

“THE JAPER OF GREYFRIARS!”

This week's rattling fine school yarn.

The Magnet 2^d

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EVERY SATURDAY.



BILLY BUNTER IS STONY—AND THERE'S 27/6 TO PAY!

(An amusing incident from this week's jolly school story of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars.)

Our Special Football Feature!



This week "Referee" tells us the ideal way of scheming and opening out the game, choosing as his subject Billy Gillespie, the famous Sheffield United inside-left and Irish International.

THIS week I want the budding inside-wing footballers among my readers to be specially attentive, for I am going to talk to you about the ways of one of the greatest inside-wing men the big game has ever known.

The reason why I want you to be so specially attentive this week, however, is because I am convinced that the inside-wing men have the future of the game of football in their hands to a very large extent. It used to be said that the centre-half of a team was the most important fellow, and there's no denying that he is so still.

Where Brains Are Wanted!

The alteration in the offside rule, however, made for a change in relative importance. The centre-half is not now so much of an attacker as he used to be, and some of the work in the way of scheming and opening out the game has now to be done by the inside-wing men. Thus they are even more important than they used to be.

The fellows the football managers are looking for to-day—and will continue to look for to-morrow—are brainy inside-wing men. This is now the place of all others where brains are wanted in football, and this brings me to introduce one of the brainiest players we have had in the game during our time—Billy Gillespie, the inside-left of Sheffield United.

He is an Irishman, as you may have heard, but he has been in England long enough for some of us to have forgotten where he was born. From time to time in recent years we have had a reminder that Gillespie was Irish, for he has played for Ireland on more than twenty occasions, and sometimes he has led, as the captain, the Irish side to victory against England.

Theoretically, it ought never to be possible for an Ireland side to beat an English eleven. For every leading Irish player there are a score or more of leading English players. Moreover, Ireland has often had to play the "second best," because the English clubs would not release Irish-born players for these International games. But Gillespie, of Sheffield United, has led these Irishmen on to the field; he has inspired them with something of his own genius, and has literally captained them to victory.

An Adept at Drawing an Opponent!

Let me just give you an idea of what they think of Gillespie in Ireland. When Ireland, under Gillespie's captaincy, beat England in 1923, the Irish Football Association gave the skipper a present in the shape of a mahogany dining-room clock. They gave his wife a gold

bracelet watch, and they sent a silver rattle for Gillespie's little boy.

It is necessary for an inside-wing forward in these days to be able to hold the ball, which means that he must have mastered the art of ball-control. Any sort of pass won't do. A pass to be effective must not be made until the opponent has been drawn from the man to whom the ball is to be given. Gillespie is an adept at holding the ball to draw an opponent. He can get it under control in a twinkling, and, by a sudden and unexpected turn, cause the man who is coming in to tackle to go the wrong way.

In the ordinary course of events he doesn't keep in a line with his other forwards. He keeps behind them, picking up the stray balls which fall around the centre of the field. The things which he does with those stray balls reveal the genius of the man.

I have said that he has "captained" Ireland to victory over England more than once. It is also literally true that he has captained Sheffield United to

victory in the English Cup. The story of the Cup Final of 1925 should be retold here, because it contained lessons for young footballers, and illustrated the genius of Gillespie to a marked degree.

Every Bit a Schemer!

For days and days before that Final tie between Sheffield United and Cardiff City was played the newspapers discussed the likely course of the game. They said what everybody was thinking. That the danger to Cardiff City came from the Sheffield United left wing, which consisted of Gillespie and Tunstall. I know that the Cardiff men thought out their plans to hold up this left-wing of Sheffield; they had schemes to stop Gillespie and Tunstall.

As the game progressed, however, it seemed to become more and more obvious that it wasn't the left-wing which was the danger to Cardiff. Every time Gillespie got the ball he veered over to the right. When the half-backs had the ball he told them to send it out to the right. And Gillespie himself worked over to the right wing. For long spells Tunstall might as well have been in the dressing-room or in the grandstand. He was doing absolutely nothing, because his own colleagues were keeping the ball away from him.

This became so obvious that gradually the defenders of Cardiff City came to the conclusion that they could safely leave the Sheffield United left-wing and concentrate on stopping the right-wing, which was having all the play. That conclusion was their undoing. In the second half we again saw Gillespie going over to the right-wing as he had done before, and the Cardiff defenders were following him. Suddenly he swung round and banged the ball over to the left, where Tunstall was waiting for it.

And from that pass Tunstall scored the goal which won the Cup final. The scheming of Gillespie that day was just typical of the man. He thinks about the game, and his thought being backed by ability is one big reason why he went right to the top of the tree.

Of course he is getting on a bit now. He has had three benefits with Sheffield United. But he is still very fit. He thinks golf a fine game for the footballer to play, and he plays golf fairly well. He is fond of a game of bowls, too, and has skippered many a bowls team, which shows that he thinks about other games besides football.

I want you to remember Gillespie when you may be tempted to think that the game of football is played with the feet only. Gillespie's greatness has been due to the fact that he plays with his head.



BILLY GILLESPIE,
of Sheffield United,
one of the brainiest
inside-lefts in the
country.

MEET CHRISTOPHER CLARENCE CARBOY! HE'S A SCREAM! They've had some japers at Greyfriars, but the latest practical joker to arrive at the old school out-jokes all his predecessors!

THE JAPER OF GREYFRIARS!



A Magnificent New Long Complete School Story of Harry Wharton & Co., introducing a new boy in Christopher Clarence Carboy, the biggest practical joker Greyfriars has ever known. By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Victim Required!

CHRISTOPHER CLARENCE CARBOY!

"Yes."

"What a name!"

"Some name!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Still, as Shakespeare asked a long time ago, what's in a name?"

"Most of the alphabet, in this case!" remarked Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Never mind his name," said Harry Wharton. "The question is, who's going to the station for him?"

"Hem!"

"Echo answers who?"

"The echo-fulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Jamsot Ram Singh. "Nobody seemed keen."

"Quelchy's asked me," said Wharton. "As head boy of the Remove, nice little things like this are bound to come my way. And there's footer practice this afternoon, as I mentioned to Quelchy. He said it would be quite all right if I sent some other Remove chap."

"Very considerate of Quelchy!" said Frank Nugent. "Did he suggest the name of any Remove chap who would like to root about a railway station waiting for a new kid on a half-holiday?"

"He didn't."

"I thought not. I can't think of such a chap myself," confessed Nugent. "Not little me, anyhow."

"I dare say this Carboy man is quite a nice chap!" remarked Harry Wharton. "It may be quite a pleasure to meet him."

"It may!" agreed Bob Cherry. "But this is my self-denial week; and I'm willing to leave the pleasure to some other fellow."

"The fact is, I can't very well get away from the footer," said the captain of the Remove. "You chaps don't feel keen on going to Courtfield Station to collect this Carboy."

"The keenfulness is not terrific."

"There's the footer," said Bob. "But there are a lot of chaps in the Remove who don't care about footer. Luckily, it's a compulsory day. Skinner would jump at the chance of getting out of footer practice."

Wharton shook his head.

"Can't send Skinner—he would play some rotten jape on the new kid. Can't trust him."

"What about Mauleverer?" asked Bob. "He groaned aloud when I told him it was compulsory footer this afternoon. He had forgotten it, and hated to be reminded."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"He might forget to turn up at the station, too. The new kid's been told to wait till called for."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Bunter! The very man!" exclaimed Bob.

Billy Bunter rolled up to the group of juniors outside the House. Somewhat to his surprise, they met him with smiling and welcoming faces.

A smiling welcome did not always fall to the lot of William George Bunter of the Remove. It was quite a common occurrence for a group to break up and scatter when Bunter rolled into view. To William George Bunter himself the sound of his own voice was as the music of the spheres. On the rest of the Greyfriars Remove it had palled.

But circumstances alter cases. Bunter was not an ornament to the Remove; and as a rule he was even less useful than ornamental. But a use for Bunter had been found at last.

Somebody had to go to Courtfield Station to meet the new kid. That was the order of Mr. Quelch, master of the Remove. The task had been assigned to Wharton as head boy and captain of the Form. Kindly and considerately had Quelchy agreed that another fellow might be sent. So it was necessary, as the song says, that a victim must be found. There was no reason why W. G. Bunter should not be the victim.

Bunter hated football. He hated all form of exertion; but for footer, as a rather strenuous form of exertion, he reserved his deadliest animosity. On days of compulsory practice Bunter was fertile of excuses. Bunter, on the other hand, liked new boys. New boys had never heard of Bunter's celebrated postal-order, which was always expected but never materialised. It was always on the cards that a new fellow, who had never heard of Bunter, might shell out a small loan on the strength of that postal-order. Billy Bunter, in fact, was the very fellow to be assigned the task of meeting Christopher Clarence Carboy at the railway station. He would be glad to miss footer; and every other fellow on the field would be glad to miss him. It would be a case of satisfaction all round.

So the Famous Five of the Remove smiled benignantly on William George Bunter as he rolled up.

Bunter was limping.

They were not surprised to see him limping. There was always something the matter with Bunter just before compulsory games practice.

His fat face was scrowed up into an expression of suffering.

"I say, you fellows—" he began.

"Anything up, Bunter?" asked the captain of the Remove, with more sympathy than Bunter had expected.

"Yes, old chap," said Bunter. "I've lamed my leg."

"Poor old Bunter!" said Bob Cherry, with deep commiseration. "That means that you'll have to cut footer this afternoon."

"Is it very bad?" asked Wharton gravely.

"Horrid!" said Bunter. "That's what I've come to speak to you about, Wharton. I want you to let me off this afternoon." Bunter stood on his left leg and wriggled the right painfully. Apparently it was the right leg that was injured. "You see, coming out of the

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study, I slipped over and fell. My ankle's sprained rather badly."

"I'll help you in to Quelchy's study," said Bob. "That's a matter for the doctor."

"It's not as bad as that," said Bunter hastily. "Merely painful. I'm not the fellow to make a fuss about a little pain. I can bear it. The trouble is that I shall have to cut games practice. It's rather rotten for me—"

"Eh?"

"You know how keen I am on Soccer—"

"Oh!"

"But it can't be helped. I suppose it's all right, Wharton?" asked Bunter, with an anxious blink at the captain of the Remove through his big spectacles. "If Wingate of the Sixth says anything, you can explain to him that I'm crooked, you know. The pain is simply awful!"

The chums of the Remove looked as serious as they could. They knew exactly how much William George Bunter was crooked; they had been there before, so to speak.

"Well, I can't let you off for nothing, Bunter," said Harry. "I have to answer to Wingate for every man let off games practice."

"My leg's simply black with bruises!" said Bunter pathetically. "Black as— as midnight. Covered with 'em!"

"That settles it," said Harry. "If your leg's covered with bruises you can't play footer!"

"Oh, good!" said Bunter, in great relief. "I knew you'd do the decent thing, Harry, old chap!"

"Certainly. Let's see the bruises."

"Wha-a-t?"

"You can borrow a microscope from the lab!" said Johnny Bull. "I think one will be needed to see Bunter's bruises."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Come into the changing-room," said Harry. "If your leg's as bad as all that, Bunter, you want some Elliman's."

"The—the fact is, Harry, old chap, the—the bruises have—have got better, but the pain's still fearful," said Bunter. "It's rather serious, you know, when an injury goes inward, and—and pains fearfully, without leaving any sign on the skin."

"Awfully serious!" agreed Wharton. "It might be serious for me, too, if I spun such a yarn to the Head of the games. He might give me the ash-plant."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's not only my leg," said Bunter hurriedly. "I've got a pain in my chest—it feels like pneumonia coming on. Or plumbago. My—my grandfather suffers terribly from plumbago. It's hereditary, I think."

Possibly Bunter meant lumbago. But Bunter was not particular in trifles like this.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Chuck it, old fat man!" he said. "Look here, Bunter, there's a new kid coming to Greyfriars this afternoon, and Quelchy wants him met at the station. You can go if you like, and that will let you out of the footer."

Billy Bunter brightened up at once. He had had doubts—strong doubts—as to whether even such a complication of complaints as a sprained leg, incipient pneumonia, and plumbago would get him off games practice. Now it was all right. He ceased immediately to wriggle his injured leg. There was no need for that leg to be injured any longer.

"I'll go, old chap," he said. "I'd do

anything to oblige an old pal like you, Harry. What's his name?"

"Christopher Clarence Carboy."

"Oh crikey!"

"He gets in at Courtfield Junction by the three-thirty. He's been told to wait till called for, so you'll find him mooning about somewhere. You've got lots of time to get to the station. Ta-ta!"

And Harry Wharton & Co. walked away to the changing-room, the matter of the new Remove now being satisfactorily settled.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

Just Like Bunter!

"I SAY, you fellows."

"Why, you fat frump!" exclaimed Harry Wharton wrathfully.

The Remove had gathered on Little Side for games practice. Harry Wharton & Co. and most of the other fellows looked merry and bright. Most of the Remove welcomed the winter game when it came along. Skinner and his friends did not look merry, and did not look bright; they would have preferred to slack about, smoking surreptitious cigarettes in corners. Still, there was no doubt that games practice in the keen air was much better for them; and, anyhow, they had no choice in the matter.

Harry Wharton had dismissed Christopher Clarence Carboy and Billy Bunter from his mind. Both of them were disposed of; at least, he supposed that they were. So he was naturally surprised and wrathful to find the fat junior waiting for him when he arrived at the football ground.

"Why haven't you started?" he demanded.

"Oh, lots of time!" said Bunter.

"Lots of time for anybody else, you fat boulder, but you crawl like a snail!" snapped the captain of the Remove. "You can't keep the new kid hanging about a railway station till tea-time."

"Shall I start him with a kick?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Do!"

Bunter jumped away.

"I say, you fellows, no larks, you know. Look here, Wharton, if I'm going to do you this favour—"

"This what?"

"Favour," said Bunter. "If I'm going to do you this favour I expect you to be civil, see?"

William George Bunter had evidently been thinking the matter over, since he had delightedly welcomed the idea of meeting a new kid at the station instead of turning up to games practice.

He blinked severely at the captain of the Remove.

"I jolly well know that Quelchy's ordered you to meet that new kid," he said, wagging a fat forefinger at Wharton. "You're shoving it off on me! Very well! But you'd better be civil about it, see?"

"You fat frog!" exclaimed Wharton, in great exasperation.

"Oh, really, Wharton! I don't mind going to the station," said Bunter. "I'm an obliging chap. I'm always doing good-natured things and getting imposed upon in consequence. I'm used to it. I don't expect gratitude. Still, a fellow's bound to do the decent thing. If I do this favour for you and cut footer and all that, one good turn deserves another. It's a jolly long walk to Courtfield. What about a taxi?"

"Nothing about a taxi, you fat chump."

"I don't mind telephoning for one," said Bunter. "I'm not a fellow to dodge

taking a little trouble. I'll telephone like a shot!"

"Telephone all you like, you ass! You can have a whole cab rank if you like—if you can pay the fare."

"I'm not asking you to pay the fare!" said Bunter loftily.

"Oh, my mistake! I thought you were."

"Nothing of the kind! I'm not the fellow to take a taxi on the nod, I hope. But as I happen to be short of money this afternoon, I should expect you to lend me the fare. I'll settle up to-morrow—out of my postal-order."

"You fat villain!" said Harry Wharton in measured tones. "Are you going to the station for the Carboy man, or aren't you?"

"I'm afraid I can't walk it," said Bunter, shaking his head. "If you're going to be mean about a taxi I might catch a bus. That would be a shilling. And then there's tea."

"Tea!"

"I shall be late back for tea. I'm not grumbling at giving up my half-holiday to do your work for you, Wharton—I'm always doing these unselfish things. But I've got to consider my health. I can't miss my tea. They do you a decent tea at the bunshop for half-a-crown. If my postal-order had come to-day, as I expected, I shouldn't mention such a trifle. But"—Billy Bunter shook his head sorrowfully—"it hasn't come yet, old chap."

"Well, you can't wait for tea till your postal-order comes," chuckled Bob Cherry. "It would be the longest fast on record."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Is this footer practice or a conversation?" inquired Herbert Vernon-Smith.

"Perhaps you'd like to go to Courtfield to meet the new kid, Smithy?" suggested Bunter sarcastically. "These things are put on me because I'm good-natured and obliging. The way unscrupulous fellows impose on good-natured chaps is scandalous."

Harry Wharton breathed hard and deep.

"Are you going to the station or not, you fat, frumptious burler?" he demanded.

"Not unless you do the decent thing," said Bunter firmly. "I could do the whole thing on three-and-six. That's not much, when you're asking me to give up football for the afternoon, while you play footer yourself, in your selfish way."

"That does it," said Harry. "I shall have to go, you men—that fat idiot has let us down."

"Oh, rot!" said Nugent. "Look here, I'll go—you're wanted here, Harry. I'll cut the footer and get down to Courtfield for that blessed Carboy."

Wharton hesitated a moment. But the captain of the Remove really was wanted when games practice was on, so he nodded assent.

"Thanks, old chap! Bunter, get into your footer things. Sharp."

Bunter jumped.

"If you're not changed in three minutes look out for squalls."

Bunter gasped.

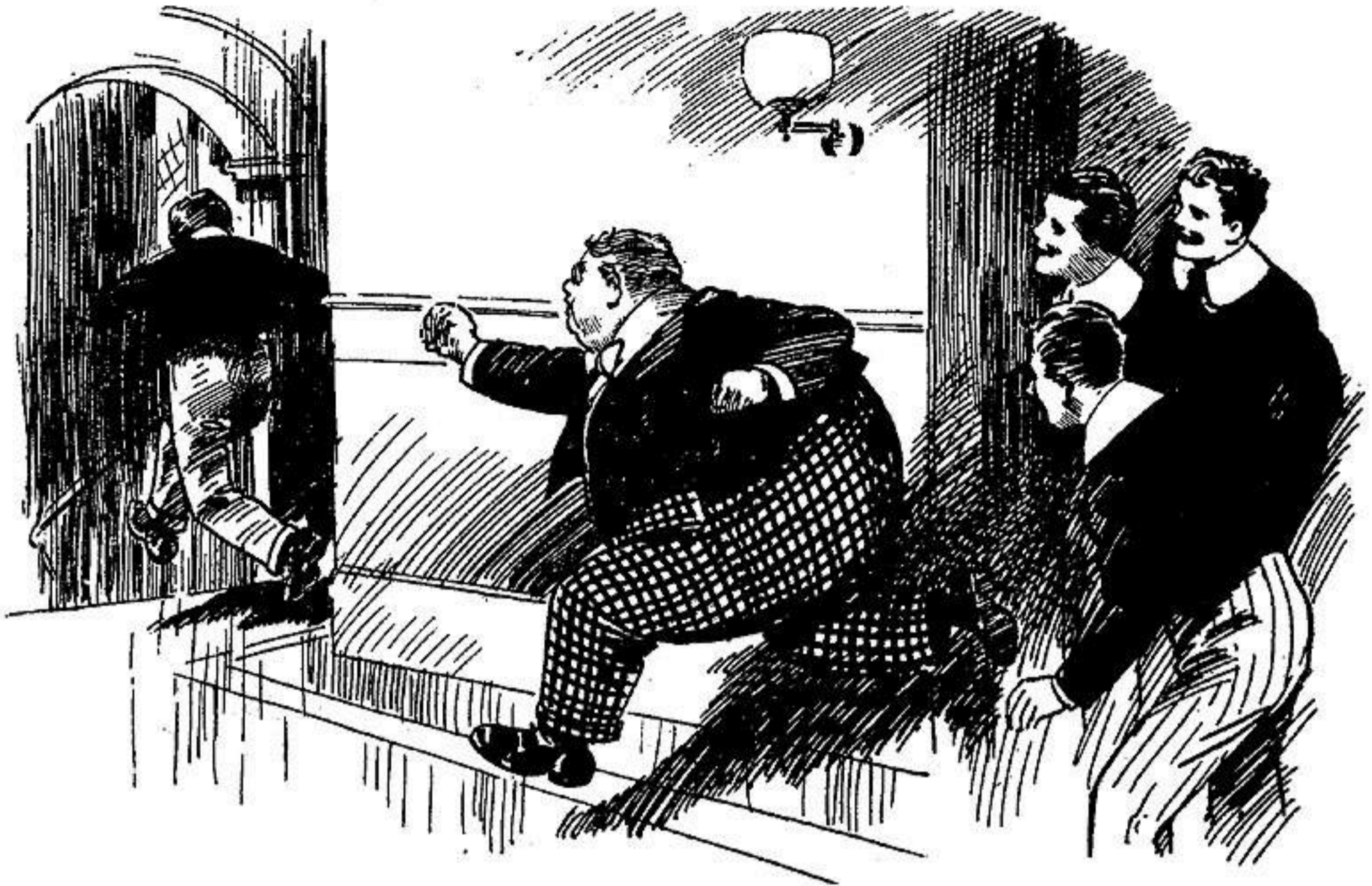
"But—but I'm let off games practice!" he stammered. "Why, you let me off yourself, you beast."

"Only to go to the station."

"I've got a pain—"

"You'll have some more if you don't change in a hurry," said the captain of the Remove impatiently. "Now, shut up! Mind, if you cut practice you'll be reported to Wingate, and that means six."

And Wharton turned away.



Christopher Clarence Carboy bolted out of the Rag, and scudded down the passage, under the astonished eyes of the Famous Five. A second later, Bunter came out of the Rag, puffing and blowing. "Where's that funky cad?" he gasped. "He dodged me round the table and got away. If you fellows want to see him turned into a hospital case, follow me!"
(See Chapter 8.)

Billy Bunter blinked after him in dismay. Footer practice, after all, was too horrible a prospect to be contemplated with equanimity. The fat junior jumped after Wharton and grabbed him by the arm.

"I—I—I say, old chap!" he squeaked. "I'm going! I'm just starting! I'm off! Honest Injun! I—I—I want to meet that new chap! I do really!"
"Oh, rats!"

"I say, I don't want Nugent to miss the footer, old chap! He—he needs practice more than I do! I say——"

"Look here, you fat fraud!" said Harry. "If you're going to the station, go, and shut up. I'll give you another chance. Yes, or no?"

"Yes!" gasped Bunter.

"Then hook it—sharp! And if you don't bring the new kid safe and sound to the school, I'll give you six with a five bat!"

"Beast!"

And Billy Bunter rolled away, wrathful, but glad that he had escaped footer practice, after all.

Games practice proceeded on the junior ground, what time William George Bunter plugged along the road to Courtfield, sadly reflecting what an unfeeling, ungrateful world it was in which his lot had been cast.

