

Billy Bunter is Funnier Than Ever in the Tip-Top School Story of Greyfriars—INSIDE!

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Exit the Prefect!

BACKING UP BUNTER!



BY FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bunter Barges In!

"BUNTER!"
"Not Bunter?"
"Yes—Bunter!"
"Great pip!"

It was amazing.

Greyfriars fellows stared, as if they could hardly believe their eyes—as indeed they hardly could.

Billy Bunter, standing in the doorway of Hall, blinking in through his big spectacles, was the cynosure of all eyes.

The school was at dinner. At the Remove table there was a vacant place—the place usually occupied by Billy Bunter. Bunter was not expected to dinner. He was not expected at Greyfriars at all. Only that morning Billy Bunter had been sacked—expelled from the school! Some fellows thought that Bunter had had hard measure. Some thought that it served him jolly well right! But few, if any, expected to see him at Greyfriars again after he had been turfed out by his headmaster. Yet—there he was!

There he was, as large as life, sniffing the scent of dinner, like a warhorse sniffing the battle!

Fellows forgot dinner, and stared at Bunter! Second and Third, Remove, Fourth, and Shell, Fifth and Sixth, stared at Bunter. Even the prefects at the high table stared at Bunter. Form-masters at the heads of their respective tables looked round, and if they did not stare like common mortals, at least they looked at Bunter very, very hard. Bunter had the spotlight!

"Bunter!" The name rippled from table to table. "Bunter! It's Bunter! It's really Bunter! Oh, scissors! Bunter!"

Billy Bunter rolled in.

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He headed for the Remove table, and, in the midst of the general amazement, dropped into a chair there.

"Bunter!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"Bunter, you ass!" breathed Bob Cherry.

"Bunter, you fathead!" murmured Frank Nugent.

Harry Wharton & Co. of the Remove, perhaps, were the least surprised. They knew that Bunter had come back after Wingate of the Sixth had taken him to the railway station, because they had seen him dodging in the quad. But they had supposed that he would keep out of sight. That, in fact, had been Bunter's intention. But he had reckoned without the inner Bunter. There were some things no fellow could stand—at least, no fellow like Bunter. Missing a meal was one of them.

"I say, you fellows—" began the fat Owl of the Remove.

"You howling ass!" whispered Bob Cherry. "What have you barged in here for?"

"I'm hungry!" said Bunter, with dignity.

"Oh, my hat!"

"I say, you fellows, you might pass a fellow something to eat! Shove that pie this way!"

"Do you think they'll let you stop?" gasped Harry Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Prout's spotted him!" murmured Bob.

Mr. Prout, master of the Fifth, rose at the head of the Fifth Form table. Portly and pompous, Prout stared at the fat junior. His eyes seemed to be popping from his plump face at the sight of Billy Bunter in Hall. Everybody was astonished; but Prout was angry as well as astonished. It was on the charge of mopping a squirt of ink

over Prout that Billy Bunter had been sacked. Prout looked like Roderick Dhu in the poem, at the time when dark lightnings flashed from Roderick's eye!

"Bunter!" boomed Prout.

Billy Bunter did not answer. He was already busy. He had started on steak-and-kidney pie. He realised that he might be interrupted, and that he had, therefore, no time to lose. He gobbled! The rate at which that steak-and-kidney pie was disappearing from sight was a record. Never had even Billy Bunter wrapped himself so swiftly round a pie!

"Bunter!" roared Prout.

Gobble, gobble!

"Upon my word!" gasped Prout. He turned his head towards the high table where the prefects sat, and singled out Wingate of the Sixth, the captain of Greyfriars, who was staring at Bunter as at some amazing vision. "Wingate!" he boomed.

"Oh, yes! Yes, sir!" gasped Wingate.

"Bunter of the Remove was expelled from this school only this morning! I understood that Dr. Locke had directed you to take him to the station."

"Yes, sir!"

"And why have you not done so, Wingate?"

"I did so, sir; but the young ass—I mean, Bunter—dodged me at the station, and didn't catch the train! I reported it to the Head," answered Wingate.

"You should not have allowed him to elude you, Wingate!"

"Indeed, sir!" answered the Greyfriars captain coolly; and he sat down again, and transferred his attention to his dinner—thus making it clear that a Sixth Form prefect was not in need of instruction from the master of the Fifth.

Prout snorted. It was Prout's way to regard himself as one having authority, saying, "Do this!" and he doeth it! He was constantly forgetting that his authority had its limits. He never liked being reminded of those limits.

Coker of the Fifth jumped up.

"Shall I turn him out, sir?" he asked. Coker of the Fifth was always ready to barge into anything that did not concern him.

"You may sit down, Coker, and be silent!" snapped Prout.

"Oh!" said Coker, and he sat down amid smiles.

Prout left the Fifth Form table, and strode along to the Remove. It was the custom at Greyfriars for Form-masters to sit at the school dinner with their Forms. But there was no master at the Remove table. Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, was absent. He was expected back that afternoon; but he had not yet arrived. Mr. Lascelles, the maths master, sat in his place.

Larry Lascelles was gazing at Bunter, but did not seem disposed to take any more active measures. Prout, however, was the man for active measures. Only the evening before he had been drenched with ink from a squirt. The sun had gone down on his wrath, and risen on it—unabated!

"Look out, Bunter!" muttered Johnny Bull.

Gobble, gobble!

"The esteemed and absurd Prout is coming!" whispered Hurree Janset Ram Singh, poking Bunter with a dusky finger.

Gobble, gobble!

"Bunter!" boomed Prout.

Gobble, gobble!

Prout's hand fell on Billy Bunter's shoulder. He jerked him from his chair. Bunter, parking steak and kidney at a terrific rate, was not prepared for sudden movements. Steak, or kidney, or both, went down the wrong way, and Bunter gave a horrible gurgle.

"Gurrrrrgggh!"

"Bunter! How dare you come back when you have been expelled from the school by your headmaster?" demanded Prout. "Answer me!"

"Urrrrgggh!"

"What have you to say?"

"Yurrrrrgggh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How dare you, Bunter!"

"Wurrrgggh!" gurgled Bunter. "Leggo! I'm chook-chick-chuck-choking! Gurrrgh! Beast! Leggo! Yurrrgh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" boomed Prout. "This is no laughing matter."

"Isn't it?" murmured Smithy, with a chuckle.

"Silence! Bunter, come with me! At once!"

"Urrgh! I haven't finished my dinner!" gasped Bunter. "Look here! Let a chap finish his dinner!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Not one minute—not one moment!" boomed Prout. "Come!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Come!"

With a grasp of iron on a fat shoulder, Prout marched Billy Bunter out of Hall. Bunter went unwillingly; but he went—he had to! Crimson with wrath and indignation, the Fifth Form "beak" marched him out, and they disappeared from the eyes of the school—leaving Hall rocking with laughter.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Prout All Over!

"CHEEK!" said Bob Cherry.

"The cheekfulness is terrific!" agreed Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"The fact is," remarked Johnny Bull. "We're getting too much Prout."

"Much too much!" said Frank Nugent.

"Well, I hear that Quelch is coming back this afternoon," said Harry Wharton. "We shall be done with Prout when he turns up. All the same, he's a cheeky ass!"

The Famous Five were all agreed on that. So were the rest of the Remove. Mr. Prout, commonly alluded to as "Old Pompous," was rather getting on the nerves of that Form.

Harry Wharton & Co. came out after dinner, wondering what had happened to Bunter. Prout had returned to Hall with a flushed and wrathful face—alone. Apparently he had turned Bunter out.

No doubt a fellow who was sacked from the school, and who had the uncommon "neck" to reappear after being sacked, had to be turned out. But it was no special business of the Fifth Form master's.

In fact, Bunter's remarkable reappearance ought to have been reported to the Head, for Dr. Locke to deal with him. His peculiar proceedings concerned Prout no more than they concerned any other beak.

Billy Bunter, the prize "porpoise" of the Remove, is accused of squirting ink over a Form-master, and in consequence he is "booked for the bullet"! But Harry Wharton & Co., believing in Bunter's innocence, stand by him loyally.

But it was like Prout to take the matter in hand. He liked taking matters into his own plump hands. It was Prout all over!

"I suppose the fat duffer's gone, anyhow!" remarked Bob. "I wonder if he will turn up again?"

"The wonderfulness is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "The esteemed Bunter is a sticker, and he sticks like ridiculous glue."

The chums of the Remove walked down to the gates. They spotted Gosling, the ancient porter, at the doorway of his lodge, and Wharton called to him:

"Seen Bunter, Gosling?"

William Gosling grunted.

"I see Mr. Prout turn him hout!" he answered. "And he says to me, says he, see that he don't come in again, Gosling, he says! And I'll see that he doesn't, neither! Wot I says is this 'ere—"

Without waiting for more from Gosling, the Famous Five walked back into the quad. Bunter was gone again; but was he gone for good? Really, there was no telling what remarkable stunts might occur to a wonderful intellect like Billy Bunter's.

Like the man in the old story who was dead but would not lie down, Bunter was sacked but would not go home. And, in point of fact, the chums of the Remove were rather worried about Bunter.

That fat and fatuous youth had been sacked for mopping ink over Prout.

But nobody in the Remove believed that he really had mopped that ink over Prout! And if a fellow had been sacked in error, it was an extremely serious matter, and could not be left to rest where it was.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's Don Pomposo!" murmured Bob Cherry, catching sight of Mr. Prout's portly form under the elms.

"What the dickens is he up to?" asked Nugent.

"Looking for something."

Mr. Prout was going along the Elm Walk, peering to right and left in the grass and under the trees, occasionally stooping and peering more closely.

This was the spot where the ink had been squirted over him the previous evening by some fellow hidden under the dusky elms—Bunter, according to the general belief, though the Removites did not believe so.

As the juniors glanced at him, Mr. Prout straightened up and looked round, and saw them. He beckoned to them to approach.

They approached, though not very willingly. While Mr. Quelch was away, and other masters were taking the Remove in turn, Prout took the Remove in third school. Outside third school he had no more authority over the Remove than any other Form-master. But it seemed impossible for Prout to get this into his majestic head.

"Wharton!" puffed Prout. He was breathless with stooping. "Please look up and down this path—you and the others—and see if you can find a book."

"A book?" repeated Harry. "Have you dropped a book, sir?"

There was no book to be seen on the path.

"I dropped it last evening, Wharton, when I was attacked—assaulted and—and inked—by that young rascal Bunter! It was in my hand at the time, and I dropped it. I forgot it at the moment—" Prout broke off, and glared at the juniors. "Are you laughing?"

The chums of the Remove suppressed their merriment. They could picture to themselves Prout's state when he got the ink, and were not surprised that if he had dropped a book he had forgotten all about it at the time. Probably he had been thinking wholly and solely of the ink!

"An assault upon a Form-master is not a laughing matter, Wharton!" thundered Mr. Prout.

"Oh, no, sir! Certainly not!"

"Kindly look for that book at once!" snapped Prout.

"What sort of a book, sir?" asked Bob.

"You have seen the book, Cherry! It is an account-book—a sort of ledger—kept by some Greyfriars boy—some young rascal who had been lending money among the other boys—"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob involuntarily.

The juniors had forgotten—but they remembered now—that the account-book belonging to Fisher T. Fish, the business-man of the Remove, had fallen into Prout's hands.

Prout had learned from that book that some young rascal was carrying on a surreptitious money-lending business in the school—Shylock on a small scale.

Any fellow in the Remove could have told him whose book it was; but no fellow in the Remove had any intention of giving Fishy away—little as they esteemed that cute, smart, spry youth.

Now, it seemed, Prout had lost the book—which was a stroke of luck for Fisher T. Fish, who had been in a state

of terror ever since Prout had got hold of it.

"I had not yet discovered," resumed Mr. Prout, "the owner of that rascally book! I was examining it when I was attacked, and it dropped from my hand. Look for it at once. It must be here somewhere."

Prout leaned his portly form on an elm, to rest after his exertions. Stooping was rather an effort to Prout, who had a very wide circumference to stoop over.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another, and looked at Prout. Evidently the Fifth Form master was still under the delusion that he could give orders to Remove men!

However, they proceeded to look for the book.

Had they found it, it was improbable that they would have handed it over to Prout. Fisher T. Fish was a worm—the last word in worms—but nobody wanted to take a hand in getting him the sack. Moreover, it was no business of Prout's.

But they did not find the book.

They found traces of ink still in the grass, where Prout had been squirted the evening before. That was the scene of the "outrage," as it was called by the beaks; of the jape, as it was called by the juniors.

But there was no sign of Fishy's precious book. If Prout had dropped it there, it had been picked up since.

"Not here, sir!" said Harry Wharton at last.

Prout detached himself from the tree. Several times already that day he had looked for the missing account-book, and had failed to find it. It was dawning on him that the lost article was no longer where he had dropped it. But he did not give up hope. He was tired of the quest himself, but he saw no reason why the juniors should not continue to exert themselves.

"Keep on looking for it, Wharton!" he said. "It may be out of sight in the grass, or may have fallen among the trees."

"We're going up the river this afternoon, sir!" said Bob Cherry pointedly.

"Kindly do not be impertinent, Cherry! Look for that book, and if you find it bring it to me in my study."

With that the master of the Fifth rolled away towards the House. Harry Wharton & Co. gazed after his portly back.

"Does that cheeky old ass think we're really going to root about for his silly book?" asked Johnny Bull.

"There's no accounting for what Prout may think!" said Harry Wharton, with a shrug of the shoulders. "He thinks we're going to do the lines he gave us the other day—a thousand each. Let him think!"

"Anyhow, we're going up to Popper's Island this afternoon," remarked Nugent, "and it's time we were off."

And Prout having disappeared, the Famous Five went into the House and up to the Remove passage, to get ready for the trip up the river to Popper's Island, where they were going to picnic. Harry Wharton went in Study No. 1 for his rucksack, to pack.

As he opened the door of that study he heard a startled gasp within. Somebody, it seemed, was in the study.

But as he stepped in he glanced round in astonishment. Nobody was visible.

"What the dickens!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove blankly.

"Anything up?" asked Nugent, looking from the passage.

"I say, you fellows!"

The two juniors jumped. From under the study table a fat face, adorned with a large pair of spectacles, emerged into

view. Wharton and Nugent stared blankly at Billy Bunter!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Rally Round!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Bunter!" gasped Wharton.

"B-Bunter!" stuttered Nugent.

They had wondered whether Billy Bunter was gone for good after Prout turned him out at the gates. Evidently he wasn't!

The fat junior blinked anxiously at the doorway through his big spectacles.

"Any beaks about?" he gasped.

"No!"

"Oh good!"

Bunter crawled out from under the table. He had popped out of sight at the opening of the door lest the newcomer should be a master or a prefect. But the voices of the owners of the study had reassured him. Now he planted his fat form in the study arm-chair and blinked at the amazed juniors.

"Shut the door, you chaps!" he said uneasily. "Some beast might come along and spot me."

Wharton shut the door.

"So—so you're here!" he articulated.

Bunter grinned.

"Yes! That old ass Prout turned me out! Like his cheek, you know! I hadn't finished my dinner! I can tell you, I was frightfully hungry! I shouldn't have come into Hall, only, of course, a fellow couldn't miss his dinner."

"You fat duffer!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! I suppose a fellow has to have his meals!" said Bunter warmly. "That was a lovely steak-and-kidney pie, too, and I never finished it owing to that old ass Prout barging in! I should be hungry now, if I hadn't found a cake in your cupboard, old chap."

"You've scoffed our cake?" roared Nugent. That cake had been intended for the picnic on Popper's Island.

"Oh, really, Nugent! I suppose you didn't want a fellow to starve! Luckily, I found it, and the bananas—"

"You've scoffed the bananas?"

"There were only a dozen!" said Bunter with dignity. "I was jolly glad to find a bag of tarts, too."

"You fat cormorant—"

Harry Wharton glanced into the study cupboard. Most of the comestibles for the picnic had been parked there. Nothing of an eatable nature remained. It looked as if the picnickers were going to have a rather thin time. Billy Bunter seemed to think it fortunate that he had found the tuck in Study No. 1. It did not seem so fortunate to the proprietors thereof.

The two juniors looked at Bunter. They had been feeling sympathetic and quite concerned about him. Now they were feeling more inclined to kick him.

There was a footstep in the Remove passage. Billy Bunter made one jump out of the armchair and under the table. He was out of sight when the door flew open under a heavy thump.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" bawled Bob Cherry. "You fellows got the stuff—we're ready."

"Beast!" came a gasp from under the table.

Bob Cherry jumped.

"Why—what—who—" he stuttered.

Billy Bunter emerged once more.

"You silly ass, you made me jump!" he said accusingly.

"Bub-Bub-Bunter!" stuttered Bob.

"The esteemed and idiotic Bunter!" ejaculated Hurree Janset Ram Singh, his amazed, dusky face staring in at the doorway.

"That blithering idiot Bunter!" gasped Johnny Bull.

"I say, you fellows, don't yell!" howled Bunter. "Do you want to bring the beaks here? If I get spotted I shall get turfed out again. Shut that door and hold your row."

"Well, my hat!" said Bob. "How did you get here, you frabjous ass?"

"I got in over the Cloister wall after that old ass Prout turned me out at the gates!" explained Bunter. "It was easy enough to sneak into the House with everybody at dinner. So I came up to the studies to keep out of sight and wait for you fellows to show up. I was afraid you mightn't come up before tea. I should have been hungry again—"

"And what are you going to do now you're here?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"Stay, of course," said Bunter. "I never inked Prout, and a fellow can't be sacked for never doing anything. Besides, I can't go home! My father would be waxy—frightfully waxy! I told the Head so when he said I was expelled, but he took no notice! Schoolmasters haven't much sense, you know. But even a schoolmaster ought to have enough to know that a fellow can't go home in the middle of the term. Don't you think so?"

"You're sacked!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Don't yell—"

"Look here, you blithering ass—"

"Don't roar!"

"Do you think you can stay on at Greyfriars when you're sacked?"

"Well, I hear that Quelch is coming back to-day," said Bunter. "He's my Form-master, and he's bound to see me righted. A fellow expects justice from his Form-master. Fancy poor old Quelch's feelings if he came back and found me gone!"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bob. "Do you think he'd mind?"

"Well, it would be rather a blow to him, wouldn't it?" said Bunter. "Tain't as if it was one of you fellows going! But me, you know—"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Quelch would feel it!" said Bunter, blinking seriously at the five Removites. "He rather values me in the Form, you know! I've wondered sometimes why he didn't make me head boy. Wharton barged into it somehow—"

"You piffling fathead!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! You know jolly well that I ought to have been head boy, and it was pretty sly of you to bag it. I never was sly!" added Bunter, with dignity.

Harry Wharton looked at him.

"Time we got off, you men!" he remarked. His sympathy and concern for Billy Bunter seemed to have disappeared. Which was not, perhaps, surprising.

"I say, you fellows, don't go!" exclaimed Bunter hastily. "I haven't told you yet what I want you to do."

"That's worth staying to hear!" said Johnny Bull, with deep sarcasm.

"Well, we're pals, ain't we?" said Bunter cheerfully. "I expect you fellows to stand by me, after all I've done for you. I've got to keep out of sight till Quelch comes back. He will see me righted."

"Quelch can't do anything," said Bob. "The Head's sacked you for inking Prout—"

"I never inked Prout!"

"Well, you took a lot of trouble to make it look as if you did! Anyhow, you're bunked, and Quelch can't interfere."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"My esteemed idiotic Bunter—"

"Don't jaw," said Bunter. "You fellows are like a sheep's head—nearly all jaw! Let a fellow speak! Now, as

the matter stands, the Head makes out that I'm sacked—"

"Makes out!" gasped Nugent.

"Yes, he makes out that I'm sacked, so I shall have to lie doggo. I can keep in the studies for a bit without being spotted. I can't go down to Hall to tea, of course. But you fellows can see to that. You can bring me something. Don't be mean about it. Whatever you spend I'll square to-morrow. I'm expecting a postal order to-morrow."

"Oh scissors!"

"That will be all right! Now, I told you fellows this morning that Quelch was coming back to-day—I happened to hear—"

"You happened to be prying."

"Beast! I happened to hear the Head mention to Capper that he was coming by the three-thirty at Courtfield. I want

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Painful for Prout!

MR. PROUT stared at five rather startled and flushed faces.

Bunter had dived under the table; but he had not been gone a second when Prout appeared. Harry Wharton & Co. could not help looking, as they felt, rather disconcerted. Prout's gaze grew grim and stern.

"Is Bunter here?" he demanded.

"B-Bunter!" stammered Wharton.

"I have just learned," boomed Prout, "that Bunter has been seen in the precincts of the school again. He was seen in the quadrangle and he was seen in the House."

"Was—was—was he really, sir?" stammered Bob.

"There is no doubt about it! Instead

Bunter—in a state of great trepidation, hardly daring to breathe.

"Which is—I should say, was—Bunter's study in this passage?" demanded Prout, having paused in vain—for a reply.

"Study No. 7, sir," answered Harry. "Very well, I will go there before I search the passage from end to end," said Mr. Prout.

And he stepped out of Study No. 1, much to the relief of the Famous Five. They had stood grouped between Prout and the table to cut off any possible view of Bunter, and Prout had not seen the fat Owl.

Obviously he suspected that Harry Wharton & Co. had seen something of the Owl of the Remove, but he did not seem to suspect that Bunter was hidden in that very study.



Mr. Prout grasped the table with his plump hands, and whirled it aside. It tilted over, and crashed, and books and papers and ink-pot shot on to the floor. Bunter was revealed! "Oh crumbs!" gasped the hapless Owl. "Hook it, you ass!" shouted Bob Cherry.

you to meet him coming off the train, Wharton."

"What the thump for?"

