

**THE FATTEST AND FUNNIEST BOY IN FICTION !**

(Meet him inside.)

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# The Magnet 2<sup>d</sup>

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EVERY SATURDAY.



**MR. QUELCH'S GUESTS ARRIVE—BUT HE DIDN'T INVITE THEM!**

*(An incident in the great jape against a Form-master described in the amazing school story of Harry Wharton & Co., inside.)*

# CUP FINAL THRILLS!

By "REFEREE"

**W**HEN you put your noses into your history books—and you have to do this sometimes, doubtless, whether you want to or not—you find there references to gigantic battles between the House of York and the House of Lancaster. The men of Lancashire and of Yorkshire went forth to battle, the one wearing the Red and the other the White rose.

No longer do the people of Lancashire and Yorkshire fight on the field of battle with swords. But in a friendly warfare on the playing field Lancashire and Yorkshire have fought many battles in these modern days. And this Cup Final of 1928—the fight for the most prized possession of the football field—sees a renewal of the old War of the Roses—Lancashire and Yorkshire.

## The Battle of Roses!

Never since 1923, when Cup Finals were first played at Wembley, has there been a Red Rose v. White Rose Final Tie. There was a battle of the roses in the year previous to the building of Wembley, however. That was in 1922, when Huddersfield Town and Preston North End struggled for the mastery at Stamford Bridge.

As I am going to tell you something about the thrills of Cup Finals, I may as well recall right now the big thrill of the last battle of roses on the football field. The game wasn't a good one—the players were too excited to play real football.

It seemed to be running on to a goalless draw, when suddenly there was a scene. Smith, the Huddersfield Town outside-left, was dashing towards goal. Hamilton, the Preston right-back, came across to stop him. The forward was stopped all right, but the tackle wasn't a fair one. The referee blew his whistle and pointed to the penalty spot. The onlookers yelled, the players of Preston North End protested.

## Won by a Penalty-kick!

A lad of not more than fourteen years, with a blue-and-white cap, which was the colours of Preston North End, dashed from his place just inside the rails towards the referee. A burly

policeman collared him and put him back whence he had come.

We, sitting in our places in the stand, knew what that little excited lad wanted to say. He was going to tell the referee that the foul was just outside, and not just inside, the penalty-area. What is more, that lad was right, in my opinion, and in the opinion of most of the people who saw the incident. The referee thought it was a penalty-kick, however. He stuck to his decision, and the same "Billy" Smith who had been fouled scored a goal and won the match for Huddersfield. What breathless minutes were those. First wondering if the referee would change his mind, and then waiting to see if Smith scored.

I shall always feel sorry for a man called upon to take a penalty-kick in a Final Tie. I once saw Charlie Wallace, the outside-right of Aston Villa, shoot yards wide from the penalty spot in the old days, when final ties were played at dear old, bad old Crystal Palace.

That was in 1913, when Aston Villa and Sunderland were the opponents, and when the biggest crowd which had ever attended a Final Tie up to then were present—120,000—and only about sixty thousand able to see every kick of the ball.

## A Young Hero!

Mention of crowds reminds me that some of the excitement, even some of the thrills, have gone from Cup Finals nowadays. The 1923 affair put an end to much of the hustle and bustle which was associated with previous Cup Finals, when every time almost the impossible effort was made to get a "quart into a pint pot," as the saying has it.

Probably you remember the Final Tie of 1923. It was the first at Wembley, the wonderful new ground which, so it was said, would be big enough to hold the biggest crowd which would ever want to see a Cup Final. For that 1923 Final at least sixty thousand more people turned up than could be accommodated in the places reserved for spectators. The gates were closed, but that didn't deter the people outside. They smashed the gates, crushed in, and swarmed on to the playing pitch. The story of the policeman on the white horse, who did valiant things in pushing the people

back, has been told many times. The thrill of it, the wonder of it, the anxiety of that day, however, will remain a vivid memory so long as memory lasts.

Associated with it in my mind is a picture of a telegraph lad—a boy of sixteen or so. He had been engaged to carry messages for me to the post office. When he didn't turn up I began to worry. Presently he appeared, blood on his face and hands, and his clothing all torn. This was what he said: "I'm sorry I'm late, sir, but I got mixed up with the crush." Wasn't that boy a Cup Final hero?

## Ticket-holders Only!

There were thrills behind the scenes, too, that day in 1923. Four times the players made the attempt to get on the pitch, but four times they found it impossible to force a way through the throng. Here is the wonderful part of it. When the match was eventually started, three-quarters of an hour late, and with thousands of people lining the touch-lines, the players of Bolton Wanderers—a Red Rose side, which emerged victorious from the fight—and West Ham United gave a really fine display. They were heroes, too!

That scene of 1923 has affected all Cup Finals, and, as I say, taken out some of the excitement from the proceedings. For a Cup-tie Final nowadays every available space is disposed of beforehand by ticket. The people know that it is no use going to see the Final Tie unless they have purchased a ticket in advance. Thus, instead of the scramble for places, Cup Finals since 1923 have been as orderly as a Sunday School picnic, almost.

The thrills are still there, though. There was a big thrill last season, when Arsenal and Cardiff City were struggling for the first goal. A Cardiff forward shot; the Arsenal goalkeeper caught the ball, and seemed to be in a position to clear comfortably. To the consternation of everybody the ball finished in the net. The thrill can best be described in the words of the man who was broadcasting the match. He had told, in his calm way, how Lewis, the Arsenal goalkeeper, had stopped the shot. And then he forgot the necessity

(Continued on page 28.)

**EASY MONEY!**—William George Bunter does not hesitate long when he sees a chance of getting rich quick, even when it is at the expense of his Form-master. But his latest scheme, like all the others, brings only disaster to its inventor, and once again the Owl of the Remove discovers the truth of that old saying "The way of the transgressor is hard."



A Magnificent New Long Complete School Story of Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars, featuring that most amazing schoolboy character—William George Bunter. By FRANK RICHARDS.

### THE FIRST CHAPTER.

#### Trouble in the Form-room!

"SKINNER!"

The metallic voice of Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, rang through the Form-room.

Morning lessons were half-way through, and after a session at French with Monsieur Charpentier, the Remove were now being instructed in the mysteries of geography by their own Form master.

Had they been offered a choice in the matter, the Remove would probably have elected to continue their French lesson. Monsieur Charpentier was a somewhat simple, easy-going gentleman, and while he was in charge, the juniors, to a large extent, pleased themselves whether they worked or not.

The Remove Form master was a horse of a different colour, so to speak. Mr. Henry Quelch had been often compared with that famous schoolmaster who was once described as "A Beast—but a Just Beast!" There could be no question about his being just, and from the point of view of quite a number of the juniors, there was more emphatically still, no question about his being a beast.

On this particular morning, he had entered the Form-room wearing a frown that indicated what Bob Cherry described as trouble, with a capital "T," for any unfortunate junior who happened to cross his path.

Nobody in the Remove had the least desire to cross Mr. Quelch's path, and most of the fellows were therefore on their best behaviour.

Harold Skinner, the practical joker and leading "blade" of the Remove, was one of the few exceptions.

Skinner had a particular loathing of geography.

True, he displayed no outward and visible sign of his feelings. In fact, judging by the rapt expression on his face as he listened to Mr. Quelch, geography might have been the delight of Harold Skinner's life.

But it was not.

Perhaps it was because Mr. Quelch realised that fact that he was unusually suspicious of Skinner. Whatever the reason, he was extraordinarily quick to detect a movement on Skinner's part when his back was turned to the black-board for a moment.

Skinner had seized the opportunity to soak a paper pellet in ink, and it was just as he was taking careful aim at the head of Frank Nugent, in the far corner of the room, that the Form master suddenly swung round, with the sharp exclamation:

"Skinner!"

And Skinner, with an inward groan, realised that Mr. Quelch had not been so inattentive as he had supposed.

"What is the meaning of that absurd attitude?" demanded Mr. Quelch.

"Absurd attitude?" echoed Skinner, in tones of pained surprise.

"You understand perfectly well what I mean," said Mr. Quelch grimly. "Come out and give me whatever you have in your hand!"

A faint grin flitted across Skinner's face as he made his way out to the front of the class.

Mr. Quelch held out his hand to receive whatever Skinner had to give him, and the Remove humorist hesitated.

"Give it to me, Skinner!"

"But, sir—" began Skinner.

"Not another word, boy! Give it to me!"

Skinner suppressed a grin and handed over the inky pellet, and there was a gasp of annoyance from Mr. Quelch as his fingers closed over it, causing several great smudges of ink to appear on his hand. A subdued chuckle ran round the Remove.

Mr. Quelch glared at Skinner, who did his best to assume an expression of child-like innocence—not an easy task for that somewhat shifty-looking junior.

"Is this a misguided attempt at practical joking, Skinner?" rasped Mr. Quelch, making a portentous movement for his cane.

"Nunno, sir!" said Skinner, watching this move with trepidation. "You insisted on having it, sir!"

Mr. Quelch's lips set tightly.

"We will let that pass," he said. "May I ask what you were doing with an inky ball of paper raised in the air?"

"I had just fished it out of my ink-well, sir," explained Skinner meekly.

"That is quite obvious," said Mr. Quelch tartly. "It is equally obvious that you intended throwing it at somebody!"

"I, sir?" cried Skinner, with a show of indignation. "Certainly not! I assure you, sir, someone else must have put it in my ink-well, and I was merely going to throw it into the waste-paper basket."

Skinner had no particular scruples about departing from the strict truth if there was a chance that it might get him out of a scrape.

From the expression on the face of Mr. Quelch, however, it was fairly obvious that Skinner had not achieved that object. The Remove Form master glared at him with the glare of the fabled basilisk.

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"So," he rapped out, "not content with wasting your time in class, you have the impudence to prevaricate as well. Hold out your hand!"

Harold Skinner reluctantly extended his palm, and received a stinging cut, which was repeated several times on both hands.

"You will kindly remember that the Form-room is not the place for practical jokes," said Mr. Quelch grimly. "Resume your place!"

Skinner returned to his place, looking as though the humour of the thing had rather lost its appeal to him. He sat down savagely, tucking his hands under his arms, and for the rest of the morning very little was heard from Harold Skinner.

Billy Bunter was in hot water very quickly after Skinner had been so effectively dealt with. Bunter was not feeling in the mood for geography, owing to a not unusual attack of hunger. He had been caught rolling off with a meat-pie from Study No. 1 just before lessons commenced, and Harry Wharton had deprived him of the prize before he had had an opportunity of sampling it. Billy Bunter's imagination had been running riot over that meat-pie all the morning, and his appetite, never at a low ebb, had been stimulated to unusual keenness, even for him. In consequence, Bunter had very little thought to spare for geography.

"Bunter!"

The Owl of the Remove jumped at the sound of his name.

"Bunter, where do we get our tea?" demanded Mr. Quelch, relentlessly pursuing the subject of geography again.

Billy Bunter's brain, engrossed in thoughts of his own personal food requirements, was quite unable to rise to the occasion.

"I— In Hall, sir!" was his surprising reply.

There was a gasp from the Remove, then a roar. The juniors couldn't help it.

Mr. Quelch's face was a study as he took in the full import of Bunter's answer.

"Silence!" he cried, rapping the desk with his pointer. "There is nothing amusing in this ignorant boy's stupidity. Bunter, come here!"

Billy Bunter advanced to the front of the Form, blinking apprehensively through his glasses at Mr. Quelch.

"I—I say, sir, isn't that the right answer?" he asked, in dismay. "What I really meant to say was that most of us get our tea in our studies. My mater is always sending me whacking great hampers from Bunter Court, and chaps like me can afford it. When I said in the Hall, I was really referring to poverty-stricken bounders like Linley!"

"Silence, you incredibly stupid boy!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "By amplifying your answer you have made matters worse. Hold out your hand, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, sir!" gasped Bunter. "What for?"

"Hold out your hand!"

Bunter gingerly extended a fat palm.

Swish!

"Yarooooh!"

Bunter gave a howl that must have been heard all over Greyfriars.

"The other hand!"

Swish!

"Yarooooop!"

"Cease that ridiculous noise, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch sharply. "The other hand again, Bunter!"

Swish!

"Yarooooh! Whoop!"

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"Now go back to your place, and remember that we are discussing geography, not meals!" rapped out Mr. Quelch.

And Bunter, with a final lugubrious groan, rolled back to his desk, his eyes blinking through his glasses with great indignation.

Harold Skinner, who was still nursing his hands rather tenderly under his arms, and emitting an occasional grunt of pain, gave Bunter a nudge as he rolled by.

"Who are you pushing, Skinner?" groaned the fat junior. "Yow—ow, ow!"

Skinner, whose eyes were glittering with malice at the painful recollection of his own caning, looked to make sure that the Form master's back was turned away from them, then leaned over to Bunter.

"Give the rotter a bit of ventriloquism!" he whispered. "Get a bit of your own back!"

Bunter ceased his groans and nodded, and his little eyes gleamed again.

However foolish Bunter was in other ways, it could not be denied that he was an exceptionally clever ventriloquist.

"Ahem!"

Several juniors looked round as they heard Billy Bunter's well-known preliminary cough, and one or two of them shook their heads, and made other motions, warning him not to attempt any "jarks."

The fat junior, however, was notoriously short-sighted, and probably did not see them. At all events, their warning gestures passed unheeded.

"Gr-r-r-r-r-r-r!"

Mr. Quelch started as that blood-curdling growl fell on his ears, and whisked round from the blackboard.

"Bless my soul! Is that a dog?"

"Gr-r-r-r-r-r-r!"

"Dear me!"

"Gr-r-r-r-r-r! Ur-r-r-r-gh!"

"There is certainly a dog outside the Form-room," said Mr. Quelch, frowning at the interruption. "Bolsover, you are nearest the door, please go and send the animal away!"

"Certainly, sir!" grinned Bolsover, making for the door with alacrity.

He quitted the Form-room, and the Remove waited expectantly to hear what would happen. The entire Form was aware that the dog was absolutely mythical, and that the ferocious growling was the work of Billy Bunter.

The fat junior was in his element when he realised that he was the centre of interest, and as the door closed behind Bolsover he gave of his best.

"Gr-r-r-r-r-r-gh! Ur-r-r-r-gh!"

The growling increased in intensity, then changed into quite a terrifying barking and yelping. Bolsover, who could hear what was going on inside the Form-room, played his part well, and set up such a scuffling and banging that any listener who was not "in the know" could only have concluded that a terrific dog-fight was in progress.

Mr. Quelch looked quite startled as the renewed din fell on his ears.

"Dear me! I trust that Bolsover will not be bitten!"

The Remove Form master hastened across the room to the rescue of Bolsover; and Billy Bunter, with a fat grin, ceased his ventriloquism.

Mr. Quelch came to a sudden halt before he reached the door, however, and, as if a sudden idea had come to him, he looked fixedly at Billy Bunter. The Owl of the Remove was smirking with delight at the success of his efforts, blissfully unconscious of the expression of suspicion that had suddenly appeared on Mr. Quelch's face.

"Bunter!"

Billy Bunter started as Mr. Quelch's grim tones penetrated his fat ears.

"Ye-e-e-es, sir!"

"Bunter, I believe you are playing one of your ventriloquial tricks on me!" rapped out Mr. Quelch.

"N-n-nothing of the kind, sir!" gasped Bunter, blinking nervously through his spectacles. "I—I wouldn't dream of making you think there was a dog outside, sir! Skinner tried to get me to do it, but I told him I had too much respect for you!"

"So it was Skinner's suggestion?" boomed Mr. Quelch in his most terrifying voice.

"N-n-not at all, sir!" stuttered Billy Bunter, who was by this time in quite a panic. "What I really meant to say was that Skinner never said anything about it!"

The Remove grinned. Billy Bunter, with his usual over-anxiety to appear innocent, had revealed quite as much as Mr. Quelch wanted to know.

Mr. Quelch glared at him with a baleful eye.

"I will deal with you later, Bunter!" he said in a manner that made a shiver run down the Owl's spine.

Mr. Quelch wrenched open the door of the Form-room.

Bolsover, who had been keeping a wary eye on the door during the noisy performance, was prepared for a sudden appearance on the part of the Form master, and he made a great show of rubbing himself tenderly and dusting himself down.

"I think I've scared him off now, sir," remarked Bolsover, re-entering the Form-room. "It was rather a job, sir, I can tell you!"

"What!" gasped the Remove Form master, staring fixedly at Bolsover.

"I think it was an Alsatian wolfhound," went on Bolsover cheerfully. "Can't think how it got in. It was a most frightful monster, sir, but I managed it all right!"

Mr. Quelch looked at Bolsover with a very peculiar expression.

"Am I to understand that you have just engaged in a fight with an Alsatian wolfhound?" he asked.

"That's it, sir!" assented Bolsover. "He was an awful brute, too, with great fangs, you know, sir!"

There was a gasp from the Remove, and Skinner, who had been endeavouring to attract the burly Removite's attention to warn him, groaned aloud at this mighty effort of imagination. He could foresee a painful end to the incident, and, as Billy Bunter had dragged him in, it was a pretty sure thing that he, Harold Skinner, was booked for another licking!

Mr. Quelch went to his desk, looking quite pale with anger.

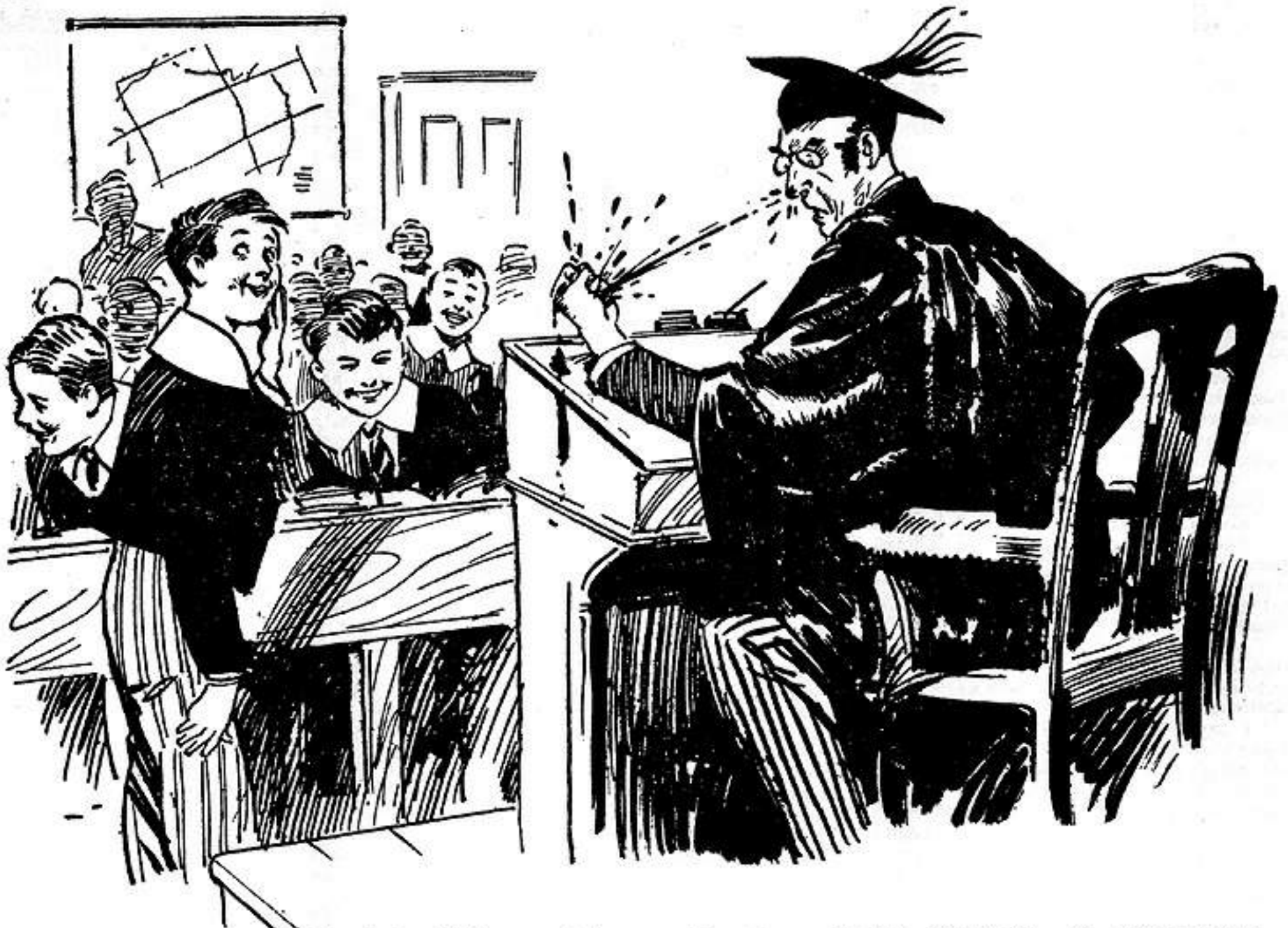
"Return to your place, Bolsover!" he said. "Perhaps you will be interested to know that Bunter has already admitted that your Alsatian wolfhound was nothing more than the product of a ventriloquial trick on his part!"

"Oh crumbs!"

Bolsover almost staggered to his desk.

"Please refrain from making ludicrous exclamations, Bolsover!" said Mr. Quelch. "Probably, however, you will have more excuse for making them later in the morning. I want you and Skinner and Bunter to stay behind after lessons to discuss this matter!"

After which portentous remark Mr. Quelch found that he had no more trouble with the Remove that morning.



"Skinner!" said Mr. Quelch grimly. "Give me whatever you have in your hand." "But, sir—" "Not another word! Give it to me!" Skinner suppressed a grin and handed over the inky pellet. There was a gasp from Mr. Quelch as his fingers closed over it, and the Remove chuckled. (See Chapter 1.)

## THE SECOND CHAPTER. Skinner's Little Wheeze!

"Y OW—OW—OW!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"The rotter! Oh, dear!"

Quite a little crowd had assembled in the Remove passage to welcome the three humorists after their interview with Mr. Quelch at the end of the third lesson.

They looked far from humorous as they came round the corner of the passage, though, judging by the unsympathetic grins on the faces of the other Removites, there was a decidedly humorous aspect of the incident.

Bolsover looked like an enraged bull as he tramped along, and Skinner's eyes were glittering with anger, while Bunter wore an expression of woe that might have melted a heart of stone.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! See the conquering heroes come!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Did he lay it on hard?"

"Let's hear about that Alsatian again, Bolsover!"

Bolsover glared furiously at the grinning juniors.

"Shut up your cackling, you silly asses!" he snorted.

"Cheer up, Bolsy! You don't fight a brute with great fangs every day."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, I'm feeling really queer, you know!" groaned Bunter. "I shouldn't be surprised if that beast has injured me for life."

"My hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harold Skinner did not commit himself to words. Judging by his furious looks, his feelings were too deep for words.

The three humorists entered their respective studies, and the group of juniors dispersed, still chuckling. And for the remainder of the dinner interval there was quite a lot of amusement over the incident.

