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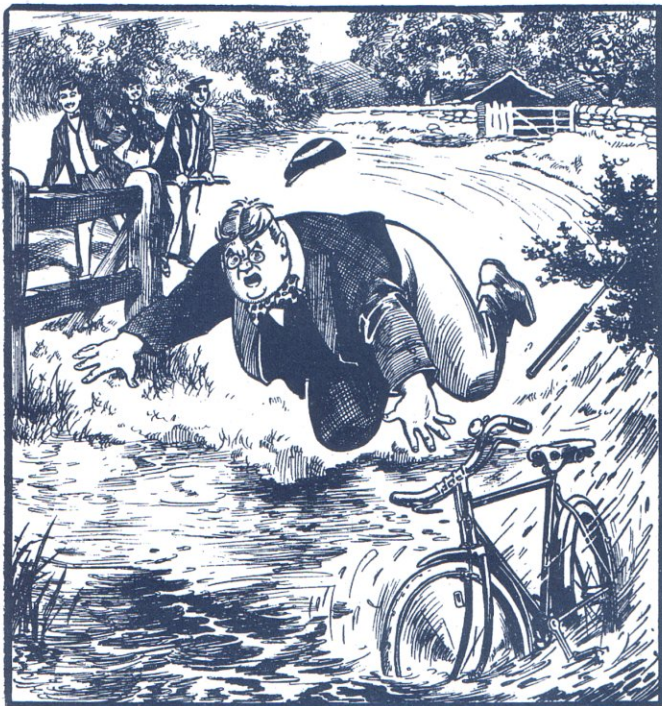
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WILLIAM THE WARLIKE!



WILL HE GET WET?

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WILLIAM THE WARLIKE!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

A Magnificent New Long Complete Tale of
Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars School.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Corn in Egypt!

BILLY BUNTER stood in the old gateway of Greyfriars and chuckled.

His fat fingers clutched a registered letter which Blogg, the postman, had just handed to him.

"Well, this is a bit of jolly good luck, and no mistake!" said the fat junior. "My hat! I'll make it warm for those beasts who've been ragging me about my postal-orders. After this little lot, I shall be able to chuck my weight about!"

From which it will be gathered that the lines had fallen unto Bunter in pleasant places.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" boomed the stentorian voice of Bob Cherry, who suddenly came on the scene with the rest of the Famous Five. "Wherefore that seraphic smirk, porpoise?"

"I'm in clover!" chuckled Billy Bunter.

"Postal-order turned up, after wandering round the globe for umpteer years?" suggested Nugent.

"Rats! I've got no use for postal-orders."

"Wha-a-at?"
The Famous Five were quite taken aback. It was not only unusual, but unheard of, for Billy Bunter to turn up his nose at postal-orders. Why, the hope of them was all that made life worth living to him!

It was seldom that the Owl of the Remove fingered a remittance. He always had great expectations; but, except on one or two rare and historic occasions, they had never been realised.

"You—you've no use for postal-orders?" stammered Harry Wharton.

"No—not when there are bigger fish in the sea!"

"What d'yo mean?" growled Johnny Bull.

"I mean this!" said Bunter, indicating the registered envelope. "One of my uncles—one of the lauded gentry, you know—has just turned up trumps. He's sent several previous remittances; but somehow or other they've been lost in transit. I've got this one all serene, though!"

"Rot!" said Wharton.

"Piffle!" snorted Bob Cherry.

"He is telling the esteemed beliefness!" said Hurree Singh. "The usefulness is the belieffulness!"

"Hear, hear!" said Johnny Bull.

"You can't expect us to swallow a yarn like that at one sitting, Bunt. Trot out the giddy remittance for our inspection, and we'll be satisfied. If not, we'll give you a jolly good bumping for telling whoppers!"

There was an impressive pause. Billy Bunter inserted his fat thumb and forefinger in a couple of crisp notes.

The Famous Five gasped.

"For the notes were fivers!"

"Have you been robbing a bank, you fat rascal?" demanded Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent—"
"There's something jolly fishy about this," said Bob Cherry.

His quick eye caught the writing on the envelope, and he seized Bunter by the shoulder.

"You fat fraud! This isn't for you at all!"

"Lemme go! I—I—"

"This envelope's addressed to 'W. G. Hunter'" exclaimed Bob. "How long has your name been Hunter?"

"Ahem! It—it's a mere slip of the pen!" exclaimed Bunter, writhing in Bob's strong grasp. "It's a badly-written 'B.'"

"Rats! You're not going to pull the wool over my eyes! I wasn't born yesterday; and it's as plain as a pikestaff that this letter is intended for somebody else."

"But who could it be?" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "We haven't a fellow named Hunter at Greyfriars."

"There's a letter enclosed with the notes, isn't there?" said Nugent.

"Yes," said Harry Wharton; "but we won't pry into it. It's none of our business. Look here, Bunter, I should advise you not to play the giddy ox. That letter's not intended for you, and if you hang on to it you may land yourself into trouble. Better hand it back to the postal authorities."

"Hand my own letter back?" yelled Billy Bunter, wrenching himself away at last from Bob Cherry's grip. "Not likely! This ten quid is my own, to do as I like with. And I'm going to have a high old time, I can tell you!"

"We don't mind your doing that," said Wharton, "so long as you make absolutely certain it's your own money you're going to blue. If a fellow named Hunter were to drop on you suddenly for ten quid, where would you be?"

"In the esteemed soupfulness!" grinned Hurree Singh.

Billy Bunter tucked the registered letter away in his pocket, and glared defiantly at the Famous Five.

"You sha'n't have a share in this!" he declared. "You've been jolly stinging with me in the past, and now it's my turn to have the upper hand. I shall buy a couple of chicken—"

"Good!"

"And a dozen or so big veal and ham pies—"

"Cheers!"

"And enough cakes to stack the cupboard in Study No. 7!" concluded Bunter.

"Bravo!" said the Famous Five together.

"And I shall invite my chosen chums to a first-rate spread—"

"What ho!"

"Look here," said Bunter, in exasperated tones, "it's no use trying to kid me you're not jealous! Just think of it! Chicken and pies and cakes! I'll make rather a change from our usual war-time menu, I think. And it won't be the

slightest use your trying to cudge anything from me. I'm not having any!"

The faces of the Famous Five became suddenly ominous, but Billy Bunter was too obtuse to notice it.

"I shall go down—"

"You will!" said Bob Cherry suddenly. And he gave the Owl of the Remove a playful push in the chest that sent him sprawling.

"Beast!" screamed Bunter furiously. "I was going to say I should go down—"

"Well, you did, didn't you?" asked Bob innocently.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I meant, I should go down to the village!"

"Well, why didn't you say what you meant at first, you burbling balloon!"

Billy Bunter rose painfully to his feet.

"You're a set of heastly outsiders!" he exclaimed. "I'm fed up with you! And if you come cadging to me for grub to-night, when you see what a fine spread I've laid out in the dormitory, you won't get a scrap—see?"

"P'raps not; but you will!" said Bob Cherry. "A bigger scrap than you bargained for—with a couple of black eyes and a set of punctured ribs thrown in!"

Matter of fact, I think I'll get busy on you now—"

But Billy Bunter, who knew of old the force of Bob Cherry's sledge-hammer blows, did not wait for Bob to put his threat into effect.

He promptly fled.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Bunter Draws Blank!

FOR the remainder of that day Billy Bunter strutted about like a peacock.

He was no longer the poverty-stricken cadger of half-crowns. He was a man of means now, and all Greyfriars lay at his feet, for him to conquer.

But if Bunter hoped that fellows like Skinner and Snoop and Stort would proceed to crawl up to him, and make him a sort of tin god, he was badly let down.

"I say, Skinner," said Bunter, approaching the cad of the Remove when afternoon lessons were over, "would you like to walk as far as Friarale with me?"

"No, on your life!" said Skinner promptly.

"Not to lay in a stank of provisions?" Skinner gave a start.

"Eh? Whose going to pay?" he asked suspiciously.

"I am!"

"You? Why, you haven't the price of a box of tin-tacks on you!"

"That's all you know! I happen to be simply rolling in money—wallowing in it, if you like!"

"Gammion!"

Billy Bunter fumbled in his pocket, and produced the two five-pound notes. He thought Skinner would fall down and worship him after that.

But Skinner was not in the least impressed.

"They're faked, I s'pose," he said. "Get out of my sight, you fat spoofeer, before I drubbin' you along the passage!"

Billy Bunter rolled indignantly away. He bore down upon Snoop and Stott, who had been standing at a sufficiently close distance to overhear Skinner's remarks.

"Hallo, gasbag!" said Snoop irreverently. "You look like a chap who's suddenly discovered a gold-mine under the footer-field!"

"I've done the next best thing," said Bunter. "My uncle's sent me ten quid—ten quid, Snopsey!"

"In cash?" asked Stott.

"No, fathead! Two five-pound notes!"

"Faked, of course!" said Snoop and Stott together.

Bunter's voice rose to a shrill crescendo.

"They're not faked, I tell you! They're perfectly genuine!"

"Can any genuine thing come out of Bunter?" grinned Snoop.

Billy Bunter gave a grunt, and went on his way.

The other fellows seemed to have no burning desire to share his wealth. Indeed, they appeared distinctly loth to accepting that wealth at its face value.

Fisher Tarleton Fish, the Removite from the U.S.A., was Bunter's one remaining hope. The fat junior was not really looking for somebody to share his good fortune, but he badly wanted someone to carry the good things back from Friardale. It would be no joke for Bunter, who was not in training, to stagger that distance beneath a load of tuck. He wanted someone to do the dirty work for him, that he might reap the benefit.

"I say, Fishy—"
Fisher T. Fish, whose head was buried in the pages of a New York newspaper, looked up impatiently.

"Get off the earth!" he said.
Bunter ignored this far from polite reception.

"I've got ten quid to blow," he said.

"Ten which?"

"Ten quid. And I'm going in for a big bust-up. Coming into Friardale with me, to get the tuck!"

Fisher T. Fish eyed Bunter narrowly.

"Guess you're not going to spoof me!" he said, with emphasis.

"I'm not spoofing, Fishy—honest Injun!"

"Show me the spondulicks!"

"The—the what?" gasped Bunter.

"Dollars—greenbacks—shekels—whatever you call 'em!"

For the ninety-ninth time that day Billy Bunter produced his two five-pound notes, which by this time looked in a fit state for the dust-bin.

"I sorter calculate you've been picking some galoot's pockets," was Fishy's comment.

"And you want me to be your pardner in this hyer business, so that you can shove the blame on to me when the steal is discovered! No, sir! I'm not having any!"

"My uncle sent me these notes!" shouted Bunter furiously.

"Guess you'd better take a leaf out of the book of George Washington! No good coming to me with a yarn like that! I've got you covered every time—right from the word 'Go'!"

Billy Bunter doubled his fat fists and glared at the American junior as if he would eat him. But he remembered that Fishy, though not a fighting-man, was the possessor of hard and bony knuckles; and hard and bony knuckles have a habit of hurting.

"You can go and eat cake!" said Bunter. "When I come in to-night, I den with good things, like—*like*—Santa Claus, you'll be sorry you didn't take advantage of my offer!"

With which Parthian shot Billy Bunter went on his way alone. It was both humiliating and disconcerting to find that his newly-acquired wealth had made no impression in the Removite—at least, not in the manner in which he had expected.

Some time later Billy Bunter crawled slowly into Friardale.

To his dismay, he found that most of the shops were closed, or in the act of closing.

Uncle Clegg's was still open, however, and Billy Bunter made hurried tracks towards it.

Mr. Clegg himself was standing behind the counter, looking far from cheery. His shop had a very barren and empty appearance.

"Good-evening, Mr. Clegg!" said Bunter. "I want to make a number of purchases. To begin with—"

"Br-r-r!" growled Mr. Clegg.

"I wish you wouldn't interrupt me when I'm giving my orders!" said Bunter loftily. "Have you got a couple of plump chickens?"

"Ain't never seed a chicken since the War started!" snapped Mr. Clegg.

Bunter's jaw dropped.

"That's rotten!" he said. "I was counting on those chickens. Still, if you can't supply 'em, you can't, I s'pose. Gimme some ham, then!"

"Am," said Uncle Clegg ruminatively. "is a hunkun quantity. Besides, I'm not a blinkin' butcher!"

"Oh, dear! I shall have to fall back on pork-pies, then."

"You can't! There ain't any to fall back on."

Billy Bunter grew desperate.

"This is too thick!" he exclaimed.

"You've got no chicken, you've got no ham, you've got no pork-pies! What the merry dickens have you got?"

"Only what you can see in the shop," said Mr. Clegg wearily.

Bunter surveyed the miserable row of corned-beef tins on the shelf, and turned from them in disgust.

"When a fellow has no dough usually set the ball rolling with corned beef."

There were some biscuits available, but they were as hard as bullets. There was some salmon, too, but it looked as if it had been caught in the days of Izaak Walton. As for the cheese which stood on the counter, that spoke for itself—loudly.

"What a mouldy collection!" growled Bunter. "Call yourself a grocer?"

"You seem to forget, Master Bunter, that we're at war."

"Forget it? You don't give a chap much chance to do that, when you show him a lot of miserable stuff like this, not fit for cattle!"

"Which I can't sell what I've n't got!" muttered Uncle Clegg.

"An' what's more, I'm not goin' to stand 'ere gaspin' to you all night! Look shippy! I want to shut up the shop."

"Pig!" snorted Bunter.

And he rolled out of the shop, and proceeded along the High Street.

But he got no satisfaction anywhere. A few shopkeepers were polite, most were surly; but none could give him his heart's desire.

At last, worn out with much tramping, and with the ten pounds still in his pocket, Billy Bunter returned to Grevfrians.

He had been dreaming all day of what he would do that evening—how he would convey piles of tempting tuck up to the dormitory, and devour it in the sight of his schoolfellows, making their bits or sup.

But his fond dream had fallen a long way short of realisation. He had forgotten, in his wild desire to make his

schoolfellows king small, that there was a war on, and that provisions were less easy to obtain than in the piping days of peace.

Bunter was chaffed mercilessly in the dormitory that evening. The fact that he had come empty away from Friardale gave colour to Skinner & Co.'s theory that the notes were not genuine. The Removites waxed very sarcastic at Bunter's expense.

"You're a set of hoastly rotters!" growled the Owl of the Removite, as he tumbled into bed. "But I'll get even with you for this, you see! I'll bring you to your knees—all the jolly lot of you!"

