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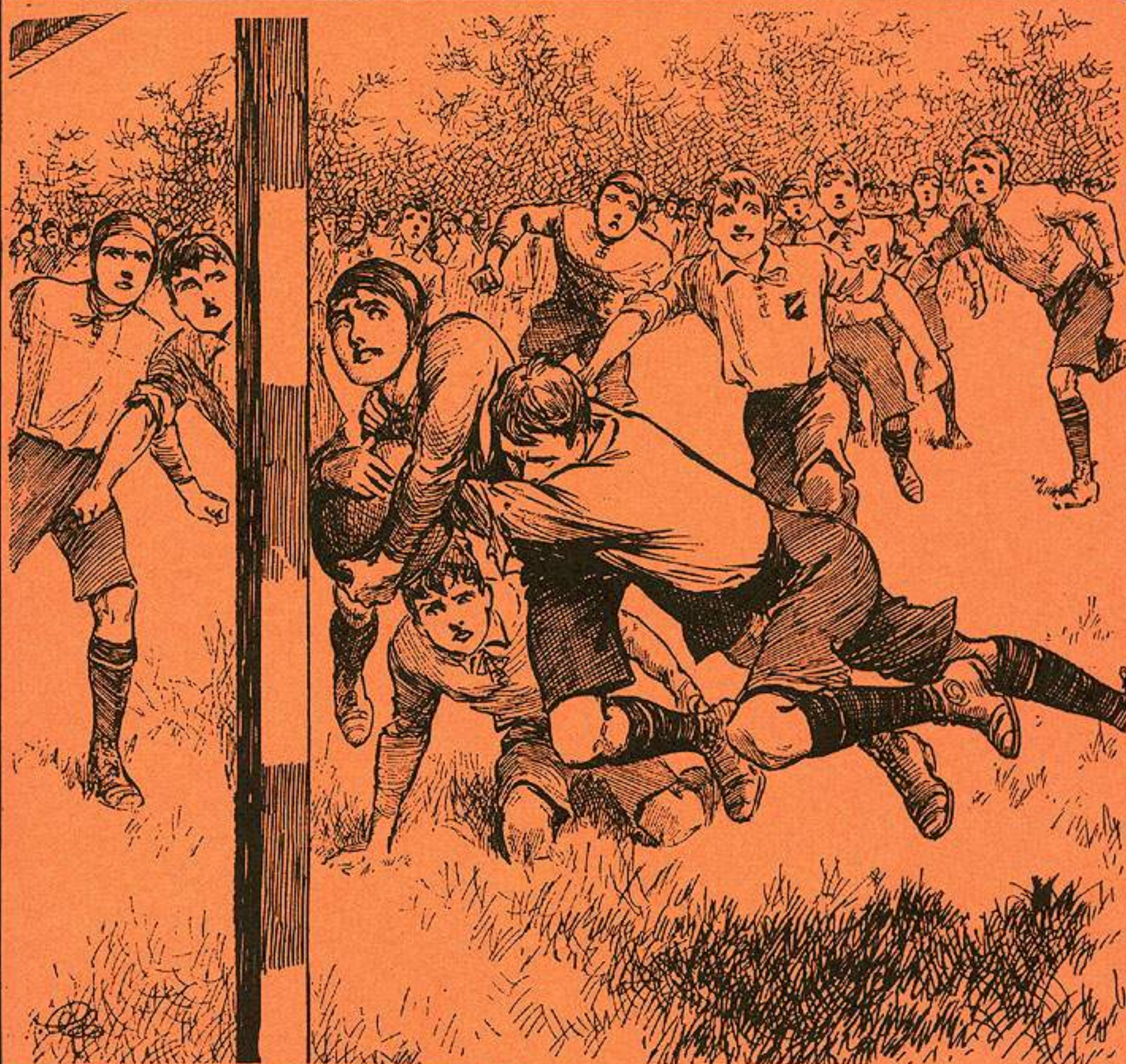
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NO. 104.

VOL. 4.

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NEXT
WEEK

"THE GREYFRIARS TREASURE."

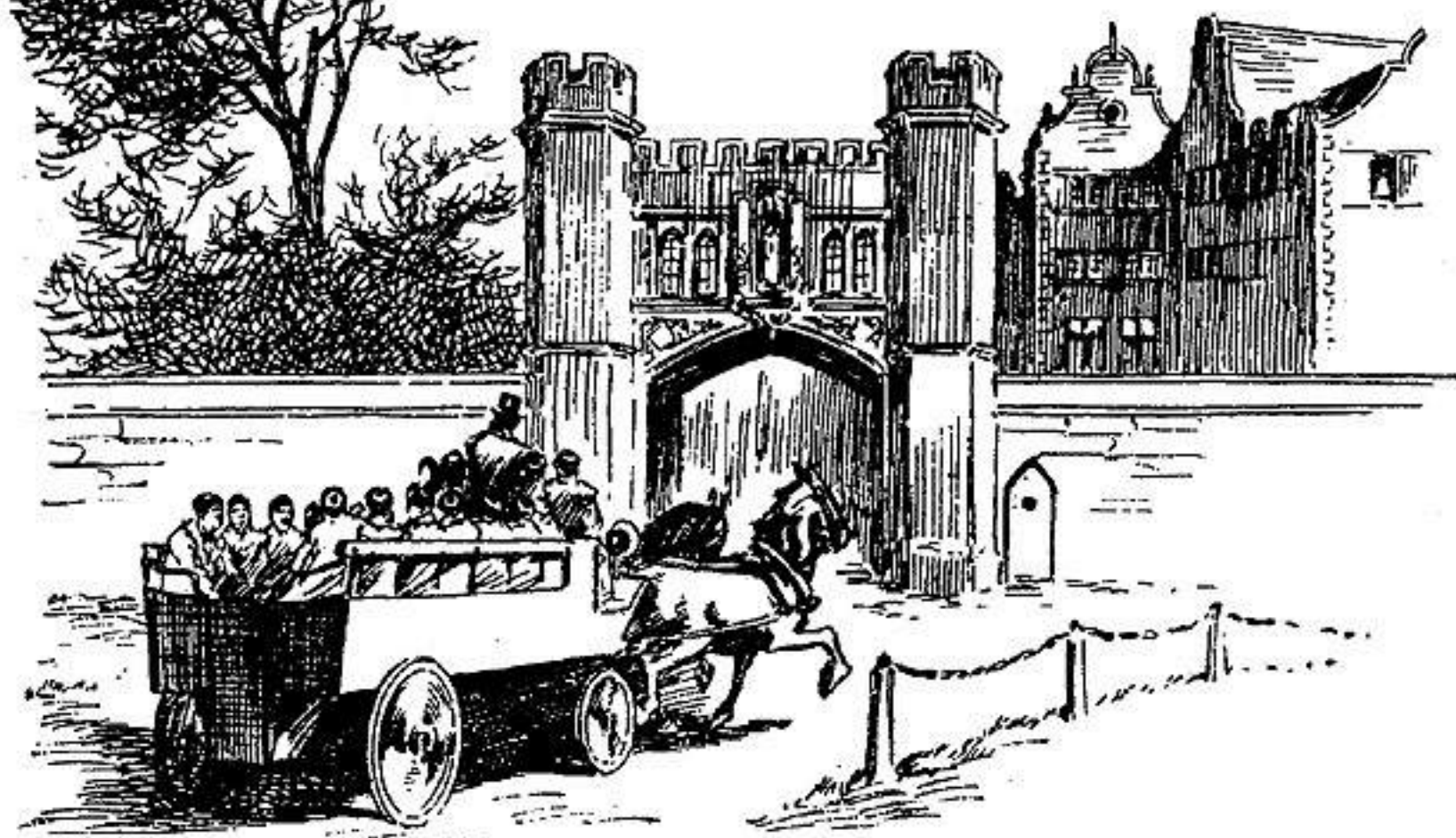
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THE FIRST CHAPTER. Bunter Goes.

"I SAY, Wharton——"
"Hallo!"
"I suppose you're going to put me down as a reserve?"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at!" said Billy Bunter, blinking at Harry Wharton through his spectacles. "You may want reserves. You never know what may happen. You're going over to play a school you've never

played before, too. If you're any good as a football skipper you'll take some reserves."

"I'm going to, Billy," said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Well, then, I suppose you'll take me."

"Well, I'll find room for you in the brake if you like, Bunt," said Wharton, good-naturedly; "but I won't have you as a reserve—with many thanks."

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"I don't know," remarked Bob Cherry, cocking his eye thoughtfully at Billy Bunter. "He might do as a reserve goalkeeper. Of course, he couldn't stop a ball with his

hands or feet—but if he stood between the goalposts, there wouldn't be much room for a ball to get through."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fat junior blinked indignantly. Billy Bunter had many strange ideas, but the idea that he could play football was one of the most curious of them. Harry Wharton & Co. of the Remove were about to start for Bolsover, to play the junior team there, and Billy Bunter, who had tried in vain to get included in the team, imagined that he was at least entitled to go as a reserve.

"You chap, ready?" said Wharton. "It's time we started. The brake's at the door, and we've got to catch the train at Friardale."

"We're ready."

"The readiness is terrific," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur, coming out with a bag slung on his arm, and a grin on his dusky face.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Bundle in," said Harry Wharton. "No time to lose."

"I say—"

"Good-bye, Bunter!"

"I'm jolly well coming with you!" exclaimed the fat junior, tearing out of the house, with somebody's overcoat on his arm, and somebody else's cap in his hand. "Hold on!"

"My dear chap, we've got plenty of reserves, and if we hadn't, we shouldn't pick out the slowest, stupidest, fattest dummy in the Remove," said Bob Cherry, with that charming frankness which was one of his characteristics.

"Exactly," said Wharton. "You'll have to reduce your weight by a dozen stone or so, Billy, and take to running faster than a tortoise. Then there might be a chance for you—perhaps."

"You know jolly well that I'm a dab at footer—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But I'm coming anyway. I want to see the game, and I suppose there will be a bit of a feed afterwards, as we have such a blessed long journey," said Billy Bunter. "I don't see why you wanted to fix up a match at a school you don't know, with fellows you've never seen, at such a beastly long way off. I don't see—"

"There are lots of things you don't see, Billy. You don't see you're wasting time at the present moment. Get off that step."

"I'm coming in."

"Well, bundle in quick, then."

Billy Bunter bundled in. The horses started before he was fairly in the brake, and he pitched forward headlong among the crowded juniors.

"Ow! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Help! I—I say, you fellows, help a chap up."

The brake rolled on towards the gates. A crowd of juniors stood round and waved their caps, wishing good-luck to the departing team.

Bob Cherry dragged Billy Bunter up from the countless legs in the brake, and made room for him on a seat.

"Now keep quiet," he said.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Shut up!"

The brake was crowded, and Billy Bunter was jammed in between Bob Cherry and Tom Brown, and he breathed with difficulty. Billy Bunter was fat, and he took up about twice as much room as an ordinary junior. He blinked indignantly at Tom Brown, and then at Bob Cherry, but they did not seem to notice it. The brake rolled out of the school gates, to the accompaniment of a final cheer from the juniors of Greyfriars.

As a rule, the Greyfriars fellows managed to follow their football teams, whether junior or senior, when they were playing away.

But on the present occasion it was not feasible.

Harry Wharton had received a challenge from the junior football team of Bolsover, a school at a considerable distance, to be reached only by railway.

The fare was a great consideration. The funds of the junior club stood the fares of the members of the team, and most of the other fellows thought twice before spending one-and-ninence on a return ticket.

It was not known, either, whether the match would be a particularly good one.

The Greyfriars fellows did not know what kind of a team Bolsover put into the field. Bolsover was too far away for them to have met any of the fellows. In fact, it was so far, that Wharton had been doubtful about accepting the challenge. The Bolsover men had evidently heard of the Greyfriars junior team, which had been winning considerable victories during the season at home and away, and were anxious to meet it. Wharton looked over the engagement list and found that he had two dates—one empty, and

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the other that of a scratched match. So he sent them over to Bolsover, who accepted the dates, and matches at home and away were arranged.

The first was to be played on the Bolsover ground, and the Greyfriars juniors were starting off on this bright winter afternoon to meet their as yet unknown opponents.

Of the Bolsover form they knew nothing. But they were feeling quite confident. The Remove team had an excellent opinion of themselves—as, indeed, the Remove in general had—and they had little doubt of returning home, with another triumph to their list.

The brake rolled down the lane towards Friardale.

"I—I say, you fellows," said Billy Bunter, at last, as he gasped for breath, "you might give a fellow a little more room."

"Don't you shove me," said Russell.

"Faith, and I can't squeeze up any more," said Micky Desmond.

"You see how it is, Bunter, said Bob Cherry, "you must do the best you can. You see, there really isn't room for a chap your size in any brake."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"We shall be at the station in ten minutes," said Harry Wharton. "Do leave off grumbling for a bit, Bunter!"

"That's all very well for a lath of a fellow like you," said Billy Bunter indignantly. "I'm plump."

"Ha, ha! You are, by Jove!"

"I'm short of breath, too. I've got a bag of tarts in my pocket, too, and I don't want them squashed. Make more room."

"Can't be did."

"Oh, really—"

"Shut up!"

"Look here, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!" roared the whole brake.

And Billy Bunter relapsed into indignant silence. He blinked round angrily at the unsympathetic faces. Suddenly a gleam darted into his eyes. He remembered that he was the ventriloquist of Greyfriars, and the juniors were not suspecting a trick. Billy Bunter generally used his ventriloquism to cause trouble when he was exasperated.

"Here, don't shove, Bob Cherry!"

"I'm not shoving, Russell," said Bob, who had been sitting perfectly still, and he bestowed an astonished glare upon Russell.

"Eh?" said Russell. "I never said you were."

"Yes, you did."

"No, I didn't."

"Oh, don't be an ass!"

"Don't you be an idiot."

"If you want a thick ear, Russell—"

"Well, I do, if you can give me one," said Russell defiantly.

"Look here—"

"Rats!"

"You fathead—"

"You dummy—"

The next moment they were rolling in the bottom of the brake, clasped in a most affectionate embrace. Billy Bunter grinned, and usurped half of the space left vacant by Bob Cherry.

"Here, hold on, you duffers!" shouted Harry Wharton. "Is this how you keep in form for a footer match? Stop it!"

"I'm going to lick him."

"I'm going to squash him."

"You fathead—"

"You ass!"

"Here, collar them!" said Harry, and he seized Bob by the shoulders and dragged him away from Russell. Nugent and Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh grasped Russell and wrenched him away in spite of his struggles.

"Leggo!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Oh, be quiet!"

"He said I was shoving, and then—"

"I didn't, fathead!"

"You did, you worm!"

"I'll—"

"I'll—"

"Shove them down and sit on them, if they won't keep quiet," said Harry Wharton grimly.

"Here, hold on—"

"Too late!"

And Bob Cherry and Russell were jammed down on the floor of the brake, and half a dozen juniors promptly sat on them. Billy Bunter stretched himself on the seat and chuckled. And thus the Greyfriars brake arrived at the railway station in Friardale.



"This will never do," muttered the disguised Nugent. "You seem to be most feverish! Three thousand beats to the second!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Bob Cherry Catches It!

"TRAIN'S in!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, as he saw a puff of smoke rise over the station wall. "Hurry up!"

"The hurryfulness is terrific."

"Lemme gerrup!" mumbled Bob Cherry.

The juniors poured down out of the brake and rushed into the station. Bob Cherry and Russell were naturally the last down, and they exchanged a glare as they jumped out of the brake. But there was no time then to renew their quarrel. They ran into the station, and burst upon the platform, running into Billy Bunter in their haste and sending him flying.

Billy Bunter sat down on the platform, and rolled over, and there was a curious squelching sound, and a yell from the fat junior.

"Ow! Yow!"

"Quick, Billy—the train's going!"

"Ow!"

"You'll be left behind."

"Yow!"

"Oh, stay there, then!"

The juniors poured into a third-class carriage, divided into three compartments, which held them all. Billy Bunter squirmed up, and saw the guard waving his flag. He made a dive for the carriage.

"Stand back there!"

Bunter clung to the carriage. The porter made a rush for him, and Harry and Frank dragged him in and he rolled over in the carriage.

Slam went the door and the train started.

"Young ass!" said Frank Nugent, with a gasp.

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Br-r-r! Get up!"

Bunter scrambled to his feet. He was red with exertion and rage. He adjusted his big spectacles on his fat little nose.

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NEXT
WEEK:

"THE GREYFRIARS TREASURE."

"Beasts!" he said. "Rotters! Who was it ran into me on the platform?"

"Sorry," said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, it was you! You'll have to pay for them."

"Eh? Pay for what?"

"The tarts!"

"What tarts?"

"Look here!"

Billy Bunter extracted a bag of tarts from his overcoat pocket. The bag was burst, and the tarts squashed. Crumb and jam exuded from gaps in the bag. The inside of the pocket must have been in a shocking state.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "Did you sit on them?"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at," grunted Bunter. "There's a bob's worth of tarts clean gone."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You'll have to pay for them. And now, suppose I get hungry in the train, what am I to do?"

"Oh, eats the tarts! You can eat the paper, too, as it's mixed up with the tarts. It will save waste."

"I believe you chaps would be pleased to see me fall down and expire of inanition at your feet!" said Billy Bunter, glowering.

"You'd better not," said Nugent. "I don't want the trouble of chucking you out of the train."

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"You're not likely to die of hunger," said Hazeldene kindly. "You have enough fat to live on for a whole winter, like a polar bear, if you couldn't get any tommy."

"Oh, really, Vaseline—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo," exclaimed Bob Cherry, "here's Linfield already! I'll stand at the door, and keep other passengers out."

The train stopped, and a stout old lady in a shawl, with a big basket, came up to the carriage door. The old lady had evidently been marketing, for her basket was full, and, to judge by the rubicundity of her face, she had taken a

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& Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

certain amount of liquid refreshment after her labours. Bob Cherry made a grimace and opened the door. He could not keep a woman out, much as he wanted to keep the carriage for the Greyfriars party.

"Thank you kindly," said the old lady. "P'r'aps you'll 'elp me in with this basket."

"Certainly, ma'am!" said Bob politely.

He lifted in the basket, and placed it on the floor. Then the old lady handed in an umbrella, and followed it in.

She was very stout, and very short of breath, and she strained and gasped as she climbed into the carriage.

Finally she sat down on a seat with a gasp of relief.

The train restarted.

Billy Bunter, who was in the next compartment, blinked over the partition, and took in the rubicund and somewhat aggressive looks of the market lady, and the by no means happy countenance of Bob Cherry, who had the pleasure of sitting next to her.

"Cold to-day," said the old lady, looking at Bob Cherry.

"Yes, ma'am," said Bob.

"Need somethin' to warm you?"

"Yes, ma'am."

With that preliminary, the market lady took out a flask from the recesses of her bright red shawl, and proceeded to help herself from it. There was a gurgling sound as liquor passed down a capacious gullet.

"Beastly!" said a voice.

The old lady glared at Bob Cherry.

Bob had not opened his lips, but it certainly seemed to be Bob who had spoken, and the old lady was naturally very much incensed at this gratuitous opinion passed on her proceedings.

"Wot!" she exclaimed.

"I beg your pardon, ma'am," said Bob.

"I should think so," said the lady—"I should think so! If you was my boy, young man, I'd spank you!"

"Wh-wha-wha-what!" said Bob, in dismay.

"I'd take you and spank you!" said the lady emphatically. "Passing remarks on your elders!"

"I—I didn't speak!"

"Don't you tell lies, young man!"

"Ma'am!"

"Beastly—eh? Eh? Beastly! Can't a lone widder take a little refreshment without being insulted by a slip of a boy?"

"I assure you, ma'am, I—I never spoke," faltered Bob.

"Beastly—eh? Eh? Beastly! Can't a lone widder take

"I—I belong to Greyfriars School."

"And I suppose they teach you to insult your betters there?" said the lady aggressively. "For two pins I'd spank you!"

"But, ma'am—"

"Young impudence!"

"Oh, rats!"

It was Bob Cherry's voice, though Bob had not spoken; and the truth dawning on him, he cast a furious glance at the Greyfriars' ventriloquist in the next compartment. Billy Bunter blinked at him.

But the market lady turned crimson with rage.

"I'll learn you!" she remarked.

She laid a businesslike grip on her umbrella with one hand, and caught hold of Bob Cherry's collar with the other. Bob struggled violently.

"Leggo!" he roared. "I didn't speak! It was that fat rotter in the next compartment! Leggo—leggo!"

"I'll learn you!" said the market lady.

Bob was an athlete in the Greyfriars Remove; but he was no match for the indignant lady. With a wrench of her powerful arm she swept him face downwards across her knees, and the umbrella rose in the air. The other juniors crowded hastily back out of the reach of it.

"Help!" gasped Bob Cherry.

Swish! Smack!

The umbrella descended forcibly.

Bob Cherry roared and struggled. But it was in vain. The umbrella descended again and again. Bob yelled for help and rescue. But the juniors were dubious about attacking a member of the gentle sex, though she was certainly a little masculine in her methods.

"By Jove," murmured Nugent, "this must be a blessed suffragette! We'd better give her a wide berth!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Poor old Bob!"

"Help!" roared Bob Cherry. "Rescue—rescue, Remove!"

Harry Wharton put one leg over the partition.

"Really, ma'am—" he began.

The market lady made a sweep at him with her umbrella, and he rolled back into his compartment. He rolled upon Nugent and Tom Brown, and they all three went to the floor together.

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NEXT
WEEK;

"THE GREYFRIARS TREASURE."

Biff, biff, biff!

"Oh, oh, oh!" roared Bob Cherry.

The train stopped in the next station.

