

"The Outcast Of The School!" Great School Story by Frank Richards

The Magnet 2^D

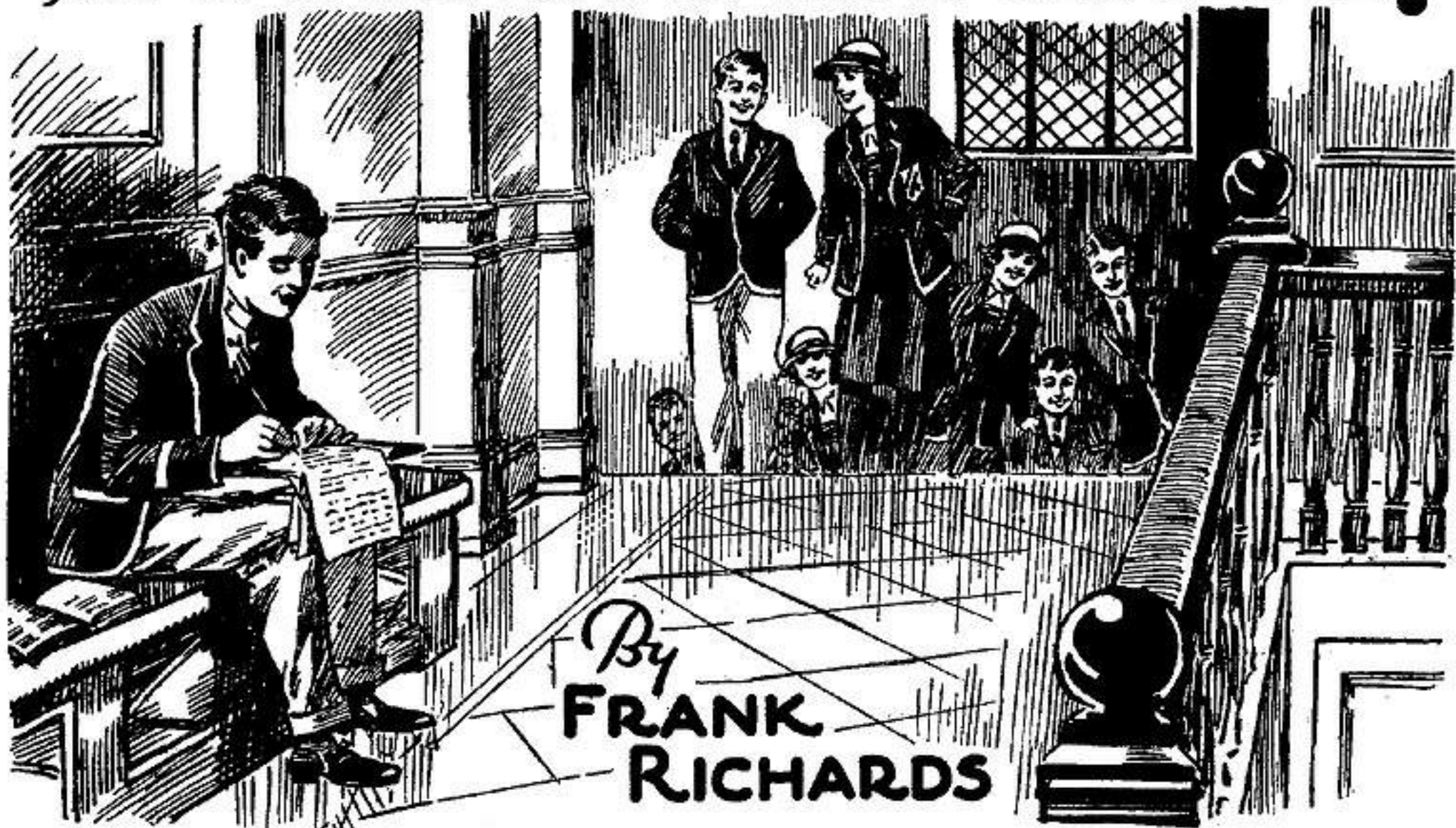
*Billy Bunter's
Own Paper*

PLACE YOUR GIFTS
IN THE HAT
THANK YOU
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BILLY BUNTER'S HERO FUND!

The OUTCAST of the SCHOOL!



By
**FRANK
RICHARDS**

Skip laboured on at his Latin exercises, and did not look up at the cheery party that was about to pass him on the landing.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Skip, Too!

"WHAT about Skip?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Skip!" repeated Harry Wharton.

"Rot!" said Johnny Bull.

"Um!" murmured Frank Nugent.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh grinned and was silent.

It was just like Bob. He did not like Skip, the new fellow in the Greyfriars Remove, any more than any other Remove fellow did. He was interested in him wholly and solely for one reason—because he was down on his luck, and Bob hated to see any fellow down on his luck.

The Famous Five were on the Remove landing, after class. The new fellow, who bore the remarkable name of "Skip," had passed them there, going to Study No. 1, which he shared with Wharton and Nugent.

He had glanced at them in passing, but did not speak. Skip seldom spoke to a Remove man unless he was spoken to first.

Skip had been at Greyfriars School hardly more than a week, but in that brief space of time he had learned that most of the Removites had no use for a fellow who had been brought up in Shunmock's Alley, and still retained many of the manners and customs of that delectable quarter.

Bob's glance followed him as he went into the study; then he propounded the query that surprised his friends.

"Well, why not?" asked Bob, rather warmly. "We're going on a bike spin. The kid's got a bike. Why not ask him to come?"

"The whyfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

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"We don't want him!" pointed out Johnny Bull.

"That's not the point. He'd like to come. I know what he was before he came here as well as you do; but it's rotten to see any chap barred like that. Look here, let's ask him to run his jigger out with us."

The Co. looked at Bob, and looked at one another.

In the study, Wharton and Nugent were civil enough to the peculiar new Removite; indeed, more than civil—they were kind and helpful. But out of the study, the less they saw of him, the better they liked it. They could make generous allowances for a fellow who had been trained in bad hands—they could feel glad that he had been given a chance in life—but they did not want the company of a fellow who was known to have been a pickpocket, and that was that!

"Don't all speak at once!" said Bob sarcastically.

"Well?" said Harry Wharton slowly.

"Well?" said Frank Nugent.

"You don't think he will pinch our jiggers, I suppose?" grunted Bob.

"I know he picked our pockets last hols!" said Johnny Bull stolidly. "If he's changed since he came here, I'm glad. But I'd rather keep him at arms-length."

"The ratherfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Well, I think it's rot!" said Bob crossly. "The kid's done nothing amiss since he came here. Even Bunter turns up that pimple he calls a nose at him. Are we taking Bunter as an example?"

"He oughtn't to be here."

"The Head decided that. Hadn't you better drop in at Dr. Locke's study, and tell him you don't find him giving satisfaction as a headmaster?"

Johnny Bull grinned.

"No need to get your rag out, old man," he said. "Let's ask him, if you like. If he picks anybody's pockets while he's out with us—"

"Don't be a silly ass!" snapped Bob.

"I'd say the same to you, only you can't help it, so it would be no good!" said Johnny imperturbably. "Come on, you men, let's trot along to the study and ask him to honour us with his company. We'd better not go through Courtfield, though."

"Why not?" grunted Bob.

"There's a notice up outside the railway station, 'Beware of Pickpockets,'" said Johnny affably. "It might hurt his feelings."

Three members of the Co. chuckled. Bob Cherry snorted.

"If you're going to be a blithering idiot—" he began.

"Not at all! I'm leaving that to you—it's in your line!" said Johnny Bull. "Come on! This Co. always sticks together, and if you're going to play the goat, we'll all play the goat. Can't say fairer than that."

"Look here—"

"Oh, let's!" said Harry Wharton. "We shall never get out on the jiggers at this rate. Let's go and ask him, and have done with it."

Bob Cherry tramped into the Remove passage, his friends following him. They were willing to back up Bob in a kind action, but they could not feel very enthusiastic about it.

The door of Study No. 1 was half-open.

Skip of the Remove was in full view as the Famous Five arrived at the doorway.

As he had gone to the study, they supposed that he had some work to do. Skip, whose knowledge of the shady side of life was extensive and peculiar, was not well up in the kind of knowledge

that was required in a Form at Greyfriars.

He could pick a pocket and he could crack a lock, but he could not construe the simplest sentence in Latin without severe labour. He was, in consequence, rather a trial to Mr. Quelch in the Remove Form Room, and, being anxious to get on, he put in a good deal of his leisure-time at swotting. He had all the more time for it, as he was left severely alone by most of his Form.

But he was not swotting at this particular moment.

He was sitting on the corner of the study table, staring at a small object that he held in his hand.

So engrossed was he, that he did not notice the arrival of the juniors at the doorway, and did not look round as they looked in. Certainly he was not expecting anyone to come to the study for him. It was very seldom that anyone did.

Looking in from the doorway, the chums of the Remove could not help seeing what the waif of Slummock's Alley held in his hand.

It was a small plain gold locket, attached to a ribbon. It contained a photograph which they could not see.

Bob Cherry had been about to shout into the study, but he did not shout. He stopped dead at what he saw.

A gold locket was rather an unusual possession for a schoolboy. In Skip's possession, it was not merely unusual. The most unsuspecting fellow could scarcely have drawn any conclusion but one.

Unheeding, in fact, unaware of five pairs of startled eyes staring from the doorway, Skip continued to gaze at the photograph in the locket with a curious, clouded expression on his chubby, rather good-looking face.

But the pause at the doorway was only momentary.

Bob Cherry tramped heavily in, and Skip, with a sudden start, stared round.

Instantly the locket disappeared from view under his jacket, and he slipped from the table and stood facing the juniors with a red face.

"Well," he snapped aggressively, "what do you blokes want? Making a covey jump out of his skin! Whatcher want?"

THE SECOND CHAPTER!

Whose Property?

HARRY WHARTON closed the door of Study No. 1.

His face was very serious, as were the faces of his comrades.

The intended bike spin was, for the moment, forgotten. The sight of an article of jewellery in the hand of the one-time pickpocket had given the chums of the Remove a painful shock.

Only once had Skip fallen under suspicion of reverting to his old ways since he had been in the school. Vernon-Smith's notecase had been missed, and all the Remove had taken it for granted that Skip had pinched it. But as it had turned up in the Bounder's study, even Smithy had had to admit that the waif of the Remove was guiltless, reluctant as he was to admit that he had made a hasty and unfounded accusation.

But the gleam of gold in Skip's hand told another tale. Five fellows had seen it with their own eyes, and it had to be explained.

"Well?" yapped Skip, his eyes roving aggressively from face to face. "Wot you got agin a bloke now?"

"Nothing, I hope, Skip," said Harry Wharton quietly. "But—"

"Then what are you all looking like a set of blooming howls for?" demanded Skip.

"I'd better put it plain. We could not help seeing what you had in your hand when we looked into the study," said the captain of the Remove.

"No 'arm if you did. What about it? Think I pinched it?" sneered Skip.

The Famous Five looked at him. That, as a matter of fact, was exactly what they thought, and could not help thinking.

"Young Smith missed suthing from his study agin, and making out that it was me?" jeered Skip.

"No," answered Harry. "But—"

He paused uncomfortably.

"Oh, git it off your chest!" growled Skip. "What's biting you now?"

"You had a gold locket in your hand," said Harry quietly. "I don't suppose it belongs to anybody at Greyfriars. But it can't belong to you!"

"Ow do you know?"

"Well, I suppose that's pretty clear. According to what you've told me, you've never had anything, except—"

except—

"Except what I've pinched!" sneered Skip. "There ain't no secret about that. I pinched from you coveys once. I'd be pinching now, if Mister Coker hadn't took me up, and his aunt per—"

ONE MINUTE AN OUTCAST —THE NEXT THE HERO OF THE SCHOOL!

**Because of his bad record,
Harry Wharton & Co. do not
want the company of Skip,
the new boy in the Remove.
But when the one-time pick-
pocket risks his life to save
another they are the fellows
to do him honour!**

suaded the 'Ead to give me a chance 'ere. But I ain't never pinched 'ere, like I promised the 'Ead I wouldn't! And if you don't believe a bloke, you can do the other thing!"

"But I do believe you," said Harry. "But—but—look here, kid, you must know, as well as I do, that when the Head let you in here, he not only made it a point that you chucked being dishonest, but he took it for granted that you were not keeping anything you had—had—"

"Pinched!" said Skip. "Can't you git it out?"

"Yes, pinched!" said Harry. "You don't look at such things as we do, Skip; but you must know that you can't keep anything here that doesn't belong to you. Will you take that locket to Mr. Quelch, and explain to him?"

"Wot am I to explain?"

"That it was left over from—from the time before you came here. He can send it to the police station, and they may get it back to the owner."

"You're bound to do it, kid!" said Bob Cherry, as Skip did not answer. "You can't keep what doesn't belong to you, now you're a Greyfriars man."

"And the sooner you get that into your head, the better!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Honestly, my esteemed Skip, is the cracked pitcher that goes longest to the well!" murmured Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh.

"Buck up and get it over!" said Nugent. "What on earth would the

fellows think, if they saw it, as we did?"

"They'd think I pinched it, like you do!" said Skip bitterly. "I s'pose it ain't no good telling you I didn't!"

Grunt, from Johnny Bull. Evidently he had no use for such a statement!

"If you mean that it is yours—"

said Harry slowly.

"I mean jest that, and you can believe it or not."

"It's not easy to believe, Skip," said Harry quietly. "From what you've said, you were brought up in an alley, by some brute you call Barney the Binger, and you joined up later with a rascal called Jimmy the Rat, who is now in prison. You've said that you don't know your own parents, or even your own name. And you're asking us to believe that that gold locket belongs to you. If that's so, where did you get it?"

"I dunno."

"You don't know!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove.

"Ow'd I know?" snapped Skip.

"All I know is, that I've always 'ad it. Barney never knowed I 'ad it, or he'd 'ave pinched it fast enough, for the drink. But I've always 'ad it, all the same. It's got a picture in it, and it might be one of my relations, for all I know."

"Oh!" exclaimed Harry.

"It was 'ung round my neck when I was a little nipper," said Skip. "I don't know how old I was then—ow'd I know?—but I know I've always 'ad it, and always kept it 'id, in case they got it off me. Many a time I've looked at it, and wondered who she was, and whether I'd ever see 'er."

The Famous Five exchanged glances. It was a strange story enough, but they had to admit that it was possibly true. Skip, alone in the world as he was, ignorant even of his own name, must have had parents and relations somewhere, at some time, like every other fellow.

"You can look at it, if you like!" added Skip, "and if you ever seen it afore, you tell me the bloke it belongs to!" he added, with a sneer.

He drew the locket out from under his jacket, and threw it on the table. The juniors looked at it. They had certainly never seen it before; but they did not, in any case, suppose that it belonged to anyone at Greyfriars School.

"Look in it!" jeered Skip. "P'r'aps you'll say you know the chivvy in it, and that I've pinched it from 'er."

Quietly, Harry Wharton picked up the locket and snapped it open.

He was sure, or almost sure, that Skip had done no pinching at Greyfriars. If the locket was not his own, it was left over from the loot of his earlier days, or else he had been at his old game outside the school.

That was a startling and dismaying thought. Certainly, if the face in the locket was familiar to the eyes of the Greyfriars juniors, Skip's tale could scarcely be true.

The five juniors looked at the photograph.

It was that of a young woman of about twenty-three, with strongly marked features.

In those features, there was something familiar to the eyes of the Famous Five.

They did not, certainly, recognise the face. But they had seen it somewhere or other, or, at least, one very like it, they felt sure.

All the five had the same impression. Skip watched them with a sarcastic

sneer on his face. But his look changed as he read their expressions.

Harry Wharton drew a deep breath. "Where did you get this, Skip?" he asked, in a low voice.

"I've told you."

"And I tell you," said the captain of the Remove grimly, "that, though I don't know who it is, and can't recognise her, I've seen that face before somewhere—what do you fellows say?"

"The same!" said Bob Cherry.

"The samefulness is terrific!" agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Johnny Bull nodded emphatically.

"No doubt about it," said Nugent. "It might be a chance resemblance, of course, but—it's like a face I've seen somewhere."

"Gammon!" said Skip.

"Don't be a young ass!" said Bob. "That photograph is of somebody we've seen while we've been at school—somebody about Greyfriars somewhere. We live in different parts of the country, so it can't have been at home—or we shouldn't all know it. Goodness knows who—nobody here, at any rate. But it's somebody who lives near Greyfriars, I'll bank on that."

"Ow'd I come by it, then?" jeered Skip.

"There's only one answer to that question, Skip!" said Harry Wharton. "You've pinched that locket from somebody in this neighbourhood since you've been here."

"That's what you think, is it?"

"What else am I to think?" exclaimed the captain of the Remove. "Do you expect me to believe that you've had that photograph since you were a little nipper, when I know perfectly well that it belongs to somebody not far from this school?"

"Oo?" sneered Skip.

"I don't know! It's not somebody I've seen often, I know that! I can't spot who it is. But I know I've seen that face somewhere."

"And I know you ain't!" said Skip. "P'raps you've fixed this 'ere up with young Smith, as he never got by with his lies about his blooming notecase!"

"What?" gasped Wharton.

"Why, you rotten young black-guard!" roared Johnny Bull.

"P'raps you 'ave, and perhaps you ain't!" said Skip. "But that there locket's mine, and I'm keeping it!" He crammed it back into an inside pocket. "Now you can go and tell Mr. Quelch if you like, and the 'Ead, too, and I'll say the same to them, and you won't get shut of me so easy as you think."

Harry Wharton & Co. gazed at the hapless waif of Slummock's Alley in almost incredulous disgust.

He had suspected Smithy of making a false accusation, which the Bounder, hasty and headstrong as he was, was, of course, totally incapable of doing. Now, it seemed, he was extending the same suspicion to the Famous Five.

That the Remove did not want him, he knew only too well; and to the boy trained among unscrupulous crooks, such a suspicion of foul play came only too easily.

"Let's get out of this!" gasped Harry Wharton. "It's no good talking to him—he makes me sick! Get out, for goodness' sake!"

The Famous Five left the study at once. Even the good-natured Bob was not thinking now of asking that young rascal to join in the bike spin.

Skip was left staring after them—with angry resentment in his face, which gradually changed to troubled dismay.

More than once it had been borne in

on his mind that the ways of Slummock's Alley were not the ways of Greyfriars School; but it was a lesson hard to learn.

He realised now that he had given deep and deadly offence to the only fellows in the Remove who had shown him kindness—and he realised, too, that his miserable suspicion was not only unfounded, but impossible. He crossed to the study window and stood staring out, with a dark and gloomy brow.

"This 'ere ain't the place for me!" he muttered. "It ain't! That feller Coker's a kind-earted bloke, but he's a silly fat-head, like I always knowed—and he was a fool to bring me 'ere. What I oughter do is to 'ook it, like they all want—only—"

The chums of the Remove, who had left him in deep anger, would perhaps have relented, had they known what was in the waif's mind.

Leaving Greyfriars, where nobody wanted him, was a thought that had come into Skip's mind more than once. But leaving Greyfriars meant going back to what he had left—and his new associations had already worked a change in Skip's views on the subject of pinching. A repugnance for his former way of life, and even for the remembrance of it, was growing up in Skip, deeper and stronger with every passing day. Leaving Greyfriars meant going back to picking pockets—and the waif of Slummock's Alley had already determined, irrevocably, that he would never, as he expressed it, "pinch no more."

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

No Lift for Bunter!

"I SAY, you fellows!" yelled Billy Bunter.

Five cyclists slowed down.

Billy Bunter was plugging down Friardale Lane, when he heard the sound of bicycles behind him, and blinked round, through his big spectacles.

As he recognised the Famous Five, he waved a fat hand and yelled.

"I say, hold on!" he squeaked, as they slowed.

"Buck up—what is it?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Get down, and I'll tell you."

"Bow-wow!"

No member of the famous Co. seemed keen on dismounting to hear what Billy Bunter had to say. If he had anything to say that was worth hearing—which seemed doubtful—he could squeak it out as they rode. They slowed to the slowest possible pace to give him a chance.

"I say, you fellows, I'm going over to Cliff House!" gasped Bunter, trotting beside the bicycles, and puffing and blowing as he trotted. "I'm going to see my sister Bessie!"

"Sorry!" said Bob Cherry.

"Eh? What are you sorry for, fat-head?"

"Bessie!"

"Beast! I say, I'm tired," gasped Bunter. "It's a jolly long walk. Will one of you fellows give me a lift on his bike?"

"I would, with pleasure——" began Bob.

"Thanks, old chap!"

"If my bike was a ten-ton lorry——"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"But it isn't! Good-bye!"

"Beasts!" roared Bunter, as the Famous Five, laughing, put on speed again, and swept on down the lane.

The chums of the Remove were quite obliging fellows. But taking Billy

Bunter's uncommon weight on the back of a bike was really asking too much of any fellow. Moreover, they were going nowhere near Cliff House School. So they pedalled on, and the fat Owl of the Remove was left to plug afoot.

It was a warm afternoon, for October. The sun was bright, the lane was dusty, and Bunter was tired—not to mention lazy.

But there was no help for it, and the fat junior plugged on, till he reached the stile, which gave admittance to the footpath through Friardale Wood, a short cut to the sea and Cliff House.

On that stile Bunter reposed his fat person, to take a rest before he proceeded farther.

It was not a very long walk to Cliff House for any other Greyfriars junior. But it was a fearfully long walk to Bunter. A mile and a half was seven furlongs more than he liked when he took a walk.

But he wanted to see Bessie Bunter. This was not wholly on account of brotherly love, which was not strongly developed in the Bunter clan. Sometimes he did not see Miss Elizabeth Bunter for weeks together, and even forgot that he had such a charming relative at Cliff House School at all.

But circumstances alter cases. There was a feast toward, at Cliff House that afternoon. Hazeldene of the Remove, having a sister also at Cliff House, was going. He had been asked. Bunter, having a sister also at Cliff House, was willing to disregard the trifling circumstance that he had not been asked!

There was plenty of time yet, fortunately, and Bunter was able to take a rest on the stile. He sat there, and fanned his fat face.

The Famous Five had long disappeared in the dusty distance, when another cyclist came up the lane from the direction of Greyfriars—a junior in a straw hat.

This time it was Hazeldene of the Remove.

Bunter's fat face brightened.

Hazel, evidently, was going to Cliff House on his bike. There was no reason—that Bunter could see—why he should not stand on the foot-rests, and go on Hazel's bike as a passenger. This would save Bunter a lot of trouble. It was likely to give Hazel a lot, too; but that did not matter to Bunter. It was possible that it might matter to Hazel!

The Remove jumped off his bike at the stile to lift it over, and take the short cut through the wood.

"Shift, fatty!" he said briefly.

"Hold on a minute, old chap!" said Bunter amicably. "There's no hurry, you know! They ain't teeing at Cliff House till half-past five. Old Bullivant goes for her walk after class, and she's as regular as clockwork. Look here, I'll come with you, if you like."

"I don't!" said Hazel.

"Beast!"

Hazeldene laughed, and lifted his machine.

"Shift, fathead, before I bang it into you!" he suggested.

"I say, old chap—ow! Keep that bike away, you silly idiot—you're making my bags all muddy!" yelled Bunter.

