

THE GREYFRIARS
HOLIDAY
1925 **ANNUAL** 1925
FOR BOYS AND GIRLS



A WINNER ALL THE WAY !



Frontispiece

BUCCANEERS' GOLD!

One of the many thrilling incidents in the story of "Skeleton Cove!"



This Book Belongs to _____

The Editor to his Friends

In the compilation of this, the Sixth Volume of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL, the guiding principle of previous years has been followed, namely, to invite contributions only from authors and artists of proved popularity, whose work is known and appreciated by many hundreds of thousands of readers of the famous Companion Papers throughout the world. By this means the HOLIDAY ANNUAL has become recognised as a big budget of the finest obtainable stories and pictures, representing the best work of the proved favourites of a vast public. Its popularity was, therefore, assured from the first, and has increased steadily year by year.

I venture to say that the present volume need not fear comparison with any of its predecessors. The cheery chums of Greyfriars, St. Jim's, and Rookwood—the most famous schools in fiction—are as much in evidence as ever, and Messrs. Frank Richards, Martin Clifford, and Owen Conquest, the celebrated trio of evergreen favourites, maintain in conclusive fashion their proud position as the world's most popular school-story writers. P. G. Wodehouse, Duncan Storm, and Michael Poole keep the ball rolling merrily, while the clever artists responsible for the Colour Plates and illustrations are recognised as being masters of their craft. The whole volume is freely spiced with humour, which reaches its climax, perhaps, in "Billy Bunter's Annual"—that original and delightfully funny feature which has this year been developed and enlarged.

Enough has been said to show that every effort has been exerted to make the present volume worthy of the long line of successful HOLIDAY ANNUALS preceding it; it only remains for my reader-chums to put the matter to the test by reading it to the last line!

THE EDITOR.

The Fleetway House,
Farringdon Street,
London, E.C.4.



The Romance of The Holiday Annual!

By The Editor

"LONDON invaded!"

That would make a startling newspaper headline, would it not? But it is precisely what happened a few months ago. London was invaded by an army of schoolboy scribes, hailing from Greyfriars, St. Jim's, and Rookwood—three of the best-known public schools in the world.

Before setting to work on the stupendous task of preparing the 1925 edition of THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL, I wrote to all the schoolboy journalists who have helped to make this volume famous. I requested them to call at my editorial sanctum at a fixed hour on a fixed day, and I told them to bring their best, brightest, and brainiest ideas with them.

Two heads are better than one, and fifty heads are better than two; so I thought it would be an excellent plan to summon all these schoolboys together, to a sort of round-table conference, that we might discuss in detail the launching of the present volume.

From Greyfriars I invited Harry Wharton, who, as editor of "The Greyfriars Herald," has already served a long apprenticeship in journalism. I also invited the fat and famous Billy Bunter, who, although the postman never brings him his long-expected postal-order, is none the less "a man of letters."

From the same school I invited Bob Cherry—probably the most popular schoolboy in

the world. I once heard Mr. Frank Richards, the author of the Greyfriars stories, describe Bob Cherry as "a human chunk of concentrated sunshine"—an apt and accurate description of the jovial Bob.

Other Greyfriars celebrities whom I summoned to the conference were Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, Hurree Singh, Mark Linley, Tom Brown, Vernon-Smith, Peter Todd, and Dick Penfold.

From St. Jim's I invited Tom Merry, the handsome and popular captain of the Shell Form, and the editor of the "Weekly" which bears his name. Tom's bosom chums, Harry Manners and Monty Lowther, were also included in the invitation: also Jack Blake & Co., Figgins & Co., and that elegant, blue-blooded member of the British aristocracy, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy! The invitation was extended to "Baggy" Trimble, the fat and fatuous Falstaff of St. Jim's.

From Rookwood School, way down in Hampshire, I bade Jimmy Silver & Co. travel up to town, bringing with them their great rivals, Tommy Dodd & Co., and that plump and portly personage, Tubby Muffin.

Thus was London invaded one sunny spring morning, by a laughing throng of schoolboys!

I was seated at my desk, going through the contents of my morning mail-bag, when one of my sub-editors came rushing in like a whirlwind.

"They've come, sir!" he shouted excitedly. "A whole battalion of them. They've taken Fleetway House by storm!"

"You mean the schoolboys?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where are they?"

"Overflowing the waiting-room down-

stairs. You'll have to interview them in sections, sir, I'm afraid. They couldn't possibly crowd into this room all at once. Shall I arrange for them to come up half a dozen at a time?"

"No," I replied, rising to my feet. "We will hold the conference down in the waiting-room. Instead of the mountain coming to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the mountain."

And I promptly made my way to the spacious waiting-room on the ground floor.

Long before I got there, a babel of voices came to my ears. I could hear Billy Bunter's shrill voice above all the rest.

"I say, you fellows, I'm going up to see my old pal, the editor! I'm the only chap he really wants to see. He invited the rest of you just out of politeness."

"Dry up, Bunter!"

"Sit on him, somebody!"

Evidently somebody did, for on reaching the door of the waiting-room I heard a noise like wind rushing out of a punctured football.

And then I saw Billy Bunter lying prone on the floor, with Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull making a footstool of him.

I halted in astonishment on the threshold. Never had I seen such a multitude assembled in the waiting-room. The place resembled a human beehive.

My appearance was the signal for a rousing cheer, which Tom Merry started. I smiled in acknowledgment, and Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull jumped up with crimson faces.

"Hope you didn't mind us sitting on Bunter, sir," said Bob. "He has to be sat on several times daily, or there would be no suppressing him."

"Oh, really, Cherry!" came a plaintive squeak from Billy Bunter. "You've flattened my chest, and squashed two of my ribs! If there was room to fight here, I'd wipe up the floor with you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Simmer down, Bunter," I said, squeezing myself into the room and closing the door.

"This is a peace conference, not a council of war. We have met together to discuss the launching of the next edition of THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL."

"Hear, hear!"

"Make way for the Editor, you fellows!"

"Don't take that chair, sir!" said Tom Brown warningly. "Bunter sat on it just now, and the seat's stove in!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton placed a more solid chair in position, and I sat down. My visitors did likewise—at any rate, those who were able to do so, for there were not nearly enough chairs to go round.



"They've come, sir!" said my sub-editor excitedly. "A whole battalion of them! They've taken Fleetway House by storm!"



Billy Bunter broke off with a muffled yell as Johnny Bull, true to his promise, gagged the fat junior with a handkerchief. "Now we are getting along famously, boys!" I said

However, there were a couple of luxurious settees, and these were instantly commandeered.

When something approximating to silence had been obtained, I plunged into my preliminary speech.

"Gentlemen of Greyfriars, Rookwood, and St. Jim's!" I began. "I am glad to see you have answered my summons with such alacrity. All the old familiar faces are here, and right pleased am I to see them. Now, with regard to the HOLIDAY ANNUAL—"

"One moment, sir!"

It was the piping voice of Tubby Muffin which broke in upon my discourse.

"What is it, Muffin?" I asked, a trifle impatiently.

"Before we get to business, sir, what about having a feed? Speaking for myself, I'm simply famished. We had to leave Rookwood so early this morning that I didn't have time to do justice to my brekker. I don't know about the other chaps, but I can't talk business on an empty stomach."

"Possess your soul in patience, my plump

friend," I said, with a smile. "As soon as the discussion is over, I propose to take you all out to lunch at a big restaurant."

A hearty cheer greeted this statement; and the faces of Tubby Muffin, Billy Bunter, Baggy Trimble, and Fatty Wynn beamed like full moons.

"That's awfully sporting of you, sir!" exclaimed Tubby Muffin. "I'll try and hold out for half an hour."

"Same here," said Billy Bunter. "Now, what about the ANNUAL, Mr. Editor? I suppose you'd like me to write the lion's share of it?"

"Not at all, Bunter. I shall require only one contribution from you—a special edition of "Billy Bunter's Annual"; and mind it's a good one!"

"Is that all?" gasped Billy in dismay.

"Yes. It will give a sort of comic relief to the rest of the contributions."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter blinked at me very reproachfully through his big spectacles.

"But—but I had counted on writing at least nine-tenths of the ANNUAL, sir!" he said. "The British public expects it. They can never have too much Bunter. Won't you let me write three long stories—one of Greyfriars, one of Rookwood, and one of St. Jim's?"

"But you don't know anything about Rookwood!" shouted Jimmy Silver.

"And you know even less about St. Jim's!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"And Mr. Frank Richards is going to write the long story of Greyfriars, so you can keep off the grass, Bunt!" said Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter turned to me appealingly.

"Well, if I can't write the long stories, sir, p'raps you wouldn't object to my writing a dozen short school yarns, and a pirate story and a Special Tuck Supplement, and a play in verse, and a hundred or so odd poems?"

"I should object very strongly!" I replied.

"Now, I must ask you to refrain from further interruptions, Bunter."

"I'll gag him with his handkerchief if he interrupts again, sir!" said Johnny Bull.

Billy Bunter having been effectively silenced, I asked my audience if they had any suggestions to make.

Suggestions? Why, their brain-boxes were simply bubbling over with them! Brilliant brain-waves were simply showered upon me from all parts of the room. The babel of voices was so terrific that I was obliged to stop my ears.

"One at a time, please!" I implored. "Now, Wharton. I can see you are bursting to say something."

"I simply want to suggest, sir, that stories of Greyfriars, Rookwood, and St. Jim's, should be written by Messrs. Frank Richards, Owen Conquest, and Martin Clifford, as in previous years."

"Hear, hear!"

"Stick to the old firm!"

"You can't beat that brainy trio of writers, sir."

"No, indeed I cannot," was my reply.

And the wishes of the audience were promptly jotted down in my memorandum-book.

"Three long school stories will form the backbone of our next volume," I said.

"Now, what about the other features?"

"I'll write you a short story about Billy Bunter, sir," said Peter Todd.

"Very well, Todd."

"And I'll write you a short story about Baggy Trimble, sir," chimed in Monty Lowther.

I nodded my approval.

"And I'll weigh in with a short story about Tubby Muffin, sir," exclaimed Teddy Grace of Rookwood.

"Splendid!" I said. "Make your stories brief, bright, and breezy. The amusing antics of the three fat boys ought to make excellent reading. Now, is the Poet Laureate of Greyfriars present?"

Dick Penfold rose blushing to his feet.

"At your service, sir," he murmured.

"Well, Penfold, will you give us another of your capital plays, written in verse?"

"Delighted, sir!"

"And a budget of humorous poems, written in your best style?"

"With pleasure, sir!"

There was a snort of wrath from Billy Bunter.

"Yah! Penfold can't write poetry for toffee! He can make 'cat' rhyme with 'bat,' and that's about all. You want a real brainy bard for the job, sir, and you needn't look farther than me. I'm a descendant of the greatest poet who ever pushed a pen—William Shakespeare! If you care to come down to Bunter Court, sir, I'll show you my family tree—"

"He means the plum-tree in the garden, sir!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bob Cherry, you're a beast—ow! Gug-gug-gug!"

Billy Bunter broke off with a muffled gurgle as Johnny Bull, true to his promise, gagged the fat junior with a handkerchief.

"Now, we are getting along famously, boys!" I said. "We have already arranged for the long school stories, the short ditto, and the poetry. The adventure stories you may leave to me. I am in touch with some of the finest adventure-story writers of the

day, and I feel sure they will rally round, and rise to the occasion. Any more suggestions?"

Vernon-Smith, the sports editor of "The Greyfriars Herald," jumped to his feet.

"I shall be pleased to contribute a page of chatty sports paragraphs, sir," he said. "Sporting Records of Greyfriars' would make a good title."

"What about a similar page dealing with St. Jim's sport, sir?" suggested Tom Merry. "We'll ask Kildare of the Sixth to write it, if you're willing."

"Agreed!" I said promptly.

And it was also decided that big George Bulkeley, the captain of Rookwood, should be asked to contribute a page of Rookwood sporting chat.

Other special features were promised by Tom Merry, Bob Cherry, and Jimmy Silver. And, at the urgent bidding of my guests, I consented to write an article myself for the 1925 ANNUAL.

The discussion proceeded at a merry pace, and all sorts of brain-waves were suggested and sifted, accepted or rejected, until—thanks to my willing army of schoolboy helpers—this edition of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL was mapped out in detail.

"Gentlemen all," I said, rising to my feet, "I must thank you all very cordially for your good offices—"

"But these offices aren't ours, sir!" protested Tubby Muffin. "They belong to the Amalgamated Press."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"These are not the sort of 'offices' I mean, Muffin," I said smiling. "I was referring to your kind services."

"Oh!"

"I have no doubt, my dear boys, that the HOLIDAY ANNUAL for 1925 will surpass all its predecessors, and that it will be unanimously voted the best and brightest boys' book on the market!"

"Hear, hear!"

"We will now adjourn for lunch," I added.

The words had a magical effect upon the four famous feeders, Bunter, Trimble, Wynn, and Muffin.

Johnny Bull removed the gag from Billy Bunter's mouth; and the Fat Boy of Greyfriars was the first to follow me from the waiting-room.

A willing junior ran up to my room to fetch my hat, and then we trooped out into the bright sunshine.

How shall I describe the bumper celebration that followed, in Fleet Street's famous restaurant? Truth to tell, it almost beggars description!

My schoolboy army took the restaurant by storm. Never have I seen such a merry, boisterous throng! Their cheeriness was in harmony with the radiant spring morning. It was infec-

tious, too, for even the busy waiters, rushed off their feet though they were, found time to smile.

I told the boys they could order what they liked. I also expressed the hope that they would like what they ordered.

Of course, Billy Bunter & Co. were in their element. They feasted to their hearts' content, and they kept the waiters on the run.

It was the merriest meal I have ever attended, and I felt downright sorry when the time came to bid au revoir to my schoolboy guests. Gladly would I have devoted the



The Fat Boy of Greyfriars led the way, and we trooped out into the bright sunshine



I told the boys they could order what they liked, and I hoped they would like what they ordered! Anyhow, it was the merriest meal I have ever attended

afternoon to showing them the sights of London; but there was work to be done. The HOLIDAY ANNUAL had been carefully planned, and it was for me to put those plans into execution.

For many weeks afterwards, an army of authors and artists was hard at work, preparing the bumper volume which is now in your hands. I also worked hard, and my labours frequently extended far into the night.

But I always regard the compilation of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL as the most congenial task which falls to my lot.

It is with the keenest pleasure that I place this volume, with its packed programme of stories, before my readers. It is for them to pass judgment upon it; and I feel confident that the verdict will be:

"Guilty — of making us split our sides with merriment, and giving us once again a heritage of happy laughter!"

THE END





The Editor of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL chats with some of his correspondents

THE cry is, "Still they come!" From all parts of the English-speaking world—as well as from remote parts of the globe where the English language is rarely spoken—cheery letters come to me from enthusiastic readers of THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL.

Many of these letters I have replied to in the course of my daily duties. Many others, glowing with expressions of goodwill, bear no address, but it would be churlish of me to miss this opportunity of thanking the writers very cordially for their good wishes, bright suggestions, and delighted approval of the healthy fare provided by THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL.

QUEER QUERIES

Lots of my correspondents show an insatiable thirst for information. Their letters consist almost solely of questions. These they fire off at me with the rapidity of a machine-gun in action.

One reader in the Transvaal has sent me six pages of questions. Were I to attempt to answer them all in this article, I should need to double the size of THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL!

As a matter of fact, I do not pretend to be able to answer them all. To do so, I should need to be a walking encyclopedia, and to possess the ability of "Dadas," the Memory Man! I frankly confess I cannot give the colour of the hair and eyes of every fellow at Greyfriars. Neither can I give a

list of their home addresses, their pet hobbies, their favourite books, and so on and so forth. I could give these particulars in isolated cases. Billy Bunter, for example. His hair is of a nondescript hue; his eyes are blue-grey; his home address is Bunter Court; his pet hobby is eating; and his favourite book is Mrs. Beeton's Cookery Book! But I could not extend this information to embrace every one of the three hundred boys at Greyfriars! My Transvaal chum will, I feel sure, readily understand this. He must be very keenly interested in the Greyfriars boys, or he would never have subjected me to such a bombardment of questions!

A POETIC TRIBUTE!

There are poets in our midst! This is proved by a letter in rhyme, which was sent to me by a reader who styles himself "Robert the Rhymer," and who lives at Horsham, in Sussex.

"Bright stories in the ANNUAL,
It is a treat to scan you all!"

That is the ingenious way in which "Robert the Rhymer" starts his poetic tribute; and he goes on to say:

"You give such grand variety
That people in Society,
And folk of humble origin,
All love to delve and forage in
This book of mirth and merriment—
A truly grand experiment!"

It was also a successful experiment—the launching of THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL. This is our sixth year of publication, and, although there are many rivals in the field, our bumper volume is still voted the brightest and best.

I wish I had space to quote the whole of my Sussex chum's poem. There must be something inspiring in the atmosphere of his native town, for one of our greatest poets first saw the light of day at Horsham. I thank "Robert the Rhymers" for his effusion, and I hope that this, our latest and greatest edition of THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL, will inspire him to fresh efforts!

A TYPICAL LETTER

I am reproducing the following letter, because it is typical of many hundreds which have come to hand:

"Dear Editor,—I have perused THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL for 1924 from cover to cover, and it is better than a banquet—though I hardly think Billy Bunter would say this!

"There are so many grand stories in the volume that it would require the judgment of Solomon to decide which was the best. Personally, I must award the palm to "A Great Man at Greyfriars," which deals with Mr. Martin Clifford's visit to the old school, and gives many interesting glimpses of the personality of the popular GEM author.

"The adventure stories, the articles, the coloured plates, the poems—all are absolutely A1.

"One of the greatest charms of THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL is that it is always seasonable. It is a boon companion by the Christmas fireside, and also under a shady tree on a sweltering summer day. It caters for all tastes; it covers a wide range of topics. In a nutshell, it is far and away the best book ever published for boys and girls. I do not intend to flatter; I am giving you my honest opinion.

"I hope the good old ANNUAL will flourish for many years to come. Fifty years hence, I hope to be buying it for my grand-children; and, eighty years hence, for my great grand-

children! You will observe that, like most of your readers, I am a cheery optimist!

"Yours loyally,

"A LOVER OF GREYFRIARS."

These are the sort of letters that warm the cockles of an Editor's heart. I receive them daily. The office files are bulging with them. But I never grow weary of such letters, since they act as a spur to my resolve to make each edition of THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL better than the last.

CANDID CRITICS

There is another side to the picture. Not every letter I receive is couched in terms of praise and appreciation.

Never was a story written, or a poem penned, that escaped the attentions of that outspoken gentleman known as the Candid Critic.

Now, criticism is a very good thing—when it is helpful criticism. But when merely destructive, criticism is worthless.

One of my critics suggests that the ANNUAL would be much improved if it were twice the present size, and half the present price. I don't doubt it! But if my friend understood anything of printing and publishing expenses, he would realise that THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL, at its present size and price, gives better value than any of its contemporaries. If I were to tell him the cost of a coloured frontispiece alone, it would probably take his breath away!

Many other criticisms have come my way, some helpful, others rather stupid. Sensible criticisms are always assured of getting a sympathetic hearing. As for the other sort—well, there is always the waste-paper basket!

The vast majority of the letters I receive, however, are written in strains of the highest approval.

I can assure my world-wide army of readers that no effort shall be spared to make THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL better and brighter, and more and more attractive, as the years roll by.



My Postal Order

Billy By Bunter

OUR postman's name is Mr. Pim,
Because he "passes by";
He glares at me in manner grim
With cold and steely eye.
But though he brought me "nix" to-day,
My postal order's on the way!

He brought a letter for the Head,
And two for Mr. Twigg;
But when I asked for mine, he said:
"There's nothing doing!" Pig!
But still, unless it's gone astray,
My postal order's on the way!

I tried to raise a little loan,
And tackled Bull and Brown;
The former gave a dismal groan,
The latter gave a frown.
They treated me with scorn; but stay!
My postal order's on the way!

I've been expecting it for years.
Why is it thus delayed?
I sometimes harbour ghastly fears
That it has been mislaid.
Yet still! my heart is bright and gay—
My postal order's on the way!

It may not come next week, or year,
That "tip" from Uncle Bertie;
In fact, it may not reach me here
Till Nineteen hundred and thirty.
But never mind the long delay—
My postal order's on the way!

Hallo! The postman is in sight!
He comes in my direction;
An envelope, both neat and white,
He shows for my inspection.
My heart beats high with hope. Hooray!
My postal order's come to-day!



JACKSON'S DIP!

By P. C. Wodehouse

An Amusing Complete
Public School Story



IT was the hottest day on record. The day on which the celebrated American engine-driver was obliged to sit inside his furnace in order to keep cool must have been warm; but it could not have been warmer than this. The thermometer had been going up steadily for hours. It had been high at the end of morning school. During the dinner-hour it had risen. Lying under the trees you could see a sort of dancing haze over the cricket-field, as if the earth were smoking. And now at three o'clock it was worse than ever.

The Upper Fifth struggled painfully across the cloisters, keeping as much as possible in what little shade was thrown by the pillars. They were due at M. Gautier's room at the top of the middle block for their French lesson. From under the trees at the other side of the cricket-field came the raucous voice of the school sergeant, who was engaged in putting a junior form through its drill. Somehow the sound seemed to intensify the heat.

U In the middle block it was cool. But the repper Fifth had got so warm by the time they heached it, that they barely noticed the

difference. They lurched into M. Gautier's room and sank languidly into their places, where they sat, looking as if all they wanted was to be left alone. Surely the man wasn't going to be brute enough to try and do any work that afternoon? Given absolute peace and full permission to doze, they might, they felt, just manage to scrape through till four o'clock. Otherwise they could not answer for the consequences.

But the French master, a brown, dried-up little man, who looked as if he had spent a lifetime in the tropics, was sternly determined to waste no time.

"Dictée!" he said crisply.

The form looked stupefied. Not *dictation* with the thermometer at a hundred and eighty or thereabouts, in the shade! It was an outrage. He must be joking. He couldn't expect a chap to write on a day like that. They took up their pens in disgust. Ten minutes' dictation reduced the Upper Fifth to pulp. The leisurely translation of Erckmann-Chatrien's "L'Invasion," which followed, came as a boon and a blessing, except to the unfortunates who had to stand up and translate. The rest of the form leaned back comfortably in their seats, and composed themselves for slumber.

Jackson, who sat next to the open door, was better off than the others. All the windows of the form-room were open, and he got the benefit of the cooling breezes thus created. But even with this advantage it was sufficiently baking. The voice of the sergeant sounded faintly from without, but now it not only made the air seem warmer, but suggested somehow how cool it must be

under those trees, or, better still, in the pond.

One of the features of Locksley School grounds was the pond. It was an idyllic spot, and the thought of it was maddening on an afternoon like this. This pond stood in the middle of a thick clump of trees at the pavilion end of the cricket-field. Its waters, though not deep—about four feet in the middle—were clear as crystal, owing to the fact that a stream ran through it to the river which divided the school from the town.

It would be very pleasant, thought Jackson, to be in the pond. Locksley, as a rule, bathed in the river; but somehow even the river's attractions paled at this moment before those of the pond.

To put a finishing touch on the thing, his next-door neighbour asked him at this point if he was coming to the river after school.

Jackson's mind was made up. At all costs he must go and have a bathe in the pond immediately. If he were expelled for it on his return he must, nevertheless, go. His position next to the door favoured the scheme. All that it was necessary to do was to seize his opportunity.

He confided his intention to his neighbour, who, appropriately, threw cold water on it.

"You'll be an ass if you do," was his criticism.

"Well, I'm going to," said Jackson. "I'm simply boiled. If I don't get cool soon I shall have a fit or something. I wish you'd shunt up more to the end of the form directly I've gone. Ten to one Gautier won't spot that there's anyone away."

"All right. But I shouldn't advise you to."

Jackson made no reply. His eyes were on the master.

His opportunity soon came. M. Gautier put Firmin on to translate. Firmin sat at the opposite end of the room, so that the master turned his back on Jackson. It speedily became evident that M. Gautier would not have much attention to spare for the rest of the form. All his available stock must be

lavished on Firmin, who was making perhaps as complete a hash of "L'Invasion" as mortal had ever done. M. Gautier's moustache bristled with horror. His manner and speech began to resemble those of a tragedian in his "big scene."

"Ah, no, no, my boy! No, no!"

Firmin looked up from his book in mild astonishment, as if he could hardly believe that he was wrong. Then, with the air of one who is always anxious



M. Gautier's moustache bristled with horror. His manner and speech began to resemble those of a tragedian in his big scene. "Ah, no, no, my boy! No, no!"

to comply with even the most unreasonable request, he gave out another rendering of the sentence. M. Gautier writhed, dashed a hand across his brow, and spun round in his direction again.

Simultaneously Jackson shot silently out of the door, and began to creep downstairs. On the first landing he waited to see if there was going to be any hue and cry. If M. Gautier had discovered his absence, it would not be too late to return and smooth things over with some excuse.

"Ah, no, no, Fir-r-min, my boy! No, no!" from the class-room.

Jackson concluded that all was well. He continued his descent.

It was very pleasant out of doors, pleasanter perhaps because the pleasure was a stolen one. There was a world of difference between the look of the grounds now and their appearance twenty-five minutes ago. The thought of the pond lent a beauty even to the gravel.

From the middle block to the ponds was a distance of about two hundred yards across very open country. He must look to it that no one saw him making for the pond. He wished he had had to approach it from the opposite side; for behind the pond, some dozen yards from the edge of the clump in which it stood, there began a deep belt of shrubbery, which ran all the way to the end of the grounds. It was separated from the high road by a wooden fence of moderate height.

This shrubbery, trackless to the uninitiated, had no secrets for Jackson. When a fag he had ranged through it from end to end with a delightful sense of secrecy and Robin Hood-cum-Fenimore-Cooper's-Indian daredevilry; and, though he had not entered it since time had brought discretion and a place in the XI., he was confident that he still knew it through and through.

But, since this ideal approach was out of the question, he must risk the open way. After all, everybody was in school, so that there was no one to see him. The sergeant and his junior drillers had moved, in the execution of some intricate and probably brilliant manoeuvre, to the football ground at the other side of the shrubbery. He could hear

the sergeant urging them on to glory or death in a voice that sounded faint and metallic, as of one speaking in a gramophone.

He made his dash. All went well. He arrived at the clump streaming but jubilant, and stood panting by the edge of the pond. How cool the water looked, and how clear. He remembered reading somewhere, or being told by someone, that it was very bad for you to go into the water in a state of perspiration. You ought to cool down first. Or was it that, if you were in a state of perspiration, it was very bad for you to cool down before going to the water? He could not remember. Both seemed probable. By way of settling the matter he flung himself out of his clothes, and slid into the pond.

Jackson had had some comfortable dips in his time. He could remember occasions when the river had been remarkably pleasant. The first bathe in Cover Reservoir, too, after the arrival of the School Corps at Aldershot Camp—that had had its points. But for absolute and solid luxury this stolen wallow in the pond beat everything he had ever dreamed of. The only drawback was that, being stolen, it was not a bath which it would be advisable to prolong beyond a certain time. The longer he stayed away, the more likely was M. Gautier to notice his absence.

He tore himself reluctantly from the water and began to dress. Having no towel, he did not stop to dry himself, and it was fortunate for him that he did not.

He had reached a sort of halfway stage in his toilet—that is to say, the lower half of him was clothed, but he had still to don his shirt and coat—when he noticed with horror that somebody was coming towards the clump, and that person was Mr. Knight, the master of the Lower Fifth.

Each form on the classical side at Locksley spent the last hour of afternoon school on two days in the week with its French master, and the regular master of the form was consequently off duty. The French days of the Upper and Lower Fifth coincided. The master of the Upper Fifth had taken himself off at three o'clock to the masters' garden at the back of the junior block. Mr. Knight had done the same, but at half-past three had



The master, on entering the near side of the clump, was astonished to catch sight of a figure flitting rapidly away from the other side. "Extraordinary!" said Mr. Knight. "Most extraordinary!"

suddenly been seized with the notion of trying the pond clump as a resting-place. It seemed to him that it would be so much cooler than the masters' garden. So he gathered up his novel and deckchair and sallied forth.

For a moment Jackson was paralysed. The danger was so near, Mr. Knight being only a few yards from the clump when he saw him, that it seemed hopeless to try and escape. Then he recollected the shrubbery, and determined to make a dash for safety. At the same time, it flashed across his mind that Mr. Knight was shortsighted—at least, he wore spectacles. Possibly he might not recognise him, for he would only get a back view, and once on board the lugger, once in the shrubbery, and the situation was saved.

The result of these reflections was that the master, on entering the near side of the clump, was astonished to catch sight of a figure flitting rapidly away from the other side. The figure was clad as to its nether limbs in the grey flannels which nearly all the school wore during the hot weather. It was the upper half that struck Mr. Knight as peculiar. A canvas shirt enveloped the head, and beneath this he caught a glimpse of bare back. Over his arm the runner carried a blue flannel coat. Even as Mr. Knight looked, the figure disappeared into the shrubbery.

"Extraordinary!" said Mr. Knight to himself. "Most extraordinary!"

He trotted round the pond and out of the clump. The excitement of the chase, instinct

in the mildest of human beings, banished from his mind his desire for a comfortable seat in a cool spot. He went out into the sunshine, and hurried to the edge of the shrubbery.

Here he paused.

It was a little difficult to know what was the best thing to do next. He did not feel equal to probing the shrubbery in search of the fugitive. It was very thick, and he was disposed to think that there were insects in it, "things with wings what stings." Wasps even. No. The course to pursue here was to parley with the boy. He was certain on reflection that it was a boy, though he had not recognised him. Yes, a parley was the thing.

But how to begin was the question. No manual of polite conversation ever dealt with the problem, "What to say to semi-naked strangers hidden in shrubberies." He resolved to try a happy blend of command and statement of fact. "Come out directly," he cried. "I can see you!"

"Liar!" murmured Jackson happily, wriggling into his shirt behind a bush.

"Come out, boy!"

Jackson, clothed now and in his right mind, did not hear the observation. He was half-way towards the fence, threading his way through the bushes with the ease of old acquaintanceship. At the fence he stopped, and peered round a bush to see how Mr. Knight was faring. That gentleman had his back turned, and seemed to be still engaged in addressing the shrubbery. Jackson was over the fence and in the road in a couple of seconds.

It was a long way round by the road, but he re-entered the middle block in safety just as the quarter-to struck from the clock-tower. He trotted upstairs to M. Gautier's room, and there he received his second shock of the afternoon. The door was shut.

There are moments when the gamest man feels that there is nothing left to do but to throw up the sponge, Fate being too strong for him. That was how Jackson felt when he looked at the door which shut him out from the class-room. Anxious as he had been three-quarters of an hour before to get out, he was still more anxious now to get in.

I hope I have made it more or less clear that Jackson was a youth of some little resource. He proved himself so in this crisis.

He knocked at the door and opened it. M. Gautier glared at him from the desk. He did not seem to have enjoyed the last three-quarters of an hour. Firmin's translation on a hot afternoon was enough to drive any man distracted, especially an excitable man like the French master.

"Please, sir," said Jackson humbly, "may I come in now?"

M. Gautier continued to glare, as if he were trying without much success to recall the earlier portion of the lesson. When had he sent Jackson out of the room and why? His mind was a blank upon the matter.

"I will be very quiet, sir," urged Jackson.

Royce, his next-door neighbour, caught on to the points of the idea with rapidity.

"Please, sir," he said, "it was really my fault. I think it would be only fair if you allowed Jackson to come in and sent me out instead."

He rose as he spoke. M. Gautier looked bewildered. Then a solution of the problem occurred to him. The hot weather, brain-fag, and so on. He must have sent Jackson out of the room, and forgotten all about it; but it would never do to show that he had forgotten.

"Yes, come in, my boy; come in," he said. Jackson came in.

"Really," said Mr. Knight for the third time that night, over a quiet pipe with Mr. Ferguson in the latter's study, "it was the most extraordinary thing. The boy went into the shrubbery. Of that I am positive. But I am equally positive that he never came out. It was an amazing thing, quite amazing. I waited and watched for nearly an hour, and I am certain that he did not come out."

"Then," said Mr. Ferguson earnestly, "he must be there still. Probably he was attacked with heat apoplexy and fell in his tracks. All you have to do is to see who has not returned to his House to-night, and the missing boy is your friend. You had better

begin to make the round of the houses now."

But Mr. Knight did not move. His chair was comfortable, and his zeal for detective work decidedly abated.

"Nevertheless," he said, "it was a most extraordinary thing, most. And I am certain he did not come out of the shrubbery."

Jackson was rather anxious for the next few days. He knew that Mr. Knight was still puzzled about the "extraordinary" sight he had seen by the pool, and Jackson feared that he might mention it in the presence of M. Gautier.

Had he done so, it was quite likely that M. Gautier would have brought his mind to bear upon a certain member of the Upper Fifth he was instructing that afternoon, who had timidly requested to be allowed to rejoin the class.

Fortunately for Jackson, M. Gautier was of a somewhat reticent and timid disposition in the presence of his colleagues. Seldom did he converse with them. And it is certain that he would never have confessed—not even in his most talkative moments—that the heat had dealt him a scurvy trick. M. Gautier was particularly proud of his memory. Had he done so it is extremely probable that Mr. Knight would have solved his problem. And having done so would, doubtless, have preferred to let the mystery remain a mystery.

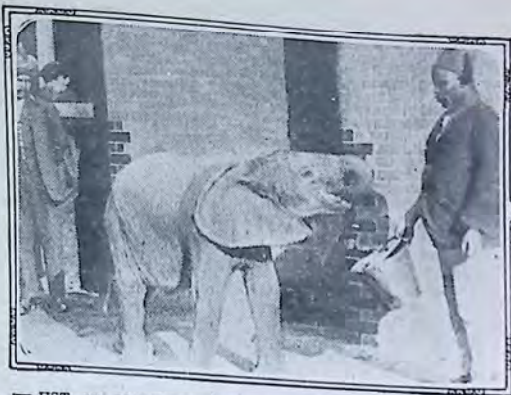
Mr. Knight was a sensitive little person and disliked very much having trouble with the boys, consequently he decided to let the matter drop and fortunately



"Please, sir," said Jackson humbly, "may I come in now, sir?
I will be very quiet, sir."

for Jackson, at any rate, the whole affair died a natural death.

THE END



Celebrities of the Zoo

Mr. Leslie G. Mainland—who is the famous “Uncle Leslie” of 2 L.O.—tells some True Stories of the most popular “Characters” at the Zoo.

JUST as some people become famous and others stay “just ordinary,” so a few of the Zoo’s creatures become celebrated whilst the rest live and die there without rising from the ranks. Some beasts become famous because of their exciting adventures in the past, others because they are specially ugly or bad-tempered, or because they have lived in the Zoo for such a very long time. Just one or two draw large crowds because they have such funny tricks, or because they are so good-natured and friendly with children.

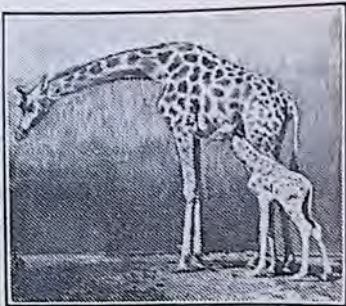
How Maggie did the “Splits.”

“Maggie,” the biggest of the giraffes, is famous because she has grown lop-sided owing to a very curious accident she had when she was quite a girl. She was born in the Zoo nearly twenty years ago. I remember seeing her when she was only a few hours old. Her mother, who was at least 16 feet tall, took no notice of the poor little long-legged child who trotted at her heels as she strolled about the big cage. The baby was obliged almost to gallop to keep pace with her, and at last the tiny thing dropped down tired out. Then, for the first time, the giant mother seemed to miss the patter of the little feet that had been wearily chasing along behind her all the morning. I saw her stop and listen. Then she turned round her long, snakey neck, and noticed the poor panting child. She bent down her head and licked the little thing’s nose. That was the giraffe-

baby’s very first kiss, and after that the mother took quite good care of little Maggie, and she grew up quite fast until the day came when she had a curious piece of bad luck.

Her legs grew rather faster than her neck, so when she wanted to lick up a piece of bun, she had to set her two fore-feet wide apart, just like a man who has to open out the legs of a camera to take a low picture. One day she did this once too often on the slippery cement floor of her cage, and she found that her feet began to slip farther and farther apart. To finish up, she “did the splits,” as the acrobats say and crashed on to the floor. This damaged her shoulder-blades, and to this day you can see the results, for one half of her chest looks all wrong, something like a ship that has been in collision with a rock.

As a result of this smash she is only about 14 ft. tall, or 2 ft. shorter than her mother was at her age.



“Maggie”

Jim the Ferocious

When you look at the big rhinoceros, "Jim," and notice that he has no horn on the end of his nose, don't think that he has had an accident and broken it off. He has really worn it down to nothing by rubbing it against the big wooden beam that supports his back door. It makes a most tremendous noise, and pleases the old sinner. As he grinds the stump of his horn on the wood, you hear a rumbling row that reminds you of thunder in the distance, and that is Jim's idea of amusing himself. What he really longs to do is to kill just one keeper. If you look in the corner of his cage, you will see a funny kind of steel shield, which protects the bottom part of some steps which lead up into the roof. The idea is this. When Jim tries to charge his keeper, the man just slips through a narrow gap and behind the shield. The gap is too small for the great beast to squeeze through, and so the keeper has time to climb up and up until he gets away into a little gallery up near the roof.

The Elephant who Wouldn't

There are two famous elephants now in the Gardens, "Lukhi" and "Indarini." The first of these is not allowed to carry



"Jim the Ferocious"

end of her "beat." She did not wait when her keeper wanted to tell her that there was nothing to be scared of, but lumbered away at top speed, until she came to the mouth of the tunnel. In she bolted like a rabbit darting into its burrow. At the time she was wearing her "howdah," or the saddle in which children sit for their rides. The steel centre-bar of this was smashed against the top of the ten-foot tunnel, and the wreck of the saddle scraped a long swerving line from one end to the other. You can still see the mark on the roof if you look closely,

although it has since been painted. Indarini disgraced herself, too, once, by refusing to do any work. She let the children get off her back before she started to get tiresome, but after that she turned lazy, and would not carry any more. Her trouble was that she did not like the look of some new mounting ladders. They were made of steel, and made a clattering noise when children clambered up



Indarini, who once caused trouble

them to get on her back. So she fidgeted about and would not stand still, until her keepers had to take her back to her cage. The silly old lady grew less and less obedient, and at last, someone decided that if they could find someone who could speak the language which she first learned to obey—Hindustani—something might be done with her. After a search, they found a native sailor down near the docks who once had something to do with elephants. When he came to the Zoo and spoke to Indarini, she let him get on her back and drive her about. She was not quite well-behaved yet, however, so they had to send to India for a very clever elephant-tamer called Syed Ali, who still comes over to London to look after her every summer. He was able to cure her fear of the ladders, and soon she was back at her work once more, carrying little passengers round the Zoo.

A Wireless Experiment

I once tried to see if Syed Ali could make Indarini carry out his orders by wireless. I got a large loud speaker, placed in her open-air paddock, and took Syed Ali round to the London Broadcasting Station. The Indian spoke his orders at 2 L O, and the elephant heard them at the Zoo. Unluckily, the Zoo keepers had dropped a lot of potatoes down at Indarini's feet, so as to lead her up to the loud speaker, and she was so busy picking these up and eating them that she paid no attention to the wireless orders which came to her over four miles of space. I may try it again some day—without the potatoes.

The "Father" of the Zoo

Perhaps the most famous of all the animals now at the Zoo is old "Micky," the great old chimpanzee who has been there for more than 25 years, and is known as "The Father of the Zoo." No ape has lived there for such a long time before. Micky is no beauty. His big teeth (called canine teeth) have never come through, and can be seen as huge bulges on each side of his stump of a nose. He became rickety when quite a child, and therefore has lost the use of his legs. His temper has grown worse and worse, until now he flies in tremendous rages. When he



Micky, "Father" of the Zoo.

gets furious he gallops round and round the cage, using his arms as crutches, and swinging his body between them at a great pace. When he comes to a piece of ironwork he hammers on it to make a big noise, and always finishes up with a war-dance on the iron trap-door that leads to the cages below his den. Then he has to stop and get his breath once more, and seems very sorry for himself as he

whistles in front of the bars.

He has the strength of a giant, and the bars of his cage have to be at least as strong as those in the lions' house, for he often tries to tear them down. Of course, the keepers cannot go in with him when he is so furious, but I remember what a tame chap he was when he was younger; I sometimes used to take him for walks holding his hairy hands.

When Micky got Loose

Not so very long ago he got out of his cage. He did not escape into the Gardens, but he

was loose in the long corridor behind the apes' dens. First of all he tore down a great framed plan of the Gardens, and smashed it to pieces, cutting himself a bit on the glass.

Next he tried to get up a fight with old Sandy, the great orang-outang who lived next door. Micky, however, did not like the looks of Sandy, who was probably stronger than the "Father of the Zoo," so he moved off to see a very strange sight. Inside Micky's empty cage was a keeper, who was dancing up and down with rage. He was shaking his fists at another keeper, who was dancing about in front of the bars. This was too much for Micky. He climbed back inside his own cage to see what all the fuss was about. Then there was a clang! The keeper inside the cage had slipped out behind Micky's back and had slammed the door shut on him. It was all a clever plot got up by the two men who knew that the old ape would be too curious to resist seeing what the fight was about. They had pretended to fight so as to catch him.

Sandy, the famous Orang-outang

"Sandy," the most famous orang-outang in the world, died at the London Zoo one afternoon in March.

In Sandy child visitors to the Zoo lost a real though rather terrifying favourite. It is over sixteen years since he came to London from the Singapore Botanical Gardens, and he broke all records of his race for long life in captivity. He was eight years in Singapore before he came to this country,

and as he was nearly three years old when caught, this would make his age about twenty-seven when he died.

Many good stories are told about old Sandy. He first discovered the beauties of civilisation when living with a Pole named Dittmar. He found a bottle of Benedictine in Mr. Dittmar's house, drank the lot, and then struggled into the library. Here he wrecked scores and scores of books until he could make a comfortable bed with the torn-out leaves.

From drink he took to cigarettes, and would light his own from the glowing end of a visitor's (which he politely returned unless he liked it better). Cigars came next, until he was caught in the act of chewing. Finally, he descended to a pipe and villainous shag, in which he was sometimes indulged at the Zoo. Lately his temper had been uncertain, and his pipe was forbidden lest he should set his bedding on fire.

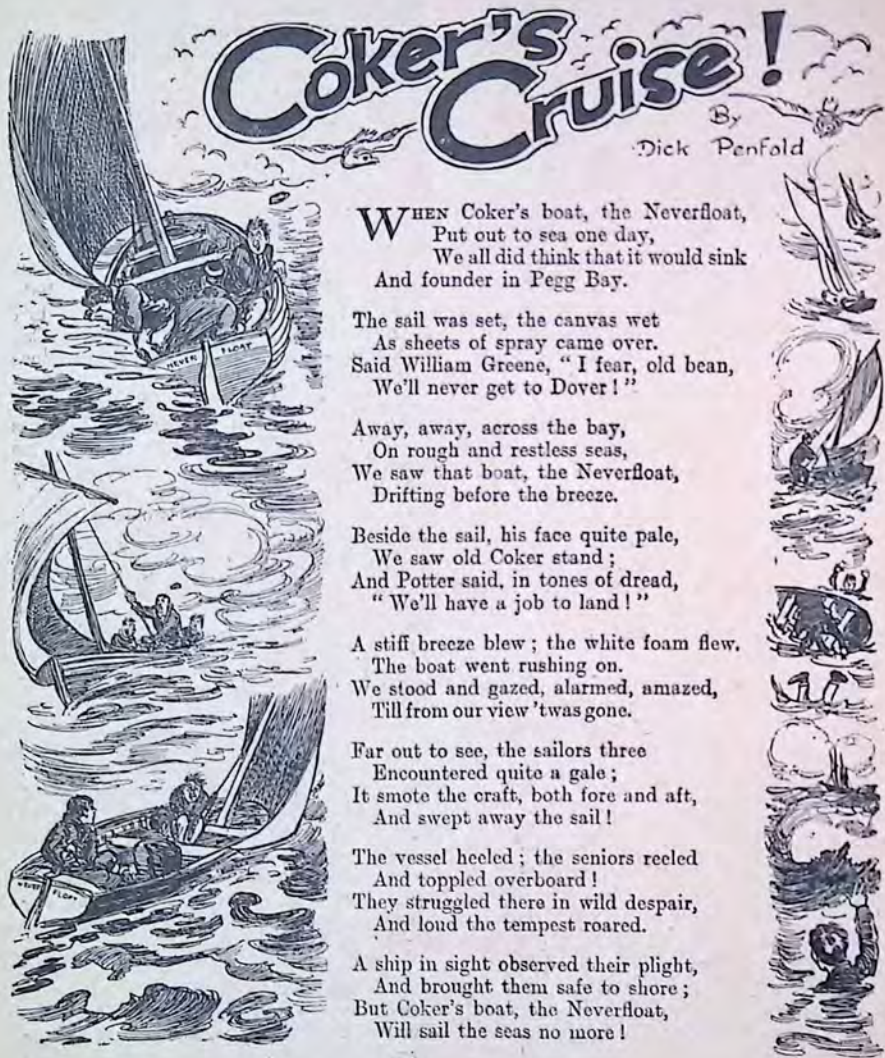
One of his friends was the Duke of Orleans, who once let him draw at his own pipe. Sandy, liking the amber mouthpiece,

refused to let it go again. The duke tried a bargain, and offered a couple of bananas. Sandy grabbed them, but still stuck to the pipe. The keeper then showed the duke the right way to make a deal with the old sinner. He held up some fruit where Sandy could see it, but did not hand it over till the ape had returned the pipe.

In London Sandy grew those remarkable facial ornaments which are shown in the picture. They are the sign of the full-grown orang-outang, and had never been seen in this country before.



Sandy, the famous Orang-outang



Coker's Cruise!

By
Dick Penfold

WHEN Coker's boat, the Neverfloat,
Put out to sea one day,
We all did think that it would sink
And founder in Pegg Bay.

The sail was set, the canvas wet
As sheets of spray came over.
Said William Greene, "I fear, old bean,
We'll never get to Dover!"

Away, away, across the bay,
On rough and restless seas,
We saw that boat, the Neverfloat,
Drifting before the breeze.

Beside the sail, his face quite pale,
We saw old Coker stand;
And Potter said, in tones of dread,
"We'll have a job to land!"

A stiff breeze blew; the white foam flew.
The boat went rushing on.
We stood and gazed, alarmed, amazed,
Till from our view 'twas gone.

Far out to see, the sailors three
Encountered quite a gale;
It smote the craft, both fore and aft,
And swept away the sail!

The vessel heeled; the seniors reeled
And toppled overboard!
They struggled there in wild despair,
And loud the tempest roared.

A ship in sight observed their plight,
And brought them safe to shore;
But Coker's boat, the Neverfloat,
Will sail the seas no more!



Sporting Records of Greyfriars!

By A. Vernon-Smith
(Sports Editor of "The Greyfriars Herald")

CRICKET

GREYFRIARS played its first cricket match in 1822, against a famous Canterbury school. Although badly in arrears on the first innings, Greyfriars pulled the game round, and gained a sensational victory by five runs.

In 1897, H. V. Clifton, a Greyfriars prefect, had the distinction of scoring seven centuries in consecutive matches.

PLAYING for the Greyfriars first eleven against Courtfield Wanderers, in 1907, R. B. Standish drove a ball 155 yards from hit to pitch. This is almost a record for school cricket; though in 1856 an Oxford University player drove a ball 175 yards.

In August, 1912, on a rain-soaked pitch, the Greyfriars first eleven was skittled out for the meagre total of 19 runs. They then dismissed their opponents — Burchester Grammar School—for 17!

THE most notorious "stone-waller" in Greyfriars cricket was J. B. Sturgess. He once batted two hours and ten minutes for only 8 runs.

THE school cricket pavilion has twice been demolished by fire—in 1875 and in 1900. The present building is equipped with fire-extinguishers.

PLAYING for the Greyfriars Remove, in 1910, Norman Howard, the wicket-keeper, made eight catches in one innings.

FOOTBALL

THE record attendance at a Greyfriars football match is 4,270. This was in 1901, when Greyfriars met Highclife in the third round of the Public Schools' Challenge Cup competition. The ground was thrown open to the public.

THE Remove eleven's record victory was 17—1, against Wapshot Juniors. In this match, Harry Wharton found the net on no less than eight occasions. It is only fair to state that Wapshot had two men injured, and played with only nine men for the greater part of the game.

In 1896, Greyfriars and St. Jim's met in the Final for the Public Schools' Cup. Five meetings were necessary to decide the issue, four successive games having been drawn. The Cup eventually came to Greyfriars.

BOXING

THE quickest fight on record was between Victor Yorke (Greyfriars) and Harry Hodges (Courtfield Town) in 1905. Yorke knocked out his man in five seconds!

In the last Remove Boxing Tournament, Bob Cherry and Dick Russell fought their way to the final. Cherry won on points, after a gruelling contest.

THE best boxing year Greyfriars has ever experienced was 1920, when the school won four separate championships. The winners were George Wingate (heavyweight), George Blundell (middleweight), Bob Cherry (lightweight), and Richard Nugent (featherweight).

GREYFRIARS GOSSIP

Some interesting and amusing facts concerning Greyfriars and its Scholars

By BOB CHERRY

GREYFRIARS was originally inhabited by the monks. This does not simply that the school was a monkey-house, but a monastery!

It is rumoured that there was a Friar Tuck at Greyfriars in those days. Evidently one of Billy Bunter's ancestors!

Looking down the list of headmasters who have ruled the roost at Greyfriars, I find some very appropriate names. There was a Dr. Tanner, a Dr. Birch, and a Dr. Chas. Tyser!

"GOOD QUEEN BESS" visited Greyfriars in the year 1564. Gosling, the porter, who is about as old as Methuselah, says he remembers the occasion quite well!



Evidently one of Billy Bunter's ancestors!

SEVERAL famous inventors spent their school-days at Greyfriars. But the best known "inventor" of all is still at the school—William George Bunter, to wit!

TWELVE Old Boys of Greyfriars are now playing as amateurs in county cricket. We do not know if the school has produced a marbles champion or a hopscotch hero!

MANY of our Old Boys have won fame and glory on the stage; but none can approach Coker of the Fifth as a first-class comedian!

TOM DUTTON, the deaf junior, would make a poor fisherman, because he can never "catch" anything!



Why Alonzo Todd nearly beat the hundred yards record!



Dick Penfold is evidently "well-versed"

MR. PAUL PROUT, the master of the Fifth, is famous as a marksman. He once shot a stag in full flight—on his own testimony. He is also an expert at "shooting the Rapids." Some of Prout's unkind critics say it's about time he "shot his bolt"!

THE Greyfriars tuck-shop, presided over by Mrs. Jessie Mimble, was established in the reign of Queen Anne. Mrs. Mimble, by the way, is a very clever conjuror—or rather, conjurers. She can make a sausage roll and an apple turn-over!

MANY nationalities are represented at Greyfriars. There is an American junior—Fisher T. Fish; a Scottish junior, Donald Ogilvy; a boy from the Emerald Isle, Micky Desmond; a Welsh Junior, David Morgan; an Indian, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh; an Australian, S. Q. I. Field; a New Zealander, Tom Brown; a French junior, Napoleon Dupont; and a Chinese, Wun Lung. Formerly there was a Greek, Ionides of the Sixth. We are now looking forward to the arrival of a South Sea Islander or a Zulu!

I NOTICE that in last year's "HOLIDAY ANNUAL" the statement appears: "Bob Cherry covered the hundred yards in 11 secs., dead." On the contrary, I was very much alive!



Micky Desmond makes Trotter trot

ALONZO TODD, the Duffer of the Remove, nearly beat this record on one occasion. Needless to state, a mad bull was thundering behind him!

JOHNNY BULL has a very appropriate name. Not only does he bellow, but when anything annoys him he frequently "sees red." He was also seen to "toss" a coin the other day!

DICK PENFOLD claims to have written over a thousand poems since he has been at Greyfriars. He is obviously "well-versed" in the art!

BOLSOVER MAJOR, the blustering bully of the Remove, generally has a fight on his hands every day. Like Adolphus, the kitchen cat, he is very fond of "scraps"!

THE Great Fire of Greyfriars occurred in 1895, but there have been many conflagrations since. Skinner & Co., the "giddy goats" of the Remove, are frequently guilty of "setting the place alight"!

WHY is the Greyfriars page-boy called Trotter? We only saw him trot once, and that was when Micky Desmond exploded some jumping crackers behind him!



Billy Bunter's Christmas Holiday!

Being the Correspondence between William George Bunter of the
Greyfriars Remove, and his pet aunts—and others!

I

From Billy Bunter to his Aunt Prudence

Deer Auntie Proo,—Now that the jolly old festivall of Krissmus is drawing neer, I am beginning to wunder where to spend the Vace. It okkurs to me that I can't do better than come to you.

I no you will invite me to yore place, and I am alreddy looking foreword with keen-anticipashun to the tirkey and plumm-pudding You mite also bear in mind the fact that (to kwote the wurd of a poppular kome-dian), "I do like a s'nice minse pie!"

When I arive at yore howse, please see that I am well stuffed—like the tirkey!

Hopeing you are kwite well as it leeves me at pressent,

Yore luvving nevvev,
BILLY.

II

From Aunt Prudence to Billy Bunter

My dear William,—I regret that I shall be unable to put up with you—I mean, put you up, for the Christmas Vacation.

I should have been delighted to do so, but for the fact that I have already arranged to accommodate Sammy; and I am afraid that my stock of provisions, although ample, would not meet the requirements of both of you, your appetites being — well, a trifle abnormal.

Hoping you will succeed in persuading some other relative to entertain you for the Christmas holidays,

Believe me, Your devoted
AUNT PRUDENCE.

III

From Billy Bunter to his Aunt Sally

Deerest Aunt Sally,—It is my intenshun to do you a grate faver.

Reelizing how loanly you will be during Krissmus, I have desided to come and stay with you, and cheer you up.

Pleese send me my railway-fair as soen as possible, and don't forgett to lay in a good stock of grubb. I am espeshully fond of plumm-pudding, minse-pies, and doe-nuts.

I presoom you will send your karridge and pear to meet me at the station!

Yore affeckshunate nevvev,
BILLY.

IV

From Aunt Sally to Billy Bunter

My dear Nephew,—You do me a great honour in stating that you will spend Christmas with me. Unfortunately, however, it is an honour I cannot accept, owing to the fact that I have already invited your sister Bessie to spend the holiday with me.

Bessie is a charming girl, but she possesses a most healthy appetite (or should I say an unhealthy one?), and as you are similarly afflicted, it would be sheer folly on my part to invite both of you. I should be eaten out of house and home!

In order to alleviate your disappointment, I enclose a postal order for one shilling, with which I trust you will procure a useful hand-book on the subject of spelling

Your ever affectionate
AUNT SALLY.

V

From Billy Bunter to Colonel James Wharton of Wharton Lodge

My dear Kernel,—Being a grate pal of yore nevwew Harry, I rite to say that I intend to spend the Krissmus Vace at Wharton Lodge.

Would it be asking too much if I rekwest that you will reserve me the best bed-room, and instruct yore cook to fatten me up, as I am suffering from lack of nurrishment?

I will bring Harry down with me, and see that nuthing happens to him on root. In a wurd, I will be his shapperone. Beleeve me, dear Kernel,

Yores trewly,
W. G. BUNTER
(One of the "Nutts!")



Aunt Prudence gets Billy Bunter's letter



"I shall make arrangements for your immediate ejection"

VI

From Colonel Wharton to Billy Bunter

Dear Bunter,—Were you indeed a chum of Harry's, I should be more than delighted to have you here for the Christmas Vacation. As, however, you and he appear to have nothing in common, I regret to state that I cannot accommodate you at Wharton Lodge.

If you persist in coming, in the face of this refusal, I shall make arrangements for your immediate ejection.

Yours,
JAMES WHARTON (Colonel).

VII

From Billy Bunter to the Home for Unwanted Porpoises and Prize Porkers

(Telegram.)

Can you akkomodate me for Krissmus?—
BUNTER, Greyfriars Skool, Friardale.

VIII

From the Secretary, Home for Unwanted Porpoises and Prize Porkers, to Billy Bunter

(Telegram.)

Delighted to receive a further addition to our menagerie!

A PAIR OF IMPOSTORS!

or The Bunter Brothers Unmasked!



① HERE

WE SEE

THE BROTHERS BUNTER,

How THEY SWANK AROUND

THE QUAD!

ARE THEY NOT

'A PAIR OF PEACOCKS?

— NOTE THE WINK
FROM PETER TODD.



③

PETER WATCHES THE UNROBING
BASE DECEIVERS THEY ARE PROVED



④

FOR NOTE THE
CHANGE — THE
TRANSFORMATION,
WHEN BOOTS AND
JACKETS ARE REMOVED!

POWER-DRIVEN MODEL BOATS



Photo: Technical Editorial Service.

MODEL boats driven by machinery possess a fascination all their own, which is quite distinct from that of the model sailing-boat; and the model boat which "goes by itself," instead of being dependent for its motive power upon the vagaries of the wind, is firmly established as one of the favourite playthings of the modern boy or girl.

This has led naturally to the provision by leading model-makers of a very wide choice in power boats.

The cheapest and simplest power boats are driven by clockwork, and range in length from 12 in. to 30 in. or so. They are suitable for small ponds and quiet waters. A 24-in. to 30-in. boat is the smallest that is of any real ordinary use, and some wonderful products are available from Messrs. Bassett-Lowke, the world-famous model manufacturers of Northampton, at modest prices.

Some Different Types

A particularly interesting line comprises a selection of characteristic types of ocean-going steamers, including cross-channel packets, which are modelled with two funnels, upper and lower decks, deck cabins and saloon, captain's bridge and chart-house, masts, and miniature wireless installation, as well as some minor but equally important details, such as accurately modelled ships' lifeboats on davits, stanchions running around the decks, and other fascinating items.

Along the same lines is an Atlantic liner with four funnels which, when placed at a short distance away, bears a striking resemblance to the great original. The "P" boat,

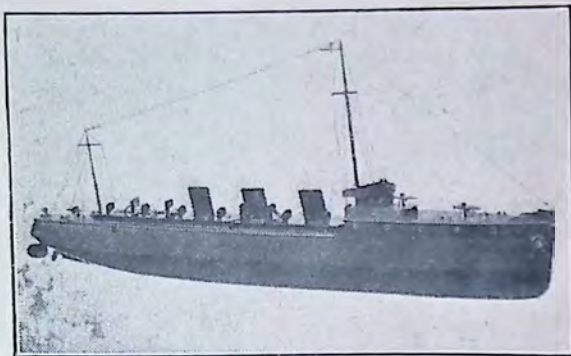
or submarine chaser, is another type of model which will appeal to the young seaman. These models faithfully represent the class of boat which did such splendid service during the war in the pursuit of hostile vessels and in the destruction of submarines. They are noted for their rakish body lines. Then there is the long, lean torpedo-boat destroyer, a fine model of which is illustrated.

Quite a different note is struck in the models of steam yachts, vessels famous throughout the world for graceful lines and peaceful intent. In the models all the features are faithfully represented, and the whole is particularly attractive, being finished with green enamel and lined with gold, and the deck cabins and saloons in polished mahogany.

An up-to-date model is the police patrol boat of the type used in the endeavour to suppress the smuggling of liquor. These little vessels have rakish lines, and a single funnel, and are faithfully representative of the vessels that perform the necessary task in such an admirable manner.

Steam, Clockwork, or Electricity

On a model power boat the motive power is either clockwork, steam, or electricity. A clockwork motor will drive the vessel at full speed for several minutes with one winding. It has the merit of requiring little in the matter of care and attention beyond periodical cleaning. The electrically-driven boats are, of course, capable of much higher speeds, and the motive power is supplied from a small accumulator which can be recharged at a garage, or charging station, in the same way



A realistic steam-driven model of a Torpedo Boat Destroyer

as small accumulators used on the motor-car. The current from the accumulator is controlled by a switch which, when turned on, enables the electric motor to start revolving at high speed, this driving the propeller through a flexible coupling and so propelling the boat at a tolerably good speed.

Usually, the average electrically-driven boat will run for upwards of an hour on one recharge. The time of running can easily be lengthened by having a spare accumulator ready to fit immediately the other has run out.

In the 30-in. class the Dixey motor-boat is world famous for its notable performances. Several types are available. In the simplest, the motive power is an electric motor energised from an accumulator. Another pattern is made with a steam boiler and engine. The boiler is made throughout of solid brass, and contains a safety valve and filler. It is heated by means of a special type of methylated spirit lamp. One filling of spirit and water will run the boat for half an hour or more, and it can readily be refilled and as many more runs made with it as time and circumstances permit.

The engine is quite a simple little one, with an oscillating cylinder and a heavy flywheel, but its simplicity is its chief charm. It is quite sufficient to drive the boat at a speed a good deal

greater than the electric motors; in fact, for racing this type is preferable. Another type of Dixey racing motor-boat has two separate propeller shafts and two propellers. This of course, adds greatly to the speed and power of the boat, and is well worth the extra expense.

The Importance of Proper Design

To the uninitiated any small model motor-boat looks very much like another, but everything depends upon the scientific design of the hull and the care and accuracy with which it is made. This requires first that the design should be technically accurate, and the lines properly proportioned to the speed of the boat and the power of its engine. The hull must be made from well selected dry pine, and accurately shaped. This is only possible by the employment of highly skilled workmen, which would make the cost of the boats very high. Fortunately, however, by introducing special machinery and the adoption of modern methods of mass production, it has been made possible to turn out a perfectly moulded and absolutely accurate hull at the cost of a few shillings. Consequently, scientifically-designed models are now on the market at prices within reach of all.



Photo: Technical Editorial Service
Filling the spirit lamp of a model motor-boat

This method of production is not restricted to these little vessels. The same principles are applied in the modelling of torpedo-boat destroyers, police patrol boats, steam yachts, and other vessels of a like character with the same advantages to the purchaser. Nor is the production restricted to the little models for the purposes of the youngsters. A wider range of boats has been produced that can be used indoors at any time, and are therefore very attractive in wet weather, or when circumstances prohibit a visit to the pond side.

Water-line Models

These models only measure a few inches in length, and are known as water-line models, because the hull is cut off at the level of the water. Consequently, these boats can stand up on a flat table, which may be covered with blue cloth to represent the water. The models only cost a few shillings, and are wonderfully perfect in detail, as can be judged from the illustration, where the great liner *Majestic*, one of the very largest vessels in the world, has been modelled to a length very little more than the length of a man's hand, the picture showing the boat held between the finger and thumb. At the same time, it will be seen that every important detail has been reproduced, including the boats, cabins, bridges and other numerous details, with the result that these models have a particular charm and fascination. By building up a little model harbour, a set of boats can be



The simple and compact power-unit of the Dixie motor-boat

made to perform a number of evolutions, and various vessels can be traversed from side to side of the table as if making their voyages, while those who care to study naval tactics, or the movement of mercantile vessels at sea, and the rule of the road as adopted by mariners, can follow all these manoeuvres with the small boats and

learn to appreciate how it is that when dozens of boats are passing to and fro in a crowded waterway, such as the mouth of a river, or the approach to a great seaport, they do so without collision or danger.

At the other extreme are model boats large enough to carry a crew of two or three men. One such is illustrated, and represents a large model warship some 25 ft. in length, driven by electric motors supplied from a large battery of accumulators. The crew are comfortably seated within the hull, and look out through conning towers and apertures cut through the super-structure of the boat, so that although they are out of sight themselves, they command a full view of all around them.



A miniature warship which will carry a crew of two or three men

Models of this type are to be seen at the great exhibitions where a miniature fleet is worked according to a regular naval plan of campaign, and wonderfully realistic results are obtained in this way. Access to the boats is through a removable part of the super-structure or upper works, and in the illustration the crew are seen attending to the details before going aloft.

Models of this character cost a good deal of money,

but are very interesting, and are especially appropriate for use in rivers and inland water. They are not suitable for use at sea.

There is still another field for the energies of the model mariner, especially those with a handy turn of mind and able to use simple tools. In such cases nothing is better than to obtain the requisite number of component parts and actually build up a model ship in every detail.

The actual handling of a model power boat of small type is comparatively a simple matter. The safety valve or filler cap is first removed and the boiler about two-thirds filled with clean water. It is best to take some in a clean medicine bottle as the pond water is likely to be very dirty and would choke the boiler. Sea water is salty and should never be used in a small boiler. The lamp is then filled with the best quality methylated spirit and the wicks adjusted and lighted. The lamp is placed beneath the boiler and in a few minutes steam is raised and the engine can be turned round a few times by hand to free it from condensed steam. All moving parts are given a drop of oil and the steam is turned full on. The boat should be in the water when this is done, and then the nose of the vessel is pointed seawards and the little ship sets out on her first voyage.

The rudder has to be so adjusted that the boat will steer as closely to the desired course



A model cross-channel packet on her maiden trip

as possible, but this can only be judged by experience, and by taking the pressure and direction of the wind into account. After some skill in handling the boat has been acquired, the owner or skipper can turn attention to racing and the more exciting aspects of this most delightful and healthy hobby.

To avoid the necessity of stopping and turning the boat by hand it is a good plan to provide a thin walking stick wherewith to alter the course of the ship as she comes ashore.

Care should, of course, be taken not to allow the little craft to bump head on into the side of the pond when going at full speed, as there is a chance that the shock might injure the mechanism.



Water-line model of the famous liner "Majestic"

A WIRELESS TRAGEDY!





A splendid story of the Mexican Border, introducing Arizona Jim, "Bad" Phil Hicks, and "Left-Hand" Britton, three "pardners" who are feared and loved in all the Western States

THE FIRST CHAPTER

Three Visitors!

AGUADANTE, in New Mexico, is so close to the Mexican boundary that, it is said, people have to be careful when they go for an evening stroll, if they do not want to find themselves out of United States territory and in the land of revolutions. Meaning, of course, that if a man fires a bullet at another man in Aguadante, and misses him, the chances are a thousand to one that the bullet will drop on Mexican soil. Those who live there—the Americans, that is—aver that Mexico is "too darn close to be healthy."

When it isn't hot in Aguadante, it is very sultry. Rain falls about once in a very long while. Trees long since gave up the idea of flourishing thereabouts. Grass also got discouraged about the time the world began. Cactus abounds, rocks, and sand—plenty of sand, sunshine, and nervousness. That is all Aguadante can boast.

But even Aguadante gets visitors. Why such people ever hit the place can never be

adequately explained. Most people think it's the best sort of place to get out of. But oddly enough, visitors with quite peaceful intentions sometimes drift down that way because there is a railway station connected with the town. Other visitors, with anything but peaceful intentions, pay visits to Aguadante, as well—especially if there happens to be anything worth stealing in the place, as there sometimes is. But more of this sort of visitor anon.

There were three visitors who got off the train that coughed its way dejectedly up to the depot at Aguadante one day when the mercury in the thermometer outside the Casino was boiling. They were total strangers to the place, and the few manana-stricken people who were lounging on the raised platform of the depot eyed them with languid interest. Everybody at Aguadante, by the way, suffers from that fell disease known as manana. Manana is Spanish, and means "to-morrow." Nobody does anything to-day at Aguadante if to-morrow will do, and then they won't do it if they can dodge the job

These three visitors, however, did not seem to have the manana disease. They looked very sprightly as they alighted from the dust-grimed train and looked about them. And the citizens of Aguadante, after they had taken a second glance at the three, actually sat up and began to take some notice of them. For the appearance of all three was very noticeable.

The eldest man of the party was a dandy, from the top of his valuable Stetson hat, which he wore with a gay scarf round the crown, instead of the usual rattlesnake-skin band affected by cowboys; down, via a short velvet jacket, flowing black silk scarf, elaborate riding-breeches that couldn't have been made anywhere else but in London or Newmarket, to brown boots that would have made any crack polo-player weep with envy. This man was, however, a fellow who had never seen England in his life. Arizona was his birthplace; the whole of the Western States were his hunting-ground. By profession, he was an Indian agent, working for the Indian department at Washington. His hair was rather long and distinctly wavy. He had a short-clipped moustache; and he sported, of all things, a monocle. It was, perhaps, the monocle that caused the citizens of Aguadante to forget their manana and sit up to take notice of him.

"Tenderfoot, that," remarked the station agent, who was chewing an unlighted cigar. But there he was wrong. Tenderfoot! Why, this was Arizona Jim Carton, the best-loved and most-feared man, perhaps, in all the Western States more than a hundred miles north of the Mexican border! Tenderfoot! Perhaps it was as well for that station agent that Arizona Jim did not hear that comment.

Next in remarkableness of appearance to Arizona Jim was a tall, lanky, cadaverous individual who walked with both hands perpetually in a position to clutch out the heavy guns that slung and wobbled about his thighs. This man, too, had rather long hair, the most ferocious of scowls on his visage, and coal-black eyes that fairly sparkled as he cast them about the depot.

"Tough guy, that!" commented the

station agent. And had the "tough guy" heard that remark, he would have felt the proudest man in the world; for he was none other than "Bad" Phil Hicks, a very genuine cow-puncher who hadn't a streak of vice about him, but who fondly imagined himself to be the "baddest" man in forty-nine States and all the territories under U.S. jurisdiction.

The third of the party was just a tall, well-built, active-looking youngster of about eighteen, who had no particular characteristic save this: whereas he wore on his right hand a glove, his left hand was bare and tanned to the colour of old oak. Westerners know what that means. A gunman never wears a glove on his gun hand. So this was a left-handed gunman. Indeed, he was "Left-hand" Britton, British throughout, with nothing to do but go about the world looking for adventure and thrills. And so we have the three principal characters of this border story on the stage.

"Wal," Bad Phil Hicks remarked to his comrades, "I guess these bat-eyed ginks ain't never seen a reel bad man in all their say-so, jedgin' by the way they lamps us. Guess I'll hev to git my position established, pronto. I'm the baddest man ever! I'm so bad that——"

"Never mind that, Phil," laughed Arizona Jim. "Maybe, before we have finished with this part of the world, they'll know how bad you can be! Mexico's only a few yards away, and Monteflores' gang of bandits pesters this place, I know. Wait till there's a raid——"

Shots began to sound in the little frontier town even as Arizona Jim spoke. There was a very cannonade of them, accompanied by the angry yells of men, the stamp of horses' feet on sun-baked roads. And, hearing this, the loafers on the depot platform forgot their manana, pulled out huge guns, and, forgetting also the strangers, began to run at waddling gait away from the station and towards the cluster of adobe buildings that began a hundred yards away.

"A border raid, and as soon as we arrived," said Arizona Jim. "Monteflores' gang, too, for a wager!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER

The Raid!

"I'm sure goin' to show this town how bad I am!" shouted Hicks. "Gosh, all Friday! This is jam! Whoop-ee! I'm going to howl! Ow-ow-ow-ool!" And he lugged his enormous guns out and began to run towards the town. Left-hand Britton,

with a slight smile on his handsome mouth, also pulled out a Colt's; and, Arizona Jim did the same thing. Side by side they ran along the dusty road, and soon almost overtook the more enervated citizens of Aguadante. The shooting grew more pronounced as they got nearer the buildings. From the windows of some of the houses men could be seen leaning, blazing away with their six-guns, while

the streets seemed alive with mounted men, dressed in wide-brimmed straw hats, gaudy sashes, and with dirty brown faces. These horsemen were riding about, blazing away with rifles and revolvers at all the figures they saw in the windows. And, here and there, could be seen bunches of men standing on the sidewalks, hands well up, with their guns lying on the road before them,

while mounted men menaced them with their weapons.

Those who rushed down from the depot soon became like the last-mentioned, for three horsemen rode up to them, sent one man flying from a blow dealt by a horse's shoulder, and got the rest disarmed and properly held up.

"Best keep out of this, boys," said Arizona

Jim, and dodged behind a building. He watched several Mexican bandits gallop past the same building, without seeing them.

"I guess I know the motive for this raid. The bank! It's as we were told! Always is there a raid when there's something valuable in the town! Monteflores wants money to keep his gang going and working for the revolutionists."

This was shouted, for the rattle of the gun-fire was intense, although it gradually died down. For, as usual, the manana-stricken citizens of Aguadante had been taken quite by surprise. So long, perhaps, had they waited for the raid, that they had grown slack in their watch, with the result that it had come along, this time, whilst they were enjoying their necessary siesta.



"Now hear me!" grunted Bad Phil Hicks. "I'm going to be real bad from now on!" Then he crashed with the whole weight of his body against the door. It went with him—and the next moment they were in the thick of it (See Chapter 2)

"Guess it ain't my way to step out of a chance to be real bad," grumbled Phil Hicks. "It's a fair old chance to do a bit o' wild-wolf howlin', this is—shore!"

"Just the same, keep down!" snapped Arizona Jim. "Keep under cover, and try and find the bank. I'll bet it's the bank they're after this time, because I know this was the date the bank was going to receive a big consignment of gold from the Olla Podrida mines, in Sonora."

Left-hand Britton did not demur against his leader's wishes. And, when the position was explained to him, Bad Phil Hicks quietened down considerably. After all, it was an understood thing that Arizona Jim should always be their leader. So they crouched down in whatever shelter they could find—and that was not much—and listened. Arizona Jim's hare-ears were generally infallible. He could locate sounds and understand them better than any Westerner that ever was. And, as the gunshots dribbled down gradually, as yells of wounded men filled the air, Arizona Jim looked in a certain direction.

"Bank's that way," he said. "Gosh! Pity we hadn't time to locate ourselves before this started. Train was late, anyway. Now, boys, I guess the greasers aren't figuring on us being here. So follow me!"

He led the way down what seemed to be a sort of back lane, leading to the rear quarters of the buildings whose fronts made up the main streets of Aguadante. Most of the buildings were houses, they saw; they had gardens of sorts behind them. But one place, that had nothing but a stretch of sandy ground at its rear, was the building that Arizona Jim became interested in. Inside here there was much shooting going on. They hopped over an adobe fence, and crept up, unseen, to certain windows set some six feet from the ground. These windows had bars set in the adobe, giving them an impression of strength that perhaps they did not possess, for the average man could kick a hole through a border adobe wall with his foot quite easily. Adobe is only sun-baked mud, anyway.

"This is the bank, I'll bet a hen," said

Arizona Jim. "Gosh!" he exclaimed, as a yell broke out, coming through the barred window. "Somebody's got it!"

Bad Phil Hicks, who was over six feet himself, reached up with both hands and seized the bottom-most of the iron bars. He swung on this, with the intention of hoisting himself upwards. The bar came away from the adobe wall as though it had been merely stuck there with blobs of sealing-wax. Disgruntled, the "bad" man looked at the inch-thick piece of round iron he held in his hand. Then he threw it away, took a leap upwards, and seized another bar, which came away equally easily in his hands. He did not drop that, though, but rested it on the window-sill, then, gripping the same sill with his big talons, hoisted himself up.

"Get through, man!" said Left-hand Britton eagerly. "Don't keep the whole show to yourself!"

"Some work's goin' on inside here!" said Bad Phil Hicks, and gripped the bar with one hand, while with the other he pulled a six-gun out of the holster into which he had thrust it. "Now's my time to howl, b'gosh!" And he slid forward into the building. Like a monkey, Left-hand Britton climbed up and shoved his way through the window, which, like many windows on the Mexican border, was unglazed. Arizona Jim was the last to climb.

They all stood for a moment side by side, in a small room fitted up as a bed-room. The managers of these wild western banks often sleep on the premises. There was a door facing them, and on the other side of this they could hear much shouting going on.

"Now, hear me!" grunted Bad Phil Hicks. "I'm goin' to be reel bad from now on, I'll tell the world."

He gave a howl like a devil-tormented wolf. Then he crashed with the whole weight of his body against the door. It went with him without checking him. And, a moment later, he was in the very thick of it, his gun spitting venomously, while his hefty window-bar flashed about his head.

For the main part of the bank seemed to be filled with straw-hatted Mexicans. Sprawling across the counter here was another man,

looking more dead than alive. And the Mexicans, startled, turned at once to face the impetuous "bad" man and his two comrades. But Phil Hicks gave them little time to realise that they had been attacked from the rear, as it were. His six shots brought down five men even as they fumbled for their weapons. Then the bar began to crack

Mexican skulls at an extraordinary rate, while, in the meantime, the guns of his comrades spoke steadily and with precision. Men dropped about the floor like so many flies, Spanish curses on their lips. One man—a youngish fellow with a huge hat and poncho wrapped about him—tried to make a fight of it, a gun in each hand. But, without the slightest regard for his own life, Bad Phil Hicks jumped at him and brought him to the floor with a smashing blow from his bar that left the man as limp as a corpse.

"The doors—shut 'em!" shouted Arizona Jim; and Left-hand Britton, blazing away with his gun, cleared a way to the portal. This had been standing wide open. And, even as he made to shut it, many men outside made a dash to force their way in. He got his sturdy shoulder to the woodwork,

thrust, and slammed it in their faces. The bolts were still serviceable, and these he shot. Then, panting, he turned back into the bank, to see what further good work he could do.

But the work inside was done. All the dozen men who had been inside were now lying about, some of them still, others groaning pitifully. And, like the wolf he

claimed to be, Bad Phil Hicks looked about him for fresh worlds to conquer.

"Best shoot from the windows," shouted Arizona Jim. "The rest aren't going to let this pass without a fight!" Which was quite true, as was proved the next moment.

Howling, the Mexican raiders outside began to fire through the unglazed and barred windows of the bank. Their bullets spattered about and did unmentionable havoc to the adobe walls.

But the three adventurers from further north kept out of the line of fire, though they sent deadly bullets hurtling in amongst the marauders.

This was a surprise that had a wonderful effect on both the Mexicans and the citizens of Aguadante who had been rendered harmless at the very outset of the raid. The Americans were quick to realise that something



One man tried to make a fight of it, a gun in each hand. But Bad Phil Hicks jumped at him and brought him to the floor with a smashing blow from his bar (See Chapter 2)

had happened to distract the attention of the men who had kept them held. They, or many of them did, regained their down-flung guns, so that, what with the hot fire Arizona Jim and his friends were sending out of the bank, and that the citizens were giving them from corners of buildings, the greasers—never very plucky men when fighting fairly—deemed discretion the better part of value, spurred their horses cruelly, and fled.

They were so close to Mexico, that they were home again before any American had time to find a horse and chase them. But there were many who had come who did not go back. Riderless horses galloped all about the town. Men lay in the streets, cursing or praying, according to the seriousness of their wounds. While, inside, Arizona Jim and the other two gave some attention to the casualties that had happened there.

Hankson, the young manager of the bank, was lying across his desk, his head bleeding. But he was not dead, as Arizona Jim soon found out. A dozen Mexicans were on the floor, and of these was the youngish man who had faced Arizona's party with two guns. His head was bleeding also, and he was quite unconscious, though not dead either. Some of the other greasers were quite dead, anyway; which was only right, seeing all the white people outside had not escaped this raid with their lives. Such is the penalty paid for living too close to the Mexican border, when revolution is the order of the day on the south side of the line.

"We'd best see if the doctor's left alive," said Arizona Jim. "I'm anxious to get Hankson pulled around, so he can tell us why he sent that hurry message up to us in Wyoming."

"Gosh, though," panted Phil Hicks, "Wasn't I bad jest then? I guess I ain't sorry that message come along. I dunno what we was sent for to do. But I'm right glad it gave me the chance."

Left-hand Britton had nothing much to say. Perhaps he wanted to know exactly why they had come down to this turbulent part of the United States. But there was a white man badly needing surgical aid, and he was able to give him some—of a rough, amateurish sort.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

The Marshal's Story

"DARNED decent of you to come down, Arizona," said Hankson wanly. "Guess, by all accounts, you came along just in time, and you saved my bank from getting robbed for the fourth time!"

"But you didn't send for me to come and save your bank this one time," said Arizona Jim. He was sitting by Hankson's bed now, and Bad Phil Hicks and Left-hand Britton were sitting near as well. "It was a queer message you sent, and we were lucky to have nothing particular to do at the moment."

"I—wrote," said Hankson, slowly, "to ask you to try and help me. You're always ready to help a fellow." Which was true. By hobby, Arizona was a helper of lame dogs over stiles; and his two comrades were his very enthusiastic lieutenants. "So, in desperation, I sent for you to come and look into a fine old mystery. Of course, there are troops and secret service men working about here—but they can't find out how Monteflores' gang always happen to know just when this bank gets a fresh consignment of gold in. But a fresh lot came in first thing this morning, and, by ten o'clock, along comes Monteflores' gang to raid the town and rob the bank. Four times it's happened, in as many weeks, and the chiefs of my bank are getting—well, nasty about it!"

"They can't blame you, though," said Arizona Jim soothingly. "A man managing a bank in a place like this can't be made responsible for his charge! It's up to the soldiers and Rangers."

"They're always nicely out of the way when the raids come off," said Hankson. "But I'll tell you something, which I thought was a secret, until I found out the bank knew it. Monteflores, the leader of this gang of bandits, isn't a Mexican at all, but as good an American as you and I! And, worse, he's a relation of mine!"

"Well," said Arizona Jim. "That's bad luck, certainly. But it's not your fault that you have a kinsman who's an American citizen turned yellow."

"He's only a step-brother," said Hankson,

"and I don't own him. But, at the same time, the bank's got the notion; somebody's told 'em about my step-brother, William, and—well, the bank, lately, have been hinting that I'm in league with him—understand? Not that they can prove anything. But I sent for you, knowing the marvel you are for rooting out mysteries, to see if you could help me. I don't want to get on the bad side of the bank. It's my job, and—"

cried the bank manager. "Without Monteflores—or my step-brother—those poons would never have the pluck to make such barefaced daylight raids, not even on a border town! I'll never be able to thank you enough!"

"Wal," Bad Phil Hicks chimed in, "I guess I'm right glad if we hev managed to help ye, Mister Hankson, but—wal, it's a plumb disappointment to know as I've only had a chance to be bad for about ten minutes.

Guess I was lookin' forward to a prolonged period o' right-down badness, here in new country. But my luck never was great." And he sighed deeply.

"So," said Arizona Jim, rising to his feet and patting the wounded bank manager on the shoulder. "as Monteflores is under arrest, I think you may lie quietly for a bit. We'll see your gold is shipped on the next east-bound train. And we might as well spend a bit of time trying to find who the traitor is who has kept Monteflores posted as to the doings of the bank. And don't be so grateful, Hankson. It's a hobby of ours travelling about and straightening matters like this out—or trying to."

"An' bein' bad, besides," said Phil Hicks. "An' Left-Hand here makes it a pastime workin' at these jobs to try an' forget he's a lord in his own old country!"

"Well," laughed Left-Hand Britton, "seeing you two chaps were responsible for my getting the title, it's up to you to help me live down the disgrace and forget it!"

It was pretty late at night while all this



Arizona Jim unbolted the portal, and a man came lurching inside. "Watch your bank!" he roared. "Monteflores has escaped, and he'll bring his bandits to lift the gold!" (See Chapter 3)

"I think you needn't worry," said Arizona Jim soothingly, for Hankson was getting quite feverish, what with his scalp-wound and his excitement. "We've captured Monteflores. He was in the bank—a youngish fellow in a poncho and with two guns. He was recognised by the town marshal as soon as he was handed over. He's in jail now, well under control."

"Then you've done all I wanted you to do!"



To face page 40

A MEXICAN BORDER RAID

talk was going on. Hankson had been a long time recovering from the blows he had received from the border raiders. Everything in Aguadante was still now, for the citizens, having cooled down from their excitement, and feeling safe in the knowledge that they would not be raided again for some time, had gone to bed; though they had all been ordered by the town marshal, one Eph Burbage, to be ready should the greasers make any attempt to rush the gaol and so rescue the captured Monteflores. However, the manana had fallen on these worthy citizens again, and, it is to be feared, they did not attach much importance to Burbage's warning. After all, that was the marshal's business, not theirs. Their duty was to carry on in Aguadante under most enervating conditions, and to leave everything that could be left till—manana.

"We'd best sleep here on the bank premises, to be on the safe side," said Arizona Jim, as Hankson wearily closed his eyes. "One never knows what might happen in the night. We'll get that gold shipped on the train that goes through early in the morning—seven o'clock. We'll toss up who takes first turn at keeping awake."

"Seems to me," said Bad Phil Hicks, "this is another o' the town marshal's responsibilities. How-so, as ye says so—"

The silence outside was split suddenly by six revolver shots that boomed out on the heavy air. At once the three adventurers came to their feet, feeling for their guns. Bad Phil Hicks began to howl in his joyous excitement.

"They come again!" he roared. "Oh, whoopee!"

The citizens of Aguadante opened their windows, and the night became very lively with the shots they sent booming out into the street. For two minutes it sounded like another pitched battle going on; then the firing died down, and things became comparatively quiet again, though those inside the bank could hear the shouts of many startled men. Yet, above the shouts of these they heard a very raucous voice.

"Quit shootin', ye fools! It's me blazed away—me, the town marshal! Monteflores has escaped!"

"Gosh!" exclaimed Arizona Jim. "I thought he was locked up securely, and the marshal was going to sleep in the gaol himself. The man was handcuffed, wounded though he was!"

There came a loud banging at the door of the bank. Arizona Jim unbolted the portal, and a man came lurching inside. It was Eph Burbage, and he had a bandage tied around his head. In his hand he held a revolver.

"Watch yer bank!" the man roared. "Monteflores has escaped, an' the chances are a thousand to one he'll bring his bandits back to lift the gold, as he knows it's here yet!"

Then he sank down into a chair and laid a hand to his head, groaning deeply.

"How will he know? And how did he escape?" asked Arizona Jim sharply. "He was hog-tied firmly enough when I saw you put him away."

"Say," the sheriff said—he was a blusterer always, anyway—"who the Sam Hill air you, and—"

"I'm Arizona Jim Carton," said the Indian agent. His cool eyes, one of them behind a monocle, surveyed the marshal closely. "Say," he said, "you've had a biff on the dome, old man. Let me see—"

The marshal put a hand to stave him off.

"I jest went into his cell before I thought I'd leave him for the night," said Eph, "when he picked up a water-jug that was there an' jest brained me with it. His hands was fastened in front of him. I don't remember anythin' more till I woke up 'lyin' on the floor o' the cell, an' then Monteflores had gone. Guess he found the key of the handcuffs on me, an' unlocked himself. Oh, my head!"

"And about what time would that be?" asked Arizona Jim.

"'Leven o'clock, exact," said the marshal.

"It's one o'clock now, so he's been gone two hours," said Arizona Jim. "Well, marshal, I suppose you'll have to do a bit of explaining to get over this?"

"I'll explain that all right to the sheriff," said Burbage. "I'm only human."

"Well," said Arizona Jim, "let's see what he did to your head."



"Going to let 'em do it?" asked Bad Phil Hicks. "Yes—if he doesn't tell me something I want to know!" said Arizona Jim. And he walked quickly after the angry mob (See Chapter 4)

"Nix," said the marshal. He came to his feet as he spoke, rocked on them for a moment, then began to walk out of the bank. By this time many of the citizens were clustered outside, shouting anxious questions. "Best tell the boys——"

And then Arizona Jim did a strange thing. He stepped after the marshal soft-footedly, reached out a hand, seized the knot of the handkerchief bandage that encircled the officer's head, and jerked it off roughly.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

Arizona Sees It Through!

BURBAGE wheeled sharply and fished out his revolver. But before he spoke, before almost he got the weapon out, Left-hand Britton, admitted to be the quickest on the draw in several Western States, had drawn with his left hand and had the man covered.

"Get your hands up, marshal!" the

Britisher said clearly. "I guess Arizona's got a reason for what he does!"

And so grim-eyed did the left-handed young gunman look that Marshal Burbage dropped his revolver and held up his hands.

"Well, Arizona, and what's the idea?"

Arizona Jim was examining the handkerchief he had torn away from the marshal's head, and he was chuckling softly to himself.

"Not a sign of blood on it," he said. "Now, let's have a look at the wound, marshal!" And he stepped forward, grasped Burbage roughly by the shaggy hair of him, and jerked his head down so that he could examine that, also. "And not a cut or a bruise on it," he went on. "Oh, Burbage, how could you tell such lies?"

Burbage at that, however, brought a knee up swiftly, reckless of the gun Left-hand Britton kept levelled at him, and his knee got Arizona Jim fairly in the stomach, sending the Indian agent back, gasping.

And, with the speed of light, the marshal turned again towards the door.

"Bad I'm goin' to be now!" yelled Phil Hicks.

He gave a jump after the marshal, got his arms around the man's neck, gave a twist, and sent Burbage thudding to the floor. Then he picked him up again and dashed him down again.

"That'll do, Phil," said Arizona Jim, recovering himself. "Don't kill him. But I think we've found out who was Monteflores' informant. The marshal never was knocked out at all; it's all a fake! This marshal released the bandit chief hours ago, and tried to get away with his baby yarn about a broken head! Say, marshal, got any more handcuffs on you?"

He felt in the man's pockets. Sure enough, he found a pair of bracelets. These he snapped on the struggling man's wrists.

"Now your own cell for you," he said, "and if you don't come quietly, I'll shout out to the town what I've found out about you. Then the town'll sure lynch you! So you've been helping Monteflores in his raids, have you? And don't think to make any trouble about my actions, marshal! I'm Arizona Jim, and my powers are greater than yours—greater than your sheriff's, if it comes to that!"

"Ye'll never prove it! It's all lies!" shouted the marshal.

"Thought you shouted the alarm rather robustly, considering you had just come round after being laid out two hours!" smiled the Indian agent. "Say, I've come down here to look into a mystery that wouldn't have been any mystery at all, if the people around here hadn't got the manana so badly their brains had dripped through their left ears! Now, son, I'm going to ask you something else. First, though, remember who I am. I'm Arizona Jim Carton, and I have methods of my own. I've weighed you up to the last ounce. You're a crook and a traitor! You're helping the Mexicans to make their raids and get away with them. Three times this bank has been robbed by them, just because they knew exactly the psychological moment

to come for the gold. And who told 'em? Why, you!"

"It's a lie; prove it!" blustered the marshal. "Gosh, I'll have you jailed for this, whoever ye are! I'm a respected man in these yer parts!"

"Oh, are you?" said Arizona Jim. "Well, then, we'll find out exactly. Hold him, you fellows!"

Bad Phil Hicks and Left-hand Britton seized the man. Arizona Jim went to the door of the bank again, opened it, and stood on the threshold. There were many men about now, and when they saw the shadowy figure of the Indian agent, they at once began to ask him what news the marshal had to give.

"Plenty!" answered Arizona Jim. "He's a crook! Say, are you going to believe me or not? Listen here, boys, and I'll tell you why you've been having these raids. Your marshal's the man who's been helping the raiders. I'm Arizona Jim Carton, and maybe, you've never heard of me before—but you can believe me, boys! And it was he who let Monteflores escape to-night. Did any of you see Burbage with a bandage on his head?"

"Shore!" answered several in his audience. Many of them seemed incredulous. "We seen that all right."

"Well, see how bad his wounds are!" said Arizona Jim. "Boys, bring him along here!"

"With pleasure!" roared Bad Phil Hicks, and rushed the man on the threshold of the bank. Arizona Jim shot out his hands, grasped the marshal, and gave him a thrust that sent him staggering amongst the citizens. And now, it must be admitted, these people of Agnadante had forgotten their manana, and they were as alert and energetic as anybody in Wyoming or any other colder State.

They seized the shouting marshal. Some of them, being more impressionable than the others, were inclined to be rough from the start. But the clear voice of Arizona Jim warned them to be gentle. Wiser men of the party set to work to examine Burbage's head, and, like Arizona Jim, found no trace of wound or bruise there.

It doesn't take much to inflame a Western

mob. And the nerves of these men of Aguadante had been on edge for a long time, owing to their close proximity to the Mexican border.

"Lynch him!" yelled several. And they grabbed Burbage roughly and began to rush him down the street. Burbage, a shrieking coward now, tried in vain to resist.

"Goin' to let 'em do it?" asked Bad Phil Hicks, putting on a ferocious expression to cover the misgivings that were his.

"Yes—if he doesn't tell me something I

Arizona Jim intervened, and so sharp was his voice that the almost hysterical mob stopped their yells to listen to him. Arizona Jim could always command his fellow-men.

"Before we go on with it," said the Indian agent, "I want to ask the man something. If he doesn't answer satisfactorily, you can carry on with the good work!"

His eyes gleamed now as he stared at the traitor, the man who had so sadly betrayed his trust.

"Where do you go to when you want to tell



"Put up your hands—all of you!" shouted Arizona Jim. "The real law's going to handle this case—not lynch law!" And the prisoners were marched up to the Bank (See Chapter 4)

want to know," said Arizona Jim. "Come on, boys," and he walked quickly after the angry mob and the shrieking Burbage. His comrades walked with him.

The mob halted under a telegraph pole in the main street of the town. They have telegraphs in Aguadante, of course. And somebody was not slow about producing a rope, which was tossed over one of the insulator arms. The noose that was formed was about to be placed about the shrieking marshal's neck, and many men light-heartedly seized the other end, ready to haul. At this point,

Monteflores the news of Aguadante?" he asked.

"Oh, to the—to the Toro Valley!" gasped the wretch.

He brought up his manacled hands, and loosened the noose about his neck.

"Mind you," said Arizona Jim, "if you're lying, we'll soon know, because we're going after him right away, and if you lie, you'll get strung up. Tell the truth, and you'll be saved that!"

"What——!" began Burbage. "These fellers——"

"You'd let him off if he helped you to capture Monteflores again, wouldn't you?" said Arizona Jim, to the crowd.

At which there seemed to be some demur. The hotter-blooded doubted whether they would. The older, soberer men said they'd think about it.

"It's true that's where I go!" yelled Burbage; then proved himself incapable of being true even to the other side. "But he ain't thar now, Arizona! Say, if I tell ye where to find him, will ye let me get clear o' this?"

"We'll see you don't hang, but I'll have to let the Governor know about it, so he can deal with you himself," said Arizona Jim. "Well, where is he?"

Burbage hesitated a moment. A man gave an impatient twitch at the rope. He choked.

"Hidin' in the cellar o' my house," he said at length. "It's true, boys!"

"Then some of you go and see!" said Arizona Jim. "Hustle, now!"

There was a wild yell. Most of the lynchers broke away and made a dash for a certain house, set at the extreme end of the main street of Aguadante. Three minutes later they returned, hustling amongst them the erect form of—Monteflores, as the renegade American was known as then. But there was nothing cringing and cowardly about this leader of the bandits. His head was bandaged, for Bad Phil Hicks had struck him shrewdly. But his lips were closed, and he glared about those who held him. He may have been a bandit, may have turned "yellow" for personal gain; but he was what Burbage never could have been: he was a man, and proved it then.

"We'll string him up instead!" yelled the mob.

"No, you won't!" roared Arizona Jim, and his gun was in his hand as he spoke. So, too, were the guns of Bad Phil Hicks and Left-hand Britton. "Drop him, there, you!"

Deep growls broke out. Men clapped their hands to their hips as well. But the three friends had the mob well covered before any of them could draw a gun.

"Put your hands up—all of you!" shouted Arizona Jim. "The real law's going to

handle this case—not lynch law! Phil, Left-hand! Take these two to the bank!"

He menaced the lynchers with his revolver so fiercely that the men drew back, snarling, perhaps, in their disappointment. He fired at a man who tried to defy him, and sent the fellow cowering back with a bitter sear on his arm. The effect of that shot was salutary.

"C'mon!" said Bad Phil Hicks, grabbing Monteflores by the scruff of the neck, pressing the muzzle of a gun against his ear. "Ye're in the hands of a right bad man now—much worse'n you ever could be!"

Left-hand Britton took charge of the handcuffed marshal. And so between the ranks of the foiled citizens, they marched their prisoners up to the bank. On the threshold of that building, Arizona Jim, eye and gun still alert, once more addressed the citizens.

"When you've cooled down," he remarked, "you'll realise that we've not done so badly to-night. We've got the two most dangerous men in hand. You'll find, I guess, that there won't be any more border raids for a bit, because those peons are cowards without a leader. And when you've got a new marshal here, you ought to enjoy a spell of peace. And the United States will punish these two fitly enough."

He slammed the door in the crowd's faces then, and the two prisoners were dragged inside, thrust into the bank's vault, where they were both locked in so securely that escape would be quite impossible for them.

"We came down here," said Arizona Jim, "expecting to find a long, tough job ahead of us. Well, these jobs are all the better for being brought off quickly."

"Jest the same," said Bad Phil Hicks, "it don't give a feller much chance to be reel bad, when things ends up so tame as this."

"You'll have plenty of other chances, in plenty of other places," the Indian agent laughed. "Anyway, I'll bet Hankson's satisfied!"

And Hankson was.

"I don't know how you manage these things Arizona," he said, gratefully. "But you do."

"By using a little gumption, I guess," said Arizona Jim.

THE END.

Early Rising

By Lord Moulverer
(The Stocker of the Greyfriars Famine)



WHEN frost is on the window-pane,
And cold winds whistle through the dorm,
It's nice to fall asleep again
Beneath the blankets, snug and warm.
But soon we start up with a yell
When Gosling rings the rising-bell!

"It's seven o'clock!" Bob Cherry cries;
And promptly tumbles out of bed.
It seems a shocking hour to rise;
It's more like two a.m. instead.
We dare not snatch another spell
When Gosling rings the rising-bell!

No sounds of snoring fill the air;
No fellows chatter in their sleep.
There's hustle, bustle everywhere
As from our cosy beds we leap.
Harsh, jangling sounds—we know them well
When Gosling rings the rising-bell!

I'd love to lie in bed all day,
And have my meals brought up to me.
Hot rolls and coffee, on a tray—
How jolly ripping it would be!
Such blissful dreams I must dispel
When Gosling rings the rising-bell!

The winds of winter freeze our bones;
Our noses are of strawberry hue.
On every side we hear deep groans,
Save from the energetic few
Whose lively spirits none can quell
When Gosling rings the rising-bell!

It's fine to fall asleep at night
And dream delightful dreams—perhaps!
But all such dreams are put to flight
By noises just like thunder-claps.
My mournful feelings, who can tell,
When Gosling rings the rising-bell?

Turlypin the Fox

By Clive Fenn

Illustrated by Warwick Reynolds

TURLYPIN the fox had had a good day. It was a Sunday, too, and the fat pheasant he had found so unexpectedly down in a sheltered dip under the brown waste of bracken at the edge of a copse, had come in right handily. The pheasant thought it was safe. For weeks its life had been in danger, but the shooting-party from the Manor had overlooked the bird. That pheasant had grown sleek and fat, and then the spirit of over-confidence, so bad for pheasants, as for mortals, was its undoing. It had felt all was well with the world, and had disregarded caution by peeping out of its hiding-place, just at the identical moment when Turlypin came by. The pheasant noticed the presence of Reynard too late. It observed something—a strange touch in the atmosphere—but there was no time to act on the lightning-gained knowledge. One screech, and the pheasant had ceased to be interested in what was passing in the world it had known.

It was the finest pheasant Turlypin had ever tasted. "Done me a power of good!" he said, as he munched up the tempting bird, leaving only a few feathers to tell the tale, as it were. These feathers were swept away by the soft, scented wind. Turlypin felt good, and he went on his way with sleepy content, dwelling cheerily on the pheasant and the tit-bits of it, smacking his lips, and hoping that the winter would not be a worrying sort of one, with any over-zeal on the part of the pestilent fox hunters.

He was so pleased about things generally that, as he glided on his way, he gave a little

dog-like bark, just by way of triumph. The country was wonderful, all lambent and vivid in the warm autumn sunshine. The air suggested the hey-day of gay old summertime, but it was better, infinitely superior to the coloured riot of July. Besides, the cover was surer.

"I feel I could do with a nap," said Turlypin to himself, as he lingered again in memory over his meal. "I only wish my poor wife had had as good a dinner to-day, but, maybe, later on, something will turn up which I can take home to her—a rabbit, say. Rabbits are good enough for the household."

He paused and looked round as he reached an open stretch of country. Close to the stripped trunk of a mighty elm, which lay flat across the rough ground, making a bridge over a ditch in which there was fairly deep water, thanks to the autumn rains, a robin and a tufted greenfinch were having an argument about food. The discussion did not interest the fox. He snuggled down in a little hollow right under the massive elm trunk, and composed himself to sleep. He dreamed of pheasants—whole troops of them—and his tail twitched. The greenfinch and the robin had flown off to their respective headquarters. They had no liking for a fox. There was just that dangerous, over-familiar something in the atmosphere, you understand, when a fox was about, which makes one think of some appointment in the next field where the scent is not so obvious. But that was all nothing to Turlypin. Long experience of a somewhat uncharitably-minded world had rubbed off

his squeamishness. He had grown thick-skinned. Foxes are like that.

It was a really good sleep after that never-to-be-forgotten Sunday dinner. A whole pheasant, with no absurd worries about sharing the princely delicacy. Turlypin was, so to speak, dead to all around, for his spirit was moving amidst even pleasanter scenery than that provided by the browning woods, and the pale stubble fields where mushrooms were numerous, the edible kind, home-spun affairs, so different from the rich crimson aristocrats, the brilliant "russula emetica" of the thick copses, where the ground was made gorgeous with the deep red discs.

But as Turlypin slept the sleep of the just, strange things were happening overhead. The grand old elm had fallen aslant the little stream. It made a splendid highway for lots of creatures which disliked water. Very thoughtful of the elm! And as the fox slumbered there came a pattering, so faint as hardly to be heard. A whole large, well-ordered family party of rabbits were making for the rich cabbage preserves of Farmer Smith a mile distant. The cabbage lands were situated the other side of the stream, quite a considerable distance and if the big tempest that night in April long before had not dragged the century-old elm from its roots and left it lying flat, the rabbits would never have dreamed of aspiring to the rich crop which had attracted their atten-

tion. For a rabbit hates water. Water is abominably bad for his fur. Avoid aquapura or the other kind—that is the rabbit policy. But all this is neither here nor there.

Of course, the rabbit expedition into the practically unknown country presided over by Farmer Smith would never have been made had there been the least inkling of an idea that Turlypin was sleeping off the effects of pheasant just underneath the old elm trunk. One may be brave, but why take chances, and upset the nerves? No sense in that! Even a French rabbit, who calls himself a lapin, would know better than that! But to proceed. The rabbits had scouts, and these advance runners were keeping a sharp look-out. They had all heard of Turlypin. They knew his prowess. They hated the very sound of his



WARWICK REYNOLDS

While Turlypin the Fox slept the sleep of the just strange things were happening overhead!

name, but they disliked the special brand of atmosphere he carried about with him even more. Turlypin had carved a reputation for himself as a sort of pirate-cum-buccaneer all through that countryside.

"Hallo! What's this?" cried the rabbit

for his skill in tracking down peril. He was sniffing now, like mad. Then he took a furtive peep under the trunk, and his little white bunch of a tail certainly turned a shade whiter. For down there in the low growth he caught sight of the arch-enemy, Turlypin, the

villainous fox which ate rabbits all the year round. That was not all. The rabbit pride was trampled underfoot. The fox made no bones of his opinion, namely, that rabbit was merely what the French call a "faute de mieux"—a want of something better—and that's just the kind of mocking, contemptuous treatment which nobody, even if it is a rabbit which is in question, can stand.

"It's a mangy fox!" breathed the rabbit who had first spoken.

There could have been no greater insult. Had Turlypin but heard, he would have roused himself,

and charged the traducer! It is true he had got a touch of mange, but it was never referred to in the circles in which he moved.

"Well, he's asleep, sure enough," said the commander-in-chief of the rabbits. "What had we better do about it?"

"Tweak his nose!" cried one smart little bunny, who knew no better, for he had hardly as yet seen the world.

The leader chuckled, and called for volunteers for the job. The heedless little merry-hearted rabbit made a move to go forward, but its mother told it not to be so silly.

"This is no place for us. I feel we had better be going back," murmured a wise old



The leading rabbit stopped and sniffed uneasily. The scent was unmistakable; there was a fox about!

who was leading the way. He sniffed uneasily.

Then he sniffed again, as one does when one is not quite, quite sure. But the thing was unmistakable. You could not escape it. There was a fox somewhere near. The other rabbits were behind, dancing along the trunk, care-free, but then suddenly they, too, had a suspicious waft of the smell.

"There's a fox close by," sang out advance post number one.

"You are dreaming, surely?" replied another rabbit.

The rabbit who took the lead was a bold fellow as rabbits go, which is not saying much. But no matter. Anyhow, he had been selected

rabbit, who disliked anything unusual. "Besides—well, it is really impossible to linger here, and I left my eau-de-Cologne on the mantelpiece."

"Don't be so fidgety!" chimed in the leader. "After all, what is a fox—Turlypin, or any other? I ask you, what is he?"

"If this is a guessing competition," said another rabbit, "I tell you frankly you are putting it forward at the wrong time. I always want lots of leisure for such things, and there ought to be coupons, and heaps of prizes."

The leader clapped his green leaf handkerchief to his nose, for he could really hardly stand being so close to the fox.

"I will tell you what that creature is," he cried. "He is only preserved vermin. That's what he amounts to! Preserved vermin! I would say it to his face! If it were not for the fact that a lot of silly people like to go hunting, as they call it, he would not be here at all."

It was a plucky thing to say. Words carry like thistledown. The caustic remark pene-

trated even the dull brain of Turlypin. He woke with a start, reassembled his drowsy faculties, and he was conscious of a lot of nervous-looking rabbits grinning down at him.

"What insolence!" he roared, making a grab at one bunny.

"I'll take one of them—it will do for my wife's supper," he said.

The rabbits broke and fled. Such a scamper! But the victim which had been seized by Turlypin was very bright and lively for its age. It kicked, and said a lot of things. And then it got free by a lucky feint. The fox was still half-way over the frontier into the land of sleep—not at all his usual energetic self.

Splosh! Into the water went the rabbit. It scrambled out, and was off like a streak of lightning, panting to overtake its fellows, and bemoaning the wetting of its precious fur.

"After all, one might go further and *fur* worse!" it gasped.

And Mrs. Vixen, harassed and irritated, went without her supper, after all!

THE END



HINTS TO UNCLES!

Compiled by Tubby Muffin of Rookwood

1. Always mark on your kallender, in red ink, the date of your nephew's berth-day.

2. Do not send presents "in kind." That is to say, don't send your nephew a volume of the "Works of Harry Stotle," or a pear of socks, or a peashooter. Send cash every time—preferably a big check.

3. Don't write long letters of advice to your nephew. He duzzent need it. He gets quite enuff lectures at Rookwood. He duzzent want any from his own fambly!

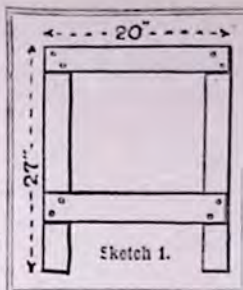
4. Letters sent with remittanses should be very short, such as: "My dear Tom, I have plezzure in enclosing a check for a hundred ginnies.—Your affeekshunate Uncle."

5. Although presents in cash are preferred, there is no objectshun to your sending a hamper of tuck in addition.

6. When you have occasion to vizzit your nephew at the school, "tip" him on your arrival, "tip" him at intervals of half an hour during your stay, and "tip" him again before you go. That is the proper caper.

7. Always studdy your nephew's whims. If he writes to say he is short of pocket-munney, send him the needful at once. You don't like to be kept waiting yourself? Very well, then, see that your nephew duzzent have to wait!

8. Carry out these instructshuns to the letter, and you will be a very popular uncle!



Sketch 1.

HOW TO MAKE A GARDEN TABLE

An Instructive Article which will appeal to Boys

THE top of a bacon box will supply the necessary

wood, and the three sections which go to the round can be quite easily sawn to shape. If it prove necessary to make the top, the biggest job will be done when it is shaped and nailed together, with two under-pieces of rough wood to hold it. A disused copper lid makes an ideal top for the table, however.

Now for the legs: For a shilling I bought a bacon box and took it to pieces carefully, putting on one side all the nails. There was enough wood left over to have made the top also, had it been necessary.

The box was sawn up into six strips 27 inches long by $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, and a further six from the ends (which did not need sawing) produced six sections 20 inches long by 3 inches wide. I should here say that if an old crate which has contained a cycle, or something similar, can be obtained instead of the bacon box, a considerable amount of time can be saved in sawing pieces lengthwise, but I mention the box as being the article more readily obtainable.

With the top bought ready made in the shape of a copper-lid, or already built up by the amateur carpenter, the table is almost done.

The next step is to take two of the longer strips and see that you have the bottoms of same on a level; then nail two of the shorter lengths crosswise, as shown in Sketch 1. Repeat this operation twice with the remaining lengths, and you have three sections which simply need nailing together to form a triangular stand for the table-top.

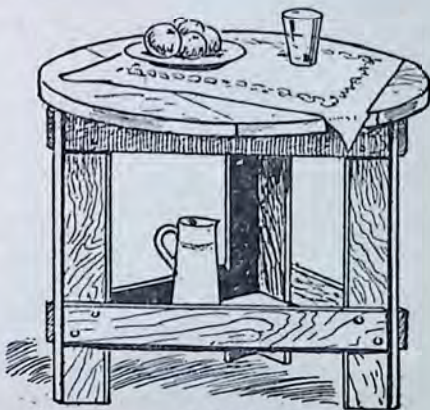
Now nail the latter on, and your table is practically complete.