But the only reply to Bunter's passionate outburst was:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bunter Borrows a Bike!

"TODDY, old man—"

"Hallo!" said Peter, passimg at a dramatic part of the Herlock Sholmes story he was writing.

"You're always being a generous-minded sort of chap—"

Peter Todd sniffed. When compliments were flying about like this, it was obvious that the fellow who paid them had an axe to grind.

"What's the little game?" asked Peter.

"Ahem! I—I want to borrow your bike."

"I dare say you do. So do lots of people. But you're jolly well not going to!"

"Just for this once!" pleaded Bunter.

"It's urgent!"

"You're this detective story I'm writing. Clear out, tubby, and let me sit alone with my thought, as the song says."

"Oh, really, you know—"

Peter Todd seized a ruler, and sent it whizzing through the air. Billy Bunter promptly disappeared into the passage.

"Ungrateful beast!" he grunted.

"I've shared his study with him all this time, and given him the benefit of my society free, gratis, and for nothing—and yet he won't rise to the occasion over a little matter like this. It's disgusting!"

Bunter badly wanted a bike. He was still in possession of the ten pounds, and still seeking for ways and means in which to spend it.

The school tuckshop was no use. Mrs. Mimble had cut down her supplies to a minimum; and there was nothing to be had in the fancy line.

So Billy Bunter had decided on another excursion to Friardale; but he had no intention of walking there. A bicycle he simply must have.

But there were too many juniors in the neighbourhood of the bicycle-shed for Billy Bunter to go and take his choice. It would be necessary for him to get somebody's permission, or go bikeless.

"Inky, old scout!" shouted Bunter, catching a glimpse of the nabob. "Be a sport, and lend me your bike!"

Hurreo Singh shook his head.

"My esteemed bike shall not be imparted to you loafnully," he said. "It would not be returnfully put back."

"Yes, it would!" said Bunter eagerly. "I will not try it experimentally."

And Hurreo Singh went on his way, whistling.

"Beastly nigger!" growled Bunter. "I don't seem to be getting any luck at all!"

The cycle-shed remained inaccessible. Micky Desmond was mending a puncture, and Mark Linley and Dick Penfold were standing by, giving him advice. There

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were several machines there, but Bunter could not possibly commandeer one without being seen.

The fat junior rolled discontentedly across the quad. He seemed to be beaten on all fronts. And to walk to Friar-dale and back was too much.

And then, in the very moment of his despair, a brilliant idea occurred to Bunter.

He remembered that a bicycle was due to be delivered to Mr. Prout that afternoon—a brand-new model, with all the latest improvements.

"That'll suit me down to the ground," he muttered, "if only I can get hold of it without being spotted!"

Borrowing a bike of Mr. Prout's without permission was a risky business; but the risk was not nearly so great as if the machine belonged to one of the other masters. Mr. Prout prided himself on possessing a keen eye and a strong detective instinct. He really had neither. Therefore Bunter felt that, in annexing the Fifth Form master's bicycle, he was comparatively safe.

A carrier's van came jolting up to the old gateway. Perched on the back thereof was the very thing Bunter was seeking—a bicycle, with brown-paper wrappings tied round the framework.

Billy Bunter kept his eye glued to that van as if he had entered upon a vision of the Promised Land. He saw it rumble to a halt outside the main archway, and observed the driver clambering down.

No sooner had the man disappeared into the building than Billy Bunter acted. He ran forward, hastily heaved the bicycle down from the back of the van, ripped off the brown-paper coverings, and mounted the machine.

It was all done in the twinkling of an eye. Bunter could be active enough at times.

He was out in the roadway like a flash, his fat little legs working overtime. "My hat! This is something like!" he chuckled. "What a stunning bike! I shall be in Friar-dale in next to no time!"

But Bunter had not allowed for the possibility of casualties by the way.

He was speeding along a lane, when suddenly three fellows sprang out of the hedge, chuckling. He recognised Ponsby and Gadsby and Vavasour, the nuts of Highcliffe. They carried between them a long pole, which they at once thrust across the roadway, holding it a few inches from the ground.

Billy Bunter was in a desperate plight.

He was going at too great a speed to check himself, and the only thing to do, if he wished to avoid that pole, was to swerve aside either to the right or left. If he went to the right he would be deposited in a prickly hedge; if he went to the left there was a nice, green, slimy pond awaiting to receive him. Bunter hated prickles, and he hated cold water. But the idea of rushing full-tilt into that pole was appalling. It couldn't be done.

Bunter lurched to the left, then to the right, then to the left again; and this time he headed straight for the pond.

There was a dull, unmusical splash, a shrill scream of anguish, and then cycle and rider disappeared completely into the depths of the stagnant pool!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Good Samaritan!

AFTER an interval of a few seconds Billy Bunter became visible again; but he was no longer recognisable. His face and hair were covered with rank weeds and clinging moss.

"What—ho, water-nymph!" chuckled Ponsby.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't leave your poor old bike to drown, you coward!" said Gadsby dramatically.

Splutter, splutter, splutter!

Billy Bunter was in a terrible state. But he still retained sufficient presence of mind to think of Mr. Prout's brand-new bike. That must be recovered at all costs.

A handle-bar showed itself above the surface, like a periscope. Bunter made a frantic grab at it, and started to haul himself and the machine out of the water.

But the eads of Highcliffe were enjoying themselves, and they meant to keep the pot boiling.

Every time Bunter secured a footing in the roadway, he was promptly pushed back into the pond again.

"Grooooooh!" You cads! You beasts! Lemme gerrout!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

How long Ponsby & Co. would have persisted in their bullying tactics it was impossible to say; but at that moment a sturdy, well-built stranger, the peak of whose cap was pulled down over his eyes, came briskly on the scene.

"Hold on!" he exclaimed. "D'you call this fair play?"

Ponsby regarded the speaker in his most arrogant manner.

"Who are d'ickens are you? An' what the dickens d'ye mean by bargin' in, begad?"

"You cheeky young cub! P'raps you'll sing a trifle smaller when I tell you that I'm Jim Sprightly, late boxing champion of the Southern Fusiliers."

"Go on!"

"Seems to have a mighty big opinion of himself," said Gadsby. "Better chuck him into the pond alongside of Bunter!"

Mr. Jim Sprightly squared his shoulders. He looked decidedly ugly.

"Ho!" he exclaimed. "So that's the way the wind blows, is it? Very well. We'll see how you like that one, for a start!"

He shot out his fist, and Gadsby went down like a ninepin.

Ponsby and Vavasour, alarmed at this exhibition of the new-comer's pugilistic powers, turned to flee; but Mr. Sprightly was too quick for them. He dodged ahead.

"No, you don't!" he said. "Before you go I'll give you something to remember me by!"

Bliff! Smack!

Ponsby and his companion, smitten on cheat and cheek respectively, joined Gadsby in the roadway.

One blow each had been enough.

"Ow!" groaned Pon. "Confound you, you rotter!"

"My face!" moaned Vavasour. "It feels all mashed up, absolutely!"

Meanwhile Billy Bunter had succeeded in getting clear of the pond; and Mr. Prout's bicycle, which now looked like old iron, was dragged out also.

It was not often that gratitude glowed in Bunter's breast, but it did at that moment. He could have hugged Mr. Jim Sprightly, and would probably have done so had not the latter objected to what Bunter had brought out of the duck-pond.

"Now," said the pugilist, addressing the squirming Highcliffians, "I think you'd better have a dose of what you gave this young gentleman. Who's going to be first?"

But Ponsby & Co. felt that they had been punished enough. The very thought of wallowing in that fearful pond struck terror into their hearts. Leaping to their feet, they streaked off down the road like hares, and didn't stop

running until they reached the gates of Highcliffe.

"Now, my son," said Mr. Sprightly, turning to Bunter, "what d'you mean by allowing three fellows to pitch you into a pond—hey? Where's your spirit, eh? You should have littered the road with those insolent puppies!"

"The rotters took me by surprise!" groated Bunter.

"Ah, that's the secret of most failures in every sort of game. Taken by surprise! No man has a right to be taken by surprise. That sort of thing has lost years before now. Why don't you let me take you in hand?"

Bunter started back.

"W-w-what d'you mean?" he gasped.

"Don't be alarmed, my chubby child! What I'm suggestin' is that you should let me instruct you in the noble art of self-defence. You couldn't possibly put yourself in the hands of a better man. I've fought before all the crowned heads of Europe, and can show a record that'd take your breath away. I'm stayin' in Friar-dale, and if you'd care to come over and have lessons, Jim Sprightly's your man!"

Bunter's little round eyes fairly glowed.

Here was luck, and no mistake! He had set out that evening in order to find a way of spending his ten pounds, and lo! he had found it.

Under the tuition of Jim Sprightly, he told himself, he would rapidly become a star boxer!

A star boxer!

Looking into the future, he saw himself gaining a series of smashing victories over the fellows who had so often jeered at him.

It was a glorious prospect. Bunter, the fighting—the Terror of the Remove—the champion of the oppressed—the monarch of all he surveyed!

"I'm on!" he said eagerly.

"Good! My terms are half-a-guinea a lesson."

Bunter's face fell a little. Half-a-guinea a time was a bit stiff, but it would be worth it, he reflected.

"That's all right," he said. "I'm ready for the first lesson as soon as you like. My name's Bunter. Give me your address, and if it's convenient, I'll call at your place to-morrow night."

"You've got the true hustlin' spirit," said Mr. Sprightly admiringly. "You'll find my crib easily enough. It's over the barber's shop in the High Street."

"It's a bargain, then?"

"Absolutely!" sang out the boxer, retiring swiftly at the sight of the dummy hand which Bunter extended. "I'll see you about seven to-morrow evening, Mister Bunter! Good-night!"

"Good-night!" said Billy Bunter.

He endeavoured to push Mr. Prout's battered bicycle along the road, but it refused to budge.

"Oh, blow the beastly thing!" growled Bunter. "They can't expect me to carry a crock like this for miles and miles on my shoulders. Here goes!"

The Owl of the Remove sent the machine spinning into the hedge. Then he plodded away in the direction of Greyfriars, building castles in the air as he went, and heaping blessings upon the head of Mr. Jim Sprightly.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Reckoning!

"BOYS!" rapped out Mr. Quelch when the Remove were assembled in the Form-room next morning.

There was a note of sternness in Mr. Quelch's tone, and his gimlet-eyes were more piercing than usual. The juniors

could see that there was a storm brewing, and some of them shifted uneasily in their seats.

"I have a very serious complaint to make," said Mr. Quelch. "It appears that I have been made the victim of a practical joke!"

"This is where somebody gets it in the neck!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Yesterday afternoon," continued Mr. Quelch, "a bicycle was delivered at the school by the carrier. Somebody—and I am going to make it my business to find out who—must have removed the bicycle from the van and made off with it. I do not suggest that the offender intended to steal it. He probably made use of it temporarily, or has hidden it in order to cause me inconvenience. I call upon the boy who did this, if he is present, to stand forward without delay!"

Not a fellow stirred; but Billy Bunter's heart was beating faster than usual.

"So the bike he had purloined was not Mr. Prout's, after all. It was the property of his own Form-master.

"I am waiting!" said Mr. Quelch ominously.

"Don't speak all at once!" muttered Peter Todd.

"Silence!" rapped out Mr. Quelch. "I warn the culprit that if he does not come forward voluntarily he will be dealt with very severely. This saddle-bag—the Form-master held it up for inspection—" was found by the roadside between this school and Friardale. That clearly shows that somebody cycled out of gates on my machine during yesterday afternoon. I have a very shrewd idea that it was a member of my Form. If that is so, let him stand forward at once!"

There was still no response.

"Very well," said Mr. Quelch. "It is my painful duty to question you all until I light upon the guilty one. How many boys were absent from the school yesterday afternoon? Show your hands!"

A number of hands shot up. Mr. Quelch counted them.

"Fifteen," he said. "Can you boys give an account of your movements?"

"Yes, sir," said Harry Wharton. "Eleven of us were playing in a footer match at Waphot, and there were two reserves."

"That accounts for thirteen," said Mr. Quelch. "Those boys may sit down."

Only Ogilvy and Russell were left standing.

"Where were you yesterday afternoon?" asked Mr. Quelch.

"We biked into Friardale, sir," said Russell.

"Ah!"

"On our own bikes," added Ogilvy.

"Can anyone bear out that statement?"

"Shure, an' I can, sir!" said Micky Desmond. "I was in the shed when they came in for their bikes."

"Very good. You may sit down," said Mr. Quelch.

Ogilvy and Russell dropped into their seats, grinning.

Mr. Quelch may have thought he had stumbled upon a conviction, but there was nothing doing.

"He doesn't seem to be getting much fodder!" whispered Frank Nugent.

"We want a good detective on the job!" murmured Bob Cherry.

But Mr. Quelch, though baffled for the moment, had no intention of letting matters rest.

"Skinner!" he thundered.

"The wish of the Remove jumped to his feet."

"I had to know how you were occupying your time during yesterday afternoon?"

That query was due to Skinner's shady reputation; and, all things considered, it



A biff for Bunter! (See Chapter 6.)

was not unjustified, though it was so unlike Mr. Quelch that no one could doubt his being unusually riled.

"I was in my study the whole time, sir," said Skinner promptly. "Snoop and Stott were there with me. They can bear witness."

"That's so, sir," said Snoop and Stott together.

Mr. Quelch reluctantly accepted this assurance.

"Bunter!" he exclaimed.

Conscious of a sinking feeling in the pit of the stomach, the Owl of the Remove rose in his place.

He knew that he was on very thin ice. He would have to tread warily.

Had Mr. Prout been the victim of the bicycle catastrophe, all might have been well. Bunter might have put him off the scent with a few glib lies.

But Mr. Quelch lacked that simple faith which the poet preferred to Norman blood.

"Where were you at the time in question, Bunter?" snapped the Form-master.

Billy Bunter cleared his throat desperately.

"Ahem! I—I was in Friardale, sir."

"What?"

Mr. Quelch's voice was like the booming of breakers on the beach.

"I ordered all boys who left the school yesterday afternoon to stand up!" he thundered. "You, Bunter, remained seated. And now you have the effrontery to tell me that you were in Friardale!"

"Oh, crumbs!" groaned Bunter. "I—I thought you were referring to the afternoon before last, sir. I was in Friardale then."

"How dare you, sir! You were under detention the whole of the time, writing lines which I had given you."

Bunter's jaw dropped. He realised that, in order to lie skilfully, it was necessary to have a good memory.

"I—I—" he stammered.