"To explain to him," said Bunter. "You'll get in first word that way, see? You explain to him that I'm perfectly innocent and never had anything to do with inking Prout. Get Quelch on our side to begin with, see? You might tell him that I was in your study at the time Prout was inked—"

"You weren't!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Who's coming?" ejaculated Bob Cherry, as a heavy, elephantine tread was heard in the Remove passage outside.

"Oh lor'! That's Prout!" gasped Bunter.

He dived under the table again.

He was only just in time. There was a tap at the door of Study No. 1, it opened, and Mr. Prout rolled in.

of leaving, after I took him down to the gates that extraordinary boy has again entered the school surreptitiously. I have no doubt that he is hiding in one of the studies."

"Hiding in a study!" ejaculated Bob. "Do—do—do you think it's possible, sir?"

"I think it very probable, Cherry. I am here to search the Remove studies for him. If you have seen him—"

"We—we saw him at dinner, sir," ventured Nugent.

"I am aware of that, Nugent. If you have seen him since, I command you to tell me so at once."

Prout paused, like Brutus, for a reply. Like Brutus, he did not get one. Either the chums of the Remove had nothing to tell him, or they did not choose to tell him anything. They were rather wondering whether Prout would think of looking under the table. So was

He closed the door after him with rather a slam. A fat face looked out from under the table.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Quiet!" breathed Frank Nugent.

"I say, now that pompous old ass is gone—"

The door reopened.

Prout had not gone!

"Shut up!" hissed Bob Cherry.

But the warning came too late.

Prout had heard!

"What?" boomed Prout. "What is this? I heard Bunter's voice! He is here, as I suspected!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

This was rather deep of Prout. He had suspected all the time that Bunter was parked out of sight in Study No. 1, and had only pretended to depart. He had reopened the door suddenly to catch

Bunter if he was there. And he had caught him! There was no doubt about that! He had heard Bunter's voice—alluding to him as a "pompous old —." Prout recognised the voice, if not the description.

"Bunter!" he boomed.

No answer.

"Wharton, where is Bunter?" thundered Prout angrily.

Wharton did not reply.

"Cherry, where is Bunter?"

"Oh, where and oh, where can he be?" sang Bob Cherry.

It was not respectful. But the Remove fellows were getting fed-up with Prout and his fussy interferences. They considered it was time to let Prout know that a Fifth Form beak had no business in Remove studies.

"What—what? This is impertinence!" exclaimed Mr. Prout. "Hurree Singh, tell me at once where Bunter is!"

"The wherefulness is terrific!" remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"I see that you are all in a conspiracy to aid this outrageous defiance of your headmaster's authority!" boomed Prout.

"We should not think of defying the headmaster's authority, sir!" said Harry, his tone implying that he was not so particular about defying Prout's.

"I understand you, Wharton! I quite understand your impertinence! Will you tell me at once where Bunter is concealed?"

"No, sir," answered the captain of the Remove, driven to a direct reply. "You are not our Form-master, sir, and if Mr. Quelch were here—"

"Silence! I will not allow you to bandy words with me, Wharton! Since you are in a conspiracy to shield a boy who has been expelled from the school, I will search for him myself."

Prout advanced farther into the study. He glared round it for a hiding-place. The cupboard door was open, and a glance showed that Bunter was not there. In the farther corner was an old and rather tattered screen, and Prout rolled over to it, nothing doubting that Bunter was crouched behind it in the corner. Bunter, under the table, watched his plump legs passing.

Bob Cherry stooped and made him a sign to cut. As soon as Prout had drawn the corner blank he was fairly certain to look under the table. But for the moment the way was open for Bunter to bolt.

"Cut!" whispered Bob, under his breath.

Billy Bunter hesitated to leave his refuge. There was really no time for hesitation; if he was going, it was necessary to go while the going was good. But the Owl of the Remove did hesitate; and Prout, in the corner, jerked the screen away and glared behind it. Rather to his surprise, the corner was vacant—nobody was there.

Prout revolved on his axis and glared at the Famous Five across the study table; then he came round the table again.

"I am aware that Bunter is here!" he boomed. "I am perfectly assured of that! I am— Ah! Ha!"

Bunter had stopped hesitating at last—rather too late. He was crawling out from under the table as Prout circumnavigated that article of furniture. Prout stared down at his podgy back as he crawled.

"Bunter!" he roared.

"Oh crikey!" Bunter popped back under the table, like a fat tortoise popping back into its shell.

He did not seem to realise that it was now too late. Or perhaps he only

wanted to keep out of Prout's grasp. Anyhow, back he went. Prout, grabbing at him, missed him by inches.

"Bunter, come out at once!"

"Oh dear! I—I'm not here!" squeaked the alarmed Owl.

"What?"

"I—I mean—"

"Emerge!" roared Prout.

Bunter did not emerge. He was thinking of anything but emerging. Squatted under the study table, Bunter sat tight.

"Do you hear me, Bunter?" roared Prout. It would have been difficult for Bunter not to have heard Prout. He could be heard the length of the Remove passage.

"Oh lor'!"

"I command you to emerge!"

"Oh crikey!"

"Upon my word! Wharton—Cherry, lift the table aside at once!"

Wharton and Cherry put their hands into their pockets. The Fifth Form beak could give orders if he liked in a Lower Fourth study, but getting them obeyed by the Removites was another matter.

Prout's face, already crimson, became purple. But he did not repeat his order. He grasped the study table with his own plump hands and whirled it aside. It tilted over and crashed, and books and papers and inkpot shot on to the floor. Bunter was revealed.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped the hapless Owl. "Hook it, you ass!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Silence, Cherry! Bunter, come with me! I shall take you to your headmaster, and you—" Prout leaned over to grasp Bunter by the shoulder.

At the same moment Bunter leaped up to follow Bob Cherry's advice and hook it. He did not look before he leaped, as the proverb counsels. His bullet-head came with a crash on Prout's extensive waistcoat.

"Urrrrr!" gurgled Mr. Prout, staggering back, winded.

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter, sitting down again from the shock.

"Oooooogh!" spluttered Prout.

He staggered backwards with both plump hands pressed to his well-filled waistcoat. Bunter's head had smitten hard where Prout had lately parked his lunch. The effect was simply disastrous. Gasping, gurgling, spluttering feebly but wildly, Prout staggered back and back till he reached the study wall, against which he crumpled up, almost doubled. Horrible gurgles came from him as he crumpled.

"Ow! I've banged my head on something—" gasped Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hook it, you fathead!" yelled Nugent.

"Gurrrrrgh—stop him—urrrgh—hold him—wurrgh—I command you to—to—yurrrrrgh—" came gaspingly from Prout.

Harry Wharton dragged Bunter to his feet. The fat junior gave Prout one blink through his big spectacles. For the moment the Fifth Form master was hors de combat—quite unable to deal with Bunter.

Bunter made a bound for the door.

In a twinkling he was outside the study.

There was a hurried patter of footsteps in the Remove passage, and Billy Bunter was gone. Harry Wharton & Co., smiling, strode out of Study No. 1. Horrid sounds from Prout followed them.

"Urrrrrgh! Upon my word! Gurrrrrgh! Bless my soul! Yurrrrrgh! Wurrgh! Groooooogh! Oooooogh!" They left him to it.

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THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Where Is Bunter?

"GOOD old Bunter!" chuckled the Bounder.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ain't he a coughdrop?" chortled Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess this is the bee's knee!" declared Fisher T. Fish.

"Where is he now?" asked Peter Todd.

"Goodness knows!"

"Somewhere in Greyfriars!" chortled Bob Cherry. "I don't think Prout's hunting him now! Prout was rather short of wind last we saw of him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There'll be no end of a row about this!" said Tom Redwing.

"It's no end of a lark!" said Vernon-Smith. "Bunter is some lad! The Head nearly sacked me last term, but I never thought of staying on if he did! It's Bunter for original ideas!" And the Bounder roared.

"The blithering ass thinks that Quelch will set it right when he comes back," said Nugent. "But—"

"The butfulness is terrific!"

"Quelch can't do anything," said Skinner, "and he jolly well wouldn't if he could! Stands to reason he'll be glad to be shut of Bunter."

"Any beak would!" agreed Bolsover major.

"Oh, rot!" said Lord Mauleverer. "Quelch can't like Bunter—I don't see how anybody could—but he will want justice done! Quelch's a whale on justice."

"Bunter mayn't be such a blithering idiot as he seems!" remarked Harry Wharton. "After all, he never did ink Prout, though he meant to; and he was sacked for nothing. If Quelch believed that, he would barge in."

"But will he?" said Squiff.

"I guess he might!" remarked Fisher T. Fish. "I'll say that it was rough luck on Bunter! He never did it, and I'll tell a man he hasn't had a fair deal! Nope!"

Some of the fellows glanced rather curiously at Fisher T. Fish. It was not Fishy's way to help a lame dog over a stile, or to put in a word for any fellow who was down on his luck.

He seemed to be making an exception in Bunter's case, which was odd enough, for they had been anything but pally. But Fisher T. Fish had his reasons—though the other Remove fellows were far from guessing them.

A crowd of fellows were in the quad discussing Billy Bunter's antics with great excitement and much laughter. It was sheer luck, in the general opinion, that it was a half-holiday that day. A holiday could not have been better timed. Sixth Form prefects were hunting the Owl of the Remove up and down the school, by order of the Head; but he had not turned up yet. Where and when he would turn up was a thrilling question. It would have been simply rotten to have to go into classes while this excitement was on. Fortunately, very fortunately, it was Wednesday, a half-holiday at Greyfriars; and fellows were free to give their whole attention to Bunter.

And they gave it! Other interests were discarded. Harry Wharton & Co. had intended to go up the river in their boat to picnic on Popper's Island. They forgot Popper's Island now. Other fellows, who had meant to put in cricket practice, forgot cricket. Fellows who had planned cycle spins, left their jiggers in the bikeshed. Bunter filled

the stage! Everybody thought of Bunter, and talked of Bunter. From the most unimportant member of the Remove, Billy Bunter had suddenly become the most conspicuous character at Greyfriars.

Where was Bunter? Where had he hidden himself? What was he up to? When would he be found? What would happen to him when he was found? Everybody asked these questions, over and over again; but nobody could answer them.

All that was known for certain was that he had been discovered in a Remove study by Prout, and had vanished therefrom, leaving Prout in a winded and disastrous state.

That was an hour ago! Nobody sup-

GREYFRIARS CARTOONS

By HAROLD SKINNER,
our lightning artist.

No. 3—WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER
(The Owl of the Remove.)

If only Harold Skinner wasn't a sneak and a toady, his abilities as a cartoonist and writer of verses would carry him a long way. Maybe he'll reform one of these days—who knows?



To see the Porpoise at a meal
You'd murmur: "Saints defend us!"
And that's the reason, you would feel,
His fame is so tremendous.

His jaws work fast in manner grim
At feasts, when he has held 'em!
But does the grub belong to him?
Well, very, very seldom!

posed that he had cleared out of the school! He was somewhere within the walls of Greyfriars—but where?

All the Remove wished him luck. In the first place, they did not believe that he had inked Prout. In the second place, they averred that Prout was a pompous, interfering old ass, and deserved to be inked. In the third place, it was a tremendous lark!

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Wingate!" said Bob Cherry, as the Greyfriars captain came out of the House with a frowning brow. "He doesn't look as if he's found his nibs."

Wingate came over to the grinning group of juniors.

"Any of you seen Bunter?" he demanded.

"Is he still here?" asked Bob innocently.

"I suppose so! He hasn't been seen to leave! If any of you have seen him, you——" Wingate stared suspiciously at the crowd of grinning faces.

"Of course, we'd be sure to mention it at once, Wingate, if we saw him!" said the Bounder, with a grin. And there was a chuckle.

Wingate grunted and stalked away. He had little hope of extracting any information from Bunter's Form fellows. He tramped away towards the Cloisters, apparently to search in that rather remote spot.

"Old Wingate doesn't seem pleased!" grinned Tom Brown.

Wingate looked anything but pleased. He had intended to devote that afternoon to cricket; instead of which, he had to devote it to hunting up and down Greyfriars for an elusive fat junior. All the prefects were busy.

Loder and Carne of the Sixth could be seen exploring among the elms. Walker and Sykes were rooting in the Remove passage. Gwynne was drawing the box-rooms. Parkinson and North were rambling in the Fourth Form studies. Other prefects were hunting in other spots. Coker, of the Fifth, who never could mind his own business, was helping in the search. But nobody else helped. It was up to the prefects to carry out the Head's orders; and it was their job; that was one of the privileges of being a prefect. So far from helping, it was fairly certain that the Remove fellows, at least, would put obstacles in the way of the search, if they could. All their sympathy was on the side of Bunter.

The Head was seen glancing from his study window. His face wore a deep frown.

Dr. Locke was deeply disturbed and annoyed.

It was painful to him to have to expel a Greyfriars fellow—though probably more painful still to the fellow expelled. But he had felt it to be his duty, and he had done it, and regarded the matter as at an end.

So far from being at an end, however, it seemed to be only at the beginning! Bunter, sacked and tufed out, was still there! And nobody knew where he was! Unless the next meal-time drew him forth from his hiding-place, there was no telling how long he might remain hidden.

Sammy Bunter, of the Second Form, rolled up to the Removites in the quad, with a grin on his fat face that was to like his major's.

"You men seen anything of my major?" he asked.

"Nobody's seen him since he bullied Prout!" answered Bob.

Sammy chuckled.

"I say, ain't he a gem?" he asked. "Fancy coming back after the beak sacked him! Ain't he a coughdrop? He, he, he! I say, if any of you men have seen him, you might tell me, you know! I want to see him before he goes."

The Removites looked sympathetic. Nobody had ever noticed much in the way of brotherly love in the Bunter clan. But it was a sign of grace, in Sammy, if he was concerned about his brother Billy, now that Billy was sacked.

"Of course he'll have to go," said Sammy. "I hear that he bunged gallons of ink over old Prout last night—he, he, he! Can't imagine where he got the nerve! But, of course, he will have

to go for that! But, I say, I simply must see him before he goes!"

Sammy looked anxious as he blinked from face to face through his spectacles. "Sorry, kid!" said Lord Mauleverer. "Nobody's seen him. But don't worry too much—there's a chance he may pull through."

"Eh! Who's worrying?" asked Sammy Bunter. "I want to see him before he goes! He owes me sixpence!"

"What?" roared the Removites. "Sixpence!" said Bunter minor.

The juniors gazed at Bunter minor. They had rather wondered to see Sammy concerned about Billy! The mystery was explained now! He wasn't! He was concerned about the sixpence!

"Bump him!" said Bob Cherry.

"The bumpfulness is the proper caper!"

"Here, I say—leggo!" roared Sammy, as half a dozen indignant Removites collared him. "Wharrer you at? What's this game, I'd like to know! It's true—Billy owes me sixpence, and I can jolly well say—Whoooooop!"

Bump!
"Oh crumbs! Wow! Leggo! Ow!"

Bump!

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!" roared Sammy. Sammy forgot even the sixpence that Billy Bunter owed him, as he wriggled away and fled. Sammy had been bumped, and bumped hard; and if he was not sorry for Billy, there was at least no doubt that he was sorry for himself!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise for Mossoo!

MONSIEUR CHARPENTIER, the French master of Greyfriars, looked up from his newspaper in surprise.

"Mon Dieu!" he murmured, "Qu'est-ce que c'est, cela? Je ne comprends pas!"

It was really very odd. Mossoo was seated in his armchair in his study, reading a French newspaper. The window was wide open to let in the bright June sunshine from the quad. It was a warm, sunny June afternoon, with hardly a breath of wind stirring. It was surprising, therefore, that the curtains at Mossoo's window should be in motion.

But they were—they stirred, every few moments, as if the wind rustled them; which the wind certainly did not.

They were long and rather heavy, reaching from the top of the window almost to the floor. They were pulled back on either side of the window, to leave the latter clear. And a surprising circumstance was that the bunched curtain on the left of the window continually stirred as if rustled by the wind, while that on the right never moved at all.

This circumstance was so singular, that it drew the attention of the French master at last, and several times he glanced up from the "Petit Journal," and fixed his eyes on the curtain.

"Je ne comprends pas, cela!" repeated Monsieur Charpentier, shaking his head: and indeed it was a very puzzling thing.

He laid the paper on the table at last, and rose to his feet. The curtain was still again—perfectly still! But as he watched it, after a minute or so, it stirred!

It was not the wind. It was, evidently and obviously, something behind the

curtain that moved, and in its movement stirred the curtain itself. Mossoo thought of the House-dame's cat, which had a way of wandering into the studies. But, as he gazed, he became aware of a still stranger phenomenon. Under the bottom edge of the curtain a pair of boots could be seen, now that his attention was concentrated on the spot!

Monsieur Charpentier gazed at those boots!

It could not be the cat—unless indeed, the fabulous Puss-in-Boots had paid his study a visit!

"Ma foi!" gasped Monsieur Charpentier, "Ce drole de Buntair—ici!"

He guessed it now!

There was somebody hidden behind that curtain! Standing beside the window, cramped to the wall, the hidden one was completely concealed by the long curtain, except for his feet. Those feet Mossoo had not noticed when he came into the study and sat down to his newspaper. He would never have noticed them, probably, had not the stirring of the curtain drawn his attention. But he noticed them now.

Monsieur Charpentier was aware that the prefects were hunting for Billy Bunter, up and down the school. Bunter had vanished into some deep hiding-place. Evidently this was the hiding-place. Nobody, so far, had thought of looking for him in a master's study.

"Buntair!" exclaimed Monsieur Charpentier.

No answer—but the curtain gave a sudden jerk, as the fat junior behind it jumped at the sound of his name.

"Buntair! You are zere!" said Monsieur Charpentier, "Zat you come out at vunce vis yourself, mon garcon."

Still no reply!

"Mon Dieu! I know zat you are zere, Buntair!" hooted Monsieur Charpentier, "Venez, donc! Come out vis you."

"Oh lor'!" came a gasp from behind the curtain.

Monsieur Charpentier stepped to it, grasped it, and dragged it aside. A fat and gasping junior was revealed to view.

Mossoo gazed at Bunter! Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles. He was discovered! The Owl of the Remove was very red and warm and perspiring. It was rather a warm corner, packed behind the curtain, on a summer's afternoon.

"I—I say, sir—" gasped Bunter.

"Mauvais garcon!" said Monsieur Charpentier sternly. "You come to conceal yourself in my study while zat I am not here viz me, and ven zat you hear me to come, you hide behind zat curtain! Heureusement, je vous ai trouve! Now you come viz me to ze headmaster."

"Oh, really, sir—" gasped Bunter.

"Come!"

Monsieur Charpentier laid a hand on a fat shoulder, and jerked Bunter from his hiding-place.

"Oh crikey! I—I say, sir, I—I don't want to go to the Head!" gasped Bunter, "I—I believe he's waxy with me, sir! Leggo!"

"It is my duty to take you to ze Head, Buntair! Come viz me!" said Monsieur Charpentier. And he led Bunter to the door.

"I—I say—"

"Say nozzings, Buntair, but come."

"Beast!" howled Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove was desperate.

It was firmly fixed in his fat mind that he couldn't, and wouldn't, be sent home! He nourished a hope that it would be all right when Quelch came!

Mr. Quelch would, as he expressed it,

see him righted—at least Bunter hoped so! Anyhow he wasn't going! Not if Bunter could help it.

He clutched at the study table and held on as Mossoo jerked him doorward.

"Mon Dieu! Laissez—let go zat table, Buntair!"

"Shan't!" gasped Bunter.

"Zat you let go!" roared Monsieur Charpentier.

"Beast!"

Mossoo took both hands to Bunter, and dragged. Bunter clung to the table with both hands! Mossoo was determined, and Bunter was determined. But something had to go! It was the table that went!

Bunter, dragged doorward, dragged the table after him, and dragged it over. There were plenty of things on the table, and they all crashed at once.

"Ciel!" ejaculated Monsieur Charpentier, "Buntair, you verree bad boy—you tres mauvais garcon—Ciel!"

"Leggo, you French beast!" yelled Bunter.

Mossoo let go, for the inkpot was streaming over a pile of French exercises on the floor, and he jumped to save them. Bunter jumped away, gasping. Another jump, and he had placed the table between him and the French master.

"Keep off, you beast!" he spluttered.

Monsieur Charpentier rescued the exercises. Then, with glinting eyes, he started round the table after Bunter.

Bunter dodged rapidly round the table. So long as that was between him and Mossoo, he was out of reach of a clutch.

"Buntair! Zat you stop!" panted Mossoo.

"Beast!" retorted Bunter.

"Mon Dieu! Ven zat I catches you, I smacks you ze head!"

"Yah!"

Mossoo made another rush round the table. Bunter did the circuit at an equal speed, keeping ahead. Billy Bunter's movements often resembled those of a tortoise. But now he seemed to be understudying the hare! Panting and puffing he whipped round the table with the dapper little gentleman after him, and they went round and round, once, twice, thrice, as if they were playing mulberry-bush.

"Mon Dieu! On en a assez!" gasped Monsieur Charpentier, "one of zat has enoff, isn't it! I call ozzers to catch you."

He cut across to the door, and threw it wide open.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter.

A moment more, and Monsieur Charpentier would have shouted out the news that Bunter was in his study, and drawn searchers to the spot.

Bunter had no time to think! Besides, thinking was not in his line! He knew that he was done for if Mossoo brought the prefects to the study while he was still inside! He acted without thinking! Mossoo, standing in the doorway with his head in the passage, of course, had his back to Bunter! Bunter charged!

Something that seemed like a battering-ram or a ten-ton lorry, smote the French master in the back. It was Bunter!

Monsieur Charpentier gave one gasping howl, and pitched headlong across the passage.

He crashed there on his hands and knees.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter, breathlessly.

He whipped out of the study.

"Oh! Ow! Ah! Ciel! Mon Dieu!"



Bunter's little round eyes glimmered behind his big round spectacles. It was a chance for him, if Coker did not look round. With infinite caution, the fat junior raised the lid of the trunk, and stepped out. "The cheeky young villain!" murmured Coker. "He must have got out of the window!"

