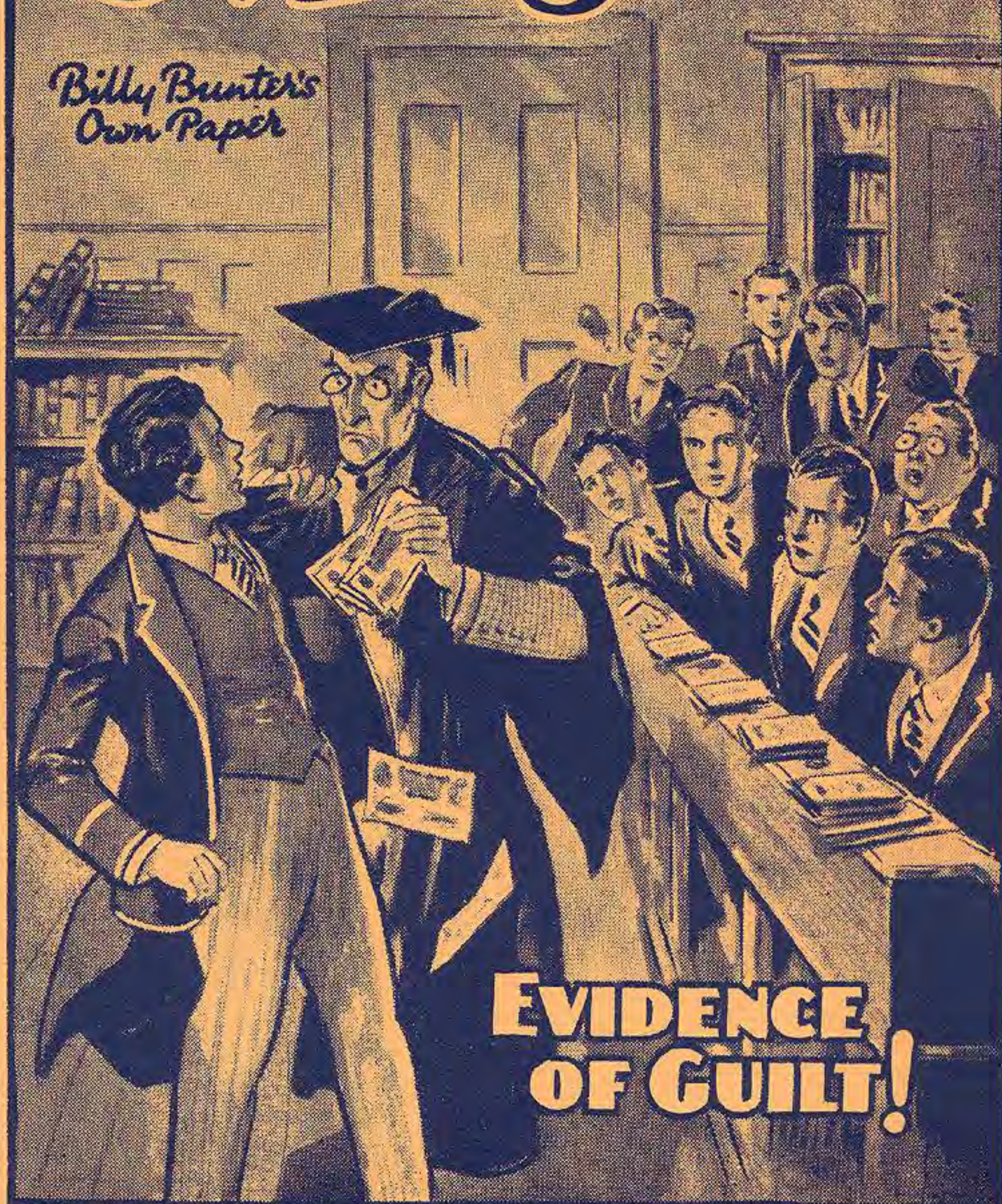


"GOOD-BYE, GREYFRIARS!" Super 35,000-word School Adventure Year of Harry Wharton & Co. By Frank Richards.

The Magnet ^{2^D}

*Billy Bunter's
Own Paper*



**EVIDENCE
OF GUILT!**

SCHOOL NEWS IN A NUTSHELL By—

The GREYFRIARS GUIDE

THE DAILY ROUND.

(1)

You'll see them come with flagging step
Along the class-room corridor,
The chaps who haven't done their prep
And know that trouble is in store.
They wait outside the door with fear,
And feel a pang of dire alarm
The moment they see Quelch appear,
With his cane—tucked—underneath
his arm!



9 a.m. First School.

(2)

A fire is blazing in the grate
To give a welcome to the Form.
It's pleasant, but, at any rate,
We know that Quelch will make us
warm!
When Bunter rolls in late, his face
Is full of apprehensive signs,
And when at length he seeks his place
He's burdened with a hundred lines!

(3)

Now beastly Virgil holds the field,
And Quelch leaps like a kangaroo
As Virgil's beauties are revealed
In my superlative construe!
Well, after I've been soundly whopped
I'm glad to know my turn is past,
And always think the clock has stopped,
But slowly "break" comes round at
last.

THE GREYFRIARS
ALPHABET
EDWIN MYERS,

Dicky Nugent's Chum in the Second.

M is for MYERS, who's in the Second,
A bright example he is reckoned;
The inkiest of these inky creatures,
You hardly can discern his features.



Some think this shouldn't be forbidden,
They say his face is better hidden,
And ink, though not a thing of beauty,
In this case does a pleasant duty.
Such talk as this is either candour
Or something very near to slander.
And Myers himself is quite decided
It's both offensive and misguided!
His features are, in his opinion,
The best in Britain's wide dominion.
Who's right, the former or the latter?
Well, what's the odds? It doesn't
matter!

ANSWER TO PUZZLE

Fourpence.

A WEEKLY BUDGET
OF FACT AND FUN

By

THE GREYFRIARS
RHYMESTER

GREYFRIARS GRINS

Coker of the Fifth went out with an
examiner for his driving-test yesterday.
It is believed that when the examiner
regains consciousness he will fail Coker.

Skinner put some drawing-pins on
Quelch's chair this morning, but it was
Skinner who was sat on.

Linley upset a bottle of marking-ink
over his fingers recently. Well, it is
certainly able to Mark Linley.

They say that once an Indian
Gurkha's sword is drawn, it is never put
back till it has tasted blood. We know
a cane like that, too.

PUZZLE PAR

Bunter found twopence, and
then had three times as much as
if he had lost twopence. How
much had he at first?

Answer at foot of column 2.

Davo Morgan, who went to bed think-
ing of his maths paper, says he dreamed
the answers during the night. If the
masters hear of this they'll make us
work while we're asleep.

Wibley recently made up so well as
Mr. Hacker that he had a bad attack of
liver trouble until he took off his
disguise.

Mr. Prout was seen running along the
Courtfield Road yesterday. It was sheer
force of habit. He had passed the
circus and caught a glimpse of a grizzly
bear.

If all the verses I write during the
year were dropped into the sea, there
would be a sigh of relief all round.

If all the years since Greyfriars
started were lived by one man, his name
would be William Gosting.

AFTER SCHOOL HOURS
Night Prowlers

Although there may be times, no doubt,
When chaps in every Form
Get up at midnight and go out
Beyond the bounds of dorm,
You mustn't get the false idea
That crowds are marching down
At midnight, when the coast is clear,
To taverns in the town.

When midnight chimes, a little group
Go out—but quite a few!
There's Skinner and his crony, Snoop,
And Stott and Smithy, too,
And maybe Peter Hazeldene,
And Bolsover, perhaps,
And I myself have sometimes been,
And several other chaps.

We clamber down the water-pipe,
And in the darkness see
That other fellows of our type
Are out upon the spree.
There's Angel of the Upper Fourth,
And Kenney, too, his chum.
Look east or west or south or north,
The cry is—still they come!

Upon the Fifth Form water-pipe
Are Hilton, Smith and Price,
And chaps who think the time is ripe
To try a little vice.
Yes, on the face of Greyfriars School
They wriggle out in swarms,
And every water-pipe is full
Of stealthy climbing forms.

And though the mob is rather large,
We never make a sound.
With Loder of the Sixth in charge,
And Walker snooping round,
We slink away to spend the night
In merriment and sin,
Until the dawn of morning light,
And then— (You wake up!—Ed.)

"GOOD RIDDANCE TO BAD RUBBISH!" There's no shedding of tears when Arthur Carter, Billy Bunter's rascally cousin, gets kicked out of Greyfriars—in fact, Harry Wharton & Co. are glad to see the back of him!

GOOD-BYE, GREYFRIARS!



From behind one of the old stone pillars, Carter watched Billy Bunter slip a bunch of keys into a crevice of the ancient wall, screened by thick ivy!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter's Booby-Trap!

"THESE books Carter's?"

"Yes!"

"Tell him I've taken them, won't you?"

"Eh?"

"What?"

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent, in Study No. 1, stared blankly at Billy Bunter. Carter, who shared the study, was not present; but a pile of school books belonging to him stood on a corner of the table. Billy Bunter proceeded to gather them up and pack them under a fat arm.

There was an expansive grin on Billy Bunter's fat face. Apparently he was planning some jest on Arthur Carter. Where the jest came in, was a mystery to the two fellows in the study.

"Let Carter's books alone, you fat ass!" said Harry Wharton. "He will want them when he comes up."

"He, he, he! Mind you tell him," chuckled Bunter. "I've got them!"

"Do you want him to come after you?" demanded Nugent.

"He, he, he! That's it!"

Billy Bunter turned to the door, with five or six books packed under his arm. Harry Wharton reached out with his foot, and kicked the door shut. Bunter came to a halt.

"Beast!" he yapped. "I say, you fellows, open that door! Carter may be coming up any minute—"

"Put those books back, fathead!" said Harry. "Carter will boot you all round your study if he has to come there after them. What the dickens do you mean by walking off Carter's books?"

"I ain't going to my study!" explained Bunter. "When you tell Carter I've got his books, he will come there after them, of course! Don't you think so?"

"Yes, I suppose so! But what—"

"I've got it all fixed up ready for him!" grinned Bunter. "I'm going to watch from the door of Bob Cherry's study—see? I've fixed up a booby-trap in my study! I've stuck a tin pail on the door—"

"Oh!" gasped Wharton.

"Half full of water," chortled Bunter. "I've poured Toddy's bottle of red ink in it, and Dutton's gum! I've put in

"Mr. Quelch caught me squinting over his shoulder, and came down on me like a ton of bricks! Of course, that cad Carter knew that Quelch had his eye on me—that's why he did it! Quelch's given me a paper to write on the Norman Conquest! I don't know anything about the Conquest except that it happened in 1588—"

"Oh crumbs! Did it?"

"Didn't it?" asked Bunter. "I know something did! I've a pretty good memory for dates, you know, only I never can remember just what happened on them! Not that it matters, of course, only Quelch thinks it does, and it's no good arguing with a Form-master! I haven't done that paper yet, and Quelch is sure to kick up a row about it if I don't take it to his study! So—"

"So you'd better get on with it, and leave Carter alone," suggested Wharton.

"It was his fault I got it! Look here, you beast, you let me get away with these books before Carter comes up! I tell you I've got that booby-trap all fixed up in my study ready for him, and I've got to get him to go to my study—gerroust of the way, Wharton!"

"You benighted bandersnatch! Suppose Toddy goes into the study before Carter gets there—"

"Or Dutton, you howling chump!" exclaimed Frank Nugent.

"Oh!" said Bunter.

Apparently the fat Owl of the Remove had overlooked that possibility! Really, it was quite a possible possibility, as Peter Todd and Tom Dutton were his study-mates in Study No. 7.

"Well, I shall have to chance that, of course," said Bunter. "I dare say

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Super School Story by
Star Author, featuring
**HARRY WHARTON &
CO., the Cheery Chums of
GREYFRIARS.**

some soot, too, and some treacle. And some ciuders. He, he, he!"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Frank Nugent.

"You howling, blithering, benighted ass!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton! You know what Carter did in class this afternoon," booted Bunter indignantly. "He got me into another row with Quelch! He's always getting me into rows with Quelch, as you jolly well know! He let me copy his history paper—"

"You shouldn't have copied his history paper."

they won't. They were down in the Rag when I saw them last. Look here, you let me pass, Wharton, you beast! I tell you Carter may be up any minute—"

"Here comes somebody now," said Frank Nugent, as there was a sound of footsteps in the Remove passage coming along from the landing.

"Oh, you beasts!" hissed Bunter. "If that's Carter, it's too late now—"

The footsteps, faintly heard through the shut door, passed Study No. 1, and went on up the passage.

Bunter breathed again.

"That ain't Carter!" he said. "Carter would have come in here! I say, you fellows, don't be beasts! I'm going to pay Carter out for getting me that history paper. I've got a row coming from Quelch, as I haven't done it. I say—"

Billy Bunter was suddenly interrupted. From the Remove passage came the sound of a sudden crash! It was followed by a heavy fall, and a wild sudden yell on somebody's top note.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Nugent.

"Oh crumbs!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "That's from your study, Bunter—"

"Toddy or Dutton!" said Frank Nugent. "You blithering ass—"

"You dangerous maniac—"

"Oh lor!" gasped Billy Bunter. "If—if—if it's Toddy or Dutton, I—I—I never did it! Oh crikey!"

Carter's books slipped from under the arm of the fat Owl, and thudded on the floor of Study No. 1. Billy Bunter stood in dismay. Obviously, someone had walked into that booby-trap in Study No. 7; and it could not possibly be Carter—the whole of Bunter's masterly scheme not yet having been carried out. Who it was, was quite an interesting question. It might have been almost anybody—except Carter!

Harry Wharton tore open the door and rushed into the passage. Frank Nugent rushed after him; and Billy Bunter tottered in Nugent's wake! A dozen other Remove fellows ran out of the studies—the crash had been heard from one end of the passage to the other.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"What's up?"

"Who—"

"What—"

"I say, you fellows, I never—"

A startled crowd of juniors gathered round the open doorway of Study No. 7. That doorway was flooded with a fluid of many mixed ingredients. In the middle of the floor sat a figure, with a tin pail upside down on its head.

Who it was, was not visible at the moment; the pail, falling on the head from the top of the door as it was pushed open, had fairly bonneted the hapless victim. But it was not Toddy! It was not Dutton! It was worse than that—much, awfully worse! A master's gown, drenched and dripping with mixed water and ink, was tangled round the figure as it sat in the flood! It was a master who had walked into Billy Bunter's booby-trap!

"Wurrr-hugggh!" came in a horrible gurgle from the interior of the tin pail!

"Great pip!"

"A beak—"

"Who—"

"Quelch!" almost moaned Harry Wharton. "It's Quelch!"

And the Removites gazed in petrified horror at their Form-master! Mr. Quelch, crowned and masked by the tin pail, gurgled!

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THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Simply Awful!

HENRY SAMUEL QUELCH hardly knew what had happened to him.

Booby-traps, certainly, had happened before, in the history of Greyfriars School. But such experiences, naturally, seldom came a Form-master's way. Mr. Quelch had, most assuredly, not been thinking of anything of the kind when he arrived at Bunter's study in the Remove passage.

He had not arrived in a good temper. Bunter, strictly bidden to bring that history paper to him at tea-time, had not turned up with it before tea; neither had he turned up with it after tea. So, as the mountain did not go to Mahomet, Mahomet went to the mountain, so to speak! Having rapped sharply at the study door, which stood ajar, Mr. Quelch pushed it open and entered. And then—

Then it seemed to him that the universe was suddenly falling to pieces.

Bunter had calculated correctly that that tin pail would fall on the head of anyone who opened the door to step in. He had been too busily occupied laying this masterly scheme to think about Toddy or Dutton, and certainly he had not given the remotest thought to Mr. Quelch. But it was Quelch who turned out to be the happy man!

Taken quite by surprise, Quelch went over, with the tin pail like a helmet on his head! He tumbled, he rolled, in a state of hopeless confusion, his cane flying from under his arm, one or two things from his pockets, unheeded. Then he sat up.

He sat in a swamp of inky water. All was dark, and, in his state of mental confusion, he did not realise that the darkness was caused by the tin pail fitting over his head, jamming down as far as his neck. He sat dizzily, and spluttered in the interior of the inky pail.

Splutter, splutter, splutter! Gurgle, gurgle, gurgles! Gasp, gasp, gasp!

Wild sounds came from the interior of that pail, while the crowd of Removites in the passage gazed in horror and consternation.

"Quelch!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"The esteemed Quelch!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Who the thump did this?" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"What howling ass—"

"What thundering idiot—"

"I say, you fellows, it wasn't me! I never did it, you know! Besides, I meant it for that cad Carter!"

Harry Wharton, the first to recover from the shock and get down to action, stepped forward, grasped the pail, and unhooked it from Quelch's head.

A drenched mortar-board, a dripping face, were revealed. That face was almost hidden by streaming inky water. Quelch was scarcely recognisable.

"Oooooooooogh!" gurgled Mr. Quelch.

"Urrgh! Oooh!"

He dabbed at his eyes with an inky hand.

"C-e-can I—I help you, sir?" stammered Wharton.

"Oooooooooogh!"

Quelch, generally quick-witted, seemed quite dazed; he just sat in the inky pool, dabbing, gasping, and gurgling.

Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry grasped him by either arm and helped him up. He tottered to his feet.

Inky water streamed down him as he stood. He leaned a hand on Wharton's shoulder for support. He seemed quite shaky.

Billy Bunter gazed at him, his eyes big and round with terror behind his spectacles. If Quelch found out that he had done this— The bare idea was unnerving. Bunter could only hope that Quelch wouldn't.

Other fellows came scooting up the passage to see what was on. Among them came Carter—the fellow for whom that booby-trap had been planned. Carter jumped nearly clear of the floor at the sight of his Form-master in that startling state.

"Is—is that Quelch?" he gasped.

"That's Quelch—what's left of him!" said Herbert Vernon-Smith, with a grin.

The Bounder seemed amused.

"Urrgh! Ooogh!" spluttered Mr. Quelch. "What—what has happened? I—I hardly know what—what—what can—"

He dabbed his eyes and cleared his vision, and stared dizzily round him.

He stared at the pool of inky water; he stared at the pail that had helmeted him. A glint came into his eyes that made the grin fade even from the Bounder's face. Quelch, as he realised what had happened, was absolutely terrifying.

"This—this—this is—is a trick!" he gasped. "It—it's what you call, I—I think, a—a—a booby-trap, Wharton!" He glared at his head boy. "Who did this?"

"I—I was in my study, sir!" stammered the captain of the Remove. "I ran out when I heard—"

"Someone—some boy in this Form—fixed up that rascally trap for me to walk into!" almost roared Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, no, sir! I—I'm sure not! It can't have been meant for you, sir!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "It just can't!"

"I'm sure not, sir," said Harry Wharton.

"Nobody knew you were coming, sir," ventured Frank Nugent.

"It must have been meant for a joke on one of the fellows in that study, sir," said Johnny Bull.

"Silence! I command the boy who played this insensate trick to stand forward!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

Billy Bunter backed behind several other fellows.

Bunter was not shy, as a rule. He rather liked putting himself forward on lots of occasions. But just at present William George Bunter was as shy as the modest violet. His one desire was to escape the glinting gimlet eye of the Remove master.

"Is the boy present?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

Carter glanced at Bunter. Probably he guessed, though he did not guess that the booby-trap had been intended for himself. Other fellows guessed, too; two of them knew. But they were careful not to draw attention to Bunter. Nobody wanted to see the culprit handed over to Quelch's dire wrath—that is, nobody except his relative, Arthur Carter. Bunter's terror-stricken face was really a sufficient indication of his guilt.

But three or four fellows were between him and Quelch, and the glinting gimlet eye did not fall on Bunter. And Bunter did not speak. He quaked in terrified silence behind the screen of Removites.

"The perpetrator of this outrage will be flogged by the headmaster!" said Mr. Quelch in a grinding voice; and, with that, he strode away down the passage.

No doubt it occurred to Quelch that a wash and a change were more pressing matters even than the discovery of the author of that outrage.

His cane remained on the floor of Study No. 7, forgotten by Quelch, and one or two other articles. Quelch hurried away down the passage, leaving a trail of inky water behind him.

Breathlessly the juniors watched him disappear.

"My hat!" said Vernon-Smith. "There's going to be a royal row about this! Who did it—you, Bunter?"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Was it you, you fat chump?" hooted Peter Todd.

"Of—of course not!" gasped Bunter. "I—I never knew there was a booby-trap at all, Toddy! You can ask Wharton and Nugent. I told them—"

"Then it was you!" howled Peter.

"Oh, no! I—I never— Don't you get making out that it was me!" howled Bunter. "Quelch says it's going to be a Head's flogging, so it wasn't me—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"By gum!" said Carter. "You've got a nerve to lay a trap for Quelch like that, Bunter! That's the limit!"

"I didn't!" yelled Bunter. "You'd like to make out that it was me, wouldn't you, you cad? It was all your fault! I shouldn't have laid that trap for you if you hadn't got me into a row with Quelch. And if I hadn't been in a row with Quelch, he wouldn't have come up to my study!"

"For me?" repeated Carter blankly. "You put it up for me?"

"I didn't put it up at all! I never knew it was there! I never got that old pail out of Gosling's shed! Gosling can prove that; he'll remember that I asked him if I could have it—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Carter.

"Oh, cackle, you beast!" hooted Bunter. "It wasn't me! I—I shouldn't wonder if it was you! I—I say, you fellows, do you think it was Carter?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I say, you fellows, for goodness' sake, don't you let Quelch hear you saying it was me! He might think it was, you know! No good telling him it was meant for Carter when he got it; he won't care much whom it was meant for as he got it, you know! What I want you fellows to remember is that I never did it; and I was somewhere else when I was here putting that pail up on the door—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, you've done it this time, you fat chump!" said Bob Cherry.

"I haven't!" yelled Bunter. "Don't I keep on telling you that I never did it, you beast? I haven't the faintest idea who did it! My mind's an absolute blank on the subject!"

"Let's hope Quelch's will be, too!" chuckled the Bouncer.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a faint hope, and the hapless Owl of the Remove realised it. Quelch had a lot of washing to do, and Billy Bunter wondered, in deep dread, what was going to happen when Quelch was through.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

High Words!

HARRY WHARTON put pencil to paper hesitated, and, after a long hesitation, wrote down the name "A. Carter."

Four other fellows in Study No. 1 were watching him in silence.

Once or twice, as the captain of the Remove hesitated, Bob Cherry opened his lips as if to speak; but he closed them again.

But his ruddy face grew grim as he saw the name that Wharton had

written—filling the last place in the football list for the Rookwood match.

Johnny Bull gave a slight grunt. Frank Nugent nodded, as if in assent to Wharton's action. Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh gave no sign. Bob's face reddened, and grew grimmer in expression.

"Not Carter?" he asked, breaking the silence at last.

"Yes," said Harry. "Carter!"

Bob breathed hard.

"You're skipper!" he said. "But—you oughtn't to play that toad, Wharton! You oughtn't to expect decent fellows to play in the same team with him."

"He's a good winger," said Harry. "He's one of the best, Bob! We're going to play Rookwood at Soccer—not at anything else. I don't like the fellow any more than you do—but I can't leave out a good man because I don't like him."

"I know that! It's not a matter of liking or disliking the fellow. I can't stand him at any price; but that wouldn't make any difference, if I had to pick the men. But—a rascal like that—a thorough rotter—a plotting scoundrel—a scheming cur—"

"He's all right in Soccer!"