"Do not prevaricate, wretched boy!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "Were you, or were you not, in Friardale yesterday afternoon?"

"No, sir!" said Bunter, eagerly and emphatically.

"You were in the school building all the time?"

"Yes, sir."

"In what particular section of it?"

"Er—I was over at Cliff House, sir."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

An uncontrollable roar of laughter burst from the class.

In his stato of flurry, and his anxiety to avoid detection, Billy Bunter was blundering badly.

Mr. Quelch's thin lips were contracted.

"You will oblige me," he said, "by telling the plain, unvarnished truth! Do you not see that you are hopelessly contradicting yourself? First of all you say you were in Friardale; then you assert that you were here; and now you tell me you went to Cliff House."

Billy Bunter suddenly saw a way out. He jumped at it.

"I was at all three places, sir," he said.

"What?"

"I was here till classes were over, then I went into Friardale, and then to Cliff House, sir."

Mr. Quelch glared.

"I myself saw you on the premises at five," he said. "That means that your visits to Friardale and Cliff House occupied only an hour. Be very careful, Bunter!"

"I—I—I did it, sir, anyway!" said Bunter desperately.

"Then," said Mr. Quelch triumphantly, "you must have had some swifter means of transit than by going on foot. In short, a bicycle."

The perspiration stood out in great beads on Bunter's forehead. He was driven to the wall, and none was at hand to help him.

"Oh, dear!" he gasped. "If you really want to know, sir, it was Ponsobny!"

"Ponsobny!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir," said Bunter, feeling that he was proceeding on safe lines now.

"Ponsobny and several more Highlife fellows sent the bike into a pond, and me as well."

"You? Then you must have had the bicycle in your possession at the time?"

"Oh, no, sir! Certainly not, sir! I shouldn't think of laying hands on other people's property, sir!"

"Where did this alleged assault take place?" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"On the road to Friardale, sir."

"And you wish me to believe," said Mr. Quelch, with heavy sarcasm, "that the bicycle, propelled by some unseen and mysterious power; descended from the carrier's van, and proceeded as far as the pond you refer to?"

"Nunno, sir! I—I wasn't at the pond at the time, so I didn't see the bike arrive."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mr. Quelch. "I will wait no more time in words, Bunter. I am quite satisfied that you appropriated my machine yesterday, and that you have lied about it, and attempted to evade the ends of justice! Stand out before the class!"

Billy Bunter's fat knees knocked together. But he decided upon one last desperate effort to retrieve himself.

"The bike wasn't yours, er, anyway," he said. "It was Mr. Prout's. I heard he'd ordered one, and I saw the carrier bring it along. If I'd guessed it was yours, er, I shouldn't have taken it."

"That's fairly put the lid on!" gurgled Bob Cherry.

And it had!

Mr. Quelch seized his cane, and proceeded to treat the class to what looked like an exhibition of carpet-beating.

Swish, swish, swish!

"Ow-ow-ow!"

"You are a perverse and foolish boy, Bunter"—swish!—"and I will endeavour to teach you"—swish, swish!—"that it is wrong and foolish to tell untruths!" Swish, swish, swish!

Billy Bunter looked a perfect wreck when Mr. Quelch had finished. The Form-master regarded him with stern contempt.

"Where did you leave my machine?" he demanded.

"Yow! I chucked the beastly thing into the hedge—that is to say, I've never set eyes on it, sir!"

Mr. Quelch brandished his cane aloft once more, and Billy Bunter deemed it prudent to keep to the facts.

"It's in the hedge, er, sir!" he said wildly. "I'll get what's left of it as soon as I can."

"What do you mean, boy?"

"It—it's been through the mill a good bit, sir. I expect you'll want a new bike."

"But this was a new one! Do you mean to say you have smashed my machine?"

"No, sir; it was Ponsonby!"

"Enough!" said Mr. Quelch sternly. "I shall require you to make good the damage, Bunter. If you fail to do so, I shall communicate with your father. You have acted in a most scandalous manner! Go to your place!"

And Bunter went, telling himself en route that the next time he borrowed a bike he would not be guilty of such a costly error in tactics!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Noble Art!

BILLY BUNTER came in for a vast amount of chipping on the subject of Mr. Quelch's bicycle.

None of his schoolfellows was inclined to be sympathetic. On the contrary, the Removites persisted in regarding the affair as one of the richest jokes of the term.

"Got a pain, Bunt?" asked Bob Cherry, as the fat junior went squirming along the passage.

"Yee, and somebody else will be getting a pain shortly!" said Bunter darkly.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Going to set up business as a fighting-man?" said Bob Cherry.

"Wait and see!"

"We shall wait a lifetime, then!" said Nugent.

"To the endfulness of our esteemed days," agreed Luuree Singh.

Billy Bunter paused impressively. "Some of you think I'm a weakling," he said. "You don't keep my end up. But just you wait! The worm will turn!"

"Glad you admit you're a worm," said Harry Wharton.

"I'll show you," continued Bunter, "that I'm not a fellow to be trifled with. I've fed up with all the jolly loll of you! And if you get my rag out you'll have reason to regret it, I can tell you!"

"Help!" muttered Bob Cherry.

"Bunter's fairly on the warpath!" said Johnny Bull. "We'd better flee!"

And the juniors fled, but not before they had bumped Bunter.

Billy Bunter picked himself up and jumped away. He was in the wars with a vengeance, but he consoled himself with the thought that before many days had elapsed other people would be in the wars, too. His secret tuition at the hands of Jim Sprightly would result in his being equal to the finest fighting-man in the Remove, he felt confident.

At the appointed time that evening the Owl of the Remove turned up at the boxing champion's quarters.

Mr. Sprightly's room was a curious mixture of a bed-sitting room, a gymnasium, and a four-ale bar. There was a punching-ball in one corner, and a pair of foils; in another corner stood a camp-bedstead, and a suspicious-looking bottle, marked "Embrocation," but containing a vastly different sort of liquid, stood on the shelf.

The boxer himself was garbed in a very ancient sweater, and he twisted a poisonous-looking cigar from one corner of his mouth to the other.

"Evenin', Master Bunter!" he said affably. "Ready for the first instalment—what?"

"Yes, rather!" said Billy Bunter.

He peeled off his coat, and Mr. Sprightly assisted him to put on a pair of boxing-gloves.

"Better have a smack at the punching-ball first," he said. "I want to see exactly what sort of stuff you're made of."

Billy Bunter waddled up to the suspended ball and gave it a mighty punch. Before he could do anything further the ball bounced back like a boomerang and luffed him smartly on the nose.

"Yaroooooh!"

"You should have ducked your napper," said Mr. Sprightly cheerfully.

"That's one of the secrets of success in boxing—ducking your napper at the crucial moment. You dodge half the punishment that way. Cheer up, and try again!"

Billy Bunter did. He smote the ball once more, and as it swung back he endeavoured to repeat the performance. Owing to his short-sightedness he missed, and his gloved fist crashed into the wall with a sounding report.

"Ow-ow-ow!"

"Never hit wild," corrected Mr. Sprightly. "Make sure of your mark first, then go all out."

Bunter appeared to be all out already. He tucked his damaged fist under his arm, and danced about the room in agony.

"I think you'd better leave that ball alone," said the boxer. "It makes you give it best every time. Try a little gentle sparring with me. And don't hit too hard. Remember, you've got the strength of an ox, and I don't want to be laid out on my native heath. Ready?"

Mr. Sprightly threw away the stump

of his cigar, put on gloves, and faced Bunter. The fat junior waddled up to him, and succeeded after much puffing and blowing, in punching him on the chest.

Mr. Sprightly made no effort to guard the blow.

"Ah!" he said, gasping. "You caught me napping that time. Hold on a jiffy till I get my breath back."

Billy Bunter was too obtuse to see that his partner was merely playing with him. He imagined he had delivered a surprise attack, and delivered it well. Not many fellows would have got off the mark so well as that, he reflected.

Jim Sprightly got it on the nose next time. He did it by putting his nose in the way of Billy Bunter's fist. He recoiled, and nearly fell.

"As near a knock-out as makes no difference," he observed.

Bunter was delighted. From that time forth he hit out wildly, blindly, anywhere, and most of the blows found a destination on some part of Jim Sprightly's anatomy.

Occasionally the boxer would pretend to smite Bunter with terrific force, but the blow was cunningly checked at the finish, and Bunter concluded the bout unscathed.

"See here, my son," said Jim Sprightly, disporting himself on the camp-bed, and proceeding to light another cigar, "you've got the makings of a first-rate fighting-man! That straight lick of yours would—ahem!—would make people stare. A few more lessons and you'll be well away."

"Shall I be able to lick the other fellows in my Form?"

"Why, bless you, yee! They won't stand an earthly! You'll walk round 'em, my boy—simply pulverise 'em!"

Bunter licked his lips with great relish. He was on the eve of getting his own back at last!

"What about the half-guinea for the first lesson?" inquired Mr. Sprightly, coming down to things on earth with a rush.

Billy Bunter groped in the pocket of his coat, and produced a five-pound note. The boxer eyed it hungrily.

"Take it out of that," said Bunter.

Jim Sprightly's fingers closed lovingly over the five. He made no motion to hand over anything in the way of change.

"I look here, Master Bunter!" he said.

"I took a fancy to you from the very first. You're a class of fellow one rarely meets with. What's more, you can be trusted to keep your mouth shut. This being so, I'm going to let you into a little secret."

Bunter wondered what was coming.

"I have here," said Mr. Sprightly, after the manner of a conjurer, and bringing to light a small bottle, "a preparation which, when applied to boxing-gloves, will enable you to beat any opponent under the sun!"

Bunter's eyes fairly gleamed.

"It's called the 'Lick-'em-all' liquid," explained Mr. Sprightly. "A little drop of this on your gloves and you've got your man beaten every time!"

"My hat! Hand it over!" said Bunter eagerly.

"My charge to you," said Mr. Sprightly, as if he were making a vast concession, "is five pounds."

"Oh!"

"You don't seem to properly appreciate my generosity. This is a sporting offer, Master Bunter, that may never be repeated. What man wouldn't pay out a paltry five pounds if he could have the satisfaction of licking every enemy he had in the world?"

Mr. Sprightly's eloquence had the

desired effect. The transaction was complete.

"Thank you!" said Mr. Sprightly. "You are a gentleman, sir! Better come round and see me again once or twice before you start on your slogging campaign. There are always some useful tips I can give you."

"Good!" said the Owl of the Remove. And he resumed his visits to Mr. Sprightly, until that gentleman was in possession of his entire wealth.

"Ten quid gone—and not a penny of it in tuck!" sighed Bunter. "Still, it was worth it. I can lick any of the beasts now—and I'm going to! Their lives won't be worth living!"

And Mr. Sprightly, who at that precious moment was imbibing from one of the suspicious-looking bottles which had stood on the shelf, felt as well satisfied as Bunter—possibly with better cause!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Great Offensive!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"
Bob Cherry, with a cricket-bat tucked under his arm and a bright smile on his serene countenance, stopped short in amused surprise as he came upon Billy Bunter parading the Remove passage.

The Owl of the Remove, with his arms folded like a young Napoleon, stalked up and down, with dignity written all over him. And on his hands were fastened a pair of hefty-looking boxing-gloves!

"What's the merry game, Bunt?" inquired Bob Cherry. "Going to give somebody a face massage?"

Bunter paused impressively.

"I'm waiting for Skinner!" he said.

"Why, what's Skinner done?"
"He stuck a pin in my leg this morning, in class. He won't be in a hurry to do that again, I'll bet!"

"Great jumping crackers! I've never seen you looking so warlike as this before!" gasped Bob. "Matter of fact, I'm beginning to feel a little frightened!"

"I'll tackle you in due course," said Bunter calmly. "Meanwhile, I've got a lot of old scores to pay off. Your licking won't be any milder through waiting for it, though!"

"Mum-mum-my licking!" stammered Bob.

"Exactly! You're jolly well going through the mill, I can tell you! I shall settle with Skinner and a few more first, and then it'll be your funeral!"

"My hat! Since when has this fit of lunacy come over you, Bunt?"
"I'm perfectly sane, Bob Cherry! And I'm in rare fighting trim, too. So you can look out for squalls— Ah, here he is!"

Bunter broke off suddenly as Harold Skinner came strutting on the scene.

The ead of the Remove gazed at the warlike Bunter in profound astonishment.

"Wherefore this thushness?" he exclaimed.

"I'm going to lick you, you unmitigated cad!" said Billy Bunter dramatically, recalling a passage from an absorbing love-story he had recently read. "You have outraged every law of decency and good breeding! You have proved yourself a moral wreck, and a dangerous menace to Society! If you speak a word to Miss Sempronina again—I mean, if you dare to stick a pin in my leg again, I shall challenge you to mortal combat! As it is, I shall content myself by giving you the thrashing you so richly deserve!"

"Ye gods!" gasped Skinner. "Carry me home to die, somebody!"

"Bunter's potty!" said Bob Cherry. "I thought so before, but I'm dead cer-

tain now. He's wandering in his mind. Something will have to be done about it!"

Billy Bunter blinked angrily at Skinner.

"Get your gloves," he said, "and prepare to meet me in the gym in five minutes! I intend to make shavings of you!"

"Don't be an ass!" said Skinner.

Billy Bunter turned to Bob Cherry.

"You see, he's trying to back out of it!" he said. "He funks me!"

Skinner bristled up at this.

"I'll jolly soon show you whether I'm a funk or not!" he growled. "Come along to the gym, and I'll knock spots off you!"

The little procession, with Bob Cherry leading, headed for the gym.

It didn't remain a little procession long. News of the fight swept through the school like a fire through gorse, and within a few minutes the gym was packed.

It seemed incredible that Billy Bunter should be hungry for a fight. True, Skinner was not a very redoubtable opponent. But to see Bunter so eager for the fray was amazing.

"Want a referee?" inquired Peter Todd.

"Don't trouble!" said Billy Bunter loftily. "I'll settle this cad's hash in less than a minute!"

Peter seemed doubtful. He ignored Bunter's swanking statement, and took out his watch.

"Gentlemen," he announced, "William George Bunter and Harold Skinner will now proceed to do their best to wipe each other off the face of the earth! Are you ready, you two? Very well, then! Time!"

And, amid the delighted exclamations of the crowd, the merry game began.

Billy Bunter went at his man with the velocity of a whirlwind in a fierce gale. Skinner, who had not expected anything of the sort, was frankly taken aback.

