

Meet **BILLY BUNTER**, the **FREAK FOOTBALLER**—Inside!

The Magnet ^{2^D}

*Billy Bunter's
Own Paper*

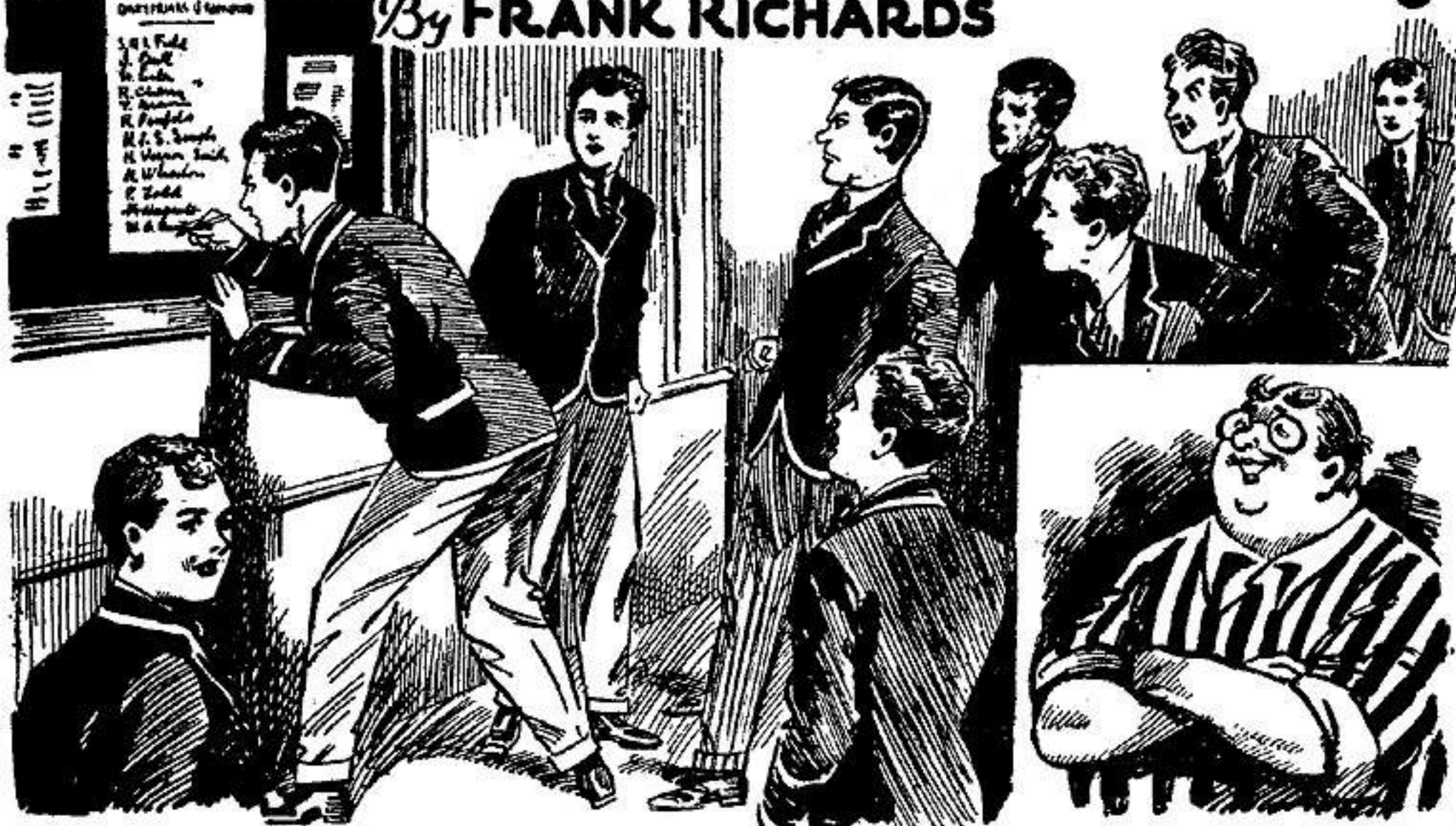


The
**DUD of the
TEAM!**

All that stands between Billy Bunter of Greyfriars and a handsome tip is a place in the junior football eleven. Does the fat Removeite give up hope? It's not likely!

BUNTER'S ORDERS!

By FRANK RICHARDS



Harry Wharton stepped up to the football notice, and under the crossed-out name of F. Nugent wrote, in a firm hand, "W. G. Bunter."

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Gorgeous!

"A IN'T it gorgeous?" gasped Billy Bunter.

The fat Owl of the Remove beamed.

His little round eyes fairly sparkled behind his big, round spectacles. Happy satisfaction irradiated his fat visage. The summer sun at noonday had nothing on Bunter's face for brightness.

It was morning break at Greyfriars School. Some of the Remove, when they came out of the Form-room, looked in the rack for letters. Billy Bunter was one of the foremost. Bunter, as was well known in the Remove, was expecting a postal order.

Several fellows found letters. Some of them were of a satisfactory nature, thoughtful relatives having remembered to enclose a tip along with the home news and the good advice. Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove, found himself in happy possession of a ten-shilling note. Vernon-Smith carelessly shoved a fiver into his pocket—not before the other fellows had seen it! Other fellows had other causes for satisfaction. But none, it seemed, so great as Bunter's!

Bunter chirruped with glee!

Which naturally drew a good many eyes on the fat junior. Billy Bunter was in a permanent state of expecting a postal order; but the number of times he had been disappointed about that postal order could not have been computed without going into very high figures. This time, judging by Bunter's look, luck had come his way.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the jolly old news?" inquired Bob Cherry.

"Fine!" gasped Bunter.

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"Postal order come at last?" grinned Frank Nugent.

"Better than that!" chuckled Bunter.

"Got a fiver, like Smithy?" asked Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Better than that!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"It's ripping!" declared Bunter. "Fine! Gorgeous! Uncle George is a jolly old brick! Of course, he's fearfully rich, like all my relations, you know, and seven pound ten ain't much to him!"

"Seven pound ten!" ejaculated Johnny Bull.

"Ain't it gorgeous!" grinned Bunter.

"The gorgeousness is terrific," remarked Hurrec Jamset Ram Singh, "but where is the seven pound ten?"

Bunter had an envelope in one fat hand—a letter in the other! There was no sign of cash.

Seven pounds ten shillings was rather an odd sum, as well as a generous sum, for a relative to send to a fellow at school. There was no doubt that it was gorgeous—if true! Few Remove fellows at Greyfriars ever handled such sums. Harry Wharton's ten-shilling note paled into insignificance in comparison. Even the Bounder's fiver was outshone. But if Bunter had that handsome sum the visibility was not good! Nothing was to be seen of it.

"Gammon, as usual?" asked the Bounder.

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Well, where's the vast wealth?" inquired Peter Todd.

"It hasn't exactly come—" explained Bunter.

"Ah! I rather thought it hadn't!" said Peter, shaking his head.

"But it's coming!" hooted Bunter.

"I shall have it. Let's see! The Rook-

wood match's on Wednesday! I shall have it next week."

"Eh?"

"What?"

If the Remove fellows had been surprised before they were astonished now. It was surprising enough for Bunter's Uncle George to send, or undertake to send, such a sum as seven pounds ten shillings to his nephew at Greyfriars School, but what the Rookwood match had to do with it was a mystery.

That match was a matter of intense interest to most of the Remove, but it had not, so far, interested Billy Bunter very much.

Bunter certainly had offered his services in the team. But as Bunter's Soccer was like unto that of Coker of the Fifth, only more so, his offer had been declined with laughter, but without thanks. Bunter in a football match was something like a bull in a china shop, something like an excited elephant in the jungle, and something like a porpoise in a frenzy—but his resemblance to a footballer was very remote.

As a hilarious entertainment there was something to be said for Billy Bunter's Soccer. But the Greyfriars eleven was not going over to Rookwood to make the Rookwooders laugh. So there was no room for Bunter in the team.

But what connection there could possibly be between the Rookwood match and Bunter's letter from his Uncle George was quite mystifying. It seemed that there was some connection—known only, so far, to Bunter.

"Potty?" inquired Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Well, what the dickens—" began Harry Wharton.

"I'll tell you, old chap!" beamed Bunter. "I'm relying on you to do the right thing, of course. You wouldn't let

a pal down, after all I've done for you, you know."

"Anybody know what that fat ass is talking about?" inquired the captain of the Remove.

"Does he know himself?" asked the Bounder.

Billy Bunter grinned serenely. He had, at all events, the attention of all the fellows on the spot. Even Dicky Nugent of the Second Form, who had come along to see whether his major had a remittance, and to borrow some of it if he had, gave Bunter his interested attention.

"You see, it's like this," explained Bunter. "My Uncle George was great on games when he was at school—a jolly long time ago, of course. At least, he thinks he was—he, he! He fancies that he played a great game of Soccer. You know these old geezers—they all fancy that they were great games men at school!" Bunter chuckled. "Well, Uncle George being fearfully keen on games, I had rather a big idea. You have to touch an old geezer on the right spot to make him shell out, as I dare say you fellows know—"

"You fat ass!" growled Johnny Bull.

"You pernicious porpoise!" said Frank Nugent.

"Yah! Well, you fellows, you remember I had leave from school, a few weeks ago, when Uncle George came to pay a visit. I laid it on rather thick about the football—telling him how fearfully keen I was—"

"Oh crumbs!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"Why, you fat fibber," exclaimed the captain of the Remove, "you have to be booted down to games practice!"

"I don't need all the practice you fellows do! You can't deny that I've offered to play in every match this term—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've been kept out of the matches," said Bunter warmly, "and you jolly well know why, Wharton!"

"Because you can't play Soccer for toffee, you fat foozler, and because you're too jolly lazy if you could."

"You can put it like that if you like," said the fat Owl of the Remove disdainfully, "but I fancy a good many fellows here know that you bar me in the matches because you're jolly well jealous of my form."

"Oh crikey!"

"But, of course, I expect you to play up this time, considering what there is at stake," said Bunter. "You see, I laid it on rather thick with Uncle George and hoped for the best. He didn't seem to believe, somehow, that I was frightfully good at games—"

"I wonder why!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"The wonderfulness is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"But it's turned out all right!" declared Bunter. "I've written to him to mention that I need two pound ten for a new outfit—football boots and—things—and I thought there was a sporting chance, at least, of getting that two pound ten—"

"To blow at the tuckshop?" asked Nugent.

"Well, you can jolly well bet that I shouldn't chuck it all away on football!" grinned Bunter. "Too much sense for that, I hope. I let him understand that I should very likely be playing for school—that was the sort of thing to please him, you know—"

"You footling fibber!"

"And it jolly well has!" said Bunter, with great satisfaction. "He's going to let me have the two pound ten, and a fiver along with it as a reward. What do you fellows think of that?" Bunter

held up the letter from Uncle George. "I say, you fellows, look at it—just see what he says!"

Much interested, the Remove fellows looked at that letter from Uncle George. It ran:

"My dear Nephew William,—I have received your letter, and note that you require £2 10s. for a new football outfit. I note, also, that you expect to be selected to play for your school in a junior match. If this is correct, I am very pleased. I will send you the £2 10s., and will add a £5 note as soon as I receive a report of a Greyfriars School match in which you have played as a member of the team, selected on your merits as a footballer.

"Your affectionate uncle,

"G. BUNTER."

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Not So Gorgeous!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. stared at that letter. They stared at Bunter. They gazed in astonished wonder at the fat, fatuous countenance of the Owl of the Remove.

What cause of satisfaction there was in that letter, they could not even begin to surmise.

Bunter had declared that it was gorgeous. Evidently he was fearfully

Harry Wharton's chum, Frank Nugent, together with Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, is booked for expulsion, unless the junior football skipper jumps to BUNTER'S ORDERS!

bucked. But where the gorgeousness came in, was quite a mystery to every fellow—but William George Bunter.

"I say, you fellows, ain't it gorgeous?" chuckled Bunter. "Seven pound ten—what? You fellows don't often get seven pound ten! He, he, he! What do you fellows think of that? What?"

"Blessed if I see the jolly old gorgeousness!" remarked Bob Cherry.

"Sounds to me like sarc!" said Johnny Bull.

"The sarcfulness is terrific!"

"Uncle George isn't such a fathead as his Nephew William!" remarked Peter Todd. "Tain't so jolly easy to pull his leg!"

That was quite clear—to everybody except, apparently, Bunter. That letter, from Uncle George, revealed the undoubted fact that Mr. George Bunter did not believe, for one moment, any of the tall stories his nephew had told him on the subject of Soccer, and had not the remotest expectation that William George would be selected, on his merits, to play for his school.

As his generous offer was conditional upon that, it was quite a safe offer, and not likely to cost Uncle George anything.

Billy Bunter had about as much chance of playing for Greyfriars as of playing for England!

Uncle George's letter was, in fact, sarcasm from beginning to end. Only Bunter seemed unaware of that fact, which leaped to every other eye.

But Bunter, evidently, was tremendously bucked. Clearly he regarded

that seven pound ten as being as good as in his pocket. Already he was reveling in a gorgeous vista of unlimited jam tarts and doughnuts.

He blinked round at surprised faces through his big spectacles with a happy and satisfied blink.

"I say, you fellows, that's all right, ain't it?" said Bunter. "You fellows don't get letters like that from your relations! Of course, most of you haven't got rich relations like I have! I dare say your uncle couldn't afford to send you seven pound ten, Wharton! He, he, he! I say, don't you fellows think this is gorgeous?"

"Blessed if I can see it," said Harry Wharton, puzzled. "You've been trying to pull your uncle's leg, and you haven't got by with it, so far as I can see."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Well, where does the gorgeousness come in—if any?" demanded the captain of the Remove.

"It's plain enough, isn't it?" yapped Bunter. "If I play in the Rookwood match next week, I get that seven pound ten. I suppose you're not thinking of keeping me out of the team, with seven pound ten at stake?"

"Wha-a-a-t?"

"Dash it all, you can't let a man down like that!" exclaimed Bunter hotly. "I'm willing to play at Rookwood! I've offered already! I'm as good a footballer as any man in the Remove—better than most! I get seven pound ten for playing in the match—old George will keep his word if—"

"You howling ass!" roared Harry Wharton. "Do you think we're going to chuck away a football match to bag you a tip from your uncle?"

"Look here, you beast—" gasped Bunter.

The happy satisfaction faded out of his fat face.

So far, it seemed, Bunter had taken it for granted that the captain of the Remove would play up!

A football match was very small beer in comparison with the sum of seven pounds ten shillings—in Bunter's estimation, at least! It seemed to be quite a dismaying surprise to the fat Owl that the captain of the Remove was not going to play up!

"You—you—you idiot!" gasped Bunter. "You—you—you fathead! You—you blithering ass! It's seven pound ten! What the dickens does a football match matter compared with that?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Remove fellows. Most of them seemed to think that it mattered a little.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" howled Bunter. "You're not going to let me down in this, Wharton! I can play your head off at Soccer, as you jolly well know! You're not going to let your rotten jealousy of a fellow's form stand between me and seven pound ten—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, old chap, be a sport!" gasped Bunter. "Look here, when I get that seven pound ten, I'm going to stand a spread! I'll ask you!"

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

"Is it a go, old fellow?" asked Bunter anxiously. "Mind, I undertake to bag at least one goal in each half at Rookwood—perhaps two—"

"The perhapsfulness is terrific."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Put me in as centre-forward," said Bunter. "I know you prefer that place yourself; but, after all, we want to win the match, as well as bagging that seven pound ten. You know what I'm like at centre-forward, Wharton?"

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"I know!" gasped Harry. "Like a potty porpoise!"

"Beast! I mean, look here, old chap, if you want to stick to centre-forward, though you jolly well know I ought to have that place, put me in on the wing. You can leave out Smithy—he's not much class at Soccer."

"Thanks!" chuckled the Bomber.

"Or Inky—Inky's not much good at outside-right—"

"The thankfulness is terrific."

"Or, Toddy," said Bunter. "What? Who have you got on the left-wing? If you're thinking of Nugent, just because he's your pal—"

"I'm thinking of Nugent, but not just because he's my pal!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Well, look here, football before friendship!" said Bunter. "You ought to know that, Wharton, as football skipper. If you don't, I'm telling you! Leave Nugent out, and put me in. I'm twice Nugent's weight at footer."

"More than that!" chuckled Nugent. "Ten times, old fat bean—or twenty times—at footer or anything else!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is it a go, old chap?" asked Bunter anxiously.

"Ha, ha! Not quite!"

"Well, look here, I'm as good a half as a forward—you've got to admit that, Wharton—"

"Freely!" chortled the captain of the Remove. "Quite as good! Every bit as good! Every fellow here will say the same!"

"The samefulness is preposterous."

"Well, then, leave out Cherry, or Penfold, or Browney. I don't mind which—"

"I do!" gasped Wharton.

"You've just said I'm as good a half as a forward—"

"Just as good—which means no good at all, old fat bean!"

"Beast! Rotter! I mean, dear old chap—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll play back if you like!" urged Bunter. "Bull or Linley can be left out—they're not much good, anyway, in my opinion!"

"Listen to the man who knows!" chortled Johnny Bull.

"Am I going to play back, Wharton?"

"Hardly!"

"Well, I'll go into goal, if you like!" said Bunter. "After all, I'm good in goal, and Squiff wouldn't mind standing out, would you, Squiff, to make room for a better man!"

"Not to make room for a better man, certainly!" agreed Sampson Quiney Iffley Field. "Glad, in fact!"

"You hear that, Wharton? Can I go into goal?"

"No room!" said Harry, shaking his head. "If you'd read up the rules of Soccer, Bunter, you'd know that the width between the goalposts was as fixed and immutable as the laws of the Medes and Persians. I can't ask the Rookwood fellows to put up a specially wide goal to make room for you to squeeze into it."

"You—you—you silly idiot!" shrieked Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter glared at the captain of the Remove, with a glare that almost cracked his spectacles.

It was true that Bunter was plump—in fact, very plump! He was, perhaps, double-width! But he had no difficulty in getting between Soccer goalposts! That was really an exaggeration.

"I'm afraid there's nothing doing,

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old fat man!" said Harry. "If you're really keen on playing footer—"

"I am—fearfully keen—"

"Then my advice is, begin to study the game, and when you've learned the difference between a goal and a goal-post—"

"Beast! Look here, I'm jolly well going to play in the Rookwood match!" roared Bunter. "Even if you think I can't play—and you're fool enough—you can stretch a point! See?"

"Oh dear!" gasped Harry Wharton. "Sorry, old podgy porpoise, but Soccer's Soccer! We can't really chuck away a School match, to help you pull your uncle's leg! Not quite! You fat duffer, can't you see that Uncle George jolly well knows you were trying to stuff him, and he's just being sarcastic?"

"That doesn't matter, so long as I play in a School match! He doesn't make any condition about winning the match!" said Bunter eagerly. "If I play, he will have to stomp up! So it really won't matter if we lose—"

"Won't it?" gasped Wharton.

"Not a bit, old chap! Is it a go?"

"Ha, ha! Hardly!"

"Look here, Wharton, you beast—you try to keep me out of the Soccer this time, and I'll jolly well appeal to the games master—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll go to Wingate of the Sixth and say— Beast! Don't walk away while a fellow's talking to you—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five walked out into the quad, chortling.

"Beasts!" roared Bunter.

Billy Bunter rolled away—no longer beaming. No longer did his fat visage outshine the sun at noonday.

The gorgeous sum of seven pounds ten shillings was within the grasp of his fat fingers, and nothing stood between, except the football skipper's unwillingness to throw away a football match—as if that mattered!

Whether it mattered or not, clearly the captain of the Remove fancied that it did! And the happy prospect of collecting seven pounds ten shillings from his Uncle George faded from Billy Bunter's gaze like a beautiful dream!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Six For Richard!

"YOU putrid little rotter!"

Johnny Bull, of the Remove, made that complimentary remark.

It was called forth by the sight of Nugent minor—Richard Nugent of the Second Form, young brother of Johnny's chum, Frank Nugent of the Remove.

Johnny, strolling round after class, came suddenly and unexpectedly on Dicky Nugent. Walking along the old Cloisters—a rather secluded spot—the scent of cigarette smoke impinged on Johnny's nose, and he sniffed. The next moment he saw the fag—leaning on one of the old stone pillars, his hands in his pockets, and a cigarette in his mouth.

Hence Johnny's remark.

Smoking, of course, was strictly prohibited at Greyfriars. Sixth Form sportsmen, like Loder and Carno and Walker, sometimes smoked—in the seclusion of their studies. That would have made Johnny snort—had he seen it. The sight of a young ass, hardly thirteen, smoking, made him snort emphatically.

Dicky Nugent gave a start as Johnny came along, and drew a hand from his pocket to whip away the cigarette. It was rather a serious matter for a fag to be caught smoking by a prefect or a master.

But seeing that the newcomer was only a Remove junior, Dicky shoved his hand back into his pocket and went on smoking—blowing out a little cloud towards the Remove fellow, just to show how independent he was!

"Chuck that away, you silly little ass!" grunted Johnny Bull. "If I were your major, I'd boot you!"

"How lucky you ain't my major!" yawned Dicky. "Lucky for you, I mean—I'd punch your cheeky nose if you did, you see!"

Johnny Bull breathed hard. He was powerfully inclined to boot Dicky, though he had not the misfortune to be his major.

Dicky was cheeky—for the excellent reason that he could always get by with cheek to members of the Famous Five. His elder brother, Frank, had a strong affection for the young scamp, and a strong sense of duty towards him. For which reason Frank's chums bore with him as patiently as they could—and saw as little of him as they possibly could.

Often, however, they saw a good deal of him—for when Dicky was too lazy to work out an exercise, he would bring it to Study No. 1 in the Remove for Frank to do his work for him. When he was hard up, Frank was his banker. When he was in any sort of trouble—which was fairly often—Frank had the chief benefit of it. At other times, however, the cheerful Dicky quite forgot that he had a brother in the Remove—and he would scoot down passages, or round corners, to dodge Frank Nugent, if there was a sign of anything in the way of sage, brotherly counsel coming.

Dicky had been whopped for smoking several times that term. Which seemed to Richard Nugent a good reason for smoking—to demonstrate to himself, and to the universe generally, that he could do as he jolly well liked.

He grinned at Johnny over the cigarette.

Johnny's expression amused him.

"Have one?" he asked.

"What?" roared Johnny.

"I'll stand you a smoke, old bean!" offered Dicky. "Safe enough here—old Quelch won't spot you! Might make you sick, though," he added. "Perhaps you'd better not risk it. You men in the Remove are rather soft!"

"Frank would make a fuss if I booted you!" said Johnny thoughtfully. "If he had the sense of a bunny rabbit, he would lay into you with a cricket stump. That's what you want."

"Mind taking your face away?" asked Dicky.

"What?"

"It rather worries me," explained the fag.

Johnny Bull regarded him in silence for a moment. Seldom had Richard Nugent been nearer a booting. But Johnny suppressed his feelings. Frank was rather an ass about his minor—and it was a rule with the Co. never to give Dicky what he often asked for.

Johnny turned away, leaving Dicky grinning over his cigarette.

But he turned back.

"You'd better chuck it—" he began.

"Rats to you!" said Nugent minor, blowing out another cloud of smoke.

"I mean, there are prefects about, you little idiot!" growled Johnny.

"A whopping is just what you want, but Frank would pull a face as long as a fiddle if he heard. I saw Walker of the Sixth in the Cloisters."