"He isn't! He crooked me in a game, as you jolly well know. He'd play the same rotten trick again if it suited him," growled Bob. "Even at Soccer, he's not to be trusted. In everything else, he's a rotten rascal! You know it! I was down on him when he came, because I knew—and you fellows couldn't see it! You've had enough proof since. You know now."

"Yes! But—"

"He was turned out of his last school for blagging! His rich uncle turned him down for that. Has he changed since he came here? Haven't we seen him sneaking out of the Three Fishers—and didn't Wingate spot him, and whop him for it? He might have been sacked, as he was at St. Olaf's."

"I know! But Smithy goes blagging, and we admit that it's no bizney of ours. Smithy's in the team."

"That's different! Smithy's blagging is more silly swank than anything else—Carter's bad to the bone. It's not only that! It—it's everything! Bunter's told everybody that old Joe Carter has some idea of taking him up, now that he's turned Carter down—and the old ass has asked Quelch for Bunter's report this term! What has Carter been doing all through the term? Playing one foul trick after another—trying to land that fat ass in trouble, to get him a bad report—"

"I know!"

"That's bad enough—but it's not all! He's played rotten tricks to get the fat chump sacked! Never mind whether it can be proved or not—you know it, and you know that Bunter's number would have been up, if I hadn't stood by him, and Smithy hadn't helped!"

"No doubt about that!" granted Johnny Bull. "We all know that."

"The knowfulness is terrific," murmured Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh, "but—"

"But he's a good winger!" said Frank Nugent, "and what we know about him, we can't sing out to all the Remove."

"He knows we know his game, and knows we wouldn't touch him with a barge-pole!" said Bob. "Only this afternoon he was at it again—letting Bunter copy his paper in class, to get him into another row with Quelch—"

"Bunter shouldn't have done it," said Harry. "The fat chump asks for

most of what he gets. Carter couldn't do much, if Bunter didn't help him."

"More or less, perhaps! That makes no difference. Bunter's more a fool than anything else. Carter can't say that the fat chump has done anything to cut him out with his rich relation. Bunter's only seen the old bean once, and that was a couple of years ago. He's never had a word from him—nothing except that old Joe's written to Quelch to ask for a copy of his report this term. The old man would never have thought of Bunter, if Carter had been decent—he only turned him down because he was a rotter."

"I know, but—"

"Carter could very likely set the matter right, by being decent—and chucking up his rotten ways! Is he trying that tack? You know he isn't! He goes pub-hunting—breaks bounds after lights out—backs gee-gees—pah! All he thinks of is dishing Bunter with old Joe Carter—and he will play any dirty trick that comes into his head to get away with it."

Harry Wharton was silent.

"And that's the man you're sticking in the Remove eleven!" snorted Bob. "He would let the team down, if it suited him. He would crook any man on his own side, if he had a grudge against him. He's not fit for any decent fellow to touch. No chap ought to be asked to play in the same team with him."

"I know how you feel, old bean, and I feel just the same," said Harry. "But—that fellow, rotter as he is, has one good point—he's keen on Soccer, and plays a first-class game. Other fellows don't know him as we do, and they all think that he ought to be in the team. And—I think so, too, old chap! Outside Soccer, I bar him as much as you do! I wish he'd never come to Greyfriars, and I'd be glad to see him booted out—as he will be, if the Head ever finds out the kind of toad he is. But when it comes to Soccer—"

"I think Wharton's right!" said Nugent, slowly.

"I think he's wrong!" grunted Bob.

"Same here!" said Johnny Bull.

"When a fellow's not to be trusted, I wouldn't trust him in Soccer, or in anything else."

"He will play a good game, and help us beat Rookwood!" said Harry. "It's our last fixture, and we want to wind up with a win."

"If it suits him!" snorted Bob.

"Well, why shouldn't it suit him?" asked the captain of the Remove, with a touch of impatience. "His rotten tricks at Bunter don't come into the football—Bunter's got nothing to do with football. He's keen on the game—and it's the only decent thing he ever does. I think he ought to go in."

"Well, I've said my say!" growled Bob. "Leave it at that! But a rotten, crawling worm like that toad Carter—"

The study door opened, as Bob was speaking.

Arthur Carter came into the study.

His eyes glinted at Bob. Evidently he had heard what was said as he opened the door.

"Talking about a fellow behind his back?" he sneered.

Bob's eyes blazed at him.

"I'll say it to your face fast enough," he bawled. "I said you were a rotten, crawling toad—and I've been saying that no decent fellow ought to be expected to play in the same team with you. You're not fit to touch—or to breathe the same air with any decent chap! And if I were skipper, you

wouldn't be in the Rookwood game to-morrow."

Carter shrugged his shoulders.

"Glad you're not skipper!" he remarked. "Does that mean that you're putting me in, Wharton?"

"Yes!" said Harry shortly. "You know that I think the same of you as Bob does, Carter, but I don't see that it's got anything to do with football."

He rose from the table, put the list in his pocket, and moved to the door. His friends followed him.

Study No. 1 had belonged to Wharton and Nugent before Carter came; but they used the study as little as they could now that Carter was there. If they happened to be in the room, Carter's entrance was generally the signal for their exit.

"Going?" sneered Carter.

"Yes!"

And they went.

Carter kicked the door shut after them. His brows were knitted; his face dark and bitter. Bob Cherry's angry, scornful words had stung him.

But in a few minutes the schemer of the Remove had forgotten the incident. He had other matters to occupy his mind.

He threw himself into a chair, and drew a folded paper from his pocket. It was a pink paper, devoted to racing matters—and Carter's attention was soon deeply concentrated on it.

His face grew darker as he read. There was a certain "gee-gee" that Carter had fancied, and that he had backed with a sporting acquaintance at the Cross Keys—but, since that date, doubt had crept in. He was very keen on the latest news of Tip-Cat—for if Tip-Cat did not win in the one-thirty at Wapshot on the morrow, Carter hardly dared to think of what the consequences might be. And the expert in the racing-paper he was now consulting seemed very dubious about Tip-Cat!

With a worry like that on his mind, Carter was not likely to bother very much about what Harry Wharton & Co. thought of him. In fact, he forgot their existence, as he concentrated on Tip-Cat!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Culprit!

MR. QUELCH sat in his study—newly swept and garnished, so to speak.

Every trace of the inky water was gone. The Remove master presented his accustomed spotless and rather prim aspect.

But the expression on his face might have excited the envy of the Gorgon of ancient times.

Quelch was about to sit in judgment! And his expression indicated that his judgment was going to be severe—probably Rhadamanthine in its severity.

He had sent for the three members of Study No. 7 to appear before him. He was beginning with them. If the culprit was not numbered among the three, his inquiry was going farther—farther and farther, until he discovered that culprit. Whoever had laid that booby-trap, was going to learn, beyond the shadow of a doubt, what a very serious matter it was.

There was a tap at the door, and Peter Todd entered, followed by Tom Dutton. Billy Bunter brought up the rear, slowly and unwillingly. The hapless Owl felt a good deal like Daniel entering the lion's den, with the difference that he did not dare to be a Daniel. But there was no help for it, and he

rolled in in the wake of Toddy and Dutton.

Peter Todd had a cane in one hand and a handkerchief in the other. He laid them on Mr. Quelch's table.

"I found these in my study, sir," he said meekly. "I—I think you must have dropped them there, sir."

"Thank you, Todd!"

Mr. Quelch did not recall having dropped anything in Study No. 7. He had been rather confused at the time.

"I require to know, Todd, who laid that dastardly trap for me in your study," he said. "I shall question you first!"

"Not I, sir!" said Peter. "I was down in the Rag when I heard that there was a row on, sir. I hadn't been up to the studies since class."

"You may stand aside!" rapped Mr. Quelch. "Dutton!"

"Did you speak, sir?" asked Tom Dutton.

Dutton was deaf, and it was necessary to put on a little steam in addressing him.

"Was it you, Dutton, who played that detestable prank in Study No. 7?"

"I haven't been out since class, sir."

"What?"

"I don't think I'm muddy."

"Muddy?"

"I couldn't get muddy, as I haven't been out, sir."

"I did not say muddy, Dutton," said Mr. Quelch, breathing hard. "I was speaking of your study."

"Did you say study, sir?"

"Yes."

"The study isn't muddy, sir. It was rather mucked up with ink and stuff, but that's been cleaned up—"

"Upon my word! Dutton, try to hear me!"

"Oh, no, sir! I've got nothing to be afraid of. Why should I fear you?" asked Dutton. "I haven't done anything."

"Did you fix up that pail of ink at your study door?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"I helped, sir."

"You did!" roared Mr. Quelch.

"Certainly, sir! I wasn't going to leave it all to Todd," answered Dutton. "We cleaned it up between us."

"Bless my soul!"

"We couldn't leave all that muck on the study floor, sir."

"I am not speaking of the study floor! I am speaking of the study door!" roared Mr. Quelch. "Did you, or did you not, place that pail on the study door?"

"Oh, no, sir! I never knew anything about it. I thought you were asking me about the ink on the study floor."

"You may stand aside, Dutton."

"Well, we might have slipped in it, sir, if we hadn't seen it. I don't know about sliding—"

"Silence!" bawled Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir!"

"Now, Bunter—"

"It wasn't me, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I never knew anything about it, sir, just like Toddy and Dutton. It wasn't meant for you, sir."

"How do you know it was not meant for me, Bunter, if you did not do it?"

"Oh, I—I—I mean—"

"What do you mean, Bunter?"

"I—I mean, I—I wasn't there, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I was in the school shop at the time, sir! I—I heard six strike while I was—was eating a jam tart in the tuckshop, sir."

"Do you mean that—that booby-trap was fixed up at six o'clock, Bunter?"

"That's it, sir. And as I was in the tuckshop at the time—"

Mr. Quelch concentrated a deadly glare on Bunter. He did not need to seek farther for the culprit.

"And how do you know, Bunter, that the—the booby-trap was fixed up at six o'clock?" he demanded, in a grinding voice.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "I—I—I mean—I—I don't know, sir! I—I don't know anything about it, sir! How could I, when I was in the gym?"

"In the gymnasium?"

"I mean the tuckshop, sir. I went down to the tuck-gym—I mean the gym-shop just after class, sir, and never came in again, and—"

"It was you, Bunter. Your own words condemn you!"

"Oh crikey! It—it wasn't, sir!" howled Bunter. "I never knew you were coming up to my study, sir, or I shouldn't have thought of it. Not that I did think of it, of course. I was reading the 'Holiday Annual' in the Rag when I did it—I mean, when I didn't do it—that is, do it—"

"Todd! Dutton! You may go! Bunter, I shall take you to your headmaster, and request him to administer the severest flogging—"

"Oh lor'! I never meant it for you, sir!" yelled Bunter. "It was meant for that beast Carter, sir, for getting me into a row."

"Carter!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir," groaned Bunter. "I was going to take his books away from his study, and when he went after them, sir, he—he was going to get that pail on his nut, sir, and—and then—"

"You utterly stupid boy! Anyone might have entered the study!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Your studymates might have done so."

"I—I never thought of that, sir. I—I was only thinking of catching that beast Carter."

Mr. Quelch paused. Peter and Dutton left the study, leaving the fat Owl squirming under the gimlet eyes of his Form-master.

"I shall believe, Bunter, that that dastardly prank was not intended for me," said Mr. Quelch, at last. "I shall not take you to Dr. Locke."

"Oh, thank you, sir!" gasped Bunter, in great relief. "Mum-mum-may I—I go now, sir?"

"You may not, Bunter. I shall not take you to your headmaster, but I shall administer punishment myself—"

"Oh crikey!"

"With sufficient severity—"

"Oh lor'!"

Mr. Quelch picked up the cane from the table.

"Now, Bunter, you will bend over that chair—"

"I—I—I never did it, sir!" yelled Bunter desperately. "I—I hope you can take a fellow's word, sir!"

"Wha-a-at? You have just admitted that you did it, Bunter!"

"Oh, that—that was only a—a—a figure of speech, sir!" gasped Bunter. "What I really meant was that I never—"

"Bend over that chair at once!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"But—but as I never did it, sir—"

Whack!

The cane rang across fat shoulders, and Billy Bunter yelled.

"Now will you bend over that chair, Bunter?"

"Yarrah!"

"Upon my word, if you do not instantly bend over that chair, Bunter, I shall change my mind and take you to the headmaster!"

Bunter bent over the chair.

What followed was really harrowing.



Harry Wharton stepped forward, grasped the pail, and unhooked it from Mr. Quelch's head. A drenched mortar-board and a dripping face were revealed. "Ooooooooooogh!" gurgled the master of the Remove. "Urrgh! Oooh!" "C-c-can I—I help you, sir?" stammered Wharton.

A patent carpet-beater had nothing on Quelch for the next few minutes.

Bunter wriggled; he squirmed; he roared; he yelled. He woke the echoes. A fellow who drenched his Form-master with inky water, whether by mistake or not, had something special to expect in the way of a whopping. Billy Bunter got something extra-special!

Quelch laid down the cane at last.

"You may go, Bunter!" he rapped.

"Yarooop!"

"Leave-my study!"

"Yow-ow-ow-wooop!"

"If you make another sound, Bunter, I shall cane you again!"

Billy Bunter suppressed his feelings, while he bounded out of his Form-master's study.

But he squeaked wildly as he wriggled down the passage. He squeaked his way back to the Remove. He squeaked into Study No. 7, and for a long, long time every fellow who passed that study heard from within the sound of woeful and anguished squeaking!

Squeaking, apparently, afforded the suffering Owl some relief, and he squeaked and squeaked and squeaked.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

One on Quelch!

"Oh!" ejaculated Billy Bunter suddenly.

He sat upright, and blinked through his big spectacles. A glimmering object had suddenly caught his eye.

For nearly an hour the fat junior had been in the study—most of the time spent in mumbling, moaning, and squeaking. Peter Todd looked in once, but he had soon tired of Bunter's musical effects, and had left the fat Owl to squeak on his own.

But it was getting nearer time for prep now, when the Remove fellows would be coming up to the studies. Bunter was feeling disinclined for prep—he felt disinclined for anything, except to "whop" Mr. Quelch with his own cane, had that been possible. Bunter, sprawling in the armchair, had ceased, at last, to squeak—the effect of the whopping was beginning to wear off. He had sufficiently recovered to take heed of what he now saw—the glimmering object on the floor of the study—nothing more nor less than a bunch of keys!

There were four or five small keys on a key-ring, and they lay under the table, out of sight of anyone standing in the study. They were in Bunter's sight because he was sprawling in the armchair, and so they came within his range of vision.

"Oh!" repeated Bunter.

He knew that that little bunch of keys did not belong to the study. It was not his—it was not Toddy's—and it was not Dutton's. Somebody else had dropped it there, and it had pitched under the table—remaining there unseen, until Bunter's eyes and spectacles fell on it.

It was Quelch's key-ring, with Quelch's keys on it. Bunter knew that, for two reasons. First, only Quelch could have dropped it there, when he took his tumble; second, the keys were familiar to his eyes, as he had often seen Quelch use them to unlock desk or drawer in his study.

Bunter knew already that Quelch had dropped a cane and a handkerchief when he mixed himself up on the floor in Study No. 7. Now he knew that that key-ring had also dropped.

The fat junior stared at it inimically. Quelch had not missed it yet, or he would have been back for it. Probably

he would not miss it till he came to need one of the keys for use! Then he might or might not think of Study No. 7 as a likely place! Bunter, at all events, wasn't going to take his keys back to him—not after that whopping! He could jolly well hunt for his beastly keys as long as he jolly well liked!

That was Bunter's first idea! But as he sat blinking at the keys, second thoughts supervened—and he grinned a fat grin.

He looked himself out of the armchair and reached under the table, picking up the keys. There were five of them, belonging to desk or drawers in Mr. Quelch's study—and one was a special key, of unusual make, which Bunter knew, unlocked a special drawer in Quelch's desk. Quelch would be as mad as a hatter if he couldn't find that key. Bunter knew that. At the present moment, wriggling from a severe whopping, Billy Bunter's chief desire was to make Quelch as mad as a hatter—or madder!

"I'll jolly well show the beast!" grinned Bunter.

He was about to slip the bunch into his pocket when the study door opened, and his fat hand was immediately put behind him, with the keys in it. It was Peter Todd who came in. There was a tramp of feet in the Remove passage—the fellows were coming up to prep.

"Oh! You, Toddy!" said Bunter.

He had feared for a moment that it was Quelch after his keys. His fat hand came into view again.

"What have you got there?" asked Peter.

He stared at the glimmering keys in Bunter's fat hand.

"What do you think?" chuckled Bunter. "Old Quelch dropped his keys here, Peter, when he went over, along

with the other things. I've just spotted them—when they went under the table."

"Better cut down to Quelch with them," said Peter.

"I'll watch it!"

Bunter slipped the keys into his pocket.

"Look here, you ass, you'd better take them down at once," said Peter. "If you keep them here till after prep—"

"I'm going to keep them longer than that!" grinned Bunter. "Quelch can hunt for those keys, Toddy! Serve him right for whopping a chap—see?"

"You born idiot—"

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"Quelch will skin you, if he finds that you've been keeping his keys!" hooted Peter.

"Yes—but he won't!" chuckled Bunter. "I ain't going to tell him! He don't know that he dropped them here. See? I'm jolly well going to mind them till the end of the term—"

"What?" gasped Peter.

"I'll drop them about the study the day we break up—see? I say, Peter, won't he be hopping mad when he can't find them?" Bunter chortled. Evidently a state of hopping madness on his Form-master's part appealed to Bunter as entertaining. "Serve him right—what?"

"That's the big idea, is it?" gasped Peter. "That's the way you're going to get a good report from Quelch this term, is it? Lucky for you you've got a pal in the study to keep you from playing the giddy ox, ain't it? Take those keys down to Quelch at once?"

"Shan't!" hooted Bunter.

"I'll give you a start!" said Peter. "In fact, I'll come all the way, if you like—if you prefer to be booted as far as Quelch's study. Start!"

Peter drew back his right foot. Bunter dodged round the study table.

"Stop it, you beast!" he roared. "I tell you—Keep off, you rotter—yaroogh! Stop kicking me, you swab! I—I say, I—I—I'll go down to Quelch! Yoo-hoop! Beast!"

Peter, pursuing the fat junior round the table, landed three in swift succession. Three seemed enough for Bunter. He bolted for the door and flew out of the study.

Tom Dutton, rather unfortunately for himself, was coming in at that moment. There was a crash in the doorway, and Tom staggered back across the passage.

"Oh!" he spluttered. "Owl! What—"

Bunter sat down in the doorway and roared.

"Ow! Ooogh! Beast! Ooooh!" "What did you barge into me for?" roared Tom Dutton, in great wrath. "You've made me bang my head on the wall, you fat chump!"

"Ow! Beast! It was Toddy's fault!" howled Bunter. "It was Toddy, in the study—"

"Don't be a silly ass! How could there be a body in the study?" snapped Dutton. "What do you mean—"

"Oh, you deaf chump—"

"Yes, you made me jump, all right—and now I'll jolly well make you jump!" exclaimed Dutton indignantly.

"Take that—and that—"

"Yoo-whoop!"

Bunter picked himself up and flew.

Tom Dutton, frowning, came into the study where Peter Todd was emitting a series of chuckles.

"Nothing to grin at, Toddy!" said Dutton crossly. "Fancy that fat ass rushing into a fellow and knocking him over simply to make him jump! Check, you know! Well, I've jolly

well kicked him! I don't see anything to cackle at, Peter."

"I do!" chortled Peter.

"Eh? What are you calling me a Jew for?"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Peter. "I said 'do,' not 'Jew.'"

"Not so jolly easy to do a Jew!" said Dutton, shaking his head. "They're pretty fly. Besides, what do you want to do a Jew for? Do you mean Newland? He's the only Jew in the Form. What do you want to do him for?"

"Help!" gasped Peter.

"Well, I don't think so!" said Dutton. "I shouldn't call any fellow in the Form a whelp, and certainly not Newland—a very decent chap! Have you been having a row with him, or what?"

Peter Todd shook his head—that was the easiest way out! But it did not satisfy his deaf study-mate.

"If that means that you think I'm deaf, Toddy, you're a silly ass!" said Dutton. "I can hear you when you don't mumble! What have you been rowing with Newland about?"

"Nothing!" roared Peter.

"Well, you must be a goat to row with a chap about nothing! Calling him a whelp, too! That's a rotten expression, Peter—I shouldn't use words like that, if I were you—rotten bad form!"

Peter did not argue the matter further. He sorted out his books for prep.

Billy Bunter came back into the study, and favoured Peter with a ferocious glare through his big spectacles which did not disturb Toddy's equanimity in the least.

Toddy understood, if Bunter did not, that the sooner those lost keys were returned to their owner, the better—and he was quite satisfied with his action in booting Bunter into returning them.

It did not occur to him, at the moment, that Bunter hadn't!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Quelch Wants to Know!

"B LESS my soul!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch.

He was quite startled.

Standing before the desk in his study, the Remove master was about to unlock a certain drawer—a very special drawer, to which he had a very special key. For in that drawer it was Quelch's custom to keep his supply of ready cash, among other valuable things.

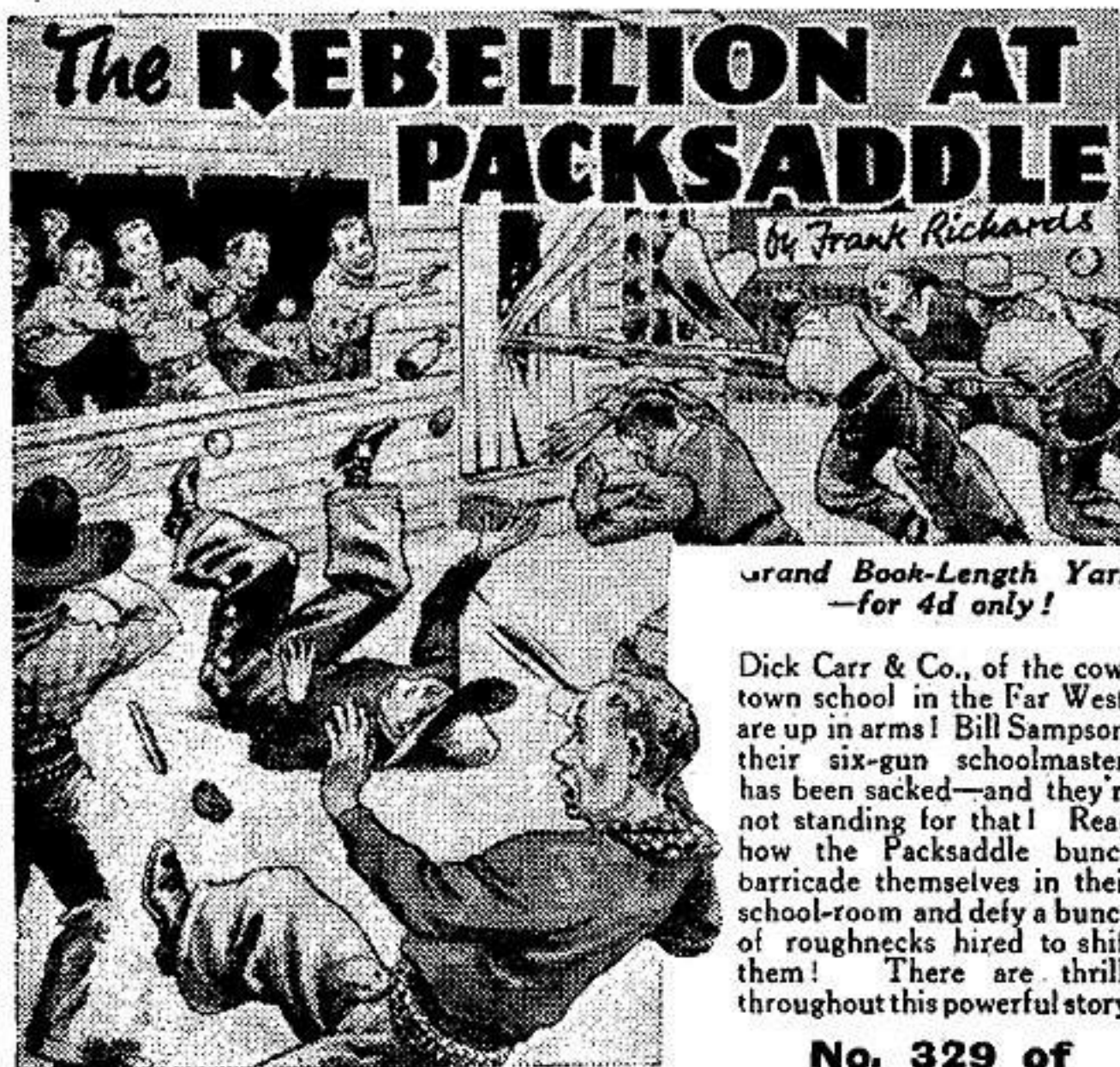
At the moment what he wanted was a pass-book, which he kept in the drawer. About to unlock that drawer, Quelch felt for his keys, only to make the startling discovery that they were missing.