There was one solace, however. He was going to meet a new kid, who had never heard of him or his postal-order, who might be induced by skilful management, to stand a tea at the Courtfield bunshop—who might, indeed, turn up trumps, and prove a horn of plenty to the Owl of the Remove. Bunter hoped so, at least. As the poet has remarked, hope springs eternal in the human breast.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. The New Fellow!

CHRISTOPHER CLARENCE CARBOY looked out of the carriage window as the train slowed down in Courtfield Station.

The new fellow, who was coming to Greyfriars to enter the Remove, had a rather unusual name; but there did not seem to be anything else of an unusual nature about him. He was rather chubby in figure, and rather chubby in face, he was nicely dressed, he was rather good-looking, and looked rather intelligent. If there was anything uncommon about his looks, it was the twinkle in his hazel eyes, which might have indicated an unusually active sense of humour and a disposition to look on the bright side of things.

Certainly he did not look like a fellow going to school for the first time; fresh from home, or fresh from a "prep" school. He had rather an assured manner with him, like a fellow who knew his way about the little bit of the world with which he was acquainted.

He smiled as he looked from the window.

Billy Bunter was standing on the platform.

Had Billy Bunter been asked, he would not have been able to explain what there was for this merry-eyed fellow to smile at. There was nothing of a comic nature in the platform, in the trolleys, in the stacks of luggage, in the porters, or in the automatic machines. Above all, there could scarcely be anything of a comic nature in the handsome features and commanding figure of William George Bunter himself.

Yet it was upon that handsome face and commanding figure that Carboy's eyes rested as he smiled.

In point of fact, he did not notice that the face was handsome and the figure commanding. Bunter noticed these things every time he looked in the glass, short-sighted as he was. Other fellows, keen-sighted as the eagle or the hawk, never noticed them. Remove fellows would never have seen in Bunter what Bunter saw, had they been blessed with the eye of Argus. And so it happened that while Bunter stood in an attitude of commanding grace, as he would have observed at once himself had there been a mirror handy, all that the new boy saw was a tubby, fat fellow, with big glasses perched on a fat little nose, a mouth of considerable size which bore traces of what Bunter had had for dinner, and an air of fatuous self-satisfaction.

So Carboy smiled.

The train stopped, and Christopher Clarence Carboy stepped out, with a bag in his hand and a rug over his arm.

Bunter blinked along the train at the alighting passengers, and spotted him.

So far as the new boy was concerned personally, Bunter did not care two straws, or one, what happened to him or became of him. Bunter was not a philanthropist. Carboy might have got into the wrong train and landed late at night at Bristol or Gretna Green or South Shields—he might have wandered into the town, and landed at Highcliffe or Redclyffe, instead of Greyfriars—he might, indeed, have vanished into thin air if so disposed—and Bunter would have preserved his equanimity unruffled. But Bunter had two good reasons for

keeping his compact and turning up at the station to take the new kid in hand.

One was, that Wharton, having let him off games practice for the purpose, would assuredly have laid on the fives bat had Bunter failed. The other was that the new fellow might be good for a feed at the bunshop. So there was Bunter, prepared to do his duty.

Having spotted a fellow who looked as if he might be the new fellow for Greyfriars School, Bunter rolled across the platform towards him.

Carboy was walking along the platform, to see about his box, which was being disgorged from the guard's van.

He was not walking specially quickly; but Bunter's rate of progress was modelled upon that of the tortoise, so the new fellow left him far behind.

Bunter rolled in pursuit.

Carboy had arranged about his box with a porter, and started off again by the time Bunter arrived in the offing.

Bunter blinked after him as he headed for the exit.

"Hi!" he shouted.

Carboy apparently did not realise that that ejaculation was coming to his address. He walked on regardless.

"Hi!" roared Bunter. "Carboy!"

The new fellow turned his head at that.

He stared at Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove rolled up to him. He was a little breathless with his exertions, and rather indignant.

"You ass!" he gasped.

"Eh?"

"Why didn't you stop?" hooted Bunter.

"What was there to stop for?" inquired Carboy. "Who are you, anyway? What do you want, if you want anything?"

"I'm Bunter!"

Carboy eyed him.

"You look as if you might be," he remarked. "Some names suit people, and some don't! Mino doesn't! Yours does! Gratters!"

"You silly ass!" spluttered Bunter. "What the thump do you mean? Look here—"

"Excuse me!" said Carboy politely. "I've got to think of my eyesight!"

With that reply, Christopher Clarence Carboy turned away again and walked off to the exit.

Bunter blinked after him in deep wrath.

"Why, the cheeky beast!" he gasped. "The rank outsider! This is what comes of being good-natured and meeting silly new kids at a station! This is the gratitude a fellow gets!"

Bunter, in his indignation, was strongly tempted to leave the new fellow to his own devices. But two considerations restrained him—Wharton's fives bat and the possible feed at the bunshop. He rolled again in pursuit of Carboy.

That youth had reached the station vestibule, and was standing there looking about him, when the Owl of the Remove rejoined him. Carboy seemed to be looking for somebody; but not for Bunter, for he glanced very impatiently at the fat junior, as a fat hand grabbed his sleeve.

"You again!" he ejaculated. "Look here, hook it!"

"You silly chump—"

"If you've got out of a home for idiots," said Carboy, "I'm sorry, but I haven't the time to take you back. Ask a policeman!"

"I've come here—" howled Bunter.

"I know that. What I want is to see you go!"

"To see you—"

"Well, you've seen me, and there's no charge. Now cut!"

"To see you to Greyfriars—"

"What?"

"You footling chump!" hooted Bunter. "I'm a Greyfriars man, and I've been sent to meet you at the station."

"Oh, Maria!" ejaculated Carboy.

"Oh, my only hat and umbrella! You a Greyfriars man?"

"Yes!" hooted Bunter.

"And are there any more at home like you?" demanded Carboy.

Bunter spluttered with wrath.

"I was told I should be met at the station," said Carboy. "They didn't mention that they were sending Fat Jack of the Bonehouse."

"Why, you—you—you—"

"Well, now you've met me," said Carboy, "you've done your bit, so you can give me a rest. I suppose you don't want me to roll you home to Greyfriars like a barrel, do you?"

Billy Bunter breathed hard and deep. For a new fellow to talk like this to a Greyfriars man who had been whole terms at the school, was simply unheard of. This fellow had brought with him a cool assurance of which Bunter disapproved highly.

"Why, you cheeky beast!" gasped Bunter. "You—you—you—"

"Sing it," suggested Carboy.

"What?"

"Singing is good for stuttering."

"Who's stuttering?" roared Bunter.

"You are, old barrel. If you've finished, I'll get along. You're frightfully entertaining; but I've got to get to school."

"I've got to take you to Greyfriars," gasped Bunter. "Look here, Carboy! Old Quelch—"

"Who's old Quelch?"

"Our beastly Form master. Old Quelch told Wharton to meet you, and he chucked it. I came along out of good-nature."

"You don't look the part," said Carboy. "But if you meant to be good-natured, I'm obliged to you. I'm getting a taxi to the school, and I'll give you a lift, if you like. I'll pick out a taxi that will stand your weight, if I can."

Billy Bunter very nearly clenched his fat fist to smite Carboy to the earth. It cost him a great effort to restrain his wrath. But he succeeded in restraining

it. Bunter was hungry. He had had nothing since dinner, except a cake he had found in Squiff's study, and a bag of bullseyes that he had found in Ogilvy's study. Tea at the bunshop was an attractive prospect, if it could be worked. Not till Bunter was quite, quite sure that that attractive prospect was merely a mirage, would he give way to his wrath and treat this beast as he deserved.

"Look here, old chap, there's no hurry," he said. "I dare say you're a bit peckish after your journey."

"I shan't be sorry to get in and get some tea," said Carboy, with a nod.

"Well, come along to the bunshop," said Bunter. "It's only a few steps from the station. I'm going to stand you a feed."

"Are you?" ejaculated Carboy.

"Yes, old fellow."

"Form master's instructions?"

"Not at all! Just my generosity!"

"Oh, my hat and umbrella! May I remark again that you don't look the part?" asked Carboy. "If you're trying to pull my leg, chuck it!"

"I mean it!" Bunter slipped his arm through the new fellow's. "Come on! This way! Splendid place! Their doughnuts are ripping! The cakes are simply tophole! The cream puffs are spiffing—"

Carboy paused for a moment, looking at Bunter. Then he nodded. And William George Bunter and Christopher Clarence Carboy entered the Courtfield bunshop together.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Royal Spread!

BILLY BUNTER beamed. Carboy smiled genially. The two juniors sat at a little table in the bunshop, and the waitress was kept quite busy.

Good things piled the table.

Bunter gave the orders, and he gave them royally. It was not a time for Bunter to stint.

He had landed his fish.

No doubt the new boy, being pressingly invited to take his whack in this royal spread, distinctly stated to be at Bunter's expense, expected that Bunter would foot the bill. But expectations of that sort, in dealing with W. G. Bunter, were likely to lead to disappointment.

Some fellows in Bunter's present financial state would have lacked the nerve to give orders for things running into expensive figures. But Billy Bunter did not lack that sort of nerve.

His present resources were limited to a halfpenny. It was a bad halfpenny, which explained why it was still in Bunter's possession. Even had it been good, current coin of the realm and legal tender, it would not have gone far towards defraying the cost of that royal spread. The bill came to a pound already, and Bunter was still going strong, and Christopher Clarence Carboy was doing his bit, too.

But Bunter had no qualms.

When the feast was over, and the little bill was presented, all that Bunter had to do, was to discover that he had left his purse at the school. In similar circumstances, Bunter had made such discoveries before.

Not that Bunter, of course, intended to bilk a trusting new boy. Nothing of that kind. The new fellow would have to foot the bill—temporarily. Bunter was going to indemnify him later out of his postal-order—when it came. Carboy was a new boy now. He might be an Old Boy by the time Bunter's postal-order came. That was a chance any

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fellow had to take who had financial transactions with William George Bunter.

Obviously, the fellow couldn't refuse to foot the bill, and that was the main point. Having disposed of the spread along with Bunter, he was equally liable. He couldn't refuse. If Bunter had no money, the other partaker of the feast was bound to pay. And Bunter hadn't any! So that was all right.

He might be annoyed, irritated, exasperated. He might call Bunter unpleasant names. That would be no new experience for Bunter. He was accustomed to thanklessness and want of proper feeling.

So—feeling that it was all right—Bunter spread himself at that spread, and did himself remarkably well.

The new fellow had a fair appetite, and seemed to be hungry after his journey. But he was nowhere in comparison with Bunter. He had finished long before Bunter had had half enough.

Bunter blinked at him hospitably over the festive board. He liked to see a fellow eat. And he felt justly that this chap was entitled to a good whack in the feast, since he was going to pay for the lot.

"Try another doughnut, old chap!" urged Bunter.

"Thanks! I've had two."

"Make it three. I've had seven."

"Oh, Maria! Well, I'll tackle one more, as you're so jolly pressing," said Carboy.

"Do, old chap!"

And Carboy did.

Then he halted, and Bunter proceeded alone. Christopher Clarence Carboy eyed him very curiously.

"I say, Bunter, you must be frightfully well off to chuck money about like this," he said.

Bunter nodded and grinned, with his mouth full.

"You see, money's nothing to me," he explained. "If I ever find myself short of tin, I simply telephone to Bunter Court."

"Topping!" said Carboy.

"And I've a lot of titled relations, you know, who send me remittances," said Bunter. "I'm expecting a postal-order first thing in the morning."

"Fine!"

"I may be rather careless with money," said Bunter negligently. "A really wealthy fellow can afford to be. Sometimes—you'd hardly believe it—he, he, he!—but sometimes I forget all about putting any money in my pocket when I go out, and find myself quite stony."

"I can quite believe it," said Carboy.

"The fact is," said Bunter confidentially, "I rather fancy that I left my purse in the study before I came out this afternoon."

"Fellow might easily forget a little thing like that," assented Carboy, with the twinkle in his eyes very much pronounced now.

"Not that it matters," said Bunter.

"Oh, no! I suppose your credit's good at this place?" suggested Carboy. Bunter coughed.

"Oh, quite!" he said. "But, as it happens, we're not allowed to run up bills in the town. The Head's down on it. But if I happen to have left my tin behind, it's all right. You can settle this little matter—"

"Eh?"

"And I'll square when we get to the school," said Bunter carelessly. "See?"

"I see."

"It will be only about twenty-five

shillings," said Bunter. "There, or thereabouts."

"A mere trifle," said Carboy.

He looked at his watch.

"Mind if I call a taxi now?" he asked.

"Right-ho! I shall be finished by the time it comes," said Bunter.

"I think you'll be finished before then," said Carboy pleasantly.

A rather cryptic remark, which would have puzzled Bunter, had he given it any attention. But all Bunter's attention was bestowed upon a dish of cream puffs.

Carboy sauntered to the door with his hands in his pockets. He stood in the doorway looking out into the street for a few moments, and then strolled away.

Bunter continued his operations on the cream puffs.

They vanished.

By that time Bunter felt that he had had enough. There was just a little

He realised that these people were looking at him as if they thought it was high time that he vacated the table and left it for another customer. Finally, his waitress approached the table again.

"Can I get you anything more, sir?"

"No, thanks!" said Bunter.

She retired.

Five minutes more ticked away. Bunter was beginning to feel uncomfortable. Why the thump didn't Carboy come back with that taxi?

A man in a morning-coat and an ample waistcoat came sliding up to Bunter's table, at last. It was the manager of the bunshop. His manner was polite, but there was a sort of look in his eye that Bunter did not like.

"If you are finished with this table, sir—" he hinted.

"I'm waiting for my friend," said Bunter, with dignity.

The manager gave him a long, long look and retired. But he did not retire out of sight. He seemed to hover on the horizon.

Bunter felt a deep quake.

Suppose Carboy did not come back? Suppose—Immediately he supposed that Carboy was not coming back, Bunter knew that he was not coming back. It couldn't possibly take a fellow an hour to get a taxi from the station, which was almost next door. Bunter quaked. Carboy had left him in the lurch. A bill for 27s. 6d. lay on the table. Carboy was gone—rather naturally leaving Bunter to pay for the spread he had stood. Bunter had the sum of one halfpenny in his possession. And the halfpenny was a bad one.

With a bad halfpenny in his pocket, a bill for 27s. 6d. on the table, and the managerial eye upon him from a distance, Billy Bunter felt like Daniel in the lion's den, only more so—much more so.

After the feast came the reckoning. The feast had been ripping, but the reckoning made William George Bunter turn cold all over.

4 SCHOOL

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space left inside Bunter, into which he contrived to cram some chocolate creams. Then he leaned back in his chair, satisfied.

He was ready for the taxi now.

Carboy seemed rather a long time getting that taxi. Bunter did not mind taking a little rest. The waitress cleared his table, and, after a pause, brought along a little bill from the desk.

"Pay at the desk, please," she remarked.

"Oh, certainly!" said Bunter.

He sat on.

His thoughts were pleasant. He had enjoyed a royal spread, and he was going back to the school in a car. He was not sorry that he had obliged Harry Wharton in the matter of meeting the new boy at the station. For once his kindness and generosity had been well repaid. But as the minutes passed on he noticed that the waitress was looking at him rather queerly, and that another waitress had joined her, and was whispering and looking at him also. Then a man appeared from somewhere, and looked at Bunter. He realised that Carboy was an extraordinarily long time getting that taxi.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

C. C. C. Arrives!

"HALLO! Hallo! Hallo!"
Bob Cherry spotted the new fellow as he came away from the changing-room after games practice.

On the first day of term there might have been a good many new fellows knocking about; but the term was some weeks old now. So when Bob sighted the stranger he guessed that it was Christopher Clarence Carboy. And as he knew that the fellow was coming into the Lower Fourth, Bob stopped to give him a cheery word.

"Carboy?" he asked.

The new fellow glanced round at him.

"Yes."

"Christopher, of that ilk?" asked Bob.

"Yes."

"And Clarence?"

"Quite."

"Brought 'em all to Greyfriars with you?" asked Bob humorously.

"The whole lot," answered Carboy seriously. "Fellows have told me that with a string of names like that, I ought to go to a home for idiots. So I've come."

"So you've come," repeated Bob, staring at him. "If you mean that Greyfriars is a home for idiots—"

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"Isn't it?" asked Carboy. "My mistake, perhaps. I know it's not fair to judge a place by the first fellow I see in it."

Bob looked at him long and hard; then he smiled.

"All serene!" he said. "My fault. I oughtn't to have japed about your giddy name, as I don't know you. Sorry!"

"Not at all," said Carboy, with a laugh. "If you happen to be a Remove man, you might tell me where to find my Form master."

"This way!" answered Bob. "I'll take you straight to his lair where he lies in wait for new boys. But didn't a Greyfriars man bring you here? Bunter, of ours, went to meet you at the station. Wharton will give him jip if he didn't do it."

"Bunter met me all right," answered Carboy. "Splendid chap, Bunter, isn't he?"

"Oh, my hat! Is he?" exclaimed Bob, in astonishment. "I dare say he is: but I believe you're the first man that's ever noticed it."

"Well, look at his generosity," said Carboy.

"His whatter?"

"Generosity! He took me to the bunshop, and stood me a thumping good spread—me, a stranger to him. It came to well over a pound."

"Bunter did!" roared Bob.

"He did!"

"And found out that he'd forgotten to take any money, and asked you to settle the bill till his postal-order came—what?" chuckled Bob.

"Not in the least. I didn't stay long enough. I went for a taxi, and decided to get my box from the station and come on to Greyfriars," answered Carboy simply. "I saw it coming; but it never arrived."

Bob Cherry stopped short at the corner of Masters' passage, and stared blankly at Christopher Clarence Carboy.

"You left Bunter to pay for the spread—over a pound?"

"Naturally. Don't Greyfriars men pay for a spread when they stand one?" asked Carboy.

"Ha, ha! Not Bunter, as a rule. Why, they won't let him get out of the bunshop alive!" roared Bob.

"Dear me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Bob. "Bunter's landed at last. Did you really think he was paying?"

"He told me so."

"Ha, ha! Of course, you don't know him! Poor old Bunter! Mean to say you slipped off before he had time to mention that he had forgotten his tin?" shrieked Bob. "Poor old Bunter! They'll scalp him! He won't be home till morning. The Head will have to go and bail him out. Ha, ha, ha!" Bob Cherry roared.

The door of the Remove master's study opened, and Mr. Quelch's severe countenance looked out. His gimlet-eye fixed frostily on the hilarious Bob.

"Cherry. Masters passage is not a suitable place for boisterous and unseemly merriment."

"Oh! Ah! Yes, sir!" gasped Bob. "This—this is the new chap, sir—I mean the new kid. I mean Carboy, sir."

"Oh! You may come into my study, Carboy."

Christopher Clarence Carboy followed the Remove master into his study, and the door closed. Bob Cherry suppressing his merriment, with difficulty, till he was out of the sacred precincts of Masters passage, rushed off to the Rag to tell the news. There was a crowd

of Remove fellows in the Rag when Bob burst in with a war-whoop.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha! The joke of the season, you men! Bunter's got it where the chicken got the chopper!"

"Bunter! What's happened to Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton.

"That new fellow's happened to him!" roared Bob. "He took Carboy into the bunshop to stand him a spread—over a pound—and the new kid slipped off before Bunter could land the bill on him."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Poor old Bunter!"

There was a roar of merriment in the Rag. The methods of William George Bunter were well known in the Greyfriars Remove. Even wideawake fellows had been landed successfully by Bunter. He owed a shilling even to Fisher T. Fish, the youth from New York, though how Bunter had ever extracted even a small loan from Fisher T. Fish was one of those mysteries which pass understanding. But W. G. Bunter had met his Waterloo at last!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And Carboy left him to it!" sobbed Bob Cherry. "Carboy saw it coming, and left him to it. Poor old Bunter!"

"That new kid is jolly sharp, for a new kid," said Peter Todd. "Bunter has taken in old hands."

"Who's going down to Courtfield to bail Bunter out?" yelled Skinner; and there was another roar.

"The bailfulness will be harmless and necessary," chuckled Hurree Jamset

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Ram Singh. "They will not allow Bunter to escape without the preliminary payfulness. The commiseration is terrific."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fellows in the Rag were still yelling when Nugent minor, of the Second Form, put his head in at the door.

"Wharton here?" he called out.

"Here," answered Harry.

"You're wanted in the prefects'-room. Wingate says you're being asked for on the telephone, and that he'll jolly well lick you if it happens again," said Nugent minor.

"Well, I never asked to be asked for on the telephone," growled the captain of the Remove. "Wingate can take the call and keep it."

"Shall I tell him so?" grinned Nugent minor.

"Nunno! I'll go."

"Ten to one it's Bunter," yelled Skinner. "He wants Wharton to go and bail him out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, Wharton," said Wingate of the Sixth, as Harry presented himself in the prefects'-room, "this won't do! You know jolly well that you can't arrange with a Remove kid to ring you up on this telephone."

"But I haven't."

"Well, he's rung you up," said Wingate gruffly. "As he says it's about some new kid who's got lost, you can take the call."

"A new kid lost!" ejaculated Wharton.

He had already heard from Bob Cherry that Christopher Clarence Carboy was in Mr. Quelch's study, interviewing his Form master.

"Bunter says so. Take the call."

"Oh crumbs!"

Wharton went to the telephone and picked up the receiver.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Horrible for Bunter!

BILLY BUNTER sat at the table in the Courtfield bunshop and quaked. The managerial gentleman hovered on the horizon, rather nearer. Waitresses looked at Bunter. Other people in the bunshop, scenting that something was on, began to look round at him. Bunter did not mind, as a rule, being the cynosure of all eyes. It was, in fact, his due. But on this occasion he did not enjoy it.

His fat face grew red. Perspiration trickled down his back. He had a feeling of horrid discomfort. He knew that he was already regarded as a bilk. He knew that he was watched. He knew that if he attempted to pass the desk near the doorway without paying, doubt would change to certainty, and he would be collared. The manager was "wide" to this sort of game; he had been "had" before.

One of the two fellows who had "tea'd" so sumptuously at the bunshop had quietly retired; the other was watching for a chance to follow suit. That was the game—from the manager's point of view. He had been there before! There was trouble in store for Bunter if he did not pay. And how could he pay 27s. 6d. with a bad halfpenny? It was a sheer impossibility. By no arithmetical gymnastics could a bad halfpenny be made to equal 27s. 6d. The highest mathematics would not do it. Bunter sat and quaked.

But it became clear to Bunter that he could not sit there for ever. Something had to be done. In fact, the bunshop had to be "done." But how?

