

"FISH'S HOLIDAY STUNT!" A Feast of Exciting Bank
Holiday Reading Featuring . . **Harry Wharton & Co.**

The Magnet ^{2^D}



A BOOKED SEAT!



COME INTO the OFFICE, BOYS - AND GIRLS!

Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers. Write to him: Editor of the "Magnet," The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped, addressed envelope will ensure a reply.

THERE is quite a bunch of interesting queries from various readers on my desk this morning, so I had better get down to the job of answering them right away. Here is the first, which comes from B. R. D., of Rochester. He asks

WHAT IS A DENE-HOLE?

This is the name given to some rather curious excavations found in Essex. A new one was discovered not very long ago during the course of some building operations. Dene-holes are shafts cut in the ground, and extend to a depth of about sixty feet. At the top they are only a yard in diameter, but what appears to be an ordinary hole soon proves to be very much otherwise upon investigation. For, down in the depths of the earth, these shafts open out into a large chamber.

Dene-holes date from the days when the Danish pirates ravaged our coasts, but antiquarians differ as to what they were originally intended to be. Some say that they were used as places of refuge from the marauding Danes. Others claim that they were constructed as storage places for grain, while some people claim that they date back much further, and were flint mines. Whatever they were used for, there are many of them to be found, and one of the principal places to find them is in the curiously named Hangman's Wood, which is not far from the town of Grays, in Essex.

Be careful if you should come across one, chums! It would not be a very pleasant experience to step into what you imagine to be a small hole in the ground—and then drop a sheer sixty feet!

Once or twice I have given you some interesting information concerning the names of various towns. Here is another paragraph, in reply to a query from Ralph Stone, of Greenhithe. He wants to know

HOW PURFLEET GOT ITS NAME.

Purfleet is an ancient place at the beginning of Long Reach, in the River Thames. Tradition has it that, just prior to the coming of the Spanish Armada, the English fleet was anchored in Long Reach. Queen Elizabeth came down here to inspect the fleet, and, realising how small it was compared to the mighty armada, stood at Purfleet, and exclaimed: "Oh, my poor fleet!" In course of time, the words have been contracted to Purfleet, and the place has been known by that name to the present day.

Incidentally, the district around here is most historic. Not far away are some chalk pits in which remarkable remains of prehistoric animals have been found—proving that these long-forgotten animals once ranged the marshes of the district. The bones of lions, tigers, as well as turtles have been found. England was not such a safe place in which to live in those days!

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No 1,434

"WIRELESS FAN," of Barrow-in-Furness, asks me to give him some information which is sure to interest those of you who "listen-in." He wants to know HOW WIRELESS "EFFECTS" ARE WORKED.

The B.B.C. have discovered that it is easier and more realistic to "fake" effects than to make records of the actual happenings. For instance, when you hear over the wireless—or on the "talkies"—the swishing sound of raindrops pattering down, do you realise that you are only hearing rice being dropped into a basket containing brown paper? The illusion is perfect.

When the noise of an aeroplane crashing is heard, it consists merely of brown paper being rustled close to the microphone, while an ordinary match-box is crushed alongside. The crushing of a match-box in front of the "mike" has also been used in "talkies" to give the sound of a liner crashing into an iceberg!

Two other interesting "fakes" are the following: Lead shot rolled in a drum in front of the microphone gives the sound of waves breaking on the shore, while brown paper held against a revolving disc with leather thongs, creates the sound of a dirt-track motor-cycle. One might well ask what the B.B.C. and the film companies would do without brown paper!

HERE, in response to further requests from various readers, is another selection of THINGS YOU'D HARDLY BELIEVE!

The Smallest Book in the World! There exists a complete copy of the "Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam," which is only five-sixteenths of an inch square, and one-eighth of an inch thick!

A Python can Swallow a Deer—Complete with Antlers! Cases are known of pythons swallowing buck deer. The antlers protrude through the reptile's skin, but, in time, the python manages to digest the whole of the deer—including the antlers!

A Princess Who was Sold for Salt! An African native princess, who had displeased her tribe, was sold to a Spanish slave trader for salt. All ended well, however, for the slave trader landed her secretly, and sent her back to her parents.

Darts is One of the Greatest of British Games! There are more than 3,000 darts clubs in this country—and over a million members! This firmly establishes darts as one of the greatest and most popular games in the country.

The Word "Dunce" Really Means a Great Thinker! It is taken from the name of a Scotsman called "Duns," who was a great philosopher. People who did not believe in his teachings called his followers "Duns men," which became contracted to the present word.

MODEL GLIDERS—FREE!

So that you and all your friends will have an opportunity of taking up model

gliding, Quaker Oats Limited are repeating their offer made in a previous issue. Turn to page 7. There you will see the Puffed Wheat and Rice announcement which contains a coupon for your convenience, to be sent in with two packet tops for a fine realistic glider, that flies, banks, loops—it is absolutely FREE.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

If you want more than one glider, or any of your friends would like to get one, simply write to Quaker Oats Ltd., 11, Finsbury Square, London, E.C.2., giving your name and address and enclosing two packet tops from Puffed Wheat or Puffed Rice for each glider required. (You don't need to send a coupon if you mention the name of this paper when writing to Quaker Oats Ltd.)

A READER of mine who is interested in shipping—he lives at Deal, and thus sees many vessels of famous shipping lines pass his home—asks me to mention something about

FUNNELS OF FAMOUS LINERS,

so that he can tell the name of the company to which these liners belong by means of their funnels. It would be impossible for me to give a full list of every steamship company's funnels, but here are a few of the most outstanding:

All Black Funnels are carried by the Anchor Line; the British and African S. N. Co.; the General Steam Navigation Co.; the Pacific and Orient S. N. Co.; Watts, Watts & Co.; Capper Alexander S. Co.; Clyde Shipping Co.; Glover Bros.; J. & P. Hutchinson, Ltd.; the Messageries Maritimes; and the Rotterdamsche Lloyd.

Red Funnels with Black Tops are distinguishing mark of vessels b to Anglo-American Oil Co.; Perth, and London S. Co.; Gl Guinness Son & Co.; John Ho Power S. S. Co.; Union Castle Ma Co.; the Ellerman Wilson Line.

Red Funnels with Black Tops and Two Black Lines are carried by the Commonwealth and Dominion Line, and the Cunard S. S. Co.

I am afraid space will not allow me to give a further selection this week, but if any more of my readers are interested, and would like a further list, I will see what I can do.

Now I must deal with next week's programme. As usual, you may be certain of a real top-notch issue, the principal yarn of which is entitled:

"THE MYSTERY OF PORTERCLIFFE HALL!"

By Frank Richards.

This, the second yarn in our grand new holiday series, is worthy to rank with the best that our old chum and author has ever given us. Harry Wharton & Co. are booked for the most exciting experience of their lives at Portercliffe Hall. With such characters as Fisher T. Fish and Billy Bunter playing prominent parts, next week's yarn is crammed with the most amazing adventures, with exciting incidents as plentiful as blackberries in September.

You'll find the supporting features as good as ever; further exciting chapters of our popular adventure story, a topical issue of the "Greyfriars Herald," an effusion from our Greyfriars Rhymester, and last, but by no means least, another cheery chat with your old friend

THE EDITOR.

HURRAH! THE HOLIDAYS ARE HERE AGAIN!

FISH'S HOLIDAY STUNT!



By **FRANK RICHARDS**

The First of a Magnificent New Series of School Stories dealing with the Exciting Holiday Adventures of **HARRY WHARTON & CO., the Chums of GREYFRIARS.**

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Just Like Bunter I.

“YOU silly ass!” roared Bob Cherry.
“Ho, he, ho!” cackled Billy Bunter.

“Kipps, you fathead!” exclaimed Harry Wharton.

Kipps of the Remove grinned.
Harry Wharton & Co. glared.

A dozen fellows had come along in break for letters. There was one in the rack for Bob Cherry, among others for Remove men.

Kipps picked it out, as if to hand it over to Bob.

Instead of doing so, however, he stepped to the window, which was wide open on the quadrangle, and swung his hand outward.

The letter vanished.

Why Oliver Kipps had played such an absolutely idiotic trick as pitching a fellow's letter out into the quad was a mystery. Bob gave a roar of wrath.

He rushed to the window, shouldering Kipps aside, and stared out for his letter. But it was not to be seen.

There was half a gale blowing that morning. The wind came up from the sea in great gusts, shaking the old Greyfriars elms, and howling wildly round the chimney pots.

It was not much use looking for a letter thrown out into the howling wind, so light an article was certain to be instantly whirled away.

Bob turned back from the window and glared at Kipps, who was still grinning cheerily.

“You footling ass!” he hooted.
“You've lost my letter!”

Kipps shook his head.
“Keep your wool on, old bean,” he said. “It's not lost—”

“It's blown away!” exclaimed Harry Wharton. “What the dickens—”

“The blowfulness is terrific!” remarked Harroo Jamset Ram Singh. “The ridiculous letter may never be found again.”

Ever since Fisher T. Fish first came to Greyfriars he has boasted of the great wealth of the Fish family, in “Noo Yark.” But Harry Wharton & Co. have taken it with a large grain of salt. Now comes the startling news that Fish's “popper” has invited the chums of Greyfriars to spend the holiday vac. at Portercliffe Hall, a grand old Sussex mansion!

“Right as rain!” said Kipps. “You see—”

Kipps was interrupted.
Bob Cherry made a jump at him and grabbed him by the collar. Bob's letter was—to all appearance, at least—lost! Before starting hunting for a lost letter in a high wind, Bob's idea was to let

Kipps know exactly what he thought of such a fatheaded trick.

Bang!
Kipps' head smote the window-seat with a mighty smite.

“Whoop!” roared Kipps. “Leggo! Oh, my hat! Yow!”

“He, he, he!” chortled Billy Bunter. “Give him another!” said Frank Nugent.

Bang!

“And a few more!” grinned Johnny Bull.

Bang!
“Yaroooh!” Kipps roared, and struggled wildly. “You silly ass—yow-ow! Leggo! Wow!”

Bang!
“There!” gasped Bob Cherry. “And there—and there! You footling fathead, losing it—”

“It's not lost, you howling idiot!” shrieked Kipps. “Leggo! It's here, you blithering ass! Ow! I've got it, you fathead! Wow!”

“What!”
Kipps jerked himself out of Bob's mighty grasp.

He rubbed his head—which had a pain in it! Then, with his left hand, from his right sleeve, he extracted a letter.

The juniors stared at it.

It was Bob's letter—which all the fellows present could have sworn they had seen Kipps toss out into the windy quad. They had forgotten for the moment that Kipps was a conjurer, and never happy except when he was playing sleight-of-hand tricks.

Evidently he had not pitched that

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,434.

letter out of the window. He had only appeared to do so, slipping it up his sleeve unseen.

"Oh!" gasped Bob.

"He, he, he!" cackled Billy Bunter. "I say, you fellows, it was only one of Kipps's rotten conjuring tricks! He, he, he!"

"Ow! Wow! Yow!" mumbled Kipps, rubbing his damaged head. "You howling ass—wow!—can't you see a joke, you idiot—wow!"

"Oh!" repeated Bob, as he took his letter. "Sorry, old bean! I—I thought—"

"Gammon!" yapped Kipps. "You can't think, you fathead—you've got nothing to do it with! Ow! My napper! Wow!"

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Well, I thought my letter was gone!" he said. "I forgot you were such a jolly clever conjurer, old chap!"

"Ow! Wow!"

"We all thought it was gone, Kipps!" said Harry Wharton laughing. "You shouldn't be so jolly clever, you know."

"The cleverfulness of the esteemed Kipps is too preposterous!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Kipps grinned ruefully. The misunderstanding was a tribute to his skill as a conjurer. But it was rather a painful tribute.

"I say, you fellows, there's not much in a trick like that!" said Billy Bunter. "Any fool could do it."

"You ought to be able to, then!" remarked Johnny Bull.

"Yah! I can jolly well tell you, I could do it on my head," said the fat Owl of the Remove. "Give me that letter, Bob, and see."

Bob Cherry put the letter in his pocket.

Billy Bunter had a fixed belief that he could do anything that any other fellow could do; the only difference being, that Bunter could do it a little better! What Kipps had done seemed, to Billy Bunter, extremely simple; and he was keen to show that he could do likewise. But Bob did not want Bunter playing conjuring tricks with his letter. He did not share Bunter's confidence in his fat self.

"Try it with a letter of your own, old fat bean!" said Bob.

Bunter blinked up at the rack.

"There doesn't seem to be a letter for me!" he said. "It's a bit queer it hasn't come! I told you fellows I was expecting a postal-order—"

"You did!" agreed Bob.

"Lots of times!" remarked Nugent.

"But it's not here," said Bunter, blinking over the rack through his big spectacles. "It's from one of my titled relations, you know."

"These noblemen are so absent-minded!" remarked Skinner. "It's too bad of Sir Bunter de Grunter."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast! Well, I'll take one of these letters," said Bunter. "Here's one for Smithy—I'll show you with that—"

"You jolly well won't!" said Herbert Vernon-Smith, jerking the letter from Bunter's fat hand. "You'll leave my letters alone, fathead!"

"Oh, really, Smithy! Well, here's one for Fishy!" said Bunter. "Quelch has kept Fishy in the Form-room! Look here!"

There was a letter in the rack, with an American post-mark addressed to Fisher T. Fish. Bunter took it down.

As Fishy was not on the spot to look after his property, there was nothing to prevent Bunter from displaying his wonderful powers as a conjurer.

With Fishy's letter in his fat hand, he stepped to the window. All the fellows

watched him, with grinning faces. Nobody but Bunter had the faintest belief that he could bring off a conjuring trick like Kipps.

"Mind you don't chuck it out, ass!" said Peter Todd.

"That's all right," said Bunter. "I fancy I can play a simple trick like that better than Kipps."

"Fathead!" said Kipps.

"Yah!" retorted Bunter.

He swung up his arm at the open window, with the letter in his fat fingers, and made a motion of flinging it out into the open air.

It flew!

According to plan, it should have slipped up Bunter's sleeve and disappeared there, as had happened to Bob's letter in Kipps' hand.

But perhaps Bunter, after all, was not such a clever conjurer as Kipps! Perhaps he was not the clever fellow he supposed at all! Perhaps he was, in fact, the clumsy, conceited, footling ass that all the Remove believed him to be!

Anyhow, Fishy's letter, instead of slipping up Bunter's sleeve when it left his fat fingers, flew out of the open window into the howling wind.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I—I say, you fellows, it—it's gone!" gasped Bunter.

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

It was gone! There was no doubt of that! Bunter blinked from the window through his big spectacles—but he blinked in vain! The letter, tossed into the windy quad, had been caught by a powerful gust and whirled away instantly out of sight. Like the Hunter of the Snark when he faced the terrible Boojum, it had "suddenly, silently vanished away."

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter. "I—I—I say, you fellows, you—you needn't mention to Fishy that there was a letter for him this morning! I don't suppose it matters much, you know! Perhaps you fellows would like to go out and find it?"

"Perhaps!" chuckled Bob.

"The perhapsfulness is terrific!"

"Well, don't mention it to Fishy! He won't miss it if he doesn't know it's come, you know! That's all right! Besides, it may turn up!"

And Billy Bunter rolled away—rather anxious to be off the scene if the American junior came along to look for letters.

It was ten minutes later that Fisher T. Fish came along, and all the other fellows had cleared off before then. Fishy had been kept in the Form-room for a "jaw" by his Form-master, who had heard a rumour of money-lending transactions in the lower Forms.

Fishy got away in time to look for letters before third school. But he looked in vain.

For days Fishy had been expecting a letter from his "popper," Mr. Hiram K. Fish, in New York. Every day he scanned the rack anxiously for that expected letter. Every day, so far, he had scanned it in vain. Now again he scanned it in vain. That letter, he guessed and reckoned, had not come yet. Fishy remained in happy ignorance of the fact that it had come—and gone!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Alonzo on the Phone!

"BOTHER!" said Mr. Quelch.

Mr. Quelch said "Bother!"—but the expression on his face hinted that he was thinking something more emphatic—much more emphatic!

Quelch was busy—as the Form-master generally was in the last days of term.

More than once Quelch had wondered whether it really was wise to have a telephone installed in his study. It was sometimes a doubtful blessing.

Of course, it was very useful to speak to anybody in a hurry—if one got the right number! On such occasions Quelch generally seemed to get a wrong number or two.

On the other hand, anybody who wanted Quelch always seemed to get the right number first shot, and almost always at a moment frightfully inconvenient for Quelch.

Up to the neck with work at term-end, Quelch did not want to hear the unmusical buzz of the telephone-bell. And as it hummed through his study he said "Bother!" and thought more!

However, he crossed to the irritating instrument and took up the receiver. Then he barked:

"Hullo!"

"Is that Mr. Quelch?" came a rather thin voice over the wires that seemed familiar to the ears of the Remove master.

"Speaking!" barked Quelch.

"How do you do, sir?"

"What?"

"I trust that you are well!"

Quelch glared at the telephone! It was very kind of the man at the other end, no doubt, to be concerned about his health. But was it really possible that some unspeakable idiot had rung up a busy man to ask him how he was?

"Who is speaking?" hooted Quelch.

"Todd, sir."

"Todd!" barked the Remove master.

"How dare you, Todd? For what reason, Todd, have you rung up your Form-master? Is this a foolish prank to waste my time? I shall cane you, Todd!"

"Dear Mr. Quelch—"

Bang! went the receiver back on the hook. Quelch cut off—in a hurry! He breathed hard as he went back to his table and a pile of Form papers.

There was only one Todd at Greyfriars—Peter Todd, of Quelch's Form, the Remove. If that youth had rung up his Form-master, to waste his time, it was an act of temerity to be followed by condign punishment.

But as he sat down at his table, Quelch's eyes happened to turn to his window, and out in the quad, in the bright summer sunlight, he spotted Peter Todd—walking and talking with Harry Wharton & Co.

Quelch stared at him.

Evidently it was not, as he had supposed, Peter Todd who had called him up on the phone.

"Bless my soul!" said Quelch, puzzled. Buzzzzzzzz!

It was the bell again.

Quelch picked up the receiver. If some other Todd, not Peter, had called him up, he realised that he had better hear what that Todd had to say.

"Is that you, sir?" came the voice. "We seem to have been cut off rather suddenly, sir."

"Who is speaking?"

"Todd, sir."

"What Todd?" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"I know only one person of that name who is here at school. Tot Wad—I mean, what Todd?"

"Alonzo Todd, sir!"

"Oh!" grunted Mr. Quelch.

He remembered Alonzo Todd now—a cousin of Peter's, who had been at Greyfriars School for a short time. Alonzo was very, very good, and very, very conscientious, but very, very worrying and troublesome in very, very many ways, and Quelch had not been sorry to see the last of him. And he saw no

reason whatever why Alonzo should ring him up.

"I trust, sir, that I am causing you no inconvenience by calling you up and that you are not busily engaged at the present moment," came Alonzo's piping voice. "I should be exceedingly regretful to waste your very valuable time, sir."

That was Alonzo's mode of conversing, as if, as they said in the Remove, he had swallowed a dictionary!

"I am very busy, Todd!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "What is it?"

"I am very, very sorry I have interrupted you, sir, if you are busy—"

"Please come to the point!" Quelch wanted to be patient with a fellow who had once been in his Form.

"Oh, certainly, sir!" piped Alonzo.

"What?"

"Would you mind very much saying it over again, sir?"

Snort!

Bang!

The receiver went back on the hooks.

Mr. Quelch, with a heightened colour and a glinting eye, sat down at his table again. He was glad that Alonzo Todd was no longer a member of his Form, but just for a moment he would have liked to have had Alonzo in the study within reach of his cane.

Buzzzzz!

Quelch handled Form papers, unheeding the phone. He let it buzz! If that worrying young ass, Alonzo Todd, was still trying to get through, he could get on with it and keep on with it till he was tired.

far away. I am speaking from Courtfield Post office—"

"Listen to me!"

"I am listening, sir, with great pleasure! It is very agreeable indeed to hear your voice again, sir! I should be so glad if my Cousin Peter would walk down to Courtfield, and accompany me to the school, where I propose to see my old friends again before they depart in various directions for the summer holidays. I have bought a cake—"

"Silence!"

"Eh!"

"Do not dare to ring me up again! If you were here, I would cane you!"

"Good gracious!"

Bang! went the receiver on the hooks again.



"Look here, you fellows," said Bunter, gazing at the Famous Five, "any one of you could lick Fishy. You could do it, Cherry! Fishy can't handle a hefty hooligan like you—" "A whatter?" gasped Bob. "Or you, Nugent! Even a milksop like you could handle Fishy!" A bony figure came out of the House and two sharp, foxy eyes glinted round the quad. Fisher T. Fish was looking for Bunter!

"My object in communicating with you by telephone, sir, was to prefer a request which, I sincerely trust, you will not regard as troublesome or savouring of assumption in any way."

"Speak!" almost hissed Mr. Quelch.

"If it would not cause you undue inconvenience, sir, I should like to speak to my Cousin Peter in connection with arrangements to be made for the holidays now approaching—"

Mr. Quelch very nearly banged the receiver back on the hooks again.

He refrained from doing so, but he snorted.

"You can do nothing of the sort, Todd!" he yapped. "My telephone was not installed for the purposes of conversation between Greyfriars boys and their relatives at home. I am surprised that you should make the request, and I certainly shall not accede to it."

"I didn't catch that, sir."

That was all very well, but Quelch soon realised that he would get tired first! How was a Form-master to deal with Form papers with that hideous, raucous bell buzzing in his ears?

Buzzzzz!

Quelch gritted his teeth. He really felt like grinding them. But he stopped short of that. They were an expensive set.

Buzzzzz!

Quelch rose from his table again and fairly bounded to the telephone. He tore off the receiver.

"Is that you, Mr. Quelch? How very, very disconcerting it is to be cut off so suddenly in the middle of a pleasant and agreeable talk—"

"Todd!" roared Mr. Quelch. "Boy! Do you hear me?"

"Oh, certainly, sir! Your voice sounds quite loud now! I hear you with absolute distinctness, sir! I am not very

Mr. Quelch sat down at the table, breathing wrath, but thankful that he had done with Alonzo at last. It would have been a pleasure to cane him, but it was a lesser pleasure to have got rid of him.