He gave way a yard or two, and Billy Bunter, hitting out blindly, happened to catch him a fearful swipe on the chin.

Skinner, who hadn't sufficient stamina to keep his feet after that, promptly threw up the sponge. He went down in a heap, amid a chorus of applause.

Billy Bunter stood over him with legs apart, looking every inch a conqueror.

"Just look at him!" sneered Stott.

"Look at his mug! He's knocked out Skinner by a sheer fluke, and now he thinks he's Jack Johnson!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter spun round.

"Are you alluding to me, you worm?" he demanded.

"Yes, barrel!"

"Then you can come and take your flue!"

"I won't lick you," drawled Stott.

"Too much fog!"

"Shame!" chorused the crowd.

"It's up to you to accept Bunter's challenge, Stott," said Harry Wharton.

"And if you don't," added Johnny Bull, "we'll jolly well bump you for being a funk!"

Reluctantly Stott rose to his feet and advanced into the ring. He relieved Skinner of his gloves, and then faced the Owl of the Remove.

Bunter had everything in his favour. He had the support of most of the fellows present, and that counted for a great deal. Moreover, he had tremendous confidence in Jim Sprightly's famous "Lick-em-all" liquid, to which he chiefly attributed Skinner's downfall.

Stott, on the other hand, was decidedly nervous. He could hardly hope to succeed where Skinner had failed; and he opened very feebly.

Once again Billy Bunter managed to land a chance blow. Stott caught the

full force of it in the chest, and promptly collapsed. Peter Todd gaily counted him out.

"That's two accounts settled!" said Billy Bunter, with infinite satisfaction. "I've not finished yet, either!"

Snoop, who had witnessed the downfall of his two companions with growing uneasiness, attempted to slink out of the gym; but a solid phalanx of grinning juniors barred his exit.

"Going to tackle Snoop, Bunt?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Yes—any old thing!" said Bunter, with scornful indifference.

"I don't want to fight—" began Snoop.

"I can quite believe you!" said Bunter. "But you've got to face the music, you rotter! Back up! I'm not going to hang about here for the duration of the war!"

So Snoop went up to the slaughter; and he fared no better than his predecessors.

There was nothing remarkable about Bunter's boxing. It was his faith in Jim Sprightly's liquid that gave him confidence—the confidence that begets victory.

Snoop survived for a round and a half, and then dropped out. Bunter had let drive at his chest, and he had ducked, catching the full force of the blow on his nose.

The result was that his eyes watered, and he became more short-sighted than Bunter himself, which was saying a good deal.

Snoop lay on his back eventually, with his legs thrashing the air; and Billy Bunter's star was in the ascendant.

"I think that concludes the entertainment for this evening," said Peter Todd. "Bunt, old son, you've worthily upheld the high traditions of Study No. 7. You're a giddy marvel! We didn't guess you had it in you!"

Billy Bunter scowled at the speaker.

"You can't soft-sawder me, Peter Todd!" he said.

"W-w-what d'you mean?" gasped Peter.

"You're not going to dodge your licking by buttering me!"

"My licking?"

"Yes. You're going to get a dose of what these bouders have had!"

Bunter was flying at higher game now. The fact that he had been able to trounce three Removites made him keen to tackle a fourth. He did not stop to consider that his victims were fellows of a very feeble calibre, while Peter Todd was one of the Remove's best fighting-men.

In his appalling ignorance, Billy Bunter was fairly putting his foot in it. Peter made up his mind to lure him on.

"I—I'm sorry I've offended you, Bunt—" he began fearfully.

"Cut it short! Anything you say now won't make an atom of difference. I shall thrash you beyond recognition!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes, you can laugh!" shouted Bunter, flourishing his fists at the sniggering crowd. "But you'll see some fireworks when I start on Todd, I can tell you!"

Peter Todd drew out a handkerchief, and, leaning on Bob Cherry's shoulder, commenced to sob.

"A scene such as this," said Bob, with great emotion, "ought to move a heart of stone. Spare him, Bunt! Be merciful to him in his old age!"

"He's shown no mercy to me," said Bunter. "Ever since I've known him he's been down on me. I've been biffed, and bumped, and bruised—and now I'm going to get a bit of my own back!"

Peter Todd slipped down on to his knees. He cut a comical figure.

"I beseech—" he said.
 "Dry up!" growled Bunter. "You haven't the pluck of a dormouse, you grovelling fool!"

"I beseech—" wailed Peter.
 "You've lorded it over me all along, because you thought you could lick me, and now you've got a rudo awakening!"
 "I beseech you"—Peter Todd's voice rose to a shrill scream this time—"I beseech you to let it stand over till the morning!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 Billy Bunter decided to be magnanimous. It would create a good impression, he reflected.

"Very well," he reflected. "I'll meet you in the Cloisters after brekker."
 Peter Todd rose to his feet, and bowed his head. He looked like a person who was about to be passed sentence upon by a hanging judge.

"We'll be along to see fair play," said Harry Wharton. "Toddy's likely to get so badly knocked about that we shall want a sort of first-aid party."

"Yes, rather! Bunter's fairly astonished the natives this journey!" said Nugent.

The proud victor waddled away from the scene of his triumph with his little round eyes glittering, and his face beaming like a full moon.

His fond dreams were being realised. Three victims already stood to his credit, and Bunter told himself, with many elukies, that this was only the beginning!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Makes History!

"COFFEE and pistols for two!"
 said Bob Cherry.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "How are you feeling, Peter,

old sport?"
 Peter Todd yawned wearily.
 "I've spent a sleepless night," he said. "My mind's in a giddy tumult of fear and apprehension. But I still cherish some slight hope that Bunter will cry off."

"Then you can stuff your hope away in your pocket," said Bunter. "It'll do you good if I make an example of you before all the fellows. In years to come, you'll bless me for it. You'll say, 'Well, old Bunter did the decent thing. He knocked all the conceit and swelled head out of me. That licking he gave me at Greyfriars did me a world of good!'"

"Oh, help!" murmured Peter Todd, under his breath.

The Removites dressed, and went down to breakfast in a very cheerful mood. They had an idea there would be some fine fun floating around afterwards.

"And they were right!"
 Breakfast over, a general move was made to the Cloisters.

Peter Todd looked pale. Tom Dutton knew that he had been putting chalk on his face. But Billy Bunter took it as a sure sign that Peter was in the bluest of blue funks.

"Will you hold my hand, Bob?" asked Peter of Bob Cherry.

"All serene, old man!"

"And will you take me up tenderly when Bunter's finished with me?"

"Certainly."

"Will you see that a party is detailed as stretcher-bearers?"

"Yes."

"And give an eye to my funeral arrangements, in the event of—of my demise!"

"Oh, Toddy, Toddy!" sobbed Bob Cherry, leaning heavily upon the disconsolate Peter. "The worst has now got

happened! Don't talk of pegging out yet!"

"Oh, dear! I'm all of a tremble!" groaned Peter. "When I look at Bunter's biceps I—I am undone!"

Bob Cherry sprang back, and squared his shoulders dramatically.

"Look here, Toddy!" he said. "If you get licked, I shall avenge you!"

Billy Bunter waddled to the fore.

"Enough!" he said. "Let's get on with the washing!"

"Who's your second?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Pah! I need no second."

Billy Bunter blinked closely at his gloves, to make sure that he had not forgotten to apply the necessary quantity of "Lick-'em-all" liquid.

Yes, it was there all right. And Peter Todd would soon be cringing and whining for the mercy he would not get. Happy thought!



GET ONE OF THESE CARDS.

It is mostly on the impulse of the moment that we fritter away our money. If we stopped to think we should remember that we are asked to save so that our money may make things easier for the brave boys "out there."

If you carry a War Savings Card in your pocket it will be a very useful reminder.

Each card is divided up into thirty-one spaces. Whenever you have 6d to spare you just buy a coupon at the post-office and fix it on one of the spaces. As soon as all the spaces are filled up you can take the card to a post-office and exchange it for a 15s. 6d. War Savings Certificate.

In five years' time that certificate will be worth £1.

This is the best way for a patriotic boy to put money by. Won't you try it?

"Time!"
 Billy Bunter rolled up to the attack. He shot out both fists, and Peter Todd purposely collided with them.

"Yaroooooh!" he yelled; and straight-way collapsed.

"One—two—three—" began the referee.

Peter Todd struggled desperately.

"Four—five—six—"

"Buck up, Toddy!"

"Don't let him have a walk-over!"

"Seven—eight—nine—"

Peter tottered to his feet, and swayed from side to side.

"My—my number's nearly up," he gasped, "but I mean to see it through."

"Draw!"

Billy Bunter could hardly refrain from laughing outright. The thing was so

ridiculously easy. He had Peter Todd

on toast, and could lick him as easily as falling-off a form.

Bunter rushed in once more, and this time Peter Todd guarded the deluge of wild blows. He even managed to survive the first round.

"Well played, Toddy!" sang out the crowd, as Peter dumped himself down heavily on Bob Cherry's knee.

"Stick it out, old man!"

"Nil desperandum!"

As for Billy Bunter, he strutted up and down with puffed-out chest, as if he owned the earth and all that therein was.

"The second round," he said, addressing the crowd at large, "will be the last. I shall not spare him!"

"Oh, Bunter!"

"Don't be hard-hearted, old man!"

"Think of Toddy's youth and innocence!"

But Billy Bunter remained firm.

"He shall be dealt with as he dealt with me in the past," he said. "Buck up, Wharton! I'm dying to finish him off!"

Harry Wharton, keeping his face straight with great difficulty, called "Time!"

Peter Todd advanced to meet his doom. His knees were knocking together, and the look of appeal he darted at Bunter might have melted a heart of stone.

But Bunter meant to end the affair in style. There must be no half measures, he told himself. He was making history; and all these gaping idiots who were looking on would realise that they must keep off the grass in future!

He got Peter into a corner—or Peter got himself there—and proceeded to pommel him with great vigour.

"Ow-ow-ow!" gasped Peter. "He's k-k-killing me!"

A dozen Removites rushed into the ring, with well-feigned expressions of horror.

"Stop the fight!"

"This has gone far enough!"

"It'll be a case of manslaughter soon!"

"Stand back!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "The fight shall proceed."

And it did. Peter Todd allowed Bunter to turn his fists into battering-rams for a few minutes, and then he clawed the air wildly and fell.

"Down and out!" said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, what a fall was there, my countrymen!"

Peter Todd closed his eyes, and lay prone.

"You—you've killed him!" said Frank Nugent, in startled tones.

"Rats!" said Bunter. "I've merely given him something to be going on with. When I lick a fellow I like to do the job thoroughly. There are no half-measures where I'm concerned!"

Bob Cherry dropped on his knees beside the fallen boxer.

"My dear old Toddy—" he began.

No reply.

"Todd! Toddy! Don't you hear me? Aren't you going to answer?"

"Speak—speak—speak to me, Thora!" grinned Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Peter Todd still lay motionless, though once or twice a curious twitching of his lips became apparent. Fortunately, Bunter was too short-sighted and too elated to notice it.

"Bring him along," said Bunter, with a nod towards his victim. "And if anybody wants to know what's up, tell 'em I've trounced the rotter, and that I'm game to tackle anyone in the school, from Wingate downwards! They won't want to fight me again in a hurry!"

To be sure the juniors placed Peter Todd on a hurdle and carried him back

to the school building. Morgan and Micky Desmond, who followed close behind the procession, whistled the "Dead March."

For the rest of that eventful day, Billy Bunter strutted about like a water-wagtail.

To think that he had beaten Peter Todd! It was too wonderful for words. Henceforth Study No. 7 would have but one leader; and his name would be Bunter.

Perhaps it was as well for the fat junior that he was not present when his Form-fellows gathered together and chuckled over the recent fight, and gave it as their unanimous opinion that Bunter was a priceless ass, and that Peter Todd, in allowing himself to be licked, had provided them with one of the richest japes of the term!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Bob Cherry Bites!

"BLESSED if I can understand it!" said Johnny Bull. "The fat cad must either be a thief or a fool, or a little of both!"

"The money can't have come from a relative, that's certain," said Harry Wharton. "Bunter hasn't a relative who tips like that. There's some shady work going on, and he'll run a halter round his silly neck if he's not careful!"

Another letter had arrived, and another remittance—for five pounds this time. And, as on the previous occasion, the envelope was addressed to "W. G. Hunter."

Billy Bunter protested both long and loudly that the "H" was a "B," and he may have genuinely thought so. The note which came with the remittance was very brief, and gave no address; and Bunter was so used to swanking about his wealthy relatives that he had possibly come to believe he actually possessed them.

And the fiver he had just received was badly needed, too.

Mr. Jim Sprightly, with an eye to business, had suddenly put up the price of his "Lick-'em-all" liquid, just when Bunter ordered another bottle.

"How d'you find this stuff?" asked the boxer.

Billy Bunter gave a fat chuckle.

"It works wonders!" he said. "I set the ball rolling by licking Skinner and Snood and Stott—three very sturdy fellows, you know—and then I tackled Todd. Todd's one of the best boxers you ever struck. People say he'll become a White Hope. But he stood no chance whatever against me. I had him howling for mercy in the second round!"

"That's top-hole!" said Mr. Sprightly. "I told you how great my preparation was. You should always have a bottle in your possession, and then you're top dog for ever and a day, and nobody can lift their little finger against you!"

Billy Bunter purchased his second bottle, and trotted back to Greyfriars in a very cheerful mood, although he was now broke to the widen.

If he could have seen the expression of unning joy on Jim Sprightly's face after he had gone he would have had several sorts of a fit.

The Famous Five were waiting for Bunter at the school gates.

They regarded him grimly.

"Look here, Bunter!" said Harry Wharton. "We've come to the conclusion that you're not playing a straight game. Some days ago a letter arrived here addressed to a fellow named Hunter, and you collared it. You professed it was yours, but we didn't believe you. We know of old what a romancer you are."



Toddy is afraid! (See Chapter 7.)

"Don't you dare to suggest—" began Bunter.

"Dry up! I'm speaking to you for your own good, only you're too dense and fatheaded to see it! If you're walking off with money that doesn't belong to you, there may still be time to set things square before it gets to the Head's ears. This morning another remittance arrived addressed to Hunter. You collared that also."

"It's simply a mistake in a capital letter!" said Bunter. "Any fool could see that it's intended for a 'B'! Besides, there's nobody here named Hunter, so it must be for me."

"Very well! If you mean to brazen it out like this, it's your funeral! But don't say we haven't warned you!"

Billy Bunter danced up and down the Close, blinking angrily through his big spectacles.