It was useless to sit there and think of what he would like to do to Christopher Clarence Carboy. Hanging was too good for him. Something lingering, with boiling oil in it, might meet the case. But such thoughts, though pleasant, were not helpful. Carboy was gone—Bunter had to go—somehow. He resolved to risk it at last.

There was a possibility that he might pass the pay-desk unchallenged. Once he reached the door he could take to his heels.

It was undignified. It could not be called straightforward and honourable in the highest sense of the words. But it was all that was left for Bunter to do. It was useless to stop at the desk and offer the young lady there a bad halfpenny. Bunter was not bright, but he was bright enough to realise that.

He rose from the table, brushed away a few crumbs with a careless air, and strolled doorward in a casual sort of way.

His casual air was pronounced—very pronounced. It would have drawn attention upon him even had he not already been suspected.

The manager quitted the horizon, and hovered in the offing. His eye was on Bunter with a glint in it like steel.

Bunter strolled past the pay desk. The young lady there observed him with a cold eye, and stared after him as he passed unpaying.

Bunter almost reached the big glass doors.

His heart beat fast.

Another minute would do it—then a rush—A hand dropped on his collar with a grip of iron.

"Ow!" squeaked Bunter.

He was spun round. Two managerial eyes, cold as steel, gleamed at him.

One managerial hand held Bunter's collar. The other managerial hand held out Bunter's bill.

"Your bill, sir!" said the manager.

"Ow!"

"You forgot it, sir," said the manager, with biting sarcasm. "Perhaps you



Carboy's funk vanished suddenly, and he stood looking down at Bunter with a genial grin. "Come on, old fat bean!" he chuckled. "Roll on, thou fat and frabjous Bunter, roll!" "Ha, ha, ha!" "Grooogh! Beast!" wailed the Owl of the Remove. "Wow! Ow! Oh, dear! Keep him off, you fellows!" (See Chapter 11.)

would not mind paying at the desk, sir."

"Ow! Leggo! Certainly! Of course! I—I quite forgot!" gasped Bunter.

The manager—between Bunter and the door—released his collar. Bunter ran his hands through his pockets, as if in search of cash.

"The—the fact is—" he said, through his chattering teeth.

"Twenty-seven-and-sixpence, please!"

"I—I've forgotten my money."

"Quite so!" said the manager. "No doubt! Step into this room, please. Thank you! Kindly take a seat. No, not near the door. You are not the first bilk I have had to deal with in this establishment. Your confederate has escaped. You will be handed over to the police." The manager picked up the receiver from his telephone. "I shall ask for a constable to be sent immediately."

"Ow!"

Bunter blinked at him in horror.

"I—I say," he stuttered. "I—I say, I'm a—a—a Greyfriars chap! I'll square to-morrow. I've lots of money! I say, let me use that telephone, and—and I'll ask my headmaster to come."

"You belong to Greyfriars?" jeered the manager.

"Ow! Yes."

"You do not mean Borstal?"

The manager was a sarcastic gentleman.

"Ow! No. I say, I'll ring up a friend to call here, and—and settle that—that paltry amount," gasped Bunter.

"Very well." As the manager had not really intended to call in a constable, he graciously conceded the point. "I will give you a chance."

"It's all a mistake," gasped Bunter.

"You see, I left my banknotes in my study. All my currency notes, too. I hope you don't think that a Greyfriars chap, would be capable of diddling you."

The manager did not state what he thought on that point. He stood aside for Bunter to use the telephone. Bunter took the receiver and hesitated. He had stated that he could call up his headmaster; but that was only a figure of speech. He would as soon have called up spirits from the vasty deep, as the headmaster from Greyfriars. He thought of his studymate, Peter Todd. 'Toddy ought to stand by him—but it was a question whether he would—and it was unlikely that 'Toddy had twenty-seven shillings and sixpence to part with. Twenty-seven and six was a considerable sum in the Lower Fourth Form, though Bunter had so lightly incurred a debt to that extent. He gave the number of the prefects' room at Greyfriars at last, and when Wingate's voice came through, asked for Wharton.

"Who's speaking?"

"Bunter."

"Well, you can go and eat coke, Bunter."

"I say, hold on," gasped Bunter.

"It's about a new kid—he's lost—Quelch sent me to meet a new kid—he's lost somewhere—"

"Oh! Hold on, then!"

Bunter gasped with relief. He would be able to get through to the captain of the Remove, at all events.

A few minutes later Harry Wharton's voice came along the wires.

"Hallo! Is that you, Bunter?"

"Yes, old chap!" gasped Bunter.

"What do you want? You know jolly well you're not allowed to ring a man up on this phone."

"I—I'm in a fix," gasped Bunter. "I—I—why, you beast, what are you laughing at?" Bunter was not yet aware that his "fix" was known at Greyfriars, and had been retailed in the Rag amid yells of laughter. "I say, Harry, old chap, it's not a laughing matter. I want you to come here. That new chap you sent me to meet—Carboy—is—is—is lost. I—I want you to come and help me find him, old fellow."

Bunter thought this rather astute. Wharton might not come to the bunshop to bail him out; fellows were such beasts. But he could hardly refuse to come and help look for the new boy who was lost. A new boy lost on his way to Greyfriars was a serious matter. And once Wharton was on the scene, Bunter trusted to his eloquence. The chief thing was to get him to the bunshop.

"Lost, is he—" asked Harry.

"Yes, old chap! I want you to help—"

"I daresay he'll turn up. Good-bye."

"Hold on!" yelled Bunter. "I say, old fellow, he—he's had an accident—"

"What?"

"I—I was breaking it to you gently, old chap. He isn't lost—he's been run over!" gasped Bunter.

"Run over!" came a howl along the wires.

"Yes, old chap! His body—"

"His body!"

"Yes; his body has been brought

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into the bunshop! Come along and help me, old fellow!" gasped Bunter. "He—he—ho's lying here now."

"You mean you are lying there now?" "No," gasped Bunter. "Do come, old fellow! A fatal accident—"

"I think he must have recovered by this time. You see, he's got to Greyfriars, and he's in Quelch's study now."

"What?" gasped Bunter.

"Good-bye, you fat spoofer."

"Hold on!" Bunter sent a despairing wail into the telephone. "Harry, old chap, they won't let me go—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast! They're going to send for a bobby—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's only twenty-seven and six!" wailed Bunter. "Do come, old chap! I came to meet that new beast to oblige you, you know. He let me in for this! It's up to you. Speak to the manager and tell him it's all right. Ow!"

"How can I tell him it's all right when it's all wrong?" asked the captain of the Remove.

"Bring along the twenty-seven and six, and it will be all right. I'll settle out of my postal-order to-morrow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!"

"You fat villain! You'll have to pay the bill."

"I—I can't! You see, I've been disappointed about a postal-order—"

"You'll have to pay it all the same. Give them your pater's name and address, for the bill to be sent to him."

"I—I say, the pater would kick up an awful shindy," gasped Bunter. "Much better for you to bring the twenty-seven and six—"

"Will ninepence do?"

"No, you ass!" howled Bunter.

"Well, that's my present limit."

"I say, old chap, go round the Remove and—borrow it. Mauly will lend you some money if you ask him. Fishy will lend it you, if you promise to pay interest on it. Go to Quelch, and—tell him you want the money for a new football. Anything—"

"I can see myself doing it—I don't think. Ask the manager to speak to me, you fat frump, and I'll see what I can do. Luckily he knows me."

And at long last, the matter was arranged; the manager accepting Master Wharton's undertaking that the sum should be paid. And Billy Bunter, perspiring all over his fat person, tottered out of the bunshop, and limped away to Greyfriars, feeling that life was hardly worth living, when a feast was followed by such a reckoning as this.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Shindy in Study No. 1!

"YOU Carboy?"

"Just that!"

"Glad to see you and so forth, but—prep!" said Harry Wharton. "Run along the passage and play."

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent had come up to Study No. 1 for preparation. Christopher Clarence Carboy was seated there in the window-seat, with his legs stretched out, his hands in his trousers pockets, and a general air about him of having made himself at home.

It was quite a rule in Study No. 1 in the Remove, to be kind and considerate to new fellows. All the Remove were not so considerate. Bolsover major was given to bullying new kids. Skinner liked to play tricks on them. Bunter

liked to borrow their ready cash. Other fellows had their own manners and customs, more or less agreeable. But Wharton, who was a thoughtful fellow, and Nugent, who was all good nature, never failed to give a new kid a kind word and a helping hand if he needed it.

Still, they did not like a new fellow making himself at home in their study in this cool way. Moreover, Christopher Clarence Carboy did not look as if he needed a kind word or a helping hand. He looked uncommonly well able to take care of himself. At a glance they could see that he was not new to school, though he was new to Greyfriars.

And they did not quite approve of his jape on Bunter. True, the Owl of the Remove had asked for it. A fellow who offered to stand a spread could hardly complain if he was left to foot the bill. Still, the Removites were accustomed to making wide allowances for the fatuous Owl. No doubt he deserved what had happened to him; still, they thought it was rather thick, considering what a fatuous ass Bunter was.

So, while the chums of the Remove were prepared to be quite civil to Carboy, they had no special desire for his company, and were not in the least gratified by the cool way he made himself at home in their study.

Carboy did not move from the window-seat. He sat there and smiled. Wharton and Nugent sorted out their books, and as Carboy did not stir, Harry gave him an expressive glance.

"Made any friends at Greyfriars yet?" he asked. "If so, you'd better run along and see them."

"Haven't made any, so far."

"Then you'd better go and make some."

Christopher Clarence Carboy laughed.

"I'm all right here," he said. "Don't worry about me. Quite all right."

"I'm not worrying about you, and I don't care a straw whether you're all right or not," answered the captain of the Remove. "Fellows aren't allowed in other fellows' studies during prep. That's a rule."

"Often broken, I dare say."

"Quite! But nobody wants to break it, in the present instance. Cut along to your own study."

Harry Wharton turned his attention to his work. Carboy remained and whistled a tune. The captain of the Remove looked round again, after a few minutes, with a knitted brow.

"All serene, old chap," murmured Nugent. "Let him rip! He won't do any harm staying there."

"I don't want any cheek from a new kid," said the captain of the Remove.

"Why can't he go to his own study? How's a fellow going to work with him whistling there? Get out, Carboy."

"I'm all right, thanks."

"Do you mean to say that you're going to stick in our study whether we like it or not?" demanded Wharton, a flash coming into his eyes.

"I suppose it amounts to that!" said Carboy, with a thoughtful air. "Yes, you can put it down at that."

Harry Wharton rose to his feet. Even the mild and placable Nugent looked a little angry now.

Wharton came over to the window-seat. Carboy eyed him rather warily.

"I've asked you to go," said Harry.

"You have!" agreed Carboy.

"And I've told you to go."

"Right on the nail."

"Are you going?"

"No."

"Chuck him out on his neck," said

Nugent. "I'll lend you a hand if you want one."

"I don't think I shall need any help. I give you one minute, Carboy, to clear out of this study before I sling you out on your neck!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove.

"My dear chap, I wouldn't put you to the trouble for worlds," said Carboy.

"Think it over again."

"Time's going!" said Wharton grimly.

"If I were a puzzle-merchant I should ask you a conundrum," said Carboy. "Why am I unlike time? Because time's going and I'm not. See?"

That was enough for Wharton. He grabbed the new fellow by the collar and jerked him off the locker seat under the window. They waltzed across the study together, crashed into the table, knocked over a chair, and arrived at the doorway in a rather gasping state.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the row?" roared Bob Cherry, from the passage, as two struggling, wriggling, and panting figures filled the doorway of Study No. 1.

"Wharton scrapping with the new kid!" chuckled Skinner. "What would Quelch say, you men?"

"Bullying the new kid!" giggled Snoop.

Wharton's face was crimson.

"This cheeky rotter has planted himself in my study, and refuses to clear out!" he exclaimed hotly. "I've asked him to go and told him to go, and he won't! What would you fellows do?"

"Sling him out on his neck!" said Squiff.

"The slingsfulness on his esteemed neck is the proper caper," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"That's what I'm doing."

Bump!

Christopher Clarence Carboy landed in the passage and sat down there. Wharton stood in the doorway, panting a little. The new fellow had given him rather a tussle.

"Now hook it!" said Wharton.

Carboy picked himself up and smiled. He did not seem at all disturbed or disconcerted.

"You really won't let me come into the study?" he asked.

"No, you cheeky ass!"

"Well, I'll give up the point, if you like," said Carboy. "But what's a fellow to do? Am I to go back to Mr. Quelch and ask him to put me into another study?"

Wharton jumped.

"Has Quelch put you into this study?" he ejaculated.

"Oh, yes! It's my study."

"Then why didn't you tell me so?" roared Wharton.

"You didn't ask me."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Skinner.

"Wharton's slung the new kid out of his own study! High-handed, if you like. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Talk about bullying!" chortled Bolsover major. "That's the chap who's given me yards of chinwag about bullying new kids!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The look on Harry Wharton's face was, as Skinner said, worth a guinea a box. It had not occurred to him that the new junior had been assigned to Study No. 1 by Mr. Quelch. Any fellow might have been expected to say so, of course, as soon as the question of his presence in the study was raised. As Carboy had not said so, Wharton naturally did not think of it. He realised that the new fellow had been deliberately pulling his leg.

The fellows in the passage were roaring. Wharton's crimson, discomfited

face in the doorway of Study No. 1 made them howl. Carboy smiled gently.

"Well, I only want to know what to do," he said. "I'm not up to the rules of this school yet, being a new fellow. Shall I go back to Mr. Quelch and ask him for another study?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm willing," said Carboy. "I'm an obliging chap! If you really would prefer not to have me in that study, Wharton, and if Quelch will agree—"

"Oh, shut up!" snapped Harry. "You know you can come in if it's your study. You know you ought to have told me so at once. You seem to be a leg-puller, Carboy. If this is your idea of a joke, it's not mine."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the fellows in the passage, as Harry turned back into his room.

"His Highness is ratty!" said Skinner. "His Magnificence has got his majestic back up."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Carboy winked at the fellows in the passage, sending them into a fresh roar, and stepped back into Study No. 1 with an air of timidity.

"Calm now?" he asked.

Wharton glared at him.

"What do you mean, you born idiot?"

"I mean, is it safe for a fellow to come into the study now? I don't want to be slung out again."

"Go and eat coke!"

"Come in and don't play the goat, Carboy," said Nugent. "And you'd better go slow with your leg-pulling stunts if you want to have a quiet life in the Remove."

Christopher Clarence Carboy strolled back into the study and resumed his seat on the window-locker. Harry Wharton took no further heed of him. He sat with a darkly frowning brow, however. He had been made a fool of, and he was intensely irritated. Carboy watched the two juniors at work; as a new fellow, he had no prep to do himself his first evening. As soon as he could catch Nugent's eyes he winked at him—so unexpectedly and comically that Frank burst into a laugh. Wharton looked up, and Nugent became grave again at once. He had a guilty feeling that he had joined in the laugh against his chum. He was very careful indeed not to catch Carboy's eye again after that, and he was glad when the new fellow rose at last and sauntered out of the study.

"We seem to have landed a first-class japer in that new kid!" Frank remarked, when he was gone.

"He may jape in this study once too often!" growled Wharton.

And Frank tactfully let the subject drop.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter on the Warpath!

BILLY BUNTER was wrathful. When, the next day, Christopher Clarence Carboy took his place in the Remove, Billy Bunter favoured him with a dark scowl.

When the Remove came out for morning break, Bunter made it a point to meet Carboy face to face in the passage, where he looked first at Carboy's feet, then allowed his glance to travel up to Carboy's grinning face, then let it drop to his feet again.

This process, which Bunter called looking a fellow up and down, was supposed—by Bunter—to have a withering effect.

Having looked Carboy up and down, and, presumably, withered him, Billy

Bunter gave a snort of contempt and rolled away.

Bunter had his faults—unknown to himself, but leaping to the eye, as it were, of every other fellow in the Greyfriars Remove. But among them bad temper and malice were not included. Bunter was as quick to forget offences as to forget his lessons or his little debts. A fellow might kick Bunter one day, and be claimed as an old pal by Bunter the next day—especially if he had had a remittance in the meantime. A fellow might call Bunter all the names he could think of, and still the fat junior would meet him next time with an affable fat grin and roll into his study at tea-time in the most friendly fashion.

It was quite uncommon for Bunter to nurse a grudge or cherish a feud. He



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made an exception in Carboy's favour. In Carboy's case Bunter felt that he had received an injury that was not to be forgiven or forgotten. Carboy was not merely a beast, like every other fellow Bunter knew. He was a specially beastly beast—a superlative sort of beast—the absolute beast, as it were.

Besides, Bunter had a constant reminder of Carboy's iniquities. He owed twenty-seven and sixpence in Courtfield. That little sum had to be paid somehow. Bunter was expected to write to his father to pay it. If he did not the matter was certain to come before his Form master, whereupon Mr. Quelch was sure to write to his father, and cane Bunter over and above. The Owl of the Remove was well aware of it, yet he hesitated to write to Bunter senior. Twenty-seven shillings and sixpence was not a large sum—it was a trifling sum to a fellow's pater who was rolling in gold, banknotes, and currency notes, which, according to Bunter,

was the happy state of Mr. William Samuel Bunter, of Bunter Court. Nevertheless, Bunter hesitated to write on the subject.

Carboy was the cause of all that trouble and worry to Bunter. Had he not expected to land the new fellow with the bill, Bunter never would have ordered that gorgeous spread at the bun shop in Courtfield. The fellow was a japer—a beastly practical joker, Bunter knew that now. He had been pulling Bunter's leg all the time. He had known jolly well that Bunter wasn't going to pay, and had let him run on, thinking it funny. Perhaps it was funny, in a way; but the fun was lost on Bunter.

So Bunter had a feud.

Never had Bunter so bitterly regretted the fact that he was not a fighting man.

It was true that in his imagination—which was capable of anything—Bunter fancied himself a fighting-man. He told stories in the Remove of hefty tramps he had knocked over—in the holidays. He had never knocked any over within sight of Greyfriars. Bunter nourished a belief that if he really exerted himself he could lick Bob Cherry, or the Bounder, or the captain of the Remove. It wasn't worth the exertion; but he could do it if he liked.

But when Bunter came down to brass tacks, so to speak, the matter was different. When Tubb of the Third had on one occasion declared war on Bunter, the Owl of the Remove had disgraced his Form by fleeing from the wrath of the fag. And when Bunter turned over in his mind the possibility of thrashing that unspeakable beast, Carboy, he had doubts—strong doubts. His wonderful intellect was capable of believing that he could thrash the fellow with one hand, if he liked, while, at the same time, the thought of standing up to him with the gloves on made him feel a sinking in the stomach and an uncertainty in the knees that was most uncomfortable.

Bunter would have given a week's pocket-money—anybody's pocket-money but his own—to thrash Carboy. But he decided not to thrash Carboy.

He gave him dark scowls, he looked him up and down, and he turned his back on him with a sneer of contempt. He made it clear that he regarded Carboy as dirt beneath his feet. He emphasised the fact that he considered himself contaminated by breathing the same air as Carboy. But he did not knock him over, as he longed to do—as he had knocked over those imaginary tramps in the holidays. An imaginary tramp, knocked over, stayed knocked over. There was a lot of difference between imagination and reality.

And then, all of a sudden, Bunter saw light.

After class that day he met Carboy in the Remove passage, and was preparing to turn on his scornfullest sneer, when Carboy turned round and ran.

Bunter blinked after him through his big spectacles in amazement.

He did not immediately realise why Carboy was running. But at the top of the Remove staircase Carboy banged into Hazeldene, who was coming up. Hazel grabbed him in wrath.

"Let go!" yelled Carboy.

"What the thump—"

"Bunter's after me!"

"What?" howled Hazel, releasing Carboy in sheer astonishment.

Carboy did not stay to amplify. He flew down the Remove staircase and vanished, leaving Hazel staring dumb-founded.

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Bunter had heard. He understood now. The fellow was afraid of him. The fellow was a funk—a hopeless funk. He was afraid of Bunter—afraid that Bunter was going to hit him.

Bunter breathed hard and deep with exhilaration.

This discovery altered the matter considerably. If Carboy was afraid of him, obviously, there was no reason for him to be afraid of Carboy. That was logic.

A fellow who was such a howling funk that he fancied a fellow was going to hit him and ran like a rabbit was just the fellow Bunter wanted to meet, in the scrapping line.

Bunter grinned.

"Stop him!" he shouted.

Hazelden stared round.

"Eh? Stop whom?"

"That cad, Carboy!" Bunter rolled on towards the staircase. "The rotten funk! I'll give him the licking of his life."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Hazel.

"I was just going to pitch into him," exclaimed Bunter. He decided on the spot that he had been just going to pitch into Carboy. "He bolted. Jevver see such a rotten funk?"

"Bolted from you?" gasped Hazel.

"Oh, my hat! Some funk! I shouldn't have thought a kid of three would bolt from you."

"Oh, really, Hazel—"

Bunter rolled down the Remove staircase, warlike now, and full of pluck. His eyes gleamed with wrath, and vengeance, and determination, behind his big spectacles.

"I say, you fellows," he shouted to the Famous Five, downstairs. "Seen Carboy?"

"Ho's just gone into the Rag," answered Johnny Bull.

"Come on, and see me thrash him!" said Bunter.

"What?"

"I'm going to give him the licking of his life."

"Oh, crumbs!"

Bunter rolled valorously into the Rag, the Famous Five staring after him. A minute later Christopher Clarence Carboy came bolting out of the Rag. He scudded away down the passage, under the astonished eyes of the Famous Five.

"What the thump—" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

Bunter came puffing and blowing out of the Rag.

"Where's that funky cad?" he gasped. "He dodged me round the table and got away. Where is he?"

"Gone!" chuckled Bob.

"The gonefulness is terrific, my esteemed Bunter."

"I'll smash him! I'll pulverise him! If you fellows want to see him turned into a hospital case, you come on!"

And Bunter rolled on, in quest of the elusive Carboy, leaving the Famous Five staring.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Not Taking Any!

"PETER, old chap!"

"Stony!" answered Peter Todd.

"Beast!"

Peter grinned and went on with his tea. Billy Bunter gave him a wrathful blink, and rather wished that Peter was a funk, like Carboy. He would have liked to give Peter a licking, for his own good. Peter never could understand that the really important fellow in Study No. 7 was W. G. Bunter. A thumping good licking would have made him realise it. But that was a

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vain dream, and Bunter did not allow his mind to dwell upon it. He came back to business.

"I want you to be my second, Peter!" he said with dignity.

"Your which?" ejaculated Peter.

"Second. It's a fight!" said Bunter negligently.