The market lady looked out of the window, and released Bob Cherry. The dismayed and dishevelled junior scrambled away. The lady rose and grasped her basket, and, with a final glare of wrath at the unhappy junior, alighted.

"I'll learn you!" she said.

"Great pip!" gasped Bob Cherry. "The horrid old boulderess! Ow! I shan't be able to sit down for a week!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's nothing to laugh at, you cackling asses!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You grinning chumps!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And as the train rolled on again the yells of the Greyfriars juniors rang loud above the rattle of the wheels.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Surprise for Greyfriars!

BOB CHERRY, in a state of boiling indignation, began to climb over the partition. Billy Bunter jumped up. He had not expected Bob to discover his little trick; but now that it was discovered, he felt that vengeance was coming. He blinked in great alarm at the big Remove.

"I say, Cherry—" he began.

"You fat worm!"

"It was only a lark, you know."

"Good!" said Bob grimly. "Now I'm going to have a lark!"

"I—I say, you fellows, keep him off!"

"By Jove," exclaimed Russell suddenly, "now I come to think of it, it must have been Bunter's blessed ventriloquism in the brake that caused the row!"

"Why, of course!"

"The of-coursefulness is terrific."

"Bunter—"

"I—I say, Wharton, keep him off. Stand by a chap in your own study, you know," said Bunter, squirming behind Harry Wharton.

"Come out, you fat animal!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Get out of the way, Harry, please!"

"Certainly!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

Billy Bunter made a scramble for the partition, to get into the next compartment. He had one leg over it when Bob Cherry clutched at him. The fat junior rolled helplessly over the partition, bumped on the seat, and rolled on the floor of the carriage. There was a yell that might almost have been heard at Greyfriars.

"Ow! I'm hurt!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "So was I just now!"

"Ow! I've broken my leg!"

"Good!"

"My backbone's dislocated!"

"Jolly good!"

"My arm's sprained!"

"Ripping!"

"My neck's twisted!"

"Excellent!"

Bunter gasped and glowered. He never received any sympathy for his little accidents—probably because he made

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so much of them. He lay groaning on the floor, and refused to rise.

"You'll be sorry for this when my body is taken home on a stretcher," he said faintly. "I forgive you, Bob Cherry!"

"You needn't trouble. It's all right."

"You're an unfeeling beast! I'm lamed for life!"

"Where are you lamed?" asked Nugent. "In the back, or the leg, or the neck?"

"Beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter lay on the floor and groaned while the train rattled on. It slackened down at last in the station where the juniors were to alight for Bolsover. Still Billy Bunter did not rise.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here we are!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, who was completely restored to good humour by this time.

Billy Bunter groaned.

"You fellows will have to lift me out of the carriage," he said.

"Yes, rather—I don't think!" remarked Frank Nugent.

"I can't move."

"No need. You can stay there, and go on to London in the train."

"Look here, Nugent——"

"It will save us a lot of worry, and Bolsover a lot of grub," said Tom Brown. "I regard it as a lucky accident, Bunter being crippled like this."

The fat junior only groaned. The train stopped, and Harry Wharton threw the door open, and the juniors streamed out upon the platform with their bags. Bob Cherry looked in again at Billy Bunter.

"Going to stay there, Bunter?"

"I can't move."

"Good-bye, then!"

"Oh, really, you fellows——"

Bob Cherry slammed the door of the carriage shut, and turned away. In a twinkling Billy Bunter was on his feet, and he had thrown the door open and jumped out. Bob surveyed him with an expression of great astonishment.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! I thought you couldn't move?"

Billy Bunter snorted.

"What a wonderful recovery!" said Bob, still greatly astonished. "Blessed if we oughtn't to write to the papers about it! Talk about Bodie!"

"Hallo, here are the Bolsover chaps!" said Wharton.

Three fellows in school caps were coming along the platform. It was easy to guess that they belonged to Bolsover School, and had come to meet the Greyfriars fellows at the station, and conduct them to the ground.

One of them, a handsome, red-haired, Irish lad of about Wharton's age, greeted the juniors with a cheery voice and a merry smile.

"Sure we're glad to see you!" he exclaimed. "You're the fellows from Greyfriars, of course?"

"Yes," said Wharton. "And you're from Bolsover."

"Exactly! I'm Fitzgerald minor, junior captain," said the other. "Are you Wharton?"

"Yes," said Harry, shaking hands with the Bolsover fellow. "Glad to see you."

"These chaps are Bull and Hilton, two of the team," said Fitzgerald. "We're jolly glad to see you over here. We've got a brake waiting outside. It's a mile and a half to the school. This way!"

And they streamed out of the station.

The brake was a large roomy one, and there was plenty of room for the Greyfriars crowd and the three Bolsover fellows. Billy Bunter, of course, was squeezed between Bob Cherry and Hurree Singh, but that was rather from choice—on Bob's part—than from necessity. The brake rolled away from the station, and Bunter blinked round as his mouth almost watered as he caught sight of a pastrycook's in the street.

"I say, you fellows," he ventured. "Don't you think you ought to have a little refreshment before——"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"I'm hungry."

"Dry up," said Bob Cherry. "Do you want to be shoved out of the brake?"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Chuck it!"

And Bunter chuckled it, and glowered. The brake rattled on through a wintry landscape. The afternoon was a fine clear one, and cold; just the afternoon for a footer match. The Greyfriars juniors were in the highest of spirits. They chatted cheerily with the Bolsover fellows, and the mile and a half they had to cover passed very quickly under the wheels of the brake.

They came in sight of Bolsover at last—a grey, old, ivy-mantled building. Fitzgerald pointed it out.

"You'll see the playing-fields as soon as we get past the elms," he said.

Harry Wharton looked. The trees once passed, the

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playing-fields burst upon the view of the fellows in the brake.

A dozen lads were on the football-field, putting a ball about. But it was not at them that Harry Wharton looked.

It was at the goalposts.

"My only hat!" he exclaimed, in amazement.

Fitzgerald looked at him.

"Eh! What's the matter?"

"Great Scott!"

"What——"

"The goals!"

"The goals!" repeated the Bolsover skipper, in surprise.

"What about the goals? What's the matter with them?"

Wharton did not reply for a moment. His eyes—and all eyes in the brake—were fixed upon the Bolsover goalposts. For the Bolsover goals, instead of being of the familiar Association shape, resembled the letter H with the cross-bar very high up; in a word, the goals were for the Rugby game.

"What on earth are you driving at?" exclaimed Fitzgerald, in amazement. "I don't understand you, Wharton."

"My only hat! You play Rugby!"

"Rugby! Of course!"

"And we——"

"Well, you——"

"We play Soccer."

"Phew!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Rugger or Soccer?

THE fellows in the brake stared at one another for a few moments, and then burst into an irresistible shout of laughter. It seemed too comical. The challenge had been sent, and had been accepted, and it had occurred to neither side to specify which kind of football they played. It had been a ridiculous oversight; yet, as Bolsover were accustomed to always meeting Rugger teams, and Greyfriars to meeting only Soccer, it was not unnatural that such a detail should escape their attention.

"Well, that is curious, and no mistake!" exclaimed Hilton, who was a three-quarter in the Bolsover junior team. "We never thought of it. What on earth induces you chaps to play Soccer?"

"Well, it's the better game of the two, you see."

"Rats!" said Hilton warmly. "Why, Rugger is far and away the best."

"More rats! Why——"

"The bestfulness of the honourable Soccer game is terrific."

"But Rugger——"

"But Soccer——"

"Oh, cheese it!" exclaimed Wharton, laughing. "No need to argue that out now. It's been argued out enough times already, without convincing anybody."

"Faith, and that's true."

"The question is, what are we going to do? We can't play one side Rugger, and the other side Soccer, that's certain."

"Ha, ha! No."

"Either Bolsover will have to play an eleven at Soccer with us, or we'll have to play a fifteen at Rugger with them," said Wharton, looking at his friends. "We can't miss the match altogether after coming all this way."

"Right!"

"The rightfulness is terrific."

Fitzgerald looked very thoughtful.

"Sure as the hosts we ought to yield the point!" he exclaimed. "But we've never played Soccer here, and, of course, you would walk all over us. We took it for granted, of course, that you knew we played Rugger, when we sent you the challenge."

"Well, we'd better make it Rugger, as some of us play that game," said Harry Wharton. "Tom Brown here comes from New Zealand, and he always played Rugger at home; and Linley is a Lancashire chap, and was brought up on Rugger. We've dabbled in it at Greyfriars, and most of us have a bit of knowledge of the thing."

"Well, we ought to be able to keep our end up, at least," said Nugent. "Let's make it Rugger."

"Well, that's hardly fair on you," said Fitzgerald.

"Oh, it's all right!"

"We shall walk all over you."

"Never mind; we'll walk all over you in the return match."

Fitzgerald laughed.

"Look here! I'd rather yield the point, and give you a chance!" he exclaimed.

"Toss a penny and settle it," suggested Ogilvy.

"Good egg!"

Wharton tossed the penny, and covered it with his hand.

"Head Rugger, tail Soccer," he said. "Is that all right?"

"That's all right!"

Wharton showed the penny; it was head,

"Rugger!" he said.

Fitzgerald nodded.

"Good!"

The brake halted. A crowd of fellows came up to greet the Greyfriars party, and there was a general grin as they discovered that the visitors had come over to play Soccer. Harry Wharton & Co. were shown into their quarters to change.

Wharton was looking a little serious.

"This won't be a joke, when we start playing," he remarked. "We've only got two fellows who know how to play Rugger well, and the rest of us will be weak. Jolly lucky we brought some reserves with us, enough to make up the fifteen."

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur. "There are sixteen of us in all, including the honourable Bunter."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter! Now—"

"Look here, Wharton, let me speak! I was going to say that as you don't know much about Rugger, I shouldn't mind captaining the team," said Bunter. "I'm rather a dab at Rugger myself."

"Thanks awfully, Billy; but we won't accept the offer," said Wharton. "Linley, I want you to captain the side."

"Oh, no!" exclaimed the Lancashire lad. "I'll back you up!"

Wharton shook his head.

"You play Rugger, and I have only dabbled at it," he said. "Either you or Brown—and you've been longest with us. You're skipper for this match."

The Lancashire lad's cheek glowed a little.

"Well, if you wish it, I accept, of course," he said. "I shall be a three-quarter myself, and Tom Brown another. Hazeldene had better be full back."

Mark Linley, who had captained Rugger teams at home in Lancashire, in the days when he was a factory lad, and played football on the common on a Saturday afternoon, soon had his arrangements made.

"Be careful not to pass forward or knock on," he said. "In the scrum, stick to it for all you're worth. Tackle low, and mean it every time. That's about all."

"Good!"

And the Greyfriars fellows, having changed, issued from the pavilion. They found the Bolsover side in the field already, punting a ball about. A big, handsome fellow in a Norfolk-jacket came up to them, and the resemblance told them at once that he was Fitzgerald major. Fitzgerald minor had told them that his major was captain of Bolsover, and was to referee the match.

The senior nodded to them with a smile.

"I hear this is your first Rugger game!" he exclaimed.

"That's right."

"Bolsover are willing to play a couple of men short, to make things more even."

Harry Wharton shook his head quickly.

"Oh, no; we don't want that! If we're licked, we shall make it up in the return match. We'd rather take our chance."

Fitzgerald major laughed.

"I'm afraid it's rather a poor chance," he remarked. "But do as you like. You are plucky ones, anyway, and I like your nerve."

The teams went into the field.

Billy Bunter blinked after them from the pavilion.

There was a decidedly discontented expression upon the fat junior's face. He could no more have played in a Rugger game than he could have sailed an aeroplane, but Bunter never believed that he couldn't do anything. He attributed his exclusion on all occasions to personal jealousy.

"I'm blessed if I know how I stand those fellows," he murmured. "I'm wasted at Greyfriars. I've never been appreciated—even at home they don't appreciate me. They don't like me to show form at footer—and they cut up rusty when Marjorie Hazeldene shows that she prefers my company. I'm blessed if I know how I stand it. There they go—without caring a rap whether a chap's hungry or not."

And Bunter grunted with dissatisfaction.

As a matter of fact, the fat junior was hungry, and he was less interested in football at that moment than in getting something to eat.

It occurred to him that there was certain to be a collation

prepared for the Greyfriars team, to be partaken of before they returned on the long journey to Greyfriars.

His eyes glistened behind his big spectacles at the thought.

Where was the collation?

Was it to be in the school, or in the pavilion? The pavilion was a big and substantial building. Bunter decided to scout.

The attention of everyone was on the game now. Greyfriars had won the toss, and given the kick-off to their opponents.

The ball was rolling, and the teams were mingled in combat, and every fellow either in the pavilion or round the ropes was watching the players.

Nothing could have been better for Bunter.

He stepped quietly into the pavilion, and explored it. His eyes nearly started from his head as he looked through a half-open door, and saw a table laden with dishes, covered up with white cloths. There was the lunch, evidently, all ready to be laid out when the match was over.

Bunter gave a quick glance round, and then stepped swiftly into the room and closed the door. A second more and he was at the table, and at work. Loud shouts rang from the football-field as the game progressed—but Bunter never heard them. He was as busy as the footballers, though in a different way!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Rugby Match.

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were hard at work.

As Harry had told the Bolsover skipper, two of his team were good Rugger players, having been brought up on that game. Tom Brown of Taranaki and Mark Linley of Lancashire had taken kindly enough to Soccer, but they still had a weakness for their old love, so to speak, and were glad to play the old game. They had taught their chums a good deal of the Rugby game, too, so it was not quite strange to the Removites.

But against a team like the Bolsovers they had no chance. Tom Brown and Mark Linley were splendid, and their good play showed up well against the wretched performance of the others. But two players in fifteen could not save a side. The Bolsovers simply walked over them.

Mark and Tom, as three-quarters, showed that the Greyfriars crowd would have acquitted themselves with credit if they had been playing their own game, and in the scrummages the visitors showed plenty of strength and pluck, but they were not "in it" with the fellows who had played Rugger all their lives, of course.

But they played up manfully.

Quickly enough during the first half the Bolsovers scored—two goals, two tries, and a dropped goal.

The Greyfriars score was still blank.

Their faces were a little blank, too; but they stuck to their guns, determined at all events that it should not be wholly a walk-over for Bolsover.

And Mark Linley's chance came at last.

He received the ball from the scrum, and was away with it like lightning, dodging the Bolsover backs with ease.

Half a dozen fellows were rushing to intercept him. He eluded Fitzgerald's tackle, and left the Bolsover skipper on the ground. He glided like a snake between two heavy forwards who were rushing in, and danced round Hilton, and dodged Bull. Then he streaked for goal, with only the full-back between him and his destination, and the Greyfriars players involuntarily gave a shout of encouragement.

"Go it, Linley!"

"Good old Lancashire!"

"Hurrah!" And the Bolsover crowd round the football-ground, like the Tuscans of old, could not forbear a cheer.

Mark Linley seemed to fly!

The Bolsover full-back was watching and waiting. He was well in advance of his goal, and directly in the Lancashire lad's path. Mark Linley seemed to be rushing straight at him, with the intention of overbearing him by sheer impetus.

The full-back, a strong and heavy fellow, grinned in anticipation, and prepared for a tackle which would put a sudden finish to the rush of the Greyfriars three-quarter.

But Linley was too keen to risk that tackle.

He was within a couple of feet of the full-back, and the tackle was about to fasten on him, when he suddenly swerved off to the right—so suddenly that he left the full-back standing and staring.

Before the fellow could pursue him, Mark was past, and keeping on at the same angle, he touched down over the line unmolested.

The Greyfriars fellows gave a perfect yell.

"Try! Try! Try!"

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Lancashire!"



"Of course," explained Harry Wharton, "my fat friend on my left has greatly distinguished himself at this banquet!"

Mark rose, smiling and breathless.

It was a try—the first score for Greyfriars. Even if it did not materialise into a goal, there was the try—three points for Greyfriars. They had broken their duck, at all events.

"Hurrah! Hurrah!"

"Jolly good!" said Fitzgerald, who had picked himself up and was wondering how he had come to be on the ground. "If they were all like that, Hilton——"

Hilton grinned.

"We might as well walk off, in that case," he remarked.

"Faith, and ye're right!"

"Who's going to take the kick?" said Harry Wharton.

"You're captain, Linley."

Linley nodded, with a smile.

"You or Brown, Marky, old chap," said Bob Cherry.

"Right! Brown."

"Good!" said the New Zealander; and he trotted forward to take the kick.

The ball was carried out and carefully placed. Mark Linley placed it, and Tom Brown took the kick. It was at an awkward angle for a kick, for Mark had been compelled to make a wide swerve to avoid the full-back, but Tom Brown of Taranaki had brought off more difficult coups than that.

The kick was taken, the ball flew, and there was a yell as it sailed gracefully over the crossbar between the posts.

"Goal! Goal!"

"Hurrah!"

The Greyfriars fellows had reason to cheer. A goal from a try counted, of course, five points, and they indulged for a moment a wild hope that they might at least make the game a draw. With two leaders like Brown and Linley, and the rest backing them up loyally, something might be effected.

The Bolsover men marked Linley and Brown, and kept their hands full after that, and Mark or Tom never had a chance of getting away.

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The first half wore on to its end with the score unaltered till the very finish, when Harry Wharton had the ball, with five or six Bolsovers almost upon him.

There was no chance of passing with success, and the enemy were almost upon him.

Wharton took a desperate resolve, and dropped a goal.

The ball touched the earth and rose, and he kicked—and away sailed the leather. The next second Wharton crashed on the earth, and a myriad of stars danced before his eyes, and he felt for a moment as if the universe had come to a sudden end.

What happened to the ball he didn't know; but as he recovered his faculties a roar of cheering came to his ears, and he knew then.

"Goal!"

Bob Cherry dragged him up.

"Look there, my son!" chuckled Bob. "You boulder! Where did you learn to drop goals like that? Clean over the bar in the very centre! By Jove!"

"Ripping!" said Nugent enthusiastically.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, I did my best," he remarked, "but it was at least half a fluke, to tell the candid truth."

"Fluke or not, it was a goal, and we're nine points now against twenty."

And the players trooped off to rest for the short interval.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Where's Bunter, I wonder?" said Bob Cherry, as he accepted a lemon from a Bolsover fellow, and began to suck it. "I'd forgotten him."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here you are!"

Bunter blinked at them. There was a shiny look about his fat face, and his little round eyes seemed to be almost closing behind his glasses.

"Yes, I'm here," he said. "How have you done?"

A Splendid Tale of Harry Wharton
& Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

"Haven't you seen the game?" demanded Hazeldene indignantly.

"Oh, really, Vaseline, I've better things to do than to watch a set of duffers playing at a game they don't know!" said Bunter. "I suppose you're about half the Bolsover score?"

"Less than half."

"I told you so. I knew how it would be if I didn't play," said Bunter, with a shake of the head. "Do you think you could get Fitzgerald's permission to make a change now, Wharton, for the second half, and put me in instead of Cherry or Nugent or Tom Brown?"

"Why, you cheeky young ass——" began the New Zealander.

"You fat duffer!"

"You impertinent porpoise!"

"Oh, really, you know——"

"I might get Fitzgerald to agree," laughed Harry Wharton. "I'm jolly well not going to try, though. Our chance is small enough as it is."

"Oh, really, Wharton! You see how the game has gone so far. It's really not like you to sacrifice the interests of the school to personal jealousy. I expect that sort of thing in Cherry and Nugent, but I really looked for something better in you. Ow! Who's that got hold of my ear?"

"You young alligator!" growled Bob Cherry. "I——"

"Ow! Leggo!"

"You expect what of Nugent and me?" demanded Bob, compressing his grip upon the fat junior's ear till Billy Bunter squealed.

"Ow! I don't expect anything. What I really meant to say was that you were above any feelings of personal jealousy!" wailed Bunter.

"Ha, ha! You really meant to say that?"

"Yes. Ow! Yes."

"Then you've got a most unfortunate way of expressing yourself," grinned Bob Cherry, releasing the fat junior's ear.

Billy Bunter rubbed his ear and glowered. Harry Wharton had gone into the dressing-room, and he returned with a bar of milk chocolate in his hand.

"Here you are, Billy," he said. "I know you must be famished. This will keep you going till the game is over, and then we shall have a feed."

"I really don't see why you should always be passing remarks on my appetite, Wharton. I know I've a delicate constitution that requires being kept up by plenty of good nourishment, but I'm not a greedy chap."

"You're hungry, I suppose?" said Wharton, in surprise.

"No, I'm not."

There was a general exclamation of astonishment.

"Not hungry?"

"You're joking, Billy!"

"This is a new wheeze!"

Bunter blinked indignantly round.

"I'm not hungry," he said. "I'll have the chocolate—to put in my pocket in case I should get hungry. It's just as well to be on the safe side."

"And you're really not hungry?"

"Certainly not, Cherry."

"What silly ass was it said that the age of miracles was past?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The whistle went at that moment, and the teams trooped back into the field for the second half of that peculiar match.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Why Bunter Went Early.

THE second half was to a large extent a repetition of the first. The Bolsover fellows did not score so quickly, however, for the Greyfriars lads were getting stronger in the defence, if not in the attack, and were falling more into the way of the scrum.

Hazeldene, at full-back, saved the situation several times, and Harry more than once gave him a glance of the warmest approval. Hazeldene, once the waster of the Remove, had taken very kindly to football under Harry Wharton's eye, and he was turning out extremely well.

It had been an experiment, playing him in the junior team, and there were not wanting fellows in the Remove who hinted that Hazeldene was given his place, not on his own merits, but on account of his sister Marjorie. But Wharton never allowed criticism of that sort to affect him. He was glad to help Hazeldene for Marjorie's sake, but he would never have allowed the lad to play if he had not believed him fit. And Hazeldene was more than justifying his choice now—in a new game, too, that he was not accustomed to.