For five minutes there was peace and blessed silence in the study—as sweet and peaceful as if that wonderful instrument the telephone had never been invented! Then—

Buzzzzzzzzz!

The brows of the Remove-master had unbent—the glint gone from his eye. But as the bell buzzed again, the brows bent once more and the glint came back. After what he had said, it seemed incredible that even that foolish, unthinking young ass, Alonzo Todd, would ring him up again! But there was the bell buzzing!

Buzzzzz!

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,434.

Quelch jumped up as if electrified! He bounded across to the telephone like a kangaroo. He fairly wrenched off the receiver, causing the instrument to rock wildly. He almost shrieked into the mouthpiece:

"How dare you? I repeat, how dare you ring me up, you foolish, thoughtless, unreflecting dolt? I repeat, dolt! I repeat—"

"Mr. Quelch!" came an astonished voice. "Good gad, sir, what do you mean? If you think, sir, that that is the way to address a governor of the school, sir—"

It was not Alonzo this time!

That barking voice belonged to Sir Hilton Popper, of Popper Court.

Mr. Quelch almost fell down!

"Oh!" he gasped weakly.

He had been hasty! There was no doubt about that! He had taken it for granted that it was Alonzo Todd on the phone again—and it wasn't!

"Good gad, sir!" hooted Sir Hilton. "What do you mean, sir? I demand an explanation, sir! I—"

"I—I—I—" babbled Mr. Quelch.

"I—I—I—"

"I shall mention this matter, sir, to Dr. Locke! By gad, I have never been so insulted! Good gad, sir—"

"I—I—I—"

"Pah!"

Sir Hilton rang off—evidently in a royal wax! Mr. Quelch stood blinking at his telephone! Once more it was borne in on his mind that that marvelous and ingenious invention was a rather mixed blessing!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Fisher T. Fish on the Warpath!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter rolled up to the group of juniors in the quad with a worried and anxious fat brow. Bob Cherry raised his hand.

"If you say 'holidays' you get kicked!" he warned.

"Hard!" said Johnny Bull.

"The hardness will be terrific, my esteemed fat Bunter!" declared Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Oh, really, you fellows—"

"Anything else you like!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "But cut out the hols!"

"Beast!"

In the last days of term the holidays were rather an important matter to Billy Bunter. He had not yet decided which fellows were to be honoured with his distinguished company for the summer vacation.

But eager as Bunter was to discuss this important subject with almost every fellow in the Remove, there was a marked lack of enthusiasm on the part of the other fellows.

"I say, you fellows, I wasn't going to speak about the hols!" yapped Bunter.

"Honest Injun?" asked Bob.

"Yes, you silly idiot!"

"Then you can run on!" said Bob.

"Beast! I mean, I say, you fellows, I want you to keep that lout Fishy off. He makes out that I lost a letter of his yesterday—"

"So you did!" said Harry Wharton.

"The didfulness was terrific!"

"Oh, don't jaw!" said Bunter irritably. "I couldn't help the beastly thing getting lost, could I, when the wind blew it away? Goodness knows where it's blown to! That brute Fishy wants me to hunt for it, and keep on hunting, till I find it. He says he's going to keep on kicking me—"

"Good!" said Bob.

"Some rotter told him there was a

letter for him, and that I chucked it out of the window," said Bunter. "Well, you fellows were there, and you can all bear witness that I didn't!"

"What-a-at!"

"Skinner told him," explained Bunter. "Well, Skinner's well known to be an awful fibber! You fellows are truthful, like me—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"So it will be all right, if you explain to Fishy that there never was a letter, and that it's only Skinner's gammon—see? You can all give him your word, honour bright, you know. Then he'll leave me alone."

The Famous Five gazed at Billy Bunter! They did not speak. Bunter seemed to have taken their breath away.

"I'll do as much for you fellows another time!" said Bunter. "I say, that beast Fishy is after me now, and I've only just dodged him! What about it?"

"You piffling, pie-faced, pernicious porker!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"You frabjous, footling, fibbing frump!" gasped Johnny Bull.

"Kick him!" said Nugent.

"The kickfulness—"

Billy Bunter jumped back in alarm.

"I say, you fellows, you needn't get your rag out! What you are getting shirty for I don't know! I think you might do a little thing like that for a pal, after all I've done for you! Fishy's rather a suspicious beast, but he will take your word. You see, that letter's lost, and I don't suppose Fishy could read it even if it turned up. There was a lot of rain last night, and it must have got soaked. I say—"

"You footling fathead!" said Harry Wharton. "You'd better hunt for that letter and find it. Of course, Fishy wants it!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! Well, look here, will you give Fishy a good licking?" asked Bunter. "Any one of you could lick Fishy! It will keep him quiet! You can do it, Bob! Fishy can't handle a hefty hooligan like you—"

"A whatter?" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Or you, Nugent! Even a milksop like you could handle Fishy," said Bunter. "Give him a jolly good hiding and keep him quiet! See?"

A bony figure came out of the House and two sharp, foxy eyes glinted round the quad. Fisher T. Fish was looking for Bunter!

The Famous Five and Toddy grinned as they saw him. But the short-sighted Owl of the Remove did not observe that vengeance was on his trail.

"I say, you fellows, you might stand by a pal!" urged Bunter. "I've done a lot for you! Look at the way I used to stand your beastly temper, Wharton, when I was in Study No. 1!"

"You frabjous owl—"

"And you, Toddy!" said Bunter reproachfully. "Since I've been in Study No. 7 with you, haven't I always treated you as a pal? Have I ever pointed out that we stand on a very different footing socially? Have I ever chucked it up against you that your father's a poverty-stricken solicitor in Bloomsbury? I ask you!"

Peter Todd did not answer. He just gazed at Bunter!

"And you, Inky," went on Bunter, blinking through his big spectacles at the Nabob of Bhanipur. "You can't say I haven't always treated you decently, though you're only a black nigger—"

"You terrific and preposterous bloater!" gasped Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

There was a patter of footsteps, and Fisher T. Fish arrived. His bony hand grasped Bunter's collar.

"Say, where's that pesky letter from Noo Yark?" demanded Fishy.

"Owl! Leggo! I say, you fellows, make him leggo!" yelled Bunter.

"You found that dog-goned letter yet?" roared Fisher T. Fish.

"Owl! No! Wow! Beast!"

"I guess I'll make potato scrapings of you if you don't cough up that letter! You slab-sided jay, I heard from my popper that he was going to send me noos—great noos. He sure was to have let me know when he got it fixed. I guess it was all in that letter, and I've sure been rubbering at the rack every day for a week arter that letter. And now you go and lose it, you pie-faced clam! I guess you got to spot it!"

"I say, you fellows! Make him leggo!" wailed Bunter. "I say, Fishy, there never was a letter! Those chaps were present, and they can prove that there wasn't a letter for you yesterday. They saw it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll sure bang your cabeza till you go arter that letter and cinch it!" roared Fisher T. Fish.

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter, as the American junior proceeded to suit the action to the word.

Bunter's head established contact with one of the ancient Greyfriars elms. There was a loud bang.

"Now, you pesky mugwump—" roared Fishy.

"Whoop!"

Bang!

"I say, you fellows, help!" yelled Bunter. "I say—yaroooh! I say—Oh crikey! Yow-ow-ow-wooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The worm will turn! Billy Bunter turned on Fisher T. Fish and smote desperately.

It was Fishy's turn to yell as a fat fist caught him under his bony chin.

Bunter howled. He felt as if his fat fist had been punctured! Fishy yelled and sat down.

In an instant Billy Bunter was running.

"Carry me home to die!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. He scrambled to his feet and tore after Bunter.

"Go it, Bunter!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Go it, Fishy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors roared with laughter as they watched the chase. Billy Bunter was heading for the open gates, his fat little legs going like clockwork. Fisher T. Fish's bony limbs twinkled as he flew in pursuit.

Fishy was gaining, but Bunter had a start. The fat junior vanished out of the gateway, going strong.

After him pelted Fisher T. Fish.

It was at that moment that Horace Coker of the Fifth Form came in. Coming in at the school gate, Coker of the Fifth naturally did not expect to meet a wildly excited American in full career.

Not expecting it, Coker, of course, was caught napping. Fisher T. Fish hit Coker like a charging tank!

Coker roared, and sat down in the gateway. Fisher T. Fish yelled and distributed himself over Coker. Bunter, hitting the open spaces, flew!

"What the—" gasped Coker.

"Aw, you pesky jay!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. "Wharrer you get in the way for? I guess you've winded me a few! Wow!"

He scrambled off Coker.

Coker, red with wrath, leaped up. He grasped Fisher T. Fish.

"You cheeky young sweep!" roared Coker, in great wrath. "Barging over a Fifth Form man—"

"Aw, leggo! I guess I'm after Bunter. Wake snakes!" howled Fisher

T. Fish, as Coker began to smack and slap. "You pesky piecan, let up! I'm sure telling you to let up!"
Smack, smack, smack, smack!
"Yaw—wooop! Jumping Jehoshafat! I guess I'll—yaroooh! I sure guess I'll—who—hoop!"
Smack, smack, smack!
"There!" gasped Coker. "That'll teach you to barge over a Fifth Form man, you cheeky little tick! I mean, it'll teach you not to!"
And, pitching the hapless Fishy over in a heap, Coker stalked in and left him to splutter. By the time Fisher T. Fish recovered, Bunter had disappeared over the horizon.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Carries the Cake!

"GOODNESS gracious!" ejaculated Alonzo Todd.
Alonzo was quite startled.
His mild eyes almost popped from his gentle face. He came to a halt on the road across Courtfield Common, staring at the fat and breathless figure coming up that road towards him.
He recognised Billy Bunter, at a distance. Even when Bunter was too far off for his features to be distinguished, his circumference was not to be mistaken.
Alonzo, having failed to get through to his cousin Peter on Mr. Quelch's telephone, had started to walk to Greyfriars on his lonely own. He was quite near the school when Bunter happened.
Why the fat Owl of the Remove was speeding along at such a rate in the blazing summer sun was a mystery to Alonzo. If there had been pursuers behind him he could have understood it.
But there was no sign of a pursuer. Billy Bunter had the road to himself. And he was cutting along as if in a foot-race, his fat face bedewed with perspiration, his straw hat on the back of his bullet head, his spectacles sliding down his fat little nose.
Alonzo regarded him with thoughtful concern. He hoped it was not a case of sunstroke. Standing in the road with a big parcel under his arm, the good Alonzo watched Bunter.
Bunter did not even see him. In the full belief that Fisher T. Fish was raging in his track, Bunter barged wildly on till he was within a couple of yards of Alonzo, and then suddenly he saw him.
"My dear William—" began Alonzo.
"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.
He gave a hasty blink over a fat shoulder. Bunter was warm and damp, and fearfully tired. It occurred to him that with Alonzo's aid the ferocious Fish might be driven off. Even a scrap was better than further exertion.
But, to his relief, there was no Fish in sight. He realised that he had outrun his pursuer, or else that something had happened to stop Fishy.
"Oh!" gurgled Bunter. He fanned himself with his straw hat. "I say, Alonzo—ow! Fancy meeting you! Oooogh! I'm out of breath! Wooogh!"
"I was quite surprised to see you running so fast in the hot sun, my dear William!" said Alonzo. "I feared for a moment that you were cracked! I remember Peter observing once that you have not sufficient brains to go mad with, but really—"

"You silly ass!" grunted Bunter. "I say!" His eyes and his spectacles glued on to Alonzo's parcel. "What have you got there?"

"A cake, my dear William! I thought it would please Peter if I brought a cake with me, as I shall be having tea in the study. I bought a very large cake, as I had no doubt that you would join us at tea, and I remember that you have an extraordinary appetite—"

"I'll carry it for you, old chap!" said Bunter.
Alonzo shook his head.
He was not a suspicious fellow. It did not occur to his kind and simple mind that Bunter had designs on that cake.
Any Remove fellow for whom Bunter had offered to carry eatables would have declined Bunter's services as a carrier. He would have known that Bunter's load, like Aesop's of old, would have diminished as he progressed with it.
But that was not Alonzo's reason. Alonzo was too considerate to give another fellow trouble.
"Not at all, my dear fellow!" said Alonzo. "I could not think of troubling you. I can carry the cake myself."
"Look here, I'd rather carry it for you!" urged Bunter.
"You look hot and tired, my dear William!" said Alonzo gently. "Please do not trouble about it."
"I—I came to meet you, specially to carry it, old chap."
"Dear me! Did you know I was coming to the school?" exclaimed Alonzo, in surprise.

(Continued on next page.)



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"Oh! Ah! Yes. You see, Peter told me."

"But Peter did not know!" said Alonzo, still more surprised.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "I—I mean that—"

He had taken it for granted that Peter Todd knew that his cousin was visiting Greyfriars.

"I telephoned to Mr. Quelch from Courtfield," explained Alonzo. "I desired to speak to Peter, and ask him to come to meet me. But I fear that Mr. Quelch was cross. I hardly like to say so, or even think so, but I cannot help feeling that his voice sounded very cross." Alonzo shook his head sadly. "So I conclude that he did not mention it to Peter—"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "He told me—"

"He told you?"

"Yes; he called me to his study window and said: 'Alonzo's coming along from Courtfield shortly, Bunter, if you'd like to go and meet him.'"

"Did he really speak of me as Alonzo?" asked Peter's cousin. "That is very nice of Mr. Quelch! It shows that he remembers me with kindness. But why did he tell you, instead of Peter, Bunter?"

"Oh! Peter's gone out of gates—gone to see a football match—"

"A football match in the summer!" exclaimed Alonzo.

"I mean a cricket match! Toddy being out, Quelch thought I'd better come. I—I thought you might have something to—carry, and—and I thought I'd carry it for you, old chap!"

Alonzo Todd beamed.

"That was very, very kind and thoughtful of you, Bunter," he said. "I am so glad to see this improvement in you, my dear William! I remember you used to be very selfish and inconsiderate when I was at Greyfriars. But I remember telling Peter that even the most unpleasant people are capable of improvement—"

"You silly idiot!"

"Eh?"

"I—I—I mean, let me carry that parcel, old chap! After I've run at top speed all this way to meet you—"

"Certainly, my dear William, if you insist! I had no idea you were running to meet me, or indeed that you knew I was coming at all. If you are quite, quite sure that you do not mind carrying the parcel—"

"No fear! I—I mean, not at all!"

"It is rather a large cake, and somewhat heavy!" said Alonzo dubiously. "I am afraid you will find it very, very fatiguing."

"Hand it over!" gasped Bunter.

"Very well, my dear William, if you insist."

Alonzo handed over the parcel. Billy Bunter's little round eyes gleamed through his big round spectacles. It was rather a heavy parcel. Bunter, as a rule, did not like carrying a heavy parcel. But circumstances alter cases! In this case the heavier the better! It meant more cake!

With the big parcel under a fat arm, Bunter turned back towards the school. But he walked very slowly.

He did not want to meet Fisher T. Fish. And he did not want to arrive at Greyfriars with the cake still inside the parcel. He wanted, in fact, to get shot of Alonzo at the earliest possible moment.

"I say, Alonzo," he exclaimed suddenly, "race you to Greyfriars!"

"Are you not tired, my dear William?"

"Not a bit! I say, I'll give you six

yards start, and jolly well beat you to the gates!" said Bunter.

Alonzo smiled. Alonzo was no athlete, but it was certain that his long, thin legs could cover the ground at least twice as fast as Bunter's short, fat ones.

"Perhaps I had better give you a start, Bunter!" he suggested. "You are rather fat and heavy and clumsy, if you don't mind my mentioning it."

"You cheeky chump—"

"My dear William—"

"I—I mean, I've been putting in a lot of sprinting lately. Wingate picked me out for the school 100 yards!" said Bunter.

"Did he really? I should never have thought it!"

"Well, you see!" said Bunter. "Six yards start, and if I don't pass you in a couple of minutes, I'll eat my hat!"

"Very well, then, William! Perhaps I had better carry the cake, though."

"Eh?"

"It would be rather a handicap for you—"

"N-n-not at all! Nothing to me! Now you walk on, six yards, and start."

"Very well!"

Alonzo walked on. He calculated six yards very, very carefully. Then he looked round at Bunter.

Bunter waved a fat hand.

"Start!" he shouted.

Alonzo started!

His long legs fairly whisked. He was going to win that race if he could, if only for the satisfaction of beating the champion whom Wingate had picked for the school 100 yards!

He won it easily!

Bunter did not pass him in a couple of minutes! He did not pass him at all! Having seen Alonzo fairly started and going strong, Billy Bunter turned off the road and vanished amid the gorse on the common.

When Alonzo Todd reached the school gates and looked back, Bunter was not in sight! Pleased with having won the race so easily, but hoping very, very earnestly that Bunter was not very tired with his exertions, Alonzo went in at the gates.

It was later that Billy Bunter returned to Greyfriars. He moved very slowly. He was still carrying the cake, but the cake was now an inside passenger!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Wet!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Alonzo!"

Harry Wharton.

"The esteemed and ridiculous Alonzo!"

The Famous Five cut across to meet Alonzo Todd as he came in. They snatched him on the shoulders and thumped him on the back.

They liked Alonzo! Everybody liked Alonzo! His society was liable to pall, after a time, perhaps! Possibly he was rather a bore! Certainly he was an ass. Still, a fellow could not help liking him. And the chums of the Remove demonstrated that they were glad to see him again.

Alonzo was rather like Peter in looks—in fact, very much like him. But he was a meeker and milder edition of Peter. He had a sweet smile such as was never seen on Toddy's visage. He had a mild voice unlike Peter's hefty tones. And he preferred draughts, as a game, to cricket or football—which was very unlike Peter

indeed. In more strenuous moments Alonzo had played croquet! But draughts was his game!

"My dear, dear fellows," exclaimed Alonzo, beaming, "how pleased I am to see you again! It is so delightful to meet my dear schoolfellows!"

"The delightfulness is terrific, my esteemed and idiotic Alonzo!" declared Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, while the Co. grinned.

Alonzo Todd had a way of talking as if he lived in a prize school book, that the chums of the Remove remembered.

"We'll call Toddy," said Bob.

"I think Peter has gone to a cricket match, my dear Robert," said Alonzo. "Bunter told me so—"

"Oh, you've seen Bunter! Toddy can't have gone far—he was with us half an hour ago," said Harry Wharton. "Bunter was fibbing as usual, I suppose—goodness knows why."

"My dear Henry—" exclaimed Alonzo.

"Oh, chuck it!" gasped Wharton.

Alonzo Todd had a fearful habit of calling fellows by their front names and making them as solemn as possible. Harry Wharton had never been called Henry in his life—except by Alonzo! It was the sort of thing that Alonzo would do!

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Toddy!" said Bob Cherry as Peter came along.

Peter stared at his cousin and shook hands with him.

"Fancy you blowing in, 'Lonzy!' he said.

Peter did not, perhaps, bubble with enthusiasm. He was fond of Alonzo, but it was a case of absence making the heart grow fonder. Distance lent enchantment to the view of Alonzo Todd!

"Yes, is it not a happy chance!" said the beaming Alonzo. "You see, I was with Uncle Benjamin at Folkestone, and as he was occupied this afternoon, I thought I would go to Canterbury to see the cathedral."

The juniors gazed at Alonzo! What seeing the cathedral at Canterbury had to do with visiting Greyfriars, they did not for the moment grasp.

"Unfortunately—or perhaps I should say fortunately in the circumstances—I got into the wrong train!" continued Alonzo. "I was very, very much surprised to find myself at Courtfield instead of Canterbury."

"Oh, my hat!" said Peter.

"But immediately," went on Alonzo, "it occurred to me that it was an excellent opportunity to see you and discuss arrangements for the holidays, my dear Peter. So I came on. It will be such a delightful pleasure to have tea in the old study. I bought a large cake for that purpose."

"Oh, good! Alonzo's not such a fool as you might fancy!" Peter explained to the Famous Five. "But where's the cake?" he added.

"Bunter is carrying it—"

"Bunter!" yelled Peter.

"Yes he came to meet me and very, very kindly offered to carry the cake."

"You—you—you—" gasped Peter. "You let Bunter out of your sight with a cake?"

"He will be here shortly, my dear Peter! You see, he proposed a race to the school, and gave me a start, although he had the cake to carry! I won the race!" added Alonzo with a smirk.

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

"Oh, you born idiot!" gurgled Peter. "Well, we won't wait tea till



Billy Bunter turned on Fisher T. Fish, and smote desperately. It was Fishy's turn to yell, as a fat fist caught him under his bony chin. Biff! "Ooooch!" yelled the transatlantic junior, as he sat down with a bump, nursing his chin. "Carry me home to die!"

Bunter comes in with the cake—a cake can't be eaten twice. Come on!"

"Goodness gracious!" ejaculated Alonzo. "You surely do not suspect, my dear Peter, that Bunter had nefarious designs on the cake?"

"Sort of!" said Peter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear schoolfellows," said Alonzo reproachfully. "It is surely not a matter for merriment if Bunter has in reality deluded me intentionally and obtained possession of the cake with the object of consuming it by methods which can only be described as surreptitious and unscrupulous."

"It's his lower jaw that moves!" said Peter. "I recommend cotton-wool in the ears! Dutton will be glad to see you, Alonzo—he's deaf! Come on!"

"My dear Peter, I do not quite comprehend the drift of your remarks—"

"With a brain like yours you wouldn't, old chap! Squat down here and have a ginger-pop!"

"I am indeed somewhat athirst, my dear Peter, and I shall be excessively pleased—"

"Squat!"

Peter pushed Alonzo into a seat on the old oaken bench under the big tree outside the school shop. Peter was quite attached to his Cousin Alonzo, but he seldom waited for him to finish his remarks. Life was too short.

Alonzo sat down, with a cheery smile on his kind face. A dozen fellows nodded him a greeting.

Mr. Quelch, coming out of the House, caught sight of Alonzo, and for a moment frowned. But the frown disappeared.

Quelch, having got through his Form papers, was perhaps in a rather better

temper. And perhaps he felt that he had cut Alonzo off rather brusquely on the telephone.

It was true that Alonzo was an annoying ass, perhaps; still, he was an old boy of Quelch's Form, and when he made one of his rare visits to the school, it really was up to Quelch to give him a kind word.

So the Remove master came over towards Alonzo, to bestow a kind word or two on him.