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips. He was very much annoyed. He was a very careful and methodical gentleman, and seldom, or never, lost anything. It was quite a puzzle to him, for a moment or two, how he had lost those keys!

His first proceeding was to go through all his pockets. He knew—being such a methodical gentleman—that he had not put the key-ring in the wrong pocket, still, in the circumstances, he had to make sure.

He soon made sure that the keys were not in his possession. His next proceeding was to look round his study.

Once that term Quelch had been



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guilty of an act of forgetfulness; suddenly called away by the Head, he had left a key sticking in a drawer.

There had been quite a row about it; as the new junior, Carter, had seen it there and taken it away—a disrespectful trick, Mr. Quelch considered.

He had caned Carter for it very severely. Probably he would have caned him much more severely had he known that Carter had taken that key, not for a trick on his Form-master, but with the intention of landing it on his relative and rival Billy Bunter; but Quelch did not, of course, know that, and did not suspect anything of the kind.

But what had happened once might have happened again. He might possibly and conceivably have left those keys in his study, one of them sticking in a lock, so Quelch's gimlet eye gleamed in turn at every lock in the room—and drew blank. No keys were to be discerned.

Grimmer grew the brow of Henry Samuel Quelch.

Where were those keys? It did not occur to him at the moment that they might have slipped out of his pocket when he tumbled over in a Remove study and pitched out of sight. With the recollection in his mind of having on one occasion left a key sticking in a lock, that seemed to him the most probable solution; and the fact that no keys were visible sticking in a lock brought back to his mind Carter's transgression of several weeks ago.

Mr. Quelch left his study and proceeded to the stairs. If that young rascal Carter had been playing tricks again Quelch was the man to deal with him.

He arrived at Study No. 1 in the Remove passage, tapped at the door—Quelch always tapped at a fellow's door—and opened it.

An impatient voice within greeted him.

"Don't barge in in prep, you ass! Get out!"

"Wharton!"

"Oh!" Harry Wharton bounded to his feet. "Sorry, sir! I—I thought that—"

"Quite so, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch quietly. "I am sorry to interrupt preparation, but this is a matter that cannot wait."

"Oh, yes, sir—certainly!" stammered the captain of the Remove.

Wharton, Nugent, and Carter stood at attention, all three wondering what Quelch wanted.

It was extremely unusual for the Form-master to "barge in" in prep. Forms below the Remove did their prep in the presence of a beak; but the Remove "prepared" in their studies, unsurveyed.

Wharton and Nugent only wondered what Quelch wanted, but their study-mate Arthur Carter felt an uneasy throbbing at his heart. That unusual visit was enough to make the black sheep uneasy.

In his early days that term Mr. Quelch had had a good opinion of him, and had had the impression that the fellow who had been turned out of St. Olaf's was doing his best to make the most of a new chance at a new school; but the incident of that abstracted key had given Quelch's good impression a rough jolt. And since then Carter had been spotted out of bounds by a prefect, and, though he had been let off with a prefect's whopping, the incident had given Mr. Quelch very serious food for thought when it was reported to him. He was prepared

to believe Carter's explanation that he had on that occasion thoughtlessly taken a short cut across the grounds at the Three Fishers if Carter's subsequent conduct reassured him; but he was now keeping a very sharp eye on Carter's conduct.

Arthur Carter was well aware of it; and, considering his present dealings with Mr. Banks at the Cross Keys on the subject of Tip-Cat, he had reason to feel uneasy when Mr. Quelch suddenly butted into his study in prep.

And his uneasiness intensified as he saw that the gimlet eyes were specially fixed on him, disregarding Wharton and Nugent.

"Carter!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir?" said Carter in a low voice; for a moment he felt hardly able to breathe.

"Have you been in my study since class?"

Carter had a sense of relief at once. If some trick had been played in the Remove master's study he had nothing to fear. His relief showed in his face, and it caused Mr. Quelch to give him a very penetrating look.

"No, sir," answered Carter.

"I have lost a bunch of keys," said Mr. Quelch quietly. "I cannot help remembering, Carter, that one day early in this term I left a key in a drawer in my study and you abstracted it. It is for that reason that I have come here to question you. Have you taken my keys?"

"No, sir!" answered Carter.

Wharton and Nugent did not speak, but they looked very curiously at Carter. His word, to them, was worth nothing, and it dawned on them at this moment that Mr. Quelch was better acquainted with the new boy's real character than they had supposed.

"The keys," said Mr. Quelch, "are missing."

Carter looked sullen.

"I know nothing of them, sir. I haven't been in your study."

"I should be sorry to suspect you unjustly, Carter," said Mr. Quelch quietly. "But I cannot, in the circumstances, forget your previous action. Unless I left the keys in my study by inadvertence, I cannot think what has become of them, and if I left them there they have been taken away."

Carter's eyes suddenly gleamed.

"Perhaps you dropped them, sir—"

"That is very improbable, Carter."

"I mean when you fell over in Bunter's study, sir."

"Oh," said Mr. Quelch, "it is, I suppose, possible, though very unlikely!"

"I saw Todd picking up a cane and a handkerchief that you had dropped there, sir," said Carter.

"That is true; but if the keys had fallen also, no doubt Todd would have picked them up, too, and he would certainly have returned them to me," said Mr. Quelch. "However, I will ascertain whether the keys may be in that study."

Mr. Quelch rustled out.

Harry Wharton looked at him, and then glanced at Nugent, who gave a shrug of the shoulders. Both of them could read the thought that had flashed into Carter's mind—that perhaps this incident gave him another chance at Bunter. The disgust they felt showed plainly enough in their faces.

Carter, with a scowling face, sat down to his books again, and prep in Study No. 1 went on in silence.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Missing!

"THAT beast Quelch—"

Billy Bunter broke off suddenly as there was a tap at the door of Study No. 7 and it opened.

Mr. Quelch stepped in.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "I—I-I wasn't—"

"Kindly be silent, Bunter!" Quelch undoubtedly had heard Bunter's happy remark as he opened the door; but it was not his way to take note of remarks not intended for his ears. "Todd!"

"Yes, sir?" said Peter.

"You brought a cane and a handkerchief to my study which I had dropped here. You did not, I presume, see anything of a bunch of keys—"

"A—a bunch of keys!" stammered Peter.

"My keys," said Mr. Quelch, "are missing. It is possible that I may have dropped them in this study."

"Oh!" gasped Peter.

He knew that it was not only possible, but that it had happened; and he knew, too, that Billy Bunter had not, after all, returned those keys to the owner. That booting had been a sheer waste.

At that moment Peter Todd would have given a great deal to have booted Bunter again. That, however, had to wait.

"I am sure, Todd, that you would have returned the keys to me immediately had you found them," said Mr. Quelch kindly. "Nevertheless, as they are missing, I have come here to inquire."

"I—I certainly never found them, sir, when I found the handkerchief and the cane," stammered Peter.

He hardly knew what to say. That bunch of keys, he knew, was in Billy Bunter's pocket. But he could not tell Mr. Quelch that. Bunter had had one terrific whopping already that day, and Peter naturally did not think of handing him over to another.

It was for Bunter to speak. Even that benighted ass, Peter hoped, would have sense enough to shell out the keys now. If he handed them over at once it was all right; Quelch would only suppose that he had intended to leave it till after prep. If he only had sense enough—

Unfortunately, sense was not Bunter's long suit. Bunter saw no reason whatever for handing over those keys—in fact, he saw lots of reasons for not handing them over. Quelch plainly was worried already; he was going to be a lot more worried before the vengeful Owl was done with him. Bunter wasn't going to shell out those keys—not Bunter!

"Very well, Todd!" said Mr. Quelch. "Dutton!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Have you seen any keys here?"

"Certainly not, sir!" gasped Dutton, with quite a jump. "Nothing of the kind in this study, sir! I hope you don't think there's fleas in my study, sir—"

"Wha-at? I said keys!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Keys!"

"Oh, cheese," said Dutton. "I thought you said fleas, sir! Yes, sir: there's a hunk of cheese in the cupboard—we're going to have it for supper, and—"

"Keys!" hooted Mr. Quelch. "Keys—a bunch!"

"Did you say lunch, sir?"

"I said bunch—a bunch of keys! Five small keys, on a key-ring!"

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exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Is it possible that I dropped it here?"

"Yes, sir; I can hear all right, only you don't speak very distinctly—"

"Have you seen my bunch of keys?" roared Mr. Quelch, in a voice that was audible to Dutton, and to most of the fellows in the other studies.

"No, sir. I hope you haven't lost them, sir."

Mr. Quelch breathed hard and turned to the third member of the study.

"Bunter, have you seen any keys in this study?"

"Only one, sir!"

"One?" repeated Mr. Quelch. "It is scarcely possible that one key can have become detached from the ring, even if they fell here. However, where is the key of which you speak, Bunter?"

"In the door, sir!" answered the fat Owl cheerfully.

"In the—the door!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir; sticking in the lock."

"You utterly stupid boy, I am not here to inquire for a door key, that belongs to the study! My bunch of private keys is missing. If you have seen anything of it in this study, tell me so at once."

"I'm rather short-sighted, sir!" said the Owl of the Remove. "I can't see things so plainly as the other fellows, sir!"

"Yes, yes; quite so!" said Mr. Quelch. "If you have not seen them, never mind. I think, however, that it would be advisable for the study to be searched for them, as they may possibly have fallen out of sight, if they fell here at all. Todd, please make a search."

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Peter.

"I'll help!" said Bunter cheerfully.

Mr. Quelch's gimlet eyes gleamed round the study. If the keys had been anywhere in sight, those gimlet eyes would have spotted them. But Quelch's eyes, penetrating as they were, could not penetrate into the interior of a pocket. And certainly it did not occur to him that William George Bunter had parked those keys in his pocket.

Peter and Bunter commenced to search. Tom Dutton, as soon as he caught on to what was wanted, helped industriously.

Bunter blinked under the table—and, in the cover of that article of furniture, favoured Peter with a fat wink.

Toddy gave him an almost homicidal glare in return.

"They ain't under the table, sir!" squeaked Bunter.

"Probably they are not here at all!" said Mr. Quelch. "But please make quite sure, my boys."

"Oh, certainly, sir! Shift the arm-chair, Toddy, they might be under it, you know!" said Bunter, with another fat wink.

Peter Todd breathed hard and deep. In Quelch's presence it was impossible to whisper to Bunter undetected. Homicidal looks had no effect on the fat junior. Bunter was enjoying this! With the keys safe in his pocket, he did not mind how long the search went on. Moreover, any interruption to prep was welcome! Quelch could hardly come down on a fellow in Form if he skewed his con, after interrupting prep in this way!

"Can't see them anywhere, sir!" said Bunter breezily. "Let's look along the bookshelf, Toddy!"

"You absurd boy, a bunch of keys could not have fallen on the bookshelf!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "The bunch is on the floor, if it is here at all."

"I can't see it on the floor, sir!"

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squeaked the fat Owl. "Can you, Toddy?"

"No!" hissed Peter.

"Thank you, my boys, you need search no farther!" said Mr. Quelch. "It is clear that the keys are not here."

"We don't mind going on looking for them, sir!" said Bunter.

"It is useless to continue looking for them, Bunter, when it is obvious that they are not here!" said Mr. Quelch. "Evidently, I did not, after all, drop them in this study. I am sorry that I have had to interrupt your preparations, my boys—"

"Oh, we don't mind, sir!" said Bunter.

"You may now resume!" said Mr. Quelch, and he rustled out of the study, with a set face and a knitted brow.

The keys were not there, or they would have been found! He was convinced now that he had not dropped them there. He set his lips hard, at the thought that some boy in his Form—probably Carter—had abstracted those keys, and was now laughing in his sleeve!

When the door shut on the departing Form-master, Peter Todd fixed his eyes on the fat face of the Owl with a deadly glare.

"You benighted idiot!" hissed Toddy.

"He, he, he!" from Bunter.

"You never took those keys back to Quelch!" hissed Peter.

"No fear!" grinned Bunter. "He ain't getting them back in a hurry, Toddy! Not till the end of the term! He, he, he!"

"You'll take them back after prep or—"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Bunter.

"I can't now! If I handed them over now, Quelch would know that I'd had them all the time. I'll watch it!"

"Oh!" said Peter. He realised that Bunter had left it too late to hand over those keys. "Well, all you can do now is to leave them about somewhere, to be picked up—"

"No fear!"

Peter Todd grabbed a ruler from the table.

Rap!

"Yow-ow-ow!" roared Bunter. "You silly chump, wharrer you banging me with that ruler for? If you bang me again I'll—yarooooop!"

"Are you going to leave those keys about for Quelch to find?"

"No," yelled Bunter.

Rap!

"I—I—I mean, yes! Yow-ow! Leave off, you beast, will you? I—I'll chuck them in his study after prep. Wow!"

"Mind you do!" said Peter, and he laid down the ruler.

Billy Bunter sucked his fat knuckles and glared ferociously at Toddy.

But after prep, when the fat Owl rolled down from the studies, he did not roll in the direction of Quelch's quarters. If Quelch was worrying about his lost keys, he could go on worrying—and that was that!

Nothing had been seen or heard of the missing keys by the Remove master when the Remove went to their dormitory that night.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Putting Paid to Peter!

"**W**ARE Henry!" murmured Bob Cherry, when the Remove went into Form the following morning.

"Henry?" otherwise, Henry Samuel Quelch, master of the Remove, had a

grim countenance that morning, and was obviously not to be trifled with.

Something had occurred to disturb Henry's serenity!

And some of the Remove fellows knew what it was. Wharton, Nugent, and Carter could guess that Mr. Quelch had not found that missing bunch of keys yet. Peter Todd and Billy Bunter knew that he hadn't! Other fellows had seen a notice on the board, stating that a bunch of keys had been lost, and requesting the finder to convey the same to Mr. Quelch's study.

It was a time for the Remove to be on their best behaviour, especially as Rookwood were coming over that afternoon, and the bare idea of a possible detention was dismaying to the footballers.

Mr. Quelch had little fault to find with his Form that morning. They knew the danger-signals, and walked warily.

In break Peter Todd looked for Billy Bunter, with the intention of booting him till he dropped the keys.

But he did not find Bunter.

The fat Owl was on the alert, and he disappeared during break and did not reappear till third school.

Peter's intervention in this matter was, in Bunter's opinion, just cheeky meddling, which Bunter was not going to stand.

In third school Quelch's face was as grim as ever, and several fellows noticed that the gimlet eyes lingered, more than once, on Carter.

They could easily guess the reason.

Keys were missing; and Carter had been responsible for a missing key! It was scarcely possible that a bunch of keys could be lying about the school unnoticed all this time. Some fellow had them, and was keeping them out of sight. It was natural for Quelch's suspicions to turn upon a fellow who had once played a similar trick—and a good many of the Remove thought it very probable, too, that Carter had the missing keys.

Carter, for his part, thought it very probable that Bunter had them.

As he knew that he had not touched them, it seemed to him most likely that Quelch had dropped them when he took his tumble in Bunter's study, and the fact that they had not turned up indicated to his mind that some fellow belonging to that study was keeping them back.

Neither Toddy nor Dutton was likely to be guilty of such a fatuous folly; but Bunter, on the other hand, was!

It was, in fact, just the fatheaded thing that Bunter might do—especially after he had had a severe whopping from Quelch!

During third school, Carter thought it out; and he resolved to keep an eye on Bunter. He had other things to think of that day—first and foremost, Tip-Cat in the one-thirty at Wapshot; second, the Rookwood match, in which he was booked to play and in which he was very keen to play. But he was not losing a chance of "getting one over" on Bunter, if a chance came his way.

When the Remove were dismissed again, Peter Todd was on the watch, and did not let the fat Owl escape him this time. He kept close to Bunter as the Remove went out—with the obvious intention of collaring him as soon as they were outside the House.

For which reason Billy Bunter did not roll out with the rest of the Form. He stopped in the passage; and Peter stopped also.

Carter, unaware of what was on, but with the idea of keeping an eye on Bunter to find out somehow whether he

had the keys, stopped at a little distance.

"I say, Toddy, ain't you going out?" asked Bunter anxiously.

"Not till you do!" answered Peter.

"Isn't that Wharton calling you?"

"I didn't hear him."

"Look here, you beast, you clear off!" hissed Bunter. "If you think you're going to order me about, Toddy—"

"You blithering idiot!" said Peter. "Drop those keys here, and Quelch will find them when he comes away from the Form-room. He won't know you had them, and you'll be all right."

Carter's back was to them—but he heard, and his eyes glittered! He had felt fairly sure of it; and he knew, now! It was as he suspected—Bunter had the keys!

"Shan't!" hissed Bunter. "Look here, you dummy, you shut up! There's that cad Carter listening to you!"

"What does that matter?"

"Well, it would be just like that cad to make out that I'd got the keys—he likes getting me into a row with Quelch."

"You priceless idiot, you have got them! Will you drop them on the floor here for Quelch to see when he comes along?"

"No, I won't!"

"Then I'll jolly well bang your silly head on the wall till you do!" exclaimed the exasperated Peter.

"Leggo!" yelled Bunter, as Toddy proceeded to suit the action to the word. "Ow! My napper! Wow! Leggo! Beast!"

"Todd!" Mr. Quelch's sharp voice was heard, as he came out of the Form-room. "Todd! What are you doing? How dare you use Bunter in that manner?"

"Oh!" gasped Peter. He released the fat Owl quite suddenly.

Billy Bunter stood rubbing his fat head, and grunting.

Carter strolled out of the House—he knew now what he wanted to know; and the only question in his mind was, how to give Bunter away without appearing personally in the matter. Quelch did not encourage "sneaking"—and the Remove were likely to take drastic measures with a sneak. He had decided what he was going to do—but he had to think out the method.

Peter stood before his beak, crimson with annoyance. He could not tell Quelch why he had been banging Bunter's fat head!

The Remove master frowned at him severely.

"Todd! This kind of horseplay in the corridors—"

"I—I—" stammered Peter, "I—" Mr. Quelch raised his hand.

"Go into the Form-room, Todd! You will remain there until you have written out the whole conjunction of 'audio.' Bring it to my study when you have finished."

"I—I—" stuttered Peter.

"You need say no more, Todd! Go into the Form-room at once!"

With feelings that could hardly have been expressed in words, Peter Todd returned to the Form-room.

Quelch, happily ignorant of the fact that it was on his account that Peter had been banging Bunter's fat head, rustled on his way.

Bunter rubbed his head—but he grinned! He was clear of that beast, Toddy, now! He rolled out cheerfully into the quad.

Toddy was safe for half an hour or so. But the fat Owl realised that, when Toddy came out of the Form-room, he had more cheeky meddling to expect.

Bunter, however, was equal to the occasion.

He rolled away to the old Cloisters.

He was going to keep those keys away from Quelch—Toddy or no Toddy! That determination, in Bunter's fat mind, was as fixed and immutable as the laws of the Medes and Persians. On the other hand, such persuasive methods as banging his head on a wall were not to be resisted. If he still had that bunch of keys in his pocket when Toddy got on his trail again, his game was up!

The answer to that one was easy—he was not going to have that bunch of keys in his pocket! He was going to park it in a safe place, and leave it there!

He selected the old Cloisters as a safe spot. Grinning, the fat Owl rolled away; Carter, in the quad, watched him curiously as he went.

No other fellow was interested in Billy Bunter's proceedings; but Carter, at the moment, was very much interested. It was not difficult for him to guess Bunter's intention, after what had happened in the Form-room passage, and in view of what was certain to happen when Peter Todd came out! Carter strolled in the same direction as Billy Bunter.

Five minutes later, from behind one of the old stone pillars, he watched the fatuous fat Owl take a bunch of keys from his pocket, and slip them into a crevice of the ancient wall, screened by thick ivy.

Bunter, still grinning, rolled away, quite unaware that he was being watched, and satisfied that he had put paid to Toddy and his cheeky meddling!

After he was gone, Carter walked along to the spot, pulled the ivy aside, and the bunch of keys was revealed, lying in the crevice.

Carter scowled at it.

He let the ivy fall back into its place, and tramped away. By parking the keys in that spot, Bunter had not only "put paid" to Toddy—he had, all unconsciously, put paid to Carter, too!

Unless the fat Owl had the missing keys on him, it was useless for Carter to carry out his plan of giving him away to the Remove master—there was no proof, now, that Bunter had over touched the keys!

All that Carter could do was to keep a watchful eye open and ascertain whether the fat Owl removed the bunch from its hiding-place. Once the keys were in Bunter's pocket again, he would know what to do.

In the meantime, he drew what satisfaction he could from the fact that Quelch was fearfully annoyed and worried by the loss of the keys! To his malicious nature, there was considerable satisfaction in that.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Not a Winner!

WIBLEY of the Remove stared. "Not going out?" he ejaculated.

William Wibley was in the bike-shed. He was looking over his jigger, on which he intended to ride down to Courtfield that afternoon, when Carter came in.

As it was past two o'clock, and the kick-off in the Rookwood match was timed for three, he was naturally surprised to see a member of the eleven come in and take his machine from the stand.

Already a good many of the footballers were gathered in the changing-

room. Jimmy Silver & Co. from Rookwood, were expected soon.

Carter glanced at him.

"Yes," he answered briefly.

"Cutting the footer?" asked Wibley. "If you're standing out, I'll go and ask Wharton whether there's a chance for me."

"No—I shall be back in a quarter of an hour. I've got to call at the post office about a parcel—that's all."

Wibley stood looking after him, as he wheeled his machine out. Carter, without heeding him, mounted, and pedalled away. It was rather unusual for a fellow to clear off on his bike, just before a fixture in which he was booked to play; and the reason he had given Wibley was not very plausible. But no inducement would have kept Carter within gates just then. He had plenty of time to ride down to Friardale and get back before the game started—and his visit to Friardale was urgently important to the "bad hat" of Greyfriars.