Afternoon lessons were exceptionally quiet and peaceable that day, and no further attempts at practical joking were made by the three juniors whose previous efforts had proved so disastrous.

Harold Skinner, however, was not the kind of fellow to forget an injury lightly, and there was still a savage look on his pasty face when he came out of the Form room again.

He tapped Bolsover on the shoulder on his way to the Remove passage from the Common-room, later in the evening.

"I want to have a word with you, if you'll come along to my study," he said.

Bolsover looked at him suspiciously.

"What's the game?" he demanded.

"I've got a scheme for getting our own back on Quelch," said Skinner.

"I thought you'd be interested, that's all!"

Bolsover scratched his chin doubtfully.

"Oh, all right!" he growled. "I'll come along with you, though how you're going to manage it I don't know."

They went along together to Study No. 11, which Skinner shared with Snoop and Stott, and sat down, Bolsover taking the only armchair that the study boasted, and Skinner contenting himself with one of the small chairs.

Snoop and Stott had both drifted off to the Common-room, and there was not likely to be any interruption.

"Well, what's the wheeze?" asked Bolsover.

Skinner lit a cigarette—smoking was one of Skinner's little habits—and nodded.

"As a matter of fact, it's rather a brainy notion for making the brute sit up," he said.

"You're not thinking of waylaying him and giving him a pasting, I suppose?" asked Bolsover, sarcastically.

"I only wish we could, without any risk of being found out," said Skinner, his shifty eyes gleaming at the thought. "I'd pay off a few old scores then, and no mistake!"

"You can pay off your old scores on your own, then, my son!" grunted Bolsover. "If it's anything like that you can cut me right out of it."

"Oh, I know that's impossible," Skinner went on hastily. "I wasn't thinking of anything like that. My idea was to put Quelch to as much annoyance as I can, and I've had a brain-wave for making a beginning, anyway."

"Well, let's hear it, then," said Bolsover, rather dubiously.

Bolsover had had some of Harold Skinner before, and he was not inclined to be over-enthusiastic about that enterprising junior's brain-waves for making other people sit up.

"The best way to hit at the Quelch-bird is to interrupt his work," said Skinner sagely. "Every blessed minute he can spare he devotes to that precious 'History of Greyfriars' he's been writing for the last umpteen years."

Bolsover nodded.

"That's true enough. Writing that history is a regular mania with him, I know."

"Well, then, what about putting a stop to his work for a couple of hours one evening?" suggested Skinner brightly.

Bolsover stared at his companion blankly.

"What do you mean, Skinner? Kick up a shindy outside his study?"

"Oh, don't talk rot!" answered Skinner witheringly. "If I couldn't think of anything better than that I'd eat my hat!"

"Well, what's the stunt, then?" demanded Bolsover impatiently.

"The stunt is for us to keep as far from Quelchy as we possibly can, ourselves," said Skinner. "I'm not running my neck into a noose, thank you! My idea is to get other people to interrupt the brute."

"And who the dickens do you think is going to interrupt him on our account?" asked Bolsover in astonishment.

Skinner pondered for a moment or two, then a grin spread over his lean face.

"What about Sir Hilton Popper, to begin with?" he said.

"Wha-a-a-at?"

"And Mr. Lazarus?"

"M-M-Mr. Lazarus!"

"And Inspector Grimes of Courtfield, and Mr. Mobbs, of Highcliffe?" went on Skinner cheerfully.

"Are you going off your rocker, Skinner?" gasped Bolsover.

"And, say, Cobb, of the Cross Keys, and Banks?"

Bolsover looked at Skinner quite apprehensively.

"I say, Skinner, are you feeling all right?" he asked. "I suppose this morning's row with Quelchy hasn't gone to your brain by any chance?"

Skinner grinned.

"It's all right," he said. "I really mean what I've said, Bolsy."

"You mean you can get old Popper and Lazarus and Cobb and the rest of 'em to come and interrupt Quelchy?" hooted Bolsover.

Skinner nodded.

"I think I can get most of 'em along," he answered.

"But how the dickens—"

"Oh, it's easy enough," said Skinner. "My idea is simply to issue invitations to a crowd of people to come along and have dinner with him one night, that's all!"

Bolsover's jaw dropped.

"My only hat! That's all is it?"

"Well, that's all to begin with, anyway," said Skinner cheerfully. "The miserable old bouncer hardly ever has any visitors. Perhaps a little company will cheer him up!"

"My sainted aunt! I can just picture old Popper and Cobb and Lazarus cheering him up!" gasped Bolsover.

The burly Removite chuckled as he pondered on the scheme, then he grew serious again.

"It strikes me you're asking for trouble, Skinner," he said. "Why, if you succeed in bringing that crowd up here, there'll be a record row."

"I don't see why we should catch it," said Skinner. "We shall be the only two who know anything about it, and I suppose neither of us will shout the story from the house tops."

Bolsover scratched his chin reflectively.

"I rather like the idea—it will fairly paralyse old Quelchy if it comes off—but I can scent danger, and plenty of it."

"Where's the danger?" demanded Skinner. "I can get some letters typed out inviting the old boys along, and nobody need ever know who was responsible for 'em."

"But are they going to fall for it, anyway?" asked Bolsover doubtfully.

"Don't you think they're likely to smell a rat?"

"Leave it to me," answered Skinner

confidently. "If I couldn't invent a yarn good enough to fetch those old fogies up to Greyfriars, I'd— Hallo! What's the matter?"

The last question was caused by a movement on the part of Bolsover, who suddenly had put his finger to his lips in what was evidently a warning to be silent.

The cad of the Remove looked round quickly to the study door.

It was still shut, and there was no sound from outside, and Skinner was just wondering what was the cause of Bolsover's alarm, when he detected in the sudden quiet a faint noise that had not penetrated his ears while the talking was going on.

It was the distinct sound of heavy breathing, and it seemed to emanate from within the study itself.

The two Removites looked at one another uneasily. It sounded as if there was another occupant of the study besides themselves, and it was not exactly nice to know that they had been overheard.

For several seconds neither of them uttered a word, and during that time the breathing of the third party became heavier and more laboured, as if he might be cramped up in an uncomfortable position.

Bolsover was the first to break the spell.

With a sudden grunt, he leaned forward, and gave a mighty kick under the table.

There was a fiendish yell, and a tremendous crash as a fat form leapt out from under the table and sent it flying into a corner of the study.

"Yarooooh! Yow-ow-ow! Help! Murder!"

"Bunter!"

"Great Scott!"

"You fat toad!"

Billy Bunter hopped round the room like an injured porker, his fat face crimson with pain.

The contact of Bolsover's boot with his anatomy was no joke. Bolsover's boot could not by any stretch of the imagination be called a dainty one, and he had put considerable force behind that kick.

"Groooh! Beasts!" moaned Bunter. "You've broken my backbone, you awful rotter!"

"I'll break your neck soon, you fat eavesdropping cad!" said Bolsover ferociously.

"Ow! I didn't hear anything!" gasped Billy Bunter, rubbing himself tenderly. "I—I dropped in to see Snoop!"

"And I suppose you got under the table to see if he was having a nap on the floor!" said Skinner, with crushing sarcasm.

"Oh, really, Skinner! I was just looking for a—er—tiepin I dropped when you came in. Ow! You've injured me for life, Bolsover, you rotter!"

"No such luck!" said Bolsover savagely. "You can call that jape off, Skinner, now that this fat brute has overheard us. It'll be all over the school in half an hour!"

"Will it?" said Skinner grimly. "I think I've got a better plan than that. This jape is too good to drop for the sake of Bunter. I think I know how we can shut his mouth and get him to help us, too!"

"Oh, really, Skinner! If you think I'd listen to your shady, rotten plotting—"

"Oh, cut out all that!" snapped Skinner impatiently. "We know you've heard every word—"

"If you think I'd listen to your blessed wheezes for doing Quelchy in the eye, you're jolly well mistaken!" said Bunter

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indignantly. "I didn't hear a word about sending out fake invitations to dinner, and—yarooop! What are you doing, Bolsover, you rotter?"

"Kicking you!" answered Bolsover calmly. "You're going to get a kick for every fib you utter, you fat toad! Now, Skinner, what's the new idea?"

"I think Bunter can save us a good deal of trouble," answered Skinner. "The fat rotter let us down with his ventriloquism this morning, but there's no reason why it shouldn't work this time. He's pulled off plenty of japes with it before, anyway."

"But how the thump does Bunter's ventriloquism fit in with your wheeze?"

"It fits in very well. Instead of going to the trouble of having invitations typed, we can get Bunter to imitate Quelchy's voice over the phone."

"Well, the fat rotter certainly is a bit of a dabster at imitating a voice," admitted Bolsover, knitting his brows thoughtfully. "But what's to stop him babbling?"

Skinner grinned.

"I don't think he'll want to talk much if he works the jape himself."

Billy Bunter, who had been listening to the conversation with great interest, lifted his fat little nose into the air.

"I'm afraid I can't agree to start japing my own Form master!" he said loftily. "That sort of thing may be all right for shady rotters like you, but that sort of thing is hardly in my line at all!"

"Never mind about what's in your line!" said Skinner. "Did you know that there's a new tuck department just opened at Chunkley's Stores?"

"My hat! Is that a fact?" asked Bunter, displaying a sudden interest in Skinner's remarks.

"After we've finished the job," went on Skinner, "we'll give you the run of the new cafe at our expense up to, say, five bob!"

Billy Bunter's eyes glimmered behind his spectacles.

"Well, of course, Skinney, old man, I don't mind obliging an old pal," he said thoughtfully. "Still, there's no need to be mean about it, you know! Make it ten bob!"

"Five bob, and no more!" said Skinner, with an air of finality. "Now, what is it—yes, or no?"

Billy Bunter granted.

"All right, then, I'll come! Still, I must say I consider you're being rather stingy!"

"That's settled, then!" said Skinner, in satisfied tones. "And if you breathe a word about it to anybody, Bunter, there's going to be a dead porpoise discovered around here pretty soon!"

And with that terrifying threat Harold Skinner concluded his interview with Bunter.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### On the Telephone!

#### COURTFIELD JUNCTION!

The short local train from Friardale drew into the station and came to a standstill.

Among the passengers that alighted were the three Greyfriars juniors who had embarked on Skinner's jape against their Form master.

It was Wednesday—a half-holiday at Greyfriars, and, as Skinner had arranged, the trio had come to Courtfield to perform the telephone operations necessary to bring the local celebrities up to the school.

Harold Skinner had not decided on Courtfield without giving the matter some little thought. It would certainly have saved time and expense to have

used one of the telephones at the school, or even the public telephone at Friardale Post Office.

The danger of being overheard at the school was too great to permit that, however, and Friardale Post Office was uncomfortably near Greyfriars and would probably receive visits from a dozen or more Greyfriars people in the course of a half-holiday. Courtfield was therefore the nearest point from which the work could be done with safety.

The three Removites quitted the station, and walked down the busy thoroughfare of the town.

"I say, you fellows—" began Billy Bunter, as they drew near the post office.

"Dry up, Bunter!" growled Bolsover. "Oh, really, Bolsover! I've been thinking—"

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Skinner, incredulously.

"I tell you I've been thinking—"

"What with?" asked Bolsover humorously.

"I tell you I've been thinking—"

"That's what you said before," remarked Skinner. "It's more than we can believe, old fat bean!"

Bunter stopped and glared at his companions.

"Look here, you fellows, if you're going to spend the afternoon making idiotic jokes, I'm backing out!"

Skinner stopped grinning, and altered his tone a little.

"Don't be a silly ass, Bunter! No need to take offence, you know."

Skinner did not want Bunter to "back out" after he had gone to the trouble of bringing the fat junior to Courtfield for the express purpose of helping in the "jape."

"That's all right, then," said Bunter loftily. "What I was going to say was that I think I can suggest an improvement on our plans for this afternoon."

Bolsover and Skinner displayed a little more interest in Bunter's remarks.

"An improvement!" said Skinner, quite cordially. "Good egg, Bunter! What is it?"

"Let's hear it, Fatty!" chimed in Bolsover. "Buck up!"

"Oh really, Bolsover! Anyway, I'll tell you. Your idea at present is for me to go to the post office now, and phone up a lot of old fogies in Quelchy's name."

"That's it," assented Skinner, with a nod.

"After that," said Bunter, "we go to the new tuck-shop in Chunkley's Stores and you chaps stand me a ten-bob feed. That's it, what?"

"A five-bob feed," said Skinner firmly. "Five bob and not a penny more, my pippin!"

"Well, five bob then, you mean rotters!" grunted the Owl. "Anyway, there's one drawback to your stunt."

"What's that?" demanded Skinner, looking puzzled.

"You've got it the wrong way round, you know!"

Bolsover and Skinner stared.

"What do you mean by the wrong way round?" asked Skinner.

Bunter granted.

"I must say you fellows are jolly dense," he remarked peevishly. "Can't you see what I mean? Instead of going to the post office first and Chunkley's afterwards, I suggest we go to Chunkley's first, and do the phoning after we've had the feed!"

"Oh!"

The light of understanding broke on the two Removites.

"So that's your improvement is it?" growled Bolsover.

"That's it!" said Bunter, looking quite enthusiastic now. "After the train journey, you know, I'm feeling rather

peckish and a snack will just put me in the mood for the jape!"

"You fat spoofer!" growled Bolsover. "Yes, I can just imagine you doing the thing better after scoffing five bob's worth of grub! I expect we'd have to kick you every inch of the way to get you to come to the post office at all!"

"Oh really, Bolsover—"

"Cut it out, Bunter!" said Skinner. "If you think you're going to get a scrap of tuck before the job's over, you'd better have another think!"

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"Shut up, and come along!" roared Skinner, his patience exhausted. "Take his other arm, Bolsy, and we'll yank the fat boulder to the post office!"

"Come on, you barrel of lard!" growled Bolsover, seizing Bunter's right arm.

Skinner had already gripped the other arm, and between them, the two proceeded to "yank" the fat Removite down the street.

Bunter gave a yell.

"Lemme go, you rotters! Leggo my arm, Skinner! Grooogh!"

Billy Bunter's yells trailed away, for the simple reason that he had no breath left for any more.

Having decided that Bunter should be "yanked" to the post office, Skinner and Bolsover were doing the "yanking" in a most efficient manner.

With Bunter between them, they raced along the Courtfield High Street at express speed, scattering the pedestrians right and left, and causing quite a sensation.

Billy Bunter's fat little legs had to work like clockwork to keep up with his companions, and he gasped and puffed like a steam-engine at the unaccustomed exercise.

It took them little more than a couple of minutes to reach the post office, but by that time Bunter was almost in a state of collapse.

At the entrance, Bolsover and Skinner slowed up and piloted their fat burden to one of the telephone-boxes at a much reduced speed.

Billy Bunter flopped on to the stool in the box, and for several seconds could only gasp and pant and glare, with a glare that almost cracked his spectacles.

Bolsover, quite restored to good-humour by the incident, which was of the vigorous kind that appealed to him, roared with laughter.

Skinner was not so fit and muscular as his fellow-conspirator, and was panting himself, but even he grinned at the hapless sight Bunter presented.

"Beasts!" gasped Bunter at last. "Ooch! Beasts! Ow, you rotters, you did that on purpose!"

"Go hon!"

"Grooogh! Beasts! You can jolly well do your rotten telephoning yourselves now! Yah!"

"Don't talk rot!" said Skinner. "Do you mean to say that after having come so far, you're going to miss the opportunity of a free feed now?"

Bunter gasped and mopped his brow, and pondered a little over that remark.

After his little run, Bunter was feeling even more "peckish" than before, and he knew by now that unless and until he did the job properly, there would be no "tuck" for him.

His injured feelings counselled him to wash his hands of the whole affair, and thus have a bit of his own back on Bolsover and Skinner.

But in that event there would be no "feed" at Chunkley's Stores. And as Bunter was in his usual state of impecuniosity, it was a sure and certain

thing that there would be no more for him to eat until he got back to Greyfriars.

That prospect was too appalling to be contemplated. Bunter gave in.

"All right, you rotters!" he grunted. "I'll do the job!"

"Good!" said Skinner. "Let's get on with it, then!"

He picked up the local telephone directory, and looked for a number.

"Ready?" he asked.

Bunter nodded.

"We'll ring up old Popper first," said Skinner. "Here's the number. And don't forget, you fat Owl, you're supposed to be Quelch!"

Billy Bunter grunted, and picked up the receiver.

In two minutes he was through.

"Hallo! Is that Sir Hilton Popper?"

Billy Bunter's voice had now completely altered, and Skinner and Bolsover grinned as they listened. For the Owl was reproducing Mr. Quelch's severe, magisterial tones exactly. As Bolsover had observed, Bunter was certainly a "dabster" at imitating voices, and nobody listening at the other end could have been expected to conclude that anybody other than Mr. Quelch was speaking.

"Hold on, please," came the answer. "I will fetch Sir Hilton. Who is that, please?"

"Mr. Quelch, of Greyfriars, speaking," rapped out Bunter.

Bunter's powers of mimicry were certainly remarkable. That sentence sounded so much like Mr. Quelch that Skinner could not refrain from giving a nervous glance over his shoulder to assure himself that the Remove Form master was not standing by.

There was a brief interval, then the harsh, military voice of the peppery old baronet came through.

"Hallo, there! What d'you want?"

Sir Hilton Popper's tones were brusque. His acquaintance with Greyfriars School had not been of a very friendly character in the past. A bitter feud had existed at one time regarding the ownership of a piece of land on the borders of Greyfriars, and many a time had the Remove, in particular, come into conflict with the fiery old warrior.

Sir Hilton Popper had not always got the best of his exchanges with the school, a fact which made him, to put it mildly, not altogether amiable when he came into contact with anybody associated with Greyfriars.

He had met Mr. Quelch on several occasions, mostly connected with trouble between him and the Remove, and the relations between him and the Remove Form master were by no means cordial, as the Removites well knew.

"Mr. Quelch of Greyfriars speaking!" said Bunter.

"Ha! The Lower Fourth Form schoolmaster, I believe!" rasped Sir Hilton Popper. "I remember you, sir!"

"You are doubtless wondering what causes me to ring you up," continued the Greyfriars ventriloquist. "I am afraid our meetings have not been altogether happy in the past, sir!"

"Huh! Indeed they have not!" snorted the baronet.

"I am afraid the boys in my Form have frequently been a great nuisance to you."

"I am glad to hear you admit it, Mr. Quelch," came back Sir Hilton's gruff voice. "If you would only flog the young cubs more often they might become a little more respectful to their elders."

"I sometimes think that is true," replied Bunter, bestowing a fat wink on

Skinner. "Anyhow, sir, I have been wondering lately whether the time has not arrived when we should try to understand each other better."

"Huh! What, what!" said the baronet, evidently a little puzzled.

"I am ringing up to ask you whether you would care to dine with me to-morrow at seven."

"Ha! Dinner with you to-morrow, hey?" repeated Sir Hilton, thawing a little. "That's rather good of you, sir! But what the—"

"I am sure a frank talk on the subject of the boys in my charge over the dinner-table can only do good!" said Bunter, interrupting the old martinet.

"An excellent idea!" agreed the baronet. "Gad, sir! I have a lot to tell you about your boys! I must say this invitation is—ha!—a little surprising, but I shall certainly come. Thank you, Mr. Quelch!"

Sir Hilton Popper rang off, and Bunter replaced the receiver.

"Everything O.K.?" asked Skinner eagerly.

"Of course," said Bunter, with a fat smirk. "The old boy fell for it like a lamb! I say, you fellows, don't you think I did that rather well?"

"First rate!" said Skinner. "Still, we mustn't waste time, you know. Let's get through to Cobb of the Cross Keys, now!"

Bunter chuckled, and picked up the receiver again.

For some little time after that, Bunter was kept busy at the telephone. In turn, he got through to Mr. Cobb, the landlord of the Cross Keys, Mr. Lazarus, the second-hand dealer, Mr. Coots, the grocer, Mr. Mobbs, the master of the Fourth at Highcliff School, and Inspector Grimes of Courtfield Police Station.

After that, he continued with Mr. Bailes, the Courtfield athletic outfitter, and quite a number of other local tradesmen.

Skinner's inventive genius stood him in good stead, for he had to supply Bunter with a plausible story to suit each of these gentlemen. In the absence of a comprehensible reason for it, most of them would naturally have been suspicious of an invitation to dinner with the Form master at Greyfriars.

Skinner's imagination, however, was equal to the occasion. In the case of Mr. Cobb, for example, Skinner primed Bunter to inform the surprised innkeeper that he wanted an opportunity of a quiet talk with him on the subject of racing. He hinted that he was thinking of opening an account with a bookmaker, and if Mr. Cobb could recommend him to a local man who would act discreetly, he would like him to come also.

Mr. Cobb, who already made quite a considerable amount from the more "sporting" element among the older boys at Greyfriars, was highly gratified, if rather surprised, at the prospect of striking up a friendship with one of the masters, and he readily accepted the invitation.

At last Billy Bunter grew tired.

"I say, you fellows, I'm finished!" he said pathetically. "If I go on any longer without a snack, I'm sure I shall faint."

"I should think you're satisfied by now, aren't you, Skinner?" said Bolsover. "We've put nearly three bob's worth of coppers into that slot, so far!"

"If all the old fogies turn up, it'll be worth that to see Quelch's face!" grinned Skinner. "Anyway, I should think we've gone far enough now."

"Good!" said Bunter, rolling out of the telephone-box, and stretching his fat limbs with satisfaction. "Now, what about that feed, you chaps?"

"Do you think the porker deserves anything?" asked Bolsover of Skinner.

Bunter's little eyes began to dilate with horror at the thought that he might yet be cheated of his reward; but, to his relief, Skinner answered:

"Better dub up, I suppose. He has been useful, after all!"

"Well, he can go and stuff on his own, then!" snorted Bolsover. "I'm not eating now. Here you are, Fatty!"

Bunter grunted, but pocketed the proffered half-crown with avidity.

He remained with his Form-mates exactly one minute longer to receive Skinner's half-crown, then he rolled away from them, and made a bee-line for Chunkley's Stores.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

### An Essay Competition!

"O crumbs!"

That remark emanated from Billy Bunter.

He had been in Chunkley's Stores exactly five minutes, and during that period he had seen no sign of the new Tuck Department which Skinner had mentioned.

Chunkley's Stores, in Courtfield, corresponded to the great departmental stores of London. Anything that a human being might want—from a packet of pins to a motor-car—was obtainable at Chunkley's. It was probably a great convenience to the inhabitants of the town to have such a variety of goods housed under one roof, but Billy Bunter found it very confusing.

He had rolled in through the main entrance, and passed through departments labelled Perfumery, Stationery, Boots and Shoes, Ironmongery, Art, and Vegetables.

Then he had found that he was back at his starting-point again. Hence the exclamation:

"Oh crumbs!"

Bunter blinked around him quite wrathfully. He was feeling the gnawing pangs of hunger, and it was very annoying to the Owl to encounter any difficulty in finding where the eatables were kept. Apart from the Catering Department he had no interest whatever in Chunkley's Stores.

