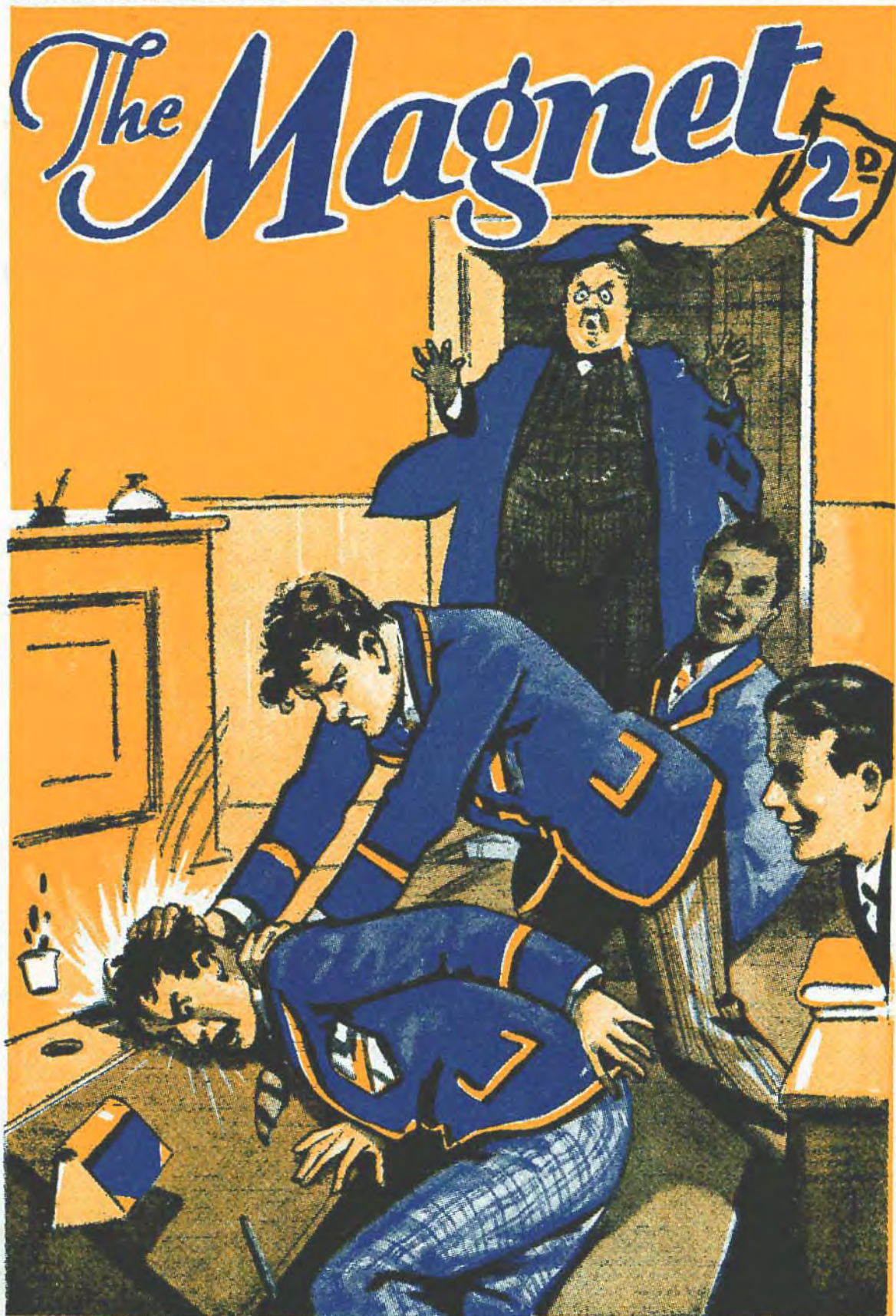


BILLY BUNTER and HARRY WHARTON & CO. "BUNTER TELLS THE TRUTH!"
In another sensational school adventure





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.

FROM the tone of the letters I have been receiving lately I gather that you have one and all enjoyed George E. Rochester's great yarn, "The Flying Submarine!" the final chapters of which appear in this week's issue of the MAGNET. Next Saturday you will have the pleasure of reading the brilliant opening of

"DAN OF THE DOGGER BANK!" By David Goodwin,

a superb new story of amazing adventures aboard the North Sea fishing trawlers. And I can tell you that it is a real "breezy" yarn. My old readers will remember David Goodwin for his many wonderful yarns that have held their interest from start to finish. To those of my readers who have not yet read a David Goodwin yarn, I can promise the treat of their lives.

Dan, the hero of this thrilling narrative, is a lad who, in strange circumstances, finds himself plunged into service with the North Sea fishing fleet. There is a sinister mystery behind the various adventures which befall him, a mystery that will hold you enthralled throughout the story.

David Goodwin, during the Great War, commanded one of the many trawlers which, in those days, gave up fishing in order to "do their bit" for their country. You can be sure, therefore, that this sea story is absolutely true to life. There are few boys' authors who know the Dogger Bank so well as this prince of storytellers. Make sure of signing on for this adventurous trip to the North Sea fishing grounds by asking your newsagent to reserve the MAGNET regularly for you from next week onwards!

The Dogger Bank is

A MOST HISTORIC PLACE.

It extends from about thirty-six miles east of Flamborough Head to within sixty miles of Jutland, and is one of the most celebrated cod-fishing places of the world. It is nearly sixty miles in width, and the depth of the water varies from ten to twenty fathoms, which means that at its shallowest part it is about sixty feet deep.

During the Russo-Japanese war a Russian fleet opened fire on British trawlers on the Dogger Bank, thinking they were war vessels. Two men were killed, and many others were injured. The Russians apologised and paid compensation to the relatives and injured men. The next time the Dogger Bank came into prominence was in 1915, during the Great War, when three powerful German cruisers were seriously damaged by a British fleet. They managed to make their escape to Heligoland.

This, then is the setting of our next great serial, and when I tell you that it is one of the finest stories that David Goodwin has ever written, you will realise that there is, indeed, a treat in store for you.

A Northampton reader asks me to tell him something about piracy. He asks me THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,444.

if there are still pirates in the world. You bet your life there are!

PIRACY FLOURISHES

on the Chinese coast, where even nowadays it is difficult to make sure of taking a sea journey without the risk of being held up by pirates. And the pirates are not only Chinese. Just a little while ago four Europeans were sentenced to death for piracy. They were three Germans and a Swiss. They boarded a steamer and killed ten people. Apparently, they could not navigate the ship properly, for they ran it ashore, and were promptly arrested. Out in Eastern waters they don't waste much time on pirates, and these four were promptly hanged, while one of their confederates is now cooling his heels in gaol—where he will remain for the next ten years!

FUNNY things happen in this queer old world of ours. Here is an item of interest I heard the other day:

THE BEE DETECTIVES!

In Moravia, Czechoslovakia, just recently, a gang of criminals had been plundering a certain neighbourhood. They had managed to throw the police completely off their track, despite the utmost endeavours of the authorities. Growing more impudent, three of them broke into the house of a railway official, and carried off a large haul of valuables. It happened, however, that the railway official kept bees, and one of the men, in his hurry to escape, knocked over a beehive. The bees soon got to work!

Next day the police made a round-up, and examined the faces of everyone in the neighbourhood. Eventually they found three men whose faces were swollen to an undistinguishable size—the work of the bees! The three were promptly arrested, found guilty, and sent to gaol!

Here's another queer happening:

THIRTY PENS TO WRITE A NAME!

Most of us are satisfied with one pen to write our signature, but they do things differently over in Fisher T. Fish's country! Not so long ago the President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, had to sign his name on a new act which had passed the Congress. He used thirty different pens to write the eighteen letters of his name, and then presented the pens as souvenirs to the Congressmen who supported him. I should imagine that the signature looked extremely shaky when he had finished it!

There is quite a nautical flavour about my postbag this week. The next letter to hand comes from Tom Evans, of Lowestoft, who writes to tell me that

TOPSAILS ARE NOT TOPSAILS!

Sounds queer, doesn't it? But Tom is right! Actually, the sails which are called "topsails" are nothing of the sort. They are, on sailing ships, the second lowest sails of the lot. A sailing ship will carry as many as seven different sails on one mast. Take the mainmast, for instance,

The lowest sail is called the mainsail. Above that there comes the lower topsail, the upper topsail, the lower top gallant sail, the upper top gallant sail, the royal, and the skysail. So there are actually five others sails above the so-called lower "top" sail!

Now for a few

THINGS YOU'D HARDLY BELIEVE,

which seems to be a very popular feature with you fellows.

No One Knows Where Elephants Die!—When elephants are about to die they simply disappear! Two thousand wild African elephants disappear every year. One theory is that they go to rivers and are drowned there, but no one knows for certain!

A Queen of England Who Never Lived in England!—Queen Berengaria, the wife of Richard the Lion-Hearted, never set foot in England. She lived in Italy and France!

Animals Which Cannot Walk on Their Feet!—Anteaters cannot walk on their feet. They contract their paws and walk on their knuckles. The duck-billed platypus, of Australia, also walks on its knuckles.

HERE is a curious question which John King, of Richmond, asks me:

WHAT IS AN ERMINE?

Lots of people don't know. Actually, the ermine is just another name for the stoat, an animal of the weasel tribe. In cold countries, or when an exceptionally severe winter is experienced, the fur of the stoat changes from reddish-brown to an almost pure white. The tip of the tail, however, remains black. Under these circumstances the stoat is trapped and skinned, and the fur is sold as "ermine,"—which sounds much better than saying "stoats' fur!"

Now for a query from a Whitstable reader:

WHAT IS A DEVIL FISH?

At one time the name "Devil Fish" was given to the octopus, but it is now used to designate several large species of ray fish, notably one which is occasionally captured on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of America. Some of them are as broad as twenty feet, and it is said that divers have been attacked by these tremendous fish and devoured. If these devil fish are carried into shoal water owing to strong currents or high winds, they cannot extricate themselves, and thus fall easy prey to fishermen. The devil fish is a valuable catch because of the oil which is obtained from it.

As space is rather limited now I must draw your attention to:

"SAVED BY HIS ENEMY!"

By Frank Richards,

the long complete Greyfriars yarn for next week. Stephen Price, the bitter enemy of Jim Warren, goes all out to bring trouble upon the shoulders of the boy with a borrowed name. Just when Price's efforts look like meeting with success, Gerald Loder, another of Price's kidney, puts his spoke in and unwittingly brings the rascally scheming to nought!

Then in addition to the opening chapters of the record-breaking David Goodwin yarn aforementioned, there will be another rib-ticking issue of the "Greyfriars Herald," and also the Greyfriars Rhymester's interview, while I shall be waiting "in the office" to have another little chat with you.

YOUR EDITOR.

BUNTER TELLS the TRUTH!

By FRANK RICHARDS



Featuring HARRY WHARTON & CO., and BILLY BUNTER, the Owl of the Greyfriars Remove.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

By Whose Hand?

"YOU awful ass, Smithy—"

"Chuck it!"

"Smithy, you fathead—"

Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, did not heed. Harry Wharton, and several other fellows in the Remove Form Room, spoke all at once—but they spoke with bated breath.

The Form-room door was open. Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, was in the corridor outside. He was not in sight; but his voice could be heard, showing that he was perilously near at hand.

"He, he, he!" came from Billy Bunter. Bunter was watching Smithy through his big spectacles with great amusement.

"Smithy—" breathed Wharton.

"Smithy, you ass—" murmured Bob Cherry.

They could only speak their warning in whispers. Anything above a whisper would have reached Quelch's keen ears in the corridor. Which would have spelled disaster to Smithy.

It was second lesson in the Remove Form Room at Greyfriars School. Mr. Quelch had let his Form into the Form-room, and would have entered also—but for Prout.

Mr. Prout, master of the Fifth, had caught him in the corridor. Prout was talking to him—heedless of the fact that Quelch was due to take his class. That was one of Prout's ways. Quelch was a punctual gentleman—Prout wasn't.

Prout did not mind keeping the Fifth waiting.

Quelch minded very much keeping his Form waiting; but he could not tell Prout to shut up! So there he was—delayed in the corridor—and the Remove had a few minutes to themselves.

Smithy was making the most of them—improving the shining hour, as it were, like the little busy bee!

The blackboard, which was going to be used in second lesson, was erected

Romancing comes more easily to Billy Bunter than telling the truth. Little wonder, then, that his schoolfellows disbelieve him when he really does tell the truth and nothing but the truth!

on its easel before the Form. Chalk and duster lay on a chair beside it.

Smithy had taken the chalk, and rapidly sketched an absurd figure on the blackboard. That occupied him only a few seconds. Now he was handling the duster.

Into the folded duster Smithy was carefully depositing the contents of a bottle of gum.

He wrapped the duster very carefully round the gum.

Some of the Removites were grinning. Quelch, of course, seeing that ridiculous

sketch on the board, would take the duster to brush it off. The gum would spread all over his fingers. The expression on Quelch's speaking countenance, when he found his fingers all sticky with gum, would be worth watching, in the opinion of most of the juniors.

No doubt it was funny—from a schoolboy point of view—certainly not from a schoolmaster's! Quelch was not a safe man to rag! It was, in fact, a deadly dangerous game with Quelch. It was about as safe to rag Quelch as to rag a tiger in the jungle.

But the Bounder was the fellow to do it if he had half a chance. It was fearfully risky; for at any moment Quelch might have stepped in and seen him in the act! Fellows wondered at Smithy's nerve! That was chiefly why he did it! Smithy liked to make fellows wonder at his nerve!

"Smithy—" murmured Redwing.

"You terrific ass, Smithy!" breathed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"If Quelch catches you—"

"He's coming!" gasped Johnny Bull.

Prout's boom, and Quelch's curt replies, died away in the corridor. The Remove master had got rid of Prout. Another moment—

A moment was enough for Smithy!

He was sitting in his place, looking as if butter would not melt in his mouth, when Mr. Quelch came in.

There was a sudden stillness in the Remove. It was done now—and the Bounder had escaped detection. All the Lower Fourth had to do now was to

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wait and watch till Quelch got his fingers in the gum!

Mr. Quelch glanced over his class.

Only on Billy Bunter's fat face was there a lingering grin. The other fellows looked as serious and unconscious as they could.

But Quelch was keen. He sensed that there was something on in his Form-room. His gimlet eyes gleamed from face to face. Many of the juniors dropped their eyes before his searching gaze. But the Bouncer met it with cheerful calmness. The gimlet eyes lingered for a second on Bunter's grinning fat face—and Bunter's grin vanished as if wiped off with a sponge.

Then Quelch stepped to the blackboard.

His eyes fell on the figure chalked there. Then he supposed that he knew what was "on." The chalk sketch represented a tall, angular man in cap and gown, brandishing a cane. It was so hastily and clumsily done that a second glance was required to make sure of what it was meant to portray. That was enough to see the Bouncer clear—for Smithy could draw when he liked. Nobody could have suspected that that clumsy portrayal was Vernon-Smith's handiwork.

Mr. Quelch looked grimly and fixedly at the sketch on the blackboard. Then he turned to his Form.

"Who did this?"

Silence!

A pin might have been heard to fall in the Remove Form Room. Then Mr. Quelch spoke again.

"Bunter!"

Billy Bunter jumped.

"Oh crikey!" he ejaculated.

"Stand out before the Form, Bunter!"

"Oh lor!"

The Owl of the Remove crawled out of his place. His fat knees knocked together. Why Quelch had picked on him he did not know. But Quelch had!

Bunter was innocent! Innocence ought to have been a sure shield! But he did not like the look in Quelch's gimlet eye!

"It wasn't me, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"What?" barked Mr. Quelch.

"It really wasn't me, sir!"

Quelch glared.

"Bunter! Do you or do you not learn the English language in this Form?" he barked.

"Eh? Yes, sir," stammered Bunter, astonished by the unexpected question.

"Then what do you mean by saying 'It was not me'?"

Bunter blinked at him.

"But—but I didn't say it wasn't you, sir!" he gasped. "I—I said it wasn't me, sir."

"Have you no knowledge of grammar, Bunter?"

"Oh, yes, sir! Lots! It—it's my favourite subject!" stuttered Bunter.

"I—I'm fearfully keen on it, sir! I—I often go through my grammar, sir, on a half-holiday, because—because I'm so—so fond of it."

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bob Cherry.

Mr. Quelch glared round.

"Silence in the class! Bunter, you should have said: 'It was not I!'"

"But you knew it wasn't you, sir—" said the fat Owl.

"Upon my word! This boy's obtuseness passes all patience!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "I mean, Bunter, that you should not confuse the nominative case with the accusative case. You should not have said: 'It wasn't me.'"

"But I didn't, sir—" gasped Bunter.

"What! I heard you!"

"Oh, no, sir! I said it wasn't me."

"Ha, ha, ha!" came from the Remove.

"Silence!" hooted Mr. Quelch. "This

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boy's stupidity and ignorance are not laughing matters."

"Aren't they?" murmured Peter Todd.

"Did you speak, Todd?" Quelch's ears were very sharp. "Take fifty lines!"

"Oh, yes, sir!" gasped Peter.

Hilarity in the Remove was cut suddenly short. Evidently it was no time for laughing—whether it was a laughing matter or not!

"Bunter! Did you chalk this absurd figure on the blackboard?" Mr. Quelch gave up the grammatical point.

"Oh, no, sir! Not at all, sir! I wouldn't—I wasn't—I never—"

"You were laughing when I came in, Bunter!" Apparently it was Bunter's fat grin that had drawn suspicion on him.

"Was I, sir? Oh, no, sir!"

"And this drawing is so excessively clumsy, so absurd, so ill-done, and out, entirely out of drawing, that I cannot help suspecting that it was your work, Bunter."

"I—I—I'm rather good at drawing, sir—"

"You are nothing of the kind, Bunter!"

"Oh lor!"

"If you were guilty of this act of impertinence, Bunter—"

"Oh, no, sir! I say, you fellows, you tell him it wasn't me!" gasped Bunter.

"You know jolly well it wasn't me."

Some of the fellows glanced at Smithy. He was immovable. Had Quelch taken up his cane to deal with Bunter, Smithy would have owned up like a shot. But he was not going to ask for it.

"If you please, sir," said Harry Wharton. "It was not Bunter!" Head boy of the Form was bound to speak up, in the circumstances.

"Very well!" said Mr. Quelch, "I shall ascertain who it was, I have no doubt. But—" Quelch's grim voice deepened, "the lesson will not be delayed for that reason! Bunter, take the duster and wipe the blackboard clean!"

"Eh?"

"Are you deaf, Bunter?" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, yes! I—I mean, no! I—I—"

"What do you mean, Bunter?"

"Oh! Nothing, sir!" gasped Bunter, blinking in dismay at the innocent-looking duster, that was reeking with wet gum within. Bunter knew what was hidden in that duster, if Mr. Quelch did not.

Quelch gave him a glare. He had to take his head boy's word that Bunter was not the culprit, but he was very annoyed and very irritated. More than enough time had already been wasted, in the Remove master's opinion, if not in that of the Remove.

"Bunter—"

"Oh dear!"

"Take the duster at once, and wipe the blackboard, and then go back to your place!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Oh crikey!"

Bunter reached out a fat hand to the duster—and drew it back again. And Mr. Quelch, with a baleful glitter in his eyes, picked up the cane from his desk.

— — —

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Swipes for Smithy!

"NOW, Bunter—"

Henry Samuel Quelch swished the cane.

"Oh, yes, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I—I'm j-just going to, sir!"

"If you waste another moment, Bunter—"

"Oh, no, sir! Oh dear!"

The Remove fellows watched Bunter with grinning faces. The fat Owl gave Vernon-Smith an infuriated blink. Smithy cheerfully winked at him, in return.

Slowly, the fat hand went to the duster.

This was quite an unexpected development of Smithy's little joke. But for the fact that Bunter was standing out before the class, no doubt Quelch would have grabbed the duster, to wipe the board clear—and would have got the gum! But as Bunter was standing there, his Form-master naturally told him to do it. Bunter's hesitation only irritated him.

There was no help for it!

Billy Bunter took the duster, in a very gingerly way, as Mr. Quelch stepped towards him with swishing cane. He started rubbing the blackboard.

Instantly the gum was exuding all over Bunter's fat fingers, and smearing the chalk on the board.

"Oh crikey!" murmured Bunter.

"Bunter—what—what—" The Remove master stared at the board. "What are you doing? What is that? Are you plastering the blackboard with some adhesive substance?"

"Oh, no! I—I—I think it—it's gum, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I think there must have been gum on the—the duster, sir."

"Gum on the duster!" repeated Mr. Quelch.

"I—I didn't know it was gummy, sir!" groaned Bunter. "I never saw Smithy—I mean, I never saw anybody put gum on it, sir!"

Vernon-Smith was grinning. He ceased to grin, as Bunter made that remark. Quelch's eyes glittered round at him, for a second.

"Cease to rub that board instantly, you stupid boy! Do you wish to smother it with gum!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir! I mean, no, sir."

"Put the duster away at once. It cannot be used. Do not wipe your fingers on your trousers, you extremely dirty boy. Go and wash your hands at once!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, yes, sir! Certainly, sir!" said Bunter, brightening up wonderfully.

That meant getting out of the Form-room, and escaping at least a part of second school. Bunter, as a rule, washed his fat hands very quickly, when he washed them at all. On this occasion he was likely to take his time about it.

He rolled joyfully out of the Form-room. Smithy's jape had been, after all, a success, so far as Billy Bunter was concerned. It had got him out of at least ten minutes' work! And every minute of laziness gained, was so much to the good, from the point of view of the fat slacker of Greyfriars.

Mr. Quelch stood and looked at the Remove. The Remove sat and looked at Mr. Quelch.