By that time, the one-thirty at Wapshot was over and done with; and Tip-Cat had either won or lost. Carter wanted to know. It had been easy to arrange with Mr. Banks for a telephone-call after the race. Such a call, of course, he could not risk taking at the school. But he had a Wapshot number to call up Mr. Banks, and he could call him up on the telephone at the village post office.

Otherwise, he had to wait till he saw an evening paper to learn the result of the race! And he could not wait in uncertainty all that time! He had to know his fate at the earliest possible moment. In fact, he hardly dared to think of the possibility of Tip-Cat having failed to pull it off. He had backed Tip-Cat, days ago, as a "cert"—but since then, his perusal of pink papers had introduced a painful element of doubt.

Mr. Banks, who knew him as the nephew of the rich company director, Joseph Carter, had been very glad to do business with him. Mr. Banks did not know—and Carter was not likely to tell him—that old Mr. Carter had turned his nephew down, for bad conduct; and that, at present, he was paying his school fee and making him a very small allowance, and nothing more; and had plainly stated that he intended to do nothing more! Had Banks been aware of those circumstances, he would not have been so glad to do business with Arthur Carter!

But, as it was, Mr. Banks had welcomed the young rascal into the fold—and had willingly allowed him to run into debt. All that Mr. Banks required was a "bit of writing"; and, thus secured, he had no hesitation in carrying out the young sportsman's instructions.

There had been several losses already; but Banks had been satisfied by Carter's explanation that he was awaiting a remittance from his uncle!

As Carter had no expectation whatever of a remittance from anybody, he had to find some other method of settling his account with Mr. Banks.

He had found one! He owed Mr. Banks twelve pounds already. He had put a "fiver" on Tip-Cat at three-to-one. This meant fifteen pounds to come to him, when Tip-Cat romped home! Out of that sum, Mr. Banks' twelve pounds would be liquidated, and Carter would have three pounds in hand! Which was quite a happy prospect—if Tip-Cat did romp home!

But the pundits of the sporting papers seemed to entertain a good deal of doubt whether Tip-Cat would, after all, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,572.

perform the romping act! The odds had lengthened—Carter, who had got three-to-one a few days ago, could now have got six-to-one! Which looked as if the bookmakers had no great fancy for Tip-Cat's chances of romping!

Carter clung to the belief that he was right, and the pundits wrong. He dared not think that he had backed a loser.

In that case, instead of clearing off his debt to Mr. Banks, he would owe that frowsy gentleman twelve pounds, with his stake of five pounds in addition—a total of seventeen pounds; and he did not possess so many shillings!

Banks would expect him to pay! He had not the remotest possibility of paying! His one hope would be to lay a further and larger bet, to cover all the losses; and trust to fortune to get by with it! But he knew that Banks would "jib" at that! Seventeen pounds was a very large sum of money for a school-boy to owe—and Mr. Banks would want to see the colour of his money before he went further. Already he had shown sign of restiveness.

Tip-Cat was going to win! Tip-Cat had to win! Carter dared not think of Tip-Cat losing! Tip-Cat, a few days ago, had seemed to him absolutely certain to win! He must and should win! But Carter was feverishly anxious to know that he had won!

He stopped at Friardale Post Office and went in.

It was half-past two. He had arranged to ring up Mr. Banks at two-forty; so he had to wait! Banks was a busy man that day—Carter was not the only "mug" on his list.

Those ten minutes seemed endless to the wretched junior as he hung about waiting. Tip-Cat had won—he must have won!—but the thought that he might have lost, made Carter sick at heart.

In those dismal minutes, his dingy folly came more clearly home to his mind. He despised his relative, Bunter, as a fat fool; yet, in this matter, he had to realise that, with all his cunning, all his keenness, he was exactly on a par with Billy Bunter!

If only he had left this racing rot alone—in these very minutes he might have been one of a cheery crowd in the changing-room, thinking of the coming football match! Instead of which, he was hanging about in a state of nervous terror, counting the seconds that seemed longer than minutes—eager for news, yet dreading what the news might be when it came!

But those long and dismal minutes elapsed at last, and he was on the telephone, calling up the Wapshot number.

Mr. Banks' beery voice came through. "Allo! That you, sir?"

"Yes, yes!" breathed Carter. "What about Tip-Cat?"

"Sorry I got bad news for you, sir; it—"

Carter's heart stood still!

"I was a bit doubtful about that 'orse, sir, but it ain't for me to argue with a young gentleman about his fancy!" went on the voice from Wapshot.

Carter broke out passionately:

"You fool, cut it short! Has Tip-Cat won?"

"No, he ain't!"

"He—he—he's lost?"

"Course he has, as he ain't won! He wasn't even placed!" came Mr. Banks' answer. "He come in at the tail, he did! Better luck next time, sir!"

Carter was dumb.

"I'll be seeing you to-morrow, sir!"

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went on Mr. Banks. "Same place and time—what?"

No answer from Carter. He knew what that meant.

"You there, sir?" Banks' voice was a little testy. "You 'ear me? I'll be looking out for you to-morrow, sir, to settle up."

Carter rang off without speaking.

He left the post office like a fellow in a dream—or, rather, in the grip of a nightmare! Tip-Cat had lost—that wretched horse had lost! He owed Banks seventeen pounds! Banks expected to see him on the morrow to "settle." What was he going to do?

He tramped away up the village street.

The football match, in which he had been so keen to play, had quite disappeared from his mind. With utter ruin staring him in the face, he was not likely to think of football! He did not even remember his bicycle, standing against the building he had left. With a white face and a sick heart the wretched young rascal tramped away, one thought hammering in his mind—what—what was he going to do?

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Man Missing!

"CARTER!"

"Where's Carter?"

"Seen Carter?"

"Where the dickens is Carter?"

Carter's name was on every tongue. He was not, by any means, the most important member of the Remove eleven, but he was a valuable member; and the absence of any member, at the last moment, would have been surprising and disconcerting.

He had not turned up in the changing-room; and Harry Wharton, puzzled and irritated, led his men down to the field without him. He had no doubt that Carter would turn up at the last moment—and come cutting down to the field after the rest. He did not think of doubting it—and, so far, he was only annoyed; but in a few minutes more, annoyance gave place to deep anger.

The team—excepting Carter—were ready! Jimmy Silver & Co., from Rookwood, were ready! Only Carter was not ready—and Carter was not present, and nobody seemed to know what had become of him.

Three or four fellows had cut off in various directions to look for him, and remind him of what he had apparently forgotten—though it was almost unimaginable that any fellow had forgotten that he was booked to play in a match for School.

But they did not find him.

He was not to be found in the House, or in the quad, or anywhere! Where he was, and what he fancied he was up to, nobody knew.

Wharton, with a flushed face, spoke to Jimmy Silver, the junior captain of Rookwood; and Jimmy nodded with a cheery smile. He did not mind waiting a few minutes—or a good many minutes, if it came to that—Jimmy was a cheery and good-natured fellow. But some of the Rookwooders exchanged curious looks—and Mornington winked at Arthur Edward Lovell, whose grin was not lost on Harry Wharton. Three was striking from the clock-tower; and the ball should have been kicked off at three.

That settled it, so far as Carter was concerned.

Wharton was unwilling to cut him out for two reasons; he was a first-class winger, and was wanted in the game;

and, in the second place, the Remove captain could not suppose that Carter was doing this intentionally—he must be delayed in some manner that he could not help. But at three o'clock there was no question of waiting longer—and the captain of the Remove had to put in another man.

An hour ago there would have been no difficulty about that. Almost every man in the Remove was keen to play—and there were many good men to choose from. Robert Donald Ogilvy was the best man outside the team—and Wharton learned, with deep feelings, that Ogilvy had gone out on his bike with Russell, who was another good man.

That left Harry's best chum, Frank Nugent, as the best man available—only Nugent was not available. Never dreaming that he might be wanted, Frank had gone off for the afternoon with his minor, Dicky Nugent of the Second Form. With all his four pals in the football, it was an opportunity for Frank to give up a half-holiday to his minor—and he had done so—rather unfortunately, as it happened!

Vernon-Smith would have been pressing the claims of his pal, Redwing, already—but for the fact that Tom Redwing had gone up to Hawkscliff for the afternoon. Hazeldene, who might have been of some use, had gone to see his sister at Cliff House; Monty Newland had gone to a matinee at Courtfield; even Wibloy, if Wibloy had been of any use, had gone out on his bike.

Tom Dutton and Micky Desmond were in the crowd that had gathered on Little Side. Dutton was a back, and not much use anywhere else; Micky was a half, but had played forward; and the captain of the Remove, at long last, gave him the word to change—which Micky was only too keen to do.

Meanwhile, nothing was heard or seen of Carter. Minutes were elapsing—the Rookwooders were kicking a ball about to keep themselves warm—and the Greyfriars footballers were breathing wrath and indignation.

Gwynne of the Sixth, who was acting as referee, was looking impatient—and more so every minute.

"The ass—fool—idiot!" breathed Harry Wharton. "What can he be up to—he must have gone out of gates—"

"And stayed out!" said the Bounder, with a shrug of the shoulders. "It's like him to let us down."

"He hasn't done so before—not in Soccer."

"It hasn't happened to suit him!" sneered Smithy. "He's crooked a man he disliked in Soccer—and if you'd had the sense of a bunny rabbit, you'd never have played him, after that."

"Oh, shut up, Smithy!" snapped Wharton. His temper was sore, and he was in no mood to tolerate the sneers of the Bounder.

"Micky's a good man," said Bob Cherry. "He'll be down in a minute—he's jolly keen!"

That was like Bob! He had had the strongest possible objections to Carter's inclusion in the team—he had even thought of standing out, because Carter was in. But Bob had never been heard to say, "I told you so." His idea was to make the best of it, and give what comfort he could.

"We'll jolly well boot Carter when he comes in!" said Peter Todd, savagely. "If he wanted to cut, he could have said so long ago."

"Something must have kept him away—"

said Harry.



There was a crash in the doorway as Bunter rushed out of the study, and Tom Dutton staggered across the passage and caught his head against the wall. "Oh!" he spluttered. "Ow! What—" "It was Toddy's fault!" howled Bunter.

"Something shouldn't!" snapped Toddy. "What the dickens did he go out of gates for? He's gone out, and stayed out!"

"He can't have meant to cut—he'd have said so—"

"Not a man to trust!" said Johnny Bull. "He's not to be trusted in anything else; and you know I said, in the study—" Johnny was not quite so tactful, in these painful circumstances, as Bob.

"No need to say it all over again!" said Harry, tartly.

"Well, you know I said, and Bob said—"

"Here comes Micky!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, hurriedly. "Nothing to worry about, you fellows—Micky's a good man, and as keen as mustard." The sides lined up at last.

Even at the last moment, had Carter suddenly appeared, Wharton would have stretched a point and put him in. But there was no sign of him. He had gone out—and was apparently making a day of it.

As the game started, Harry Wharton did his best to throw aside annoyance and irritation—feelings that were not conducive to good play. But it was not easy.

A change in the team, at the very last moment, was bad business; and the new recruit was nowhere near Carter's form, besides being in an unaccustomed place. And Jimmy Silver & Co. had come over with their shooting-boots on.

In the first half, Rookwood had it almost all their own way—with the exception that Squiff, in the Greyfriars goal, put up a really remarkable performance in the way of stopping shots that almost rained on him. The junior from New South Wales was always in good form—now he was at

the very top of it, which was fortunate for the team.

Six or seven times, at least, Rookwood came within an ace of scoring, and Sampson Quiney Ifley Field coolly and cheerfully put paid to it. Not till close on half-time, did Mornington of Rookwood send the leather in, and beat Squiff.

It was the only goal in the first half. But after the change of ends, the home team began to pull up. Smithy put the ball in, and the score was level.

Then the game went on ding-dong, the sides so evenly matched that it looked like anybody's game. If Rookwood had rather the advantage in attack, Greyfriars were very strong in defence—and Squiff, in goal, performed another series of miracles. And, by an unlooked-for freak of fortune, it was Micky Desmond who finally pulled the game out of the fire.

Almost at the finish, Harry Wharton & Co., got going in a hot attack on the Rookwood goal; and Rawson of Rookwood drove the leather out twice—the second time dropping it right at Micky's toe—which toe sent it back before Rawson had the remotest idea that it was coming.

"Goal!"

It was a terrific roar.

"Howly mother av Moses!" ejaculated Micky, more surprised even than the other fellows. "Faith and it's a goal entirely! Hurrroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Goal!"

"Hurray!"

After that, the Greyfriars men defended for five strenuous minutes—and the final whistle announced them winners by two goals to one! When they went back to the changing-room, Carter had not come in. But they had, by that time, forgotten Carter.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Nothing to Say!

ARTHUR CARTER moved about his study, restlessly. His face was pale and harassed.

That afternoon had been something like a nightmare to the wretched "bad hat" of the Remove.

He had spent most of the time tramping about the paths in Friardale Wood, trying to think out his problem, trying to find a solution; but no solution was to be found.

If he remembered the football match, in which he had been booked to play, it was only to dismiss it contemptuously from his mind. Not till it was almost time for call-over, did he remember the bicycle he had left standing against the post office in the village. Then he went back for it, and rode home, in a black and dismal mood, just in time for calling over.

Remove fellows looked at him, expressively, when he came into Hall. No one spoke to him, however. The fact that Rookwood had been, after all, defeated, rather modified the views of fellows who had intended to boot Carter all over Greyfriars for his desertion. Carter hardly noticed the looks he received—and he got away to his study as soon as he could. He wanted to be alone—to think!

Not that thinking was of much use! He had thought, and thought, during that weary afternoon, till his head ached, and all to no purpose.

He was in a hole, from which he could not drag himself out! What had happened to him at St. Olaf's was to happen over again at his new school—and from the same cause.

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GOOD-BYE, GREYFRIARS!



(Continued from page 13.)

And it was his own fault! He had asked for it, and now he had got it! It had not been easy for old Mr. Carter to obtain admission for him at Greyfriars, after he had been "bunked" from his last school. A second expulsion meant the end of school life for him—his uncle's patience already sorely tried, was not likely to hold out against that. After his former disgrace, old Mr. Carter had washed him out as heir to his money—but he had not cast him wholly off. He would cast him off now, and Carter knew it.

He had had a chance, a good chance, of reinstating himself in the old man's good graces—by taking warning from what had happened to him, and turning over a new leaf at his new school! This was how he had done it! Three or four times, during that term, he had had narrow escapes—but this time there was no escape!

There was no help! Such a sum of money as he needed to see him through was to be obtained nowhere. He thought of his cousin, Gideon Gooch—only to dismiss the thought. Gooch had been hand-in-glove with him, in his scheming against his rival, Billy Bunter—but he had taken fright, and thrown in his hand—but even had he been still a confederate, he would not have stood for this—Carter could imagine the bitter sneer with which Gideon would have met a demand for such a sum as seventeen pounds! And he had no other resource! The game was up, with a crash—unless he could somehow induce Mr. Banks to wait for his money! Even that only postponed the inevitable!

What was he going to do?

He knew only too well! He was going to be kicked out of Greyfriars, as he had been kicked out of St. Olaf's. Unless he could think of some resource—

Banks might wait! Banks might take another bet—and he might win! He knew that such an idea was clinging to the flimsiest straw—but it was all he had to cling to—he dared not face the alternative! Tip-Cat's performance in the one-thirty that day had shaken his faith in his power to spot winners!

There was a tramp of feet in the passage—the Remove were coming up to prep.

Carter pulled himself together.

There was a chance yet, he told himself. He was going to see Banks on the morrow—he would gain time, at least. Something would turn up—something should turn up. In the meantime, he had to carry on—and keep as stiff an upper lip as he could.

The door opened, and Wharton and Nugent came in.

"Oh, you're here, Carter?" said the captain of the Remove, quietly.

"I'm here!" muttered Carter.

"Anything to say?"

Carter paused. In his mood of des-

perate bitterness, he was inclined to answer with a torrent of angry and savage words. He barely restrained them.

"What do you mean?" he snapped.

"You know what I mean. You were picked to play Rookwood, and you let us down at the last minute. I want to know why."

"You don't seem to have missed me, from what I've heard."

"That's not the point. We were lucky to win, as it happened. I want to know why you let us down, if you've got anything to say."

Carter stood silent. What could he say? It was not of much use to say that he had been completely knocked over by the news that Tip-Cat had lost the one-thirty, and that in his stress of mind he had hardly remembered the Rookwood match at all. And what else was he to say?

"Two of my friends warned me against trusting you," said Harry. "I know you well enough by this time, Carter, not to trust you in anything else; but I thought you could be trusted in games. You've always seemed keen on Soccer, and you were keen enough to push into the eleven. Why?"

"Find out!" snarled Carter.

Wharton drew a deep breath.

"I don't want to find out," he said quietly. "I'm asking you because you're entitled to be given a hearing. But if you've nothing to say, that does it. Let it drop." He paused a moment. "I suppose you know that after this dirty trick you're barred from Remove games? We're over with Soccer now, except for one or two Form matches; but the cricket comes on next term—"

Carter burst into a bitter laugh, and Wharton stopped.

Next term, unless something like a miracle happened, Arthur Carter would not be at Greyfriars. It was extremely doubtful whether he would finish out the remaining weeks of the present term. He was not likely to worry about what was going to happen next term.

Harry Wharton looked at him hard.

He could read the signs of stress in the fellow's face. Carter had had a knock of some kind that afternoon. That, doubtless, was why he had carelessly failed to turn up for the football match.

Knowing what he did of Carter's ways, the captain of the Remove could guess at the nature of that "knock."

A look of utter contempt crossed his face. He turned away from Carter without another word.

Vernon-Smith looked into the study.

"Oh, here's the rotter!" he said.

"Has that cur told you why he let us down this afternoon, Wharton?"

"No!" answered Harry shortly.

"Had a good time at the Three Fishers, Carter?" asked the Bounder, with bitter sarcasm.

"It couldn't have been that, Smithy!" said Frank Nugent.

"What else was it, then?" sneered the Bounder. "Can't the fellow say?"

Carter did not speak. He was sorting out his books for prep, and he did not look at the Bounder.

Smithy, with an angry and contemptuous sniff, walked on up the passage. His place was taken by three or four other fellows.

"What's Carter got to say, Wharton?" inquired Peter Todd.

"Nothing," answered Harry.

"Nothing!" exclaimed Squiff.

"Just that."

"Well," said Squiff, "if Rookwood had beaten us, Carter, I'd have booted you up the passage and back again!" And Squiff snorted and tramped on.

"What the thump did you do it for, Carter?" demanded Peter Todd. "Wibley's told us that you told him you were going to the post office for a parcel. That didn't keep you away from the Rookwood match."

"Oh, go and eat coke!" yelled Carter. "Leave a fellow alone! I'm fed-up with it!"

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Peter, staring at him.

"Get out!" snarled Carter, and he slammed the door of the study almost on Peter's nose.

Peter stamped away to Study No. 7 in great wrath.

In Study No. 1 the three sat down to prep, but Carter gave very little attention to prep. Generally he was careful with it—against the grain, but because it was his game to keep in Quelch's good graces, with an eye on his term's report. But he could give it little attention now. His thoughts ran incessantly on his coming interview with Mr. Banks—the interview on which everything now depended, and from which he had little to hope.

In fact, he hardly saw the books before him. He could not have construed the simplest sentence that evening, any more than he could have played Soccer in the afternoon. What was he going to do? The question that had hammered in his mind ever since he had phoned Mr. Banks was still hammering there, to the exclusion of all other things.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Stamp for Bunter!

"I SAY, you fellows!" roared Billy Bunter.

The door of Study No. 1 burst open, and Billy Bunter shot in, like a stone from a catapult. In that startling manner did William George Bunter announce that prep was over in the Remove.

Wharton and Nugent, who were putting their books away, stared round at the yelling fat Owl. Carter, who was stepping towards the door, had the pleasure or otherwise, of meeting the fat Owl in full career as he shot in.

Carter, with an angry howl, staggered against the study table. Billy Bunter, spluttering, reeled from the shock, and sat on the study carpet with a bump.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter. "Oh, I say, you fellows! Keep him off! I say, that beast Toddy is after me! I say—"

Peter Todd appeared in the doorway. There was a cricket stump in Peter's hand. Half a dozen laughing fellows were at his heels.

"What the thump—" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Roll out, you fat slug!" roared Peter, brandishing the cricket stump.

"Beast!" gasped Bunter.

He did not roll out. He rolled rapidly round the study table, to place that article of furniture between him and the cricket stump.

"Are you coming out?" roared Toddy.

"Beast! No! I say, you fellows, keep him off!" gasped Bunter. "I haven't got them! I never had them! It's all a mistake!"

"Them!" repeated Frank Nugent.

"Yes, I never had them, you know! Quelch never dropped them in my study, you know, and I never saw them under the table! Besides, I took them back to Quelch this—this afternoon! Keep off, Toddy, you cad!"

"What is that fat ass babbling about, Toddy?" asked the captain of the Remove.

"Queleh's keys!" snorted Peter. "I'm going to make him hand them over, or else wear out this cricket stump on him."

"Great pip! Has Bunter got them?" exclaimed Harry. He glanced at Carter. He had not given much thought to the matter, but undoubtedly he had rather shared his Form-master's suspicion on that subject.

Carter sneered. "You thought I had them?" he asked.

"Well, Queleh looked as if he thought so," answered Harry. "And you did sneak a key from his study once, and got a whopping for doing it—every fellow in the Form knows that."

"Tain't Carter this time," said Peter. "Queleh dropped the keys in my study yesterday, when he got Bunter's booby-trap. I found his hanky and his cane, but the keys seem to have fallen under the table, and I never noticed them. That fat idiot snooped them!"

"Look how he whopped me for nothing!" howled Bunter. "I told him I never put up that booby-trap, and I explained that it was meant for Carter, top; but he whopped me, all the same."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He can jolly well hunt for his keys!" said Bunter. "I'm not going to find his keys for him if he drops them about the studies. Why should I?"

"You blithering ass!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith, from the passage. "If you've got Queleh's keys—"

"The fact is, I haven't!" said Bunter. "It's really all a mistake. When Toddy saw me with Queleh's keys yesterday they were really some other keys—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, of all the howlin' asses!" said Lord Mauleverer, staring in at Bunter. "Queleh has the key of his cash-drawer on that bunch, Bunter. Lots of fellows have seen him usin' it. Take them back to him at once, you ass!"

"I'll watch it! I'm likely to tell him that I've had his keys all the time! Besides, I—I haven't! The fact is, I don't know anything about Queleh's keys, and I haven't hidden them anywhere, either."

"You've hidden them!" roared Peter.

"No!" roared back Bunter. "Haven't I just told you that I haven't? Besides, I knew you'd be after me again. Why can't you mind your own business, Peter Todd? You're a meddling ass!"

"Where have you hidden them?" yelled Peter.

"I haven't hidden them at all. I don't know anything about them. If you come near me with that cricket stump, Peter Todd, I'll go straight to Queleh and say— Yarooogh—yoo-hoop—whoop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Keep him off!" yelled Bunter, dodging frantically round the table, with Peter in pursuit. "I say, Wharton—I say, Nugent—stop him! Yaroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a roar from the passage. Half the Remove had gathered there to watch the entertainment in Study No. 1.

Harry Wharton caught the fat Owl by the collar as he circled the table, and jerked him to a halt.

Peter brandished the cricket stump. Football had claimed Peter's attention during the day, and Bunter had escaped till prep. Now Peter was on the war-path again. Peter understood, if Bunter did not, what a terrific row awaited the fat Owl if he were found in possession of those missing keys. He was more concerned for Bunter than for Mr. Queleh in this matter. But, as he displayed his concern by laying on the

cricket stump, Bunter felt no gratitude whatever. He only wanted to be shut of Peter and his concern.