Dicky winked.

"Try again," he said.

"You putrid little swab, what do you mean?"

"I mean, that you can't pull my leg!" chuckled Dicky. "I'm jolly well smoking this fag, and another after it, too, and you can go and eat

lated to strike terror to the heart of any fag.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Johnny.

He had been intensely irritated with Dicky Nugent. But he was sorry for him now. Not only was the fag caught in the very act of smoking by a prefect, but that prefect had heard Dicky describe him as a silly ass, who funk'd Coker of the Fifth, and threatened to hack his shins. Clearly, a terrific storm was about to burst.

Richard Nugent's wild yell rang through the Cloisters.

Johnny Bull walked away. The wretched fag had asked for it, as emphatically as any fellow could ask for it; and he was going to get it, hot and strong; but Johnny did not want to witness it. He walked away quickly—Dicky's frantic yells and the swipes of the ash following him as he went.

Swipe, swipe, swipe, swipe, swipe, swipe!



"I say, Wharton," said Bunter, "you're not going to let your rotten jealousy of a fellow's form stand between me and seven pounds ten. You know what I'm like at centre-forward." "I know!" gasped Wharton. "Like a potty porpoise!"

coke, and he blowed to you! Got that?"

Again Johnny barely suppressed his feelings. Evidently, Dicky did not believe his statement that there were prefects about. Had he believed it, that cigarette would have vanished like a ghost at cock-crow.

"I tell you—" hissed Johnny.

"Gammon!"

"I saw Walker come into the Cloisters—"

"You can't pull my leg! Blow Walker, anyhow!" said Dicky, safe in the certainty that James Walker, prefect, of the Sixth Form, was nowhere at hand. "Who cares for Walker—a silly ass like Walker? Who's Walker? Everybody knows that he funk's Coker of the Fifth, though he's a prefect—I can jolly well tell you I'd hack his shins if he whopped me! Walker can go and—"

Dicky Nugent broke off suddenly.

The words seemed frozen on his lips.

His jaw dropped, and the cigarette sagged. The startled horror in his face made Johnny Bull stare round. Then he saw the cause—Walker of the Sixth, who had just appeared in view, hardly ten feet away!

The old stone pillars had hidden Walker as he came along—but the expression on his face showed that he had heard every word of Dicky's vaunting speech. That expression was calcu-

lated to strike terror to the heart of any fag. He slipped it down into his hand as he came towards the wretched Dicky.

"Smoking, what?" said Walker grimly. "And I'm a silly ass, am I—and I funk, do I—and you'll hack my shins, will you? Get on with the hacking, my beauty!"

Dicky Nugent did not get on with the hacking. The half-smoked cigarette dropped from his sagging mouth. He gazed at Walker of the Sixth rather like a rabbit fascinated by a serpent. He knew what was coming! James Walker swished the cane.

There was a spot of the bully in Walker, though he could be good-natured—he was quite nice in comparison with Loder or Carne. At the present moment Walker was at his very worst. Even a good-tempered prefect like Wingate, or Gwynne, would certainly have given Nugent minor severe "toco" in the circumstances. It was plain that James Walker was going to hand it out very severely.

"Bend over and touch your toes, Nugent mi!" yapped Walker.

Dicky gasped. His vaunting words had been, of course, sheer "gas"—he had not the remotest idea of hacking a prefect's shins. With a pallid face he bent over and touched his toes.

The ashplant went up and came down with a terrific swipe.

Even at a distance Johnny heard the swipes, a full "six," and every one of them a terrific whop! Louder still rang the yells of Dicky Nugent. Walker was putting his beef into it—rather overdoing it, perhaps, in his wrath. More than once, Nugent minor had had to suffer for his sins—but never, perhaps, quite so severely as now. Johnny Bull was glad to get out of hearing.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

The Injured Innocent!

FRANK NUGENT came into Study No. 1 in the Remove with a cheery smile upon his face.

He was feeling fresh, fit, and very cheerful, after football practice in a keen, winter wind. He was all the more cheerful, because he had put up a good show, and felt that he had justified his selection for the team that was going over to Rookwood on Wednesday.

Although he was the very best pal of the captain of the Remove, Nugent did not expect that to count in his favour in Soccer matters—and it never did. Harry Wharton really did not need Billy Bunter to tell him that football came before friendship!

There were few things that Wharton would not have done for his pal—but
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putting him in the Remove eleven, except on his merits, was not one of the things he could do. Still, there was no doubt whatever that Wharton was very glad indeed to put him in; and it was a general satisfaction to the whole Co. It did not often happen that the Famous Five were all in the team—and when it did happen, it was very satisfactory all round.

Looking forward to that great game with Jimmy Silver & Co. at Rookwood, and feeling uncommonly well and fit, Frank was in great spirits. It was dusky in the study, only a glimmer coming from the fire; and Frank naturally supposed that no one was there; and as he entered, hearing a mumbling sound in the gloom, he started.

"Hallo! Who's that?" he ejaculated, peering.

He heard a gasp of quickly drawn breath. Someone was there, huddled in the armchair before the fire; but why any fellow should be there in the dark, was rather a mystery to Nugent.

He switched on the light and stepped towards the fireplace. It was a fag of the Second Form who was huddled there in the armchair.

"Dicky!" exclaimed Nugent, startled.

Nugent minor looked up at him without speaking.

His face was pale, and there were signs of wet on the cheeks. Nugent gazed at him in horrified surprise. "Blubbing" was a thing unknown at Greyfriars, even among fags of the Second Form. But unmistakably, Dicky had been blubbing.

Sympathy and anger mingled in Frank Nugent's breast—sympathy for his brother, anger against the unknown person who had caused his distress. At the same time he felt a sinking of the heart. Dicky, clearly, was in trouble again, as he had been several times that term; and it was rotten luck for it to happen now, when Frank had been feeling so happy and bright. His cheery spirits came down to zero at once.

"What's up?" he asked, very quietly.

"N-n-nothing!" muttered Dicky sullenly. He was not there for sympathy, that was plain. Nugent mi. had no use for sympathy. He glared at Frank as if defying him to detect the signs of blubbing—which did not need much detecting.

"That fool Coker—" muttered Frank. The last row into which Dicky had dragged his major had been with Coker of the Fifth—Coker having booted him for "side."

"No!" muttered the fag.

"You've been whopped?" asked Frank. "Twigg—"

Often had Frank's indignation been stirred by whoppings administered to Master Richard by his Form-master, Mr. Twigg. Nugent's friends refrained from telling him that Twigg did not whop Dicky half enough. They thought so—but it was not judicious to say so. "That brute Walker!" groaned Dicky.

His lips trembled and he whimpered—instantly, however, suppressing the whimper. They prided themselves on being tough in the Second; and Richard was not going to let down the traditions of his Form—if he could help it. Had Gatty or Myers seen him, with those damp cheeks, he would not have heard the end of it for a term or two.

Frank's brow darkened.

"That rotten bully!" he said.

He clenched his hands. A senior man who was a bully could be handled by juniors—if not a prefect. But a

prefect could not be handled by anybody—without the sack to follow for the handler—the persons of prefects being almost as sacrosanct as those of masters.

A fellow like Loder of the Sixth was wont to take full advantage of that fact. Walker sometimes followed in his footsteps.

"Oh, the rotten cad!" said Frank. "The rotten bully!"

He had no doubt that James Walker, taking advantage of his unpunchable position as a Sixth Form prefect, had been letting his temper go. The worst of it was, that there was no getting back on a prefect. Coker of the Fifth could be up-ended in his own study and whacked with his own cricket stump—with many hands to make light work. But not a prefect!

Dicky drew a quivering breath. He did not want Frank's sympathy; and he did not want to be made a fuss of; and he hated Frank or anybody else to see damp signs on his cheeks. At the same time, he was aching from that terrific whopping Walker had given him, and could hardly restrain his whimpering. There was no doubt that Walker had laid it on uncommonly hard—and the lapse of an hour had not made Dicky feel much better.

"What was it for?" asked Frank, after a pause. Even Frank realised that Walker must have had some sort of reason.

"He caught me smoking!"

Frank repressed an angry exclamation. It was not only the right, but the duty of a Sixth Form prefect, to whop any fag caught smoking.

"You little fool!" was on his lips—but he kept it back. Dicky had had enough from Walker, without a "jaw" from his major to follow.

Dicky gave a low groan. He suppressed another that nearly followed.

Frank's brief spasm of annoyance passed. Dicky was hurt—it was no ordinary whopping that had put him into this state. Two or three flicks from a cane, or even "six" would not have crumpled Dicky up like this. If Walker had given him this thrashing for smoking, he had over-done his duty—he had, in fact, been bullying a wretched little fag, under cover of doing his duty as a prefect.

Frank's eyes gleamed.

"The brute!" he muttered. "The bully! He's as bad as Loder sometimes—worse, the brute! The rotten bully!"

Dicky squirmed out of the armchair. "If your pals are coming up, I'll clear," he said. "I don't want them to see me—" He wriggled as he stood.

"Only Wharton," said Frank. "We had tea in Hall—don't go, Dicky. You needn't mind Harry—"

"I'll go! I'm all right!" grunted Dicky. "I—I wanted to keep clear of the fellows for a bit, so—I came up here! That fat cad Sammy Bunter would make out that a fellow had been blubbing. I'll get out now. I'll get a wash at the tap along the passage."

There was no doubt that not only Bunter minor, but the rest of the Second Form, would have "made out" that Dicky had been blubbing, had they seen him at the moment.

"But I say—" began Frank.

"Oh rot! I'm going!" muttered Dicky, and he went.

He set his lips to keep back a yelp as he walked to the door—and Frank's brow darkened as he watched him. No fag ought to have been thrashed, as Dicky had been thrashed; if it was only for the childish folly of being caught with a cigarette.

Harry Wharton arrived in the study doorway as Dicky was passing out. He glanced at the fag's white, strained face.

"Hallo, anything up, Nugent mi.?" he asked, as cordially as he could. Friendship with Frank required cordiality towards Frank's minor.

"Find out!" almost snarled Dicky. He knew that Wharton could not fail to notice the signs of tears on his cheeks, and he was angry and exasperated. When Dicky was angry and exasperated, his manners were deplorable.

Wharton's cheeks reddened.

The fact that Richard Nugent was Frank Nugent's brother, saved him from being booted the length of the Remove passage. But Wharton was breathing hard as he came into the study.

Frank coloured uncomfortably.

"Don't mind the kid, old chap!" he said. "You can see that he's been through it."

"He looks like it!" assented Harry. He suppressed his annoyance. "He looks as if he's had it hard! That ass Coker—"

"Coker wouldn't pitch into a kid like that. He's a fool, but he's not a bully. It was that brute Walker!" Frank clenched his hands hard. "If he wasn't a prefect—"

"He is, old chap!" said Harry. "And—well, Dicky must have done something—Walker isn't a brute like Loder, whopping a chap for nothing or next to nothing—"

"It was smoking!"

"Oh!"

"Oh!" repeated Nugent sarcastically. "You think a kid like Dicky ought to be thrashed like that, for being a little fool?"

"Wasn't there anything else?"

"Dicky told me it was for smoking! If you think my brother has been telling me lies, of course—"

Wharton gave his chum a quick look.

His own temper was, sometimes, a little unreliable, and generally it was Frank's equable nature that made Study No. 1 the most peaceable in the Remove. But Wharton could be tactful. The Co. had long ago agreed that it was no use arguing with old Frank on the subject of that precious young brother of his.

"My dear chap, of course not," said Harry. "I came up here for my 'Holiday Annual'—seen it? Oh, here it is!"

He picked up the "Holiday Annual" and left the study.

In Nugent's present disturbed state of temper, he was better left alone. Harry Wharton did not believe, for one moment, that Walker of the Sixth would have pitched into Dicky, to such an extent, merely for catching the young ass with a cigarette. But as argument on the subject could only lead to disagreement, and disagreement to a quarrel, argument was best avoided.

Frank was left alone, with a dark and moody brow.

He had forgotten the Rookwood match now, and his bright and happy anticipations. He was passionately and bitterly angry. His young brother had been ill-used—and the bully was not to be touched, because he was a prefect. Dicky's ungracious ingratitude for his sympathy made no difference to Frank's feelings. He was bitterly angry and indignant—and the thought was in his mind that, prefect as he was, Walker might have something coming to him, all the same.

(Continued on page 8.)

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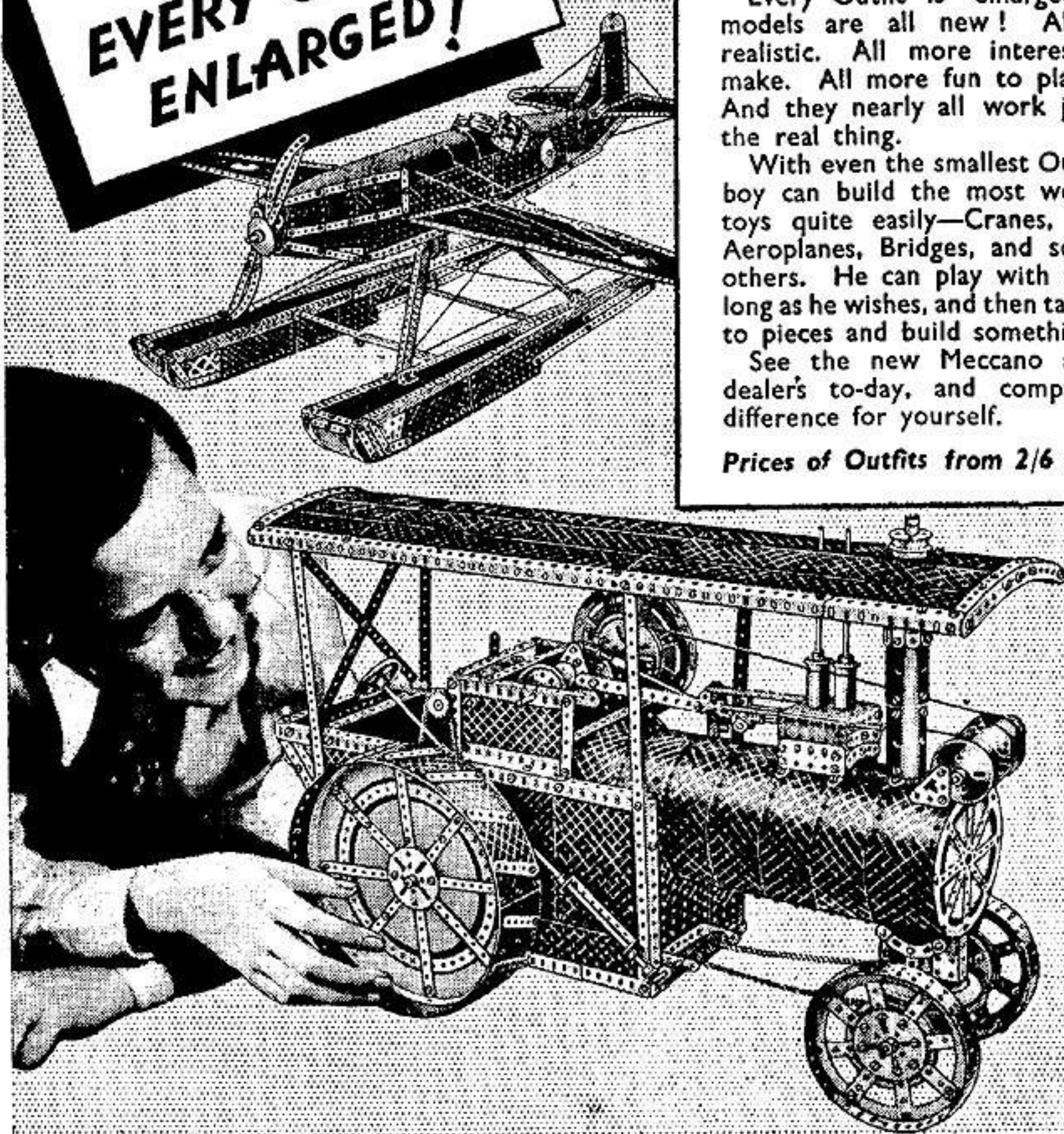
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THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Nothing Doing!

"I SAY, you fellows!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "What are you cackling at?" howled Bunter.

A dozen fellows, in the Rag, chortled. The mere fact that Billy Bunter rolled up to the captain of the Remove, with a fearfully serious expression on his fat face, was enough to make the fellows chortle.

It was two or three days since the Owl of the Remove had received that sarcastic letter from his uncle, Mr. George Bunter. During those two or three days, much—in fact too much—had been heard of Bunter's claim to be played in the football match at Rookwood.

He had carried out his threat of appealing to the games master. To his intense indignation, Mr. Lascelles had only answered "Pooh-pooh!"

Then he had tried his luck with Wingate of the Sixth, who was captain of the school and head of the games, and a man wielding no end of authority. A word from Wingate to Wharton would have been enough.

But Wingate had only laughed, and said, "You young ass!" The captain of Greyfriars was of no more use to Bunter than the games master.

After which, Bunter had pointed out to Peter Todd that, as a pal, it was up to him to stand out of the eleven and make room for Bunter. He pointed it out several times. But it was quite useless—Todd could not or would not see it.

As it was now Monday, and the Rookwood match was on Wednesday, Bunter was getting quite alarmed. Seven pounds ten shillings hun in the balance—and, to all appearance, he was going

to lose that gorgeous and magnificent sum, simply because that silly idiot, Wharton, could not understand how important it was.

As it was clear now that Bunter was going to begin again, the fellows in the Rag chortled. Bunter's idea that a football match did not matter a boiled bean, so long as he bagged that tip from his Uncle George, struck the Removites as one of the best jokes they had ever heard.

The fat Owl blinked round indignantly through his big spectacles. He, at least, could see no cause for cackling. The matter was serious—awfully serious.

Seven pounds ten shillings did not often come Bunter's way! In fact, it never did. For that sum, or half of it, Bunter would willingly have swapped all the Soccer matches in the Greyfriars list, senior and junior.

"You can cackle," said Bunter morosely. "But look here, you fellows. I think Wharton ought to do the decent thing for once. I really think that! You're putting up the list to-morrow, Wharton. Are you putting my name in it?"

"I'm afraid to, old fat bean!" said the captain of the Remove, shaking his head.

"What are you afraid of, you ass?"

"Lynching—if I did."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly chump!" hooted Bunter.

"You're football captain—"

"I don't think I should stay football captain long, if I played men like you, old fatty! Can't be did!"

"You're playing that ass Nugent! He can't play footer for toffee—you're playing him because he's your pal! Well, ain't I your pal, too?" demanded Bunter. "Who stood by you when you first came to Greyfriars, and you were

such a grumpy, disgruntled rotter that nobody wanted to speak a word to you! I ask you!"

"Doesn't he put it nicely?" remarked Harry Wharton. "If anything would make me stretch a point, that would, of course."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Haven't I been a jolly good pal to you?" demanded Bunter. "Well, if you can play a man because he's a pal, play me! See?"

"If we played Rookwood at skittles—"

"What?"

"Or hop-sotch—"

"You silly ass!"

"Or kiss-in-the-ring, I'd think of it! But not at Soccer, old fat man! Wait till we get a fixture, say at marbles—"

"Why not ask Wingate?" suggested Bob Cherry. "Go to Wingate and ask for a place in the First Eleven! Tell him seven pounds ten depends on it, and he will shove you in—perhaps!"

"Well, it's no good asking Wingate that, Cherry! No use at all! I've asked him to tell Wharton to play me for the Remove, and he only laughed. He called me a young ass, too!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm willing to do the fair thing!" urged Bunter. "If I get the seven pounds ten, I'll lend you a quid, Wharton—"

"What?"

"I mean it! What about that?" asked Bunter.

"Bribery and corruption!" chuckled Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can't let me down, old chap—you simply can't!" said Bunter earnestly. "I've simply got to play for school now. Leave that ass Nugent out—Nugent's only a fumbling, fooling fathead at Soccer—" Frank Nugent was not present with his chums in the Rag, so there was no reason for Bunter to conceal his genuine opinion of him. "He can't play for nuts! I'm willing to take Nugent's place at outside-left. What about me for outside-left, Wharton?"

"Put it the other way round, and it's a go," said the captain of the Remove.

"Eh? How do you mean?"

"You can't be outside-left! But you can be left outside."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You funny idiot!" roared Bunter. "I can tell you, I'm fed-up with your rot. I've a jolly good mind to punch your nose!"

"Somebody give Bunter a bunk up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter breathed wrath. Seven pounds ten shillings was receding farther and farther into the horizon. Really, Bunter was in a mood to knock his Form-captain down. But there were difficulties about that—it was not easy to perform; and, even if performed, there was the unpleasant prospect of what his Form-captain would do when he got up again. But never had Bunter wished so sincerely that he was a fighting man. But alas!—he was not, any more than he was a footballer!

"Seven pounds ten going begging," he said bitterly, "and all you fellows can do is to snigger. At the present moment, I'm absolutely stony!"

"Not really?" gasped Bob Cherry. "How on earth did that happen?"

"I've been disappointed about a postal order! I'm actually stony!" said Bunter. "Not a brown!"

"What does it feel like, to be stony for the first time in your life?" asked Johnny Bull with interest.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Chuck it, old man!" said Harry.

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"You've done your funny turn. What about giving us a rest?"

"I was going to say—" howled Bunter.

"Well don't!"

"I was going to say, that if you're going to be a rotter, and do me out of that seven pounds ten, you might lend a chap ten bob till his postal order comes,"

hooted Bunter. "The tuckshop isn't shut yet, and there's time to nip out before lock-up, and—"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I'd rather lend you ten bob than play you in the Rookwood match," he said. "But not having frightfully wealthy relations like you, old fat man, ten-bob notes have run short. But I'll

make it two bob, if you'll shut up about the Rookwood match, and give us a rest."

The captain of the Remove extracted a two-shilling piece from his pocket. It was immediately grabbed in a fat grubby hand. A bird in hand was worth

(Continued on next page.)

LEARN TO PLAY FOOTBALL!

OUR INTERNATIONAL COACH

WATCH YOUR MAN!

I PROMISED to kick off this week by telling you something about marking your opponent in football. You remember that when our inside-right, in the game we are playing, passed to the outside-right, the ball didn't get there because a player on the other side was marking our winger. He stepped in and took the ball.

Now it wasn't just by chance that the other player was there to get the ball before our outside-right. He had been told, before he started to play, that he must mark our right winger, and he was carrying out instructions. So let me see if I can tell everybody on our side the opponent they must mark, and how to do it, because marking is one of the most important things in football.

Marking does not mean following your opponent around wherever he chooses to go. You don't have to think very hard before you realise that if you did that you would have no time to think about playing your own game. It means that, while you are getting on with your job of helping your side to score goals, you must keep one eye on the fellow you have been told to mark, to see that he doesn't get the ball too much, or have too many chances of scoring goals.

That partly explains, doesn't it, what I meant when I said some time ago that half-backs and full-backs have got a double job to do. They must give their forwards a hand in getting near the goal, and they must also make sure that the opposing forwards are not given a free hand.

This marking business can be done in two ways. One way is to wait till the fellow you are marking is given the ball and then try and get it away from him. I haven't told you much about tackling yet, but I will later on. If you are good at tackling, you will usually be able to get the ball away from your opponent. But that is not the best way to mark a player.

ANTICIPATION!

A FAMOUS footballer, discussing this business of marking with me the other day—I was asking him what he thought was the best way for me to explain it to you—told me to tell you this:

"The best time to take the ball from a player is before he gets it."