"Better shift, then!" grinned Hazel.

Billy Bunter shifted, and Hazel dropped his machine on the inner side of the stile. He clambered over after it.

"I say, old chap," said Bunter persuasively. "I'm going to Cliff House. Miss Bullivant has asked Bessie to tea, as well as your sister Marjorie, and Clara and the rest, and I'm going with

her. See? I don't want to miss it, because old Bullivant always stands a jolly good spread when she asks the girls to tea. I heard that last time there were three kinds of cake, as well as jam, and cream puffs. She's a bit of an old rhinoceros, you know, but she knows how to stand a spread—"

"That's why I'm going," said Hazel. "Get out of the way, Bunter!"

"But, I say, what about giving me a lift on your bike?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Hazel.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" snapped Bunter. "What are you cackling at, you ass?"

Hazel grabbed him by the collar from behind.

Bang, bang!

Billy Bunter's bullet head smote the stile. It smote the stile hard. Bunter's yells awoke the echoes of Friardale Wood.

"Yaroooh! Ow! Stoppit! Yarooop!"

Bang, bang!

"Ow! Oh crikey! Leggo!" yelled Bunter frantically. "Ow! My napper! I'll jolly well lick you! Yaroooh!"

Bang!

"Yoo-hoop!"

"There, you fat frump!" gasped Hazel; and, leaving Bunter rubbing his

in the poem, resume plodding on his way

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Whose Hat?

BEASTS!" groaned Billy Bunter. Half-way through the wood, Bunter was more than tired. He was fatigued, he was hot, he was dusty, and he was perspiring; and his pace had dropped to that of an old and feeble snail.

By this time he might have been landed at Cliff House, if a fellow had given him a lift.



Billy Bunter blinked in horror at the face under the smashed hat. It was the face of Miss Bullivant, the games-mistress of Cliff House. The straw hat had taken him in. It was not Hazeldene's. It was Miss Bullivant's!

"Your little joke!" explained Hazel. "I'm not joking—"

"You are, old fat man! Ha, ha, ha!"

And Hazel, laughing, pushed his bike into the footpath to remount it.

Billy Bunter glared at him, with a glare that almost cracked his spectacles.

As Hazel put his leg over the bike, the fat Owl reached out and tipped his straw hat over his face.

Straw hats were dropped at Greyfriars, after the summer term; but that bright and sunny afternoon had caused Hazel to sport his straw.

Bunter tipped it up from behind, and it slid down over Hazel's nose, taking him quite by surprise. The result was that he missed his pedal, the bike spun, and went over, and Hazel sprawled over it.

He gave a yell as he landed on the bike.

"He, he, he!" gasped Bunter.

"Ow!" howled Hazel. "Wow! Why, you fat maniac, I'll burst you all over the shop!"

He scrambled up, red with wrath, and made a fierce rush at Bunter.

Bunter made a prompt jump for the stile, to escape.

But he did not jump quickly enough.

head, and squeaking with anguish, he turned back to his jigger.

He lifted it from the earth, to mount. Then he made the happy discovery that the pedal had been twisted in the fall, and would not go round.

The look that came over Hazel's face as he made that discovery, caused Billy Bunter to leave off rubbing his fat head quite suddenly, and clamber over the stile into the lane.

"You fat idiot!" roared Hazeldene. "Look what you've done! I can't ride that bike now!"

"Serve you jolly well right!" retorted Bunter, from the safe side of the stile.

"Why couldn't you give a fellow a lift?"

"By gum! I'll jolly well—"

Billy Bunter faded up the lane promptly. There was a pain in his bullet head, where it had banged on the stile, and he did not want any more.

Hazeldene glared after him; and then wheeled the jigger onward. He could not ride it, and the only resource was to wheel it as far as Pegg, and leave it at the cycle-shop there to be put in order, while he went to tea at Cliff House.

Not till he was safely out of sight, did Billy Bunter clamber over the stile again, and, like the weary ploughman

The Famous Five had passed him by, like the idle wind which they regarded not. They were beasts! Hazeldene had not only refused him a lift, but had banged his head on the stile, and there was a pain in it where it had banged! Hazel was a worse beast than the other beasts!

There was some satisfaction in the fact that he had to walk to Pegg, wheeling a disabled jigger. But Bunter wished now that he had pitched into the beast, and given him a jolly good thrashing.

But tired and peeved as he was, Bunter plugged on hopefully. The lure of foodstuffs drew him like a magnet.

Owing to a disappointment about a postal order he had long been expecting, he was in his usual stony state; and at Cliff House there was a spread—if a fellow could barge into it. And if Marjorie Hazeldene's brother could, so could Bessie Bunter's brother!

Bessie could hardly refuse to back him up, when he was actually on the spot.

Miss Bullivant, the founder of the feast, might be a little surprised to see him, as he was not on the list of invitees. THE MAGNET LIBRARY. No. 1,549.

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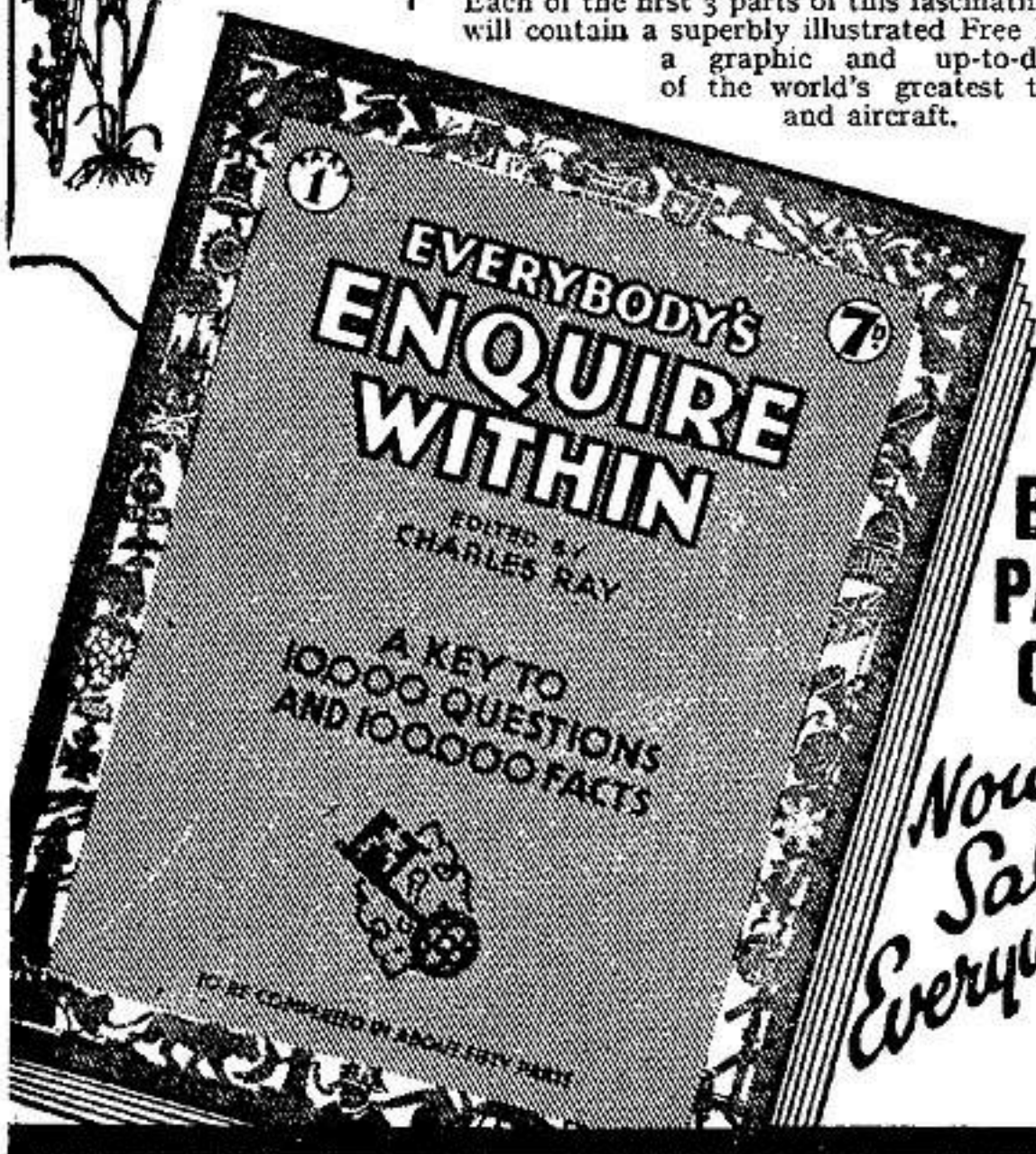
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7d

guests. But even the Bull, as some of the Cliff House girls called the games-mistress, could hardly do anything but take it politely—so Bunter hoped, at least.

After all, he was a charming and fascinating fellow, and he had his good looks and courtly manners to help him through. He felt that he could, with reason, rely a good deal on his personal charm!

Personally, he did not like Miss Bullivant. She was a trifle terrifying. She was a lady with an extremely strong character, and a commanding voice and eye. Games slackers at Cliff House found her adamant. She wore heavy boots, and a straw hat like a man's on a cropped head—and it was rumoured that she smoked cigarettes, though, of course, she was never seen to do so.

But she had a lot of sense.

She understood that a few slices of thin bread and butter, and a snip of cake, did not constitute a tea, as understood by healthy youth.

If Miss Bullivant asked anybody to tea, the tea was worth attending—even by Billy Bunter.

It was even worth a walk of a mile and a half, if a fellow was stony, and had no other resources.

So Billy Bunter plugged wearily on.

He could afford to take his time, for it was not five o'clock yet, and tea with Miss Bullivant was not due till five-thirty.

But he grew more and more tired, and more and more peeved, as he plugged. He would have liked to boot the Famous Five all round. He would have liked to boot Hazel all the way to Cliff House and back again.

He reached the stile on Pegg Lane at last. It was only a short walk to Cliff House School from that spot; but Bunter had to have another rest first. So he sat on the stile.

Sitting there, he considered the tactics to be employed when he arrived at Cliff House. Bessie would have to take him in—that was all right. Miss Bullivant seeing him, would think to herself—"Who is that handsome boy?"

Bessie would present him as her brother, who happened, by sheer chance, to have called at Cliff House just then!

Bunter's pleasant and agreeable manners, and his air of native nobility, would surely do the rest.

At the very worst, Miss Bullivant couldn't kick him out, with those heavy boots of hers, as Remove fellows sometimes did at Greyfriars.

He was going to charm Miss Bullivant! He was going to show her that some Greyfriars fellows, at least, were a bit different from Hazel, who only came there to gobble tuck.

It would be all right—when he got to Cliff House. But he was beastly tired, and fearfully peeved, and had a lingering pain in his banged head—and he would almost have given the Cliff House tea to punch Hazel as he deserved.

Then suddenly, as he sat on the stile, he spotted the straw hat.

He blinked at it.

At a little distance from the stile in the lane, was a mass of hawthorns, and over the hawthorns, showed the straw hat.

Someone was seated there, on the wayside bench, only the straw hat showing over the hawthorns behind the bench.

Bunter's eyes gleamed at it.

He had supposed that Hazel had got as far as Pegg by that time. But the straw hat told a different tale.

No doubt he had got tired wheeling that crooked jigger, and stopped on that wayside bench for a rest, after getting through the wood.

Certainly, it looked like it. Hazel was sporting his straw hat that afternoon, but straw hats were rare in late October. It was Hazel all right! Billy Bunter's fat brows knitted over his big spectacles. More and more vengeful grew the gleam in his little round eyes, behind those big round spectacles.

Hazel had banged his head. Now the beast was fairly asking for it. To creep behind those hawthorns, and bang that straw hat down over Hazel's ears, was as easy as falling off a form.

Long before Hazel could get at him, in return, Bunter would have vanished. The beast would be utterly taken by surprise!

Evidently he had no knowledge that Bunter was near. The back of the straw hat was towards Bunter, and it did not stir.

Bunter breathed hard and deep. He slipped, silently, from the stile, and crept along on tiptoe behind the hawthorns. His eyes gleamed, and he suppressed his breathing. If only he got near enough to bang, before the beast looked round—

Closer and closer he crept, till only the nodding hawthorns were between him and the unseen figure on the bench surmounted by the hat.

Up went his right hand, the fist clenched.

It was poised in the air, right over the hat.

Bunter gathered all his strength for the smite. He was not going to stay to deliver more than one—so it had to be a good one. All his beef was going to be put into one terrific bang.

Bang!

The straw hat was smashed down over the head that wore it! From the wearer came, not the yell that Bunter naturally expected to hear, but a shrill feminine shriek—or rather, a screech!

Bunter, jumping back, gave a gasp of amazement and horror.

It was not Hazel!

Up from the bench, on the other side of the hawthorns, leaped a figure—a figure that was nothing at all like a Greyfriars junior—and that was at least six inches taller than Hazel.

The face, under the smashed hat glared round at Bunter.

He blinked at it in horror, his eyes almost popping through his big spectacles!

It was not only the awful discovery that he had banged a lady on the head that unnerved him. He knew that face! It was the face of Miss Bullivant, the games-mistress of Cliff House!

Too late, he remembered that the Bull had her own special taste in head-gear! That straw hat had taken him in. It was not Hazel's! It was Miss Bullivant's. It was the Bull who was glaring at him across the hawthorns, as fiercely as any bull ever glared at a matador in a Spanish arena.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "Oh crikey!"

His fat knees knocked together.

"Boy!" The Bull fairly roared.

"You—you—"

She did not waste more time in words. Word, after all, were superfluous. Besides, the Bull was a woman of action!

Hazel might not have been able to get Bunter before he fled! But Miss Bullivant got him! She got him quite easily!

She made one plunge through the hawthorns, and a large and sinewy hand gripped Bunter as he would have dodged. There was no dodging for Bunter!

One swing of Miss Bullivant's powerful arm landed him through the

hawthorns, to the wayside seat. He sprawled across it.

Then a heavy hand rose and fell.

Smack, smack, smack!

"Ow! Wow! Yaroooh!" roared Bunter.

"I say, I never—yaroop! I mean, I thought—oooooh! I say—yow-ow-ow!"

Smack, smack, smack!

"Yoo-hoop!"

"Ruffian!" exclaimed Miss Bullivant.

Smack! "Hooligan!" Smack! "You

are a Greyfriars boy, I think!" Smack!

"I will not complain to your head-

master—" Smack! "I will deal with

you myself!" Smack, smack!

"Yurrooop!"

Smack, smack, smack!

"Ooooooooooooooh!"

Miss Bullivant, with a final smack,

and a farewell glare, walked away down

Pegg Lane towards Cliff House—punch-

ing her hat into something like shape

again as she went.

Billy Bunter leaned on the wayside

bench, and roared.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow!"

It was some minutes before Billy

Bunter's dulcet tones ceased to wake the

echoes. He left the spot at last, but he

did not take the way to Cliff House.

He had walked a mile and a half for

tea with the Bull at Cliff House.

Now he started to walk a mile and a

half back again—without the tea!

After what had happened even Billy

Bunter did not think of barging into

Miss Bullivant's tea party. He had a

hopeful nature, but he did not hope to

be able to charm Miss Bullivant now—

not after smashing in her hat!

With feelings that could not have been

expressed in any known language, Billy

Bunter plodded his homeward way—

tea-less!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Tea in Study No. 12!

LORD MAULEVERER walked down the Remove passage and paused near the door of Study No. 1; he paused long, and seemed to meditate.

Remove fellows coming up to the studies to tea, glanced at him. Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, stopped to speak.

"Tea in my study, Mauly," he said.

"Trickle in!"

"Thanks, old man, no!" said Lord

Mauleverer. "Another engagement."

"Afraid I shall offer you a smoke

after tea?" sneered the Bounder; and

he shrugged his shoulders and walked

on to Study No. 4.

Ogilvy and Russell came up, and the

former called to Mauleverer.

"If you want the chaps in that study,

Mauly, they're gone out; I saw them

go out on their jiggers after class."

"All of them?" asked Mauleverer.

"That new kid and all?"

"Oh, no, not likely!" answered Ogilvy,

laughing, and he went on with Russell.

Skinner, who was in the passage,

stared at Mauleverer.

"You don't want the pickpocket,

Mauly?" he asked.

"Not at all," said Lord Mauleverer

urbanely. "I was thinkin' of askin'

Skip to tea if he's about. Seen him?"

"Taking up that pincher?" asked

Skinner, sneering. "You'd better look

out that you're not barred, the same as

he is, if you do."

"You wouldn't bar me, Skinner, for

takin' up Skip, would you?" asked

Lord Mauleverer.

"I jolly well would!"

"Mean that?"

"Yes, you fathead!"

"Then that settles it. I'll jolly well take him up!" said Mauleverer cheerfully. "Thanks, Skinner, old bean!"

And Mauleverer turned to the door of Study No. 1, leaving Harold Skinner scowling, and other fellows in the passage laughing.

Mauly tapped at the door and pushed it open.

Skip was seated at the study table; he was at work on a Latin exercise now, wrinkling his brows over it—perplexed, but determined.

It was the sort of simple exercise that Mr. Twigg might have set for a fag of the Second Form, but it was tough enough for the waif, who had hardly heard of the existence of the Latin language until a few weeks ago.

He looked up, far from pleasantly, at a footstep, probably supposing that his studymates had come back, but his brow cleared as he saw Mauleverer.

So far he had hardly exchanged a dozen words with that member of his Form; for, truth to tell, his noble lordship rather shuddered at the thought of coming into contact with a fellow who was—or had been—a pincher.

But so far as Skip had seen anything of Mauly, Mauly had been urbane and polite. Mauly's manners were rather more polished than the general run of manners in the Lower Fourth, and he would not have hurt any fellow's feelings if he could possibly have helped it.

Now, after considerable consideration, Mauly had decided that if that wretched kid really was on the reform tack, as the Head seemed to suppose, it was no help to him to be barred by his Form, but quite the reverse.

Overcoming, therefore, the repugnance which his whole noble, nervous system felt at the idea of a pincher, Mauly had dropped in to break the ice.

"Oh, you!" said Skip. "You're Mauleverer, ain't you?"

"Yaas."

"Wharton and Nugent 'ave gone out."

Lord Mauleverer smiled.

"I didn't call to see Wharton or Nugent, as it happens," he answered.

"The other blokes 'ave gone with them, I believe."

"Nor the other blokes," said Mauleverer gravely.

"You ain't called to see me, I s'pose?" said Skip, staring.

"Yaas."

"Oh smoky 'addocks!" ejaculated Skip, still staring. "I say, I've 'eard the other coveys say you're a blooming lord."

"The other coveys had it right," assented Mauleverer, with great gravity.

"My eye!" said Skip. "Fancy me a-talking to a lord! I wonder what Barney the Binger would say to that? I s'pose you know Latin?"

"As much as Quelch has been able to drive into me," assented Mauleverer.

"The quantity is not large."

"I dessay you could 'andle this! Look 'ere. What does this 'ere mean—if you know?" Encouraged by Mauly's urbanity, Skip held up his exercise.

"Romulus Romanorum rex erat. I s'pose that means som'thing."

Lord Mauleverer grinned. He was far from being one of Mr. Quelch's brightest pupils; but Latin, to that extent, he could have done on the back of his neck, so to speak.

"Yaas," he assented. "Romulus was King of the Romans."

"That's what it means, is it?" asked Skip.

"Yaas."

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"There ain't nothing about Romans 'ere, that I see. This 'ere word is Romanorum."

"That's the genitive case," explained Lord Mauleverer. "It means 'of the Romans.'"

"Does it?" said Skip. "Queer way of putting it, if you ask me. Did them Roman blokes really talk to one another like that?"

"Oh, yaas!"

"Must 'ave puzzled one another a bit, I fancy," said Skip. "Still, I s'pose it comes in useful some time if a bloke 'appens to meet any Romans."

"Oh gad!" gasped Mauleverer, almost overcome by the idea of meeting any Romans who had used Latin as their native language. "That's not likely to happen, Skip. It's a dead language, old bean; the modern Romans talk Italian."

"Then what are we a-learning of it for?" asked Skip. "I'd rather put in the time at football myself."

"Lots of fellows think the same, I believe," chuckled Lord Mauleverer. "But never mind that. I dropped in to ask you if you'd like to come along to my study to tea."

"Tea!" repeated Skip.

"Tea!" assented Mauleverer. "In your deep plunges 'nto the classics, old thing, you seem to have forgotten that it's past tea-time."

"Look 'ere. What you getting at?" demanded Skip, with the suspiciousness of Slummock's Alley gleaming from his eyes. "You don't want a bloke like me to tea in your study. Pulling of my leg?"

Lord Mauleverer did not answer for a long moment. During that moment he carefully suppressed the repugnance caused by Skip's answer. The polite smile remained on his face as if glued there.

"My dear chap," he said at last, "I'm askin' you to tea in my study, if you'd care to come. Will you?"

"Course I will, if you mean it!" said Skip. The suspiciousness faded out of his face, and he coloured. He was quite keen enough to see that he had put his unfortunate foot in it again. "Look 'ere, Mauleverer, don't you mind me; p'raps your manners wouldn't be no better'n mine if you'd been brought up by Barney the Binger. See?"

"Oh gad! Yaas—quite! Who was Mr. Barney?" asked Mauleverer. "Not your father?"

"Course he wasn't!" said Skip. "I never 'ad no father that I knowed; nor mother, either. I was a blooming orphan when I come to Barney. I've 'eard 'im say so when he was squiffy. Left on his 'ands, according to 'im—blow him! Fat lot he ever did for me. 'cept teaching me to pinch. I own up that he did that thorough."

"The awful rotter!" breathed Mauleverer.

Skip grinned.

"Some of the blokes 'ere make a fuss if Quelch wops them with a cane," he said. "I'd like them to sample old Barney's buckle belt! I used to get it 'ot and 'ard if I come back with empty 'ands."

"Don't!" gasped Mauleverer. "You're makin' my flesh creep, old chap! I—I mean, sorry, Skip! Look here, trickle along with me. I've got a decent spread in my study, and I want you to come."

"Like a bird!" said Skip.

Latin exercises were left forgotten on the table in Study No. 1.

Bright and cheery, Skip walked out with Lord Mauleverer up the Remove passage.

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A dozen pairs of eyes watched the ill-assorted pair as they went—his slim, elegant, handsome lordship by the side of the stocky young rascal from Slummock's Alley.

"What's this game, Mauly?" asked Bolsover major.

"Game?" repeated Mauly. "I don't catch on, dear man! Skip's comin' to tea in my study, if that's what you're referrin' to."

"Oh crumbs! You've asked a hooligan to tea!" exclaimed Bolsover.

"Not at all! I haven't asked you, that I remember," answered Lord Mauleverer politely, and he walked on with Skip, leaving Bolsover major scowling.

Skip glanced round Study No. 12 when he entered it, with an appreciative eye.

Mauleverer's surroundings were rather luxurious for a junior schoolboy. Study No. 1 was quite cosy and comfortable, but Mauly's looked as if a small fortune had been spent on its outfit.

"Smoky 'addocks!" said Skip. "You do yourself all right 'ere, old covey."

"Eh? Oh, yaas!"

"You 'ave this 'ere study to yourself?" asked Skip.