Ooooooooooh!" came in a gasping yell from the sprawling French master.

He sat up, dizzily. His nose had tapped on the hard oak floor and there was a thin red line oozing from it. Monsieur Charpentier clasped his damaged nose with both hands, and blinked dizzily round him. He had a moment's glimpse of a fat figure vanishing down the corridor.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Coker's Catch!

FISHER T. FISH, the American junior in the Remove, was sitting in Study No. 14. His study-mates, Johnny Bull and Squiff, were with the crowd of Remove fellows in the quad.

Fishy, sitting at his study table, had an account-book open before him: a book that Mr. Prout would have recognised, if he had seen it, as the one that had dropped from his hands when he was inked the previous evening. Fishy was making up accounts in that book: but for once his face did not express the undiluted joy that he generally felt when he was dealing with money. Fisher T. Fish was worried: and probably for the first time in his business-like life money failed to fill his whole thoughts and give him unbounded satisfaction.

A cute, smart, spry guy who had been raised in "Noo Yark," really had no use for a conscience. But Fishy, rather to his surprise, found that he had a conscience, and that it troubled him a little.

Nobody at Greyfriars knew, or thought of suspecting, that it was Fisher T. Fish who had "mopped" that

squirt of ink over Prout, in order to regain possession of his precious ledger. Billy Bunter had made all the preparations for that harebrained jape on Prout: and his fat courage had failed him at the last moment, and he had not done it! Fishy had done it, and thereby recaptured that precious book, which would have spelled the "sack" for him if Prout had taken it to the Head.

"Safety first" was Fishy's chief consideration. He had not the remotest idea of owning up and taking his gruel. But it worried him to realise what a worm he was! Bunter was sacked—for what Fishy had done! Somehow or other, Fisher T. Fish could not dismiss it from his mind. Even the figures in that precious book, showing the profits he was making by lending small sums among the fags, failed to comfort him. And when profits failed to solace Fisher T. Fish, it was clear that he was very perturbed indeed!

At the sound of footsteps in the Remove passage, Fisher T. Fish hurriedly dropped that account-book into his desk and locked it. He was not going to run any more risks with that precious book, that had caused so much trouble already.

A few moments later the study door was hurled open, and Coker of the Fifth appeared. Fishy stared at him, and Coker glared at Fishy.

"Bunter here?" demanded Coker.

"Nope!"

"He's hidden somewhere!" declared Coker, "I've rooted through all the studies. This is the last."

"What the Abraham Lincoln has it got to do with you?" demanded Fisher T. Fish, indignantly, "Has the Head made you a prefect, Coker?"

"The Head might do worse!"

answered Coker, calmly, "If he had any gumption, he would pick his prefects from the Fifth Form, not the Sixth! But never mind that! Have you seen that young scoundrel Bunter?"

"Find out!" retorted Fisher T. Fish.

"I'm after him!" said Coker, "He's mopped ink over my Form master! Cheeked my beak! I'm not standing for that!"

Coker, in point of fact, did not think much of Prout, personally. He had a lot of trouble with Prout in the Fifth Form Room. They disagreed about grammar, and spelling, and many other things. But Prout was Coker's Form master. From the circumstance, Prout derived importance—such importance as he had in Coker's eyes.

"The Head's set the prefects to find the young rotter," went on Coker, "Fat lot of good that will do. I don't think much of the Sixth—never did! I'm after Bunter! He's about somewhere! Have you seen him? You seem to be the only fag in the studies."

"Aw, go and chop chips!" answered Fisher T. Fish.

Horace Coker looked at him! Then he strode at him, and grasped him by the collar, jerking him away from the table with a swing of his powerful arm.

"Aw! Wake snakes!" yelled Fisher T. Fish, "Leggo, you pic-faced goob! Leggo, you pesky gink! Whoop!"

Bang! Fishy's bony head established contact with the study door. A fiendish yell awoke the echoes of the Remove passage.

"Have you seen Bunter?" demanded Coker.

"Aw! Nope! Leggo! I guess not! Ow, my cabeza! Yarooop! Let up! Wow!" shrieked Fisher T. Fish.

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Coker dropped him to the study floor, snorted, and stamped out of the study again. Coker of the Fifth had a constitutional disinclination to minding his own business, and he was very keen on the hunt for Bunter. Also he was keen to show that a Fifth Form man could handle the matter, when the Sixth Form prefects failed to do so.

So far, he had had no luck. Prefects had searched the Remove passage in vain! Now Coker had searched it, equally in vain! But unexpected luck was just coming to Coker!

As he stepped out of No. 14, at one end of the Remove passage, he sighted a fat figure, coming from the stairs, at the other end.

Coker stared!

It was Bunter!

Bunter—walking fairly into his hands!

"My hat!" ejaculated Coker.

Billy Bunter, rooted out of the French master's study, had been driven into flight again. Bunter had scuttled up to the Remove passage, like a homing pigeon, hoping to find safety there. As the prefects were gone, he might have found safety—but for Coker of the Fifth! Coker, as usual, was the wrong man in the wrong place!

"My hat!" repeated Coker.

He stepped back into No. 14. The fat Owl's range of vision was much more limited than Coker's, and he had not observed the burly Horace at the opposite end of the passage.

Had he observed him, undoubtedly he would have fled downstairs again, and Coker, with the length of the passage to cover, would probably have lost him.

Hence Coker's strategic retreat into the study.

There, out of sight, he waited for Bunter to come up the passage!

Fisher T. Fish blinked at him, still rubbing his head! Coker's strategic proceedings puzzled Fisher T. Fish.

"Aw, what's this game, you pesky geek?" demanded Fishy.

"Shut up!" rapped Coker.

"I guess—"

"Shut up, or I'll jolly well kick you!" hissed Coker, fearful that Bunter might hear and take the alarm.

Fisher T. Fish shut up! He glared at Coker of the Fifth as if he could have eaten him: but he shut up. It was, of course, sheer cheek, on Coker's part, to throw his weight about in Remove studies. Still, Fishy did not see how he was to stop him; and he did not want to be kicked. So he held his peace, and took it out in glaring!

Coker peered round the corner of the doorway. He expected Bunter to go into one of the studies—whereupon Coker would have whipped along to that study, and bagged him. But Bunter was coming on, right up the passage, and Coker withdrew his head hastily. He guessed now that the fat hunted Owl was making for the box-room stairs at the upper end of the passage. The box-room was safer than the studies for the hunted one.

That suited Coker admirably! To reach the box-room stairs, Bunter had to pass the door of No. 14.

All Coker had to do was to wait, and jump out at him as he passed and grab him. Once his powerful grasp was on the elusive Owl, the thing was done.

Little dreaming of what was awaiting him, Billy Bunter rolled on up the passage, gasping for breath as he rolled. Bunter was feeling that he was rather in luck. He had escaped from Mossos, and dodged upstairs unseen. He had no doubt that the Remove

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quarters had been searched already: and a spot once searched, was safer than other spots. In quite a relieved frame of mind, Bunter rolled on, till he came abreast of the open doorway of No. 14. And then Coker jumped!

With one jump, Coker of the Fifth was on Bunter, and grasped him by the collar. There was a startled yell from the Owl of the Remove.

"Yaroooh!"

"Got you!" grinned Coker.

"Ow! Leggo, Wingate, you beast!" Bunter wriggled in Coker's grasp, nothing doubting, for the moment, that a prefect had got him. Then, as he blinked at Coker and recognised him, he howled with wrath, "Coker, you rotter! Leggo, you beast! I'll hack your shins."

"Better not!" grinned Coker, "Come on! I've got you!"

"Can't you mind your own business?" howled Bunter.

Coker did not deign to reply to that question! Anyhow he could only have answered in the negative.

"Come on!" he repeated.

"Leggo! What's it got to do with you?" yelled Bunter, "You're not a

Coker staggered. A second bony fist crashed up under his chin as he staggered, and Coker measured his length in the Remove passage with a bump that made the planks ring.

"Oh!" roared Coker, as he hit the floor. "Ow!"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

"Git, you pesky gink!" howled Fisher T. Fish. "Absquatulate, you pie-faced clam! Burn the wind, you pesky jay!"

Bunter dashed away up the passage. Coker, sprawling, roared! Fisher T. Fish sprinted down the passage to the stairs.

He had knocked Coker down! How he had found the nerve to do it Fishy really did not know. But he had done it, and prudence counselled him not to wait till Coker got up again. What would have happened to Fishy had he been within reach when Coker got up did not bear thinking of! As fast as Bunter flew in one direction Fisher T. Fish flew in the other!

Coker struggled to his feet!

"I—I—I'll—!" gasped Coker.

He glared round. Fishy was disappearing across the Remove landing, Bunter up the box-room stairs. Coker made a stride after Fishy, but paused. Bunter was his game. He whirled round again and rushed after Bunter. Up the box-room stairs went Billy Bunter, panting, and puffing, and blowing. After him went Coker of the Fifth, sure of his prey now.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Putting It to Quelch!

HENRY SAMUEL QUELCH, master of the Greyfriars Remove, smiled—a frosty, but genial smile—as the train drew in at Courtfield Station.

Mr. Quelch was coming back to Greyfriars, to resume his interrupted duties there; and he was very pleased to be coming back.

The Remove master had been quite a long time away. He had been slow to recover from the effects of an attack of influenza, and after that, another mischance had delayed his recovery. And here he was, restored at last to his usual health, brisk, and keen, and eager to be in harness again.

He was not at all sure that matters had gone well with his Form during his absence. Mr. Smedley, the temporary master who had taken his place, had given anything but satisfaction, and had had to leave quite suddenly. For the few days intervening between Smedley's departure and Quelch's arrival the Remove had been taken in turn by other masters and by some of the prefects—a state of affairs that could not come to an end too soon, in Quelch's opinion. He had, therefore, rather hurried his return, and written to the Head that he would arrive on Wednesday, instead of at the end of the week, as originally intended. And here he was, looking forward to walking in the old quad again, chatting with his colleagues in Common-room, discussing Sophocles and Thucydides with the Head, and, above all, seeing that the Remove pulled up sharply, if they had slacked down during his long absence, as he rather suspected they had!

Certainly he had no idea of the state of excitement that reigned in the old school that day. He was quite unaware that he was going to find that a member of his Form had been expelled, and, still more startling, that that expelled member wasn't gone, but was dodging pursuit up and down the school.

Here's
A GREYFRIARS LIMERICK
from W. J. Walker, of 29, Devonshire Street, Monkwearmouth, Sunderland. And it well deserves the

POCKET WALLET

I have sent him.—Ed.

At Little Side, where cricketers meet,
Hurree Singh performs many a feat.
"His bowling's so fast!"
Said a batsman, aghast.
"Greased lightning is not in the same street!"

Have you got your wallet yet?
If not, there is still time for you
to have a shot at winning one!

prefect! Lemme alone, you cheeky rotter!"

Fisher T. Fish stared out of the study.

"Look here, Coker, you leave Bunter alone!" he snapped, "I guess you want to mind your own business, just a few."

"Rescue, Remove!" squealed Bunter, in the faint hope that Removites might be within hearing. They could not have helped him, in the hands of a prefect; but they would have helped him fast enough, in the hands of a meddling Fifth Form man.

But Fisher T. Fish was the only Removite in hearing. And Fishy was no fighting-man. Bunter expected no help from him.

But it was the unexpected that happened!

Even Fisher T. Fish had his limit! Bunter was sacked for the sins of Fisher T. Fish, and it was on Fish's conscience. Much as he dreaded the heavy hands—and feet—of Horace Coker, Fishy simply could not stand by and see Bunter hauled off to the Head by the Fifth Form fellow. He screwed up his courage, such as it was, to the sticking point and jumped out of the study at Coker.

"Let up, you pie-faced jay!" he shouted.

Coker, unheeding, jerked Bunter along the passage. Then a bony fist landed unexpectedly on his ear, and

The train stopped, and Mr. Quelch stopped out. There were familiar faces about the station, and he had a pleasant feeling of homecoming. He was still more pleased at the sight of a Remove fellow on the platform, who ran towards him with quite an eager look, raising his straw hat in respectful salute as he did so.

Mr. Quelch smiled, and almost purred. This was really gratifying, to see the head boy of his Form waiting on the platform to meet him.

It seemed to him very thoughtful, and very dutiful, of Harry Wharton. It was a half-holiday, so the junior was free from classes; but most fellows would have been thinking of cricket, or going on the river, rather than greeting a returned Form-master!

"Mr. Quelch! So glad you're back, sir!" exclaimed Harry.

Mr. Quelch shook hands with his head boy very cordially.

"I am glad to be back, Wharton!" he answered. "And very glad to see you, my boy—very pleased indeed! Did you come to meet my train?"

"Yes, sir. I heard from Bunter that you were coming by the three-thirty, so I thought—" Wharton paused. "And—and I'd like to speak to you, sir, if you'll let me—"

"Certainly, Wharton! I hope that all is well at Greyfriars?" said Mr. Quelch, with a rather keen look at the captain of the Remove.

"Well, no, sir, not quite," said Harry. "I trust that there has been no trouble in the Remove?"

"I'm afraid there has, sir."

Mr. Quelch's face grew a little grimmer. He realised now that it was not wholly for the pleasure of seeing him again that the captain of the Remove was there.

"Do you mean that you have something to tell me, as head boy of the Form, Wharton?" he asked.

"That is how it is, sir."

"It must be something very urgent, if it could not wait till I reached the school," said Mr. Quelch dryly.

"The fact is, sir, it is very urgent!" said Harry earnestly. "We're all keen to see you at Greyfriars, sir, because—well, sir, every man in the Remove believes that an awful mistake has been made, and we all hope that you may be able to set it right, sir."

Mr. Quelch stared at him.

"That is a very extraordinary statement, Wharton! I quite fail to understand you. However, you may explain the matter in the cab going to the school. Come with me!"

Nothing more was said on the subject till the Remove-master and his head boy were seated in the taxi, buzzing away down the Courtfield Road towards Greyfriars.

Then Mr. Quelch turned his glance on Wharton grimly.

"You may explain," he said briefly.

"The last few days, sir, since Mr. Smedley went, the Remove has been taken in third school every day by Mr. Prout—"

"I trust, Wharton, that the Remove have treated Mr. Prout with the same respect that they would have shown to myself," said Mr. Quelch sternly.

This did not seem to be a promising beginning. Wharton coughed.

"Oh, of course, sir," he answered. "But Prout—I mean Mr. Prout—hem! My friends and I have had some trouble with Mr. Prout, sir; but that's not what I wanted to speak to you about. It's about Bunter."

"Well, what of Bunter?"

"He's sacked, sir."

Mr. Quelch gave a jump.

"Do you mean expelled, Wharton?"

Bless my soul! A member of my Form expelled! This is a great shock to me! I had heard nothing of it, though I had a letter from Dr. Locke yesterday—"

"It happened this morning, sir," said Harry. "Last evening Mr. Prout was on the Elm Walk, and somebody mopped a lot of ink over him. Bunter has been sacked for it."

Mr. Quelch's jaw set grimly.

"You are not thinking of asking me to intercede in favour of a boy who has assaulted a Form-master, Wharton, I trust?"

"Oh, no, sir! Not at all! But we all believe that Bunter never did it," said Harry hastily.

"You cannot be serious, Wharton! You will hardly venture to infer that your headmaster expelled a boy without just cause."

Mr. Quelch was growing grimmer and grimmer.

"No, sir; the Head had no doubt about it, neither had Prout. But you, sir, as Bunter's Form-master, know what a fool he is—I mean—"

Mr. Quelch stared at Wharton for a moment and suppressed a smile. His look was rather less grim as he answered:

"I think I catch your meaning, Wharton. You mean that Bunter may have acted in a very foolish manner and drawn suspicion on himself when he was not really guilty?"

"I knew you'd see how it was, sir," said Harry, relieved. "That's just what we all believe has happened. I'd better speak out frankly, sir, and tell you at once that Bunter planned to jape Prout—I mean mop the ink over him in the quad. All the fellows knew that he had Gosling's squirt ready, full of ink. But nobody believed that he had nerve enough to do it—and the fact is, we still believe that he hadn't. A fellow can't be expelled for what he thought of doing, sir, but never did."

"Certainly not, Wharton! But—"

"Fellows often think of silly things, sir, and fancy they'll do them; but they don't when it comes to the pinch," said Harry.

Mr. Quelch smiled.

"That is very true, Wharton. But it appears, from what you say, that the evidence is very strong, indeed conclusive—against Bunter," he remarked. "I am sufficiently well acquainted with Bunter to believe that his nerve would very probably fail him when the time came to carry out such a hare-brained scheme. But you say that Mr. Prout was actually assaulted—"

"He was squirted with ink, sir."

"Some other boy—"

"That's it, sir! Bunter had the things all ready, and if Bunter didn't carry on it seems pretty clear that some other fellow found the squirt of ink where he put it, and let Prout have it."

"Have you any suspicion?"

"None, sir! But a lot of fellows are wild with Prout, and—and it certainly was somebody! I know, sir, that a decent fellow ought to own up, when another chap gets the chopper by mistake; but whoever it is hasn't nerve enough to face the sack, I suppose."

"Why do you feel so certain that Bunter did not do it, Wharton?"

"Well, he hasn't enough nerve; but that's not all. He bragged in the Remove of having done it—"

"He admitted it?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Well, sir, he thought it was all safe and clear, and he's such an ass—he bragged that he had done it! Up to then we thought he had; but when he said he had, we know he hadn't. I mean, he told such a mixed story—trying to make out that he had done it, he made it perfectly clear that he hadn't!"

"Did he deny it to the Head?"

"Oh, yes, sir! But he's such an awful fibber, of course the Head wouldn't think of taking his word," said Harry. "I know he ought to be jolly well licked, sir; but he's done nothing to be sacked for, though he's made the Head believe that he has! And—and we all hope, sir, that now you've come back you'll put the matter right."

"I shall certainly discuss the matter with the Head," said Mr. Quelch guardedly. "If a bare possibility exists that there has been an error, it is my duty to see the matter set right. Bunter, I presume, has now left?"

"Yes, sir; but—but he's come back."

"He has come back!" repeated Mr. Quelch.

"He's such an ass, sir!" said Harry.

"He doesn't seem to be able to get it into his head that he's sacked. He's in the school now, keeping out of sight somewhere, and the prefects are looking for him."

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

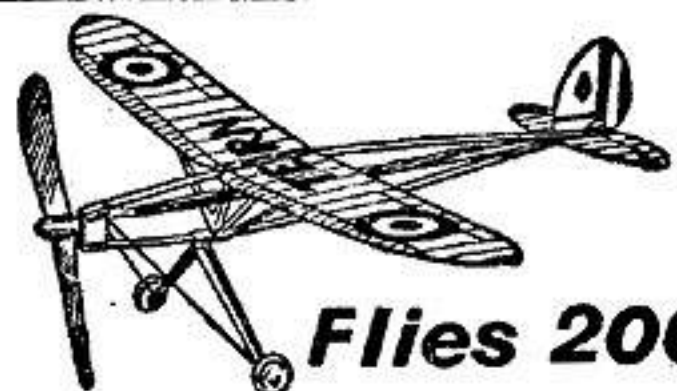
"He's really waiting for you to come back, sir!" said Harry hastily. "He feels sure that you will see him through, as he never did ink Prout."

"I fear, Wharton, that such extraordinary conduct on Bunter's part will only tend to confirm the headmaster in his decision," said the Remove master. "However, I shall certainly take the matter up without delay, and I have no doubt that if Bunter is not the guilty party, the guilty party will be found."

Mr. Quelch said no more, remaining plunged in deep thought, while the taxi ran on to Greyfriars. It was a very unexpected state of affairs that awaited him on his return to the school.

Wharton, as he sat silent, was glad that he had acted on the fat Owl's suggestion to meet Quelch at the station and be the first to tell the story. First impressions counted for a good deal; and he had an inkling that Quelch was pleased at the idea that his whole Form were eagerly awaiting his return—to see justice done! There was no doubt that if anything could be done

(Continued on next page.)



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for the fat and fatuous Owl, Quelch was the man to do it. The Head boy of the Remove had done all he could for that woebegone member of his Form—and now he could only hope for the best.

A few minutes later the taxi turned in at the gates of Greyfriars, and Gasling touched his ancient hat to Mr. Quelch. Mr. Prout was one of the first to greet Quelch when he came into the House.

"My dear Quelch, I am glad to see you back!" said Prout.

"Thank you, Mr. Prout—I am glad to be here!" said Quelch.

"And I regret, sir, that you should have to be informed, on your arrival, that a boy in your Form has been expelled," said Prout.

"Indeed, sir!" said Mr. Quelch coldly. "Perhaps, sir, it may transpire that that boy in my Form may not be expelled after all."

Harry Wharton heard that as he went his way, and he smiled as he went.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Catching Coker!

"**W**HERE'S that rat tick!" gasped Coker of the Fifth. Coker stared round the Remove box-room.

Billy Bunter had bolted into that box-room like a fat rabbit into a burrow. Horace Coker had been hardly more than a minute behind him.

But when he got there, so to speak, the cupboard was bare! The Owl of the Remove was not to be seen.

There were a good many boxes and trunks in the room—prominent among them a huge trunk belonging to Lord Mauleverer. Coker looked round them, and over them, but Bunter was not hiding among them.

Where was he?

Coker crossed to the window. Outside was the flat, leaded roof of an outbuilding. Coker had heard of juniors breaking House bounds by way of that window and the leads outside. Had Bunter gone that way, shutting the window after him to delude his pursuer?

"The cheeky young scoundrel!" breathed Coker, grasping the lower sash.

He opened the window and leaned out, to scan the leads. Bunter was not there. If he had gone by the window doubtless he was negotiating the rain-pipe that led earthward.

Coker, as he leaned from the window, looking out, did not, of course, see anything in the room behind him, not being blessed with eyes in the back of his head.