It would have been excusable in anyone to avoid some of the Bolsover rushes and tackles, for they certainly were a rough-and-ready team.

But Hazeldene stood to his guns.

The Bolsovers had at first taken the match more in the

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light of a joke than anything else, but the steady defence the visitors were now putting up nettled some of them.

They played with the most rigid fairness all the time, but some of them were a little rougher than there was any occasion for.

From a scrum near the home twenty-five the ball came out to Hilton, who eluded Mark Linley by the skin of his teeth, and dashed for the Greyfriars line.

Harry Wharton tackled him instantly, but not before he had succeeded in passing the leather to Fitzgerald.

The Bolsover skipper dashed on with the ball, while Hilton went sprawling in the grasp of Harry Wharton.

Bob Cherry and Tom Brown both had a chance at Fitzgerald; but the burly Bolsover fellow left them both on the ground, and tore on.

Nugent and Ogilvy rushed in, too late. Fitzgerald, with a turn of speed remarkable in so large and powerful a lad, dashed on, and gave them no chance, and made straight for Hazeldene.

Hazeldene's colour wavered for an instant.

He was a slight lad, in comparison with the big Bolsover fellow, and he looked as if he could have stood Fitzgerald's rush about as well as a cow on a railway line could withstand a locomotive.

The Bolsover crowd were already raising a cheer.

They fully expected Fitzgerald to touch down fairly under the bar, making the ensuing kick the simplest thing in the world.

Fitzgerald grinned as Hazeldene stood in his path. The Remove of Greyfriars set his teeth hard.

He faced the oncoming three-quarter with steady eyes.

Fitzgerald did not swerve. Hazeldene was light upon his feet, and would have been upon him like a cat. There was no dodging the full-back. But Fitzgerald had not the slightest doubt that he would send Hazeldene whirling with his rush, and pass over or round him under the bar.

Crash!

Right into the full-back rushed the Bolsover captain, and Hazeldene tackled hard.

There was a momentary whirling and staggering, and Hazeldene went down, but to the unbounded delight of the Greyfriars fellows, the mighty Fitzgerald went down with him.

He was tackled!

The rest were on the spot in a twinkling, the ball was down, and the whistle went for a scrum. Harry Wharton helped Hazeldene up. The full-back was gasping, and his face was contracted with pain.

Wharton was concerned at once.

"Hurt, old chap?" he whispered.

"N-no," said Hazeldene, trying to keep his face straight.

"N-no. Only—oh!"

"You are hurt!"

"It's my ankle," muttered Hazeldene. "It's all right; only a twist. I can stand on it, but it does hurt."

"Let me look at it."

"Hallo, no harm done, I hope," said the Bolsover skipper seriously. "I'm sorry, kid."

"Oh, it's all right!" said Hazeldene. "You have to give and take in footer, especially in Rugger."

"Faith, and you're right!"

"It's all right," said Harry, who had been examining Hazeldene's ankle. "But you can't play any more, Hazel. You'll have to get off."

"I suppose so," said Hazeldene ruefully. "I'm sorry to leave you in the lurch like this."

"That's all right. You can't help it. And you've saved a certain try."

"Faith, and he did! It was plucky."

Harry Wharton helped Hazeldene off the field, and the junior changed and sat down outside the pavilion to watch the rest of the game.

With a man short on the Greyfriars side, it was not likely to be much of a show for Harry Wharton & Co.

"You can play a substitute if you like, Wharton," Fitzgerald minor remarked, as the Greyfriars captain came back to the field.

Wharton shook his head.

"I haven't one here," he said.

"What about that fat chap?"

Harry laughed.

"He's no good."

A piping voice was heard from the direction of the pavilion, and Billy Bunter hopped over the rope and came upon the field of play. He was looking very excited, and his eyes were gleaming behind his spectacles.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Hallo!"

"I see Vaseline's hurt. I suppose you want a substitute. I'm quite willing to look over your conduct, Wharton, and play up for the school."

"You may be willing, Billy, but I'm not. Get off the field, please."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Buzz off!"

"This is the last time I shall make the offer," exclaimed the Owl of the Remove wrathfully. "If it's not accepted, I shall wash my hands of the whole business."

"I dare say it will do them good," remarked Bob Cherry.

"Wash your neck while you're about it, Billy."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Get off the field, Bunter; you're in the way."

"Then I'm jolly well not going to stay here and see a game thrown away from motives of personal jealousy," said Bunter. "I'm going back to Greyfriars."

"Good! Your return ticket's in my coat pocket. Take it and go."

Bunter rolled away.

The scrum was formed, and the Greyfriars fellows managed to get the ball out, and clear it away from its dangerous proximity to their goal-line. Ogilvy took Hazeldene's place at full-back, and a fellow had to be left out of the pack.

Fortunately for Greyfriars, the game was near its close now.

They had put up a good fight, but the only score in the second half was from a try by Tom Brown, and a dropped goal by Mark Linley.

When the whistle went the score was hopelessly against Greyfriars, the home team being twenty points ahead.

But under the circumstances, the Greyfriars side had no reason to be ashamed of their performance. That they had been able to break their duck at all was something to be proud of.

They trooped off the field, quite fagged out by the game, and changed their things. There was no sign of Billy Bunter in the pavilion. His coat was gone, likewise his return ticket, and it was pretty clear that the fat junior had returned to Greyfriars.

Harry Wharton was decidedly puzzled.

"Blessed if I can understand this!" he remarked. "Bunter knew perfectly well that there was to be a feed after the match. I can't understand his missing the feed."

"It's a blessed mystery."

"The mysteryfulness is terrific."

"My only hat!"

It was a sudden exclamation from Fitzgerald minor. He came out of the pavilion with a startled face.

"Anything up?"

"The grub!"

"Eh? What's the matter with the grub?" asked Hilton.

"It's gone!"

"Gone!"

"Well, most of it. Somebody's been at it, and wolfed nearly all the lot."

"Phew!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "That accounts for Bunter's going. The grub's gone, and Bunter's gone, too. I fancy they went together."

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Return.

THE Greyfriars juniors looked decidedly uncomfortable. Billy Bunter had come to Bolsover with them, and for him to act in this unpardonable way was outrageous.

There was not the slightest doubt, of course, that the raider was Bunter. This accounted for his not being hungry in the interval; this accounted, too, for his early departure. If he had not had a feed, wild horses would not have dragged him away from Bolsover.

"I don't understand it," said Hilton. "Who on earth could have got at the grub, or who would?"

Fitzgerald shook his head.

"Faith, we'll settle that another time!" he remarked. "Cut over to the tuck-shop, Hilton, and make them send over a fresh lot instanter."

"Right you are!"

Hilton ran off. Harry Wharton stepped over towards the Bolsover junior skipper with a very red face.

"I'm sorry for this, Fitzgerald—" he began.

"Oh, it's all right, we'll have a fresh lot, and—"

"I mean, I'm sorry because it was one of our fellows did it."

"Oh!"

"It was that fat rotter; he's gone now. That's why he's gone," said Wharton uncomfortably. "He is a rank outsider in every way, and we ought not to have brought him with us. I'm awfully sorry. It was a rotten thing to do."

Fitzgerald laughed goodnaturedly.

"Oh, it's all right! I remember the chap looked as if he could put away a good meal, and faith, as if he had put away a good many, too."

"Well, I can only apologise."

"Oh, don't worry, lad; it's all right. We don't mind."

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"THE GREYFRIARS TREASURE."

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HALFPENNY.

The fresh supply was soon forthcoming, and the two teams sat down to tea together on the best of terms. The winter dusk was now falling. The brake came round to take the Greyfriars fellows to the station.

"What about the return match?" asked Fitzgerald.

"Are you still thinking of playing it?"

"Yes, rather!" said Harry Wharton emphatically. "It's next Saturday, and on next Saturday afternoon we expect your fifteen at Greyfriars."

"Oh, we'll come!"

"We're going to slog at Rugger for a week, and we'll give you a better game than we gave you to-day," said Wharton. "I don't think you'll walk over us quite so easily."

Fitzgerald grinned.

"Well, all right. You put up a good game to-day, though you had everything against you. I must say I don't think you'll be first-rate Rugger cracks by next Saturday, but I've no doubt you'll give us a tussle."

"Well, we'll try to. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye!"

The brake rolled off.

"Well, I like the Bolsover chaps," said Bob Cherry. "They're decent. And we're going to give them a jolly good whaling next Saturday, my sons, if it costs us a leg apiece."

"Yes, rather!" said a dozen emphatic voices.

"The ratherfulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh, in his soft voice. "We have a wholeful week in which to perpetrate the esteemed practice, and by the arrival of next Saturday I hope we shall all be in the perfection of the fitfulness."

"Good!" said Nugent. "If you pick up Rugger as you've picked up English, Inky, they simply won't be in the same street with you."

"The good opiniativeness of my worthy chum is full of the honourable gratification to me," purred the Nabob of Bhanipur. "I do not boastfully pride myself upon my English, but I flatterfully consider that I speak that honourable language in the first-class stylefulness."

"You do, do you! The stylefulness is only equalled by the extraordinaryfulness," said Frank Nugent.

"Here's the station."

The juniors were soon in the train, and speeding home to Friardale. From Friardale station they walked to the school, and they were pretty tired when they arrived there.

The reception they met with showed that Billy Bunter had reached Greyfriars and spread the news.

Half the school seemed to be in the hall to greet them, with grins and chuckles and all sorts of remarks.

"Hallo, what game have you been playing?"

"How many points?"

"Was it a walk-over for somebody?"

"What sort of a licking have you had?"

"What brand of duffers do you call yourselves?"

"Well, mistakes will happen," said Bulstrode, "especially when the Form has such a jolly good captain as it has at present."

"Oh, rats!" said Harry Wharton cheerfully. "How were we to know that Bolsover played Rugger, when they never told us so, and we'd never been to the place?"

"A football captain is supposed to know these things, or to find them out," said Bulstrode.

"Well, yes, that's right enough," Harry confessed. "I ought to have made sure; but I admit it never crossed my mind that perhaps Bolsover played the old game. However, there's no harm done."

"Only a licking for Greyfriars," said Stott.

"Well, as we were playing a new game, we didn't expect to win; but we're going to level up next Saturday afternoon."

"How many points did they beat you by?" asked Bulstrode disagreeably.

"Twenty."

"My only hat! And you're going to play them again next Saturday?"

"Certainly."

"Not satisfied with one licking, I suppose. You want to make a show of Greyfriars—eh? Of course, they will walk over you next Saturday the same as this time."

"That's what we're going to see," said Wharton quietly.

"I hope we shall have a fifteen in form to meet them."

"Rot! You can't do it in the time."

"We're going to try."

"It means another licking, and Bolsover laughing at us. I think the Remove football club ought to stop," said Bulstrode hotly.

"Rats!"

And Harry Wharton walked away, and ended the discussion. But there were a good many fellows in the Remove

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who more or less agreed with Bulstrode. They looked on it as a dangerous experiment to play Bolsover again within so short a time, at a game the Remove were not accustomed to.

But Wharton was accustomed to having his way. He was not the kind of football captain to be talked over or hectoring over. If the Remove didn't like his methods, he was ready to resign; but even his opponents did not want that. Bulstrode had been football captain before him, and under Wharton there had been a big change for the better. The Remove were not tired of winning victories. Under Harry Wharton's leadership, they had made the rival Form, the Upper Fourth, sing properly small.

"I think Wharton ought to be stopped from guying Greyfriars in this way," said Bulstrode, looking round as the Remove captain walked away.

"Oh, rats!" said Ogilvy.

And that was all the reply Bulstrode received; whereat he scowled, and allowed the subject to drop.

"Where's Bunter?" Bob Cherry was asking on all sides. "Where's Falstaff? Where's the porpoise? We're going to slay him before tea? Where is the alligator who devoured the grub at Bolsover? Where is the beast?"

"Bunter!" said Stott. "He's ill."

"Ill!"

"Yes. He's laying up."

"Rats!" said Bob wrathfully. "He knows we're going to slay him for wolfing the grub at Bolsover, and this is only a little game. Where is he?"

"In the dorm."

"Come up to the dorm., you chaps. Bunter's ill, and we're going to put him out of his misery."

"Ha, ha! Right you are!"

And half a dozen of the returned footballers followed Bob Cherry upstairs to the Remove dormitory.

"Go easy, though!" said Harry Wharton. "You never know. He might be ill—he eats enough pastry to make an elephant ill."

"Well, there's something in that," agreed Bob Cherry. "He may be ill after scoffing so much grub at Bolsover. I never thought of that."

"Tread lightly!" grinned Nugent. "Tiptoe!"

"The tiptoefulness is a wheezy good idea."

And the chums of the Remove tiptoed into the dormitory.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Spoofted!

BILLY BUNTER lay in bed.

Although the Removites were tiptoeing, Bunter had heard their voices in the passage outside, and he knew they were coming. He was blinking towards the door with an expression of resigned anguish on his fat face.

"I—I say, you fellows," he said feebly, "be quiet, will you, if you don't mind. I don't feel quite well."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Ill, Bunt?"

"Yes. Oh!"

"Where do you feel the pain?"

"It—it isn't exactly a pain."

"Is it an ache?"

"Well, not exactly an ache. It's a bit of each, with a dreadfully fatigued feeling—an awful attack of lassitude, mingled with shooting aches and pains in the arms, legs, back and head," said Bunter.

"My only hat! What a variety!"

"I don't think you ought to be so heartless, Cherry. If I perish you will be sorry. I feel as if I shall very probably die to-night."

"We'd better send for a doctor, then!" exclaimed Nugent.

"Oh, no—oh, no!" said Bunter quickly. "I don't want a doctor. Nothing of the sort."

"Rats!" said Bob Cherry, with emphasis. "You need a doctor. Do you think we're going to let you die without medical assistance?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Nugent. "You don't need medical assistance to die, but to recover."

"I know what I'm talking about," retorted Bob Cherry. "A doctor has a natural right to assist at a death-bed. It's no good hanging a thing out. I'll wire for the medical merchant in Friardale."

"Oh, no, don't!"

"Why not?"

"I—I don't believe in doctors," gasped Bunter. "I—I'd rather not have a doctor."

"Let's have a look at you," said Harry Wharton, and he lighted a candle on a washstand near the head of Bunter's bed.

The juniors uttered exclamations as they saw his face. Bunter was ghastly white in complexion, and there were dark rings under his eyes. The juniors changed their tone.

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NEXT
WEEK:

"THE GREYFRIARS TREASURE"

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at once. There was no doubt that the fat junior looked really ill this time.

"I say, old fellow," said Wharton, "you are ill, you know—you look simply ghastly."

Billy Bunter groaned.

"It must have been the grub he wolfed at Bolsover," said Bob Cherry. "We were going to give him a jolly good ragging for that, but it seems to me that the crime has brought its own punishment."

"He ought to see a doctor."

"No, no!" exclaimed Bunter. "I don't feel as bad as that. It's—it's only the things I ate at Bolsover, you know."

"Well, if you're determined—"

"Yes, yes! I am, really. I shall be better presently."

"Can we do anything for you?" asked Nugent.

"I—I feel a little hungry," said Bunter hesitatingly. "A bag of tarts is what I fancy most just now."

"The ruling passion," murmured Bob Cherry. "It's strong in death, you know."

"The strongfulness is terrific."

"You can't have anything to eat now, Bunter," said Wharton gently. "It's through over-eating that you're ill."

"I—I think—"

"Try and go to sleep, Bunter, and we'll come up and see you again presently."

"Oh, all right!" said Bunter, rather sulkily.

And the Removites left the dormitory, leaving the candle burning.

"He really seems to be genuine this time," said Bob Cherry. "Of course, it's nothing serious—only acute dyspepsia, I expect, through reckless gorging."

"That's it. But I dare say he's in pain, and his face is ghastly, anyway," said Harry. "He will get off that ragging."

"He generally does get off his deserts," said Tom Brown. "Still, I don't want to rag the poor beast, for one."

Harry Wharton looked thoughtful as he went into his study. Bunter as a rule had the digestion of a horse or a walrus, and it showed what a tremendous feed he must have had at Bolsover to make him ill like this.

The chums went into No. 1 Study, and Harry lighted the gas.

"I suppose we'd better have the practice," he remarked.

"Bunter can't hear us from here. Of course, if he were seriously ill I should be inclined to put it off. But that's not worth while now."

"Right you are."

The Amateur Dramatic Society of the Greyfriars Remove had been very busy lately. A big performance was to come off shortly, in which the girls of Cliff House were to take a part. The amateur actors were losing no time in getting as much practice as possible.

They had made great progress in the art of making up, and of disguising their voices for the characters they meant to represent.

Their repertoire was a growing one, and Nugent, who could make up as anything, was quite famous in the lower Forms for his skill.

A dozen or more amateur actors met in No. 1 Study, and they were soon busy. Bob Cherry was looking thoughtful, however. At last he unburdened his mind.

"I wonder if Bunter might have a couple of tarts," he said. "After what he's put away, they couldn't do him much harm. It would comfort him."

"Well, I suppose he ought to be the best judge," said Wharton, laughing. "There are some tarts in the cupboard, if you like to take them to him."

"Good. Nugent will run up with them."

"Nugent won't!" said Frank, who was busy with his make-up box. "Nugent's busy."

Bob Cherry grinned, and taking the tarts, he left the study.

"Go in quietly," called out Harry Wharton, "he may be asleep."

"Right-ho!"

Bob Cherry ascended the stairs to the Remove dormitory. The candle was still burning in the dormitory, and Bob Cherry saw the glimmer of light under the door.

He turned the handle silently, opened the door a foot or so, and peeped in. If Bunter was asleep he did not intend to disturb him.

He nearly gasped at what he saw.

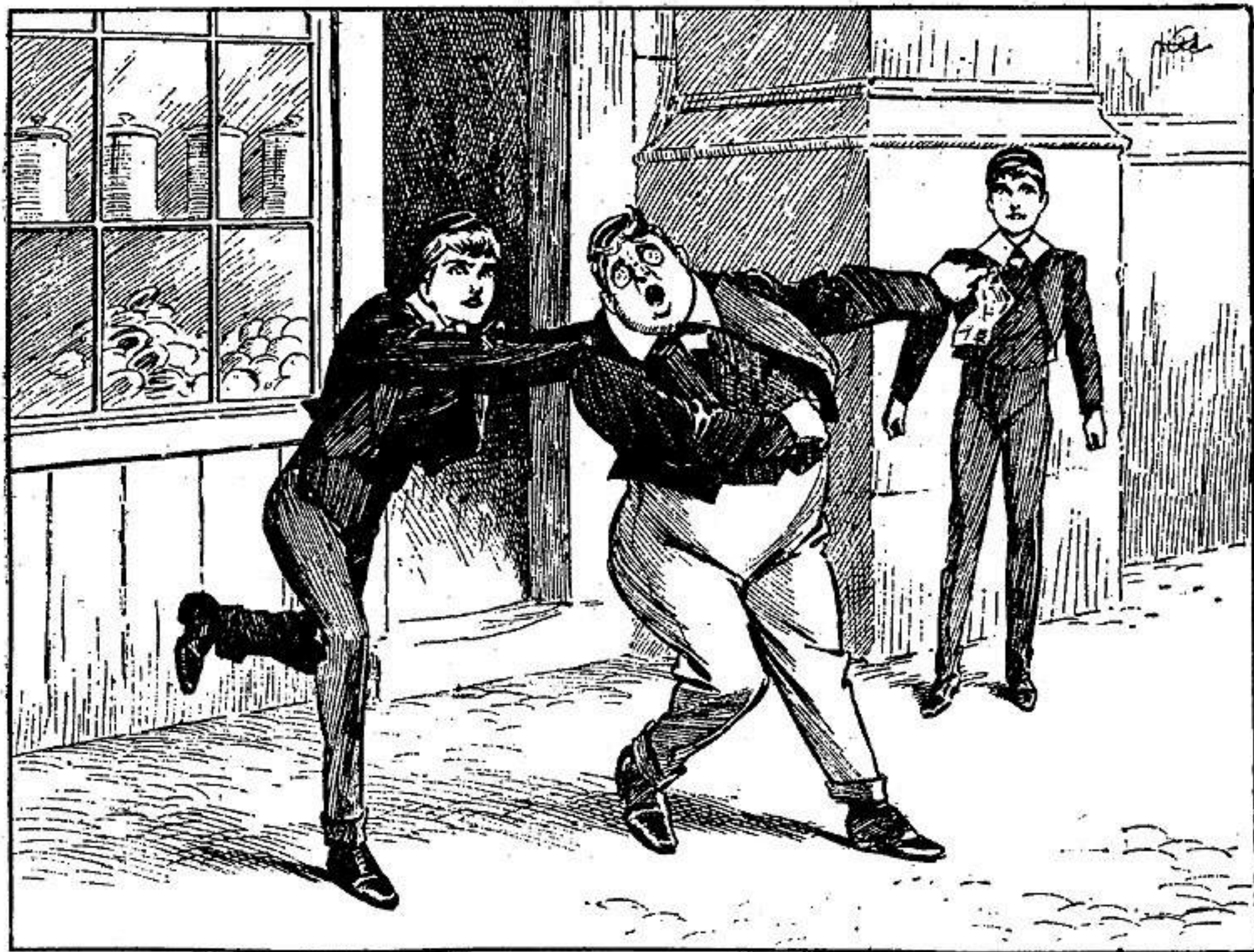
Billy Bunter was sitting up in bed, and he had a bag open on the counterpane before him, and was calmly feeding on cakes and buns from the bag.

Bob Cherry stared at him blankly.

In the candle-light Bunter's face was as ghastly as ever, but there was a grin of enjoyment upon it that showed that he certainly was not ill.

"My only hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "The cunning rascal! My only hat!"