Bunter had let out Smithy's name. The Form-master could have been in no doubt on the subject. Most of the fellows expected him to call the Bouncer out. Some of them, however, considered that Quelch was too good a sportsman to take advantage of information dropped by accident. They wondered what he was going to do.

"I understand now," said Mr. Quelch, with a grim brow. "The gum mixed in the duster was intended for me. A practical joke has been played in this Form-room! A Form-room is no place for practical jokes. I shall endeavour to impress that fact on every boy in the Remove."

Tense silence.

"I request the boy who placed the gun in the duster to stand forward, and take his just punishment!" said Mr. Quelch.

Nobody stirred.
"I am waiting!" said Mr. Quelch.
The Remove seemed satisfied to let him wait!

"Very well," said Mr. Quelch, grimly.
"The whole Form will be detained next Wednesday afternoon."

"Oh!" gasped the Remove.
"We will now proceed!" said Mr. Quelch.

"But, sir—" exclaimed Harry Wharton, in dismay.

"You need not speak, Wharton."
"But, sir, there's a football match on Wednesday—"

"That will do, Wharton! Say no more!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

that rang like a pistol-shot through the Form-room. Up it went again, and down it came again.

Whack! Whack! Whack!
Smithy had to set his teeth to keep back a yell. But he would not yell—he would not even murmur. He liked the fellows to see what a tough nut he was. Fortunately, Mr. Quelch stopped at the third swipe, or even the hardy Bounder must have given tongue.

"Now, Vernon-Smith, you will take a fresh duster from the cupboard, and clean the blackboard," said Mr. Quelch.
"I will give you five minutes, and if a speck of gum remains, I shall cane you again, more severely."

The Bounder walked wriggling to the Form-room cupboard, and wriggled back to the blackboard! Mr. Quelch

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Heavy Hand!

"SHUT up!" said Coker of the Fifth.

"I'm not talking to you, Coker!"

"I know that! Shut up, all the same!"

"I'm talking to Hilton."
"I said shut up," said Horace Coker, "and when I say shut up, Price, I mean what I say. Shut up!"

Price of the Fifth scowled. Jim Warren, the new fellow in the Form, smiled. Hilton yawned; most of the other fellows laughed.

It was all Prout's fault really. Had Mr. Prout been on time in his Form-room the Fifth would have been rooting into Roman history, and no dispute



Mr. Quelch was about to leave the Form-room when his eyes fell on Bunter. "Why are you still here, Bunter?" asked the Form-master, in surprise. "I—I'd like to go through my Latin prose again, sir, if—if you don't mind," said the fat junior. "I—I'm afraid it—it wasn't very good!" Mr. Quelch fairly gaped at Bunter in his amazement.

Harry Wharton was silent, but he gave Smithy a very expressive look. Detention on a half-holiday was a severe punishment, but on that particular date, its severity was excessive.

Other fellows looked at the Bounder. Smithy drew a deep breath, and rose to his feet. Smithy was not the man to let his Form down.

"If you please, sir—" said the Bounder, meekly.

"What is it, Vernon-Smith?" asked Mr. Quelch, grimly.

"I gummed the duster, sir!"

"Very good!" said the Remove-master, in the same grim tone. "You may step out before the Form, Vernon-Smith. As the culprit has confessed, the sentence of detention on the Form will be rescinded. Vernon-Smith you will bend over that desk!"

"Certainly, sir!" said the Bounder, with an air of cool impertinence, which made Quelch's eyes glitter.

He bent over the desk. Up went the cane, and it came down with a whack

laid down his cane and started the lesson. Smithy rubbed, and rubbed, and rubbed, at the blackboard with great energy. Three from Quelch satisfied him, and he did not want any more. It was borne in on his mind, as he laboured, that it did not pay to rag Quelch in the Form-room. It was an amusement rather like that of twisting a tiger's tail! Wriggling, he rubbed—and by the time Mr. Quelch wanted to use the blackboard, it was spotless and speckless.

"Thank you Vernon-Smith," said Mr. Quelch, with grim politeness. "That will do nicely. You may take your place."

The Bounder went back to his place, and wriggled as he sat there. Second lesson went on—not very happily. Mr. Quelch was sharp and acid, and the Remove on their very best behaviour—which was rather a strain. Only one fellow was enjoying that lesson, and that was Billy Bunter. The Owl of the Remove was an extraordinary long time washing his fat hands.

could have been going on in their Form-room.

But Mr. Prout was not on time—he very often wasn't. Quelch had cut him short and got away. It is true. But he had spotted Monsieur Charpentier, the French master, in the corridor, and roped him in, so to speak. Mossos had no class just then, so he had no excuse for breaking away.

So Prout was still talking. When Prout's plump chin was in action he forgot time and space. Monsieur Charpentier shifted from one weary leg to the other, and from the other to the one, vainly trying to think of a reasonable pretext for getting away from Prout. Prout, who never even suspected that he was a bore, boomed on.

Meanwhile, the Fifth Form were left to their own devices. Two or three studious fellows gave attention to their books, but they were few.

Football jaw was more interesting. Blundell, captain of the Form, was discussing the coming First Eleven match

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with St. Jim's, and expressing grave doubts whether Wingate had put enough Fifth Form men in. Blundell, of course, was in the First Eleven, and it was said that Warren, the new fellow, was going in, and perhaps Hilton. But, in Blundell's opinion, the First Eleven would have been greatly improved by picking eleven men from his Form; only four or five seemed—to Blundell—asking for trouble. In the Fifth Form there was a general concurrence in this opinion.

Coker listened rather impatiently to this talk. Not that Coker wasn't keen on football; he was. But Coker had no more chance of playing for Greyfriars School than the man in the moon. So the football jaw seemed rather drivel to Coker.

Price wasn't talking football. He never played Soccer if he could help it, and never talked it at all. Price's topics were smokes, billiards, and races—in which few of the Fifth were interested.

But Price had another topic now. He was talking about the new fellow—Warren. For the umpteenth time, Price was referring to the strange story about the new senior, with which everybody else was fed-up.

Stephen Price was not going to let that story die out if he could help it. His intense dislike of the new fellow grew more bitter every day, and this was the only handle he had against him. In point of fact, Price himself had grown rather doubtful whether the story was true or not.

But, true or not, he was the fellow to make the most of it. Heedless of Coker's angry injunction to shut up, he went on speaking to Hilton, who was too easy-going to tell him to shut up, though

he certainly would have liked him to do so.

"I've asked young Wharton about it," said Price, "and he refuses to say anything. But I know what I heard him say once. And that was that he knew James Warren at home, and that Warren here isn't a bit like him, and—"

"I said shut up!" repeated Coker. "I think it ought to be cleared up," said Price. "And there's another thing—"

Coker rose to his feet. "Oh, let him run on, Coker, old bean!" said Jim Warren. "Don't let Prout come in and find a row going on."

Price was talking in Warren's hearing just as if he was not there. The new senior contemptuously disregarded him and his talk.

"There's another thing," said Price coolly. "Warren came direct into the Fifth Form here from another school. He never mentions the name of his school. Does anybody know?"

"That's his own bizney," yawned Hilton. "Give us a rest, Pricey, old man! You're growin' to be a fearful bore."

"A fellow in a false name—" said Price viciously.

"That's enough!" said Coker grimly. "If you won't shut up, Price, when you're saying rotten things about a friend of mine, I'm going to shut you up! See?"

"Hold on, old chap!" said Warren.

"Rot!" roared Coker. "Blessed if I know why you don't punch his cheeky head! You could knock him out with one finger if you liked! If you won't punch him, I jolly well will!"

"Prout!" exclaimed Potter and Greene together.

"Blow Prout!" said Coker.

Prout's voice could be heard booming in the corridor. He was going strong, but he might have barged in at any moment. Coker was the only fellow in the Fifth who was willing to risk being caught scrapping in the Form-room by his Form-master.

Coker strode along the forms to Price. Price, perhaps wishing that he had shut up when Coker bade him, jumped up, and as he did so Coker grabbed him by the collar.

"Hands off, you ruffian!" yelled Price—a yell that was intended to reach the ears of Prout in the corridor.

Bang! Coker twisted the weedy slacker of the Fifth over in his muscular grip and banged his head on his own desk. It was quite a hefty bang! Horace Coker was a heavy-handed fellow.

Price gave another yell, louder than the first. There was a chuckle from the Fifth Form men.

"Prout's coming!" exclaimed Potter.

Coker, unheeding, gave another bang, and Price gave another fearful yell. His first yell had startled Prout and caused him—much to the relief of the French master—to roll along to his Form-room. He arrived in the doorway in time to hear the second bang and to behold Stephen Price wriggling and struggling frantically in the hefty grasp of Coker.

"Now, you rotter—" bawled Coker.

"Coker, what is this? What does this mean?" boomed Prout, sailing into the Form-room, his plump face red with wrath. "Release Price at once! Do you hear me? Release him!"

Coker let go Price's collar, and the cad of the Fifth jumped away from him, gasping. Prout's eyes gleamed at Horace Coker.

"Cannot I turn my back for one moment without this uproar in the Form-room?" exclaimed Mr. Prout indignantly. "Is this a senior Form? Or have I entered the Second Form Room by mistake?"

This was sarcasm—bitter sarcasm. "That ass Coker—" muttered Blundell.

"That fathead Coker—" mumbled Greene.

"Coker, I find you in the act of creating a disturbance—an uproar!" boomed Prout. "You are the most troublesome as well as the most backward boy in my Form, Coker! Is it impossible, Coker, for you to behave yourself when my back is turned for a moment or two?"

Prout under-stated the case. It was more than a moment or two. He had kept the Fifth waiting at least ten minutes.

Coker faced his Form-master, undaunted.

"Sorry, sir!" he said. "But Price asked for it."

"Asked for it?" repeated Mr. Prout. "What do you mean, Coker? Have you the audacity to say that Price asked you to strike his head on that desk? Absurd!"

"I mean he wouldn't shut up when I told him to, sir," explained Coker, while the other fellows grinned at Mr. Prout's misapprehension.

"And what right have you, Coker, to impose silence on your Form-fellows?" boomed Prout. "Are you under the delusion, Coker, that I left you in charge of this Form-room—you, at the bottom of the class?"

Price rubbed his head. He was rather damaged by two hefty bangs, but he was not wholly sorry for what had happened. Next to Warren he most disliked Coker's vociferous champion, Coker. And Coker was booked for a row with Prout now.

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"I am tempted," said Prout, "to break with the traditions of this Form and administer a caning, Coker! But I shall give you 500 lines. Now take your place!"

"But, sir—"

"Silence!" boomed Prout—with so formidable a boom that even Horace Coker realised that he had better be silent, though silence was not his long suit.

Suppressing his indignation, Horace went to his place and sat down. Prout, frowning, got going with Roman history, rather late.

Price rubbed his head a good many times during that class. It was getting near time for morning break, when he stood up and addressed Mr. Prout.

"If you please, sir—"

Some of the Fifth Form fellows looked curiously at him. Fitzgerald winked at Hilton, who laughed.

They knew what was coming! For several days past Price of the Fifth, on one excuse or another, had got out of the Form-room in second lesson before break, which came between second and third school.

Sometimes he had forgotten a book or map, once he had left a tap running, and fellows were beginning to wonder what it meant, though the general opinion was that Price smoked a surreptitious cigarette in a quiet corner during those absences. Now he had another excuse.

"What is it, Price?" asked Mr. Prout, not very genially. He did not like that member of his Form.

"I've got rather a bruise on my head, sir. Can I go and give it a rub with embrocation?" asked Price meekly.

"You may!" said Prout.

"Thank you, sir!"

Stephen Price left the Form-room. Some of the fellows grinned. That banging of his head had furnished Price with a new excuse. Now, they supposed, he was heading for his study—not for embrocation, but for hidden cigarettes.

But Price, out of the Form-room, did not head for his study, either for embrocation or smokes. He headed for the rack in which letters were placed for Greyfriars fellows to take in break.

Nobody in the Fifth guessed that every morning, when he could get out of the Form-room, Price scanned that rack to look for letters before the other fellows saw them.

But it was not for letters for himself that he looked; it was for letters for Jim Warren!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

What Billy Bunter Saw!

BILLY BUNTER was enjoying life.

He had washed the gum off his fat fingers—most of it, at all events. That had not taken Bunter long. He was not frightfully particular in matters of cleanliness. A brief wash was enough for William George Bunter; and the briefer it was, the better he liked it.

Bunter could easily have returned to the Remove-room under five minutes. But Bunter had not the remotest intention of doing so.

He was going to spin it out to the latest possible moment. Mr. Quelch's instruction, valuable as it was, had absolutely no appeal for Bunter. He was willing to admit that knowledge was a good thing, but he had a conviction that it was possible to have too much of a good thing.

Instead of hurrying back to the Form-room to pick up the pearls of wisdom dropping from Mr. Quelch's lips, Billy Bunter rolled along the Remove passage and looked into the studies.

With all the other fellows in the Form-room, this was a chance for Bunter, the grub-hunter; and he was not the fellow to let his chances, like the sunbeams, pass him by.

His voyage of discovery in the Remove studies was quite fortunate. In Lord Mauleverer's study he found a cake—which was in Bunter, instead of in the study, when he left. In Smithy's study was a bag of tarts, which joined the cake within Bunter's fat circumference. In Ogilvy's study was a packet of toffee; in Hazeldene's, a bag of bullseyes. Toffees and bullseyes followed the tarts and the cake on the downward path.

By that time even Bunter thought that Mr. Quelch would wonder why it was taking him so long to get the gum off his fat fingers.

So he rather reluctantly abandoned the quest of provender, and went downstairs. Even Bunter, though not bright, was bright enough to know that he had better turn up in the Form-room again before the Remove was dismissed for break.

But he took in the letter-rack on his way to the Remove-room. By that time, he knew, the letters would be up; and there always existed a remote possibility that his long-expected postal order might have arrived.

Really, it was time it arrived, as Bunter had been expecting it since the beginning of the term.

So the fat Owl stopped, and scanned the letters through his big spectacles.

There were plenty of letters, but there did not seem to be one for Bunter. Once more, it appeared, his titled relations had forgotten his fat existence.

But Billy Bunter was interested in other fellows' letters as well as his own. One for Mauleverer, for instance, might mean that Mauly was getting one of his many remittances, in which case there was a hopeful chance of "touching" Mauly for a small loan to tide him over till his postal order came. But there was not even one for Mauly.

There was one letter, however, on which Bunter's eyes and spectacles fixed with keen interest.

It was addressed to James Warren.

Bunter, of course, knew the tale that was told about Warren of the Fifth—that he was not the fellow whom Harry Wharton knew under that name at home.

As Harry Wharton declined to say a single word on the subject, and as Warren was popular all through the school, that tale had done him little harm. But it had caused him to receive a great deal of attention.

Some fellows had noticed that letters never, or hardly ever, came for Jim Warren. Many had noticed that he never spoke of his former school; Price had been very sedulous in calling attention to that.

So that rare occurrence, a letter for Warren, interested Billy Bunter, especially as it was no business of his.

He blinked at it, and noted that it was addressed in a boyish hand. He wondered whether it was a letter from a former friend at Warren's former school—wherever that was.

Then it occurred to him that something could be learned from the postmark, and he reached the letter down to examine it more closely. Curiosity was Billy Bunter's besetting sin, and it did not even occur to him that he

deserved to be kicked for what he was doing.

But he blinked at the envelope in vain. There was a postmark, certainly, but so blurred that the fat Owl could not make it out. In detective novels valuable clues are picked up from postmarks. In real life they are only too often indecipherable. Thus it was in the present case—much to the disappointment of the inquisitive Owl.

The letter was still in his fat hands when a footstep startled him. Hurriedly he replaced it in the rack, and blinked round with a guilty blink.

Price of the Fifth came quickly up.

He started, and stared at Bunter, surprised to see him out of class in class-time. Bunter, equally surprised to see Price out, blinked at him.

"What are you doing out of class, you young sweep?" snapped Price.

"What are you doing out?" counter-questioned Bunter.

"Oh, clear off!" snapped Price.

"I'm looking for letters—"

"Well, look sharp, and clear!"

As Bunter had already looked for letters and found none, he had no reason to linger. But he did not see being ordered off by a Fifth Form fellow, and he proceeded to blink over all the letters again.

Price watched him, with surly impatience. He had already spotted a letter addressed to Warren—the one that had been in Bunter's fat hands a minute ago.

It was the first time he had struck lucky, so to speak, and this was his chance of penetrating the mysterious new fellow's secrets, if any. But in Bunter's presence, of course, he could not take down a letter addressed to another fellow. It was a risky proceeding at the best of times, and quite impossible under the eyes of a witness.

Why Price wanted him to clear was a mystery to Bunter; the fellow could have looked for letters without bothering about him. But it was quite plain that Price did want him to clear—for which reason Billy Bunter took plenty of time blinking over the rack.

"Look here, get out!" snapped Price, losing patience.

"It's all right, Price," said Bunter coolly. "There's no letter for you. I've looked at all of them."

"I'll look for myself, you fat freak!"

"Well, look, then!" said Bunter.

"I'm not stopping you!"

Price set his thin lips. He had a bad temper, which had not been improved by the banging of his head on his desk. And he had no time to waste—he had to get back to the Form-room.

He grabbed Billy Bunter by the collar. Bunter gave a howl of anticipation. The next moment his anticipations were fulfilled. Price banged his head on the wall, as hard as Coker had banged Price's on the desk.

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter.

"Now clear, you cheffy fat slug!" snarled Price.

"Ow! Beast! Wow!" yelled Bunter.

Price, with a swing of his arm, sent him staggering. He stopped after him, with a foot uplifted.

Billy Bunter did not wait for the kick to land! He flew! He vanished round the nearest corner, like a ghost at cock-crow.

Stephen Price turned back to the rack. He glanced this way and that way, like Moses of old. Warren's letter was before him—and, like Bunter, he surmised from the boyish handwriting that it was probably from

some fellow at Warren's former school. His heart beat fast.

This was his chance—if he dared take it!

If the fellow who called himself Warren, at Grayfriars, was not really James Warren at all, surely there might be some clue to his trickery, in a letter written to him! Especially if it came from some fellow who had known the real James at his former school!

At least, in the latter case, it would reveal the name of that former school—and open up a new field of investigation to Price!

He had resolved to take the letter. For seven or eight mornings he had scanned the rack, before the other fellows, in the hope of spotting one for Warren—and here was one!

But Price lacked the courage of his rascality, and he hesitated. The consequences of taking, and opening, another fellow's letter were serious enough. He had absolutely no scruples on the point, but he feared the consequences if found out.

He hesitated, but he made up his mind at last! With a sudden movement, he picked out Jim Warren's letter and thrust it into his pocket and walked quickly away. His face was a little pale, and he was breathing fast. But he had done it now! The letter was in his pocket, to be opened at his leisure. In a mood of mingled triumph and funk, he hurried away. But triumph predominated over funk.

It was probable, however, that funk would have predominated over triumph, had he been aware that he was not, as he supposed, unwatched.

Billy Bunter had vanished round a corner—but he had not gone far! Bunter wanted to know!

He knew already that there was no letter for Price in the rack. Price knew it, too; he had had ample time to see that it was the case before he drove Bunter off the scene. What was he up to?

Bunter realised that he was up to something! Playing tricks on fellows' letters, it seemed to Bunter. Anyhow, Bunter was going to know!

For which reason the fat Owl of the Remove crept on tiptoe back to the corner, and peered round it.

He barely repressed a squeak of amazement as he saw Price take a letter down, put it in his pocket, and hurry off.

Bunter's head popped back behind the corner, like that of a tortoise into its shell! He knew what he would get from Price if the cad of the Fifth discovered that he had seen his action.

"Oh crikey!" breathed Bunter.

He waited for several minutes, to make sure that Price was gone. Then, after a cautious blink round the corner, he rolled back to the letter-rack. Price had taken away a letter—certainly not addressed to himself!

Bunter wondered whose it was—and guessed already! He knew whose enemy Price was, and on whom he was most likely to play a scurvy trick.

His guess was correct! There was no longer a letter in the rack addressed to James Warren!

It was Jim's letter that Price had purloined.

"Oh crikey!" repeated Bunter. "The beast—banging a fellow's napper—and sneaking a fellow's letter! I'll jolly well tell Warren, in break! I know that!"

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Billy Bunter rolled up the passage to the Remove Form Room. Even Billy Bunter realised that it was high time no arrived there.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Beastly for Bunter!

MR. QUELCH turned a frosty eye on Bunter as he entered.

The fat Owl would have liked to creep quietly to his place, unnoticed by Quelch's gimlet eye! He was not likely to have such luck! Mr. Quelch attached more importance to lessons than Bunter did.

"Bunter!" came Quelch's acid voice. "You have been absent for almost the whole of a class! Where have you been?"

"I—I—I've been—been washing, sir!" stammered Bunter. "My—my fingers were fearfully sticky, sir, and—"

"You have been more than half an hour washing your hands, Bunter?" asked Mr. Quelch in a very deep voice.

"I—I couldn't find the—the soap, sir!" stuttered Bunter. "And—and when I'd found the soap, the—the nail-brush was gone! And then—then I had to hunt for a towel! And then—"

The Removites grinned. Billy Bunter was trying "to account for" the lapse of well over half an hour; but he was not likely to satisfy Quelch by a tale of hunting for soap and towel.

"You need say no more, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch grimly. "As you have wasted so much time you will be kept in during break—"

"Oh lor!"

"And for half an hour after third school—"

"I—I say, sir—"

"Now go to your place, Bunter." Billy Bunter went to his place in rather low spirits.

All the time he had gained was going to be lost again! Instead of dodging work he had merely postponed it! It was rotten luck!

He realised that he might have expected as much from Quelch! The beast was so frightfully downy! Old Capper, the master of the Fourth, would have handed out a gentle chiding—Wiggins, the Third Form beak, would hardly have noticed whether a chap came back to the Form-room or not. Nothing of that kind about Quelch! He was altogether too wary a bird.