Meanwhile, Peter and the Famous Five were providing refreshments. There was a little table under the shady elm outside the tuckshop. On that table Peter disposed bottles of lemonade and ginger-beer; Bob Cherry added a siphon of soda-water, Harry Wharton a dish of jam-tarts, Nugent a bag of doughnuts, and the other fellows various comestibles. Alonzo did not come often, and possibly fellows did not yearn for him to come oftener, but when he was there, they were pleased to make much of him.

Which was very, very gratifying to Alonzo. He beamed on his friends, who gathered round him with smiling faces. He picked up the soda siphon to squirt soda into lemonade—a most refreshing beverage on a hot summer's afternoon.

"Leave that to me!" said Peter, rather hastily. Alonzo was well-intentioned, but exceedingly clumsy, and a soda siphon in his hands made his immediate neighbours feel uneasy.

"My dear Peter, please let me help you," said Alonzo.

"Well, shove it in the glass—not down my neck!" said Toddy.

"I hope you do not think I should be so very clumsy as to—"

Squish!

"Wow!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"My dear Robert, I am so sorry! I had no idea that the muzzle was pointing towards your ear—"

"Urrgh! Turn it away!" yelled Bob, grabbing out his handkerchief and dabbing at his ear. "Shut it off, fathhead!"

Alonzo shut it off.

He was quite pained by that little accident. So was Bob! A squirt of soda-water in a fellow's ear was neither grateful nor comforting.

"You blithering idiot—" began Bob, forgetting for a moment that Alonzo was a visitor whom the chums of the Remove were delighted to honour.

"Shush!" murmured Wharton. "Here comes Quelch!"

The juniors rose respectfully to their feet as their Form-master came up to the table.

Alonzo rose, siphon in hand.

"I am glad to see you here, Todd!" said Mr. Quelch graciously.

"You are very, very kind, sir!" beamed Alonzo. "It is most gratifying to see you again, sir."

Mr. Quelch shook hands with him. Alonzo passed the soda siphon to his left hand to disengage his right. He held it by the top, and inadvertently compressed his grip on it.

Squish!

"Oooogh!" gasped Mr. Quelch suddenly, as a stream of soda-water shot up his sleeve. "Oh! Ah! Oh dear! What—"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Peter. "Stop it! Put it down!"

"Oh, goodness gracious!" stuttered Alonzo.

He jammed the siphon back on the table. Unfortunately, in the confusion of the moment, he neglected to release

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the pressure. The stream of soda still shot from the nozzle, and the change of position brought it to bear full on Quelch—for the moment!

It was only for a moment! But a lot can happen in a moment! A jet of soda-water caught Mr. Quelch under the chin!

He jumped back, spluttering.

"Oooogh! Upon my—grooph—word—wooggh!" spluttered Mr. Quelch.

"Drop it, you potty ass!" shrieked Peter.

He grabbed Alonzo by the arm and dragged the siphon aside. The soda-water, in full force, swept round in a circle, as Alonzo's arm was dragged round. Five fellows gulped and gurgled wildly as they received an unexpected wash in rapid succession.

Crash!

Johnny Bull thumped the siphon out of Alonzo's hand. It fell among plates and bottles and glasses with a terrific crash of crocks.

"Oh dear!" gasped Alonzo.

"Urrrgh!" gurgled Mr. Quelch.

"Goodness gracious! I—trust that you are not wet, sir!" gasped Alonzo.

Mr. Quelch's face was drenched with soda-water. If Alonzo, in these circumstances, trusted that he was not wet, it showed that Alonzo had a very trusting nature!

"Boy! Fool! Upon my word—if you have deliberately played this atrocious trick—" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, sir! I—I assure you that I am very, very—" "Pah!"

Quelch stalked away, dabbing his face with a handkerchief. He had no more kind words for that former member of his Form. If he had spoken to him further, his words would not have been

kind—they would have been extremely unkind!

"Oh, goodness gracious!" he gasped. "Do you think that Mr. Quelch is cross, my dear Peter?"

"Oh, no!" howled Peter. "Pleased—fearfully pleased! Didn't he look pleased?"

"I thought he looked rather displeased, Peter—but I am very, very glad to hear that you think he was pleased—where are you going, my dear schoolfellows?"

Harry Wharton & Co. did not explain where they were going. They went! They needed some towelling, and they had, perhaps, enjoyed Alonzo's society sufficiently for one day. They departed, and Peter was left to entertain his cousin on his own.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

After the Feast, the Reckoning!

ALONZO TODD was beaming when he started to walk back to the station in company with Peter.

Peter was not beaming.

Alonzo had been very, very pleased to see Peter, to discuss the subject of the holidays with him. Peter, no doubt, was pleased to see Alonzo—but not to discuss the subject of the holidays.

When Alonzo touched that topic, Peter headed him off, time and again, but, as the novelist would say, it booted not. When they started for the station, Alonzo got down to brass tacks.

"We must not forget to make definite arrangements with regard to the school vacation, my dear Peter," said Alonzo.

"What lovely weather we're having!" remarked Peter.

"The weather is, indeed, very gratifying, though we are, perhaps, getting more rain than is customary at this time of the year," assented Alonzo. "You are going hiking in the holidays, my dear Peter?"

"Yes! I wonder where Bunter got with that cake?"

"For the moment, my dear Peter, never mind Bunter. I mentioned in my letter that I should be delighted to accompany you on the hike—"

"Hard work, hiking, old chap!"

"But think of the beauties of nature," said Alonzo. "Think of the advantage to my botanical studies! I shall be able to explain to you the nature and history of every leaf, of every flower—"

"Oh dear!"

"Good gracious, what is the matter, Peter? Has anything disagreed with you?" asked Alonzo anxiously.

"I'm afraid something's going to!" mumbled Peter.

"I am so very, very sorry! I wish I had brought my box of Dr. Pooter's Purple Pills for Peakiness. Six of them, taken with a glass of lukewarm water—"

Peter suppressed a groan.

"I must not forget to bring a supply of purple pills on the hike," said Alonzo thoughtfully. "They are useful in all emergencies. However, if I forget, they can be obtained at any respectable chemist's, as is, indeed, stated on the label on every box—"

"Or delivered in plain vans?" asked Peter.

"My dear Peter—"

"You'll never be able to do twenty miles a day, 'Lonzo!" murmured Peter.

"Not at all, my dear Peter! I was thinking of, perhaps, a mile a day," explained Alonzo. "Or, perhaps, half a mile! The time can be profitably spent in improving conversation. Are you in pain, Peter?"

Peter had groaned.

"Hallo, there's Bunter!" exclaimed Peter, as a fat figure came in sight, rolling slowly down the road towards the school.

"He does not seem to have the cake with him now, Peter. I wonder if he has lost it," remarked Alonzo.

"I fancy he's still got it," grunted Peter.

"I do not see it—"

"You won't, without an X-ray outfit," grunted Peter.

Billy Bunter blinked at the two Todds in some alarm through his big spectacles. He came to a halt, and seemed to be meditating flight.

But flight was not a practical proposition for Billy Bunter just then. There was so much cake parked inside Bunter that he could hardly have run had a mad bull appeared on the road. Even walking was rather a difficulty.

"I—I—I say, you fellows—" he stammered, as Peter and Alonzo came up.

"Well, where's the cake?" asked Peter grimly.

"The—the cake!" stammered Bunter.

"Owing to your failure to reach the school with the cake, my dear William, we were unable to partake of it at tea," said Alonzo. "Have you lost the parcel?"

"That's it," agreed Bunter. "I—I dropped it. And—and when I—I looked for it—it was gone."

"You dropped it down the inside of your neck?" inquired Peter.

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"My dear Peter, I am sure that Bunter would not be so very, very unscrupulous as to devour a cake which he offered to carry," said Alonzo, with mild reproach. "But, my dear Bunter,

DON'T MISS IT!

The COWBOY HOBBO

by Ivan Storm



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if you dropped it, you must surely have been able to find so large a parcel."

"You—you see, some Highcliffe cads came up," explained Bunter. "Ponsonby and Gadsby, and that crew—they—they collared the cake!"

"How very lawless and unscrupulous!" exclaimed Alonzo warmly.

"I—I fought like a—a—a lion!" said Bunter. "Knocked 'em right and left. But there were six of them, and I—I can't handle more than four fellows at a time."

"Oh, my hat!" said Peter.

"Let us go after them!" exclaimed Alonzo, with a warlike look. "Although opposed, as a rule, to anything in the nature of violent proceedings, I think that we should be justified in the present circumstances, in dealing with Ponsonby in the most unceremonious manner. Come with us, Bunter, and we'll—"

"I—I mean it—it wasn't Ponsonby!" gasped Bunter.

"What?"

"It—it was a gang of tramps," gasped Bunter, "and—and they cleared off at once. Ran for it. They—they're miles away now—miles!"

Even the good Alonzo regarded Bunter doubtfully now. The sudden change in his tale from Pon & Co. to a gang of tramps shook even Alonzo's simple faith.

"My dear William—" he ejaculated.

"Of course, I shall pay for the cake!" said Bunter. "I—I feel responsible for it. How much did it cost, Alonzo?"

"Eight shillings, my dear William. But—"

"That's all right; I'll square," said Bunter. "At the moment I'm short of cash, but I'm expecting a postal order any—"

"Are you expecting anything else?" asked Peter.

Bunter blinked at him.

"Well, I'm rather expecting a cheque from one of my titled relations," he answered.

"Are you expecting anything from me?"

"From you?" said Bunter, puzzled.

"No. Wharrer you mean?"

"Then you're going to get something you don't expect," explained Peter.

"And here it is!"

He grabbed the Owl of the Remove by the collar.

There was a roar of apprehension from Bunter.

His apprehensions proved to be well founded. Peter jerked him to a wayside tree, and banged his head thereon. Another roar, still louder, woke the echoes of Courtfield Common.

"Yaroooh!"

"Now where's the cake?" inquired Peter.

"Beast!"

Bang!

"Yarooop!"

"Now where's that cake?"

"Ow! Pon got it—I mean a gang of Pons—that is, a gang of tramps—"

Bang!

"Whooop!"

"My dear Peter," gasped Alonzo, "you will damage Bunter's head—"

"Nothing in it to damage," answered Peter. "Are you going to own up what you did with that cake, Bunter?"

"Beast! I say—"

Bang!

"Ow! I ate it!" shrieked Bunter.

"Yah! Beast! I ate it! Now leg-go!"

Peter Todd chuckled, and released the fat Owl. He twirled him into the middle of the road.

"Now stand steady," said Peter. "I'm going to kick you—"

Bunter did not stand steady; he flew! Toddy grinned and resumed his way

to Courtfield. But he ceased to grin, as Alonzo resumed expatiating on the delightful prospects of the hike in the holidays.

When Alonzo sat in the train for Folkestone—the right train as Peter selected it for him—he beamed as he went.

Peter, walking back to Greyfriars, did not beam. No doubt he was thinking of that delightful hike, with Alonzo doing a mile or a half-mile a day, with a botanical volume under his arm, a box of pills in his pocket, and a ceaseless stream of improving conversation flowing from his lips. If Peter was thinking of that, perhaps he could not be expected to beam.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Amazing News From New York!

"**B**EAST!" groaned Billy Bunter. It was the following day.

By that time Billy Bunter had recovered from the cake, and the banging of his fat head, and had forgotten both the feast and the reckoning. It was Fisher T. Fish who was worrying him.

Fishy wanted that letter from New York.

That was, no doubt, a natural desire on Fishy's part; but from Bunter's point of view it was worrying and annoying.

The letter had been lost a couple of days now. Bunter thought that it was high time that the subject was dropped.

Fishy didn't. Fishy announced his intention of kicking Bunter every time he saw him, till he found the letter. He further announced that if the letter did not turn up he would complain to Quelch. There was no help for it. Bunter had to hunt for that rotten letter—or, at least, pretend to hunt for it.

Goodness only knew where the beastly thing was. It had blown away in a high wind and vanished.

No doubt it was still within the walls of Greyfriars School. But the walls of Greyfriars School were rather extensive.

Looking for a lost article within those extensive walls was rather like looking for a needle in a haystack.

Obviously the blown-away letter had not dropped in an open spot, where it would have been seen and picked up. It had blown into some obscure corner—perhaps into the thick branches of a tree—perhaps into some recess of ancient ivy. Goodness only knew!

Bunter could not help feeling that it was frightfully unreasonable of Fishy to expect to see that letter again. Fishy, however, was determined on it, and getting very excited about it.

Billy Bunter at the present moment was in the Cloisters—a quiet secluded spot. He knew that Fishy was looking for him to inquire after that wretched letter again. He was going to tell Fishy, when they met, that he had hunted everywhere. Meanwhile, he sat in the shade of an ivied wall, and told space what he thought of Fishy.

As if the rotten letter mattered, anyhow. A letter for Bunter might, perhaps, have had a postal order in it. But a letter for Fishy was not likely to have any cash in it. So what did it matter? Besides, it had rained twice since the letter was lost, and in all probability it was soaked with water, and very likely unreadable.

Bunter was absolutely fed-up with Fishy and his wretched letter. It was all the fault of that fathead, Kipps, too, for playing conjuring tricks. It was anybody's fault but Bunter's.

Still, annoying as Fishy was, it was comfortable sitting in the shade of the

ivied wall on a hot summer's afternoon. And by good fortune Bunter had found a bag of chocolate creams in Smithy's study, so he was not wholly wasting his time.

Having finished the chocolate creams, Billy Bunter shoved the empty bag into the ivy to get rid of it.

That did it.

As the ivy shook under his fat hand something fluttered out, and dropped at Bunter's side.

He blinked at it.

It was a letter!

"Oh crikey!" ejaculated Bunter.

The letter was addressed to Fisher T. Fish, in a straggling hand, and had an American postmark. It was the lost letter! Evidently the sportive wind had landed it in the ivy and left it there, and it had remained there ever since, till Bunter disinterred it by sheer accident.

It was, as Bunter had supposed, soaked with rain. The address on the envelope was smudged, and blotted. Still, it was easily decipherable. It was Fisher T. Fish's lost letter from his popper.

Bunter picked it up. His first thought was to roll away with it, and chuck it into Fishy's study, and have done with it.

But second thoughts—not always the best—supervened.

Bunter was very curious about that letter, and, being soaked with rain, the envelope was unstuck. Any fellow could open that letter, without leaving a sign of having done so.

Any fellow who did so, certainly, deserved to be kicked; but Bunter was not worrying about that.

Not that Bunter was going to open the letter, exactly. Like many unscrupulous persons, Bunter had great powers of self-deception.

He did not open the letter. He simply wriggled the damp envelope in his fat hands till it came open by accident!

The envelope having come open by accident, Bunter decided to glance at the letter and ascertain whether it had been damaged by the rain.

The fact was, the fuss Fishy had made about that letter had caused the fat Owl to feel very curious. According to Fishy, it was a most important letter.

His popper had given him a hint, in previous communications, of surprising things to come when matters were "fixed." The history of the mystery, so to speak, was to be elucidated in this epistle.

Fishy's home, in the great city of "Noo Yark," was too far away for Fishy to travel homeward when the school broke up. Generally he passed the holidays at Greyfriars, with such company as that of Gosling, the porter, and Mrs. Kebble, the house-dame, and Trotter, the page.

And even these persons, unentertaining as they were, never displayed any keen yearning for Fisher T. Fish's society.

But if Mr. Hiram K. Fish was coming across the "pond," matters would be much brighter for Fisher T. And Fishy had gathered that his popper might have business in the Old Country that summer.

Fishy wanted to know! So did Bunter! And—the letter having come open by accident—it was Bunter who was going to know first! Looking at the letter, of course, only to see whether it had been damaged by the rain, Billy Bunter read it from end to end, and his little round eyes almost

bulged through his big round spectacles as he read:

"Dear Fisher,—I guess I got it all fixed, and now I'm telling you. You sure won't be staying at the school on your lonesome this time. You surely will not, big boy.

"You're going to have your holiday in fine style, Fisher, in a grand palatial mansion, that lays over, a few, any you've ever set eyes on. Tip-top mansion, lately owned by a nobleman, with staff of servants and first-class butler all complete! Chew on that, son!

"Ever heard of Portercliffe Hall? Maybe not! But you're sure going to hear of it, a few.

"I've bought that mansion, Fisher; at least, I've taken an option on it that comes to the same thing. I'm coming over, soon after this letter, to take possession.

"I guess I'm going to run that mansion, like Lord Portercliffe, and then some. It's in Kent—I believe near a burg called Margate. Ever heard of such a place?

"I guess you know your popper well enough, Fisher, to figure that it's a business deal, with dollars at the tail of it. Yep!

"I'll mention that it means a big sum—around a million dollars! Chew on that! It's going to cost something; but I'll mention that it'll all come home, with more to it. Heaps!

"Now, I want you to bring a party of friends with you—as many as you like! I guess the boys will come in useful, rubbering around the old place. I'll tell you why when we meet. I sure ain't putting such news in ink. Nope! Not so's you'd notice it! But you do as I tell you, Fisher! Bring them along! A dozen guys if you like! No expense spared to entertain your friends! I'll tell a man!

"Everything's left as his lordship left it—cars, servants, the whole caboodle. Watch out for me to blow in, in his lordship's big car, when the school breaks up! Have your party ready! Get me?

"Your popper,
"H. K. FISH."

"P.S.—Not a word about the business side of the deal, of course! Don't spill any beans. Important!

"H. K. F."

Billy Bunter sat blinking at that remarkable letter in almost breathless astonishment.

He had, as a matter of fact, heard of Portercliffe Hall—an immense mansion, the extensive grounds of which he had passed, on a motor-bus, during a holiday at Margate.

If Mr. Fish could afford to buy Portercliffe Hall, there must be something in Fishy's yarns of the great wealth of the Fishes in New York.

But it appeared that he had not actually bought the place—he had taken an "option" on it; paid down some sum for a right to purchase extending over a period of time, with occupation during that period.

Why?

Bunter was mystified.

He said it was a business deal, with dollars at the tail of it! How was even a keen, cute American business man going to make money out of such a place as Portercliffe Hall?

Its owner could not afford to keep it up—it was one of the "stately homes of England," blotted out of existence by excessive taxation.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,434.

How was Hiram K. Fish going to make money to the tune of a million dollars out of a place that was too expensive for its owner to keep up?

It was really mysterious.

Mr. Fish, evidently, was going to spend money, if he was going to keep up Portercliffe Hall, with a butler and a staff of servants, and cars and things, and a large schoolboy party to entertain. He was the kind of man to expect to see a dollar back if he spent a dime! But how?

And how were schoolboys going to be useful "rubbering" round the old place? Mr. Fish was not the man to spend money on them, unless they were going to be useful! But of what imaginable use could they be?

Bunter had to give that problem up.

It beat Bunter.

But more important than that puzzling problem was the outstanding fact that Fisher T. Fish was going to spend the holidays in great style, tip-top style, in grand and gorgeous surroundings, regardless of expense. He was going to take a party from Greyfriars, to share with him the gorgeousness and the grandeur.

It was immediately clear to Bunter that he was going to be one of that party!

That, as Fishy would have said; was a cinch!

It was rather unfortunate that, at the moment, he was rather unpopular with Fishy! Diplomacy would be required! Somehow or other he had to wangle it!

Luckily, he was rather good at wangling!

When Billy Bunter rolled out of the Cloisters, at last, that letter was in his pocket—and was going to remain there for the present. Fisher T. Fish was going to get that letter—later! But not till it was definitely settled that Billy Bunter was going to pass the holidays with Fisher T. Fish!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

All that Glitters Is Not Gold!

"I SAY, you fellows—"

"Buzz!" said seven voices at once—those of the Famous Five and Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing.

The seven were in Study No. 1. So was Oliver Kipps. The latter was performing a conjuring trick for the entertainment of the seven. Interruption was not desired—especially interruption by Billy Bunter!

Bunter blinked in impatiently through his big spectacles.

"Look here, you fellows—"

"Buzz!" roared Bob Cherry. "Blow away! Take a pew and look on, if you like, or blow away! Anyhow, shut up!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Kick him!" suggested Johnny Bull.

Bunter snorted with impatience. He was fed-up with conjuring tricks, and he had no time to waste. It was tea-time; and not only did Bunter want his tea, but he wanted to stand Fisher T. Fish tea!

That was unusual; but the circumstances were unusual. Standing a fellow tea was one way of placating him.

Certainly Billy Bunter would have forgiven his bitterest foe had that foe stood him a spread! Fishy, perhaps, was not so amenable to the influence of tuck! On the other hand, if he got it for nothing it would give him great pleasure. Getting something for nothing was one of the joys of life to Fisher Tarleton Fish.

But there was, so to speak, a lion in the path. Bunter was short of cash!

This was not a new experience for Bunter! He had been short of cash before. He had, indeed, been short of cash many a time and oft.

But it was specially awkward now. He had only a few days in which to make firm friends with Fishy and get invited for the holidays. He had to do it before Fishy learned the news from New York. Cash was required.

With the selfishness Bunter really might have expected of them, the fellows in the study went on watching Kipps, who went on conjuring just as if the Owl of the Remove did not exist, or as if his fat existence did not matter.

Kipps had a glimmering coin in his palm, and he was making it disappear and reappear in all sorts of unlikely places. Bunter blinked longingly at that coin. Sovereigns were not often seen at Greyfriars School—but Bunter knew one when he saw it. Indeed, his father, Mr. Samuel Bunter, had put away a lot of sovereigns in the old War days, and sold them at a later date at thirty shillings each after the rise in the value of gold. Bunter thought that very clever of Mr. Bunter!

Bunter was aware that a sovereign could be changed, not for twenty shillings as of old, but for thirty shillings or more. So he glued his eyes on the golden coin in Kipps' hand.

The beast was using that golden coin to conjure with when it would have got Bunter out of the difficulties caused by a shortness of cash!

"I say, you fellows—" Bunter recommenced.

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Beast!"

The sovereign had vanished from Kipps' hand. Nobody knew where it was, excepting Kipps himself.

"Guess where it is!" said Kipps.

"The guessfulness is terrific!" said Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

Kipps held out his hands wide open. The coin was not there! Harry Wharton & Co. looked round. It was not to be seen.

"Well, where is it?" asked Bob.

"What about your mop?" asked Kipps.

"Rot!" said Bob.

"Look!"

Kipps dipped finger and thumb into Bob Cherry's thick mop of flaxen hair. He held up finger and thumb with the sovereign between!

