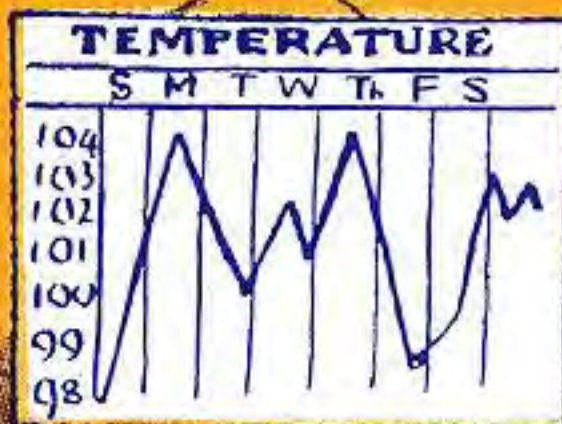


THE BEST SCHOOL STORY PAPER? YOU'RE LOOKING AT IT NOW!

The Magnet

Billy Bunter's
Own Paper



Dear Wharton
Bee a sport
I'm STARVING
Send me
some tuck
A cake
would do
Lr

**BUNTER
ON THE
SICK LIST!**

NORTH, SOUTH, EAST or WEST the MAGNET'S considered the VERY BEST !



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.

EVERY day now, chums, my post-bag is chock-a-block full of readers' letters saying how pleased they are with the stories of Harry Wharton & Co. Allow me, then, to thank you all for the appreciation shown.

The Greyfriars yarn I've got in store for you next week is a real corker! The title alone:

"BILLY BUNTER'S WINDFALL!"

By Frank Richards

will make you sit up and take notice. As you are already aware—unless you have not yet read the school yarn in this issue—Billy Bunter, by a wonderful stroke of good fortune, has become possessed of the stupendous sum of fifty pounds. With so much money at his disposal naturally enough the Owl of the Greyfriars Remove gets a swelled head! What's more, quite a number of fellows discover hitherto unsuspected attractions in Bunter—fellows like Skinner & Co., who are ready to advise him to make the fur fly. But Bunter needs little urging. The fat junior rather fancies himself as a sportsman! Shortage of cash has prevented him from going "on the spree"; but shortage of cash is a thing of the past now. And does Bunter go the pace? I'll say he does. But there's some good in our Billy as well as bad, as is proved by the fact that the Famous Five are more than delighted to honour him when he gets back to his accustomed state of impecuniosity—with nothing left, but the extremely doubtful expectation of a postal order! Believe me, chums, this yarn contains more laughs than I've encountered for a long time.

Added to this splendid treat is the usual two-page "Greyfriars Herald" supplement which is guaranteed to come up to your best expectations. If you've not already ordered your copy, do so now!

ARE YOU A PHOTOGRAPHER?

S. Austin, of Brockley, is, and he's written to ask me to advise him how to photograph a night scene, cheaply. He is anxious to photograph the moon, etc.

Astronomical photographs, my chum, are impractical without an expensive camera and access to a large telescope. You can photograph the moon—exposure about one hour—but owing to the fact that it will have moved considerably during that time, your picture will show a very elongated image, fading slightly at the ends. I advise you to specialise on ordinary night subjects such as flood-lighting. Buy panchromatic film and give about one minute exposure for buildings floodlit in white, twice as long

for colours. You can get good night effects during the day by placing a piece of red glass in front of the lens of your camera. The best way is to photograph directly towards the sun, making sure it is screened from the lens—behind a tree, for instance—and increase your exposure at least six times to compensate for the red glass. Indoor photography by artificial light is comparatively easy, providing you use panchromatic film, but exposure depends entirely on the power of light in the room and must be found by experiment. Be sure and use the largest aperture in all cases.

I have had a letter of complaint this week from Belinda Lascelle, of Sunderland, who thinks that our artist should be

CALLED OVER THE COALS!

My Sunderland chum considers that Vernon-Smith's nose is rather exaggerated! This is the first complaint of its kind, and personally, I don't think there's need for it. Smithy has got a somewhat bulbous nose and nothing can alter it. And then again, the Bunder's nasal organ does distinguish him from any other junior at the school. No, chum, Smithy himself doesn't complain, so why should you? Thanks, however, for the nice things you say about the MAGNET. You are certainly right in saying that it is the best boy's paper.

Praise for the good old paper comes from Colin M. Turnbull, of Purley, who writes: "Every success to the MAGNET. The yarns are by far the best and most natural. I have been a reader for roughly six years, and haven't come across a series I haven't enjoyed."

I must thank Shadrick Mumberson, of Cumberland, for his suggestion. To carry it out, however, would entail far too much work, and incidentally it would be far too expensive and complicated.

Every week, it seems, I receive letters from readers asking me

HOW TO JOIN THE NAVY!

To these and others whom it may concern, let me say that a booklet dealing with this subject can be obtained from any post office on application. Talking of the sea reminds me of some

NAUTICAL NICKNAMES.

Practically everybody knows that the sailor's name for the chaplain is "Sky Pilot." Here is a list of nicknames

which are not so widely known. The coxswain is "Tommy Piper," the carpenter "Chippy," the electrician "Sparks," and the stokers rejoice in the euphonious name of "clinker knockers." The name given to the sick-berth attendants, which suggests a slight element of ingratitude, is that of "poultice wallopers," and the doctors have been invested with a still unkind one of "butchers." The naval cooper is "Jimmy Bungs," and the sergeant of marines is known as "Stripey," while the paymaster's appellation is delightfully suggestive of affluence—to wit "Moneybags."

Now comes a query from Henry Holt, of Ipswich, who asks me to tell him the origin of the

THREE BRASS BALLS.

The sign used to denote moneylenders and pawnbrokers shops, viz., three brass balls, owes its origin to a doctor. A number of the members of a family—the famous Medicini family—were very skilful in the art of medicines, and had for their trade mark three brass balls which represented gilded pills. Later, this family turned their occupation to moneylending; but, nevertheless, they still continued to use their sign. Other moneylenders copied this with the result that every moneylender or pawnbroker now has the sign of the three brass balls over their shop.

Now for a few

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

Bob Nicholls (Brighton): Many thanks for your long and interesting letter. I am grateful for your suggestion.

Arthur Wells (Reading): I am afraid I cannot tell you where you can obtain back numbers of the MAGNET other than our Back Number Dept., Amalgamated Press, Bear Alley, Farringdon Street, E.C.4. Even then, you can only get issues published within the last three months.

Miss Doris Walsh (Potters Bar): In reply to your query how to develop your chest I advise you to try chest developers. A daily course of exercises should bring about the desired result.

Eric Grey (Folkestone): Thanks for your appreciative letter. I cannot publish your verses as space will not permit.

Other letters have been received from Tom Burns (Catford), Will Staines (Bedford), Harry Raymond (Windsor), Clem Foster (Gillingham), Bert Porter (Plymouth), Stanley Friar (Southampton) and my thanks are due to all these readers.

Before winding up this chat, I would like to remind all "Magnetites" of the rollicking fine yarns dealing with the early adventures of Harry Wharton & Co. now appearing in our companion paper—the GEM. You'll enjoy reading them, you can take it from me. This week's yarn: "THE GREYFRIARS VENTRILOQUIST!" is a real top-notch! Get a copy of the GEM to-day and sample this splendid treat!

YOUR EDITOR.

FIFTY POUNDS REWARD for information leading to the capture of a smash-and-grab man! And Billy Bunter, the borrower of "bobs" and the cadger of "tanners" has the clue!

BUNTER ON THE SPOT!



By
**FRANK
RICHARDS**

Keeping in the dark shadows, Billy Bunter crept close to the two dark figures by the furniture-van. "Get going!" he heard one of them say. "We shall hit Courtfield by midnight, and that's far enough away for safety!"

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bunter Knows Nothing!

"WHERE'S my bike?" Five fellows asked that question all at once. Harry Wharton & Co. stared round the Greyfriars bike-shed. Five machines, which should have been visible on the stand, where nowhere to be seen. It was really surprising, as well as annoying. Some unthinking fellow might have borrowed a bike on a half-holiday without asking leave. But it was improbable that five fellows had borrowed five bikes without asking leave. Yet the jiggers were gone.

Billy Bunter, standing in the doorway of the bike-shed, blinked at the Co. through his big spectacles and grinned.

"I say, you fellows, are your jiggers gone?" he asked.

"The gonefulness is terrific," answered Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"What silly ass—" began Bob Cherry.

"What blithering idiot—" growled Johnny Bull.

Harry Wharton gave the fat Owl of the Remove a suspicious glare.

"Where are our bikes, Bunter?" he demanded.

"Eh? How should I know?" asked Bunter. "I dare say some of the fellows have bagged them. A lot of fellows are going over to Lantham to see the first eleven match, you know."

"If any fellow's bagged my jigger he will bag a thick ear next!" said Frank Nugent.

"Not much good looking for them, I'm afraid!" remarked Bunter. "I say, you fellows, why not go over by motor-bus?"

"Because we can do it in an hour on the bikes, fathead, and the bus would take two, even if we caught it, ass."

"Well, there's lots of time on a half-holiday!" argued Bunter. "What's the hurry?"

"Fathead!"

"Well, look here, if you go by bus I'll come!" said Bunter.

"What an inducement to go by bus and miss half the cricket!" remarked Bob Cherry. "No takers, old fat man."

"Well, you'll jolly well have to go by bus if you can't find the bikes!" said Billy Bunter. "And they ain't here, are they? He, he, he!"

The Famous Five of the Remove

HARRY WHARTON & CO., of Greyfriars, in another EXCITING SCHOOL ADVENTURE.

gazed at William George Bunter. As Bunter was there, and the bikes were not, they guessed that Bunter's presence had something to do with the jiggers' absence. Without being brilliant arithmeticians, they were able to put two and two together!

"You fat, frabjous frump!" said Harry Wharton in measured tones. "What have you done with our bikes?"

"Nothing, old chap! I haven't seen them. If they're not here I fancy some fellows must have borrowed them. In fact, I saw Smithy take yours."

"You saw Smithy take mine—and leave his own here," roared Wharton.

"Oh! I didn't mean Smithy! I meant Toddy!" explained Bunter.

"I saw Toddy start on his own jigger ten minutes ago."

"Oh! I—I—I mean, I—I saw Squiff bag it!" amended Bunter. "And a Fourth Form chap had yours, Cherry; I saw him. And—and some Shell fellows took the other three. There's rather a rush on bikes this afternoon, with so many fellows going over to see the first eleven play Lantham. I'd have my own jigger out if it hadn't got a puncture and a bent pedal and the chain wonky. As it is, I shall be going by bus, and I'd like you fellows to come with me."

"Ain't he a coughdrop?" asked Bob Cherry. "We're not supposed to be able to guess that he's parked our jiggers somewhere to get us to pay his fare on the Lantham motor-bus."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The guessfulness is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Where are those bikes, my esteemed and idiotic Bunter?"

Bunter shook his head.

"Haven't the foggiest," he answered breezily. "I shouldn't bother about them if I were you. What's the good of slogging about on bikes on a hot June day? We'll pick up the motor-bus at the corner of Oak Lane, and—"

"We'll pick up a blithering bloater in this bike-shed and bump him if he doesn't tell us where those bikes are!" said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Where's my bike!" bawled Bob.

"It's no good asking me where your bike is when I don't know anything about it. All I know is that Coker of THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,531.

the Fifth came in and took it out. I dare say he's miles away by this time!"

"So Coker of the Fifth had it as well as a Fourth Form chap?" roared Bob. "Did they take it for a tandem?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I mean, a Fourth Form chap—Temple of the Fourth, to be exact. I—I wonder what made me say Coker of the Fifth?" stammered Bunter. "I—I meant Fry of the Fourth—that is, Temple of the Fourth. I—I thought it rather a cheek of him to take it, but there you are—"

"Are you going to tell us about those bikes?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"I say, you fellows, how you keep on, as if I knew anything about your mouldy jiggers," said Bunter peevishly. "Look here, let's start now, and we shall catch the bus all right. I'll pay the fares all round, if that's what's worrying you," added Bunter, with a touch of scorn. "Nothing mean about me, I hope! One of you can lend me five bob—"

"Where's my bike?" roared Johnny Bull.

"It's no good yelling at a chap, Bull, because somebody's borrowed your bike," said Bunter. "Look here, you'll get over by bus in time to see something of the cricket if you really want to. I'll wait for you at the Pagoda. I suppose you'll be having tea there?"

The Famous Five of the Remove wasted no more time in words. Billy Bunter was keen on their company that afternoon—evidently with a view to tea at the Pagoda. They were not so keen on Bunter's; and, amazing as it seemed to the fat Owl, they were keener on cricket than on tea at the teashop. They jumped at Billy Bunter as if moved by the same spring, and grabbed him.

"Now, you fat foozler—" roared Bob.

"Leggo!" yelled Bunter. "Ow! Beasts! Wow!"

"Bump him!"

"I say, you fellows— Yoo-hooooop!" Bump!

Billy Bunter sat in the doorway. He sat and roared. His roars were like unto those of the celebrated Bull of Bashan of ancient times.

"Ow! Yaroooh! Beasts! Yooooop!"

"Now where's the jiggers!" Nugent demanded.

"Ow! I don't know—"

Bump!

"Yarooooooooop!"

"We'll keep this up as long as you like!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Weight-lifting is good exercise, though I wish it was under a ton! Give him another."

Bump!

"Whoop! Beasts!" roared Bunter. "I don't know anything about your mouldy bikes! I never wheeled them out, you rotters, and they ain't stacked behind the bike-shed this very minute, and— Wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Harry Wharton & Co., leaving the fat Owl sitting in the doorway, tramped round the building to look for bikes.

A minute later five machines were being wheeled down to the gate by five cheery juniors.

Billy Bunter sat and gasped, while the Famous Five went sailing merrily away on the jiggers.

"Beasts!" he gurgled.

The fat Owl picked himself up and tottered, gasping, away from the bike-shed. Billy Bunter had been banking on that masterly scheme for getting over to Lantham that afternoon; but, like many of Bunter's schemes, it had let him down with a bump—in fact, several.

bumps. Bunter's problem now was what he was going to do next—or, to be more exact, whom he was going to do next!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Unexpected!

"BETTER not, Smithy!"

The Bounder of Greyfriars scowled.

"I'm not askin' you what I'd better do! I'm askin' you whether you'll come!" he snapped.

"Not out of bounds, old chap!" said Tom Redwing, shaking his head.

Herbert Vernon-Smith's scowl grew blacker.

Billy Bunter, rolling along under the old Greyfriars elms, where the two juniors stood talking, came to a halt and blinked at them through his big spectacles.

Bunter was looking for Smithy. Now he had found him; but the Bounder looked in such an exceedingly bad temper that Bunter hesitated to approach nearer.

That Smithy was having a car out that afternoon Bunter knew—as he knew many things that did not concern him. He supposed that Smithy, like a crowd of other Greyfriars fellows, was going over to Lantham to see the first eleven play—in which case Bunter wanted a lift in the car if he could get it. Smithy's present expression did not look as if he would get it—or anything but a boot—if he bothered the Bounder now.

Neither Smithy nor Redwing observed Bunter; they were facing one another—Redwing looking impatient, Smithy angry and resentful.

"I suppose you mean," Vernon-Smith went on, "that you'd rather have biked over to Lantham with Wharton and his crew. Is that it?"

"I'd have liked that all right if you'd have come," said Redwing. "I don't see what you want to keep on rowing with those fellows for."

"Well, you can go after them if you choose," said the Bounder, with a dark look at his chum. "I dare say I can pick up somebody to go in the car. Skinner or Snoop would jump at it; or I could drop in at Highelife and ask Ponsonby."

Tom Redwing compressed his lips.

"You'll do as you like, I suppose," he said. "I thought you'd chucked that cad Ponsonby after it came out about the rotten trick he played on the Cliff House girls."

"I can take him up again," sneered the Bounder. "And I jolly well will, and run across to Wapshot races, if you won't come on a trip! Where's the harm in a run to Brighton?"

"None, if you had leave. Do you think Mr. Quelch would give you leave to go a hundred miles out of school bounds on a half-holiday?"

"I know he wouldn't."

"Well; that washes it out."

"Oh, all right! I'll make it Wapshot races, instead," sneered Vernon-Smith.

"Why not make it Lantham, and see Wingate and his men play?"

"You can cut after Wharton's crew and leave me on my own. That gang may like to hear your pi-jaw; I'm fed up with it!"

With that the Bounder of Greyfriars turned on his heel and stalked away—so suddenly that he fairly walked into Billy Bunter, who had not expected that sudden move.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter, tottering.

"Ow! I say— Wow!"

"You fat rotter!" The Bounder's eyes glinted at him. "Have you been

listening, as usual, you podgy freak?"

"Oh, really, Smithy! I never heard a word you said to Redwing!" exclaimed Billy Bunter indignantly. "I'm not the fellow to listen, I hope! Still, you're rather an ass to talk in the quad about going to Wapshot races. But it's all right, Smithy—I'll come!"

"Will you?" said the Bounder grimly.

"Yes, old chap! I'm not pil!" said Bunter reassuringly. "That soft ass Redwing's no good. I'm your man, Smithy! Yaroooh! You kick me again, you beast, and I'll go straight to Quelch and say— Yoo-hoooo-hoooo!"

Billy Bunter hopped away like an active kangaroo. The Bounder was about to follow him up, evidently to land another kick, when Tom Redwing hastily caught him by the arm.

"For goodness' sake, Smithy, chuck it! Do you want it squealed out all over Greyfriars?" he exclaimed.

"I'll boot him across the quad and back again, the eavesdroppin', fat rascal!" exclaimed the Bounder furiously.

"Yah!" roared Bunter, hopping away farther. "Yah! Pub-haunting cad! Yah! Who's going to Wapshot races? Yah!"

"Shut up, Bunter!" exclaimed Redwing anxiously.

There were plenty of fellows in the quad, and five or six at least had heard Bunter's roar, and they exchanged grinning glances. One hearer, however, was Walker a Sixth Form prefect, and he did not grin.

Walker frowned and came across towards the juniors.

"What's that?" he exclaimed sharply.

"Where are you going, Vernon-Smith?"

The Bounder for the moment was on the point of making an angry and defiant reply, but he checked himself. Even the reckless scapegrace of the Remove realised that he had to be careful now.

"Eh? I'm going to Lantham, Walker," he answered. "Lots of fellows going over to see the first eleven play."

James Walker gave him a grim, penetrating, suspicious look. Every prefect at Greyfriars had a wary eye on the Bounder, who had been in trouble often enough, and had only avoided worse trouble many times by phenomenal luck.

"Well," said Walker, "all right. Lantham's not out of bounds on a half-holiday. If you're going to Lantham, Vernon-Smith, I recommend you to let some other Greyfriars fellows see you there, in case they're asked. That's a tip for your own benefit."

Walker moved away with that.

The Bounder scowled after him.

Trips out of school bounds were washed out now—whether a motor run to Brighton, or a visit to the races at Wapshot. He was quite well aware that Walker of the Sixth would make it a point, after what he had heard, to ascertain whether he had been seen at Lantham or not.

For a moment or two Herbert Vernon-Smith stood breathing hard, then he turned to Tom Redwing.

"Coming to Lantham?" he asked.

"Yes, rather, old chap!" said Tom, in great relief. "Bike it?"

"The car's waiting down the road. Might take another man or two; room for four easily," said Vernon-Smith. "Hallo, Oggy! Like a lift to Lantham?"

"Eh, what?" Ogilvy came up. "Yes, rather—like a bird! No gammon?" he added. He had heard Billy Bunter's roar.

The Bounder laughed.

"Honest Injun! Redwing's comin'—"

that's a guarantee of respectability! Room for another chap. Like to hop in the car, Bunter?"

Billy Bunter fairly jumped.

Bunter had a hopeful nature, but he had not hoped for that.

Having, as he was quite aware, "dished" the Bounder's intended escapade for that afternoon, he had been expecting a boot—certainly not an offer of a lift in the car.

"Oh, yes! Rather, old man!" gasped Bunter.

Redwing looked at Smithy blankly. Smithy had his good qualities—plenty of them—but he had not a forgiving

of Lantham. They were taking the shortest cuts across country to save time. The first eleven were playing a whole day match, and had left Greyfriars in the morning, so a good deal of the game had to be missed, in any case.

The chums of the Remove were keen to get on the scene and cheer Wingate and his merry men at the earliest moment. A winding country lane, rutty and bumpy, saved them a mile on the road, and they whizzed along that narrow lane, shut in by high banks of earth crowned with hawthorn hedges, heedless of ruts and bumps.

His ankle had knocked on a pedal and it hurt.

The man lay sprawling in the dust, dazed and dizzy from the crash.

The Greyfriars juniors looked at him as if they could have eaten him. Without even sounding his bell, he had come round the corner at such a tremendous speed that the collision could not possibly have been avoided. It was plain that his tumble had damaged him, but they had no sympathy to waste on him. They needed it for themselves, in fact! Only one member of the party had escaped painful jolts and bruises; and it was quite likely that the bikes were



The Greyfriars Removites were going at full speed when a cyclist came whizzing round the corner and crashed into them almost before they saw him. With yells of dismay, the juniors went flying. "You howling ass!" roared Johnny Bull. "Mad, or what?"

nature. It simply amazed Redwing to hear him make that offer to Bunter, in the circumstances.

"I say, Smithy, old man, that's frightfully decent of you!" said Tom.

"Yes—isn't it?" said Smithy. "Come on, then; it's ten minutes' walk to the car."

And Vernon-Smith, Redwing, and Ogilvy walked out together, with Billy Bunter rolling on behind, a cheerful, fat grin on his face.

The problem of transport was solved in the most unexpected manner. Really, this seemed to Billy Bunter too good to be true.

As a matter of fact, it was!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Man with the Squint!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"Look out!"

"Great pip!"

"The terrific ass!"

Five startled juniors shouted together as the crash came.

The Famous Five, going at a good speed, were within two or three miles

They had nearly reached a sharp turn, when a cyclist came whizzing round it.

The Famous Five were going fast, but the man who came round the corner came almost like a streak of lightning. Possibly he did not expect to meet anyone in that lonely lane, or perhaps he was in too great a hurry to think of it. Anyhow, he came shooting round the corner and crashed into the bunch of cyclists almost before they saw him.

Bob Cherry, who was a little in the lead, went flying to the right. Harry Wharton went spinning to the left. Both crashed into the banks beside the lane. Johnny Bull and Frank Nugent tumbled over, sprawling; only Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, a little in the rear, steered clear. The stranger hurtled headlong, his bike crashing, and himself crashing after it. It was a terrific mix-up.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh dismounted. The other four picked themselves up. They stood panting, glaring at the man who had caused the disaster.

"You howling ass!" roared Johnny Bull, rubbing an elbow that had banged hard. "Mad—or what?"