He was, therefore, unaware that the lid of Lord Mauleverer's big trunk lifted, and that a crimson, fat face and a pair of big spectacles blinked out from the interior.

Billy Bunter blinked at Coker's back. He glared at it!

Bunter had packed himself in the trunk—really a brain-wave on his part. But, large as that trunk was, it was close packing for the fat junior. And it was warm! And it was stuffy! Bunter was not anxious to stay there! If that beast Coker, not spotting him in the box-room, would only have gone—

But that beast Coker, instead of going, was staring out of the window, as if expecting to spot Bunter outside.

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Bunter's little round eyes glistened behind his big round spectacles. It was a chance for him—if Coker did not look round!

With infinite caution, the fat junior lifted the lid of Mauly's trunk farther, and stepped out.

On tiptoe he stepped to the door.

"The cheeky young villain!" He heard Coker's voice, but, to his immense relief, Coker did not turn his head. "He must have got out of the window! The cheeky young scoundrel!"

Bunter reached the door.

He jerked the key from the inside of the lock and jammed it in the outside. Coker spun round from the window as he heard the sound.

"Bunter!" yelled Coker.

He had a full view of the fat Owl of the Remove! But it was only for a second. The next, Bunter had whipped out of the box-room, and dragged the door shut after him.

With a bound, Coker was across the room, and grasping at the door-handle. Click!

Coker dragged at the door.

But it did not stir.

"He, he, he!" came a breathless chuckle from outside.

Bunter could afford to chuckle now. With a locked door between him and Coker, Bunter was all right.

Horace Coker wrenched at the door-handle. He tugged at it! He dragged at it frantically; but the door remained fast.

"He—he—he's locked it!" gasped Coker. That fact dawned, at last, on Coker's powerful brain. "He—he—he's locked the door! He—he's locked me in! Bunter! You impudent young rascal! You cheeky tick! Unlock this door at once! Do you hear?"

"He, he, he!"

"I'll smash you!"

"Yah!"

"I'll whop you!" roared Coker.

"Rats! You couldn't whop a mouse!" retorted Bunter from the safe side of the door. "You can't scrap, Coker! For two pins I'd come in and mop up the room with you! Thank your lucky stars that I've no time to waste on you, Coker!"

"Why, you—you—you—" gasped Coker.

"If I had the time," said Bunter, through the keyhole, "I'd give you the thrashing of your life, Coker! Yah, fathead!"

"I—I—I'll pulverise you!" gurgled Coker, wrenching frantically at the door. "I'll burst you all over the shop!"

"You couldn't!" said Bunter cheerfully.

"I—I—I—" stuttered Coker. Defiance from the fat Owl of the Remove was really the last straw. Coker boiled. "I—I—I'll spifficate you—"

"He, he, he!"

"Will you open this door?" roared Coker.

"I would if I had time to thrash you, Coker. But I haven't!"

Coker heard the key withdrawn from the outside of the lock. Bunter was going—and apparently he was taking the key with him.

"Stop!" bawled Coker. "Open this door, you fat tick!"

"He, he, he!"

That chuckle was followed by the sound of retreating footsteps. The Owl of the Remove was departing.

Horace Coker put both hands to the door-handle, grasped it firmly, and wrenched with all his strength. It was a terrific effort, and it told! The door did not open; it couldn't. But the door-

handle came off in Coker's mighty grasp.

It came off quite suddenly, and Coker flew backwards, with the door-handle in his hands. He crashed against a pile of lumber and sent it toppling.

"Ow!" gasped the burly Fifth Former, as a cricket-bag smote him in the back of the neck, while a heavy box crashed down on his head. "Wow!"

He sat up, hardly knowing what had happened, for a few moments. He rubbed the back of his head tenderly.

The footsteps outside had died away. Bunter was gone. Coker picked himself up slowly and painfully. He was hurt. His head was hard, but the floor was harder.

"Ow!" repeated Coker. "Oh crumbs! Oh my head! Oh my neck! Wow!"

The door-handle was off; but the lock still held the door fast. There was no escape that way for Coker.

For several minutes Horace Coker raged in the Remove box-room, like a freshly caught lion in a cage. He was trapped in the box-room, and he had a prize headache; which was all he had gained, so far, by his pursuit of Billy Bunter. It was useless to shout to be let out—even if he was heard, nobody could let him out without the key, and Bunter had the key. Neither was Coker keen to let all Greyfriars learn that he had been caught like a rabbit in a trap.

He went to the window at last. That was the only way out; unless Coker had a fancy for trying the chimney, which Coker hadn't. Fortunately, it was easy to get away by the window.

Coker clambered out and dropped on the leads. From the leads he swung himself down a rainpipe to the ground.

Then he made his way round to the House doorway.

He had lost Bunter! And, anxious as he was to get hold of that fat youth and knock the stuffing out of him, he was not feeling inclined to take up the chase again. His head was almost splitting.

Coker went to his study in the Fifth. There he sat down in his armchair and rested his aching head in his hands. And for quite a long time Coker of the Fifth dismissed other matters from his mind.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Quelch Has His Doubts!

MR. LOCKE shook his head. "No doubt at all!" he said. "None!" said Mr. Prout, with emphasis.

Mr. Quelch pursed his lips.

The three masters were gathered in the Head's study. Mr. Quelch was losing no time in getting down to the affair of Bunter. Dr. Locke was kind, considerate, sympathetic. He realised that it was disagreeable for the Remove master, on the day of his return after a long absence, to be met by the news that a boy in his Form had been expelled from the school.

Prout, on the other hand, was neither kind nor sympathetic. Prout had been inked. That, of course, made a difference. Prout's view of the matter was, so to speak, coloured by the ink.

"Absolutely none!" repeated Prout, with unnecessary emphasis. "Really, Quelch, I am surprised! Bunter was reported by Gosling for taking the garden squirt from the woodshed. He was seen by a prefect and by myself, with the large bottle of ink he had taken from the Form-room. It is demonstrated that he absented himself from preparation last evening. It was during preparation that I was attacked,



Coker grasped the door-handle firmly, and wrenched with all his strength. It was a terrific effort, and it told! The door did not open, but the door-handle came off in Coker's mighty grasp. The burly Fifth Former flew backwards, crashed against a pile of lumber, and sent it toppling. "Ow!" gasped Coker, as a cricket-bag smote him in the neck, and a heavy box crashed down on his head. "Wow!"

Can you ask for more complete evidence?"

Dr. Locke shook his venerable head again.

The evidence was, indeed, complete and convincing—at least to the extent that the fatuous Bunter had made everything in readiness for the jape on Prout.

But Mr. Quelch had a slightly obstinate expression on his face.

Had Bunter belonged to any Form but Quelch's, perhaps Quelch would have regarded the evidence as conclusive. But no Form-master liked an expulsion in his Form.

Moreover, Quelch knew Bunter better than the other masters did. He was aware that Bunter was fool enough to plan such a hare-brained prank. But he did not believe that the fat junior had the nerve to carry it out. Between planning to rag a Form-master, and actually ragging a Form-master, there was a great gulf fixed.

And Quelch was primed, as it were, with Wharton's version of the affair. He knew that the Remove fellows did not believe Bunter guilty, on the word of his head boy. Had Bunter done it his Form-fellows would not have doubted that he had—so it seemed to Mr. Quelch.

In point of fact, Mr. Quelch was right. But the position was a very difficult one. For if Bunter had not done it, who had? Who had inked Prout?

Somebody had—unless Mr. Prout was to be supposed to be, like a rubber stamp, a self-inker!

There was a short silence in the Head's study. Prout broke it. Prout never left a silence unbroken long.

"I am surprised, my dear Quelch—quite surprised, that you are not com-

pletely satisfied. And the boy's antics since his expulsion—"

"Bunter's very peculiar conduct, since his expulsion, raises a serious doubt in my mind, sir," said Mr. Quelch stiffly. "Even a stupid boy, like Bunter, would know perfectly well that he could not be allowed to remain here, after assaulting a Form-master. Yet it is clear that Bunter entertains some hope of being allowed to stay."

"Unprecedented impudence on his part—" boomed Prout. "Unparalleled effrontery—"

"I am not satisfied!" barked Mr. Quelch. "I admit that the evidence is irrefragable, so far as it goes. Bunter, undoubtedly, planned this foolish freak and should be severely caned for having done so. But if he did not carry it out, he does not merit expulsion."

"Perfectly true!" said Dr. Locke. "But—my dear Quelch—Mr. Prout was drenched with the ink that Bunter prepared for the purpose. You must not forget that fact."

"The poet," said Prout, "has remarked, that facts are stubborn things."

"You questioned Bunter, of course, sir?" asked Mr. Quelch, addressing the Head.

"Naturally. But he uttered such a tissue of absurd prevarications, that no doubt was left in my mind."

Mr. Quelch sighed. He knew his Bunter. Innocent or guilty, there was no doubt that the fatuous Owl would take his usual refuge in prevarication. Bunter's own statements counted for nothing. It was a question of evidence—and the evidence was overwhelming. Yet the Remove master was not satisfied.

"As Bunter's Form-master, sir, I am more intimately acquainted with the

boy's character," he remarked. "If I could question him—"

"If you really think there is any doubt in the matter, Mr. Quelch—"

"I do, sir!" said the Remove master firmly.

"In that case, most certainly you must question Bunter, and satisfy yourself!" said the Head, a trifle coldly.

"No other boy can be even suspected of being out of the House," said Prout. "It was during preparation, and the boys were in their studies."

"If one boy was out of the House unnoticed, sir, another may have been," rejoined Mr. Quelch.

Snort, from Prout. "As it happens that Bunter is still in the school, I can at all events see him and question him," said the Remove master.

"He is here in defiance of his head-master's sentence of expulsion!" snapped Prout. "And it appears that he is in hiding."

"Nevertheless, he is here," said Mr. Quelch, "and as soon as he is found—"

There was a tap at the study door. It opened, and Wingate of the Sixth looked in.

"Have you found Bunter, Wingate?" asked the Head. Probably the head-master of Greyfriars was rather anxious to get through and have done with Bunter.

"No, sir!" answered Wingate. "We've searched everywhere, and he cannot be found. But Monsieur Charpentier told me that the young ass—hem! I—I mean Bunter, sir—was hiding in his study, and got away again, so it seems that he is still in the House. And—"

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(Continued from page 15.)

"And what, Wingate?"

"Well, sir, after what Monsieur Charpentier told me, I went up to have another look in the Remove passage, and found that the door of the Remove box-room was locked. I had already searched it once, but—"

"If the door is locked, it certainly appears that someone is in the room," said the Head. "Did you not ascertain, Wingate?"

"I knocked at the door, sir, and called, but there was no answer, and I did not hear anyone moving."

"Obviously the boy is there!" granted Prout.

"The door can scarcely be locked for any other reason," said the Head. "I will proceed there personally, and I hardly think that Bunter will refuse to open the door at my command. Please come with me, Mr. Quelch."

The headmaster and the Remove master left the study together. Mr. Prout followed on. Really, it was no concern of Prout's, except from his natural desire to see the fellow who had inked him turfed out of the school. No doubt he wanted to be in at the death!

In majestic procession the three masters proceeded up to the Remove passage, where the Removites were now coming in to tea.

Many eyes watched them go! All Greyfriars was thrilling with interest in this extraordinary hunt for Bunter. The Remove passage was crowded with juniors; and as the masters came across the landing they heard the nasal tones of Fisher T. Fish.

"I guess that bone-headed jay has locked himself in the box-room!"

"Then they've got him," said Bob. "Look here, I'll cut up to the box-room and give him the tip to clear, through the keyhole—"

"Cherry!" said a deep voice.

"Oh, my hat!" Bob Cherry spun round and gazed in dismay at his headmaster coming into the passage, followed by Quelch and Prout.

Bob stared at him, crimson. Dr. Locke, however, contented himself with giving the junior a very severe glance, and turned to Mr. Quelch.

"It appears certain that Bunter is in the box-room," he said. "Is it possible for that room to be left by the window?"

"I believe so, sir."

"Then will you kindly pass the word to the prefects to watch outside in case that utterly foolish boy should attempt to escape by the window?"

"Certainly, sir."

Mr. Quelch went down the Remove staircase again. The Head paced on to the other end of the Remove passage where the stairs to the box-room ascended. Up those stairs went the Head, followed by Prout.

"They've got him this time!" said Bob.

"The gotfulness is preposterous!" agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Poor old Bunter!" grinned the Bounder.

If Bunter was in the box-room there was no doubt this time that they had "got" him! As a matter of fact, Bunter wasn't! With the box-room key in his pocket, Billy Bunter had cleared off to parts unknown before Wingate came up and discovered the locked door. Actually, at that moment, Billy Bunter was hidden deep—under a bed in the Remove dormitory. That circumstance, however, was known only to Bunter—and to everybody else it seemed certain that the Bunter-hunters had, at long last, "got" Bunter.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Sooty!

KNOCK!

"Bunter!"

Knock! Knock!

"Bunter! Bunter!"

Neither to the knocking on the box-room door nor to the Head's deep voice came any reply from within the locked room.

Had Coker of the Fifth still been there, no doubt Coker would have replied. But Coker had long gone, by the window.

There was no one in the Remove box-room to answer the Head! Happily unaware of that fact, Dr. Locke rapped again, harder and harder, and called again, in a voice that grew deeper and deeper.

"Bunter! I am aware that you are there! Unlock this door at once! You disrespectful young rascal, admit me."

No reply!

"Upon my word!" exclaimed the Head. "This passes all patience! The boy must be there!"

"Undoubtedly!" said Prout, peering at the lock. "The door is indubitably locked, sir—obviously on the inside! Bunter is there!"

"Bunter! Admit me at once!"

Knock! Knock! Knock!

"My hat!" murmured Bob Cherry, in the passage below. "Has that fat duffer really nerve enough to keep the Head out?"

"Looks like it!" said Harry Wharton. "He must be there! I suppose nobody's locked that door on the outside and taken the key away?"

"Why should anybody?" asked Skinner. "Bunter's there all right! Bet you he's scooting by the window."

"Then the prefects will get him!"

"Poor old Bunter!"

Knock! Knock! rang from above.

"Bunter!" The Head's voice was deep and angry. "Bunter! You impudent boy—you—you impudent young rascal! I command you to admit me instantly."

Mr. Quelch came hurrying up the Remove passage. The crowd of juniors made way for their Form-master. He ascended the box-room stairs, and joined the Head and Prout on the little landing outside the door there.

"Has Bunter been seen at the window, Mr. Quelch?" asked the Head.

"No, sir! The window is shut. Wingate, Gwynne, and Loder are watching in case the foolish boy should leave by the window! But is it possible, sir, that he has refused to open the door at your order?"

"It is more than possible, Mr. Quelch," said the Head in a deep, deep voice. "It is the fact! He refuses even to answer me."

"Is the boy in his right senses?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch aghast. This was rather awkward for a Form-master who had resolved to do anything that could be done for the expelled junior.

"Probably not, sir!" boomed Prout. "Very probably not, sir! A boy who

has the temerity to squirt ink, sir, over a Form-master, and to disobey the commands of his headmaster—"

"Please speak to him, Mr. Quelch," said the Head; and Mr. Quelch rapped on the box-room door and spoke sharply.

"Bunter! Answer me! It is your Form-master speaking! Bunter!"

There was no answer from the locked room.

Mr. Quelch bit his lip with vexation.

"The boy, sir, appears to treat you with no more respect than other members of Dr. Locke's staff!" said Prout maliciously.

The Remove master reddened.

"Is he there?" he snapped. "I cannot understand the boy not answering, if he is there! Probably he is not there."

"The door is locked!" said the Head. "Someone, I presume, must be there! Otherwise, why is the door locked?"

This seemed unanswerable to gentlemen who did not know that Bunter had locked a Fifth Form man in the box-room and bolted with the key and that the Fifth Former had long since departed by the window. The beaks were quite ignorant of Horace Coker's activities that eventful afternoon.

Mr. Quelch rapped again quite savagely.

"Bunter!" he hooted. "Bunter!"

Echo answered; but only echo. Mr. Quelch breathed hard and deep. Prout gave a snort. The Head compressed his lips in a tight line.

"The door must be forced!" he said. "Send for Gosling, Mr. Quelch."

Mr. Quelch stepped down the box-room stairs and met the eyes of a swarm of fellows staring up from the Remove passage. All the Remove were on the spot now, all keen to watch the latest developments of the amazing Bunter-hunt.

"Wharton!" rapped Mr. Quelch. "Kindly go and ask Gosling to step here and to bring with him tools for forcing a door."

"Yes, sir!" answered Harry, and he went, rather slowly. It was ten minutes before he returned with Gosling. During those minutes intense excitement reigned in the Remove passage; and on the box-room landing the Head waited with majestic calm, but with a glint in his eyes which boded ill to the Owl of the Remove.

Gosling, grunting, came up the box-room stairs at length. He had brought a hammer and a cold chisel. The Head pointed to the lock.

"Kindly open that door, Gosling, as quickly as possible!" he said.

"Yessir!"

Gosling started with chisel and hammer! Bang! Clang! Bang! Clang! awoke the echoes far and near. Gosling hammered the chisel in between the door and the jamb; an efficacious, if somewhat rough-and-ready method of forcing open the door. Bang, bang, bang! Clang, clang, clang! Holding the chisel in position with his left hand, Gosling banged away with his right.

Suddenly the banging and clanging stopped, and a wild and fearful yell rang out even more loudly.

"Yooooooooop!" yelled Gosling frantically.

He dropped the hammer, with a crash, jammed his left thumb into his mouth, and sucked it wildly.

"Yow-ow-ow!" howled Gosling. "Wow! Yow! Whoop! Oh, jiminy! Yoo-hoop!"

"What ever is the matter, Gosling?" exclaimed the Head.

"Yarooooooooop!" roared Gosling. "You are wasting time, Gosling!"

said Mr. Prout severely. "You are wasting the headmaster's time—"

"Ain't I 'ammered my thumb?" roared Gosling. "I can tell you, it's 'urt! I've 'ammered my blooming thumb! Whoo-hoop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came floating up from the Remove passage.

"Ow! Yow! Wow! 'ammered my blooming thumb, and them young limbs a-larling!" hooted Gosling.

"Please moderate your expressions, Gosling!" said the Head sharply.

"Proceed, and be more careful!"

"Ow! Wow! Yow!"

"Proceed!" snapped the Head.

Gosling gave his damaged thumb a final suck, snorted, and grasped the hammer again. Bang, bang! Clang, clang!

The door creaked. The lock cracked as the chisel was driven deeper in. There was a sudden snap at last, as the lock parted. The door flew open.

Dr. Locke strode into the box-room.

"Now, Bunter— Why, goodness gracious, where is the boy?" he exclaimed. He stared round a room tenanted only by boxes and trunks.

"He is here!" boomed Prout. "He must be here—unless, indeed, he has escaped by the window! I perceive that it is unfastened."

Prout threw up the sash and looked out. Three Sixth Form prefects were visible, beyond the outbuilding below, patiently watching, like terriers for a badger.

"Wingate," boomed Prout, "has anyone emerged by the window? Has Bunter emerged?"

"No, sir! Nobody's come out by the window."

"Then the boy is still here!" said Prout, turning back into the box-room.

"He is concealed—"

"Where?" asked Mr. Quelch sarcastically.

Prout stared round. He observed Lord Mauleverer's big trunk, stepped to it, and raised the lid. It was the only trunk in the room large enough to hide Bunter inside. It had hidden him once, but it was not hiding him now! That trunk was empty!

"He is not here!" said the Head blankly.

"But—but the door was locked, sir!" stammered Prout. "How could it be locked if no one was here? The chimney, perhaps—"

Prout rolled over to the chimney. That was the only possible hiding-place, if anyone was there. It was a wide, old-fashioned chimney, with room inside for a climber. It was long since there had been a fire in the grate; but there was plenty of soot in the chimney; a good deal had fallen in the grate below. Prout bent his head, and shouted up the chimney.

(Continued on next page.)



What "Umpire" doesn't know about cricket isn't worth knowing. His expert advice is at the disposal of all "Magnetites". If you've an intricate problem that wants solving, write to him: c/o The MAGNET, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

PATIENCE PAYS I

PATIENCE is a cricket virtue. That sounds a bit like the text of a sermon by way of a start this week. But it's true. In certain circumstances the batsman must wait patiently for the bowler to tire himself out. That was always the policy of the Australians when they faced Maurice Tate. Tate, as you know, was about the most accurate bowler we ever had; and about the strongest as well.

To take the slightest risk with him was generally fatal. So the Australians used to stand there, watching every ball most carefully; not even trying to score, but waiting for the time when Tate was either taken off or his bowling lost just that last little bit of fire.

The bowler must have patience, too; keep pegging away at the batsman, even though the possibility of getting him out seems remote. And the fielders must have this same virtue of patience.

I have seen fellows in the slips fielding for hour after hour without even a half chance coming their way. But they have gone on, getting ready for each ball that came down; always expecting, hoping, and patiently waiting for the one which would be snicked.

Having started off thus, I am going to ask my readers to exercise their patience just a little. My letter bag gets more and more bulky. I don't complain about that. But will you just have a little patience if the reply to your letter does not appear as soon as you expected? Believe me, it will not be lost sight of.

THE SECRET OF RUN-GETTING I

STRANGELY, the first two notes I picked out this week had questions in them of an entirely opposite nature. A reader chum from Bishop Auckland wants to know how he can get out of the habit of stone-walling,

as he calls it. He has played in some matches this season and has stayed in quite a long time, but finds it almost impossible to get runs.

The opposite sort of trouble is experienced by a Plymouth reader, and cricket player. He has a natural tendency to slog, and finds himself getting out quite quickly in consequence. There are all sorts in this game of cricket, are there not?

I am afraid I cannot diagnose for the first of these two "complaints." My friend who can't get runs has a difficult problem to solve, and I am afraid there is only one way to find an answer—that is, by practice. I have given that advice previously, but it cannot be insisted upon too strongly.

