

FUNK BECOMES HERO ! Read the Sensational School-Adventure Yarn of Harry Wharton & Co. . . **" BUNTER THE BRAGGER ! "**



The Magnet

Billy Bunter's Own Paper

MR. QUELCH

**AN
UNINVITED
GUEST!**

DON'T WAIT FOR AN INVITE . . . JOIN UP RIGHT NOW with—

The GREYFRIARS GUIDE

A TOUR OF THE SCHOOL. The Remove Passage.

(1)

You won't find the calm of the Cloisters,
No quiet seclusion is here,
The fellows aren't dumb like the oysters,
Or like the old friars—no fear!
They like to make plenty of clatter
To let people know they're alive,
If others object—what's it matter?
At least, till the prefects arrive!

(2)

At times, Horace Coker comes charging
Right into the place like a chump,
And then there is shouting and barging
As Coker goes out—with a bump!
And often when Bunter's been bagging
Some tuck from the study next door,
The noise of his subsequent ragging
Is just like the Japanese war!

(3)

And yet, through the din and the
roaring,
One fellow is calmly inert,
Old Mauly is peacefully snoring
Till Cherry looks in—with a squirt!
With teacups and knives gaily clinking,
The passage outside full of fun,
Oh, pity me, sitting here thinking
And writing; but—Whoopie!—I'm
done!



A WEEKLY BUDGET OF FACT AND FUN

By
**THE GREYFRIARS
RHYMESTER**

GREYFRIARS GRINS

Fisher T. Fish had a dud sixpence recently. But not for long.

Mr Twigg, after whopping a dozen inky fags, sends his cane to be decarbonised.

While Toddy was out, Bunter kindly kept his fried sosses warm by wrapping himself round them.

Wingate found his chimney smoking this morning. He gave it a hundred lines.

Something ought to be done about the behaviour in the French class. Mossos talk so loud we can't hear ourselves speak.

Tom Redwing says that if there's anything in a fellow, the sea will bring it out. It often does!

Angel of the Fourth has been spotted coming out of the garden of the Three Fishers. His excuse, that he was trying to help a poor little robin with a broken wing, has not been well received. In fact, he got the bird!

PUZZLE PAR

Two trains run from Courtfield to London and back each day. The first goes up at 60 m.p.h. and back at 30 m.p.h. The second does 45 m.p.h. in each direction. Which gets back first?

Answer at foot of column 2.

Gosling denies that he takes whisky, except by doctor's orders. The expression of horror on his face when he takes his medicine would move a heart of stone. I don't think!

After niffing the fumes of Prout's cigars, we know what killed the grizzly bears! Not his rifle!

I see in the papers that steel-toughened glass, warranted not to crack in any circumstances, has just been invented. Now Bolsover major will be able to have his photograph taken.



AFTER SCHOOL HOURS Chess Champions

(1)

Long years ago—well, more or less—
When I was quite a fag,
A grand and thrilling game of chess
Was started in the Rag.
Mark Linley challenged Hurree Singh
To fierce and fearful fight,
And tried to checkmate Inky's king
With bishop, pawn, and knight.

(2)

He moved a rook—we held our breath,
And Inky lost his head;
With trembling feet, as pale as death,
He tottered off to bed;
He tossed in anguish till the dawn,
Then rose and sought the board;
With steady hand he moved a pawn!
Jemima! How we roared!

(3)

But Linley, though he dared not speak,
Was ready to attack;
He thought it over for a week,
'Then moved the castle back!
Just like a falchion from its sheath
Flashed Inky's eyeballs keen!
He squared his jaw and set his teeth,
And firmly moved his queen!

(4)

Term after term, night after night,
Was finished and begun,
But never a moment ceased the fight
Of the one and the—other one!
When bishops, rooks, and knights were
gone,
The queens in combat met,
And still the game went dragging on—
It hasn't finished yet!

THE GREYFRIARS ALPHABET

JAMES HOBSON,
Captain of the Shell Form.

It is for Hobson of the Shell,
A Form he captains very well;
Quite easy to get on with, he's
A very simple chap to please.
Good-tempered, rugged, rather plain,
He doesn't boast a lot of brain.



But Hobby's loyal all the while,
And meets misfortune with a smile.
The chief misfortune he endures
Is Hoskins and his overtures,
His music-loving study-mate,
Composing at a fearful rate
The most appalling serenade,
Makes Hobby listen while it's played!
He hears it to the bitter end.
Great jumping crackers! What a friend!

ANSWER TO PUZZLE

The second train would arrive first.
It's average speed is 45 m.p.h., while
the other train's is 40 m.p.h.

WONDERS WILL NEVER CEASE! Mr. Quelch, a master at Greyfriars, has been the victim of a wild and reckless rag—and Billy Bunter, the fat and funky Owl of the Remove, not only admits that he's the guilty person, but brags of it!

BUNTER *the* BRAGGER!

By FRANK RICHARDS



"Who cares for Quelch?" said Bunter, as he strutted about the Rag with his fat little nose in the air. "I've made him sit up once, and I'll make him sit up again! Fat lot I care for beaks!"

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Lines for Two!

RAP!
"Woo-hoooooh!"
Mr. Quelch jumped.
Really, it was quite a surprising occurrence in the Remove Form Room at Greyfriars.
The rap of the ruler on Billy Bunter's fat knuckles sounded almost like a pistol-shot, and the yell that followed fairly woke the echoes.

All the Remove stared round, as well as their Form-master.

Quelch had been about to point out some detail of interest—or otherwise—on a large map that hung over the blackboard on the easel. His back had been partly turned for the moment.

But at that sudden rap and that loud yell of anguish, the Remove master spun round and glared at his class.

"What——" he thundered. "Who——"

"Oh! Ah! Ow! Wow!" howled Billy Bunter, sucking frantically at his fat knuckles. "Beast! Ow! Oooogh! Wow!"

"Bunter——"

"Whooo-loop!" howled Bunter.

"Shut up, you ass!" whispered Bob Cherry.

"Ow! Wow! Ah! Oh! Ooooh!"

"Bunter, what——"

Some of the Removites grinned as Micky Desmond was seen to slip a ruler under his desk. Micky, who was sitting next to Bunter, tried to look as if he knew nothing about rulers. Perhaps he regretted that hasty rap when Bunter's

frantic yell rang through the Form-room and drew Quelch's attention.

"Bunter," thundered Mr. Quelch, "what do you mean? What——"

"Ow! My knuckles!" howled Bunter.

"Oh crikey! You beast, Desmond——"

"Desmond!"

"Yis, sorr!" mumbled Micky.

"Did you strike Bunter with a ruler?"

"I—I—I——" stammered Micky.

"Yes, or 'No'?" thundered Mr.

Quelch.

"Sure, I rapped the fat baste's knuckles, sorr!" confessed Micky.

"Upon my word! How dare you do anything of the kind, especially in class! I shall cane you severely, Desmond, for such an act!"

**Super School-Adventure yarn,
starring HARRY WHARTON
& CO., the Chums of
GREYFRIARS.**

Micky opened his mouth, and shut it again. Other fellows looked at him. Some of them had seen why Micky had rapped those fat knuckles. So far as Mr. Quelch could see, it was a sudden thoughtless prank that had disturbed the serenity of the Form-room. Harry Wharton & Co. and three or four other fellows were aware that Bunter's fat hand had been sliding under Micky's desk, groping for something there—probably toffee!

But Micky was not going to tell Quelch so—for two good reasons. He was not going to "tell" on Bunter, and he did not want to reveal the fact that he had brought a packet of toffee into class.

As Micky did not choose to explain, it was nobody else's business to do so.

Mr. Quelch picked up the cane from his desk, and signed to Micky to step out before the Form.

Micky rose reluctantly to his feet.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!" came from Bunter.

"Silence, Bunter!" rapped Mr.

Quelch.

"Yes, sir! Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Will you be silent, Bunter?"

"Oh, certainly, sir! Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow!"

Micky was about to leave his place when another fellow rose to his feet. That fellow was Carter, the new junior in the Remove.

"If you please, sir——" said Carter.

"What—what have you to say, Carter?" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"I think, sir, that Bunter ought to tell you why Desmond rapped his knuckles," said Carter.

"Shut up, Carter!" whispered Harry Wharton.

"Fair play's a jewel!" answered Carter. "I don't see Desmond getting licked for nothing!"

"No bizney of yours!" muttered Frank Nugent.

"Silence in the class! You may sit down, Carter! Bunter, why did Desmond rap your knuckles?"

"Ow! Because he's a beast, sir!"

Wow! I wasn't after the toffee!" gasped Bunter. "I never knew he had any toffee!"

"Toffee!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "Did you say toffee, Bunter?"

"Oh, no, sir! I mean to say, I never reached under Desmond's desk for his toffee, sir! I never knew he had any! I—I was going to borrow a—a—a pen-nib!"

"Desmond, have you brought toffee into the Form-room?"

"Yis, sorr!" groaned Micky.

"Hand it to me at once!"

Mr. Quelch tossed the packet of toffee into the wastepaper-basket. Rather to Micky's relief, he laid down the cane. Carter's intervention had stopped the whopping, at all events.

"You should not have rapped Bunter's knuckles, Desmond! However, I shall excuse you, in the circumstances," said Mr. Quelch. "You will take a hundred lines from the first book of Virgil for bringing comestibles into the Form-room!"

"Yis, sorr!"

"Bunter——"

"I—I didn't!" gasped Bunter, in alarm. "I wasn't after the toffee, sir! It—it was all a mistake! I—I was simply reaching under Desmond's desk to borrow some blotting-paper, sir!"

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"I never knew there was any toffee there, sir!" said Bunter anxiously. "I never saw Desmond put it there when we came in, sir! Besides, I don't like toffee, sir! It—it's one of the things I—I dislike most——"

"Will you be silent, Bunter?"

"Oh, yes, sir! But I never reached after that toffee, sir; I just wanted to get a pencil——"

"You will take a hundred lines, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, sir——"

"And if you utter another word, I shall cane you!"

Billy Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles, and did not utter another word.

"You will both bring the lines to me before tea!" said Mr. Quelch. "If there is another interruption, I shall cane the offender!"

Geography was resumed in the Remove-room.

Billy Bunter turned his eyes and his spectacles on Carter. He gave the new junior a glare that bade fair to crack those big spectacles.

"You rotten sneak!" breathed Bunter.

Arthur Carter was a relative—a distant relative—of the fat Owl of the Remove. Bunter had rejoiced when he left his former school and came to Greyfriars, having told every fellow who wanted to hear, and still more who didn't, that Carter was a rich relation of his. But Carter, from his first day at Greyfriars, had barred Bunter, and not a single crumb from the rich man's table had come Bunter's way. So in a few days Billy Bunter's deep affection for his rich relation had turned to scornful dislike. But never had he disliked him so much as now.

Carter shrugged his shoulders.

"Sneaking beast!" hissed Bunter.

Mr. Quelch looked round again.

"Are you talking in class, Bunter?" he asked.

"Oh, no, sir! I never opened my mouth. I only said to Carter——"

"If you speak again, Bunter, I shall double your imposition!"

After which, William George Bunter was dumb.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,562.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Drastic Measures!

"BARGE!" said Harry Wharton.

"Look here——" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

He had no time to say more.

The Famous Five of the Remove had come up to tea. As they reached the doorway of Study No. 1, Bob Cherry was about to walk on and leave his friends there.

Ever since Carter, the new fellow, had been in Study No. 1 with Wharton and Nugent, Bob had avoided that study like a plague-spot.

On this occasion he was quite unable to avoid it; for at the word from the captain of the Remove, his four friends suddenly barged him into the doorway, and he went spinning in.

He spun headlong, stumbled over, and sat on the carpet, with a bump and a roar.

Four grinning faces looked at him from the doorway.

Bob sat up and glared at them.

Having barged him into the study, Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull and Hurree Janset Ram Singh, were blocking the doorway, to bar him from escape—packing their goal, as it were.

"You silly asses!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Ready for tea, old chap?" asked Nugent affably.

"Not here!" snorted Bob.

He scrambled to his feet, with a red and wrathful face. But there was no getting out of the study, without charging his friends like a bull. The doorway was well defended.

"Now, look here, Bob——" said Johnny Bull.

"Let me get out, you fatheads!" granted Bob.

"No exit," said Nugent.

"You silly ass——"

"Now don't play the goat, Bob," said Harry Wharton soothingly. "We've always fed together in this study, and we're not going to chuck it because you don't like that man Carter. He doesn't bite——"

"I won't sit down to tea with Carter."

"Well, you can feed standing up like a horse, if you like that better," suggested Johnny Bull. "What about that?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob grinned for a moment. It was not easy for Bob Cherry to resist the blandishments of his friends. He had a sunny nature; and even if he disliked a fellow, his good temper and good nature generally got the upper hand. That made his deep dislike of Carter all the more puzzling and exasperating to his friends.

They were a little doubtful, perhaps, about the new fellow themselves. But on the whole they did not see any great harm in him. They saw no good reason why Bob should cut Study No. 1, simply because it was Carter's, as well as Wharton's and Nugent's. So now they were dealing with the difficulty.

"You see——" granted Bob.

"The point is, that we don't," answered Harry. "Carter's come here from another school, and I dare say he's got his own ways; but we don't see any reason at all why you should bar him in this fatheaded way."

"The barfulness is not the proper caper, my esteemed and idiotic Bob," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh, with a shake of his dusky head.

"Why not chuck playing the goat?" asked Johnny Bull. "After all, it's

not your way to be a sulky ass, Bob."

Bob gave an angry grunt.

"I don't like the chap. I don't want to say anything against him, but I can't stand him!" he snapped. "Look what he did the other day—complaining to Quelch about Bunter bagging his tuck——"

"Well, yes, but——"

"And this afternoon," growled Bob, "sneaking to Quelch——"

"He might have held his tongue," agreed Harry. Still, Bunter ought to have spoken out——"

"I know that, but——"

"He saved Desmond from getting a whopping," said Nugent. "Blessed if I know whether a chap should have spoken or not! I suppose Carter thought he ought——"

"Fat lot he cares about what he ought to do!" growled Bob. "He wanted to land Bunter into a row."

"Well, he doesn't seem frightfully fond of his relation," admitted Wharton.

"Oh, bother the cad!" grunted Bob. "I don't want to row with him. I want to steer clear of him."

"You're not going to cut this study!" said the captain of the Remove decidedly. "We don't cut Johnny's study because he's got Fishy there. And I suppose Carter's a bit better than Fishy."

"Worse!" grunted Bob.

"Oh, rot! The chap's quite ready to be friendly with you——"

"Let me catch him being friendly with me!" growled Bob.

"You're an unreasonable ass!"

"Well, if I'm an unreasonable ass, you don't want me in this study, so let a fellow get out."

"But we do, old bean. We're too fond of you to part with you," said Frank Nugent, laughing. "I say, we've got a cake for tea!"

"You silly chump!"

"And two kinds of jam——"

"Fathead!"

"And doughnuts——"

"Will you stop talking silly rot?" roared Bob Cherry. "Now, look here, I'm going out of this study before Carter comes up."

"Charge, Chester, charge! On, Stanley, on!" quoted Frank Nugent.

And the four stood ready for a charge.

"Will you stop playing the goat?" roared Bob.

"That's what we're asking you to do."

"I've a jolly good mind to biff the lot of you over into the passage!" hooted Bob.

"Help!" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm going out of this study!" howled Bob. "Now shift!"

And he charged at the crammed doorway.

His friends did not shift. They staggered, under the hefty charge; but they rallied, and grasped their recalcitrant chum on all sides, and bore him back into the study.

Bob was a hefty fellow, but he was no match for the four, and, exasperated as he was, he did not think of punching. But he resisted fiercely, and there were two or three hectic minutes in Study No. 1 before he was dumped on the carpet again.

He sat there and gasped for breath. The Co., gasping also after that strenuous tussle, packed the doorway again, and grinned breathlessly at him.

"You silly fatheads!" gasped Bob.

"We'll keep this up as long as you do, old chap," said Harry Wharton.

"You're teeing in this study with your old pals—Carter and all."

Bob staggered up. He set his collar and tie straight, and glared at the four. They smiled back at him.

There was a step in the passage, and the keen, penetrating eyes of Arthur Carter looked in, over the shoulders of the four.

"Hallo! You fellows scrapping?" exclaimed Carter. "I thought you fellows never rowed."

"Only a little friendly argument," answered Nugent.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Tea in Study No. 1!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Get out!" snapped Carter. Billy Bunter blinked into Study No. 1, where six fellows sat at tea. As his "rich relation" spoke, Bunter turned his spectacles on him, with a glare of lofty and contemptuous scorn.

"Did you speak to me, Carter?" he inquired.

"Yes, I did, you fat ass!"

"I'm not in your study!" retorted Bunter. "A fellow can stand in the passage if he likes and speak to his friends. I'm not speaking to you—I bar you! If you fancy you're going to know me at Greyfriars, because we're distant connections, you're jolly well mistaken. Don't you fellows believe anything he says about that you know. At home, we don't know the Carters."

"You'd be jolly well glad to!" sneered Carter. "Now clear off!"

"Shan't! You make out you're fearfully rich," went on Bunter. "I haven't



As Billy Bunter's fat hand groped under Micky Desmond's desk, the Irish junior brought his ruler into play. "Ow! My knuckles!" howled Bunter. "Oh crikey! You beast, Desmond!" The fat junior's yell rang through the Form-room and drew Mr. Quelch's attention.

Bob Cherry gave the new junior a look. The chums of the Remove had not been scrapping, though certainly they had been struggling rather strenuously. But, it seemed to Bob, at least, that Carter always gave the most unpleasant turn he could to everything. Everything, in fact, that Carter did, seemed to get on Bob Cherry's nerves.

"What's the row about?" asked Carter.

Bob compressed his lips.

"Who said there was a row?" he snapped.

"Well, it sounded like one," said Carter. "Sorry to see you fellows falling out like this!"

"We're not falling out," said Harry Wharton sharply. "It's all right, Bob—have it your own way."

"Have it yours," said Bob. "It's all right. I'll make the toast, shall I?"

"Yes, old chap. You cut some bread, Johnny, while I put the kettle on and make the tea."

Toast and tea were soon ready. Bob Cherry sat down to tea with the Co. and Carter in Study No. 1, disliking the new fellow more than ever, but determined not to give him, at all events, the satisfaction of seeing a "row" on in the Co.

"Then don't," said Bunter. "I've told you before not to speak to me, Carter. I've told you not to presume on our relationship."

Five fellows grinned.

This was rather a new line for Billy Bunter to take with his rich relation. But Bunter had thought it out, and decided that if his rich relation was going to bar him, the least he could do was to bar him back. Having spent days and days in vain efforts to hook on to Carter, the fat Owl was now taking up an attitude of the loftiest disdain.

Carter did not grin; he scowled. Everybody in the Remove knew that he disliked that fat and fatuous relative. Nobody was really surprised by that. Few fellows, if related to Billy Bunter, would have boasted of it.

"I say, you fellows," went on Bunter, "if that chap makes out that he's a near relation of mine, don't you believe him. The actual fact is, that we never speak to the Carters."

"Will you get out?"

"Buzz off, old fat man!" said Harry Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"I've told you to get out of my study, you fat freak!" snapped Carter.

noticed you spending much since you've been here. I dare say old Carter, your uncle, isn't so rich as we supposed—I mean, as he made out! I've heard my pater say that he's been bankrupt more than once! Not that we ever talk about the Carters at Bunter Court! We never even mention them!"

Carter rose to his feet, and stepped to the door. He grasped it and hurled it shut with a sudden slam.

"Yaroooh!" came a roar from the passage.

Bunter was, as he had stated, standing in the passage. But his fat little nose was over the frontier, so to speak—it must have been, for the door banged on it! Bunter's wild roar rang far and wide.

"Yaroooh! Yow—ow—ow! Beast! Oh crikey! My nose! Wow! My boko! Wow!"

"Hallo, what's the row, fatty?" came another voice from the passage; that of Peter Todd.

"Ow! I say, Toddy, that beast Carter banged the door on my nose—I say, go in and kick him, old chap, will you? I say, he called you a bony freak the other day, Peter! I'd kick a chap who called me a bony freak!"

"Good egg: I will!"

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"Yarooop! Wharrer you kicking me for, you beast! Stoppit!" roared Bunter. There was a sound of hurried retreating footsteps.

Five minutes later, the door of Study No. 1 opened again, and the fat face of Billy Bunter looked in. His fat little nose was red.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Will you clear off?" yelled the exasperated Carter.

"I've come here to speak to my pals!" said Bunter. "I say, you fellows, what do you think I'd better do about my lines?"

"Write them!" suggested Harry Wharton.

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Bunter peevishly. That resource, apparently, had not occurred to the fat junior. "I say, Quelch said I was to take them in before tea. Desmond's done his already—I haven't had time. It's too late now, if I'm going to have tea with you fellows, now you've started—"

"That's all right—you're not."

"Oh, really, Wharton! I say, think Quelch would notice any difference, if I took in another chap's lines?" asked Bunter. "I mean to say, Desmond's writing is rather like mine, ain't it?"

"Quite!" said Harry. "Both like an inky spider crawling over the paper. But I can't see Micky doing your lines for you, as you got him his."

"Well, I daresay he wouldn't—he's selfish, like the rest of you," said Bunter. "But what I mean is, he's done his lines, and gone into the Rag with Morgan and Wibley. Well, suppose I borrowed his lines—"

"You fat villain!"

"I mean, I could write my name on the top, over his—Quelch wouldn't notice an extra smudge or so. Think Desmond would mind?" asked Bunter.

"Ha, ha, na!"

"Well, I needn't mention it to him, after all," said Bunter. "He might get waxy about nothing—he's got an Irish temper, you know. Look here, suppose one of you fellows cut along to the study, and bag the lines! Then I can tell him I never went into his study, if he asks me—he might, you know! I don't want him to cop me there, if he comes in—I mean. I'm a bit more particular about the truth than you fellows—"

"If you touch Desmond's lines, you fat ass, Quelch will scalp you first, and Micky will scalp what's left of you!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Will you shut that door?" asked Carter.

"No! I say, you fellows, I'll chance it," said Bunter. "I haven't time to do the lines before tea—you fellows will be finished. Quelch will wait a bit, too—blow Quelch!"

"Roll away to your own study, fat-head!" said Nugent.

"There's nothing there," explained Bunter. "Toddy and Dutton have gone to tea with Squiff. No good going to my study when there's nothing there, is it? I say, you fellows, if you could cash a postal order for me—"

"Scat!"

"I'm expecting it to-morrow—"

"Rats!"

"Well, look here," exclaimed Billy Bunter, warmly. "If you won't cash a postal order for me, after all I've done for you, the least you can do is to ask a fellow to tea! I must say that!" Harry Wharton laughed.

"Oh, roll in, fathead!" he said. "Make room for the fat porpoise, you fellows!"

Carter rose from the table.

"I'll make room for him if you want him here," he said, curtly. "I'll cut!"

"Oh, rot!" said Harry. "Look here, Carter, you ought to be able to stand your own relation, if other fellows can."