I had to think about that for a minute. You think about it, too, because even if it is double Dutch, it is

MARKING YOUR OPPONENT

Don't roam about all over the football field, but keep your eyes on the fellow you have been told to mark . . . it's one of the most important things in football.

wonderfully sound advice. It means that a much easier way of getting the ball than by tackling the player, is to get the ball while it is on its way, and before it reaches the other fellow. In other words, intercept it. That is what the player did when our inside-right passed to his winger. He nipped in and got the ball before it reached our outside-right. Didn't he save himself a lot of trouble?

How could he be quick enough, however, to get the ball before it reached our wing man, as the inside-right kicked it pretty hard? Ah, now you've hit the nail on the head! Didn't I say something, not so very long ago, about thinking when you are playing football? Well, that fellow who nipped in to take the ball before it reached our outside-right was thinking. He saw our inside-right with the ball. Now, he thought to himself, that inside-right may pass to his outside-right. If he does, I must be there to intercept the ball. He got ready, the ball was passed to the winger, and the half-back was there to step in and take it.

You see, that half-back was thinking. He wasn't just waiting till something happened and then trying to stop it. He was working out in his own mind what he thought was likely to happen next. As it happened, he was right, and so he made things much easier for himself. Footballers call that anticipation.

Right throughout a game a good footballer will be trying to anticipate what will happen next, so that he can get himself ready for anything which comes along. Thinking and looking ahead all the time is one of the important things in football, and now you are getting quite good at the elementary things in the game, like ball-control and kicking, there is no reason why you shouldn't try these more advanced things. I am not pretending that you will be able to guess what is coming every time. But you can see what a help anticipation is, even if you are right only every now and again.

THE MAN TO MARK!

NOW you want to know which players you must each mark on the field. Roughly, the forwards are the fellows who are marked: the half-backs and full-backs the ones who do the marking. That doesn't mean, of course, that forwards never tackle an opponent. Inside forwards, in fact, have to do quite a lot of defending in some sides. And it certainly doesn't mean that forwards needn't bother about anticipation. They must.

Generally speaking, however, only the defenders are given definite players to mark. If you are a centre-half, your job is soon told. You must watch the opposing centre-half. Whether the centre-half should spend all his time marking the centre-forward and forget about his job as a helper in attack, has never been decided by people in first-class football. I should say that if you find you can keep the opposing centre-forward quiet—"in your pocket" as they say—and still find time to help in attack, do so. But first of all make sure that the centre-forward you are marking can't do any mischief.

Another thing which some football clubs can't make up their minds about is the fellow whom the wing-halves and the full-backs should mark. You remember that the player who was marking our outside-right was the left-half. As a matter of fact, that isn't the usual way. It is more usual for the full-backs to mark the wing men, and for the half-backs to mark the inside-forwards. Have you ever seen West Bromwich Albion play? They are one of the clubs whose half-backs mark the wing men, and whose full-backs mark the inside-forwards. There aren't many clubs do this, but I don't think it makes a lot of difference. I'll leave you to decide which you prefer. The important thing is that everyone should know, before a match starts, which opponent he is expected to mark.

Well, another week has gone, and we haven't progressed any further with our game. Never mind. This question of marking really is very important; I had to spend a lot of time on it. And we couldn't very well play a good game without your knowing something about marking opponents. When we carry on with the game next week, you will know all about keeping the ball away from your opponents by marking and anticipation.

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two in the bush: and all was grist that came to Billy Bunter's mill.

"I'll let you have this back out of my postal order," he said. "But look here, if you'll play me at Rookwood—"

"Shut up!" roared Wharton.

"I mean to say, if I play at Rookwood, I shall bag that seven pound ten, and—"

"If you say Rookwood again, you'll bag my boot!"

"Beast!"

Bunter rolled out of the Rag with a florin in his fat paw.

There was not much time left for getting across to the school shop before lock-up—so the sore subject of the Rookwood match dropped, for the present. Quite a spot of tuck could be obtained for two shillings—and the fat Owl was a little comforted as he rolled out into the dusky quad, and headed for the tuck-shop.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Smithy Plays Up!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH, the Bounder of Greyfriars, gave a little start, as Frank Nugent came into his study.

His study-mate, Tom Redwing, had gone down after tea, and the Bounder was indulging in a cigarette—which he promptly pitched into the fire as the study door opened.

He coloured a little, annoyed and uncomfortable. Cigarettes were not uncommon in the Bounder's study: but a fellow who had been picked to play in a football fixture, was expected not to play the goat in that way, quite apart from any consideration for the rules of the school.

But Nugent did not appear to have noticed the cigarette. He shut the door, and came across towards the Bounder.

Smithy's eyes dwelt curiously on his face. For some days past, Nugent had been looking uncommonly merry and bright, happy in his selection to play in a really big fixture. Now he looked neither merry nor bright. His face was clouded: and, more unusual still, there was a dark and bitter expression on it. Seldom indeed had the most good-natured fellow in the Remove such an expression on his face.

What was the matter with him, and why had he come to Study No. 4, the Bounder did not know. He was not often a visitor in that study.

"Oh, you're here," said Nugent, "I wanted to speak to you, Smithy."

"No charge," said the Bounder, wonderingly, "Heave ahead!"

"It's no good speaking to my friends about this," said Frank, "it's not a matter they'd care to take a hand in. But you—"

The Bounder laughed, quite amused. "Something frightfully shady, and you've picked out the bad hat of the school to lend a hand?" he asked. "I'm fearfully flattered! What is it?"

"I mean, you're the man for it," said Frank. "I'd like a fellow to back me up—handling a Sixth Form man is a big order for a Remove fellow. If you care to help, I'd be glad—but it's risky of course, the man being a prefect—"

The Bounder sat bolt upright, in his astonishment.

"You're thinking of handling a Sixth Form prefect?" he ejaculated.

"Yes!" said Frank, between his teeth.

"My only sainted aunt! You're comin' out, old man!" Vernon-Smith whistled, "Get it off your chest! Loder?"

"No: Walker."

The Bounder gave him a very keen look. Handling a prefect, wild and

reckless as such an action was, was not too wild and reckless for the Bounder of Greyfriars. He was the fellow to take risks, and enjoy them. But he was not the fellow to go into a thing blindfold.

Moreover, he knew quite well that given an adequate cause, Frank's own chums would have backed him up to any extent as regardless of risk as the Bounder himself.

There was something in this that Smithy did not understand. But he was going to understand, before he took a hand in it.

"What's Walker done?" he asked quietly.

"Bullying!" said Frank, between his teeth.

"He's a bit that way, sometimes!" assented the Bounder. "He's all right when he doesn't take Loder as a model. But what—"

"He's out in the quad now," said Frank, "I dare say he's gone out for a smoke," he added, with bitter contempt, "He thrashes a silly little fag in the Second for smoking, but a lot of fellows say that he smokes himself. Anyhow, I saw him go out into the quad a few minutes ago, and it's a chance. I'm going to hand him some of his own medicine."

Smithy did not answer for a moment or two. He could see that Nugent was deeply and passionately excited, and in a mood for the wildest and most unthinkable action. Few fellows would ever have regarded the Bounder of Greyfriars as a sage counsellor: but he had a cool head, and he liked Nugent: and his immediate thought was to restrain him, if he could—certainly not to help him on the way to getting expelled from the school.

"I know it's risky," said Frank. "It's the sack—I know that! Well, I can't walk up to a Sixth Form prefect, and punch his face, and go up to the Head to be bunked for it. The brute knows that, and he banks on it. I'm not letting him off because of that. It's pretty dark in the quad. I'd like to let Walker know who gave it to him—but I'm not going to be sacked. If a couple of fellows upended him all of a sudden—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I'd get in a few with a cricket stump, and make the brute squirm!" said Frank. "Will you lend a hand?"

"I'd rather know what Walker's done first, old chap!" said the Bounder, quietly, "Give it a name."

"I've told you, bullying."

"If he's been bullying the Remove, Wharton isn't the man to let him get by with it."

"He's been bullying my young brother in the Second."

The Bounder was careful not to smile, though he felt inclined to do so. He was concerned for Nugent, and wanted to be tactful with him.

But as soon as Dicky was mentioned, he guessed how the matter stood. Frank might believe that Nugent minor was an injured innocent. Vernon-Smith did not suppose anything of the sort.

"Whopped him?" he asked.

"Yes! Not an ordinary whopping—Dicky deserved that—Walker caught him smoking. But he's thrashed him—fairly knocked him out—you should have seen him." Nugent breathed hard. "He's not going to treat my young brother like that, and nothing said."

"A fag gets six for smoking!" said the Bounder, "I should have got six, if Walker had stepped in here, instead of you, a few minutes ago. If Walker's given the kid six—"

"He thrashed him like a dog!"

"Wasn't there anything but smoking?"

asked Smithy, "Walker really isn't the chap to—"

"I've had that from Wharton! Are you going to lend me a hand or not? You brag all over the Remove that you don't give a bean for the prefects, or the masters either!" said Nugent, savagely. "Are you funky, as soon as it comes to the point?"

The Bounder crimsoned.

"Don't be a fool!" he said, roughly. "If it was Loder, or even Carne, I might believe he had let his temper go, and given the kid too much. I don't believe Walker would, unless the kid cheeked him, and put his back up. Is your young brother to be allowed to carry on just as he likes at Greyfriars because he's a spoilt darling at home?"

Frank Nugent gave the Bounder a dark and bitter look.

"That's enough!" he said, "I was a fool to come here—I might have known that your gas was just gas, and nothing else. Wash it out!"

He turned angrily to the door, the Bounder scowling at his back. He had come to that study for aid, because Vernon-Smith was the most reckless ragger in the school, utterly regardless of authority, and little likely to care about the rights or wrongs of any enterprise so long as it was up against the rules. Certainly he had not come there for good advice, or to hear that Dicky might, possibly, have deserved all that he had got.

"Hold on!" rapped Smithy.

He rose from his chair.

His view of Nugent was that he was a fool; but he was not going to be supposed to be a funk. The Bounder liked to pose, before the other Removites, as a devil of a fellow, who cared nothing for masters or prefects. He had that not very enviable reputation to think of. For a fellow like Nugent, whom he considered a good deal of a milksop, to turn his back contemptuously on him as a funk, was too much for the scapegrace of the Remove to endure.

Nugent did not hold on. He opened the door to leave the study. The Bounder followed him into the passage.

"I'm on!" he said.

Then Nugent paused.

"After all, it's risky!" he said. "I'm going to do it—that's settled. But after all, why should you—"

"You can cut all that out!" sneered the Bounder. "I'm coming, and we'll handle Walker together—unless you jib at the last minute, as I expect you will. This is in my line, not in yours; and you haven't got the grit for it."

"That's enough!"

Nugent tramped down the passage to the stairs. The Bounder followed him.

A couple of minutes later, they had slipped out of the House together by a back passage window.

Passionately excited as he was, Frank Nugent was not wholly lost to caution; and even had he been, the Bounder was cool. No eye noticed them leaving the House—and no eye was to notice them re-entering it—after Walker of the Sixth had been duly "handled." Unseen, they slipped out into the thickening dusk and mist of the winter evening.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

What Bunter Saw!

BILLY BUNTER grinned. It was the sight of the red, glowing tip of a cigarette that brought that grin to Billy Bunter's fat face.

In the school shop, the two-shilling



"Chuck that away, you silly little ass!" grunted Johnny Bull, as Dicky Nugent puffed away at the cigarette just to show how independent he was. "If I were your major, I'd boot you!" "How lucky you ain't my major!" replied Dicky. Johnny Bull breathed hard.

piece had been duly expended. Jam tarts to the value of one shilling had disappeared down Billy Bunter's neck. Jam tarts to the value of the other shilling were in a paper bag in Bunter's podgy paw.

That bag of tarts was intended for Bunter's delectation in Study No. 7 after prep.

That was Bunter's idea, when he rolled out of the tuckshop, and headed for the House.

But half-way to the House, second thoughts supervened. The lure of tuck was too strong for Bunter.

Four jam tarts—threepenny ones—pushed down one after another, might have satisfied some fellows. They did not satisfy Bunter. When there was tuck about, Bunter's appetite was insatiable.

The fat junior stopped under one of the old Greyfriars elms by the path, and dipped a fat paw into the paper bag. He thought he would have just one more.

He had one more. It was jammy and juicy and delicious—so he thought he would have still one more. Then the third and the fourth followed. Bunter was left with an empty paper bag.

It was then that he spotted the cigarette-tip.

The bell had not yet gone for lock-up, but the dusk was deep and thickened by a mist from the sea. Bunter, standing under the shady branches of the elm, was completely invisible. Had he been visible, certainly Walker of the Sixth would not have chosen that spot for smoking a surreptitious cigarette.

As it was, Walker did.

Quite aware that a fellow would be invisible under the tree in the misty dusk, Walker stopped there and lighted his cigarette. The momentary glimmer as

he lighted it revealed his face to Bunter.

Wherefore did Bunter grin.

Walker of the Sixth was a prefect. He whopped juniors for smoking. Here he was, smoking himself.

But though Bunter grinned, he did not mean to let Walker see him grin—or see him at all. It was rather dangerous for a fellow to let a prefect know that he had seen him smoking. Prefects had to keep such things very carefully hidden from knowledge; and Billy Bunter did not want to have an irritated prefect down on him.

Instead of revealing himself, therefore, the cautious fat Owl backed a little farther away, to screen himself behind the trunk of the elm. He was going to keep doggo till Walker went. Grinning, he waited—peering round the tree through his big spectacles.

Except for the glowing tip of the cigarette, Walker was invisible—a mere shadow in shadows. Beyond him, however, outside the gloom of the tree, it was rather lighter.

Looking past the black shadow which was Walker, Bunter was rather startled to see two other shadows.

He blinked in astonishment.

Two fellows—unrecognisable in the gloom, but, from their height, no doubt juniors—were stealing up behind Walker of the Sixth. No doubt a glimpse of the glowing end of the cigarette guided them, and enabled them to keep behind the senior whom they could hardly see, and out of his observation.

Bunter's eyes grew big and round behind his spectacles. He was the unseen witness of what followed.

There was a sudden rush. Then a sudden bump.

Bunter barely repressed a squeak of amazement.

Walker of the Sixth, suddenly charged

from behind, toppled over helplessly on his face.

As he sprawled, utterly amazed by the sudden and unexpected attack, a knee was planted in the small of his back by one of the shadowy figures, pinning him down.

The other wielded a cricket stump.

Swipe, swipe, swipe!

The cricket stump fairly crashed on Walker's trousers.

Bunter goggled at the scene.

He could scarcely believe his eyes or his spectacles.

Walker, a Sixth Form prefect, was being whopped—thrashed like a fag: pinned down by one fellow, thrashed by the other.

It was time for the skies to fall.

Bunter goggled and gasped. He could hardly believe that such an amazing thing was happening.

But it was!

Swipe, swipe, swipe, swipe, swipe!

The fellow with the cricket stump was laying it on hard and fast—with almost lightning swiftness. Every swipe rang like a shot.

Walker, in his utter surprise, hardly struggled for a moment or two. Then he began to struggle fiercely, and yell at the same time. His yells rang all over the quadrangle.

But with a knee in his back, and a sturdy junior holding him down, Walker was almost helpless. And the cricket stump swiped and swiped and swiped!

From the direction of the House came a calling voice. Two or three windows were opened. Walker's frantic yelling reached the House, and startled many ears therein.

Swipe, swipe, swipe!

Yell, yell, yell!

"Oh crikey!" breathed Bunter.

(Continued on page 13.)

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The fellow who was pinning Walker down, suddenly jumped up. He grabbed the other by the arm and dragged him away.

Footsteps were approaching the spot. The fellow with the cricket stump seemed inclined to go on—but the more wary one dragged him off, leaving James Walker sprawling and yelling at the top of his voice.

One dragging the other, they came panting round the elm—and ran fairly into Billy Bunter—of whose presence, so far, they had known nothing.

"Owl!" gasped Bunter. "I say, you fellows—ow!"

"What—"

"Who—"

Two panting voices breathed the words at the same time.

"Quick! Hook it!" came a whisper that Bunter knew to be the Bounder's voice. "You fool—quick! Do you want to be sacked?"

"I'm coming!"

The two shadows vanished in the gloom.

Billy Bunter was left gasping and blinking.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He knew who they were now—Vernon-Smith and Frank Nugent. Smithy and Nugent had collared a prefect in the dark and whopped him. It was not so surprising in Smithy—the reckless Bounder—but it was amazing in Nugent. Billy Bunter gurgled with astonishment.

Walker was on his feet now, spluttering with rage. He was hurt—not since he had been a fag in the Lower School, had James Walker had such a whopping. But it was less the damage, than the outrage and insult to his dignity as a Sixth Form man and a prefect, that enraged Walker.

Five or six fellows came running from the direction of the House.

Bunter heard Wingate's voice calling, and Loder's.

He backed away swiftly, and disappeared in his turn, after the raggers. A fellow caught on the spot might have been suspected of having had a hand in that awful happening! Bunter vanished.

He heard Walker's voice, as he went: "Two fellows—juniors, I think—they knocked me over, and pitched into me—I think they were juniors—"

Billy Bunter heard no more. He gasped and flew.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Who Whopped Walker?

HOBSON of the Shell put his head into the Rag. Hobby was grinning.

"You fellows heard?" yelled Hobson.

"We've heard somebody yelling in the quad!" answered Harry Wharton. "Anything up?"

"Walker—whopped!" yelled Hobson. "A Sixth Form prefect—whopped! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Walker!"

"Whopped!"

"Gammon!"

"Draw it mild!"

"Fact!" yelled Hobby. "I've just seen him come in—Wingate was with him. I say, he looks in a fearful temper. He's gone to the Head."

"Who on earth has whopped Walker?" exclaimed Peter Todd. "That is, Coker wouldn't be such an idiot!"

"Nobody else here idiot enough!" said Skinner.

"Who was it, Hobby?" gasped Harry Wharton.

"Nobody knows, so far—but there were two of them!" said Hobby. "I heard Walker say he thought they were juniors—but he never saw them—they barged him over from behind, and laid into him with a stick or something—fancy, a Sixth Form prefect! Ha, ha, ha!"

Hobby seemed amused.

"Two fellows in it!" exclaimed Harry. He felt a sudden sense of relief. The thought of Frank Nugent had come into his mind. He had left Frank in the study, in a mood of passionate anger and resentment, and the news that somebody had pitched into Walker of the Sixth rather alarmed him. "Sure there were two in it?"

"Walker said so. I suppose he knows," chuckled Hobby. "I say, I wonder who they were? It's the sack for them!"

"But if Walker never saw them?" said Toddy.

"Bet you they'll bag any fellow who was out of the House!" said Hobby. "The bell's going—they'll have to show up. The prefects are on the prowl now. Sorry for them if they get snaffled."

"The sorrowfulness will be terrific!" remarked Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh. "The bunkfulness will be a deadly cert!"

"Well, it's rather thick, whopping a prefect!" said Johnny Bull. "That sort of thing isn't done."

"But who the dickens?" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Not Remove men, I hope. Any Remove man out of the House?"

"Bunter," said Squiff. "Think it was Bunter?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Nobody was likely to suspect Billy Bunter of desperate work. Squiff's suggestion was a jest, and was received with a howl of laughter.

"Well, I hope they weren't Remove men," said Johnny Bull. "It's rather outside, that sort of thing."

"Awful and shocking!" declared Skinner. "It is well known, my beloved 'earers, that the Sixth Form is the giddy Palladium of the school. Any man who raises his hand to a prefect, except in the way of kindness—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where's Smithy?" asked Hazeldene, with a grin.

"Smithy's in the study," said Tom Redwing quickly. "I left him there when I came down after tea."

"Well, I believe we're all here, except Bunter and Smithy, and—where's Franky?" asked Bob Cherry, looking round. "Seen Franky?"

"In the study," said Harry, as quickly as Redwing. "He was there when I fetched down my 'Holiday Annual.'"

"Well, that clears the Remove," said Bob. "Unless it was that bold, bad Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Fifth Form men, I fancy!" said Skinner. "Lots of the Fifth don't like Walker's swank. Coker's fool enough!"

Harry Wharton quietly left the Rag. He had a feeling that he would like to make sure that Frank Nugent was still in the study, where he had left him half an hour ago.

The bell was ringing for call-over now, and any fellows out of the House had to come in, or be immediately missed. As the captain of the Remove went to the stairs, he heard a squeak.

"I say, I've just come from the tuck-shop—wharrer you mean, Loder? You leggo!"

Bunter had just come in, and Loder of the Sixth had stopped him. The prefects, evidently, were taking note of fellows who had been out of the House when that attack was made upon one of their august number.

Loder grabbed Bunter's collar, as he rolled in. But he laughed, and let go again. Really, the fat Owl of the Remove was hardly the fellow to be suspected of having taken part in such an enterprise as handling a prefect.

"You can cut!" he said.

Bunter gladly cut. His name was taken, as a fellow who had been out of the House, that was all.

Harry Wharton hurried up the stairs to the Remove passage. The light was on in his study, and through the half-open door he saw Frank Nugent there—and was glad to see him there.

Vernon-Smith was lounging in the passage, and he gave Wharton a curious glance.

"Some row on down below?" he asked.

"Yes—some silly asses have been collaring a prefect out in the quad, and whopping him, from what I hear," answered Harry.

"By gum! Who was it—Loder?" asked the Bounder cheerfully.

"No; Walker!"

"Actually whopped him?"

"So it seems."

"Some nerve!" said the Bounder, with a whistle.

Harry Wharton nodded, and went into his study. He was thankful, deeply thankful, that Frank was there.

"Heard?" he asked.

Nugent laughed—a laugh that made Wharton give him a quick look. The captain of the Remove caught his breath, and hastily shut the study door.

"Frank!" he gasped. "Not you? You haven't been fool enough—mad enough—" He broke off in utter dismay. He did not need Nugent to tell him; he knew.

"I've thrashed that bully who ill-used my minor!" said Frank coolly and quietly. "I'd do it again, too! I thought you'd guess, when you heard! No need to shout it out all over the Remove, though!"

"You mad ass!" gasped Harry.

"Thanks!" said Nugent, with a very unusual sneer on his face. "I wasn't letting that bully get away with it, and nothing coming to him! I've given him what he gave Dicky—and perhaps a little more. I'm glad."

"It's the sack—"

"Are you going to the Head, to tell him?"

"Don't be a fool! You—you—you utter mad ass!" Wharton was aghast. "To ask for the sack like this on account of that little scoundrel—"

"Leave Dicky alone!"

"It's time you got some plain English about Dicky!" roared Wharton. His anxiety and concern for his chum made him angry. "I've no doubt he asked for all Walker gave him, and more. The trouble with that little scamp is, that he's not thrashed enough!"

Nugent set his lips.

"That's enough!" he said. "Leave it at that! I'm going down to call-over."

He tramped past Wharton, and left the study.

In utter dismay, the captain of the Remove followed. It was his chum, his best pal, who had done this mad thing; and, if discovered, would be expelled from Greyfriars on the spot. His brain was almost in a whirl as he followed Nugent across the landing.

Vernon-Smith passed him quickly, and

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joined Nugent on the stairs. He pressed Frank's arm.

"Don't look like that, you ass!" muttered the Bounder. "Every fellow will be watched in Hall—keep a stiff upper lip. Look as if nothing's happened, you fathead!"

Nugent nodded.

Wharton, following, caught the whispered words, and his eyes gleamed at the Bounder.