For now that the light streamed full upon the face of Billy



"But now," said Bob Cherry, taking a firm grip on the back of Billy Bunter's collar—"now we'll go and look for Bulstrode!"

Bunter, Bob Cherry noticed what had not been observable when the face was in the shadow.

The whiteness of the face was not equal all over—it showed red in patches—and, in short, it was quite plain that the ghastly complexion of the fat junior was caused by his face being chalked.

The dark rims under his eyes, too, were undoubtedly made by burnt cork.

Bob Cherry whistled softly.

The making-up of the amateur dramatic society had evidently furnished the fat junior with hints for this little deception, and he had made himself up like this from the materials in No. 1 Study before the footballers returned from Bolsover.

He had escaped the expected punishment for his raid, and was left in peace to finish the things he had brought home in his pockets from Bolsover. For he had stuffed his pockets full there, of course, as well as his interior

"My only hat!" murmured Bob Cherry again.

His impulse was to rush into the dormitory, to startle the pretended invalid in the midst of his surreptitious feed, and to squash his cakes and tarts all over him.

But a new idea flashed into his mind, and he grinned, and stepped back quietly. The short-sighted Owl of the Remove had not seen the door open, and Bob had been too quiet for him to hear anything.

Bob Cherry closed the door quietly and withdrew.

He hurried downstairs, and into No. 1 Study, where the dramatic practice was going at full blast. Wharton's voice was heard as he approached.

"Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears!

"I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him!

"The evil that men do lives after them,

"The good is oft interred with their bones.

So let it be with—"

"Bunter!" gasped Bob Cherry, bursting into the study.

"Eh? What?"

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NEXT WEEK: "THE GREYFRIARS TREASURE."

"Bunter! Is he worse?" exclaimed Wharton anxiously.

"Worse! No; he's well."

"What do you mean?"

"He was only malingering—it's all bunkum. He's not ill at all," said Bob Cherry. "We've been spoofed."

"Spoofed!"

"That's it! Spoofed—diddled—dished—done!" said Bob Cherry graphically. "He's chalked and corked his chivvy to take us in, and now he's sitting up in bed gorging!"

"My only hat!" ejaculated Nugent. "I never thought he was deep enough for that! The worm!"

"Oh, worms aren't in it with Bunter," said Bob Cherry.

"Let's go and have him out," said Tom Brown.

"Good egg! Come on!"

Bob Cherry held up his hand.

"Hold on!"

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Nugent wrathfully.

"He's going to be ragged! He's made us all look like hooligans to the Bolsover chaps, and now he's spoofed us! He's jolly well going to be put through it!"

"I know, but—"

"Well, let's have him out!"

"Hold on, I say! A wheeze—a wheeze!"

"Oh!"

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Medical Man.

BOB CHERRY blocked up the doorway, and kept the eager avengers back. He waved his hand to Nugent, who was very excited.

"Well, go ahead with the wheeze!" exclaimed Frank.

"I expect it's rot, like most of the wheezes that come from No. 13 Study.

"Listen to me, you infants!" said Bob Cherry. "We've

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got the clothes, the make-up, and the genius among us of a ripping dramatic society—"

"What on earth's that got to do with Bunter?"

"Listen, and I'll explain. Nugent made up as a medical man the other day to take part in a sketch, and he did it well."

"He did, but what—"

"Let me finish. Why shouldn't Bunter have a doctor?"

"But he's not ill."

"All the more reason why he should have a doctor to make him ill," said Bob Cherry cheerfully; "but I'm not suggesting Dr. Baggs, from Friardale. I was thinking of Dr. Nugent."

"Dr. Nugent!"

"Exactly."

"What the dickens—"

"Nugent in the medical man rig-out," explained Bob Cherry. "He could visit Bunter, and feel his pulse, and so on, and put him through it—all sorts of pills and potions and violent exercises, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors burst into a simultaneous roar at the idea.

"My hat!" exclaimed Wharton, with tears of merriment in his eyes. "This is the joke of the season. Nugent makes up well, and Bunter is short-sighted and the dormitory is dusky, so it ought to be easy."

"I'll try it," said Nugent.

"It will be jolly good practice for the dramatic society," grinned Ogilvy. "We can all stand round looking serious and grief-stricken, and keep up the game."

"Jolly good."

"The goodfulness is terrific."

"Get into the clothes, Nugent," said Harry. "We'll make you up in next to no time."

"Right you are!"

Nugent selected a pair of black trousers, with a black frock-coat. He put them on over his own clothes, to give himself an appearance of stoutness. Then he put on large boots and spats, and his hair was powdered white, his eyebrows made up, his nose tinted red, and a false beard and moustaches of a grizzled colour fastened upon him.

The change in his appearance was astounding.

He looked exactly like a little old gentleman of the medical persuasion. He put on a silk hat, and the picture was complete.

"Where is my patient, gentlemen?" he asked, in a squeaky voice.

The juniors roared.

"Splendid! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, ripping!" said Wharton. "Come up to the dorm. now. Mind, you fellows, not a snigger, or you'll give the whole show away."

"What-ho!"

And Dr. Nugent ascended to the Remove dormitory, guided by Wharton and Bob, and followed by the rest of the dramatic society.

The juniors made plenty of noise as they approached, and Billy Bunter, who was getting to the end of his provisions, had time to shove the bag under the bedclothes and lie down in an attitude of slumber.

There were crumbs and smears of jam on his fat face, but of this the Owl of the Remove was not aware, and he breathed steadily and regularly as he heard the Removites enter the dormitory.

"Ahem—h'm!" coughed Nugent, coming in with his silk hat in his hand, and his powdered hair glistening white in the candle-light. "Where is my—h'm—patient?"

"He is here, sir," said Wharton respectfully.

"H'm—h'm! Light another candle, please."

"I will light the gas if you wish, sir."

"I said candle!" snapped the medical man.

"Certainly, sir."

A second candle was lighted, and both were placed so that the light did not fall on the face of the pseudo doctor.

Billy Bunter's eyes were closed as tightly as if they had been screwed shut, and he lay without motion or sound save his heavy breathing. The juniors knew perfectly that he was not asleep, and they exchanged a wink.

"H'm!" said the medical man. "H'm! The patient appears to be asleep. H'm!"

"Are you asleep, Billy?" said Wharton. "Here is Dr. Skewers to see you."

"H'm—h'm!"

Bunter did not move or open his eyes.

"H'm—h'm! Don't wake him. I can see that what he wants is bleeding," said Dr. Skewers. "I will insert my lancet in his neck, and bleed him without waking him up. Then he will not feel the pain."

Billy Bunter woke up suddenly, and sat up in bed.

"You jolly well won't do anything of the sort!" he roared. "I'm not ill. I only want a rest. I told you not to fetch a doctor, Wharton."

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NEXT
WEEK:

"THE GREYFRIARS TREASURE."

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"H'm—h'm! It is always best to have a medical man when you are ill, boy. Let me see your tongue."

"My tongue's all right."

"Put your tongue out at once!" said the doctor sternly.

Bunter sullenly obeyed. He put his tongue out.

"Further out."

Bunter put it out further.

"Further still."

"I c-c-can't!" stuttered Bunter. "How on earth am I to put it out further? It was all out then."

"He suffers from having too long a tongue," said the medical man. "Does he use it often?"

"Practically continuously, sir," said Harry.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"He even talks in his sleep, as well as all day," remarked Bob Cherry.

"Dear me!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"A serious matter," said the doctor, shaking his head.

"His complexion is of a very peculiar colour, too."

"It's all right—"

"It is not all right, Bunter! I suppose you will not set your childish opinion up against that of a medical man?" said the doctor severely.

"I got some chalk on my face, that's all."

"Ah, his mind is wandering!" said the doctor. "The case is more serious than I supposed at first. We shall have to be careful, or we may lose him."

"Ow!"

"Does he eat much?"

"Practically continuously—"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Has he other bad habits? Does he tell lies, or sneak?"

"Practically continuously."

"Ah! An unhealthy mind in an unhealthy body," said the doctor, shaking his head again. "This is very serious. We must cleanse this mind and this body. H'm! I will now proceed to bleed the patient—"

"Ow!"

"I find I have forgotten my lancet. However, a carving-knife would do. Will one of you go and fetch a carving-knife?"

"Certainly, sir," said Tom Brown, leaving the dormitory.

"I won't be bled!" roared Bunter. "I—I—I won't! I'm not ill! I—I was only pretending! It was only a joke! I'm sincerely sorry! Ow!"

"His senses are wandering, you see. Does he usually talk nonsense?"

"Practically continuously, sir."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"I am bound to give your medical man the facts, Billy. It's no good trying to deceive a doctor, you know."

"Look here, you beasts, I don't want a doctor! I don't—"

"It isn't a question of what you want, Billy, but what you need. We can't run the risk of losing a chap we're so fond of."

"I'm all right! I won't be bled! Besides, bleeding is a silly, cranky idea, and out of date. Doctors have new wheezes now, and all of them are about as good as one another. I won't have anything done to me. I'm not ill!"

"But you said you were, Billy."

"I—I—I was only joking."

"Let me feel your pulse, Bunter."

"My pulse is all right."

"Let me feel it, boy."

"Oh, all right! There it is!"

The doctor felt Bunter's pulse, and shook his head sadly. It was evident that he drew the most serious deductions from the state of Bunter's pulse.

"Ah! This will never do! Most feverish! Three thousand beats to the second!" said the doctor. "You boys do not know much about it, but you must know that that is a very high rate for the human pulse."

"I rather fancy it is!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"It's all rot!" howled Bunter. "My pulse is all right! Lemme alone!"

"Here's the carving-knife, sir," said Tom Brown, re-entering the dormitory, with a formidable weapon in his hand.

Billy Bunter gave one yell at the sight of it, and bounded out of bed. The bedclothes tangled round his legs, and he came to the floor with a bump. He was up again in a second, and running wildly for the door in his pyjamas.

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THE TENTH CHAPTER. A Sudden Disappearance.

STOP him!"

"Billy! Come back!"

"You young ass! It's all right!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The pseudo medical man and the juniors doubled up with laughter. Billy Bunter, before he could be stopped, had disappeared out of the dormitory. Billy Bunter's plump form was clad solely in a suit of highly-coloured pyjamas, and if he met a master in that state there was likely to be trouble.

"My only hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ho, ho, ho!"

They rushed to the door after the fat junior.

There was the sound of a surprised voice from the passage.

"Bunter! Whatever does this mean?"

Bob Cherry gave a whistle.

"Quelch!"

"Great Scott!"

"We're in for it!"

"Perhaps not," said Mark Linley quickly. "Nugent, get off those things—quick! Shove them under the bed. Quick!"

"Good! Buck up, Frank!"

Nugent caught on at once. He stripped the medical man's disguise off in a few seconds, and the black clothes, the silk hat, and the beard and moustache, disappeared under the nearest bed.

A wipe of a wet sponge cleaned his face of the make-up—at least, sufficiently to pass any but close observation.

Meanwhile, Billy Bunter was not enjoying an interview with the Remove Form-master in the passage.

Mr. Quelch was astonished, and Mr. Quelch was angry. His Form was not a quiet, or a very orderly Form; but he had never discovered any of them out in the passages in their pyjamas at an early hour of the evening before.

"Bunter!" The Form-master stared blankly at the fat junior, who had almost run into him, but stopped himself just in time. "Bunter, what does this mean?"

"I—I—I—"

"Have you been to bed?"

"Yes, sir."

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NEXT
WEEK:

"THE GREYFRIARS TREASURE."

"Why?"

"I—I was ill, sir! I caught a—a—an illness in the train, coming back from Bolsover, sir. I'm in a rather delicate state of health, and—"

"If you are ill, and in a delicate state of health, what do you mean by running about the passages in your night-clothes?" demanded the Remove-master sternly.

"You—you see, sir—"

"I do not see, Bunter, and I am waiting for an explanation."

"It—it was the doctor, sir."

"The doctor?"

"Yes, they would send for a doctor, though I told them I didn't want one, sir. The beast—I mean, the doctor—is in the dormitory now."

"It was quite right to send for a doctor, if you were ill, though I should have been consulted. But that does not account for your flying about the passages in this state."

"He—he was going to bleed me, sir."

"Impossible!"

"He was, sir. He had forgotten his lancet, and he was going to bleed me with a carving-knife!" gasped Billy Bunter.

Mr. Quelch stared at the fat junior for a moment, and then he took one fat ear between his finger and thumb, and compressed it with a grip like a vice. Billy Bunter squealed with anguish.

"Ow—oh—oh, really, sir—"

"You must not tell me these absurd stories, Bunter. I am afraid you are a most untruthful boy. Your inventions lack even the semblance of truth."

"Ow! I assure you, sir, it's true! The beast's in the dormitory now. I only ran out in time. The fellows are all there; they'll bear me out."

"Ahem! I will see," said Mr. Quelch.

He strode into the dormitory. Billy Bunter followed him, blinking. The gas was alight in the dormitory, and a merry party of juniors were playing leap-frog up and down the long room. There was no sign of the doctor.

Mr. Quelch looked in, and the leap-frog ceased. Leap-frog in the dormitory was not forbidden, though it was not encouraged, certainly. The Remove-master's keen eyes which his pupils had compared to a pair of gimlets, swept up

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and down the dormitory in search of the supposed doctor, without finding him.

"Boys," he exclaimed, "Bunter has told me an absurd story of a doctor being here, who wished to bleed him with a carving-knife."

"Oh, sir!"

"Is there a doctor in the room?"

"Certainly not, sir!"

"Has there been a doctor here?"

"Certainly not, sir!"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Well, I haven't seen one," said Nugent. "If there had been one here, I suppose I should have seen him. And I haven't."

Billy Bunter blinked at them in amazement. For a moment he thought that he must have fallen asleep, and dreamed the whole matter. Mr. Quelch's brow grew stern.

"Bunter, this is not the first time I have found you out in palpable inventions. You will follow me to my study."

"Oh, really, sir—"

"Follow me at once!"

Harry Wharton ran forward.

"If you please, sir—"

"Well, Wharton, what have you to say?"

"It—it was a jape, sir," said Wharton. "Bunter thought there was a doctor here, sir. He was malingering, and one of us dressed up as a doctor to give him a scare. Of course, we weren't going to bleed him really."

"Oh!"

"It was only a lark, sir."

"There you are, sir," said Bunter, in an injured tone. "I hope, sir, that you'll believe me next time. I always tell the truth, sir. If I were to begin telling untruths, I should really give it away at once, sir, because it would be so new to me."

"Silence, Bunter! Either dress yourself, or get back into bed. If I find you out of the dormitory in that state again, I shall cane you."

"Oh, really, sir—"

"I suppose there is no harm in a joke of this description, and I have no doubt that Bunter fully deserved it," said Mr. Quelch. "At the same time, I recommend you to keep your sense of humour within reasonable bounds."

And the Remove-master quitted the dormitory.

"Good old Quelch," said Nugent. "He didn't even ask which of us had dressed up as the doctor. He's a good sort."

"The good-sortfulness of the honourable Quelch is terrific," murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Well, you fat young duffer, you jolly near got everybody into a row," said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry! I think it was heartless of you to play a joke like that on a chap who was seriously ill, and might have been at death's door."

"Only I saw you munching tarts, you see," said Bob Cherry. "and I knew you were only telling lies as usual."

"I—I feel quite ill! I think I will go to bed again."

"I think you'll get into your clothes, and go downstairs," said Harry Wharton. "We give you one minute. If you're in bed after that, you'll be bled."

Billy Bunter plunged into his clothes.

He was dressed in record time, and he skipped out of the dormitory in a great hurry, and the Removites followed him, laughing.

That was the end of Billy Bunter's illness; but the fat junior had served his turn after all, for he had escaped the ragging he richly deserved for his raid on the provisions at Bolsover.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Temple Means to be Kind.

"THE Amateur Dramatic Society will have to stand over for a bit," Harry Wharton remarked, on Monday, when, as a rule, the society had a rehearsal. "We shall have to give up every minute to Rugger, now."

"What-ho!" said Nugent. "We'll play out of doors in the daylight, and in the gym., or the passages, after dark."

"That's the idea! We've got three good Rugger players in Brown, Linley, and Morgan. We want a dozen more. We're going to have them."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Nugent. I was going to say that perhaps I could help you now," said the fat junior. "I should be glad to do anything I could."

"Eh? How on earth could you help?"

"I should be willing to overlook the petty jealousy shown towards me at Bolsover, and play in the Greyfriars' fifteen," said Bunter. "I'm rather a dab at Rugger."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at! However, if you don't like to accept my offer, there it is. I'll referee, if you like."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cackling duffers!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter rolled out of the study with a sniff of disdain. He really wanted to play in that football-match, and it was too bad that his claims should be treated in a persistently humorous spirit.

The junior footballers of Greyfriars took up the Rugby idea with great keenness. Naturally enough, they preferred their own variety of the great winter game; but they were willing to admit that there were good points in Rugger, and, anyway, now that they were in for it, they wanted to win.

There was as much keenness shown by the juniors to get into the Remove fifteen as there usually was to get into the Remove eleven.

And the practice started in dead earnest.

Tom Brown of Taranaki, and Mark Linley, were agreed upon as the instructors, assisted by Morgan, who, as a Welshman, was concluded to know all about Rugger.

And Harry Wharton & Co. practised assiduously.

Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, took a keen interest in the matter, too, and he sometimes came down to see the practice, and looked on for a time, and dropped a word of advice here and there.

Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Upper Fourth, the old rivals of the Remove, took the whole affair as a joke. At first they were rather inclined to take it more seriously, and, in fact, Temple & Co. made Harry Wharton a really generous offer. It was after some Rugger practice on the junior ground, at which the Upper Fourth fellows had been looking on. Wharton had succeeded in scoring a try against Tom Brown and Mark Linley, and both of them clapped him on the back when he had touched down over the line. Then the juniors came off the field to go in to tea, and Temple, Dabney & Co. spoke to them on the subject.

"You seem to be taking up, Rugger," Temple remarked, in a rather patronising tone, which he generally adopted towards the Lower Fourth.

Harry Wharton nodded.

"You're really going to play Bolsover again on Saturday?"

"My dear chap, I've answered that question twenty times at least!" said Wharton, in a tone of resignation. "But here goes for the twenty-first! Yes, we really mean to play Bolsover again on Saturday."

"Well, I was thinking that we'd strengthen the team for you a bit, if you liked," said Temple. "It's like your cheek to be meeting Bolsover in a game you don't understand, but we're willing to help you for the good of Greyfriars."

"That's awfully kind of you."

"I mean to be kind," said Temple loftily. "Dab and Fry and myself will play, if you like. I should captain the team."

"I really don't know how to thank you, Temple. You're an awfully generous chap, to go about making offers like this!"

"Do you accept, then?"

"Oh, no!"

"Eh?"

"You see, we want to win, if possible," said Wharton sweetly. "If we wanted to lose, we'd play you with pleasure. But we want to win, and that makes all the difference. Thank you, all the same, of course!"

And the Removites walked on.

No. 105: The "Magnet" Library, One Halfpenny.

NOTE!

No. 106: The "Magnet" Library, One Penny.



Loud shouts rang from the football field as the game progressed, but Billy Bunter never heard them. He was as busy as the footballers, though in a different way!"

"Well, I rather think Wharton scored that time," Fry remarked.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

Temple snorted.

"Cheeky young sweep!" growled Temple. "Fancy his having the nerve to refuse an offer from the Upper Fourth! This blessed Remove wants putting in its place!"

"Oh, rather!"

"Can't you say anything but 'Oh, rather!' Dab?" demanded Temple crossly. "Blessed if you're not like some giddy poll parrot!"

"Oh, rather—I—I mean, just so!"

"It's like their cheek to be trying to play Rugger at all!" growled Fry. "Of course, they can't play! They ought to be laughed out of it."

Temple's eyes gleamed.

"Good!"

"Eh? What do you mean by 'good'?"

"We'll laugh them out of it."

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"What do you mean?"

"Wait till the next time they're playing this rotten game, and all the fellows shall turn up in force and guy them," said Temple, with a grin.

And Fry said "Good!" himself. And Dabney chimed in: "Oh, rather!"

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER. No Tarts for Bunter.

"RAIN!"
"Rain?"
"Listen to it!"
"Oh, blow!"

"Beastly!"

"Just our luck!"

"Rats!"

"Rotten!"

These remarks, and many more of the same tenor, might

have been heard, as a novelist would say, in the Remove dormitory. The Remove were getting up in response to the clang of the rising-bell, and mingled with the bell's clang came the sound of the drops pattering against the windows. It was raining!

Just when the Remove wanted to squeeze in every possible moment at practice on the football-field, the rain was distinctly exasperating.

"Rain!" growled Bob Cherry, looking out of the window. "Coming down in buckets full! It looks as if it's going to last, too."

"Well, if it lasts over next Saturday, the blessed match will be put off," said Ogilvy.

"My dear chap, it will clear up as fine as you please on Friday, all ready for Bolsover to lick us on Saturday," said Bob Cherry, with a snort.

"Yes; very likely."
"The likelihood is great. The uncertainty of the honourable climate in this esteemed country is terrific," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur.

Harry Wharton shrugged his shoulders.
"Well, it can't be helped. We shall have to get some practice indoors, that's all."

And certainly that was all that was to be done. The Removites went down with glum faces.

Wingate, of the Sixth, nodded to Harry Wharton in the hall.

"This is rough on your footer practice, Wharton," he remarked.

"Yes; can't be helped, I suppose."

"I'll arrange for you to have the gym. for a certain time to yourselves this evening, if you like, for such practice as you can get indoors," said Wingate.

"Thanks! You're awfully good!" said Wharton gratefully. "Of course, that would be ripping!"

"The rippingfulness would be terrific."

"Then it's settled."