"Oh, no! My studymate, Vivian, is teeing out to-day with some men in the Fourth," said Mauleverer, rather hastily.

Skip grinned cheerfully. He was as keen as a razor, and he knew at once that he was asked to the study while Vivian was teeing out, because Vivian did not share Mauly's desire to be civil to him. But Skip was not disposed to be over punctilious; and he did not mind in the least.

The spread, at least, was all that could be desired.

They sat down to it with cheerful faces. Skip's face, in fact, was beaming. A few of the Remove had been civil to him. Coker of the Fifth had been kind, in his own fatheaded and overbearing way. But this was Skip's first really happy hour since he had been at Greyfriars.

With all his trials and tribulations in the Remove, Skip found Greyfriars a happy haven, in comparison with Slummock's Alley. But he had sensitive feelings under his rough exterior, and those feelings had been deeply wounded by the general disdain and avoidance. Now the fellow he admired most in all the Form was entertaining him to tea in his study with graceful politeness. Skip's chubby face was like the midsummer sun for brightness.

Tea was going on happily when the door opened, and a fat face and a large pair of spectacles blinked in.

"Oh, here you are, Mauly!" gasped Billy Bunter.

Tired and dusty, Bunter almost tottered in the doorway of Study No. 12.

He had got back from his expedition at last. Tea in his own study—Study No. 7—was over, and Peter Todd and Tom Dutton had gone out. The fat Owl blinked into Study No. 12, in the hope that Lord Mauleverer was not through yet.

"Yaas, here I am!" assented Lord Mauleverer. "Good-bye!"

"Oh, really, Mauly—"

"Shut the door after you, old fat man!"

"I say, Mauly, old man, I've been over to Cliff House to tea, and I never got any, after all, because I had a row with that old cat, Bullivant—" Billy Bunter broke off, as his eyes and spectacles fell on Skip. "Oh crikey! What's that pickpocket doing here?"

It was rather an unfortunate remark for Bunter. Lord Mauleverer, who was the easiest-going fellow at Greyfriars, would certainly have resigned himself to his hard fate, and allowed the fat junior to roll in to tea—but for that remark. But that did it.

"Skip, old chap!" said Lord Mauleverer. "Would you mind doin' something to oblige me?"

"Any old thing, you bet!" said Skip.

"Will you kick Bunter into the passage?"

"Won't I?" grinned Skip.

And he did!

There was a wild roar in the Remove passage as Bunter rolled.

The door of Study No. 12 shut on him.

Billy Bunter, still tea-less, rolled dismally away—reduced to the last resource of the stony—tea in Hall.

And when he arrived in Hall, and found that tea was over there, Bunter simply groaned. Words were inadequate, and he just groaned.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Strange Story!

HARRY WHARTON and Frank Nugent came into Study No. 1 for prep that evening, and found Skip already there.

Neither of them spoke to him, or even glanced at him.

Skip eyed them rather wistfully, but did not speak, either. His manner was very subdued.

During the week or two that he had been at the school, his studymates had played up to the best of their ability. Mr. Quelch had specially requested his head boy to do what he could for the queer new junior, and Wharton had done his best. Nugent had backed him up, and the other members of the Co. had done the same, more or less. They had stood by him when Smithy made his mistaken accusation. And in every way, they had made the best of a fellow with whom they had nothing in common.

But that was over now. They felt now that they could not stand him, and they were not going to pretend that they could.

There was no occasion for talk, as Skip's prep was quite different from the usual Remove work. Prep passed in grim silence in the study—Wharton and Nugent only anxious to be finished and gone.

Several times Skip looked at them, but did not speak. Not till work was over, and the two juniors rose to leave the study, did he break silence.

"Look 'ere, you blokes!" he said, at length.

They glanced at him. They were barring him, like the rest of the Remove now, but they did not want to carry it so far as to refuse to answer when he spoke.

"Well?" said Harry curtly.

"You needn't get your backs up, 'cause of what I said this 'ere arternoon," muttered Skip. "I knowed the minute I spoke that I was putting of my foot in it, like the rough cove I am. I was sorry arter."

Wharton's set face relaxed a little.

"You don't suspect us of intending to tell lies about you, to get you pushed out of the school, like you did with Smithy?" he asked, with a contempt he could not conceal.

"P'raps I did for a minute," mumbled Skip. "And p'raps you would 'ave, if you'd been brought up like I 'ave."

"Oh!" said Harry. "Well, if you've

learned to suspect fellows of rotten motives, the sooner you learn something else the better. Smithy made a fool of himself the other day over his lost notecase. But he would be hanged, drawn, and quartered before he would make a false accusation—and you ought to have known it."

"He said I pinched it, and I knowed I never did!" said Skip. "And this 'ere arternoon you says that there locket don't belong to me, and I knows it do!"

Wharton and Nugent exchanged glances.

"You don't believe that?" asked Skip.

"How can we believe it?" asked the

captain of the Remove. "I suppose you can't help being a suspicious, distrustful rotter, if you've been trained to be one. A fellow could get over that. But you're keeping something that doesn't belong to you—and that means that you're as dishonest now as you were when you picked our pockets in the holidays. It's no good saying that you were brought up to it. You've seen something different here, and you know how a decent chap thinks about a thief."

"You've put us in a beastly position, too," said Frank Nugent quietly. "We know you've got that thing, and if we say nothing about it, it's as good as being accomplices. But if we say a

word, you'll be booted out of Greyfriars."

"We can't do that," said Harry. "But why can't you do the right thing? You're not poor now and hard up. Coker's aunt is standing your expenses here, and you have more pocket-money than most fellows in the Remove. Yet you're sticking to something you've pinched—"

"I ain't!"

"And that's not all," said Wharton hotly. "If it was left over from an earlier time, it would be bad enough. But you must have taken it since you've been in the school."

"I tell you I ain't!"

(Continued on next page.)

The FIRST of a SERIES of Interesting and Instructive Articles Written Specially for "Magnetites" who want to—

LEARN TO PLAY FOOTBALL!

OUR INTERNATIONAL COACH

WATCH THE GOOD PLAYER!

IT is hard to believe that there was a time when the big footballers of to-day had never kicked a football.

Yet naturally there was such a time, and not so very long ago.

At this time of the year there must be hundreds of boys who are just like that—never kicked a football—but who are looking forward to starting very soon. I am here to help those boys. If you want to be a footballer, listen to me. We are going to start at the beginning, and perhaps one day you will all be in the shoes of the heroes of your favourite teams.

By the way, I hope you have all got a favourite football team, which you go and watch when you get the chance. One of the best ways to learn this game of football is to watch the fellows who are really good at it. That's my first tip. Remember it.

Before we start talking about how to play football, there are one or two things I ought to tell you, just as an introduction to the game. As the time has approached for you to start playing yourself, I guess some of you are worried about your size. Perhaps you are a bit smaller than the fellows you play with, and you're wondering just a bit whether they'll be better than you because they are bigger.

Before we go any further let me tell you that they won't. In football size doesn't really matter.

THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING SHORT

EVEN though you may not have played football before, you must have heard the names of Alex.

James, who has just put his football boots away for good, and Hughie Gallacher. Some people put these two players among the best footballers who have ever lived. Alex James is just five feet six inches in height. Hughie Gallacher is half an

In football, size doesn't really matter. The small player has just as much chance of getting on and being a "star" as the hefty one.

inch shorter. Both very small, but wonderful footballers just the same. There have been footballers smaller still. "Fanny" Walden was only five feet two—but he played for England. You see, size doesn't matter in football.

I guess a lot of you are puzzled at that. You've always thought that the fellow who had the most height and weight to throw about went furthest on the football field. Let me try to explain why that isn't so. You probably know if you have read the rules—which I sincerely hope you all have—that a player can only charge another player over with his shoulder. He mustn't push with his hands, with his back, or with his arms. He must do it all with his shoulder.

Just imagine what happens when a player six feet high goes to charge an opponent who isn't much over five feet. The big 'un can't get his shoulder down low enough. Either he has to let the little man run by, or else, worse still, he has to charge him unfairly.

On the other hand, what happens when a little man charges a six-footer. He gets him right in the middle, and very often the big player topples over. I've seen that happen hundreds of times.

And here's another advantage which the little man has over the big fellow in football. On a slippery ground the shorter the legs the easier they are to control. A big player will slide about all over the place. The man with short legs won't be troubled at all. Try that out sometime, and see if I'm not right.

KEEP THE BALL ON THE GROUND

I KNOW what you are all going to shout at me in a minute. You are going to ask me what happens when a little man and a big man go to head the ball when it is in the air. The big man wins, you say. So he does. But wait a minute, and keep alert, because there is another good tip coming. Perhaps I shall be able to talk more about this later, but for the moment, let me say just this. It is true that when the ball is in the air the big player has the better chance.

The point is that in football the place for the ball is on the ground, not in the air at all. The game is called football. Surely if the head were supposed to play a big part in the game it would be called headball.

If you get the impression, when you are watching a football match, that the ball is in the air as much as it is on the ground, then there is something wrong with the teams you are watching.

Which have been the most successful teams in League football in the last two seasons? Sunderland and Manchester City—two teams whose players know that the game should be played "on the ground." They have proved that headball is not so profitable as football.

I do not say that sometimes it does not help a player to be bigger than his opponents. What I do say is that the advantage is not always with the tall footballers. So, you little 'uns, don't worry. You have just as much chance of being a "star" footballer as any of your bigger pals.

Take heed of the tips which I shall give you in this series, watch other people playing, listen when your older friends give you advice, and one day you will have your name across the headlines of the football papers.

Next week I shall start with a lesson which is the basis of all success at football—ball control.

"That's rot!" said Harry. "Five of us have seen the face in that locket before somewhere, and we can only have seen it somewhere about Greyfriars. That locket belongs to somebody in this neighbourhood. It must!"

"Will you let a bloke speak?"

"Oh, say what you like!"

"I got this 'ere to say," said Skip. "That there locket is mine, and I've 'ad it since I was a small nipper. I've told you so, and it's true. You ain't believing it—"

"No!"

"It's true, all the same. I've always thought that mebbe that there chivvy in it belonged to some relation of mine," said Skip. "I s'pose I got relations somewhere, like every other covey. Barney the Binger used to gabble when he was squiffy, and more'n once I've 'eard him speak about my sister—"

"Your sister!" exclaimed Harry.

"Why shouldn't I 'ave a sister, like other blokes?" demanded Skip defiantly. "I never seed 'er, and Barney never would say a word when he was sober; but I used to think that p'r'aps it was true, and that p'r'aps it was 'er face in that there locket."

The two juniors looked at him. They did not, and could not, believe a word of it, yet the bare possibility that it was true had to be admitted.

"What I'm coming to is this 'ere," went on Skip. "If you've seed a face like that there, like you say—"

"If," said Harry contemptuously.

"I mean, I know you 'ave, if you say so," went on Skip humbly. "Well, then, you seed a face somewhere what you think is the same chivvy. Mebbe you're right, and mebbe it's the same, and, if that's 'ow it stands, I'd like to know who it is, 'cause why, if it's 'er face, she must know something about me, or else 'ow do I come to 'ave her picture?"

They looked at him in silence.

"In that there picture," went on Skip, "she looks about twenty-three—fur as a covey can say. 'Course, she'd be older now. I know I've 'ad it more than ten years. That'd make 'er over thirty now. P'r'aps that's why you don't know 'er exactly. She'd look different—p'r'aps only a bit like what she was when she was a girl—see? But if it's the same, like you think, I'd like to see 'er, and show 'er that picture, and 'ear what she says about it."

Wharton and Nugent did not answer him; they could not. There was a possibility of truth in that strange tale, and they had to admit it. But it looked more like—much more like—a fantastic invention to account for the possession of the gold locket. Its possession had to be accounted for, and the unscrupulous young rascal was trying to pull their legs. They could not help thinking so, and their belief showed plainly in their faces.

Skip's own face hardened.

"Wot you got to say to that?" he asked roughly.

"Nothing!" said Harry.

"You don't believe me?"

"No."

"Do the other thing then, and be blowed!" snorted Skip. "And if you don't want to speak to a bloke, keep your chinwag to yourself; I don't want it. Betcher that bloke Mauleverer would believe it if I told 'im! He's a gentleman, he is. Now, get out and leave a covey alone!"

"As soon as you like," said Harry. "But you know what we think, Skip, and if you know what's good for you you will take that gold locket to Quelch and hand it over to him before other fellows see it on you."

"Oh, shut it!" said Skip rudely.

"You won't?"

"I said shut it! That means, 'old your row!' snapped Skip.

Really there was nothing to be said in answer to that.

Wharton and Nugent left the study without another word.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Not What Coker Wanted!

HORACE COKER of the Fifth Form looked into the changing-room on Wednesday afternoon.

It was crowded with juniors, a match being on that afternoon between the Remove and the Upper Fourth.

Coker of the Fifth was much too lordly a fellow, as a rule, to know anything about junior matches. If he knew anything about them, he affected not to know. But on this special occasion, Horace not only knew that the Remove had a game on, but had come specially to the changing-room to speak to the Remove skipper about it.

His reason was—Skip!

Skip, as Coker had told all Greyfriars several times over, and then several more times, had saved him from having his nut cracked by a footpad.

Coker regarded him as being under his protection. He was going to keep an eye on Skip. He was going to help bring him up in the way he should go.

Unluckily, having quite a lot of other affairs to think of, Coker was not quite able to carry out these benevolent intentions. In actual fact, days passed without Coker seeing Skip at all, and he even forgot him at times.

At other times he would remember him, and seeing him in the quad would say: "Hallo! Getting on all right—what?" and pass on without waiting for an answer.

Still, Coker was a dutiful fellow. Discovering that the juniors barred Skip, he had told them sternly that he would not allow anything of that kind, which had caused the Removites to reduce him to a state of wreckage for his cheek, and certainly had not caused them to relent towards his protege.

Now Coker clearly was at it again.

He looked into the changing-room, where there was a cheery buzz of voices, glanced over the juniors there, and failed to spot Skip. He called out to the captain of the Remove.

"Here, Wharton!"

Harry glanced round, with a jersey half on.

"Hallo, Horace!" he said cheerily.

This, of course, was cheek, and meant to be cheek, as Coker realised. But Coker kept his temper.

"I believe you're playing one of your fag matches this afternoon," he said.

"Do you?" asked Wharton, in surprise.

"Aren't you?" demanded Coker.

"Not at all!"

"Then what are you changing for?" asked Coker, puzzled.

"Football!"

"You silly little ass, what do you mean, then?"

"You silly big ass, I mean that we're playing a junior match," explained the captain of the Remove.

And the juniors in the changing-room grinned.

"Well, that's what I mean," said Coker, with unusual self-restraint.

"If that's what you mean, why not say what you mean?" suggested Wharton.

"Doesn't Prout teach you English in the Fifth? Or are you just fatheaded?"

Coker breathed hard and deep.

"Have you got Skip in the team?" he inquired.

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because he's left out."

"Well, why is he left out?"

"Because he's not put in."

There was a chuckle from the footballers. They found the expression on Horace Coker's speaking countenance entertaining.

It was clear that Coker of the Fifth only barely restrained himself from jumping at the captain of the Remove.

Fellows who had not yet got their football boots on, hurried up with that operation. They fancied that the boots might be needed soon.

However, the great man of the Fifth continued to control his just wrath. His voice was almost calm as he went on:

"That kid can play footer."

"How on earth do you know?" asked Harry.

"I've seen him in games practice."

"Yes, but you don't know anything about footer."

"You cheeky young sweep!" roared Coker, his wrath breaking out. "Do you want me to come in there and mop up the place with you?"

"Just that!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Trot in!"

"Do!" urged Bob Cherry.

"Oh, do!" implored Johnny Bull.

"Roll in!" chuckled Peter Todd.

Coker of the Fifth, however, did not roll in. Passing these pressing invitations unheeded, he addressed the captain of the Remove again.

"Look here, young Wharton, that kid has got to have fair play. He can play footer, and he's keen enough, I know that. Now, look here, put him in the team. You can leave one of the other fags out to make room for him. It won't make any difference to that scrambling and barging that you fags call Soccer."

The Remove fellows gazed at Coker.

In the Greyfriars Remove they played Soccer with the accent on the "play," so to speak. They played a good game and they knew it, and prided themselves on the fact. Coker, on the other hand, played footer as a rhinoceros or a hippopotamus might have played it, and what he did not know about the game would have filled large volumes to overflowing. Coker had his own style in Soccer, and he had it all to himself!

So his criticism of the Remove game was neither grateful nor comforting. The Removites would really rather have taken it from Billy Bunter than from Horace Coker.

"Well, what about it?" asked Coker briskly. "The kid's all right, you can take that from me. Your kicking and rushing isn't footer, but such as it is, I want to see the kid taking his whack in it."

"That's what you want, is it?" gasped the captain of the Remove.

"That's it!" said Coker, with a nod.

GIFTS IN PLENTY.

On page 25 there are particulars of a number of free presents obtainable from Rowntree & Co., Ltd., in exchange for coupons from their tins of cocoa. There are lovely boxes of paints, footballs, table tennis sets and heaps of other lovely gifts to choose from. Send a postcard for the special list of gifts with a Free Voucher worth three coupons as directed at the foot of the advertisement, and don't forget to show your mother her special paragraph.

"It's quite different from what you're going to get!"

"Eh?"

"You fellows ready?" asked Harry Wharton, looking round.

"The readyfulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Come on, then! On the ball!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The "ball" at the moment was Coker of the Fifth!

The captain of the Remove led a rush through the doorway of the changing-room.

Coker staggered before the rush, and as three or four football boots clumped on him he roared.

"Yaroop! You cheeky young villains, wharrer you up to?"

Coker really did not need to ask that question, for it was quite plain what the Removites were up to. They were playing footer, on kick-and-rush principles, with Coker of the Fifth in place of a ball!

For a few moments Horace, raging with wrath, attempted to stem the tide.

Then it swept him away.

He staggered, and tottered, and swayed, and sagged, in the midst of the merry Removites, with football boots clumping on him from all sides. Some of the juniors, in their eagerness to land one on Coker, booted one another. But Horace got most of it.

He got it hard and heavy, hot and strong. A couple of minutes of it was enough for Coker. Then he ran.

After him ran the Removites, dribbling Coker of the Fifth.

How many boots landed on him, Coker never knew. At a rough guess, he would have put it down at about a million.

But he knew that they landed often, and he knew that they landed hard. On that point there was no room for doubt!

Half-way across the quad, the Remove footballers chased the hapless Horace. Then, leaving him in a gurgling heap, they trooped away to Little Side, roaring with laughter.

Coker of the Fifth sat up and blinked after them, not quite sure that he was still in one piece. He felt as if he was in a good many.

"Ooooooogh!" gurgled Coker.

He was still gurgling when the game started on Little Side. Harry Wharton & Co. forgot all about Coker, and he gurgled unheeded.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Skip to the Rescue!

SKIP of the Remove tramped down the bank of the Sark towards Friardale Bridge, with his hands driven deep into his pockets, and a cloud on his brow.

It was October; but it was fine and sunny, and the golden afternoon had tempted some of the Greyfriars fellows to take boats out.

Skip glanced at them in passing; and would have been glad enough to join any of them. But nobody wanted the company of the outcast of the Remove, either in his own Form or any other Form.

He would have been more than glad to join the Remove footballers—or even to stand and watch the game. But he was not wanted there; and the rugged little waif had a disinclination to barge in where he was not wanted.

Much as he liked Lord Mauleverer, and much as he would have enjoyed his lordship's company that half-holiday, he did not think of bothering Mauleverer. That "bloke" had been kind to him; but

Skip was not going to take advantage of his kindness and be a worry to him.

So he started on a tramp down the river by himself—far from enjoying his own company, for he was of a sociable nature. In Slummock's Alley, blokes had been sociable enough—but Skip did not want that sort of society now, even if he could have had it. He had left one world and entered another—and was in the unhappy position of belonging to neither.

As he drew nearer the village, there were no more Greyfriars boats to be seen. But he noticed a boat coming up from the lower reaches of the Sark, and glanced at it.

There were three schoolgirls in it. Skip had heard the juniors speak of Cliff House School, and had heard that Hazeldene and Bunter

had sisters at that establishment. But he had never seen the place, or anyone belonging to it; so he was unaware that the three girls in the boat were Marjorie Hazeldene, Clara Trevlyn, and Bessie Bunter. He noticed, however, the ample proportions and big spectacles of Miss Elizabeth Bunter, and her resemblance to the fat Owl of the Remove.

A barge, towed by a horse, came along, and Skip stepped out of the way of the horse.

The barge rolled slowly on, leaving a heavy wash behind on the river.

The Cliff House boat danced on the wash, and Skip heard a shrill squeak from the plump schoolgirl.

"Owl! I say, you girls, look out—we shall be over!"

"Don't be an ass, Bessie, if you can help it!" remarked Miss Clara.

"Cat!"

"It's all right, Bessie!" said Marjorie Hazeldene. "Sit tight!"

Bessie Bunter sat tight, holding on to the seat with both plump hands. At the same moment, the wind from the sea, blowing strongly up the river, lifted her hat.

Both hands being fully occupied in clinging to the seat, Miss Bunter had none to spare to clutch at her hat.

It flew from her head, and dropped on the gunwale, resting there for a moment before it slid into the water.

"Oooooogh!" squeaked Bessie. "My hat!"

"Look out!" shrieked Clara, as Bessie Bunter, releasing one hand, plunged towards the gunwale to grab the hat before it went.

"Bessie!" exclaimed Marjorie. "Keep back!"

The fat hand missed the hat, which dropped into the water. Bessie's clutch followed it, and closed on it.

She had the hat. But her weight, thrown on the gunwale of the rocking boat, caused it to dip till it almost capsized. That did it—and Bessie shot over the side almost like a stone from a catapult.

Splash!

Skip had passed the boat, and was not looking back. But at the sound of

(Continued on next page.)

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the splash, and the startled cries from the boat that followed it, he swung round at once, and stared across the rippling water.

"Oh, smoky 'addocks!" gasped Skip, in alarm.

He stared blankly at a fat face and a gleaming pair of spectacles that showed above the water; as Bessie Bunter was swept down towards the bridge.

By the bridge, where the stream narrowed, the current was strong. It whipped Bessie away from the boat in a twinkling.

"Bessie!" shrieked Clara, in horror.

"Oh! Quick!" panted Marjorie.

They got the boat round, to pull down the current after Bessie. But both of them were white with horror, for they knew quite well that they could never reach her in time.

Bessie did not even know what was happening to her. Utterly bewildered and half-conscious, she swept away down the swift current to the bridge.

Skip, on the bank, stood for a second staring. Then he threw off his jacket and cap, and went headlong into the water.

Skip was up to the Remove standard in very few ways; but at "ducker" he had shown that he was as good a man as any in the Form. And he showed now that he could swim—and swim magnificently.

He shot across the current with lightning strokes, and reached Bessie as she was dipping under for the third time.

His grasp pulled her head above the water again, and Miss Bunter spluttered frantically.

"Gurrrrgggghh!"

"Old on, miss!" gasped Skip.

Bessie Bunter hardly needed telling. The moment she had anything to cling to, she clung, like a limpet to a rock.

Two plump arms fastened round Skip's neck like a steel vice, dragging him down.