"So you were the other fellow!" he said. "You fool—you rotter! Couldn't you keep an excited ass from making a fool of himself, instead of backing him up in a potty game like this?"

"You can pack that up!" snapped Nugent. "My own pals wouldn't have backed me up, if I'd asked them!"

"I should jolly well think not!"

"Well, Smithy did! He stood by me, when you wouldn't have! You can shut up, Wharton!"

The captain of the Remove made no reply to that. It was no time to quarrel with his chum, when the shadow of expulsion loomed over him. In silence he followed Nugent and Smithy down the stairs—the Bounder shrugging his shoulders.

Greyfriars fellows streamed into Hall, for calling-over, in a buzz of excitement. The news of what had happened in the quad had spread far and wide now, and caused a thrilling sensation throughout the school. A prefect had been whopped—two fellows, if caught, were going to be up for the sack; and everyone was wondering who they were, and whether they would be spotted.

Frank Nugent answered to his name when it was called, quietly and clearly. He had taken the Bounder's tip and composed himself. As for the Bounder, he was cool as a cucumber. Smithy enjoyed a sensation, and a spot of danger added to his enjoyment.

Not that there was much danger. The two ragers had got back into the House by the window they had left open before the alarm had spread. They had been safe up in their studies in the Remove before Walker of the Sixth tottered into the House. The whole thing had gone like clockwork, with the exception that they had unexpectedly barged into Bunter in the dark, getting away. But Smithy did not suppose that the fat Owl had recognised either of them, and he had almost forgotten the circumstance.

He was reminded of it, however, as he received a nudge from a fat elbow, and glanced round at Bunter.

Billy Bunter gave him a fat wink.

The Bounder set his lips. He gave Bunter a look as if he could have bitten him. In response to which, the Owl of the Remove, grinning, favoured Smithy with another wink.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter Knows Too Much!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Prep!" said Harry Wharton curtly.

"Yes; but I say——"

"Cut!"

Prep, in Study No. 1, was going on in an unusually silent and chilly atmosphere when Bunter barged in.

Frank Nugent, for once, was in a resentful, almost sullen, frame of mind. Wharton was deeply anxious for his chum, and angry because he was anxious. And though he had not said so, Nugent knew that he disapproved of what had been done. That, of course, was because he did not care two straws whether

Dicky was bullied or not—it seemed to Nugent.

Neither of the two chums had spoken a word since coming up to the study. Wharton was in dread every moment of a prefect looking in to tell Nugent that he was wanted by the Head. If it had only been a matter of a flogging, it would not have troubled him so much. But it was worse than that; it was the "sack," and Wharton would almost as soon have been sacked himself as seen Nugent turfed out of Greyfriars. And all on account of a reckless young scamp who had probably had no more than he deserved.

Chilly as the atmosphere of the study was, neither of the juniors was glad to see Bunter.

Bunter had evidently left prep unfinished. There was a cheery grin on his fat face as he barged into Study No. 1.

Wharton waved an impatient hand at him.

"Shut the door!" he snapped.

Bunter shut the door. He remained, however, on the inner side of it.

"Right!" he remarked. "Better not let anybody hear, perhaps. I haven't said anything, so far."

Wharton looked at him surprised. Nugent gave him a quick stare. Like Smithy, he had supposed that the fat junior had not recognised the ragers who had barged into him in the dark under the elm. He had not given Bunter a thought since. But he realised now that Bunter knew.

"What do you mean, you fat ass?" asked Harry impatiently.

"I fancy Nugent knows!" grinned Bunter.

Wharton glanced at his chum.

"Bunter was in the quad," said Nugent, shrugging his shoulders. "I suppose the fat fool knows."

"Oh!" gasped Harry.

"How could a fellow help knowing, when you butted into him and nearly knocked him over?" demanded Bunter. "You banged your elbow into my neck, and Smithy trod on my foot."

"Oh!" repeated Wharton blankly. "You—you saw——"

"He, he, he!"

Nugent's face set. Already, perhaps, he was beginning to realise that that outburst of passionate temper had led him too far. But he had not thought of detection as likely. Walker of the Sixth had been "paid out" for bullying that injured innocent Dicky, and there the thing ended. Now he realised that there was more danger than he had guessed.

Bunter, certainly, was not likely to "sneak" to masters or prefects; but he was fairly certain to tattle what he knew up and down the Lower School. With all the prefects "on the prowl," one careless word was enough to put them on the scent.

"I say, you fellows, it was rather a nerve!" went on Bunter. "Pitching into a Sixth Form prefect—my hat! I say, you'll get bunked if they spot you, Nugent. I say, what did you pitch into Walker for?"

"Find out!" snapped Nugent.

"Eh? That's why I'm asking you, old chap!" said Bunter. "Don't you be afraid. I'm not going to give you away. Rely on me. You haven't treated me like a pal. Only on Saturday you refused to cash a postal order for me. But I'm keeping this dark, old chap. Kindest friend and noblest foe, you know—that's me all over."

"Get out, you fat fool!"

"Eh?"

"Get out before I boot you!"

"If you can't be civil, Nugent——"

Nugent was in no mood to be civil to Bunter. He picked up his Latin dictionary and took aim.

Harry Wharton caught his arm, just in time.

"Stop that, you ass!" he muttered. "Do you want that fat fool to go yelling this out all over Greyfriars?"

"I don't care!"

"Well, I do."

"It may pay you to be civil, Nugent!" said Billy Bunter, in great wrath. "I come here as a friend to tell you I'm not giving you away, and you start chucking dicks at me! I can jolly well tell you——"

"Haden't you better get back to prep, Bunter?" asked Harry.

"Oh, all right!" said Bunter. "I'll get out if you fellows don't want me here. I dare say Skinner will be glad to see me in his study. I fancy Skinner would like to know who whopped Walker."

Nugent kept his eyes stubbornly on his work; but Harry Wharton rose to his feet, deeply troubled.

Bunter had come there, like the fat and fatuous ass he was, to let Nugent know that he knew, and to be begged to keep it dark, which, in a manner of fatuous patronage, he was going to promise to do.

But he had to be asked, and he had to be asked jolly civilly, too; in fact, it had to be admitted and acknowledged what an important fellow he was, with Nugent's fate in the hollow of his fat hand.

That was what Bunter expected. What he received was far from pleasing him. Having glared indignantly at Nugent through his big spectacles, he turned to the door.

"Hold on, Bunter!" said Harry Wharton hastily.

Bunter gave him a lofty blink over his shoulder.

"I'm not wanted here," he said, with dignity. "I'll go."

"Hold on. I tell you!"

"Shan't!" retorted Bunter independently.

Wharton breathed hard. It went sorely against the grain to take check from the fat Owl, and on his own account he would probably have lost his temper and kicked Bunter out of the study. But he was thinking of his chum, not of himself.

"Stop a minute!" he said, controlling his intense irritation. "Look here, if you saw those fellows in the quad——"

"No 'if' about it!" jeered Bunter. "I saw Nugent and Smithy, and heard them, too. They barged into me, getting away from Walker. It was Smithy held him down, and Nugent laid into him with a stump. No 'if' about it!"

"Have you told anybody yet?"

"Am I a fellow to tattle?" asked Bunter, with dignity. "I haven't said a word. I was going to tell Toddy, but he told me not to jaw in prep—I mean, I haven't told even Toddy. I came here to tell Nugent that he could rely on me; but if he can't be civil——"

"Keep it dark," said Harry. It cost him an effort to ask a favour of the fat Owl, but it had to be done. "Look here, Bunter, this means the sack if it comes out, and if it's talked up and down the Form the prefects will get on to it sooner or later. Don't tell a single soul, see?"

"Nugent doesn't seem to mind whether I do or not," sneered Bunter. "I don't see why I shouldn't tell my friends, in confidence."

"Well, don't. Keep it dark from everybody. It will get out if it's talked about. It will blow over in a few days if nothing's said. Just at present all the



Swipe, swipe, swipe! Walker struggled fiercely as the cricket stump swiped and swiped and swiped. But with a knee in his back and a sturdy junior holding him down, Walker was helpless. His yells rang all over the quadrangle. Hidden behind a tree, Billy Bunter gurgled with astonishment.

prefects are as keen as mustard. Pack it right up."

Billy Bunter blinked at the top of Nugent's head, bent over his work. Frank did not look at him, or say a word. He was not going to ask favours of Bunter, greatly offending Bunter thereby. His contemptuous indifference annoyed the fat Owl extremely.

"What have you got to say, Nugent?" he demanded.

"Nothing, except that I'll boot you if you don't get out of my study!" answered Frank, without looking up.

"Oh, all right!" Bunter gasped with wrath. "That's enough from you! I'll get out fast enough!"

And he got out.

Harry Wharton hastily followed him into the Remove passage. If Nugent refused to put his pride in his pocket, his chum had to perform that disagreeable operation instead.

He grabbed a fat shoulder in the passage.

"Hold on, Bunter—"

"Leggo!" yapped Bunter. "I've got to go and see Skinner. I've got something to tell him."

"If you say a single word, to Skinner or anybody else, I'll boot you the length of the passage and back again!" said Harry savagely.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Can't you understand how serious it is?" breathed Wharton. "It's not a caning, or even a flogging—it means Nugent and Smithy getting expelled!"

"He, he, he! Think I don't know that? Whopping a prefect—"

"Well, not a word about it—see?"

Billy Bunter blinked at him. He had got no change, so to speak, out of Frank Nugent; but Wharton's anxiety was plain enough. A thoughtful look came over Bunter's fat face, and there was a sly gleam behind his spectacles.

A new idea, it seemed, was working in the fat Owl's podgy brain.

"Well, that's all very well," he said, "but I don't see why I should bother about Nugent, if he can't be civil. Still, if you make a point of it, old chap—"

"Yes, yes!"

"Well, I'd do more than that to oblige a pal," said Bunter affably.

"We're pals, ain't we?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Well, look here!" said Bunter. "I told you I was expecting a postal order. It's been delayed in the post. You lent me two bob this afternoon, and I'm going to settle it when my postal order comes. But it hasn't come."

"That's all right; never mind!"

"But I do mind!" said Bunter firmly. "Short reckonings make long friends, and all that. I'm going to let you have that two bob back out of my postal order!"

"Oh, all right!"

"What I was going to say is this—the postal order will be for five shillings," explained Bunter. "That will leave three, after I've settled the two-bob bit you lent me to-day. I think you might lend me the other three, and take the whole postal order when it comes. What do you think?"

Harry Wharton gave him a look. Then, without a word, he placed a half-crown and a sixpence in a fat hand, and went back into his study.

Billy Bunter grinned as he rolled along to Study No. 4.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Smithy Knows How!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH knitted his brow as the door of Study No. 4 opened to admit a fat form, and a fat face adorned by a large pair of spectacles.

Tom Redwing glanced at Bunter, and pointed to the door with his pen. Prep was not over yet, and visitors were not wanted.

"Oh, let him come in!" said Smithy. "What do you want, Bunter?"

Bunter rolled cheerfully in. He shut the door carefully, and grinned brightly at the Bounder.

"I'm not giving you away, old chap," was his beginning.

Redwing looked from one to the other.

"What—?" he began.

"Oh, Bunter's the man who knows!" said the Bounder, with a carelessness of manner that was belied by the glitter in his eyes under his knitted brows. "He was in the quad when two fellows whopped Walker of the Sixth."

Redwing started.

"You were up in the study at that time, Smithy—"

"He, he, he!"—from Bunter.

"Bunter thinks he saw me in the quad," drawled the Bounder.

"Smithy! You—"

"It's all right, old chap," said Bunter, grinning. "I'm not going to give Smithy away. I've come here as a friend. We're pals, ain't we, Smithy?"

"No," said the Bounder coolly. "If I ever want to pal with a porpoise, I'll choose one that washes, at least."

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(Continued from page 15.)

"Eh?" Bunter blinked at him. "What? Why, you cheeky rotter! After what I saw you at in the quad—knocking on Walker, and pinning him down while Nugent whopped him—"

"Nugent!" gasped Redwing. "Nugent and Smithy!" yapped Bunter. "Blessed if I know how he got Nugent into such a game, but he did. It was Nugent with him."

"Is that true, Smithy?" "Oh, really, Redwing—" "Shut up, you fat Owl! Is it true, Smithy?"

"Quite!" drawled the Bounder. "Only I didn't get Nugent into it; he got me into it. Walker had been whopping that young brother of his; and young Dicky, of course, mustn't be whopped, even by a prefect. So we slew Walker!"

"A lot you care about that young rotter of the Second—"

"Not a boiled bean! But Nugent dared me to do it, and I was fool enough to fall for it. There's three of us up for the sack, if it comes out."

"Three? Who was the other, then?" "Bunter knows."

"Eh? I don't," said Bunter blankly. "I only saw you and Nugent—I know that. Only you two, and Walker. Look here, Smithy, you needn't be afraid that I'm going to give you away!"

"I'm not." "I expect a fellow to be civil," said Bunter. "I've just seen Nugent, and those fellows in Study No. 1 have been begging me almost on their bended knees to keep it dark. Of course, I'm going to, but—"

"You won't find any bended knees in this study."

"Well, a fellow expects to be treated civilly, I can jolly well tell you!" exclaimed Bunter warmly. "I came here as a friend—"

"You mean you came here to throw your weight about, because you fancy that I'm afraid of your gabbling, you fat fool!" said the Bounder contemptuously.

"Oh, really, Smithy—" "Go and eat coke!"

"I came here as a pal!" roared Bunter. "In fact, I was going to suggest a study supper—"

The Bounder laughed. "I could have guessed that one," he said. "Wash it out, old fat man! Open your mouth as wide as you like; but keep in mind that if it comes out, all three will be up before the Beak."

"Those were only you and Nugent, and—"

"And you," said Vernon-Smith. Billy Bunter jumped.

"What?" he yelled. "You were there, weren't you?"

"Why, you—you—you beast!" gasped Bunter, in alarm and terror. "I'd only stopped under that tree to finish my jam tarts, and then I saw you and Nugent pitch into Walker."

"You can tell that to the Head, if

we come up before the Head," said the Bounder, coolly and deliberately. "Dr. Locke may believe you, but I hardly think so. You haven't exactly got a reputation as a Georgie Washington. And when I own up that we were all three in it—"

"Own up!" gasped Bunter. "But it ain't true!"

"You're so jolly particular about the truth, aren't you?" asked the Bounder banteringly.

"But I never—I wasn't—I didn't—I wouldn't!" stuttered the alarmed Owl. "You jolly well know I never touched Walker!"

"Keep that for the Head. He may believe it. Three Remove fellows were on the spot when Walker was walloped. The Head may believe that one of the three had nothing to do with it, perhaps. I wouldn't bank on it, if I were you."

"But I never!" gasped Bunter. "You—you—you awful beast! Mean to say you'd tell the Head I did?"

"If you tell the Head I did, why shouldn't I tell him you did?"

"Oh crikey! But I never—"

"You fat, frowsy, frabjous, footling freak!" said the Bounder contemptuously. "Any fellow in the Form but you could be trusted to keep his mouth shut. Not you. Well, open it, and see what you'll get! If I go up before the Head, I shall make a clean breast of it, and own up that you and I walloped Walker."

"But I didn't!" shrieked Bunter. "Keep that for the Head!"

"You awful rotter!"

"That's about enough from you!" said the Bounder. He made a stride towards the fat Owl, gripped him by the collar, and swung him to the door. With his left hand he opened the door. "Outside!"

Thud! Vernon-Smith's boot crashed, and the next moment Billy Bunter crashed—in the passage.

"Yarooop!" roared Bunter. The Bounder slammed the door on him.

Tom Redwing gave him a quiet look as he dropped into his chair again at the study table.

"I suppose you were pulling Bunter's leg, Smithy," he said. "You wouldn't do—"

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders without replying.

Billy Bunter rolled away to Study No. 7, gasping. There was not going to be a study supper with Smithy, that was clear.

Peter Todd looked at him, as he came spluttering into his study—in a breathless state of mingled wrath and indignation and terror. Peter grinned.

"Had it hard?" he inquired. "I heard you drop!"

"Owl! That beast Smithy—" gasped Bunter. "The cheeky rotter, you know! I've a jolly good mind to—to—to—to—"

"To what?" asked Peter.

"Oh, nothing!" said Bunter hastily.

The Bounder's threat, whether empty or in earnest, was enough for Bunter. Smithy, at least, was safe from the tattling of the longest tongue at Greyfriars.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Big Idea!

"THREE shillings!" said Mrs. Mimble firmly.

Billy Bunter laid down three shillings. Three shillings, extracted from Harry Wharton

the previous evening, were the sum total of Bunter's wealth. In break, in the morning, Bunter had his first opportunity of expending the same. Now they were expended.

"I say, ma'am, I'm expecting a postal order by the next post," remarked Bunter. "I think I'll have a few more doughnuts, and—"

Mrs. Mimble did not even seem to hear.

There were plenty of fellows who had liberal "tick" at the school shop. But Billy Bunter was not one of them. Mrs. Mimble knew her Bunter too well for that! With a magnificent home at Bunter Court, innumerable wealthy and titled relations, and a constant expectation of receiving a postal order, Billy Bunter could not obtain "tick" to the extent of sixpence.

He rolled sadly out of the tuck-shop.

He frowned over his big spectacles at the sight of the Famous Five in the quad. That frown was specially directed at the captain of the Remove. "Beast!" hissed Bunter.

The Rookwood match was on the morrow. If that unutterable beast, Harry Wharton, had stretched a point, and played Bunter in the eleven, the gorgeous sum of seven pounds ten shillings would have dropped, like manna, into Bunter's fat paw!

Regardless of the almost incalculable amount of tuck that Billy Bunter could have obtained for such a sum as seven pounds ten shillings, that unspeakable beast was leaving him out.

"Beast!" repeated Bunter.

He stood blinking at the chums of the Remove. They were talking—discussing the Rookwood match, probably. All five of them were in the team, the beasts—and they would all burst out laughing if Bunter rolled up and urged his claims once more! Wharton was going to play that dud Nugent, simply because he was a pal—and refusing to play such a pal as Bunter.

It was then that a new and rather startling idea came into Bunter's fat brain. Blinking at the group of juniors, he suddenly grinned.

"By gum!" ejaculated Bunter.

He stood for a minute or two, thinking it over. Then he rolled across to the Famous Five. As he drew nearer, he heard Johnny Bull speaking. The topic was not, after all, the Rookwood match, but the whopping of Walker.

"Looks as if they won't get those silly asses now!" Johnny was saying. "Nobody seems to know who they were. I say, Walker's looking fearfully wild to-day. I believe they're chipping him in the Sixth about having his pants dusted."

Bob Cherry and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh laughed. Wharton and Nugent were rather uncomfortably silent.

Bunter chuckled. He could see that Wharton and Nugent had said nothing to the other members of the Co. Three of the five were still in ignorance of the identity of the whoppers of Walker.

"Blessed if I quite make it out, you know," went on Johnny. "Walker's a bit of a bully at times, but not a bad chap on the whole. Can't imagine why two fellows should go for him like that. It's the sack, for a cert, if they get copped."

"No doubt about that!" said Bob Cherry. "And, dash it all, what can they expect? The Head has to back up the prefects."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Blow away, bluebottle!"

"I say, I want to speak to you

fellows about the Rookwood match. It comes off to-morrow, so there's not much time for making changes in the team," said Bunter. "I think Nugent might stand out, Wharton—"

"Think again, fathead!"

"To oblige me!" said Bunter.

"Wha-a-at?"

"To oblige me," said Billy Bunter firmly. "I think it's up to Nugent to oblige me, in the circumstances. Considering what I'm doing for him, I think he might oblige me in a little matter like this."

"What does the fat ass mean?" asked Bob Cherry, in wonder. "What are you doing for Nugent, you blithering bloater?"

"He, he, he!"

"My esteemed and idiotic Bunter, the—"

"I'm asking Nugent," said the fat Owl calmly, "to stand out of the team and make room for me. He ought to be glad to make room for a better man. I should be, in his place—I'm a sportsman, I hope. Are you going to do it, Nugent?"

Frank Nugent looked at him in silence.

"Is he potty?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"The pottiffulness seems to be terrific!" remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "This is a preposterous case of fatty degeneration of the absurd brain."

"Oh, really, Inky—"

"You'd better shut up, Bunter!" said Harry Wharton quietly. "Buzz off, and don't talk out of the back of your silly neck!"

"I want an answer!" said Bunter calmly. "I'm asking you to play a better man than Nugent, Wharton—and, as football skipper, you ought to be pleased."

"Nugent's playing, ass! Shut up!"

"Shan't! He mightn't be here to-morrow to go over to Rookwood!" jeered Bunter. "How about that?"

"Mad as a hatter!" said Bob blankly. "Why shouldn't Nugent be here to-morrow, you potty porpoise?"

"He, he, he!"

"Will you shut up, Bunter?" asked the captain of the Remove, breathing hard.

Frank did not speak.

"No, I won't! Is Nugent standing out?"

"You fat, frumpious fathead, if Nugent stood out, I'd rather play Wibley, or Fishy, than you!" snapped Wharton. "Don't be a fool!"

"Oh, would you?" said Bunter, his eyes gleaming with wrath behind his big spectacles. "All right! If that's how you look at it, don't expect any more favours from me!"

"Look here," said Bob, "what does this mean? What is that blithering idiot driving at, Wharton?"

It was Frank Nugent who answered the question.

"That prying fat cad spotted me last evening in the quad, and he's trading on it!" he said.

Three fellows stared at him blankly.

"Spotted you?" repeated Bob.

"What the dooce was there to spot?" grunted Johnny Bull. "You haven't been breaking bounds, I suppose, or smoking like that precious minor of yours?"

"My esteemed Franky!" exclaimed Hurree Janset Ram Singh, startled.

He caught on at once.

"He, he, he!" contributed Bunter.

"You fellows may as well know now," said Frank quietly. "It will be all over the school soon, I expect. I whopped Walker, and Smithy helped

me. I dragged Smithy into it—poor old Smithy! Bunter was spying about, as usual—"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Anyhow, he spotted us. He's been throwing his weight about ever since. Now he seems to think it's worth a place in the eleven to him. I'm going to kick him, to start with!"

"I say—Here, you keep off!" roared Bunter, in alarm. "I say—Yaroooh! Yoo-hoop! Leave off kicking me, you beast! I ain't going to split—I tell you, I ain't going to say—yarooop! Whoop!"

Nugent landed three, all good ones, before the yelling fat Owl got out of reach.

Bunter disappeared at top speed—yelling! For the time he was not thinking of his big idea—he was only thinking of getting out of reach of Nugent's boot. Yelling, he got!

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

No Hope!

FRANK NUGENT breathed hard and deep.

His face was flushed as he faced his chums. It was easy for him to read in three more faces what he had read in Harry Wharton's the day before. Grim disapproval was quite plainly expressed.

"You!" said Bob slowly.

"Me!" grunted Nugent. "Smithy helped!"

"The silly ass!" said Johnny Bull. "He might have stopped you—"

"Do you think I should have let him?" snapped Nugent. "He backed me up when I jolly well knew that you fellows wouldn't."

"Right!" said Johnny. "You won't catch me making such a fool, or such a hooligan, of myself!"

"But what the thump did you do it for, Franky?" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "If it were Loder, a chap could understand. But Walker—"

"He was bullying my minor—"

"Oh!" Bob's ejaculation was expressive.

Nugent gave his friends a bitter look.