The rain was still coming down when the boys went into morning classes. They worked to the accompaniment of drops dashing against the panes of the Form-room windows.

When morning lessons were over, the rain was still descending, and the Close was running with water. A group of juniors gathered in the big doorway and looked out into the Close. The rainfall was a little less heavy, but it was still coming down thickly. Billy Bunter joined the group at the door, and blinked out into the wet.

"Ugh! It's rotten weather!" he remarked.

"Thanks for the information, Bunter. We hadn't noticed it before."

"Oh, really, Nugent! I say, will one of you chaps cut across to the tuckshop for me? I don't want to get wet. I'm in a rather delicate state of health at present, owing to being kept short of grub in my study."

"Yes; I think everybody here is willing to go out in the rain for you!" said Bob Cherry sarcastically. "You've only got to choose your man."

"Well, you see, I don't want to get wet. I think one of you chaps ought to go. You're an awfully strong and hearty chap, Wharton. It wouldn't hurt you."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, you, then, Brown. I think you might go."

"Think again," said Tom Brown.

"You see, I want some tarts from the tuckshop," said Bunter pathetically. "It's some time yet to dinner, and I feel very faint. It's no good a chap with a delicate constitution getting into a low state for want of grub. Are you going over to the tuckshop for me, Inky?"

"The painfulness of denying my worthy Bunterful chum is great, but the wetfulness of the honourable weather is terrific. The remainfulness where I am is the proper caper."

"Oh, really, Inky—"

"Let the honourable Bunter take an esteemed umbrella, and make a boleful dash for it," suggested Hurree Singh.

"I tell you I don't want to get wet. I think all you chaps are awfully selfish. You'll be sorry for this some day, when I'm really ill for want of nourishment. I say, Snoopey, will you go, and you can have some of the tarts."

Snoop looked thoughtful. He didn't like the rain, but he did like tarts, and he was about evenly balanced between the two.

"It's a disgrace that they don't have a covered way to the tuckshop!" growled Billy Bunter. "If I were head-master, I should run this school better. There ought really to be a tuckshop in the house, and things should be sold at cost price. Look here, Snoop, I want you to fetch me a bob's worth of tarts, and if you fetch them, you shall have the odd one. You get thirteen for a shilling, mind."

"Rats!" said Snoop.

"Well, suppose we say two?" said Bunter.

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NEXT WEEK: "THE GREYFRIARS TREASURE."

"Bosh!"
"Oh, really, Snoop, you're awfully greedy! But I feel that I must have something to eat, or I shall be ill. We'll say three."

"Four!" said Snoop.

"Oh, really, Snoop—"

"Well, fetch your own tarts, then," said Snoop.

"Well, we'll say four, then," said Bunter, with a sigh.

"But mind you get thirteen for a shilling. Pay cash for them."

"All right. I'll get my coat and a broolly," said Snoop, and he hurried away. He was back in a few minutes, wrapped up in a greatcoat, with his trousers turned up, and an umbrella in his hand. "Hand over the bob!"

"The—the bob?"

"Yes. Mrs. Mimble won't let you have tarts on tick, or me either."

"Well, you see," said Bunter, diving into his pockets. "I'm a little short of money to-day, owing to a disappointment about a postal order. I suppose you wouldn't mind advancing the shilling; I'll return it to-morrow morning out of my postal-order."

"Why, you silly ass—"

"Oh, really, Snoop! What difference does it make to you, so long as you have the bob to-morrow morning? It's all the same to you!"

"Yes; I know your blessed postal-order!" growled Snoop.

"Do you mean to say that you've given me the trouble of getting my coat and broolly for nothing, and that you haven't a bob at all?"

"You see—"

"Then I'll jolly well give you a lamming with the umbrella, now I've got it here!" exclaimed Snoop angrily.

"Oh, really, Snoop, it's all right! Bob Cherry is going to lend me the shilling."

"Is he?" said Bob. "That's the first I've heard of it. And there's a mistake somewhere. I'm not going to do anything of the sort."

"I meant Wharton. I say, Wharton, can you lend me a bob till to-morrow morning. I have a postal-order coming by the first post, you know."

Harry laughed.

"My dear ass—"

"Oh, really, Wharton! I'm awfully hungry, and I feel I shall sink if I don't have some tarts, and Snoop wants to go and fetch them for me. Suppose you advance me a bob off my postal-order, and have it back first thing in the morning."

"Rats!"

"If you have any doubts about the postal-order—"

"I jolly well have, Bunter!"

"If you doubt my word, Wharton, this discussion had better cease," said Billy Bunter, with a great deal of dignity.

"Much better," agreed Wharton.

"Oh, look here, Wharton, you might make it a bob, you know. The postal-order—"

Harry groped in his pockets. He generally ended by conceding what the fat junior asked. Billy Bunter was a merciless and unscrupulous borrower, and he had a way of getting what he wanted.

"I'm short of tin!" growled Wharton. "You had some yesterday, and some the day before."

"I'm going to settle up to-morrow morning out of my postal-order—"

"Oh, do get off that, for goodness' sake!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"I've got fivepence here," said Harry, fishing out the coppers. "You can have it if you like."

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Bunter eyed the coppers disdainfully, but he took them, all the same.

"Is that all the tin you've got, Wharton?"

"I've some more in the study."

"Well, if you'd like to run up and fetch some—"

"I shouldn't!"

"I'll tell you what," said Bunter, with a burst of generosity. "I'd do a lot for a fellow I like. I always would, you know. I'll go up and fetch the money, if you'll tell me just where it is."

"No, you won't!"

"Look here, if you don't want to lend me money, Wharton—"

"You know I don't!" said Wharton bluntly.

"Ahem! I—I mean, I'll take the fivepence, if you like. I don't like to see a fellow acting meanly; but that's your look-out, I suppose, if you choose to do it. Here's the tin, Snoop. Tell Mrs. Mumble—"

But Snoop did not wait for any more. He took the fivepence, opened his umbrella, and made a dash out into the rain. He disappeared through the dripping elms, and Billy Bunter looked after him anxiously.

"Lemme see," said Bunter, when Snoop was out of sight. He took out a notebook, and opened it, and blinked at a page covered with figures. "I say, Wharton, will you have the fivepence back out of my postal-order in the morning, or shall I put it down to the old account?"

"Whichever you like, ass."

"I'd rather you decided. I know some chaps are not particular about debts of honour, but I like to be perfectly regular myself," said Bunter. "Short accounts make long friends. It's better to settle these matters at once. Now, which shall it be?"

"Oh, rats!"

"Then I'll put it down to the account. That will make a total for the term of—"

"Shut up!" roared Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton! I was only going to tell you the total amount I owe you for what you have lent me this term," said Bunter, blinking at him in surprise.

"Well, don't!" growled Wharton. "It's bad enough to have you scoffing up all a chap's spare cash this way, without being reminded every minute of the sum it amounts to in the course of a term. Shut up!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

Harry Wharton walked away. Bunter blinked after him, and blinked round at the grinning juniors. Then he shook his head.

"Curious thing about Wharton," he remarked. "He's a sensible chap in some things, but he has no idea of business—simply no idea!"

Bunter blinked out into the rain in search of Snoop. Snoop seemed a long time gone. The other fellows were also interested. They wondered how many tarts Snoop would bring back.

The form of the junior was seen at last, skipping through the rain with the umbrella up.

He dashed into the doorway, scattering raindrops on all sides.

"Ugh!" he gasped. "Fearful weather!"

"Got the tarts?"

"I'm quite wet! Umbrella's not much good in rain like this!"

"Got the tarts?"

"Tarts! What do you mean by tarts?" demanded Snoop. "You only get five for fivepence—Mrs. Mumble doesn't throw in any extra ones under a bob's worth. What do you mean by tarts? There's only one!"

"One!" gasped Bunter. "Why, I—"

"It was agreed that I was to have four."

"Four!"

"Yes, for fetching them." Snoop produced a paper bag from under his coat. "There's your one. I ate mine in the tuckshop."

Bunter mechanically took the bag and opened it. It contained a single tart, and not a large one at that. He blinked at the tart, and blinked at Snoop.

"You—you worm!" he gasped. "Give me my tarts!"

"Well, I like that!" said Snoop. "All the fellows heard you agree that I was to have four of them for going to the tuckshop!"

"That was if you got a bob's worth!" roared Bunter. "You—you sweep! Where's my tarts? Hand over my tarts!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry.

"I—I say, you fellows, I'm not going to be done like this! There's nothing whatever to cackle at! Look here, Snoop—"

"There's your tart," said Snoop. "I'm a businesslike chap—I keep exactly to the agreement." And he walked away.

Billy Bunter blinked at the single tart, and cast an indignant look at the juniors, who were howling with laughter.

"Well, of all the rotten swindles!" he growled. "What's

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Next Week: "THE GREYFRIARS TREASURE."

NEXT
TUESDAY,

The "Magnet"

ONE
HALFPENNY.

LIBRARY.

the good of a tart—a single tart—to a chap like me? I'd just as soon be without it!"

"Oh, good!" said Skinner.

He reached over Bunter's shoulder, jerked the tart from the bag, and ate it in a twinkling. It was gone before Bunter knew what was happening. Skinner wiped his mouth, and Bunter blinked at him speechlessly for some moments. There was a perfect shriek of laughter from the juniors.

Bunter found his voice at last.

"M-m-m-my tart! Skinner! I—I—you—I—"

"It was all right," said Skinner. "I like tarts."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you sweep!" yelled Bunter. "My tart—my last tart! I want it! Look here—"

"You said you'd just as soon be without it!" exclaimed Skinner, with a look of surprise. "I was simply getting rid of it for you. It's no good trying to please some people." And Skinner strolled away. He certainly had not pleased Bunter!

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

No Luck.

BILLY BUNTER wore a grim look all through dinner, and he was still wearing it when the Remove went in to afternoon lessons. The rain was pattering away at the panes, and Billy Bunter declared that he always felt extra hungry on rainy days. He had disposed of a dinner which Bob Cherry said might have been enough for any reasonably-minded hippopotamus, but he did not seem to be satisfied. He confided to Wharton as they left the dining-room that he was very peckish, and asked him what he could suggest in the way of a fillip. Wharton suggested that he should go and eat coke—a suggestion which Bunter received in very ill part.

The fat junior was still thinking of his ravished tarts, and that caused the grim expression on his fat face when he went into the Form-room.

It had taken so much trouble to extract that fivepence from Wharton, and then to have four of his tarts scoffed by Snoop, and the remaining one by Skinner—it was really too bad, and there was nothing surprising in the fact that the fat junior felt wrathful. The ventriloquist of Greyfriars was on the warpath.

Monsieur Charpentier, the French-master, was taking the Remove in his own beautiful language, and the lessons to the Remove were not generally enjoyed by the French-master.

Many of the fellows took pleasure in ragging him, and Bunter sometimes worked off ventriloquial wheezes on the little French-master—a safer subject than Mr. Quelch. Billy had, indeed, tried it upon Mr. Quelch, but the results had been so painful that he was not tempted to try it again.

"Good-afternoon, mes enfants!" said Monsieur Charpentier cordially, as he entered the Form-room; and the Remove responded with "Good-afternoon, Mossos!"

And then a still small voice was heard saying:

"Froggy!"

Monsieur Charpentier turned red.

"Who was speak?" he exclaimed.

"Froggy!"

"Boy! Who speak viz himself zat time?"

"Froggy!"

"Skinnair! You speak!"

"No, I didn't, sir!" exclaimed Skinner, in alarm. "The—the voice came from my left, sir!"

"Was it you zen, Snoop?"

"Oh, go and eat frogs!"

Monsieur Charpentier fairly jumped as Snoop's voice replied.

"Vat! Vat!" he shrieked.

"Go and eat frogs! Yah! Waterloo!"

Mossos was crimson.

"Snoop! Snoop! Stand out here viz you!"

Snoop stared at him.

"If you please, sir, I—"

"Come out viz you!"

"Certainly, sir. But—"

"Come here!"

The alarmed and apprehensive Snoop obeyed. Monsieur Charpentier took a pointer from the desk and whisked it through the air.

"Hold out ze hand, Snoop!"

"But, sir—"

"I zink I teach you not to insult ze master."

"I—I didn't speak, sir!"

"It is zat you zink I do not know your voice, Snoop? You speak and Skinnair speak, but you vas ze vorst, so I punishes you. Hold out ze hand."

"B-b-b-but, sir—"

"If you not obeys me, Snoop, I lays ze pointer round ze back!" shouted Monsieur Charpentier.

Snoop reluctantly held out his hand. He received a swipe that brought the water to his eyes.

A pointer will make the hand smart more than a cane. Snoop was hurt! He tucked his damaged hand away under his arm, and squeezed it convulsively as he staggered back to his place in the class.

"I zink zat is a lesson to you," said Monsieur Charpentier. "I zink you are more careful ze next time, Snoop. Skinnair, you vill be more careful. I like not punishing ze poys, but I am not to be treat viz ze impertinence. You understand?"

"Oh, ring off!"

"Skinnair!"

"Rats!"

"Skinnair, come out hero!" thundered Mosscoo.

"I—I—I didn't speak!" said Skinner, with a gasp of dismay. "I—"

"Come here viz you at vunce!"

"But if you please, sir—"

"Zen I fetches you!"

And Monsieur Charpentier ran towards Skinner, and seized him by the back of the collar, and yanked him out bodily before the class.

Skinner came out with a gasp and a clatter of feet on the floor, and stood unsteadily where the French-master jerked him.

"Now zen," said Monsieur Charpentier hotly, "vat did you say?"

"I—I said nothing, sir!" stammered Skinner.

"Do not tell me ze falsehoods, Skinnair!"

"I—I—I—"

"Hold out ze hand, Skinnair! I vill give you vun for speaking viz ze impertinence, and vun more for uttering ze lie about it."

"I haven't told a lie, sir. I—"

"Hold out ze hand!"

"I won't!" yelled Skinner. "I'm not going to be licked for nothing! I'll appeal to Mr. Quelch! I—"

"Skinnair!"

"I won't! I—"

"What is that, Skinner?"

It was a very quiet voice, but it cut Skinner short very sharply. The door opened, and Mr. Quelch, the Form-master, stepped into the room.

Monsieur Charpentier was one person, and Mr. Quelch quite another, and Skinner was flabbergasted under the gimlet eyes.

"Well, Skinner?"

"If—if you please, sir," stammered Skinner, "I—I—"

"I think I heard you being impertinent to Monsieur Charpentier," said Mr. Quelch, in a dangerously quiet tone.

"Oh, no, sir! I—I said I would appeal to you, sir. I—I have a right to appeal to my own Form-master, sir."

"He has been ferry impertinent!" said Mosscoo heatedly.

"He say 'Froggy,' and 'rats'—he say zem to me, his master."

Mr. Quelch's brow grew very stern.

"I didn't, sir!" howled Skinner. "The fellows next to me will bear me out! Bulstrode knows whether I spoke or not—so does Elliott!"

"There seems to be some mistake, or trick, here," said Mr. Quelch. "Are you willing for me to look into the matter, Monsieur Charpentier?"

"Viz pleasure, Monsieur Quelch."

"Bulstrode! Elliott! Did you hear Skinner speak?"

"No, sir."

"You are sure he did not speak?"

"Quite sure, sir."

"Did you hear the words Monsieur Charpentier complains of?"

"Yes, sir. It was somebody else."

"Ah! The boy who spoke will kindly stand up."

Nobody stood up.

"Very well," said Mr. Quelch, after waiting a few moments. "I will proceed to investigate the matter. Bunter!"

"Ye-es, sir," stammered Billy, looking much startled.

"Stand up!"

"Certainly, sir."

"I have had reason to suspect you before of playing ventriloquial tricks in the Form-room," said the Remove-master. "On at least one occasion I found you guilty beyond all doubt. Have you been playing another trick this afternoon?"

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

"Are you quite certain, Bunter?"

"Quite certain, sir. Besides, I couldn't imitate Skinner's voice, you know, sir. I can imitate almost any voice, but not Skinner's."

"Indeed! Then you have not been indulging in any ventriloquism?"

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"Oh, no, sir! I wouldn't think of such a thing. Snoop and Skinner have both been awfully impertinent to Mosscoo. I wouldn't be impertinent to Mosscoo for anything."

"Indeed!"

"No, sir, I—I'd rather be impertinent to my own grandfather," said Billy Bunter. "Besides, he lays it on with the pointer when he gets waxy, you know, sir. I wouldn't call him Froggy for anything. I think it would be quite inconsiderate to throw it in his face that he eats frogs and things when he's at home."

"What has Skinner done to offend you to-day, Bunter?"

"He scoffed my last tart, sir—I—I mean, he hasn't done anything."

"Ah! He took your last tart, did he?" said Mr. Quelch.

"And what has Snoop done?"

"Nothing, sir. He was very kind, to fetch the tarts for me. I'm very much obliged to Snoop, sir, and I like him very much. I wouldn't think of imitating his voice to get him into a row with Monsieur. I like him too much; and as for the tarts he kept, I really didn't want them. I didn't really."

"So Snoop had some tarts as well?"

"Yes, sir—I mean, sir, no, sir. Certainly not."

"Your statements do not agree with one another, Bunter."

"I—I can't help that, sir. I can only tell the truth."

"My only hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "The truth!"

"Bunter, I am convinced that you have spoken falsely. Your whole manner, and what you have said, make it quite clear."

"Oh, sir! I hope you don't think I could possibly be guilty of uttering a falsehood, sir. I'm very particular about always telling the truth."

"Skinner and Snoop have offended you over some trivial matter, and you have taken this means to punish them," said Mr. Quelch sternly.

"A—a trivial matter, sir! Do you call scoffing my tarts a trivial matter? I was awfully hungry, too, when the beasts scoffed them. I said I'd make them sit up—I—I mean, I never said anything of the sort, and of course I didn't want to make them sit up. I like them both, and they were perfectly welcome to the tarts. They know that."

"Come out there, Bunter."

"But, sir, I—I assure you—"

"Come here at once."

Billy Bunter came out before the class in a very gingerly manner. It was pretty clear that he was in for it now, though he did not see quite how he had betrayed himself. Mr. Quelch's power of seeing through him and reading his secrets seemed to Billy Bunter quite uncanny.

Nor did he receive any sympathetic looks from the class. The Removites were fond enough of a joke; but Bunter's trick on Snoop and Skinner was a little beyond a joke, and the barefaced way he had rolled out lie after lie on the subject disgusted even fellows like Snoop himself.

Not that Bunter was as guilty in that matter as most dealers in falsehood. The fat junior was so obtuse that he hardly knew the difference between truth and falsehood, and he would tell the most astounding lies without actually realising that he was departing from the truth.

Mr. Quelch bent a terrifying frown upon the Owl of the Remove.

"Now, Bunter, you had better tell me the truth. You have been playing a ventriloquial trick upon Monsieur Charpentier. I know it perfectly well."

"Well, sir," said Bunter, changing his ground. "I'm sincerely sorry, sir. I don't want to contradict you, sir. It would be disrespectful to contradict you, sir, especially as we all like and respect you so much."

"That will do, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch curtly.

"Thank you, sir!"

And Billy Bunter turned to trot back to his place. The Remove-master's stern voice called him round again.

"I did not mean that you were to go back to your place, Bunter. Stand where you are."

"Ye-es, sir," stammered Billy, blinking very nervously at the Remove-master. "But it—it makes me tired standing, sir. I'm rather faint this afternoon, owing to not having had quite enough to eat at dinner."

"I am going to punish you, Bunter, for your mean trickery!"

"Oh, sir! It wasn't mean—it was awfully clever really, and they had my tarts, you know—and I'm not big enough to lick them, and—I—I mean that I haven't played any tricks, sir. I wouldn't think of such a thing in the class-room, sir. I'm really surprised at your suggesting it."

"Ze bad boy," said Monsieur Charpentier, almost with tears in his eyes. "He has caused me to cane Snoop, who was innocent. I am ferry sorry, Snoop."

Snoop grunted. Mosscoo's sorrow did not take the smart and tingle out of his hand.

"And as for you, Skinnair—"

"Yes, sir?" said Skinner, with a triumphant glance at Billy Bunter, enjoying in prospect the licking the Greyfriars ventriloquist was certainly booked for.

"I am sorry I accuse you, Skinnair. You may sit down viz yourself."

"Thank you, sir."

And Skinner went back to his place. Gladly enough would the Owl of the Remove have followed his example.

"Now, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch sternly. "I am going to punish you for your insolence to your master, and your treachery towards your Form-fellows."

"Oh, sir! It—it wasn't me—"

"Hold out your hand, Bunter."

"I—I—I—"

"Hold out your hand!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

He had the pointer in his grasp now, and his eyes were gleaming.

Billy Bunter squirmed, and held out his hand. Mr. Quelch made a swipe at it, and Bunter instinctively withdrew it at the critical moment.

The pointer swept down, and caught Mr. Quelch a crack on the knee that rang through the Form-room like a pistol-shot.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Prefers to Stand.

"OH!"

Mr. Quelch gasped out that ejaculation; and the Remove were treated to the strange and unaccustomed sight of a Form-master dancing on one leg, and clasping the other in both hands. The pointer went with a crash to the floor.

"Oh! Oh!"

A chuckle swept irresistibly through the Form. Billy Bunter blinked at the Form-master. Mr. Quelch's antics were certainly comical enough to a disinterested looker-on. But there was nothing comical in them to Bunter's eyes. The fat junior had acted upon impulse, and he was frightened almost out of his wits at the result of his action.

"Oh! Oh!"

"I—I'm sincerely sorry, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—"

Mr. Quelch calmed down. His glance swept over the Form, and the chuckles died away. The Remove-master must have been suffering a great deal of pain still, but after the first shock he allowed himself to betray no sign of it.