"Can't stand him at any price!" answered Carter. "But I'm not stopping you other fellows having him, if you want him. Anyhow, I've finished, or nearly."

"Nobody will miss you, you can bet on that!" said Billy Bunter disdainfully, as the new junior went to the door. "Your room's better than your company."

"Shut up, Bunter! Look here, Carter—"

Carter settled the matter, by walking out of the study, and shutting the door after him.

Billy Bunter grinned cheerfully, as he sat down in the chair vacated by the new junior. The fewer fellows there were to tea the more there was for those present: and as Bunter was present, that was important!

"Good riddance to bad rubbish!" remarked Bunter. "I say, you fellows, who's going to make some more toast?"

"You can, if you like."

"I don't care much for toast! Those sardines look all right—I'll have the lot if you fellows don't want any! Any sosses?"

"No fathead!"

"If I stood a fellow a treat, I should have some sosses! This isn't much better than tea in Hall."

"Try tea in Hall," suggested Nugent.

"Still, I see you've got a cake! I can fill up on cake! Don't open the jam yet, Cherry—I'm not ready till I've finished these sardines! Look here, don't you mop up all that jam, you know."

"Like Bunter better than Carter to tea, Bob?" asked Nugent with a chuckle.

"Yes!" answered Bob, unexpectedly.

"I should jolly well think so!" said Bunter. "All the same, leave some of that jam for me! And dash it all, Wharton, you might wait for me, before you start on the cake! Tain't a big one, either."

If Bob Cherry preferred Bunter's company to Carter's, he was the only member of the Co. who did.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Corn in Egypt!

"O H crikey!"

Billy Bunter rolled into his own study, after tea, and blinked in surprise. His eyes and his spectacles fixed on sheets of impot paper on the study table, covered with scrawled Latin.

His eyes almost popped through his spectacles in astonishment.

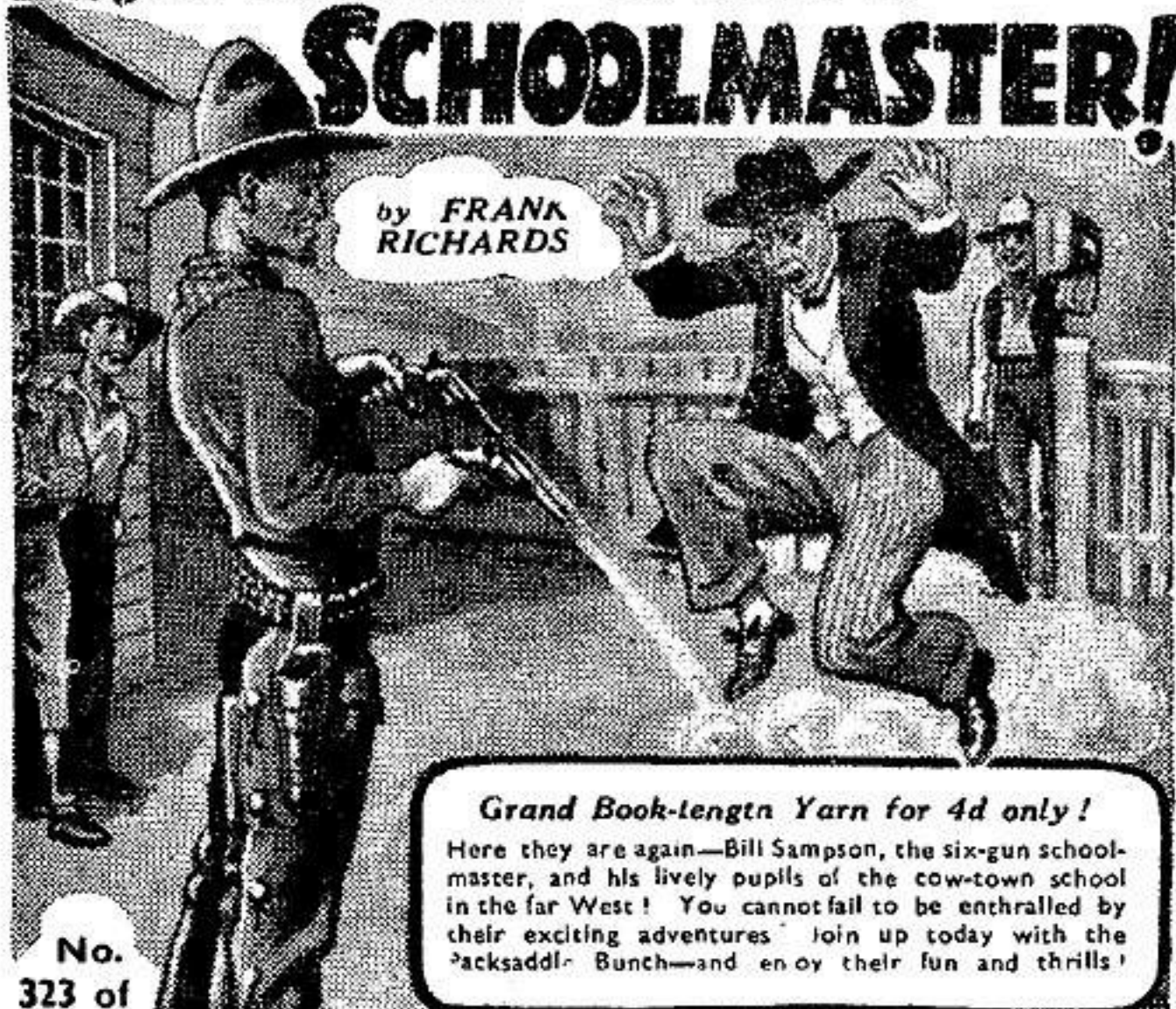
It had not taken Bunter very long to clear the festive board in Study No. 1. Having done so thoroughly, Bunter had proposed that the Famous Five should all buckle to, and get his lines done for him. It would be, as he pointed out, only twenty each, for five fellows!

With the selfishness that Bunter might really have expected, the chums of the Remove had declined, and gone downstairs instead. After which, Billy Bunter had asked about a dozen fellows, up and down the studies, to lend him a hand, without getting a single offer.

Driven to his last resource, the fat Owl rolled, at last, into Study No. 7, to write the lines himself. It was high time that he tackled them, unless trouble was to accrue. By this time the lines were due, if not overdue, in Quelch's study: and the Remove master was rather particular about such matters.

The SIX-GUN SCHOOLMASTER!

by FRANK RICHARDS



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It was doubtful, indeed, whether Bunter could have turned out a hundred lines in time, by setting to hard work. And setting to hard work was a thing that had never had any attraction for Bunter.

He was debating in his fat mind whether to drop in at Quelch's study, and explain that he had written the lines, but that Toddy had left the window open, and they had blown away. And then his eyes, and his spectacles, fell on that written impot, on the table. It was like a discovery of corn in Egypt in the lean years!

It was really astonishing. There before his popping eyes, lay a hundred lines from the first book of Virgil: beginning at "Arma virumque cano," and going on to "sub undis." Whoever had written those lines had done the exact hundred, and not bothered about making it a hundred-and-one, for the mere purpose of finishing at a full stop!

But who had done it?

Bunter had asked nearly half the Remove to help him with those lines: and not a man had offered. Some fellows whom he had not asked, apparently, had done the whole job unasked, seldom or never did such things happen!

"Oh crikey!" repeated Bunter.

He blinked, and blinked again, at those Latin lines! He counted them—exactly the hundred! The writing was a ragged scrawl, not unlike Bunter's own—but not quite so bad as Bunter's—few fellows in the school could write as badly as Bunter. That straggling, scraggy, round-hand might have been almost anybody's—it might have been Bunter's, if he had taken a little more care than usual.

Whoever it was, the fellow had done Bunter a good turn. Amazed as he was to find his lines written for him, the fat Owl beamed with satisfaction.

This was all right. Quelch might have believed that Bunter's lines had been blown out of the study window—but it was much more probable that he mightn't! It was ever so much more satisfactory to take in the lines—as Bunter had not had the trouble of writing them.

He picked up a pen, to write his name on top of the top sheet, which was the rule. In the top corner was a thick black smudge. Bunter wrote his name under the smudge. It did not occur to his fat brain, at the moment, that the writer's name had been written there, and obliterated with ink. That was, really, natural enough; for finding the lines there, on his study table, he had no doubt that some good-natured fellow had done them for him. It was unusual, and it was surprising; still, there were the lines!

In a cheery and satisfied frame of mind, Bunter picked up the impot, and rolled out of the study with it. He found the Famous Five at the foot of the staircase, and they glanced at him, in surprise as they saw the impot in his fat hand.

"You haven't done your lines already!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Looks as if I have!" grinned Bunter.

"You fat villain, if you've bagged Micky's lines—"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I hope I'm not the fellow to bag another fellow's lines!" exclaimed Bunter, warmly.

"Why, you frabjous, footling frump, you asked us, in the study, to cut along and bag them for you!"

"Oh! I—I mean—that is, what I really meant was, that I wouldn't have bagged his lines!" explained Bunter.

"Nothing would have induced me to do it! I'm rather more particular in such things than you are, Cherry!"

Bob Cherry made a movement with his foot—and Bunter scuttled on hastily. He tapped at Mr. Quelch's door, and the Remove master bade him come in.

Bunter rolled in, and laid the imposition on the table.

"My lines, sir!"

"Oh! Very good!" said Mr. Quelch. "Wait a moment, Bunter!" He picked up the lines and glanced at them.

Bunter waited, rather uneasily! It was one of Quelch's maddening ways, to examine an impot—as if it mattered a boiled bean how it was done! More than once, Bunter had been directed to write lines over again—Quelch objected to a jig-saw puzzle of blots and smears.

Bunter always waited, uneasily, in such circumstances. Now he was more uneasy than usual. There were fewer blots and smudges than his lines generally showed, it was true; but he wondered whether Quelch was going to notice the difference of the "fist." He quaked inwardly as he saw his Form-master scanning the lines very closely.

But, to his relief, Mr. Quelch gave a nod expressive of approval.

"Your handwriting is improving, Bunter!" he said.

"I—I—I've been trying very hard to improve it, sir!" stammered Bunter.

"It is still very bad—very bad indeed—a mere scrawl—but it is not so slovenly as usual, Bunter. It is more like Desmond's hand than yours."

Bunter wondered whether it was Micky who had written those lines for him. It was unlikely, as Micky had had a hundred to write for himself. Still, the Irish junior often did good-natured things.

"Is—is it, sir?" mumbled Bunter. "I—I thought my writing was—was rather better than Desmond's, sir!"

"On the contrary, Bunter, Desmond's writing is rather better than yours, though both are very bad indeed!" said Mr. Quelch. "However, you have done better than usual, Bunter. You may go. Kindly tell Desmond that I am expecting his lines, and that they must be brought to me at once."

"Yes, sir!"

Bunter went—gladly.

He rolled cheerfully down Masters' Passage. It was a relief to have got those beastly lines off his mind. He rolled into the Rag to look for Micky Desmond, but he did not find him there.

"Seen Desmond, you chaps?" squeaked Bunter.

"Gone to take his lines to Quelch," answered Wibley.

"Eh? He hasn't taken them—Quelch has just told me to tell him!"

"Well, he went up to fetch them."

"Well, look here, Wib, Quelch wants him—you go up and tell him," suggested Bunter.

"Bow-wow!" said Wibley.

"I say, Smithy, are you going up to the studies?"

"No!" answered the Bounder.

"Well, look here, you might go up and tell Desmond—"

"Rats!"

"Beast! I say, Manly, you're not too jolly lazy to walk up to the studies, are you?"

"Yaas!"

"What about you, Redwing?"

"Fathead!"

"Lazy lot!" said Bunter, scornfully. "Anybody might think it was a mile up to the studies. I suppose I shall have to go myself."

And he went.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Backing Up Bunter!

"HOWLY Moses! I tell you, they're gone!" roared Micky Desmond.

"Rot!"

"How can they be gone?"

"You forgot to write them, old bean."

"Phwat!" Micky Desmond was always a little more Irish when he was excited. "Think I'm a fool entirely?"

"Yes, rather, old chap!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Quite a crowd of Remove fellows had gathered outside Micky's study. In the doorway stood Micky, red with rage. His infuriated voice could be heard at both ends of the passage. He roared. He raged.

"I tell yez!" bawled Micky, "I wrote thim lines, and so I did intirely, and Wibley and Morgan, in the study, seeing me do it, by the same token, and left thim on the table when I wint down to the Rag—and Wib remoinded me of thim, and I came up for thim, and they were gone! And I want to know phwat spalpeen has lifted thim lines from my study."

"I say, you fellows, what's up?" Billy Bunter rolled up the passage.

"Micky says that somebody has lifted his lines!" answered Squiff.

"Sure, they're gone!" roared Micky. "And I lift thim on the table."

"You'd better find them, then!" grinned Bunter. "Quelch has just told me to tell you he's waiting for them."

"How can I find thim whin they're gone?" shrieked Micky. "Some omadhaun has lifted thim lines. How can I take thim to Quelch when I can't find thim at all, at all? Who's taken my lines? By the howly smoke, when I find that spalpeen, I'll rejuice him to powther intirely! I tell you my lines are gone!"

"That won't do for Quelch!" said Bunter, shaking his head. "Bit too thin, old chap!"

"It's the thruth!" roared Micky.

"Well, look here, tell him you left the study window open, and they blew away!" suggested Bunter. "That's rather thin, I know—but not so thin as saying that somebody took the lines away! That's no good at all."

"Listen to the man who knows!" chuckled Skinner.

"Well, I mean to say, if you're going to tell a whopper, tell a good one," said Bunter. "It's not the sort of thing I'd do myself, of course. Still, it's absolutely useless to tell Quelch that somebody's pinched the lines! He would never fall for that."

"But I tell yez, some spalpeen has pinched them intirely!" howled Micky. "Sure, I'm not going to tell Quelch any loies, yer fat omadhaun. Somebody wint in and lifted thim after I wint out of the study."

"Well, if Quelch believes that, he will believe anything!" said Bunter. "If you get away with it, I'll try it myself, next time."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But who the dickens could have done it?" asked Carter, who was in the little crowd in the passage. "Was it you, Bunter?"

"Oh, really, Carter—"

"You were saying something of the kind in my study, at tea-time!" said Carter. "A lot of fellows heard you."

"Beast!"

"Oh crumbs!" exclaimed Hazeldene. "Was it Bunter! I remember once he bagged Toddy's lines, and used them—"

"I didn't!" roared Bunter.

"You jolly well did!" exclaimed Peter Todd. "You fat brigand, have you bagged Desmond's lines?"

"Of course I haven't!" roared Bunter, indignantly. "I told Wharton I wouldn't because Desmond might come in and cop me in his study. I never even thought of doing anything of the kind! Not the sort of thing I would do."

"Oh crikey!"

"Ye thafo of the worruld!" roared Micky. "Where are my lines?"

"I don't know anything about your silly lines!" roared back Bunter. "I haven't been in your study, and none of those rotters would fetch them for me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Have you taken in your own lines, Bunter?" grinned Snoop.

"Yes, I jolly well have, and I've got no use for anybody else's!" snorted Bunter. "As if I'd touch his lines!"

"Sure I'll mop up the passage wid ye!" howled Micky, shaking a fist under Bunter's little fat nose. "I want those lines."

"Beast! I never——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the thumping row?"

The Famous Five came up the Remove passage.

"Bunter's snaffled Micky's lines!" said Tom Brown.

"I haven't!" yelled Bunter.

"Oh, my hat! We saw him taking in his lines, and he never had time to write them!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Did you bag Desmond's lines, you fat bandit?"

"No!" shrieked Bunter.

"Then where did you get them? You never wrote them!" said the captain of the Remove. "Hold on, Micky! Don't slaughter Bunter till he's had time to answer—dead men tell no tales, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You see," gasped Bunter, "it was like this! A pal wrote those lines for me——"

"Gammon! Who?"

"I—I don't know——"

"Ye gods and little fishes!" ejaculated Johnny Bull. "Does even that fat Owl expect anybody to believe that?"

"It's true!" roared Bunter. "I went to my study to write my lines, and found them on the table, all ready written. I don't know who did it, but somebody must have. Anyhow, I found them there, and took them to Quelch."

"Oh crumbs!"

"That's the jolly old limit!"

"It's true!" howled Bunter.

Even Bunter realised that it sounded improbable—especially with an impot missing from Desmond's study! Still, it was true!

"True!" gasped Nugent. "Oh, my hat!"

"If that be truth, where is untruth to be found?" inquired Skinner.

"The truthfulness is not terrific!" chuckled Hurrec Jamset Ram Singh.

"I say, you fellows, it's really true!" gasped Bunter. "I say, if you ask all the fellows you'll find out who did those lines for me. I—I thought perhaps it was Desmond."

"Me!" roared Micky.

"Well, Quelch said that the fist was like yours, old chap——"

"Phwat!" shrieked Micky.

"He—he—he said that the fist was like Micky's—and you make out that you never snooped Micky's lines!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"I never did! I—I wouldn't!" gasped Bunter. "You might do such a thing, Wharton, but I—I wouldn't! Never!"

"Well, my only summer hat!" said Peter Todd, gazing at the fat Owl in

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wonder. "You benighted bandersnatch, can't you see that every fellow here knows that they were Micky's lines you took in to Quelch?"

Billy Bunter blinked round at the juniors. It was dawning even on his fat mind that it was Micky Desmond's impot that he had found in his study.

"I—I say, you fellows, I—I never knew it was Micky's!" he gasped. "How was I to know, when I found it on my study table? Of course, I thought some fellow had done it for me."

"It walked to your study?" asked Carter.

"Beast!"

"You'll have to go to Quelch and own up!" said Peter Todd. "You can't leave Micky in the soup after sneaking his lines."

"Faith, and I should say not intirely!" gasped Micky.

"I'll watch it!" squeaked Bunter. "I found the lines in my study!"

"You did not!" roared Peter.

"I did!" yelled Bunter.

"Oh, fan me!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "You piffling porker, are you asking us to believe that some fellow snooped Micky's lines and put them in your study for you to find?"

"I—I suppose so——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry did not join in that roar of laughter. His face set strangely, and his eyes turned on Carter, with a gleam in them.

But he did not speak. The suspicion that had flashed into his mind came with almost the force of certainty: but it was only suspicion! He set his lips hard.

"Are you going to Quelch, Bunter?" demanded Peter Todd.

"No: I jolly well ain't!"

"Then we'll jolly well bump you till you do!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Bag him!"

"I—I—I say, you fellows," gasped Bunter. "I—I never—I didn't—I—I wasn't—I—I—I say—I—I——"

"You took Micky's lines!" said Harry Wharton. "You've played that trick before, and now you've played it again. You've got to own up, or get a ragging."

"I tell you——" yelled Bunter.

"Bag him!"

"Bump him!"

"Hold on!" rapped Bob Cherry. He stepped suddenly in front of Bunter, and the fat Owl, surprised but greatly relieved, dodged thankfully behind the sturdiest figure in the Greyfriars Remove. "Hands off Bunter!"

"What the dickens——" exclaimed Wharton.

"Don't be an ass, Bob!"

"Bunter says that he found the lines on his study table!" said Bob.

"Do you believe him, you fathead?"

"Yes, I do!"

The crowd of Removites stared at Bob Cherry blankly.

Nobody in the Remove thought of taking Billy Bunter's word, even if he made a probable statement. And his present statement was utterly improbable. That any fellow would have snaffled Micky's lines, to save Bunter the trouble of writing his own, was simply an absurd idea. It really sounded like the most fantastic of Billy Bunter's many and various "whoppers."

"You—you—you believe him?" gasped the captain of the Remove.

"Yes, I do!"

"Bob knows I wouldn't tell a lie, don't you, old chap?" gasped Bunter.

"I know you never tell anything else, you fat chump, or hardly ever! But I believe you're telling the truth this time!"

"And why?" demanded Wharton.

"Well, I do!" said Bob. "Bunter's had this landed on him. It's not fair to make him go to Quelch when he was diddled into taking those lines in."

"What utter rot!"

"Silly ass!"

"Look here——"

"Let us get at that fat frog!"

"You'll have to walk over me first!" said Bob Cherry quietly, but with a glint in his steady blue eyes. "I'm standing by Bunter!"

Harry Wharton compressed his lips.

"Well, nobody's going to walk over you, fathead!" he said. "If you really believe Bunter you're the only fellow here who does! But what's Micky going to do? Quelch will be after him, and he's got no time now to write the lines again."

Trotter, the House page, came up the passage from the stairs.

"Master Desmond, please——"

"Oh, howly Moses!" groaned Micky.

"Mr. Quelch's study at once, please, sir!" said Trotter.

Micky Desmond drew a deep breath. He gave Billy Bunter one look of terrific deadliness, and followed Trotter down the passage to the stairs.

"That's a licking for Micky," said Johnny Bull. "And that fat blighter bagged his lines because he was too jolly lazy to do his impot."

"Beast! I never——"

Some of the juniors made a movement towards Bunter.

Bob's hands clenched hard, and he stood like a rock.

Harry Wharton hastily interposed.

"Chuck it!" he said. "You're a silly ass, Bob——"

"Same to you, with knobs on!"

"Oh, rats!"

Bob Cherry took hold of a fat arm and led Bunter into his study.

Billy Bunter was glad to get on the safe side of the door of Study No. 13. Just at present the hapless fat Owl was hardly safe among the Removites.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

After Bunter!

"STOP!" yelled Billy Bunter. "Bob, stop!"

It was the following afternoon. Harry Wharton & Co. were going out of gates after dinner when that sudden yell reached their ears, and they looked round.

After them, cutting along at unaccustomed speed, came Billy Bunter.

After Bunter, running like a deer, came Micky Desmond.

The Famous Five grinned. Seldom, or never, had Billy Bunter been seen to put on such speed.

He came through the gateway almost like a stone from a catapult. Micky shot out after him. Bunter, breathless, dodged round the Famous Five in the road.

"Hould him!" gasped Micky, coming up, panting. "Hould that thafo of the worruld!"

"I say, you fellows, keep him off!" gasped Bunter. "I ain't going to do his rotten lines for him!"

"Hold on!" said Harry Wharton. "What's the row, Paddy?"

But he hardly needed to ask. It was that mysterious affair of the lines that was still causing trouble.

Micky's impot, not having been handed in at the due time, had been doubled. He had two hundred lines on hand now, instead of one hundred. And Quelch, though he would double an



"Yaroooh! Yow-ow-ow! Beast!" Billy Bunter's wild roar rang far and wide. "Ow! I say, Toddy, that beast Carter banged the door on my nose—go in and kick him, old chap, will you? He called you a bony freak the other day, Peter! I'd kick a chap who called me a bony freak!"

impot that was not handed in, seldom redoubled—his next step was to hand over a whopping. That afternoon was a half-holiday; and Micky had many more attractive occupations for a half-holiday than writing lines. But it was lines or a licking!