Second lesson went on to its end, Bunter failing to enjoy the finish as he had enjoyed the beginning!

It was close on break when he remembered that he had been going to tell Warren about the purloined letter in break. Detained in the Form-room, he could not, obviously, speak to a Fifth Form man and that rotter, Price, would keep the letter, and no doubt read it before Warren could get it back.

It was not Billy Bunter's way to concern himself much about the troubles of others. But he really did want Warren to know about that letter.

He disliked Price intensely—and he rather liked the good-natured, good-tempered Warren. Price had whopped him, and Warren had stopped the whopping a week or two ago. Moreover, Price had banged his head only this morning, and would have kicked him, too, if he hadn't bolted in time. Very likely Warren would punch Price for pinching his letter. That would be all to the good.

As he could not get out of the Form-room himself, he determined to get another fellow to speak to Warren. For which reason he whispered to Frank Nugent:

"Nugent, old chap—"

"Shut up, ass! Quelch's looking!" muttered Frank.

"But I say, that cad Price—"

"Are you talking, Bunter?" came Mr. Quelch's voice.

"Oh, no, sir! I only said to Nugent—"

"Be silent in class, Bunter!"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

Bunter was silent for a couple of minutes. Then he blinked at Nugent again—and Frank turned his head away, to keep him from chattering to him. The fat Owl leaned over towards Johnny Bull.

"I say, Bull, old chap, tell Warren—"

"BUNTER!"

"Oh crikey! I wasn't speaking to Bull, sir!"

"Take fifty lines for talking in class, Bunter!"

"Oh dear!"

Bunter gave it up for the time. When the Remove were dismissed for morning break, and left their places, Bunter grabbed at Harry Wharton's arm.

"I say, Wharton—"

"Bunter, you may keep your place!" said Mr. Quelch. "Sit down at once!"

"Oh, really, sir—"

"Sit down!" barked Mr. Quelch.

Bunter plumped down on his form. The game was up. The Remove marched out and the fat Owl of the Remove was left with his Form-master. Mr. Quelch gave him a list of Latin conjugations to write, in order that his time should not be wasted, and left him to himself.

"Beast!" breathed Bunter, when he was gone.

Bunter began on the Latin verbs. But Latin verbs had no real attraction for Bunter! He soon left his task and rolled over to the Form-room window, where he clambered up to look out into the quad.

At a short distance he spotted Harry Wharton & Co. in a group. He waved a fat hand to them.

But the Famous Five were not looking towards the Form-room, and they did not observe Bunter or his signals.

"I say, you fellows!" squeaked Bunter.

Then the Co. looked round.

"That fat ass Bunter!" said Johnny Bull.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "You asking for more trouble with Quelch, you fat chump?"

"I say, you fellows, come over here—I've got something to tell you!" squeaked the fat Owl. "I say—"

Whack!

Bunter roared.

He spun round from the window.

There, in the Form-room, stood Mr. Quelch, with a cane in his hand, which he had just whacked on Bunter's tight trousers as he called out of the window.

"Ow! Wow!" gasped Bunter. "I say—wow! Ow!"

"Leave that window at once!" barked Mr. Quelch. "Is this how you perform the task I set you, Bunter?"

"Yes, sir! I mean—wow!—no, sir!"

"Go to your desk at once."

Bunter went to his desk, under Quelch's glittering eye. He sat down to Latin conjugations.



Coker thrust the unwilling Price into a chair. "You've got paper and ink," he said. "Now give him a pen, Greene!" "A pip-pip-pen!" stuttered Greene. "What the dickens—" "Price got me five hundred lines," said the infuriated Coker, "and he's going to write them for me, whether he likes it or not!"

Mr. Quelch left him to it. But Bunter did not leave his desk again. One swipe was enough for Bunter, and he was not running any more risks.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Letter from Oakshott!

JIM WARREN went out in break, with a crowd of other Fifth Form men.

Anyone could have seen at a glance that the new fellow was popular in his Form.

Hilton lingered in the corridor for Price. He preferred Warren's company—and since he had taken up football, he had much in common with Warren and little in common with Price. But he remembered that Price had been his pal for terms before Warren came, and he felt some compunction about deserting him entirely.

Price, however, did not want him now. Price was thinking of the letter in his pocket, with which he was going to deal during break.

"Comin' out?" asked Hilton, not very heartily.

"I'm goin' up to the study."

Hilton made an irritable movement.

"Oh, come out, Pricey! It's a ripping morning, and you don't want to frown indoors over a filthy cigarette! Let's get out!"

"You used to come up to the study for a cigarette before that rotter Warren came!" sneered Price.

"Well, I was as silly an ass then as you are now!" snapped Hilton. "I'm not goin' to frown in the study, I know that."

"Who's askin' you to?" sneered Price. "Get after your precious new pal

Warren as soon as you like! Make the most of him before he's kicked out of the school for the spoofer and impostor that he is!"

"I'm fed-up with that!" said Hilton curtly. "Warren's a decent chap—and your best friend wouldn't say the same of you, Pricey! If you can't leave off girdin' at Warren, you can find somebody else to listen to it!"

And with that Cedric Hilton walked out of the House.

Price watched him go, with a sullen, sneering, bitter face. He knew that Hilton was going to join Warren, which he had wanted to do all along. But it suited Price now; he wanted to get rid of Hilton. What he was going to do in the study did not want a witness! It was not, as Hilton supposed, smoking a secret cigarette.

He hurried up to the Fifth Form studies and went into No. 4. Neither Warren nor Hilton was likely to come in during break, and he had the room to himself. He locked the door and took Warren's letter from his pocket.

He had had no chance of opening it so far; he had sat with it in his pocket, unopened, in the Fifth Form Room till break. He had noticed that Jim Warren had gone out of the House immediately the Form was dismissed, without going to look at the letter-rack, as many of the fellows did. He was not expecting letters, which so seldom came for him. Had this letter been still in its place, Warren would not have seen it, though doubtless some other fellow would have noticed it and told him that there was one for him. As matters stood, Warren was not likely to miss the letter.

Price laid it on the table. There was a spirit stove and kettle in the fender,

for tea-making when the study fire was not available. He lighted the stove, and in a minute or two steam was issuing from the spout of the kettle.

What he was going to do with that letter ultimately Price had not decided. That depended on the contents.

But if there was nothing of consequence in it, he was going to seal it up again and slip it back in the rack—and nobody, so far as Price knew, at least, would know that he had ever touched it.

For that reason he had to open it carefully, without leaving a trace.

He held the envelope in the steam of the kettle.

A sound of footsteps in the passage outside made him start guiltily. He listened uneasily till they passed on.

Even Price, mean and envious and unscrupulous as he was, had a feeling of shame at what he was doing. It was so mean and so base that he could not feel quite comfortable about it.

But he did not hesitate. The flap of the envelope came open, and he drew out the folded letter inside.

His heart beat faster as he unfolded the letter. What was it that he was going to learn about his enemy? His eyes devoured the letter, scrawled in a schoolboy hand.

"Oakshott School,
Oakshott,
Essex.

"Dear Warren,—I'd have written before if I'd known where you were, but I've only just found out that you went to Greyfriars this term. I've written to you twice at your home address without getting an answer. I dare say you never got the letters.

"Look here, old man, I don't want to
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be stuffy, but you jolly well know that a fellow can't afford to chuck away five pounds. You promised to settle next term—and you never came back next term. I'm willing to believe that you didn't know then that you weren't coming back to Oakshott, but you jolly well know that I'm still here, and if you want to know what I think, I think it's a bit thick!

"You're not hard up—anyhow, you've talked enough here about your father having pots of money. I hear that he's gone to China, but I suppose he hasn't taken all the pots of money with him—what?"

"Look here, Warren, don't be a cad! Let me have that fiver!"

"Yours, "J. BULLIVANT."

Stephen Price read that letter through, and read it through again. Then he sat gazing at it with gloating eyes.

It was indirect proof but it was proof!

James Warren had been at Oakshott School, Essex! He knew that now. He had left owing a fellow, this Bullivant, five pounds, which he had promised to pay, but never paid.

Was Jim Warren that kind of fellow? He was not.

Price loathed him—disliked him with a deep and bitter rancour. But he knew at the bottom of his heart that it was for his good qualities that he disliked him, not for his bad ones!

He was not deceived by his dislike—and he knew quite well that Jim was the last fellow in the world to take advantage of the fact that he was leaving school to bilk a schoolfellow.

This letter was written to a James Warren quite unlike Warren of the Fifth in character!

Bullivant's letter, though more or less friendly in tone, was contemptuous. But Jim Warren was not a fellow whom anyone would have treated contemptuously.

Price remembered what he had overheard Wharton say—the junior's description of James as a bullying, ill-tempered, hulking, unpleasant brute of a fellow. That description of the real James tallied with the James to whom this letter was addressed.

Neither in looks nor in anything else was Jim Warren of Greyfriars anything like James Warren of Warren Croft, Surrey.

Price gloated over that letter.

Bullivant of Oakshott had written to James Warren, having heard that he was now at Greyfriars—in the hope of getting back the five pounds that James owed him! Price wondered what Jim would have done about it had he received this letter. Perhaps he would have sent Bullivant his five pounds in order to prevent any more letters coming from Oakshott. It was worth five pounds to keep his secret!

But it was as clear as noonday that Jim was not the Warren to whom Bullivant believed that he was writing.

He would have got the letter, but for Price. But it was not intended for him; it was intended for the James who, in some mysterious way, had vanished off the scene, leaving this spoofer to carry on in his name.

What on earth had become of the real James? Price could not doubt that there had been foul play of some sort. How else could James' extraordinary disappearance be accounted for?

Yet the whole thing was puzzling.

Bullivant said that he had written twice to Warren Croft! What had become of those letters! Said the real James somehow got them, and not

taken the trouble to answer? But at Warren Croft, James was supposed to be at Greyfriars. Letters would have been sent on.

It was mysterious and puzzling, and the more Price thought about it, the more tangled and perplexing it seemed.

But one thing stood out clear—the main point was established now—to Price's satisfaction, at least! Jim was not James!

A bell clanged!

Break was over, and the fellows going back to the Form-rooms. Price jumped to his feet.

He had to get back to Prout's Form-room for third school. What was he going to do with this letter?

Slipping it back into the rack would be easy, to be found by Warren after school! And then, of course, Warren would send Bullivant his fiver, and that would be the end of that!

Never!

Suppose Bullivant did not get an answer from Greyfriars, any more than he got an answer from James' home! Was it possible that he might come over to see James?

Price's eyes danced at that thought.

It was a great distance—eighty or ninety miles, at least. More than a hundred by the railway. He was not likely to come! But—he might—and if he did, he would find a fellow who was not James Warren passing under that fellow's name. That would be the finish for Price's enemy!

If only Bullivant came—

Price was going to give him a chance, at least! There was going to be no reply to this letter! Warren was not going to know that it had ever come!

Coolly and quietly, the cad of the Fifth struck a match and set it to the letter in the grate.

He watched J. Bullivant's epistle burn away to the last fragment. That was that!

Then he unlocked the door and left the study. He was just in time to join the last of the Fifth going into the Form-room.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Lost Letter!

"I SAY, you fellows!"
"Poor old Bunter!" said Bob Cherry sympathetically. "He's still hungry! I noticed that Quelch stopped him at the tenth helping—or was it the eleventh, old fat bean?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Like to fill up on bullseyes?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Yes, rather, old chap!"

"Then I'm sorry I haven't any."

"Beast!"

The Famous Five chuckled. It was after dinner when Billy Bunter came looking for them and found them.

Having been kept in after class, Bunter, when he was let out at last, was too hungry, naturally, to think of anything but dinner and count the minutes to that meal. Warren and his purloined letter disappeared entirely from Bunter's mind—dinner occupying his whole thoughts.

But after dinner Bunter remembered.

First things, of course, came first, and Warren's affairs were of very secondary importance compared with dinner. But first things having been dealt with, Bunter could give his fat attention to secondary things. He really did want Jim Warren to have his letter—and still more did he want Jim to kick Price of the Fifth!

"Come for a trot round the quad, old fat man!" said Harry Wharton. "It will shake down those eleven helpings—or was it twelve?"

"It was only three, and you jolly well know it!" grunted Bunter. "I think it's pretty rotten having a beak at the table—some of the beaks lunch in Common-room, and I don't see why Quelch can't, too! Watching every mouthful that goes down a fellow's neck! He jolly well knows that I like steak-and-kidney pie, and that's why he stopped me at the third helping—sheer grumpiness—"

"Cruelty to animals!" said Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But I'm not thinking about dinner!" went on Bunter.

"You're not!" ejaculated the Famous Five together, in a chorus of surprise.

"No!" roared Bunter.

"Have you started thinking about tea already?" asked Bob.

"No, you silly ass—"

"Then you're still thinking about dinner," said Bob positively. "You don't forget one meal till you start thinking of the next."

And the chums of the Remove chortled again. Billy Bunter blinked at them indignantly through his big spectacles.

"I say, you fellows, stop rotting! I'm thinking about that letter of Warren's—"

"Eh, what letter of Warren's?" asked Harry. "What have you got to do with Warren's letters? You'd better not begin meddling with Fifth Form men's letters, as you do with the Remove—"

"Oh, really, Wharton! You see, I saw it in the rack this morning, before break," said Bunter. "I went to see whether there was a letter for me. I believe I told you chaps I was expecting a postal order—"

"I believe you did!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"The belieffulness is terrific."

"Well, it hadn't come," said Bunter.

"There's been some delay in the post! Just like our fatheaded Government, you know—bothering over this Abyssinian business, instead of seeing that a fellow gets his remittances."

"Oh, my hat!"

"But if you fellows like to lend me five bob, and take the postal order when it comes—"

"Good-bye, Bunter!"

"I say, you fellows, don't you start walking off while a chap's talking!" roared Bunter. "I say, I was really speaking about Warren's letter—"

Harry Wharton & Co. had started, but they stopped again.

If anything had happened to a letter for Warren, they were prepared to look into the matter. They all liked the new man in the Fifth—even Wharton, who knew the strange secret of the Fifth Former.

Bunter, unwillingly, dropped the subject of his postal order, and came back to Warren's letter.

"You see, it's gone!" said Bunter.

"You pilfering pie-faced porker!" said Johnny Bull in measured tones. "If you've been snaffling a senior's letter—"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"What have you done with it, you fat ass?" asked Harry.

Billy Bunter glared at them in almost speechless indignation.

Really, their suspicion was a natural one. Bunter never could mind his own business, and on more than one occasion he had handled letters that did not belong to him, and they had even

come open "accidentally" in his fat hands.

So the Famous Five took it for granted that Bunter had had another "accident" with another fellow's letter, and was in dread of the consequences.

"Cough it up!" said Bob. "Warren's a good-tempered chap—he won't report you; he will let you off with a kick, if you give him the letter."

"Beast!" howled Bunter.

"But you'll have to give him the letter, you fat chump!" said Frank Nugent. "For goodness' sake don't say you've lost it, as you did one of Mauly's once."

Bunter gasped with wrath.

"You—you—silly idiot! I never touched it," he howled.

"Didn't you say it was gone?"

"Yes, you beast!"

"And it went without your touching it?" asked Johnny Bull sarcastically.

"Yes, you rotter!"

"Better not tell Warren that! Guard with your left if you do!"

"I tell you—" shrieked Bunter.

"Look here, you fat ass! If you've pinched a letter of Warren's while you were out of the Form-room this morning—" exclaimed Wharton.

"I haven't!" yelled Bunter. "Price did! Price of the Fifth! I saw him!"

"Price!" ejaculated the captain of the Remove, staring.

"Yes, you beast! He came up while I was looking for letters, and banged my napper on the wall to make me clear off. Then he pinched Warren's letter!"

"Draw it mild!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"If you don't believe me—" hooted Bunter.

"Oh, don't be an ass! Does anybody ever believe you?" snapped Johnny. "You should try telling the truth sometimes, if you want people to believe you."

"Why, you—you—you!" gasped Bunter. "I tell you I saw Price pinch Warren's letter from the rack—"

"And he let you see him pinching a letter?" grinned Johnny. "He wanted to get a head's flogging, what?"

"Of course he didn't see me! I was watching him round a corner," said the fat Owl of the Remove. "I wondered what he was up to, and watched him, and he bagged a letter—"

"One for himself, I suppose."

"There wasn't one for him. And when I looked at the rack, after he was gone, Warren's letter wasn't there."

The Famous Five were looking very grave now. They had the lowest possible opinion of Price of the Fifth. But this sounded very steep, even about a fellow like Price. And, as for believing any statement made by Billy Bunter, without proof, that was out of the question. They knew their Bunter too well for that.

"It's all rot!" said Bob, at last. "Even a worm like Price wouldn't do it. He's not a fool like Bunter, doing such things out of fatheadedness—"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Very far from that!" said Harry Wharton dryly. "Whatever Pricey is, he isn't a fool! He's a first-class rotter—and if he took Warren's letter, he's a rotten rascal! But—"

"But he didn't!" said Johnny Bull.

"I saw him!" roared Bunter.

"Gammon! Price was in the Fifth Form Room till break," said Johnny. "I suppose nobody played tricks like Smithy in that Form-room, and Price had to go out and get a wash!"

"He was out of his Form-room, anyhow!" said Bunter. "I couldn't have seen him at the letter-rack, if he wasn't, could I?"

"Oh, I know the answer to that one! You didn't!"

"Beast!"

"Let's go for a trot, now Bunter's done his funny turn!" said Johnny.

"Hold on!" said Harry Wharton.

"If there's really been a letter for Warren, and it's gone, it will have to be found. I suppose Bunter must have had it—"

"Beast!"

"But let's ask a Fifth Form man whether Pricey was out of his Form-room in second school. That will settle it about Price."

"That's a good idea," said Bob. "There's Coker over there. Come on!"

Coker, Potter, and Greene of the Fifth, were walking and talking in the quad—at all events, were walking, and talking—that one, of course, being Horace Coker.

Horace was telling his friends what he thought of Prout for giving him five hundred lines, merely because he had banged a cheeky rotter's head on a desk—after, as Coker pointed out, having warned him to shut up! Coker wanted to know whether a fellow in his—Coker's—position, could be expected to stand this sort of thing. But he did not wait for Potter and Greene to tell him. Coker was quite equal to doing all the talking that was to be done, and he had little use for replies.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" bawled Bob Cherry. "I say, Coker—"

Coker, thus interrupted in the full flow of eloquence, glared round at the Removites.

"Clear off, you cheeky fag!" he snapped.

"We want to ask you something, Coker," said Harry.

"Well, don't!" said Horace. "Just clear off, see?"

"It's about Price—"

"Oh, Price!" Coker relaxed.

"What has that rotter been up to? Spinning rotten yarns again, about a fellow whose boots he ain't fit to clean?"

"Was he out of the Form-room in second school?" asked Harry.

Coker staved.

"What the dickens does that matter to you?" he snapped.

"Well, we want to know," said Harry. "Bunter says he saw him out of the Form-room before break—"

"I jolly well did!"

"Well, he might have," said Potter. "If he looked into Price's study, I dare say he saw him with a cigarette. I fancy that's what he sneaks out of the Form-room for."

The Famous Five gave a general start. This was unexpected confirmation of Billy Bunter's statement.

"Then he was out of the Form-room in second school this morning?" exclaimed Wharton.

"He generally is," said Greene, "just before break."

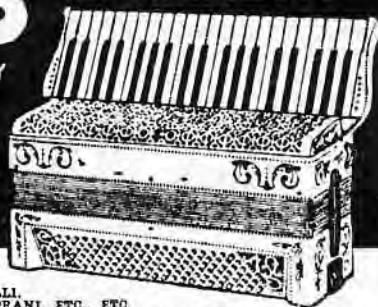
"Oh, my hat! Does Prout let him?"

"He's always got a yarn to spin," said Potter, with a grin. "He gets out

(Continued on next page.)

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before break nearly every morning. It will take Prout about ten centuries to spot that he goes up to his study for a smoke."

"Or twenty!" grinned Greene.

"Great Christopher Columbus!" murmured Bob.

There was a snort from Coker.

"Are you men going to stand here jawing to those fags, or are you going to listen to me?" he demanded.

"Oh, come on!" sighed Potter.

Potter and Greene would have preferred "jawing" to fags, or anything else, to listening to Horace Coker. But they resigned themselves to their fate, and walked on with the indignant and eloquent Horace.

"Perhaps you believe me now?" jeered Bunter.

"I—I think I do," said Harry slowly. "It looks— Anyhow, if you really saw a letter for Warren in the rack, you'd better tell him so. Come along, and we'll find him!"

"Well, the fact is, I'd rather you fellows told him," said Bunter cautiously. "I was going to tell him in break, but that beast Quelch kept me in. But now I've thought it over, I—I'd rather not butt in, personally. You see, Warren's bound to kick Price—"

"Serve him right, if he pinched a letter."

"Oh, yes, that's all right—I want him to kick Price!" explained Bunter. "I hope he'll kick him jolly hard, too! But I don't want Price to kick me, see?" He blinked seriously at the chums of the Remove. "You see, Price will know it was me spotted him and told Warren, and he will take it out of me when Warren's done with him."

"You'll have to chance that, fat-head!"

"That's all very well; but I should get the kicking," objected Bunter. "Now, my idea is this. You tell him, Wharton."

"You fat ass, if I tell Warren you saw Price pinch his letter, it comes to the same thing!"

"I don't mean that!" said Bunter irritably. "You can tell Warren that you saw Price pinch the letter—"

"Wha-a-t?"

"You see, Price did pinch it, and it doesn't matter who saw him. So you can tell Warren you saw him, and—"

"Noooooo!"