The other day I had a chat with W. A. Brown, one of the new chums who has come to England with the Australian team this season. He is about the youngest of the party. He told me that when he was at home at Sydney, striving to make a name in cricket, he and his father used to get up at six o'clock every morning to do a bit of practice. And even now, when he is in the Australian side, young Brown can be seen in the hotel each evening looking for somebody who will go out with him early to the cricket ground the next morning to give him some practice at the nets. That's the way to get on.

I should like to see my friend who can't score runs, because then I might be able to tell him what is the trouble. I suspect that he has not yet learnt how to use his feet.

Wielding the bat is only half the art of batting. The use of the feet is the other half. You can't make a scoring shot at cricket unless the body is behind the bat, and the strength of the body can't be behind the bat unless the feet are in the right place.

Are you firm-footed, my chum? I suspect so.

The other reader who gets out because

he will slog should be easily cured—he can cure this fault himself. I am with the hitter in cricket every time. But there is just this difference between hitters—successful ones and bad; the good ones choose the right ball to hit. This reader doesn't get out merely because he slogs; he gets out because he slogs at the wrong ball. Anyway, I am prepared to wager; that is the reason.

Think back over your recent experiences, my chum, and then send me another letter answering this question: "How often do you make up your mind what you are going to do with the ball before you know what sort of ball is coming?"

The secret of run-getting in cricket is treating every ball on its merits. Use the straight blade, with the lower end of the bat well back, to defend your wickets against the good deliveries.

FATE PLAYS STRANGE TRICKS!

NOW to answer a question concerning the laws of the game. A Dulwich reader was batting the other day and tried to make a hit. He failed to connect and the bat flew out of his hand. He went out of his crease to pick it up, and the wicket was then "broken" by the wicket-keeper. My friend wants to know if he was properly "out." The reply is in the affirmative. What the batsman should have done, after the bat had left his hand, was to stand in his crease until the ball became "dead."

This reader is worried by a bit of cricket history which he read the other day. It was an interesting story, for a county championship was lost to a side because one of their batsmen hit a four from the last ball of the first day. Surrey were the county concerned, and the incident happened in 1920. Somerset batted and scored 138. Surrey's reply had reached the same total—for six wickets—when the last ball of the day was sent down. Bill Hitch hit it for four, and Surrey had a lead on the first innings. Rain ruled out cricket for the rest of the match; and, of course, Surrey took the points for the first innings lead. The sequel to this story—and the answer to my correspondent—is that under the system of scoring that season games in which neither side gained a first innings lead were ignored for championship counting purposes. But for a first innings lead a side got two points. If the match had been washed out before Hitch got that boundary Surrey would have had a better percentage and, as it happened, would have won the championship. Fate plays strange tricks.

"UMPIRE."

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"Bunter, if you are there—"

Prout's powerful voice boomed up the chimney, and several flecks of soot floated down, dislodged by the atmospheric disturbance.

"He is there!" exclaimed Prout.

"I am sure that he is not there!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"You can see, sir, that soot is falling!" boomed Prout. "Obviously, sir, it has been dislodged by someone in the chimney."

"A shout, sir, is more than sufficient to dislodge soot in a chimney!"

"Nonsense, sir!"

"Mr. Prout!"

"Mr. Quelch!"

"The matter may easily be decided by looking up the chimney," suggested the Head mildly.

"Quite so, sir!" said Prout. "I have not the least doubt that the boy is there—it is the only possible hiding-place in the room! Mr. Quelch may think that the sound of my voice may have disturbed the soot, sir, but I do not agree with Mr. Quelch's opinion—I do not agree with it in the very least! I have no doubt whatever, sir, that the boy is in the chimney, and that I shall see him, sir, when I look up."

And Prout bent his stately head, and twisted round his portly neck, to stare up the wide, old chimney.

He did not see Bunter. Bunter was not there! But Mr. Quelch was certainly right in supposing that a shout booming up the chimney might loosen some of the ancient soot clinging to the bricks. For, as Prout looked up, a flurry of soot came down.

"Urrrrggh!" spluttered Prout suddenly.

"My dear sir—" ejaculated the Head.

"Ooooooogh!"

Prout fairly bounded back from the chimney. He spluttered wildly. The Head and Mr. Quelch gazed at him. The Fifth Form master seemed to have been suddenly transformed into a negro. Black, but not comely, he gurgled soot.

"Yurrrggh! Oooooogh! Groooogh! Ooooch!"

"Is the boy there?" asked the Head.

"Gug-gug-gug! No! Wug-wug-wug! Yurrrggh!"

The Head suppressed a smile. Mr. Quelch did not suppress one. Prout gurgled wildly.

"I have observed," said Mr. Quelch, "that the key is missing from the door. Obviously the door was locked on the outside, sir, and the key taken away. Bunter, certainly, is not here! Are you satisfied, Mr. Prout, that Bunter is not here?"

"Gug! Wug! Yug!" spluttered Mr. Prout.

"Let us go!" said the Head hastily, perhaps fearing that he would not be able to suppress that smile much longer.

The Head and Mr. Quelch went. Prout, spluttering, coughing, and gurgling, following more slowly. Eager eyes were watching in the Remove passage, and there was a buzz as it was seen that the Head came without Bunter.

"They've not got him!" breathed Bob Cherry.

"Good old Bunter!" chuckled Smithy. "He's leading them a dance! More power to his giddy elbow."

The Head and Mr. Quelch passed on. Then Prout came in sight. The juniors gazed at him, dumbfounded, as he came down the box-room stairs.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Who—What's that?"

"P-Prout!" stuttered Harry Wharton. "Prout? Ha, ha, ha!"

Prout glared round him—a sooty glare! Flecks of soot dropped as he strode down the passage. A roar of merriment followed him.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's been up the chimney after Bunter! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Prout wants a wash!"

"The wantfulness of an esteemed wash is terrific!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Prout departed with hasty steps. He realised that he was not looking his best! With eyes gleaming wrath from a sooty face, he vanished down the Remove staircase, leaving the juniors yelling.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Wants Witnesses!

"I SAY, you fellows!"
"Oh, Jemima!" gasped Bob Cherry.

The Famous Five were at tea in Study No. 1. There were sosses for tea, and while they discussed the sosses, they discussed, of course, Bunter. The hunt for the elusive Owl was still going on, though it was growing rather desultory now. Sixth Form prefects were tired of it—even Prout seemed to have lost his keenness since the episode of the soot.

Still, there were hunters, here and there, rooting after Bunter, and it was a thrilling question in the Remove, where he was, and whether he would be rooted out. The Famous Five were discussing that thrilling question when the study door opened, and a familiar fat figure rolled in.

Bunter closed the door hastily after him.

He blinked through his big spectacles at five staring faces, and sniffed appreciatively the appetising scent of the sausages.

"Bunter!" gasped the chums of the Remove.

"Don't yell it out all over Greyfriars," said Bunter. "I say, you fellows, I'm fearfully hungry."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" said Bunter indignantly. "I've had nothing since dinner—and I never finished my dinner, owing to Prout—nothing except that tuck I found in this study, and some toffee I found in Ogilvy's, and some biscuits that Toddy had—and a cake—"

"Is that all?" asked Johnny Bull sarcastically. "You must be famished, old fat man!"

"Well, not exactly famished," said Bunter, "but fearfully hungry! It's not much I eat, as you know—"

"Oh crumbs!"

"But a fellow can't miss meals! That's why I showed up at dinner! It was jolly risky, but what was a fellow to do? But I can't go down to Hall to tea—they'd collar me at once! From what I can make out, they're hunting me all over the shop! It's a bit thick, as I've done nothing; but there you are! But I knew I could rely on my old pals to stand me some tea, so I came here! I say, those sosses look good!"

The next moment Bunter ascertained that they tasted as good as they looked.

"Where have you been?" asked Harry.

"In the dorm!" said Bunter. "I got under a bed! After I'd locked Coker in the box-room—he, he, he! Did he leg it by the window? If not, he's still there!"

"Oh! That's how—"

"Mind if I finish the sosses? After all, you fellows can get something in Hall! I say, is Quelch back yet?"

"Yes, ass, and—"

"Did you meet him, as I told you, Wharton?" asked Bunter eagerly, his mouth full of sausage. "Have you explained to him that I'm perfectly innocent, and that I was with you in this study when Prout was inked?"

"I've told him the whole thing, and we don't believe you inked Prout. I haven't told him any lies, and I'm not going to!" said Wharton gruffly.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"If you've got the sense of a bunny rabbit," said Nugent, "you'll see Quelch at once and tell him the truth. If you've got the ghost of a chance of getting out of the sack it rests with Quelch; but if you tell him lies—"



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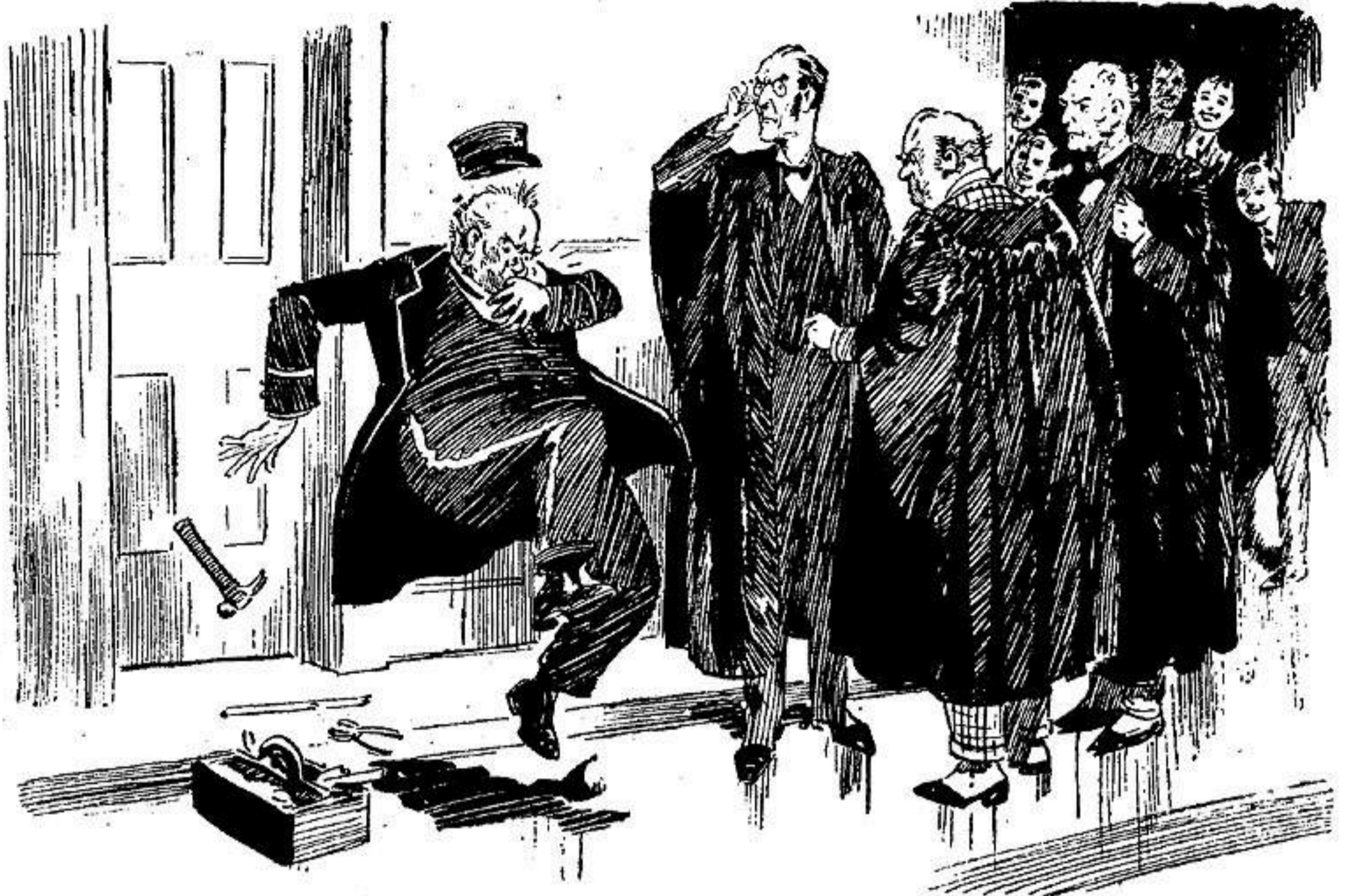
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"Yoooooop!" yelled Gosling frantically. He dropped the hammer, with a crash, jammed his left thumb into his mouth, and sucked it wildly. "Yow-ow-ow! Oh, jiminy! Yoo-hoop!" "What ever is the matter, Gosling?" exclaimed the Head. "I've 'ammered my blooming thumb!" roared the school porter. "And it's 'urt!" "Ha, ha, ha!" came floating from the Remove passage.

"Oh, really, Nugent! I want to see him, of course—after tea! I'd better make sure of tea while I've got the chance. That's rather important." Bunter gobbled sausages at a great rate. "If you fellows don't want any of the toast—"

"Oh, don't mind us!" said Bob, with sarcasm.

"Right, old chap—I won't! You might make some more toast—there's only a dozen slices! Any more sosses?"

"No, you cormorant!"

"I'll fill up on toast. I dare say you've got a cake. This isn't a time to be mean, you fellows! I expect all my friends to rally round at a time like this!"

The sosses being finished, Bunter gobbled toast. Harry Wharton lifted a cake from the cupboard. Bunter's opinion evidently was that expressed in the phrase familiar to typists; that now was the time for all just men to rally to the aid of the party! Bunter's fat thoughts were generally fully occupied by W. G. Bunter, and now that was more than ever the case. In the present thrilling crisis of his fate, nobody else's concerns mattered the least little bit. It was Bunter first, and the rest nowhere.

However, the chums of the Remove, convinced that Bunter had got the "sack" in error, were prepared to play up.

Bunter gobbled cake. He gobbled with one eye on the door, fearful of being interrupted before he had finished the cake. But he managed to talk while he gobbled. Bunter's fat jaws were the most efficient part of Bunter, developed by constant exercise.

"I say, you fellows, I'm going to see Quelch—after I've finished this cake! I'll have another cup of tea, Nugent!

Four lumps, please—don't be mean with the sugar! I say, you fellows, I want you to come with me to Quelch. I want you to be my witnesses."

"My esteemed idiotic Bunter—"

"Don't jaw, Inky; it's wasting time. Just listen to me. You see," explained Bunter, "Prout was inked in prep last night. If Toddy would swear that I was in Study No. 7 at prep, it would be all right; but it's no good asking Toddy—you know what an ass he is! Well, it's just as good if we prove that I was in this study with you and Nugent, Wharton—"

"But you weren't in this study!" roared the captain of the Remove.

"I wish you'd keep to the point, Wharton!" said Bunter peevishly. "The beaks don't take my word—why, I don't know! But they'd take yours and Nugent's, and if you swear—"

"Well, you're enough to make any fellow swear, if it wasn't bad form!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"If you swear that I was in the study with you, they're bound to swallow it. You can say I came to help you with your Latin. That will be a good reason to give for my being in the study, see? It sounds better to be able to give a good reason! I've thought about that."

"Oh, you've thought about that, have you?" gasped Nugent.

"Yes, old chap; I think of things, you know," said Bunter. "I've got the brains for it! Then, about that ink! Prout saw me with the bottle of ink. Well, suppose Bob swears that he saw me take it back to the Form-room—or, better still, that he took it back himself! What about that, Cherry? What do you think, old chap?"

Bob Cherry did not state what he thought. He only stared blankly at the fat Owl of the Remove

"Then about that squirt," went on Bunter. "That sneaking beast Gosling reported me for bagging it from the woodshed, it seems. Think they'd take my word, Wharton, against Gosling's, if I said I hadn't?"

"Hardly."

"Well, it's pretty thick for a school-porter's word to be taken against a Public school man!" said Bunter. "Disgraceful, I call it! It's up to a headmaster to take a fellow's word—especially mine! What I mean is, I've got a rather particular sense of honour—not like some fellows I could name! But the Head doesn't take my word!" said Bunter, shaking his head sorrowfully. "It's pretty sickening, but he doesn't—and that's that! Well, about that squirt, I think Bull had better give evidence."

"I?" gurgled Johnny Bull.

"Yes; the more witnesses the better, you know! Bob's going to be my witness about the ink—"

"Am I?" gasped Bob.

"Yes, that's settled; and Bull can give evidence about the squirt. You're going to say that you saw me put it back in the woodshed, old fellow. Then it will be pretty clear that some other fellow took it afterwards, see?"

The expression on Johnny Bull's face was extraordinary. It did not indicate that he was going to give the evidence required by Bunter!

Harry Wharton rose to his feet. "Finished your tea, Bunter?" he asked.

"Yes, unless you've got another cake—"

"Then you'd better go and see Quelch. We're not coming with you! We're not going to tell any whoppers! We're only going to start you on the

way to Quelch's study! I advise you to tell the truth there, if you're capable of it. Now, you men, gather round and give Bunter a start."

"Hear, hear!"

Bob Cherry opened the door. Johnny Bull grasped Bunter by his fat neck and swung him into the doorway.

"I say, you fellows——" gasped Bunter.

"All together!" said Harry.

"I say—— Yarrooooooh!" roared Bunter.

Five boots landed on Billy Bunter all at once! He shot out of Study No. 1 like a cannon-ball from a cannon.

He landed in the passage with a bump and a roar.

The door slammed after him.

"Yow-ow! Yaroooh! Beasts!" roared Bunter.

He started for the stairs to visit Mr. Quelch—without the witnesses he required! It was clear, even to Bunter's obtuse intellect, that he was not going to get those witnesses from Study No. 1.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter's Last Chance!

"HERE he is!"
"Bunter!"
"It's Bunter!"
"Here's Bunter!"

Forty or fifty fellows stared at Bunter when he made his appearance from the stairs. Bunter had to run the gauntlet of the House to reach Mr. Quelch's study in Masters' passage. That could not be helped. His appearance in public, naturally, caused great excitement after his amazing antics during the day. After being so long in hiding, he had now emerged into the public view, and really seemed to be asking for it!

"It's Bunter!" gasped Temple of the Fourth. "Really Bunter!"

"Bunter, you ass!" shouted Hobson of the Shell. "Hook it—here comes Prout!"

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter.

The name of Bunter, repeated on all sides, had caught the ears of Mr. Prout. Freshly washed after his sooty adventure, but in the worst temper of his life, Prout came striding on the scene.

"Bunter!" he boomed. "Is Bunter here? Bunter——"

"Cut!" yelled Temple.

Bunter did not need telling.

At the sight of Prout's portly, pompous form, he cut promptly. Like a frightened fat rabbit he raced for Masters' passage.

"Bunter!" boomed Prout. "Stop!"

Bunter flew on.

"Upon my word!" gasped Prout.

He rushed after Bunter. Now that the elusive Owl was actually in sight once more Prout was not going to let him escape again, if he could help it.

Bunter flew—and Prout flew. A roar followed them from a crowd of Greyfriars fellows as they flew into Masters' passage, both going strong.

"Go it, Bunter!"

"Put it on, Prout!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Had Mr. Prout detected the fellow who shouted "Put it on, Prout!" probably that fellow would have been sorry that he had spoken. But Prout's attention was concentrated on the fleeing fat figure in front of him.

"Bunter!" he boomed. "Stop! Stop, instantly!"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He blinked over a fat shoulder. Prout,
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like a galleon under full sail, was sweeping in his wake.

Bunter put on a spurt. He did Masters' passage at a speed that looked as if he had a healthy chance for the School 100 yards. He reached Quelch's study with Prout well in the rear.

He did not stop to knock. There was no time for that. He tore open the door and hurtled into the study.

Mr. Quelch was seated at his table. After tea, with his colleagues, in Common-room, Quelch had gone to his old study, and now he was seated there, sorting out books and papers, and putting them in order with his usual careful precision. The affair of Bunter was on Mr. Quelch's mind, but while the expelled Owl remained in hiding it could not be dealt with. And Quelch had almost succeeded in dismissing that worrying affair from his thoughts, in his happy satisfaction at being back in his old quarters, with his old, familiar occupations. He was reminded quite suddenly of Bunter as the door flew open and the fat junior hurtled in.

Bunter came in like a whirlwind. He was going too fast to halt, and before he knew what was happening, he had cannoned into the study table. He clutched at it wildly for support.

The table rocked under the shock. Books and papers shot from the tilting table-top, showering over Mr. Quelch.

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter.

"Bunter!" shrieked the Remove master.

"Oh crikey!"

"How dare you——"

Mr. Quelch made a clutch at a cane. At the same moment the portly figure of Prout appeared, breathless, in the doorway.

"Ha! I have caught you at last, you young rascal!" panted Prout.

"Owl! Keep off!" yelled Bunter, dodging round the study as Prout rolled in. "I say, sir, keep him off! Oh dear!"

"Mr. Prout!" barked the Remove master. His wrath was transferred from Bunter to Prout. "What does this mean? Why, sir, may I ask, are you pursuing a boy of my Form, sir, in my study?"

"Sir!" gasped Prout. "Now that Bunter is found I shall secure him and take him to his headmaster, sir, for his sentence of expulsion to be carried into effect, sir!"

"You will do nothing of the kind, Mr. Prout! This boy belongs to my Form, and I shall deal with him, sir, and I shall brook no interference, sir, from any other master at Greyfriars!"

"If—if you will take him to the Head, Mr. Quelch——"

"I shall decide that matter, sir, wholly on my own initiative!" hooted Quelch. "I am in no need of advice, sir, from any other member of Dr. Locke's staff."

Prout breathed hard. He had, as usual, exceeded the limit. Now that Mr. Quelch was back at the school, Prout had no shadow of a pretext for dealing with Remove fellows. That was up to Quelch.