"Ow!" groaned Bob Cherry. "Wow!"

damaged, which meant delay on the way to their destination. In that case, the short cut looked like proving the longest way round.

The man sat up, dizzy and panting. His machine lay near him, with a buckled wheel and twisted pedals—evidently not to be ridden again in a hurry. He glared breathlessly at the schoolboys.

"You young fools!" he panted.

"Well, I like that!" exclaimed Harry Wharton hotly. "It was your fault entirely! You must be mad to take a corner like that!"

"The madfulness must be terrific!"

The man staggered up. He was a man of rather powerful frame, with hard features, and a squint in one eye. In his calmest moments, he would not have looked a handsome man. And now his face seemed almost distorted with rage.

The accident, though obviously his own fault, seemed to have infuriated him. He gave a yelp of pain as he got on his legs, and almost fell down again. Then he stood on his right leg, his left limping.

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"You ought to have had more sense!" growled Johnny Bull. "What the thump do you mean by taking a corner like a mad bull?"

The man gave a savage snarl, and, without other reply, limped to his machine, and picked it up. The fury in his face intensified as he saw that it was hopelessly damaged.

"See if the jiggers are all right!" gasped Harry Wharton.

The juniors picked up their machines.

All of them were intensely exasperated; but there was no use in a "row"—especially as the cause of the accident had come off worst of all. Taking no further heed of the man, the Greyfriars juniors examined their machines.

Luckily, the damage to the bicycles was not extensive. The squint-eyed man's machine was a hopeless wreck; but the schoolboys' bikes had escaped serious damage. Which was a relief and a satisfaction. Knocked about as they were, they were still rideable.

"Thank goodness we can get on!" said Nugent.

"Come on!" said Harry.

"Stop!"

The limping man rapped out the word.

Harry Wharton & Co. stared round at him.

"What do you want?" asked Harry curtly.

The man pointed to his machine.

"I can't ride that again; and I'm in a hurry!" he snapped.

"Yes; you looked as if you were rather in a hurry," said Johnny Bull sarcastically. "More haste and less speed, as it turns out."

"I want one of those machines."

"Wha-a-t?"

"Yours—it's the biggest," added the squinting man, making a stride towards Bob Cherry. "Sorry; but it can't be helped. Hand it over—quick!"

The Famous Five fairly blinked at him. He had wrecked his own machine, and nearly wrecked theirs, and four of them were bruised and badly shaken. Added to that, he had the amazing nerve to demand one of their jiggers. And they wondered for a moment whether they heard aright.

"You—you—you want my jigger?" stuttered Bob.

"Yes—quick!"

"You cheeky idiot!" roared Bob. "Think I'm going to let you have it?"

"Don't be a fool! I'll knock you flying if you give me any trouble—and your friends after you! Hand it over—sharp!"

"I can see myself doing it!" gasped Bob. "Of all the nerve—Why, you cheeky rotter, leggo my bike!"

It was really difficult to believe that the fellow was in earnest; but he was, for he grasped Bob Cherry's bicycle by the handlebars, and wrenched it away from him.

Another moment, and his leg would have been over it. In that moment Bob leaped at him, and hit him under the ear, with a thump that sent him staggering across the lane. Nugent caught the bike as it rocked away.

"There, you cheeky rotter!" roared Bob, crimson with wrath. "Think you're going to pinch my bike, because you've crooked your own?"

"Line up!" rapped Wharton sharply. The man was coming at them with clenched fists and blazing eyes. They let the machines run, and stood up to him in a bunch.

Evidently the ruffian had no doubt

about being able to handle a party of schoolboys. But he rather underestimated the Famous Five of Greyfriars.

He was a thick-set, muscular man, and he had a hard and heavy punch. One or two, or even three of the juniors would have found him tough to handle. But five of them only needed pluck to stand up to him with success—and of that the Famous Five had ample measure.

In his rage and excitement the squinting man seemed to have forgotten his damaged leg. He came on almost like a tiger.

Bob Cherry got the first punch, and, sturdy as Bob was, he went over under it, sprawling. Frank Nugent was down the next second. The two punches had come like lightning, and like knocks from a hammer. But Johnny Bull's fist crashed right in the squinting eye, and Harry Wharton's on the bulldog jaw, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's dusky knuckles fairly rang on an ear.

The man staggered over; and then, his limping leg failing him, he dropped, with a bump, in the dust. He had no chance of rising before Johnny, with an active jump, landed on him, and pinned him down with his knees. A moment more and the nabob was stamping on his legs, and Harry Wharton gripping his wrists.

Bob and Frank were up again, panting, and they rushed in.

In the grasp of the five the squinting man struggled madly; but they had him.

Dangerous ruffian as he evidently was, the five were too many, and too much for him.

"By gum!" panted Bob. "Pin him; hold him! We'll show the rotter whether he can knock fellows over and pinch their bikes!"

The man heaved under them, frantic with excitement and fury. Indeed, he was so madly excited and enraged that the thought occurred to the juniors that he had some powerful motive for his haste—some motive that he could not have explained. Obviously he was a lawless and unscrupulous rascal, and it was quite possible that he was in such a hurry to get to a safe distance from some officer of the law.

But whatever he was, he had no chance of handling the Famous Five of Greyfriars. They handled him! There was no help for them in that lonely spot if that rascal had got the upper hand; but they had the upper hand, fortunately, and they kept it.

"Hold him!" gasped Harry. "Yank him along to that bike of his, and tie his paws to it! That will keep him out of mischief!"

"Good egg!" grinned Bob breathlessly.

"Let me go—let me go!" The man ceased to struggle, and panted out the words: "I will not touch you again! I will not touch your bicycles! Only let me go—"

"Do you think we'd trust you, you rascally thief?" snapped Wharton. "The minute we let you go you'd begin again, you scoundrel! We're making you safe!"

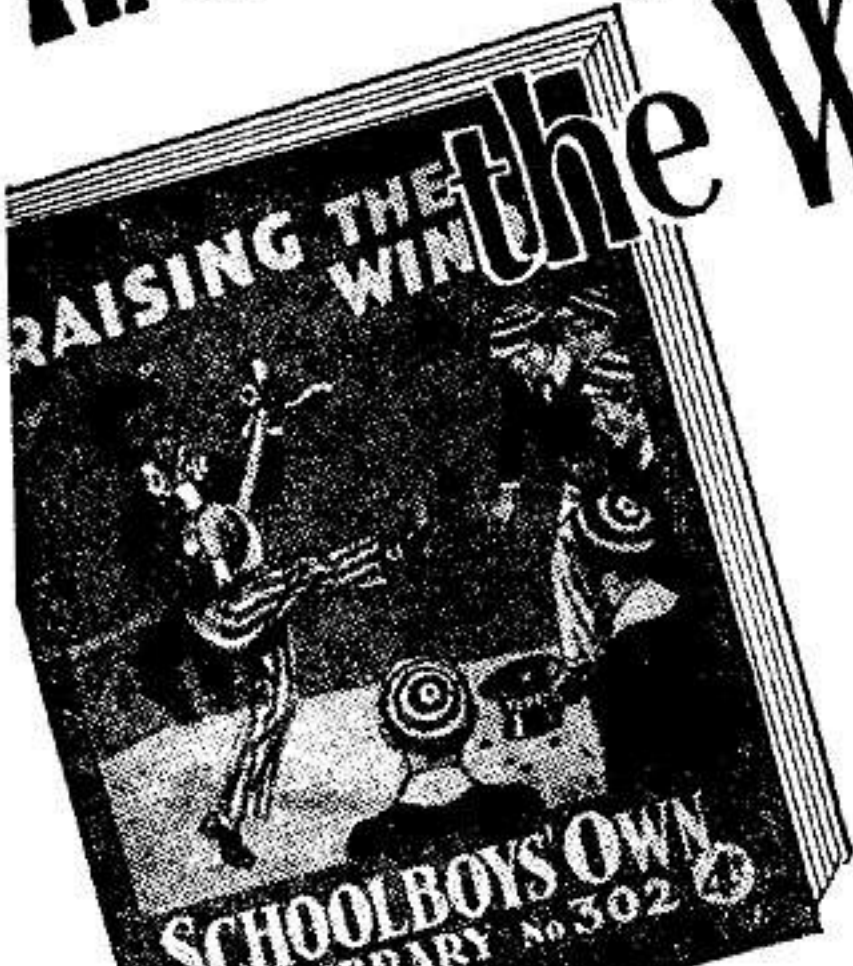
The man resumed the struggle more desperately than before.

Clearly he was alarmed at the prospect of being left tied to his bike. That strengthened the suspicion of the schoolboys that he was some law-breaker making his escape. Anyhow, they did not intend to let him go, and have another desperate fight on their

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hands a minute afterwards. They dragged him to the crooked bike, forcibly.

Bob jerked his handkerchief from his pocket, twisted it, and knotted it round his right wrist, and to a handle-bar. Then he jerked off his necktie, and secured his left wrist in the same manner.

After that he was released, and the juniors stood panting for breath. They were all bruised and breathless from the struggle, and glad enough that the infuriated rascal was in no position to do further damage.

It was some minutes before they felt equal to mounting their machines and resuming their way. During those minutes there was an incessant jingling and clanking as the squinting man dragged and wrenched at his bound hands, dragging the bike to and fro. But it was likely to be a long time before he got loose.

"Let me go—let me go!" he yelled, as the juniors prepared to mount their bikes at last.

"Rats!" answered Bob cheerfully. "The ratfulness is terrific!" chuckled the Nabob of Bhanipur.

And the Famous Five rode on, the clinking and clanking dying away behind them as they rode. How long it would take the rascal to get free, they neither knew nor cared; but they had no doubt that he was still wrenching and wriggling when they arrived at the Lantham Cricket Ground, put up their bikes, and joined the crowd watching the game.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter Gets Left!

"I SAY, you fellows, ain't we going a long way round?" asked Billy Bunter, blinking from the car through his big spectacles.

"Are we?" smiled the Bounder.

"Well, this isn't the Lantham road!" said Bunter.

"Go hon!"

Vernon-Smith's other companions in the car had noticed it before Billy Bunter. The four juniors had packed into the car on the Courtfield road, and the chauffeur had started at a good speed, which promised to land them in Lantham in very quick time.

But half-way to that town the car turned off the high road and followed a lane, leading to parts unknown.

The Bounder had spoken to the Courtfield chauffeur before starting, in a low voice, unheard by his companions. Apparently he had been giving the driver instructions, which the man was now carrying out.

Why, none of the three could guess.

Ogilvy was looking rather impatient. He wanted to get to the cricket as soon as possible, like other fellows who were going over to Lantham that afternoon. Still, it was Smithy's car, and Smithy had a right to choose his own route.

"We're missing a lot of the cricket!" the Scottish junior remarked at last. "What's the big idea, Smithy?"

Redwing was silent. He had been surprised by the Bounder taking Bunter in the car, in the circumstances, and now he wondered whether there was something behind it. Turning the other cheek was not much in the Bounder's line, as a rule. And the lurking grin on Smithy's face indicated sardonic thoughts within.

"Oh, why not run round a bit?" said Smithy blandly. "Glorious afternoon for a run! Besides, I think it will do Bunter good."

"Oh, blow Bunter!" said Ogilvy.

"Oh, really, Ogilvy!" bleated the fat Owl. "I think it's rather a good idea. Who wants to stick in a crowd watching cricket?"

"I do!" grunted Ogilvy.

"Rot!" said Bunter. "I'd rather run round a bit. It will be all right so long as we get in at Lantham in time for tea. I don't want to be late at the Pagoda when my pals get there, that's all."

"Silly ass!" said Ogilvy.

"Yah!" retorted Bunter.

"All serene, Oggy!" said the Bounder, laughing. "We'll get to Lantham sooner than you'd have got there on a bike. Twenty miles round the country won't take long in this car."

"Oh, all right!"

"Sure you're not keen on watching the cricket, Bunter?" asked Vernon-Smith banteringly.

"Oh, no, old chap!" said Bunter affably. "I wouldn't mind cutting it out altogether."

"Done!" said the Bounder.

"Look here——" began Ogilvy, "I'm not cutting it out, Smithy!"

"Nor I!" said Redwing quietly.

"Same here, old beans," said the Bounder. "But why shouldn't Bunter, if he likes? Hallo, we seem to be stopping."

The car had wound through a bewildering succession of lanes a good distance off the Lantham road. Where they were exactly the juniors had only a vague idea—and Bunter had no idea at all.

The chauffeur halted, glancing at Vernon-Smith with a faint grin on his face.

Smithy threw open the door of the car.

His next proceeding made the other fellows jump. He reached out, picked the hat off Bunter's head, and tossed it out of the car.

It sailed over a hedge and landed in a field.

Billy Bunter gave a jump of astonishment.

"You fathead!" he gasped. "What the thump——"

"Is that what you call a joke, Vernon-Smith?" asked Ogilvy, staring at the Bounder.

"Just that!" said Smithy cheerfully. "Hop out and get your hat, Bunter! A little exercise will do you good!"

"You silly idiot!" yelled Bunter. "You get out and get it, you blithering fathead! You chucked it out!"

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders. "If you'd rather go on without it——" he said.

"Beast! I'll get it!"

In a state of great annoyance Billy Bunter rolled out of the car. He scrambled through a gap in the hedge to retrieve his hat.

Vernon-Smith slammed the door shut. The car shot onward.

Billy Bunter picked up his hat. He stared through the gap in the hedge with his eyes almost popping through his spectacles in amazement and alarm at the back of the disappearing car.

"I say, you fellows!" he shrieked.

Only the buzz of the engine answered him.

The car rushed on.

Herbert Vernon-Smith sat laughing; Redwing with compressed lips; Ogilvy in blank astonishment.

"What on earth are you up to, Smithy?" exclaimed Ogilvy. "You're not leaving Bunter there, I suppose?"

"Just that!"

"You can't leave him there, you ass!"

"Can't I?" said the Bounder coolly.

"I think I can. This car doesn't stop

again this side of Lantham cricket ground, anyhow."

"The fat duffer's ten or twelve miles from Greysfriars," said Ogilvy. "He must be seven from Lantham. What's he going to do?"

"Walk, I should think," drawled the Bounder. "While he's walking he can think out whether it pays to butt into my concerns, and give me away to a prefect."

"Look here, Smithy——" began Redwing.

"Cut it out, Reddy! I lot that fat rotter come into the car to teach him a lesson. He's going to learn it now."

"That's all very well," grunted Ogilvy, "but it's rather a rotten trick to play on any fellow."

"Think so?" grinned the Bounder.

"Yes, I jolly well do!"

"So glad to hear your opinion," drawled Vernon-Smith. "Hallo, that looks like Lantham already. We haven't lost a lot of time."

The car was fairly whizzing now. Ogilvy and Redwing exchanged glances—but there was nothing that they could do.

Bunter, perhaps, deserved something at the Bounder's hands, and it was rather like Smithy to overdo the punishment. Lost in the winding lanes, Billy Bunter was likely to have a weary and woeful crawl for miles and miles, before he got in at Greysfriars again.

Redwing and Ogilvy sat silent as the car ran into Lantham, and stopped. When they left it, Ogilvy left the party. Redwing remained with the Bounder, but his face was clouded. Smithy was grinning cheerily.

"Think I was too rough on that fat freak, Reddy?" he asked.

"Yes," answered Redwing quietly.

"You're a soft ass, then! Let him crawl about, and land at the school on his hands and knees!" said Vernon-Smith. "He will just about crawl in for lock-up! He said he was willing to cut the cricket, you know!"

And he chuckled.

"You might send the chauffeur to pick him up again while we're at the cricket!" said Redwing.

"I'll watch it!" said the Bounder derisively. "Let him walk his fat legs off. It will make him think twice before he barges into my bizney again."

Redwing said no more, and they went in to join the crowd of Greysfriars fellows on the cricket ground.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Man Who Was Wanted!

"WINGATE! Good old Wingate!"

"Bravo!"

"That's a jolly old boundary!"

"Well hit!"

Harry Wharton & Co., with more than a hundred other Greysfriars fellows, were watching the first eleven.

Wingate of the Sixth, the Greysfriars captain, was hitting mighty hits, and the Famous Five joined in the roar of cheering that greeted every hit.

Bob Cherry dabbed his nose with his handkerchief in the intervals of cheering. Crimson persisted in oozing from his nose—a result of the tussle with the squinting man. Bob's nose was looking a little like a squashed strawberry, and feeling the same.

"Been in the wars, old man?"

Bob glanced round, and saw Redwing. Smithy was with him, but he did not look at the Famous Five, or speak to them. The Bounder, who generally had a "row" on with somebody, had one

on, at present, with the cheery Co.—which did not disturb their equanimity in the least.

"Yes, I've had a knock on the boko, old bean," answered Bob. "Does it show much?"

Tom Redwing grinned.

"Just a trifle," he answered.

"Well, the other man had a few," said Bob. "That's one comfort."

Vernon-Smith glanced round as he heard. His eyes dwelt on Bob's crimson nose, and on the various signs of damage displayed by the other members of the Co. All of them showed traces of recent trouble.

Smithy's lip curled in a sneer.

"You fellows hunting for trouble, as usual?" he said.

"We didn't exactly hunt for it," answered Bob. "I'm not particularly gone on having a boko like this, Smithy!"

"I dare say you asked for it. You generally do."

"Nice and polite, as usual, ain't you, old bean?" said Bob cheerily. "It's a pleasure to listen to you, Smithy."

And he turned to watch the cricket again.

Redwing, rather regretting the encounter, would have moved farther off, but the Bounder remained where he was, and his chum stayed with him.

"Been picking another row with a Highcliffe man?" he sneered.

"No Highcliffe men here, that I know of," answered Bob over his shoulder. "And do you think your precious pal Ponsonby could have given me this nose? Not in a month of Sundays."

"We had a row with a hooligan, who wanted to pinch a bike from us, Reddy!" said Harry Wharton quietly. "He ran into us, and crooked his own jigger, and had the neck to try to grab one of ours."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Is that for Quelch, if he asks you what you've been scrapping about?" grinned the Bounder. "Pretty thin, isn't it?"

"It happens to be true!" said the captain of the Remove.

"I don't think!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Do shut up, Smithy," said Tom Redwing. "You know it's true if these fellows say so."

"Think Quelch will believe it?" chuckled the Bounder. "Why, Bunter could make up a better one than that. Thinnest yarn I've ever heard."

The Famous Five elaborately took no notice of that. They did not want a row with the Bounder in the middle of a cricket crowd.

"There goes old Wingate again—"

"Bravo!"

"Getting towards time now," remarked Nugent. "They draw stumps at six, I believe. We're winning."

"Oh, yes, rather! They won't shift old Wingate in a hurry," said Johnny Bull. "Greyfriars wants six more, and old Wingate's good for sixty."

"Is the man here, Cherry?" asked the Bounder.

Bob glanced round.

"What man?" he asked gruffly.

"The fellow you've been scrappin' with."

Bob's eyes glinted.

"You've been told that I got this nose from a hooligan who tried to pinch my bike, Vernon-Smith!" he said quietly. "Now shut up!"

"I don't believe all I hear, you know!" said the Bounder. "Was it a Highcliffe chap you scrapped with?"

"I shall be scrapping with a Greyfriars chap soon, if you don't shut up!"

"Go it!" said the Bounder.

Bob Cherry looked, and felt, ex-

tremely inclined to "go it." But he checked that impulse, and turned his back on the Bounder again.

"But won't you tell us how it happened?" grinned Smithy. "Why not have a rehearsal, ready to spin the yarn to Quelch when he spots your nose?"

Bob did not answer.

"Don't be such an ass, Smithy!" said Frank Nugent impatiently. "If you want to know what happened, a man ran into us, coming away from Lantham on a bike riding like a maniac, and there was a crash. He smashed his jigger, and grabbed Bob's. We had a tussle with him."

"Sounds so likely, doesn't it?" said Smithy, laughing.

"No, it doesn't; but it happened."

"By gum!" said the Bounder. "And I've heard those fellows jawing Bunter for telling lies! This beats Bunter hollow!"

Redwing grasped his chum by the arm and drew him, forcibly, in the crowd. It was only in time, for tempers were failing. But the crash of a wicket drew all attention, and the Famous Five forgot Smithy.

"Wingate—out!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Last man in, and four more to get to win!" said Bob Cherry.

Gwynne of the Sixth took Wingate's place at the wicket, to deal with the last ball of the over.

"Three to tie, four to win!" said Bob. "Now go it, Gwynne! Oh, my hat! Look! Bravo! Hurrah!"

Bob grabbed the nearest hat, and waved it wildly, as Gwynne drove the ball for a boundary.

"Fathead! Gimme my hat!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Hurrah! Greyfriars wins!" Bob Cherry brandished the hat, and in the exuberance of his spirits, slammed it back on Johnny's head with a tremendous slam. "Hurrah!"

"Ow! You dangerous ass!" gasped Johnny.

"Greyfriars wins! Hurrah!"

"The hurrahfulness is terrific!"

The Famous Five surged off the field with the crowd.

Now that the match was over, they realised that they wanted their tea. Even the great and glorious satisfaction of a Greyfriars victory did not alter that fact.

They headed for the Pagoda, the tea-shop in Lantham High Street, in the midst of a crowd of fellows heading for the same destination.

The Pagoda was fairly well crowded with Greyfriars fellows, but the chums of the Remove secured a table, and sat down to tea.

Bob Cherry glanced over the crowded tea-shop and grinned.

"Bunter never got that bus fare!" he remarked. "At least, he's not here! We're going to miss Bunter this time."

"The missfulness in this esteemed case is better than the milefulness," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Now that they remembered him, the Famous Five fully expected to see Billy Bunter. But that fat youth was conspicuous only by his absence—which they were able to bear with considerable fortitude.

Tea was nearly over, when Vernon-Smith came in with Tom Redwing, and looked round.

The Bounder's eyes fell on the Famous Five at their table, and he came towards them.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Smithy again!" said Bob. "Is that howling ass going to kick up a shindy here?"

The chums of the Remove gave Smithy grim looks as he came directly up to their table and stopped. There

was rather a peculiar expression on Herbert Vernon-Smith's face.

"Look here, you men," he said abruptly. "Was that a straight yarn you were spinning on the cricket ground?"

"Find out!" growled Johnny Bull.

"If it was straight," said the Bounder, unheeding, "you'd better hop along to the police station, and let them hear it."

The five stared at him.

"Why?" rapped Wharton.

"Because I've heard that there was a smash-and-grab raid in Lantham this afternoon, and the sportsman got away on a bike, riding like billy-ho!" said the Bounder. "He smashed the jeweller's window with a brick, and grabbed. He never got anything—they were on him too quick—only watches scattered about the pavement, all picked up again. But they want him, of course—and if a man really ran you down on a bike—"

"By gum!" said Bob. "I wondered at the time—"

"So did I!" said Harry. "Thanks for the tip, Smithy! Ten to one it was the same man; and we can give his description if they've not got it."