Bunter broke off, with a yell, as Wharton grasped him by a fat ear.

"Now let's go and look for Warren," said the captain of the Remove.

Evidently Bunter's astute suggestion did not seem satisfactory to Wharton. Bunter did not know why. It seemed to him a jolly good idea.

"I say, you fellows!" he gasped.

"Come on!" said Harry Wharton. And the Famous Five went to look for Warren of the Fifth, and Bunter, led by a fat ear, went with them.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

In Doubt!

STEPHEN PRICE sat in the arm-chair in his study—slacking, as usual, though not, as was also usual, smoking. He took a cigarette from his pocket, regarded it doubtfully, and put it back again.

Mr. Prout had a suspicious eye on Price that term, and had dropped into the study several times rather unexpectedly. It was safer not to smoke in the study. Moreover, Jim Warren was likely to make a fuss if he found the study reeking with smoke, and Hilton had taken to backing him up on that

point. Price scowled, and relinquished the cigarette.

But if he could not smoke, the black sheep of the Fifth had, at least, agreeable food for thought.

The possibility that "J. Bullivant" might come over from Oakshott to see Warren was very pleasant to think of. And as it was unlikely that J. Bullivant would come of his own accord, Price was thinking out ways and means of making him come.

Somehow or other, Price considered, it ought to be possible to get the fellow over to Greyfriars. After all, James owed him five pounds, which was not a small sum to a schoolboy. It only wanted thinking out.

Price was thinking it out when Jim Warren came in.

The slacker, sprawling in the arm-chair, glanced up at him with a mocking glimmer in his eyes. He wondered whether Warren knew that there had been a letter for him that morning. If so, he was not likely to guess what had become of it.

"Oh, you're here, Price!" said Warren, as he came in. "I've been looking for you."

"You needn't have troubled," answered Price coolly. "I don't want to see you."

"I hear that there was a letter for me this morning," said Warren, unheeding.

Price breathed rather hard. Why had Warren come to him to mention that? He could have no suspicion—none!

"Nothing to do with me, I suppose," said Price, as easily as he could. "I'm not interested in your letters. You don't seem to get a lot, anyhow."

"Did you take it from the rack?" Price jumped.

That utterly unexpected question made his heart almost miss a beat.

"W-what?" he stammered.

"A Remove kid says he saw you take a letter from the rack before the fellows came out in break," said Jim quietly. "Did you?"

Price did not answer. He was collecting his thoughts.

He remembered Bunter at once. He had supposed the fat junior to be safe off the scene when he had purloined the letter. But it flashed into his mind instantly that Bunter had spied on him.

He needed to keep cool. What he had done meant, in all probability, the "sack" from Greyfriars, if it could be brought home to him. Taking another fellow's letter, and deliberately destroying it, was an offence that Dr. Locke was not likely to deal with leniently.

"I'm waiting for your answer, Price," said Warren quietly. "I don't like to think that even you would do such a thing; but I've got to know."

"I know nothing of your letter," said Price sullenly. "If it came, and if you haven't taken it, I suppose it's still in the rack."

"Did you take it?"

"That question's an insult," said Price loftily. "I suppose you think you can insult me as much as you like, because you're strong enough to knock me out in a scrap. Well, I can't kick you out of the study; you're too hefty for me. But I can refuse to answer an insulting question."

Jim looked at him dubiously. He had listened to Billy Bunter's tale with doubt. But he had ascertained that there had really been a letter, and that it was no longer in the rack.

"I'm bound to go into this, Price," he said at last. "Bunter, of the Remove, seems to have been out of his

form-room in second school, and he went to the rack to look for letters. You came up and drove him off. He watched you round a corner, and saw you take a letter. So he says, at any rate."

Price laughed.

"You're a new man here," he said. "But if you ask any fellow, he will tell you that that fat young scoundrel, Bunter, has been kicked and whopped a dozen times for meddling with other fellows' letters. If you've missed one, and Bunter was anywhere near the spot, you'd better ask Bunter for it."

"I've thought of that," admitted Warren. "But if Bunter pinched the letter, why should he come and speak to me about it at all?"

"I'm not good at riddles."

"Did you take a letter from the rack at all, as he says you did?"

"That's my business."

"You'd better speak out, Price. This is a serious matter. I don't want to be suspicious, but I've noticed, like every other man in the Fifth, that nearly every morning for more than a week you've got out of the Form-room before break on one yarn or another. The fellows think you've got out to smoke, but—"

"Suppose I did?" sneered Price.

"If you did that's no concern of mine. But if you got out to watch the rack for letters, and pinch one belonging to me, that's a different matter. And it looks like it now. You're so deeply interested in my personal affairs, you see, you can't let them drop," said Warren contemptuously. "Bunter says he looked over all the letters, and there was none for you. If you took one, it was not yours. Did you?"

"Was there a letter at all?" said Price carelessly. "You seem to have only that fat fool's word for it."

"There's no doubt about that, I've asked Prout," answered Warren. "He says there was a letter for me put in the rack with the rest."

"Well, I know nothing of it."

"Did you take it?" demanded Warren.

"No," said Price, between his closed lips.

Even Price jibbed a little at the lie direct. But there was no help for it now. He had left himself no loophole of escape.

"The letter's gone," said Warren.

Price forced a laugh.

"Ask Bunter for it," he said. "I saw him at the rack meddling with the letters with nobody about, and knocked his head on the wall as a warning to let other fellows' letters alone. That's all."

Warren watched him keenly.

But Price was quite cool now. It was dismaying to find that he had been watched taking the letter. But the witness, fortunately for him, was only Bunter, whose inquisitiveness and untruthfulness, were equally well known to all the school. Price felt safe.

"A letter missing, and Bunter on the spot," he said, with a laugh. "Ask any fellow in the school what that means."

"I know; but—"

"I dare say he had the letter when I scooted him off," added Price coolly. "You see, you're such a jolly mysterious person, Warren, that a lot of chaps are curious about you. I dare say Bunter was after information. He's an inquisitive little beast! If he's opened it and read it, it may suit him to land it on another fellow—if he can."

"I suppose it's possible," said Warren slowly. "But"—he paused—"but I don't believe Bunter had the letter."



"Back up, you fellows!" roared Bob Cherry. In the twinkling of an eye the Greyfriars juniors had hold of James. Before the burly youth knew what was happening, he was extended on the floor of the carriage, with six pairs of feet planted on him, pinning him to the floor. "Let me get up, you cubs!" he roared.

"You can believe what you like, of course," drawled Price. "But we'll have this out plain, if you please. If you accuse me of taking your letter, I'm going straight to the Head, and I'll ask you to come with me and repeat it before Dr. Locke. Do you accuse me or not?"

"I can't do that, when it rests only on the word of a young sweep like Bunter. I don't quite know what to think about it."

"That's that, then!" said Price. "And I'll see Bunter about it, and give him a tip about telling such lies about a Fifth Form man." His thin lips closed viciously.

Jim Warren looked at him very uncertainly. He was disposed to believe Bunter's story; but certainly Price had made out a good case.

Almost any fellow at Greyfriars asked for judgment on the matter, would have said that it was Bunter who had purloined the missing letter. He had done such things before; and Price of the Fifth certainly never had.

"I shall speak to Bunter about it," said Warren at last.

"Do! And tell him what's coming to him!"

"If you had the letter, Price, and if you hand it over, I'll let the matter drop. I don't want to make a row in the school."

"Thank you for nothing!" sneered Price.

"Then, if Bunter sticks to his story, I shall advise him to report the matter to his Form-master," said Warren.

"That's what he ought to do, if he really saw a fellow pinch a letter, and the fellow refuses to give it up."

"Go ahead!" said Price.

And Warren left the study.

Price laughed as he went. But when he had kicked the door shut he ceased to laugh. Nothing could be proved against him; he was safe. But he did not want talk on the subject of the missing letter. That, however, could not be helped. And Price could only make up his mind to indemnify himself by making Billy Bunter "sit up" severely for knowing too much.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Likes Latin!

BILLY BUNTER, the following day, was leading a life which might be likened to that of a hunted hare.

Price of the Fifth was after him. Price did not exactly hunt him up and down staircases and passages, but he kept an eye open for Bunter, and whenever he saw him he kicked him, if the fat Owl could not escape in time.

Exercise was good for Bunter. He needed a lot, and he never had enough. But that day he had exercise enough to satisfy the most strenuous athlete.

Price caught him in the quad after prayers, and kicked him. He spotted him again after brekker, and kicked him again. He waited for him in break, and lauded one. After morning school Bunter hunted cover, and did not reappear till the dinner-bell rang. But Price kicked him on his way to dinner, and kicked him again when he came out after that meal.

In the Remove Form Room, in the afternoon, Billy Bunter sat very uncomfortably on his form. So many kicks made Bunter desirous of sitting on the softest down, instead of hard oak.

He squirmed on his form, and once or twice the gimlet eye of Quelch fixed on him warningly.

The rest of the Remove were rather amused.

By that time, of course, Bunter had told his tale to everybody who would listen—but, sad to relate, he found few believers.

Nobody ever believed anything that Billy Bunter stated, as a matter of course. That was one of the drawbacks of being an habitual fibber.

Even if Bunter had remarked that it was raining a fellow would have looked out of the window to ascertain whether it really was raining before accepting it as a fact!

In that respect Bunter was a dog with a bad name!

Lots of fellows thought that Price was none too good for the action Bunter attributed to him. Fisher T. Fish remarked that he wouldn't put it past him. The Famous Five agreed that he was warm enough for anything.

But if it rested on Bunter's word, nearly everybody was prepared to dismiss Price without a stain on his character, so to speak!

If someone had had the curiosity to open another fellow's letter and read it, the unanimous verdict was that Billy Bunter was the someone!

Even if he had not been on the spot, he was open to suspicion! And he had been on the spot!

It really was awful for Bunter! He was not accustomed to telling the truth! It was a thing he seldom did! So when, on a rare occasion, he did tell the truth it was rather a blow to him not to be believed.

Bunter was in the position of the boy

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BUNTER TELLS the TRUTH!



(Continued from page 13.)

in the fable who cried "Wolf!" so often when there was no wolf that nobody believed him when the wolf really came!

Had the fellows believed Bunter they would very soon have stopped Price. But what they believed was that Bunter was spinning one of his yarns and had told his usual whoppers—selecting Price as the victim! And a fellow who was accused of so mean an action as purloining another fellow's letter had a right to take it out of his accuser in kicking!

Warren had advised Bunter to put it before his Form-master. Harry Wharton & Co. had backed up that advice. Bunter declined to do anything of the sort. So what were fellows to believe?

But Bunter was sadly conscious of the fact that Mr. Quelch would not have dreamed of believing him without proof—and where was the proof?

It was his word against Price's—and Price's, though not very reliable, was ever so much the better of the two!

So Bunter sat in class, squirming uncomfortably and looking forward with dismay to dismissal.

Generally Bunter looked forward to the end of class with longing. But circumstances alter cases. Now he did not doubt that Price of the Fifth would be waiting for the Remove to come out.

Lightning never strikes twice in the same place. But a boot does! And Bunter really felt that he could not stand any more of Price's boot on his tight trousers.

When Mr. Quelch gave the signal for dismissal Bunter heard it with regret. Instead of barging forward to be the first out of the Form-room Billy Bunter lingered behind. He whispered to Skinner as he went:

"I say, Skinner, if Price is in the passage tell him I'm detained till six, will you?"

"I'll watch it!" grinned Skinner.

"Beast!"

Bunter remained in the Form-room after the other fellows had gone. Mr. Quelch, busy with papers at his desk, did not observe him for some minutes.

The fat Owl remained—quaking! Price, not seeing him come out, might suppose that he was detained, and not wait any longer. On the other hand, he might guess that Bunter was banking on exactly that—and wait!

Mr. Quelch stepped away from his desk, and his eyes fell on Bunter. He stared at the fat junior.

"Bunter, why are you still here?"

"I—I—I—" stammered Bunter. "I—I'd like to go through my prose again, sir, if—if you don't mind. I—I'm afraid it—it wasn't very good."

Mr. Quelch gazed at him, petrified.

Last lesson had been a Latin prose paper. Bunter's, certainly, wasn't very good—in fact, it was very bad! But for Bunter to care whether it was good or bad was amazing! For Bunter to want to go through it again, instead of

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scuttling off at the earliest possible moment, was absolutely astounding.

"Bunter, do I hear you aright?" ejaculated Mr. Quelch at last.

"Oh, yes, sir!" gasped Bunter. "M-may I have my paper and—and do it over again, sir?"

Remove fellows had sometimes got detentions, but no Remove fellow had ever been known to ask for a detention before!

Billy Bunter was asking for it now—in every sense of that phrase!

Mr. Quelch's jaw set grimly.

He could not suppose that Bunter meant this! He could only suppose that it was some sort of a fatuous jest at his expense. Bunter was trying, somehow, to pull his leg!

"You desire to write your paper over again, Bunter?" demanded Mr. Quelch in voice reminiscent of the filing of a saw.

"Oh, yes, sir! I—I'm rather keen on Latin, sir—" stammered Bunter.

"Indeed?" said Mr. Quelch grimly.

"Well, I shall grant your request, Bunter! I have not the slightest belief in your statement! I presume that this is some absurd, impudent, and insensate jest! But since you have expressed the wish, for whatever reason, it shall be gratified."

Mr. Quelch sorted out Bunter's smudgy, blotchy, smeary paper from a pile on his desk.

"You will write this over again, Bunter! You will not leave the Form-room till it is completed! I shall expect the second paper to be better than the first."

"Oh! Thank you, sir!" gasped Bunter.

He sat down to the paper! Without some pretext he could not remain in the Form-room. With a pretext he could. Price could wait in the passage as long as he liked now!

Bunter's relief was so evident that Mr. Quelch was quite puzzled. He looked long and hard at the fat Owl, seated at his task. Then he quitted the Form-room, perplexed. If this was a jest of Bunter's, Quelch did not see where the joke came in! If it was an outbreak of a sudden desire for knowledge it was very, very remarkable in Bunter!

Really, it was a puzzle, and the Remove master had to give it up.

He passed Price of the Fifth, loafing in the corridor, as he went away; but he did not connect Price's presence there with Bunter's new and surprising thirst for knowledge! It had to remain a riddle to Mr. Quelch—and he did not guess that Price was the answer to it!

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Hunted and Harried!

"YOU silly ass!" roared Harry Wharton.

There was a general jump in Study No. 1.

The Famous Five were at tea there, when the door was suddenly hurled open, and Billy Bunter hurtled in like a fat cannon-ball.

So fast was Bunter going that he could not stop himself, and he crashed into the tea-table and set it rocking wildly.

The teapot went over—the milk-jug followed suit—and cups and saucers and plates danced right and left.

A splash from the teapot caught the captain of the Remove across the knees, and he found it hot. He jumped, and roared.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What?"

"Urrgh!" gasped Bunter breathlessly. He grabbed at the rocking table to

steady himself. "Urrgh! I say, you fellows—Urrghh!"

"You howling fathead!" yelled Frank Nugent. "What do you mean by barging in like a mad bull?"

"Urrgh! I say, that beast Price—"

There was a patter of footsteps in the Remove passage. Then the chums of the Remove understood. Price was in chase, and Billy Bunter had had one more of his hairbreadth escapes!

"Kick him out and let Price mop him up!" growled Johnny Bull, rubbing a splash of milk from his waistcoat.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Oh, let him rip!" grunted Wharton. "I'm fed-up with that cad Price and his stunts! He's not going to chase fellows up this passage, anyhow! If he puts his cheeky nose in here sly something at it."

"Good egg!" grinned Bob, and he picked up a pat of butter ready.

"I say, you fellows, here he comes!" squeaked Bunter, in alarm, dodging round the table. "I say, I let Quelch keep me in a whole hour to dodge the beast—and then he caught me on the stairs."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I say, you fellows, you collar him and—smash him up—Oh crickey! Here's the beast!"

Stephen Price looked in. His eyes gleamed across the study at the Owl of the Remove. Bunter backed into the farthest corner.

"Keep out of here, Price!" snapped Harry Wharton.

"We're rather particular in this study!" explained Nugent. "No doubtful characters allowed in here."

Price scowled as the juniors chuckled.

"Turf that fat cad out then," he said.

"I want him!"

"Go on wanting!" suggested Bob Cherry.

"The wantfulness may continue till esteemed further notice!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I say, you fellows, he had that letter—"

"You hear him!" said Price. "I'm going to kick the fat brute till he owns up that he was telling lies yesterday."

"Well, I like that!" howled Bunter indignantly. "I wasn't telling lies, and you jolly well know it, you Fifth Form cad."

Bunter almost forgot that he was funky, in his wrath and indignation. Bunter never liked to own up to telling untruths, when he really was doing so, which was often! But to own up to telling untruths when he was actually telling the truth, was altogether too much to ask.

"I say, you fellows, he had that letter of Warren's!" gasped Bunter. "If there was a remittance in it, he pinched it! That's why he's trying to put it on to me."

Price, with glinting eyes, made a step into the study. Bob Cherry's hand went up, and there was a whizz as the pat of butter flew.

Bob's aim was good! The butter landed fair and square on Price's sharp nose and squashed there.

"Goal!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oooo-oooo!" gasped Price, and he rushed in with clenched fists. "You young rotter, I'll—I'll—"

Whizz! came a hassock across the study! It caught Price of the Fifth on the side of the head, and he went over with a bump.

"Give him the jam!" shouted Johnny Bull.

Price did not wait for the jam! He realised that he had rather woke up a hornets' nest in Study No. 1! He wanted Bunter—but he did not want

the jam! He jumped up and backed out hurriedly.

Billy Bunter rolled across to the door and shut it.

"I say, you fellows, I'll hang on here a bit till that bully clears," he said. "He'll be watching for me, if I go down to tea. I'll tea here, if you like."

"The likefulness is not preposterous, my esteemed Bunter."

Bunter turned a deaf ear to that remark. He pulled a chair to the table and sat down.

The Famous Five eyed him, but they did not say him nay. And a hearty welcome was not necessary to Bunter. Anything short of being kicked out was good enough for him. He grabbed provender, and began.

Harry Wharton & Co., in fact, were in a doubtful frame of mind about the Owl of the Remove. If he really had seen Price "pinch" Warren's letter, it was rough luck he was getting, there was no doubt about that. If he had pinched it himself, he deserved all he got, and more. And they really could not make up their minds one way or the other.

"I say, you fellows," said Bunter, with his mouth full. "I say, I think you ought to stand by a Remove man, with a Fifth Form cad hunting him like this! You wouldn't let him treat any other Remove man like it."

"If you've told lies about him, you've asked for it!" grunted Johnny Bull. "And it looks as if you have."

"Oh, really, Bull! I tell you I saw him take Warren's letter! I was watching him all the time. I jolly well know that's what he got out of the Form-room for. You know he's got his knife into Warren! Price can't stand a really decent chap—that's why he doesn't like me."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"He's got the letter now," went on Bunter. "I fancy there was a remittance in it. In fact, I know there was! Price has pinched it, see?"

It was like Bunter to add trimmings to his tale.

"How do you know what was in the letter, if it wasn't you that pinched it?" demanded Harry Wharton.

"I—I mean—"

"Well, what do you mean?"

"I mean, I—I mean, I'm certain of it!" stammered Bunter. "Price is always hard up, losing money on gee-gees, and so on. Everybody knows. I dare say there was a banknote in the letter. In—fact, I—I heard it rustle when I had it in my hands—"

"You had it in your hands!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"I—I mean, no, I—I never touched it, of course!" said Bunter hurriedly. "I'm not the fellow to touch another fellow's letter, as you fellows know! Besides, I only took it down to look at the postmark, and I put it back when that beast Price came along."

"Spying, as usual!" grunted Bull. "Beast! Well, I believe—I mean, I know there was a banknote in that letter. Price had it! See? That's why he's so waxy," said Bunter. "I say, is there any more cake?"

"You blithering idiot!" said Harry Wharton. "If you go about calling Price a thief, you'll get taken up before the Head!"

"Better stick to the first edition!" grinned Bob.

"I say, is there any more cake?"

"No, you cormorant."

"Pretty measly spread to ask a fellow to! I wonder if Mauly's finished tea yet! I say, you fellows, walk up the passage with me, will you, in case that beast Price is hanging about? I

want to see old Mauleverer about something very particular."

"Bow-wow!"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter opened the door cautiously and peered out through his big spectacles. Price was not to be seen.

He rolled out and headed for Lord Mauleverer's study.

"Look out, Bunter!" yelled Tom Brown, who was in the doorway of Study No. 2.

Billy Bunter blinked round in alarm.

"Oh crikey!" gasped the hapless fat Owl, as Price of the Fifth appeared round the corner. "Oh crumbs!"

He raced up the passage for Study No. 12. After him cut Price of the Fifth! Bunter had a start, however, and he beat Price by a short head, and bolted into Lord Mauleverer's study.

Mauly, who was resting after tea on

his study sofa, sat up and stared in surprise, as Bunter slammed and locked the door.

"Begad!" ejaculated Lord Mauleverer. "What's that game, Bunter?"

"Ow! That beast Price—" gasped Bunter.

Lord Mauleverer chuckled and settled down again.

"I say, Mauly—"

"Yaas."

"Had tea?"

"Yaas."

"Anything in the euphoard?"

"Yaas."

"Can I have it?"

"Yaas."

Billy Bunter rolled to the study euphoard. He blinked into it hopefully.

He failed to discern any sign of food-stuffs. There were some crockeries on

(Continued on next page.)

(1)

Three fellows from the Irish coast
The rolls of Greyfriars School can
boast,
And who can say which shines the
most,

Fitzgerald, Desmond, Gwynne?

Pat Gwynne, perhaps—at any rate,

He has the chance to scintillate,

For he's a Sixth Form Potentate,

The "highest class" he's in!