Two really great improvements can now be added. The first is to turn the table upside-down and nail short lengths of the left-over wood to form a kind of tray near the bottom of the table as shown in Fig. 2. This proves a handy receptacle for books or the cake-stand when tea is taken down the garden. It is soon done, and besides being of use, steadies the table, whilst strengthening it.

Finally, buy a pint of creosote and make your table weatherproof by giving it one or two coats of this preserving fluid, at the same time considerably improving its appearance, and obliterating the marks of the bacon brand usually stamped upon the box.

Do not trouble to plane your wood, though you will probably prefer to do this for the top.

My table is used for all kinds of purposes and left out in all weathers. As the picture shows, it is anything but an eyesore in the garden.



Sketch 2.



The Bunter Cup!

A New and amusing complete story of the Chums of Greyfriars, specially written for the "Holiday Annual"

By FRANK RICHARDS

THE FIRST CHAPTER

Bunter Takes the Risk!

"Say, you fellows—"

"Yes."

"I'm awfully—"

"Speak!"

"A postal order—"

"For goodness' sake, Bunter, chuck it!" urged Bob Cherry.

"By the very next post!" said Billy Bunter firmly. "Now, which of you fellows is going to lend me five bob till the post comes in? Don't all speak at once!"

Harry Wharton and Co., of the Greyfriars Remove, did not all speak at once. They did not speak at all.

The Famous Five were gathered in No. 1 Study, discussing a subject of far greater importance than William George Bunter.

It happened—as it had happened before, and might happen again—that the finances of the Greyfriars Football Club were at a low ebb.

There was a matter that required discussion, attention, and adjustment; and naturally Harry Wharton and Co. were not interested in Billy Bunter and his celebrated postal order.

Billy Bunter stood in the doorway of No. 1 Study and blinked at the juniors through his big spectacles. As no reply was forthcoming, Bunter went on:

"I say, you fellows, I hope I'm not interrupting you—"

"You are!" said Harry Wharton.

"Sorry! But this is rather important, you know. You see, my postal order will be here by the next post. In the meantime, I'm hard up—and I want my tea. Which of you fellows is going to hand me five bob?"

"The whichfulness," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "is terrific."

"Oh, really, Inky——"

"You fat duffer!" exclaimed Bob Cherry impatiently. "Don't you really know that that postal order is a chicken that won't fight!"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Shut the door after you, Bunter," said Harry Wharton.

"Yes, old chap—but I'm not going yet," said Bunter, blinking at the captain of the Remove. "I think I mentioned that I'm expecting a postal order——"

"Buzz off!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull——"

Harry Wharton burst into a laugh. Bunter's postal order, which was always expected and never arrived, was known from end to end of Greyfriars. It was a standing joke in the Remove—it was chuckled over by the fags. Great men in the Sixth Form had heard of it and smiled. Of all the fellows at Greyfriars, there was only one that took Bunter's postal order seriously—and that was W. G. Bunter himself. Bunter, by some mental process inexplicable to the rest of the Remove, contrived to believe in that postal order—or to believe that he believed in it.

"Now, look here, Bunter," said Harry Wharton. "We're fed up with your postal order, and fed up with you personally. Are you leaving on your feet or your neck?"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"You've got the biggest feet, Bob," said Johnny Bull. "Kick him out!"

"Oh, really, Bull——"

"Buzz!" roared Bob Cherry. "We're busy!"

"Well, I'm busy too," said Bunter. "I've got to think of tea. Toddy's gone out, and there's nothing in the study. I can't find Lord Mauleverer anywhere. Smithy's refused to cash my postal order in the most brutal way. I'm actually hungry!" said Bunter, pathetically.

"Why didn't you have tea in the hall?" demanded Bob.

"I did. What's tea in the hall to me?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I was really expecting that postal order this morning——"

"Give us a rest!"

"But it's absolutely certain to come by the next post. Did you say you were lending me five bob, Wharton?"

"No!"

"Did you, Nugent? You're not so mean as Wharton, Franky, old man."

"More!" said Frank Nugent, with a chuckle.

"I say, Bob, you're not a selfish beast like Nugent——"

"Just like!" denied Bob Cherry.

"Inky, old man——"

"My esteemed chums," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh gravely, "the worthy and execrable Bunter assures us that his never-to-be-forgotten postal order is to arrive by the next honourable post. If I may make a suggestive remark——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob. "Do you mean a suggestion or a remark, Inky?"

"Both, my esteemed and uproarious Bob. I suggest that we should stand the esteemed and disgusting Bunter a shilling each, and take the remarkable postal order when it comes——"

"But it won't come!" howled Bob. "Does it ever come?"

"You shut up, Cherry!" hooted Bunter.

"Inky can take my word. Inky's a gentleman. He's a blessed nigger, I know; but he can take a fellow's word."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Inky," said Bunter encouragingly. "You were saying——"

"And if the esteemed postal order does not come——!" resumed the dusky Nabob of Bhanipur.

"No 'if' about it!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull, I wish you wouldn't interrupt Inky——"

"If it does not come," resumed the nabob, "each of us will give the excellent Bunter a terrific kick, one after anotherfully."

"Oh!" ejaculated Bunter.

"The fat and execrable Bunter will be taking no risk if the postal order is certain to arrive," grinned Hurree Singh; "and if

it does not come he will have a terrific kick from each of us, as hard as we can put it on!" "Hear, hear!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"I—I—I say, you fellows—"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Done!" he said. "We'll give you a chance, Bunter. We'll be with you when the post comes in, and if the remittance doesn't materialise you'll get the boot—hard!"

"The hardness will be terrific!"

"Ha, ha, ha! That's a go!" roared Bob.

Billy Bunter blinked dubiously at the Famous Five. Deep down in his fat breast, perhaps, lingered a doubt in the reality of that postal order which he had expected so long and so patiently. And he saw that the chums of the Remove were in deadly earnest. They were, in fact, fed up with Bunter and his postal order. If Bunter agreed to the terms, the terms would be carried out to the very letter.

"Is it a go, Bunter?" grinned Nugent.

"I—I say—"

"Is there some doubt about the postal-order, after all?" chuckled Bob.

"Nunno! But—"

"Good-bye, Bunter!"

"I—I say, you fellows—"

"Shut the door after you!"

"I—I say—I—I—I agree!" gasped Bunter desperately. The prospect of five shillings in hard cash, and all the tuck it would purchase, was too much for the Owl of the Remove. He simply couldn't resist it.

"You agree?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Ye-es."

"Mind, we mean it," said the captain of the Remove. "If the remittance doesn't turn up, each of us takes a free kick—hard!"

"I know mine will be jolly hard!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Yes," gasped Bunter. "You—you see—it's fairly certain—"

"Only fairly?"

"Quite certain, I mean! It—it's from one of my titled relations!"

"Cut that out!" said Wharton. "It's agreed—and there's my bob! Look out for a goal-kick, Bunter, if that postal-order doesn't turn up."

"Oh, dear!"

For a moment hesitation came on the fat junior. The chums of the Remove were all footballers, and Bunter had seen them kick. There was no attraction whatever in the idea of taking the place of the Soccer ball while five juniors in turn took goal-kicks.

But Bunter was hungry! He had had only one tea that afternoon, so he was, of course, almost in a state of famine.

When Bunter was hungry, lesser considerations vanished. It was really time for the stars in their courses to sit up and take notice when Bunter was hungry. Nothing else mattered—and the Owl of the Remove recklessly took his chance.

"Hand it over!" he gasped.

Five shillings were handed over. Bunter's fat fingers closed on them.

He rolled out of the study. Then he turned in the doorway.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Buzz!" roared five voices.

"But I say—"

Whiz!

A cushion flew—and Bunter flew! Cushion and Bunter disappeared into the passage together.

"Yoooop!"

"Come back, Bunter!" roared Bob Cherry.

"I've got the inkpot ready."

Bunter did not come back. Evidently he did not want the inkpot; he was more than satisfied with the cushion.

"Beast!"

Bunter scudded away to the stairs. Bob kicked the door shut; and the Ways and Means Committee in No. 1 Study resumed their discussion of ways and means.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

After the Feast, the Reckoning!

PETER TODD gave a start.

Toddy came into No. 7 Study, in the Remove, with a letter in his hand. The post was in, and there was a letter for Toddy; and Peter had retired to his study for the perusal thereof. And as he came in, there was the sound of a hurried movement, and then stillness. And Peter, looking round the study and finding that it was vacant, was naturally surprised.



Two pairs of hands were laid on the study table, and it was lifted aside. Billy Bunter was revealed, sitting on the carpet. "It-it-it was only a joke, you fellows," said Bunter dolorously. "Come on! If the postal-order hasn't arrived, it's five free kicks!" chuckled Bob Cherry (See Chapter 2)

"What the dickens!" murmured Peter.

He looked round again. Nobody was to be seen in the study—but there was a sound of a hurried breath.

"My hat!" said Peter Todd. "Some blessed dog's got into the house. Shoo, you brute!"

There was a suppressed grunt, and it came from under the table.

It was rather dusky in the study, and there was a cover on the table, and Peter could not see the animal that grunted. He put his hand to the cover, and then pulled it back. If there was a strange dog under the table, Toddy did not want to be bitten.

"Shoo!" he exclaimed again.

"What's the row?" asked Tom Dutton, coming into No. 7. Dutton, the deaf junior,

shared No. 7 Study with Peter Todd and William George Bunter.

"There's a dog——"

"What rot!" said Dutton. "Nothing of the kind! It's a perfectly clear afternoon. No fog that I can see."

"Not a fog—a dog!" howled Peter.

"Who's a hog?"

"Oh, dear!"

"If you mean Bunter, all right," said Dutton. "But it's rather a strong expression. I should call him a pig!"

"There's a dog under the table!" roared Peter.

"I know there is."

"Oh! You know it, do you?" asked Toddy, in surprise.

"Certainly! There's always a dog in th

stable," answered Dutton. "Gosling keeps his dog there."

"Oh, my hat!" said Peter. He gave up the attempt to explain the situation to Dutton. Deafness was a great affliction; not only to the deaf person.

Peter Todd sorted a wooden foil out of the study cupboard, and approached the table. "Shooo! Gerrout, you brute!" he shouted.

There was no sign from the hidden animal. Peter bent down and shoved the foil under the table.

His supposition was that that would shift the brute. He was right! A fiendish yell came from under the table.

"Yaroooooh!"

Peter jumped.

"Oh, my hat! It isn't a dog——"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"It's Bunter!" roared Toddy. "Bunter, you fat idiot, what are you doing under the table, you chump?"

"Yow-ow! I'm not here."

"What?"

"I—I mean——"

"Come out!" shouted Peter. "I'll give you another poke——"

"I—I say, Peter——"

"Like that!"

"Whooooop!"

Billy Bunter rolled out from under the table. He sat on the study carpet and roared.

"Ow! Beast!"

"Now what's this game?" demanded Peter. "Have you been bagging tuck from some fellow's study?"

"Ow! No!"

"Then what were you hiding for?"

"I—I wasn't——"

"What?"

"I—I mean, I—I thought some of those beasts might be with you, Toddy——"

"What beasts?"

"Wharton or Bob Cherry. I—I say, Toddy, if they come along, tell them I've gone home for the week-end, will you?"

"In the middle of the week?"

"I—I mean, tell 'em I've gone home for the middle of the week!" gasped Bunter.

"I—I don't want to see them! I—I don't

like them! I say, Toddy, you could lick any of that gang. I'll hold your jacket, old fellow, if you pitch into them."

"Have you gone quite off your rocker?" inquired the amazed Toddy. "Bob Cherry was asking after you a minute ago, downstairs."

"Oh dear!"

"The post's in, and he said you wanted to see after a letter you were expecting——"

"Ow!"

There was a sound of footsteps and voices in the Remove passage, and Billy Bunter made a sudden dive under the table. A fat and anguished face peered out under the cover at the astonished Peter.

"I—I say, Toddy, don't tell 'em I'm here. They—they're going to kick me if my postal order hasn't come, and—and there may have been some delay in the post!"

"What on earth——"

"Keep it dark!" gasped Bunter, and he vanished from sight as the footsteps reached the door of No. 7 Study.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" It was Bob Cherry's powerful voice. "Is that fat spoofer here?"

Five grinning faces looked into the study. The post was in, and the Famous Five were ready to keep their compact with Bunter. But Bunter, it seemed, was not so ready. Now that the psychological moment had arrived, Bunter was smitten with dreadful doubts and misgivings. The hour had come—but had the postal order?

It was said of old that after the feast came the reckoning. Bunter had had the feast, but he had no desire to have the reckoning.

"Where is he?" demanded Wharton.

"Who?" asked Peter Todd.

"Bunter!"

"What do you want Bunter for?"

The captain of the Remove explained. Peter Todd chuckled; and Bunter, under the study table, quaked.

But Peter was not disposed to betray the quaking refugee. He assumed a thoughtful expression.

"Well, you'd better look for him," he said. "He's a fat bounder, and he ought to be kicked. Give him an extra one for me when you find him."

Press Day at the Office of a Famous Weekly!



The Editorial Staff of that famous publication "Billy Bunter's Weekly" consists of the great William George Bunter himself, assisted by his brother Sammy, Fatty Wynn and Baggy Trimble of St. Jim's, and Tubby Muffin of Rookwood. On "Press Day" all is bustle in the Editorial Office, and would-be contributors by the score have to be gently but firmly repelled

Harry Wharton looked round the study.
"Not here," he said. "Let's draw the box-rooms."

"Come on!"

"I say," Tom Dutton, who had heard only a few syllables of what was said, without comprehending them, broke in. He was surprised, and he wanted to know. "I say, what's this game? What is Bunter under the table for? Is it a new game?"

"What!" Bob Cherry turned back into doorway. "Under the table, is he? Come out, Bunter!"

"I'm not!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Roll him out!"

"Turn them out, Toddy!" yelled Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Two pairs of hands were laid on the study table and it was lifted aside. Billy Bunter was revealed, squatting on the carpet, with his fat knees drawn up under his podgy chin.

"I—I say, you fellows—" squeaked Bunter.

"Bring him along!"

"He, he, he! I say, you fellows, I can take a joke! He, he, he!" cackled Bunter dolorously. "He, he, he!"

"This way!"

"Of—of course, it was only a joke, you fellows," mumbled Bunter. "You—you ain't going to kick an old pal?"

"Not at all! We're going to kick you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Not if the postal order's come!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Why didn't you turn up for the post, Bunter? We were waiting for you."

"You—you see—"

"The seefulness is terrific," grinned Hurree Ram Singh. "Come alongfully."

"There may have been some delay in the post!" wailed Bunter. "I ain't responsible for the delays in the post, am I? It's the way the Government manages things!"

"Come on, old fat bean! There may be a postal order, or a cheque, or a bag of gold!" chortled Bob Cherry. "One's as likely as the other, in fact."

"I—I say—"

But the wild expostulations of Billy Bunter were not listened to. Bob Cherry and Johnny

Bull took his fat arms and linked them with their own, and Bunter was walked out of the study. Hurree Singh walked behind, and thoughtfully helped Bunter with his boot when the Owl of the Remove lagged. In a laughing crowd, the juniors marched Billy Bunter along the Remove passage to the stairs, and marched him down. Peter Todd joined the crowd, and several other Removites, catching on to the joke, followed on.

The hapless Owl of the Remove resigned himself to his fate. Five free kicks had to be taken—unless the celebrated postal order at last had arrived at Greyfriars. And even Bunter now did not believe in his own postal order. Only the postal order could save him; and the general opinion of the hilarious Removites was that, when the matter was put to the test, Billy Bunter would bag more kicks than halfpence.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

The Unexpected!

"I—I say, you fellows—"

"Here you are, Bunter!"

"But I—I say—I've got to see the Head—the Head wants to see me specially—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Any letters for Bunter?" bawled Bob Cherry.

Skinner of the Remove was looking over the rack. He glanced round and nodded.

"Yes."

"An unpaid bill, most likely," remarked Johnny Bull. "Bunter owes money to everybody who's ass enough to trust him."

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"It's his pater's fist," said Skinner, handing over the letter.

"Here you are, Bunter!" grinned Bob.

Billy Bunter took the letter in his fat fingers. It was addressed to him in the well-known hand of his father, Mr. William Samuel Bunter. The Owl of the Remove blinked at it dismally. Now that the matter came to the test, he had simply no hope that the letter contained a remittance.

True, he had recently written to his pater, pointing out that money was scarce, and that a remittance would be thankfully received.

But many a time and oft had he written in the same strain without receiving even an answer; and when an answer did come it generally came in the form of a lecture on economy.

Lectures on economy were of no use to Bunter now.

The Owl of the Remove stood with the unopened letter in his fat hand, blinking at it, and blinking at the grinning faces around him. He longed for an avenue of escape; but there was no way out. The Famous Five encircled him, and a dozen Remove fellows had gathered round, chuckling, to see how the peculiar affair would turn out. Nobody believed for a moment that the long-expected postal order had arrived at last. That was too much to expect.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Open the letter, old top!" said Bob Cherry encouragingly. "The jolly old postal order may be in it; although somebody has said that the age of miracles is past."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I think I'll open this letter in my study," mumbled Bunter. "I'll let you fellows know later—"

"You jolly well won't!" grinned Nugent. "You'll let us know now, old fat top!"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Open it!" roared Johnny Bull. "Shell out the postal order!"

"Go it, Bunter!"

"Get on with it, fatty!"

"Let's see the postal order!" chortled Peter Todd. "It will be worth seeing after all this time. My belief is that it will have grown whiskers!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I say, you fellows—"

"Bump him!"

"Hold on!" gasped Bunter. "I—I'm opening the letter, ain't I, you awful beasts."

"I—I say, it won't be my fault, will it, if the postal order has somehow dropped out in the post?"

"It won't be your fault—it will be your misfortune," said Wharton. "You'll get the kicks."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter desperately jabbed a fat thumb into the envelope. He hoped against hope that, somehow or other, miraculously, unexpectedly, there might be a postal order in that letter. After all, his pater did send a remittance sometimes—

rarely, but it had happened. Indeed, once in the dear dead days beyond recall, when Mr. Bunter had had great good fortune on the Stock Exchange, he had sent actual fivers to his hopeful sons at Greyfriars—real, genuine fivers. That period of prosperity in the Bunter family had been brief—to William George it now seemed like a happy dream. Still, it had happened once, and might happen again.

Bunter's fat thumb gashed the envelope, which was Bunter's usual elegant way of opening a letter.



Skinner picked up the postal-order with an amazed ejaculation. "Great Scott!" Bunter blinked at it, more amazed than Skinner. It was a postal-order for a pound. Bunter could scarcely believe his own eyes! (See Chapter 3)

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

Happy and Glorious !

Surrounded by grinning faces, the Owl of the Remove drew a folded letter from the envelope.

So faint now was his hope of a remittance that he was in no hurry to unfold the letter. He held it in his fat fingers and blinked dismally at the Famous Five.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Buck up, Bunter!"

"The fact is, this letter is from my papa. It was from a relation I was expecting a postal order——"

"Get a move on!"

"One of my titled relations, you know——"

"The duke or the marquis?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Beast!"

"Walk him along the corridor," said Bob Cherry. "I take first kick. This way!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh dear!" gasped Bunter.

In desperation Bunter unfolded the letter. He had no hope now. But it was the unexpected, the amazing, that happened.

From the letter, as he unfolded it, a slip of flimsy paper fluttered.

Skinner picked it up, with an amazed ejaculation.

"Great Scott!"

Bunter blinked at it, more amazed than Skinner. For it was undoubtedly a postal order, and on it the figures "20s." appeared prominently. It was a postal order for a pound!

The Owl of the Remove could scarcely believe his eyes or his spectacles. He was so astounded that he did not even take the postal order that Skinner was holding out to him. He stood rooted to the floor, staring at it.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" gasped Bob Cherry. "What—what—what—what—what is it?"

"The whatfulness is terrific!"

"Is it—is it—is it——" stuttered Peter Todd.

"Great Scott!"

"Phew!"

And from all the Removites came gasps and exclamations of amazement. The unexpected had happened: the age of miracles was not past! Billy Bunter's celebrated postal order had arrived.

"BUNTER's postal order?"

"Twenty shillings!"

"One quid!"

"Well, that beats the band!"

Slowly the Owl of the Remove recovered. His fat fingers closed on the postal order, and he jerked it away from Skinner. Apprehension in his fat face gave way to satisfaction.

It was a postal order—and it had come! At the most opportune moment it had come—and Bunter was saved!

"Congrattlers, old man," said Skinner, quite civilly.

Skinner, as a rule, did not waste much civility on Bunter. But Skinner was a youth of much worldly wisdom; and he believed in being civil to a fellow who had a pound—so long as the pound lasted, at all events.

Bunter smiled.

"I say, you fellows, I think I owe you a few shillings," he said loftily. "What was it—four or five?"

"Five, you fat boulder," said Bob Cherry.

"Was it five?" said Bunter carelessly.

"I never can remember these small sums. Well, give me fifteen bob change, will you, and you can take the postal order."

"Don't change it, Bunter," said Peter Todd. "Better have it framed and hung up in the study."

"Oh, really, Toddy."

"Do I sleep, do I dream, do I wonder and doubt—are things what they seem, or are visions about?" quoted Vernon-Smith.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's a real, genuine postal order, I guess," remarked Fisher T. Fish. "I guess this has got me beat."

"Oh, really, Fishy."

"Don't you take any notice of their rot, Bunter, old chap," said Skinner. "Come along to the tuck-shop and change it."

"Good egg!" said Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove rolled away with Harold Skinner. He gave the Famous Five a parting blink over his shoulder.

"I'll settle with you fellows presently."

And he disappeared. Snoop, Stott, Fisher T. Fish, and Micky Desmond followed.

Now that Bunter was in funds for once, there were not wanting fellows who were prepared to pick up the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, that happened luckily for Bunter," he said. "There is such a thing as fool's luck, after all."

"The luckfulness was terrific."

"Old man Bunter must be in funds," grinned Vernon-Smith. "If this goes on Bunter will be quite popular."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Heedless of the comments of the Remove fellows, Billy Bunter rolled away to the tuck-shop with his friends. In Mrs. Mimbble's little shop in the shady corner of the quad, a number of Second Form fags were making merry. Prominent among them was Samuel Bunter of the Second Form, the younger brother of William George. Bunter minor, apparently, was in funds too.

"Hallo, Billy!" said Bunter minor, blinking round from the high stool upon which he was seated.

"Hallo, Sammy!"

"You got one, too?"

"One what?" asked Bunter.

"I've had ten bob from the pater, by the last post," said Sammy. "Didn't he send you something?"

Bunter held up the postal order.

"Look!"

"Oh, good," said Sammy. "Now then, young Gatty, don't you bag all the dough-nuts."

Both the Bunters were in luck, and both were expending their unexpected remittances in the same way. Billy Bunter's pound very rapidly followed Sammy Bunter's ten shillings.

Bunter sat on a stool at Mrs. Mimbble's counter and enjoyed himself. In refreshments, liquid and solid, the pound took unto itself wings and flew away.

Skinner and Co. shared in the good things. On the rare occasions when Bunter was in funds, he liked to see other fellows enjoying tuck as well as himself. He gave his orders royally, and Mrs. Mimbble—first having put on her glasses and examined the postal order with

great care—handed out the good things with a smiling face.

In the happy enjoyment of tuck, William George Bunter quite forgot that five shillings out of the twenty were due to the chums of the Remove.

It was not till exactly twenty shillings had been expended, and Mrs. Mimbble called a sudden halt in her activity, that the Owl of the Remove realised that his debt was still unliquidated.

He slid off the high chair.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Thanks, old man," said Snoop, strolling away.

"I say, Skinner—hold on a minute—lend me five bob, will you," said Bunter.

"Bless my hat, I've forgotten my lines for Quelch!" exclaimed Skinner, and he hurried off.

"Beast!"

Bunter's postal order having melted away, his comrades melted away also, like snow in the sunshine. Looking rather jammy and sticky, and very thoughtful, William George Bunter rolled back to the school-house. His pater's letter was in his pocket, and Bunter had not thought of reading it yet. The postal order had engrossed the whole of his attention. He did not think of reading it now—he was thinking of the shillings due to the Famous Five.

He mounted slowly to the Remove passage; after that gorgeous feed in the tuck-shop, Bunter was a little short of breath for stair-cases. He blinked in at the doorway of No. 1 Study, and found Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent there.

"I say, you fellows," began Bunter cautiously. "My postal order came all right, didn't it?"

"It did," assented Wharton, looking up with a smile. "Jolly lucky for you, Bunter."

"Of course, I knew it was coming! I told you fellows so, didn't I?"

"You told us so, certainly," said Harry, laughing.

"About the five bob," went on Bunter. "I'll settle that later."

"Why not now?" demanded Nugent.

"I'm expecting another postal-order——"

"What?"

"Shortly," said Bunter. "Leave it over till then, will you? The fact is, I've been treating some of my numerous friends, and the money's run out. You know my thoughtless generosity."

"Oh, my hat!"

"But it comes to the same thing," said Bunter airily. "I'm expecting several postal orders, as a matter of fact, from some of my titled relations. I'll settle up out of one of them. Make a note of it, will you, and remind me—you can't expect me to remember these trifling sums."

And Bunter rolled on up the Remove passage just in time to escape a whizzing Latin grammar.

He rolled into No. 7 Study, where Peter Todd and Tom Dutton were beginning their prep. Bunter sank down in the armchair and breathed hard. He felt that he needed a rest after his exertions in the tuck-shop.

"Time you got on with your prep, Bunter," said Peter Todd, looking up. "Blow prep! I've got my pater's letter to read," said Bunter, remembering the existence of the paternal missive.

The fat junior jerked the letter from his pocket and blinked at it. He blinked at it without much interest. He expected it to contain maxims of economy, and injunctions to make the pound last a long time—injunctions which it was no

longer in Bunter's power to carry out.

But as he read, Bunter's expression changed.

"Phew!" he murmured.

And he read on eagerly.

"Good news?" asked Peter, who had been watching the changing expressions in Bunter's fat face with considerable entertainment.

Bunter blinked up.

"Well, rather! My pater's coming down to

Greyfriars on Wednesday—"

"Call that good news?"

"In his new motor-car," said Bunter. "The Rolls-Royce, you know."

"I don't know," said Peter.

"Well, you do now I've told you," snapped Bunter. "The pater's rolling in it—fairly rolling in it!"

"Rolling in his motor-car?" ejaculated Peter.

"No, you ass!" hooted Bunter. "Rolling in money."

"Good! You'll be able to settle the eighteen pence you've owed me all the term," said Peter cheerfully.

Bunter's fat face beamed.

"Something's happened on the Stock Exchange, I suppose," he said. "I remember last holidays hearing the pater say he was a bear, and was going to be a bull, or something—Stock Exchange terms, you know, Peter, that you don't understand. I suppose it's turned out well, and he's made a lot of money—I—I mean, of course, that the pater's a very wealthy man, with a big rent-roll—he



The leather flew, and Hazeldene, who was keeping goal for Wharton's side, fairly jumped as the ball whizzed in. "Goal!" gasped Bunter. "You-you burbling jabber-wock!" shrieked Wharton. "It's our own goal!" "Ha, ha, ha!" (See Chapter 5)

dabbles in stocks and shares merely as a hobby——"

"Fathead!"

"If you call me names, Peter Todd, I shall have to think seriously about dropping your acquaintance," said Bunter. "I've mentioned before that I don't like familiarity."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Peter.

"The pater says—very rightly—that he wishes to see me take a more prominent part in the school," said Bunter. "He says it is due to his position—and mine, of course. I shall have to see about it. I've always been too easy-going—I see that now. Properly speaking, I ought to be captain of the Remove. Do you think the fellows are likely to elect me form-captain, Toddy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Toddy.

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at. Anyhow, I shall expect to be given a show in the footer," said Bunter. "I shall put it straight to Wharton. I'm entitled, on my form, to play in the Remove eleven—precious few fellows in the Lower School here of my form."

"None!" said Peter. "You're the only jolly old barrel at Greyfriars. Your minor runs you pretty close, though."

"I mean my football form," roared Bunter.

"That's so—you're much the same form as a football," agreed Peter. "But you're more like a rugger ball than a soccer ball."

"Beast! I shall put it plain to Wharton, and if he refuses to give me a chance in the eleven I shall appeal to Wingate of the Sixth, as Head of the Games. I say, Peter, I expect to have a lot of money shortly."

"Go hon!"

"Do you think Wingate would order Wharton to put me in the eleven if I lent him some money?"

Peter Todd shrieked.

"Ha, ha, ha! Better try it on! Insure your life first. Sign the coupon in the 'Daily Mail' before you ask Wingate."

"Beast!"

Peter Todd resumed his prep. Bunter did not bother about prep. He read the paternal communication through again, with a keen and close attention that he seldom bestowed on paternal communications. Then he lay

back in the armchair, with a fat and fatuous smile on his face, and dreamed golden dreams. Fortune was smiling on the Bunter family, the future was rosy! Billy Bunter, generally regarded as the most unimportant fellow in the Remove, was going to be a fellow of some importance. He was going to take his rightful place in the Remove—like the king coming into his own again, as it were!

This was Bunter's lucky day!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER

Bunter the Footballer!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

Bob Cherry was surprised.

It was Saturday afternoon, and games practice was on. Properly speaking, all juniors who were not fortified behind a medical certificate were bound to turn up for games practice on Saturday afternoon. But there were many exceptions to the rule; and Billy Bunter generally contrived to dodge games practice, as he dodged most things that called for exertion. Yet here he was, on this particular Saturday afternoon, in football jersey and shorts, looking as if he were just going to burst out of them.

"Bunter," Harry Wharton chimed in, "what's this game?"

"Football," said Bunter.

"I mean, what are you doing here?"

"It's games practice, isn't it?" snapped Bunter.

The captain of the Remove laughed.

"I'll let you off, old fat bean. Roll out of the way."

"Shan't!"

"Wha-a-at?" ejaculated Wharton.

Billy Bunter flashed a fat forefinger at the captain of the Remove, and blinked at him severely.

"There's such a thing as duty, Wharton," he said. "It's your duty as captain of the Form to see that fellows don't cut games practice."

"A hit—a very palpable hit!" grinned Vernon-Smith.

"You fat bounder!" roared Wharton, righteously indignant. "When I want to round you up for games practice, I generally have to rout you out from under a table or somewhere!"

"That's all very well," said Bunter. "But here I am, quite keen. Are you picking up sides?"

"Yes, ass!"

"Put me in," said Bunter.

"What on earth are you after, Bunter?" asked Harry, puzzled. "You don't play footer, and you don't want to."

"I happen to be the best player in the Remove."

"Eh?"

"Or in the whole Lower School, for that matter."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I haven't cared much for games practice," went on Bunter, blinking at the astonished juniors. "That's because I'm always left out of matches from jealousy."

"Phew!"

"It's rather disheartening," said Bunter. "Here I am, a born footballer, a fellow with great pace and a wonderful eye for a goal. I'm left out owing to you fellows hating to be put in the shade by a better player—you especially, Wharton."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Wharton.

"It's disheartening; in fact, sickening," said Bunter. "But I'm not standing any more of it. I'm fed-up! My pater says he expects me to take my proper place in Form and School. I'm going to insist upon my rights!"

"Go it, Bunter!" said Peter Todd. "Gather round, you fellows, while Buntie does his funny turn."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm going to play up in the games practice and fairly shame you, Wharton, into putting me into the Remove eleven," said Bunter. "That's why I'm here. The pater expects to see me play for Greyfriars. He's said so; in fact, he says he insists upon it."

"Oh, my hat!"

"He knows what's due to me. We've got some good fixtures—Rookwood, and Highcliffe, and St. Jim's. I shall expect to be played in all of them."

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Remove fellows.

The idea of William George Bunter playing in the biggest football fixtures of the season

took them by storm. They shrieked and they roared.

Billy Bunter blinked round indignantly through his big spectacles. Apparently he could see nothing in his observations to excite merriment.

"You can cackle!" he snapped.

"We will! Ha, ha, ha!"

"But I mean it! This afternoon I'm going to show you how I can play," said Bunter. "Put me in, Wharton. I've a right to play in the pick-ups, and if you leave me out I'll appeal to Wingate!"

"You silly ass!" said Harry. "If you want to take up footer, I'll find time to give you some coaching——"

"Coach your grandmother!" said Bunter. "How the deuce are you going to coach a fellow who knows the game ten times better than you do?"

"Oh, my hat! But you're really no good in the pick-ups, old chap," said Wharton patiently.

"Yah!"

"Now look here, Bunter——"

"Cut it out!" said Bunter. "I mean business! Now, if you've picked up sides, where do I play?"

Harry Wharton looked at his comrades and smiled. Strictly speaking, Bunter was within his rights—rights that certainly he had never insisted upon before. As a rule, Bunter dodged football practice, though undoubtedly he had always been willing to figure in a prominent match. He was firmly convinced that he was the best junior footballer at Greyfriars, though, for that matter, he was equally convinced that he was the cleverest fellow in class and entitled to the top place—which never by any chance did he reach.

"Oh, stick him in!" said Bob Cherry. "It will be funny while it lasts, and after he's winded we'll roll him off."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast! Put me in as centre-forward, Wharton."

"But I'm centre-forward myself, old nut," said Wharton mildly.

"Can't you get aside just for once?" demanded Bunter. "Blessed if I ever saw such a conceited chap!"



Mr. Bunter looked very good-natured and fat and prosperous. "Well, William," he said. "I have not heard a good report of you from your form-master!" "The fact is, you know, I go in chiefly for games," said Bunter, rather anxiously. "Why, only the other day I scored a goal when I was playing for Wharton!" (See Chapter 6)

"Righto!" said Harry, laughing. "Form up, you fellows; roll into the middle, Bunter."

The junior footballers chuckled as they formed in line. Vernon-Smith, the Bounder, was captaining one side in the pick-up game; Harry Wharton the other. There was not a lull team on either side; it was only practice, and very informal. Billy Bunter was allowed to adorn the centre of Wharton's front line with his podgy person, and Harry went on the wing.

"Play up!" roared Bob Cherry. "Bunter kicks off! Kick off, Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bump!

Even the Owl of the Remove might have been expected to kick off without disaster.

But William George Bunter had his own ways of playing the great game of Soccer.

There was a roar as Bunter sat down.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What on earth are you sitting down for, Bunter?" demanded Wharton.

"Yow-ow! My foot slipped—ow!"

"Roll him off!" exclaimed Redwing.

"Yah!"

Billy Bunter scrambled up, to find the ball kicked off and the game in progress.

"I say, you fellows—"

Nobody heeded Bunter. He was interesting as a comic interlude; but the Removites were there, after all, for football practice. Vernon-Smith's merry men were rushing the ball towards Wharton's goal, and the defenders

crammed in to the defence, and the game waxed hot and fast. But Billy Bunter, having resolved to shine as a footballer, was not to be denied.

He rushed valorously into the game.

Round the field a number of fellows had gathered on the news that Bunter was playing in the junior pick-ups. It was felt that Bunter on the football field was worth watching. Not even the great Coker of the Fifth excited more interest from a humorous point of view.

Extreme short sight was a handicap in the Soccer game. It was not Bunter's fault that his sight was short, certainly; and no doubt it was not his fault that he was a duffer. Both were his misfortune. But certainly these little drawbacks handicapped him as a footballer. Nevertheless, he charged into the mêlée; and Bunter's charge was by no means to be despised, with his weight in it. Bunter's idea of a charge was, apparently, to hurl himself at the nearest player, regardless of the side that player belonged to. His charge caught Harry Wharton in the back, and stretched the astonished captain of the Remove on his face on the muddy ground. Wharton lay and gasped, feeling as if an earthquake had happened; and Bunter, gasping too, charged victoriously on. His own side did not expect to be charged from behind, even by Bunter, so the Owl of the Remove looked like carrying all before him.

"On the ball, Bunter!" yelled Skinner from behind the goal. "Ha, ha! On the ball, old fatty!"

Bunter was on the ball!

He kicked!

Smithy and Co. were quite ready to see that Bunter did not send the ball up the field. But Bunter did not even attempt to send it up the field. He kicked for goal—in the excitement of the moment, being oblivious of the fact that it was his own goal he was kicking at.

Whizz!

By a miracle, the kick told. The leather flew; and Hazeldene, who was keeping goal for Wharton's side, fairly jumped as the ball whizzed in.

"Goal!" gasped Bunter.

"Why, what——"
"What—what——"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a wild yell round the field. The spectators roared, the footballers shrieked. Harry Wharton, scrambling up breathless, rushed at Bunter and grasped him by the shoulder.

"You silly owl!"
"Yaroooh! Leggo!"
"You crass ass!"

"I've kicked a goal!" roared Bunter. "More than you could do. There's the ball in the net! Yah!"

"You—you burbling jabberwock," shrieked Wharton, "it's our own goal!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter started. Even Bunter realised that that masterly goal was not in accordance with the very best traditions of the Soccer game.

"Oh! Is—is it?" he gasped. "I—I didn't see——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Anyhow, it's a goal!" gasped Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Peter Todd rushed up to Bunter. He was on Wharton's side in the pick-up, and therefore Bunter's fellow-player, and he had been almost winded by a charge from Bunter. He grasped the Owl of the Remove by his fat ears and shook him.

"Yooop!" roared Bunter.

"What did you charge me over for?" shrieked Peter.

"Yow! Leggo! It was a fair charge!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Take him away!" gasped Wharton.

"Roll him away! Burst him! Bury him somewhere!"

"I—I say, you fellows—— Yooooooop!"

Peter Todd led Bunter's fat ears off the field in an iron grip. Bunter, naturally, had to accompany his ears; a parting would have been too painful. Bunter was led off, and dumped down in a breathless heap.

Peter glared down at him.

"You get across the touch-line again and you'll be squashed!" he said. "Keep off the grass! Go and eat coke! Disappear!"

"Ow!" gasped Bunter, sitting up. "Look here, Toddy, you beast——"

An Editorial Banquet !



Their work completed, and "Billy Bunter's Weekly" having been safely "put to bed," the worthy Editor and his four fat subs invariably regale themselves with a glorious feed. Needless to say, the distinguished amateur journalists prove themselves at least as handy with the knife and fork as with the pen!

"Are you going?" roared Teddy, drawing back his right foot for a terrific kick.

"Ow!"

Bunter went.

The pick-up game finished without Bunter.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER

Mr. Bunter at Greyfriars

"SOMETHING like style!" grinned Skinner. It was Wednesday afternoon, and Mr. William Samuel Bunter had arrived at Greyfriars. The little portly gentleman, with his gold-rimmed glasses gleaming on his little fat, purple nose, had been shown in to the Head. The car in which he had arrived was open to the inspection of all Greyfriars that cared to inspect. And quite a number of fellows gave it admiring glances.

It was a big car, and it was an expensive car. It was the first time the car had been seen at Greyfriars, which indicated that it was a new possession of Mr. Bunter's. Fisher T. Fish, of the Remove, guessed and opined that Old Man Bunter had been doing well on the Stock Exchange. Whether that was so or not, undoubtedly Mr. Bunter had "done himself" well in the way of motor-cars.

"I guess Bunter isn't half a bad guy, take him all in all," said Fisher T. Fish.

Skinner nodded assent.

"I always liked old Bunter," he remarked.

"I was just thinking the same," observed Snoop. "There are worse fellows than Bunter knocking about."

"There are!" chimed in Bob Cherry.

"Take yourselves, r'instance——"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Skinner.

The fact was that Skinner and Co. were feeling that they had never really valued Bunter at his proper value. Bunter had had several remittances of late, following the unexpected arrival of his celebrated postal-order. He had been seen changing a five-pound note! A fellow who had fivers to change was not a fellow to be lightly disregarded, in the opinion of Skinner and Co. Skinner took the view that Bunter had never had justice, especially in games. He declared that if every fellow had his rights, Bunter would be found playing in the Remove eleven

on great occasions. Which was like honey to William George Bunter, who fully agreed with Skinner. Harold Skinner further declared that if he ever became captain of the Remove eleven, he would play Bunter on the spot—which was quite a safe offer, as Skinner was never likely to become football captain. In the meantime, No. 7 Study was a land flowing with milk and honey, and Skinner's new-born admiration of Bunter made him a welcome guest there.

Billy Bunter was carrying his fat little nose high in these days. He had fallen into a way of jingling money in his trousers' pocket, and instead of seeking to borrow "bobs" and half-crowns up and down the Remove, he was willing to lend them to any fellow who duly and properly acknowledged his importance. This made a great difference in the popular estimation of Bunter. He had even offered to make a handsome contribution to the funds of the Remove football club, on the modest condition that he should be played in all important fixtures. Needless to say, his generous offer was declined, without thanks.

But Bunter was a stickler, and his fat mind was made up. Somehow or other, he was going to take his proper place in the Form. Somehow, all Greyfriars was going to be made to acknowledge what a really important person he was.

Bunter was waiting now at the corner of the Head's corridor for his father. Skinner and Co. joined him there, and chatted amiably with the Owl of the Remove till Mr. Bunter came along. They saluted the stout little gentleman very respectfully. Mr. Bunter gave them a friendly nod, and walked away with William George. Bunter conducted him to No. 7 in the Remove.

Mr. Bunter sat in the study arm-chair and put his thumbs into the arm-holes of his waistcoat. He looked very good-natured and fat and prosperous. Fortune had evidently been dealing kindly with the portly gentleman of late. Whether he had been a "bull" or a "bear" or a "stag," or any other of the fearsome beasts that haunt the purlieus of the Stock Exchange, undoubtedly fortune had smiled on him.

"Well, William," he said, "I have not heard a good report of you from your Form-master."

"Not really?" asked Bunter.

"Mr. Quelch thinks you idle," said Mr. Bunter, shaking his head.

"The fact is, you know, I go in chiefly for games," said Bunter, rather anxiously.

"Games, after all, are what a chap comes to a public school for, father. When a fellow's distinguished in games, it doesn't matter much about swotting."

"But you're not distinguished in games, William."

"You see, there's a lot of jealousy about," explained Bunter. "It's at Greyfriars, as at a lot of schools; the games get into the hands of a clique, and they're very cliquey, you know. Sometimes a first-rate man doesn't get a chance at all."

Mr. Bunter eyed his hopeful son dubiously.

Bunter, to do him justice, spoke in perfectly good

faith. Nature had not been kind to him in all respects; but, at least, she had endowed him with a remarkably good opinion of himself.

Not all his extraordinary performances on the football field could convince Billy Bunter that that was not the right place for him. When the Remove lost a match, Billy Bunter had no doubt whatever that it was because he was left out of the team. When they won

a match, they won it in spite of having left him out. On this topic Bunter was not open to argument—if anybody had cared to argue the point with him.

"Only the other day, in games practice, I bagged a goal," said Bunter. "In the pick-ups, you know."

"Oh! ah! yes!" said Mr. Bunter, who

had a very vague idea of what the pick-ups were.

"Put the ball right in and beat Hazel all along the line," said Bunter. "I wish you'd been there to see it, father. But it makes no difference. Wharton wouldn't dream of playing me in a school fixture. He's not a bad chap, you know," went on Bunter considerably. "A bit lofty, but he's got his good points. But my style isn't his style, you see, and he thinks his own style is IT. Lots of fellows like that."

"No doubt," assented Mr. Bunter. "Still, if you are a good player, William, you ought to be

given a chance in the cricket."

"It's football now," murmured Bunter.

"Oh! Ah! Yes! Exactly! And what was it you took—a wicket?"

"Nunno! A goal!"

"Of course—a goal, certainly!" said Mr. Bunter, with a nod. "Well, this is not as it should be, William. It is my desire to see you take a more prominent place in your school,



"I'm simply going to knock your head upon the wall—like that!" said Bob Cherry. "And like that——" "Yaroh!" roared Bunter. "Stoppit! I'm coming with you as fast as I can, ain't I?" (See Chapter 8)

I should like to see you make better progress in class; but, above all, I desire very much to see your name in the games lists. I see no reason why my son should not become captain of the school."

"No reason at all, father; only, as I said, there's a lot of jealousy and envy about," said Bunter. "It's really disheartening."

"This must be altered," said Mr. Bunter decidedly. "I shall speak to Wharton on the subject."

"Oh!" ejaculated Bunter, in some dismay.

"Certainly," said Mr. Bunter firmly.

"I—I don't think that would do much good, father," stammered the Owl of the Remove. "You—you see——"

"I have not yet told you, William, my purpose in coming to the school to-day," said Mr. Bunter. "I have mentioned my intention to the Head, and he approves. It is my desire to associate the name of Bunter permanently with Greyfriars in—in sports and—and pastimes, and so forth," said the plump gentleman, rather vaguely. "I am going to found a Cup!"

"To—to find a Cup?" ejaculated Bunter.

"To found a Cup."

Bunter blinked at him.

"A Football Cup!" explained Mr. Bunter. "It will be known as the Bunter Cup, and will be competed for, on certain conditions to be laid down."

"Oh!" exclaimed Bunter.

His fat face brightened. He realised that the son of the founder of a Cup would be a fellow of some importance. There would be room for swank—and next to tuck, it was swank in which William George Bunter found the greatest delight.

"Jolly good idea!" he exclaimed.

"A handsome silver cup, costing fifty guineas!" said Mr. Bunter impressively.

"Phew!"

"I can afford it," said Mr. Bunter, with a wave of his plump hand. "That is nothing! Now, I want to consult you on this subject, William. It is a long time since I was at school, and to tell the truth, in my school-days I gave little attention to games. Probably you know more about cricket——"

"Football."

"Football, I mean, than I do," said Mr. Bunter.

"I fancy there isn't much about the game that I don't know," said Bunter complacently.

"Very good. Now, in a Cup competition, there are a certain number of ties, I think they are called——"

"Cup-ties," assented Bunter.

"Just so! Various teams are drawn to play against one another for the Cup, or something of the kind."

Bunter grinned.

"That's it," he said. "Of course, there would have to be an age limit. No good putting up the Remove to play the Sixth, for instance."

"N-no, I suppose not. A certain number of—of fixtures—you call them fixtures, I believe?"

"Yes."

"A certain number of fixtures will be arranged, and the winners play one another till only one is left, what?" said Mr. Bunter.

"These details can be settled. Only junior elevens, of course, will compete. Are you in the Remove eleven, William?"

"Not—not as a regular member," murmured Bunter.

"That is not as it should be," said Mr. Bunter, frowning. "I shall make it a condition that you play in each match."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

"If that condition is not agreed to, I shall not bestow the Cup!" said Mr. Bunter firmly.

Billy Bunter's eyes twinkled behind his big spectacles. It was clear that Mr. William Samuel Bunter did not know much about the great game of Soccer or the rules governing Cup competitions. Nevertheless, a handsome silver cup costing fifty guineas would be a trophy worth struggling for; the Remove fellows were certain to be very keen about it.

"Jolly good idea!" said Bunter, heartily.

"Make it a condition, and they can't possibly leave out the best junior footballer at Greyfriars. And if I play in all the ties, that means, of course, that the Cup will stay in the Remove—we're bound to win."

"Then let us arrange the details," said Mr. Bunter cheerfully.

And they proceeded to the arrangement of details.

By the time the big Rolls-Royce bore Mr. William Samuel Bunter away from Greyfriars all details had been arranged. And William George Bunter, of the Remove, seemed to be walking on air as he came in after seeing his father off. At long last, Bunter the footballer was to shine in the public eye, and to take his rightful place as the champion exponent of the great game—by means of the peculiar conditions governing the competition for the Bunter Cup!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

Bunter in the Llmellight!

"CHEEK!"

"Awful cheek!"

"The cheekfulness is terrific!"

"Rot!"

"Bosh!"

Quite a number of comments were made by the Remove fellows who stared at the notice on the board, a week or so after Mr. Bunter's visit to Greyfriars.

The notice was written in the sprawling hand of Billy Bunter, and it was couched in Bunter's own original variety of spelling. And it ran:

NOTIS!

THE BUNTER CUP!

A Meeting of the Remove Football Club is called for 7 p.m. this evening, to diskuss the abuve. W. G. Bunter will make an announce-meant. The hansom silver cup presented by Mr. Bunter will be on vue in the form-room.

Sined,

W. G. Bunter."

"Bunter—calling a meeting!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith. "Bunter—calling a meeting of the football club! Who ever heard of such cheek?"

"What's this rot about a Bunter Cup?" said Harry Wharton, puzzled. "There isn't such a cup."

"Never heard of it," grinned Bob Cherry.

"You heard anything of it, Toddy? You're his keeper, you know."

Peter Todd looked perplexed.

"Bunter's been gassing some stuff in the study about his father founding a Cup competition," he said. "I thought it was his usual rot."

"I suppose it is," said Harry.

"I don't know, though," remarked the Bounder, with a grin. "Old man Bunter seems to be rolling in wealth these days. Perhaps he's going to spread himself in the form of a Challenge Cup. Wharton's uncle put up a cup to be played for once."

"That's so," assented Harry, "but——"

"It's all right," said Skinner, joining the group. "The genuine goods, my sons. Old Bunter——"

"Billy Bunter, do you mean?"

"Yes. Old Bunter's told me all about it. I've seen the Cup."

"You've seen it, Skinner?" exclaimed a dozen voices.

"Seen it!" assured Skinner. "It's the genuine article, and it never cost less than fifty pounds."

"Great pip!"

"Pulling our leg?" asked Bob Cherry suspiciously.

"Not at all; it's the goods," said Skinner.

"You'd better turn up to the meeting, if you want a chance at the Cup. Bunter's got the whole thing in his hands, and if the Remove don't take it on, he's going to put it up to Temple of the Fourth. You know that Temple and Co. claim to be the official junior eleven of Greyfriars——"

"Which is rot!" said Bob.

"Well, I fancy they'll take on Bunter and his Cup, if the Remove turn him down," grinned Skinner. "You don't pick up a fifty-quid silver cup on every bush, you know."

"We'll go to the meeting, and hear what the fat duffer has to say, anyhow," said Wharton, greatly astonished. "But if Mr. Bunter is offering a Cup, this isn't the way."

"It's the Bunter way, though," said Skinner. "Bunter's looking after himself."

"Dash it all, if Mr. Bunter's putting up a decent Cup, it's jolly good of him," said Bob Cherry. "I shouldn't have thought

he took much interest in tooter. We'll give the Owl a chance to explain, anyhow."

"Yes, rather," assented Nugent.

"The ratherfulness is terrific," concurred Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But as for the Cup, the seefulness is the believefulness."

Before seven o'clock, most of the Remove had arrived in the form-room. By that time, the news of Bunter's Cup was known far and wide, and there was general curiosity on the subject. It was agreed on all hands that it was like Bunter's "cheek" to call the meeting;

nevertheless, there were very few fellows in the Remove who thought of missing it. Bunter was getting his full share now of the limelight that he loved.

Seven was tolling from the clock-tower when the Famous Five arrived in the form-room.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" boomed Bob Cherry. "Where's Bunter?"

"Not turned up yet," said Peter Todd. "I left him in the study, giving the final touches to his speech."

"My hat! Is he making a speech?"

"We're not bound to hear it," grinned Ogilvy. "I've brought an old apple for Bunter, if he's pulling our legs. I shall let him have it on the boko."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where's the jolly old Cup?" asked Johnny Bull. "The notice says it's to be on view in the form-room."

"Not on view yet," said Harry.

"All gammon, I fancy!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Well, Bunter generally hands out gammon," said the captain of the Remove thoughtfully. "But I fancy there must be something in it this time. Skinner says he's seen the Cup."

"Anyhow, it's time he was here, as he said seven in the notice," said Vernon-Smith. "Dash it all, it's like his cheek to call a meeting at all—and to keep the meeting waiting is too thick."

"If it's all spooft, we'll give him the ragging of his life," remarked Squiff.

"Hear, hear!"

Nearly all the Remove were in the form-room by this time, but there was as yet no sign of Billy Bunter. Either the Owl of the Remove had not yet finished composing his speech to his satisfaction, or he was impressing his importance on the Remove by keeping them waiting.

"Let's go to his study and have him out,"



There was a general grin when Billy Bunter rolled on to the field. Bunter's football rig was amply planned, but he looked as if the least exertion would cause him to burst out of it! (See Chapter 9)

suggested Tom Brown, at last.

"Good egg!"

"Give him till a quarter past," said Harry Wharton. "After that, we'll fetch him out by the neck!"

So the juniors waited. It was a quarter after the hour, when the form-room door was opened, and there was a general shout:

"Here he is!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's Bunter!"

"Roll in, old tub!"

Billy Bunter had arrived.

The fat junior came into the form-room with his fat little nose high in the air. He

rather strutted than walked, and the Removites grinned as they watched him. Bunter, in his new sense of consequence, was swelling like the frog in the fable.

"You've kept us waiting, Bunter!" hooted Hazeldene.

"Have I!" said Bunter carelessly.

"Yes, you have, you fat bounder!"

"That's all right—you can wait!" said Bunter coolly. "Why the dickens shouldn't you wait?"

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Hazel, quite taken aback by that reply.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bunter's going strong!" grinned Bob Cherry.

Skinner and Snoop were following Bunter into the form-room. In the sunshine of Bunter's new prosperity, Skinner and Snoop had become his loyal friends and followers; they were prepared to do anything to oblige "old Bunter." They bore into the Remove room a large object covered by a cloth—upon which all eyes were immediately fixed.

"Put it on Quelch's desk," said Bunter.

The object, with the cloth still over it, was placed upon the form-master's desk. Billy Bunter blinked round at the curious and interested crowd, and waved a fat hand.

"Show it up!" he said.

Skinner jerked off the cover. There was a gleam of silver in the light. The Bunter Cup was revealed to the surprised gaze of the Removites.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

A Cup Competition on New Lines!

"THE Cup!"
"Phew!"
"My hat!"

It was a handsome Cup! It was an expensive Cup! That much could be seen at a glance. It was a Cup that it was worth any club's while to compete for.

Mr. Bunter had done it, and done it well! Undoubtedly the plump gentleman had drawn quite a large cheque for that Cup.

The Remove fellows stared at it. There was admiration and astonishment on all sides. Billy Bunter blinked round him, enjoying the sensation he had caused.

"So that's the Cup!" exclaimed Wharton, at last.

"That's it!" said Bunter.

"The Bunter Cup!" said Skinner impressively. "Presented by Mr. Bunter, through his son, my pal Billy."

"Three cheers for Bunter!" exclaimed Snoop.

"Lots of time for the cheers, when we know what it's all about," said Bob Cherry. "Suppose you explain, Bunter."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Speech!" shouted Skinner.

"Go it, Bunter!"

Skinner pulled forward a chair, and Billy Bunter mounted on it. From that commanding position the Owl of the Remove blinked over the assembly through his big spectacles. All eyes were fixed on him, and William George Bunter was enjoying life at that moment.

"Gentlemen——"

"Hear, hear!" from Skinner.

"Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows!" said Bunter. "You see before you the Bunter Cup! This Cup cost——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It cost——"

"Leave out the costfulness, my esteemed Bunter."

"It cost fifty guineas!" roared Bunter, evidently resolved not to leave out that important item. "And I'd jolly well like to see any other chap's pater hand out a Cup costing fifty guineas!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. This Cup cost fifty guineas. It's worth it! It's a jolly good Cup!"

"The Cup's all right, old chap," said Bob Cherry. "Get on with the washing!"

"The Cup is presented by William Samuel Bunter, Esquire, of Bunter Court, to be competed for by junior elevens at Greyfriars," said Bunter, referring to a crumpled paper in his fat hand—evidently the notes of his speech.

"Hear, hear!"

"The Cup will be placed in charge of the Head, who will present it to the winning team after the final tie."

"Good!"

"Certain conditions have been laid down governing the Cup competition. These conditions will have to be agreed to."

"That's all right."

"First condition—three matches will be played for the Cup——"

"Three!" ejaculated Wharton.

"Three!" said Bunter firmly. "The Remove eleven will play Highcliffe, Rookwood, and St. Jim's, in turn, for the Cup!"

"My hat!"

"But—but——"

"Second condition—the matches will be played on the Greyfriars ground, arrangements being made accordingly with the competing teams."

"B-b-b-but——"

"Third condition, the best players available will be selected for the Remove, including the best junior footballer at Greyfriars—W. G. Bunter!"

"What!"

"Phew!"

"Great Scott!"

"That is the most important condition," said Bunter, blinking at the astonished Removes. "Without that the whole thing is off."

"You cheeky porpoise!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull——"

"What a neck!" gasped the Bounder.

"Oh, really, Smithy——"

"The neckfulness is terrific!"

"But you can't play footer, old man!" said Harry Wharton, staring blankly at the self-satisfied Owl of the Remove.

"I didn't come here to listen to your cheek, Wharton."

"Wha-a-at?"

"Quite right," said Skinner. "Stand up to him, Bunter!"

"You silly ass, Skinner——"

"If a fellow stands a Cup," said Snoop, "a fellow has a right to play for the Cup, I should think. Stick to it, Bunter."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dates will be arranged for the three matches, and all that," said Bunter, glancing at his paper again. "These details will be left to Nugent as secretary. The conditions

being officially accepted by the Remove Football Club, the competition will be arranged forthwith."

"But——" stuttered Wharton.

"In the event of the Remove Club declining to accept the conditions, the same offer will be made to the Fourth Form Club," went on Bunter.

"Oh, rats!"

"But——" yelled Wharton.

"I'm willing to discuss the matter," said Bunter, with dignity, "so long as I'm not asked to alter the conditions. I'm open to argument."

"But look here," exclaimed the captain of the Remove. "If we're to play Highcliffe, Rookwood, and St. Jim's in turn for the Cup——"

"That's right."

"Suppose we lose the first match. Then the Cup goes to Highcliffe, and the other two matches won't come off."

"That's impossible."

"How?"

"I shall be playing for the Remove."

"Wha-a-at?"

"I don't want to brag about my footer——"

"Brag about it!" said Wharton dazedly.

"Brag about your footer! It's not a thing to be bragged of, I should think."

"I don't want to brag about it, as I say; but it's no good denying the fact that I play the game better than any other Lower School chap at Greyfriars."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"With me in the team, every match will be practically a walk-over——"

"Oh, dear!"

"The arrangements are made for the Remove to keep the Cup, you see," explained Bunter.

"Keep it?"

"Yes—three wins, and the Cup remains in the Remove."

"Three wins—with you playing every time?"

"Yes—three dead certs."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Remove room rang with laughter. Even Skinner and Snoop grinned. Whether

the Remove eleven could beat their rivals, with Bunter as a passenger in the team, was a problem. But it was quite certain that Bunter would not be a help but a handicap. That was quite clear to everybody but William George Bunter.

"Order!" hooted Bunter. "Give a chap a chance to speak!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Bunter!"

"Gentlemen, the conditions have been stated. If these conditions are agreed to, the Bunter Cup will be competed for by the Remove Club. If they are not agreed to, the Remove Club can go and eat cake!"

"But—"
"The butfulness is terrific!"

"The conditions are simply idiotic!" said Harry Wharton.

"Who ever heard of a Cup competition on those lines?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Possibly not," said Bunter coolly. "But there are the conditions, and you can take them or leave them. The Cup's worth fighting for."

"That's so. But—"

"But we couldn't beat St. Jim's with you in the team, Bunter!" urged Peter Todd.

"Don't be cheeky, Toddy! You couldn't beat St. Jim's without me in the team."

"Oh, dear!"

"The Remove Club can take it or leave

it!" said Bunter loftily. "This Cup won't go begging, I can tell you."

"But—"

"You'd better hold a committee meeting and talk it over," said Bunter. "Let me know what you decide to-morrow. But it's no good talking to me—the conditions are fixed."

And with that Billy Bunter stepped down from his rostrum. The meeting in the form-room broke up; and that evening there was only one topic in the Greyfriars' Remove—the football Cup offered by Mr. Bunter.

Harry Wharton and Co. discussed, and again discussed, the Bunter Cup and the peculiar conditions attached thereto. For a couple of days the matter remained undecided. In the meantime, a great deal of argument was wasted on Bunter. It was a



Bunter kicked, and dropped the ball right into the press of players in front of the home goal. There was a tussle, and the ball came out right for the goal. "There!" gasped Bunter, obviously pleased with himself (See Chapter 10)

sheer waste; Bunter was adamant.

He explained with perfect coolness that the whole thing was planned to give him his rightful show in the games. For that reason he was to be played in every match; for that reason he had selected St. Jim's, Rookwood, and Highcliff—those schools being the important fixtures. In the regular fixtures with the three, Bunter had no more chance of being played than had the man in the moon. But he was determined to play St. Jim's, to

play Rookwood, and to play Highcliffe. That his assistance would probably lose the first match, and so prevent the others from coming off at all, was an argument that did not worry Bunter. He simply couldn't see it.

No doubt three extra matches could be fixed up with the three schools. No doubt Tom Merry of St. Jim's, Jimmy Silver of Rookwood, and Courtenay of Highcliffe, would be quite keen to play the Remove for such a prize as the silver challenge cup. That was not the difficulty—the difficulty was that the Remove players had to go into the matches carrying Bunter on their backs, as it were.

To face keen footballers, with such a flaw in their armour, was a serious matter.

Bunter regarded himself as a tower of strength in any team; but Bunter was quite alone in so regarding himself.

But as the Owl of the Remove declined to listen to reason, the matter simply came to this: to accept the offer as it stood, or to refuse it. And when it came to that, there seemed no special reason for refusing it. With luck—and there is a great deal of luck in the Soccer game—the Remove might win the matches, even with Bunter on their backs. Every other member of the eleven should be in top-hole form—Bunter could be placed where he would do least damage—the thing might be pulled off. At the worst, if the Remove failed to win under such a handicap, they would be no worse off than if they refused to enter the competition at all.

On these grounds, Harry Wharton, after a great deal of thought and discussion, counselled accepting the offer as it stood.

"We shall be up against it," said the captain of the Remove. "With Bunter in the team, it's a heavy handicap. But we're in great form—we've got some really good men—we may pull it off even with a passenger in the team."

"We may!" assented Bob Cherry.

"Bunter's a silly ass, of course!"

"A crass ass!" said Nugent.

"A conceited dummy!" said Johnny Bull.

"The crassfulness of the execrable Bunter is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Notwithstanding, I think we should accept the esteemed and idiotic offer."

"And it's a jolly good Cup!" said Bob. "No doubt about that—a jolly good Cup," said Vernon-Smith. "And if we pull it off, with a fat fool like Bunter in the team, it will show that we're great footballers."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's settled, then?" said Harry Wharton, at last.

"Settled!" assented the rest.

"Then Nugent had better write to Tom Merry and Jimmy Silver," said Wharton. "We can go over and see Courtenay about it, as Highcliffe is near us. We can fix up the matches easily enough, though goodness knows what they'll think when they see Bunter in the team! I'm pretty sure they'll like to go in for the Cup, anyhow."

The decision was conveyed to Billy Bunter. He received it with lofty dignity.

"You've done the sensible thing," he said. "I'm glad to see that you're not such an ass as I supposed, Wharton."

"Hem!"

"The Head's taken charge of the Cup," said Bunter. "He's going to present it to us in Big Hall after the last tie."

"Or to Highcliffe after the first," said Harry.

"Oh, that's rot! We shall beat Highcliffe. I think it's very probable that I shall put the ball in four or five times."

"Into which goal?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah!" was Bunter's elegant and crushing rejoinder.

The Cup competition being settled, Nugent, as secretary, proceeded to fix up the arrangements. A reply was soon received from Tom Merry, at St. Jim's, cheerily assenting. The date was soon fixed. The answer from Rookwood was also quite satisfactory. Jimmy Silver and Co., undoubtedly, were surprised to hear about the Cup, but they were quite keen to come over to Greyfriars and annex it.

Highcliffe School being in the vicinity of Greyfriars, the Famous Five rode over on their bicycles to see Frank Courtenay about the matter. In Courtenay's study they told the whole story of the Bunter Cup, and Courtenay and his chum the Caterpillar roared.

"Dear old Bunter!" said the Caterpillar. "It's generous of him. We've bagged some pots and things since Franky became junior captain at Highcliffe, but we've room for another on the giddy old oak shelf. It's quite kind of Bunter to stand us this silver Cup."

"You haven't won it yet, you know," reminded Bob Cherry.

De Courcy nodded.

"Not yet," he agreed. "When's the date?"

"We've got a vacant date next Saturday, Wharton, if that will suit you!" said Frank Courtenay, with a smile.

"That's all right."

"Then it's goin' to be on Saturday," said the Caterpillar. "Saturday evenin' we'll be swankin' about Highcliffe with that Cup. Give Bunter our best thanks in advance."

Harry Wharton and Co. rode home from Highcliffe, leaving, as they knew, a conviction behind them that the Bunter Cup would soon be standing with other trophies won by Courtenay's team. But that knowledge had rather the effect of putting up the backs of the Remove fellows. They determined that somehow or other, by sheer hard play and resolution, they would beat Highcliffe, even with the egregious Bunter in the team.

"We've got to do it," said Bob Cherry. "It's practically playing ten men against eleven. Well, ten of Greyfriars are worth eleven of any other school—what?"

"Hear, hear!" grinned Nugent.

"Let us hope so, at least," said Harry Wharton. "At any rate, we'll do our level best to keep the cup in the Remove, Bunter or no Bunter."

"And he might fall ill!" suggested Johnny Bull hopefully.

"Ha, ha! No such luck."

"Anyhow, we'll keep the fat bounder hard at practice, and see if we can ram the rudiments of the game into him," said Bob. "Even Bunter's brain ought to be able, with plenty of tuition, to grasp the difference between a goal and a goalpost!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the following day, when the Remove fellows went down to Little Side for games practice, Bob Cherry looked for Bunter. If

The Greyfriars MASTERS' GALLERY



No. 1.—THE HEAD

HATS off to worthy Dr. Locke!
Far famed for deeds scholastic;
Although we oft receive a shock
When punishments are drastic,
We all admit that, as a rule,
Our Head is kind and lenient;
The merry japers in the school
All find it most convenient.

Attired in gown and mortar-board
The Head's a fearsome figure;
He wields the cane just like a sword,
With energy and vigour.
But only deeds of deepest dye
Receive such castigations;
The victim's voice is shrill and high,
And loud his lamentations.

The Head is growing old and grey,
Though still alert and ciever;
For Heads of schools don't fade away,
They seem to live for ever.
Like Gosling, keeper of the gate,
The Head is hale and hearty,
And he will never join, they state,
The "old-at-seventy" party

We would not wish a worthier man
To reign in justice o'er us;
"Find his superior if you can!"
The fellows chant in chorus.
Long may "His Reverence" reign and rule
In wisdom and in honour;
To bring fresh fame to Greyfriars School
And shed new lustre on her.



Bunter, in a breathless state, was reposing on the earth, gazing at the sky, seeing more stars there in the daytime than any astronomer ever saw there by night! (See Chapter 14)

Bunter was going to play for the Remove, Bunter was going to be as fit as possible. That was not much to ask, in Bob's opinion. But it appeared that, in Bunter's opinion, it was much too much to ask.

"Come on, fatty," said Bob; "jump into your things. Footer practice."

Billy Bunter blinked at him from the comfortable depths of the armchair in No. 7 Study.

"Football practice!" he repeated.

"Just that. Come on!"

"That's all right. I'm not coming."

"You jolly well are!" exclaimed Bob warmly. "Aren't you sticking to playing against Highcliffe on Saturday?"

"You bet!"

"Then you're jolly well going to put in

steady practice every day from now to Saturday!"

"Rot!"

"Look here, Bunter!" roared Bob.

Bunter waved a fat hand at him.

"You see, it's like this," he condescended to explain. "You fellows stick to practice; that's all right. You need it; I don't. And that makes all the difference. See?"

"I see," assented Bob. "Are you ready?"

"Don't I keep on telling you I'm not coming?" hooted Bunter.

"Your mistake; you are!"

Bob Cherry laid wrathful hands on the back of the chair and tilted it forward. There was a bump as William George Bunter rolled out on the carpet.

"Whoop! Beast!"

"Coming now?" grinned Bob.

"Ow! No! Wow!"

An iron grip fastened on the back of Bunter's collar.

"Ow! Ow! Leggo!"

"Please yourself," said Bob. "I'm simply going to knock your head on the wall till you come—like that."

"Yaroo!"

"And like that."

"Oooop!"

"And that."

"Stop it!" shrieked Bunter. "I'm coming, ain't I? I'm coming as fast as I can. You beast! Ow!"

And Bunter came.

THE NINTH CHAPTER

The Match with Highlife!

HARRY WHARTON wore a somewhat worried look on Saturday morning.

That afternoon was to be played the first tie in the Bunter Cup competition, with Billy Bunter in the Remove eleven, and Wharton simply could not help feeling worried.

Bob Cherry's energetic methods had kept Bunter hard at practice during the week. Certainly he had improved. He could run three yards without gasping, four without sitting down to take a rest. He could kick a Soccer ball without missing it, if the ball lay quite still and nobody bothered him. This was an improvement on Bunter's customary form, but it could not be said that it entitled him to play Highlife on his merits.

Harry Wharton had hoped, perhaps, for further improvements. He was prepared to take any amount of trouble coaching Bunter and helping him on, since the eleven was landed with him; but the trouble was that Bunter couldn't, or wouldn't, see that there was any room for improvement.

Such as he was, he was quite satisfied with himself, and he did not conceal his opinion that he was the only really first-class man in the team.

On Saturday, Bunter looked very bright and cheery, in contrast to the captain of the Remove. He had no doubts about the after-

noon—not Bunter! He did not even doubt that the Bunter Cup would remain at Greyfriars. With Bunter in the team, victory was a foregone conclusion; that was how he looked at it. Highlife were simply coming over to afford Bunter an opportunity of showing what a masterly player he was. If Bunter had any doubts, it was about his fellow-players. Still, even with those duds, as he cheerfully called them, in the team, he did not doubt his ability to pull the game out of the fire.

"Not too much of your barging about, Cherry," he said to Bob, after dinner on Saturday.

Bob gave him a basilisk look.

The Owl of the Remove did not even see it, however, and he rattled on cheerfully:

"You're a bit of a bargee on the footer field, you know. You don't mind my mentioning it, do you?"

"You fat ass!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! And you be a bit careful with your passing, Inky. Your passing is a bit wild."

"My esteemed fatheaded Bunter——" murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Lucky you're not in the team, Nugent! I couldn't have agreed to a dud like you being put in!"

"Fathead!"

"Oh, really, Nugent! By the way, none of your skylarking at back, Bull! Take the game seriously!"

Johnny Bull breathed hard.

"As for you, Wharton——"

"Not quite satisfied with me?" asked the captain of the Remove, with deep sarcasm.

Bunter shook his head.

"Not quite! You take rather too much of the game on yourself! Keep your eye on me and play up to me! That's the idea."

"Oh, my hat!" said Wharton.

"As for you, Smithy——"

"Do you want your silly, fat nose knocked through the back of your silly fat head?" asked the Bounder pleasantly. "If not, don't give me any chin!"

"Oh, really, Smithy——"

"Dry up, Bunter!"

"I think I ought to warn you, Toddy,

to keep in your place in the half-way line. Don't barge into the forwards."

Peter Todd drew back his foot, apparently with the intention of acknowledging this good advice with his boot. Bunter rolled hastily away, and made no more criticisms.

"What's a fellow to do with such a born dummy?" said Harry Wharton. "I begin to think we were rather asses to take on this Cup business at all. Still, we're in for it now, and there's a lot of uncertainty in footer. Let's get down to the ground."

There was already a crowd on Little Side. Most of the Remove fellows who were not in the team intended to witness the game. Temple Dabney and Co. of the Fourth came along, too, and some of the Third and Second, interested in the first tie for the Bunter Cup.

There was a general grin when Billy Bunter rolled into the field in a glaring shirt of blue hoops. Bunter meant that he should not be missed—that everybody at Greyfriars should recognise the junior who was playing the best game. He needn't have troubled! Bunter's football rig was amply and widely planned, but he looked as if the least exertion might cause him to burst out of it.

Apart from Bunter, the Remove team was a strong one. Harry Wharton had selected it with the greatest care, and every man he had picked was at the top of his form.

Hazeldene was in goal; Johnny Bull and Mark Linley were the backs; Peter Todd and Tom Brown at half, with Bunter; and the front line was a powerful one—Bob Cherry, Hurrey Jamset Ram Singh, Harry Wharton, Herbert Vernon-Smith, and Dick Penfold. But for Bunter's presence in the team, Bob would have played at half, and Nugent would have been in the front line. But with the valuable addition of Bunter, there was no room for Nugent, and Bob was almost as good a forward as a half. For goal, it had been a toss-up between Hazel and Squiff; but the latter was not at his best, and Hazel was in great form.

Harry Wharton felt that he had reason to be satisfied with his team, with the one awful exception. How that exception was to tell in the match remained to be seen.

(Continued on page 81.)

GREYFRIARS IN "THE GOOD OLD DAYS"

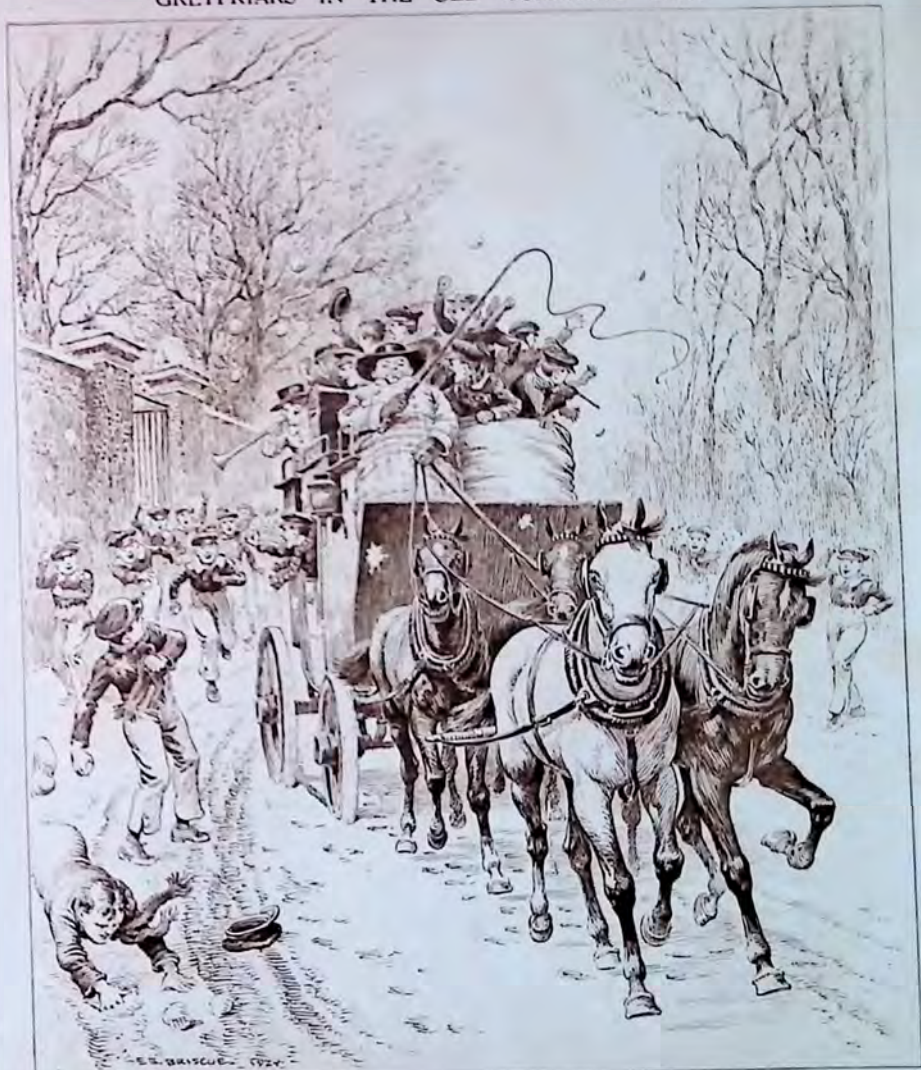
THE jolly picture which you see opposite gives a splendid impression of Braking-up Day at Greyfriars, a hundred years ago.

The old-fashioned "coach-and-four," at which we smile in these days of swift cars and char-a-bancs, is laden with a merry party of Greyfriars juniors, about to start off for the Christmas Vacation. Members of a rival Form have come dashing out of the gates in order to "see them off," which they proceed to do very effectively by firing a volley of snowballs at the coach party. The air is thick with the round white missiles; and we should imagine there were some "compliments" flying around, apart from the usual compliments of the season! One of the inside passengers is seen leaning from the coach, flourishing his fist at the enemy, and exclaiming, "Wait till next term, you cheeky varlets! We'll get our own back then!"

The plump little coachman, heeding nothing of the clamour—he is doubtless well accustomed to such scenes—is flicking his steeds into action, and the coach rumbles away on its journey. Its destination is not Friardale railway station—which was non-existent in those days—but London. The boys on board all have their homes in the metropolis. Those who live elsewhere will have to wait until their respective coaches come along. One does not envy those who happen to live in the Far North. They will spend several days and nights on the road; but what with their being buried in snow-drifts, and having possible encounters with highwaymen, there will be no lack of excitement for them! The London coach, which we see in the picture, will reach its destination the same day, barring accidents.

Whether "the good old days" were really so grand and thrilling as the writers of historical romances would have us believe, is open to question. But we may be certain that the Greyfriars boys of that generation enjoyed more than one "crowded hour of glorious life," and plunged into the Christmas festivities with all the enthusiasm and whole-heartedness of the boys of to-day.

GREYFRIARS IN THE OLD COACHING DAYS



To face page 80

BREAKING UP FOR THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here come Highcliffe!" sang out Bob Cherry.

The Highcliffe brake had arrived. For reasons best known to themselves, the Highcliffians smiled when they observed Billy Bunter on the field with the Remove footballers.

Bunter rolled hurriedly to Wharton while the captain of the Remove was speaking to Courtenay.

"There's still time, old chap——"

"Eh? What?"

"I've told you several times that I'm best as centre-forward——"

"Oh, dry up, Bunter!"

"It means making a cert of it, you know."

"Do cheese it!" urged Wharton.

"Oh, really, you know——"

"Hallo! It's jolly old Bunter!" smiled the Caterpillar. "So kind of you, Bunter!"

The Owl of the Remove blinked at him.

"What's kind of me?" he asked.

"Givin' us that jolly old Cup!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you cheeky ass——" said Bunter warmly.

"Shut up, Bunter!" shouted two or three voices.

"Get into the field."

Wingate of the Sixth had kindly consented to referee the first tie. The big, broad-shouldered captain of Greyfriars came into the field, and the footballers prepared for business. Frank Courtenay won the toss, and gave the Remove the wind to kick off against. The ball rolled, and the game started.

"Now look out for a jolly old circus!" said Temple of the Fourth to his comrades.

"Watch Bunter. Bunter's worth watchin'!"

And the Greyfriars' fellows grinned, and watched Bunter.

Cecil Reginald Temple was undoubtedly right; he was worth watching.

THE TENTH CHAPTER

The First Half!

HIGHCLIFFE came up the field with the wind behind them, and there was a hot attack on the home goal to begin with. As a rule, the Remove half-way line

was difficult to get through—but though centre-half and left were in great form, there was a weak spot—occupied by William George Bunter. That weak spot gave the enemy the opening they wanted, and the Highcliffe forwards left Bunter gasping on his back as they ran down on goal.

Johnny Bull and Mark Linley defended well; but Courtenay came through with the ball, and he passed to the Caterpillar as he was tackled. Rupert de Courcy sent the leather whizzing in, and there was a gasp round the field. But Hazel, in goal, was equal to the shot; his fist met the ball, and sent it whizzing back. Courtenay's foot was ready for it, and the ball shot forward, but fortunately—for the Remove—struck the cross-bar and rebounded. It was a narrow escape, and the backs rushed to clear. Mark Linley lifted the leather out of the press, and a fat figure in blue and white, scrambling up, spotted and rushed for it. Bunter could have sent it tearing right up the field—but it did not seem to occur to his powerful brain that it was necessary to speed the ball in any special direction. He kicked, and dropped the ball right into the press of players in front of the home goal.

"There!" gasped Bunter, obviously pleased with his performance.

So were the Highcliffians.

There was a tussle for the ball, and it came out of the tussle like a pip from an orange, right for the goal. Hazel did not succeed in stopping it this time, and it landed.

"Goal!" chirruped Highcliffe.

Smithson, who had taken the goal for Highcliffe, grinned.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Temple of the Fourth.

"Some game!" remarked Fry.

"Oh, rather!" chuckled Dabney.

"Goal!"

Billy Bunter blinked in scorn at his hapless comrades as they lined up again.

"I say, you fellows, this won't do!" he said.

"Won't it?" gasped Bob Cherry.

"It won't! You'll have to play up a bit better than that! What's the good of my taking the trouble to play up, if you

fellows are going to muck up the game in that style?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Practically giving away the Cup," said Bunter. "For goodness' sake, pull yourselves together. Keep an eye on me."

"Kill him, somebody!" gasped Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Line up!"

The game went on, and the Greyfriars' men attacked.

With the struggle in the visitors' half, Bunter was not able to do so much damage—he was always hopelessly behind. And fortune smiled on the Removeites—there was a brilliant goal from Harry Wharton, and the score was equal.

By that time, Harry had realised that, good as the Highcliffe men were, his own team out-classed them—with one terrible exception. The usual Remove side would have won—with a struggle; but they could have counted on a win. But for that un-

happy flaw in their armour, Harry Wharton and Co. could have considered the Cup a safe thing so far as Highcliffe were concerned. Unfortunately, there was Bunter to be reckoned with, and Bunter was not in the least inclined to be a quiet passenger. If only he would have slacked through the game it would have been something. But Bunter, imbued with the firm belief that victory depended almost entirely upon himself, was bucking up amazingly.

By the time the whistle went for the interval, Bunter had distinguished himself—there was no doubt about that. He had charged Wharton over in the act of kicking for goal, thereby depriving his side of a certain score; he had stumbled over Mark Linley and landed with his whole terrific weight on that unfortunate youth, nearly flattening Mark into the shape of a pancake; he had landed a kick on Bob Cherry's ankle, and sent

poor Bob limping away almost crippled. He had done other things, but these were his chief performances.

The score was level at half-time, and ten members of the Remove eleven were longing to suffocate Bunter.

The Caterpillar grinned breathlessly as he sucked a lemon.

"We're lucky, Franky," he said to Courtenay. "They're above our weight, these merry men of Greyfriars; and if Bunter wasn't helpin' us in that thorough-goin' way—"

Courtenay laughed.

"They're in great form," he admitted.

"Especially Bunter!" said the Caterpillar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What kindness of heart!" murmured De Courcy. "Standin' a Cup, and playin' up hard for the other side. We must bag that Cup, Franky, if only to show Bunter that we're grateful for his generous help."

Meanwhile, Harry Wharton was having a heart-to-heart talk with William George Bunter.



There was quite a peculiar expression on Vernon-Smith's face as he watched the sleeping beauty. "If only he'd keep like that until after the Rookwood match!" said Smithy (See chapter 13)

"You crass ass——" he began.

"Cut it out!" said Bunter.

"You charged me——"

"You barged in my way, you mean——"

"You fat villain!" hissed Bob Cherry.

"You prevented a certain goal by butting into Wharton."

"I should have kicked that goal if Wharton hadn't blundered in my way like a clumsy ass!" said Bunter calmly. "That's one off our score, owing to Wharton and his clumsiness. I really must say that it's time Wharton learned to play footer."

"You must be more careful, Bunter," gasped Wharton. "Keep in your place——"

"My place is where I am needed."

"We don't want a half charging at the Highcliffe goal, and butting forwards out of the way!" shrieked Wharton.

Bunter nodded.

"You may not want it," he assented. "I understand that. But you need it. I'm going to win this game, if it's possible to win with a crowd of duds getting in my way. I'm not risking the Cup just to let you sky the ball for fluff, Wharton. I must say that I never saw such a rotten lot of footballers—never. But rely on me to pull the game out of the fire."

"You—you—you——"

"Cheese it, old chap; keep your breath for the game. You're not much good, but you may as well do your best—such as it is."

"No good talking to him," said Johnny Bull. "One of us had better lay him out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I don't think it's the only way," growled Wharton.

"Oh, really, you know——"

"Bunter, do try to have a little sense," urged the captain of the Remove. "Just keep in your place, don't try to show off; leave the game to us——"

"Likely, isn't it?" grinned Bunter. "And what about the Cup?"

"We want to save the Cup, you fathead."

"Only you can't do it," said Bunter. "That depends entirely on me, as you'd see if you weren't blinded by conceit, Wharton."

"Oh, dear!"

"Now, I'll give you a tip," said Bunter, blinking at the infuriated footballers. "Leave

the game to me. Keep round me and watch me, but give me plenty of room. Play up to me. Play second fiddle yourselves, and let me win. See?"

It was fortunate, perhaps, that the call of time came, or something like manslaughter might have happened on Little Side at Greyfriars.

The teams lined up again, and Billy Bunter, pumped, almost breathless, but still determined to distinguish himself, looked, like Alexander, for fresh worlds to conquer.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER

The Second Half!

"PLAY up, Bunter!"

"On the ball!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Temple of the Fourth wiped his eyes.

"Isn't this too good to be true?" he appealed to Fry and Dabney. "Jevver see anythin' like it off a comic film? Why, that fellow Bunter is a prize packet; he's worth his weight in postal-orders; he's worth a guinea a box!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Bunter!" yelled the Fourth-form fellows.

Bunter was going it.

His late attention to football practice had done him good—it was turning out too well, in fact. It would have been fortunate for the Remove had Bunter collapsed into a breathless state, and had to be assisted off the field. That would have been a stroke of great fortune. But the Owl of the Remove was displaying unusual endurance. True, he took a good many rests. Much of his time was spent in lying on his back, gazing dizzily at the blue sky. Many minutes he spent sitting down; many more, in looking for his spectacles.

But he found time enough, and energy enough to play a game that made the spectators howl.

Exactly where he was not wanted, there Bunter was sure to be. If he kicked the ball and hit it with his elephantine foot, he was sure to land it just where the enemy wanted it. If he kicked it and missed it, he was sure to land a kick on an ankle or a knee belonging

to a fellow-player. It was, indeed, wonderful that any fellow could play football quite so badly as William George Bunter played it. Really it amounted almost to genius.

Even when he fell down—which was the most useful thing he could do for his side—he was sure to fall down in somebody's way, in the most awkward place possible. And if a fellow was down, Bunter was certain to plump over him, and knock out what breath remained in the hapless victim.

The Remove fellows soon fell into the way of shouldering Bunter ruthlessly aside, careless of what happened to him. But it was rather a handicap to have to play Bunter and the Highcliffians as well. And Bunter was not to be shouldered away with impunity. He would rise in wrath and charge—and a charge with Bunter's weight behind it was like unto the charge of a particularly hefty battering-ram.

More and more during the second half it became clear that the Removites, if not handicapped by Bunter, would have walked all over the Highcliffe team. As it was, they kept the enemy from scoring, and that was a great feat in the circumstances. They felt that if the game ended in a draw, it would be more to their credit than many previous victories.

Temple of the Fourth looked at his handsome gold watch.

"Five minutes to go!" he remarked. "Lots of time for Bunter to win the game for Highcliffe."

"Oh, rather," chuckled Dabney.

"Highcliffe ain't up to much form," said Fry sagely. "If they'd been anywhere near the Remove style, they'd have won hands down. Looks like a draw now."

Cecil Reginald chortled.

"What will it be like when they play St. Jim's—with Bunter?" he said.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If I were a bettin' chap," said Temple, "I'd back St. Jim's, or Rookwood either, to pile up ten goals to nil, with the fat duffer barging about the field."

"It's good-bye to the jolly old Cup, anyhow," said Fry. "Highcliffe may not bag it, perhaps: but the next match does it."

"And that's a shame—it's a good Cup, and ought to stay at Greyfriars," said Temple,

"If I were Wharton, I'd manage to boot that fat duffer out of the eleven."

"He can't: it's a giddy condition, laid down and agreed to. Bunter's wide—in more ways than one," chuckled Fry.

"There he goes!" roared Squiff. "Oh, look at that chump!"

"What a game!" chuckled Coker of the Fifth, who had been drawn to Little Side by the roars of laughter. "Jevver see the like?"

"Never!" said Potter and Greene of the Fifth together. And they roared.

The Removites were attacking hotly, and they had the Highcliffe defence fairly beaten, and in the last few minutes of the game Bunter, in a breathless state, had been reposing on the earth, gazing at the sky, seeing more stars there in the daytime than any astronomer ever saw there at night. But Bunter was not done with. Far from that! He sat up and pumped in breath, and blinked round him, and staggered to his feet. He set his glasses straight on his fat little nose, and charged into the fray.

Vernon-Smith was kicking for goal—and it was a fairly sure thing, for the Highcliffe goalie had slipped over and was down after punching out the ball. And right into Smith's back came Bunter like a charging bull.

Crash!

The Bounder very nearly shot into goal himself, under that terrific impact.

A Highcliffe back lifted the ball the next moment as the hapless Smith rolled over, and dropped it in midfield. Wharton ran to pick the Bounder up as the game swayed away.

"I'll slaughter him!" muttered Wharton. "I'll order him off, anyhow—I'll—I'll—"

"I say, you fellows, where's the ball?" squeaked Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a yell.

"Where's that ball—I say, where's my glasses—mind you don't treat on my glasses!" roared Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm going to kill him after the whistle's gone," said the Bounder ferociously. "He's nearly broken my back! Ow!"

"Come on!"

Vernon-Smith limped into the fray again.

Courtenay and Co. had carried the ball up to the home goal, but Johnny Bull sent it whizzing back with a tremendous kick.

Bob Cherry was on it in a moment more, and Bunter—regardless even of his spectacles—made a rush. Harry Wharton was just in time to give Bunter his shoulder, and the Owl of the Remove spun three yards away and collapsed.

"Kick!" roared the crowd.

Bob was taking the ball up the field, and Wingate was about to blow the whistle.

"Kick!"

And Bob Cherry kicked, a long shot, which by good fortune grazed the fingertips of the custodian and landed.

"Goal!"

It was a tremendous roar. On the very stroke of time Bob Cherry had landed the winning goal, in spite of Bunter and all his works.

Wharton clapped his elbow on the back.

"Bob, old man—good! Good! Good!"

"Hurray!"

"Bravo, Cherry!"

"Goal! Goal! Goal!"

"Well, my hat!" said Bob Cherry. "We've pulled it off! We've won a match with Bunter on our backs! Oh, my hat!"

"Goal! Goal!"

"Remove wins!" roared Nugent. "Bravo! Good old Bob!"

The whistle was hardly heard in the roar. Billy Bunter staggered up and blinked round him.

"That wasn't a fair charge!" he howled.

"Eh?"

"Referee—where's the referee! I claim a penalty!" howled Bunter. "Wingate—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly chump!" roared Wharton. "It wasn't a Highcliffe fellow—it was I who pushed you out of the way."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!"

"Well, I don't think I've ever seen a game like this before," said Wingate of the Sixth, laughing. "And I can't say that I want to see another like it."

"I say, you fellows, get going!" shouted Bunter.

"What?"

"Oh, the ball, you know," urged Bunter. Apparently the Owl of the Remove was unaware that the game was over.

"You burbling bandersnatch," gasped Johnny Bull. "It's over, and we've beaten Highcliffe."

Bunter blinked at him.

"Then we've won?"



The Owl of the Remove clasped both hands to his plump circumference and yelled. "I want the masters here! I want the Head! I want the doctor—I—Yaroooh!" he yelled (See chapter 13)

"Yes, yes!"

"I told you we should, with me in the team!" said Bunter.

"Oh, my hat!"

The Caterpillar came up to Billy Bunter with a whimsical smile on his face. He tapped the fat footballer on the shoulder.

"Sorry, Bunter, old man," he said.

"Eh! What?"

"Horrid disappointment for you," said the Caterpillar sympathetically.

"Eh! How?"

"You were intendin' to give us that Cup, and now we haven't bagged it," said the Caterpillar. "I assure you, old man, that I sympathise deeply with your disappointment."

Bunter blinked at him in perplexity.

"I wasn't intending to give you the Cup," he said. "What——"

"Oh, my mistake!" said the Caterpillar gracefully. "I thought, from your style of play, that you were."

And De Courcy walked off with Courtenay, leaving Bunter blinking, still perplexed, and the other fellows chuckling.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER

Bunter is Satisfied!

AFTER the Highcliff match, the Bunter Cup was a more discussed topic than ever at Greyfriars. By the skin of their teeth, as it were, the Greyfriars Remove had saved the Cup in the first tie. Mr. William Samuel Bunter's silver Challenge Cup still reposed safely at Greyfriars; but the Remove had two more matches to play to win it—in the peculiar conditions of the competition. Highcliff having been beaten, Rookwood came next on the list; and Rookwood had notified their willingness to fix a date. But it was generally felt that it was not of much use to arrange a later date with St. Jim's. Fortune had favoured the Remove in the first tie, but they could not expect fortune to favour them to the same extent in the second. For Rookwood were certain to send over a team that could not fail to beat the Remove if Bunter persisted in claiming his right to play.

And Bunter did!

Argument, expostulation, and oburgation were exhausted on Billy Bunter in vain.

He simply could not see what was perfectly clear to everybody else. And there were, as Smithy remarked, none so blind as those who would not see!

Bunter's view was that he, the best footballer ever turned out by Greyfriars, had been prevented from winning the match hands down by the rotten play and cheeky interference of the rest of the team.

That view was firmly fixed in his fat mind. A surgical operation would scarcely have removed it.

Bunter pointed to the undoubted fact that the match had been won with Bunter playing in the team. He stated that he had said that the Remove would win if they played him, and that certainly was true; he had said so, not once, but many times.

That the Remove had won in spite of his presence in the team was a circumstance that Bunter couldn't or wouldn't see.

"We had luck—heaps of luck!" Bob Cherry told him. "Highcliff were not in great form, for one thing."

"Rot!" said Bunter.

"We ought to have beaten them by four or five goals, on their form," said Nugent.

"So we should have—if the fellows hadn't got in my way," said Bunter.

"And the winning goal was a stroke of luck," said Bob. "It was ten to one against my bringing it off as I did."

"Very likely," assented Bunter. "But it would have been a dead cert if you'd let me have the ball."

"Oh, dear!"

"Next match, don't be a selfish player," admonished Bunter. "Let me have the ball, and play up to me. That's what we want."

Evidently it was not of much use arguing with the Owl of the Remove.

"Best thing you can do," continued Bunter, "is to persuade Wharton to take a back seat and let me play centre-forward. Then we shall walk all over Rookwood, and St. Jim's after them. See? But, of course, I shall expect you fellows to play up to me, and not keep on getting in my way as you did in the Highcliff match."

Words were wasted on Bunter; so Bob Cherry sat him down, with a bump, and left it at that.

There was deep discussion in No. 1 Study. The question was: Could Bunter, somehow or anyhow, be left out of the team in the subsequent matches? That question had to be answered in the negative.

"We've agreed to the conditions," said Wharton. "We took the risk, though I must say I didn't quite realise what an absolute idiot Bunter could be, and I've never experienced before how much one dangerous maniac can do to muck up a whole side. We can throw up the whole thing if we like, and tell Mr. Bunter to take his blessed Cup away and bury it in his back garden. But if we play for it, we're bound to play on the terms agreed."

"We were fools to agree!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Well, if we throw the thing up now, it comes to the same thing," said Harry. "Are we throwing it up?"

But there was general reluctance to decide upon that. The Remove footballers wanted to win the Bunter Cup, especially now that they had taken on the job.

"After all, football's an uncertain game," said Bob. "We've seen good teams beaten by rotten teams—with luck on their side. And we're a top-hole team excepting Bunter. Somehow or other we may beat Rookwood."

"They might be off colour or something," said Nugent.

"That's too much to expect. Highcliffe weren't up to the mark, and the same thing wouldn't happen twice," remarked Peter Todd.

"Still, you never know."

"I think we may as well play on and hope for the best," said the captain of the Remove.

"There's always a chance, too, that Bunter may fall ill; he's got lots of money these days, and he spreads himself every day in the tuck-shop. Even Bunter can't keep on cramming doughnuts and jam tarts without something happening, I should think."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then we fix it up with Rookwood?" asked Nugent.

"I think so."

Vernon-Smith nodded thoughtfully. "Lots of things might happen," he said. "Lots of things might be made to happen —"

Wharton gave the Bounder a rather sharp look.

"Cut that out, Smithy!" he said. "It's hard cheese on us, and that fat duffer has got us pinned down. But we're bound to give him fair play—either to throw up the whole thing, or to keep to the conditions."

"Oh, of course," said the Bounder. "But if Bunter had a terrific attack of indigestion on Rookwood day—"

"I suppose we may hope for that, at least," said Wharton laughing.

"And you never can tell," said Bob Cherry, hopefully. "Fix it up with Rookwood, and hope for the best."

And so it was decided.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER

Awful!

JIMMY SILVER AND CO., of Rookwood School, were booked to arrive at Greyfriars on a Wednesday afternoon: and Harry Wharton and his comrades looked forward to that date with a mixture of hope and misgiving—in which mixture misgiving predominated. William George Bunter was the only member of the team who had no misgivings. In these days William George, lived and moved, and had his being, in swank. No more was heard at Greyfriars of Bunter's celebrated postal order. Bunter had plenty of cash in his pockets now; his expected postal order was not likely to be heard of again so long as this new prosperity lasted in the Bunter family. Possibly it would not last for ever. There were ups and downs on the Stock Exchange, and Mr. Bunter might encounter some of the downs after a happy experience of the ups. But for the present Billy Bunter fairly exuded currency notes, and Skinner and Co. were loyal in their devotion, whatever other fellows thought. But it was not only as a wealthy fellow that Bunter swanked—he swanked still more as a footballer—a fellow who was great on games.

He was never tired of pointing out that,



Bunter was stretched upon the sofa, groaning deeply. Mr. Quelch stood over him, puzzled and alarmed. "He's in my team, sir!" said Harry Wharton. "I can't very well ask the Rookwood fellows to wait. Come on, Bunter, pull yourself together and come along!" "I'm dying!" groaned Bunter (See Chapter 14)

the very first time he had played; for the Remove, the Remove had won—a very important match, too, with a silver Cup at stake!

What could you want plainer than that, Bunter would inquire. And Skinner and Co., revelling in jam tarts and dough nuts "stood" by the generous Owl, agreed that it was plain enough.

Bunter, indeed, declared that, after he had helped to beat such tough opponents as Rookwood and St. Jim's, it was very likely that Wingate would ask him to play for the Greyfriars First Eleven. And Skinner and Co., with their tongues in their cheeks, agreed that it was very likely indeed.

So, in these happy days, Bunter came very near understudying the ancient classical

gentleman, and striking the stars with his sublime head!

Bunter was all the more satisfied, because he was no longer urged to show up at games practice. Rather the Remove fellows liked to see him stuffing in the tuck-shop. For if Bunter played in the Rookwood match, the sooner he was winded the better. The only hope of the Removites, indeed, was that Bunter would collapse early in the game, and leave them to play a man short.

So Bunter, who was not at all keen on football excepting when there was "swank" to be earned, kept quite clear of Little Side, and had hardly touched a football before the date of the Rookwood visit came round.

On that Wednesday morning, Bunter was eyed almost wolfishly by some of the Remove

fellows. He seemed fatter and shinier than ever; but they had to admit that he showed no signs of illness. How the inner Bunter dealt with all that was crammed into it by the outer Bunter, was a mystery. But the Owl of the Remove really seemed to thrive on unlimited tuck.

After lessons that morning, Harry Wharton made a last attempt to reason with the fat junior.

"Feeling fit, Bunter?" he asked.

"Fit as a fiddle," assured Bunter.

"You don't feel like standing out of the match this afternoon?"

"Not in the least!"

"Bunter, old man, be good," urged Wharton. "You want us to win the Cup for Greyfriars, don't you?"

"Yes—that's why I'm going to play."

"You'll lose us the match, old man."

"That's only your conceit," said Bunter cheerfully. "If you'd like me to make a suggestion, I suggest that you should hand the captaincy over to me for this match."

"Eh?"

"After all, we want to keep the Cup," argued Bunter. "That would make it a cert. What do you think?"

Wharton did not state what he thought. He suppressed his feelings and walked away. It was evident that there was nothing doing.

The hopes of the Remove team were very nearly at zero now. They were going to do their best; but there seemed little to hope for.

Some of the fellows went to meet Jimmy Silver and Co. at the station; the Rookwood crowd were coming by train from Hampshire. Billy Bunter did not worry about honouring the expected guests in that way; he repaired to the school shop after dinner for further supplies. Skinner and Co. joined him there, and shared the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table.

Then Bunter rolled away to No. 7 Study for a nap, which he felt that he needed after his exertions in the tuck-shop.

He disposed himself in the arm-chair in No. 7, and his deep and resonant snore echoed along the Remove passage.

A little later the Bounder of Greyfriars

looked into No. 7. There was quite a peculiar expression on Vernon-Smith's face as he watched the sleeping beauty.

"Looks a real bute, doesn't he?" remarked Wibley, glancing over the Bounder's shoulder.

"If he'd only keep that up till after the Rookwood match!" said Smithy.

"He jolly well won't! Besides, Wharton would send for him at once and wake him up."

"Wharton's an ass," grunted the Bounder.

"Well, he's bound to give the fat duffer fair play," remarked Wibley, judiciously. "An agreement is an agreement."

Vernon-Smith nodded.

Billy Bunter's eyes opened. He rubbed them, and set his spectacles straight on his little fat nose, and blinked at the two juniors in the doorway.

"Hallo! Silver's lot here yet?" he yawned.

"Not yet! Wharton's gone to meet them at Courtfield," said the Bounder. "They're not here yet."

"Good! Time for a snack."

"Hungry?" asked Wibley, sarcastically.

"Well, just a little peckish, you know! I've had nothing since dinner but a few dough nuts, and a cake and half-a-dozen jam tarts and some nuts and bananas."

"Great pip! You must be famished!" ejaculated Wibley, still more sarcastically.

"Not famished—just peckish," said Bunter.

"Trot along to my study," said the Bounder, with a peculiar glimmer in his eyes. "There's a cake in my cupboard—a jolly good cake, with marzipan on top."

"Good old Smithy!" said Bunter, "I will."

And he detached himself from the arm-chair, yawned, and rolled along to No. 4 Study. Smithy and Wibley watched him disappear into No. 4, and then looked at one another.

"Will it work?" murmured Wibley.

Smithy shrugged his shoulders.

"If it doesn't, the Rookwood match is a goner," he said. "Hallo, there comes the football crowd." He gave a nod towards the corridor window.

Billy Bunter did not heed the arrival of the footballers. He was busy on the cake.

He sat in Smithy's armchair, with the cake on his knees, and shifted it in bulk, so to speak.

It was assuredly a very nice cake, rich in fruit and aromatic in odour, with a thick layer of marzipan on the top.

Vernon-Smith appeared in the doorway with Wibley, and found him busily engaged. Bunter gave him a fat grin, with his mouth full.

"I say, this is a jolly good cake, Smithy."

"Glad you like it, old bean."

"Won't you have some?"

"Not just before footer."

"Rot!" said Bunter, "I play better on cake! What's the matter, Smithy?" he added.

Vernon-Smith was staring into the open study cupboard, with a startled expression on his face.

"Did you get hold of the right cake, Bunter?" he asked.

"Eh! I suppose so."

"You didn't take the one I got ready for the rats?"

"The—the what?"

"It's all right—you'd have tasted the rat poison, if there was any in that cake."

Bunter jumped.

"Rat poison!" he said faintly.

"Dash it all, that's careless, Smithy!" exclaimed Wibley. "You shouldn't leave such a thing in your study cupboard!"

"Lot of good saying that now—if Bunter's got hold of it by mistake," growled the Bounder. "But it's all right if Bunter took the cake off the second shelf—"

"I took it off the top shelf!" said Bunter, faintly.

"The—the top shelf!"

"Yes!" gasped Bunter.

"Good heavens!"

The remnant of the cake slid from Bunter's fat knees to the floor, unheeded. He lay back in the chair and blinked in horror at the Bounder.

"Smithy!—oh, dear—ow——!"

"It's all right," said Vernon-Smith, hurriedly. "If you don't feel any ill-effects, it can't have hurt you."

"Ow!"

"How much did you put into it?" exclaimed Wibley.

"Not so much as a quarter of a pound, I'm certain."

Bunter gave a wild yell.

"A quarter of a pound of rat poison! Ow! I'm killed! I'm dying! Yaroooh."

"Shut up—you'll have the masters here!" exclaimed the Bounder. "I—I'm sure you're not poisoned—"

"I am!" yelled Bunter. "I want the masters here—I want the Head—I want a doctor—I—I—yaroooh!"

"But I tell you it's all right if you don't feel any pain—"

"I do!" howled Bunter. "Frightful pain—awful agony! Ow, ow, ow!"

The Owl of the Remove clasped both hands to his plump circumference, and yelled. Bunter had a fertile imagination. The bare idea of rat poison in the cake made him believe that the pains were coming on.

"Real pain?" ejaculated the Bounder.

"Awful! Ow! Like burning daggers! Wow! Help!"

"You've done it now, Smithy," said Wibley.

"I—I say, it will be brought in accidental death, I hope, at the inquest."

Bunter gave a fearful yell at that word.

"Inquest! Yooooop!"

"You'll bear witness it was accidental, Wib," gasped the Bounder. "You know I never knew there was any rat poison in the cake."

"You did!" yelled Bunter. "You've done it on purpose! You'll be hanged! Help! Doctor! Whooooop!"

Ogilvy of the Remove looked in.

"You're wanted, Smithy," he said, "Bunter, too, if he's playing. The Rookwood chaps are ready! Why, what's the row here?"

"Yarooop!"

"Look after him!" gasped Vernon-Smith, and he hurried out of the study.

"Yow-ow! Help! Doctor! Help!" roared Bunter.

Vernon-Smith arrived on the football ground. Harry Wharton called to him.

"Do you know where Bunter is, Smithy?"

"In my study," said the Bounder.

"Why doesn't he come?" exclaimed the

captain of the Remove crossly. "Bad enough to have to play him, without having to wait!"

"He thinks he's ill."

"Ill!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Only fancy, I think," said the Bounder calmly. "But I hardly think he will come."

"Hurray!" yelled Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Oh, what a little bit of luck!" sang Peter Todd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton gave the Bounder a penetrating look. He was glad enough to hear that Bunter was likely to stand out of the match; but a compact was a compact, and Bunter was to be given his rights if he claimed them and chose to exercise them.

"Look here, Smithy, is this straight?" asked the captain of the Remove bluntly.

"Perhaps you'd better see Bunter," said Smithy. "Perhaps I had."

And the captain of the Remove sprinted away to the schoolhouse, leaving the footballers in excited discussion of the unexpected turn of events.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER

Not Fatal!

"Ow-ow-ow!"

"Bunter!"

"Wow-wow-ow!"

"My dear boy——"

"Groooogh!"

The voices of Billy Bunter and Mr. Quelch,

the master of the Remove, alternated in No. 4 Study as Harry Wharton came running up the Remove passage from the stairs.

Wharton looked into the study.

Bunter was stretched on the sofa now, groaning deeply. Mr. Quelch stood over him, puzzled and alarmed. Wibley and Ogilvy were in the study, both grave and quiet.

"Is Bunter ill, sir?" exclaimed Harry.

"He seems so, Wharton."

"Whoooooop!"

"He's in my team, sir," said Wharton. "We can't very well ask the Rookwood fellows to wait——"

"Beast! Ow!"

"Are you playing, Bunter?" demanded Wharton.

"Ow! I'm dying!"

"Oh, rot! He's always fancying himself ill, sir," said Harry.

"Look here, Bunter, pull yourself together and come along!"

"I won't!" roared Bunter.

"Hang your silly footer! I tell you I've been poisoned——"

"What?"

gasped Wharton. "That beast Smithy has poisoned me!"

"Ow! Wow!"

"You silly ass!"

"I tell you he has!" shrieked Bunter.

"He put rat poison in a cake, and I've eaten it! He said so!"

"Do you feel any pain, Bunter?" asked Mr. Quelch.



Billy Bunter arrived breathless on the field. His fat face was crimson and he panted. "I'm ready to play!" he gasped. "Have you started?" "Started?" exclaimed Wharton blankly. "The game's half over! This is the interval, fatty!" (See Chapter 15)

"Ow! I'm suffering fearfully! Ow! Ow! Wow! Send for a doctor!" yelled Bunter.

"I have already given instructions for the doctor to be telephoned for, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch. "Calm yourself."

"Ow! Ow! Wow!"

"Dr. Pillbury will be here soon," said Mr. Quelch soothingly.

"Wow!"

"I must see Vernon-Smith," said the Remove master. "Doubtless he can explain this. It looks to me like some foolish jest on Bunter."

"Ow! I'm dying!"

"Where is the pain, Bunter?"

"All over! Like burning daggers——"

"Bunter!"

"And red-hot knives!"

"Really, Bunter——"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow! Where's that doctor? Ow!"