The Bounder nodded, and went to rejoin Redwing. And the Famous Five, their tea finished, left the Pagoda, and walked along to the police station, where they found Inspector Carter very interested in what they had to tell him.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Weary Walker!

"O H lor'!"

William George Bunter made that remark for the umpteenth time.

The sun was setting in a blaze of crimson and gold. A splendid June day was drawing to its close. But Billy Bunter had no eyes for sunsets. Scenery of the most gorgeous description had no appeal for him. Glowing skies, sweeping dusky woods, fields and hedges of greenest green, were wasted on the Owl of the Remove. He just groaned!

It had been hard for Bunter to realise, at first, that the Bounder really had gone off and left him to "hoof" it. It seemed too awful to be true. It was fearful—it was horrific!

On a road it would not have been so bad. There would have been a chance of a lift—anyhow he could have found his way to somewhere. But in this network of rutty lanes, leading apparently nowhere in particular, there was nothing in the nature of a lift, and a brighter fellow than Bunter might have found it difficult to discover his way.

Smithy, perhaps, had not thought of that. He had pictured the fat Owl crawling wearily home—but not crawling wearily in vain search of home!

Bunter was handicapped—by short sight and long weight. Other fellows could have climbed a high tree, and spotted some landmark in the distance. Bunter had a lot of difficulties in lifting his weight up a tree—neither could he have spotted anything a hundred yards off. Further than that, a house and a haystack were very much the same to the Owl of the Remove. Smithy was not the fellow to make allowances for a "lame duck," and the unfortunate fat Owl was very much of a lame duck in some respects.

Having trudged about a quarter of a mile, Bunter took a rest. After about another furlong, he took a longer rest. That really was not the way to arrive anywhere.

He hoped to spot a farmer's cart that would give him a lift, also to spot a



Drenched and dripping, Billy Bunter tottered into the dormitory. Behind him was Mr. Quelch, frowning portentously. "I regret disturbing you, my boys," said the Remove master. "It is due to this stupid and troublesome boy, Bunter, who will be severely punished to-morrow!" "Oh, really, sir!" gasped the fat Removite.

native who would give him directions. But he spotted neither. Those lanes wound through rugged pasture-land on the slopes of the downs—populated only by cows and occasional flocks of sheep; and not thickly populated even by those. And if there were shepherds about, as doubtless there were, they were outside the range of Bunter's limited vision.

Any fellow but Bunter, no doubt, would have walked into Lantham after a time, as Bunter, at first, hoped to do.

But as he took the wrong turning, and walked with his back to Lantham, prospects were not bright.

He had walked a little, and rested a lot, when he met, at length, a native—a weary ploughman homeward plodding his way.

Thankfully Bunter stopped him, and asked for directions to get to Lantham.

The good-natured ploughman stopped, and gave him the same.

"You're cooming away from it, zur!" he said. "You turn round, and keep on for a quaafter of a moile, then turn by Goiles' barn, and leave the pond on your left, and when you pass old Moike's hut, you'll only have fower miles to the Lantham road, roight on."

Having given these explicit directions, the ploughman disappeared by a field-path; and Bunter plugged back the way he had come—but there were so many turnings that he never saw Giles' barn, not to mention the pond and old Mike's hut! Those landmarks remained for ever unknown to the hapless Owl.

He sat on a stile to rest, and by that time he was thinking less of getting to Lantham and tea at the Pagoda, than of getting back to Greyfriars School for the night.

He was hungry. He was tired. He was in a fearfully bad temper. He could have kicked himself for falling

into Smithy's trap. With still more pleasure could he have kicked Smithy.

"Beast!" groaned Bunter, as he sat on the stile, in a more mournful mood than the Irish Emigrant who did the same.

He sat and waited for somebody to come by, and tell him the way to anywhere. This, however, proved to be rather like the performance of the rustic of ancient times, who sat on a bank and waited for the stream to flow by!

Bunter waited in vain.

Nobody passed.

He knew that the cricket match at Lantham must be over by that time—if he had been interested in it, which he was not. Worse than that, tea at the Pagoda must be over, and the fellows on their way back to Greyfriars, if not already there.

Plenty of them would be taking short cuts on bikes; and had Bunter been lost on the Greyfriars side of the Lantham road, he might have fallen in with some of them. But that unspeakable beast, Smithy, had dropped him on the farther side of the Lantham road, in waste spaces of pasture land, where certainly no Greyfriars fellow was likely to be seen that day.

But even Bunter, tired as he was, realised that it would serve no useful purpose to remain sitting on that stile as a permanent ornament to the landscape. He rolled off at last, and resumed his weary tramp—though whether he was heading for Greyfriars, or for Land's End, or John o' Groats, he had not the faintest idea.

Then suddenly he gave a gasp of joy.

On any other occasion, the sight of a furniture-van would not have inspired him with joy. Now it was a sight that beat all sunsets hollow.

It was a motor-van at a halt. It had double doors at the back, which were

open, showing a dusky interior, in which there were some packing-cases, sacks, and other such things. In the open back of the halted van, sat a man, smoking cigarettes, a man with a pug nose, his most prominent feature, and two little shifty eyes.

"Jones & Co., Weymouth," was painted on the side of the van.

The man was not a nice-looking man—he was small and wiry, and had a look like a sort of human ferret. But Billy Bunter was unspeakably glad to see him and his van.

From his peaked cap, and the fact that he was the only man visible, he supposed that the puggy gentleman was the driver of the van, though why he had stopped in that solitary spot would have mystified him, had he thought about it.

Bunter plugged up, leaned on the van, and gasped.

The shifty eyes gleamed at him.

"Sheer off!" said the puggy man briefly.

"I say, could you give me a lift?" moaned Bunter.

"No!"

"I say, I'll wait till you start! Let me sit down in the van will you? I say, I'm lost!" groaned Bunter.

"Ain't starting," said the puggy man. "Engine trouble. Waiting for my mate to get back. 'Ook it!"

"Oh dear!"

Bunter did not start. If the furniture-van was hung up by engine trouble, and its driver waiting for his mate to return from somewhere with something essential, there seemed no prospect of a lift. But his fat little legs were nearly falling off, and it was a relief to lean on the vehicle.

The man eyed him surlily. He finished his cigarette, lighted another.

from the stump, and threw away the stump—adding to a collection of two or three dozen in the dust.

"You seen a bloke coming this way?" he asked suddenly.

"I met a man about an hour ago—or—or two hours!" mumbled Bunter. "I haven't seen anybody since."

The man seemed interested.

"Bloke with a squint in his eye?" he asked.

"I didn't notice," mumbled Bunter. "He was a ploughman, I think."

"You fat head!" said the puggy man. "Think I want to 'ear about a blooming ploughman! 'Ook it!"

"Can't I sit in the van for a bit?" moaned Bunter.

"Not 'arf! 'Ook it!"

Bunter was really in no state to hook it. He continued to lean on the motor-van.

The puggy man looked at him, drew back a foot, and projected it suddenly at Bunter. It caught him in the ribs, and he went over backwards, and sat down in the dust with a bump!

"Woo-ooooop!" howled Bunter.

"'Ooking it?" snapped the puggy man.

The fat Owl squirmed away, and scrambled up. Evidently, it was time to hook it! He gave the puggy man a deadly glare through his big spectacles, keeping out of reach.

The man with the pug nose stepped towards the fat junior, and juttied his jaw threateningly. Only too clearly, he did not want Bunter there.

Bunter backed farther away.

"I—I—I say, I'm going!" he gasped.

"You better!" growled the puggy man.

"I say, tell me the way to Lantham, or Courtfield, or—or anywhere!" groaned Bunter. "Anywhere I can get a train, or a bus, or—or anything."

"Keep straight on for a mile, turn to the left, and then five miles to Lantham!" said the puggy man, grinning. "Now, 'ook it, afore I give you a boot."

"Oh lor!" groaned Bunter.

He trudged past the van, and tramped wearily on.

The man with the pug nose watched him, with sharp suspicious eyes, till he was out of sight. Then he resumed his seat and smoked more cigarettes, and every now and then muttered an oath—evidently very impatient for the arrival of his mate—the bloke with the squint in his eye!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Missing!

MR. QUELCH was calling the names, in Hall at Greyfriars. The fact that Billy Bunter did not answer to his name did not attract any particular attention—for at least six or seven other fellows also failed to answer at roll.

Bunter was the only Remove man missing, as it happened; but Coker of the Fifth was not there, which was easily to be accounted for by the fact that Coker had gone out on his motor-bike; and Temple, Dabney, and Fry of the Fourth were also marked absent, and two or three others.

So many Greyfriars fellows had gone over to Lantham to see the first eleven match that it was not surprising that half a dozen were late for lock-up.

Three fellows in the Remove noticed that there was no fat squeak from Bunter when Quelch called his name. They were Vernon-Smith Ogilvy, and Redwing.

The Bouncer grinned, and the other two frowned. Evidently, Billy Bunter was still walking; a circumstance that seemed to amuse the Bouncer.

"That fat duffer hasn't got in, Smithy!" said Redwing, when the school was dismissed after roll.

"Looks like it!" grinned Smithy.

"It was a fool trick to play on a fool like Bunter!" growled Redwing. "He's ass enough to lose his way, and wander anywhere."

"What rot! I suppose he's got a tongue in his head, and can ask his way," answered the Bouncer carelessly. "If he's lost himself, serve him right."

"If he's not in for prep—"

"Why shouldn't he be?" snapped Smithy. "Ten to one he got into Lantham after hoofing it for a couple of hours. Must have got somewhere. I suppose even that fat fool has got gumption enough to get on a train, hasn't he?"

"Mightn't have the fare."

Smithy whistled.

"Blessed if I thought of that! Anyhow, he's had time to walk back—if he can't walk nine or ten miles, it's time he learned how."

And with that, the Bouncer carelessly dismissed the matter from his mind.

Before prep, Temple, Dabney & Co. had come in; and Coker of the Fifth had turned up, without his motor-bike, which it transpired he had left at a garage for repairs.

Nobody was missing now but Bunter—and a good many fellows began to remark on his absence.

When the juniors were going to their studies for prep, Harry Wharton was called in by his Form-master.

Mr. Quelch was frowning severely.

"Bunter has not yet come in, Wharton," he said. "Do you know whether anything is known of him?"

"I haven't seen him, sir," answered Harry. "I think he was going over to Lantham, like most of the fellows, but I did not see him there."

"Please inquire if anyone has seen him."

"Yes, sir."

Harry Wharton left the study and proceeded to inquire among the Remove.

That Bunter, if he had started for Lantham, had not arrived there, the Famous Five had already guessed, from the fact that he had not turned up at the Pagoda. But it was rather a mystery what had become of him.

The Remove were in their studies now for prep, and Wharton went along the passage, calling into study after study:

"Anybody seen Bunter?"

In Study No. 2, Tom Brown answered that he hadn't, and Hazeldene added that he hadn't, and didn't want to. In Study No. 3, Russell shook his head, but Robert Donald Ogilvy coloured uncomfortably.

"Better ask Smithy," he said.

"Smithy?" repeated Wharton. "He wasn't with Smithy at Lantham; we saw Smithy there with Redwing—"

"Better ask him," said Ogilvy.

"Oh, all right!"

The captain of the Remove went along to Study No. 4 and looked in.

"Seen Bunter?"

Redwing gave the Bouncer a look.

Smithy shrugged his shoulders.

"Hasn't the fat fozler turned up?" he asked.

"No!"

"Getting anxious about him?" sneered Smithy. "You're fearfully attached to Bunter, aren't you?"

"Don't be an ass, Smithy, if you can help it! Quelch has told me to inquire

for him!" said Harry sharply. "Oggy seems to think you know."

"I haven't seen him since I gave him a lift in my car this afternoon," said the Bouncer carelessly.

"Where did you leave him, then?"

"He got out a few miles from Lantham; decided to walk, after all," said the Bouncer blandly. "Haven't seen him since."

Harry Wharton gave him a sharp look.

"Well, he's not in," he said tartly. "Quelch wants to know. It's queer that Bunter decided to walk, Smithy."

"He's a queer animal, isn't he?" yawned the Bouncer.

"Do you know what's become of him, Reddy?"

"Not since he left the car," said Redwing, with a troubled look. "That was in the lanes a few miles off the Lantham road, on the other side. I'm afraid he may have lost his way."

"Pretty certain if you left him there," said Harry. "What the dickens did you drop him there for?"

"He wasn't keen on coming on to Lantham to see the cricket," explained the Bouncer airily. "He said he would rather cut it out. I took him at his word."

Harry Wharton made no answer to that.

He left Study No. 4 and went up the passage, asking the same question in every study in the Remove. But nobody knew anything of Bunter, and he had to return to Mr. Quelch, and report what he had learned from Vernon-Smith.

He reported that Smithy had given Bunter a lift in a car, and that Bunter had left the car a few miles from Lantham—without adding his own strong suspicion that the Bouncer had played some trick on the hapless Owl. That was a matter for Mr. Quelch to discover for himself, if the spirit moved him so to do.

"Very well," said the Remove master. "It appears that no accident has happened. No doubt he will return soon. Thank you, Wharton!"

Harry Wharton went to Study No. 1 in the Remove, to join Nugent there for prep.

Prep drove William George Bunter from his mind; but when prep was over he went along to Study No. 7—Bunter's study.

Peter Todd and Tom Dutton were there, but not Bunter.

"Hasn't that blithering Owl blown in yet, Toddy?" he asked.

"Haven't seen him," answered Peter. "Looks as if he's going to make a night of it."

After prep, in the Rag, most of the Remove fellows were discussing Bunter.

Vernon-Smith had nothing to say on the subject, but he scowled at the mention of the fat Owl's name. It looked now as if Bunter might not be in for dorm—which was an extremely serious matter, and very probably spelled trouble for Smithy when the facts came to light. Certainly, the Bouncer had not foreseen anything like this, though, with a duffer like Bunter, he really might have foreseen it. He had intended to give the fat Owl a long and weary walk, but it had never even occurred to him that the hapless Owl might get left out all night. But that began to seem a possibility now.

Darkness was setting in, with a patter of rain. The glorious day was followed by a wet night.

Smithy looked out into the dusky quad and grinned. Raindrops were splashing on the windows.

"Bunter will be getting a wash if he's out in this!" he remarked.

"Not before he needed one!" remarked Snoop.

"Poor old Bunter!" said Bob Cherry. "By gum, it's going to be a damp night! Where the dickens can he be?"

Mr. Quelch came into the Rag shortly before dawn.

Smithy drew a deep breath as he saw his Form-master. He guessed that Quelch had come there for him.

"Vernon-Smith!"

"Yes, sir!" said the Bounder meekly.

"Please tell me exactly where Bunter left your car this afternoon. It is very singular that he has not returned."

"About three miles off the Lantham road, on the other side, sir. I think the place is called Cow Lane."

"That is a very solitary place!" said Mr. Quelch, with a sharp look at the Bounder. "Why did Bunter leave you?"

"He didn't seem to care about coming on to see the cricket, sir."

Mr. Quelch paused a moment, then he nodded and left the Rag, looking very thoughtful.

There was a buzz of voices after he was gone. Whether Quelch suspected what had happened or not, no fellow in the Remove was likely to believe that Billy Bunter had willingly left a car and given himself a long walk.

"You ass, Smithy!" said Peter Todd.

"Rotten trick!" said Bolsover major.

"That blithering idiot's got lost!"

"Did you chuck him out?" asked Tom Brown.

"Dirty trick!" said Hazeldene.

The Bounder scowled blackly. As a matter of fact, he was feeling sorry for Bunter and rather concerned as he heard the rain lashing on the windows and thought of the wretched fat Owl tramping wearily through the down-pour. But nothing would have induced Smithy to admit it.

"Why shouldn't the fat fool get what he asked for?" he sneered. "A wash will do him good! He hasn't had one this term so far, I believe!"

And the Bounder lounged out of the Rag.

Ten minutes later it was dawn, and the Remove fellows went up. One bed in the Remove dormitory remained empty—that of Billy Bunter. And a good many fellows were longer than usual in going to sleep that night as they listened to the rain, and wondered where the hapless Owl of the Remove was in the wet and darkness.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Startling!

BILLY BUNTER in those moments was not enjoying life.

Bunter had not noticed the gorgeous sunset, but he noticed when it was blotted out by dark banks of clouds drifting up from the sea, and a few spattering drops of rain began to fall.

The bare possibility of being out for the night—and a rainy night—was so awfully awful that Bunter hardly dared to think of it.

He plugged on desperately, hoping to arrive somewhere. But if he had not been able to find his way in the daylight, he was not likely to do so when dusk fell and dusk deepened into darkness. Dim lanes and hedges and trees bewildered him, and he was so tired that he could scarcely drag one fat leg after another.

His pace was that of a decrepit snail as he plugged wearily on. Not that greater speed would have helped him very much; for if he hit by chance on

a right direction, he soon turned into a wrong one. And when suddenly he heard a sound of tramping footsteps, he was not sure whether to feel relieved; for in those lonely lanes after dark a wayfarer was as likely as not to be some unpleasant tramp, and Bunter did not want to meet a tramp.

He stopped and listened. Someone was coming along a dim lane in the gloom, slowly and with an irregular tread, as if with a bandy leg.

The fat Owl backed to the side of the lane, determining to keep out of sight till he saw the man, and judged whether he was a tramp or not.

Visibility was not good in the dim gloom, but he made out a man of muscular frame, with a hard face that was set in an expression of the most savage and bitter bad temper. But he was respectably dressed, and did not look like a tramp. His left leg dragged and limped as he walked, and his progress was slow.

Bunter decided to chance it. Unless he got help of some kind, he was booked for a night out, that was certain.

He stepped out into the lane, and squeaked:

"I say!"

The effect on the limping man was startling. He made a sudden spring back, forgetful of his limping leg; then, as it crumpled under him, he staggered and almost fell.

Billy Bunter blinked at him in astonishment.

He was ready to be frightened himself; but he had certainly not expected to frighten anybody else.

"I say," he gasped, "it's all right! I say, I only want to ask my way. I—I say—Oh crikey!"

The man, recovering himself almost at once, sprang towards him and gripped him by the collar.

"Who are you?" he snarled. "What do you want?"

"Ow! Leggo!" spluttered Bunter. "Oh lor', I've lost my way—Ow! Wow!"

He heard the man panting spasmodically. Why he was alarmed was an utter mystery to Bunter; but plainly that sudden encounter in the gloom had startled him badly. But Bunter was too deeply alarmed himself to think much about that. The grip on his collar was like that of a vice.

The man bent his head and peered at him. The sight of Bunter's fat, frightened face had a reassuring effect, clearly, for he released the fat junior.

"Oh! A schoolboy!" he said.

"Ow! Yes! Wow! Wharrer you grab me for?" spluttered Bunter.

"Think I was a tramp, or what?"

"Oh, get out!"

Bunter backed a little, scared again by the savage tone. But when the man had bent to scan his face closely, the fat Owl had seen the man's face, and noticed that he had a pronounced squint in the left eye. That recalled what the pug-nosed man on the furniture-van had asked him. The driver of that van had been waiting for a "bloke with a squint."

That was two or three hours ago, and it certainly seemed improbable that the van was still waiting there, for the driver's mate to return.

But this man, clearly, had had an accident of some sort, and undoubtedly he was a "bloke with a squint."

So it seemed quite probable to Bunter that he was the man, and that some accident had delayed him.

If, by happy chance, that was so, Bunter saw a chance of a lift ahead.

He hardly cared in what direction the lift might take him, so long as it took him out of that awful wilderness of

fields and hedges, and landed him in a town.

The limping man made an angry gesture. For some reason—perhaps because of the accident he had obviously been through—he was in the worst of tempers.

"Get out, you fat fool!" he snapped. "What do you want?"

"I say, I've lost my way!" gasped Bunter. "If you're going to that van—"

"What?"

"That furniture-van—"

Bunter seemed destined to produce startling effects on the limping man. He broke off, with a yell of terror, as the man leaped at him again, and grasped him fiercely, this time by the throat. His eyes gleamed savagely at the fat junior, the left one squinting horribly.

"Now tell me what you mean, you spying fool?" hissed the squinting man.

"What do you know about me and a van? Quick—before I wring your neck!"

"Oooooooooogh!" gurgled Bunter.

"Answer me!" came hissing.

"Answer, fool!"

"Grooogh! You're chook-chook-choking me!" gasped Bunter. "I say—Urrgh!"

The squinting man relaxed his grip, and changed it to the fat Owl's collar. But he still glared savagely.

"Now, what do you mean about a van?" he snarled.

"Urrgh! I—I saw a van, a few hours ago, miles from here!" gasped Bunter. "Miles and miles and miles. I've been walking ever since. Ooogh! The man said he was waiting for his mate. He said he had a squint, and asked me if I'd seen him—Grooogh!"

"Oh!"

The man released Bunter again.

Bunter promptly dodged back out of reach. He was not going to be grabbed again, if he unconsciously gave this mysterious man another shock!

"Oh! I—I see! You passed a van. Did you notice the name on it?"

"Urrgh! Yes. Jones & Co., Weymouth," answered Bunter. "It was painted on the side of the van. I—I say, I—I want a lift! I'm lost in this awful place. If you're going back to that van, c-c-can I c-c-come?"

The man's actions, strange as they were, left no doubt in Bunter's fat mind that he was the "bloke with a squint" the puggy man had been waiting for. And if the puggy man was still waiting for him, and was going to start up as soon as he arrived, Bunter could see no reason why he should not have a lift in the van. Unpleasant as this squinting beast was, he was not so unpleasant as a night out, with rain coming on.

The fat Owl blinked at him anxiously. The ill-tempered face wore a blacker scowl than ever. The man made a step towards Bunter, and Bunter promptly retreated. He made another step, his hand raised, and his intention of smacking Bunter's head was so plain, that the fat Owl fairly bolted. Obviously, he was not going to get the offer of a lift from the "bloke with a squint!"

Bunter disappeared in the gloom, and the squinting man, gritting his teeth, tramped on his way, limping and scowling.

Probably he dismissed the fat schoolboy from his mind. But Bunter did not dismiss the limping man from his fat mind.

At a safe distance he stopped, and looked round and listened.

Rain-drops were pattering, and through the patter he could hear the tramping footsteps of the squinting man.

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Sure that the man was going, and that there was no further danger from him, Billy Bunter followed in the same direction.

He trod lightly as he went. He could hear the man's limping tread in the silence; but he was not going to let the limping man hear!

Lost in the dark, that squint-eyed man, disagreeable as he was, was Bunter's only guide, and Bunter was not going to lose him, if he could help it. Unless the beast spotted his pursuit, he was going to follow him to the van; and, if he could, hang on behind when the van started. That seemed to Bunter his only hope of escaping a night out in the rain.

Guided by the limping footsteps, and taking care to step almost on tiptoe, Bunter followed cautiously on.