Which, undoubtedly, was hard cheese, for Micky had done his lines in the first place, and they had been handed in by Bunter. Had he cared to tell Mr. Quelch so, he would have been all right—though certainly Bunter would have been in serious trouble.

But he had not told Quelch. All the fellows thought it was up to Bunter to own up to his trickery. But Micky had no idea of giving him away, if he did not. His idea was to set the matter right by leaving those two hundred lines to Bunter. Bunter did not seem to see it.

"I say, you fellows, he makes out that I had his lines yesterday, you know!" gasped the fat Owl.

"So you had?" grunted Johnny Bull.

"I never—"

"Oh, chuck it!" said Harry Wharton. "You had Micky's lines! If Quelch had spotted you, you'd have gone to the Head for a flogging!"

"Sure I couldn't tell Quelch!" said Micky. "I'm not going to be a snake!"

"A snake?" exclaimed Wharton.

"What the dickens—"

"I wouldn't snake about him, and send him up to the Head—"

"Oh! A sneak! I see!"

"I said a snake, didn't I? It would serve him right, after snaking my lines, but I wasn't going to snake to Quelch. But I'm not going to write two hundred lines because that fat baste snaked my impot. Bunter's going to write them, see? If Quelch took my fist for his, he will take Bunter's fist for mine!"

"That's fair," said Nugent. "Up to you, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"The fairfulness is terrific!" declared Hurreo Janset Ram Singh.

"But I never snaked the lines!" howled Bunter. "I keep on telling you that I found them in my study—"

"You can keep on telling us that, till you're black in the face, and nobody will believe you!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Bob does—don't you, Bob?"

"Yea!" said Bob Cherry.

"'Twasn't my fault some fellow snaffled Desmond's lines, and put them in my study!" said Bunter.

"Gammon!"

"I don't know who did it," said Bunter, "unless it was Bob—"

"What?" roared Bob Cherry.

"You needn't yell at a chap," said Bunter, blinking at the curly-headed Bob. "I think it must have been you, as you're the only fellow who knows I didn't do it. If you did, you might as well own up to it."

Bob looked at him. The other fellows chuckled—even Micky, wrathful as he was. The expression on Bob's face at that moment was worth a guinea a box!

"You—you—you fat rotter!" gasped Bob. "It was a dirty trick to take Micky's lines, and leave them in your study!"

"I know it was! If you did it—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's what you get for standing up for Bunter!" chuckled Johnny Bull. "It's what you might have expected, too, you fathead!"

"Oh, really, Bull! If it was Bob, I—"

"You fat freak!" hissed Bob. "You ought to have done your lines, and then that cad, whoever he was, couldn't have played that trick on you. And if you'd

had the sense of a bunny rabbit, you'd have known it was a trick, when you found the lines in your study."

"Well, I was jolly glad to find them there, of course," said Bunter. "And if you put them there, Cherry, I think you ought to admit it. You're making all the fellows think I pinched them, at this rate."

"I did not!" roared Bob.

"Well, I take your word, of course, old fellow. Still, if you did—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! Somebody put those lines in my study, and it looks—"

"Anyhow, you had Micky's lines," said Bob. "You ought to do at least a hundred for him, as you had them."

"So I would, if—I had time! I—I mean, I—I would, only—it would be like taking Quelch in, you know—deceitful, in fact! I—I couldn't do anything deceitful," said Bunter, shaking his head. "I dare say you could, Cherry, as you suggest it, but—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled four members of the Co.

Bob Cherry gave the fat Owl a glare, and tramped away up the road.

His comrades followed him, laughing. Backing up Bunter was rather a thankless task.

"I say, you fellows, don't walk away while a chap's talking!" yelled Bunter. "I say—"

"Now, you fat baste—" roared Micky.

"Keep off, you beast! Oh crikey!" Billy Bunter broke into flight again. After him flew Micky. His grasp was on Bunter's collar, when the fat Owl, in desperation, kicked backwards.

Micky gave a yell, as he caught a heel with his shin, and hopped.

Leaving him hopping, Bunter darted

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,562.

in at the gates again, and disappeared. For two or three minutes Micky hopped on one leg, and rubbed his hacked shin. Then he limped in after Bunter. The expression on his face was quite alarming.

It was fortunate for Billy Bunter that he had had time to disappear. It is related that the man who struck O'Hara was picked up afterwards in so many pieces that they could not be numbered. And something like the same fate loomed over the fat junior who had hacked Micky Desmond.

Fortunately, Billy Bunter had disappeared and he stayed disappeared!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bob Cherry's Problem!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. stopped at the corner of Oak Lane, near Courtfield Common. There the five separated.

The chums of the Remove were taking that walk, that afternoon, to look for Ponsonby of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe. On a half-holiday, it was very likely that Pon would be taking a walk abroad, and very likely indeed that his footsteps would lead him in the direction of the Three Fishers, the disreputable inn on the river.

There were two ways of reaching that delectable resort—one by the back gate on Oak Lane, the other by the gate on the towpath by the Sark.

So, while Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry sauntered in the lane, the other three members of the Co. walked on to the towpath.

Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh disappeared from sight. Wharton and Bob sauntered at a leisurely pace, keeping in sight of the Three Fishers' fence, which bordered the lane for some distance.

Bob's face was rather grim and glum in expression.

It was far from being Bob's way to nourish a grudge; but he was very keen to get within hitting distance of Cecil Ponsonby.

It was a week since Pon & Co. had ragged him at Lantham Station, and left him tied up in the waiting-room there—and generally Bob forgot an offence in much less than a week. But Pon's rag had had unexpected consequences, which kept its memory green, as it were.

"I'm blessed," said Bob, breaking a long silence, "whether I know what a fellow ought to do!"

"And I'm blessed," said Harry, with a smile, "if I can make you out the last few days, old bean. First you take a dislike to a new fellow, for no reason that anybody can see—then you stand up for that fat villain Bunter against the whole Form—"

"The two things are connected!" grunted Bob. "It was Carter planted those lines in the fat fool's study for him to find!"

"Carter?" repeated Harry. "How do you know, Bob? If you've got any proof of anything of the kind, that alters the case, of course. But how—"

"Think that cunning rascal would let anybody get proof?" grunted Bob.

Wharton's face became grave.

"If there's no proof, Bob, you oughtn't to think so. Just because you dislike the fellow—"

"It's not that, ass! Carter was in the study when that fat idiot came in gabbling about Micky's lines. He left before we finished tea—"

"Because he can't stand his relation—and no wonder!"

"No—because Bunter's gabble had put the idea of that trick into his head. Only Bunter's fool enough to fall for it. But he knew Bunter was. What chance has that silly fathead against a clever rogue?"

"Blessed if I make you out. You're not quite fair to Carter," said Harry. "He doesn't like Bunter hooking on to him as a relation—and precious few fellows would, if you come to that. He knows perfectly well that the fat ass is only after his money."

"I know that! I'm not blaming him for that! If it were only that, do you think I should care a boiled bean?" grunted Bob. "He's here as Bunter's enemy, that's what's worrying me. That blithering ass can't take care of himself, and he's so fatheaded, and so beastly unscrupulous, he keeps on giving the cad chances."

"That's bosh!" said Harry. He stopped, and stood looking at Bob's flushed, troubled face. "Look here, you've said that when those Highcliffe cads left you tied up in that waiting-room, with a hanky stuffed in your mouth, the day Carter came, you heard something—"

"I couldn't help hearing it."

"I know, if they came into the waiting-room and jawed, while you were tied up behind the door. I saw that man Gooch, Carter's cousin, who brought him to the school that day. They changed trains at Lantham, I suppose, and came into the waiting-room while they waited for the Courtfield train. You heard what they said. You've told us that, but not what you heard—"

"I can't repeat what I heard from behind a door, can I—though it was those Highcliffe cads who fixed me up behind the door."

"Well, no; but—" Wharton paused. "It seems that what you heard there made you take a dislike to Carter. You said that he was a cad, and that the man with him was a rascal! Now you say he's Bunter's enemy. Does that mean that they were talking about Bunter?"

"Yes, it does!"

"But they can't have talked any harm," said Harry, utterly mystified. "Carter didn't know Bunter, I remember, when he got to Greyfriars—"

"That was gammon. He knew him all right! Look here," said Bob, with a deep breath, "I'd better tell you—only don't jaw about it, for goodness' sake. I want your advice what to do. Mind, it's in confidence. I can't repeat things about a chap that I heard in such a way. But—but—there's some rascality afoot, and it's up against that fat idiot, Bunter. How can I leave him to take what's coming to him?"

"I'll keep it dark, of course—and I dare say it will turn out to be next to nothing, after all," said Harry. "I know Carter's seen Bunter only once, before he came, and that was a long time ago, so he can't be his enemy, as you put it. He can't stand him, that's all!"

"If you'd heard—"

"Well, get it off your chest!"

"I don't remember every word, of course," said Bob, "but that fat ass, Bunter, thinks Carter a rich relation. Well, he isn't. Bunter doesn't know why he left St. Olaf's to come here—I do! He was kicked out of his last school as a bad hat!"

"What rot! The Head wouldn't have let him into Greyfriars—"

"The man Gooch mentioned that

Carter's uncle had a lot of difficulty in fixing it."

"Must have had—if it's correct!" said Wharton dryly.

"Well, never mind that—that's no business of mine, anyhow," said Bob. "I shouldn't dream of saying a word about that part. But the rotten part is that old Carter got so annoyed with the young rascal that he cut him off; he's paying his school fees here, and that's the limit. He's altered his will, leaving his cash to another relation."

"Even if that's so, what is there to bother you about it? Blessed if I make you out."

"Fathead! The new name in the old bean's will, according to what they said, is the name of Carter's relation at Greyfriars."

"Oh!" said Harry.

"They never mentioned the name! But the only relation that Carter's got at our school, so far as I know, is Bunter."

"It's quite likely there might be another chap related to him, out of two or three hundred. Bunter's only seen the old man once, and it doesn't look likely—"

"Oh, I know—I know! But they said more than that! Carter's to play a reform game, to get back into old Carter's good graces, and, at the same time, to do all he can to disgrace the other fellow, making the old man think that the new heir is no better than the old heir—see?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Well, from the very start, Carter's been on Bunter's trail, and that looks as if Bunter's the victim—especially as he's the only fellow, as far as we know, related to Carter. That's why he reported that grub raid to Quelch, last week. That's why he spoke out in class yesterday. That's why he's fixed Bunter over those lines. He banked on Bunter being shown up for snaffling them."

"Um!" said Harry.

"Twice, since Carter's been here. Bunter's had a narrow escape of going up to the Head! Well, a fellow can't keep on going up to the Head! A fellow who's always being sent up to the Head gets sacked, in the long run."

"I know. But—" Wharton shook his head. "Look here, Bob, a fellow can't be sent up to the Head, or sacked, either, for anything he hasn't done! It's all very well to say that Carter's on his trail: but Bunter does snoop tuck in the studies, and he does grab another fellow's lines if he gets a chance. Carter can't make him do it."

"He can take a rotten advantage of it when he does it."

"Well, that's Bunter's look-out; the fat ass should run straight."

"Yes, I know that. But that time he reported Bunter for a grub raid the fat ass hadn't done it. It turned out to be some rag or other. And this time Bunter never knew they were Micky's lines. I tell you I know that cad got them out of Micky's study and left them in Bunter's, as sure as if I'd seen him doing it!" said Bob irritably.

Harry Wharton stood silent.

"Well, what do you think?" asked Bob, at last. "I can't be certain it was Bunter those two rotters were talking about, as they never mentioned the name. But it looks pretty clear, the way he's been on the fat duffer's trail. It's a fool against a rogue. And from what they said, there's a lot of money at stake."

"I don't see how they could know that—"

"That man Gideon Gooch is a solicitor, and I suppose he nosed it out somehow. Anyhow, that's what he said. Carter said he would fix the fellow who

had cut him out. I remember those words."

"It's all jolly queer!" said Harry slowly. "If you've got it right, it looks as if Old Man Carter has cut his nephew off and made a new will in Bunter's favour, and they're out to get it changed again. But—if you said a

word about this, Bob, you couldn't prove a single syllable."

Bab flushed crimson.

"Does that mean that you don't believe me?" he exclaimed.

"Don't be as ass, old chap! I believe every word, of course, but you might very likely be mistaken—have misunder-

stood something. If Carter was turfed out of his last school for playing the goat, it's odd that he's shown no signs of it here, in over a week."

"Bunter's said that he's caught him smoking."

"Bunter will say anything. Nobody (Continued on next page.)

LEARN TO PLAY FOOTBALL!



OUR INTERNATIONAL COACH

PROFESSIONAL DODGES

I PROMISED you some more corner kick "secrets." I must be careful what I tell you, or I shall have players and managers on to me, accusing me of giving away private information. But so long as you remember the things I tell you, and they do you good, I don't mind taking the risk.

Look at any newspaper which prints photographs of football matches in progress—one of the big Sunday or Monday newspapers, for example—and you are almost sure to find some sort of picture of a corner kick. Either the goalkeeper saving, a goal being scored, or the players bunched together waiting for the ball to come over. Notice what an unruly jumble of players there seems to be.

Believe me, there is more thought put into that "jumble" than you think. Every player has his eye on a particular opponent; no one is allowed to stand unmarked. One or two defenders are ready to fall back on to the goal-line to cover up the goalkeeper in case he makes a slip. And the attackers are busy positioning themselves in the places where they think they will stand the best chance of getting to the ball as it comes across.

Neither does the player taking the kick merely slam the ball into the middle without any regard for the colleague to whom he wants it to go. Very often he has an arrangement with one of the players in the middle to put the ball across in a certain place, or in a certain way.

If you get a chance to see the Arsenal in action, watch carefully when they are awarded a corner kick. You may see Ted Drake, their "giant" centre-forward, stand well away from the goal, and then, as the ball comes over, dash in with a huge leap in an endeavour to head the ball into the net. Or watch the Arsenal when they are not doing too well—perhaps a goal down. As soon as a corner kick is awarded they bring up one or two of their tall defenders—Jack Crayston or Les Compton, for example—to try to force a goal that way. In the game against West Bromwich Albion, earlier this season, Compton, a full-back, saved the game by coming up for a corner kick when there were only five minutes left for play.

But remember this: If your defenders advance for a corner kick, other players must be sent back to act as defenders in the case of a quick breakaway by the other side.

The subjects of this week's "lesson" by our special sporting contributor are corner-kick secrets—and a warning about heading the ball.

HEADING IS IMPORTANT

O THER clubs adopt their own dodges to help them to score goals from corner kicks. Grimsby Town work one, and I have occasionally seen Chelsea try it on this season. Instead of banging the ball into the middle, the player taking the kick passes it gently to a colleague who is running up about half-way between the touchline and the centre of the field. From there the player with the ball can have a shot at goal. The point is, you see, that the fellow taking the kick must not play the ball again until it has been played by another player. He couldn't run in from the corner to have a shot, so he passes the ball to a colleague, who is at liberty to do as he likes.

In the foregoing you have a few of the dodges which first-class players "try on" in their efforts to improve that average of "one in eighteen" goals from corner kicks. Now let us take our corner kick and see how we get on. The ball went out on the left of the goal—that is on our right wing. We decided that, because we wanted our corners to be taken with the "wrong" foot, we would let our outside-left take the corners on the right wing. He must place the ball in the "arc" and, without moving the corner flag, take the kick as per the instructions which I have been giving you.

Now then, you forwards, position yourselves with some intelligence; don't all crowd in the goalmouth. The ball is coming over—a nice corner kick, not too high, and about four yards out from goal. Our centre-forward jumps, gets his head to the ball, but sends it over the bar, and the game must be started again by a goal kick.

I don't know who taught our centre-forward about heading the ball. It certainly wasn't me. You may have thought it queer that I haven't said anything about heading up to now. Don't think I have forgotten, or that I think heading doesn't play an im-

portant part in football. Heading is important. Several players have failed to reach the top rank because they have not been able to head a ball properly.

WATCH THE BALL

I HAD reasons for not mentioning this heading business earlier. First of all, I remember telling you at the beginning of this series of "lessons" that football should be played on the ground. If the game is played properly there should be no need for a great deal of heading.

The real reason, however, why I have left heading out of these notes up to now is that I don't advise you young footballers to get into the habit of heading a football. During a game a football can become very heavy. A soft skull, which isn't used to taking bangs, may easily be damaged if you head the ball in the wrong way. Don't think I am suggesting that you wrap yourselves up in cottonwool, or that you shouldn't do the things which might hurt you. But there is no point in running the risk of getting knocked out, or, at the best, going about for days with a severe headache. The head is a very delicate part of the anatomy, which needs looking after. For the time being, let us make it a rule that there shall be no heading in our games.

That doesn't mean that you must forget about this important part of football. Heading practice with a small dry football can do no harm and will do a great deal of good. Even a tennis ball will teach you the right and wrong ways to use your head. The most important thing to remember is that you never head a ball with the top of your head; always with the front or the side. The other thing to remember is to keep your eye on the ball all the time, even when it is just striking your head. It is a great temptation, I know, to shut your eyes as the ball gets nearer. Force yourself to keep them open, or you will never be able to head a ball accurately—like "Dixie" Dean, the Everton and England centre-forward, can, for example.

That is as much about heading as I am going to bother you with now. Watch how the first-class players head a ball, and practise yourself with a light ball. But, for the time being, forget about heading so far as actual games are concerned, and see that your feet go in the right places.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,562.

else has—and even if he had, smoking is a silly trick, but not exactly a crime. Smithy smokes, and we're all friendly enough with Smithy. Don't be an ass, Bob!"

"He knows those Highcliffe cads, Pon & Co.—"

"So do we, if you come to that! Anyhow, he's only met Pon in the holidays. St. Olaf's is a couple of hundred miles from Highcliffe, so—" Harry Wharton shook his head again. "Look here, Bob, the chap's keen on football, and plays a jolly good game. That doesn't sound like a smoky ass and a bad hat."

"Smithy's as good a footballer as any man in the Remove, and he's a smoky ass and a bad hat!" growled Bob.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, if he's no worse than the old Bounder we can stand him," he said. "We're not sitting on the bench to judge fellows. Anyhow, what he does is no bizney of yours or mine."

"I know that. It's about Bunter that I'm worried. I'm not even sure that Bunter's his game, but it looks like it. It might be only dislike that makes him rough on the fat chump. I've told you that because I want to know what you think. Well, what do you think?"

"I think it all sounds jolly steep, and that you may have got a wrong impression from what you heard that day at Lantham," answered Wharton frankly. "Still, in the circumstances, we might keep an eye on him and Bunter."

"Yes, that's all I've been able to come to!" grunted Bob.

"If the chap came a mucker at his last school, and is trying to make good at Greyfriars, it's to his credit," added Wharton. "He has a right to try to get his uncle's good opinion back, if he can—in fact, it's his duty. If he's trying to blacken Bunter, though, that's a dirty game, and we'll jolly soon put a stop to it. But I've seen no sign about him of what lanky would call badhatfulness."

Bob Cherry burst into a laugh.

"Look—," he said.

"What—"

"Oh, just look!"

Bob pointed down the winding lane.

The two chums were there, to see if Ponsonby came along to the gate of the Three Fishers. From the direction of the Courtfield road Ponsonby came up the lane, and stopped at that gate. But he did not come alone. Another fellow was walking by his side. That fellow was Arthur Carter, the new junior in the Greyfriars Remove.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Punches for Pon!

HARRY WHARTON stared.

Bob Cherry broke into a rapid sprint.

Ponsonby had put his hand on the gate to open it, and it was plain that his Greyfriars friend was going to follow him in.

But the gate had only started to open, when Bob arrived, with a rush.

Pon, glancing round, received a shove on the chest, which sent him staggering back into the middle of the lane, where he sat down.

Carter stared at Bob, a flush coming into his face. Bob gave him no notice. He faced Ponsonby, standing between the Highcliffe fellow and the gate. He was giving Pon no chance to dodge into the grounds of the Three Fishers, where he could not have been followed.

Harry Wharton was on the spot by the time the dandy of Highcliffe had scrambled to his feet.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,562.

"You—you hooligan!" panted Pon. "What—"

"I've got you, this time!" said Bob, grimly. "Keep away from that gate, Ponsonby—banker and billiards can wait a bit!"

"You rotten ruffian, stand aside!" said Ponsonby, his voice thick with rage.

"Look here—" began Carter.

Bob gave him a look.

"You can shut up!" he snapped. "Cut into that den if you like—nobody's stopping you! Pon's not going till I've licked him!"

"I'm not going in!" muttered Carter. "I walked as far as this with Pon! That's all! Look here, if you've got a row on with Pon, you can leave it till he's not in my company."

"It's not so easy to catch Pon!" answered Bob scornfully. "He got me at Lantham, with three other fellows to help him. Now he's on his own, and he's going to have what he's asked for!"

"It was only a lark, that day at Lantham!" muttered Ponsonby. "I suppose it did you no harm to lose your train."

"It did more harm than you fancy! You ragged me and tied me up—four of you! You'd be glad enough to rag again, if you had a Highcliffe crowd with you!" said Bob contemptuously. "Are you going to put up your hands, Ponsonby?"

"No!" said Pon between his teeth.

"Look here, Wharton, you ought to stop this, as captain of the Remove," exclaimed Carter. "I've not been long at Greyfriars, but I've heard that Quelch is down on this rowing with Highcliffe. You've got friends at that school, too! Keep that silly fathead quiet!"

"Pon shouldn't ask for it, if he doesn't want it!" answered Wharton. "I'm here to see him get what's coming to him."

"Well, I shall stop it, if you won't!" snapped Carter. "Keep your paws to yourself, Cherry, or you'll have me to deal with, as well as Pon."

"Back me up," muttered Ponsonby.

"I certainly shall!"

"You won't!" said Harry Wharton. "I don't want any trouble with you, Carter, as you're in my study at Greyfriars, but if you chip in here, you'll have a scrap on your hands! Pile in, Bob!"

Bob Cherry, heedless of Carter, was already advancing on Ponsonby, his hands up, and his eyes gleaming over them.

Pon cast a hunted look at the Three Fishers gate; but he was barred off from it, and he backed away to the opposite side of the lane.

Carter made a forward step, and Harry Wharton immediately stepped into his way.

Carter had to stop.

"Keep clear," said Harry quietly. "It's man to man—and it was four to one when those cads tackled Bob at Lantham. You'll have to wait for Pon to join you in that den."

"I've said that I wasn't going in!" muttered Carter.

"Well, I hope it's true!" said Harry dryly. "Anyhow, Pon's going to be busy now—and you're not going to interfere."

Carter stood undecided. He was intensely irritated and angry, and keen to go to his Highcliffe pal's aid. But it was clear that he could render Pon no help; a fight with Wharton would not help Pon. And the captain of the Remove stood ready for him.

Meanwhile Pon, very unwillingly, was getting busy. A tap on his lofty nose

decided him to put up his hands, and as there was no escape for him, the dandy of Highcliffe threw himself into the fray with all the courage he could muster.

Wharton and Carter looked on.