Toddy looked at him across the table. Had Bunter asked him to be his second in a duel Peter could not have been much more surprised. Much had been heard in Study No. 7 of Bunter's fistical prowess. But hitherto all his warlike exploits had been done entirely with his chin.

"A fight!" repeated Toddy.

"Yes. I'm going to thrash a cheeky fellow," explained Bunter.

"Oh, my hat!"

"I'd like you to be my second, Peter."

"Pulling my leg?" asked Toddy in perplexity.

"Oh, really, Peter—"

"Are you going to wallop Tubb of the Third for chasing you up the Remove staircase last term?" asked Peter.

"Never mind Tubb of the Third," said Bunter hastily. "I've no time to waste on fags. It's a Remove man."

"Gammon!" said Peter.

"It's that now cad, Carboy!" roared Bunter. "I'm going to thrash him. He's dodging me. I want you to take him my challenge, Peter, and fix it up."

"If that's a joke," said Peter, "I don't see the point. Anyhow, chuck it, fatty. You know jolly well that you'd run your fat legs off if Carboy came after you, or any other chap. Chuck it!"

"If you refuse to be my second I'll ask some other chap," said Bunter coldly. "I've asked you because you're in my study. I think you ought to play up, Peter. You've hinted more than once that you think me a funk!"

"Not hinted," contradicted Peter.

"Said so out plain; you mean."

"Well, I've got a fight on with Carboy now, and I want a second," said Bunter. "He's got to be got up to the scratch. Will you fix it up for me, Peter, and back me up?"

Peter Todd looked at William George Bunter long and hard.

"I'll be your second with pleasure, if you've really got a fight on," he said, "but if you're pulling my leg look out for squalls. If I fix up a fight between you and that now chap you've got to fight him—or else I shall lick you myself. You're not making a fool of me, you fat chump! So think it over first."

"I mean it, Peter! He's afraid of me—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cackling ass, I tell you he's in a blue funk when he sees me," roared Bunter. "Only this afternoon I met him in the Remove passage, and he turned tail and ran."

"Might have been your face that did it!" suggested Peter. "Ho's not used to your features yet, like the rest of us."

"You cheeky beast!" roared Bunter. "I've a jolly good mind to lick you after I've licked Carboy."

"Oh, do!" gasped Peter. "It would be good for trade in the undertaking line, anyhow. Sign the 'Daily Mail' insurance coupon first. That's a tip."

"Look here, you beast, I mean it—"

"If you mean it, I'll go and fix it up with Carboy," said Peter. "I'd be jolly glad to see you show a little pluck. You're a disgrace to this study. But mind, if I fix up a fight for you you've got to get on with it, or take a batting."

"I'm keen to get on with it. Eager!" said Bunter.

"Well, if you're eager, I'm your man."

And after tea Peter Todd proceeded

along the Remove passage to Study No. 1. He found Wharton and Nugent and Carboy there; the three having just finished tea in the study. Carboy jumped up suddenly as Peter came in, then, seeing who it was, sat down again. Peter eyed him rather curiously.

"I thought it might be Bunter," explained Carboy. "That chap keeps on getting after me. I don't want a row with him!"

Toddy's lip curled.

"You're booked for a row, whether you want one or not," he answered. "I've come with a challenge from Bunter."

"Bunter still on the warpath?" asked Nugent, laughing.

"Thirsting for blood," answered Peter. "I'm his second. If you've got a second, Carboy, give me his name."

"I'm not going to fight Bunter."

"That's your mistake—you are," said Peter. "You've offended Bunter, and he's out for vengeance. No apology will be accepted; nothing but blood will wipe it out. What time and place will suit you?"

Carboy looked at Harry Wharton.

"You're captain of the Remove, I believe?" he asked.

Wharton nodded without speaking. He had not by any means recovered from his annoyance with the new fellow yet.

"Well, as captain of the Form, you can tell me whether I'm bound to fight this chap Bunter or not," said Carboy.

"You're not," said Wharton curtly. "You'll be called a funk if you refuse; but perhaps you don't mind that."

"Not at all. I refuse, then."

"Oh, my hat!"

"You refuse?" ejaculated Peter Todd.

"Yes. Let it drop."

"Great pip!"

Peter Todd almost staggered from the study. Wharton and Nugent looked at Christopher Clarence Carboy. They did not speak, but what they thought of him was very clearly expressed in their looks. Carboy did not seem to mind. He strolled out of the study with his hands in his pockets, whistling.

"Well!" said Nugent, with a deep breath.

"Well!" said Wharton.

And they let it go at that.

Peter Todd returned to Study No. 7. Billy Bunter blinked at him as he came in, a little anxiously. It was true that Carboy had shown the white feather in the most unmistakable manner. But certain qualms had assailed Bunter after the challenge was despatched beyond recall. The news that Carboy had accepted the challenge and was ready to fight would have caused a large proportion of Bunter's courage to ooze out at his fat finger-ends. But the news that Peter brought caused Bunter's failing courage to revive at a bound.

"Carboy refuses!" said Toddy.

"Refuses!" gasped Bunter. "Why, the awful funk!"

"Must be the last word in funks if he's afraid of you, fatty," agreed Peter. "But there it is!"

Billy Bunter's little round eyes gleamed behind his big spectacles. His courage had revived—it was at boiling point. Bunter was not only resolute now—he was ferocious. He clenched his fat fists.

"Does he think he's getting out of it like that, after the dirty trick he played me?" he exclaimed. "I'll jolly well show him! I'll get at him in the Rag this evening, and if he won't fight, I'll thrash him before all the fellows! I'll show him." Bunter was burning with valour and eagerness for the fray. "I'll go and look for him now! I'll show him."



"Cave." The sudden warning came too late. The door of the Remove dormitory opened wide, the light was switched on, and Mr. Queleh stood in the doorway, with a gimlet eye surveying grimly the startled crowd of Remove fellows. When the Form-master spoke his voice came through a dead silence. "What does this mean?" (See Chapter 11.)

Bunter rolled out of the study. He put a fat little nose and a pair of spectacles into the doorway of No. 1.

"Carboy here?" he roared.

"Bunked," answered Nugent.

"The rotten funk! I'll run him down."

On the lower staircase Bunter sighted his prey. He shook a fat fist over the banisters at Christopher Clarence Carboy.

"Stop!" he roared.

Carboy gave one terrified look at Bunter and fled.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Means Business!

ALL the Remove know about it when the juniors gathered in the Rag after prep that evening. The new boy and Bunter were the sole topic. Bunter on the warpath was entertaining in himself. That any fellow possibly could be afraid of Bunter was extraordinary and mysterious. But a dozen fellows had seen Carboy fleeing from the wrath to come, when he had sighted Bunter in the distance. It was known that, during prep, Carboy had appealed to the captain of the Form to keep Bunter off while he did his prep, an appeal that Wharton could not refuse.

It was known that after prep Bunter had lain in wait for Carboy in the Remove passage, and chased him when he came out of his study, Carboy escaping only by the skin of his teeth. Indeed, could Bunter have run as fast after a fellow as he could run when a fellow was after him, Carboy never would have escaped. Since prep Carboy seemed to be lying "doggo" somewhere—dodging the warlike Owl. And the Removeites yelled over it.

Bunter was in the crowded Rag now, puffing with importance. Never before had William George Bunter been able to spread himself as a dreaded fighting-man from whom a foe fled in affright. He enjoyed it. He swelled with importance, till he seemed in danger of sharing the fate of the frog in the fable.

"I'll get him at dorm!" said Bunter. "He can't dodge me any longer when we go to the dorm. There's going to be a fight after lights out to-night, you fellows! You wait and see!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "Here he is!"

Christopher Clarence Carboy's face appeared in the doorway of the Rag. He glanced quickly round the room, evidently to ascertain whether Bunter was present.

"Come in, you funk!" roared Bolsover major.

"I say, you fellows, don't let him get away!" howled Billy Bunter.

"Oh!" gasped Carboy; and he vanished, followed by a roar of laughter.

"I guess that guy has got cold feet, just a few!" chuckled Fisher T. Fish.

"The funkfulness is terrific!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, you wait till dorm!" said Billy Bunter. "You just wait till dorm! You wait and see!"

For once, when Wingate of the Sixth shepherded the Lower Fourth off to their dormitory, he found the Remove willing to go to bed. They were quite keen to get to the dormitory. Not that they were thinking of balmy slumber.

Carboy was last in the dorm. He slipped in after all the other fellows—apparently keeping out of Bunter's way till the last possible moment. The

Owl of the Remove gave him a deadly blink as he came in. There was no doubt, no hesitation, about Bunter now. His minor, Sammy Bunter, would not have hesitated to tackle a fellow who was so hopeless a funk. Billy Bunter was prepared to deal with him faithfully; to strew the hungry churchyard with his bones, as it were.

Never had it been placed on record that William George Bunter was spoiling for a fight. Now he was not only spoiling for one; he was yearning for one, burning for the fray. The Remove fellows were going to see, at last, what a fighting-man Bunter really was—they were going to see him mop up the dormitory with this chap, who was much taller than himself, though not so wide; they were going to see that Bunter was, as he had often told them, some scrapper when he was roused.

Bunter was glad when Wingate put out the lights and left the dormitory to darkness and repose—as he fancied. The door was hardly closed behind Wingate of the Sixth when Bunter hopped out of bed. Never before had Bunter, of his own accord, left his bed till rising-bell—and never even then if he could help it. But Bunter was breaking records right and left now.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shush!" said Peter Todd. "You'll have that giddy prefect back. Give him time to clear."

And Bunter controlled his war-like fury, to give the captain of Greyfriars time to get well off the scene. He did not want the thrashing of Carboy to be interrupted by an interfering prefect.

But he could not wait long. He was too eager for the fray.

(Continued on page 16.)



(Continued from page 15.)

"I say, you fellows, it's all right now I got a candle, 'Toddy?'"

Peter Todd struck a match and lighted a candle. Several more candles were lighted on various washstands. The juniors did not venture to turn on the electric light to illuminate the scene.

"Turn out, you funk!" hooted Bunter. "Carboy! Yah! Turn out! Out you come, you worm! Out you come, you cringing toad!"

Christopher Clarence Carboy sat up in bed. He stared round at a crowd of grinning faces.

"I say, what's the row?" he asked.

"Funk!" hooted Bunter. "Get out!"

"I'd rather stay here, thanks."

"He, he, he! I dare say you would!" jeered Bunter. "But you're jolly well getting out, all the same, see? I'm saving you out!"

And Bunter grabbed the new fellow's bedclothes, and yanked them from the bed. He was about to yank Carboy in his turn, when the new junior slipped out of the bed on the other side.

"Stand up to it, Carboy!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "You're for it now!"

"Come out from behind that bed!" yelled Bunter.

"I—I'll stay here, I think!"

"I'll jolly well soon have you out!"

Bunter rushed round the bed, amid a chortle from the Removites. There was no doubt that Bunter on the war-path was entertaining. Carboy leaped over the bed, just in time to escape the clutch of outstretched fat fingers. Bunter grabbed after him, lost his balance, and fell face down on the bed with a gasp.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaroooh! Ow! I'll smash him!" gasped Bunter. "I'll spifficate him! Hold him, somebody! Ow! Wow!"

Bunter scrambled furiously over the bed in pursuit. Carboy dodged him and scudded along the dormitory. Skinner made a grab at him, caught him, and swung him round.

"Here he is, Bunter!" chuckled Skinner. "Oh, my hat! Ow!—What—yooop!"

Harold Skinner suddenly found himself sitting on the floor of the dormitory, without quite knowing how he had got there.

Carboy scudded on, leaving Skinner spluttering. Bunter panted behind in hot pursuit, amid chortles from the Removites. All of a sudden Carboy halted, and Bunter, unable to stop in time, crashed over the new fellow as he dropped on his hands and knees. There was a terrific howl from Bunter as he rolled over Carboy, and then on the floor. Carboy picked himself up and smiled down at the sputtering, spluttering Owl.

Bunter sat up, wild and winded.

"Groogh! I say, you fellows, hold that beast! Hold him! Stop him! I ain't going to chase him up and down this beastly dorm! Hold him till I gerrat him!"

Three or four Remove fellows gathered round Carboy and collared

him. Bunter scrambled to his feet, puffing and blowing and vengeful. He rolled up to Carboy with his fat fists clenched. Round the new fellow the Remove men gathered in a thick ring; and there was no escape for him now.

"Face the music!" grinned Peter Todd.

"Come on, you funk!" howled Bunter, brandishing his fat fists. "Come on, you toad! Come on, you worm!"

Carboy backed as far away as the unyielding ring of juniors permitted. Bunter came on valorously. He gave Peter his glasses to hold, and so he saw Carboy rather in a mist—as through a glass darkly, so to speak. But he could see him clearly enough to knock him into a cocked hat—if Carboy let him. Bunter's misfortune was that Christopher Clarence Carboy did not let him.

For as Bunter rolled to close quarters Carboy, all of a sudden seemed to forget his panic; his hands came up like a flash, and Bunter received a tap on his fat nose that made him jump.

It was followed by more taps, none of them very hard, but so swift that William George Bunter had not the remotest chance of dealing with any of them. Tap, tap, tap! Tap, tap, tap!

"Oh crumbs! Oh crikey! Ow!"

Bump!

A more emphatic tap, and William George Bunter sat down, with a bump that almost shook the Remove dormitory.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Wakes Up!

"HELP!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow-ow! Help! Beast!"

Wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the

Removites. Billy Bunter sat on the floor, blinking up at Carboy. Christopher Clarence Carboy stood looking down at him with a genial grin. All Carboy's funk had vanished of a sudden; and at the same moment that the new fellow's funk vanished, Bunter's courage performed a vanishing trick.

"Come on, old fat bean!" chuckled Carboy. "Roll on, thou fat and frabjous Bunter, roll!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Groogh! Beast! Wow! Ow!"

Oh dear! Keep him off, you fellows!"

"You fat villain!" roared Peter Todd.

"Gerrup!" Peter grasped Bunter and heaved him to his feet. "Go in and win! You're going to thrash Carboy, you fat oyster!"

"I—I think I'll let him off!" gasped Bunter. "I—I never was rough on new kids, Peter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You fat frump! Go it, or you get a pillowing!" exclaimed Peter indignantly. "I warned you—"

"Go it, Bunter!" chuckled Bolsover major; and he gave the Owl of the Remove a hefty shove that spun him almost into Carboy's arms.

"Ow! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Go it, Bunter! Pile

in!"

"Go in and win, Bunter!" chortled Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter, thus hurled into the arms of his enemy, smote right and left, with desperation. Had Carboy been the hopeless funk he had playfully led Bunter to believe, no doubt Bunter would have got away with it. But as it was, the new fellow walked round Bunter, tapping him here, and tapping

him there, keeping all the time easily out of reach of Bunter's wild and frantic smites, till it seemed to the hapless Owl of the Remove that there were at least a dozen Carboys flitting round him like mosquitoes.

The juniors roared with laughter as they watched the progress of that extraordinary fight. It was evident to all the Remove now—even to Bunter—that Carboy's affectation of funk had been a jest at the expense of the Owl. William George Bunter had been, as Shakespeare expresses it, tenderly led by the nose as asses are. It was a dreadful discovery for Bunter to make now that he was landed in a scrap—with a fellow who obviously could have given him a terrific thrashing if he had liked.

Fortunately for Bunter, Carboy did not like. Weird as his sense of humour seemed to be, he was only out for fun.

He tapped Bunter here, and tapped him there, but the taps were not hard, only sufficient to throw Bunter into a state of wild and hopeless confusion and panic.

"I say, you fellows, keep him off!" wailed Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say—help! Yoop! Rescue!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter made a rush to escape at last. He burst through the ring of almost hysterical juniors, and bolted for his bed.

Carboy stared after him.

"Had enough?" he asked.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"The answer is in the esteemed affirmative!" chuckled Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaroooh! Help! Keep him off! I

say, you fellows, keep that beast off!"

Evidently Billy Bunter was no longer on the war-path.

"Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows, the giddy performance is over!" said Bob Cherry. "W. G. Bunter has made his farewell appearance in the character of a bloodthirsty warrior."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cave!" exclaimed Tom Brown suddenly: but the warning came too late. The dormitory door opened wide, the light was switched on, and Mr. Quelch stood in the doorway, with a gimlet eye surveying grimly the startled crowd of Remove fellows.

"Oh!" gasped Bob. "Quelchy!"

There had been more than enough noise in the Remove dormitory to draw Mr. Quelch to the scene. Of all the Remove, only Bunter was in bed. All the other fellows were out, and had had no time to bolt into their burrows.

Mr. Quelch gazed at the Remove. The Remove gazed at Mr. Quelch. When the Form master spoke, his voice came deep through a dead silence.

"What does this mean?"

No answer.

"It is past ten o'clock! I find you all out of bed, with one exception." Mr. Quelch glanced at the exception, who blinked back at him, and was very glad that he was in bed. "Whar-ton, what does this mean?"

"Hem!"

"My fault, sir!" said Carboy.

Mr. Quelch's gimlet eye directed all its penetrating powers on the new junior.

"What? What do you mean, Carboy?"

"My fault, sir! I was playing a joke on a fellow, and the other fellows turned out."

"Indced!"

There was a pause. The Removites waited anxiously wondering whether it

was going to be a licking all round, or only lines.

"Every boy out of bed will take fifty lines!" said Mr. Quelch at last.

There was a general feeling of relief. "Excepting you, Carboy! I accept your statement that some absurd jest on your part caused this disturbance. As you are a new boy here, I am reluctant to cane you."

"I feel just the same, sir," said Carboy. "I assure you, sir, I feel just as reluctant as you do."

The juniors gasped. Mr. Quelch concentrated all the powers of his penetrating eye on Carboy. But the new junior met his glance with an expression of childlike innocence that was disarming.

"Is that reply intended for impertinence, Carboy?" asked Mr. Quelch, in a deep, rumbling voice.

"Oh, sir!" exclaimed Carboy. "Impertinence, sir! Oh, sir!"

Mr. Quelch breathed hard. He did not want to be severe upon a new fellow who was merely stupid; but he could not quite make up his mind whether Christopher Clarence Carboy was merely stupid, or the cheekiest young rascal that had ever come into the Greyfriars Remove. Fortunately, he decided to give Carboy the benefit of the doubt.

"I shall not cane you, Carboy, as you are a new boy. I shall give you an imposition."

"Thank you, sir," said Carboy meekly.

"You will write out, 'I must not play foolish tricks in the dormitory' five hundred times."

"Very well, sir."

"Now go to bed!"

The Removites turned in promptly. Mr. Quelch put out the light and retired.

"Well," said Bob Cherry, "you may be no end of a japer and a leg-puller, Carboy; but you've come out the wrong end of the joke. Five hundred lines isn't exactly a jest."

"Five hundred lines!" repeated Carboy.

"That's your little lot—and serve you jolly well right!" said Skinner, who was feeling sore about his own fifty.

"I'm not going to write five hundred lines."

"Gammon!" said Skinner. "Gas!"

"Wait and see!" yawned Carboy.

And silence and slumber at last descended on the Remove dormitory.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Trying It On!

CHRISTOPHER CLARENCE CARBOY was eyed a good deal in the Remove the following day.

For a fellow who had been only a couple of days in the school, Carboy was getting an unusual amount of attention.

"Not a bad kid," was Bob Cherry's opinion. "But rather too much of a giddy practical joker."

"Much too much!" said Harry Wharton, rather dryly.

"The pull-fullness of the leg appears to be his esteemed mission in life," remarked Hurreo Janset Ram Singh. "It is possible to have too much of a good thing."

"Oh, a jape's only a jape!" said Bob tolerantly.

"I say, you fellows, he's a cheeky rotter!" said Billy Bunter plaintively. "You ought to give him a jolly good hiding, Bob, old chap. The fellow's an absolute beast, and a beast ought to be jolly well licked."

"Well, if a beast ought to be licked, I—"

"Yes, rather, old chap——"

"I'll begin on you——"

"Oh?"

"Hallo, hallo, hullo! Where are you going, Bunter?"

But Bunter was gone.

It was not only Carboy's peculiar predilection for leg-pulling that drew attention upon him. All the Remove had heard him declare that he was not going to write five hundred lines for Mr. Quelch. In the hearing of all the Remove he had been given an imposition of five hundred lines. If he did not write that impot, the fact that he was a new boy certainly would not save him from the wrath of Quelch. But as the day progressed, it seemed that Carboy was in earnest. Five hundred lines was a task that required time, and the lines had to be handed in that day. But at tea-time the new junior had not touched them.

Carboy came in to tea in Study No. 1; he tea'd with Wharton and Nugent there. The two chums were not at all keen on having a new fellow in their study; but they accepted the inevitable, and Carboy made himself at home. He would have made himself at home, anyhow. Wharton still regarded him with a rather grim eye, but the new fellow did not seem to mind.

After tea, Nugent gave him a good-natured hint. Mr. Quelch was not exactly the kind of master to be trifled with; and the new fellow seemed bent on rushing in where all the Remove feared to tread.

"You haven't done your lines yet, Carboy," said Frank.

"My line, you mean," said Carboy.

"Line! Quelch gave you five hundred lines, you ass!" said Nugent, staring at him.

Carboy shook his head.

"My dear chap, I remember distinctly what Quelch told me to write: and I'm going to write it. I hope I'm not a chap to disobey his kind master. I'll get it done now."

Carboy took pen and paper, and wrote. Wharton and Nugent, quite puzzled, watched him. They fairly gasped when they read the line that Christopher Clarence Carboy dashed down on the impot paper.

"Mr. Quelch must not play foolish tricks in the dormitory five hundred times."

Wharton and Nugent stared at it blankly. Then they stared at Carboy. He met their eyes innocently.

"That's right, isn't it?" he asked.

"That's what Quelch said."

"You—you—you——" gasped Nugent.

"You know jolly well what Quelch meant, however he put it."

"I can only go by what Quelch said. His actual words were: 'You will write out, I must not play foolish tricks in the dormitory, five hundred times.' You heard him."

Wharton drew a deep breath.

"You ass! Do you think you will get away with that?" he asked.

"Why not? I've written what Quelch told me to write."

"You're going to bung that in on Quelch?" demanded the captain of the Remove.

"Yes; he told me to."

"Oh, my hat!"

Bob Cherry looked into the study. He also felt a good-natured concern for the new fellow who was risking the wrath of Quelch.

"Done your lines, Carboy?" he asked.

"I've done my line."

"Your whatter?"

"Line!"

Bob stared at the paper, and burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha! You won't have the nerve to hand that in to Quelch."

Christopher Clarence Carboy raised his eyebrows.