Luckily, that painful limp made the man's movements slow—the weary Owl could not have put on speed, and a brisk walker would very soon have dropped him. As it was, even the tired fat Owl kept pace easily enough, and, to his surprise, the distance proved to be hardly more than half a mile.

In his weary wanderings, the hapless Owl had almost wandered back to the spot where he had met the puggy man and the furniture-van. Now, on the track of the limping man, he reached it.

A dark, looming shape between the hedges, the cessation of footsteps, and a sound of muttering voices, warned Bunter that the limping man had arrived. And, keeping in the black shadow of the hedge, the fat Owl crept as close as he dared, to wait and watch for the van to start—and hang on behind when it went.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

A Lift at Last!

MUTTERING voices, in the silence that was broken only by pattering rain-drops, reached the fat ears of Billy Bunter, as he lurked under the dark hedge.

He made out a red speck in the gloom—clearly the burning end of a cigarette. Dim in the dark he could discern two figures by the furniture-van—the small, wiry figure of the pug-nosed man, the more powerful figure of the "bloke with the squint." The latter was speaking in a growling voice of savage anger.

"How could I help it, you fool? Lucky to get back at all! It was a frost! I got nothing, and the closest shave of my life! And then——"

He broke off to grit his teeth.

"This 'ere van has been sticking 'ere since three!" came the other man's voice. "Lonely spot, if you like; but I've 'ad to tell 'arf a dozen coves that it was ingine trouble. Asking for it!"

"Fool!" came the deep, savage growl again. "Everything went wrong! I just got out of Lantham on the bike—only just! I cleared off on the other side of the town. Would you have liked me to make straight for the van, with coppers after me? I had a spill!"

"You ain't learned yet to ride a bike without falling off?" asked the puggy man, with savage sarcasm.

"Fool!" said the squinting man again. "I was putting on speed, and ran into a bunch of schoolboys, and smashed the jigger in the crash. I was going to take another bike from one of them, but they got the upper hand——"

"You let a pack of schoolboys——"

"Hold your tongue, Nosey, if you don't want me to knock your face in!" snarled the squinting man. "I got a

game leg in the crash! I've been hardly able to crawl. They tied me on the bike to give them time to clear. I was hours getting loose, and every minute of it I expected to see a copper."

"Strewth!" said the pug-nosed man.

"They must have lost my track. Nobody came, and I got loose at last!" muttered the squinting man. "The bike was no good. I had to leave it. I had to go dot-and-carry-one, and then" —he gritted his teeth again—"I spotted five or six coppers in the lanes and fields. I had to hide in a ditch till dark!"

"Strewth!" repeated Nosey.

"I've been expecting a hand on my shoulder all the way here since!" muttered the squinting man. "I jumped nearly out of my skin, a short way back, when a silly schoolboy stopped me to ask his way."

"The sooner we get out of this 'ere, the better, Squinny!" grunted the pug-nosed man. "You was to be back by four, and look at it now——"

"Can it, you fool!"

"There ain't many blokes passing this way, but there's been 'arf a dozen, and mebbe all of them will remember seeing a furniture van stuck up 'ere. Fair asking for it!" grumbled the puggy man. "Nobody would think of connecting up a furniture van with a smash-and-grab in the ordinary way—but when a van sticks about for eight or nine hours, it——"

"That's enough! Get going!" snarled the other. "We shall hit Courtfield by midnight, and that's far enough away for safety. Anyhow, there's nothing suspicious in a furniture removal van travelling by night. Get going!"

The two men moved along to the front of the van.

Two dim shadows disappeared from Bunter's sight.

The fat Owl remained very still.

He had heard every one of the muttered words; and even on Billy Bunter's obtuse brain it had dawned that the two were law-breakers.

But for the fact that he had hardly a run left in his aching fat legs, Billy Bunter would have retreated promptly from the spot.

But utter fatigue glued him where he was.

They were going to Courtfield! That was Billy Bunter's way home to Greyfriars.

Law-breakers or not, that van offered Billy Bunter his only chance of getting under a roof that night.

The rain was coming down more thickly. Bunter was already wet through. The two men were at the engine—and the back of the van was still open.

Billy Bunter made up his fat mind.

They had not the faintest idea that he was there, obviously, or they would not have spoken in his hearing. To nip into the van and nip out again when it entered Courtfield, was Bunter's idea. There was ample space in the van for hiding—and the interior was as black as a hat. Even if they looked in, they would not see him. And why should they look in?

Only fatigue, and the falling rain, and the awful prospect of a night out under a hedge, could have driven Bunter to take the chance.

But he took it.

With thumping heart, he stepped on tiptoe to the back of the van, and quietly climbed in.

His outstretched fat hands came in contact with a large wooden packing-case. He groped his way round it, and crouched.

There was a sound from the engine. They were starting up. Then the puggy man's voice came through the buzz:

"If you been seen, Squinny——"

"I had a beard on in Lantham, you fool! I shoved it in my pocket when I got out of the town."

"But them schoolboys you run into night——"

"What would they know? Don't be a fool!"

"You can call a covey a fool, Squinny, but you better get inside the van till we get clear of this part."

Billy Bunter's heart gave a jump. There was a pause.

"Perhaps you're right, Nosey! Get going."

Footsteps came along the side of the van.

Bunter crouched low, hardly breathing.

He heard the squinting man step into the van, and close the doors at the back with a slam.

Then the man groped along the van, bumping against the packing-case, and almost touching Bunter as he passed.

He sat down at the driver's end. There was a heavy jolt, and the van got into motion.

Bunter was almost holding his breath. But when the heavy van was once in motion, he ventured to breathe freely. The buzz of the engine and the jolting of heavy wheels over the ruts made an incessant noise; and Bunter could have moved without danger of making his presence known.

He did not think of doing so, however. He sat tight. About ten feet from him, in the dark, the squinting man was sitting, and the fat Owl dared not take the remotest risk of drawing his attention.

What would happen to him if he was found in the van he dared not think. He squatted in a perspiration with funk; half-regretting that he had made the venture, and at the same time deeply thankful that every turn of the wheels was taking him nearer and nearer to Greyfriars.

Slowly, the heavy van rumbled on through the night.

Occasionally, a word was exchanged between the driver and the man inside; but in the buzz and the rumble, Bunter did not catch what was said.

The next hour was awful for Bunter.

Added to his terror of discovery was the fact that he was wet through, and had a feeling all over him that he was catching cold.

Even his terror of the squinting man did not make him wish that he was outside the van in the pouring rain. It was now beating heavily on the roof of the van.

He was wet, and he was shivering. Every now and then he felt a sneeze coming on, and desperately repressed it. He dared not sneeze.

Certainly the Bunder, when he played that trick on Billy Bunter, had never dreamed of an outcome like this! The most stony heart might have felt compassion for the hapless Owl.

The sneeze, long repressed, came at last—Bunter could no longer stop it!

Luckily, the heavy rumble of the van drowned the sound, and it did not reach the ears of Squinny.

How long was this going to last? It seemed ages to Bunter. The voice of the squinting man came again, speaking to the driver, and he caught the words:

"Jackson's garage."

"Next turnin'!" came back from the pug-nosed man.



Billy Bunter grabbed up the book and hurled it at Vernon-Smith's head. The volume smote the Bounder and then crashed on the floor, bursting open as it did so. From its interior, bullseyes, chocolates and caramels shot out in a stream. "Why—what—what——" stuttered Mrs. Kebble, staring in amazement at the unexpected sight.

Bunter realised that they were in Courtfield.

Apparently the two crooks—in their character of furniture-removers travelling by night—were going to put up the van at Jackson's garage, off the High Street.

The van turned a corner, and halted. Both men alighted; the squinting man getting out at the front.

Billy Bunter moved at last. Squinny and Nosey had entered a gateway, and this was Bunter's chance. He whipped along to the back of the van, threw the door open, jumped out, and ran. For the moment he did not heed the drenching rain that greeted him. All he wanted was to get clear of Nosey and Squinny before they saw him.

In that he was easily successful. In ten seconds, he had turned the corner again into the High Street, and was scudding down Courtfield High Street like a frightened fat rabbit.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Return of the Wanderer!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"
"Who—and what——"
"Bunter!"

The Remove had long been fast asleep. The Bounder had remained awake the longest wondering uneasily what on earth had become of Billy Bunter; and no doubt wishing that he had not given the fat Removite so emphatic a Roland for his Oliver.

But at midnight's witching hour, the juniors were sound in slumber; and it was long past midnight when the door of the dormitory opened, and the light flashed on. Two or three fellows woke, and then several more, and some of them sat up in bed and blinked in the light.

Drenched and dripping, Billy Bunter tottered in. Behind him appeared Mr. Quelch, frowning portentously.

The Remove master had sat up for the missing member of his Form. Sitting up past midnight did not agree with Quelch's health, or improve his temper. No doubt he was glad to see Bunter back at Greyfriars, safe and sound. But only too clearly, he was not in a happy or benevolent mood.

Indeed, it seemed to Harry Wharton & Co., as they blinked at him, that he looked as if he would have liked to bite Bunter.

"I regret disturbing you, my boys!" said Mr. Quelch. "It is due to this stupid and troublesome boy, Bunter, who will be severely punished to-morrow for the trouble he has given."

Quelch's expression left no doubt that he was in earnest about that!

"Oh, really, sir——" gasped Bunter. "Silence, Bunter! Remove your wet clothes at once, towel yourself dry, and go to bed."

"Urrrgh! Yes, sir! But——"

"You need say nothing, Bunter! I have already told you that I will question you to-morrow regarding this reckless escapade."

"But I——"

"That will do!" said Mr. Quelch.

"I will return in ten minutes, Bunter."

"But I'm hungry!" wailed Bunter.

"Indeed!" said Mr. Quelch. "You will hardly expect me to awaken the servants at this hour, Bunter, I presume?"

"But I say, sir—— Atchooooooh——"

"You appear to be catching a cold, Bunter! I advise you to get yourself dry as quickly as possible."

Mr. Quelch walked away, frowning grimly.

Billy Bunter turned a watery blink on the Removites. Most of them were

awake by now, and sitting up, staring at the drenched and dismal Owl.

"I say, you fellows—aytishoooo!" said Bunter. He sneezed loud, and he sneezed long.

Only too plainly, Bunter was catching a cold!

"You howling ass!" said Harry Wharton. "Where have you been all this time? Why, it's past one o'clock!"

"I've been—aytishoo! I mean, atchoooooh! I've had to walk all the way from Courtfield in the rain!" groaned Bunter. "I'm soaked! Oooooogh!"

"You look dampish!" remarked Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Urrgh! I'm c-c-catching a kik-kik-kik-cold!" gasped Bunter. "I say, don't you fellows tell Quelch I've got a cold—he will want to stick me in sanny."

"He won't guess it when he hears you sneezing the roof off!" remarked Peter Todd. "Hardly!"

"Well, I don't want to go into sanny—look at the rotten grub they give you!" groaned Bunter.

"You'd rather we all caught your cold?" asked Bob.

"Yes, old chap—I don't mind."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" groaned the fat Owl. "I've had a fearful time. All that beast Smithy's fault—ooooh!"

"You shouldn't have asked for it, old fat man!" said the Bounder. "Still, I never expected you to make a night of it. Why didn't you come back for lock-up?"

"I lost my way, you beast! I've walked hundreds of miles——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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BUNTER ON THE SPOT!



(Continued from page 13.)

"And I can jolly well say—aytishooo! Ooooooh! Ooooooh!" Bunter sneezed and gurgled, and dabbed streaming eyes and nose. "I say, you fellows, you might help a fellow, instead of giggling like a lot of sniggering idiots!"

Two or three fellows turned out to help.

Bob Cherry got off one of the fat Owl's boots, Harry Wharton the other. Nugent helped him off with dripping garments.

Then the weary fat Owl towelled himself, and turned in.

He sat up in bed, blowing off a sneeze like the blast of a foghorn.

"I say, you fellows—atchooh! I say, I haven't had any tea—or any supper—and I'm famished—starving—ravenous—oh, dear! I say, I've simply got to have something to eat! I say—aytishoooooh!"

Mr. Quelch came back into the dormitory. Rather to the general surprise, he carried a hot-water bottle in one hand, and a plate of biscuits in the other.

Quelch's bark was always worse than his bite. There was no doubt that he was exceedingly angry and annoyed; nevertheless, he had taken the trouble to scrounge those supplies for the dismal Owl.

Bunter was glad of the hot-water bottle, and gladder of the biscuits. No doubt he would have preferred Mr. Quelch to ring up the whole household staff, and set them to work preparing a substantial meal.

At one in the morning, Mr. Quelch did not think of doing so—even if the household staff would have played up, which was extremely improbable. Bell-ringing at that hour would probably have fallen upon very deaf ears!

Quelch had done all that he could; and the biscuits, at least, made Bunter feel that his life was saved. He finished them to the last crumb—indeed, he almost looked like bolting the plate after them.

"Now go to sleep," said Mr. Quelch, "and I will question you in the morning. I think you are catching a cold, Bunter—"

"Oh! No, sir! Atchooh—not at all, sir!" said Bunter hastily. "Just a trifle of a—oooooh—wooooh—choooooooop!"

"I shall see in the morning, Bunter, whether it is necessary for you to be sent into the sanatorium."

"N-n-not at all, sir!" groaned Bunter. The prospect of the thin diet in the school hospital was more terrifying than Squinny! "I'm all right, sir—only a spot of—grooooh! ooooooh! Atchooh!"

"Good-night, my boys!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Good-night, sir."

The light was shut off, and the door closed.

Mr. Quelch, at long last, was able to seek repose.

"Oh lor!" groaned Billy Bunter. "I'm jolly well going to have a cold!"

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I know that! Mind you fellows don't tell Quelch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, anybody got any toffee or anything?" groaned the fat Owl, "I'm fearfully hungry! Fancy that beast giving a chap a few biscuits, when he's famished—"

"Gratitude, thy name is Bunter!" remarked Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He seems to have sat up for me," grunted Bunter. "He looked like thunder when he let me in. Well, as he sat up, he might have had a decent supper kept hot for me, I think. He must have known I should be hungry."

"Might have been thinking more about his own beauty sleep!" chuckled Bob.

"Everybody's so jolly selfish!" said Bunter. "I don't see why the cook can't get up and get me something! Fat lot of good suggesting that to Quelch! I say, you fellows, if you've got anything in the studies, you might go down and fetch me something—a cake would be better than nothing."

"Like a cold ham pie?" asked Skinner.

"Yes, rather, old chap!" said Bunter eagerly.

"And some cold, baked potatoes—"

"Oh, yes, rather! You're a splendid chap, Skinner," gasped Bunter.

"And a cake to follow—"

"What ho!"

"You'd really like them?" asked Skinner.

"Yes, rather!"

"Then I'm sorry you're not likely to get them, old fat man!" said Skinner, and he laid his head on his pillow.

"Beast!" roared Bunter.

He laid down his weary fat head, sneezed, coughed, and sneezed again, and then snored! And for the remainder of the night, the fat Owl's snore was only interrupted by intermittent sneezes.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Not a Cold!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. turned out at the clang of the rising-bell in the morning—a bright sunny morning after a rainy night.

Billy Bunter did not turn out.

He snored on, regardless of the bell.

On other occasions, when Bunter passed the rising-bell unheeded, some fellow would oblige by jerking off his bedclothes. But as it was pretty certain that Bunter was booked now for "sanny," he was left to snore undisturbed. He would have been still snoring when the Remove went down, had he not been awakened by a gargantuan sneeze.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, there he blows!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Getting up, Bunter?"

"Urrgh! No! Tell Quelch I'm ill, and can't get up!" gasped Bunter.

"All right!"

"Oh! I—I mean, tell him I'm not ill!" added Bunter, at once, remembering sanny and the diet therein. "He's not going to make out that I'm ill, and stick me in sanny on dishwater and gruel and filthy medicine! Urrgh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter rolled out of bed. He was still tired, and sleepy, and undoubtedly he had rather a bad cold. But he was not going into sanny if he could help it. Getting up was better than that!

"I say, you fellows, mind you tell Quelch I'm all right, if he asks!"

gasped Bunter. "Tell him I'm as fit as a fiddle. I say, where's my clothes? Some silly ass has taken my clobber away—"

"They've been taken away to be dried, fathead! If you're getting up, I'll sort out some for you," said Bob good-naturedly.

"I'm getting up, rather! I've been in sanny once!" said Bunter, shuddering at the recollection. "I was so fearfully hungry, I could have eaten a horse. I'm not going in again. I say, you fellows, wait for me. Quelch may think I've got a cold, if I don't come down with you."

"You fat chump!" roared Peter Todd. "Think you're going to stay in the Form and give us all your putrid microbes?"

"Beast!"

"Oh, give him a chance," chuckled Bob. "Quelch mayn't notice that he's got a cold—perhaps!"

"The perhapsfulness is terrific!" chortled Hurrea Jamset Ram Singh.

"It's all Smithy's fault!" gurgled Bunter. "I'll jolly well lick you when I get over this cold, Smithy, you cad!"

"Help!" gasped the Bounder.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, Cherry, are you going to get my clothes or not? I think you might get my clobber, instead of standing there sniggering like a gorilla."

"My dear porpoise, I'd do anything for a chap who puts it so nicely," answered Bob.

Billy Bunter bundled into his clothes. Most of the Remove were gone down, before he had finished dressing; but the Famous Five kindly waited for him.

They did not think it probable that Mr. Quelch would fail to spot the fact that Bunter had a cold. Neither were they keen on Bunter staying out of sanny and spreading his cold all through the Form. However, they were sympathetic, and they waited till he was ready, and went down with him.

Wingate of the Sixth met them as they hurried to prayers. He stared at Billy Bunter's red nose and watery eyes.

"So you got back last night, you young ass?" he asked.

"Urrrgh! Yes, Wingate! Urrgh!"

"You were out in the rain, I suppose, and—"

"Soaked to the skin!" said Bunter pathetically.

"You've caught a cold—"

"Oh, no!"

"No!" ejaculated the Greyfriars captain.

"No! Not a bit of it. I'm feeling fuf-fuf-fuf—"

"What?"

"Fuf-fuf-fuf-fine!" gasped Bunter. "I never got wet. Dry as a bone. I haven't been sneezing or anything, Wingate. Aytishoooooooh!"

"You'd better see your Form-master at once after prayers," said Wingate, laughing. "That sounded to me a bit like a sneeze."

"Urrrrrgh!" gurgled Bunter. "Not at all. Atchooh—choop! Currgh!"

At breakfast, where Mr. Quelch sat at the Remove table, Billy Bunter made desperate efforts to repress sneezing, gurgling, and guggling. He felt that Quelch's gimlet-eye was on him. He could almost read the word "sanatorium" in Quelch's face.

He gobbled brekker at a great rate. He had a dreadful feeling that this might be his last substantial meal for days if Quelch spotted his cold.

But with all his manful efforts, that cold refused to be quiet. Suddenly a terrific sneeze woke the echoes of Hall.

It made other fellows glance round from other tables.

"Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Oh dear! I mean— Urrrrgh! Yes, sir!" groaned Bunter.

"You will go to the House-dame immediately after breakfast," said the Remove master.

"Wha-a-at for, sir?" gasped Bunter.

"You have a cold, Bunter!"

"Oh! No, sir! I wasn't sneezing, sir!"

"What?" ejaculated Mr. Quelch, staring down the table at the fat Owl. "I heard you sneeze, Bunter!"

"Oh, no, sir! I—I—I was—was laughing!" gasped Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!" rippled along the table. The rest of the Remove were laughing, whether Bunter was or not.

"Silence, please!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

After that alarming episode, Bunter's efforts at controlling that cold were more desperate than ever. But it booted not. A few minutes later another sneeze broke out, all the more forceful from suppression. It almost roared.

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Quelch. "I think you had better leave the table, Bunter, and go to Mrs. Kebble at once."

"I—I—I wasn't sneezing, sir!" groaned Bunter. "I—I—I mean, I—I got some pip-pip-pip—"

"You got what?"

"Some pip-pip-pip-pepper in my nun-nun-nose, sir!" stuttered Bunter. "Pip-pip-pepper in the n-n-nose always makes me snig-snig— Atchoooooooooh!—m-makes me snig-snig-sneeze, sir! Urrgh!"

Mr. Quelch gazed at him. As Bunter had got as far as the marmalade, it was really improbable that he was using pepper. Few fellows, if any, took pepper with their marmalade.

"Bunter, how dare you make such a statement?" exclaimed the Remove master. "You have no pepper near you at all."

"Oh! Haven't I, sir?" gasped Bunter. "I—I mean, it—it was the—the salt, sir—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! Bunter, say no more! I shall take you to the House-dame after breakfast. You cannot go into Form with a bad cold."

"I—I'd rather not go into sanny, sir. I don't want to miss my lessons, sir," groaned Bunter. "I—I should feel it very much, sir, if I missed my meals—I mean my lessons. I haven't got a cold really, sir. I wasn't sneezing in the dorm this morning. You can ask any of these fellows, sir—they heard me."

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

If Billy Bunter hoped that that satisfied Quelch, his hope was short-lived.

After breakfast the Remove master called to him, and walked him away to the House-dame's room.

When the Remove went into Form, one member was missing—and it was clear that the unhappy Owl had been parked in sanny.

No doubt he drew comfort from the fact that he was missing lessons in the Form-room. He had also the consolation of not being called to account, for having stayed out of gates till one in the morning. But these comforts and consolations were not much use to Bunter—barred off from the tuckshop, from study spreads, and allowed to eat only as much as was good for him—which seemed to the unhappy Owl a famine diet.

In sanny, Bunter thought, and dreamed, of the tuckshop, and the delights thereof, and like Rachel of ancient times, he mourned and could not be comforted.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Smithy the Smuggler!

"UP to me, Reddy!" said the Bounder.

"Eh, what?" asked Tom Redwing.

"Poor old Bunter!" said Vernon-Smith, with a grin. "Think of him sticking in sanny, without a single bullseye to comfort him in his affliction."

Tom Redwing smiled.

"It will do him good to keep off tuck for a few days," he said. "Bullseyes wouldn't be much good for a bad cold, Smithy."

"Not much harm though," said Smithy.

"Perhaps not. But, for goodness' sake, you're not thinking of taking tuck to a fellow in sanny!" exclaimed Redwing. "You know it's not allowed. It's against all the rules."

"That rather worries me, of course," said the Bounder gravely. "You know what a whale I am on rules."

"It would mean a row if they spotted you, Smithy, and it wouldn't do Bunter any good," said Tom. "You'd have to ask Quelch for leave to see him—"

"I've done that," answered Smithy, "and Quelch said yes at once. I think he was rather pleased to see a hard case like me, taking any interest in a dear schoolfellow laid up on his beam-ends. He didn't expect it of me. More in your line, really."