For two or three minutes there was a wild and whirling combat in the lane. Twice Bob staggered under hefty blows—and twice Pon went down in the mud, with deplorable results to his elegant clobber.

When he went down for the third time, he stayed down, gasping.

"I give in!" he panted.

"You don't!" answered Bob coolly. "You're going on till you're licked, you rotten funk. Get up!"

"I—I can't!"

"Then I'll roll you into that ditch!"

Pon, evidently, could get up—for he jumped up like a jack-in-the-box at that.

Hammer and tongs they went again—Pon backing, and dodging, giving all the ground he could, and cunningly circling round, to get nearer and nearer to the gate in the fence.

Suddenly he made a fierce attack, pressing Bob so hard that the Greyfriars junior had to give a foot or two. Then, as Bob rallied, Pon spun round, ran for the gate, put his hands on the top bar, and vaulted over.

He was gone almost like a lightning flash.

Bob, red with wrath, made a fierce rush after him.

Pon dropped on the inner side of the gate, and cut off at a breathless run towards the red-tiled building that showed at a distance through the leafless trees.

"Hold on!" shouted Harry, as Bob put his hands on the gate, with the intention of leaping over after Ponsonby. In his excitement, Bob rather forgot that the Three Fishers was strictly out of bounds.

Harry Wharton ran to him, and caught him by the arm.

"You can't go in there, Bob!" he exclaimed.

"That cur's not getting away!" roared Bob. "I mayn't see him again this term—think he'll give me another chance if he can help it? I'm going to thrash him—"

"You've given him a good allowance, old chap—"

"Rot! I'd hardly started—"

"Look here, you're not going over that gate, so chuck it!" said Harry. "If you got spotted, it wouldn't be much use telling the Head you only went in for a row with a Highcliffe cad! Stop, I tell you!"

Bob Cherry grunted angrily, but he listened to reason. He turned away from the gate, and dabbed his nose, where one of Pon's knocks had landed.

"After all, he had a few!" he muttered.

"More than a few!" said Harry, laughing. "You can call it a day, Bob, so far as Ponsonby is concerned. Come and bathe your nose in the pond—and let's get after the other fellows."

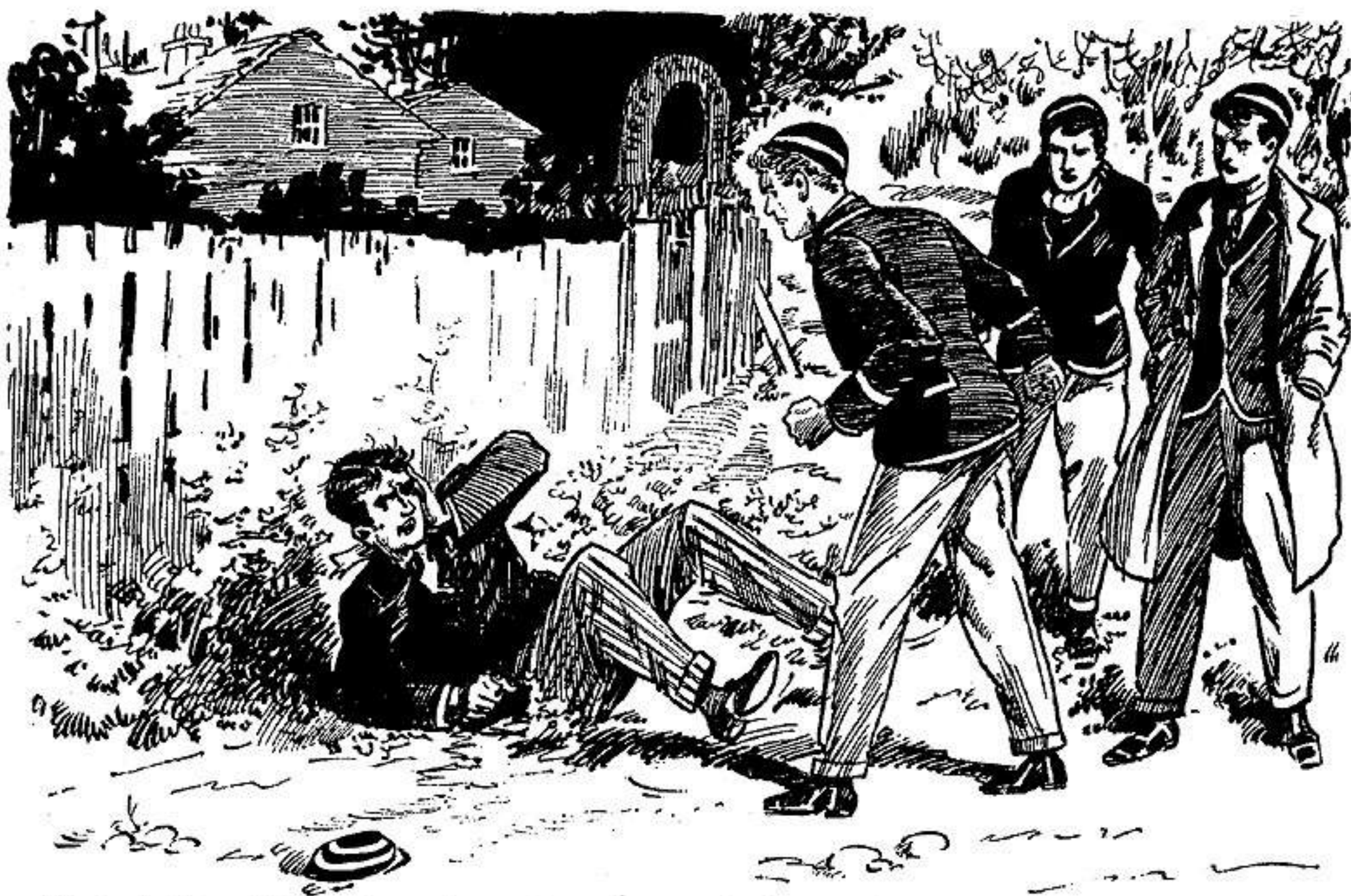
"Oh, all right."

Harry Wharton glanced at Carter.

"You've said that you were not going into the den with Ponsonby, Carter," he said. "What are you waiting for?"

"I suppose I can wait here if I like!" yapped Carter.

"Oh, certainly; but as you're new to Greyfriars, I'd better tell you that a chap spotted at the Three Fishers is booked for a flogging, and might be sacked. And the beaks and prefects at Greyfriars are not so slack as at Highcliffe—Pon may be safe, but you wouldn't be."



"I give in!" panted Ponsonby, as he went down in the mud, with deplorable results to his elegant clobber. "You don't!" answered Bob Cherry coolly. "You're going on till you're licked, you rotten funk! Get up!"

"Thank you for nothing!" sneered Carter.

"Oh, come on!" snapped Bob. "The fellow's only waiting for us to turn our backs before he follows Ponsonby in."

"I'm waiting for Pon to come out," said Carter. "He's only gone in to speak to a man for a few minutes, I—I think."

"Oh! In that case, I'll wait, too!" said Bob sarcastically.

"He's not likely to come out while you're hanging about."

"No—nor for a couple of hours, anyhow. Come on, Wharton, you don't want to see Carter going in, I suppose?" growled Bob. "He's a bit more careful than Smithy—he doesn't want any Greyfriars man to spot him."

Carter gave Bob a bitter, and at the same time, curious look.

"You seem to have made up your mind that I'm a bad hat!" he remarked. "Any special reason?"

"I know you're a bad hat!" retorted Bob. "You wouldn't pal with that Highlife blackguard if you weren't."

"I've seen you very friendly with Vernon-Smith; and I've heard that he carries on exactly as Pon is doing! Are you a bad hat?" asked Carter.

Harry Wharton smiled, and caught Bob's arm.

"Come on!" he said.

They tramped away up the lane, heading for the wayside pond, for Bob to bathe his nose—which rather needed it.

The pond was past a winding turn of the lane, and when they reached it the Three Fishers gate and Carter were out of sight behind.

"Bet you that cad's over the gate before this!" grunted Bob, as he dipped his handkerchief into the water.

Wharton made no reply. He did not feel sure, in his own mind, about Carter, and it was useless to argue the point. But he wondered.

Bob's damaged nose having been

bathed, they walked on to the Sark, and joined the other members of the Co. on the towpath.

Whether Arthur Carter had followed Pon into the Three Fishers, as soon as their backs were turned, Harry Wharton did not know—and he was willing to give the new junior the benefit of the doubt. But there was no doubt in Bob's mind.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Quech Comes Down Heavy!

"LEGGO!" roared Billy Bunter.

"Ye thafe of the worruld!" roared Micky Desmond.

"Beast!" howled Bunter.

"Will you leggo?"

Billy Bunter had remained in a disappeared state for most of the afternoon. But towards tea-time it was impossible for Bunter to continue disappeared. He was very keen to miss Micky—but missing a meal was not to be thought of.

He hoped that Micky had got over the hack on his shin by that time. He hoped, also, that Micky had done those lines. Anyhow, he had to risk it, or miss his tea—which was unthinkable.

But it was rather a certainty than a risk, as he found when he rolled into the Remove passage. Micky Desmond pounced on him, before he even saw that the Irish junior was in the passage at all.

Micky had recovered, more or less, from the hack. But he had not done the lines. He had made up his mind that he was not going to do them. It was up to Bunter—and in that all the Remove fellows agreed with Micky. Even Bob, who believed that the lines had been "planted" on Bunter the day before, considered that it was up to the fat Owl to do bull. Everybody else

considered that it was up to him to do the lot.

With, of course, the exception of Bunter himself. Bunter never considered that it was up to him to do anything involving exertion.

A dozen fellows in the Remove passage looked on, grinning, as the hapless fat Owl was collared. He wriggled and shook like a fat jelly in Micky's grasp.

"Now, ye podgy omadhaun," hissed Micky, "are you going to do the lines? They've got to be handed in by lay-time."

"No!" roared Bunter. "I say, Smithy, make him leggo!"

"I'll watch it!" grinned the Bounder.

"I say, Hazel, old chap—"

"Fathead!"

"Bolsover—I say, Bolsover, old chap—"

If you 'old chap' me, I'll boot you!" said Bolsover major. "You pinched Desmond's lines, you fat burglar—"

"I didn't!" wailed Bunter. "Desmond, you beast, leggo! I've got to see Mauly—I'm going to tea with Mauly—Yarooooop!"

Billy Bunter roared and howled as Micky yanked him along the passage to the tap and sink at the end, and put his fat head under the tap.

"Yow-ow-ow! If you turn that tap on me," shrieked Bunter, "I—I'll—I'll—Gurrrrrrrgh!"

Holding Bunter's head under the tap with his right hand, Micky turned on the tap with his left!

Splash!

Billy Bunter gave a suffocated roar as the water streamed over his head. He struggled frantically.

"Now, you fat baste—" gasped Micky.

"Gurrrrrgh!" gurgled Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

(Continued on page 16.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1562



(Continued from page 13.)

"Are you going to do the lines intirely?" roared Micky.

"Hooooooogh!"

"Bunter's getting a wash," grinned Skinner. "Your first this term, old fat man! It will do you good!"

"He's changing already!" remarked Hazel.

"Gurrgh! Ooooooch! Woo-hooch!" gurgled the hapless fat Owl. "I say, you fellows—Gooooooogh!"

"Sure, I'll hold yez here till ye say yis!" bawled Micky Desmond. "Will ye do the lines, ye fat spalpeen?"

"Groooooooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cave!" called out Kipps of the Remove, from lower down the passage. "Ware beaks!"

Bunter's frantic yells had been heard. Up from the stairs came Mr. Quelch, with rustling gown and frowning brow. He gave a thunderous glare up the passage towards the crowd at the end.

"Will ye do the lines for me?" roared Micky Desmond. "Sure I'll dhrown yez if ye don't, intirely."

"Shut up!" breathed Smithy. "Here comes Quelch, you ass!"

"Grooogh! I say, you fellows—Oooogh!"

"Desmond!" came in a voice of thunder. "Release Bunter this instant! How dare you!"

"Oh, howly mother av Moses!" gasped Micky in dismay, and he let go Bunter as if the fat Owl had suddenly become red-hot to the touch.

"Ooooooogh!" gasped Bunter.

He sat down with a bump when he was released, streaming with water, and gasping and gurgling for breath.

Micky spun round to his Form-master, his face the picture of dismay. In his fixed belief that Bunter had deliberately "snooped" his impot for the day before, he had been deeply exasperated; but he realised that he had handled the fat Owl in rather a drastic manner, all the same.

"This is absolutely outrageous!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "I have never heard of such a thing! I heard what you said, Desmond—and I am very glad that I heard it! I shall take very severe measures to see that nothing of this kind recurs in my Form."

"I—I—I—" stammered Micky.

"You were drenching Bunter with water, to force him to write your imposition for you!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "I heard you, Desmond!"

"Yis, sorr, but—but—"

"I should cane you severely merely for asking another boy to write your lines, if it came to my knowledge! But you have actually bullied Bunter to compel him to do so!"

"Oh, no, sorr! You—you see—"

"I have the evidence of my eyes and my ears, Desmond! I do not think I have ever heard of anything so utterly outrageous!"

Micky stood blinking at him.

The rest of the Removites were silent. Few, if any, would have blamed THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1562.

Micky if he had blurted out the whole story. But he said nothing. Whatever came of it, he was not going to "snake."

But Mr. Quelch's expression was really terrifying. He had, as he supposed, come upon a particularly obnoxious case of bullying. Certainly it looked like it—a fellow holding another fellow's head under the tap till the victim agreed to do his lines for him!

"Bunter! Go to the dormitory and dry yourself at once!" said Mr. Quelch. "Desmond, follow me to my study!"

"I nivr mint—" stammered the unfortunate Micky.

"I know what I have seen and heard, Desmond! You need say nothing! I will make it very clear to all that bullying is not permitted in my Form!"

"Sure I wasn't bullying!" gasped Micky. "You ask any of these fellows, sorr, whither they've iver seen me bullying—"

"Desmond wasn't to blame, sir!" said Vernon-Smith. "He could explain—"

"Have you anything to say, Desmond?"

Micky hesitated a moment. The Bounder's intervention gave him a chance, and he was strongly tempted to tell the story of the "snooped" impot. But he hesitated only a moment.

"No, sorr, only that I wasn't bullying," he said. "Sure, I wouldn't touch the baste with me little finger if he hadn't asked for that same."

"You will take a hundred lines, Vernon-Smith, for your impertinent remark. Bunter, go to the dormitory at once. Desmond, follow me."

Billy Bunter, drenched and dripping, tottered away to the dormitory staircase.

Micky followed his Form-master down the lower stairs.

In his study, Mr. Quelch, with a grim brow, selected a stout cane.

Micky breathed hard through his nose.

"You have not written your lines, Desmond?" rapped the Remove master.

"No, sorr—"

"You were relying, no doubt, on coercing Bunter into writing them!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "I have never heard of such a thing. I shall cane you with the utmost severity! Bend over that chair!"

It was a harrowing scene that followed—for Micky!

Mr. Quelch felt it his duty to be severe; and he did his duty to the full! There were only six swipes—but every one of them rang like a pistol shot—and louder still rang the recipient's anguished yells.

"Now," said Mr. Quelch, laying down the cane.

"Ow! Ooogh! Howly Moses! Wow!" groaned the wriggling Micky.

"Be silent! You will be detained on Saturday afternoon, Desmond, and you will take five hundred lines, in addition to your caning."

"Howly smoke!" gasped Micky.

"In the event of any further bullying coming to my notice, I shall report you to your headmaster!" said Mr. Quelch sternly.

"I nivr bullied Bunter—"

"Silence! Leave my study!" rapped Mr. Quelch. "Another word, and I shall cane you again!"

"I don't care!" howled the exasperated Micky, reckless between anguish and indignation. "I nivr did bully anybody, and so I nivr did, and—"

"Upon my word!"

Mr. Quelch grasped the cane again. Three hefty swipes landed on Micky's shoulders before he escaped from the study.

In the Remove passage he was received with sympathy. But sympathy was not of much use to the suffering Micky.

"The baste!" he said. "The baste! Whipping a man for bullying, and I niver did—sure, I niver did intirely! I'll make the baste sit up for it! Ow! Yow! Wow! Sure I shan't be able to sit down for a wake! Wow! Wow!"

And for a long, long time sounds of woe and tribulation were heard from Micky's study.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Puts Both Feet In It!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Turn out, you fat slacker!"

"I can't! I'm ill!"

The rising-bell rang in the dewy morn.

The Greyfriars Remove turned out to the familiar, unwelcome clang—with the exception of Billy Bunter. Bunter lifted a fat head from a pillow, and blinked at the other fellows.

"I'm ill!" he repeated firmly. "I caught a cold yesterday when that beast Desmond held my head under the tap—"

"That the latest?" asked Carter.

"You can shut up, Carter! I'm not speaking to you! No need for you to butt in!" snapped Bunter. "I say, Wharton, you tell Quelch I've caught a bad cold—"

"And all for ten minutes extra in bed!" said Skinner. "Think Quelch will swallow it, you fat ass?"

"I've said I'm ill!" answered Bunter, with dignity. "I was drenched with water—soaked all over! It stands to reason I've caught a cold! I'm not exactly coughing or sneezing—it's internal, see? I feel absolutely unable to get out of bed."

"Shall I help you?" asked Bob Cherry.

"No, you beast!" roared Bunter. "Can't you take a fellow's word that he's ill? I've been feeling ill all night! I haven't just thought of it because I want to stay in bed—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, cackle!" said Bunter. "Cackle while a fellow's lying—"

"Well, your lying is enough to make a cat laugh!" said Skinner.

"While a fellow's lying ill, I mean!" hooted Bunter. "I've got a temperament!"

"A which?" gasped Bob.

"A very serious temperament—"

"Oh, my hat! Do you mean a temperature?"

"Is it temperature? Well, whichever it is, I've got it—bad! It may turn to measles or—or plumbago, for all I know! I simply dare not put a foot out of bed! Tell Quelch, when you go down, Wharton, old chap!"

"You howling ass!" said Harry. "If you make Quelch believe you've got a cold, you'll be hiked off to sanny."

"It's not so bad as that," said Bunter hastily. "I—I may feel better shortly. At the present moment it's simply awful! Tell Quelch I'm suffering fearful agonies, will you, old fellow? That may touch his heart, you know."

There was a chuckle along the Remove dormitory. Billy Bunter's excuses for getting a few extra minutes in bed were many and various. This, nobody doubted, was one more of them.

Still, it was possible that Bunter had caught a cold, for that drenching under the Remove tap on Wednesday afternoon had been very thorough. The

have possibility saved him from having his bedclothes hooked off him.

If he claimed to be ill, he had a right to take the risk of disregarding ringing-bell; it was his own affair! But if he were spoofing, nobody envied him his interview with Quelch.

Bunter laid his fat head on the pillow again. He was prepared to recover by the time the breakfast-bell rang. But this, he considered, was good for nearly an extra half-hour in bed. The fact that he hadn't a cold did not bother Bunter in the least. Truth and he were strangers.

He grinned on his pillow when the Removites had gone down. Now that all those noisy fellows were gone, there was a chance for a fellow to get another forty winks. That drenching under the Remove tap had been fearfully uncomfortable at the time; but the fat Owl was rather glad of it now. It was coming in useful.

Bunter's eyes closed and his mouth opened. He was about to glide off into happy slumber, when there was a footstep in the Remove dormitory.

The fat Owl's eyes closed and his mouth opened. He did not lift his head from the pillow, but he yapped out irritably:

"Aren't you all gone yet? How long are you going to hang about keeping a fellow awake? I say is that you, Wharton? Look here, you go and tell old Quelch I'm ill—why, if he isn't told, the old ass may come up here to see why I haven't gone down—"

"BUNTER!"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

All desire for slumber vanished at the sound of his Form-master's voice. Bunter fairly bounded.

"Oh lor'!" he stuttered.

He fixed his terrified eyes on Mr. Quelch. It was not one of the Remove fellows who had not gone down—it was the Remove master who had come up! Bunter blinked at him in as much horror as if he had been the grisly ghost of a Form-master.

Mr. Quelch advanced towards the hapless Owl's bed. His gimlet eyes almost bored into Bunter.

"Bunter, as you did not come down with the rest of the Form, I came up to ascertain why. What expression did I hear you apply to me, Bunter?"

"Oh crumbs! I—I—I never called you an ass, sir!" gasped Bunter, in terror.

"I heard you!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, no, sir! I—I was speaking of another old ass, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"Bunter!"

"I—I—I was, really, sir! You—you ain't the only old ass at Greyfriars, sir," babbled the fat Owl.

Mr. Quelch gasped.

"Get out of bed at once, Bunter!"

"Oh, yes, certainly, sir!" gasped Bunter, and he rolled out.

He quite forgot to be ill! Quelch's look did not encourage illness, at the moment!

"Now bend over that bed, Bunter!"

"Oh lor'!"

Mr. Quelch had brought his cane up to the dormitory with him; doubtless guessing that it might be needed! He swished it in the air as the hapless fat Owl bent over the bed.

Whack!

Pyjamas were a very poor protection against a cane. Billy Bunter's wild yell woke all the echoes of the dormitory.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Now, Bunter—"

"Yaroooh! Oh crikey! Yarooop!" roared Bunter. "Oh dear! Owl!"

"If you are not down in five minutes, Bunter, I shall come up again!" said Mr. Quelch, in a voice resembling that of the Great Hugo Bear.

And he tucked the cane under his arm and left the dormitory.

Billy Bunter was down under the five minutes. He was very anxious not to give his Form-master the trouble of coming up again!

He rolled out into the quad, wriggling.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "Did you get away with it, old fat man?"

"Ow! The beast walloped me!" groaned Bunter. "Fancy a Form-master pitching into a chap when he's ill! That's how fellows are treated here!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" howled Bunter. "I've a jolly good mind to go to the Head about it! That beast Quelch—"

"Shut up, ass!" exclaimed Frank Nugent, as Mr. Quelch came out of the House, just behind Bunter.

"Shan't! The beast whopped me!" roared Bunter. "Whopped me for nothing! Think I'm going to be whopped for nothing? I came jolly near chucking a pillow at his head, I can tell you! I'd a jolly good mind to stick in the dorm, and chuck a pillow at his cheeky head when he came up again! I—Leggo, you beast!" added Bunter, as a hand fell on his fat shoulder. "Is that you, Desmond, you rotter—Oh crikey!"

Bunter's eyes popped through his spectacles at Mr. Quelch.

Early as it was, Bunter had done it twice that morning! Often and often did the fatuous fat Owl put his foot in it! Now he had, as it were, put both feet in it!

Mr. Quelch did not speak. But his face was eloquent as he led Billy Bunter back into the House.

A minute later, the sounds that echoed from Mr. Quelch's study might have touched a heart of stone.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Getting Quelch!

WILLIAM WIBLEY took Micky Desmond by one arm, David Morgan took him by the other, and, between them, they walked him to his study—gently but firmly.

Micky had a large, heavy hassock in his hand—and the light of battle in his eye. They had grabbed him on the Remove landing after prep.