"Shove him on the table!" said Peter, as he brandished the stump.

"Leggo!" yelled Bunter.

Bump!

Wharton and Nugent between them heaved the fat Owl on the table, and pinned him there in a favourable position for whacking.

Bunter emitted an agonised squeak of apprehension.

"Now," demanded Peter, "where are those keys?"

"I—I don't know, old chap—"

Whop!

"Whoop!"

"Know where they are now?" asked Toddy.

"No—"

Whop!

"I mean, yes!" yelled Bunter. "I—I know just where to put my finger on them! I—I'll go and fetch them this minute if—if you lemme go!"

"I'll go and fetch them—"

"Beast!"

Whop, whop!

"Better cough it up, Bunter!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Queleh has got to have his keys back, you fat chump! He will be ragging the whole Form to-morrow if they're still missing."

"Where are they?" roared Peter.

"I—I forget—"

Whop!

"I mean, I remember!" yelled Bunter. "They—they're in the—the box-room! I—I—I put them in Mauly's trunk!"

"Good!" said Peter. "I'll go and fetch them! Keep that fat brute there till I get back with the keys, you men!"

"We'll keep him safe!" grinned Nugent.

"Oh! I—I mean, they—they ain't in the box-room," wailed Bunter—"not—not if those beasts are keeping me here till you come back—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You howling ass!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Cough it up at once! It will come out that you've got them. And what's going to happen to you then, you blithering ass? Now everybody knows, it can't be kept dark."

"If you mean that that cad Carter will tell Queleh—"

"Have you just thought of that, you fat frump?" asked the Bounder. "Of course he'll tell Queleh! Think he'll miss a chance like this?"

Carter gave him a black and bitter look. Vernon-Smith spoke just as if Carter were not there, utterly regardless of his feelings on the subject.

"Draw it mild, Smithy!" murmured Tom Redwing.

"Rot! Plenty of fellows here know that that cad will put Queleh wise in some way or another!" sneered the Bounder. "That's what Cherry meant, if he chose to put it plain."

"But—but I haven't got them!" howled Bunter. "If Carter sneaks to Queleh, I don't care, as I haven't got them!"

"Where are they?" hooted Peter.

"They—they're in the bookcase in the Rag, old chap! I—I'll come down and show you the exact spot."

Whop!

"Yoo-hoop! I—I mean, I hid them in the Cloisters!" wailed Bunter. "They're stuck in the wall under the ivy, you beast! Ow!"

"Well, we can't go roofing about the Cloisters after lock-up," said Peter. "Is that why you say the Cloisters?"

Whop!

"Beast! Stop it! They're really in the Cloisters!" shrieked Bunter. "I—I—I'll take you there before prayers in the

morning! I say, you fellows, take that stump away from that beast!"

Peter lowered the stump.

"That looks like the truth at last," he said. "You're turning out first thing in the morning, old fat man, and leading me to the spot! I'll take this cricket stump with me, in case they ain't there!"

Billy Bunter rolled off the table, wriggling.

Peter shook the cricket stump at him warningly.

"If you don't find those keys in the morning—" he said.

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter rolled away, squeaking.

Peter's stump was not to be argued with; and there was no doubt that when the Remove turned out in the morning the fat Owl was going to lead Toddy to the spot where he had hidden those keys.

That the exact spot was known to any fellow in the Remove naturally did not occur to Bunter—or to Peter. Neither of them thought of suspecting that, while most of the fellows gathered in the Rag after prep, one fellow was dropping from a box-room window, to pay a surreptitious visit to that secluded spot in the old Cloisters. No one but Carter knew that the keys would not be found in that spot when they were looked for in the morning!

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Still Missing!

CLANG, clang!

Bob Cherry was first out of bed, as usual, in the Remove dormitory. Peter Todd was second, and Billy Bunter, for the first time in history, the third.

Bunter had no desire to be "placed," as it were. But he had no choice in the matter. Peter grabbed his bed-clothes and yanked them off in a bundle; then he grabbed Bunter, and landed him on the bedclothes on the floor.

Even Billy Bunter could not close his eyes for an extra few minutes after that.

He occupied a few minutes in telling Toddy what he thought of him. Then he dressed, and was ready to go down as soon as Peter.

Toddy picked a cricket stump up from under his bed, having thoughtfully brought it up to the dormitory. With the stump under his arm, he went down with Bunter, and a dozen grinning fellows followed them out of the House.

There was time before prayers to cut into the Cloisters and gather in those keys; and Peter was going to leave them in Queleh's study, for Mr. Queleh to find there—which, in everybody's opinion but Bunter's, was the best thing that could be done in the circumstances.

Carter did not join the little crowd that walked into the Cloisters. He watched them go, with a sarcastic grin.

In his own dismal and harassed state of mind, he found a little comfort in passing on a spot of trouble to his fat rival.

He still hoped desperately to pull through the disaster that had fallen on him. If he succeeded in so doing, his campaign against the fat Owl of the Remove would be carried on unchanged. And this time the outlook was very bad for the fatuous Owl.

All the Remove knew now that he had snooped Queleh's keys. Sooner or later that knowledge was bound to spread outside the Remove—with or without assistance from Carter. As the keys—
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would not now be found, every fellow, of course, would continue to believe that Bunter still had them. Quelch would believe so, as a matter of course, when he learned what was common knowledge in his Form. Bunter was booked for an exceedingly bad time if the keys were not given up. And Bunter now was unable to give them up. His own fatuous folly had landed him fairly into the hands of the unscrupulous schemer.

Billy Bunter rolled into the Cloisters with a dozen other fellows, with a frowning fat brow—and an uneasy eye on Peter's stump.

Only that stump induced him to lead the way, and several times he blinked round through his big spectacles, watchful for a chance of cutting off. But he had no chance of cutting off.

He halted at last at the spot where he had hidden the keys. He gave Peter Todd a final infuriated blink, and then pulled aside the ivy that hid the crevice in the ancient wall.

"There you are, you meddling beast!" hissed Bunter.

"Where?" demanded Peter, staring into the crevice.

"Stuck in there, you beast! That's where I put them!" snorted Bunter.

Peter gave him a grim look. Nothing but dust was to be seen in that little crevice in the wall. However, he groped in it to make sure. Then he turned to the fat Owl, his face grimmer and grimmer.

"Where are those keys, you blithering idiot?" he demanded.

"Can't you find them, you silly ass?" booted Bunter. "Get out of the way, and I'll get them!"

"You'd better!" said Peter, taking a businesslike grip on the stump.

"You fat chump!" said Bob Cherry. "The bell will go in a minute! Cough up those keys, you blitherer!"

"They're here, you silly ass!" yelped Bunter; and his fat hand groped in the crevice. "Oh crikey! They ain't here!"

"Where are they?" demanded Harry Wharton.

"How should I know?" howled Bunter. "I know I parked them there. I suppose somebody's found them."

"Found them, in that hole in the wall behind the ivy!" said Peter. "Don't talk rot, you fat ass! It would take a fellow a month to find them, even if he knew you had parked them in the Cloisters at all!"

"For goodness' sake, Bunter——" urged Bob.

"You awful ass!" said Harry Wharton. "Quelch is bound to hear of this sooner or later, and he will ask you for the keys."

"Sooner, rather than later, I fancy!" grinned the Bounder. "If you know what's good for you, Bunter, you'll cough up those keys before it's too late."

"They're—they're not there!" gasped Bunter. He was quite bewildered by the absence of those keys.

"I know they're not there!" snorted Peter. "Where are they?"

"I—I put them there——"

"You howling ass!" roared Peter. "If you put them there, they'd be there now. What have you done with them?"

"I—I suppose they've been found, and——"

"Did you tell anybody where you'd hidden them, Bunter?" asked Bob.

"No, of course not—till I told you fellows last night."

"Did any fellow see you——"

"Of course not."

"Well, they can't have been found, then. Have you forgotten just where you put them? Is that it?"

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"I put them in that hole in the wall!" howled Bunter.

"Then where are they now?" roared Peter.

"I—I don't know!"

Whop!

"Yow-ow! Beast! Keep that stump away, you rotter!" yelled Bunter. "I tell you I put them there——"

Whop!

"Yaroooooh!"

"Where are those keys?" howled the exasperated Peter. "By gum, I'll wear out this stump on you if you don't cough them up!"

"Beast!"

Whop, whop, whop!

"Bunter, you ass——"

"Bunter, you chump——"

There was a clang of a distant bell, mingling with Billy Bunter's anguished howls; it was the chapel bell.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! That's progress!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Come on!"

The juniors scuttled out of the Cloisters. The interruption came as a relief to Billy Bunter; he was tired of that stump.

What had become of the hidden keys was a mystery to Bunter. It was no mystery to the other fellows, who had not the slightest doubt that Bunter could have handed them over had he chosen.

He had had them, he had hidden them somewhere—and that was that! That such a hiding-place as the one he had revealed could have been discovered by chance, nobody was likely to believe. Besides, if the keys had been found, where were they now?

It seemed clear enough to all the Remove fellows. Bunter still had the keys, and did not intend to give them up. They could hardly believe anything else in the circumstances.

At the breakfast table that morning Mr. Quelch's face was very grim. He was seen to fix his eyes on Carter, though he did not address him. All the juniors knew that he was thinking about those missing keys, and that his suspicions were directed towards Carter.

Nobody had much sympathy to waste on Carter, however. It was only because of his own trickery that he was suspected. He had done such a thing before, and it was his own fault if he were suspected of having repeated his act.

When the Remove went into their Form-room they were not surprised to hear Mr. Quelch allude to the subject before class began. Obviously it was not a subject that could be allowed to rest.

"My keys," said Mr. Quelch, "have not been returned to me. They have not been found. It is perfectly clear now that they are in the possession of some member of this Form who is deliberately keeping them back."

His eyes lingered on Carter for a moment.

"Those keys," he went on, "must be returned to me. Unless they are returned, the Remove will be detained on Saturday afternoon, and the whole Form will lose the half-holiday."

"Oh!" murmured the Remove.

"I regret this," said Mr. Quelch, "but I have no alternative. On the former occasion when a key was taken from my study, it came to light by chance and the culprit was discovered. The offence has now been repeated, and no discovery has been made. It appears very probable to me that the name of the offender is known to other boys in my Form——"

He paused a moment.

"Certainly I shall not think of asking any boy in this Form to give information against another," he added. "I should not, in fact, listen to anything of the kind. But I recommend you to counsel this boy, whoever he may be, not to persist in his disrespectful and malicious action. I shall trust that the keys will be returned to me before Saturday."

With that the subject dropped. But in break that morning loud howls were audible in the quad. They proceeded from the hapless Owl of the Remove. Quite a number of fellows were "counselling" him to give up those keys—and their counsel was rather vigorous.

No doubt Billy Bunter would have given up those keys had they still been at his disposal; but as Bunter knew no more than any other fellow what had become of them, that resource was denied him.

Bunter was booted in break; he was booted again after third school; again after dinner he was booted. But he did not give up the keys; he couldn't. And before the fat Owl's eyes stretched an endless vista of bootings.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Finish!

ARTHUR CARTER glanced up and down the towpath with a wary eye as he stopped at the back gate of the Cross Keys.

Then he cut quickly in.

It was not the first time by many a one that Carter had dodged in at that gate during the term he had been at Greyfriars School, but it was the first time that he went in unwillingly and with a heavy heart. Gladly he would have kept away from the place and given a wide miss to Mr. Banks and all his works; but he dared not.

He had to see Mr. Banks; he had to induce him, if he could, to grant time for the payment of the sum which—granted time or not—he had not the remotest prospect of paying. Granted time, he nourished a hope that something might turn up; in his desperation he had even the folly to hope that a win on another horse in another quarter might see him through. Anyhow, he had to stave off immediate disaster if he could.

He doubted whether he could—and he doubted still more as he saw the fat, red-faced man in the dingy summer-house in the weedy garden. Mr. Banks' fat face had a most unpromising expression on it.

Perhaps he read in Carter's look the fact that he had brought no cash with him. And what Mr. Banks wanted was cash. He was not in the business of deluding "mugs" simply for his health.

"Oh, 'ere you are, Master Carter!" said Banks, much less cordially than was his wont. "You cut off rather sudden yesterday, sir. But 'ere you are, ready to settle up—what?"

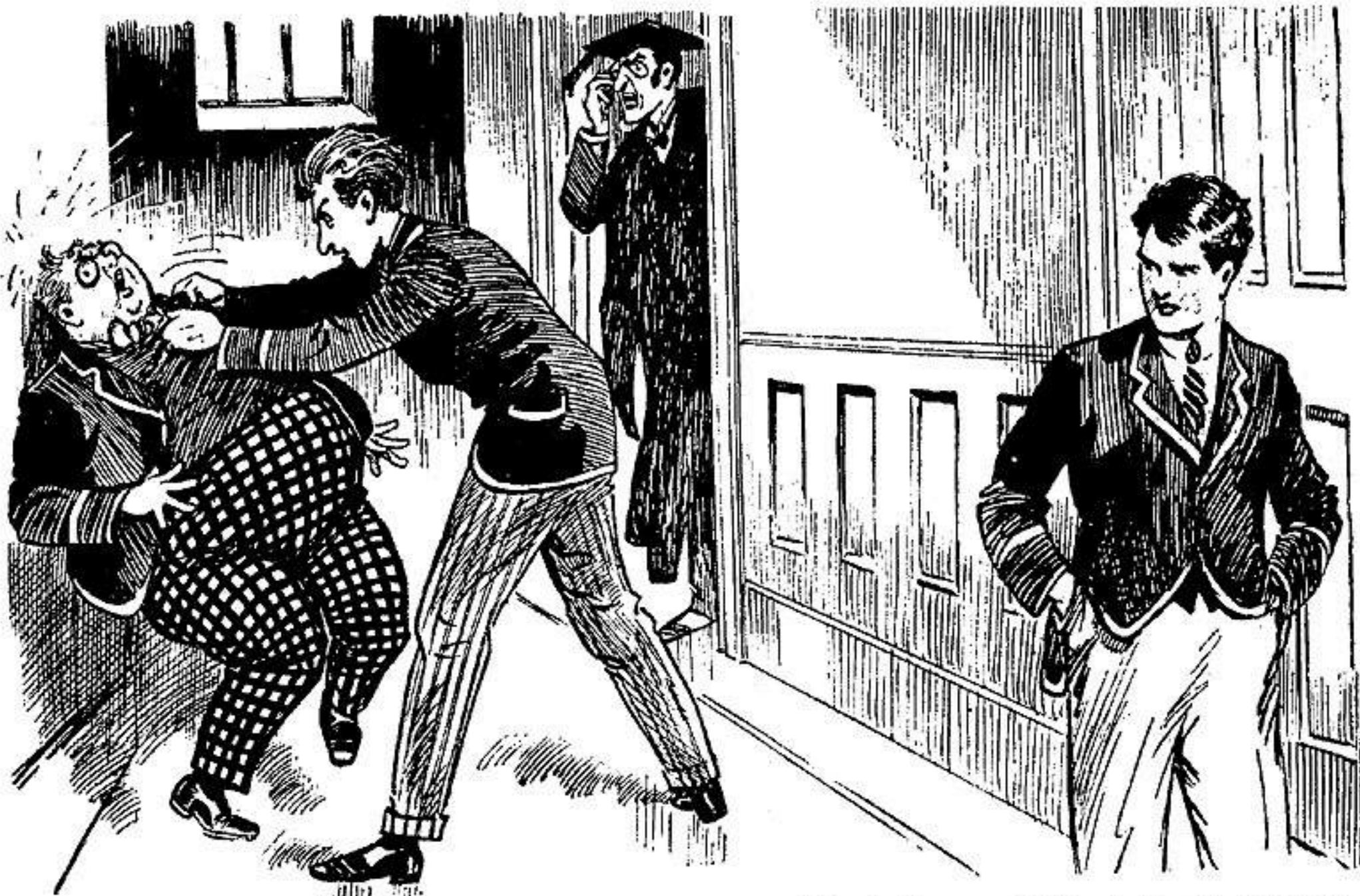
"No," muttered Carter.

Mr. Banks' expression grew more unpleasant.

"You ain't had that remittance from the old gentleman?" he asked with sarcasm. "It's a long time coming, sir."

"I—I can't square at present, Banks," muttered Carter. "I've had some bad luck in various ways. Next term——"

"You can wash that right out, Master Carter. I got my own bills to meet. Short reckonings make long friends,"



"Leggo!" yelled Bunter, as Peter Todd banged his head on the wall. "Ow! My napper! Wow! Leggo! Beast!"
 "Todd!" Mr. Quelch's sharp voice was heard, as he came out of the Form-room. "Todd! What are you doing?
 How dare you use Bunter in that manner?"

said Mr. Banks. "I ain't a 'ard man, I 'ope; I wouldn't push a young gentleman 'ard. 'Ow much can you do?"

"Nothing at present," breathed Carter.

Mr. Banks' jaw jutted.

"Nothing?" he repeated.

"No. You—you see—"

"I see!" said Mr. Banks grimly. "You been leading me on. I see! If Tip-Cat had pulled it off yesterday you'd 'ave squared me out of my own money! As he didn't, I can whistle for my money and for the fiver I put on Tip-Cat for you? Is that the tune?"

Carter stood silent.

That was, in fact, exactly how the matter stood, and he had dreaded that Banks would see it in that light. Banks saw it clearly. The racing man's red face grew redder.

Banks had some cause for indignation. He was a rascal and a sharper, but he had trusted Carter. He had actually lost money on his transactions with the wretched fellow. So far from touching a profit, he was netting a loss; and the idea of being "diddled" by a schoolboy was much too much for Mr. Banks to tolerate with patience.

He was accustomed to "diddling," but not to being diddled. Mr. Banks preferred to conjugate the verb "to diddle" in the active, not the passive.

"Is that it?" he snarled. "Well, that won't do for me, Master Carter! You owe me seventeen quid! 'Ow much can you shell out?"

"I can't do anything this term," muttered Carter. "You'll have to give me time. Next term—"

"Mebbe you won't be at your school next term," said Mr. Banks grimly. "P'raps that uncle of yours will take you away when he's asked to square this little bill."

Carter started.

"You—you wouldn't—" he panted. He stared almost wildly at the sharper's sullen face. If he had anything yet to hope for from his uncle, old Joseph Carter, that would be an end of it! If old Joseph heard a single word about this—

"Wouldn't I?" said Mr. Banks. "I can tell you I would, Master Carter, and quick. You can get the cash if you like. Don't I know it? Think I ain't asked some questions about that uncle of yours since we done business? Rolling in it, he is—'ead of a big company. You only got to ask him—"

"I—I can't—"

"You said you could!"

"Yes, yes, I know; but—but—"

Carter's voice trailed off miserably. It was as the nephew and heir of a rich company director that he had led Mr. Banks into trusting him. Banks was far from knowing how matters actually stood.

"Well, if you ain't asking him, I'll ask him!" said Mr. Banks. "I ain't losing seventeen quid, I know that!"

"It won't be any use if you do!" said Carter, with white lips. "My Uncle Joseph wouldn't pay you a shilling."

"No 'arm in asking the old gentleman!" sneered Mr. Banks. "Mebbe he'd rather pay than 'ave it took before your 'eadmaster at Greyfriars."

Carter's heart almost ceased to beat.

He did not believe that Banks would dare to show his disreputable face at Greyfriars, or to let the headmaster there know that he carried on racing transactions for Greyfriars boys. Neither did it matter very much. If Joseph Carter knew, all was over for him.

"Now you got it fair and square!" said Mr. Banks grimly. "You told me you was expecting a remittance from that uncle. Well, all you got to do is

to give the old gent a tip to 'urry up. I'll wait till Saturday."

"Saturday!" breathed Carter.

"Saturday afternoon," said Mr. Banks. "I'll be back 'ere, and waiting for you, Master Carter! If your uncle ain't stumped up by that time he'll get a 'int from me. That's the lot!"

"Listen to me—" faltered Carter.

Mr. Banks walked out of the summer-house without giving him another word or look.

Carter was left alone, rooted to the ground.

This was the finish.

Slowly, at last, he left the place and wandered out on the towpath.

It was the finish for him. Banks would not lose money; if he could help it; and if he had to lose it, his malice was as much to be feared as his greed. Either he had to pay Banks seventeen pounds by Saturday, or old Joseph Carter was going to learn that he was the same dingy, disreputable young rascal at Greyfriars as he had been at St. Olaf's. And he had not seventeen shillings!

He had asked for it. He had, in fact, played a sharper's game, with a sharper; and the result was what he might have expected. He had spent a whole term in scheming against his rival for an old man's money, only to dish himself completely by his own actions.

Carter hardly knew how he had got back to the school. His brain was almost in a whirl as he went in, and went to his study.

There was something like a shindy going on in the Remove passage when he arrived there. A sound of bumping, accompanied by a frantic squeaking, greeted his ears! Billy Bunter was in the hands of the Philistines.

Bump bump

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"I say, you fellows, leggo!" howled Bunter. "I say—"

"Think we're having detention because you've snooped old Quelch's keys?" roared Bolsover major.

"I haven't—I didn't—I wasn't—"

Bump!

"Yarooop! I say, Bob—"

"Cough up those keys, you fat chump!"

"Beast! I—"

Bump!

"Ow! Wow! Ow!"

Carter went into his study and slammed the door. At this rate, it could hardly be long before Quelch heard something, and Bunter would be booked for bad trouble. But that hardly interested the schemer of the Remove now. Whatever might happen to Bunter, he himself was done for. There was not a gleam of hope. The game was up, and he had come to the finish! Scheming and knavery had left him, at long last, where a knave might have expected to be left—in the cart!

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

In the Small Hours!

A SILVER crescent of moon glimmered at the high windows of the Remove dormitory.

It was midnight—an hour at which all Greyfriars had long been sleeping. But there was one fellow in the Remove dormitory who was not sleeping—and who could not sleep!

Carter's eyes had closed many times; but they had reopened every time. He would slumber in vain.

It was useless to keep awake and think over a problem that had no answer; but while the other fellows slept the sleep of healthy youth, the wretched young rascal who was caught in his own toils could find no rest. It was Thursday night; and on Saturday the end would come. He would not even finish out the term, in all probability. At all events, he would not return to the school at the new term. He had come a "mucker" at St. Olaf's—he was to come another mucker at Greyfriars; and there was no way out.

It was in the still, silent watches of the night, while all others slept, that a way out dawned on his tormented mind.

It made him start and shiver when he thought of it, yet, thinking it over, he wondered that it had not occurred to him before.

The glimmer of the moon at the high windows showed his face white as chalk, but showed a deadly determination gathering in it.

There was, after all, one way—a way which would sink him deeper than he had ever dreamed of sinking, but which might save him. Unscrupulous as he was, he shrank from it, but it dwelt in his mind and became a fixed determination there. He sat up in bed at last and peered round the dormitory.

No one was awake but himself—no one was likely to be! He was safe—quite safe—from all but his own conscience. Midnight had chimed; the whole House was buried in slumber.

He crept softly from his bed.

Often he had done so before, to break bounds after lights out, but never so cautiously as now! For his present enterprise was even more dangerous than that!

Half-dressed, silent in his socks, he crept to the door. There was hardly a sound as the dormitory door opened and shut.

He crept silently down dark stairs.