Smithy, who had just come into the study, laid several small packets on the table. They were an assortment of bullseyes, chocolates, chocolate-creams, and caramels. Redwing frowned as he looked at them. He could sympathise with a fellow in sanny; but breaking the rules by conveying tuck to that fellow was not an idea that appealed to him.

No doubt Billy Bunter, in his present parlous state, would have rejoiced greatly, at the sight of those sticky things. But it was certain that they would have done him no good, and in any case, such a proceeding was strictly forbidden.

"For Bunter?" asked Tom.

"Yes—if I can smuggle them in!" answered the Bounder coolly. "It's up to me, Reddy. I meant to make the fat ass sit up, for barging into my affairs, and mucking up my half-holiday; but I never meant him to wander about all night in the rain and get laid up with a cold. This is a sort of makeweight."

"Better leave it till he comes out of sanny. It's only a few days."

"Think of poor old Bunter pinin' for tuck all that time. If he doesn't get anythin' sticky it will seem like a few years to him—if not a few centuries."

Redwing was silent. He was glad to see that his chum was sorry for the disastrous outcome of his trick on the hapless fat Owl, and desirous to make it up to Bunter somehow. But certainly he was not glad to see Smithy's way of making it up. Nothing could have pleased Bunter better, very probably; but rules were rules, and were not made to be broken.

"The question is, how?" said Vernon-Smith thoughtfully. "The matron will be present, and if I handed this stuff to Bunter, she would be on me like a jolly old hawk. How am I going to spoof her, Reddy?"

"Better chuck up the idea—"

"Bow-wow!"

"You'll get spotted—and Bunter will get nothing, and you'll get six from Quelch!" grunted Redwing.

"There are ways and means, old man!" said the Bounder. "I fancy I can work the oracle all right! Bunter's allowed to have books."

"Books!" repeated Redwing.

"Yes. I want a jolly big book," Smithy glanced over the bookshelf in Study No. 4. "I suppose it might look a bit suspicious if I took him a Latin dictionary—what? Invalids don't often like Latin dictionaries as bedside books. But I must have a big book."

"What the dickens—"

The Bounder laughed and went out of the study. He walked along to Study No. 1 in the Remove, where the Famous Five were at tea.

The Co. looked at him, as he glanced in at the door, rather uncertainly. They were not on good terms with Smithy, these days, and a visit from the Bounder was as likely to mean trouble as not.

But Vernon-Smith's manner was quite genial.

"Sorry to bother you men," he said politely, "but I've got leave from Quelch to visit the interesting invalid. Visitin' the sick, and comfortin' the afflicted is my long suit, as I dare say you know."

"The knowfulness is not terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Well, it was your fault that he caught that rotten cold," grunted Johnny Bull.

"Exactly," agreed the Bounder. "That's why I'm goin' to do the visitin' and comfortin' stunt. We're not allowed to take in tuck, which I think Bunter might possibly like, and, of course, I'm not the fellow to disregard rules. I want to take him a book. One of these nice upliftin' books that are good for invalids."

Harry Wharton looked at the Bounder curiously.

"Bunter doesn't care much for books," he said. "But, if you mean it, Smithy, you can take any book we've got. There's an old 'Holiday Annual,' and a 'Modern Boy's Annual.'"

"The fact is, I've thought of one of Nugent's books that I've noticed on your shelf here once or twice," said Smithy blandly. "It still looks so nice and new that I don't think Nugent's read it. Perhaps he doesn't want it."

Smithy stepped to the bookshelf and lifted a volume therefrom.

It was a big volume, nearly two inches thick, and very weighty. It had gilt edges and a gilt inscription on the thick cover:

"GOOD GEORGIE!"

THE BOY WHO LOVED HIS KIND TEACHERS!"

"Can I have this?" asked the Bounder, holding it up.

Frank Nugent chuckled.

A kind aunty had presented him with that volume, which he had never opened, and never intended to open. It was placed on the study bookshelf, not for use, but because there happened to be room for it.

"Think Bunter will like it?" he asked.

"Yes, rather," said Smithy. "I think he may find somethin' very much to his taste in that book."

"What utter rot!" said Harry Wharton. "It's horrid piffle—nobody ever reads such stuff; they're only printed to be sold to aunts and uncles. Look here, Smithy, that's a rotten joke to play on a fellow who's laid up."

"Think so?" asked Smithy.

"Yes, I jolly well do! If you take that rubbish to Bunters in sanny he may chuck it at your head—I jolly well know I would!"

"Well, opinions differ, you know," said the Bounder. "I'm convinced that THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,531.

Bunter will be glad to get that book. You don't mind, Nugent, if you don't get it back?"

"Not in the least," answered Frank. "Anybody who likes can have it. But look here, Smithy, Bunter won't open it. If you're going to take him a book, take him one a fellow can read."

"I really think Bunter would like this!" said the Bounder, and he put the hefty volume under his arm.

"Rot!" said Bob Cherry.

"Rubbish!" grunted Johnny Bull.

The Bounder laughed, and walked out of the study with "Good Georgie." He left the chums of the Remove puzzled. It seemed unlikely that Smithy was setting out to pull the leg of a fellow who was laid up in sanny; but if he really fancied that the hapless invalid would like to peruse the adventures of the boy who loved his kind teachers, he certainly was not displaying his usual sagacity.

Smithy seemed satisfied, however. He strolled back into Study No. 4 with "Good Georgie" under his arm.

He slammed the huge volume on the table, and shut the door.

Tom Redwing stared at the book.

"Think Bunter will like that, Reddy?" asked the Bounder.

"What rot!" said Tom.

"I'm going to edit it for him," explained Smithy. "Watch me doin' the editorial work."

He opened the big volume, and then opened a penknife.

Tom watched him in amazement.

Pressing down the mass of thick leaves, Smithy carefully cut round the centre of the top page.

Leaving a wide margin, he cut that centre out. Slowly, but steadily, he cut and cut, till the centre of every page in the book was removed.

"What the dickens—" asked Redwing blankly.

That extraordinary operation on the book turned it into a kind of box! An inch of margin was left round every page, so that, when Vernon-Smith closed the book there was no outward sign of the operation.

But the interior of the book now formed a box, and into that space the Bounder proceeded to pack chocolates, caramels, and bullseyes.

"Oh!" gasped Redwing. He understood now.

When the available space was filled, the Bounder closed the cover. "Good Georgie" presented a normal appearance. Certainly nobody, glancing at it, would have supposed that it was now a box of sweetstuffs.

"Some stunt, what?" asked the Bounder, grinning. "This is my first go as a smuggler bold, but I think I shall get through."

And the Bounder, putting the volume under his arm—very carefully keeping it tightly shut—walked out of the study grinning.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Spills the Beans!

"OOOOOOOGH!" remarked Billy Bunter.

He dabbed his nose.

He dabbed his eyes.

He grunted.

He groaned.

Sitting up in bed, the fat Owl of the Remove regarded life with a jaundiced eye. It did not seem, at the moment, worth the trouble of living.

One day in sanny had passed—on leaden wings. All through that weary day, Billy Bunter had eaten enough for

only one fellow. It was really awful! It was fearful!

Even worse than the quantity of his diet was the quality! Not only was there merely enough, but none of it was sticky!

It seemed to Bunter a week since he had tasted a bullseye. It seemed a year since he had pushed his fat face into a juicy jam tart.

And there were to be days of it—two or three days, at least! Just because other fellows did not want to catch his cold!

Left to his own devices, Bunter would have spread that cold recklessly all over the Remove, and all over Greyfriars—indeed, all over the whole inhabited globe, if it came to that.

Bunter did not like catching other fellows' colds. But there was no reason why other fellows should not catch Bunter's cold, if Bunter's personal comfort was increased thereby. But there it was—he was isolated with his merry microbes, and for a whole day he had not eaten more than was good for him!

"Ooooooogh!" moaned Bunter. "I say, Mrs. Kebble, I wish you'd tell Quelch that my cold is gone. Atchoooo—atchoo—chooop!"

Mrs. Kebble smiled.

"Would you like to see one of your friends, Master Bunter?" she asked. "One of them is asking to see you—Master Vernon-Smith—"

"Beast!" groaned Bunter.

"Eh?"

"Rotter! It's all his fault I caught this putrid cold!" groaned the fat Owl. "I dare say he would like to see me sneezing my head off! Urrggh!"

"Shall I tell him you would rather not see him?" asked Mrs. Kebble.

"Oh, no; let him come in!" said Bunter.

The fat Owl was glad to see even Smithy. Perhaps he nourished a faint hope that Smithy might have some toffee in his pockets, which could be surreptitiously conveyed to a sad sufferer.

The matron fetched Vernon-Smith in. Bunter blinked at him dismally, and blinked at the huge volume under his arm.

"Feeling better, old fat bean?" asked the Bounder.

"No; worse."

"I've brought you a book to read."

"You silly idiot!" was Bunter's grateful answer. "Lots of rotten books here, if I wanted them."

"This is rather a special book," explained Vernon-Smith. "I'm sure you'll find somethin' interestin' in this."

Grunt from Bunter!

Literature never had much of an appeal for him—and it had less than ever in his present parlous state.

"Is there a murder in it?" he asked, with a faint show of interest.

"Somethin' better than that," answered Smithy. "Look!"

Bunter blinked at the title of the book. His little round eyes almost bulged through his spectacles with astonishment and indignation.

"You fathead!" he said. "You idiot! You dummy! You chump!"

"You haven't looked into it yet—"

"Beast! I don't want to!" hissed Bunter. "Take it away, and take your face away. Go and eat coke! Yah!"

"Dear me! It looks a very nice book, Master Bunter," said Mrs. Kebble. "I am sure it was very kind of your friend to bring it to you."

Bunter breathed in fury. A book with a real, good, gore-drenched murder in it might have given him some comfort. But he had no use for "Good Georgie" who loved his kind teachers. He was tempted to hurl his pillow at

the Bounder. He was, in fact, only restrained from that proceeding by the possibility that Smithy had some toffee in his pocket!

"I—I say, Mrs. Kebble, can I have a clean hanky?" he said.

"Yes, certainly!"

"I say, Smithy!" whispered Bunter as the matron's back was turned. "I say, got any toffee—just a bullseye—one caramel—anything?"

Mrs. Kebble turned back. Her ears were sharper than Bunter supposed.

"Here is a handkerchief, Master Bunter! You must not ask Master Vernon-Smith for anything of the kind. If he should give you toffee, or sweets of any sort, I should have to report him to Mr. Quelch."

"Nothing doing in that line, old bean!" said Smithy. "But I say, do look in this book! It's jolly interestin' inside."

"Idiot!"

"But just look—"

"Beast!"

It was impossible for Smithy to convey a hint. Mrs. Kebble hovered at hand with a wary eye. She was quite aware that a thoughtless schoolboy's sympathy was likely to take a form not for the good of an invalid.

Smithy could hand Bunter that book, but nothing else. He could not even speak unheard. Unluckily, the fat Owl was not quick on the uptake.

"You awful beast!" he went on, glaring at the Bounder through his big spectacles. "First you give me this putrid cold, then you bring me that rotten muck to read. I suppose that's your idea of a joke. Beast!"

"Perhaps you had better go, Master Vernon-Smith," said Mrs. Kebble.

"Well, I'll leave Bunter the book," said Smithy.

"You needn't trouble," snarled Bunter. "Take the rotten rubbish away with you, and be blowed!"

"Look here, don't be an ass, Bunter!" said the Bounder. "Look into the book, and you'll like it all right."

And he laid "Good Georgie" on Bunter's knees, and turned away.

It was all that he could do; and had Billy Bunter opened the book, it would have been all serene. He would have beheld, not the adventures of the ineffable Georgie, but a closely packed stack of bullseyes, chocolates, and caramels. Then all would have been calm and bright; for Mrs. Kebble had not the remotest suspicion that there was more in that volume than met the eye.

Unfortunately, Bunter hadn't, either.

He did not open the book.

He did not think of opening it.

He was only glad to have it within reach, as a handy missile to hurl at the Bounder, who, so far as he could see, was adding insult to injury by bringing him "Good Georgie" after giving him a cold.

He grabbed up the book, and, as the Bounder moved away, hurled it at Herbert Vernon-Smith's head.

Bang!

"Ooooooh!" spluttered the Bounder; and he tottered under that unexpected crash, and fell on his hands and knees.

Crash! went the volume on the floor.

"There, you beast!" gasped Bunter.

The volume burst open as it struck the floor. From the interior bullseyes and chocolates and caramels shot out in a stream.

"Why, what—what—what—" stammered Mrs. Kebble. She stared in amazement at that unexpected and startling sight.

"You blithering ass!" roared Vernon-Smith, picking himself up. "You fat, frabjous, footling fathead—"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter, his eyes and spectacles turning on the stream of sticky things on the floor. "Oh lor'!"

He understood—too late!

The volume lay open, revealing the interior cut out! Its contents were scattered round it.

"Oh crumbs!" groaned Bunter.

Too late, he realised that he would have found something interesting in that volume.

It had contained matters of interest, far exceeding any other volume in the whole range of literature. But those matters of interest were out of Bunter's reach now.

"Upon my word!" gasped Mrs. Kebble. "Master Vernon-Smith, I must report this to your Form-master! Go away at once! Do you hear me? Go at once! I shall take this book to Mr. Quelch! Go away!"

"You blithering bloater!" yelled the Bouncer; and he went, rubbing his head.

"Oh lor'!" groaned Bunter.

Mrs. Kebble gathered up the smuggled cargo of sweetstuffs.

Billy Bunter's eyes followed them mournfully till they disappeared.

Bunter groaned. Life seemed less worth living than ever now. Smithy was not likely to play the smuggler again.

Smithy, in fact, an hour later, had quite lost his sympathy for the sad invalid. He was called into Mr. Quelch's study, to receive "six" of the best. After which, Smithy needed all his sympathy for himself.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Rally Round!

SAMMY BUNTER of the Second Form rolled up to the Famous Five after class the following day.

There was a fat grin on Sammy's podgy face. As he came from the direction of the Head's garden, at the end of which the sanatorium was situated, the chums of the Remove guessed that he had been to see his major; but they did not discern any sign in Sammy's aspect that he was fearfully cut up by Billy Bunter's sad state.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "How's Billy?"

"Horrid!" said Sammy cheerfully. "Looks about as jolly as a boiled owl. He says he's growing thin. I didn't notice it myself. He, he, he!"

The Famous Five grinned. It was improbably that Billy Bunter was growing thin; but they had no doubt that he felt like it.

"Poor old Bunter!" said Bob.

"He says he had only two eggs and a small rasher for brekker this morning," said Sammy.

"Awful!" gasped Nugent.

"The awfulness is terrific!"

"He's in a rotten temper," said Sammy. "I went to ask him if he would do the letter home this week, you know. It's my turn; but he's got lots of time, sitting there in sanny doing nothing. He simply yapped at me."

"So that's why you went to see him, was it?" asked Bob, staring.

"Eh? I didn't go because I wanted to catch his cold, anyhow," answered Sammy. "I thought he might do it. But he won't. Billy's selfish. He simply got shirty when I asked him."



As the parcel left Bob Cherry's hand, Billy Bunter's fat face appeared at the open window. The parcel landed on William George's fat cheek, knocking him sideways. "Yaroooooh!" yelled the fat Remove. "Oh, you beast! Whoo-hoooooooooop!" "That's torn it!" gasped Bob Cherry.

I had a jolly good mind not to bring you his note, Wharton."

"His note?" repeated Harry.

"He's pencilled it on a fly-leaf he's torn out of a book," explained Sammy. "He says it's important. I've brought it."

Bunter minor fished in his pocket, and produced a crumpled, grubby paper. He handed it to the captain of the Remove, and rolled away.

Harry Wharton unfolded the grubby paper, and the Famous Five read it together:

"Deer Wharton,—I'm riting this in bedd, and wating for a chance to send it to you. I'm pheerfully hungry hear! That silly beast, Smithy, got spotted bringing me some tuck, and he hasn't bean neer me since. I want my old pals to rally rownd me. The doctor is a silly phool! He says that tuck would be badd for me. A phat lot he nose about it. I'm in a pheerful state of dredful hunger all the

tyme. It seems like weaks and weaks since I've tasted cake. I'm left aloan from fore to five, and aloud to sit by the window. I've got a string that I can lett down, if a pal will bring something to tye on it. Doo play up, and bee a sport. I'm starving. Send me some tuck—a cake wood do. I shoood prefer a bigg one. In fakt, the bigger the better. Tye it on the string, and I will pool it up.

"Yore old pal,

"W. G. BUNTER."

"P.S.—I prefer plumm cake.

"N.B.—Mind, a bigg one."

"Oh, my hat!" said Harry Wharton. "Poor old Bunter! I suppose he can't understand that the doctor knows best."

"Hardly," grinned Nugent.

"It will do him good," remarked Johnny Bull. And he will enjoy it all the more when he comes out of

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quod. We'll stand him a feed when he comes out."

Bob Cherry rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"After all, a cake wouldn't hurt him," he said slowly.

"You know better than the medical johnny?" inquired Johnny Bull, with gentle sarcasm.

"The knowfulness of the esteemed medical wallah is probably terrific, my absurd Bob," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Still, it's rough luck on Bunter," said Bob. "Two days without tuck is enough to make him pine away. Just a plum cake—"

"Fathead!" said Johnny Bull.

"Smithy got six for taking in a lot of sticky stuff, hidden in that book," said Nugent.

"Well, if Smithy can risk it, we can," said Bob. "Poor old Bunter will be waiting and watching for that cake, and it seems rather rotten to turn him down."

Bob's chums quite agreed to that. They sympathised with the unhappy prisoner of the sanatorium. But they shook their heads.

So far as "six" from Quelch was concerned, every member of the famous Co. was ready to run the risk. But doctor's orders were doctor's orders. If Dr. Pillbury had cut off cake, cake was cut off, and that was that.

"Wash it out, old chap!" said Harry. "I'd be jolly glad to play up, as that fat duffer asks, but—"

"Can't be done!" said Johnny Bull.

"I don't see it!" said Bob.

Bob Cherry had the kindest of hearts, and not infrequently followed his heart rather than his head. His good nature was rather liable to outrun his discretion at times.

The thought of the dismal Owl sitting at the window, waiting and watching, with his fat thoughts concentrated on that cake, and waiting and watching in vain, was too much for Bob.

"Well, if you don't see it, take our word for it!" suggested Johnny Bull.

"Rats!" answered Bob. "After all, doctors don't know everything. I don't see that just one cake would hurt Bunter."

"Well, I suppose it wouldn't!" agreed Harry. "But—"

"Don't be an ass!" advised Johnny Bull.

"I'd ask you the same, old chap, only I know you can't help it," answered Bob affably. "I'm jolly well going to let Bunter have that cake! You fellows can steer clear if you like."

"Fathead!" said Harry.

"The steer-clearfulness is not the proper caper, my esteemed Bob," said the Nabob of Bhanipur. "This idiotic Co. always sticks together."

"One fool makes many!" remarked Johnny Bull.

"That's settled, then!" said Bob cheerfully. "Let's go and get the cake. It's half-past four now, and Bunter will be sitting at that window! Think of his giddy joy when he pulls that cake up."

"And think of ours when we get six all round from Quelch!" remarked Johnny Bull.

"Oh, rats!"

Bob Cherry headed for the school shop, and his chums followed him. Four members of the Co. were rather troubled with misgivings; but Bob had made up his mind, and if Bob were going to hunt for trouble his comrades were not going to let him hunt alone. So that was settled.

In Mrs. Mimble's establishment there was a sorting out of cash. Bunter had

stated in his note that he preferred a large cake—though really he need not have stressed that point; for any fellow who knew Bunter could have guessed that one! Quite nice, large plum cakes were purchasable from Mrs. Mimble for five shillings, and a shilling each was not really a large contribution in the distressing circumstances.

A five-shilling cake was wrapped up and handed over; Mrs. Mimble, no doubt, supposing that it was to grace the board at a study tea.

With the parcel under Bob's arm, the chums of the Remove left the tuckshop.

They strolled in quite a casual manner to the gate of the Head's garden. That garden was out of bounds, except by special leave, and in the circumstances of the case leave could not very well be asked.

It was rather a risky business to penetrate into the forbidden precincts, as Form-masters sometimes walked there, and the majestic Head himself!

Stopping at the gate, the juniors looked over it to ascertain whether the coast was clear. No one was to be seen at the moment, but the trees and shrubberies cut off the view at a short distance from the gate.

"All serene!" said Bob. "You fellows wait here—no good the lot of us going in; safer for one. If you spot a beak trickling about, one of you begin to whistle the Greyfriars School song—see?"

"Right-ho!" said Harry Wharton. "Buck up, for goodness' sake!"

"Five minutes will see me through, I expect, if Bunter's got his string ready," answered Bob.

And, after a last cautious glance round, Bob whipped over the gate and disappeared into shrubberies.

His chums waited anxiously.

Five minutes had passed, when an angular figure came along from the quad, and the four juniors exchanged dismayed glances.

Mr. Quelch glanced at those four members of his Form. He had a book under his arm, and was evidently going into the garden to sit under a shady tree there and peruse the same.

They stood aside, and Harry Wharton politely opened the gate for his Form-master.

Mr. Quelch gave him a kind nod and passed through, and the captain of the Remove closed the gate again.

The Co. looked at one another expressively.

"That tears it!" murmured Nugent.

Harry Wharton began to whistle the tune of the Greyfriars School song. It was all that he could do, and they could only hope that Bob would be put on his guard and would hunt cover before the gimlet eyes of Henry Samuel Quelch spotted him.

Anxiously they waited for the result.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

So Near, and Yet So Far!

BILLY BUNTER'S little, round eyes gleamed behind his big, round spectacles.

He was sitting at the window.

On a hot June afternoon he was able to have the window open, though still in an extremely snuffly and sneezy condition. Not that Bunter was fearfully keen on fresh air. But he wanted that window open for his own reasons.

He was thinking of cake!

Sammy's visit had afforded him an opportunity of conveying his pathetic appeal to the Famous Five to "rally round." Even those beasts, Bunter con-

sidered, might be expected to play up in these awful circumstances. Anyhow, he hoped for the best, and he sat at the window and watched eagerly, and happy anticipation dawned in his fat face at the sight of a Remove fellow threading his way cautiously towards the building.

His eyes and his spectacles fixed on Bob Cherry.

Bob, spotting the fat face and the spectacles, waved his hand. Billy Bunter put an eager head out.

"I say, old chap! Got it?" he gasped.

Bob Cherry stepped out of the shrubberies under the window. He looked this way and that way, like Moses of old, and, like Moses, he saw no man. Then he held up the parcel for Bunter to see.

"Quick—let down the string!" he said as loudly as he could venture to speak.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "All right!"

He fumbled for the string, and let it drop from the window, holding one end. The distance was about sixteen feet. The length of that piece of string was about seven feet. That was like Bunter!

Bob Cherry reached up to the end of the dangling string, without being able to reach anywhere near it. He gave Bunter an expressive glare.