"I don't see that it needs any nerve to take in to Quelch what he told me to write," he answered.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

In a few minutes all the Remove were aware of Carboy's remarkable version of the impot given him by the Remove master. They gathered round No. 1 study and stared at that version, and roared. Only Carboy had a grave face, and seemed surprised at the general merriment.

"You're not taking that to Quelch?" exclaimed Peter Todd.

"Certainly!"

"You'll get scalped."

"What rot! I'm bound to take it! I'm new here, but I suppose a fellow at Greyfriars has to do as his Form-master tells him."

"My only hat!" said the Bunder. "If you try your leg-pulling stunts on Quelch, you'll find that he will bite."

"Gas!" said Skinner. "He's not taking that to Quelch. There isn't a man in the Remove would have the nerve."

Carboy picked up the impot paper.

Nearly every fellow in the Remove followed him as he went down the stairs. That Carboy really had misunderstood Mr. Quelch to that extent was scarcely possible; and they could not believe that he intended to take that extraordinary impot to the Form-master. But he walked on coolly to Masters passage, a crowd following him at a little distance.

Five or six heads were put round the corner to watch his progress down the passage.

"He's stopped at Quelch's door!" said Bob, breathlessly.

"He's knocking——" gasped Nugent.

"He's gone in!" said Bolsover major.

"Oh, crumbs!"

"I say, you fellows, he'll get a jolly good licking!" chuckled Billy Bunter. "I say, you fellows wait a minute and you'll hear him yell. He, he, he!"

Evidently Carboy had the nerve to present that impot to the Remove master. The only question now was, whether he would get away with it; and no fellow in the Remove believed that he would.

Mr. Quelch was at his writing-table when Carboy entered. He fixed his eyes questioningly on the new junior.

"My line, sir!" said Carboy respectfully.

"Your what?"

"My line, sir."

"I fail to understand you, Carboy. What do you mean?"

Mr. Quelch understood what Carboy meant, the next moment, as the sheet of impot paper, with a single line written upon it, was laid upon his table. Mr. Quelch looked at it, and, unable to believe his eyes, he looked again. For a third time he looked and read "Mr. Quelch must not play foolish tricks in the dormitory five hundred times."

Having got it into his scholastic intellect that those amazing words really were there, Mr. Quelch raised his gaze to Carboy's face.

His gaze resembled that of the fabled basilisk, Medusa, in her grimmest mood, probably looked like Mr. Quelch at that moment. But Carboy met his grim gaze with a smile that was child-like and bland.

"Is that all right, sir?"

"A-all right!" stammered Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir! Some of the fellows think that I must have misunderstood you."

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“sir,” said Carboy humbly. “But that is what you said, isn’t it, sir?”

And there was a long, long silence in the study: while the breathless Remove fellows in the passage waited for the sounds of slaughter.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Catching a Tartar!

MR. QUELCH gazed at Carboy. Carboy met his eyes with a deprecatory smile.

He looked like a fellow who realised that his Form master was annoyed about something, and wondered what that something was.

Mr. Quelch seemed hypnotised. A long, long minute passed and he still gazed at Carboy, and did not speak. Perhaps his breath was taken away.

“May I go, sir?” asked Carboy, venturing to break the silence at last. He was rather anxious to go.

The Medusa-like gaze of Henry Samuel Quelch was beginning to get on his nerves, though he still smiled an innocent smile.

“No!” gasped Mr. Quelch. “No—you may not go.”

Carboy waited. Perhaps he had expected, or hoped, to pull Mr. Quelch’s majestic leg to this extent, and get away with it. He did not yet know Mr. Quelch. He was about to learn more of that gentleman.

“Carboy! Last night you made a remark to me which might have been dictated by either impertinence or stupidity. I gave you the benefit of the doubt, and attributed it to stupidity. But I shall not believe, Carboy, that your stupidity is so abysmal as you would now lead me to suppose. I gave you five hundred lines, Carboy.”

“One line, sir! You said—”

“I remember perfectly what I said, and am fully aware that my words might bear the construction you have placed upon them. But you could not place such a construction upon them, unless you were absolutely and incredibly stupid.”

“I’m afraid I’m not very clever, sir!” murmured Carboy apologetically. “They—they didn’t think me very bright at my last school, sir.”

“If your stupidity is so abysmal as this, Carboy, I should not dream of punishing you,” said Mr. Quelch. “Nothing would induce me to punish a boy, however exasperating, for a defect of the intellect.”

“Thank you, sir!” murmured Carboy.

“But I do not believe that you are so stupid as you pretend, Carboy.”

“Oh, sir.”

“In order to avoid the possibility of an injustice, however, I feel compelled to give you, a second time, the benefit of the doubt.”

Carboy’s eyes glimmered. He was getting away with it! No man in the Remove had ever been able to pull Quelch’s leg: no man dared to try. Christopher Clarence Carboy, a new fellow, had brought it off, on his third day in the school! In his mind’s eye he could see the whole Remove roaring over the joke—he could see himself the cynosure of all eyes in the Form, as the one and only fellow who had ever “stuffed” Quelch and got away safe with it. It was a glorious triumph: it would make him the envy of the Form: the observed of all observers.

But he had not finished with Henry Samuel Quelch yet.

“I shall give you the benefit of the doubt, Carboy. I shall assume that you

are indeed so incredibly stupid as to suppose that that”—Mr. Quelch pointed to the impot—“was my meaning when I gave you an imposition last night in the Remove dormitory.”

“Yes, sir.”

Carboy edged towards the door.

“You will not go yet, Carboy.”

“Oh! Very well, sir!”

“I have not yet finished. I shall pass this matter over, on the assumption that you have been guilty only of stupidity. Bring a chair to this table, Carboy, and take up that pen.”

Carboy obeyed, in wonder tinged with uneasiness. If Mr. Quelch was going to give him the benefit of the doubt, and was not going to punish him, it was time to dismiss him from the study. But, apparently, there was more to come.

Mr. Quelch placed a sheet of note-paper on the blotter before Carboy on the writing-table.

“You will now write a letter at my dictation, Carboy.”

“Very well, sir.”

“You will address it to your father.”

“Mum-mum-my father, sir?”

“Precisely. Lose no time!”

Carboy, wondering still more, and growing more and more uneasy, wrote down: “Dear Father.”

Mr. Quelch proceeded to dictate:

“I am sorry to have to tell you that it is necessary for me to leave Greyfriars immediately.”

Carboy jumped.

“Wha-a-at—” he stuttered.

“Write!” thundered Mr. Quelch.

“Oh, yes!” gasped Carboy. He wrote.

“My Form master, Mr. Quelch, desires you to arrange for my removal from the school not later than to-morrow morning.”

Carboy gazed helplessly at the Remove master, the pen idle in his hand. Steely eyes met his, more Medusa-like than ever.

“Have you written that?” demanded Mr. Quelch.

“Nunno! I—I—”

“Write it immediately!”

“Oh dear!” Carboy wrote it.

“You will now proceed: ‘Mr. Quelch’s view is that Greyfriars is a school for normal boys, and not for the mentally defective. Mr. Quelch has the choice of believing that I am either an incorrigibly impertinent young rascal, or else a boy whose stupidity amounts to an intellectual defect. He is giving me the benefit of the doubt; but, not being trained to take care of the mentally defective, desires my immediate removal from the school.’ Have you written that?”

“Ow! Yes!” groaned the unhappy practical joker of the Remove.

“Very well! Seal the letter and address it. I will see that it is posted, and I will explain matters to your headmaster,” said Mr. Quelch. “You may now go, Carboy.”

Christopher Clarence Carboy tottered to the door.

At the door he stopped.

He turned his head and cast an appealing glance at his Form master. Mr. Quelch, busy with papers, did not heed.

Carboy remained in the doorway as if rooted there. About a minute later Mr. Quelch looked up. He raised his eyebrows at the sight of the new junior lingering on his threshold.

“You are not gone, Carboy?”

“Hem! No, sir!”

“Go at once; and close the door after you!”

“If—if you please, sir—”

“You may go!”

“I—I’d like to say—”

“There is nothing further to be said, Carboy.”

That was not Carboy’s impression, however. He came back desperately towards the Form master’s table.

“D-d-don’t post that letter, sir!” he gasped. “I—I—I—”

“The matter is closed, Carboy. I sympathise deeply with a boy whose intellect is so clouded as yours appears to be.” Mr. Quelch could be almost ferociously sarcastic at times. “But my form at Greyfriars is no place for him. Medical care—”

“I—I—I was only spoofing, sir!” stammered the new Removeite.

“Do you mean that you were playing a jest at the expense of your Form master, Carboy?”

“Oh dear! Yes, sir.”

“If that is the case, Carboy, I shall not post this letter to your father. Insolence is a matter with which I am quite capable of dealing!” said Mr. Quelch grimly. “Stupidity such as you have assumed would be beyond my powers. Insolence, I think, I can deal with effectually. You may throw that letter into the wastepaper-basket, Carboy.”

Gladly Christopher Clarence Carboy throw it there. But he was very apprehensive of what was to come next.

His apprehensions were well founded.

“Hand me the cane from the shelf, Carboy—the stoutest cane! I think there are three there—give me the stoutest.”

In the lowest spirits the leg-puller of the Remove selected the stoutest cane of the three, and handed it to Mr. Quelch. The Remove master rose to his feet, and pointed to a chair with the cane.

“Bend over that chair, Carboy!”

“Oh! Yes, sir!” mumbled Carboy.

There had been a long wait in the passage. No sound of a twacking cane, no sounds of woe or labour had reached the eager ears of the Removeites. It really seemed as if Carboy was getting away with it—incredible as it was that Quelch’s leg was pullable.

But suddenly the silence was broken.

Whack, whack, whack!

“I say, you fellows!” squeaked Billy Bantor. “He’s getting it! He, he, ho!”

Whack, whack, whack!

“Whooooooooooooop!”

“Oh, my hat!” murmured Bob Cherry.

“Sounds as if Quelch thinks he’s beating carpet!”

Whack, whack, whack!

“Nine!” said Skinner breathlessly.

“Six is the usual limit! Is he going on? Carboy will want his bags patched at this rate!”

Whack, whack, whack!

“Twice six are twelve!” murmured Skinner. “I remember I learned that in my early infancy, my beloved ‘carers. I remember my dear governess takin’ me by my little hand, and murmuring, ‘Twice six are twelve.’”

“Is he going on?” gasped Snoop.

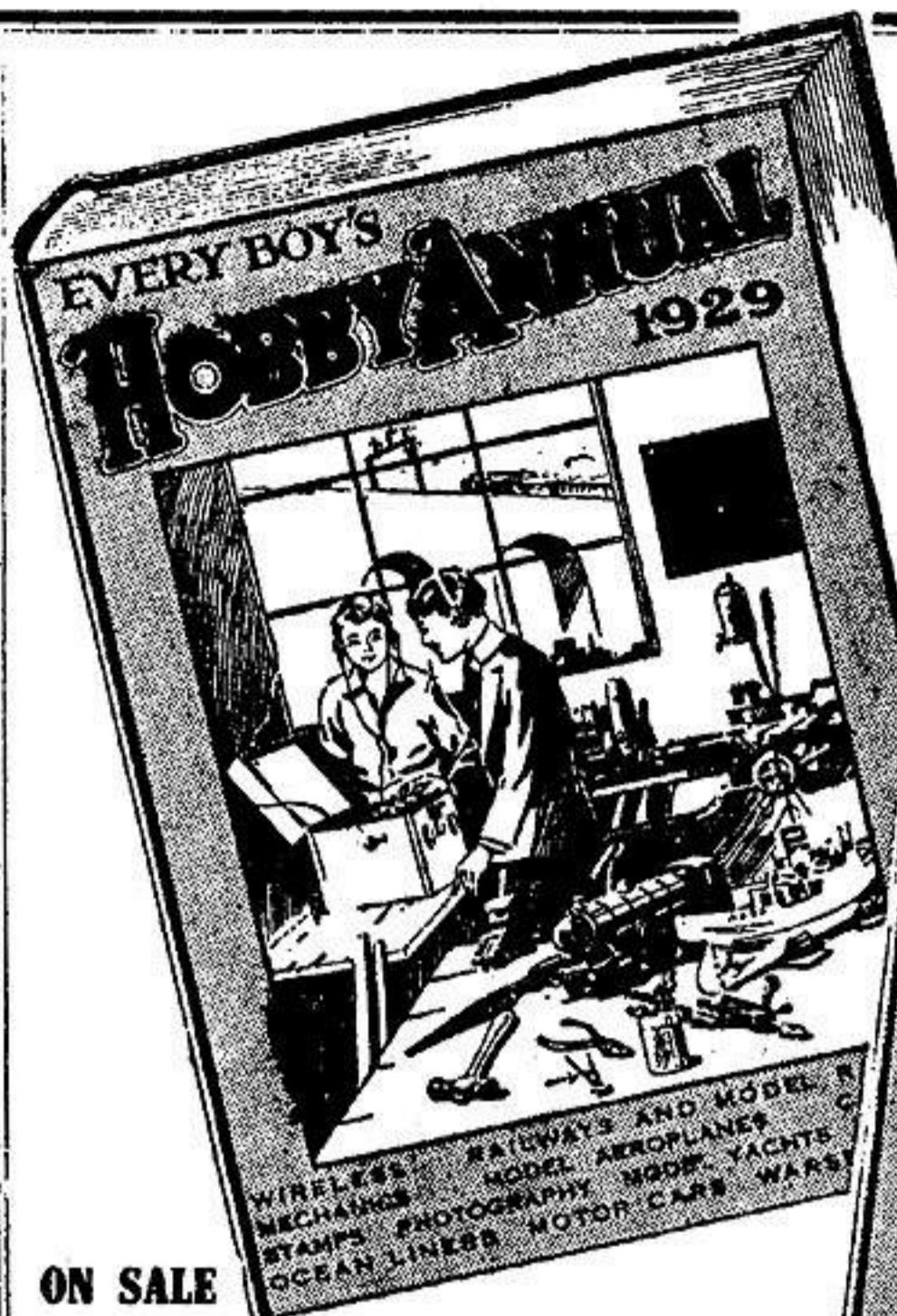
The sounds of the whacking cane ceased. A junior came limping out of Mr. Quelch’s study, wriggling to the right and wriggling to the left, wriggling forward and wriggling backward. Christopher Clarence Carboy seemed to be one mass of wriggles as he squirmed his way down the passage.

The Remove fellows looked at him, and he gazed at them with lack-lustre eyes, and passed on without a word. He wriggled into the distance and disappeared—wriggling.

“Jevver get left?” grinned Fisher T. Fish.

And there was a chuckle. Christopher Clarence Carboy had tried it on, but he

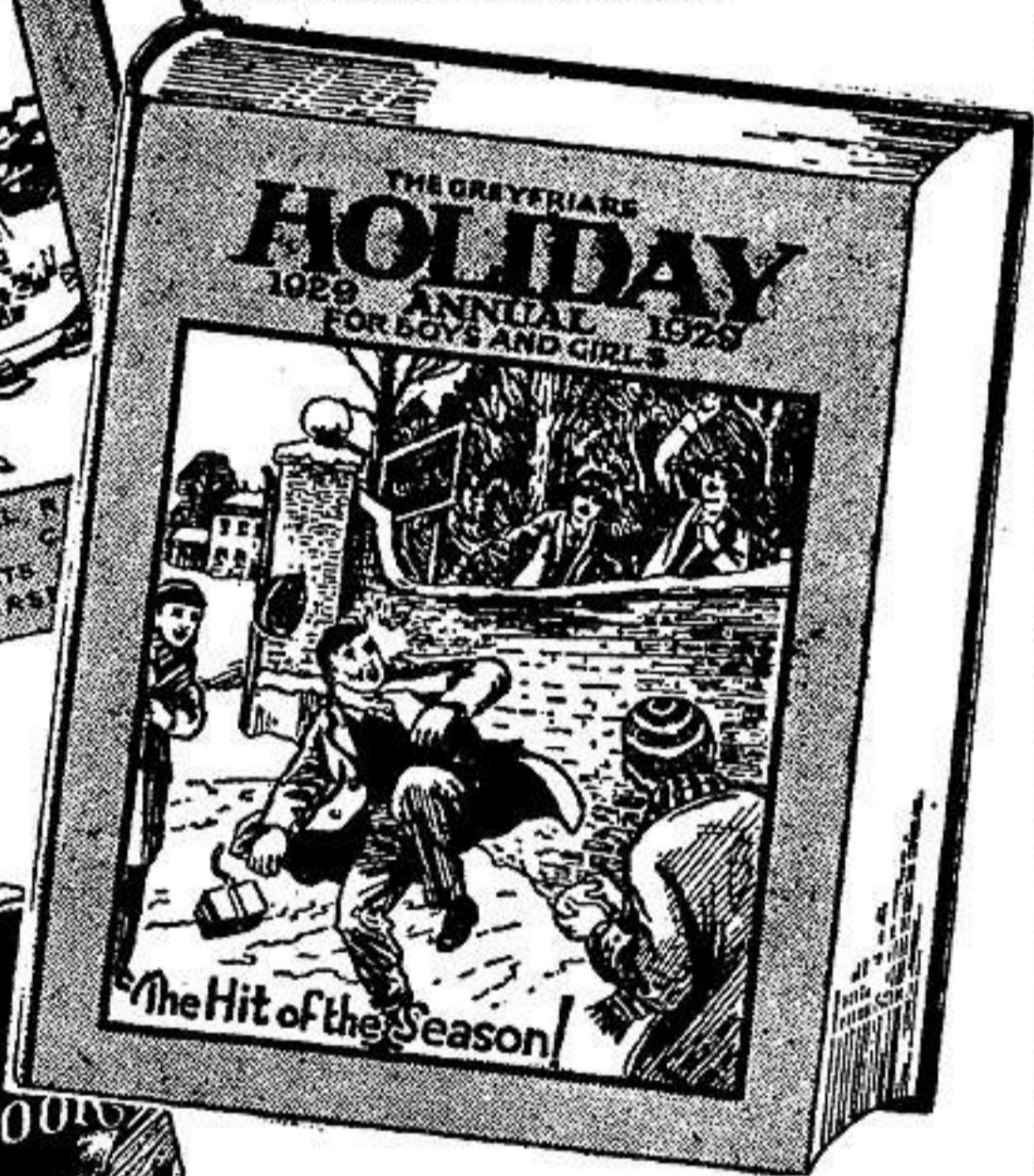
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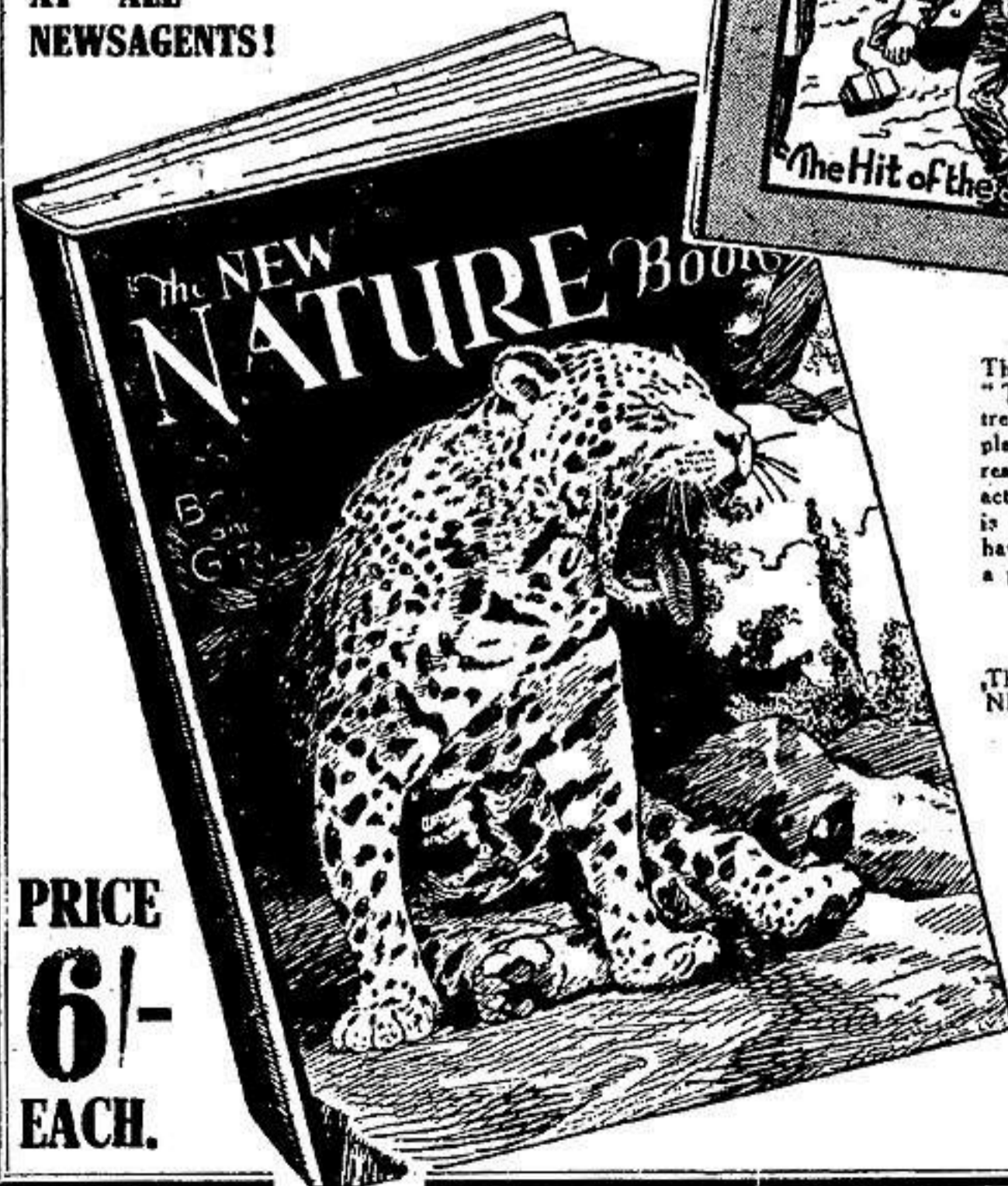
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"The Japer of Greyfriars!"*(Continued from page 18.)*

had not—evidently and obviously—got away with it. What he had got away with kept him wriggling till bed-time.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.**The Bounder's Bet!**

"I SAY, you fellows—"

"Don't!"

"If you say 'twenty-seven and six,'" said Bolsover major, "I'll jolly well biff you, Bunter! Mind, I mean it!"

Billy Bunter did not say "twenty-seven and six." He blinked dismally and dolefully at the grinning fellows in the Rag.