"Can I do anything for you, sir?"

A very superior person, in all the glory of a tailed coat and white spats asked that question as the puzzled Removite stared round in a vain search for provender.

"About time somebody attended to me, I should think!" said Bunter peevishly. "I want your Tuck Department."

"This way, sir, if you please!"

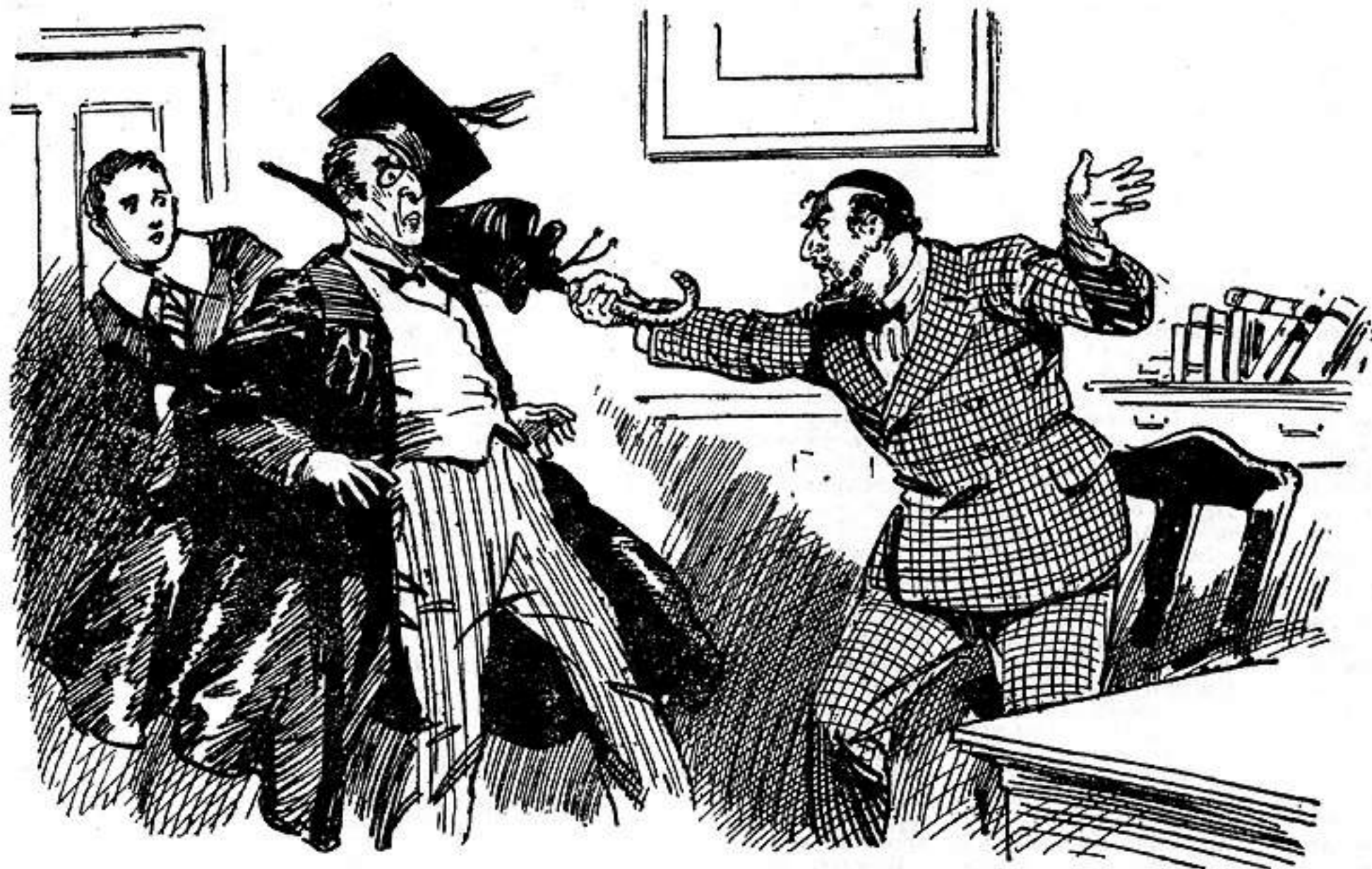
The superior person, who was evidently a shopwalker, swept down the aisle where Bunter was standing, and the fat junior followed him.

They passed through Perfumery, Stationery, and Boots and Shoes; then the shopwalker turned off into a part which Bunter had missed before.

"Mr. Wing," called out the shopwalker, "please attend to this young gentleman!"

Bunter stared around him in astonishment. There was no sign of tuck in the sense that Bunter had intended. In every direction geese, chickens, and rabbits abounded; but nothing was cooked, and even Bunter drew the line at consuming a raw fowl. It seemed that he was in the Poultry Department.





"Wharton!" rapped out Mr. Quelch. "Please fetch some of the prefects and have this person taken away!" "Ah, would you?" shouted the enraged Mr. Lazarus. "Then take that!" And, eluding the horrified Wharton's grasp, he brought down his umbrella on Mr. Quelch's shoulders with a loud thwack. (See Chapter 5.)

"Good-afternoon, sir!" said Mr. Wing, advancing to the counter. "What can I show you, sir?"

"The young gentleman wishes to purchase a duck," explained Bunter's guide.

"Duck!" howled Bunter. "Oh, my hat! I didn't say duck, you silly ass! I said tuck—T U C K—tuck, you know!"

The shopwalker had turned a little pink. It was rather disconcerting to be called a silly ass by a schoolboy.

"I misunderstood you!" he said shortly. "Come this way, please!"

He swept off again, and Bunter rolled after him. Surely he had made it clear now!

But apparently he had not. This time the shopwalker conducted him to the Tailoring Department, and waved forward a young man whose distinguishing feature was a tape measure hung over his shoulders.

Billy Bunter blinked furiously around him. Here again there was no sign of the comestibles he so badly wanted.

"Where the dickens have you brought me to now?" he hooted. "I said the Tuck Department, not the Tailoring Department!"

"Any tuck you require will be dealt with in this department," replied the shopwalker frigidly.

Billy Bunter stared.

"Well, I must say you've got a funny way of doing things here," he commented. "Still, if this is the right department, you can take my order."

"Yes, sir!" said the gentleman with the tape measure. "I am ready, sir!"

Bunter considered for a moment.

"Well, then, bring me half a dozen meringues, half a dozen jam-puffs, and a bottle of ginger-pop to begin with!" he said.

The two men jumped.

"D-did you say jam-puffs?" murmured the shopwalker, the pink hue in his cheeks deepening to red with anger,

which Bunter was at a loss to understand.

"That's right!" said Bunter. "Why not?"

"I hope this is not a practical joke, young man!" said the shopwalker severely, dropping the "sir" now.

"P-practical joke?"

"I understood you to say you wanted the tuck department!"

"So I do!" howled Bunter.

"All pleats and tucks and alterations to clothing are managed by our tailoring department. If you really want a tuck in one of your garments, this is where the matter will be dealt with."

Billy Bunter stared at Chunkley's men speechlessly. It had not occurred to him that the word "tuck" would convey any meaning other than the meaning he himself attached to it. "Tuck" to Bunter meant meat-pies, ham-patties, jam-puffs, doughnuts, preserved fruits, or any other kind of comestible. "Tuck" to Chunkley's was evidently a tailoring term—and a tailoring term only.

"My only hat!" gasped Bunter at last. "He, he, he! Well, you're a couple of asses, and no mistake! When I said the tuck department I was referring to grub. Grub, you know! Tommy—food! Don't you see?"

The tailoring assistant grinned and turned away. The shopwalker, who was evidently annoyed at Bunter's manner, did not appreciate the humour of the situation, however, and he merely indicated his understanding by a stiff nod.

"This shows the danger of using slang terms, young man!" he remarked in very lofty tones. "The now cafe, if that is what you want, is on the first floor. The lift is over there!"

He marched away in high dudgeon; and Bunter, with a fat chuckle, rolled over to the lift.

The Owl of the Remove went up in

the lift, and, stopping at the first floor, entered the real tuck department at last.

It was still rather early in the afternoon, and he did not have to wait more than a couple of minutes before the waitress had brought him an array of pastries, cakes, and delicacies that caused his fat face to beam with satisfaction.

"Is that all?" asked the waitress, with an irony that was completely wasted on her fat customer.

"That's all for the moment," answered Billy Bunter between mouthfuls of currant-cake. "By Jove! This cake is prime!"

The waitress walked away, and from a distance continued to watch in wonderment plate after plate of provender disappearing with amazing speed into Bunter's capacious mouth.

Doubtless the girl encountered all kinds of eaters in the course of her employment, but it was reasonably certain that no customer she had ever met could have equalled Billy Bunter in the rapidity with which he devoured the good things before him. The feast melted away like snow before the summer sun, and within a very short space of time Billy Bunter was ruefully regarding a bare table again.

"I say, miss, how much does that lot come to?" he asked.

"Four-and-fourpence," answered the waitress, looking at Bunter as if she were mesmerised.

"H'm!" murmured the Owl thoughtfully. "May as well blue the rest, I suppose. How much are your doughnuts?"

"Twopence each."

"Bring me four, then, and I'll fill up on those," said Bunter.

"Four doughnuts?" queried the waitress incredulously.

Bunter nodded; and the girl went off to fulfil the order, looking quite blank.

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Bunter was evidently something entirely new to her.

The doughnuts were soon disposed of; then the fat junior, with a faint grunt of satisfaction, leaned back in the chair and took his ease for an interval.

Billy Bunter was fond of the sound of his own voice, and he would have been glad if Skinner and Bolsover had remained with him.

Those two youths, however, were probably at Friardale by this time, so that was impossible, and Chunkley's Cafe was devoid of customers on whom Bunter might have inflicted his conversational powers.

For once in a way, therefore, Bunter filled in a few minutes reading.

There was a newspaper lying on a neighbouring chair, and the fat junior opened this and glanced through it.

It was the current copy of a local paper called the "Courtfield Express," which recorded the week's events every Saturday.

Billy Bunter took little or no interest in the affairs of Courtfield and district, and he yawned as he turned over the pages.

Now and again Billy Bunter's little eyes gleamed for a moment as they fell on an advertisement for somebody's delicious pork-pies, or somebody else's prime sausages. For the most part, however, Bunter found the paper decidedly uninteresting.

He was on the point of throwing it away in disgust, when he was attracted by an announcement in big letters on the last sheet.

It began:

"£10 10s. FOR YOU!"

Bunter proceeded to read that notice with a great deal of interest. The idea of ten guineas for William George Bunter made that fat junior feel quite giddy for a moment.

"In order to encourage the study of local history," ran the announcement, "we are offering the sum of ten guineas to the lady or gentleman who, in the opinion of the judges, sends in the best essay on any episodes in the history of Courtfield and the surrounding district."

Then followed details as to the closing date, the approximate length required in the essays, and other matters connected with the competition.

The hopeful look which had come into Bunter's eyes when he read the heading died out again as he read what had to be done to win the prize.

Ten guineas was a very useful sum of money.

Billy Bunter tried to work out roughly how many jam-puffs the money would buy, and although his mathematical genius was not developed sufficiently to enable him to complete the calculation, he could understand without the aid of arithmetic that the number would be considerable.

"My word! If only—" murmured Bunter,

He broke off. True, the competition was being run by a small, unimportant newspaper, and the standard of the essays submitted would not be high. That standard, however, would be sufficiently high to leave Bunter quite outclassed.

Bunter would have been the last person in the world to admit that he was deficient in those qualities which go to make a good essay writer—or in any other qualities, if it came to that—but in his heart of hearts he knew well enough that English was not his strong point.

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Bunter's grammar was, to put it mildly, slovenly, while his spelling would have disgraced a fag in the Second Form.

In addition to these two drawbacks, he had no knowledge whatever of local history.

Altogether, Bunter's chances of winning that prize seemed very remote.

"Rotten!" murmured Bunter. "I don't know why they couldn't give the prize for the best cooking recipe, or something. I suppose if I'd been a rotten scholarship cad, like Linley, instead of a gentleman, I could have bagged it!"

He read through the rules again, ruminating on the strange ways of modern journalism. It was really too bad that newspapers should deliberately encourage "swots" with ten-guinea prizes and leave "gentlemen" out in the cold.

"I wonder—"

Billy Bunter shook his head dubiously. For a moment he had wondered whether Mark Linley, the scholarship "cad," might be induced to collaborate with him in an essay for entry in the competition. On consideration, however, Bunter realised that the "collaboration" would be a rather one-sided affair, necessitating the entire work being done by Linley. It was doubtful whether such an arrangement would meet with the Lancashire lad's approval.

However, there could be no harm in trying, and consequently, when Bunter rose and paid his bill, he picked up the "Courtfield Express" and took it away with him.

And all the way out of Chunkley's Stores Billy Bunter continued to murmur:

"Ten guineas! If only!"

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### Mr. Quelch's Visitors!

"G O O D-E F E N I N G, young shentlemen!"

Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry looked round in some surprise.

It was the evening of the day following Skinner's visit to Courtfield.

The two Removites were just about to mount the stairs leading up to the Remove passage when the remark fell on their ears. The accent was such as was rarely heard at Greyfriars, and the two Removites wondered for a moment who the speaker could be.

"Why, it's Mr. Lazarus!" exclaimed the skipper of the Remove. "What the dickens—"

Harry Wharton was rather better acquainted with Mr. Lazarus' son, Solly, who played football for a Courtfield Council School team, than with Mr. Lazarus himself. However, he turned back and nodded cordially.

"Is there anything we can do for you?" he asked courteously.

"Indeed there ith, Master Wharton!" said the Courtfield second-hand dealer, with an expansive smile. "I vant to be shown to Mr. Quelch, if you pleathe!"

Wharton and Cherry could hardly avoid looking a little astonished. It was difficult to imagine Mr. Lazarus having business dealings with the master of the Remove, and even more difficult to imagine that the call was a friendly one. Mr. Lazarus was quite an amiable gentleman in his way, but his way was not Mr. Quelch's way, nor were his thoughts Mr. Quelch's thoughts, so to speak.

Still, it was no business of theirs.

"Don't wait for me, Bob," said Harry

Wharton. "I'll hop along with Mr. Lazarus."

Bob Cherry nodded and continued up the stairs, and Wharton moved off in the direction of Masters' Passage, followed by the unusual visitor.

"I can't say whether Mr. Quelch is in his room at present," said Harry Wharton, as they turned into Masters' Passage. "He sometimes has dinner with the Head in the evening, I know."

"Vell, he ain't having dinner with the Head to-night," said Mr. Lazarus, with a chuckle. "Mr. Quelch invited me to dinner with him, ath a matter of fact!"

Harry Wharton stared.

"In-Invited you to dinner?"

"Yeth! He vants to arrange about selling some of his furniture," explained Mr. Lazarus.

"S-selling some of his furniture!" stuttered the captain of the Remove. "But he hasn't any at the school, apart from that in his room?"

"Vell, that's vat he said," replied Mr. Lazarus, with a shrug. "Anyway, your schoolmaster has asked me to dinner, and here I am, ready for it!"

Harry Wharton hesitated, hardly knowing whether to tap on Mr. Quelch's door or not. If Mr. Quelch really had invited the old deafe, then he could only conclude that Mr. Quelch had suddenly taken leave of his senses.

However, Mr. Lazarus seemed to be sincere enough in his idea, and under the circumstances the only thing to do was to trot him into Mr. Quelch and see what happened.

Harry Wharton therefore rapped on the door of Mr. Quelch's room.

There was a busy clicking going on inside the room, indicating that the Remove Form-master was engaged on his famous "History of Greyfriars." Judging by that sound, Mr. Quelch certainly was not anticipating entertaining anybody to dinner.

"Come in!"

Harry Wharton entered, with the portly little Jewish gentleman at his heels.

Mr. Quelch was seated at his desk, typing. The desk was littered with freshly-typed sheets of paper, and other papers and books were strewn about the room in some disorder. It was evident that Mr. Quelch had been working hard.

"Mr. Lazarus to see you, sir!" said Harry.

"Mr. Lazarus?"

Mr. Quelch glanced up blankly.

"To see me, did you say, Wharton?"

He rose to his feet, and the expression of bewilderment on his face increased as Mr. Lazarus shook him warmly by the hand.

"Pleathed to meet you, Mr. Quelch!" said Mr. Lazarus. "Very kind of you to invite me to dinner to-night!"

Mr. Quelch jumped.

"Invite you to dinner?" he exclaimed, dumbfounded.

"Nozzing like a good meal to help a deal through," said Mr. Lazarus, depositing his hat on the table and making himself comfortable in a chair.

Wharton was about to leave, but Mr. Quelch signalled him back.

"There seems to be some extraordinary mistake here," he said, turning to Mr. Lazarus. "I am Mr. Quelch, master of the Remove Form at this school. I assume that you have come here by mistake."

The dealer rose again, the fat smile leaving his face as he observed his host's frigid demeanour.

"Mr. Quelch! That's right! You are the shentleman I have come to see. I am here to dinner with you, and to talk about the furniture you vish to sell."

"Furniture!" repeated Mr. Quelch, his eyes almost starting from his head.

"I am at a loss to understand you, my good sir!"

"Don't you remember ringing me up yesterday, and inviting me to come here, then?" asked Mr. Lazarus, looking surprised in his turn.

"I remember nothing of the kind!" said Mr. Quelch tartly. "Wharton, please conduct this person off the premises."

There was a howl of rage from Mr. Lazarus.

"My goodness! And you think I come all this distance to be shown off the premises? Vy do you tink I come here, then, you big, ugly schoolmaster?"

Mr. Quelch turned quite red. It was the first time in his life that he had been called a big, ugly schoolmaster.

"Moderate your language, my good man!" he said, as calmly as he could. "And please leave this room at once!"

"Come along, Mr. Lazarus," said Harry Wharton. "You've evidently made a mistake."

"Mistake!" hooted Mr. Lazarus angrily. "Did I not hear this schoolmaster on the telephone with my own ears? I tell you I make no mistake!"

"But I have never spoken to you in my life!" said Mr. Quelch, raising his voice. "How dare you say I had a telephone conversation with you!"

Mr. Lazarus rolled his eyes about in rage.

"But I do!" he howled. "Ith there, then, anozzer with your voice? I tell you I make no mistake."

"I do not wish to argue with you!" rapped out Mr. Quelch. "Please go, or I will have you forcibly ejected!"

"And there ith no dinner for me, after I valk all this vay?" wailed Mr. Lazarus. "Scoundrel that you are to vaste a man's time!"

"What!"

Mr. Quelch crimsoned with wrath. "Wharton, please fetch some of the prefects, and have this person taken away!" he ground out.

"Ah, would you?" shouted Mr. Lazarus. "Then take that!"

And, eluding the horrified Wharton's grasp, he brought down his umbrella on Mr. Quelch's shoulder with a loud thwack.

For a moment, the Remove Form master seemed too paralysed with anger and astonishment to act.

But when he did recover himself he showed an agility surprising in one of his years. Wheeling round, he warded off a second blow, then snatched the umbrella from his opponent's hand and seized him firmly by the scruff of the neck.

"Please obtain help, Wharton!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Upon my word, I have a good mind to summon the police. Never have I heard of such a monstrous and unprovoked assault!"

Harry Wharton darted out of the study.

He was just in time to run full tilt into Trotter, the page, and the pompous form of Sir Hilton Popper.

Trotter was nimble enough to dodge in time, but the baronet caught the full brunt of the attack.

Crash!

For one dizzy moment Sir Hilton Popper and Harry Wharton whirled round in fond embrace; then, with a terrific concussion, they crashed to the floor.

"Ow!"

"Oooch! Good gad!"

Doors opened all down the passage at the sound of that great fall, and the faces of several masters looked out.

"Oh! Gad!" gasped Sir Hilton Popper. "You young villain! I'll have you flogged for this, you mannerless young whelp!"

Harry Wharton, gasping himself from the impact, helped the old martinet to his feet, and Sir Hilton, his face the colour of a boiled lobster, glared at him with a glare that ought to have shrivelled him up.

Quite a crowd had begun to assemble, juniors running up from all directions to find out the cause of the unusual hubbub in the master's quarters.

"Show me to Mr. Quelch!" roared the baronet. "And you come with me!" he added, gripping Harry Wharton by the shoulder.

Trotter led the way into the Remove master's room, and the trio entered, the crowd following them as far as the door.

There was a buzz of excitement as the juniors saw, through the doorway, the extraordinary spectacle of Mr. Quelch holding Mr. Lazarus firmly by the scruff of the neck.

"What the merry dickens—"

"Look at Quelchy!"

"Great pip! He's scrapping with old Lazarus!"

Bolsover and Skinner and Bunter had joined the crowd, and they watched the proceedings with the utmost interest.

Bunter had been warned by the other two that one word from him to the crowd would result in his immediate slaughter, and for once, therefore, his fat chin rested, though he longed to tell all he know about the affair.

Inside the study, Sir Hilton Popper was fairly dancing with rage.

"I demand that you flog this young rascal at once!" he spluttered.

Mr. Quelch released Mr. Lazarus and faced his second visitor.

"Sir Hilton Popper!" he gasped.

"What ever brings you here, my dear sir?"

"I have come to dinner, as requested by you, sir!" roared the baronet. "I have received the kind of welcome I might have expected here—this young villain has bowled me over outside your very door!"

"You—you have come to dinner with me?" stuttered Mr. Quelch faintly.

"What—"

"I suppose you are not going to deny inviting me, are you?" hooted the lord of Popper Court.

Mr. Quelch looked at him helplessly.

"Well, sir?" roared Sir Hilton Popper. "Are you deaf, or silly, or both?"

The crowd outside chortled. This was as good an entertainment as had ever been seen in Masters' passage.

"Calm yourself, my dear sir," said Mr. Quelch icily, as he began to recover his composure. "I can assure you that I should not think of inviting you here to dinner."

Sir Hilton Popper greeted that remark with a snort of disgust.

"A trick, by gad!" he howled. "A trick to fool me! I might have known what to expect from Greyfriars! Tricked by an idiot of a schoolmaster! Good gad!"

The baronet stamped up and down, shaking his fists in the air, and growling like an angry bear.

"Has everybody taken leave of their senses?" demanded Mr. Quelch, addressing space. "Sir Hilton Popper, I'm afraid you have been drinking!"

That, as Bob Cherry expressed it, did it!

If Sir Hilton Popper had resembled a bear before, he resembled a whole menagerie of bears now!

He raved and fumed and stormed and shouted abuse, until the onlookers began seriously to wonder whether he would break a blood-vessel.

It was in the middle of all this that a fresh arrival came on the scene.

The heavy figure of Inspector Grimes, of the Courtfield Police, moved through the crowd, and walked through into the room.

"Mr. Quelch here? Ah, thank you for your invitation, sir! Here I am!"

"Another invitation!" murmured Mr. Quelch, turning quite giddy for a moment. "B-bless my soul!"

But Inspector Grimes was not the last.

There was a hubbub among the crowd in the passage, and those in Mr. Quelch's room could hear a roar of laughter.