"That all you've got?" he hissed.

"Eh? Reach up to it, old chap!"

"Do you think I'm a telescope, you fat idiot? Haven't you got another bit to tie on to it?" breathed Bob.

"Oh! No! I happened to have this bit! Think Mrs. Kebble would have given me a ball of string if I'd asked for it? Don't be an idiot!"

"You howling ass—"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Lean out and lower it as much as you can, fathead!"

"I say, I can't put my head out of the window when I've got a cold! Suppose it makes me sneeze again?"

"Do you want this cake or not, you benighted bloater?"

"Oh! Yes! I say, is it a big one? That parcel doesn't look very big."

"It's a five bob one, fathead!"

"I think you might have got a ten bob one, Cherry! I said distinctly a big cake! Some fellows are so selfish—"

"You pie-faced, pernicious, piffing porker, do you want it at all? Think I can stay here for ever?" howled Bob. "Can you make that string longer or not?"

"Eh? How can I make it longer! It ain't elastic—I can't stretch it! Don't be a fool!" said Bunter peevishly.

"Tie something on to the end, idiot!"

"I haven't got anything! Can't you stand on something?"

"Oh! Yes!" hissed Bob, with ferocious sarcasm. "I'll call Gosling to bring his ladder, shall I? Or shall I ask Mrs. Kebble to bring out a chair for me to stand on?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"If you could tie it on to your tongue it would make it long enough for anything! Try your hanky—tear it in strips—"

"I don't want to tear up my hanky! Hankies cost money," answered Bunter warmly. "I'll tell you what. See if you can shy your hanky up to the window and I'll tear that up."

"You—you—you—" gasped Bob.

By that time, probably, Bob rather repented rallying round the fat Owl!

"You're wasting time, old chap!" urged Bunter. "If some beastly beak came along you'd get spotted, and then I—"

"I've got to chance getting six, ass!"

"Yes, I know; but I mean, then I shouldn't get the cake."

"Oh!" gasped Bob.

Evidently Bunter's fat thoughts were

wholly on the cake, and a whopping for Bob was a mere trifle, unworthy of his consideration.

"Look here, try to reach that string!" urged Bunter. "I think you might make an effort, Cherry! Don't be lazy!"

"I wish I could reach your nose!" gasped Bob. "I'd give it such a punch—"

"Beast!"

"Get something to tie on that string, you blitherer, or else lean out as far as you can, and let it down lower. I'll stand on tiptoe."

"You'd like to make my cold worse!" snorted Bunter. "Of all the beastly selfishness—"

"Oh, gum!" ejaculated Bob, as a distant whistle, to the tune of the Greyfriars School song, floated across the shrubberies. "Quick, fathead! That's a signal—somebody's coming!"

"Oh crikey!"
The danger of losing the cake spurred Bunter on. He leaned from the window as far as he could, stretched out a fat arm, and lowered the string from his fat finger-tips. It was exactly like Bunter to let it slip from his fat fingers—and he did!

It dropped on Bob Cherry's upturned face.

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter.

"You—you—you—you blithering bloater!" gasped Bob. "You chumsey, pie-faced, unspeakable owl—"

"Beast! I say, I can see Quelch coming!" Bunter, from the window, had a more extensive view than Bob below. "I say—"

Bob Cherry darted back into the shrubbery, taking cover.

There were footsteps on the path, and a few moments later, an angular figure emerged into view.

Mr. Quelch glanced up at the fat face blinking from the open window. He gave the fat invalid a kind nod.

"I hope you are feeling better, Bunter!" he said.

"Oh! No! Yes! Lots, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I should like to come back now, sir! I—I miss my lessons fearfully, sir."

"You shall have every opportunity of making up for lost time, Bunter, when you return to your Form," said Mr. Quelch. "Perhaps on Monday—"

"Oh dear!" groaned Bunter.

Mr. Quelch smiled, and passed on. Probably he did not suppose that Bunter's dismay was due to the loss of lessons for the rest of the week!

He sauntered along the building, and passed out of sight behind a clump of flowering almond-trees.

Billy Bunter's spectacles were fixed on him till he disappeared. Then he leaned out again.

"I say, Cherry, he's gone!" the fat Owl called out cautiously.

Bob put his head out of the shrubbery.

Quelch was not in sight. But whether he was walking on by the garden-paths, or had sat down on a seat, or whether he might walk back, Bob had no means of guessing. He dared not call out.

The string being on the ground, there was no possibility of pulling the parcel up to the window.

Bob calculated the chances of pitching it up and landing it at the window. It was a rather heavy and clumsy article for such a feat, and the window was sixteen feet from the ground; neither was the open space very large.

Bob did not want to land it on a pane and cause the garden to echo and re-echo with the crash of breaking glass.

But if Bunter was going to have that cake, the chance had to be taken.

(Continued on next page.)

The STATELY HOMES of GREYFRIARS

THE TUCKSHOP

By

The Greyfriars Rhymester



(1)

And now—Ah me! Alas! My eye!
(Excuse me, readers, while I sigh!)
This week I write with great delight
About a home so stately,
That everyone who sees the place
Looks on with sad and wistful face,
And longs to stride at once inside
The home they love so greatly.

(2)

By way of giving you a game,
I won't at first reveal its name,
I'll let you guess the answer—yes?
It won't take you a minute.
It's not a mansion house at all,
It's just a cottage, very small;
A man and wife have lived a life
Of modest comfort in it.

(4)

The owner of this charming house
Is now and then inclined to grouse,
Though not a bad old sort of lad
When taken altogether;
For he's a gardener, and so
He grumbles at the rain and snow,
And when it's dry he heaves a sigh
And says: "What awful
weather!"

(6)

His wife—now this is where I start
To tell the rapture in my heart!—
His wife is kind and you will find
Her nature always sunny.
She fills her little cottage-shop
With rabbit-pies and ginger-pop,
And those who call may taste them all
If they have any money!

(8)

While Mimble gardens for the Head,
His wife is baking currant bread,
And, by the way, I ought to say
If I'm an honest writer,
The Mimbles have a sonny boy,
His father's hope, his mother's joy,
And he can stop inside the shop—
The lucky little blighter!

(3)

There is a picture on this page.
The artist's clever for his age,
(He isn't more than ninety-four;
A promising young fellow!)
At any rate, the picture shows
The place I mean, and I suppose
You'll try to view the colours, too,
Dull red, with green and yellow.

(5)

He thinks that every boy he sees
Is making for his apple trees;
Well, he could spare one here and there,
He grows 'em in such numbers.
He guards his cabbages and greens,
Protects his precious peas and beans,
He'd battle on till life was gone
To save his choice cucumbers!

(7)

The TUCKSHOP! Yes, you're quite
correct!
And Mrs. Mimble, I expect,
Would take you in with joyous grin
If you pulled out your purses!
Alas! I can't go in as well,
Unless the Ed. will be a pal
And send me down a half-a-crown
For writing these 'ere verses!

(9)

With floods of bitter tears we think
Of all that lovely food and drink,
We'd scoff the lot upon the spot
If only we were present!
Oh, what a gorgeous stroke of luck
To own a cottage filled with tuck!
Who wouldn't give the world to live
Inside a house so pleasant?

Next Week: POPPER COURT.

He stepped out into the open and took a grip on the parcel, ready for the attempt.

Bunter blinked down at him—not, of course, understanding. Bunter was never quick on the uptake.

"I say, old chap, how are you going to get it to me, now that you've made me drop that string?" he asked in a shrill whisper.

Bob waved his left hand, as a sign to Bunter to get away from the window and give space for the missile to whiz in.

"Wharrer you mean?" asked Bunter. "Can't you speak, you ass? It's all right—old Quelch has cleared off!"

"Get back from the window, you idiot!" breathed Bob in cautious tones. "Eh?"

"Get back!"

"I can't hear you!"

"Get back!" Bob had to raise his voice a little. "I'm going to chuck it up!"

"Oh! Suppose you break the glass——"

"Idiot!"

"What did you say?"

"Dummy! Quelch may come along any minute!" hissed Bob. "Will you——" He broke off, as there was a sound of returning footsteps on the path, and popped back out of sight into the shrubbery.

"Oh crumbs!" groaned Bunter.

Mr. Quelch appeared in view. He glanced up at the window.

"Were you speaking to someone, Bunter?" he asked.

"Oh! No, sir!"

"Indeed! I am sure I heard voices."

"D-d-did you, sir? I—I didn't hear anything."

The Remove master gave him a sharp glance.

"If you desire to see any of your Form-fellows, Bunter, they may be allowed to visit you!" he said. "But leave must be asked and obtained, and surreptitious visits must not be paid, as you know very well. I am assured, Bunter, that I heard your voice——"

"Oh! Yes! I—I was singing, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"What?"

"Just—just singing, sir!" stammered Bunter. "That—that's all, sir!"

"Indeed!" said Mr. Quelch very dryly. He gave the fat Owl a sharper look than before, and walked away.

He passed within six feet of Bob Cherry, who hardly breathed, till the footsteps of his Form-master died away once more.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Alas for Bunter!

BOB CHERRY put his head out again.

The coast was clear once more; though how long it was likely to remain clear, was another matter. It was evident that Quelch's suspicions were aroused, and every moment Bob dreaded to hear the sound of returning footsteps. If Quelch was suspicious, he was very likely to keep an eye on that spot; and it certainly looked as if he was.

Bob did not dare to call out again. He waved his hand at Bunter, who nodded to show that he understood, and backed from the window to give the parcel space to whiz in, if, by good fortune, Bob landed it in the open space and not on a pane of glass.

Bob Cherry gave a swift glance round, and then swung back his right arm, taking careful and accurate aim.

Whiz!

The parcel flew!

At the same moment, Billy Bunter's fat face reappeared in the open space of the window.

"I say, mind you don't break the glass——" squeaked Bunter. "I say——Yaroooooooooooooh!"

Bunter's reappearance at that moment was unfortunate. The parcel had left Bob's hand, after which, of course, he could not stop it!

His aim was good!

Right in at the open window the parcel flew, and it would have landed on the floor within, had not William George Bunter's fat features been in the way.

As it was, it landed on William George's fat cheek, and knocked him sideways, spinning.

The yell that Billy Bunter gave, as he got the crash, rang the length and breadth of the Head's garden.

"Yaroooooh!" roared Bunter. "Yow-ow! Oh, you beast! Whoo-hooooooooop!"

There was a heavy bump in the room, as Bunter landed there on his back. Another loud yell followed.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bob Cherry. "That's torn it!"

He jumped back into the shrubbery.

He was barely in cover, when Mr. Quelch came whisking back along the path, with a startled and angry face.

The Remove master halted under the window, and stared round him with glinting eyes.

Bunter was no longer visible at the window. Bob was in cover. Mr. Quelch had the spot to himself for a few moments.

Then a fat face reappeared at the window, and two little round eyes gleamed wrath and rage through a big pair of spectacles.

"You silly idiot!" yelled Bunter.

"You clumsy fathead! Wharrer you mean by bunging the cake in a fellow's face! Ow! You've nearly smashed my jaw, you clumsy ass! Wow! You knocked me over, you dummy! Oooogh! I'd rather not have had the cake at all than have had it bunged in my face, you clumsy idiot! I've a jolly good mind to chuck it back at you, Bob Cherry, you thundering dummy!"

"Upon my word!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"You silly ass—you clumsy fathead—you blithering chump——" went on Billy Bunter, rubbing his fat cheek in anguish. "Ow! I——"

"Bunter!"

"Oh! Oh crikey!" Bunter ceased to yell, and blinked down in horror, seeing his Form-master below. "Oh! Is—is—is that you, sir? I—I—I wasn't talking to anybody, sir——"

"How dare you utter such untruths, Bunter?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Is Cherry, of my Form, here?"

"Oh! No, sir! He—he hasn't been here! I—I haven't seen him since—since the last time I saw him, sir! He hasn't chucked anything up to the window, and it never banged on my cheek, sir, and—and it wasn't a cake——"

"Cherry!" Mr. Quelch's voice was not loud, but deep. "Cherry! I am aware that you are here! Step out at once!"

"He—he ain't here, sir!" gasped Bunter. "He—he hasn't been here, sir, and he ain't in that shrubbery this very minute, sir——"

Bob Cherry, with feelings too deep for words, stepped out into view. His face crimsoned under the glare of his Form-master.

Billy Bunter blinked down at him.

"Oh, you fathead!" he gasped. "Why couldn't you keep out of sight?"

"Silence, Bunter! Cherry, is it possible that you have come here to

convey to that foolish boy unhealthy comestibles strictly forbidden by the school doctor?"

"Oh!" gasped Bob. "Ye-e-es, sir! I—I——"

"This is a very serious matter, Cherry!"

Bob really did not need telling that. Whether it was serious for the fat invalid to have cake or not, it was undoubtedly extremely serious for Bob to be caught in the act by his Form-master. Mr. Quelch's expression conveyed clearly that it was fearfully serious!

"You will go to my study, Cherry!" continued Mr. Quelch. "You will wait there till I come in, when I shall have leisure to cane you for this thoughtless folly."

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Bob.

"Go at once!" said Mr. Quelch sternly.

Bob Cherry trailed dismally away.

The Remove master fixed his eyes on the fat face at the window above.

"Bunter!" he rumbled.

"Oh! Yes, sir!" groaned Bunter. "I—I never knew that Cherry was there, sir! I—I hadn't the faintest idea——"

"You will drop that cake from the window immediately, Bunter."

"The—the—the cake, sir!"

"At once!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh crikey! I—I'm fearfully hungry, sir—I—I mean, there isn't a cake! I—I don't know what Cherry was doing in the garden, sir—but he—he never chucked a parcel up to the window, and—and it isn't here now, sir! And—and there isn't a cake in it."

"Bunter!"

"I—I hope you can take my word, sir!" groaned Bunter.

"If you do not immediately drop that parcel out, Bunter, I shall come in for it," said Mr. Quelch, "and if you give me that trouble, Bunter, I think you will regret it. Drop that parcel out at once!"

"Oh lor'!"

In the lowest of spirits, the fat invalid fielded the parcel and dropped it from the window. The paper wrappings burst as it landed, revealing a plum cake! Mr. Quelch, with a grim brow, picked it up.

With the parcel under his arm, the Remove master walked away.

Billy Bunter's eyes, and spectacles, followed that cake, till it disappeared, in anguished longing. Then he groaned—a deep, deep groan! There was, after all, no cake for Bunter! Cakeless, he groaned!

Meanwhile, Bob Cherry rejoined his chums on the other side of the gate. They looked at him.

"Copped?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Sort of!" grunted Bob.

"Did Bunter get the cake?" asked Harry Wharton.

"No; that's one comfort!" said Bob, and he walked away to the House to wait for Mr. Quelch in his study.

His sympathetic chums walked with him as far as the House.

"Well, it was a fatheaded idea!" remarked Johnny Bull. "I told you so, you know."

"Fathead!" grunted Bob.

"Well, you can call a fellow names," said Johnny. "But I jolly well did tell you so, and—— You silly ass, wharrer you up to?"

Bob knocked his hat off, and as the surprised and indignant Johnny rushed after it, went into the House.

Johnny glared after him.

"Silly ass!" he grunted. "What's Bob shirty about?"

"Perhaps the told-you-sofulness was a little too terrific!" suggested Hurrea Jamset Ram Singh, with a dusky grin.



The Famous Five jumped almost clear of the ground at the sound of a sudden tremendous smash. "What the thump——" gasped Bob Cherry. They spun round, and the sight that met their eyes made them jump again. A man had smashed the window of a jeweller's shop and was grabbing at all the valuable articles within his reach.

Bob Cherry waited in Mr. Quelch's study, till his Form-master came in.

What followed was painful—and it had the effect of completely curing Bob of any idea of conveying further unhealthy comestibles to the fat invalid.

If Billy Bunter waited in hope for his old pals to rally round, he waited in vain! There was no more rallying round; and so long as the fat Owl remained in sanny, he was reduced to the awful straits of eating only as much as was good for him. Which made it probable that Billy Bunter would get well as fast as he possibly could!

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Smash and Grab!

"THAT ass!"

"That slacker!"

Five juniors, standing on the pavement in Courtfield High Street, looked along the road, like five Sister Annes. Like Sister Anne, they saw no one coming—not, at all events, the one they were looking for.

It was Saturday afternoon, and the Famous Five of the Remove had run down to Courtfield on their bikes, as it was the first half-holiday since their adventure at Lantham.

Although those bikes had been rideable after the crash going to Lantham on Wednesday, every one of them was in need of minor repairs; and a half-holiday was an opportunity to get them done. So the five had ridden down to the cycle shop in the High Street, where they had spent an hour, and a considerable portion of their pocket money, after which the jiggers were, if not as good as new, at least as serviceable as new. Then they rode on to Chunkley's Stores.

Chunkley's was the big emporium of Courtfield. It had numberless depart-

ments, where everything was sold from jewellery to jamjars and jigsaw puzzles, from doughnuts to dustbins and dictionaries.

The department in which the Famous Five were interested that afternoon was Chunkley's Tea Lounge.

Lord Mauleverer of the Remove was standing tea at the tea lounge, and the Famous Five were his distinguished guests.

At four o'clock the chums of the Remove were to find Lord Mauleverer standing at the entrance, to join him there, and go in to tea.

Having finished with the business of the bicycles well before four o'clock, they were on time; in fact, rather early.

Mauly, however, was late.

At four o'clock nothing was to be seen of Mauly. At a quarter past four his lordship was still conspicuous by his absence.

Mauly was not the man to keep his friends waiting if he could help it. But he was the man to forget an appointment sometimes; likewise, he was so incorrigibly lazy, that almost anything might delay him on his way.

Hence the complimentary references to his lordship as the five juniors waited.

Mauleverer, having had a good hour, after they had left the school, he had had plenty of time to get to Chunkley's. But he was not there yet.

They had parked their machines in a yard adjoining the stores. Now they walked up and down the pavement in front of the imposing facade of the great emporium; and every now and then glared down the street in the direction of Greyfriars in search of Mauly.

"The ass!" repeated Bob Cherry.

"The slacker!" repeated Johnny Bull.

"If he's gone to sleep in his study and forgotten——" suggested Frank Nugent.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I shouldn't wonder! Look here,

we'll give him till half past—and then give it a miss if he doesn't turn up. Mauly's such an old ass, you never know."

"The knowfulness is never terrific, with the esteemed and idiotic Mauly," agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

They waited cheerfully enough, however. Certainly they would have preferred a spin on the bikes to hanging about doing nothing. Still, it was a glorious June afternoon, and they were in cheery spirits. And so they waited, and walked up and down, and watched the traffic in the High Street, and looked in at the attractive displays in Chunkley's vast windows, and the minutes passed.

Chunkley's jewellery window was especially attractive and imposing. Behind a great sheet of plate-glass gorgeous things were displayed—watches and rings and necklaces and bangles of incalculable value. Not that the Famous Five were specially interested in such things; but with nothing else to do, they looked into that big shining window to kill a few minutes; and Bob Cherry, seeing his reflection in the plate-glass, was able to pull his tie straight—though it remained straight for only a matter of minutes.

Thus it happened that the Famous Five were there when a powerfully built man came up the High Street on a bicycle, and stopped, hooked his bike to the kerb, and stepped across towards the window.

As the juniors were, at the moment, looking at their own reflections in the plate-glass, they saw the reflection of the newcomer as he crossed towards the window—with many other reflections of pedestrians passing to and fro.

It did not, of course, interest them specially; but they saw it, and Harry Wharton noticed a face under a slouched

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hat, with a thick beard and heavy moustache, and a squint in the left eye.

That squint made him give the reflection another glance.

The juniors had not forgotten the squinting man who had crashed into them on Wednesday. They had reported the incident at Lantham police station, after what Smithy had said at the Pagoda, but had heard nothing more about it. Whether that reckless cyclist was, indeed, the smash-and-grab man, they did not know, though they thought it very likely. They knew that Inspector Carter, at Lantham, had sent constables to search for him where they had left him; but as that was after the end of the cricket match, he must have had plenty of time for getting loose and getting away. Nothing, so far as they knew, had come of the matter.

The squint in the reflection in the plate-glass reminded Wharton of the man. But the man, as he remembered him, had been clean-shaven, and this reflection had a beard and moustache; and it did not occur to Harry at the moment that it was, or might be, the same man.

The bearded man with the squint was carrying a small parcel in his hand, wrapped in brown paper. He stopped at the window, and became interested in the dazzling display therein, at a little distance from the schoolboys. They gave him no heed. That window display was specially designed to be looked at; and it naturally did not occur to them that the man was waiting for them to move off.

"Is that ass ever coming?" said Johnny Bull; and he stepped back from the window and stared along the street.

His friends joined him, and they stood in a group, looking down the High Street, their backs turned to the man with the parcel in his hand, not even remembering his existence.

Then all of a sudden, they jumped almost clear of the pavement at the sound of a sudden tremendous smash!

Crash! Smash!

"What the thump——" gasped Bob.

They spun round.

The sight that met their eyes made them jump again.

In the centre of the great sheet of plate glass, was a huge, ragged gash, and splintered glass lay in all directions. Inside lay the brown-paper parcel the squinting man had carried—evidently containing a brick, or something of the kind, from its effect on the glass!

The man was grabbing!

Obviously an old hand at the game, his actions were like lightning. Handfuls of watches, rings, bangles, anything within reach, were grabbed and jammed into pockets.

Before the juniors realised what was happening, the swift grabbing was done, and the man shot back to the bike at the kerb.

His leg was over the bike, and it was shooting away up the High Street in a matter of seconds.

Bob Cherry made a jump towards him, too late. The bike shot away like an arrow, and was gone like a lightning flash.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Hot Chase!

"STOP him!"

"After him!"

"Smash-and-grab——"

"Great pip!"

"Stop him! Stop thief!"

"It's the man!" gasped Wharton.

"That man——" He knew it now in a flash.

"Stop him!"

"That man on a bike——"

"Stop thief!"

A minute ago, Courtfield High Street had been quiet and sleepy, as it always was except on market days. Now it roared and buzzed and echoed.

Twenty people, at least, had seen the smash-and-grab raid—though so swiftly had it been carried out that no one had had time to intervene. Even the Greyfriars juniors, who had been nearest to the raider, had had no chance.

Fifty pairs of eyes had been on the

man as he drove his bicycle away at reckless, desperate speed.

Up and down the street was a roar of alarm. People came running out of shops and houses. A constable came rushing up. Assistants came bolting out of Chunkley's. A hundred voices roared.

But the man was gone. Swiftly was his only chance; and he had been amazingly swift.

Bob ran a few paces in the road, stopped, and cut back.

"The bikes!" he panted.

"After him!"

The Famous Five rushed for their bicycles.

The man was already clear of the High Street, and going all out up the country road that led past Highcliffe. In a matter of minutes, no doubt, cars would be roaring in pursuit; but minutes were enough for him to dodge away into winding lanes. He had escaped at Lantham—and he looked like escaping at Courtfield. But he was not going to escape if the Famous Five could stop him.