"Bunter obviously cannot play football this afternoon, Wharton. You had better fill his place. Ogilvy, please find Vernon-Smith at once and send him to me."

"Very well, sir."

The captain of the Remove and Ogilvy left the study together. Billy Bunter's resounding groans followed them down the passage.

"What on earth does it all mean, Ogilvy?" asked Wharton.

"Blessed if I know! Only I fancy there's something on between Smithy and Wibley," said Ogilvy.

"I can't make it out. I'll ask Smithy, anyhow. He's on the football ground," said Harry.

The two juniors hurried down to Little Side. A shout from the Remove footballers greeted them.

"Where's Bunter? Is Bunter playing?"

"No!"

"Hurray!"

"Smithy's wanted," said Ogilvy. "Isn't Smithy here?"

"He's cleared off," said Squiff. "He told me to ask you to play me instead, Wharton."

"That's all right," said Harry. "But

Smithy's wanted. Mr. Quelch wants to know what he's done to Bunter."

"Perhaps that's why he's cleared off," grinned Peter Todd.

"The perhapsfulness is terrific."

Harry Wharton knitted his brows in perplexity. He was unable to make head or tail of the puzzling affair. But one thing was clear—whether Bunter was ill, or fancied that he was ill, he was standing out of the Rookwood match.

That much was clear, and it was a great relief to all concerned. Ogilvy hurried away to look for Vernon-Smith—but without much expectation of finding him. He had to return finally to No. 4 Study and report to Mr. Quelch that Vernon-Smith could not be found.

"He's run away!" howled Bunter. "He knows he'll be hanged for this——"

"Nonsense, Bunter!"

"Where's that doctor?"

"He will be here very quickly, Bunter——"

"Ow!"

On Little Side, the game was beginning. But William George Bunter was not giving a single thought to the Rookwood match. All his thoughts were concentrated on himself.

It seemed an age to Bunter, before the medical gentleman's car was heard on the drive, and Dr. Pillbury, the school doctor, was shown up to the study.

Mr. Quelch hurriedly explained the circumstances, so far as he knew them.

Dr. Pillbury looked far from impressed.

Bunter's howls and groans certainly seemed to indicate that he was in a very serious state; but there was no other indication.

"My own impression is," added Mr. Quelch, "that this foolish boy has been frightened by some foolish joke."

"Very probable indeed!" grunted the medical gentleman.

"However, if you examine him——"

"Quite so."

Dr. Pillbury took Bunter in hand at once. The Owl of the Remove did not enjoy the process. It seemed to him that the heartless medical man, deaf and blind to his awful

sufferings, took a fiendish delight in pinching and punching him. The proceedings were still proceeding, when the study door opened, and Vernon-Smith walked in.

The Bounder seemed surprised to see Mr. Quelch and the medical man there. At all events, he looked surprised.

"Oh! Here is the boy!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Vernon-Smith, Bunter declares that you gave him a cake in which rat-poison had been placed——"

"Does he?" ejaculated Smithy.

"You did nothing of the sort, I presume?"

"Certainly not, sir."

"Have you so dangerous a thing as any kind of poison in the study, Vernon-Smith?"

"No, sir! Never had, that I know of."

Bunter ceased to groan suddenly. He sat up on the sofa.

"Smithy, you beast—— Oh, you rotter——"

"Kindly moderate your expressions, Bunter, in my presence and that of Dr. Pillbury!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch severely.

"He said he put a quarter of a pound of it in the cake!" yelled Bunter.

"I certainly did not," said the Bounder coolly.

"He did!" shrieked Bunter.

"Kindly tell me what your exact words were, Vernon-Smith," said the Remove master sternly.

"Wibley asked me how much I had put in the cake, sir," said Vernon-Smith. "I said not so much as a quarter of a pound."

"Then you did put some?"

"Oh, no, sir—I put none. None is not so much as a quarter of a pound, isn't it?"

Mr. Quelch stared at Vernon-Smith; and a faint sound resembling a chuckle came from the medical gentleman.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Vernon-Smith, you—you appear to have kept within the bounds of the truth; yet what you said was calculated to give Bunter the impression that there was a quantity of rat-poison in the cake."

"Was it, sir?"

"Certainly it was! In fact, it is perfectly clear to me that you deliberately gave Bunter that impression in order to play upon his foolish fears."

"Oh, sir!" murmured the Bounder.

"There is nothing wrong with the boy," said Dr. Pillbury. "My time has been wasted."

"I apologise most profoundly, doctor," said Mr. Quelch. "Your time has been wasted by Bunter's folly, and by the misdirected humour of Vernon-Smith! Both will be punished, you may be sure."

"Ow!"

Dr. Pillbury bustled away to his car. Mr. Quelch fixed a very stern glance on the Bounder.

"Vernon-Smith, you will go at once to the form-room, and write out three hundred lines of Virgil."

"Very well, sir!" said the Bounder submissively.

"You have played a foolish jest on Bunter, Vernon-Smith—with the serious result that you have wasted your form-master's time, as well as Dr. Pillbury's. I am sorry to punish you severely; but I cannot do less. Go to the form-room at once."

"Yes, sir."

The Bounder went.

Billy Bunter slid off the sofa rather apprehensively. All his fearful pains and agonies had vanished now, having existed only in his fat imagination.

"You will take a hundred lines, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch. "On another occasion I shall cane you, if you do not learn to reflect a little, before causing so much trouble for nothing."

"I—I——!" stammered Bunter.

"That will do, Bunter! I shall expect the lines this evening," said Mr. Quelch, and he rustled out of the study, very cross indeed.

"Beast!" murmured Bunter.

Bunter was feeling well again—quite well. Feeling well, he remembered the Rookwood match. He blinked at his watch—it was nearly a quarter to four, and the kick-off was timed for three o'clock.

"They—they—they wouldn't have the cheek to play without me!" gasped Bunter.

And he scudded out of the study and headed for Little Side.



Bunter was doing the honours, and the table almost groaned under the good things that were stacked on it. It could not be denied that Bunter, when in possession of ample funds, spent them royally (See Chapter 17)

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER

The Rookwood Match!

JIMMY SILVER and Co. were quite pleased to hear the whistle, at the end of the first half. It had been a gruelling game, and the visitors at Greyfriars had been given plenty of work to do. There were two good teams in the field, and both were playing hard; and no goal had been taken on either side when the whistle went for the interval.

At the start, a good many fellows had gathered round the ground, to grin at Bunter's expected performances. It was quite a disappointment to some, to find that the Owl was not in the Remove team.

"Oh, gad!" said Temple of the Fourth, "Bunter's standin' out! No comic turn to-day."

"Good luck for the Remove, what?" said Fry.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"They've got Squiff in Bunter's place, and Nugent instead of Vernon-Smith!" remarked Hobson of the Shell. "I wonder they've left out the old Bounder! He's a good man."

"Nugent's good in the front line," remarked Temple. "And that chap Field is toppin' at half! These Remove kids are playin' pretty good footer to-day."

The Remove fellows were under the impression that their footer that day was some-

thing more than pretty good: but Cecil Reginald Temple was a lofty youth.

In the interval, the Remove eleven looked and felt very well satisfied, though they were feeling the effects of a hard first half. The fact that Bunter was not in the team had a remarkably invigorating effect on them.

If Bunter really was ill, they were, of course, sorry! But they were undoubtedly more pleased for themselves than sorry for Bunter.

The team was as good as on the occasion of the Highcliffe match. Nugent, perhaps, was not quite up to the Bounder's form, but he was at his best, and he had a great turn of speed. And the absence of Bunter more than compensated for any difference there. Vernon-Smith had had to sacrifice his own game that afternoon to carry out his curious scheme; but he had felt that it was worth it. And, Bunter being out, Squiff as half-back added a tower of strength to the Remove eleven.

The game had been hard: Jimmy Silver and Co. were in topping form. And all the Remove realised that, had Bunter played, the margin of goals against them would have been already heavy. A weakness in their defence would have been found out at once. A flaw in their armour would have handed them over to the Philistines.

Wharton hardly dared to think, indeed, of what the game would have been like, against the Rookwooders, had Bunter been barging and charging about the field as on the Highcliffe occasion.

It really did not bear thinking of. Undoubtedly it would have meant certain defeat.

Fortunately, Bunter was not there.

It was anybody's game, so far; but at all events the result depended on good football and hard play; and Wharton could count on every one of his followers to put up a good game.

"Well, Rookwood's giving us our money's worth," Bob Cherry remarked, as he sucked a lemon. "I think we're going to win—"

"You always do!" grinned Nugent.

"Still, if we're licked, we're licked on our giddy merits," said Bob. "That's better than being let down by a fat bandersnatch."

"Yes, rather," said Johnny Bull.

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

"I wonder how Bunter's getting on," said Toddy.

"Oh, blow Bunter!"

"Bless Bunter!"

"I hope he isn't really ill," said Wharton. "But it's a blessing to have him standing out of the team, and there's no denying it. We've got a chance of keeping the Cup at Greyfriars now."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Talk of angels! Here he comes!"

"Bunter, by Jove!" exclaimed Temple of the Fourth. "A little late—but better late than never."

"Too late to play, thank goodness," said Mark Linley.

Billy Bunter arrived breathless on the field. His fat face was crimson, and he panted.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, Buntly! All serene again!"

"Yes," gasped Bunter. "I'm ready to play."

"Eh! What?"

"I'm ready! Have you started?"

"Have we started?" exclaimed Wharton blankly. "The game's half over! This is the interval, fatty!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

"Time!" sang out Bob Cherry.

"I say, you fellows!" roared Bunter, in great wrath. "Look here, I'm going to play! I—"

"Keep off the field, Bunter!" called out Gwynne of the Sixth, who was referee in the match.

"Look here, Gwynne! I—"

"Keep off, you fat duffer."

"I tell you—" roared Bunter.

"Roll him away," said Gwynne; and Ogilvy and Russell and Wibley took hold of Bunter and rolled him away.

The whistle went, and play was resumed. Behind the Remove goal, Billy Bunter's voice could be heard—in tones of wrath and expostulation, mingled with loud laughter from the Remove crowd. That Vernon-Smith had played a jest on him—that he hadn't really intended to stand out of the match—that he wanted the game to be restarted from the

Mysterious!

beginning. All this became clear. But it only seemed to afford entertainment to the fellows who listened to Bunter. The footballers, certainly, did not listen to him. They were too busy even to remember the existence of William George Bunter.

The game was hard and fast. Jimmy Silver, centre-half in the Rookwood team, held his men together well, and directed a masterly game. Mornington and Erroll, among the forwards, were dangerous customers—thrice was a deadly shot from Morny only narrowly saved by Hazel in goal. But a miss was as good as a mile. Tommy Dodd, at inside right, very nearly got the leather through—but not quite. Arthur Edward Lovell, at half, was a great man that day. Good men all were the Rookwooders, in fact; but they found equally good men at Greyfriars. And the game went on, ding-dong, without a score, with many a narrow escape on either side.

It was Frank Nugent who drew first blood, putting the ball into the Rookwood goal; and as it turned out, that was the only blood to be drawn in the hard-fought match.

There were ten minutes to go when Nugent scored, and those ten minutes were filled up with hard tussling. Thrice the Rookwooders swept up to the home goal in formidable array, and each time they found the defence too tough for them—Peter Todd and Tom Brown and Squiff seemed an almost unbreakable line; Johnny Bull and Mark Linley were like a last ditch that could not be passed; behind them, Hazel in goal was all eyes and hands. Gallantly the Rookwooders strove to equalise, and it was not their fault that they failed.

Pheep!

The whistle shrilled.

"Remove wins!" roared the crowd.

"Bravo!"

"Well," said Bob Cherry, as he mopped his perspiring brow, "I think we deserved it. We've earned it, anyhow."

Two thoroughly gruelled teams came off the field; the Rookwood match had been lost and won, and the Bunter Cup was still to repose at Greyfriars—until the date of the St. Jim's match.

HOMER of old sang the wrath of Achilles—to Greece the direful spring of woes unnumbered. But even Homer could scarcely have done justice to the wrath of William George Bunter after the Rookwood match. The wrath of Achilles was simply "not in it" with the wrath of Bunter. His wrath and his indignation were, as Hurree Jamset Ram Singh justly said, terrific.

He had been done! After all his careful, not to say cunning, planning, he had failed to figure in the second tie for the Bunter Cup. Rookwood had come and gone, and Bunter had not been in the field. Loud and long were the plaints of the Owl of the Remove.

And nobody sympathised with him, and nobody heeded his wrath. In the well-known case of the Jackdaw of Rheims, "never was heard such a terrible curse, but nobody seemed a penny the worse." And so it was with the oburgations of Billy Bunter. The Removites listened to him with chuckles and chortles—or they did not even listen at all. Certainly, terrific as his wrath was, nobody seemed a penny the worse.

Smithy, according to Bunter, had deliberately pulled his leg, made him believe himself ill, so as to keep him out of the match. To which the juniors rejoined that if Bunter was ass enough to have his fat leg pulled so easily, it was his own look-out—and that he shouldn't have been so funky, anyhow. Bunter could not aver that he had been officially left out of the eleven; the captain of the Remove had known nothing of the affair, and had indeed given Bunter every chance to play up to the latest moment. Wharton had kept to the agreement to the very letter.

Whatsoever the Bounder had done was Smithy's own affair, and even Bunter could scarcely have expected the match to be restarted on his account, after the first half had been played. That would have been too much for even Bunter to require.

But he did demand that the match should be cancelled and played over again, thus causing more merriment in the Remove. Rookwood had played for the cup, and the

Rookwood match was now a thing of the past, and all Bunter's indignant wrath could not make it a thing of the future again.

So Bunter raged, and raged in vain—a closed chapter was not to be reopened for Bunter. There was still the St. Jim's match in which he could distinguish himself, and when that date came round it was certain that Bunter would be very wary of the Bounder. Certainly he was not likely to walk into the spider's parlour again so fatuously.

Not that Smithy was likely to try the game again, or indeed any game. On that subject the captain of the Remove spoke very plainly to the Bounder.

"No more larks of that sort, Smithy," he said. "A compact is a compact, and we're bound to play up."

"I agree," assented the Bounder, cheerfully. "Keeping

Bunter out of the match would have been breaking the compact. But there was no reason why he shouldn't keep himself out if he liked."

"That's so. All the same——"

"Are you sorry he wasn't in the eleven?" Harry Wharton laughed.

"I'm jolly glad he wasn't! Rookwood would have walked all over us, and walked off with the Cup."

"Then what are you grouching about?" asked the Bounder.

"I'm not grouching—I'm not blaming you," said Harry. "You were not even a member of the eleven that day, as it turned out, and nobody can say that you shouldn't jape Bunter if you liked. All the same, don't do it again, old man. For one thing, I simply

must have you in the St. Jim's match—can't spare you, Smithy. And a member of the eleven can't take a hand in shutting Bunter out—even by a jape, and letting him make a fool of himself."

"If Bunter plays, Tom Merry's crowd will bag the Cup."

"Most likely, I know. Still, the Cup's stood by Bunter's father, and he seems to have stood it chiefly to give Bunter a chance to show off in soccer. He's entitled to his money's worth."

"Well, anyhow, I don't suppose Bunter would be caught twice," said Vernon-Smith, laughing. "Once bit twice shy. I'll keep off the grass, at any rate."

"Good!" said Wharton, feeling relieved.

Billy Bunter came rolling along the Remove passage, where the two juniors were talking. He stopped, and fixed his big spectacles on Smithy with a wrathful glare.



Shortly before the brake from St. Jim's appeared, Billy Bunter rolled up to Vernon-Smith, an insinuating grin on his fat face. "Smith, old man," he said. "Come for a stroll, will you, before the match?" (See chapter 19)

"You rotter!"

"Hallo!" said Vernon-Smith cheerfully.

"You worm!"

"Go it!"

"Yah!"

"Hear, hear!" said Smithy.

"You did me over the Rookwood match!"

"You did yourself, you mean," amended the Bounder.

"I've a jolly good mind," went on Bunter, "to give you the thrashing of your life, Smithy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Bounder, and Harry Wharton chuckled.

"Mind, I mean it!" howled Bunter. "I'd mop up the Remove passage with you, Smithy, only—only——"

"Only?" grinned the Bounder.

"Only I don't want to go scrapping just before the St. Jim's match. After that, we'll see."

"Let's!" assented Smithy.

"I hear that St. Jim's are in great form," went on Bunter. "I shall have to keep myself perfectly fit for that game—it will depend chiefly on me."

"You—perfectly fit!" ejaculated Smithy. "How many tons of tarts have you scoffed to-day?"

"Yah! But you look out!" said Bunter darkly.

"After the St. Jim's match," said the Bounder gravely, "I will make my will at once, and sign the 'Daily Mail' insurance coupon. Then I shall be prepared for all eventualities."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Perhaps you won't be in the St. Jim's match," sneered Bunter.

"No perhaps about that," said Harry Wharton. "We're going to have Smithy in the front line, Bunter! Can't spare him."

"You can have me in the front line," said Bunter. "Squiff or Nugent can play half instead."

"Don't be funny, old man! You do less damage at half than you would do in the giddy forefront of the battle."

"That only shows your ignorance of football, Wharton. You don't mind my putting it plainly?"

"Not at all," said Harry, laughing.

"My opinion is that Smithy shouldn't play."

"Thanks for your opinion."

"Then you'll leave him out?"

"No; I'll put him in."

"Look here, Wharton——"

"Ta-ta, old bean!"

And the captain of the Remove strolled away. He was bound to have Bunter in his eleven; but really he did not want any advice on football matters from the Owl.

Bunter blinked at Smithy.

"You look out, that's all," he said mysteriously. "You may play in the St. Jim's match. You may not! We shall see."

"Blessed if I see where there's any doubt in the matter," said Smithy, perplexed. "If I'm fit I shall play. And I shall take jolly good care to be fit."

"One good turn deserves another," said Bunter, "the same applies to a bad turn."

"Eh?"

"You got me out of the Rookwood match. Perhaps I shall do the same for you in the next."

The Bounder stared at him.

"Are you going to try to pull my leg and make me fancy myself ill?" he chuckled. "Go ahead! It doesn't seem likely, to me."

"I know what I know!" said Bunter, still more mysteriously.

And he rolled away, leaving the Bounder very puzzled. Apparently, some deep scheme was working in Bunter's powerful brain—some scheme for retaliating Smithy's little jape on himself. Bunter, apparently, had decided upon a policy of tit-for-tat—a Roland for an Oliver. He had decided to do it—but how he was going to do it was a deep mystery.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER

No Mistakes!

"Good old Bunter!"

"Hear hear!"

"What I like about Bunter," said Skinner, with deep gravity, "is his generosity. Old Bunter's got a lot of good qualities——"

"Yes, rather!"

"But, after all, any fellow might be sturdy,

handsome, wealthy, and well connected," said Skinner. "That's really luck!"

"Oh!"

It was a little party in Bunter's study. Skinner and Snoop, Stott and Fisher T. Fish were there. Bunter was doing the honours, and the study table almost groaned under the good things that were stacked on it. It could not be denied that Bunter, when he was in the possession of ample funds, spent them royally. Any fellow was welcome to share in Bunter's gorgeous spreads, so long as he took the trouble to pull Bunter's fat leg a little, and give him a good allowance of "butter." Skinner and Co. had not the slightest objection to "buttering" Bunter—they would have buttered anybody on the same terms.

Skinner, perhaps, was laying it on a little "thick." But Skinner knew what he was about—Bunter liked his flattery, like pineapple, in chunks.

"Any fellow might be all that," went on Skinner. "It's Bunter's luck that he's the best-looking fellow in the Remove—"

"Ah! Oh! Yes!" gasped Snoop.

"It's his luck that he's the wealthiest fellow—"

"Ah!"

"It's his luck that he's the most highly connected—"

"Um!"

"In a way, it's his luck that he's the best footballer in the lower school—I may say, in the whole school, upper and lower."

"Mmmmm!"

"But his generosity, what I might call his princely hospitality, is a quality of his own!" said Skinner. "And I must say that that's what I like most about Bunter."

Billy Bunter beamed over the festive board. He liked this—he liked it very much. Until quite a recent date, nobody had taken the trouble to butter Bunter. But the King had come into his own at last!

"I say, you fellows—"

"I guess—" began Fisher T. Fish.

"Dry up, Fishy," said Skinner severely.

"Bunter's speaking."

"Oh, sure!" gasped Fishy.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Go on, Bunter."

"I'm going to ask you to do something for me."

"Give it a name!" said Skinner. "We're all your friends here, Bunter. Any old thing."

"Good," said Bunter. "Next Wednesday."

"That's the date of the St. Jim's match," said Snoop. "You want us to turn up and cheer your goals. Of course, we shall come! We wouldn't miss it for anything."

"Catch us missing it!" said Skinner.

And in that, at least, Skinner was quite sincere. He did not intend to miss the show when Bunter played football. It would be, as he had privately confided to his comrades, better than a comic film at the Courtfield picture palace.

"I'm not satisfied with the team," said Bunter.

"Well, there's at least one good man in it!" said Stott.

"That's so," assented Bunter, "but I'm not satisfied with Smithy. I've asked Wharton to leave him out, and he refuses."

"Cheek!" said Skinner.

"Besides, you know the trick Smithy played on me," said Bunter. "I was dished out of the Rookwood match. Well, I'm going to dish Smithy out of the St. Jim's match—tit for tat, you know."

"Oh!" said Skinner.

"I've thought it all out."

"You're the fellow for thinking things out," said Snoop. "Brain, you know! Pass the doughnuts, Fishy."

"You fellows are going to help," said Bunter.

"Oh!" said Skinner again, looking rather grave.

"I've got it all cut and dried. Just before the match, Smithy's going to disappear."

"Disappear!" ejaculated Skinner.

"That's it," said Bunter, with a nod.

"There'll be a taxi-cab waiting in the road."

"A—a—a taxi-cab!"

"Yes. I shall stand all the exes, of course, and arrange with the driver, and tip him. That will be all right. You fellows get Smithy to walk out before the match, somehow—or I'll do that, and you'll be waiting by the cab. Then you'll mop him up—"

"Mop him up?" gasped Snoop.
 "Chuck him into the taxi, and—and sit on him," said Bunter, triumphantly. "The taxi buzzes off—takes you anywhere you like—fifty miles if you choose—and you don't come back with Smithy till the first half is played, at least—same as he served me, you know."

"Oh, great Scott!"

"Easy as falling off a form," said Bunter.
 "I can rely on you?"

There was a unanimous silence on the part of Bunter's guests. The Owl of the Remove had almost taken their breath away.

"Just like a stunt you see on the films," said Bunter. "In fact, I got the idea from a film."

"I—I fancy you must have!" stuttered Skinner.

"I—I say, those things are easier on films than in real life, you know," murmured Snoop.

"Easy enough," said Bunter, cheerfully.
 "I'm relying on you fellows, of course."

"I guess I'd let Smithy off, if I were you, Bunter," said Fisher T. Fish.

"No fear!" said Bunter, firmly.

"Well, let's finish tea, and then talk it over!" suggested Skinner.

Skinner felt that it would be injudicious to get to the end of the spread before telling Bunter that he couldn't, wouldn't, and

shouldn't dream of taking a hand in any such enterprise. The consequences of tricking a valued member of the eleven into missing the match, would have been a little too serious for Skinner to contemplate with equanimity.

"Right-ho!" said Bunter.

And it was not till the table was cleared that the plot was discussed. The discussion on the part of Skinner and Co. consisted of arguments and expostulations. They argued,

with Bunter—they almost pleaded with him—but Bunter was adamant. His fat little mind was made up; and he was obstinate. Skinner and Co. did not want to refuse Bunter—their thoughts dwelt lovingly and regretfully on the fleshpots of Egypt. But it had to come to that.

"You see," said Skinner, at last, "if Smithy's kept out of the match, the fellows will be awfully wild."



Temple and Dabney laid hands upon Bunter, and before he knew what was happening, the Owl of the Remove was sprawling in the bottom of the car (See Chapter 20)

"Let 'em!" said Billy Bunter.

"Hem! Yes! But they'll rag us bald-headed."

"You can risk that."

"Can we?" said Snoop, warmly.

"Then there's Smithy—he's got a jolly bad temper," said Stott. "He would make us put up our hands all round, afterwards—and Smithy's got a jolly hefty punch."

"I'll protect you!" said Bunter.

"Oh, my hat!"

Apparently, Skinner and Co. did not feel like placing much reliance on Bunter's protection.

The Owl of the Remove blinked suspiciously at his friends. There was such a plentiful lack of enthusiasm on the part of Skinner and Co., that Bunter could not help observing it.

"Look here, are you taking it on?" he demanded.

"You—you see——!"

"Yes or no!" snapped Bunter.

"Well, no, if you come to that!" said Skinner, desperately. "You can't expect us to stand a form ragging, Bunter."

"I guess not!" said Fisher T. Fish, emphatically.

Billy Bunter blinked at them wrathfully.

"So that's what your friendship's worth!" he said. "You can go and eat coke, the lot of you! I'm fed up with you! Yah!"

"I say, Bunter, old man——" murmured Skinner, still thinking of the fleshpots.

"Oh, get out!"

The happy party in Bunter's study broke up. There was a rift in the lute; even flattery in chunks could not placate Bunter now. He had expounded his wonderful plan for "getting even" with the Bounder, and there were no takers.

But Billy Bunter was a stickler. His podgy mind was made up: Skinner and Co. had failed him, but there were others! At all events, Bunter supposed that there were!

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER

Temple takes it on!

"It's hard cheese on those kids!" said Cecil Reginald Temple.

"Oh, rather!" assented Dabney.

"Of course, they're cheeky fags, those Remove chaps."

"They are," agreed Fry.

"Still, it's hard cheese!"

It was Tuesday, the day preceding the final tie for the Bunter Cup, and Temple and Co. were talking it over in their study after tea. Cecil Reginald Temple, as became the captain of the Fourth, took a lofty view of the Remove and of Remove affairs—the Remove

being the Lower Fourth Form of Greyfriars. But Temple was a good-natured fellow—in a lofty, patronising way, he sympathised with the Remove in the matter of the Bunter Cup. Temple was not a first-class footballer himself—though he nourished a secret belief that he was. Still, he played footer—he was captain of the Fourth Form team. So, naturally, he could feel for a football skipper in Harry Wharton's predicament.

Undoubtedly it was "hard cheese," that a football captain should be driven to play a fellow like Bunter, in a match where a single weak spot meant defeat. Tom Merry and Co., of St. Jim's, were great men at the game; and the Remove needed eleven good men and true for the fixture. With ten good men and one rank "rotter," they were placed at a terrible disadvantage.

"I'd put in a word for them, if it would do any good," said Cecil Reginald. "But it's no good talkin' to Bunter! The fellow simply can't see that he's a hopeless ass."

"Strange, but true!" remarked Fry.

"If I were in Wharton's place," observed Temple, thoughtfully, "I should be tempted to lock the fat duffer up in a box-room till the match was over."

"I wonder he doesn't."

"Well, he can't very well, after agreein' to play him!" said Temple. "The fact is, Bunter's got him tied hand and foot!"

"That's so. It's hard cheese."

"And the fat duffer can't see that the Cup was saved last time by Smithy's little jape—and that it's quite certain to go to St. Jim's this time," said Temple. "I suppose if he could see that, he would stand out of the team. But he can't."

"He can't," said Fry. "Lots of fellows have pointed it out to him. But he can't see it."

Tap!

"Come in!" yawned Temple.

Billy Bunter's fat face and big spectacles glimmered into the study. The three Fourth-formers stared at him. They had not been expecting a visit from the Owl of the Remove.

"Hallo!" said Temple. "Where did you roll from? Wherever it was, roll back again, will you?"

"Oh, really, Temple——"

"Shut the door after you!" said Fry.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Don't!" said Dabney. "No need to say anything! Just bunk."

Instead of "bunking," William George Bunter rolled into the study, and closed the door after him. Evidently he had something to say to the chums of the Fourth before taking his departure.

"I say, you fellows, no larks," said Bunter. "I suppose you know it's the St. Jim's match to-morrow?"

"Just discussin' it," said Temple lazily. "Don't say you've come here to talk football, Bunter! Don't."

"It's a half-holiday, of course, to-morrow," said Bunter, blinking at the Fourth-formers. "How would you fellows like a free drive in a car—no expense, and as far as you like, and as long as you like?"

"Eh?"

Temple, Dabney, and Fry sat up and took notice, so to speak, at that. They were astonished. Certainly, they had heard that, of late, Billy Bunter had been spreading himself royally, expending right and left his unusual cash resources. But they had not expected him to come to a Fourth-form study with the offer of an expensive treat.

"Is that a jest?" asked Temple.

"Honest injun!" said Bunter.

"But what the thump——"

"I'm ordering the car," said Bunter. "I'm standing the whole exes. You can get a run along the coast—Folkestone, Dover, Deal, Brighton if you like!"

"Well, I should like that," said Temple, staring. "Can't say I specially want you to stand it, Bunter—but I should like it."

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"And how are you going to pay for the car, Bunter?" asked Fry, sarcastically. "Are you expecting a postal order?"

Billy Bunter sniffed, and took out a little leather purse. He opened it, and showed several currency notes.

"That's all right," he said.

"But what are you drivin' at?" demanded Temple. "Why the merry thump should you

stand us an expensive motor trip—even if we wanted you to?"

"Of course, I should want a quid pro quo," said Bunter. "One good turn deserves another."

"You'd want us to take you, and let people suppose that you know us?" asked Temple. Bunter glared.

"You cheeky ass!" he roared.

"Well, if it's not that, what is it?" asked Temple, while his comrades grinned.

"It's Smithy!"

"Eh! Smithy! What about Smithy?"

"He's a rotter!"

"Well, all you Remove fags are rotters, more or less. I wouldn't give twopence-half-penny for the whole Form!" remarked Temple. "But——"

"He diddled me out of the Rookwood match."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He doesn't think much of you, Temple," said Bunter.

"Oh, doesn't he?" said Cecil Reginald rather warmly. "Not that I care a straw what a Remove fag thinks."

"I've heard him say that you look like a tailor's dummy, and play football like an organ-grinder's monkey——"

Temple crimsoned.

"And he says Fry is a silly ass who thinks himself clever, and he can't guess how Fry ever came to think that——"

"Oh, shut up!" said Fry.

"He says that Dabney is just a parrot, who says 'Oh, rather!' whenever Temple opens his mouth."

"Does he?" said Dabney, showing signs of excitement.

"So, you see, it will serve him jolly well right if you pull his leg on St. Jim's day."

"On St. Jim's day?" repeated Temple.

"That's it. I get Smithy to walk along to the car before the match, and you fellows mop him into it——"

"Oh, gad!"

"And clear off with him. Keep him away till the match is half over, at least. See?"

Temple and Dabney and Fry stared fixedly at Billy Bunter. They could scarcely believe their ears.

Bunter blinked at them with a self-satisfied smirk. He was, in his own fat opinion, being exceedingly diplomatic. The offer of a free car ride for a half-holiday was tempting. The information regarding Smithy's unflattering opinion of their noble selves might be expected to put up the backs of Temple and Co. And their natural desire to jape the Remove was to be counted upon—for in the many little troubles between the Remove and the Upper fourth, Temple and Co. generally had the worst of it.

So Bunter had little doubt of success in dealing with Temple and Co—or, rather, no doubt at all. It was only necessary to put it to them for them to jump at it. That was how Bunter looked at the matter.

That was not quite how Temple looked at it. But he controlled his impulse to take the Owl of the Remove by the collar and sling him out of the study. He made Dabney and Fry a sign to keep quiet.

"So Smithy's to miss the St. Jim's match, is he?" said Temple.

"Just that!"

"Won't he be wanted in the game?"

"Oh, that makes no difference! I shall be there, and one dud more or less won't affect the result."

"Great pip!" murmured Fry.

"Let's have it clear," said Temple. "The car's to be waiting somewhere near Greyfriars before the match?"

"Yes; I'll see to that."

"You'll bring Smithy along to it?"

"I can manage that. I'm pretty diplomatic, you know," said Bunter, with a fat smirk. "Fairly deep, you know."

"And we're to carry him off like a character in a film—once aboard the lugger, and the rest of it?"

"That's it," said Bunter. "You ain't afraid of Smithy, Temple? That cad Skinner's afraid Smith would punch him afterwards."

"Oh, you've asked Skinner to work the oracle, have you?"

"Not at all. I wouldn't!" said Bunter fatuously. "I've dropped Skinner; nothing to do with the fellow. Now, is it a go, you fellows?"

Fry made a movement to pick up the poker. Temple made him a sign, and Fry reluctantly relinquished his intention.

"Look here, Temple—" he began.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney. "I think —"

"Leave it to me," said Temple. "Who's top of this study? You fellows shut up and leave it to me. Now, this seems a jolly idea, Bunter."

"Isn't it?" said Bunter. "I've thought it out, you know. Takes a fellow with some brains to think out a thing like this. But that's me all over."

"Let's have it quite clear. On Wednesday afternoon, say an hour before the St. Jim's match, we're hangin' around a car on the Friardale Road. You walk along with Smithy. We shove a passenger into the car and buzz off with him, whether he likes it or not, and keep him away from Greyfriars till the match is over?"

"That's it! He, he!"

"If the passenger objects, we sit on him—what?"

"He, he! Sit on him hard!" chuckled Bunter. "That's all right."

"It doesn't matter if we hurt him a bit?"

"Not at all."

"And we're not to take any notice of anythin' he says?"

"None at all."

"Well," said Temple thoughtfully, "I think we can accept that offer, Bunter."

"Good!"

"Look here, Temple—" shouted Fry and Dabney together.

"Shush!" roared Temple. "Leave it to me, I tell you! I'm runnin' this show. Leave it to me. Can't you trust your Uncle Cecil?"

"Oh!" said Dabney and Fry, beginning to comprehend at that.

"It's a go!" said Temple. "Rely on us, Bunter, to do exactly what I've said. Exactly that—no more and no less."

"Good man!" said Bunter; and he rolled away from Temple's study in a state of great satisfaction.

Fry shut the study door.

"Now, Temple, you ass!" he said. "If it's a jape, all right; but if you think we're

going to play a rotten trick on Smithy, or any other blessed fag—"

"Do you want me to punch your nose, Edward Fry?" inquired Temple politely. "If not, don't talk like a goat. We're going to carry out the programme."

"But—" howled Dabney.

"Bunter walks Smithy down to the car,"

said Temple, "and we take an unwilling passenger away for a motortrip—"

"We jolly well don't!" roared Fry.

"We do! Only the passenger won't be Smithy—"

"Eh?"

"What?"

"Got it now?" asked Temple blandly.

Fry and Dabney stared at Cecil Reginald for a moment or two blankly. Then there was a yell in Temple's study:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Apparently Temple's chums had "got it."

Vernon-Smith came on to the field. His rather hard face was very bright and cheery. "Haven't kept you waiting, what?" he said. "I had to see Bunter off—" "Off!" repeated Wharton. "Yes, he's gone for a motor ride with some Fourth Form fellows!" (See chapter 21)

But the heroes of the Remove, keen footballers as they were, did not expect to enjoy that match.

For, like the Old Man of the Sea on the shoulders of Sindbad the Sailor, there was the Owl of the Remove on the backs of the Greyfriars eleven.

Luck had befriended the Remove team

in the first tie, Smithy's jape had saved them in the second. But in the third and final tie for the Bunter Cup there was little left to hope for. Chance might help them—but all the chances were against Harry Wharton and Co., and they realised it. Man for man, team for team, they were every bit as good as St. Jim's—they flattered themselves that they were a trifle better. But Bunter made all the difference. They couldn't get rid of the



THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER

Awfully Deep!

"St. Jim's to-day!" said Bob Cherry.

It was Wednesday—clear and cool and sunny. It was a day for enjoying a football game, especially a match with so good a team as Tom Merry's from St. Jim's.

Old Man of the Sea. Nevertheless, they still nourished hope, chiefly in the glorious uncertainty of the great game of soccer. Anyhow, as Bob Cherry remarked, a game wasn't lost till it was won—and Tom Merry and Co. hadn't won it yet.

That Wednesday Billy Bunter strutted complacently. There was no chance this

time of the Bounder "dishing" him. On the other hand, Bunter had made masterly arrangements to dish the Bounder. On that subject he gave Wharton a hint that rather puzzled the captain of the Remove.

"Still thinking of playing Smithy?" Bunter inquired.

Wharton nodded.

"Better keep Squiff handy."

"Eh! Why!"

"You may want him, you know, or Nugent. Smithy might get left out at the last minute."

"How on earth could Smithy get left out?" demanded Wharton.

"Well, you never know, you know."

"Are you wandering in your mind, Bunter?" inquired the captain of the Remove.

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Well, what are you driving at?" demanded Wharton impatiently.

"That's telling!" said Bunter mysteriously. "I know what I know. If Smithy stands out you'll want Nugent or Squiff. Keep 'em handy. That's a tip."

"Smithy isn't going to stand out."

"He might."

With that Bunter rolled away, feeling that he had said enough—or perhaps a little too much. Harry Wharton looked for Vernon-Smith after dinner.

"You're fit, Smithy, I suppose?" he asked.

"Fit as a fiddle."

"You're not thinking of standing out of the match to-day?"

"No fear!"

"Bunter's got some potty idea in his head that you might. I suppose it's only his rot."

The Bounder grinned.

"I know. I've heard him burbling on the subject. Some idea of giving me what I gave him."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"If that's all, all right," he said.

"Right as rain!" said the Bounder, laughing. "If dear old Bunter plays any little game on me, I fancy he will find me awake—wide awake! Just a few!"

And the Bounder was very wide awake indeed when a little later, shortly before the

St. Jim's fellows were booked to arrive in their brake from Courtfield Station, Billy Bunter rolled up to him with an insinuating grin on his fat face.

"Smithy, old man——"

"Cough it up," said Vernon-Smith.

"Come for a stroll, will you, before the match?"

"Thanks, no."

"I'd really like you to, Smithy."

"Probably," assented the Bounder. "My society, I believe, is worth cultivating. Yours isn't. Roll off."

Billy Bunter's little round eyes glinted behind his spectacles. A short distance down the road towards Courtfield a motor-car was waiting, and three fellows of the Fourth Form were waiting along with it. Bunter relied on his diplomacy to get Smithy to the fatal spot. But Smithy did not seem to be taking any.

"I—I say, Smithy——"

"Buzz!" said Vernon-Smith briefly.

"I—I was going to say——"

"Dear old barrel, I don't want to hear you say anything, except that you're going to stand out of the St. Jim's match."

"You silly ass——"

"Good-bye!"

"Hold on, Smithy, the fact is—let's talk it over. I say, Smithy, suppose I stand out of the match——"

"Good man," said Vernon-Smith, cordial at once. He was quite willing to waste his time on Bunter, if it should lead to such a very desirable result. "Do that, old bean, and we'll all pass a vote of thanks."

"Suppose," said Bunter, with deep cunning—"suppose I went for a motor drive instead."

"Jolly good idea."

"Well, come and see me off, like a pal," said Bunter.

The Bounder stared at him.

"See you off!" he repeated.

"Yes. I've got the car!"

"You've got the car!" stammered Vernon-Smith in amazement. "You're really going to let us off this afternoon! Bunter, old man, you're worth your weight in tuck! I'll see you off with pleasure—never been so pleased in my life. Where's the car?"

"Waiting down the road, with some friends

of mine who are going," said Bunter. "Come along, Smithy."

"What-ho!"

In great amazement, mingled with a natural satisfaction, Herbert Vernon Smith strolled out of gates with Bunter. It seemed too good to be true—and, in fact, Vernon Smith did not quite believe it till he saw the car waiting by the side of the road—the engine running, the chauffeur in his seat, and Temple, Dabney, and Fry lounging round the car.

After that there seemed no room for doubt.

"You're really going?" ejaculated the Bounder.

Bunter grinned.

"There's the car!" he said. "Come on!"

Vernon-Smith walked towards the car with him, briskly. Bunter rolled on with the Bounder, grinning. The hapless Bounder was walking right into the trap—and Billy Bunter felt that he was deep, very deep indeed!

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER

The Passenger!

CECIL REGINALD TEMPLE smiled.

Fry and Dabney smiled.

Even the chauffeur smiled. The chauffeur had been given to understand that he was taking part in a schoolboy lark; and he had also been given a handsome tip. Three merry schoolboys were going to take a fourth for a long drive, unasked—just for a lark. That was how Bunter had put it, and the motorman did not see any harm in such a lark, especially as Bunter's hint was accompanied by a ten-shilling note over and above the hire of the car.

So there were smiles all round as Billy Bunter rolled up to the car with Vernon-Smith.

"I say, you fellows, ready?" said Bunter cheerily.

"Quite!" said Temple.

"Oh, rather!"

"Waitin', old fat bean," said Fry.

"Good luck," said the Bounder, cheerily.

"I hope you'll have a ripping run! Good old Bunter says he's going for a motor run instead of playing in the St. Jim's match."

"Does he?" ejaculated Temple.

"Oh, gad!" said Fry.

Bunter bestowed a fat wink on the Fourth-formers, conveying thereby that this was the deep diplomacy by which he had induced Vernon-Smith to enter the danger zone.

"I see!" said Temple, in reply to the wink. "You're an awfully deep old bird, Bunter."

"Just a few, what?" smirked Bunter.

"A fellow would have to get up very early in the mornin' to pull the wool over your eyes, Bunter," said Temple, with great gravity.

"I fancy so!" grinned Bunter.

"Well, I wish you a jolly drive, and lots of fun," said Vernon-Smith. "The fellows will simply love you, Bunter, when I tell them this! And I can tell you we'll play up our jolly hardest to keep the Bunter Cup in the family! Get back in time to see the Head make the giddy presentation to the victors."

"He, he, he!"

Bunter signed to the Fourth-formers. It was time for them to hurl themselves upon Vernon-Smith, seize him, and pitch him into the car.

But the Fourth-formers showed no sign of doing it.

Vernon-Smith gave them a cheery nod and turned to walk back to the school. Bunter blinked in amazed wrath at his confederates.

"Collar him!" he breathed.

"Eh! Collar whom?" asked Temple.

"Smithy, of course!"

"Collar Smithy?" repeated Temple, as if not understanding.

"You silly ass—after him!" gasped Bunter. "If he gets away, you won't have another chance. Quick!"

"All serene," said Temple cheerfully. "We're not runnin' any risk of losin' our passenger. Are we, you fellows?"

"Rely on us, Bunter," said Fry.

"Oh, rather!"

"But he's going!" howled Bunter. "After him!"

"What was the arrangement?" said Temple with a leisurely drawl that was quite exasperating to Bunter in the circumstances. "You were to bring Smithy here——"

"Quick——"



it was from the foot of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy that the ball went in. Seven minutes to go, and the visitors were one goal down! "A good game—a good game!" said Dr. Locke. And the game went on hard and fast (See Chapter 22)

"And then we were to put our passenger in the car——"

"Quick, I tell you; he'll get away!"

"But I never specified the name of the passenger," said Temple. "That was a trifling point you overlooked, Bunter."

"Wha-a-at?"

"In with him!" said Temple.

Vernon-Smith was at a good distance by that time. He did not think of looking back; he was hurrying to the school with the glad news that Bunter had decided to stand out of the match. Had he looked back, he would have seen a startling sight.

Temple and Dabney and Fry laid hands on Bunter together, and before he knew what was happening the Owl of the Remove was sprawling in the bottom of the car.

"Get off, driver!" shouted Temple.

"Yooop!" roared Bunter.

"Sit on his head, Fry."

"Groooogh!"

"Buck up, driver!"

"Mmmmmmmmm!"

For a moment or two the chauffeur stared blankly. Why Master Bunter should have tipped him for this was a mystery to him. Why Master Bunter should have hired the car in order to be carried off like this by his schoolfellows perplexed the chauffeur. If it was a "lark," it was a lark beyond the chauffeur's understanding. However, he concluded that Master Bunter knew his own business best.

So he started the car, and it ripped away on the Courtfield road at a great rate.

Temple and Dabney sat down, prepared to enjoy a spanking run in the fine, clear weather. Fry, for the present, sat on Bunter's head. From underneath Fry came a succession of frantic howls.

"Gerroff, you beast! Stop the car! Put me down! I shall miss the match! You potty duffers, I wanted you to bung Smithy in the car—not me! Can't you understand? Groooogh! Lemme gerrup!"

"Keep that passenger quiet, Fry."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm not the passenger," shrieked Bunter. "Smithy's the passenger, you ass."

"Your mistake," said Temple blandly.

"You're the passenger, old bean, and this is your reward for askin' us to play a dirty trick. Catch on?"

"Beast!"

"If you remember the arrangement, fat old bean, we were to shove a passenger—name not specified—into the car, and keep him away from Greyfriars till the match was over."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We're doin' it," continued Temple. "If he objected, we were to sit on him. Fry's doin' that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It wasn't to matter if we hurt him," continued Temple. "Well, I don't see that it matters. I'm not worryin' anyhow."

"And we were not to take notice of anythin' he might say. Well, we're not takin' any notice."

"Beast!"

"I don't think you ought to keep on grumblin' like that, Bunter, when we're carryin' out the arrangement to the very letter."

"Ow! Wow!"

"Are you hurt?" demanded Fry.

"Ow! Yes!"

"Well, that doesn't matter—accordin' to the arrangement."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow-ow-ow! Beast! Lemme up! Help!"

"If that passenger makes any more row, Fry, knock his head on the floor," said Temple.

"You bet!"

"Beast! Help! Fire! Yaroooooh!"

Bang!

"Whooooooop!"

"Have some more?" asked Fry.

"Ow! No! Wow!"

And Billy Bunter relapsed into infuriated silence while the car ate up the miles.

THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER

Too Good to be True!

"WHERE'S Bunter?"

Tom Merry and Co., of St. Jim's, were on the football ground at Greyfriars, looking very fit and cheery.

They chatted amicably with the Remove footballers, what time Harry Wharton was inquiring where Bunter was.

As a rule, when the St. Jim's footballers came over to Greyfriars for a regular fixture they came prepared for a stern struggle. But on this occasion a smiling confidence might have been detected in the looks of the Saints.

For they knew the peculiar condition of the Bunter Cup competition—they knew that Bunter was entitled to play for the Remove—and they knew Bunter.

That any team could win a match against anybody, playing Bunter, seemed incredible. That it would win a match against St. Jim's, playing Bunter, was impossible.

So Tom Merry and Co. had no doubt about the result; and, in fact, they sympathised with their opponents. Naturally, they had no objection to walking off with a handsome trophy. They were quite prepared to take the Bunter Cup home to St. Jim's, to be added to trophies already won. But, as good sportsmen, they would have preferred to see Wharton put his team in the field unhandicapped. They would have preferred a struggle with the home team at their best, and to win the cup by sheer good football.

"It's wuff on them!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked. "Vewy wuff indeed. Buntah ought not to make such a wotten sillay condition. If his fathah can't pwesent a cup without attachin' sillay unsportsman-like conditions, it is up to him not to pwesent a Cup at all."

"Right on the wicket," agreed Jack Blake. "But there it is—and Bunter's in the eleven! And, from what I've seen of Bunter, I fancy they might as well hand us the Cup without a match at all."

"Yass, wathah!"

"I fancy they know it, too," Tom Merry remarked. "It's rough, and no mistake."

"I wondah," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy thoughtfully—"I wonder if it would be any use my speakin' to Buntah."

The swell of St. Jim's looked inquiringly at his comrades through his celebrated eyeglass.

"Suppose I point out to him that he is actin' in a wotten unsportin' way? Suppose I mention that he is weally makin' a widiculous

exhibish of himself? Do you think it would do any good, Tom Mewwy?"

"Probably not!" said Tom, laughing.

"Pewwaps, as a visitah, it would be scarcely polite, howevah, to tell him what I think of him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I couldn't tell him what I think of him, in polite language," said Monty Lowther. "But I say, we're close on time, and the chaps don't seem to be ready. Are they hanging it out in the hope that Bunter may burst at the last moment?"

"Bai Jove!"

"Where's Bunter?" Harry Wharton's voice was heard. "Where's Smithy? Dash it all, they might be on time."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, there's Smithy!" called out Bob Cherry.

Vernon-Smith came on the ground. His rather hard face was very bright and cheery.

"Haven't kept you waiting, what?" he asked. "It's not time yet."

"Jolly nearly," said Bob.

"Well, I had to see Bunter off. Blessed if I know what he wanted me to see him off for, but he made a point of it, and you bet I was jolly glad to see him go."

"See him off?" repeated Wharton.

"Yes. He's gone."

"Gone?"

"Gone for a motor-ride with some Fourth-form fellows—he's standing out of the game."

"What?" roared Bob.

"Standing out!" gasped Nugent.

The Bounder chuckled.

"Just that! Isn't it ripping?"

"Hurray!"

"Good old Bunter! He's let us off!"

"What a giddy escape!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"The escape is terrific."

"I rather thought you'd be pleased to hear it," grinned the Bounder. "Some news—what?"

"Yes," said Harry dubiously; "but——" He paused.

"But what?"

"Look here, Smithy——" Wharton paused again.

"Well?" grinned Smithy, guessing what was coming.

Harry Wharton looked at him very keenly. That the captain of the Remove was glad to hear that Bunter had changed his mind about claiming his right to play in the match went without saying. But a compact was a compact, and Wharton's word was his bond.

"If this is another jape, Smithy, it won't do," said Wharton quietly. "I don't say I blame that jape over the Rookwood match; it was Bunter's own look-out if he chose to make a fool of himself. But if you've bungled him into a car——"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob.

"Dash it all, that won't do!" said Peter Todd. "Look here, Smithy——"

"Keep your wool on, my sons," said the Bounder coolly. "It's nothing of the sort. Bunter came up to me and asked me to see him off on his drive; he said he was going motoring with some Fourth-Form chaps. I suppose you can take my word? Anyhow, you can ask some fellows who must have heard him; Hobson, of the Shell, was standing near."

"Of course we take your word," said Harry. "But——"

"I went out to the car with him," continued the Bounder. "Temple and Dabney and Fry, of the Fourth, were there. I left Bunter with them."

"Did you see them start?" asked Wharton, much perplexed.

"I didn't stay for that; I was in a hurry to get back."

Wharton wrinkled his brows. He did not doubt Smithy's statement, but he was quite puzzled. After all that Bunter had said, up to almost the last moment, it seemed impossible that he had changed his fat mind and let the Remove team off. It was, at least, utterly unlike Bunter.

"I—I hope he wasn't just pulling your leg, Smithy," said the captain of the Remove at last. "Of course, you know I should be glad if Bunter let us off. But he's got to have his rights. I think we'd better make certain that he's cleared off before I fill his place in the team. He's entitled to that."

"Fair play is fair play," said Johnny Bull. "Still, I wouldn't stretch a fine point too far, Wharton."

"Still, I think——"

"I tell you there's no doubt about it!" said the Bounder impatiently. "Bunter's chucking money about lately, but I suppose he wouldn't hire a car from Courtfield just to pull my leg."

"I suppose not. But——"

"Anyhow, he will have to be left out if he isn't here in time for the game," said Peter Todd. "You can't ask the St. Jim's fellows to wait for Bunter."

"I shouldn't," said Harry. "Still, it's not time for kick-off yet. Look here, we can easily see whether Bunter's gone. If not, the car will be still where Smithy saw it."

"That's so," said Smithy.

"If it's gone, we must take it that Bunter's gone in it," said Harry. "I'll go and see myself. You come with me, Smithy, and tell me just where you left Bunter."

"I don't mind."

Wharton called to Tom Merry.

"You don't mind hanging on a few minutes?"

"Not in the least," answered the St. Jim's skipper cheerily.

Harry Wharton left the football ground with Vernon-Smith. The other fellows gathered in a group and discussed the matter earnestly. They hoped from the bottom of their hearts that the captain of the Remove would return without Bunter, and with the news that he was gone. But it was really too good to be true, they felt; it was too much to hope for.

Tom Merry and Co, of course, heard the talk on the subject, and they heartily entered into the feelings of the Remove footballers. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was confident that Bunter would not turn up. He had a touching faith in human nature.

"You see, deah boys," said D'Arcy, "Buntah has realised that he was actin' in an unsportin' mannah. Natuwally, as soon as he realised it, he decided to dwop it. Any fellow would."

"Any fellow but Bunter," said Johnny Bull.



"Temple spoofed me! He mopped me into the car, instead of Smithy!" gasped Bunter. "And I had to pay for the car—as I'd ordered it!" "Ha, ha, ha!" Billy Bunter was the only one in the room who did not think it was a laughing matter! (See Chapter 23)

"Let's hope for the best," said Toddy. "But if Bunter decided to let us off, it's queer that he never told us so. He told Smithy, but he ought to have told Wharton."

"I quite undahstand that, deah boy; he gwacefully wetired fwom the scene, not wishin' to be embawwassed by your gwatitude."

"Oh, my hat! Not Bunter!"

"Yaas, and it shows that Buntah has some vewy fine feelin's—which is all the more gwatifyin' because it is so surpwisin', you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I hope D'Arcy's right," grinned Bob Cherry. "Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here they come! Without Bunter!"

"Oh, good!"

"What's the news?" yelled a dozen voices as Harry Wharton and the Bounder came back.

"All serene!" said Harry cheerfully.

"The car's gone, and Bunter seems to have gone in it. He's let us off, though I can't understand it! He might have mentioned it to me."

"Yaas, wathah! But pewwaps he wished it to be a joyful surprise to you, deah boy," said D'Arcy.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, if that was his wish, he had it all right," he said. "It's a surprise, and a jolly joyful one."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You'll play, Nugent," said Harry. "Bob goes in at half, and Smithy in the front line, and you, old chap. I hope Bunter comes back in time to see the Cup presented, whoever wins it."

"Yes, rather. Good old Bunter!" said Bob.

Bob was feeling quite affectionate towards Billy Bunter just then.

And the footballers went into the field.

THE TWENTY-SECOND CHAPTER

Winning the Cup!

It was a great match.

Tom Merry and Co. were in fine form, and now that the Remove team was up to its full strength the visitors realised that they had to put their best foot foremost, and they did.

But the Remove also were in great form, and the relief caused them by Bunter's amazing departure had an invigorating and exhilarating effect on them. With that dead-weight gone from the team, with the Old Man of the Sea off their back, with the good man put in the place of a shockingly bad one, the Removites felt "bucked" to such an extent that they felt equal to encountering a league team.

Good as the St. Jim's men were, they found it hard to hold the home team. Harry Wharton and Co. were simply not to be denied.

The first half was a hard struggle, but it ended with the Remove one goal up.

The Greyfriars footballers took that as an augury of success, and in the interval they exchanged happy anticipations.

"We're going to win," said Bob Cherry. "One goal to nil is good enough for me. We'll pass a vote of thanks to Bunter. He's winning this match for us by going on a motor drive this afternoon."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It will be Bunter's win if we pull it off," said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Good old Bunter! Never dreamed that I should ever like the fellow so much," said Bob. "But he's really a good sort—sometimes. They say that absence makes the heart grow fonder—it certainly does in Bunter's case."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned his eyes on the cheery Remove footballers and smiled.

"Those chaps are awfully bucked," he remarked. "They think they are going to win the Cup. Of course, they're not. Still, they have a sportin' chance now."

Monty Lowther chuckled.

"Bunter's bucked them by dropping out,"

he remarked. "What a chance for you to buck us in the same way, Gussy!"

"I do not quite follow, Lowthah."

"By following Bunter's example," explained Lowther.

"I regard you as an uttiah ass!" said Arthur Augustus witheringly. "An uttiah cwass ass, Lowthah!"

"Time!" said Tom Merry, laughing.

The footballers lined up for the second half. Wingate, of the Sixth, referee in the final tie, blew the whistle.

Hard and fast went the game.

Tom Merry and Co. fought hard for goals, but goals did not come their way. It really seemed as if the Remove, in their intense relief at getting rid of Bunter, had been "bucked" to such an extent that they were irresistible.

Certainly they seemed to have the upper hand, in spite of the good football that was put up by the St. Jim's fellows.

"Goal!" came in a roar round the field.

The goal came from Vernon-Smith, and it was the second for Greyfriars.

"Oh, good old Smithy!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Bravo!"

"Goal! Goal!"

"Bai Jove," said Arthur Augustus, as the players walked back to the centre of the field, "you fellows will weally have to pull up your socks if we are goin' to win the Buntah Cup to-day."

"Play up!" said Tom Merry. "We've got fifteen minutes, and a jolly lot to do. Play up!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

St. Jim's played up heroically. They were attacking the home goal in great style when the Head and Mr. Quelch walked down to the field. After the match the Cup was to be presented to the winning team in Big Hall, by the Head in person, and it was to be a great occasion. The Head took a kindly interest in the matter, likewise Mr. Quelch. So they came down to see the finish.

"Goal!"

"Yaas, wathah—goal!" gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

It was from the aristocratic foot of Arthur Augustus that the ball had gone in for St.

Jim's. The visitors were one to two with seven minutes to go.

"A good game—a good game!" said Dr. Locke. "How does it go, Hobson?"

"Greyfriars two to one, sir," said Hobson, of the Shell.

"Good—very good!"

Hard and fast was the game after the St. Jim's goal. Tom Merry and Co. scarcely hoped to do more than equalise in the short space of time left to them; but a draw meant a replay, and that—although the footballers did not know it—would have meant a triumph for St. Jim's. For if the match had been replayed, certainly Billy Bunter would have claimed his right to figure in it. No doubt Harry Wharton and Co. thought of that dreadful possibility. At all events, they played up in the last minutes of the match as they had seldom played before, and St. Jim's, with all their efforts, could not get through.

Hard and fast, harder and faster, till the shrill blast of the whistle cut the air.

Phoop!

"Bai Jove," gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "this is weally vewy wuff. I am suah I should have taken anothah goal in anothah minute or so. Vewy wuff indeed!"

"Greyfriars wins!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Hurray for us!" gasped Nugent.

"Hurray for Bunter, you mean," chortled Smithy. "Bunter's done it, done it all. Good old Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Jolly good game, old man," said Tom Merry, smacking Harry Wharton cheerily on the shoulder. "You've got the Cup, but I think we made you earn it."

"I think you did," said Harry, laughing. "We've been lucky to win. Good game, anyhow."

"Yaas, wathah!"

The footballers, feeling pretty thoroughly gruelled, trooped off the field. Throughout the Remove there was keen satisfaction; even Skinner and Co. rejoiced in the victory. Three matches the Remove had played for the Cup, and, by luck and pluck, they had won them all three; and they rejoiced accordingly.

* * *

There was a great spread in the Rag after the historic match, the St. Jim's footballers being entertained by the victors. Bunter was not forgotten. The Removites were feeling so kindly now towards Bunter that they missed him from the spread; they felt that he would have enjoyed it so much. But Bunter had not yet returned, and when the crowd gathered in Hall for the great presentation, even then Bunter had not returned. Harry Wharton and Co. looked for him and inquired for him, anxious that he should not miss the impressive scene. But he was not at Greyfriars, so the presentation had to proceed without him. And he had not turned up by the time Tom Merry and Co. left to catch their train.

It was not till close on lock-up that the hoot of a car was heard at the gates of Greyfriars.

Billy Bunter had returned at last.

THE TWENTY-THIRD CHAPTER

Bunter Is not Satisfied!

"I SAY, you fellows——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, old chap!"

"I—I say——"

Breathless, Billy Bunter burst into the junior Common-room, crowded with fellows discussing the late match and admiring the handsome silver cup that reposed in state on the sideboard.

There was a chorus of welcome as Bunter rolled in. He was, in a way, one of the most popular fellows in the Remove—for the moment! For had he not practically won the Cup for his Form by standing out of the final match?

"Trot in, old chap!"

"Had a good time?"

"Sorry you weren't here to see the Cup handed out."

"It's all right, Bunt; we won, old man!"

"Thanks to you, Bunter," said Vernon-Smith.

"The thankfulness is terrific, my esteemed, ludicrous Bunter."

Billy Bunter glared at the Removites. He glared with a glare that almost cracked his spectacles.

"I—I say, you fellows, have you played St. Jim's?"

"You bet! And beaten them," said Bob Cherry.

"I'm not having it!" roared Bunter.

"What?"

"I shall insist on a re-play."

"Wha-a-t?"

"I was going to play in the match!" howled Bunter.

Harry Wharton stared at him blankly.

"But you stood out," he said.

"I didn't!" shrieked Bunter.

"But you did," said Vernon-Smith, as puzzled as Wharton. "You went for a motor drive instead of your own accord. You told me so, and asked me to see you off. What are you driving at?"

Bunter gasped.

"Those Fourth Form rotters spoofed me!" he stuttered.

"Eh—who?"

"Temple and his gang!" gasped Bunter.

"I—I arranged with them to mop up Smithy and take him away in the car."

"What?" yelled the astounded Removites.

"I was going to jape him like that because he japed me on Rookwood day."

"Why, you cheeky villain," yelled Wharton, "if you'd kept one of my men out of the game, I'd have—have—have burst you!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Was that the game?" ejaculated the Bounder. "Bless my hat! I don't think Temple would have found it very easy to

get me into the car, if he'd tried! And I'm jolly certain he never meant to try."

"He spoofed me!" gasped Bunter. "He mopped me into the car instead of Smithy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That beast, Fry, sat on my head for miles, and miles—"

"Oh, dear!"

"They've taken me all round Kent for hours and hours—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"At my own expense!" shrieked Bunter. "I've had to pay for the car, as I engaged it!"

The Removites yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And that beast, Fry, sat on my head—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's not a laughing matter!" yelled

Bunter.

But the Removites evidently thought that it was. It was said of old that 'tis sport to see the engineer hoist by his own petard. Undoubtedly, William George Bunter had been hoist by his own petard. Bunter was the only fellow who did not regard it as a laughing matter. The other fellows did, and the room almost rocked with laughter.

* * *

Billy Bunter, for days and days, was eloquent on the subject. His indignant eloquence, indeed, seemed to have no limit.

But Bunter's eloquence could not alter facts. The Cup competition was over and the Greyfriars Remove had won the Bunter Cup!

THE END





A False Alarm!

An Amusing Story of
ROOKWOOD SCHOOL

Featuring

TUBBY MUFFIN

The Famous Fat Boy of the Fourth

By TEDDY GRACE

"TELEGRAM for Master Muffin!"

The uniformed boy who pushed his red bicycle into the Rookwood quadrangle made quite a sensation.

Telegrams for "Master Muffin" were like figs in the average fig-pudding—few and far between. Sometimes Tubby went right through a term without getting a telegram. Not being a person of importance—except in his own estimation—he very seldom received a wire. Few of Tubby's relatives ever squandered a shilling over him, in this way. But a telegram had come now, and Tubby Muffin clutched eagerly at the buff-coloured envelope. His schoolfellows looked on eagerly while he opened it.

"Good news, Tubby?" inquired Jimmy Silver.

"I expect so."

But the expectations of Reginald Muffin

were not realised. He drew out the flimsy sheet, and glanced at the written message, and instantly his face changed colour. He gave a deep, dismal groan, and very nearly collapsed on the flagstones.

Instantly Jimmy Silver and Co. were full of concern.

"Is it bad news, Tubby?"

"Anybody ill?"

"Brace up, old fellow!"

Tubby groaned again—a deep, sepulchral groan.

"Oh, dear! This is too awful for words! Talk about a giddy bombshell! He—he's coming! This afternoon, too!"

"Eh?" ejaculated Jimmy Silver in surprise. "Who's coming this afternoon?"

"The Holy Terror!"

"And who might that happen to be?" asked Lovell.

"My Uncle Roger."

"Well, you ought to be jolly bucked to receive a visit from your uncle," said Newcome. "Uncles don't drop in every day. Wish one of mine would roll up, with a cheery smile and a fat remittance."

"You—you don't understand," faltered Tubby. "This particular uncle is a fair tartar! He's a retired colonel, and he goes purple in the face on the slightest provocation. He called some time ago, you remember, and he gave me an awful lamming with his walking-stick, just because he got a rotten report about me from my form-master. I'm afraid history will repeat itself this afternoon. Oh, dear, confound Uncle Roger and all his works!"

The telegraph-boy waited until this outburst was over. Then he asked if there was any reply.

"No," grunted Tubby.

He tipped the lad the princely sum of one penny, and dismissed him.

Then Tubby glanced once again at the fateful telegram.

"Muffin, Rookwood, Coombe, Hants.—Calling on you this afternoon about three.—UNCLE."

Of course, Tubby had more uncles than one. But he had no doubt that the particular uncle who had sent this message was his Uncle Roger, since the rest of his avuncular relatives hardly ever came to Rookwood. Besides, the telegram had been despatched at Winchester, and that was where Uncle Roger lived.

Tubby crumpled up the telegram, and hurled the little ball of paper to the winds. Then, without another word to Jimmy Silver and Co. he rolled moodily away.

"I must try and dodge this somehow!" he groaned. "I simply can't face the Holy Terror. He's bound to ask Dalton how I've been shaping in class, and Dalton will shake his head in that grave way of his, and say, 'Your nephew, sir, is the worst slacker in my form!' Then Uncle Roger will see red, and chase me round the corridors and pitch into me with his walking-stick."

Tubby shuddered at the prospect. By hook

or by crook, he told himself, he must dodge the coming ordeal.

The obvious thing to do was to go out of gates, and stay out all the afternoon. This, however, Tubby was unable to do, for he had been gated for a week by the Head, for raiding the school pantry at dead of night. If he attempted to leave the school precincts, he would probably be seen and stopped by a prefect.

Presently an inspiration came to Tubby.

Why not go to the matron, and represent that he was unwell? He would then spend the afternoon in the sick bay, and give instructions that no one was to be admitted on any pretext. He would, if necessary, feign desperate illness, and the matron would keep all visitors at bay.

"Conspiracies no sooner should be formed than executed," said Shakespeare; and Tubby Muffin acted on this advice. He rolled away to the sanatorium, and knocked at the door of the matron's room. During the brief interval of waiting, Tubby assumed a look of appalling anguish. The door opened, and the kindly old matron appeared. She gazed at the plump junior, first with concern, and then with suspicion.

"Good gracious, whatever are you pulling such faces for, Master Muffin?"

"Ow, I—I'm awfully ill, ma'am!" groaned Tubby.

"Come, come! What is the matter with you?"

"I've got shooting, stabbing pains in my chest—"

"Indigestion," said the matron tersely, "I will give you a couple of tablets."

"It's not indigestion!" Tubby almost shrieked. "It's ten thousand times worse than that! The pain's going right down my legs. You can't get indigestion in your legs!"

The matron looked very sharply at Tubby. Then she darted into her room, and returned with a thermometer. This she promptly inserted between Tubby's lips.

If Tubby could have done anything to make his temperature rise to a hundred and four, or thereabouts, he would not have hesitated. But, alas, the matron's eye was

upon him, and there was no chance of playing tricks with the thermometer.

Presently the matron removed the instrument and shook it and examined it.

"Why, your temperature is perfectly normal!" she said. "There cannot be anything the matter with you. If you experience any discomfort, then it must be due to over-feeding. I have in my surgery a special pill—"

"Groo! I don't need a pill, ma'am. What I want is an afternoon in the sick bay, until the delirium passes off."

"But you are not delirious, you utterly stupid boy!"

"I shall be in a minute," said Tubby hopefully. "I've got pneumatic fever—"

"What?"

"Or else it's fatty regeneration of the heart—I'm not sure which. I wish you'd show me a little sympathy, ma'am, instead of glaring at me like that!"

But the matron, kindly soul though she was, had no sympathy to waste on malingerers. She promptly sent Tubby Muffin about his business, and the fat junior realised, as he went mournfully down the stairs, that his little ruse had been an utter failure.

Was there no way of dodging the impending

interview with Uncle Roger? Yes. Another scheme leapt into Tubby's mind—quite a simple scheme, so simple that he could have kicked himself for not having thought of it before.

He would hide in the coal-cellar! And he would lie concealed in those dim regions until Uncle Roger, despairing of finding him,

took his departure.

Tubby waited until nearly three o'clock — at which hour the martinet was due to arrive — and then he made his way by stealth to the coal-cellar.

No prying eyes saw Tubby Muffin descend the stone steps which led to that gloomy dungeon.

It was not a pleasant hiding-place, but it was a very effective one. It was extremely unlikely that Uncle Roger, when making search for his plump

nephew, would think of exploring the coal-cellar.

Having entered the cellar, Tubby shut the door after him, and sat down.

His surroundings were very dark and depressing. He shuddered to think he might have to spend some hours in this place. It made him realise what a prison cell must have been like in the days of old



"Good gracious, whatever are you pulling such faces for, Master Muffin?" exclaimed the Matron. "Ow! I—I'm awfully ill, ma'am!" groaned Tubby



"Has—has my uncle gone?" asked Tubby feebly.
"You trabjous duffer!" shouted Jimmy Silver. "We've hunted high and low for you. It wasn't your Uncle Roger who came!" "Wha-at!" gasped Tubby.

The time passed with terrible slowness. Tubby had a luminous wristlet-watch, and he glanced at it every now and then, only to find that the minute-hand seemed to be standing still.

"This is too awful for words!" he groaned. "It's almost as big an ordeal as meeting Uncle Roger! But I must stick it out, somehow!"

The atmosphere was suffocating, like that of the Black Hole of Calcutta. Tubby felt like a deep-sea diver who longed to come up for air.

Slowly, ever so slowly, the afternoon dragged out its weary length. And then voices sounded in Tubby Muffin's ears—the familiar voices of Jimmy Silver and Co.

"He can't be in the coal-cellar, surely?" Lovell was saying.

"Well, it's about the only place we haven't explored," replied Jimmy Silver. "Let's investigate."

Tubby could hear a clatter of feet on the stone steps without.

"I—I say, you fellows—" he called feebly.

"My only aunt!" exclaimed Newcome. "He's here!"

The door opened, and Jimmy Silver flashed an electric torch into the dark recess.

Tubby Muffin scrambled to his feet in alarm. "My uncle!" he muttered. "Has—has he gone?"

"Yes, you frabjous duffer!" shouted Jimmy Silver. "We've hunted high and low for you. We've turned the whole school upside-down! It wasn't your Uncle Roger who came—"

"W-w-what?"

A sickening fear crept into Tubby Muffin's mind.

"It was your Uncle Jack," said Lovell. "Awfully decent sort. He happens to be staying at your Uncle Roger's place, down at Winchester, and he thought he'd pop up to Rookwood this afternoon to see you. He was going to stand you a feed, and give you a fiver, and goodness knows what! But he was annoyed to think you were hiding from him, and at last he went off in a huff. So there's no feed and no fiver!"

Tubby Muffin almost swooned. He came crawling out of the coal-cellar, looking the picture of abject misery.

"D—do you mean to say I've missed a feed?" he almost shrieked.

"Afraid so, fatty."

"And—and a fiver!"

"Your Uncle said he would have tipped you a fiver, if he could have found you," said Jimmy Silver. "What did you want to go and hide for, you young ass?"

"I—I didn't know! I—I thought it would be Uncle Roger for certain! and now—Oh, my hat!" groaned the unfortunate Tubby.

Gradually he digested the painful truth. That telegram had not been from Uncle Roger at all, but from Uncle Jack! Tubby had been too ready to jump to conclusions, and this was the result!

"Oh, crumbs!" he gasped. "This is about the biggest shock I've ever had in my life!"

So wretched and woebegone was the expression on Tubby's face that Jimmy Silver and Co. took compassion on him.

"Cheer up, old porpoise!" said Jimmy Silver. "What do you say to a feed at the tuckshop, at our expense?"

What Tubby Muffin did say—whether "Yes" or "No"—the reader will have little difficulty in deciding!

THE END

ROOKWOOD REFLECTIONS

Potted Pars concerning the famous Hampshire School

By JIMMY SILVER

Rookwood School ought to appeal to every money-making profiteer, because it is "a goodly pile!"

THERE are two sides to every argument, and there are two sides to Rookwood School—the Classical and the Modern. The former is far and away the most important; the latter being merely a side-show!



Sergeant Kettle "boils over"

THE Rookwood colours are purple and green. Tommy Dodd, who has an eye for colour, suggests that red, white and blue should be added, with a dash of yellow. If this were done, our footer eleven would be known as the Rainbow Rovers!

THE school tuckshop is kept by Sergeant Kettle. When anything annoys him, he has frequently been known to live up to his name, and "boil over"!



"Mack"

THE Rookwood porter is a person named Mack. Being a "Mack," he often appears to be "worn" on a wet day!

TUBBY MUFFIN, the Falstaff of the Fourth, declares he ought to be in the junior footer eleven, because the forwards are so "well fed." On the other hand, Tubby wouldn't care to be a golfer, because a golfer sometimes "misses a tee"!

MR. MOONEY, the master of the Shell, is not such a miserable gentleman as his name implies. To see him doing the fox-trot at the Rookwood Fancy Dress Ball the other evening, you would have thought him anything but "mooney"!

TOM RAWSON, the scholarship junior, confesses that his favourite hobby is devouring the classics. Tubby Muffin's pet hobby, on the other hand, is devouring jam-tarts!

MR. ROGER MANDERS is responsible for the administration of the Modern Side. About the only thing he "administers" is the cane!

THE aforesaid Mr. Manders is a martyr to indigestion. We suggest that he should chew each mouthful of food ninety-six times! We have passed on the same advice to our champion gormandiser, Tubby Muffin; but Tubby prefers to bolt his food whole!

WE know a certain Modern junior who is at the top of his form when playing footer, and at the bottom of his Form in the classroom!

WE wonder if James Frederick Towle, of the Modern Side, always gives himself a brisk rub-down after his morning tub? And is he a rough Towle, or a soft one?

IT is hardly surprising to learn that Duff of the Fifth is a great lover of plum pudding!

LOVELL, Newcombe, Raby, and the writer of these "Reflections," are known to the world as "The Fistical Four." We delight in boxing, and are always keen on having a few rounds in the gym. Tubby Muffin wishes to state that the only sort of rounds he fancies are rounds of buttered toast!



Mr. Manders

A LANDMARK IN THE HISTORY OF A FAMOUS SCHOOL



To face page 121

THE GREAT BARRING-OUT AT ROOKWOOD

THE GREAT REBELLION AT ROOKWOOD

THE French Revolution of 1789 proved infectious, for it led to acts of lawlessness in other parts of the globe. In that memorable year, Rookwood School was the scene of a great rebellion, or "barrington."

There have been upheavals at Rookwood before and since, but none can compare with the Great Rebellion of 1789.

Those who have carefully studied the sequence of events which culminated in the Great Rebellion must confess to a sneaking sympathy with the rebels. They had a grievance, and a just grievance. It was wrong of them, certainly, to cast law and order to the winds; to barricade themselves in the building; and to defy all efforts to dislodge them; but they had every excuse for adopting these drastic methods. The Headmaster of that period—Dr. Lamb—was not nearly such a docile person as his name might suggest. He was a tyrant of the worst type. Rookwood had long groaned under his iron rule. He wielded the birch-rod far too freely; he was hard and cruel; and he had no sympathy with boys.

At that time the Modern Side had not been built; and it was the Classical Side, or School House, which the Rookwood rebels successfully held against the onslaughts of the enemy. The Head, the masters, and the prefects were "barred out," and their frantic efforts to gain admittance proved futile. Ladders were reared against the walls, only to be dashed down by the rebels. Attempts to batter down the doors were repulsed by heavy fire—and water—from above. The rebels were "top dogs," and they remained masters of the situation throughout.

The rebellion was brought to an end by the intervention of one of the school governors, Sir John Derring. This worthy gentleman made a thorough investigation of the facts, and came to the conclusion that Dr. Lamb was not a fit and proper person to have charge of Rookwood. The tyrant was turned out of office; the rebellion ceased; and Rookwood resumed the even tenor of its way.

SPORTING RECORDS OF ROOKWOOD

By GEORGE BULKELEY

(Captain of the School)

CRICKET

Rookwood has wonderful traditions as a cricketing school. The game was first introduced here in 1837—long before the Modern Side came into existence. In those far-off days, the fellows played in their "Sunday best" instead of in flannels; and the tight-fitting Eltons must have been most uncomfortable!

* * *

The school started off grandly, going through two seasons without tasting defeat. Then all their best players left in a body, and a lean time ensued. But the standard of play soon revived, and Rookwood can point to a brilliant record of victories.

* * *

The highest score standing to the credit of Rookwood first eleven is 740 (all out). This huge total was put together in two days, in the summer of 1899. Lockwood, who captained the team at that period, scored 266, not out. This is also a record.

* * *

Rookwood Juniors have never compiled a total exceeding 500, but they have been wonderfully consistent. Jimmy Silver topped the batting averages last season, with the fine average of 52.

* * *

JOHN ASHWOOD, known to fame as the biggest hitter Rookwood has ever had, once hit four "sixes" in one over! On another occasion, he gave a display of hurricane hitting, and scored 135 runs in one hour!

* * *

PLAYING for Rookwood against Greyfriars, in 1905, E. P. Howell-Griffiths scored a century in each innings, his scores being 120 and 105 not out.



Bernard Barton

BOXING

BERNARD BARTON was the best boxer who ever donned gloves on behalf of Rookwood School. He went through his school career without a single defeat. Barton was six feet in height, and he towered over all his opponents. He did not, however, rely upon height and girth, but upon skill and science.

BARTON once fought a practically one-handed fight of twelve rounds, it being afterwards discovered that he had broken a bone in his wrist.

In the last Boxing Tournament, Jimmy Silver defeated three successive opponents in the first round! He eventually reached the final, where Tommy Doyle gave him a hard fight. The Irish junior was forced to retire in the fifth round.

FOOTBALL

ROOKWOOD's football record is not so lustrous as its cricketing record. Nevertheless, some magnificent performances have been given from time to time.

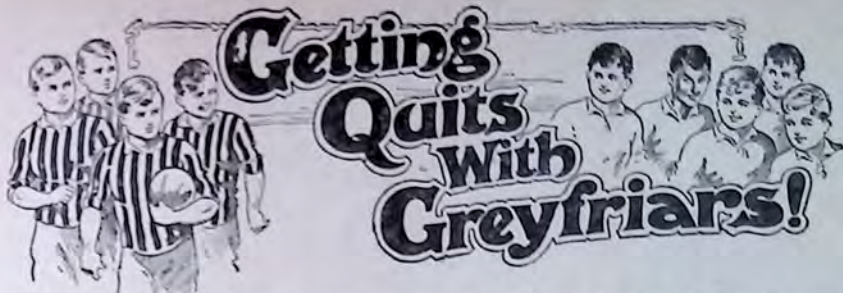
THE most memorable match on record was that between Rookwood and St. Clive's, in the first round of the Public Schools' Challenge Cup contest. The ground was practically under water, and this led to many mistakes by both sets of defenders. There was quite a glut of goals, the final score being a draw of seven goals each! Rookwood won the replay by two goals to nil.

ROOKWOOD has only won the Public School's Cup on one occasion. This was in 1913. On three other occasions Rookwood has reached the final only to be beaten at "the last lap."

JIMMY SILVER scored 135 goals last season for the Rookwood junior eleven.



Jimmy Silver



A Splendid Complete Story of Jimmy Silver & Co. of Rookwood

By OWEN CONQUEST

THE FIRST CHAPTER

Trouble in the Family

TOMMY DODD gave a snort. He was very annoyed.

Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle, peering over their chum's shoulder, snorted also. They, too, were very annoyed.

The Three Tommies of the Modern Side at Rookwood were standing before the notice-board in the hall.

The following announcement, in the bold, familiar handwriting of Jimmy Silver, leader of the Classics and junior captain of football, greeted their gaze:

"ROOKWOOD v. GREYFRIARS.

"This very important fixture will be played this afternoon on our own ground. The teams will be as follows:

GREYFRIARS.—Bulstrode; Bull, Brown; Cherry, Todd (P.), Linley; Vernon-Smith, Penfold, Wharton (capt.), Nugent, H. Singh.

ROOKWOOD.—Cook; Rawson, Raby; Doyle, Conroy, Van Ryn; Lovell, Newcome, Erroll, Silver, and Dodd.

"(Signed) JAMES SILVER,
"Captain."



Bad news for Tommy Dodd!

"If this is Jimmy Silver's idea of fairness, I don't think much of it!" growled Tommy Dodd. "Just look at the composition of our team! Isn't it enough to make a fellow's blood boil?"

"Faith, an' it's a scandal!" said Tommy Doyle.

"It's an insult to the Moderns!" declared Tommy Cook warmly. "Only three of us are given a show. Rawson and Raby are Classics. Conroy and Van Ryn are Classics. All the fellows in the forward line are Classics, except Tommy Dodd. It's a howling shame!"

"I'm going to see Jimmy Silver about this," growled Tommy Dodd. "I'll give him a piece of my mind!"

"Fire away, then," said a cheery voice.

The three Tommies turned, to find themselves confronted by the Fistical Four—Silver, Lovell, Newcome, and Raby.

"Look here, Silver, I've got a bone to pick with you," said Tommy Dodd. "Do you call this a representative team?"

"I call it the best we can muster," said Jimmy Silver; "and that's all that matters."

"But there are only three Moderns in it—"

"As those three Moderns happen to be yourselves," said Lovell, "why grumble?"

"Because we want fair play for the others."
 "What others?" asked Jimmy Silver.
 "Well, there's Lacy, and Towle, and Wadley, and McCarthy—all topping players."
 "But hardly worth places in the eleven," said Jimmy Silver.

"In your opinion!" said Tommy Dodd bitterly.

"Well, it's my opinion that counts. I'm skipper."

Football arguments between Classicals and Moderns always led up to that indisputable fact—that Jimmy Silver was skipper. Jimmy's word was therefore law. The Moderns could protest and plead and persist, but all to no purpose. It was Jimmy Silver who selected the team, and his decision, like that of the editor, was final.

"When I picked the team," said Jimmy, "I didn't take any notice whether a fellow was Classical or Modern. Only one thing counted with me, and that was merit. I selected the players strictly according to ability. A skipper who adopts any other method is not doing his duty."

The three Tommies were scowling.

"You can't get away from the fact that there are only three Moderns in the side," said Tommy Dodd.

"And you can't get away from the fact that I'm skipper, and have the final say in everything," said Jimmy Silver cheerfully.

"More's the pity," growled Tommy Dodd.

"Look here, don't let's be at each other's throats on the morning of the match," said

Newcome. "We've got to go all out to lick Greyfriars. That's the great point."

"Then why doesn't Silver choose the best team?" demanded Tommy Cook.

"It's chosen," said Jimmy Silver. "Here endeth the merry argument."

And the Fistical Four linked arms and strolled away.

The three Moderns glanced after them with frowning faces.

"Faith, an' Jimmy Silver's always ridin' the high horse like this," said Tommy Doyle. "It would serve the spalpeen roight if we went on stroike, an' refused to turn out for the match."

"We can't do that," said Tommy Dodd. "There's the honour of Rookwood to consider. We must knuckle under to Jimmy Silver, and let him have his own way. It won't be for long. One of these days, when we get licked by about six to nix, the fellows will be crying out for a new skipper. Hallo! There goes the gong for lunch."

The three Tommies made their way to

the dining-hall. The footballers were lunching early, for the Greyfriars eleven was due to arrive shortly.

Tommy Dodd found a letter on his plate. It had come by the midday post.

"It's from the pater," he mused, glancing at the handwriting on the envelope. "Hope there's a remittance inside. I want cheering up."

But there was nothing of a cheering nature in Mr. Dodd's letter. Decidedly the reverse, in fact.



"You are a traitor!" said Jimmy Silver. Smack! Tommy Dodd unclenched his right hand, and brought it with a report like a pistol-shot, across Jimmy Silver's cheek (See Chapter 2)

"Your mother has been taken suddenly ill," ran the letter. "Her condition is not at present dangerous, but it may become so. In that event, I will send you a telegram, so that you may come home at once."

"Oh, crumbs!" muttered Tommy Dodd, in dismay.

Cook and Doyle were busily engaged in reading letters of their own. They failed to observe that there was anything amiss with their chum. And Tommy Dodd did not enlighten them.

"The mater ill!" he muttered to himself. "I might be wired for at any moment. It's rotten!"

It certainly was. Tommy Dodd would need to be at his very best that afternoon. He was to partner Jimmy Silver on the left wing, and Jimmy would expect great things of him. Yet how would he be able to give his mind to the game when there was a crisis at home?

At first, Tommy Dodd thought of standing down from the match. He could explain the position to Jimmy Silver, who would play a substitute in his place.

But would Jimmy Silver understand? He might think that Tommy Dodd was "showing off," as the result of the argument which had taken place.

True, Tommy could have shown his father's letter to Jimmy Silver; but he didn't care to. Tommy Dodd was sensitive about his home affairs. He tucked the letter away in his pocket, without even taking Tommy Doyle and Tommy Cook into his confidence.

On reflection, Tommy Dodd decided to play. Although haunted by the thought of

his mother's illness, he hoped to be able to banish it from his mind for ninety minutes, during the tussle with Greyfriars.

"I'll try and forget it for a time!" he muttered.

But Tommy Dodd had as much chance of forgetting his mother's illness as of forgetting that he was on the earth. His play was bound to suffer. He would have been wiser to have explained the position to Jimmy Silver, and cried off the match. But he had made up his

mind to play; and there was nothing more to be said.

The Greyfriars team, skippered by Harry Wharton, arrived after lunch. And three-quarters of the population of Rookwood School wended its way to the football ground.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

An Amazing Match!

"PLAY up, Rookwood!"

"On the ball, Jimmy Silver!"

The teams were lined up in readiness for the great tussle.

Bulkeley of the Sixth was the referee. He sounded the whistle, and the ball was

kicked off from the centre.

The Friars were the first to make ground. Their forwards raced away in splendid formation, and Tommy Cook, in the Rookwood goal, crouched forward anxiously.

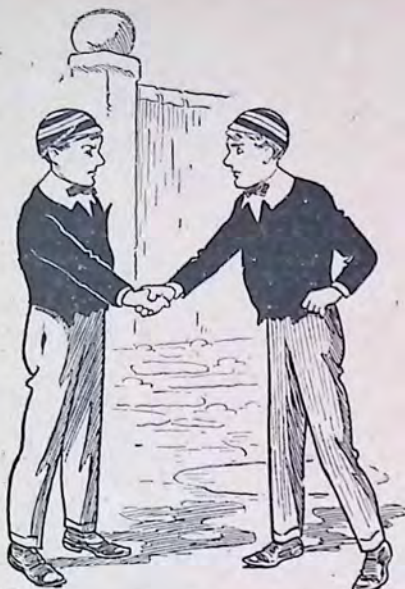
"Look out, Tommy!"

"Keep your peepers open!"

The spectators were no less anxious than Tommy Cook. The Greyfriars forwards were very dashing and dangerous. They swung the ball from wing to wing in a businesslike manner.



The Captain of Rookwood pointed towards the dressing-room. "Silver! Dodd!" he rapped out. "Get off the field" (See Chapter 2)



"Forgive me, Tommy!" said Jimmy Silver simply. "I didn't know the facts." Tommy Dodd wrung Jimmy's hand warmly. "That's all right!" he said cheerily (See Chapter 3)

Raby, at back, had a thrilling duel with Vernon-Smith, the speedy Greyfriars winger, and the Rookwood junior was left standing. Vernon-Smith whipped the ball across to Frank Nugent, who fired in a great shot.

The ball eluded Tommy Cook's grasp, and landed in the roof of the net.

"Goal!"

There was no jubilation in the cry. The Rookwood supporters were looking very worried. This was a disastrous start, from their point of view.

"Buck up, Rookwood!"

"This will never do!"

Kit Erroll, playing at centre-forward for the home team, did his best to put a better complexion on matters. He and Jimmy Silver made headway by means of clever passes, and eventually Jimmy Silver, hard pressed by an opposing back, put in a deft

touch, which placed Tommy Dodd in possession.

Tommy had a clear run through, with nobody to hamper him. But he could not keep his thoughts on the business in hand. Those thoughts were far away. Instead of cutting in towards goal, Tommy Dodd dallied with the ball—stood looking at it with a vacant air, as if puzzling what to do with it—and while he dallied, Tom Brown of Greyfriars sent him reeling with a powerful charge, and punted the ball well up the field.

There was a chorus of groans from the touchline.

"Buck up, Dodd!"

"Pull yourself together!"

Tommy Dodd flushed crimson. And Jimmy Silver frowned at the offending junior.

"You threw away the chance of a lifetime," he said irritably. "Wake your ideas up!"

That was not exactly the proper way for a football captain to speak. But there was some excuse for Jimmy Silver. His side was a goal down; there had been a glorious chance of equalising, and Tommy Dodd had bungled badly.

After that incident, Tommy could do nothing right. He kept glancing towards the entrance to the ground, expecting at any moment to see a telegraph-boy approach with a wire, summoning him home.

Now, it is impossible to look out for telegraph-boys and play football at the same time. And Tommy Dodd's play suffered. He went all to pieces, and was little more than a passenger.

Jimmy Silver grew more and more annoyed as the time went on. He was tired of urging Tommy Dodd to pull himself together. The fellow seemed hopeless. He was beaten every time by Tom Brown of Greyfriars, who dispossessed him of the ball with the greatest ease.

Tommy Dodd's poor play disorganised the whole of the Rookwood forward line. They were accustomed to playing in harmony, and a weak link in the chain affected the whole line.

Not once in the first half did Rookwood ever look like scoring.

Greyfriars, on the other hand, applied

heavy pressure, and but for the sterling work of Rawson and Raby, at back, they would have added to their score.

Half-time came, with Greyfriars leading by a goal to nothing.

Jimmy Silver was angry, and he made no attempt to conceal the fact.

"Dodd's playing a putrid game!" he growled. "He's had plenty of openings, and made a hash of the whole jolly lot."

"What's the matter with the fellow?" asked Kit Erroll. "Is he ill?"

"Ill? Of course not!" snapped Jimmy Silver. "He's doing this deliberately!"

"Phew! Draw it mild, Jimmy! You're accusing him of wilfully letting the side down, and that would be rank treachery. Why should he want to let the team down?"

"Because I'm only playing three Moderns, and it doesn't meet with his approval. Unless Dodd bucks up in the second half I'll tax him to his face with his treachery!"

Kit Erroll sighed. He realised that Jimmy Silver was too furious to be reasoned with.

There was trouble in the team, and it looked like developing. Which was not a happy augury for Rookwood's success. A team divided against itself cannot hope to win matches.

Bulkeley blew his whistle for the game to be resumed.

The second half was a repetition of the first.

Tommy Dodd did nothing right. He was feeling desperately unhappy, and he could not fix his mind on football. Time and again he was robbed of the ball. A fag in the First would have showed to better advantage.

The climax came when the second half was twenty minutes old.

Kit Erroll raced away with the ball at his toes, bent upon redeeming Rookwood's fallen fortunes. He tricked three men in succession, and then Johnny Bull came charging towards him. He could not hope to beat Johnny, who was a tower of strength in the Greyfriars defence. But he saw Tommy Dodd standing in an unmarked position, and he promptly touched the ball across to him.

"Now, Dodd!"

"You've an open goal!"

"Don't miff it!"

Tommy Dodd certainly had the goal at his mercy. He had only to tap the ball into a corner of the net. But to the horror of the onlookers, he ballooned it high over the bar.

There was a positive howl from the touch-line.

"Rotten!"

"Call yourself a footballer?"

This crowning blunder on the part of Tommy Dodd caused Jimmy Silver's rage to overflow. Jimmy was long-suffering up to a point, but that point had been passed. He strode angrily towards the offending Modern.

"You cad!" he cried hotly. "You are deliberately trying to lose the match for us!"

At this accusation—one of the worst that can be levelled at any fellow who prides himself on being a sportsman—two flaming spots of colour appeared on Tommy Dodd's cheeks. He spun round upon his captain, his hands clenched, his face pale and set. It was a



Harry Wharton won the toss, and he set Jimmy Silver and Co. to face a strong wind (See Chapter 3)



In the last minute of the game Tommy Dodd ran through on his own and, drawing Bulstrode out, fired into the empty net. "Goal!" "Five up, be jabbers!" roared Tommy Doyle (See Chapter 3)

pretty problem to decide which was the angrier of the two.

"Are you accusing me of treachery?" asked Tommy Dodd, in a low tone.

"Yes. You are a traitor!"

Smack!

Tommy Dodd unclenched his right hand, and brought it with a report like a pistol-shot across Jimmy Silver's cheek. The next instant the two juniors, completely forgetting themselves, were fighting like tigers.

The spectators stood dumbfounded.

Fighting on the field of play was the sort of thing that only hooligans indulged in. Such a scene was unprecedented on the Rookwood ground.

Instantly there was a rush of feet towards the combatants.

"Scrapping!" gasped Kit Erroll, in dismay. "Stop them!"

"Drop it, you two!"

"You must be potty, fighting in front of the Greyfriars fellows!"

Bulkeley of the Sixth, his jaw set sternly, came striding on the scene.

"Silver! Dodd!" he rapped out.

At the sound of Bulkeley's voice, Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd came to their senses. They realised, in a flash, the enormity of their conduct. Whatever their quarrel, whatever hot words had passed between them, they should have deferred this scene until afterwards.

But it was now too late to undo the mischief.

The two combatants dropped their hands to their sides. Jimmy Silver's nose was swelling visibly. There was blood on Tommy Dodd's lips. Neither of the juniors were able to meet Bulkeley's stern, reproachful gaze. They hung their heads.

The captain of Rookwood pointed significantly towards the dressing-room.

"Silver and Dodd, get off the field!"

Consternation broke out among the players. The Rookwooders were dismayed; even the Greyfriars fellows were distressed.

Harry Wharton came up, and touched Bulkeley on the arm.

"Can't you overlook it, Bulkeley?" he asked. "They only did it in the heat of the moment, and they're both sorry."

Bulkeley shook his head.

"Ungentlemanly conduct on the football field must be punished," he said. "As referee, it is my duty to put down that sort of thing with an iron hand."

Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd walked slowly from the field, amid a profound silence. It was the first case of ordering-off that had occurred that season.

Rookwood were left with only nine men. Not that they would miss Tommy Dodd. But Jimmy Silver's absence would be a calamity.

"We will now get on with the game," said Bulkeley curtly.

Never was a more one-sided display than that which followed.

The Greyfriars forwards ran riot, and there was no stopping them. They put on four goals before the end came, and eventually ran out winners by five to nil.

A cloud hung over Rookwood that evening, a cloud of gloom.

Everybody lamented that regrettable scene on the football field. It had dealt a damaging blow at Rookwood's reputation of being good sportsmen.

There was a good deal of sympathy for Jimmy Silver, but none for Tommy Dodd. It was Dodd who had struck the first blow. It was Dodd's appalling play which had been the cause of the trouble. And Tommy Dodd was far and away the most unpopular fellow at Rookwood that evening.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

Turning the Tables!

TOMMY DODD was called away next morning by telegram.

Nobody knew the why and wherefore

of the sudden summons, excepting Tommy Dodd himself and Leggett of the Fourth.

Leggett was a Paul Pry and a Peeping Tom rolled into one. He picked up the crumpled telegram which Tommy Dodd had thrown away, and read it.

The message was brief and to the point.

"Come at once. Mother worse.—FATHER."

Now, Leggett was a talker and a tale-bearer; which was rather fortunate in this instance, for he told Jimmy Silver the whole story.

"I say, Silver," he said, going up to Jimmy in the quad. "Where do you think Dodd's gone?"

"Don't know, and don't care!" said Jimmy curtly. He was feeling very sore about the events of yesterday.

"He's been called home. His mater's awfully ill."

Jimmy Silver gave a sudden start.

"Are you sure of that, Leggett?" he asked quickly.

"Yes. I saw the telegram. And, by the way, Dodd had a letter by the midday post yesterday. It was to tell him of his mater's illness, I expect."

"Great Scott!"

Jimmy Silver speedily began to put two and two together.

This accounted for Tommy Dodd's wretched display against Greyfriars. He had been too concerned about his mother's illness to be able to concentrate on the game.

"No wonder Dodd was off-colour yesterday!" said Jimmy. "Wish I'd known this before the match!" he added miserably.

He felt that he had done Tommy Dodd a grave injustice. He had suspected treachery where no treachery was. He had called Tommy Dodd a traitor to his face. The remembrance of these things made Jimmy Silver feel very wretched.

Jimmy nodded shortly to Leggett, and strolled away to inform his chums of what he had heard. They were astonished when Jimmy explained.

"I've done Dodd a fearful injustice," he said, "and I must make it up to him when he comes back."

"Why didn't the silly duffer explain that his mater was ill?" said Lovell.

"I don't suppose he cared to," said Newcome. "He's a bit touchy about his home affairs."

"Well, I'm jolly glad I know the facts," said Jimmy Silver, "or I might have gone on supposing Tommy Dodd to be a traitor."

Two days elapsed before Tommy Dodd came back to Rookwood. He returned to the school with a lighter step and a happier face than when he had left it. His mother had come successfully through a brief but critical illness, and Tommy could look on the world with a smiling face once more.

Jimmy Silver was the first to greet him on his arrival. Jimmy looked very contrite as he held out his hand.

"Forgive me, Tommy," he said simply. "When I taxed you with treachery on the footer field; I didn't know the facts. I know them now, thanks to Leggett poking his nose into your affairs."

Tommy Dodd wrung Jimmy's hand warmly. "That's all right," he said cheerily. "We'll say no more about it."

"I've written to apologise to the Greyfriars fellows for making that scene on the field," said Jimmy Silver. "And Wharton wants us to play them again on Wednesday, on their own ground."

"Ripping!"

"I've altered the team slightly," Jimmy Silver went on, flushing a little. "There are five Moderns in it this time. I'm giving Lacy and Towle a show."

"That's awfully decent of you, Jimmy."

"Not at all. Newcome's twisted his ankle, and he's standing down, and Van Ryn's hardly up to form. So Lacy and Towle will take their places. We shall give the 'Friars a good run for their money, this time."

"Yes, rather!" said Tommy Dodd heartily.

When Wednesday came, Jimmy Silver's eleven was given a hearty send-off from Rookwood. They were determined to avenge that 5-0 defeat.

Harry Wharton and Co. gave the Rookwooders a cordial reception.

"I promise you there shall be no scrapping on the field this time," said Jimmy Silver. "It was all due to a rotten misunderstanding, and it shan't happen again."

"It had better not!" said Bob Cherry, with a chuckle. "Gwynne of the Sixth is referee, and Gwynne's method of dealing with players who get out of hand is to pick them up and knock their heads together!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a merry party of players that gathered on the Greyfriars football ground.

Harry Wharton won the toss, and he set Jimmy Silver and Co. to face a strong wind.

But the Rookwooders played up gallantly from the start, and after a sustained attack Kit Erroll headed a grand goal.

The Rookwood forwards were full of life and vim. It was a fast-moving, fleet-footed line, with Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd the star performers.

Lacy filled Newcome's place to advantage, and it was from Lacy's pass that Jimmy Silver scored the second goal.

Greyfriars then set up a whirlwind attack and after Wharton had hit the cross-bar, Dick Penfold beat Tommy Cook with a fast low drive.

The interval came with Rookwood leading 2-1.

In the second half, with the wind in their favour, the Rookwood forwards played as if they were inspired.

Tommy Dodd's dashes down the wing, and his deft passes to Jimmy Silver, were the outstanding features of the game. Tommy was bang on top of his form, and no one would have recognised him as the same player who gave such a feeble display on the previous occasion.

"Come along, my merry men!" said Jimmy Silver buoyantly. "We want more goals!"

And more goals they soon got.

Tommy Dodd forced a corner. He took the flag-kick himself, and lobbed the ball on to the head of Lovell, who headed it into the net.

"Goal!"

"Faith, an' that's the stuff to give 'em!" chortled Tommy Doyle, who was acquitting

himself manfully at centre-half. "Keep it up, Rookwood!"

Harry Wharton and Co. were surprised and alarmed. This was a different Rookwood from the Rookwood they had met before. Every man-jack of them seemed to be playing the game of his life.

Tommy Cook, in goal, had an easy time. He was well covered by Rawson and Raby, whose tackling and volleying were beyond reproach.

The Rookwood halves were rare spoilers. They broke up the desperate rushes of the Greyfriars forwards again and again.

As for the Rookwood forward line, it was dazzling. Bulstrode, the Greyfriars goalie, said afterwards that he felt as if he had been under a bombardment. Jimmy Silver and Co. gave him neither rest nor respite. They simply swarmed around him, and he was for ever fisting out shots.

With ten minutes to go, Jimmy Silver scored Rookwood's fourth goal with a lightning drive.

Bulstrode dashed across to save the shot, but he had simply no chance. The ball crashed into the net, and there was a shout from the Rookwooders.

"Goal! Good old Jimmy!"

This did not complete the scoring. In the last minute of the game, Tommy Dodd ran through on his own, and, drawing Bulstrode out of his goal, fired into the empty net.

"Goal!"

"Five up, be jabers!" said Tommy Doyle, clapping his chum on the back as the final whistle sounded.

"We've licked Greyfriars 5-1 on their own pitch," said Kit Erroll. "Whoever would have thought it?"

The crowd, although disappointed and amazed at the result, gave the winning team quite an ovation.

It was a very happy family that journeyed back to Rookwood, to acquaint their eager schoolfellows with details of that thrilling game in which they had succeeded in getting quits with Greyfriars!

THE END

The Greyfriars MASTERS' GALLERY



No. 2—Mr. QUELCH

THE master with the "gimlet eyes,"
Now claims our keen attention;
His rule is very sound and wise—
Strict, also, I might mention.
When he discovers japes and larks
There's always trouble brewing.
As many of our gay young sparks
Have found to their undoing!

He has a heap of common sense
And lots of understanding;
His store of knowledge is immense,
His presence most commanding.
When he rebukes unruly ones
And loudly thunders "Silence!"
His voice is like the boom of guns—
It might be heard a mile hence!

He often burns the midnight oil
In writing reams of history;
Though when he will complete his toil
Remains a deep-set mystery.
He's been engaged on it for years
With vigour undiminished;
In spite of which, we all have fears
That it will ne'er be finished!

We rather like the "Quelehy bird,"
As Cherry calls him gaily;
We hang upon his lightest word,
And do his bidding daily.
Despite the canings we receive
(Our palms have often smarted)
I fancy most of us would grieve
If Mr. Quelch departed!

Building a Model Railway Wagon

By W. J. BASSETT-LOWKE, M.Inst. Loco. E.

FROM a constructive point of view an ordinary model railway wagon of the open type has nothing about it which necessitates much description, once the overall sizes are drawn out and the metal parts have been obtained. The body of an open truck is simply a box on wheels, but as most model railway owners will not stop at one vehicle, a speedy method of building the bodies may very profitably be considered.

The ordinary 10-ton open wagons have bodies of more or less standard length and width. Heights may vary, but for model railway purposes these may be standardised into two dimensions, one for high-sided trucks and the other for low-sided vehicles. The two sizes are therefore included in the general arrangement drawing herewith, on the two half-views shown. The dimensions of all small wagons are given in millimetres, as this is the most convenient measurement for the smaller models. Fractional inches become very complicated, when 64ths have to be dealt with. The scale of the model is 10 mm. (1 centimetre) to the foot, and the gauge the standard No. 1 size, i.e., $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches between rails.

The components of the superstructure are as follows:

Two ends of 4 mm. wood, planed and planked on outside.

Two sides of 3 mm. wood, planed and planked on outside.

One floor of 5 mm. wood, planed.

Two solebars of 7 by 10 mm., planed strip wood.

Two headstocks of 10 by 10 mm. planed strip wood.

Four end battens of 4 by 4 mm. planed taper strip wood.

The planking is accomplished by scribing lines with a knife-edged tool on the surface of the planed wood.

The metal parts required comprise:

Two pairs of wheels

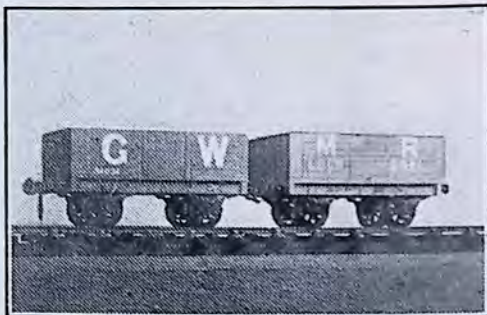
Four axleguards.

Four buffers; and

Two sets of draw-hooks and chains.

Other metallic embellishments, viz.: corner plates, strappings, washerplates, etc., may be added if desired, but where a large number of wagons are required it is usual to represent these in the painting process.

Having prepared the pieces of wood necessary to make the body exactly to shape



The type of Model Wagon dealt with in this article

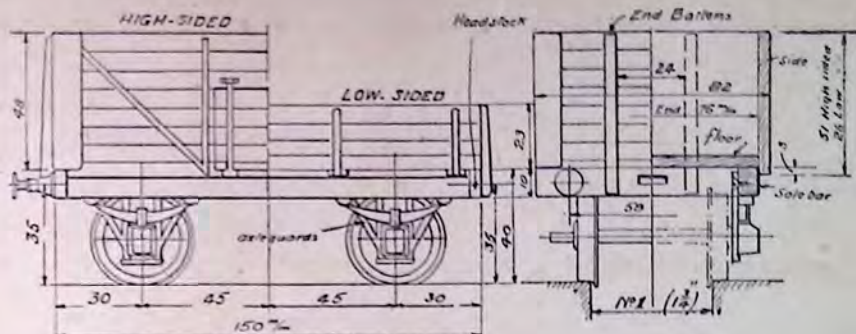


FIG. 1

and size, the next thing, preliminary to building up the parts, is the making of the building jig (Fig. 3). On a piece of $\frac{3}{4}$ inch or 1 inch planking—or directly on the bench, if needs be—a rectangular block of wood the same size and shape as the inside of the wagon-top may be securely fixed. This jig-block may be oiled and wiped dry so that the glue or seccotine used in jointing the sides and ends will not adhere to it. For high and low-sided wagons two such blocks will be required.

The wagon bodies are built upon this jig upside down and when glued and primed together, the model is lifted off complete. The nails used are very fine "panel-pins" of a thickness and length suitable to the size of the wagon being made. The sides and ends are wrapped round the jig first, with the floor inside them, this resting on the top of the block. When secured together, the headstocks and solebars (See Fig. 2) may be

fixed to the floor. The latter members may be placed in position temporarily while the headstocks are permanently attached to the floor, and then removed so that the axleguards which are screwed on to the inside then are positioned and affixed. When this is done the solebars may be finally fixed down with the wheels and axles in their proper places.

If any tendency to split the wood is observed in driving the pins into the wood—the nature of the material will have a lot to do with this—then holes should be drilled previous to driving the nails. This may be done by drilling, or with a specially fine bradawl.

The end battens may be fixed by gluing only before removing the body of the truck from the jig block or at a subsequent stage in the operations, according to which is most convenient.

The buffers are screwed into the buffer planks (headstocks) in the positions shown by the dimensions on the drawing. These

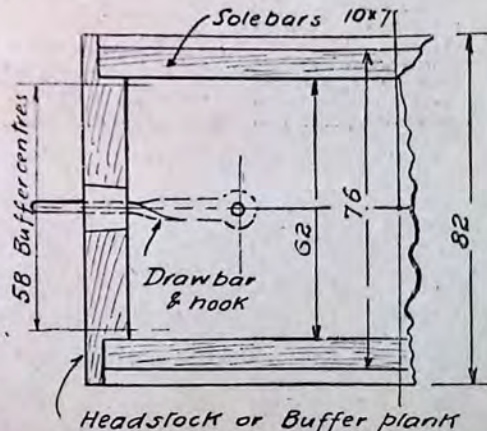


FIG. 2

fittings are usually cast with screwed shanks.

The headstocks must be pierced for the drawhooks, and in fixing the same a certain amount of side-play should be allowed on the pivot in the shank of the drawbar. The type of drawhook with the straight coupling-link is to be preferred, although the orthodox hook and three-link chain may be employed if the curves of the line are all of very large radii. The straight link

coupling is arranged to provide for the pushing of the coupled vehicles through this link instead of through the buffers. Scale size buffers are apt to "buffer-lock" on the sharper curves of a model railway, and have

led to the introduction of this "pull or push" type of coupling.

To obtain the best finish on a wagon the surface of a body should be primed with a lead colour or one of the "patent fillers" known to the decorating trade, and when thoroughly dry rubbed down with glass-paper. The final painting may then proceed, a flat colour (paint ground in turps instead of oil) being used. The corner plates, strapping,

and other metal work may be lined in with black paint, and the lettering painted by hand or transferred. Transfers of the standard initials of the various railway companies are obtainable.

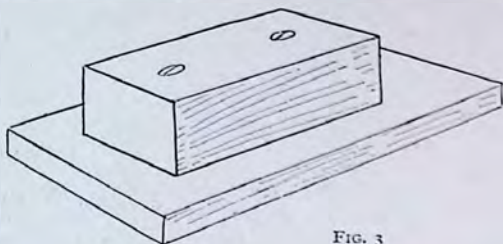


FIG. 3

The Official Colours of the Great Railway Groups

NO doubt many readers of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL will be watching with interest the new colours of the locomotives and rolling-stock now that the railway companies are grouped into four different groups.

Below is a list of the colours which have been officially adopted by each group, and the work of repainting the locomotives and rolling-stock of the old companies to conform is being carried on steadily.

L.M.S. GROUP

THE LOCOMOTIVES to be the old M.R. Lake, the only alteration being that the new L.M.S. crest will be on the cab side instead of the M.R. crest.