"I'd a jolly good mind to lick the lot of you!" he gloated.

"Rats!" he exclaimed.

Billy Bunter opened his eyes wide. This was unexpected defiance. He had thought that Peter Todd's licking would be a lesson to everybody, and that he would henceforth be treated with scrupulous politeness. But the Famous Five did not seem to stand in awe of him.

"So that's the way the wind blows, is it?" he said. "You think you can say 'Rats!' to me—me, the Remove's leading boxer? Some of you may have noticed my form—"

"His fragile form!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Owl of the Remove swung round upon Bob.

"You grinning gargoyle!" he spluttered. "I'll teach you to mock me, you cackling beast! Will you fight me?"

Harry Wharton drew close, and whispered something into Bob Cherry's ear. Bob nodded, and grinned.

"With pleasure, Bunty!" he said. "I'm always ready to oblige. Bring your own stretcher-bearers."

"It's you who'll want them, you silly swanker! Where and when shall we have the scrap?"

"Here and now!" said Bob Cherry. "Just skip along to the gym and get me some gloves, Franky!"

"Right-ho!" said Nugent cheerfully.

"I'll go and get mine, too," said Bunter.

And he slipped away to No. 7 Study and got the gloves, being very careful, first of all, to apply a sufficient quantity of the "Lick-'em-all" liquid. It would be unwise and unsafe to take any risks with a boxer of Bob Cherry's calibre.

When he returned to the Close he found a vast crowd assembled. The Removees were there in full force; and Coker & Co. and Temple & Co., and even a few of the mighty men of the Sixth had come along to see what was doing.

"This is where I show up!" thought Bunter. "But I wonder why the dickens they're all grinning at me?"

Ginning was a mild term. Some of the fellows were cackling outright. Bunter couldn't understand it at all.

But it was not his reason why. He was there to bring off the crowning coup of a meteoric boxing career—to lick Bob Cherry. Higher than that he could not go—at least, inside the Remove.

Coker of the Fifth was the self-appointed referee, and he summoned the combatants into the ring formed by the circle of spectators.

"Ready?" he asked.

"Ready, ay, ready!" replied Bob Cherry.

"Time!"

And then Billy Bunter, taking no heed of the grinning faces around him, doubled his fists and plunged into the fray.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A Rude Awakening!

BILLY BUNTER saw more stars in that first fierce minute than he had ever beheld in his life before.

He reeled and gasped; and, before he could recover his breath, Bob Cherry was at him again, his right and left fists shooting out alternately, and catching Bunter some painful cracks on his anatomy.

"Yow-ow-ow! Stoppit! Chuckit! Oh, my stars! Yaroooooh!"

These expressions, coming from the lips of a fellow who had considered himself cock of the walk, were sadly out of keeping.

"Back up, Bunter!" yelled the sarcastic crowd.

"Pile in, old man!"

"Remember the giddy record!"

Bunter rallied desperately. He told himself that Bob Cherry's early success was just a flash in the pan, and that ere long the "Lick-'em-all" liquid would take its terrible toll.

But, instead of weakening, Bob Cherry's attack grew hotter and hotter! He simply peppered his fat opponent with blows—and they were no kid-glova touches, either. Straight from the shoulder they came, with deadly directness; and the crowd, when Bunter caught glimpses of them—which wasn't often, owing to the comets which absorbed his gaze—did not appear in the least sympathetic. They seemed to be having a competition to see who could laugh longest and loudest.

"Teach him a lesson, Bunter!" sneered Skinner. "Show him that you're not a fellow to be trifled with!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter managed to survive the first round. How he did it was a puzzle, even to himself.

As he staggered back to take a breather at the interval, he examined his boxing-gloves closely.

Was it possible that he had not applied sufficient liquid to the gloves? Or had the second bottle which Jim Sprightly sold him lost its magic charm?

"Why do they keep cackling at me?" he muttered angrily. "This is a trick—a rotten, low-down trick! I can't quite see what it is yet, but—"

"Time!" rapped out Coker.

The second round was remarkable. Bob Cherry lounged into the ring, and waited in a careless attitude. When Bunter got within range of his fists he led to drive with his left, straight from the shoulder.

That was all.

With all the light knocked out of him, and with a terrible buzzing sensation in his head, Billy Bunter fell—not at the base of Pompey's statue exactly, but at the feet of Horace Coker.

The latter, with a face like a judge, solemnly counted him out; and the fame of Billy Bunter as a fighting-man had vanished for ever!

When he eventually remembered that his name was Bunter, and that he was still on the earth, the fat junior spoke.

"I've been done!" he spluttered. "Dished and done! That stuff Jim Sprightly sold me is a beastly fraud! I'll tell him off about it next time I see him! And I'll have my money back, too! The fellow's a swindler from top to toe! And yet, the first sample of that stuff seemed to be all right. I licked Peter Todd with it, anyway!"

"You champion ass!" said Harry Wharton. "Couldn't you see that your fat leg was being pulled? You wouldn't lick Peter Todd if you went into training for a thousand years! He was playing with you, fathead!"

Bunter's jaw dropped. He stared stupidly around him like a country yokel.

"I—I—don't believe it!" he stammered, at length. "You're joking!"

"Not a bit of it! We simply had you on a piece of string the whole time; and in order to prove that your silly 'Lick-'em-all' liquid was N.G., it was arranged that you should tackle Bob Cherry. Here's the result!"

"You—you knew all about that liquid?"

"Certainly!" grinned Bob Cherry, putting on his coat. "We knew all about Jim Sprightly, too. He's the artful dodger who advertises his beastly concoction in some of the lower-class sporting papers. Says it make a Jack Johnson of a chap in five minutes, and all that sort of trash. The fellow ought to be boiled in oil!"

Billy Bunter looked positively fiendish. "I mean to get my money back, if I have to murder him for it!" he exclaimed.

"You're quite sure that it's your own money?" said Wharton.

"Of course!"

"How much have you paid that scoundrel?"

"He's had about fifteen quid out of me!"

Harry Wharton eyed the fat junior sternly.

"I hope, for your sake, that the cash was your own," he said. "It's jolly curious that you should receive fifteen quid all in one week, when in normal times you're stony. I don't like the look of things at all."

"The cash was mine, of course!" said Bunter indignantly. "D'you think I'd walk off with other fellows' money?"

"History repeats itself sometimes. And we know you of old, Bunter."

"I'd a good mind to lick you for making such an attack upon my honour!"

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"I shouldn't try, if I were you," smiled Wharton. "You see, you're pretty much the worse for wear already, and I shouldn't like to see you walking about disgraced for life. I should advise you to go and drown yourself in a bath for about an hour. And never touch a pair of boxing-gloves again!"

Billy Bunter could have wept. Indeed, he was actually on the verge of tears.

To think that all his grand schemes of conquest should have come crashing down like a house of cards!

"And all through that beast Sprightly!" he groaned. "I don't believe he's a boxer at all! He was pulling my leg all the giddy time. I'll jolly soon get square with him!"

But the fat junior counted his chickens before they were hatched.

There are certain slot-machines which, if you are skilful, give you your money back; but Mr. Sprightly was a very different proposition to a penny-in-the-slot machine.

With the laughter of the crowd still ringing in his ears, Billy Bunter crawled limply away from the scene of his defeat.

Mr. Prout encountered him as he came along the passage.

"Bless my soul! What have you been doing to your face, Bunter?"

"Groogh!"

"Is it possible that you have got mixed up with some vehicular traffic?"

"I've been bullied and insulted!" growled Bunter. "Everybody's got a down on me in this show! They're jealous of my high social standing. I'd a jolly good mind to complain to the Board of Governors. The masters ought never to allow such tyranny!"

Mr. Prout turned crimson.

"Are you aware to whom you are speaking?" he thundered. "I shall report you to your Form-master for impertinence!"

"Report, and he blowed!" muttered Bunter, under his breath. And he jessed on to the bath-room, where he was busily occupied for a long, long time. When Bob Cherry's fists had "arrived," as Fisher T. Fish would say, they left ample trace of having done so; and much water would have to flow under the bridges before Billy Bunter became anxious to tackle Bob Cherry again!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Maully to the Rescue!

WHEN he was clad, and in his right mind once more, Billy Bunter's first task was to walk over to Friarclade.

He told himself that the journey must not be a fruitless one. He must recover every penny of that fifteen pounds from Jim Sprightly, even if it meant soliciting the aid of P.-c. Tozer, or some other minion of the law. Bunter felt that he had been done—which is never a nice sort of feeling.

He had no pass to be late out of gates, and the evening was drawing on; but Bunter didn't worry on this score. His mind was full of the fifteen pounds he had frittered away so foolishly, and which it was up to him to recover.

But there was a shock in store for him. When he reached the headquarters of the elusive Jim Sprightly he found that the bird had flown.

The room was barren of furniture—it had not possessed a great deal before—and it was obvious that Jim Sprightly had pitched his moving tent a day's march farther on. He had squeezed Billy Bunter as he would have squeezed an orange; and then he had folded his tent like an Arab, and stolen away.

Billy Bunter stood mute on the threshold.

This was the last straw!

He had tramped all the way from Greyfriars in order to beard Jim Sprightly in his den, only to be foiled at the finish. It was fairly obvious that Mr. Sprightly had anticipated his visit.

What could be done now? To search for Mr. Sprightly would be about as hopeful as hunting for a fig in the average cheap restaurant fig-pudding.

Moreover, Mr. Sprightly was already wanted, both by the police and by the military, as an absentee without leave from service. And if he could not be pounced upon by the hawklike eyes of those authorities there wasn't the faintest shadow of hope for Bunter.

The fat junior lingered in the deserted room, and conjured up in his mind the many things he could have done on the recovery of that fifteen pounds. It would have been difficult, no doubt, to expend it all in gorging; but with such a large sum in his possession he could have certainly given himself airs.

"It's a shame!" groaned Bunter. "A beastly, rotten shame!"

Turning on his heel, he started on the way back to Greyfriars. He felt fed up

and far from home. Fate seemed to have its knife into him—right up to the hilt.

But the worst was yet to come.

When, an hour later, Billy Bunter rolled into the Common-room, he encountered an excited army of Removites.

Standing in the centre of them, dabbling his eyes from time to time with his handkerchief, was a small fag. His face was new to Bunter, who idly wondered what was amiss.

"What's the trouble, kid?" Bob Cherry was asking sympathetically.

The fag continued to snivel.

"Did you feel pangs at parting from your great grandmother?" inquired Skinner.

"Dry up!" said Harry Wharton sharply. "The kid's genuinely upset. He wouldn't howl like this for nothing. What's your name, young 'un?"

"Mum-mum-my name's Hunter—W. G. Hunter!" wailed the new boy.

The captain of the Remove gave a start.

Billy Bunter, who had naturally been drinking in the conversation, was observed to turn an art shade of green.

"Let's hear your tale of woe," said Nugent, addressing the new boy.

Hunter made an heroic effort to turn off the tap, as it were.

"M-my money's gone!" he stammered. "Every penny of it! You see, it's like this. I've got a rich aunt, and she sends me big tips every now and again. She thought I arrived at Greyfriars over a week ago, and since then she's sent me a tenner here, but nobody in the Lower Forms seems to have seen anything of my letters, and I—I really think they've been stolen. I didn't think that sort of thing ever went on at schools like Greyfriars."

"Neither does it, as a general rule," said Harry Wharton. "Your name happens to be almost identical with the name of that fat rotter there." He indicated Bunter. "Your letters have been collared by him. He seemed to think they were his own property."

"So they were!" screamed Billy Bunter.

"Rats! You're fairly bowled out, my pippin!" said Vernon-Smith. "We guessed all along the money wasn't yours, and now you've been and bled it. I shouldn't be surprised if this means the sack for you!"

To the wretched Bunter the world seemed to have suddenly turned topsyturvy. A short time ago, when he had been piling victory upon victory, and pinning his faith to the "Lick-'em-all" liquid, life had been well worth living.

And now—

The toils were closing in upon him fast. There seemed to be no way of escape.

"It's high time Bunter learned the difference between meum and tuum," said Mark Linley. "He's been asking for this for a long time."

"He'll only see one more sunrise at Greyfriars, anyway," said Bulstrode. "The Heid will have to know about it. We can't let this new kid suffer. Every penny of that fifteen quid will have to be made good somehow, and Bunter must face the music."

Billy Bunter didn't look capable of facing anything at the moment. His brazen indignation slipped away from him like a mask, and he burst into wild wailing.

"I didn't know!" he exclaimed shrilly. "I—I thought it was my own money, honour bright! You could have knocked me down with a feather when this kid came along and claimed it. Don't be hard on me, you fellows! Stand by me in this crisis!"

"We've stood by you in too many to want to go on doing it ad lib.," said Peter Todd grimly.

"I shall have to tell Wingate what's happened," said Harry Wharton. "Bunter may not have reckoned he was stealing, but the matter's much too serious to smooth over. Besides, it's not fair that young Hunter should lose his think."

Billy Bunter made an appealing gesture. He looked the picture of abject misery.

"I shall be sacked!" he moaned. "I shouldn't wonder," said Skinner, who never had any sympathy to waste on a fellow when he was down.

But it was at this crisis in Billy Bunter's school career that somebody came to the rescue.

Lord Maulverer, who had been reclining in an armchair with half-closed eyes, listening idly to the conversation, contrived by a great burst of energy to produce his wallet from his pocket. He extracted three five-pound notes with a careless hand, and passed them over to Hunter.

"That'll make it square, begad!" he said.

"Oh, thank you! Thank you ever so much!"

"Don't mench!" said the schoolboy earl.

He turned to Harry Wharton.

"The matter may rest there—what? No need to haul Bunter up before the wicks now that everybody's happy."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"You've saved the situation, Mauly," he said. "If you hadn't turned up trumps Bunter would have gone through the mill pretty badly. As it is, he gets off with a bumping, just to teach him that opening other people's letters ain't according to the Defence of the Realm Act, unless you happen to be some kind or sort of censor!"

"Leggo!" yelled Billy Bunter, frantically.

But his schoolfellows were not to be denied. They bumped him thoroughly and completely until he lay gasping like a deflated kite balloon.

It was a sadder and wiser Bunter who crawled up to the Remove dormitory an hour later.

He had learned several lessons during that past week of alternate triumph and failure, though whether he would lay them to heart or not was another matter. Certain it was, however, that Bunter's fistie prowess yet remained to be proved.