They dragged their bicycles out into the road, mounted in hot haste, and shot away up the High Street, the way the squinting man had gone.

If Lord Mauleverer arrived now, he was going to miss his tea-party. But the juniors had forgotten Mauleverer.

Winding recklessly among the traffic, the Famous Five did the High Street at a speed for which they would certainly have been called to order at any other time! They shot out like arrows on the Highcliffe road.

Far ahead, a speck in the dust, was a slouched hat! Almost out of sight, but not quite, they spotted their man.

The slouched hat vanished round a turning, into a narrow lane.

The five pedalled on hard.

Behind them came the roar of a car, already in pursuit. It roared past, too fast for them to call to it; and roared on, past the end of the narrow lane into which the smash-and-grab man had turned. So far as that car was concerned, the smash-and-grab man was in no danger.

But the juniors had seen the slouched hat whisk round the corner, and they knew! The five bikes rocked round the corner in chase, and the high road was left behind.

"By gum, we'll jolly well get him!" panted Bob Cherry.

"If we don't, nobody will!" said Harry Wharton. "There's twenty turnings, or more, along this road—plenty for them to choose from, once he was out of sight. Us, or nobody!"

"Put it on!" said Johnny Bull.

They did the lane like a cinder-path. Sounds from the high-road died away behind them. The pursuit, evidently, was going on along the highway. The squinting man was clear, unless the Greyfriars fellows ran him down. That was what they were going to do, if they could.

At Lantham he had failed to pocket any plunder; but this time, they knew, he had got away with a great deal. Under their very eyes, he had crammed handfuls of valuables into his pockets. Hundreds of pounds, at least, perhaps thousands, was the value of the loot in the rascal's pockets, if he got away safe with it. And the raid had been so sudden and so swift, that his escape was certain; but for the chance that the schoolboys had been on the spot with their bicycles at hand. Probably, by that time, a hundred pursuers were on the chase—but only the Famous Five of Greyfriars had spotted the right track.

"THE WAY OF A WELSHMAN!"

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Under the blazing June sun they rode as if for their lives. The wheels flashed round in a cloud of dust.

"Look!" panted Bob. He released one hand and pointed.

Far away, over a low hedge, a slouched hat bobbed for a second, and vanished behind a belt of willows.

"That's the man!" gasped Nugent.

"Put it onfully!" panted the Nabob of Bhanipur.

But for that glimpse over the hedges, they would have lost their quarry; for he had turned into a lane at right angles to the one they were following.

Harry Wharton braked.

"Hold on—hold on!" he exclaimed. "Cut across the field—this way!"

"Oh, good!"

There was a stile and a footpath across the field.

Harry Wharton jumped down, whipped his bike over the stile, remounted, and shot across the field.

Fast on his track came his comrades.

By cutting across the field, a quarter of a mile had been saved. The squinting man had gone on to the corner a good distance ahead, and turned to the right—and was well on his way in the side-lane. Cutting across the field to the side-lane, the Famous Five gained a big stride in the pursuit.

They came out into the side-lane by a gap in a hawthorn hedge, and looked eagerly in the direction in which the man had been going.

They fully expected him to be in view, and not very far ahead, owing to the distance they had saved. But they were rather surprised to see him at a halt, standing beside his bike under the shade of the willows.

He was not fifty yards away!

"Oh, my hat—there he is!" panted Bob.

They could see why he had halted. He was cramming something into his pockets; and they could guess what it was, from the fact that his beard and moustache were now gone from his face.

That disguise was worn while he was engaged on smash-and-grab—and once safely out of sight, and with a few moments to spare, it was his game to remove it—leaving the pursuers to hunt for a bearded man, while a clean-shaven man rode safely on his way!

The slouch hat, too, was gone, probably crammed into some crevice in the bank by the lane. The man had a cap on his head now.

In that little lane, little more than a cart-track, shadowed by the willows, and three miles out of Courtfield, the squinting man had evidently deemed it safe to stop for a minute or two, to make that change in his appearance.

He was watching the way he had come with gleaming eyes as wary as a cat's. The road behind him was clear—till suddenly the five juniors emerged from the gap in the hedge.

He stared at them as they sighted him.

Perhaps he remembered them as the bunch of schoolboys he had seen outside Chunkley's window—perhaps recalled them as the cyclists he had crashed into a few days ago. Anyhow, he knew that it was pursuit—and he leaped on his bicycle again.

But they had seen him—seen him clearly, and every one of the five recognised him easily, without his beard! Wharton had guessed it already; but now there was no shadow of doubt that he was the man of Lantham.

"That's the man!" breathed Johnny Bull.

"Get on!"

They flew in pursuit.

Only fifty yards, or less, behind their quarry now, they drove at the pedals with every ounce of their strength. They were all good cyclists, and good for a hard race. And the squinting man, powerful as he was, and desperately as he had ridden at the beginning of his flight, was not going so fast now, with all his efforts.

It was probable that he had not completely recovered from the damage to his knee in the few days that had elapsed since the crash near Lantham. Three miles of breakneck speed had told on it, and every desperate push at the pedals told on it more.

"We're getting him!" breathed Harry Wharton.

If they were not gaining, they were not losing ground.

Keeping the fleeing man easily in sight, they swept on behind. And soon it was clear that the space between was lessening, inch by inch and foot by foot. They were gaining!

Five or six times they passed staring pedestrians, and shouted "Stop thief!" But the fleeing man was past too swiftly for a hand to be stretched out to seize him.

Once they came on a farm-cart almost blocking the way; but the squinting man went between it and the hedge, crashing along the hedge as he went, and the man in the cart stared at him blankly, and then stared at the five juniors, as, strung out in line, they raced past in turn.

Another mile and they were not thirty yards behind. They were ready for a tussle when it came—and they knew it was not going to be an easy one. But they had handled the man that day at Lantham, and they could handle him again. But suddenly the bike shot off the lane, into a track that wound away among woodlands, and he vanished from their sight.

A moment later and they shot round the corner in chase, under the shady branches of the trees.

Bob Cherry, who was in the lead, suddenly braked and shouted:

"Hold on!"

They jammed on their brakes, and halted just in time. The squinting man was not to be seen. But across the path lay his bicycle, abandoned, and the pursuers had had a narrow escape of crashing over it.

They jumped down, panting, and staring about them in the dusk of the trees. The smash-and-grab man had abandoned his bicycle, and taken to the wood on foot, and disappeared from sight.

A distant rustle, heard for a moment, died away. The man with the squint was gone!

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

Lost Trail!

"SOLD!" gasped Bob Cherry breathlessly.

"The selfishness is preposterous!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "We are diddlefully dished and done!"

Bob fanned his crimson face with his school cap. All the five were red and breathless and perspiring. Seldom had they put on such speed a-wheel. Frank Nugent leaned on his machine and panted for breath. Hurree Singh dabbed streams of perspiration from his dusky face.

"Gone!" grunted Johnny Bull. "We're jolly well dished! We'd have had him for a cert—"

"He knew that, of course!" said Harry. He stood staring into the dusk of the wood. "Not much good hunting

for him here—like hunting for a needle in a haystack. But—"

"But what, old man?" asked Bob, with a rueful grin. "Anything doing?"

"Lots!" said the captain of the Remove. "We've made him chuck his jigger, and he's on foot now, at any rate. And, from the way he was riding, I fancy he's still feeling the pinch in his gammy knee. He won't cover much distance in a hurry. He's dodged us in this wood—but he can't stay in it long."

"No; but—"

"One of us had better cut back to Courtfield and tell them at the police station," said Harry. "You're the fastest man on a jigger, Bob—you go! That will bring the bobbies here pretty quick. I fancy Inspector Grimes, at Courtfield, will be jolly glad to hear the news!"

"You bet!" grinned Bob. "I'll go, if you like." He whirled his bike round. "But what about you?"

"We'll ride on, and keep an eye open for him. He must know, as well as we do, that under an hour the police will be combing this wood for him. He will break out of it somewhere, and we may spot him when he does."

"Right-ho!"

Bob Cherry remounted, and rode away, going all out for Courtfield. Bob was the heftiest man in the Co., and the chase, hot as it had been, had told on him very little. He disappeared from sight in a few seconds.

The other four remained where they were, resting for a few minutes before getting going again.

They looked at the abandoned bike lying in the woodland path. It was unlikely that the smash-and-grab man had left anything on his machine that would give a clue helping to his ultimate capture. There was nothing to be learned from it, except that it was quite a new machine.

Evidently the man, having lost his mount in the crash at Lantham, had purchased a new machine for his next exploit in the smash-and-grab line.

"Better put that jigger out of action," remarked Johnny Bull. "He might sneak back for it while we're hunting him."

"Very likely," agreed Harry. "He won't be able to ride it, if he does. Pity to rip those new tyres—but here goes!"

He opened his pocket-knife, and in a minute or two the machine was put very effectively out of action. It was quite possible that the squinting man might have come back for it when they were gone; but, if he did, he was not likely to find it of much use.

They remounted their bicycles and rode through the wood at a much more leisurely pace than before.

At what point the fugitive would break out of the wood they had no means of guessing; but there was a chance of spotting him, and once spotted, his game was up, now that he was on foot.

About a mile on they rode out of the woodland path into a broad country lane, and there, there was a chance, at least, of picking up news of the squinting man, if he had got out of the wood.

A couple of passing cyclists could tell them nothing; neither could a ploughman in an adjoining field. But an agricultural gentleman, who was found leaning on a stile, meditatively chewing a straw, had news, when they questioned him.

"Man with a squint in his eye?" he asked. "Yes, he coom rooning."

"Oh, good!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

A man with a squint in his eye, who
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had come running, was evidently the man they were looking for—

"Which way did he go?" asked Nugent eagerly.

"Right on!"

And the juniors, very hopeful now, rode right on!

A few minutes later they came on a farm-cart jogging along, and hailed the driver.

He nodded in reply to eager questions.

"Four or five minutes ago he passed me, roonin loike there was a foire!" said the farmer's man.

"Thanks!"

They shot onward.

Clearly, the squinting man had got out of the wood into that lane. It led, as they knew, to the high-road to Canterbury, though that road was a good distance. If the squinting man was making for that road, they were absolutely certain of riding him down, howsoever fast he ran.

"Hallo, let's ask this chap!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, as he sighted a furniture-van lumbering along the lane ahead.

It was a motor-van, and, large and heavy as it was, it was going fairly fast. The Greyfriars fellows put on speed and passed it, reading the style and title, "Jones & Co., Weymouth," painted on the sides, as they passed.

They called to the driver—a small, wiry man, with a pug nose, who did not slacken speed, and only stared at them carelessly.

"Hold on a minute, will you?" called Harry Wharton, keeping pace with the van.

The puggy man stared and shook his head.

"What's up?" he called back.

"We're after a smash-and-grab man—he got away in this direction. Have you seen anyone pass—a man with a squinting eye, most likely running?"

The puggy man did not slow down the van, but he gave a nod, and called back civilly:

"Bloke with a squint, did you say?"

"Yes, yes. You've seen him?"

"That'd be the covey that spoke to me ten minutes back," said the puggy man, with another nod. "Back at the gate—p'r'aps you know it—a white gate?"

"Yes, we've passed a white gate."

"That's it!" said the puggy man. "He asked me where the footpath led to, but how could I tell 'im, when I'm a stranger in these parts, on a moving job from Weymouth? But he went that way, through the white gate."

"Oh, thanks!" exclaimed Harry.

The furniture-van rolled on, and the cyclists turned in the lane, and rode back.

"By gum, we've overshot the mark!" said Johnny Bull. "He's taken to the fields—that white gate leads away to Giles' farm on the Sark. Lucky we asked that chap on the van!"

"Yes, rather!"

"The luckfulness was terrific."

And the four juniors rode back in hot haste to the white gate, went through, and followed the footpath beyond.

But from that point they failed to hear the slightest, faintest news of the man with the squint. Up and down and round about they rode, asking questions whenever they met with an inhabitant; but nobody in that quarter had seen anything of a squinting man.

Which would not have surprised them had they only heard the puggy man's words, spoken to somebody unseen,

inside Jones & Co.'s van, after they were gone.

"You 'eard that, Squinny?" asked Nosey, over his shoulder.

"I heard the young blighters!" came back the voice of the man with a squint. "I'd like to give 'em something for butting in, too."

"Well," said Nosey, "if they go back to that there white gate, and foller that path, I dessay they'll get somewhere; but they won't get anywhere near you, Squinny, so that's all right."

And the puggy man chuckled as he drove on, and turned the van out of the lane into the Canterbury road.

But the "bloke with a squint" did not chuckle. He lay on a heap of sacks inside the closed van, panting and panting for breath.

"Squinny" had had a narrow escape, and it was a long time before he was sufficiently recovered from his desperate race to sit up in Messrs. Jones & Co.'s removal van and gloat over his plunder.

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

Bunter Knows Something!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Roll in, old barrel!"

On Monday, after class, Billy Bunter's fat face was seen in the doorway of Study No. 1 in the Remove.

The Famous Five were in that study—all busy.

Perhaps because they had not seen Bunter for so long, or perhaps because they were so bucked at not having seen him for four or five days, they were standing the fat Owl a spread to celebrate his recovery.

Bunter was, they thought, a proper object of sympathy. Deprived of sticky things for more than half a week, they realised that his sufferings must have outclassed those of a member of the noble army of martyrs.

Restored once more to the Remove, he was going to feed on the fat of the land for once, at least, and so his appearance in a study doorway was not greeted, as usual, by "Buzz off, Bunter!" but by a general hospitable invitation to roll in.

Bunter rolled in.

His fat face was beaming with anticipation. How hungry he was, it would have been hardly possible to calculate. Since Wednesday the previous week he had had only enough food for one fellow. So it was doubtful whether the combined pocket-money of the chums of the Remove would be able to do justice to his appetite. They could only do their best and hope for the best. Contributions were made by other sympathisers, however. Lord Mauleverer had contributed a bag of jam tarts, and a bag of doughnuts, and a big jam roll, and Smithy had promised a big cake. With what the Famous Five themselves were able to provide, it was hoped that there would be enough, or almost enough, for Bunter.

The table was well spread.

Billy Bunter blinked over it through his big spectacles, and his beaming smile grew more expansive.

"I say, you fellows, that looks all right!" he said. "I say, I've had an awful time! Famished! Ravenous! I never even got that cake, you know, owing to Cherry bungling, and that silly fool Smithy gave it away when he was bringing me a few things. Pair of silly idiots—what?"

"You fat ass!" began Bob Cherry. He checked himself. "I mean, take a

pew, old fat man! Just poaching the eggs! Like to begin on poached eggs?"

"Oh, yes, rather! How many have you got?"

"A dozen."

"Good! That's all right, if you fellows don't want any."

"Oh!"

"I say, that ham looks all right. I'll begin on the ham. It will last till the eggs are ready, I dare say. Might make a few more rounds of toast—there's only eight or nine here—"

"Oh!" gasped Harry Wharton. "All right!"

Bunter sat down, and started on toast and ham.

Frank Nugent made more toast, and Johnny Bull buttered the same. The eggs being poached, Bunter continued with the eggs and more toast.

With a happy, shiny face, he went ahead.

In sanny, Bunter had doubted whether life was worth the trouble of living. Now, however, he knew that it was. Life, on the present lines, seemed to him one grand, sweet song.

"I say, you fellows, this is prime!" he declared.

"Glad you like it, old fat bean," said Harry politely.

The Famous Five were glad to see Bunter enjoying life again, after his sad sufferings, but they hoped that he was not going to burst all over the study floor.

"Try the jam tarts," said Nugent.

"Just going to begin on them," said Bunter cheerily. "I say, you fellows, haven't you got a cake? If I were standing a fellow a spread, I should have a cake. You might have had a cake."

"Smithy's bringing a cake," said Harry. "It hasn't arrived yet."

"See if he's coming," said Bunter. "I'm fearfully hungry! These tarts won't last me long."

"Oh crikey!"

The tarts vanished, and the doughnuts began to follow. Every now and then Billy Bunter cast an anxious blink towards the door.

If the cake had not arrived by the time the doughnuts were gone, there would be a pause in the proceedings. Bunter did not want to pause.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Smithy!"

Vernon-Smith came in with a parcel under his arm. He gave Billy Bunter a grin and a nod.

"Got the cake, old man?" asked Bunter eagerly.

"Here you are! Brought it back with me from Courtfield," answered the Bounder. "Hungry?"

"Famished!" answered Bunter. "I've had a snack, but I shall be glad of the cake!"

"Ye gods!" murmured Bob Cherry.

Smithy unrolled the wrappings, and revealed a large, handsome cake—one of Chunkley's best. Bunter bolted the doughnuts more quickly than before, with his eyes on the cake.

"Leave room for it, old man!" grinned the Bounder.

"Eh? Lots of room!" said Bunter, with his mouth full. "I don't eat much, as you fellows know—"

"Eh?"

"But after nearly a week practically without food a fellow gets a bit of an appetite. I'm really sharp set to-day."

"We'd guessed that one!" murmured Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Any news from Courtfield, Smithy?" asked Harry Wharton. "Nothing

heard of the smash-and-grab man, I suppose?"

"There's a reward out," answered the Bounder. "The notice is up at the police station, and at Chunkley's. Fifty pounds reward for anybody putting salt on the tail of the smash-and-grabber and getting the loot back."

Bob Cherry whistled.

"We've missed that," he said. "We jolly nearly had him on Saturday. With a little more luck we'd have pinched that squinting sportsman."

Billy Bunter, getting busy on his first slice of the cake, paused and blinked round at the juniors.

"What's that?" he asked. "Something happened while I've been in sanny?"

"Only a smash-and-grab raid at Courtfield," answered Harry Wharton. "We got after the man on our bikes, but he got clear."

"Pity I wasn't there!" remarked Bunter.

"Fathead!" said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"They've got the man's description, anyhow," said Bob. "He's the same man we ran into last Wednesday near Lantham. No doubt now that he was the Lantham smash-and-grabber. They ought to get him, with that jolly old squint of his."

"Lots of people with squints," said Vernon-Smith. "He seems to have had nothing else special about him. Anyhow, he's disappeared, and the reward's out; but it doesn't look as if anybody will snaffle it."

Bunter paused again, with his mouth full of cake.

"Did you say a squinting man?" he asked.

"Yes," answered Harry.

"Squint in the left eye?" asked Bunter eagerly.

The Famous Five all stared at him. As Bunter, so far as they knew, had never seen the man, or heard of him before, this sounded to them rather like magic.

"How the dickens did you know?" asked Bob blankly. "Yes, the jolly old squint was in his left optic. Some squint, too! Have you ever seen him?"

"Oh crikey!" said Bunter. "I say, was he about five feet nine or ten, and clean-shaven?"

"Eh? Yes! How the dickens—"

"By gum!" Billy Bunter almost forgot the cake in his excitement. "I say, you fellows, did he have a beard on when he smashed and grabbed, and take it off afterwards when he was getting away?"

The Famous Five fairly jumped.

How Billy Bunter knew all this, when he had been parked in sanny at the time, was an amazing mystery to them.

"Yes!" gasped Bob. "How the merry thump do you know anything about it, Bunter?"

"Oh crumbs!" said Bunter. "It's the same man all right! I jolly well knew what he had been up to at Lantham when I heard them talking, you know! And he had a beard on that day when he—"

"How do you know?" shrieked Bob.

"Eh? Because I heard him tell the other man, of course! He put it in his pocket when he got away, he said!"

"What other man?" roared Johnny Bull. "Where, and when, you fat ass?"

"Last Wednesday," answered Bunter. "I say, Smithy, sure there's fifty pounds reward for getting that squinting beast?"

"Yes," answered Vernon-Smith, who was staring blankly at the fat Owl.

"Mean to say you saw anything of him near Lantham last Wednesday?"

Billy Bunter grinned over the cake.

Not only had he seen that squinting man, but he knew how he got away after a raid and travelled about the country unsuspected!

In ordinary circumstances, Bunter would have related his adventures on that eventful day at Lantham, not once but many times. But his cold, followed by parking in sanny, had, so to speak, cut off the gas!

Sneezing and snuffling, and the dire shortage of foodstuffs, had, in fact, driven the whole matter from his fat mind!

By this time he had almost forgotten his encounter with the squinting man, and the pug-nosed man in the furniture-van and his perilous lift to Courtfield.

But he remembered them now.

His little round eyes glistened behind his spectacles. Fifty pounds reward was offered—and Bunter had the clue!

"That's mine!" declared Bunter, cutting another slice of cake.

"The cake—"

"Eh? No! The reward! Fifty quids! My hat! I'm going to put in for that reward! You see, I can jolly well put them on the track."

"What do you know about it, then?" asked the Bounder. "Did you see anything of the man while you were

Bunter winked.

"That's telling!" he answered.

Johnny Bull rose.

"I'm going to kick him," he said. "I was going to try not to kick him, his first day out of sanny, but he's got to have it."

"I say, you keep off, you beast!" exclaimed Bunter. "You're as ill-tempered a beast as Smithy!"

"The fat idiot seems to know something about the man," said Harry Wharton, quite mystified. "He must have seen him that day at Lantham, I suppose."

"He, he, he! I say, you fellows, you said you got after him on your bikes on Saturday! Did you see a furniture-van about? He, he, he!"

The chums of the Remove jumped again. This seemed more like magic than ever. They blinked at the grinning fat Owl.

"How the thump did you know that?" yelled Wharton. "We overtook a furniture-van and asked the driver if he'd seen him—"

"Jones & Co., Weymouth, on the van?" asked Bunter.

"Great pip! Yes!"

"He, he, he! Pug-nosed man driving it?" chortled Bunter.

"Great Christopher Columbus!" said Nugent. "How does that fat ass know all that? This beats Sherlock Holmes!"

"The beatfulness is terrific!" said

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wanderin' about Lantham last Wednesday?"

Bunter chuckled—a fat chuckle.

"Did I?" he grinned. "He, he, he! I'm not going to tell you anything, Smithy—"

"Why not, fathead?"

"He, he, he! Think I'm going to have you cutting in first and putting in for the reward? No jolly fear!"

The Bounder stared at him blankly for a moment. Then he suddenly grabbed the fat Owl by the back of the neck, and sat him down on the study floor with a terrific bump.

"Yarooooop!" roared Bunter.

The Bounder stalked out of the study, leaving Bunter roaring.

"Ow! Wow! Beast! Ow! I say, you fellows— Oh crikey! Ow!"

"You fat frog—" growled Johnny Bull.

"Ow! Beast!"

Billy Bunter picked himself up. He gasped for breath, and grabbed a slice of cake.

"Groogh! I say, you fellows, what did Smithy get shirty about?" he gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! Bumping a fellow over in the midst of a friendly chat!" growled Bunter. "I say, you fellows, I'll stop to finish this cake—then I shall have to get off! The sooner they get hold of that squinting beast the better."