"Bunter!" he rasped out.

"Ye-e-es, sir."

"Follow me!"

Mr. Quelch strode from the Form-room. The fat junior followed reluctantly, with many a backward glance.

The Remove knew very well what it meant. Bunter was to go to the Head, and he would not be merely caned this time.

"Ve vill now commence," said Monsieur Charpentier.

And the French lesson began. It was about ten minutes before Billy Bunter returned. Then he came into the Form-room with a peculiarly squirming gait.

Monsieur Charpentier glanced at him.

"Go to your place at vunce, Buntair!"

"Yes, sir," groaned Billy Bunter.

"I trust your punishment, vich I am sorry for, will be a lesson to you, and you play no more of ze tricks in ze class," said Monsieur Charpentier.

Bunter did not reply. He dragged himself to his place in the Form, which was in the last row, next to the wall.

But he did not sit down.

He stood behind the form, still squirming. Monsieur Charpentier glanced at him across the class.

"Buntair!"

"Yes, sir," groaned Billy.

"Sit down!"

"Yes, sir."

Bunter sat down and groaned. The next moment he was standing up again.

The French-master glanced round.

"Buntair!" he shrieked.

"Ye-e-es, sir!"

"It is zat I have told you to sit down."

"I did sit down, sir."

"But you get up again!" exclaimed Monsieur Charpentier. "You sit down and stays sit down, Buntair, or I zink you got ze pointer."

"I—I—I—if you please, sir, I'd rather not sit down at present," faltered Billy Bunter. "I—I think I might be allowed to stand for the rest of this lesson, sir."

Monsieur Charpentier stared at him, and then some thought seemed to strike him, for a smile dawned upon his face and he nodded his head.

"Very well, Buntair. Zat you stand up for ze rest of ze lesson if you wish."

"Thank you, sir!" groaned Bunter.

And he stood up. Monsieur Charpentier mercifully let him alone for the rest of the lesson, and he was left to groan in peace.

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"Is it very bad?" whispered Tom Brown sympathetically. "Oh, don't talk of it!" groaned Bunter. "Oh—oh! What an ass I was ever to learn ventriloquism! I'm always being made to suffer because I'm cleverer than other chaps. Oh!"

"Yes, it's awfully rough, Billy. But you clever chaps must expect it. It's the price of genius, you know."

"Oh, really, Brown!"

Billy Bunter was squirming in the most uncomfortable manner when the Remove were dismissed that afternoon.

Dr. Locke did not often punish a junior, but when he did, the punishment was one to be remembered, and Billy Bunter was remembering this one.

In the passage Snoop and Skinner came up to the fat junior. Billy Bunter looked alarmed, and tried to squirm behind Wharton.

"You young sweep," said Skinner. "You wanted me caned, did you? Wanted to get me licked by Mossos, you young cad!"

"And I was caned!" howled Snoop. "My blessed hand is tingling yet. I thought Mossos would have had half of it off with that rotten pointer."

"Collar the young cad!" said Skinner. "Bump him!"

"What-ho!"

"I say, you fellows! Oh, really, you know—Wharton!"

Harry Wharton interposed.

"Let him alone," he said. "Hang it all—the Head's flogged him, and that's enough for anybody. Let him alone!"

"I'm going to lick him!" said Snoop ferociously.

"Let him alone, I say."

And Snoop looked at Wharton's face, and decided that he had better. Billy Bunter was careful to keep close to Harry Wharton as the captain of the Remove walked away.

"I'm obliged to you, Wharton, you know," he said. "Those beasts were going to bump me. Of course, it was really all your fault."

"Eh?" said Harry, staring. "How was it my fault?"

"It was your blessed meanness over those tarts," said Bunter. "If you had let me have the bob it would have been all-right."

"It was your own rotten caddishness," said Harry sternly. "It was mean and beastly to try to get Snoop and Skinner into a row in class, and if the Head hadn't licked you already, I'd let them bump you as much as they pleased."

"Oh, really, you know! I say," said Billy Bunter, changing a painful subject. "What are we going to have for tea?"

"Tea in hall; money's tight."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Rats!"

Harry was not in a patient mood. He had other things to think about, more important than Billy Bunter and his unearthly appetite. There was the match with Bolsover hanging on his mind, and the rain descending steadily and stopping all chance of outdoor practice.

The chums of the Remove had their tea in Hall. Wingate spoke to Wharton after they had left the dining-room, and told him he had arranged for the Remove to have the gym, if they wanted it, from seven to eight, to themselves.

"It will give you a chance to get in some Rugger practice, though it's not like being out of doors, of course," said Wingate. "But what you want to pick up chiefly at first is the theory of the game, and you can practice passing, dropping, and the scrum as well in the gym. as anywhere else."

"Thanks!" said Wharton. "You're awfully good."

"Not at all. I want to give you every chance to make a good show for Greyfriars, and I don't see that you haven't a chance of licking Bolsover, too."

Harry Wharton & Co. proceeded to No. 1 Study, to get their prep. done as early as possible, to have a clear evening for the indoor Rugger practice. Bob Cherry and Mark Linley went along to No. 13 for the same purpose. Billy Bunter was in No. 1 Study as Harry entered. The fat junior had gone there directly after tea. Harry expected to see him, as usual, rolling in the armchair, with his feet on the fender, taking up three-quarters of the fire, and growling to the new-comers to close the door.

But Bunter was not in the armchair this time. He was walking up and down the study, with a set expression upon his fat face.

"Hallo," exclaimed Frank Nugent, "what's the matter with Bunter? Taking exercise at last, Billy?"

Bunter blinked across at them.

"No," he said. "The fact is, you fellows, I know some of you have grumbled at my always having the armchair. Not that I do have it always, but you seem to think I do, and you don't like it. I feel entitled to it, as I'm in delicate health, and require plenty of rest and good nourishment to

keep me going at all. However, I shall now take a new line, and I decline to occupy the armchair at all this evening."

"Oh, don't be an ass, Billy! Sit down."

Bunter shook his head firmly.

"I have told you I shall not use the armchair this evening. You fellows can have a turn. I decline to do anything that may look selfish, as you are so fond of finding fault with me."

The chums of the Remove stared at one another. This was so new a line for Billy Bunter to take, that they were quite nonplussed for the moment. It really looked as if the fat junior were turning over a new leaf.

"And I hope," said Billy Bunter, in quite a magisterial manner, "that you won't be quite so sharp in attributing selfish motives to a fellow in future. I think——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Nugent suddenly.

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

"You humbug! You everlasting spoofer!"

"Oh, really——"

"To think that I let you take me in for a second!" exclaimed Nugent indignantly. "I had forgotten the flogging. Of course you don't want to sit down!"

"Why, of course not!" exclaimed Wharton, laughing. "And equally, of course, he wants to make capital out of it. The young spoofer!"

"The spoof-fulness is terrific."

"Oh, really, you fellows——"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"But, I say, you know——"

"Shut up!" roared three voices in unison. And Bunter shut up, walking out of the study, and slamming the door after him.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Laughers.

PROMPTLY at seven o'clock the Greyfriars fifteen turned up in the gym. for practice. Most of the Remove turned up too, to look on, and some of them to help in the practice.

The rain was still descending in heavy drops in the Close, and dashing against the big panes of the gymnasium windows.

Wingate had arranged that the Remove should have the great building for an hour. The other fellows could enter it if they liked; but all the usual paraphernalia had been cleared away, and if other fellows entered, they could only do so to line the walls as spectators.

As the sight of the junior team getting in practice at a new game was not likely to be particularly interesting, Harry Wharton did not expect any spectators outside his own Form. He was surprised, therefore, to see Temple, Dabney & Co. come in.

Temple nodded to him affably.

"We're come to see the show," he remarked. "I've paid money in my time to see things less funny than this will be."

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"We're just going to look on," said Fry. "You will excuse us if we smile. It may prove to be an irresistible sight. A smile or two allowed, I suppose?"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Wharton.

Temple, Dabney & Co. allowed themselves the liberty of a smile, and took up their station against the wall of the gym. More of the Upper Fourth followed them in, and took up their station along the same wall, till nearly the whole of the Form was there, all standing in a solemn row. The Removites exchanged dubious looks.

Some of them felt a little nervous and uneasy at setting to practice under the eyes of the rival Form; others anticipated trouble. Wharton strode over to Dabney and Temple.

"Look here," he exclaimed, "what's the little game? We're here on business, and we don't want any rag this evening."

Temple looked at him with an expression of great surprise.

"My dear chap, who's talking about a rag?" he exclaimed. "We're here just to look on. We feel interested. We want to see you play the game. We want to learn. We're always willing to learn."

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"Look here——"

"My dear fellow, that's just what we've come here to do," said Temple blandly. "We're going to look. We're here to look. As your inky-complexioned friend would remark, the lookfulness will be terrific."

Wharton's brows contracted.

"Well, if there's any rotting, you'll get the order of the

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boot, and sharp," he exclaimed. "We are here for work, not play."

"My dear fellow, don't get your rag out for nothing. We sha'n't do anything more than smile, and you must admit that the Remove playing football is a just cause for a smile from anybody."

Wharton walked away without replying. He had selected his fifteen, and picked out another fifteen from the Remove for them to play against. It was not to be a match, however, but simply practice, mingled with instruction from Brown, Linley, and Morgan. The ball was kicked off, and the Removites set to work, passing and tackling and scrummaging.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a loud, staccato laugh from the Upper Fourth.

Harry Wharton glanced round at them. Temple had raised his hand, evidently as a signal, and at that signal the loud laugh of the Upper Fourth had rung out.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a sharp, staccato laugh, which sounded as if it were delivered by machinery, every fellow enunciating the syllables at the same moment.

Wharton's eyes sparkled with annoyance. He could see that the Upper Fourth must have rehearsed this beforehand. Temple was managing the affair like the conductor of an orchestra. His hand went up again, and again that staccato laugh burst forth.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

With solemn faces, like a choir going through a particularly difficult and delicate exercise, the Upper Fourth laughed to order.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The silly asses!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Idiots!"

"Chumps!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The howling jackasses!"

"The frabjous lunatics!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That silly, cackling row will get on my nerves, I think," said Nugent irritably.

"It's getting on mine," growled Tom Brown.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Temple had taken out his watch. At the end of every thirty seconds he raised his hand, and the Upper Fourth laughed.

The Removites glowered with anger.

It was a novel kind of a rag; and though the juniors said at first that they would let the Upper Fourth cackle as much as they pleased, the laughter soon began to get on their nerves and worry them.

Harry Wharton ran across to the laughing line in a few minutes.

"Look here," he exclaimed, "enough of that! Chuck it!"

"Chuck what?" asked Temple. "Are you referring to my watch?"

"I'm referring to your silly cackling."

"Oh, my dear fellow——"

"We don't like it, and we're not going to have it. You may be funny merchants, but we don't want your funning here. Get out."

"But the gym. is free to everybody, and you can't expect a chap to remain quite grave while the Remove are playing football," expostulated Temple.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"Well, I've warned you," said Wharton.

"Thanks, very much!"

"You're not going?"

"No, I think not. We don't often see anything as funny as this, and we're not going to lose a chance. We're here to enjoy ourselves. My dear chap, if you fellows could see yourselves, you'd always watch yourselves playing football instead of paying to go into a Punch and Judy show."

Wharton returned to his comrades. The play had ceased for a few minutes. The stares and the absurd laughter of the Upper Fourth had quite thrown the players off their form. Fellows who have played in football matches with the spirit of the crowd against them, and who know the peculiar effect it has on the nerves, will understand how Temple's tactics put the Remove off their form.

"It's a jape," said Harry Wharton, with a grim smile.

"They're going to keep it up. They think it's awfully funny."

"Well, so it is, in a way," remarked Nugent. "But we're here for work now, not for fun. They ought to chuck it."

"They're going to chuck it."

"But you said——"

"They think they're going to keep it up, and I think they're going to chuck it," explained Wharton. "Look here. When we recommence playing, I shall knock on the

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ball towards that wall, where the silly asses are standing in a row."

"Yes; what then?"

"You'll all follow it at top speed, as hard as you can go. I'll take care that the ball reaches the wall. Only you won't take any notice of the ball. When you reach the Upper Fourth, you'll tackle them—see—and yank them all over and roll 'em on the floor. They will be taken by surprise, and I think we can give them a bumping that will make them sorry for themselves."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now, then, ready!"

The practice recommenced. The juniors passed the ball, and formed a scrum, waiting for the signal from Wharton before acting on the offensive. Meanwhile, Temple was timing the laughter of the Upper Fourth as before.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Every time Temple's hand went up as a signal, that staccato laugh burst forth, with rhythmic regularity. The Removites were smiling now, however, as they thought of the surprise that was preparing for Temple & Co.

Wharton knocked the ball on towards the wall of the gym., where the Upper Fourth had stationed themselves. The Remove dashed after it. The Upper Fourth saw them coming, but suspected nothing. The players had rushed in their direction a dozen times before. But this time the Remove were on the warpath.

They overtook the ball, and passed it, and then they burst like a thunderbolt upon the Upper Fourth.

Before the laughers could realise that the Remove had adopted offensive tactics, the juniors were upon them.

The Upper Fourth, seized by countless hands, went whirling and reeling, and bumping on the hard floor, amid a babel of wild yells.

In three seconds not a fellow was standing, and it was the turn of the Remove to laugh, which they proceeded to do with a right good will.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter Stands a Feed.

"H A, ha, ha!"

Loud and long laughed the Remove.

It was indeed a comical sight! Temple, Dabney & Co. were sprawling on the floor, yelling and gasping, and half the Remove were sprawling over them.

It was a sudden and complete fall for the Upper Fourth.

Temple tried to struggle to his feet, but Nugent was sitting on his chest, and Bob Cherry was standing on his legs. Temple sank back again.

"Lemme gerrup!" he gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You beasts! Get off!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites simply yelled. The Upper Fourth-Formers gasped and shrieked and struggled. A few of them succeeded in getting up, but were promptly tackled, and hurled down again, mostly with Removites sitting on them.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah! Cads! Lemme get up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll—I'll break your necks for this!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're done for," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "You'd better give in, Temple. We'll let you go if you agree to get out of the gym., and not bother us any more."

"I won't—I won't—I—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you get out, Temple?"

"No," yelled Temple, "I won't! I'll—"

"Then you'll jolly well be spanked," said Wharton determinedly. "We've only got the gym. for an hour, and we're not going to have our time wasted. This jape has gone far enough. Will you get out?"

"No!" shouted Temple, who had quite lost his temper at the failure of his jape, and the ridiculous result of it to himself and his comrades. "No, no!"

"Turn him over and spank him, Bob."

"What-ho!"

"Don't you dare!" yelled Temple. "I—I—"

"Spank him!"

Nugent and Hurree Singh rolled Temple over, and held him fast, in spite of his furious struggles. Then Bob Cherry raised his hand, which was not a small size in hands.

"Are you ready, Temple?"

"Don't you dare—"

"Will you go out?"

"No!"

Spank! Bob Cherry's hand descended with a resounding spank. Temple gave a terrific yell, and struggled wildly. Nugent and Hurree Singh, choking with laughter, held him fast.

"Now, then, Temple, are you going?"

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"No!"

Spank!

"Ow!"

"Are you going?"

"No—yes! Yes!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let him get up!"

Temple staggered to his feet. His face was crimson and furious. He gave one wrathful glare round at the grinning Removites, and left the gym.

A roar of laughter followed him. The surrender of the great Temple was distinctly amusing to the Removites.

"Now for the esteemed Dabney," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "I will hold him tightly, while the honourable Cherry administers the esteemed spankfulness with his large hand."

"Here, hold on!" exclaimed Dabney, in alarm. "I'll go quietly."

And he wriggled in the muscular grip of Tom Brown and Morgan.

"Surq?" asked Bob Cherry politely. "It's no trouble to me to give you a spank or two, if you prefer it."

"I—I'll go, I tell you!"

"Are all you fellows going quietly, or shall I come round to you?" demanded Bob Cherry.

And the Upper Fourth chorussed eagerly:

"We'll go quietly."

"Very well," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Let them go."

And the Removites got off their prisoners, and allowed the ruffled and rumped and defeated Upper Fourth to struggle to their feet and depart in peace.

In a minute more the Remove had the gym. to themselves.

"Good!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "It was a funny wheeze of Temple's, but I think that even the Upper Fourth will have to admit that we scored."

"Ha, ha! Rather!"

"Half our time gone," said Harry. "Never mind. I think Temple & Co., will leave our practice here severely alone in the future. Let's buckle to, now."

And they buckled to.

There was no more trouble from the Upper Fourth, and until eight o'clock the juniors worked hard at the game.

The improvement in their form, visible even in that short time, was great, and it gave Wharton the liveliest hopes of what was to come.

At eight they left off, pretty well satisfied with their progress. The rain was still falling as they left the gym., but more lightly. Temple, Dabney & Co. were in the hall when Harry Wharton and his friends came in.

Temple frowned at them, and the Removites burst into a laugh.

"Cheeky young cubs!" said Temple majestically.

"Ha, ha, ha! What price spanking?" chortled Bob Cherry.

And Temple turned red, and walked off.

The chums of the Remove went up to No. 1 Study. The football practice had made them hungry, and Nugent remembered that there was bread and cheese in the study cupboard. Bob Cherry and Mark Linley and Tom Brown were asked into the study, and they accepted the invitation.

"We shall make a clean sweep of the bread and cheese," remarked Tom, with a laugh, as they went upstairs.

"Oh, there will be enough to go round," said Nugent. "That is, of course, if Bunter hasn't been on the scene. If he has, we shall find the cupboard in the same state as Mother Hubbard's."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as they approached the study door. "There seems to be a feast toward in the halls of the Remove."

"The smellfulness is terrific," said Hurree Singh, sniffing.

And, indeed, from Study No. 1, in spite of the closed door, a smell of frying bacon was proceeding. The juniors hurried on and opened the door. The study was lighted, and there was a blazing fire in the grate. Bunter was standing at the grate with a frying-pan in his hand, and he looked round rather guiltily as the juniors came crowding in.

"Hallo!" he said. "I—I thought you were at footer practice."

"That's over," said Nugent. "We've come in for some bread and cheese, but there seems to be something better going on."

"My hat! What a feed!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

The feedfulness is terrific."

They glanced in surprise and satisfaction at the table. It was spread plentifully enough. Bunter had evidently obtained funds from somewhere. There were cakes and jam and biscuits and ham and tongue and poached eggs, and other items, and Bunter was just finishing turning out a whole frying-pan full of savoury rashers.

"Have you come into a fortune, Bunter?" demanded Nugent.

"Oh, no. You can join me in this feed, if you like," said Bunter. "There's enough to go round. I'm not a chap to bear malice, though I've been treated meanly."

"Who have you been robbing?" asked Bob bluntly.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"What silly ass has been lending you money, then?"

"If you've come here to insult a fellow at his own table, Cherry—" began Billy Bunter, with a great deal of dignity.

"You don't mean to say that your postal-order has come!" exclaimed Bob, in great astonishment.

"I decline to discuss the matter," said Bunter loftily.

"Here's the feed, and you're all welcome if you like to join me."

To which the juniors replied with one voice:

"What-ho!"

And they joined Billy Bunter with great alacrity.

There was ample to go round. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh contented himself with bread and butter and cake and bananas, as his caste did not allow him to eat bacon. But the nabob was very polite, and he sat unmoved while his chums ate rashers, carefully locking in his own breast what he thought about it. It was really a first-class feed, and the juniors enjoyed it immensely. Billy Bunter, in the novel rôle of a fellow standing a feed, beamed hospitably through his big spectacles.

"Well, I must say this is ripping!" said Bob Cherry. "I think we ought to return a vote of thanks to the founder of this feast."

"Hear, hear!"

"As the youngest and best-looking gentleman present—"

"Rats!"

"I rise to move a vote of thanks to our friend Bunter, who, we must all admit, is not always such a worm as he usually is."

"Hear, hear!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Passed unanimously," said Nugent. "Now pass the jam."

"Hear, hear!"

And Bob Cherry and Linley and Brown retired, very well satisfied with the feed, though greatly puzzled to know how Billy Bunter had done it. Harry Wharton was very much puzzled, too. He had left some money in the study, in his writing-case, and the thought crossed his mind that Bunter might have found and "borrowed" it. But he looked into the writing-case, and found it still there.

"Was it really the postal-order, Billy?" asked Nugent. "If it was, you oughtn't to have cashed it. You ought to have had it framed."

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Anybody seen my footer?" asked Harry, glancing round.

"Oh, really, Wharton, you had it in the gym."

"That was Brown's footer—a Rugby ball, ass. We've been playing Rugger."

"Oh, I—I thought it was yours!"

"Well, it wasn't. What difference does it make, anyway, whether it was mine or Brown's?" asked Wharton, looking at the fat junior in surprise.

"Well, you see—" began Billy Bunter haltingly.

"Eh? What's the matter?"

"You—you see, as you fellows are taking up Rugger, I—I thought you wouldn't need the Soccer ball any more," said Bunter slowly.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"My dear chap, we're only taking up Rugger to play Bolsover on Saturday. We intend to stick to our own game for the rest, of course. Rugger's a good game, but Soccer's our game, and we're sticking to it."

"I—I— You really ought to have explained that, Wharton, you know."

"Eh? Why? What does it matter? What on earth are you getting at, Bunter? What difference can it make to you whether we play Soccer or Rugger, as you don't play either?" demanded Wharton.

"Well, you see—"

"Do you mean to say that something has happened to my Soccer ball?" asked Wharton.

"You see—really—"

"Oh, out with it! What have you done with my ball? You ought to have let it alone; but if you've damaged it, I suppose it can't be helped," said Wharton impatiently.

"I—I haven't damaged it."

"Then what's the matter?"