(2)

Yes, Gwynne is quite a good old
horse!

I wouldn't tell him so, of course;

He might reply to me with force,

He's Second Prefect now!

And in his room he keeps a thing

Which he can wield with hefty swing,

It's guaranteed to smart and sting,

And make you say: "Ow-wow!"



(4)

Like Hoskins, very often he's
At work on the piano keys,
But (unlike Hoskins) plays to
please!

We love to hear him thump!

His pieces are of every grade,

Sonata, song and serenade,

And Hoskins (jealous, I'm afraid)
Considers him a chump!



(6)

Now this was just the reason why

I didn't want to catch his eye,

He'd given me some lines, which I

Had not had time to write!

I therefore started to explain

That I had dropped them down a drain,

But I would write them all again

And bring them there that night!

(7)

He chuckled: "That was what I feared!
You know, it's really rather weird

How many lines have disappeared

In fires, or down the drain!

Hard luck! But still, I think it's fair

To teach you to take much more care!

So just bend over that armchair!"

And Gwynne picked up a cane!



(8)

I will not soil my fountain pen

By telling you what happened then!

My voice was loud enough for ten,

In fact, I nearly burst!

I changed my mind upon the spot.

Is Gwynne so decent? No, he's not!

In Greyfriars School, of all the lot,

That blighter is the worst!



(9)

But still, I had my job to do,
And told him, "Just a word with
you!

I've come here for an interview

Start talking, please!" I said.

He did! He started with a roar,

"I don't know what you've come

here for,

But what you'll get—" I saw

the door,

And opened it and fled!

the shelves, and in the lower part of the cupboard an old footer, a broken tennis racket, and an empty box.

Bunter blinked at them. The Owl of the Remove had the stowage capacity of an ostrich. But even Bunter could not eat crockery-ware, or footballs, or rackets, or old boxes.

He turned his spectacles on Mauleverer again.

"I say, Mauly——"

"Yaas!" yawned his lordship.

"Didn't you know there wasn't anything to eat in the cupboard?"

"Yaas."

"You beast!" roared Bunter. "Is that why you said I could have it?"

"Yaas."

"Beast!" roared Bunter.

Lord Mauleverer chuckled. Billy Bunter glared at him with a glare that might have cracked his spectacles.

Not for a quarter of an hour did he venture to open Mauly's door and blink out into the passage. But Price of the Fifth was gone, and—for the time at least—the wicked ceased from troubling, and the weary were at rest.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Still Running!

"WHAT about me for goal?" asked Billy Bunter.

Bunter propounded that conundrum after dinner on Wednesday.

Harry Wharton & Co were getting ready for the train which was to take them over to St. Jim's to play football. It was rather a long trip, and the footballers had to get off immediately after dinner. They really had not very much time to waste on Billy Bunter, important fellow as he was. But that question caused them to give the fat Owl attention—especially Squiff, who was custodian for the Remove.

"You for goal!" repeated Harry Wharton.

"Yes, old chap! You know how keen I am on soccer," said Bunter. "I don't always turn up at practice, I know, but then, I don't need so much as you fellows! I'm really fearfully keen on the game. And you know how I keep goal!"

"Yes, rather!" agreed Bob Cherry. "Like a sack of coke!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Squiff isn't much good, really," went on Bunter. "The fact is, you're rather a dud in goal, Field, if you don't mind my mentioning it."

"Not at all!" said Sampson Quincey Isley Field cheerfully. "Talk any rot you like, old fat man! I suppose you must talk—and you can't talk anything else."

"I say, Wharton, you haven't answered me——"

"The answer is in the negative," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "You see, you could hardly squeeze into a goal without the posts being put wider apart—and the St. Jim's men mightn't agree to that."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the footballers. "You silly ass!" howled Bunter. "I'm not joking! Look here, I really want to come over to St. Jim's to-day. It's important! I'll play centre-forward if you like!"

"Thanks!" gasped Wharton. "I can see myself standing out to put you in, old porpoise! Quite!"

"Well, I'm a better man at the game, as you know," argued Bunter. "I hope you're not conceited enough to think you're a better centre-forward than I am."

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"I am!" declared the captain of the Remove. "The fact is, I'm fearfully conceited—on that point."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I'm as good in one place as another," said Bunter. "I'm an all-round man, really——"

"You are!" chuckled Bob.

"The all-roundfulness is terrific!" chorled Hurree Jamsel Ram Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't cackle! I can play half quite as well as forward——"

"Quite!" assented Wharton.

"Well, then, leave Browney out and put me in as centre-half!" urged Bunter.

"Browney's a sport—he wouldn't mind standing out to make room for a better man."

"Not in the least!" chuckled Tom Brown.

"You hear what Browney says, Wharton——"

"Yes—and now you hear what I say—roll off, and don't bother!" said the captain of the Remove. "You've done your funny turn—now travel!"

"Well, look here," said Bunter. "I want to go over to St. Jim's to-day, see? I'll come and watch the game, if you won't play me."

"No law against that," said Harry. "The fare's pretty steep; but come along, by all means, if you like."

"I suppose one of you fellows will lend me the fare?"

"The supposeness is preposterous!"

"Your supposer's a bit out of gear, I think," remarked Bob Cherry.

"You'll lend me the fare, won't you, Smithy? You've got lots of money."

"And lots of sense to look after it!" remarked the Bouncer.

"I say, you fellows, wait while I go and find Mauly and speak to him——"

"What-ho!" said Bob. "Never mind if we lose the train and scratch the match."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you beasts, I want to go over to St. Jim's!" howled Bunter. "That beast Price will be hunting me—while you fellows are away, see?"

"Oh, that's it, is it?" chuckled Bob. "I fancied it wasn't all keenness on soccer."

"Come on," said Harry. "We've got to catch the motor-bus at the corner to get to the station. Good-bye, Bunter!"

"Don't walk off while a chap's talking," roared Bunter. "I tell you I want to go over! Toddy, old chap, be a pal——"

Peter Todd paused.

"You really want to go over?" he asked.

"Yes, old fellow," said Bunter eagerly. "I say——"

"If Bunter wants to go over, no reason why he shouldn't, is there?" asked Peter Todd. "Here goes!"

He grasped Bunter by his fat shoulders and up-ended him. Bunter went over with a roar.

"Yaroo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Remove footballers.

"Yow-ow-woop!" yelled Bunter. The fat Owl had stated that he wanted to go over. Now he had gone over! Still he did not seem satisfied.

"Like to go over again?" asked Peter affably. "Jump up! I'll make you go over——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!" bellowed Bunter.

He did not get up till the footballers were gone. Going over in that manner was not what Bunter wanted, after all.

Harry Wharton & Co. went for their train—sad to relate, forgetting the fat existence of William George Bunter.

The football match with Tom Merry & Co., at St. Jim's, somehow washed

Billy Bunter, important as he was, out of their minds. Indeed, to the Removites, that match was more important than the First Eleven match with St. Jim's, which was to take place the following week.

Billy Bunter, as he wandered on his lonely own that half-holiday, was not wasting any thought on the junior match at St. Jim's, or the senior St. Jim's match, either. The exploits of Harry Wharton & Co. on the soccer field interested him no more than the performances of Wingate and the great men of the Sixth and Fifth. Bunter, that afternoon, was thinking chiefly about Price, and keeping a wary eye open for that rancorous and revengeful youth.

Bunter was still leading a hunted and harried life.

Price, certainly, would have preferred the whole matter of the purloined letter to fall into oblivion. But it had been too much talked of for that. When the affair was once talked up and down the school, Price had no choice but to take up an attitude of indignation. Letting Bunter say what he liked unpunished was as good as admitting the charge.

That consideration, added to Price's bitter and revengeful temper, made him implacable.

Bunter was really leading a dog's life these days; which was hard on a fellow, who, contrary to his usual manners and customs, had told the truth!

The sight of a number of Fifth Form men coming out of the House drove the fat Owl into flight. Price was not among them—but Bunter did not linger to ascertain that fact.

He bolted into the Cloisters.

The hapless Owl's luck was out! Price of the Fifth, who did not venture to smoke in his study since Mr. Front had grown so watchful, had retired to the seclusion of the old Cloisters for a quiet cigarette.

He grinned and threw away the cigarette, however, as he spotted Bunter. As the fat Owl came rolling along, Price stepped out from behind one of the old stone pillars and grasped him by the collar.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter.

His little round eyes almost popped through his big round spectacles as he blinked at Price in startled terror.

"Ow! Beast! Leggo!" yelled Bunter. Bang!

Bunter's bullet head tapped on the stone.

The yell that came from Bunter awoke all the echoes of the old Cloisters.

"Are you going to own up that you were telling lies the other day?" asked Price gently.

"You beast, you know I wasn't——"

Bang!

"Yaroooh!"

In sheer desperation Bunter kicked. His kick landed on Price's shin; and the end of the Fifth, with a howl of anguish, released him and hopped.

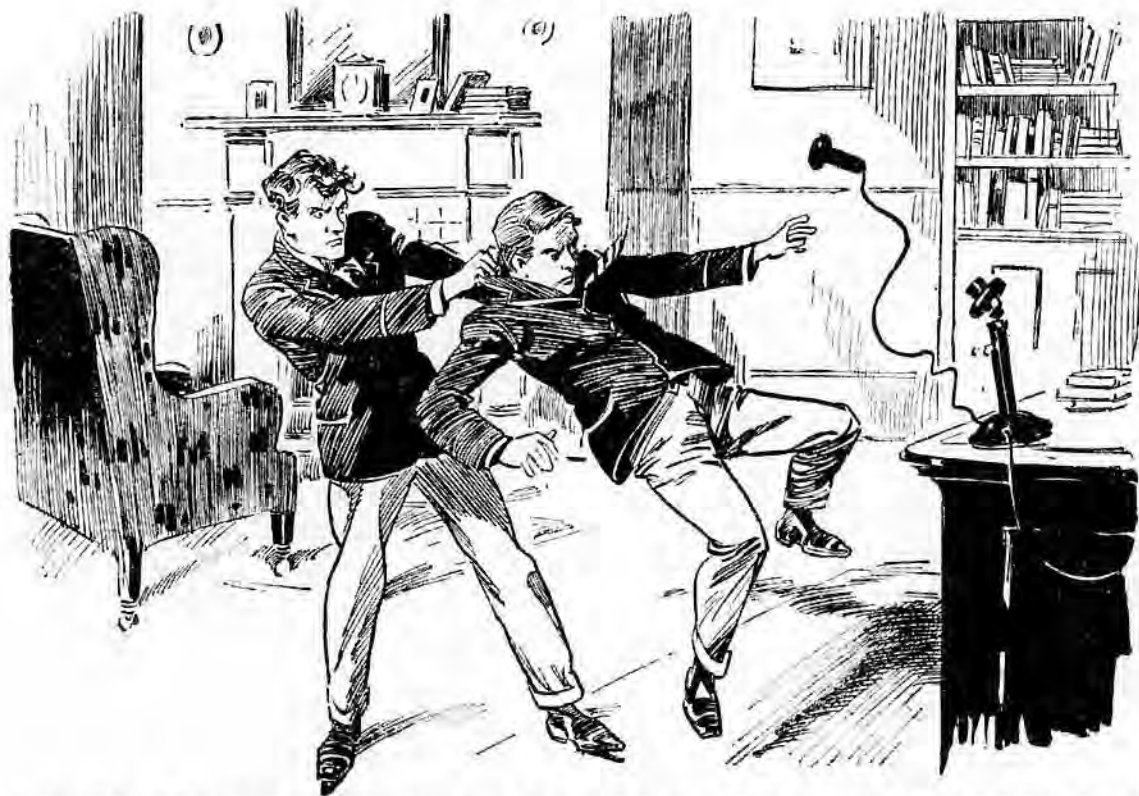
The next moment he was jumping at Bunter again. But a moment was enough for Bunter! He flew!

He came out into the quad at a speed which showed that, in certain circumstances, Bunter had a chance for the school hundred yards. After him came Price, white with rage.

Perhaps it was fortunate for Bunter that Coker of the Fifth was coming along! It was not fortunate for Coker! Bunter did not even see him till he crashed—and Coker went over sideways, like an up-rooted tree. He landed on one elbow with a roar.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter, reeling from the shock.

Price came pelting up. He grabbed Bunter by the neck.



Coker made two long strides and grabbed Price by the back of the collar. The black sheep of the Fifth was dragged away from the telephone. "Oh! Urrrh!" he spluttered. "You lying worm!" roared Coker. "Using another fellow's name on the phone. Get out, you sneaking toad!"

"Ow! Leggo!" yelled Bunter. "I say, Coker! Make him leggo!"

Which was rather cool, considering that Bunter had up-ended the great Horace! But Coker of the Fifth had his own reasons for heeding the appeal.

He scrambled to his feet.

"Let that kid go, Price!" he snapped.

"Mind your own business!" snarled Price. "You know what the young rotter has been saying about me—"

"Yes, and I think it's jolly likely to be true, too!" retorted Coker. "You're that sort! Let him go, or I'll jolly well punch you!"

Price was not the fellow to argue with Horace Coker's leg-of-mutton fists. He gritted his teeth and let Bunter go. The fat Owl vanished like a fat rabbit.

"And now," said Coker, "I want you, Price."

"What do you mean, you fool?"

"I've been looking for you! I fancied I should find you smoking in some corner on a half-holiday," said Coker disdainfully. "Well, I've found you! Come up to my study."

"I won't!"

Coker pushed back his cuffs.

"Where will you have it?" he inquired.

Price, it appeared, did not want anywhere. Coker linked arms with him, and walked him off to the House!

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Hard Lines!

POTTER and Greene, of the Fifth Form, stared. They were in the study when Horace Coker arrived there with Price. Both of them were booked for games-practice with the First Eleven that afternoon; but it was not yet time to

change; and they were discussing their chances of figuring in the big match next week, when Coker happened.

But they forgot soccer as Coker appeared in the doorway, his arm linked in Price's. Coker had a grim and determined expression on his face. Price was looking a good deal like a wildcat.

What Coker wanted him in his study for, Price could not begin to guess; but he had no doubt that it was something unpleasant. Price, it was clear, did not want to come in; but he came.

Headless of the surprised stares of his study-mates, Coker kicked the door shut.

"You can sit down, Price!" he said.

Price showed no desire to sit down. Coker shoved him into a chair at the table, and he sat down quite suddenly.

"What on earth's this game?" inquired Potter.

"Where's Virgil?" asked Coker.

"Eh? On the shelf!"

"Hand it over!"

Potter, more surprised than ever, handed over the volume of P. Vergilius Maro.

It was time, no doubt, that Coker started on the lines that Mr. Prout had awarded him on Monday morning. Prout had asked for them on Tuesday; and he was likely to ask still more emphatically on Wednesday, if they were not handed in.

If Coker had decided to spend that half-holiday getting his lines done, it was a sensible proceeding on Coker's part. But why he had brought Stephen Price to the study was a great mystery.

"Give Price a pen, Greene!" said Coker.

"Eh?" ejaculated Greene.

"Getting deaf?" asked Coker.

"Did you say give Pip-pip-Price a

pip-pip-pen?" stammered Greene. "What the dickens—"

"He can't write lines without a pen!" said Coker.

"Is Price going to write lines here?" asked the mystified Potter. "I didn't know you had lines from Prout, Pricey."

"I haven't!" yelled Price.

"Then what the thump lines are you going to write?"

"Mine!" said Coker, before Price could reply. "Price got me five hundred lines on Monday. He's going to write them for me."

"Oh!" gasped Potter and Greene together.

Price looked at Coker as if he could have bitten him.

"Write your lines!" he howled.

"That's it!" said Coker, with a nod.

"I think it's only fair! You got me the lines from Prout! Well, you can write them! Make your fist as much like mine as you can! Anything will do for an old ass like Prout—but you may as well be careful."

"Do you think I'm going to write five hundred lines for you on a half-holiday?" shrieked Price.

"I've said so."

"Then you're jolly well mistaken! I'm getting out of this!" Price jumped up from the chair and made a rush for the door.

Horace Coker gripped him by the shoulder, spun him round, and slammed him against the table. The table rocked.

Price, staggering against the table, panted. Potter and Greene looked on, like fellows in a dream.

They were rather used to high-handed ways from Horace Coker. But this struck them as rather the limit, even for old Horace.

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"Coker!" gasped Potter.

"Coker!" gasped Greene.

"You men needn't jaw," said Coker. "I've thought this out, and decided that it's only fair. If Price wants a scrap first, I'm ready and willing to give him all the scrapping he wants. But he's going to write those lines—and if Prout ain't satisfied with them, I'm sorry for Price, that's all!"

"You rotten bully!" yelled Price.

"Bully!" repeated Coker derisively. "Well, I like that! I caught you pitching into a fat little rotter in specs, who couldn't put up a fight against a rabbit! You've got more chance than Bunter had if you want to put up a scrap!"

Which was true enough; but Price of the Fifth did not want to put up a scrap! No consideration whatever would have made him face Coker's tremendous fists in action!

Potter and Greene exchanged a glance. Stopping Coker, of course, was out of the question. Coker was not a fellow to be stopped. Neither did they worry much about the unscrupulous enemy of the—they liked—Jim Warren. But it carried to both of them at once that they did not want to be mixed up in this!

"Time we changed, Greeney!" said Potter hastily.

"Yes; Blundell won't wait for us!" agreed Greene.

And they migrated doorward.

"Don't you go!" yelled Price, alarmed at the prospect of being left alone with Coker.

Unheeding, Potter and Greene left the study, grinning as they went down to the changing-room. Coker kicked the door shut after them.

"Sit down, Price!" he said.

"I won't!" yelled Price.

"I'll help you!" said Horace, making a stride towards him. Price sat down hastily without waiting to be helped.

"Take that pen!"

Price looked at him. If looks could have annihilated, Horace Coker's stormy career at Greyfriars would have come to a sudden end. Fortunately, looks couldn't. Price took the pen.

"Now go it!" said Coker.

"You silly idiot—"

"I said go it!"

"You burbling fathead—"

"You're wasting time!" Coker pointed out. "You've got five hundred lines to write by tea-time. It's a bit of a job! You can scribble faster than I can—still, it will take you all your time."

Price panted with rage.

"I won't write a line!" he howled.

Coker stepped to the shelf. He picked up a fives-bat there. He turned to the enraged Price again, his face grim.

"Are you getting on with your job?" he demanded.

"No!" yelled Price.

"That does it!" said Coker.

He grasped Price by the back of the collar, and hooked him off the chair. The weedy slacker of the Fifth struggled. But he was powerless in the beefy grip of Horace Coker.

Whack!

Price circled round Coker in his vain endeavor to elude the swipe of the fives-bat. It landed hard, and Price roared.

Coker lifted his strong right arm again. His left gripped Price's collar. Price fairly squirmed round him, away from the swiping bat.

But it booted not! The fives-bat landed again, with a smack like the report of a rifle. Price's frantic yell followed it.

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"What about it now?" asked Coker genially.

"You rotter—"

Whack!

"Let go!" panted Price. "I—I—I'll write the lines!"

"I thought you would!" smiled Coker. "Get down to it—you've got a lot of work before you, you know! What's the good of wasting time?"

Three whacks from the fives-bat sufficed Stephen Price. Almost writhing with rage, he plumped into the chair again, and took up the pen.

A sheaf of impot paper lay before him on which he had to transcribe the verses of P. Vergilius Maro to the tune of five hundred lines! It was not going to be much of a half-holiday for Price! Still, it was better for him than smoking in the Cloisters, and sneaking in at the back door of the Cross Keys! That, however, did not make it any more palatable to the black sheep of the Fifth.

His hand trembled with rage as he started on Virgil. Coker watched him begin with grim satisfaction.

After a few lines Price looked up.

"You mean this—"

"You'll find that I do!" said Coker.

"I shall tell Prout that I wrote the lines, and that you made me!" hissed Price.

"Do!" said Coker coolly. "You'll want a new set of features shortly afterwards—that lot won't be much use after I've done with them! But please yourself. Just at present you've got five hundred lines to write, and if you don't want me to touch you up with this bat, you'd better get on with them."

Price half-rose from the chair. Up went Coker's hand, with the fives-bat in it. Down sat Price again in a great hurry. And, with an expression on his face that might have been likened to that of a demon in a pantomime, Price wrote lines.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER

Just Like James!

THAT chap will know you again, Wharton!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Eh—who?" asked Harry.

In the autumn dusk the Remove footballers, homeward bound, were changing trains at Courtfield.

It had been a great game at St. Jim's, and, with a goal each, it had looked like a draw right up to the finish, when Horace Jamset Ram Singh put the pill in almost on the stroke of time. A minute more, and it would have been honours even: as it was, Tom Merry & Co. were beaten, and the Greyfriars men rejoiced. A win, by howsoever narrow a margin, was a victory, and the Greyfriars team rolled homeward in great spirits.

While they waited at Courtfield for the local train, Harry Wharton & Co. talked of the game, especially of Inky's goal at the finish. The footballers, in a cheery group, did not take much heed of other passengers on the platform till Bob drew Wharton's attention to a burly, square-jawed, pug-nosed fellow who was staring at him from a little distance, with a scowling brow.

Bob had never seen the fellow before, and he wondered who he was, and why he fixed his eyes so inimically on the captain of the Greyfriars Remove. But Wharton, as he glanced round, recognised the square-jawed youth at once. He caught his breath.

Wharton was not likely to have forgotten that square jaw and pug nose and scowling brow. It was the fellow that he and Hurree Singh had met in

the holidays at Wharton Lodge, and whom, only a week ago, Harry had come upon near Greyfriars, riding. It was, in fact, James Warren, the son of Sir Arthur Warren, of Warren Croft—the fellow in whose name Jim Warren had arrived at Greyfriars.