It was Friday evening. Saturday was the limit for the payment of W. G. Bunter's little bill at the bunshop in Courtfield. Bunter was still provided with a bad halfpenny; his resources were still limited to that inconsiderable sum. He had not written home. He was too powerfully disinclined to call upon the immense resources of Bunter Court. The bill had to be paid. Bunter had to pay it. He could not possibly pay it with a bad halfpenny. So what was to be done? Who was to be done? There seemed to be nothing and nobody to be done. "Hinc illae lacrymae," as Skinner expressed it.

Bunter had tried up and down the Remove to borrow twenty-seven and six. Bunter had not succeeded. Some of the fellows declared that it was up to Carboy to help him out. A joke was a joke, but Carboy had carried that joke too far. Carboy seemed to have rather a propensity for carrying jokes too far.

"I say, you fellows, I'm in an awful scrape!" groaned Bunter. "I say, Smithy, you've got lots of money!"

"Lots!" agreed the Bounder. "And lots of sense to look after it!"

"Lend me—"

"A thick ear?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"Beast!"

"Why haven't you written to your pater about it?" demanded Harry Wharton.

"He would be so jolly waxy!" mumbled Bunter. "Of course, the money's nothing to him—less than nothing. But he—"

"The butfulness is terrific," grinned Hurreo Singh.

"That beast of a manager told that beast Wharton that he would wait till Saturday," groaned Bunter. "If the bill isn't paid, what will he do? You know how sordid these shopkeepers are about money."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It was jolly good-natured of him to wait," said Johnny Bull. "He might have detained you and telephoned to your headmaster."

"He'll drop in to-morrow morning to see the Head," grinned Vernon-Smith. "Didn't he say he would, Wharton?"

"He said he would, if the money wasn't paid by Saturday," answered the captain of the Remove. "I told him it would be paid. I supposed, of course, that that fat idiot would write to his father, rather than let it come before the Head. It will have to be paid, anyhow. The Head will pay it, and send the bill on to Bunter's pater."

"With a licking for Bunter thrown in," grinned Skinner.

"Well, that's only to be expected."

"I say, you fellows, that beast Carboy is to blame!" said Bunter plaintively.

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"It was all his fault. He led me on. He made a fool of me."

"That was done before my time," said Carboy.

"Beast!"

"As a matter of fact, we all think it's up to you, Carboy," said the captain of the Remove curtly. "You ought not to have pulled Bunter's leg like that. You knew he was a silly, gassing ass!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"My dear chap, I think it will be all right," said Carboy. "I'm sure the manager won't say any more about it."

"Bet you ten-to-one in doughnuts that he will!" chuckled the Bounder. "And something emphatic, too."

Carboy looked at him.

"I'll take that bet," he said.

"Why, you ass!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith, staring at him. "You know jolly well that the man will insist on being paid. Why shouldn't he?"

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"Oh, he might be satisfied to let the matter drop!" answered Carboy carelessly.

"You know jolly well he won't!" snapped Smithy tartly. "And if you want to know my opinion, it's rather mean of you to let Bunter in for it."

"Thanks for your opinion, though I could have got on quite comfortably without it," yawned Carboy. "My opinion is that the bunshop man will let the matter drop, and won't say a word to the Head about it."

"Gammon! You don't think anything of the sort."

Carboy shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, I'm taking your bet, anyhow. You've offered me ten-to-one in doughnuts, unless you want to back out of it—"

The Bounder's eyes gleamed angrily.

"I'll make it quids, if you like!" he snapped.

"No fear! I'm not a betting chap."

said Carboy. "I don't mind a bet in doughnuts, though. You bet me ten-to-one in doughnuts that the bunshop man won't let the matter drop where it is."

"Yes, I did, and do."

"Very well. All these fellows are witnesses," drawled Carboy.

And he walked away, leaving the fellows staring.

The Bounder's eyes gleamed with annoyance.

"What the thump does the silly rotter mean?" he growled. "He knows jolly well that the man won't let the matter drop. Is this some more of his leg-pulling?"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"But what about me?" roared Bunter. "You know the bunshop beast will come here after his money. He makes out that I owe him twenty-seven and six! Yarooogh!"

Bump!

"I warned you!" said Bolsover major, as he sat Bunter down on the floor of the Rag.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

That night in the Remove dormitory Billy Bunter gave Christopher Clarence Carboy a deadly blink. If blinks could have slain, probably Carboy's leg-pulling career would have come to a sudden end on the spot. But Carboy only grinned and turned in.

"I say, you fellows!" squeaked Bunter, after lights out.

"Dry up!"

"I shall get a licking to-morrow!" wailed Bunter.

"You'll get one to-night if you don't dry up and let fellows go to sleep," growled Johnny Bull.

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter went to sleep and dreamed of bunshop managers and a Head's licking.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.**"Had!"**

HARRY WHARTON had a thoughtful look when he came down with the Remove the following morning. After breakfast he unburdened his mind to his comrades in the quad.

"That bill's got to be paid, you fellows," he said. "I gave the bunshop man my word that it would be paid, if he let Bunter off. Of course, I thought that fat idiot would write to his father by the next post to prevent it coming before the Head. But he hasn't—"

"Let him get a licking," said Johnny Bull. "It's what he's asked for, isn't it?"

"Blow Bunter!" said Bob Cherry.

"Yes; but after telling the man it would be paid by Saturday, I can't let him down," said Harry. "Bunter ought to have written to his father at once, but he hasn't. We don't want it to come before the Beak. I can raise the money up and down the studies, and settle later. I think I'll ring the bunshop up, and tell the man I'll come along and square this afternoon. That will keep him quiet."

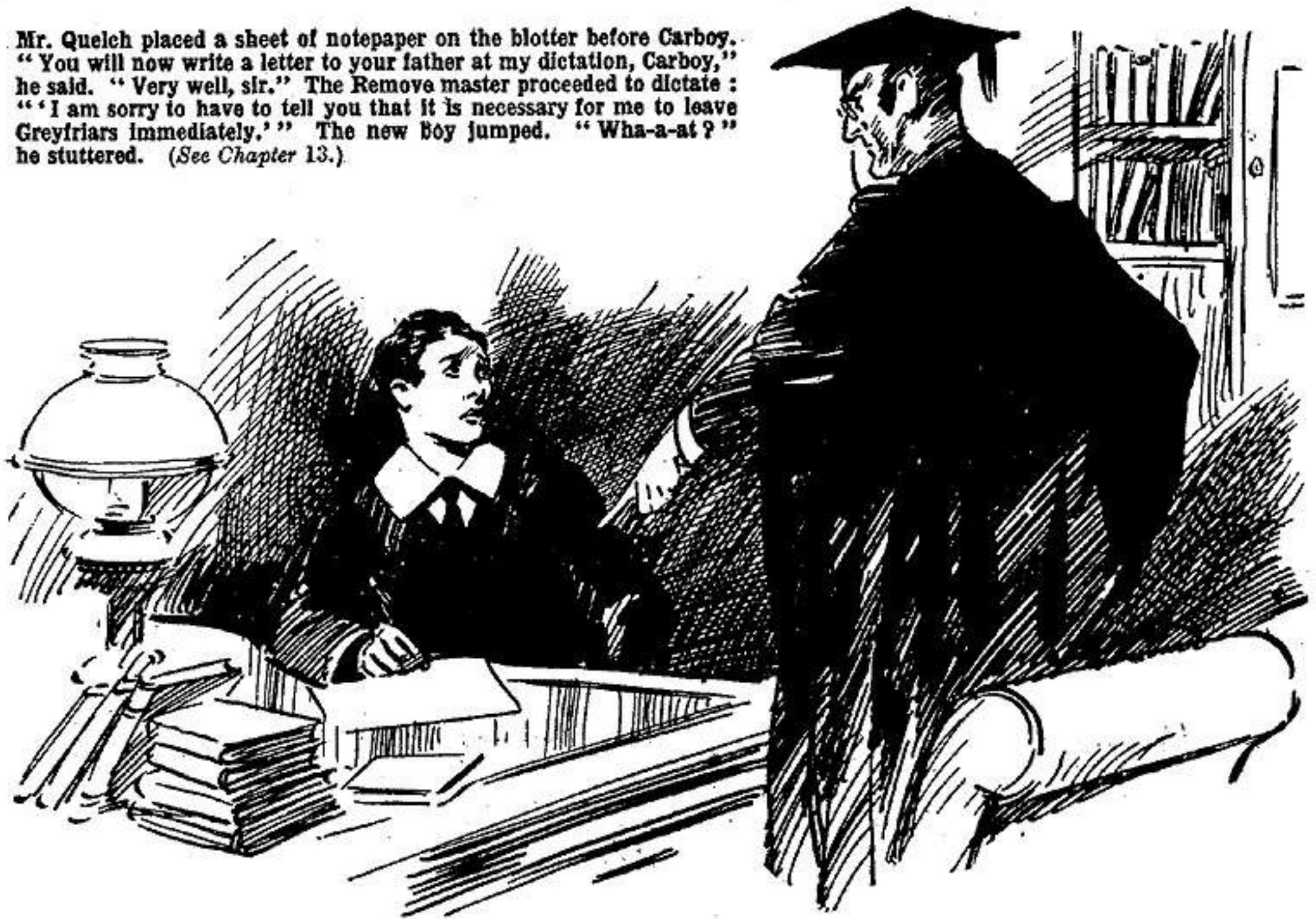
"Carboy thinks he'll let the matter drop, anyhow."

"Only his gas," said Harry. "Anyhow, I've given my word. And I can't let him let it drop, even if he's willing."

"Something in that," agreed Bob Cherry. "We'll all stand our whack, and take it out of Bunter in kicking."

And before morning class Harry Wharton found an opportunity of using the telephone in the prefect's room, his comrades keeping guard in the passage to give warning if any of the Sixth

Mr. Quelch placed a sheet of notepaper on the blotter before Carboy. "You will now write a letter to your father at my dictation, Carboy," he said. "Very well, sir." The Remove master proceeded to dictate: "I am sorry to have to tell you that it is necessary for me to leave Greyfriars immediately." The new boy jumped. "Wha-a-at?" he stuttered. (See Chapter 13.)



appeared in the office. He rang up the Courtfield bunshop and asked to speak to the manager.

"Harry Wharton speaking from Greyfriars," he said, when that gentleman's fat voice came through. "About that account Bunter owes you—"

"Quite all right, Master Wharton!" "I'll come along this afternoon and settle it," said Harry.

"Eh! It is settled already."

"Settled already?"

"Certainly, Master Wharton. A young gentleman from Greyfriars called in on Thursday and settled it."

"Oh, my hat!"

"It was the young gentleman who had tea here with Master Bunter."

"Carboy!" gasped Wharton.

"Yes, I think that was the name."

"Oh, all right! Good-morning!"

Harry Wharton rang off, in a state of great astonishment, and joined his chums in the passage.

"All serene?" asked Nugent.

"Quite. The bill's paid—that idiot Carboy called in at the bunshop the day after, and paid it."

"And he let Bunter think it was still hanging over his head like a giddy sword of Damocles! I suppose that's his idea of a joke."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I suppose so. It's a lesson for Bunter, anyhow. He will be more careful with the next new kid."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five went along to the Form-room. Billy Bunter, that morning, sat with an expression which seemed to be moulded upon that of the Knight of the Sorrowful Countenance. In class Wharton had no opportunity of passing on the glad news, and all through first and second lessons Bunter quaked at every sound, hearing in it the footstep of the bunshop manager coming to see the Head.

It was not till morning break that the Owl of the Remove was relieved of his terrors. He rolled up dismally to the Famous Five in the quadrangle.

"I say, you fellows—" he moaned.

"It's all right, fathead," said Harry.

"Carboy paid the bill on Thursday, and that's the end of it."

Bunter jumped.

"Carboy paid it?"

"Yes; and it's over and done with."

"The beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The rotter! The—the blighter!"

gasped Bunter. "Letting me think all the time that that bunshop beast was after me! I've a jolly good mind to give him a thumping good licking. Pulling my leg all this time! I've a good mind to go after him now and mop up the quad with him."

"Do!" grinned Bob Cherry. "I'll hold your hat."

"Still, I'll let him off," said Bunter magnanimously. "He's not worth licking. I'll treat him with contempt."

The Bounder's face was a study when he learned the news.

"So that's what that spoofing japer meant!" he ejaculated. "That's why he bet me a doughnut that the bunshop man would let it drop—because he had paid him already!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "You've been done, Smithy!"

"Why, I—I—I'll—" exclaimed the Bounder, in great wrath.

"Ha, ha, ha! You'll pay Carboy ten doughnuts—you bet him ten to one in doughnuts!" howled Bob.

Christopher Clarence Carboy came along to the Bounder when the Remove were going in for third lesson. He smiled as Herbert Vernon-Smith scowled.

"You owe me ten doughnuts. I think," he murmured.

Vernon-Smith drew a deep breath. His leg had been pulled; and Smithy hated to have his leg pulled. He hated, too, to come off second best in a betting transaction. But the terms had been quite clear; he owed Carboy ten doughnuts, if the bunshop manager let the matter drop where it was. And, obviously, the bunshop manager was letting it drop where it was, as the bill had been paid. The Bounder had been taken in; and the fact that the Remove were chuckling over it made it all the more unpalatable to Smithy. Still, a bargain was a bargain, even if he had been "had."

"Yes," he answered.

"Trot 'em out by tea-time, old bean," said Carboy. "I rather like doughnuts for tea."

"Right!"

There was a gleam in the Bounder's eye which Carboy did not fail to notice.

Smithy walked on to the Form-room, and Carboy followed him, with a cheery grin on his face.

After class that morning Smithy went along to the school shop to order the doughnuts. Skinner joined him with a grinning face. Skinner was more or less pally with the Bounder; but Skinner could enjoy any fellow's discomfort, and perhaps a pal's more than anybody else's.

"You've been had, Smithy, old bean," he remarked.

"So kind of you to point it out," answered Vernon-Smith.

"No good grousing over it, old chap," said Skinner. "That man Carboy is some japer. He's pulled your leg all right."

And Skinner grinned as he stood beside Smithy in the tuckshop while the order was given for the doughnuts.

"You're squaring, then, Smithy?" he asked.

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"Naturally, as I lost the bet,"

"But you ain't pleased," chuckled Skinner. "I say, Carboy's got the whole Form chuckling over that bet."

Harold Skinner liked rubbing it in.

"Let 'em cackle!" answered the Bounder indifferently, though his eyes glittered. "They may find something else to cackle about later."

The Bounder left the tuckshop with the paper bag of doughnuts under his arm. He carried them to his study in the Remove passage. There, he locked the door. Smithy's next proceedings required that there should be no observation.

With his penknife he made a little hole into the centre of each doughnut. Then he filled a squirt with cayenne pepper. With great care and patience the Bounder squirted a strong dose of cayenne into each doughnut. From his paste-pot he obtained material to stop up the little holes after the pepper had been inserted.

The doughnuts were fresh and flaky, and looked delicious. They looked as if they would melt with enjoyment in the mouth.

But after the Bounder had attended to them it was quite certain that the mouth in which one of these doughnuts melted would experience anything but enjoyment.

Having finished his operations the Bounder replaced the doughnuts in the bag and carried it along to Study No. 1. No one was there, and Smithy put the bag in the cupboard.

He looked for Christopher Clarence Carboy when he came downstairs.

"I've paid up, Carboy," he said curtly. "You'll find ten doughnuts in your study cupboard."

"Thanks!" said Carboy. "But look here, Smithy, I was only pulling your leg, and I don't want the doughnuts. Take 'em away again."

"No fear! I'd rather pay up," said Vernon-Smith, with a sour grin. "A bet's a bet, even when a fellow's been had."

"Well, if you insist——"

"I do!"

"All serene, then."

The Bounder walked away. He had been "had," but he was of opinion that when Christopher Clarence Carboy got one of those doughnuts into his mouth he would wish fervently and sincerely that he had never "had" the Bounder.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Hot Stuff!

"WHAT the thump——"

Harry Wharton fairly jumped.

The captain of the Remove had lines to write that afternoon. His late imposition of fifty lines for Mr. Quelch had been written and handed in; but to Mr. Quelch's eye they showed signs of undue haste. As Wharton had written them at top speed this was not surprising. Many and many of the impots that were handed in to Henry Samuel Quelch showed signs of hasty writing. Sometimes they passed without comment. Sometimes they didn't. It depended largely on Quelch's humour at the moment. If you caught him in one of his genial tempers it was all right. If you didn't it was all wrong. Wharton hadn't. So he had his impot to write out all over again, with a strict injunction to hand it in by Saturday.

The captain of the Remove was well aware of the ancient proverb which

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states that it is better never to put off till to-morrow what can be done to-day. But in the Lower Fourth Form little heed was paid, as a rule, to proverbial wisdom. The lines had been left till Saturday afternoon, and then, as they could not be left any longer, Wharton sat down in his study to write them out—with as few signs as possible of undue haste.

He was writing rather rapidly—though trying not to exceed the speed limit this time—when all of a sudden the study door whizzed open, a fat figure shot in, and the door closed again.

Billy Bunter stood panting in the study.

Wharton uttered a startled ejaculation, jumped, and scattered a shower of blots from his pen.

Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles, and jumped also. Evidently he had supposed the study to be vacant.

"Oh!" he stuttered. "I—I thought you were down at the footer."

"You fat idiot!" roared Wharton. "Look what you've done! I've got to scribble this thumping rot over again now."

"He, he, he!"

"Why, you—you——" Wharton started to his feet and grasped the inkpot.

"I—I say, old chap, don't get waxy!" exclaimed Bunter hurriedly. "I say, I'm awfully sorry you've got lines. Look here, I'll write them out for you if you like."

Wharton stared at him. That was a very uncommon and unexpected offer from William George Bunter. He relinquished the inkpot.

"Fat lot of good that would be," he grunted. "Quelch would spot your fatheaded scrawl at once."

"I'll make it like yours, old chap—leave me a copy," said Bunter. "I'm frightfully sorry to see you kept in like this on a fine afternoon, and the footer waiting for you, and all that. Leave it to me."

"Rats!" said Harry, sitting down to his task again.

"I mean it," said Bunter anxiously. "I'd be jolly glad to do those lines for you, Wharton. I say, Bob Cherry's waiting for you downstairs. It's rather a shame to keep him waiting."

"You howling ass! What's your little game?" demanded the captain of the Remove. "What did you come here for?"

"Nothing, old fellow."

Wharton stared at him. Obviously Bunter had popped into the study unobserved from the passage, for some reason of his own. He had not expected to find Wharton there; and he was offering to do his lines simply to get him out of the study. So much was clear; but the fat Owl's motive was not so clear.

"I just came in to see you, old fellow," explained Bunter. "Feeling sorry for you being kept in like this, I just dropped in."

"You said a minute ago that you thought I was down at the footer."

"Oh, d-d-did I? I—I meant—I meant that I didn't think you were down at the footer, old chap. I say, let me do those lines for you. I'll leave them all ready for you to take in to Quelch."

"Fathead! Buzz!"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Anyhow, shut up!"

Harry Wharton sorted out a fresh sheet of impot paper and recommenced the lines. Bunter blinked at him impatiently.

"I say, old chap, how long will it take you to get those lines done?" he asked anxiously. "Look here, that beast Carboy may come in any minute and——"

"What does that matter, fathead? Dry up!" said Wharton. "If you say another word look out for the inkpot. Why don't you clear?"

"I—I'd rather keep you company, old fellow."

"Ass! Shut up, then!"

Billy Bunter opened his mouth again, and Wharton stretched out his hand to the inkpot. Bunter closed his mouth immediately. He did not leave the study. He sat down to watch the captain of the Remove as line after line raced from his pen. His blink turned continually towards the study cupboard.

"I say, Harry, old chap——" he began at last.

"Shut up!" roared Wharton.

"Look here, I can't keep on waiting, in case that beast comes in. I say, Harry, do listen to a chap. That beast Carboy is always pulling a fellow's leg, you know. Don't you think it would be a scream to bag his doughnuts?"

"Oh!" ejaculated Wharton. He understood at last the cause of William George Bunter's mysterious proceedings.

"Smithy's put them in the cupboard! Ten lovely doughnuts," said Bunter, his eyes glistening behind his big spectacles. "You know what jolly good doughnuts Mrs. Mumble makes! Ten of 'em! I say, old fellow, you'd like a doughnut, wouldn't you? Let's bag 'em; it would be no end of a joke on Carboy!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"You go near that cupboard, and you get the inkpot in the back of your neck," he answered.

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Shut up!"

Billy Bunter shut up once more. Wharton's pen continued to race across the paper. Bunter edged nearer and nearer to the study cupboard. Wharton, deep in his task, which he was in a hurry to get finished, almost forgot his presence in the study. For once, William George Bunter was glad to be forgotten.

Softly he pulled open the cupboard door. Still Wharton did not look up. Inside reposed the paper bag of doughnuts. Bunter's hand, trembling with eagerness, was extended into the cupboard. He grabbed the bag, rushed across the study, dragged the door open, and fled. Wharton jumped.

"Bunter! You fat villain——"

Slam!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The study door closed on the vanishing Bunter. Harry Wharton burst into a laugh, and sat down to finish his lines. Bunter was gone, and Carboy's doughnuts were gone. Really, it would have been judicious on Carboy's part to lock the cupboard door if he wanted to keep the doughnuts till tea-time. But perhaps he didn't.

Bunter dashed breathlessly up the Remove passage with his prize. He was in far too great a hurry to see where he was going.

Crash!

Bolsover major and Skinner were chatting in the passage. Bunter charged into them like a bull as he rushed from Study No. 1.

Skinner went sprawling. Bolsover major staggered against the wall. Bunter sat down and roared.

"Oh!" gasped Bolsover major. "You—you—you fat freak! You—you——"

"Ow! Grooogh! Ow! Wow! I say, you fellows, there aren't any doughnuts

in that bag!" roared Bunter. "You leave that bag alone!"

Bolsover major picked up the bag. "You fat burglar! You've been grub-raiding—"

"I say, you fellows—" Bunter scrambled to his feet. "It—it—it's a joke on Carboy. The beast is always japing, you know. I—I'm not going to scoff those doughnuts, you know. I—I wouldn't! Just a joke on that beast! Smithy put them in his study cupboard, and I've bagged them for a—a—jest, you know."

Bolsover major grinned. "No end of a joke," he agreed. "As you weren't going to scoff them, you can leave them with me."

"Oh, really, Bolsover—" "Have a doughnut, Skinner?" asked Bolsover major hospitably.

"What-ho!" grinned Skinner. "I saw Smithy buying these doughnuts; they're fresh and good."