"You—you see," said Bunter, edging a little nearer the door, "as you fellows were taking up Rugger, I naturally concluded that you wouldn't need the Soccer ball any more, and—and then, you see, you left it to me to see about supper. I was in a low state for want of nourishment,

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and I knew you fellows would come in hungry, too. You see, I really don't see how I could have done anything else."

"You don't mean to say that you've eaten Wharton's football?" exclaimed Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Then what have you done?"

Bunter had his hand on the door by this time.

"You—you see, I really thought you wouldn't need a Soccer ball any more, and—and I had to get some grub somehow. So I—I—"

"You what?" roared Wharton.

"I've sold it."

"Sold it?"

"Yes. You see—"

Harry Wharton made a stride towards the fat junior. In a twinkling Billy Bunter was outside the study, the door slammed behind him, and his footsteps could be heard scuttling down the passage.

The chums of the Remove stared at one another blankly for a moment, and then Nugent and Hurree Singh burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Nugent. "So that's where the feed came from."

And Wharton's frowning face cleared, and he joined in the laugh—he could not help it.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter Gets a Postal-Order.

BOB CHERRY jumped out of bed in the Remove dormitory at the first clang of the rising-bell in the morning. He ran to the window and looked out into the quad., and gave a shout of satisfaction.

"It's all right, you chaps!"

"Eh?"

"No more blessed rain."

"Good!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, jumping out of bed.

"Jolly good!"

He joined Bob at the window and looked out. The Close was dry and fine in the rising sunlight. The rain had completely disappeared over night.

The Remove footballers dressed in cheerful spirits.

There would be a chance now of getting some real practice, and they needed it with Saturday drawing nearer, and the Bolsover match ahead of them.

Most of the fellows got down very quickly, and went out into the Close for a run before breakfast, and joined in the novel practice of carrying the ball instead of passing it by footwork.

Billy Bunter was also down early for once. Sometimes the post came in early at Greyfriars, and Bunter was anxious about the post that morning. Instead of lying in bed till the last possible moment, he jumped up with the others, and commenced his brief ablutions; extremely brief in the cold weather.

The others looked at him in surprise.

"Still feeling ill, Bunt?" asked Bob Cherry, with friendly solicitude.

Bunter blinked round at him. Bunter had a dab of soap on the centre of his face, and was about to rub it off. That constituted Bunter's morning wash.

"Eh? No," he said, "I'm all right."

"Then what are you getting up for? You might have had another three minutes and a half."

"I want to see if the post is in."

"What does it matter?"

"I'm expecting a postal-order."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Now, draw it mild, Billy. You don't expect us to swallow that you really believe in that postal-order yourself?"

Bunter snorted, and turned back to his washstand. He rubbed the patch of soap off his nose, and rubbed his fat face with a towel till it glowed. His ablutions were finished. Billy always dressed before he washed, perhaps so that he should not be tempted to injure his health by over-washing.

Bob Cherry looked at him curiously.

"I say, Bunter," he exclaimed suddenly, "what would you do if the Head suddenly discovered the reckless way you waste the school soap?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"The dirty young brute ought to be bathed by force," growled Bulstrode.

"What-ho!" said Skinner, who had not yet forgotten the ventriloquial incident in the class-room. "Let's wash him now."

Bunter blinked at the two through his big glasses, and dodged out of the dormitory. Bulstrode and Skinner went downstairs together, talking in low tones, and from their

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frequent chuckles it might have been surmised that they were planning some mischief.

But the other fellows had no eyes for Skinner and Bulstrode. They were thinking of some Rugby practice before breakfast. Bunter was thinking of his postal-order. He found that the post was not in yet, and grunted discontentedly.

"Blessed if it's any use getting up early in this blessed place," he said. "I wonder how long that blessed postman is going to be?"

And Bunter took up his position on the steps outside to wait for the postman. Harry Wharton called to him.

"Come and have a run, Billy, and keep yourself warm."

"Do you want me to play in the fifteen?"

"Ha, ha! No."

"Then I'm jolly well not going to waste any time in practice," said Bunter. "It's useless for me to try to get on in football, with so much petty jealousy to contend with."

The postman came along at last, and Bunter trotted to meet him.

"There's a registered letter for me, I think?" he remarked.

"No registered letters this morning, Master Bunter."

"Ahem! As it's a postal-order, very likely the letter's not registered," remarked Bunter. "I suppose there is one for me."

"No, sir."

"Oh, dear! I think you must have made a mistake! Why, what is that one in your hand—I can see a capital 'B'?"

"That's for Master Bulstrode."

"Are you quite sure? The names are very much alike."

"Oh, yes!" grinned the postman.

And he went on to the house. Billy Bunter blinked after him discontentedly. He drifted into the house a little later, just before the breakfast bell, and looked in the rack where the letters were generally placed after delivery. Sure enough, there was the envelope addressed to Bulstrode.

Billy Bunter took it down, and turned it over in his hand. He knew that Bulstrode's people were rich, and that the bully of the Remove was constantly receiving postal-orders. Bunter was extremely short-sighted, but even he could hardly mistake the word Bulstrode for Bunter. But the desire to take possession of the postal-order inside the letter was strong. The longer he held it in his hand, the more and more he became persuaded that the name on the letter was really intended for Bunter.

"After all, if it's really for Bulstrode, I can explain to him that it was a mistake," Bunter reflected. "I may as well make sure that it's for him."

Temptation could be resisted no longer. Bunter inserted his fat thumb into the envelope and slit it open.

There was indeed a postal-order in the envelope. It was an order for ten shillings, made payable to Bulstrode.

There was a brief letter with it in a man's hand, evidently from an uncle of Bulstrode's. Bunter read it through—perhaps to make sure that it was for Bulstrode.

He shook his head.

"It really seems that the letter's for Bulstrode," he murmured, "unless the postal-order's got into it by mistake. The postal authorities are always making blunders of some sort. It might be my postal-order. All sorts of mistakes happen in the post-office. As for the name on it, that might be an error. Anyway, if Mrs. Mimble will take it, that will prove that it's for me."

Bunter was about to hurry out to the tuck-shop, forgetting that it was not open at that early hour, when the bell rang for breakfast. The Remove came trooping in. Bunter thrust the letter hastily into his pocket.

Bulstrode paused to glance at the rack before he went into the dining-room.

"Nothing for me," he remarked to Skinner. "I was expecting a postal-order this morning."

"Ha, ha! That sounds like Bunter."

Bulstrode grinned.

"Yes, but mine was a real postal-order. It hasn't come, though."

Bunter trembled a little as he followed Bulstrode into the dining-room. That postal-order was reposing in his pocket, and it occurred to him that if it was discovered there, a very ugly word might be used to describe the way he had gained possession of it.

After breakfast came prayers and morning classes, and all the time the postal-order remained in Billy Bunter's pocket.

Immediately the Remove were dismissed after morning school, the fat junior dashed off to the tuck-shop.

Mrs. Mimble came out of her little parlour as he rapped on the counter.

Mrs. Mimble had a fixed smile with which she came into her little shop to serve her youthful customers. Only for one customer did that smile fail; and that one customer was William George Bunter. Bunter would have been Mrs. Mimble's best customer, on a system of unlimited credit, if she had allowed it. But Mrs. Mimble, as Bunter complained, was not businesslike. He had tried to explain that

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the whole modern financial system was built up on lines of credit, and that if stock exchange brokers and bankers and so on demanded cash in all their dealings, the whole system would break down. But Mrs. Mimble was obstinate. She didn't know anything about the stock exchange or banking; but she did know that she did not intend to part with any of her goods unless she were paid for them with something more substantial than a vague promise about some date in the next term. Hence the almost perennial smile generally changed into a frown for Billy Bunter.

"Oh, Master Bunter! I didn't know it was you!" said Mrs. Mimble, her manner implying very plainly that if she had known, she would not have taken the trouble to answer that imperative rap on the counter.

"Oh, really, Mrs. Mimble—"

"Do you want anything, Master Bunter?"

"Yes, certainly. I've a postal-order here for ten shillings. I think I mentioned to you that I was expecting one."

"Yes, you did," said Mrs. Mimble, with a sniff, "I should like to see it."

"Well, it came this morning. I want you to cash it."

"Certainly—if you have it."

"Oh, really, Mrs. Mimble, I hope you don't doubt my word!"

Mrs. Mimble sniffed. That sniff told a great deal about her private opinion of the veracity of William George Bunter.

"Well, here's the postal-order!" exclaimed Billy Bunter indignantly; and he drew it out of his pocket, holding it so as to show the amount without letting the name written on the order be seen. "Look at it!"

Mrs. Mimble's expression changed a little.

"But is it really yours, Master Bunter?"

"Oh, Mrs. Mimble!"

"Well, you know, you brought me a five-pound note to change once, and it turned out to be somebody else's," said Mrs. Mimble, with asperity; "and but for the kindness of Master Wharton and his friends I should have lost the money."

"That was a mistake."

"Yes, and perhaps this is a mistake, Master Bunter."

"I suppose my name on the postal-order will convince you, Mrs. Mimble?" said Billy Bunter, with a great deal of dignity.

"Oh, yes," said Mrs. Mimble, thawing a little. "Let me see it."

"There you are!"

And Bunter threw the postal-order down upon the counter with the air of a prince.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bob Cherry is Wrathful.

MRS. MIMBLE thawed still more. It was really a postal-order, and it was really for ten shillings. There was no doubt on those points. She did not see the name very clearly for the moment, but it certainly began with a B. But Mrs. Mimble had learned caution at her time of life. She picked up the postal-order, adjusted her glasses, and read it carefully. Then she put it down on the counter again, and gave Billy Bunter a look that made the fat junior wish himself well outside the shop.

"Master Bunter!"

"Eh? What's the matter?" stammered Billy.

"This postal-order is not yours."

"Oh, really, Mrs. Mimble—"

"It is Master Bulstrode's name upon it."

"Nonsense, Mrs. Mimble! You're short-sighted," remonstrated Bunter. "You can see the name begins with a B, and the rest is a scrawl."

"It is Master Bulstrode's name."

"Look here, if you refuse to cash it I can take it to the post-office," exclaimed Billy Bunter, grabbing the postal-order, half afraid that Mrs. Mimble might keep it to return to Bulstrode. "But that means a waste of time. I'm hungry now."

"Did Bulstrode give it to you?"

"Certainly not!"

"Then it is not yours. You have stolen it."

"Mrs. Mimble!"

"Listen to me, Master Bunter," said the good dame seriously. "I know how silly you are, and I suppose you do not realise what you are doing. You must take that postal-order to Master Bulstrode at once."

"I suppose I can please myself about that, Mrs. Mimble," said Bunter haughtily.

"No. If you do not give it to Master Bulstrode I shall speak to the Head. Now, remember, Master Bunter, I shall ask Master Bulstrode the first time I see him whether he has had his postal-order."

"Of course," said Bunter, changing his ground—"of

course, if the postal-order is really Bulstrode's he's welcome to it. I think I will show it to him, and ask him his opinion as to whether it's his name or mine on it."

"You had better," said Mrs. Mumble significantly.

Billy Bunter left the tuck-shop discontentedly. He was very hungry, and it was hard to have ten shillings in his hand and not be able to spend it. The fact that the ten shillings belonged to somebody else was quite a minor point. Billy already looked upon it as his, and that was quite enough for him.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, meeting the fat junior outside the tuck-shop, and noticing the postal-order still in his hand. "Ye gods! Has the famous postal-order really arrived at last?"

"Oh, really, Cherry, I told you I expected a postal-order this morning—"

"You told me so, certainly," agreed Bob Cherry.

"It's for ten shillings," said Bunter. "If you care to cash it for me you can have the postal-order. It's a long way to the post-office, and Mrs. Mumble won't cash it for me."

"Why not? She cashes the orders for all of us."

"Oh, she's an obstinate old woman, you know. I suppose it's because I owe her an account," said Bunter, who always said the first thing that came into his head, without stopping to reflect whether it was true or not. "If you could cash it for me I should be very much obliged."

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"I haven't ten shillings, or anything like it," he said. "I could raise three, if that's any good."

"Well, lend me the three, then, and I'll return them when I've cashed the postal-order," said Billy Bunter eagerly.

"You jolly well won't! I know you, Bunt, you see, and you're not going to scoff my three last bobs in that way. I'll take the postal-order to cash, and give you the other seven bob afterwards."

"Oh, very well! Hand over the bobs."

Bob Cherry groped and fished in his pockets, and brought three shillings to light, and handed them to Bunter. He took the postal-order and glanced at it. Billy Bunter was already entering the tuck-shop when he felt a grip of iron on his shoulder, and he was swung back with a suddenness that took his breath away.

"O-o-o-o-oh! Really—Cherry! Ow!"

"You young sweep!"

"I—Oh! Ow! Yawooh!"

Bob Cherry, with a face flaming with wrath, shook the fat junior till his teeth rattled. Billy Bunter sagged to and fro in his grip as helplessly as a sack of wheat. He gasped and wriggled and squirmed helplessly.

"You young sweep!" repeated Bob Cherry. "This postal-order isn't yours! It's that five-pound note business over again, I suppose! Give me my three bob!"

"Ow! Oh! Yow!"

"Take that—and that—and that!"

Each "that!" was accompanied by a powerful shake. Bob released the fat junior at last, and Billy Bunter staggered against the wall, gasping spasmodically. He blinked at Bob over his glasses, which had slid down his nose.

"Oh! Ow! Groo! Oh, really, Cherry! If—if you had made my glasses fall off they—they would have broken, and you'd have had to pay for them."

"You young thief!"

"Oh, Cherry! I—I—"

"Give me my three bob—sharp!"

"Here you are, you beast! Ow!"

Bob Cherry restored the three shillings to his pocket. Then he flourished the postal-order threateningly in the face of Billy Bunter.

"This belongs to Bulstrode, you fat young beast!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"You've stolen it!"

"I—I—I—"

"Take it!"

Bob thrust it into Bunter's fat hand. Billy's fingers closed on it with great relief. He had feared that it was not to be given to him again.

"And now," said Bob Cherry, taking a firm grip on the back of Bunter's collar—"now we'll go and look for Bulstrode."

"Oh! Ow! Yow! Yaroooh!"

"What are you squeaking about?"

"You—you've got your beastly knuckles jammed in the back of my neck!" gasped Bunter. "Yow! It hurts! Yow!"

"Serve you jolly well right! Come on!"

"Yow! Ow!"

Bob shifted his grip a little, still keeping a tight hold, and marched the fat junior away. Billy Bunter wriggled spasmodically in his powerful grip. There was no escape for the fat junior.

He was marched away from the tuck-shop, with the postal-order still in his hand, and Bob's grip on his collar.

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Bob Cherry looked round for Bulstrode. Nugent was the first fellow he met, with Hurree Singh, and the two stared at Bob in amazement.

"Oh! Help!" gasped Bunter. "This beast is choking me! Ow!"

"What on earth's the matter, Bob?"

"The matterfulness must be terrific to call up that frownful scowl upon the esteemed brow of the worthy Cherry."

"This fat beast has reached the limit, that's all!" said Bob. "He's trying his best to disgrace our Form! He has stolen a postal-order!"

"What!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"He's got a postal-order here belonging to Bulstrode, and he tried to pass it off on me," said Bob Cherry. "I'm looking for Bulstrode. Have you seen him?"

"He's in the gym."

"Good!"

And Bob Cherry marched his prisoner off. Billy Bunter was squirming in a state of extreme apprehension now. He was alarmed as to the view Bulstrode might take of the opening of his letter.

"I—I say, Cherry!" he gasped. "I—I found the postal-order, you know, and—and I—I really meant to return it to Bulstrode, you know."

"Don't tell lies!"

"I—I really did, you know. I—I—"

"That's why you tried to pass it off on me, I suppose!" said Bob, still propelling Bunter forcibly towards the gymnasium.

"You—you see, that—that was only temporary. It was merely taking the postal-order as a loan till my own one came, you see. Mine is certain to be here by the second post this afternoon, and then I should have settled with Bulstrode. Ow! Don't shake me like that! You might make my glasses fall off, and if they get broken you'd have to pay for them."

"Come on, you worm!"

"But—but I—I don't want to see Bulstrode just now. I—I've got another engagement, you know. I—I—"

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Yes, I dare say you have, but you can put it off for a bit, my pippin. Come into the gym. If you try to hang back I'll roll you in."

Billy Bunter did try to hang back, and Bob Cherry exerted all his strength, and rushed him in at full speed. He rushed him in too quickly to quite see where he was rushing him, and he rushed him right into Bulstrode, who was coming out. Bulstrode gave a roar, and sat down violently, and Billy Bunter sat down opposite to him, blinking at him.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

Jam Tarts for Bunter!

BULSTRODE scrambled to his feet, red with rage.

"You silly ass!" he roared. "What are you up to? What's the little game? What do you mean by it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You howling ass!"

"Ha, ha! I'm sorry, Bulstrode! Ha, ha, ha! I was just looking for you. Billy Bunter has got something for you, and I was bringing him to see you, as he has another engagement he's anxious to keep."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"What's that?" exclaimed Bulstrode, catching sight of the postal-order in Billy Bunter's hand. "Is that my postal-order? I was expecting one this morning, and it didn't come. Has that young thief collared it, as he did Wingate's fiver?"

"Oh, really, Bulstrode—"

"It's yours," said Bob Cherry. "Hand it over to Bulstrode, Billy."

Bunter staggered to his feet. Bulstrode snatched the postal-order from his hand, glanced at it, and then bent a very grim look upon the fat junior.

"How did you get hold of this, Bunter?"

Bunter gasped. He began to understand at last that he had got himself into a serious scrape. Fellows were gathering round, all of them looking grim.

"I—I found it," stammered Bunter.

"You found my postal-order?"

"Ye-e-es."

"Where?"

"In—in a letter—I—I mean, in the Close."

"Where's the letter?"

Bunter extracted the letter from his pocket, and handed it to Bulstrode. Bulstrode looked through it.

"You young rotter!" he exclaimed. "You opened this letter!"

"I—I—I—"

"You opened my letter!" roared Bulstrode.

"You see, I—I—"

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"And stole my postal-order!"
"I—I— You see, I thought the letter was for me, the names are so much alike," Bunter gasped. "That's how it was. I—I found it wasn't for me when I looked into it, and I was—was bringing it to you."

Bulstrode glared at him suspiciously.
"I don't believe a word of it!" he exclaimed.
"Oh, really, Bulstrode—"
"If you were coming to me, why was Cherry dragging you along?"
"He—he was showing me the way," said Bunter, with an imploring blink at Bob Cherry to bear him out.
"He was showing you along," said Ogilvy. "I saw him."
"Well; that's—that's his way, you know. He's always doing things like that."

"Is he telling the truth, Cherry?"
Bob Cherry looked uncomfortable. In his first wrath at Bunter's dishonesty, he had rushed the fat junior off to the rightful owner of the postal-order. But he was beginning now to feel a little sorry for the wretched Bunter. Bunter, after all, was too stupid to really realise that he had acted dishonestly.

"Oh, I've nothing to say about the matter at all!" said Bob. "I thought he'd better come to you at once with the postal-order, and I helped him along."

"He was going to keep it!"
"Oh, really, Bulstrode—"
"You young thief!"
"If you doubt my honesty, Bulstrode, this discussion had better cease," said Billy Bunter, with dignity. "I must say I am surprised at you. All the fellows here know me too well, I hope, to place any faith in such a suggestion. I was coming to you as fast as I could to explain that I had opened the letter by mistake. You know I am a little short-sighted. Of course, I mistook the name for Bunter, as I was expecting a letter."

Bulstrode thrust the letter and the postal-order into his pocket.
"I believe you're lying!" he said. "I've a jolly good mind to go to the Head and give you away for it, you worm!"

"Oh—oh, really, you know—"
"If you ever open any more of my letters by mistake, it will be the last mistake of that kind you'll make at Greyfriars!" growled Bulstrode.
And he walked away.

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER. The Rugby Match.

THE weather had changed for the better, and fine, cold days succeeded one another, and every day the Remove spent every available hour of daylight on the football-field. The days were too short to be any danger of overdoing it, and becoming stale. They played the Rugger game as keenly and enthusiastically as ever they had played Association, and there was no doubt that their form was improving wonderfully.

They were already in good condition; there was no need of training; it was simply a question of mastering the ways of the new game; and, with Linley, Brown, and Morgan to help and instruct, they naturally made great progress.

By the time Saturday arrived Harry Wharton was well satisfied, and he looked forward to the return Bolsover match with some confidence. Wingate, whom he often consulted, was satisfied, too.

"You're in good form, and you've got a good chance, Wharton," the captain of Greyfriars remarked. "I think you'll give a good account of yourselves, at all events, when you meet Bolsover. You deserve to win."

Wharton's eyes sparkled.
"Thanks, Wingate! We're going to do our very best, at all events, and I suppose nobody can do more than that."

"Have you arranged about a referee?"
"Well, no. We were thinking of—of asking—"
Wingate laughed.

"Who?"
"You!" said Wharton. "You're the only senior here who has played the Rugger game, and who is good-natured enough to give up an afternoon to the juniors."

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Wingate, laughing. "Still, I was thinking I might stand by you. I'll referee with pleasure."

"Thanks awfully! I'll tell the fellows!"

The Remove fifteen were naturally delighted. The fact that Wingate thought they had a chance was inspiring to them, too. Wingate knew all there was to be known about football, in either code, and he was looked upon in Greyfriars as a sort of Macgregor and Steve Bloomer rolled into one—being treated with as much respect as the father of the League, and admired as much for his prowess as the famous Stephen.

"If Wingate says we've got a chance, we've got one," said Bob Cherry, laying down the law. "My private opinion is that we shall crawl all over Bolsover."