Umpteen times that day Micky had confided to his study-mates that he was going to make Quelch sorry for himself "entirely"! Micky's wrath was transferred, it appeared, from Bunter to Quelch. The affair of the "snooped" impot had been washed out of his mind by that severe whopping in Quelch's study, from which he was still feeling twinges.

Worse than that, was detention on Saturday afternoon, with five hundred lines to write. Likewise, the imputation of bullying made Micky feel very sore—very sore indeed!

Bunter's delinquencies—or supposed delinquencies—had been washed out by that drenching under the Remove tap. Quelch's remained to be washed out—and until Micky recovered his usual good temper his friends were rather anxious about him.

As Mr. Quelch was standing below the staircase in conversation with Prout,

Wib and Morgan guessed what Micky was thinking of doing with that hassock. For which reason they grasped him and walked him off—Micky energetically protesting. Heedless of protests, they walked him into the study and slammed him into an armchair.

"You howling ass!" said Wibley.

"Asking for the sack, look you!" said Morgan.

Micky glared at them—without a sign of gratitude for their friendly offices. Just at present what Micky wanted was vengeance.

"Ye cheeky, fathheaded spalpeens!" gasped Micky. "Sure, I'd have dropped it right on his napper!"

"And what would happen afterwards?" inquired Wib.

"Sure, he'd be sorry for himself intirely!"

"You potty Celt!" said Wibley. "You baliny Hibernian! Lucky for you you've got friends to keep you from getting sacked!"

"If you think you're going to stop me—" hooted Micky.

"Sort of!" grinned Morgan. "You try to get out of this study till Quelch has cleared off, and we'll bung you on the floor and sit on your head!"

Micky glared wrath. In moments of excitement there was no doubt that Micky needed a restraining hand, and he was wildly excited now. Wibley and Morgan stood between him and the door, watchful.

"I tell you I'm going to get Quelch!" hissed Micky. "You thry to stop me, and, sure, I'll knock both of yez into the middle of next wake! You could no more stop me than you could stop the devil whin he was going through Athlone! Now get away from that dure!"

Micky jumped out of the armchair.

"Collar him!" exclaimed Wibley.

Micky's friends closed in on him. Obviously he had to be kept in the study for his own good.

But Micky at the moment was quite blind to his own good. Making Quelch sorry for himself was the urgent business on hand, to his mind.

He gripped the hassock and swung it round his head.

William Wibley gave a howl as he caught it with his nose and went staggering across the study, to fall in the corner.

The next swipe landed on Morgan's ear, and he rolled over on the carpet with a roar.

Micky shot to the door.

In a moment or two his friends would have been up again and jumping at him—but a moment or two were enough for Micky.

He tore the door open and rushed out into the passage.

The Remove had gone down after prep, only three or four fellows remaining in the studies. Nobody was in the passage, or on the landing.

Micky Desmond shot down the passage to the landing.

By the time Wibley and Morgan were on their feet in the study Micky was shooting across the landing to the balustrade.

He looked down over it.

Quelch was still there, still in conversation with Mr. Prout.

Micky's eyes gleamed down at the top of his mortar-board.

He lifted the hassock over the balustrade, calculated carefully, and let it drop. Down it went like a plummet, landing fair and square on Mr. Quelch's mortar-board.

Plop.

Never had the remove master been so surprised.

He staggered, tottered, gasped, and sat down with a bump.

Prout stared at him blankly.

Instantly Micky backed away from the balustrade. Micky was not much given to caution, but he realised that he needed to keep out of sight and remain undiscovered. The penalty for dropping a hassock on a Form-master's head was likely to be fearfully severe.

Grinning, he backed across the landing—as Wib and Morgan came cutting breathlessly out of the Remove passage.

He grinned at them as they came.

"Sure, I've done it!" he chuckled.

Loud exclamations from below told only too surely that Micky had "done it." Excitement reigned below.

"You mad ass!" gasped Wibley.

"You potty chump!" hissed Morgan.

"Get away—quick! Quick!"

Up to that point Wibley and Morgan had been anxious to restrain their excited chum, but now that the deed was done their anxiety was to save him from the consequences.

They grasped him by the arms once more and rushed him away, but they did not return to the Remove studies. Obviously there would very soon be investigation in that quarter. They rushed Micky away by the Fifth Form passage and down a back staircase. In a very few moments all three of them were safely off the scene.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

A Mystery!

"O OOOOH!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "My dear Quelch—" stuttered Mr. Prout. "Ooogh!"

"Goodness gracious! What—"

"Something—something fell on—on my head, I—I think," gasped the Remove master dizzily.

Mr. Quelch sat in a dizzy state, gasping. A crowd gathered round at once. The Remove master's mortar-board had been knocked sideways, and now it slanted on his head at an intoxicated-looking angle. Beside him lay the hassock.

Quelch's first dizzy impression was that Greyfriars was collapsing on his head. Fortunately, it was not so bad as that.

"It was—was—was this!" exclaimed Prout, turning the hassock over with his foot. "Where, in the name of goodness, can this have fallen from?"

"It must have dropped over the banisters, sir," said Wingate of the Sixth. He stared up.

"Extraordinary!" ejaculated Prout.

"It must have been done intentionally," said Mr. Hacker, the master of the Shell. "It cannot have been an accident."

"Pray let me help you, sir," said Loder of the Sixth officiously. He gave the Remove master a helping hand up. Mr. Quelch tottered to his feet.

He glanced at the hassock that had banged on his head. He put his mortar-board straight. His lips set in a tight line.

That hassock had been dropped on his head. Obviously it could not have got over the banisters on its own. Someone had done this—intentionally, as Hacker said. Quelch's face was almost pale with wrath. His gimlet-eyes glinted with a deadly glint.

"By gum!" came the voice of Coker

of the Fifth from the gathering crowd. "Some Remove kid larking with his beak! By gum!"

"What silly ass—" murmured Bob Cherry.

The alarm had drawn a crowd of juniors from the Rag.

"Who's up in the studies?" asked Carter.

"Oh crumbs! Look!" breathed Harry Wharton.

Fifty pairs of eyes were turned upward—and all of them beheld a fat face adorned by a large pair of spectacles blinking over the balustrade of the Remove landing.

"Bunter!" breathed Nugent.

"That potty porpoise!"

"Bunter!" muttered Carter, his eyes gleaming.

"Rot!" said Bob Cherry. "Even Bunter wouldn't be ass enough to stay there if he'd done it!"

"Isn't he ass enough for anything?" grinned the Bounder.

Mr. Quelch was already ascending the stairs. After him went a whole army of Greyfriars fellows.

If Bunter had done it he was certainly displaying uncommon nerve or uncommon obtuseness, for he did not go; he remained where he was, blinking down, apparently not in the least alarmed.

"I say, you fellows, what's up?" he called out, as the crowd came swarming up to the landing.

"Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch in a voice that was not loud, but very, very deep. "Bunter, did you drop a hassock over the banisters?"

Bunter blinked at him.

"Eh? Oh, no, sir!"

"What are you doing here, Bunter?"

"Eh? Standing on the landing, sir," answered Bunter, puzzled.

There was a suppressed giggle among the crowd of fellows who had followed Quelch up. It was an awfully serious matter, but the fat Owl could always be relied upon to supply a little comic relief.

"Is that intended for impertinence, Bunter?" roared Mr. Quelch. He was not in a mood to be patient with Bunter's obtuseness.

"Eh? Oh, no, sir! I—I haven't done anything," gasped Bunter in alarm. "I've been in my study, sir."

"Wingate! Will you ascertain if any other Remove boys are in the studies?"

"Yes, sir!"

The Greyfriars captain hurried up the Remove passage, to look into the studies. He found only two Remove fellows—Lord Mauleverer, yawning over unfinished prep in Study No. 12, and Fisher T. Fish counting his money in Study No. 14. He shepherded both of them along to the landing, where Billy Bunter was standing before his Form-master in a state of quaking alarm.

"These are all, Wingate?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Have you been out of your study, Mauleverer, before Wingate came?"

"No, sir!" answered Mauly, in wonder. "I haven't quite got through my prep yet, sir."

"And you, Fish?"

"Nope!" answered Fish promptly.

Mr. Quelch glared at him.

"Answer me in English, Fish!" he rapped. "Yes or no!"

"Nope—I mean nunk—that is, nix—no, sir!" gasped Fish.

"I say, sir, I was in my study, too!" squeaked Bunter. "I never came out till I heard something going on. I came to see what it was. I never—"

Mr. Quelch fixed a penetrating glare on Bunter. Only that morning Bunter

had been whopped twice! Only that morning Quelch had heard him declare that he had a "jolly good mind" to chuck a pillow at his Form-master's head! And a hassock had actually been "chucked" at that majestic head!

"Someone," said Mr. Quelch, in a grinding voice, "dropped a hassock over the banisters, to fall on my head. You were here, Bunter."

"I—I wasn't, sir!" groaned Bunter. "I'd only just come. I shouldn't have waited for you if I'd done it, sir."

"Safe bet!" murmured Skinner.

"This morning," said Mr. Quelch, in the same grinding tone. "I heard you utter a threat, Bunter, which has now been carried out."

"Oh crikey! I—I never meant it, sir!" groaned Bunter. "I—I wouldn't chuck a pillow at your head, sir! Besides, it wasn't a pillow, sir, if it was a hassock."

"That is immaterial," said Mr. Quelch. "I suspect you very strongly, Bunter. Why did you remain in your study after preparation was over?"

"I—I—I—I was mugging up Latin, sir! I—I—I'm rather keen on it, sir, as—as you may have noticed."

"That statement is untruthful, Bunter. If you cannot tell the truth, I can only conclude—"

"Oh crikey! I—I—I mean—"

"I will give you one more opportunity, Bunter, to explain why you remained up here after the rest of the Form had gone down."

"I—I—I'd rather not tell you while Toddy's here, sir!" gasped Bunter, with an anxious blink at Peter Todd, who was staring at him from the crowd.

"What has Todd to do with it?" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Well, he might make a fuss about the toffee, sir!" gasped Bunter. "He might think I'd had it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! Bunter, tell me at once what—"

"Never mind the toffee, Bunter," put in Peter Todd. "That's all right."

"Oh, all right, then," said Bunter. "The fact is, sir, Toddy left some toffee in the study, and I—I ate it, sir."

"Do you mean to say, Bunter, that you remained after your study-mates had gone down, in order to consume comestibles belonging to Todd?"

"Oh crikey! N-n-no, sir! I mean, Toddy didn't mind me having the toffee. Did you, Toddy, old chap? Toddy knows that I shall stand him some toffee when my postal order comes. I'm expecting a postal order, sir—"

"That will do, Bunter! You deny having committed this outrageous act?"

"Oh, yes, rather, sir! I—I wouldn't!"

"Very well!" said Mr. Quelch, between his closed lips. "In such a very serious matter as this, there must be absolute proof. The boy concerned will be reported to Dr. Locke for a public flogging. The facts will be ascertained before long. You are under suspicion, Bunter."

"Oh, really, sir—"

"You need say no more!"

Mr. Quelch turned and rustled away down the stairs. The expression on his face as he went was very eloquent. Nobody envied the hassock-hurler when he was discovered.

"I say, you fellows, fancy Quelch thinking it was me, you know!" gasped Bunter, as the Remove master disappeared. "Of course, I'd like to drop a ton of bricks on his napper, after whopping me for nothing. But—"

"You must have been a silly ass to stick there after doing it!" said Carter.

"Eh? I've said I didn't do it, you beast!"

Carter laughed.



"I say, you fellows!" said Bunter, sitting up in bed and blinking at his Form-fellows. "I've been feeling ill all night! I haven't just thought of it because I want to stay in bed! I've got a temperament!" "A which?" gasped Bob Cherry. "A very serious temperament!" hooted Bunter.

"I say, you fellows, I never did, you know!" exclaimed Bunter. "I say, I wonder who did? Did you, Mauly?"

"Oh, gad! Hardly!"

"Was it you, Fishy?"

"I guess not, old-timer!" grinned Fisher T. Fish.

"Well, nobody else seems to have been up in the studies," said Bunter. "It's a bit of a mystery, ain't it?"

"Not fearfully mysterious, as every fellow here knows you did it!" answered Carter.

"I say, you fellows, I think most likely it was Carter!" said Billy Bunter. "He would like to land it on me. He's always trying to get me into a row, because I won't take him up as a relation—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Carter was in the Rag, with us, when it happened, fathead!" said Harry Wharton.

"Oh, was he?" said Bunter. "Then I'm blessed if I know who it was. I know it wasn't me!"

"Quelch knows it was, old bean!" grinned Skinner.

"Beast!"

Until dorm, the matter was discussed in the Rag, and fellows were quite unable to make up their minds whether Bunter had done it or not. It was a reckless act, which did not look like Bunter. On the other hand, it was a fatheaded act, which did look like Bunter! Bunter's own statement, of course, did not weigh a feather's weight, one way or the other!

Three fellows in the Remove knew that it was not Bunter. But those three said no word on the subject.

If, indeed, the charge was officially fastened on the fat Owl, and Bunter was up for punishment, Micky Desmond had only one thing to do, which was to own up and take his gruel; and he would not have hesitated a moment to do so.

But unless it came to that, obviously, the least said was the soonest mended. So the matter remained, for the present, a mystery.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Loder Takes a Hint!

LODER of the Sixth glanced round. Loder was standing at his study window, looking out into the sunny, frosty quad, after class the next morning, when two Remove juniors strolled by, talking as they passed. One of them was Carter, the new fellow in the Remove, the other Skinner. Carter's voice floated clearly to the prefect's ears.

"Well, we all know it was Bunter! Of course, nobody's going to give him away—not that the fat ass needs much giving away. Quelch knows, all right."

"Quelch is like the jolly old school-master in the story—a beast, but a just beast!" chuckled Skinner. "He won't skin Bunter without proof."

"Easy enough to prove."

Loder fixed his attention on Carter as the new junior made that remark.

As a Sixth Form prefect, it was Loder's duty, if he could, to discover the reckless young rascal who had dropped that hassock on Quelch's majestic napper. Loder was not a whale on duty; and though the other prefects were "prowling" on the subject, Gerald Loder had given the matter no thought at all. He did not, as a matter of fact, like Quelch, and was not in the least sorry that a hassock had banged on his head.

Still, Loder was a prefect, and he was keen to show what a zealous and capable prefect he was, if it could be done without taking any trouble. So he was quite keen to hear what Carter had

to say. Most Greyfriars prefects would have jibbed at getting information by overhearing talk among the juniors, but Loder was not particular. He lent Carter a very attentive ear.

Skinner had not noticed the prefect at his window. If Carter had, he did not reveal the fact.

"Blessed if I see it!" said Skinner. "Bunter was on the spot, but that doesn't really look as if he did it. He would have bolted. How's Quelch going to prove it?"

"There's the hassock," said Carter. "They've got that! Can't they find out whom it belongs to?"

"Dozens of them knocking about the studies," said Skinner.

"Oh, yes; but I fancy there's one missing from Bunter's study to-day," grinned Carter. "If I were Quelch, I should ask Bunter whether he had one, and whether he still has it."

The two juniors passed on, Loder looking after them curiously as they went.

It was clear that both of them believed that Bunter was the unknown hassock-hurler, and Carter's suggestion struck Loder as useful. He had a suspicion that Carter had spotted him at the open window, and had intended his words to be heard by official ears. If the fellow had chosen that surreptitious method of "sneaking," it did not matter to Loder; he was going to act on the suggestion.

He left his study and went to the doorway of the House. Most of the Removites were out in the quad after class. He called to Peter Todd.

"Where is Bunter, Todd?"

"He went up to the study after class," answered Peter.

Loder turned and went to the stairs. Peter whistled. That inquiry, from a

perfect, looked as if they were on the track of the hassock-hurler.

The bully of the Sixth found Bunter in Study No. 7 in the Remove, traveling slowly but surely through a packet of butterscotch.

The fat Owl blinked round in alarm at the sight of a prefect looking in.

"I say, Loder, it wasn't me!" he exclaimed in a great hurry.

"What wasn't?" grinned Loder.

"Oh! Anything! I mean, nothing!" stammered Bunter.

"I've come here to ask you a question, Bunter! You'd better tell me the truth!" said Loder, adopting his most bullying expression. "There used to be a hassock in this study, I understand?"

"Eh? Oh, yes!" Bunter blinked at him. "I used to have it on my chair, Loder, because the table's so beastly high. I use a cushion now."

Loder laughed. Really, there was not much need for investigation in dealing with a fellow like Bunter.

"Where is it now?" he demanded.

"Eh? I don't know! You see—"

"Is it in this study?"

"Nunno! You see—"

"Yes, I see!" grinned Loder. "Follow me, Bunter. I fancy your Form-master would like to hear something about that hassock!"

"I—I don't suppose Quelch cares about it, Loder! A chap's allowed to chuck away an old hassock if he likes."

"That depends on where he chucks it!" said Loder. "Are you coming, Bunter, or do you want me to lead you along by your ear?"

"I—I'm coming! But—"

"Sharp's the word!" snapped Loder. Billy Bunter rolled out of the study after Loder, and followed him down the stairs to Masters' Passage. He was feeling uneasy—Bunter always felt uneasy when he approached his Form-master's study. At the same time, he did not look so alarmed as Loder might have expected.

Loder tapped at Mr. Quelch's door. He entered, followed by the fat Owl.

Mr. Quelch glanced at the prefect inquiringly.

"What is it, Loder?"

"I've been making some inquiries, sir, into what happened last evening," explained Loder, with a dutiful smirk. "As the prefects were asked to investigate, I've been giving the matter a good deal of attention. I think there can be no doubt now that it was Bunter, sir, from what I have ascertained."

"You have made some discovery, Loder?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

There was no doubt that the Remove master was keen on news.

"I think so, sir! I thought of inquiring whether such a thing as a hassock was missing from a Remove study. It appears that one is missing from Bunter's study, so I have brought him to you, sir."

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

"Thank you, Loder!" said Mr. Quelch. "I had not thought of that line of investigation. It was very thoughtful of you. Bunter, you had a hassock in your study?"

"Oh! No, sir!"

"He admitted to me a few minutes ago, sir, that he had!" said Loder.

"I didn't!" howled Bunter. "It wasn't mine; it was Toddy's—"

"It was in your study?" rapped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, yes, sir! Toddy keeps all his

things in my study, as it's his study, too—"

"Is it in the study now?"

"No, sir!"

"What has become of it?"

"I don't know, sir! I chucked it away—"

"You—you threw it—"

"Yes, sir!"

"Upon my word! Then you admit, Bunter, that you were guilty of the assault upon your Form-master last evening?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

Bunter jumped.

"Oh, no, sir! Oh crikey! I mean, I chucked it away, sir—I didn't chuck it at your napper, sir— Oh lor! It wasn't the same hassock, sir! Oh crumbs! Nothing of the kind, sir! I—I chucked it away because it was worn-out, and all the stuffing coming out all over the floor, sir, and—"

"That will do, Bunter! You had a hassock in your study, and it is no longer there! Last night a hassock was dropped on my head, and I have retained it in my possession. Nothing could be clearer—"

"But, sir, I never—"

"Bunter, you will come with me to your headmaster! Loder, I am very much obliged to you!"

"Not at all, sir!" said Loder, with another smirk.

"Follow me, Bunter!"

"Oh lor!"

Bunter rolled after his Form-master. At the corner of the passage they passed Carter of the Remove. Carter glanced at them and smiled a cat-like smile as he watched them arrive at Dr. Locke's study.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Passing It On!

"VERY good!" said Dr. Locke.

"Very good indeed!"

Bunter was entirely unable to see anything good in the matter at all.

He stood quaking, while his Form-master explained to Dr. Locke that the author of the unexampled outrage with the hassock has been discovered.

Why Quelch supposed that he was the hassock-hurler, Bunter did not know. But he could see that Quelch did. If the Head took the same view, it was all up with Bunter. Already the Head's eye was swerving towards his birch.

Everybody knew that the man who had bonneted Quelch was booked for a Head's flogging, if spotted. Dr. Locke seemed ready to get on with it at once. Billy Bunter was far from ready. Bunter's objections were deep and strong.

He had only one hope—in the fact that "old Locke" was well-known to be a "downy bird," with an almost superhuman faculty for getting at the truth!

Seldom was the truth a resource of Bunter's! But in this instance only the truth was of any use to him. For, in point of fact, he had not hurled that hassock, and had no idea who had.

"Very good!" repeated Dr. Locke. "I am very glad, Quelch, that a discovery has been made. Such an episode could not be suffered to pass without serious detriment to the discipline of the school. Bunter—"

"I didn't!" wailed Bunter.

"If you have anything to say, Bunter—"

"Oh, yes, sir! I didn't! I wasn't—"

"I should explain, sir," said Mr. Quelch grimly, "that I myself heard

this boy utter a threat to hurl a pillow at my head—"

"Is it possible, Mr. Quelch?"

"That—that was only gas, sir!" wailed Bunter. "I never meant to—I—I—I shouldn't dare! Lots of fellows would like to chuck a pillow at your head, sir—but they never do—"

"What?" roared Mr. Quelch.

"Fellows have often said such things, sir! They never do it! I've heard a chap say he would chuck Mossos across the detention-room—but nobody's ever chucked him—"

"Be silent, you foolish boy!" said Dr. Locke. "Mr. Quelch, you have other evidence beside foolish talk on the part of this stupid boy?"

"Naturally, sir. Bunter was on the spot when investigation was made. In view of his denial, I allowed the matter to remain in abeyance. But a Sixth Form prefect has now discovered that a hassock is missing from his study—"

"Bless my soul!" said the Head. "There could hardly be more conclusive evidence than that, I think."

"I quite agree, sir."

"I will hear you, Bunter, if you have anything further to say! The hassock missing from your study, it can hardly be doubted, is the one that was flung over the banisters at your Form-master. Did you—"

"It wasn't, sir!" howled Bunter. "It couldn't be, sir! You see, it's impossible!"

"And why so?" demanded Dr. Locke. "Where is your hassock now, Bunter, if it is not the one in Mr. Quelch's study?"

"It wasn't mine, sir; it was Toddy's."

"Answer my question—where is it?"

"I don't know, sir! How could I know?" wailed Bunter. "I don't know what the dustmen do with the things."

"The—the—the what?"

"Dustmen, sir."

"What do you mean, Bunter? What can the dustmen have to do with this matter?" exclaimed the Head.

"Well, I suppose they took it away, sir!" said Bunter. "They take all the rubbish away. I don't know what they do with it. You see, sir, Toddy grumbled about that old hassock bursting and dropping stuffing all over the shop, so I threw it away."

"Where did you throw it, Bunter?"

"Into a dustbin, sir."

"And when did this occur?"

"Last term, sir."

"Last term!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch blankly.

"Yes, sir! Toddy made out that I wore it out, because I used it to sit on at prep in the study, and then he groused because I chucked it away, because it was his and—"

"Has there been a hassock in your study this term, Bunter?"