The Removites chuckled incessantly as they turned in, and all were unanimously agreed that the game had gone heavily against Bunter, and that he would have cut a very sorry spectacle at the finish had it not been for the large-hearted Mauly.

But the end was not yet.

A few days later, much to his indignation and chagrin, Billy Bunter received a letter which he verily wished had been addressed to the fag whose name so closely resembled his.

For the missive was from his father, and the terms in which it was couched were not very endearing:

"Dear William,—I have received a communication from your Form-master, stating that you borrowed his bicycle without permission, and smashed it beyond repair. I have been asked to make good the damage.

"Such conduct on your part has shocked me considerably, and I feel that I must employ stern measures. I shall therefore stop your weekly allowance of pocket-money until further notice, and that of Samuel also, lest you should seek to horrow from him.

"I trust there will be no recurrence of this disgraceful affair.

"YOUR AFFECTIONATE FATHER.

"Affectionate coke-hammer!" growled Bunter when he had read the epistle. "The pater was only writing for an excuse to show his meanness. Not that I care a hang about the beastly allowance. It was next to nothing, and what you never get, you never miss."

All the same, the letter was much more of a blow to the Owl of the Remove than to Sammy Bunter.

The latter, playing his cards very carefully, managed to raise divers sums from the guileless Hunter, who readily accepted his assurance that the money would be paid back.

Thus enriched, Sammy found a new joy in living, but he refused to join with his major in a game of share and share alike. In vain did Billy Bunter threaten and coax and entreat. He got no change out of the artful Sammy.

W. G. Hunter only honoured Greyfriars with his presence for a few days. His aunt was not satisfied that he could stand the rough-and-tumble of school life, and she sacrificed a term's fees in order to have him brought back to his private tutor. But during Hunter's brief innings the Lower Form dormitories fairly bowed with milk and honey.

As for the notorious Jim Sprightly, he vanished completely off the map, and Billy Bunter never saw him again, though he fervently hoped he had been scolded in by the Army officials. Mr. Sprightly's A lived up to his name only too well, and his "Lick-'em-all" liquid, though it might have wrought miracles in certain remote parts of the world, had certainly proved anything but a boon and a blessing to poor Bunter!

(Don't miss "THE SHYLOCK OF THE SECOND!"—next Monday's grand complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., by Frank Richards.)

NOTICES.

Back Numbers Wanted by—

T. Platt, 11, Adelaide Street, Manchester, "Nelson Lee," 1/4; also "Penny Populars," 1/25.

J. Gilligan, 59, Everleigh Street Refern, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia—"Gem" Christmas Number, 1917.

J. Gregory, 119, Devon Street, Ardwick, Manchester—any back numbers.

F. M. Daneford, Box 236, Salisbury, Wiltshire, South Africa—"Gem," MAGNET, and "Penny Popular" prior to 1916. "Empire Library," "Boys' Friend" 3d. Library, dealing with St. Jim's, Greyfriars, or Rylcombe. "Boys' Herald," any amount, particularly the earlier issues. "Puck," stories of "Speck Co." and Kit and Cora Teyford. "Greyfriars Herald," all numbers.

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A Thrilling Story of Adventure, in which Ferrers Lord, Ching-Lung, Gan-Waga, the Eskimo, and other Popular Characters, play their parts.

NEW READERS START HERE.

Rupert Thurston buys an idol bearing the inscription, "I am Sharpa the Slumberer, and at my awakening the world shall tremble!" Ferrers Lord, Ching-Lung, Gan-Waga, Maddock, Prout, and O'Rooney arrive. The idol's eyes are seen to open, and with a terrific crash the hotel collapses.

A late Indian, named Gandra Singh, is employed as cook; and the one-time rebel, Larpur Raj, is the shikari. While watching the idol he sees its eyes open, but they quickly shut.

Duke Payton arrives and joins the expedition to the cactus country. They are out hunting a tiger, and Ching-Lung manages to shoot it. They find a blue-eyed native who has been killed by a python, and bury him. Maddock, Gan-Waga, Barry O'Rooney, and the cook are left in camp. Some rebelling natives fire on them. The natives are beaten, and the party proceeds in peace to Danda's village. Barry accidentally releases Kosi, the python. Barry, Maddock, and Prout go to get Gan-Waga's towl. Through his field-glasses Ferrers Lord sees a horde of natives advancing.

(Now read on.)

The Closed Gate (continued).

"GET this done, Ching," he said. "Those are the trenches I want made, just like an arrow-shot. Make a barricade of the turf almost up to the edge of the ravine, so that they will have a hot passage if they try to break through. It isn't that I want to kill any of them, but if they are bent on war or murder, they had better have a sharp taste of it. Show this to Payton, and if he has any suggestions to offer, they should be well worth considering, for he is a shrewd fellow, and experienced in this kind of thing. I am off for a canter with Rupert and the shikari. I wish to get out of this place as soon as I can. We must let them attack. We are not going to start the row. Where is that rascal?"

"You can't do anything with him, chief," said Ching-Lung. "Payton and I have tried, and so has Danda. We've offered him cigarettes and tobacco and other tempting trifles, but it was no good. All we could get out of him was a glare."

"Very well. Get on with the work, Ching," said Ferrers Lord. "The sooner it is done the better. Consider the whole tribe."

He mounted the pony and rode up the northern slope of the natural bridge to the level of the plain. The village lay to the right. They rode wide of it to the only ridge which civilized beings would have holed the ridge, and if they had found water there it would have been built on it, for the drainage would have been good, and it would have been easy to defend. The native mind might have grasped the importance of the last advantage, but it could never understand why people could be mad enough to take all the trouble to dig for water when there was plenty of water to be had without digging for it.

They were nearly half-way up the slope when Thurston's pony shied and almost threw its rider.

"Be careful, for it may be a snake!" cried the millionaire.

The brute has seen something, and won't budge," said Thurston. "Get on, you ha'orth of catamount! Make a move!"

The pony refused to stir. With its ears pricked and the whites of its eyes showing, it remained staring at a patch of thick, rough grass that might easily have concealed a snake. The millionaire's pony was not so nervous.

Ferrers Lord rode forward, holding his cane ready to strike at the snake if it came out of its ambush. But it was not a snake, it was a man. He lay stone dead, gazing with sightless eyeballs at the sapphire sky. A spear had cut a great gash in his breast. "He was one of Danda's warriors who had been sent out scouting. His weapons were gone."

"They have taken first blood, old wolf," said the millionaire, as Larpur Raj joined him.

"So it is, sahib," answered the shikari, with a tinge of contempt in his voice. "And it is a good wound that let out that man's life. But these brown people are not feeble stuff. The tiger hunts in the jungle and the wolves haunt the mountains. But these plain-

dwellers, these grass-fed things! Truly grass is good fodder for cows and oxen, but not for a warrior and a shikari. The rifle the Viceroy gave me is hungry. Let him eat!"

Larpur Raj struck the neck of the pony with his hand, and set it cantering up to the summit of the ridge. There was a twang and a whizz. The pony dropped to its knees, uttering a queer, gurgling rattle, and rolled over with an arrow in its chest. The shikari's left leg was pinned beneath it, but with a dying sprawl the animal freed him. In an instant the shikari's arm was at his shoulder, and as he lay there he fired one shot.

One of the brown-skinned warriors of the strange army, who was fitting a second arrow to his bowstring, tumbled backwards into the scrub. The next moment the scrub bristled with flashing spears and brown bodies.

"Quick with thee, old wolf!" cried Ferrers Lord.

Larpur Raj grasped the millionaire's extended hand, and leapt up behind him. It was a heavy weight for the pony to carry, but the sturdy little animal responded gamely. In silence, except for the rustle and beat of their footfalls in the grass, the brown pursuers swept over the crest of the ridge.

"Don't fire, old wolf!" said Ferrers Lord. "These ponies do not understand gun-fire yet. It is a pitiful thing to run from these brown adepts, but it would be more pitiful if thou and I and Thurston Sahib were slain by such people, and that must happen if we are broken up. I am unarmed, and even the rifle the Viceroy gave thee can seldom claim two lives with one cartridge. They are too many for us, old wolf."

"Ay, they are too many for us, sahib!" grunted the shikari. "Dumb dogs hunt well, but they are dumb."

He looked back with blazing eyes. The brown warriors seemed to have no battle-cry. They ran well and swiftly. Rupert Thurston unsling his rifle, but the millionaire's warning shout reached him in time. Thurston's pony had already shown itself to be a nervous brute, and the report of the rifle might have brought its rider to disaster, if not death.

Bows twanged, and arrows whistled over them.

"Rather undignified, this, Rupert," said the millionaire, as Thurston drew alongside. "I feel very insignificant."

"It's every bit of that, chief," said Thurston; "but it will be a good deal worse if this bunch of mad men or puts his foot in a hole. I hope that beggar of yours is a weight-carrier. In a case like this I don't mind looking or feeling undignified, as long as we can pull out of it. This is a very pleasurable shooting-rip, but it has the one slight drawback that we aren't doing the shooting. By Jove, that was close!"

He ducked his head as an arrow skimmed past his ear with a nasty, spiteful whine. They still kept their lead, but the ponies were fat with grass, and were not trained and hardened. The silent pursuers ran like men who knew how to run, and wasted no breath in ugly shouts to terrify the pursued. Perhaps they did not wish to terrify the ponies to greater speed.

"Old wolf," said Ferrers Lord over his shoulder, "we shall never make the bridge. The pony is falling. Run, thou, at my leg."

He slowed the pony, and the shikari slid to the ground. He caught the millionaire's left ankle, and kept pace with the pony. Ferrers Lord glanced back, and then in the direction of the bridge. Their peril had not been seen from the bridge. The pony was blowing heavily, for the double weight and the pace had been too much for it, and it might collapse and founder at any moment. In a flash Ferrers Lord made up his mind.

"To the village, Rupert!" he shouted. "My pony is flying signals of distress, and almost bled. We may kill a lot of these fellows before we go under, but if we do go under there will be little gratification in that. To the village, too many for us."

"They may be in there, chief."

"I don't think so. There's not a bit of cover here, or a hollow or dip where we can put up a fight. Get ahead, and try to cover us."

Thurston's mount was not in much better fettle, but as he encouraged it it began to take the lead and drew clear. He skirted the palisade that defended the abandoned village. Then came the first yell from the pursuers—a yell of exultation.

The millionaire's pony was down. Thurston saw Larpur Raj helping Ferrers Lord to his feet. Thurston pulled in his pony and dismounted, and began to fire steadily. The millionaire had taken the rifle from Larpur Raj, and was firing, too, and retreating as he fired, and his aim was deadly.

"Ay, sahib, thou art a warrior and a shikari!" cried Larpur Raj, his eyes blazing with the joy of it. "The rifle the Viceroy gave me was never in better hands! Run, sahib, run! They are too many for us!"

Arrows struck the palisade, and remained shivering in the wood. The gate was just round the corner, opposite the muddy water-hole. Three quick shots from Rupert Thurston stopped three of the nearest pursuers who were bounding forward with brandished spears. But behind the gate lay safety.

And the gate was shut.

The Blowing Up of the Bridge.

WITH one impulse and one impact the three men hurled themselves at the clumsy and massive gate of the Dahran village. Had it been fastened the force would have been sharp and swift, and it could only have ended one way. Rupert Thurston's weapon was a sporting-rifle of moderate calibre that threw a bullet with great accuracy and with astonishing penetrating power, but it had no magazine. Ferrers Lord had exhausted his cartridge, and there was no time to obtain more from Larpur Raj. He had his shoulders against the creaking gate when one of the pursuers, three clear yards ahead of the rest, made a flying leap at him. His weapon was not a spear, but a pear-shaped kind of copper with a spike at each end—the sort of weapon the barons of old used for smashing in each other's helmets and brain-pans.

The rifle the Viceroy had presented to Larpur Raj did gallant service. Ferrers Lord

whirled it round by the barrel with an upward tilt of the head of the weapon that took the attacker under the chin and closed his wide-open mouth, and stopped his savage yell. The straining arms of Thurston and the shikari forced open the gate, and as the copper mace sloped from the man's hand and hung by the narrow gap, they dashed in and forced the gate back. Spears and fists beat against it, but the bar had dropped into the socket.

"A fine blow, sahib," said the shikari, "and well struck; I have eyes behind me, and never shall I think this old skull of mine in more danger of being cracked beyond repairing. I thank thee, sahib! It was well struck!"

The millionaire looked at Thurston, who was wiping his streaming forehead, and laughed in his quiet way.

"You seem a warm, hotpert,"

"Warm, chief? I'm boiling over like a pan of milk on a hot fire!" gasped Thurston. "The beggars can yell hard enough when they like, it seems. Where's that knuckle-duster?"

A pair of brown hands were clutching the top of the gate. Thurston gave a spring, and brought the flat side of the copper inlaid down on the knuckles of one of them. The hands vanished with great rapidity.

"Fear down some of that thatch, old wolf," said Ferrers Lord to the shikari. "Let us make a smoke, and warn Payton Sahib and the prince that we need help. Sprinkle the stuff with water, shikari, for it must be benedictory."

"Then I may not mount the tower and shoot down these brown rats, sahib?" asked Larpur Raj.

"Keep thy rifle cool for a more suitable time," said Ferrers Lord. "It is likely enough that it need not go hungry, old wolf. Get up, then, screen thy skin from arrows, and aim smartly."

Larpur Raj pulled down an armful of thatch, and sprinkled it with water from an earthenware jar. It was essential to get into communication with their comrades without delay. For the moment there was no power of aiming, but the musket might be reinforced heavily, and with only two rifles and their small stock of cartridges they could not hope to stem a violent attempt to rush the stockade if made from a dozen points at once.

The shikari placed the heap of litter on the plain of the ground, and threw the faces of the ravine. His flint and steel twinkled, and a spark dropped on the tinder, which he blew gently into a blaze. In the breathless air the smoke rose in a straight column. Kneeling there, Larpur Raj peered through it. Evidently the brown riders had just held a consultation. One of them thrust aside his spear, and tightened the thongs of his sandals. Then he darted away, running superbly.

"A good messenger must needs run fast," muttered the shikari; "and for us that yellow rabbit carries no good tidings! He goes to call others. If he carries his message, then my hand and eye fail me for always."

The shikari had brought his beloved rifle with him. He took careful aim at the running man, and pulled the trigger. The runner faltered, swayed, and fell prone, and Larpur Raj checked as arrows came whizzing through the smoke and striking the woodwork.

"Did I not tell thee not to shoot?" cried Ferrers Lord. "Shall we quarrel then, old wolf, or am I master?"