"Oh!" ejaculated Harry, startled.

"You know that sportsman?" asked Bob.

"He seems to know you, Harry!" remarked Frank Nugent, with a grin.

"Oh, my esteemed hat!" exclaimed the Nabob of Bhanipur, as his dark eyes turned on the burly James.

"You know him, too, Inky?" asked Johnny Bull.

"I have seen his absurd and ugly mug before!" answered the nabob.

"Who the dickens is he, then?" asked Vernon-Smith. "He's looking at you as if he'd like to bite, Wharton!"

Harry Wharton did not reply.

He had promised Jim to keep his secret, little as he could understand the affair. The fact that the real James was at large showed that no harm had come to him. Indeed, Wharton had wondered once or twice whether James knew that another fellow had gone to Greyfriars School in his name.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's the train!" exclaimed Bob.

And Wharton was glad of the interruption.

There had been plenty of talk in the school about Warren of the Fifth since Price had spread the story that he was an impostor. Certainly there would have been plenty more had this crowd of Remove fellows learned that that unpleasant youth was named James Warren.

"Come on!" said Nugent.

And the juniors crowded into the train.

The Famous Five and the Bounder got into one carriage. Bob was closing the door when the burly fellow with the square jaw came up and grasped at the handle.

"No room in here!" said Bob politely.

"Make room, then!" grunted James.

He dragged the door wide open, jerking it from Bob's hand, and barged into the carriage.

Harry Wharton's eyes glinted. He knew that James had selected that carriage because he was there, from the desire to make himself unpleasant—that was in keeping with James' ways.

But he was, on the whole, rather glad of it. There were a good many Greyfriars fellows along the train—the footballers and the fellows who had gone over to St. Jim's with them. If they had learned anything about James, it would soon have been all over the school.

So, on Jim's account, the captain of the Remove was relieved to have James in that carriage, little as he liked his company.

"Look here—" Bob was beginning wrathfully, as the fellow barged in.

"Shut up, you!" said James.

"Why, you cheeky tick—" bawled Bob.

"All serene, Bob!" said Wharton hastily. "Let him stay!"

"I'm going to stay!" said James coolly.

"Plenty of room down the train!" said the Bounder.

"Oh, don't let's have a row!" said Harry.

"Rot!" said Smithy. "Barge that cheeky tick out!"

But a porter slammed the door, and the local train moved out for Friardale. James stood with his back to the door, grinning disagreeably, and eyed rather

curiously by the half-dozen Greyfriars juniors.

"Who the dooce is that bargee?" asked Vernon-Smith. "Not a friend of yours, I suppose, Wharton?"

"Hardly!"

"So I've run into you again, you cub!" said James, with his eyes on the captain of the Remove.

"I'd rather you didn't speak to me!" said Harry.

"I shall please myself about that! I see that your nigger friend is with you this time!" said James, with a stare at the dusky Nabob of Bhanipur. "Is the nigger at your school?"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's dark eyes gleamed.

"The niggerfulness is not terrific," he said quietly, "and the cost of civility is nix!"

"I'll give you civility!" grunted James. "If you'd been with Wharton that day I ducked him at Warren Croft, I'd have ducked you, too!"

Wharton sat silent as the glances of his friends turned on him.

The mention of Warren Croft startled them. Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Bob Cherry did not take long to guess that this was the hulking bully that Wharton had told them about—the brute who had ducked him in the lake when Sir Arthur had asked him over to the Croft to meet his son.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob.

Hitherto the chums of the Remove had doubted whether Wharton had not made a mistake, more than half-believing that Jim Warren of the Fifth really was the fellow he pretended to be. But now—

This fellow clearly was the fellow who, at Warren Croft, had told Wharton that he was James Warren. If he was, certainly Warren of the Fifth was not!

"Who the dooce is the fellow?" exclaimed the Bounder, in astonishment. "Did you meet this chap at Warren's place, Wharton?"

Wharton made no answer. It did not matter much what his chums knew, but he did not want Vernon-Smith to hear anything, if he could help it.

James stared at the Bounder.

"Warren's place?" he repeated. "Is that how you're speaking of my father's place, you cheeky young cub?"

"Your father's place!" stuttered the Bounder.

"If you speak of my father, you'll speak of him as Sir Arthur Warren!" snapped James. "What the dickens do you mean? You don't know my father!"

Vernon-Smith stared at him, almost petrified with amazement. He had, of course, been speaking of Warren of the Fifth.

Of Warren of the Fifth, however, it seemed that James knew nothing.

"Is the fellow mad, or what?" gasped the Bounder at last. "Look here, who the dickens are you?"

"I'm James Warren, if you want to know, though I can't see that it's any business of yours!" snapped James.

"James Warren! My only summer bonnet!" gasped Smithy. "Then what Price was saying—"

"Shut up, Smithy, old chap!" said Harry hastily.

The Bounder broke off, staring at him, and then grinned. Smithy was quick on the uptake, and he only needed a hint.

"All serene!" he said; and he sat back in his corner and remained silent, with an amused glimmer in his eyes.

"Which of you young cubs is giving me his seat?" growled James. "Herg, you, Wharton, get up!"

Wharton was glad that he changed the subject, if only to make himself unpleasant. But he had no intention of giving up his seat to a fellow who had barged into a full carriage.

"Guess again!" he suggested.

"Make room for me!"

"Go and eat coke!"

James' narrow eyes glinted, and he barged towards the captain of the Remove and grasped him by the shoulders with his heavy hands. With a wrench, he dragged Wharton out of his seat.

"Back up!" roared Bob Cherry.

In the twinkling of an eye the whole carriageful had hold of James.

James hardly knew what was happening before he found himself extended face downwards, on the floor, with six pairs of feet planted on him, pinning him there.

He heaved under those feet, spluttering with fury. But they were too many for him—many too many—and he was pinned down.

"Let me get up, you young cubs!" roared James, struggling.

"Stay there, you hooligan!" answered Harry Wharton contemptuously. "Keep him there, you fellows!"

"What ho!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"I'll thrash the lot of you!" yelled James.

"Get on with it!" chuckled the Bounder.

James tried to get on with it. He tried hard! But there was no chance for James! James had bitten off more than he could masticate—and he remained sprawling on the carriage floor, with the feet of six Greyfriars juniors resting on him, till the train ran into Friar-Jale.

By that time James was dusty, dishevelled, breathless, and boiling with rage.

But when the train stopped, and the juniors crowded out, and James was free to scramble up and follow, he

seemed to have had enough trouble, for the present. The Famous Five were quite ready to give him more; but James did not seem to want more. He slouched away, gasping and scowling, and disappeared, and Harry Wharton was glad to see the last of him.

When the Greyfriars fellows arrived at the school Harry found an opportunity of speaking quietly to the Bounder as they went in.

"No need to talk about that fellow on the train Smithy!"

The Bounder laughed.

"What a game!" he said. "I'd have sworn that that fellow Warren, of the Fifth, was as straight as a die! He looks it."

"I believe he is," said Harry. "I can't understand it all. But I believe he's straight."

"It doesn't look much like it now, does it?"

"Perhaps not! But—"

"Oh, I'm not going to jaw!" said Smithy. "No bizney of mine!"

Which was a relief to Wharton. He liked Jim Warren, and trusted him, and wanted to stand by him all he could. But he could not help thinking that, now that the real James was in the vicinity, Jim Warren's secret was held by a very precarious tenure.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Up to Warren!

"OOOOOOH!" roared Billy Bunter.

Jim Warren knitted his brows.

It was the following day, and Bunter, it was clear, was still pursuing the career of a hunted hare. Warren of the Fifth, walking under the elms after third school, heard the roar of the hapless Owl, and looked round.

Billy Bunter was skipping like a fat kangaroo. Behind him was Price of the Fifth. Price's boot had landed once—hence Bunter's roar! It landed again as Jim spotted them, and there was another roar from the Owl of the Remove. Then, as Bunter's eyes, and spectacles, fell on Warren, he cut across to him, yelling.

"I say, keep him off!" he howled.

He dodged behind Warren's sturdy form as Price came up.

"Look here Price—" said Warren.

"Are you going to barge in?" sneered Price. "Can't you mind your own business?"

"You can let that fat duffer alone!" snapped Warren. "Even if he was spinning yarns about you, you've given him enough."

"Not at all!" said Price coolly. "I'm going to make him own up that he was telling lies! I can't afford to leave the matter where it is."

(Continued on next page.)

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"I wasn't telling ~~you~~, and you jolly well know it!" groaned Bunter. "You jolly well know ~~the~~ you took Warren's letter on Monday morning, you beast!"

Price's eyes glittered.

"You hear him?" he said. "He's still sticking to that story! Would you let him, if he spun such a yarn about you?"

"Not if it was untrue!" said Warren slowly.

"Well, I say it was untrue——"

"It wasn't!" howled Bunter.

"No fellow can afford to have a yarn like that told about him," said Price. "I'm going to kick that fat little rotter, and keep on kicking him, till he owns up he was lying! Keep that in mind, Bunter!"

Price walked off, Warren's glance following him doubtfully. Billy Bunter remained where he was. He did not intend to leave his present protection while Price was in the offing.

"I say, Warren, you lick him!" groaned Bunter. "You could lick that cad with one hand! I say, it's up to you, you know."

"How do you make that out?" grunted Warren.

"Wasn't I doing you a good turn in letting you know that he pinched your letter?" gasped Bunter. "I wish I hadn't now!"

"That's all very well. But did he pinch it?"

"I saw him!"

"Well, you're such a blessed little fibber!" said Warren. "If you really saw Price pinch a letter of mine, I'd knock him into a cocked hat if he touched you! But——"

"Well, I did!" groaned Bunter. "I knew the beast would be on my track, and I asked Wharton to say that it was he who'd seen Price pinch the letter, so as to keep clear of him——"

"What?" gasped Warren.

"Only he wouldn't!" mumbled Bunter. "He refused—after all I've done for him, you know! Refused——"

"I should jolly well think he did, you young rascal!"

"Oh, really, Warren——"

"You young Ananias!" exclaimed Warren angrily. "How's a fellow to believe a single word you say? The letter's never turned up, and it looks to me as if you had it—I've heard of you doing such things before——"

"I didn't!" howled Bunter. "I just looked at it, to see the postmark, and I couldn't make it out! Then Price——"

"Oh, rot!" snapped Warren. "Look here, if it's all true, go to your Form-master about it! If it's true, you've a right to be protected from Price, and Quelch will see you through."

"But suppose he didn't believe me!" groaned Bunter. "Quelch has doubted my word before this! Why, only the other day, when I went out of the Form-room to get a wash, he wouldn't believe that I was half an hour finding the soap——"

"Oh, my hat!"

"And Smithy made out afterwards that I'd snaffled a bag of tarts from his study that very time," said Bunter. "Just because the tarts were gone, you know, and I happened to be out of the Form-room. Just as if I'd touch a fellow's tarts! They were stale, too!"

"Stale!" gasped Warren.

"Yes—left over from Saturday, you know," said Bunter. "Measly lot! Not that I touched them, you know! I never went near Smithy's study that morning. I told him so—and instead of taking a fellow's word, he kicked me! What do you think of that, Warren?"

Jim Warren did not state what he thought of that. He just gazed at William George Bunter.

"It's ungentlemanly to doubt a fellow's word," went on the fat Owl. "I hope you're a gentleman, Warren. I never went near some fellows here who tell whoopers—but I'm thankful that I'm not one of them. But it's no good going to Quelch! He's suspicious! Very likely he would believe Price sooner than me."

"Very likely indeed, I think!" gasped Warren.

"I never get justice here!" said Bunter sorrowfully. "Quelch has actu-

ally caned me for untruthfulness—me, you know! He caned me once for opening a chap's letter, though I told him it came open by accident, and that I'd never touched it! What's the good of going to Quelch?"

"Very little, I think, in the circumstances," said Warren laughing.

"Well, you stand by me, you know," said Bunter. "You jolly well wallop Price, and stop him, see? He's funky of you. And you can take my word, Warren, can't you?"

"Take your word! Look here, you untruthful little idiot, it's barely possible that you're telling the truth this time. If it ever comes out that Price had my letter I'll deal with him and see that he doesn't touch you again. But if you're telling lies about him, you deserve all you're getting and more! Now cut!"

And Warren walked away from Bunter.

"Beast!" hissed Bunter.

The new fellow in the Fifth was in a very thoughtful mood as he strolled under the elms.

What to believe between Bunter and Price he did not know; and he had given up that problem. What worried him more was the disappearance of the letter itself.

Someone had written to him—but who? An uneasy doubt was in his mind that some fellow who had known James at his former school, might have heard that James was at Greyfriars and written to him there. Such a letter, in hostile hands, would have been dangerous.

But if a letter had come from Oakshott School, and Price had had it, he would know all about Oakshott, and surely he would have let it out! Not a word about Oakshott had been uttered.

True, he might be keeping it dark, because Bunter had seen him take the letter. For, if Price had shown knowledge of Oakshott, which Jim had never mentioned at Greyfriars, it would convict him as the purloiner of the letter. By no other means could he have learned anything of James Warren's school.

The more Warren thought about it, the more certain he felt that the vanished letter had come from some fellow at Oakshott. He had, in fact, no correspondent except Captain Warren, and he had already inquired of the captain and learned that he had not written.

Had Price had the letter? Or had the inquisitive Bunter opened it, and then, frightened at what he had done, thrown it away, and kept his mouth shut?

Warren hoped that the latter was the explanation. But he could not be sure—and it was a worry on his mind. The fellow who was passing at Greyfriars School under another fellow's name had a thorny path to tread!

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Cut Off!

"COKER!"

Mr. Prout's boom was deep and menacing.

Prout sat at his study table, after class, with a consignment of lines in front of him. Horace Coker stood before the table, facing his Form-master with more impatience than respect in his manner.

Coker was feeling rather fed-up. He did not know why Prout had sent for him, and did not specially want to know; he just didn't want to see Prout, or to hear him boom. What the



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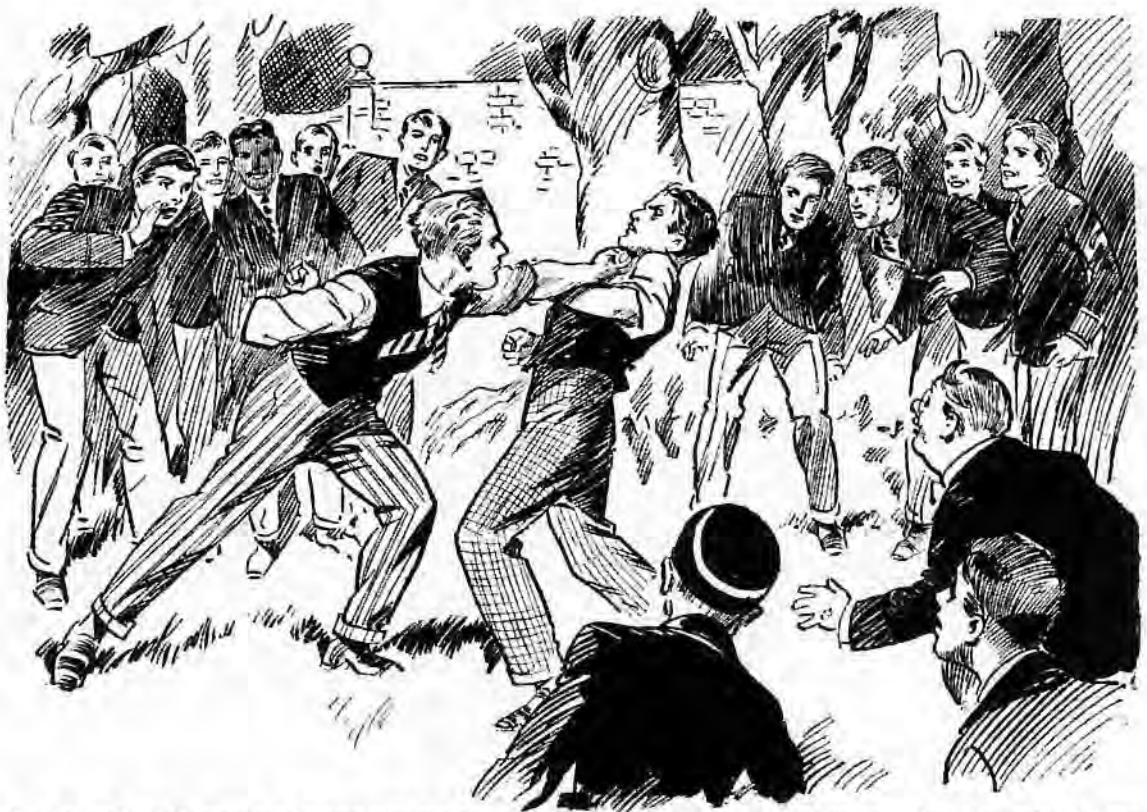
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Jim Warren kept his right arm behind him, while Price used both hands with desperate energy. But Warren's left hand seemed more useful than Price's right and left together. He took hard knocks without even winking, but every time his left got home on Price there was a yell. "Let him have it, Warren!" yelled the crowd of onlookers.

cl Dickens was the matter with the man, Coker wondered surlily.

"Old Pompous" had given him five hundred lines on Monday morning—most unjustly, in Coker's opinion. Still, Coker had delivered the goods, so to speak, on Wednesday evening.

True, Price had written the lines, under threat of the fives-bat! But there they were—delivered, lying on Prout's table, over and done with! Prout was well known hardly ever to look at a fellow's lines. Indeed, he did not always take the trouble to mark or tear them, and fellows had been known to recapture their lines, and use them over again!

After class on Thursday, Coker had naturally dismissed the matter from his mind. Prout, however, hadn't!

Contrary to his usual custom, he had given Coker's lines the "once-over," if not the "twice-over." He was deeply and intensely annoyed with Coker, and unusually sharp on the subject.

It did not need a very keen examination of those lines to make certain discoveries. Price had said no word—he dared not at the risk of requiring a new set of features!

But there was internal evidence, once a beak looked. The writing, though a hasty scrawl, rather like Coker's in that respect, did not look as if made by flies crawling over the paper after diving into the inkpot. The spelling was the same as Virgil's, a very suspicious circumstance, for Coker's spelling was even worse in Latin than in English. With the copy under his eyes, even Coker might have been expected to spell as Virgil spelt. But he seldom did. He would glance at a line and scribble it down—in his own way!

It was obvious, to Prout, that Coker

had never written those lines! He did not know that Price had. But he knew that Coker hadn't!

Hence the Olympian wrath in the plump brow of Prout.

Sitting at his table, glaring across it at the impatient and annoyed Coker, Prout boomed with a deeper note than usual in his boom.

He tapped the lines with a plump forefinger.

"Coker! You did not write these lines!" he boomed. "I gave you five hundred lines, Coker! You have had the audacity—the impudence—to attempt to delude me, Coker, by inducing a friend to write them for you."

"Not at all, sir!" said Coker. The lines had been written for him, but not by a friend. Nobody, who had seen Price at work writing those lines, would have fancied that he looked friendly!

"What!" hooted Prout. "Do you venture to say, Coker, that you wrote those lines with your own hand?"

"Oh, no, sir!" said Coker at once. Coker was not the fellow to tell truths. He could say that the lines weren't written by a friend! But he couldn't say that they were written by himself.

"I am glad," said Prout, "that you are frank! I am glad, Coker, that you do not resort to subterfuge! I am glad that you are, at least, truthful! I shall take that into consideration, Coker."

"I hope I shouldn't tell lies, sir!" said Coker rather disdainfully.

"But—" said Prout. He tapped the lines again. "But—you have disregarded my commands, Coker! You are disobedient! You are disrespectful! What am I to do with such a

boy? I shall not order you to write these lines again, Coker."

"Thank you, sir!" said Coker, quite relieved.

"I shall impose a much more severe task, Coker!"

"Oh!" said Coker, his relief evaporating.

"Your conduct," boomed Prout, "is disobedient, disrespectful, obstinate, foolish, crass! I am glad to see that you would not utter a falsehood on this subject. Yet to palm off another boy's lines as your own, amounts to deception! Can you not see that, Coker? I shall endeavour to make you understand, if it is possible to penetrate your stupidity, Coker. I—"

"Please, sir—" Trotter put in his head at the door.

Prout, interrupted in the full flow of eloquence, glared at the House page.

"What—what? What do you want, Trotter?" he barked.

"Mr. Capper's respects, sir, and he's waiting—" said Trotter.

"Oh!" said Prout. In his wrath and indignation on the subject of Coker's lines, Prout had forgotten that he was booked for a walk with the master of the Fourth after class. "Oh! Tell Mr. Capper that I am coming immediately."

"Yessir!" Trotter disappeared.

Prout heaved his huge bulk from the chair.

"Coker! Wait here for my return! I shall be back in an hour!"

Coker blinked at him.

"Shall I come again when you come in, sir?" he suggested.

"What? What?"

"What I mean is, my time's rather of value!" Coker pointed out.

Prout gurgled for breath.

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"Coker! Remain here! If, on my return I learn that you have left this study for one moment, I will cane you!"

Prout rolled out of the study.

Coker stared after him.

"Well," said Coker, "I'm blessed!"

It was merely a way of expressing his feelings! He did not feel blessed! Far from it.

He was to stick in that study, twiddling his thumbs, for a whole hour—perhaps longer! No doubt Prout regarded that as a part of his just punishment, for having tried to spoof him with the lines.

But Coker's time, as he had told Prout, was valuable.

He did not want to waste such valuable time. He had been going to give Potter and Greene some tips about football. They were going down to games-practice with the Fifth. He had been going to advise Potter not to skip like a hen on hot bricks in the front line, and Greene to try to look a little less like a sack of coke in the halves. Now they would lose this useful instruction.

And it was a fearful bore to stick in Prout's study, all by himself, with nobody to talk to. No doubt Prout knew that.