"Oh, my giddy aunt!"

"Cobb!"

"From the Cross Keys, you know!"

"And Banks, the bookie!"

"And they've come to dinner with Quelchy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Messrs. Cobb and Banks edged their way through the crowd, very much surprised at the commotion their arrival had caused.

"Now, where's this 'ere Quelch?" demanded Mr. Cobb. "We've got an invite here to-night, you young gents; so jest you make way, there!"

"And none of your larks, neither!" added Mr. Banks suspiciously.

"Make way for the guests, you chaps!"

"Two to one, bar one!" yelled Snoop.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Quelch, at the sight of the latest arrivals, reeled against the mantelpiece. It seemed to him for a little while that the whole world had indeed gone mad.

"Are you the old covey?" asked Mr. Banks, extending a beefy hand. "Shake! And thanks for the invitation—eh, Cobb?"

There was a fresh roar from the passage.

"Still they come! My only hat!"

"It's old Mobby, from Highcliffe!"

"And Coots, the grocer!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And Bailes, the outfitter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's a jape, by Jove!"

The affair had by now attained the dimensions of a riot. Half the school was wedged in Masters' Passage, and juniors and seniors alike were helpless with laughter.

The other masters did their best to obtain some kind of order, but the task was too great.

Inside Mr. Quelch's room an angry and heated crowd of disappointed guests were arguing and gesticulating, and comparing notes, and the noise was almost as great as in the passage.

"Silence!" roared the unhappy Remove master repeatedly. "Please, please be silent for a minute!"

At last the clamour began to die down a little, and a few minutes later, it became possible to speak and be heard.

"Gentlemen!" said Mr. Quelch, addressing the mixed crowd that surrounded him, "I am very sorry indeed that your time has been wasted in this unfortunate affair."

There was a growl from the gentlemen. They were in full agreement with him on that point.

"I wish to say," continued Mr. Quelch, "that I did not telephone any one of you yesterday, and it would therefore appear that the invitations were the work of a practical joker."

Another angry growl.

"I need hardly say," said the Remove master, his gimlet eyes gleaming, "that I shall not rest until the perpetrators of the outrage are discovered."

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Billy Bunter, listening out in the passage, quaked.

"When they are discovered, I can promise you that the severest punishment will be meted out to them."

"Oh lor'!" murmured the Owl.

"In the meantime, I can only regret the inconvenience caused you, and ask you to leave me to deal with the matter," concluded Mr. Quelch.

And with that he sat down and waited for the unwelcome visitors to depart.

They duly departed—but not before each and every one of them had expressed himself in no uncertain terms on the subject of the manners of Greyfriars in general, and matters in particular.

And by the time the last had left, Mr. Quelch was positively grinding his teeth with rage and chagrin.

Skinner's jape had been a greater success than even the cad of the Remove had expected. But there was a shock in store for Harold Skinner if he thought he had heard the last of his great wheeze.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### Bunter Keeps it Dark!

"S O you think we're safe, Skinney?"

Percy Bolsover asked that question rather uneasily.

An hour had passed since Mr. Quelch's guests had shaken the dust of Greyfriars from their feet.

But though they were gone they were by no means forgotten.

The entire school, from the inkiest fag of the Second up to the stateliest senior of the Sixth, talked of nothing else but the tremendous jape that some person or persons unknown, had perpetrated on the Remove Form master. Even the masters, in their sanctum sanctorum, the Masters' Common-room, discussed it at some length.

In fact, the jape had attracted rather more attention than Skinner and his fellow-plotters desired. Hence the uneasiness that impelled Bolsover to drop in to Skinner's study and hear what that humorous junior thought about it.

Skinner was not looking particularly cheerful over the success of his efforts as Bolsover put his question.

"I don't know that I do feel altogether safe," he replied, a little gloomily.

"Well, it won't be my first licking, anyway!" grunted Bolsover. "And, I must say, Skinney, the whole thing was a howling success!"

"Oh, rather! Quelch has never had such a shock in his life!"

"His face was worth a guinea a box!" grinned Bolsover.

The two plotters chuckled at the recollection of the unusual procession of local celebrities that had visited Mr. Quelch that evening.

"I should feel as safe as houses, if we were the only two concerned in the stunt," said Skinner, becoming serious again.

"So should I," agreed Bolsover. "But—"

Skinner nodded.

"Just so! There's Bunter to consider!"

"Pity we had to bring him into it!" growled Bolsover.

"No use crying over spilt milk!" Skinner remarked philosophically. "We had to bring him in, or call off the jape. And you must admit he did well on the telephone."

"Agreed!" chuckled Bolsover. "It

was worth feeding the brute to hear him taking off old Quelch!"

"The thing that's troubling me," said Skinner, "is that I'm afraid old Quelch will remember Bunter's gift for imitating voices."

Bolsover nodded thoughtfully.

"We won't stand a dog's chance, in that case," he remarked. "That is, unless we can terrify Bunter into keeping completely mum, whatever happens."

"We might do that. But he's such a fat fool—Hullo, talk of the angels!"

While Skinner was speaking, Billy Bunter had unceremoniously rolled into the study.

"I say, you fellows!" he said, blinking uneasily at the two Removites. "I've come to ask you about that jape. If anything leaks out, I suppose it's understood that I had nothing to do with it?"

"What!" yelled Bolsover and Skinner in unison.

"After all, Skinney," continued Bunter, "you dragged me into it, you know. I told you at the time it was not quite the thing, from my point of view."

"And your point of view jolly soon changed when we offered you five bob's worth of tuck!" grinned Bolsover. "Don't you worry, you fat tulip! If there's any row coming, you're going to be well in it!"

Billy Bunter groaned.

"Beasts! I say, you know, old Quelch's like a blessed raging lion over this. If he finds out, we're in for a fearful row!"

"And that's a jolly good reason why he shouldn't find out!" snapped Skinner.

"If you'll only keep your mouth shut, you fat idiot, he can never get any evidence that we had anything to do with it."

"That's so, fatty!" chimed in Bolsover. "If only to save your own skin, you'd better not breathe a word to anyone about this bizney."

"What's more," said Skinner, an ugly look appearing in his eyes, "if you do give the game away this time you'll have to answer to us, as well as the Quelch bird!"

"Ow!"

"We'll slaughter you, you fat toad!" growled Bolsover, bestowing a ferocious look on the Owl of the Remove. "That's a tip!"

"Oh, really, Bolsover! Is that all the gratitude I get for helping you out with your beastly jape?"

"All you deserve," said Bolsover gruffly. "Mind, if you let out a word you're for it!"

"Oh, I shall keep mum all right!" said Bunter loftily. "No need to worry about that, you chaps! I shall keep it dark!"

"You'd better," growled Bolsover. "Look out for squalls if you don't, that's all!"

At this moment there came an interruption, in the form of a kick at the study door.

"Bunter in there?" boomed the powerful voice of Bob Cherry, outside.

The next moment the speaker entered.

"Hullo, hallo, hallo! Here you are, then! Quelch sent me to find you at once, Bunter!"

"M-m-me?" stuttered Bunter, his podgy face blanching.

"Yes, you, you fat pippin! Better stuff your bags with exercise-books, he's in the tantrums!"

"Ww-w-what does he w-want me for?" asked Bunter, his teeth almost chattering with fear.

"Goodness knows. Buzz off quickly, though, before he bursts a boiler!"

Skinner and Bolsover exchanged a quick look as the trembling Owl rolled out of the study. Both guessed that the summons was connected with their great jape. But they could do nothing except hope for the best, and they allowed Bunter to go without further warnings.

In fear and trembling, Billy Bunter made his way to Mr. Quelch's study. His fat knees were fairly knocking together by the time he arrived at that dreaded apartment.

The door of Mr. Quelch's room was open, and as he rolled along Masters' Passage Bunter could see the Remove Form master pacing up and down, with fury written on his lean face.

"Ah, Bunter!" rasped Mr. Quelch, spotting the reluctant Owl through the doorway. "Come in, and close the door behind you!"

With an audible groan Bunter obeyed the command.

Mr. Quelch glared at Bunter with a truly dreadful glare for some seconds, then he burst out with:

"A disgraceful practical joke has been played on me this evening!"

"Y-y-you don't say so, sir!" gasped the unhappy Bunter.

"A number of gentlemen were invited here to an imaginary dinner with me to-night, and I have been put to great inconvenience and annoyance by their arrival."

"I—I hope you don't think—" mumbled Bunter.

"Silence! I have since been thinking over the matter, and have come to the conclusion that the affair presents one extraordinary feature."

"D-d-does it, really, sir?" stuttered the Owl.

"The extraordinary feature is that each one of the gentlemen concerned was under the impression that he had heard my voice on the telephone," ground out Mr. Quelch.

"W-w-what a strange thing, sir!"

"Very strange indeed!" said the Remove Form master, his face positively working with rage. "Now, I believe that you are the only boy in the school with a propensity for imitating other people's voices?"

"N-n-nothing of the kind, sir!" said Bunter, with a groan. "Any of the fellows will tell you that I can't imitate voices for nuts!"

"What?"

"When Skinner put it to me I told him that I couldn't imitate you, sir, if I tried," explained Bunter feverishly. "Th-th-there's a sort of rasping sound about your voice, you know, sir, and I—"

"You stupid boy!" rumbled Mr. Quelch. "And what did Skinner do after you had declined to help him in this senseless prank?"

"Oh, really, sir! Skinner didn't ask me at all, sir. I heard him tell Bolsover that he had the highest respect for you, and wouldn't think of japing you like that!"

"So it was Bolsover, was it?" roared the irascible Mr. Quelch.

"Certainly not, sir!" gasped Bunter, beginning to get in a panic now. "You've got it all wrong, sir! Bolsover absolutely declined to have anything to do with it, sir."

"You admit, then, that there was a plot?"

"N-n-not at all, sir! If you think we went over to Courtfield to ring all those people up you're mistaken, sir. Bolsover and Skinner just took me over to stand me a feed in Chunkley's Stores."

"So you went to Courtfield?" demanded Mr. Quelch, his eyes burning like live coals now.

"We didn't," groaned Bunter.

"What?"



"Oh, you rotters!" Billy Bunter gave a yell as Skinner picked up a sheaf of papers from the floor and hurled them into the fire. The Owl of the Remove made a leap at the fireplace, but he was too late. Just as he bent over to reach for the papers, they burst into flames. (See Chapter 7.)

"What I really meant to say was that we didn't go near Courtfield yesterday afternoon!"

"But you have just said you did!" roared Mr. Quelch.

"That was only a figure of speech, sir," explained Bunter. "A—a—a kind of metaphor, if you understand, sir."

"I understand quite well, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch, "that you, and Bolsover, and Skinner planned this practical joke on your Form master and executed your plans at Courtfield yesterday afternoon."

"Oh dear!" gasped Bunter. "W-what-ever makes you think that, sir?"

"I presume that this is an attempt at revenge for the punishment I administered the other day," continued Mr. Quelch.

The Remove master's expression was quite terrifying now, for he was turning the matter over in his mind, and beginning really to appreciate the enormity of the offence that had been committed against him.

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

"You may!" said Mr. Quelch unexpectedly.

"Thank you, sir!"

"Do not trouble to thank me yet, Bunter. You may go and fetch Bolsover and Skinner, and return with them to this study as quickly as possible."

"Oh, lor'!"

Billy Bunter almost tottered out of the room.

Bolsover and Skinner were waiting at the foot of the stairs leading up to the Remove quarters, and they pounced on the fat junior eagerly as he rolled towards them.

"Well, what did he want you for?" snapped Skinner.

Bunter gave a deep groan.

"I—I say, you fellows, the game's up!"

"What!"

"You fat fool!"

"Quelch wants you two to come back with me to his study at once," said Bunter wretchedly.

Bolsover snorted and Skinner turned pale.

"So you sneaked, did you?" hissed Skinner.

"Of course not!" moaned Bunter. "The beast seemed to read my thoughts, somehow. I kept it dark, all right!"

"Wait till I get my hands on you afterwards, you fat toad!" growled Bolsover.

"Oh, really, Bolsover—"

"That doesn't help us now!" said Skinner, with a shiver. "We're in for it this time, Bolsy, and no mistake!"

"Well, let's get in and get it over!" granted Bolsover.

And, with the air of three condemned criminals, the Removites moved off in the direction of their Form master's study.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Bunter's Little Ruse!

**T**HE feud between Mr. Quelch and Skinner and his two allies seemed, after the evening of the jape, to have ended in complete victory for Mr. Quelch.

It was true that Skinner & Co. had played a record jape on their Form master, and to that extent they certainly had scored.

But that seemed insufficient compensation for the interview that followed Billy Bunter's unsuccessful attempts to keep the affair dark.

Mr. Quelch was more angry than the Removites had ever seen him, and for

ten minutes the three delinquents had to endure his bitter tongue, wondering all the time what punishment was to follow.

They soon learnt—and the revelation was not a pleasant one! Mr. Quelch selected his best cane and laid it on well and truly.

The three hapless japers considered that their previous "licking" at Mr. Quelch's hands had been quite bad enough, but, in comparison with this, the other was as moonlight unto sunlight, as water unto wine.

Loud and long were the lamentations of Skinner & Co. in Mr. Quelch's study that evening. And when at last the irate Form master had completed his task, they were feeling that the life of a japer at Greyfriars really was not worth living.

To add to their misery, Mr. Quelch imposed a thousand lines on each of the offenders. That seemed the last straw.

Billy Bunter was the first to leave the Form master's room, and he scuttled away in the direction of the Remove quarters like a frightened rabbit. For Bunter, with good reason, feared the wrath of Bolsover and Skinner, and was not anxious to meet them until they had had a chance to simmer down a little.

The rest of the evening Billy Bunter spent in Study No. 7, under the wing of Peter Todd, and although for a time he continued to bemoan his fate, he brightened up before bed-time.

For the news that Bunter had been chiefly responsible for the great jape against Mr. Quelch quickly spread through the Remove, and in a very short time the fat junior found himself quite the hero of the hour. Before the evening was over many of the fellows had dropped in to hear the full story of the jape, and in the excitement of his

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(Continued from page 13.)

sudden popularity Bunter began to forget his painful interview with Mr. Quelch.

Bolsover and Skinner had not forgotten, however, and they eyed their fat confederate with baleful eyes in the dormitory that night. But they knew that there would be trouble with the rest of the Form if they started "ragging" Bunter openly, so they postponed the event, and mentally vowed that Bunter should suffer for his sins on the morrow.

Billy Bunter, for his part, mentally vowed that he would very carefully avoid the society of his late allies for a time.

For the best part of the following day he succeeded in doing this. Whenever possible, he stuck to Peter Todd, and when his redoubtable study-mate was not available, he locked himself in Study No. 7 and "waded in" to the task of writing the thousand lines that Mr. Quelch had given him.

Mr. Quelch required the lines delivered in two instalments—the first half before Saturday evening, and the second before the following Wednesday evening, and so well did Bunter get on with them that he had finished five hundred lines before bed-time.

Having done this, the Owl, for the first time during the evening, issued forth warily from the study, and rolled downstairs to deliver the "impot" to the Form master's room.

There was no answer to the knock he gave on the door, so Bunter rolled in without further ado, and blinked round the room to see if anybody was in.

Mr. Quelch was not there, and the fat junior grunted. It was very rarely that Bunter had any evidence of exceptional industry to show his Form master, and he rather wanted Mr. Quelch to see those lines before bed-time.

"Blow him!" murmured the Owl disrespectfully. "S'pose I'd better have a nose round the House and find him!"

Before proceeding to have a "nose" round the House, however, Billy Bunter had a "nose" round the room. The most inquisitive junior at Greyfriars could not let such an opportunity as this pass by.

He rummaged among the books and papers on Mr. Quelch's desk, but there was nothing of a private and confidential nature, such as would have interested Billy Bunter.

It was while glancing at a batch of handwritten notes and typewritten sheets containing the most recent chapters of Mr. Quelch's famous "History of Greyfriars" that Bunter gave a sudden start.

"My only hat!"

He read one or two lines of the manuscript, and his little eyes gleamed behind his spectacles.

"My only hat! The very thing!"

He dived his hand into his pocket and, fishing out a newspaper cutting from among the other contents, glanced eagerly through it.

"Ten guineas for the best essay on any

episode or episodes in the history of Courtfield and district," he muttered. "Well, I suppose Greyfriars is in the Courtfield district, ain't it?"

He picked up Mr. Quelch's manuscript and perused it again.

"Henry VIII.'s encounter with the Grey Friars.' That's just the kind of thing they want in their blessed competition, I should think."

Billy Bunter's fat brain turned the matter over.

"Ten guineas!" he murmured. "My hat! I could do with that prize!"

It was obvious, even to Bunter, that Mr. Quelch's work would be of a higher grade than most of the other competitors in the "Courtfield Express" Essay Competition. The chance that anybody else would send in an essay better than a chapter or two of Mr. Quelch's book was remote indeed. Bunter, therefore, rightly surmised that if he submitted some of Mr. Quelch's work, in his name, his prospects of winning the prize were excellent.

Billy Bunter was not intentionally dishonest, but his ideas of meum and tuum were a little vague at times. In cases like this, where something really worth having was concerned, such ideas were liable to disappear completely.

And that is what happened on this occasion. After a little hesitation, Billy Bunter quickly transferred Mr. Quelch's batch of papers to his pocket, and hurriedly quitted the room. His impot was still clutched in his hand, but he had almost forgotten it at that moment.

"After all," he muttered, as he rolled off towards the Remove passage, "nobody here reads the blessed rag, so if I win the prize, it's not likely to be spotted. And, anyway, Quelch's a beast!"

That last thought apparently satisfied Bunter's conscience completely, and he was wearing quite a smirk of satisfaction when he reached the Remove passage again.

His mind being now occupied solely with the subject of the essay competition, Billy Bunter had, for the moment, forgotten the very existence of Skinner and Bolsover.

He was very forcibly reminded of them, however, before he arrived at Study No. 7. He had just reached the top of the staircase when a heavy hand fell on his fat shoulder, another was clapped over his mouth, and, struggling furiously, Bunter found that he was in the hands of the Philistines at last.

"Got him!" grunted Bolsover.

"Yank the fat frog into my study!" said Skinner. "We'll teach him to sneak!"

"Groogh!"

Billy Bunter kicked out desperately, and there was a howl from Skinner and Bolsover as their shins caught the kicks. But his struggles were of no avail, and within a few seconds he was within Study No. 11, still held in a grip of iron by the burly Bolsover.

"Now, my fat beauty, you're going through the hoop!" said Bolsover grimly. "Lock the door, Skinney!"

"Groogh!" mumbled Bunter.

With Bolsover's hand over his mouth that was about all he could say.

Bolsover glared triumphantly at his victim.

"We've had two lickings from Quelch this week through you!" said the bully of the Remove savagely.

"And now we're going to get a little satisfaction by lamming you with a cricket stump!" said Harold Skinner cheerfully.

"Groogh!"

"Hold him over the table, Bolsy," continued Skinner in businesslike tones,

as he picked up a cricket stump. "You can have a go after I've finished!"

As Bolsover swung the helpless Owl into the required position, the impot which Bunter had been carrying fell out of his hands, and Skinner picked it up.

"Only the fat fool's lines, I expect!" growled Bolsover. "Chuck 'em on the fire and make him do 'em again!"

Skinner put the suggestion into effect by hurling the sheaf of papers on to the remains of a fire which was burning in the grate. Billy Bunter, who had not ceased to struggle the whole time, gave a convulsive jump at that dreadful occurrence, and for a moment jerked himself free and made a leap at the fireplace.

He was too late to save the impot, however, for just as he bent over to reach for it the whole thing burst into flames and was consumed in a few seconds.

"Gone!" said Skinner, with a grin. "Still, you can do them over again, Bunter!"

"Ow! You rotters!"

Billy Bunter gasped, and glared at the two grinning Removites, then looked round wildly for a means of escape.

But there was none.

Necessity, however, is the mother of invention, and as Bunter stood there, like a hunted porpoise at bay, a cunning gleam entered his eyes.

"Ow! You rotters!" he repeated, dodging Bolsover, as the burly Removite made a grab at him. "You've jolly well gone and done it now!"

"Got you!" said Bolsover, catching his fat quarry by the scruff of the neck.

"Yaroooop!" yelled Bunter. "Leggo, you bullying rotter! Don't you see what you've done now?"

"What's the matter with the idiot?" demanded Skinner, lowering his cricket stump for a moment. "What the dickens are you burbling about, Bunter?"

"Yah! Leggo first and I'll tell you! It's a jolly serious matter!"

Bolsover released the Owl, and Bunter stood up again, rubbing himself tenderly.

"Beasts!" he grunted. "Nice mess you've got yourselves into now, I must say."

"What do you mean, you fat idiot?" roared Bolsover.

"Those papers you threw on the fire just now—"

"Well, what about them? You'll have to do them again, now!"

"You silly asses!" sniffed Bunter. "They weren't my lines at all!"

"Not your lines? Well, I suppose they weren't anything important, were they?"

"He, he, he! Not really!" sniggered Bunter. "Old Quelch may think they're important, though!"

"Quelch?"

"Yes, Quelch!" grinned Bunter. "You've gone and done it now, you chaps! He, he, he!"

"Cut out the cackling!" snorted Bolsover, shaking Bunter fiercely. "What the dickens were they?"

"Ow! Lemme go, you beast, or you'll break my glasses!"

"What were they?" roared Bolsover.

"All right! I'll tell you! They were papers of Quelch's."

"Oh crumbs!"

The two Removites looked at Bunter uneasily.

"Well, anyway," said Bolsover optimistically, "they may not be of any importance."

"But they are!" said Bunter, with a fat chuckle. "They were chapters of

his mouldy old 'History of Greyfriars.'"

"What!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Complete dismay was written on the faces of Skinner and Bolsover now. All thought of ragging Bunter left them as they heard that astonishing intelligence.

"That's why I said you'd done it!" grinned Bunter. "You have done it now, and you're properly in the soup, you silly asses! He, he, he!"

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

### In the Soup!

**S**KINNER and Bolsover stared at the Owl of the Remove in alarm. "Do you mean to say that we've chucked some of Quelch's 'History' on the fire?" gasped Bolsover at last.

Bunter nodded.

"But what—"

"Oh, the fat spoofer's lying, as usual, I expect!" interrupted Skinner. "We know he's just been down to Quelch with the impot he's been writing all day. The fact is that Quelch wasn't there, and Bunter brought it back again. It was his impot all right!"

"Oh, really, Skinner! If you doubt my word—"

Billy Bunter was looking quite indignant for a moment. The fact that Mr. Quelch's manuscript was in his pocket and that Skinner had hit upon the truth did not lessen the indignation of the Owl of the Remove at having his word doubted.

"Still, it's funny for the fat brute to think out such a weird yarn," remarked Bolsover.

"It's true, I tell you!" howled Bunter, almost beginning to believe it himself in his anxiety to inspire terror into the hearts of his captors.

"Then, if it's true, what the dickens were you doing with papers belonging to Quelch?" demanded Skinner.

Billy Bunter hesitated.