It was to the Remove box-room that he crept, silent as a spectre in the

dark. In that room, under a trunk, he had hidden the bunch of keys he had abstracted from Bunter's hiding-place in the Cloisters.

They were safe from discovery there, and ready to his hand, if he wanted them. It had already occurred to his scheming mind to play some trick with one of the locked drawers in Quelch's study—a trick that could only be attributed to Bunter, when it transpired that Bunter had taken the keys. But his own distress had fixed his mind, he had not thought of carrying out that idea. It was for quite another purpose that he wanted the keys now.

One of them was a special key, to a special drawer, as he knew only too well. He knew what was in that drawer! That drawer contained what he needed to satisfy Mr. Banks!

To that desperate extremity had he come! To save himself, anyhow, and at any cost, that was his determination now, and once he had made up his shrinking mind to do it, it seemed easy enough.

Easy—and safe! He could open that special drawer with that special key and take what he wanted—and lock the drawer again. Quelch would not even know that anything was missing until he gave up hope of recovering his keys and sent for a locksmith.

And then—all the Remove knew that Bunter had the keys! What had happened could not fail to be attributed to Bunter! Quelch himself suspected Carter, it was true, of having the keys, but all the Remove knew that Bunter had them, no doubt could be left in the matter.

If Carter felt a spot of remorse, it was banished by fear for himself. His mind was irrevocably made up now.

He crept into the box-room and removed the keys from under the trunk. He slipped them into his pocket and crept out again.

On the landing he paused for long minutes to listen. He could almost hear his heart beat in the stillness.

But there was no sound, and at last he crept down the stairs. He did not need a light; and he would not have ventured to turn on the merest glimmer. He reached the door of Mr. Quelch's study at last, with his heart beating almost to suffocation.

At that door he paused. For a long, long minute he stood there, realising that he was on the verge of an abyss from which, if he plunged in, there was no escape again!

But his face set, and he gripped the door-handle and turned it, silently.

The door did not open.

In surprise and rage he pressed the handle hard and pushed at the door. Still it did not open.

He caught his breath.

He released the handle, and stood there, in the darkness, breathing hard with rage and disappointment.

The door was locked.

He knew that his Form-master did not habitually lock his study door at night, and he had not expected it or, indeed, thought anything of the kind. Yet he realised now that he might have expected it.

With the keys missing which would unlock drawers containing private papers and money, it was only natural for Mr. Quelch to lock the study door. Probably he had locked it carefully each night since that bunch of keys had been missing.

There was nothing that Carter could do! His keys were useless to him, if he could not enter the study—and he could not enter it. Neither that night, nor any subsequent night, would he be able to do so—this desperate resource

was not—after all, a way out of his difficulties!

He crept away at last, sick at heart! He was saved—saved in spite of himself—from what he had contemplated. But he was not thinking of that. He was conscious only of rage and disappointment—and fear!

But there was nothing to be done—and he crept back to the box-room, and concealed the keys in their former place; and then tiptoed back to his dormitory.

All were sleeping there, as when he had left. Billy Bunter's deep snore rumbled through the long apartment. No one had seen Carter go—no one saw him return. He crept back into his bed.

But he could not sleep.

It was long, long before his eyes closed, in sheer weariness, and slumber came at last, when the first gleam of dawn was in the sky. It was with a pale and haggard face that he turned out at the clang of the rising-bell in the morning.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER

Rough Luck for Bunter!

BAG him!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Scrag him!"

"Leggo!"

Billy Bunter was leading a hunted life, those days.

From the bottom of his fat heart he wished that he had never thought of the brilliant idea of snooping those beastly keys that Quelch had dropped in his study.

His idea had been to make that beast Quelch sit up for having whopped him. Whether Quelch was sitting up or not, there was no doubt that Bunter was! He was having really an awful time.

None of the Remove had enjoyed life in Form that morning. Quelch had been grimmer than ever. He was, in fact, all acid. Even Mr. Hacker, who was called the "Acid Drop" in the Shell, was not so acid as Quelch.

Mr. Quelch was quite assured that some member of his Form was keeping back those keys! He had no doubt that other members knew who it was! Yet this disrespectful and malicious prank was still going on—nothing had been heard of the keys. Naturally Quelch was deeply and intensely annoyed, and equally, naturally, quite a lot of his annoyance was passed on to his Form.

A fellow in the Remove-room could not drop a book, or shuffle his feet, indeed, he could hardly breathe, without a gimlet eye turning grimly on him. Lines fell like leaves in Vallombrosa. The cane was featured several times. Nobody, of course, was punished unjustly. But justice was fearfully strict that morning!

As if that were not bad enough, detention for the half-holiday on Saturday loomed ahead of the Remove—to be followed, they had no doubt whatever, by further detentions, if those wretched keys did not turn up.

And all because that fat ass, Bunter, fancied that he could cause all this worry and trouble to the whole Form, from a fatheaded idea of "paying out" Quelch for a whopping he had richly deserved!

It was no wonder that the Remove fellows used rather drastic measures with the hapless Owl. He was not expected to own up. He was only asked to leave those keys somewhere for Quelch to find them. Even that he refused to do!

Nobody believed, for a moment, that he would have done it like a shot, had

it been in his power! Bunter was more than tired of getting booted and bumped! He would have produced those keys on the spot, had it been possible to do so! He was thoroughly tired of hearing about those putrid keys!

But not a fellow believed Bunter! He had had the keys! That was certain. Nobody had seen anything of them;

so he still had them! They were not on his fat person—a dozen fellows had quite unceremoniously made sure of that! He had parked them somewhere, and would not tell where! Bunter's asseverations were passed by, by the Removites, like the idle wind which they regarded not. Bunter had those keys—and Bunter was going to be booted, and booted, and booted, till he

coughed up, and hooked the Remove out of the trouble he had landed them in.

Bunter left the Form-room that morning in a state of great trepidation. Little as he liked lessons, he could have wished that lessons had been longer. Even work in the Form-room was

(Continued on next page.)

LEARN TO PLAY FOOTBALL!

OUR INTERNATIONAL COACH

LAST week I told you about the goalkeeper who, after he had gone off the field injured, came back into goal without telling the referee and then was surprised, when he made a save, to have a penalty given against him. I suppose most of you have some idea what a penalty kick is, but no harm can be done if I tell you all about it straight away.

I haven't said much in these "lessons" about fouls and free-kicks, because I prefer to think that such things are not really part of football at all. But now that you are playing proper games, and playing them, I hope, with plenty of energy and enthusiasm, you are sure to find yourselves, in the excitement of it all, doing things which the laws say you must not do. When you do these things you are said to commit fouls, and the punishment for a foul is a free-kick to the other side.

Some fouls are much worse than others, of course, such as tripping an opponent, or charging unfairly. There is no need for me to lay out a list of the various fouls here, you will get to know and understand them much better by having them crop up in your games. For all fouls, free-kicks are given, but from some free-kicks it is not possible to score a goal direct. From free-kicks awarded for the bad fouls—like deliberate handling or tripping an opponent—the player taking the free-kick can score a goal direct from the kick. It is only in the case of these sort of infringements that a penalty kick can be awarded.

NOT ALWAYS SUCCESSFUL!

I PRESUME you all know what the penalty area is. On your diagrams, and on a marked-out pitch, you will find it as the bigger of the two "boxes" which are laid out in front of each goalmouth. When a foul is committed in the middle of the field, the free-kick is taken by a member of the opposing side from the spot where the infringement took place. But if the foul is committed inside the penalty area the punishment is much more severe, taking the form of a penalty kick.

In the penalty area, twelve yards from the exact centre of the goal there is a mark which is called the penalty spot. When a foul is committed in the penalty area, and a penalty kick is awarded to the other side, the player

This week's special article by our sporting contributor is written around fouls, free-kicks and penalties.

taking the kick places the ball on this spot. All the other players on the field, with the exception of the defending goalkeeper, must then go outside the penalty area, and at least ten yards away from the ball, while the taker of the penalty kick has a free pot at goal, with only the goalkeeper to beat.

The idea is, that if a foul is committed so near to the goal that it is inside the penalty area, the foul may prevent a goal being scored, so the rules say that the attacking side shall be given a good chance to score a goal by being allowed a free shot from a "baby" position only twelve yards out, and with only the goalkeeper in the way.

You would think, wouldn't you, that first-class footballers would be able to score every time from a penalty kick. There is a great deal of time and patience spent on the question of scoring goals from penalty kicks, but still successes are not nearly so frequent as they should be. Every team should try to have a penalty kick specialist—a fellow whose job it is to take the penalties awarded. It will be worth his while, too, to practise hard at the job. The trouble is, of course, that on the practice ground practically any player could beat a goalkeeper nine times out of ten with shots from the penalty spot.

Mr. Jimmy Seed, the Charlton Athletic manager, told me how he went out on to the pitch one day while the players were at training, and put six penalty kicks in succession past the club's best goalkeeper. Mr. Seed finished the story by telling me that when he was a player he did not once manage to score from a penalty kick, although he tried in matches with three different clubs. There you have one of the reasons why so many first-class players can't score goals from penalty kicks. At practice they can do it easily. But in a match, when so much may depend upon that one kick, they get "windy," muff their kick, and the ball

either goes wide or is saved by the goalkeeper.

DIRECTION FIRST, PACE AFTERWARDS!

THE first essential for a player who is to take his side's penalty kicks is a cast-iron nerve. He must also be an expert at kicking a "dead" ball. Plenty of players who are fine kickers when the ball is moving find it very difficult to kick a "still" ball hard and accurately. No need to tell you, is there, that the instep, not the toe of the boot, must be used? And remember that for penalty kick purposes, direction is more important than speed.

The rules say that the goalkeeper must stand absolutely still on the goal-line until the ball is kicked. If the ball is well placed into the corner of the net, the goalkeeper won't be able to move quickly enough, even though it is not particularly fast. He will have a much better chance of saving a cannon-ball shot that goes within reach of his arms. So direction first, pace afterwards. And as I have told you before, as a general rule for all shooting, a low shot is harder to save than a high one. Get your knee well over the ball, your instep well on to it, and the ball will go straight and low.

I think the best advice I can give you is that you shouldn't worry about the goalkeeper. Make up your mind where the ball is going, and concentrate on putting it there. Some players, who have plenty of confidence and are used to the job, manage to make the goalkeeper think the ball will go one way, when it is really going the other. I don't see much point in bothering to do this. A fairly hard accurate kick will beat a goalkeeper, whether he knows where the ball is going or not. Fix your eyes on a spot, and send it there—that is the secret.

I hope you won't have a lot of penalty kicks in the games you play, because I like to think you are playing the game as it should be played. If an opponent is clever enough to get you in a position where he looks like scoring a goal, do what you can to stop him, of course, but don't be unfair about it. If you can't stop him by fair means, he has got the better of you. Be a good loser, and keep playing the game like a sportsman.

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preferable to what he had to expect outside the Form-room.

He was rounded up in the quad by a dozen Remove fellows. They surrounded him, with exasperated looks. They wanted those keys!

"Are you going to chuck up playing the goat, you fat ass?" demanded Skinner. "Do you think we're going to have Quelch ragging the lot of us all day long to please you?"

"Scrag him!" hooted Bolsover major.

"I say, you fellows, I haven't got the keys!" wailed Bunter. "I'd hand them over if I had, and be jolly glad to. I never had them—"

"And Toddy saw them in your paw!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Bag him!"

"Scrag him!"

"Look here, Bunter, you unspeakable chump!" said Harry Wharton. "This can't go on! Can't you see that? Quelch must have reported this to the Head by this time. Do you want to be taken up to the Head?"

"I haven't—"

"If the Head takes it up, do you think you can keep it dark that you had the keys?" roared Bob Cherry. "Do you specially want a flogging?"

"I never—"

"Oh, bump him!"

"Yarooooop!"

"Boot him! Boot him across the quad and back again!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove.

"Oh crikey!"

Bunter fled for his fat life!

A dozen fellows whooped after him. Even when the fat junior bolted into the House, he was chased, at the risk of masters or prefects butting in.

The Remove fellows were thoroughly exasperated—even Bob Cherry had no patience to waste on the fat Owl. He was booked for the life of a Soccer ball, till those keys turned up.

But the pursuers halted when the fat Owl, in sheer desperation, bolted into Masters' Passage. Booting Bunter in those sacred precincts was not a practical proposition.

Billy Bunter stopped at the door of his Form-master's study. Mr. Quelch was in Common-room, with some of the other beaks. But he might come along at any time; and his study door was a safe spot for the hunted Owl.

Half a dozen fists were shaken at him, from the corner of the passage.

Bunter leaned on the door, and pumped in breath.

"Come back, you fat chump!" hissed Peter Todd.

"Beast!" gasped Bunter.

"Let's go and roll him out!" exclaimed the Bounder. "Quelch ain't in his study!"

"Some of the beaks are!" said Peter. "We don't want to bring old Prout out. Or Hacker!"

"Well, he can't stick there for ever!" said Ogilvy; and the wrathful juniors retired from the spot, more exasperated than ever.

Billy Bunter, leaning on Mr. Quelch's door, and gasping for breath, remained where he was.

Masters' Passage—a spot disliked, as a rule—was his only safe refuge now; and there he stuck, and resolved to stick till the dinner-bell rang. If Quelch came to the study, he was prepared even to ask his Form-master for some information about Latin verbs, in order to remain in that safe spot! Even Latin verbs were better than bootings!

It was about a quarter of an hour later that footsteps came along the passage from the upper end—the direction of Masters' Common-room.

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Billy Bunter blinked up the passage, expecting to see a Form-master—and, to his surprise, saw Carter of the Remove.

Carter came quickly along the passage. Having lingered a few minutes outside Common-room, he had heard Mr. Quelch's voice in that apartment, and so was assured that the Remove master was not in his study. The keys were in his pocket again, and he required only a few minutes in that study!

He gave a start at the sight of Billy Bunter at Quelch's door.

Billy Bunter blinked at him, surprised to see Carter there. Carter glared at Bunter, enraged as well as surprised.

"What the dickens are you sticking there for, you fat fool?" muttered Carter, as he arrived on the spot.

"Find out!" retorted Bunter.

"Well, get out of it, you fat ass!"

"Shan't!"

It was only with difficulty that Carter restrained himself from collaring the fat Owl and pitching him headlong along the passage. But a shindy in that passage was impossible. Certainly Carter would have had no opportunity of dodging surreptitiously into his Form-master's study if he had brought two or three masters on the scene by handling Bunter there.

He controlled his rage with an effort.

"What's the big idea?" he asked, as casually as he could speak. "Are you waiting for Quelch, or what?"

"Find out!" repeated Bunter.

Carter breathed hard.

"You'll get into a row hanging about this passage!" he said.

"So will you!" retorted Bunter. "I'm jolly well sticking here till dinner, I know that! Go and eat coke!"

Carter passed down the passage. A locked door had stopped him the previous night. The door was unlocked in the day-time; but a fat and fatuous Owl stopped him as effectually as a turned key.

Ten minutes later Carter glanced round the corner of the passage again, Mr. Prout had come out of his study.

The Fifth Form master paused to stare at Bunter.

"What are you doing here?" he asked.

"Waiting for my Form-master, sir," answered Bunter.

Prout grunted, and walked on.

Carter had to give it up. Not till the dinner-bell was ringing did Billy Bunter quit that safe spot.

After dinner, Mr. Quelch went to his study. The keys were still in Carter's pocket, and his purpose as far as ever from being carried out when the Remove went into their Form-room for afternoon class.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Success!

BILLY BUNTER had no opportunity of hunting cover when the Remove were dismissed that afternoon.

Five or six fellows gathered round him when the juniors left the Form-room.

Peter Todd took one fat arm, Vernon-Smith took the other, and they walked him off. The Famous Five followed on with half a dozen other fellows.

That afternoon Quelch had not been merely acid; he had been the quint-essence of acid. It was worse than the morning. The Remove were more than fed-up. That unspeakable idiot Bunter had to give up those keys! And the Removites were going to see that he did, or else make him realise that life was hardly worth living. They walked him off to the Remove passage for that

purpose, much to the hapless Owl's dismay.

There was one fellow in the Form who was not interested in Bunter, however. That was the fellow in whose pocket the missing keys, at that moment, actually were. Carter lingered near the Form-room, anxious to ascertain the next movement of his Form-master.

Quelch came out a few minutes later and rustled away. To Carter's immense relief, he headed for Dr. Locke's study.

It was already rumoured in the Remove that Quelch had reported the affair of the keys to the headmaster—in which case, no doubt, he would report to him that the missing keys had not yet returned.

Carter cared little what his business might be with the Head; all he cared about was the fact that Quelch had not gone to his own study, and was not likely to do so for some little time.

Having, from a safe distance, seen the Head's door close after Quelch, Carter did not lose a minute.

The coast was clear at last, and this was his last chance. From the corner of Masters' Passage he scanned the study doors; all were closed, and no beak was in sight. In less than a minute he was in Mr. Quelch's study, with the door shut.

His face was white, his heart beating unpleasantly. But his mind was made up, and the time of hesitation was past.

He needed only minutes, and Quelch was safe for at least ten minutes—more likely half an hour.

So long as he was not caught in the study, he was safe.

No trace would be left of what he had done. The loss would not, and could not, be discovered until a locksmith was sent for to open that drawer.

It was clear that Mr. Quelch did not intend to take that step, so long as he had any hope of recovering the missing keys.

On the morrow Mr. Banks would be back in Friardale. Carter would see him, and hand over the sum he owed. Not till days later—perhaps a week or more—would anything be missed from that drawer. Before that time Quelch would know that Bunter had his keys. What had happened could not fail to be attributed to the hapless fat Owl.

What could be safer?

Nothing—unless it was a fact that ill-deeds could never prosper, and that honesty was not only the best policy, but the only safe one.

Carter might have learned that much from the ill-success of his scheming all through that term. But, with all his cunning and keenness, he did not know what the simplest fellow could have told him—that in every act of rascality there is sure to be some weak spot leading to its undoing.

All was safe—he was sure of that—so long as he got through before anyone came to the study. And a few minutes were enough.

He knew the drawer he wanted—and the key. Swiftly he slipped the key into the lock, and the drawer opened to his hand.

Within were papers, pass-books, other things in which he had no interest. But there was something else that interested him keenly—a batch of currency notes, fastened by an elastic band just as it had come from the bank.

His hand trembled as he touched it. But he did not hesitate. He lifted the batch of notes, and then he paused. Swiftly he counted seventeen of the notes and detached them from the rest.

That was the sum he needed to see him through. Somehow it seemed to

him less like what it was, to take only the exact sum he needed.

The remainder he dropped back into the drawer, closed it, and relocked it, slipping the keys back into his pocket.

He was through now!

He stepped back to the door.

Standing there, with a beating heart,

could afford to wait, easy in his mind until the inevitable discovery, sooner or later, was made that money was missing from the drawer to which all the Remove knew that Bunter had the key.

That would mean that Bunter's number was up—that he was done for at Greyfriars, and utterly done for with



"After him!" "Stop him!" A crowd of Removites charged across the landing after Billy Bunter. Terror seemed to lend the fat junior wings. He fairly whizzed down the stairs. Coker, who was going down the stairs, was taken by surprise when something heavy hit him in the back and sent him whirling.

he listened, and then opened the door an inch or so to peer into the passage.

A dapper little figure came in sight—Monsieur Charpentier, the French master, coming along to his study.

Carter closed the door again silently.

Again he listened till the French master's footsteps died away and a door closed farther up the passage. Then again he peered out.

This time the passage was clear.

He slipped out of the study, closed the door softly after him, and walked quietly away, with a beating heart.

Five minutes later the keys were safely hidden behind Gosling's woodshed, and Carter walked back to the House and strolled into the Rag.

Half a dozen fellows were there, and some of them glanced at Carter as he came in, but no Remove man spoke to him. Since his desertion of the team on Rookwood day, Carter was at the lowest depth of unpopularity in his Form, and few of the Remove had anything to say to him.

He threw himself into an armchair near the window and picked up a book. Any fellow noticing him would have supposed that he was deep in that book.

But he was not reading.

He was thinking. He was turning over and over in his mind what he had done, and what the result would be—what it must be.

He was safe; that came first. He was going to settle with Banks on the morrow; that came second. Then he

old Joo Carter. And Carter grinned sourly at the reflection that not even Bob Cherry, not even the keen-witted and suspicious Bounder, would think of suspecting his hand in the matter.

Such were Carter's reflections—the reflections of a rascal assured of success and assured of safety; while, even in the very moments while he was thus reflecting, his fate was stealing upon him, and was soon to overtake him!

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

Boot for Bunter!

"NOW, you fat chump—" "Beasts!" wailed Billy Bunter.

"Rag him!"

"Scrag him!"

"Bump him!"

"Burst him!"

More than half the Remove were gathered in the passage.

Billy Bunter blinked round through his big spectacles at a sea of exasperated faces.

They had walked off to the Remove studies, giving him no chance to escape! Matters had come to a climax now! Bunter, according to the belief of the Remove, had those keys—and Bunter was going to produce them, or take the consequences. The Remove were not going to be detained on half-holidays because that fat chump had a

fatheaded idea of "paying Quelch out."

"I say, you fellows, I haven't got those putrid keys!" wailed the unhappy Owl. "I've told you I—I never had them! It—it's all a mistake! I never picked them up in my study at all! Besides, that old ass Quelch shouldn't have dropped them there! I never had them! Can't you take a fellow's word?"

If Bunter hoped that the angry Removites were going to take his word, he was booked for a disappointment.

"Collar him!" roared Bolsover major.

"Boot him!" snapped the Bounder. "Keep on booting him till he coughs up those rotten keys! I'm not being kept in to-morrow afternoon to please that howling idiot! I'll boot him all over Greyfriars first!"

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific!"

"Where are those keys, Bunter?" demanded Harry Wharton. "You fat chump, do you think any fellow here is going to let this last till the end of the term?"

"I told you where I put them!" howled Bunter. "Tan't my fault if somebody found them, is it?"

"If you put them under the ivy in the Cloisters, nobody could have found them there, unless he was watching you at the time," said Harry. "You've told us you put them there—and you've

told us you never had them at all—in fact, you've told us every silly whopper that came into your silly head! Now cough up the truth!"

"Beast!"

"Oh, boot him!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith.

"I say, you fellows, I really did put them there!" squeaked the unhappy Owl. "I—I can't guess how anybody found them there; but somebody must have! I—I really did put them there!"

"Bump him!"

"Scrag him!"

"Hold on!" said Bob Cherry. "Is it possible that somebody might have found those keys where he put them, after all?"

"Rot!"

"Rats!"

"Rubbish!"

"Well, look here," said Bob, "the fat ass keeps on rolling out whoppers, but he always comes back to that—that he hid them in that hole in the wall in the Cloisters."

"So I did!" gasped Bunter. "Perhaps some fellow saw me, and I never noticed him. I'm a trifle shortsighted, as you know."

"Gammon! Boot him!"

"Cough up those keys!"

"Roll him over!"

"Scrag him!"

"Hold on, I tell you!" exclaimed Bob. "It looks to me as if that may be the truth—that he did hide them in the Cloisters—"

"Oh, can it!"

"Shut up!"

"Collar that fat idiot and scrag him!"

"I say, you fellows, leggo!" yelled Bunter. "I tell you somebody else has got those beastly keys—"

"Who, then?" demanded Harry Wharton.

"How should I know?" howled Bunter. "Unless it's Bob Cherry—"

"What?" yelled Bob.

"Well, you know I put them there—you've said so, and so—"

"Why, you fat scoundrel—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You've asked for that, Bob!" said

Frank Nugent, laughing. "Got anything more to say for Bunter?"