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob. "How the thump did you get it into my hair? You never came near me."

"Chucked it, of course," said Bunter. "In fact, I saw him."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Kipps.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" said Bunter. "I jolly well saw you pitch it! You fellows never notice anything."

Kipps chuckled. He had, as a matter of fact, had the coin up his sleeve, and had landed it where he found it at the moment when he found it there! But his sleight-of-hand was so swift and so neat that no eye had detected the trick.

"Bet you you couldn't land it on me without my knowing," said Billy Bunter, rolling forward.

Kipps pushed him back.

"Don't barge, old fat man!" he said.

"Well, look here, see if you can land it on me!" persisted Bunter.

Bunter had his own ideas of what would happen to that sovereign if it was landed on him! A loan to that extent would come in very useful.

"Oh, all right!" said Kipps. He waved his hand in the air. "Hey, presto! It's in your waistcoat pocket, Bunter."



Alonzo Todd jammed the soda-siphon on the table, unfortunately neglecting to release the pressure. The stream of soda-water still shot from the nozzle, and the change of position brought it to bear full on Mr. Quelch. Squish! "Ooooooogh! Upon my—grooogh—word—woogh!" spluttered the master of the Remove, jumping backwards.

"Rot!" said Bunter.

"Well, feel there!" said Kipps.

All the fellows watched Bunter as he fumbled in his waistcoat pocket. They could not believe that the sovereign was there!

There was a general exclamation of astonishment when Billy Bunter drew out a fat finger and thumb, with a glistening yellow coin between them.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

His eyes almost popped through his spectacles at the precious coin! Kipps laughed. He had, of course, landed the coin in Bunter's waistcoat pocket when he pushed him back—ready for appearing to perform the trick a minute or two later. But, as nobody had detected him doing it, it looked very wonderful.

"By Jove, you're a jolly old magician, Kippers!" said Harry Wharton.

"Terrific!" declared Hurrec Jamset Ram Singh.

"Not to say preposterous!" said Bob Cherry, with a chuckle.

"I say, you fellows, Kipps never landed this on me! He never touched me," said Bunter. "The fact is, I—I must have had a sovereign in my pocket of my own—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Here, chuck that over here!" exclaimed Kipps.

"I rather fancy it's mine," said Bunter. "But if it's yours, Kipper, I'll give you thirty bob for it."

"Shell out!" grinned Kipps.

"I mean when my postal order comes—"

"I shall be getting my old-age pension then," said Kipps, shaking his head.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah!"

Billy Bunter executed a strategic retreat to the door.

If the sovereign was his, it was his! If it was Kipps', Bunter was going to pay for it—when his postal order came. In the meantime, it was going to stand the feed that was destined to secure the valuable friendship of Fisher T. Fish.

"Look here, Bunter—" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

Bunter did not "look there." He did not answer. He whipped out of the study, slammed the door after him, and flew.

"After him!" roared Bob.

The whole party were on their feet. Only Kipps showed no signs of excitement. He waved them back.

"All serene!" said Kipps. "What does it matter?"

"What? Bunter's bagged your quid!" exclaimed the Bounder. "Are you going to let him snaffle it?"

"He won't spend it!" said Kipps.

"You silly ass!" roared Johnny Bull. "He will make a straight line for the tuckshop and spend it at once if you don't stop him!"

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

Kipps shook his head.

"I think not!" he replied.

"Then you're an ass!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Well, let him spend it if Mrs. Mimble will take it off him," said Kipps. "I don't mind! I can get another."

"Sovereigns cheap in your family?" asked Smithy.

Kipps grinned.

"My dear chap, if you want any I can let you have them at a penny each!"

It doesn't cost much to gild a ha'penny with goldleaf! It looks all right in a conjuring trick, but it's not much use for shopping!"

The juniors stared at Kipps blankly for a moment. Then, as they understood, they burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"A gilded ha'penny!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Just that!"

"Oh, my hat!"

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

Billy Bunter escaped unpursued with his booty! Study No. 1 rang with howls of laughter at the idea of the fat Owl rolling into the school shop and trying to buy tuck with that gilded halfpenny. He was going to discover that all was not gold that glittered!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Lure of Gold!

BILLY BUNTER drew a deep, deep breath.

He blinked through his big spectacles at the golden coin that lay on the counter, and then at Mrs. Mimble's stern face.

In the rapid motions of a conjuring trick a gilded halfpenny might very well pass for a sovereign. But only the short-sighted and obtuse Owl of the Remove would have mistaken one for the other when he had it in hand.

A halfpenny was larger round and lighter in weight than a sovereign. And the design on it, of course, was totally different.

(Continued on page 16.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,434.

Fish's Holiday Stunt!



(Continued from page 13.)

But Billy Bunter had noticed nothing. In fear of pursuit, he had run all the way to the school shop with that precious coin clutched in his fat hand.

He had not examined it till he slammed it down on Mrs. Mimble's counter and demanded change. Then even the obtuse Owl noted that it did not seem to ring like gold.

Mrs. Mimble, of course, spotted it at once. And she told Bunter what she thought of him.

"I shall report this to Mr. Quelch!" said the angry dame. "You will be caned, Master Bunter."

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter.

"Such a trick—"

"I thought it was real!" howled Bunter. "A fellow lent it to me—I thought it was a sovereign! The beast—pulling my leg!"

Mrs. Mimble's stern frown changed to a smile. She realised that the fat and fatuous Owl had not been attempting to palm off spurious coinage on her.

"You are very silly, Master Bunter!" she said. "You had better throw it away."

"That's why the beast let me have it!" groaned Bunter. "I see it now. Oh, the rotter!"

Bunter clutched up that useless coin and rolled out of the tuckshop with it.

He was about to throw it away in the quad, but it occurred to him that even a halfpenny, though not a very valuable coin, had a certain value. If he scraped the gilding off it, it would be current coin of the realm again.

And now that he examined it he could see that it was merely a thin coating of gold leaf stuck on that gave it its golden look. It was, as Kipps had said, all right for a conjuring trick, but otherwise it would not have deceived a blind man.

Nevertheless, it flashed and glittered in the bright summer sunshine as Bunter stood with it in his fat hand, blinking at it. And its golden shine caught the eyes of Fisher T. Fish.

Fish, having spotted Bunter, was bearing down on him—to make one more of his weary inquiries after that lost letter and to add a kick or two.

But at the sight of a golden coin in Bunter's fat hand the business-man of the Remove experienced a change of heart.

The fierce scowl disappeared from his bony face, to be replaced by a cheery grin.

"Say, bo!" said Fishy; and Bunter gave a startled jump, slipped the gilded coin into his pocket, and out.

Fisher T. Fish made a stride after him and caught him by a fat shoulder with a bony hand.

"Leggo!" yapped Bunter. "I—I'm just going to look for that letter, Fishy! I mean I was going to ask you to tea, old chap! Leggo!"

"I guess I'll help you look for that letter, big boy!" said Fisher T. Fish.

agreeably. "Don't you go off on your ear! Say, you want to change that sovereign?"

Bunter blinked at him. He understood.

"Oh!" he gasped.

"I saw you come out of the shop!" explained Fisher T. Fish. "Won't Mrs. Mimble change it for you?"

"N-n-no!" gasped Bunter. "She—she—"

"I guess shopkeepers don't see a heap of gold these days," said Fisher T. Fish. "They're sure suspicious of 'em. But it's all O.K., boy; I'll change it for you, and pleased. I guess I've got twenty shillings in silver."

Billy Bunter grinned.

Evidently Fisher T. Fish had spotted that gold coin, but not near enough to observe what it really was. He was quite unaware how Bunter had obtained possession of it; and as it looked from a distance like a sovereign, Fishy had no doubt that it was a sovereign. And he was going to change it for twenty shillings—if he could, and make a profit of ten shillings or more on the transaction! He had only to walk down to Courtfield with a sovereign to get thirty shillings for it!

"Is it a go?" asked Fishy eagerly. He rattled silver in his trousers pocket.

Billy Bunter certainly would have been willing to sell Fishy that gilded halfpenny for twenty shillings—or even less!

But that, of course, was a chicken that would not fight! Fishy had only to look at it to see what it was!

So Bunter left it in his pocket.

So long as it was out of sight he had the credit, at least, of being in possession of a sovereign! So he kept it out of sight.

"Oh, I don't want to change it, Fishy," he answered airily.

"Look hyer, I'd sure like it, jest as a curiosity," said Fisher T. Fish. "And I guess I'll give you a shilling over the twenty for it."

It was not much use for Bunter to accept that offer, much as he would have liked to do so. It would have been withdrawn, of course, immediately Fishy saw the gilded halfpenny. So the fat junior shook his head.

"I—I—I'll think over it, Fishy," he said. "If I part with it to anybody, I'll let you have it, and—and I won't take more than twenty shillings for it, either. I'll let you know."

"O.K.!" said Fisher T. Fish, disappointed, but still in hope of a profit. "I guess you'd do better to change it—you sure might lose a sovereign. But I got the change ready for you when you want it. You seen anything of that letter?"

He came back to that subject, but he came back to it quite civilly and politely, and did not even dream of kicking Bunter. Kicking Bunter might have deprived him of a prospective profit! And profit was the salt of life to Fisher T. Fish.

"I—I—I fancy I know where to find it," said Bunter cautiously. That statement was well within the truth, for Bunter's hand, in his pocket, was resting on the letter from New York! "I—I'm going to look for it, Fishy."

And Bunter escaped unscathed. Fishy, indeed, gave him quite a friendly nod as he went. A fellow who had a sovereign in his pocket was a fellow calculated to inspire Fisher T. Fish with feelings of friendship.

If Fishy had guessed that the "sovereign" in Bunter's pocket was a dud, and that his letter from New York was in the same pocket along with it,

Fishy's feelings certainly would have undergone a change.

But Fishy, good as he was at guessing, did not guess that. It was fortunate for Billy Bunter that he didn't!

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Fixing up for the Hols!

"ABOUT the hols, old chap—" said Billy Bunter.

Had Billy Bunter made that remark to any fellow except the fellow to whom he did make it, he would have been discouraged from proceeding.

He would probably have been discouraged very emphatically.

But Bunter made that remark to the only fellow in the Remove who was calculated to discuss the holidays with Bunter with equanimity.

That fellow was Fisher Tarleton Fish. It was after prep, and they were in Bunter's study, No. 7. A study supper was going on.

Bunter's study-mates, Toddy and Dutton, were not there. Bunter had not asked them to join the festive board.

His hospitality was reserved wholly for Fisher T. Fish, for whom of late—of very late—Bunter entertained friendly—indeed, affectionate—feelings!

A handsome steak-and-kidney pie graced the supper-table. Fishy, who never sat down to a festive board without calculating the cost of every comestible thereon, guessed and reckoned that that pie must have set Bunter back at least two dollars.

No doubt it would have done so had Bunter purchased it at market price. Fishy, naturally, was unaware that in those very moments Coker of the Fifth was vainly searching for a steak-and-kidney pie that had mysteriously disappeared from his study!

Coker had asked his friends, Potter and Greene, to a steak-and-kidney supper. Potter and Greene had turned up, but the steak-and-kidney pie hadn't.

Unaware of all that, Fishy was feeling very friendly towards Bunter. For one thing, it looked as if the fat clam was in possession of unusual supplies of cash. Only that afternoon Fishy had seen him with a sovereign, which he was in no hurry to change! Now he was standing a very expensive study supper! Signs of wealth like these naturally made Fisher T. Fish feel very cordial.

He had almost given up hope of ever seeing his lost letter again. Anyhow, Fishy was now prepared to admit that that loss had been an accident, and that there was no call for a guy to go off on his ear about it!

He was pleased, but puzzled! He liked steak-and-kidney pie for supper, if he could get it for nothing. But why was Bunter so pesky friendly?

Never before that day had the fat Owl seemed to recognise what a very agreeable fellow Fishy was. Now he treated him, not only with friendship, but with marked distinction.

He asked him to supper. He listened to his conversation with every appearance of pleasure. Fishy had only two topics—first of all, money; second, the great superiority of the Yew-nited States over the Old Country. Neither of these topics was popular in the Remove. Yet Bunter now listened as if to golden words of wisdom falling from Fishy's lips.

Fishy could have understood it if he was standing the supper. But Bunter was standing the supper. So it was a puzzle.

And now Bunter was coming to the

subject of the holidays! That subject had no terrors for Fisher T. Fish as it had for other fellows. As Fishy was going to pass the holidays, as usual, at the school, Bunter could hardly be fishing for an invitation to pass them with him.

Indeed, in the dismal period while all the other fellows were away, and Fishy had no victim upon whom to inflict his conversation, he would have been glad of Bunter's company, had Bunter stayed, too.

"About the hols, old chap," said Bunter. "I say, have some more of the kidney! There's lots! About the hols—Have a bit more crust, old chap! We're breaking up in a few days now, old fellow! I've decided not to go with Wharton and his gang. I can't stand too much of them. And I've told Mauleverer I can't give him any time these hols. As for Smithy, the fellow's not my class, and I simply decline to join up with him. Have some more of the steak! The fact is, Fishy, I want you to come home with me for the hols."

"Search me!" gasped Fisher T. Fish, almost choking from a delicious morsel of kidney in his astonishment.

"You'll like Bunter Court!" said the fat Owl. "Bif better than rotting about an empty school all on your own, what?"

"Yep!" gasped Fishy.

Fisher T. Fish had always entertained strong doubts as to whether there was such a place as Bunter Court. He suspected it to exist only in the fat Owl's imagination.

Still, Bunter evidently had a home of some sort, and now he was asking Fishy there for the holidays. Even if Bunter Court, on close inspection, dwindled to Bunter Villa, it was undoubtedly better than sticking in an empty school, with no company but Gosling's and Mrs. Kebble's.

That was a cinch.

"Like to come?" asked Bunter.

"You said it!" agreed Fishy.

There was a possibility—or Fishy hoped there was—that Mr. Hiram K. Fish might be crossing the herring-pond that summer. In which case, no doubt, he would hook Fishy out of the solitude of Greyfriars in holiday-time.

But that was only a possibility, so far. Fishy had heard nothing definite about it!

This invitation to Bunter Court was more than a possibility—it was the goods! Fishy's bony face beamed.

"I guess I'll mosey along, Bunter, old fellow!" said Fisher T. Fish, with great cordiality.

"We mayn't be doing much, you know," said Bunter carelessly. "Some hunting and shooting and yachting—a few of the nobility for week-ends—nothing much. But I'd like you to come, Fishy."

Fishy had doubts about the yachting and the nobility! But there seemed no doubt that Bunter wanted him to come. There was still less doubt that Fishy wanted to come! He was quite bucked at the idea!

Certainly Bunter was not the fellow he would have picked with whom to pass the holidays had he had a wider choice. But his choice was limited. Bunter wanted him! Nobody else did! So that was that!

"Is it a go?" asked Bunter.

"Sure!"

"I'm glad! The fact is, we haven't been such pals as we might have been—as I should like to have been," said Bunter. "We'll have a jolly time together, Fishy! It's settled, then, that we go together when we break up."

"Surest thing, you know."

"Right!" said Bunter. "If—if anything should happen to prevent you from coming, I'll come with you instead! The fact is, what I want is your company, old chap—I don't care where it is!"

"Waal, I swow!" said Fisher T. Fish, more surprised than ever. He knew, of course, that his company was agreeable, entertaining, in fact, entrancing. But nobody else had ever seemed to notice it, so far. This, from Bunter, was really very flattering.

Nothing, so far as Fishy knew, was likely to prevent him from going with Bunter. But if he did not go with Bunter, he had to stay at the school! Bunter was more than welcome to stay there with him, if he liked!

"The thing is, we stick together!" explained Bunter.

"Sure!" said Fisher T. Fish cordially.

"Right through the vac?" said Bunter.

"Yep!"

"You with me, or me with you, it really doesn't matter which, what?"

"Not a bean!" said the surprised and flattered Fishy. "I'll sure be glad, Bunter! It's a cinch, big boy!"

"That's settled, then!" said Bunter.

"I say, have some more pie, Fishy. No good leaving any of it!"

Fishy had some more of the pie, and then some more, and some more after that. He fully agreed that it was no good leaving any of it.

After which the two pals went down to the Rag together on the best of terms.

"I say, you fellows!" Bunter blinked at the Famous Five in the Rag.

"About the hols—"

"Slay him!" said Bob Cherry.

"I was going to say—"

"Bump him!"

"I was going to say," yelled Bunter, "that I shan't be able to come with you, Wharton, and it's no good asking me."

"My dear ass—" said Harry Wharton.

Bunter waved a fat hand at him. "You can cut it out!" he said. "It can't be done! I've dropped in at your humble home sometimes, and I was never treated well. You can't expect me to stand it again, Wharton! Just wash it out, see?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Stick to that, old fat man," he said. "If you change your mind, and drop in at my humble home this vac, you will get a humble boot on your trousers."

(Continued on next page.)



GREYFRIARS INTERVIEWS

"A real broth of a bhoys," was the remark passed by our clever Greyfriars Rhymester after he had interviewed

MICKY DESMOND,

the Irish junior of the Remove Form.



(1)

It's a long, long way to Tipperary,
And a long way back again,
But Micky, if he was a fairy,
Would not go there by train,
He'd fly back homewards like a swallow,
If only for a while,
Says he: "It beats all countries hollow,
The dear old Emerald Isle!"

(3)

I hope there won't be indignation
In Ireland through my words,
Or Welshmen send a deputation
To tell the House of Lords,
I quite admit I'm talking twaddle,
But what else can I do?
If you had my fatheaded noddle,
You'd talk twaddle, too!

(5)

"Your make-up's topping," I admitted,
"It's quite a work of art!"
But then, by nature you are fitted
To play that special part!
At this he turned a trifle sticky,
And told me to begone,
But I was waiting there for Micky,
And so I lingered on.



(8)

"Now here we have the great What-Is-It!
Observe the creature's face,
No uglier features can yez visit
In any other place!
By nature he would be a killer,
If he could stand a fight,
The brute's a species of gorilla,
But not so handsome—quite!"

(2)

Yes, Mick is Irish, and begorrah,
He speaks his native Erse!
I've often heard him, to my horror—
I don't know which is worse,
To hear the Welsh of Morgan's lingo,
Or Micky's jaw-ache chat!
I fancy Micky's is. By Jingo,
I can't stand much of that!

(4)

In Study 6 I found old Wibley,
Made up to be King Kong,
He wagged his head and told me glibly
That Mick would not be long;
Said I: "Your features are surprising,
No doubt you're up to japes?"
He answered: "No, I'm just disguising
As Tarzan of the Apes!"

(6)

Then Micky came and brought a rabble
Of other fellows, too.
I heard his cheerful Irish gabble,
"Begorrah, it's quite true!"
I tell yez so! The chump was crying,
Approaching Study 6,
"I bet ye'll find old Wibley trying
His usual monkey tricks!"

(7)

Though Wib emphatically protested,
Mick started to declare,
"Now all yez fellows are requested
To give the creature air!
His smell is rather overpowering,
So stand back, if yez please!
And take no notice of his glowering—
It's all because of fens!"



(9)

The crowd enjoyed the joke immensely,
But Wib was looking grim,
He eyed the cheerful Micky tensely,
Then made a jump at him!
What chance had I of interviewing
That Irish joker now?
For he was busily "Yarooobling,"
With here and there an "Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Yah!" retorted Bunter. "You won't see me within a hundred miles of your place, I can tell you that! I'm going with a friend—"
 "Poor chap!" said Bob Cherry. "Who's the giddy victim?"
 "I mean, my friend's coming with me," said Bunter hastily. "My pal Fishy—"

"Your pal Fishy?" repeated Bob, in astonishment. This was the first the Famous Five had heard of the new friendship.

"Yes, I'm going with my pal Fishy—I—I mean, my pal Fishy is going with me! We've fixed up to have the hols together, haven't we, Fishy?"

"Sure!" said Fisher T. Fish. "It's sure a cinch!"

And a cinch it was!

Billy Bunter, at last, was fixed up for the hols! And on the morrow, he considered, it would be time for the lost letter from New York to be found.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Pally!

"**W**HARTON!"
 "Yes, sir!"
 "Please send Fish to my study!"

"Yes, sir!"

It was the next day, and Wharton, in the quad, was reading a letter from home, when his Form-master called to him from his study window.

Wharton's face was a little thoughtful over that letter. It was from his Aunt Amy.

It informed him that his uncle, Colonel Wharton, who had gone abroad on business, would not be likely to return to Wharton Lodge for some little time, and that Miss Wharton would be going to her sister's at Bournemouth for a few weeks.

This was not wholly pleasing, on the very eve of breaking up for the summer holidays!

True, Miss Amy Wharton declared that she would be delighted if dear Harry would come to Bournemouth also, and bring any of his school friends with him—unless he was making other arrangements.

But Miss Wharton's widowed sister at Bournemouth was a rather precise old lady, with a very precise household, and half a dozen fellows from the Greyfriars Remove were likely to have the effect in that quiet and precise household of half a dozen bulls in a china-shop.

Moreover, it would be fearfully quiet, not to say dull—in fact, dreary! Of course, Harry could go home to Wharton Lodge, if he liked, with his friends, in the absence of his uncle and aunt; but that did not seem very attractive, either.

Thinking this over, he was not very pleased to be interrupted and sent in search of Fisher T. Fish. However, as head boy of the Remove, he had to play up, so he played up gracefully. Putting the letter from Aunt Amy in his pocket, he went in search of the junior from New York.

He found him in Bunter's study.

The new and remarkable friendship struck up between Fishy and Bunter seemed to be going strong.

Bunter and Fishy, in Study No. 7, were sharing a bag of bullseyes. Billy Bunter was standing the bullseyes to his new pal. Fisher T. Fish did not inquire whose they were!

"Quelch wants you in his study, Fishy!" said Wharton, looking into Study No. 7.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,434.

"Aw, what does the old piecan want now?" exclaimed Fisher T. Fish, in alarm. "Say, what's he got on to?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"May have spotted your Shylocking," he answered. "I hope so!" And he walked away, his mind occupied with his own affairs, leaving Fisher T. Fish in a state of dismay.

Fishy's bony face was deeply concerned and worried.

Only a few days ago, Mr. Quelch had kept him back in the Form-room in break, to give him a pi-jaw. Fishy had barely wriggled out of that. Quelch was suspicious. He had heard something about money-lending in the Lower Forms—and when he heard of such things as that, he knew which fellow to put his finger on.