"I—I—well, the fact of the matter is that I took them when I went down with my impot," he explained.

"But what for?" howled Skinner.

Skinner, in spite of his apparent scepticism, was beginning to wonder now. As Bolsover had said, it was funny for Bunter to think out such a weird yarn if there was no foundation of truth for it.

"What for, you fat cuckoo?" howled Skinner again, as Bunter still hesitated.

"Oh, really, Skinner! As a matter of fact, I thought I'd hide them from the beast for a week or two just to annoy him. You know how potty he is on the muck he writes!"

"Oh crikey! Is that the truth?" asked Bolsover, with a searching look at Bunter.

"Of course it's not!" said Skinner, between his teeth.

"I believe it is, for once, anyway," groaned Bolsover. "It's just the idiotic kind of thing he would do."

"It's true, right enough, you fellows!" said Bunter eagerly.

"Well, if it is, we've let ourselves in for it now with a vengeance!" remarked Bolsover. "We shall be fairly scragged this time!"

"But it's all Bunter's fault!" snarled Skinner. "How the dickens were we to know he was carrying Quelch's belongings about with him?"

"I don't think Quelch will worry much about that aspect of it," grunted Bolsover. "It will be quite enough for him to know that the three of us are up against him again!"

"But it's not as though we'd burnt the stuff intentionally," argued Skinner desperately.

Bolsover shrugged his shoulders.

"I say, you fellows, you can rely on me to keep it dark!" said Bunter generously.

"Like you did last time, I suppose!" said Bolsover savagely.

"Better, perhaps, to make a clean breast of it right away, before the fat fool puts his foot in it," said Skinner, looking uneasily at Bolsover.

"Well, you can do that, if you like!" snorted Bolsover. "Personally, I'm not asking for any more trouble this week. I've had quite enough already, thank you!"

Skinner groaned dismally.

"It's all Bunter's fault!"

"And yours!" snapped Bolsover.

"Didn't I tell you before we began japing Quelch what it would be? When you start ragging, as I said, you usually finish up by being ragged yourself!"

"Ragged!" groaned Skinner. "That'll hardly describe it! If this comes to light, we'll be flayed alive!"

"Perhaps you won't be so anxious to jape Quelch again afterwards!" growled Bolsover. "I wish I'd left you to it in the first place now."

"Oh, give us a rest!" said Skinner. "The only thing to be done now, is to make the best of a bad job, and see if we can't get out of it somehow."

Bunter blinked at his companions rather scornfully. Now that he had succeeded in convincing them that they had burned Mr. Quelch's manuscript, he was beginning to regain his confidence. He could see that after the news he had given them, Bolsover and Skinner were feeling too groggy to continue with the ragging they had intended for him.

Without having altogether intended it, Bunter, by deceiving the two Removites as to the nature of the packet they had thrown on the fire, had achieved a dual purpose.

In the first place, he had gained his immediate object of putting them "off their stroke" in the ragging they had meant to administer to him.

And, secondly, he had, to a certain extent, lessened his own responsibility by getting them to believe that they had destroyed the papers.

Dense as Bunter was, he realised that there would be a hue-and-cry after the missing papers as soon as the loss was discovered. If, by some piece of bad luck, it was found out that Bunter had taken them from Mr. Quelch's study, it would help to mitigate his offence if his allies were under the impression that they were mixed up in the affair, too.

Bunter felt his confidence grow as he saw that Bolsover and Skinner were really scared.

He blinked at them disdainfully.

"I say, you fellows, there's no need to get the wind up, you know," he said, with a sniff. "Of course, I don't expect much from you, Skinner; but I must say I'm rather surprised at you, Bolsy!"

"What!" roared Bolsover.

"It shows there's something in what they say about bullies being the

biggest cowards," went on Bunter cheerfully.

"Why, you—you—"

Bolsover was so taken aback by that unusual remark that for once his heavy hand did not descend, and he simply blinked at Bunter.

"Be like me, you know!" urged Bunter, with a fat smirk. "Brave as a lion! A little incident like this is all in the day's work to me!"

"Why, you silly idiot," gasped Bolsover, "I—I'll pulverise you! I'll—I'll—"

"Can it!" snapped Skinner irritably. "We want to settle this business without any more idiotic slanging! What we want from you, Bunter, is a solemn promise that you're going to keep really mum!"

Bunter nodded.

"All right, Skinney. I'll give you my promise!"

"You understand what it means?" said Skinner. "If Quelch tackles you, you're simply to say you know nothing. The less you say, in fact, the better. Understand?"

"Quite clear, old chap," said Bunter, with another nod. "I shouldn't have said anything, anyway, but I'll be awfully careful now!"

"You'd better!" growled Bolsover.

"Oh, really, Bolsover! Old Quelch won't get anything out of me, I can tell you!"

Skinner and Bolsover looked at each other, a little relieved. It was, of course, impossible to place a lot of reliance on Bunter's promises. But even Bunter showed a glimmering of commonsense sometimes, and he certainly seemed to appreciate the position now.

"Well, if you really can keep quiet for once, that's all right," said Skinner, in less worried tones. "We may get out of it yet."

"After all, Quelch's got no proof whatever that we've had the blessed papers," argued Bolsover. "They may easily have been cleared up with the wastepaper by one of the servants."

"That's so!"

"Anyway, you can rely on me, you chaps!" said Bunter, rolling towards the door. "Unlock this door, will you, Skinney?"

Skinner unlocked the door, and Bunter, in a very different manner from that in which he had entered it, shook the dust of Study No. 11 from his feet.

From No. 11, he made straight for No. 7, and, having gained the privacy of that apartment, he dived a fat hand eagerly into his pocket, and triumphantly produced the manuscript that weighed so heavily on the consciences of Skinner and Bolsover.

(Continued on next page.)

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"And now for that competition!" muttered Bunter. "If Quelch's piffle ain't good enough to win it, I'll eat my blessed hat!"

## THE NINTH CHAPTER.

### The Missing Manuscript!

"**Q**UELCHY wants you!" said Harry Wharton, quite crossly. "Blow Quelch!" As head boy of the Remove, Wharton had many little responsibilities which did not fall to the lot of the rank-and-file of the Form. He was often required by Mr. Quelch at most inconvenient times. And no time could have been more inconvenient than the beginning of a fine Saturday afternoon.

It was, as a matter of fact, just five minutes before the time fixed for the kick-off in the football practice match arranged for the afternoon. A practice match was not, of course, so important as a Form match, or a match with another school.

Nevertheless, Wharton was anxious to see how his men were shaping, in view of an important fixture with Rookwood—the last match of the season—which was coming along in a fortnight. He was not at all pleased, therefore, when Snoop walked up and announced that he was wanted.

"Why couldn't he have put it off till after the practice?" demanded Harry Wharton. "Did he say what he wanted?"

"No; but he looked in a fearful wax," grinned Snoop.

"Surely his Magnificence has not been smudging his copy-book!" murmured Skinner, who was lounging near by.

And there was a grin among some of the footballers.

"Don't rot!" snapped Wharton. "This is a blessed nuisance, but I suppose it can't be helped. I'd better cut off and find out what he wants, and get back as soon as I can. Don't hold up the start for me."

And Harry Wharton put a coat over his football garb and sprinted off towards the School House.

It was rather inconsiderate of Mr. Quelch to send for him at such an inopportune moment, and Wharton wondered, as he sprinted along, what could be wrong. Mr. Quelch was not concerned very much with junior football, and he could hardly be expected to realise the importance of a trial game in preparation for the coming Rookwood match. For all that, he was undoubtedly aware that his summons to Wharton was likely to upset the arrangements on Little Side, and it was not like Mr. Quelch to interfere with such arrangements unless something fairly serious was "on."

Reaching the School House, Wharton made for Mr. Quelch's room with all speed, and tapped on the Remove master's door.

He thought that Mr. Quelch's "Come in!" was a little sharper than usual, and he was not surprised to find, on entering, that Mr. Quelch's thin lips were compressed into a straight line that boded ill for somebody.

Mr. Quelch nodded.

"I have sent for you, Wharton, because I want your assistance in recovering some papers of great importance which I have lost."

"Yes, sir!" said Wharton, looking rather surprised.

"Doubtless you are already aware that I am engaged in writing a book on the history of Greyfriars."

"I had heard so, sir," said Harry, with a faint smile.

"For several months past I have been investigating the events that occurred at Greyfriars during the reign of Henry VIII, and the results of my investigations are assembled in two chapters which I have just completed."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"The papers containing those two chapters, together with all my rough notes," continued Mr. Quelch, his face darkening, "have disappeared from this room. You will appreciate, Wharton, that the loss is a most serious one from my point of view, and I am exceedingly anxious that all the papers should be recovered at once."

"I can quite understand that, sir," said Wharton sympathetically.

He knew that the "History of Greyfriars" was the apple of the Remove master's eye, and it was easy to see that Mr. Quelch was very much perturbed by his loss.

"I suspect that the papers were taken during my absence from this room yesterday evening," said Mr. Quelch. "I am hopeful that it is merely a foolish prank on the part of some junior, and that you will be able to ascertain their whereabouts."

Wharton pursed his lips rather thoughtfully.

"H'm! If I were able to do that, sir, I'm afraid I couldn't very well sneak about it."

"Rest assured, Wharton, that I shall not ask you to divulge any names," said Mr. Quelch quickly. "In the event of your recovering the missing manuscript, I shall—hem!—be willing to accept it back without inquiring further into the matter."

"I see, sir. But I can't think that anybody in the Remove would be such a silly ass—I mean so silly as to take the papers," remarked Wharton, after a pause. "I suppose you've made sure that none of the servants have cleared them up, sir?"

"I have thoroughly satisfied myself on that point," answered Mr. Quelch. "I can find nothing to support such a theory, and there seems no other solution than that somebody has taken them—either maliciously, or else for a stupid practical joke. I trust the latter."

"I hope so, too, sir," said the Remove skipper rather dubiously. "It seems a queer kind of joke, though!"

"I can only hope that it is nothing worse than a joke, Wharton. Kindly make inquiries among your Form-fellows and report to me later."

He made a gesture of dismissal, and Wharton quitted the room.

The practice match was in full swing by the time Harry Wharton reached Little Side again.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Everything all right?" called out Bob Cherry from the middle of the field.

"Come and show these slackers how to play, Harry!" yelled Johnny Bull. "We're one down already!"

Harry Wharton laughed, and, after dumping his coat in the pavilion, joined in the game. Nothing much could be done before tea-time, anyway.

In the excitement of a somewhat boisterous game the subject of Mr. Quelch's missing manuscript was soon relegated to a back seat, and Harry had almost forgotten it by the time the whistle blew for full time.

It returned to his mind, however, at Bob Cherry's first question after the game.

"Well, what did the beak want?" asked Bob cheerfully, as they tramped off the field.

"Our wishfulness to know the wants

of the esteemed beak is terrific!" joined in Hurree Singh.

"By Jove! I was almost forgetting all about it!" said the Remove skipper. "Quelch's lost his 'History of Greyfriars'!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"Never!"

"Well, not quite all of it," added Harry. "Two chapters of it, to be precise."

"Whew!"

"He'll go off his dot!"

"The dotfulness of the esteemed and ludicrous beak will be—"

"Terrific!" finished Harry Wharton, with a grin. "Exactly! He looked very down in the mouth about it when I saw him, anyway."

"But where do you come in, Harry?" asked Frank Nugent, rather puzzled.

The leader of the Famous Five briefly recounted his interview with Mr. Quelch, and quite a number of the footballers listened with great interest.

"Well, I'm dashed! Poor old Quelch!" said Frank Nugent, when Harry had finished.

"Shows how keen he is on getting the stuff back to be willing to accept it without further inquiries," commented Squiff. "I feel quite sorry for the old bird!"

"Same here!"

There was quite a chorus of approval.

"Perhaps that silly ass Skinner is up to his larks again," suggested Johnny Bull. "You know what a feud there's been lately between him and Quelch. What about turning out his study when we get back to the House?"

"Good egg!"

"More likely to find it there than anywhere else!"

"Let's get changed, then, and pay a visit to our shady young friend before tea!" grinned Bob Cherry.

And Harry Wharton & Co. entered the pavilion and hurriedly changed from their football "togs" into Etons again.

Bolsover was in the pavilion, doctoring a damaged knee, as the crowd entered, and quite an alarmed expression appeared on his face when he heard the subject of the juniors' conversation.

"What's the merry rumpus about?" he asked, ceasing his First Aid operations for a moment.

Harry Wharton explained; and Bolsover looked considerably relieved at the explanation. He had wondered for a moment whether the little incident in Study No. 11 had come to light.

"Well, I'm jolly sure Skinner hasn't got the blessed muck!" he said, when Wharton had finished. "Still, turn out the idiot's study, by all means! I don't mind!"

Leaving him to his damaged knee, the Removites followed their skipper up to the School House. Harry Wharton himself, and one or two others were quite in earnest about the thing, but most of the fellows were grinning, in anticipation of a pleasant little "rag" before tea.

As it happened, their anticipations were realised.

Harold Skinner was sitting alone in Study No. 11 as the raiders entered, and he looked quite alarmed at the number of his unexpected visitors.

"What the deuce—" he exclaimed, getting up from the armchair.

"Don't trouble to offer us all a seat, Skinner," grinned Bob Cherry. "We haven't come to stay, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, what's the little game, anyway?" asked Skinner, looking anxiously at the Removites.

"Just a friendly visit, that's all!" said Squiff humorously. "We've all called





Harold Skinner's study was crowded when the Removites started the search for Mr. Quelch's missing manuscript. Johnny Bull started by turning out the coal-scuttle, while Squiff seized a shovel and began lading out soot from the chimney. Skinner fairly danced with rage. "Get out of my study!" he shrieked. (See Chapter 9.)

to see you because we're so fond of you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's not altogether a laughing matter, though," said Harry Wharton seriously. "Quelch has lost some papers connected with the book he's writing."

Skinner started, and bit his lip.

"We've come here to see whether you know anything about it," explained Wharton, looking keenly at Skinner's white face.

"Why should I?" snarled the cad of the Remove.

"Well, to speak frankly, you happen to be a bit of a rotter, and pinching a chap's private papers might strike you as a way of doing him an injury," said Harry steadily.

"So put that in your pipe and smoke it!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

Skinner's eyes glittered.

"If that's all you've come here to tell me you might just as well have saved your breath!" he sneered.

"Oh, don't think we're going to stop at talking," grinned Johnny Bull. "Actions speak louder than words."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, fair play, you know!" said Skinner, in alarm. "What are you going to do?"

"We're going to turn out the study for you," explained the captain of the Remove.

"You rotters! I haven't got Quelch's muck!"

"Sorry if we're doing you an injustice," said Harry. "I've got Quelch's orders to find if anyone in the Form has pinched the stuff, and you strike me as the most likely fellow to have it."

"Hang you!"

"Before we start looking for ourselves I had better tell you that Quelch has promised not to ask any questions if I return the stuff to him intact."

"Well, I haven't got it, I tell you!" shrieked Skinner. "Get out of my study, you interfering cads! Yarooop!"

Harold Skinner sat down suddenly as Bob Cherry seized him by the shoulders and dropped him into the armchair.

"Let my stuff alone, hang you!" yelled Skinner, jumping furiously to his feet again as the crowd invaded the study and began to get to work. "Get out, you bullying cads!"

"Full of gratitude, as usual!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Don't you realise that this is all for your good, Skinney?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Judging by the antics Skinner performed as Harry Wharton & Co. crowded in, Skinner certainly did not realise that it was all for his own good.

The Removites went to work very thoroughly.

Johnny Bull started by turning out the contents of the coal-scuttle on the carpet.

"Not there!" he said thoughtfully, surveying his handiwork with a critical air.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"See if they're hidden at the bottom of that jam-jar," grinned Squiff.

"Who knows?" said Bob Cherry gravely, emptying a sticky mass of preserves over the fender.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't miss the chimney!"

"Not likely!"

Squiff seized a shovel, and began lading out soot from the chimney with great vigour. Skinner fairly danced round the study in his rage, but he could do nothing to stop the rag, and the rag therefore went on.

Within five minutes the study presented a dreadful appearance. Every article in the room had been carefully taken from its appointed position and put somewhere else.

The raggers were not bent on destruction, and they did not actually

break anything. But what they did was bad enough.

"Well, it looks as if we've drawn a blank," remarked Harry Wharton at last, surveying the wreck thoughtfully.

"Nothing doing, apparently!" grunted Herbert Vernon-Smith. "No need to waste any more time here, then!"

"Sorry we troubled you, Skinner!" said Bob Cherry blandly.

"You—you—"

Skinner choked as he looked round the room at the desolation that was on all sides.

The raiders tramped out again, leaving the luckless blade of the Remove to clear up the mess. Skinner's face as he began this task wore an expression that would have done credit to an enraged tiger.

The advent of teatime prevented the search being carried further, and by the time tea was over most of the Remove had lost interest in Mr. Quelch's missing manuscript.

Mr. Quelch himself was not likely to have lost interest in it, however, and it was no surprise to Wharton when he reported later that there was "nothing doing," to find that the Remove Form-master looked even more anxious and worried than before.

Soon afterwards Mr. Quelch paid a visit to the Head, to report his loss to that gentleman. And when Skinner and Bolsover learned the news they trembled.

## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

### Bunter the Author!

**D**URING most of the following week Bolsover and Skinner were wearing very worried expressions.

Mr. Quelch's manuscript did not, of course, turn up, and they felt very  
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doubtful indeed whether their little adventure would be allowed to remain in its obscurity.

Luckily for them, nobody questioned Bunter, and no suspicion became attached to them after the unsuccessful raid on Study No. 11.

But the days were full of alarms, for the search for the missing manuscript went on, and it became obvious that Mr. Quelch did not intend to drop it in a hurry. And for Bolsover and Skinner the week that followed the disappearance of the manuscript was quite a nerve-racking time.

During the second week Dr. Locke assembled the entire school in the Hall and made a special request for the assistance of everybody who could throw any light on the matter. The two Removites ignored the request, of course, but it gave them an uneasy feeling that the affair was by no means finished with.

The Rookwood match, on the following Saturday, gave the Remove something more important than history to think about.

The Remove were somewhat anxious about the fixture. Squiff, who was the regular goalkeeper, was unable to play owing to a sprained wrist, Linley was in the Sanny, and Bolsover, whose knee was still a little weak, was, much to his disgust, omitted from the selected eleven. The Remove team, as a result, was not up to its usual strength, in the defence, at all events.

"Comin' to Courtfield, Bolsy?" asked Skinner as they stood outside the pavilion, just before the kick-off.

"What's on?" grunted Bolsover. "Don't you want to watch the match, then?"

"Dear man, it doesn't interest me a little bit," yawned Skinner. "I thought you wouldn't feel much like lookin' on, either, after the mighty Wharton had dropped you."

"Wharton's a silly ass!" growled Bolsover. "But what's on at Courtfield, anyway?"

"Pictures—tea—anything you like," said Skinner. "I want to go anywhere where we shan't have that blessed manuscript dinned into our ears every five minutes."

Bolsover pondered.

"Oh, all right!" he said, at last. "I'll come. I'm fed up with hearing about it myself."

The Rookwood match, that afternoon, was played, therefore, without the patronage of Skinner and Bolsover.

The absence of that unfortunate pair was not noticed particularly, however, for a goodly number of the Lower School had gathered to watch the match, not to mention a sprinkling of the Upper Fourth and Shell.

They were treated to a sparkling display of football. The game was keenly fought and well played from the beginning. As the Remove supporters had feared, the Greyfriars defence was hard nut to it to resist the speedy attacks of Jimmy Silver and his men, but the game was by no means one-sided.

Just before half-time a well-directed shot from Mornington had Hazeldene, in goal, well beaten, and the whistle blew for the interval with Rookwood one up.

"Well, if it's not my old pal, Morny!" remarked Billy Bunter, spotting that immaculate junior, as the Rookwood team came up to the pavilion.

Billy Bunter had just rolled upon the scene wearing a fat and satisfied expression that seemed to indicate that he had recently visited the tuckshop.

"Let me see! Do I know you?" asked Mornington, as Bunter extended a grubby hand.

"Oh, really, Morny!" said the Owl of

the Remove. "Surely, you haven't forgotten your old pal, Bunter?"

"Oh, Bunter!"

"Congrats on your goal, old chap!" said Bunter, seizing Valentine Mornington's reluctant hand and shaking it warmly. "Couldn't have done it better myself, you know."

"I don't suppose you could," said the dandy of Rookwood, with a grin.

"I dare say you're wondering why I'm not playing against you," continued Bunter. "It's the same old story, you know!"

"How do you mean?"

"Jealousy!" explained the Owl of the Remove confidentially. "Wharton's as jealous as anything of my play, to tell you the truth."

"My hat!"

"I expect you get the same kind of thing at your school," went on Bunter eloquently. "After all, in the mixed crowd you get at a Public School nowadays, fellows of breeding, like you and me, are bound to arouse jealousy among the other low cads."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The roar was from the Remove men, who had come up just in time to hear Bunter's last remark.

"Don't be scared of him, Morny!" said Bob Cherry, reassuringly. "He's potty, of course, but quite harmless, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Bob Cherry—Yarooop!"

Johnny Bull, who was bringing round a plateful of sliced lemons for the players had somehow backed into Billy Bunter as that fat junior was speaking, and Bunter sat down violently, with a terrific yell.

"Sorry, Bunter!" grinned Johnny. "Lemon for you, Mornington?"

"Thanks, dear boy!"

"You clumsy idiot!" grunted Bunter, getting up and rubbing himself tenderly. "I've a jolly good mind not to invite you to tea, now!"

"Wha-a-at?"

There was quite a yell from the fellows standing near. Johnny Bull stared.

"Come again, Bunter!" he said. "I don't think I quite got you last time."

"I said I'd a jolly good mind not to invite you to tea, now!" repeated Bunter.

"I— Invite me to tea?" stuttered Johnny Bull. "Were you going to invite me to tea, then?"

"Matter of fact, I want all of you to come to tea with me," said Bunter, blinking round at the surprised footballers.

"All of us?"

"That is to say, both teams," explained Bunter. "Just an informal little affair, you know. Tea and jam-tarts, and things in the tuckshop."

"Great pip!"

"What's the joke?"

The Removites looked at Bunter in astonishment.

"Do I understand you aright?" asked Bob Cherry. "You want all of us to come to tea with you in the tuckshop?"

"That's it!"

"You don't mean that when we get there we all club together and pay for you to have tea?"

"Certainly not!" said Bunter, with dignity. "I'm asking you, and I pay for the lot, of course!"

"Oh, I see!" said Bob, with a grin. "It's the old postal-order gag again. Before you pay, I suppose, we cash an imaginary remittance for you!"

"I hope you don't think me capable of anything like that, Bob Cherry!" remarked Bunter loftily.

"Well, where's the catch, then?"

"There's no catch, you idiot! I'm asking you fellows to come and have tea with me at my expense in the tuckshop. That's clear enough, ain't it?"

"Quite clear!" agreed the puzzled Bob. "Blessed if I understand it, though!"