"You don't care about that, of course," he said. "But I'm not letting a brute get by with bullying my young brother, if I can let him have something back for it! I'm only sorry I can't tell Walker who thrashed him! Anyhow, he will know now—all Greyfriars will know soon."

"It's the sack!" said Bob.

"I'm not so sure of that!" answered Nugent. "Walker, as a prefect, could whop Dicky for smoking. But no prefect has a right to thrash a kid as he did—and if the Head knew, he wouldn't stand for it. Do you think I should have thought of handling Wingate, or Gwynne, or Sykes, if they'd whopped the kid? They would have given him what he deserved. That brute Walker thrashed him till he could hardly crawl. It was sheer bullying—I suppose he was in a rotten temper about something, and he took it out of the kid."

"Um!" said Bob.

"If it comes up before the Head, the Head's going to know it all," said Frank. "If he knows how the brute pitched into Dicky, I don't feel at all sure he will sack me for getting back on the brute."

"If Dicky was only smoking—" said Harry slowly.

"I've told you he was! A few flicks would have been enough for the little fool—think Wingate would have

thrashed him like that? You saw the state he was in."

"You fool!" said Johnny Bull. "You crass idiot! If Dicky told you he was whopped just for smoking, he was telling lies! But I suppose you never asked him—you took it for granted that he hadn't asked for what he got—"

"What do you know about it?" demanded Nugent fiercely.

"More than you do, as I was present when it happened!" retorted Johnny Bull. "And if I'd known the little rotter had come whining to you about it, I'd have told you, before you made a fool of yourself."

"You were present?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Yes, I was!" growled Johnny. "And if it comes out before the Head, Dr. Locke will hear more than Nugent fancies. I found the little beast smoking in the Cloisters, and tipped him that a prefect was in the offing, and he thought I was pulling his leg to make him chuck his silly cigarette away. Then Walker came up and caught him."

"And what difference does that make?" demanded Nugent.

"If you'd heard him—as Walker did—you'd know!" snorted Johnny. "He didn't believe that Walker was anywhere near, the cheeky little ass, though I told him. He was saying that Walker was a silly ass, that he funks Coker of the Fifth, and that he would back his shins if he whopped him. And Walker heard every word."

"Oh!" gasped Nugent.

"Walker gave him a pretty stiff six!" said Johnny. "I fancy any prefect would, if he heard a fag saying he'd back his shins if he whopped him, and calling him names. I fancy old Wingate would have laid it on a bit."

Nugent stood silent.

His chums stood silent also.

Nugent spoke at last.

"All Dicky said was that Walker had caught him smoking!" he said. "I never asked him if there was anything else. He never knew I was thinking of getting back on Walker, of course. He'd have told me the rest, if he'd known that. Of course, I never knew—"

Grunt from Johnny Bull. His view was that a fellow ought to have been careful to ascertain all the facts before taking such a step as handling a prefect of the Sixth. Nugent realised that, too.

"So, if it goes before the Head," said Johnny grimly, "Dr. Locke's going to hear that your minor called Walker a funk, and a silly ass, and threatened to back his shins! Do you think that will help you a lot?"

Nugent breathed hard.

"If I'd known all that—" he muttered.

"You ought to have known!" retorted Johnny. "Couldn't you take the trouble to find out how the matter stood before you pitched into a prefect?"

"Chuck it, Johnny, old man!" murmured Bob. "Nugent was a bit excited—we all know he goes potty about his minor. But I say, it's awfully unfortunate. If it comes before the Head, the old bean's more likely to give Dicky a few more, than to think that Walker gave him too much, if that's how it stands."

Nugent stood silent—overwhelmed.

He had acted passionately, hastily, thoughtlessly. Taking it for granted that that injured innocent, Dicky, had been ill-used, he had gone off at the deep end without reflection. It was clear enough to him now.

In a case of bullying, had it been proved, no doubt the headmaster would have made allowances, even in so serious a matter as "handling" a prefect.

But it was not a case of bullying—and Nugent knew that now. He had not a leg to stand on.

Walker, no doubt, had let himself go. He had laid it on uncommonly hard. But even a good-tempered prefect, like old Wingate, would probably have put his beef into it, had he heard a cheeky fag describe him as an ass and a funk, and threaten to hack his shins. What Johnny Bull had told him had banished Frank's last faint hope. He was "for it," without the faintest chance of leniency, if he came up before the Head.

"That tears it!" said Harry Wharton at last, breaking the dismal silence. "It's all up, if it comes out! Bunter's got to be bottled up!"

The bell for third school cut short the dismal conference. The Famous Five joined the Remove going in.

In the Form-room, Billy Bunter gave them a fierce and defiant blink through his big spectacles. Bunter was sitting rather uncomfortably—and wriggling; no doubt the result of Nugent's booting. His wrath and indignation were deep and intense. But the chums could see that he had said nothing, so far—there was no sign that the other Removites knew how matters stood.

Bunter did not find it easy to keep his extensive mouth shut. But he was keeping it shut, as yet—still clinging to the hope of a place in the eleven, and seven pounds ten shillings from Uncle George!

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Orders from Bunter!

"MAULY!"

"Blow away, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter rolled into the Rag after dinner.

Harry Wharton, worried and frowning, followed him there.

There was only one fellow in the Rag—Lord Mauleverer, taking his ease in an armchair.

Billy Bunter—with the corner of his eye on the captain of the Remove—proceeded to address his lordship.

"I say, Mauly, they haven't found out yet who walloped Walker," he remarked. "You got any idea, Mauly?"

"No; blow away."

"I fancy I know!" grinned Bunter.

"You fat rotter!" said Harry, breathing hard.

Bunter blinked round at him.

"Oh! You there?" he said. "What do you want, Wharton?"

"I want you to hold your silly tongue!" said Harry.

"I'm willing to act as a pal, if I'm treated as a pal!" said the fat junior cheerily. "So long as you go on keeping me out of the matches, Wharton, you can hardly expect me to do you favours. I see you've put up the list

for Rookwood! Is Nugent's name in it?"

"You know it is."

"Haden't you better take it out?"

"You fat fool!"

"Mind, I don't care what fellow you leave out," said Bunter. "In fact, I'd rather you dropped Smithy. He was cheeky to me in his study last night. Wash out any name you like, so long as you put mine in."

"You know I can't, you fat chump!"

"I know you can, if you choose. Don't you want to win at Rookwood?" demanded Bunter. "Jimmy Silver's lot are pretty good at Soccer—you want a good man to help you keep your end up. Why throw away chances?"

"Oh, you crass idiot!" hissed Wharton. "You benighted dummy!"

"You can call a fellow names!" sneered Bunter. "If you played Soccer like I do, you'd be a better footballer than you are. I can jolly well tell you, plainly, that this eternal jealousy is simply sickening. I've stood this kind of thing all the term—left out, while a lot of duds fumble about. Well, I'm not standing it any longer. If you were a sport, you'd be jolly glad to play me, and let me bag that seven pounds ten—I mean, bag goals for Greyfriars. Nugent's a dud—"

"Idiot!"

"Give a chap a chance—that's all I ask!" said Bunter. "When you see me putting in the ball at Rookwood, you'll be—"

"Ass!"

"If you can't do anything but call a fellow names—"

"Fathead! Chump!"

"Yah!"

Billy Bunter extracted a stump of pencil from his pocket. The football list for Rookwood was posted up in the Rag. Bunter rolled across to it, and blinked at it through his big spectacles. It ran:

S. Q. I. Field.

J. Bull, M. Linley.

R. Cherry, T. Brown, R. Penfold.

H. J. S. Singh H. Vernon-Smith,

H. Wharton, P. Todd, F. Nugent.

That was the team that was going over to Rookwood on the morrow—unless changes were made at the last moment. The captain of the Remove had no idea of making any change. That magnificent footballer, William George Bunter, had.

His fat hand dabbed at the list, and he drew the pencil through the last name, crossing out "F. Nugent."

Then he turned and blinked at Wharton.

"That's that!" he said.

Harry Wharton looked at him, breathing something like fury. For any fellow to take it upon himself to alter the football list, officially posted up by the football captain, was an absolutely unheard-of act of cheek and impudence. The captain of the Remove could hardly believe his eyes.

"You—you—you—" he gasped.

"That's that!" repeated Bunter calmly. "Nugent's out of it now! You saw how he kicked me in break! Well, he's out of the footer now! Play him in the St. Jim's match, if you like—if you want to lose it! You're not going to play him at Rookwood! That's my order!"

"That's what?" shrieked Wharton.

"My order!" said Bunter firmly.

"Your—your order?"

"Yes! You can't play him, anyhow, for if you keep his name in that list, he won't be here to-morrow to go over to Rookwood with you!"

"You fat scoundrel—"

"Pack that up!" said Bunter. He

wagged an admonitory fat finger at the enraged captain of the Remove. "I don't want abuse—and I don't want criticism! I'm going to win this match for you. What more do you want? I'm not going to allow you to play that dud Nugent—"

"You—you—you're not going to—to allow—" Wharton stuttered.

"No! As a Greyfriars man, I can't allow it! You're not going to chuck this match away, simply because Nugent's your pal, and you want to play him! You ought not to want to—but you're no sportsman; that's the trouble! Well, this time you're jolly well going to do the right thing, whether you like it or not! Got that?"

Wharton made a stride forward. He was boiling.

Billy Bunter made a backward jump towards the door.

"You touch me, you beast, and I'll yell out at the top of my voice that it was Nugent who walloped Walker!" he gasped.

"You fat rascal, I'll—"

"I say, you fellows," yelled Bunter, backing rapidly towards the open door, as Wharton advanced on him. "I say, it was Nugent who—"

Wharton stopped.

So did Bunter.

They glared at one another.

"You—you—I—I—" The captain of the Remove was incoherent with rage. But he did not approach Bunter. One yell from that fat youth meant the end of all things at Greyfriars for his best pal.

Bunter had the upper hand. Unless he was to see Frank Nugent called up in the Head's study and sacked from the school, Wharton had to toe the line. He stood, almost choking.

Bunter grinned. He pointed a triumphant and rather grubby finger at the football list.

"Nugent's out!" he said. "He stays out! Mind, I'll look in here again presently, and if you've got Nugent in again, you know what to expect! Take that as a tip!"

With that, Billy Bunter rolled out of the Rag—almost miraculously escaping the booting of his life. Barely did Harry Wharton restrain his intense desire to boot the fatuous fat Owl all over Greyfriars.

But he did restrain it.

Bunter rolled away—grinning.

Wharton was left alone in the Rag—far from grinning.

He stepped across to the football list. But he did not touch it. He stood staring at his chum's crossed-out name. For several long minutes he stared at it with inexpressible feelings. Then, with a knitted brow, and a sorely troubled mind, he walked out of the Rag—leaving Nugent's name still crossed out.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

High Words in Study No. 1.

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! What's that?"

"Nugent out?"

"Why—"

"The whyfulness is terrific."

"After all, Oggy's a better man," remarked the Bounder.

"Hear, hear!" said Ogilvy.

"But Oggy's name isn't in!" said Peter Todd. "Besides, Nugent's in jolly good form! What has Wharton scratched him for?"

"Goodness knows!" said Squiff.

"You know, Nugent?"

Nugent shook his head. His face was almost pale with vexation.

MODEL RAILWAYS

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Harry Wharton slammed the door of the study and put his back to it. Then he faced Nugent. "What will your people think when they hear that you've been kicked out of Greyfriars for making a hooligan attack on a prefect?" he snapped. Frank Nugent looked at the junior captain, and the rage faded out of his face.

After class a number of Remove fellows were in the Rag, staring at the alteration in the football list.

That list was a matter of the keenest interest in the Remove. Except for St. Jim's and Highcliffe, the Rookwood match was the biggest fixture in the Remove list. Even slackers like Skinner, and duffers like Bunter, would have been glad to figure in it. Footballing fellows were fearfully keen on it. Fellows who did not find their names in, could not help feeling a spot of doubt whether Harry Wharton was really quite up to the mark as football captain. Still, everybody agreed that it was a good team—though individuals might have suggested an improvement here and there!

If a name was "out," it meant renewed hope for a number of fellows only too keen to fill the vacant place.

Ogilvy, sorry for Nugent like the good-natured fellow he was, looked rather bright—for there was little doubt that he had the reversion of the place, if Nugent was dropped.

Not to a fellow did it occur that any hand but Wharton's had drawn that pencil line through Nugent's name. Nobody supposed for a moment that any fellow would have the nerve to do it—least of all Bunter! It was taken unquestioningly as official.

It was a heavy blow to Frank, after all his high hopes. It was all the more unpleasant because Wharton had said not a word on the subject—given him no hint that he was thinking of making a change.

Leaving the other fellows in animated discussion, Frank walked out of the Rag, and went up to the Remove. He was bitterly hurt and offended; and he was going to see the football captain at once about this.

Wharton had gone up to his study after class—perhaps to keep away from

questioning. Frank went to find him there.

On the Remove landing he passed Billy Bunter, who favoured him with a fat grin. Taking no notice of the fat Owl, Frank tramped on to his study, and tramped in.

Wharton was there—staring from the window. He turned as his chum entered, and looked at him in silence.

"So I'm out of the eleven?" said Frank, hardly able to control his voice. "You've crossed my name out."

"No! Bunter has!"

"Bunter?" yelled Frank.

"Yes!"

"And you let him do it?"

"No!" said Harry savagely. "I didn't—you did! You've put it in the power of that fat freak to give orders to his Form captain—and I've got to knuckle under. He's crossed your name out—and instead of smashing him for his cheek, I've got to let him get by with it—or else see you hooked off to the head to be sacked!"

"Oh!" gasped Nugent, utterly taken aback.

Wharton clenched his hands.

"Have you come up here to jaw me about it?" he snapped. "A precious position you've put me in with your foolery. You're out of the team. It's Bunter's orders. Understand that? Bunter's orders!"

Nugent gasped.

"I—I—I'll smash him—I—I—I'll—"

He turned to the door, almost panting with rage.

Harry Wharton crossed the room quickly, and slammed the door and put his back to it.

"You won't!" he said. "Don't be a fool—you've done enough in that line already! You've got to stand it—not so rotten for you, as for me, I think. Do you want to be bunked out of Greyfriars?"

"I'd be bunked a hundred times before I'd stand this from that fat fool!" roared Nugent.

"Oh, chuck it! You've let your silly temper run away with you once—you'd better learn to keep it in hand a bit, I think! Are you going home to tell your father that you're sacked from the school? What are you going to say to your mother—and your sisters? What's your father going to say when he hears that you're kicked out of Greyfriars for making a hooligan attack on a prefect, without cause, except that you fancied he had bullied your young rascal of a minor, when he hadn't done anything of the kind."

Harry Wharton's temper was almost on boiling-point, and he did not measure his words.

Nugent looked at him—and the rage faded out of his face. The mention of his father and mother was sufficient to calm him.

He had not thought of them in his passionate temper the day before. He had to think of them, however.

Wharton's words, angry as they were, brought the picture to his mind—of his surprised and shocked family when he arrived home—sacked from the school!

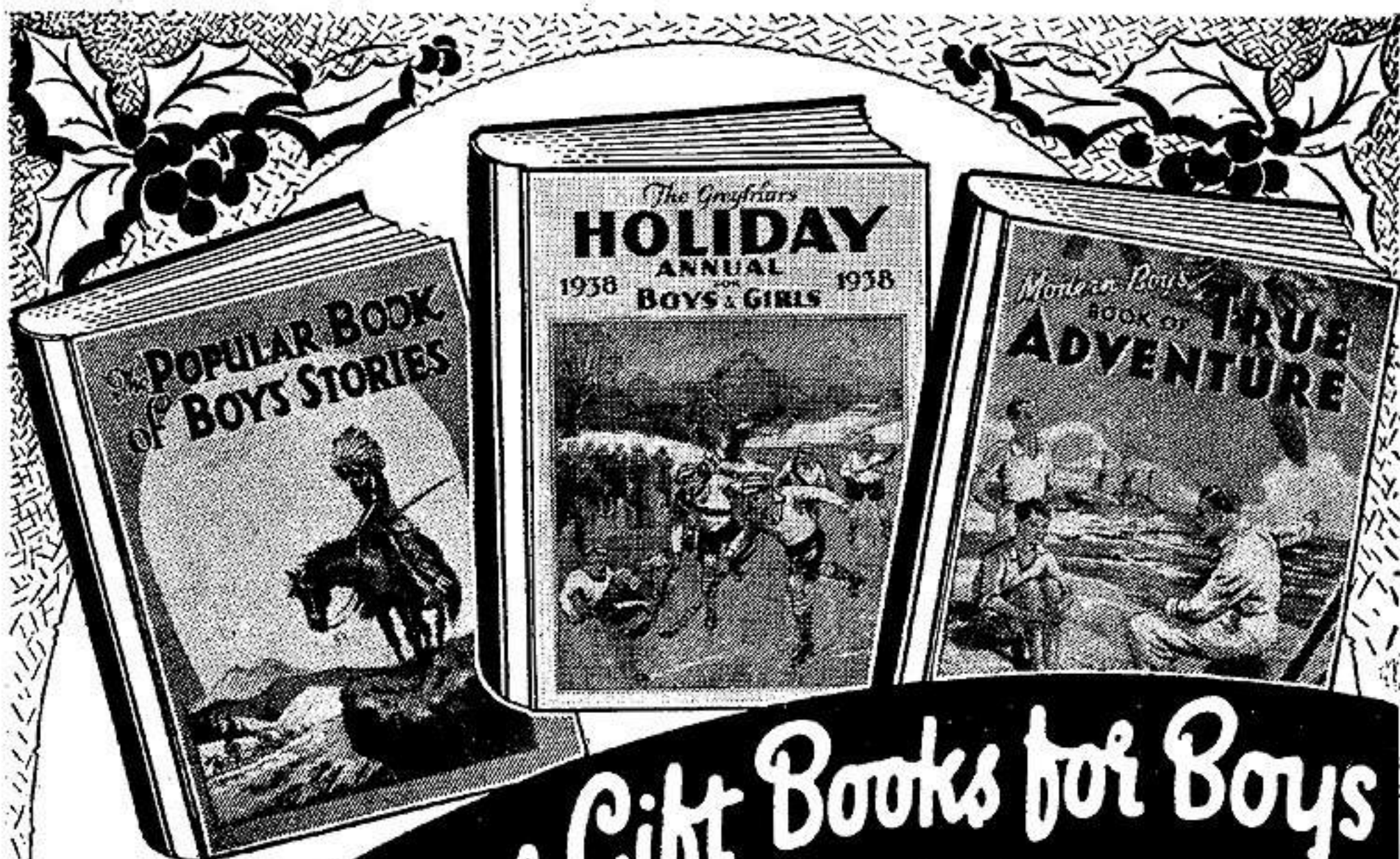
And it would come to that! Once Bunter tattled what he knew up and down the school it could not fail to reach the ears of authority. He would be called before his headmaster, judged, and expelled—as, indeed, he realised now that he deserved to be.

There was silence in the study, and Nugent's face grew almost haggard.

The anger faded out of Wharton's as he saw it.

"No good rowing about it," he muttered. "That fat cad has got us in a cleft stick—I can't kick, or you're done for."

(Continued on page 23.)
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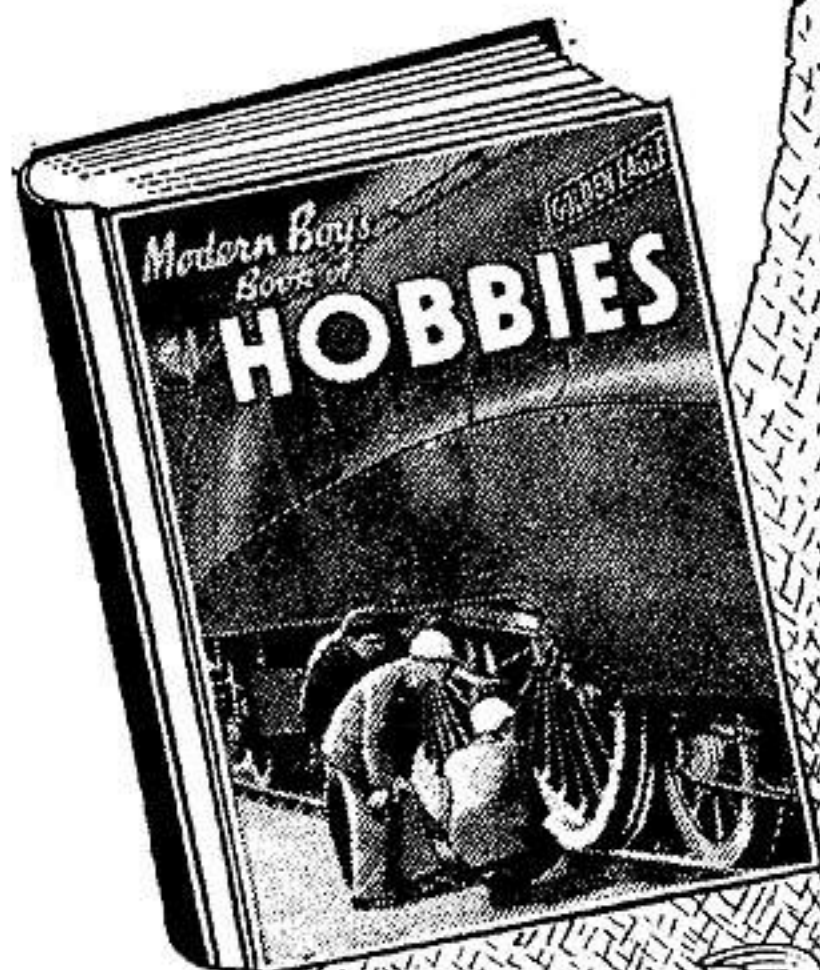
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"I shall have to face it. I've been a fool and I've got to stand for it!" muttered Nugent. "You needn't—"

"Oh, don't be an ass! I'd as soon be sacked myself as see you sacked, and you know it!"

"But—but you can't stand this! You can't let that fool—that idiot—that frowsy frump—dictate to you? You!"

Wharton gave an angry laugh.

"Me!" he said. "High and mighty Panjandrum, as Skinner calls me—dictated to by that fat frump! Yes, I'm going to let Bunter dictate to me—and I shall be only too jolly thankful if he stops at that!"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that he's taken it on himself to push a man out of the eleven, and I've got to let him. And, if that's all, I shall be glad—ready to tell him how awfully obliged I am to him!" said the captain of the Remove savagely. "If he stops at that, all right! Oggy can take your place, and no harm done. But you know what the fat fool's game is—he wants to shove into the team—"

"You can't—"

"Of course I can't! I'm football captain as well as pal to a fathead who handles prefects! I can't chuck a football match away. But—but what am I going to do? I can't let you go up for the sack."

"The rascal—the rascally rotter!" muttered Frank.

"Not much good calling him names! Besides, he's only a fool—he thinks he can play footer and that the game won't suffer. Even Bunter wouldn't do this if he had the sense of a bunny rabbit and understood what he was doing! He doesn't! Not that it makes any difference! He's got me!"

"But you can't—"

"I know!"

"Well, then—"

"I know I can't! But what can I do?"

"You'll have to let him rip and let me take my gruel."

"Oh, don't talk rot!"

The study door was pushed open. Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh came in—rather uneasily.

"Not rowing, you fellows?" asked Bob.

"No; only a pleasant chat about the Rookwood match!" said Harry bitterly.

"Well, look here, old man, it's a bit of a surprise—Nugent being left out like that at the last minute," said Bob uncomfortably. "No fellow would like it! I suppose you've got a reason?"