He struggled wildly, exerting all his strength, and came up again.

Bessie came up with him, still clutching his neck, rather like a boa-constrictor.

"Urrggh! Give a bloke a chance!" gurgled Skip.

Bessie Bunter made no reply—she did not even hear. She clung!

Skip swam hard, keeping himself and Bessie afloat, the current taking him down under the shadowy arch of the bridge with his burden.

How he got through, with that weight hanging helplessly on his neck, Skip could never have told. But he was a good swimmer, and he was strong, and he had unlimited pluck and determination.

He kept himself and his burden afloat, and, as the current dashed him against the arch, he clutched at a stone coping a foot above the water, and held on desperately.

The water tore at him, almost dragging him away; but he held, and shouted huskily for help. The boat, he knew, must be somewhere near at hand.

"Elp! 'Elp!" shouted Skip.

"Gurrrggh!" came in a feeble gurgle from Bessie.

"Elp!"

"Hold on!" came a clear voice, that of Marjorie Hazeldene; and there was a dash of oars in the water.

The boat glided under the bridge.

Skip, with his free hand, gripped the gunwale, and let go with the other. The boat, borne on by the current, carried him on, and out into the sunshine below the bridge.

Between Skip, in the water, and Marjorie and Clara, in the boat, Bessie

Bunter was got on board, where she sat streaming and gasping and gurgling.

"Oooogh!" gurgled Bessie. "I'm wet! I'm wet all over! Grooogh!"

Skip, utterly spent and exhausted, hung on to the gunwale. But he grinned up at the anxious faces of the two girls.

"You better get 'er 'ome as soon as you can, young ladies!" he gasped.

"She'll be catching a blooming cold!"

"Let me help you in!" exclaimed Marjorie.

"That's orlright!" said Skip. "Pull in a bit, and I'll get on the bank. You jest 'it out for 'ome."

A few moments more, and Skip scrambled through the rushes up the bank.

Marjorie and Clara pulled away as fast as they could, to get Bessie landed as quickly as possible.

Skip, on the bank, threw himself down on the grass, and did not move for some minutes. That brief, but fierce struggle for life in the swift current had exhausted him, tough as he was.

But he picked himself up at last and wrung the water out of his clothes as well as he could. Then he tramped up the bank to the spot where he had left his jacket and cap.

He put them on, and then, slowly, for he was tired out, he tramped up the bank, on his way back to the school, and at a turn of the towpath, walked fairly into a crowd of Remove fellows coming down the river.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Bounder's Rag!

"**H**ERE he is!"

"Here's the cad!"

"Bag him!"

"Snaffle him!"

There were half a dozen fellows in the little crowd that suddenly met Skip at the turn of the towpath. Before he knew what was happening they had surrounded him with a rush.

"'Ere, 'ands off!" exclaimed Skip. "What's this blooming game?"

He struggled in the grasp of the grinning juniors, though not with his accustomed energy, for he was still spent from his struggle in the water.

Bolsover major had him by one arm. Stott by the other; Skinner had hold of his collar and Snoop of one ear! Vernon-Smith and Hazeldene grasped him, too.

"Look 'ere—" he panted.

"Dropped something?" grinned the Bounder.

"Eh? Whatcha mean?"

"I thought I heard an H drop."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, shut it!" snapped Skip. "You let a bloke alone! 'Arf a dozen of yer 'andling one bloke! I'd knock your faces in, one at a time!"

"But we haven't followed you to have our faces knocked in," explained the Bounder, with a grin. "We're just dropping you a hint that pick-pockets aren't wanted in the Remove!"

"Just that!" chuckled Bolsover major.

"I s'pose this 'ere is what you call a rag?" snapped Skip.

"This 'ere is just that," chuckled Smithy, "and I've stood out of a football match this afternoon for your especial benefit."

Skip gritted his teeth. So far, he had been barred by nearly all his Form, but there had not been any active ragging. Bolsover major, who had undertaken to whop him, had been knocked out so swiftly and severely that nobody else had been keen to undertake that task. Most of the fellows

were content to leave him alone, at arm's length, and the greater part of the Form would have opposed ragging measures. Harry Wharton & Co., indeed, would have opposed such measures vigorously.

But the Bounder had his own following in the Form. And the Bounder was implacable. His first feeling towards the new fellow had been one of contempt; but since he had made a fool of himself in bringing an accusation that had proved to be a hasty mistake, that feeling had intensified into a bitter dislike. Skinner, who had been booted by the new junior, was very keen to back him up. Stott and Snoop always followed Skinner's lead; Bolsover major was sore and savage from his defeat, and joined in from sheer thoughtlessness.

The six of them had kept an eye open for Skip that afternoon, planning a rag while most of the fellows were on the football field, and, having learned that he had gone down the river, they had followed on—and here they were, and Skip was wriggling helplessly in their hands.

A mile from the school, safe from the eyes of masters and prefects, a rag was a safe proposition; and the Bounder & Co. intended to impress on the unpopular junior's mind that he was not wanted in the Greyfriars Remove.

"Hold the cad!" said Skinner, who had not forgotten the hefty punch that had knocked Bolsover major out. "Don't let him get loose!"

"We've got him!" grinned Hazel.

"Here's the cord!" said the Bounder, drawing a coil of whipcord from his pocket. "Tie up his fins!"

"Look 'ere, you let a cove alone!" roared Skip. "You wouldn't dare 'andle a bloke like this in the blooming school."

"That's why we've got after you here, my pippin!" said the Bounder. "We don't want Quelch butting in!"

"You blooming rotter!" gasped Skip. "You're doing this 'ere, because you never got away with telling lies about a bloke!"

Vernon-Smith's eyes glittered. It was Skip's suspicion that he had deliberately brought a false accusation that made him most bitter.

He had made a hasty mistake in his fixed belief that the new boy was still a pincher, looking for chances to pinch. He had to own up to it when his missing notecase was found in his study. But that was all; and Skip's wretched suspicion that he was capable of what amounted to a crime roused his bitterest resentment and scorn.

"Listen to the cad!" he said, between his teeth. "That's the sort of rotter they've landed on the Remove! Well, we'll let them all see how much we want him in our Form!"

Skip's hands were dragged behind him and his wrists tied together. With the grasp of so many on him resistance was futile.

Then his right leg was seized and bent up at the knee and tied in that position. That left him only one leg to stand on, and the raggers had to hold him now to keep him from falling.

But the Bounder was not finished yet. He drew from his pocket several tubes of water-colour.

Amid howls of laughter from his friends he squeezed the tubes over Skip's flushed and furious face, rubbing in the colour with his finger.

Streaks of red, yellow, and blue alternated on Skip's face, giving him an extraordinary zebra-like appearance.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Skinner & Co.

The Bounder chuckled.

"That's that!" he remarked. "When



"Bessie!" shrieked Clara Trevlyn, in horror. "Oh!" panted Marjorie Hazeldene. "Quick!" Utterly bewildered and half-conscious, Bessie Bunter was swept away down the swift current. Skip, on the bank, stood for a second, staring. Then he threw off his jacket and cap, and went headlong into the water.

they see him like that at Greyfriars they'll know exactly what we think of him in the Remove—what?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly idjit!" gasped Skip. "You think that I'm going back to the school like this 'ere!"

"Just like that there!" agreed the Bounder, with a sarcastic imitation of Skip's English.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I tell you, I won't take a blooming step!" declared Skip.

"You'll take more than one step, my pippin, whether blooming or not!" said Vernon-Smith. "There's a short cut through the wood from here, back to Friardale Lane! You're going to hop it!"

"I ain't!"

"I fancy you are! You'll be booted till you do!"

"Go it!" chortled Skinner.

Skip was led into the footpath, hopping. There, as he was released, he had to continue hopping, to keep from falling.

"Start!" said the Bounder.

"Shan't!" panted Skip.

Without another word the Bounder lunged out with his boot.

Skip gave a yell, and started. There was no resisting that persuasion.

He hopped, and hopped, and hopped. There was no help for it; he had to hop, the Bounder & Co. following behind, ready to land out with a kick if he halted.

Panting for breath, streaming with perspiration, Skip hopped till they emerged from the wood into Friardale Lane, a short distance from the gates of Greyfriars.

"Hop on!" chortled Skinner.

"Oh, smoky 'addocks!" gasped Skip.

"I ain't going—"

"Ain't you?" chuckled Hazeldene. "Help him on!"

"Ow!" gasped Skip, as a boot landed, and he hopped up the lane towards Greyfriars.

He could scarcely believe that the raggers intended him to hop in at the school gates in that state, to meet the eyes of crowds of fellows. But they did—and there was no help for Skip.

A fat junior, in the gateway, blinked round with startled eyes through a big pair of spectacles, at the sight of the hopping Skip.

"He, he, he!" cackled Billy Bunter.

"Oh crikey! He, he, he!"

"Hop it!" chuckled Smithy.

"Boot him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He, he, he!" yelled Bunter, almost weeping with merriment. "He, he, he! I say, you fellows, Quelch is in the quad, and—"

Smithy & Co. did not stop for more than that. If Mr. Quelch was at hand, it was time that the raggers were not at hand!

They faded away promptly, leaving Skip staggering and hopping a few yards from the open gateway, and a crowd of Greyfriars fellows gathering there, staring at him, and howling with laughter.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise for the School!

MR. QUELCH stared.

He looked as if he could not believe his eyes.

Perhaps he hardly could.

The Remove master was walking in the quad with Mr. Prout when his attention was drawn by yells of laughter from a crowd of fellows gathering at the gate.

Both the masters walked in that direction, to see what was happening. Then they saw Skip.

"Who—who—who—what—" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"What—what—who is this?" stuttered Mr. Prout.

"Oh, smoky 'addocks!" groaned Skip, as he stared at his Form-master. If he had had a hope of hopping away, and somehow getting loose, and entering the school in a rather less striking state, that hope had to be given up now.

"Who is it?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. He did not recognise that member of his Form, under the zebra-like streaks of paint.

"I think it's a fellow in your Form, sir!" gasped Potter of the Fifth.

"A boy of my Form!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Impossible!"

"That new kid, Skip, sir, I—I think!" gasped Greene of the Fifth.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hop it, young 'un!" called out Hobson of the Shell.

"He, he, he!" chortled Billy Bunter.

"I say, you fellows— He, he, he!"

"Skip!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch blankly. "Skip! Is—is that indeed a boy of my Form? Answer me, boy—are you—are you Skip?"

"Oh crikey! Yessir!" gasped Skip.

"Extraordinary!" boomed Prout. "The boy must be insane! No boy who was in his right senses would play a trick like this!"

"Why have you done this, Skip?" almost shrieked Mr. Quelch. "How dare you parade the public road in such a state!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the crowd in the gateway. They could guess, if the two masters did not, that it had not been a matter of choice with the outcast of the Remove.

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

(Continued on page 16.)

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The OUTCAST of the SCHOOL!



(Continued from page 13.)

"Skip, I command you to answer me at once! Why—why have you acted in this ridiculous, this absurd manner?"

"I ain't!" wailed Skip. "Think I like it? 'Ow could I 'elp it, when 'arf-a-dozen blokes 'ad 'old of a covey!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "You—you have been treated in this manner by—by—by other boys? I understand! Hobson, instead of laughing in that senseless manner, you might have the kindness, and the common intelligence, to release that boy!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Hobby.

"Amazing!" said Prout. "That, then, is the boy who was befriended by Coker, of my Form! Extraordinary! Quelch, I should recommend the severest measures towards the young rascals who have been guilty of this outrageous action. The very severest measures!"

Mr. Quelch's answer was a sound resembling a snort. He was deeply and intensely angry, and his look showed that the measures he was going to take would be severe enough. But he did not want any advice from the master of the Fifth.

"Release that boy at once, Hobson!" he snapped.

"Oh! Yes, sir, as fast as I can!" gasped Hobson.

He opened his pocket-knife and cut through the whipcords.

Skip was able to drop his tied leg at last, and ceased hopping.

Under the streaks of paint on his face, he was burning crimson, though it could not be seen.

The fact that he was an outcast in his own Form was bitter enough to the Greyfriars waif, without having it displayed and paraded to the whole school like this. Skip had plenty of nerve, and a good allowance of impudence; but he was overwhelmed with shame and humiliation.

"Now go in at once, Skip!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Get that paint cleaned off immediately—and then come to my study."

"Yessir!" mumbled Skip.

He hurried in, and headed for the House.

There was a crowd of fellows in the quadrangle, and all eyes were turned on him, as he went. Yells of laughter greeted him on all sides.

"Oh crumbs! Who's that?" gasped Coker of the Fifth, coming out of the House as Skip arrived. "Is that the Wild Man from Borneo?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's your pet pincher, Coker!" yelled Temple of the Fourth.

Coker jumped.

"Skip! Is that you, Skip?"

"Yes, it blooming well is!" gasped Skip, hurrying past Coker, only anxious to get into the House, and get out of sight.

But Coker caught him by the shoulder and stopped him. Tact had never been one of the great Coker's gifts.

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"Who did this?" he demanded. "Is it a Remove Rag? Who did it?"

"Leggo!"

"Tell me at once who did it, you young ass!" hooted Coker. He tightened his grasp on Skip's shoulder, as the hapless junior wriggled. "By gum! I'll jolly well—yoo-hoop!"

Out of patience, Skip gave him a shove, and Coker sat down suddenly. He sat with a bump, and an astonished gasp.

Skip, jerking away, darted into the House, and left Coker sitting.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a roar from the quad.

"Oh!" gasped Coker. "Oh, my hat! Why, the cheeky little sweep! Oh!"

Skip had vanished. He left Coker spluttering with surprise and wrath, and everybody else howling with laughter. Heedless of them all, he made direct for a bath room, soap, and hot water—and rubbed and scrubbed, and scrubbed and rubbed, till he was, at last, in a fit state to present himself in his Form-master's study.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Chopper Does not Come Down!

HARRY WHARTON glanced, with a rather sarcastic smile, at a group of juniors on the Remove landing.

There were six fellows in that group—and five of them looked very uneasy. The Bounder was cool as a cucumber. Bolsover major was trying hard to keep up his usual bluster. But Skinner, Snoop, and Stott were in a state of ill-concealed disquietude, and Hazeldene was palpably in a funk. Looking at them, the captain of the Remove could hardly have any doubt as to the identity of the raggers.

The rag on Skip was the one topic in the Remove, at present. Every fellow discussed it, and most laughed over it.

It was not, however, likely to be a laughing matter for the raggers when Quelch got going. They had cause for uneasiness.

The football match on Little Side had been over, when Skip came in. Some of the footballers had seen him, from the changing-room. And when they saw him, they could guess why Smithy had stood out of the game that afternoon. Nobody doubted that it was the Bounder's rag. His feud with the outcast of the Remove was too well known for that.

That was more than half an hour ago. Since then, the raggers had come in, and here they were; and Wharton eyed them with a sarcastic eye.

The Bounder, with his usual nerve and effrontery, was fully prepared to face the music—but his associates evidently did not like the prospect.

"Will the cad sneak?" muttered Skinner.

Vernon-Smith laughed.

"He will tell Quelch who ragged him, if that's what you mean," he said.

"If he gives us away——" muttered Stott.

"Didn't you think he would?" sneered Smithy.

"It was too thick!" muttered Hazeldene. "Ragging the cad was all very well—but sending him back to the school like that—that was just fatheaded! Quelch was bound to spot him!"

"I wanted him to!" said the Bounder coolly. "I'd have liked the Head to spot him, too. We don't want that rotter in the Remove, and the sooner the

beaks get that into their heads, the better!"

"That's all very well!" growled Snoop. "But I don't want a flogging!"

"He won't dare give our names!" muttered Skinner. "He knows jolly well the Form would rag him bald-headed for sneaking."

"I wouldn't bank on that!" grinned Smithy. "It's six all round, from Quelch, at the very least! Wasn't it worth it?"

"Yes, it jolly well was!" declared Bolsover major, though not in a tone of conviction. "If you fellows funk facing the music, you shouldn't have taken a hand in it."

"I jolly well wish I hadn't!" muttered Hazel.

"Same here!" mumbled Snoop.

Harry Wharton came across to the group.

"It was you lot?" he asked.

"Guessed it in one!" smiled the Bounder. "We've let all the school know what we think of that rotter, now."

"There'll be a row!" said Harry. "The chopper will come down for this!"

"Think we don't know that?"

"I say, you fellows!" Billy Bunter came up the Remove staircase, and rolled, grinning, across the landing. "I say, that rotter Skip has gone to Quelch's study. He's got the paint off. He, he, he!"

"If you have tears, prepare to shed them in about five minutes!" grinned William Wibley. "You fellows have fairly asked for it!"

"Oh, shut up!" snapped Skinner. He looked round at his fellow-raggers. "Look here, you men! I don't see going like lambs to the slaughter. If that swab gives us away, I don't see owning up to it."

"Oh, don't be an ass!" grunted Hazel. "Have we got the nerve to stand up to Quelch and tell him a pack of lies? I haven't, anyhow!"

"You haven't nerve enough for anything, you rat!" snarled Skinner. "If we all stood together——"

"Smithy's landed us in this!" muttered Snoop. "It's up to him to own up to it, when we go down to Quelch."

The Bounder's lip curled with scorn.

"Leave that to me!" he said. "I'll take as much as I can on myself!" Quelch will know that I was ringleader, anyhow, without being told! He wouldn't suspect you of doing anything that needed a spot of pluck, Snoopey!"

Some of the fellows laughed, and Sidney James Snoop flushed. The Bounder had a bitter tongue when he let it go.

"It was a rotten, dirty trick on the kid!" remarked Lord Mauleverer, who had joined the group on the landing. "But you needn't be afraid! Skip won't give Quelch your names."

"Think he'll be afraid to, Mauly?" asked Skinner eagerly.

"No; but he won't give you away, all the same."

"Well, he jolly well would, if he wasn't afraid of what would happen to him afterwards!" said Snoop.

"I don't quite see how he'll get out of it when Quelch asks him!" said Harry Wharton. "Quelch must know that he was ragged by Remove men—and he will order Skip to give the names."

"And the cad will jump at the order!" sneered the Bounder.

"We'll scrag him afterwards!" growled Bolsover major.

"Why the dickens couldn't you let

the fellow alone!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove. "It's one thing to bar him—but it's quite another to rag him like this. It was a rotten game."

"The rottenfulness was terrific."

"Dirty trick!" agreed Bob Cherry.

"So glad to hear your opinion!" sneered the Bounder. "Mind keepin' it to yourself till you're asked for it?"

"If I'd been there, I'd jolly well have stopped you!" snapped Wharton.

"You might have got some of the same if you'd barged in!" retorted Smithy. "And this isn't the last that the cad is goin' to get, either! I'm goin' to make him fed up with Greyfriars before I'm done with him!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he comes!"

All eyes were turned on Skip of the Remove as he came up the staircase.

He did not glance at the crowd on the landing.

Passing them with averted face, he went into his study, and closed the door after him.

The juniors exchanged glances.

Skip had been to Quelch; his interview with the Remove master was over.

Undoubtedly, Quelch knew that the ragers were Remove men, and had told Skip to give their names. Few doubted that he had done so. The victim of such a rag could hardly be expected to shield the ragers; moreover, it was not easy to refuse to answer a master like Henry Samuel Quelch.

Smithy & Co. had not the slightest doubt that a summons to their Form-master's study was about to follow.

They waited anxiously for the expected message. Even the Bounder, with all his nerve, had a twinge of inward uneasiness; and Bolsover's bluster had quite faded away. The other four were openly funky.

"Here comes somebody!" said Frank Nugent, as there was a step on the stairs.

But it was only Tom Brown coming up.

A few minutes later, there was another step. But it was only Fisher T. Fish.

"Isn't the old bean goin' to send for us, or what?" muttered the Bounder. "It isn't like Quelch to leave it hangin' over us."

"Better ask that cad what he's done!" muttered Skinner.

"I'm not goin' to speak to him."

"Well, I am!" snarled Hazeldene, and he tramped along to the door of Study No. 1, and threw it open.

The whole crowd followed him. The ragers were anxious, and all the other fellows curious to know what was going to happen. A couple of dozen fellows stared into the study.

Skip looked round at them, with a gleam in his eyes. But his manner was subdued. What had happened had hit the waif of Greyfriars harder than any of the juniors guessed. He understood now, if he had not fully understood before, how utterly he was an outcast at Greyfriars; and his present feeling was one of deep despondency.

"Look here—" began Hazel.

"Don't you talk to me!" interrupted Skip. "I done with the lot of you! Can't you leave a bloke alone in his own study?"

"We want to know whether you've sneaked to Quelch!"

"We don't!" cut in the Bounder. "Don't be a fool, Hazel! We all know that he has!"

"Shut up, Smithy—the kid can tell us!" said Skinner. "Look here, you young cad, if you've given Quelch our names—"

Skip's lip curled.

"If I'd give your names, you'd be up before Quelch afore this!" he answered. "Don't you be in a funk—I ain't give no names."

"You haven't?" exclaimed Snoop.

"No, I ain't! Now, get out, and leave a bloke alone! You don't dare start another rag 'ere when you might be copped!" added Skip sarcastically. "You 'ave to ketch a bloke in a safe place, six to one, afore you rag 'im! Take your blooming face away, afore I punch it!"

"Didn't Quelch ask you for the names?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Course he did!"

"And what the dickens did you say?"

"I didn't say nothing."

"You jolly well knew what you would get afterwards if you did!" jeered Skinner. "Sneaking don't pay in the Remove!"

"Think so if you like!" said Skip. "Wot'd I care wot you think—a bloke like you! Get out of my room!"

Skip grasped the door, and slammed it in the crowd of faces. He was left alone after that.

Whatever his reason, he had not named the ragers, and they had nothing to fear. Which was an immense relief to Skinner & Co.—and probably to the Bounder also, though nothing would have induced him to admit it.

But whether Skip had been silent because he would not "sneak," or because he dared not face the consequences, remained an open question, and every fellow was at liberty to hold his own opinion about that.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Poor Bessie!

"BOO-HOO!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Boo-hoo!"

"What the thump—"

"Boo-hoooooooooo!" blubbered Billy Bunter.

Harry Wharton & Co. gazed at the fat Owl of the Remove, transfixed.

It was the following day, and they had come up after class to tea. They passed Study No. 1, heading up the passage for Study No. 13, Bob's study.

Since the day they had seen the gold locket in Skip's possession, Wharton and Nugent had not tea'd in their own study.

Up to that date, they had very carefully avoided seeming to leave Skip on his own in the study—little as they liked his company, they would not carry their dislike of it so far as that. But since that date there was a change.

The belief that the boy from Slummock's Alley was keeping in his possession something that did not belong to him was altogether too much for them.

Making the best of a bad job was one thing, but associating with an unrepentant pincher was quite another; and they could not and would not do it.

So Bob Cherry's study was now the headquarters of the Co.

Coming up the Remove passage, they passed Study No. 7, the study that was graced and distinguished by William George Bunter.

The door of Study No. 7 stood wide open.

And as the five juniors were walking past it, that sudden and surprising sound of grief and woe fell on their astonished ears.

They looked in—at Billy Bunter.

They gazed at him! They stared at him!