"I say, you fellows—" "Look here, they're my doughnuts!" howled Bunter. "You give them to me, you beast! Halves, then! Look here, gimme one."

"I never was mean with tuck," said Bolsover major. "You can have one."

Billy Bunter grabbed a doughnut from the bag. Bolsover major and Skinner took one each. Three doughnuts, fresh and flaky, were jammed into three mouths—three pairs of jaws crunched on them with every expectation of ecstatic, jammy, juicy enjoyment. And then—

Bolsover major had intended to finish that bag of doughnuts himself. The first one, however, proved enough for him. In fact, it proved more than enough.

A horrid change came over his face as he crunched it. A horrid change came over the faces of Bunter and Skinner. Horrid sounds awoke the echoes of the Remove passage.

"Groooogh! Ooooch! Wooooch!" "Mooooooch! Atchoo — atchoo — atchooooooo!"

"Gurrerrggggh!" "Gug-gug-gug-gug!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry, coming up the Remove staircase to look into Study No. 1 for his chum, stopped to stare at the scene. "What's the matter with you chaps?"

"Geroooooh!" "Yoooooooch!" "Gug-gug-guggle!"

Harry Wharton looked out of Study No. 1. Several other fellows looked out. The uproar was deafening. Gurgles and gasps alternated with wild yells and Gargantuan sneezes. Tears streamed down the faces of the three unhappy devourers of peppery doughnuts, as the cayenne got in its deadly work. They coughed and sneezed and spluttered and stuttered and groaned, while their eyes streamed with water and they gouged at their burning mouths. Never did three fellows wish more sincerely that they had left alone doughnuts that did not belong to them.

Fellows came from near and far to stare. Christopher Clarence Carboy looked on from the Remove staircase with a cheery grin.

Christopher Clarence Carboy had suspected those doughnuts, and he had suspected Bunter. Both his suspicions had proved well founded. The doughnuts were doctored, and Bunter had raided them. And Herbert Vernon-Smith, drawn out of his study by that terrific outbreak of sneezing and coughing and spluttering in the Remove passage, realised that his little jape had missed fire—so far as Carboy was concerned, at least. Unfortunately for Bunter, Skinner, and Bolsover major, it had not



FOR NEXT WEEK!

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missed fire so far as they were concerned.

"What on earth is the row?" exclaimed Harry Wharton in amazement.

"The rowfulness seems to be terrific," chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "My esteemed Bunter—"

"Yurrrrrgggh! Groooogh! I say, you fellows—gug-gug-gug!—that beast Smithy—yoooooch!—he put pepper in the doughnuts for Carboy—oooooch! I've got the p-p-pepper—grooooooch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Wharton. "Bunter raided those doughnuts that Smithy put in the study for the new kid!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "Lucky for Carboy he did!"

"The luckfulness was—" "Terrific!" chuckled Bob. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oooch! Groooch! Mooooch!" spluttered Bolsover major. "I'm chook-chook-choking—suff-suff-suffocating—oooooch! I'll smash him! Owl! Wow!"

"Ow!" moaned Skinner, with streaming eyes. "Wow! Atchoooh—atchoo-ooop!"

"I say, you fellows, that beast Smithy—Gug-gug-gug!"

Bolsover major turned a pair of red and streaming eyes on the Bounder,

"So it was you!" he roared. "You silly ass!" howled the Bounder.

"It was meant for that japing rotter Carboy. Why couldn't you let the doughnuts alone?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Bolsover's welcome!" said Carboy. "I never fancied those doughnuts, somehow."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "You—groogh!—you silly chump—oooooch!—I'm chook-chook-choking with pi-pip-pepper!" spluttered Bolsover major. "I suppose—gug-gug!—you

think it's—oooooch!—fuf-fuf-funny. Perhaps you'll think this fuf-fuf-funny, too!"

And he rushed at the Bounder, grasped him round the neck, and got his head in chancery.

Thump, thump, thump! "Oh, my hat! Leggo! Yarooch!"

It was the Bounder's turn to yell, and his yells awoke all the echoes.

"Take that, and—gug-gug!—that, and—ooch!—that!" spluttered Bolsover. "Bring those doughnuts here, Skinner! Groogh! Bung them over the silly ass! Gerrooogh! Atchoooh!"

Skinner, coughing and sneezing and furious, jammed and plastered doughnuts all over the Bounder's face and head as he struggled with Bolsover major. Vernon-Smith seemed to live and move and have his being in squashed doughnuts. Gurgling horribly, he tore himself away, bolted into his study, and slammed the door and turned the key. Yells of laughter from the Removites followed him, and coughs and sneezes and gurgles from the victims of the jape that had missed fire. Christopher Clarence Carboy strolled away with a gentle smile on his face, and left them to it.

"That chap Carboy," pronounced Bob Cherry in the Rag, "is too funny to live. If he keeps on as he's started there will be a dead japer found lying about the Remove passage one of these days."

And, though it did not prove quite so bad as that, undoubtedly there were troublous times ahead for the Japer of Greyfriars.

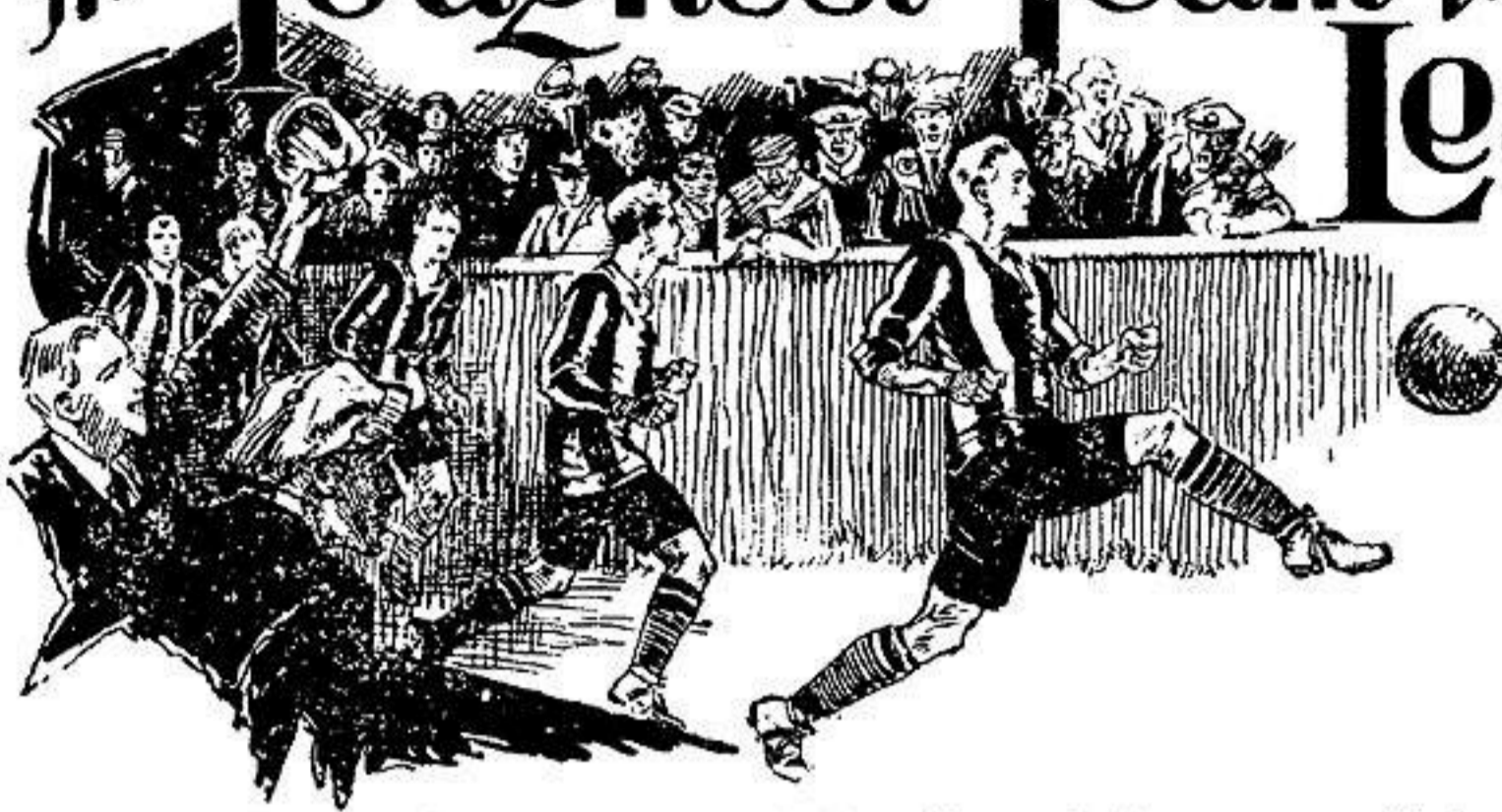
THE END.

(See particulars above for the next magnificent story in this grand series, chums.)

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ANOTHER ATTEMPT ON THE LIFE OF A FAMOUS DETECTIVE! A cat has the advantage of a human being if it has, as some people say, nine lives. But if Ferrers Locke is to emerge from his latest adventure with a whole skin it looks as if he'll need ninety-nine lives!

The Toughest Team in the League!



A Brilliant New Footer and Detective Serial, featuring Ferrers Locke, Detective, and his boy assistant, Jack Drake.

A Lucky Escape!

"**J**OVE, guv'nor, you played the game of your life this morning!" There was no mistaking the note of admiration in the voice of Jack Drake as he gazed at his chief across the dining-table.

It was three hours after Ferrers Locke had turned out for the practice game with the Athletic, and the famous sleuth and his assistant had returned to their rooms in Baker Street for a well deserved lunch.

Locke looked the picture of health as he leaned back in his chair, a faint smile lighting up his keen features as they dwelt on Jack Drake.

"Yes," he replied, "I really think that I haven't lost my form. Rummy thing Bigways didn't stop to see the end of the match, though."

Drake nodded. "He was as keen as anyone at the beginning of the game, especially when you got your first goal," he said. "Then he hopped it without a word to anyone. You'll be a rod in pickle for Portsmouth on Saturday," added Drake, with a chuckle.

"Don't be so sure," said Locke. "Portsmouth possess a jolly good defence!"

"Humph!" Drake implied by that that the Portsmouth defence, good as it was, would not survive the onslaughts Ferrers Locke would make upon it.

"By the way, my lad," said Locke suddenly, "you'll have to amuse yourself to-night—I'm due at Sir Milton Havers' place in Eaton Square—"

"For his daughter's coming of age!" interpolated Drake. "I remember now; the old codger's doing the grand in honour of the occasion."

"You should not speak so disrespectfully of one of my clients!" admonished Locke. "Sir Milton is certainly old, but he's not a codger!"

Drake snorted. "He called me a clumsy young jackanapes once for treading on his blessed corn!" he retorted, with a faint grin.

"Well," exclaimed the detective, with an expressive gesture, "treading on a man's pet corn is hardly an admirable way of getting into his good graces."

"Oh, I know the old codger—ahem!—I mean, the old chap is all right," said Drake. "He'll give you a good time, I expect."

"And what will you do?" Drake appeared to reflect, and his chief watched him with a twinkle in his steely grey eyes.

"Go to the pictures and see Douglas Fairbanks in 'The Gaucho'?" he asked.

"How did you know I'd decided to do that, guv'nor?"

Locke chuckled.

"Why, you used to keep a framed photograph of Charlie Chaplin on your bed-room mantelpiece, but you changed it for one of Douglas Fairbanks only this morning. A random guess, in a way, but it hit the target."

"Here's the coffee," said Drake, changing the conversation as Sing-Sing padded in, "and—"

Bang!

Drake's words were drowned in the noise of a terrific explosion. For a few seconds the room was filled with a dense cloud of acrid smoke. Pieces of wood and glass hurtled across the room. Sing-Sing felt himself knocked against the opposite wall, the tray he was carrying being whirled out of his grasp as if by some invisible hand.

Locke felt something strike his temple, and he almost lost consciousness. But by a supreme effort of will he collected his scattered senses. Through the haze of smoke, he looked across the room to where his handsome grandfather clock once stood—for all that remained of it now was a skeleton framework.

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE.

Ferrers Locke, the celebrated Baker Street detective, takes on the job of rounding up a mysterious gang of crackmen which has been operating in the West End. A chance clue leads him to the Sparsdale Athletic Football Ground. Here, during the home team's fixture with the Arsenal, Wentworth, the Athletic's outside-right, is making tracks for his opponents' goal when he suddenly collapses with a gun-shot wound in the chest. Before he can make a statement, however, he is whirled away in a car belonging to Samuel Bigways, the Managing Director of the Sparsdale Athletic. Locke is convinced that the shot had been fired from the stand in which Bigways had been sitting with a friend. Later Locke signs on as a playing member for the Athletic. That the team is composed of a gang of toughs the London sleuth is soon assured. Although he succeeds in notching two goals in his first match he fails to please Bigways, who speeds back to his quarters with the dread feeling that in signing on Ferrers Locke he has signed his own death warrant.

(Now read on.)

"A bomb!" he muttered. "That was a close call. You all right, Jack?"

The words were hardly out of his mouth before Drake was by his side.

"You're not hit, guv'nor?" he asked anxiously.

"Just a scratch," smiled Ferrers Locke, rubbing the side of his head. "Is Sing-Sing all right?"

"Me all light!" lisped the Chinese. "But the tray and clockery all smashed!"

Locke could scarcely forbear to smile at Sing-Sing's obvious concern over the crockery.

"Me open windows?" asked Sing-Sing, eager to be of some assistance.

The Baker Street detective shook his head.

"Not much use doing that," he said, with a rueful smile. "I expect all the panes are broken."

They were—Drake saw that at a glance.

The smoke was beginning to clear now, and the trio could see the extent of the damage the explosion had caused. The two big bay windows were shattered; three pictures had "jumped" off their hangers and collapsed in weird shapes on the floor; a couple of plates had scattered themselves in fragments on the carpet; and a small automatic liqueur cabinet had overturned. Beyond that, and, of course, the ruined clock, there was very little damage done.

Drake was still suffering from the shock, but that was speedily passing. Locke himself felt little the worse except for a small bruise that was colouring on his right temple, whilst Sing-Sing's expressionless face would never have suggested even to the most careful observer that anything out of the ordinary had occurred.

Without further words, the Chinese servant turned on his heel, to return in a few moments with a broom and a dustpan. By that time Locke and Drake were examining the remains of the old grandfather clock.

"That bomb was timed to go off at two o'clock," remarked the detective, looking at his own watch, which had stopped through the explosion.

"And so were we, guv'nor!" said Drake dryly.

Locke smiled. "Glad you've got a sense of humour even at such a grave moment as this," replied Locke. "This is undoubtedly the work of our friend Bigways, or one

of his satellites. But it wasn't good enough. We shall soon see, my lad, for it's the custom of the gang to ring up after they've tried on any of their tricks. Listen—there's the bell!"

The detective laughed grimly as he crossed to the receiver; but the laugh had disappeared when he returned to Drake, and the keen face was strangely grim and purposeful.

"The same voice as before," he remarked to Drake. "The same threat—and curses. Bigways, I can't give you very much more rope—you may score a winner!"

"So it was Bigways?" said Drake. "Jove! He's a murderous villain! But I wonder how he managed to get in here and fix that bomb?"

Locke shrugged his shoulders.

"We'll soon find that out," he replied. "Sing-Sing—"

"Yes, Mistle Locke?"

The Chinese servant dropped his broom and dustpan, and came over to his master.

"Were you out of doors this morning after twelve o'clock?" asked Ferrers Locke.

"For ten minutes only," said Sing-Sing. "No wanted some coffee—"

Locke nodded.

"You locked up, of course?"

The Chinese replied in the affirmative, and Ferrers Locke signalled that he could return to his sweeping.

"Drake, just have a word with the builders below. Ask them if anyone called after twelve o'clock."

"Right-ho!"

While Drake was gone Ferrers Locke examined three or four pieces of metal he found on the other side of the room.

"A Mills-bomb," he reflected. "Fortunate for us that it was. A bomb of a higher explosive nature would have done for us. The good old grandfather's timbers took the worst shock."

Sing-Sing had swept up several pieces of the clock's machinery into the dustpan. Locke, peering over them, suddenly pounced on a piece of chain which held the weight, and to which was attached a length of string.

"Very ingenious," was Locke's comment, "and very simple!"

"What is, gov'nor?" asked Drake, coming into the room at that moment.

"You see this weight-chain," said Locke, "and you see the piece of string. If I tell you that it was a Mills-bomb that exploded inside that grandfather's clock how would you think the bomb was made to explode?"

Drake was silent for a few moments.

"Why, I should say that a piece of string was attached to the pin of the bomb—"

"Correct!"

"And that in turn the string was attached to the weight-chain, so that as it rose it withdrew the pin."

"Exactly," said Locke. "And that, my lad, is how it did happen. I noticed during my brief stay in Mr. Bigways' house that he had a passion for collecting souvenirs of the Great War. Doubtless this bomb was one of them."

"It was a jolly lucky escape for you," said Drake.

"For all of us," returned Locke seriously. "We must be more careful in future. But tell me—did you discover anything from the workmen below?"

"Nothing, except that Inspector Pycroft called just after twelve," said Drake?

Locke's eyebrows elevated a trifle.

"Pycroft?" he muttered. "Don't tell me that Bigways had the nerve to call himself Pycroft. I'll soon verify that," he added to himself.

Once more he took up the telephone receiver. This time he put a call through to Scotland Yard. There was an amused expression on his face as he drew level with Jack Drake a few moments later.

"As I thought," he remarked. "Inspector Pycroft was at the Old Bailey at twelve o'clock. Didn't leave there until close on one, so it's obvious that either Bigways or one of his gang stepped in here the moment Sing-Sing's back was turned."

"Which proves that he must have been watching the house," said Drake.

"Exactly," replied Locke. "Just see who's taken the flat opposite, my lad. It was to let a couple of weeks ago. I see now that it's occupied."

Drake reached for his cap and hastened out of the room.

"Inquire at the estate agents, of course," called out Ferrers Locke after him, and Drake nodded.

He was gone for at least a quarter of an hour, during which time Locke, from behind a curtain, peered through his damaged windows at the flat opposite. He stiffened as, a minute after Drake



FERRERS LOCKE,
the celebrated sleuth of Baker Street, whose thrilling adventures in this great serial will grip every "Magnetite."

had entered the street, an elderly gentleman, bent almost double with rheumatism, came out of the flat opposite, hobbled along the pavement, and took the same route as Drake had done.

Locke memorised that figure and then seated himself to await Jack's return.

"Well?" said the detective laconically when Jack did arrive. "Is the new tenant an elderly fellow, a victim of rheumatism—"

"But—" began Drake bewildered. "How did you know?"

"I've just seen the gentleman totter along after you," said Locke, with a smile.

"Oh!" exclaimed Drake. "Most respectable old chap, according to the estate agent. Name of Theodore Templing. Recommended by—"

"Mr. Samuel Bigways?"

"No, gov'nor," said Drake, with a short laugh. "Mr. Fred Bulsome."

"Just as good," said Locke. "So the plot thickens. Our neighbour opposite obviously isn't an old man. He's playing the sentry. We'll stroll down to the estate agent together and make a few inquiries. I've a feeling that the elderly gent has given notice."

"What makes you think that?"

"Why, the very fact that he followed you down the street suggests that he was curious," said Locke. "It suggests, too, that he had a suspicion of your destination. And if he's at all windy it's quite on the cards that, having interrogated the estate agent as to your visit, he'll think of some excuse for giving up the flat."

"Oh!"

"Just a theory," said Locke, with a smile. "Still, we'll see!"

Ten minutes at the estate agent's office proved Ferrers Locke to be right. Mr. Theodore Templing had complained of the noise of Baker Street and on those grounds had stated his intention of giving up the flat forthwith.

"Now we can nab him," said Drake confidently, as the twain returned to their own rooms.

"On the contrary, we can't," said Ferrers Locke. "Remember we are only surmising. Although, in my own heart, I feel convinced that Mr. Templing is in league with the gang, that is not sufficient proof to justify an arrest. He must keep with the others until we have tightened the net. Patience, my lad—patience."

And Locke, ringing the bell, requested Sing-Sing to make some fresh coffee.

The Missing Host!

THERE was a blazo of light emanating from the many windows of Sir Milton Havers' fine old mansion that night, and the quiet of Eaton Square was continuously broken by the arrival and departure of cars.

Gentlemen in evening dress escorted their ladies up the massive stone steps to be received by Lady Havers ere they entered the ball-room, which was a merry blazo of colour and activity.

The gathering included all the most famous devotees of sport, and Sir Hilton moved among them with a beaming face expressive of his pleasure.

Pamela Havers, in whose honour the dance and reception was being held, was surrounded by a bevy of young men eager to anticipate her every wish, eager to perform her bidding.

Ferrers Locke was cordially received by the old baronet.

"Glad you've come, Looke," said Sir Milton. "How's that young jackanapes, Drake?"

"Not quite so clumsy as he used to be," said Locke, with a smile. "I say, you've got a good crowd here. But you'll excuse me, I must pay my respects to your daughter Pamela."

"Ah, yes," smiled the baronet. "The dear girl is all excitement. She knows that I've something extra special for her in the way of a present"—he gave Locke a gentle dig in the ribs—"but she'll never guess that it's the Bosworth Emerald!"

"Plew!" whistled the detective softly. "So it was you who bought it at Christy's for a hundred thousand, was it?"

The baronet laughed.

"Even then it's not good enough for Pamela," he remarked. "See you later," he added, as Sir Thomas Michaldever appeared in the offing.

Ferrers Locke strolled over to Pamela and paid his respects. What's more he had the honour of "bagging" the next dance with her, much to the chagrin of several young men who stood near.

And for the next two hours Ferrers Locke gave himself up to pleasure. None would have thought that the handsome man in the forties who danced a foxtrot

of a tango with such grace and obvious enjoyment was Ferrers Locke, the world's most famous detective—the man whose very name sent a shiver down the spine of the most hardened criminal. But that handsome face suddenly grew stern and grim as, quite by chance, Locke caught sight of Samuel Bigways.

Thereafter dancing had no attraction for Ferrers Locke. He watched Bigways as a cat will watch a mouse; not even Pamela Havers could persuade him to dance again.

"I've a feeling that something's going to happen," Locke muttered to himself. And the detective was right.

A quarter of an hour after Locke had caught sight of Samuel Bigways he was approached by Lady Havers.

"Mr. Locke," she said, and her face was anxious; "have you seen Milton?"

The detective shook his head.

"Haven't seen him for about a quarter of an hour," he replied.