THE COACHES of this group to be the standard Midland colour, the only alteration being that instead of the word "MIDLAND" under the eaves of the coach, the letters L.M.S. will be put on the "waist" of the coach, and, in the case of the diners and sleeping cars, the company's crest in the lower panel in the centre.

THE GOODS LOCOMOTIVES to be black, with white numbers, and all goods rolling-stock a light lead colour.

L.N.E.R. GROUP

This group has adopted green for its passenger locomotives with black and white lining, with the letters L. & N.E.R. on the tender and the number underneath.

THE COACHES will be finished in standard teak colour, these being uniform with the old Great Northern, and a very attractive new crest has been designed.

THE GOODS AND TANK LOCOMOTIVES to be black, as the other groups.

G.W.R. GROUP

These are maintaining their standard green colour for their LOCOMOTIVES with practically no alteration, and the PASSENGER COACHES have gone back to their attractive chocolate and cream colours of pre-war days.

THE GOODS VEHICLES will be lead colour a slightly darker shade than the L.M.S. group.

SOUTHERN RAILWAYS

These have decided on green for their LOCOMOTIVES, with black and white lining, and the words "SOUTHERN RAILWAYS" and the number on the tender. The GOODS LOCOMOTIVES will be black with white lettering.

PASSENGER COACHES will be green, with black and yellow lining, and the GOODS VEHICLES will be brown.



A Story of Ned Low, the pirate who was the terror of the Spanish Main

BY STUART MARTIN

THE FIRST CHAPTER The Treacherous Mate!

THERE was not a man in old Port of Spain who did not know the qualities of the good sloop *Moth*, which had come to the Spanish Main to take her share in the adventures of those ten wonderful years that lay between 1665 and 1675. Trim and trig, she was, with sails that spread above her deck so widely that they gave her a bird-like appearance, and a poop that rose high above her rudder, well over the dead water that swirled under her quarter.

For the *Moth* was no ordinary vessel. Laid on the lines that Francis Drake had chosen for his *Golden Hind*, she had been built at Plymouth of good English timber for the work that kept her on the Carib sea. She was a gold-ship, one of the ships that carried the precious metal from the Gulf of Panama and Trinidad to the islands of the North; and now she was lying just

beyond the wharf of Port of Spain, while from the tavern doors men watched the preparations being made for putting her to sea.

No wonder Roddy Stark, captain's boy of the *Moth*, felt a thrill of pride in the craft as he stood in the look-out barrel of the foremast and looked down on the sun-tanned, bare backs of the crew who tramped round the capstan, bending their weight on the bars to the tune of a chanty chorus. Of all the voyages the sloop had made, this one on which they were bound was the most dangerous, as it was the most important.

On the poop stood the captain, clad in a suit of faded velvet and white hose, his long sword hanging from a black scabbard and his feathered hat well back on his brows. In the waist of the ship two heavy culverins, one to port, the other to starboard, with ball ammunition heaped in boxes beside their carriages, groaned and creaked with the movement of the sloop. But presently

their noise was drowned in the chorus of the crew :

*Heave and go, jolly mariners all!
Heave, ye lads, heave and haul!*

*Old Ned Low,
He don't know
We've got gold
In the middle hold,
And plenty meat
In the lazaret!*

*So heave and go! Yo, ho, ho!
To Execution Dock with old Ned Low!*

Up came the anchor to the shout, and as the vessel slid forward and Trinidad was left behind, the flag of England broke at the masthead, and the captain's hat came off with a flourish, while the ship's bell clanged for every man to gather on deck.

Those were the days of lone seas and quaint sailing ceremonies at the close of the seventeenth century, when a draught of sack was given each member of the crew at the beginning of a voyage and the flag was saluted gravely.

The tall, heavily armed galleons of the Dons were not the only enemies with which the *Moth* had to contend on the Main. There were the pirates, more cruel than any Spaniard, more atrocious than any beast of prey; gaunt, lawless men who slew crews and sank ships without pity and without remorse, plundering and killing for very love of destruction. And of these the most terrible, as the most daring, was none other than Ned Low, one-time lieutenant of the notorious Kidd, who prowled the seas for loot.

The *Moth* was bound for Jamaica. In the captain's cabin was a chest of gold bars from the banks of the Caroni—the very gold for possession of which the Spaniards had sacked the town of San Josef, but they themselves had been scattered in the Caroni jungle by Abercrombie's men from the frigates which had sailed in through the Serpent's Mouth to Port of Spain.

The *Moth* had been chartered to carry the gold from Trinidad northwards, and an English warship was to meet her fifty miles or so north of the island and convoy her

through the most dangerous part of the Main. Reports of incoming craft had brought word that Ned Low was somewhere among the outer islands of the Antilles, so that the *Moth's* crew had a feeling of security as their vessel faced the open seas and Trinidad melted in the evening mist astern.

Roddy Stark was relieved of his look-out aloft, and descended to attend the captain and lay the supper for him and the first mate. The latter was a new member of the crew, having been engaged in Trinidad owing to the disappearance of the original mate on the eve of departure. The new officer was a tall, silent man who had only one eye, but he was a thorough seaman and seemed to know his business. He and the captain were bending over a chart as Roddy entered the cabin.

"Faith," the captain was saying, "but relief will be mine when we sight the frigate: for though I care little for the big ships of the Dons, there is an uneasy feeling in my heart about this Ned Low."

"Art afraid of this Ned Low, then?" asked the mate, as he straightened his back and glanced at Roddy. "Has any of your crew seen the buccancer?"

"None of us have seen him, and I'd liefer never put my eyes on him!" cried the captain. "For those that see Ned Low do not come back to give us his likeness. They say he takes the unmarried men from off his prizes and makes the others walk the plank at sundown. The sharks follow his ship, it is told, always sure of a ghastly meal. As for us, we are not armed enough to offer him resistance; but once we meet the frigate we may snap our fingers at him and all his breed."

"What time do we meet the frigate, master?" asked the mate, his fingers fumbling at a gold chain which hung round his neck.

"At dawn. There is the point we steer for."

The captain jabbed a finger at a spot on the chart and turned to Roddy, who stood close by.

"Lay the supper, sirrah, and be quick!"

As Roddy went about his work he listened to the conversation of the two men, who took

no further notice of him. The mate sat down on a cushioned bench, and drew forth a pipe, which he stuffed with Indian tobacco. He took things leisurely now that the sloop was on the high seas. His dress was almost above his station on the sloop. A pair of velvet breeches covered his legs, and through his belt a long Spanish dagger was thrust. In his ears were rings of curious workmanship. Yet there was an air of surliness about him that was difficult to penetrate or explain.

When the meal was ready for them they drew in their stools, while Roddy waited upon them, running to and from the galley for their dishes. The sun was dipping behind the horizon when the meal was finished. Together the officers rose and went on deck, and the boy heard their footfalls on the planks above as he tidied up the cabin for the captain's return. The sailing of the sloop was in the hands of the mate after dark, and as Roddy was curtaining the cabin windows the captain returned, and tossed his sword on the table.

"Mask the stern lights to-night, boy," he said, "and then get to your bunk. I shall need you at dawn."

Roddy went out, closing the door of the

cabin softly. He heard the captain turn the key in the lock as he shuffled along the narrow alleyway. The gold bar was a heavy responsibility on the captain's shoulders, and he was making sure that the chest beside him would be undisturbed throughout the night.

Up to the deck Roddy crept. Already it was dark, only the glimmer of a light on the binnacle in front of the steersman flickering feebly. The watch were in the waist, and

the mate was on the poop gazing into the darkness.

Fetching a lantern from the deck store, Roddy struck a light with flint and steel and, as soon as the wick caught, wrapped a piece of canvas round the glass so that the light fell in a small circle on the deck. He was carrying the lantern to the poop when a hand fell on his arm heavily.

"No masked lights, sirrah! Here, give it me!"

The tall mate was beside him and swung the lantern out of the boy's grasp. Carrying it to the taffrail, he placed it in the sidelight socket, throwing the canvas mask overboard.

"But the master's orders!" cried Roddy.

"He said——"

"You get below to your bunk, or I'll beset you with a rope's end, you monkey!" roared



Roddy was carrying the lantern to the poop when a hand fell on his arm heavily. "No masked lights, sirrah! Here, give it me!" It was the mate! (See this page)

the mate. "Think you I am not your master on deck? Be off!"

He made a dash at Roddy, who rushed for the alleyway, and dropped down to his cabin in the roundhouse. It was not the first time he had seen the fury of the new mate, who had a temper that brooked no opposition.

Yet the boy lay in his bunk wondering at the cause of the explosion. So long as the master of the sloop was in his cabin the mate was in charge of the ship and his orders must be obeyed; but this hanging out of the stern light was a duty which had been Roddy's ever since he joined the vessel.

He lay wondering at the audacity of the mate in sailing with open lights. He heard the yards creak, the waves beat a regular tattoo on the timbers, the ship's bell sound the half-hours with a subdued clanging. Midnight came. The watch was changed. He heard the men's feet on the deck planks. And then, as he was dozing into sleep, a sudden movement of the sloop woke him up.

The steering gear grated and thudded above him. The sloop swung round, leaning over to port. The helm had been shifted suddenly.

Above the noise of the swinging yards and the thunder of the sea came shouts from the watch in a swift note of alarm. A crash rose above the tumult, followed by a sound of splintering wood.

Roddy Stark leaped to the floor as the vessel staggered and fell away. Now he knew what the crash had been. It was the report of a culverin.

Up to the deck he raced; everything was confusion, the spray lashing over the bulwarks, the crew shouting to each other, rigging lying about the deck entangling his feet. From the bows came the swift cry of the look-out, a cry that sent a thrill through every man aboard; "Pirates on the weather bow!"

The foremast of the sloop had already been shot away and lay athwart the deck, the tangle of rigging, sails, and cordage making it impossible for Roddy to see at first the coming of the dreaded enemy. He scrambled over the ruin, conscious that the watch below were tumbling up in wild fear. From the poop came the voice of the mate; but it was charged with grim menace.

"Ye have no chance, ye dogs! Forrad every man!"

Now Roddy saw looming through the night the bulk of a tall ship. She was within a boat's length of the sloop, her sides high above and ending in a poop that was on a level with the cross-trees of the mainmast. Not a light was on this vessel, but from her sides there came shouts enough to curdle the blood of the bravest. She seemed to be packed with men.

Crash!

The two vessels came together with a grinding sound as timber bore against timber. The sloop lay over on her side. Grappling irons were flung from the high ship to the deck of the sloop, and she was hauled close. Next moment her decks were flooded by a swarm of fierce men who ran over the ship, beating the crew below and shooting those who made a stand of it.

"Ned Low for ever! Ned Low and treasure!"

Roddy Stark crouched low in the shadow of the break of the poop as the pirates ran to and fro clearing the deck of the crew. Their shouting filled his ears, and their wild appearance struck fear to his heart. Great, fierce men they were. Their cutlasses flashed in the dim light of the lanterns, and their pistols crashed out every now and then, mingling with the cries and groans and defiant roars of the sloop's men.

There was not much chance for the crew. They had not had time to find weapons, and all they had was what they could pick up in the wild moments of attack. The pirate had come upon them out of the night, silently and ghost-like, and had run alongside and shot away the mast to disable the ship.

Down the steps of the poop came the tall, dark mate. Roddy saw him race aft towards the captain's room. In a moment his voice came across the deck.

"This way, lads! The chest is here! Get it aboard quickly!"

Roddy put his head round the corner, and saw a sight that made him gasp. The tall mate was standing at the door of the captain's room. In his hand was a smoking



A swarm of fierce men ran over the ship, beating the crew below. "Ned Low for ever!" they shouted. "Ned Low and the treasure!" (See opposite page)

pistol. In that moment the boy realised the truth of the situation. The mate was one of the pirates! He had guided the ship so that the pirates could have an easy prey.

Half a dozen of the rogues laid hands on the chest and dragged it forward. A rope was tied round it, and it was slung upward to the deck of their ship, and the buccaneers climbed aboard. The tall mate went with them, his pistol still in his hand and his voice giving orders with authority.

Roddy sat still in his corner as the grappling irons were thrown off. He looked along the deck of the sloop. Dead and dying men lay everywhere. The decks ran red.

"Give her a broadside, gunner! Dead men tell no tales, and sunk ships are never found!"

The voice came from the deck of the pirate vessel. On the poop, high above him, Roddy saw the man who had been mate of the *Moth* gazing down at the sloop. His arm was raised and there was a terrible expression on his face, made all the more ghastly by the flicker of a lantern which

hung from the mast of the *Moth* almost on a level with him.

A roar as of thunder filled the air. The *Moth* shivered from stem to stern as the balls went through her. Her deck burst open. Splinters were thrown far into the night and the mainmast tottered, swayed, and fell outboard, carrying with it the rail, the wheel, and single lifeboat.

Up came her starboard gunwale, rising against the sky until it reached the zenith. The deck sloped at a terrific angle, and Roddy was shot to port like a stone out of a catapult. He caught hold of some cordage and hauled himself back from the sea that surged towards him. The ship was turning turtle.

Up the sloping deck the boy toiled in agony. He was struck time after time by the falling wreckage, but he held to the stump of the mast. The ship was turning slowly on top of him.

With a last effort he gained the gunwale and sat astride to gain his breath. He heard the pirates cheering, but the roar of the

sea and the crashing of falling timber mingled with their shouts. They did not see him, or he would have been shot. He crouched low as he swung over to the side of the sloop which was now where the deck ought to have been.

Down the sloping hull he slid towards the sea. The waves seemed to thrust him back, but he plunged into the water and swam as fast as he could. He rose to the surface under the lee of the pirate ship. A rope hung down from her stern. He saw it against the star-studded sky, and swam for it.

Gripping it with an energy born of despair, he scrambled up hand over hand. Up above the helm he went, until he reached the beams which told him he was under the stern windows and the short "admiral's walk" leading to the cabin.

He paused for a moment to gain his breath.

He saw the *Moth* turn over and plunge beneath the waves. Her keel was uppermost, her stern high in the air as she took the final plunge. Then, a moment later, there was nothing of her left save a mass of wreckage and some floating spars.

There was little choice for Roddy Stark. He must either climb up and board the pirate, or drop back into the sea. He resolved to take his chance on the vessel. Gripping the protruding beam above his head, he swung himself up. The rails of the admiral's walk formed a good hold. Over the rail he went, and found himself facing the cabin. The windows were open, and two men stood in the room. Their backs were turned towards the boy, but they heard the noise of his movements and turned.

Next moment Roddy was seized by the collar and jerked into the cabin.

"Well, if it isn't the captain's boy of the *Moth*! How did you get here, lad?"

Roddy stepped back from the man who addressed him, for the man was he who had been mate of the sloop. A black patch over his right eye seemed to lend a sinister aspect to his face now. He had changed his clothing, too, and now wore a frock-coat of bright colour and a pair of long top-boots reaching

to his knees. Around his waist was a silksash, through which were thrust a pair of pistols and a cutlass of fine steel. On his head was a large handkerchief tied in knots which hung behind his right ear.

"You know me now, youngster," he said with a laugh. "Sink me if I thought we should have you as a recruit. You must have liked our company or you would not have come through the stern windows."

"You are Ned Low, the pirate!" exclaimed Roddy.

The other bowed in mock appreciation of the recognition.

"That's my name, just as it ever was. What do you think of my coup? Why, lad, I saw to it that your mate did not go back to the sloop once he came ashore at Trinidad, and so I offered myself in his place and sent word to my crew to take the chest before the frigate arrived. Smart, wasn't it? And here we are on board the *Sea Hawk*, all safe and sound with the gold, and not a trace of the *Moth* anywhere. So now you've come aboard you'll be my cabin-boy and grow up to be as good a buccaneer as any of us. What do you say to that, hey?"

"I won't join you!" cried Roddy boldly. "I came aboard to save myself from drowning—"

"And drown you will or die with a bullet in you and have pennies in your eyes, if you ain't more civil," roared the pirate. "I'm captain here, and I'm obeyed, as Bahama Jack, my chief mate, can prove."

The other man, heavy-jawed and stout, grinned as he pushed a plug of tobacco into his mouth.

"You bet, cap'n. Them as comes on board the *Sea Hawk* comes as recruits or goes to the sharks. That's the rule of the Main, and a good rule it is. But, cap'n, there ain't time to squall about this kid now. I was telling you that the frigate is due. I saw a pin point of light on the horizon when we put the broadside into the sloop. If it's the frigate she'll have heard the guns. We'd better be going."

Low jumped to his feet and strode to the stern windows.

"Turn down the lights."



The tall mate was standing at the door of the captain's room. In his hand was a smoking pistol. "This way, lads! Get the chest aboard quickly!" The mate was one of the pirates! (See page 138.)

The stout buccaneer lowered the wicks of the two lanterns that illumined the cabin as his chief stared out into the night.

"Yonder she is, Jack—just above the sea-line. You see her white sails? That's a king's ship, or I'm a yellow Don."

He drew the curtains across the window and clapped his hand on Bahama Jack's shoulder.

"Hark ye, we'll have a run, but we'll win. Dowse all lights on deck. Give the men a swig of rum and beat to quarters. Put every stitch of canvas on her that she'll carry. We're going to the cache to bury this loot, then north to the Tortugas again! See to it."

The older man nodded and withdrew. Low stood biting at his fingernails in deep thought. Suddenly he laughed, and turned to the boy.

"I'm Ned Low and my word is law on the *Sea Hawk*, sirrah, so attend to what I say.

You're one of my crew now, or else you walk the plank at dawn. I'll take you on trial as my boy. In that cupboard you'll find crockery. Lay a meal for me and bring a mess from the galley. You'll find the cook preparing something for me—"

"Prisoner I may be," rebelled Roddy, "but never a pirate like you, Master Ned Low, even if I do your bidding—"

"That'll do," shouted Low, giving the boy a clip on the ear that sent him sprawling. "There's bin others as said the same thing, but they changed their minds. And you'll change yours, too. Ever heard of Skeleton Cove?"

"No, I don't know where it is."

"You'll know by mornin', lad. It's to Skeleton Cove we're bound, up by the Grenadines, and it's there you'll finish your cruise if you run athwart me and my plans. You

get the dishes out and a bottle of rum, or I'll whale the hide off you."

He laughed and went out of the cabin, closing the door behind him, and Roddy heard him turn the key.

For a moment the boy stood considering the situation. He had escaped from the sinking sloop, but he had landed into a ship which was as likely to prove as bad for him as if he had gone to the bottom with the crew of the *Moth*.

As he stood wondering what he ought to do, he felt the ship move forward. The sails had been hoisted and the *Sea Hawk* was on the move, running away from the frigate in the darkness. At the thought of the frigate the boy lifted the corner of the heavy curtains which fell over the stern windows.

Away astern a light bobbed on the top of the waves. It was the masthead light of a frigate. Scarcely bigger than the head of a pin, it was coming in his direction. A sudden desperate idea entered Roddy Stark's head. If the frigate had a light to guide her she would come up on the pirate ship. Was it possible for him—

He mounted the small table, and lifted one of the lanterns from the hook on which it was hung. Searching about for a piece of cord, he found a small length of rope under the bunk, and this he unravelled quickly. To the ring on the top of the lantern he tied the cord, and, leaning out of the window, fastened it to one of the rails of the narrow walk, letting the lantern hang down under the projecting beam, after he had turned up the light.

Then he closed the curtains and set about getting the dishes out of the cupboard as he had been ordered. The lantern, swinging under the rail, was out of sight, and could not be seen from the poop, nor from below, for it was just over the cut-away of the ship's quarter above the rudder. But it was a mark for the pursuing frigate. Even a lighted match can be seen for three miles in darkness at sea. The lantern was a guide.

Roddy had already got some of the dishes on the table when the door opened and Ned Low reappeared. He grinned as he saw the

boy at work, and took a quirt of tarred rope out of his pocket.

"If you hadn't bin setting the meal, lad," he said, "I'd hev given you the heavy end of this tickler. It brings most rebels to their senses. Now then, get farrard and bring the stuff from the cook. He's waiting for you. And if you show a light on deck I'll throw you overboard."

On deck Roddy found that every effort was being made to escape the frigate. Every sail possible was set, studding sails were being bent, and under the press of canvas the tall ship was fairly flying.

The cook had his cuddy screened round by canvas so that no glimmer of his fire appeared over the deck. The crew went about their work like gnomes of the night. There was not a sound but the creaking of the cordage and the crash of the waves on the bows.

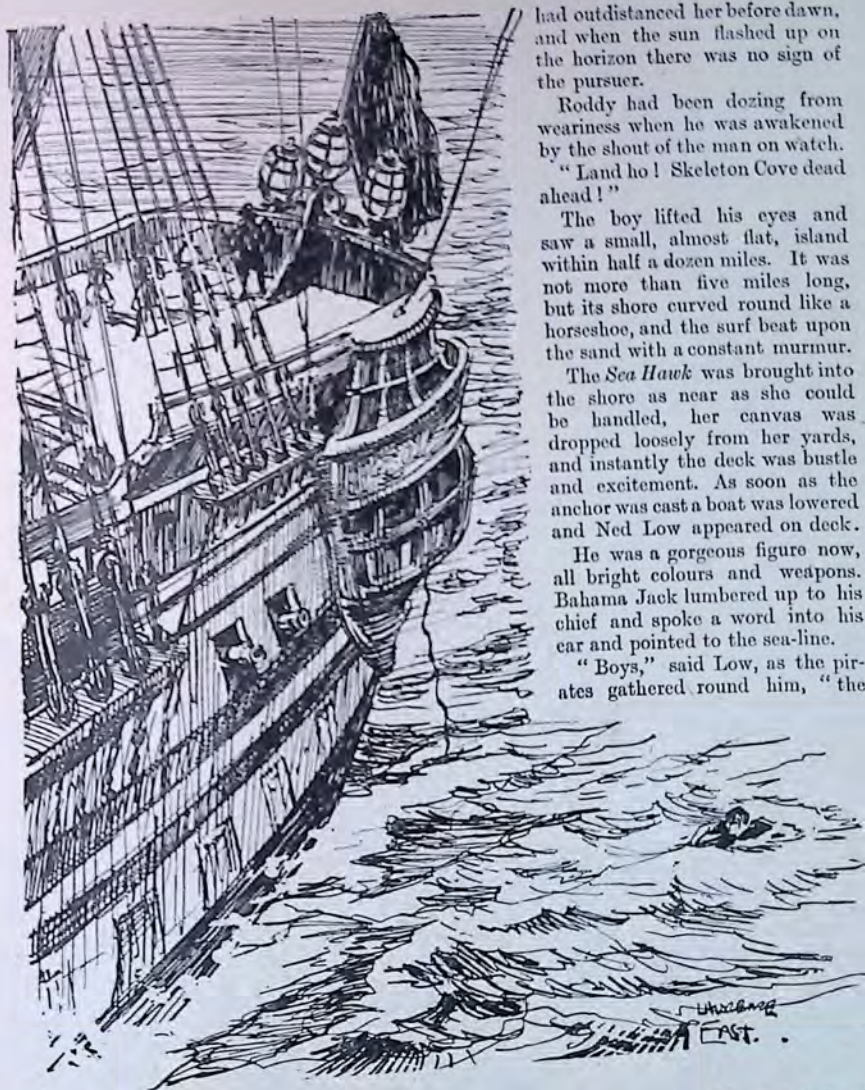
And far across the ocean, through the dim light of the misty night there gleamed the masthead lantern of the frigate as she kept on the trail of the pirate.

Roddy acted as steward to Ned Low, who ate alone. He was, indeed, more than a cut above his crew, who were mostly low fellows, hardened with crime and steeped in iniquity. When the meal was finished Roddy was told to get something for himself from the cook, and then go forward and find a berth in the fore-castle.

But the boy was in no mood for finding such a berth. He remained on deck, curled up on a piece of sail in the bows, watching as well as he could the progress of the chase.

Several times he heard the look-out grumbling that the frigate had not been shaken off, and he heard one of the crew growl out that Ned Low was of opinion that there must be some reason for the insistent pursuit, as he had changed his course time after time, and still found the frigate hanging on behind.

But even the frigate was no match for the flying *Sea Hawk* in speed. The latter had been one of the East India clippers before Ned Low captured her, and she had a reputation for flying that was second to none. Her speed now saved her from defeat. If she had not lost sight of the frigate by midnight she



had outdistanced her before dawn, and when the sun flashed up on the horizon there was no sign of the pursuer.

Roddy had been dozing from weariness when he was awakened by the shout of the man on watch.

"Land ho! Skeleton Cove dead ahead!"

The boy lifted his eyes and saw a small, almost flat, island within half a dozen miles. It was not more than five miles long, but its shore curved round like a horseshoe, and the surf beat upon the sand with a constant murmur.

The *Sea Hawk* was brought into the shore as near as she could be handled, her canvas was dropped loosely from her yards, and instantly the deck was bustle and excitement. As soon as the anchor was cast a boat was lowered and Ned Low appeared on deck.

He was a gorgeous figure now, all bright colours and weapons. Bahama Jack lumbered up to his chief and spoke a word into his ear and pointed to the sea-line.

"Boys," said Low, as the pirates gathered round him, "the

Roddy rose to the surface under the lee of the pirate ship. A rope hung from her stern and for this he swam (See page 140.)

frigate is still on our track. Jack tells me that the look-out says she is topping the horizon, so we may have to make a running fight of it after we bury the chest. It is short work we must make of our landing, for a plague seems to be on the *Sea Hawk*. All night this cursed frigate has hung on our heels, though we steered among the Grenadines and doubled on our tracks. And there is another thing. We have a passenger aboard who is to take the oath, or otherwise, this morning. I mean the whelp who climbed aboard from the *Moth*. Set him here."

Roddy was pushed forward by the pirates and stood facing the leader.

"Boy," said Low threateningly, "we're here at the Cove, and here we give all who board us a chance to make their choice. Wilt be one of us, or do you choose to join the company of Skeleton Cove?"

"Why should you force me to be one of

you?" cried Roddy. "I climbed aboard to escape drowning——"

"Enough, enough! Stow the gab on that score. The thing that matters is that you came aboard. We are all merry men on the *Sea Hawk*, each for all and all for each. We cannot take a rebel to croak on us. Say what you choose and have done."

"I will never be a pirate!" cried the boy desperately. "Ye are outlaws, every man of ye! I'd rather walk the plank and get it over than be hanged at Execution Dock in London town. Yet I shall die knowing that I have done my best to outplot you all. It was I who caused the frigate to chase you——"

"What's this?" roared Low, his hand grasping his pistol, while he waved back his men who crowded round. "Hold back, my hearties. Blood and hounds, if what this cockerel boasts is true he'll pay right well for it! Come, jackanapes, out with it! What hast thou done?"

"Look at the stern of your ship," cried Roddy boldly, "and you'll see a lantern hanging there. I tied it so last eve——"

Low swore a great oath and then made a sign to one of his men. The latter ran aft, but in a few moments he was back again bearing the tell-tale lantern in his hand.



Ned Low stood rigid as a statue, his face convulsed with rage. The Dago was lying in the sand where he had sprawled. "Rush him!" yelled Low

"It's true, cap'n," he said hoarsely. "Twas tied to the admiral's walk, and not a drop of oil left. It has burned all night!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Turning the Tables!

A ROAR went up from the pirates. They made a rush at the boy, but again Low held them back. His face was white and his teeth showed through his beard.

"That settles it!" he hissed. "This boy goes to Skeleton Cove. We'll bury him beside the gold. Jack, seize him and tie his hands!"

Buffeted and kicked, Roddy was bundled into the boat into which the chest of gold had been lowered. Low sat in the stern at the tiller. Bahama Jack was beside Low, and five others came as the crew. One man who looked more Dago than English had charge of Roddy.

They pulled ashore swiftly, and landed on the white beach. Two pirates hoisted the chest on their shoulders, and the party marched upwards towards the woods. Low halted them at a mound of sand where small shrubs grew here and there.

"Dig!" he ordered sharply.

Two of the men fell to digging with a shovel which they had brought for the purpose. Two others remained on the slope facing the ship to watch for signals. The boy stood between the Dago and Bahama Jack, the latter leaning on his long rifle.

The men who were digging the pit were deep in the hole when Low turned to the boy, and pointed to a shrub not far off. A shiver ran through Roddy as he saw a human skull at the base of the shrub.

"I told you you were bound for Skeleton Cove," said Low. "You see them shrubs? Every one covers a man who defied me. That is the reason for the name—Skeleton Cove! We've buried many a one here, and they are all buried the same way—the way you are to be buried. How's that, you ask? Why, up to the neck in sand! We're giving you a special treat. We're letting your feet rest on the gold chest. That's about enough, lads. Put in the chest!"

He drew a pistol and held it in his folded

arms, as his two men lowered the chest into the sand.

"Step in, Roddy Stark!"

The boy shivered. His bound hands were tightly clasped. His eyes glanced from side to side, looking for a way of escape. There was none.

On his left Bahama Jack had raised his gun. On his right the Dago was smiling under his broad-brimmed hat.

"Step into your grave, lad!"

All eyes were on Roddy. He stepped forward, then suddenly his hands went up, pointing towards the horizon.

"Look!" he cried.

Instinctively they wheeled to see the cause of the exclamation. The white sails of the



"The first who lifts a hand is a dead man!" cried Roddy.

frigate were above the sea-line; but in that moment Roddy Stark was not thinking of the frigate.

He kicked at the Dago behind him, toppling the man down the slope; and as he kicked he swung round and tore the gun from the hands of Bahama Jack and leaped back, the weapon at his shoulder, and his finger on the trigger.

"The first who lifts a hand is a dead man!" he cried. "I shan't be buried alone, Ned Low!"

His gun waved steadily from one to the other. Low stood rigid as a statue, his face convulsed with rage. The two men who had dug the pit were gaping in amazement at the swift development. The Dago was lying in the sand where he had sprawled.

Roddy backed cautiously until he reached the Dago, and stamped the man's pistol into the sand. That put it out of commission.

"Rush him!" yelled Low. "He can't shoot us all!"

"Will you begin the rush, cap'n?" asked one of the men sarcastically.

No one moved.

"Put down that pistol, Ned Low! I'll shoot when I count three. One—two——"

The pistol fell from Low's arms to the ground.

As it landed the boom of a gun came from the sea.

"Look here, cap'n!" cried Bahama Jack, "did you hear that? It's the frigate! Let's leave this kid on shore with the gold. He'll starve to death, anyway. We can come back and settle his hash after we get the frigate, for if we wait much longer——"

"They're signalling us to return to the ship!" cried one of the men, as a second gun echoed over the cove. "That's the urgent call!"

A third gun boomed out. Roddy Stark was backing towards the woods, his gun still pointed towards the pirates.

"By the holy poker, cap'n, look. We're caught!"

No wonder Bahama Jack roared out the words. The pirates forgot all about the boy who menaced them, and turning, ran headlong towards the beach.

A second frigate had appeared on the horizon.

The *Sea Hawk's* sailing qualities availed her nothing. She was caught between two forces, each of which were equal to her in gun power.

Yet she sailed straight out to her doom. It was a terrible doom that met her, but it was one which she had inflicted on many peaceful merchant ships.

Until mid-day the thunder of the guns reverberated over the sea. Great clouds of smoke rolled betwixt the ocean and the heavens, and for some time Roddy Stark could not guess how the battle of giants progressed.

At length, out of the dark billows there drifted a stricken ship, her masts gone by the board, her hull riddled with shot, her gear trailing like the feathers of a wounded bird.

It was the *Sea Hawk*, which had fought her last fight. Smitten fore and aft she drifted towards the beach, and was caught on a reef and hung there, while the survivors of her crew plunged into the water and swam towards the shore to escape the destruction which the frigates poured into her.

And after the fugitives came men from the king's ships, who pursued the pirates and took them all; and in the pursuit found Roddy Stark beside his chest of gold bar waiting to be rescued.

They made much of the boy who had guided them to the attack; and when he was taken on board one of the ships he was told how his lantern swinging at the stern of the pirate had been the cause of the frigate keeping on her trail, and how, just before dawn, when another frigate had hove in sight, she, too, had come to join in the hunt for Ned Low.

Yet the curious thing was that Low's body was not found after the fight, nor was he among the men who had come ashore. And it was not until Roddy Stark had arrived at Jamaica and had handed over the chest of gold bar to its destination, that he received his reward in a percentage of the treasure, which made him a wealthy man for life. As for the majority of the crew who were the scourge of the Spanish Main under Ned Low, the records of Execution Dock on the Thames tells how they were hanged, defiant and careless to the last.

THE END



Bunter's Banking Account!

*An Amusing Complete
Story by Peter Todd,
of the Remove Form
: at Greyfriars :*

It had come at last!
Not the millennium, not
the end of the world, but something even
more astonishing.

Billy Bunter's postal-order had arrived!
For many terms the Owl of the Remove
had told the time-honoured tale of the
postal-order which he was always expecting,
but which had never arrived—until now.
On that topic of the postal-order Billy Bunter
had descanted in season and out of season.
He never wearied of it, though he made his
schoolfellows very weary indeed.

And now—wonder of wonders!—the ancient
and decrepit postman had brought Billy
Bunter a letter. The fat junior had opened it
in the presence of a dozen juniors, and a
printed slip of paper had come out in his
fingers. Bunter blinked at it and fairly
danced with delight. He was so delighted,
in fact, that he never looked to see the value
of the postal-order.

Bob Cherry reeled, half-swooning, into
Harry Wharton's arms.

"It—it's come at last!" he murmured
faintly. "The shock is too much for me. I
feel quite overcome! I suppose it isn't a
dream, is it?"

"It's no dream," said Frank Nugent.
"Bunter's postal-order, which has been on

its way ever since the Flood, has arrived at
last!"

"It can't be a genuine postal-order,"
said Johnny Bull. "Bunter must have
made it himself!"

Billy Bunter's ample round face was
beaming like a full moon. His jaw dropped a
little when he examined it, for the amount
mentioned on the face of the order could
not have been called princely.

"Pay to WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER
the sum of
6 SIX PENCE 6
pence. pence."

"Not quite so much as I expected,"
murmured Billy Bunter. "But a tanner isn't
to be sneezed at. All's grist that comes to
my mill."

Suddenly there was an explosive cackle
from Skinner of the Remove.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton and Co. glanced inquiringly
at the hilarious Skinner.

"Do you know anything about this postal-
order, Skinner?" asked Wharton.

"Well, I should say so, seeing I sent it
myself!" chuckled the cad of the Remove.

"You—you sent Bunter a postal-order for a tanner?" gasped Bob Cherry.

Skinner nodded.

"But—but where does the joke come in?"

For a moment Skinner was too convulsed with merriment to reply. At last he recovered the power of speech.

"I've made that postal-order payable to Bunter at Burchester post-office," he said. "Anybody with a knowledge of geography knows that Burchester's twenty miles from here."

"Oh, my hat!"

"You mean to say Bunter's got to fag all the way to Burchester to get that postal-order cashed?" said Nugent.

"Exactly! The return fare to Burchester is three bob. Bunter will therefore have to spend three bob in order to gain sixpence. The cashing of that postal-order will cost him half-a-crown!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors roared, and nobody laughed louder than the humorous Skinner.

Billy Bunter, however, did not seem the least bit dismayed.

"I notice that the titled relation who sent me this postal-order has made it payable at Burchester," he said. "But there will be no need for me to fag all that distance."

"Why won't there?" asked Skinner, in surprise.

"I shall simply pay this postal-order into my banking account," said Bunter calmly.

Shouts of amazement arose.

"Your what?"

"Your which?"

"Say that again, Bunter!"

The fat junior repeated his remark.

"Draw it mild!" grunted Bolsover major. "No use trying to kid us that you've got a banking account!"

"Oh, really, Bolsover, I'm not trying to kid anybody! I've got an account at the London & Kentish Bank in Friardale."

There was a howl of incredulity. A plump pauper like Bunter possessing

a banking account! A fellow who was "broke" from one end of the term to the other! Why, it was altogether too absurd for words!

"I hope you fellows don't doubt my word!" said Bunter, in tones of pained reproach.

"We know what a fat Ananias you are!" said Harry Wharton. "You've never had a banking account in your life!"

Billy Bunter plunged his hand into his breast-pocket and brought forth a long, thin book. The juniors blinked at it in astonishment. It was a cheque book!

"Here you are!" said Bunter triumphantly. "A cheque book containing twenty-five blank cheques. That's evidence that I've got a banking account; in fact, it's more than evidence. It's proof!"

Harry Wharton looked quite alarmed. He grabbed Billy Bunter by the collar.

"This is a serious matter, Bunter," he said sternly. "Where did you find this cheque-book? Whose desk have you been burgling?"



Billy Bunter brought forth a long, thin book. The juniors blinked at it in astonishment. It was a cheque book!

"Oh, really, Wharton——"
"Out with it!" said the captain of the Remove sharply. "Tell me the truth!"

"Leggo, you beast! The truth is, it's my own cheque-book, issued to me by the bank."

"I can't believe you."

"Well, you're at liberty to come down to the bank with me and see me pay this postal-order into my account. P'raps you'll believe me, then!"

"Right you are," said Wharton grimly. "We'll come with you to the bank—now!"

Billy Bunter's postal-order had come by the midday post, and there was just time to go to the bank and back before dinner.

The Owl of the Remove rolled away out of the gates, with quite a body-guard of juniors in close attendance.

Nobody believed for one moment the story of Bunter's banking account.

They would have found it easier to believe in the grandeurs of Bunter Court, the ancestral mansion which Bunter was always boasting about, but which had no solid existence. Neither did anyone suppose that the banking account had any real existence outside Billy Bunter's fertile imagination.

However, there was the matter of the cheque-book to be explained away. It was unusual for a Greyfriars junior to walk about with a cheque-book in his pocket. Obviously, something was wrong somewhere. The

juniors could not help suspecting that Billy Bunter had appropriated a book of blank cheques from a master's desk; in which event the consequences would be very serious for Bunter.

The fat junior, however, was quite unconcerned. He was, in fact, quite cheerful.

When the procession reached the village of Friardale, Billy Bunter rolled into the branch office of the London & Kentish Bank. He rolled into it after the manner of a lordly millionaire.

Harry Wharton and Co. waited outside the glass doors, where they could both see and

hear what went on.

A youthful-looking bank clerk popped his head over the counter. Billy Bunter, with an air of great ostentation, produced his postal-order with a flourish and handed it over.

"I want this to be placed to the credit of my account!" he said, in a loud voice.

"Very good, sir."

The juniors who were listening and watching nearly fell down, so great was their astonishment.

"My only Aunt Sempronia!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Bunter's actually got a banking account!"

Billy Bunter glanced round with a triumphant grin. Then he turned to the bank clerk again.

"I'll take my pass-book, please," he said.

The clerk produced a white-covered book and handed it to Bunter, who rejoined his



Dame Mimble regarded the fat junior very sternly. "The bank has refused to honour your last cheque, Master Bunter! You will have to pay cash down in future!"



Billy Bunter blinked at the postal order and fairly danced with delight, whilst the juniors looked on, grinning.

schoolfellows. They gaped at him in growing amazement, and the feelings of Harold Skinner, who was one of the party, were too deep for words. His little jape on Bunter, instead of costing the fat junior half-a-crown, had enriched him to the extent of sixpence! Instead of putting Bunter to endless inconvenience, Skinner had actually swollen the fat junior's banking account!

For the banking account was now a firm reality, and not a fiction, as the juniors had supposed.

Billy Bunter opened his pass-book and handed it round, and the juniors blinked harder than ever. For it showed Bunter to have a credit balance of twenty pounds. The sixpence he had just paid in had not yet been entered.

"This—this has knocked me all of a heap!" murmured Wharton faintly. "I—I don't understand—"

Billy Bunter proceeded to throw light on the situation.

"My pater opened this account for me," he explained. "He started it with twenty pounds. He said it would save him the trouble of constantly sending me small sums of pocket-money. Topping idea, don't you think?"

"It would be, if you were a thrifty fellow," said Bob Cherry. "But I'm afraid your banking account won't last long. By the time you've had a few feeds, your bank balance will begin to look a bit thin, and in a short time it will disappear altogether."

A prophet gets no honour in his own country. Nevertheless, Bob Cherry proved a true prophet.

Each day—and sometimes several times a day—Billy Bunter swaggered into the school tuckshop and ordered a sumptuous repast, and paid Dame Mimble by cheque.

This went on for about a week, until one morning a bombshell burst upon Billy Bunter. His latest cheque had been returned by the bank, with the curt intimation that there was no money there to meet it.

Dame Mimble regarded the fat junior very sternly. Like the Ancient Mariner, she held him with her glittering eye.

"The bank has refused to honour the last cheque you paid me, Master Bunter," she said. "It appears you have overdrawn your account. I shall be unable to serve you in future, unless you pay cash down."

Billy Bunter beseeched and implored and entreated, but all in vain.

Poor old Bunter! His brief reign of prosperity had come to an inglorious end, and he was not likely to receive any pocket-money from his pater for a long, long time to come. Like the Prodigal Son, he had squandered his substance in riotous living, and there was nothing for it but to fall back upon the old, old story of the expected postal-order, in the hope that his hearers would open their heart—and their purses.

THE END

The Greyfriars MASTERS' GALLERY



No. 3—Mr. PROUT

A PORTLY man and plump is Prout,
Not small and slim, like jockeys;
He tells you thrilling tales about
His exploits in the "Rockies."
When tigers tackled him, or bears,
He never used to dread it;
He has the scalps of fifty hares
(And bunnies) to his credit!

Upon his study wall is hung
His celebrated rifle;
Its prices he has often sung,
It wearies one a trifle!
The story-teller's droning voice
Goes drearier and drearier;
We have to listen—not from choice,
But Prout is our superior!

"I shot a tiger once, my boys,"
He hastens to inform us;
"It fell, and made a fearful noise—
Its size was most enormous!
The fierce and savage beast of prey
Lay dying in the jungle;
It was a risky shot, they say—
But then, I never bungle!"

The drawback to such thrilling tales
Is this—they lack conviction;
When Prout's imagination fails
He studies works of fiction,
And what he reads, he'll then recite
With energy and vigour;
Himself the hero of the fight—
A fine and fearless figure!

The Ghost of Greyfriars!

I DWELL in deep and dark domains ;
I creep around with clanking chains,
And when the witching hour draws nigh,
The Greyfriars' Ghost goes gliding by.

From dark recesses of the crypt
My ghostly feet have often tripped.
Then through the slumbering school I stalk,
Making weird wailings while I walk.

When clocks at midnight start to boom,
I swiftly glide from room to room.
These words I utter, as a rule :
" I am the Ghost of Greyfriars School ! "

Old Prout once started up in bed,
And gazed at me in direst dread.
He then gave forth a scream of terror,
For I had scared him stiff—no error !

I then passed on to Mr. Capper,
And gently touched his nightcapped napper.
Swiftly, he started from his sleep,
And then his flesh began to creep !

Onward I went, from door to door,
And down each winding corridor ;
While those who saw my white-clad figure
Took to their heels and fled with vigour !

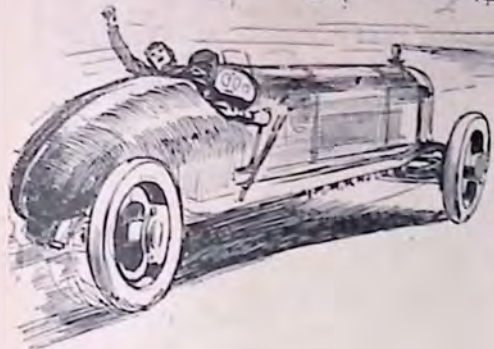
Some say I have no real existence,
Yet they would surely keep their distance
If they should see me one dark night—
A fearful phantom, draped in white !

Back to my dim and dark retreat
I now return, with speedy feet ;
For soon the dawn will flood the sky.
No lover of the light am I !



KINGS of SPEED!

BY Alfred Edgar.



Thrills and dare-devil driving are features of this story of the world's greatest motor road-race

THE FIRST CHAPTER

Sons of Speed!

"NINETY—easy!"

Bob Hamar reached up and belated the words in his brother's ear, and even as he spoke they were snatched from his lips by the terrific gale of wind that whirled past his head.

Roger Hamar responded with a short nod, while his bronzed, tool-scarred hands rested firmly on the big, rubber-bound steering-wheel, holding the long, grey racing car to the wide road.

Bob snuggled back to the mechanic's seat, getting a fresh hold on the leather grip which was bolted to the near side of the scuttle; he slipped his right arm through the little hole behind his brother's squab and steadied himself anew against the vibration of the hurtling machine.

The magnificent car shot on in a welter of dust and raging sound. Its exhaust was roaring madly, and from the blackened end of the flat, copper exhaust pipe there darted a tongue of flame, visible despite the brilliance of the noon-time sunshine.

From the front of its rounded radiator to the tip of the pointed tail, the low machine was perfectly streamlined. Above the high

edge of the scuttle, the bared heads of Bob and Roger just showed as they crouched behind their tiny, wire-meshed wind-screens.

As the silvery-grey car shot onwards down the straight, little whorls of dust flung out from beneath the threshing tyres, mingling in a low cloud behind. The machine seemed to leap on the broad road as it thundered on, the even roar of the engine lost in the staccato note of the exhaust.

The long, grey Warwick car had lapped the six-mile course at Twynham's Park at ninety miles an hour; its speed on the straight stretches had been actually over a hundred and five. The machine was tuned almost to perfection; and it needed to be, because one of the most sporting contests in the whole history of motor-racing was due to be run off in less than forty-eight hours time on the specially prepared track at Twynham's.

Sir Thomas Dent owned Twynham's Park; he was uncle to the two fellows in the silvery car. He had been interested in motor-racing since its inception, and it was he who had financed the Warwick Cars, Ltd. Roger Hamar was the star speedman of the firm, and Bob's one ambition was to make as great a name as his brother had done.

Roger's features were strong and lean, tanned almost to a coppery hue; his clear

grey eyes gleamed out from his bronzed skin with a strange, steady keenness in just such a way as did those of his younger brother.

Roger knew cars inside out; he had no nerves at all. Neither had Bob, for that matter, and he was already becoming known in the motor-racing world. Already he had raced at Brooklands and in some of the minor Continental events; he had acted as mechanic to his brother in the last Italian Grand Prix at the Monza Speedway.

Now he was to play the same part in a battle of giants—in a race that was absolutely unique. There had never been a contest like it, and it had been made possible by the splendid generosity and sportsmanship of Sir Thomas Dent.

Road racing was barred in England, but the old baronet had overcome that difficulty. He had turned his great estate at Twynhams into a speedway. Part of the roads that traversed the grounds formed a six-mile triangular circuit; the roads on this circuit he had had specially widened, while corners and bends had been cut and straightened.

There were not many people who knew the reason behind all this; few did outside the two young Hamars and Sir Thomas. In the old days when the baronet himself had raced, the one speedman whom he had been constantly against was an Italian named the Comte d'Alessan.

The Comte was just as good a sportsman as the baronet, but he almost always seemed to win. Whenever Sir Thomas had come up against him—and that was frequently—the Italian got home first. Through all the years that had followed the baronet had tried to get a machine which would give its exhaust

gas to the Ballago, the make of car which the Comte d'Alessan financed.

Never had Sir Thomas been able to beat the Italian machine—until Roger and Bob joined the Warwicks and showed the motor-racing world some dare-devil driving and real speed.

Because of the publicity which Sir Thomas' scheme received, the race attracted enormous attention. The motoring world saw that it was likely to overshadow even the great events held at Indianapolis and on the classical French courses.

Entries for the cup which he offered came from America, from Italy, Spain, France, Belgium, and even Holland offered a team of cars.

When the selections had been made of only those machines which had earned real fame on the world's great tracks, there were left eight teams of three cars each. The cars were to be handled by the pick of the world's drivers, veritable kings of speed. Out of them all, Sir



Bob, hunched up in the mechanic's seat, peered grimly ahead, as the car roared on (See page 155)

Thomas looked to Roger Hamar on the Warwick to win and to beat the Ballagos, thus avenging the many defeats he himself had suffered in the years before at the hands of the Comte d'Alessan.

There was one other event. That was a race between himself and the Italian count—on the cars which they had driven twenty years or more before. They were old, out-of-date machines, fit only for the museum; but the sporting, stout-hearted veterans would race them as they had raced so many times before.

But the great interest was not centred on these two old cars; the eyes of the world were on the wonderful machines which would fight it out in dust and tumult later in the day.

Between these, rivalry was already keen—keener than had ever been observed in other events. The drivers risked their machines in impromptu races during the practice spins, and in just such a little contest did Roger Hamar indulge as the silvery Warwick neared the end of the straight.

Ahead, he saw a black machine—an American car, driven by a speedman who had won the Iron Crown of Monza and the 500 miles race at Indianapolis earlier in the year—Danny Farrell.

The sable car showed in a haze of dust racing down to Brace Corner—the first on the course after the replenishment pits.

Roger had never raced against Farrell before, nor had he come up against him during practice spins, so that he had never found an opportunity of discovering whether the black machine was all that it was alleged to be. He would, in any case, be able to test the pace of Farrell—if the American took the challenge.

That the speedman on the black machine was only too ready became evident as she reached Brace Corner. His mechanic saw them as they took the wide bend and, even before they were round, he was squirming in his seat to wave them on.

Roger slowed for the corner, clicking beautifully through his gears. Above the roar of the car Bob heard the whine of over-running gears and the gripping of the four brake drums; then they hurtled round without the slightest suggestion of a skid and took the straight again in the haze of dust that the black car had left behind.

Bob, hunched up in his seat, peered through the wire mesh in front of him; he saw the American mechanic turning round and grinning, waving them on again; then the fellow settled down in his seat and gave his attention to his work.

Roger swung the silvery-grey car a little to the right, clear of the dust and his foot went down little by little on the accelerator, opening up. The machine gathered speed and more speed with every fraction that his foot went down, hurtling onwards like a living thing.

The road showed red with gravel and with the dust from the bricks that had been used

to pave the parts where it had been widened. It shot beneath the threshing tyres like a crimson carpet. The Warwick held to it with a firmness that told of wonderful design, but, for all that, Bob was bucketed in his seat. He held on with all the strength that was in his muscular arms, forcing himself down in his seat, and bracing his back against the squab.

He saw Roger's knees thudding on the cotton-waste pads that had been strapped to the steering-pillar; saw the muscles standing out on his wrists and hands as he gripped the big wheel, and he saw the tensed, square jaw and the half-closed eyes.

His bronzed features carried the same expression as they had borne during the big race on the Monza Speedway, and Bob knew that if they didn't pass the black machine it would be because Farrell was driving a better car.

Fifty yards separated the two speeding machines when they were clear of Brace Corner; they accelerated in unison and for a little more than a quarter of a mile the distance between remained the same. Farrell's mechanic did not look round again—which was in accordance with good manners on the racing track; he would take no further notice of the silvery car until it was on them—if that happened, then he'd pass the information to his driver, and Farrell would edge over the few feet which would mean all the difference between an easy passing and a tight one.

The distance between Brace Corner and the next—Ferry Bend—was a little under two miles. The centre part of this road had been newly built for the race, cutting out a nasty curve and a narrow bridge over the Trent Brook. This new section of road included a wooden trestle bridge which ran over another part of the stream.

The road dipped slightly to this bridge, and Bob Hamar glimpsed the new wooden posts at the sides as they topped the slope.

He saw, half a mile in front of them, and still some little way from the bridge, a group of four cars. They were, seemingly, all out, and engaged in just such an impromptu race as that between the Warwick and the American.

This racing during practice was one of the features of the preparations for the Dent Gold Cup event; there were always crowds on the course—for the estate had been opened to the public—and the spectators were certain of seeing some real speed work.

There was a crowd of these people on the grassy banks at the beginning of the wide bridge, and many of them scuttled back as the four hurtling cars roared down on them.

It seemed to Bob that there was no distance at all between the quartette of multi-coloured machines; they appeared to be running wheel to wheel. He could see them only hazily because of the dust that Farrell was raising, but he knew that there was some close work going on ahead.

He turned his attention to the black car in front. Against the dark hue of the short, rounded tail he could see the stabbing flare of the exhaust, and he could hear its vicious, tearing note as the machine sped on.

The whole fabric of his own car was vibrating with the terrific speed. From beyond the bent-edged, steel footplate against which his canvas shoes rested, came the thunderous roar of the engine, and from out the cavity there rushed a volume of heated air, almost hissing as it passed his body and legs and escaped through a cavity at the end of the tail.

Down the slope the grey and the black cars rushed, bellowing and roaring like two monster metal demons. The dust swirled and eddied behind, rising high in a thin film after their passing.

Bob peered through the meshed screen just in time to see the four cars top the slight rise of the bridge and literally leap at the slope beyond. The people who were standing by were watching them, and he saw them turn to wave to Farrell, as though to urge him in pursuit.

He noticed, then, that they were gaining on the black machine. His keen eyes, attuned to judgment of distance, told him that the Warwick had notched yards out of the American's lead—ten yards at the least. And they were still gaining.

He pushed his body forward in the seat and reached upwards to Roger's ear.

"Show 'em how!" he yelled. "Put your foot down!"

Roger's grim-set lips stretched in a grin showing his white teeth. On the instant those teeth were covered with a layer of grit from the dust on the road—but he did not notice that.

They were ninety feet behind Farrell when the American car touched the flat hundred yards to the wooden bridge—a distance which it would cover in a matter of barely two seconds, for both cars were touching the hundred mile an hour mark.

Bob had a glimpse of people standing well back on the banks. They looked to be waving and shouting, but he had no chance to see what they were actually doing.

He fixed his gaze on the black car and saw it streaking for the bridge. In what seemed the fraction of a second later the wheels of the American machine were thundering on the wooden structure.

Bob saw it reach the low crown of the bridge, and the threshing wheels actually left the road as the car leaped over the slight, abrupt rise. Then—

Bob was never too sure of what happened then.

There were whitened posts and rails at the side of the bridge. Suddenly, and for no apparent reason, these seemed to fly into the air, hurtling high. The bridge, where those posts had been, rucked up as though it was made of cloth, while half a dozen broken, dust-filmed planks jutted out of the breach.

That quartette of cars which had sped before had tested the strength of that bridge, and had found it weak. The structure had given under the strain, and the passing of the black car had been all that was wanted for its collapse—it was collapsing now.

Bob knew that Roger must realise it. He saw the big fellow's hands move on the wheel, saw those tensed muscles flex and strain, glimpsed his squared jaw and gleaming eyes as he sent the car on.

There was no time to stop, no chance to brake and pull up. But there was a chance that the car might speed over that collapsing bridge—and Roger took that chance.

He asked the Warwick for every atom of

speed that was in the roaring engine. His foot went down on the accelerator with all the great strength of his tensed leg-muscles, clamping the throttle wide.

The fraction of a second later and they were hurtling amidst the falling woodwork that had formed the bridge-rails. Bob ducked, yet he still managed to look ahead.

The front wheels of the great machine hit the bridge with a thud. Beneath the impact, the timbers at onesideshook and broke, thundering down with a mighty roar.

The road-way sagged at the crown—sagged and dropped even as the silvery machine hurtled to the spot.

Just as the black car had done, the wheels leaped clear and the Warwick surged on, driving above cracking timbers and jagged rents, and hitting the dust of the good hard, red road on the other side.

It was while the machine was actually in the air that a whitened post came plugging down. Others bounced off the rounded tail and joined the ruck of broken woodwork which had once been the trestle-bridge; but this thick post drove into the scuttle of the car from the off side.

It caught Roger's tensed arms just as the car struck the firm ground and hurtled

onwards. Bob, bending from the threatening post, saw his brother's hand swept clear of the wheel, and the car lurched across the road. On the instant, Roger's left hand was shooting back to the rubber-bound frame again, but not before Bob had found a hold there and had steadied the great car.

A moment later and the machine was straight again, saved by Bob's swift thought and action. Already Roger was braking, the

whine of the drums sounding as the wheels threshed to a halt in the middle of the road.

"Hurt?" asked Bob, wriggling stiffly forward in his seat.

"It caught my wrist!" Roger answered. He was gripping his right wrist with his left hand, and he was frowning at the pain. He turned in his seat to look back, despite his hurt.

Where the bridge had been there

was now a towering cloud of dust—the collapse of the structure had been absolute and complete, only a wide gap showed now.

"Narrow shave that!" Roger commented as he saw it. "Wonder if they can repair it in time for the race?"

The effect of the smashed bridge on the race was his only thought; he did not consider the almost miraculous fact that they had come



"What's the matter?" Bob asked his brother anxiously. "That post has broken my wrist!" Roger answered slowly, in a voice that was vibrant with anger. "I shan't be able to drive in the big race!" (See page 158)

through two incidents which might have meant instant and horrible death.

"I hope they jolly well——" Bob's voice died away as he noticed his brother's face. It was twisted with pain now, and he was trying to get out of his seat. Bob climbed to the road, then he helped his brother out of the scuttle. For a few seconds the big fellow stood feeling his wrist and, as his fingers moved over it, Bob saw the colour drain slowly from under the tan of his face.

"What's the matter?" he asked.
"What—— Do you feel——"

"That post has broken my wrist!" Roger answered slowly, in a voice that was vibrant with anger. "I shan't be able to drive in the race!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER

Veterans of the Track!

THE fact that a broken wrist doesn't necessarily keep a man in bed was but poor consolation to Roger Hamar. There have been stout-hearted, plucky speedmen who have gone into a race with a damaged limb, but their pluck has never been rewarded with victory. Roger Hamar knew that he could not drive with but one hand, and he knew that, if he attempted it, he would stand no chance of winning.

For this reason, he vacated his seat to his brother. Bob was glad of the chance he was being given, but he wished with all his heart that it had come about some other way.

For some little time, the collapse of the bridge looked as though it might mean the postponement of the race. When it was reported that it would be impossible to reconstruct it in time for the race on lines strong enough to stand the shocks of the speeding cars, there was many a black brow in Twynhams Park.

It was Sir Thomas Dent who solved the difficulty. He called a meeting of all drivers and mechanics engaged in the race, and he took them to the branch road which had been cut off when the new section and bridge had been built.

"Gentlemen," he said. "I will have every available man set to widening this half-mile of road and to broadening the entrance,

but I cannot enlarge the bridge over the brook. It is impossible for two cars at speed to pass over the bridge together—one can get across with comfort. The trestle bridge cannot be built in time for the race; but if you will agree to the inclusion of this stretch of road and the narrow bridge—the race can be run."

When this little speech had been translated to the Belgian drivers and the Italians, to the Spaniards, the Frenchmen, and to the team from Holland there was, for a short space, pandemonium.

After that, every driver and mechanic went down to the Trent Bridge to look at it. The peculiar thing about their inspection was that they did not examine the bridge or the width of it. What they looked at was what lay on either side of it, and just how far their machines would have to fall if they happened to—well, to miss the bridge.

"Waal, Sir Thomas," drawled Farrell, "if you'll hook up them spiked fencings on th' near-side bank, I'll race over that bit of course until the li'l bridge is red-hot!"

And everybody else said the same. It was the Comte d'Alessan who put the finishing touch to the discussion. The baronet's great rival was a short, spare, wiry man, and his hair was as snow-white as that of Sir Thomas. Where the baronet's features were the rich red of an English country gentleman, the Comte's were bronzed and wrinkled. But there was the same gleam bright in his brown eyes as showed in the Britisher's, and the sly dig that he gave was accompanied by a flashing smile.

"You and I, Sir Thomas, when we race, should we weesh to pass togezzzer—it will be my ver' great pleasure to make way for your ver' rotten automobel!"

"Look here, my boy," roared the baronet, "if your antiquated pile of rattling junk can beat my old machine to this bridge, I'll—I'll give you the race!"

And the Comte d'Alessan smiled and bowed; then he laughed into the rubicund features of the nobleman and extended a slim, strong hand.

"We fight old battles over again, eh?" he asked, as his slim fingers were wrapped in Sir Thomas's broad palm. "Perhaps,

The bridge was collapsing, but there was no time to pull up. The front wheels of the Warwick hit the bridge with a thud, and the timbers shook and broke! (See page 157)



thees time, fortune will favour you, and you—"

"Anyway, we'll show some of these youngsters what the old 'uns can do, eh?" and the baronet laughed jovially and clapped a hand on Bob Hamar's shoulder. "This youngster's coming as my mechanician. My nephew. Haven't met him, have you?"

"His brother I know well," answered the Comte.

"You'll know this lad a jolly sight better after he's beaten your rotten Ballagos in the big race," Sir Thomas answered.

The Comte's eyes widened.

"You drive?" he queried. "You drive the Warwick?"

"Yes," answered Bob.

For what seemed long seconds the grey-haired Italian gazed at him, surveying his resolute features and looking deep into his grey eyes. Bob met squarely the gaze of this veteran of the motor-track, and he was proud to take the old sportsman's hand as he extended it to him.

"You will have a ver' hard task to conquer

Deo—my ver' great driver," he said slowly. "But I weesh you ver' good fortune."

Bob knew that an Italian named Pietro Deo was the crack driver of the Ballago team; he was a speedman who had swept the board on the Italian tracks, and who had been victorious in France as well. There would be credit in beating such a man as he.

Bob knew that he would have his great chance in the big race; that, if he won the Dent Gold Cup he would not only please his brother and gain his uncle's everlasting blessing, but he would make a name for himself that would live for ever in the annals of motor-racing.

And he meant to win.

It had been originally arranged that he should go as mechanician to Sir Thomas in the "Veterans' Race" the morning before the big event. That arrangement was still to hold, for two reasons.

The first was that Bob had prepared the old car for his uncle, and the old baronet wanted him in the seat at his side; the second reason was that the two or three hours spent in making the car finally ready, as well

as the time of the actual race, would occupy the young fellow's mind and leave him no opportunity to think on the important event of the afternoon.

So he was to play a part in both the races that were near to Sir Thomas's heart—mechanician in the sporting event of the morning, and driver in the Gold Cup race. A pretty full day, a lot of people thought—but Bob knew that he could manage it all.

All that night, all the next day, and all the night following, gangs of road men worked like demons on the branch road. Trees came down, ditches were filled, and the track was broadened to its full width of sixty feet.

But the bridge could not be altered. A few projections were removed; nothing more than that could be done. It still remained a death-trap to the driver who would not give a rival room. There were certain to be many duels for precedence on that bridge—and the risk was very great.

Every competing driver knew this, but none quailed. There was a chance that the bridge would not interfere with the race, that it would play no actual part in holding up a car. They did not consider what would happen if a driver, in the heat of the fight, forgot the bridge—or refused to let his rival go ahead.

With the morning of the great day Twynhams park was invaded by crowds who came from all over England and from the Continent. They came by special trains and by fleets of cars; by charabanes and—a party of enthusiastic Americans—by aeroplane.

The course itself was simple, a six-mile triangle, with two dead-straight legs, and a third which included the branch road and Trent Bridge—an ugly and treacherous stretch. The three corners were Brace Corner, Ferry Bend and Home Corner. This last marked the straightest and fastest stretch, and just around it were the grandstands and the replenishment pits, together with the starting and finishing line.

The long grandstands were gay with flags and bunting, streamers and pennants. The pits were full of colour, for each carried the distinguishing sign-board of the cars that it was to supply. These pits were just wire cages, recessed from the tracks; at the back stood

mechanics and helpers; on a broad plank in front of them was every type of tool and spare allowable in the race—from a split pin to a carburettor, from spare wheels to chewing gum. This last is often as much value to a speedman as another ounce of "pep" to his engine.

The track was cleared at nine-thirty. At eleven o'clock the race between Sir Thomas Dent, on an ancient Panhard, and the Comte d'Alessan, on a strange-looking machine which was known as the "Beetle," was due to start.

The Panhard was a strange affair, with the radiator coiled over the front of the engine-cover; the top of the cover could be lifted and held in position by little forks. The driver sat perched high up in his seat, with the steering column running down almost perpendicularly before him. His mechanician was accommodated in a much lower position; both seats were nothing more than boxes, with cushions at the bottom.

The Beetle was an altogether queer affair. The engine cover was nothing but vents, and stuck out in a point at the front. The engine was air-cooled, and the cylinder heads seemed to be about on a level with the axles, so low was the engine slung. The whole effect was extremely rakish, and the Beetle certainly looked to promise speed—and noise.

There was a huge crowd to witness the start of the veteran cars' one-lap race, and most of them agreed that six miles was about as much as the machines would run without falling to pieces.

Bob had been working on the Panhard every moment that he could spare from the Warwick machine during the past month, and he had the engine in pretty good trim. Of course, many parts were hopelessly worn and, according to the agreement of the race, these could not be replaced. But Bob thought that the car would last the course, and he had certainly tuned it to concert pitch—although the "concert" part was nothing but a clattering and a snorting.

When the two machines lined up there was a crowd of celebrities round them. As Bob glanced about him he saw the features of men whose names had been famous in the infancy of motor-racing. They had come to see the



CUTTING OUT THE PACE!

Two Monster Racing-cars Fighting out a Thrilling Speed Duel in a Great Road Race

To face page 160

two old warriors fight again—and the odds were, as ever, on the Comte d'Alessan.

Sir Thomas climbed to his seat after the machine had been started up, and Bob took his place beside him. The engine was clattering and roaring, the cover was rattling on its shaky hinges and the exhaust was chugging with the purposeful regularity of a gas-engine.

The baronet glanced across to his rival. The Comte was in his seat, settled comfortably behind his steering-wheel, much lower than the baronet. Sir Thomas grinned:

"We'll show these young 'uns, eh, D'Alessan?" he bellowed above the clatter of the Panhard. The count didn't catch his

down on the Beetle. After that it was first one in the lead and then the other all the way to Brace Corner.

There was no speedometer on the car, so Bob could not tell what speed they were making. But there was plenty of noise and dash about the old Panhard. Sir Thomas was bending over the wheel, his eyes shining, grinning to himself when they passed the Beetle; muttering angrily when the low car forged ahead and left them behind.

Both cars raised the dust enormously. When the Beetle was ahead Bob could feel the tiny grains clattering his eyes and nostrils. It seemed to lie thick at Brace Corner, and the cars reached it neck and neck.



Sir Thomas bent over the wheel of the old Panhard, his eyes shining, and grinning to himself when they passed the Beetle. (See this page)

words, but he guessed what he meant, and he smiled. A moment later and they were both watching the red flag of the starter.

Ahead, the road stretched straight as a die to Brace Corner. Bob saw it shimmering in the heat of the morning sun, then he looked at the starter again.

He saw the flag flutter—it dropped.

The Panhard got away with a jump that drove the back of his seat against his spine, then the Panhard was thundering away, to the tremendous cheering of the crowd on either side.

The Beetle leaped into its stride immediately and forged ten yards ahead. Sir Thomas opened up in pursuit, did desperate things with the gear lever, and began to close

The baronet did not think it needful to slow, and he took the corner at top speed. The result was a terrific skid which sent Bob's heart into his mouth. The top-heavy machine slithered the whole width of the corner, appeared to poise on two wheels, gained the horizontal again, and dashed after the Beetle, now nearly fifteen yards in the lead.

"We'll get 'em on the slope!" Sir Thomas shouted; and Bob thought he could foresee some exciting work on the way to Trent Bridge.

They gained nothing on the Beetle until they reached the entrance to the branch road; there the slope to the bridge commenced, and the Panhard began to pick up. Foot by foot they overhauled the Beetle, the

heavier Panhard gaining momentum with every yard that it travelled.

The bridge was hardly half a mile distant, and Bob could see that Sir Thomas was determined to regain the lead and get across first. Possibly he was remembering what D'Alessan had said only a little time before.

On the two cars thundered, rattling and banging, their engine covers clattering and adding to the din, their heavy wheels spurning the red dust, their pilots bent over the steering gear, grim and determined.

Two hundred yards from the bridge and the snaked radiator on the Panhard was level with the Comte d'Alessan. Sir Thomas was shouting words that Bob could not catch, and laughing like a boy.

They forged ahead; by some chance, the Italian managed to urge a little more speed out of his engine, and he drew level again.

Side by side they raced for the bridge. Bob saw Sir Thomas's foot go down on the accelerator, the Panhard sputtered, gained two yards of lead—and they were through.

Across the bridge, the baronet turned in his seat to shake his fist at D'Alessan, almost running the car off the track as he did it, then he settled down to make sure of the race.

He lost way up the rise beyond, and the two cars were again running neck and neck at Ferry Bend. It was a ding-dong battle down the straight to Home Corner, and the Panhard had the lead when they reached it. It did not avail Sir Thomas much, for he skidded again.

When he got the car straight once more, D'Alessan had snatched the lead—and two of the Panhard's cylinders were misfiring.

The Beetle thundered on, while the lamed Panhard rumbled up in the rear. The coloured replenishment pits came into view, Bob saw the decorated grand stands, then he glimpsed the Beetle as the car was flagged home as winner.

"Beaten me again! Did you ever see such cursed luck?" gasped Sir Thomas. "The old car went back on me again. I'd have beaten him an'—"

His words seemed to choke in his throat and, half a minute later he pulled the car to a halt five yards from the victorious Beetle.

D'Alessan rushed up to help him down from his seat and to shake his hand.

"Thunderin' stiff that's made me," Sir Thomas growled. "Not so young as I was. Well, congratulations, D'Alessan. You've won a dashed good race—confound you!" and he shook the Italian's hand heartily, then he swung round to Bob: "Lad, win the big race, and I'll give you the finest sports model Warwick that ever touched the road!"

"I'll win it, uncle, without the—"

"You've got to win it, Bob! If you don't, D'Alessan will be strutting round Twynhams like a fighting cock. I've got to get my revenge somehow—and you're my last hope!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER

Silver and Yellow!

THREE hours later Bob was once more anxiously watching the starter's flag. Its red fabric was silhouetted against the green of the trees beyond. Vaguely, he noticed that a hush had fallen in the stands on either side of the broad road.

Ahead of him, cars that had started at twenty-second intervals before him were already raising the dust on the road to Brace Corner. Beside him, other machines waited their turn to leap into the great race.

Already the last car was but a clot of dust on the sunny surface of the road. It looked as though he would never catch him—would never catch Deo, the daring driver of the yellow Ballago who had gone off a minute before. Would that flag never drop? Was the starter going to hold it there all—Ah!

The red cloth slashed down. In went the Warwick's clutch, and the car, racing in second gear, sent a vicious fount of dust up behind as it leaped in pursuit of number six; Bob's number was seven.

In the mechanician's seat beside him was a Cockney who had helped to make the silvery car ready—a man who had his whole heart in the Warwicks' gaining the victory.

Away they went, the roar of the engine rising to crescendo, the bark of the exhaust stammering to a nerve-shattering roar that brought echoes back from the grand-stands. It was a magnificent start.

Shaking and trembling in every inch of its glistening body with the force of the unleashed power, the Warwick started its two hundred-mile journey—thirty-three laps of the triangular circuit.

Brace Corner seemed to rush at them. The four-wheel brakes slowed the terrific momentum of the car as Bob changed down; he held the machine close in to the wooden fencing that marked the inside edge of the track, accelerated in a haze of wildly-flung dust and, with a bellowing roar, was away again.

A quarter of a mile past the corner and he made out number six ahead. The other machine was holding the centre of the road,

number four—held them until they were around Home Corner, then Bob passed him by the stands.

Roger Hamar and Sir Thomas Dent were standing together with the Comte d'Alessan, and the two Britishers cheered when they saw that Bob had passed three rival machines on the first lap.

"He's chasing Deo!" roared Sir Thomas. "He'll get him the next lap."

Ahead of the young speedman lay only the Ballago team. Of course, the twenty-second start which the cars had received from each other would be taken into account when the race was run, but it was not likely that it



Bob twisted the rubber-bound steering-wheel a trifle and took the silvery car closer to the fencing. There was a ripping of wood, a fountain of palings, and he was clear of the corner! (See page 164.)

but the Warwick swung up to it as though the car had been crawling, flashed past it with a triumphant roar, then bore in for the bend to Trent Bridge.

"Them Spaniards ain't no good!"

Bob's mechanic reached up to shout in the young fellow's ear, and there was a chuckle in his voice as he bellowed the words. The car they had passed might not be good enough for the Warwick, but it had been good enough to gain victories in the Coppa Florio and other big speed events.

The second of the Spanish team was just making the Trent Bridge as Bob saw it. They overhauled and passed the car ere it reached Ferry Bend. The leader of the Spaniards—

would make much difference on the actual running. Bob knew that if he could get and hold the yellow machine that Deo was driving—number three—he would be all right.

The road to Brace corner lay wide and straight, with a haze of dust on it and no sign of a Ballago. He did not see anything of the yellow cars until he was on the fifth lap, then he sighted one on the straight to Home Corner. He closed down on it, gaining all the way. He tried to beat it to Trent Bridge, but he failed, and he did not close in again until they neared Ferry Bend.

Then he was but a scant ten yards behind, and he could glimpse the Italian mechanic shouting frantically to the driver. But Bob

had the legs of that yellow car, although the other machine made desperate efforts to get away from him.

The driver knew that he was hard pressed and he took risks on Ferry Bend. Bob was watching the machine to try and get a glimpse of the number, and he saw the tail slither outwards as the machine took the corner.

It was a skid—and a bad one. The whole machine slithered sideways, driving for the whitened fencing which kept the spectators off the track. Suddenly, something black seemed to fly out from the near-side front wheel—it was a tyre, ripped from the rim by the strain of the skid.

The driver seemed to rise half out of his seat as he fought for control, hauling on the wheel to take the machine away from the spectators and the fence.

The machine shot back across the track, and Bob saw it coming. He twisted his own rubber-bound steering-wheel the fraction of an inch, and took the silvery car closer in to the inside fencing.

He saw the yellow machine bearing down on him—thought it would hit him! He heard the Cockney mechanic yelling and, a moment later, there came a ripping of wood, a fountain of palings—and he was clear of the corner, hurtling to the next bend.

Behind him, the yellow Ballago pulled into the side of the track—fortunately right way up. Just behind where the car stopped there was a great break in the inside fencing, where the hubs of the Warwick's near-side wheels had caught as Bob twisted to avoid the skidding car.

Both machines had had a narrow escape—but that was all part of the great game.

"Number two that was!" shouted Bob's mechanic, and the young fellow grinned as he heard it. He had passed four cars and must now be hot on Deo's machine.

Lap after lap swung under the threshing wheels of the Warwick. The machine ran faultlessly, but never a sign could Bob see of the two yellow Ballagos which were in front of him. The Cockney watched the Warwicks' replenishment pit anxiously for signals, but all he got was a series of "O.K.'s."

The leaders were setting a terrific pace, lapsing the difficult course at little short of ninety miles an hour. The speed soon told on the weaker machines, and before the course was half run eleven cars had retired.

All the Warwicks were in the running still; numbers eight and nine were fighting it out with Farrell and his two team-mates. Bob was all on his own, straining every nerve to get up with the Italian machines which he knew were somewhere ahead.

On the seventeenth lap he thought that he saw the sunlight glinting on something yellow on the red road ahead. He set his teeth, put his foot hard down and settled to keep that dusty yellow speck in sight. Two laps passed before he made any appreciable impression upon the distance that separated the cars, and two more went by before the mechanic, sighting the other machine at Brace Corner, said that it was number one!

"Pass 'im—an' we get Deo!" the Cockney yelled.

Bob overhauled number one on the next lap, passing him steadily and leaving him behind. Then he watched for Deo.

Continually, now, Bob was passing cars; he watched every dust-cloud anxiously, but he was reeling off the twenty-sixth lap before he picked up a blotch of dust which seemed persistently to keep ahead of him. He knew that that must be Deo.

The yellow car was lying half a mile ahead almost, and the miles sped beneath the threshing tyres, bringing them to within four laps of the finish—then Bob knew that he was closing in on his rival.

It seemed almost inches at a time that the swaying, leaping car took him nearer to the yellow Ballago. Bob knew that, on time, his own silvery machine was leading—but he wanted the glory of passing Deo, of passing and giving him his dust. The race would be truly won then!

Brace Corner—Ferry Bend—Home Corner—the two cars shot round them almost together, the Warwick a little in the rear. Bob thought that his engine must be tiring, for he could make no impression on the short lead which Deo had. It wasn't that—the Italian driver was using every device that his

experience could bring to get his car along, to forge away from the Warwick and win.

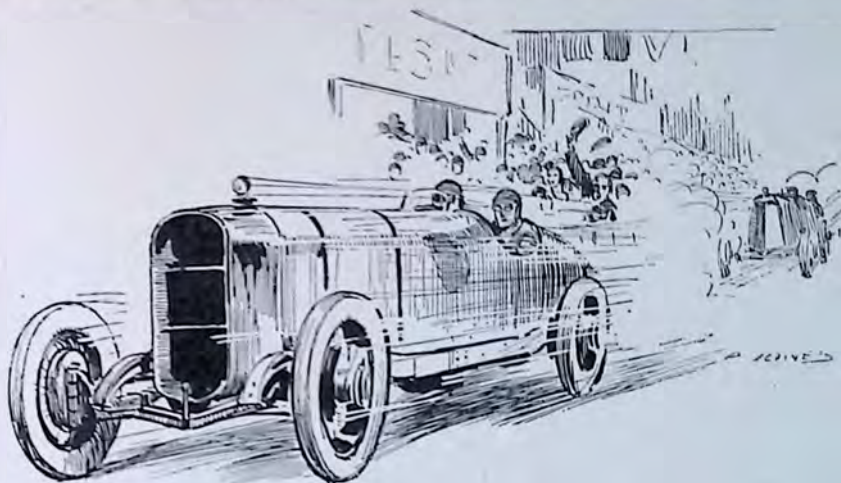
Behind him, Bob was doing all he knew to crowd an extra ounce of power out of the engine—to pass the yellow Ballago and leave it behind.

Thirty laps—thirty-one—thirty-two—they entered on the last hurricane circuit. The silvery car seemed to stretch itself as it shot past the stands and past the replenishment pit that it had never visited.

"Last one, boss!" bawled Bob's mecha-

could muster, worked with all his brain in his hands and feet—but here, Deo was his equal, and he held him. For all that, the Ballago was not so delicately responsive as the silvery car, and once more Bob snatched feet from the other's lead—which brought his radiator level with the other's tail.

He knew, then, that if Deo held the lead over Trent Bridge there would be no hope of catching him on the home run. Passing over the bridge meant that he would be put at least a car's length behind—and even inches



Bob took the last bend in a flurry of dust, and flashed past the grand-stands and across the finishing-line—the winner! (See page 166).

nician. "Git past 'im—else Sir Tom'll go mad!"

Bob did not answer. Every nerve in his body was thrilling now. He could feel the pull of his engine, could sense the tremendous power, knew the great fight that the Warwick was putting up—and despite all he could do the yellow machine held him all the way down to Brace Corner.

Bob took risks now. He cornered so close to the inside fence that the hearts of track stewards leaped, spectators raced away—and he gained three feet on the yellow machine.

He accelerated with all the skill that he

counted with a rival like Deo racing to hold the lead.

Bob knew that he had got to cross Trent Bridge first if he wanted to please old Sir Thomas and give the baronet his "revenge" on the Comte d'Alessan—and he meant to do it.

It seemed to him that he crept further along the side of the yellow machine as they tore onwards to the bend that marked the entrance to the branch road. He was gaining in inches, but he was still behind when they sighted the bridge at the bottom of the long slope.

"Now for it!" bellowed his mechanic, and, from the corners of his eyes, Bob could see the man bend eagerly forward.

Bob flicked the throbbing lever wide, and he put all his weight on the accelerator pedal—just to make sure that the engine was getting all it could. He bore over on the track to make a dead straight course for the bridge, then he urged the bellowing car along.

The mechanic sprawled in his seat, jerking his right foot forward and pressing his toe up and under the brake pedal—making certain that the brakes were not on in the slightest degree.

The helmeted heads of the drivers were bent over the big steering wheels, both exhausts were belching flame, each car was bellowing a war song of defiance—and the Trent Bridge flashed up towards them.

Neither driver would give way to the other. To spectators who were standing near the bridge, it looked as though the cars must smash on the low parapets at the sides.

Bob felt that the Warwick was gaining—but he dared not look to see. He heard his mechanic shouting something, glimpsed the brickwork of a bridge parapet, saw the gleaming yellow radiator of the Ballago, caught sight of a threshing wheel—then he was on the bridge!

The hubs of his wheels all but scored the brickwork, a masterly twist of the wheel—the merest fraction of an inch, and he was through and in the lead, his exhaust roaring defiance on to the very radiator of the yellow car!

Ferry Bend went past in a maze of cheering spectators and gleaming fences. The heart seemed to be taken out of the Ballago, for it dropped behind yards at a time on the straight run to Home Corner.

Bob took the last bend in a flurry of dust, then the grand-stands loomed up, with their waving flags; he saw the pits and their coloured signboards, the grouped officials—cameras—pressmen—and Sir Thomas with the great gold cup under one arm, his hat waved high above his head, his ecstatic cheering drowned by the furious roar of the silvery car as it flashed past the chequered flag on the finishing line—the winner!

THE END

The Greyfriars MASTERS' GALLERY



Mr. LARRY LASCELLES

A FIGHTING man we here behold.

A most athletic person:

I love to have a hero bold

To vent my flowing verse on!

From very early days in life

He learned to thrust and parry;

He is a giant in the strife—

We simply worship Larry!

We always have a cheery time

When Larry takes mathematics:

Some masters, who are past their prime,

And smitten with rheumatics,

Are apt to fly into a rage

And cane a chap with vigour;

But Larry hasn't reached that stage—

He is a kindly figure.

He helps us in our work and play,

Grand games he organises:

And at such times, he gives away

A host of handsome prizes.

For he's a sportsman of the best,

Who loves a thrilling tussle;

And he arranges many a test

For youthful mind and muscle,

Then give three cheers, and three times three,

For this delightful master!

A fine and fearless Briton he

In triumph or disaster.

Possessor of a hero's heart,

He has no proud superior:

If Larry Lascelles did depart

Then Greyfriars would be drearier!

THE TRIBULATIONS OF TRIMBLE!



*An Amusing Short Story
of St. Jim's*

**By MONTY LOWTHER
OF THE SHELL FORM**

"I'm going to enter!"

Baggy Trimble made that pronouncement from the doorway of the study which the writer shares with Tom Merry and Manners.

Baggy was looking very excited. His eyes were bulging, his flabby cheeks were flushed.

"What are you going to enter, Baggy?" I asked. "An asylum, or a Home for Prize Porkers?"

"Oh, really, Lowther—I've made up my mind to enter for the Marathon."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A peal of laughter greeted Baggy's statement. The idea of the corpulent, clumsy, untrained Trimble entering for a race of any description was enough to make the proverbial cat laugh.

A big Marathon Race, open to all juniors of St. Jim's, was to be run on the morrow. Strictly speaking, it was not a real Marathon over a course of twenty-six miles. But it was a race of seven miles, and a fellow needs to be in the pink of condition to cover that distance. And Baggy Trimble was far from fit. People who train on dough-nuts and jam-puffs can't reasonably expect to win long-distance races.

Baggy glared at us in great wrath.

"Dry up, you cackling dummies!" he exclaimed. "You'll pipe to another tune

to-morrow, when I romp home an easy winner!"

"Why, you fat duffer," said Tom Merry, laughing, "you couldn't win a donkey race! To come in first you'd have to be the only runner!"

"And even then, Baggy would never finish the course," said Manners. "He can't run seven yards, let alone seven miles!"

"Look here—" began Trimble wrathfully.

"Now, if it were a rolling race, or a waddling race," I said, "I'd put my shirt on you, as the saying goes. You're the champion roller and waddler at St. Jim's, Baggy, but you can't run!"

"Beast!" snorted Trimble. "I'll make you eat your words to-morrow! My Uncle Bob, who's a rare old sport, is going to present me with a fiver if—I mean when—I win!"

"Uncle Bob's fiver will remain in his pocket, I'm thinking!" chuckled Tom Merry. "Take my advice, Baggy, and give the Marathon a miss. You'll only make a champion ass of yourself."

But Baggy Trimble's mind was made up, and wild horses would not have prevented him from taking part in the race. His eyes were positively gleaming with determination. He meant to "lift" the silver cup that was being awarded—also the "fiver" from Uncle Bob

Flourishing a fat fist in our faces, Baggy rolled away to complete his training—by stuffing himself with doughnuts. One of his rare remittances had arrived, and it was being rapidly expended at the school tuckshop.

St. Jim's was buzzing with excitement next day. Crowds of fellows turned out to see the start of the great race.

There were ten runners. Nine of them represented the cream of the running talent at St. Jim's. The other was Baggy Trimble.

Roars of laughter greeted the fat junior as he rolled down to the school gates. He was garbed in a tight-fitting vest, and a pair of baggy shorts that came down over his knees. His bare calves wobbled like jellies as he walked.

"Hallo, hallo!"

"Here comes the merry athlete!"

"How many miles start do you want, Baggy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Baggy Trimble lifted his snub nose scornfully into the air, and disdained to reply to the bantering juniors.

Tom Merry was taking part in the race, as a matter of course. Other School House runners were Talbot, Jack Blake, Harry Noble, Clive, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. The New House was represented by Figgins, Kerr, and Redfern.

Cardew of the Fourth, who has a priceless sense of humour, was "shouting the odds."

"Back your fancy for the St. Jim's Derby, gentlemen. Two to one on the favourite, Tom Merry! Three to one against Figgy; six to one against Blake; and a billion to one against Baggy Boy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

At this juncture Mr. Railton came striding on the scene. He was about to start the runners on the long, long trail.

The Housemaster stared in surprise at Baggy Trimble.

"Bless my soul! I had no idea you were participating in this event, Trimble!"

"You've no objection, I hope, sir?"

"Not in the least. But do you seriously suppose that you have a chance of winning?"

"Quite a rosy chance, sir!" said Baggy,

beaming. "Tom Merry's the favourite I know, but I shall run him off his feet!"

Mr. Railton smiled.

"You seem very confident, Trimble. But I cannot agree that your chance is rosy. Candidly, I do not consider you have the remotest chance!"

"Oh, really, sir—"

"If you are determined to take part in the race, I think you ought to have twenty minutes' start—provided the other runners are agreeable."

"We're quite willing, sir!" came in a cheerful chorus from the rest of the runners.

Baggy blinked at Mr. Railton.

"Why, sir, you're making me a present of the race!" he said. "I shall finish miles in front of the others!"

"Nonsense, Trimble! You had better start now, and the others will be sent off in twenty minutes' time."

Baggy Trimble started off down the road, to the accompaniment of an ironical cheer.

"Go it, Baggy!"

"Put your beef into it!"

Puffing and blowing like a grampus, Baggy pounded along for all he was worth. His arms were going like windmills, and he was expending much needless energy. Gradually he disappeared from view.

"We shall find him in a state of collapse by the roadside, about a couple of miles from here!" was Jack Blake's prediction.

"A couple of miles? Why, he'll never get as far as the village!" said Figgins.

As a matter of fact, Baggy Trimble was soon showing signs of distress. As soon as he was out of sight of St. Jim's, he slowed down to a walk. Even a walking pace was too exhausting for the fat junior. Presently he sunk down by the roadside, and mopped his perspiring brow.

"Oh, dear!" he panted. "Wish I'd refused that fourth helping of pudding at dinner. I—I feel too full to do myself justice. Still, if only a cart or something comes along, I may be able to get a lift."

With this unscrupulous intention in his mind, Baggy glanced along the road.

Presently his face lighted up with pleasure.

A coal-wagon, drawn by a couple of cantering horses, came into view.

"Now's my chance!" muttered Baggy.

He crawled through a gap in the hedge, and waited until the wagon was alongside. Then he wormed his way back into the roadway. The vehicle had passed the spot by this time, and Baggy, bracing himself for the effort, took a flying leap at the tail-board. He succeeded in dragging himself up, and the coal-wagon rumbled on its way, with Baggy Trimble on board as a passenger.

But it would be foolish to remain in an exposed position on the tail-board. Trimble realised this, so he crawled into the wagon itself, and stowed himself away in the middle of the coal sacks. They rose up all around him, like sandbags screening a soldier from the fire of the enemy.

The driver of the wagon was blissfully unaware of the fact that he had a passenger. Crouching in his hiding-place, Baggy Trimble could neither see nor be seen.

He hoped that the coal-wagon would convey him over a large portion of the circular route that the runners were taking. If it branched off in some other direction, he would have to hop off.

To Baggy's delight, the wagon kept to the course. On one occasion it stopped outside a house, and a couple of sacks of coal were taken off.

Baggy was in a blue funk lest the driver

should catch sight of him during this manoeuvre. But he need not have feared. The two sacks were taken from the rear of the wagon, and Baggy was safely ensconced in the middle.

Having delivered the coal, the driver whipped his horses into action once more.

Baggy could not tell if any runners had passed. But he didn't think so, because the horses had been going at a good pace. He concluded that Tom Merry and the others were a long way behind on the road.



Baggy, bracing himself for the effort, took a flying leap for the tail-board of the coal cart. He dragged himself up, and the cart rumbled on its way

The fat junior was cramped and uncomfortable in his hiding-place, but he was in good spirits. For the coal-wagon was taking a circular course, and would soon be nearing St. Jim's. It was Baggy's intention to hop off about half a mile from the school, and complete his journey on foot, romping home—as he hoped—an easy winner.

There was still a mile to go, when Baggy

was prompted by an irresistible desire to sneeze. He tried hard to stifle it, and he succeeded—for a time. But the sneeze insisted on making itself heard, and it was all the louder when it did come, because it had been bottled up.

"Atishoo! Atishum-m-m!"

The driver turned his head with a start.

"What the thunder——" he began.

"Atishoo!"

"Drat me if there ain't somebody in my

wagon!" exclaimed the driver, reining up the horses. "Hi! Jest you come along off out of it! D'you 'ear?"

Baggy Trimble, pale with fright, remained crouching in his hiding-place. But not for long. The driver started to explore amongst the coal sacks, and he soon discovered the stowaway.

"You young warmint!" he roared. "Joy-ridin' in my wagon, without permission are you? I'll learn you! Take that—an' that!"

The long whip curled through the air, and descended across Baggy Trimble's shoulders.

Uttering shrill yelps of anguish, Baggy scrambled out of the danger zone with all speed. He clambered over the coal sacks—making himself very black in the process—until he reached the tail-board. From thence he dropped down into the roadway, and took to his heels as if a thousand furies were in pursuit.

He was one mile from St. Jim's, and he ran all the way. In spite of his misfortunes, he hoped to be the first man home. He had not heard any runners pass him, and he had glorious visions of gaining the coveted silver cup and the "fiver" from his Uncle Bob.

It was a very black, dishevelled, panting, and perspiring runner who staggered into the school gateway shortly afterwards.

Mr. Railton was standing there, and Baggy reeled into the Housemaster's arms,

transferring a good deal of grime and coal-dust to Mr. Railton's clothes.

"Sorry, sir!" panted the fat junior. "I'm whacked—absolutely done! But I've won the race, and that's all that matters!"

Mr. Railton sprang back a pace.

"You utterly stupid boy!" he thundered. "How did you come to be in this grimy condition? As for winning the race, why you are the last to finish!"

The words rang like a death knell in Baggy Trimble's ears.

"Last?" he echoed, in astonishment and dismay.

Mr. Railton nodded grimly.

"Merrywon the race, quite twenty minutes ago, and the others have all finished," he said.

"But—but I didn't hear them pass me when I was in the coal-wagon, sir—"

"Oh!" said Mr. Railton sternly. "So you took a mean advantage, Trimble, in the hope of deceiving us all? I have a good mind to cane you severely for this conduct! However, I will not add further to your humiliation."

Go and cleanse yourself immediately!" Baggy Trimble crawled disconsolately away to the nearest bathroom. His rosy dreams were ruthlessly shattered; his castles in the air had come crashing down.

In due course the silver cup was awarded. But the winner's name—owing to some absurd oversight, as Baggy afterwards informed his uncle—was not Bagley Trimble!

THE END



It was a very black, dishevelled, panting junior who staggered up to Mr. Railton. "Sorry, sir!" panted Baggy. "I'm whacked—absolutely done! But I've won the race!"

ST JIM'S SIDELIGHTS

*Specially contributed to the Holiday Annual by Tom Merry,
the popular captain of the Shell Form at St. Jim's*

THE history of St. Jim's is like Skimpole's receding chin. It goes a long way back!

CERTAIN historians declare that in the dim and distant days of old, St. Jim's used to be a prison. Baggy Trimble, who has been placed on a bread-and-water diet for misbehaviour, declares that it is still a prison.

THE Headmaster of St. Jim's is Dr. Richard Holmes, M.A. He is a very decent sort, but he raises Cain when he raises the cane!

MR. HORACE RATCLIFF rules the New House with a rod of iron. It takes very little to make Ratty ratty; and this paragraph will make ratty Ratty rattier.

MR. VICTOR RAILTON, who holds sway in the School House, is a rattling good sort. He is also very anxious to encourage the sport of fishing, for he has been known to give a fellow the "rod," also a number of "lines."

HARRY MANNERS is the cleverest photographer at St. Jim's. Like Herries' bulldog, he is always "taking snaps."

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY is the best-dressed fellow in the school. His wardrobe is said to consist of a dozen lounge suits, three

dress suits, fancy waistcoats galore, collars and neckties by the gross, piles of purple socks; and a standing army of twenty "toppers."

WHY is Fatty Wynn, of tuckshop fame, the tidiest person at St. Jim's? Because he is always "putting things away"!

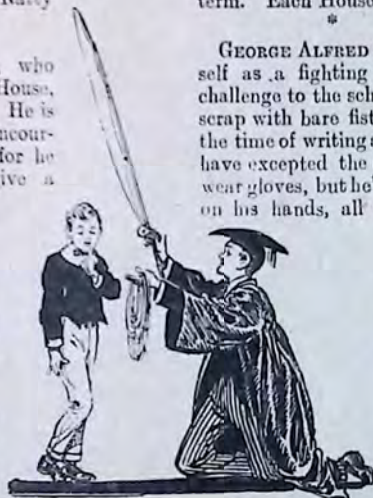
GREAT is the rivalry between School House and New House. The annual cricket and football matches are the tit-bits of the sporting year. The School House can claim the better record.

THE last annual snow-fight between the rival Houses was won by the School House; and there have been six pillow-fights this term. Each House has won three.

GEORGE ALFRED GRUNDY, who fancies himself as a fighting man, has thrown out a challenge to the school at large, to a stand-up scrap with bare fists, behind the chapel. At the time of writing a hundred and fifty fellows have accepted the challenge. Grundy won't wear gloves, but he'll have a good many fights on his hands, all the same!

WE regret to announce the painful fact that Gunn has "gone off" at football. Mind you "explode" when you see this joke!

GEORGE HERRIES seems to spend all his spare time practising cornet solos. He makes an awful din, and the cornet isn't the only thing that wants a good blowing-up!



Mr. Railton has given a fellow the "rod" and also "lines"



SPORTING RECORDS OF ST. JIM'S

By ERIC KILDARE

(Captain of Games)

THE highest score ever compiled by the St. Jim's senior eleven was 557 for 4 wickets (innings declared closed). This was against Wayland Wanderers in 1880.

THE highest individual score in St. Jim's cricket is 226 not out. This mammoth score was put together by R. V. Mason in 1914.

THE highest score ever made by the St. Jim's junior eleven was 488 (all out). This was against the Greyfriars Remove in 1910. The Remove made a gallant reply to this huge total, scoring 320 for 6 wickets. The match ended in a draw.

THE record individual score for the St. Jim's junior eleven is 177, scored by Talbot of the Shell last summer against a weak Wayland eleven.

THE finest bowling feat ever recorded in the annals of St. Jim's cricket stands to the credit of P. R. Rushworth. Playing for the School House against the New House, in 1902, he captured all ten wickets at a cost of only one run!

FIFTEEN St. Jim's Old Boys are now playing as amateurs for their native counties.

FOOTBALL

THE Public Schools' Challenge Cup has been won by St. Jim's on two occasions—in 1901 and last season—when St. Jim's met and defeated Greyminster in the final.

PLAYING against the village of Rylcombe, in 1908, the St. Jim's senior eleven rattled up 16 goals, and their opponents failed to reply! This is a record.

THE record victory for the St. Jim's junior eleven is 13—0. This runaway win was scored at the expense of Rylcombe Grammar School as far back as 1890.

IN the season of 1910-1911, both the senior and junior elevens of St. Jim's went right through the winter without a defeat!

TOM MERRY, captain and centre-forward of the junior eleven, performed the "hat trick" in three successive games last season. He scored three goals against Rookwood, three against Highcliffe the following week, and three against Wayland Juniors the week following!

BOXING

THE best boxer at St. Jim's is Darrel—"The Fighting Prefect." He has only been once defeated in the whole course of his career.

THE best junior boxer is Tom Merry, though he is hard pressed for that distinction by Reginald Talbot, Dick Redfern, and Harry Noble.

THE finest fighting man in the school's history was James Sherwood, popularly known as "the hero of a hundred fights." He was at the height of his fame in 1872, and he is reported to have fought as many as a dozen battles in one day without having his colours lowered!

ON leaving St. Jim's, Sherwood rapidly became the champion amateur boxer of his county. In spite of tempting offers of big stake money, he resolutely refused to turn professional.



*A splendid long, complete story of stirring adventure
at sea and on land, introducing the ever-popular
boys of the school-ship "Bombay Castle"*

THE FIRST CHAPTER

Chums All!

"H I, George!" cried a cheerful voice from the window of the leading cab of three taxis which were speeding from London towards the Albert Nyanza Dock.

The taxi driver slowed up at the entrance of a large fair on a squalid piece of waste ground surrounded by dingy houses, gasometers, and varnish works.

Two steam roundabouts were blaring against one another, shots sounded from rifle galleries, where the tang of the bullet on the steel plates behind the targets sounded louder than the explosion of the charge.

The night air was filled with the smell of the flare lamps of the side shows, and the reek of the varnish and gas works. And this smell was laced by the rancid reek of fish and chips.

The fair, curly-haired boy who had called his taxi to a halt, leaped out, and looked up at the great, staring announcement over the gates of the fair ground.

It was Master Dick Dorrington, bound for the famous School Ship, Bombay Castle, and he had money burning in his pocket.

The announcement over the gate of the fair ground was attractive.

"Luna Park and Electric Joy World," it

announced. "All the fun of the Fair. Performing elephants. Wild Man of Borneo. The Laughing Hippopotamus. The Murder in the Red Barn. Higgins's Grand Theatre of Varieties. New Exciting Dramas every ten minutes. The Wibblewob and Skyscraping Swings. Patronised by Royalty."

The two taxis following pulled up swiftly at the signal of the leading driver.

"What's the lark?" called a voice from the first of these vehicles.

And Master Chip Prodders, famous in the records of the Boys of the Bombay Castle, skipped out of the cab.

"It's a 'show!'" replied Dick Dorrington. "We must have a peep at it before we go to sea. We shan't see a real show again for ever so long. And I want to have a squint at the Wild Man of Borneo. Look, it's up there on the board!"

Out of the leading cab had descended Jim Handyman, the son of the famous skipper of the Bombay Castle, and he was followed by a huge and mild-faced boy, Arty Dove.

Yet another figure remained in the cab. It was a large figure, attired in the blue blazer of the floating school. Its hands were neatly gloved, and its feet were encased in patent leather boots. It was larger than most boys, and over its head was pulled a basket. This

was a light, close-woven waste-paper basket, such as are used in hotels.

This figure had marched out of the hotel with the basket over its head. The taxi driver thought he had a queer fare. But he had driven lots of medical students and schoolboys in his time, and nothing astonished him.

And it was no concern of his if this young gentleman chose to walk about with a basket over his head. But he could not account for the huge cricket bat, ten feet long, and weighing hundredweights, which the boys had hoisted on to the roof of his cab.

His orders were to drive them to the School Ship, Bombay Castle, which was due to sail from the Albert Nyanza Dock on the first of the ebb, about midnight. It was now eight o'clock.

"What about the other young gent?" asked the taxi driver, standing by his cab door. "And I suppose you young gents know that you'll have to pay for the wait!"

"That's all right, old chap!" said Dick cheerfully. "You shall have an extra half-crown for looking after our things. And as for the other young gent—well, I don't know!"

"'Im with 'is 'ead in the basket!" said the taxi driver.

"Well," replied Dick Dorrington, "I don't know whether it would be quite wise to take him into the Luna Park. The crowd inside looks a bit rough."

The taxi driver laughed.

"There are some of the lads in there to-night," said he. "It's pay-night in the works round 'ere. But that young gent looks big enough and ugly enough to take care of 'isself. 'E ain't a Mollysop, is 'e?" asked the taximan, rendered friendly by the promised half-crown.

"Have a look at him, George!" said Dick, laughing, and he leaned inside the dark cab, and lifted the waste-paper basket from the figure's head.

"My word!" gasped the taxi driver, as he started back in alarm. "What is it?"

"That's Cecil!" said Dick Dorrington. "Haven't you heard of Cecil, the tame orang-outang of the Bombay Castle?"

"Can't say as I 'ave!" replied the taxi

driver doubtfully. "'E don't look very tame. Orful-looking chap, I call 'im!"

"It's only his looks," said Dick. "He's really one of the kindest, dearest old chaps in the world. Look, George, he wants to shake hands with you."

Sure enough, that terrible figure in the cab, pleased with the horror of the taxi driver, and wishing to create a more favourable impression, was holding out a well-gloved paw, clothed in spotless buckskin. It furthermore made clucking noises of a reassuring nature.

"Shake hands with him, mate. Don't be afraid. You'll hurt his feelings if you don't!" said Dick Dorrington.

The taxi driver shook hands timidly.

"My word! What a dial!" he exclaimed, in awed tones.

"Isn't it!" said Dick proudly. "Old Cecil would like to go into the show with us. But if we take him in there and they spot his face we shall be mobbed. The showman might want to swap him for the Wild Man of Borneo. That's what he is, you know, driver," added Dick, always ready to impart information. "Orang-outang is Malay for the Man of the Woods."

"Well," replied the taxi driver firmly, "I don't want to stop outside looking after him. Some of these rough lads might see him, or he might turn ugly on me; then what about it?"

Dick looked up and down the street. Then a happy thought struck him.

The spot where the taxis had drawn up was fairly dark. But a few yards further on were stalls—stalls of cheap hosiery, sweet-stuffs, and toys, attracted to this dismal spot by the fair.

And on the nearest of these stalls Dick's quick eyes noticed, amongst other toys, masks for sale.

They were the usual old Guy Fawkes masks, a job line of left-overs from last November the Fifth.

Swiftly, he ran along to the stall and made a rapid purchase of half-a-dozen of these masks.

One, a nigger's mask, he clapped on his own face.

"Here you are, Skeleton!" he called to a

thin and cadaverous youth who had alighted from the second cab. "Clap this over your ugly face!"

"Why?" asked Skeleton doubtfully. "I say you chaps, I'm getting so awfully hungry. Do you think I might have some of those fried fish and chips?"

"Never mind about your fried fish and chips!" replied Dick impatiently. "Shove that mask on. I want a few of us to be wearing masks, so that Cecil can wear one, too. The people will think that we are just ragging, and they won't take any notice of us."

"But how am I to eat fish and chips if I've got this mask on?" asked Skeleton miserably, surveying the red-nosed, leering mask with which he had been served out.

"You'll have to wait," replied Dick. "We shall be aboard the ship in half an hour. We aren't far from the docks here. Then you can blow yourself out like a balloon. There's always a tremendous supper first night in the saloon."

This did not console Skeleton much. He had had a very large tea only an hour since. Now he was hungry again. But he clapped on the mask and tied the strings behind. Then Dick, leaning into the cab, slapped a grinning pink and white mask with George Robey eyebrows over Cecil's terrible visage.

"Well, I never!" gasped the taxi-driver, as Cecil took this proceeding quite calmly. "I wouldn't have done that for a thousand quid!"

And he stood back as Cecil alighted from the cab, a roomy ulster pulled over his school blazer, which he wore in common with the boys, and a thick knitted tam o' shanter pulled well down over his huge leathery ears. For there was a chilliness spreading up from the river, and Cecil was susceptible to chills in this northern climate.

Arty Dove had also clapped on a mask. There followed Chip Prodders, Porkis, the fat boy, who had been put in the third cab because he had been eating pickled onions, and Pongo Walker, the boy who could pull the finest monkey faces in the world.

"You don't want a mask, Pongo!" said Dick briefly. "Your face is ugly enough

without any mask. Take Cecil's arm; I'll stand treat."

Few people noticed the merry crowd as they pushed in at the gate of the so-called Luna Park. There were a lot of the lads of Millwall and Poplar and Silvertown disporting themselves in masks, and throwing confetti and fried fish bones at one another.

They started with a splendid ride on the World's Champion Roundabout. Pongo Walker rode on a unicorn. Cecil had a perch on a golden duck which bobbed up and down as they swept round to the inspiring strains of a steam organ which worked a band of golden knights in armour.

Everyone agreed that it was a splendid roundabout, except that it did not run long enough for threepence a shot.

After that they went to see the lion.

The lion was in a tent, shut in a cage which looked none too strong.

"Walk in, gents, and see the great man-eatin' lion that was caught on the plains o' the Sahara by General Foch, the great French general!" called the man at the door. "Admission tuppence. It's generally fourpence, but we are showin' at arf price to-night, 'cause it's near the end o' the week. The real man-eatin' lion o' the Atlas Mountains. 'E's no ordinary lion, young gents! None of them lions at the Zoo 'ave ever eaten a man. This one ate nothin' but niggers till he was caught by General Foch when 'e was out huntin'. An' the laughin' hyena's in the next tent. Admission only tuppence. That's what makes 'im laugh, to think that all you people can see 'im so cheap!"

The boys advanced to the cage.

The man-eating lion was a bit of a disappointment. He was nicely lit by a bunch of electric lights at the top of the cage. But he was a depressed and moth-eaten-looking animal, idly chewing a beef bone.

"I thought you said he was a man-eater?" asked Dick, in rather disappointed tones.

"So 'e is!" replied the guardian of the lion. "But 'e's like the rest of us; 'e 'ad to eat what 'e could get in the war-time."

"Can't you stir him up and make him walk about?" asked Dick.

The man had no time to answer, for the

lion sniffed the air, raised its head, bared its ugly yellow teeth, and without a word of warning, hurled itself at the bars of its cage, uttering an angry roar.

"Take off them masks, young gents!" said the man in great agitation. "It must be them that's upsetting him. Stir 'im up! My word, 'e don't want no stirring up! If 'e 'its the cage like that again 'ell bust it!"

The boys knew that it was not the masks which had agitated the lion, but the presence of Cecil, the orang-outang. All beasts dread the orang-outang.

Skeleton and Dick slipped off their masks. But the lion had shrunk back to the far corner of his cage, growling and snarling in a frightened manner.

"I never seen 'im do that before," said the man. "You'd better get out of it, young gents, and leave 'im to calm down. There's something got on 'is nerves. Maybe it's the smell o' them gasworks."

The boys left the agitated lion. He had set the laughing hyena off, so they did not go in to see that interesting animal.

"His laugh is the best part of him," said Dick, with his usual commonsense, "and we can get that for nothing outside the tent. Come along, chaps; we haven't got much time with those taxicabs ticking up the fare against us! Let's come and see the Wild Man of Borneo!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER

The Wild Man of Borneo!

THE Wild Man of Borneo was stowed away in the corner of the fair ground, far away from the rest of the shows. Perhaps the word had gone forth that the Wild Man of Borneo was not a star turn. At any rate, there were few patrons about in the dark, mouldy corner of the waste ground near the wall of the gasworks.

They met the money-taker for this show coming away from his tent in despair. He took the boys' twopences casually.

"You'll find him in the corner yonder, young gents," said he. "You can take 'im if you like. 'E's a Dudski, that's what 'e is. There's only one party taken a ticket for 'im all day—a nigger. And 'e's there now. You can stop as long as you like. There's no extra charge. I'm going to supper!"

"I expect it's a swindle," said Jim Handyman.

"Sounds like it," admitted Dick Dorrington. "But

we've paid our twopences, so we may as well go and have a look. Hark! You can hear him howling from here. I expect the poor chap has to howl like that or he does not get his money!"

As the boys approached the tent the howls increased. There was something very genuine in them, something so real that Dick paused and Cecil started to growl softly under his breath.



"It's a show!" cried Dick Dorrington. "We must have a peep at it before we go to sea! And I want to have a squint at the Wild Man of Borneo." (See page 173.)

Cecil always growled like that when anyone was in pain. It was Cecil's way of showing sympathy.

"Shut up, Cecil!" ordered Dick. And Cecil grew silent.

"Stay here a moment, chaps!" whispered Dick. "I'll bet that chap's not howling to attract customers. He's in pain, and he's frightened."

Dick ran forward and approached the tent softly. His footfall made no sound on the soft, muddy waste ground.

The tent in which the Wild Man of Borneo was stowed was the oldest tent in the show. It was full of holes, and advertised plainly that the Wild Man of Borneo was at the bottom of the bill of the Luna Park.

Through one of these square, torn holes in the canvas Dick peeped.

The tent was lit by a single flare lamp, and in it was a small cage, the sort of cage that would be awarded to one of the humbler species of the wild cats. In the corner of the cage crouched a man, tattooed and painted, a man with a great wig of frizzy hair that made him look like a goliwig.