In the Greyfriars Remove, fellows did not "blub." Even under the severest whopping, a fellow might yell when the cane came down—but never, never did he, or would he, "blub." Any fellow who "blubbed" would certainly never have been allowed to hear the end of it. Even Bunter never blubbed! So the present sight was astonishing—dumbfounding!

"Boo-hoo-hoo!" blubbered Bunter.

"Gone mad?" inquired Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull! Boo-hoo-hoo—"

"You fat, foozling, frabjous freak!" said Bob Cherry. "Have you been licked? If you're going to make that row about it, I'll give you some more! What do you mean by it, you blithering barrel of blubber?"

"Oh, really, Cherry! Boo-hoo! I say, you fellows! Boo-hoo! My pip-pip-pip—poor sister! Boo-hoo!"

"Oh!" said the Famous Five, together.

"Boo-hoo! Pip-poor Bib-bib-Bessie! Boo-hoo!"

This looked like bad news—very bad news—in the family circle!

Bunter, it was true, had never displayed any overwhelming or overpowering affection, so far as fellows had noticed, either for his brother Sammy or his sister Bessie. Indeed, he had often referred to Sammy as a pig and Bessie as a cat!

Still, if something had happened to Bessie, and Bunter was cut up about it, fellows were prepared to be sympathetic, though surprised.

"Bad news, old fat bean?" asked Bob.

"Ow! Yes! Boo-hoo!"

"But what's happened to Bessie?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Oh dear! Boo-hoo! She's drowned in—"

"Drowned!" gasped the five.

"I mean, nearly drowned. Not quite. Boo-hoo! Nearly! Laid up with a bad cold. Boo-hoo!"

"You're blubbing because Bessie's got a cold?" yelled Nugent.

"Eh? No! Because she's drowned—I mean, she was nearly drowned, and—and it may turn to plumbago."

"What?"

"I mean pneumonia. Pneumonia runs in our family. My grandfather was lame with it."

"Lame with pneumonia?"

"I mean rheumatism and plumbago. Pip-pip-poor Bessie! She fell out of the boat, and was drowned—I mean, nearly drowned. If a fellow hadn't gone in for her, she would have been done for. Boo-hoo! I say, you fellows, you know how fond I am of my sister Bessie—"

"Never noticed it."

"Beast! I mean, I—I'm awfully fond of her! Now she's lying—"

"That runs in your family, at least," remarked Johnny Bull.

"She's lying ill, you beast, in sanny at Cliff House. And I—I can't do anything for her!" wailed Bunter.

"Think of that! Boo-hoo!"

"But what's happened?" asked Harry. "How did you get the news?"

"Hazel went over to see his sister to-day, and she told him. You see, they were out in a boat yesterday afternoon, and Bessie fell in the water. Boo-hoo! They couldn't get the boat after her in time; only some village kid jumped in, and got her under the bridge."

"That was a plucky kid, whoever."

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he was," said Bob Cherry. "You fellows know what the current's like by Friardale Bridge."

"Some swimmer," agreed Nugent. "But he got her out all right, fatty?"

"Oh, yes; but she's laid up," moaned Bunter. "And I—I can't even go over and see her. Boo-hoo!"

"Why can't you? Quelch would give you leave at once."

"It's that old cat Bullivant! I daren't go near her, since I smashed in her hat."

"You smashed in Miss Bullivant's hat?" yelled Bob.

"It was Hazel's fault. He was wearing a straw hat that day, and he banged my head. Well, when I saw that straw, I thought it was Hazel, and banged it in."

"Oh crumbs!"

"And it wasn't; it was that old cat—you know she wears a hat just like a man's hat—and I smashed it on her head."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! She smacked me right and left."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Famous Five.

"Oh, shut up!" roared Bunter. "Now I daren't go near Cliff House, or very likely she would start again. You know what a gorgon she is. She's got a fist like Coker of the Fifth."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So I can't go over to Cliff House, and see poor old Bessie. It would be such a comfort to her to see me, you know."

"Would it?" asked Bob doubtfully.

"Eh? Of course it would."

"You don't think it would make her worse?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Beast!"

"Well, Bessie seems to have had a narrow escape; but if it turns out that she's only caught a cold, it's all right," said Nugent.

"Boo-hoo! I dare say you're not fond of your sisters. We're a very loving family," moaned Bunter.

"You've kept that pretty dark, then, up till now."

"The darkness was terrific!"

"Boo-hoo! I think you might be sympathetic when a fellow's sister is drowned—at least, nearly drowned. I can't go over and see her, because of that old cat Bullivant. Besides, it's a jolly long walk."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, cackle, when a fellow's nearly broken-hearted about his pip-pip-poor sister! If a fellow could only do something for her!" moaned Bunter. "You know, you have to feed a cold. They don't give you much to eat in sanny. I remember when I was in sanny once—it was awful! I'd like to send her some things—nice, nourishing things, you know. And I—I can't! Boo-hoo!"

"Why can't you?"

"My postal order hasn't come."

"Oh!"

"I'm stony!" moaned Bunter. "It's not a thing that often happens to me, as you know, but there it is. If a fellow would lend me a pound, so—so that I could get something nice for Bessie, I should feel better."

"N.G.," said Bob. "If she's in sanny, they wouldn't allow tuck to be sent in to her. They never do."

"Oh, she isn't in sanny now—"

"Eh?"

"I—I mean, she—she was in sanny yesterday, but they let her out to-day."

"Then she can't be fearfully ill," said Bob, staring.

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"Oh, yes; she is, awfully! What I'm afraid of is pneumonia," explained Bunter. "Colds turn to pneumonia, I've heard—I mean, I know. She had a touch of it in the holidays through paddling in the sea, in her foot."

"In her foot?" shrieked Bob.

"Yes; she was hardly able to walk for days."

"Oh crikey!"

"Now she's out of sanny, she ought to be feeding her cold," said Bunter.

"If my postal order had come, it would be all right. Boo-hoo! I—I say, you fellows, if you'd lend me the pound, and take the postal order when—when it comes—"

"Think that would make you feel better about it?" asked Bob.

"Oh, yes—rather!" said Bunter eagerly. In his eagerness he quite forgot that he was overcome with grief for his beloved sister Bessie, and entirely ceased to blub. "That—that would comfort me no end, old chap. I—I should feel ever so much better."

The Famous Five grinned. By this time they were quite aware why the fat Owl had turned on those sounds of grief and woe as they passed the study.

Evidently he had been lying in wait, as it were—all ready to turn on woeful lamentation as soon as they came by.

A fellow, whose sister was ill, was entitled to feel grieved and woeful. He was even entitled to weep over his grief and woe, if he was very tender-hearted. Bunter was only exercising his rights as an affectionate brother. And having, by that display of affectionate grief, evoked sympathy, he was going to get his celebrated postal order cashed, if he could.

There was no doubt that if Billy Bunter succeeded in extracting a pound from sympathising fellows, he would spend it on nice nourishing foodstuffs. But there was a lot of doubt whether those foodstuffs would ever get anywhere near Cliff House School.

"Well, look here," said Bob, with a private wink at his friends, "it won't run to a pound—but what about ten bob? One of those big cakes that Mrs. Mimble charges ten bob for—what?"

Billy Bunter's eyes glistened.

"Just the thing!" he gasped. "I—I say, that's splendid, old chap! It's only two bob from each of you. You can manage that."

"If that cake would do Bessie good, and relieve your awful grief, old chap, we'll manage it all right."

"Good!" Billy Bunter jumped up, with not a single sign of grief or woe left in his fat countenance. "Hand it over, you fellows, and I'll cut down to the tuckshop this minute!"

"But how will you get it over to Cliff House, if you can't face the Bull?" asked Bob.

"I'll risk it," said Bunter valiantly. "After all, the old cat may have got over it by this time. I'll chance it. Where's that ten bob?"

"You're in a hurry—"

"Oh, yes! You see, pip-pip-pip-poor Bessie—"

"You wouldn't like to tea with us first?"

"Oh, yes—rather! In—in fact, I—I think it would buck me up. I'll come to tea with pleasure, old chap."

"Come on, then," grinned Bob. "Come on, you fellows! Bunter's going to postpone his heart-breaking grief till after tea. This way!"

And the Famous Five walked on, grinning, to Study No. 13, and Billy Bunter rolled cheerfully after them.

He was not blubbing now—far from it. With a tea in hand, and a ten-shilling plum cake in the bush, so to

speak, Bunter evidently was comforted and consoled, and all was calm and bright.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Not for Bunter!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. came out of the House with Bunter after tea, and headed for the school shop.

Billy Bunter was willing to undertake the purchase of that cake on his lonely own—in fact, more than willing—eager!

Still, as the Famous Five went with him, he could not very well tell them that he preferred their room to their company—especially as they had not yet parted with the ten bob. So they arrived at the school shop together.

The chums of the Remove, in point of fact, were interested in the story of Bessie Bunter's disaster; and, being well acquainted with Miss Bunter, they thought it would be only polite to walk over to Cliff House, and ask her how she was. Likewise, they were rather interested in the fellow who had gone into the river for her, and curious to hear more about him. They were swimmers themselves, and they knew the Sark, and its currents, and knew that the fellow, whoever he was, must have run a lot of risk in going in for Bessie, and getting swept down under the bridge.

Being well aware of Miss Elizabeth Bunter's resemblance to her brother, William George, they had no doubt that a big plum cake would be as welcome to her as the flowers in May. They were quite willing to whack out the necessary sum for its purchase, and offer it in token of sympathy.

So they walked down to the tuckshop very cheerfully with Billy Bunter, who was grinning in happy anticipation, not anticipating at all what was to follow the purchase of that cake.

In Mrs. Mimble's shop the cake was duly purchased and paid for, placed in a box, and wrapped.

Bunter carried it out happily, and the Famous Five walked out with him, smiling at one another.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Where are you going, Bunt?" asked Bob Cherry, as the fat Owl started for the House. "That's not the way to Cliff House School."

"Oh! I—I—" stammered Bunter.

Now that the cake had materialised, Bunter was anxious to get going on it. Tea in Study No. 13 made no difference to that. Bunter was always good for a cake after tea, and the bigger the cake the better he liked it.

Still, considering how he had come by that cake, he could scarcely walk it off under the eyes of the Famous Five. He turned and headed for the gates. After all, it was easy to find a shady spot out of gates where he could sit down in comfort and deal with that cake.

Grinning, the Famous Five walked after him out of gates.

In Friardale Lane the fat Owl blinked at them through his big spectacles in annoyed surprise.

He did not want their company; in fact, he objected to it. Now that the cake was bought and paid for, they had, so to speak, outlived their usefulness. But there they were!

"I say, you fellows, going down to Friardale?" asked Bunter.

"That way for a bit," assented Bob.

"Oh, I—I think I'll go the other way, by the river," remarked Bunter, with a casual air.

"So will we," said Bob heartily.



Vernon-Smith lunged out with his foot, and Skip gave a yell, and started. There was no resisting that persuasion. He hopped and hopped and hopped, the raggers following behind, ready to land out with a kick if he halted!

"Nice walk by the river. You fellows like the idea?"

"Yes, rather!" chuckled Nugent.

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

Billy Bunter breathed deep. He rolled on down the lane. The Famous Five sauntered after him.

At the stile he paused. Across the stile lay the footpath to Pegg and Cliff House School. That was Bunter's way—if he was going to Cliff House. He sat on the stile.

"I'll rest here a bit," he remarked.

"Don't you fellows stop."

"Oh, we'll stop!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

And they stopped.

Billy Bunter blinked at them almost ferociously.

So long as he was under the eyes of those beasts, evidently, he could not begin operations on the cake.

He clambered over the stile and started up the footpath.

His intention was to proceed just far enough to get out of sight; but, to his horror and dismay, the five juniors vaulted over the stile after him.

He blinked round at them.

"I say, you fellows, where are you going?" he asked.

"Cliff House," answered Bob affably, "with you, old chap!"

"What-a-t?"

"Like me to carry the cake?" asked Bob.

Bunter glared at him.

"Look here, I—I don't want to bother you fellows to walk to Cliff House with me!" he gasped. "I can go alone all right."

"Sure you'd get there if you went alone?"

"Eh? Oh, yes!"

"Well, we've rather got some doubts about it," said Bob. "Anyhow, we'll see you safe there, old fat man. We'll rally round if the Bull wants to gore you."

Bunter gazed at five grinning faces.

Slowly it dawned on his fat brain that he was not going to get away with that cake. These suspicious beasts did not believe that he was going to carry it over to Cliff House for Bessie. Such suspiciousness was, to Bunter's mind, the limit. Still, he could see that it was so. "If you fellows can't trust me with a cake—" he gasped.

"He's guessed it!" said Bob. "What a brain!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

With feelings too deep for words the fat Owl rolled on up the footpath.

The Famous Five strolled in his wake. Bunter stumbled suddenly.

"Ow!" he ejaculated.

"Anything the matter?" grinned Johnny Bull.

"Ow! I've sprained my ankle. I—I shall have to sit down for a bit. I—I say, you fellows, don't stop. I'll catch you up."

"You'd never catch us up with a sprained ankle," answered Bob, shaking his head. "We'll wait for you, old bean!"

"Wait as long as you like!" said Nugent.

Billy Bunter suppressed his feelings and rolled on.

"You're going on?" asked Bob.

"Yes!" snorted Bunter.

"Sprained ankle and all?"

"Beast!"

"We've never done Bunter justice, you fellows," said Bob gravely. "We never knew what an affectionate brother he was! Look at him now, plunging on with a sprained ankle, just to get that cake to Bessie!"

"Bravo, Bunter!" said Johnny Bull heartily.

A few minutes later Billy Bunter halted, turned, and blinked back along the footpath through his spectacles.

"I say, you fellows, is that Coker after us?" he exclaimed.

The Famous Five, suppressing their merriment, all turned round to look back along the footpath—as they were aware that Bunter wanted them to do.

"Don't see him," said Bob. "Where is he, Bunter?"

But answer there came none.

As soon as five backs were turned, Billy Bunter had darted off the path into the wood, and disappeared among the trees.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry, looking round again. "After him!"

With a yell of laughter the Famous Five rushed after Bunter.

The fat Owl had about as much chance in a foot-race with them as a tortoise would have had with a party of hares. In about a minute and a half they were round Bunter.

"Taking a short cut?" asked Bob affably.

The blink that Billy Bunter gave him was almost petrifying.

"Oh! Ah! Yes!" he gasped. "Exactly!"

"Then you've taken the wrong direction. This way! We'll keep on through the wood, as it saves some distance. Needn't go back to the footpath."

"I say, you fellows, you keep on this way! I—I think I'll go back to the footpath!" gasped Bunter.

"Oh, we'll stick to you, old chap!"

"Beast!" roared Bunter.

"Well, my hat!" exclaimed Bob.

"That almost sounds as if Bunter doesn't like our company, you fellows. Nice fellows like us, too!"

Bunter came to a halt and plumped down at the foot of a tree. It was his last resource. It was still nearly a mile to Cliff House, and Bunter had no intention of covering that mile. What was the use, if he had to part with the cake at the end of it?

"Tired?" asked Harry.

"Yes, you beasts! I'm going to rest."

here. I'm jolly well going to rest for half an hour, and if you like to hang about you can!" snorted Bunter.

That, Bunter hoped, was a winner. Sitting down for half an hour, or half a day for that matter, suited Bunter; but it did not suit energetic youths like the Famous Five. They were extremely unlikely to hang about for half an hour doing nothing.

"Well, perhaps we'd better get on!" said Bob, looking round at his grinning friends. "Bunter may be too tired to get to Cliff House at all, at this rate. No good waiting for him if he's so jolly tired."

"That's right," said Bunter eagerly. "You fellows go on. I'll come after you when I've rested."

"Do," said Bob. He stooped and jerked the parcel away from Bunter. "I'll carry the cake, in case you don't finish the trip."

"Beast!" shrieked Bunter. "Gimme that cake!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Famous Five.

"That's all right, old man!" said Bob soothingly. "You might never get as far as Cliff House, with that cake to carry. Take all the rest you want as you're so tired, and then follow on."

"Beast!"

The Famous Five walked on, Bob carrying the cake.

Billy Bunter glared after them with a glare that almost cracked his spectacles; but he made no further effort. Evidently the game was up, and Bessie was going to have that cake. Which ought to have pleased Bessie's affectionate brother, but which, judging by his look, did not please him the least little bit!

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Who Was the Hero?

"FROM Billy!" ejaculated Miss Bunter.

"Yes!"

"Well," said Bessie, "that beats it!"

Bessie Bunter was seated in the summer-house, in the garden. She did not look much the worse for her adventure of the previous afternoon.

Billy Bunter's fears—if any—were groundless. There was no sign of even a bad cold—much less of the same turning to pneumonia, or that mysterious disease plumbago. Miss Bunter gave an occasional sniff, and that was all.

Marjorie Hazeldene and Clara were with the fat schoolgirl when the Greyfriars fellows arrived. Miss Bellew, the Fourth Form mistress, having given them gracious permission to come into the garden, there they were!

The cake was duly presented to Bessie—from Billy! And her astonishment was great! Evidently Miss Elizabeth Bunter had not expected Brother Billy to be so deeply and kindly concerned about her.

"Is Billy coming?" she asked.

"He started—but got tired," explained Bob. "So we came on, and I carried the cake for him. He carried it half-way."

"Without scoffing any of it?" asked Bessie, more and more astonished.

"Oh! Quite!"

"Is Billy ill?"

"Eh? No!"

"Then I can't understand it!" said Bessie. "I say, is there really a cake in this box?"

"I—I think so!" gasped Bob.

"I'll look, anyhow!" said Bessie. And she proceeded to unwrap the box, and

the cake, on the seat in the summer-house.

The cake was revealed!

"I say, anybody got a knife?" asked Bessie. "All of you have some! I say, it looks a jolly good cake! I wonder whom Billy borrowed the money from? You fellows, I expect! Have some cake, Marjorie! Have some cake, Clara! I say, all of you have some cake!"

The cake was duly sliced, and a cheerful party proceeded to dispose of the slices. It really was a scrumptious cake, and there was plenty to go round.

"Jolly good of you to walk over with that cake!" said Miss Bunter, with her mouth full. "I've got a spot of cold, you know, and they don't seem to understand here that you have to feed a cold. Miss Bellew stopped me at my fourth helping at dinner, and I should have had hardly any pudding, only I took Marjorie's. You didn't mind, did you, Marjorie?"

Marjorie laughed.

"Not much use if she had, as you bagged it when she wasn't looking!" remarked Clara. "You nearly had mine, too!"

"I've had hardly anything for tea," went on Bessie. "Only a couple of eggs and some ham and a few doughnuts. I say, this cake is good! Have you heard that I was nearly drowned yesterday?"

"Yes; we wanted to ask you how you were!" said Harry.

"Oh, I'm all right now!" said Bessie. "But I got fearfully wet! It was Marjorie's and Clara's fault, you know, letting the boat rock when I was reaching for my hat! I never got the hat! That silly boy never noticed it, I suppose, or he might have got hold of it! Boys are stupid!"

"My dear," remonstrated Marjorie, "that boy very likely saved your life. It was wonderfully brave of him to go in for you as he did."

"Well, I wish he had got hold of my hat, too!" said Bessie. "Hats cost money. Barbara's made a fuss about my taking hers, too!"

"Who was the chap?" asked Harry Wharton. "He must have had a lot of pluck to go in for Bessie! There's a beastly current on the Sark just above the bridge."

"We don't know who he was," said Marjorie. "We were in a hurry to get Bessie home as she was soaked with water, and he never stayed a minute. I wished afterwards that I'd asked his name."

"Not a Greyfriars man?" asked Bob.

"You'd have noticed his cap."

"Oh, no!" said Marjorie, with a smile. "He didn't have a cap on when we saw him—I suppose he threw it off with his jacket before he dived in. But he didn't speak like a Greyfriars boy."

"Never seen him before," said Miss Clara. "Some village kid, I suppose. But whoever he was he was jolly plucky."

"Must have been," said Bob. "I'd like to see him. But if you don't know who he was—"

"Haven't the foggiest," said Clara. "But I can tell you he was plucky. My heart was right in my mouth when he was swept under the bridge with Bessie." She gave a little shiver. "I—I thought—"

"So did I!" breathed Marjorie. "But he was holding on when we got up to him in the boat. I'd like to see him again to thank him for what he did—but I suppose I never shall. He was a very brave boy."

"I wish he'd got my hat, though!" remarked Bessie. "It won't be much use if it's found now—soaked with

water, you know. Luckily it wasn't my best hat!"

"The luckfulness was terrific, esteemed and beauteous Bessie!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Yes, that was lucky," said Bessie. "It was annoying enough, as it was—but if it had been my best hat I should have been very cross. You see, he must have been quite close to the hat when he got hold of me in the water. Why he didn't think of it I don't know! But boys are thoughtless, ain't they?"

"Frightfully!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"I shouldn't wonder," said Johnny Bull solemnly, "if the chap never thought that the hat mattered at all just then!"

"Well, I shouldn't, either!" agreed Bessie. "It would be like a boy! I say, I'd like to offer you another slice of cake each—"

"Oh, thanks!"

"Only I think perhaps I'd better finish it as I've got a cold, and you have to feed a cold, you know."

"Ah! Yes! Quite!"

Miss Bunter finished the cake, while the chums of the Remove chatted with Marjorie and Clara. But they were unable to learn anything further of the unknown but plucky youth who had plunged into the Sark for Bessie, glad as they would have been to learn who he was.

They walked homeward in complete ignorance of the fact that that unknown plucky youth was a member of their own Form at Greyfriars.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Does His Bit!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"Bunter you ass!"

"What have you been up to?"

Billy Bunter grinned.

It was after break, the following morning, and the Remove were gathering at the door of their Form-room for Mr. Quelch to come along and let them in.

To their surprise, the Form-room door opened, and Billy Bunter emerged, and shut the door after him.

Bunter, evidently, had been in the Form-room during break, which was not permitted without leave. Equally evidently he had been "up" to something there.

The fat grin on his podgy face indicated that William George Bunter was in possession of a good joke.

"I say, you fellows, Quelch ain't coming yet, is he?" asked Bunter, with a blink down the corridor.

"He's due in two ticks!" answered Bob Cherry. "You've only got out in time, you fat frump! What have you been doing in the Form-room?"

"He, he, he!" chuckled Bunter.

"If you've been japing Quelch, you blithering bloater—"

"He, he, he!"

"Chalking on the blackboard?" asked the Bounder, noticing signs of chalk on Bunter's fat fingers.

"Eh? Oh, no! I mean, what makes you think I've been chalking on the blackboard, Smithy?" exclaimed Bunter, in alarm. "I—I don't want Quelch to guess that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! Look here, Smithy—"

"You'd better rub that chalk off your paws if you don't want Quelch to guess!" chuckled the Bounder.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

He blinked at his chalky paws, and

(Continued on page 22.)

FALL IN FOR ANOTHER RAMBLE WITH—

The GREYFRIARS GUIDE

A TOUR OF THE SCHOOL. The Sanatorium.

(1)
When you quiver and quake
And you shiver and shake
With a violent ache in your tummy,
When you snivel and sneeze
And feel weak at the knees
And despondently wheeze: "Oh lor'
lumme!"
You know what's the matter with
you,
You've picked up a dose of the 'flu!



