

A Ballad of Greyfriars School



OLD Gosling greets us at the gate;
His gaze is sour and surly.
For Gosling has to work till late,
And rise each morning early.
"A porter's life," he sadly moans,
"Is not a bed of roses!
The winds of winter freeze my bones—
Just see how blue my nose is!"

He conjures with his bunch of keys,
And lets us pass the portals;
For William Gosling, if you please,
Is one of the immortals.
He has the power to shut us out
Or let us in, at pleasure.
We toss him half-a-crown; no doubt
That "tip" he'll always treasure!

Then to the tuck-shop we repair;
'Tis kept by good Dame Mimble.
Though silver streaks adorn her hair,
She's still alert and nimble.
Beside the counter Bunter stands;
He's famished, and wants feeding.
He holds out supplicating hands,
And starts his piteous pleading.

"Give me a dozen doughnuts, please,
And six jam tarts to follow!
I'm faint and feeble at the knees;
My cheeks are sunk and hollow.
I cannot face starvation, ma'am!
You know how much I dread it.
See what a skeleton I am,
And serve me now—on credit!"

But good Dame Mimble shakes her head
As sternly as a warder.
"I don't believe a word you've said
About your postal-order!

No, Master Bunter; I insist
Upon a prompt cash payment,
For only a philanthropist
Supplies free food and raiment!"





Then Billy Bunter pipes his eye,
And turns to us in sorrow.
"If you'll advance some money—why,
I'll pay it back to-morrow!"
We lend the rascal eighteenpence—
His acting is so clever—
Although we have the common sense
To know it's gone for ever!

And then the Famous Five stroll in;
Indeed, a merry meeting!
Bob Cherry, with a spacious grin,
Extends a cheery greeting;
Presenting us, without ado,
To Nugent and the Nabob,
To Johnny Bull and Wharton, too,
Then to himself—the gay Bob.

Fine fellows are the Famous Five
(You'll meet them in this ANNUAL),
Alert and active and alive
In mental tasks, and manual.
In school and sport they stand supreme,
Likewise in battle royal;
These splendid schoolboys are the cream
Of all that's true and loyal.

They show us round the stately school,
Through close and crypt and cloisters;
When passing through the vaults, so cool,
We keep as mum as oysters.
For there is something strange and weird
About these dim recesses;
The Ghost of Greyfriars, it is feared,
This underworld possesses.

Gladly we greet the light of day,
When weary of exploring,
And to the studies make our way,
Where studious youths are poring

Over their Latin exercise,
Geography, or grammar;
The famous annual Founder's Prize
Is sought by every "crammer."





Mark Linley, as a scholar should,
Sits pondering and frowning
Over the works of Thomas Hood,
And Byron, Burns, and Browning.
Then into Penfold's lair we look ;
He's busy writing ballads.
Two doors away, Wun Lung, the cook,
Is making Chinese salads.



In Study No. 7 we see
Alonzo Todd and Peter ;
The room is clean and orderly—
No study could be neater.
But when the careless Bunter comes,
We'll see a transformation ;
He'll strew the floor with countless crumbs
And cause great consternation.



We chat with Fisher Tarleton Fish,
The "guy" from New York City.
He's not so rich as he could wish—
It seems an awful pity.
He asks us to invest our cash
In one of his cute "wheezes."
We shun such speculations rash—
A fact which much displeases.



Bolsover major greets our gaze ;
He's beefy, big, and burly,
And very awkward in his ways—
So sullen and so surly !
"I'll fight the lot of you !" he cries,
In manner pugilistic.
"I shall be pleased to black your eyes
In combat fierce and fistie !"

We pass to a more pleasant zone,
And visit Rake and Russell,
Two fellows who have held their own
In many a thrilling tussle.

With Lord Mauleverer we chat
(Mauly a gay young blood is) ;
There's much to see and wonder at
In the Removites' studies.



We call on Mr. Quelch, of course,
That stern but manly master.
When kindness fails, he rules by force ;
His canings cause disaster !
As Skinner says, " He's often smiled
On those who practise virtue ;
But when you make old Quelch wild,
He never fails to hurt you ! "

To Mr. Prout and Mr. Twigg
We make our salutations ;
With Mr. Hacker, who's no prig,
We 'stablish good relations.
We call on Mr. Bunter, too,
Who rules the kindergarten ;
A sportsman, thorough and true blue,
Whom nothing can dishearten.

And so we pass from place to place,
And Greyfriars and its glories
With eager eyes we fondly trace,
Recalling all the stories
Which we have read of this great school,
So flourishing and famous.
Who would despise it but a fool
Or hopeless ignoramus ?

Now comes the parting of the ways.
To Wharton and the others
We bid farewell, and warmly praise
This happy band of brothers.
Long may they shine in school and sport,
And every grand endeavour ;
Their doughty deeds, of good report,
Will be remembered ever !



Old Gosling greets us at the gate,
Most eager and most willing.
He's smiling, wondrous to relate
(Tip him an extra shilling !).

" I 'ope you'll come again, young gents,
This hedifice to visit.
Good-bye ! Haccept my compliments ! "
Not bad for Gosling, is it ?