Now he had sent for Fish to go to his study!

It looked as if he had got hold of definite information! In which case, Fisher T. Fish was booked for "six" on the bags! And only too well did Fishy know that every one of the six would be a swipe.

"Aw, search me!" groaned Fisher T. Fish. "I guess the old piecan figures that he has spotted a guy! This means a lambasting, sure."

Billy Bunter grinned.

Bunter's opinion was that the more the Shylock of Greyfriars was "lambasted," the better it was for him.

But he remembered suddenly that he was now Fishy's friend and dearest pal, and ceased to grin; and assumed an expression of deep sympathy.

"Rotten, old chap!" he said. "I dare say Quelch has found out about your lending a bob to Tubbs of the Third, and bagging a penny a week interest on it. You'll get it pretty stiff, if he has."

"The old piecan!" groaned Fisher T. Fish. "He don't understand anything about business! I guess nobody does in this mouldy old island."

Fishy rose to his feet, wriggling with apprehension. Already he seemed to feel Quelch's cane whacking.

"Look here, I'll help you pack, old chap!" said Bunter.

Fisher T. Fish brightened.

"Packing," in preparation for a licking, was a comforting idea. A few exercise books, carefully packed, took off the edge of a whopping.

"Good man!" said Fishy.

Bunter, not usually an obliging fellow, or prepared to exert himself, was now bursting with friendship for the fellow whose "popper" was going to run Porterciffe Hall, and entertain a party of Greyfriars fellows there.

He helped Fishy pack.

When Fisher T. Fish left the study and went down the stairs, he walked carefully, and even more jerkily than usual.

"Packing" made walking rather awkward. And Bunter, though he had exerted himself to save his dearest pal from the keenest edge of Quelch's cane, had done the work rather clumsily. Every now and then Fishy felt that the packing was in danger of slipping.

He tapped at Mr. Quelch's door and entered. Mr. Quelch glanced at him across his writing-table.

"Ah! Fish!" he said. "I have sent for you because—" Mr. Quelch paused. "Is anything the matter, Fish?"

Fisher T. Fish, half-way to Quelch's table, had stopped suddenly with a convulsive wriggle. One of the exercise-books had slipped; and only that swift wriggle saved it from going.

"Nope!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. "Oh! No, sir!"

"Please do not wriggle in that absurd manner, Fish!" said Mr. Quelch, frowning.

"Yep! I mean, nope, sir!" stammered Fishy.

"I have sent for you, Fish, because— Upon my word, Fish, what do you mean by wriggling in that manner? What is the matter with you?"

"I—I—I think outhin's tickling me, sir!" gasped Fish.

"Absurd! I have sent for you, because I have a letter for you, Fish! You appear to have dropped it unopened, and I picked it up in the quadrangle."

"Wha-a-t?" stuttered Fisher T. Fish.

Mr. Quelch, with a long forefinger, tapped a letter that lay on the table.

It was smudged, and had evidently been wet in the rain, though it had dried since. The smudgy name on it was Fishy's.

Fisher T. Fish realised that it was his long-lost letter from New York!

That was why Quelch had sent for him! It was not a licking at all! And he had come to the study "packed"—and so clumsily packed, that he hardly dared move! He could have kicked Bunter for his friendly concern.

"You should not be so careless with your correspondence, Fish!" said Mr. Quelch severely. "This letter, I judge by the hand, is from your father; indeed, I remember having it placed in the rack for you a few days ago. Apparently it has not been opened. I conclude that you dropped it and did not look for it, Fish. I picked it up in the middle of the path. Such exceeding carelessness, Fish—why do you not keep still?"

"I—I guess—"

"Are you afflicted with a skin disease of any kind, Fish?"

"Nope!" gasped Fishy.

"Then why do you persist in wriggling like an eel?" snapped Mr. Quelch. "You may take your letter and go."

To take the letter, Fisher T. Fish had to cover six feet of carpet that separated him from Mr. Quelch's table. And the packing was already slipping.

Only by bending forward, and thus keeping his garments stretched tight, could Fishy keep it in place.

Mr. Quelch gazed at him in angry astonishment, as he advanced towards the table in that bending attitude.

"Fish!" he rapped.

"Yep, sir!" gasped Fishy.

"Why are you playing such absurd pranks in my study? What do you mean, sir?" hooted Mr. Quelch. "Is this a jest?"

It was far from a jest for Fishy! He was not there for a licking—the packing was superfluous and unnecessary! But if Quelch detected it—

"I—I guess I—I got a pain, sir!" gasped Fishy. Which was not exactly true; though Fishy certainly was anticipating a pain, if Quelch discovered the packing.

"Take your letter."

Fishy took the letter.

"Now go!"

Fishy was about to turn to the door. But he paused. The packing was slipping! It bulged! Quelch's eye was on him, grimly, suspiciously.

Instead of turning round, therefore, Fisher T. Fish backed to the door.

Greyfriars fellows had to treat beaks with respect. But they did not have to walk backwards from their presence, as from the presence of Royalty!

Quelch, already surprised and annoyed by Fishy's antics, glared!

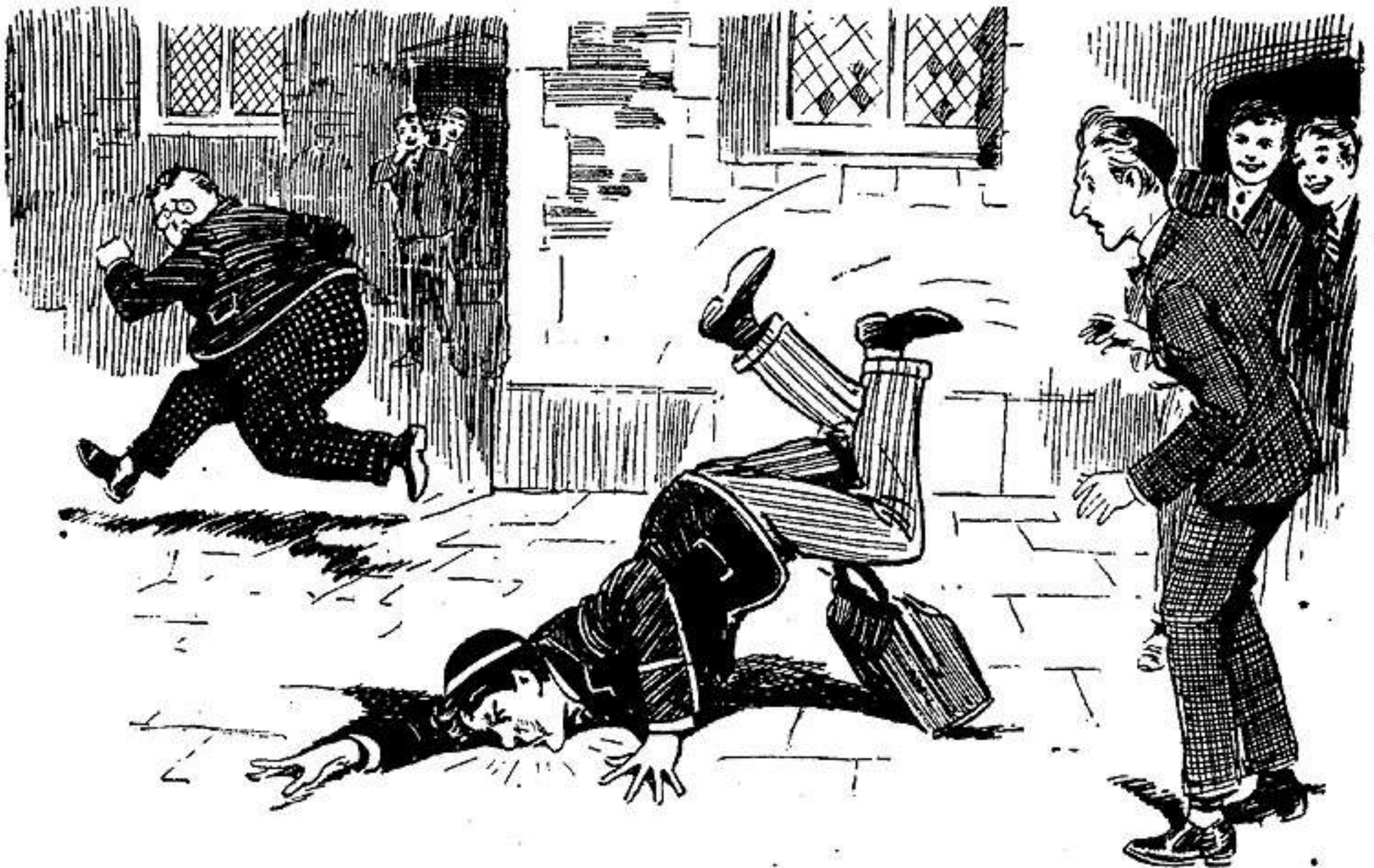
"Fish!" he snapped.

"Yep, sir!" groaned Fishy.

"What do you mean?"

"Mum-mum-mean, sir?" stammered Fishy.

Mr. Quelch rose to his feet. He picked up his cane.



Another few seconds, and Coker's mighty grasp would have been on Billy Bunter, and the Owl of the Remove would have been having the time of his life. But Alonzo's bag, dropped in his path, did the trick for Coker! His long legs tripped over the bag, and he pitched forward on his nose. "Oooh! Woogh! Groogh!" he roared.

"If you do not leave my study this instant, Fish—"

There was no help for it! Fishy had to risk it, and he cut for the door.

There was a rustling sound, as several exercise books slid downwards. The legs of Fishy's trousers bulged in various places, as if he had suddenly developed a crop of enormous bumps!

Mr. Quelch, for a second, gazed petrified! Then he hooted:

"Fish! Come back!"

"Aw, wake snakes!" gasped Fisher T. Fish.

"I now perceive," said Mr. Quelch, "the cause of your peculiar and extraordinary proceedings, Fish! I conclude that you supposed that you were sent for, for punishment, and that you had taken surreptitious and forbidden measures to elude the punishment."

"I—I guess—"

"I further conclude," continued Mr. Quelch, "that you know yourself to be deserving of punishment, Fish, or you would not have taken these ridiculous precautions."

"I—I—"

"In any case, I am bound to impress upon you, Fish, that such measures must not be taken! You will bend over that chair, Fish!"

"Oh, great gophers!"

Mr. Quelch swished the cane.

Fisher T. Fish, in the lowest spirits, bent over the chair! The packing had slipped—and where it was now, it was no use to Fishy! The cane came down—hard! Fishy yelled.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Who—ho—ho—ho!"

Mr. Quelch laid down the cane.

"You may go, Fishy! Let this be a warning to you."

Fisher T. Fish went—wriggling more than ever!

At the corner of the passage, Billy Bunter met him. The Owl of the Remove was waiting to see the result. He grinned cheerily at Fishy.

"Was it all right?" he asked. "I heard the cane whacking, old chap! Did the packing work all right? I say—yarooooop!"

"You pesky clam!" hissed Fisher T. Fish.

Forgetting, for the moment, that he was Bunter's pal, he grabbed the fat junior and banged his head on the wall.

"Yoop!" roared Bunter.

Fisher T. Fish wriggled on his way, somewhat comforted by that roar!

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Fisher T. Fish Astonishes the Natives!

"FISHY looks bucked!" remarked Bob Cherry.

He did!

Lots of fellows noticed it!

Fishy was so bucked that even the lingering twinges of Mr. Quelch's cane did not worry him—after he had read his popper's letter.

Fishy wore a delighted grin.

He grinned almost from ear to ear.

"He's diddled somebody!" said the Bounder. "But who, and how?"

That was a natural conclusion! Getting the better of somebody in a bargain might have made Fishy look like that! No other reason could be adduced.

"Looking forward to a holiday with Bunter, perhaps!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

That was not probable. A holiday with Bunter was better than staying at the school through the vacation; but certainly it was not likely to make a fellow feel so tremendously bucked as all this!

And Fishy was not merely bucked! He was a glorified Fishy! He seemed to be walking on air!

Fisher T. Fish had read that amazing letter from Hiram K. He had read it a dozen times. He almost knew it by heart.

It was rather mysterious how the letter had turned up! Quelch, seeing it lying on the path, had naturally picked it up; but it was rather surprising that no one had seen it there before.

It did not occur to Fishy that the letter had been placed in the middle of the path to meet the eye of the first passer that way.

Keen and cute as he was, he did not suspect that the letter had been already read, and that the reader, having done with it, had considered that it was time for it to be found—and had placed it where it was certain to be found!

The damp flap had been stuck down again; and there was no sign that the letter had ever come open "by accident."

Fishy was totally and happily unaware that any other fellow at Greyfriars was acquainted with the contents of that amazing letter.

He was going to pass those contents on to all who would listen—but carefully edited, as it were! Everybody was going to know that Hiram K. Fish had bought Portercliffe Hall!

But nobody was going to know that he had merely "taken an option" on that magnificent establishment.

Still less was anybody going to know that it was a "business deal." It was going to be understood that it was one of those careless acts of extravagance, natural to a millionaire!

Fishy, indeed, could not see where the "business" came in. Portercliff Hall was a place to lose money on; certainly not to make money on.

In what weird and mysterious way Hiram K. Fish was going to make a million dollars at Podtercliffe Hall, was a puzzle to Fishy—it beat him to a frazzle! He was very anxious to meet up with his popper, and learn the details that Hiram K. was too cautious to put into writing.

Still he had no doubt of it. Hiram K. was a business-man from the word go! Obviously he would not have entered into any transaction without a view to a profit! Mysterious as it was, Fishy guessed that his popper knew what he was about.

But he was not going to put the Greyfriars guys wise! They were going to suppose that Hiram K. Fish was chucking money about, simply because he had money to burn! For once Fishy had a chance to swank! And next to dollars, swank was dear to Fishy's heart.

Harry Wharton & Co. smiled as Fisher T. Fish came up to them in the quad after tea. By that time all the Remove had noticed how tremendously bucked Fishy was.

"Say, big boys!" said Fisher T. Fish. "Jever hear of a show called Portercliff Hall, somewhar in this country?"

"I've heard of it," said Harry Wharton, surprised by the question. "Tremendous place down Thanet way. It's a sort of show-place—people go to see the picture-gallery and things."

"I get you!" assented Fisher T. Fish. "Tourists and trippers—charge for admission to see the sights, what?"

Harry Wharton laughed. "Lord Portercliff wouldn't be likely to charge for admission," he said. "I suppose the visitors tip the butler."

"Some bonehead!" commented Fisher T. Fish. "He might make a little money that way; and I guess these mouldy old British noblemen could do with a leetle in the way of spot cash!"

"The present Lord Portercliff isn't a mouldy old nobleman," said Harry. "He's quite a young man, I believe, and he inherited the place from his uncle a few years ago. The old bean is said to have been a bit of a miser."

"Swanky place, what?" asked Fishy.

"Tremendous!" answered Harry. "I believe it's let sometimes, servants and all, to the rich people. It's a well-known place. But what about it?"

"My popper's bought it!" said Fishy, with studied carelessness.

"Oh, my hat!"

The Famous Five looked at Fisher T. Fish. They had heard of Portercliff Hall as one of the "show" places of the county of Kent. "White elephant" as it was, too expensive for anybody but a millionaire to keep up in due style, it must have been fearfully expensive to buy. The lowest imaginable figure would have run into many thousands of pounds.

"Bought it!" repeated Bob Cherry.

"Sure!"

"Not won it in a raffle?" asked Bob. And the Co. grinned.

"I guess I'm giving you the goods!" said Fisher T. Fish. "The popper's doo here in a day or two now. He's taking over the Hall, butler and servants, and the whole caboodle. Running the thing in style, you know! I'm going there for the hols."

"Gratters, old bean!" said Harry. "You ought to have a good time at a place like that!"

"You said it!" agreed Fisher T. Fish. "And the popper wants me to take a party of guys from the school. You galoots come?"

"Oh!"

"I guess I'm inviting you for the holidays," said Fisher T. Fish. "Everything in style—lots of grub—butter, and footmen, and chauffeurs, and cars—the whole shebang tip-top! Come?"

Harry Wharton & Co. gazed at him. This was rather flattering and overwhelming—if true!

They did not, perhaps, yearn for the society of Fisher T. Fish or that of

Hiram K. But there was no doubt that fellows could have had a tip-top time at a place like Portercliff Hall. And it was an answer to Harry Wharton's own little problem, about the holidays.

But—there was a but!

Hiram K. Fish was an enterprising business-man who dabbled in all sorts of business, from the making of talkies in Hollywood, to the cornering of pork in Chicago. But if he made millions of dollars out of his enterprises, few of those dollars travelled as far as Greyfriars. Fisher T. Fish was not unduly supplied with the cash he talked about so airily.

"Look here, are you pulling our leg?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Nary a leg-pull!" answered Fishy.

"A place like Portercliff Hall wouldn't go under twenty or thirty thousand pounds," said Harry Wharton. "It's worth twice as much if anybody could afford to run it."

"I guess my popper can, and a few over. You guys figure that I'm stringing you along?" demanded Fisher T. Fish indignantly.

"Well—hem—you see—hem—" murmured Harry Wharton.

He had seen Mr. H. K. Fish, and he simply could not imagine that bony and business-like gentleman buying Portercliff Hall, and running it in expensive style. He was not the man to play ducks and drakes with his dollars. He was, in fact, anything but that!

"Waal, I guess this gets my goat!" said Fisher T. Fish, reproachfully. "My popper tells me to bring a party of guys from the school, and you're the first galoots I ask, and you figure it's all shennanigan! I'll say it gets my goat!"

"Thanks very much, of course," said Harry. "But—you see—"

Snort from Fisher T. Fish.

"I guess I shan't have to ask many guys twice!" he snapped. "Heap guys will jump at it with both feet. I'm telling you! But I guess you guys will do a fellow credit, and I sure want the pick of the bunch."

"That's rather flattering!" grinned Bob.

"The flatterfulness is terrific!" declared Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh.

"I don't want poor fish like Skinner, or Snoop," explained Fishy. "I'll say they'd jump at it. I'm asking you! I'm telling you, my popper will blow in the day we break up, in his lordship's big car. I'm going straight across to the Hall, and taking my party with me. I want you to come!"

"You're not pulling our leg?"

"Nope!" yapped Fishy. "Straight goods! I guess the popper could buy Buckingham Palace if he wanted."

"Oh, my hat!"

"With the Grand Chamberlain and the dukes thrown in!" said Fishy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Snigger all you want!" said Fisher T. Fish. "Look yere, I'm making a list of guys for my country-house party. I'm putting you down!"

Fisher T. Fish jerked out a notebook. He jerked out a pencil. Fishy did everything in jerks. He jerked down five names in jerky scribble.

"But—I say—" exclaimed Bob. "We haven't—"

"My esteemed and absurd Fishy—"

"That goes!" said Fisher T. Fish.

"I guess I want a few more—I'll say I'll round 'em up fast enough! S'long!"

Fisher T. Fish skipped off.

"But—look here—" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

Fisher T. Fish was gone.

Lord Mauleverer had appeared in the distance and Fisher T. Fish was after

him like a shot. He wanted Mauly if he could get him. The Famous Five were O.K., but Mauly was a lord! Hiram K., like Fisher T., was keen on lords! Both of them had a true republican regard for the nobility!

"Fishy, you ass—" exclaimed Nugent.

Fishy vanished.

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "It seems that we're booked for the hols with Fishy, whether we like it or not. Has his pater really bought Portercliff Hall—or is it gas—or is he dreaming?"

"Goodness knows!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "But if it's real, we might do worse for a week or two, anyhow. If we can't stand Fishy, or if he can't stand us, we can clear. I admit I'm rather curious to see whether it's real or not."

"Two to one on the not!" said Johnny Bull.

"Well, we break up to-morrow and we shall see what we shall see!"

And that being indubitable, the chums of the Remove left it at that.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter, Too!

"DEAR old chap!" said Bunter.

He spoke affectionately.

He almost purred.

Faithful friendship beamed from Billy Bunter's fat face.

It did not beam from Fisher T. Fish's. Bunter was just going to take his arm. Fishy jerked that bony arm away. He gave Bunter a look that did not express deep and abiding friendship.

"Aw, carry me home to die!" grunted Fishy.

He had forgotten Bunter!

Up to the moment when he had recaptured and read that amazing letter from his popper, Fishy had been very friendly to his new pal—almost grateful to Bunter. Bunter Court, whatever it was like, was so big an improvement on sticking by himself at the school during the holidays, that Fishy had jumped at it with both feet, as he would have expressed it.

But matters were altered now.

Whatever might or might not be the attractions of Bunter Court, it was "not a circumstance" to Portercliff Hall! Fishy, in his new and delightful circumstances, would not have been found dead in the residence of the Bunter clan.

Having forgotten Bunter, he was rather unpleasantly reminded of him. On one side, that new and touching friendship had died a sudden death. But on the other side—Bunter's side—it was going as strong as ever.

"Dear old fellow!" went on Bunter. "Come and have a stone ginger!"

"Aw, can it!" said Fisher T. Fish restively.

"Hem! Like me to help you pack in the morning?" asked Bunter. "We're catching a rather early train for Bunter Court."

"Nix on Bunter Court!" said Fisher T. Fish decidedly. "Sorry and all that, Bunter, but something else has turned up and I guess we got to wash it out. Wharrer you grinning at?"

"W-w-was I grinning? I mean, it's all right, Fishy, old chap," said the fat Owl, still resolutely affectionate. "We fixed it up, you know—so long as we're together for the hols—"

"I guess—"

"You come with me, or I go with you—what does it matter, so long as we stick together, like pals?" said Bunter breezily.

Fishy looked at him. Fishy was tough

—he was rather unscrupulous; he was accustomed to thinking of only one person in the universe—Fisher Tarleton Fish. But even Fishy felt a twinge.

Bunter had taken him up when he appeared to have no prospects for the vacation, and it had been rather a wind-fall. To turn Bunter down after that required a degree of hard-faced effrontery, of which Fishy was capable—but it cost even Fishy an effort.

"I guess," said Fishy, rather slowly, "that we got to wash it out, Bunter, all along the line. You see, my popper—"

"That's all right," said Bunter reassuringly. "I can stand your father, Fishy! Of course, he's got horrid manners—"

"Hay?"