AFTER SCHOOL HOURS

The Shooting Party

When Prouty goes shooting at Popper
Court,
The cows jump over the moon!
The partridges laugh to see such sport
And gamekeepers fall in a swoon!
Death and red ruin spread far and wide
Over the smiling countryside.
For though he may once have shot bears
untold
In the Rockies of long ago,
Paul Pontifex Prout is now growing old
And his hand and eye are slow,
And that is the reason, when Prout
arrives,
The rest of the party all fly for their
lives!
An old cock pheasant flies up from the
gorse
As Prout grips his weapon and fires,
He misses the bird, as a matter of
course,
But a dog falls down and expires!
While the pheasant flies off with a pier-
cing shriek
And laughs till the tears roll down its
beak!
The dogs cast very black looks at Prout
And appear decidedly vexed.
"Which of us hounds," they inquire no
doubt,
"Will the old fool pop off next?"
The answer arrives in a moment or so—
A black retriever whose name was Joe.
For Prouty is well on the warpath now,
His bag grows impressively large:
Another retriever, a sheep and a cow,
A gamekeeper, second in charge,
Sir Hilton himself—at which Prout, I
suppose,
Remembers an urgent appointment and
goes!

(2)
And no matter how sly
You may be when you try
To avoid the keen eye of a master,
The cold in your head
Will condemn you to bed
Just in case it should spread any
faster.
Then off to the Sanny you go,
That building of sorrow and woe.

(3)
This resort of the sick
With its tiles and red brick
Is kept spotless and spick as a pebble,
Each bed well apart,
With its locker and chart,
And the dame (bless her heart!) Mrs.
Kebble
Has plenty of medicines—grooh!
Fine nasty strong tonics—for you.

THE GREYFRIARS ALPHABET

NAPOLEON DUPONT, the French Junior of the Remove

D is DUPONT, who is French, but no
fool,
And one of the cleverest chaps in the
school.
At cooking (ask Bunter) no chef could
improve
On little Napoleon Dupont of the
Remove.
The omelets he makes are delicious and
hot,
Ask Bunter—he frequently pinches the
lot!
His stews are a poem of excellent
cooking,



Ask Bunter—he snoops 'em when Nap
isn't looking!
His patties and pies are a dream of
delight,
Ask Bunter—he takes 'em and gets out
of sight.
At very rare intervals, just as a treat,
Nap actually has his own foodstuffs to
eat!
But usually he's looking for Bunter
when he
By rights should be having his dishes
for tea!
Though Bunter's his ardent admirer, no
doubt
That sort of admirer he'd well do
without!



A WEEKLY BUDGET OF FACT AND FUN

By
THE GREYFRIARS
RHYMESTER

GREYFRIARS GRINS Keep Fit Campaign

Greyfriars is supporting the new
Health Campaign by various exercises
like these:

Class-room Exercises.—(1) FOR
MASTERS. Grip an ashplant firmly in
the right hand, swing the right arm
sharply six times, and repeat as often as
possible. (2) FOR THE PUPIL. Bend
the body so that the fingers touch the
toes, and practice deep breathing by
uttering loud yells or hoots to the full
extent of the lungs.

Running.—The easiest way to get run-
ning exercise is to call Coker a frabjous
Fifth Form frog (which he is) and
leave the rest to him.

PUZZLE PAR

Two aeroplanes were flying to-
wards each other, yet they were
both going in the same direction.
How was this?

Answer at foot of column.

Climbing, etc.—Climbing is best done
in the fresh air late at night. Water-
pipes and walls should be climbed with
the minimum of noise. To strengthen
wrists for climbing, practice dealing
cards to gay dogs from Highcliffe.
Lessons given by H. VERNON-SMITH
(Expert).

At the half-term exam, Quelch gave
us the paper and said: "Now before
you start, is there anything you want
to know about these questions?" Russell
replied at once: "Yes, please, sir—the
answers to 'em!" (200 lines.)

What's the difference between Coker
and a slice of bacon?—One is rash, the
other rasher.

ANSWER TO PUZZLE

They were flying to the North Pole
from opposite sides of the globe, thus
going towards each other, but both
flying north.

THERE WILL BE ANOTHER INTERESTING TOUR NEXT WEEK!

immediately rubbed them on his trousers. The chalk was transferred from the fingers to the trousers.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors.

"I say, you fellows, my fingers are all right now," said Bunter, blinking at them anxiously. "Quelch won't spot it now, will he?"

"Better dust your bags!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "If you've been chalking something on the blackboard for Quelch to see he may want to know how you got chalky!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh!" Billy Bunter blinked down at his trousers through his big spectacles, and discerned the streaks of chalk. "Oh crikey!"

He smacked the trousers hard to disperse those telltale signs. A cloud of dust arose as he smacked. Bunter's garments were generally in need of brushing.

Smack, smack, smack! went Bunter's fat paws on his trousers, dispersing powdery chalk and clouds of dust.

An angular figure came striding up the corridor, and Mr. Quelch's gimlet eyes fixed in surprise on Bunter as he smacked.

"Bunter, what—" he ejaculated.

"Oh!" spluttered Bunter. He ceased to smack and blinked at his Form-master. "Only—only a wops, sir—"

"A—a—a what?"

"A wops—I—I mean, a—a wasp!" gasped Bunter. "I was just smacking at a wops—I mean, a wasp; he—he—he settled on me, sir—"

Mr. Quelch looked long and hard at that hopeful member of his Form. Perhaps it was possible that the last wasp of summer was still hanging about in October; but it seemed improbable.

However, the Remove master made no further comment. He opened the Form-room door, and the juniors went in and took their places, the Form-master going to his high desk.

Then the Removites gasped—and Skip of the Remove flushed crimson. All the Form saw now how Bunter had been occupied in the Form-room.

The blackboard was standing on its easel, facing the Form. Mr. Quelch, at the moment, could only see the back of it. But the Removites could see the front of it, and what was chalked thereon.

In large capital letters appeared the remarkable inscription:

"BEEWAIR OF PIKPOCKETS!"

The juniors stared at it. Billy Bunter bestowed a fat wink on them. This was Bunter's great joke!

Bunter was taking his part in the feud against the new junior. The Bounder was actuated by bitter hostility, Skinner by unforgiving malice; but these unpleasant feelings were not shared by the fat and fatuous Owl of the Remove. Bunter's motive was chiefly unreflecting fatheadedness. Something was going on, and Bunter was going to have a hand in it. And this was Bunter's happy contribution.

Having, with great cunning, chalked in capital letters, he left no clue to the joker's identity—that he knew of! Having got rid of the traces of chalk before Quelch arrived, he carried no clue on his fat person. So he was, so far as he could see, as safe as houses!

"That howling ass—" breathed Bob Cherry.

"That blithering bloater—" murmured Johnny Bull.

"I say, you fellows, wait till Quelch sees it!" whispered Bunter. "Make him understand how we like pickpockets in the Form—what?"

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"You'll get six for that, you grinning grampus!" hissed Peter Todd.

"Eh? Quelch won't know I did it!"

"Oh crumbs! Won't he?" gasped Peter.

"Of course, he will know that some Remove man did it, but he won't think of me!" said Bunter confidently. "He may think it was Smithy—"

"With spelling like that!" gasped Peter.

"Eh? Like what?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He may think it was Skinner—you know, Skinner stuck something like that on Skip's jacket once. Well, Skinner can say he didn't."

Harry Wharton glanced across at his Form-master, who was busy, at the moment, with papers at his desk. He was wondering whether he had a chance of stepping out, bagging the duster from the peg, and rubbing out that inscription on the board before the chopper came down on the unfortunate Owl.

But Mr. Quelch, at the same moment, stepped away from his desk. He was conscious of subdued chuckling and whispering in his class—of neither of which did Mr. Quelch approve in the Form-room.

The Remove-master came towards the Form, with a glint in his gimlet-eye.

Merriment was suppressed at once. The Remove waited breathlessly for that gimlet-eye to turn on the blackboard.

It turned on the blackboard.

Mr. Quelch gave a slight start, stepped nearer to the blackboard, and gazed at Bunter's handiwork.

His back being to the class, Billy Bunter favoured his Form-fellows with a happy grin, and another fat wink.

Mr. Quelch turned round.

To Bunter's horror and dismay, the gimlet-eye fixed directly on him.

"Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch, in a deep voice.

"Oh!" stuttered Bunter. "Ye-es, sir! It wasn't me, sir!"

"You have chalked on the blackboard, Bunter!"

"Oh! No, sir! I wasn't in the Form-room in break, sir!" exclaimed Bunter, in great alarm. "You can ask any of the fellows, sir. They all saw me come out and—"

"What?"

"I—I mean, they didn't see me come out, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I never chalked anything on the board, sir! I—I wouldn't! I—I haven't any chalk on me, sir. I haven't dusted it off, either."

"Stand out before the Form, Bunter!"

"Oh lor'!"

"Now hand me the cane from my desk."

"Oh crikey!"

Mr. Quelch swished the cane.

"Those absurd words on the blackboard, Bunter, are apparently intended to be offensive to the new member of this Form!" he said. "For that offensive act, Bunter, I shall cane you severely."

"I—I say, sir, I—I never—" groaned Bunter. "I—I say, why—why d-d-do you think it was me, sir?"

"I do not think, Bunter, that any other member of the Form is so crassly ignorant of correct spelling."

"Is—is—isn't the spelling right, sir?" gasped Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That question alone, Bunter, demonstrates that those words were written by you. Bend over that desk!"

During the next six seconds six whacks sounded like pistol-shots through the Remove-room, accompanied by six fiendish yells, one after another.

"Now, Bunter—"

"Yaroooooh!"

"Will you be silent?"

"Yoo-hoo-hoo-hooooop!"

"Another sound, Bunter, and I shall cane you again!"

"Oh crikey!"

Bunter suppressed the sounds of woe.

"Now, Bunter, after class, you will ascertain, from the dictionary, the correct spelling of those words, and will write them out, correctly, one thousand times. You will bring them to me before preparation this evening. Otherwise, I shall cane you again, more severely."

"Oh lor'!"

"Go to your place, Bunter!"

Mr. Quelch took the duster and wiped the board.

Billy Bunter crawled to his place, moaning as he crawled. It was probable that the Bounder, in his feud with the new boy, would receive no more active support from Bunter.

By the time he had completed the task imposed on him, no doubt Billy Bunter would be able to spell "Beware of Pickpockets" correctly! But it was extremely improbable that he would ever chalk those words up in the Remove Form Room again!

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Maully's Way!

"I THINK—" began Lord Mauleverer.

"You do!" ejaculated Bob Cherry, in astonishment.

"Yaas."

"Gather round, my infants!" exclaimed Bob. "Maully's started thinking! Let's watch, and see how he does it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five regarded Maully with smiling faces.

But Maully was not smiling. His noble countenance was very serious indeed.

"Don't rot, old bean!" he said. "I think you fellows have been actin' rather badly, and so I'm mentionin' it to you."

That remark was sufficient to make the Famous Five as serious as Maully. They gave him inquiring looks.

"What's up, fathead?" asked Harry Wharton.

"About Skip—that kid in your study."

"Well, what about him?" asked Wharton, rather curtly.

He liked Maully, and respected his opinion, but he did not want any lectures from him, especially on the subject of the outcast of the Remove. His own opinion, and that of the Co., was that they had treated Skip a great deal better than he deserved.

"I'm not the man to barge in, as a rule!" said Lord Mauleverer quietly. "But that wretched kid's in an unfortunate position. A bit more is expected of you fellows than of most of the fellows in the Form. When a man does what's not done, he must expect to hear about it."

The captain of the Remove coloured angrily.

"So we've done what's not done!" he exclaimed.

"Yaas."

"Look here—" growled Johnny Bull.

"Easy does it!" said Bob Cherry. "Give it a name, Maully! I won't punch your cheeky head till you're through."

"I heard that you had him to tea the other day," remarked Nugent. "You can bag him for your study, if you like. No objection to parting with him."



"This way to the pond!" chortled Skinner. The ragers headed for it, dragging Mauleverer and Skip through the bushes. From the log under the trees rose an angular figure, with a terrifying expression on its face, and a walking-stick grasped in its hand. "Stop!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"None at all!" said Wharton sarcastically. "Take him off our hands with our blessing, Mauly!"

"You're wanderin' from the point, dear men. I think you're not playin' the game, and I'm tellin' you so," answered Lord Mauleverer calmly. "Smithy's up against the kid, chiefly because he made a fool of himself. Skinner's up against him because he funks him, chiefly. Bolsover the same, because the kid licked him in a fair fight. Other fellows for various reasons. I don't say they're wrong, because I own up that though I'd like to go easy with him myself, I'm bound to confess that a chap who's been a pincher gets on my nerves a bit. But you fellows started by treating him decently, and now you've turned him down. That's not cricket—see?"

"Oh!" said Harry.

"If you'd taken the same line as the rest of the Form, from the beginnin', all right!" said Mauleverer. "But you didn't. You seemed to have made up your minds to swallow him whole, and give him a chance. I thought that pretty decent of you, an' followed your example. Then, all of a sudden, you let him down with a bump. That leaves me the only fellow in the Form speakin' to him. If you call that cricket, I don't!"

"You don't understand——"

"No," assented Mauly. "I don't! He was a pickpocket and a pincher before he came here, and if you'd barred him from the start, like the other fellows, you'd be in the same boat with them. Now you're not. He's no worse than when he came—in fact, every fellow who chooses to see, can see that he's better. You can't start a thing, and then chuck it. It's not done."

The Famous Five stood silent.

Most of the Form had been glad when they "barred" Skip like the rest—thus lining up with the Remove. But Mauly evidently looked on it in a different light.

"Better tell him, I think!" said Bob slowly. "It does look a bit as if we've let the kid down. Mauly doesn't know what we know."

Mauleverer gave him a quick look.

"You don't mean——" he began.

"We do!" said Harry curtly. "We believed, as the Head and Quelch did, that the fellow had chucked up his rotten ways when he came here. If he had, we could stand him, and make the best of him, as we tried to do. But——"

"You mean that he hasn't?"

"Exactly! Don't shout it all over the school—we don't want to land him in a row with the Head, and get him booted out. I'm blessed if I quite know what we ought to do—but we can't do that! That's how it stands."

Lord Mauleverer shook his head.

"There's some mistake!" he said.

"It was a mistake about Smithy's wallet—but you're not hot-headed asses like Smithy. I think you've made some mistake all the same. If you've missed things——"

"Oh, my hat! It's not so bad as that!" said Harry. "But we've seen something in his hands that can't possibly belong to him, and it's something that he must have got hold of since he came to Greyfriars."

"I've not heard of anythin' missin' in the school——"

"It belongs to somebody outside the school."

Lord Mauleverer's face became very grave.

"You mean, you suspect him of goin' on pickin' pockets, since he's been here—carryin' on his old trade round about Greyfriars?"

"I know it sounds pretty awful. But that's the only way of accounting for it—and it's not suspicion; it's fact."

"If it's a fact," said Lord Mauleverer, "the sooner he's booted out of the school, the better. There were excuses for him once—there's none now!"

"I know! But——"

"But I can't get it down. There's some mistake. What chances has he had, anyhow? How often does he go out of the school, if you come to that?"

"When he goes, he goes alone, at any rate."

"That's hardly his fault, as nobody will take a walk or a bike ride with him. But it's pretty seldom."

"Once would be enough, I suppose."

"Not quite. He wouldn't pick one pocket, and then chuck it. That's not sense. If he's carryin' on the old game round about here, he would clear off every half-holiday, at least, to get on with it. Why shouldn't he?"

The Famous Five did not answer that.

"He was bagged, out of gates, one half-holiday, too!" went on Mauly. "Was he pocket-picking when Smithy got him, by the river? He seems to have been walking along the Sark—no pockets to pick there. More likely to have been hanging round the railway station at Courtfield, if he's keepin' up the old game."

"Well, we know what we've seen," granted Johnny Bull, "and you don't."

"I shall, if you tell me."

"Oh, tell him!" said Bob impatiently. Harry Wharton, in a few words, told what had been seen in Study No. 1, and the explanation Skip had given.

Mauly listened in thoughtful silence. His face showed that he was rather staggered by the mention of the gold locket. But he listened very attentively.

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as Wharton repeated the strange story that Skip had told to account for it.

"You don't believe him?" he asked at last.

"Of course we don't!" said Wharton irritably. "Would anybody?"

"Well, I know it sounds rather steep!" confessed Mauly. "But if there's a doubt, I think a fellow ought to be given the benefit of it. What he told you is possible."

"Oh, possible, I suppose! Lots of things are possible that aren't true. For instance, it's possible that you're talking sense. But it wouldn't be true."

"Hear, hear!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"The possibility is not terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Time we got along to the changing-room if Mauly's done talking out of the back of his neck!" grunted Johnny Bull.

It was Saturday afternoon, and the Famous Five were booked for football.

"Any more rot to talk, Mauly?" asked Nugent.

"I'm done!" said Mauleverer quietly.

"If you believe that, I suppose you're right to turn the kid down. I wouldn't believe it, unless it was as clear as the sun at noonday—which it isn't by long chalks. It's pretty hard on the kid if what he's told you is the truth."

"He spun the first yarn that came into his head."

"Perhaps. But—"

Lord Mauleverer broke off, as Skip came out of the House.

Alone, as usual, the waif of the Remove walked away slowly towards the gates.

He came near the group of juniors, but did not glance at them. Since his studymates had turned him down, he had addressed hardly a word to them, and the effect of the Bounder's rag had been to make him withdraw like a tortoise into its shell.

"There he is!" said Mauly, in a low voice. "Goin' out—on his own! Lookin' for pockets to pick, do you think?"

"I hope not—but I shouldn't wonder!" answered Harry Wharton.

"He must have pinched that locket since he came here."

"I'd rather believe not!"

"So would I—but I can't!"

"Well, what about puttin' it to the test?" asked Mauleverer. "If he's goin' out pickin' pockets, he won't want a chap with him to see him doin' it, will he?"

"Hardly!"

"Well, here goes, then! Skip!" called out Lord Mauleverer.

Skip glanced round.

"Callin' me?" he asked.

"Yaas! Goin' out for a walk?"

"Jest that!" answered Skip.

"Like a fellow to come?"

Skip looked at him, and the cloud on his face cleared off. It was rather like the sun coming out on a cloudy day.

"Wouldn't I just, old covey!" he answered.

"I'm your man, old bean!"

Lord Mauleverer gave the Famous Five a rather droll look, joined Skip, and walked down to the gates with him. The Co. exchanged glances.

Skip's delight in Mauly's company was too obvious to be mistaken. He seemed to be walking on air as he went with his noble lordship.

"Well!" said Bob, with a deep breath. "It isn't pinching this afternoon, that's a cert. He wouldn't want Mauly if it was."

"And he does want him!" said Nugent.

"That's pretty plain. I—I—I wonder—" Bob looked very uneasy.

"I—I wonder whether old Mauly's

right. He's not half such an ass as the fellows think him. I—I wonder—"

There was a twinge of doubt in the minds of all the Famous Five, as they walked away to the changing-room. But—there was a "but"! Mauly might be right, and they hoped that he was; but they could not think so, and that was that!

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Skinner's Rag!

MR. QUELCH raised his eyebrows.

That afternoon was a half-holiday for the Remove master, as well as for the Remove, and Mr. Quelch was taking a walk abroad in the golden October weather.

Now he had stopped for a rest in a clump of beeches beside the Courtfield road.

He was seated on a log under a tree, screened from the road by bushes, thinned of their leaves by autumn breezes. Through those thinned bushes, he had a view of the road, as he sat, if he looked up—but he did not look up, as his eyes were fixed on a pocket edition of Horace.

Unlike most of the dwellers within the walls of Greyfriars School, Mr. Quelch regarded Q. Horatius Flaccus as a pleasant companion for leisure hours.

But he did look up at a sudden whirr of bicycles on the road. Many bikes and many cars had passed the spot without drawing Mr. Quelch's attention from Horace. But these bikes did not pass—they stopped in a bunch, and the riders thereof pushed them off the road into the bordering bushes. Which disturbed Mr. Quelch, and caused him, at last, to raise his eyes—and then his eyebrows!

Five Remove fellows had jumped off those bikes, and pushed them off the road, parking them in the thicket.

Evidently they did not know that their Form-master was taking a rest on the farther side of the bushes.

They did not even glance in his direction. But Mr. Quelch's eyes discerned them all through the interstices of branches and twigs. He recognised Bolsover major, Skinner, Snoop, Stott, and Hazeldene.

Having slammed their bikes against the nearest trees, the five Removites faced the road, watching it, evidently for someone to come along. Now they had their backs to Mr. Quelch, and were less likely than ever to spot him.

The Remove master was a little surprised—and a little suspicious. His boys had a right, if they liked, to cycle up the Courtfield road on a half-holiday—and to dismount at that clump of trees, if the spirit moved them to do so. Their arrival disturbed him, and interrupted his delighted perusal of Quintus Horatius Flaccus—but that was no just reason for ordering them off; so Mr. Quelch said nothing. But he was rather suspicious—for the way in which Skinner & Co. were watching the road, did not look as if they were watching for a friend to come along—it looked a good deal more like an ambush.

"They're coming!" It was Skinner's voice. "I can see Mauly's hat! Keep out of sight, you chaps."

"What-ho!" grinned Hazel.

"They saw us pass them, on the bikes—" said Snoop.

"They haven't guessed that we've stopped for them."

"Right as rain!" said Bolsover major. "Wait till they come up! We'll give Mauly a lesson about taking up that cad!"

"Not a word till they come up!" whispered Skinner. "Not a sound! If they cut across the common, we might get Mauly, but we should never get that young cad Skip—he would dodge us! And it's the pincher we want, more than Mauly!"

"We want Mauly, too!" growled Bolsover. "He's jolly well going into the pond along with that pincher!"

"Yes, rather!" agreed Skinner. "If he chooses to stick up against his Form, he can take what's coming to him! They're both going in!"

"If there's a row—" said Stott.

"There won't be a row! The young cad was afraid to give us away last Wednesday!" grinned Skinner. "He won't dare go to Quelch about it! And Mauly wouldn't, anyhow!"

"A bit of luck we spotted them going out!" said Hazel. "We don't often get a chance of bagging that young cad out of gates!"

"We've got him this time!"

"You bet!"

There was a chuckle.

"Quiet!" breathed Skinner. "They're just here."

Every word came clearly to Mr. Quelch's astonished ears, through the bushes. Thunder gathered in his brow.

He knew now that it was an ambush. Lord Mauleverer, apparently, had been spotted going out for a walk with Skip; and Skinner & Co. had cut past them, on their bikes, to lay this ambush ahead, on the roadside—in the clump of beeches where there was a muddy pond.

Mr. Quelch knew that, now—and he knew, also, the identity of the raggers who had sent Skip hopping home with a painted face a few days ago. Smithy's luck was in; as he was playing football that afternoon with the Remove.

Mr. Quelch, breathing hard and deep, laid his volume on the log beside him, and picked up his walking-stick.

The expression on his speaking countenance would have alarmed Skinner & Co. could they have seen it. But they had, of course, no eyes in the backs of their heads, and they never even dreamed that their Form-master was anywhere near at hand.