"Truly thou art waster, and sooner would I strike off this hand than quarrel with thee," said the shikari. "I have a messenger, sahib, appearing on his way to bring aid to these vermin. He runs no more, sahib, for the messenger I sent to stay him ran the faster. Did I do wrong?"

"No matter that that now. Take this skin of signal to Payton Sahib. He knows the tricks of the billiard, and will read it." He passed up an antelope-hide he had taken from Zappa's hut. Larpur Raj pressed it down over the smoldering reeds. He lifted it, and once more the smoke rose above the barrier. He repeated the operation again and again with longer and shorter intervals. It was the old trick of blanket-signaling, as well known on the plains of Western America as on the Indian hills where the shikari was born. Wiping his smarting eyes, he looked towards the ravine.

"It is well, sahib," said Larpur Raj. "Nacha answers me. They are coming. There is smoke yonder."

"I think you fellows might come and do

something better than just getting smoke-dried at the top of the mountain. The smoke is keeping me and my knuckle-duster busy. Don't stop there roasting chestnuts! This is no picnic for me."

Thurston had discovered a large bowl of hammered brass, and was using it as a helmet to keep the yellow raiders was almost over. He was reaching down to obtain another spear from one of the men below, when Larpur Raj snatched the big earthenware jar and heaved it at him. He went down headlong, carrying several more of the attackers with him.

With the bowl jumping up and down on his head, but not falling off for some unknown reason, Thurston was bounding off the ground and aiming slashing blows at hands and arms and shoulders with the copper mace. The millionaire was compelled to smile, and the shikari's wrinkled face became still more wrinkled as he hurried to Thurston's aid. One of the yellow raiders was almost over. He was reaching down to obtain another spear from one of the men below, when Larpur Raj snatched the big earthenware jar and heaved it at him. He went down headlong, carrying several more of the attackers with him.

"Another breather," said Rupert Thurston; "and, by Jove, I deserve it! How do you like my shrapnel helmet? It's a few sizes too large, and a bit too heavy and warm for a hot climate, but it's spear-proof. One clap in the general prosaic me before I got him with my trusty knuckle-duster. The thing gives out a beautiful clear note when struck, just like a muffin-bell. I think, with a few pink ribbons and a bunch or two of artificial artichokes in it, it would look very nice. I'm rather, chief, as I'm getting tired of the smell of this place, what about the smoke?"

"The shikari tells me that Nacha has answered it," said Ferrers Lord. "We will go on and see."

"It is rather asking to be made a sort of porcupine of; don't like their heasty arrows, chief."

Larpur Raj glided away between the huts to make sure that no attempt was being made to mount the palisade behind them. It was strange that the brown raiders had so far confined their attacks to the gate, but it struck him that the enemy could not be aware that the village had been abandoned, and that the three men they had hunted into it were its only defenders.

The shikari was quite angry with himself that he had despised this before. Much as he despised this new enemy—almost as much as he despised the Dabrahs—it was impossible to believe that they would not have done more than make these half-hearted attacks had they been aware of the weakness of their position. He had called for more aid. No doubt it was the unnatural quiet of the place, as reported by their scouts, that had kept them from taking possession of it before. That, together with the closed gate and the empty watch-towers, had misled the Dabrahs. It was a bitter impression that the defenders, though concealed, were very alert.

Again Ferrers Lord entered the priest's hut. He brought out a shield made of bullock's hide. On it was painted in vivid colours a circle with three heads, and the leather was almost as tough as steel.

"Almost as useful as your hat, Rupert," said the millionaire. "I presume this is part of the old hypocrite's stock-in-trade. If your helmet is spear-proof, this thing ought to be arrow-proof. It is good, and it ought to screen as both. Watch the gate, old wolf."

They climbed the ladder. The smoke was still rising steadily. In the distance appeared a glittering disc of light that suddenly began to wink and glitter. Ching-Lung was telegraphing. This was the messenger that had been sent. He had fifty Dabrahs here from camp. Blanket once for every ten men needed."

"Hold the shield, Rupert," said the millionaire.

He put the hide over the smoke, and lifted it in three times. Then they watched. Ching-Lung and Payton were bringing up Larpur Raj's hillmen. Lithe and active as mountain goats, they sped over the grass. Suddenly the raiders saw them. A shrill blast was blown on a horn.

"The shikari been there to see, his contempt for the brown invaders would have vanished. True, they had the advantage in numbers of nearly three to one, but they must have learned already the deadliness of the foe's weapons. They rushed to the attack."

Payton gave an order, and the bearers drew into line and lay down, only Duke Payton and the prince remaining erect. The first shot

was fired by Barry O'Rourke at eight hundred yards of drooping withering. Then came a tricking but deadly fire.

"Come, we'll get out of this, Rupert," said Ferrers Lord.

They opened the gate, ran round the outer circle of the palisade, and dashed across the plain. The shikari's hillmen had checked the rush. A dozen of the invaders were down.

Payton's voice was angry as he shouted to the bearers.

"Your fingers are toes and your brains slobbered milk," he cried. "Sons of asses, take time! One, two—fire!"

A volley of musket fire. The invading warriors, wavering and broken, turned to fly. Then Larpur Raj uttered a yell, swung round, and clapped the rifle to his shoulder. The ridge was alive with brown-skinned men. It was not a regiment or a battalion, but a division in full-line after line of half-naked bodies and gleaming spears advancing at a double.

"By the gun the Viceroy gave me, sahib," said the shikari, "there has been a great latching of brown adders! A thousand dung-bills must have been filled with their eggs. Did I tell you long ago that it was an evil country, and that the wolves would be well fed ere we returned? Then the tale of old Sharpa the Siumherer was true."

"Save thy breath to help thy legs, old wolf," said Ferrers Lord. "We were not born to be the beasts, shikari."

They came up with Ching-Lung, Payton, and the bearers, who had advanced to meet them.

"Save your cartridges, Payton," said Ferrers Lord. "We have a good supply, but don't waste them."

"It is rather asking as useful as trying to fill a pillar-box with penny stamps, chief," said Ching-Lung. "Where do all those beggars come from? You can give the order to charge, Payton—to charge for home, sweet home."

Down the slope, wave upon wave, swept the brown-clad warriors. Their feet were yet within bowshot. The retreat was made at full speed.

"Take your men well back, old wolf," said Ferrers Lord. "We want no smashed limbs or broken heads."

The millionaire was the last man to cross the bridge. He remained for a moment to light a cigarette and watch the advance. The brown horde was not a disorderly rabble. The warriors seemed to have some knowledge of order and drill. Fast as was the pace, each rank kept its distance—about the length of two spears—from the rank in front. Ferrers Lord and Payton were quickly met. Mr. Thomas Prout, sitting in a little dug-out ramparted with sods of grass, saluted him. On his knee Prout had the mahogany box that contained the electric battery.

"Up with her, Prout," followed the pressure of Prout's finger. Masses of rock, heaps of earth, and small trees were hurled into the air amid a gush of flame and a vast, mushroom-shaped cloud of dense smoke. Prout took the pipe from his mouth and grinned.

"By honey!" he remarked. "That's the stuff to give 'em!"

It had been too much for the brown warriors, though after the tremendous booms and crashings of Sharpa the explosion was a mere quiver. It was the novelty and unexpectedness of it that appalled them. They were a mob now, mere rabble, and bolts of lightning had to take shelter on the safe side of the ridge. Where the natural bridge had been a chasm gaped.

Ferrers Lord looked down. The bottom of the ravine was choked with earth and rock.

"They were a mighty fine sight on the hill, sir," said Prout. "They've put paid to that, by honey!"

The village was ablaze.

An Interrupted Melody.

"IN this here world, some me," said Mr. Benjamin Maddock, "a few things are beautiful and useful. Some things are useful that ain't beautiful, and lots of things—most of 'em—are ugly and useless. But the limit," said Maddock, crushing down the glowing tobacco in his pipe with a fingertip that seemed as fireproof as asbestos, "is that Eskimo."

Had any stranger made this statement he would have been rare, not to repeat it, and if he had been foolish enough to ignore the warning his nose and Maddock's fist would have come into violent contact. But here it was a different matter—quite a family affair—

little bit, but rose higher and clearer as he chanted the ballad of the baby seal.

"My honey, when I get at you, blubber-biter, I'll tear you to tcealeaves!" yelled Prout. "I'll lay you out flat! Owl Murr!"

The singer opened his hand and dropped a bomb in the shape of a new-laid egg. It was well-timed and beautifully placed, Prout's bald head being the objective. As the war bulletins put it, good results were observed, and the egg smote his bumpy of intelligence with a pop. Prout was intelligent enough to give up all idea of climbing. He came down with a run, and danced round the pole, brandishing his fists like an enraged human omelet that had not been properly cooked.

"Zee-woong-zoo!" Zip-zwang-g-g-trilled the impresario. "Zak-zong-zwang!"

With one swipe Barry O'Rooney embedded the axe in the pole, and left it there. Another egg descended. Marking its flight, Barry pushed Mr. Maddock—quite accidentally, of course—and breathed a quick apology for having justified against him. But Mr. Benjamin Maddock was an old stager. He had suffered many perils on land and sea. Also, he was fairly well acquainted with his old friend, Barry O'Rooney, Esq., the last of his famous race. Benjamin had a big hand and a quick eye.

He whizzed round and jumped back, and saw the flicker of the descending egg, and hit it—not the flicker, but the egg itself. There was a spin on that egg, otherwise it would have broken to atoms. Maddock had intended it for Barry. It bounced away, skimmed over the head of Prout, and to the consternation of them all hit Duke Payton in the chest. This was something unexpected. Payton was Ferrers Lord's guest. Gads was a long ceased, and Mr. Prout stopped dancing.

"We beg your pardon a thousand times over, sir!" said Maddock. "We were just skylarking, sir."

Payton's fresh pink colour deepened as he looked at the mess on his neat shooting-coat.

"It was just—er, for you, sir," said Barry.

"Thank you, I'll do it myself!" said Payton irritably.

He turned on his heel and strode towards the tent. Gan-Waga looked ahead and flung his cigar into the air.

"The cook sure looks out!" he shouted.

"They're coming!"

The ridge on which the lonely sentry had stood was alive with running men and flashing spears.

The Cook and His Gun Once More Cause Trouble.

At all times and in all ages, ever since the first war, there has always been one penalty for the sentry who deserted his post—death. Gan-Waga had no intention of playing the coward or traitor. He liked the coolness, and his lofty position offered him the best possible view of everything that was happening or likely to happen. But a voice that even the wayward Eskimo had never yet ventured to disobey came booming upwards through a megaphone, the voice of Ferrers Lord.

"Come down out of that, Gan-Waga! Maddock's taking a place!"

Gan-Waga wailed and descended, and Benjamin Maddock clambered up and seized a couple of signalling-flags. The bos'n brought a megaphone with him, carrying it on his head, helmet fashion, so that he could use both hands. He remembered it, and got his eyes to work. With their spears glancing the first wave of the brown warriors roled towards the ravine. No shot was fired. Ferrers Lord stood on the barricade watching, smoking a cigarette, and lazily flicking his little cane. Below him was the shikari holding the megaphone.

"A sign to warn the blood of a man who loves war, sahib!" said Larpur Raj, his eyes glittering.

"But I love not war, old wuf," said Ferrers Lord. "I am a cater of men."

The next moment he could plainly that it was not going to be a mere disorderly onrush. There was to be method in the attack. The millionaire computed that from twelve to fifteen hundred spearmen were in the first line, and three times as many in the second, and a third and a fourth line of bodies lay in three rows, each warrior digging the blade of his spear into the ground beside him. Ching-Lung sprang from the fire-step to the top of the parapet beside his chief,

"It's as clear as mud that these hegemars have been drilled," said the prince. "What's their plan, chief?"

"Alooy!" roared Mr. Benjamin Maddock. "Look out! I don't know what's coming, so make me, but it's either centipedes or tanks! I think it's centipedes by the number of feet."

Even Maddock's elevated position did not afford a view of what was happening behind the ridge. The next moment six curious-looking monsters came into sight, running forward on many legs. They were rectangular in shape, and of dull brown in colour, moving block-houses of tough hide. They advanced along the gaps left for the purpose in the prone ranks of the spearmen. The many brown legs became invisible as the hegemars set down their portable fortresses. They were within bowshot, and a flight of arrows quickly showed that they were concealed bowmen.

"Well, there's nothing new under the sun, chief," said Ching-Lung, as they dropped into shelter. "Just the modern methods, with the arrows instead of artillery, and infantry with spears to follow up the bombardment instead of bombs and bayonets. The old style has one advantage. It isn't so noisy as the new-fangled method."

"A kind of battle of Hastings," said the millionaire. "Don't you see, King Harold did, and get one in the eye, Ching."

The archers were firing their arrows at a high angle over the top of the hide shelters, in regular flights of twenty at a time. Eventually they could see Maddock, for several arrows came his way with a painful buzzing sound. No one was hit except Weeping Willie. The mule lost the tip of one ear, and squealed with rage and pain at the outrage.

Ching-Lung unhitich him, soothed him with soft words and a lump of sugar, and led him to the shelter.

Duke Payton came sauntering along, piling in mouth, as a fourth line of spears leapt flashing over the ridge.

"The bearers are becoming a bit impatient, sir," he said to the millionaire. "We haven't had a casualty yet, but we back of them close shaves. Don't you think we had better plug a few holes in these leather tanks, and show them that we mean business? We're simply letting them pile up more men for the big run."

"I think I'd prefer the rush, Payton—in daylight," said the millionaire.

Payton did not understand. An arrow hit the parapet, and glancing from a stone, struck him sideways across the cheek, causing a white weal on his pink skin. He rubbed the spot and sighed.

"In daylight," said. "Then you don't expect them to attempt to cross the ravine now?"

"Yes; but I think if we show our hand too much they will wait until after dark," said Ferrers Lord. "It's hateful, but they must be taught a very stern lesson on the outbreak. I want to teach them that lesson now if I can. That is why I am unwilling to frighten them."

"More coming over, sir?" bellowed Mr. Benjamin Maddock. "Now they're taking a rest, like the others."

Ferrers Lord walked slowly towards the foot of Maddock's observation-post, and paused there to obtain a light for his cigarette before he ascended to join the bos'n at the summit. The brown bodies of the spearmen lay in five lines, intersected by regular gaps, and the spears were upright in the turf. At the head of each of the six gaps was a movable shelter. The brown army seemed asleep or dead, except for an occasional flight of arrows.