There was nothing for Prout to do but to retreat—which he did, with a very bad grace. The door of Mr. Quelch's study closed after him with a bang!

Billy Bunter grinned. Quelch had "put paid" to Prout in a way that won Bunter's full approval.

But the grin died off his fat face as Mr. Quelch's gimlet eyes turned on him grimly.

"So you are here, Bunter!" said the Remove master.

"Yes, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I came at once, sir, as—as soon as I knew

you were back. I knew you'd see me righted, sir!"

Mr. Quelch's grim look relaxed a little. Bunter, evidently, had come out of hiding, and come to his Form-master's study of his own accord. By thus delivering himself up into the hands of authority the fat junior made it clear that he relied on Quelch to save him. And that reliance could scarcely be founded on anything but the knowledge of his own innocence. If he really had inked Prout, even Bunter could not have been obtuse enough to fancy that Quelch would stand by him.

"You see, sir, as my Form-master, you're bound to see justice done," gasped Bunter. "I knew you would, as soon as you came back, sir. Now you're here it will be all right!"

Mr. Quelch's countenance relaxed still further. He could hardly help being touched by this faith in him.

"Bunter, answer me one question, at once, and truthfully. Did you, or did you not, throw the ink over Mr. Prout last evening on Elm Walk?"

"No, sir! Never!" gasped Bunter. "I—I never thought of such a thing, sir! Never dreamed of it!"

Mr. Quelch's face grew grim again.

That Bunter had not actually inked Prout, he believed. But that he had not only thought of it, but prepared to do it, was certain. Bunter's ineradicable propensity to prevarication made matters difficult for the Remove master.

"Bunter! For your own sake, tell me the truth!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, sir! Yes, sir! I hope I'm not untruthful, sir!" said Bunter, a remark which proved that Bunter had a hopeful nature.

"You certainly planned the absurd practical joke on the Fifth Form master," said Mr. Quelch. "On that point there is no doubt. You were out of preparation when Mr. Prout was attacked. You placed Gosling's squirt, charged with ink, in readiness, and I have no doubt that you left the House with the full intention of using it. When Mr. Prout was on the Elm Walk you were on the spot, the squirt in your hands."

"It—it wasn't, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"I am perfectly assured that it was, Bunter."

"I—I swear that it wasn't, sir!"

"Then where was it?"

"Under my arm, sir!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"It was, really, sir!" gasped Bunter.

Mr. Quelch gazed at that hopeful member of his Form. He did not speak for some moments. Bunter seemed to have taken his breath away.

"You incredibly obtuse boy!" said Mr. Quelch at last. "When I say that the squirt was in your hands, I mean that it was in your possession. Cannot you understand that?"

"Well, sir," said Bunter, in an injured tone, "if you don't say what you mean, sir, how's a fellow to understand? I know I never inked Prout! I never even thought——"

"If you do not tell me the truth at once, Bunter, I shall take you to Dr. Locke and request him to send you away from the school."

"Oh lor'! What I mean is, sir, a man can't be sacked for having thought of inking a beak. Lots of fellows think of things. Coker of the Fifth said once that he was going to punch Prout, but he——"

"Never mind Coker now. If you actually did not commit that outrage, Bunter I shall do my best for you. Tell me the facts."

Even Billy Bunter realised, at that, that it was time to come down to the facts, little as facts appealed to him!

With a question here and there, and a grim, steady stare that warned Bunter not to wander too far from the strait and narrow path of veracity, Mr. Quelch drew the whole story from him.

Bunter, evidently, had done everything except the actual inking of Prout! But he stated—and Mr. Quelch believed—that he had left the inky squirt under the elms, unused, and got back in at the window of the Rag, and there had heard Prout's yell when he was inked by some person or persons unknown. If this was true, some other fellow had been secretly out of the House, had found the squirt where Bunter had left it, and inked Prout with it. But whom that fellow was, was a complete mystery to Bunter, and to Mr. Quelch, also. Neither did there seem much probability of that fellow's identity ever coming to light.

"Very well, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch at last. "I will take you to the Head now, and see what can be done. If Dr. Locke does not alter his decision you have only your own folly and untruthfulness to blame. Whether you remain here, Bunter, or leave, this should be a lesson to you to tell the truth. Now come with me!"

And Billy Bunter, still hopeful that Quelch would see him righted, followed his Form-master from the study.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

No Luck!

"WHARTON!"
 "Yes, sir!"
 "Have you written your lines?"

"My—my lines!" stammered Wharton. He had completely forgotten those lines for Prout.

So had the other members of the Co. They were not likely to be thinking of those lines on a day of such unusual and extraordinary excitement in the school. Indeed, had they thought of them, they would have supposed that Prout would let the matter drop, now that Quelch was back and in authority over his Form. That would have been tactful, at least. But Mr. Prout, though a gentleman of many qualities, did not shine in tact.

Moreover, he was deeply and intensely annoyed. He had over-stepped the limit of his province, as he often did; and Quelch had snubbed him. That snub rankled.

Harry Wharton & Co., and most of the Remove, were in the Rag after tea, discussing the affair of Bunter. All the fellows knew now that the Owl of the Remove had shown up, and gone to his Form-master; and they were quite anxious to know the result. Bunter might be a crass ass, an untruthful duffer, and an irritating fathead—the Remove freely admitted that he was all these things, and many more. But he was a Remove man—he was sacked for what he had not done—and his fate was a matter of intense interest to the whole Form. Mr. Prout, rolling in at the door of the Rag, found the room in a buzz of talk. He called sharply to Wharton.

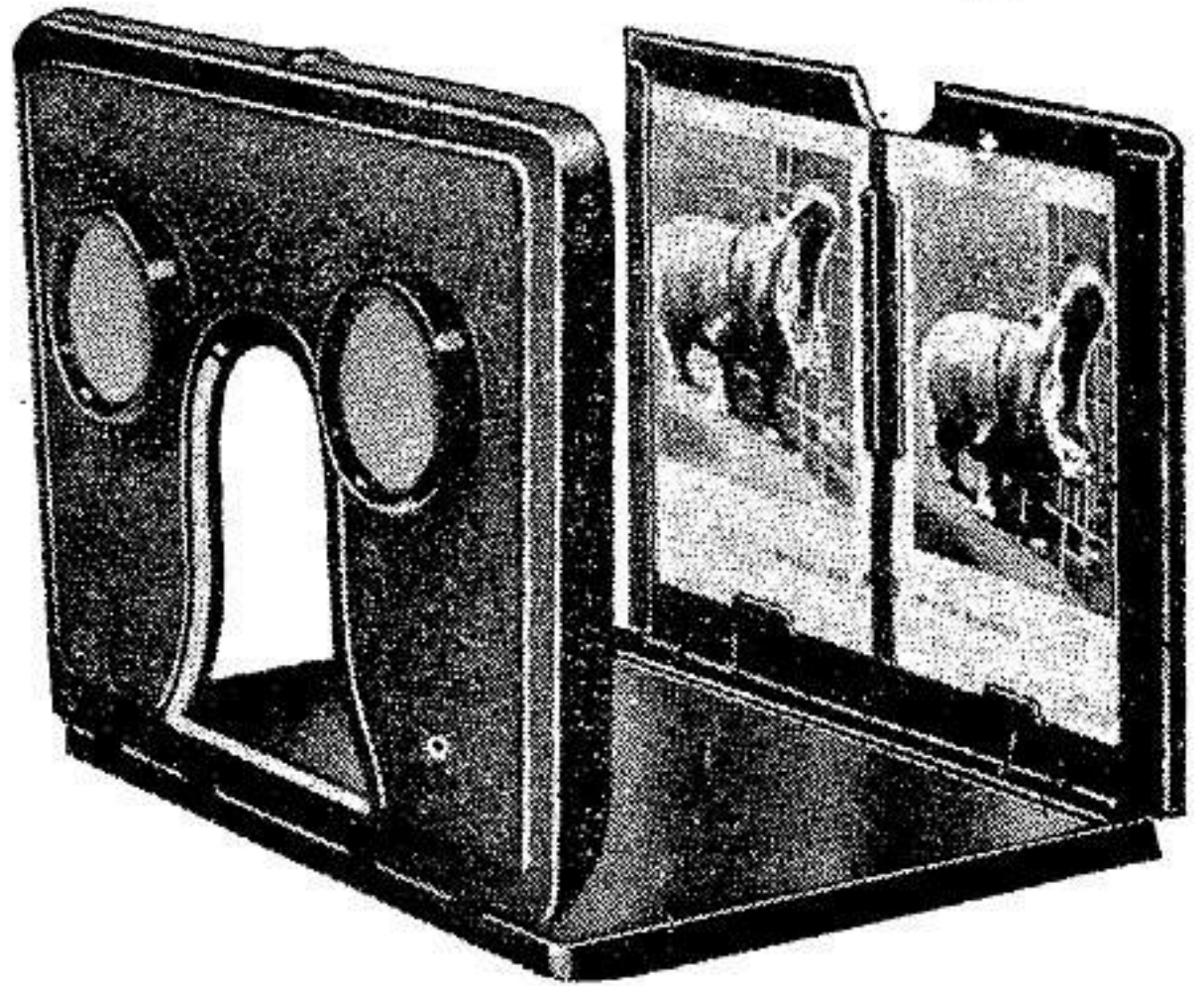
Inimical glances were cast at Prout by many of the Removites. A voice—unknown—was heard to murmur, "Old Pompous!"

"Wharton, Nugent, Bull, Cherry, Hurree Singh!" Prout recited the names. "You were directed to hand in your lines by tea-time. Have you written them?"

"No, sir!" answered five voices at once.

(Continued on next page.)

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"This is deliberate defiance, Wharton!" said Mr. Prout.

"Not at all, sir!" said the captain of the Remove, with great respect of manner, whatever he felt. "I told you, sir, when you gave us the lines, that only our own Form-master could give impositions in the Remove."

Prout's plump face became purple.

At that moment, Prout would have given much to cane the head boy of Mr. Quelch's Form! But now that Quelch was back at Greyfriars, even Prout could hardly think of doing that.

"We are willing to go to Mr. Quelch, sir!" added Wharton, in the same respectful tone. "If he tells us to do the lines, of course we shall do them at once, sir."

"Of course!" said Bob Cherry.

"Enough!" gasped Mr. Prout, "I shall take you to your Form-master! Follow me at once."

"Oh, certainly, sir."

The Famous Five followed Prout from the Rag. They left the room in an excited buzz behind them.

Prout marched ponderously to Masters' passage, with the five Removites in his wake. But he did not have to go so far as Mr. Quelch's study. Coming down the passage from that study, with Billy Bunter, was the Remove master. They had started on their way to the Head.

"One moment, Mr. Quelch——"

Prout raised a plump hand. "What is it, sir?" asked Mr. Quelch, icily, his glance passing the Fifth Form master, to the bunch of juniors behind him.

"These boys of your Form, sir——" Prout's plump hand waved at the Famous Five. "Since you are here, sir, I place the matter in your hands. During your absence I have taken the Remove in third school at the headmaster's request: and I do not conceal from you, sir, that I am glad—very glad—to have nothing further to do with them. But I am bound to tell you that these juniors have refused—refused, sir—to write impositions given them by me."

Mr. Quelch knitted his brows.

"Is it possible?" he exclaimed. "Wharton, explain this at once! How dare you refuse to write lines, given you in school by a master placed in authority over you by the Head?"

"The lines were not given in school, sir!" explained Wharton. "When Mr. Prout gave us lines in third school we did them, just as if you had given them to us, sir."

"Then I fail to understand——"

"The lines were given us out of class, sir! Mr. Prout had no more right to give us lines, than Mr. Capper, or Mr. Hacker, except in third school."

"You hear him?" boomed Prout, "You hear him, sir?"

"I hear him, Mr. Prout!" said the Remove master icily. "May I ask you, sir, whether the statement is correct that the impositions were given out of school?"

"Certainly they were, sir, for an outrageous disturbance in the quadrangle."

"Such a disturbance, sir, should have been reported to the headmaster, in my absence!" said Mr. Quelch. "I am bound to uphold the view of these boys of my Form that they are amenable to no authority but my own and the Head's."

"Mr. Quelch!" gasped Prout.

"Surely, sir, you would take exception to the act, if I were to give lines to Fifth Form boys!" said Mr. Quelch.

"W-what?" stammered Prout. "You would scarcely venture, sir—I repeat, you would scarcely venture——"

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"Quite so!" said Mr. Quelch, icily. "I have no more authority to give impositions to the Fifth, sir, than you have to give them to the Remove. In third school you had my Form in charge—in the quadrangle, you certainly had not! No more, sir, than Mr. Capper, or Mr. Hacker, as my head boy very rightly states."

"Sir!" gasped Prout.

"The matter," said Mr. Quelch, firmly, "ends here! If you care to lay a complaint before me concerning the disturbance you speak of, I will most certainly deal with it. But I insist, sir, upon dealing with my Form myself."

Mr. Prout seemed on the point of choking.

The Remove master made the Famous Five a sign to go. They went—and contrived not to grin till they were round the corner.

Prout, in an almost apoplectic state, stood gazing at Quelch. Quelch turned to Bunter.

"You will now follow me, Bunter, to the Head's study."

"Yes, sir!"

Prout, in a sort of trance of angry indignation, watched them go. But he woke suddenly from his trance, as it were, and rolled after them. He arrived at the door of Dr. Locke's study with Bunter and the Remove master. Quelch stopped at that door, and looked round at him.

"If you have business now with Dr. Locke, Mr. Prout——" he began.

"I have, sir!" said Prout, in a choking voice, "the same business that brings you here, sir! I insist upon being present when Bunter is dealt with. I am concerned in the matter, sir, as the master assaulted by that reckless and disrespectful boy, and I insist upon being present. I shall not allow a young ruffian, sir, to escape justice, if I can help it."

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips, and tapped at the headmaster's door.

He entered with Bunter, and Prout rolled in.

"Ah! You have found Bunter, Mr. Quelch!" said Dr. Locke, with a glance at the fat Owl that made him quake.

"He came to my study of his own accord, sir!" said Mr. Quelch, "I have now been able to question him, as you gave me permission to do."

"And you are satisfied that there is no doubt in the matter?" asked the Head.

"No, sir! I am satisfied that there is very considerable doubt in the matter," answered the Remove master, "To be frank, sir, I am absolutely convinced that this boy of my Form did not commit the act for which he has been sentenced to expulsion."

Snort, from Prout!

"It is true, sir, that he planned the act, and doubtless might have carried it out had not his courage failed him," said Mr. Quelch. "For that, I suggest that he should be severely flogged——"

"Oh lor'!"

"Silence, Bunter!"

"Oh dear!—I—I mean, yes, sir."

Dr. Locke wrinkled his brows in thought. He had great faith in Mr. Quelch's judgment. On the other hand, the evidence against the fatuous Owl of the Remove was about as complete as evidence could be.

Mr. Prout stood trembling with suppressed wrath. Not a doubt was in his plump mind that Bunter was the guilty party. Twice, in the short space of time since his return, Mr. Quelch had snubbed the fussy, interfering Fifth Form master. Now, it seemed, he was trying to save that boy of his Form from just punishment for an outrageous

act of which Prout had been the victim! Prout's feelings were hardly to be restrained, even in the majestic presence of his Chief! But he contrived to contain himself while the Head of Greyfriars considered the matter.

Dr. Locke spoke at last.

"I am bound to respect your judgment, my dear Quelch! At the same time, the evidence appears to be absolutely conclusive. If, however, Mr. Prout agrees with your view——"

"Dr. Locke!" Prout could contain himself no longer. "I do not agree with Mr. Quelch's view! I am diametrically opposed to it, sir! I have been assaulted, sir, smothered with ink—drenched with ink, sir—by this boy in Mr. Quelch's Form! There is no shadow of doubt in the matter! Mr. Quelch, who was not even present in the school when the outrage took place, chooses to disregard the plainest evidence and proof! I have a right, sir, to ask you to enforce the sentence already passed on this wretched boy."

Dr. Locke nodded slowly.

"You certainly have such a right, Mr. Prout," he answered, "and you, my dear Quelch, will, I am sure, acknowledge it."

He paused a moment. Mr. Quelch stood silent and grim. Billy Bunter blinked almost in horror at his headmaster through his big spectacles. The fat Owl had relied on Quelch to "see him righted," as he expressed it. He had convinced Quelch, and Quelch had done his best! And it had all gone for nothing! Bunter was still to be expelled!

"Oh crikey!" groaned Bunter.

"Bunter!" said the Head.

"Oh lor'!"

"You will leave Greyfriars this day! I shall now send for a prefect to take you to the station."

"I—I—I never did it, sir!" gasped the wretched Owl.

"Say no more, Bunter!"

"I—I never dreamed of it! I never touched the garden squirt, and I never had that bottle of ink Mr. Prout saw me with——"

"Silence! How dare you utter falsehoods in my presence, Bunter? Silence!"

"Oh crikey!"

The Head touched the bell for Trotter. The page was to be sent to fetch a prefect for Bunter! Bunter's game was up! He was to go! But was he?

There was a tap at the door, and Trotter looked in.

"You rang, sir——"

"Yes, Trotter! You will—— Bless my soul!"

The Head broke off with a gasp as Billy Bunter made a sudden jump for the door. Trotter was in the way, and Bunter had no time to bother about Trotter. Trotter went flying under a charge like that of an escaping rhinoceros. He crashed, and the fat Owl of the Remove reeled from the shock, recovered himself, and dashed down the passage.

"Ow!" roared Trotter. "Wow!"

"Bunter!" shrieked the Head.

"Bunter!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Bunter!" roared Prout.

But answer there came none!

Bunter was gone!

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Rebellion in the Remove!

"GENTLEMEN——"

"Hear, hear!"

"Gentlemen of the Remove——"

"Go it!"

Bob Cherry, standing on the table in



"I have no doubt whatever, sir, that Bunter is up the chimney," said Mr. Prout, "and that I shall see him, sir, when I look up!" The Fifth Form master bent his stately head, twisted round his portly neck, and stared up the wide old chimney. "Urrrgh!" spluttered Prout suddenly, as a flurry of soot came down. "Ooooooooooogh!" He fairly bounded from the chimney, looking like a negro and gurgling soot.

the Rag, was "going it." Bob was not much of a hand at speech-making, and he was very red, as all eyes turned on him, but he meant business.

The Removites cheered him vociferously. From some of the Fourth Form fellows in the Rag, on the other hand, came a suggestion that he should cheese it, dry up, ring off, and chuck it!

The Rag was crowded with juniors. Prominent among them was Billy Bunter—gasping for breath after his flight from the Head's study. Bunter had panted out his tale of woe to sympathetic ears, so far as his Form-fellows were concerned. Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Fourth did not seem so sympathetic.

"Gentlemen, chaps, and sportsmen—" resumed Bob.

"Hear, hear!"

"Give us a rest!" suggested Cecil Reginald Temple.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"Shut up, you Fourth Form ticks!" roared Johnny Bull. "We'll jolly soon shut you up if you don't!"

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific!"

"Gentlemen—" went on Bob. "Look here, Temple, you dry up—see? I'm talking to the Remove—"

"You're talkin' to the Remove?" demanded Temple.

"Yes, you ass!"

"Then why did you say 'gentlemen'?" inquired Temple.

There was a laugh from the Fourth Formers at this stroke of brilliant wit from Cecil Reginald. But the Removites were excited, and in no mood for brilliant wit from Temple or laughter from his followers.

"Turn those ticks out!" shouted the Bounder.

"Kick 'em out!" roared Bolsover major.

"Oh gad! I say, look here—" gasped Temple, wishing, too late, that he had not been quite so witty!

Temple was interrupted. He was suddenly up-ended by a rush of Removites, and went bowling doorward. Dabney and Fry, and others of the Fourth, resisting valiantly, were driven after him. For three or four minutes there was a wild and whirling state of affairs in the Rag. Then the passage outside was strewn with gasping Fourth Formers, and the door was slammed on them.

Bob Cherry, wiping a streak of crimson from his nose, resumed his elevated position on the table.

"Gentlemen—" recommenced Bob.

"We've had that!" remarked Skinner.

"Shut up, Skinner!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Go it, Bob!" called out Harry Wharton encouragingly.

"Well, look here, you men," said Bob. "Something's got to be done about Bunter. He's sacked! He hasn't done what he was sacked for! We all know that, if the Head doesn't! We're not standing for it!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Bunter's a silly ass and a fatheaded tick, and the biggest fibber that ever fibbed—" went on Bob.

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

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"But," went on Bob, "fairplay's a jewel! Even a fat and frabjous freak like Bunter is entitled to fair play! In fact, he's more entitled to it than other fellows, as he's too big a fool to take care of himself!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!"

"It's old Prout!" went on Bob. "Old Pompous had to throw his weight about

and ask for trouble, and he got it! Blow old Pompous, if you ask me!"

"Hear, hear!" roared the Remove. Every man in the Form was willing to "blow" old Pompous!

"Bunter being a howling ass makes no difference," said Bob. "Bunter's a Remove man, and a Remove man isn't going to be bunked for nothing!"

"Never!"

"If it was left to Quelch it would be all right! Quelch knows! Now, we all jolly well know that Quelch believes the same as we do—that Bunter never did ink Prout! Quelch doesn't think he ought to be sacked, any more than we do. Our Form-master's opinion is good enough for us!"

"Hear, hear! Good old Quelch!"

"There isn't much doubt that Quelch would have got round the Head but for old Pompous! He can't mind his own business! Are we going to have a man in our Form sacked to please Old Pompous?"

"Not if we can help it!" said Squiff.

"But—"

"We've got to help it!" said Bob resolutely. "And my opinion is that it's a matter for the whole Form, and we're bound to stand by Bunter and one another, and get fair play for that silly ass!"

"Hear, hear!"

"I'm not barging in to take the lead," went on Bob, with a very red face. "There's better men for that in the Remove. Wharton's captain of the Form, and I'm ready to follow his lead."