Bob gave an angry snort and stalked away along the passage. Apparently he had no more to say for Bunter!

"Now bag that fat rotter and scrag him!" said the captain of the Remove. "Mind, you're going through it, Bunter, till you hand over those keys! We all know you had them, and you needn't trouble to roll out any more crammers! Are you going to hand them over?"

"I—I never—I—I didn't—"

Bump!

"Yoo-hoop!"

Billy Bunter smote the floor of the Remove passage, and smote it hard. He roared frantically.

"Give him another!"

Bump!

"Yow-ow! Stop it! Oh crikey! I tell you I haven't got those keys!" shrieked Bunter. "I never had them at all, and I hid them in the Cloisters—"

Bump!

"Yoo-hoop-hoop!"

"Boot him along the passage!" exclaimed the Bounder.

"I say—yaroooh! I say—whoop! Oh crumbs! Oh crikey! Oh scissors! Beasts! Yarocop!" roared Bunter. "I say, you fellows, I think very likely Bob Cherry's got them! Yaroooooh!"

Billy Bunter travelled up the passage, propelled by countless feet. Then he travelled down again, in the same way.

At the landing end he made a frantic jump to escape. Peter Todd's grasp closed on his fat neck.

"No, you don't!" said Peter grimly. And he twirled Bunter round, to be booted up the passage again.

Bunter was desperate! In sheer desperation, he landed out a fat fist, catching Peter unexpectedly in the eye.

Peter, taken by surprise, went over, with a bump and a howl.

Billy Bunter flew across the landing.

"After him!" roared the Bounder.

"Stop him!"

"Snaffle him!"

The whole mob of Removites whooped in pursuit. But terror seemed

to lend Bunter wings. He fairly whizzed!

He did the Remove staircase in jumps like a kangaroo, and cartered down the lower stairs.

Coker of the Fifth was going down those stairs—and he was taken quite by surprise when something heavy hit him in the middle of the back and sent him whirling.

Coker, with a wild roar, crashed, and over him crashed Billy Bunter.

With amazing and remarkable agility, the fat Owl picked himself up and flew on, doing the stairs two at a time. Coker was left sprawling—and three or four of the pursuers, going too fast to stop, distributed themselves over Horace Coker.

It was a brief delay, but it gave the fleeing Owl a chance! He hopped and leaped and bounded down the staircase, just ahead of pursuit.

Wingate of the Sixth looked round in surprise, and stepped quickly to the foot of the stairs, with a frowning brow.

"What—" he exclaimed.

He got no further.

Bunter was on him the next moment, crashing. The stalwart captain of Greyfriars sat down heavily, and the fat Owl of the Remove sprawled, spluttering, across his knees.

"Oh!" gasped Wingate.

"Ooooooh!" spluttered Bunter.

Wingate rolled him off, staggered up, gripped him by the collar, and hooked him to his feet. He glared up the staircase at an excited mob of juniors who came to a sudden, breathless halt at the sight of the prefect.

"What does this mean?" roared Wingate. "What's this riot about? What—"

"Ow! Leggo!" howled Bunter. "Leggo, you beast!" He wriggled wildly, not even noticing that it was Wingate who had grasped him. "Will you leggo, you rotter? Beast! Rotter! Leggo! I haven't got the keys! I never had them! I don't know anything about them! Leggo!"

"What—"

The pursuing mob on the staircase melted away. They backed out of sight as hurriedly as they could.

But Billy Bunter had no chance of melting away. Wingate's grip was on his collar.

"What's that about keys?" rapped Wingate.

"Oh crikey!" Bunter blinked at him. "Oh, nothing, Wingate! Nothing at all! Leggo, will you? It—it's only a—a—a lark— Leggo!"

Wingate's grip tightened. Mr. Quelch's notice had been on the board for several days, referring to those missing keys. Quelch's Form was locked for detention, unless those keys turned up! So Wingate did not need telling much more about the cause of Billy Bunter's frantic flight from a mob of enraged Removites.

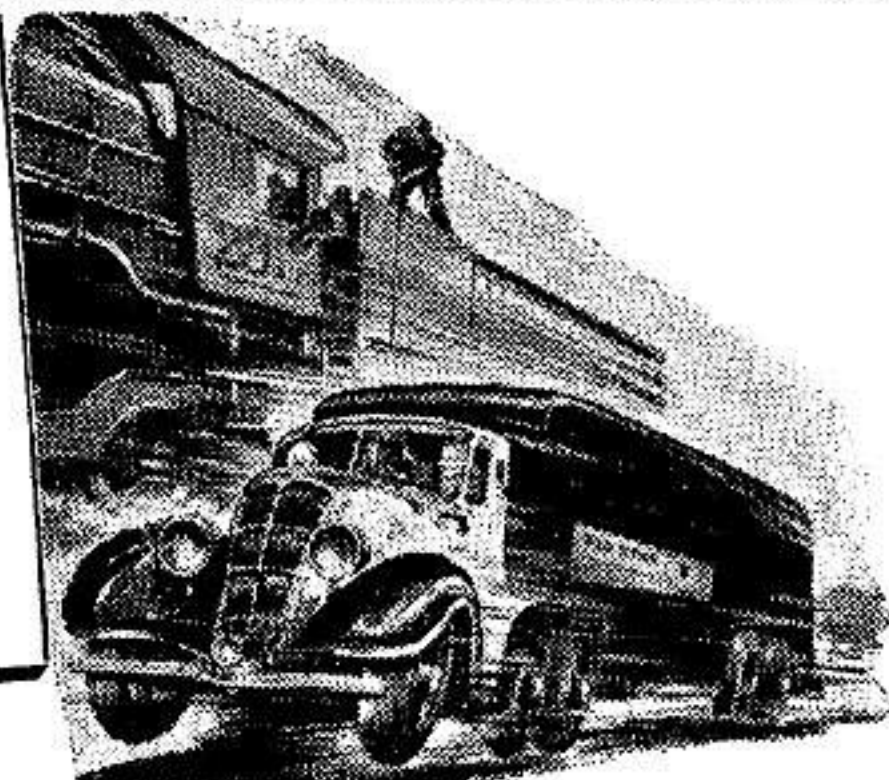
"You young rascal!" said the Greyfriars captain, shaking Bunter. "Have you got those keys there's been such a fuss about?"

"No!" gasped Bunter. "Oh, no! Not at all! I say, leggo, will you?"

"It looks to me as if those young sweeps think you have, at any rate!" rapped Wingate. "Tell me the truth, you young ass. If you've got those keys—"

"I haven't!" yelled Bunter in alarm. "I never picked them up in my study—I've never seen them at all. I—I didn't know Quelch had lost any keys, and I never helped to look for them in my study. I—I don't know anything about them at all, Wingate. I don't know

8
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who's got them, unless Bob Cherry has. I—I never knew they were missing—” Wingate, still grasping him by the collar, stared at him.

“Come along!” he said. “Give me those keys at once, Bunter, or I shall take you to the Head.”

“I haven’t—”

“Then come on, you young rascal!”

And Bunter, squirming, was marched off, still with Wingate’s grasp on his collar, to the Head’s study.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

Light at Last!

DR. LOCKE glanced inquiringly at his head prefect.

Mr. Quelch glanced frowningly at the fat ornament of his Form.

The Head and the Remove master were discussing that mysterious disappearance of the bunch of keys when Wingate arrived with Bunter.

“What is it, Wingate?” asked the Head.

“I think, sir, that this junior can explain what has become of Mr. Quelch’s keys,” answered Wingate.

“Indeed!” exclaimed the Head.

“Bunter!” exclaimed Mr. Quelch. “Surely not!” Mr. Quelch’s suspicions were turned in quite a different direction.

“I gather, sir, that a number of the Remove boys think that Bunter has the keys, from—from something I have observed,” explained the prefect. “I thought perhaps you would care to question him, sir.”

“Certainly!” said the Head.

Wingate left the study, leaving the fat Owl blinking at his headmaster, with a sidelong blink at his Form-master.

“What do you know of the keys, Bunter?” asked Dr. Locke.

“Nothing at all, sir,” answered Bunter promptly. “The fellows are all mistaken, sir—it’s all a mistake from beginning to end. I don’t know anything about the keys, sir. Mr. Quelch knows that he never dropped them in my study. Don’t you, sir?”

Mr. Quelch’s face set grimly.

“Is it possible, Bunter, that my keys have been in your possession all this time?” he exclaimed.

“Oh, no, sir! I never touched them!” gasped Bunter. “If you’d dropped them in my study, sir, Toddy would have found them that day, sir. You remember he found the cane and the hanky, sir. So he would have found the keys! They never rolled under the table when you dropped them, sir.”

“Bless my soul!” ejaculated the Head.

“Upon my word!” said Mr. Quelch. “This foolish, this utterly stupid boy found my keys where I must have dropped them, and kept them back!”

“I—I—I didn’t—” howled Bunter.

“Bunter, hand over that bunch of keys to your Form-master at once!” exclaimed the Head.

“I haven’t got them, sir!” wailed Bunter.

“You will be severely caned, Bunter, for this disrespectful trickery. But if you do not hand over the keys immediately I shall flog you,” said the Head sternly.

“I—I can’t!” groaned Bunter. “They—they’re lost! I—I mean I never had them! Oh lor’!”

Mr. Quelch held out his hand.

“Give me those keys, Bunter!” he said.

“I haven’t got them!” groaned Bunter. “I—I really haven’t, sir! Somebody else has got them! Oh dear!”

“Do you mean that you have given them to some other boy?”

“Oh, no!”

“Then what do you mean?”

“I—I—I—I haven’t had them at all, sir!” gasped Bunter. “I never picked them up in the study, and I never told Toddy I was going to keep them till the end of the term because you whopped me, sir. Nothing of the kind. I don’t know anything at all about those keys, sir.”

Dr. Locke compressed his lips.

“It is clear, Mr. Quelch, that Bunter has your keys,” he said. “As he refuses to return them to you a flogging will not meet the case. I have no alternative but to expel this boy of your Form, Mr. Quelch.”

“Quite so, sir,” said Mr. Quelch.

Billy Bunter almost collapsed.

“I—I—I say, sir, I—I didn’t!” he howled. “I mean, I wasn’t! I never—I—I mean, I—I hid the keys in the Cloisters, sir—”

“Then you may go and fetch them at once, Bunter.”

“I—I can’t!” groaned Bunter.

“What?”

“They ain’t there, sir! Somebody found them and took them away. I don’t know who it was. Oh dear!”

The two masters exchanged glances. It was no easy matter to disentangle truth from untruth in Billy Bunter’s wildly mixed statements. But they could judge that this was the truth; in his terror the hapless Owl was getting down to the facts at last.

“If that statement is correct, Mr. Quelch, Bunter had the keys in the first place, but they are now in possession of some other boy,” said Dr. Locke.

“It would appear so, sir,” said Mr. Quelch. “Bunter, I warn you to tell the truth! You stand in danger of being expelled from this school. Unless you can prove that the keys are no longer in your possession—”

“I haven’t got them, sir!” groaned Bunter. “I’d have given them up long ago if I had, with the fellows booting me all over the place. Nearly every chap in the Form has been kicking me to make me give up those keys, sir; and I can’t, as I haven’t got them.”

Dr. Locke coughed.

“The boys of your Form appear to have adopted somewhat drastic measures, Mr. Quelch. But certainly I should imagine that Bunter would have given up the keys if still in his possession.”

“I think so, sir.”

“Then some other boy—”

“Quite possibly some other boy, sir, watched Bunter when he was hiding the keys. It could easily have happened without his knowledge, as he is both short-sighted and stupid.”

The gimlet eyes fixed on Bunter.

“Now, Bunter,” said Mr. Quelch quietly, “it appears that you picked up the keys, which I dropped in your study on Tuesday, and concealed them in the Cloisters. What other boys were aware that the keys were in your possession?”

“Only Toddy, sir.”

“Toddy is a sensible lad. I have no doubt that he advised you to give up the keys, Bunter. Certainly he would not have taken them.”

“Oh, no, sir! He was in the Form-room when I hid them, sir; so he couldn’t have seen me—”

“In the Form-room!” repeated Mr.

Quelch. “Do you mean in class? You must also have been in class, Bunter, if Toddy was. What do you mean?”

“It was Wednesday morning, sir. You—you remember sending Toddy into the Form-room because he was banging my head on the wall—” gasped Bunter.

Mr. Quelch started.

“Upon my word! Was—was Toddy acting in that manner to induce you to give up the keys, Bunter?”

“Yes, sir. He banged my head—”

“The keys were still in your hands at that time?”

“Oh, no, sir; in my pocket!”

Mr. Quelch breathed hard.

“You had not yet concealed them in the Cloisters?” he asked.

“No; I cut off and hid them while Toddy was in the Form-room, sir. I—I knew he would be after me again when he came out,” mumbled Bunter.

“Was any other boy, besides Toddy, aware that you had the keys in your pocket?”

“Only Carter, sir.”

Mr. Quelch gave another start.

“Carter!” he repeated. “I have observed, Bunter, that you are not on friendly terms with your relative Carter. Yet you told him—”

“Oh, no, sir, I never told him! I never speak to him. He was hanging about listening while Toddy jawed me about it, sir. He was there when you came out of the Form-room, sir.”

“I remember that I noticed Carter in the corridor when I came and found Toddy using you, as I supposed, very roughly,” said Mr. Quelch. “Quite so. So Carter knew that you had the keys?”

“Yes. And I warned Toddy to shut up, because he was listening, and—”

“That will do! Was any other boy aware at that time that you had the keys, apart from Toddy and Carter?”

“Not that I know of, sir! They all knew that night, because Toddy got after me with a cricket stump after prep, and I told them the keys were in the Cloisters.”

“They have been looked for?”

“Oh, yes, sir! A whole crowd of the fellows came with me before preppers—I mean, prayers—yesterday morning! I pointed out the place, but—but the keys were gone. They—they didn’t believe that I’d put them there at all—”

Mr. Quelch turned to the Head.

“I think, sir, that we have now elucidated the truth of this matter,” he said.

“I think so, Mr. Quelch,” assented the Head. “But it remains to discover the keys and the boy who took them from the spot where Bunter concealed them.”

Mr. Quelch’s lips were compressed hard. His original suspicion, that it was Carter who had taken the keys, had seemed to be disproved by the revelation that it was Bunter who had picked them up. But it had now returned to the Remove master’s mind in full force.

“Bunter,” he rapped, “you may go! You will be dealt with later for this insensate prank. Go to my study and wait for me there!”

“I—I say, sir—I—”

“Leave my study, Bunter!” rapped the Head.

Billy Bunter rolled dismally from the study.

Dr. Locke looked inquiringly at the Remove master when the door closed on the fat and dismal Owl.

“You have some idea where the keys are to be found, Mr. Quelch?” he asked.

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"I think so, sir," said Mr. Quelch very grimly. "As I have told you, sir, my suspicions were fixed upon a certain boy in my Form who played a similar trick some weeks ago. It now appears that this boy, Carter, knew that Bunter had the keys. Nothing would have been easier than for him to observe where that stupid boy concealed them."

Dr. Locke nodded thoughtfully.

"It is clear that someone must have watched that obtuse boy concealing the keys, if they were taken from the hiding-place," he said.

"Precisely so, sir. It cannot have been Todd, who was kept in the Form-room. I cannot help suspecting that it was Carter. However, now that I know precisely what has happened, it will be easy to ascertain the facts." Mr. Quelch rose. "I have no doubt now of recovering the keys!"

And Mr. Quelch left the Head's study, assured now that he was on the track of those elusive keys, but little dreaming of what else he was unconsciously on the track.

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

Bunter Takes His Medicine!

"POOR old Bunter!"

"Serve the fat ass right!"

"Well, yes; but—"

"He's for it, anyhow!"

Arthur Carter glanced curiously at the juniors, who were talking as they came into the Rag. It sounded as if some new trouble had befallen his fat relative in the Remove.

"Anythin' up, you men?" called out Lord Mauleverer from the depths of an armchair. The fellows in the Rag were unaware as yet of the exciting happenings in the Remove passage.

"Yes; Bunter's up for a row," answered Harry Wharton. "Trot along, Mauly; the Form's got to go into the Form-room—every man present."

"Oh gad!" said Mauleverer, with a yawn. "That's somethin' new, isn't it? Quelch can whop that fat duffer without the whole Form lookin' on."

"That's the order, fathoad! Wingate is rounding up the Form," answered the captain of the Remove. "I'm afraid the Head's coming into it—Quelch would send for the fat clump to come to his study, otherwise."

"Poor old Bunter!" sighed his lordship, as he detached his lazy limbs from the armchair. "What has he been up to this time?"

"Those dashed keys," said Bob Cherry. "They know now that Bunter's got them, the blithering owl!"

Arthur Carter smiled faintly.

"Have they spotted Bunter at last?" he asked carelessly.

"Wingate came on the scene while the fat duffer was bolting away from a ragging!" said Harry. "Wingate marched him off to the Head at once. Now we're ordered into the Form-room. That's all I know."

"Has he given up the keys, then?" drawled Carter.

"I don't know! Cut along to the Form-room, you chaps."

"Blessed if it doesn't look as if the fat Owl has lost them, or something," said Frank Nugent.

"I shouldn't wonder!"

"By gum! Quelch will be ratty if he doesn't hand them over now that he knows that Bunter has them!" said Carter. "As you're such a pal of his, Cherry, hadn't you better tip him to cough them up."

"He says he hasn't got them!" grunted Bob.

Carter laughed.

"You don't believe that, I suppose?" he asked.

Bob Cherry made no reply. It was true that he did not believe Bunter—or, at most, half-believed him—but he was not disposed to discuss that with Carter. He left the Rag without speaking.

Carter followed with the other fellows, whom Wharton had come there to call to the Form-room. There was a lurking grin on his face as he went.

It had not been necessary, after all, for him to play the sneak; Quelch had found out about Bunter. The fat Owl had been up before the Head; it was known that he had snooped the keys.

Wharton did not know, and the other fellows did not know, whether he had handed them over or not. But Carter knew! Bunter certainly could not have handed over those keys; and the inevitable conclusion, so far as Carter could see, was that he refused to reveal what he had done with them, and the vials of wrath were sure to be poured on his devoted fat head!

And later on, when it came out that that locked drawer had been tampered with, who could fail to believe that it was Bunter who had been there—when he was already judged, and punished, for keeping back those keys?

That was as certain to follow, as night was certain to follow day, when Mr. Quelch at length gave up hope of recovering the keys and sent for a locksmith!

That was how Carter looked at the matter—that was how he could not help looking at it—and he was easy in his mind and in a cheerful and satisfied mood as he joined the rest of the Form in the Remove-room.

Other fellows were not looking either cheerful or satisfied. They had ragged the fat Owl, and were preparing to go on ragging him till he gave up the keys and got the Form off that sentence of detention. But they had not wished or intended to give him away to the beaks!

That was Bunter's own doing! If he were up for severe punishment, he had brought it on himself. Nobody doubted that he was.

All the Form knew that Wingate had taken him to the Head, and that he was now waiting in Quelch's study. Not to a single fellow did it occur for a moment that the calling together of the Remove had anything to do with any fellow but Bunter. There was no doubt that he was up for a whopping—and that, so far as the juniors knew, was all.

Wingate of the Sixth saw all the Form in with the exception of Bunter, and then departed to inform Mr. Quelch that they were ready for him. There was a buzz of voices in the Remove-room after the prefect had gone.

"That howling ass!" said Peter Todd. "If he hadn't bolted and bashed into Wingate—"

"Just like Bunter!" said the Bounder.

"Well, it was bound to come out sooner or later," said Skinner, "and I don't want detention to-morrow for one. Quelch is bound to wash that out now he knows who had the keys."

"After all, Bunter had chances enough of doing the sensible thing," said Johnny Bull. "He should have handed over the keys."

"I fancy he would have, if he'd had them," said Bob Cherry. "Looks to me

as if he's lost them. It would be like him."

"The likefulness would be terrific."

"Poor old Bunter!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here they come!"

The buzz of voices died away as Mr. Quelch entered the Form-room, with the dismal fat Owl trailing after him.

Bunter's fat face was doleful and woeful. He knew what he had to expect, and the prospect did not seem to exhilarate him. He blinked dismally at the Removes as he trailed in after his Form-master.

Mr. Quelch's face was set and grim.

He picked up a cane from his desk—a proceeding that all the Removes expected.

Bunter eyed it apprehensively.

"My boys," said Mr. Quelch, addressing the silent Form, "it has now transpired that the missing keys were in Bunter's possession. Bunter has confessed that he picked them up and deliberately kept possession of them from a foolish desire to cause trouble to his Form-master. For that offence Bunter will be caned severely."

"Oh lor'!"

"Bunter states that the keys are no longer in his possession," continued Mr. Quelch. "If they are recovered, the sentence of detention passed on his Form will be rescinded. I will, however, come to that later. Bunter, you will now bend over that chair!"

"I—I say, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I never had those keys, sir—"

"What?" roared Mr. Quelch.

"I—I—I didn't, sir!" groaned Bunter, with an alarmed eye on the cane in his Form-master's hand. "The actual fact is, sir, that—I—I never even saw them, and—and—and never—"

"Bend over that chair at once, Bunter!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Oh jiminy!"

Billy Bunter dismally bent over the chair! He wriggled with apprehension as he did so. His apprehension was well-founded! He guessed that Mr. Quelch was going to lay it on hard! He guessed correctly!

Swipe!

"Yooo-hoooo!"

Swipe!

"Wow!"

Swipe!

"Oh crikey!"

Swipe!

"Yaroooooooooooo!"

Swipe!

"Ow-ow-ow-ow-ow-ow-wow!"

Swipe!

"Woooooooooooooooooooooh!" roared Bunter. "Oh crumbs! Oh lor'! Woooooh!"

Mr. Quelch laid down the cane.

"You may now take your place with the Form, Bunter!" he said.

"Ow! Oh! Ow! Wow! Oooh!"

"And if you make another sound," continued Mr. Quelch grimly, "I shall cane you again, Bunter, and more severely."

Billy Bunter blinked at him. It was not easy for Bunter to refrain from making another sound, in the painful circumstances. But, as Mr. Quelch evidently meant what he said, the hapless fat Owl made a tremendous effort, and suppressed the sounds of woo.

Wriggling like a fat eel, Bunter tottered to his place in the Form. He stood there, wriggling, exerting himself to suppress squeaks of anguish. The further proceedings had no interest whatever for the suffering Owl! But they had a good deal of interest for the



COME INTO the OFFICE, BOYS - AND GIRLS!

Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers. Write to him: Editor of the "Magnet," The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

HALLO, readers all over the British Isles and overseas! Here's wishing you all many enjoyable hours reading the jolly old MAGNET!

I commence my Chat thus, as this week I have received letters not only from readers living in England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, but from practically every dominion and colony in the empire.

"Is it true," asks John Crowhurst, of Maplethorpe, "that an apple a day keeps the doctor away?" Well, I must say that I've heard the saying quite a number of times, but whether it's true or not, I cannot say. Personally, I very rarely eat an apple myself, and—touch wood!—doctors would starve if they relied on me for their bread-and-butter. Believe me, when I have a fit of the "blues," I settle myself comfortably in my arm-chair, and read the next Frank Richards yarn. Then—hey presto!—I'm as right as ninepence again.

Who could help smiling at the amusing and amazing adventures of Billy Bunter? For year in and year out the Owl of the Greyfriars Remove has kept the whole world rocking with laughter. Long may he continue the good work!