"None at all!"

"Eh? Then why is Nugent left out?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"Ask Bunter!"

"Bunter?"

"Yes, Bunter; Bunter gives orders now and I jump to them! And, if I don't, Nugent goes up for the sack, and Smithy along with him."

"Oh!" gasped Johnny.

"You mean to say—" gasped Bob.

"Oh, my esteemed hat!" gasped the Nabob of Bhanipur.

Bob Cherry clenched his hands.

"We've just passed him on the landing—grinning like a Cheshire cat! I'll punch that grin off his face! I'll smash him up! I'll—I'll—"

"Oh, do!" said Wharton sarcastically.

"Do—if you want him to yell out to all Greyfriars that Nugent whopped Walker in the quad! Walker will be glad to spot the man—go it!"

Bob, who was jumping to the door, turned back.

"But—" he gasped.

"I'm not standing this!" said Nugent.

"It's up to me—and I'm going to the Head—"

"You're going to do nothing of the kind! Don't talk like an ass!"

Bob shook his head.

"Wash that out," he said. "But—but—but—" Bob broke off helplessly. The peculiar situation was beyond him.

But one thing, at least, was clear. Billy Bunter was not to be punched, thumped, and booted as he so richly deserved. Billy Bunter, grinning with fatuous satisfaction, went on grinning—from ear to ear!

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Die Is Cast!

"I SAY, old chap!"

Harry Wharton was tramping to and fro under the leafless old elms, his hands in his pockets, a wrinkle in his brow. He was deep in disagreeable thought when Billy Bunter joined him.

It was tea-time, but Wharton had forgotten tea. He was trying to think of a way out of the difficulty in which he had been placed by his chum's folly and Bunter's unscrupulous fatuousness. And he could think of no way out.

"I've looked in the Rag!" said Bunter, blinking at him. "You haven't put my name in the Rookwood list yet."

Wharton did not answer that. He looked at the fat Owl as if he could have eaten him; that was all.

"I mean to say, I've washed that dud Nugent out," said Bunter. "But a fellow's name will have to be written in your fist. Why haven't you done it yet?"

Wharton breathed hard.

But he kept his temper. Booting Bunter all over the quad would have been more agreeable than reasoning with him. But that not being practical politics, Wharton had resolved to reason with him—if the fat Owl's podgy brain was amenable to reasoning.

"Now, look here, Bunter," he said quietly, "you can't do this. If you had any sense you'd know you were acting like an unscrupulous rascal. If you give Nugent away you're a rotten sneak—"

"Who's going to give him away?" asked Bunter. "If you mean that I'm capable of sneaking to a beak or a prefect, Harry Wharton, I can only say that you're an insulting beast! You'd better shut up, I think. I may mention that matter to my friends. I don't see why I shouldn't!"

"If you talk about it at all it will be jawed up and down the school and come out—you might as well go straight to Quelch or the Head!" said Harry, as patiently as he could.

"I don't see that!" yawned Bunter. "I don't see why I shouldn't chat with my friends if I choose. Besides, if you want me to keep it to myself I'm perfectly willing to oblige you, as you know. It all depends on whether you make up your mind to do the right thing."

"The wrong thing, you mean, you fat ass!"

"I mean what I say! You know jolly well that I'm entitled to play for school! Why not admit it?"

"Oh, you benighted idiot!"

"Dash it all, why not be a sport for once?" demanded Bunter warmly.

"You know my Uncle George is going to shell out seven pounds ten if he sees my name in a Greyfriars match. Yet you want to bar me out of this match—knowing all the time that I'm the best man available. I call it sickening."

Bunter spoke with warm indignation.

Evidently it was not much use reasoning with the fat Owl!

So far from realising that he was acting like a rascal, the Owl took the view that, for once, he had the power to make an obstinate ass do the right thing. Reasoning with a fellow who was gifted with an intellect like that was obviously a waste of breath.

Whether Bunter quite believed what he said was perhaps doubtful. Perhaps he half-believed it. But he had a wonderful way of believing anything that he wanted to believe.

Certainly he was not going to admit to himself that he was acting unscrupulously. He was going to make Wharton do the right thing for once. That was how he was going to look at it, at any rate.

"After all, you want to win!" he said. "I'm willing to be judged by results! Judge by the goals I bag—see?"

"You fat chump, we have to go all out to keep our end up at Rookwood. One dud in the team means chucking the game away."

"Well, I've crossed out the dud! Nugent won't be playing. That's all right."

"I can't play you."

"Suit yourself, of course," said Bunter. "I can't make you, if you won't! And you can't make me keep Nugent's rotten secrets for him, either."

Wharton was silent. On his own account he would have acceded to anything, to save his chum from the result of his folly. But, as football captain, he had his duty to do. What Bunter asked was impossible to grant—and yet—unless he granted it, Nugent had to take what was coming to him.

"I've got to catch the post," said Bunter. "If I'm playing, I want to let my uncle know. I've written the letter already, to tell him that I'm playing in the fixture at Rookwood—"

"You fat fool!"

"If I'm playing, I'm going to catch the post with that letter," said Bunter. "I want old George to know, of course. I want that seven pounds ten. Well, am I to post that letter, or not?"

No answer.

"It's for you to decide!" grinned Bunter. "You're skipper. If the fellows had sense enough to make me skipper, it would be all right. They haven't. Well, as skipper, you ought to do the right thing. You know as well as I do that a football skipper ought to put in the best men. No need for me to tell you that. You prefer to play your pals. Well—"

"You blithering idiot!"

"Abuse is no argument!" said Bunter loftily. "Look here! I want to know whether to post that letter or not. 'Yes' or 'No'?"

Wharton made one more attempt.

"Look here, Bunter! I saw your uncle's letter, and he made a condition that you were to be selected on your merits as a footballer. Butting into the team by threatening to sneak about Nugent is quite a different thing. You'll be practically diddling the old bean."

"You know a lot about the merits of a footballer, don't you?" sneered Bunter. "You pick out a dud like Nugent, and a barking walrus like Cherry, and a blundering elephant like Bull— Why, I've forgotten more about Soccer than you ever knew, or will know!"

Evidently there was nothing doing.

"That's enough jaw," went on Bunter. "I'm sick of listening to your silly carping and jealousy. Is my name going up in the Rookwood list?"

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THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Startling!

"WHO'S the happy man?" asked Peter Todd.

A crowd of Remove fellows were in the Rag after tea, and all eyes fixed on Harry Wharton, when he came in. He stepped up to the football notice, and took a pencil from his pocket.

Clearly he was going to add a new name, in the place of Nugent's, and everybody was keen to know what name it was.

The Co. were not there. But all other members of the football eleven were present, as well as plenty of fellows who would have been glad to be included as members. Ogilvy, Hazeldene, Wibley, Morgan, Micky Desmond, Bolsover major, and several other fellows, looked hopeful.

Wharton did not immediately use the pencil, however. He stood in front of the notice and looked at the crowd of Remove fellows. His face was clouded.

"Give it a name!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Put us out of our jolly old misery, old bean!" said Wibley.

"I've got something to say first," said Harry Wharton. "I've decided to put a certain chap in the team—and nobody will like it. I've got reasons for doing it that I can't explain—and I don't expect anybody to be satisfied. If the men ask me to get out, I'll resign on the spot. When you see the name up, I dare say you'll want me to go. If you do, I shan't say anything. Squiff will make a jolly good skipper, if you want a change, or Browney, or Linley. Plenty of good men to choose from. I've never claimed to be the only pebble on the beach."

"You're talking rot!" said Mark Linley.

"Sheer rot!" agreed Squiff. "What's biting you, old man?"

"Talk sense," suggested Tom Brown.

"By gum, this is getting jolly mysterious!" said the Bounder. "What sort of a giddy recruit have you dug up? Has Coker of the Fifth offered to play for the Remove, by any chance?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton made no reply. But he turned to the paper, and under the crossed-out name of F. Nugent, wrote, in a firm hand, "W. G. Bunter."

The Remove crowd stared at that name, not merely in surprise, not merely in astonishment, but in stupefaction.

"Call that a joke, or what?" gasped Peter Todd.

"No!"

"You don't mean that, of course?" asked Squiff.

"Yes!"

"Talk sense!" roared Bolsover major. "You've picked out the silliest and uttermost fatheaded dud in the Remove for the Rookwood match!"

"Yes!"

"You haven't got a sudden fancy that Bunter can play footer?" asked Tom Brown.

"No!"

"Well, what do you mean by it, then?"

Harry Wharton slipped the pencil back into his pocket.

"You all heard what I said!" he answered. "Kick me out of the captaincy, if you like. I shan't complain. But if I stay skipper, Bunter's in the eleven."

"You won't stay skipper long at that rate!" bawled Bolsover major.

"I'm ready to go."

"Oh, don't talk rot!" roared Peter Todd. "Nobody wants you to go. But you can't play Bunter, and you know you can't!"

"Not gone mad, by any chance?" asked Hazeldene.

"Mad as a hatter, I should think!" gasped Wibley. "That chap tells me I can't play Soccer! Is my Soccer as bad as Bunter's?"

"Look here, Wharton—"

"This won't do, Wharton!" said the Bounder. "If you fancy you can get by with playing the goat like that, you've got another guess coming. You can't, and you ought to know you can't!"

Harry Wharton laughed. The Bounder's fate as well as Nugent's, hung on that name in the football list, though Smithy was not aware of it.

"Don't you jaw, Smithy," said Wharton. "I don't want to hear anything from you. You fellows, we leave for Rookwood early to-morrow afternoon. If you want a new skipper, you've only to say so before we start. If I'm turned out, I can't play Bunter—and it's in your hands to turn me out. I shouldn't be sorry if you did! That's all."

"Nobody's going to turn you out, Wharton!" said Mark Linley. "But you can't be serious about this! What do you mean by it?"

"Yes, let's know what it means!" sneered the Bounder. "Has Bunter offered you halves in his tip from Uncle George?"

"Oh crumbs! Is that it?" yelled Bolsover major. "Look here, Wharton—"

"Shut up, fathead!" said Squiff.

Harry Wharton, without deigning to reply, walked out of the Rag. He left the juniors in a buzz behind him. Vernon-Smith, with a savagely angry face, followed him and overtook him in the passage.

"Do you think we're going to stand this, Wharton?" he demanded, grabbing the captain of the Remove by the arm. "Do you fancy, for one minute, that you can get by with silly cheek like that?"

Wharton jerked his arm away.

"You'd better hope so!" he said curtly.

"What the dickens do you mean?"

"Can't you guess?" snapped Wharton. "If you'd had enough sense to hold Nugent back, instead of helping him on, this wouldn't have happened. You had to keep up your reputation as a bad hat—of course! You couldn't lose a chance of getting mixed up in a mad rag! You couldn't give us a tip what that hot-headed ass was up to, so that we could have stopped him. Well, this is the result."

"What the thump has Walker got to do with football?" exclaimed the Bounder, blankly.

"This much—that if Bunter doesn't go into the team, you and Nugent go up to the Head for the sack. Is that what you want?"

"Oh!" gasped Smithy. "You mean he's asked—"

"No, I don't! I mean that he's given orders, and I'm jumping to them. Now you'd better shut up!"

With that, Harry Wharton strode away—leaving Herbert Vernon-Smith staring blankly after him.

In the Rag there was a buzz of excitement and wondering surmise. Few fellows were likely to heed the jeering suggestion that the captain of the Remove was "going halves" with Bunter in the tip from Uncle George.

(Continued on page 25.)

"No!" hissed Wharton.

"Oh! All right!"

Bunter blinked round. At a little distance, Skinner and Snoop, Stott and Fisher T. Fish, were standing in a group, talking.

"I say, you fellows!" yelled Bunter.

Skinner & Co. looked round.

"I say, I've got something to tell you fellows!" squeaked Bunter. "Something rather interesting. He, he, he!"

Harry Wharton caught his breath. Walker and Loder of the Sixth were passing at a short distance. One word to Walker's ears, and the game would be up!

"What's the jolly old news, fatty?" asked Skinner. "Found out who whopped Walker yesterday?"

"He, he, he! I say—"

"Shut up!" breathed Wharton.

Bunter blinked at him.

"Shall I tell these fellows that I'm in the team for Rookwood, or that Nugent whopped Walker?" he asked.

"Oh, you fat rotter!"

"What's on?" asked Skinner curiously. He could see that something was on, and he came across, followed by his friends.

"Cough it up, old fat man!"

"I'm in the team for Rookwood!" said Bunter.

"Eh?"

"What?"

"Tell us another!"

"Am I or not, Wharton?" asked the fat Owl, fixing his eyes and his spectacles on the captain of the Remove.

"Yes" or "No," old chap?"

"No!" breathed Harry.

"Oh! All right! I say, you fellows, I was going to tell you about—"

"Yes!" gasped Harry.

Bunter chuckled.

"I say, you fellows, you hear that? Wharton's decided to put me in Nugent's place. Bit better prospect for Greyfriars to-morrow, what? I say, Wharton, old chap, stick my name up in the list, will you? I fancy Oggy's got his eye on the place, and you may as well let the fellows know."

"Is this a joke, Wharton?" asked Skinner, mystified.

Harry Wharton walked away towards the House without replying.

Skinner & Co. stared after him, and then stared at Bunter.

Bunter was grinning all over his fat face.

"I say, you fellows, ripping, ain't it?" he said. "Wharton's a bit of an obstinate ass—but he's decided to do the right thing."

"If Wharton puts you in the team, the team will lynch him!" said Snoop.

"Yah!"

"I guess this is the bee's knee!" said Fisher T. Fish.

"Blessed if I can make it out," said Stott. "Wharton wouldn't dare to put that fat chump in the team."

"Jealousy all round!" sneered Bunter. "Well, I can't stay here listening to your rotten envy—I've got a letter to post."

And Bunter rolled away to the school letter-box, and dropped his letter to Uncle George therein. Then he rolled back to the House in a happy and satisfied mood.

The die was cast now—Wharton had knuckled under. Bunter's name was going up in the list—Bunter was going to play at Rookwood—Bunter was going to receive the magnificent sum of seven pounds ten shillings from his Uncle George, and it was going to be gorgeous—at least, for Bunter!

Tramp, Tramp, Tramp! The Boys are Marching with—

The GREYFRIARS GUIDE

A TOUR OF THE SCHOOL. The Prefects' Room.

(1)

It's solemn and calm in the prefects' room,
For this is no place for ragging,
Where prefects sit in a studious gloom
And fags are silently fagging.
While Tabb of the Third makes coffee
and toast
For senior fellows to guzzle,
Old Wingate is busily sorting his post,
And Carne has a shot at a puzzle.



AFTER SCHOOL HOURS The Debating Society

(1)

On Thursday nights at half-past eight
The Fourth assemble in debate;
With gravity they sit around
The table in the Rag.
When Captain Temple takes the chair
He sternly orders: "Silence, there!"
And who would dare to make a sound
When Temple starts to brag?

(2)

The subject for debate to-night
Is "Politics, and Are They Right?"
And there's a breathless hush, because
Old Dabney starts to bleat.
"Hem! 'Are They Right?' " he reads,
and adds:
"Oh, rather!" Whereupon the lads
Burst into volumes of applause.
As Dab resumes his seat.

(3)

Dab having said his little say,
Old Fry gets up and starts to bray,
And all the ranks of the Remove
Can scarce forbear to cheer
As Fry maintains upon the spot
That politics are bally rot,
And says he'll undertake to prove
They're simply rot! (Hear, hear!)

(4)

"I mean to say," Fry means to say,
"Just look at politics to-day!"
It's simply chinwag, where a lot
Of asses wag their jaws!
They gather round and hear some ass
Get up and spout a lot of gas!
"That sort of thing is bally rot!"
(Much laughter and applause.)
And Temple, trying hard to speak,
Adjourns the meeting for a week!

(2)

And Gwynne, on the telephone, orders
some books
On "Life in the Chilean Tropics,"
While Loder, who much prefers race-
horses, looks
As though he is bored with such topics.
And Sykes, talking football, is ready
to go
On wagging his chin without ceasing,
And Walker is counting his money, as
though
He hopes he will find it increasing.

(3)

But sometimes the calmness is shattered
with force
When prefects assemble in meeting,
And some young offender, who's full of
remorse,
Is up to the prefects for beating.
Then howls and entreaties and gurgles
are heard,
Combined with a rhythmical whacking,
And those who have tried it have always
averred
The prefects should all be sent
packing

THE GREYFRIARS ALPHABET GEORGE GATTY,

Dicky Nugent's chum in the Second.

G is for GATTY of the Second—
To mention him at all I reckoned,
Unnecessary waste of time;
He isn't worth a single rhyme.
It causes me profound surprise
To know the Ed thinks otherwise!



This inky-featured infant pals
With other little animals
Who move in an untidy swarm
About the noisy Second Form.
They're known as fags because they shirk
The very smallest hint of work.
The inkiest of all the tribe
Is Dicky Nugent, famous scribe;
But Gatty, with his smudgy face,
Is easily in second place.

ANSWER TO PUZZLE

$\frac{1}{2}$ oz., $1\frac{1}{2}$ ozs., $4\frac{1}{2}$ ozs., $13\frac{1}{2}$ ozs.



A WEEKLY BUDGET OF FACT AND FUN

By
THE GREYFRIARS
RHYMESTER

GREYFRIARS GRINS

Fitzgerald of the Fifth was observed
to throw two large stones at Gosling's
dog this morning. We believe it was a
case of once bitten, twice shy.

Part of Coker's letter to his Aunt
Judy: "The wether hear is pretty
rotten." A very bad spell of weather,
in fact.

Fisher T. Fish has such a bad cold
that he has been excused lessons till it's
better. His correspondence course on
"Catching a Cold" is now selling like
hot cakes.

Bunter let four empty biscuit-tins fall
down the stone stairs yesterday morn-
ing. Hoskins of the Shell was surprised
when there were loud requests for him
to stop playing his Sonata in F.

PUZZLE PAR

Mrs. Mimble has only four
weights in her shop, but with
them she can weigh any quantity
between $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. and 20 ozs. What
are the weights?

Answer at foot of column 2.

Bunter says he is willing—even
anxious—to give up raiding tuck—only
he can't persuade another fellow to do it
for him!

Trotter, the page-boy, says he's a
sleep-walker. He woke up the other
night, and found himself hurrying along
the Lower Hall. Mrs. Kebble, the
house-dame, has now asked Trotter to go
to sleep during the day. It's the first
time he's ever hurried anywhere.

Mr. Prout has been seen cleaning and
oiling his gun. Well, it's time some-
thing was done about the mico in the
Fifth Form quarters!

A motor firm claim that they have
made a chassis frame which can stand
a pressure of 2,500 tons. That's nothing.
At Greyfriars we have a bed frame
which can stand the pressure of Bunter.

But why he was doing this was an utter and impenetrable mystery.

Finally, the astonished and exasperated footballers went in search of the Co. to seek enlightenment.

But from Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, and Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh, they learned nothing. The Co. knew why, but they could not say so.

Then a crowd of the fellows went along to Study No. 7 to see whether Bunter knew any reason why he was picked out for this distinction.

Bunter, it seemed, knew; and was ready to shed light on the mystery.

"Wharton's decided to do the right thing at last!" Bunter explained airily. "Knowing me to be the best footballer in the Remove, he's made up his mind to put jealousy aside and pick the best man that he can get! That's all."

"You burbling idiot!" said Peter Todd.

"You benighted bandersnatch," said Squiff.

"You fat, frumptions freak!" hooted Tom Brown.

"Wait and see!" advised Bunter. "When you see me kicking goals at Rookwood—"

"If we see that, we shall see you kicking them through our goal!" roared Toddy.

"Yah!"

"Look here, Bunter, why has Wharton put your name up?" bawled Penfold.

"Because I'm the best winger he's got!"

"Oh, kick him!" said Toddy.

"Beast!"

It had to remain a mystery—unless Bunter's explanation was to be accepted.

Nobody but Bunter, however, was likely to regard W. G. Bunter as the best man available for the vacant place in the team. Unless the captain of the Remove had gone off his dot, there was no understanding it.

That evening there was hot discussion in the Remove studies. A good many fellows were inclined to take Wharton at his word and ask him to step out of the captaincy—at least, till he got back on his "dot."

Wharton, as he had said, would not have been sorry to have it put out of his power to jump to the orders of the ineffable Bunter.

But it did not come to that; whether off or on his dot, Harry Wharton was captain of the Remove; and Billy Bunter's name remained posted up in the Rag, outside-left for the Rookwood match—a wonder to all observers!

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Uncle George Wants to Know!

"WHARTON!"

Harry looked round.

He was in the quad, with his friends, after class the following morning, when Mr. Quelch called to him from the door.

It was a fine, clear day; ripping weather for Soccer; and it was Rookwood day; but the chums of the Remove were not looking so merry and bright as they might have been expected to look on that great day.

Immediately after dinner they were starting for Rookwood; but the fact that William George Bunter was going, as a member of the team, had a rather clouding effect on their spirits.

There seemed nothing to be done. Arguing with Bunter elicited nothing from him but fatuous self-satisfaction.

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He could not—at present—be booted—though later, when the affair of Walker had blown over, there was little doubt that he would be most severely booted.

In the meantime, Johnny Bull had kicked Nugent minor, as the original cause of the trouble; which action, though solacing, did not solve any problems.

"Yes, sir!" said Harry, as his Form-master called; and he left his friends and hurried across to the door of the House.

"Someone desires to speak to you on the telephone, Wharton!" said Mr. Quelch. "A Mr. Bunter—a Mr. George Bunter—"

"Oh!" exclaimed Harry in astonishment. "Does he want me, sir?"

"He stated that he desires to speak, very urgently, with his nephew's football captain," said Mr. Quelch. "and he gave your name. Really, I do not quite understand; but as it appears to be very urgent, you may go in and take the call, Wharton."

"Very well, sir."

Understanding no more than Mr. Quelch, why Bunter's uncle desired to speak to him on the telephone, Wharton went into the House. The Remove master was frowning a little; telephone calls for members of his Form being quite out of the usual run of things. However, he was allowing Wharton to take the call.

The captain of the Remove hurried up the passage and went into Mr. Quelch's study.

The receiver was off the telephone, as Mr. Quelch had left it when he went to the door to call Wharton.

Wharton picked it up.

"Wharton speaking!" he said. "Is that Mr. Bunter?"

"Mr. George Bunter!" came back a fat and wheezy voice. "I have had a letter this morning from my nephew William, at Greyfriars. You, I understand, are football captain in the junior team! Is not that so?"

"Yes," said Harry.

"Then my nephew William is in your team, playing in a junior match this afternoon at Rookwood School?"

"Oh, yes!"

Wharton began to understand.

He was well aware that Mr. George Bunter's letter to his nephew William, days ago, had been written in a sarcastic strain. Uncle George did not believe, for one moment, that William would ever be playing for his school.

His offer to supply the two pounds ten shillings Billy required for a new football outfit—perhaps—and to add a five-pound note to it if he played for Greyfriars, had been pure "sarc." Uncle George did not expect that offer to cost him anything!

So that letter from Nephew William, informing him that W. G. Bunter was selected to play football in a junior Greyfriars match, had undoubtedly given Uncle George a surprise.

Knowing his hopeful nephew as he did, he did not believe it! Hence that call for the Remove football captain. Mr. G. Bunter wanted definite information, straight from the horse's mouth, as it were.

"William states that he is playing in a junior Greyfriars match!" said Mr. George Bunter. "I have not always—hem—found William truthful! Do you confirm this, as captain of the football team in question?"