As a matter of fact, arrangements had already been made for the Rookwood fellows to split up and "tea" with various members of the Remove in their studies, and Bunter's invitation was, therefore, not needed. The juniors were none the less surprised, however, to receive an invitation from such an unexpected quarter, and some of them felt inclined to snatch five minutes between the close of the game and their study teas to see whether there was a catch in it, or whether, as Bob Cherry expressed it, the age of miracles had begun again and the invitation was indeed genuine.

Further consideration of the problem was stopped by the beginning of the second half.

The Remove were on their mettle now. They realised that they had all their work cut out to overtake their rivals' advantage of lead, but they were by no means dismayed yet.

The Remove forwards and half-backs, determined to demonstrate the truth of the old slogan about the best defence being attack, carried the war into the enemy's camp and made an onslaught on the Rookwood goal area as soon as the whistle had blown for the start.

The Rookwood men were rather taken by surprise, and they had hardly realised that play had begun before Harry Wharton, following up a fine pass from Bob Cherry, was racing towards the goal with the ball at his feet.

Conroy, in goal, waited with every nerve strained for the shot that was coming.

But he stood very little chance. Harry Wharton, when he did shoot, made no mistake, and there was an excited roar from the spectators as the ball lodged in a corner of the net.

"Goal!"

"Well shot, Wharton!"

"Play up, Friars!"

After that the play was of an even character, and it began to look as though the score would remain at one all. There were one or two anxious moments when the Rookwood men got uncomfortably near the Remove goal, but Hazeldene was pretty sound, and managed to keep the ball out.

With only ten minutes to go, Wharton broke away again and raced down towards Conroy in just the same way as before. This time, however, he was well marked, and was forced to pass the ball to Hurree Singh, on the wing. Inky steadied himself and took a shot from a rather difficult angle, but the move succeeded, and Conroy was just too late.

After that there was no further score, and Greyfriars ran out the winners of a fine game by two goals to one.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Still here, then?" said Bob Cherry, slapping Bunter on the back with great heartiness.

"I say, you fellows, I've fixed it up with Mrs. Mimble, and she'll have tea ready in ten minutes."

"Then it wasn't a leg-pull?" said Johnny Bull in wonderment.

"Of course not, ass! Sho's laying the tables now!"

"But, you fat chump, we've already arranged teas in the Remove quarters

for all the Rookwood men!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Oh, really, Wharton! Surely they'd rather have tea altogether in the tuckshop than in a lot of mouldy studies."

Harry Wharton scratched his chin thoughtfully.

"Something in what the fat idiot says, you chaps," he remarked. "As a matter of fact, Jimmy Silver tells me they haven't a lot of time to spare, and when I arranged for their splitting up I had banked on their having a couple of hours here after the game."

"That settles it, then!" said Bunter. "You'd better make up your minds to come along to the tuckshop. My treat, you know!"

After a hurried consultation the Removites decided that, to save Jimmy Silver & Co.'s time, it should be the tuckshop, after all, particularly in view of the fact that Mrs. Mimble was preparing for them.

Harry Wharton & Co. then went into the pavilion to change.

To say that the footballers were surprised by Billy Bunter's invitation was putting it mildly. They were absolutely staggered.

Billy Bunter was good-natured enough in his peculiar Bunterish way, and no doubt if he had been as well endowed with cash as Lord Mauleverer or Vernon-Smith he would often have stood "spreads."

But he was not. On the contrary, Bunter suffered from chronic and continual impecuniosity, and the celebrated postal-order which he was always expecting, but which never arrived, had become one of the legends of Greyfriars.

"Well, it's queer, and no mistake!" remarked Harry Wharton, as he issued forth from the pavilion again. "But, anyway, wherever he got the tin we can't let him pay for the whole crowd."

"Not for the visitors, anyway," said Bob Cherry. "Still, I shall be interested to see whether he really means it."

"I say, you fellows, don't waste time, you know," said Bunter anxiously. "I'm beginning to feel a bit peckish myself!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a jolly, laughing crowd that swarmed into Mrs. Mimble's shop. There was not a lot of room, and some had to sit down at improvised tables inside Mrs. Mimble's back-parlour, but everybody was in high spirits, and the tea was voted first-rate.

When everybody, including the founder of the feast himself, had finished, Bunter rolled up to the counter.

"How much, Mrs. Mimble?" he asked.

"Two pounds, five shillings, and sixpence, Master Bunter, if you please!" answered Mrs. Mimble, with a very peculiar look at the fat junior.

There was a gasp from the Greyfriars men as Bunter, with a flourish, fetched out a wad of Treasury notes and settled the bill.

"M-m-m-my hat!"

"Bunter!"

"With about ten pound-notes on him!"

"Where did he find 'em?"

Jimmy Silver & Co., as guests of the school, could not, of course, make any comment, but even they looked rather surprised. For they, too, had met Bunter before!

"We'll see Bunter afterwards about this," whispered Harry Wharton to Bob Cherry. "Wait till the Rookwood chaps have gone!"

Soon after the tea-party broke up, and Jimmy Silver & Co. were escorted

## THE DUFFER OF THE FIFTH!

Horace Coker, of the Fifth, is firmly of the opinion that he can play cricket better than anyone at Greyfriars; that he can keep cheeky fags in order; that he can organise anything and everything better than anyone else on earth, so to speak. His latest "outbreak" takes the form of organising "a league of friends," a movement which Coker fondly imagines will foster a spirit of goodwill and comradeship amongst mankind. Just how much comradeship and goodwill is engendered in

## "COKER'S LEAGUE OF FRIENDS!"

is described in Frank Richards' inimitable style. Don't miss this treat for next week, boys, whatever you do!



down to the motor-charabanc which was waiting near the school gates.

When they had gone Bunter was surrounded by an eager, inquiring crowd.

"Now, then, Bunter, own up!"

"Was it a bank you robbed?"

"Or was it only forgery?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Perhaps he's been blackmailing again!"

"Own up, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter glared at the humorous Removites.

"I say, you fellows, if this is the sort of thing I'm to expect when I happen to be in funds, I shan't be in a hurry to stand you a feed again!" he said resentfully.

"Don't be a chump, Bunter!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "We're not going to allow you to pay that lot, anyway. But, seriously, where did you get all that tin?"

"Oh, really, Wharton, can't a chap carry a few quids now without telling you all about it?"

"Well, that depends on the chap," answered the Remove skipper. "If it happened to be Mauly or Vernon-Smith there wouldn't be any need to ask, of course. But—"

"But you're a different proposition, old fat man," explained Frank Nugent.

"Come on, Bunter!" said Wharton persuasively. "Where did they come from?"

"Has the postal-order turned up at last?" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry! Look here!" said Bunter, in a sudden burst of confidence. "I don't mind telling you chaps, if you promise to keep it dark. I don't want everybody to know I'm an author!"

"A—a which?"

"You?"

"Yes, me!" said Billy Bunter, with a fat smirk. "I made all this money writing for the Press, you know!"

"M-m-my hat!"

"He's potty!"

"Look here, you chaps," said Bunter

warmly. "If you're going to doubt my word I'll dry up. You've seen the cash, haven't you?"

"True!" agreed Harry Wharton. "But do you mean to say you made that wad of notes writing for the Press?"

Bunter nodded, and there was a roar from the crowd.

"Rot!"

"Bosh!"

"Tell us an easier one!"

"Oh, really, you fellows—"

"Well, seeing's believing!" said Bob Cherry. "If you've written something that's in print, let's have a look!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Hem! The fact is, I can't very well show you," said Bunter. "Anyway, I assure you that money is the first prize in an essay competition that I won."

"Rats!"

"Bosh!"

And that was the general opinion of the Remove.

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Skinner's Discovery!

"YAW-AW-AW!"

If the dimensions and duration of his yawn were anything to go by, Bolsover was feeling decidedly bored.

He and Skinner were sitting on a seat at Courtfield Station, waiting for a train to take them back to Friardale.

They had spent most of the afternoon in the Courtfield Cinema, and Bolsover had not been particularly amused at the entertainment.

Percy Bolsover was more fond of the open-air life than Harold Skinner, and, unless he had been induced by the latter to go to the pictures, he would undoubtedly have passed the afternoon watching the Rookwood match on Little Side.

Now that it was over, Bolsover began to wish he had stopped there. The

afternoon began to impress him as an afternoon wasted.

"Yaw-aw-aw!" repeated Bolsover.

"Tired?" asked Skinner.

"Tired of slacking all the afternoon, if you want to know," grunted Bolsover.

Skinner shrugged his shoulders. Sentiments like that left him stone cold.

"Well, I've rather enjoyed it myself," he remarked. "It's been a treat to get away from the blessed school for a bit."

"Wonder how they shaped against Rookwood," murmured Bolsover.

"Blow Rookwood!"

"I expect, by the time the game's over, Wharton will wish he'd played me."

"Blow Wharton!"

"And blow you!" retorted Bolsover cheerfully. "If you spent an hour or two on the playing fields, instead of slacking away your spare time in stuffy picture shows, you wouldn't look such a washed-out scarecrow!"

"Oh, rats!" said Skinner irritably. "You jolly soon agreed to come along, anyway!"

Bolsover nodded.

"Perhaps I did," he admitted. "Still, it was only because that blessed bizney of Quelch's has been getting on my nerves."

"Just so," said Skinner. "And it hasn't got on your nerves more than on mine. I don't mind telling you the last fortnight has thoroughly got me down!"

"Well, we've dodged the trouble so far, anyway," chuckled Bolsover.

"Jolly good job for us that we have! We'd have been hung, drawn, and quartered if Quelch had found out that we had burnt his rotten manuscript!"

"You're right. All the same, we can't crow yet, you know. Quelch hasn't given up the search by any means."

"I know that," said Skinner. "Still, Bunter has kept mum all right over this affair, and I think we ought to be safe now."

"Let's hope we are, then," grunted Bolsover. "Anyway, Bunter ought to be slaughtered for giving us all this worry!"

"Hear, hear!"

And, pondering on Bolsover's last amiab'e thought, the two Removites became silent again.

"How much longer do we wait for the blessed train?" asked Bolsover impatiently, after an interval.

"About ten minutes, I think. Let's have a stroll up the platform, if you want a stretch."

Bolsover accepted that suggestion with alacrity, and, jumping to his feet, began to exercise his long legs up and down the platform.

Skinner accompanied him once each way, then lounged over to the station bookstall, and whiled the time away turning over the pages of the magazines displayed there.

There was a breeze blowing along the platform, and reading was not very comfortable; for the pages of the magazines were being continually blown over. Skinner began to yawn and wish for the local train to come along.

At last it puffed into the station, and it was just as it drew to a stop that a sudden gust of wind came down on the bookstall, and lifted off several newspapers from a pile standing in the corner.

Skinner instinctively dropped his magazine and made a grab at them, and, more by luck than judgment, succeeded in saving them from being blown away.

"Well saved, Skinner!" yelled

Bolsover from the other end of the platform.

"Thank you, sir!" said the lad in charge of the stall.

Skinner was just restoring them to the lad when he happened to glance at the top copy.

It was the current week's edition of the "Courtfield Express."

That fact, in the ordinary way, would not have excited Skinner's interest in the slightest degree. The "Courtfield Express" was a paper which was rarely seen at Greyfriars, and Skinner had never handled a copy before.

He had seen the contents bills advertising it outside newsagents' shops in Courtfield, and therefore knew of the existence of the paper, but that was all.

That there was, however, something about this particular edition of the "Courtfield Express" that attracted Skinner's attention was obvious from his behaviour.

He stood staring at the paper with complete astonishment written on his lean face.

"Hallo, there! What's wrong, Skinney?" demanded Bolsover, coming up to the bookstall. "Been backing a loser, or something?"

"Well, if this isn't the giddy limit!" gasped Skinner at last. "Tell me that I'm not seeing things, will you, Bolsy?"

He pointed to one of the columns of the paper, and Bolsover ran his eye down it.

As the burly Removite read the contents of the column, he, too, gasped.

"Great Scott! 'W. G. Bunter, of Greyfriars'! That's our Bunter! There's only one W. G. Bunter!"

"Read on!" said Skinner thickly. "My hat! The fat villain!"

"We have pleasure in announcing," read Bolsover, "that the prize of Ten Guineas offered by this paper for the best Essay on Local History has been awarded to Mr. W. G. Bunter, of Greyfriars School, for an excellent paper on the subject of Greyfriars in the reign of Henry VIII. The Prize Essay is printed on page 4 of this issue."

He stared blankly at Skinner.

"Well, carry me home to die! Bunter gets a prize for essay writing! If that's not the latest!"

"Can't you see?" murmured Skinner.

"See what? I'm blessed if I can understand it," said Bolsover wonderingly. "He's always been the biggest duffer in the Form at anything like that."

"Can't you see?" repeated Skinner.

"What do you mean? Why, I didn't know he could write decent English even. He's always in hot water with Quelch over grammar."

"Oh, the villain!" breathed Skinner.

"The cunning, tricky, fat schemer!"

"What's up, then?" asked Bolsover, in surprise. "I should imagine this is a big score for him. Nothing villainous about winning a prize in a competition like this!"

"You blind idiot!" snapped Skinner.

"Can't you see, even now, the explanation of this?"

"Dashed if I can! What are you getting at?"

"Don't you remember the subject of Quelch's missing manuscript?"

Bolsover started.

"G-Great Scott! Why, according to what the Head said when he made his announcement in the Hall, it was all about the Greyfriars in the time of Henry VIII. You don't mean—"

"Now you can see?" said Skinner.

Percy Bolsover's eyes bulged, as his somewhat slow brain got to work on the problem.

"Great pip!" he gasped at last. "The fearful, fat scoundrel! He's won this prize with Quelch's missing MS!"

"Got it at last!" snapped Skinner. "That's exactly what's happened!"

"Then it wasn't Quelch's muck we throw on the fire, after all!" murmured Bolsover slowly. "M-m-my hat!"

"It's all as clear as daylight now," said Skinner, his eyes gleaming. "We were right in thinking that it was Bunter's lines we chucked on the fire!"

"But why the dickens should he say they were Quelch's papers, then?" asked Bolsover, slowly turning over their startling discovery in his mind.

"That's easy! It's as plain as a pike-staff to me! Can't you remember what a ragging we were going to give him at the time?"

"I remember that, all right! Incidentally, he didn't get it!"

"That's the whole point!" said Skinner eagerly. "The fat toad kidded us into believing that we'd burnt the manuscript just to scare us into letting him off his ragging."

"Oh crumbs! And did that fat fool think out all that?" gasped Bolsover.

"He couldn't have the brains to think it out in the usual way," said Skinner.

"The only reason it occurred to him, I expect, was that he had Quelch's papers tucked away in his pocket."

"My hat! The rotten outsider!"

"Well, he's had us all on toast this time, all right!" said Skinner, with a grim chuckle. "Just think of the suspense and anxiety we've gone through during the last fortnight—all for nothing!"

"Oh, the rotter!" murmured Bolsover. "I'll scrag him alive for this!"

"He'll get scragged by the beaks this time, never fear!" chuckled Skinner. "They're bound to get to know about this, even if we say nothing. Look at the headlines here!"

"Then it will all come out about our knowing he pinched the manuscript!" said Bolsover, a little uneasily.

"Who cares now? Bunter's the giddy criminal this journey, and Quelch's not going to worry very much about who else knew anything about it. We're all right."

Just then the guard's whistle blew, giving the signal for the departure of the Friardale train, and Bolsover made a bolt for it.

Skinner hurriedly bought half a dozen copies of the "Courtfield Express," and raced after his ally, and a few seconds later the two Removites were on their way back to Greyfriars.

## THE TWELVE CHAPTER.

### The Trials of an Author!

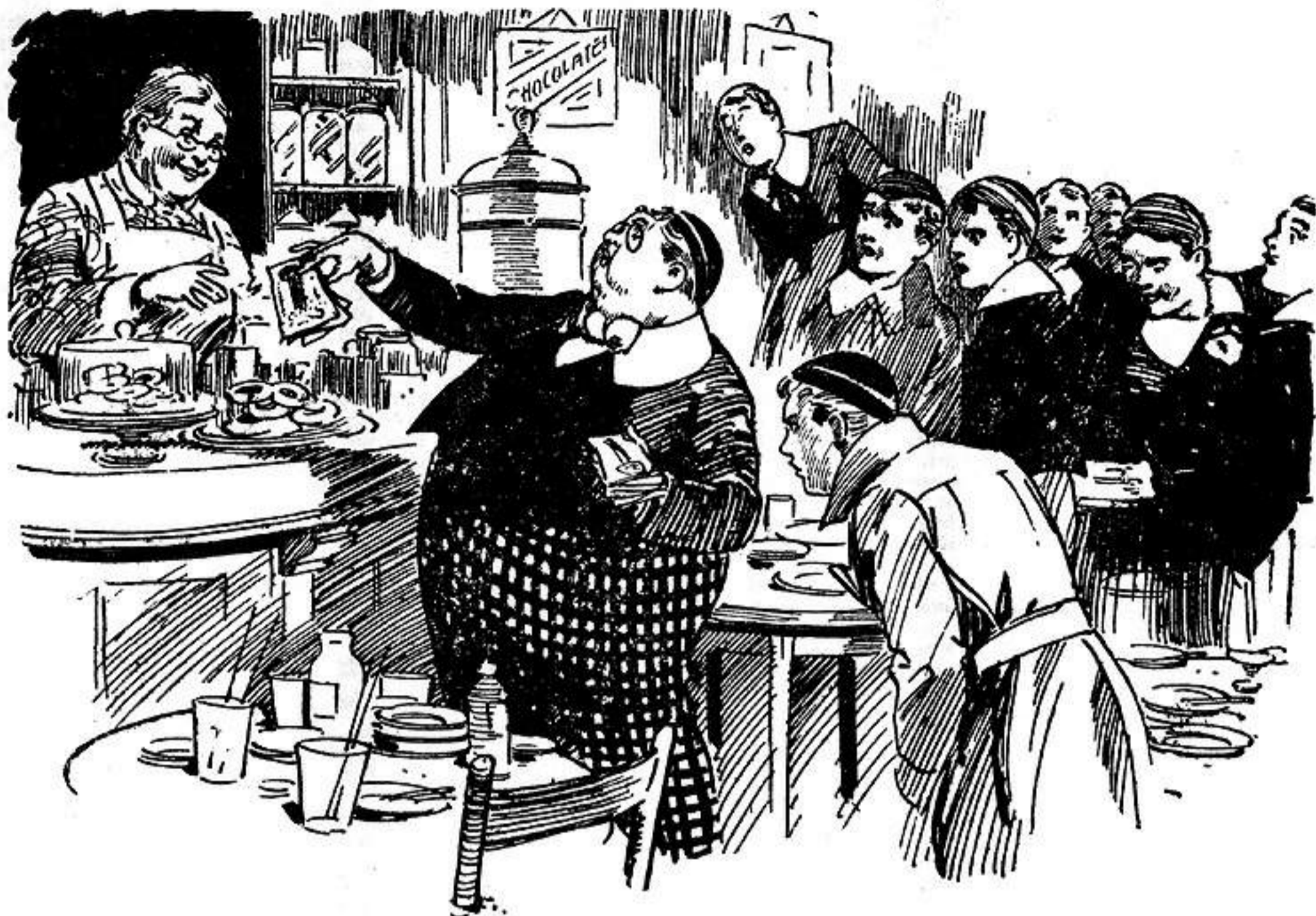
"BOSH!"

"Piffle!"

Such were the first words that fell on the ears of Bolsover and Skinner as they passed through the school gates on their arrival at Greyfriars again.

The two Removites had returned to Greyfriars as quickly as the local train and their legs would carry them. During the entire journey they had spoken of nothing else but Skinner's discovery of Bunter's trickery.

Skinner and Bolsover were angry, and like the prophet of old they felt that they did well to be angry. Bolsover, who was a fairly straight sort of individual, was quite disgusted at Bunter's shady scheme, and he breathed fire and slaughter all the way. Skinner, who was not very particular himself, did not feel exactly disgusted with Bunter. He



"How much, Mrs. Mimble?" asked Bunter. "Two pounds, five shillings and sixpence, Master Bunter, if you please!" answered Mrs. Mimble. There was a gasp from the Greyfriars fellows as Bunter, with a flourish, fetched out a wad of Treasury notes and settled the bill. "M-m-my hat!" (See Chapter 10.)

was more disgusted with himself for being taken in so easily.

The two allies tramped through the school gates, and immediately spotted the fat object of their wrath, surrounded by an excited crowd of Removites.

"I tell you it's true!" Bunter was howling as they approached the group.

"Rats!"

"Piffle!"

"Tell that to the marines!"

"But it is!" hooted Bunter, blinking furiously at the incredulous Removites through his big spectacles.

"Rot! Why can't you show it in print, then?"

"I—I— Well, there are certain reasons why I can't actually show it you," said Bunter lamely. "But I assure you that's how I got the cash. How else could I have made all that lot?"

"By robbing someone, I should think!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No, it won't wash, Bunter," said Harry Wharton, looking at the Owl with rather a puzzled expression on his face. "Do you really expect us to believe, without some proof, that you've won a ten-guinea prize in an essay competition?"

"But I've got proof," said Bunter, quite feverishly. "I've got the ten guineas; that's proof enough, ain't it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, not quite!" said Harry, with a smile. "In fact, it's your having ten guineas that's worrying me!"

"Oh, really, Wharton?"

It was at that moment that Skinner and Bolsover came barging their way through the crowd.

"Enter the brothers Vere do Vere!" remarked Bob Cherry humorously.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No time for politeness!" said Bolsover gruffly. "This is where we take a hand with that fat villain!"

"Oh, really, Bolsover—" said the Owl of the Remove, blinking at his late allies, in some alarm.

"You take a back seat, Bolsy!" said Skinner. "I'll do the talking for a minute or so."

"What's on, Skinner?" asked a dozen juniors at once.

Harry Wharton & Co. waited with interest to hear what Skinner had to say. They could see by his expression that he was the bearer of tidings.

"I say, you fellows, don't take any notice of Skinner!" said Bunter anxiously. "I don't know what he's going to tell you; but it ain't true, anyway! You know what an awful blackguard he is!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner scowled at the uncomplimentary reference to himself.

"I'm not the only blackguard in the Remove, anyway," he said. "These chaps will see that in a minute!"

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"I suppose the fat villain has been telling you he's won a ten-guinea prize for an essay," said Skinner, looking round at the circle of Removites.

"Right first time!"

"On the bawl, Skinner! What do you know about it?"

"Pretty well everything, I think!" answered Skinner, with a sardonic grin.

"Is the fat cormorant lying, as usual?" asked Johnny Bull.

"No. As it happens, for once, he's telling the truth!"

"Great Scott!"

"He's really won ten guineas for writing an essay?"

The juniors looked at Bunter in wonderment.

"However, that's not the beginning and end of it," said Skinner, with a mocking grin at the fat junior, who had begun to look rather uncomfortable. "As some poet johnnie or other remarked, thereby hangs a tale!"