Dick knew at once that this man had never seen Borneo. He was a Gilbert Islander, a Kanaka of the Pacific.

And, standing by the cage, prodding the unhappy occupant with the point of a sharp and glittering sword, drawn from a sword-stick, was a well-dressed nigger attired in a neat tweed suit and Trilby hat.

"You hurt me too much!" stammered the Wild Man of Borneo, trying to get away from the cruel point of the sword-stick.

"I t'ink I hurt you some mo'," grinned the nigger, "s'pose yo' not tell me where Capten Davis hid der pearls from der wreck ob der Haliotis!"

The Wild Man of Borneo shrank away in the corner of the cage.

"I promise not to tell," he muttered, his teeth chattering. "I promise Capten Davis when he die dat I no tell to anyone but—"

Then he paused like one who is about to say too much.

"Who did yo' promise to tell?" demanded the nigger. "Dat am what I wan' to know. Yo' tell me quick, Mister Mitui, or—"

Dick saw the point of the sword-stick flick into the cage again, and the unhappy Wild Man of Borneo squirmed into the corner of the cage, twisting his legs to avoid the steel that stabbed under his feet.

Dick had seen some bullying in his time, and made no doubt of the nigger's mission. The Wild Man of Borneo had a secret which the nigger wished to worm out of him. And here he was caught and secured in the cage in which he earned his daily bread by masquerading and playing the fool, and at the mercy of this enemy who had found him out.

For a moment Dick saw red. He would have burst into the tent and snatched the sword from the nigger. Any sight of bullying always came near to driving Dick Dorrington mad.

But he commanded himself. He slipped back to his friends, made a sign to them, and noisily they approached the tent.

"Here you are, chaps!" cried Dick, aloud. "Here's the Wild Man of Borneo. And I don't wonder that he's jolly wild, being stowed away in a dirty corner like this."

He lifted the flap of the tent, and entered.

There was nothing suspicious to be seen, nothing save a wild, trembling, tattooed figure shrinking in the corner of the cage, and a grinning, smartly-dressed nigger carrying a Malacca cane and smoking a bad cigar with a big red band round it.

The nigger looked round quickly and suspiciously as the boys entered. But he seemed assured that they had heard nothing when he saw their masked faces.

"Hallo!" said Dick, advancing into the tent. "Here he is, in the cage. This is the Wild Man of Borneo."

"He doesn't look very wild," said Skeleton, eating fish and chips out of a paper bag.

Dick's kind heart smote him as he saw the look of dumb misery and appeal in the eyes of the wild, tattooed figure in the corner of the cage, and noted the grotesque woman's rudi, or skirt of bass, that it was wearing, and the strings of beads and shells and the tufts of ostrich feathers that were thrust in the frizzy hair to add to the impression of wildness.

"He doesn't look wild!" he agreed. "Let's undo the cage!"

And he advanced to the padlock which

fastened the cage. It was merely hanging in the staples.

But the nigger was quick to interpose with a greasy, oily smile on his black face.

"No, young gentlemen," said he. "Yo' mus' not unfasten this chap. He is really a wild man, and he is dangerous!"

Dick pretended to swallow this piece of information.

"All right!" said he. "Lend us that swell stick of yours, chappy, to stir him in the ribs and to see if he will roar!"

The nigger handed over the stick readily enough. Dick felt the weight of it and knew that he had got the sword-stick.

He dug the Wild Man of Borneo in the ribs sharply.

"Hi!" he cried. "Why don't you yell? You aren't much of a wild man!"

The nigger guffawed. There is nothing that pleases many niggers more than the sight of pain inflicted.

"He am not a bery wild man, sar!" said he obsequiously. "Stir um up again, sar. Hit um on de haid!"

Dick's heart blazed within him, for he could see the tears in the wild, hunted eyes which were the only wild thing about the Wild Man from Borneo.

"Doan hit me, sar!" pleaded the Wild Man. "I ain't well!"

Dick pulled the stick out of the cage.

"If you aren't well," he answered, "you ought not to be in that cage!"

"He's well enough, sar!" put in the nigger. "He am only shammin'. You hit 'im ober de haid, sar. Dat'll make 'im roar!"

But Dick had made up his mind what he was going to do. He had heard enough outside the tent. This so-called Wild Man had got a secret which concerned pearls. He was plainly a Kanaka from the South Seas. To the South Seas the Bombay Castle was bound.

Time was short. He must move quickly. The nigger must go into the cage and the Wild Man of Borneo must come out of it.

He made an almost imperceptible sign to Cecil, who, with that silly George Robey mask hiding his terrible face, slipped behind the grinning nigger.

Dick looked round on his chums and laughed.

"He's the tamest Wild Man I ever met," said he. "What will you chaps bet I won't get in the cage with him?"

"Bet you a bo-bo-bottle of bullseyes," mumbled Skeleton, taking up the challenge, with his mouth full of chips.

"Done!" said Dick, and he advanced to the door of the cage.

But the nigger seemed strangely perturbed.

He jumped forward and laid a huge black hand on Dick's shoulder.

"No, sar," said he, his black eyes rolling and showing bloodshot and yellow. "You mus' not open dat door!"

"Take your dirty hands off me," said Dick, in affected anger as he twisted open the padlock and swung the cage door wide.

The negro tried to swing him aside.

"Bombay Castle to the rescue!" called Dick. "Pull the Wild Man out of the cage, Arty!"

Arty Dove caught the astonished Wild Man and lifted him out of the cage in his powerful arms as easily as if he had been a child.

"I teach yo'!"

The nigger, with a sudden rush of mingled anger and fear, closed with Dick, and received that young gentleman's fist hard on his rubber-like nose.

He gave a cry of rage and strove to snatch his sword-stick from Dick's hand.

But Dick neatly threw the sword-stick into the cage. The nigger reached after it.

"In with him, Cecil!" gasped Dick.

The nigger gave a yell of fear as he found his fat waist surrounded in the terrible grip of the long, hairy arms of the orang-outang. He turned and saw the grinning pink mask, with its George Robey eyebrows peering over his shoulder.

In vain he twisted in the grip of the orang-outang. Though a tremendously powerful man, he was no more than a child in that terrible hold.

He managed to tear the mask from Cecil's face, and at the sight of the hideous visage beneath, with its sparkling eyes and flashing white teeth, the strength seemed suddenly to go from him.

Cecil boosted him into the cage. The door

was clashed to and the big padlock slipped into the staples.

The positions were now reversed. The nigger was caged and the Wild Man of Borneo was free. The latter had sunk down on the ground in an almost fainting condition.

The nigger woke up from his trance of terror with a howl, and dashed at the bars of the cage, shaking them in his great black hands.

"Let me out!" he cried. "Let me out, or I will kill you!"

"That's a very good reason for not letting you out, old sport," answered Dick Dorrington. "And let me tell you, Quashie, I saw you torturing the poor beggar when you thought you had him alone in your power. You can think yourself lucky that we don't handle you in the same fashion, you cowardly bully!"

"Let me out!" yelled the nigger.

"Not a bit of it," answered Dick. "You are doing the Wild Man of Borneo act far better than this poor chap you were prodding up with that rotten sword-stick. You stay and keep it up. We are going to take the Wild Man of Borneo back to Borneo. You've met the real Wild Man of Borneo this time, that's what's the matter with you."

And Dick pointed to Cecil, who was staring through the bars of the cage at the infuriated nigger with a pensive expression on his awful visage, as much as to say that there are some human beings who are beneath the contempt of a respectable ape.

Then Pongo picked up the mask and slipped it over Cecil's face again.

"What are you going to do about the Wild Man?" he asked.

"Take him with us," replied Dick, lifting the Wild Man to his feet. "Shove your overcoat on him, Arty. Now the nigger's hat. Now a mask. That will do. Come on—link up arms, boys. Cecil one side of him—you, Arty, on the other."

And they hustled the poor bewildered Wild Man out of the tent and hurried him across the dark corner of the fair ground to a hole in the fence.

Behind them they could hear the caged nigger bully giving forth desperate howls for help and release.

But no one took notice of these. The two steam roundabouts were working up to full steam, and were crashing out "Lead Me to that Beautiful Band" and "Coal Black Mammy" in fierce opposition.

And the poor Wild Man of Borneo had been howling all day in the tent in the hope of attracting a few customers.

"Let him howl," said Dick, grinning. "If we had had a little more time I'd have given the brute something to howl about."

They slipped through the hole in the fence and made for their waiting taxis.

The poor Wild Man was staggering between Arty and Cecil.

"What's the matter with him?" asked the taximan, as they pushed him into the cab with Porkis.

"He's all right," said Dick glibly. "The naphtha lamps have made him feel queer."



Standing by the cage, prodding the unhappy occupant with the point of a sharp and glittering sword, drawn from a sword-stick, was a nigger. "You hurt too much!" stammered the Wild Man of Borneo. (See page 177.)

Drive on quick, you nuts, or we'll lose the boat."

And the boys leaped into their cabs and were whirled away, leaving the nigger in the cage to howl unnoticed.

In the cab with Porkis, the Wild Man of Borneo had fainted from pain and fear and hunger, for in the Luna Park he was only paid by results, and business had been bad.

Porky was a resourceful boy.

"Poor chap!" he muttered. "He's empty—that's what's the matter with him."

He took the mask off the wild man and fanned his face till he revived. At Porky's feet was a hamper destined for an illegal night feed in the Glory Hole, as their dormitory cabin on the Bombay Castle was called.

Porky opened the hamper quickly as the cab rolled on.

He produced a couple of the largest sausage rolls that were ever seen off the pantomime stage. They had been made specially to his order. He handed these to the Wild Man, who devoured them as if he had never before in his troubled life tasted a sausage roll.

"That's better," said Porky affably, as the two sausage rolls disappeared in a twinkling. "Now try a couple of our famous meat pies. They're as good as Bovril!"

The meat pies disappeared in the same fashion as the sausage rolls.

Then the Wild Man of Borneo laid his hand timidly on Porky's arm.

"Where you go?" he asked.

"We are going to the school ship, Bombay Castle," said Porky. "We sail to-night for the South Seas—you know, the Pacific."

"You take me to Pacific?" asked the Wild Man wistfully.

"I believe that's the idea," said Porkis. "We've pinched you out of your cage and left that big nigger in exchange. And he's a good swop!" chuckled Porky. "I bet he's a heap wilder now than you have ever been. You are our nigger now. And we are the Glory Hole Gang of the Bombay Castle. What we have we hold. And what we pinch we keep."

A sudden change came over the Wild Man of Borneo. He seemed revived with a new life.

"You boy too good," he exclaimed. "Name belong me Mitui. Me no wild man, me Kanaka boy. S'pose you take me back to Pacific, me make you rich. Me make you all rich."

"Steady on, old chap," answered Porky, who was, above all things, a matter-of-fact fellow. "Don't promise too much. You don't look as if you could make anyone very rich just now."

But Mitui's eyes rolled.

"He know," said he, "dat nigger, he know dat Mitui know. For dat he stuck his skewer into feet."

And he lifted his feet, covered all over with jabs and punctures, showing them in the light of a passing lamp.

"Who did that?" demanded Porky.

"Dat nigger," replied Mitui. "He catch me in cage an' he try to make me tell 'um where to find de pearl and gold."

"If I'd known that," said Porky slowly, "we'd have put Cecil in the cage along with him, and seen which of them was the wildest. But I say, what a rotter! I've a good mind to go back and thump him!"

But the Wild Man grasped his arm in terror.

"You no do dat," he exclaimed. "Dat nigger am de wustest man in London. Take Mitui away quick out o' London."

"All right," said Porky placidly. "And what did you say about gold?"

"See dat hat," said the Wild Man, pointing to Porky's bowler which lay on the cab seat, "dat your hat?"

"Rather!" replied Porky. "It was a classy hat. I gave six-and-six for it two years ago, but the chaps have used it a good deal for baling out boats and for football. They once made a Christmas pudding in it. But it's a good hat still."

Mitui gripped Porky's hand hard. And there was terror in his grip.

"You take me to Sout' Seas again, and I fill dat hat along gold," he said.

And Porky was left gasping with wonder, as the string of taxis raced along for the Albert Nyanza Docks.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

A Great Surprise!

CAPTAIN JAMES HANDYMAN, master of the school ship *Bombay Castle*, was standing on the bridge of that vessel looking anxiously through the darkness in the direction of the dock gates.

The Dock Police were also on the look-out for the late arrivals. They knew the boys of the *Bombay Castle* only too well, and were always relieved when they saw the last of the ship and her high-spirited crew.

For the boys were always managing to get into mischief. They fell in the docks, they monkeyed with the cranes, they got into rows with native seamen and firemen, and they wandered on board other ships, doing their best to fall down their holds, or to get knocked over by bales of goods as they swung in their slings.

It was two of the boys of the *Bombay Castle* who had climbed up the funnel of the great New Zealand packet *Tangarua*, and had fallen down the enormous funnel, giving the dock staff endless trouble to fish them out again.

And the Dock Police had not forgotten how a gang of these high-spirited lads, full of boyish curiosity to find out how a dock tug worked, had gone aboard a small tug, had cast her adrift, and had set the engines running without knowing how to stop them. With the result that they had had to steer her in circles till she sank two empty barges and had ended up by colliding with the dock gates.

There was, therefore, little wonder that Captain Handyman was looking out anxiously for the last of his crew. The rest had arrived an hour since by a special train, and had been shepherded safely on board.

And Captain Handyman had clapped a couple of quartermasters on the gangway with orders and ropes ends, to turn back any boy who might try to get ashore again.

By his side stood a Hindu gentleman, who wore a turban of bright cerise silk, a smart frock coat, golf knickers of the Guards cut, which are known as plus fours, and strapped sandshoes.

This was Mr. Chatterjee Lal Tata, Master of Hindustani and of the higher Mathematics,

and M.A. of Calcutta University, a gentleman who had been led into more scrapes by the boys of the *Bombay Castle* than he cared to think about.

Mr. Lal Tata shivered a bit, for the cold night wind blew over the black waters of the dock, setting the flaring white arc lamps swinging. And there was a promise of snow in the wind.

"I wish those boys would turn up," said Captain Handyman, impatiently. "I always like to see the *Glory Hole Gang* safe aboard. Then I know that we are all right and ready for sea. Last time they came they ran a cab into the dock."

"Here they come!" exclaimed Mr. Lal Tata.

"So they do!" replied Captain Handyman, in tones of great relief. "Look at the coppers clearing the way for them as if they were royalty. I wonder what the young scoundrels have been up to to make them so late!"

"You may be sure, sir, that they have been guilty of usual rascalities," laughed Mr. Lal Tata. "I never knew a more devilish gang than our young friend, Master Dick Dorrington and his satellite fellows. They are all mischief stars, those nuts."

Three taxicabs lurched and rolled over the cobbles and rails of the quay, drawing up at the gangway of the ship.

Out of the first cab leaped Dick and Jim Handyman, Arty Dove, and Cecil.

"There's that boy of mine!" exclaimed the captain, waving his cap. "And my hat, just look at the size of that new cricket-bag that they've got for the crocodile. Where are we going to stow it this trip?"

Captain Handyman knew well the contents of that vast cricket-bag. It contained Gus, the mascot of the Boys of the *Bombay Castle*. Nearly everyone knew Gus. Caught in the River Nile, near Khartoum, when he wasn't much larger than a sixpenny haddock, Gus had been carried about the world in a cricket-bag by the Boys of the *Bombay Castle*. With the fine ship's fare and regular feeding, he had grown larger and larger, outgrowing cricket-bag after cricket-bag, till this last new and enormous bag had to be made for him.

The trouble about Gus was that you could not put him into a travelling-cage or a packing

case, or any other form of travelling home. He had been put into a cricket-bag when he was an infant, and he had lived all his youth in a cricket-bag. And as soon as he was taken out of a cricket-bag he started to pine and to get ill-tempered and thin.

Hence this gigantic cricket-bag. In the ordinary course of things, when dormant in the cold climate of England, Gus lay quite still in the bag and slept week in and week out. The boys had often put him in a cloak-room at a railway station, and no one had been any the wiser.

But to-night they had dropped him down the stairs of the hotel, and that had wakened him up. He knew that he was off to sea again, and was going to steam over the briny down to the warm weather that he loved. He knew that he was going where the palm trees grew and that made him feel lively.

As Captain Handyman watched the cab from the high bridge, there was a crash of glass, and the window dropped out of the second cab.

Captain Handyman knew what had happened. The boys had been foolish enough to untie the neck of the canvas-sail bag in which was stowed the second mascot of the Bombay Castle, Horace, their famous Egyptian goat. And Horace, excited by the fizzing of steam, the rattle of winches, and all the sounds of a great steamer getting near ready for sea, had naturally shoved his great head out of the bag and had endeavoured to struggle out of the taxicab through the glass window.

Now his huge head, with its spreading

horns and its evil green eyes which shone like emeralds, was hanging out of the broken window.

The two quartermasters were hurrying down the gangway. They were ready for Horace, for they knew what he could do when he was excited. They were rattling two pairs of the ship's handcuffs. And, before he could get out of the cab, Horace was manacled fore and aft and was thrown out, bleating, on his side.

"By Jingo!" exclaimed Mr. Lal Tata, looking down from the bridge as the driver of the first cab struggled with the great cricket-bag on the roof. "That taxi-fellow does not know what sort of cricket apparatuses our boys carry or he would not handle that so heavy bag with such joysomeness."

The taxi-driver was wrestling with the end of the bag, levering it from its perch.

Of a sudden the man yelled, for the end of the bag flew open under the pressure of something that twisted and turned and squirmed within.

He saw the huge shovel-head and scaly shoulder and stubby foreleg of a crocodile force its way out almost in his face.

Then he gave a yell and let the bag drop, jumping back as though

Gus were a bagfull of snakes.

Gus hissed like a punctured tyre. Then, freeing himself from the bag, he turned on the taxi-driver who had thus let him down on his nose.

"Stop him, you idiot!" yelled Dick.

"Not me," replied the taxi-driver. "I may be an idiot, but I ain't quite barmy—not yet!"



As Mitui caught sight of the captain, his whole expression changed. "Capten Jim!" he gasped. "It am Capten Jim himself." He rose and staggered. Captain Handyman held out his arms and caught him. (See page 184.)

"Stop him, Arty!" cried Dick, heading Gus round.

But Gus was not going to be stopped by Arty or by anyone. With a swift twist of his serrated tail he knocked Arty's legs from under him and raced up the gangway on to the ship.

There are a lot of people who think that a crocodile can't run when he wants to, but Gus went up the gangway like a streak of lightning. He shot along the promenade-deck, making for the well-deck forward where he usually had his perch near the water-taps.

But alas for Gus, here under the bridge the deck was dark. He did not see that planks were laid from the ladder of the well-deck to the steel coaming of the No. 2 hold, which was still open to take the last stores coming aboard. He shot down the ladder and along these planks, and a shout went up from Captain Handyman and from Mr. Lal Tata as they heard a yell and a tremendous thump from the bottom of the ship.

It was a sheer fall of forty-seven feet from that coaming to the spot below where the dockers were working.

Captain Handyman rushed from the bridge to the hatchway, Mr. Lal Tata following more slowly.

"If crocodile has necks, that crocodile has spifflicated himself," muttered Mr. Lal Tata to himself.

Captain Handyman was leaning over the open hatchway.

"Below there!" he shouted. "Anyone hurt?"

"What's it doin' up there?" demanded an aggrieved voice from the depths of the ship. "Rainin' crocodiles!"

"Is he killed?" demanded Captain Handyman.

"Killed!" replied the voice. "Why, when 'Arry went to see if 'e was stunned, 'e put a crowbar in 'is mouth an' 'e's chewed it up like a straw!"

"Put him in a sling and send him up!" ordered Captain Handyman.

"Not me!" replied the voice. "I ain't 'andling no crocodiles, captain. You send someone down as understands 'em. My chaps

are all standin' on packin' cases to keep out of 'is way."

Captain Handyman had just superintended the hoisting out of the unhappy Gus, who was chained up on deck with the water tap running on his bruised nose, when a footfall behind him caused him to turn.

"Please, sir!" exclaimed the voice of Dick Dorrington.

"What is it?" demanded Captain Handyman. "What do you want, Dick, and you, Jim?"

"Please, sir, we've put a chap up in the chart room—a nigger," said Dick.

"A nigger in my chart room!" exclaimed Captain Handyman. "What d'ye mean by putting a nigger in my chart room? What with Gus tumbling down the hold, and nearly killing a member of the Dockers' Union, and you putting niggers in my chart room, you boys seem to be out to give me a Saturday night at sea. What's the nigger?"

"He's the Wild Man of Borneo, sir," explained Dick. "We found him in a cage at the Luna Park, where a nigger was ill-treating him. So we pinched him out of the cage and we shoved the nigger in the cage in his place!"

Captain Handyman gasped.

"Do you mean to say that you've stolen a nigger out of a show, and stuck him in my chart room?" he demanded, unable to believe his ears at the piece of unparalleled impudence.

"Please, sir," explained Dick, "his name is Mitui."

Captain Handyman's jaw dropped.

"Say that again," he exclaimed dully.

"Mitui, sir, and he comes from the Gilbert Islands—the Kingsmills, as they call them. And he wants you to give him a passage back to the South Seas," said Dick.

"Mitui!" muttered Captain Handyman, staring at the boys. "Get out! It can't be true! What's he like?"

"Biggish chap, sir," reported Dick. "Tattooed with palm leaves in fine lines all over him. He was doing the Wild Man of Borneo in the show. And we caught the nigger digging at him with a sword-stick—big nigger, well-dressed, marked with small pox, and half his right ear missing."

Captain Handyman put a hand on each knee, and stared into Dick's face.

"Gumbo! By Jingo!" he exclaimed. "And you shoved that nigger in the other chap's cage?"

"Yes, sir," replied Dick.

"Did he know who you were, or where you are going?" demanded Captain Handyman, strangely moved.

"He could find out, sir," replied Dick.

"Then the sooner we are out of this dock and off to sea, the better!" snapped Captain Handyman. "That nigger is the blackest nigger inside and out that walks this earth! And we shan't be long hearing about him, either! Who shoved him into the cage?"

"Cecil, sir!" replied Dick.

"Then Cecil was handling a more dangerous brute than himself," said Captain Handyman. He shouted for the boatswain.

Mr. Galloper came running up.

"Galloper," snapped Captain Handyman, "clear out the shore gangs as quickly as possible. Arm both quartermasters on the gangway. Stop all strangers coming aboard, and keep a sharp look-out for a nigger with half an ear. If he tries to force his way on board, chuck him down the gangway. If he tries to come aboard after that, hand him over to the police. And snatch his stick first thing. It's a sword-stick. He is likely to be armed. Get the tug alongside and pass the word to the dock people that I want to get out as soon as possible!"

Mr. Galloper hurried off, and Captain Handyman raced up the ladders to the chart-room, followed by the two boys.

He flung the door open.

There, huddled up on a chair, was the Wild Man of Borneo, his eyes bright and staring. He seemed half insensible.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

Mitui's Story

MITUI looked up dully as the crowd entered. Then, as he caught sight of the captain, his whole expression altered.

"Capphen Jim!" he gasped. "T'ank de Lord. It am Capphen Jim himself!"

He rose and staggered.

Captain Handyman held out his arms and caught him.

"Mitui!" he exclaimed. "Mitui, my poor boy! What have they been doing to you?"

Mitui could hardly answer. He was shaking with fever.

"Pneumonia!" muttered the captain. Then he turned to the boys. "Call two hands!" he cried. "Tell them to carry this chap to the sick bay and send for the surgeon at once. And you get down below and stay below till we've cleared the docks. If that nigger comes along I don't want him or any of his pals to see you. He's the Bad Man of Badville, and dangerous, especially to boys who have shoved him in a monkey cage! And that's that!"

The boys did as they were told. They hurried down to the saloon to supper. There was a first-class supper on the table, and Skeleton showed them how to knock the newness off a York ham. They moved amongst the new boys of the Bombay Castle, and showed them how to stow themselves away in their cabins.

And it was ten-thirty by the time they had gathered in the Glory Hole to discuss the strange happenings of the evening.

They would have given anything to go on deck to look for the nigger of whom Captain Handyman had given such an evil account. He was a nigger worth meeting.

They listened to the sounds of the ship preparing to leave. They heard the dock tug come alongside, and they heard the deep-throated roar of the Bombay Castle's steam whistle announcing that she was on the move down to the lock gates.

Then Porky's hamper was opened and laid out on the beds. Sausage rolls, meat pies, ginger beer, cake, and other fodder made its appearance, and the Glory Hole Gang gathered round to keep up the tradition that healthy English schoolboys can always eat two suppers and drop asleep to dream of angels.

They were in the last lock, and now the Bombay Castle was booming her message that she was coming out into the great, dark river.

Peeping through the porthole they could

see the granite kerbing of the lock slowly moving past.

The lock gate was open, and the Bombay Castle was moving into the river.

Dick laughed as he took a bottle of ginger beer and popped the cork.

"Well, that nigger has not turned up, at any rate," said he. "Perhaps he's still locked up in his cage at the show. But he seems to have put the wind up your father, Jim," added Dick. "Never mind! Here's to the Bombay Castle and the voyage!"

"What did dad say his name was?" asked Jim Handyman who, attired in his pyjamas, was sitting on the edge of the bed eating raspberry puffs.

"Gumbo!" replied Dick. "Here's to Gumbo with half an ear, the blackest nigger in the world!"

The bottle was half-way to Dick's lips when it suddenly shattered into fragments.

"Lights out!" cried Chip Producers.

The electric lights in the Glory Hole were snapped off, leaving the long cabin in darkness.

"On the floor all of you!" cried Chip.

The boys slipped on the floor.

"What was it?" cried Dick from the floor.

"Crumbs, my bed's swamped with ginger beer!"

Chip had seen all he wanted. Under the glare of the arc lamps which lit the lock, he had caught sight of a big nigger running off with two policemen after him.

"It's a bullet," cried Dick Dorrington.

"Here it is in my pillow! A bullet fired through the porthole! Who fired it?"

"It was your friend, Gumbo!" answered Chip, turning on the light again. "It's all right. We are clear of the lock now and out of range."

And the crowd in the Glory Hole gathered round the flattened bullet and marvelled over the smashed bottle of ginger beer.

"That bullet was meant for you, Dick!" said Chip. "And it was a near thing, too!"

"A miss is as good as a mile!" replied Dick gaily. "Let's have another bottle!"

But all the same he could not help thinking of Gumbo, the blackest nigger in the world, who had managed to get out of the cage of the Wild Man of Borneo and to track them down to the Glory Hole of the Bombay Castle.

"He must have peeped in every port!" said he at length. "We shall hear of him again!"

"I think you will!" said a voice at the door of the Glory Hole.

"I thought that I'd come down and see that you boys were all right. The ruffian had a shot at me on the bridge as well, and smashed the glass at the bridge end. Look!"

Captain Handyman held out his cap, which was pierced through above the badge by a bullet.

"If the police haven't got him," said he, "he'll be off on our track within the week, boys. So keep your weather eye open for a nigger with half an ear. You won't cage him again. You can't sting that nigger in the



The bottle was half way to Dick's lips when it suddenly shattered into fragments. "On the floor, all of you!" cried Chip. "That was a bullet!" (See this page)

same place twice. Now, to bed with you, and thank your lucky stars Master Dick, that it was only the ginger beer bottle he hit. That shot was meant for your brains. But you haven't got any!"

And, with that, Captain Handyman marched off to the bridge again.

There is no need to tell here of the voyage of the Bombay Castle to the Pacific.

It was like most of the other voyages of that famous craft. Dr. Crabhunter, the head-master, was seldom seen. He remained in the lab. all day working at his microscopes, examining the white ooze and the shrimps that were trawled up daily from the bed of the sea for his benefit.

The Bombay Castle steamed slowly along the eastern edge of that great Atlantic gulf which is called the Eastern Azores Trench, where the water is over five thousand fathoms in depth.

And from this deep were dredged some very interesting holothurians and shrimps over which the worthy doctor went nearly wild with enthusiasm. He was so pleased at one haul that he named a new shrimp after Dick Dorrington, who had helped in the hauling of the deep-sea trawl. He called it the Dorringtonii. But the next day when Dick gravely brought in a specimen of deep-sea sludge embedding an unmistakable smoked kipper, he was handed over to Scorchier Wilkinson, the Sixth Form master, who swished him with a new swishing which he called the Jellyfish Sting. After that Dick did not find any kippers in the depths of the Atlantic.

The first part of their voyage was saddened by the illness of their new chum, the "Wild Man of Borneo." In that damp tent poor Mitui had caught influenza, which had turned to pneumonia, and for some days he lay between life and death. But Dr. O'Sullivan nursed him with his great skill and, presently, as the Bombay Castle ran into the warm blue seas where the air was as soft as milk, Mitui began to recover.

Presently the boys were allowed to go in and to talk to him, and Mitui began to cheer up.

Then they got him out on deck in a long

chair, and Cecil, who had taken a great fancy to this brother Wild Man, would sit by him for hours handing him his glass of soda and milk, and bringing him his rice pudding from the galley punctually at eleven in the morning.

And as they steamed round the islands of the Spanish Main, Mitui grew stronger and stronger. He began to walk about the deck, and presently he started to work with the crew. And, bit by bit, the boys learned from him the whole story of the wreck of the Haliotis.

The Haliotis had belonged to Captain Joe Davis, an old South seaman who, in the old days, had been Captain Handyman's greatest chum. And the Haliotis had been the smartest schooner trading amongst the islands of the Paumotus—or the Dangerous Archipelago, as that wonderful labyrinth of islands is called which lies midway between Australia and the South American coast.

Mitui had been Captain Davis' boy, and he had learned from his master to regard Captain James Handyman as the greatest seaman in the world next to Nelson.

It was Mitui who had turned his master's attention from trading to pearling. Trade was bad in the South Seas. There were few freights of copra or dried coconut running between the islands and Australia. So it was Mitui who had persuaded Captain Davis to stake his all in a diving outfit to pearl in the lesser islands of the Paumotus. And it was to Captain Handyman that Captain Davis had turned for the money to buy the diving outfit, for his own means were exhausted, the Haliotis having swallowed up all his money.

Captain Handyman was hard up also at that time. But Davis was his oldest friend, and he had raised five hundred pounds and had staked it on his friend's venture, more to help his friend than to help himself.

And Captain Davis had sailed from Brisbane for the Paumotus, and for two years had worked amongst the labyrinth of the low coral islands searching for pearl oyster.

Once he got amongst them, but it was what pearlmen call a dead lagoon. The oysters were there, but they were dead and worthless.

Sick at heart, having no more money to pay his native crew, Captain Davis was going to

quit the thousand islands and to make for the Marquesas, there to sell his schooner, beggared of everything but his good name.

But Mitui, watching in the crossstreets, had picked up the misty cloud that shows a low island. They had sailed up to this island, which proved to be just a ring of coral, studded thick with coco palms and enclosing a lagoon six miles in diameter.

There, in the lagoon, they had struck the pearl. The floor of the lagoon was rich in shell, and when the great oysters were laid out to be washed they had yielded such a show of pearls as happens only once in a century. There were white pearls, blacks, and smokes, all as large as peas and of wonderful quality. There were pink and flesh-coloured pearls running wonderfully regular in size, which adds to the value of a pearl for, as such gems are matched into a necklace or a rope, each pearl increases in value as it helps to make up the complete string.

And, more than this, there were wonderful baroques, or pearls of irregular shape. Chief amongst these was a wonderful smoke-coloured baroque which had the exact shape of the letter H. And Captain Davis had set this aside and had called it the Handyman pearl.

They had not cleaned out the lagoon of Pearl Island when provisions and water began to run out, and Captain Davis had been forced to leave this Tom Tiddler's Island, as he called it, and sail for the Marquesas to repair his ship and to load up with fresh stores.

And, whilst navigating the treacherous thousand miles of the Paumotu, the schooner Haliotis had been overtaken by one of those great hurricanes that, every thirty years or so, sweep the Pacific.

Captain Davis had seen the barometer falling, and he had taken shelter in the lagoon of a strange island which no man had ever visited before. It was called Hump Island, because of a strange hump or tumulus of coral which was lifted to fifty feet above the sea, whereas the low islands are rarely ten feet above high tide mark.

And in this lagoon the hurricane had caught the ill-fated Haliotis. Had she been a new ship she might have stood it. But her anchors were second-hand stuff, and her chain was old and

rusted. In the top of the hurricane she had parted from her anchors and had been driven ashore to become a total wreck. Only Captain Davis and the faithful Mitui had escaped. The Kanaka crew had taken the boat, and all were drowned.

But Captain Davis and Mitui had drifted ashore on a henceop, in which were lashed the precious pearls, wrapped in cotton wool and enclosed in two tin canisters.

Captain Davis had buried the pearls, and only Mitui knew their resting place. And Captain Davis had made his will, in regular and proper shape, leaving the pearls to Captain Handyman.

He had warned Mitui that, if he ever escaped from this lonely island, he must not take the pearls with him. No wandering Kanaka could escape from that island or get a passage through the South Seas carrying fifty thousand pounds worth of pearls without being robbed. It was well known that Captain Davis had gone pearling, and if anyone found the wreck of the Haliotis he knew that he would be charged fifty thousand pounds for his passage from that island.

Captain Davis knew also that his days were numbered. He had been badly bruised when they were cast ashore, and the hammering of the seas had affected his lungs. The pearls belonged to Captain Handyman, and he had warned the faithful Mitui that if he survived he must not try to take the treasure to Captain Handyman, but that he must bring Captain Handyman to the treasure.

For two years they had lived on that island together, Mitui spending his time in fishing in the lagoon and making puddings of the sprouted coconuts to tempt the invalid's appetite.

Mitui had nursed his master with all the love and care that could have been bestowed upon him. But there had come a day when Captain Davis was dying.

Mitui had carried his master out from his house of palm leaves and laid him on the bed of coco fronds outside, and again Captain Davis had given his last instructions about the pearls.

And then, wonder of wonders, a schooner had sailed into the lagoon. It was a schooner

called the Black Arrow, commanded by a nigger who flew the Peruvian flag, and who called himself Mr. Gumbold. But his real name was Gumbo, and both he and the Black Arrow had a bad name in the Pacific.

Gumbo had come ashore in his whaler, and had recognised Captain Davis at once.

He had pretended a great sympathy and talked a lot. And his talk had ended in one thing. He suspected that Captain Davis had pearls. He was sure that Captain Davis had pearls. He looked into the wreck of the old Haliotis and he had discovered that she was packed with pearl shell. And where there is pearl shell of that type there are pearls.

Gumbo knew a good deal about pearls. He priced the gems which Captain Davis had taken from that shell at fifty thousand pounds, and he was within five thousand pounds of their price.

And he had offered to take Captain Davis from the island and to sail him straight to the nearest hospital, which was in the Marquesas, for the sum of fifty thousand pounds paid in pearls.

And Captain Davis had listened to him.

Then he had made his answer, and it was a straight one.

"Those pearls belong to my friend Jim Handyman, who put up the money to fish them," said he. "As for me, I don't want

any voyage to the Marquesas. I'm going on a longer voyage. You can take the shell from the wreck, which is worth a few thousand, and you can give my boy Mitui a passage and a hundred pounds. But I know you are a rascal and you won't do it."

And, with that, Captain Davis had died.

Mitui got a board and shovelled up the sand and buried his master, saying a prayer

over him. But none of Gumbo's crew had helped him in this pious task. Gumbo had looked on, sneering. Then he had called all his crew to search the island, and they searched it high and low. But they could find no trace of the pearls, for two tins of pearls buried on a coral atoll are lost as a needle in a bundle of hay.

They promised Mitui a passage. But Mitui knew better than that. He watched them one night and saw them make a fire. There was no reason why they should make such a fire, or why they should thrust into the fire iron rods which they had brought ashore to probe amongst the sands.

The Pacific is a great ocean, but a great ocean gives up its secrets, just as one of these days it will give up the dead which are in it.

And Mitui had heard the story how Gumbo had once tortured a native with



The cricket bag was rushed along the deck, and Gus was bundled into it, and lowered over the side to be rowed to the Moonstone. (See page 194)

hot irons to discover the secret of his hidden pearls.

He had crept away in the darkness and had hidden.

There were few places in that island to hide, but Mitui had hidden in one of the places where few could find him.

He had climbed up one of the three thousand coco palms which grew round the lagoon, and he had hidden himself in its great fronds. And there he had stayed three days whilst these scoundrels searched for him.

But they did not find the pearls, neither did they find Mitui. The Black Arrow sailed away, leaving Mitui marooned.

But Mitui was all right. He was a born islander. He fished the lagoon and harvested the coconuts. The scoundrels had smashed up his canoe and had removed all the tools he had saved from the wreck. But there still remained an axe, which he had stowed away in a cleft of the coral, and the penknife which he carried.

And with these tools Mitui had built the canoe with which he had escaped from the island, to be picked up at sea after many days by a German warship. And he had learned that all the world was at war. He had escaped from the warship on the east coast of Africa, and bit by bit he had made his way to London, working on all sorts of strange ships. He knew very little English, only the name Captain Handyman; and he had searched for Captain Handyman in vain, because the captain was away at sea. Then, in this hard, grey northern climate he had fallen sick and could get no employment save that of the Wild Man of Borneo; and at last Gumbo, having lost his schooner, had come to London and found him in his tent. By threats and tortures he was trying to get from him the secret of Captain Davis's treasure, when the boys of the Bombay Castle had surprised the ruffian.

That was Mitui's story, and over and over again he told it to the boys as the Bombay Castle coasted down the South American coast, through the Straits of Magellan, and northwards to Valparaiso.

And at Valparaiso Captain Handyman went ashore and had long talks with the agents

of the ship, and there Mitui was left behind whilst the Bombay Castle cruised in the China Seas and the Malay Archipelago.

The boys often thought of Mitui and wondered what he was up to. But amidst wonderful new sights and many adventures they did not have much time to wonder what their friend was doing.

And Captain Handyman kept his counsel when questioned on the matter.

"Never you mind what Mitui is up to," said he. "He'll turn up one of these days like a bad ha'penny, when you least expect him, and when he comes you boys shall have your share of the fun."

THE FIFTH CHAPTER

Getting Rid of the Shark

THE boys managed to get a very fair share of fun as they went along. There was the day when Horace, the goat, got loose in a Chinese town and butted a Chinese mandarin of the highest rank into a mud barge. That day nearly cost them their heads, and if they hadn't set the prison on fire they would probably be there still.

There was also the day when they took Gus ashore for a run in a Malay village, when Gus broke his dog collar and chain and got in amongst the piggeries, chewing up the native pigs. There was a deal of trouble over that, especially when Gus fell foul of the tame crocodiles of the village, which were kept moored to stakes, and put up the biggest crocodile fight ever seen in that place.

And when the boys managed to grab one of the fighting crocodiles and to shove him in the cricket-bag and to get the bag to the boats, which pulled off to the ship amidst a volley of musketry from the angry villagers, they thought they had had a pretty lively time. But the time was nothing to the time they had when they let the supposed Gus out of the bag. Then they found that they had brought off the wrong crocodile, for their supposed pet started to chase them all round the ship.

They climbed into the rigging and looked over the side, and there was the original and only Gus swimming alongside, asking to be

taken on board. He had followed the boats like a dog.

And just as a sling was being lowered for Gus a big, grey nurse shark came cruising along and thought that he would like to try his teeth on Gus.

The boys hung in the rigging with the wild crocodile trying to climb after them whilst they cheered Gus, who rolled into the astonished shark and came away with the best part of his tail.

They were looking for another crocodile fight on deck, but the quartermasters came along and shot the visitor from the village, hitting him with fifty bullets before he crawled into the music-room and died under the grand piano.

Then Gus was hoisted on board, and his late enemy was disposed of over the side.

After that do the boys were not allowed to take interest in anything. They had taken Gus ashore without leave, and Scorchers Wilkinson descended upon them and said that they were getting too fresh.

He came down upon them as the Assyrian came down, like a wolf to the fold. His cohorts weren't gleaming in purple and gold. They wore their gowns and they hammered lessons into the unhappy boys as the Bombay Castle steamed southwards across the Pacific, heading for the Dangerous Archipelago.

It was something awful.

Scorchers started work at six in the morning. He took the boys in French and Latin. Then he handed them over, after breakfast, to Mr. Lal Tata, who gave them trigonometry and Hindustani till dinner-time.

There was no rest after dinner. Dr. Crabhunter woke up then and gave them biology, chalking out the nervous system of a starfish upon the blackboard, in the Chemmy Lab, in coloured chalks.

Then Lal, who had been snoozing in his cabin all the afternoon, took them on for chemistry till supper time. After that they had home lessons.

And, all the while, the Bombay Castle was making what Captain Handyman called "a passage," steaming southward over warm, blue, sticky seas. It was tremendously hot, specially in the Chemmy Lab, and a six-foot

shark, which had been caught and which Dr. Crabhunter was preparing as a dissection, began to smell horribly.

Even Porky got mutinous. He was thick in the neck, and felt the hot weather. It was 105 degrees in the Chemmy Lab, and the boys were nearly worn out with this intensive education.

"Hang the nerves of a starfish," said Porky. one gorgeous tropic afternoon when Lal had gone out of the Chemmy Lab. "My nerves are all to pieces with overwork. It's cruelty to dumb animals working chaps like this under the Equator. But you wait a minute, nuts!"

The boys woke up with interest. Some of them had taken a brief respite, and were napping with their heads on their arms.

They looked up.

Porky had produced from the corner of the Chemmy Lab a queer scientific shape of glass, which had several bulbs in it. These bulbs were filled with various coloured liquid.

"What is it, Porky?" asked the chorus of voices.

Porky made a sign to Chip to go to the door of the Lab and to keep cave down the deck for Mr. Lal Tata.

"He's all right," reported Chip, as he popped his head out cautiously. "Old Lal is up on the bridge with the captain. They are staring at the sea with telescopes. Go ahead, Porky!"

Porky clapped Lal's mortarboard on his head, and picked up Dr. Crabhunter's tortoiseshell glasses and perched them on his nose.

"You see this little instrument, gents," said he. "This is the Porkis Patent Perfume Pump, a little invention of my own. You have heard, gents, that ill-conditioned Hindu nigger, Lal Tata, refuse to give us a half holiday. Neither will he have that beastly shark removed from the room and properly buried at sea. He is grinding us down. We are working twelve hours a day and that is seventy-two hours a week, which is more than the forty-four hours allowed by the School-boys' Union. What I propose to do is to insert my patent perfume pump in the shark on the board there."

There was a low murmur of approval from the class.



Gus dived like a streak of lightning. Then there was a foaming boil in the water. Gus had got the shark where the shark did not like it, about three feet above his great tail (See page 197)

"You will observe that it is a tube attached to three bulbs and some twiddle bits," continued Professor Porky. "The three bulbs are filled with various chemical mixtures which are my own formulae. They are divided by small plugs of shellac which will dissolve away when the pump is placed in a certain position. I am going to insert this pump into the defunct shark, and you will see the fruity result as the various chemical come in contact with one another."

There was a murmur of applause.

"Bravo, Porky!" exclaimed Dick Dorington, jumping up from his desk. "You are a proper scientific. It's some sort of fume, I suppose?"

"Fume!" exclaimed Porky, with con-

tempt. "Fume's not the word! It's a gas-works explosion!"

He had taken a dissecting scalpel and had neatly made an incision in the shark, which was lying on its back with its ugly mouth wide open.

"Hurry up, you chaps," called Chip from the door. "Lal is coming off the bridge!"

"Give us the nitric acid quick, Dick!" said Porky. "It's the third bottle on the fourth rack."

Dick snatched down the desired bottle, and Porky, with a glass tube, gently dripped a dozen drops into the carefully hidden incision.

They had just time to replace the bottle and to gain their seats when Lal made his entrance at the door of the Chemmy Lab.

He was rubbing his hands, and looking very pleased.

"Ha, boys!" said he. "We are nearing the region of the Paumotus, or the Low Archipelago. Soon we shall see some land again after so long sea passage, and you shall have some holiday fun. In the meantime, we will take up this very interesting problem that I chalk upon the board. Pay attention now. Dorrington, why do you stargaze with your mouth open as if it was a flytrap? Wake up, sir, and pay attention!"

"Please, sir," said Dick, mildly. "Can't we have that beastly shark taken out of the room? It is getting most offensive and dangerous to health. It's giving me a headache!"

"Nonsense!" replied Lal. "What is the matter with the shark? He is as sweet as nuts, and prepared with arsenic. It is much as the life of any man is worth to move that shark. Our reverend and learned Head has spent hours in making careful preparation of that shark for the museum at Oxford. It is no longer a shark. It is works of art! Two hundred pounds would not buy that shark now!"

"Hear that!" whispered Porky to Pongo Walker, who was entertaining the company with some monkey faces whilst Lal, at the blackboard, had his back to the class. "Work of art is right!"

"Now, boys," began Lal, twiddling the chalk in his dark fingers. "This, that I have marked on the board, is a given straight line. Upon it we shall have much pleasure in describing one of the most simple and delightful problems of applied mathematics."

Lal paused and sniffed the air suspiciously. Those who were in the know could see a slight blue fume arising from the region of the waistcoat pocket of the dead shark.

"It is very close in this Laboratory this afternoon," said Lal. "I think wind has changed, or ship has changed course. Open two portholes, boys."

There was a rush of the whole class to perform this service.

"Back to your seats, gentlemen!" roared Lal. "It does not need thirty boys to open two scuttles. Dorrington, Skelton! You will

open portholes. Other boys will resume seats. Walker will stand in corner for pulling fool-some and disrespectful faces resembling those of lowest type of monkey peoples. It is sad to see human boy defacing already ugly face which Nature has given him in such evil contortion!"

The scuttles were opened, and Pongo stood out near the tail of the deceased shark.

Lal chalked a number of complicated lines on the board, which promised trouble for all concerned.

Suddenly he turned on Pongo.

"Walker!" said he sternly. "You continue to pull monkey-faces for amusement of your fellow conspirators."

Pongo was not pulling faces now. He was nearly choking with the fume that was arising from the shark.

"Please, sir," he stammered, "I am not making faces. It's that shark— Oh, dear!" And he hid his face in his handkerchief.

The blue film of fume round the shark was thickening now, and Porkis was surveying the work of the Porkis Patent Perfume Pump with considerable pride.

"Good old shark!" he muttered. "He's beginning to talk!"

"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed Mr. Lal Tata, gazing at the blue fumes arising from the shark. "What on earth is the matter with the shark?"

"It must be the arsenic, sir!" exclaimed Dick, holding his handkerchief to his nose. "My hat! It may be a gas main gone wrong inside him!"

The choking fumes were spreading round the Chemmy Lab, and every boy had clapped his handkerchief to his nose, and was gasping for breath.

"Gas mains! What nonsenses are these?" demanded Mr. Lal Tata.

Then he had to draw out of his pocket a huge coloured handkerchief and clap it to his nose.

Of a sudden the shark burst out into a black smoke, thick and dark. One of Porky's divisions of shellac had dissolved away under the fumes, and a new chemical combustion was going on.

"Good heavens!" stammered Mr. Lal Tata.

"I have never seen a shark smoke himself before!"

"Perhaps he thinks he's a giddy kipper, sir!" choked Dick Dorrington. "Can't we chuck him overboard?"

But Mr. Lal Tata was still doubtful. The shark was a beautiful specimen of dissection, and he knew that Dr. Crabhunter would be excessively annoyed if anything happened to it.

But something was happening to it. The volume of black smoke increased, and the great open mouth of the brute started to pour forth a black-brown smoke like a factory chimney, filling the room with the dark cloud which poured out of the door.

"Whoop! Whoop! Whoop!" went the whistle of the Bombay Castle. It was the call to fire quarters. Those on the bridge had seen the cloud of smoke pouring out at the Chemmy Lab door.

"Every boy down on hands and knees!" shouted Mr. Lal Tata. "Crawl out of doors at once, or we shall be spifflicated!"

The order was swiftly obeyed. One by one the boys crawled out at the door of the Chemmy Lab, keeping as far as they could below the black fumes.

Porky and Chip had snatched down towels, and had wetted them in the fresh water basin.

Chip was ready to do gallant and noble deeds. Porky knew that the sooner the shark was overboard and back in the vasty deep, the better for him. The Patent Perfume Pump was working better than he expected, and he did not know what would be the result of the last combination of chemicals.

"Quick, Chip!" he gasped. "Get hold of the rope round his tail and overboard with him!"

They snatched at the cord that was fastened to the brute's tail, and hauled it out of the Chemmy Lab as it belched forth huge volumes of sickening fumes. They dragged it to the rail and shot it over the side.

The boys cheered as they saw volumes of smoke pouring up from the sea. And hardly was the shark clear of the ship than a sharp explosion rent the air, and a column of broken water and flame shot up from the sea, mixed up with strange coloured lights.

The shark was gone.

The fire crews came rushing along the deck, unreeling the hose with lightning rapidity. The ship's whistle was tooting the fire call, and everyone who was sleeping in his cabin turned out and rushed to the scene, armed with axes and fire extinguishers.

Captain Handyman came running from the bridge.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed. "What's all this!"

"Why, sir," explained Dick, "something went wrong with that shark which Dr. Crabhunter is fixing up. It had been drinking, may be. It had been dipped in alcohol, and it probably went off by spontaneous combustion. But it's all right now, sir, though we shan't be able to get into the Chemmy Lab for another half hour. Porky has thrown the beast overboard!"

"Oh, Porky's thrown it overboard, has he?" asked Captain Handyman, with a very direct glance in that young gentleman's direction. "Let me tell you, Porky, that where there's smoke there's fire!"

"Excuse me, sir!" answered Porky, modestly. "Where there's smoke there's shark!"

"But I never saw a dead shark blow up with coloured lights before, Master Porkis," answered Captain Handyman, trying to disguise a twinkle in his eyes.

Porky feared that he was going to say more. But there came from the bridge a sudden beat of a gong. A sail had been sighted.

Captain Handyman suddenly dismissed the shark as if a matter far more significant had overshadowed it.

"Glory Hole Gang!" he ordered. "Get yourselves and your things together. If this is the ship I am looking for I shall want you ready in half an hour!"

The boys raced off downstairs to wash themselves free of the soot of Porky's Patent Perfume Pump. And when they got out on deck again the Bombay Castle was coming to a standstill on a smooth blue sea. Hove to, a quarter of a mile away, was a graceful schooner of no more than a hundred tons. Her sails were shining in the afternoon sun, and her long spars were reflected in great swirls on the oily water.

And, from the wheel, Mitui was waving his hand to them, signalling with his arms the ship's name. It was the "Moonstone."

There was no need to tell them now of the mission of this graceful schooner. A ship of the size of the Bombay Castle was too large to navigate the dangerous channels and reefs and to enter the lagoons of the Dangerous Archipelago. And the Moonstone was Captain Handyman's favourite book. This Moonstone was the ship in which they were to seek the buried pearls.

Soon the boat-swain's call was shrilling along the deck, and Mr. Galloper was ordering out two of the lifeboats.

These were lowered and the boys' gear was dropped into them. Captain Handyman, with his sextant base under his arm, was coming along the deck giving his last instructions to Mr. Gates, the First Officer. Mr. Lal Tata stood by the gangway, carrying his suit case in one hand and a brown paper parcel containing his pyjamas in the other.

"All ready?" demanded Captain Handyman.

"Please, sir," gasped Dick, "can we bring Horace?"

"What do you want that infernal goat for?" demanded Captain Handyman.

"He's a mascot, sir!" said Dick cunningly.

"That's true!" replied Captain Handyman. "Can he live on coconut?"

"He can live on anything!" replied Dick.

"Then bring him along."

"And what about Gus, sir?" asked Porkis.

"Hang it!" exclaimed Captain Handyman. "We are going on a secret expedition. You can't bring a menagerie!"

"But Gus is a mascot, too, sir!" urged Porkis.

Captain Handyman was shaken. He was seeking fifty thousand pounds worth of pearls, and in the Paumotu there is always a big element of chance.

"Bring him along, if he can live on biscuit and cokernut!" he answered.

And with a loud cheer the cricket bag was rushed along the deck, Gus was bundled into it and lowered over the side to be rowed to the Moonstone.

Soon they were on board the little yacht. Mitui greeted

them with tears in his eyes, and the crew of the six Gilbert Islanders grinned at the boys approvingly. They had heard from Mitui how these were the boys who had saved the Wild Man of Borneo from Gumbo the nigger.

The lifeboats passed between the liner and the graceful little schooner twice, and the sun was setting in the west as they delivered the last load of stores, and the sails of the Moonstone were hoisted.



"Dat my ghost ship," said Mitui. "Dead men down dere and plenty money!" "Find the place where you got in!" said Captain Handyman, gasping and staring at the huge galleon (See page 199)

The ensigns dipped. Then the sun dipped also, and soon the boys were seated on the deck watching the stars reflected in the great oily swells of the Pacific.

Near the horizon showed two large stars. These were the masthead lights of the Bombay Castle following a more or less parallel course, steaming at slow speed.

"My word!" exclaimed Dick with a sigh of relief. "Just think of those poor beggars on board swotting away at their home lessons! My hat! Home lessons on a night like this! Where are we bound for, Mitui?" he added.

"We are sailing for Hump Island," replied Captain Handyman, who stood by the wheel of the Moonstone, peering in at the lighted binnacle. "You may have dodged your home lessons, young gentleman, but this is where you can keep your eyes skinned for Mr. Gumbold, or Mr. Gumbo as he's known!"

"Is he about, sir?" asked Dick eagerly.

"Sailed a week before this craft cleared from Valparaiso," answered the captain. "Sailed out of Callas with a couple of schooners filled up with the worst riffraff of South America. One schooner is called the Black Moth and the other is called the Black Arrow. They are supposed to be after guano, but their job is piracy. Now get below, boys. Supper is ready!"

THE SIXTH CHAPTER

Treasure Hunters!

FOR two weeks the Moonstone had cruised amongst the outlying islands of the Paumotu, looking for Hump Island.

And never had the boys of the Bombay Castle, with all their experience of the sea, sailed in such magic waters as these of the Low or Dangerous Archipelago.

Islands and reefs they sighted, atolls which rose suddenly from the sea, crowned with long lines of green coco palms which seemed to be standing in the sea itself, so low was the elevation of the coral beaches on which they stood.

And, passing these, they had glimpses into still lagoons, sea ponds encircled by walls of coral.

By day the sun blazed down on the decks of the Moonstone, making the pitch bubble

in the seams so that, when they turned Gus out of his cricket bag for an airing, he got stuck down to the deck like a postage stamp.

By night the stars blazed and swirled in the sky overhead to the rolling of the schooner on the long backed Pacific swells.

Sometimes a covey of flying fish would come scattering aboard. Sometimes fair islands would seem to float by them, the beaches showing white and gleaming under the dark, nodding coco groves.

The tides were a puzzle. They set in all directions, and Captain Handyman said that the Tides of Dover Straits were fools to them.

Sometimes, at night, in the quietness of the ocean, they would hear a distant roaring like the passing of a distant train. This was the surf beating on some reef or island, past which they were drifting on the mill race of the tide.

Captain Handyman began to think that they would never find Hump Island in this uncharted sea. The boys almost wished that he wouldn't. They could have gone on sailing through the witchery of these magic seas for ever.

Even Mr. Lal Tata relaxed and forgot that he was a schoolmaster. He played deck games with the boys—skittles and "Are you there, Mike?" and "Swing the Monkey." They all had a splendid time except Horace. Horace did not like the heat. He had eaten all the newspapers on board, he did not like the ship's biscuit, and he was pining for the land.

But there came a sunrise on this blank sea when Horace sniffed the morning breeze with a new vigour and bleated loudly.

"What's up with old Horace?" demanded Porky, who was sluicing himself down with warm sea water from a bucket.

"He can smell land," said Dick. "And it does show a bit misty ahead, too. All these low islands are like that. First you see the mist set up by the breakers on the outer beaches, and then you get a sight of the palms and the—"

"Land O!" came the cry.

The curtain of morning mist on the blue sea was swept up by the heat of the rising sun, and before them rose the palms of a fairy island from the sea.

It was just the same as countless islands of

its sort, a great ring, or bank, of coral crowned with thick woods of palms, enclosing a lagoon some five miles long and three miles wide. But this island was different in one respect. At one part of it rose a long low ramp of coral about three hundred yards long. This ramp was surrounded by palm trees, but there were no trees on the crest of it. It was about fifty or sixty feet high.

To the boys it looked like some ancient burial tumulus or mound. But on that low-lying, sea-washed shore it appeared like a mountain.

Mitui shot out of the galley, where he was getting the kettle on the boil for breakfast.

"Hump Island!" he cried. "It am Hump Island!"

The cry brought Captain Handyman running out on deck.

"Are you sure, Mitui?" he asked.

"Sure, sar!" replied Mitui. "Dere am no other island wid de hump in all de Pacific."

Captain Handyman laughed.

"Well, I hope it won't give me the hump!" he exclaimed. "Up to the crosstrees, Mitui, and con her in. You know the passage better than anyone here, seeing that you are the only one that's been here before."

Mitui climbed up to the crosstrees and soon, under his guidance, with Captain Handyman at the wheel, the Moonstone found her way in the lagoon channel and sailed into the most beautiful sea pond the boys had ever set eyes on.

It was a perfect South Sea lagoon, surrounded by thick groves of drooping palms which appeared to be gazing at their own reflections in the water. And as soon as they were in the lagoon the sea breeze died quite away and the Moonstone glided slowly onward over a sheet of water as smooth and polished as a mirror.

The boys, looking over her rail, were entranced by the wonderland below her keel, for the water of the lagoon was amazingly clear, and they looked down on masses of rare corals, coloured seaweeds, and countless sea creatures that made up a perfect mermaid's garden.

Across these submarine flower beds glittering fishes swam like groups of brilliant butter-

flies. And there on the rail they hung spell-bound till the anchor went down with a crash amongst the coral, the sails were stowed, and the Moonstone lay at rest in this marvellous haven.

Mitui called them to breakfast.

The crew of Gilbert Islanders gathered on the deck, and Cecil squatted down with them to a big bowl of rice and bananas. Cecil always liked feeding with men, though he hated sitting up at table and handling a knife and fork. Table manners worried him. He always wanted to put his knife in his huge mouth, and he knew that was not allowed.

So he sat in the mess, where fingers were made before forks, and the Gilbert Islanders made him welcome, addressing him respectfully as Great Monkey Man, for the myth of the orang-outang has spread in many wonderful forms from the Malay Archipelago to the uttermost of the lonely islands of the South Seas.

They made short work of breakfast. The whalers were got out, Gus was lowered in his cricket bag for a run ashore, and Horace, without waiting for the crew, leaped nimbly into the first whaler.

Then away they went for the shore, the lazy, triangular fin of a shark following them up.

"Here! I'd sooner have that chap's room than his company," said Captain Handyman, who detested sharks. And he picked up a rifle that was laid under the curtained gunnel of the whaler in true South Sea fashion.

"Half a mo', sir," said Dick. "Let old Gus have a run at him. Gus wants some breakfast and he's sick for a fight with something."

The big cricket bag was hauled out, and one end opened. And the Gilbert Islanders looked on in wonderment as they saw the bag thrust out over the stern of the whaler like a torpedo tube.

They gave a yell as Gus, smelling the water, struggled out of the bag wildly and flopped in with a heavy plunge.

And the shark hearing the flop and, naturally enough, thinking that there was something doing, shot forward on Gus with a few powerful sweeps of his tail.

The boys standing in the boat saw a strange sight. They could see the gleam of the shark's underside as he rolled over to take his prey. They saw Gus dive like a streak of lightning. Then there was a foaming boil in the water. Gus had got the eighteen-foot shark just where a shark does not like it—about three feet above his great tail.

The Gilbert Islanders yelled with delight and awe. They had never seen a shark tackled by a crocodile before, and they started to bet in sticks of tobacco that the shark would win.

But Mitui, who knew that a crocodile can tackle a shark every day in the week and twice on Sundays, took all the challenges.

Nor was he wrong, for in five minutes the great shark rolled wrong side up and Gus began tearing him up for breakfast.

Other sharks, attracted by the struggle, came sailing up, eager and expectant, but they soon sheered off when they found that there was a crocodile in Hump Island Lagoon.

The boat rowed on for the shore, and presently Gus came sweeping after them, shooting past them and drawing his shining armoured body out on the warm sand, waited for them like a fox terrier dog. Gus was a queer crocodile. He had lived with the boys so long that he hated to be left alone even for a few minutes.

He followed them up the beach to the spot where a rough wooden cross showed where Captain Davis had been buried.

Captain Handyman and the boys removed their caps reverently as they looked at the humble grave, and the boys noticed that Mitui had carved the cross in beautiful South Sea patterns such as the natives love.

Mitui pointed out to them the few timbers sticking up in the sand that were all that was left of the ill-fated Haliotis.

"My ship," he said, his dark eyes filling with tears. And, pointing to the grave, "My Captain!"

"And the best captain that ever



The captain gave a cry, for the lump of coral he heaved out revealed the lid of a wooden box. "Dat him!" exclaimed Mitui eagerly. "All pearl in him, sar!" (See page 198)

sailed the seas!" muttered Captain Handyman, visibly moved. "Come along, Mitui, show us where you hid in the trees from those scoundrels!"

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

Mitui's Ghost-Ship

Mitui led them along through the silent coco groves, where Horace eagerly devoured the fallen fronds of the coconuts and the young nuts which had fallen.

Horace was quite another goat now. He leaped and he skipped like a kid with delight at finding himself ashore, and he playfully jumped on Gus, who was following the party like Mary's little lamb, until Gus lost his temper and with a swipe of his tail cut Horace's legs from under him.

Mitui showed them the tall coco palm where he had hidden from his enemies. He had marked it by carving a cross on its polished shaft. Then onward he led them through the coco groves to that queer mound.

Goodness knows what it was. The boys guessed that perhaps it was the last resting place of some South Sea Island king, whose devoted subjects had reared over him a heap of coral just as the Pyramids were reared over the Pharaohs of Egypt.

Mitui sprang up the side of this mound eagerly, and Horace leaped after him. Captain Handyman and the boys followed more sedately, for they were laden with sacks of gear which Captain Handyman had put together to cover all contingencies.

There were ropes, dynamite, flares for signalling, picks, axes, and arms.

There were no signs of any occupation of the island. Captain Handyman, however, was taking no chances with Gumbo in the offing.

"Anyone been here, Mitui?" he asked anxiously, as the party came toiling up the slope.

Mitui shook his head.

"No, cappen," said he. "Me find pearl plenty soon."

And he started casting about the top of

the long mound like a hound picking up the scent.

"Where's that crocodile?" demanded Captain Handyman. "We can't do without our mascot!"

The boys ran back and there, on the bank of the tumulus lay Gus hissing and much annoyed by the steepness of the slope.

The boys gathered round him, slipped a noose about his neck, and with loud cheers, Gus was hauled to the top of this, the largest hill in Hump Island.

Captain Handyman watched Mitui anxiously.

Mitui had started to pace out the mound from corner to corner, counting his steps and marking where his path crossed.

"We dig here!" said he.

"Well, I hope you are right!" said Captain Handyman. "It seems a rough and ready way of playing hot butter beans and bacon for fifty thousand in pearls."

He started to pick up the rock. It came up queerly in great lumps.

"This is a bag of mystery!" muttered the captain, the perspiration pouring from his forehead. "I suppose this lump of coral must have been forced up from the floor of the sea by some volcanic action! They do say that all these islands are built up on the craters of submarine volcanoes."

He dug down a foot. Then he gave a cry, for the lump of coral he heaved out revealed the lid of a wooden box.

"Dat him!" exclaimed Mitui eagerly. "All pearl in two canister, sar, and Cappen Davis him writing. Me make my mark!"

Captain Handyman lifted the broken lid of the box and there lay two canisters.

He opened the first of these. In the top was a paper, the will of Captain Davis duly made, and accounting for the presence of but one witness. There was also the last sheets of the log book of the ill-fated *Haliotis*, all the evidence that a proper Court of Law would require. And beneath this, shimmering on layers of cotton wool, were such pearls as Captain Handyman had never seen in his life before, liquid molten jewels of the sea which caught the sunlight and dazzled his eyes.

Or perhaps his eyes were dazzled by jewels more precious than pearls, human tears for the friend who had pencilled those shaking lines "to my dear and staunch friend and shipmate, Captain James Handyman!"

Somehow Captain Handyman did not want to look at his wealth any more. He held out his hand to Mitui.

"Shake, Mitui!" said he. "There's one white and honest man in the South Seas, and his name is Mitui. You'll never want again as long as you live. Nor will you be the Wild Man of Borneo in a show any more. It's halves to you when we get home and your job will be to ride on the roundabouts."

Then, to disguise his feelings, Captain Handyman turned and muttered irritably.

"Where the deuce are the crocodile and the goat?" he asked.

They soon saw where Horace and Gus had got to. They were playing like kittens, and thoroughly enjoying themselves.

Gus was dashing at Horace with his jaws open. Horace was leaping into the air to avoid the rushes, kicking Gus in the neck at every rush.

"My word! Look at them!" exclaimed Captain Handyman in admiration. "Aren't they a couple of nibs?"

"Horace had best look out!" exclaimed Mr. Lal Tate, "or the crocodile fellow will eat his trotter. My hats!"

The last sudden exclamation was wrong from Lal as Horace bounded high in the air came down with a thump on the crocodile, and suddenly disappeared as though the mound of Hump Island had opened and swallowed him up.

The boys rushed forward and stopped at a cry of warning from Captain Handyman.

"Look out, boys," cried the skipper. "It's a subsidence. Mind you don't go through as well!"

The boys stood back from the hole in the ground. The crust of the coral had given way, and down below Horace could be heard bleating dismally.

"Give me one of those portfires!" exclaimed Captain Handyman.

He lit a flare and hurled it down into the space revealed. The flare fell for sixty feet and burned fiercely on a sandy floor, flaring and fizzing.

There lay Gus, annoyed and hissing loudly. And there stood Horace, looking rather dazed in the white glare.

And Captain Handyman had a glimpse of something else, that made him gasp and stare round at Mitui. For he was looking down on the great carven stern of a huge galleon.

"What's this, Mitui?" he asked. "What's this?"

Mitui shook his head.

"Dat am my ship!" said he. "My ghost ship!"

"You have never told us about any ghost ship!" exclaimed Captain Handyman.

Mitui shook his head.

"Me fright too much along dis ship," said he. "Dead men down dere and plenty money! Me find him one day all alone, but me fright too much. Me run away!"

"Which way did you get in?" asked Captain Handyman.

"Down below!" replied Mitui, pointing down the slope of the ramp.

"Find us the place where you got in!" said Captain Handyman. "I suppose you aren't frightened to come in with all this gang of tugs?" he added, pointing to the boys and Cecil.

Mitui shook his head, and smiled.

"Me no fright now!" said he. "Me too much fright when me all alone an' Cappen Davis dead."

Captain Handyman nodded. He understood now how this poor chap, left alone on the lonely island, had suffered from the South Sea Islander's fear of the dead, a fear which every Kanaka has born in him.

Mitui bounded down the slope of the ramp and soon shouted as he parted the brushwood. Here was a passage or rift, and the party, following it, found themselves soon treading a slope of fallen rubble down to the floor of a great cave.

Stalactites, born of the rains, falling through roof of limestone above, hung like draperies from the ceiling and there, lit by the flares, showed the great carven and gilded stern of a

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

Gumbo's Defeat

HALF a million it was. They got it out by a hole tunnelled in the side of that great mound. It took them a week, the boys toiling like navvies to get it safely stowed on the Moonstone.

And, better than the gold, they treasured the splendid suits of gold-inlaid armour, the morions and the Toledo blades that were found, almost as good as new, in that strange old hulk.

As they toiled, they puzzled how she came there. Captain Handyman guessed that she had been driven ashore in the cleft of that great upheaved ridge and that, shaken by a subsequent earth tremor, the cleft had fallen in on the galleon,

burying her, whilst the action of water had hollowed out the cave around her.

Captain Handyman was a haggard man in these days. He hurried the loading of the treasure as much as he could. He shifted the Moonstone to bring her closer to the treasure chamber. He worked the boys night and day. A schooner ballasted with half a million in gold, and another two hundred thousand in rare, jewelled cups whose price and craftsmanship was far beyond their metal and jewel value, made him an anxious and careworn man.

"Now I understand why millionaires are

huge galleon. It was plainly a Spanish ship, for on each quarter were the great arms of Castille and Aragon.

Her lower gunports were open and she lay on her side half buried in the sand. Captain Handyman, stepping in to her, found himself on a deck littered with the dry bones of men in armour.

Captain Handyman knew every story of lost treasure and hidden treasure of the Southern Seas. He looked round at the red-painted gun deck and at the name of the ship that was engraved on the bell of pure silver. It bore the legend in raised letters of ancient fashion: "Nuestra Senora de los Dolores."

Captain Handyman staggered back like a man in a dream.

"Boys!" he exclaimed hoarsely. "That little fortune of mine is nothing! This is the flagship of Diego Moreno, the Spanish admiral who bunked with the Lima treasure. There's half a million in this ship!"

Mitui listened, and nodded approvingly. He was afraid of the dead men in this strange cavern, and he wanted to get out of it.

"Money belong boys!" said he. "Dey too good to de poor old Wild Man of Borneo!"

And Captain Handyman stared at this poor Kanaka, who gave away fortunes as easily as if they were cigarettes



Before Gumbo could reach the captain, Cecil, with a cry of rage, brought down his shattered cricket bat on his head. "Boundary hit!" called Arty (See page 202)



QUEEN OF THE SEAS!

Facing page 201

The White Star Liner "Majestic," the largest ship afloat, in Mid-Atlantic

THE MOST WONDERFUL SHIP IN THE WORLD

THE Royal Mail Steamship, *Majestic*, 56,551 tons, of the famous White Star Line, is the largest steamship in the world, and makes the passage across the Atlantic Ocean in 5½ to 6 days. She is 955 feet long, 100 feet in breadth, and possesses a deck area of no less than 7½ acres. She carries a crew of 1,000, and has capacity for 3,816 passengers.

Her engines are of 100,000 horse-power, and she burns oil fuel. The principal advantage of oil over coal is that the ship can carry sufficient oil to last for the double journey across the Atlantic and back. With coal it would be necessary to replenish bunkers after each single passage.

As well as having 1,011 separate state-rooms, the *Majestic* is amply supplied with means for healthy exercise, amusement, and recreation. There is a ballroom, a gymnasium, and a swimming bath, while a special play-room is provided for the children on board.

The restaurant, the Palm Court, and the lounge are superb apartments, only comparable in size and luxury with those of a first-class hotel ashore. The Promenade Deck is more than fifty feet above the sea. Walking along it one gets the impression of strolling along the sea front at a fashionable watering-place rather than of being on board ship.

Needless to say, this huge ship is absolutely steady except in the roughest weather.

To provide for the feeding of the population of this floating town, the foodstuffs carried for one voyage only include about 25,000 pounds of fresh meat, 48,000 eggs, 26,000 pounds of vegetables, and 31,000 pounds of milk. The weight of fuel, water, provisions, baggage, mail, passengers, and crew constitutes nearly the whole deadweight capacity of the vessel. There is, therefore, not much room for cargo, but the *Majestic* is essentially a passenger vessel, and a truly wonderful example of the modern shipbuilder's art she is.

such miserable beggars!" said he, as he marched down to the shore with a bag of pieces of eight over his shoulder. "But that's the last of it, boys. One more trip, and we'll be off by this afternoon's tide. This place is not called Hump Island for nothing. I've got a hunch that those scoundrels with their Black Arrow and the Black Moth are not far off us. I've got a tickling in my foot that tells me I want to kick someone."

It was four o'clock in the afternoon, when the boys were loading up the last sacks in the cavern, that Mitui came running down to them, his eyes rolling.

He had been on top of the mound to take a squint round at the sea, for he was as jumpy to get away as Captain Handyman.

"Dey come!" he cried. "Dey come! Two bad ship!"

The boys ran up to the top of the mound, and sure enough, coming down on the wind at a great pace showed two schooners, whose very appearance together was sinister. Schooners seldom sail together on an honest errand in the South Seas.

Captain Handyman had also bolted up to the top of the mound.

He took one look at the oncoming ships.

"The Black Arrow and the Black Moth, for all our cargo!" said he. "This is where we get out of it quick, boys. There's no false pride about Jim Handyman when his pockets are full of money. I'm going to run—quick as I can!"

They hastened down to the shore and pulled off to the Moonstone, and soon the schooner was buzzing with activity as they made ready for sea. But the preparations took some time, and their anchor was hove short and the sails ready for hoisting as round the bend of the lagoon entrance came sailing the two evil black-hulled schooners.

Their decks were crowded with men.

"Hold on, boys!" said Captain Handyman, in a low voice. "Keep hidden behind the bulwarks. They'll not see that we are ready to push off, and we can leave our anchor behind us. Let them get their hooks down and their boats overside. Then, when I whistle, hoist for your lives. The breeze will hold."

The two schooners came sailing up the lagoon, till the colour of the water warned them that what would float the little Moonstone would not float them.

Then they lowered their sails and let go their anchors. They were much larger than the Moonstone, and they made no effort to hide their numbers. There were a hundred yellow and brown and black men aboard them.

And as their boats touched the water, four in number, crowds of armed men tumbled into them.

"Here they come, boys!" said Captain Handyman, watching his visitors narrowly. "When I give the whistle, up with the head sails and knock the pin out of the anchor shackle. We can leave them an anchor!"

On came the boats, and Captain Handyman started, as in the sternsheets of the leading boat he saw a grinning nigger with half an ear.

The nigger stood up and yelled with excitement as he saw Captain Handyman standing on the deck, apparently alone, calmly smoking a cigar.

"Hi! Cappen Handyman!" he called. "I know you! You hab come hyar wid dat nigger Mitui to take my pearls!"

"Good job he don't know what our ballast is!" muttered Captain Handyman, watching the boys, who lay flat on the deck.

"Who are you?" he called.

"I am Mistah Gumbold, sah!" replied the nigger. And unable to contain himself he pointed to the two sinister flags which were hoisting to the peaks of the two schooners.

A flutter of breeze caught them, and they opened out their folds, revealing the vaunting, wicked old sign of the skull and crossbones.

"Oh, that's your game, is it?" asked Captain Handyman, his voice carrying clear across the smooth water. "Right, Gumbo! When you come in it's time for honest men to clear out!"

He gave a whistle, and as if by magic, the little Moonstone clothed herself in white canvas. The boys and crew hoisted as they had never hoisted before, and the well-oiled blocks made no sound as the sails went up.

Dick Dorrington, ready with a mallet, knocked the pin out of the anchor chain shackle.

There was a rattle in the hawsehole, and the Moonstone started to glide through the water just as the four pirate boats closed on her stern.

"You shall not escape us!" yelled Gumbo.

And he urged his boats forward as a catspaw of breeze came sweeping up the lagoon, filling the sails of the Moonstone, and sending her scudding forward.

Captain Handyman made a sign to the boys, and they dropped flat on the deck.

Down he went himself, steering by the lower spokes of the wheel, and lying flat as a storm of bullets swept over the Moonstone, slapping into her masts and punching little holes through her canvas.

But they were only bullets, and cut no halliards.

Three of the boats were left in that sprint of breeze. The fourth boat, that of Gumbo, was pulling ten oars a side, and was travelling as fast as the Moonstone as she pulled through the rather sluggish water.

Captain Handyman lay low, doing a masterpiece of steering as he flattened himself on the deck, and allowed the pirates to empty their weapons. For, without looking at his course, he was running the narrow channel of the lagoon in his head.

He was one of those skippers who are not above learning from the Scouts, and he had learned the maxim never to get in where you can't get out. He had come in by one entrance of the lagoon. He meant to go out by the other, travelling a dangerous course between the reefs of the lagoon.

One touch and it would be all over with them.

Captain Handyman lay flat, and prayed for wind. He began to get it. The breeze came up with a stronger puff, and the pirate boat fell back in the race.

Then the puff failed, and on came the boat at redoubled speed.

"Now for it, boys!" exclaimed Captain Handyman. "Stand by to repel boarders!"

The big boat came racing along. A grappling iron was hurled on the side, and with a yell and a roar the pirates boarded. They drove the boys forward by the sheer weight of their rush. Then they made a rush back as, with a roar, Cecil burst up from the

forecastle, swinging a cricket bat and hitting right and left with terrible blows.

They almost forgot Captain Handyman as he stood by the wheel. But Captain Handyman did not forget them. As the weaker hearted raced back, he picked up a short red stick like a sugar stick, touched its fuse to his cigar, and threw it into the pirate boat. There was a shattering explosion, and the great boat dragged alongside with half her side blown out.

Then came another rush back, for Gus had shot out on deck, snapping right and left, and these pirates who were so brave in fighting boys found they had no nerve to stop a crocodile.

They leaped back into their sinking boat and Dick, with the swipe of an axe, cut the grapnel line as Arty, catching one of the last of them, hurled him over into the lagoon as if he had been a baby.

Gumbo, left alone, looked round him, bewildered.

His pistol was empty, and he had dropped the cutlass with which he had boarded.

With a yell of anger he sprang for Captain Handyman. But he was too late. Before he could reach the wheel Cecil, with a cry of rage, brought down his shattered cricket-bat on his head.

"Boundary hit!" called Arty, as the nigger went down on deck like a log.

It was a good job for Gumbo that a nigger's head is thick, and a better job that Cecil had already splintered the bat before he hit him.

When he came back to consciousness he found himself handcuffed, sitting up against the mainmast with his head tied in bandages. On his knees rested the huge head of Gus, the crocodile, who was looking up at him with his evil eyes as much as to say, "I like you so much I could eat you!"

And standing calmly at the wheel, Captain Handyman was finishing his cigar.

The Moonstone had passed out at the windward entrance of the lagoon, and was slashing through the open sea at a fine speed. She already had ten miles' start of her adversaries, and a big bank of clouds told of rain and a night of moderate squalls in which no chase could be held.

Gumbo gnashed his teeth with rage. His prey had escaped him when he had it within his jaws.

"Don't you gnash your teeth at me, Gumbo," said Captain Handyman pleasantly. "That gentleman with his head on your lap can do all the gnashing that is wanted in this ship. You've got to make up your mind to it. You are left! You are left twenty streets behind. And let me tell you, you penny plain, twopence coloured pirate, that you bit the wrong dog when you tried biting me. I've been a bit of a pirate myself, and I think you'd better chuck piracy and take to holding horses' heads and picking pockets. That's more in your line, my boy!"

Captain Handyman lit another cigar and looked up at his masts as he sailed into the windy sunset.

"In three days we'll pick up the Bombay Castle, my boy," said he, "and you shall then handle more gold than you ever thought to handle in your life. But not a penny of it shall be yours. It all belongs to the Wild Man of Borneo."

But the Wild Man of Borneo shook his head, and grinned.

"Me plenty rich already, cappen," said he. "What belongs to Mitui belong to de boys of the Bombay Castle who were kind to a poor caged Kanaka. Now git up, you black trash. Mitui am goin' to lock you up in de chain locker, a good safe place for pirates!"

With Gumbo completely under his thumb, Mitui might easily have tormented the prisoner as Gumbo had tormented the Wild Man of Borneo on show at Luna Park. It said much for Mitui that he did nothing of the kind, treating Gumbo with the contempt he deserved.

And thus the Moonstone came sailing back to the safe open seas and the Bombay Castle, where the Wild Man of Borneo would not rest till he had filled Porkis's bowler with the noble golden cartwheels of Old Spain, according to his promise.

And that finished Porkis's bowler hat. It had stood the Christmas pudding, but the crown fell out under the weight of the splendid pieces of eight of the Wild Man of Borneo.

THE END

The Snow Fight!

By
Dick Penfold



Down on hands and knees we go,
Plunging in a sea of snow;
Gathering lots of ammunition,
Ere we take up our position.

Now the foe appears in sight!
Rally, comrades, for the fight!
Let your snowballs, hard and round,
Whizz and whistle all around!

They are many, we are few;
Let your aim be swift and true.
"We're outnumbered; what's the odds?"
Shouts a voice. 'Tis Peter Todd's.

Forward, fellows, to the fray!
Fight the fight and win the day!
See, the foe is backward driven,
And the air with shouts is riven!

One for Temple—down he goes!
One for Dabney—on the nose!
One for Fry, and one for Scott!
Onward, boys, with zeal red-hot!

See, the Upper Fourth retreat!
Fast they fly on nimble feet.
Feeble fighting-men they prove
When they tackle the Remove!

Scores of snowballs rend the air,
Wreaking havoc everywhere!
Scores of foemen are in flight;
'Tis a wild and thrilling sight!

Comrades, we have proved victorious,
And our victory was glorious!
Let us celebrate it, pray,
At the tuckshop right away!

St. Katie's Big Splash!

By MICHAEL POOLE



The greatest "jape" ever brought off by a schoolboy stands to the credit of Lincoln Beck. The full story of it, and of the amazing discovery it led to, is told here for the first time

THE FIRST CHAPTER

Linky's Brain-Wave

"It's a dull sort of day," said Lincoln Beck; "been a dull term. Nothing ever seems to happen at St. Katie's. S'pose there are schools in this little country of yours where they sometimes have some fun! But St. Katie's—it's a dull show! Wake up, Kid, and tell us some more about the things you used to do when you were young, but daren't do now."

"My hat!" breathed Richard Dexter. "After all we've done for you. Oh, you pie-faced duffer! We've shown you——"

"Oh, I know you showed me how to play noughts and crosses," Lincoln Beck drawled. "Good game it is, too. Not quite so exciting as tiddley-winks. I used to play it in my cradle, and I've often thought since coming here—— But it's a bit too hectic for you little lads. Let's play 'think of a number.' That's not too exciting for you, Jimmy? Roger wouldn't think I was trying to lead you astray?"

Jimmy Curtis had been reading a fairly hefty book, "Detective Dent's Last Scoop," and without a word he heaved it at Linky Beck so swiftly and surely that Lincoln hadn't a

chance to dodge. For one brief moment his gentle grin was blotted out as his face stopped "Detective Dent."

That ought to have closed Lincoln down for a time, but he didn't happen to be that sort. The grin was even more expansive when the book fell, and the next instant Linky had grabbed it and slung it nicely at Dickie Dexter, who, much to his surprise, received "Detective Dent" just about as nicely as Linky had done.

"Jimmy thought you'd like to read it, Kid," murmured Linky, just as Dexter's face was lost to view. "But, talking about games——"

"I'll show you one!" asserted the Kid, and he did a spring which would have been a credit to an untamed lion of the jungle. Linky was lying on the pleasant turf which fringed the playing-fields, and the Kid didn't give him a chance to get into fighting attitude.

Jimmy Curtis also jumped in.

"Scrag him, Kid!" he begged gently. "Make the little reptile wish he'd never left his cradle in America and come to play with the rough lads of St. Katie's!"

"It's excitement you want, is it, old son?" the Kid asked Linky as he shoved his knees into the middle of his back and grabbed the

hair of his head with great violence. "Here's a sample for you, my bonny boy. And there's more coming."

In the next few minutes there was quite a pleasant little scrap. But Lincoln didn't get any more than he'd asked for, and Washington Beck, his younger brother, merely gazed on and smiled.

Why on earth did Lincoln Beck want to start his giddy arguments on an afternoon such as this? It was one of those glorious, lazy summer days, not too hot, yet with scarcely a breeze moving the trees, and over all the fair countryside hung a quiet calm and peace. The sort of day when most fellows are content to sit about and dream pleasant dreams. Even the captain of the cricket eleven was lounging in the shade of the pavilion, sipping a lemon squash and smiling gently as he thought of the team he'd field next Wednesday.

Few fellows were actually playing, and those that were handling the bat or trundling the ball weren't getting too frightfully excited about it. Jimmy Curtis had had a few knocks and then wandered to his chums, Dickie Dexter and the Beck brothers, collared the book Washy was pretending to read, and settled down for a real peaceful time. The Kid was content to do just as Washy Beck was doing—lie face downwards on the pleasant sward and lazily survey the scene.

And that's the time of day when Lincoln Beck must try and drag in a revised version of his old argument. He generally trotted it out about once a week, and it always had the same effect on the Kid and Jimmy Curtis.

Sometimes Linky would start the argument one way and sometimes another, but it always amounted to much about the same thing. St. Katie's was a mild, milk-and-watery sort of school; the lads hadn't any real grit in them; there was never any fun, or excitement, and everybody went in fear and trembling of Mr. Roger Blunt, the Head. But way back in New York, or Boston, or Chicago, or whatever city of the great American Republic Lincoln Beck happened to strike on, things were continually humming—especially when Linky happened to be knocking round.

Mind you, there was about one per cent truth in Linky's yarns. He'd been a fairly high-class pest to his family, and that was why, in the fulness of time, he had been dumped, with brother Washington, at St. Katie's School, where "Jolly Roger" Blunt undertook to tone them down.

And, so far, Roger had made a pretty decent job of it. There had been little outbreaks and mild excitements, but on the whole, Lincoln Beck was beginning to fit in with the rest of the landscape quite nicely. With the aid of the Kid and Jimmy Curtis he'd begun to discover lots of ways of enjoying life without getting his name in the papers.

"Now, have you had enough excitement?" the Kid demanded when at last they let him go. "Can they beat that in America, Linky, or would you like us to put you through the hoop once more?"

"Gee!" Linky began to smooth his hair and re-arrange his clothing. "You little lads are full of fun, aren't you? Me? I'm not complaining, boys. But what I have said I have said. You're only children, but you may grow up some day. What you want at this little one-hour show of yours is something to boost it up."

"It's got along all right without your help, Linky," said the Kid, quite cheerfully. "Maybe it's needed something to tone it up lately—since you came. But I dare say it'll live you down in time."

"Shucks!" Lincoln just smiled on the Kid. "The little chap's gettin' quite bright, isn't he, Washy? But we'll brighten them up a bit more before we're through. We'll show them how to work a first-class stunt and give everybody a bit of the joy of life. I just got a little scheme now—"

"What is it?" demanded Curtis. "Look here, Linky! We've done our best for you, but if you try any more of your crack-pated stunts don't look to us to pull you out of the mess! I'm just warning you that Roger won't stand much more, either. It'll be you for the long, lone trail—and a granite-hearted father waiting with a horse-whip for you at the other end, my lad! I'm speaking just for your own good, you pie-faced chump!"

For Linky still went on grinning joyously as though he had suddenly remembered the joke of the century, and he folded up the newspaper he had been reading carefully, and shook his head pityingly at them.

"Shoo, little ones! You trust little Linky!" he murmured. "What would you say if your little playmate got a full day's holiday for you and then took you out for a little feed because his proud parent had pushed a wad of dollars in his hand and wanted him to be happy? And old Roger beamin' on me and saying what nice lads we are, and maybe getting our photos in the papers, with St. Katie's in the background—"

"My giddy aunt!" the Kid interrupted. "Don't you go trying any mad stunts which will drag the school in, Linky! Old Roger will stand a lot—and Jimmy and I can stand a lot—but we won't stand anything that's going to drag the old school into the papers, or our photographs! I know your giddy limit! Foolish Boy's Mad Joke at Famous School! You can cut it right out, Linky! This is where we put our foot down, isn't it, Jimmy?"

"It is," said Jimmy Curtis sternly. "Now, Linky, own up, and tell us what brain-wave has staggered that wood block of yours this time?"

"Dear lads! My little blue-eyed pets!" Linky murmured as he rose, and the smile on his face was one of the fadeless sort. "Forget it! You wouldn't understand! I'm not complaining. But just remember what little

Linky's promised you. A whole holiday from early morn till lights out, and maybe there'll be some sort of a celebration, but we can't guarantee that yet. But there'll be lots of fun for you, little ones, and your uncle Linky will see you don't go crying for food. And old St. Katie's 'll get that little boost-up I'm telling you about. I owe Roger a good turn, and this'll about see him straight. You'll have to help me, Kid, when the newspaper men start crowding round me and asking what I think of jolly Roger. We must do him a bit of good. I reckon this is going to

be the Big Splash for Katie's—But not a word, little ones. You trust little Linky!"

"Jumping snakes!" Curtis was scrambling to his feet, but Linky had turned and left them. "Oh, my hat! What prize-ass scheme has he stuck on now?"

"You trust Linky!" Washington Beck began. "Linky's luck—"

But they felt they couldn't stand any more, and they laid hands on Washy

Beck there and then and bumped him with many hard bumps. If they couldn't keep the elder brother from being a first-class mug, at least they'd do their best to keep Washy on the straight path!

Only what they couldn't guess at was the particular asinine stunt Linky Beck was going to try. And although they weren't the lads to jib at any little scheme for brightening their lives, they knew just enough about Lincoln Beck to be a bit afraid that he'd probably over-step the mark. The Kid had



"It's excitement you want, is it, old son?" the Kid asked Linky, as he shoved his knees in the middle of his back and grabbed the hair of his head. "Here's a sample for you, my bonny boy—and there's more coming!" (See Chapter 1)

a vague idea that it would be something in the way of setting fire to the school and then working the heroic rescue stunt, or some similar hare-brained notion.

Yet, of course, Linky had carried through one or two really brainy schemes, and it might be that he'd struck the real goods this time. In which case the Kid and Jimmy Curtis would most assuredly give him a helping hand.

But not a word could they drag from Linky, though the Kid, being a bit of a detective, did notice that he'd cut a whole column from the daily paper which he'd folded up so carefully that afternoon. After some little difficulty the Kid managed to get hold of a complete copy of the same paper and to discover the column which had interested Linky so much.

But there was nothing funny or suggestive of brain-waves in the column. On one side were various advertisements, chiefly about women's and children's shoes and odd household necessities. On the other side practically the whole column was occupied by the description of a ceremony which had been held to unveil a special memorial tablet to Sir George McLachan, who actually died about one hundred and forty years ago.

Still, the Kid read the report through very carefully. It might have had some interest for Linky because of the fact that this chap McLachan had been one of the pioneer lads in America in the reign of the first Georges, though he hadn't stayed in America for ever. He'd just founded one or two states and got a few odd towns going and made a tiny fortune, then wandered back to Britain to enjoy a happy old age.

Mind you, he'd done the job properly and even founded schools in these towns, because he reckoned he owed everything in life to his own education, and he was dead keen on the young getting it, too. Anyhow, some bright Americans had discovered that he'd been buried in this particular church, and they'd been putting up a first-class tablet just to let everybody know about it, too.

Only one little item struck the Kid's eye, but even that didn't seem to connect up with Linky in any way.

"That McLachan was a man of education and broad culture is certain," the paper said, "though nothing whatever can be discovered concerning his early years beyond the fact that his parents were of the fairly well-to-do middle class, and would doubtless be at some pains to ensure the education of their children. The family, apparently, moved from Holford House about the time when young George would be seven or eight years old, and nothing further is known of him until the times when he served under the Prince Eugene on the Continent. It is improbable that he attended either of the great universities, but more than likely he was a scholar for some years at one of the public schools, though there is a complete lack of evidence in the letters, etc., upon this point. In his 'Life' (written in 1845 by J. Tomlin), there is no more than a broad summary of McLachan's first twenty years. . . ."

All very interesting, no doubt, to folks who worry about that sort of thing, but where was the joke?

The Kid gave it up, and Jimmy Curtis gave it up, but they kept a sharp eye on Lincoln Beck, and just occasionally asked him a question about it, but Linky only grinned.

Then one late afternoon Jolly Roger came to their study, and with him were two tall, rather hatchet-faced, and solemn-looking men.

"Ah, Beck major!" Roger called to Linky. "I should like to see you for a few minutes. This is young Lincoln Beck, Mr. Hustlet. Mr. Hustlet and Mr. Mordenfelt belong to the Mayflower Society, Beck, and they are very interested in the letter you wrote to your father concerning Sir George McLachan. Most interested! You had better come with us, Beck."

They disappeared from the room, and not for a full hour did Lincoln Beck return. When he did, he entered the study with the biggest and broadest grin on his face that he'd ever dared wear since first he came to St. Katie's. And he began to sling around a few of his pet American phrases, which was a sure sign that Linky was pleased with himself.

"Say, where's your uncle Linky now, little ones? The fat-wads are coming down, and they'll be handing out the Fishers to your uncle!" he grinned. "Me! I'm an antiquarian and a student of history! And it'll be a gala day for you lads—and the limelight playing on Linky. Don't go overeating yourself this next week or two! Save it up for Linky's beanfeast, 'cos it's coming to you! And maybe a whole holiday, too. An' you'll see Roger giving me the glad eye, and the representatives of the Great American Republic patting my curly locks with their right hands while their left's finding the right way to slip the wads into my cash-pocket. Gee! You little lambs! When you want to know anything about brains—apply Lincoln Beck, Study 7. Yep!"

Which was all very bright and breezy, but didn't tell them exactly what game Linky had been trying on this time. They wanted to know badly, not because of the great things Linky was promising, mind you, but because they had horrible fears that whatever it was it was certain to come unstuck somewhere—and they wanted to be prepared.

But Linky still smiled and said: "You wait and see!" not knowing, of course, that a wiser man than Lincoln Beck had struck a packet of trouble through saying exactly the same thing long before Linky had left the Statue of Liberty behind him!

THE SECOND CHAPTER

An Historical Discovery

A lot of people had made the painful discovery at various times, that Lincoln Beck wasn't nearly so big a mug as he often looked. Jolly Roger found it out very quickly.

It would be difficult, however, to go into all the intricacies of the brain-wave which had absorbed Linky's mind ever since he read that

bit in the papers about Sir George McLachan. They didn't know the school where the lad McLachan had been. Well, what was wrong with St. Katie's?

That was the beginning. Despite his apparent lack of interest in anything save matters of the moment, Lincoln was, like so many of his countrymen, profoundly attracted by the relics of by-gone days, and even the Kid had been surprised at Lincoln's awed enthusiasm over the old parts of St. Katie's.

For St. Katie's had ladled out instruction to the

young for well over three hundred years. In the Head's study were the original "foundation and list of scholars," and many other historic manuscripts. Away up in the library one big cupboard held school registers which went back over two hundred years. Unfortunately, perhaps, they were far from being complete, which was probably the reason why successive headmasters had looked at them and then decided to leave them there. For many years past now the printed "Blue Book,"



Late one afternoon Jolly Roger came to their study, and with him were two tall, solemn-looking men. "Beck major!" called the Head. (See Chapter 1)

containing the full form lists, in order of merit, had served the part of register, and there were two or three copies of the "Blue Book" added each year. The cupboard was locked, but one could always obtain the key from the librarian to examine the Blue Books.

Probably ninety per cent of the boys at St. Katie's weren't even faintly interested in this cupboard. Occasionally a fellow in the Sixth might go there to get a Blue Book for eight or ten years ago, to find the exact year when old Jenkins (since famous as a county cricketer) was in the Sixth at St. Katie's, but it wasn't often one found many fellows in the library. On a bright summer afternoon—well, even a prize swot wouldn't have spent his time in the dull and musty atmosphere of the least-used room in St. Katie's.

But Lincoln Beck, armed with the key which Marsh, the librarian, had lent him, spent one or two afternoons there. No one saw him do it—but on the third afternoon he came away with two very ancient, thin books, with yellow, parchment colours, tucked under his coat, and the usual grin on his face.

No one saw the books and no one knew he had them—except a bright lad called Charlie Challinor. Charles was an assistant to the chief chemist in Dulchester, and in the matter of bright ideas and broad outlook he and Linky had much in common. Many little favours had Charles done for the bright lads of Study 7, because he knew a lot about chemistry and science, especially the little tricks one could play with chemical mixtures.

Observe Charles and Linky in the dispensing room of the chemist's shop one early closing day. Before them on the table is an open register of St. Katie's School, bearing the date 1710. Charles writes carefully on a yellowish sheet of paper and the ink he uses is a miserable rusty colour. Very carefully he compares what he has written with some of the writing in the register.

"No; not quite yellow enough, Linky!" Charles remarks. "We've got to get it absolutely exact or some of these lynx-eyed experts will spot it straight away!"

More experiments; more practising; Linky

looks up a book which Charles has borrowed from the library, "Life of Sir George McLachan," and there is some discussion. A full hour goes by before Charles at last draws the register towards him.

"Just there, I thought," says Linky. "Couldn't be better. Might have known somebody would want a blank line one day!"

It is done at last and both Charles and Linky stare at it intently.

"Jolly good!" says Linky. "Now this one! This is 1712, and I reckon——"

More discussion about forms and promotion in those far-off days. More practice efforts by Charles, till at last he writes: "McLachan, G. prep." right at the head of one of the form-lists in the second book. Charlie blots it very gently with slightly damp blotting, examines it and compares it, holds it near his eyes, gets a magnifying glass and studies it, touches it with the damp blotting again, then holds it from him proudly.

"There you are, Linky!" he says gloatingly. "If there's another chap in England or America who could have made a better job of that—I'll eat my hat!"

"You're a brick!" Lincoln says. "An eighteen-carat gold brick, old son. Not a word! You needn't eat your hat, laddie! I know something better than that. Try Shipton's rock cakes!"

"It's a poached egg on toast for me," says Charles. "I've been messing round with that ink since closing-time and didn't get any grub, so——"

"Charles, it's a mixed grill for you, my lad! You may know something about chemistry, but when it comes to the grub department—trust uncle Linky!"

The following day Lincoln replaced the registers, but he did not need to borrow the key this time because he'd found how to operate the lock with a pocket-knife. Later in the same day he wrote a kind, affectionate letter to his father, which brought pleasure to the heart of Mr. Cyrus Beck. Lincoln was always keen on giving other people happiness—if there was anything coming to him out of it!

"I was very interested to hear that you had been to the unveiling of the McLachan memorial tablet," wrote Linky, after mentioning a bit about the weather and how St. Katie's had beaten Teviot School at cricket. "I read the account in the papers, and it just struck me casually that maybe Sir George had been to St. Katie's. They've had a lot of famous people here at different times, and they've still got some of the old registers. Anyhow, I went and had a look at some of these and it's a funny thing, but there was a chap called G. McLachan at this school somewhere round about 1710. Of course it's probably not the same lad, or somebody would have been bound to know about it. But some of those expert chaps connected with your society might know if he came to St. Katie's. Nobody seems to know about him here—at least, my friends never heard of him, and he isn't on the roll of famous men in the drawing-hall."

Within an hour of getting that letter Mr. Cyrus Beek was busy!

If someone had given Mr. Beek a cheque for a couple of thousand pounds he'd probably have been bored, but he was positively thrilled at the idea that he might have a hand in adding to the history of the famous Sir George McLachan.

He dashed off to the heads of the society—and within another hour two members of the

committee were breaking speed records to get to St. Katherine's School. They saw Mr. Blunt, who didn't quite grip what all the excitement was about at first. When he did begin to understand he took them off to the library and they began to hunt among the old registers!

Oh joy! Oh Jerusalem! There it was! Not in one, but in two. What did "præp."

mean? Præposter—a kind of head boy, a monitor of his form? How wonderful! Beyond all shadow of doubt. But it could, perhaps be tested still further!

"There was the reference, you remember, Mr. Mordenfelt," said Mr. Hustlet, "in the correspondence with Reynolds. 'When I, a boy, did learn Latin under Mr. K., a stern man but an excellent teacher.' That is one of the few definite references to his school-days. Now is it possible, Mr. Blunt, that there exists a roll of the masters who served the school during this period?"

Roger went back with them to his study, and dragged out other manuscript books. Sure enough, they discovered that there was a certain Mr.

Keynes, a Master of Arts and a scholar of the University, who had taught in the school. Later, indeed, Mr. Keynes had reigned as Head!

What more proof was needed? Even Roger shared in their joy, and agreed to show them over the school and to drag out Lincoln Beek and hear his views. There may have



"There you are, Linky!" said Charles gloatingly. "If there's another chap in England or America who could have made a better job of that I'll eat my hat!" (See Chapter 2)

been a fleeting suspicion in Roger's mind, but it swiftly passed. Lincoln seemed surprised that his father had shown his letter to anybody, and he even tried to suggest that it was probably someone else and not the McLachan whose name was on the roll.

"No, my dear boy," Mr. Hustlet assured him. "I think we can reasonably assume that we have to-day definitely established another link in the history of the great and noble George McLachan. Your very fortunate and commendable interest in the history of this famous school has laid on your countrymen a debt of gratitude, and I trust that this school itself will permit us, who revere the name of George McLachan——"

It was quite a posh speech, and everybody felt that there ought to have been a band there, just to do the "Ta-ra-ra! Ta-ra-ra! Ta-ra!" touch when Mr. Hustlet's record ran down. But they shook hands with Linky and told him again that his name wouldn't be forgotten when the real speechifying began; and then Roger turned Linky out so that he'd have a chance to grasp whether they proposed to buy up the school on the spot and turn it into a museum, or whether they only wanted to add a "McLachan Prize" to the lot that would be handed out next Speech Day.

But they were quite reasonable about it. They wanted a tablet stuck up somewhere, and they wanted McLachan's name to get its right place among those other famous names which adorned the honours boards of St. Katie's. Then they'd like a little ceremony, and they rather hoped to have it pretty quick because the American Ambassador was making the home trip very shortly and he'd probably like to tell the folks about it and report that the job was done.

"In the matter of founding a prize or prizes in memory of the great McLachan," said Mr. Mordenfelt, "we shall, of course, be guided entirely by you, Mr. Blunt. And we shall submit to-morrow, I trust, the design for the tablet, based upon the one recently unveiled. Any alterations which you may desire will, of course, be at once carried out. You, Mr. Blunt, steeped in the great traditions of this noble school——"

Oh, yes, Mr. Mordenfelt knew how to ladle the soft soap and butter all right. He didn't get excited, or throw his weight about, but just turned it out in a quiet, soft, drawling voice, and Mr. Hustlet looked serious and nodded his entire approval; and by the time the pair of them had said their piece even Jolly Roger, for all his granite heart, felt rather thrilled and very proud of St. Katie's, and jolly glad that he was doing so much to keep America and Britain real good pals.

"It will, I trust, be a great day for St. Katherine's School when we are permitted to dedicate our modest memorial to the nobility of one of her famous sons," said Mr. Hustlet, as he shook hands with Roger and bade him farewell.

But, of course, Mr. Hustlet didn't know that about a week ago Lincoln Beek had prophesied the coming of a Great Splash for St. Katie's. And for once Linky was quite right.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

Problems for Jolly Roger!

THE big-wads, as Linky would have called them, who had the job of the McLachan Memorial in hand were the sort of men who *get things done*. They didn't get excited or kick up a fuss, but they moved as swiftly and easily as the big Rolls-Royce cars which began to purr round St. Katie's in the next few days.

The library had more visitors in those few days than ever before in its history. Executive sub-committees and deputations filed quietly and solemnly into the Head's study, and most of them just told Roger what they thought about him. Generally they mentioned Abraham Lincoln and George McLachan as being the only two men they'd really admired until they met Roger Blunt. Almost against his will Roger had to order an extra couple of dozen photographs of himself, and he was getting quite an expert at signing them in a dignified sort of way.

And the good work went swiftly on. The drawing-hall was closed for one full day, and lots of odd people went in and were hammering and knocking, and in the morning there

was a big patch on one of the walls, not far from the tablet which told you about "Herbert Spencer Velwood, first Baron Velwood, sometime scholar of this school," who was great-grandfather to the Lord Velwood who was now a governor of the school, and the patch was covered with a big white sheet, with thin ropes hanging from it, but all carefully tied up so's you couldn't start fooling with it.

There were photographs in the papers, and articles about George McLachan, illustrated by an old picture of George and one of the brand new ones of Mr. Roger Blunt. Jolly Roger was a bit annoyed about this when he saw it, but it wasn't any use kicking up a fuss, so he just had to put up with it. Quite a lot of little details were now fitting in about the Great McLachan—things and remarks which before hadn't any particular meaning: a journey he had taken as a boy with several companions through the snow, was proved quite clearly to be the journey from St. Katie's to his home for the Christmas holidays.

Even Linky Beck gasped when he read some of these new discoveries. But he absolutely kept his mouth quite tightly closed when the Kid and Curtis began to question him, especially after Roger had announced that there would be no school on a certain day as various distinguished visitors were

coming to unveil the tablet to Sir George McLachan.

And, although there were one or two little annoying things, you can take it from me that Jolly Roger was pretty cheery these days. He'd never have gone out to advertise the school, but it was pleasant to see so many kind and generous things printed about it; fine to read again the list of St. Katie's boys who had played their part as men, and inspiring to think that under him now were boys who would doubtless in the fulness of time bring honour to themselves and to the school. And other masters felt it; and even the older

boys, awakening afresh to the records and traditions which St. Katie's held, felt that—well, they would not let St. Katie's down.

The great day came. It was, according to the programme, going to be a sort of special Speech



St. Katie's may not have turned out all the brass-lunged heroes in the world, but when it came to giving the glad shout of joy they'd have taken first prize at an Eisteddfod! (See Chapter 3)

Day, but Roger had nodded gently when the captain of the school had suggested that they might let the Ambassador man and the crowd of distinguished American (and British) visitors see what St. Katie's could do in the way of a welcome.

"But don't overdo it!" Roger begged. "A little cheering, of course, but—no violence."

"Certainly not, sir!" said the captain, in dignified surprise.

As though the gentle lads of St. Katie's could ever get violent! Quite the wrong word to use.

Early in the morning the cars began to buzz up St. Katie's drive. They all got a cheer and a bright welcome, but it was nothing to what happened when the message came through from the scouts at the station by telephone to the porter's lodge that the Ambassador and his pals were en route in three cars and were looking quite well.

The chap who was driving the Ambassador's car, with Lord Velwood as chief host with him, and two other posh fellows, expected to glide up the drive at somewhere round about forty-five miles per hour. But St. Katie's lads were in a solid phalanx across the entrance to the drive, and as he didn't want to get his licence endorsed that day the driver slowed down in record time.

They recognised the Ambassador right away. He was the sort of chap you couldn't mistake anywhere, even if it hadn't been for the fact that his bosom pal was sitting alongside him. The Ambassador was a very tall, very thin man, with a very solemn-looking face, except for the queer little twinkle behind his horn-rimmed specs; his friend was also tall, but he would have made six ambassadors counting by width, and his smile was a first cousin to Linky Beck's, inasmuch as it belonged to the fadeless brand and never wore off.

There were two cars behind, each packed carefully with first-class people, including Mr. Hustlet and Mr. Mordenfelt, and they drew up just in time to get included in the opening cheer of welcome. My hat! St. Katie's may not have turned out all the brass-lunged heroes in the world, but when it came to giving the glad shout of joy they'd have taken first prize at an Eisteddfod.

And some folks have said that St. Katie's isn't a musical school. If you mean they're not much good at "Sweet and Low" and things of that sort, nobody wants to argue with you. There's different kinds of music, and if you're talking about victory marches with talking-tommies and comb-and-paper accompaniments, and the real, genuine joyous vim behind the happy voices blending or unblending together, or a bit after each other, in the "Marseillaise," you wait till you've heard

St. Katie's before boasting about your male voice choirs!

I don't know why they chose the "Marseillaise." But, then, there's no reason why they shouldn't, is there? The captain of the school marched alongside the chauffeur's seat and told the uniformed chap how to go slowly ahead as the band struck up, and away they went up the drive, the mob simply swarming round the cars and playing giddy tunes on the Klaxon horns and the hooters, which upset the "Marseillaise" a bit, but didn't lessen the row.

And there was Jolly Roger, supported by a little mob of masters in caps and gowns, standing on the top steps at the main entrance ready to hold out the glad hand of friendship to our cousins from over the seas; and photographers and cinema men were dodging about to get the right view-point, or swinging their cameras on the marching lads; and newspaper men were jumping round and asking nice little questions from masters and from boys. Oh, a great day!

"Could you tell me which is Lincoln Beck?" asked one of the newspaper men, and somehow Linky was dragged into the limelight.

Now it had really come to the big splash, Linky wasn't particularly keen on getting the limelight turned on him too much, but he couldn't dodge it that day.

Mr. Beck was there, and Mrs. Beck, and they lugged Linky round and introduced him to the Ambassador, who said what a bright lad he looked and how every boy born under the Stars and Stripes had a free ticket to White House tucked away in his pocket-wallet, and how he hoped Lincoln, with the unparalleled opportunities which being at St. Katie's gave him, would be there or thereabouts one bright day.

Then one or two others came along, and Linky had to do the personally-conducted tour business; and at odd intervals they whispered sweet words to him about there being a candy-store somewhere in the vicinity, in which case: "Just get some from me for you and your little playmates, Lincoln."

And the glad hand passed, and Lincoln,

with a soft, low murmur, did the conjuring act swiftly in case some of the other mutts saw it happening too often and thought they might miss that item off their programme. Linky didn't want anybody to miss anything—especially him.

Presently they all assembled in the drawing-hall, and things were serious for quite a while, because the Ambassador was telling them a bit about all men having been boys. He wasn't too serious, and it was really a jolly good speech.

Then he pulled a string, and everybody saw the brand new tablet which said that George Andrew McLachlan, Baronet, had once been at St. Katie's; and after that he did a lot of good by starting states and towns and building schools—only it put it a lot better than that, and really looked very decent, with nothing cheap or nasty about it.

After that the nuts went to the platform, and, of course, St. Katie's lads had to sing "Forty Years On" presently, and there were more speeches, and even Roger said a few words, and everybody cheered him mightily, because he had on his best gown with the bits of fur peeping out, and his Sunday cap with the different-coloured tassel, which seemed to match his bright face more.