Coker was tempted to march out of the room, regardless of Prout—especially when, from the window, he spotted Prout and Capper going out at the gates.

But even Coker had some remnant of common sense. Even Coker realised that it would be unwise to exasperate Prout further.

With deep feelings of indignation, he made up his mind to it.

He shut the door and stood for ten minutes or so looking out into the quad. Then he looked round the study for something to read to pass the time.

There was a good fire, and Prout's armchair was comfortable! Prout, perhaps, would not expect him to sit in that armchair, but Prout could be blowed—while he was at a safe distance, at all events.

There was no light literature in Prout's study! Coker looked over many valuable works—but they were all, in Coker's opinion, rot! There was nothing like Bulldog Drummond, or anything of that kind.

Giving up his quest for something to read, Coker sat down in the big armchair, rested his feet on the fender, and sat it out.

He had been nearly half an hour in the study when the door opened and someone stepped in and closed the door again quickly.

It was not Prout—he was not due back yet for a good half-hour, and the footsteps were light, quite unlike Prout's elephantine tread. They crossed swiftly to Prout's telephone, near the window.

Coker, sitting in the big armchair facing the fire, was quite out of sight of anyone entering the study and going to the phone. That, however, did not occur to him.

He heard the receiver jerked off the hooks, and knew that some fellow had come in, to use Prout's phone while he was out.

Coker had done the same himself, on occasion, and he had no fault to find with that proceeding.

He simply lifted his head and glanced over the high back of the chair to see who it was. If it was anybody but Price of the Fifth, Coker would be glad of a little company, even for a few minutes.

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But it was Price!

Stephen Price stood at the telephone, his back to Coker, the receiver to his ear, his mouth to the transmitter.

Coker frowned, and turned his head away again. He had no desire to speak to Price.

Indeed, he would have got up and walked out of the study, but for Prout's stern injunction.

Price called for a number. He had not, of course, the faintest idea that anyone else was in the study. Having ascertained Mr. Prout's movements, he had taken this opportunity of using his phone. And he knew nothing of Coker's trouble over those lines.

Coker paid him no heed. It was no business of his. Price got his number, and when he asked if it was Oakshott School, Coker was not in the least interested. He had never even heard of Oakshott School.

"Speaking from Greyfriars School," Price went on. "Can I speak to J. Bullivant?"

A question from the other end, which was not audible to Coker, followed. Then Price spoke again:

"Tell him it's someone he knows—James Warren, who was at Oakshott last term."

Coker sat upright.

He could scarcely believe his ears.

Price—Stephen Price of the Fifth—was speaking into the telephone in the name of Jim Warren.

Coker rose to his feet.

Over the high back of the chair he stared at Price blankly. Price's back was still partly turned to him; but he had a glimpse of Price's profile, and spotted the sardonic grin on his face.

Price had thought, and thought, and thought over the matter since he had read the letter from J. Bullivant, of Oakshott.

Bullivant had not, as he had hoped, come along to Greyfriars to see Warren. It was improbable that he would come. But what if he was asked by, as he would suppose, Warren himself?

It seemed a sound scheme to Price. Bullivant was plainly keen to collect that fiver, if he could. It would be more than worth the fare over. He could manage it on a half-holiday. He might come, and then—

Price had resolved, at all events, to try it on. He had been on the watch that day for a chance to bag a telephone. The chance had arrived—at a rather unfortunate moment for Price.

Unconscious of Horace Coker's amazed and wrathful face glaring at him over the high back of the armchair, Price spoke again into the mouthpiece:

"That you, Bullivant? Warren speaking—"

Price got no further.

Coker made two long strides, and grabbed him by the back of the collar. Price went over backwards in Horace's muscular grip. The receiver, torn from his hand, dangled at the end of its cord.

"Oh!" gasped Price.

"You rotten toad!" roared Coker.

"Oh! Urrrh! Oh! Urrrh!" spluttered Price.

"You lying worm—"

"Gurrgh!" Price half-choked, wriggled frantically.

"Making out you're Warren—"

"Wurrgh!"

"I'll jolly well let him know what you're up to!" bawled Coker. "Using a fellow's name on the phone, by gum! Get out!"

"Wurrgh!"

Price had no choice about getting out. Coker whirled him across the study, opened the door with his left

hand, and swung Price into the passage with his right.

There was a bump and a crash as Price landed. Coker glared after him from the doorway.

"I give you two seconds!" said Horace, drawing back one of the two biggest feet in the Fifth Form at Greyfriars.

One second was enough for Price.

Coker slammed the door.

"Sneaking toad!" he ejaculated.

He walked across to the telephone and jammed the receiver back on the hooks. J. Bullivant at the other end was probably left surprised at being so suddenly cut off.

Then Coker sat down again to wait for Prout.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Own Up!

"I SAY, you fellows!" yelled Billy Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter was running. Bunter was still leading the strenuous life. Price of the Fifth had spotted him in the quad, with the usual result.

Or rather, worse than usual; for Price was in a bitter and savage temper, after his handling by Coker in Mr. Prout's study. That was an hour ago; but Price's neck was still aching from Coker's knuckles. It was quite a solace to him to kick Bunter—and he kicked hard.

Harry Wharton & Co. chuckled at the fat junior flew. Bunter dodged round the Famous Five.

"I say, you fellows, stop him!" he howled.

"Get out of the way, you young rotters!" snarled Price.

He had not finished with Bunter yet. "My esteemed and idiotic Price—" began Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh.

"I say, you fellows, you stand by a chap!" gasped Bunter. "Keep him off! I jolly well wish I hadn't told you now that he pinched Warren's letter!"

"Did he?" said Harry Wharton, shaking his head. "You see, old fat man, you're such a fearful fibber!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—" "Such a lying worm, Wharton means," grunted Johnny Bull.

"Beast!"

"He did pinch Warren's letter!" howled the hapless Owl. "He jolly well knows he did, and that beast Warren won't believe me!"

"Let me get at that fat rotter!" snarled Price.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes Warren!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

Jim Warren came up. The look on his face was so hard and set and grim that it made the chums of the Remove look at him curiously. It was quite an unusual expression for the Fifth Form man's good-humoured face.

Price moved away hastily.

"Stop!" called out Warren.

And as Price did not stop he ran to him, and caught him by the shoulder. Price stopped then and faced him, breathing hard. He had dreaded trouble to follow the scene with Coker; and now the trouble had come.

"What do you want?" he asked, between his teeth.

"I'll tell you," said Warren quietly. He dropped his hand from Price's shoulder. "Stand where you are! I'll knock you spinning if you try to cut!"

"I say, you fellows—"

Warren glanced at Bunter.

"It's your own fault I never believed (Continued on page 28.)

THE FLYING SUBMARINE

Carson Has a Plan!

WHITE of face and with eyes blazing, Carson wheeled on Zarnal.

"You murderer!" he yelled, and, casting all discretion to the winds, hurled himself on the man, lashing out savagely with his fists.

Zarnal side-stepped, his right shooting out with the smooth precision and force of a piston.

The blow took Carson fairly and squarely under the chin, lifting him off his feet and sending him crashing to the iron deck.

With a roar, Cribb plunged forward, intent on returning the blow, no matter what the consequences might be to him. But, with his insane laugh, Sebastian Coot flung his arms round him and held him fast.

"Let go, you beast!" panted Cribb, lashing out savagely with his heel.

Sebastian Coot's idiotic laughter turned abruptly into a shrill squeal of pain and rage as Cribb's heel took him on the shin, and, releasing one arm, he landed Cribb a smash under the ear which almost stunned that desperately struggling youth.

By this time two of the seamen had pounced on Carson, who had scrambled to his feet. Like Cribb, he struggled desperately, but he was powerless in that iron grip.

"Look them in their cabin!" said Zarnal; and, turning coolly on his heel, he mounted again to the bridge.

The two schoolboys, prisoners aboard the armed freighter, Laughing Lass, were hustled below by their captors, thrust roughly into their cabin, and the door was locked upon them.

"Did you ever see anything so dreadful as the deliberate murder of those poor fellows aboard that British ship?" groaned Carson, tenderly massaging his jaw. "Thank goodness, I got one smack in at Zarnal before he downed me!"

"And I nearly smashed the odious Coot's shinbone for him!" observed Cribb, with deep satisfaction. "Well, we seem booked for trouble now, Carson, old fellow!"

"Unless Lawless turns up," suggested Carson hopefully.

"How on earth can he?" said Cribb. "I don't want to appear pessimistic, or anything like that, but Lawless can't possibly have the foggiest idea where we are. All he'll know is that we've vanished from the Isle of Callan. No; we can't expect help from him this time, I'm afraid."

"Then we'll have to do something ourselves!" said Carson. "But what the dickens we can do, cooped up aboard



"Stand over there!" ordered Carson. "And keep your hands above your head, or I'll drill you!" The scared operator obeyed the order, while Cribb tapped rapidly on the transmission key. "S O S."

this rotten ship with a lot of cutthroats like Zarnal and Sebastian Coot, I don't know!"

"Let's try to think of something," suggested Cribb.

The two schoolboys proceeded to do so; and as the day wore on, and afternoon merged slowly into dusk, they discussed plan after plan of escape. But all were so far-fetched and impossible that they gave it up at length, and sat staring at each other in blank hopelessness and dismay.

"No; it looks as though we're booked for the Baltic and a firing-party!"

Carson and Cribb, prisoners in the hands of ruthless enemies, have one chance in a thousand of gaining their freedom. Do they risk it?

groaned Cribb. "Short of getting out of this beastly cabin, jumping overboard, and swimming about a hundred miles to the mainland, I fail to see what we can do!"

"If only we could get a message through to the Admiralty or somebody!" said Carson. "It's our only chance!"

"You might just as well talk of getting a message through to the moon!" snapped Cribb. "I wish you'd stop gibbering!"

"Shut up!" retorted Carson, sitting staring into the gloom with a peculiarly set expression on his face. "I mightn't

be gibbering as much as you think! You agree that if we don't get out of here we'll be shot?"

"I certainly do!" said Cribb. "There's not the slightest doubt about that!"

"Then," went on Carson, "it won't make very much difference just where we're shot. What I mean to say is that if we're going to be shot, we may as well be shot here as shot in the Baltic!"

"The whole rotten business hasn't turned your brain for you, has it?" asked Cribb solicitously.

"No, it hasn't!" snapped Carson.

"I've got an idea. I suppose we may assume that we'll get a meal some time this evening?"

"I think it's probable," agreed Cribb.

"Zarnal hasn't starved us so far!"

"Then you listen to me," said Carson.

"I've got a plan. It's got one chance in a thousand of coming off, but we've got to risk it!"

He proceeded to outline the plan to Cribb, who listened, with bulging eyes.

"Well, what d'you think?" demanded Carson, when he had concluded.

"I think," said Cribb slowly, "that it's worth trying. As you say, it's got one chance in a thousand of coming off; but it's the best scheme we've hit so far, and—"

He broke off as heavily booted feet approached along the passage-way outside and the key scraped back in the lock.

"The moment," he said softly, rising to his feet, "appears to have arrived!"

"Yes!" muttered Carson, also rising. "For goodness' sake, don't blunder, Cribb! Remember, it's no time for nice measures!"

The SOS!

THE door of the cabin swung open, and a seaman stepped across the threshold, a laden tray in his hands.

Next moment he got the most painful shock of his life, for Cribb's knee whipped up, catching the man full in the stomach.

With a gasp of agony, the seaman doubled up, the tray falling with a clatter to the floor. Another moment, and Carson had leapt forward and swung shut the door. Before the man could recover, both the boys were on him.

With all the wind knocked temporarily out of him by Cribb's knee, the seaman was incapable of putting up any resistance at all, and he went down, with Carson and Cribb on top of him.

"Give him another!" panted Carson.

Obediently Cribb drove his knee into the man's stomach.

That finished the struggle as far as the seaman was concerned. A few moments later he was lying securely trussed, and gagged with strips torn hastily from one of the blankets on the bunk.

"Do you think it's dark enough yet?" demanded Cribb excitedly, rising from tying tight the last knot on the prisoner's wrists.

"It's near enough," replied Carson, snapping open the chamber of the automatic which he had found on the seaman and examining the cartridges. "Come on! We daren't delay, or somebody'll be coming here looking for this chap!"

With his finger crooked round the trigger of the gun, he cautiously opened the door of the cabin and peered out into the passageway.

"All clear!" he muttered over his shoulder to Cribb. "Lock the door behind you and shove the key in your pocket."

Cribb did so, and a few moments later the two boys were creeping quickly up the companion ladder, Carson in the forefront, his gun raised.

The deepening dusk was bitterly cold with the icy chill of the Baltic, and as Carson raised his head and peered cautiously along the deck he gave an inward sigh of relief to find that it was deserted.

The fo'c'sle door was open, however, and from it streamed the sickly illumination of a hanging oil-lamp. Above him, on the bridge, Carson could hear the steady tramp of the officer on watch, receding and approaching as the man stamped backwards and forwards to keep the blood coursing warmly through his veins.

"Be ready to make a dash for it the instant I give the word!" breathed Carson. "The wireless-room's only a few paces from here, below the bridge."

"Right-ho!" murmured Cribb.

Waiting until he heard the officer of the watch turn about on the bridge and stamp away, Carson breathed a terse:

"Now!"

Next instant, like two shadows, he and Cribb sped swiftly and silently across the few paces of deck which separated them from the door of the wireless-cabin.

Carson's fingers closed on the handle, the door opened, and next moment he and Cribb were safely inside the cabin. The youthful and swarthy-featured operator was seated with his back to them, earphones on his head.

The cold draught caused by the swift opening and shutting of the door caused him to turn his head. At sight of Carson and Cribb, and the gun in the hand of the former, the operator's eyes dilated, and he froze rigid and motionless in his seat.

Two strides took Carson to him.

"One word from you," grated Carson,

"and I'll blow your brains out! Do you understand?"

It was very evident that the swarthy-featured operator did understand, for the cold rim of the gun-barrel against his forehead told him that Carson was in deadly earnest. He cowered away, stark terror in his eyes.

"Get up!" hissed Carson.

The operator got up.

"Now stand over here," ordered Carson, "and keep your hands above your head, or I'll drill you!"

At the point of the gun Carson propelled the thoroughly scared operator back against the wall.

"Have you bolted the door, Cribb, old chap?" he asked.

"Yes," said Cribb, slipping into the chair vacated by the operator and pulling on the pair of earphones. "Don't let that blighter move, Carson. Thank goodness Lawless made us learn Morse! Well, here goes!"

Next instant his finger was tapping rapidly on the transmission key; and Carson, listening, heard the message go flashing out into space:

"SOS—SOS—SOS.—Please transmit to British Admiralty—Carson and Cribb prisoners aboard armed freighter the Laughing Lass bound for the Baltic. SOS—SOS—SOS.—Please transmit to British Admiralty—Carson and Cribb prisoners aboard armed freighter—"

Thus the message went on with monotonous repetition.

The insistent crackling of it had caused the officer on the bridge to halt in his pacing and listen, with a puzzled frown.

What the dickens was Petroff, the operator, up to?—he reflected. There was something queer about that message. It was so insistent, and was going on without a pause.

Swinging on his heel, the officer leaned over the rail and hailed the watch.

"Bo'sun!" he bawled. "Hallo, there, Coot! Ask that cursed wireless officer what game he's playing!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" leered Sebastian Coot, popping his ugly head out of the fo'c'sle. Shuffling along the deck, Sebastian Coot tried the handle of the wireless-cabin door.

Discovered!

THE fact that the door of the wireless-cabin was either locked or bolted on the inside neither startled Sebastian Coot nor made him suspicious. He merely concluded that Petroff, the operator, had locked himself in to be free from interruption.

Coot knocked on the panel and shouted:

"Hey, there, Petroff, the officer of the watch wants to know what the devil game you're playing!"

"Tell him you're just testing the transmitter, set!" hissed Carson, jabbing the muzzle of his gun hard against Petroff's heart. "Go on, speak up, or I'll fire! We're desperate, my pal and I!"

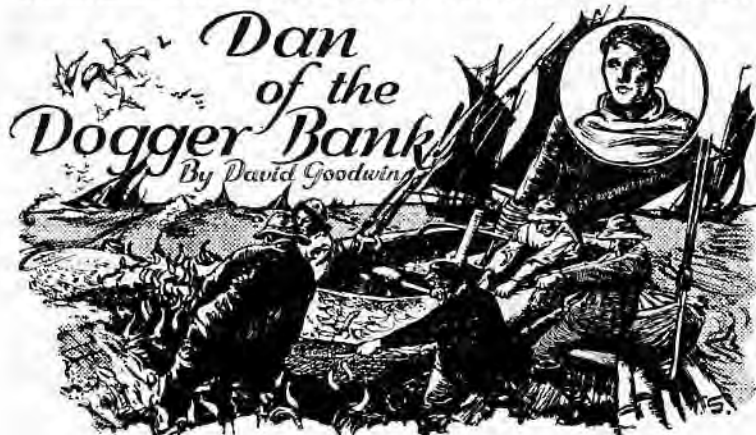
Petroff could well believe that. He realised how desperate he would feel himself were he in the place of these two English brats.

Raising his voice he bawled:

"I'm just testing the transmission!"

Sebastian Coot relayed this information to the bridge in his shrill, piping voice.

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"He says he's just testing the transmission!" he yelled.

"Then tell him to stop it at once!" snapped the officer. "It sounds all right to me, and he's only wasting juice!"

"You're to stop it!" shrilled Sebastian through the door. "D'you hear?"

"Say yes!" hissed Carson.

"Yes!" bawled Petroff obediently.

"Dry up for a minute, Cribb, old chap!" whispered Carson.

Cribb raised his finger from the transmission key; and as the crackling of the wireless ceased, the long-armed and misshapen Sebastian took himself back to the fo'c'sle.

"Olay here yet?" he demanded, entering and peering about him searchingly.

"No, he has not returned from taking the two prisoners a meal," grunted one of the men.

"Hasn't he?" said Sebastian sharply. "Sounds rather queer to me. I will go and see where he is."

Quitting the fo'c'sle again, Coot shuffled hurriedly along the deck, and, descending the saloon ladder, tried the handle of the door of the cabin in which the boys had been imprisoned.

The door refused to open, and something akin to alarm appeared in the dwarf's eyes as he noticed that the key was missing from the outside.

"Hallo, in there!" he cried sharply, rapping on the panels.

There came no answer, save a queer slithering and grunting.

Sebastian Coot hesitated not a moment longer; stepping back, he raised his foot and crashed the heel with terrific force against the lock.

There was a splintering crash of riven woodwork as the door swung open.

Another moment and Sebastian Coot scuttled hastily into the cabin.

At sight of the bound, gagged, and writhing seaman his eyes flamed, and he came to an abrupt halt.

But only for a moment did he stand motionless. Recovering himself, he leapt at the helpless man, kicking him savagely in the ribs.

"Fool, dolt, imbecile!" he rapped out furiously. "What has happened? Where are the prisoners? Answer me, you dog!"

The unfortunate seaman couldn't answer him, being very effectively and securely gagged.

Realising this, Sebastian Coot stooped and tore the gag from the man's mouth.

"Where are they?" he shrieked. "Where have the prisoners gone? Answer me, you imbecile!"

"For pity's sake stop it!" mouthed the helpless wretch. "I don't know where they are—they overpowered me and—escaped on deck!"

"Well, you'll hang for this, that's what you'll do!" snarled Sebastian, and with another brutal kick at the man, he turned and scuttled from the cabin.

"Turn out the watch!" he shouted, rushing up the ladder and gaining the deck. "The prisoners have escaped—search the ship—they must be aboard her somewhere!"

In the wireless cabin, Carson and Cribb heard the hubbub which broke out on deck.

"They've rumbled our escape, Cribb, old chap," said Carson. "It'll only be a matter of time before they're battering this door down, so get on with the giddy washing and send out as many S.O.S.'s as you can manage!"

Obediently Cribb started hammering away again at the transmission key, and, as the wireless crackled anew into life, the officer on the bridge—who was

no fool—swiftly put two and two together.

"They're in the wireless cabin!" he roared. "Smash in the door! Jump to it, you fools!"

The Sentence!

HALF a dozen burly and muscular shoulders hurling themselves against the panels of the wireless cabin door quickly smashed it in.

As the seamen poured into the cabin, Carson wheeled on them, his automatic raised.

"Back!" he bellowed. "Back, or I'll fire!"

The trouble was that the seamen couldn't have kept back even if they had wanted to. Carried forward by the impetus of their rush, they swept into the cabin, pinning Carson against the wall.

Rough hands seized Carson, and the gun was yanked from his grasp.

As he and Cribb struggled desperately in the grip of their captors, Zarnal strode furiously into the cabin, his face dark with anger.

"So you got out of your cabin!" he snarled. "What message have you been sending out on that wireless?"

"You can find out!" said Cribb valiantly.

Zarnal glared at him, hands clenched, then swung on Petroff.

"What message have they been transmitting?" he grated.

"An S.O.S. saying they are prisoners aboard this vessel and asking all shipping to transmit it to the British Admiralty," stammered Petroff.

"And you let them do it, you dog!" snarled Zarnal.

Stepping forward, he struck the wireless officer brutally in the face.

"Put him in irons!" he rasped, wheeling on a couple of the seamen.

"He'll stand his trial for gross negligence of duty when we reach our base!"

The white-faced and trembling Petroff was dragged away. Then Zarnal turned to Carson and Cribb.

"Well, your S.O.S. will help you nothing," he snarled. "I am going to hang you out of hand!"

He turned to Sebastian Coot.

"Have the for'ard derrick slung out and a couple of ropes attached!" he ordered harshly. "We'll get rid of these cubs here and now!"