"Oh, no, sir! This term I've used a cushion on my chair. Toddy can't grumble about that, because I borrowed it from Mauly's study—"

Mr. Quelch gazed at Bunter a good deal like a gorgon. He had taken it for granted—he had had no doubt whatever—that the hassock missing from Study No. 7 was the one that had been dropped on his head. Really it was pretty good evidence. Still, if the hassock in Study No. 7 had been thrown away last term, it clearly wasn't the same hassock, and couldn't be!

"If this is true, Bunter, why did you not tell Mr. Quelch so?" exclaimed the Head.

"He never asked me, sir."

"Do you believe this statement, Mr.

Quelch? The boy Todd can be sent for to corroborate it or otherwise."

Mr. Quelch breathed hard and deep. "I think, sir, that it is unnecessary! If this boy had had the common intelligence to mention that he had had no hassock in his study this term, I should not have supposed—"

"Quite so," assented the Head. "Bunter should have made that statement immediately. He could hardly have supposed that you were inquiring about an article that was thrown away before the Christmas holidays. But—"

He coughed. "If it was not the same hassock—"

Mr. Quelch breathed harder and deeper. "I still suspect Bunter very strongly, sir. But it is a matter for proof, and the proof appears to be lacking. I regret, sir, having wasted your time."

"Not at all, Mr. Quelch! I am only too anxious for this matter to be cleared up," said the Head politely.

"M-m-may I go now, sir?" gasped Bunter.

"You may go, Bunter."

The fat junior made almost a bound for the door.

Mr. Quelch followed him more slowly, with a spot of colour in either cheek. The Head was always courteous, but Quelch knew perfectly well what he was thinking—that the matter should have been probed a little deeper before a busy headmaster's time was wasted on it.

That, Quelch realised, was the case—he should have elicited all these details before taking Bunter to the Head.

On the other hand, Loder, who had taken up the clue of the missing hassock in the first place, should have elicited the details before bringing Bunter to Quelch. Had not Loder acted hastily, jumping to conclusions, Mr. Quelch would not have followed his example.

Loder of the Sixth was loitering at the end of the passage. Perhaps he expected a word or two of commendation from Mr. Quelch for his zeal and perspicacity. If so, a disappointment was coming to him.

"The matter is now cleared up, sir, I trust," said Loder, with his dutiful smirk.

Quelch's eyes glinted at him.

"The matter is not cleared up, Loder," he answered icily. "You have wasted my time and your headmaster's by your thoughtless carelessness."

"Wha-a-at, sir?" stuttered Loder.

"It transpires that Bunter's hassock is missing from his study, Loder, because it was thrown away last term. You should have ascertained this fact before making a report to me. You have been very remiss, Loder."

With that, Quelch stalked on, leaving Gerald Loder staring. Evidently there was no commendation coming Loder's way.

"By gad!" breathed Loder.

He went to his study and picked up his ashplant. With that instrument of punishment under his arm he walked out into the quadrangle and looked round over the fellows there.

He was looking for Carter.

He had taken a hint from Carter, with the result that he had made a fool of himself, and received the sharpest edge of Mr. Quelch's tongue as a reward. He could not handle Quelch, but he could handle Carter. Quelch had passed on his annoyance to Loder; Loder was going to pass it on to Carter.

He soon spotted the new Removee. Arthur Carter, in the quad, was watching Bunter with a puzzled expression on his face.

Bunter had been up before the Head, with the certainty of a flogging, and a sporting chance of the "sack." Yet he had rolled out of the House looking quite cheery and satisfied.

Naturally it puzzled Carter, and Loder, catching the expression on his face, knew beyond doubt that the young rascal had intended him to hear those words spoken under his study window. Carter had been surreptitiously sneaking, and was perplexed to see no result accrue therefrom.

Loder had no particular objection to "sneaking," on principle; but in this instance it had led to Loder making a fool of himself and getting "jawed" by a beak, which made a lot of difference.

As Carter stood staring at Bunter, Loder came up behind him. The ashplant slipped from under his arm into his hand.

Whop!

Carter gave a sudden yell and a bound, as that unexpected whop landed on his trousers.

"Oh! Ow!" he yelled. "What—"

Whop!

"Oh crumbs!" Carter leaped away and spun round, staring at Loder. "Look here, what the thump do you mean? What—"

Whop!

Carter bolted without waiting to ascertain why Loder was whopping him. Whatever the reason, there was no doubt about the fact, and Carter just dodged a fourth whop, and flew.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Glory for Bunter!

"**W**HERE he got the nerve from beats me!" said the Bounder.

"Me, too," agreed Skinner.

"He's not such a funk as he's always made out!" remarked Bolsover major.

"Fools rush in where angels fear to tread!" grinned Hazeldene.

"Well, yes, but fancy Bunter—"

"Beats me hollow!"

"And he's got by with it. They'll never spot him now!" said Smithy.

"Fancy that fat ass ragging a Form-master, and getting by with it!"

"Jolly old wonders will never cease!"

Billy Bunter, listening with all his fat ears, grinned. Bunter was sprawling in an armchair in the Rag, after tea, when the other fellows came in.

They did not notice him there as they discussed the matter that was still a thrilling topic in the Remove—the bonneting of Henry Samuel Quelch with a hassock from the landing.

After the lapse of a day, it certainly looked as if the hassock-hurler was going to get by with it. No discovery had been made, except Loder's, which had turned out to be a mare's nest.

It was known that Bunter had been up before the Head; but it was also known that he had escaped unscathed.

Few fellows doubted that Bunter had "done it." The three fellows who knew better were keeping it fearfully dark. And it was a matter of surprise and keen interest in the Remove. First, that Bunter had ever found the nerve to do it; and second, that he had not been bowled out.

Smithy, who was

a reckless ragger, would hardly have ventured to bonnet Quelch with a hassock, or anything else. Bunter, never supposed to be reckless, had done what the Bounder would never have ventured to do. So it was no wonder that the Removees wondered.

Bunter, as he sprawled unnoticed, and listened to the talk, grinned, with a sly gleam in his little round eyes, behind his big round spectacles.

At first Bunter had only been anxious to prove that he hadn't done it. At the same time he was rather elated at being regarded as a bold, bad ragger, who had the unheard-of nerve to rag such a man as Quelch.

Now, the danger being past, the great idea germinated in Bunter's fat intellect, of claiming the credit of that bold, bad rag.

Often and often had Bunter envied Smithy, who swanked as a fellow who did not care a boiled bean for beaks or prefects. Bunter would gladly have trodden the same reckless path, but for the awkward fact that he hadn't Smithy's nerve to carry out a rag, or Smithy's hardihood to endure the consequences if they came home to him. It was not of much use for Billy Bunter to set up as a devil-may-care desperado when the mere knitting of Quelch's brows made him quake.

Now, however, his bold, bad reputation was, as it were, ready-made for him.

Who had bunged that hassock at Quelch, Bunter had not the faintest idea. Whoever it was he was keeping it frightfully dark—as it behoved him to do. He, whoever he might be, was not likely to cut in and rob Bunter of the credit, if he laid claim to it.

Bunter did not, of course, think of laying claim to that distinction, so far as Quelch was concerned. He was thinking of spreading himself in the Remove as a bold, bad Bunter who feared no foe.

For which reason he grinned cheerfully as he heard the discussion going on behind the high back of the armchair in which his lazy, fat limbs sprawled.

He rose from that armchair, and blinked over the back at the group of juniors through his spectacles.

"I say, you fellows—" he squeaked.

"Oh, here he is!" said Vernon-Smith.

"What did the Head want you for to-day, fatty?"

"What do you think?" grinned Bunter. "I pulled his leg all right! He, he, he!"

"Not so jolly easy to pull the Head's leg!" said Skinner, staring at him.

Bunter chuckled.

"Was I flogged?" he asked complacently. "Sacked—what? No fear! All you want is nerve, you know, dealing with the beaks! I was all right!"

"Then it was you?" exclaimed Bolsover major.

"Didn't you think it was?" asked Bunter calmly.

"Well, yes; but—"

"Of course, I rely on you fellows to keep it dark," said the fatuous fat Owl. "I don't want Quelch on my track. All the same, I fancy he'll be

(Continued on next page.)



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a bit more careful after this. I told him to his face that I'd chuck a pillow at his head! You wouldn't have had the nerve to tell Quelch that, Smithy!"

"Hardly," agreed the Bounder. "Nor you, either, you fat fraud! Quelch heard you gassing by accident."

"Well, did I bung a hassock at him or not?" demanded Bunter. "I said I would—and did I or not? By gum, if I have any more of his old buck, I'll let him have an inkpot next time—and the ink in it, too!"

"Yes, I can see you doing it!" grinned Smithy.

"Well, I can't see you dropping a hassock on his head," sneered Bunter, "and then waiting, as cool as an iceberg, for him to come up! You'd have cut off if you'd done it, Smithy!"

"Like a shot!" assented Smithy.

"Well, did I?" grinned Bunter. "No fear! Just stood there and waited for him to come up! I'm not afraid of Quelch, I can jolly well tell you! You fellows may be! Not me! You see, I've got nerve!"

The Bounder laughed.

"Well, old fat bean, you'll want all your nerve if Quelch gets on your track!" he said. "I shouldn't brag of it too much, if I were you."

"Who cares for Quelch!" said Bunter valorously. "Let him whop me again, that's all! I'll make him sit up again—see? I don't mind all the fellows knowing I did it! In fact, I'd rather they knew! They'll jolly well see that I'm not the man to stand any nonsense! Fat lot I care for beaks!"

With which, Billy Bunter rolled out of the Rag, with his fat little nose in the air. He was feeling tremendously bucked. Even the reckless Bounder had to take second place as a wild ragger to the fellow who had bonneted Quelch. This was glory!

Before very long the news spread in the Remove that Bunter had admitted it.

Most of the fellows had already believed so, though they still wondered where he had found the nerve. So few were surprised. But one member of the Remove was surprised—in fact, astonished. That one was Micky Desmond.

Micky had been in his study after tea getting some of his lines done. He heard the news when he came out, finding a dozen Remove fellows in the passage discussing it.

"Heard?" called out Skinner.

"Phwat?" asked Micky.

"Chap who bonneted Quelch," grinned Skinner. "No secret about it now."

Micky stared at him. He had had time to reflect since his wild and reckless act the night before, and from the bottom of his heart he wished that he had not done it. All he could hope for now, since it was done, and could not be undone, was that it would remain a secret and gradually be forgotten. So Skinner's statement that it was no secret now rather alarmed him.

"Phwat do ye mean intirely?" gasped Micky. "Sure they haven't found out—"

"Oh, no! Bunter's only told the Remove so far!" chuckled Skinner. "It won't get out till he spins the yarn outside the Form. No sneaks in the Remove."

"Bunter doesn't know—"

"He jolly well knows he did it! We all knew he did it, and now he's owned up to it."

Micky Desmond blinked.

"Owned up to it?" he gasped.

"Yes; told all the Form."

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"Howly Moses! Bunter's owned up to droppin' that hassock on Quelch's napper!"

"Bragging of it right and left!" chortled Skinner. "The only man in the Form who ever got away with a rag on Quelch—if he has got away!"

"Bet you Quelch will nail him sooner or later!" said Carter. "Quelch is no fool. He knows Bunter did it as well as we do."

"Yes, but he's got to prove it."

"If he hears that Bunter has been bragging of it up and down the Form, he won't want much more proof!"

"The fat omadhaun!" exclaimed Micky. "He niver did it! Phwat is he saying he did for whin he didn't?"

"He did, you ass! We all know he did!" answered Skinner. "He's let it out now because he thinks it's safe."

Micky Desmond, with quite a dazed expression on his face, made his way along the passage to Study No. 7. He heard Bunter's voice as he looked in.

"You see, it was like this, Toddy. I told him I'd heave a pillow at his head, and he whopped me. So I jolly well let him have it—right on his napper, you know! He, he, he! Did you guess I'd done it, Toddy?"

"Yes, I did," answered Peter Todd. "But now you say you did, I've got my doubts."

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"You fat spalpeen!" gasped Micky Desmond. "Are ye saying ye bonneted Quelch with that hassock?"

Bunter blinked round at him.

"That's it, old chap!" he said complacently. "Got him right on the napper over the banisters! You wouldn't have had the nerve—what? He licked you as well as me, but I'll bet you'd never have bunged a hassock on his napper! He, he, he! It wanted some nerve, I can tell you!"

Micky gazed at him blankly.

"You—you—you did it?" he gasped, like a fellow in a dream.

"Little me!" said Bunter. "The only chap in the Remove who had the nerve to do it, too!"

"Oh, howly smoke!" gasped Micky.

He almost tottered away.

That evening, in the Rag, Billy Bunter was the cynosure of all eyes. He enjoyed it thoroughly. For the first time in history the fat and funky Owl of the Remove was able to show off as a wild and reckless ragger who had brought off the wildest and most reckless rag of the term. It was unaccustomed glory for Bunter, and he fairly revelled in it. Indeed, he seemed likely, like the classic gentleman in Horace, to strike the stars with his sublime head!

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bob Does his Best!

BOB CHERRY frowned.

Saturday afternoon was fine and bright, and most of the Greyfriars fellows had cheery faces when lessons were over. But there was one member of the Remove who looked as if most of the troubles in the universe had descended on his young shoulders. That one was Micky Desmond.

All the Form agreed that it was fearfully hard cheese on Micky. He had detention for the half-holiday and innumerable lines, and all because of that fat owl Bunter bagging his impot early in the week. Plenty of fellows would have regarded Micky as fully justified in letting Quelch know how the matter really stood; but Micky did not take that view, and so there was no help

for it. He was feeling disposed to hang, draw, and quarter William George Bunter, but not to give him away to a beak.

It was all the harder because there was a Form match on that afternoon with the Fourth. In that match the leading spirits of the Remove football world stood down to give the lesser lights a look-in, and Micky was one of the lesser lights in Soccer. He was not only losing his half-holiday, but losing his chance of playing football for the Form, which was really the limit.

Bob Cherry's frown was caused by the sight of Micky's doleful and dolorous countenance. As the only fellow in the Remove who did not believe that Bunter had snooped that impot, Bob did not lay the blame on Bunter, being the only fellow who did not. But he had been thinking the matter over, with the result that he looked for Bunter to put it to him.

Had Bunter "snooped" Micky's lines, certainly nothing would have induced him to reveal that fact to Quelch. The consequences would have been too painful. But what had really happened was much less serious; he had found the impot written for him, as he supposed, by another fellow doing him a good turn. Quelch had been a schoolboy himself once upon a time, and he would surely realise that, in such circumstances, a fellow would make use of the lines. Bunter's punishment, if any, would be light—much less severe, at any rate, than what was coming to poor Micky.

True, Bunter was not, as a rule, the fellow to face any music, howsoever light. But, in view of his recently developed boldness and badness, it seemed more probable. Bob, like all the Remove excepting three, believed that Bunter had bonneted Quelch. The fellow who had done that would surely not be afraid to own up to a small fault.

He found Bunter blinking through his big spectacles at the window of the tuckshop. He was outside, instead of inside, because his celebrated postal order had not yet arrived.

Bob tapped him on the shoulder.

"Looking for you, old fat man!" he said amiably.

The Owl of the Remove gave him a hopeful blink.

"I say, old chap, if you've got a half-crown you don't want—" he began.

"Sorry, I haven't!"

Grunt from Bunter! He turned back to his contemplation of the tuckshop window, with a total lack of interest in Bob Cherry.

"Look here, Bunter, about Desmond—" began Bob.

"Blow him!" granted Bunter.

"He's got detention this afternoon! It's going to keep him out of the football," said Bob.

"I'd take his place, if Wharton asked me. I shouldn't mind playing for the Form! He would have to ask me civilly, of course."

Bob breathed hard.

"Look here, you could get Micky off," he said. "If Quelch knew that he had really done his impot the other day, and lost it, it would make a lot of difference. You're not to blame, as you found it stuck in your study. If Quelch knew, he would go easy with Micky—"

"He held my head under the tap—"

"Well, yes, but he thought you'd snooped his impot—"

"As if I would!" said Bunter indignantly. "Drenching a fellow all over like that! Blow him!"

"Suppose you go and let Quelch know—"

"I'll watch it."

"Look here, Bunter, it's up to you!" exclaimed Bob. "Quelch won't do more than give you lines, and I'll help you with them."

"More likely to whop me."

"Well, you're not afraid of a whopping, old bean, even if he did!" said Bob, encouragingly. "Why, the fellow who bunged a hassock on Quelch's head oughtn't to be afraid of anything!"

"Eh!" Bunter blinked at him. "Oh, yes! I'm afraid of nothing of course! You know my pluck!"

"Ah! Um! Yes! Well, look here, go and tell Quelch that you found those lines in your study, and thought a pal had done them—that's the truth! Quelch is no fool—he knows when a chap is telling the truth. Very likely he will let you off, for coming and owning up in a manly way. See? If he gives you the lines over again, I'll do them for you."

"Um!" said Bunter doubtfully.

"It will show that you've got the pluck to do the right thing!" urged Bob.

"Um!" said Bunter. "You don't think Quelch will whop me?"

"Not at all likely."

"And if there's lines, you'll do them?"

"Honour bright!"

"Oh, all right then," said Bunter, "I'll go to Quelch! Presently," he added cautiously.

Billy Bunter was quite willing, indeed keen, to show that he had plenty of pluck, if there was no danger involved. But he wanted to feel quite sure about that. That was rather important.

"No time like the present," said Bob. "Look here, I'll come with you." He slipped his hand through a fat arm, and led Bunter off towards the House.

Billy Bunter went willingly enough—until the House was reached. But at the door he paused.

"I—I—I say, I—I think I'll leave it till later—" he stammered.

"Come on, old bean."

"But I say—" mumbled Bunter feebly.

"This way!"

Bob almost dragged Bunter into the House. They got as far as the corner of Masters' Passage, and then Bunter jibbed like an obstinate horse.

"Look here, leggo my arm!" he hissed. "I'm going all right, but—but I don't want you to come to Quelch's study! Leggo my arm!"

Bob jerked at the fat arm. Bunter hung back. Really, it was not easy work, getting Bunter up to the scratch.

Obviously, if Bob let go the fat arm, Bunter was not going to proceed in the direction of Quelch's study. He was going to proceed in exactly the opposite direction! Bob did not let go.

"Now, look here, Bunter, if Micky has to cut the footer, you'll very likely get a ragging," he said. "You don't want that."

"Oh, no! But—"

"Well, come on, then!"

Bunter came on—reluctantly.

They arrived, at long last, at Mr. Quelch's study door.

Bob tapped at the door with his free hand.

"Come in!" said the deep voice from within.

Bunter gasped. The sound of his Form-master's voice did it. All the boldness and badness of bold, bad Bunter departed on the spot! One thing was fixed in Bunter's fat mind—he wasn't going into that study! But the grip on his fat arm was like steel! Bunter had to use strategy.

He grasped the door-handle and turned it.

Bob, under the impression that he



Micky Desmond's eyes gleamed as from the landing above he looked down at Mr. Quelch, who was in conversation with Mr. Prout. Then he lifted the hassock over the balustrade, calculated carefully, and let it drop. Down it went, like a plummet, landing fair and square on Mr. Quelch's mortar-board. Plop!

was going into the study, released the fat arm at last.

Bunter would have cut—but there was no doubt that Bob would have grabbed him before he was out of reach. He had to prevent that!

He made a quick step back and gave Bob a sudden shove. Taken by surprise, Bob Cherry crashed against the door. The door being unlatched, it flew open under his weight, and Bob toppled backwards into the study. At the same moment, Bunter cut down the passage.

Mr. Quelch started up from his chair, staring. It was enough to make him stare, the sight of a member of his Form knocking the door open, crashing into his study, and rolling on the carpet!

"Cherry!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh!" stuttered Bob.

He bounded to his feet, his face crimson.

Mr. Quelch, from the other side of his writing-table, glared at him.

"Cherry! What does this mean? What—?"

"Oh! Sorry, sir!" stammered Bob. "I—I—I—somebody pushed me, sir—I—I—I fell against the door—"

"Take a hundred lines, Cherry! If you play such an absurd prank again, I shall cane you! Go!"

Bob Cherry went—with deep feelings! He spent the next ten minutes looking for Billy Bunter, with the intention of booting that fat youth all over the quad.

But he did not find him. Billy Bunter was very careful not to be found!

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bribing Bunter!

"SURE it's harrrd lines, and—so it is!" groaned Micky Desmond.

"We'll rag Bunter!" said Morgan.

"That won't get me off detention."

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"It won't!" said Wibley thoughtfully. Fellows were going into the changing-room. Micky watched them, with a gloomy brow. It was time for him to go into detention. Detention, never attractive, was less attractive than ever now. It was not even a detention class, which was bad enough. Micky had to sit in the Form-room on his lonely own, and write lines. And the other fellows would be playing football, and Micky might have been playing, too! It was hard lines!

Carter was in the Remove team. He came in to change, with the others, and glanced at Micky at the doorway. He smiled slightly at the expression on Micky's dismal face.

"You're out of it?" he asked.

"Yis!" groaned Micky.

"Well, you're an ass! Nobody would blame you if you let Quelch know about your impot being snooped. Ten to one Quelch would let you off."

"Think I'm a snake?" snorted Micky.

Carter shrugged his shoulders, and went in.

Micky gave a deep, deep sigh, and turned to make his way to the Form-room.

"If that fat chump owned up about snooping the impot—" muttered Wibley.

"Catch him!" grunted Morgan.

"Well, he might!" said Wibley thoughtfully. "Bunter will do anything for a feed! I've got an idea."

Wibley hurried away in search of Bunter. He found him in the Rag, frowsting over the fire. He was busily occupied in searching through all his pockets, one after another, in the hope of unearthing a forgotten bullseye!

"Oh, here you are!" said Wibley cheerfully. "Come up to my study, Bunter! I've got a toffee-tin—one of those seven-pound tins—"

Bunter fairly bounded out of the arm-chair.

"What-ho!" he said.

He rolled joyfully up to the Remove after Wibley. In Wibley's study he blinked round for the toffee. Wibley lifted a large tin out of the study cupboard, and placed it on the table.

Bunter's eyes, and spectacles, fairly gloated over it. It was a seven-pound tin, and the inscription on it was "Blunt's Super-Cream Toffee!" A packet of toffee would have delighted Bunter. A seven-pound tin quite dazzled him!

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He stretched out a fat hand to the tin. Wibley pushed it back.

"Hold on!" he said. "Don't touch! If you'd like that tin, Bunter, you can have it—if Micky's let off detention."

"Oh, really, Wibley—"

"You got him into a row with Quelch!" said Wibley. "Snooping his impot—"

"I didn't! I've told you—"

"Well, there's the tin!" said Wibley. "If Micky's let off to play Soccer this afternoon, it's yours. Otherwise, buzz off!"

Billy Bunter did not buzz off. He seemed unable to take his eyes off that tin! Only Wibley's intervention kept his fat hands off it.

"I—I—I say, let—let's talk it over!" suggested Bunter. "I—I'll have some of the toffees while—while we talk it over, old chap."