Then the Ambassador had to say another piece, and he dragged in Lincoln Beck, and everybody cheered Linky, just to show the visitors that St. Katie's bore their troubles nobly. And you can guess that pleased Mr.

and Mrs. Beck no end, even though it made Linky himself horribly nervous, and begin to wish— But all he said was: "Oh, shucks!" and "Can it!" quite a lot of times, and bent his head so much that you couldn't see the gentle flush of youthful modesty which suffused his boyish cheeks.

"I have but one request to make," said the Ambassador, after he'd told a bright story and handed out a little more soothing syrup—about old Roger, "and I trust that your worthy Head will not deem me avaricious or grasping when I express the hope that he will be graciously pleased to grant the school a whole holiday on Thursday next. That, I feel sure—"

He didn't say any more, because St. Katie's boys were showing their complete approval of his ideas! They clapped and cheered, and indulged in the famous "Ra-ra-ra" and the long shrill whistle which is the hall-mark of their pleasure.

It was a bit of a surprise for old Roger, because he calculated the lads had had a good day, and it would be about time to settle down to work to-morrow. But Thursday!

To-day was Tuesday! Queer how the Ambassador had got to know the one hard day of the week at St. Katie's! Even while he was struggling to weigh it up, but getting a bit fogged because of the row, Roger's eyes fell on the bright faces of the Transitus lads. Two of them were not clapping at all, but were leaning forward and gazing in wonder at a fellow in the



"Sh!" the Kid suddenly hissed, and rose to his feet. For Jolly Roger was standing in the doorway, and was looking curiously at the back of Lincoln's head (See Chapter 3)

Matric. For Jimmy Curtis and Richard Dexter had suddenly realised that every detail of Linky's prophecy was coming true, and it started a lot of queer ideas in their minds!

And there was Lincoln Beck also leaning forward, and the forefinger of his right hand was pushing to one side the tip of his not too handsome nose. It was not a beautiful gesture, but it conveyed, combined with a ten-horse power grin, exactly what it was meant to convey—derisive and scornful yet triumphant amusement!

And into Roger's mind flashed horrible doubts. Surely— But perhaps it was only in connection with the holiday? Anyhow, he was bound to grant that now!

"There will be a whole holiday on Thursday next!" Roger announced when a lull came in the cheering, and the Ambassador had sat down. Whereupon came another splendid exhibition of gladness and joy, expressed by means of the mouth, hands and feet.

One or two more little speeches, and the day's work was done. An hour later practically every visitor had left, and peace and quietness began to fall upon St. Katie's.

Mr. Roger Blunt had shaken many hands and spoken many kind words, and just for a brief space, when all was over, he retired to his study to survey the little pile of souvenirs of this glad day. Photographers had actually sent him swift proofs of the joyous welcome; there were to-day's papers with their preliminary announcements about the affair. To-morrow's papers would doubtless have the Ambassador's speech and a lot of stuff about St. Katie's. Well, the old school was worthy of all the kind things which had been said, and Roger meant that it would be even more so.

Mr. Ruffell, the writing and singing master, entered the study with a little apology. He looked worried, and Roger asked him what his secret sorrow was.

"Well, it is a secret sorrow, sir," Ruffell admitted. "I don't know—I wondered last night. It's worried my conscience all the day, but I think I ought to mention it to you.

Have you got the original registers with McLachan's name in?"

"Yes!" Roger began to hunt round, but for the life of him he couldn't find them. They'd been in his study all day and had been inspected by the visitors with wondering awe. "I'm sorry, Ruffell. I can't lay hands on them at the moment. But here you are! They have had very excellent photographs taken of the page, exactly to size."

"Yes, yes!" Mr. Ruffell examined the photograph. "But this doesn't show—Fact is, sir, and I hate to say it, but I'm convinced that name was put in quite recently—and with a steel pen! It's some chemical preparation which was used—not faded ink. I— Of course, writing, and manuscripts generally, are a hobby of mine, and I'm bound to admit I never suspected—"

"What!" Roger suddenly gasped. "You mean McLachan's name is a forgery? But Ruffell— Why? What purpose—what possible object— For goodness' sake, man, don't publish this fact until you have absolutely definite proof!"

"I know! I know!" Mr. Ruffell was genuinely upset. "But I thought I ought to let you know my belief. Of course, we needn't mention it. If you know where the registers are, I will point out to you exactly what leads me to believe—"

"But they were examined by the American experts!" protested Roger, fighting back the horrible fear in his mind.

"I know. I saw them a dozen times before the least doubt arose in my mind," Mr. Ruffell said. "It was only yesterday afternoon, when I had it under the microscope that I began to wonder and tried the Gunter test. Even now I wouldn't swear—but I wish I could show you."

But, search as they would, they could not find the two registers. It rather looked as though one of the visitors had calmly taken them as a souvenir! Yet that was incredible!

The bright day seemed to be petering out into a very sad affair! Roger suddenly jumped up and made for the door.

"Stay here, Ruffell! I'll be back very

soon!" he said, and disappeared. He headed for Study 7!

In Study 7, Lincoln Beck had been doing the heavy father act on the other lads, and they were getting a bit tired of it, even though he gave them definite proof that on Thursday they could buy up the whole of Dulchester's restaurants at his expense. Linky had had a great day—and a profitable one!

"But tell us truthfully, Linky!" they begged. "How did you know so long beforehand that all this would happen? You didn't fix it in any way, because I saw the jolly old register in Roger's study when the mob went in, and old McLachan's name, a bit faded, but quite clear. I reckon it was just a bit of luck—"

"Luck?" Lincoln grinned. "Dear child! I make luck! That's Lincoln Beck, little one. What about George McLachan? He went to school, didn't he? And if nobody knows where he went, how are they going to find out he didn't come to St. Katie's? I'm proud of St. Katie's, I am, so I just put Georgie's name down—"

"Sh!" The Kid suddenly hissed and rose to his feet. For Jolly Roger was standing in the doorway, and was looking curiously at the back of Lincoln's head!

Linky jumped up, too, when he realised that Roger was in the room!

"Yes, sir!" he bleated, as though he knew already that Roger wanted him.

"Yes, Beck! I wanted to ask you—No! Come with me!" Roger snapped, and Linky followed him from the room.

"Oh, my hat! It's come unstuck!" murmured the Kid as the door closed. "But what a game! Jumping snakes! If Linky really has—My hat!"

Words failed them. Even Jimmy Curtis couldn't imagine the awful end that was awaiting Lincoln. But Washy struggled to smile and bleated his usual hope.

"Trust Linky!" he murmured. "Linky always has the luck!"

"He'll need it, too!" said Jimmy Curtis. "Jove! But if this really is one of Linky's wangles—Gee!"

Inside Jolly Roger's study the game began

quietly enough, which gave Linky a chance to think about things. He was a fighter, was Lincoln Beck, and he wasn't going to throw up the sponge straight away.

But Roger got most of the truth presently, though there was one little item Linky absolutely refused to divulge. That was the name of the person or persons who had altered the register.

"You see, sir," Linky explained, very sorrowfully, "they're all quite certain that McLachan did go to school some time, and it's pretty certain, I expect, that he went to St. Katie's, only there isn't any absolute proof. Well—it's proved now, sir, and nobody can ever disprove it."

It wasn't often Mr. Roger Blunt was in a real fog, but he was to-night. Being the sort of man he was, he wouldn't force Linky to sneak and give away the person who had actually made the addition to the register, especially as in Roger's mind was the idea that it was some of the Americans.

Nor could Linky throw any light on the question of the missing registers, beyond the fact that he hadn't taken them.

For perhaps five minutes there was deep silence in the Head's room. Roger was thinking hard; he wasn't the chap to burk anything, but—would he be wise to start raising doubts again about McLachan? It had been a great day for St. Katie's, but it would all be lost and spoiled if people had the impression that it was a spoof, a trick. No! The best plan would be to let the matter lie quietly for a time, at all events.

"All right, Beck! I won't express any opinion at the moment on your conduct!" Roger snapped out at last. "It may have been a proud day for the school, as you suggest, but I would much rather—However, I will take an early opportunity of talking to you again on the subject. There is just this point, in the meantime: I trust you will refrain from mentioning your part in this unfortunate affair to anyone! You may go!"

"Yes, sir!" said Lincoln, and wandered forth.

Strictly speaking, the story ends there, because nothing more ever happened, so far as the outside world was concerned. The tablet still stands to McLachan, and everybody believes, as they always have done, that McLachan went to St. Katie's.

And they are right! Lincoln's luck absolutely held! For many days after the Big Day, Roger was hunting and turning out old cupboards, ancient records, and queer bundles. There was quite a lot of rubbish of one sort and another stored away at St. Katie's, and every Headmaster who came, generally looked at it in his first enthusiasm, and said:

"Right! I'll have a look at that very soon, and we'll have everything that is valueless destroyed. No use harbouring rubbish!"

But that was all they ever did—till Roger began to sort and examine, and other masters helped him. Actually they discovered a lot of interesting material relating to St. Katie's past. They learned, for instance, that it was when Mr. Keynes became Headmaster that the foundation or charter of the school had been altered. A fairly large number of boys were "attached" to St. Katie's, but on a special register known as "Keynes' House."

Cutting the long search short, the old registers of Keynes' house were discovered. And—Oh, the joyous moment when Roger realised the truth!—George McLachan had been in Keynes' house, and his name was inscribed in these other registers!

No wonder everything had fitted in so beautifully and Lincoln Beck's little joke had gone through so swimmingly. And when Roger grasped all this—what could he say to Lincoln Beck? After all, Linky had only been guilty of "intelligent anticipation," and

probably if he hadn't started fooling about, it never would have been discovered that McLachan had been one of St. Katie's lads!

The other registers were returned by post all right some days afterwards. Strangely enough they had been posted in Dulchester. There's no harm now in telling just what happened, which was that Charlie Challinor managed to come to the school for the celebrations, though not to the unveiling. He went to examine the registers when no one was worrying about an "outsider" being there, and he realised that his chemical preparation was beginning to show! So he just took them away to touch them up a bit before anyone had a chance to get suspicious!

And the lads of Study 7 duly celebrated the Great Splash, prophesied and arranged by Lincoln Beck. Yet it was not till some time afterwards they realised the full truth and how, after all, Lincoln hadn't done anybody any harm—in fact, he'd done quite a lot of good all round to everybody!

But it might have been different! Lincoln's "intelligent anticipation," as Roger called it, might have turned out to be a most horrible practical joke, and Lincoln might have celebrated it by going on the long, lone trail, instead of having a tophole feed with his chums and Charlie Challinor in Dulchester. And Mr. Hustlet and Mr. Mordenfelt might have said a lot of rude things to Linky and the Beck family generally, instead of patting Linky on the head and putting him down for life-membership of their society.

And this story could never have been written—but all's well that ends well! George McLachan went to Katie's—and Lincoln Beck arranged the Big Splash to celebrate it! Well done, Linky!



THE END

When The Stormy Winds Do Blow!

By Dick Penfold.



THE wild West Wind is blowing ;
It booms and roars around,
As if great guns were going—
A terrifying sound !

With fury unabating,
It madly thunders by ;
And hefty slabs of slating
Come crashing from on high !

It's like a fierce tornado ;
It rages and it roars.
But we, with gay bravado,
Refuse to go indoors !

It catches Quelch's " topper "
And whirls it into space ;
A merry voice cries, " Stop her ! "
And there's a thrilling chase !

Old Hacker's best umbrella
Goes soaring to the sky !
What right have they to sell a
Gingham that's learned to fly ?

The elm-trees' leafless branches
Towards the ground are bending,
As if fierce avalanches
Were suddenly descending.

The din is most appalling ;
All sounds it seems to smother,
Though one scared fag is bawling :
" Oh, take me home to Mother ! "

The wild West Wind is blowing,
More than it ever blew !
We don't care if it's snowing ;
We'll stay and see it through !





A Gripping Story of Adventure in the Sahara

By
HOWARD PEASE
and
KNIGHT JESSE

"**I**n the name of Allah, a sou, O wealthy one!" whined the beggar boy, lifting a dirty brown hand supplicatingly.

The Arab merchant gave the boy a disdainful glance.

"May Allah satisfy all thy wants," he replied; and turned away.

Disconsolately, the beggar lad seated himself on a sack of millet. Behind him loomed the great south gate of El Mora, where the twisting street of the Tent-makers' Bazaar ends, and where the caravans outfit for their voyage across the Sahara.

A passing Frenchman, clad in the uniform of the Saharan Desert Patrol, sauntered by.

"In the name of Allah—"

The beggar boy began his chant, but the officer strolled unheeding on his way. Still reiterating his appeal for alms, the boy followed after. Apparently the Frenchman did not heed, but at the door of the coffee-house he suddenly stopped.

"See here, thou son of charity," he said, in Arabic. "Thou art an Arab of some learning. Twice have I heard thee sing in the market-place. Each time thou sang with understanding. Even thou sang an English song. Is that not true?"

The boy nodded.

"Canst thou, then, read Arabic?"

Again the lad bobbed his head.

"Then thou art the lad I need. Come inside, and there will be a sou for thee."

Curiously, the boy obeyed.

Inside the coffee-house, the Frenchman pointed to a large placard on the side-wall.

"My name is Lieutenant Gidel," he said. "I've caused that sign to be printed and posted here, but although I speak Arabic, I do not read with ease. Canst thou tell me exactly what it says, that I may see whether or not my commands have been carried out?"

The boy was silent a moment, then he began to read from the sign in a high, sing-song voice:

"REWARD.—For any information concerning the whereabouts of Major Jordan, noted

exporter of ivory and skins, wealthy landholder, reported missing from his caravan following an attack by marauding Taureg tribes. Information will be held confidential. Apply to

"LIEUTENANT RAOUL GIDEL,
"Saharan Desert Patrol."

As the Frenchman did not reply, the boy ventured:

"Is the notice correct, monsieur?"

"Yes, it is correct." Then, as if musing to himself, he added: "I wonder if I should have put in that he has been gone three months! However, everyone knows that. Here, lad; thy learning is quite remarkable for a beggar boy!"

He tossed the boy a coin and motioned for him to go.

"Wait!" he called.

The boy turned.

"Thou art everywhere. Perhaps thou couldst help us. Hast thou seen anything of a white lad wandering about—a boy of perhaps your own age?" Then, as the beggar boy looked blank: "It's this Major Jordan's son, the son of the man you've been reading about. His name is Phil, and he has lived all his life in Algeria, until this term, when his father sent him to England to school. When the boy heard his father had disappeared, he ran away. The last thing heard of him was that he'd embarked for Africa. I have thought perhaps this would be his destination. If you should bring me news of him, there will be an extra sou for you. Run along now!"

The boy went out into the Market Place. Evening was near. Already deep shadows were invading the arcade square, and candles were being lighted behind grated windows. He stopped at one corner and began to sing. His first song was the "Lament of the Prisoner of Kairouan."

People collected in the square; a circle formed about the little singer. Street children pushed through the group to see who sang so well this melancholy love song. After the melody had died away, the boy collected a few coins. He turned to his listeners, saying:

"Wait, O kind ones, and I will sing for thee now a song of far-away England which I

learned from a traveller! Not many beggar boys can sing a song of England."

"True, true!" echoed the little circle. "Surely this youth is doubly wise for a beggar, for they say that to get to this England one must travel across the great Mediterranean."

"What is thy name, O beggar boy?" shouted someone on the edge of the crowd.

The boy looked up, as though he had been momentarily startled.

"Ali!" he answered quickly; and began to sing his foreign song.

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot
In the days of auld lang syne?"

He began precisely.

"And never brought to mind——"

His clear tenor voice thrilled far out over the house-tops of the Market Place. The Arabs evidently thought the song interesting, although unusual, for they listened incomprehendingly, with many a whispered word of praise or condemnation. Dark forms appeared behind grated windows. Women with veiled faces leaned over from the roofs of the mud-walled houses and gazed unseen at the singer below. Passing camel drivers stopped their beasts while they listened.

Abruptly the prayer call of Muezzin from a near-by mosque fell on the still evening air. Prayer rugs were brought forth and laid in the street where the Mohammedans prostrated themselves, faces toward Mecca. Ali reverently joined the throng of worshippers, repeating in soft tones:

"There is only one God, and Mohammed is His prophet."

Suddenly he started and raised his head in surprise. Above the murmur of prayer in the hushed market-place, he heard a faint voice singing:

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot
In the days of auld lang syne?"

Yes, he had not been mistaken. A distant baritone voice was singing his song. Seemingly the voice came from across the Market Place, somewhere near the shop and home of Hadji Ahmed, wealthy Arab trader.



The prisoner who sang

There was a final murmur, and the prayer was over. Chatter broke out in the Market Place as the Arabs folded their prayer rugs and wended their way to their homes. Ali strolled across the almost deserted street

when the crowd had well dispersed. He took up his stand in front of the great shop of Hadji Ahmed and began singing his "Lament of Kairouan." After that he repeated the words which introduced his favourite song, and began once more to sing the foreign words. He sang it proudly, as if it were a wonderful thing. Into it he put all the fervour of which his voice was capable : carefully he pronounced the strange words. He raised the tones so that they floated out over the market-place, reaching all the Arab homes hidden behind their blank walls and narrow windows.

Again, above the shuffle of passing footsteps, the tinkle of a goat's bell, and the murmur of Arab voices, the answering melody floated back to him. A sign! A sign! Someone who spoke English was singing from Hadji Ahmed's home! His pulses beat wildly as he collected a sou or two, his eyes ever searching the roof of the great house before him.

As the crowd dwindled, he spied a large black Sudanese standing in the merchant's doorway. The black was probably the merchant's servant, who had come to the street attracted by the singing of the beggar boy. At the door Ali lifted his hands supplicatingly.

"Food! Food, O Lucky One!" he whined. "Merely a bite to satisfy my hunger, O Friend from the South!"

The big black grinned sympathetically.

"Willingly would I feed thee, Little Singer," he replied, "but my master would learn of it and have me beaten."

"Not for two days have I eaten," pleaded the boy. "Allow me to return after candle-

lighting time. None shall know that you befriended a beggar."

The black looked cautiously about.

"Return soon, Little Singer," he whispered, "and knock twice on this door."

Raising his voice so that the near-by loiterers should hear, he cried:

"Begone, beggar! Hadji Ahmed likes not beggars at his doorway!"

So saying the Sudanese withdrew and slammed the door shut. Ali slipped away, turning the corner into a narrow, dark street. A few candles gleamed behind jalousied windows; above shone the blue-green of the luminous African night. A burnoused figure scuffled softly past; while from over the housetops came the distant throb of a native tomtom, beating rhythmically its wild strange dance. Night had descended upon the oasis town of El Mora.

When the crescent moon came stealing into the shadowy street of the Milk-Sellers' Market, the boy crept back to the Market Place, and crossed quietly to the house of Hadji Ahmed. He knocked softly twice upon the merchant's door, and eagerly waited. A shuffling came from behind the door, a bolt was drawn, and a deep voice whispered:

"Enter, Little Singer! To-night thou shalt have a feast such as will always make thee remember Salam the Sudanese."

A large hand grasped his, and he was drawn within the house. The door was carefully closed, and the bolt shot into place. He followed the black through a dark passage to an open court, where a candle sputtered fitfully. Noiselessly crossing this they passed under an arcaded veranda to a lighted doorway. Salam drew the boy within the room and closed the door.

"Now for the feast, Little Singer!" cried the black, showing his white teeth in a wide grin. "All is ready!"

On the floor of the bare, whitewashed room Salam had placed a few dishes from which tempting odours emanated.

"This is a couscous such as the master loves," said the Sudanese, pointing to a steaming pot.

Ali proceeded to help himself, for truly he

was hungry. As he squatted on the floor, he chatted with the friendly black.

"Hadjî Ahmed is a good master!" he questioned, sticking his fingers into the steaming mixture.

"Lah! A good master!" cried the black, his face taking on a fierce expression of hate. "He is like a Kaffir! Always does he beat his servants and slaves!"

"Slaves!" exclaimed the boy, looking up quickly.

"Hush, Little Singer! Not so loud! Thou knowest that the French have forbidden the Arabs to hold slaves from the Sudan; but here in the desert towns live many slaves and the French know it not. Some are contented; but me—by Allah! Some day I shall attain my freedom—when my chance comes!"

"Ah, Salam," said Ali quietly, putting his hand on the big black. "You are not the only prisoner in this house!"

The big black's eyes rolled grotesquely.

"Thou art wise, Little Singer," he replied. "If that lazy mud-fish of a master of mine could but hear thee—hush!"

Warningly he raised his hand. The two listened. Approaching footfalls came from the courtyard.

"'Tis my master!" cried Salam. "He is returning from a visit to a great sheik who is encamped without the town walls. Come, Little Singer! Thou must hide!"

The Sudanese quickly scraped

the dishes to one side and rose, leading the boy down a short passage to a darkened room.

"Remain in this store-room until I come for thee," whispered the black. "Thou art safe here."

From behind bales of goods Ali gazed out into the lighted room. He saw the door to the courtyard open and a tall, richly-garbed Arab enter. Ali could hardly repress a shudder as he beheld the merchant's cruel, hawk-like face, out of which his dark eyes gleamed evilly.

"What! Thou piece of a dog's flesh!" cried the merchant angrily to Salam. "Eating at this hour!"

"Only a bite, Arfi-Master," answered the slave meekly.

"Begone then, or, by the Prophet, I shall have thee whipped! To-night I have bigger business on hand!"

Ali heard the big Sudanese shuffle off.



Suddenly the boy started and raised his head. Above the shuffle of passing footsteps came the answering melody. Someone who spoke English was singing from Hadjî Ahmed's home! (See page 222)

Next he heard a key grate in a lock and, turning, beheld a flickering candlelight shining behind a grated window in the wall above his head. From the room came Hadji Ahmed's voice, raised in triumph and contempt.

"Thou white-faced horse with eyes," Hadji said scornfully, "hast thou at last decided to tell me where in El Golea thou hast hidden the ivory?"

Breathlessly Ali waited for the answer.

"Never!" came the reply in Arabic, in the unmistakable tones of a foreigner. "I shall never tell thee, thou Kafir!"

Ali's heart was pounding excitedly as he jumped upon a sack of grain and raised his head cautiously to the small barred window. As he took in the scene before him, he could

barely suppress a cry. A middle-aged Englishman stood near a dirty couch, his foot tied by a heavy chain to a huge ring in the wall. His face was thin and pale as if from weeks of confinement in an unlighted room; yet he faced his captor bravely, defiantly. Surely a man of strength and daring, this trader—Major Jordan!

"Thou shalt die, O White Man!" hissed the merchant. "Thinkest thou that Hadji Ahmed will allow taunts to be thrown at him as if he were a pariah dog?"

"Thou lump of camel's flesh," cried the prisoner biting, "thou dost not dare kill me; for already thou knowest that the Desert Patrol suspect thee and are on thy trail!"

"Thou liest!" Hadji screamed the words in his anger; but his eyes gleamed furtively, frightened.

Ali dropped to the floor and crept down the passage to the room where he had eaten. He was not surprised to see Salam listening at the door of the prisoner's room. The slave was evidently taking a great delight in the duel of words coming from the other side of the door. He lifted a warning to Ali; but the boy drew back to the passageway.

"Salam," he whispered excitedly, "thou hast been waiting for a chance to escape to thy home in the south. Now is thy opportunity at hand! The prisoner in that room is Major Jordan, a wealthy English trader of Algiers. Help me to get him free and I promise thee the protection of the Desert Patrol and a gift of the swiftest riding-camel in El Mora to take thee across the desert."

The black's face was contorted in amazement.

"I thought him a petty trader," he gasped. "Is he truly the great exporter of Algiers?"

"By the Prophet, I swear it is true!" said Ali earnestly. "A swift mehara shall be thine."

"I believe thee, Little Singer," cried the startled black. "To resist destiny is sacrilege. Allah, thou hast spoken!"

The big Sudanese crept back to the room, to the doorway of the prisoner's abode. Angry voices still came from the other room, but the black did not pause. Cautiously, slowly, he swung back the unbolted door.



"Enter, Little Singer!" A large hand grasped Ali's, and he was drawn within the house (See Page 222)



Like a tiger that springs upon its unsuspecting prey, the Sudanese leaped upon the back of the Arab. A cry, a muffled groan, and the two fell to the floor (See this page)

Ali saw that the merchant's back was towards them as he hurled a torrent of epithets at his captive. Major Jordan was facing the door, and he evidently saw them enter, for his face took a mask-like expression as he strove to hide his astonishment. The merchant sensed the danger, for he turned—too late!

Like a tiger that springs upon his unsuspecting prey, the Sudanese slave leaped upon the back of the Arab. A cry, a muffled groan, and the two fell to the floor, writhing in the agony of mortal combat.

The black's hands dug into the Arab's throat until Hadji fell back limp and unconscious.

Slowly Salam arose, and gazed triumphantly down at the huddled form of his master. Already Ali was beside the unconscious Arab, searching. Madly he tore at the cord which bound the waist of the burnous. His fingers trembled so in his excitement that they refused to do his bidding.

"Under him! At his side!" cried the black. Feverishly Ali sought to follow his bidding. He tore aside the burnous and triumphantly held aloft a great bunch of keys.

Turning to the chain that held Major Jordan's leg, Ali hurriedly tried the large key. It would not fit. He seized another. Again failure.

"Hurry!" implored the black

Trying to calm his mind, Ali set to work more carefully to force the first key he had tried into the ancient lock. There was a moment's suspense, then the lock slowly opened. The chain rattled to the floor. Major Jordan was free.

"Come. Run!" After a last glance at the silent but breathing man on the floor, they hurried from the room. Major Jordan closed and securely locked the heavy door behind them. The captor had now become the captive.

In safety they made their way to the courtyard. Ali glanced at his half-eaten meal. How long a time ago that seemed! And yet it was only half an hour! He stopped.

"Hush!" The others came to a stop behind him. "Voices!"

"Servants! Speak, Salam!" whispered Ali. "They know thy voice and will not suspect anything amiss."

The black was chattering in terror, but after several unsuccessful efforts to speak, he managed:

"This way, O visitors! My—my master bids me light thy way with a candle!"

Unmolested, hardly noticed, they crossed the courtyard and entered the passage. At the immense doorway, the black threw the bolts, and slightly opened the door. They were in the dark Market Place. Beneath the arcade they stood breathless.

"Well——" began Major Jordan.

"Thieves! Thieves!" came the cry from

the courtyard behind them. "They have robbed the master. After them!"

"Run for your lives!" cried Ali. He led the way, as they sped as noiselessly as possible across the deserted Market Place. Behind them there was a great commotion. At the entrance to the street of the Tent-makers' Bazaar Ali gave a quick glance over his shoulder. The pursuers were approaching rapidly. He doubled back into a narrow dark alley, closely followed by Salam and Major Jordan. Behind them came the hue and cry.

On they sped. Their pursuers steadily gained upon them. They left the street and came out into the Place de la Republique, where the Saharan Desert Patrol's headquarters were. As they rushed across the square toward the gateway of the compound Ali saw with a flash of despair that the Arabs were almost upon them.

With a crash they hurtled at the gate. It was locked! Then it was that the beggar boy did that which made Major Jordan turn in amazement.

"Open the gate," the boy cried in English. "Major Jordan is outside."

The pursuers were upon them. With their backs to the gate the three fought for their lives. Sticks were out, and knives. The assailants, an even half a dozen, lunged at them again and again.

"The gate," screamed the boy once more. "Open the gate!" After that he was too busy dodging blows to call. The Arabs wielded their clubs with skill. Suddenly when the three had despaired of help and resigned themselves to their fate, the gate gave way behind them and they fell into the compound of the Desert Patrol.

A pistol spat fire, once, again. Silence. The quick sounding of Arab feet. The gate swung shut. The three were face to face with a man in the uniform of the Saharan Desert Patrol, who stood amazedly blinking at them.

"Why, it's Lieutenant Gidel!" cried Ali in English.

"Mon Dieu!" gasped the Frenchman. "Major Jordan! Who, O Beggar Boy, are



With a crash they hurtled at the gate. It was locked! "Open the gate!" the boy cried in English. "Major Jordan is outside! Open the gate!" (See this page)

you to bring back this man whom all of us had mourned as lost! Who are you?"

Ali smiled at the little circle. Abruptly he tore the tattered garments from his chest.

The lieutenant started in amazement.

"Mon Dieu! You are white!" he gasped. Clearly discernible in the flickering candle-light was the boy's white body, a dark line separating it where the face and chest had been stained brown.

"Don't you know me?" he cried, turning to Major Jordan.

The major drew a shaking hand across his dripping brow.

"Know you, you little beggar! Do you suppose I don't know my own son—Phil!"

Later that night as Phil and his father sat with the men in the patrol rest room, Lieutenant Gidel turned to the boy.

"How did it come to your mind to go into the street as a beggar boy?" he asked. The others listened for the boy's answer.

Phil looked around smiling—looked at his father, at Lieutenant Gidel, at Salam, who sat worshipping him from a corner.

"I got the idea in the Hotel du Sahara in

Biskra," the boy replied. "The commandant in Algiers had told me there was no trace of my father. I tell you I was feeling mighty blue! I picked up a book in the hotel library—a book called the 'Life and Death of Richard Cœur de Lion.' He's always been a hero of mine. When I turned the pages one chapter seemed to leap at me. It was all about the imprisonment of Richard in Austria, and the adventures of the troubadour Blondel as he went through the countryside singing the king's favourite song, searching for his hidden prison. One day, underneath the tall grey towers of Gratz, the troubadour heard an answering melody, and a ring dropped at his feet. He had found Richard's prison. I thought that surely if a troubadour could find his king's hidden prison, I could find my father's. Only troubadours are not common in Algeria; so I chose to be a beggar!"

"That lad of yours has brains," said Lieutenant Gidel. "He's carried an idea down through the ages, from a troubadour to a beggar at the gate."

THE END



Forbidden to Fight!

A Splendid Complete Story of
Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's

By MARTIN CLIFFORD

THE FIRST CHAPTER

On the Warpath

"B LESS my soul!"

Mr. Ratcliff uttered that ejaculation in almost horrified tones.

The sour, ill-tempered Housemaster, who ruled the New House of St. Jim's with a rod of iron, had just emerged from his study to find a fierce fight in progress in the passage.

Mr. Ratcliff stopped short in amazement. His hands were raised aloft in pious horror.

Rough-and-tumble fighting was forbidden at St. Jim's, though—like many other forbidden things—it flourished exceedingly. The master who could successfully suppress "scraping" remained to be born.

But this particular "scrap" was a more serious affair than most, for it was taking place within the sacred precincts of Mr. Ratcliff's domain—under the Housemaster's very nose, so to speak.

Kerr of the New House and Blake of the School House were the belligerents. And they were evidently deeply engrossed in their task of pommelling each other; for they had failed to hear Mr. Ratcliff's door open, they had

failed to hear him speak, and they failed to see him standing there, viewing the scene with frowning disfavour.

"Bless my soul!" repeated Mr. Ratcliff.

Biff! Thud! Biff! Thud!

To and fro tramped the combatants, their bodies swaying as they fought. They were breathing heavily, and they had evidently been "going it" for some time, judging by their appearance. Kerr's right eye had temporarily put up the shutters, and Jack Blake's nose was red and swollen through contact with Kerr's knuckles.

"Desist!"

Mr. Ratcliff's voice boomed down the corridor. The fighters heard it—they could hardly help doing so, for it resembled the rumble of thunder—and they lowered their hands to their sides, and stood blinking sheepishly at the Housemaster.

"How dare you?" roared Mr. Ratcliff. "How dare you indulge in a bout of fisticuffs on the very threshold of my study?"

"I—I—" stammered Kerr.

"We—we—" stuttered Blake.

"Your behaviour is no better than that of a pair of hooligans!" stormed Mr. Ratcliff. "You, Kerr, are a member of my House, and

I shall punish you severely. You will write a thousand lines!"

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Kerr. "Might as well make it a million!" he added, under his breath.

"What did you say, Kerr?" demanded Mr. Ratcliff sharply.

"Nothing of any consequence, sir."

The Housemaster gave a snort, and turned to Jack Blake.

"As for you, Blake, I am powerless to deal with you, since you do not come under my jurisdiction. But I will report this unseemly conduct to your Housemaster!"

So saying, Mr. Ratcliff stalked away with rustling gown, leaving Kerr dabbing at his eye with a handkerchief, and Jack Blake caressing his nose.

There was a further shock in store for Mr. Ratcliff. When he emerged into the sunny quadrangle a moment later, it was to find another fight in progress.

Redfern of the New House and Clive of the School House seemed intent upon knocking each other off the face of the earth. They were fighting furiously.

Mr. Ratcliff halted. His frown resembled the frown of Jove of old. There appeared to be quite an epidemic of fighting on this particular afternoon, and Mr. Ratcliff could not understand it. He did not know that it was the eve of the junior footer election, and that the St. Jim's fellows were wildly excited in consequence.

Where there was smoke there was fire, and where there was an election there was fighting. It was a perfectly natural case of cause and effect.

Tom Merry, who had captained the junior eleven the previous season, had put up for re-election, and Figgins of the New House had put up in opposition. The School House stood solid for Tom Merry, the New House swore allegiance to Figgins. And "scrap" between the rival partisans were the order of the day.

This particular "scrap" between Redfern and Clive was quite a lively affair. They were pounding away at each other, no quarter being asked or given. And the most disgraceful part of it, from Mr. Ratcliff's point

of view, was that both Reddy and Clive seemed to be thoroughly enjoying themselves.

"Stop!" thundered the Housemaster. "This is the second unseemly brawl I have encountered within a few moments. It is disgraceful! It is monstrous! Stop! Do you hear me?"

The fight ended as if by magic. And Redfern and Clive exchanged rueful glances, which seemed to say eloquently, "We're in for it now!"

"Redfern?" fumed Mr. Ratcliff.

"Sir?"

"How dare you behave like a young savage?"

"Ahem! We—we were just having a few words, sir——"

"Words?" echoed Mr. Ratcliff. "Then I must say they were very forcibly addressed. You will take a thousand lines, Redfern."

"Whew!"

"As for you, Clive, I shall place a report before Mr. Railton, and request him to punish you severely."

Clive groaned, and Redfern groaned, and then they both groaned in chorus. Mr. Ratcliff left them to their dismal duet, and strode away. It was a half-holiday, and the Housemaster proposed to take an afternoon walk.

Several other fights happened to be going on at that moment; but Mr. Ratcliff, like the homeward-bound prodigal son, was sighted afar off, and the warriors melted away like snow in the sunshine. They were not anxious to come to loggerheads with the sour-visaged Housemaster.

Mr. Ratcliff strode on out of the gates, and wended his way towards the river. He did not anticipate coming upon any more fights. The riverside, he reflected, would be peaceful and serene. The silence would be broken only by the twittering of birds and the gentle lapping of the water.

But Mr. Ratcliff imagined a vain thing. No sooner did he set foot on the towpath than he caught sight of a couple of juniors engaged in a deadly hand-to-hand duel.

As in the previous instances, one of the combatants was a New-House fellow, the other belonged to the School House.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was taking up the cudgels on behalf of Tom Merry, and Edgar Lawrence was fighting for the cause of Figgins.

They didn't see Mr. Ratcliff approaching. They had no eyes for anything but the business in hand.

Arthur Augustus was wildly excited. His arms were revolving like windmills. His coat lay neatly folded on the bank; his shirt-sleeves were rolled back, revealing a pair of slim but wiry arms. He was fighting furiously; but he wasted a good deal of valuable breath by hurling remarks at his opponent.

"How dare you say that Tom Mewwy is a wash-out an' a back numbah?" he panted. "How dare you insinuate that Figgins is the bettah man of the two? Bai Jove! I will administah a feahful thwashin'—"
Biff!

Gussy's flow of eloquence was rudely interrupted by the arrival of Lawrence's fist on his nose.

Arthur Augustus reeled back a pace or two, and Lawrence was quick to follow up his advantage.

In the excitement of the moment Lawrence did not realise that his opponent was being driven rapidly towards the water's edge. He rushed in with a lightning jolt to the jaw, which lifted Arthur Augustus clean off his feet, and precipitated him into the river.

Splash!

"Xawooooop! Gug-gug-gug!"

The swell of St. Jim's disappeared below the surface for a second or two; then he came up spluttering.

Instantly Lawrence plunged to the rescue. He knew that Arthur Augustus was dazed, and might not be able to scramble ashore without assistance. And that assistance was readily forthcoming. Lawrence grasped the floundering Gussy round the middle, and propelled him, with a great effort, to the bank.

"Many thanks, deah boy!" panted Arthur Augustus, his sense of chivalry overcoming

all other considerations. "I'm sowwy I thwashed you just now—"

"Thrashed me?" echoed Lawrence with a laugh. "Why, you duffer—"

He broke off suddenly. His tongue seemed to cleave to the roof of his mouth. For there, standing in the offing, so to speak, was Mr. Ratcliff!

The House-

master was saying something. But in his raging fury he could not speak coherently. The two juniors could only catch the following fragments:

"Disgraceful—degrading—debasing—behaving like barbarians—display of fisticuffs—almost a tragedy—shocking—outrageous!"

Arthur Augustus shook himself like a drenched spaniel.

"I twust, sir," he said, "that you do not imagine that Law'ence delibewately knocked me into the wivah? It was a sheeah accident, sir—"

"Be silent!"—boomed Mr. Ratcliff, re-



"This fighting is disgraceful—it is appalling! I will see that both of you are adequately punished! Follow me!" Lawrence and D'Arcy collected their coats and followed the irate master (See Chap. 1.)

covering the power of coherent speech. "This is the third bout of fisticuffs I have witnessed this afternoon!"

"Pardon me, sir——"

"I will not pardon you, D'Arcy!" hooted Mr. Ratcliff. "It is disgraceful—it is appalling! I will see that both of you are adequately punished! You will return with me at once to the school!"

The Housemaster turned on his heel, and set out with rapid strides along the tow-path.

Lawrence and D'Arcy collected their coats and followed, looking as if they had just participated in a swimming-in-clothes contest.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

The Ban on Fighting.

"SOMETHING'S up!"

Monty Lowther made that pronouncement.

The Terrible Three of the Shell were standing in the school gateway when Mr. Ratcliff arrived with D'Arcy and Lawrence in tow.

It did not need the skill of a Sherlock Holmes to deduce that "something was up." There were storm-signals on Mr. Ratcliff's brow, and there was a wrathful gleam in his eye. He brushed the Terrible Three out of his path as he came stamping through the gateway.

The two drenched juniors came squelching behind him. They were looking very unhappy. Arthur Augustus, usually so immaculate in his appearance, was now a sorry spectacle. His sodden trousers clung limply to his legs, and his hair was like a wet mop. His usually immaculate topper was nothing more or less than a wreck.

"What on earth have you fellows been up to?" asked Tom Merry, in wonder. "Been taking a tub in your clothes?"

"Gwoogh!" gasped Arthur Augustus, with a shiver. "I have had a feahful duckin', deah boys! We were sewappin' on the tow-path, an' Lawrence accidentally knocked me into the wivah!"

"My hat!"

"Old Watty happened to come along, an' he's in a towahin' wage," explained the swell of St. Jim's. "I wathah fancy he's goin' to weport us to the Head."

"Say not so," said Monty Lowther. "Surely fifty lines would meet the case? I dare say you'll have to write out a copybook maxim, something like this: 'Dear children, you should never let your angry passions rise; your little hands were never made to black each other's eyes!'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

By this time Mr. Ratcliff was half-way across the quadrangle. He imagined that D'Arcy and Lawrence were following close on his heels, like a pair of faithful hounds. But when the Housemaster looked round, he was furious to find that the two juniors had lingered down by the gates, chatting to the Terrible Three.

"D'Arcy! Lawrence!" roared Mr. Ratcliff. "How dare you loiter at the gates? Come here immediately!"

Arthur Augustus made a grimace.

"We're in for it, deah boys," he muttered. And he and Lawrence hurriedly joined the impatient Mr. Ratcliff.

It was to the Head's study that the Housemaster led the way. His two victims followed, shedding a trail of water along the corridor.

Mr. Ratcliff tapped on the door, and, in response to the Head's "Come in!" the procession stepped into the sacred apartment.

Doctor Holmes looked up from his papers.

"Bless my soul!" he ejaculated in amazement. "What does this mean, Mr. Ratcliff? How came these boys to be in such a deplorable state?"

"They were fighting and brawling on the river bank, sir," was the reply. "D'Arcy was knocked into the river by Lawrence, who then plunged in to his assistance. I may say, sir, that I have interrupted no fewer than three fights in the course of the afternoon! There appears to be quite an epidemic of hooliganism among the junior boys; and I have brought these young rascals to you, in order that you may make an example of them."

The Head frowned.

"I have myself witnessed several bouts of fisticuffs from my study window," he said. "I must take drastic measures to prevent these unruly disturbances."

"Pway excuse me, sir——"

"Well, D'Arcy?"

"I am afraid you have ovahlooked the fact that there's an election comin' off to-morrow."

"An election?" echoed the Head, in surprise. "What has that to do with the matter?"

"You can't have an election without a certain amount of fighting, sir," chimed in Lawrence.

"Indeed!" said Doctor Holmes drily. "I fail to see why a schoolboy election should be made an occasion for horseplay and hooliganism. You have both behaved abominably!"

The culprits stood silent.

"Mr. Ratcliff has asked me to make an example of you," the Head went on. "But for the fact that you have both suffered immersion in the river, I should cane you. As it is, you will go and change into dry garments at once!"

Arthur Augustus and Lawrence left the study with alacrity. They were thankful to get off so lightly.

But the matter did not end there. Evidently the Head and Mr. Ratcliff had a long "confab" on the subject, for that evening the following announcement appeared on the school notice-board:

"NOTICE!"

"The junior boys have recently been indulging far too freely in fisticuffs, and quite an epidemic of fighting seems to have spread through the school. I am determined that this deplorable state of affairs shall cease forthwith.

"All boys are hereby cautioned to refrain from fighting, no matter what the provocation. Should I receive any more complaints, I will take the drastic step of cancelling the forthcoming boxing tournament.

"(Signed) RICHARD HOLMES,
"Headmaster."

That announcement made quite a stir in the school.

"No more scrapping, by Jove!" said Monty Lowther, surveying the notice. "That's jolly awkward. Personally, I don't believe

in bloodless elections. A footer election's a tame affair, without any black eyes or swollen beaks knocking around."

"Hear, hear!" said Manners. "We've got to thank Ratty for this. Interfering old beast!"

Tom Merry nodded.

"Still, an order's an order, and it's got to be obeyed," he said. "If any fellow's caught striking a blow, the Boxing Tournament will be done in. And that's unthinkable. Confound old Ratty and all his works!"

The Terrible Three felt the situation keenly. The footer election would be shorn of much of its excitement, now that fighting was forbidden. It would be, as Lowther had said, a "bloodless election," and therefore a tame affair.

But the fiat had gone forth, and the Head's decree was like unto the laws of the Medes and Persians. It would have to be obeyed.

Tom Merry and Co. lingered in the hall discussing the situation, when three juniors came swaggering arm-in-arm towards the notice-board. They were Racke and Crooke, the cads of the Shell, and Mellish, the sneak and toady of the Fourth.

The trio halted in front of the notice-board, and read the announcement, and chuckled in great glee.

The news that fighting was forbidden didn't worry Racke and Co. in the least. On the contrary, it was cheering news. It meant that they would be able to "cheek" Tom Merry and Co. openly, without getting knocked down for their pains.

"All fightin' to cease forthwith!" chortled Aubrey Racke. "Good business! What d'you think of it, Tom Merry!"

"Br-r-r!" growled Tom.

"He doesn't seem wildly happy about it," grinned Crooke. "I think we ought to take this opportunity of telling Merry what we think of him. I'll begin, and your fellows can chime in with a chorus of your own!"

Crooke stepped up to Tom Merry, with his hands thrust carelessly into his pockets, and an insolent sneer on his face.

"You're a bumptious bounder!" he said deliberately.

"You're a rank outsider!" added Racke.

"You're a beastly upstart!" chimed in Mellish.

Tom Merry flushed angrily. Instinctively he clenched his fists, and he was about to hurl himself at Racke and Co., regardless of the Head's express commands, when Manners and Lowther seized him and dragged him back.

It was lucky that they did so, for Knox of the Sixth came striding into the hall at that moment.

Tom Merry was no favourite of Knox's, and the prefect would certainly have reported him for fighting, if he had been given the chance.

"Hallo!" What's going on here?" demanded Knox sharply.

"We are!" growled Tom Merry. And the Terrible Three went on, leaving Knox glaring after them.

"We're in for a happy time—I don't think," grumbled Manners. "Now that the no-fighting order has come into force, cads like Racke will be able to cheek us as often as they like. And we shan't be able to lift a finger against a pack of the 'roughs' of the village. 'Gwreat Scott!' gasped D'Arcy. 'It's awful!'"

"Awful isn't the word for it," said Monty Lowther. "It's appalling!"

Tom Merry felt the situation even more acutely than his chums. The cads seemed to make a dead set at him, insulting him in all sorts of ways, secure in the knowledge that he would be powerless to reply to their insults by hitting out straight from the shoulder.

All that evening, Racke and his cronies followed Tom Merry about, passing sneering remarks which goaded him to anger. But Tom was helpless, though he writhed under the taunts of the cads.

The climax came just before bedtime. Tom Merry and Co. went for a sharp sprint in the

quad, as was their custom, and Racke and Crooke and Mellish followed them out of doors. Then they began to chant an election chorus, which Racke had invented:

"If you want to lose each match,

Vote for Merry!

He ought to be in Colney Hatch—

Madman Merry!

If you want the team to suffer,

If you want the game made rougher,

If you want a hopeless duffer,

Vote for Merry!"



A flying figure came tearing down the village street. Hard on his heels came a pack of the "roughs" of the village. "Gwreat Scott!" gasped D'Arcy. "It's old Watty!" (See Chap. 3)

Tom Merry stopped short in his stride. He was furious, and no wonder. To be called a madman, and a rough player, and a hopeless duffer, all in one breath, as it were, was enough to turn a docile lamb into a raging lion.

In that instant Tom Merry "saw red." He forgot the Head's order, forgot everything save the fact that he had been grossly insulted. He rushed at Racke and Co., and this time Manners and Lowther made no attempt to stop him. Indeed, they rushed with him.

The singers, who were half-way through another verse, ceased as if by magic.

"Oh, my hat!" muttered Racke in alarm. "They're defying the Head's orders!"

"Look out!" gasped Mellish.

The Terrible Three came on. They selected a man apiece, and hit out, straight from the shoulder.

Down went Aubrey Racke, with a bump and a roar. Down went Crooke, right on top of him; and Percy Mellish completed the human pyramid.

Tom Merry and Co. paused, panting. And then a harsh voice echoed through the gloom:

"So you have defied the express commands of the Headmaster! You have dared! to resort to fisticuffs, after his stern caution! Very well! I shall report this outrage at once, and request Dr. Holmes to cancel the forthcoming Boxing Tournament!"

Tom Merry and Co. groaned in doleful chorus.

The fat was in the fire now, with a vengeance!

It was Mr. Horace Ratcliff who had come on the scene. Mr. Ratcliff had a habit of springing out of dark corners at unexpected moments. He had sprung out now; and the Terrible Three realised only too well what the consequences would be.

There would be no Boxing Tournament for St. Jim's!

THE THIRD CHAPTER

Mr. Ratcliff's Dilemma

NEXT morning the expected happened. The worst came, to the worst, and the Boxing Tournament was declared "off"—by order of the Head.

An atmosphere of gloom settled over St. Jim's. For the Boxing Tournament was one of the most popular events of the year, and its suspension came as a big blow.

Everybody was furious with Mr. Ratcliff. He had never been a universal favourite, and he was now more unpopular than ever. The Housemaster's ears must have burned that day, for all sorts of uncomplimentary things were said about him.

It was the day of the footer election. And never did an election pass off so quietly.

The juniors assembled in the Common-room that evening, and recorded their votes:

and Tom Merry was re-elected by a big majority.

There was no cheering, no flag-wagging, and no rejoicing. The juniors were feeling too sick about the cancelling of the Boxing Tournament.

"Congwats, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, slipping his hand into Tom Merry's as the fellows trooped out of the Common-room. "I knew you'd get in. I've been doin' quite a lot of canvassin' on your behalf, an' I exercised my tact an' judgment, an' persuaded all the fellahs to vote for you."

Tom Merry smiled. He was not sure that he owed very much to the tact and judgment of Arthur Augustus.

"The question is," said Monty Lowther, "what are we going to do with ourselves for the rest of the evening? Personally, I want cheering up."

"Same here," grunted Mannors. "I'm in the dumps, and the doldrums, and the dark depths of depression."

"And so say all of us," said Jack Blake. "I've never had the 'blues' so badly since I was a new kid."

"What about a feed down at the bunshop?" suggested Tom Merry. "There's still an hour and a half before looking-up."

Arthur Augustus nodded his approval.

"A toppin' ideah, bai Jove!" he said. "Havin' had a fivah fwom my patah this mornin', I shall be pleased to stand treat."

"Good old Gussy!"

Thus it came to pass that the Terrible Three, accompanied by Jack Blake and D'Arcy, sallied forth to the village in the winter dusk. They all wanted cheering up, and a feed at the bunshop seemed the very thing.

Scarcely a word was spoken as they strode along the frosty road. They were thinking of the cancelled Boxing Tournament and of Mr. Ratcliff's tyranny.

The lights of Rylcombe glimmered ahead of them. Presently they swung into the village street—usually a quiet and peaceful thoroughfare.

But it was not quiet now. There was quite a commotion going on.

Tom Merry and Co. stopped short.



The youth at the pump-handle gave it a vicious tug, and a gushing stream of water shot over the New House master. "Help!" screamed Mr. Ratcliff. "Merry! D'Arcy—" "Fighting's forbidden, sir!" said Tom Merry sweetly (See Chapter 3)

"What the thump—" began Blake.

A flying figure came tearing down the village street. Hard on his heels came a pack of the "roughs" of the village, headed by a burly lout named Huggins.

"Gweat Scott!" gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, in amazement. "It's old Watty!"

It was, indeed, Mr. Horace Ratcliff, who was endeavouring to lower the hundred yards' record.

The Housemaster had evidently done something to annoy the village roughs. It was Mr. Ratcliff's chief mission in life to annoy people. If they were St. Jim's fellows that he annoyed, they were unable to hit back; but the louts of the village were under no such restrictions. Mr. Ratcliff was nothing to them. They would cheerfully have ducked him at the village pump. This, in fact, was their intention!

Mr. Ratcliff, his coat-tails flying in the breeze, came rushing on.

The Housemaster was no athlete, and he

was already showing signs of distress. His breath came and went in great gasps; his pace slackened; and the villagers—there were three of them—were gaining rapidly.

Presently they caught up with him, and laid hands on his sacred person without ceremony.

"Oh, my giddy aunt!" murmured Monty Lowther. "Ratty's going through the hoop!"

"He's got these fellows' backs up. I suppose, and they're going to rag him," said Manners. "Do we interfere, Tommy?"

"No, we don't!" said Tom Merry grimly. "Have you forgotten that there's a no-fighting order in force?"

Manners grinned, and the rest of the juniors grinned also. This was an occasion when the no-fighting order would recoil on Mr. Ratcliff's head, and place him in a very awkward dilemma.

In the ordinary way Tom Merry and Co. would have rushed to the rescue; but they

had been forbidden to fight, and they had the law on their side, so to speak.

Mr. Ratcliff was hustled away towards the village pump. He struggled and squirmed in the powerful grasp of his captors, but he could not escape. Then he caught sight of the St. Jim's juniors, and shouted to them.

"Help! Merry! D'Arcy! Blake! Come and rescue me from these ruffians!"

The juniors stood still.

"Help!" repeated Mr. Ratcliff, his voice rising to a scream. "You can see the plight I am in! I am threatened with personal violence! These hooligans intend to immerse me at the pump!"

Still the juniors remained motionless.

The village louts hustled the Housemaster to the pump; and then the burly Huggins removed his coat, and grasped the pump-handle.

"Help! Rescue! Police!" yelled Mr. Ratcliff wildly. "Why do you not hasten to my assistance, Merry?"

"Fighting's forbidden, sir," said Tom Merry quietly.

"But—but this is an exceptional case——"

"The Head's express commands must not be set at defiance, sir," said Tom Merry, quoting Mr. Ratcliff's own words.

The village roughs evidently came to the conclusion that if they waited much longer they would lose their victim. The youth at the pump handle gave it a vicious tug and a gushing stream of water shot over the New House Master's head.

"Help!" screamed Mr. Ratcliff. "Merry! D'Arcy——"

"We are quite powahless to interfere, sir," chimed in Arthur Augustus, "unless——"

"Unless what?" panted the unhappy Housemaster.

"Unless the no-fightin' ordah is rescinded, sir, an' the Boxin' Tournament is permitted to take place. If you would promise to use your influence with the Head, sir, to bring this about, we would willin'ly come to your assistance."

"Yes, rather!" said Jack Blake.

Mr. Ratcliff snorted with fury.

"This is a deliberate attempt to coerce me—to force my hand!" he panted.

The juniors did not deny it. For it was perfectly true. They had Mr. Ratcliff in a cleft stick, and unless he yielded to their terms he would suffer at the village pump.

Huggins began to work the pump-handle, and Mr. Ratcliff's head was again thrust in position under the spout.

Seldom had the Housemaster been in such a dreadful predicament. He felt that he could not face another stream of water. The juniors held the whip-hand, and he would have to give in.

"I—I consent!" he gasped. "Come to my aid, boys, and I will use my influence with Dr. Holmes to permit the Boxing Tournament to be held."

That was good enough for Tom Merry and Co. It was all they wanted.

With one accord they hurled themselves upon the villagers; and Mr. Ratcliff was rescued from the hands of the Philistines.

It was not until after a fierce and furious fight that the villagers were vanquished. It was a case of giants against pigmies; but the pigmies knew how to use their fists, and they won the day at the finish.

Huggins and Co. slunk away from the scene of the combat; and Tom Merry and Co. acted as a bodyguard to Mr. Ratcliff, and escorted that gentleman back to the school.

The Housemaster could easily have broken his promise, and the juniors would have been helpless. But, to do Mr. Ratcliff credit, he kept his word, and requested the Head to allow the Boxing Tournament to stand.

The no-fighting order was also withdrawn. Perhaps the Head realised, as many headmasters have done before him, that it was impossible to stamp out fighting at a public school. Boys would be boys, and so long as fights were fairly fought, it was far better that fellows should settle their differences that way, than by nursing their grievances, and bearing malice towards one another.

There was great rejoicing at St. Jim's when the Head's decision was made known. And the rejoicers-in-chief were Tom Merry and Co., the heroes of the School House.

THE END

BILLY BUNTER'S ANNUAL



THE KIDNAPPER ARRIVES!

"Buck up, Bill!" said the driver hoarsely, "The deadly deed must now be did!" (See the grand story, "IN THE KLUTCH OF THE KIDNAPPER!")



IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN

MY DEAR READERS, — What would THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL be like without — issue of my own ANNUAL inside it? Why, it would be a mere shaddo of itself. There would be an outcry all over the civilised world. All the boys and girls would rise up in wrathful indignation, and cry, "Give us BUNTER! We never weary of him. His kontributions are a dream and a delite!"

Of course, the Editor of THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL realises all this, and he has had the good sense to allow me to publicate another budget of my wonderful wit and wisdom. It is with pride and plezzure that I place it in your hands, and throw it at your feet.

Owing to pressure on my space — as the cannibal said after he had eaten six missionaries off the reel — I can't say all I should like to say, by any means. I should like to tell you what a brilliant and brainy fellow I am; but there! You have only to gaze at my classic features (depicted above) to realise the trooth of that statement. I have been called "The Schoolboys' Pickwick" — and I've got the Dickens of a swelled head in consequence.

I have managed to skwreeze some splendid kontributions out of my plump subb-editors; and Dicky Nugent has also risen to the occasion in grate stile. So I have no doubt you will all vote this isswe of my ANNUAL to be the best, brightest, and brainiest since last year's.

And just let me say that my Weekly appears evvery Toosday in "The Popular." It's just as grate!

Ever your plump pal,
BILLY BUNTER.



TUCKSHOP TOPPICKS

By BAGGY TRIMBLE

Have you heard the latest konnundrum, dear readers? Why is a London 'bus like a cannibal?

Bekawse it is often "full inside."

Personally, I have always been fond of feeds. As a youngster, I had some happy times. When I went to bed, my mater used to give the candle a good "blow-out," and then give me a good "tuck-in."

DAME MARTHA TAGGLES keeps the tuckshop at St. Jim's. I don't wish to be ungallant towards a member of the fair sex, but I konsider Dame Taggles is a hartless hussy! Whenever I ask her to supply me with a feed on credit, she coldly replies, "This is a tuckshop, Master Trimble, not a 'tick'-shop!"

I wish my wealthy relations would send me more "dough." Then I should be able to make profitable investments in "dough" nuts!

I sent Billy Bunter an Ode to a Jam-tart, for publicashun in his ANNUAL. It konnaenced:

"Succulent, stickey jam-tart,
What raperher and bliss you impart!"

But, alas! Bunter threw my brilliant ode into the W.P.B., which means "Wasteful Proceeding, Billy!"

Do you know, dear readers, why it is that I never feel the cold in winter-time? It isn't bekawse of my sooperficious covering of flesh, but bekawse I have such a splendid 'eating apparatus!



MYSELF!

By SAMMY BUNTER

Billy's an editor, brave and bold,
And I'm his valiant "sub."
I sweep his room with a long-haired broom,

And sometimes sneak his grub,
Jolly jam tarts, so sweet and jammy.
These are dear to the heart of
Sammy!

Billy's a champion gorgier, boys,
And I'm his next-of-kin;
I thrive on tuck, when I've the luck
To have sufficient "tin."
Perched on the tuckshop stool you'll
find me,
With cakes before me and behind
me!

Billy possesses a C3 brain,
He ranks with the densest dut-
fers;
And when addressed with the lash-
ing cane
He squirms, and squeals—and
But I've a brain that I wouldn't
swoop
For all the tarts in the school tuck-
shop!

Billy's a big as a huge balloon,
His figure is plump and portly;
But I am slim, and lithe of limb,
And my ways are polished and
courtly.
Billy is stuffed with self-conceit,
But for modesty—well, I'm hard to
beat!

Billy's the boss, and I'm the "sub,"
It's hardly right and proper;
But one fine day, I'm pleased to say
He'll come a fearful cropper.
When that day dawns, then "yours
sincerely"
Will edit "SAMMY BUNTER'S
YEARLY"

IN THE KLUTCH OF THE KIDNAPPER!



By Dicky Nugent

Boom! It was the first stroke of midnight, tinkling from the old clock-tower of St. Sam's.

A silence, as of some brooding fate, hovered over the old school. No sound could be heard save the wailing of the wind, the sobbing of the breeze, and the moaning of the gentle reeds.

But stay! What was that purring sound, from the direction of the school gates? Could it be the purring of the porter's cat? Nay, it was the purring of an automobile!

The car came creeping to a halt under the shadow of the school wall. The lights were distinguished, and then a sinister-looking skoundrel stepped out of the car. He was a slim, stout, clean-shaven man, with a flowing beard. A scar ran down his cheek—so did several drops of perspiration, for he was very hot and flustered. In his large and sinewy hand he held something which glittered in the moonlight. It was a revolver!

The driver of the car remained in his seat. He looked just as dejected a skoundrel as the man who had stepped out of the car.

"Buck up, Bill!" he said in a horse whisper. "The deadly deed must now be did! Go and collar that wealthy young brai, and we will take him away to a safe place, and hold him to ransom. His form-master, Mr. Trayter, will show you when he sleeps. You ought not to have any trouble. Everything will go without a hitch—as the Surrey kaplin said when he was without his bowler."

The sinister-looking man nodded and disappeared into the darkness. On reaching the school gates, he found somebody waiting for him on the other side.

"That you, Mr. Trayter?" he asked.

"Yes," came the muttered reply. "I will unlock the gates, and let you in, and then the way will

be clear for you to carry out your kidnapping stunt."

A key grated in the lock, and the heavy gates were swung open. Then Mr. Trayter escorted Bill the kidnapper to the Fourth Form dormitory.

"Young Luker sleeps in the end bed, near the fireplace," he whispered. "He is only a frail youth, and you will have no difficulty in picking him up bodily and carrying him to the car. But, first of all, you must pay me the bribe you promised me, for helping you in this matter."

Bill groped in his trousers pockets, and a small silver coin changed hands. Then the treacherous Mr. Trayter stole away to his own quarters.

Bill the kidnapper crept into the dormitory as tiptoe. He made his way to the end bed.

Luker, as his name suggested, was simply rolling in riches. He had no father or mother, and was therefore an orphan; but he had a very rich maiden aunt—Miss Milly O'Nair—who kept him well supplied with pocket munny. It was rumoured that he got a whole shilling a week!

Bill bent over the bed, and gathered the slumbering occupant into his arms. But he had got the wrong pig by the ear, so to speak. Luker had changed beds that night with Jack Jolly, the kaplin of the Fourth; and it was Jack who nestled in the arms of the kidnapper!

Instantly he awoke, and dashed his fist into the dark, sinister face above him.

Bill dropped his yewman burden, and staggered back with a wild yell. This aroused Jack Jolly's elums, Merry and Bright, and with one accord they leapt out of bed and hurled themselves upon the dastardly kidnapper.

"Sit on him, boys!" panted Jack Jolly. "He came here to

kidnap young Luker—I'm certain of that. I've always warned Luker not to keep his munny under his pillow. He's got at least one-and-fourpence there, to my certain nollidge!"

"How did this kidnapper find his way to the dorm?" asked Merry. "Somebody inside the school must have helped him. There's a trayter in the camp!"

"You! It's Mr. Trayter!" whispered Bill, who lay proveling on the floor, with the juniors sprawling on top of him.

"My hat! Fancy our own form-master being hand in glove with this villain!" cried Jack Jolly. "Go and telephone for the police, somebody!"

"Merry, young gents!" pleaded Bill.

"Merry?" echoed Jack Jolly scornfully. "What merry would you have shown to young Luker, if you had got him into your klutches? Bah! Prate not to me of merry! We're going to sit on you till the police come. Ah, would you?" added Jack, as the ruffian wrenched his arm free, and whipped out his revolver, and fired with a sickening thud.

The bullet passed harmlessly through the body of Binks major, who was standing near. He just larfed and asked who was tickling him.

Jack Jolly wrenched the revolver from Bill's grasp; and the juniors sat on their quarry until the police arrived.

Bill was given over into eusterdy, and then Jack Jolly & Co. hurried off in search of Mr. Trayter. But that sneaky, stethly, snake in the grass had heard the revolver-shot, and fled in pannick from the school.

In dew course, Bill and his raskally confederate, the driver of the car, were sentenced to reneave twelve months' hard labor, and a jenners application of the catter-nine-baler.

THE END



OUR GALLERY OF CHAMPIONS!

By Frank Nugent



The list of Remove champions which appears below has been decided by ballot.

The whole Form met together to put the matter to the vote, and the result is very interesting.

I must point out, however, you must not take these fellows to be the permanent champions. Their colours are likely to be lowered at any time. Still it is very interesting to see who are the accepted champions at the moment.

I have included as many forms of sport as possible, and have also given the names of the runners-up, where it has been found possible to do so.

SPORT	CHAMPION	RUNNER-UP
FOOTBALL	H. Vernon Smith ..	(Voters cannot decide.)
CRICKET	Harry Wharton ..	Hurree Singh
RUNNING.		
100 yards	Archib Howell ..	Frank Nugent
Quarter Mile	Peter Todd ..	Bob Cherry
Mile	Harry Wharton ..	H. Vernon Smith
Marathon	Mark Linley ..	Harry Wharton
High Jump	Frank Nugent ..	Archib Howell
Long Jump	Bob Cherry ..	Tom Brown
Cricket Ball	Johnny Bull ..	George Bulstrode
Boxing	Bob Cherry ..	Dick Russell
Wrestling	Peter Todd ..	David Morgan
Rifle Shooting	Peter Todd ..	S. Q. I. Field
Swimming	Mark Linley ..	Harry Wharton
Diving	Frank Nugent ..	Peter Todd
Water Polo	Bob Cherry ..	Micky Desmond
Cycling	Tom Brown ..	S. Q. I. Field
Walking	Mark Linley ..	Dick Penfold
Sculling	Johnny Bull ..	Tom Redwing
Gymnastics	Oliver Kipps ..	Wun Lung
Tug-of-war	Johnny Bull ..	Billy Bunter
Chess	Hurree Singh ..	Peter Todd
Ping-pong	Wun Lung ..	William Wibley
Table Football	Bob Cherry ..	Dick Penfold
Race to the tuckshop ..	Billy Bunter ..	(Nobody else within a mile of Bunter.)

I might mention that each year the governors of Greyfriars present a silver cup to the best athlete in each form. The present holder, so far as the Remove is concerned, is Bob Cherry. But the next great sports meeting is now nearly due, and when it comes off I have no doubt that the above list of champions will experience many alterations.

Will Bob Cherry retain his proud title of Champion of the Remove? This remains to be seen.

THINGS WE WANT TO KNOW!



By JIMMY SILVER

DOES Billy Bunter's "ANNUAL" refer to his yearly bath?

IS it true that Bunter pays his sub-editors fourpence-halfpenny a week, and then deducts fourpence for health insurance?

IS Baggy Trimble growing tired of ginger-beer? If so, we may expect a dire calamity, for Baggy will be "going off 'pop'."

IF Trimble won six eating contests last term, then how many did Fatty Wynn? (There will be no prize for the solution.)

IS the aforesaid Fatty a millionaire yet? If so, for when he keeps goal for the St. Jim's junior eleven he is constantly "saving."

WHY is Tubby Muffin like a fountain-pen? Is it because he is a "self-filler"?

WHY does Tupper, the Rookwood page-boy, consider he is over-worked? Perhaps he doesn't think it fair that Rookwood should have only one "page," when there are three-hundred-and-sixty in "THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL."

WHEN will the end of the world come? In other words, when will Billy Bunter's celebrated postal-order arrive?

HOW much will Bunter pay me for this contribution? (You will get nicks, you cheeky bouncer! I have never been so consulted in my life!—Ed.)

WHETHER Harry Wharton and Billy Bunter will think it worth while to pay us not to bring out "Rookwood's Own" in competition with their rags?

A FAMOUS QUINTET !



To face page 240

THE EDITORIAL STAFF OF "BILLY BUNTER'S ANNUAL"!

WHEN I AM EDITOR!



THE title of this article may seem a bitumptuous, but I am firmly convinced that I shall become an Editor one of these days. What's more, I shall edit "THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL."

My Uncle Bob sent me a penknife the other day. I don't know if he expected me to carve out my career with it! Anyway, I've told Uncle Bob that my burning ambition is to become a fool-blown Editor, with a sweet of office in Fleet Street.

At present I am in rather a rut—as the roadhog said when his car overturned. I'm a sub-editor on the staff of "BILLY BUNTER'S WEEKLY," and if anything ever happened to Billy, I should probably step into his shoes, and my ample form would fill the editorial chair. But I'm afraid there is no chance of anything happening to Bunter. He's too young to retire on a pension; he's too fat to fade away; and he's too fond of his job to want to resign. So, you see, I have no scope for self-advancement just yet.

But the day will dawn when I shall blossom forth into a real, live Editor. After editing such periodicals as "THE TUCKSHOP TIMES," and "GRUB," and "THE FOODHOG'S FORT NIGHTLY," I shall be offered the editorship of "THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL"—and I shall jump at it!

When I get this coveted job I shall make sweeping changes in the policy of the ANNUAL. In the first place, I shall fill it with my own stuff, as well as drawing all the illustrations myself. (You didn't know I was a clever artist as well as a talented journalist, did you?)

Keep a look-out for "THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL," which will appear in 1950, or thereabouts. It will be packed with pirate stories, and Redskin stories, and thrilling yarns of mystery and horror—all from the pen of the most famous fat boy who ever flurried—Myself, to wit!

H.A.



Report of a Sensitive Case

A YELLOW-SKINNED youth of Chinese extraction, answering to the name of Wun Lung, was swung into the dock by his pugilist.

Magistrate: No velly solly to see you in the docket, my young friend. (Laughter.) What have you been up to—running an opium den?

Mr. Robert Cherry, K.C.: Your worship ought to be well-acquainted



with the prisoner's offence. He struck you the other day with malice aforethought.

Magistrate: You don't say so? I thought it was with a snowball! (Laughter.)

Mr. Cherry: He struck you on your worshipful chin, and your worshipful yells rang through the Close!

Magistrate: Be careful, my worshipful chump! (Laughter.) Now, Wun Lung, what have you got to say for yourself?

Prisoner: No no savvy. Magistrate! You admit throwing a snowball at me?

Prisoner: I threw it at Bob Chelly, and hit your worship instead.

Mr. Cherry: You young villain! I'll jolly well serag you for shying snowballs at me!

Magistrate: Shush! No dignified counsel should use the term

"serag," "Spifficate," or "pulverise," are much superior. (Laughter.)

Detective-Inspector Penfold gave evidence of the offence: Your worship's chin was struck by the snowball, and it burst.

Magistrate: I have no recollection of my chin bursting! (Laughter.)

Witness: It was the snowball that burst, your worship. I witnessed the whole incident.

Magistrate: Then why didn't you arrest the prisoner immediately?

Witness: I was too helpless with laughter, your worship. You see, at the time, your worship looked such an awful ass! (Laughter.)

Magistrate (sternly): Be silent, sir, or I shall report you to the chief of Jotland Yard, and request him to suspend your wages for a month!

His worship then summed up, and after a brief retirement the jury found prisoner guilty, under great provocation.

Magistrate: What do you mean by that?

Foreman of the Jury: Well, your face was such a tempting target, your worship, that prisoner simply couldn't resist buzzing a snowball at it! (Laughter.)

Prisoner was sentenced to be suspended by his pigtail from the ceiling, and pelted with missiles by the members of the jury.

Foreman of the Jury: Prisoner is in too weak a state to stand such treatment, your worship.

Magistrate: Why?

Foreman of the Jury: Because he's only Wun Lung. (Loud laughter.)

In view of the foreman's protest the sentence was altered to a fine of fourpence.

REPORT IN BRIEF.

A prefect named Charlie Tremaine was charged with inflicting much pain

On Bunter who wriggled: The magistrate giggled, And urged him to do it again!



What A Life!

By

A Special Interviewer



WHEN I called upon the skipper of the Shell, I couldn't help cackling.

Hobson was lying limply in the armchair, and his appearance suggested that he had either been wrestling with a lawn mower or trying conclusions with an earthquake. His face was adorned with strapping plaster; his nose was twice its normal size; and he blinked at me with his one sound eye.

"Buzz off!" he snarled. "And shut the door after you!"

I stayed where I was. "Pardon me if the question savours of impertinence," I said, "but what have you been doing to your face?"

Hobson snorted.

"I've been scrapping with Coker of the Fifth!" he growled.

"And he licked you?"

"Well, I shouldn't be patched up like this if he hadn't!"

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself!" I said sternly. "Fancy

a great burly lout like you allowing Coker to dust the floor with you! Why, you ought to have knocked him into the middle of next week!"

"Get out!"

"You call yourself skipper of the Shell," I said scornfully, "and yet you allow an alien from another Form to bash you about like this! Where's your pride, man?"

A dangerous gleam came into Hobson's one sound eye, but I assured myself that he was too badly crooked to do any damage.

"I shall inform the readers of the ANNUAL that you're a chicken-hearted chump!" I went on. "I shall tell them that you allowed yourself to be pulverised by an ass like Coker! How you came to let him lick you I can't imagine."

"Would you like me to show you exactly how it happened?" asked Hobson.

"Yes, do!" I said, without weighing his question.

Whereupon, Hobson rose from the armchair, and advanced towards

me with clenched fists. I backed away in alarm.

"First of all," said Hobson grimly, "Coker dotted me on the nose—like this!"

"Ow!"

"Then he gave me one in the eye—like this!"

"Ow!"

"After which, he lifted me off my feet with a powerful upper-cut—like this!"

"Yaroooooh!"

I went crashing to the floor, and my napper got mixed up with the fire-guard.

"So now you know how it was done!" said Hobson, with a fiendish grin. "And you can tell your gentle readers exactly what happened."

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

Hobson then heaved me up by the scruff of my neck, and advanced towards the door. And I, owing to circumstances over which I had no control, accompanied him!



I HAVE a particularly pathetic incident to relate.

Wingate, the kaplin of Greyfriars, came to my study in grate distress. His cheeks were moist with unshed tears.

"Bunter," he said. "I here you kept gale last week for the Remove, in the match with St. Jim's."

"Yore ears have not deserved you," I replied.

"I am told that you didn't let a single shott go threw!"

"You have bean korrekctly informed," I said. (I did not add that not once during the match did a single shott come my way!)

"Then," said Wingate, dropping on his knees, and holding out his hands in supplication, "will you do me the onner of turning out for the 1st eleven?"

I hesitated.

"I implore you!" said Wingate,

A Football Tragedy!

By Billy Bunter



and two big tears splashed on to his tie-pin. "Our reggular goalie is down-with hoops and kofi, and unless you consent to take his place, and fill the breech—"

"Fill the foot-bawl shorts, you mean?" I interjeckted.

"That's it! Unless you konsent to do that, we shall be wacked to the wide!"

After further discussion, I agreed to play; and Wingate sent my meazurements to the Courtfield tailor, so that a speshul jersey could be maid for me.

The match was against Topham—a team which had been going so strong that nobody could s-Topham. (Dissemring readers will observe the pun!)

Of course, Wharton and the others were very jellus of me as I took my stand in the Greyfriars goal.

From the kick-off rite up to th final wissel, the Topham forewords bombardred me with shotts. But I was allways ekwal to the okkashun. Sumtimes I stopped the bawl with my fists, sumtimes with my feet, and sumtimes with my noze; but I always stopped it. I played the game of my life; and when it was all over, and I clung to the goal-post, pumping in breth, I saw Wingate coming towards me. He raised his hand aloft, for the purruss of clapping me on the back. And then—

Whack, whack, whack!

"How dare you go to sleep in class, Bunter," roared Mr. Queleh.

And his poynter rose and fell with monnoterus regularity.

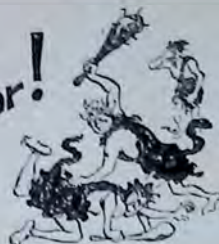
Alass, deer readers! I had been dreaming in the Form-room, during mourning lessons.

And my awakening was rood!



Coker's Earliest Ancestor!

By Peter Todd



WHEN I dropped in to chat with Coker about his ancestors, he was tremendously bucked. Coker loves talking about family trees and genealogical tables, especially when those trees and tables happen to be connected with himself.

Of course, I didn't expect Coker's earliest ancestor to be plain John Brown, or Ted Smith, or Tim Coker. That it would be some mighty man of brawn and muscle I felt certain.

"My earliest ancestor of whom I have any reliable knowledge," said Coker, "was Strongbow."

"You don't mean Robin Hood's pal?" I inquired.

"Oh, no. He lived long before Robin Hood's time. Matter of fact, he flourished in the Stone Age."

"Was he a giant?"

"Yes, rather! If he was in this study now his napper would bump against the ceiling. I can't give you his actual height, but he'd nearly come up to the top of a lamp-post."

"My hat!"

"He would be able to get from Greyfriars to Friaridale in a couple of strides," Coker went on. "He was such a mighty man that Shakespeare mentions him in his works. Haven't you heard the phrase:

'He doth bestride the narrow world like a Colossus'?"

THE FIRST



"Yes—but that was written of Julius Caesar!"

Coker flushed crimson.

"Are you sure of that, young Todd?"

"Certain!"

"Then I must be mistaken," said Coker reluctantly. "But you can take it from me that Caesar was an insignificant little puppy compared with Strongbow."

"Hm! But how do you know that you are descended from this Strongbow?"

"I can prove it," said Coker excitedly. "When Strongbow was in the prime of life he married the fair damsel who used to put coke on his fire. She was known as a 'Coker.' Having no surname of his own, Strongbow adopted her name on marriage."

"How many children did they have?"

"Four little Cokers, and three little Colerosses."

"Great Scott!"

"The family tree can then be traced right down through the generations," said Coker. "I'm the very latest member of the Strongbow tribe. Of course, I'm not so tall as my earliest ancestor—but I'm still growing!" Coker added hopefully. "Before I leave Greyfriars I shall expect my head to touch the ceiling."

"Then you'll have to borrow a pair of steps!" I said drily. "But tell me something of this man Strongbow. Where was he born?"

"In Scotland."

"Then why wasn't his name MacStrongbow?"

"Ass!" said Coker witheringly. "Not everyone who happens to be born in Scotland is a Mac. And by that same token, not everyone born in Ireland is a Pat, any more than everyone born in Wales is a Taffy."

"It strikes me very forcibly, Coker," I said, "that you're a Scotsman, and that you've been hiding your nationality under a bushel all this time. I believe your real name is Angus MacCoker."

"Help!"

"In what part of Scotland was Strongbow born?"

"In Glasgow. Of course, in those days Glasgow was a small fishing village on the Clyde. Rather than stay in a dead-and-alive hole like that, Strongbow came south. He fought for England at the Battle of Hastings."

"But the Battle of Hastings took place long after the Stone Age!" I protested.

Coker again flushed crimson. I had fairly cornered him, but he managed to wriggle out of it by saying that Strongbow, though born in the Stone Age, lived several hundred years.

"I believe he was a doddering old jossar of about eight hundred when he died," said Coker. "In ancient days, you must remember people lived much longer than they do now. Look at Methuselah!"

"Do you seriously mean to tell me that Strongbow took part in a battle when he was hundreds of years old?" I exclaimed.

"Ahem! He—he didn't take an active part," stammered Coker. "He sat in his chariot and directed operations. It was due entirely to his generalship that England won."

"But England didn't win!"

"D-d-didn't they?" stammered Coker stupidly. "I-I thought—"

"You'd better take lessons in

AND — THE FOREMOST



history, old chap!" I said, with a smile. "You've got your facts all wrong."

"I must have been mistaken as to which battle it was," said Coker. "Now I come to think of it, it was the Battle of Waterloo."

"Worse and worse! Waterloo wasn't fought until 1815. You're not going to tell me that this wonderful ancestor of yours lived all that time!"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Coker, who by this time had got hopelessly in the mire. "Wasn't there a previous Battle of Waterloo, fought in the Stone Age?"

"Not to my knowledge. Look here, Coker, I don't believe a word you say about Strongbow. You've merely been trying to make an impression."

Coker rose angrily to his feet.

"I can show you my family tree!" he exclaimed.

"Drawn up by yourself, of course? That proves nothing. My own belief is that your earliest ancestor was an orang-outang!"

This enraged Coker so much that he snatched up a cricket stump and chased me from the study.

"You cheeky young brat!" he hooted. "Take that—and that—and that!"

Fortunately the door-post took them—not me. I was through the doorway and along the passage like a streak of light. And Coker a blows, instead of raining upon my shoulders, rained upon the door-post, which was able to stand the punishment better than I could have done.

Fear old Coker! His story of Strongbow cuts no ice with me. Dost see any green in my eye, Brother Horace? Nay, sire!

When Coker Owns a Car!



It is rumoured that Horace Coker's indulgent Aunt Judy has promised to present him with a speedy car of his own. Judging from the way he handles his motor-cycle, this is what will probably happen when Coker goes out in his car.

Billy Bunter Among the Pots—and Pans!



It is one of Billy Bunter's chief ambitions to be a great chef, and this picture is one that often presents itself to his lively imagination. There is no doubt that he would allow himself generous "snacks" from the good things he prepared!



UNDER THE FALLS.

A Thrilling Complete Story of Adventure in Africa By M. WYNNE

THE FIRST CHAPTER A Perilous Quest

"It is Cedric!" shouted Rex to Tom, waving his arm, whilst at the same time he made towards the farmhouse which stood there on the fringe of the veldt, backed by the massed trees of an African forest.

It was a lonely spot, this Ten-Tree Farm, but neither the young Gostolds nor their father had ever regretted paying no heed to the warnings of more cautious friends. There were no womenfolk to grow anxious for, since the lads' sisters were in England and their mother was dead. Ten-Tree Farm was a bachelor stronghold, where work kept the men—barring only the Kaffirs—busy from dawn to dark.

As Rex reached the cactus hedge, a boy of about fifteen reined up his sturdy Cape pony on the opposite side.

No need to ask what sort of a message this visitor brought. Both Rex and Tom recognised a summons for help, and were round in a trice.

Cedric Walden was the only child of a zealous missionary who had been living in a native kraal some ten miles' journey through the forest. A dangerous dwelling-place, in spite of the fact that the natives had seemed devoted to their teacher.

Perspiration poured down young Cedric's face; he looked dazed.

"It's my dad," he muttered. "I was away with two of the natives at the time. A tribe of the Wazari fell on the kraal. They—they took no prisoners excepting my father. We heard from Lomboli, the herdsman, who had hidden in a tree. Oh, it is terrible, terrible! Lomboli says they cried aloud that they

would take the white wizard and prove his skill. My father did all he could for his people. It was his courage which made the Wazari call him 'wizard.' And now they have taken him away. No one knows where the kraal of the Wazari lies. I came here to ask your father to help me. We must find my dad. We must!"

Rex and Tom had gone pale under their tan. It was a ghastly story, and how could they echo the warning which Mr. Walden had so constantly turned a deaf ear to!

"Dad is away," said Rex; "but come right in and get food. Then we'll saddle up and ride out to the kraal. We must find some trace. Sure, Cedric, we'll do all we can."

The younger lad nodded.

"I knew you would," he replied. "And, oh, we shall find him! He's so splendid, so brave. He can't be taken away to be killed and tortured. He knew something of these Wazari. He had helped a party of them once long ago. I remember he told me they were fine fellows."

Ching Li, the Chinese cook, was not long in preparing a meal, but he raised his hands in horror when he heard his young masters were riding into the forest.

"My baas very much disturbed, think no good his sons leave trust," he declared with wily significance.

Rex shook his head.

"There are dangers which your master would say were rightly faced," he retorted. "You give him this note, Ching, and he will understand. Now, Tom——"

But Tom had already gone out to help saddle up. Young Walden did not say much, but his eyes were grateful.

Through a weird tangle of forest paths they rode in silence, each mile stretching out to the length of two. The howling of wild beasts, the chatter of apes, even the hiss of some unseen serpent, made strange music for them; but after all they had become accustomed to such sounds, and were well armed.

"To the right," said Cedric hoarsely. "The kraal is burned, but—but most of the natives have fled. There will be plenty who have come back to tell us all they know, but——"

"Look!" said Tom, reining back his pony

and pointing to the left where the path branched.

The others leaned forward. The undergrowth had parted, and a hideously be-daubed face peered out. A native warrior crept out into the open.

Cedric gave a gasp of horror.

"Wazari," he muttered. "Are they returning?"

"The man is badly wounded," replied Rex. "See, he has fallen. Seems to be dying. We can't leave him without a drink of water."

And, dismounting, he hurried back to the prostrate native's side.

Pity took the place of fear as the lads gathered round, but it was at Cedric the savage looked.

"Yoh, mena—wali?" he whispered.

Cedric bent low, the man evidently wished to speak, but his words came spasmodically with long pauses. But Cedric seemed to understand, and his lean, boyish face grew grim and tense as he bent lower.

"Give him water," he called to Tom, "he cannot speak, and he must, he must, he must."

They raised the warrior's head and he drank feverishly, then again spoke, groping now about his neck. A queer "amulet" of twisted hair and ivory hung there.

"Zakila," Rex and Tom heard him repeat. "Zakila."

With an effort he snapped the thin chain and dropped the amulet into Cedric's hand, then with a long sigh sank limp.

"He is dead," said Cedric, "but he has done his best. He is Mungo the warrior. My father knew him. He converted him to Christianity, but Mungo feared Akolo the witch-doctor, and dared say nothing except to his wife Zakila. They hoped one day to go away alone into the forest. Then the word came for the impi to go out against the kraal of the Kubosi, and Mungo came. He knew my father lived there. He wished to save him. Akolo called him the white wizard. It was Akolo who killed Mungo, who tried to save my father. Now—now he—my father—has been taken to the stronghold of the Wazari."

Rex mopped the sweat from his brow. "I thought no one knew where their stronghold was?" he replied.

"That's right, no one knows. But Mungo has told me. The entrance is *under the falls*."

"Under the falls? What in the world—"

Cedric looked excitedly from one to the other of his companions.

"Do you know the Galiki Falls?" he asked. "They are some twenty miles away, through the forest. The Wazari came in canoes down the river. Mungo says we shall find his canoe amongst some trees. He has told me where. The falls rush down over a sandstone cliff more than a hundred feet high. Behind the waters there is a cave leading into a series of caves which run underground for miles. That is where my father is. And I am going to rescue him from that fiend Akolo."

"Say!" urged Tom in his slow way. "But it's not possible. Even if we got under the falls, it would be going into a nest of hornets. An army couldn't carry on against the odds."

"That's true," agreed Cedric, "*but see can*. I've got this amulet, and if we find Zakila, she will help us."

"If we find Zakila," echoed Rex.

Cedric was studying the amulet.

"She waits in the cave of the falls at the hour of sunset," he replied. "That is where she and her husband stood to pray. They went secretly in fear of Akolo, who is the cleverest of witch doctors, and is terrified of his power being usurped."

"And so we shall find Zakila," said Tom. "And she will help us. It's good enough. We'll come."

"Sure!" agreed Rex—but he was equally sure that quest would be the last they ever went on. Yet he did not flinch, but set his jaw squarely. You reckon he and Tom, as well as Cedric, had been learning the Scout motto for years past. And now they were putting it into practice. "Be prepared!"

It needed some tussle, however, with those queer thrills which spell fear, but need never spell coward, when the next day they stood together, looking across to where Galiki Falls came roaring down like the bellowing of a

monster herd of elephants. They had found Mungo's canoe and left it moored in calm water lower down. Around the falls the river raced and whirled like mad.

It wasn't going to be a very pleasant dive through the white sheet of spume. And if there were no sheltering cave beyond—if they fell short by half a foot from their goal, it meant swift and certain death.

Leisurely, Tom stripped to his shirt.

Rex smiled grimly. Tom, old slow coach as he was, generally managed to be there first with his joke.

Cedric was heaving a great stone over their wardrobes.

"I guess we'd better take off from that rock," he remarked, and tried gallantly but vainly to speak as if they were taking a header from the Cape Town school diving-board.

Rex ran along the bank and took his leap on to a rock near. The eddies swirled around.

"Not likely to be any crocs about," he chaffed. "It's a bit like Ali Baba, eh? 'Open, sesame!'"

And, curving his lean arms high, he dived into the white wall of water.

Gone! Swallowed up completely. The mighty curtain swept over the place where the figure had disappeared.

Tom snapped his lips. He had instinctively prepared to follow his brother, but stood back. Cedric was the younger, and it wouldn't have been cricket to leave him till the last. But it was not a matter of five minutes before the three had joined each other again.

As Tom staggered, dazed, to his feet he felt Rex's strong grip on his shoulder. It would have been useless to speak; the thunder of falling water must have deafened the keenest ears, and, as the lads grouped together, the curious stunned feeling they had first experienced gradually left them. Less expert divers might easily have been dashed unconscious against the rocky wall and flung out into the whirlpools beyond. But they were safe—so far—and the Wazari stronghold lay before them.

The outer cave was not entirely dark, and it was Rex who first spied the crouching figure of a native woman kneeling near an inner entrance.



"Look!" said Tom, reining back his pony and pointing to where the path branched. The undergrowth had parted, and a hideously bedaubed face peered out! (See page 247.)

Zakila! Cedric had seen the figure, too, and evidently felt no need to question. In such an adventure may be it is better not to search too closely for ambushes or traps, lest the moment for action passes.

The woman remained stationary, after rising to her feet. From what they could see of her face in that dim place she seemed petrified with fear. Those shirt-clad figures must be ghosts. And, without exception, ghosts are most fervently believed in by the African natives.

Cedric stretched out his hand. In the palm lay the amulet.

"Mungo—Zakila," he said, placing his

mouth close to the other's ear. She heard, and her rigid limbs relaxed. Light leapt into her dark eyes.

"E—u—h," she breathed. "Mungo—Zakih—nigla weena—Mungo."

Cedric seemed to understand. He replied in what seemed to the other lads a babble of words. Presently the younger boy came back to them. His face looked grey with dread.

"Zakila will do all she can," he said, "but it does not amount to much. She is heart-broken about her husband. Her prayer is to join him, and yet, as she puts it, she does not want Akolo the witch-doctor to send her by some terrible road to the land of ghosts."



"Baas," said Zakila, pointing along a sloping path. "That is the way leading to the place of Kandoli!" (See this page)

"And so," queried Tom slowly, "what's the first move? Is your father here?"

"Yes," said Cedric as the three gathered close as far as they could get from the roar of waters, "Zakila has told me enough. He is here. It is Akolo's fiendish plot to maintain his authority with the tribe which led him to capture my poor old dad. He is a bound and helpless prisoner in 'the place of Kandoli.' Kandoli, I gather, is a monster of some sort, worshipped as fetish and 'luck' by the tribe. It is, so the woman says, to be proven whether the White Wizard or Kandoli is the greater. The White Wizard is my father. I—I do not know what or who Kandoli may be. The woman fears to speak."

"Say," urged Rex, "where is the place of Kandoli?"

"That's it," said Cedric. "Zakila promises to lead us as far as the gate—but not beyond. She will, if possible, wait for our return. I do not quite understand her last words, but she seemed to want to explain that there was a second exit from the 'place,' but Kandoli guarded it, and only Akolo knew its secret."

Tom drew a deep breath.

"We'd better get a move on," said he.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

Found I

ZAKILA was waiting for the three "messengers from the land of ghosts," as she regarded them. Poor soul! It must have seemed to her that these white-shirted heroes belonged to another race of mortals than those she knew. Ghost-warriors from a land where fear did not dwell. And yet the old good man who had told her the story of a wonderful faith had been capable of suffering and suffering. Euh! It was true.

Yet, because of the confusion of her mind and the sorrow of her loss she obeyed blindly enough. Holding a small native lamp in her hand, she crept back along many passages—passages which twisted and zigzagged like the snakes which most probably lived in them; passages which led over chasms and low tunnels, till they came to wider places, where piled boulders and rough sculpture told of the work performed by dead hands in bygone ages.

"Baas," said Zakila, laying her hand on Cedric's and pointing with the other along a sloping path, "that is the way leading to the place of Kandoli. None but the priests and their victims pass along it; none but the priests return."

She shuddered, trembling. But Tom already advanced. They were Britishers bound on a rescue; you guess there was no indecision in striking that trail. And as they went, each

in turn put his hand in that of the woman and blessed her quietly. To Zakila the words were as a charm, keeping her from fear.

Yet when they had disappeared, fear rose grinning from behind a rough, hewn stone.

It was Akolo. For a moment he glared at Zakila, his teeth bared in a snarl.

Then the lean figure of the witch-doctor stole swiftly away down the path, following those who had dared to enter the secret stronghold of the Wazari.

In the meantime, Tom again led the way up a zigzag path which was no longer a mere passage. The dim light around might have been the reflection of daylight from far away and above, yet they were climbing together.

It was Tom who halted as he turned a corner of the sandstone cliff, crying aloud. To the utter bewilderment of the searchers, they stood on the ledge of a precipice rising sheer above and below. The ledge ran back, showing an arched entrance to an inner place, but the lads hardly noticed this, for there before them, bound standing to a post, was the drooping figure of John Humphrey Walden, the heroic missionary to the Kabosi tribe.

And now it was Cedric's turn to spring forward. Tears ran down the boy's face, he gave one cry, faintly echoed by the elder man. Then Cedric had his knife out and was cutting the bonds whilst Rex helped him.

"My boy," whispered the missionary. "Heaven pity us! How did you get here? Are you prisoners and not bound? Tell me?"

And, whilst Cedric and Rex told him, Tom had gone to the ledge, looking down and around in wonder. For there was space—vast space in this deep, half-subterranean stronghold; space where thousands of warriors could gather to hold festival or meeting.

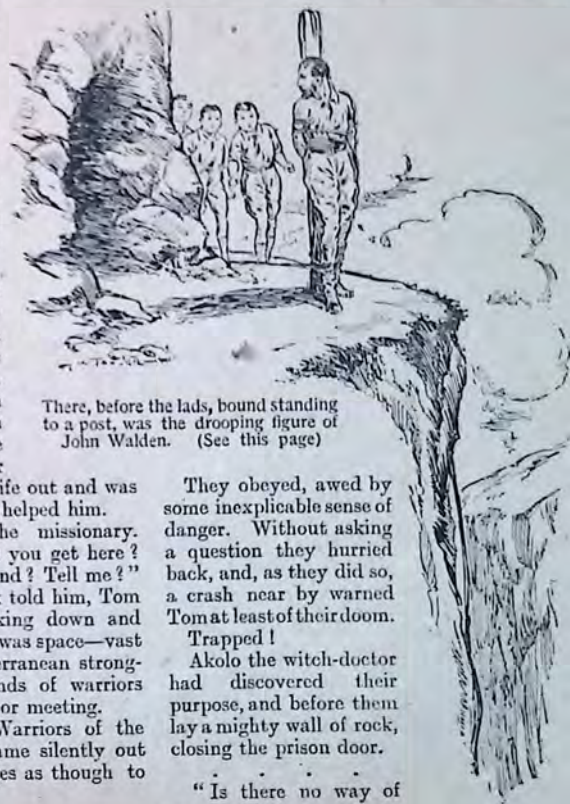
Warriors? Surely yes. Warriors of the Wazari tribe who already came silently out from dark, mysterious passages as though to witness some great fête.

Tom felt his blood run chill. Those silent warriors gathering in their hosts must be aware of their presence here. They were looking, watching, yet making no outcry.

A cold sweat broke over the boy. If only those dark-visaged men would have shouted aloud he would not have minded; it would have aroused his fighting blood. As it was, he turned and went back to where Cedric and Rex chafed Mr. Walden's cramped limbs.

"Let us go quickly," urged the latter, "for there is no moment to lose."

And he looked towards the entrance in the cliff.



There, before the lads, bound standing to a post, was the drooping figure of John Walden. (See this page)

They obeyed, awed by some inexplicable sense of danger. Without asking a question they hurried back, and, as they did so, a crash near by warned Tom at least of their doom.

Trapped!

Akolo the witch-doctor had discovered their purpose, and before them lay a mighty wall of rock, closing the prison door.

"Is there no way of

escape?" asked Cedric "Can't we find a way through that hole in the cliff, or is that—is that——"

Tears rose to his father's eyes.

"There is no way," he said, "or, at least, I am told there is one, but we cannot pass it. That cave is the lair of the sacred serpent Kandoli which these poor savages worship. Akolo is its priest and mouthpiece. That is to say, Akolo is an hereditary cheat who rules the tribe by a wild superstition. When the Wazari first heard my teaching, many warriors would have listened had it not been for Akolo. He threatened the people with the vengeance of Kandoli. Having trapped me, he has summoned all his tribe to witness the struggle between Kandoli and myself. The monster, which I have never seen, has been satiated, gorged, allowed to sleep. The hour of his waking is due. Already you can see how the warriors gather to watch the struggle between—as they believed—a bound man and the great snake. Now—ah, heavens, now——"

He clasped his hands, trembling. Want of food had weakened him. Hero though he was, he feared. And there was reason for his fear. From the spaces below and around a shout went up.

"Hau! Kandoli, great one, eater of enemies, wise thinker. Hau! Kandoli—do you wake hungry, ready to devour the false one? Hau!"

Echoing and re-echoing through caves and passages the last word rolled, and, as the echo died away, a peculiar sound of rustling and slithering movement came from within the cave.

"Steady," said Tom. "Out revolvers! Keep back, Mr. Walden, you are unarmed. Now!" He shouted the last word in a cry, sharp with excitement, as an enormous snake of the python tribe, but swollen and grown to gigantic size, thrust itself out, hissing furiously as it rose in a curling column of green and yellow, its forked tongue darting in and out as it stiffened for the first deadly dart.

Ping—ping—and if—they missed the creature's waving head they were lost. Ping—ping—and the sharp little shrieks of sound were echoed by a howl from the spectators, whilst the waving column of sinuous grace

collapsed, flinging itself out along the ledge—its head shattered, but the great body still wreathing and unwreathing itself.

Again the warriors shouted, but they had not quite grasped the fact of what had happened. For the first time Mr. Walden took the initiative.

"The den," he cried: "there is an exit at the back of the den. Akolo mocked me in telling me of it. He is the only one who dare use it. Quick!"

Stepping carefully aside to avoid contact with the dying monster, the four ran towards the den. Rex took out his electric torch and flashed it round. Luckily, Cedric's sharp eyes detected the outline of a door, half concealed by dry leaves.

Making towards it, he managed to push it open. Steps lead downwards. Whither?

Anywhere, anywhere was better than the place in which they now stood. Close on his heels the others followed. In single file they crept down the rock-hewn stairs till they reached another passage.

It was Rex who unceremoniously pushed the younger boy aside.

"I'll go first, Ced," said he. "I have my torch."

The passage was pitchy dark and very narrow. Yet they could not hesitate. Distant sounds told that the maddened Wazari were flocking round the edge of the ledge. The avengers of Kandoli would be at their heels.

"Shall we—have to get out—under—the falls?" shouted Cedric.

"No," replied Rex. "I reckon—we've reached Mister Akolo's—side—door."

As he spoke he laid his shoulder against the rock blocking the end of the passage.

Crash! Over it went, rolling down evidently amongst thick grasses and undergrowth. Rex, unprepared for the speedy release of the "door," fell with it, and as he did so, felt a pair of lean arms wrap him round. It was Akolo.

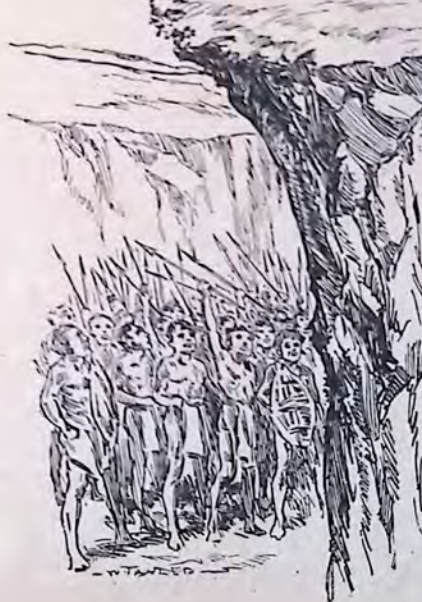
Rolling over with the stone, the two reached the ground in a breathless state.

Akolo did not speak. He had too much to do. Writhing and wriggling, he just managed to become upper dog, but he reckoned without sturdy youth and well-trained muscles.

Rex heaved up and toppled the native back just as Tom shouted. Akolo, with the agility of a wild cat, had doubled himself ready for attack, but, at Tom's shout, he twisted about and dived amongst the tall reeds to the left of the path.

"Stop him!" cried Mr. Walden breathlessly. He knew what Akolo's purpose was. Tom dived too, followed by Cedric, but though they pushed their way gallantly through the snapping canes, no trace could

"Steady! Out revolvers!" said Tom. An enormous snake of the python tribe thrust itself out of the cave, stiffening for the first deadly dart. (See opposite page.)



they see of the witch-doctor. Only one course lay open.

"The canoe!" cried Rex. "If we reach that first we may escape down the river."

Shouts answered him—but not from the lips of his companions. From under the falls, taking some way undiscovered by the lads, the Wazari were pouring out upon the bank of the stream. Yet so far their prey was hidden.

A thin, shrill voice shrieked its directions. They were coming—led by Akolo.

Cedric thrust his hand into his pocket, bringing out a box of matches. He did not wait to ask advice. Up, up ran a thin ribbon of flame. Up, up, spreading to right and left amongst the dry bamboos till a sheet of flame blazed between them and the Wazari.

Then, turning, the four raced back down the path. How the fire roared and crackled, drowning the cries of the natives.



Half-carried, half-dragged forward, the missionary was brought to where, still hidden by the tangle of grasses, lay the canoe. (See this page.)

Mr. Walden stumbled and nearly fell. "Go on, lads," he panted. "I'm done!"

But they paid no heed. Tom and Rex each took one of his arms, each drawing the limb round his neck; thus, half carried, half dragged forward, the good man was brought to where still hidden by the tangle of grasses, lay the canoe.

Would the shallow craft take the four?

Cedric drew back.

"Go on," he called. "Take dad. I'll—follow."

"Seat!" mocked Rex. "We'll sink or swim together, kid." And he toppled the half indignant boy into the little craft.

The canoe swayed and swung about, but Rex and Tom had the paddles.

The Wazari were still fighting the fire, which threatened their stronghold.

Out into mid-stream floated the canoe. She was a stout little craft after all, and though low in the water, carried the heavy burden well enough. It was a grim journey, though. White moonbeams showed the horny heads of alligators, and each of the four knew what would happen should the canoe capsize.

Nearer, nearer now came the shouts of the Wazari, but the pursuers were too late.

When, five minutes later, Akolo, in a frenzy of rage, reached the spot to which he had tracked his foes, the canoe had vanished.

Nor was his rage decreased by the words of a warrior spoken in his ear.

"Hau, old one, is it not proven that Kandoli is dead, defeated by the priest of the white man's god? What is that to thee, Akolo? Is it the word that Mungo spoke in our ears? If so—"

Akolo shrieked, clawing the air. He would prove that Kandoli still lived—he only slept. Hau! he only slept.

And meantime, four fugitives were paddling down the broad stream in safety. Pursuit they had expected, but it had not come.

Why?

Neither Rex nor Tom troubled to answer that question as they tramped back across the veldt towards Ten-Tree Farm to be welcomed by a father who had been crazed with anxiety on their behalf.

But—John Walden asked it as he and his son sat amongst the friendly Kabosi who had rejoiced ecstatically at receiving them back.

"One day," said Walden, "I shall take the Great Message to the Wazari. They will listen. One day I shall return and find welcome from our enemies. I am sure of it!"

But Cedric was silent.

Just then it seemed to him that never, never again did he wish on any errand to enter the stronghold—under the falls.

THE END



Blind Man's Buff with a Bear!

A True Story
By PERCY LONGHURST

OUT West one meets with some queer characters seated around the camp fire at night; supper finished, and pipes alight, one hears some strange yarns. Some of them may be true. As I wasn't a tenderfoot when I listened to the following yarn, I feel quite satisfied it was a genuine experience. The fellow who told the yarn was a trapper, and the adventure happened to a pal of his, with whom and two other fellows he had gone into the North-West Territory on a fur-getting trip.

It was winter, of course, as that is the season for trapping, and a big snowstorm had covered the ground for a couple of feet, making mishaps easy, since a man couldn't be sure what was underneath where he set his feet. Which explains how one of the trappers came to fall into a deep hole. A fallen tree had covered the mouth of it; the snow had covered the branches, and these, thoroughly rotten, let the trapper through.

The hole was deep enough for the man to be half stunned, and when he had recovered himself and moved his limbs about, he was feeling mighty thankful that no

bones had been broken. How far he was down and how big the hole, he hadn't the slightest notion, for he was lying in inky darkness, but small troubles were quickly forgotten when, from somewhere quite close at hand he heard a sound that left him in no doubt that it was a bear's lair he had tumbled into, and the bear was at home. He knew he was in a tight place.

Worse was to come. A few seconds later, as he stood listening and trying to peer through the gloom, he heard a faint whine, and then something cold and wet touched his hand and something else scratched at a leg. A cub! That meant it was a she-bear he was shut up with; and when a she-bear has cubs with her she is liable to be short-tempered.

The trapper wished himself outside. His rifle had dropped from his hand as he tumbled in, and his only other weapon was a hunting knife, a poor weapon for tackling an annoyed bear when in a confined space. Putting up one hand, he felt around the wall of the hole, to discover no crack or knob, nothing to give him hand or foothold.



A fallen tree had covered the mouth of the hole, snow had covered the branches, and these, thoroughly rotten, let the trapper through

He could not get out, and the cubs—there were two—having found him, concluded he might make a useful playmate. But their notions of play were rough, and when their claws scratched him, though anxious not to attract the attention of the sleepy mother, he was irritated into giving Baby Bruin a cuff. The little bear squealed, and Mother, somewhere a few yards away, growled as though asking what was the matter, but was too lazy to get up to find out.

It was sometime during the forenoon that the trapper met with his disagreeable accident, and the day passed mightily slowly, though the cubs at intervals came to him to resume their game.

So the hours dragged until night came, as the man was able to learn by the little patch of obscured light overhead slowly disappearing. Mother and cubs slept. But do you think the trapper slept? You're right; he didn't. Fear kept him awake.

But when morning came again, and with it the hope that his partners, alarmed by his absence, might succeed in locating him, he found it impossible to remain in his cramped position. Very carefully he crept here and there, and once he thought his last hour had come. He stepped on a cub; the cub squealed lustily, and its mother was provoked into getting up and making more serious investigation. He heard her move, though unable to see her, and he made up his mind for a fight. It couldn't be put off longer. Suddenly she bumped into him, to swing round quickly with an angry growl. And at the same moment the trapper struck with

his long knife, ripping a long gash in her side.

Then the fight was under weigh.

How long the awful battle lasted no one can know—the trapper himself said it might be half an hour, though it seemed to him like days. The clamour was deafening. The cubs squealed, their mother growled savagely, the man, hardly knowing what he was doing, shouted as he slashed with his great knife. That he could not last much longer he knew; he felt breath and strength failing him.

Suddenly he heard his name shouted, and he knew what had happened. His three partners had tracked him to the hole; they could hear the savage sounds below; he could just make out their heads bending over the edge.

His hoarse cry soon acquainted them with the truth, and at once they began slashing away with their axes to widen the mouth of the hole.

Then two rifles cracked, and immediately after two more bullets struck the bear. Then the prisoner fainted.

One of his partners dropped into the hole—a dozen feet deep it was—secured the cubs, and roughly patched up his chum's wounds. Ropes were lowered, and he was hoisted out, to be carried back to the camp without delay. Here examination proved his injuries so serious that their expedition ended at once. Packing their belongings, and the wounded man on their sledges, they made all haste back to the nearest settlement, where a doctor was to be found. A man's life was worth more than a winter's taking of fur pelts.



All the time his rescuers were widening the hole, the man in the bear pit was dodging, and striking, and slashing—and being struck.



THE BISHOP'S MEDAL

Figgins, of the New House at St. Jim's, takes on a mighty task, and all his chums rally round to help him. That is the theme of this magnificent School Story

By MARTIN CLIFFORD

THE FIRST CHAPTER

Simply Astounding!

"**N**OT Figgins!"
 "Yes, Figgins!" said Tom Merry solemnly.

"Oh, rats!"

"Yaas, wats!"

"Impossible!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry's news was received with utter incredulity. The crowd of School House fellows to whom he had imparted it chuckled in chorus. Tom Merry was grinning himself. The news was indeed surprising, and Tom Merry had been incredulous at first.

"Who told you?" demanded Blake, of the Fourth.

"I had it from Kerr!"

Blake shook his head.

"It's one of Kerr's little jokes, then—one of his blessed Scotch jokes. Of course, it's impossible. Figgins is an ass—but he's not such an ass!"

"Yaas, wathah!" chimed in Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I have always regarded Figgay as an ass—in fact, as sevewal sorts of

an ass—but I weally do not considah that he is such an ass as that!"

"Must be off his giddy rocker, if it's true!" chuckled Levison, of the Fourth. "Not that I believe it. Kerr was pulling your leg!"

"It's the giddy limit!" said Monty Lowther. "Anybody but Figgins!"

"Not Figgins! Ha, ha, ha!"

"I know it's funny," agreed Tom Merry. "But it's true. He's going to take in his name to Mr. Ratcliff this afternoon. To-day's the last day."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ratty will think he is joking."

"Blessed if I can swallow it," said Blake. "Figgay oughtn't to be allowed to make such a giddy ass of himself. What are Kerr and Wynn thinking about? Why don't they stop him?"

"Yaas, wathah! It's a chap's dutay to see that a pal doesn't play the giddy goat!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a shake of the head.

"Yes; we do that for Gussy," remarked Blake. "Lots of times we've chipped in to stop him playing the giddy ox——"

"Weally, Blake——"

"And Kerr and Wynn ought to do as much for Figgy. Why, it'll be the joke of the term. What chance will he have?"

"Nix!"

"Less than nix!"

"Hundred per cent. less than nothing," said Monty Lowther. "Why, what does Figgy know about Horace, for instance?"

"You should hear him construe Caesar," grinned Blake. "He just scrapes through. And Caesar to Horace is like moonlight unto sunlight, and water unto wine, as Shakespeare says——"

"Wasn't that Browning?" grinned Herries.

"No, it jolly well wasn't," said Blake warmly. "It was Shakespeare."

"Browning——"

"Shakespeare——"

"Tennyson, you asses!" said Monty Lowther, laughing. "But blow Shakespeare and Browning and Tennyson! What about Figgins? I think a deputation ought to wait on Figgins from all the Lower School, and politely request him not to play the giddy ox."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas, wathah! I should be quite willin' to be chairman of the deputation——"

"I can't quite swallow it yet," said Blake, shaking his head. "Let's go and see Figgins. We'll reason with him. Of course, he's only a New House bounder—but I don't like to see Figgins looking for trouble in this way. Figgy is a good sort, though he's an ass."