"Go ahead, then!"

Skinner's tones were quite thrilling, and the Remove were looking really interested now.

"I suppose when Bunter told you he'd won the prize, he didn't tell you who wrote the essay?" continued Skinner.

"Well, as he won it, I suppose he wrote it," remarked Frank Nugent. "Can't imagine another chap writing it for him, anyway."

Skinner grinned.

"I suppose it hasn't occurred to you that Bunter might use another chap's work without asking his permission?"

"Oh!"

"I say, you fellows, I told you he'd start telling you a lot of yarns—"

"Shut up, Bunter!" said Wharton grimly. "Now, then, Skinner, you're making a serious charge against Bunter. Cut the cackle and get to the horses, and let's know what it's all about."

"Hear, hear!"

"Cough it up, Skinny!"

"I say, you fellows, I've just remembered an important engagement—"

"You've got a more important engagement here, my fat tulip!" said Bob Cherry, seizing Bunter's ear gently but firmly and guiding the scared-looking Bunter back to the centre of the group.

"I know all about the seriousness of  
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it," went on Skinner. "And, in case any of you doubt what I'm going to tell you, I've got plenty of proof with me."

"Good egg!"

"Trot it out!"

"What's the fat idiot been doing?"

"This is what he has been doing," said Skinner, with a venomous look at Bunter. "He's pinched someone else's work and sent it up in his own name to the 'Courtfield Express,' and won the prize with it! That's all!"

"Pshaw!"

"The fat spoofer!"

The Removites eyed the Owl of the Remove grimly.

Bunter had turned the colour of a beetroot, and was mopping his heated brow with a pocket-handkerchief in quite a feverish manner.

"Well, that's that!" said Skinner, quite pleased with the sensation he had caused. "I've still got to tell you the most interesting bit about it, though."

"Well, what you've told us is interesting enough, anyway," remarked Johnny Bull. "What else is there?"

"Only the identity of the chap who really wrote the essay," replied Skinner cheerfully.

"Oh!"

"Who was it, then?"

"Why, none other than dear old Quelch!" grinned Skinner.

"Wha-a-at!"

"Quelch?"

"Oh, come off, Skinner!"

There was quite a chorus of protest.

"That's a bit too steep, you know, Skinner!" said Johnny Bull. "Can anyone here imagine Quelch sitting down to write an essay for the 'Courtfield Express'?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Not much!"

"Don't suppose he's ever heard of the rag," remarked Bob Cherry. "I can't remember hearing of it myself before this."

"Same here!"

Skinner still grinned cheerfully.

"When you've all finished yapping," he said, "perhaps you'll allow me to point out that I said nothing about Quelch writing an essay for the competition."

"Why, you silly ass, you just said that—"

"Oh, dry up, you idiots! Let a chap get a word in! I haven't told you yet that the subject of the essay was local history."

"Well, what about it?"

"Can't you remember something in that line being lost by Quelch in the last fortnight?"

"Oh, Great Scott!"

"He means that Bunter has used Quelch's missing manuscript for the essay competition!"

"Great pip!"

"Oh, the fat fraud!"

"The criminal!"

The juniors gazed at Bunter breathlessly.

"Do you seriously mean that Bunter took Quelch's manuscript and entered it in this competition in his own name?" demanded Wharton.

"Right, all along the line!" answered Skinner. "If you want the proof, here it is!"

And with that Skinner produced the six copies of the "Courtfield Express" which he had bought at Courtfield Station and handed them round.

The Removites fell on them eagerly, and there was quite a roar as they read the announcement concerning Bunter's winning essay.

"Greyfriars, in the reign of Henry VIII! That's Quelch's manuscript all right, you chaps!"

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"An excellent paper! By Mr. W. G. Bunter, you know!"

"What a twister!"

"What a rogue!"

"He'll finish up at the Old Bailey yet!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"I think you'd better say as little as possible just now, Bunter," said Harry Wharton, regarding the flustered-looking Owl with knitted brows. "By Jove, I might well have been suspicious about where your windfall came from!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Shut up! This wants thinking out," said the Remove skipper. "Not that you deserve a moment's thought, you fat idiot."

"Let the porker get on with it," growled Johnny Bull. "He's not worth worrying about."

"Hear, hear!"

"Well, I don't know," said Wharton, tolerantly. "I think he's more fool than knave, however caddish this bizney may seem."

"H'm!"

"After all, he was generous enough in standing treat after the match, you know."

"Hem!"

"Easy enough to be generous on other people's money!" snorted Johnny Bull.

"Perhaps we can't do much to save him, anyway," said Wharton. "He's probably booked for the long jump, all right, this time. But we might help somehow."

"I say, you fellows, can't you let a chap speak?" howled Bunter, above the din that was going on.

"Shut up!" roared a dozen voices.

"Oh, really! I refuse to shut up! I tell you I wrote the beastly essay!"

"Oh, crikey!"

"Still keeping it up?"

"I can tell what it is," continued Bunter, blinking round at the Removites. "You're jealous, that's the truth of it."

"My hat!"

"Worse than ever!"

"Sit on him, somebody!"

"Look here, Bunter, this won't do, you know," said Wharton, gazing at the Owl in perplexity. "Your best plan is to own up now that it's come out. Denials will only make matters worse for you, though goodness knows they couldn't be much worse!"

"Yah! You're jealous!" howled Bunter. "I shan't own up! I mean there ain't anything to own up to!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let him take his gruel, Wharton!" growled Bolsover. "Serves him right if he does get bunked. We can do without your interference for once."

"Well, you're going to get it, anyway," said Harry, his eyes flashing. "Mr. Quelch gave me a certain amount of responsibility in this affair when his papers were first lost, and I'm going to take a hand in it now."

"I say, Wharton, you ain't going to sneak, are you?" said Bunter, in great alarm.

"I'm going to try to help you, fat-head!" retorted Wharton. "Call it sneaking, if you like. Quelch's bound to know within an hour or so now, so it doesn't much matter if I break the news a little early. In any case, we can't let things rest as they are."

The Removites looked at Wharton a little uneasily. Most of them realised that he had some notion of interceding on Bunter's behalf, but they didn't quite like the idea of any of their number—more especially their skipper—infringing the Greyfriars code of honour.

Harry Wharton saw the doubtful expressions on their faces, and his lips set grimly.

"I've made up my mind, anyway," he said. "I'm going up to Quelch's room now, and I want some of you to keep a watchful eye on Bunter, and have him ready when I come out for him."

"Right-ho, Harry!" said Bob Cherry. "Orders is orders!" grinned Frank Nugent.

"The orderfulness is terrific!"

"Yah! Sneaks! Rotters!" howled Billy Bunter furiously, as they marched him along. "Lemme alone! I don't want to see Quelch!"

"I don't suppose you do," grinned Bob Cherry. "Nor would I if I were in your shoes."

Accompanied by the whole crowd, the Famous Five, with Bunter in their midst, tramped up to the School House.

Arriving indoors, Harry Wharton instructed his chums to keep Bunter within easy reach of Masters' Passage, then he went on alone.

He gave a tap on Mr. Quelch's door, and Mr. Quelch's voice, from within the room, bade him "Come in!"

## THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

### The Way of the Transgressor!

"WELL, Wharton?" said Mr. Quelch, looking up from his work.

"I have come about the manuscript you lost, sir," said Harry, closing the door and advancing to the master's desk.

Mr. Quelch sat bolt upright, and his gimlet eyes fixed on the skipper of the Remove.

"You have news for me?" he asked eagerly, with a display of emotion that was very unusual for him. "You have found the manuscript?"

"Well, not exactly, sir. But I think I've found what happened to it."

"Pray proceed, Wharton."

"Before doing that, sir, I—I should like to make my own position clear," said Wharton hesitatingly. "You remember you said you would not ask me to divulge any names?"

Mr. Quelch nodded.

"Well, sir, as things have turned out, I can't very well tell you the facts without giving you the name of the chap concerned," said Wharton.

"In that case, Wharton, I think the circumstances are sufficiently serious to justify your doing so," said Mr. Quelch. "Your hesitancy is commendable, but I must ask you to acquaint me with the full facts."

"I am going to do that, sir," said the Remove skipper. "But I haven't quite got out what I wanted to say yet."

Mr. Quelch raised his eyebrows.

"What I wanted, sir," went on Harry, flushing, "was to ask you whether, in view of the fact that I brought you the information, I might say a word for the chap responsible."

"Really, Wharton—" said Mr. Quelch, puzzled.

"You see, sir, the stunt he's worked may strike you as absolutely criminal, and perhaps it is. But however bad it looks, I think Bun—I mean, the chap concerned is such a prize idiot that it's not quite so bad as if an ordinary fellow had done it."

Mr. Quelch looked very much surprised.

"So I thought," concluded Harry Wharton, "that perhaps if I put in a word first you might not have the chap bunked."

"Bunked?" repeated Mr. Quelch. "I suppose you mean expelled, Wharton?" Wharton nodded.

"Dear me! Are you not being a little presumptuous?" said Mr. Quelch, with a queer look at the uncomfortable Remove skipper. "I gather from what you say that the matter is serious, and if that is so you may rely on it that the judgment of Dr. Locke and myself will be as impartial, or even as lenient as you could wish. Beyond that, however, I cannot go; though I will bear your remarks in mind. And now, Wharton, kindly proceed."

"Well, sir, it was Bunter!" said Wharton.

"Indeed!" said Mr. Quelch, his lips tightening. "So it was Bunter who took the manuscript from my study?"

"I can hardly say that, sir. All I know is what I have seen here."

And Wharton produced a copy of the "Courtfield Express," and pointed out the result of the essay competition.

"B-bless my soul!"

Mr. Quelch stared at the paper as if hypnotised as he read the surprising announcement concerning Bunter's prize essay. Like one in a dream, he turned over to page four, where the essay was printed in full, and his expression as he read down the page became quite extraordinary.

By the time he had read half a column two bright spots had appeared on his usually colourless cheeks which seemed to indicate that Mr. Quelch's emotions were working under severe pressure.

"Well, upon my soul!" he gasped at last, sitting back in his chair quite limply. "This is positively the most extraordinary thing I have ever heard of! Bunter has won ten guineas in an essay competition by submitting the manuscript I have lost!"

"Then it is yours, sir?"

"It is my work, without the alteration of a single word!" said Mr. Quelch. His expression had become quite alarming.

"This is monstrous!" he exclaimed. "The boy is nothing less than a common thief!"

"I thought that was how you would take it, sir," said Wharton ruefully. "That was why I put in a word first."

"Send Bunter to me at once!" said Mr. Quelch harshly.

Harry Wharton quitted the room.

The furious and struggling Owl of the Remove was being held captive by Bob Cherry and the other members of the Famous Five at the end of the passage.

He gave a howl at the sight of Harry Wharton.

"Yah! Sneak! Tell-tale! Beast!"

"Quelchy wants to see you at once," said Harry curtly. "I've done my best for you, and now, if you'll take my advice, you'll make a clean breast of it."

"Oh dear!"

"Don't keep him waiting, ass!" said Frank Nugent. "Cut it now, Bunter!"

With a final indignant glare, Billy Bunter rolled reluctantly into the dreaded apartment of the Remove Form master.

In the excitement of his struggle, and in his indignation at Wharton's infringement of the Bunter code of morals by "sneaking," Billy Bunter had hardly descended yet to the wretched state of remorse to which he was accustomed to sink in answering for his sins to Mr. Quelch.

The chief feeling he had when he entered the room was one of alarm at the possibility of losing the balance of his prize-money before he had had time to spend it.

That feeling, however, quickly gave way to one of fear for the safety of his

fat carcass when he beheld the terrific expression on Mr. Quelch's face.

"Oh crumbs!" he gasped. "I—I say, sir, I hope you don't think—"

"Silence! Allow me to speak! I presume that you have already seen this copy of the 'Courtfield Express'?"

"Certainly not, sir!" answered Bunter promptly.

Denial, to the weird and wonderful mind of Bunter, was the only possible course in an emergency like this.

"You have not seen this edition of the 'Courtfield Express' before?" asked Mr. Quelch, raising his voice.

"I—I never knew there was such a paper, sir," said Bunter rather more shakily. "And if my name's in there, sir, all I can say is that someone else put it in!"

Mr. Quelch came as near to snorting as a dignified schoolmaster could be expected to come.

"In spite of your being unaware of the existence of the paper, you are, then, aware that it contains an announcement that you have won ten guineas?" queried Mr. Quelch sarcastically.

"I—I—well, sir, you know what fearful imaginations those newspaper reporters have!" gasped Bunter.

Mr. Quelch choked for a moment.

"Do you dare to deny, Bunter, that the essay with which you have won this prize is my work?" he thundered at last.

"Oh, really, sir, how can you think such a thing?" said Bunter in feigned surprise. "W-w-what ever put that into your head, sir?"

"It was put into my head by the strange fact that your winning essay is identical with that part of my 'History of Greyfriars' which has been lost!" ground out Mr. Quelch. "What have you to say to that, Bunter?"

"D-d-does that essay seem like your work, then, sir?" groaned Bunter.

"The two are identical!" roared Mr. Quelch.

"Then all I can say is that it's a case of great minds thinking alike!" said Bunter hopefully.

"Wha-a-a-at?"

"G-great minds th-thinking alike, you know," said Bunter, rather less hopefully. "It's often been known before, sir. Two geniuses hit on the same idea, and work it out in the same sort of way, without knowing each other are doing it, sort of thing!"

"You are an inordinately stupid and wicked boy!" roared Mr. Quelch, without troubling to answer that question.

"Oh, really, sir—"

"Men have been sent to prison for less than this outrageous offence, Bunter," stormed Mr. Quelch. "were it not for the scandal that would thereby be associated with the name of the school, I should seriously consider sending for the police now!"

"Oh, lor'!" gasped Bunter. "D-did you say the p-police, sir?"

"I did!" barked the infuriated Form master. "And there is not the slightest doubt that if I did have you charged you would be sent to a reformatory for a long period, Bunter!"

"Oh crumbs! D-d-do you think so?" groaned Bunter, his hair almost standing up on his bullet head at the dreadful thought of William George Bunter as a prisoner in a reformatory.

"I am certain of it! Do you not realise, Bunter, that you have committed a criminal offence, or is your stupidity so great that the seriousness of it has not fully penetrated your brain?"

"Oh, dear! I—I didn't know it was so bad as that, sir!" blubbered Bunter,

overcome with remorse as he blinked up at Mr. Quelch's scornful face. "Please, sir, don't have me bunked! I wish I'd never had anything to do with the beastly competition now!"

"The matter is too serious for me to adjudicate on," said Mr. Quelch, his face relenting just a little as he glanced at the weebegone appearance of the fat Remove, who was almost in tears now. "I shall have to take you to the headmaster and report the circumstances to him."

"Oh, lor', I shall be bunked!" moaned Bunter. "And I didn't think it was so serious, sir—I didn't, really!"

"I begin to think you are not quite responsible for your actions, Bunter," remarked Mr. Quelch, calming down a little. "Tell me exactly how you came to do this thing."

And then, for once in his career, William George Bunter told the truth. With his fat knees knocking together and his eyes blinking quite pathetically behind his big spectacles, he related the whole story, from the reading of the "Courtfield Express" in Chunkley's up to the appearance of Skinner and Bolsover among the sceptical Removees.

"A sordid affair!" was Mr. Quelch's comment, when he had finished. "And did it not occur to you, Bunter, that the whole thing was bound to come out if you won the competition?"

"Nunno, sir!"

"Dear me!" sighed Mr. Quelch. "Wicked and mercenary as you are, Bunter, I am afraid your stupidity exceeds either of those two qualities. Well, we must see Dr. Locke!"

. . . . .

Bunter was not expelled.

Horrified and disgusted as the Head was when he heard the story of Bunter's prize essay, he, like Mr. Quelch, was influenced by the stupidity Bunter had shown, and was, to a certain extent, impressed by the Owl's wretched state of remorse. And when Mr. Quelch mentioned Harry Wharton's intervention, the weight was just turned in Bunter's favour, and the extreme sentence was not passed.

But Bunter received the flogging of his life, instead, and never did anyone regret adopting a literary career more than did Bunter on the morning when that event took place. Of course, he had to hand over the prize-money; and Mr. Quelch generously donated this to the funds of the various sports clubs in the school, thus proving the truth of the old adage that it's an ill wind that blows nobody any good.

The Remove Form master did not forget the part that Skinner and Bolsover had played in the affair, as revealed in Bunter's confession; and, although he did not punish them again, he gave them a very severe "wiggling." The two japers came out of his study with burning ears, and wearing very sheepish expressions, and it was noticed in the days that followed that they were both extremely attentive and respectful to Mr. Quelch.

It was quite a long time before Bunter was his old self again, and for many weeks, to cause the Owl of the Remove to change colour, it was necessary to whisper only three short words—"Bunter's Prize Essay!"

THE END.

(There's a treat in store for you, chums, when you read: "COKE'S LEAGUE OF FRIENDS!" next week's extra-long complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars.)

**FALLING FOUL OF THE FANS!** The new "boss" of Storrydene F.C. seems to have mastered the art of causing trouble wherever he goes, for in addition to upsetting his team-mates he deliberately goes out of his way to be unpleasant to his club supporters!

# THE MAN OF IRON!

By  
WALTER EDWARDS.



A Grand  
New Story  
of  
League  
Football.

## Under Fire!

**A** TENSE silence settled upon the dressing-room as Terry Carson's mellow voice died away; and Hefty and one or two others moved across the room, fearing violence from the scowling giant.

Scannan, however, was standing perfectly still as though petrified; but in the depths of his eyes there glowed a spark that became uncannily bright with the passing of seconds. A man of terrible fury and unbridled passion, Tiny Scannan looked capable of anything at that moment, but Terry did not flinch as the giant gave a snarl and pointed a quivering hand towards the open window.

"You nearly went through there on Monday morning, you little rat!" growled Scannan, "and I'm going to make no mistake to-day! I don't allow anybody to talk to me as you did, and I warn the lot of you that I shall run the team on my own lines! I don't allow anybody to butt in—least of all a kid! Hear that, you pup?"

"I thought I was a rat," said Terry. "You distinctly said—"

"You—you—" Scannan choked as he glared down into the youngster's smiling eyes. "I'm going to heave you through the window, and I don't care a hang if you break your neck! I've had enough of you, Carson, so watch out!"

A hairy hand shot out as Tiny uttered the warning, but the nimble youngster had already skipped out of distance and darted to the other end of the dressing-room; and the other players closed round him, their eyes hard, their lips tightly closed.

Tiny Scannan might be a man-eater, but they were going to defy him!

"We know you're a bully and a great fighter, Scannan," growled Hefty Hebble, "but I warn you that you aren't going to put a finger on this kid!" He placed a muscular arm round Terry's shoulder as he said the words. "Carson had pluck enough to say exactly what the rest of us have been thinking since Monday morning, so I tell you straight that we're not in the mood to stand any rough stuff! There are ten of us—"

"I don't give a hang if there are thirty of you!" shouted Scannan. "There's not a real man amongst you!" His tone changed, becoming a sneer. "And what are you going to do, Mister Hefty Hebble?" he asked. "I thought I gave you a lesson the other day! Never mind; there are plenty more hidings where that one came from!"

Hefty's broad features still bore signs of the damage that had been inflicted, his right eye being discoloured and his lips badly swollen.

He gave a somewhat crooked smile.

"You'll have to kill me before you'll touch this kid," he declared, his voice low and husky.

"We'll see about that!" growled Tiny, crouching for a rush.

Uttering a snarl, he clenched his mighty paws and leapt; but he was not prepared for the fierce fusillade that met the vicious attack.

No sooner did he rush than the air became thick with flying missiles, brushes, combs, and cakes of soap mingling merrily with soaked sponges and samples of footwear; but it was a generous handful of soft soap that brought Tiny up with a jerk.

Propelled by the strong arm of

Terry Carson, the missile landed clean in the middle of the target.

Plop!

The unpalatable brown mess spread like a poultice and obscured the giant's broad countenance, filling his ears and mouth and trickling down his neck; and for the next twenty seconds or so he reeled about like a ship in distress, his hands clasped upon his waistcoat, his bulbous eyes streaming.

"Oh-ooooo!" moaned the Man of Iron, his tongue protruding like a piece of red flannel. "Oooo-er—"

Plop!

"Ouch!"

It was an over-ripe banana that whizzed through the air and smote him neatly between the eyes, bursting with a dull report and smothering him with luscious Jamaica fruit; and Scannan, obviously put out about something, emitted a wild yell of fury and snatched up a heavy wooden chair.

"Come on, the lot of you!" he roared, swinging the weapon round and round his bullet head; and it was at this moment that the door opened and the referee strode into the dressing-room.

## Barraoked!

**T**HE referee's moustache was bristling as he came to an abrupt standstill and regarded Tiny Scannan with excusable amazement, for the Man of Iron looked much the worse for wear.

Some seconds elapsed before he could frame a remark, but even then his words lacked tact.

"H'm!" He gave an important little cough. "It's a great pity you can't find a more suitable time for fooling."

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Scannan," he said. "I'm not a man to damp high spirits, but this"—he nodded at Tiny's soiled countenance—"is going a bit too far. You're supposed to be on the field in less than three minutes, yet you spend your time larking about and—"

"What?" roared Scannan, still foaming at the mouth. "Say another word, you gibbering little monkey, and I'll heave you through the window! Larking, eh? Do I look as though I've been larking, you maniac? I've swallowed about a hundred-weight of soft soap!"

"Why? What for?"

It was a perfectly simple question, yet it appeared to drive Tiny Scannan on to the verge of insanity.

The big fellow strode across the dressing-room and flung open the door.

"G-get out!" he stuttered, his massive limbs quivering. "Get out, before I do you an injury! You ask me why I swallowed a hundred-weight of soft soap!" Scannan gave a mirthless, hollow laugh. "I'll tell you, you idiot! I was hungry! Get out!"

He slammed the door as the bewildered referee darted out of the room, and the face he turned towards his men was anything but pleasant. Not that it was ever pleasant; but there are degrees of unpleasantness.

"There's no time in which to finish our little argument," he said. "But I may as well mention that you've all got something coming to you. Now, get a move on, 'cause I want to handle a few practice shots before we start!"

Five seconds ticked away, and then he spoke again, breaking an uncomfortable silence.

"I need hardly remind you fellows of the fact that you've not won a game for weeks, so I suggest that you pull yourselves together and make a special effort in the next half! I shall be in goal, so you'll have little to fear." He glared round, prior to leading his side on to the field. "Let me down," he grated, "and there'll be trouble for the lot of you. Anybody got anything to say to that?"

This was Scannan's usual question—a taunt, a challenge—but even Terry Carson refused to rise to the bait on this occasion, for he knew that further unpleasantness might easily put the boys clean off their game. And Bosworth United were always at their best in the second half.

Still scowling, Storrydene's Man of Iron strode off down the corridor, passed up the stone steps, and strolled across the cinder-track; and no sooner did the local lads show themselves than the fans let forth a reverberant roar of greeting.

"Up the Villa!"

"Good boy, Terry!"