"You won't!" said Wibley. "You can have the whole tin if Micky's let off. It's up to you, and you know it."

Bunter paused. Bob Cherry had failed to get him up to the scratch. But seven pounds of toffee was seven pounds of toffee! He paused—he hesitated—but he made up his fat mind.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,562.

"I—I—I'll do it!" he gasped.

"Do!" said Wibley.

And Bunter did! He rolled away down the Remove passage.

Wibley, grinning, watched him over the banisters as he went downstairs. The fat Owl headed for Masters' Passage.

For the second time that afternoon Billy Bunter arrived at Mr. Quelch's door. There, for a long minute, he paused. But the lure of toffee was too strong, and he tapped and went in.

Mr. Quelch looked up from Latin papers.

"What is it, Bunter?"

Bunter blinked at him. Under the gimlet eyes he wished himself out of the study again. But he thought of that magnificent tin of toffees, and took his courage in both hands, as it were.

"I—I—I—" he began.

"Be brief!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, yes! It—it's about Desmond, sir," stammered Bunter. "I—I think I—I ought to tell you, sir, as Micky's got detention and he wants to play football, and—and Bob thinks you won't be very waxy—"

"What?"

"I—I mean, that—that impot, sir," gasped Bunter. "It was really Desmond's, sir, that—that impot last Tuesday, sir—"

"It was Desmond's!" repeated Mr. Quelch blankly. "What? I remember that I remarked on the writing! Have you come here to tell me, Bunter, that you deceived me by using another boy's lines as your own?"

"Oh, no!" gasped Bunter. "I—I—I—"

"You took Desmond's lines!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, no! I—I found them in my study, sir!" gasped Bunter. "Some beast—I mean, some fellow—took them and put them in my study, and—and I thought a chap had done them for me, and—and so—so I brought them to you, sir!"

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Only Desmond thought I had pinched them, sir, and—and that was why he wanted me to write the next lot, and held my head under the tap—"

"Upon my word!" repeated Mr. Quelch. "If this is true, Bunter, who was it that placed Desmond's lines in your study?"

"I don't know, sir! It was a rotten trick—it's made all the fellows think I pinched the lines, except Bob Cherry! Of course, I thought a chap had done them for me when I found them in my study."

Mr. Quelch gazed at him.

"Even if this statement is correct, Bunter, you are very well aware that you should not have brought the lines to me as your own!" he said sternly.

"Oh, yes! I mean, no, sir!"

"And why have you come to confess this to me now, Bunter?"

"I—I thought I ought to—to own up, sir! Bob Cherry thinks you wouldn't be very waxy if I came and told you the truth, sir."

"You utterly absurd boy! Desmond should have told me that he had written his lines if he had really done so. As you have told me this of your own accord, Bunter, I shall not punish you for having used another boy's lines."

"Oh, good! I—I mean, thank you, sir!"

"But if it should occur again—"

said Mr. Quelch in a terrifying voice.

"Oh, no, sir! If I ever find lines in my study again I shan't be taken in like that!" gasped Bunter. "I never knew that they were Desmond's—"

Mr. Quelch gave him an extremely penetrating look.

"It is very singular, Bunter, that some boy should have taken Desmond's imposition and placed it in your study!" he said slowly.

"Yes, sir! When you said the fist was like Micky's I thought it was Micky who'd done them for me. But it turned out that they were his lines, that he had left in his study, and some beast—"

"I believe your statement, Bunter, extraordinary as it is!" said Mr. Quelch. "I am glad that you have come and told me this. You may go."

Bunter shot out of the study.

Mr. Quelch remained some moments in puzzled thought. Then he left the study and went to the Form-room.

Micky Desmond was there, with a face as long as a fiddle. He gave his Form-master a dismal look.

Mr. Quelch smiled faintly.

"Desmond, I have learned from Bunter that your imposition was written last Tuesday, and taken from your study—"

"Oh!" gasped Micky. "Yis, sorr!"

"You should have told me so, Desmond!"

"Sure I'm no snake, sorr, and I couldn't give the fat basto away—I—I mean—"

"You supposed that Bunter had taken the lines?"

"Yis, sorr."

"I believe Bunter's statement that the lines were placed in his study by some unknown person. I shall make an inquiry into this. But you supposed that—"

"Oh, yis, sorr!"

"I should not have doubled the imposition if I had known. Nevertheless," said Mr. Quelch sternly, "you should never have thought of making Bunter write the second imposition for you, and most certainly you should never have used such methods, Desmond. You deserved the caning you received."

"Oh! Yis, sorr!"

"However, in the circumstances, I shall cancel the rest of your punishment," said Mr. Quelch. "You may leave the Form-room, Desmond."

Micky's dismal face brightened.

"Thin I can go and play futball, sorr?" he gasped.

"You may!" said Mr. Quelch.

Micky scudded out of the Form-room. At the corner of the passago he found Wibley and Morgan waiting for him.

"Have they started yet?" gasped Micky.

"No—they're still in the changing-room!" grinned Wibley. "You've got off?"

"Yis! Sure I wish I'd niver bonneted Quelch! Come on!" gasped Micky, and he careered away to the changing-room, just in time to catch the footballers before they came out.

Billy Bunter watched the three, as they went, with a cheery grin. He had earned that toffee-tin! And he rolled up to the Remove to bag his reward!

The seven-pound toffee-tin stood on the table in Wibley's study, where he had left it. It was Bunter's now! The fat Owl of the Remove gave it one joyous blink, and grabbed it. He tore off the lid and grabbed at the toffees within—and grabbed vacant space!

He blinked into the tin!

Then, as the poet has remarked, a change came o'er the spirit of his dream!

The tin was empty!

Bunter gazed at it! He blinked into it! He gasped.

Only bribery and corruption had induced Bunter to do the right thing! Wibley had bribed and corrupted him

to go to Quelch! And he had bribed and corrupted him with an empty toffee-tin!

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

Boots for Bunter!

"**T**HAT cad!" muttered Bob Cherry.

"He can play football!" answered Harry Wharton.

"So can all the Remove!"

"We can't leave a man out of games, Bob, because you've got a feud on with him!" said the captain of the Remove.

"Don't be an ass, old chap!"

Bob grunted.

Bob was one of the mighty men of the Remove who were standing down that afternoon to give the lesser lights a look-in. But as Micky Desmond was out of the team there was a place to be filled, and Bob was going to fill it. He was keen enough to play, though a match with Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Fourth was not much of a game. But his cheery face darkened when Carter came in to change.

Deeply as he disliked the new junior, Bob admitted that he could play Soccer. Carter was, or affected to be, keen on the game, and there was no doubt that he had shown up remarkably well in games practice. Harry Wharton, in fact, had an eye on him for the Remove eleven, and he was going to "try him out" in the Form match. Whether Carter was, or was not, the "rotter" that Bob believed him to be, the football captain had to consider him from the point of view of Soccer.

"Well, look here, you won't want me," said Bob at last. "Lots of fellows will jump at the chance as Micky's standing out."

"Now, look here, Bob," said the captain of the Remove quietly, "this game with Temple's lot doesn't matter much, but if Carter goes on as he's started he will have to be played for the Remove in big fixtures. You can't carry your rows with him into Soccer."

"Well, no; but—"

"Well, then, chuck it!" said Harry. "You can punch his head after the game if you like, but until then wash it out—see?"

Bob grunted again. He was not the fellow to carry private feuds into football, but it irked him to play in the same team with Carter. He stood undecided, with a football boot on and the other in his hand.

"If that fat ass Bunter had played up Micky would have got off," he muttered.

"Well, he hasn't, and won't! And so—"

"Hurrooooo!" came a sudden roar in the doorway. "Here I am, in toime—phwat? Hurroo!"

Micky Desmond careered into the changing-room, collided with Bob Cherry, and sent him staggering.

Bob dropped his boot, staggered against Wharton, and sent the captain of the Remove tottering against the wall.

"You mad ass!" he gasped.

"Sure I'm in toime," grinned Micky. "Hould on a minute or two, Wharton, darling, while I change. Hurroo!"

"Has Quelch let you off?" asked Harry.

"Sure, and he has intoirely! Where's me shirt? Where's me boots? Has innobody seen me boots?"

Carter glanced across at the Irish junior.

"So you told Quelch?" he asked.

"Tould him, is it?" snapped Micky.

"Sure I tould him nothing! Bunter wint and tould him."

"Bunter did!" exclaimed Carter blankly.

"Faith, and he did, and it's a broth av a bhoy he is, too!"

"Bunter told Quelch he had snooped your lines the other day!" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

Micky chuckled.

"No; he tould him he found thim in his study. Quelch belaves him—and sure so do I now. I belave innythng, now I'm let off to play futball. Where's me boots? Who's got me boots?"

Bob Cherry laughed. As Micky had turned up in time, he was not wanted, after all. He was glad of it, not only for Micky's sake.

"Well, Bunter's coming out, and no mistake!" said Frank Nugent. "Bonneting Quelch with a hassock, and then going and owning up about snooping a fellow's lines. Where's Bunter getting all this nerve from?"

"The nervefulness is getting truly terrific," remarked Hurroo Jamset Ram Singh.

William Wibley, in the doorway of the changing-room, chortled. He knew how Bunter had screwed up his courage to go to Quelch. And he was greatly entertained by the thought of Bunter's fat face, when he looked into the toffee-tin in the study.

The Fourth Form footballers were already in the field, and the Remove fellows were ready to join them there; but they waited for Micky to change.

Micky was ready at last, when a fat figure loomed up at the doorway.

"I say, you fellows, is Wibley here?" squeaked Billy Bunter. "I say, where's that beast Wibley? Where's that rotter Wibley? Where's that cad Wibley?"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the row?" asked Bob.

"Where's that swab Wibley?"

"Here!" grinned Wibley.

"Beast! There weren't any toffees in that tin!" roared Bunter, shaking a fat fist under Wibley's nose. "Rotter! You said you'd stand me a seven-pound tin if I went to Quelch, and there weren't any toffees in the tin!"

"What?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"I say, you fellows, what do you think?" gasped Bunter, breathless with indignation. "He took me up to his study, and showed me a seven-pound toffee-tin, and said I could have it if I got Desmond off detention, and I went to Quelch, and got him off, and then there weren't any toffees in the tin."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So that was why—" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Not a single toffee!" yelled Bunter. "Fancy that! Pulling a fellow's leg, you know. He said seven pounds of toffee—"

"I didn't," chuckled Wibley. "I said a seven-pound toffee-tin. I never said there was anything in it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can have the tin," added Wibley. "I said you could have it, and you can have it."

"What's the good of an empty tin to me?" roared Bunter. "Of course, I thought it was full of toffees."

"Now I wonder what put that idea into your head," remarked Wibley.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you—you beast!" gasped Bunter. "I wouldn't have gone to Quelch if I'd known. I might have got whopped—you never know—with

a beak. And there wasn't any toffee in the tin—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! An empty tin—"

"So you had to be bribed to go to Quelch, you fat villain!" chuckled Harry Wharton. "And you know you deserve to be booted—"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"And you've come here to be booted—"

"Eh? I haven't!"

"Your mistake; you have! All together!" called out the captain of the Remove.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, stoppit! I say— Yaroooh! Why, you beasts, I— Yoo-hoop! Leave off kicking me, ye rotters! I say— Ow! Help! Fire! Murder! Wow! Yarooooop!"

The Remove footballers crowded out of the changing-room, and what seemed to Bunter like an infinite number of football boots landed on him. As a matter of fact, it was only eleven, but it seemed to Bunter like scores, if not hundreds.

Bunter's view was that he was a fellow with a grievance, and he was far from realising that he deserved to be booted. But it was clear to the other fellows, and booted he was. When the Removites passed on, chortling, the fat Owl was left sitting and gasping.

He was still sitting, and still gasping, when the game started on Little Side. For quite a long time Bunter sat and gasped. It was a dismal and breathless Owl that tottered away at last—still gasping.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

The Secret Out!

"**H**EARD about Bunter?"

"What about Bunter?"

"Bonneted his beak!"

"Not Bunter?"

"Yes, Bunter!"

That sort of talk was going the rounds, up and down Greyfriars School. At first it had been heard only in the Remove, but, naturally, it spread to other Forms. Such an item of news could not fail to spread.

Investigation into that startling happening was still going on. Mr. Quelch was not likely to let it rest. The prefects were supposed to be fearfully keen on tracking down the offender. Loder, certainly, was not bothering about it any further, but the rest of the prefects were doing all they could.

So far, no discovery had been made; but while beaks and prefects remained in blissful ignorance, all the Remove knew—or at least thought that they knew—and fellows in other Forms knew—more and more of them.

Bonneting a beak was a rather unusual exploit. It was the sort of thing that the Bouncer might have done, from reckless swank, though even Smithy would have thought twice, or thrice, before dropping a hassock on Quelch's august napper. That a hot-headed Irish youth had done it in haste, and repented of it at leisure, nobody thought of guessing. It was supposed to be the deed of a specially mad ragger. But that that mad ragger was Billy Bunter, was most amazing.

Fellows in the Remove had supposed that it was Bunter, amazing as it was, and when he openly admitted it, there could hardly be any doubt on the subject.

Bunter not merely admitted it, he swanked about it. He bragged of it. He gloried in it.

It was sheer satisfaction, to the fat and fatuous Owl, to be stared at in the quad, as the wild and reckless ragger who had bonneted his beak. By Monday, his fame had spread far and wide.

They knew all about it in the Fourth and in the Shell. Cecil Reginald Temple of the Fourth stopped Bunter in the quad to ask him about it. Hobson of the Shell came to his study to get particulars. They talked about it in the Third and the Second. Even in the Fifth Form it was heard of, and on Monday afternoon Coker of the Fifth stopped Bunter, and asked him if it was so.

"You bunged that hassock on your beak's napper last week?" asked Coker.

Bunter grinned happily.

"Sort of," he answered airily.

"Well," said Coker, "you've got a nerve!"

Which filled the cup of Bunter's satisfaction. A Fifth Form man had stopped him in quad, and told him that he had a nerve. Bunter felt, at least, an inch taller when Coker, whistling, left him. A few minutes later he saw Coker pointing him out to Potter and Greene of the Fifth; and Potter and Greene stared round at him.

Rolling happily away, Bunter caught the voice of Tubb of the Third, speaking to Paget and Bolsover minor of that Form.

"That's Bunter—chap who banged a hassock on his beak's napper! Some nerve—what?"

"Choeky ass!" said Paget.

"Yes; but what a nerve!"

Billy Bunter grinned cheerfully. By that time Bunter had ceased to wonder who really had bonneted Quelch. Obviously the genuine culprit had too much sense to talk about it. Sense was not Billy Bunter's long suit. He

had acquired a new and reckless reputation, outclassing even Smithy in that line, and he revelled in it.

Indeed, by this time, Bunter almost believed that he really had bonneted Quelch! Anyhow, his glory, such as it was, was safe; nobody else was likely to claim such a dangerous distinction.

It was rather an extraordinary situation, that while masters and prefects were trying to spot that reckless ragger, almost the whole of the Lower School knew who the ragger was, and discussed it freely.

But nobody, of course, thought of giving Bunter away to the powers; and widely and freely as his exploit was discussed, fellows were careful to say nothing about it within hearing of official ears.

It was quite probable, however, that a topic discussed all through the Lower School, and even in Fifth Form studies, would reach, sooner or later, official ears.

It was, if Bunter had only known it, a certainty! On Tuesday morning, in break, Carter joined the fat Owl in the quad.

Billy Bunter greeted him with a disdainful and inimical blink: but his expression changed when Carter spoke.

"Did you drop half-a-crown under the elms, Bunter?" he asked.

"Yes," answered Bunter promptly. He held out a fat hand. "If you've picked it up, it's mine!"

"I didn't pick it up, as it wasn't mine," answered Carter. "I thought I'd ask you—"

Bunter did not wait for him to finish. He rolled away by the Elm Walk. If half-a-crown had been dropped there, Bunter was prepared to believe, on the spot, that he had dropped it.

Carter followed him under the elms.

Bunter, blinking anxiously along the path, did not observe the portly figure of Mr. Prout in the offing. Carter did.

"I say, Bunter!" Carter did not speak loudly, but he knew that his voice

reached the Fifth Form master. "I say, I wouldn't talk so much about bonneting Quelch, if I were you. If it got out—"

"Rot!" answered Bunter. "Think any man in the Remove would give me away? The fellows would scrag a sneak, I can jolly well tell you! I say, where did you see that half-crown?"

"It was about here somewhere. Now, if you'll take a tip from me, Bunter, you'll shut up about dropping that hassock on Quelch's napper—"

"Rats!" retorted Bunter. "Think I'm funky?"

"If Quelch heard—"

"Who's afraid of Quelch?"

"Well, if you're not, all right!" said Carter. "But, look here, Bunter, honest Injun, did you really drop that hassock on Quelch?"

"You jolly well know I did—the only man in the Form who'd have had the nerve, too!" said Bunter. "Smithy swanks about not caring a bean for the beaks—but Smithy wouldn't have had the nerve. You wouldn't, either! A Fifth Form man told me I'd got a lot of nerve to do it! So I have! I at lot I care for beaks, or prefects, either!"

Carter laughed.

Mr. Prout, at a short distance, had turned his head, and was staring blankly at Bunter.

"But, I say, where did you see that half-crown?" asked Bunter. "It's mine, you know—I remember hearing it drop."

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Carter. "Well, if you heard it drop, you know where to look for it!"

And he walked away, Bunter blinking after him in great annoyance.

"Beast!" hooted Bunter. "I don't believe there was any half-crown at all! Rotter!"

And Bunter rolled away to the school shop, in the hope of finding Lord Mauleverer there.

Mr. Prout gazed after him as he went.

"Goodness gracious!" gasped Prout.

And the Fifth Form master walked to the House, with news for Mr. Quelch.

When the bell rang for third school, and Billy Bunter joined the Remove going in, he little dreamed of what awaited him. He had seen nothing of Prout under the elms, and had not the remotest idea that his brag was, as it were, coming home to roost.

The Remove gathered at their Form-room door, and when Mr. Quelch came along to let them in, the expression on his face caught many eyes.

"Mind your step, you fellows!" whispered Skinner. "Quelch's got his rag out over something."

"Henry looks shirty!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"The shirtiness is terrific!"

That something was "up" was clear to all the Remove. Mr. Quelch's face, always severe, was extremely grim, and his eyes glinted. Like the young man in the Alpine poem, his brow was set, his eyes beneath, flashed like a falchion from its sheath. Trouble, it was clear, was coming to somebody; and the Removites wondered uneasily whom.

They took their places in the Form-room in silence, every fellow on his best behaviour for once. Nobody knew, so far, where the thunderbolt was going to fall—only that it was coming.

Mr. Quelch stood facing his class, and the Remove waited almost breathlessly. It was coming now!

"Bunter!"

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The name was rapped out like a rifle-shot. And the other fellows breathed more freely. It was Bunter who was "for it." And most of them guessed at once why. Something had leaked out about Bunter's exploit with the hassock. The fat Owl gave a jump as his name was rapped out. His eyes popped at his Form-master.

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

"Stand out before the Form, Bunter!"

"Oh lor'!"

Bunter almost tottered out.

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

Self-condemned!

"BUNTER!"

"I—I didn't, sir!" gasped Bunter. "It—it wasn't me!"

Bunter did not know yet of what he was going to be accused. Every other fellow in the Form-room had guessed. But Billy Bunter's powerful brain was not quick on the uptake.

But he could see that he was going to be accused of something, and he was prepared, on general principles, to deny anything and everything. On any and every subject the fat Owl was prepared to tell anything but the truth.

"It has come to my knowledge," said Mr. Quelch, in a deep voice, "that it was you who committed a disrespectful and outrageous attack on your Form-master one day last week, Bunter. I had the very strongest suspicion of you at the time; but in so serious a matter, I felt bound to wait for absolute proof. That proof is now in my hands."

"Oh crikey!"

"I shall take you to your headmaster to be dealt with," pursued Mr. Quelch. "Whether Dr. Locke will administer a flogging merely, or whether you will be expelled, I cannot undertake to say. The decision rests with your headmaster."

"Oh crumbs!"

"Howly Moses!" breathed Micky Desmond. He sat in his place, looking on in dismay.

"Wharton, I shall leave you in charge here for a few minutes, while I take Bunter to his headmaster."

"Very well, sir!" answered Harry with a glance of commiseration at the hapless fat Owl.

Bunter did not look much like a bold, bad, mad ragger now. His eyes were popping, and his jaw dropping. His fat face was the picture of woe and terror. His podgy knees knocked together.

"But, I—I say, sir!" squeaked Bunter desperately. "I—I didn't! I never did, sir! I was in my study—"

"I will listen to no further untruths from you, Bunter!" said the Remove master sternly. "I have said that proof is now in my hands! Not only is it known to me that you are the culprit, but I have reason to believe that the fact is known to the whole Form." Mr. Quelch cast a very severe glance over the Form. "I have no doubt that every boy here present is aware of it!"

Every boy there present tried to look as unconscious as he could. But it was quite easy for Quelch's gimlet eye to read that they all knew.

"But I never did, sir!" wailed Bunter. "It can't be proved when I never did, sir! How can it?"

"From what I learn, you were not only guilty of that outrageous act, Bunter, but you have actually boasted of it!" said Mr. Quelch sternly. "In

break this morning, you were heard boasting of it to another Remove boy."

"Oh crumbs! I—I say, sir, if—if Carter says—"

"Carter has said nothing, Bunter! I should not be likely to listen to information given by one boy against another."

Bob Cherry gave a start, and his eyes flashed round at Carter. The latter sat with his eyes fixed on Bunter.

Bob drew a deep, hard breath. Carter could not have gone to Quelch with the story. Mr. Quelch was not a master to whom a sneaking story could be told. But it was plain that Carter was mixed up in it somehow. Bob knew, at least, he was certain, that the schemer of the Remove had contrived, somehow, to give the wretched Owl away.

"No boy has given me information!" said Mr. Quelch. "No boy would be permitted to do so. Your foolish and boastful words were heard by a member of Dr. Locke's staff, Bunter, who reported them to me."

"Oh lor'! But I—I never—"

"In break this morning, Bunter, you were heard to state, indeed to boast, in speaking to another Remove boy, that you threw the hassock—"

"I—I wasn't, sir!" gasped Bunter. "Nobody was there, but Carter. At least, I didn't see anybody."

"Mr. Prout heard you from a short distance Bunter."

"Did he, sir! Oh crikey! But—but I never said anything to Carter, sir! He made me go there, making out that there was a half-crown, and I never saw Prout! Oh crikey! But—but I never said anything to Carter, sir! I never said a word to him, sir! You can ask him, sir—he will remember all I said—"

"That will do, Bunter! Not only were you guilty of that outrage, on your own statement, but you have actually made it a matter of boasting!" said Mr. Quelch, sternly. "How any boy could find matter for boasting, in a foolish, reckless, and disrespectful act, passes my comprehension: but you have done so. You will now go with me to Dr. Locke—"

"But I never, sir!" yelled Bunter, in desperation. "I—I—I made out I did, sir, but I—I never did! It was only swank, sir!"