"It will be a standing joke for the rest of the term, if he really enters," Manners remarked.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Kerr and Wynn ought to be ragged for letting him do it," said Tom Merry, with a nod. "He won't listen to us! But we'll see him, and try our eloquence on him."

"Good wheeze!"

And Tom Merry and Co. walked across the old quadrangle of St. Jim's, bent upon doing their best with Figgins.

They were really concerned about Figgins.

If Figgins was not pulling the leg of the school generally, he must certainly be off his rocker, or so the juniors regarded it.

Figgins had his qualities. He was chief of the New House juniors, their leader in all their

alarums and excursions against the School House; and Tom Merry and Co., of the School House at St. Jim's, admitted that he was a foeman worthy of their steel.

Figgins was as brave as a lion, and generous to both friend and foe. He could swim and run and box and row—and he was a splendid forward, and almost equally good as a half-back. He was a jolly good fellow all round. But in the scholastic line Figgins was not distinguished.

His best friend would never have said that old Figgins was the fellow to enter for a difficult examination with any chance of success.

It was the last thing that anybody would have expected of Figgins. He hadn't a taste for that kind of thing. He was the kind of chap who cannot breathe quite freely indoors. On the footer-field or the river or the running-track he was in his element. But in the classroom he did not shine. Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth, to which Form Figgins belonged, did not regard him as a promising pupil. He was industrious and painstaking, and that was all. He had often expressed an opinion that things would go on much better at all schools if all Latin and German masters were put into a sack and dropped into the North Sea.

And now——

It was enough to take one's breath away. The Bishop's Medal was a much-sought-after distinction. The examination was confined to juniors—and many were the ambitious "swots" who sweated over their books for the purpose of "having a shy" at the Bishop's Medal. The examination was yearly, and there were generally nine or ten entrants. The subjects were "stiff," decidedly so. Fellows like Levison of the Fourth, or Brooke, or Manners of the Shell, had a good chance. But Figgins——

What could have induced Figgins to do it—if he was really going to do it—was a mystery.

He was not as a rule ambitious of distinctions of that kind.

To win a race or a footer match—Figgins had ambitions of that kind. But to win an exam.—that wasn't in his line at all.

Of course, there was no telling what a fellow could do until he really tried. Figgins might turn out a "dark horse." But it wasn't likely.

"Bai Jove! I wondah whethah old Figgay is hard up!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked suddenly, as if he had found the explanation. "They give ten guineas in cash along with the Bishop's Medal, you know."

"My hat!" said Blake. "I'd rather raise a subscription for Figgay than let him swot for that exam., if it's the giddy guineas he wants. He will burst something if he swots over Horace."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It will be in the papers," said Monty Lowther solemnly. "'Shocking fatality at a Public School! Unhappy Junior found Lying Dead upon a Volume of 'Horace.' Death Due to Fatty Degeneration of the Brain!'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Kerr and Wynn, of the Fourth, were standing in the doorway of the New House when the School House juniors arrived there. Kerr and Wynn—the famous "Co." of the New House—were looking a little less cheerful than usual. Perhaps they were worried about that sudden, new, and unexpected departure of their great chum Figgins.

"Hallo! What do you School House bounders want!" demanded Kerr, a little gruffly.

"Is it true, Kerr?" sang out all the visitors at once.

"Is what true?"

"About Figgins."

"Yes," growled Kerr. "Didn't I tell you, Tom Merry? Figgay's going to put his name down this afternoon, when Ratty comes in."

"But what's the matter with him?" asked Monty Lowther. "Is it insanity, or a weird sense of humour?"

"Oh, rats!" said Kerr crossly. "Don't bother!"

"I suppose we can see Figgins?" asked Blake. "You haven't got him in a strait-jacket yet, have you?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's in the study," said Kerr. "Writing a letter, I believe. You can go up if you like. No larks, you know, or we'll come and chuck you out on your necks."

"Weally, Kerr——"

"No larks!" said Tom Merry solemnly. "Come in, you fellows!"

And the School House juniors walked in and ascended the stairs to the Fourth Form passage, and thumped on the door of George Figgins' study.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

Figgins Doesn't Like It!

FIGGINS, of the Fourth, was seated at his study table. He had a sheet of paper before him on a blotting-pad, and a pen in his hand. Kerr had said that Figgins was writing a letter, and that certainly had been Figgay's intention when he sat down at the table. But, as a matter of absolute fact, Figgins was chewing the handle of the pen, apparently as an aid to composition.

Three words had been written on the sheet, and they were "Dear Cousin Ethel." And there Figgins had stopped, at a dead loss for words.

Then came the thump on his study door. Figgins jumped, and almost swallowed the penholder, and hastily put his hand over the sheet of paper.

"Come in!" he muttered.

The door opened, and Tom Merry & Co. marched in. Figgins had expected some New House fellow or other, and he jumped up in surprise at the sight of the School House crowd. His first thought was that it was a raid, one of the little "alarums and excursions" that enlivened the existence of the rival Houses of St. Jim's. And he picked up a big ebony ruler in a very significant sort of way—thus leaving the letter, with the three written words unconcealed.

Tom Merry waved his hand amicably. "We're here as friends—no need for that ruler."

"Wathah not, deah boy!"

Figgins grinned rather awkwardly, and laid down the ruler.

"All serene!" he said. "What's wanted? You fellows will excuse me, I—I'm rather busy now!"

"Workin' up for the exam. alweady, deah boy?" asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sympathetically.

Figgins coloured.

"Not yet," he said.

"That's what we've come to see you about," said Jack Blake. "Is it really true, Figgie?"

"Quite true, dear boy?"

"The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the giddy truth?" asked Monty Lowther, with great solemnity.

"Is what true?" asked Figgins irritably.

"Look here——"

"About your entering for the Bishop's Medal," said Tom Merry.

"Yes, it is."

"You're not pulling our leg—eh?"

"No fathead!"

"It isn't a weird, wild, and wonderful joke?"

"You silly ass——"

"Then what does it mean?" asked Blake.

"You've got about as much chance of getting the medal and the ten quidlets——"

"Guineas, dear boy!"

"Shut up! Quidlets, as the man in the moon—rather a smaller chance if anything," said Blake. "Do you know that Brooke of the Fourth has entered?"

"Never mind Brooke!"

"And Levison——"

"Blow Levison!"

"And Kerruish——"

"Hang Kerruish!"

"And some more chaps——"

"Confound the chaps!"

"Ahem!" said Tom Merry. "Figgins, old man, we don't understand. We only want to know, you know. This isn't an exam. in shooting for goal, or in late cuts, or anything of that sort. They spring Horace on you—giddy Horatius Flaccus, wild and untamed——"

"I know they do!" said Figgins crossly.

"Why shouldn't I mug up Horace as well as any other chap?"

"Ahem! No reason why you shouldn't, excepting that you couldn't. Figgie, old boy, we are quite alarmed about you!"

"That way madness lies!" murmured Lowther.

"If you start swotting for this medal you'll have brain fever, or burst a boiler, or something of the sort!" said Tom Merry seriously.

"Then what shall we do without you, Figgins?"

The New House will go to pot, and we shan't have anybody left to rag. Think of us, Figgie, before you do this dreadful thing."

"Yaas, reflect a little, Figgie, dear boy!"

"Don't bring down our grey whiskers with sorrow to the crematorium!" murmured Monty Lowther. "Rash youth, beware!"

Figgins turned very red. He had heard remarks like that from fellows in his own House, when he had first announced his intention of entering for the Bishop's Medal. But it was too exasperating to have the School House going for him too—Pelion piled on Ossa, so to speak.

"I'm much obliged to you for your good advice," said Figgins, as calmly as he could.

"I know you think me an ass——"

"He's a giddy thought-reader!" whispered Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I know you think I can't do anything but row a boat, or kick a football, or whack a cricket-ball with a bat," said Figgins bitterly.

"Yes, I know that. But there may be other people—people with more sense than you—who think that I can do something with some sense in it!"

The juniors stared at him.

"Isn't there any sense in kicking for goal, then?" demanded Blake warmly.

"I mean something that requires brains as well as muscle," said Figgins. "I think I've got a chance of bringing it off."

"Oh, my hat!"

"And I don't see that it matters to you chaps, anyway," said Figgins bluntly.

"We've come over as your friends—as your sorrowing friends," said Monty Lowther. "We're sorry to see you on the road to Colney Hatch in this way. And we didn't really believe it; we wanted it to be confirmed, straight from the horse's mouth—ahem!—I should say, from the donkey's mouth!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Figgins pointed to the door.

"I dare say you're very funny!" he said, "But I'm rather busy now, and I've no time for your funniness. Would you mind getting out?"

The visitors exchanged glances.

"Ahem—certainly!" said Tom Merry.

"Don't mind our little jokes, Figgy. If you're really going in for the medal, we wish you luck!"

"Yaas, wathah! I'm only sowwy that impossibilities cannot happen, for your sake, Figgy!"

"Better have a medical man to feel your pulse every now and then, while you're studying," said Lowther anxiously. "We don't want to lose our Figgins."

"Oh, clear out!" said Figgins crossly.

The good-tempered, good-natured Figgins, who was always cheery and genial, was cutting up rusty! There was no doubt about that.

"I suppose you've got a reason for this, Figgy?" Blake asked.

"Yes, I have!"

"May an old pal ask the giddy reason?"

"No!"

"Oh!" said Blake.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "You will excuse me, Figgins, I have just caught sight of that lettah. If you don't want people to see your lettahs, you should not leave them lyin' open on the table, you know. It's wathah too late to covah it up with your fist," added Arthur Augustus, as Figgins, flushing crimson, placed his hand again over the letter. "I am sowwy that I saw it as it was not intended for my eyes; but now that I have seen it, I must beg to be allowed to ask you a question."

"Oh, rats!" said Figgins.

"I was not aware," said D'Arcy, with great dignity, "that you had a cousin named Ethel."

"I haven't," said Figgins.

"Then I pwesume that it is to my Cousin Ethel that you are w'itin' that lettah?" said Arthur Augustus, in his most stately manner.

"You can presume what you like!" growled Figgins.

"Weally, Figgins, I have remarked befoah that you seem to considah Miss Cleveland wathah as your cousin than as my cousin——"

"Oh, bosh!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's eye gleamed behind his eyeglass.

"I came here as a fwend, Figgins," he said in measured tones. "But if you chawactewise my remarks as bosh, I shall have no wescource but to give you a feahful thwashin'."

"Oh, get out!"

"I wefuse to get out. I have a wight to an explanation——"

"Will you take that lunatic away, or must I chuck him out on his neck?" asked Figgins, looking round.

"We'll take him away," said Tom Merry, laughing. "Come on, Gussy——"

"Undah the cires., unless Figgins apologises——"

"Kim on!" said Blake, taking his noble chum by the arm. "This way to the door. Good-bye, Figgins, and don't forget to tie a wet towel round your head when you begin swotting! And when brain-fever sets in——"

"Cheese it!" growled Figgins.

"I wefuse to go until——"

Arthur Augustus had no time to finish. Tom Merry took his other arm, and Blake and Tom between them walked the swell of St. Jim's out of the study. The other fellows followed, Figgins watching them go with a frowning brow. When they were gone, he slammed the door after them, grunted, and sat down to his letter again. He chewed the handle of the pen for some time, and then succeeded in starting:

"Dear Cousin Ethel,—I have taken your advice, and I'm putting my name down to-day for the Bishop's Medal. I'm going to work hard for it, and I hope——" Then the chewing of the pen-handle started again, and lasted quite a considerable time.

Meanwhile, Tom Merry and Co. had descended the stairs, Arthur Augustus still expostulating. But his comrades did not listen to his expostulations, and he was marched out of the New House by main force, and across the quadrangle.

Then the news spread.

And all St. Jim's, when they heard that Figgins was entering for the Bishop's Medal, expressed their surprise on the subject with prolonged chuckles.

Some fellows refused to believe it, and went over to see Figgins about it; but Figgins was "sporting his oak" now, and there was no admittance of curious investigators.

The news was true. Figgins, who was generally supposed not to be able to scrape through Caesar without a crib, was going the whole hog with a vengeance, or, as Monty

Lowther expressed it Figgins, the champion duffer of the Fourth, was going the whole giddy unicorn. And the St. Jim's fellows agreed that wonders would never cease.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

The Scoffers!

"COME in!" said Mr. Ratcliff.

Mr. Ratcliff, the Housemaster of the New House at St. Jim's, laid down his pen somewhat impatiently. Mr. Ratcliff was not a good-tempered master—indeed, he was decidedly the reverse. He was a thin, sour man, with an almost perpetual frown, a troublesome liver, and a consequently troublesome temper.

Figgins entered the study.

Mr. Ratcliff's expression did not relax at the sight of Figgins. He did not like Figgins of the Fourth. The free and easy Figgins was really not likely to please the sour and suspicious Housemaster.

"Well," rapped out Mr. Ratcliff, "what is it, Figgins? I am busy."

Figgins stood hesitating, his cheeks very red.

"If you please, sir——"

"Kindly come to the point."

"I want you to put my name down, sir."

"What do you mean? For what?"

"For the Bishop's Medal exam., sir!" blurted out Figgins. Then he stood with scarlet

cheeks, wondering what the Housemaster would think, and what he would say.

Mr. Ratcliff was evidently astonished. He swung round a little on his chair, and looked fixedly at Figgins. Figgins felt his face growing redder and redder under the penetrating gaze of the Housemaster.

"The Bishop's Medal!" Mr. Ratcliff exclaimed at last.

"Yes, sir. This is the last day for entering."

"I am aware of that. I am only surprised

that you should think of entering at all!" said Mr. Ratcliff snappishly. "What are your qualifications for such an examination?"

"I—I'm afraid, sir—but I'm going to work hard!"

"That will be quite a new line for you to take I think, Figgins. You are not, I believe, a credit to your Form in classics."

"I'm afraid not, sir."

"I think it is absurd for

you to enter for this examination. You will have no chance whatever from your record in the school!" said the Housemaster harshly. "You will simply bring ridicule upon your House by an absurd attempt, which can only end in ridiculous failure."

Poor Figgins was the colour of a beetroot now. He had expected his Housemaster to be surprised, but he had not expected an outbreak like this. He suspected, however, that Ratty's personal dislike of himself had something to do with it, and Figgins, modest and unassuming fellow as he was, had plenty of



"It is absurd for you to enter for this examination! You will have no chance whatever!" exclaimed the Housemaster harshly. "I'm sorry you don't think I have a chance, sir—but I wish to enter," said Figgins. (See opposite page)

determination. He had come there to have his name put down for the Bishop's Medal exam., and he meant to have it put down. Mr. Ratcliff's remarks made him uncomfortable, but none the less determined.

"I am sorry you don't think I have a chance, sir," said Figgins at last.

"Do you think you have any yourself?"

"I hope so, sir."

"Then you are very sanguine!" said Mr. Ratcliff, with bitter sarcasm. "I think you should not enter. I do not like the boys of my House to record failures, especially egregious and ridiculous failures, such as yours will be. It is bad for the House, and not at all to the credit of the Housemaster. I therefore advise you to think no more of this."

And Mr. Ratcliff picked up his pen, and turned back to his writing, as if the affair was wholly disposed of.

But it wasn't. Figgins was silent for a moment or two, but his purpose had not wavered.

"You may go," said Mr. Ratcliff, half-turning his head.

"If you please, sir, I'd rather put my name down."

"What?"

"I prefer to take my chance with the exam., sir."

Mr. Ratcliff gave the junior a terrific look. That Figgins would have the nerve to persist in the face of his displeasure had not even occurred to him. Figg was standing upon his rights, and he meant business, though his manner was very respectful.

"You mean that you wish to enter this examination against my advice?" exclaimed the Housemaster angrily.

"I wish to enter it, sir."

Mr. Ratcliff gnawed his lip.

"I cannot forbid you to do so, Figgins, as the examination is open to all boys in the Fourth and the Shell. But I disapprove entirely."

"I am sorry for that, sir."

"But it makes no difference to your decision?" exclaimed the Housemaster sharply.

"I think I'd like to try, sir."

"Very well," said Mr. Ratcliff, compressing his lips. "You may enter, if you choose to do

so against my wish; but I shall not forget this, Figgins. I will put your name down. You may go!"

"Thank you, sir."

Figgins quitted the study, and closed the door after him. His face was very glum and gloomy as he went down the passage. Kerr and Wynn met him at the end of the passage with inquiring looks.

"Name down?" Kerr asked.

"Yes."

"Ratty nice about it?"

"About as nasty as he could be," said Figgins. "He as good as ordered me not to enter, but I stuck to it. I've left him awfully ratty. He thinks I shall make a fool of myself, and count another failure in the House record."

"Well, it's no business of Ratty's anyway," said Fatty Wynn, "Go in and—and win, Figg."

Figgins smiled bitterly.

"You chaps think just the same about it as Ratty does," he said. "You don't think I can do anything but slog a cricket-ball or kick a footer about."

"Well, exams. ain't exactly in your line, Figg, old man," said Kerr awkwardly. "I'm sure I wish you luck."

"Heaps of it," said Fatty Wynn. "Besides, you never know what may happen. The other chaps in the exam. may turn out rank duffers."

Figgins smiled grimly. Fatty Wynn meant to be comforting; but there really was not much comfort in the way he put it.

"Well, I think I have a chance," said Figgins, "and I'm going to slog my hardest, anyway, and win if I can. I don't see why I shouldn't be good for something more than a footer-match. My people would be awfully pleased if I pulled it off. Why shouldn't I?"

"Of course, why shouldn't you?" agreed Kerr, as heartily as he could.

Figgins grunted, and they sauntered out into the quadrangle together. Fatty Wynn led their steps in the direction of the tuckshop.

The dusk of evening was falling on St. Jim's, and the tuckshop was lighted, and the cheery illumination gleamed out on the old elms. There were School House fellows in the tuckshop, and a loud laugh was heard when they spotted Figgins and Co. approaching

It was Levison of the Fourth, himself an entrant for the Bishop's Medal, who spotted them, and sang out:

"Here comes the medal-pincher!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Listen to 'em," growled Figgins. "I must say this is encouraging. The whole blessed School House making fun of me, and my own chums thinking that I'm playing the giddy ox."

"Well, you are, you know," said Fatty Wynn. "I—I—I mean, of—of course we're going to—to believe in you, and—and back you up—ahem!—we—"

"Oh, rats!" growled Figgins.

There was a sudden burst of melody from the tuckshop. Four or five fellows had burst into a tune—the tune of "Bill Bailey"—to which someone, probably Lowther of the Shell, had fitted new words for the occasion:

"Don't play the goat, George Figgins—don't play the goat!"

Don't play the giddy o-ox!

You'll only get a licking, you will be licked,
Licked right out of your so-ocks!"

Kerr and Wynn chuckled—they could not help it; but George Figgins' face was crimson. Figgins evidently did not appreciate Monty Lowther's humorous efforts.

"The silly rotters!" growled Figgins. "I'm not going to stand this cheek from the School House. It's bad enough to have my own pals doing the Job's comforter bizney. Back me up, and we'll soon stop their squalling!"

And Figgins rushed into the tuckshop. Kerr and Wynn followed him loyally.

Monty Lowther was seated upon a high stool at the counter, and Herries and Digby of the Fourth were standing near him. Levison and Gore were also there. The odds were against the New House trio; but Figgins was too exasperated to think of odds.

He rushed right at Monty Lowther, caught hold of him, and yanked him off the high stool. As Monty Lowther was just refreshing himself with a glass of ginger-beer after his tuneless efforts, the result was disastrous.

Swoosh! came the ginger-beer over

Lowther's face and neck, and the glass dropped to the floor and smashed into fifty pieces.

Monty Lowther was on the floor the next moment, roaring:

"Ow! Fathead! Yow! Grooh! Rescue!"

Digby and Herries and Gore rushed to his aid at once, and Kerr and Wynn piled in instantly, and there was a wild struggle. Levison quietly slipped out of the tuckshop. Rough-and-tumble tussles were not in his line when he could avoid them. But four School House fellows remained to deal with Figgins and Co., and numbers told.

Lowther had clutched hold of Figgins, and was rolling on the floor with him, to the great damage of the clothes of both the juniors.

Gore had closed with Fatty Wynn, and they were wrestling furiously; and Digby and Herries had collared Kerr.

In two minutes the three New House juniors were on their backs in the sawdust on the floor, and four School House fellows were sprawling over them, pinning them down, and chortling victoriously between their gasps.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

School House against New House!

MONTY LOWTHER grinned cheerfully down at Figgins as the chief of the New House writhed under him. Figgins was furious; but Lowther was quite good-tempered. Herries had lent him a hand in getting Figgins under, and now Lowther was seated on his chest, and the long-limbed junior was helpless.

"Lemme gerrup!" Figgins murmured sulphurously.

Lowther shook his head.

"Not this evening," he said genially. "Some other evening."

"You—you School House rotter——"

"Shush!" said Lowther. "Look at my face! See the ginger-beer you've wasted? What do you mean by rushing at me like a wild bull, simply because I was exercising my vocal gifts?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I—I'll pulverise you!" panted Figgins.

"Shush!" said Lowther chidingly. "Now,

don't be ratty—I'm not going to hurt you. I'm going to sing you a song instead."

"Look here——"

"Don't play the goat, George Figgins—don't play the goat!" sang Lowther, while his companions roared with laughter.

Figgins struggled desperately to release himself. Lowther had to exert his strength to keep him down, and so the next line came out in spasmodic jerks.

"D-d-do-o-n't p-p-play th-the g-g-g-gid-d-d-dy o-o-ox!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let me up!" howled Figgins.

"Shush!"

"I'll smash you! I'll—— Rescue, New House!" yelled Figgins, in the hope that some fellows of his own House might be within hearing.

"Give me a glass of ginger-beer, Mrs. Taggles, please!" said Monty Lowther. Mrs. Taggles was regarding the scene from behind her little counter with uplifted hands.

"What for, Master Lowther?" faltered the good lady.

"I'm going to give it to Figgins!"

"Don't give it to him, Mrs. Taggles!" roared Figgins. "The beast wants to swamp it over me!"

"Shurrup!" said Lowther. "I suppose one good turn deserves another, doesn't it? Buck up with that ginger-beer, Mrs. Taggles, please!"

Mrs. Taggles shook her head.

"Rescue, New House!" shouted Figgins again.

An eyeglass gleamed at the door, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy glanced over the scene in surprise and amusement.

"Bai Jove! Is that a game?" he asked.

Lowther nodded.

"Yes; we're playing at ragging the New House bounders," he said. "Figgins rushed in where angels fear to tread, and now he's getting it in the neck. Will you hand me a soda syphon, Gussy? Mrs. Taggles is neglecting me."

"Oh, Master Lowther——" murmured Dame Taggles.

"With pleasuah, deah boy," said Arthur

Augustus, crossing towards the counter.

"Do you like sodah, Figgie, deah boy!"

"You—you rotters!" Rescue!" howled Figgins.

Redfern, Lawrence, and Owen of the New House, looked in. They had heard Figgins' cry for rescue, and rushed across at once. There was rivalry in the New House between the two Co.'s; but against the School House they were as brothers.

"Keep 'em out, Gussy!" shouted Lowther.

Arthur Augustus ran back to the door, with the soda-syphon in his hands.

"Keep out, you wottahs!" he exclaimed, raising the syphon menacingly. "I shall swamp you if you—— Bai Jove!"

Swoosh! went the soda water, and Redfern and Co. rushed in. Redfern caught it full in the face, and staggered back; but Lawrence and Owen were upon Arthur Augustus in a moment and the soda-syphon was whirled away by Owen, while Lawrence bumped the swell of St. Jim's over upon the floor.

"Yawwoh!" roared D'Arcy, as he went down. "Bai Jove! Help!"

Swoosh! Swilsssh! Owen turned the syphon upon the swell of St. Jim's, and Arthur Augustus rolled over madly in the midst of a swamping shower of soda-water.

"Gewwooh! Stoppit! Chuckit! You'll ruin my clothes! Gwreat Scott! Ow!"

"Yow!" roared Lowther, as the grinning Owen turned the syphon upon him, and a stream caught him under the ear. "Yow-ow!"

The syphon gurgled in an expiring manner; it was exhausted. The New House juniors were already piling in to the rescue of Figgins and Co., and Owen dropped the syphon and joined them.

Lowther and Herries and Digby and Gore fought desperately; but the odds were now heavily against them.

One after another they were thrown out of the tuckshop, and rolled on the ground outside.

Arthur Augustus was the first to go; and as he sprawled helplessly on the ground, his comrades came tossing out, one after another, sprawling over him and over one another.

There was a chorus of gasps, and yells, and roars.

"Yawwooh! Help! Gewwoff!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Gerroff my chest!"

"Keep your blessed elbow out of my eye!"

"Ow! Wescue!"

The New House juniors crowded the doorway of the tuckshop, yelling with laughter. The School House fellows scrambled up, untidy and breathless, and crimson with exertion and fury. Figgins waved his hand to them.

"Come back!" he said. "Come on—we're waiting for you!"

"You uttah wottahs! I shall give you a feahful thwashin'! Back me up, deah boys!" shouted Arthur Augustus.

And the swell of St. Jim's rushed fiercely to the attack.

He was promptly collared and hurled forth, and he gave a loud yell as he went spinning along the ground.

But by this time the alarm had spread, and School House juniors were running up on all sides. New House fellows were also arriving, and there was every prospect of a general battle, in which the tuckshop would be reduced to wreck and ruin.

"Have the boudners out of there!" shouted Jack Blake.

"Come on!" roared Tom Merry.

"Buck up, New House!" shouted Figgins.

Kildare of the Sixth, the captain of St. Jim's, came striding from the direction of the School House as the rival juniors closed in combat. The uproar had reached him, and he had thoughtfully brought a cane with him. At the same time, Monteith, the head prefect of the New House, arrived upon the scene from another direction.

The two prefects exchanged a glance, and, without wasting time in words, they started restoring order.

Slash, slash, slash!

Whack, whack, whack!

With great impartiality they lashed and whacked at every junior within reach, and there were loud yells of anguish from the recipients.

The combat ceased as if by magic, and the juniors ran and dodged hither and thither to avoid the lashing canes.

In one minute or less the ground was clear, excepting for a few scattered caps.

Kildare and Monteith exchanged a grin, and went back to their Houses.

"Ow!" groaned Monty Lowther, as he came into the study of the School House. "Ow! I've got a cut across my arm, and another across my back, and another——"

"Never mind," said Tom Merry cheerfully, "we should have licked the New House. But what was the row about?"

"Figgins got his rag out," said Lowther, chuckling. "He's touchy about that blessed exam., you know. Came for me like a giddy wild elephant."

Tom Merry laughed.

"Poor old Figgins! I say, you chaps, if he cuts up rusty about it, better not chip him."

"Oh, rats!" said Lowther warmly. "Must have out little joke. I'm thinking of doing some comic paragraphs on the subject for the next number of the 'Weekly.'"

Tom Merry shook his head.

"Oh, ring off, Monty! Poor old Figg will have enough to worry about if he's really going to swot for that exam. You've been over last year's papers, Manners—it's jolly hard, isn't it?"

"Jolly hard," said Manners, with a nod. "I don't know that I shall pull it off this year—but as for Figgins, he hasn't an earthly."

"Not a ghostly!" agreed Tom Merry. "But we'll give him a quiet time while he's trying, you know. That's only playing the game. Now, Monty, don't chip him any more."

"Oh, br-r-r-r!" said Monty Lowther discontentedly. To the mind of the humorist of the Shell, a joke came before anything else, and he had foreseen immense possibilities of fun in Figg's strange and unaccountable outbreak.

"Come, Monty, what do you say?"

"Rats!" said Lowther, laughing

"Now, look here——"

"My hat—I'd better go and wash this blessed ginger-beer out of my neck," said Monty Lowther.

And he quitted the study.



Figgins rushed right at Monty Lowther and yanked him off the high stool. Swoosh! went the ginger-beer all over Lowther's face and neck! (See Chap. 3)

THE FIFTH CHAPTER

Cousin Ethel's Opinion.

"EVERYTHIN' weedy—what?"

Thus Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Study No. 6, in the Fourth-Form passage in the School House, was presenting an unusual aspect of tidiness, cleanliness, and festivity.

The grate had been swept clear of ashes, fragments of paper, and slippers and things. The mantelpiece had been dusted. A bright, clean, tablecloth, especially borrowed from Mrs. Mimms, the house-dame, gleamed upon the table. Bright, clean crockeryware gleamed

upon the tablecloth. There were cups and saucers of all varieties of pattern, borrowed from studies in the Fourth and the Shell. Cups in bright crimson stood in saucers of dark green, along with a blue milk-jug and a pink sugar-basin. But, as Jack Blake remarked, the effect was very bright, and really good—quite in the style of an impressionist picture.

The unusual preparations in Study No. 6 were, of course, an indication that an unusual visitor was expected.

The visitor was already in the Head's house, staying with Mrs. Holmes, but she had consented to come to tea in Study No. 6.

Needless to say, the expected visitor, on whose account the juniors had made such almost unheard-of efforts of tidiness and preparation, was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's charming cousin, Ethel Cleveland.

Ethel was expected every moment, and the Co. were ready.

Blake, and Herries, and Digby, and D'Arcy, the owners of the study, were looking very neat and clean and tidy, Arthur Augustus especially being a perfect picture of elegance.

The Terrible Three of the Shell—Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther—had a nice, newly brushed look, and their hair was very tidy and neat.

"All here—eh?" asked Tom Merry.

"Yaas, exceptin' Ethel."

"No more chaps coming?" asked Tom.

"I did not want too big a crowd, deah boy. I asked Kangawooh, but he has gone out on his bike with Dane and Glyn."

"Any New House chaps?"

Arthur Augustus frowned.

"I weally did not think it necessary to ask any New House chaps, Tom Mewwy."

"I was thinking that Figgins—"

"I weally do not know why Figgins should be supposed to have come here whenever my cousin comes. You seem to wegard Ethel as Figgins' cousin, and not as mine at all."

"It's all right," Blake remarked. "I've asked him."

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass upon his chum with a frigid stare.

"You have had the awful cheek, Blake, to ask Figgins to come ovah heah and meet my cousin?" he exclaimed.

Blake shook his head.

"Certainly not!"

Arthur Augustus looked relieved.

"Oh, that's all wight, then!" he said.

"But you remarked that you had asked him, Blake."

"I haven't asked him here to meet your cousin," Blake explained. "I've asked him here to tea."

There was a chuckle in Study No. 6. All the juniors knew of Figgins' desire to seek the company of Miss Cleveland, for some reason best known to himself, and they all sympathised with Figgy. Arthur Augustus, how-

ever, seemed to be a little obtuse or else obstinate upon the point.

"You have asked that New House boundah to tea, Blake?"

"Yes. I suppose I can ask a chap to tea in my own study if I like, can't I?" exclaimed Blake, in astonishment. "Of course, I shouldn't ask a fellow to meet your cousin without consulting you. It would be a cheek. But I suppose I can have a friend in to tea?"

"You know perfectly well, you ass, that Figgins cannot come to tea without meetin' Cousin Ethel, as Cousin Ethel is comin' to tea."

"Yes. That's what you'd call a coincidence, isn't it?" said Blake, with a nod.

"These coincidences will happen, you know; they can't be helped."

"Two separate objects, moving towards the same spot, are bound to meet in the long run," said Monty Lowther solemnly. "I don't know whether that's in Euclid; but it's a fact."

"Undah the cires., Blake, I must wequest you to wequest your fwiend Figgins to postpone his visit—"

"Rats!" said Blake cheerfully.

"If you say wats to me—"

"And many of 'em!" added Blake.

"I shall be sowwy, Blake, to thwash you just when we are expectin' a laday visitah, but, under the cires., I considah—"

"You'll be doing your considering under the table, if you don't ring off!" said Blake.

"Now, shut up, and butter the toast!"

"I wefuse to buttah the toast at all! I wefuse—"

"Cheese it!"

"I decline to cheese it! I wepeat that I do not wegard Figgins—"

"Ring off, for goodness' sake!" said Herries.

"Bump him over, and sit on him!"

"You uttah wottah!" shouted Arthur Augustus indignantly, shaking a wrathful fist at Herries across the table. "I—"

"Good-afternoon!"

It was a sweet and gentle voice at the doorway.

Cousin Ethel looked into the study.

Arthur Augustus, taken by surprise, remained as if petrified for a moment, his

clenched fist extended across the table towards Herries' grinning face.

Then he suddenly dropped it to his side and swung round, his countenance turning a bright crimson as he met Cousin Ethel's glance.

"G-g-good-af-fah-noon, deah gal!" he stammered. "I-I-I—"

"So good of you to come," said Blake. "Chuck it, Gussy; you can finish your gymnastics afterwards!"

Arthur Augustus almost choked.

"Weally Blake, I-I— Ethel, deah gal, I feah that you saw me in a wathah suspicious attitude. I-I was showing Hewwies how to—to—to—"

"How to play the giddy ox!" said Herries.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Hewwies—weally— Ethel, I—ah— Hallo, Figgins, deah boy! How do you do?"

Arthur Augustus was quite grateful to Figgins for entering at that moment.

Figgins seemed a little surprised by the warmth of his greeting, but he was pleased by it.

"Pway sit down, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus, dragging up a chair to the table. "Heah you are!"

And, in his confusion and agitation, Arthur Augustus placed Figgins' chair next to Cousin Ethel's—a thing he had certainly never intended to do. He saw his mistake as Figgy sat down—as Figgy very promptly did.

"Figgy, deah boy, pewaps you'd wathah be nearah the fiah—"

"Not at all!" said Figgins affably. "This is quite comfy!"

"Sure you are not in a dwaught there?" asked D'Arcy anxiously.

"Quite sure, thanks!"

And Arthur Augustus gave it up. Tea proceeded very merrily, the juniors vying with one another in attending to Cousin Ethel and looking after her requirements. If Miss Cleveland had eaten one quarter of the good things her hosts wanted to help her to, she would have put Fatty Wynn, of the New House, quite in the shade.

"By the way," Blake remarked presently, "Figgy's got some news for you!"

Figgins flushed, as Cousin Ethel's eyes turned upon him.

"Blake means that I've entered for the Bishop's Medal," said Figgins.

"Yes; I'm so glad!" said Ethel. "I knew that already," she added, in her frank way. "Figgins wrote and told me, didn't you?"

"Yes," said Figgins. "I only wish I could have told you that I thought I had a look-in."

"But you have a good chance," said Ethel. "and you will work hard. And all your friends will back you up, and help you to work hard for the exam."

The juniors looked at one another rather curiously, and Monty Lowther turned a little pink. Certainly, so far, their efforts in connection with the matter had not been exactly directed towards backing up Figgins.

"Ahem!" murmured Blake. "We—we—we're going to, of course!"

"Yes, rather!" said Tom Merry.

"Of course, we all wish Figgy luck!"

"Yaas; we all wish he could perform impossibilities and things, bai Jove!"

"Excepting me!" grinned Manners. "I'm in the exam myself, you know, so I can't quite hope that Figgy will pull it off. I hope he'll be second!"

"Thanks!" said Figgins. "The same to you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Cousin Ethel's opinion that Figgy had a chance for the exam, made a curious difference in the point of view of the juniors. They had not thought of taking Figgy seriously before. But if Cousin Ethel took him seriously, there was certainly no reason why they should not. They all had a very deep respect for Ethel's judgment.

When tea was over, Arthur Augustus rose to walk with his cousin to the Head's house. Figgins rose with the same object.

Arthur Augustus' eyeglass gleamed at the New House junior.

"Comin' as fah as the door, Figgy?" he asked politely but significantly.

"Ye-es," murmured Figgins.

And the juniors stood up and said "An-revoir" to Cousin Ethel, and she walked away.

with Arthur Augustus and Figgins. And at the door of the School House Figgins had to say good-bye, comforted, however, by the knowledge that Ethel was staying the night with Mrs. Holmes, and that he might see her on the morrow.

Figgins went off disconsolately towards the New House, and Arthur Augustus escorted his cousin through the dusky quad. towards the Head's private entrance.

"I want to speak to you, Arthur," Cousin Ethel said, slackening her pace.

"Yaas, deah gal?"

"It's about that examination."

"Oh, Figgins!" said D'Arcy carelessly.

"Yes. You don't think he has much chance?"

"Well, he's wathah a duffah, you know! And it's a vewy hard exam. I don't weally feel suah that I should pull it off myself if I entahed."

Cousin Ethel smiled.

"But Figgins may succeed, if he works hard—"

"Swottin' ain't much in his line, deah gal."

"His father would be very pleased, and it would be a good help for Figgins in the school, too. I suppose you all help him as much as you can when he studies, and see that he is not interrupted by pranks, or anything of that kind?"

Arthur Augustus stammered a little.

"Well, as a mattah of fact, deah gal, he's been wathah wagged about it," he admitted.

Cousin Ethel's sweet face became very serious. Probably she had guessed that already.

"Arthur, dear, don't you think that is a shame, when Figgins is trying to do serious work for the first time?"

"But it's all wot, you know. He can't do it."

"But he is trying."

"Yaas; he's twyin'," admitted D'Arcy.

"Then isn't it a shame that he isn't given a chance?"

"Ya-as; I suppose it is," agreed Arthur Augustus. "If we considahed the thing sewiously, we should back him up."

"Then consider it seriously. You like Figgins, don't you?"

"Ah—er—ahem—yaas, I suppose so!" said Arthur Augustus, rather taken aback by the question. "He is wathah a cheeky ass in some things, but he is a jolly good fellow. A chap can't weally help likin' Figgins, somehow!"

Cousin Ethel gave him the sweetest smile she had ever bestowed upon him.

"Then why not take it very seriously, and back him up, and see that all your friends do so, Arthur? It would be genèrous, and like you."

"Any old thing," said Arthur Augustus, "if you weally think I ought—"

"I think it would be kind and generous of you!"

"Done!" said Arthur Augustus. "Aftah all, miwacles have happened befoah, so why shouldn't Figgay bwing off the exam., pew-waps? Anyway, I'm goin' to wally wound him, and I'll see that the othah chaps back up, too, and wally wound old Figgins!"

And Cousin Ethel's face was very bright as she bade her cousin good-night and went into the Head's house.

Arthur Augustus was looking unusually serious as he made his way back to Study No. 6. It was impossible for Arthur Augustus to refuse anything asked by a feminine tongue, and Ethel had made him see quite clearly that it would only be the decent thing to help old Figgins now that he was struggling with a heavy task; but Arthur Augustus was a little doubtful about how the other fellows would look at it.

However, he had made up his noble mind on one point—whatever the other fellows did or didn't do, he was going to keep his word to Cousin Ethel, and rally round old Figgins.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER

"Rally Round!"

TOM MERRY AND Co. were finishing the ginger-beer and nuts in Study No. 6 when Arthur Augustus returned. The serious look upon his aristocratic face attracted their attention at once as he came into the study.

"Wherefore that pensive brow?" asked Blake.

Arthur Augustus did not reply for the moment. He assumed his favourite attitude when about to lay down the law—standing with his back to the fire, with his eyeglass between finger and thumb of his right hand.

The juniors all looked at him curiously. It was evident that something of unusual importance was coming.

"Get it off your chest!" said Blake.

"Can't you see we're on giddy tenter-hooks?"

"I have somethin' to say to you chaps."

"Pile on! Life's short!" reminded

Lowther.

"Pway don't intewwupt me with your funny wemarks, Lowthah! I entweat you to keep all that for the comic column in the 'Weekly.' As we are not bound to wead that column, it does no damage there! On the othah hand—"

"Is this a lecture or a sermon?" inquired Manners politely.

"Neithah, deah boy. But I do not want to be intewwupted. I have been thinkin'—"

"Not really!" exclaimed Monty Lowther, in great astonishment.

"Weally, you ass—"

"Order!" exclaimed Blake. "For goodness sake, don't interrupt, or this will last all the evening, and to be continued in our next! Gussy, old man, cut the cackle, and come to the hosses!"

"It's about Figgins. I wegard Figgins as a vewy decent chap, and a wathah deservin' chap."

"Figgy is all right," said Tom Merry, in wonder. "What next?"

"Figgins is entahin' for a vewy diffcult exam. I considah that Figgins has a wight to be wegarded sewiously."

"Oh!"

"My hat!"

"Great pin!"

"Rot!"

"Rubbish!"

Arthur Augustus jammed his eyeglass into his eye, and looked round upon the juniors with a very severe glance.

"Yaas," he said emphatically, "that is my point of view. I admit that it did not stwike me until Ethel mentioned it."

"Oh! Did Ethel say so?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, that alters the case!" agreed Blake.

"Of course, Figgy is only playing the giddy ox, and we can't possibly take him seriously, though."

"I wegard it as bein' up to us to take him sewiously and help him!" said Arthur Augustus firmly. "Of course, he is an ass—I'll admit that. But he is a wathah decent chap, and though he's only a New House boundah, he is weally one of our pals, isn't he?"

"Oh, yes; that's all right!"

"Well, when a pal of ours is up against somethin' specially hard, I wegard it as our duty to wally wound him."

"To—to to which?"

"Wally wound him!"

"Oh, rally round him!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "Good egg! So we're to rally round old Figgins!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Not a bad idea," said Tom heartily. "I've said so before to you, Monty. Let's rally round Figgins and buck him up."

"But there's such a blessed lot of fun in Figgy enterin' for an exam.!" said Lowther. "It's worth whole comic papers to us."

"Lowthah, I say it is up to us to wally wound Figgins," said Arthur Augustus, with great firmness. "I twust you are goin' to wally wound with the west."

"Weally and twuly wound with the west!" chuckled Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lowther grunted.

"Oh, I'm on," he said, "if you all think so. You can count me in. But it's rotten! I was planning all sorts of rags for Figgins."

"Well, so was I, as a matter of fact," said Blake, rather ruefully. "Still, we'll rally round. After all, there may be a millionth part of a baby chance that Figgy may pull off the exam. if he swots himself black and blue."

"Oh, piffle!"

"Bosh!"

"I think he might have a ghost of a chance," said Tom Merry. "Of course, Manners will beat him; but he may get in second if—he moves mountains."

Manners was looking very thoughtful.

"I don't know that I care much about the Bishop's Medal," he said. "I've bagged lots of their blessed pots and things. It seemed a pity to let it go to such a rotter as Levison—that was why I put my name down. But if Figgy's really seriously going to hunt for it, I'm blessed if I don't stand out!"

"Bai Jove!"

"I say, that's rather a lot to do, Manners, old man," Tom Merry remarked. "In my opinion, the medal was a dead cert. for you!"

"Levison and Brooke both have a good chance," said Manners. "I think very likely I should have beaten them. But, hang it all, I've collared plenty of things, and Figgins has never bagged even a book prize. I'm not going to be a hog. Figgins has never taken anything yet, and I'm not going to stand in his way. I'm not keen on it, anyway."

"Well, that's one way of rallying round Figgins!" said Blake, laughing. "Are you going to take your name off the list, then?"

"Yes," said Manners, with a nod.

"Good egg!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I think I'll twot ovah to the New House, and tell Figgins that we're goin' to wally wound him."

And Arthur Augustus lost no time. Whatever Arthur Augustus did, he did with all his heart, and he was already enthusiastic

over the scheme of rallying round Figgins and helping him through his examination.

Brimming over with good resolutions and the milk of human kindness, Arthur Augustus came up to the New House with his graceful saunter.

But, as luck would have it, he was spotted just in front of the House by Redfern and Owen and Thompson, of the Shell; and Pratt, of the Fourth, and several other New House juniors; and, mindful of the row in the

tuck-shop, those cheerful juniors rushed upon him without a word of warning, and seized him and swept him off his noble feet.

Arthur Augustus gave a wild yell as he was whirled into the air. Earth and sky, trees and stars seemed to swim about him in wild confusion.

"Yawwooh! Welease me! Let me down at once, you wottahs!"

Bump!

The New House juniors obeyed, and they let him down—hard.

"Oh, cwumbs! You are—ow!—wuinin' my twousahs! Lemme gewwup, you wottahs! Oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No School House tramps allowed on the decent side of the quadrangle!" grinned Redfern. "Run him back to his own House!"

"Ha, ha! Come on!"

"Ow! You wottahs! I have come ovah—"

"Ha, ha! And now you're going back!"

"I came here to look for—"



"I've said I'm not going to play, and I won't!" said Figgins doggedly. Kerr looked at him very straight. "Then I've got no more to say, excepting that I am ashamed of you, Figgins!" (See Chap. 10)

"Trouble!" chuckled Owen. "And you've found it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And in the midst of the yelling New House juniors the struggling swell of the School House was rushed back at top speed across the quadrangle, up the steps of the School House, and dumped down within doors.

With a final yell the New House fellows fled before a hand could be raised against them, and vanished across the dusky quadrangle again.

Arthur Augustus sat and gasped.

"My hat!" exclaimed Tom Merry, running down the stairs. "Is that you, Gussy?"

"Gwooh-wooh! Yaaa! Gwooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Have you seen Figgins?"

"I have not seen Figgins! Ow! I was collared by a gang of young wuffians—ow!—and twented with gwoos—ow!—disrespect! Gwooh!"

"Then you haven't told Figgins we're going to rally round him?" chuckled Tom.

"Ow! Blow Figgins! Wow!"

And Arthur Augustus departed in search of a clothes-brush and a clean collar, and Figgins, who was grinding away at Horatius Flaccus, remained in blissful ignorance of the fact that the School House juniors had resolved to rally round him.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

The Limit!

A FEW days later Tom Merry, of the Shell, might have been seen, as they say in the novels—and, as a matter of fact, was seen—to wear a worried look.

It was a Saturday, and in the afternoon the St. Jim's junior eleven were going over to Abbotsford to play the team there.

The junior team of St. Jim's was selected from the best players in the two junior House teams, and Tom Merry was the captain thereof.

Now, although when heated with argument with the New House fellows, Tom Merry would maintain that any fellow in the School House could give any fellow in the New House the "kybosh" at footer, yet on the occasions

when the junior team played outsiders, Tom was very particular to secure the services of Figgins and Co.

On such occasions Figgins and Co. could not possibly be left out.

Figgins was a wonderful forward, Kerr was a most reliable half, and Fatty Wynn was simply a marvel in the "chicken-run."

Figgins and Co. had their places in the junior eleven, as a matter of course, when the match was of any importance, and, as a rule, they were very keen to play.

But a change had come over Figgins of the Fourth.

Figgins was swotting.

For days now Figgins had been at it, and owing to the noble resolution of Tom Merry and Co. to rally round him, he had been allowed to prosecute his unusual studies without interruptions or rags.

Indeed, Arthur Augustus had kindly offered to coach him, an offer which Figgins had, for reasons unknown to Arthur Augustus, declined with thanks.

Figgins had shown an astonishing keenness for study. He stuck to it all the harder because it was against the grain. But the general opinion was that he was overdoing it. For he was cutting footer practice for the sake of the grind.

And now the day of the Abbotsford match had come. Tom Merry had a suspicion that Figgins meant to cut the match, and stay at home mugging up Latin, instead of kicking goals for St. Jim's on the footer field.

And the prospect of leaving behind one of his best forwards brought a worried look to the youthful brow of the junior captain.

There were plenty of fellows to take Figgins' place, so far as that went—indeed, many fellows regarded themselves as possible improvements on Figgins—but Tom Merry knew that he would not be able to find an inside-right to equal old Figgins. And the Abbotsford match was a stiff one. There were rumours that Abbotsford were in specially good form, and were going to make terrific efforts to wipe out two successive defeats. And the unanimous opinion of the junior football committee at St. Jim's was that Figgins couldn't be left out.

When the Fourth Form came out of the Form-room on Saturday morning, therefore, Tom Merry was waiting for Figgins in the passage. The Shell had come out a couple of minutes earlier. Figgins, as he came down the passage with a book under his arm and a thoughtful expression on his face, found himself stopped by the Terrible Three.

"Halt!" said Monty Lowther. "Stand and deliver!"

Figgins grinned feebly.

"Don't be funny, now!" he said. "I'm in a hurry. I've got time for another grind before dinner."

"Your mistake!" said Tom Merry. "You haven't!"

"Yes, I have!" said Figgins, in surprise, looking at his watch.

"Not at all—you've got an engagement."

"An engagement?" said Figgins, staring at him.

"Yes, you're coming down to the footer-field, to show us what kind of form you're in for this afternoon."

"This afternoon?" said Figgins vaguely.

"You may have forgotten that there's a match on with Abbotsford?" Manners remarked sarcastically.

"Match?" said Figgins. "Abbotsford? Oh, yes! I'm sorry, Tom Merry—I shan't be able to play this afternoon."

Tom Merry looked very grim.

"I thought that was coming," he observed. "Well, you're going to play. We can't spare you. Do you want Abbotsford to lick St. Jim's?"

Figgins looked distressed.

"Oh, no, no! Put Reddy in instead. He's all right."

"I know he is—right as rain," agreed Tom Merry. "But if your silly wits hadn't gone wool-gathering after Latin conjugations and declensions and deponent verbs and things, you'd remember that Redfern is right-half already. As he can't be in two places at once, I can't very well play him as inside-right, too. I would if I could—but I don't see how it's to be done."

Figgins smiled.

"I—I was thinking of something else," he said. "You see, I find that blessed grind for

the Bishop's Medal is harder than I thought."

"Go on!" murmured Manners.

"But I'm determined to bring it off, or at least get honourable mention, or bust a boiler," said Figgins. "I'll run you pretty close, Manners."

"You won't run me very close," said Manners. "I'm not in it."

"Your name's down," said Figgins.

"I've withdrawn."

Figgins whistled.

"I hadn't heard. What did you withdraw for?"

"Sort of decided to, somehow," said Manners. "I'm going in for the Percy Prize, instead. Levison and Brooke are your toughest rivals now—and Brooke doesn't have much time for grinding at exams., now he's got coaching work to do. You've got Levison to beat. The others won't touch Levison."

"Well, I'll try," said Figgins. "Levison will be a hard nut to crack—but he's not your form, and I think I shall beat him if I work hard at it. So you see I've got to chuck footer for a bit."

Tom Merry shook his head.

"That's just where you make a mistake," he replied. "You can't really grind for an exam, unless you keep fit. If you shut yourself up all the time, and get off colour, you can't put your beef into your work. A good game of footer every now and then will make you fit for the swotting."

"I'm sorry——"

"Nothing to be sorry about. You'll grind all the better afterwards when you've played Abbotsford and kicked goals for St. Jim's."

Figgins looked worried.

"I'm sorry," he repeated. "But I really can't, you know. I know you mean well, but I simply can't give up an afternoon."

"We can't leave you out."

"But—but there are others, you know. Look here, I'm going to have a jolly hard grind this afternoon. I simply can't come. You can easily fill my place."

"Look here, Figgy, I know what I'm talking about. You'll be making yourself ill, sticking indoors and grinding away, after what you've been used to. Suppose you fall ill, and

get cracked for the exam—how would you like that?"

"Oh, I shall be all right."

"You'll be all righter if you help us play Abbotsford. The fact is, Figgy, they're very hot stuff—they've got two or three new men who are reported to be regular corkers—all ready to spring on us to-day. We can't run risks. I don't mind saying that you are the best inside-right we've ever played. If we leave you out, it may make all the difference."

"Thanks! But——"

"We leave here at two," said Tom Merry. "The brake will be at the gate then. You'll be ready?"

"I can't come."

"What! Haven't I explained——"

"It's no good!" said Figgins. "I can't come. My heart wouldn't be in it, anyway. You must let me off, this time."

"Rats!"

"Rubbish!"

"I'm really sorry—but try Lawrence or Owen or Thompson—but I shall really have to stand out for once. I'm sorry—but there you are. I've got special reasons for wanting to pass this exam. I can't afford to throw away chances."

"You won't pass it unless you look after your health; and you can't look after your health without taking a proper amount of exercise."

"Oh, my health's all right."

"Look here; you must come!"

"I can't—I really can't!"

And Figgins, to save further argument, dodged the Terrible Three, and darted out of the house. The Shell fellows rushed after him.

"Figgins! Stop a minute!"

"Can't!"

"Collar him!" shouted Tom Merry.

Figgins broke into a run, and the Terrible Three dashed in pursuit. But Figgy's pace, as he crossed the quadrangle, showed that swotting had not impaired his speed, at all events.

He dashed away like a deer, and disappeared into the doorway of the New House, leaving the Terrible Three baffled and exasperated in the quad.

"Hang it all!" said Tom Merry, as they

turned back. "This is rotten! We can't leave him out."

"What's to be done, then?"

"Blessed if I know. But he's jolly well not going to be left behind, if we have to take him by the ears and bundle him neck and crop into the brake!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

And the Terrible Three, instead of proceeding to the footer-ground, proceeded to call together Blake and Co., and other members of the team, to consult what was to be done in the case of the recalcitrant Figgins.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

[Not To Be Left Out]

TOM MERRY's team for the Abbotsford match consisted of seven School House fellows and four of the New House. Figgins and Co. and Redfern represented the New House. The School House members were Tom Merry, Lowther, Kangaroo, Blake, D'Arcy, Reilly, and Herries. The seven, when the matter was discussed, were unanimously of opinion that Figgins couldn't be left out. Tom had not called the New House members to the meeting, as he guessed that the measures he had in contemplation might not be approved of by Kerr and Wynn, at least.

"Like his blessed cheek to ask to be left out, I think," growled Herries. "Why, the New House fellows were grumbling at only having four members in the team, against our seven. Now one of them wants to stand out!"

"Sure, and he can't be allowed," said Reilly. "If it was any other match, it wouldn't matter entirely. Young Mulvaney could be put in—he's jolly good form. But we've got to put in the toppest team we can get to beat Abbotsford this time."

"We could fill Figgy's place easily enough," assented Tom Merry, "if it were a match a bit less stiff than this. But as it is——"

"Figgy's got to play."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"He's as obstinate as a giddy mule," Monty Lowther remarked. "I don't believe he can be talked over."

"Then he'll have to be walked over!" said Blake.

"Hear, hear!"

"Yaas, wathah! If Abbotsford beat us by a nawwow margin Figgay would feel awf'ly wotten about it," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "It would pwobably wowwy him and upset him for his beastly swottin', and so in the long run it would do him more harm than good. Besides, if he isn't made to take some exahcise, he'll swot himself ill!"

"He's got to play!" said all the fellows together.

"Yaas. You wemembah, deah boys, that we have agweed to wally wound Figgins. I wegard this as an important point. Figgay is ovahto doin' it. As his pals, who have sworn to wally wound him, we are bound to pwevent him from ovahto doin' it. It is our dutay as—

as—"
"As ralliers round, or as rally-rounders!" said Monty Lowther.

"Yaas, it is our dutay as wally-woundahs to see that Figgay doesn't ovahto that beastly swottin'. I wecommend stern measuahs!"

"Good!" said Tom Merry. "My idea is this—we'll wait till the brake's at the gate, and get Kerr and Wynn and Reddy in it first, in case they feel inclined to interfere—as they are New House kids they might cut up rusty—then we'll collar Figgins by main force and drag him in."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If he won't go quietly we'll sit on him, and when we get to Abbotsford—why, as he's there, of course, he'll play."

"Good egg!" said Blake heartily.

"Yaas, wathah! It is wathah dwastie, but I don't see any othah way. We'll all back you up, deah boy!"

"Only the other New House chaps may chip in, and make a House row of it!" said Herries rather doubtfully. "We don't want a House rag just before a footer match."

"No; we shall have to be careful," agreed Tom Merry. "Most of the New House chaps will be against Figgins standing out of the match, you know. Still, we'll be careful. I don't see anything else that can be done."

"Wathah not, considewin' that we have pwomised to wally wound old Figgins!"

And so it was decided. The juniors went down to the footer-ground for a punt about

before dinner, joining the New House members of the team there. When they came off the field, Kerr joined Tom Merry, looking rather anxious and worried.

"I suppose you've heard from Figgay about his standing out?" he asked.

"Yes," said Tom.

"I've been keeping him from telling you all the week," said Kerr. "I hoped I should be able to dissuade him. But he's as firm as a rock."

"It's all right!" said Tom Merry. "I think we shall see him at Abbotsford this afternoon after all, Kerr."

Kerr shook his head.

"You don't know how set he is on that blessed exam," he said. "He's putting it before everything else, and he'll be making himself ill with overwork soon. The queer thing is that I'm beginning to believe that he has a chance. I've been through last year's papers with him, and the amount that he has picked up already is astonishing. I never thought he had it in him. Now that Manners has withdrawn I think Figgay will very likely pull it off, unless he breaks down before the exam."

There was a chuckle from Levison of the Fourth, who overheard Kerr's remark.

"Will you take a bet on it?" asked Levison.

"I'll give you five to one that I get in ahead of Figgins in the exam."

"No, I won't," said Kerr disdainfully. "Make your rotten bets with Mellish, or Cutts of the Fifth—they're not in my line."

Levison grinned spitefully.

"Well, I'll take jolly good care that your precious Figgins doesn't have much chance for the exam," he said. "I've been slacking a bit myself, but I could beat Figgins blindfolded, and you know it."

"We shall see," said Kerr, and he walked away with Tom Merry, leaving Levison scowling.

"You don't think you can persuade Figgins to come, Kerr?" the captain of the junior eleven asked.

"I'm afraid not."

"Well, we shall see. The brake's here at two—you'll be ready!"

"Right-ho!"



Like an arrow from a bow, Figgins sprang forward and crashed upon the goalkeeper. Back he went into his own territory, reeling, and collapsed with the ball in his hands—charged fairly into the net! (See Chap. 11.)

And the juniors went in to dinner.

Promptly at two o'clock the brake drew up outside the gates of St. Jim's. Kerr and Wynn and Redfern came down with their bags, and Reilly and Blake and D'Arcy and Herries joined them. Manners and Mulvaney, who were going as reserves, also got into the brake. Kerr looked round, but there was no sign of Tom Merry or Lowther or Kangaroo.

"Where are the other chaps?" he asked.

"Oh, they're coming!" said Jack Blake, with a grin.

"Who's playing instead of Figgins?" Kerr asked.

"Ahem! Perhaps Figgy will be playing after all."

"Oh, no—he's not coming!"

"Pewwaps he may come," smiled Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "In fact, I wathah fancy that Tom Mewwy has gone to twy and persuade him to come."

"It won't be much good," said Redfern. "I've jawed to him for a steady ten minutes on the subject, but he's as obstinate as a mule."

"Not a bit of good," said Fatty Wynn sorrowfully. "I should never have believed it of Figgy, but he's putting that rotten exam. before a football match. Queer, ain't it?"

"Yaas, it's wathah wotten—but Figgy stand by their chum. But they had no choice. The School House fellows in the brake outnumbered them, and they were pinned down.

"Shurrup!" said Blake.

Kerr looked at them quickly and suspiciously.

"I say, is there some game on?" he exclaimed. "We can't have any larks with old Figgins, you know. If he chooses to stand out, he stands out, and that's all there is about it."

"Not quite all!" grinned Blake.

"Wathah not!"

Kerr jumped up.

"I think I'll just run back to the New House——"

Jack Blake grabbed Kerr and dragged him back into his seat.

"No, you won't, my son!" he chuckled.

"Steady on! You New House kids are staying here. Look out, you fellows!"

"Look here——" shouted Kerr.

"It's no go, Kerr!" said Herries. "Don't let any of 'em get out of the brake, you chaps!"

"What-ho!"

Redfern laughed, and remained motionless in his seat.

"If you've got any dodge for making Figgins come, you're welcome," he said. "School matches come before House rows. Figgins ought to come. I jolly well shan't interfere."

"Quite wight," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I quite approve of your attitude in mattah, Weddy!"

"Good! Now I can feel quite comfy," yawned Redfern. "If you hadn't approved Gussy, I should have felt frightfully worried."

"Weally, Weddy——"

"Look here, we're getting out!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn. "Let go my arm, Mulvaney, you beast! Leggo, my collar, Herries! Get off my feet, Manners!"

"Rats!"

"Yaas, wats!"

Kerr and Wynn began to struggle, but the School House fellows held them firmly in their seats. Redfern whistled cheerily. Kerr and Wynn, as a matter of fact, were in sympathy with Tom Merry's device, which they now suspected, but they felt bound to

stand by their chum. But they had no choice. The School House fellows in the brake outnumbered them, and they were pinned down.

There was a sudden shout from Mulvaney.

"Arrah! Here they come!"

"Hurrah!"

THE NINTH CHAPTER

By Main Force!

FIGGINS was in his study, when Tom Merry and Lowther and Harry Noble entered the New House. Figgins was looking a little glum as he bent over his books. He had felt that he was bound to devote half-holidays to study instead of to sport, until the Bishop's Medal exam. was over. But it was hard. His whole soul was with the team who were going over to Abbotsford to do battle for the St. Jim's colours. He was worried, too, at the thought that the reserve who would be played in his place might not be up to his form—probably would not be. Figgins was not conceited; but he knew his own value in a football team—if he had not been one of the best players in the New House, he would not have been skipper of the junior House eleven. But he felt that he had a duty to do, however worrying it was, and he stood by it manfully. The thought had crossed his mind that he might be overdoing it—Kerr had hinted as much to him.

But Figgy felt that that was a temptation to leave his books, and he would not yield to it. He was seated at the study table, with a Latin dictionary open before him, a Horace on his left hand, and "Latin Verse" on his right, when the three School House fellows walked cheerfully in.

Figgins turned his head and looked at them dolefully. He could not help looking glum. He thought they had come to say good-bye, and he would have given anything to shy his books into the fire and go with them.

"Just off?" he asked.

"Yes—come on!"

Figgins made a weary gesture.

"Don't begin that again, for goodness' sake!" he said. "It's bad enough as it is—you don't know how much I want to come. But I can't, and there's an end of it."

"That's where you make your little mistake," said Monty Lowther. "That isn't the end of it!"

"Just the beginning of it, in fact!" remarked Kangaroo.

"The fact is, you're overdoing it, Figgy!" Tom Merry explained. "As your friends, we can't stand by and let you overdo it, and knock yourself up. That isn't good business. We're going to look after you—especially as we can't possibly spare you from the Abbotsford match."

"Good-bye," said Figgins grimly.

"Now, as a sensible chap—"

"You're keeping the other fellows waiting," said Figgins, "and, as a matter of fact, you're wasting my time. Good-bye, and good luck at Abbotsford!"

The School House fellows exchanged glances. They were quite willing to persuade Figgins, if Figgins was open to persuasion. But if he wasn't, they were equally ready to use other measures.

"We're not going without you," said Tom Merry bluntly.

"Then you won't go at all," said Figgins.

"In other words, you've got to come, and you can walk or be carried," said the Australian junior. "That's the whole extent of your choice, Figgy."

"Don't play the giddy ox," said Figgy impatiently. "Buzz off, and let me get to work. It's hard enough, anyway."

The three School House juniors did not buzz off. They advanced upon Figgins; and Figgins jumped to his feet.

"Get out!" he exclaimed angrily. "You silly asses, do you think you're going to take me to Abbotsford against my will? Are you dotty?"

"No; but you are," said Tom Merry.

"Now, are you coming?"

"No!" roared Figgins.

"Collar him!"

Figgins dodged round the table.

"You silly chumps!" he panted. "Do you want a scrimmage just before a footer-match? I'll call the other fellows in if you don't clear off!"

"The other fellows are all out," said Tom Merry coolly. "Most of them have started for

Abbotsford already to see the match. There's hardly a fellow left in the House, and there are plenty of our chaps hanging round the House to come in if we want them. You are coming with us, Figgy."

"I'm not!" yelled Figgy.

"'Nuff said!" exclaimed Kangaroo. "Have him out!"

Figgins dodged round the table again, with Kangaroo after him. He made a break for the door, but Monty Lowther intercepted him.

"Now, Figgy—yaroooh!" roared Lowther.

Figgins' blood was up. He hit out, and Lowther rolled over on the study carpet. But Tom Merry's grasp was upon Figgy the next moment, and he was dragged back from the door. Kangaroo's arm was thrown round his neck from behind; and Lowther, jumping up, collared him also with great energy. Figgins struggling wildly, was borne to the floor in the midst of the three.

On the floor he rolled and wrestled, but three sturdy juniors pinned him down, and Figgins had no chance. He put up a good fight, however, and the trio were panting breathlessly by the time they had secured him.

"Got him!" gasped Tom Merry at last.

"Now, Figgy, are you coming quietly?"

"No!" gurgled Figgins.

"Then we shall carry you."

"Rescue!" yelled Figgins. "Rescue, New House! Res—groohooooogrrrr!"

Tom Merry stuffed a handkerchief into Figgy's open mouth, and Figgy's yells died away suddenly in a gurgle. Monty Lowther drew a length of whipcord from his pocket, and coolly fastened Figgy's wrists together, Figgins was making wild efforts to eject the gag, but Kangaroo tied a string round his head, effectually keeping the handkerchief in place.

The New House junior lay and glared up at his captors in powerless fury.

"Now, walk him out!" panted Tom Merry.

Figgins was lifted to his feet.

Tom Merry took one arm, and Kangaroo the other, Monty Lowther went ahead, and the juniors quitted the study.

Figgins had to walk. When he declined to move his legs, Tom Merry and Kangaroo swung him clear of the floor and carried him out. It was more comfortable to walk.

In this guise they descended the stairs, Figgins looking round in vain for succour. In the lower passage there were some fags, and they came running up; but Figgins was rushed out of the House in a twinkling, and outside the New House there were a dozen School House fellows ready to surround him. Figgins could have drawn the Housemaster from his study by making a row, and certainly Mr. Ratcliff would have put a summary stop to the proceedings—and he would also have reported the three invaders to their Housemaster for punishment—but Figgins had no intention of doing that; it was not playing the game. Outside the New House the crowd of fellows surrounded him, and he was rushed away towards the gates without any casual observers in the quadrangle even seeing Figgins in the throng, so the fact that his hands were tied escaped notice. At the gate Tom Merry jerked the handkerchief from his mouth.

"Come on, Figgy; it's all up now, you know."

"Groo! Lemme go!"

"Lift him in!"

"Rescue!" spluttered Figgins.

The juniors heaved him into the brake. Kerr and Wynn, loyal to their chief, were struggling in the brake; but they were held fast by the fellows there. Figgins went whirling into the brake, and tumbled over there among the many feet, and Tom Merry and Co. scrambled in after him.

"Drive on!" shouted Tom Merry.

The brake started.

Figgins, with three or four School House fellows sitting upon him, writhed and struggled helplessly in the bottom of the brake.

The juniors at the gates laughed and cheered as the brake rolled away. The driver cracked his whip, and the horse broke into a trot.

The team for Abbotsford were fairly started now, and Figgins was with them!

THE TENTH CHAPTER

Figgins says "No!"

"LEMMERUP!"

Thus George Figgins

Figgins was wriggling under quite a heap of juniors. The brake was as full as it could hold of fellows who were going to play

Abbotsford, and fellows who were going to see them do it. Lawrence and Owen and several other New House juniors had jumped in, but they followed Redfern's example, and did not "chip in." Only Kerr and Wynn strove to come to their leader's assistance, and they were firmly held.

"Are you going to be quiet?" asked Tom Merry.

"No!" roared Figgins. "I'm going to get out."

"Then you'll stay where you are."

"Lemme gerrup! I'll pulverise you! I'll—I'll—"

"Go easy!" said Kangaroo. "No good trying to shift me off, Figgins. I'm planted on your manly chest. All the way to Abbotsford, if necessary."

"Gerroff! Gerrooh! Ow!"

"Sit on his head, Hammond. It's soft enough to be comfortable."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Keep off, Hammond, you beast! Look here, you rotters! Help me, Kerr! Back up, Fatty! Reddy, lend a hand!"

Redfern shook his head.

"Can't be did, Figgy. I think you ought to come to Abbotsford."

"Won't you back up your own House?" roared Figgins.

"Not in playing the giddy ox," said Redfern calmly. "It's all right. You'll be glad of it afterwards. It's like taking medicine, you know."

"You're going!" said Tom Merry, with a chuckle.

"I won't play when I get there."

"Yes, you will, Figgy. You won't sulk. You'll play up like a sportsman," said the St. Jim's junior captain cheerfully.

Figgins relapsed into grim silence. He was in for it now, and there was no escape from the hands of his captors. And the brake was bowling along at a good speed, covering the ground in fine style.

"Get off me, you beasts!" growled Figgins at last. "I'll stay in the brake."

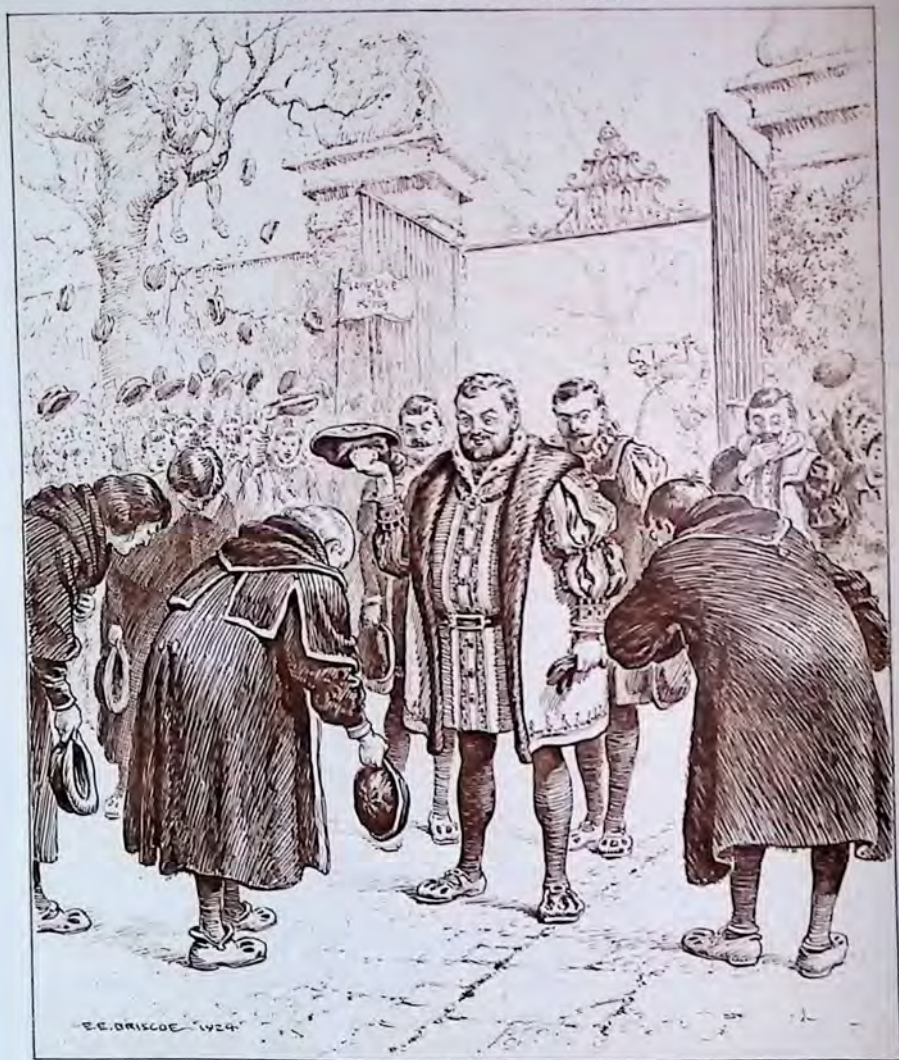
"Honest Injun?"

"Yes!" snapped Figgins.

"Let him get up."

The juniors rose from their seats on various parts of Figgins' person, and Figgy scrambled

AN HISTORIC JAPE AT ST. JIM'S



To face page 281

BLUFF (!) KING HAL VISITS THE SCHOOL!

THE BIGGEST SCHOOLBOY HOAX ON RECORD

NEVER in the history of St. Jim's has there been such an amazing "jape" as that which was perpetrated by one of the senior boys in the school during the reign of Henry the Eighth.

The name of Dick Drysdale will be handed down through all the generations of St. Jim's scholars.

Drysdale was a born impersonator, with a positive genius for disguise. He planned what we might call a super-jape. He confided to his three chums that he proposed to impersonate the King, and to honour St. Jim's with a royal visit. "Verily, 'twill work like a charm!" he said. "I will be Bluff King Hal, and ye shall act as my retainers. We will play a hoax that will set all tongues wagging at St. Jim's—yea, and throughout the land!"

Drysdale had a relative who was an actor; and from him he obtained the necessary costumes. Then he caused a message to be sent to the headmaster of St. Jim's to the effect that His Gracious Majesty proposed to honour the school with a visit on Founder's Day. The message was written on an imposing-looking scroll, and the Head did not question its genuineness; and when Founder's Day dawned there were stirring scenes at the old school. Drysdale and his fellow conspirators had adjourned to a lonely spot in the woods and donned their disguises. Then, having hired a number of noble steeds from the King's Arms at Wayland, they rode majestically away to St. Jim's. Here they received the humble obeisance of the Head and the masters, and a mighty ovation from the scholars.

The bogus monarch and his bogus retainers were shown round the school by the Head, who flattered and fawned upon "His Most Gracious Majesty," little dreaming that he was eating humble pie to one of his own pupils! The great jape was carried through without a hitch; and it was not until Drysdale left the school that he confessed to having been the prime mover in the biggest schoolboy hoax in history.

(Continued from page 280.)

up, gasping. He gave the juniors grim looks, to which they replied with pleasant grins, and glumly sat down in the brake. He was silent for a long time, while the fellows round him chatted over the coming match and the school's prospects in it. Manners took a pocket Horace from his jacket, and passed it to Figgins.

"Improve the shining hour, like the giddy busy bee, Figgy, old man," he said.

"Oh, thanks!" said Figgins.

And his face cleared a little as he opened the volume, and was soon deep in the "Carmina," turning the pages continually to refer to the notes at the end and then blinking back at the text. The other fellows grinned as they watched him. They did not mind Figgins "swotting" on the way to Abbotsford so long as he played up when he reached the place.

The brake bowled on through the country lanes and ran into Abbotsford at last. The school appeared in sight. Tom Merry tapped Figgins on the shoulder, and Figgins came out of Horatius Placcus with a start.

"We're there, Figgy," said Tom.

"I'm not going to play," said Figgins.

"Stuff!"

"I haven't got my things with me, for one thing!" growled Figgins. "You didn't think of that when you yanked me out of my study."

"Yes, we did!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "We've brought you some of Kangy's things. They fit you, you know."

"Look here, I'm not going to be ragged into playing if I don't choose to," said Figgins morosely. "You had no right to bring me here."

The brake halted before Tom Merry could reply. The St. Jim's fellows swarmed out, and were greeted by the Abbotsfordians. Figgins was the last to leave the brake. He glanced round him as if meditating bolting; but the other fellows were all round him; and Figgy, too, did not want to make a scene before the Abbotsford players.

But his look was still very grim, as he was walked into the dressing-room in the midst of the St. Jim's party.

"You're not changing, Figgy," said Tom Merry, after a minute or two.

The St. Jim's players were rapidly turning into their football things, with the exception of Figgins. He was standing with a moody brow.

"I'm not going to change!" said Figgins, doggedly.

"Buck up!" urged Tom Merry.

"I won't, I tell you!"

Tom Merry looked a little nonplussed. It was so utterly unlike Figgins to be sulky that Tom had not counted upon that. He had not doubted for a moment that, once upon the Abbotsford ground, Figgins would fall into line and play up cheerfully.

"Abbotsford will be waiting for us soon," said Kerr quietly.

"Let 'em wait!" said Figgins.

"Look here, old man——" began Fatty Wynn persuasively.

"Bosh!"

Two or three of the team broke out wrathfully.

"Look here, Figgy, none of your rotten sulks."

"You've got to play."

"We'll jolly well hammer you if you don't!"

"Faith, lave him out, and put Mulvaney in!"

"Let the sulky brute go and eat coke!"

"Bump him!"

Figgins was grimly silent. He was evidently very "rusty." Some of the fellows were looking very angry now, and closing round Figgins as if to collar him. Kerr and Wynn had not a word to say.

Tom Merry raised his hand.

"Hold on!" he said. "You say you won't play, Figgins?"

"No, I won't!"

"Very well. We'll play a man short, and if we get licked——"

Figgins jumped.

"Man short!" he exclaimed. "Against Abbotsford? Are you dotty?"

"If we get licked——" went on Tom Merry evenly.

"If!" howled Blake. "We shall be licked to the wide!"

"Licked out of our boots!" said Kangaroo.

"Dished and done!" growled Herries.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"If we get licked," pursued Tom Merry, as soon as he could make his voice heard, "then Figgins can answer for it to all the fellows! I'm going to take ten men into the field, and leave Figgy's place open. If he likes to see St. Jim's play Abbotsford without an inside-right, he can. I shouldn't care to be in his shoes afterwards, that's all."

Figgins frowned.

"That's rotten unfair to me!" he said irritably. "You'll get licked, as sure as a die, and the School will say it's my doing!"

"So it will be your doing!" said Redfern, hotly. "By George! We'll make the New House too hot to hold you if you leave us in the lurch like that, I can tell you!"

"Figgins won't leave us in the lurch," said Tom Merry. "I think I know him better than that. Figgins will take his place."

"I won't!" said Figgins.

"Very well. I mean what I say. You fellows ready?"

"Yes, we're ready."

Tom Merry, without another look at Figgy, walked out of the dressing-room, and the team followed him. Kerr and Wynn lingered behind to reason with their chum.

"Figgy, you can't do it, for the sake of the House!" Kerr expostulated. "The New House will never be able to look anybody in the face again!"

"You must come, Figgy!" urged Fatty Wynn. "Now, get into your things. Here they are, all ready. I'll help you."

"I've said I'm not going to play, and I won't!" said Figgins, with a doggedness his chums had never observed in him before.

Kerr looked at him very straight.

"You don't mean that, Figgy?"

"I do mean it!"

"Then I've got no more to say—excepting that I'm ashamed of you!" said Kerr. And with a very red face, Kerr walked out.

"Figgy, old man——" Fatty Wynn urged helplessly.

"You coming, Wynn?" called out Tom Merry.

"Just coming. I say, Figgy——"

"Wynn, you're wanted! They've won the toss."

The Greyfriars
MASTERS' GALLERY



No. 5.—MR. WALLY BUNTER

This plump and genial master boasts
Admirers by the dozen;
We only wish that there were hosts
Like Billy Bunter's cousin.
A sportsman tried, a sportsman true,
A fearless man and famous;
His head holds lots of learning, too—
He's not an ignoramus.

His manly ways are not the ways
Of Billy or of Sammy;
He shows no greedy, eager craze
For doughnuts sweet and jammy.
He does not tell us stories "tall,"
To tease, torment, and try us;
In fact, he does not rank at all
With the late Ananias!

He rules the inky tribe of fags
In manner firm but pleasant;
Indeed, the lesson never drags
When Wally Bunter's present!
When teaching grammar to his wards
He makes it entertaining;
And it is seldom he awards
An impot, or a caning.

Without a doubt, he holds high place
In this, our masters' gallery;
His deeds are never mean or base,
He well deserves his salary.
He always has a cheery smile,
He's never melancholy;
You'd have to tramp for many a mile
To find a "sport" like Wally!

Fatty Wynn gave Figgins a reproachful look, and hurried out. The teams were in the field, and already lining up. Raikes, the junior captain of Abbotsford, had won the toss, and given St. Jim's a stiff wind to kick off against. Blake touched Tom Merry on the arm.

"You don't mean it—about playing a man short!" he whispered.

"Figgins will come."

"But supposing he doesn't?"

"I think he will. If he doesn't, we must chance it," said Tom steadily. "But Figgins won't find things very pleasant at St. Jim's afterwards if we're beaten."

"You're a man short, Merry," said the referee.

"That's all right," said Tom Merry. "We're ready to start."

"Not crooked—eh?" asked Raikes.

"Oh, no!"

The Abbotsford captain gave him an odd look. If a member of the team had been crooked or turned seedy, Tom Merry had plenty of fellows with him to play instead. And why a member of the team should stay out of the fighting-line at the kick-off was more than Raikes could understand, unless he was seedy. But it was no business of his, if the St. Jim's captain chose to play ten men instead of eleven.

Pheep! went the whistle.

The ball ran from Tom Merry's foot. Figgins had not appeared.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER

Play Up!

TOM MERRY had no time to think about Figgins for the next few minutes.

The Abbotsford fellows came on with a rush, and soon showed their quality. There was a tussle for the ball in the visitors' half, and it went into touch. As the fellows stood round for the throw-in, Tom Merry spotted a long-legged and awkward figure, and smiled.

Figgins must have changed like lightning, for he was on the field now. Tom Merry had judged him well. If the St. Jim's skipper had played a man in his place, Figgins would

have gone. But he could not possibly leave the Saints to fight ten against eleven. Not for the sake of a dozen Bishop's Medals would Figgins have left his comrades in the lurch in that manner.

"Good old Figgy!" said Kerr, greatly relieved.

And Fatty Wynn, in goal, grinned a fat smile of satisfaction.

Never had the aid of Figgins been more required.

The Abbotsford fellows were keen and determined. Their attack was hot and hard pressed, and almost incessant. The Saints were used to attacking, but they found that they had a good deal of defending to do now. When the ball went across the half-way line, it was incessantly sent back, and for a long time none of the St. Jim's forwards got anywhere near the enemy's goal.

Fatty Wynn, between the sticks, was all eyes and hands and feet. It was not easy to send the "pill" past him—never was a chicken-run better guarded.

But for his sturdy defence, Abbotsford would have scored and scored again in the first ten minutes of the play.

But Fatty Wynn was "all there."

The struggle swayed away into midfield, and the ball went continually into touch, but the St. Jim's fellows were gaining ground.

Tom Merry's eyes sought Figgins somewhat anxiously.

Now that he was playing, Tom Merry knew that he would play his best, and work his hardest; he had not the slightest doubt of that.

But he had neglected all practice for a week, and it was likely enough that he would be a little off colour, and every little helped the enemy in so close a match.

Figgins' speed, his accurate passing, and his steady kick at goal were very much wanted now on the St. Jim's side.

And certainly Figgins did not seem to be quite up to his usual form just at first. Perhaps the thought of the exam. and the "swotting" he had had to give up haunted him in spite of himself, and took his heart out of the game. Or perhaps it was only that he had been neglecting practice.

Certainly he did not seem so useful as usual.

The Abbotsford fellows were scoring now. Raikes had passed the ball to his centre, and the centre had put it in, in spite of Fatty Wynn.

It was first blood to Abbotsford.

There were ten minutes of the first half still to go, and the Saints made a desperate effort to equalise, but they exerted themselves in vain.

The whistle went, leaving Abbotsford one to nothing.

It had been a hard half, and the fellows were breathing very quickly as they rested in the interval. Figgins' face was very gloomy.

"I haven't been much good to you, after all, Tom Merry," he said ruefully, as he rubbed his crimson and perspiring face.

"Better luck in the next half," said Tom Merry. "After all, they've only broken their duck."

"Better have put me in," growled Gore of the Shell, who had come over to look on. "Ifancy I couldn't have done worse. Figgins is sulking, and he doesn't want to win."

Figgins heard the words, and his eyes glittered.

But he made no reply. He knew that Tom Merry and Co. would not suspect him of slacking because he had been forced to play; but Gore, and fellows of Gore's kidney, would turn naturally to such a suspicion. And if the match was lost, a good deal of blame would fall to Tom Merry for playing an unwilling man. Figgins inwardly resolved that he would play up like an International in the second half.

The teams lined up, and the second half commenced.

By this time Figgins was feeling all his old form coming back to him, and he was as fresh as paint, and very keen. Horatius Flaccus had vanished from his mind, all thoughts of swotting and mugging were gone, and he was a footballer from the crown of his head to the tips of his toes.

The wind was behind St. Jim's now, and it helped them as much as it had hindered them in the first half. Tom Merry and Co. attacked, and Figgins came out very strong.

With a fine forward rush, they brought the ball up the field, the whole forward line passing like clockwork. The leather went out to D'Arcy on the wing, and he ran it along the touchline, and sent it in to Blake as he was stopped, and Blake centred to Tom Merry as the half ran him off the ball. Tom Merry captured the ball, and rushed on, and as there was no opening he sent it out on the right, and Figgins had it, and sent it further out to Kerr as he was tackled. Kerr sent it back to Figgins, and Figgins to Tom Merry, and Tom to Figgins again, beating the Abbotsford defence by short and fast passing, and it was from Figgins' foot that it whizzed into goal.

Then the St. Jim's spectators shouted.

"Bravo, Figgys!"

"Goal! Goal!"

"Hurrah!"

Kerr patted Figgins enthusiastically on the back.

"Good man!" he exclaimed. "Oh, good man!"

"A bit of luck," said Figgins. "It was the whole line took that goal."

And the St. Jim's fellows lined up for the restart with very cheerful faces.

There were twenty minutes yet to play—plenty of time for the match to be won and lost over and over again. Raikes and his men fought hard for a fresh start on the score, and they succeeded at last, Fatty Wynn being beaten by a shot that few goalkeepers could have saved.

Two to one!

But St. Jim's were in splendid fighting trim now, and ten minutes later Tom Merry whizzed the ball right in, beating the Abbotsford goalie hollow.

Two to two!

"Looks like a draw," yawned Gore of the Shell.

"You can't say Figgins isn't playing up now, hang you!" said Lawrence.

Gore snorted. There was no doubt that Figgins was playing up like a Trojan. He was as good a man as anyone on the field, and better than most.

"Getting close on time!" Mulvaney remarked, looking at his watch. "Not more than four or five minutes now."

"Play up, St. Jim's!"

"On the ball!"

"One goal more, Tom Merry!"

"Play up! Play up!"

Both sides were playing up hard, but the struggle was in the home half, and Abbotsford had plenty to do to defend their goal. Again and again the St. Jim's forwards broke through, but always the defence was sound, and once or twice the home players succeeded in rushing the game into the visitors' territory. But it was whirling back again, and the Abbotsford goal was hotly attacked. All the players knew that it was close on time, and they strained very nerve for that last goal. The play was fast and furious. The referee was handling his whistle when Tom Merry buzzed the leather in, and the goalkeeper just caught it and staggered forward to fling it far. But in his excitement he came a little too far—and Figgins' eagle eye was upon him.

Like an arrow from a bow Figgins sprang forward and crashed upon the goalkeeper.

Back he went into his own territory, reeling, and collapsed with the ball in his hands—charged fairly into the net.

Pheep!

The whistle rang out, while the goalkeeper lay and gasped. There was a frenzied yell from all the St. Jim's fellows on the ground.

"Goal! Goal!"

"Figgins! Figgins! Figgins! Hurrah!"

Right on the stroke of time George Figgins had won the match for St. Jim's, and his fellow-players thumped him on the back, and dug him in the ribs as they came off the ground. Tom Merry's wisdom in playing Figgins was justified now, to the satisfaction of everybody—excepting, perhaps, Abbotsford. And Figgins was grinning joyfully as he came off the field.

"Better than mugging up Latin—what?" Blake bawled in his ear.

Figgins became serious at once.

"My hat! I'd forgotten the mugging!" he said. "Never mind, I'll have to grind at Horace in the brake going back—"

And he did.

As the brake rolled homeward in the winter dusk, Figgins was poring over Manners'

pocket Horace; but as the other fellows were roaring out choruses and playing tin whistles and mouth-organs, it is probable that he did not put in very much real and serious study during that drive home.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER

The Hero of the House!

TOM MERRY's study was crammed.

The passage outside was swarmed.

The St. Jim's juniors were rejoicing. The victory over Abbotsford was being celebrated—and it was being celebrated in tremendous style.

Tom Merry and Co. had pooled funds for the occasion, and quite a raid had been made on Dame Taggles' tuckshop, and everybody had been asked to the feed.

Guests of honour had chairs, stools, or stood up, in the study—the rest swarmed in the passage, where chairs and benches and forms had been dragged for their accommodation.

As Monty Lowther put it poetically, the "red wine flowed freely"—the red wine, however, being represented by mere harmless beverages, such as ginger-beer and lemonade.

The excitement and enthusiasm was great, and the noise also was considerable. But at a hint from Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, the prefect turned a deaf ear to the noise. The juniors had won one of their toughest footer matches of the season, and it was only natural that they should want to celebrate it with song and dance, so to speak.

Figgins was the hero of the hour.

Figgins, though he had been fairly kidnapped to play in the match, had won the match for St. Jim's. There was no doubt about that. It had been practically a draw, when Figgy, with lightning promptness, had charged the goalie into the net with the ball in his hands. By that prompt action he had pulled off the match.

But while all St. Jim's—all the juniors, at all events—were prepared to do great honour to Figgins, at any cost to their lungs and their digestion, the modest and unassuming Figgy was avoiding the public eye.

He was expected to come over with Kerr and Wynn, and Redfern and Owen and Lawrence, and the rest of the New House fellows who marched over in a body to join in the jubilee. But he didn't come with them.

"Where's Figgins?" was the general inquiry.

"He's going to look in later," said Kerr, a little awkwardly.

"Bai Jove! But he's the hewo of the hour, you know!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy exclaimed.

"I've told him so," grinned Kerr.

"And what did he say, deah boy?"

"He said rats!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Swotting again?" asked Tom Merry.

"Well, I left him with his nose in a dictionary."

"Grooh!"

"Silly ass!"

"Sure he's coming over, though?" asked Tom Merry. "He must come."

"Well," said Kerr cautiously, "he said he would if he could. If he couldn't, he wants you chaps to excuse him."

"Yes, we'll excuse him—I don't think!" said Tom Merry warmly. "The chap who got the winning goal against Abbotsford isn't going to shut himself up and swot while we're celebrating."

"No fear!"

"Wathah not!"

"Give him a chance," said Blake, "and if he doesn't come, we'll fetch him."

"Yes, rather!" said Fatty Wynn. "I sympathise with Figgy—but I think this is going too far. Missing a feed like this would be a sin and a shame!"

And Fatty Wynn started upon the feed with an energy which proved that he, at all events, had no intention of missing it.

"We'll fetch him presently," said Tom Merry. "Give him half an hour. Pile in, gentlemen!"

The gentlemen were already piling in, as a matter of fact.

Figgins did not appear, and ere long Tom Merry announced his intention of going for him. Blake and Lowther and D'Arcy and Redfern decided to go with him. There might



Figgins uttered a sharp, startled exclamation as the electric light was suddenly switched on. Like a fellow in a dream, he saw the figure of Mr. Ratcliff, his Housemaster, standing before him. "So you have returned, Figgins!" said Mr. Ratcliff grimly (See Chap. 15)

be occasion to use force, as Redfern thoughtfully remarked. Figgins had to come.

"The bounder may sport his oak!" said Digby.

"He can't!" said Fatty Wynn, with a chuckle. "I've got the key of the study in my pocket."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Tom Merry and his comrades crossed over the dusky quadrangle to the New House, and hurried up to Figgins' study.

Figgins was sitting at the study table, his books before him, poring over them with a thoughtful and worried brow.

He did not look happy. He would have been very glad to be sharing in the jollification over at the School House, and the silence and gloom of his study formed a very unpleasant

contrast to the brightness and gaiety he knew would be going on in Tom Merry's study.

But he stuck grimly to his grind.

He could not help sighing a little, however, as his thoughts wandered to the merry scene over in the School House, and Tom Merry and Co. heard that sigh as they came along to his door.

Tom Merry pushed open the door, which was ajar. The juniors looked in, on tiptoe—Figgins had not heard them.

The hero of the Abbotsford match had rested his chin on his hand, and was staring at the book before him with unseeing eyes.

He was plugged in a far from happy reverie, but he started out of it as the door was flung violently back against the wall, and the juniors swarmed in

Figgins jumped to his feet.

"Come on," said Tom Merry; "the feed's going strong! The festive scene is toward in the ancestral halls of the Shell——"

"And goodly viands load the groaning board!" said Jack Blake.

"And the red wine flows like water!" said Monty Lowther.

Figgins grinned.

"Excuse me, you fellows; I'd like to come, but after the time I've lost to-day, I think I'd better not. Leave me here; I must work—I must, really!"

"Come on!" said Redfern. "Never do to-day what you can put off till to-morrow! If pleasure interferes with work, give up work! Come on!"

"But I——"

"This way!" said Blake, taking his arm. "Help him along, Tom Merry!"

Tom Merry took Figgins' other arm.

"March!" he said.

"But I—I—I——"

"This way to the feed!"

And Figgins was extracted from his study, and walked down the stairs, hardly knowing whether to laugh or be angry.

"I say, you chaps, I ought to work, you know!" he expostulated.

"Lots of time for that!" said Monty Lowther. "A feed comes only every now and then, but a chap can always find time for work."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I've got to grind at Horace! There's a viva voce exam. on Horace, you know. They make you construe the beast at sight!"

"Yaas; that's wathah wuff. But I have already offahed to coach you on Howace, if you like, Figgay. I don't know vewy much about him, nevah havin' opened Howace in my life; but I should be vewy willin' to help you!"

Figgins did not appear very grateful for that generous offer.

"Oh, rats!" he said.

"Weally, Figgins——"

"Horace or no Horaces!" said Tom Merry, "you're coming to the feed! Shoulder-high, you chaps! Up with him!"

"But I—I say—my work——"

"Blow your work!"

"The exam.——"

"Blow the exam.!"

"The medal——"

"Blow the medal!"

Figgins gave it up in despair. He was hoisted upon the shoulders of Tom Merry and Monty Lowther, and marched across the dusky quad. Right into the School House he was marched in that guise.

Kildare, of the Sixth, met them in the passage, and grinned.

"Behold the conquering hero!" said Monty Lowther. "A fellow whom the Shell delights to honour!"

"Don't break his neck," said Kildare, laughing.

"Not if we can possibly help it," said Lowther. "But we're bound to honour him, anyway, at the risk of his giddy old neck!"

"Yaas, wathah; we've got to wally wound Figgins, deah boys!"

"Up the stairs!" said Tom Merry.

Mr. Railton, the master of the School House, looked out of his study for a moment; but he smiled, and closed the door again. He was quite willing to give the juniors a little rope on such an occasion for celebrating.

Up the stairs went the juniors, with Figgins shoulder-high in their midst. As soon as they were spotted in the Shell passage there was a throng round them, all cheering the hero of the Abbotsford match.

"Here he comes!"

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Figgins!"

"Way! Way! Place! Place!" shouted Monty Lowther, as they swayed into the study with their honoured burden.

In the crammed study it was not really easy to make way for the procession. Figgins ducked his head just in time to avoid a crack as he came through the doorway, and the movement made him sway so heavily on the shoulders of his bearers that they stumbled.

There was a yell of warning:

"Look-out!"

"Hold on!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

Figgins plunged forward. His bearers and half a dozen other fellows grabbed at him—too

late! Crash he came down upon the festive board!

"Yaroooh!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Gweat Scott!"

There was a terrific crash of crockery-ware as Figgins rolled on the table. He sat up, dazedly, in the butter, with jam smeared over his face, and jellies clinging to his neck.

"Oh, my hat!" he gasped.

There was a yell of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sorry, Figgy! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why didn't you hold on! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Groooh!" growled Figgins, rolling off the table and gaining his feet. "You silly asses! I'm jammy! I'm sticky! I'm buttery and greasy! Groooh!"

"Never mind! It's all in the day's work!" grinned Blake. "You're the giddy guest of honour! Sit down! Here's your chair!"

"I must go and clean——"

"No, you jolly well won't; you'd bolt!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But I'm sticky—I'm jammy!"

"Here's a handkerchief," said Blake, jerking a beautiful cambric from Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's pocket. "Rub the jam off with that!"

"Blake! You—you feahful wottah——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But—but I'm greasy—I'm buttery——"

"Here's Tom Merry's hanky!" said Blake generously. "If they're not enough, you can have Lowther's——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was no escape for the hero of the hour, so Figgins cleaned himself of the butter and jam and jelly as well as he could with the handkerchiefs so liberally supplied by Blake, and sat down to the feed. And in the conviviality that followed he forgot once more all about Horace and all his works.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER

Figgy Requires Looking After!

"Figgy's looking pretty seedy!"

Tom Merry made the remark, one morning a week after the Abbotsford match, as the Fourth-Formers were coming out after lessons.

Figgins had passed them, without looking towards the Terrible Three and gone out into the quad, and as he walked away he was reading!

Reading Latin, walking in the quad—the very last and most hopeless sign of a swot!

All the fellows who saw him exchanged glances. Well-known swots were sometimes seen to read in the quad, mumbling over Latin as they trotted to and fro under the old elms. But Figgins!

Figgins's friends gloomily prognosticated that he was going wholly to the bad. And undoubtedly, as Tom Merry remarked to his chums, old Figgy did look seedy.

"Seedy isn't the word!" said Monty Lowther. "He looks sick and solemn as a boiled owl! He hasn't touched a footer since the match at Abbotsford."

"Hardly even a sprint round the quad, I believe," said Manners.

Jack Blake joined them.

"Looks pretty stuffy, old Figgy, doesn't he?" he remarked.

"Just saying so," said Tom Merry.

"Lucky, the exam. isn't very far off now, or he'd be ill, I think. He's taking it jolly seriously. I never thought he had it in him. By Jove, if he should pull off the exam, we'll give him a stunning ovation!"

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "We'll wally wound him and celebrate like anythin'! And, weally, he may have a chance—Mannahs has withdrawn, and I have not entahed——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I weally do not see anythin' to cackle at in that remark," said Arthur Augustus. "I'm wathah a demon at things like that when I exert myself, you know! I took up Gweek once, and I learned an awful lot in one aftahnnoon—several lettahs of the alphabet, and something else—I forget what now. I was weally thinkin' of goin' in for this medal, but I'm glad I didn't now. I want to give Figgy a look-in. But he will find Levison wathah hard to beat!"

"I suppose Levison has the brains to beat him," Tom Merry admitted. "There's no denying that Levison is clever. But he slacks



Figgins was borne, swaying, into the crowded study, and there was a sudden yell of warning. "Look out!" Figgins plunged forward, and his bearers grabbed at him, too late! Crash he came down upon the festive board (See Chap. 12)

too much; he hasn't been working for the exam."

"He thinks he can do it without working hard, against the other chaps who have entered," Blake remarked; "and he's awfully clever—learns up Latin and Greek just as we might learn English. But he may be oversure; it may be a case of the hare and the tortoise over again."

"I hope it will," said Tom Merry. "I'd rather see Figgins win, though Levison is a School House chap."

"Thank you!" said Levison's sarcastic voice behind him. "I'll remember your good wishes, Tom Merry! It's kind of you!"

Tom Merry turned round, and looked the cad of the Fourth straight in the face.

"I mean it!" he said. "You've taken enough things; and, besides, Figgy's a better chap than you are, and I wish him luck!"

Levison sneered.

"Well, I've got some time left to swot in, and perhaps I may have a chance," he said sarcastically. "I'll ask the Head to shove me into the First Form among the Babes if I let a duffer like Figgins beat me in an exam."

And Levison shrugged his shoulders and walked away.

Tom Merry looked for Figgins after dinner, and found him in his study. Figgins was working.

"Got one minute to spare?" asked Tom, with a smile.

"Just one," said Figgins, in a tired voice. "What is it?"

"Do you want to play in the match next Saturday against Wayland Ramblers' second team?"

Figgins shook his head.

"No; I asked you to put somebody in my place after the Abbotsford match, you remember."

"Yes—I've done it," said Tom Merry. "I'm giving Owen a chance. But your place is always open to you if you choose to take it."

"Thanks! But not till after the exam."

"We play the return match with Greyfriars later," said Tom. "You've simply got to play for that—but that's later than the exam, luckily. So we needn't worry

about that. Are you cutting the junior House-match, too?"

"Yes; I've arranged with Redfern to skipper the team."

"Look here, Figgy, you're overdoing it, you know," said Tom earnestly. "You're losing all your colour, and Fatty Wynn says you're going off your feed."

Figgins smiled faintly.

"Fatty thinks any chap is off his feed if he doesn't eat enough for an army," he remarked.

"I fancy Kerr and Wynn are both anxious about you, Figgy."

"I'm all right."

Figgins turned back to his books. Tom Merry laughed. It was a plain hint that Figgins wanted to be alone.

"There's another matter," said Tom. "While you've been sticking your nose into your blessed books, you've been overlooking other things besides football. There's something going on in your House that you ought to keep an eye on."

Figgins looked startled.

"What's that?" he asked. "I've been rather out of things lately."

"I don't know how much there is in it," said Tom. "I heard it from Levison, and one never knows whether he's telling the truth. But he says he heard Monteith, your prefect, telling Kildare about some junior in your House breaking bounds at night. It seems that Monteith was coming in late the other night, and he spotted a junior getting in at the passage window at the back."

Figgins turned red.

"My hat! Did he?"

"Yes—and he didn't recognise him, and he made a round of the dorms. afterwards and found everybody in bed. Now, if there's an idiot on your side playing the giddy ox like that, he's running the risk of being sacked, Figgy—and as junior captain it's up to you to keep an eye open. You don't want a fellow expelled."

"I don't think there's any danger of that," said Figgins uncomfortably. "We haven't any smart fellows, no giddy blades, in the New House, like——" He paused.

Tom Merry laughed good-humouredly.

"Like we have in the School House—Levison and Gore and Cutts, for example," he said. "Well, I thought I'd mention it to you, Figgy. If you've got a chap here asking for trouble, he'll find it sooner or later, and however big a rotter he may be, it comes rough on a chap to be sacked."

"How do you know he's a rotter?" said Figgins irritably.

Tom Merry looked surprised.

"Well, a chap must be a rotter who breaks bounds at night, I suppose," he said. "He couldn't go out of bounds for any good, I suppose."

"How do you know he goes out of bounds?"

"I don't know, of course," said Tom, still more surprised. "But I don't suppose a fellow gets out of his house nearly at midnight simply to walk round the quad."

"I—I suppose not!" muttered Figgins.

Tom Merry was looking at him very curiously, and Figgins, for some reason, turned very red. A suspicion, natural under the circumstances, came into Tom Merry's mind, but he dismissed it instantly. Old Figgins was not the kind of chap to be guilty of "pub. haunting," or anything of that kind. But Tom Merry's suspicion, momentary as it was, showed in his eyes, and Figgins saw it, and his face, already quite red, grew perfectly scarlet.

"Well, don't be offended, Figgy," said Tom, getting off the table. "I mentioned it, because you're junior House captain, and you ought to know. Of course, it's no business of mine, as a School House chap."

"I—I'm much obliged to you, of course," said Figgins haltingly. "But—but I don't think there's anything wrong."

"Right-ho! I'm off. Give my love to Horace," said Tom Merry; and, with a cheery nod and a smile, he walked out of the study.

Figgins was grinding Latin again before he had passed the doorway.

But Tom Merry's face was very serious as he crossed the quadrangle. He was so serious and thoughtful, that he almost walked into the chums of Study No. 6 as he came into the School House, without seeing them.

"Hallo! Gone to sleep?" asked Blake

genially, as he grabbed hold of Tom Merry's arm and brought him to a halt. "Wherefore this worried brow, oh, my son?"

"I was thinking," said Tom.

"More miracles!" sighed Blake. "When Figgy starts swotting, and you start thinking, I really think the age of miracles has come again! We only want to hear Gussy start talking sense, and then I shall really believe that the end of the world is coming."

"Weally, Blake——"

"I've just seen Figgy, and I've told him that yarn of Levison's, about Monteith having seen a junior scuttling in at a window nearly midnight last night—and if I didn't know Figgins so well——" Tom Merry paused.

"Well?" said Blake curiously.

"He coloured up so much, I should think he was the chap—only it's impossible," said Tom. "He isn't that kind of ass. But he knows who it is—I'm sure of that. Some pal of his playing the giddy ox, and worrying him at a time when he oughtn't to be bothered. It's too bad if that's the case."

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy indignantly. "This is a time for wallyin' wound old Figgins, and not for bothahin' him. The chap ought to be ashamed of himself, whoever he is."

"He ought to be stopped," said Blake, frowning. "Figgy's got a hard, uphill fight before him, and if we are going to let him off footer, and his chums are letting him off the House-matches, too, it's silly rot for a giddy ox to bother him with tricks like that. Perhaps that's what's making him look so badly off colour, as well as the work. The chap ought to be mobbed, whoever he is."

"I was thinking——" began Tom Merry.

Blake nodded quickly.

"I savvy! But it would be a rather serious bizney for us to get out of our House at that time of night to collar him—if we were spotted out——"

"Bai Jove! It would mean twouble——"

"We could risk that, for Figgy's sake," said Tom. "I think there's no doubt that it's weighing on his mind. I remember now that Fatty Wynn mentioned that he woke up one night and found Figgy's bed empty. Figgy came in a few minutes later, and didn't

tell Fatty what he'd got up for—but since we know this, I think it's pretty clear. Figgins knew there was a chap breaking bounds, and had been to look for him or stop him——"

"I can't believe he's the chap himself," said Blake. "It's not in his line at all. Besides, if he was going to play the roving blade like Cutts of the Fifth, he wouldn't do it at a time when he's working up for a hard exam."

"Of course he wouldn't! It's not Figgins. But he knows who it is, and he's worrying about it, and losing his sleep looking after the silly chump, whoever he is. And for a fellow who works as Figgy's doing now to lose his sleep is a serious thing. No wonder the poor chap is looking like putty."

"Bai Jove! It's wotten!"

"It's got to be stopped," said Blake resolutely. "I'll tell you what—we'll take it in turns to watch for the idiot, and collar him the first time he comes out of bounds, and make-believe he's fallen into the paws of a prefect. We'll scare him out of his wits by threatening to take him to the Head, and then let him get away. If that doesn't cure him of breaking bounds at night, nothing will. But I wonder who it is?"

"We shall know if we catch him," said Tom.

"It's a go. Suppose you start with me to-night. And if we draw it blank, Lowther and Manners can watch to-morrow night—and Kangy and Herries the night after—till we catch the rotter!"

"Good egg!"

"Pewwaps I had bettah keep watch, deah boys. It was weally my ideah at the start to wally wound old Figgins, you know."

"You can come if you like," said Tom Merry. "I expect you'll be fast asleep——"

"Wats! I shall make it a special point to keep awake."

"I'll make it a special point to haul you out of bed by your leg," chuckled Blake. "That's all right—we'll be in the box-room to-night—say at ten, Merry."

"I'll join you there," said Tom.

And so it was arranged. The chums of the School House felt that it was the only thing to be done. They knew Figgins' sense of duty, and they knew his regard for anybody who had any claim on his friendship. It was just like Figgins to lose his night's rest, at a time when he needed it badly, in looking after some foolish fellow who was hunting for trouble. Certainly the Co. could not "rally round" old

Figgins more effectively than by relieving his mind of such a worry.

And when ten o'clock rang out from the old tower that night, Tom Merry was waiting in the box-room for the two Fourth-Formers—and they joined him there in the darkness; and ten minutes later the three of them were scudding towards the New House in the gloom—to keep watch upon the passage window by which the unknown delinquent had left the New House on one occasion at least—probably

on many. If anyone came out of that window, or tried to enter by it, during the next two hours, they were ready to collar him; and he would not escape from their clutches without answering most severely for his sins.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER

Something like a Surprise!

THE night was dark and gloomy.

Fittingly through ridges of dark clouds the moon peeped down upon the old quadrangle of St. Jim's, one minute shedding a silvery glimmer, and then being again lost to sight.

Tom Merry and Blake and D'Arcy waited patiently.



"What's happened, old chap?" exclaimed Tom Merry. Kerr groaned. "Figgy's caught! You'll speak up for him—you and the others?" (See Chap. 16)

They were pretty certain that the culprit, if he was coming out that night at all, had not yet come out. The bedtime of the juniors was at half-past nine, and the young rascal would surely allow half an hour to elapse before he ventured to leave the dormitory for the coast to be clear. It was much more likely that he would be later than that he would be earlier than ten o'clock. Indeed, it was quite possible that if he was bound for forbidden haunts outside the walls of St. Jim's, he would not come out until eleven o'clock.

The three juniors swung their arms, and tramped to keep themselves warm—in the old quadrangle it was cold enough, and there was a keen wind. They sheltered themselves as well as they could behind an angle of the outbuildings, in sight of the window they were there to watch. When the moon shone, the window glimmered with the light, and then was plunged into blackness again.

Half-past ten had chimed out, when Tom Merry uttered a sudden exclamation. The window had moved in the glimmer of moonlight, and the lower sash was raised. Then the clouds hid the moon again, and all was invisible.

"Did you see anythin', deah boy?" whispered Arthur Augustus, who had been polishing his eyeglass at that moment.

"Wes, the window opened."

"Then the wottah's comin'!"

"Yes. Quiet. If he hears us he'll get back, and we shall have all our trouble for nothing. We've got to collar him! Don't move or make a sound until he's on the ground."

"Wight-ho!"

"Shush!" murmured Blake.

"Weally, Blake——"

"Shush, you ass!"

There was a sound of rustling ivy, faint in the stillness of the quadrangle. The three juniors held their breath, even Arthur Augustus forbearing from making any further remarks. They listened intently.

The moon glimmered again, and for a moment they caught a glimpse of a dark form clinging to the ivy. Then all was darkness again.