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"Well, we've got a good team, and we can play the game," said Wharton. "We can leave the result to Fortune."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Bunter's got a suggestion to make," grinned Bob. "He thinks we should improve our chances by playing him as captain."

"Really, Cherry, I was only going to ask if I should mind the 'feed' which you will have to give the Bolsover chaps after the game."

"Can't be done, Billy," said Wharton. "It's going to be locked up in the study, though, so you won't get a chance at it, and I'm going to ask Stott to keep an eye on you all the time, in case you get up to any of your tricks."

"Oh, really, Wharton! I'm not going to be locked out of my own study, you know."

"Your mistake, you are!" said Harry coolly.

And Bunter grunted discontentedly.

And locked out of the study he was when the Bolsover team arrived at Greyfriars. While Harry Wharton & Co. were welcoming the Bolsover fellows, Bunter hung round the door of the study, and found that it was really locked. He was debating in his mind whether a hammer, a chisel, or a crowbar would be the best instrument to use on the lock, when Stott and little Wun Lung of the Remove came up, took his arms, and walked him away. Bunter was so taken by surprise that he allowed himself to be walked half-way downstairs before he began to resist. Then he struggled.

"I—I say, you fellows, what do you mean?" he exclaimed indignantly. "I don't want to go out!"

"You're going to watch the football-match," said Stott.

"I'm not!"

"Oh, yes, you are!" said Stott coolly. "I'm going to, and you'll have to. You're not going to leave me till after the match."

And Billy Bunter, willingly or unwillingly, had to go. Stott and Wun Lung ranged themselves at the ropes to watch the match, and Bunter had to stand between them. And whenever he showed any disposition to get away Stott pinched his arm, and the fat junior had to groan and give in.

Meanwhile the teams were preparing for the match. The Bolsover fellows were shown into their dressing-room, and they soon appeared in the field in their green shirts, looking very fit and well.

But Fitzgerald minor had to admit that Greyfriars looked as fit as Bolsover.

"They're a decent-looking set," he confided to Hilton; "but of course, they don't play our game. It was like Wharton's cheek to take us on for the return match."

"Yes, rather!" said Hilton.

"We must give 'em a good licking as a hint to keep their conceit within bounds, entirely!" grinned Fitzgerald.

"What-ho!" said Bull.

Wharton won the toss. The teams faced one another in the field, and there was a buzz of expectation from the Greyfriars crowd round the ropes.

The sight of a Rugby match played on the Greyfriars ground was sufficiently unusual to attract most of the Greyfriars fellows to see it. Be it said that very few of them had any expectation of seeing Greyfriars win. But their wishes for the success of the Remove were cordial—even Temple, Dabney & Co. were keen about it.

"Go it, Wharton!" said Temple to his old rival. "I hope you'll pull it off—if you do, you'll hear me yell."

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"Thanks," said Wharton, with a smile. "We'll do our best—and I really think you may as well get ready to yell!"

The whistle went, and the ball rolled. Then the match began. Bolsover began with smiles on their faces, evidently anticipating an easy task.

And indeed, at the first blush, it looked as if their task would be easy.

Hilton got away with the ball, and ran up the field, and was not brought down till he was within two yards of the home goal-line.

And then, when the whistle went for a scrum, the Bolsover pack, more accustomed to the work, shoved Greyfriars fairly over the line, and scored a try amid chuckles and grins. And as the try was taken almost in the centre of the line, it was the easiest thing in the world to convert, and the goal was taken by Hilton in easy style.

One goal up for Bolsover—five points within the first five minutes!

It did not look well for Greyfriars. Many of the fellows, remembering the result of the previous match, looked glum.

But Harry Wharton's face never changed.

He knew very well that that set-back at the start was simply because his men had not got into their stride yet, and it was not an omen.

When the game was restarted, Greyfriars played a better game. Hilton was sailing away again with the ball, when Wharton, who was playing three-quarter, ran at him and tackled him, and brought him down with a bump.

Hilton tried to pass out to Bull, but failed, falling on the ball, and the whistle went for a scrum.

From the scrum Bob Cherry, playing half, captured the ball and threw it to Tom Brown, who raced away with it, and passed back to Wharton as Bull brought him down.

Wharton streaked through the Bolsover team like a knife through soft cheese.

Three heavy forwards had flung themselves in his way, but he eluded them, and the halves seemed nowhere.

He had only the full-back to fear, and the full-back he avoided by a sudden swerve that enabled him to just escape the tackle.

The back darted after him, and they ran almost neck and neck to the goal-line close to touch, and within three feet of the line the back's grasp closed upon Wharton.

But with a desperate wrench the captain of the Remove hurled himself over the line, falling heavily—but he touched down, and it was a try!

He rose, gasping and a little dizzy, with a loud cheer ringing in his ears.

"Try! Try!"

"Hurrah!"

And there were Temple, Dabney & Co. waving their caps and cheering like madmen; and the Remove—all who were not in the team—yelling themselves hoarse!

"My hat!" said Hilton. "That chap knows something, anyway!"

"Faith, and he does!" said Fitzgerald. "And it's glad I am intirely! It's goin' to be a better game than I thought, bedad!"

And the Bolsovers, warned by that experience, played harder and more keenly. The try was not converted; but it was three points to Greyfriars, and three points meant much to them, for it showed that they could, at least, score against their adversaries, and that their training and practice for the past week had not been thrown away. And during the remainder of the first half the tussle was hard and obstinate.

Bolsover scored again, Fitzgerald dropping a goal from the twenty-five, and making the Bolsover score nine points when the whistle went for half-time.

"Nine to three!" said Hilton, as they walked off. "Good!"

"But it shows they can play," said Fitzgerald. "Sure and I'm thinkin' we shall have a tussle in the second half."

And Fitzgerald was right.

"We're behind, kids," said Wharton, as he sucked a lemon, "but we've got to pull up in the second half. Mind, we've got to!"

"We'll try," said Hazeldene. "We've more than held our own so far, and that was more than Bolsover expected."

"What-ho!" said Bob Cherry. "We— Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

He broke off and stared towards the ropes. Two charming faces under charming hats were looking into the field of play. Bob Cherry turned pink as he recognised Marjorie Hazeldene and her friend Clara.

"I didn't know my sister was coming over," said Hazeldene. "Oh, I say, we must play up for the second half, or we shall get chipped at Cliff House!"

"Oh, rather!" And Harry Wharton & Co. went into the field with the determination to do or die in the second half of the match.

Marjorie waved her hand to the juniors, and Wharton halted for a moment near the ropes where the two Cliff House girls stood.

"Awfully good of you to give us a look in," he said. "We're playing a new game."

"Yes, Hazel told me, and I was determined to see it," said Marjorie brightly. "I hope you will win."

"Well, we're going to make a hard fight for it, but of course, Rugger is new to us, and the Bolsover chaps have played nothing else; but we hope for the best."

"Good luck!" said Marjorie.

And Wharton rejoined his men, and the tussle recommenced.

Bolsover had had the best of the first half, but as soon as the whistle had gone it became clear that they were to have a harder struggle for points in the second half.

Tom Brown scored a try in the first ten minutes, which was successfully converted by Mark Linley, and Greyfriars now counted eight points.

A dropped goal by Morgan brought the points up to twelve, and there was a wild cheer from the Greyfriars crowd.

For Greyfriars were now twelve points to the Bolsover nine—three ahead, and fighting hard to keep there.

"Bedad," said Fitzgerald, "this means work! Wire in!"

The Bolsover men wired in. The play was hard and fast. Scrum followed scrum, and the gruelling game told on all the

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NEXT
WEEK:

"THE GREYFRIARS TREASURE"

players, but the fierce attacks of Bolsover did not materialise. The home defence was sound.

At last, as the second half is growing old, comes a desperate combined attempt from Bolsover, and the green shirts come fiercely down the field.

Fitzgerald is through, the ball in his hands, and the Greyfriars full-back tackles him low and brings him down—but the ball is tossed to Hilton close behind, and caught, and Hilton is under the crossbar, over the line, in a twinkling, and the leather is touched down.

Another try to Bolsover. The conversion of such a try is, of course, the easiest thing in the world. It is taken, and the goal counts five points more.

Fourteen points to Bolsover, and twelve to Greyfriars, and five minutes more to play.

Wingate glances at his watch.

There is bated breath round the ground now. Even if defeated, Greyfriars will not be disgraced; their score is a good one, and they have put up a splendid game. But will they be defeated?

In his heart, Harry Wharton vows that they shall not be!

But minute follows minute, and still the struggle, though fierce, is resultless. But at last comes a break in the game. From a scrum near the home twenty-five the ball has come out to Nugent, who leaps away with it, is dragged down by a heavy Bolsover forward—but not before he has flung the leather into the arms of Bob Cherry behind. From Bob Cherry it goes to Tom Brown, and the New Zealander is away with it like a flash of lightning, his feet seeming scarcely to touch the ground.

Away—away—with Wharton and Linley racing to back him up—away—till Hilton leaps at him like a tiger, and he throws the ball to Linley just behind, and the Lancashire lad rushes on with it, while Tom Brown rolls blindly on the ground under Hilton's tackle.

A shout, swelling to a roar, rises from the Greyfriars crowd. Marjorie and Clara too are looking on with sparkling eyes. Will they get through? Time is very close now. There will be no chance for another attempt.

He—Linley—is down—down! But the ball—where is that? Safe in Wharton's hands—and Wharton is dashing on, while the Lancashire lad disappears under two sprawling Bolsovers. The clutching hands of a Bolsover half are close on Wharton—they touch—will the tackle hold good?

Another and another foe seem to start up out of the ground before him. He will never get through. It passes like a scene in a dream. Wharton feels the clutching fingers at his shoulder—a slight swerve saves him—he speeds on—to right and left reel two staggering foes—he is through—through, and speeding down to goal!

Away! Away!

Louder swells the roar of excitement—louder, louder—deepening like the roar of the sea! Will he get through? He hands off a charging Bolsover, just escaping him—he swerves further to elude the full-back, the last foe he has to fear.

But the Bolsover full-back is racing to intercept him.

Will he do it?

Yes—he bars the way—he is tackling—no, he has missed, and the two of them are running neck and neck for the far corner of the goal-line—neck and neck!

Faster, faster—again a clutch, again an escape as by a miracle—then the full-back rolls on the ground from a desperate hand-off, and Wharton has reached the line—the line—and is over it, and the ball is touched down, and Greyfriars had gained another try, and goal or not, Greyfriars has won the match.

The try is not converted, but nobody cares for that! Greyfriars are fifteen points to fourteen, and they have won the Bolsover match by a single point—but one point is as good as fifty, as far as winning the match is concerned.

Greyfriars has won!

Loud and thrilling swells the roar of cheering, and Wharton, who has scored the winning try, is clutched up by the crowd that surges over the field, and carried round in dizzy triumph—and from his rocky perch on the shoulders of his chums, he looks down at the bright eyes and sweet smile of Marjorie Hazeldene—a charming face, glowing with admiration.

The match was over, and Greyfriars had won. In the feed that followed Billy Bunter, of course, greatly distinguished himself, and Marjorie and Clara were honoured guests. The Bolsover fellows took their defeat good-naturedly enough. They left Greyfriars after planning more matches—for that victory had made the Remove quite satisfied with their Rugger, and there were more victories in store for the Greyfriars Fifteen!

THE END.

(Next Tuesday: "The Greyfriars Treasure," by Frank Richards. Order your copy of "The Magnet" Library in advance. Price One Halfpenny!)

A Splendid Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

The First Chapter of a New Serial.



STANLEY DARE

The Boy Detective

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Stanley Dare, the Boy Detective—Dark Suspicions.

"Can it be possible? Stanley Dare? This is indeed a fortunate meeting! You are the one man in Europe I should have named to-day as wishing to see above all others."

The thin, sunburnt man, who spoke in short, crisp sentences, gripped the young detective by the hand, and shook it energetically. He was the British Consul at Port Said, on one of the quays at which place—which, it may be needless to state, is at the Mediterranean end of the Suez Canal—they had met, just before noon of a hot and breathless day.

"I must regard your remark as in the highest sense complimentary," replied Dare, laughing, "although I must remind you that we are not in Europe, and I am not yet a man."

"You do man's work, anyway," returned the Consul, "and in age you are very near manhood. What are you doing in this dust-ridden spot? There should be plenty of work here for a detective, as it is a nest of villainy."

"Been out to Bombay in connection with the Ellora diamond mystery," said the young detective. "I am now on my way home; but, having heard that Port Said is the wickedest place on earth, I broke my journey here to try and find why it came to earn such an unenviable distinction. But we can let that pass. Judging from your greeting, you have some special reason for wishing to see me—"

"Come into the Consulate," interrupted Egerton Matthews, who was one of the most remarkable men in Egypt. "It is cooler there, and we can talk without being overheard."

The white stone building over which the British flag was flying was soon reached, and Stanley Dare was installed in a comfortable chair by the open window, which overlooked the busy port. An Arab servant brought in cooling lemon-squashes, and then the Consul began, what in legal phraseology, might be termed his "opening statement." It was brief and to the point.

"A King's Messenger, by name Frederick Wargrave," he said, "disappeared suddenly and mysteriously from the P. & O. steamer on which he was a passenger. He was first missed at about ten o'clock last night. An hour previous to that time the Himalaya—that is the name of the steamer—was made fast in a gare, to allow other vessels to pass, going north. No one is permitted to go on shore at these stations on the canal. That is a regulation of the P. & O. Company. I mention this only because it happened that he was seen on deck shortly before the stoppage was made, but never again afterwards."

"One moment, before you proceed," said Dare. "Am I to understand that you wish me to investigate this case?"

"I do wish it, undoubtedly," replied the Consul. "And I sincerely trust you will not refuse."

"It will interfere considerably with my arrangements," said Dare. "But—but let me have the details."

Egerton Matthews gave a satisfied smile. He knew Stanley Dare very well, and was aware that those few words practically meant that he would take up the case.

"At midnight last night," he proceeded, "I received a telegram from the captain of the Himalaya, giving details of Mr. Wargrave's strange disappearance, and I have since

received a letter by express messenger. But as soon as the telegram reached me last night, I cabled it on to the Foreign Office in London. Half an hour before I met you I received a reply, instructing me to do everything in my power, and spare no expense to elucidate the mystery surrounding Wargrave's disappearance, and also at all costs to try and recover the State documents which have disappeared with him."

"He was carrying important despatches, then?" said Stanley Dare.

"Of the utmost importance," declared the Consul. "It is not too much to say that grave complications will ensue if they have fallen in the hands of an unscrupulous person. Wargrave was carrying them from Malta to the Political Resident at Aden."

"He was, of course, an absolutely trustworthy officer?" said Dare.

"Absolutely! There can be no question of that."

"We must take it for granted that a thorough search was made on the Himalaya," pursued Dare—"for the documents, I mean, as the vessel has probably left Suez by this time."

"Her commander was fully alive to the importance of doing so," replied the Consul.

"How far along the canal is the gare situated at which the Himalaya had to stop?"

"It was at Kantara, about twenty miles from here," replied Egerton Matthews.

Stanley Dare glanced at his watch.

"It is now half past twelve," he said. "We could get to Kantara in two hours and a half in a steam launch. You have one, I believe, belonging to the Consulate?"

"Yes; I will send an order for steam to be got up at once."

He rang a bell, and a Consular servant, in a red-and-white uniform, appeared at the door of the room.

"Noureddin, give orders that the steam-launch shall be got ready at once," said Matthews. "Then have it brought alongside the quay. I am going for a short cruise up the canal."

"It shall be done, effendi."

The Arab servant departed as noiselessly as he had appeared. Egerton Matthews turned to Dare.

"What next?" he said.

"Lunch, if you have no objection," replied Dare crisply. "I have developed a wonderful appetite since I left Bombay, and I had breakfast early this morning."

"Come along, then," said the Consul. "It will be fully half an hour before the launch is ready, so that will give us ample time for the meal."

"And we can do nothing more till we get to Kantara," added Dare.

The repast was just finished, and they were sipping some excellent coffee as an aid to digestion, when Noureddin announced that the launch was ready.

It was a roomy, comfortable little boat, named the Eagle, though she did not run to any high rate of speed. However, that was of little consequence.

Noureddin Ali, the Consular servant, a swarthy son of the desert, big and muscular like the majority of his countrymen, accompanied them, and Matthews left a deputy in charge of the Consulate, for he meant to join Dare in his investigations, and from a remark let fall by the young detective, he realised that there was an element of considerable doubt about the length of time they might be absent from Port Said.

Kantara was a signal-station and canal siding where ships could be moored, and, in addition to the trim-looking houses where the canal officials lived, there were a few native dwellings in a cluster near at hand.

The southern point of the great salt lake of Menzaleh comes

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right up to Kantara, and, although very shallow, it is navigable for small, light-draught, native sailing-boats.

Stanley Dare noticed this as soon as he set foot to the shore, and called Matthews's attention to the fact that a man, dropping overboard from a steamer in the canal, would be able to cross the strip of sand to the lake in a few minutes, unseen at night, and get away in one of the native boats without any difficulty.

"But I cannot imagine any earthly reason that would induce Wargrave to attempt so mad an act," objected the Consul. "Leaving all treasonable motives out of the question; the fact that he had missed his ship when in charge of important State documents would mean the ruin of his career."

"I did not say that Wargrave would attempt it," replied Dare quietly.

The French official in charge of the gare was very willing to give all the information in his power, but it did not amount to much. He was positive that no one had quitted the Himalaya during the time that she was made fast in the gare, for he had been standing on the little wooden jetty the whole time. As for boats on the lake, there were always some coming and going, and he had not taken any particular notice of them.

"We must drag the canal, commencing at a spot about three miles north of here," said Dare, "and continue operations until we find the body."

"Surely a man falling overboard in so narrow a waterway as this would be able to attract attention!" exclaimed Matthews. "And a very moderate swimmer, indeed, would be able to reach the bank with ease."

"Not if he was stunned before he fell," Dare answered.

A startled exclamation left the Consul's lips.

"Do you mean that you suspect foul play?" he cried.

"What else?" said Dare. "I have your word for it that Frederick Wargrave was a man of honour, who would not betray his trust, and I can well believe it, for King's Messengers are not rashly chosen. He did not quit the Himalaya at the gare, and that he would quietly slip overboard, and swim for the shore, while the ship was in motion, and vanish into the desert, or across the Menzaleh lake by boat, is only to be considered on the supposition that he was mad."

"He was sane enough when I saw him at Port Said," observed the Consul.

"Then we have only the theory of foul play to fall back on," said Dare. "There were inducements enough for the act, for he was in charge of important State documents, which would probably be of immense value to a foreign country."

"They were so important," replied Matthews, "that he always carried them about with him, sewn up in the lining of his coat."

"Not always a wise precaution," muttered Dare.

Drags were obtained, and with them towing from the stern of the Eagle, they commenced their gruesome task.

Half a mile short of Kantara one of the men gave a signal, and the launch was stopped. The starboard drag was hauled up, and the limp form that it brought to the surface was at once recognised by the Consul.

"It is Wargrave!" he gasped.

Here was terrible proof that one part of the young detective's theory was correct.

"And, great Heaven!" cried Matthews. "See what he has gripped in his right hand—another hand, severed at the wrist!"

Dare was already bending over the dead man, and had lifted up his right arm. He disengaged the severed member from the death-grip of the late King's Messenger. Matthews shuddered, and marvelled that he could perform the gruesome task so calmly.

"This is not a human hand," said Dare.

"Not a human hand!" echoed Matthews. "What is it, then?"

"A hand of iron!" replied Dare.

The Consul stared at the young detective as though he had taken leave of his senses.

"A hand of iron!" he repeated.

Dare was holding a gruesome-looking object, that had every appearance of a human hand, severed from the arm at the wrist. It was flesh-coloured, and if not a real hand, the most perfect of models. It did not seem possible that it could be made of iron.

Dare moved it round quickly. There was a sharp "click," and the next moment he held out his arm with the iron hand—for it was iron—gripping him firmly by the wrist.

"Unless you know the secret of the mechanism," he said coolly. "I will defy you to unclasp those fingers."

(Another instalment of this grand Serial next week.)



Next Week
No. 2 and then—

Title of Story for Next Week:

"The Greyfriars
Treasure."

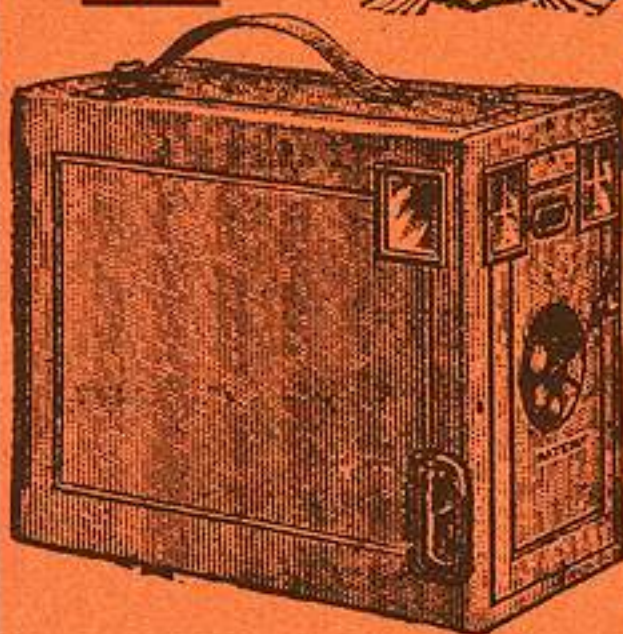


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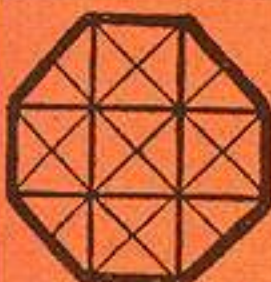
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