SO much for that, then. And now to deal with a letter sent me by a Scots chum hailing from Perth, and whose name is Jock McDougall. Jock asks, as so many readers have asked in the past, if it is not possible to publish the MAGNET twice a week. Seven days is too long to wait for the next yarn of Harry Wharton & Co., he says. Sorry, my chum, but I'm afraid it can't be done. The only thing I can do is to recommend the

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to you. Every month there is a book-length yarn of your old favourites in this popular 4d. Library. The current story in No. 328 is entitled: "Detective Bunter!" and tells how the fat junior of Greyfriars solves a mystery which has got a detective and the police guessing. The companion volumes to this, by the way, are No. 329—telling of the thrilling adventures of Bill Sampson, the six-gun schoolmaster, and his lively pupils of the cow-town school, entitled: "The Rebellion at Pack-saddle!" and No. 330—"The House-master's Revenge!" introducing those old-time favourites, Nipper & Co., of St. Frank's. One shilling buys the three volumes, chums.

WITH a little more space to spare, here are a few RAPID FIRE REPLIES

to shorter queries sent in by readers: "What is 'Hitch-Hiking'?" It consists of making journeys, not by hiking properly, but by begging lifts from passing motorists, lorry-drivers, and so on. It is carried out a great deal in America.

"How many books are there in the British Museum?" It is difficult to say, for new books are being added every day. There are considerably over four million volumes, making it the largest library in the world.

"When did Frank Richards first write for the MAGNET?" Thirty years ago. His very early yarns are now being re-published in our companion paper, the "Gem."

Gee! I'd almost forgotten to mention a word or two about next week's great Greyfriars yarn, "BOUND FOR THE WILD WEST!" by Frank Richards. As you are already aware, if you've read my last two "pow-wows," next Saturday will see the opening story of an exciting series dealing with the adventures of Harry Wharton & Co., en route for the rolling prairies of Texas, as guests of Herbert Vernon-Smith, whose millionaire father is a ranch-owner. That danger lurks in the offing can be gathered from a letter handed to Vernon-Smith when the chums reach New York, containing the following warning: "Your best guess is to hit that steamer again, and hit it quick! You won't get farther than New York! Last warning!" There are thrills for Harry Wharton & Co., and thrills for you, so be sure and join up with this most thrilling of all Easter trips—the boat steams out of the Mersey next Saturday.

YOUR EDITOR.

rest of the Form—all the fellows realised now that something more was coming, and wondered what it was.

THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER.

The End of His Tether!

"**C**ARTER!"

Mr. Quelch rapped out the name, like a bullet.

Arthur Carter started.

"Ye-es, sir!" he stammered.

"Please stand out before the Form."

Carter stared at him blankly. He did not stir—he stood rooted, staring.

Not for a moment had Carter expected to receive special attention from his Form-master. That Quelch had suspected him of abstracting the keys, in the first place, he knew, and all the Form knew. But since the discovery that Bunter had them, that, he had taken for granted, was all washed out. Bunter was known to be the culprit—he had been punished for being the culprit—so it was all clear for Carter!

He felt, for a moment, a throb of terror. But the next moment he pulled himself together. It was something else—it could not be in connection with the keys that Quelch called on him. How could it be?

"You hear me, Carter?"

"Yes, sir!" gasped Carter.

He stepped out before the Form; the Remove fellows gazing at him, quite at a loss. They, as well as Carter, concluded that it was in connection with some other matter that he was called out. Plenty of them knew that Arthur Carter had a good many secrets to keep. Half a dozen fellows, at least, would not have been surprised to hear that he had been spotted in some shady quarter out of bounds.

Mr. Quelch gave him a very penetrating look, and then turned his eyes on the waiting Form.

"Some boy in this Form," said the Remove master, very distinctly, "has my keys in his possession. I order that boy to hand them over immediately."

The Removes could only blink at him. So far as they could see, Quelch knew who had the keys; or what did his whopping of Bunter mean?

"There is no doubt," continued Mr. Quelch, "that Bunter had the keys in the first place. He has admitted it, and has been punished for it."

"Ow!" came a squeak.

The gimlet eye gleamed at Bunter! He did not squeak again.

"Bunter states," continued Mr. Quelch, "that he concealed the keys in a certain spot, and that they were missing when looked for the following morning. If that statement is correct,

some other boy must have watched Bunter hiding the keys, or else found them by chance. In either case, he removed them, and they are now in his possession."

Carter hardly breathed.

The keys, certainly, were not in his possession! They were safely hidden under a loose brick behind Gosling's wood-shed!

But there was something else in his possession; compared with which the keys would have been merely a trifle! What was coming now?

"In these circumstances," added the Remove master, "I am compelled to take steps that are extremely disagreeable to me. I shall order every boy present to turn out his pockets, unless the keys are handed over at once."

There was a dead silence.

The Remove fellows knew now why they had been gathered in the Form-room. It was not only to witness Bunter's whopping! Quelch knew, or thought he knew, that one of them had the keys; and they were there for him to ascertain the fact! And as he had called out Carter, it was fairly clear on which member of the Form his suspicions were centred!

Carter felt a sagging at the knees!

The keys were safe enough—nobody would find them where he had hidden

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them, unless and until he chose. But if his pockets were searched for the keys, something else would come to light! This was the safety on which he had counted as an assured thing!

The Bounder nudged Bob Cherry.

"Look at Carter!" he whispered.

Bob looked—and started.

Deeply as he disliked and despised the schemer of the Remove, he could have pitied him at that moment.

Carter's face was white, his eyes dilated with terror. Bob, looking at him, wondered.

The prospect of a caning or a flogging could not have frightened the fellow like this. There was something else—something more serious—something terribly serious—to bring that look to Carter's face! What was it he feared if his pockets were turned out?

Mr. Quelch waited—a long, long minute. No one spoke. He broke the deep silence at last.

"Very well. Every boy here will turn out his pockets. You will be the first, Carter."

"I—" stammered Carter. "I—"

His voice failed him.

"It was you, Carter, who played a similar trick on a previous occasion," said Mr. Quelch. "For that reason I shall commence this investigation with you. If the keys are not found on you, Carter, the search will proceed through the whole Form."

"I—I know nothing of the keys, sir!" gasped Carter. "Every fellow in the Form knows that Bunter has them—"

"You will turn out your pockets on my desk, Carter!" interrupted Mr. Quelch sharply.

Carter did not stir. He looked almost wildly at his Form-master. Mr. Quelch's face grew grimmer and grimmer. He had suspected Carter; he more than suspected him now. The white terror in the wretched junior's face, which was visible to all the Remove, was not likely to escape his eye.

There was no doubt in any mind now that Carter had the missing keys. That he dared not face a search was evident. All eyes were fixed on him. Even Billy Bunter forgot to wriggle, and blinked curiously at his relative through his big spectacles.

"I say, you fellows, Carter's got 'em!" breathed the fat Owl. "I say, that beast snoopied them out of the Cloisters, and he had them all the time, and you beasts kept on booting me, and—"

"Silence!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

He fixed his eyes sternly on Carter. He had no doubt now that the missing keys would be discovered when Carter turned his pockets out. He little dreamed what discovery it was that Carter dreaded!

"Carter," he rapped, "you have heard me! What does this mean, Carter? Turn out your pockets at once on my desk—every pocket, to the lining!"

Carter made a backward step, and his glance swept wildly round him. In amazement the juniors saw that the thought was in his mind of making a sudden bolt to escape. He was utterly desperate.

Mr. Quelch made a rapid stride forward and grasped him by the shoulder. His grip was like iron. His face was a good deal like iron, too.

"Boy, turn out your pockets at once!" he thundered.

Carter sagged in his grasp. He made no movement to obey. The game was up. The finish had come with a crash! Mr. Quelch gripped the back of his collar with one hand. With the other he proceeded to turn out Carter's pockets; but as the inside jacket pocket was the first to be turned out he did not need to proceed further.

In utter astonishment the Remove master drew out a wad of pound notes!

He stared at them; he almost goggled at them. He released Carter's collar, and the wretched junior leaned against the Form-master's desk, overcome.

There was a general gasp in the Remove. The juniors stared at the little bundle of currency notes in their Form-master's hand like fellows in a dream.

"What—what—what is this?" Mr. Quelch's voice was almost husky. "What—Carter, whose is this money? There must be nearly twenty pounds here! Wretched boy, what have you done?"

Carter groaned.

"Are you prepared to state, Carter, that this large sum of money is your own?" asked Mr. Quelch, in a grinding voice.

Carter could not speak. He had nothing to say. There were seventeen pound notes in Mr. Quelch's hand. Seventeen pound notes were missing from the cash-drawer in his study, which would assuredly be opened and examined now, whether the keys were found or not!

"Carter"—Mr. Quelch spoke slowly and very distinctly—"I find a large sum of money in your possession—a sum that cannot possibly be your own. You have the keys. You have used them in my study. You have purloined this sum, Carter. Do you deny it?"

It was useless to deny it. A low groan came from the wretched junior, and that was all.

Mr. Quelch drew a deep, deep breath.

"Carter, follow me! This is a matter for your headmaster to deal with. Boys, dismiss!"

With the wad of notes in one hand, the other on Carter's shoulder, Mr.

Quelch led him from the Form-room, and the Removites streamed out in a buzz of excitement.

Arthur Carter was not seen in the Greyfriars Remove again.

That he was going everyone knew, and no one would feel sorry that the school was to see the last of him.

They learned that he was in the punishment-room, to remain there till he was sent home. And it was learned that Quelch had found his keys, from which they guessed that Carter had revealed where he had placed them. It was the following morning, when the Remove were in class, that the sound of wheels was heard, and the Removites exchanged glances. They knew that it was the station cab taking Carter away. The sound died away. The Greyfriars Remove had seen and heard the last of Arthur Carter!

"I say, you fellows!" Billy Bunter blinked into Study No. 1 at tea-time, and found the Famous Five there. "I say, I don't mind teasing with you fellows in this study, now that beast Carter's gone."

"Shut up!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Well, he was a beast, you know."

Bob picked up a half-loaf from the table.

"Where will you have it?" he inquired.

"Oh, really, Cherry! I say, if you take my tip you'll be civil to a chap," said Bunter warningly. "It may pay you to be civil, I can tell you. Carter's dished himself all right with old Joe, and that jolly well means that the oof will be coming my way, see? Oodles and oodles of oof, I can jolly well tell you! If you fellows want me to keep friendly, when I'm rolling in it, I can jolly well say—Wow! Beast! Ow!"

Whiz! Bump!

Half a loaf, according to the proverb, is better than no bread; but Billy Bunter, just then, would certainly have preferred no bread. He sat down in the passage with a bump and a roar.

"Beast!" roared Bunter. "I jolly well won't lend you anything, now, when I get the oof! You can come squirming round me, and—"

"Hand me that inkpot, Franky!"

Bunter's voice was heard no more. He decided not to wait for the inkpot!

THE END.

(Whatever you do, chums, don't miss "BOUND FOR THE WILD WEST!" the opening yarn of a grand new holiday series. It will appear in next Saturday's MAGNET. You'll enjoy it no end!)

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WELL ROWED, THE FOURTH!

By DICKY NUGENT

A Screamingly Funny School Story of Jack Jolly & Co., of St. Sam's.



The GREYFRIARS HERALD

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April 2nd, 1938.



WOULDN'T LET BAKED BEANS BEAT HIM!

Tragedy of Missing Tin-Opener

Johnny Bull, the strong, silent man of the Remove, knows not the meaning of surrender. So naturally, when he wanted to open a tin of baked beans for supper and found that the tin-opener was missing, he simply tried to open it without a tin-opener.

With lips set, he got out his pocket-knife and attacked it with the best blade. The blade snapped. Johnny set his lips a little more tightly and used the second-best blade. The same thing happened to that and to the third blade, too. Johnny's eyes glistened slightly, but he showed no other sign of emotion. He picked up the poker, placed the tin on the floor, and tried to drill a hole through it. The tin slipped and Johnny Bull fell down and hit the floor with his nose. His nose got the worst of it, but you would hardly have thought it by the cold, unmoved look on his face, as he picked himself up again.

Somebody suggested borrowing a tin-opener from another study. A grunt escaped Johnny, but that was all. The onlookers judged that his never-say-die spirit was aroused—that he was grimly determined to open that tin of baked beans with such means as were at his disposal.

He put the tin on the table and attacked it with a hatchet. He dented it in six places, but none of the six looked like extending into a hole.

Reluctantly he laid aside the hatchet and put in some heavy work with the coal-hammer. The tin became egg-shaped, then sausage-shaped, and, finally, no shape at all. But after five minutes he was no nearer the beans.

The coal-hammer was dropped and Johnny went for the tin with his bare hands—kneading it and wrenching and twisting it till the muscles of his brawny arms stood out like iron bands. There was no result.

He put it on the floor again and jumped on it. He picked it up and started chucking it all round the study. Nothing happened. The onlookers quietly withdrew and left him to it.

That was last night. We have not seen him since. But if we may hazard a guess, he is, at the time of going to press, rolling round and round on the floor of the study, gnawing at it like a bow-wow at a bone.

One thing is certain. Johnny Bull will never let himself be beaten by a tin of baked beans!

In the Rag the other evening, we congratulated Bunter on his literary taste when he remarked that the best feature in the "Greyfriars Herald" was the Dicky Nugent yarns.

We took a back seat again, however, when Bunter went on to say that he didn't think much of the stories, but, at least, the kid could spell!

"Can't they, though?"

The wringing challenge came from Jack Jolly. He stepped fourth, his eyes flashing and his chest heaving.

"Leave it to the Fourth, Burleigh!" he

made up their minds to win the race or perish in the attempt!

Fortunately, as things turned out, there was no need for them to perish. Right from the start, they took the mezzuro



said. "Our boat is ready and so are we! Only say the word and we'll row for St. Sam's!"

"My hat! That's an idea!" cried Burleigh. "You put up a topping show yesterday. Why not to-day? Go in and win, kid!"

"HOORAY!"

Cheering wildly, Jack Jolly and his crew peeled off their coats. Their dream had come true, after all!

While Burleigh and his crew retired for a much-needed change and rub-down, the Fourth Formers got out their boat and took to the water.

When they lined up level with St. Bill's for the start, the young oarsmen looked grim and determined. They had

of their heavier opponents. Soon they were a length in front—then two lengths—then three—then a duzzen!

They passed the winning-post winners by a good twenty lengths, while the St. Bill's crew collapsed in their boat, wacked to the wide!

The cheering was simply deafening! Even Doctor Birchmall had to yield to the general enthusiasm and cheer with the rest.

"My win, after all, sir, I fancy!" grinned Burleigh, as he reappeared beside the Head. "And, taking everything into consideration, I think you ought to stand a feed to the winning team as well!"

And the Head felt so sheepish over the affair that he adopted the suggestion like a lamb!

HARRY WHARTON CALLING!

"I think it's high time Greyfriars had one or two Old Boys in the Boat Race," writes a correspondent. "Why don't you go in more for sculling?"

Well, you can't have everything! It's quite true that we do not specialise in river work at Greyfriars. The traditions we have to uphold relate chiefly to footer and cricket, and we have all our work cut out to uphold them. The general standard of sculling suffers a little as a result of this.

All the same, there are several racing skiffs available in the school boathouse and in the summer term some of us put in quite a lot of practice. Perhaps you will hear something about it in Greyfriars annals yet to be told.

The honour of being represented in the Varsity boats has not fallen to us in recent years; but it may happen one of these days. There are several promising oarsmen in the Remove and it is quite possible that one of them is destined to be the first Rowing Blue from Greyfriars since 11 somewhat remote occasion when it last happened. Here's hoping!

There is no lack of enthusiasm in the school, anyway, in regard to this year's Boat Race. Most of us in the Lower School have been sporting our colours for a week or more and there has been plenty of keen, and in some cases, heated, argument about the respective chances of the two crews.

Bolso-Major became a little too heated

in championing the chance of Oxford and started making tours round the school, biffing every Cambridge supporter he met! His ardour was dampened, however, when the Cambridge fans formed an Anti-Bolsover Front and started biffing him back; and the latest is that Bolsy has discreetly gone over to the Light Blues.

In the Third Form, there has been still more excitement, ending in a free fight on two occasions, while in the Second I understand that civil war is raging. Deaks and prefects will be rather glad when the race is over and peace descends on us once again.

Meet you again in next week's "Herald," chums!

HARRY WHARTON.

small appeared, grinning all over his dial.

"Ha, ha, ha! It looks as if the boat race is over sooner than you expected, boys!" he chortled cheerily. "You can't possibly row now, so the race will go to St. Bill's by default! Burleigh, I fancy you owe me a feed!"

Burleigh started violently; a look of dark suspicion came into his face. "My hat! That boat weighed jolly heavy, now I come to think of it! Surely, sir, for the sake of a meek feed, you—didn't tamper with it?"

Doctor Birchmall turned as red as a ripe tomato.

"Really, Burleigh, I hope you don't suspect me of doing a thing like that! Why, I wouldn't dream of tying cannon-balls under the seats to make the boat sink!"

"Grate pip!" gasped Burleigh. "You're self-convinced—convinced out of your own mouth! To think, sir, that just because you wanted a free feed, you let down your own side! Shame on you, sir! Now St. Sam's can't even make a fight of it!"

Then Doctor Birch-

be ready for anything on Boatrice Day!

Meanwhile, Doctor Birchmall had walked away from the boat-house, looking not quite so pleased with himself now that he had had time to reflect on his rash wager with Burleigh.

"My hat! I hoap I haven't let myself in for it!" he muttered, as he wended his way back to St. Sam's. "It will be simply garstly if I have to pay for a feed for a greedy grato lout like Burleigh!"

He pondered deeply, then suddenly he grinned. "I know!" he muttered. "Just to make sure that St. Sam's can't win, I will visit the boat-house in the dead of night and fix some hevvy weight to the keel of Burleigh's boat. They can't win then, whatever happens. Ha, ha, ha!"

Not many headmasters would have descended to loading the dice against their own boatrice crew for the sake of a meek feed; and fever still would have thought of such a remarkable way of doing it as the Head. But Doctor Birchmall was rather an unusual sort of headmaster, and he set to work to put his braucwave into operation with the greatest of glee.

Lato that nite, when the moon shone bright he sneaked off down to the river and went to the boat-house. To avoid reckernition, he wore a wide-brimmed hat and a flowing cloak; and underneath the cloak he carried a couple of cannon-balls which he had borrowed from the cannon which adorned the quad at St. Sam's.

Once inside the boat-house, he soon performed his fowl task. He tied one cannon-ball under the cox's seat and the other under Burleigh's. Then he returned to St. Sam's, chuckling into his beard and rubbing his hands with glee, as he trotted across the moonlit fields.

"The desprit deed is done!" he gloated. "St. Sam's can never win the race now—and the feed's as good as mine! Hooley!"

And the Head sneaked back to the skool to

sleep the sleep of the unjust and dream sweet dreams of the feed that he thought was his.

Needless to say, the St. Sam's crew found their boat remarkably weighty when they carried it down to the water on the following day. But nobody thought to look inside for a couple of concealed cannon-balls, and the seniors could only conclude that they were not so strong as usual.

Jack Jolly and his pals, who were watching them, wished more than ever that the Fourth could row for St. Sam's when they saw how the Sixth were staggering.

"My hat! They haven't even got strength enuff to carry their boat!" gasped Jack Jolly. "How can such a feeble crew expect to win a race like this?"

Nobody answered that question. They were all too bizzzy watching Burleigh and his men stepping into their boat.

The St. Bill's crew were already in mid-stream paddling along to the starting-post. This made the St. Sam's crew

Doctor Birchmall sniffed.

"All the same, Burleigh, I wouldn't mind betting you a feed in the tuckshop that without me rowing for the skool St. Bill's will beat St. Sam's to-morrow."

"Right-ho, sir!" chuckled Burleigh. "I stand you a feed if St. Bill's win; and you do the same for me if St. Sam's win!"

And Burleigh turned away to help his crew to carry their racing skiff back to the boathouse.

Jack Jolly and his pals, who were carrying their own boat back, were just in time to hear Burleigh's last remark. It brought a thoughtful expression into Jack Jolly's face.

"Dashed if I see anything to larf at!" he snorted. "I could make a better fist at it than any of you and chance it! Why shouldn't I row for St. Sam's?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Burleigh. "For one reason, sir, because you're such a doddery old fogey!"

"Doddery old fogey he bloved!" cried the Head indignantly. "Why I could give points to some of you lumbering grato louts, I'll wager! Think carefully, Burleigh, before you turn down my marvellous offer. I am offering to row for you to-morrow—and if I row, it means certain victory!"

"Yes—certain victory for St. Bill's!" grinned Burleigh. "Thanks all the same, sir; but we'll try and manmidge without you somehow."

Doctor Birchmall frowned.

"I shall have no simperthy to waste on you when you're licked to a frazzle, Burleigh!" he cried. "And licked to a frazzle you surely will be after your miserable eggshhibition to-day!"

"Oh, I don't know, sir!" grinned Burleigh. "We're a pretty good crew, really. The Fourth Form kids caught us on one of our 'off' days. We shall be right back in form to-morrow."



"In—out! In—out!" Creek! Splash! Creek! Splash!

"Go it, the Fourth!" The fellows on the towpath beside the glistening River Ripple galloped along like ponies—and cheered themselves hoarse!

It was the day before the grato boatrice between St. Sam's and St. Bill's; and Burleigh, the kaptin of St. Sam's, and his picked crew of seniors were holding a sort of dress rehearsal of the race.

A crew of Fourth Formers had been given the task of rowing against the mitey men of the Sixth. Both boats had started together on the firing of a pistol-shot by Mr. Lickham.

Of course, everybody had taken it for granted that Burleigh's boat would wack their yung opponents hollow. But a shock was in store for St. Sam's students of rowing.

Instead of the Sixth wacking the Fourth, it was the Fourth who were wacking the Sixth! Before the echo of the pistol-shot had died away, Jack Jolly and his merry men were two lengths ahead of the seniors; and, try as they would, Burleigh & Co. could not draw level!

The race finished at the skool boathouse; and there were roars of larfter for the seniors as well as loud cheers for the juniors as Jack Jolly's boat flashed past the winning-post in an easy winner.

"Ha, ha, ha! What a fiasco!"

"Fancy the Fourth beating the Sixth! What a come-down for Burleigh!"

The towpath fairly buzzed with remarks like these, as the Sixth, looking as red as turkey-cocks, paddled in to the boathouse and stepped on to the landing-stage.

The loudest of the critticks was Doctor Birchmall. "The revered and majestic head of St. Sam's wore a look of sopremo skorn as he tramped across the landing-stage to greet the Sixth Formers."

"What a crew!" he scoffed. "What an eggshhibition! Never in all my life have I seen such garstly skulling, Burleigh! You talk about licking St. Bill's! Why, you couldn't lick an in-

fants' skool in paddle-boats!"

"Thanks awfully for those few kind words, sir!" said Burleigh sarcastically. "Have you any more bright ideas?"

"Yes, Burleigh, I have! The idea that I had while I watched your puny, piffing pretensions to paddling was that there is only one hoap for you to-morrow."

Burleigh looked more interested.

"Indeed, sir?" he said. "What is it?"

"Your one hoap, Burleigh, is to resine your position as stroke and let me row in your place!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" The Sixth Formers shrieked, while the Head glared.

"Dashed if I see anything to larf at!" he snorted. "I could make a better fist at it than any of you and chance it! Why shouldn't I row for St. Sam's?"

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