"You need say no more, Bunter!"

"But I didn't, sir!" wailed the unhappy Owl. "All the fellows thought so, and I let them think so, just for swank, sir! I never did it really! I—I wouldn't! Oh dear! I wish I hadn't said I did! Oh crikey!"

"Follow me, Bunter!"

"I—I don't want to go to the Head, sir!" groaned Bunter. "He—he—he might think I—I did it—"

Mr. Quelch dropped an iron hand on the fat Owl's shoulder, and led him out of the Form-room.

Bunter gave a squeak of terror as he went.

If ever a braggart repented him of his brag, the hapless Owl of the Remove did at that moment.

For several days Bunter had gloried in the reputation of a bad, mad ragger, and enjoyed it thoroughly. Up and down the Remove had Bunter swanked as a devil of a fellow who would bonnet a beak as soon as look at him!

He did not look very much like a devil of a fellow now! He quaked, as Mr. Quelch led him out. He seemed hardly able to drag his fat limbs along. After the feast had come the reckoning, and repentance came too late! Out of his own mouth he was condemned, and there was no hope for Bunter! His dragging footsteps and dismal squeak died away down the passage.

In the Remove, the juniors looked at one another. Wibley and Morgan looked at Micky Desmond. Micky looked at his desk.

"Well, it's out now!" said Harry Wharton. "Poor old Bunter! If he'd had the sense to hold his tongue about it—"

"The sensefulness of the idiotic Bunter is not terrific!" said Harree Jamset Ram Singh. "The bragfulness is too preposterous."

"Isn't it just like him, to spout it out with a beak standing at his elbow!" said the Bounder. "Bunter all over—"

"Well, it was bound to come out sooner or later, with that fat ass swanking about it all over the shop!" said Johnny Bull.

"Poor old Bunter!"

"Dash it all, you might have stopped him, Carter, if Prout was in the offing," exclaimed Peter Todd. "You're not a blind Owl like Bunter—you must have seen Prout, if he was near enough to hear."

"Never noticed him!" answered Carter coolly. "Other side of a tree I expect. I haven't the faintest idea—"

"That's a lie!" roared Bob Cherry, starting to his feet, his face crimson, and his eyes flashing. "You pulled Bunter's leg into making him give himself away where a beak could hear him."

Carter spun round.

"What?" he gasped.

"Bob!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Chuck it, old man!" said Johnny Bull. "As if any fellow would be cad enough—rotter enough—"

"Draw it mild, Cherry!" said the Bounder.

"Oh, don't talk to me!" roared Bob, flaming with angry indignation. "This isn't the first time that cad's tried to land that fat idiot in the soup; and he's got away with it this time. And I'll tell you this, Carter—if Bunter gets a flogging, I'll give you the biggest hiding you ever had in your life."

Carter sneered.

"I'm not the only fellow he's bragged to, am I?" he asked. "He's told every fellow who would listen to him, in the Remove and out of it. He's told fellows in the senior Forms. He's shouted it out all over the school. He happened to be bragging to me when Prout heard him, that's all. He will get a flogging, and he jolly well deserves it for dropping a hassock on Quelch's head! You know that as well as I do!"

"Yes, I know that!" snapped Bob. "But it wasn't your business to get him a flogging, you rotten sneak! You wangled this—"

"Sure Bunter ain't going to get a flogging!" said Micky Desmond, rising to his feet. "I'm going to stop it intirely."

"How can you stop it, fathead?" grunted Bob Cherry.

"Sure I'm the wan that did the trick!"

"Wha-a-t?"

"You!" roared a dozen voices.

"Yis! Me!" groaned Micky. "And a thumping fool I was, too, and by the same token I was sorry afther I'd done it: but sure I ain't going to let that fat onadhaun take my gruel for me!"

All eyes fixed on Micky Desmond, as he left his place, and went to the door.

His announcement utterly amazed the Remove. Not a fellow, excepting Wibley and Morgan, had dreamed of suspecting the real culprit. Least of all had Carter!

Carter's eyes seemed to start from his head, as he stared at the Irish junior.

"You!" he gasped. "You! Why, you

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fool, what do you mean? It was Bunter—"

"Sure it was myself intirely," answered Micky, over his shoulder, "and if Bob's right, and you mint to get Bunter a flogging, you spalpeen, you've got me one instead, and afther the Head's done with me, I'll sure make shavings of ye, and so I will!"

And Micky tramped out of the Form-room, leaving the Remove in a buzz.

THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER.

The Way of the Transgressor!

"HAD it had?"

Groan!

"Poor old chap!"

Groan!

"You did the right thing, Micky!"

Groan!

"Still feel it!"

Groan!

After third school Micky Desmond was surrounded by sympathisers. He had not returned to the Form-room for the lesson, and when the Remove were dismissed, they found him in the Rag—groaning. He wriggled, he writhed, and he groaned—dismally—eloquent evidence that the Head had not spared the rod.

Everybody was sympathetic. Everybody agreed that Micky had done the right thing in going to the Head and owning up. Sympathy and approval were no doubt grateful and comforting to the sad sufferer. Still, they did not soothe the pangs and twinges left by the Head's birch.

"Sure and bedad he laid it on!" groaned Micky. "And would ye belave it, he said that he would have made it more severe, only I'd owned up in time to get Bunter off. So he said he would only give me twelve sthrokes! Howly Moses, I wonder what it would have been like if he'd give me twinty! Wow!"

"Buck up, old chap!" said Billy Bunter. "It might have been worse, you know. I mean, it might have been me that got it."

"You blithering idiot! Wow!"

"After all, what's a whopping?" said Bunter. "Bear it, you know! Keep a stiff upper lip! Bite on the bullet, and all that! No good making a fuss about it, you know! I shouldn't!"

Micky look at him.

"It's all through that fat baste's bragging that it had to come out!" he said. "And now, Wibley, you spalpeen, Morgan, you baste, you call yourselves pals, and why don't you boot Bunter entiorely? Can't you do a little thing like that for a friend?"

Wibley and Morgan obeyed the call of friendship promptly. Two boots landed, at once, on the tightest trousers at Greyfriars School, and Micky's groans were drowned by a fiendish yell from Billy Bunter.

"Yaroooh! Oh crikey! Keep off, you beasts! I say, you fellows—whoop!"

Bunter dodged for the door. After him rushed Wibley and Morgan. They landed three each before the fat Owl escaped from the Rag, and fled yelling down the passage.

Micky was feeling a little better at dinner. But he squirmed a good deal on his seat, and uttered little squeaks every now and then.

After dinner, however, he was better still. And when the juniors came out, he joined Bob Cherry in the quad.

"Ye remember what ye said in the Form-room, Cherry?" he asked.

"Yes," said Bob, looking at him.

"You think that spalpeen Carter was snaking?"

"Whattin'?" gasped Bob. "Oh, sneaking! Yes, I do! He thought it was Bunter, and he made the fat ass give himself away."

"And landed me instead of Bunter?" said Micky. "Well, I'm not sure ye're right, but, in case ye are, I'll give him snaking, the spalpeen!"

And he went to look for Carter.

"Ye thafe of the worruld!" he exclaimed, as he came up to the new

minutes at the end of which Carter lay on his back, winded to the wide, his nose streaming crimson.

Micky Desmond danced round him, urging him to get up and come on. Carter got up—but he did not come on; he tottered away to bathe his nose, which needed it badly!

"I say, you fellows!"

The Famous Five were in Bob Cherry's study at tea-time, when the door opened, and Billy Bunter blinked in.

Grim and unwelcoming stares greeted Bunter, regardless of which he rolled cheerfully in.

"Teasing here?" he asked breezily. "Fed-up with that cad Carter, what? Fancy the cad giving me away like that, you know—pulling my leg to make me tell Prout! If Desmond hadn't made out that he bonneted Quelch, I should have bagged a flogging! Of course, it was me, you know!"

"What?" roared the Famous Five together.

"Me, of course," said Bunter cheerfully. "Micky was only bragging, making out he did it! There are fellows who will brag about things they've never really done! Not the sort of thing I could do! Of course, I was jolly glad to get off a flogging! But it was me all the time!"

Harry Wharton & Co. gazed at Bunter.

They had been taken in by Bunter's brag—they had believed him to be a bold, bad ragger! Now that everybody knew the real facts, however, they had expected Bunter to "chuck" it.

Bunter, apparently, was not thinking of chucking it! He was not willing to part with his bold, bad reputation!

He winked at the staring five.

"Just brag, you know," he said.

"Micky never did it! I did! Fat lot I care for beaks! I'd bonnet Quelch as soon as look at him! Or the Head, either, if you come to that! I'm the man for it! I'd—Yaroooh! I say, you fellows, leggo! Wharrer you at?"

"Bump him!" said Harry Wharton.

"I say—"

Bump!

"Yaroooh!"

"Now, did you bonnet Quelch?"

"Ow! Yes!"

Bump!

"Stoppit! Wow! Ow! I say—"

"Did you bonnet Quelch?"

"Yes—I mean, no!" roared Bunter.

"No! Never! Not at all! Not a bit! Yow-wow-ow! Never thought of it! Oh crikey!"

A last bump landed Bunter in the passage. It was the end of Billy Bunter's bragging!

THE END.

(The next yarn in this rattling fine series is better than ever. It's entitled "RIVALS FOR RICHES!" You can only make sure of next Saturday's MAGNET by ordering it to-day!)

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junior. "Ye got me a flogging with your snaking about Bunter—"

"You can thank Bunter for that!" answered Carter, with a scowl. "If you'd had sense enough to keep your silly mouth shut, you'd have got off all right."

Micky blinked at him.

"Keep me mouth shut, is it, and let another man take my gruel!" he exclaimed. "That's the sort of spalpeen ye are, is it?"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" snarled Carter.

"Bob Cherry thinks you gave Bunter away, ye baste—"

"Bob Cherry's a fool!"

"Well, perhaps ye did, and perhaps ye didn't!" said Micky. "But in case ye did, and me getting a flogging afther it, ye can take that—and that—and that—"

The next moment a fight was in progress. There was a rush of juniors at once to surround the combatants. Micky was going it hammer and tongs, and Carter had no choice but to play up. It was quite terrific for five



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A FISHY AFFAIR!

Spasm No. 2. of—
"THE FORM-MASTER'S SECRET!"
 —a Sensational Serial, featuring Jack Jolly
 & Co., the Cheery Chums of St. Sam's.
 By **DICKY NUGENT**

"Goodness grashus!"
 Doctor Birchmall
 made that remark.

The Head of St. Sam's
 was on his way to take
 the Sixth, and he had
 just caught site of Mr.
 Lickham.

It was a bright and
 frosty morning, and the
 Head was feeling full of
 life; but as soon as he
 saw Mr. Lickham he
 stopped dead.

"Goodness grashus!"
 he repeated.

He could hardly
 believe his eyes!
 The master of the
 Fourth was a most neat
 and tidy person, as a
 rule. But not on this
 occasion! For some
 reason which the Head
 did not understand, Mr.
 Lickham was now dressed
 without the slightest re-
 gard for his appearance.
 His shirt was dirty and
 he had no collar on his
 neck. His mortar-board
 was stuck on his head at
 a rakish angle. He had
 a day's growth of beard
 on his chin.

But what took the
 Head's eye most of all
 was a bundle which he
 carried on his shoulder
 at the end of a stick.
 It was tied up in a red
 spotted handkerchief
 and it gave the last
 touch of untidiness to
 the appearance of the
 master of the Fourth.

HARRY WHARTON CALLING!

Br-r-r-r-r!
 That's how we feel
 at Greyfriars at the
 time of going to
 press!

The temperature is
 something below zero
 and the School House
 system of central
 heating, such as it is,
 has ceased to function
 owing to a burst pipe.

For heat we're rely-
 ing entirely on coal
 fires, and though coal
 fires are all very fine
 and large when you're
 near them, they cut
 no ice when you're
 not! And believe me,
 chums, there are a
 good many cold spots
 in the School House
 just now!

You might think
 that our recreations
 under these circum-
 stances are confined
 to roasting chestnuts
 and playing chess.
 But, strange as it may

seem, most of us are
 spending as much
 time out of doors at
 present as we nor-
 mally do in the
 summer term.

Footer is off owing
 to the frozen state of
 the playing fields.
 But we're putting in
 plenty of practice at
 cross-country run-
 ning in readiness for
 the Open Cross-
 country Handicap
 which takes place
 later in the term.
 And when we're not
 running, we're
 skating!

The skating has
 been topping since we
 returned to school,
 and it doesn't stop
 when darkness sets
 in, either. On the
 contrary, it's then
 that the fun really
 begins, for while the
 frost lasts they are
 having the broad
 stretch of water on



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MY FORM IS THE BEST AT GREYFRIARS!

Says P. P. PROUT, M.A.

Every Form in a school reflects the personality of the Form-master.
 If the master is weak and slack, the Form will be weak and slack, too. If the master is strong and efficient, the Form will surely be the same.
 It is for this reason that I claim, without fear of contradiction, that the Fifth Form—my Form—is the best Form at Greyfriars.

The logic of it is unanswerable. I am, without doubt, the best Form-master. Ergo—which, for the benefit of the more ignorant of my young readers, means "therefore"—my Form is the best Form!

If I were asked why it is that I am such an excellent Form-master, I should be inclined to say that it is my wide and varied experience of the world that has given me such an advantage over my less successful colleagues.

Unlike those gentlemen who have been content to spend all their time in the sheltered seclusion of a school, I have journeyed abroad and seen strange lands and strange customs with my own eyes.

The result is reflected in my pupils. See their eyes flash when I tell them stories of my big-game-hunting exploits! Why, I have known them follow my yarns with such concentration that the effort has caused them to fall asleep from sheer exhaustion!

When I think of Blundell, Bland, Fitzgerald, Potter, Greene, and others, I feel proud of my lads—but not half so proud, I am sure, as they feel of me! As for Coker, he is the exception that proves the rule—the rule that the Fifth is the best Form at Greyfriars!

IS THIS WHAT HE MEANT?

Coker tried out a second-hand car from a Courtfield garage last week and drove it straight into the river. It was well lined with wetness when hauled out again—which makes us suspect that Coker did it on purpose. He has always maintained he'll never be satisfied with a car unless it's "stream"-lined.

he took to be Mr. I. Jollivell Lickham was, in actual fact, "Dusty" Lickham, the cuzzin of the real Fourth Form master and a member of the tramp class. "Dusty" Lickham was the living image of his cuzzin, and even the brainiest fellow mite have been eggshused for failing to tell them apart; so, of course, the Head stood



no earthly chance of spotting the fraud!
 "Here's your Form-room, Lickham!" he said breathlessly, when they reached the Form-room. "Before you go in, mite I ask you one or two questions? First, why are you speaking in

such a low, common voice?"
 Dusty Lickham looked surprised.
 "My voice hain't low an' common, old covey!" he said. "My mates allus say 'ow posh I speaks!'"

"D-d-dear me! But your dress!" gasped the Head. "Why ain't you—I mean, why aren't you wearing a collar?"

"What in the name of heaven is the matter, Lickham?" he cried. "Your appearance! Your axcent! What has happened to you?"

"Nothink's 'appened to me, old covey!" chuckled Mr. Lickham. "I'm as right as ninepence! Yuss! Comin' along of me as far as my class-room?"

The Head nodded dumbly. He had to pass the Fourth Form Room to get to the Sixth, any- way, and it did not occur to him that he was serving a very useful purpose to the Fourth Form master by showing him where his Form-room was.

Naturally, the Head did not dream for a moment that the man

they had always known to be very partickular about his grammar and pronunciation simply knocked them all of a heap.

"Wot's the lesson?" asked the false Form-master, cheerfully. "Is it readin', writin' or arithmetick? Wotover it is, I'm 'ot at it, you bet! Yuss!"

"G-g-grate pip!" "As a matter of fact, sir, it's Latin," grinned Jack Jolly. "But please yourself, of course!"

"Wot! I'll do that orlight, yung covey!" chuckled the freekish beak. "I'll make it arithmetick, see? Wot's two an' six?"

"Eight, sir!"

"Wrong!" larfed Dusty Lickham. "Two-an'-six is 'arf-a-crown! Get me?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Fourth simply could not understand what had happened to their Form-master. But whatever it was, they found him in his present mood a distinct improvement on the stern tyrant who usually held the reins of offis in the Fourth Form Room.

Dusty Lickham deposited his bundle on his desk.

"Well, yung coveys, that's enuff of arithmetick!" he said. "The next thing as far as I'm concerned is breakfast. 'Cawse why? 'Cawse I hain't 'ad none!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Fourth larfed again. Then they gasped.

To their utter amazement, Dusty Lickham had unwrapped his bundle and brought to light a large collection of fresh herrings!

"Haw, haw, haw!" he chuckled, gloatingly, as he spread them out on his desk. "They ain't 'arf prime, ain't they? They make me fare smack my lips to look at 'em!"

"Beg pardon, sir, but are you going to eat them raw?" asked Frank Fearless.

"Not me, yung master!" grinned Dusty Lickham. "I'm a-goin' to cook 'em

afore this 'ere fire! Yuss!"

"Want any help, sir?" asked Bright. "We'll toast them for you, if you like. We can use our penholders for toast-ing-forks."

"A blinkin' good idea, yung covey!" said the bogus Form-master. "I'll use this 'ere cane meself, but the rest of you can use your penholders. 'Oo wants to 'elp?"

There was a rush. Nobody was likely to want to keep on sitting at a eod desk while there was a chance of getting warm in front of the Form-room fire; and everybody felt that toasting herrings was a jolly site better than lessons, ary day.

Before you could say "Nife!" half-a-duzen fellows were neeling in front of the fire, holding out herrings to the end of their penholders. The rest of the Form crowded round them, while Dusty

Lickham took up a place of honner in the centre, and toasted a large herring on the end of Mr. Lickham's cane with an eggspert hand.

Very soon the oader of frying herrings filled the Form-room. It was not long before it penny-trated other Form-rooms.

Just when the herrings were sizzling nicely, the door bust open. The Head looked in, his nose twitching and a look of sheer disbeleef on his skollerly dial.

"Fish!" he shrieked.

"Bless my sole!"

"It ain't sole, old covey!" ehortied Dusty Lickham, cheer-fully. "It's herrin'!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Doctor Birchmall's eyes rolled secerely in their sockits. He seemed on the verge of an apolojettick fit.

"Cooking fish in the Form-room!" he gasped. "Why, it's simply un-herd-of! What has

happened to your branes?"

"They kep' them at the fish shop," grinned Dusty Lickham. "But I've got some nice soft rocs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why not 'ave a taster while you're 'ere?" went on the bogus Form-master. "Try this one, old covey! It looks a good 'un!"

So saying, he turned to the gaping Head, and rammed a large herring into his open mouth. Doctor Birchmall collapsed on the floor.

"Groooo! Yuroooo! Gug-gug-groooo!" he shrieked.

"My heye! The old covey don't seem to like it!" remarked Dusty Lickham, in serprize. "Ere! Lemme get it hout for yer!"

He got it out with one terrific wrench. A moment later, the Head was on his feet and making for the door at top speed.

BULL'S A JAPER—NOT A MUSIC-MAKER!

Declares CLAUDE HOSKINS

I've done it!

I made up my mind to do it, and I've done it! I've played an instrument in Johnny Bull's so-called band, just as I promised myself I would!

Johnny Bull may boast that he slung me out before the rehearsal. Probably he will. Bull is a japer—not a music-maker! It's just the kind of thing he would boast about! The fact remains that I played in his wretched band without his know- ing it. The moral victory rests with me!

You may ask what possible motive I could have for wishing to play with such a motley crew of music-killers. I hasten to explain my reason.

Hopeless as Bull's band may be, I believed that one musician of genius, by setting an example to the rest, could guide them in the right direction. This was my reason for joining the band, and I still stand by it!

I leave it to you "Greyfriars Herald" readers to judge whether I did the right thing or not in going to the trouble I did over it. I had a jolly uncomfortable time I can tell you!

Knowing well that the one thing Bull could not stand in the band was the presence of one single musician of note, I went to young Wibley, swore him to secrecy, and asked him to disguise me.

Wibley, as you know, is really hot stuff at make-up. After I had told him I wanted to be disguised as any Remove chap who was not a member of Bull's band, Wibley walked round me and sized me up from all angles. Then he snapped his fingers and nodded.

"You'll make a perfect Tom Brown," he said. "By the time I've finished with you, Brown's own mother won't know you from her son!"



The kid was as good as his word, too. When I walked out of his study nobody would have taken me to be anybody but young Brown of the Remove.

Doctor Birchmall had had enuff of the sup- posed Mr. Lickham for one morning. And before long, Dusty Lickham was to learn that he had had enuff of him altogether!

(What will happen when Dusty Lickham gets marching orders? For the answer, see next week's rib-tickling instal-ment!)

HIS "CANDIED" OPINION!

Desmond has received a birthday cake from his native Ireland from which raisins have ac- cidentally been omitted. In expressing his feelings about it in a rich Irish brogue, he is understood to have said that the gift was most un-"raisin"-able!

Fisher T. Fish, walking in the quad, found a shilling, another shilling, and yet another shilling. His beaming smile lasted till he discovered the hole in his trousers pocket!

My plans were well laid. I went along to my study and fetched the big French horn which I have recently had recently bought. Then I marched boldly down to the Rag, where Johnny Bull's band was just beginning a rehearsal.

Bull simply beamed at me when I marched in with my French horn slung over my shoulder.

"Good old Brown!" he yelled. "That's just the thing we needed to give us a bit of background! Sit down and get busy, old bean!"

I couldn't very well speak, or my voice would have given me away, so I tottled on the French horn instead. Everybody seemed to think this awfully funny, though what there is funny in a couple of notes on the French horn I entirely fail to see.

Well, I sat down and, as Bull vulgarly put it, "got busy."

The difference that my French horn made to that band had to be heard to be believed! I gave them tone and verve and all sorts of things. But, of course, the ignorant

kids took it all the wrong way. They seemed quite resentful because I drowned their hideous din!

Even so, I think things would have gone well if Brown himself had not arrived. Unfortunately, he did arrive! Although up to this time he had not belonged to the band, it seemed that he played the concertina and had chosen this particular day to join up!

The young ass walked in with his concertina and the rest of the band stopped playing.

I didn't know that. I was too immersed in my music to notice it.

In fact, the first thing I knew about it was when I paused for a breath and had the strange and unpleasant experience of receiving a discharge of blue-black liquid against my lips from the mouthpiece of the French horn.

I dropped the instrument and leaped to my feet with a wild shriek. Only then did I realise that my secret was a secret no longer and that Bull had avenged himself on me by filling a water-pistol with ink and squirting it into the French horn!

I know that the sympathy of all musical readers will go out to me in this inglorious end to my bold attempt to create a real band out of Johnny Bull's noise-makers.

I intend to be worthy of your sympathy, dear readers—by trying yet again to put Bull's band on the right road to musical success! You wait and see!