"Neither has anyone else," said Lady Havers, who was obviously agitated. "And he was supposed to be getting the emerald—Pamela's birthday present, you know."

Locke nodded.

"Sir Milton told me about it," he said quietly. "But don't be alarmed, your husband can't be very far away."

Lady Havers rubbed her hands together.

"I can't help feeling that something has happened," she said. "Milton told me a short while ago that he was going straight to the safe to get the emerald. Yet there's no sign of him. Thomas, the butler, says that Milton went into the library, but nobody seems to know anything beyond that."

Locke's face grew stern.

"Will you allow me to accompany you to the library, Lady Havers?"

"Yes, yes!"

Despite the inquiring glances that were bestowed on her by a number of the guests, Lady Havers walked quickly

towards the door. Locke accompanied her.

The library was empty. Standing on the threshold Ferrers Locke scrutinised every corner of the big room. A large safe filled an alcove near one of the windows—and the door of the safe appeared to be shut.

"What do you make of it, Mr. Locke?" asked Lady Havers tearfully.

Ferrers Locke did not reply.

His keen eyes were scanning the polished floor. They did not fail to see a number of scratches that by reason of their colour were obviously fresh. On bended knees he examined these scratches, and followed their trail to the door of the safe. There they were more pronounced.

For a few seconds the detective stood watching the locked safe, his face expressionless.

"What do you think—" Lady Havers was saying when Ferrers Locke suddenly stiffened, and, with a curt gesture, bade her be silent.

"Listen!" he said, almost in a whisper.

Wonderingly Lady Havers did so.

"Heavens!" exclaimed Locke at length. "Your husband—"

"Yes, yes," interrupted Lady Havers hysterically.

"Your husband, unless I'm very much mistaken," said Ferrers Locke, "is a prisoner in that safe. The combination, quick!"

Lady Havers shrieked and would have fallen into a swoon, but for Ferrers Locke.

"There is no time for hysterics, madam," said the detective coldly. "The combination of the safe, quickly! Your husband is a prisoner there!"

"I—I don't know the combination," said the baronet's wife tearfully. "Milton's never told me. Oh dear, what shall we do? What can I do?"

"Keep calm," said Ferrers Locke

coldly. "Does anyone know the combination of the safe? The secretary—"

"No, no!" exclaimed Lady Havers, wringing her hands. "Oh, please—please do something. I'll phono the police."

"If you will leave it to me, madam, you may avoid unnecessary publicity," said Ferrers Locke, peeling off his jacket.

He tossed the jacket on the floor and next moment his deft fingers were "sounding" the combination of the safe.

"Help!"

Locke's face grew grim as, faintly, there came the sound of a voice from within the safe.

"My husband!" gasped Lady Havers. "I heard him. Oh, do be quick, Mr. Locke!"

The detective did not answer. All his attention was being focussed on the combination of the lock. Had Locke chosen to be a cracksman he certainly would have earned notoriety in the criminal world, for there were very few safes that he couldn't master.

As he worked, perspiration streaming down his face, he was oblivious to the fact that the library was now packed with a silent, horrified crowd of guests to whom Lady Havers had imparted the news of her husband's fate. One bright youth suggested that Lady Havers should ring up the makers of the safe, forgetting doubtless the hour of night and the fact that the makers were a Birmingham firm. But those important points had not escaped Locke's intelligence. He knew that if Sir Milton Havers was to escape with his life, only he, Ferrers Locke, could be of service to him. The oxygen in the interior of the safe would soon be exhausted and then—

A Clue!

LOCKE tried everything he knew, but still the lock defied him. And now no longer came any sound or sign of life from within the safe.

"Oh, please be quick!" gasped Lady Havers, almost hysterical in her anxiety, and Pamela, no less disturbed, repeated her mother's words.

Locke hardly heard them. His nimble fingers kept changing the combination of the lock in an effort to find the right one. And at last his very persistency, if not his instinct, met with its reward.

There was a sudden click, which was almost drowned in the gasp of relief that went up from the assembled guests and slowly the big door opened. Next moment it was swung open to its full capacity.

And, in the safe, huddled in an unconscious heap, was Sir Milton Havers, a stream of crimson marring the deathly pallor of his face.

It was the work of a few moments to drag his inanimate form to a near-by settee. Locke, his work done, wiped his brow and quietly donned his coat. A doctor amongst the guests devoted his time and his skill to reviving the baronet, and after an anxious ten minutes Sir Milton Havers' eyes opened.

It was some few moments after this before he could tell Ferrers Locke what had happened.

"I was struck on the head with something," he said faintly, "just as I had opened the safe."

"You did not catch a glimpse of your assailant?" asked Locke.

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A gasp of relief went up from the assembled guests as the big door slowly opened, for in the safe, huddled in an unconscious heap, was Sir Milton Havers, a stream of crimson marring the deathly pallor of his face! (See page 26.)

The baronet shook his head.

"No. I made some attempt to struggle with him, but he well-nigh throttled me. The scoundrel hit me over the head again, and—and I remember nothing more." His eyes closed for a moment; then they opened, and their expression was one of alarm and anxiety. "The emerald—the emerald!"

His eyes turned to the open safe.

The eyes of everyone in that room did likewise.

"It's gone!" gasped the baronet. "Gone! Poor Pamela!"

Ferrers Locke perhaps was the least surprised amongst the assembly. Certainly he was the coolest individual there.

"Lady Havers," he said quietly, "you will, if you please, kindly ask your guests to return to the ball-room. I have a special reason. No, no—don't ask questions. And please instruct your servants to forbid anyone to leave this house until I say so."

"Do as Ferrers Locke says," muttered the baronet weakly.

Lady Havers nodded.

In five minutes the guests, together with Ferrers Locke, were all assembled in the ball-room, their faces indicative of curiosity and surprise, which intensified when Ferrers Locke addressed them.

"I want all the gentlemen to remove their shoes, please," he said. "I'm quite in earnest, believe me!"

Wonderingly, the guests did so, and their wonder grew as Ferrers Locke picked up each pair and closely studied the soles and heels of them.

Locke's face was expressionless as he passed from shoe to shoe. But in his heart he was disappointed, for not one of the shoes bore the tell-tale nail protruding from the leather which obviously had made those freshly-formed scratches on the library floor.

During his inspection the Baker Street

detective did not look once at the faces of the owners of the various shoes, but after the inspection he treated the assembly to a quick but all embracing scrutiny. His eyes glittered as he noted the absence of Mr. Samuel Bigways, for that individual had been in the library when the guests had streamed in on hearing Lady Havers' screams.

Where was Bigways?

And why had he made himself scarce? "I'm sorry to have troubled you, gentlemen," said Locke easily. "Thank you!"

The guests were as mystified as ever; some of them openly displayed their contempt; but to it all Locke remained as uncommunicative as ever.

Coolly he walked to the ball-room door and passed out into the passage beyond. For a few moments he stood outside the library door. Then his eyes glittered as they observed the tell-tale track of the protruding nail.

Right down the full length of the passage these scratches were discernible. Locke followed them until he stood facing the spacious garden and the well-kept lawn. He smiled confidently as the light of the moon revealed a trail of footsteps in the damp grass. Next second Locke was speeding over the grass in the track of those footprints.

They led him to the high wall that encircled the grounds; in fact, they led him to something that he never expected to see. For on the top of the wall, half-sheltered by a decorative circle of masonry, was a jewel-box.

"Ah!"

An exclamation of triumph escaped the detective as he darted forward to get the box—an exclamation that changed in tone as simultaneously a hand darted forward from the other side of the wall.

"Would you?"

Locke's grip fastened on the hand; he heard a squeal of surprise followed

by the sound of sharply indrawn breath. Next second he was being hard put to it to keep his grip of the unknown's hand.

It was a silent struggle under the stars that lasted for no longer than three minutes. During that time the box was knocked over to fall on the inner side of the wall.

Locke dragged and dragged at the wrist, but his opponent was evidently stronger, for inch by inch the detective felt his grip failing. Strive as he might the detective could not hold on.

"Ah!" It was a grunt of mingled relief and triumph as Locke's unknown foe managed with a superhuman effort to throw off the detective's grip.

Ferrers Locke staggered back, and by the time he had recovered his balance, he could hear the patter of running footsteps on the other side of the wall. He climbed his side of it and peered through the moonlight. About fifty yards away, darting down a side turning, he saw the shadowy shape of his late assailant.

For a second or so Locke debated in his mind whether or not he should give chase. He decided on the latter, and his next task was to search for the box, that had fallen on his side of the wall. With the aid of a box of matches he found it at last, his heart throbbing with excitement long before he opened the box, for he knew instinctively what it contained.

It contained the stolen emerald! The moonlight scintillated on that wondrous stone, worth a fortune, the moment the detective threw back the lid.

"Not so bad after all," he muttered. "This will help the old baronet to recover."

Pocketing the jewel-box and its

THE TOUGHEST TEAM in the LEAGUE!

(Continued from page 27.)

valuable contents, the detective sauntered back to the house.

The guests were still in the ball-room; still discussing the robbery and speculating as to the identity of their host's assailant.

Locke started slightly as he observed that Samuel Bigways had reappeared and was bending over Sir Milton Havers, but his face was expressionless as he approached.

"Sir Milton," said Locke quietly, "you will be pleased to know that your emerald is safe!"

"Safe?" said Sir Milton faintly. "What do you mean, man—" He broke off as Ferrers Locke handed him the jewel-box.

"What—what—" he babbled. "How in the name of all that's wonderful did you find this? Where did—"

But Ferrers Locke merely smiled. "That I prefer to keep to myself for the moment," he said, his keen eyes fixing a penetrating glance on the face of Mr. Bigways. "Let it suffice that you have it in your possession once again and that the fair Miss Pamela will not be robbed of her birthday present."

"Locke, this is wonderful," said Sir Milton. "Wonderful!"

"Mr. Bigways," said Locke, with an easy smile, "I think you're the only one who has not suffered the indignity of removing his shoes for my benefit. I think in fairness to the other guests, you should do so now."

"Why, of course," said Mr. Bigways,

albeit the tone underlying his "willingness" suggested the contrary. "I had to leave the ball-room a few moments ago because I felt faint."

The idea of a big, healthy individual like Mr. Bigways suffering from shock seemed incongruous, but Ferrers Locke did not express his thoughts. Smilingly he waited for Mr. Bigways to remove his dress shoes.

A dead silence settled on the assembly as Locke examined them.

There was no protruding nail in either of the heels or soles, but on the right heel was a hole which had once been filled with a nail. Locke did not need telling that.

He gave Bigways a reassuring and half-apologetic smile as he handed back the shoes.

"You'll excuse me, Mr. Bigways," he said easily. "In fairness to the others I had to examine your shoes."

"Quite, quite," said Bigways, with a faint smile. "And are you satisfied?"

"Quite satisfied," replied Ferrers Locke, for he knew that Samuel Bigways was the culprit; knew, too, that the rascally director of the Sparsdale Athletic had vacated the ball-room in a hasty endeavour to remove the tell-tail nail from his shoe, and had succeeded in destroying the evidence that would undoubtedly have convicted him.

(Ferrers Locke has certainly come out best in his first encounter with the rascally Samuel Bigways. But the fight is far from being all over yet. There'll be some startling developments in next week's grand instalment, chums, so don't miss it whatever you do.)

BIRCHEMALL THE GOOD!

(Continued from page 15.)

"Don't trouble to shut the door after us!" continued the kaptin of the Fourth, cheerily. "We'll do that, sir! Dear me, what are those grate objects lying in our path?"

"Yarooooo!" howled the Head, as Jack Jolly trod heavily on his pet corn.

"Why, they must have been your feet!" grinned the kaptin of the Fourth.

"Wooooooop!" roared the Head, dancing about in aggrony.

"Lucky you're so good and kind, sir; otherwise you might feel like dotting Jolly one!" remarked Bright.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The door closed behind the humorous Fourth-Formers at last, and Dr. Birchmall sank into his chair with a sigh of relief. His reputation as a kind schoolmaster was established now and the legacy was already within his reach. But the egg-sperience of gaining that reputation had been the reverse of plezzant!

Meanwhile, in the passidge outside, Jack Jolly & Co. were dancing a wild dance of joy at the success of their jape.

"It seems too good to be troo!" cried Jack Jolly, as they returned to their study. "No more floggings or impots for us! Old Birchmall's got to treat us kindly for the rest of our lives, now!"

Whether Jack Jolly had spoken too soon, however, remained to be seen.

THE END.

(The next splendid story in this series is entitled: "The Reward of Virtue!" If you miss it, chums, you'll regret it.)

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"BIRCHEMALL the GOOD!"

Now that Dr. Birchemall can't not fog Jack Jolly & Co. any more for fear of losing Aunt Betsy's legacy, the cheery chums of the Fourth prepare to make hay while the sun shines.



DICKY NUGENT

"Yarooooooop!" he howled, leaping up in the air as the he had been shot.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Terrified as Jack Jolly & Co. were by the unexpected entry of the majestic and aw-inspiring Head, they couldn't help laughing in a slightly terrified weigh, of course. For the ink-pellet had hit the Head right on the boko and scattered a shower of ink all over his scollery die!

"Gug-gug-gug! Oh orkey!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Fourth.

"You disrespectful young villains!" roared the Head furiously. "I'll learn you to chuck ink-pellets at my fazz! Just you wait a minute and I'll—"

Jack Jolly & Co. crowded back in their seats, fully eggregiating to hear that they were all to be fogged black and blue.

But just at that moment, the Head, with a start, realised that Mr. Cheestem was watching him with eyes that were open wide with astonishment, and immediately he set to work to undo the bad impression his lapse was creating.

"Don't take any notice of what I've just said!" he said, with a feeble grin.

"That was only a joke, of course! What I really meant was that I know full well it was only an accident, and I wouldn't dream of punishing anybody for such a trifling offence!"

The Fourth fairly blinked. For a moment they couldn't believe that the Head was in deadly earnest.

"What?" gasped Mr. Lickham, incredulously. "Do you mean to say that you are not going to wallop the boy who hit you, sir?"

"Certainly not, Lickham!" answered Dr. Birchemall.

"M-m-my giddy aunt! But are you aware that the pellet struck you right on the boko, and that the ink is even now streaming down your die?" asked the master of the Fourth, unable to credit that the Head could be so magnanimous.

"I am aware of all that, my dear Lickham. The fact is I don't approve of corporal punishment at all!"

"Y-y-you don't?" stammered Mr. Lickham, beginning to wonder whether Dr. Birchemall had gone off his rocker.

"Corporal punishment is a relic of the barbarous past," said Dr. Birchemall, squinting out of one eye to make sure that Mr. Cheestem was taking in his words. "In these enlightened days, Lickham, boys should be treated with kindness and affection!"

At those words, there was an audible gasp from Jack Jolly & Co. Were they dreaming, or could this really be true? They asked themselves. Dr. Birchemall's broodality was proverbial, and it seemed out of the question that the leopard could change its spots—at a minute's notice, anyway.

"I should be sorry indeed to hear that any master at St. Sam's was unkind to the boys in his charge, Lickham," went on the Head, with a severe glance at his assistant. "I trust you never chastise them yourself?"

"N-n-not very often!" gasped Mr.



Lickham. "I usually bring them to you to be fogged, sir!"

"Don't tell 'whoppers!" snapped Dr. Birchemall. "You know jolly well I have never struck a boy in my life, don't you, Lickham?"

He winked meaningfully as he spoke, and Mr. Lickham, taking the tip, gave the sort of reply the Head wanted.

"Why, of course not, sir! How silly of me!" he cried. "I must have been thinking of my last school, where the Head was a booting tyrant who never tired of walloping the brock. I'm quite sure, sir, that nobody could be kinder than yourself. You wouldn't hurt a fly, let alone a heffman being!"

"There you are!" said Dr. Birchemall, turning triumphantly to Mr. Cheestem. "Didn't I tell you what a good, kind fellow I was? Without a shadow of doubt, that legacy is as good as mine!"

"It certainly seems so," agreed the lawyer.

"Now, sir," said Dr. Birchemall. "I'll show you how popular I am with the boys."

He faced the class again.

"Boys," he yelled, "just to prove how kind-hearted I am, you can all have an extra half-holiday this afternoon."

"Hoorey!" yelled Jack Jolly & Co., eggregiously.

"Three cheers for the Head!" shouted Frank Fearless. "Hip, hip, hip—"

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The cheers were given with a right good will.

"That shows how popular I am, duzzent it!" snickered Dr. Birchemall.

Mr. Cheestem, completely fooled by the Head's cunning trick, had to admit that it did!

Without waiting for any more demonstrations of Dr. Birchemall's popularity, the two then quitted the room. From the moment of their departure up to the time when the bell rang for the end of morning lessons, the Fourth Form-room fairly buzzed with eggregation.

Dr. Birchemall was engaged in an eggregiating game of noughts and crosses with Mr. Cheestem as they entered, but he looked up from his game to bestow a bonnie smile on them. By this time, he was becoming quite accustomed to smiling sweetly at boys whom he would have met with a stern scowl only a few days before.

"Please we've come to tea, sir!" said Jack Jolly boldly, sitting down in the best chair in the room.

"What the merry dickens!" he gasped. Hubbard's cupboard, just now, eggs, plaind Merry. "So we thought we'd better buzz along here and have tea with you."

"We shan't want much, sir," grinned Bright. "Only a few ham patties, and pork pies, and some tinned salmon, and sardines—"

"And poached eggs, and jam, and marmalade, and golden sirrup," put in Jack Jolly thoughtfully.

"Not to mention a few duzzen chocolate cakes, and donuts, and pineapple slices, and cream buns," concluded Merry. "That'll be all, won't it, chaps?"

"What ho!"

"And do you imagine for one moment that I'm going to provide all that grub for you to feed your faces with?" roared Dr. Birchemall, hardly able to believe his ears.

"Certainly, sir!" answered Jack Jolly calmly. "Knowing what a good, kind headmaster you are, we felt sure you wouldn't say us neigh."

"Oh, grata pip!" murmured Dr. Birchemall, realising at once that it was a case of Hobson's Choice. "But, I course, you are quite right, Jolly! I

wouldn't dream of allowing you to go without your proper grub. Pray sit down for a minute, and I will tell Binding, the page, to trot down to the tuckshop and bring up the best they have in the shop."

"Thank you, sir!" cooressed the junior, happily.

"Shall I order some tuck for you at the same time, Mr. Cheestem?" asked the Head, turning to the lawyer.

"Thank you kindly!" grinned the bob's worth—or say ten bob at the outside—will do for me!

Dr. Birchemall nashed his teeth with rage on the quiet, but he had to smile sweetly to his uninvited guests, tho it nearly broke his misery heart to part with the crisp russhing notes he handed over to Binding.

Amazing as it sounds, Jack Jolly & Co. enjoyed the feed of their lives at the Head's eggregience in the very sanctuary which had so often echoed with their yells of aggerity in the past.

Binding, the page, fairly staggered under the grata mountain of grub he brought up from the tuckshop. But that mountain very quickly became a molehill so to speak, when the ravenous jaws of Jack Jolly & Co. got to work. Pork-pies, salmon, and donuts alike disappeared like snow before the merry old Summer sun.

Dr. Birchemall's face became a study as he watched the festive scene.

At last, the Fourth-Form juniors had to admit that they were becken.

"I couldn't manage another doozent if you paid me to eat it!" declared Jack Jolly.

"Same here!" grinned Merry and Bright, their faces shining like full moons. "I fancy I've had just about sufficient myself!" cooressed Mr. Cheestem, as he thoughtfully demolished the last pork-pie.

And now what about a vote of thanks to the founder of the feast—Dr. Birchemall, the golden-haired schoolmaster?

"Hoer, hoer!" grinned Jack Jolly & Co. With loud acclamation the toast was drunk in foaming jugger-pop, after which the juniors prepared to buzz off.

"Thanks for the tuck-in, sir!" said Jack Jolly, as they filed out. "We'll drop in again next time we're passing. Don't forget to keep a good stock of grub by you!"

Dr. Birchemall meorily boughed, but couldn't trust himself to speak!

"But he mentioned your name!" said the solicitor, with a frown.

"Oh, crumbs! Well, you see, as it happens, the Head Porter here bears the same name as myself," eggregiated the Head glibly. "What's more, he's a doctor in his spare time, so of course, they call him Doctor Birchemall like me! Rather funny, isn't it? Ha, ha, ha!"

"Eggregiously!" agreed Mr. Cheestem, very much astonished. "How-ever, I am eggregiously glad to know that assistant had been referring to you, I should have been quite unable to award you the legacy, Doctor Birchemall!"

"How forlornly I corrected your first impression in time then!" grinned the Head. "Now we'll trot into the Form-room, Mr. Cheestem, and you'll be able to see for yourself how much my pupils love me!"

Having thus spoke, Dr. Birchemall strode into the Form-room.

Up to the moment of his entry, the Fourth had been behaving more like a covegeful of monkeys at a zoo than a crowd of well-bred public schoolboys. Mr. Lickham was rather easy-going, and tho at times he could eggrit his orthority, he usually allowed the chaps to sling ink-pellets, eteeters, at each other, with the result that there wasn't much dissipation in the class as a rule.

On this particular occasion, there was even less dissipation than usual, and the air was thick with flying pieces of chalk, ink-pellets, ebony rulers, and other trifles.

Immediately Jack Jolly & Co. of the Fourth spotted Dr. Birchemall, however, the bombardment ceased as if by magic. "Cave!" yelled a number of the chaps, in a terrified whisper.

"Oh, grata pip!" The Head!

Instantly, the storm died down.

Just as it happened, however, one belated ink-pellet flew across the room a second too late.

Dr. Birchemall caught it!

Whlop! Squelch!

"I usually bring them to you to be fogged, sir!"

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Dr. Birchemall meorily boughed, but couldn't trust himself to speak!

As they drew near the room, they could hear the howling voice of Mr. Lickham, the master of the Fourth.

"Silence!" he was yelling. "If you young rakkis don't keep quiet, I'll fetch the Head, and then there'll be the very dickens to pay. You all know what a broot Dr. Birchemall is when he's roused!"

Dr. Birchemall nashed his teeth with rage. It was just like Lickham to nut in and spoil his chances of bagging Betsy Birchemall's legacy like this, he reflected.

Mr. Cheestem was greatly surprised as he heard Mr. Lickham's words.

"Is that your assistant referring to you as a broot?" he asked, frowning at Dr. Birchemall.

"No fear! Lickham's talking about the Head Porter, not the headmaster!" answered Dr. Birchemall, with a sticky grin. "You see, when the masters have trouble with the boys, they sometimes direct to get the Head Porter to help them."

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