"And a fearful American accent—but, after all, not much worse than yours, and I'm used to that—"

"You fat clam!"

"Oh, really, Fishy—"

"Park it!" said Fishy. "Sorry and all that, but—I guess it's got to be washed out."

"But we arranged—" urged Bunter.

"Cut it out!"

"Look here, Fishy, if you don't want me to come to Portercliffe Hall—" said Billy Bunter, with a great deal of dignity.

"You said it!"

Billy Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles.

Portercliffe Hall was now the topic in the Remove. Every fellow in the Form had heard that Fishy's father had bought that magnificent establishment, and that Fishy was going to take a party there for the holidays.

He was issuing invitations right and left. Harry Wharton & Co. were not quite clear whether they had accepted or not.

Lord Mauleverer was quite clear that he had not! Mauly's sensitive nervous

system found one Fish hard to tolerate. Tolerating two of them was beyond Mauly's powers.

But other fellows were keen enough. Fishy was not likely to have much difficulty in filling up his list of guests.

Skinner took the view that it was all "gas," and that Fishy was pulling the fellows' legs. Skinner was not on the invited list!

Bunter, of course, was—or should have been. Having arranged so astutely—well in advance—to spend the vacation with Fisher T. Fish, Bunter had regarded the matter as absolutely settled.

Now, however, the barometer seemed to indicate "unsettled."

Fisher T. Fish was, perhaps, a little ashamed of himself. But he was firm. At Portercliffe Hall, with Lord Portercliffe's butler and footmen, Fishy intended to gather a party of fellows calculated to do him credit.

Billy Bunter had to be left out of such a calculation! Was Bunter the fellow to do a guy credit? The answer to that one was "nope!"

"Sorry, I allow," said Fisher T. Fish.

"But I guess I got to be a bit particular. You get me?"

"But look here, Fishy, in a decent place like Portercliffe Hall, with a decent staff of servants, you'll find me jolly useful!" said Bunter. "I mean to say you're rather a low blighter—"

"What?"

"Not accustomed to decent society, and all that!" explained Bunter. "With me to give you tips, though, you'll be all right! You can watch me, and do as I do, and very likely the butler won't spot that you're a low bounder at all. See?"

If Bunter hoped that that argument would prevail on Fishy to include him in the list for Portercliffe Hall, Bunter was making a little error.

Fishy glared at him.

"You pesky, pie-faced, slab-sided mugwump!" said Fishy. "You ornery piecan, pack it up! Go and chop chips! Absquatulate! Git!"

Billy Bunter breathed hard and deep! He had not foreseen this!

Bunter never did foresee anything! He had fixed it up with Fishy for the two of them to have the vacation together—fixed it up in a way that made it impossible for any decent fellow to turn him down! It was all cut and dried—settled and fixed!

And now Fishy, having something better on hand, calmly washed it all out! He did not want to go to Bunter Court! He did not want Bunter at Portercliffe Hall! And he guessed and reckoned that he was not going to be landed with anything he did not want.

All Bunter's deep astuteness had gone—for nothing! A much more expert angler than Bunter was required to catch this Fish!

"Well," said Bunter, "you rotter!"

"Blow off steam all you want, if it does you good!" said Fisher T. Fish. "I guess it cuts no ice with this baby!"

"You worm!"

"Shout it!" said Fishy encouragingly.

"Beast!"

"That the lot? I guess I got to see Toddy."

Billy Bunter looked Fisher T. Fish up and down in the most scornful and contemptuous manner.

His carefully contrived scheme had fallen to pieces like a house of cards! He was left out!

He had wasted Coker's steak-and-kidney pie, Ogilvy's bag of bullseyes, and a great deal of flattery of his very own on Fisher T. Fish—and this was the outcome. Bunter swelled with wrath and scorn.

"Think I want to come?" he asked contemptuously. "I dare say you'd

(Continued on next page.)



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like me to believe that your pater's bought the place! He, he, he! There's a lot of difference between taking an option and buying a place! Yah!"

Fisher T. Fish jumped. Since Mr. Quelch had handed him that letter from New York it had met no eyes but Fish's own! His popper had warned him not to spill the beans!

Fishy had not spilt any! How did Bunter know about the option?

"You pesky clam!" hissed Fisher T. Fish. "You've seen that letter!"

Bunter's fat lip curled.

"I hope I'm not the fellow to read a fellow's letter!" he answered. "If a letter's left out in the rain, and comes open by accident—"

"Aw! You pie-faced scallawag—"

"A fellow might glance at a letter to see if it had been damaged by the rain," said Bunter. "I call that good-natured! As for hinting that I might have read the letter, I regard such an insinuation with scorn. It's rather low to be suspicious, Fishy. But, then, you are low!"

"I guess—" hissed Fisher T. Fish.

"As for making a million dollars out of the place," went on Bunter, "I can't see how old Fish is going to do that; but perhaps some of the fellows will be able to guess, when I tell them—"

Fishy breathed hard through his long, thin nose.

He knew now that Billy Bunter had read that letter before he left it where it was found.

He knew why Bunter had developed that sudden and surprising friendship for his bony and unattractive self. But he knew, too, that Bunter could "spill the beans" all over the place if he liked. And it was fairly evident that he would like!

Fishy was as puzzled as Bunter to guess how Hiram K. was going to make a huge profit out of Portercliffe Hall! But he was—and he had warned Fishy to keep it dark. Apparently, Hiram K.'s scheme was not one that would bear the light of day! The beans had to be kept unspilt!

"The fact is, I shouldn't care to come," pursued Bunter. "Bit too fishy for me, if you don't mind my saying so. I hardly think Wharton will come, either, when he knows that old Fish wants a party of fellows there to root over the place and hunt for something! Altogether too shady for Greyfriars men, Fishy!"

And, with a disdainful sniff, Billy Bunter turned to roll away.

Fisher T. Fish stood staring after him for a moment, looking as if he could have bitten Bunter.

Then he jumped after him.

A bony hand clutched a fat shoulder.

"Hold on, you pesky clam!" hissed Fisher T. Fish. It was clear that Bunter was going to spill the beans. "Hold on! I—I guess you can come!"

Bunter turned back. Blinking at Fisher T. Fish through his big spectacles, he looked him up and down again scornfully.

"That's hardly good enough for me, Fishy!" answered the fat Owl calmly. "I'm not short of invitations for the hols, I hope! If you put it like that, I shall certainly decline to come."

Fisher T. Fish came near grasping Bunter by his fat neck and banging his bullet head. But the beans had to be kept unspilt; and Fishy restrained himself.

"If you really want me, you can say so!" continued Bunter victoriously. "In that case, I will consider whether I can come and how much of the vacation I can give to you, Fishy."

"I—I—I guess I want you!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. "I guess I'm asking

you! I'm putting your name down, Bunter."

"Well, if you put it like that, Fishy, I'll see what I can do!" said Bunter airily. "In fact, I'll come! Yes, I'll come—rely on me! I'm a fellow of my word, Fishy, and you can rely on me for the hols!"

Fisher T. Fish did not need assuring of that. He was only too certain that he could rely on Bunter for the hols!

But it could not be helped! It was the price of silence—and Bunter had to be kept from spilling the beans! The name of William George Bunter figured in the list of guests for Portercliffe Hall!

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

And Alonzo!

ALONZO TODD stared.

"Goodness gracious!" he ejaculated.

Alonzo had walked in at the school gates in the bright summer morning. His face was as bright as the morning, for he was going to join dear Peter, and get off with dear Peter on that hike; which he was assured would be very, very delightful for dear Peter, and for the dear fellows who were going with dear Peter.

But he forgot dear Peter at the startling sight of Billy Bunter shooting across the quad at top speed, and Horace Coker of the Fifth Form shooting after him like an arrow from a bow.

On the morning of breaking-up day fellows were generally in good tempers and cheery spirits. But Coker of the Fifth did not look in a good temper; neither did Billy Bunter look in cheery spirits!

Coker looked wrathful; and Bunter looked terrified. The fact was, that Coker of the Fifth, after long inquiry, had discovered what had become of a certain steak-and-kidney pie that had mysteriously disappeared from his study.

Instead, therefore, of being good-tempered on the last day of term, Coker only remembered that this was the last chance of dealing with the snaffler of his steak-and-kidney pie.

Judging by Coker's expression, Billy Bunter was going to be broken up before Greyfriars broke up.

"Stop!" roared Coker.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He flew!

But Coker gained fast!

Alonzo Todd had a bag in his hand. It contained some of the things necessary for a hike—such as a botanical volume of large size, with illustrations; a box of Dr. Pooter's Purple Pills for Peaky Persons; a volume of Wordsworth's Poems and a draught-board and a set of draughtsmen. Other things which other fellows might have thought necessary on a hike, Alonzo had forgotten; but really unimportant things like these Alonzo did not forget.

With great presence of mind Alonzo weighed in with that bag.

Bunter shot past him.

Coker after Bunter, was shooting past—when Alonzo dropped the bag in Coker's path.

His idea was to save dear William from what impended over him. And he was quite successful.

Another few seconds and Horace Coker's mighty grasp would have been on Billy Bunter, and the Owl of the Remove would have been having the time of his life.

But Alonzo's bag, dropped in his path, did the trick for Coker! His long legs tripped over it, and he pitched forward.

He landed on the quad on his hands, and his nose tapped hard! The roar

that came from Coker of the Fifth roused all the echoes.

"Gooh! Hurgh! Groogh!"

Billy Bunter blinked over a fat shoulder.

Alonzo had saved him! He saw that! And he could see, too, that Alonzo would need saving next!

But Bunter did not think of rushing to Alonzo's rescue! Discretion was the better part of valour. Bunter decided to keep on and seek help for Alonzo. It was absolutely certain that Alonzo would need some.

Coker staggered up.

He had one hand to his nose. It was damaged! Coker's nose was a prominent feature—rather in the nature of a promontory! It had jabbed at the hard, cold, unsympathetic earth—and jabbed hard. It had almost punctured the quad. A stream of claret oozed through Coker's fingers as he clasped it.

He glared at Alonzo! He forgot Bunter; forgot the purloined pie—he thought only of Alonzo!

Sudden flight might have saved Alonzo! But he did not think of that. Thinking was not Alonzo's long suit. He wanted his bag, and advanced to collect it.

"I trust you are not hurt, my dear Horace!" said Alonzo mildly. "It was not by any means my intention to cause you damage, but I considered it necessary to— Yarooooooo!"

Coker grasped him.

What happened next seemed wild and whirling to Alonzo Todd. Really and truly it had not been his intention to damage Coker. But only too clearly it was Coker's intention to damage him!

And he did!

Smack! Slap! Whack! Bang!

"Oh, goodness gracious!" yelled Alonzo. "My dear Horace— Whoohoop! Oh crikey! Yow-ow-ow! Leggo! Help! Urrgh!"

Smack! Whack! Bang!

Warning to the work, Coker let him have it right and left. Alonzo, yelling frantically, crumpled up in Coker's mighty grasp, and the smacks and whacks and bangs fell like hail.

"Tripping a fellow up!" roared Coker. "Tripping up a Fifth Form man, by Jove! Take that—and that—and that!"

"Yaroooooh! Whoohoop!" roared Alonzo.

"And that!" roared Coker. "And that!"

"Ow! Help! Yooooop!"

"And that!"

Alonzo had got ready for a hike. But Coker seemed bent on getting him ready for a hospital. Hardly knowing whether he was on his head or his heels, Alonzo crumpled and wriggled, and howled and roared.

How long Coker would have gone on smacking and banging cannot be said, had he not been interrupted. Fortunately, he was interrupted.

Billy Bunter came on the Famous Five as he fled breathlessly into the House.

"I say, you fellows!" gasped Bunter. "I say—Coker—groogh—pitching into Alonzo—oogh—in the quad—gurrgh!"

That was enough for the Famous Five. They rushed out into the quad.

"Where?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

But it was not necessary to ask the question. Loud sounds of woe and anguish told where.

The Co. cut across to the spot at top speed. Coker, still going strong, did not even see them as they came speeding up.

"Take that!" roared Coker. "And that, and that, and—here, what—leggo— You young ticks— Oh, my hat—wow!"



The feast over at last, Bunter ran his hands through his pockets. Then he uttered a surprised exclamation. "Blessed if I haven't left my note-case in the study, Alonzo! Never mind, you settle the seven-and-sixpence, and remind me to square with you before you leave the school." "Certainly, my dear Bunter!" said the unsuspecting Alonzo.

Five pairs of hands grasped Coker of the Fifth, all at once. He was dragged off Alonzo and bumped on the ground.

"Oh dear!" gasped Alonzo. "Oh! Ow! My dear friends—wow! My dear Henry—ooogh! Oh crikey!"

Coker was struggling fiercely. But the chums of the Remove dealt promptly and effectively with Coker.

"Bump him!" gasped Bob.

They bumped him hard! They bumped him again and yet again. They rolled him over and over. Then again they bumped him. Coker, finally, was left in a gasping, gurgling, breathless state, unable to do anything but gurgle and gasp. Leaving him for dead, as it were, the chums of the Remove went back to Alonzo.

"All serene, old chap!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Why the thump did Coker pitch into you?"

"Ooogh!" gasped Alonzo. "I really do not know, my dear Robert, unless it was because I dropped my bag in front of his legs and he fell over it—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"That may have made him cross!" gasped Alonzo.

"The mayfulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"But what the dickens—" exclaimed Nugent.

"He was pursuing dear William!" explained Alonzo. "I considered it judicious to stop him, but Coker did not seem to see it—wow! Ow! I am considerably breathless! Wow! Ooogh! Where is my bag? Grooh!"

Bob fielded Alonzo's bag, and the Co. walked him off to the House. Coker was still wrestling for his second wind, and it was only judicious to get Alonzo out of his reach before he recovered it.

Billy Bunter blinked at them through his big spectacles as they arrived.

"I say, you fellows—"

"You fat villain!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Why was Coker after you?"

"Nothing!" answered Bunter. "He was making out that he'd lost a steak-and-kidney pie—as if I know anything about his steak-and-kidney pies! I never knew he had one—I didn't look into his study while he was unpacking it! I say, Alonzo, old chap, did you get hurt?"

"Ow! Oh! Ooogh! Woooogh!" From that reply, it was to be gathered that Alonzo had got hurt! He seemed, indeed, to have got very much hurt!

"Well, Coker's got rather damaged, too!" remarked Harry Wharton, and the Famous Five went away to finish their packing, leaving Alonzo still gurgling.

How many smacks and whacks and bangs Alonzo had collected, he did not know. He would have put the number, at a rough guess, at about a million!

Billy Bunter blinked at him sympathetically. The fact that he had narrowly escaped capturing those smacks, whacks and bangs himself, made Bunter sympathetic. He realised how fortunate it was that Alonzo had been on the spot, and captured them instead of his more important self.

"Jolly decent of you to butt in, Alonzo," said Bunter. "The beast was going to pitch into me, you know—making out that I had his steak-and-kidney pie. As if I'd touch his steak-and-kidney pie! There wasn't enough gravy in it either! Not like the steak-and-kidney pies I get at Bunter Court. Not that I know anything about it, of course—I never saw it! Fishy had most of it, too!"

"Where is dear Peter, my dear William? Ow!"

"I—I think he's in the tuck-shop," said Bunter. "Come on—I'll go with you—you'll need me to protect you if— if Coker turns up."

Fortunately Coker did not turn up on the way to the tuck-shop, and Alonzo was not in need of Bunter's protection!

Neither did Peter Todd appear to be in the tuck-shop! But there were more important things than Peter there—such as jam-tarts and ginger-pop! Which was why the astute Owl had guided Alonzo thither.

"Not here," said Bunter, blinking round. "We—we'd better wait for him. He's coming! Have a snack while you wait, Alonzo, old chap! My treat! Order anything you like. Hungry after your journey?"

"As a matter of fact, my dear William, I am not indisposed to partake of some slight refreshment—"

"Go it!" said Bunter, hospitably. "I believe I could peck a little myself. They don't give you enough brekker here, you know! I'd had only three eggs when Quelch spotted me! Pile in, old chap, and so will I."

Bunter piled in. He pecked—more than a little! And when the feast was over, the fat Owl ran his hands through his pockets and uttered a surprised exclamation:

"Blessed if I haven't left my note-case in the study! Never mind, you settle that seven-and six, Alonzo, and remind me before you go."

"Certainly, my dear Bunter."

Alonzo settled the seven-and-six, making a mental note to remind Bunter!

Billy Bunter blinked at him quite

affectionately. This was the sort of chap Bunter liked—a very different sort of pal from Fishy! There was something in Alonzo's trusting nature that quite endeared him to Bunter!

"Look here, old chap!" exclaimed Bunter, struck by a sudden happy thought. "What are you doing for the hols? Why not come with me?"

"I should be delighted, my dear William, but I have already promised Peter to go hiking—"

Bunter grinned. He could guess how keen Peter must be on hiking with Alonzo.

"Wash it out, old chap, and come with me," said Bunter. "I'm going to a tip-top place—Portercliffe Hall—terrific style—no expense spared. I can get you invited—that's all right—leave it to me."

"But I should not like to disappoint dear Peter—"

"Let's go and see Peter—"

"But are we not waiting for him here?" asked Alonzo in surprise.

"Oh! Yes! No! I mean I think he may be packing in his study! Come on!"

Peter Todd was discovered in Study No. 71. The expression on his face was quite remarkable when Alonzo came in. But that expression changed when Bunter explained his idea. Peter smiled.

He was, in fact, quite enthusiastic about it. Greatly as he would miss Alonzo's improving conversation during the hike, he pointed out the advantage that would accrue to Alonzo's botanical studies, in the extensive grounds of Portercliffe Hall.

So it was settled, and Billy Bunter went away to tell Fisher T. Fish that he was bringing a friend with him.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Beastly for Bunter!

"I SAY, you fellows! That's the car!"

It was a big, expensive Rolls, driven by a liveried chauffeur, that turned in at the school gates, followed by another car.

In the Rolls sat a tall, thin gentleman, with features of a knife-blade pattern. Even if the Greyfriars fellows had not seen him before, they would have known him by his likeness to Fisher T. Fish. It was Hiram K.

Harry Wharton & Co. were ready. The Famous Five hardly knew whether they had accepted Fishy's invitation or not—but Fishy having taken it for granted, they let it go at that. Perhaps they had had a lingering doubt whether Hiram K. Fish and the car would turn up—whether the purchase of Portercliffe Hall was not a figment of Fishy's fancy. But here was Hiram K. and here was the car!

There was quite a party ready for the car. Besides the Famous Five and Billy Bunter and Alonzo Todd, there were Kipps and Wibley, and Vernon-Smith. Big as the Rolls was, the second car was needed.

Fisher T. Fish stood on the House steps almost bursting with importance. It was a tremendous change for Fishy!

Instead of staying behind watching the other fellows go, as on previous holidays, Fishy was going himself and taking a big party with him.

His only regret was that he had not succeeded in roping in Lord Mauleverer. Still, he had the Famous Five who were great men in the Remove, and Smithy, who was a millionaire's son; Kipps, who would be able to liven things up with conjuring tricks, and Wibley, who could fix up anything in the way of amateur theatricals. He had also Alonzo, who did not matter much anyhow, and Billy Bunter, whom he would have liked to kick across the quad and back again. Still, on the whole, it was a very good party, and Fishy was satisfied with it.

Ten Remove fellows were going to be impressed by the glories of Portercliffe Hall and the unbounded wealth of the Fish family. And they were not going to know, if Fishy could help it, that Hiram K. had only taken an "option" on the property with temporary possession!

Neither, certainly, were they going

to know that it was a mysterious "business deal," and that their presence at the Hall was, in some mysterious way, to serve the unknown purposes of Hiram K.

Only Bunter knew, and Fishy entertained secret hopes of getting shut of that distinguished guest.

The big Rolls roared to a halt. Hiram K. Fish descended.

"Hallo, pop!" said Fisher T.

"Hallo, son!" said Hiram K.

Mr. Fish shook hands with son. Then the guests were presented. Mr. Fish knew most of them already. He gave each of them a grip of a hand as bony as son's, and gave them the "once-over" with a pair of very keen eyes. He seemed to be satisfied with son's selection of guests, though he stared at Bunter.

Bunter gave him a cheery grin.

"You remember me, Mr. Fish?" asked the fat Owl amiably.

"Sure!" grunted Mr. Fish, in a tone that implied that he did not remember William George with any great pleasure.

However, he shook hands with Bunter.

"Yow-ow!" squeaked Bunter, as his fat paw was crushed in a bony claw.

"Ow! Wow! Leggo! Ow!"

"Say, what's biting you, boy?" asked Mr. Fish, compressing his bony grip like a vice.

"Yaroooh! Leggo! Wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The other fellows concluded that Mr. Fish had rather a peculiar sense of humour. Instead of letting go, he compressed his grip harder, till Billy Bunter almost danced.

"Ow! My fingers! Wow! Ow! Leggo! Ooogh!" yelled Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Search me!" said Mr. Fish, gazing at him. "What's got you?"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Fisher T. Fish grinned. He had been on the phone to Portercliffe Hall, and put his popper wise to the fact that Billy Bunter had read that letter from New York. No doubt that was the reason why Hiram K. was greeting the Owl of the Remove in this remarkable manner.

Mr. Fish was an energetic gentleman. He was full of pep and go. All his superabundant energy now seemed to be concentrated in gripping Bunter's fat paw. He gripped, and gripped.

"Yep! I'll say I remember you, Bunter, big boy," said Mr. Fish genially. "I'll surely say—"

"Yaroooh!"

"It's sure a pleasure to shake hands with you."

"Yoop!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry, gazing at the remarkable scene in wonder. "Is that old bean a giddy practical joker?"

"Perhaps he doesn't want Bunter," grinned Nugent.

"Well, Fishy asked him," said Bob, puzzled.

"Yarooop! Beast!" roared Bunter, hopping with anguish. "Will you leggo, you bony beast? You're crack-ing my jig-jig-joints! Wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Fish let go at last, and whisked into the House. Bunter was left sucking his fingers frantically.

"Ow! Wow! Yow!" wailed Bunter. "The bony blighter's nearly busted my fingers! Ow! Wow—wow! Look here, Fishy, you beast—"

But Fisher T. Fish had followed his popper into the House. No doubt he had some private communication to make to him with regard to Bunter.