"What the dickens do you know about the man?" asked Harry.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, staring in wonder at the Owl of the Remove.

"He, he, he! I say, you fellows, you are a lot of duds! If I'd been there, I'd have had him all right! He, he, he!"

"What do you know about that man?" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Find out!" grinned Bunter. "I ain't telling you anything to cut in first and bag the reward! He, he, he! Think I'm going to let you cut down to Courtfield and see old Grimes, and say— Keep off, you beast!"

Thud!

Johnny Bull's boot landed. There was a roar from Bunter.

"Yoo-hoop!"

Harry Wharton & Co. rather forgot, at the moment, that that study spread was specially stood to celebrate Billy Bunter's happy recovery! Another boot, and another, followed Johnny Bull's; and Billy Bunter flew into the Remove passage.

He landed there with a bump, and roared:

"Ow! Beasts! Ow!"

"Now let's all kick him as far as the stairs!" said Bob Cherry.

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter did not wait to be kicked as far as the stairs. He flew—and the remnant of the cake whizzed after him, and landed on the back of his head as he flew! It was quite an unexpected ending to a happy celebration!

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,531.

THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER.

Gorgeous for Bunter!

BILLY BUNTER was late for calling-over that day. Mr. Quelch, who called the roll, frowned grimly as he marked him absent.

If Billy Bunter was celebrating his release from sanny by repeating his performance of staying out late, his form-master was prepared to talk to him severely on the subject, with the cane to add emphasis to his remarks.

But when Bunter rolled in, half an hour late, he looked merry and bright. He still looked merry and bright after reporting to Mr. Quelch—which looked as if the cane had not been featured in the interview.

An expansive grin adorned his fat visage as he rolled into the Rag, where a good many fellows were curious to see him. It was known that he had been down to Courtfield, to see Inspector Grimes at the police station, in connection with the smash-and-grab raid at Chunkley's, on Saturday. What the fat Owl could possibly know about it, when he had been in sanny at the time, was quite an interesting mystery. But it was clear that Bunter knew, or fancied he knew, quite a lot.

"I say, you fellows, it's all right!" the fat Owl chortled, as he came in. "I say, Smithy, I'm jolly glad you landed me over at Lantham last Wednesday. He, he, he! Much obliged, Smithy!"

"Fathead!" answered the Bounder.

"Couldn't have happened better, as it turns out," grinned Bunter. "It's worth fifty pounds to me. He, he, he! I get fifty quids!"

"Got it about you?" asked Skinner.

"Nunno! But—"

"Cough it up, fatty!" said Peter Todd.

"Well, the fact is, I can't tell you fellows anything, because old Grimey has told me to say nothing about it," explained Bunter. "I've got to keep it all secret till they get them."

"Then?" repeated Bob Cherry.

"There was only one man in the smash-and-grab raid on Saturday."

"That's all you know," grinned Bunter. "What about Nosey?"

"Who on earth's Nosey?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Of course, you don't know," said Bunter pityingly. "You saw him, but you don't know. He, he, he! You'd have had rather a surprise if you'd looked into that furniture-van, I fancy. He, he, he!"

"The furniture-van?" said Frank Nugent. "What the thump—"

Bunter chortled explosively.

"The squint-eyed beast was inside it, you see," he said. "That's the way he clears off with the loot after a raid."

"Oh, my hat! And how do you know?" roared Johnny Bull.

"Oh, I keep my eyes open, you know!" said Bunter. "Not like you fellows. Mind, I'm not going to tell you anything! It's all right about the reward, as I got in first. But old Grimey made a point of it. I may

have dropped on that furniture-van last Wednesday, when that beast Smithy landed me there, or I may not. I may have got a lift in it, without the beasts seeing me. I may have heard them talking—Nosey and Squinny, you know. I've told Inspector Grimes all about it, of course; but I'm not going to say anything here till they've got them."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I've jolly well put the bobbies on the track, and chance it!" said Bunter warmly. "You fellows saw that pug-nosed man driving the van—you've told me so—but you never guessed that the Squinny beast was inside."

"Well, if he was, we could hardly be expected to guess that one," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "But was he?"

"Of course he was. He was last Wednesday, anyhow," said Bunter. "The beast was sitting in the van not a dozen feet from me, when I hid in it to get a lift back to Courtfield that night. I nipped out when they stopped at Jackson's garage, and they never saw me. Lucky they didn't—I mean, lucky for them! I'd have knocked them down fast enough—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, cackle!" said Bunter loftily. "You let that Squinny man get away! And I've jolly well told Grimey where to get him! Of course, it must be the same van—Jones & Co., Weymouth, on it. They keep it hanging about for the beast to dodge into after a raid—see? I dare say dozens of bobbies saw it about on Saturday; but they never guessed that a removal van had anything to do with a smash-and-grab raid."

"Well, they hardly would," said Bob. "But had it?"

"You'll jolly well see," grinned Bunter. "As soon as I told old Grimey about that van, and what I heard them say to one another that night at Lantham, he was on it like a bird. Why, he rang up Jackson's garage on the spot, and asked if the van had been there, and for a description of the two men with it. They told him all right. The Squinny man had been lying up with a bandy leg—I heard what they said on the phone—never went out of doors till Saturday. Then the two went off in the van together—for Weymouth they said. He, he, he! I fancy they weren't going to Weymouth."

"Well, my hat!" said Bob. "So he—"

"He, he, he! Of course, that squinting man had a beard and a bike all ready in the van, and he dropped out. And the van went on, to wait for him in the lanes off the Highcliffe road," grinned Bunter. "If you fellows had known as much as I did, you'd have had him."

"You howling ass!" said Harry. "If this isn't gammon, you ought to have let Grimey know last Wednesday."

"How could I, when I had a cold?" said Bunter. "I was too jolly hungry in sanny, too, to think about it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fancy they'll get them this evening," said Bunter. "They've only got to send word round to pick up a motor-van, with Jones & Co., Weymouth, on it. They'll find all Chunkley's stuff in it, you bet, and very likely a lot more! That means fifty pounds reward for me. I say, you fellows, ain't it gorgeous?"

"The gorgeousness is terrific, my esteemed fat Bunter," grinned Hurreo Janset Ram Singh.

"I'll tell you fellows all about it later, when they've got the men," added Bunter. "I can't say anything at present, because Grimey's asked me to keep it dark till they get them."

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

"You can cackle, but I jolly well ain't telling you anything!" declared Bunter. "Not a word till they've got them! Not a syllable! As I'm getting the reward, I'm bound to do as old Grimey asked, and I'm jolly well going to keep the whole thing dark till I hear from him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter evidently had his own way of keeping things dark.

Whether it was "gammon" or not, the Remove fellows could not quite make up their minds, till news came the following day.

That news was that the smash-and-grab man had been arrested, with a confederate, and that all the plunder from Chunkley's had been recovered, hidden in a furniture-van, together with a good deal of loot from other raids in other parts of the country.

Bunter evidently had been the man who knew.

For several days after that Billy Bunter was in a state of tenterhooks. There seemed to be no doubt that he was entitled to the offered reward. So little doubt was there, that Skinner and Fisher T. Fish, and two or three other fellows became quite pally with Bunter, Skinner even lending him half-a-crown to tide him over till the reward came along—in happy anticipation of sharing in the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table.

The reward was coming. When would it come? Bunter counted the days, the hours, almost the minutes. And at last it came. It came, and William George Bunter, like the classical gentleman in "Horace," was likely to touch the stars with his sublime head.

Billy Bunter, the borrower of bobs, the cadger of tanners, was in possession of the stupendous sum of fifty pounds. And what he was going to do with it was quite an interesting question in the Remove.

THE END.

(You'll laugh loud and long at the amusing adventures of the Owl of the Greyfriars Remove in next Saturday's yarn of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled: "BILLY BUNTER'S WIND-FALL!" If you've not already done so, order your copy of the MAGNET to-day!)

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THE REDSKIN OF ST. SAM'S!

By DICKY NUGENT



The GREYFRIARS HERALD

No. 245. EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON. June 19th, 1937.



SHOULD SCHOOLBOYS HAVE £5 A WEEK?

"No!" Says HARRY WHARTON

This sounds like a joke; but Smithy seriously believes that schoolboys should have £5 a week pocket-money! I am prepared to say right away that he's potty for holding such a belief!

Probably there are chaps here and there who could handle pocket-money on this scale without losing their heads. But they must be very much in the minority. The majority, I'm afraid, would just become spend-thrifts without the slightest regard for the value of money.

What, after all, does the average chap at school want with £5 a week? Club subs and kit are usually paid for by the folks at home once a term; and when clobber is bought at Friar-dale or Courtfield, the shopkeeper usually sends the bill on to them.

All we have to pay for ourselves is extra tuck and the cost of an occasional trip to the pictures or afternoon out on a "halfer." A few bob a week should see us through.

"YES!" SAYS H. VERNON-SMITH.

Poor old "Grandma" Wharton! The mere thought of a fiver a week for Removites sets his bonnet wobbling with indignation!

I still maintain that a chap needs a fiver a week to do the things he should do. We can't all live like giddy Spartans and, even if we can, we don't want to do so!

Wharton thinks a few bob a week is sufficient for our needs.

Depends on our needs!

I need hand-made Turkish cigarettes—a surreptitious visit to a race meeting now and again—a run out of bounds in a hired car once in a while—and the means to entertain friends lavishly when they call!

I need five pounds a week to carry out that programme—and usually get it!

And if Wharton wants to test his theory that fellows with a fiver a week become careless with cash, let him trot in with Bunter next time Bunter comes to my study to borrow a bob! It will open his eyes!

ICE-CREAM A LA SOAPSUDS!

American Caterer in Court

To the tune of a loud squelching noise, caused by his chewing gum, FISHER TARLETON FISH, company promoter, and American citizen, was brought into court at the Woodshed Sessions, charged with selling to the public a quantity of ice-cream containing deleterious matter, to wit, soapsuds.

Fish, on being asked whether he pleaded "Guilty" or "Not Guilty," deftly parked his chewing-gum on the rail of the dock and replied: "Nope. I guess not. I guess you got the wrong guy. I guess—"

Judge Brown: "Any more guesses and something'll happen to you for a certainty!" (Laughter.)

Remarkable allegations were made in the course of the evidence for the prosecution. It was stated that for some days prisoner had been trying to corner the ice-cream trade at Greyfriars by undercutting the school tuckshop prices. He had employed a small army of fags to carry containers of ice-cream round Junior quarters. At first, the ice-cream was quite palatable; but later, it was found to contain a strong flavour of soap, and many customers were made ill before the Remove police seized the entire stock and closed down the manufactory in Study No. 14.

Prisoner, speaking in American, which was translated into English by an interpreter for the benefit of the Court, said that he admitted that one load of ice-cream had soap-suds mixed up with it. But it was not his fault. It was the peaky fags who did it, and they were the ones who should be in the dock—not he!

Several diminutive fags having given evidence to the effect that they had put the soapsuds into the ice-cream to get their own back on Fish, who had failed to keep his promise to pay them wages in cash, the Judge found prisoner "Guilty."

He was sentenced, amid loud applause, to eat the remainder of his stock himself. The sentence was carried out immediately—and Fish was carried out soon after!

"There's a Redskin on the stairs, sir!"

Jack Jolly of the Fourth bust into Mr. Lickham's study and fairly yelled out these words.

Mr. Lickham pawed in the act of lighting his pipe.

"A Redskin, Jolly? Impossible!"

"It's too, sir!" gasped Frank Fearless, who was just behind the kaptin of the Fourth. "He's armed, too—with a tomahawk and a bowie-knife!"

Mr. Lickham, frowning severely, reached out for his cane.

"Look here, boys, if this is a hoax—"

"It's not, sir!" cried Merry, from the passidge. "There's a Red Indian brave on the stairs and he's in full warpaint, too. His face is all the colours of the rainbow!"

Mr. Lickham's face turned white.

"Surely you must be mistaken!" he cried. "This is a civilised country. The police would never allow an armed Redskin anywhere near St. Sam's!"

"They've done so, sir, anyway!" yelled Bright, from the rear of the invading group of Fourth Formers. "You ought to see him, sir! I've never seen such a fierce, bludthirsty-looking savage!"

"Stop talking about him or you'll make me wild!" cried Mr. Lickham angrily. "I refuse to believe that there is a Redskin on the stairs."

"But there is, sir—honest Injun!"

"Come and save us from him, sir."

"Go down and fight him! We'll hold your coat!"

Mr. Lickham rubbed his nose rather deviously.

If there was a Redskin at large, he had no wish to look small.

But at the same time, the thought of a Redskin brave made him feel rather nervous.

"Ahem! Well, if it really is too, boys, I'll come down and see to him as soon as I can, with a coff."

At present, unforchuntly, I am rather bizzzy—marking up eggssamination papers."

"I'm sorry, sir—but eggssamination papers will have to wait!" said Jack Jolly firmly. "You're our Form-master, sir, and we simply insist on your saving us from that Redskin."

"Hear, hear!"

"Don't be a funk, sir!"

Mr. Lickham culled furiously. The tawnt stung him to the quick. He put down his pipe.

"Pipe down!" he cried sternly. "I may be green, boys, but I am certainly not yellow! I've been called a good many names in my time—a cadd, for instance, and a beast and a tirant and a twister! But I've never been called a funk before this. Follow me!"

With these words, the Fourth Form master grabbed his cane and tramped to the door.

The grinning juniors, parting to make way for him, raised a cheer.

"Good old Mr. Lickham!"

"Give him beans, sir!"

"Leave it to me!" cried Mr. Lickham.

His pashun fairly roused now, the master of the Fourth felt that he could face even the prospect of being scalped without turning a hair. Breaking into a run, he rushed towards the stairs.

The Fourth-Formers dashed after him, cheering wildly.

Mr. Lickham reached the top of the stairs.

By a strange coincidence,

someone who was coming up the stairs, reached the top at the same moment.

That "someone" was a fearsome-looking figger, decked out in the dress of a Redskin. He carried a tomahawk in one hand and a bowie-knife in the other; and the juniors, on seeing him, gave Mr. Lickham a warning yell.

"Look out, sir! It's the Redskin!"

But the warning came too late. The skoolmaster and the savage collided with a fearful crash, and wild howls rang out over the landing.

"Yaroooooo! Oh, by dose!"

"Wooooooop! Ow-ow-ow-ow!"

The next instant, Mr. Lickham and the Redskin, clasped in affeckshunato embrace, were bumping down the stairs together.

Mr. Lickham was the first to rise when they reached the bottom. He sprang up like a jack-in-a-box and started lashing out furiously with his cane.

"Take that, you copper-culled rascal—and that—and that!" yelled Mr. Lickham.

"We don't want your sort at St. Sam's! Get out! Show a clean pair of moccasins! Get back to your wigwam on the rolling prairies!"

Shrieks of aggerny escaped the lips of the Redskin, as Mr. Lickham's cane rose and fell.

"Yaroooo! Ow! Yooooop! Grooooo!"

Then they changed slitley; and, as they did so, Mr. Lickham

and the Fourth Formers received a grate surprize—for the savage's words were no longer the fierce war cries of a Redskin, but the refined langwidge of an educated Englishman!

"Stop it! Chuck it! Lemme alone, blow you!"

Mr. Lickham started violently. So did the juniors at the top of the stairs. For the voice was one they all reckernised instantly.

"Doctor Birchermall!" they yelled in amazement.

"B-b-bless my sole!" stuttered Mr. Lickham. "It's—it's you, sir!"

"Of corse it's me, you fat-head!" roared Dr. Alfred Birchermall, the majestick head-master of St. Sam's. "Why didn't you reckernise me before?"

The Fourth Form master larked. "Well, I like that, sir! How did you eggsspect me to reckernise you, all dressed up in the war-paint and wearing apparel of a wild Redskin? What made you do such a potty thing, sir? Have you gone native?"

"No, Lickham, I have not gone native!" snorted the Head as he rose painfully to his feet. "But I am going on the films!"

"Never!"

"Fakt," said the Head with a smirk. "They are taking some scenes in a Wild West film in the Muggleton Woods to-day. It's a drama called: 'The Runaway Injuns'! and I'm acting in it!"

"Ha, ha! Now I understand why you painted your face, sir!" chuckled Mr. Lickham. "I suppose you were afraid that your ugly face would bust up the camera if you didn't!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" roared Doctor Birchermall, shaking a furious fist at the chortling juniors who were leaning over the landing. "My face, if you'd like to know, is handsome enuff for me to be a star!"

"I eggsspect it is, sir—if you only come out on dark nites!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're all jealous—that's what it is!" sniffed Dr. Birchermall. "You'd better all come and watch me in front of the camera. You'll be still more jealous then!"

"I'll come, sir—with grate plezzure!" said Mr. Lickham.

"Same here!" corussed Jack Jolly and his chums from the top of the stairs.

And so it came about that when the Head went off, a little later, to join the film-producing company in the Muggleton Woods half the skool followed him.

There were a good many stares from motorists and other passers-by at the unusual site of a fearsome-looking Redskin walking down the road with a hundred

sited skoolboys and a sprinkling of masters behind him. But Doctor Birchermall didn't mind a bit.

"This is just what every film star likes, Lickham," he confided to the master of the Fourth. "Publicity—with a capital P!"

"H'm! Have it your own way, sir, of corse," said Mr. Lickham. "But personally, I should call it Ordassity with a capital O!"

To which yewmorous remark the Head did not even daign to reply.

They reached the Muggleton Woods at last, and, in a clearing near the railway embankment belonging to the local railway, they came across the picture people. There was a big, important-looking

Director who spoke into a meggafone, a cameraman and some actors who appeared to be wearing overalls.

The Head fairly rushed up to the film director.

"Are you Mr. Shooter, the grate film projoozer?" he asked.

The man with the meggafone started violently, as his eyes fell on the Head.

"Grate jumping crackers!" he cried. "What is it?"

Doctor Birchermall frowned under his outer covering of greasepaint.

"I assure you there is no need for alarm," he said. "I am Doctor Birchermall, the head-master of St. Sam's. Are you Mr. Shooter?"

"That's me!" nodded the film director. "But—"

"You remember ringing me up to ask if you could take some pictures in the old St. Sam's ruins in the next day or two?"

"Yes, yes! But—"

"You remember me asking if I could act in your film?"

"Yes, yes, yes! But—"

"You remember saying that I could if I could provide myself with a suitable costume?"

"Yes, yes, yes, yes! But—"

"Well, I've provided myself with the costume, Mr. Shooter!" beamed the Head. "And now here I am!"

Mr. Shooter drew a deep, deep

breath.

"Well, Doctor Birchermall, you're certainly here. But you're not all there!" he said.

"Mite I ask what made you turn up in the warpaint of a Redskin brave?"

"You, of corse!"

"ME?"

"Yes, you!" yelled Doctor Birchermall. "Didn't you say the film you were projoozing was called 'The Runaway Injuns'?"

Mr. Shooter jumped. Then he started larking.

"Ha, ha, ha! Oh crikey! Now I understand! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dashed if I see what there is to cackle at!" said the Head, crossly. "That was what you said on the fone, wasn't it? 'The Runaway Injuns'!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Not eggssactly!" yelled Mr. Shooter. "It may have sounded like that; but

would-be film-star; there was no mistake about that!

But it all ended up to the Head's satisfaction, after all. For when the chase lod him to the road, he bumped into something that gave him a chance to put his tomahawk to a really practical use.

A big Rolls-Rice car had just bumped into a telegraph-pole, overturned, and caught fire; and the doors had jammed and the old gentleman who was sitting inside couldn't get out!

Doctor Birchermall took in the situation at a glance. Heedless of the roaring flames, he made a dive for the car and hacked away at the door with the tomahawk; and in a couple of jiffies he was helping out the old gentleman—who was awfully grateful to him.

"Haw! By gad! The bravest deed I evah saw! What—what!" he said, in a rich, aristocratick voice. "Prey axsept this with my condiments!"

And he handed the Head a couple of five-pound notes.

Doctor Birchermall was so delighted that he forgave the crowd for larking at him and took them all back to the skool tuckshop and bought ice-creams and ginger-pop all round. And all was well again!

Ha, ha, ha!

Oh, grate pip!

Doctor Birchermall's jaw dropped. He pushed back his leather head-dress and pressed his hand to his fevered brow. And Mr. Lickham and the St. Sam's fellows roared; they simply couldn't help it!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"ENGINES!" And the Head thought it was "INJUNS"!

Ho, ho, ho!

"Sorry and all that!" larked Mr. Shooter, as the Head continued to stare dazedly at the hilarious crowd. "When I told you to turn up in a suitable costume, I thought you'd turn up in a blue overall. Instead of that, you're copper-culled all over! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the crowd.

Doctor Birchermall glared. His face worked convulsively. He could put up with a good many things; but he could never stand being larked at!

Making up his mind all of a sudden, he lifted up his tomahawk and rushed at the yelling St. Sam's crowd.

There was no sense, of corse, in staying to argew the toss with a Redskin armed with a tomahawk—even when the Redskin was only Dr. Birchermall! The crowd turned and ran for it and the Head chased after them, brandishing his tomahawk and yelling war-cries.

It was a sad come-down for the

BOXER WHO NEVER TALKS!

Secret of Battling Bolsover's Success

"Interview me?" roared Battling Bolsover, whose much-talked-of fight with Bob Cherry for the Dreadnought-weight Championship of the Remove is due to take place after tea to-day. "Not likely!"

"I'll tell you the secret of my success in the ring. It's this: I never talk. I save my breath till the gong goes for the start of the fight. Then nobody needs any explanation from me about what I'm going to do. I SHOW 'EM!"

"There are some boxers who're better at addressing meetings than boxing. My opponent this evening, for instance—Bob Cherry. When it comes to chin-wagging, he's got me licked; I admit it! But when it comes to chin-SNASHING, it's a different story!"

"If it wasn't that I'm so strict about never talking, I could say a thing or two about this little scrap this evening."

"I could tell you that Bob Cherry has about as good a chance of standing up to me as a bathing-tent has of standing up to a tornado!"

"I could tell you that I'm going to knock that curly headed daddy's darling round the ring till he'll think he's on a round-about!"

"I could tell you that I'm going to make him rue the day he ever put on a pair of boxing-gloves. And that I'm going—"

"Excuse me, old chap, but how much longer is this going on?" our Interviewer asked.

Battling Bolsover scowled.

"It's not going on at all. It hasn't started. I've told you once and I'll tell you again: I NEVER TALK!"

So now you know, chaps. Battling Bolsover never talks. He just waits till he gets in the ring and then he acts! We did our best to get you an interview



with him; but he simply wouldn't talk.

All that's left for us to do is to roll along to the gym this evening and see what he says with his fists! (STOP PRESS. Result of Bolsover-Cherry fight. Cherry won on a knock out in first minute of Round 1.)