Two figures came in view, sauntering up the road. Lord Mauleverer sauntered at his usual leisurely pace; and Skip, who was generally brisker in his movements, accommodated his pace to that of his lordship.

Through the bushes, Mr. Quelch could see the little waif's face—bright and cheerful and happy.

"Tea at the bun-shop, what?" Mauleverer was saying, as the two arrived abreast of the wayside clump of trees.

"Any hold thing!" answered Skip, cheerfully. "I say—oh, smoky 'addocks!"

There was a sudden rush from the trees, and the two juniors were surrounded in a twinkling.

"Here, what—" ejaculated Mauleverer.

"'Ands off!" roared Skip, struggling.

"Got 'em!" chortled Bolsover major.

"Bag the cads! Get them off the road before somebody comes along!"

Both Mauleverer and Skip resisted manfully. But the odds were too heavy, with five fellows against two. They were dragged headlong off the road into the trees.

Bolsover major and Skinner had Skip by the arms, and in spite of his fierce resistance, he had to go, Snoop helping him from behind with a boot. Hazel and Stott had hold of Mauleverer, dragging him after Skip.

"Look here, what's this game?" gasped Mauleverer. "You're rumplin'!"

my jacket, you silly asses! Will you let go, you fatheads!"

"Hardly!" grinned Hazel. "If you take up that pinching cad, you can get a whack in what's coming to him."

"Leago!" yelled Skip. "You rotters, leago! Look 'ere, you let Mauly go—he ain't done nothing! Let Mauly go, I tell you!"

"Mauly's going into the pond with you, you rotten outsider!" snorted Bolsover major. "If he likes your company, he can have it—in the pond!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yank them along!"

"This way!" chortled Skinner.

The pond lay behind the clump; and the raggers headed for it, dragging the two struggling juniors through the bushes.

From the log under the tree rose an angular figure, with a terrifying expression on its face, and a walking-stick grasped in its hand.

"Stop!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Oh!"

"Oh crikey!"

"Quelch!"

Skinner & Co. stared at their Form-master in sheer horror.

They dropped Skip and Mauleverer like two hot potatoes. They stared at Quelch, as if he had been a grisly spectre. Indeed, a grisly spectre could not have startled and dismayed them more.

Mr. Quelch stepped towards them, as they stood petrified, with Skip and Mauly sprawling, gasping at their feet.

"Now!" said Mr. Quelch, in a grinding voice, "What does this mean?"

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

Rough on the Raggers!

SKINNER & Co. stood dumb. They had nothing to say. Really, Mr. Quelch's question was a little superfluous. It was only too clear what it meant.

Lord Mauleverer rose to his feet, and dusted his clothes. Skip scrambled up, a grin dawning on his face.

But for the unexpected presence of Mr. Quelch in that wayside clump, both of them would have gone headlong into the muddy pond. They had had an extremely narrow escape. But they were out of danger now—it was the raggers who were in danger.

"Skinner!" came the grinding voice.

"Oh! Yes, sir!" said Skinner, faintly.

Never had Harold Skinner been so utterly overwhelmed with dismay. He fairly goggled at his Form-master.

"You are the ring-leader in this, Skinner, I think."

"Oh! No, sir!"

"We're all in it!" mumbled Bolsover major.

The others did not speak. Skinner, was, in fact, the ring-leader; and his followers were by no means sorry that Mr. Quelch was aware of it. They did not like the way he was gripping his walking-stick. If any fellow in the party was booked for a larger share than the others, Skinner's followers were more than willing to let Skinner be that fellow.

"This disgraceful outrage—" rumbled Mr. Quelch.

"Only a rag, sir!" It was like Lord Mauleverer to put in a word for the fellows who had been going to duck him. "No harm done, sir! Only a joke!"

Skip stared at his lordship. He was slowly learning Greyfriars ways—but Mauly's ways were farthest of all removed from those of Shummock's Alley. A few moments more, and Mauly, the most elegant and fastidious fellow in the Lower School at Greyfriars, would have been sprawling in reeking mud—yet now he was trying to get the raggers off punishment.

But Skip, if he did not understand, was quick on the uptake. Mauly's ways might be a mystery to him, but they were good enough for Skip to imitate. So, after that astonished stare, Skip followed his lordship's lead.

"No 'arm done, sir!" he said. "Jest a little joke of these fellers, sir! We—we don't mind, sir!"

But Mr. Quelch was not to be so easily placated.

"You may be silent, both of you!" he rapped. "Skinner, you and your companions will be severely punished for this outrageous conduct!"

Skinner & Co., already aware of that, remained sullenly silent.

"Mauleverer! You were walking to Courtfield with Skip?"

"Yaas, sir!"

"You may go on your way!"

"Very well, sir!"

Lord Mauleverer and Skip left the clump, and walked on up the road towards Courtfield.

Skinner & Co. unhappily, remained, wriggling apprehensively under the gimlet-eye that seemed to bore into them.

"From certain remarks I heard you make," said Mr. Quelch, in a rumbling voice, "I have no doubt what boys were guilty of the outrageous occurrence last Wednesday. I shall, however, take no note of that, as I cannot act on words heard by chance, and not intended for my ears. But your present action, I shall deal with most severely."

He pointed with his walking-stick to the log from which he had risen.

"You will bend over that log, Skinner."

In silence, with a pasty face, Skinner bent over the log. Mr. Quelch's walking-stick was a thick, heavy malacca.

It answered the purpose of a Form-master's cane quite admirably.

Six times it descended on Skinner, and the hapless recipient wriggled, and squirmed, and yelled. He tottered away after the sixth cut, and stood leaning on a tree, panting and wriggling.

"Bolsover!" said Mr. Quelch grimly.

Bolsover major managed to get through it in silence. But he wriggled convulsively when it was over.

"Hazeldene!"

Hazel yelled under the infliction. Stott, who came next, went through it in silence, like Bolsover. Then came Snoop's turn.

"Snoop!"

"I—I—I—" stammered Snoop. "I—I say, I never wanted to have a hand in it, sir—I—I—"

"Bend over that log, Snoop!"

"It was all Skinner's doing—I never wanted—"

"I have told you to bend over that log, Snoop!"

The wretched Snoop almost collapsed over the log. Six lamentable howls followed the swipes of the malacca.

"And now," said Mr. Quelch, surveying the wriggling culprits grimly, "you will return to the school. You will go into the Form-room, and write out Latin conjugations till I return. I shall expect you to have written out the whole conjugations of amo, moneo, rego, and audio, when I see you again. If you waste your time, your task will be repeated next half-holiday! Now you may go."

Five unhappy raggers wheeled their bicycles out of the clump.

Mr. Quelch's grim eye watched them as they went.

When they were gone, he dismissed the matter from his mind, and sat down once more to revel in the delights of Q. Horatius Flaccus.

It was not so easy for Skinner & Co. to dismiss the matter from their minds. They trundled their bikes drearily along the road to the school. After the swipes of the malacca, they were not disposed to sit in the saddles. They wheeled the machines wearily.

"You fool, Skinner!" groaned Hazel.

"You silly idiot! Ow!"

"You dummy, Skinner!" moaned Snoop. "Catch me backing you up again! Wow!"

"Ooooooh!" groaned Stott.

"Was it my fault?" snarled Skinner savagely. "How was I to know that that old ass was there? Ow!"

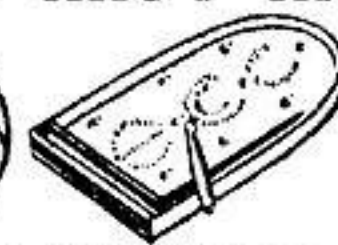
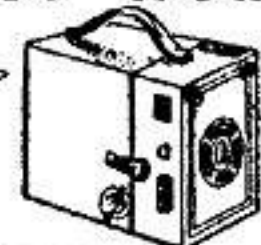
"Well, you had it worst; that's one comfort!" yapped Hazel.

"We'll take it out of that cad somehow!" mumbled Bolsover major. "Fancy that old donkey being on the spot. Yow-ow!"

They wheeled the bikes in dismay at last, and trailed away disconsolately to

(Continued on next page.)

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the House—with an endless prospect of Latin conjugations stretching before them.

Billy Bunter met them in the quad, and blinked at them through his big spectacles, with a fat grin on his podgy face.

"Did you get them?" he asked. Bunter had seen the party start in pursuit of Skip and Mauly, and he was interested to hear the result.

Even the short-sighted Owl of the Remove could see that Skinner & Co. did not look as if the result had been happy and satisfactory.

"Quelch got us!" growled Hazel.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. "Did you run into Quelch! Did he whop you? You look like it! He, he, he!"

"You fat idiot, we've had six all round!" snarled Skinner. "Anything to gurgel at in that, you blithering bloater?"

"Ho, he, he!" gurgled Bunter. He seemed to think that there was. "He, he, he! I say, you fellows, you look like a lot of eels! He, he, he! I say, I shouldn't make such a fuss about a whopping!"

"Wouldn't you?" roared Bolsover.

"No fear!" said Bunter loftily. "A fellow ought to be able to take a whopping. Bite on it, you know, and bear it! That's my style! After all, what's a whopping?"

The answer to that question was unexpected by Bunter—though, really, he might have expected it. Bunter learned, on the spot, and without delay, what a whopping was!

Skinner & Co. were simply yearning to "take it out" of somebody; and the fat Owl was fairly asking for it. They gave him that for which he asked!

Five anguished and exasperated juniors hurled themselves on Bunter. They bumped him, and smacked him; they rolled him, and punched him—they thumped and banged him. It was a chance for Bunter to show that he could bite on it, and bear it—instead of which, he yelled, and howled, and roared, and squeaked in a perfectly frantic manner.

Leaving Billy Bunter in a breathless heap, still emitting feeble squeaks, Skinner & Co. walked on to the House, feeling better.

While they sat in the Form-room, wearily grinding out Latin conjugations, Billy Bunter moaned and gurgled in the quad—and Lord Mauleverer and Skip sat at tea in the bunshop at Courtfield—Skip's face as bright as the autumn sunshine. It was a happy afternoon for the waif of the Remove, at least.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter's Hero Fund!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"It's in the paper!" squeaked Bunter.

"What is, fathead?"

"About Bessie!"

Billy Bunter rolled into the Rag after tea with the current number of the "Friardale Gazette" in his fat hand. That local sheet, which reported Greyfriars matches, had several subscribers in the school—but on this occasion, Billy Bunter seemed to have found an item of news in it that interested him more than football matches.

It interested the other fellows, too, for they had all heard, by this time, of

Miss Elizabeth Bunter's adventure in the Sark, and of the unknown fellow, supposed to be some village "kid," who had rescued her.

"Let's look!" said Harry Wharton at once.

And a crowd of fellows gathered round to look at the "Friardale Gazette."

Billy Bunter had that newspaper in his fat right hand. In his fat left, for some reason known only to himself, he carried a hat.

Why the fat Owl brought a hat into the Rag, nobody knew or cared; but almost all of them were interested in the report in the paper. It was headed:

"UNKNOWN HERO SAVES SCHOOLGIRL!"

Evidently the enterprising reporter of the "Gazette" had got on to the episode. Things did not very often happen in that quiet neighbourhood—and the most exciting event ever reported in the local paper, as a rule, was Farmer Giles' bull getting loose, or a dog being run over on market day. So the reporter had naturally made the most of this.

There was half a column of it—which the juniors read, in a crowd. It described how a pupil of Cliff House, that well-known scholastic establishment presided over by Miss Penelope Primrose, had fallen from a boat, and had been in imminent danger of drowning, when some youth, with remarkable courage and presence of mind, had plunged in and saved her.

After that heroic deed, the youth had simply disappeared, without mentioning his name, and had not been heard of since. Having risked his life to save a schoolgirl, he had just walked off and said nothing about it—even the enterprising reporter of the "Friardale Gazette" had been unable to discover his identity!

"Jolly plucky kid!" said Bob Cherry. "I'd like to know who he was!"

"Same here!" said Harry Wharton. "Some village kid, I suppose; but it's rather odd that he hasn't been heard of."

Skip, who was in the Rag, was leaning on the window at a little distance from the interested group round the newspaper.

There was a sarcastic grin on his face.

Of that happening on the Sark, Skip had said nothing—partly because he had no desire to blow his own trumpet, and partly because he was on speaking terms with nobody in his Form, except Mauly. He had, indeed, almost forgotten it by that time.

He wondered, sarcastically, what the "blokes" would have thought, had they known the name he could have told them.

Nobody in the Rag was taking any notice of him. He had been a good deal of an outcast from the first—but since the Famous Five had definitely turned him down, that had, so to speak, put the lid on!

With the exception of Lord Mauleverer, not a fellow in the Form ever addressed a word to him. And much as he was delighted by Mauly's kindness, the little waif was far too sensitive to inflict himself on Mauly overmuch. And as Mauleverer did not happen to be in the Rag at the moment, Skip was as much alone there as if he had been on Robinson Crusoe's island.

He did not approach the group of keenly interested juniors—and he did not

speak. He only watched them with a sarcastic grin.

"I say, you fellows!" squeaked Billy Bunter. "I say, that chap who went in for Bessie was a jolly plucky chap! Just what I'd have done myself, you know, if I'd been there——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! You fellows would hardly have done it, I know; but if I'd been there, I should have gone in——"

"You couldn't have faced it, old fat man!" said Skinner. "If you'd gone into the water, you'd have got a wash! You couldn't have faced that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast! But, I say, you fellows, don't you think that that chap was a jolly plucky chap——"

"One of the best!" said Bob Cherry.

"The pluckfulness was terrific," declared Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh.

"Nobody knows who it was at present," continued Bunter. "But, of course, he'll turn up. Well, my idea is that he ought to be rewarded. Bessie's my sister, you know, and I feel that I ought to do something."

"Eh?"

"What?"

Attention was transferred from the "Friardale Gazette" to William George Bunter.

Skip, from his distance, looked curiously at the fat junior. He was as surprised as the other fellows.

"That's how I feel!" declared Bunter. "That's why I've brought this hat!"

"That hat!" repeated Bob blankly. "How do you know the chap wants a hat, even if you spotted him? And that's a pretty old hat, too!"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"If he lost his hat in fishing Bessie out you might stand him a new hat if he wants one. That one looks as if you'd dug it up somewhere," said Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

"He didn't lose his hat," said Harry Wharton. "Marjorie said that he had thrown off his cap and jacket before he went in."

"I say, you fellows, do listen to a chap!" howled Bunter. "I don't know whether he lost his hat. I'm not thinking of giving him a hat, you fatheads! What I'm thinking of is a Hero Fund."

"A which?"

"A Hero Fund," said Bunter firmly. "That's why I've brought in this hat! I'm going to pass it round."

"Oh crumbs!"

"If it's some village kid, he's poor, you know," said Bunter. "He will be jolly glad of a reward, anyhow. I know I should be."

"No need to mention that."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, you fellows, see the point?" said Bunter. "I'm taking a collection for that kid. As—as soon as I find out who he is I shall hand it over to him. I was going to start it with my postal order, but it hasn't come——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do stop cackling!" yelled Bunter. "I should think you fellows might rally round and put something into the hat for a real hero like that chap. I shall put in my postal order when—when it comes. The fund will remain in my hands——"

"Not for long!" chuckled Skinner. "I fancy it would be kept in Mrs. Mumble's till!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Skinner! As Bessie's brother, it's up to me to take charge of the fund. All I want you fellows to do is to put something in the hat—and I think it's up to every man in the Remove to put something in. We ought to show how we can appreciate pluck at Greyfriars. See?"

There was a roar of laughter in the Rag.

There was no doubt that Billy Bunter was very keen on raising a Hero Fund; but there was a doubt whether that fund would reach the hero, even if discovered. This was Bunter's second "go," so to speak, at making something out of Bessie's misadventure. In the matter of the cake he had not had a lot of luck. But hope springs eternal in the human breast. Bunter was hoping for better luck this time.

"I say, you fellows, do shut up cackling!" hooted Bunter. "I'm not joking—"

"You are, old fat man!" chuckled Bob. "You are!"

"The jokefulness is preposterous."

"I ain't!" yelled Bunter. "I tell you I mean it! The whole of my postal order is going to this fund when it—it comes! I can't say fairer than that! I say, Smithy, you've got pots of money; you start."

"I don't think!" grinned the Bounder.

"I say, Newland, you're not so mean as Smithy; you start the ball rolling, old fellow! Think of that chap risking his life and all that. Are you going to put something into the hat?"

"Not exactly."

"Beast! I say, Cherry! Look here, Bob, old man, you're plucky yourself, and you admire pluck. You start the Hero Fund!" urged Bunter. "You put something in the hat and set the thing going!"

Bob Cherry grinned cheerily.

"Well, after all, it's not a bad idea," he said, looking round at his friends and bestowing on them a wink unseen by Bunter. "Dash it all, if Bunter makes a point of it, let's all put something in the hat!"

"That's right!" exclaimed Billy Bunter, his fat face brightening. "You fellows all follow Bob's example. See?"

"Oh, all right!" said Harry Wharton, "Any old thing!" said Nugent.

"Stick that hat on the table, Bunter," said Bob. "Now, every fellow's got to walk past it and drop something in. Bunter keeps charge of the collection until the giddy hero turns up. Now, one after another."

Somewhat to Bunter's surprise, and greatly to his satisfaction, there was a general outburst of approval. Bunter had hoped—but had not, perhaps, quite expected—that his stunt of a Hero Fund would catch on like this. Now that Bob Cherry was ready to set an example, it was really wonderful how the whole crowd of fellows were ready to play up.

That old hat stood on the table, on its crown, to receive contributions. Led by Bob Cherry, every fellow present walked past it and dropped something in.

Billy Bunter stood aside to watch that procession, his little round eyes beaming satisfaction through his big round spectacles.

The response to the appeal was really surprising. Not only the Famous Five played up, but the Bounder followed their example, and even stingy fellows like Skinner and Fisher T. Fish joined in. There was an almost incessant clinking in the hat as the fellows passed it one after another, every fellow dropping something in. Of the whole crowd

in the Rag only Skip did not join up; but Skip, who saw more than Bunter did, grinned as he looked on.

"I say, you fellows, that's ripping!" gasped Billy Bunter, when the last contribution had been dropped into the hat. "I—I say, I—I'll take it up to my study to count it—"

"Mind you count it right," said Bob Cherry solemnly. "Like me to come and help?"

"Oh, no! I'll manage it all right."

Bunter rolled across to the table and grabbed the old hat. He was beaming already, but he beamed still more as he lifted the hat and felt its weight. It was at least half-full of contributions, and even if they were mostly coppers the sum was sure to be pretty large. Every eye was fixed on Bunter.

"There's one thing we can be sure of," Bob Cherry remarked; "Bunter won't spend any of that on tuck."

"Bank on that!" agreed the Bounder.

Billy Bunter grinned as he heard that. He had his own ideas on that subject. Not that Bunter was going to bag that Hero Fund; he was only going to borrow from it as long as it lasted.

But the happy grin faded suddenly from his fat face as he blinked into the hat. He expected to see stacks of coppers, with a gleam of silver here and there, and a currency note or two.

That, however, was not what he saw. His eyes almost popped through his spectacles at what he actually did see.

The most prominent article was the lid of the inkstand from the table in the Rag—which, being broken off, had come in handy. But there were other things, equally valuable. Broken pen-nibs predominated; but there were some stumps of pencil, some pebbles, chunks of crumpled paper, and a good many small knobs of coal.

Bunter blinked and blinked again and yet again, as if unable to believe either his eyes or his spectacles.

The expression that came over his fat face was really entertaining; he glared round at grinning faces.

"Beasts!" he roared.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the matter?" asked Bob. "Aren't you satisfied with the collection?"

"Beast!" yelled Bunter. "Pulling a fellow's leg!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors.

"There ain't any money here at all!" yelled Bunter.

"Did you think there was?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gentlemen, chaps, and sportsmen," said Bob Cherry, "Bunter's raised his Hero Fund, but I don't believe that jolly old hero would have any use for it if he got it. I suggest letting Bunter keep it." He took the old top-hat from Bunter's fat hands; the Owl of the Remove was quite willing to part with it now. "Hero you are, Bunter—"

"You silly idiot!" yelled Bunter. "I don't want it!"

"That's beside the point, old fat man; you're going to have it. Here you are!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Removites, as Bob lifted the hat, turned it over, and jammed it on Bunter's head. The remarkable collection streamed out all over Bunter.

Bob gave the old hat a thump on the crown, squashing it down over Bunter's fat ears, amid shrieks of laughter.

"Ow! Beast! Wow!" yelled Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Rag rocked with merriment, while Billy Bunter struggled to get his

head out of the hat. It was rather a tight fit, but he got it out at last and glared at the hilarious Removites with a glare that might have cracked his spectacles.

"Going to take another collection?" asked Bob affably. "We'll play up, same as before!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!" gasped Bunter. He was tired of taking collections! The first—and the last—had been heard of Billy's Hero Fund!

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

Unexpected!

"OUR study?" asked Frank Nugent after class on Monday.

Harry Wharton shook his head.

"No; we can't very well ask Skip to clear out—and I suppose we can't boot him out. And we can't have him present."

"No fear!" agreed Nugent.

The other members of the Co. nodded assent.

It was rather an important occasion. That day there were to be guests to tea—and not, so to speak, common or garden guests. Marjorie Hazeldene and Clara Trevlyn were the distinguished and honoured guests; they were coming over from Cliff House on their bicycles, and Hazel had gone to fetch them. On such an occasion the Famous Five would have preferred to gather in Study No. 1, but there was a lion in the path—in the shape of the outcast of the Form!

Skip would be in the study—and that settled that. Certainly he could not be asked to join the tea party, and, though he could have been asked to keep out of the study for the occasion, nobody cared to ask a favour of him.

"My study!" said Bob Cherry. "There's not so much room, but it's a case of Hobson's choice. I dare say the kid would let us have the study if we asked him, but—"

"I'm not going to ask him!" said Harry.

"Well, we can't, as we bar him! He's there now," said Frank. "Let him keep the study, and be blowed to him! We can manage all right!"

"Blow him!" said Johnny Bull.

"Blow you, if you come to that!" said a sarcastic voice behind the juniors, and they all looked round at once—at Skip.

They were discussing the matter on the Remove landing. Skip had gone to his study after class. But he had not, evidently, remained there—for here he was; and, clearly, he had heard the discussion as he was crossing the landing towards the old oak settee by the banisters.

He gave the Famous Five an inimical stare.

"Blow the lot of you!" he went on. "You got somebody coming to tea, 'ave you, and I ain't good enough to be in the study?"

"We've got some visitors coming!" said Harry Wharton quietly. "You don't know them, so I suppose you don't want to meet them."

"That ain't your reason!" sneered Skip. "You don't want me in the blooming study because you're down on me—and you got it into your 'eads that I pinched that locket! P'r'aps you think I'd pick the pockets of your blooming friends when they come to tea if I was there!"

The chums of the Remove made no reply to that. They had not intended

Skip to hear their discussion, and they did not want a "row" with him—all they wanted was to keep him at arms-length.

Skip stared aggressively from face to face. But the aggressive look died away, and he went on, rather unexpectedly:

"You can 'ave the blooming study. It was yourn afore I came 'ere, and I don't want to keep you 'out of it! I'm goin' down to tea in 'All, if you want to know, and I don't want the blinking study! 'Ave it, and keep it! And I'll steer clear of it till your friends 'ave gone, if you can take a bloke's word to that extent!"