"I'll make a guess at the numbers," said the millionaire.

"Six or seven thousand of the brown polishers, sir, easy," answered the bos'n. "I'm taking it as a precious bit of luck or good management that we're this side of this slice of a hole, some me, not on the other." So the signal was given, and the watchers failed to detect seemed to be given, for the hide shelters were lifted and brought closer to the ravine. Then came a crashing boom, Gads Singh's erratic old gun had gone off again, sending a rain of swan-shot against the bos'n's shelter, the explosion being as near as the cook, Ferrers Lord frowned, and uttered a quick exclamation of annoyance. He seized the bos'n's megaphone, and put it to his lips. Even if he had shouted an order it would have been too late. The impact of a mass of arrows on the megaphone was a crash, and at the same moment the shikari's impatient bearers, who imagined the boom of the cook's gun to be the signal to commence hostilities, poured a storm of bullets across

the ravine at the two shelters opposite their position.

"Get on with it, Prout!" shouted Ching-Lung. "We may as well, as the thing has started. Fire away! Not the machine-gun. Hold that back!"

There were no protection against rifle-fire. In an instant they were riddled. No spearmen stirred. They remained like recumbent figures carved out of bronze. The havoc behind the hide shelters, that were probably arrow-proof, but hopeless against bullets, must have been terrible. There were no more arrows.

"Signal the 'Cease Fire,' Maddock," said the millionaire. "Who was the fool who caused all this?"

The bos'n knew that the lean cook was the culprit, but he evaded the question by picking up the dented megaphone and bawling through it until his face turned purple and his eyes grew bloodshot. The frink trickled away into silence.

The millionaire was frowning. He shaded his eyes with his hands, and looked towards the north. Then he went down.

"Take the gun away from that fool of a cook, O'Rooney," he said sharply, "and give him a rifle!"

Barry saluted, but the Irishman was grinning. "Don't start away. In the coolest and most comfortable part of the trench he discovered Gan-Waga. Gadsra Singh was seated on the fire-step with the big gun between his bony knees, explaining to Gan-Waga how it all happened. And Gadsra Singh seemed pleased, but Gan was a tired look."

"Oh, moaz potifull, Shinyface," said the cook; "moaz excellent! Gun, I salute you with a kiss! He live, this gun, Shinyface! He make victory, moaz gallant victory. He see feet, am not touch the trigger. Oh, moaz potifull of I tell you a wisdom, Gan, moaz foots that stick out under leather stuff. The foots be not like. Bang! be go, moaz terrible. And so we make begin the battle and victory moaz enormous! Gun, I kiss you some more!"

"Yo' sillifull old makes, if I note so tiredness get upes and kicks yo' some more!" said Gan-Waga. "I tells yo' wisdom, moaz, if I was that old blunderbusses and you' kleased me, I'd perapiode and blow yo' heads off!"

Mr. Barry O'Rooney reached out, wrenched the trouble-making brearm from the loving hands of Gadsra Singh, and sent it hurtling through the air over the parapet into the depths of the ravine. For three long seconds the cook glared at the Irishman with eyes of hate and horror. Then he struck out. It was a flat-handed blow, but the cook's arm was so long that there was a tremendous force behind it. As his hand met Barry's ear a horrible noise of cracking and splintering peck's neck, there was a snapping sound like the report of a small pistol. The stalwart Irishman tumbled over Gan-Waga, dug a double groove in the loose soil of the rear portion of the trench with the point of his chin, and lay motionless, and took a rest. All three were surprised, but nobody more so than Mr. Barry O'Rooney. He sat up and felt his ear, but said not a word. As he was proceeding to rise Gadsra Singh gave him another one on the opposite ear to equalise matters. Barry O'Rooney collapsed for the second time, and Gan-Waga opened his capacious mouth to laugh a laugh of pure delight. Round came the cook's right arm like a pole-axe. This time Gan-Waga's left ear took the stunning blow. He fell heavily against Mr. Barry O'Rooney. The cook faded away and the following was the terrible silence that can almost be heard. It was broken by O'Rooney.

"Gan, darlint," he said, in a far-away voice. "Oj was goin' to ax ye why Oj liver left Ballybunien, the dear home of me childhood. On further consideration Oj see put another question. Oj Ballybunien, ax ye see? Oj see?"

"The badful, awfulness, viciousness old hunk!" moaned Gan-Waga. "My poor ears, Barry! Yes, I see a bitness!"

"Bedad, Oj'm glad of that, son," sighed Barry, "me own blue orbs bein' a threife muddled and a muddled, and a muddled, chiefly wild stars and stroipes! Gan, chold, take a pape round, Oj offer no reward, but Oj'll take ut as a kindness and a token of comradeship. Oj same to have lost a couple of ears. Ax ye don't see thim loyin' about, 'er'ap' ye see thim loyin' about, and then care to lose the brace of thim for the sake of less than noinepence."

Gan-Waga felt his own ear with tender touch. It felt very large and very sore and very hot—especially very large.

(To be continued.)

THE GREYFRIARS GALLERY.

No. 80.—Mr. HACKER.

It cannot be pretended that Mr. Horace Hacker is a person who really matters much to the Greyfriars stories. We should not miss him if he dropped out; and no one ever writes to suggest that a story about Mr. Hacker would be welcome.

The Shell is Mr. Hacker's Form, and the Shell does not often come largely into the story. But Mr. Hobson, Hobson and Hoskins pretty well. And we knew Coker as a member of the Shell in the past. So did Mr. Hacker, and Mr. Hacker did not like him greatly, although Coker does bear the same Christian name as he does. That might have been a kind of link between them; but the chances are that Mr. Hacker rather resented a burly, illiterate youth like the magnificent Horace having his name.

Coker is a sore trouble to Mr. Prout, but on the whole the feeling between them is far better than that between Coker and Mr. Hacker. For Mr. Prout, though pompous and self-important, is not the stiff, starched personage Mr. Hacker is. Even after Coker has annoyed Mr. Prout that gentleman sees the humour of it, I fancy—after, I say, for he certainly does not consider it funny at the time. But Mr. Hacker has little, if any, humour in him. He is what a boy would call a dry old stick.

"His Form do not love him; I doubt if they even like him. That is not only because he is severe. Mr. Quelch is severe. The boldest dread his frown. He can—and does—punish heavily at times. But every decent fellow in his Form likes Mr. Quelch, though he may not be conscious of the fact that he likes him. For under the somewhat harsh exterior there is lots of real good feeling in "Quelch," as the Rectors call him when they think he is not within hearing. He was never a typical boy; he may not wholly understand boys; but he has a wide knowledge of human nature in general, and he tries to understand. He wants to. Mr. Hacker does not. Mr. Hacker's view of his responsibilities does not include anything of that sort."

There is Mr. Capper, again, quite unlike either Mr. Hacker or Mr. Quelch, but with enough human nature in him to make him pretty popular with his Form. Temple & Co. are not often willing to listen to a word against Capper. The Fifth may laugh at "Prout," but they like the old better well enough. And no one with any decent sympathy could help feeling affection for kindly Dr. Locke, the Head, whose own grave troubles have helped to make him sympathetic and inclined to mercy.

So, on the whole, Mr. Hacker is probably quite the least popular master at Greyfriars. But when one compares him with the St. Jim's masters one begins at once to see redeeming features in him. He regards games as puerile and unimportant. He has no ambition to be regarded as a friend by the boys of his Form. But at least he does not go out of his way to make enemies of them all, as Mr. Selby and Mr. Ratcliff do at the other school. Mr. Selby is a perfect tyrant to the Third; and no one in his Form in the New House likes or trusts the sour-tempered "Batty."

Greyfriars, in the absence of Mr. Lascelles, has no master to whom the boys look up to as the St. Jim's fellows do to Mr. Railton. Such masters are none too common at any school. A boy likes to feel that the man who rules over him can do things—play a game, run, jump, row—and that he is really interested in them, even though the years may have begun to hinder his active participation in them. Well, there are plenty of athletes in the scholastic profession; but many of them fail in other respects. They may lack justice and sympathy; they may be pretty useless in their Form-rooms; they may have unpleasant manners. The combination of the qualities that make a master as near perfection as can be looked for in an imperfect world is rarely to be found. And St. Jim's has in Mr. Railton what Greyfriars has not in any master now, though I think Lascelles came near the ideal.

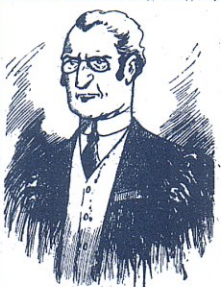
Certainly, Mr. Hacker does not approach it. The story in which he figured most largely shows him up in none too pleasant a light. It was in the connection with the Coker's Cup. Wharton had called a meeting of the junior to discuss matters in connection with that famous trophy, and both Hobson of the Shell

and Temple of the Fourth, objected strongly to the nerve of a "mere" Remove kid in taking so much upon himself. The result of their protests and the answers of Wharton and his chums was quite a nice mix-up in front of the notice-board.

Mr. Hacker came along, and did not view it with lenient eyes. "Mr. Hacker was a stern-featured and severe-tempered gentleman," says Mr. Frank Richards. "The playful manners and customs of the Greyfriars juniors were regarded by him as horseplay, if not boogaligion."

He ragged Hobson, as chiefly responsible. Mr. Capper would have been ready to believe the affair anybody's fault rather than Temple's; and Mr. Quelch would have known that it was more or less everybody's. Mr. Hacker chose to consider the skipper of his own Form as the worst offender. Hobson was given two hundred lines; Temple and Wharton were to be reported to their respective Form-masters.

Then Coker, who had introduced into his own Cup rules one to the effect that the donor of the trophy had the right to play for his side in the competition after the Fifth had gone under, came along to inform Hobson and Hoskins that he intended to turn out for the Shell. Strange to say, they



were not pleased. Coker said it was cheek of them to think of refusing; and the upshot of the heated argument which followed was that Coker was put out of the study, Hobson and Hoskins, clinging to him like wild-cats. Then Mr. Hacker came along again. Coker was sent to his own study, and Hobson was awarded five hundred lines. The lines were piling up for Hobson, but the end was not yet. Coker and Hobson got at it again, and again Mr. Hacker appeared, and Hobson was given detention for four half-holidays, including that on which the Cup match, Shell v. Fourth, was to be played.

Rough on the Shell! Hobson was quite their best man. Everyone saw that it was rough. Hobson saw it very clearly, and went to Mr. Hacker to protest. Mr. Hacker was immovable. Football was a thing he had no use for. He recommended dumb-bells and Indian clubs in preference, and he could not see that the Cup match mattered even a little bit. He found it difficult to understand why Hobson should prefer a mere game to writing out the Second Book of Titus Livius.

So Coker, who is a real sportsman, though an ass, went and tried to get Hobson off. Mr. Hacker drove Coker out with a cane. One suspects that he was not sorry for an excuse to thrash Coker, who had been a thorn in his side in the Shell days of the great Horace. Fellows in the Fifth did not expect to be thrashed like mere fags; but that made no difference—Coker got it!

The story of how Hobson played after all has already been told. The Remove gave him the chance of doing so. Mr. Hacker had locked him in, but the Remove got him out. Mr. Hacker appeared to think that Hobson

had wasted his time during the afternoon. Titus Livius had not progressed much. But Hobson explained that he had really been very hard at work—which was quite true, for he had played up in great style, though he had not been able to carry his side to victory.

Mr. Hacker did not understand, which was fortunate. Here it is not much more likelyhood that Mr. Hacker will ever understand the boy's point of view in any way whatever. We may hear of him again, but I shall be very much surprised if we hear of his doing that!

The Editor's Chat.

For Next Monday:

"THE SHYLOCK OF THE SECOND!"

By FRANK RICHARDS.

It is quite a long time since we had a yarn which the youthful heroes of the Second—Dicky Nugent, Girty Myers, Hop Hi, and Sammy Hunter—figured prominently. You will find them all well in the foreground of next week's story, which tells of the coming to Greyfriars of a new boy of rather a mysterious type—one Spring. He is not exactly a pleasant character; but I think you will find him interesting.

A SCOUTS' CONCERT.

I have not much room for Scout news, as you all know, but I don't mind sparing a few lines to the thirty-fifth Annual Meeting of the 1st Whitley Bay Boy Scouts, which was held in the Congregational Hall at Whitley Bay on the 6th of last month. Cecil J. Price, who edits the little Scout paper to which I have referred in these columns—or in those of the "Gem"; I am not sure which, and it really does not matter—points out to me a very interesting item in the programme forwarded. This was a sketch taken from one of our Herlock Sholmes stories, "The Case of the Lottery Ticket," and performed by Patrol-Leaders Price and Nicholson and Scout Leinster, and it was a great success. The introductory verses, penned by Price and Leinster, ran as follows:

"I'm Herlock Sholmes—you've heard of me—

And here's my old friend Jotson.

I am the London 'Tee, you see;

And as for brains, I've got some.

"Deduction is my strongest point,

I guess you'll all admit.

And now with friend Erasmus

A show I'll give of it."

Not at all bad, though the ingenious attempt to rhyme to Jotson is only partially successful.

Among the other contributors to quite a good and varied programme were Miss Eva Abbott, Patrol-Leader L. Emberton, 2nd V. Connors, and Scouts Tusley, Glahome, and Kenyon. There were Marionette Impressions by Mr. Ernest Bentley; the Fire Patrol, under Patrol-Leader R. S. Darling, gave a display; and Miss Robson acted as accompanist. Altogether, the Whitley Bay Scouts and their audience seem to have had a very jolly evening.

LIST OF GREYFRIARS STORIES IN THE "MAGNET" (continued).

- 281.—"Quita"
- 282.—"In Another's Name."
- 283.—"The Sandow Girl at Greyfriars."
- 284.—"Uncle Fish."
- 285.—"The False Form-master."
- 286.—"The Sports of the School."
- 287.—"Self-Denial Week at Greyfriars."
- 288.—"Shunned by the Form."
- 289.—"The Nut of Greyfriars."
- 290.—"The Schoolboy Shopkeepers."
- 291.—"Up Against It."
- 292.—"Banter the Prizewinner."
- 293.—"The Moonlight Footballers."
- 294.—"Bravo, the Bouncer!"
- 295.—"The Sneak's Revenge."
- 296.—"The Greyfriars Herald."
- 297.—"Game to the Last!"
- 298.—"The Vanished Schoolboy."
- 299.—"The Greyfriars Gold-Diggers."
- 300.—"The Coker Cup."

YOUR EDITOR.

13-7-13