With a shrill cackle of delight, the hunchback scuttled away for'ard, and Carson and Cribb heard him rapping out orders to the watch.

Sebastian Coot returned within a very short time.

"Derrick and ropes all ready, cap'n!" he reported, with a dreadful leer at Carson and Cribb.

"All right, tie their hands behind their backs and bring them along!" ordered Zarnal.

Neither Carson nor Cribb offered the slightest resistance as their wrists were swiftly and expertly lashed behind their backs, for both boys realised the absolute futility of resistance.

The pinioning complete, they were marched for'ard towards the mast where two dangling ropes, each with a noose at the end, were illumined by the light which streamed through the open door of the fo'c'sle.

In spite of the perils they had gone through during the past few weeks, the two schoolboys could not credit that this dreadful thing was really happening to them—could not believe that the end of the trail had come for them in the form of the running noose of a hanging-rope.

It was Sebastian Coot himself who slipped the noose first over Carson's head, pulling the slip knot cunningly tight behind the ear. Then, with the other rope, he performed the same operation on Cribb.

"Six of you hang on to this rope," he piped, "and six of you on to this one. When the cap'n says 'Haul!'—haul it is. Swing 'em up as high as the top of the derrick!"

Waiting until the trailing end of each rope had been seized by half a dozen men, Sebastian Coot turned to Zarnal.

"Everything ready and shipshape, sir!" he reported.

"Very good, bo'sun!" nodded Zarnal, and both Carson and Cribb felt their blood run cold at the thought that the next few moments would see them dangling by their necks, writhing and helpless at the top of the derrick. "Are you ready, men?"

"Ay, ay, sir!" growled the boys' executioners.

"Then haul—"

In that split instant of time, before Zarnal could complete the fatal word, the blackness of night was suddenly riven by a terrific dazzling beam of golden light which illumined every rope and rivet of the Laughing Lass, and from near at hand on the waters came a stentorian British hail:

"Hold hard, you hounds, or I'll sink you!"

"Shark's teeth!" screamed Sebastian Coot. "It's the searchlight of a British destroyer!"

It was! And the sudden roar of a quick-firer across the bows of the Laughing Lass convinced the livid-faced Zarnal that the destroyer meant business.

"Loosen those ropes!" he snarled.

"If we hang the brats we sign our own death warrants!"

The ropes were loosened and lifted from about the necks of Carson and Cribb.

With her searchlight still holding the Laughing Lass, the destroyer came slipping alongside and a party of armed sailors poured on to the freighter's deck.

"We surrender!" grated Zarnal to the officer in charge of the boarding party. "How did you find us, anyway?"

"We were patrolling these waters when we picked up an S.O.S. from this vessel," replied the officer. "We have been looking for you ever since. We are just in time, I think!"

"You jolly well are!" said Carson and Cribb fervently.

The nefarious exploits of the Laughing Lass and the attempted hanging of the two plucky British schoolboys, Carson and Cribb, coupled with a full report laid before the British Cabinet by Captain Lawless, caused Britain to dispatch a curt and final ultimatum to the Baltic Power which was behind Zarnal and his associates.

The ultimatum was backed by the whole might of the British Empire, and, realising that if war came she would certainly be defeated, the Baltic Power concerned agreed to every British demand, and, thanks to Lawless, Carson and Cribb, and their Flying-Submarine, the menace passed and was heard of no more.

THE END.

"*DAN OF THE DOGGER BANK!*" is the title of the grand new adventure yarn billed to appear in next week's MAGNET. Be sure and read the opening chapters, chums!

BUNTER TELLS THE TRUTH!

(Continued from page 24.)

you, Bunter," he said. "But I know now that you told the truth. Price had my letter last Monday."

"Oh crikey!"

"You've found that out!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"I've found it out—or rather, Coker has. Coker spotted that cad phoning to a fellow he could never have heard of, except from that letter."

"It's a lie!" muttered Price. "I—"

"Save your breath, you cur!" said Jim Warren, contemptuously. "You could never have heard of Oakshott School if you hadn't stolen my letter and read it. You've found out what doesn't concern you, and you're going to tell the whole school, now that you know I know, and you can get on with it as soon as you like. But—"

"I tell you—" muttered Price.

"Don't take the trouble to tell lies; they won't help you. You pinched that letter, and ever since you've been ragging Bunter, trying to force him to own up that he never saw what you know he saw, and what I know now that he saw. What sort of a cur do you call yourself?"

"I say, you fellows, I told you so!" squeaked Billy Bunter.

"Now you'll give me the letter, Price!" went on Warren.

Price panted.

"I've not got it!"

"Very well; you can tell the Head that!" said Jim grimly. "You're coming to him with Bunter, and—"

Price's face was ghastly. Did that fellow, under a false name, dare to go to the Head? He looked as if he did. Price's heart almost died within him at the idea of his headmaster hearing of what he had done in Proff's study. Whether Jim Warren was under a false name or not, there was no question that Price had telephoned under a false name.

"Come on!" rapped Warren.

"I—I—I can't give you the letter!" panted Price, driven to his last ditch, as it were. "It—it dropped into the study fire."

It was a confession; but there was no help for it now.

Price was at the mercy of the fellow

he had schemed against. He dared not face the Head. He had done the very thing of which he accused Warren—used a false name—and he had not left himself a leg to stand on.

"I believe that much!" snapped Jim, contemptuously. "I suppose you wouldn't dare keep it about you. You own up that you took the letter?"

"I—I—" stammered the wretched Price.

"Yes or no!" said Warren, between his teeth. "You can answer me, or you can answer Dr. Locke! Take your choice!"

"Yes!" breathed Price.

"Well, you rotten cur!" said Nugent. Price did not heed the juniors. His eyes were on Warren's grim face, in mingled hatred and fear.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"You've owned up, you worm!" said Warren. "We'll leave the Head out of it! You stole a letter and spied into it—you used a false name on the phone—and you make out that you're down on me because you think I'm using a name not my own! You make me sick! You'd be sacked if the Head knew what you'd done. I'm not going to give you away, though you'd give me away fast enough—but I'm going to give you a lesson you won't forget."

Price licked his dry lips.

A thrashing from Warren was better than an interview with the Head; but it was not a pleasant prospect.

"If you touch Bunter again, after this, you'll have me to deal with," said Jim Warren, and the fat Owl of the Remove grinned as he heard that. It was very welcome news to Bunter.

"I'm not going to touch the fat brute!" muttered Price. "I—"

"Now come with me!"

"I—I—"

"This way!"

Warren grasped Price's arm, and led him away under the elms. The Famous Five followed—they were not going to miss what was to come next! Billy Bunter rolled after them, his fat face wreathed in grins. And half a dozen other fellows, who had observed that something was on, came scudding up.

"What's the game?" asked the Bounder.

"Price!" grinned Bob. "Warren's found out that it was Price pinched

that letter, after all, and he's going to talk to him about it—a friendly talk out of the sight of the beaks."

By the time Warren and Price reached a secluded spot by the school wall, more than a dozen fellows were around them. Price eyed his enemy with bitter malevolence.

"You rotten bully!" he muttered.

"You know I'm not your weight—" "No reason why you shouldn't be, if you weren't a slacking, smoking, frowsting waster!" said Warren. "But I'll use only one hand."

"That's sporting!" grinned the Bounder.

Price's face lighted up a little. He had to scrap, and he hoped that he had a chance.

What followed was keenly interesting to the spectators. Jim Warren put his right arm behind him, and never moved it during the scrap. Price used both hands with desperate energy.

He got in some punishment. But Warren's left hand seemed more useful than Price's right and left. He took hard knocks without even winking—but every time his left got home on Price, there was a gasp, or a yelp, or a howl. For five minutes it lasted, hot and strong—and then Price was on his back, and refused to stir again.

"Is that enough?" asked Warren, contemptuously; and he put on his jacket, and walked away.

Price of the Fifth, never liked in his Form, was less liked than ever after that episode. Never respected, he was despised more than ever. Coker glared at him scornfully when they met—even Hilton hardly spoke to him in the study. Even Billy Bunter grinned at him defiantly—and even went out of his way to give him defiant grins—and Price dared not give the defiant Owl of the Remove a single kick!

Price was down—and Warren was up! But there was going to be a change, when J. Bullivant came over from Oakshott! Price had still—or at least so he believed—the winning card to play!

THE END.

(Watch out next week for another magnificent story of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled: "SAVED BY HIS ENEMY!" You'll vote it one of the finest school yarns Frank Richards has ever written!)

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FORTHCOMING FAG REVOLT NO JOKE

Warns FRANK NUGENT

I went along to the Third Form Room to hear a revolutionary meeting the other evening in quite an unbiased mood. I came away deeply impressed. This forthcoming fag revolt is going to be no joke, I can assure you!

George Tubb, the principal speaker, was in a fiery frame of mind.

"How much longer are we going to be the hewers of wood and the drawers of water at Greyfriars?" he demanded. "The time has come for us to break our bonds and make a mighty bid for freedom!"

"Hooray!" roared the Third, enthusiastically.

"But mark you, my friends, freedom has to be fought for!" said Tubb, darkly. "Blood will flow before we get our just demands, I can tell you!"

"Hooray!"

"I'm glad you cheer!" smiled Tubb. "It shows you've got the right spirit in you—the spirit that will defy prefects and beaks alike and smash for ever the tyrants who rule us to-day!"

I should have liked to hear more, but this was denied me owing to the arrival of Wingate at that moment.

"Bedtime, you kids!" Wingate announced, and the Third stopped cheering and answered: "Right-ho, Wingate!"

No mistake about it, you men, the revolt in the Third is going to be a smashing affair—when it comes!

Agreed

A correspondent who complains that we're sending a very poor team to play the Courtfield Candy Factory boys suggests that the fact that stickjaw will be distributed to the players may have something to do with it.

But we don't admit that they are a poor lot. At least, nobody will be able to say afterwards that they can't play footer for toffee!

TOM BROWN tells of— PREFECT LURED BY WOODLAND'S VOICE

Loder of the Sixth came out of the School House the other day with a far-distant look on his face.

"Going out?" Wingate asked him.

"What—oh, yes! I'm off to the woods, Wingate." The distant look came into his eyes again. "I find nature irresistible, you know. I'm never happier than when I'm in the heart of the woods, listening to the woodland's mysterious voice."

I blinked, dear readers. I'd certainly never looked on Loder as a nature-lover before. The idea of Loder listening to the woodland's mysterious voice almost stunned me!

I decided to follow him and perhaps hear it myself. I toddled along cautiously behind him. He crossed the quad, went out of the school gates and made for Friarland Woods.

Arriving in the heart of the woods, he stood still and listened. I pricked up my ears, hoping to get the wavel-length of that mysterious voice myself. Sure enough, I hadn't been listening more than a couple of seconds before I heard it!

"Afternoon, Mister Loder!" the Woodland's Mysterious Voice said. "I turned up as per plan to take you instructions. Now wot do you fancy in this 'ere three-thirty race to-day? Wot about a little flutter on Bonny Boy?"

I fled—gripped by superstitious fear or something! The Woodland's Mysterious Voice was a bit too mysterious for me!

HE SAYS:

"Hang the Consequences!"

We are told that our "ace" reporter Tom Brown takes unnecessary risks in his work.

We must admit that he's always putting his head into the "noose"!

BY ORDER!

All boys possessing pistols, revolvers or rifles are ordered to surrender them to G. Wingate at once. Otherwise they'll be fired!



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BOB CHERRY discusses— BUNTER'S OLD- WORLD COURTESY

"Bunter has been boasting about his old-world courtesy," the Editor told me. "Trot out and find out all about it, will you?"

I trotted out. I ran into Bunter in Courtfield High Street. Bunter smiled when I mentioned my mission.

"If there's one thing that annoys me more than anything else," he said, as he spat out an orange pip on to my waistcoat, "it's the ill-mannered way in which people behave nowadays."

"Now, in me you see one of the old school—a chap who behaves with old-world courtesy. Get out of the way, you clumsy fool!"—the last to a passer-by who accidentally brushed against him.

"I insist on always being dignified," went on Bunter, poking out his tongue and making a long nose at a senior across the street. "As a gentleman, I don't believe in letting others know what I really think of them. YAH! BEAST!" he concluded, as Bolsover major passed us.

"With my inferiors, I'm all kindness and consideration. Half a mo., old chap, while I see if this common cat slips up on that banana-skin. He, he, he! He's done it! Good!"

"If you want to hear my views on modern manners, get on this bus with me. Now just look at the ill-mannered way in which they scramble for seats! 'Nuff to make a gentleman of the old school like me perfectly sick! Kium on!"

Bunter rushed into the crowd, trampling people underfoot and hitting out right and left. I decided not to prolong the interview by catching the bus with him.

I'd already learned all I wanted to learn about Bunter's old-world courtesy!

(Continued from previous column.)

"Of course not, fathead!" spoke up the voice from within the armer. "It's your opponent inside—Bierchemall!"

"Mine gott! Vot for vos you in der armer?"

"For the duel, of course, idjut! I told you I was going to change into my duelling clobber. Well, this is it!"

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

"Donner und blitzten!" screamed the German master. "You can't fight der duel mit armer on!"

"Can't I? We'll soon see about that. Have at thee, varlet!"

And the Head grabbed his sabre and made a rush.

Clank! Clank! Clank! Sparks flew as steel snote steel. A moment later, Hair Guggenheimer flew, too! Against an opponent clad in solid iron, all his skill as a swordsman was of no avail! Round and round the armory reared Hair Guggenheimer, with Dr. Bierchemall lumbering after him, giving him a jab whenever he got the chance. Meanwhile, the crowd cheered.

"Go it, sir!"

"Give him a puncture for me!"

At last the German master saw an opening and made a dash for the door, and the Head of St. Sam's gave up the chase. The grato duel was over! Dr. Bierchemall was a winner all hands down! Throwing back his visor, he showed his grinning lizz to the crowd and made a brief speech.

"Boys!" he said. "It was a grate and thrilling encounter, fought with the strictest regard for the laws of fair play!"

"Oh, crums!"

Notwithstanding all the disadvantages from which I suffered, my superior swordsmanship won the day and I drove my opponent from the field of battle! Because why? Because my carriage would not allow me to be defeated! Boys! I ask you to give me three hearty cheers!"

And the fellows were so overcome by his check, that they actually gave them!



Complete Story by DICKY NUGENT

Jack Jolly & Co. of the St. Sam's Fourth were wandering round the skool armory, inspecting the arms and armor, when Dr. Bierchemall, the Head, came in. He was holding in his somewhat grimy paw a sossidge of tremendous size.

"Ah, boys! Larning how they used to settle their differences in bygone times?" he eride, as he took a big bite at the sossidge. "I could tell you a tale or two about that myself! I used to be considered a rare lad with the sabre in my stowdent days!"

"Go hon, sir!"

"Honest injun!" grinned Dr. Bierchemall. "I was such a dabster at it that my fellow-stowdents used to call me the 'Butcher'! I don't mind telling you, boys, that even now if it came to an affair of honour, there aren't many who could stand up against my deadly thrusting and parrying!"

Just as the Head finished speaking, the door of the armory burst open. A split second later, Hair Otto Guggenheimer, the German master, came charging in like a yewman cyclone. To the surprise of Jack Jolly & Co., he rushed straight up to Dr. Bierchemall and shook a fat fist in his face.

"Vot you mean by it, Hair Doctor, hein?" he roared. "You mine sossidges haf pinched, don't it?"

"Really, Hair Guggenheimer, I'm surprised to hear a gentleman of your education use the word 'pinched,'" said the Head, hurriedly skoffing the remainder of the sossidge. "You should always say

'nabbed': it sounds eer so much better!"

"Donner und blitzten! Vot you haf done mit mine sossidges, hein?"

"Eaten them," replied Dr. Bierchemall, calmly. "That's more, I've eaten them to your own good!"

"VOT?"

"I came to the conclusion that you were getting to fat," said Dr. Bierchemall, with a critical glare at Hair Guggenheimer's ample figure. "So I nabbed your sossidges and skoffed the lot myself—just with the idea of helping you to keep your waistline mezzament down, see?"

"Mine gott! Then mine pitiful sossidges all gone are?"

"Gone for good!" grinned the Head, smacking his lips and rubbing his whiskers at the recollection of them. "Wat are you going to do about it, Hair Guggenheimer?"

And the Head winked slyly at Jack Jolly & Co., as if to say: "That's easier for him! What CAN he do about it, anyway?"

The next instant, he got a shock. Instead of giving a hopeless shug and turning on his heel, defeated, the German master uttered a fierce, blundering growl.

"Vot I do about it?" he roared. "I vill you tell! You me haf lost mit yourself and vot I do about it is: I challenge you to a duel to der de mit sabres!"

"Eh?" gasped the Head.

"A duel to der de mit sabres!" repeated Hair Guggenheimer. "I vill settle der argument all right! I vill be vot you call der affair of hon—and seeing dot I vas a champion sabre-fighter in mine stowdent days, I haf no dot vot der result vill be!"

"M-m-my hat!" stammered Dr. Bierchemall, turning deathly pale. "A duel with sabres? It's impossible!"

"Ha!" leered the German master. "You haf vot you call der de up, hein?"

"Sus-sus-certainly not! But uldn't we fight with more civilised weapons—pea-shooters or something?"

Hair Guggenheimer burst into a roar of savvidge laughter.

"Pea-shooters! Dot vos funny! Nein, nein! Sabres I said and sabres I mean!"

"Weren't you just telling us how clever you were at sabre-fighting, sir?" grinned Jack Jolly, winking at Merry and Bright. "I should think this is a jolly good chance for you to see if the old hand has lost its cunning!"

"Oh, crums—I mean, yes, of course it is!" corrected Dr. Bierchemall, looking around him like a cornered ratt. "In the usual way I should be delighted, but—"

He broke off suddenly. His shifty eyes had come to rest on a suit of armor—and the site of that antique ornament seemed to inspire him with courage.

"On second thoughts, Hair Guggenheimer—yes!" he said. "I axsept your challenge!"

The German master bared his fangs in a savvidge grin.

"Dot vos good! Name der place and der time!"

"Here—in half an hour! I require half an hour to change into my duelling costume."

Hair Guggenheimer clicked his heels and boughed.

"Ver' good, Hair Doctor! I vill return in der half-hour—and if I don't get revenge mit mine self for mine pitiful sossidges, I'll eat mine hat!"

With that, the German master rolled out of the armory, barely gloating!

Jack Jolly & Co. looked at the Head rather uneasily when Hair Guggenheimer had gone.

"Eggseuse me, sir, but do you think it's all right for you to fight a duel with the Hair?" asked Jack Jolly. "He's reckoned to be a pretty dangerous chap with a sabre in his hand, sir!"

Dr. Bierchemall, who seemed to have recovered his spirits in a surprising fashion, laughed gaily.

"Don't you worry your fat, Jolly!" he said. "By the time I've finished with Hair Guggenheimer, you'll find it hard to distinguish him from mine-meat! Now

run off, my boys, and spread the news far and wide. Tell everybody that in half an hour's time your respected headmaster, with that dautless curridge for which he is famous, is going to risk his prelus anatomy in a deht-dealing duel with a feroshus sword-swallower—I mean, sword-fighter! Tell them to roll up in their thousands and cheer me on to the glorious victory I shall assuredly attain!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Jack Jolly & Co. And they quitted the skool armory like fellows in a dream. What had happened to the Head? They had always privily held the opinion that he was an awful coward. Yet, here he was, grinning all over his dial at the prospect of fighting a duel to the deht. It was amazing—eggar-dinary!

The only conclusion the chums of the Fourth could come to was that Dr. Bierchemall had suddenly gone potty. As Merry remarked, that seemed quite a likely explanation, for they had seen it coming for a long time!

But as a matter of fact, that wasn't the true explanation. A wily wheeze had occurred to the Head while he was talking to Hair Guggenheimer, and it was that that had made him change his tune. What that wheeze was, Jack Jolly & Co. were to learn when the time for the duel arrived!

At the appointed hour, a grato crowd assembled in the skool armory. There was a cheer as Hair Guggenheimer rolled up. He was holding his sabre at an alarming angle in front of him and he looked as if he was simply thirsting for blood.

"Where is mine opponent, hein?" he shouted. "If he does not turn up soon, I shall think he is run coward, don't it?"

A suit of armor that had been standing near him suddenly moved and a familiar voice from under the visor rapped out:

"Half a jiffy, Hair Guggenheimer! I'm here."

"Himmel!" gasped Hair Guggenheimer. "Vot vos dot, hein? Is der armer hawnted?"

(Continued at foot of next column.)

GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT!



Blundell, captain of the Fifth, said Coker was fifty-seven different varieties of an ass. Immediately Coker heard it he challenged Blundell, with the intention of licking him—but was thrown out! Potter said Coker's action made him fifty-eight kinds of an ass!

Keeping fit is Bob Cherry's ideal. On the coldest winter mornings he is to be seen performing "physical jerks" before the open dormitory window. After that Bob wets a sponge and fetches Billy Bunter out of bed—also with a "jerk!"

Dick Russell returned from a half-holiday tramp with several lizards, snatched the cross-bar at Fifth Form practice is still proudly exhibits to curious Removites referred to—by Coker! Coker Billy Bunter thinks feeding thinks he is a "crack" player. "mere reptiles" is silly. Russell he certainly "cracked" the pilot to send an important message. A (sea)-worthy rescue: "cracked up!"

When a seaplane came down with engine trouble in Pegg Bay, Tom Redwing, who was visiting some friends there, rowed out to it and brought the pilot ashore. Redwing's promptness enabled the pilot to send an important message. A (sea)-worthy rescue: "cracked up!"

Skinner says Billy Bunter has been known to employ eighty-three different methods of extracting cash from unsuspecting Removites. All Bunter's methods, however, lead up to the same thing—a request for a "little loan"—to be repaid about the year 1983!