"BUSTER BROWN —LEGIONNAIRE"

The clumsiest, toughest scrapper who ever became a recruit in the Legion—that's Buster Brown. They made him No. 13—but it's the Legion which is unlucky, for B. B. simply can't help busting things. You will pack up your troubles in your old kit bag when you read about Buster and his busts. He's a storm of merriment and a mirthquake rolled into one!

"BUSTER BROWN—LEGIONNAIRE" starts in this week's seven star-story issue of

The RANGER

On Sale now at Newsagents. Every Saturday, 2d.

The Owl of the Remove had no doubt that he was heading for Portercliffe Hall in that big, handsome Rolls. But Fisher T. Fish had doubts. Sticky as Bunter was, there were ways and means of making him come unstuck.

Billy Bunter was still feeling an ache in his fat fingers when he took his place in the Rolls.

Good-byes were said, and baggage piled. Fishy's party packed into the two cars. In the Rolls sat Mr. Fish and Son Fish, and Billy Bunter and Alonzo, and Wharton and Bob Cherry. The rest packed into the second car. They roared out of the gates.

Billy Bunter kept wary eyes and spectacles on Mr. Fish. He realised that he was not "persona grata" with the Fish family. However, Hiram K. took no further notice of the fat Owl. He talked as the car ran on. He seemed as full of conversation as son. And his topics were similar.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What are we stopping for?" asked Bob Cherry, as the Rolls slowed down and halted.

It was in a green country road, and by the roadside was a building, with a large sign which bore the cheery word "Refreshments."

Billy Bunter blinked at it. He had taken quite a dislike to Mr. Fish, and, as for son, all his friendship for that youth had completely vanished. He had been sitting with a frowning fat brow.

But now the frown disappeared; and Bunter smiled. The word "Refreshments" had that effect on him.

"I say, you fellows! What about a ginger-pop?" he asked brightly. "And a—"

"Jest what I was thinking, Bunter," said Fisher T. Fish. "Hop out with me, old thing!"

Bunter beamed on him. Fishy, it seemed, was not such a beast as one would naturally have supposed, from his looks and his manners. At that moment Bunter almost liked him.

"Yes, rather, old chap!" said Bunter.

Fisher T. Fish opened the door and hopped out. Billy Bunter rolled out after him. Fishy led him into the establishment where refreshments were to be obtained.

The other fellows sat where they were. They did not particularly want any refreshments en route, and Fishy had not asked them. It looked as if Bunter, and Bunter only, was the man he delighted to honour. They noticed that the second car did not stop. It passed them, and disappeared up the road. They waited.

A bony figure came shooting back to the car.

Fisher T. Fish came bundling in. He came alone. Bunter, no doubt, was busy with the refreshments.

Fishy slammed the door. The engine roared. The Rolls shot along the road.

Wharton and Bob Cherry exchanged an astonished glance.

"What about Bunter?" asked Bob. "You've left him behind."

"You don't say," grinned Fisher T. Fish.

"Isn't he coming on in the car?" asked Harry.

"Waal, nope; not so's you'd notice it."

"But, my dear Fish!" said Alonzo Todd, in mild surprise. "Will not Bunter be somewhat perturbed, indeed exceedingly disconcerted, when he discovers that the car has gone?"

"Sure thing!" agreed Fishy.

Mr. Fish recommenced his conversation. Bunter was dismissed from discussion. The swift car ate up the miles—minus Bunter.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Blows In!

"SOME show!" murmured Bob Cherry.

It was indeed "some" show. Portercliffe Hall did not fall short of Fishy's description. Rather it exceeded it.

Great gates stood open on a vast drive. There was a glimpse beyond of seemingly endless grounds—park and lawn and terrace.

A bowing lodgekeeper exuded from a lodge; but the Rolls whizzed on, and left him bowing. The drive was an avenue between rows of massive ancient oaks and beeches. It seemed almost as if the mansion would never be reached.

It dawned on the Greyfriars party at last—vast, immense, with a colonnaded front, soaring roofs, endless chimneys, windows innumerable; clock-tower, and turrets, and balconies. If it was staffed in proportion to its extent, it was no wonder that young Lord Portercliffe could not afford to "run" it. Rates and taxes alone must have dug a deep hole even in a large income.

Fisher T. Fish gave it the once-over with breathless glee. Then he glanced at the other fellows to see whether they were suitably impressed. They were.

The cars halted. Vast steps led up to a gigantic entrance hall. Immense doors swung open. A plump, double-chinned man appeared, evidently the butler; on either hand liveried footmen. Mr. Fish was being received in state by Lord Portercliffe's staff, which he had taken over with the premises—lock, stock, and barrel.

"I'll say Chandos is some butler," murmured Fisher T. Fish, with pride. "The genuine article—all wool, and a yard wide."

Fishy was speaking in figurative American slang, but in point of fact, Chandos was very nearly a yard wide, if he was not all wool!

His chin—supported by his second chin—was held so high that he had to look down a large fruity nose to see common mortals on the common earth. It was clear at a glance that Chandos was the best of butlers, trained in the best of families. He had, indeed, served a duke before entering Lord Portercliffe's service, which was a descent for him. What Chandos thought of the further descent, from Lord Portercliffe to Hiram K. Fish, was a secret locked in Chandos' portly breast under his ample waistcoat.

"Say, big boy, here are the buddies!" said Mr. Fish genially.

Chandos gazed at him. This mode of address, after what he had been accustomed to in the best families, seemed to take Chandos' breath away—what little he had. He just gazed.

But Mr. Fish was too full of pep and go to give Chandos time to recover from his amazement.

He extended a bony forefinger and poked Chandos in the waistcoat, as if to wake him up.

Chandos woke up!

"Urrgh!" he ejaculated.

That jab from a bony forefinger nearly punctured the butler of Portercliffe Hall. He gurgled, and seemed about to shut himself up like a pocket-knife.

"Wurrrgh!" he gurgled.

"Hop it!" said Mr. Fish. "I guess you want to show the buddies where they're going to roost in this lyer shebang! You get me?"

"Urrgh!"

The bony forefinger was drawn back for another stab. Chandos backed in time. With dignity, he waved the foot-

men to their duties. The Greyfriars party were ushered to their apartments.

Dinner was at seven-thirty.

Hiram K. Fish, at the head of a vast table gleaming with silver and glass, grinned a genial grin.

Fisher T. Fish, with a thoughtful shade on his bony brow, was lost in a calculation of the probable cost of the cutlery.

All the rest were smiling and merry and bright.

There was a footman behind every chair. Chandos presided over the function with the air of President of a Senate.

Dinner was nearly over when sounds were heard from the hall. From that direction floated a familiar squeak.

"Gerrou of the way, blow you!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Bunter!" breathed Harry Wharton.

"The esteemed and ridiculous Bunter!" murmured Hurrec Jamsat Ram Singh.

Fisher T. Fish started. Hiram K. Fish started. Popper and son exchanged a quick glance.

A fat figure appeared from the hall. Behind him was a footman who had apparently striven to bar his progress. Billy Bunter did not, indeed, look like a guest expected at Portercliffe Hall.

He was dusty, he was crimson, he was bedewed with perspiration; he was untidy, he was tired, and in a very bad temper.

His fat brow wore a frown, and his little round eyes gleamed through his big round spectacles. The Fishes, popper and son, gazed at him. They had guessed, reckoned, and calculated that Bunter, left behind, was done with. It seemed that Bunter was far from done with. Here he was!

"I say, you fellows!" yelled Bunter. "I say—"

"Search me!" gasped Mr. Fish.

"That fat piccan!" hissed Fisher T.

Chandos gazed at Bunter. Then he gazed at Mr. Fish.

"I say, you fellows, you left me behind!" roared Bunter. "Beasts! I say, I spent all my money—I had to pay after that rotter Fishy sneaked off—and I've had to walk! If I hadn't got a lift on a hay cart, I shouldn't have been here yet! Look at me!"

They were all looking at him—popper and son, guests, butler, and footmen!

"And I'm hungry!" roared Bunter.

"You pie-faced piccan!" hissed Fisher T. Fish.

"Nice way to treat a fellow after asking him home for the hols!" roared Bunter. "I've a jolly good mind not to stay now. I've a jolly good mind to clear right off! I say, you fellows, I've got something to tell you before I clear—"

"Pack it up!" gasped Fisher T. Fish.

"Sit down, Bunter!" said Hiram K.

"I've a jolly good mind—"

"Squat!" said Mr. Fish.

"I can jolly well tell you—"

"I guess I said squat!"

Bunter squatted!

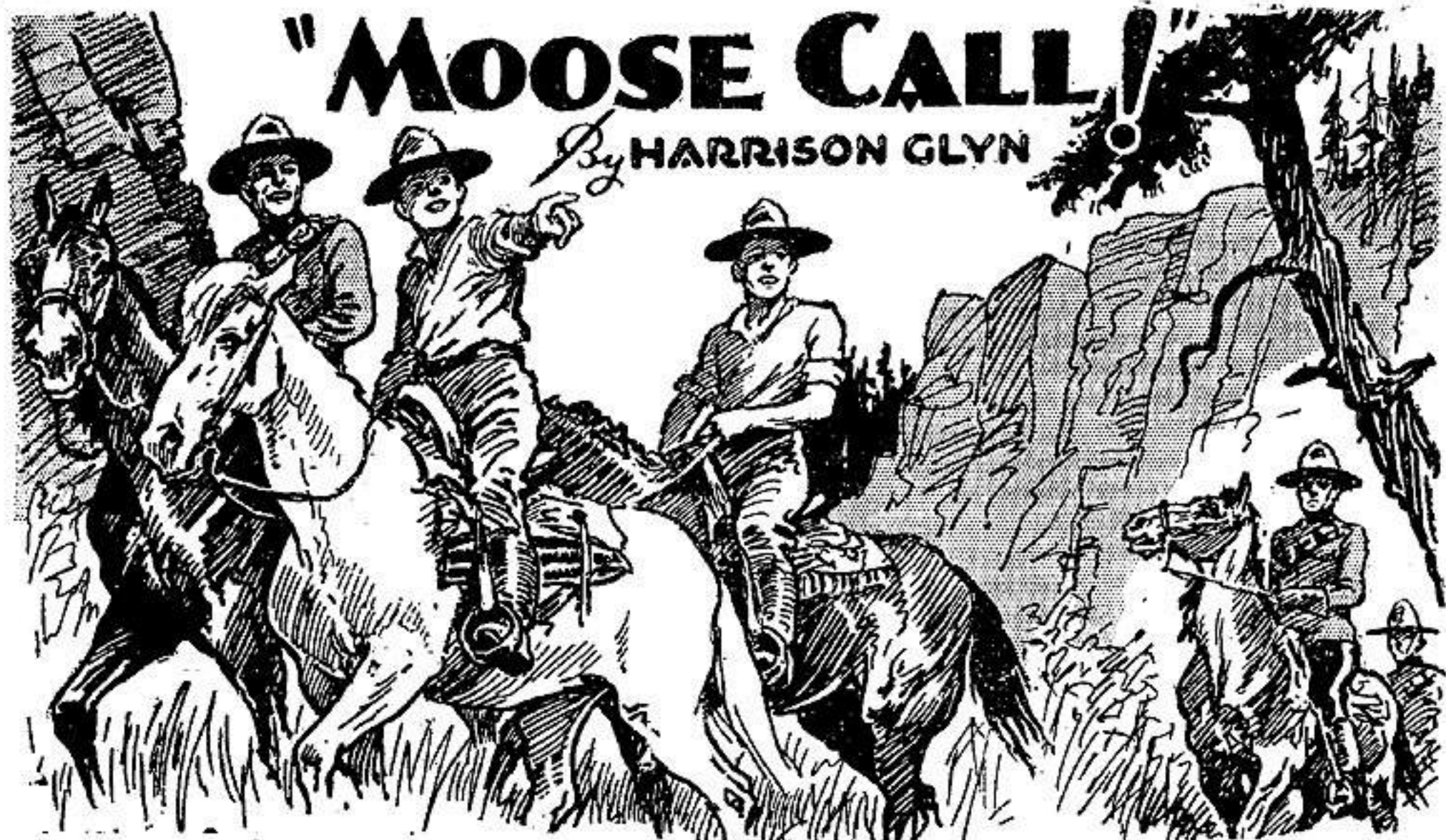
Dinner—for Bunter—began again from the beginning! Long after the other fellows were gone, Bunter was still dining. And—for the present at least—all was calm and bright!

THE END.

(How long things remain calm and bright you will learn when you read: "THE MYSTERY OF PORTERCLIFFE HALL!"—the second story in this grand holiday series which will appear in next Saturday's issue of the MAGNET. Order your copy to-day!)

"MOOSE CALL!"

By HARRISON GLYN



WHAT'S GONE BEFORE.

Selwyn Gore and his brother, Colin, set out for Moose Call to avenge the murder of their Uncle Amyas, a gold prospector. En route, they meet Mountain Lion, a Sioux Indian and friend of Amyas Gore, who leads them to a great natural amphitheatre in the Sunrise Mountains where they learn that a gang of toughs led by Majoe and Musty have already registered the claim. The two Britishers succeed in trapping the gang in the amphitheatre, and then, leaving Mountain Lion and his Sioux braves on guard, ride into Tomahawk to enlist the services of Sergeant Threfall and his Mounties. Returning to the amphitheatre, they blow up the entrance with dynamite. Two of the roughnecks try to sneak away, but one is brought down by the gang, leaving the survivor battling on.

(Now read on.)

Charge!

"**T**HEY'LL get him," said Sergeant Paul, as he saw the man edge out into the moonlight. "He doesn't stand a chance."

Even as he spoke, a cracking shot above the fall was marked by a convulsive leap on the part of the man. Sergeant Threfall and his men saw him level his gun and fire. But a third shot, which rang out a fraction of a second later, made the man stagger, drop his gun, and make a desperate rush for the fall.

Close to where he stood, the water ran smoothly over a worn rock and splashed and frothed down a rugged channel. Here a sort of ridge crossed the fall which had been submerged by the flood-water from the melting snows when Selwyn had last seen it, but was partly visible now.

Along this rough ridge the man ran, rocking, balancing himself with outstretched arms. He was carrying a

heavy sack or bag strapped to his shoulders which stood out like a hump.

Half-way across, the attackers saw him falter and pause. And as he stood there for a moment, making a bold and easy target for the killers, two rifles cracked. Both the bullets got him, apparently, for they saw him shiver twice, then throw up his arms and come plunging headlong down.

The water splashed as he hit a pool. Then the rushing fall carried him out of it, and they saw him splash down from one place to another, the water spurting in a fountain-like shower as his body struck a water-hole, and then he disappeared.

The watchers were too stunned, for a moment, to speak.

It was Selwyn who broke the silence a minute later.

"That makes four gunmen gone!" he said. "There was Slick, drowned in the cave. That man up by the slide hole. And now these two. Majoe has only four men left, including himself. They haven't done much good for themselves stealing Uncle Amyas' claim."

"Thieves never do any good for themselves when they fall out," said Sergeant Paul. "Their only chance is to stick together." Then he dropped his voice to a tense whisper. "Look, there are some more men up there."

One, two, three, four black shadows lined the top of the fall now, and each man carried a gun. They gathered together in a group talking, one of them pointing downward.

Then one of them began gingerly to descend the path.

"If he comes much closer," said the sergeant of the Mounties as he lifted up his Winchester, "I'll have to drill him full of lead. Can't have him finding the way out, boys!"

The moment the man got below the moonlit top of the fall they could scarcely follow his movements.

"Sergeant," said Selwyn anxiously.

"Yes, boy?"

"We don't want a battle in the dark. They could get us as easily as we'd get them. If we wait till daylight we'll be able to attack them from both sides and soon end it."

"Sure," said the sergeant. "They're wanted for claim jumping and triple murder, and a lot more besides. And we want them alive. Time we let 'em know we're on the map."

Pressing his gun butt hard against his shoulder, the sergeant fired at the moving shadow.

Selwyn heard the bullet chip the rock.

Mountain Lion had only been waiting for somebody to make a start.

Crack! Braang! Crack! went his Winchester, and the figures up on the fall dived for cover like scared rabbits down a hole.

Selwyn sent a bullet after the slinking figure the sergeant had missed. Then Colin had a go. Finally all four fired at once.

"That's to make no mistake," said the sergeant, grinning. "Now they know the way out by the falls is closely guarded and their chance of escape cut off!"

That volley must have sent John Majoe and his gangsters tearing back to the safer shelter of the amphitheatre behind the Great Chief's Head, for they saw and heard no more of them.

A little while later, however, as they sat in the moonlight watching the sky for the first sign of breaking day, Billy the Sneak, whom they thought was dead, stirred and moaned feebly.

"Snakes!" gasped the sergeant. "He's alive!"

He whipped a flask out of his pocket, unscrewed the metal cap and, raising the man up, set the mouth of it to his lips.

The rascal drank greedily and the neat, strong spirit brought him quickly round. His staring eyes had life in them now as he looked hard at Threfall.

"Who are you?" he whispered hoarsely.

"Nobody you know. I'm a Mountie sergeant from Tomahawk. Name Paul Threfall."

Recognition shone in the crook's eyes.

"I know, you're the officer who took me, though I'd two guns levelled, and put me in the 'can.'" He choked, gasped, and sagged wearily. "I'm dying, sergeant. They got me, curse 'em! Jim Wilkie and me thought we could make it. Jim found the way out by the falls yesterday."

A violent fit of coughing stopped the crook saying anything more, and he fell back, exhausted.

Sergeant Paul gave him some more raw spirit, and he revived again.

"Take it easy, Billy!" he said. "Those guys up there haven't got a chance. They won't gain anything from shooting you. But tell us how things lie before you cash in, if you can. Why were you and Jim trying to get away by the fall?"

Billy the Sneak, his head hanging heavy on the sergeant's supporting arm, looked at Paul Threfall some time before he answered. He was breathing very rapidly now.

"It's been—somethin' terrible—up thar!" he panted. "Nobody pullin' together. Quarrelling—and—fighting." Then his voice steadied, and he went on speaking almost normally. "Majoe's got a lot of rye up thar. He sent the licker round. Most of the time we worked for gold—we were drunk. And we found it a-plenty. Nuggets—dust—boxes full, bag loads. Cradled by the stream. When we'd got enough to make us all rich for life we started to watch one another like hungry wolves. Jim Wilkie was quick to see how things were shapin', and I wuz his pal, see?"

"Take it steady! How were things shaping?"

Billy the Sneak was fast passing out, and the sergeant gave him another drink of liquor.

"For—murder," went on the crook. "Yesterday, after the work was done, Jim spied on Majoe and Musty and overheard them plotting to bump off the lot of us and steal all the gold. So Jim and me thought we'd make our getaway. Then came an explosion—"

Billy the Sneak straightened himself up and glared round at his listener.

"We tried to get out by the slide hole, but couldn't," he said. "We knew the Injuns were squattin' on the path, for we heard them whoopin' and yellin'. And we guessed the way out was by the fall, because the two boys had escaped that way. After Ben Wall got bumped off showing himself up on them dynamited rocks, we stole all the goldbags we could lay our hands on and sneaked away."

"And Majoe and the rest of the gang followed you and shot you up?"

"Guess—that's the idea—sergeant. I'm all in. It was Majoe got me. I saw him levellin' the gun. But—I hope—Jim—got—away!"

"Jim Wilkie was shot dead on the fall," said the sergeant.

The expression on Billy the Sneak's face changed. Dismay and hatred were equally expressed by his frightening scowl.

"They shot Jim? He was my pal. Jim was tough, but not a bad guy. I'm had—sergeant—but a saint compared to John Majoe. He shot me. He dragged me into this. Get him—get him—don't let him escape! He murdered Amyas Gore and boasts about it. He would have murdered them two English boys the same if they hadn't got away so smartly. And—listen—it was Majoe and Musty Wilmot who murdered Isaac

Snugger back along the Tomahawk road."

"No!" said the sergeant, interrupting.

"I say yes. Musty shot Snugger first. Then Majoe gave him a finishing ounce of lead after the gang had dumped him out on the prairie."

"I tell you, Billy, Majoe, and Musty didn't kill Snugger," said the sergeant. "Isaac is still alive!"

A broad, spreading smile stretched the quivering lips of the dying man, and his eyes lit up.

"You don't say? Waal, I liked Snugger—rum guy—but he did his best to help me when I was put in the 'can.' Say, I'm glad! But get Majoe and Musty—get 'em—don't let 'em escape! They're the worst—couple of guys—I—ever—knew!"

The man's voice died away in a light, wistful sigh, and the sergeant laid him gently down, and bowed his head.

"He wasn't all bad," he muttered. "But just think what Majoe and Musty must be like when a crook like this ain't got a good word to say for 'em!"

A few minutes later the sky began to lighten in the East. The day was breaking.

Selwyn had never seen such a magnificent spectacle as it presented when it came. The whole of the eastern sky appeared to be on fire. It seemed to set the mountains in flame, and even the dark shadowy depths of them were tinged with blood red. Red rocks, red water, red vegetation, red eagles when they flew, and red figures standing on duty along the ridge at regular intervals—all flaming, fiery, blood-drenched red.

The spectacle lasted for several minutes before the red took on a lighter shade and then changed to gold as the sun swung up. After that, all was a normal day.

Mountain Lion let out a whoop, and at the call, Sioux came, covered the body of Billy the Sneak with a blanket, and then bore it away.

It was another day and time to call Majoe and Musty and the other two survivors of the gang of eight to account for what they had done.

If the attackers took the lot of them alive two might get away with heavy sentences, providing Sergeant Threfall and his men could get them safely back to Tomahawk for trial later at Edmonton. But Majoe and Musty would hang.

They ate from their store of scanty rations and then began the climb, Mountain Lion insisting on going in front as he knew the way.

He had climbed up but a little way when suddenly he paused and pointed to the fall. Looking that way, the sergeant and his men saw the body of the man Jim Wilkie lying in the middle of the sluggishly tumbling waters.

He had landed in a small hollow basin in a sitting position, his knees bent, his feet dangling over the edge, just as if he were in a chair. The water was swirling round him, running over his lap, and he lay back with head hanging limply and his arms dangling. The pack on his back might have been a cushion.

Having attracted attention, Mountain Lion began to thread his way across the fall, balancing himself with the skill of an acrobat on treacherous points, until, at last, he reached the man.