"Carry on, old bean!" said Harry Wharton. "I back up everything you're saying, but I don't quite see what's to be done."

"Same here, as far as that goes!" confessed Bob. "All I've got clear is this—that a Remove man isn't going to be

sacked for nothing, and that we're bound to stand by Bunter! And I'm standing by him, if I stand alone—and that's that!"

"The alonefulness will not be terrific, my esteemed Cherry!" declared Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh. "Your idiotic friends will back you up with ridiculous togetherfulness."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But what—" asked Nugent.

"Going to sack the Head and run Greyfriars on your own, according to your own ideas, old bean?" asked Skinner blandly—a query that drew a snigger from Snoop and Stott.

"Kick Skinner, somebody!" said Harry Wharton.

"Whoop!" roared Skinner, as several fellows obliged. Skinner realised that, in the present state of feeling in the Remove, it was no time to be funny.

"I'm not saying that I've got it all out and dried!" said Bob. "But I'm saying this—that if Bunter sticks here, I stick by him and help all I can. And we'll jolly well keep him at Greyfriars, beaks or no beaks!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"What larks!" chuckled the Bounder,

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his eyes glistening at the prospect of a terrific "row."

"A prefect may drop in here for him any minute!" said Peter Todd.

"Let him!" snorted Bob. "If a prefect drops in we can drop him out again, I suppose!"

"The dropfulness will be terrific."

"It's up to the Remove!" said Bob. "We've got to stand by a Remove man who's not getting justice, especially a helpless fathead like Bunter—"

"Beast!"

"But is Bunter sticking?" asked Squiff.

"Yes, rather!" said Billy Bunter promptly. "I'm jolly well not going home! You see, my pater would be fearfully waxy, as I told the Head—though he didn't seem to think that it mattered—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I'm not going!" roared Bunter. "I never inked Prout, did I? Think I'm going to be sacked for nothing? I thought Quelch would see me righted when he got back. Well, I dare say Quelch will root out the fellow who did ink Prout sooner or later; he's a downy bird, and fearfully keen. I know this much—I'm not going to be sacked! If they turf me out I shall jolly well come back again!"

"Bravo, Bunter!"

"Let a prefect come here for me!" added Bunter, with a war-like look. "I'll jolly well put paid to him! I'll knock him spinning!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Remove, quite taken by storm at the idea of Billy Bunter knocking a Sixth Form prefect spinning.

In the absence of danger Bunter was always as bold as a lion. At present there was no prefect on the spot, so Billy Bunter did not fear prefects—not he!

"I mean it!" roared Bunter. "You'll see! Let some Sixth Form cad come here after me, that's all! Let him—"

The door of the Rag was flung open. Loder of the Sixth looked in.

"Is Bunter here?" snapped Loder.

"Oh lor!" gasped Bunter.

"Oh, here you are, you fat sweep!" growled the bully of the Sixth, and he strode into the Rag, with hand outstretched to grasp Bunter.

"Now's your chance, Bunter!" yelled the Bounder. "Knock him spinning!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter did not knock Loder of the Sixth spinning. He gave the prefect a terrified blink and dodged round the long table. Loder, with an angry scowl, rushed after him, and Bunter promptly dived underneath the table and yelled:

"I say, you fellows, keep him off! I say—Yaroooh!"

"Come out of that!" shouted Loder angrily.

"Ow! Rescue! I say, you fellows—Wow!"

"Leave Bunter alone, Loder!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"What?" roared Loder, glaring round in amazement. "What? What did you say, Cherry?"

"I said leave Bunter alone—and I mean what I say!"

"Take five hundred lines, Cherry!"

"Five hundred rats!" retorted Bob.

"Get out, Loder! You're not wanted here!"

"Outside, Loder!" shouted Vernon-Smith. The Bounder was always ready for a shindy.

"Turn him out!"

"Buzz off, Loder!"

Loder of the Sixth glared round him in amazement and wrath. This was rebellion—rank rebellion! For a hand to

be raised against a prefect was unheard-of. But many hands were raised now—all ready to be laid on Gerald Loder. Wildly excited juniors surrounded him. The Bounder gave him a push, Bolsover major a shove, and then an unknown foot landed behind Loder and he tottered.

"Why, you—you—you—" gasped Loder. "You young sweeps! You young rascals! You'll be sacked for this!"

"Yes, I can see the Head sacking a while Form!" grinned the Bounder. "Rather a big order, Loder—even for the Beak! Get out!"

"Turf him out!"

"Outside, Loder!"

Loder, utterly amazed, hardly knowing whether he was on his head or his heels, found himself whirled and shoved and hustled to the door. He hit out on all sides furiously—and that was the last straw. Many hands were laid on him, he was whirled off his feet, carried bodily to the door kicking and struggling, and hurled out headlong.

There was a heavy bump and a loud roar as Loder landed in the passage. Bob Cherry slammed the door of the Rag.

"So much for Loder!" said the Bounder, laughing.

But Smithy was the only fellow who laughed. Excited as they were, indignant as they were, the Removites realised the seriousness of the matter. They had handled a prefect. And the penalty at Greyfriars for handling a prefect was the sack. And they had done it! Bob Cherry broke a rather grim silence.

"We're for it now!" he said. "The Head can't expel a whole Form. We've got to stick together in this, whether we like it or not! We're for it, and we've got to see it through."

And the Remove knew that that was so. Whatever the outcome of that rebellion, they had to stand together and see it through.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

To Go, Or Not To Go!

"IMPOSSIBLE!" exclaimed Dr. Locke.

He stared at Loder.

Impossible as it seemed to the Head that a Greyfriars Form was in a state of rebellion, Loder's aspect indicated that it actually was so. Never before had a Sixth Form prefect presented himself in the Head's study in a dusty, untidy, dishevelled state, his collar and tie torn out, and his hair a mop. Loder, obviously, had been "through" it! He was gasping for breath as he made his startling report.

"It's so, sir!" panted Loder. "Bunter's in the Rag, and the whole mob of them set on me—"

"Extraordinary!" said the Head.

"I was pitched out on my neck, sir—"

"Amazing!" said the Head. His face set grimly. "Perhaps I had better deal with this matter personally."

He rose from his chair, picked up a cane, and slipped it under his arm. A cane evidently was needed in the present state of affairs in the Remove. Leaving Loder of the Sixth panting, Dr. Locke proceeded to the Rag.

News of the outbreak there had already spread. The passage was crowded with excited fellows of all Forms. The door of the Rag was closed—from within could be heard a buzz of voices. Mr. Quelch, with a very troubled and distressed expression on his face, had arrived at the door,

and he was knocking at it when the Head appeared in the office.

"Wharton! Are you there, Wharton?" called out the Remove master.

"Yes, sir!" came the answer from within.

"This door appears to be locked! Kindly unlock it at once!"

"Bunter's here, sir—"

"I am aware of that, Wharton! Bunter is wanted—"

"I say, you fellows—" came a fat squeak.

"We're standing by Bunter, sir!" It was Bob Cherry's voice this time.

"We're not letting him be sacked!"

"The sackfulness is not the proper caper, sir, in the esteemed and ridiculous circumstances!" said the cheery voice of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"We are sticking to the ridiculous Bunter like absurd glue!"

"Hear, hear!" came a dozen voices.

Mr. Quelch stood nonplussed. This was an extremely disconcerting state of affairs to greet him on his return to his duties at Greyfriars.

His position was made all the more awkward by his own belief that Bunter was unjustly expelled.

He bowed to his chief's authority, as was his duty; but the Remove fellows were evidently taking another view of the matter.

Dr. Locke joined the Remove master at the door. His usually kind face was cold and grim.

"Is it possible, Mr. Quelch, that your Form is in a state of rebellion against authority?" he asked.

"I am sorry to say that it appears so, sir!" answered the Remove master uncomfortably.

He stepped back to give place to the Head—not sorry, perhaps, to leave that majestic gentleman to deal with the rebellious Remove.

"Open this door immediately!" said the Head, coldly and sharply.

"Is Bunter to be sacked, sir?" came Bob Cherry's voice.

"What? What? Bunter is certainly to be expelled! You are aware of that. There will be other expulsions if this riot continues!"

"We're sticking to Bunter, sir!"

"Cherry! How dare you?"

"Bunter never inked Prout, sir! Some other fellow did!"

"The matter is concluded and finished with, Cherry! Bunter! I command you to come out of that room at once!"

"Oh crikey!"

"You are there, Bunter—"

"Oh! No, sir! I—I'm not here—"

"Bless my soul!"

"I—I mean, I'm not going to be sacked, sir! You see, it's impossible, sir. I never inked Prout! And my father would be fearfully waxy—"

"Bunter!"

"Very likely he would whop me, sir—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"As I haven't done anything, I don't think I ought to be sacked, sir! Do you?"

"Upon my word! Bunter, you are expelled from this school, and will leave Greyfriars immediately!" gasped the Head.

"I jolly well shan't, and chance it!"

"What? What? Bunter, are you in your right senses?"

"Yes, sir! Are you, sir?"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bunter!" gasped the Head. "You—you impertinent young rascal! I command you to give yourself up at once!"

"No fear!"

Dr. Locke gazed at the stout oaken

door before him. It was locked, and there was a sound within of the big table being dragged against it. The Head breathed hard and deep. He was barred out of the Rag—and the expelled Owl was within, and his Form-fellows, little perhaps as they esteemed him, were determined not to give him up.

For some moments the Head stood with a brow like a thundercloud, watched curiously by the crowd in the passage, who wondered how he was going to deal with this extraordinary situation.

He glanced round at last and beckoned to a prefect.

"Walker!"

"Walker!"

"Walker!"

"Walker!"

"Walker!"

"Walker!"

"Walker!"

"Walker!"

"Walker!"

"Walker!"

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"Walker!"

"Walker!"

"Walker!"

"Walker!"

"Walker!"

"Walker!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Please go out of the House, and enter this room by the window, and unfasten the door."

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Walker.

Walker of the Sixth departed—rather slowly. The Head did not, perhaps, realise the difficulty of the task he had assigned to Walker.

Walker did! The Head's words had been heard inside the Rag.

Bob Cherry crossed to the window. A dozen fellows followed him. The window on the quad was wide open, and they did not close it.

(Continued on page 28.)

COME INTO THE OFFICE, BOYS.

Always glad to hear from you, chums, so drop me a line to the following address: The Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped, addressed envelope will ensure a reply.

THE first thing I want to get off my chest this week, chums, is to advise you, one and all, to take advantage of the remarkable offer on page 21 of this issue. The MAGNET Stereoscope, believe me, is something worth having. All you are asked to pay for this wonderful scientific instrument and the six fascinating stereoscope cards is one shilling. Just think of the hours of fun and amusement you'll get out of these stereoscopes. Send for one now while there is time, for this exceptional offer to MAGNET readers may never be repeated.

Ever tried to invent anything, chums? I've just been looking through a list of some

ODD INVENTIONS

which have been patented in London. What about gramophone records that you can eat? Sounds good, eh? The idea is to impress the tune upon chocolate or toffee, so that when you are tired of the music you can break the "record" up and chew it! Then there is a cigarette-holder with an attachment of a little wooden figure. When a cigarette is smoked through this holder, the little figure dances and gives acrobatic displays between the smoke rings. For the lazy person there is a clothes-brush which needs no "elbow grease" to work it. You simply have to lean up against it, and the brush does all the rest!

The oddest invention of the lot, however, is a new mouse-trap. It is perfect in every way—so perfect, in fact, that its intricate machinery would make it cost nearly a hundred pounds! I don't think many people will be fitting these traps into their houses!

NOW for a few **RAPID-FIRE REPLIES.**

The River that Changes Its Course. ("A Magnetite," of Loughton): The reader who sent me the information regarding the Montana river did not give its position. In the state of Montana, U.S.A., however, there are several rivers the names of which do not appear even on large-scale American maps, and I assume that it is one of these, the name of which

is only known locally. Will any American reader who can give some more information regarding the Montana river, please drop me a line? There is a Montana Creek in the Yukon, but this is apparently not the river in question.

Amateur Theatrical Companies in Ireland (Jim O'Sullivan, of Dublin): There are certain to be many of these in your neighbourhood. If you write to the Editor of any Dublin paper, enclosing a stamped, addressed envelope for reply, I feel sure he could give you the information you require. I will make a note of your suggestions, and will probably be able to do something regarding them later.

"Heavy Water" ("Magnetite"): This is the name given to an extremely powerful poison which American scientists have discovered. A few drops of it are said to be sufficient to poison a whole reservoir. Perhaps this is why there is so little information available concerning it. Scientists are still experimenting with it.

Do Oysters Produce More than One Pearl? (G. D., of Hastings): Certainly. Over a hundred and fifty pearls have been found in a single oyster. But, of course, this is an extremely rare occurrence.

Where is Ivernia? ("Magnetite," of Clapham): This is a name used by ancient writers for Ireland. Other names by which Ireland was known are Hibernia, Ibernia, and Ierne.

Here is a question which is puzzling one of my Hornchurch readers. He has heard that there are

SAILORS WHO NEVER GO TO SEA,

and he wants to know how that is possible. This statement is quite correct. Some men have spent the greater part of their lives aboard ship and many have travelled hundreds of thousands of miles—and yet they have never been to sea! Sounds strange, doesn't it—until you remember that all the great lakes of the world have steamers running on them, and even the captain of these steamers, while they are sailors, need never have set foot upon a sea-going vessel!

Space is running short, chums, so it's time I told you what the good old MAGNET has in store for you next week. You'll certainly "got a kick" out of:

"BUNTER, THE DODGER!"

By Frank Richards.

It's a really first-class, tip-top yarn of the popular chums of Greyfriars. There are exciting situations galore in it, and no "Magnetite" should miss it.

And whatever you do, be sure and read the opening chapters of our grand new nerve-tingling adventure story: "THE BLACK HERCULES!"—further particulars of which appear on page 27 of this issue. I've read every line of it, and, believe me, it's a winner!

A "Greyfriars Herald" supplement, of course, will be found in next week's all-star programme, not forgetting Harold Skinner's cartoon and another interesting cricket chat with "Umpire."

So long, then, chums,
YOUR EDITOR,

CONCLUDING CHAPTERS OF OUR DETECTIVE THRILLER!

The MAN BEHIND the SCENES!



Starring **FERRERS LOCKE**, detective, and his clever boy assistant, **JACK DRAKE**.

BY **HEDLEY SCOTT**

Two Fatal Blunders!

WHO first learned of the strange disappearance of this man Tankerhead?" asked the disguised Locke, cross-examining the plane's passengers. "I did, sir," answered the steward. "We were six or seven miles off the coast, when I entered the cloak-room." He paused.

"I saw immediately that something must have happened, sir," continued the steward, "because the emergency door was wide open. And—and"—he faltered—"I saw a pool of blood on the floor." "What did you do?" asked the detective quietly.

"I rushed into the saloon, sir," gulped the steward, "to see if all my passengers were present. And I saw that the gentleman who had booked a passage with Mr. Villiers here was missing."

"That is correct, officer," broke in Villiers. "My friend Tankerhead had left me about three or four minutes before. I was getting a trifle uneasy myself at his prolonged absence, when the steward came in with the dreadful news."

Locke eyed him keenly.

"And why, sir, were you growing uneasy?"

Villiers' face lengthened.

"Well, I suppose I must tell you, but poor Julius has been rather overdoing things lately. He was run-down, and kept telling me when he was depressed that he was going to put an end to himself."

Locke's eyebrows lifted.

"Is that so? Now, tell me, Mr.—Mr. Villiers, did you hear any sound of a revolver report? Did any of you hear the report as of a gun being discharged?"

There was a general shaking of heads.

"That indeed seems strange," remarked the detective levelly.

"The noise of the engines, sir—" began Villiers helpfully.

"But you forgot, Mr. Villiers, that the cabin of the plane is practically sound-proof so far as any noise from the outside engines are concerned."

He paused and saw Villiers stiffen.

"It would be heard," continued the detective, "unless, of course, the weapon was fitted with a silencer. You follow my reasoning, Mr. Villiers?"

Villiers, not so sure of himself, gave a sickly smile in agreement.

"And," continued Locke grimly, "the evidence already available—for the body of the man was picked up at sea—goes to prove that the gun found in his pocket was not fitted with a silencer!"

Again Villiers stiffened.

"The weapon found on the body," added the detective relentlessly, fixing his gaze on Villiers, "had not even been discharged. There were six live cartridges! Now, gentlemen, you will see why I am questioning you."

Villiers licked his dry lips. He had a feeling that the ground was slipping beneath his feet. He had a horrible feeling, too, that he would be searched—and the search would reveal the presence of a revolver fitted with a silencer, which nestled under his arm in a shoulder holster.

To his great relief, however, his inquisitor did not pursue the point of the undischarged weapon.

With all eyes upon him, Locke was now gazing at a long envelope, which a search of Tankerhead's coat had brought to light. Despite the fact that it was addressed to the coroner, the detective slit it and withdrew the contents. What he read brought a gleam to his eyes, for the document ran:

I have decided to put an end to things. I cannot sleep. I am tired of life. I leave everything I possess in this world to my good friend Mervyn Villiers, and ask his forgiveness at taking this way out.

(Signed) JULIUS TANKERHEAD.

"A very interesting document," Locke muttered to himself, and, looking up, found Villiers' eyes burning upon him.

"Is that his letter to the coroner, sir?" asked Villiers. "Surely you have no right to open it?"

It was a fatal blunder—and Villiers realised it the moment the words had left his lips.

"Were you aware, then, Mr. Villiers, that Tankerhead had written this to the coroner?" asked Locke sternly.

"No! Of course not!" retorted Villiers. "That is, I mean— Ah!"

"Then why should you jump to the conclusion that this is a letter to the coroner?" demanded Locke. "For the finding of this document in Tankerhead's overcoat has been kept a close secret. Isn't that so, steward?"

"I haven't told a soul, sir, except the inspector who took charge of everything when we landed," volunteered the steward.

Locke smiled.

"I think that will conclude my investigation with most of you. Mr. Villiers, I must ask you to remain; you others can go."

Villiers began to tremble. On each side of him he saw a stalwart constable. Behind him was Inspector Pyecroft. Before him was this smooth-tongued individual with the black moustache who had dared to open a letter addressed to the coroner.

In a fever of apprehension, he saw his late travellers file out of the Customs shed. Then he faced Locke with a show of bluster.

"May I ask why I am detained, sir?" he snapped angrily.

"You may," came Locke's reply in crisp, even tones. "You are detained on the charge of having murdered Julius Tankerhead!"

A pin might have been heard drop in the Customs shed as Locke spoke those words. Villiers rocked on his feet. Dimly he became aware of the two constables closing in on him.

"You are also charged with the forgery of this document," continued Ferrers Locke, "for there are unmistakable signs that it is a forgery. Why"—he sneered—"you even forgot how to spell the name of your dear friend Tankerhead when you forged his signature. You omitted to put in the final 'a'—"

"I didn't!" Involuntarily the denial burst from Villiers. "I—I—"

He recoiled, realising again, too late, that he had made another fatal blunder.

Locke smiled at him coldly. "I took a chance there, Mr. Clever Villiers," he remarked, "and you fell for my bait. The signature is spelt correctly. In fact, the forgery is clever enough to send you to gaol for twenty years should our other charge break down. But don't let that worry you. We have plenty more charges!"

He looked meaningfully at Inspector Pyecroft, who sidled out of the door and gave a message to the constable who was keeping guard outside.

"In fact, you will be accused of the attempted murder of one Christopher Dean," began the detective. "You remember, Mr. Villiers, you and Tankerhead insured his life for a hundred thousand pounds when he attempted his double crossing of the Atlantic. Ah"—Locke's lip curled—"I see that jogs your memory!"

"I don't know what you are talking about!" shouted Villiers. "This is monstrous! Let me go! I demand—"

He broke off, and something like a scream left his lips as the door opened and a young, well-set-up individual strode into the room.

"Dean—Dean—"

There was hysteria in Villiers' voice now. He shrank back and covered his face with his hands.

"Calm yourself, Villiers!" came Locke's cutting voice. "Christopher Dean it is—in the flesh; not a ghost! You will also be charged with the attempted murder of a mere boy—Jack Drake!"

Again the door opened, and this time Jack Drake entered, clear-eyed and composed. Again an inarticulate cry escaped Villiers; again he recoiled and covered his face with his hands.

"He, too, is alive," continued Locke relentlessly, "but no thanks to you, you murderous villain! You left him to die in Ivy Cottage, you remember, and expected Ferrers Locke to die with him. A very ingenious plot, my clever friend, but it failed. To your conscience you can add the names of a Mr. Morris, who is beyond this world, and to a certain lorry-driver who died as a result of the injuries he received when the car you had commandeered collided with him!"

Villiers was frothing at the mouth now; his eyes were wild and staring. Who was this stern-faced inquisitor who knew so much of his past life? Where had he garnered his information?

The detective watched his captive, with a triumphant smile. He knew the wild thoughts which chased their way through Villiers' terrified mind.

"There are other charges, too," he concluded, "but I don't think we shall need them—charges which concern certain sporting events, like football matches, horse-racing—you remember you substituted a crack steeplechaser for a poor horse—and swindling on a large scale on the result of a South African horse-race when you already knew the result of the race. Your confederate, you will remember, was waiting in his car below the offices of a gentleman names Jules Martinez? Ah, I see you are impressed by what I know!"

"Who—who the devil are you?" Villiers literally screamed the question. "Curse you! Who are you? What is your name?"

The answer came in the form of a quick movement of the detective's hand which brought away his disguise.

"Ferrers Locke! Ferrers Locke!" babbled Villiers. "I might have known it! The man who has defeated me at

every turn! The man behind the scenes!"

Locke bowed slightly. "That will be all, Villiers, until we meet again at the Old Bailey. Take him away Pyecroft—and watch him well!"