"Yes, he's going to play in the match!" said Harry.

He answered slowly—wondering exactly what he ought to say. It was true that Bunter was going to play in the match, at all events.

"You confirm his statement, as football captain?" asked Mr. George Bunter.

"He's in the team," said Harry.

"Possibly you may be aware that, being very anxious to see William improve at games, I have offered him a somewhat substantial reward, if I receive a report that he has played for his school?"

"Yes: he told everybody about that."

"No less a sum," said Mr. George Bunter, "than seven pounds ten shillings: being two pounds ten shillings for a new football outfit which William states that he requires, and a reward of five pounds for gaining such distinction."

"Yes, I know," answered Harry.

"I am not unaware," continued Mr. George Bunter, in a very dry tone, "that football matters are sometimes matters of—hem!—arrangement. I have never met you, Master Wharton, and cannot, therefore, judge of your character. But I am bound to say that I am surprised—very much surprised—to hear that William is playing for his school. It is—hem!—very sudden. He has been described in his school reports as idle in class, and slack at games. This change is very gratifying—if genuine, I desire to be satisfied that it is genuine."

Wharton's cheeks flushed.

It was evident that Mr. George Bunter was not only surprised, but that he was doubtful, and, in fact, suspicious.

Greyfriars football was above suspicion; but, no doubt, Mr. George Bunter had heard of football teams in which things could be "squared." Really, it looked as if he fancied that the Remove captain had been squared—perhaps with an offer of a whack in the seven pounds ten.

"I should like a definite statement on this subject," pursued the plump voice over the wires. "I am not blind to the possibility that such matters may be—hem!—arranged—I may say, squared. For that reason, I distinctly stated in my letter to William, that he must play as a member of a school team, selected on his merits as a footballer."

"Oh!" gasped Harry.

"I am bound to accept your assurance on that point, if you give it fully and frankly," said Mr. George Bunter. "Can you state fully and frankly, and with a clear conscience, Master Wharton, that my nephew, William, has been selected to play in this match on his merits as a footballer?"

There was only one answer that Harry Wharton could make to that. Certainly he was not going to tell Mr. George Bunter untruths, to help the fat Owl diddle that relative.

"No," he answered, at once.

"No?" repeated Mr. George Bunter.

"He is not selected on his merits as a footballer, Master Wharton?"

"No fear; he hasn't any!"

"Then may I inquire why he has been selected to play for his school, if he has no merits as a footballer?"

Wharton stammered a little.

"It's—it's rather hard to explain, sir," he said. "Owing to circumstances, I've got no choice but to play him. I'd rather not, but as it stands, it can't be helped. I can't explain more than that."

"That is a very odd statement, Master Wharton."

"I know. But that's how it is. Bunter's no footballer, and never was, and never will be! And he's bootied into the team against my wish, and

(Continued on page 23.)

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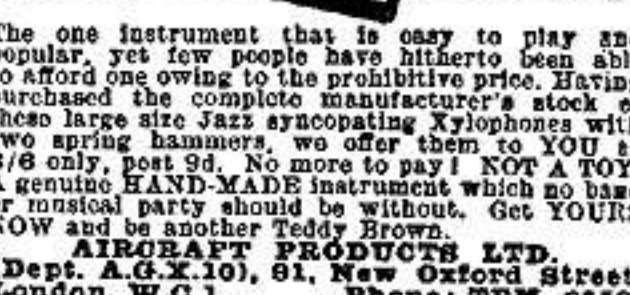
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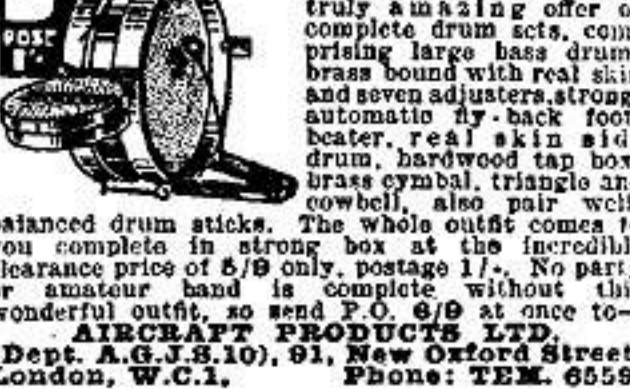
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the wish of every other fellow in it; but, owing to—circumstances, we can't boot him out. That's how the matter stands. I only hope it won't mean losing the match at Rookwood; but I expect it will."

"I fail to understand," said Mr. George Bunter, "why you, as football captain, should play anyone against your wish. But that does not concern me in the least. It does not affect the issue. What I desire to know is, whether my nephew William was selected to play on his merits as a footballer, and not by any kind of—hem!—trickery?"

"He hasn't any merits as a footballer," answered Harry. "He can't play footer for toffee!"

"Then it is by means of some kind of trickery that he is in the eleven."

"I'd rather not say any more."

"It is unnecessary. You have said quite enough, and confirmed what I already believed," said Mr. George Bunter. "I am obliged to you for being frank with me, Master Wharton. Good-bye!"

Mr. George Bunter rang off.

Harry Wharton put up the receiver, and left his Form-master's study.

Mr. George Bunter, at his end, sat down to write a letter to his nephew William at Greyfriars. But he did not enclose seven pounds ten shillings in that letter.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

Toddy Does his Best!

"**B**UNTER, old bean!" Billy Bunter grinned. "Chuck it, Toddy!" he said. "I was going to ask you if—"

"He, he, he! I know! Chuck it!" grinned Bunter. "Nothing doing, Toddy. Like your dashed cheek, I think! I'm going over to Rookwood with the team. Think I can let the team down? You can ask me till you're black in the face, Toddy, and you'll find that I'm not the man to let my team down."

Peter Todd breathed hard through his nose.

"I was going to ask you—" he repeated.

"I know. You've asked me a dozen times already. Well, I'm not standing out of this match! Think I'm going to chuck away seven pounds ten—I mean, think I'm going to let the team down, after promising to play? What do you take me for?" demanded Bunter warmly.

"If you'd like some jam tarts before we start—"

"Oh!" Bunter's expression changed. "Certainly, old chap! The fact is, I never had enough dinner. Quelch had his eye on me. You know how mean he is with the food. He stopped me at the fifth helping. I say, where are the tarts, old fellow?"

"Come up to the study," said Peter cheerily.

"What-ho!"

The footballers were preparing to start for the station. But there was time to dispose of jam tarts. Billy Bunter was never likely to fail to find time for that. And no doubt, he considered jam tarts a good thing as a preliminary to a Soccer match. He followed Toddy promptly.

Since Bunter's name had appeared in the Rookwood list, Toddy had talked to the fat Owl on the subject several times. The captain of the Remove being, apparently off his dot, Peter had urged Bunter to stand out, for the sake of the game. Needless to relate, his arguments had been a sheer waste. Now, however, Peter had thought of another dodge.

"Certainly, it was very unusual for one member of a football team to take measures to keep another member away from a match. But the circumstances were so very unusual that Toddy felt justified in taking unusual measures."

Bunter in the team meant disaster for the game. Nobody but Bunter doubted that. Even the football captain, who had put him in, did not affect to fancy that he would be of any use. Why he had done it was a mystery; and Toddy had thought of a way of undoing it.

The fat Owl followed him cheerfully into Study No. 7. On the table lay a bag of jam tarts.

"I say, old chap, this is jolly decent of you!" said Bunter. "I'll stand you a spread out of my seven pounds ten, Toddy."

"Pile in, old man!" said Peter hospitably. "Finish the lot!"

"Look here, you have one, Toddy," said Bunter generously.

There were half a dozen juicy jam tarts in the bag.

"Thanks, no! You finish the lot, old fat man," said Peter. "You'll have lots of time."

He stepped out of the study, and drew the door shut. The key had already been placed in the outside of the lock. Toddy turned it, and walked down the Remove passage, smiling, with the key in his pocket.

Unless Billy Bunter could push his ample person through a keyhole, it did not look as if he would join the footballers starting for Rookwood. That was Peter's little game.

Bunter did not notice the turning of the key—for the moment. He was busy disposing of six jam tarts, one after another.

Happy and sticky, he rolled to the door. It did not open when he pulled at it. He blinked at it through his big spectacles in surprise. Then it dawned on him. He thumped on the door.

"Toddy!" he roared. "Let me out, Toddy! You awful beast, let me out of this study! I shall miss the train! Beast! Come back and let me out!"

Thump, thump, thump!

"Toddy, you rotter! Come and let me out!" yelled Bunter. "Oh, you awful beast, gammoning a fellow! You silly idiot, I shall lose that seven pounds ten if I don't go to Rookwood! Oh crikey!"

Thump, thump!

Billy Bunter gasped with wrath. His very spectacles gleamed with rage as he thumped and thumped on the study door.

He knew Peter's game, only too well. The footballers might be starting any minute now. He was going to be missing when they started. Were they likely to wait for him, or to look for him? They were not.

Thump, thump! Bang!

"Come and lemme out, you beast!" shrieked Bunter, through the keyhole.

"Oh, you awful rotter, Toddy! Come and lemme out!"

But answer there came none. There was nobody in the studies, and Bunter thumped, and roared, and howled in vain.

Peter Todd, in a very cheery mood, had joined the footballers, who were going to walk to the station, and were

now ready to start, with some other Remove men, who were going over to Rookwood with the team.

"Where's Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton, looking round for the fat Owl.

Slack and unpunctual as Bunter was, the captain of the Remove had expected him to be on the spot on this occasion. But he was not to be seen.

"Chucked it, perhaps," said Bob Cherry hopefully.

"Oh, what a little bit of luck!" murmured Squiff.

"The luckfulness would be terrific!"

"Better not hang about," said Peter. "We don't want to lose that train. What about Oggy, if Bunter's missing it, Wharton?"

"He can't be missing! Where the dickens is the fat fool?" exclaimed Wharton. "Hasn't anybody seen him?"

"Bother him!" said Tom Brown. "If he doesn't choose to be here—"

"Let's get off!" said Penfold.

"If we lose that train—" said Peter.

"Come on, old man," said Bob Cherry. "Bunter knew when we were starting. If he doesn't choose to be on hand—"

Harry Wharton hesitated a moment. Only too gladly would he have caught that train and left Bunter behind. He was tempted; but he knew that it would not do.

He had agreed to play Bunter at Rookwood, and he had to keep to it—or take the consequences—at least, his chum had to take them.

Frank Nugent, who was going with the footballers, was there, and he pressed Wharton's arm.

"Chance it!" he whispered. "Leave it at that!"

"I can't!"

Harry Wharton went back into the House to look for Bunter.

The footballers looked at one another. The Co. understood—and said nothing. The other members of the team did not understand—and they said a good many things, and said them with emphasis.

"Is that chap quite mad?" asked Peter Todd. "Mad as a hatter, to play Bunter at all—and madder, to want to find him when he's losing the train. Lot of good a fellow locking the fat rotter in the study, at this rate."

"Oh!" gasped Bob. "Is that it?"

"Why can't that potty ass Wharton leave him there?" howled Squiff.

"My hat! Anybody would think that Bunter was a prize-packet—the best footballer ever!" exclaimed Tom Brown. "Wharton must be right off his rocker!"

"Mad!" said Peter. "Stark, staring, raving mad—mad as a hornet! Hallo, here he is again! Want anything, Wharton?"

"Give me that key, you silly ass!" snapped the captain of the Remove. "What the thump do you mean by locking Bunter in his study?"

"Trying to save you from making a silly fool of yourself!" answered Peter politely, as he handed over the key.

Without replying to that, Harry Wharton hurried into the House with the key of Study No. 7. Two minutes more, and Bunter rolled out with the captain of the Remove.

He gave Peter Todd a glare.

"You cheeky beast!" he roared. "You silly fathead—Ow! If you kick me again, Peter Todd, I'll—Yoo-hoooooop!"

Billy Bunter kept at a respectable distance from Peter, as the party headed for the station.



"What the thump has whopping a prefect got to do with football!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith blankly. "This much," said Wharton. "If Bunter doesn't go into the team, you and Nugent go up to the Head for the sack!" "You mean he's asked—" gasped Smithy. "No, I don't!" snapped Wharton. "He's given orders, and I'm jumping to them!"

It was not a very happy or cheerful party. Generally, the Remove footballers set off for a match in very cheery spirits—but the inclusion of that very extraordinary recruit made a lot of difference. And if the fellows had been irritated before, they were doubly irritated by their captain's incomprehensible anxiety to rope Bunter in at the last moment, when there was a chance of losing him.

In all the party, in fact, there was only one fellow who was feeling satisfied. That one was William George Bunter. So it was really fortunate that nobody else mattered.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

Soccer at Rookwood!

JIMMY SILVER smiled.

So did other Rookwood fellows. They had seen Billy Bunter before, more than once—but never as a footballer. Now they had the pleasure of seeing him again—as a Soccer champion.

Noticing the fat Owl arrive with the Greyfriars party, Jimmy Silver & Co. had supposed that he had come over, like other fellows, to see the game—which was surprising enough in a fat slacker like Bunter. When he rolled out of the changing-room, got up for Soccer, they started—and smiled.

Bunter had a cheery and satisfied look—the fact was that he rather fancied himself in football rig. It was a rig that showed off a fine figure to full advantage.

Billy Bunter saw himself in the glass, a handsome, upstanding, athletic figure. He did not make the same impression on other eyes.

The Rookwooders wondered how it was that he did not burst out of his

garments, and expected him to do so at any moment.

"You're playing Bunter?" asked Jimmy Silver. Really, he could hardly believe it, even when he saw the fat Owl arrayed for Soccer.

"What-ho!" said Bunter cheerily. "Look out for squalls this time, old chap! I'm in pretty good form to-day!"

"I never knew you played for your school, Bunter!" remarked Arthur Edward Lovell, of the Rookwood Fourth.

"Well, the fact is, I can't always find time for it," explained Bunter. "But Wharton seems to think this a rather tough match, and he wants his best men, so I couldn't refuse."

"Oh!" gasped Lovell.

"What the dooce have they brought that fat frog here for?" Raby whispered to Newcome. "Some of them are looking at him as if they'd like to bite him! Must be hard up for men to play Bunter!"

"Can't make it out! I hope he won't burst on the field and have to be swept up!"

"Beware of the steamroller!" murmured Mornington.

And there was a chuckle.

Harry Wharton drew the fat Owl aside. He was quite aware what the Rookwood men thought of his remarkable recruit. He was only too dimly aware that playing Bunter meant playing a man short in a game in which Greyfriars needed to be at full strength. Even at the last moment, he resolved to make one more effort and appeal to the fat and fatuous Owl.

"Look here, Bunter, it's not too late!" said the unhappy captain of the Remove in a low voice. "Be a good chap and let us off!"

Bunter blinked at him.

"Jealousy again?" he asked. "You

don't want the Rookwood chaps to see that you've got a better man than yourself in the eleven? Call that sporting?"

Wharton suppressed his feelings.

"You're doing this to bag that tip from your uncle," he said. "Well, you're not likely to get away with it—"

"Oh, really, Wharton!"

"I mean, your uncle isn't ass enough to let you diddle him—and you ought to be jolly well ashamed of diddling him if he was!"

"This is rather sickening!" remarked Bunter. "Here I give up my half-holiday to play for the Remove—a fellow like me, with a dozen or more engagements. I came over here to see you through a tough match—you say yourself that it's a tough match and needs our best men—and instead of thanking a chap—"

"You fat idiot!"

"I don't know what the Rookwood men will think if they hear you calling a fellow names from sheer jealousy!" said Bunter, shaking his head. "Dash it all, Wharton, you might think of the school!"

"Will you stand out and let us win this match?"

"Certainly I would—if you had a better man to put in!" said Bunter cheerfully. "If you have, mention his name."

"Nugent—"

"Don't talk to me about that dud!"

"Well, Ogilvy," said Harry patiently.

"Oggy's not a bad chap, but he can't play Soccer! You see, you haven't much judgment in these matters, old fellow—that's the real trouble," explained Bunter. "You can't tell a fellow's form. The truth is, that you're no great shakes of a football captain. You can't see it, I know—but take it from me!"

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Wharton seemed on the verge of choking. Bunter came very near taking something from him at that moment!

"Will you stand out or not?" he gasped. "I tell you, I don't believe for a moment that you'll be able to diddle your uncle over this match! In fact, I'm certain of it! He knows—"

"He knows that I'm playing for Greyfriars!" grinned Bunter. "As for standing out, I'm hardly the fellow to let the team down at the last minute. Besides, we want to win, don't we?"

Harry Wharton gave it up at that. He turned hastily away. He did not want to surprise the Rookwooders by the sight of a visiting captain booting one of the visiting team across the field.

Billy Bunter grinned cheerfully. The looks of the other members of the team were expressive, fearfully expressive, but they had no more effect on the fat Owl's podgy complacency than water on a duck's back. Bunter was satisfied with himself, if nobody else was!

Harry Wharton spoke a brief word to his team.

"You men have got to go all out!" he said. "We're carrying a passenger, and it can't be helped. Pull up your socks, and let Rookwood see that we can win with ten men!"

"Why not boot that fat frump out?" asked Squiff. "Nugent's here, and so is Oggy and—"

"Yes, why not?" snapped Peter Todd. "What the thump are you playing the goat like this for, I'd like to know?"

"Kick him out and chance it!" said Vernon-Smith savagely. "I think you're a dashed fool, and—"

"I don't want to know what you think, Smithy. But you other fellows—" Harry Wharton paused a moment, and then went on. "Look here, Bunter's in the team. Never mind why; there he

is—blow him! I'm asking you to back me up and play the game of your lives. You can slang me as much as you like afterwards, but for the next ninety minutes chuck grouching and play up for Greyfriars!"

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry. "Right on the nail!" said Tom Brown. "Come on, you men, we're going to beat Rookwood—Bunter or no Bunter!"

Wharton's appeal had its effect. The Greyfriars men went on the field in a do-or-die mood. The whistle went, and the game started—and in three minutes a fat figure was lying on its back, kicking up a pair of fat legs and squeaking wildly. And the rest of the team, unheeding Bunter, put all their beef into the game—and they showed that they had quite a large allowance of beef.

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

Bunter the Footballer!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. played hard. They played as hard as they had ever played in their youthful lives, or harder. And ten men, at least, were good men and true, and all at the top of their form.

Squiff, in goal, was a mighty man. Never had the Australian junior displayed better quality. To the Rookwooders he seemed all eyes and hands and feet. Again and again Rookwood came down on the visitors' goal, like wolves on the fold, and every time Sampson Quincy Ifley Field, of New South Wales, was all there. The Greyfriars defence was sound—and needed to be. But in attack they sorely missed the needed man in the front line.

That invaluable man spent most of his time on his podgy back.

It was one of Billy Bunter's happy ways, to fancy that he could do anything that any other fellow could do—and do it a little better—until he actually came to do it; then, as it were, he woke up.

Charging dismayed Rookwooders off the ball, cutting down the field like a streak of lightning, raining amazing shots in at a dismayed and astonished goalkeeper—these were things easy to think of, but harder to do; much harder, when they came to be done.

Bunter had seen himself, in his mind's eye, in almost constant possession of the ball, only parting with it, generally speaking, to slam it into the Rookwood goal. He had seen himself, in his mind's eye, careering victoriously amid astonished Rookwooders, who vainly strove to put paid to him. He had seen himself walking back to the centre of the field, after each goal scored by a wonderful kick, fresh as paint, with a slightly disdainful air, as if these things were mere trifles to him.

All this Bunter had seen with his mind's eye; but with his actual eye, what he saw chiefly was the sky, dappled with clouds.

He did not charge dismayed Rookwooders off the ball; he did not streak like lightning up an astonished field; he did not rain in shots that made the Rookwood custodian wonder whether he was dreaming; he did not remain in almost constant possession of the ball—in fact, he never saw the ball.

From the beginning to the end of the game it might as well have been played without a ball at all, so far as Billy Bunter was concerned; only by hearsay did he ever learn that there was a Soccer ball on the field after the kick-off.

Wind failed Bunter; wind was always rather short with Bunter at the best of times. Ten minutes at games practice

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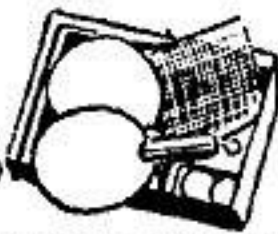


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generally left him with bellows to mend. Now he panted, he puffed, and he blew; he gasped and he gurgled.

Up and down the field the game swayed, while Bunter reposed on his podgy back, gasped for breath, and blinked at the wintry sky.

But he did his best. It was not, perhaps, a fearfully good best—but such as it was, Bunter did it.

Having taken a rest on the field, he got on his feet again and rushed into the fray. It was not his intention to charge Herbert Vernon-Smith in the middle of the back and send him spinning; he did it without intending it.

Neither was it his intention to fall over just in front of Tom Brown and cause the junior from New Zealand to come a terrific cropper over him; that, also, he did unintentionally.

But, from the point of view of usefulness, Bunter was most valuable to his side when he was reposing on his back, gasping for breath.

After about fifteen minutes of it the fat Owl, in a fearfully bewildered state, gave up trying to play football, and devoted his attention entirely to keeping out of the way of damage.

But that was not easy.

If he blundered into a Rookwood man's way he was shouldered out of it with vigour; if he came in the way of a Greyfriars man he was not merely shouldered. The Bounder found four or five opportunities of landing a kick—and he did not lose a single opportunity. Other members of the team occasionally gave Bunter the benefit of an elbow.

It began to dawn in Billy Bunter's mind that he was not enjoying this game. It was borne home to him that he was not going to capture those goals; that he was not going to be cheered to the echo; that he was not going to be carried in triumph after a wonderful game by an enthusiastic team. He was only going to be winded, shouldered, elbowed, bumped, and hustled, and hustled till he hardly knew whether he was on his head or his heels.

Playing for school was not, he realised, such a catch as he had supposed.

Half-way through the first half Billy Bunter was fed-up with football. But he had a never-failing consolation—he was playing for school, and the gorgeous sum of seven pounds ten shillings was going to be his munificent reward. It was not enjoyable—it was, in fact, perfectly beastly—but it was worth while to produce the sum of seven pounds ten shillings. That, at last, was Billy Bunter's only comfort.

He needed comfort. The forty-five minutes before the whistle went for half-time, seemed like forty-five days, if not weeks, to the hapless, spluttering Owl. It seemed to him almost too good to be true when that whistle did at last give the signal for the cessation of play.

Every fellow on the field was glad of a respite; the game had been very hard and fast on both sides. Bunter was gladdest of all.

He was able at last to gasp for breath without having to dodge rushing forms or lunging boots at the same time. He gasped and gasped and gasped.

"We're holding them, anyhow," remarked Bob Cherry, as he sucked a lemon. "Anybody's game so far."

Greyfriars had not scored in the first half; neither, however, had the Rookwooders.

"We're going to beat them!" said Harry Wharton.

"Oh, yes, rather—Bunter and all!" Bob Cherry grinned at the spluttering fat Owl. "Hallo, hallo, hallo! Enjoying life, Bunter?"

"Goooooorgh!"

"Feeling fit, old fat man?" chuckled Peter Todd.

"Urrrrrrrrggh!"

"Where are those goals?" inquired Peter.

"Urrgggh!"

"Is that German or Dutch?"

"Oooooooogh!"