"Hefty's the lad!"

Scannan, it seemed, had been completely forgotten in the excitement of the first half, but it was not long before he was singled out for a few kind words.

"How are you feeling, old man?"

"You still look a bit sunburnt, Scannan!"

"Now then, Lofty, don't lose your temper!"

Tiny Scannan scowled and muttered as a deluge of personal remarks descended upon him from all sides, and little by little it must have occurred to him that he ought not to have created the scene at the beginning of the game.

"To blazes with the lot of 'em!" he muttered, glowering. "I'll show 'em!"

Kicking the ball towards the Storrydene goal, he set off across the turf and placed himself between the uprights,

and a yell of ironical laughter echoed round the ground when Terry bewildered him with a drop-shot and found the net.

The uproar broke out afresh.

"Pull yourself together, Scannan!"

"Brighten up your ideas, old man!"

"Good boy, Terry!"

The League champions appeared at this moment, and saved the new man from further mild "harracking," but Tiny Scannan was a very angry man as he fished the twirling ball out of the net and slammed it up the field with a vicious kick.

"Up, the United!"

"Up, up, up!"

The referee, appearing with his linesmen, looked none the worse for his encounter with Tiny Scannan, but his moustache bristled perceptibly when the giant's deep voice floated across the field.

"Kick it, idiot! It won't bite you!"

The gentle Scannan addressed the remark to little Battle, the winger, and his peevish words did nothing to endear him to the home crowd.

"Ask him who he's talking to, Battle!"

"What's up with you, Scannan?"

Fearing a scene, the referee whistled the teams into position, and in facing each other for the second time that afternoon, they lined up in the following order:

#### STORRYDENE VILLA.

(Black Jerseys, White Knickers.)

Goal: Scannan (Captain). Backs: Grace, Hebble. Half-backs: Denning, Thirlboy, Craye. Forwards: Sceptre, Coyne, Carson, Noyle, Battle.

#### BOSWORTH UNITED.

(Yellow and Black Stripes, White Knickers.)

Forwards: Garter, Deemer, Jollyboy, Cramp, Dix. Half-backs: Benton, Cork (Captain), Cummings. Backs: Thirsk, Braid. Goal: FitzRoberts.

#### The Penalty Kick!

**T**ERRY CARSON started the second half by pushing the ball to Noyle on his left; and Noyle, evading a determined rush by Cramp, made a few useful yards and passed back to Terry. Cork, the Bosworth centre-half, arrived at the same time as the ball, so Terry took them both, meeting the hefty charge with a sturdy shoulder and attaching himself to the leather.

The next moment he was away, carving a path through the Bosworth

#### INTRODUCTION.

*After a sequence of wins the boys of Storrydene Villa F.C. strike a bad patch and lose nine matches right off the reel. Dissatisfied with the state of affairs, Sir Aubrey Ailen, a purse-proud baronet, and chairman of the club, engages "Tiny" Scannan to stop the rot which has set in. "Tiny"—a giant of a man—proves beyond doubt, that he's a bullying tyrant of the worst type when he introduces a dog-whip into his "gingering" methods. Maddened by Scannan's conduct, the Villa's supporters take matters into their own hands, with the result that during the first half of the match between Storrydene and Bosworth, the spectators are treated to the amazing spectacle of seeing Sir Aubrey's new "find" rushing on the field of play in a coating of black paint and feathers.*

*"Cut it out, Scanny," says young Carson, in the dressing-room during the interval, "you've come to the wrong shop to try the rough stuff!"*

(Now read on.)

defence in a cool, unhurried manner that sent the home "fans" into an advanced stage of hysteria.

"Up, up, up!"

"Right through, lad!"

"Set 'em alight!"

Terry had not been at his best for the past week or so, but now it looked as though he had regained his old form—and against the leaders of the League!

This, quoth the fans, was indeed the stuff to give 'em!

"Up, Terry!"

"Go through on your own!"

"Pretty play!"

It seemed that nothing in knickers and a jersey could stop the flying figure, for Terry tricked and outpaced every player who showed a desire to take a hand in the proceedings; and it looked for all the world as though he had the goal at his mercy when his legs were swept from under him, and he went sliding forward on his chest.

Pheep!

The little referee looked very stern as he ran across and pointed a dramatic forefinger to the whitewashed blob.

He turned to Thirsk, Bosworth's left-back.

"Any more of that, sir, and you go off!" he snapped; and thousands of fans roared their approval.

Thirsk looked very hot about the ears as he helped Terry to rise.

"Sorry, old man," he said. "I've been playing long enough not to lose my head—"

"That's all right," smiled the youngster, taking the outstretched hand. "I'll make up for it by beating Fitz!"

"Who said so?" asked a deep voice.

Swinging round sharply, Terry found Tiny Scannan scowling down at him.

The Storrydene skipper was breathing hard, for he had raced the length of the field.

"Made a mistake, ain't you?" he growled.

"I thought I might take the kick," said Carson mildly.

"Well, think again!" growled Scannan. "This is my job!"

"But—"

"No 'buts,' confound you!" snarled Scannan, his resonant voice echoing from one end of the ground to the other. "I'm skipper, and what I say is law! I take the kick!"

The Storrydene fans were not used to this sort of thing; besides, young Terry Carson was a great favourite.

Angry cries came from all parts of the enclosure.

"Let the kid take it!"

"Greedy!"

"Go home, Scannan!"

The blood ebbed from Tiny Scannan's face as he listened to the shower of abuse. He swung round upon the referee.

"Are you going to allow these hooligans to talk to me like that?" he demanded. "Speak to 'em! Do your duty—if you know it; and I doubt very much whether you do!"

The ground was in the grip of pandemonium by this time, for Scannan seemed to have mastered the art of rubbing the crowd up the wrong way; and the wild shouting took on a different note—ugly and threatening.

It was the voice of the mob.

"Look here, Scannan," said the referee, "you've been asking for trouble from the moment I met you! Take the kick if you're going to, and try to keep a check upon your tongue! That's a warning!"

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Tiny Scannan's great chest was heaving as he glared down at the diminutive referee; but he read something in the official's eyes that warned him that he had better go carefully.

Furious though he was, he did not blind himself to the fact that referees are very important persons these days. The referee is the boss; his word is law.

"Do you hear me, sir?" snapped the referee testily, his fierce moustache bristling with indignation; and the mighty fists of Tiny Scannan doubled in ominous fashion.

The threat was seen by the wide-eyed fans, and again, pandemonium broke loose.

"Get on with it, Scannan!"

"Chuck 'im off, ref!"

"Go on! Take it, greedy!"

The Man of Iron still hesitated, torn between a desire to defy the yelling crowd, and a mad impulse to send the little referee crashing to the turf; and his deep chest was heaving as, with a muttered oath, he swung round upon his heel, his unlovely features twisted into a black scowl.

He halted behind the whitewashed blob, the hard-eyed players lining up on either side of him.

The great moment had arrived; Tiny Scannan was going to be put to the test.

Slowly, strangely, the discordant din died down, until an uncanny hush settled upon the vast crowd. The breeze, slight though it had been, had given place to a weird, unnatural calm, the calm that precedes a momentous happening; and the whole universe might have been holding its breath when the whistle shrilled, and Tiny Scannan took three short steps.

Boomp!

But the merest fraction of a second elapsed between the kicking of the ball and the bulging of the net. Tiny Scannan had scored. And, for the first time in the history of the game, perhaps, the scoring of a brilliant goal was received in complete silence!

### An Ugly Situation!

TINY SCANNAN gazed round at the silent crowd in almost comical bewilderment: He could not understand it; it was unbelievable; it was unheard of. He imagined for one brief moment that he had gone stone deaf! Yet his wide-open eyes could not deceive him. There was no sign of excitement or jubilation upon the part of the fans; indeed, there was no sign of anything, except a complete and stony indifference to the brilliant goal that had given Storrydene Villa the lead!

The silence was uncanny, and the Man of Iron was acutely conscious of the cold, inimical stare of the crowd,

a stare that was disquieting and contemplative—like the fixed gaze of a man-eater.

Glancing round, Scannan found that the other players were moving off to their respective positions; and it occurred to him that it might be as well if he returned to his own goal at the far end of the field.

Tiny was a very angry man at that moment, and the deliberate manner in which he thrust his way between Terry Carson and Noyle, sending both players reeling, brought a howl of rage and disgust from the fans, all of whom were fast losing patience with the Villa's skipper.

"Dirty!"

"Booh!"

"You great big bully!"

A few spectators even went so far as to vault the railings, and it was only the good-tempered handling by the police that prevented what might easily have become a very ugly situation. Scannan, however, appeared to be contemptuous to the danger that threatened him. It pleased him to know that he had managed to rouse the fans, to have broken that uncanny silence, and he was grinning evilly as he brushed past Hefty Hebble and took up his position between the sticks.

Jollyboy lived up to his name as he prepared for the resumption of play, for he was smiling cheerfully as he waited for the whistle, and then touched the ball to Deemer, on his left. Deemer was a round-shouldered, hatchet-faced young man who ran to brains rather than to brawn, and the easy manner in which he slipped past Coyne and went away on his own, brought round after round of cheers from the Bosworth folk who had travelled south with their "pets."

"Go through, Jimmy!"

"Right through, lad!"

Thirlboy was quickly in the picture, his long arms flapping, and his eyes narrowed; but he could do nothing against the player who was as slippery as an eel; so Deemer managed to reach the goal area.

"Now, Jimmy boy!"

"Try one!"

The elephantine Grace loomed up, stolid and unemotional as ever, but even he moved with unusual celerity when Deemer shot off at a tangent and made for the corner flag. Ponderous though he was, Grace had a fair turn of speed, but he was outdistanced by the man from Bosworth. It was only a matter of inches, of course, but it gave the forward his chance of taking a shot at goal before he was sent to earth with a hefty charge.

(Will Tiny Scannan rise to the occasion and save his citadel? Be sure you read the next exciting instalment of this powerful serial, *chums*. You'll enjoy every line of it.)

## CUP FINAL THRILLS!

(Continued from page 2.)

for being calm. "Good heavens!" he yelled through the microphone. "He's thrown it into the net!"

### First Blood Means Everything!

Such thrills are all part of the Cup Final; the thrills of the game, a mistake here, a chance kick there. Thus are these big games won. And the cheering which greets a goal is all the greater, because the followers of football know that generally one goal wins the Final Tie. There have been eight Cup Finals since the War. Six of these have been won by the score of one goal to nothing. The others have been two goals to nothing, which means that not once since the War has the losing side in a Cup Final scored a goal.

Goals being scarce in Cup Finals, it follows that a lot of fuss is made of the fellows who get the goals. But while it is goals that win matches, it is equally true that dramatic, thrilling saves by goalkeepers prevent matches from being lost. One of the finest saves I have ever seen was in the Final Tie of 1926, when Bolton Wanderers beat Manchester City. The Wanderers were leading by a goal, but as the game progressed the City attacked time after time. Eventually the ball came sailing over from the wing. Waiting for it in just the right place was Tom Browell—the player who has always been called "Boy" Browell because he came into the game so young. Browell made a perfect header towards goal. Tens of thousands of people yelled "Goal!" in a mighty roar. And it looked a thousand to one on the ball going into the net. But Dick Pym, the fisherman goalkeeper of Bolton Wanderers, sprang through the air and turned that ball aside. It was a miraculous save, preventing Manchester City from equalising the score. Players of Bolton Wanderers dashed to the goalkeeper to compliment him.

Though I have heard much cheering over Cup-Final goals, one of the biggest cheers I have heard in a long experience of Cup Finals was given to his Majesty King George before the start of the Final Tie of 1921. Just as the players came out to start the game the rain came down as I have seldom seen it come down before—or since—an "sheets," as we say. Yet, according to plan, King George stepped from his place in the Royal box, went on to the pitch, and shook hands with every player. He was soaking wet before he had finished the hand shaking. That is the sort of action which endears a King to his people. It brought forth cheer after cheer. Yes, Cup Finals make heroes.

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A I. BIRCHEMALL!

Fossil, the one-time Porter of St. Sam's, and now headmaster of that famous school, called out the name at the top of his unmusical voice as he spotted Dr. Birchemall walking past, in the passage outside his study.

Dr. Alfred Birchemall, a short time before the majestic and dreaded headmaster, but now only the Skool Porter, halted as he heard his name called. Then he walked meekly into the sankum which had formerly been his, but which now belonged to his stockesser.

"Well?" he inquired. Fossil, who was arrayed in Dr. Birchemall's cap and gown, glared. "Well, what?" he asked.

"Oh, crumbs! Mean to say you want me to call you 'sir'?" gasped the former Head. "Settingly! Why not?" roared Fossil.

"Oh, grate pip!" said Fossil, grimacing all over his face now. "You may well bewail your fate now!" said Fossil, grinning all over his face.

"A lass!" groaned Dr. Birchemall. "In future, when you approach me, you will do the boughpin' and scra-pin' instead of me. You will report to me three times a day to be kicked down the steps, and on Friday night to be birched black and blue. And you will treat me always with grate respect and deference. Savvy?"

"I savvy, sir!" groaned Dr. Birchemall. "Another thing!" said Fossil, glaring sawidgely at the grovelling ex-trant of St. Sam's. "I notice that altho you are now only a porter you still swank about with your skollerly Oxbridge accent. That's got to stop!"

Dr. Birchemall nodded rechevly. "Such aristocratishk eggclamations as 'Grate pip!' or 'Oh, crakey!' are all very well for an 'eadmaster," said Fossil severely. "But comin' from a meer porter, they sound out of place."

"I see, sir!" "So just you stop it, Birchemall, or you'll roo it!" said Fossil. "When you



want to eggpress surprise now you'll eggclam: 'My only haunt!' or 'My heye!' And always begin your remarks by sayin': 'Wot I say is this 'ere'— Then every body will know you're the blinkin' 'eadmaster!' "Wot I says is this 'ere: I understand, sir!" moaned Dr. Birchemall miserably. "Well, that's all right, then!" grunted Fossil. "Now I'll give you some of the pleasant little duties you used to give me. First, I want you to raid the Fourth Form studies for tuck, and bring it to me. 'My heye!' gasped the ex-headmaster in alarm, dropping into the langwidg which his superior had ordered him to use. "Wot I says is this 'ere: I can't do that, sir!" "You can't!" repeated Fossil, with a renewed glare. "And 'oo the thump are you to say you can't! I say you can, and when I say you can, you can! Forty long years I've been raidin' tuck without so much as a 'thank you.' Now you're goin' to do a bit for me. Git out!"

"But—" murmured Dr. Birchemall, with a despairing jecture. "Git out, I say!" bellowed Fossil. "And if you're not back in ten minutes with enuff grub to last me the rest of the day you're for it, my man!" With a jump in his throat caused by a piece of toffee, which he had been dowered to conceal while he had been speaking, the unfortunate Dr. Birchemall made his way, with reluctant footsteps, in the direckshun of the Fourth-Form passage. With pail and haggard features, Dr. Birchemall opened the door of the first study he came to, and sneaked inside. As mouning lessons were in progress he had eggpected that the study would be empty. Instead, however, he found himself staring at the grinning dille of Jack Jolly, the kaptein of the Fourth. "Good-mornin', Bitchy!" cried Jack Jolly cheerfully. "Yot in and take a pew!" "Grate pip!" gasped Dr. Birchemall. "I—I didn't know you were here, Jolly! Why aren't you in your Form-room?" "Special leave," grinned Jack Jolly. "I eggspined to Mr. Lickham that I hadn't read the copy of the 'Weekly Joker' he lent me yesterday, so he aloud me to cut morning lessons. But what's your giddy game, anyway, sneekin' in like a thief in the nite?" The ex-headmaster berried his head in his hands. "Fossil's orders!" he choked, still vainly trying to dildodge the toffee from his throat. "I am tuck-raiding for the trant who has usurped my place!" "Fow!" whistled Jack Jolly, thoughtfully. "I can tell you, Jolly, I never dremt, in the happy old days, that I should ever sink to this!" said Dr. Birchemall, in hart-broken accents. "In days gone by Fossil always did the tuck-raiding, and similar meental tasks, for me. Little did I think that the day would come when I should be doing it for Fossil!" "Well, I must say it serves you right!" remarked Jack Jolly candidly. "While you were Head, you ruled us with a rod of iron. Your tirrany was a buy-word!" "A lass! I realize that!" said Dr.

Winning Back His Torrels

Jack Jolly's Ducky Nugget



Things are coming to something when such a supposedly clever personage as Dr. Birchemall has to be tutored by a junior in the Fourth Form. Yet this amusing situation arises at St. Sam's. headmaster of St. Sam's, and send Fossil back to the Porter's Lodge. "H'm! P'raps you're right," said Jack Jolly reflectively. "But how the dickens are you to do that? You've just admitted that you're stall and rusty in hollidge." "Ah! That's where you come in!" said Dr. Birchemall eagerly. "I know you're a smart lad in class. Now's your chance to prove it. Why not take me in hand, give me a bit of coaching on the quiet, and lick me into shape again?" "Oh, grate pip!" murmured Jack Jolly. "A few evenings of extra toot in your study, and I'm sure I shall soon be a credit to my profession again," said Dr. Birchemall enthusiastically. "Now, what do you say, Jolly? Be a good lad and help me out of my dreadful plite!" "Well, this beats the giddy band!" grinned Jack Jolly. "After all the torchers I've suffered at your hands, you calmly eggpect me to coach you so that you can become Head again!" "I'll make it worth your while!" said the ex-headmaster wheedlingly. "I promise you I'll give you no more fog-gings, and no more impots, when I'm reinstated. You shall have unlimited credit at the tuckshop, and the Free Pass we got from the Muggleton Cinema for their advertisement on the Skool Gates shall be yours every week." "My hat!" murmured Jack Jolly. "It certainly sounds attractive!" "Then you agree?" "All right!" he grinned. "I'll coach Jack Jolly pondered for a moment, and then he nodded. "All right!" he grinned. "I'll coach you." "Hoorary!" In his joy Dr. Birchemall clasped Jack Jolly round the waste, and waited round the study. He was as eggstated as a fag with a couple of herrings. After that he and Jack Jolly shared another bottle of ginger-pop. And, clinking their glasses together, they solemnly toasted the day when Dr. Birchemall should once more rain over St. Sam's!

II. HEN MERRY and BRIGHT, Jack Jolly's pals, heard that their leader had agreed to help Dr. Birchemall to win back his torrels, they were surprised, and rather disgusted.

Jack Jolly gave a shrug. "Well, I've promised now," he said; "and a Jolly never goes back on his word! Any old how, I really believe that Dr. Birchemall intends to reform, if he ever does become Head of St. Sam's again."

"I doubt it," said Merry. "So do I," concurred Bright. "And now, I suppose we've got to have him up, hear in the study every nite, putting a dampen on us. Kotten!"

When Dr. Birchemall did trot along, however, Merry and Bright were agreeably surprised to find that he was quite genial and entertaining. He regaled them with anecdotes about his Oxbridge days that kept them in fits of laughter, assisted in bumping Tubby Barrall, who came round cadging for tuck, and displayed a vast hollidge of cigarette pictures that was very impressive. Jack Jolly & Co. had quite a pleasant evening, in fact.

The work, however, was not neglected. While Merry and Bright were day in the Junior Common-room, Jack Jolly patiently instructed his old headmaster in simple Arithmetick, Spelling, History, and Joggery. In all these subjects, Dr. Birchemall seemed painfully weak. It really was eggstrordinary that such a learned and skollery individual should have forgotten so much.

"You don't seem to shine much," said Jack Jolly severely. "You'll have to sweat a lot, I'm afraid, before you're fit to ask Sir Frederick to reinstatate you."

But Dr. Birchemall meant to stick it. Nite after nite the ex-headmaster came to Jack Jolly's study and sweated. With slate and pencil in hand, and beads of inspiration standing out on his massive forehead, he sat at the feet of the kepin of the Fourth and imbibed hollidge.

Roomers began to spread round the skool, and the Fourth Form passage became a center of interest. Quite a number of seniors made an egggesture to put their heads into Jack Jolly's study, and they stared wonderingly at the site that met their eyes.

Even the masters came along and had a peep, and loud were the guffaws of Messrs. Justiss, Lickham, and Tyzer when they looked in. "Look at it!" jeered Mr. Lickham. "Swotting to get back It's old job!"

"What a hope!" chuckled Mr. Tyzer. "You'll never be headmaster again, Bitchy, so you may as well give up the idea."

"A skool porter's job is just about your mark, my man!" said Mr. Justiss, grinning all over his dille. "Now they've found you out they won't have any more tuck with you."

Dr. Birchemall scowled, as he looked up from his work. "Buzz off, you grinning idiots!" he snapped. "Rats!" grinned Mr. Lickham. "And many of 'em!" added Mr. Justiss and Mr. Tyzer together. "Buzz off, I tell you!" roared the ex-headmaster, with a dangerous gleam in his eyes. "If you don't, I'll—"

"More rats!" "Whizz!" A big dictionary flew throo the air with all the force of Dr. Birchemall's arm behind it. It caught Mr. Justiss full in the dille, and there was a roar

as he reeled back, knocking over his two companions. "Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Dr. Birchemall and his tutor. The three masters scrambled to their feet and boiled, feeling not quite so humorous. And Jack Jolly, and his pupil were left to pursue their studies in peace.

Dr. Birchemall soon began to make progress under Jack Jolly's able tuition. It was marvellous to see him swotting after a hard day's work. Any ordinary man, after twelve hours of cleaning windows, polishing brass, carrying parcels, and sweeping carriage-drives, would have been too eggstated



Dr. Birchemall was quite genial and entertaining, and even assisted in bumping Tubby Barrall who came round cadging for tuck.

for further labours. But not so Dr. Birchemall; his hole futuro was at steak.

The time soon arrived when Jack Jolly put his pupil throo a most searching eggamination to see whether he was fit to apply for his old job again. "Where is the Rhino?" was one of Jack's questions.

"On the outside of the cheese!" replied Dr. Birchemall promptly. "What day was it when King Alfred was crowned?"

"Panoke Day!" "How do you spell 'reskew'?" "R-e-s-k-e-w!" "Eggcellent!" said Jack enthusiastically. "You're getting on fine! Now, what is Sheffield noted for?"

"The Wednesdays," and Sheffield United!" answered Dr. Birchemall promptly. "Splendid! Now for arithmetick. What is seven and six?"

"Thirteen, sir!" "Quick as lightning came the answer. "The cost of a dog-houcer is?" "Well, that's all, I think," said Jack. "Your progress is trooly wonderful, and I really believe you are fit to approach the Guverniers and apply for reinstatement now."

"Thank Hevvan!" murmured the Head fervently. "I will write to Sir Frederick Fungus to-nite!" And with eyes gleaming with suppressed eggstement, Dr. Birchemall hopped out of the study and scampered down to the Porter's Lodge to write the all-important letter.

THE END. (There's another long laugh in next week's special story of St. Sam's, entitled: "DR. BIRCHEMALL'S COMEBACK!" Miss it, chums, and you'll miss the treat of the week.) THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 1,054.