But the words were barely out of the detective's mouth when Villiers reached for the revolver in his shoulder holster, drew it clear, and took quick and vicious aim at the man who had brought about his downfall.

"Guv'nor—"

Drake saw the peril, and lashed out with his foot.

Crash! Crack!

The revolver barked dully, for it was fitted with a silencer. The bullets missed Locke by inches only, for Drake's timely lunge with his foot had knocked the weapon aside. But Villiers wasn't beaten yet. He wheeled, almost in the same moment, snatched a hold of Inspector Pyecroft, and twisted himself behind the C.I.D. man's broad back.

The revolver jabbed hard into Pyecroft's spine.

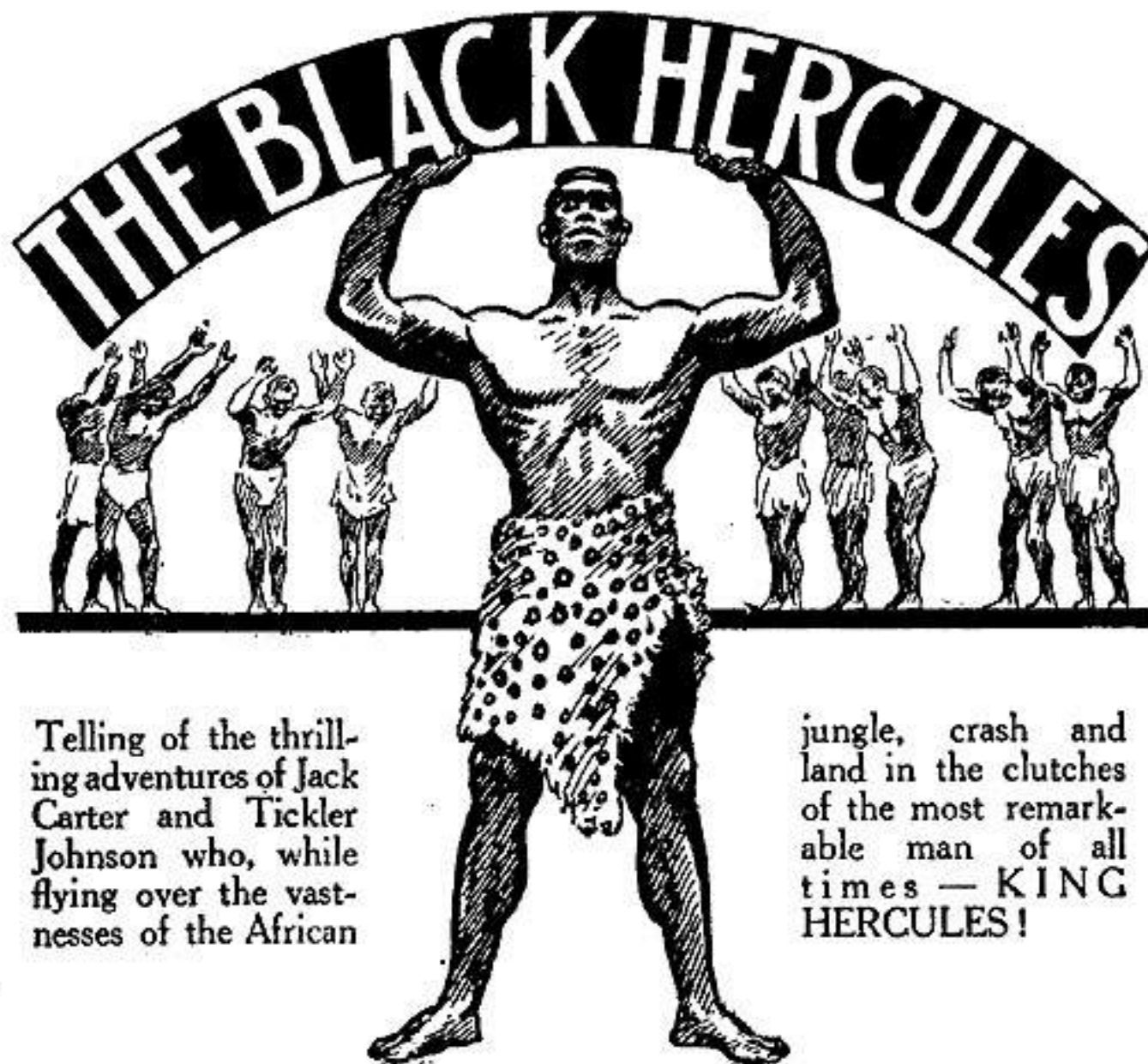
"Now, you clever policemen," screamed Villiers, "one move towards me, and this guy goes west!"

He laughed triumphantly as he saw Locke slowly lower the automatic which had suddenly appeared in his hand. To shoot now was to invite certain death for the innocent Pyecroft. Using the helpless C.I.D. man as a shield, Villiers backed towards the door, keeping the gun levelled at Locke and

~~~~~

STARTS NEXT WEEK—

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jungle, crash and land in the clutches of the most remarkable man of all times—KING HERCULES!

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BE SURE AND READ THIS STIRRING STORY, CHUMS—IT WILL HOLD YOU SPELLBOUND FROM THE VERY FIRST CHAPTER.

It commences in next week's bumper issue of "The MAGNET."  
Order Your Copy Now!

In the single-seater Moth, Villiers laughed with the frenzy of a madman. There was precious little he knew about flying, having been too afraid of the business to continue with the course of instruction he had once paid for and started upon. But now what little he had learned came to his rescue—or so it seemed.

He pulled back on the joystick when the plane had gathered flying speed and zoomed up into the air. Unconsciously he banked the plane wildly—so wildly, in fact, that he lurched to the left of the cockpit. His clutching fingers, seeking a steadying hold somewhere, fastened round the throttle lever. Unknowingly, Villiers reduced the power thrust of the engine to a minimum as he jerked back, and closed the throttle lever.

The result was terrifying and catastrophic. Tilted at an angle of forty-five degrees, and suddenly robbed of that forward thrust of the engine which is essential to a climbing turn, the nose of the plane immediately fell, sickeningly.

Like a stone the plane screamed earthwards, twisting round and round in a shuttlecock movement.

In the cockpit, wild-eyed and frenzied, Villiers wrenched at the joystick and the engine throttle in vain. He knew that his last moment had come. And as those same fear-ridden eyes caught a glimpse of a whirling wing-spread as the plane rocketed earthwards for the inevitable crash, Villiers, with the fear of death upon him, conjured up a vision of an accusing face—Julius Tankerhead's.

It peered at him with a fixed and deadly stare—a figure of retribution. It was the last thing in his life Mervyn Villiers over-remembered. . . .

The plane buried itself four feet deep into the soft turf of the aerodrome with an appalling crash that rocked the ground for a hundred yards around. Wings buckled back on the fuselage in an inexplicable mix-up. Then before the aerodrome ambulance could reach the wreckage the splashing, gushing petrol flared up in a mighty blaze. Great tongues of orange and red flames billowed out in an all-enveloping cloak.

hiding from the horrified gaze of Ferrers Locke and his companions the ghastly end of the man who had played such an important part in each of their lives.

Locke's face was grim and set as he led Drake and Christopher Dean away from the ghastly scene.

"Well, like all criminals, he beat himself," he said soberly. "His own vanity and conceit were his undoing. Come, you fellows, let's get back to Baker Street. Our work is done!"

"You're forgetting Pycroft, gov'nor!" Drake reminded him, and pointed to the doorway of the Customs shed outside which a stalwart figure was lolling, holding an aching head between two brawny palms.

### ANOTHER TIP-TOP SCHOOL TALE TO READ!

#### "GUSSY'S CRICKET PARTY!"

Starring the old favourites of St. Jim's—Tom Merry & Co.—in a rollicking long story of fun and adventure. It appears in this week's grand number of our companion paper

## The GEM

On Sale Now - - Price 2d.

"Did you get him?" panted Pycroft, who, having only just come to, was unaware of what had happened out there on the aerodrome.

Locke shook his head.

"No! I didn't get him. But no one will ever see Villiers alive again. He played with death and lost!"

THE END.

(Whatever you do, chums, don't miss the opening chapters of: "THE BLACK HERCULES!"—an amazing story of African adventure introducing Jack Carter and Ticker Johnson, air mail pilots, and King Hercules, the black terror!—which will appear in next week's bumper issue of the MAGNET.)

## BACKING UP BUNTER!

(Continued from page 25.)

Standing at the open window, they waited for Walker of the Sixth.

He arrived in a few minutes. He looked rather dubiously at the faces within.

"Look here, I'm coming in!" said Walker.

"Oh, do!" said Bob Cherry.

"Who's stopping you?" grinned the Bounder.

Walker of the Sixth grasped the broad stone sill, and swung himself up. He barged in at the open window. Immediately six or seven pairs of hands closed on him. What happened next seemed like a fearful nightmare to James Walker. He hardly knew what happened to him. But he knew that his ears were pulled, his nose tweaked, his collar jerked off, and an inkpot emptied over his head! He was in a shocking state when he was pitched back into the quad; but he was glad to get there!

"Ow!" gasped Walker! "Ow! Oooogh! Wooooogh!"

"Come on, Walker!"

"Try it on again, old bean!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Walker did not try it on again. He tottered away to report failure.

The Remove, victorious for the moment, at least, remained in possession of the Rag—and of Billy Bunter!

What was going to happen next nobody could tell!

Bunter, the bone of contention, was safe for the present. Sacked by the Head, he was still at Greyfriars, and the Remove were determined to keep him there! Obviously, such a situation could not last long! But how it was going to turn out nobody could even guess.

THE END.

("BUNTER, THE DODGER!" is the title of the next grand yarn in this magnificent series, starring the chums of Greyfriars. Be sure and read this topping yarn, chums; you'll enjoy every line of it!)

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### GOLFERS, NOTE!

The Courtfield Golf Club wish me to deny the rumour that their course was destroyed by earthquake yesterday. I have no hesitation in stating that it was quite all right before I played on it.—P. PROUT, M.A., Masters' Common-room.



# THE NEW Greyfriars Herald



No. 90 (New Series).

EDITED BY HARM WHARTON.

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AI, AI, AI!

Members of the Ancient Order of Remove Redskins are asked to note Pon. & Co. are picnicking on Popper's Island next Wednesday afternoon. War canoes will start from the boat-house at 3 o'clock sharp. Bring your own tomahawks!—(Signed) BOB CHERRY, Study No. 13, Remove.

## GREYFRIARS 100 YEARS AGO

Those who thought that George Wharton, of the Fourth Form, could never surpass the heights of impudence to which he had already risen, received a rude shock on the college cricket field last week.

One would have imagined that he had achieved quite enough already to satisfy the most ardent seeker after notoriety. During his short career at Greyfriars, as readers of these notes are aware, he has (1) led a rebellion of juniors, (2) suppressed the time-honoured practice of "bullying" and (3) revolutionised the Greyfriars game of football.

But these exploits, seemingly, are not enough to satisfy George Wharton; and on Saturday last he added to them by publicly criticising the Greyfriars style of cricket and demonstrating a new style which he states (with what authority none can say!) is being played at certain other schools nowadays.

His demonstration, which was carried out on the cricket field with the aid of a number of young Greyfriars sportsmen, was watched by a large crowd. It aroused much hostility, especially among the seniors.

As a game, it is much more complicated than cricket as we know it. Two wickets are used instead of the single wicket which is always used at Greyfriars and two strikers play together, both having to run to the opposite wicket to score a single notch. As many as eleven players are allowed on the field to oppose the strikers, and the objectionable "throwing ball" or "overarm pitch," is freely permitted.

Readers will gather from all this that Wharton's game, judged by conventional Greyfriars standards, is not cricket at all, but just a new-fangled hotch-potch. For all we know or care, it may have a temporary vogue. But Greyfriars will steadfastly set her face against such a pretentious mixture.

Wharton should be told not to go too far. He has escaped scot-free out of most of his exploits. Let him understand in advance that there will be a different story to tell if he interferes with the cricket of our forefathers!

(It is interesting to note that in spite of these protestations of loyalty to the single-wicket game, it was not long before Greyfriars abolished it. Under-arm bowling soon went, too—its end being hastened, no doubt, by the skill attained by several players who became over-arm bowlers after George Wharton had shown them how much more could be done by it than by the old methods!—Ed.)

## BUNTER'S LONGEST DAY THEORY

In case you've overlooked it, we would mention that we have almost reached mid-summer and the longest day.

Which reminds us that Billy Bunter refuses to believe that it really is the longest day.

He says the longest day in the world's history was the day when he got lost on the Lake and went without dinner and tea!

## RAKE GOES TO SEA

"A Sailor's Life For Me!"

Determination was writ large over Dick Rake's countenance as he strode down to the gates one day last week. There were other unusual features about him, too. He was wearing a white sailor cap in place of his straw hat and he carried a bundle of something wrapped in a spotted red handkerchief on the end of a cricket stump over his shoulder.

"Going hiking?" a "Greyfriars Herald" representative asked him curiously.

"Hiking! Bah!" said Rake, who had a distant look in his eyes. "I'm going to sea!"

The "Herald" representative misunderstood him and asked: "To see what?" and this question drew from Rake the surprising reply: "To see the seven seas of the world, you ass! To see strange foreign ports where men are men and schools don't exist! In other words, I'm fed up with school life and I'm going to become a sailor!"

"Great pip!" The "Herald" representative was surprised—and Rake's friends, one or two of whom happened to be in the vicinity, were alarmed!

They were aware that he had recently been up on the carpet over his prep, and also received in unlucky sequence, two or three swishings from prefects for sundry offences—but they hadn't anticipated that it would affect him to the extent of driving him to sea!

"But—but you can't!" objected Morgan, falling in beside Rake.

"Old man, you mustn't!"

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?



To prove the existence of Bunter Court, his magnificent, but fictitious home, Bunter once produced a photograph of an impressive castle. Unfortunately, Skinner recognised it as a little-known castle belonging to a Scottish peer!

said Wibley, falling in on the other side. "Be reasonable, you know!"

"Just what I am being!" retorted Rake. "It's unreasonable to expect a man to root about in a giddy school all his life. I'm being more reasonable than that—I'm going to sea!"

And all their arguments were in vain.

Quite a crowd accompanied Rake to Pegg Village, which was evidently to be the starting-point for his maritime career. There was a good deal of curiosity to know exactly how one became a sailor, and fellows who heard about Rake's decision didn't intend to miss the chance of finding out all about it.

"But I thought you said you were going to sea?" exclaimed the "Greyfriars Herald" representative, as Rake staggered on to the beach again. "Did you forget something?"

"Mmmmm!" was the only reply Rake would give—and he hasn't said much more than that about it since.

As soon as his complexion had returned to normal, he discarded his nautical head-gear and bundle and returned to Greyfriars, where he has remained up to the time of going to press.

Some fellows' ambitions are easily satisfied. Rake's ambition for a life on the ocean wave seems to have been satisfied with two minutes of it!

For the benefit of those who were not there, we may say that if Rake is to be relied on, going to sea is as easy as rolling off a log.

All you have to do is to pick out any fair-sized vessel lying at anchor off the coast and hire a boatman to row you out to it.

Mind you, even that isn't as easy as it may sound to some people.

It wasn't easy for Rake!



Rake is the roller-skating champion of the Remove. He can beat anybody for speed—but when he bowled over Mr. Prout, he wasn't fast enough to escape the vials of wrath! When Prout had finished, Rake felt "rolled" as flat as a "skate"!

You see, it happened to be rather choppy in the bay and the little tub Rake hired to take him to the ship in which he had decided to instal himself pitched and tossed in a most alarming fashion.

Before he had left the shore more than ten yards behind, Rake had begun to change colour. At a distance of fifteen yards his face was deadly white. At twenty yards it was turning green.

Suddenly, Rake's pals on the beach saw him making imploring gestures to the old salt who was doing the rowing. The next thing they knew was that the boatman was turning his little craft back to the shore again!

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## Dicky Nugent's Weekly Wisdom

Since Kipps, of the Remove, bought a trick sword and started studying sword-swallowing, his lessons have been sadly neglected.

Better look out, Kipps! If you don't stop swallowing that sword soon, you'll be getting it in the neck!



Fisher T. Fish is a great bargain-hunter, and was very pleased with an alarm-clock which he snapped up at a sale—till it went off at four in the morning, rousing the rest of the Remove to homicidal fury! Fishy's "alarm" was "striking"!

## SIMPLY MUST SAVE LIVES

River Corps Too Keen

When Tom Brown started a Corps of Life-savers to patrol the banks of the Sark during the bathing season, everybody said it was a jolly good idea.

Later opinions are not so enthusiastic. Even a good idea can be overdone, and most fellows have already come to the conclusion that there's a danger of Tom Brown's life-saving idea being very much overdone!

The life-savers began operations last Monday, and up to the time of going to press they are officially reported to have saved fifteen lives!

On those figures they've certainly justified their existence, and we're as ready as anyone to cheer. There's only one thing that stops us.

NOT ONE OF THE FIFTEEN LIVES "SAVED" WAS IN THE SLIGHTEST DANGER!

Temple, of the Upper Fourth, was the first of the victims. He was swimming perfectly soundly and contentedly in the pool when there was a yell of "Life-savers, ahoy!" Three fellows promptly plunged into the water, surrounded Temple, grabbed him by the hair and ears, and pulled him to the shore.

Temple had assumed that it was a Form rag. When the life-savers told him, apparently in all seriousness, that they had been saving his life, Temple's jaws dropped and he just stared at them. He hasn't been the same fellow since!

We haven't the slightest objection to that little incident, of course. The life-

savers are welcome to try out their stuff on as many of the Upper Fourth as they like.

But we do put our foot down when Tom Brown and his merry men start life-saving stunts with Removites—particularly in cases where the said Removites are quite capable of looking after their own lives!

Brown & Co. already claim to have saved, among others, Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull and Redwing of the Remove—and these three happen to be three of the strongest swimmers in the Form!

We fancy they'll become a bit subdued, though, after a little incident that occurred on the river yesterday.

Trevor and Desmond, two of Brown's followers, took it on themselves to plunge in and rescue Tubb of the Third.

Neither of them, as it happens, are very strong swimmers, and in a matter of

seconds both were in difficulties in midstream.

Fortunately, the fog they had set out to "save" is one of the finest swimmers in the Lower School, and he was able to give them sufficient help to enable them to return to the bank. The life-savers, therefore, had the unusual experience, for life-savers, of having their own lives saved!



Our heartiest good wishes still go out to the Remove Corps of Life-savers.

But for their own sakes as well as ours, we hope they'll conduct their life-saving with a little less enthusiasm in future!

## ARE THE FOURTH RE-ARMING?

Delegates' Sinister Conference Tactics

To a superficial observer, the recent Disarmament Conference between the Remove and the Upper Fourth was a tremendous success. The Fourth delegates seemed to agree to almost every proposal put forward by the Remove delegates, and there was an atmosphere of geniality and goodwill present which made the future of Disarmament seem very rosy.

There were some in the Remove, however, who detected something slightly sinister in the excessive friendliness of the Upper Fourth. They felt that Temple answered "Yes" a little too quickly when asked whether he would support the total abolition of land mines and study doorway booby traps.

They had an idea that he assented all too easily to Bob Cherry's proposal that, for the purpose of comparing arms, one holster should be regarded as equal to two pillows, and two pillows as equal to five pen-shooters.

Apart from all that, they regarded with deep suspicion the way the Fourth delegates kept on sniggering and digging each other in the ribs all through the conference.

Thinking over it afterwards, some of the Remove delegates felt that there must be more behind all this than met the eye. The question that logically followed that suspicion was: ARE THE FOURTH SECRETLY RE-ARMING?

Well, dear readers, the "Greyfriars Herald" can answer that question here and now!

As soon as the conference was over we sent a special representative up to the Fourth Form dormitory to find out what he could about the present state of Upper Fourth armament.

By sagging his shoulders, opening his mouth, and letting his tongue loll out, he was able to give the guards the impression that he was a member of the Upper Fourth. He thus gained access to a corner of the dorm which strangers are not usually allowed to enter.

His discoveries are amazing! The Fourth have secretly accumulated a stock of arms large enough to enable them to declare war on the rest of Greyfriars at any moment they like with every chance of success.

Bolsters, pillows, pen-shooters and ammunition, soot, flour, and treacle, not to mention eggs of immense size are stored in amazing quantity in this secret arsenal!

So there's now no longer any need to ask the question, "Are the Fourth Re-arming?"

They've already re-armed! Awful shame that the work of the Disarmament Conference should be rendered futile, isn't it?

Not that it really matters two hoots. To tell you the truth, we in the Remove have been looking on the Fourth with suspicion for some time—and, just to make sure of our continued supremacy, we've secretly re-armed ourselves a long time ago!

## IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE

Smithy offered a pound to any Removite who succeeded in riding the bucking mule in Popper's Mead for two consecutive minutes any Wednesday afternoon; but nobody has yet claimed the cash.

The remarkable thing about it, too, is that enthusiasm for that quidlet seems to be waning rapidly; in the last two weeks attendances have "fallen off" considerably!

## NO WONDER!

Passing a collection of caravans near Greyfriars the other day, we noticed Mr. Prout, who never tires of country life, regaling the Romany folk with yarns of his hunting days.

The scene reminded us of an old song: "Listen to the Gipsies Yawning," or something of the kind, we fancy!

GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT!



There was a Captain Ponsonby at the Battle of Trafalgar—but Cecil Ponsonby, of Highcliffe, does not take after his heroic ancestor. He is a sneak and cad. He put up his fists against Peter Todd the other day—but Toddy won!



Keenly interested in flying Frank Nugent has designed several model aeroplanes. His chums were interested to try out some of Nugent's latest models—and their flying performances, as "Inky" remarked, were "astoundingly terrific"!



Having seen a professional knife-brower, Bolsover major is eager to imitate him by "outlining" a victim with knives. He was very annoyed when both Snoop and Stott refused point blank to act as volunteers to be "outlined"!



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