Billy Bunter had hardly got his wind again by the time the whistle blew for the second half. Encouraged by the fact that they had, at least, held the Rookwooders, ten men against eleven, the Greyfriars men renewed the struggle in good spirits, with one exception—Billy Bunter's spirits were down to zero.

The game was harder and faster than ever. Bunter seemed to get in the way more than before. He could hardly fall down without some fellow falling over him. The Bounder, watchful for opportunities, landed three good ones. An elbow sent Bunter spinning in one direction, a shoulder pitched him back again, and he rolled into touch.

He stayed there.

During the first half he had been comforted by the gorgeous prospect of seven pounds ten shillings from Uncle George. But even that gorgeous prospect lost its attraction now. Not for seven pounds ten shillings—or for seven hundred pounds—would the hapless Owl have gone through the remainder of that awful football match.

One idea became fixed in Bunter's fat brain—to get out of it. He got out of it—and stayed out!

He crawled away unhindered. For the rest of that strenuous game Harry Wharton & Co. fought the battle of their lives; and Billy Bunter gasped and gurgled and spluttered, without even knowing what was going on—or wanting to know.

He did not even heed when a tremendous roar awoke all the echoes of the Rookwood football ground.

"Goal!"

Bunter did not know—or care—which side had taken that goal; he was past caring for anything.

"Good old Smithy!" gasped Wharton.

"Good old Bounder!"

"Goal!"

It was the Bounder who had potted the pill. And with only ten minutes more to go, hopes were high on the Greyfriars side. And those hopes were realised—for hard as Jimmy Silver & Co. pushed the struggle, they could not get through; and the final whistle went, leaving Greyfriars victors by one goal to nil.

Which, in the circumstances, was not merely a victory, but a glorious victory. Faces were bright in the changing-room.

Brightest of all was Frank Nugent's. He had watched the varying fortunes of the game with deep feelings. The place he ought to have filled was vacant owing to his own folly, and the sacrifice that his chum had made for him. He could have hugged the Bounder for that goal.

"Oh, ripping, ripping!" said Frank a dozen times over.

A cheery and satisfied team embarked in the train for Greyfriars. One member of that team collapsed into a corner seat, moaning. Bunter had not recovered yet. He had got back his wind—such as it was—but the number of aches all over his fat person could not have been computed.

It was not till the train was getting in at Courtfield, and the footballers were nearly home, that the fat Owl seemed to recover a little. He sat up and blinked at the crowd in the carriage.

"I say, you fellows," squeaked Bunter.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Still alive?" roared Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, who won?" asked Bunter.

"Wha-a-t?"

"Oh, my hat!"

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

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! Who won?" demanded Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

For a fellow who had played in a football match, to ask which side had won, seemed to strike the Remove men as comic! They did not answer Billy Bunter's question! They couldn't! They simply roared.

THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER.

Nothing for Bunter!

"OW!" That was Billy Bunter's first remark the following morning when he sat up in bed in the Remove dormitory at the clang of the rising-bell.

"Wow!"

That was his second remark.

It had been a stiff game at Rookwood. Some of the footballers were still feeling little reminders of it. Billy Bunter was covered all over his extensive person with reminders.

Overnight he had been in a state of collapse. Prep, of course, had been out of the question. During prep Bunter had sat, or, rather, sprawled, in the armchair in Study No. 7, and moaned feebly. He had been scarcely able to crawl up to the dormitory—till Peter Todd kindly assisted him with his foot.

A night's rest had pulled Bunter round a good deal after his tremendous exertions as a footballer. He was no longer feeling as if sudden death would be the greatest of boons. But he was fearfully stiff. His fat limbs were full of aches.

Had Wingate of the Sixth looked in and offered him his cap for the first eleven, Bunter would have turned up his nose at it in utter disdain and contempt. Football, for the present, was absolutely without appeal to Bunter. He hated the thought of it.

He rolled out of bed—squeaking. Three or four fellows who had intended to kick him that morning, refrained.

"Ooooooh!" said Bunter. "I say—wooooo! I'm jolly stiff! Ooooo! I say, you fellows—wow!"

He felt better at breakfast. Several breakfasts, one after another, had a reviving effect. He was still stiff—he still ached in many places—but life, after all, was worth living, in a world where there was plenty for brekker. The fat Owl of the Remove began to feel a little bucked.

After all, he had played for the School. His methods of getting into the team had been, perhaps, a little questionable. His performances, when he got in, had not been what even Bunter could regard as glorious. Nevertheless, he had played for school—and the gorgeous sum of seven pounds ten shillings was his due reward. He was not keen on playing for school again—but he was fearfully keen to hear from Uncle George.

When the Remove gathered at their Form-room door, they were talking about the Rookwood game. A certain pass by Peter Todd was under discussion. Bunter, having been on his back at the time, gazing skyward, had seen nothing of it—but surely, as a member

of the team, he was entitled to give an opinion. It was rather thick for these fellows to jaw over the game, leaving Bunter out of the jaw, just as if he hadn't played at Rookwood at all. A footballer like Bunter was not to be treated in that way.

"The fact is—" said Bunter.

"Shut up!" growled Johnny Bull.

"My opinion is—" said Bunter.

"Shut up!" said Peter Todd.

"What I think is this—Yarooop!"

Four or five fellows kicked Bunter all together.

He offered no more opinions on the Rookwood game. It was pretty rotten, considering that he had played for school; but it was clear that nobody was going to recognise Bunter as a footballer.

Still, if there was nothing to be had in the way of swank, there were more solid things to look forward to. Though still haunted by stiffness, and some aches and pains, Billy Bunter had a cheery and smiling face in morning class. He was looking forward to break, when the letters would be handed out. He hoped that there would be one from Uncle George. The sooner Uncle George weighed in with that seven pounds ten, the better Bunter was going to be pleased.

Bunter had a hundred lines that morning—Mr. Queleh not approving of pupils who gave no attention to lessons, and kept their eyes continually on the Form-room clock. But lines did not worry Bunter much, in his happy and anticipative mood.

Break came at last, and the Remove were dismissed. Bunter shot away like a stone from a catapult, to scan the rack for a letter from Uncle George.

"I say, you fellows, is there one for me?" asked the fat Owl eagerly. "I say, if there's one for me—I say—"

"Here you are, fathead!"

Bob Cherry reached down a letter for Bunter.

"Oh, good!" gasped Bunter.

Quite a number of fellows looked at the fat Owl with interest. Every fellow, of course, had heard of that seven pounds ten, and knew why he had been so fearfully keen on playing at Rookwood—though only the Famous Five and the Bounder knew how he had worked it.

"I say, you fellows, this is my uncle's fist!" said Bunter, grinning with happy satisfaction. "It's all right! I was afraid he might wait till he got a report of the match, but it's all right—here it is! I say, Smithy, you can cash a cheque for me, can't you?"

"If any!" said the Bounder.

"Well, I fancy it will be a cheque," said Bunter. "Uncle George would hardly put in notes without registering

the letter. I say, you fellows, ain't it gorgeous?"

"You fat villain!" said Harry Wharton. "You know jolly well how you wedged into the eleven, and if you get that tip from your uncle, you're diddling the old bean!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Old George said he had to be selected on his merits as a footballer!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Anybody notice any of those merits at Rookwood yesterday?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter sniffed.

"You can cackle!" he said. "You ain't getting seven pounds ten, anyhow—and I jolly well am!"

"Are you?" asked Harry Wharton, laughing. Remembering Uncle George's inquiries over the telephone, the captain of the Remove had some strong doubts on that point.

"Eh? Here it is, ain't it?" said Bunter, blinking at him. "What do you think is in this letter, fathead? I'll jolly soon show you whether I'm getting seven pounds ten or not."

Bunter jammed a fat and grubby

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thumb into the envelope, and opened the letter.

He drew out a folded sheet, and unfolded it. He blinked at it in surprise. He was looking for the enclosure. But he looked in vain. There was no enclosure.

Uncle George had, apparently, overlooked what was really the most important thing. Bunter could have done without the letter. It was the seven pounds ten he was particular about. But there was no sign of the seven pounds ten. There was only the letter—merely that, and nothing more.

"I say, you fellows, my Uncle George seems to have forgotten to put in the cheque!" gasped Bunter.

"Perhaps he remembered not to put it in!" suggested Peter Todd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Toddy! I suppose he's waiting to see a report of the match—as if he couldn't take a fellow's word!" snorted Bunter. "It will come all right, of course! I'll see what he says."

Grinning faces surrounded him, as he blinked at it.

The fat Owl's fat visage was ob-

served to grow longer and longer as he read—till it resembled a fiddle rather than a pudding, as usual. Only too clearly, there was nothing of an encouraging nature in that letter from Mr. George Bunter.

"Oh crikey!" ejaculated Bunter at last.

"Ain't it gorgeous?" murmured the Bounder.

"When is it coming?" grinned Skinner.

"It—it—it ain't coming!" gasped Bunter. "I—I say, it—it—it ain't coming at all?"

Billy Bunter stood blinking at Uncle George's letter. The expression on his fat face might have touched a very hard heart. Even the footballers forgave him, at that awful moment.

"I—I say, you fellows, look what he says!" groaned Bunter.

What Uncle George said was brief, but to the point.

"Dear William,—As I stated in my former letter, I should have been delighted to hear that you had played for your school, being selected to do so on your merits as a footballer. I have no use for artful trickery. As it is now clear, beyond doubt, that I cannot trust you to be straightforward, my offer is definitely withdrawn.

Your uncle,
G. BUNTER."

"I say, you fellows, what do you think of that?" gasped Bunter. "Trickery, you know—me! I say, do you think he's gone off his onion?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Fancy anybody thinking that Bunter was tricky, and not straightforward! What can have put that idea into his head?"

"I can't make it out!" gasped Bunter.

"Me, you know! It isn't as if it was one of you fellows—but me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Everybody laughed except Bunter.

That gorgeous sum of seven pounds ten shillings was not coming his way. He had collected innumerable aches and pains at Rookwood for nothing. To the Remove it seemed no end of a joke; but for the rest of that day, and for days afterwards, Billy Bunter understudied Rachel of old—he mourned and could not be comforted. The circumstance that it was exactly what he deserved was no consolation whatever.

THE END.

(Enjoyed this week's story, chums? Good! Now watch out for next Saturday's MAGNET and the first of a splendid new series of Greyfriars yarns, entitled: "MY LORD BUNTER!" It's good! It's great! It's absolutely tip-top!!!—Ed.)

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The GREYFRIARS HERALD

No. 269.

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

December 4th, 1937.



WHITEWASHED HIS CRIME!

How Egg-Snatcher Eased His Yoke

The mysterious hand of an unknown Greyfriars whitewasher succeeded in whitewashing the backs of more than fifty fellows before brekker one morning this week.

Chap potty, you'll probably think. That's what we all thought at first.

It was quite a time before anyone knew that a whitewashing plot was in progress.

When Wharton was told in the quad that there was a large daub of whitewash on his back, he concluded that he had acquired it entirely by accident. Bunter thought the same thing when somebody pointed out a white patch on his fat shoulders, as he rolled downstairs from the dorm.

Then Hazeldene, Brown, Bull, and Lord Mauleverer learned that they were whitewashed; and fellows in other Forms began to make the same discovery about themselves. And it began to look more like the arm of a chap with a misplaced sense of humour than the well-known "long arm of coincidence."

Suspicious were confirmed when stories began to spread of a mysterious hand, clutching a whitewash brush, that kept popping out of odd spots in and around the School House. It had flashed out, they said, from behind a tree in the quad, and branded Fry of the Fourth without Fry having the least idea that anything had happened. It had appeared again over the landing at the end of the Remove passage and whacked a double dose on to the unsuspecting back of Vernon-Smith! It had bobbed up again in a recess near the Remove Form Room and yet once more out of a window on the ground floor of the School House.

Chaps felt surprised at first; then irritated when the epidemic spread; and finally quite panicky when they saw how many fellows were suffering. Everybody had the uncomfortable feeling that there was a lunatic at large!

By breakfast-time the House was in a riot. Half the chaps had had whitewash slapped on to their backs and the rest were wondering when their turn was coming. What did it all mean?

The answer came after prayers in Hall, when the Head made his usual brief announcements.

"I regret to say that I have had a serious complaint from Mumble, the gardener. A junior whom he did not recognise visited his hen-roost this morning and made off with several new-laid eggs. Fortunately," said the Head, "I have a means of identifying the culprit. Mumble threw a whitewash brush after him and marked his back!"

We gasped. "I intend to find the owner of the marked jacket if I have to examine every wardrobe in the school," went on the Head. "Just in case the boy may be wearing it now, I ask you all to turn round so that your backs face the platform."

We all right-about-faced. And then it was the Head's turn to gasp. There were over fifty fellows with white-washed backs.

Inquiries are still proceeding; but up to the time of going to press nobody seems to have the slightest idea who took the eggs and covered up his traces in an orgy of whitewashing.

Whoever he is, he's certainly not potty; in fact, the general opinion is that he's a genius!

BUDDING GREYFRIARS JOURNALIST'S NOTE!

The only vacancy on the "Greyfriars Herald" staff at present is for a chucker-out, and we don't care two hoots about your intellectual attainments! The man we want needs a BIG FOOT—not SHORTLAND!

I. "My hat! Duzzent the Head look in a good yewmer this morning?" Jack Jolly, the kaptin of the Fourth, made that whispered remark, as Doctor Birchmall rushed into the Grate Hall of St. Sam's for Morning Assembly.

His pals gazed at the platform open-mouthed. They felt awfully surprised to see the Head in a good mood at this early hour in the day.

As a rule, Doctor Birchmall came slinking into the Grate Hall with a crool, savidge look on his dial and a menacing birchrod in his hand.

But on this partikular morning, a wonderful change had come over him. He wore a sunny smile, and his face beamed like a full moon; and he tripped on to the platform like a mewsical comedy star.

"Boys!" he said. "I have a ripping serprize for you this morning!"

"You—you don't say so, sir!"

"To sellybrate the approach of Breaking-up Day and the Festive Season," grinned the Head, "I decided this week to invite the girls of St. Lizzie's College for the Dawters of Gentlemen to a Grand Ball at St. Sam's!"

"Grate pip!"

"Pinch me, somebody!" said Jack Jolly feintly. "I'm dream-ing!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The skool Guv-vernors having ap-

proved the skeem," went on the Head, "I wrote to Miss Buttercup, the headmistress of St. Lizzie's. I am pleased to announce that she has written me this morning gladly axcepting the invitation."

For a moment, complete silence reigned. Then there was a storm of cheering.

"Hooray!"

"Well done the Head!"

"Hip - hip - hip - hooray!"

The fellows went simply wild with delight. Doctor Birchmall grinned as he held up his hand.

"Glad you like my wheeze, boys," he smirked, when the cheering had at last subsided. "And now I want to issue a few general rules which all who attend the ball must observe. First, I should like it clearly understood that this is going to be no meer common-or-garden hop. On the contrary, it is going to be a very posh affair."

"Oh crums!"

"Boys will be egg-spected to wear evening dress. Any who turn up in footbawl clothes or plus-fours will be re-fused admittance," said the Head. "Pea shooters and catterpults will not be allowed in the ball-room. Any boy guilty of helping himself too freely to the refresh-

ments will be escorted to the door. Do you savvy?"

"We savvy, sir!"

The Head cooed slitley.

"Ahem! Another matter of trifling importance, boys. There will be a charge of half-a-crown for admission."



"Can't you make it a bob, sir?" grinned Frank Fearless. But Doctor Birchmall shook his head decidedly.

"Half-a-crown is the minimum, Fearless—and when you consider that it includes refreshments, I think you will agree that it's dirt cheap. Now for the last point, boys—HANDS UP ALL THOSE WHO DO NOT KNOW HOW TO DANCE!"

A grate forest of hands shot up and the Head wissled.

"Bless my sole! I'm serprized to know that so many of you are

ignnerant concerning this usefual social art! I can only suggest that you take steps to learn dancing at once—in fakt, the best thing I can do is to give you a lesson at once! Mind lending me your cap and gown, Lickham?"

Mr. Lickham blinked. "With plezzure, sir, of corse. But mite I ask what use you are going to put them to?"

"Hand them over, Lickham, and I'll soon show you," grinned the Head.

The master of the Fourth peeled off his gown and whipped off his cap.

Doctor Birchmall took them and, to everybody's serprize, proceeded to attach them to the easel at the side of the platform.

"We will now let our imaginations run riot and pretend that this easel is a yung lady at the St. Sam's Ball," he grinned. "Now, supposing I wish to dance with the fare damsel, the correct procedure is for me to say 'May I have the plezzure?' At the same time, I bough to be lady like this."

To illustrate his point, the Head bent nearly double.

Unforehunitly, the cross-bar of the easel happened to be in the way of his somewhat prominent nose and this

caused the Head's courtly bough to come to a sudden and un-egg-spected end.

"Crash!"

"Yaroooo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A deffening roar of larfter went up, as the Head went hopping round the platform with his hands to his dam-midged nasal organ.

"What's that, sir?" asked Jack Jolly, inner-sently. "The fox-trot?"

And the crowd yelled again. But the Head was not one to be discour-ridged for long. He intended to show the boys of St. Sam's how to dance. Seizing the easel, he started performing some weerd and wonder-ful capers up and down the platform.

The skool watched with fascinated eyes. Nobody seemed to know for certain what kind of a dance it was. Burleigh of the Sixth said it was a waltz; Mr. Noyes, the mewsick master, egg-spressed his opinion that it was a rumba; and Jack Jolly remarked to Merry and Bright that it reminded him of a tango.

Evenchally Doctor Birchmall solved the mystery.

"Fancy not knowing even a simple dance like this!" he cried, turning a skornful face to the specklators, as he galloped the easel round the platform. "It's a polka, of corse! A very nice dance, too—but nothing compared with what I'm going to show you now. Just look at this!"

Doctor Birchmall changed his step and the skool looked. Unfor-chunitly that was just what the Head failed to do. Had he looked, he would have seen that he was just about to step off the edge of the platform into thin air. As it was, he didn't realise that until he found himself pitching downwards on top of the easel.

Bang! Crash! Wallop! "Yooooop! Ow-ow-ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the skool, as the Head lay horse de-combat below the plat-form.

"What's that one called?"

"Do it again, sir, whatever it is!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But Doctor Birchmall was deff to all appeals. He picked himself up, moaning and groaning, and limped off for repairs. The Head had had quite enuff of ballroom dancing for one morning.

II. Boom! Boom! Boom! Crash! Zing! Crash!

"What the merry dickens!"

Jack Jolly & Co. looked at each other in alarm.

It was the day after the Head's announce-ment and the chums of the Fourth were in-dulging in a little dancing praktiss in the jimmy-nasium. Their praktiss came to a sudden stop as a hare-raising din fell on their ears.

"My hat! What a garstly row!" egg-claimed Jack Jolly. "We shall have to find what's causing it."

"Yes, rather—and stop it, too, unless we want to be sent potty!" said Frank Fearless.

"Come on, you fellows."

The Fourth Formers rushed out of the jim and galloped along in the direction from which the noise was coming. Much to their ferprize, they found that the trail led them to the mewsick-room.

"Grate pip! I wonder what it can be!" gasped Jolly, as they stopped outside the mewsick-room. "I've never heard such a fearful row in my life!"

"Same here!"

The Kaptin of the Fourth wasted no more time. Seizing the handle, he flung the door open. Then he and his pals received a shock.

They had quite thought it was a crowd of inky faggs causing all the rampuss; but instead of seeing faggs, their astonished eyes lighted on half-a-duzen masters, playing away on mewsickal instru-ments as though their lives depeped on it!

Mr. Noyes, the mew-sick master, was punch-ing the piano for all he

was worth; Mr. Lickham was blowing a saxafone with all his mite and mane; Mr. Justies was tootling away solemnly on a French horn; Mr. Swishingham was fever-ishly plucking at the strings of a banjo; and Mr. Chas. Tyzer was wacking a set of jazz drums as if for a wager.

All this was serprizing enuff; but most ser-prizing of all was the specktable of the Head, galloping up and down before the rest of the band, making hideous sounds on a trombone.

The juniors gazed at the remarkable site in sheer amazement. They screwed up their faces into egg-spressions of ag-gerny and stuffed their thumbs into their ears, as the full blast of the masters' mewsick met them in the doorway.



"Help!" they cried. "Stoppt before you give us all a fit!"

That remark seemed to go to the old fogeys' hearts, for immejetely after it they brought their garstly discord to an end. They fixed baleful glares on the yung invaders.

"What do you mean—give us all a fit?" demanded Doctor Birchmall. "Are you imply-ing, by any chance, that the mewsick of Alf Birchmall and his Boys is not worthy to rank with the best efforts of up-to-date dance bands?"

"If you ask me, sir," said Jolly, frankly, "it's too rank to rank!"

"Why, you sawey yung raskal—"

"But what's the idea, sir, anyway?" asked the kaptin of the Fourth, in amazement. "I can understand you old

jossers turning your-selves into a debating society; but why try to turn yourselves into a jazz band?"

The Head raised his eyebrows.

"Have you forgotten, Jolly, that we are hold-ing a Grand Ball?"

Jack Jolly & Co. started violently.

"You don't mean to say that you and the masters are going to provide the mewsick for the dancing?" yelled Fearless.

The Head nodded calmly.

"Why not, Fearless?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Doctor Birchmall and his Boys gazed wrath-fully at Jack Jolly & Co. The Fourth Formers were simply shrieking with larfter and the old fossils evidently failed



to see where the joak came in.

"Silence!" roared the Head. "Can any of you give a single valid reason why my colleagues and myself should not play on the nite of the Grand Ball?"

"Yes, rather, sir!" answered Jack Jolly, promptly. "One reason is that none of you can play for toffy!"

"Hear, hear!" grinned Fearless. "And another is that your faces would frighten the guests!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you—"

Doctor Birchmall, who seemed to be in danger of an apollo-jettick fit, stopped trying to speak. He acted instead. With his trom-bone held out in front of him like a lance, he made a rush. All the other masters seazed their mewsickal instru-

ments and charged with him—with the eggsep-tion of Mr. Noyes, who found the piano too hevvy, and seazed the stool in its place.

Jack Jolly & Co. did not stop to argew the toss with the fewrious mewsicians. They turned tail and ran for their lives, and they didn't stop running till they had put a safe distance between themselves and their persewers.

They were still larfing when they reached the friendly refuge of the skool tuckshop. But in spite of this, there was rather a serious look on Jolly's face when he ordered ginger-pop all round.

"It's all very well for us to larf, you fellows," he said. "But we mustn't lose site of the fakt that if the Head really carries out his thrett it will ruin the St. Sam's Ball com-pletely."

"Troo enuff!" nodded Merry and Bright.

"I have an idea!" grinned Fearless. "Sup-pose I get my pater to put up prizes for the best dancers of the evening, the beaks will all be as keen as mustard to bag one!"

"My hat!"

"In that case, they won't be able to play and the Head will have to get another band," chuckled Fearless. "Shall I put it up to the pater, you fellows?"

"What-ho!"

"Good old Fearless!"

And the chums of the Fourth put down their ginger-pop and eagerly fell to planning how to put up the skeem to Fearless Senior.

(Don't miss the scream-ingly funny sequel to this yarn in next week's "Greyfriars Herald.")

THINGS WE WANT TO KNOW!

Whether FRY has a BOIL?

Is NUGENT some-times a bit of an OLD WOMAN?

What made BROWN turn RED?

If Mr. CAPPER isn't as mad as a HATTER?

Whether RAKE always calls a spade a SPADE?

Why BULL looks so SHEEPISH?