The five were uncomfortably silent.

"You couldn't ask a bloke to let you 'ave the study!" jeered Skip. "I ain't good enough for coveys like you to speak to. Well, if you want to know, I knowed you was 'aving somebody to tea, 'cause I 'eard you say so afore, see, and I was going to keep out. I've only been there to fetch my blooming exercises what I've got to do for Quelch."

"You can please yourself!" said Harry curtly.

"I'm going to!" grunted Skip. "I don't want your company any more'n you want mine, and if you want, the blessed study without me in it 'ave it, and be blowed! I can sit 'ere and do my blinking exercises—till the bell goes for tea—unless," he added bitterly, "you think it may do your blooming friends some 'arm to pass me on the landing!"

And, with that, Skip sat down on the settee by the banisters and opened a writing-pad on his knee.

The juniors exchanged glances, and then Wharton said, with rather an effort:

"Thanks!"

"Keep 'em!" grunted Skip, without looking up.

"Well, that settles it, anyhow!" said Bob. "Come on, we've got to get the study ready—we don't get such distinguished visitors every day in the Remove!"

The Co. followed Bob up the passage.

Harry Wharton paused a moment, glancing at Skip—but there was, after all, nothing to be said, and he followed his friends. After which the Famous Five were too busy in making the study presentable before the arrival of the distinguished guests to have any further thought to waste on Skip.

When all was ready they came across the landing again to go down.

Skip was still seated on the settee, deep in his Latin exercise, and he did not look up as they passed—neither did they glance at him. They went down-stairs in a cheery crowd to wait at the door till Hazel arrived with the two girls from Cliff House.

Skip laboured on, and did not look up at the little crowd that appeared on the landing.

Harry Wharton & Co. and Hazeldene and Marjorie and Clara came across from the stairs in a cheery little crowd.

Marjorie Hazeldene's eyes fell, casually and carelessly, on the junior

seated by the banisters as she passed him.

But the next moment her glance was neither casual nor careless. She stopped dead.

"Why—who—" she exclaimed breathlessly.

"Why, that's the boy!" ejaculated Miss Clara, in amazement.

Skip gave a start. He had heard those voices before—in a boat on the river. He lifted his head and stared. Then he rose awkwardly to his feet, colouring.

"It is you!" exclaimed Marjorie, coming towards him, her hand impulsively held out. "I had no idea that you were a Greyfriars boy!"

Skip, crimson, took her hand, blinking at her. He was as startled and surprised as the two Cliff House girls by this unexpected encounter.

"Didn't you fellows know?" asked Clara, looking round at the astonished faces of the Famous Five.

"Eh? Didn't we know what?" stammered Bob Cherry. "What the dickens! Do—do you know that chap?"

"Hasn't he told you?"

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"Eh? What?"

"He never told you," said Marjorie. "Oh, I wish I had known before that he was at Greyfriars! You are a new boy here?" she added, looking at Skip.

"Yes, miss!" stammered Skip.

"I am so glad to see you again. Everyone at our school is talking about what you did for Bessie Bunter. It was so brave!"

"Oh, it wasn't nothing, miss!" stammered Skip. "It's very kind of you, miss, but it wasn't nothing, nohow."

"It was a great deal for Bessie," said Marjorie.

"Though she lost her hat!" remarked Clara.

"But what—" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Look here, would you mind telling us what you are talking about?"

"This is the boy who dived into the Sark for Bessie last Wednesday," said Marjorie.

The Famous Five exchanged a quick glance. For nearly a week fellows had been wondering who that unknown hero was. Now, utterly unexpectedly and surprisingly, he had been revealed—in Skip!

It was startling—it was astonishing; but there it was.

With one accord, the Famous Five gathered round Skip. Whatever he was, he was the fellow who had risked his life to save a schoolgirl from drowning, and the Famous Five were the fellows to do him honour for the same.

"Skip belongs to our study, as it happens," said Harry Wharton. "He's coming to tea—aren't you, Skip?"

"No!" grunted Skip.

"Oh, please do!" exclaimed Marjorie, discerning that there was a rift somewhere, though she did not know where or why. "We're so glad to see you again, you know!"

"Yes, come on, and don't be shy!" encouraged Miss Clara.

Skip grinned.

"Just as you like, miss," he said.

"Course I'll do anything you like!"

And he came!

It was a very cheery tea in Study No. 1.

True, Marjorie and Clara hardly knew what to make of Skip, this being their first experience of that unusual member of the Greyfriars Remove. But they were very kind and sweet to him, and easily put him at his ease, and remained elaborately unconscious of his dropped h's and other unusual manners and customs.

After tea, when the chums of the Remove wheeled out their machines to ride home with Marjorie and Clara, Skip was left in the study—no longer with a clouded face.

The news was spreading through the Remove, and a good many fellows came along to speak to Skip.

Skip was feeling rather overwhelmed, but extremely pleased. It was clear that, in the Greyfriars Remove, pluck covered a multitude of sins.

And when the Famous Five came back from Cliff House, they came at once up to the study to see Skip. They had made up their minds, and they were going to make the best of the fellow who had risked his life to save another—whatever else he had done.

Skip grinned as they came in. This was his happiest day since he had been at Greyfriars School.

"Look here Skip," said Harry Wharton, coming to the point at once. "we—we can't make head or tail of what you told us the other day; but Mauly believes it, and—and we're jolly well going to try to. After what you did for Bessie Bunter, nobody's going to bar you, anyhow."

"Old on!" said Skip. "If you want to be friendly to a bloke, O.K. I'll be glad enough. But what I told you about that there locket was the truth; and if you can't swaller it you better keep your distance."

Harry Wharton paused a moment, then he spoke.

"We believe you, Skip," he said. "It's steep, and you know that as well as we do; but—well, we're taking your word."

"O.K.!" said Skip.

And that was that!

There were brighter times ahead for Skip of the Remove—no longer barred by his Form!

THE END.

(The next yarn in this spanking fine series is entitled: "BAD LAD SMITHY!" Watch out for it next Saturday, chums!)

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FIRST-AID IN THE FOURTH!

"Doing the cross-word, sir?"
Mr. I. Jollivell Lickham, the Fourth Form master at St. Sam's, poked his head into the Head's study and asked that question.

Doctor Birchmell frowned. Mr. Lickham had asked that question because the Head was marking up a newspaper with a pencil. But by the look on Doctor Birchmell's face, Mr. Lickham's shot in the dark was a long way wide of the mark.

"Cross-word? Pah!" snorted the Head. "I'm surprised at you suggesting that a man with a brain like mine could waste his time on such a pastime! I don't mind an intellectual game like noughts and crosses, Lickham; but for me to do cross-word puzzles would be a truly shocking waste of time!"

"Sorry, sir!" grinned the master of the Fourth. "Mito I ask, then, what eggsactly you are doing?"

"As a matter of fakt, Lickham, I'm bargain-hunting amongst the advertisements in this newspaper." "Ah! I see, sir!" beamed Mr. Lickham. "As a rule you make a point of ticking off cads. And now, for a change, you're ticking off ads!"

Doctor Birchmell's eggsspression thawed a little.

"That's rather well put, Lickham, considering what a braceless ass you are as a rule!" he remarked patronisingly. "To tell you the truth, Lickham, bargain-hunting amongst the ads in the newspapers happens to be a little hobby of mine. You can pick up some really wonderful snips at times. Look at this, for instance: 'For sale, second-hand motor-ambulance in third-rate condition; suit first-aid corps. Price, £5.'"

Mr. Lickham scratched his chin and grinned.

"All right for anyone who wants it, I suppose, sir; but the question is—"

The Fourth Form master never finished his remarks. Before he could do so, a cyclone in yewman shape bust into the study, yelling wildly:

"Quick, sir! Quick! Fetch the perlice! Fetch the doctor—"

"Bless my sole!"

"What the thump!"

The two old fogeys fairly blinked. It was Tubby Barrell who had bust in so rudely on their deliberations, and they didn't need a pair of field-glasses to see that the fat Fourth-Former was in a state of grate eggssitement.

Tubby Barrell was in a proper pannick—they could see that at a glance. His fat neeze was nocking together and his fat chin was wobbling sewriously. His little eyes were almost bolting out of their sockits!

"Quick, sir!" he gasped.

"Quick!"

Doctor Birchmell rose to his feet, looking a little alarmed himself now.

"What's the matter, Barrell?"

he asked. "Has a berglar theaved the skool plate? Has the tuck-shop-dame caught the measles?"

"Nunno, sir! Worse than that!" babbled Tubby. "It's simply garstly, sir! I heard about it while I was standing outside the Form-room. I happened to stop near the door to tie up my shoelace and I heard all about it! There's a most dreadful crop of axcidents in the Fourth, sir! Merry has been burned in a fire—"

"Eh?"

"Bright has been mawled by a lion—"

"Wha-a-a-at!" shrieked the two masters.

"Fearless has been wounded by a boolit from a pistle, sir—"

"What the merry dickens—"

"The Honnerable Guy de Vere has fallen into the river and been drowned—"

Tubby Barrell sounded as if he intended to go on and on with his recital of calamities. But the beaks waited to hear no more. They had heard enuff already!

Wearing startled eggsspressions on their faces, they made a rush for the door; and Tubby rolled after them still gasping out his list of disasters.

Doctor Birchmell and Mr. Lickham soon reached the Fourth Form Room. The Head, who was first, wrenched at the handle and flung open the door. He simply jumped at the site that greeted his eyes.

Lying about all over the Form-room were fellows swathed in bandages. Some had bandages on their heads, some on their feet, and some on their arms. Altogether there were quite a duzzen of them; and in addition there were about two duzzen fellows attending to them!

"B-b-bless my sole!" gasped the Head. "Then—then it's troot!"

"Must be, sir!" agreed Mr. Lickham. "I must say I thought that Barrell was romancing; but this certainly confirms what he said!"

Still further confirmation was fourtheoming a moment later, when Jack Jolly started giving orders to the fellows who were looking after the injured.

"Mind how you handle them, you chaps!" he cried. "Remember that Merry has been burned in a fire, and Bright mawled by a lion, and—"

"Stop!" Doctor Birchmell fairly bawled out the word, his face white with fear. "If what you say is correct, Jolly, what has happened to the fire? And where is the lion? And what was de Vere doing in the river?"

Jack Jolly turned round with a gasp; but when he perceived Tubby Barrell at the back of the beaks, he grinned.

"What's happened, sir?" he asked. "Has Tubby Barrell been lissenning in and getting the wrong end of the stick?"

"He certainly lissened in, Jolly; but as to getting the wrong end of the stick, surely your own words cuppled with the site of these poor unforchunit vikims prove him correct?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Not eggsactly, sir!" larfed the kaptin of the Fourth. "Nobody has been injured really; and just to prove it, I'll ask all the chaps to stand up."

As soon as he had finished his breakfast, the Head rose from the table and went out. Fellows who glanced out of the winders saw him cross the quad and walk down to the gates. They wondered where the Head was going; and they mite well have wondered, too!

The fakt was that he was going to a second-hand car dealer's in Muggleton for the purpos of buying a motor-ambulance.

"This is the wheeze of the term. No mistake about that!" he muttered to himself, as he walked through the old gateway of St. Sam's and put his best foot forward to the village. "I have a g. t. e. fancy for myself in the role of first-Aid Dictator and this is just the chance to achieve my ambition! Once I get that motor-ambulance, I shall be welcomed with open arms in Jolly's First-Aid Corps. And once I become chief of the corps, I shall very quickly turn it into a munny-making proposition!"

Doctor Birchmell fairly rubbed his bony hands at the thought.

Reaching Muggleton, he made a B-line for the second-hand motor-car dealer's premises.

The deal was soon done. A deep, ruffling fiver changed hands, and the Head climbed into the driver's seat of the motor-ambulance. Soon he was speeding along the lane on the return jerney to St. Sam's!

There was a sensation when the Head arrived back at the skool. Fossil, the porter, rushed out from his lodge at the gates and stared at the Head as though he was staring at an apparition.

"Lummo!" he cried. "Wat I says is this 'ere: They must be a houbreak of scarlet fever!"

And Fossil returned to his lodge, looking quite blue.

But Fossil's serprize was no lag compared with the serprize of the St. Sam's fellows. They were almost paralysed with astonishment.

"Grate pip!" they cried as they crowded round the old motor-ambulance at the foot of the Skool House steps. "What's happened, sir? Has there been an axcident?"

"Not so far, my boys, but axcidents will happen, you know, and it's just as well to be prepared for any emergency!" said the Head sagely. "I will let you all into the secret. I have bought it!"



No. 263.

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

October 23rd, 1937.

The GREYFRIARS HERALD



You May Hate 'Em—

Says DICK RAKE
BUT GUM-CHEWERS ARE
NOT STUCK UP!

Greyfriars gum-chewers are in bad odour. There are complaints about the number of used pieces of chewing-gum which are found about the School House lately.

Wingate, for instance, ordered young Tubb to stop chewing the other day and made him go round and disgorge the adhesive mass in his mouth into one of the dust-bins.

Mr. Quelch, after discovering a used piece sticking to the front of his desk, gave fifty lines all round and promised a swishing to the first man he found in possession of chewing-gum.

The Head himself made a reference to the "ill-mannered habit" of sucking "adhesive and inedible compounds" after prayers one morning and advised addicts to stop it.

So, you see, all the signs and portents point to a determined drive against gum-chewing at Greyfriars.

Well, old pals, I admit that the gum-chewing fraternity are jolly careless in the way they dispose of their used products. I'll grant you, too,

that a habit that results in your neighbours' mouths watering is not one that is likely to commend itself to the beaks at a place like Greyfriars!

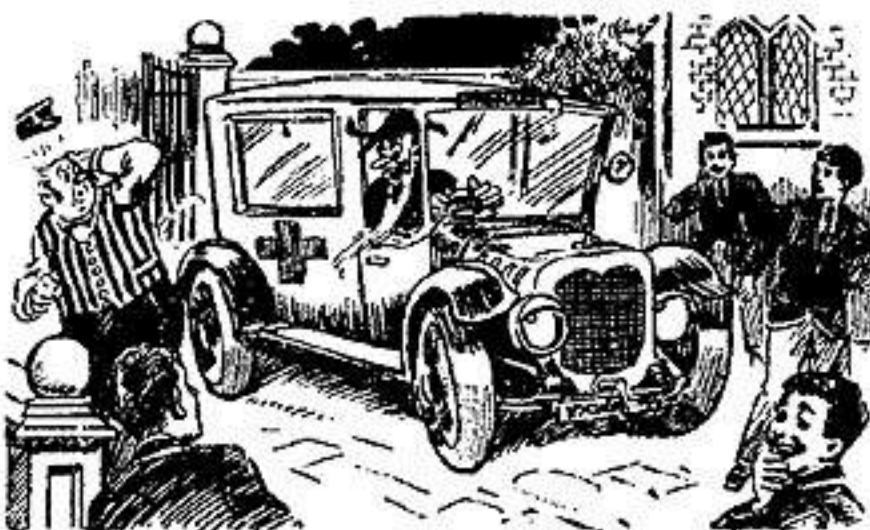
But I'm going to say in defence of the gum-chewers that they're a cheery crowd of chaps. Of course, that doesn't apply to all of them. I wouldn't say it of Fishy, for instance. But, taking them by and large, they're a genial gang; and I think that chewing-gum has something to do with it.

Gum-chewers say that the habit helps them to concentrate and clears their brains. I should also add that chewing-gum helps to stimulate the gastric juices. I don't know quite what this means, but they say it on the wrapper and it sounds good!

In my opinion this gum-chewers' hunt ought to be called off before it's begun. They're a good crowd—not a bit stuck up.

Let them "CHEWS!" for themselves!

What's the difference between a precipice and tea in Hall? One is hard to get up, the other is hard to get down.



Get up and show yourselves to the Head, you fellows!"

The next instant all the bandaged "cases" jumped to their feet!

Doctor Birchmell and Mr. Lickham stared at them in sheer amazement.

"What the merry dickens!" gasped the Head.

Jack Jolly larfed.

"You didn't think that all those garstly calamities had happened, sir, did you? If you did, all I can say is you must be potty!"

The Head cullered slitley. "If they didn't really happen, Jolly, mite I ask what's your idea in pretending that they did?"

"That's easy, sir!" chuckled the kaptin of the Fourth. "We're praktising first-aid!"

"Oh crums!"

The Head looked at Mr. Lickham and Mr. Lickham looked at the Head. Mr. Lickham had to stuff his handkerchief into his mouth to stop himself from busting out larking. But the Head didn't seem to see the funny side of it so easily; he snorted instead.

"Pah! I knew that all the time. My only wonder is that any boy could be so stupid as to misunderstand what was going on. Take a thousand lines, Barrell!"

And the Head stalked out of the Junior Common-room leaving every one in fits—with the eggsspection, of course, of Tubby Barrell!

BIRCHY TAKES COMMAND!

There was a thoughtful gleam in Doctor Birchmell's greenish eyes, as he quitted the Common-room.

It remained there all the evening and it was still there when he elled down to breakfast on the following morning.

The Head had not dayned to show the slitest interest in the Fourth Form First-Aid Corps when Jolly had eggssplained what was going on in the Form-room. But inwardly he felt more interest in it than he would have cared to admit. As the evening wore on, an idea began to evolve in Doctor Birchmell's mitey brane. By the morning that idea was fully formed.

As soon as he had finished his breakfast, the Head rose from the table and went out. Fellows who glanced out of the winders saw him cross the quad and walk down to the gates. They wondered where the Head was going; and they mite well have wondered, too!

The fakt was that he was going to a second-hand car dealer's in Muggleton for the purpos of buying a motor-ambulance.

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"Not so far, my boys, but axcidents will happen, you know, and it's just as well to be prepared for any emergency!" said the Head sagely. "I will let you all into the secret. I have bought it!"

"Ye gods!"

"Have you gone barmy, sir?"

"Certainly not!" snorted Doctor Birchmell. "This little ambulance is coming in jolly useful before I've finished with it, I can tell you. Where's Jolly?"

"Here I am, sir!"

"Ah, Jolly! I want you to assembl all the members of your First-aid Corps in the Form-room at once. Tell them I have a very important annouvncement to make to them."

The kaptin of the Fourth felt like asking eggsactly what it was. But the Head's word was law at St. Sam's, and it didn't do to argue the toss with him. So, after a moment's hezzitation, he tramped off, and five minnits later the Fourth Form First-aid Corps were waiting eggsspectantly in their places.

Doctor Birchmell walked in arm-in-arm with Mr. Lickham. He was grinning all over his face, and he looked as eggssited as a Second Form fag.

"Boys," he cried, "I have some plezzant news for you! When I saw you doing your first-aid praktiss last nite it struck me at once that there was one thing above all other things you needed to complete your outfit. That thing was a motor ambulance!"

"My hat!"

"My jennorous nature, boys," continued the Head, with a leer, "would give me no rest after that till I had supplied your need. So I have plezzure in announcing that I have been out and bought you a motor ambulance utterly regardless of cost!"

"Few!"

"The magnificent vehicle which at present stands outside the Skool House has cost me a fortune, boys. But I look on it as munny well spent. Boys, it's yours!"

The Fourth Formers fairly blinked at the Head. They couldn't beleveve their ears for a moment.

Then Jack Jolly recovered himself suffishantly to step to the four.

"Three cheers for the Head!" he cried. "Hip, hip, hip—"

Needless to say, those cheers were given with harty good will. The Fourth Form First-Aid Corps were natcherally delited to axcept a motor ambulance, though privately they couldn't help thinking that it looked a bit of an old crock.

Doctor Birchmell boughed as the cheers died away. But he had not yet finished.

"Boys," he cried, "now that you have heard that, I have still another serprize for you—a serprize that will fill you with even greater joy, if I am anything of a prophet! I will not keep you in suspense any longer. The serprize is this: I have decided to give you the bennifyt of my vast eggssperience and axcept the position of President

of your Corps—renaming it the St. Sam's Ambulance Corps!"

"Oh crickey!"

Evidently Doctor Birchmell was not such a grate prophet as he had imagined. Judging by the eggsspressions on the fellows' faces, anyway, this second serprize of the Head's was by no means as welcome as the first. But the Head didn't seem to notiss this.

"Well, boys, that's that!" he grinned. "Now to close the meeting, we will have three more harty cheers for your new President—myself!"

The Head then stood back and waited. But all that he got for his wait was not three harty cheers, but three harty groans!

With Doctor Birchmell at the head of things, the members of the St. Sam's Ambulance foresaw trouble looming ahead of them.

Events were very soon to prove them right!

(Don't miss the second long, laughable instalment of this ripping serial next week, chums!—Ed.)

FOR FIGURE TRIM PROUT STARTS TO SLIM!

Fifth Form Beak's Secret Out

If you were anywhere near the School House one particular day last week you probably heard a violent explosion that almost rocked the school buildings to their foundations.

You will be interested to know that it did not come from the chemical laboratory.

Needless to say, however, that doesn't worry us. We have a duty to our readers—a duty to report the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but; and we don't shrink from it, whoever we offend.

In the interests of truth, we assert here and now that Mr. Prout has been getting fatter and fatter lately. That's no secret, anyway; you can see it for yourself. What is a secret is that he's actually going in for slimming!

Don't for goodness' sake ask him whether it's true. He'll slaughter you if you do. It is true, anyway; our investigations leave no doubt about it.

Special "Greyfriars Herald" newshounds were detailed off one day last week to watch him right through the day. They reported as follows:

Mr. Prout got out of bed by raising himself on to his neck and doing a somersault on to the bed-room floor. He then went to a cupboard, which he unlocked, bringing to light a skipping-rope. For five minutes after that he indulged in a vigorous round of skipping. He looked like going on for an hour, but Wingate, whose study was on the floor below, came up with a rush to report

As a matter of fakt, it came from Masters' Common-room and was caused by Larry Lascelles asking Prouty if he had ever thought of going in for reducing!

It's an honest fakt, lads, the cheery old Fifth Form beak nearly bursts with rage if anyone suggests that he's fat!

that his ceiling was down; and Mr. Prout decided to stop. After dressing, he quitted the House. He walked with his usual precise and pompous gait. Nobody looking at him would have guessed what he was going to do next. But all the same, he did it. Believe it or not, he reached a quiet corner at the back of the chapel and immediately broke into a wild and whirling gallop, which he kept up till brekker.

After brekker, consisting, by the way, of one piece of dry toast and two cups of tea, Mr. Prout deliberately climbed all the stairs in the House till he reached the box-rooms at the top. His excuse was that he wanted to examine one of his boxes; but we have our newshounds' word for it that he didn't even glance at the boxes when he arrived. What he did do, having, as he thought, made sure that nobody was looking, was to slide down the banisters leading to the floor below! He then trotted up again, and repeated the performance half-a-dozen times.

Seriously, if Prouty goes on like this, he'll be getting a good deal more than the trim figure at which he's aiming—or, more correctly, LESS! We can see him simply wasting away to a shadow. We can hear his rich, fruity voice becoming a thin, piping treble. We can imagine his hair-raising stories of big-game hunting degenerating into mere fly-swatting anecdotes.

But on the other hand something tells us that it will never become as bad as that!