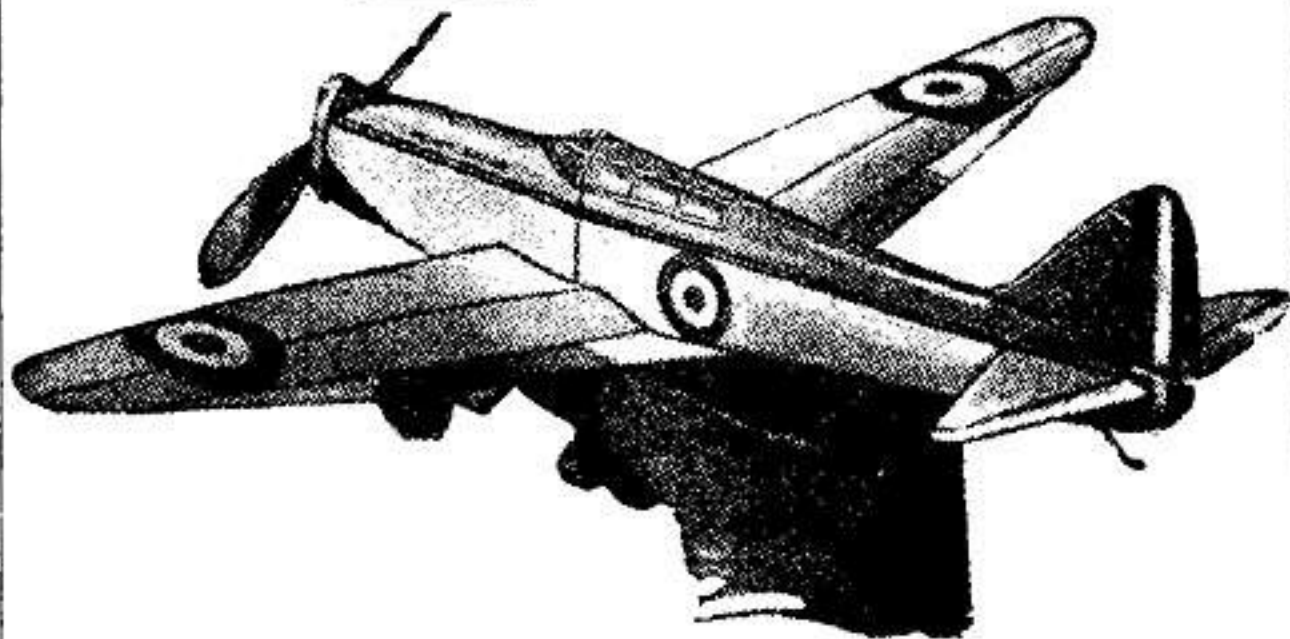
Bracing himself in the water, he unstrapped the pack on the man's back. It was so heavy that he had some difficulty in shouldering it and strapping it home. But at last he managed to do this, motioning to his followers all the time to keep back.

That done, he lifted the dead man, and, turning him over the side of the basin, let the fall rush him down. Then he came slowly back, to leap upon the safer trail and dump the pack down there.

"Mountain Lion not like to leave dead man there," he said. "Vultures come soon. No good!"

Squatting, he undid the pack. It contained all sorts of things from a tin of tobacco, a small case of medicines, some dried meat and hard biscuits, a package of ammunition, shaving tackle, change of thick socks, and so on. The

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two big bags that formed the greater part of its bulk were heavy with sifted gold and small nuggets, worth a fortune. "White man's gold," said the Sioux, glancing up. "Amyas Gore's gold. Stolen! What shall we do with it?"

"Cache it right here beside the fall," answered Sergeant Threfall. "That'll do, boys, won't it? The bags will be too heavy to carry."

Selwyn agreed, and finding a suitable place, they rolled away a rock, scooped the loose earth from under it, planted the gold bags in the hole, and then rolled the rock back into place.

Having done this, they started up the steep trail again.

It was just as well the party had Mountain Lion for a guide, for, although they were so close to the top, they could not pick out the trail. The Sioux Indian knew it, read it by the weather stains upon the rocks.

At last, with a joyful shout, Selwyn recognised the sort of landing near which the fall forked right and left, where they had previously taken the wrong trail.

The going was easier

They realised now that the ridge on which they had seen the shadows last night was not the top of the fall. Majoe and Musty had indeed found the way out. It was a good thing Sergeant Threfall had insisted upon their making their way round to the waterfall last night, for if Majoe and Musty had once got down the mountain with their gold they might very easily have turned it into cash and got away without being caught.

The attacking party quickened their pace, gained the top of the fall, and, keeping in close to the rocky wall which shut in the amphitheatre, began to work their way along it.

A jutting point of the cliff stuck out. Mountain Lion, signing to them to keep back, pulled off his eagle's crested headdress and began to poke it out cautiously beyond the edge of the screen.

Selwyn moved impatiently forward, but the sergeant of the Mounties pulled him back.

"Take it easy, kid!" he said warningly. "The Sioux knows."

Braang, braang!

Two shots rang out in quick succession, and an eagle's feather was clipped clean out of the band.

"That's clear proof that they were expecting us," said the sergeant of the Mounties. "They're waiting!"

Selwyn wrenched his arm away and ran to where the Sioux was standing flattened against the rock.

Mountain Lion had pulled the feathered head-dress back, and was grimly examining the gap in the row of eagle's feathers.

Selwyn dropped down full length and began to crawl on hands and knees, dragging his Winchester after him, to the end of the cliff.

"Hold those feathers up again, Mountain Lion," he said.

The Sioux looked down at the young Britisher with a broad, spreading grin.

"Ugh!" he grunted, and began to push the feathers slowly into view once more.

The old trick had worked once; it would work again. Majoe and his killers, waiting in a fever of terror out in Amyas Gore's claim, were not to know whether there was a head in the plumes or not, and they dare not take a chance.

Braang, braang!

Again the feathers were clipped and broken by the flying bullets.

Under cover of the ruse, Selwyn wriggled into view and brought his Winchester firmly up against his shoulder.

He could see four men standing scattered among the rocks a short distance away from where the slide-hole had been.

The dynamite explosion had blown away the whole face of the rock and completely altered the appearance of the place.

As the Sioux had reported, the fallen rock had piled itself in such a way as to leave a narrow, shifting path-way leading up to the top.

Elsewhere, boulders and masses of rock of all sizes, blown from the mountain, lay scattered about, and Majoe and his three companions were grouped among these. There they were, showing themselves from the waist up, fine targets.

To the right the amphitheatre swept away to the rocks that closed it in on the other side, and through the place the river came purling, but only half the width and depth it had been when Selwyn dived into it and found the big nugget.

Majoe was sighting his gun at the feathers, while two of the men held smoking rifles.

Selwyn fired at one of the men and saw him drop down behind the sheltering boulder in a panic.

The Sioux looked out and took a dropping shot at Majoe.

Selwyn saw a puff of grit as the bullet chipped the rock in front of the black-bearded villain.

"Durn it!" said the sergeant of the Mounties, leaping into view. "If he can have a pot, so can I!"

His rifle cracked, but there was no target for him to aim at, all the four crooks having dodged under cover.

"Time we brought your Injuns and my boys to close grips with the enemy, Sioux!" shouted Sergeant Threfall. "So let out that war-whoop of yours and bring Red Bull and the whole tribe storming up the rocks. Then we'll smoke the durn snakes out!"

Selwyn thrilled as Mountain Lion's strident notes sent a shiver down his spine. Three times the Sioux let out the cry then he bent forward, listening for an answer.

It came in a chorus from beyond the rim of rocks.

Mountain Lion fired a shot in the air and was answered by a volley from the other side.

The sounds were terrifying in that lonely place, and must have rung like a knell of doom in the ears of the skulking crooks.

Then a bugle call rang out.

"That's our Sam," said Sergeant Threfall, with a grin. "Wants me to know the Mounties are rollin' up, too. Now, the point is, will Majoe and his gang show fight, or will they chuck in the towel?"

"I know what I would do in their case," said Selwyn grimly.

"Throw up the sponge, eh?"

"No! Fight it out!"

"Yeah! But then you're British. Kin of Amyas Gore's, and I've had Amyas sit in my office and tell me that his ancestors used to sail the seas and fight with Drake. Black John Majoe's type never fight if they can shoot a guy in the back!"

Selwyn, not thinking, stepped out into the open to look.

A rifle banged, and a bullet sang by his ear and chipped the rock behind him. But he did not budge, as the sight was too wonderful to miss.

Sioux Indians, in war-paint and feathers, came tumbling over the edge of the cliff. Red-coated Mounties showed up. Scrambling and leaping, with rifles at the trail, they crowded to the narrow way down, and began to push one another along it.

"Fools!" shouted the sergeant, striding into the open, too, and shouting: "Hey, you fellows, open out! Take your time! Wanna stop a bullet?"

(Be sure and read next week's chapters of this thrill-packed adventure yarn, chums. You'll enjoy every line!)

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10-8-35

HOW FATTY WENT FISHING

By BOB CHERRY

Bunter went fishing last week. There was a rumour about that Mauly intended running a holiday party at his place for experienced anglers only. So the cheery old Porpoise thought it would be a good wheeze to become an experienced angler right away.

He set about it in a thoroughly businesslike way. First, he ran an intensive borrowing campaign and managed to rustle up the best part of a pound. Then he went down to the boathouse and booked a boat.

After borrowing fishing tackle from Mauly, he made out a list of refreshments required for the afternoon and went along to the tuckshop to get them. Listening to his order, you'd have thought he was laying in for a siege.

"If you take all that lot aboard with you on a little rowing-boat, it'll sink the boat!" I chuckled. To which kindly counsel, all the gratitude I got was "Boast!"

It was quite a sight to see Bunter set out from the boat house that afternoon. Tuck was piled high fore and aft. There was hardly room for the Owl, but he managed to squeeze in somehow, and pushed off, to a parting cheer from the grinning crowd.

Only when Bunter was out in midstream, pulling painfully towards Popper's Island, did it occur to me that something was missing.

"Hi, Fatty!" I yelled. "You've forgotten something!"

Bunter stopped rowing and called back anxiously:

"What is it?"

"Your fishing-tackle, of course, fat-head!" I roared. "You haven't even got a rod and line with you!"

DICK RAKE Says—

COKER DESPISES BANK HOLIDAYS

When the Editor sent me out to get Coker's opinion on How Schoolboys Should Spend a Bank Holiday, I had to chase round the school for nearly an hour before I found him. I ran him to earth eventually in the last place I'd expected to find him. He was standing in the doorway of the woodshed, gazing into the interior as though it had an engrossing interest for him. He nearly jumped out of his skin when I gave him a dig in the ribs.

"You cheeky fag!" he gasped. "Eh? They want my views on How Schoolboys Should Spend a Bank Holiday? You couldn't have come to a better man for an opinion on that subject. I hold pretty decided views on how you kids should spend your Bank Holidays, I can tell you!"

"What I'm in favour of for kids on Bank Holidays is giving 'em work to do that'll last 'em all day—digging up a big plot of ground, for instance, or trimming a long hedge."

"That's my idea of how schoolboys should spend a Bank Holiday! As to any suggestion of their doing the usual kind of Bank Holiday stuff—larking about in beach pleasure parks and fair grounds, and so on—I'd squash it from the start! Houp-la and feats of strength are no good for kids, take it from me. In fact, I don't approve of the average Bank Holiday at all—I despise it completely, really!"

Just at that moment there was a terrific crash from within the woodshed. I looked in. A most remarkable sight met my gaze.

The interior of the woodshed had been turned into a regular miniature fun-fair. There was a houp-la board and one of those spring gadgets on which you test your strength with a man-sized sledgehammer!

"Well, my hat!" gasped Bunter. "I borrowed Mauly's, too—must have left it behind in the study!"

"What are you going to do, chump? Going back for it?"

Bunter looked at the bank. Then he looked at the tuck. And then he smiled.

"No, I don't think I'll bother," he said. "After all, I remembered the tuck. Thanks all the same, Cherry, but it's hardly worth while. Ta, ta!"

And he bent to his cars with the happiest of grins on his fat face.

And that, dear readers, is how Bunter went fishing!



"What the thump—" I gasped. There was another crash. Coker's pal Potter was wielding a sledgehammer. While he wielded away, Greene was tossing rings at the houp-la board. Neither of them noticed me.

"I'm going strong, Coker, old man!" Greene said. "At this rate, I shall clean up all the presents on the houp-la boards on Bank Holiday!"

"Same with me!" panted Potter. "I'm going to ring the bell every time when we get to that fair ground!"

Coker frowned. I grinned. "Of course, Coker, your ideas about Bank Holidays only apply to juniors—not to old fageys like yourself!" I inquired sweetly.

Coker made a threatening move. I decided it was time to move myself.

I'd learned quite enough about Coker's view on Bank Holidays and I'd seen for myself how much he despised them!

Fellows who are wondering how Hoskins got on at the Pianists' Conference will be glad to learn that he had a "thumping" good time.

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?



When Removites complained of chocolate disappearing, they visited Billy Bunter's study. Bunter was found with a stock of it—the result of a big raid! The Removites, looking anything but "sweet," rammed most of the chocolate down Bunter's back—whereat the Owl felt "hot and sticky!"

Jolly and Merry and Bright, of the St. Sam's Fourth, came galloping on to the platform of Muggleton Station. The skool had just broken up for the summer hollerdays, and Jack Jolly & Co. were on their way to the popular seaside resort, Pargate.

As they bust through the barrier, the guard's whistle shrilled and the grate eggspres started moving off.

"Buck up, you fellows!" cried Jack Jolly. "We can just catch it! Jump into the last karriage!"

"I, I, kap'n!" grinned Merry and Bright.

In a split second they had opened the door; in half a tick they had dumped their bags on the karriage floor; and in a meer moment they were safe and sound aboard the train!

"Hurrah for the hollerdays!" panted Merry, his enthusiasm undimmed as they plunged into the inky blackness of Muggleton Tunnel. "What a treat it will be to get away from the sound of the Head's voice!"

"Ha, ha! Yes, rather!"

"That is, if you can call it a voice!" chuckled Bright, from out of the darkness. "It always sounds more like a rusty file to me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here's the end of the tunnel!" eggshilled Bright, just then. "Now we can put our luggage up on the rack."

The Co. yanked up their suitcases to place them on the rack. As they did so, however, they got a rather severe shock.

Sitting in the corner seat was the very gentleman they had just been talking about—Dr. Alfred Birchmall, the revered and majestic headmaster of St. Sam's!

A MISSION OF MISTERY!

By DICKY NUGENT

"The—the Head!" stammered Jack Jolly.

The Head nodded grimly.

"Yes, it's me," he said, with his usual faultless grammar. "What's more, I herd what you said! Why, for two pins, I'd—woooooop! Yarooooooo!"

Merry, in his nervusness, had suddenly let go of his suitcase, which he had been balancing against the rack above the Head. The result was that the case crashed downwards, giving the Head a cough on his cranium that drew howls of aggerny from him.

"Wooooop! Yarooooooo! Ow-wow-ow!"

"Sorry, sir!" mermered Merry.

"Sorry," he blowed! hooted the Head. "Take a thousand lines! Take a whopping! Take—"

"Half-a-minnit, sir!" interrupted Jack Jolly, with a twinkle in his eye. "Haven't you forgotten that we're on hollerday?"

"Besides, sir," grinned Bright "what we said was only a joak!"

Dr. Birchmall thawed a little.

"Hem! Well, I suppose I can hardly impose punishments as we are now on hollerday. You can call it off, after all, Merry."

"Thanks, awfully, sir!" grinned Merry. Then, with the idea of changing the subject, he added: "Going away, sir?"

A pekuliar look seemed to come into the Head's dial at that question. He nodded briefly.

"Yes, Merry, I'm going away," he replied. "But not, like you boys, on plezzure. As a matter of fakt, I am bound for a secret destination—on a mission of mistery. I shall vannish as if the earth had opened and swallowed me up—and reappear later, I hoap, in a blaze of glory and newspaper publissity!"

"Oh, crums!"

The Head's misterious remarks left Jack Jolly & Co. wondering whether he was quite all right in the top story.

At Littleburrow Junction, the Head and the Co. got out and said good-bye, fully eggsppecting that they would see no more of each other.

Five minnits later, on another platform, they all got into the train for Pargate.

When they arrived at Pargate they said good-bye once more, konvinced that this was the final parting.

But it wasn't! When they got into two separt taxis and drove away, it was only to make the singular discovery that both parties were making for the Seaview Hotel!

The Head's face was a study as he bumped into Jack Jolly & Co. outside the hotel.

"Bless my sole!" he eggshilled. "Can it be possibul that you boys are staying at the Seaview, too?"

"We booked up here, weeks ago, sir!" grinned Jack Jolly. "Mite I ask if this is your secret destination—the place where you're going to carry out your mission of mistery?"

Dr. Birchmall grinned a slitley sheepish grin.

"To tell you the truth, Jolly, it is," he konfessed. "And now that you know, I hoap you'll all keep mum about it!"

"Ha, ha! We will, sir!" "Thanks!" said the Head, looking quite releaved. "That settles that, then! And now,

boys. I will trot in and inspect my sweet of rooms. Note the grate respect with which the hotel staff treat me—it will open your eyes!"

Jack Jolly & Co. dewtifully followed the Head up the hotel steps, quite prepared to see the staff boughing and scraping on all hands at the Head's approach.

But the reception Dr. Birchmall got was quite different from the one he had imagined. First a page-boy nooked into him and sent him spinning; then a winder-cleaner threw a pailful of water over the Head's napper!



By the time Dr. Birchmall reached the interior of the hotel, he felt more like a drowned rat than a famus skoolmaster starting out on a mission of mistery!

As for Jack Jolly & Co., they saw the commical side of it, and larfed till their sides faired ached. If the start was anything to go on, it looked as if a hollerday with the Head was going to have its redeeming feetchers!

(What is the Head's "mission of mistery," chums? For the answer, read next week's "grate" yarn, "The Soothsayer's Secret.")

GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT!



When Removites complained of chocolate disappearing, they visited Billy Bunter's study. Bunter was found with a stock of it—the result of a big raid! The Removites, looking anything but "sweet," rammed most of the chocolate down Bunter's back—whereat the Owl felt "hot and sticky!"

Dicky Nugent thought he had hit on a great idea when he gave a swarm of fags "joy rides" on a farm tractor which Farmer Brown had left in a field. When the farmer's men came up, unexpectedly, with pitch-forks, the fags' "joy-ride" turned rapidly into "fight!"

Passing the old smithy in Courtfield, Johnny Bull asked the blacksmith if he could help hammer a horseshoe. Johnny wielded the hammer in muscular style, the anvil resounding to his blows! His muscles are not due to "good luck" as to healthy exercise!

Peter Todd is very keen on walking as a sport—his long, bony legs enabling him to travel faster than most fellows! He did a mile in 7 mins. 11 secs. at the Courtfield Sports! Wharton and Smithy were close behind—but Todd "walked off" with the first prize! A "hot vace!" Johnny agreed!

Johnny Bull's latest musical acquisition was a xylophone, which he picked up second-hand. The unearthly din he produced on the xylophone, however, was too much for his study-mates, who demanded he should go back to his cornet! Having broken half a dozen xylophone sticks, Johnny agreed!

Colonel Wharton once surprised his nephew, Harry, by paying a "flying visit" to Greyfriars in a three-seater de luxe cabin monoplane. The colonel was entertained royally in Study No. 1—his only regret being that time would not allow him to take the Famous Five for a "joy ride."

FRANK NUGENT Tells Of CRICKET MATCH WON BY UMPIRES

Lots of cricket curiosities have been mentioned in the "Herald" in the past, but none more curious than the last match of the term, played on Little Side last week. For, believe it or not, lads, this game was won by umpires instead of players.

In case you find that too much to swallow all at once, I hasten to add that it was rather an unusual match, anyway, being one between the Greyfriars Junior XI and Marjorie Hazeldene's XI from Cliff House.

It's not often we play a girls' team. We take our cricket rather seriously in the Remove, and playing against girls savours too much of a "rag" for our liking. But the holiday spirit was in the air, and when we received a challenge from Marjorie & Co., we accepted it.

It was agreed beforehand that we'd let the girls off as lightly as our dignity would permit.

Naturally, it didn't occur to any of us for an instant that there was any question about our winning the game.

But we had reckoned without the umpires!

As a compliment to our fair opponents we had arranged for two recognised ladies' men to act as umpires. One was Lord Mauleverer and the other the Hon. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of St. Jim's, whose summer vac. started a little earlier than ours.

We little dreamed, in handing over the conduct of the game to these two gallants, that their gallantry would lead them to win the game for the girls. But that was just what happened.

When Inky wrecked Clara Trevlyn's wicket with a ball bowled at not more than half his usual speed, and the cry went up, "How's that?" Arthur Augustus calmly gave the verdict, "Not out, dear boys!"

When Tom Brown caught a "skied" ball at square leg, Mauly, with equal calmness, drawled "Not out!"

When Bulstrode, wicket-keeping, smartly stumped Barbara Redfern, they both said "Not out!" together. As a result of these tactics, the girls scored the respectable total of 124 runs before the umpires decided to consider their innings at an end.

Even so, we should have been able to knock up more than that against a team of girls. But when we set out to do it, we soon found that the umpires had made up their minds that we jolly well weren't going to do it! Every appeal from the girls drew a prompt response of "Out, dear lady!" or "Out, dear gal!" Bowlings that weren't bowlings, stumpings that weren't stumpings, and catches that nobody saw—they all counted where this prize pair of chuckle-headed umpires were concerned!

In the end we were all out for 78 and the girls won the day!

If it hadn't been for the fact that the celebration tea afterwards turned out to be a particularly happy affair, we might have had something to say to Gussy and Mauly. But, as I've already said, the holiday spirit was in the air. By the time tea was over, we had all seen the funny side of it, and were able to put up with the girls' chaff with the utmost cheerfulness.

Still—if the same match is played next year, we shall think twice before appointing a couple of lady-killers as umpires!

IDEAL

Skinner says the game of penny nap is ideal. "I deal and you pay!" from what we've seen of it!

The Camera Cannot Lie

But Potter's camera couldn't "stand up" to the strain of taking Coker's photo the other day, anyway!

The Courtfield Council are seeking advice on how to plant weeping willow trees on the banks of the Sark.

We suggest they should plant them in "tiers."