The glimpse had been too brief for recognition to be possible, and the face of the junior, too, was turned to the ivy he clung to. But it was a junior they had seen—a fellow in the Fourth or the Shell without a doubt.

They heard the light pit-a-pat of feet as he dropped to the ground.

They waited for a moment for the moon to emerge again, confident that when it gleamed they would see the unknown making round the house to get into the open quadrangle, to head for the school wall.

But when the gleam came, Tom rubbed his eyes in wonder. They were between the unknown junior and the open quad—and he could not have passed without their knowing it. But the place was deserted—he was not in sight. The moon was clear for a full minute—the light searched out every interstice of the wall—the ivy glimmered before them, but the junior who had descended had vanished.

"M-my hat!" murmured Blake. "Where is he?"

Tom Merry snapped his teeth.

"He's cut off round the back of the house."

"Then he can't be making for the road," muttered Blake. "He didn't know we were here waiting for him—and he wouldn't go right round the house and by the stables for nothing. He can't be going out of the gates."

"I don't understand it; but he must have gone round the back of the house. I thought he would pass this way, of course. Blessed if I know what's on! Anyway, after him, and be careful, or he'll dodge us in the dark."

"It's vewy odd!" said D'Arcy.

Greatly puzzled, the three juniors moved on, and passed round to the back of the New House. All was darkness there, and they listened and strained their eyes in vain. There was nothing for it but to wait for the moon to gleam out again, and it was a couple of minutes before the clouds rolled on and left the moon clear. Then the light was strong enough, and they looked round them. For a time they saw nothing; but just as the moon was disappearing again Tom Merry spotted a dark figure moving cautiously in the distance, in the direction of the ruined tower.

"There he is!"

Darkness again.

"Where?" muttered Blake. "I saw nothing. Did you see who it was?"

"No; but I spotted him! He's making for the old tower."

"Great pip! What can he possibly want there?"

"Blessed if I know; but we're going to find out. Come on!"

Still more puzzled, the juniors made their way towards the old ruined tower. They did not need the moon to guide them now, they knew every inch of the way by day or night. They reached the ruins, treading very cautiously so as not to alarm their quarry. It began to look as if the night-walker was not going to break school-bounds after all; but the juniors meant to know what he was going to do, and who he was, anyway. It was very mysterious, and utterly inexplicable. What a fellow could want in the old ruins at that hour of the night was utterly beyond their powers of guessing.

Tom Merry led the way into the ruined tower. A gleam of light struck upon his eyes, and he halted. There was a faint odour of burning oil.

"He's got a bike lantern!" whispered Blake.

"Yes; we shall spot him now."

They pressed on. The light glimmered down the old stone steps; they mounted, and reached the stone doorway of the first room in the tower. The old oaken door had been shut—they had heard it close softly. A gleam of light came under it.

"Well, we've got him now!" said Blake. "There's no way out of that room excepting by the loophole—and only a cat could get through that."

"Yaas, wathah! Open the door!"

"I—I don't know," said Tom Merry hesitatingly, with his hand on the door. "The chap isn't going to break bounds after all. I don't know that we've got any right to interfere with him, as it turns out."

"Well, he's a New House bounder, anyway, and we'll bump him for giving us all this trouble," said Blake.

"Yaas! Besides, we've got to know

what's goin' on, so that we can tell old Figgins, and welieve his mind," said Arthur Augustus.

Tom Merry nodded.

"Right-ho! We'll go in!"

Tom Merry threw open the door, and the three juniors rushed in.

There was a startled exclamation within.

A boy who was sitting at an old oaken bench jumped up, and swung round towards the three invaders. The bicycle lantern, burning on the bench, gleamed upon his face, and the astounded juniors recognised him, and almost shouted:

"FIGGINS!"

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER

Mr. Ratcliff makes a Capture!

"FIGGINS!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Figgy! You!"

Figgins it was!

He seemed as astounded as the three School House juniors. He gazed at them like a fellow in a dream.

"You!" he exclaimed. "Tom Merry—Blake—Gussy! What on earth are you doing here at this time of night?"

"What are you doing here—that's the question!" retorted Tom Merry.

"I? Oh, I—"

"So you're the chap Monteith spotted last night getting into a window in the New House?" said Blake.

Figgins flushed.

"Well, I suppose it's no use denying it now," he said. "I'm the chap!"

"But what are you up to?" Tom Merry demanded, in wonder. "What do you mean by getting out of your House at this time of night, and coming here? What's the little game?"

Figgins waved his hand towards the oak bench.

The juniors looked. Then they understood.

There were books and impot, paper and pen and ink there. Figgins had a pen in his hand. A Latin dictionary—a delectus—Horace and Virgil!

"Swotting!" yelled Blake.

"Bai Jove! Swottin'!"

"Well, you—you ass!" gasped Tom Merry.

Figgins' flush deepened.

"There was no other way," he said apologetically. "This exam. is a regular twister, and I couldn't—I simply couldn't find enough time for studying in the daytime. There's such a lot of things to interrupt a fellow, and the time's so short to the exam."

"So you've been coming here of a night to study when you ought to be in bed asleep?" Tom Merry exclaimed.

Figgins nodded.

"You ass! Do you think that's the way to get ready for an exam.?" exclaimed Tom hotly. "No wonder you've been looking seedy and going off your feed. You'll be knocked up before the exam. comes round; you'll be in the school hospital instead of in the examination-room, when the time comes."

"I shall be all right."

"Wubbish! It's burnin' the midnight oil at both ends, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a sage shake of the head. "It won't do—it weally won't."

"I've been putting in a couple of hours every night," said Figgins. "Sometimes only one hour, when I was too fagged to keep it up. It's nice and quiet here for study—no beastly interruptions, no silly asses coming in to jaw, until now—excuse me—"

Tom Merry laughed.

"We'll excuse you," he said; "but you must chuck it, Figgy. It's—it's madness. You'll get knocked up. Do the other fellows know?"

"Not a bit. I've kept it dark. Blessed if I know how you spotted me," said Figgins.

"We were watching for a rotter breaking bounds. We were going to nab him and stop him. We thought you were worrying about it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, Fatty Wynn found you up one night, and—"

"Yes, it nearly came out that time," said Figgins, with a grin. "Now, you kids go back to bed and leave me alone. I can't waste time."

"Then you're going to keep this up!" asked Blake.

"I must."

"It's rotten, Figgy. You'll get knocked up."

"I can stand it—till the exam.," said Figgins wearily. "I'm going to pull off that exam. or burst something. And the harder I work, the better chance I shall have. I'm getting on splendidly. I know I've got a chance."

"You won't have a chance if you get crocked and have to miss the examination altogether," said Tom Merry.

"That's all right. I'm pretty tough. When it's all over I'm going in for outdoor games again like a bird, and it will soon pull me round."

"I wish you'd go back to bed," said Tom Merry uneasily. "This is over-doing it. Really playing the giddy ox, Figgy. Suppose you're spotted out of the House?"

"Well, I should have to chuck it then, I suppose."

"But you'd get into a row. Ratty would take it out of you."

"I can stand a licking."

"Yes; but he mightn't believe that you'd been out of the House to swot. He might think you'd been up to games like Mellish or Cutts."

"I should explain it all if I were spotted, of course. Now buzz off, like good fellows, and let me wire in," said Figgins.

The School House fellows exchanged glances. They did not approve of Figgins' methods at all; but he was his own master. If he was determined to burn the midnight oil, it was his own business.

"Well, I think you're an ass!" said Tom Merry at last.

"Yaas, wathah; several sorts of an ass!"

"Though you larrup a duffer with a cricket stump, yet will not his folly depart from him," said Blake resignedly. "All serene, Figgy, we won't waste your time. Good-night!"

"Good-night!" said Figgins.

He turned back to his books. He was deep in Horace before Tom Merry had closed the

door. The three juniors made their way back to their own house, considerably worried about Figgins, but glad that matters were no worse. The night-walker had turned out to be old Figgins; but though Figgins might play the "giddy ox," he would never be found out doing anything worse than that.

In the lonely room in the old tower Figgins worked away grimly till midnight tolled out from the clock-tower close by. Figgins paused a few moments then; but he bent resolutely to his task again, and worked on till the half-hour chimed. Then he rose and sighed.

He put his books into his pockets, concealed the ink and the lantern in a recess of the old wall, and left the lonely room, making his way down the old stone stairs in the dark.

He was tired out, and his head was throbbing.

The unaccustomed work of swotting was telling very much upon the sturdy junior, and he felt a weary desire for the whole thing to be over. Well, it would be over soon, and he would know whether he could do things or not; and perhaps the medal would fall to him, and at that thought, and the thought of showing Cousin Ethel that her faith in him was not misplaced, Figgins felt a warm glow and his weariness dropped from him like a cloak.

He climbed the ivy behind the New House, and clambered in at the window, carefully shutting it after him without a sound. The House was very dark and silent. At that hour masters and boys were long in bed.

Figgins tiptoed his way back to the Fourth Form dormitory, and opened the door. In the passage all was dark and silent.

He entered the dormitory and closed the door behind him.

The next moment he uttered a sharp, startled exclamation, as there was a blinding flash of light.

The electric light had been suddenly turned on in the dormitory.

Figgins staggered back, dazed, and, like a fellow in a dream, he saw the figure of Mr. Ratcliff, his Housemaster, standing before him, and his wondering gaze detected the

Fourth-Formers sitting up in bed with scared faces.

"So you have returned, Figgins."

Figgins could only stare.

Dimly he realised that his Housemaster must have made a round of the dormitories at a late hour, and missed him from his bed, doubtless owing to Monteith's report of what he had seen the previous night.

The Housemaster had discovered that Figgins was missing from the Fourth dormitory; and, with cat-like patience, he had waited there in the dark for the errant junior to come back.

When he heard Figgins enter the room, he had turned on the light; and Figgins was revealed—fairly caught!

Figgins gazed dazedly at the Housemaster. He saw the cold, cruel smile upon Mr. Ratcliff's thin lips, and realised how pleased the hard-hearted master was at this discovery. All Ratty's old dislike of the free and independent Figgins was in his hard, sour face, at that moment, and gleaming in his greenish eyes. Of all the New House fellows Figgins was the one whom Mr. Ratcliff would have chosen to have completely at his mercy, and his time had come now.

All the fellows were awake. They had been awake ever since Mr. Ratcliff came into the dormitory. Kerr and Wynn were looking almost haggard with dismay. For unless Figgins had some very good explanation to give, he was ruined. There was only one punishment for breaking bounds at night and staying out to nearly one o'clock in the morning, and that was expulsion. Farewell to the examination for which he had worked so hard—farewell to the old school and the playing-fields—that was Figgins' punishment! Kerr and Wynn, who would have faced death for their chum, could not help him now. He was like a mouse in a cat's claws, and Mr. Ratcliff's hard, cold, sour face showed that he would give no more mercy than the cat would give to the captured mouse.

"Where have you been, Figgins?"

Mr. Ratcliff's voice was hard and metallic. Figgins gasped.

"I've been out, sir."

Mr. Ratcliff smiled, a cold, sarcastic smile.

"I am aware of that, Figgins, since I have been waiting for an hour and a half for you to come in. But I need not ask. What disgraceful place have you visited at this hour of the night?"

Figgins's eyes flashed. He began to recover himself a little.

"None, sir," he said firmly. "I haven't been outside the school walls."

Mr. Ratcliff sneered.

"Do you expect me to believe that, Figgins?"

"Yes, sir," said Figgins.

"You expect me to believe that you have spent two hours in the middle of the night outside your House, but within the school walls? And what what were you doing, pray?"

"I—I was studying, sir."

Mr. Ratcliff almost jumped.

"You were—what?"

"Studying, sir," said Figgins, with an effort. He realised that his midnight swotting was all over now, at all events. "I'm working for the exam.—the Bishop's Medal, as you know, sir. I got up to study, and I've been in the tower, working, sir, since I left the dormitory."

"I do not believe one word of it," said Mr. Ratcliff, in a sneering tone. "If you cannot think of a better explanation than that Figgins, you had better hold your tongue!"

"But, sir, I—"

"You have been to some public-house, I presume—like Sleath, who was expelled for such practices," said Mr. Ratcliff. "You, like he, are a disgrace to your House. I demand to know, Figgins, what disgraceful resort you have been to?"

Figgins turned crimson.

"I can only tell you the truth, sir. I've been studying in the room in the old tower, and I've been doing the same every night this week," he said steadily. "I couldn't work in the House. I should have been spotted burning a light."

"You refuse to tell me, then?"

"I've told you."

"Enough! Go to bed, and in the morning I shall take you to Dr. Holmes, and then, Figgins, you will receive your sentence. You need not have the slightest doubt that you will be expelled from the school you have disgraced."

"I—I—"

"Silence! Go to bed!"

Figgins, with burning eyes, went to bed. Mr. Ratcliff turned out the light, and quitted the dormitory.

"Oh, Figgy!" gasped Kerr. "I—I knew it wasn't anything rotten, though I was staggered when Ratty came in, and you weren't here! But, Figgy, Ratty won't believe you; the Head mayn't believe you!"

Figgins groaned.

"It can't be helped. Don't worry about me."

But his chums could not help worrying, and there was little more sleep for Figgins and Co. of the New House that night.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER

Rally!

TOM MERRY came down in the morning, a little heavy-eyed and sleepy from loss of rest on the previous night. But all his sleepiness vanished as Kerr came running into the School House, white-faced and panting.

Tom ran towards him.



The old Hall rang with the cheering when the Bishop's Medal and the purse of ten guineas were handed to George Figgins by the Head himself! (See Chap. 16)

"Kerr, what's the matter? What's happened, old chap?"

Kerr caught his arm, clutched it tight in his agitation.

"You saw Figgy last night?" he muttered. "You and Blake and Gussy—Figgins told me—in the old tower swotting!"

"Yes," said Tom Merry, in wonder. "But what—"

Kerr drew a deep breath.

"You'll speak up for him—you and the others?"

"I don't understand—"

"He's caught!" groaned Kerr. "Ratty made a round of the House last night, missed Figgy, and waited for him to come in. He explained where he'd been, but Ratty wouldn't believe a word of it. You know he's down on Figgy always, and he's specially down on him now because Figgy went in for the Bishop's Medal against his wish. Oh, he's jolly glad he's caught him out—the beast—the beast! He's taking Figgy to the Head now! He's going to have him!"—Kerr choked—"sacked—sacked, do you understand, for breaking bounds at night. He thinks Figgy has been pub-haunting. Figgy can't prove where he was. The Head will believe Ratty, and—and—" Kerr choked again.

"Great Scott! What a ripping stroke of luck that we found Figgy out!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"You'll speak up for him!"

"Well, rather!"

"Oh, good! Good—"

"Hasn't Figgins mentioned—"

"He hasn't said a word about you. You'll get into a row, you know, for being out of your House at that time of night. Figgy's not going to say anything about it. But I knew if I told you—"

"Oh, the ass!" said Tom Merry. "As if we should mind his giving us away at such a time as this! Just like Figgy, though! But you bet we'll speak up, if we get the flogging of our lives for breaking House bounds. I'll find Blake and Gussy at once!"

"Heaven bless you!" said Kerr. There were tears in the Scottish junior's eyes, and Tom Merry, who had seldom seen traces of emotion in the cool, steady junior's face,

realised how deeply he was moved by his chum's peril. "I—I—speak up for Figgy, that's all. The Head will believe you, if Ratty won't. I'm sure the Head will take your word. Get Blake and D'Arcy to go with you—"

"You bet!"

Tom Merry rushed off in search of Blake and D'Arcy. They were not down yet, but he met them on the stairs. In a dozen panted words he told them what had happened and what was wanted. Blake chortled.

"Oh, what ripping luck we were out last night! Three giddy witnesses for Figgy!"

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with great satisfaction. "They can lick me if they like; I don't care a wap! This is the time for us to wally wound Figgins, and no ewwah."

And, whatever might be the results to themselves, the three juniors were determined at once on that point. They were going to speak up for Figgins, and bear witness in his favour.

A little later Mr. Ratcliff was observed crossing the quadrangle, with Figgins walking by his side. Figgins was looking very downcast. Mr. Ratcliff had sent a message over to the Head that he wished to see him early upon a very important matter, and Dr. Holmes was in his study waiting for him. Mr. Ratcliff and Figgins walked through a crowd of curious fellows to the Head's study, and the door closed upon them.

Dr. Holmes looked inquiringly at the House-master. His kind old face grew very grave as he listened to what the New House master had to say. Then he turned to Figgins.

"You do not deny this, Figgins?"

Figgins faced the Head's calm, searching glance bravely.

"I don't deny that I was out of the house last night, sir," he said. "But Mr. Ratcliff has not told you my explanation."

"A most palpable falsehood!" snapped Mr. Ratcliff.

"However, I will hear it," said the Head.

"I'm working for the Bishop's Medal examination, sir. Every night this week I've been swotting—I mean, studying—in the room in the old tower, sir. That's where I was last night, mugging up Horace."

Dr. Holmes looked at him very hard.

"I hope that is true, Figgins. But what is your opinion, Mr. Ratcliff, as this boy's Housemaster?"

"My opinion, sir, is that the explanation is false."

"You have no proof, Figgins, of any kind? Did your companions know where you had gone?"

"No, sir," faltered Figgins.

"You did not tell your own personal friends?"

"I—I didn't want to get them mixed up in a breach of the rules, sir, in case it should come out at any time."

"You must be aware, Figgins, that this is—well, a most extraordinary explanation," said the Head coldly.

"It's true, sir," said Figgins miserably.

"Mr. Ratcliff doesn't believe me, and I suppose you won't. But it's true."

Knock!

The door opened, and Tom Merry stepped into the study, followed by Jack Blake and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Dr. Holmes looked at them with a frown.

"How dare you——" he began.

"Excuse me, sir," said Tom Merry hurriedly.

"We know what Figgins is here for, and we can bear witness, sir."

"Do you mean that you know something about this matter, Merry?"

"We know all about it, sir."

"Yaas, wathah, sir!"

"It is impossible that these School House boys can know anything whatever about it!" said Mr. Ratcliff angrily.

The Head made a gesture.

"I will hear them. Go on, Tom Merry."

"We know that Figgins was swotting in the old tower last night, sir."

"Indeed! How do you know?"

"Because we saw him, sir."

"Then you must have been out of your dormitory and your House in the middle of the night."

"Yes, sir."

"It is untrue!" said Mr. Ratcliff, "a plot amongst these young rascals to save Figgins from the punishment of his iniquity——"

"Weally, Mr. Watchiff——"

"Silence! Kindly explain to me, Merry, how you came to be out of your House at such a time of the night," said the Head very quietly.

Tom Merry explained breathlessly.

Figgins gave the School House juniors a look of heartfelt gratitude. He wondered if they had saved him. But it was Mr. Ratcliff's sour voice that broke the silence.

"Of course, Dr. Holmes, you do not credit this! These boys are known to be personal friends of Figgins, and this is evidently a scheme——"

"I do not think anything of the kind, Mr. Ratcliff," said the Head icily. "On the contrary, I know these three boys to be thoroughly honourable lads, and I firmly believe every word they have uttered."

Tom Merry's face lighted up, and it was with difficulty that Jack Blake restrained himself from shouting "Hurrah!"

Mr. Ratcliff's face was a study.

"The evidence of three honourable and straightforward witnesses is enough, and more than enough," continued the Head. "It is clearly established that Figgins left his dormitory for the purpose he has stated. I am very, very glad that three boys have had the courage to come forward in this way at the risk of severe punishment to themselves to speak up for a schoolfellow. Under the circumstances Merry and Blake and D'Arcy will not be punished for having broken House bounds," said the Head. "I thank them for having come forward and saved me from the possibility of committing an injustice. Figgins, you have acted very unwisely, and it must be understood that nothing of the kind occurs again."

"Certainly, sir," said Figgins.

"I am very glad that you are cleared from disgraceful suspicions. Mr. Ratcliff, as Figgins' motives were good, though his conduct was unwise, I should prefer this matter to be passed over without punishment."

And Mr. Ratcliff could only bow; he could not trust himself to speak. He hurried from the study without another word.

"You may go, my boys," said the Head.

"I wish you good fortune in the examination, Figgins, but no more midnight study. Every-

thing should be in reason, and you may work too hard."

"Thank you, sir."

And the juniors left the study looking as if they were walking on air.

And Figgins did win the Bishop's Medal.

The exam., as he said afterwards, was a regular twister, and nobody was really so much surprised as Figgins when his name came out at the head of the list. But there it did come out; and when the Medal and the purse of ten guineas were handed to George Figgins by the Head himself before the assembled school, the old hall rang with the cheering.

And afterwards there was a gigantic celebration, to which came Cousin Ethel, all smiles and delight, thus filling the cup of joy to overflowing for Figgins.

And when Figgins was shouted at for a speech, and he rose to say a few words, his few words were:

"Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows! I propose the health of Miss Ethel, who first made me think I could possibly score at anything beside cricket and football, and backed me up like the good and true chum she is. Gentlemen, Cousin Ethel!"

And the toast was drunk with exuberant enthusiasm.

It was some time before Figgins could make himself heard again. But he managed to make his voice rise above the din at last.

"And there's another toast—" he roared. "Hurrah!"

"Tom Merry and Co.——"

"Hurrah!" shrieked Tom Merry and Co., laughing.

"For rallying round and helping me to win——"

"Good old Figgy!"

"The Bishop's Medal!" wound up Figgins breathlessly.

And that toast, too, was drunk with enthusiasm, and Cousin Ethel's eyes fairly glowed. If she had ever wanted proof that the rivals of St Jim's were also the greatest and staunchest of pals, she had it now!

THE END

The Greyfriars
MASTERS' GALLERY



No. 6.—MR. HACKER

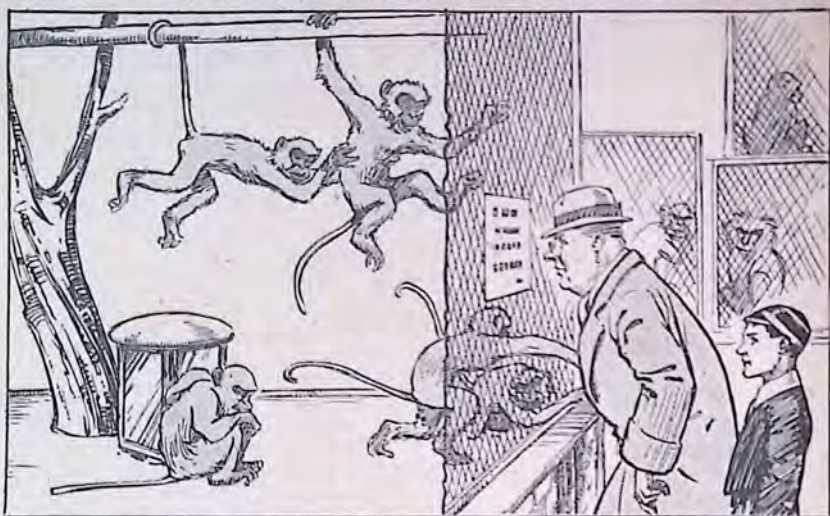
The learned master of the Shell
Knows lots of Greek and Latin;
Geography and "maths" as well,
Are subjects he is "pat" in.
The brain behind his massive brow
Is simply stacked with knowledge;
In classic lore, we must allow
He's the champion of the college!

He rules the Shell in drastic style,
And keeps his pupils under;
If he should see a scholar smile
His voice booms forth like thunder.
The class sits silent and subdued,
They dare not show elation;
For Hacker's optics are endued
With powers of penetration!

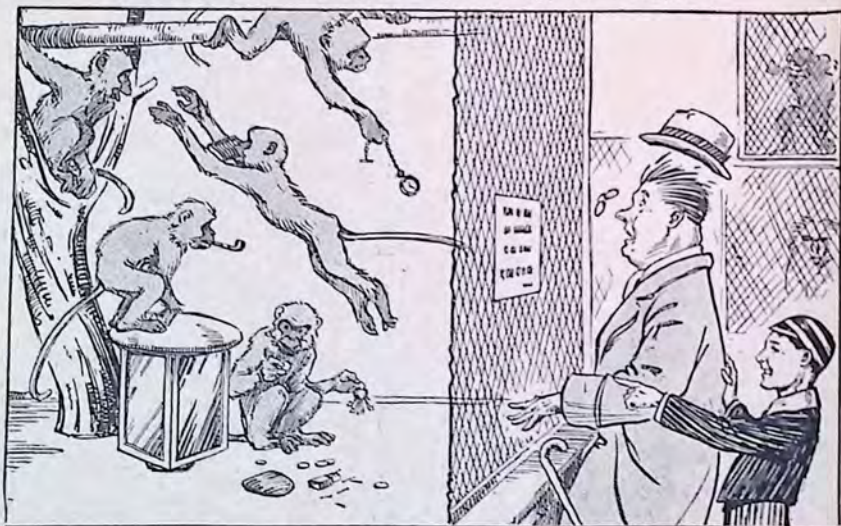
Like Mr. Queleh and Mr. Prout,
He's not exactly youthful;
He says he's forty, but we doubt
If such a claim be truthful.
For he was forty years of age
When Lascelles was eleven;
Which means that, at the present stage,
His age is sixty-seven!

Upon the whole, he's less revered
Than all the younger masters;
His fussy conduct, it is feared,
Has often caused disasters.
Like other men who toil and moil,
He cannot stand a slacker;
He thinks that everyone should toil
Like Horace Manfred Hacker!

THE WARNING THAT CAME TOO LATE!



"I wonder what this notice says! Why, bless me, it's—"



"Beware of Pickpockets!"



A Special Story, Telling of the Early Vicissitudes of the "Greyfriars Herald," the famous Junior-edited Newspaper, which is Now an Established Feature of the Life at Greyfriars School

By FRANK RICHARDS

THE FIRST CHAPTER

The Order of the Boot !

"WAAAL, I should smile!" Fisher T. Fish of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, uttered that exclamation in indignant tones.

The American junior had stopped outside the door of Harry Wharton's study, No. 1 in the Remove passage.

And although he ejaculated that he "would smile," that was evidently only a form of expression belonging to the great American language; for Fisher T. Fish did not smile, he frowned wrathfully.

There was a square of cardboard pinned on the outside of the study door and it bore, in large letters daubed with a brush, the imposing notice :

"EDITORIAL OFFICE.

No Admittance Except on Business."

Fisher T. Fish regarded that notice with a wrathful eye, and then proceeded to administer a powerful kick to the study door.

Bang !

And a wrathful voice proceeded from within No. 1 Study :

"Clear off !"

"I guess I've got business lyer!" said Fisher T. Fish; and he hurled the study door open and marched in.

Five juniors were seated round the study table.

They were Harry Wharton and Nugent, to whom the study belonged, and Johnny Bull, Bob Cherry, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, all of the Remove—the Lower Fourth Form at Greyfriars.

They were very busy. The study table was covered with papers, and each of the five juniors had a pen in his hand, and a thoughtful wrinkle on his brow. Some of them had ink on their fingers, too, and Bob Cherry had a smear of it on his nose. The Famous Five had evidently been hard at work when the interruption came. But they looked up from their work, and five separate and distinct glares were bestowed upon the American junior. Five distinct and emphatic voices pronounced at the same time the words :

"Get out!"

Fisher T. Fish snorted.

"I guess I'm on in this scene!" he exclaimed, with emphasis. "What does this mean—hey? 'Editorial office'—what?"

"Editorial office of the 'Greyfriars Herald,'" Harry Wharton explained briefly. "Buzz off, Fishy! We're busy—we've got our Christmas Number to produce."

"What?" yelled Fisher T. Fish.

"Christmas Number of the 'Greyfriars Herald,'" said Wharton patiently. "Are you getting deaf?"

"Or silly?" asked Bob Cherry politely.

"Look hyer—"

"Gerrout!" growled Frank Nugent. "Don't you know better than to buzz into an editorial office in this way when the staff are at work?"

Fisher T. Fish was crimson with rage. As he had first mooted the scheme of a junior school paper at Greyfriars, and had appointed himself editor when the first number was produced, he had perhaps some reason to be excited.

"Look hyer!" he howled. "You haven't said a word about it to me—"

"You'll see the Christmas Number when it comes out!"

"But I'm editor!" yelled Fish,

"Rats!"

"Wasn't it my idea at the start? Wasn't I chief editor, and you jays only subs—"

Harry Wharton nodded.

"You were—and we were," he agreed. "But all that's in the past tense. You mucked up the number we let you edit, and spoiled the whole thing. We had to get a second edition printed. So we gave you the boot as editor. You're out of the firm. You can go and eat coke. And the sooner the quicker!"

"Hear hear!" said Johnny Bull. "Shut the door after you, Fishy!"

"You jays!" howled Fish. "You slab-sided mugs! You—you mugwumps! I guess I'm editor of this paper, and if there's going to be a Christmas Number, I'm the galoot that's going to produce it. You hear me talk!"

"Buzz off!"

"Who's the editor of this paper, I'd like to know?" shouted Fish.

"Oh, I don't mind telling you that," said Wharton cheerfully. "I'm editor."

"Why, you—you—you—"

"We gave you a chance and you mucked it up with your silly American ideas," Wharton explained. "Phonetic spelling, and all that rot. You couldn't manage a hutch of bunny rabbits, let alone a school paper. You're no good. But I'll tell you what we'll do. If you care to submit contributions for the Christmas Number—"

"What!"

"Every contribution will be carefully considered—"

"Wha-a-at?"

"But the editor's decision is final. Contributions to be written on one side of the paper only!" said Wharton calmly.

Fisher T. Fish waved his bony hand in the air in his excitement.

"Look hyer, I'm editor of this hyer paper!" he roared. "I guess I'm head cook and bottle-washer! Got that?"

"Yes—and if you don't clear out and stop interrupting you'll go out on your neck!" said the editor severely. "Got that!"

"I guess I don't mind letting you chaps have a whack in the paper, but I'm editor, and what I say goes! You savvy?"

"Buzz off!"

"Look hyer, I'll let you jays in 'on equal terms if you like—"

"No, you won't. You're no good; no Transatlantic geniuses need apply," said Wharton calmly. "Now, buzz off! Johnny Bull has been appointed fighting editor. Get out before he begins on you!"

"I guess I'm not getting out! I guess I'm going to run this paper! I guess you jays have got to sing small! I guess—"

"Shurrup!" roared Bob Cherry. "We don't have guessing competitions in the 'Greyfriars Herald.' Clear off!"

"I guess—"

"Are you going?"

"I guess—"

"Johnny, old man, you're fighting editor," said Wharton. "Pile in!"

"What-ho!" said Johnny Bull.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

Nothing for Bunter !

The sturdy junior rose to his feet and pushed back his cuffs. Fisher T. Fish brandished two bony fists in his calm face.

"You keep off!" he roared. "If you get my mad up I shall wipe up the floor with you—just a few. You back down!"

"Going out!" asked the fighting editor politely.

"Nope!"

"Right-ho! You'll be put!"

"Look hyer, I shall smash you if you get my mad up! I shall hit you so hard that you won't know what's happened! I guess I shall—I say—Yah! Oh!"

Bump!

The American junior descended with a heavy concussion upon the linoleum in the passage outside, and roared; and Johnny Bull closed the study door and locked it. Fisher T. Fish scrambled to his feet in a towering rage. It was true that he had "mucked up" the first number of the "Greyfriars Herald" with his American improvements, but he was far from admitting that fact. And to have the management of the paper taken out of his hands in this way was not to be borne. Fisher T. Fish roared through the keyhole:

"I guess I'm coming in, you jays! I guess I'm going to run this paper!"

"Do you want me to come out to you?" shouted the fighting editor.

"Yep!"

"Then I'll come!"

Johnny Bull unlocked the door and came out. He collared Fisher T. Fish, and carried the slim American junior in his strong arms, kicking and struggling, down the Remove passage, and rolled him down the stairs. Then he grinned and returned to the editorial office.

Fisher T. Fish rolled down to the first landing and sat there gasping.

"Oh, I should smile! Oh crumbs! The jays! The rotters! Ow!"

And in No. 1 Study the editorial work went on, untroubled for the present by the indignant claims of the deposed editor of the "Greyfriars Herald."

BILLY BUNTER came up the stairs and stopped at the door of No. 1 Study, with a letter in his hand. He blinked at the notice on the door through his big spectacles and grunted.

Billy Bunter had a very strong idea that if the juniors wanted a really first-class editor for the school paper, they couldn't do better than select William George Bunter. The unfortunate part was that he couldn't get anybody else to agree with him in taking that point of view.

Bunter knocked at the door, and a loud, exasperated voice proceeded from within:

"If you don't clear off, Fishy, we'll come and frog's march you down the passage!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, it isn't Fishy—it's another silly ass! Clear off!"

"I say, is Inky there?"

"Yes, ass. Clear off!"

"There's a letter for Inky—"

"Clear off!"

"But I've brought it up for him!"

"Take it back!"

"There may be a remittance in it, you know," said Bunter, through the keyhole. "It happens that I'm rather hard up just now—"

"Travel!"

"Through a disappointment about a postal order. If there's a remittance in the letter—"

"Will you go?"

"I'm sure Inky wouldn't mind making me a little loan, would you, Inky?"

"The mindfulness would be terrific, my worthy fat Bunter," replied Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"But I've got the letter here, Inky."

"Get out!"

"Slip it underfully through the esteemed door, my worthy Bunter."

"If you don't let me in I think I had better open the letter," said Bunter calmly. "It's not safe to have letters knocking round with money in them."

"Not sate when you're about," grunted Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Will you clear off?" shouted the exasperated editors altogether.

"All right. I'll open the letter then."

The study door was unlocked and thrown open, and Bob Cherry grasped the fat junior by the collar and shook him. Bunter's spectacles slid down his fat little nose, and the letter addressed to Hurree Jamset Ram Singh dropped on the floor. Bunter roared and wriggled in Bob's powerful grasp.

"Leggo! Ow! I c-c-came up here to oblige Inky! Ow!"

"I have the esteemed letter, my worthy chum," said the Nabob of Bhanipur, picking it up. "You can ejectfully kick out the fat and ludicrous Bunter on his noble neck."

"Oh, I say, I—ow—yah!"

Bunter departed from the study on his neck, and the door was locked again. The fat junior picked himself up, and kicked wrathfully at the door before he departed. But there was evidently no "whack" in the remittance for him—if, indeed, Inky's letter contained a remittance at all.

"If you fellows will excusefully pardon me,

I will perusefully open my letter," said Hurree Singh. "I know the fist of my old chum, Dhoolah Das."

"Oh, go ahead!" said Wharton, bending over his work again. "I'll get on with the editorial notes. We shall never get done at this rate."

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh opened the letter.

He gave a chirrup of delight as he read it.

"Good news!" asked Nugent.

"The goodfulness is terrific."

"Whacking good remittance, eh?" asked Bob Cherry, with interest.

Inky shook his head. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was generally called Inky at Greyfriars, partly on account of his beautiful complexion, and partly because his full name required, as Bob Cherry had

observed, too much exertion for everyday use.

"There is no remittfulness, my esteemed Bob. It is a letter from an old chum I have friendly known in Bhanipur, and who is now in school in England. His honourable name is Dhoolah Das. Pleasefully read the letter!"

He handed the letter to Bob Cherry, and grinned.

Bob glanced at it.

His eyes grew wide and round. The letter,



Johnny Bull collared Fisher T. Fish, and carried him down the Remove passage and rolled him down the stairs (See Chapter 1.)

to Bob Cherry's eyes, resembled the result of a spider getting into the ink and crawling over the paper. As it was written in the Hindustani language, and in Deva-Nagari characters, Inky's request to Bob to read it was evidently a little joke.

"Do you mean to say you can read that, Inky?" asked Bob.

"The easiness is terrific, as it is my native language," said Hurree Singh, with a grin. "I speak him with even more accuracy than your noble and august English."

"Not with less, I hope!" grinned Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"In some respects the English instructed at Greyfriars does not seem to me quite so good as that which I fearfully imbibed from my respected tutor in India," said Hurree Singh, with a shake of the head. "My esteemed companions, will you pardonably excuse me if I leave you?"

"You haven't finished your article on India," said Wharton severely.

"The finishfulness will be completed to-night," said Inky apologetically. "My beloved and ludicrous chum tells me that he is in Courtfield this afternoon, and if I wish to see him I can cycle over, and we can meet before his train goes. Under the esteemed circumstances, I think I ought to go, as it is a long time since I have beheld the light of his countenance."

"Oh, right-ho," said Harry. "You might ask him to Greyfriars, and we'll give him a feed in the study, if he likes to come."

"Thank you, my esteemed chum."

And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh left the editorial office. The other four editors bent over their work again. They had a great deal to do to produce the Christmas number of the "Herald," and there were many other claims on their time. Indeed, that afternoon they were neglecting their football for the sake of the Christmas Number, which was a very great proof of devotion.

"I say, Inky——"

Billy Bunter bore down upon the Nabob of Bhanipur in the passage. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh gently pushed him aside, and walked on quickly.

"Inky, old man——"

"I cannot stopfully linger now, my esteemed Bunter——"

"But I say, old chap!"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh slid down the banisters, as the quickest way of getting downstairs, and of escaping from Bunter.

"Look here, you black beast!" roared Bunter, from the top of the stairs.

Inky chuckled. He had changed with startling suddenness from an old chap into a black beast. But he did not mind. He walked out of the School House, and made his way to the bicycle shed. As he wheeled his machine out, Billy Bunter rolled up. Billy Bunter was in his usual state of impecuniosity, and he was determined that Inky should not escape without parting.

"I say, Inky, old chap," he said persuasively. "I say, you know——"

"You do not wish to speak to a black beast, my esteemed Bunter?"

"Ahem! You see——"

"I am somewhat hurryful," said Hurree Singh, wheeling his bike away.

"You're going out?"

"Yes."

"I'll come with you to cash the postal-order," said Bunter. "Wait a minute till I get Wharton's bike. Ow—ow! You rotten nigger! Yow!"

Billy Bunter sat down violently as Hurree Singh wheeled the bicycle upon him. Inky calmly wheeled it on over his fat legs, and walked away to the gates. Bunter gasped and snorted, and picked himself up, and rushed after the Indian junior. Outside the school gates Inky prepared to mount.

"Hold on a minute," roared Bunter. "I tell you I'm coming with you. I'll stand on your foot-rests if you like, Inky."

"The ratfulness is terrific, my worthy fat Bunter."

The Indian junior glided away. Billy Bunter dashed after him. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh smiled gently, and allowed the fat junior almost to overtake him. Bunter made a grab at him to stop him, and the Nabob pedalled a little more quickly, keeping just

THE THIRD CHAPTER

Declined with Thanks !

out of reach. Bunter put on a spurt, panting and puffing wildly.

"I say, Inky, old chap, stop for me! I say you black beast! Inky, old fellow! You beastly nigger!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll give you a licking when I catch you, you black rotter!"

"The catchfulness must come first, my esteemed porpoise."

And Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh bent over his handle-bars, and put on speed, and vanished down the road, leaving Billy Bunter panting far behind.

The Owl of the Remove halted in the middle of the road, and shook his fat fists after the disappearing Nabob.

"You black beast! I'll—I'll—I'll——"

"Gerrou of the way, there!" roared the voice of Coker of the Fifth, and a bicycle bell rang loudly.

But Bunter did not get out of the way quickly enough. The front wheel of Coker's bike smote him behind, and he gave a terrific roar and rolled over. The bike curled up, and Horace Coker half-turned a somersault and landed on the grass beside the road.

"Oh, you silly ass!" roared Coker, sitting up dazedly.

"Ow! I'm killed!" groaned Bunter.

"You—you frabjous dummy——"

"Ow! I'm injured——"

"Are you?" snorted Coker, scrambling to his feet. "Then I'll injure you some more."

"Ow! I can't move! Ow! My back's broken! Yow!"

"Biff, biff, biff!"

Coker's boots were of a large size, and he might have been kicking for goal, by the way he started on Bunter. The Owl of the Remove discovered suddenly that he could move. He moved at a great rate, too, and fled, yelling, down the road. And Coker of the Fifth picked up his bicycle, and the things he said when he found that the wheel was buckled and refused to revolve were such as no respectable member of the Fifth Form at Greyfriars ought to have uttered under any circumstances whatever.

"OVERWHELMED with debts, the result of my own vice and folly, I have no resource but to blow out my brains!"

Thus Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton and Nugent and Johnny Bull suspended their editorial labours, and gazed speechlessly at their chum.

"What's that?" ejaculated Wharton.

"Dotty?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Overwhelmed with debts," said Bob calmly, "the result of my own vice and folly, I have no resource but to blow out my brains."

"You utter ass!"

"To-night in the gloom and silence of the Cloisters, I shall do the deed, and the long silence will be broken, the shame and iniquity I have hidden will be revealed to the world!"

"Quite mad!" said Johnny Bull.

"Father, oh, father, before I do this desperate deed, I implore your forgiveness!"

"If you're not dotty," shouted Harry Wharton, "what are you raving about?"

"How does that sound?" asked Bob.

"Sound! It sounds as if you were potty!"

"Look here, I think that sounds jolly well," said Bob warmly. "Besides, there's a moral in it. It may prove a warning to Snoopy and Skinner, and Loder of the Sixth, if they see it in the Christmas Number."

"Oh!" said Wharton, somewhat relieved.

"Is it a story, you fathead?"

"It's my serial," said Bob. "'The Road to Ruin,' you know, or the 'Debts, Difficulties, and Dangers of Dick Dodger.'"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"The hero's at college," explained Bob. "He gets on the downward path by betting on a football match—goes from bad to worse, and finally blows out his silly brains in the college Cloisters. It will be a warning to fellows who go the pace—in fact, I've thought of naming him Loder, only Loder of the Sixth might take it personally."

"Ha, ha! He might."

"Nothing like a story with a good moral,"

said Bob. "I think I've put it rather dramatically, don't you?"

"Ye-es. But isn't it a bit too thick?" asked Wharton doubtfully. "We don't want to have lurid stuff like a blessed newspaper serial, you know."

"My dear chap, it will be ripping. Must have something exciting in the paper. I rather think you'll find all the fellows turning to my new serial first, when they get the paper," said Bob modestly.

"Yes—I don't think."

There was a tap at the door, and Wharton groaned.

"Go away, whoever you are!" he called out. "Can't you see the notice on the door?"

"But I'm here on business," said the voice of Micky Desmond of the Remove. "I've got a contribution for the paper."

Wharton sighed and unlocked the door. Micky Desmond came in with a sheaf of impot paper in his hand, scrawled upon in a sprawling writing.

"I've done you a complete story entirely," he said. "You said that every contributor had better deal with his own part of the world, to get some local colour. Tom Brown is doing a New Zealand story, and Morgan an article on Wales, and Truluce a description of the Cornish coast. Ogilvy is doing a story in Scotch dialect, and Linley a Lancashire story. So I've done you an Irish one."

"In Irish?" asked Nugent.

"Sure, no, you wouldn't understand Erse, and by the same token, I don't understand it myself," confessed Micky. "I've laid the scene on the coast of Galway. Sure, I've got a ripping title—'The Banshee of Bally-onion.'"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"I'll read you a bit. 'The dark, deep, night was about to fall, when a horseman might have been seen striding along—'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sure this isn't a funny story, it's tragic entirely," said Micky Desmond in surprise. "Shut up and listen! 'A yawning chasm opened on the mountain path in front of the galloping horseman. He urged his steed to the leap, and sprang across it, but fell in the middle before he was half-way across—'"

There was a yell of laughter from the junior editors. Micky Desmond frowned, apparently quite unconscious of the extremely rich "bull" he had perpetrated.

"Faith, and it's a set of silly gossoons ye are!" he exclaimed crossly. "Sure it's a splendid and thrilling description intirely."

"How could he leap across if he fell in?" roared Nugent.

"And how could he drop in the middle if he wasn't half way across?" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sure, and it's a good description. Listen to what comes next. 'On the lonely mountain road there was no one to see the horseman as he disappeared from view—'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"In dead silence he vanished with a shrill cry—'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"At the same time, the wild wail of the Banshee was heard—'"

"Oh my hat!" gasped Wharton, "this is getting better and better! How was the wild wail of the Banshee heard if there was nobody there to hear it?"

"And in dead silence, too!" chuckled Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Faith, and I—"

"Here comes another of 'em!" growled Johnny Bull, as Alonzo Todd of the Remove entered the study, with several sheets of impot paper in his hand.

Alonzo bestowed a sweet and gentle smile upon the juniors. Alonzo Todd, the Duffer of Greyfriars, was always sweet and gentle—a great contrast in that respect to his cousin, Peter Todd.

"My dear fellows," said Alonzo beaming, "I hear that you are producing a Christmas Double Number of the 'Herald.'"

"Trying to!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Ah, you find it difficult? I shall be so pleased to help you!"

"Will you really, Alonzo?" asked Wharton seriously.

"Most certainly, my dear Wharton!"

"Then take that manuscript back to your study!"



The front wheel of Coker's bike smote Billy Bunter, and he gave a terrific roar and rolled over. Horace Coker half-turned a somersault and landed on the grass beside the road. "Oh! I'm killed!" groaned Bunter (See Chapter 2)

"Eh?"

"And burn it!"

"What!"

"And then stay there!"

"Ahem! I thought you might like a sweet and gentle story for the paper, Wharton—a story inculcating gentleness and goodness," said Todd. "I have therefore written—"

"The wild wail of the Banshee was heard—"

"My dear Desmond—"

"Shut up!" said Micky indignantly.

"Sure, I'm reading out my story—"

"Nuff of the Banshee!" said Wharton.

"Banshees are barred in school papers. Take it back, and cut out the Banshee, and put in a football match instead, and we'll see what we can do. Now Alonzo!"

"Faith and I think—"

"Order! Pile in, Alonzo!"

"We'll hear half a dozen lines—that will be enough to see that it's no good. I mean, to see whether it's any good."

"Very well, my dear Wharton. I think you will like it. I have endeavoured to inculcate the principles I have learned from my Uncle Benjamin. My story is called 'Dick's Remorse'—"

"Oh crumbs!"

"It deals with the agonising remorse of a schoolboy, who had gone to a football match instead of writing lines imposed upon him by his kind teachers—"

"Great Scott!"

"Dick sat at his desk," said Alonzo, reading from the manuscript. "He was frowning. At that moment the beauty of the 'First Book of Arithmetic' failed utterly to ap-

peal to his wilful nature, for sad to relate, Dicky did not love his lessons. He did not love his teachers. He was a bad boy."

"Nuff!" said Wharton.

"You are satisfied, my dear Wharton?"

"Quite. Put it on the fire."

"What!"

"Or the waste-paper basket, just as you like."

"My dear Wharton, pray allow me to read you some more, especially the part where, when Dicky is watching the football-match, a sudden sense of the horror of his conduct comes over him, and he covers his face with his hands and bursts into tears—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I am sure you will be touched, my dear Wharton!"

"I should be touched, I think, if I put that piffle into the Christmas Number," agreed Wharton. "Take it away and bury it. And in case it should be lonely, you can bury Micky's banshee along with it."

"Sure, and it's a silly gossoon ye are!"

"Oh, here you are!" exclaimed a voice at the door, and Trevor of the Remove came in, with papers in his hand. "I've got the first chapter of a serial for you to look at!"

"No serials required. Bob Cherry's doing the serial."

"But this is something rather special. I dare say Cherry won't mind his serial being left out to make room for something really good!"

"Well, you ass!" began Bob wrathfully.

"It's called 'The Red Rover,'" said Trevor. "A pirate story, you know—the kind of thing the readers really want. Listen to this. It begins right on the mark. 'Fire!' cried the Red Rover—"

"Ship on fire?" asked Johnny Bull.

"No, ass, that was an order to the pirates. 'Fire!' cried the Red Rover," repeated Trevor. "Crash went the broadside. The doomed brig was raked fore and aft. Dead and dying lay in heaps on her decks, and the blood ran by the gallon—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?" demanded Trevor indignantly. "This is jolly serious, I

can tell you. 'Swamped with blood the doomed ship—'"

"Bow-wow! Take it away!"

"But I can tell you—"

"Declined with thanks!"

"You silly asses, you don't know a good thing when you see it—"

"Declined with thanks; clear off!"

"Rats!"

"File in, Johnny!"

The fighting editor piled in manfully. Alonzo Todd, looking very much surprised, found himself sitting in the passage all of a sudden. But the other contributors were made of sterner stuff. The other editors had to come to Johnny Bull's assistance, before they were persuaded to leave the study—on their necks!

"Hallo, what's the row?" asked Bolsover major, coming along the passage with a roll of manuscript in his hand. "I say, don't close the door. I've got a contribution here for the Christmas Number—"

"Oh, my hat!"

Slam!

The door was closed and locked.

Bolsover major thumped on it.

"I say, I've done you a splendid story—'The Wounded Brigand!'"

"Take it away!"

"Open the door!" yelled Bolsover major.

"Rats!"

"You silly asses—"

"Go and eat coke!"

And Bolsover major bestowed a tremendous kick on the door, and departed in wrath; and the harassed editors of the "Greyfriars Herald" settled down to work again.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

Fish is First!

CALLING-OVER was proceeding in Big Hall when Hurree Jamset Ram Singh returned. The nabob slipped into his place with the Remove, and answered "Adsum" to his name. The Famous Five left the hall together. Inky's expression showed that he had something to say to his chums.

"I have seen my esteemed chum Dhoolah

Das," he remarked, when they were in the passage. "The pleasurefulness of beholding him again was terrific. And I have the honourable satisfaction to remark that he will come to Greyfriars on Saturday."

"Good," said Wharton.

"On Saturday afternoon we are not playing a match, my esteemed Wharton?"

"No, as Redclyffe have scratched."

"Exactly! Therefore I have taken the esteemed liberty of asking Dhoolah Das to play with us."

"Footer?" asked Bob.

The nabob nodded.

"Yes. Dhoolah Das is at Southgate School, which is a great distance from here, but he is willing to bring over a team and play us. He is the junior football captain of the esteemed Southgate Football Club."

"Oh!" said Wharton.

"You will like to play them?" asked the nabob anxiously. "As there is no esteemed fixture for Saturday, I thoughtfully considered that you would be glad to have a team come over from Southgate."

Harry Wharton nodded cheerfully.

"Righto! We've never played them before—in fact, I'd never heard of Southgate—but I don't see why they shouldn't give us a game. Your friend Gooly Gas—"

"Dhoolah Das," said the nabob gently.

"I mean Dhoolah Das. He must be a good player if they have made him skipper of their junior team."

"The goodness of the esteemed Dhoolah Das is, I believe, terrific. It was only at the last moment, as I was parting from him, that I remembered that we had no fixture for Saturday, and made the esteemed suggestion to him."

"Well, it's a good idea," said Nugent, who was secretary of the Remove Football Club. "When are they coming?"

"They will arrive in an august brake at half-past two on Saturday."

"Good!" said Wharton, "we'll be ready for them. We ought to have put in the afternoon on the Christmas Number of the 'Herald'; but after all, football comes first. Have you ever seen Gooly Gas play?"

"No; he has learned the great and esteemed

game of football since being in England, the same as my honourable self," said Hurree Singh. "But I am sure that my noble chums will have a really goodful game."

"We'll chance it," said Wharton. "Nugent had better write confirming the arrangement, as sec. That's settled."

And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh beamed with satisfaction.

"Now we'll get some of the stuff set up," said Harry Wharton, and he led the way to the box-room where the printing-machine belonging to the schoolboy printers was kept. It was a hand-press, which had been purchased second-hand, and one edition of the "Greyfriars Herald" had already been turned off it—that first number having been spoiled by Fisher T. Fish's latest American improvements, and reprinted afterwards without the assistance of Fisher T. Fish.

The juniors were very keen on doing their printing themselves, and they had had to work hard to get into the way of it. Setting up type, turning off copies, putting them together and pinning them, and distributing the type afterwards, took up a considerable amount of time, with the result that the "Herald," although intended as a weekly paper, seemed far more likely to become a fortnightly, monthly, or even quarterly. The great Christmas Double Number was only the second number of the paper; but as the editors were dispensing with American assistance, it would want printing only once—at least, they hoped so.

There was a light in the box-room when they arrived there.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Some bounder's working our press."

The whirr of the machine could be heard.

Harry Wharton tried the door but it was locked. The light streamed out from under it. Wharton knocked sharply.

"Here, open this door, and let that machine alone!" he called out.

"I guess not!"

"Fishy!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Correct!"

"What are you doing with our printing-machine!" demanded Nugent wrathfully.

"Whose printing-machine?"

"Ours!" roared the editors all together.

"I guess I bought this machine cheap from old Lazarus in Courtfield."

"You—you ass! We found the money, didn't we?"

"Yep, and I found the machine—that was an equal division of labour," replied Fisher T. Fish coolly. "I guess I'm going to use this machine. And I guess I'm going to use it now. I guess I'm Chief Editor of the 'Greyfriars Herald'—some!"

"Fathead!"

Whirr-r-r! went the machine.

"Let us in!" shouted Wharton. "We want to set some of the copy up now."

"I guess you can't."

"Why not?"

"I'm using the machine."

"Why, you—you ass, we'll scalp you if you don't let us in!" howled Bob Cherry. "What on earth are you printing?"

"I guess I'm printing the second number of the 'Greyfriars Herald.'"

"What!"

"All other numbers spurious imitations!" said Fisher T. Fish coolly.

"You—you—you——"

"I calculate you can hop off. This hyer paper is in my hands. If you like to send any contributions you can slip 'em under the door. All contributions carefully considered, so far as time allows, you know; being single-handed I'm rather pressed for time. I've had to write the whole of the copy for this number this afternoon, all on my lonesome."

The editors of the "Greyfriars Herald" simply breathed wrath. They had been labouring away most of the afternoon, producing really first-class copy for the "Herald," and now they had a large quantity of it ready to set up in type. And to find that the printing machine and the type were in the hands of the rival editor, and that he refused to let them into their own printing works, was distinctly exasperating.

"Look here!" roared Wharton. "We gave you a run as editor, and you were no good. We told you we should boot you, and we've done it."

"I guess it's not so easy to boot Fisher

T. Fish. He sticks!" chuckled the American junior.

And the sound of the busy machine went on.

"Look here, Fishy——"

"Rats! I'm busy."

"I tell you——"

"Too busy to talk now: kindly vamoose the ranch."

"But, I say——"

"Oh, light out!"

Wharton hammered furiously on the door. Bob Cherry lent the aid of his heavy boots, but only a chuckle came from within, and the whirr of the machine. Fisher T. Fish wasted no more time in words. He had plenty to do, to print the second number of the "Herald" all on his "lonesome."

"My only hat!" exclaimed Wharton, desisting from hammering on the door at last. "The cheeky beast! If he gets that number printed, it will make the whole thing ridiculous. The fellows will take it as the real second number—and, of course, it will be crammed with piffle from end to end."

"He's not going to do it," said Johnny Bull wrathfully. "We're producing the second number of the 'Herald'—us!"

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific!"

Wharton kicked at the door again.

"Fishy!" he shouted.

No reply.

"Fishy, you silly ass——"

Still no answer. Fisher T. Fish was attending strictly to business.

"If you don't open the door we'll bust it in!" roared Wharton.

Whirr went the machine! Fisher T. Fish did not speak.

"Rather a big order, busting in the door," said Nugent dubiously.

"We're going to do it. Get a crowbar or a chisel or something!" growled Wharton. "We can pay for the damage afterwards. We're not going to allow that howling idiot to publish the second number of our paper!"

"No fear!" said Bob.

And the exasperated editors rushed away in search of implements to force in the door of the printing works so audaciously held against them by a dismissed member of the staff.



The chums had to come to Johnny Bull's assistance before the contributors were persuaded to leave the study—on their necks! "Oh, my hat!" they gasped. "Ow!" (See Chapter 3)

THE FIFTH CHAPTER

Holding the Fort!

FISHER T. FISH chuckled.

He was in a mood of great satisfaction. He had heard the sound of retreating footsteps outside, and he had concluded that the rival editors had given the matter up as a bad job, and decided to leave him in peace

to produce the second number of the "Herald."

The American schoolboy was considerably inky, and very warm and tired. He had been working hard. From the moment he had learned that Harry Wharton and Co. were at work on the "Herald" without his assistance, he had made up his mind to forestall them. He had locked himself in the box-

room, with a bag of sandwiches, and a sheaf of impot. paper, and there he had written out enough "copy" to fill the number. Perhaps it was not exactly "top-notch" in point of literary quality; but Fisher T. Fish was quite satisfied with it, and, after all, that was the chief thing.

He had hoped to get the number printed and published before the rival editors knew anything about it, but the visit of the Co. to the box-room prevented that. They knew now what he was doing, but they could not stop him. He was turning off copies at a great rate, and in a short time they would be finished. He wanted fifty copies of the number, and those fifty he had to fold by hand, pin and cut, so he had plenty to do. Fisher T. Fish was not famous for industry as a rule, but this was a special occasion, and he worked like a Trojan.

"I guess I shall do those jays in the eye!" chuckled Fish, as he laboured away. "I rather guess they'll be sorry they tried to boot me out of the editorship. What I've printed in this number will make 'em sit up—just a few!"

And he worked on without ceasing. Certainly, when the copies were printed, bound, and cut, and distributed in the Remove, it would be very hard for the Famous Five to declare that that wasn't a genuine number of the "Grevfriars Herald." And Fish was certain of a big circulation, for he intended to give the numbers away. The charge of one penny each, which helped to pay the expenses of production, though not all of it, was an object to the Co.—but it was no object to Fish. For all the materials he used belonged to the firm, and he had not paid anything towards them.

Footsteps sounded again on the landing outside. Harry Wharton & Co. had returned, armed with implements for forcing the door. Wharton knelt again.

"Are you going to let us in, Fishy?"

"Nope!"

"Then here goes!"

Crack, crack, crack!

The lock groaned and creaked and strained under the pressure. Fisher T. Fish turned away from the printing-machine in alarm.

"I say, you jays, you'll smash that lock!" he shouted.

"Just what we're going to do!" growled Bob Cherry. "We'll be in there in a minute, Fishy, and we'll make you eat all you've printed!"

"Oh, Jerusalem!" murmured Fish, in dismay.

Crack-ack-ack!

A strong chisel had been forced between the door and the jamb, and the juniors outside were dragging upon it. It was only a matter of minutes before the lock cracked and gave way.

Fisher T. Fish ran towards the door.

"Let up, you jays!" he shouted. "You'll have to pay for that lock if you break it!"

"Unlock it, then!"

"Shan't! Buzz off! Absquatulate! Vamoose! What do you mean by interrupting an editor in the discharge of his duties?" demanded Fish indignantly.

Crack-ack-ack! The door was straining hard. A screw burst out of the lock.

"Oh, jumping Jehosaphat!" ejaculated Fisher T. Fish. "The jays really mean business. But they ain't coming in hyer, I guess!"

There were a large number of boxes and trunks in the room, most of them empty. Fisher T. Fish began dragging them towards the door to form a barricade. A huge, heavy leather trunk belonging to Lord Mauleverer came first, and he jammed it against the door. Upon it he piled several other trunks, and jammed boxes against them, till the pile was enormous, and completely hid the door.

"Now get in if you can, you mugwumps!" growled Fish.

Crack!

The lock had given way at last. It flew into pieces, and the door yielded. The chums of the Remove all shoved at it at once, but it opened only an inch. The stack of boxes and trunks kept it from opening farther.

"He's got it barricaded!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Oh, the rotter!"

"You clear off!" yelled Fisher T. Fish. "You hear me! You're going to absquat-

ulate! No admittance to the printing works except on business! Light out! Git! You hear me talk!"

"We'll hear you howl, when we get in!" growled Johnny Bull. "Now then, all together. Shove!"

"Shoulder to shoulder!" said Wharton. "Hurrah!"

And the Famous Five shoved all together.

The stack of boxes inside swayed, and Fisher T. Fish sprang to their support. He put his weight against the barricade to keep it jammed on the door.

"You let up!" roared Fish.

"All together, kids! Shove!"

"The shovefulness is terrific!"

There were several other fellows on the scene now, and they were laughing loudly as they watched the Famous Five panting at the door. The barricade inside was strong, and Fish had his weight against it, so the task of the five juniors was not easy.

"Go it," said Bolsover major encouragingly.

"Pull devil, pull baker, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Lend a hand here, can't you?" panted Bob Cherry.

"Yes, if you want my 'Wounded Brigand,' for the Christmas Number!" grinned Bolsover.

"Blow your 'Wounded Brigand.'"

"Then you can settle your giddy editorial disputes on your own. As a matter of fact, I back up Fishy—if he puts in my 'Wounded Brigand.'"

"Shove away!" gasped Wharton.

The door yielded another inch.

"We're getting through! Shove your hardest!"

The landing and the stairs were crowded with Removites by this time. Temple, Dabney and Co., of the Fourth, came up to look on.

"What on earth are you up to?" asked Temple, in wonder.

The juniors paused in their efforts. The door was still fast, kept so by the stack of boxes and Fisher T. Fish. But a couple of inches had opened, and they could see into the room—the printing machine, and the table piled with papers.

"Trouble in the editorial circle?" asked Fry of the Fourth.

"Oh, rather!" grinned Dabney.

"It's that ass Fish!" gasped Wharton.

"We've sacked him from the editorship for mucking up the first number, and now he's written a lot of tosh, and is printing it as a second number on his own. Of course, we're going to stop him!"

"Like his cheek!" said Temple cordially.

"You don't want Fish for Editor. You don't want a Remove kid at all. What you want is an older chap—one of the Fourth, for instance!"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"In fact, I'll edit the paper for you myself, if you like," said Temple generously. "You could depend on me to keep a sharp eye on your contributions and blue-pencil all the piffle, you know."

"Fathead!" said the junior editors, with unanimous ingratitude.

"Now, look here——"

"We're not looking for an editor—especially for a silly ass as editor!" said Harry Wharton politely. "Lend us a hand at shoving this door open!"

"Go and eat coke!" growled Temple.

"Pile in again!" said Wharton.

Five sturdy shoulders were set to the door and amid encouraging chuckles from the spectators, the Famous Five exerted themselves upon the door of the box-room.

Inside the printing office, Fisher T. Fish braced himself against the barricade of boxes.

"Buck up, Fishy!" roared Bolsover major.

"Go it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The combined efforts of the Famous Five told at last.

The barricade was yielding. The American junior shoved on it in vain on the inside. The pile of boxes swayed and staggered, and the topmost trunk slipped over and crashed down to the floor. The door opened farther, and there was crash on crash of falling boxes.

Crash! Bang, bang!

"Oh, jumping Jerusalem! Ow, ow, ow, ow! Great Christopher Columbus! Yarool!"

Crash, crash!

The door flew open.

The juniors rushed in.

Fisher T. Fish was sprawling on the floor amid overturned boxes and trunks. A trunk lay across his legs, and another was lodged on his chest, and a hat-box was reposing on his waistcoat.

His crimson face looked out of a sea of boxes, big and little.

"Oh, you jays!" he gasped. "Ow! Hellup! Drag 'em off! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The editors left Fisher T. Fish to sort himself out. They devoted their attention to the printed copies of the "Herald" that were piled on the table. Fisher T. Fish dragged himself painfully from amid the boxes. He had been considerably shaken up, and he was not feeling happy.

Harry Wharton pointed to the door.

"Clear off!" he said.

"Nope!"

"Light a fire in the grate," said Harry.

"We've got to burn all this rubbish!"

Fisher T. Fish gave a yell of wrath.

"I guess you're not going to burn my copy!"

"Wrong guess!" said Bob Cherry. "We are!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish made a desperate rush to save his valuable literary productions. But he was unceremoniously seized and hurled forth from the printing-works. He sprawled on the landing, among the crowd of juniors who were grinning into the box-room. But he was not daunted. He was not a great fighting man as a rule, but the tamest animal will fight in defence of its cubs, and Fisher T. Fish was willing to encounter any odds in defence of his literary productions. He picked himself up and charged into the box-room again, with his fists wildly waving.

"Clear off!" roared Bob Cherry.

"I guess I'm chief editor—I guess——"

"Collar him!"

The juniors closed upon the infuriated Fish, and collared him, and whirled him over.

Johnny Bull picked up a can of printers' ink and swamped it over his face. Fisher T. Fish

was suddenly transformed into a nigger of the deepest dye. Johnny Bull rubbed the printers' ink liberally into his hair, and down his neck, and then he was slung out of the box-room once more.

There was a surging away of the juniors on the landing to avoid him. Fisher T. Fish was not a nice object to touch in his present state.

"Now clear off!" yelled Bob. "You'll get some more if you come back!"

"Grooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Grooh! I guess—ow—yah—grooooooh!"

And Fisher T. Fish finally disappeared, followed by howls of laughter from the juniors.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER

Fish's Enterprise Ends in Smoke I

THERE were piles of the newly printed spurious second number on the table.

The exasperated editors handled them unceremoniously.

Wharton glanced over the copy and sniffed with indignation. Fisher T. Fish had written it all himself, in his best style, and he had not spared his rival editors. In his leading article Fish had explained the situation:

"Owing to the crass stupidity of the mug-wumps formerly associated in this undertaking, the management is now entirely in American hands. This will ensure brilliant literary work, and the editorial notes, being written by F. T. Fish, will be the last word in journalistic ability. Readers are invited to make comparisons between the splendid contributions in this number of the 'Greyfriars Herald,' and the piffle published in the first number by a set of jays."

"Look at the blessed serial!" grunted Johnny Bull. "'Deadwood Bill, the Boy Burglar, or the Red Road-Raiders of the Rockies.'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shove 'em into the grate!" said Wharton.

"Anybody got a match?"

Nugent had a match, and the literary productions of Fisher Tarleton Fish were soon ablaze.

Number after number was crammed into the grate, and the blaze of the burning edition roared up the chimney.

The fire was fed fast with the numbers turned off the machine with so much labour by Fisher T. Fish.

As the fire-grate in the box-room was seldom or never used, the chimney was not in a state to stand a conflagration of that sort; it had not been swept for dog's ages, as Fisher T. Fish would have expressed it.

As the blaze of the burning papers roared up the chimney it was echoed by a hollow roar above, and lumps of smouldering soot dropped into the grate.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, in dismay. "That sounds as though the chimney had caught!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bolsover major. "You've set the chimney on fire. You'll have the House on fire next! Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly cuckoo—there's nothing whatever to cackle at—"

But Bolsover evidently thought differently. He roared.

"Oh, my hat!" said Wharton. "Drag the blessed papers out and stamp 'em out! There'll be a row if the chimney catches!"

The unfortunate editors, who had perhaps been a little too hasty in the work of destruction, hurried to drag the pile of burning copies from the grate. Bob Cherry hacked them out with the poker, and Johnny Bull with the tongs. They fell in the grate and on the floor, and the juniors stamped them out hurriedly. Thick smoke filled the room in a very few seconds, and the juniors laboured at the work of extinguishing the burning papers, with

smarting eyes and nostrils, panting for breath.

None of the fellows outside the room offered to help. They were roaring with laughter, evidently considering the whole matter as a comedy designed for their special amusement.

Thick volumes of acrid smoke rolled out of the box-room, and the juniors outside coughed as well as laughed, and sniffed and snorted.

The burning papers were stamped out at last, but the hollow roar in the chimney continued. By this time Harry Wharton and Co. looked like firemen who had been through some particularly rough experiences in a very bad fire. Their faces and hands and cuffs and collars were blackened, their hair was wild and dishevelled, their eyes were smarting, and they were gasping for breath. Bob Cherry dragged the window open to let the smoke escape—a happy thought, though a little late. But the keen wind rushed in, and drove the smoke in a heavy

volume out of the door, and enveloped the juniors there in it, and drove them downstairs coughing and snorting and sneezing.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob, rubbing his eyes. "You must have been an ass to burn those rotten papers, Wharton—"

"Why, you suggested it, you fathead—"

"The chimney's on fire," said Johnny Bull.

"Perhaps it'll go out soon!" said Wharton hopefully.

"And perhaps we shall have Quelch and a whole family of prefects up here before that!" Johnny Bull growled.

"Oh, I'll pulverise that howling idiot, Fishy—it's all his fault!"



"Let us in!" shouted Wharton. "I guess not!" said Fisher T. Fish from within. "If you don't open the door, we'll bust it in!" roared Wharton (See Chapter 4)

"The faultfulness of the esteemed Fish is terrific."

"Oh, my eyes!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, here comes Loder! Now for the fireworks!"

Loder the prefect, the bully of the Sixth, strode into the box-room sniffing.

"What does this mean!" the prefect roared.

"Can't you see?" said Wharton tartly. "We've been burning some rubbish, and the chimney's caught!"

"You young rascals——"

"Oh, rats!"

The juniors' tempers had suffered, naturally, and they were not disposed to stand Gerald Loder's bullying, prefect as he was. Loder had a cane in his hand, and he was only waiting for an excuse to use it. Loder of the Sixth had a special "down" on the Famous Five of the Lower Fourth.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yaroooh! Oh—oh! Ow!"

Loder distributed the lashes with great impartiality on all sides. But the Removites were not in a mood to stand it. Prefects had a right to cane them, but Loder was thrashing them recklessly, and they did not mean to have it. Bob Cherry caught at the cane, and snatched it away, and tossed it out of the window. Loder, with an exclamation of fury, seized him by the collar and boxed his ears. That was the signal for the rest. With one accord they rushed upon Loder, and rolled him over.

Gerald Loder roared as he rolled in the half-burnt, smoky, charred remains of the second number of the "Greyfriars Herald."

In a few seconds Loder and his clothes were smothered with soot and blacks, and he was in almost as deplorable a condition as the juniors themselves.

"You—you young scoundrels!" roared Loder. "Ow! Leggo! Help! You young villains! I'll have you expelled for this! I'll get you flogged! Ow, ow! Leggo!"

He tore himself away at last, and sprang to his feet, clenching his fists. But the exasperated juniors rushed at him, and Loder dodged out of the box-room and fairly ran.

"After him!" roared Bob Cherry excitedly.

But Harry Wharton caught his excited elum by the arm and dragged him back.

"Nuff's as good as a feast!" he gasped. "We've done enough already to get a fearful licking all round, when Loder reports us."

"Well, the rotter deserved it all——"

"We'd better go and clean ourselves up!" groaned Nugent. "We shall be called before Quelch for this—and we can't go in this state. Quelch would think that we'd been disorderly or something if he saw us like this."

"Ha, ha! I think he would!"

"The blessed chimney's gone out," said Bob. "We can't do better than do the same."

And they did.

But they were not destined to escape the eyes of their Form-master. Wingate of the Sixth came hurrying along the Remove passage as they came downstairs. Loder had evidently made his report, and the head prefect was coming for them. Wingate stopped in utter amazement at the sight of the sooty, smoky, juniors.

"Why, what—what——" he stuttered. "Ha, ha, ha! Oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

He burst into a roar of laughter.

Five smoke-blackened faces looked at him grimly.

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Wingate. "You young asses! You frabjous duffers! Loder's reported you for setting a chimney on fire, and assaulting him. You're to come to Mr. Quelch at once."

"I—I say, we can't come in this state!" said Bob Cherry.

"Let's go and get a wash first," urged Wharton.

Wingate shook his head.

"Impossible! Mr. Quelch has sent me to fetch you."

"But—but, I say——"

"The butfulness is terrific!"

"Come on!" said Wingate.

There was no help for it. Crowds of yelling fellows gathered to see them as they marched off at the prefect's heels towards Mr. Quelch's study. Chuckles and loud laughter greeted them on all sides.

With faces crimson under the soot and smoke and blacks, the juniors followed the

captain of Greyfriars into Mr. Quelch's study. Wingate was doing his best to be grave, but he was not succeeding very well.

"Here they are, sir," he said. "Ha, ha, ha! I—I mean I've brought them, sir. They're a little dirty."

Mr. Quelch jumped up as the five grimy juniors marched in.

"Bless my soul!" he exclaimed. "What—what does this mean?"

"Ahem! You see, sir——"

"This is—is disgraceful!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Loder has reported you to me. You have set a chimney on fire."

"It was an accident, sir; and it's gone out," said Wharton meekly.

"You have assaulted a prefect."

"Oh, no, sir!"

"What! Do you deny Loder's statement that you seized him and rolled him on the floor among some burnt papers and rubbish?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch sternly. "Loder came here in a most revolting state!"

"Ye-es, sir. We—we didn't assault him exactly, sir. We know better than to assault a prefect," said Nugent.

"Then what did you do?"

"We just collared him, and rolled him on the floor, sir."

"Nugent!"

"But we didn't mean to assault him, sir. That would have been wrong," said Nugent with a shake of the head.

"I shall cane you, and you will take two hundred lines each," said Mr. Quelch. "Also, you are forbidden to gather in the box-room again for any reason whatever."

"Oh, sir!" exclaimed Wharton in dismay. "It's our printing-office, sir."

"You heard what I said, Wharton."

"Yes, sir; but——"

"Enough! Hold out your hand!"

Mr. Quelch was not to be argued with. The Famous Five were caned in turn, and dismissed from the Remove-master's study—they went out squeezing their hands and blinking painfully through the grime on their faces.

"Well, this is a go!" groaned Bob Cherry. "The printing office of the 'Greyfriars Herald' will have to be closed till further orders."

"Ow, ow! I didn't know Quelch was such a giddy athlete!" mumbled Johnny Bull. "All for rolling a beast like Loder in the soot! Ow!"

"All Fishy's fault!" growled Wharton. "Let's look for Fish and slaughter him!"

"Good egg!"

And they hunted for Fish. But Fisher T. Fish was locked up in a bath room, scrubbing printer's ink from his face and hair, and it was a couple of hours before he showed himself again.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

Removed to New Premises!

MISFORTUNE had fallen upon the Greyfriars editors.

Mr. Quelch's edict had the effect of evicting a prosperous printing firm from their works, and the "Greyfriars Herald" editorial staff had nowhere to lay its weary head, so to speak.

The Remove-master was quite right from his point of view. He had closed the box-room to the enterprise of the Famous Five. But it was evidently necessary to have a printing-works and an editorial office, if the paper was to be produced at all; and the staff turned the matter over very seriously in their minds.

Fisher T. Fish chortled when he heard the news.

He had been booted out of the editorial staff, and the editorial staff had been booted out of the editorial office; and the American schoolboy regarded that as a sort of poetical justice.

But Harry Wharton and Co. were worried.

None of the Remove studies could be considered large enough for a printing installation, even on the modest scale of the "Greyfriars Herald" Outfit.

"We shall have to do the printing in the Rag," said Bob Cherry.

"We can never get the Rag to ourselves," said Wharton, with a shake of the head. "All the fellows use the Rag, you know."

"We could boot them out."

Wharton laughed.

"We couldn't boot out a whole Form," he said. "There are only five of us, and if the



The door opened farther and there was a crash of falling boxes. Crash! Bang, bang! "Oh, jumping Jerusalem!" howled Fish. "Ow, ow, ow, ow!" Then the door flew open. (See Chapter 5)

other contributors back us up, that's less than half the Form. And the Fourth, and the Shell, and the Fifth use the Rag."

"Well, where else are we going to do the printing?"

"Blessed if I know!"

"Then we shall have to try the Rag."

And that had to be decided upon. The Rag was a large room, and there was plenty of

accommodation for a printing plant ten times as large as that of the "Greyfriars Herald." The difficulty was that all the fellows had a right to use the Rag. The Sixth generally had their meetings in the senior common-room, or the prefects' room; and the Fifth did not use the Rag much, but all the junior meetings were held there. Temple, Dabney and Co. of the Fourth met there regularly every

Thursday evening for a debate, being the leading lights of the Fourth Form Debating Society. Hobson and Co. of the Shell met there in football committee once a week. Even the fags of the Third held meetings in the Rag, sometimes having a "spread" there. The editors of the "Greyfriars Herald" were not likely, therefore, to have the Rag to themselves, if they established their editorial office and printing-works there.

But there was nothing else to be done.

The most enthusiastic member of the staff did not relish the idea of having the printing machine in his study, and the Rag was the only alternative.

So on the day following the misadventure in the box-room the juniors, after morning school, brought down their machine, and their cases of type, and cans of ink, and other appurtenances.

They were all bestowed in the Rag, ready to be set up for use as soon as the juniors were finished with lessons for the day.

Fisher T. Fish was looking very crusty that day.

He had been solemnly warned that he would be bumped without mercy if he was found near the printing-machine again. He had simply yelled with rage, and exploded into all kinds of weird American remarks, when he learned the fate of his doomed second number of the "Herald." He announced his fixed intentions of being "on" in the editing of the great Christmas Double Number, and the rival editors announced their equally fixed determination of slaughtering him if he bothered them any more.

Fisher T. Fish chuckled when he learned that the printing press had been established in the Rag. Alone and unaided he could not have interrupted the work of the editorial staff; but he thought he saw his way clear to make them repent themselves for having pushed him off the staff, as he expressed it.

After lessons that day the editors snatched a hurried tea in No. 1 study, and then proceeded to the Rag for business.

They were soon in their shirt-sleeves, setting up type, oiling the machine, finishing the literary work at the table — as busy as beavers.

While they were labouring away, very busy and considerably inky, Fisher T. Fish came in. Bolsover major and Skinner and Stott, Snoop and Trevor, and several other fellows came in with him. They were all eager contributors whose contributions had been declined, with or without thanks, by the editor. As a natural result, they were not feeling specially amiable towards the editorial staff.

"I guess we're ready," Fisher T. Fish remarked.

Wharton looked up from the type-case where he was working.

"Hallo! What do you want?" he asked.

"We're all going to help, I guess," said Fisher T. Fish airily. "I've taken these chaps on to my staff."

"Well, you cheeky ass!"

"As chief editor I've a right to engage as many sub-editors as I like," Fish explained. "These chaps are all sub-editors. See? Got that?"

"Oh, buzz off!"

"Fish is going to put in my 'Wounded Brigand,'" said Bolsover major. "I recognise Fishy's rights as chief editor."

"Sure, and he's going to publish my 'Banshee of Ballyunion,'" said Mick Desmond. "Fishy is a first rate editor, intirely!"

"He's putting in my 'Ode to a Dying Swan,'" said Peter Todd. "Under the circumstances, I admit Fishy's rights as chief editor, and consider all you chaps as outsiders!"

"Hear, hear!" chorused Bolsover and company.

Harry Wharton snorted.

"You can go and bury your 'Dying Swan,' along with Bolsover's 'Wounded Brigand,' Todd," he said. "And you can shove in the 'Banshee of Ballyunion,' and Alonzo's story of remorse and crime. And then you can go and eat coke."

"We're waiting," said Bolsover major.

"Waiting for what—a thick ear?"

"That printing-machine."

"We're ready to dis. the type," said Fisher T. Fish. "Don't trouble to set any more up; it's all got to be dissed again."

"Look here, you clear out of the editorial

office!" exclaimed Wharton wrathfully. "If you don't travel, you'll be shoved out."

Bolsover major pushed back his cuffs.

"I'd like to see anybody shove me out!" he said truculently.

"Back up, all members of the staff!" said Wharton, as Fish and Co. advanced, with the evident intention of taking possession of the printing plant by force.

There were a good many contributors at work at the large table in the Rag. Tom Brown of New Zealand, and Ogilvy, and Morgan and Penfold, and Mark Linley, lined up with the Famous Five.

"Now are you going to hand over our printing press!"

"We'll give you one minute to clear off before we hand you over the thick ears!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Charge!" shouted Fisher T. Fish.

Like a prudent general, he remained in the rear as he issued that fiery command.

But Bolsover major, who had heaps of pluck, led the charge, and in a moment there was a terrific combat raging in the Rag.

"Pile on 'em!" roared Fish. "Give 'em socks! Give 'em a lambasting! Pile in, my giddy antelopes, and pulverise the jays!"

But as it happened, the odds were slightly on Wharton's side, and the Famous Five were better fighting men than the other fellows. The charge of Bolsover and Co. was stopped, and they were hurled back, and Harry Wharton and Co. followed them up hotly. Skinner backed into Fisher T. Fish hurriedly, and they rolled over together, and they were seized and hurled out into the passage. Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull grasped Bolsover major, and the burly Removee was swung off his feet, and hurled headlong out after Fish and Skinner. Then the smaller fry broke and ran, pursued by the victorious staff half-way down the passage.

"Hurray for us!" shouted Bob Cherry, as the staff returned to the Rag, flushed and breathless and victorious.

"Pile in!" said Harry Wharton.

And the somewhat dusty staff of the "Greyfriars Herald" piled in, and the famous Christmas Number grew under their busy hands.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

A Lively Debate!

TEMPLE of the Fourth came into the Rag about half an hour later.

Fish and Co. had evidently been chased away for good; at all events, they had not returned to try conclusions again. Harry Wharton and Co. had hoped that they were to be left in peace to finish their editorial work. They looked rather suspiciously at Temple, the captain of the Fourth, as he came in. Temple was followed by Fry, Scott, Dabney, and five or six more members of the Fourth Form at Greyfriars.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What do you kids want?"

"It's Thursday evening," Temple explained.

"Yes; I can see that on the calendar. Thanks for the information all the same. Do you know any more things like that?" asked Bob politely.

Temple frowned majestically. As captain of the Upper Fourth, he cultivated a superior manner towards mere Lower Fourth-Formers, and affected to regard the Remove as mere fags—a superior attitude which sometimes led to trouble.

"I suppose you know that our debating society meets on Thursday evenings?" he said loftily.

"Weekly, you know," said Fry.

"Oh, crumbs! Better make it fortnightly," said Harry Wharton. "We can't be worried with your blessed debates while we're at work."

"Rather not."

"The rather-notfulness is terrific, my worthy and ludicrous Temple."

The captain of the Fourth sniffed.

As chairman of the debating society, naturally he regarded a debate as a much more important matter than any number, Christmas or otherwise, of a Remove Form paper.

"I was just wondering whether we could stand you here while we're holding our debate," he said. "If you're very quiet, we'll try to stand it; but don't talk. If you interrupt us in any way you'll have to go."



Johnny Bull picked up a can of printers' ink and swamped it over the American junior's face. Fisher T. Fish was suddenly transformed into a nigger of the deepest dye (See Chapter 5)

Whereupon the staff of the "Greyfriars Herald" looked at Temple as though they would eat him.

"We shall want that table," said Fry.

"Oh, rather!" chimed in Dabney.

"You can't have it, you know," said Mark Linley politely. "You see, we're writing out our articles on it."

"Can't be helped. A debating society must have a table."

"Couldn't you go and debate somewhere else?" asked Wharton. "In the bike shed, or the wood-shed, for instance?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I decline to answer impertinent remarks from a fag!" said Temple loftily. "I must repeat that we want that table."

"Then I must repeat that you can go and eat coke."

"And plenty of it," said Nugent.

Temple looked at his followers, and then at the Removites. He was greatly inclined to

commit assault and battery upon the spot, and eject the schoolboy editors and the printing-press and all their works violently into the passage. But he reflected in time that that was a device that might work in reverse order; and, besides, the Fourth-Formers had come there for a debate, not for scrapping. So Temple choked down his wrath and remained polite and urbane.

"We'll split the difference," he said. "It's a big table. You kids can have one end, and we'll meet round the other end."

"Well, that's fair enough," said Wharton, willing to accept the olive-branch, so to speak, and keep the peace. "But I hope you don't want to talk. You see we can't write while you're talking."

"And I don't see how I can set up type with those chaps chattering," said Johnny Bull, who was working as a compositor.

"Do you think we can debate without speaking?" roared Temple.

"Well, couldn't you have a Quaker meet-

ing for once, and leave the debate till next week?" asked Frank Nugent.

"You—you ass——"

"Leave those fags alone," said Fry. "Let's get to work. Take your seat, Mr. Chairman."

Temple took his seat.

The Removites went on with their work, and Temple, after a wrathful glare at them, opened the proceedings of the Fourth Form Debating Society.

The subject proposed for debate was "On the Influence of the Public School System upon the National Life, and whether the British Empire could possibly survive without the Public School."

Fry undertook to prove that it couldn't; and Dabney, on the other hand, was of opinion that it could, though necessarily in a crippled state.

Needless to say, Fry adduced that famous saying which the Duke of Wellington uttered—or did not utter—concerning the cheerful assumption that the Battle of Waterloo was won upon the playing fields of Eton.

"What did the Iron Duke say?" exclaimed Fry. "The Battle of Waterloo——"

"My hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Fry, I've heard that before!"

Temple rapped the table.

"Don't you fags interrupt!" he exclaimed severely.

"Sorry!" said Bob politely. "Can you tell me a rhyme for frabjous chump, Temple? I'm writing a poem about the Fourth."

Temple glared, but did not offer to provide a rhyme.

"The Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton," said Fry firmly. "Of course, in saying that, the Duke meant all the public schools, and not only Eton—which, after all, isn't quite up to Greyfriars."

"Hear, hear!"

"He meant that affairs were well managed by public school men—that the braininess and initiative of our officers, the marvellous resource and adaptability of our generals, the splendid and wideawake administration of our War Office are due to the public school men who fill all the posts."

"Oh, my hat!" said Bob Cherry.

"Shut up!" roared Temple.

Fry went on eloquently. Dabney replied with equal eloquence. He acknowledged that his friend Fry had put the case well. But he begged to submit that, even, without the public schools, the British Empire would have a slight, perhaps a very slight, chance of surviving. It was barely possible that some other class of men could be found to administer the War Office, for instance, almost as energetically as it was administered now. It was possible that——

"I want some more e's," said Johnny Bull.

"Have you chaps been making pie of this blessed type again? I must have some more e's."

"Silence!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"Look here——"

"Rats! I want some more e's," said Johnny Bull.

Wharton lent him a hand at sorting out the type. More e's were found, and Johnny Bull went on setting up. Dabney, after a ferocious glare at the Removites, resumed his speech. Bob Cherry rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"Any of you chaps know a rhyme for burbling?" he asked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm doing a poetic description of a junior debating society," Bob explained.

"Are you going to shut up?" roared Temple, rapping furiously on the table. "Now go on, Dab, old man!"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"Good egg!" exclaimed Russell of the Remove at last, lifting his head from his work. "I've finished this at last. I think the readers will like this story of rugger footer, Wharton. It will be specially interesting as we play Soccer here."

"Order!"

"I'll read out the first bit," said Russell. "You fellows listen to this for a thrilling description. 'Jack dashed up the field, the ball in his hands. Forward after forward tried to stop him, but——'"

"Shut up!" roared the debating society with one voice.

"But Jack dashed on. There was only the full-back to beat——"

"Ring off! Speak louder, Dab."

"Jack was tackled, and they rolled on the ground——"

Temple of the Fourth jumped up, rushed along the table, and caught the splendid story of Rugger from Russell's hand, and flung it across the room. Russell jumped up with a yell of wrath.

"You silly ass——"

"Now shut up——"

"Why, I'll—I'll——"

"Turn those Fourth-Form bounders out of the editorial office!" exclaimed Bulstrode. "I've been making all sorts of mistakes, with their chatter going on. I've just written down Waterloo instead of walnuts."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cheeky fags——"

"You silly magpies——"

"You'll get booted out——"

"You'll get booted out——"

"Look here——"

"Look here——"

Debating society and editorial staff were equally excited. There was no pause from words to action, and the Fourth Form Debating Society went whirling towards the door, under a fierce rush from the editorial and literary staff of the "Greyfriars Herald."

The important point whether the British Empire could or could not survive without the public schools, was never settled—at all events, by Temple, Dabney, and Co.

The Fourth-Formers put up a gallant fight, but they were rushed out of the Rag, and chased down the passage. The proceedings of the debating society had come to a sudden termination.

"Now, perhaps, we can get some work done, now those talkative burlers have cleared out," growled Johnny Bull. "Some silly ass has upset the forme. The blessed type's in pie on the floor. Help me sort it out."

"All hands!" said Wharton.

And all hands started "dissing" the type, which had been upset in the struggle with the Fourth-Form Debating Society.

THE NINTH CHAPTER

Coker's Little Game!

"BUSY—eh?"

Coker of the Fifth asked that question.

It was half an hour since the departure of the Fourth Form Debating Society, and Harry Wharton and Co. were making great progress with the Christmas Number of the "Greyfriars Herald."

They were not pleased to see Coker of the Fifth walk in, with Potter and Greene and Fitzgerald with him.

Instinctively they knew that it meant trouble.

Coker of the Fifth had kindly offered to take on the editing of the school paper when it was first started. The offer had been declined without thanks. Then he had offered splendid literary contributions—which had also been left on his hands. Then Coker had become wrathful, and there had been trouble between the Fifth Formers and the editorial staff. And Horace Coker looked now as if he meant mischief, as he stood with his hands in his pockets, regarding the schoolboy editors and printers with a broad grin.

"Yes, we're busy," said Wharton shortly.

"And we don't want to be interrupted, as a matter of fact," Frank Nugent remarked pointedly.

Coker chuckled.

"Got leave to use the Rag for this rubbish?" he asked.

"Go and eat coke!"

"Well, live and let live!" said Coker genially. "We don't mind you kids being here, so long as you don't interrupt us."

"Not at all," said Potter airily.

"Sure and not a bit intirely!" affirmed Fitzgerald.

"Look here, what are you going to do here?" demanded Wharton suspiciously.

"Only a little boxing match—half a dozen couples," said Coker calmly. "No need for you kids to get in our way, you know. If you do you'll get hurt, very likely; but, of course, that's your own look-out."

"Why can't you box in the gym.?" demanded Bob Cherry.

Coker appeared to reflect.

"Why can't we box in the gym, Potter?" he asked.

Potter shook his head.

"Why can't we box in the gym, Greeney?" he asked.

Greeney in turn shook his head with owl-like solemnity.

"Why can't we box in the gym, Fitzgerald?" he asked.

"Sure, and it's because we're going to box here!" said Fitzgerald.

"Look here, you can clear out!" exclaimed Wharton. "You rotters, you've come here for a rag, and we're not going to have it. We're busy!"

"The busyfulness is terrific, my worthy and ludicrous friends."

"Are we going to clear out?" asked Coker, appealing to his friends, in the same humorous strain.

"Are we going to clear out, Potter?"

"Are we going to clear out, Greeney?"

"Are we going to clear out, Fitzgerald?"

"No," said Fitzgerald; "we're not!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Other Fifth Formers were dropping in by ones and twos now. They were fully entitled to use the Rag if they wanted to, though, as a rule, they were satisfied with the senior common-room, where they were untroubled by the presence of mere juniors. But just now they had special reasons for being in the Rag. Coker had evidently organised the raid.

There had been comic libels on the Fifth in the first number of the "Greyfriars Herald." The Fifth had smarted under them. Apparently they had made up their minds that they would have a word or two to say in the production of the second number.

Coker did not intend to interfere directly with the schoolboy printers. But the crowd of Fifth Formers had brought boxing-gloves with them, and they intended to have a general boxing match. And the results of that, at close quarters with the work of the editorial staff, could easily be anticipated.

The chums of the Remove exchanged uneasy glances.

They had dealt with the recalcitrant members of the Remove, and they had ejected the Fourth Form Debating Society,

but it was not quite so easy to eject a dozen seniors. Coker and Co. were in too great force to be tackled with any hope of success.

"Line up!" said Coker. "Now, my party's going to charge your party, Potter. If we drive you right round the table, that counts one for us!"

"Right-ho!" grinned Potter.

"Don't you come fooling round this table!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Keep off, you Fifth Form rotters!"

"Clear out!"

"Go back to Colney Hatch!"

The Fifth Formers did not heed the angry and indignant exclamations of the juniors. They lined up in two ranks of six, and Coker's party charged Potter's division. Potter's division gave way at once, and came whirling round the table. Coker's party scrambled over the table to get at them, with direful results to literary efforts and formes of set-up type.

"Go it!" roared Coker. "Don't get in the way, you kids!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You rotters!" roared Wharton. "Get out, or we'll put you out!"

"Oh, don't be rough with little boys!" implored Coker with comic pathos, and his followers roared with laughter.

"Line up!" shouted Wharton. "Kick them out!"

"Play up, Remove!" bellowed Bob Cherry.

The juniors played up gallantly. It was the only thing to be done, as the seniors only too evidently intended to wreck the whole show. The Removites had little chance in the unequal combat, but they did not mean to be ragged out of their printing-office without a struggle.

Harry Wharton tackled Coker, and succeeded in knocking him flying with a left-hander right on the chin. Coker roared as he went down.

"Oh! Yah! Collar the cheeky little beasts! Kick them out!"

"Sock it to 'em, Remove!" roared Bob Cherry.

Potter and Greene seized him as he roared, and he was carried, kicking and

struggling, to the door, and hurled bodily into the passage. Bump!

And after Bob Cherry, one by one the unfortunate literary and editorial members of the staff were hurled forth, and there was a quick succession of bumps and loud yells in the passage outside the Rag.

And when the ejection was finished, Coker & Co. crowded in the doorway, yelling with laughter, and chortling with triumph.

The Removites scrambled up, and limped away. They had no chance, and they did not want to try conclusions with the Fifth a second time just then.

A roar of laughter from Coker and Co. followed them.

Work on the Christmas Number of the "Greyfriars Herald" had been stopped for that evening, there was no doubt about that; and there was equally no doubt that a new printing-office would have to be found for the junior newspaper. The Rag was a little too lively for editorial and literary work.

THE TENTH CHAPTER

Very Funny!

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Temple, Dabney, and Co. stood before the notice-board in the Hall and yelled with laughter.

There was a new notice on the board, in the handwriting of Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove.

It was that notice, apparently, that drew Homeric laughter from Temple, Dabney, and Co. of the Fourth Form.

The Famous Five came along the passage, while the Fourth Formers were indulging in their merriment, and they looked at them in astonishment. There was nothing in the Remove notice to excite risibility, so far as the Removites could see. It was the list of the Remove eleven booked to play Southgate School on Saturday, when Inky's old chum, Dhoolah Das, was to arrive with his team. Notices of the senior matches were always posted up on the board, and Harry Wharton did not see any reason why junior matches should



Crowds of yelling fellows gathered to see the juniors as they were marched off at Wingate's heels. "I-I-I say, we can't come in this state," said Bob Cherry (See Chapter 6)

not be posted in the same way. He did not see anything whatever to laugh at.

But Temple, Dabney, and Co. evidently did. They had spotted the notice when they came out after lessons that Friday, and they had fastened on it at once. A whisper from Temple to the others had set them roaring, and they roared still louder as they saw Harry Wharton and Co., staring at them.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, this beats the band!" ejaculated Temple.

"Oh, rather!" Dabney chuckled.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What's the little joke? I don't see anything funny in a footer list myself. Your name's not there, Temple. It would be funny, if it were, of course."

"So you're playing Southgate?" said Temple, with tears in his eyes.

"Yes, to-morrow," said Wharton.

"At footer?"

"Yes, of course. You don't think we should be playing them at cricket, I suppose, at this time of the year?"

"Or at marbles or hop-scootch?" growled Johnny Bull.

Temple, Dabney, and Co. yelled again, and the chums of the Remove were utterly mystified. Where the joke came in was a mystery to them. But there evidently was a joke—the mirth of the Fourth Formers was genuine enough. There were tears in Temple's eyes, and Fry appeared on the point of having a fit.

Dabney, in a shaking voice, read down the list of the eleven, amid breathless chuckles from the other Fourth Formers.

"Bulstrode; Bull, Morgan; Brown, Todd, Cherry; Hurree Singh, Nugent, Wharton, Penfold, Vernon-Smith."

"Eleven of 'em?" grinned Fry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Did you expect us to be playing ten or twelve, you silly asses!" asked Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So that's the giddy list?" said Temple.

"Yes, and I don't see where the cackle comes in. We're leaving Linley out as he's working on an exam. paper on Saturday. But that's a good team—good enough to whip the Fourth Form out of its boots."

"Ever seen Southgate play?" chuckled Temple.

"No; never even heard of them till Wednesday," said Wharton. "Inky's got a chum there, a chap named Bass or Gas or something."

"Dhoolah Das, my esteemed friend," murmured the nabob.

"Well, I've seen 'em," said Temple blandly.

"I've got a cousin at Southgate—he's in the junior footer team."

"What sort of game do they play—good?"

"Oh, quite good!"

"Well, if they're a good team, and they lick us, we'll try to stand it," said Wharton. "But I don't see where the cackle comes in all the same."

"You will to-morrow," said Temple, and the Fourth Formers burst into another roar, and walked away, leaving the Removites very much mystified.

"I'm blessed if I can get on to this," said Bob Cherry. "What is there to cackle at in our playing Southgate at footer?"

"Nothing that I can see."

"Seems to me that the silly asses are off their silly rockers!" growled Johnny Bull.

Wharton rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"I don't quite understand it," he said.

"If Temple's got a cousin at Southgate, I suppose he knows something about the place, and about their footer team. But I don't see anything funny in their team coming over here to play us. You had an answer from them, Frank?"

"Yes, that's all right," said Nugent.

"They'll be here before half-past two to-morrow."

"Good! I suppose as a junior team they'll be playing fellows from the Fourth and the Shell, and Temple thinks they'll be too strong for us. We'll see."

"We can beat the Fourth and the Shell here," said Bob Cherry. "We always walk over Temple and Co. on the footer-ground, and we've beaten the Shell. And we can do as much for Southgate."

"Of course."

But the chums of the Remove were puzzled. Even if the Southgaters were a particularly strong team, and likely to administer a severe licking to the Greyfriars Remove, that did not fully account for Temple and Co.'s great merriment on the subject.

But Temple evidently did not intend to explain, and the Removites were left in the dark as to where the joke came in.

But although Temple did not explain to the Remove, apparently he confided the secret whatever it was, to other fellows. When Wharton came across Coker of the Fifth that

Friday evening, Coker hailed him with a broad grin :

"I hear you're playing Southgate to-morrow?" he said.

"Yes; what about it?"

"Never seen them play—eh?"

"Never," said Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Coker.

And he walked away laughing.

Wharton began to feel vaguely uneasy. And, later on, Hobson of the Shell tackled him on the subject. He tapped Wharton on the shoulder in the passage.

"Playing Southgate to-morrow, what?" he asked.

"Yes!" Wharton snapped. He was getting tired of the subject.

"Rather a queer match—eh?" said Hobson.

Wharton stared at him.

"Queer!—why queer?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Hobson. "You'll see to-morrow, if you don't know now. Who arranged the giddy match?"

"Inky arranged it with another Indian chap who's at Southgate."

"Without asking any questions, I suppose?" grinned the Shell fellow.

"Questions! What questions should he have asked?"

"Oh, you'll see to-morrow!"

"Look here, Hobson—"

But Hobson walked off, chuckling gleefully.

"I don't quite like this," Wharton confided to his chums. "There seems to be something funny about our playing Southgate, but I'm blessed if I can see it. Temple has been telling his little joke all over the school, and all the fellows are cackling about it, but they won't say what the joke is."

"Quite beyond me," said Nugent.

"I suppose they won't fail us at the last moment, or anything of that kind?" said Bob Cherry thoughtfully.

"Impossible, my esteemed Bob," said Inky promptly. "The refulness upon my worthy chum Dhoolah Das is terrific."

"There must be a joke somewhere," said Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars. "I've just been asked about it by Potter of the Fifth. I thought he'd die of laughing

when I told him Southgate were coming over here to play us."

"But there's nothing funny in that, is there?"

"Not that I can see."

"Well, they'll be here to-morrow, and we shall see," remarked Tom Brown, the New Zealand junior. "I don't see the joke at all myself."

But the other fellows to whom Temple of the Fourth had imparted his mysterious information, seemed to think that it was very funny.

Quite a number of fellows in other Forms, who generally affected not to know that there was such a thing at Greyfriars as a Remove Footer team, announced their intention of putting off other engagements in order to see the Southgate match.

But the secret, whatever it was, was well kept; and the Remove fellows could not get the slightest hint as to the nature of the mysterious joke.

"Oh, let 'em cackle!" said Bob Cherry that evening. "We've got to see about the Christmas Number of the 'Herald.' Where are we going to stick the printing-press? We can't leave it in the Rag."

"Might have it in your study?" Nugent suggested thoughtfully.

"No room," said Bob blandly. "I was thinking that you might have it in No. 1."

"Ahem! Johnny Bull might like it in No. 14."

"Couldn't find room," said Johnny Bull promptly. "But, as Wharton is chief editor, he would naturally like it in his study."

"Well, we can't have it in the box room, now Quelch's on the warpath," he said, "and we can't get any work done in the Rag. It will have to go into some study."

"Toss up for it!" suggested Tom Brown.

"I suppose that's the only way!"

And that was done, and it fell to Johnny Bull. So the printing press and all its appurtenances were carried into Study No. 14, which Johnny Bull shared with Fisher T. Fish, the American junior. Fish was there when it was brought in. And the schoolboy editors impressed upon him, with direful warnings, that he would be slaughtered, scalped, and boiled



"Ha, ha, ha! I mean, I'm sorry, sir!" gasped Bob Cherry. "I-I-I don't mean to be disrespectful, sir, ha, ha, ha! But—but this is too funny!" "Cherry!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "For the last time, explain the meaning of this wicked letter!" (See Chapter 13)

in oil, if he ventured to lay a finger on the property of the Remove Printing and Publishing Company.

"I guess I'm the head of that company!" said Fisher T. Fish.

"Better bump him to start with," suggested Bob Cherry, "simply as a warning!"

"Yes, that's a good idea!"

"Hyer, I saw—I guess—ow, ow!"

Bump!

And the schoolboy editors left the study, leaving Fisher T. Fish sitting on the floor, gasping for breath, and breathing vengeance.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER

Loder Makes a Terrible Discovery!

"CHERRY!"

Loder of the Sixth rapped out the name.

It was close upon bedtime, but Bob Cherry, who had been working hard at his literary work for the great Christmas Number, was going out into the Close, to take a sprint in the open air to freshen himself up before going to bed. Loder of the Sixth caught sight of him at the door, and called to him.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob, stopping and keeping a wary eye on the bully of the Sixth. He knew that Loder had not forgotten the incident in the box-room, as well as several other rubs he had had with the Famous Five.

"Where are you going?" demanded Loder. "You know very well juniors are not allowed out of the house after nine o'clock."

"I'm going for a sprint round the Close; Wingate's given me leave!"

"Rubbish!" said Loder. "Wingate's gone out!"

"He gave me leave before he went out, please Loder," said Bob with meek politeness.

"Rubbish! I suppose you are going out for some mischief. Get in!"

"Rats!" said Bob, less politely.

And he ran out.

Loder made a rush after him, and caught him by the shoulder. There was a struggle at the bottom of the School House steps, and then Bob tore himself away, and vanished into the darkness.

Loder snapped his teeth. He had interfered with the junior from sheer motives of bullying, and for no better reason. He knew very well that Bob would not have told him an untruth. He did not feel inclined, however, to chase the elusive junior in the darkness of the Close, and he turned back to the House—and, as he did so, he caught sight of a sheet of paper that lay on the steps, evidently dropped either by himself or by Bob Cherry in the momentary struggle.

He picked it up and glanced at it.

Then, he gave a sudden start, and whistled.

"My hat! What on earth—"

He read the paper over again.

It was in Bob Cherry's sprawling handwriting, which Loder knew well enough, having often imposed lines upon Bob; And it ran:

"Dear Father.—Overwhelmed with debt, the result of my own vice and folly, I have no resource left but to blow out my brains. Evil companions have led me into gambling and reckless folly, and now the end has come. I cannot face exposure and disgrace. My last coin has gone to purchase a revolver, with which I shall end a career of vice and folly. This night, in the darkness, I shall perish in the

gloomy shadows of the Cloisters, and you will be rid of an ungrateful and unworthy son. Father, forget me, and—"

There the writing ended.

Probably it had been continued on another sheet, but that other sheet was still reposing in Bob Cherry's pocket.

Loder stared at the sprawling writing, fraught with such deadly meaning, with wide-open and startled eyes.

Was it possible?

He had always had his suspicions of the Famous Five. Their conduct had always appeared to be open and honest, frank and honourable—but to Loder, who was a past-master in the art of hypocrisy, that only seemed an additional reason for regarding them with suspicion.

More than once he had tried to find out things to their disadvantage—but he had always failed, simply because they had nothing to conceal.

But this letter?

It could not be a jape, because Bob Cherry could not possibly have had any fore-knowledge of the fact that Loder had been near the door when Bob was going out.

And the junior could not have written that terrible letter, and put it into his pocket for nothing.

It was not written in the form of a letter to be posted either, but simply scrawled on a sheet of impot. paper, doubtlessly the first paper that had come to hand, in a junior study.

Incredible as it seemed, Loder could not doubt it.

The wretched junior was all that he had ever suspected at his most suspicious moments, and worse—the Famous Five were "evil companions" who had led him into vice and crime and debt—what an exposure for Harry Wharton and Co., when the last despairing letter of Bob Cherry was made public!

Loder grinned at the idea.

But he quickly ceased to grin—after all, he was human—and a junior's life was trembling in the balance. The wretched victim of his own folly had gone to the Cloisters to blow his brains out—with the revolver purchased with his last coin.

Loder felt that he must act quickly.

To save Bob Cherry's life was his first duty—and then to expose his evil companions who had led the hapless junior to that rash step. Loder himself was a decidedly evil companion for anybody, but he did not stop to think of that just then. He was going to see justice done. It was quite a new sensation for Gerald Loder to feel that he was doing good.

He ran into the house, and dashed breathlessly into Mr. Quelch's study, without stopping to knock at the door.

The Remove-master started up, regarding him in astonishment.

"Loder! What is the matter?"

"There's not a moment to lose, sir—look at that letter!"

Mr. Quelch took the letter and glanced at it.

"What does this mean?" he exclaimed.

"Is it a joke?"

"A joke! The wretched kid's life is in danger, sir! He has just gone out of the house!" exclaimed Loder. "I tried to stop him, but he dodged away and ran, and dropped this letter."

"Impossible!"

"It is exactly as I say, sir, and if time is lost, it may be too late——"

"I cannot believe that Cherry is so foolish a boy. I am sure also that he is one of the most honourable and upright boys in the school!"

"Don't you know his handwriting, sir?"

"Yes, certainly—but it must be some foolish joke! Perhaps he dropped it on purpose for you to find, Loder."

"Impossible, sir! He did not know that I should stop him as he left the house."

"Well, no; I suppose not!"

"And I may say, sir, that I have for a long time suspected Wharton and his friends of not being above suspicion——"

"You have sometimes brought accusations against them, Loder, which have been disproved," said Mr. Quelch tartly.

"If you will not take steps in this matter, sir, I must go to the Head!" said Loder, with equal tartness. "That boy's life is in danger!"

"I shall certainly see to the matter, and if it turns out to be a joke, Cherry shall be

punished for writing this nonsense. You say he has gone out!"

"Yes; he ran out, though I told him to stop——"

"Then we must look for him in the Cloisters. Get a lantern, Loder, and take a couple of prefects with you, and find him as quickly as you can. There is a bare chance that this letter was written seriously, of course."

"I am certain of it, sir!"

"Then lose no time!"

"Very well, sir!"

Loder left the study—somewhat disappointed that the Form-master did not join with him in a breathless chase after Bob Cherry. But he called Walker and Carne, and they hurried into the Close, armed with bike lanterns.

Mr. Quelch remained in his study, looking and feeling very annoyed and uneasy. He read the letter through again, and frowned over it.

"It must be some foolish joke!" he muttered. "It is impossible—impossible! Yet—if it should be true—the foolish boy——"

He stepped anxiously to the window, and looked out into the shadows of the Close.

The light of the bike lanterns gleamed through the darkness under the leafless old trees, as the prefects searched for the supposed intended suicide.

Mr. Quelch waited anxiously.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER

Saving Bob Cherry's Life!

BOB CHERRY was sprinting cheerfully round the Close, in the keen fresh air of the winter night, when he caught sight of the bike lanterns gleaming in the darkness.

He paused, and whistled softly.

The light in the distance showed him Loder and Carne and Walker, the bullies of the Sixth; and it was only too evident that they were searching for somebody, and that that somebody was himself.

"My hat!" murmured Bob. "Loder must be awfully ratty, to take all that trouble. Well, he's not going to catch me. I'll dodge into the Cloisters!"



Passing the ball from hand to hand, the Southgaters bore down upon the goal. Bulstrode looked out for the attack with all his eyes. "Hands!" roared the Greyfriars fellows frantically. "Ha, ha, ha!" (See Chapter 15)

The old Cloisters of Greyfriars was a secluded spot, very lonely and dark of a night; and Bob felt that the seniors were not likely to look for him there. Of the real reason why Loder was hunting for him he had no idea. He simply supposed that the bullies of the Sixth were going to rag him—and if they caught him in the Close far from his chums, it was probable that the ragging would be a severe one. So Bob plunged into the darkness of the Cloisters to keep clear of them.

"Cherry! Where are you, Cherry?"

It was Loder who was calling.

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Don't you wish you knew, you rotter?" he murmured.

The light gleamed closer at hand. Bob Cherry took cover behind a stone column, and watched the searchers. To his dismay

he discovered that they were coming directly towards the Cloisters just as if they knew he was there.

The three seniors came under the old stone arch flashing their bike lanterns to and fro in the deep gloom.

"He must be here somewhere," said Loder.

"How the dickens does he know that?" murmured Bob.

He backed away silently among the old stone arches.

A stone clinked under his boot, and Loder uttered a shout.

"There he is!"

The three seniors rushed in the direction of the sound.

Bob promptly ran.

The light gleamed on him as he ran, and Loder shouted to him:

"Cherry—Cherry! Stop! Stop at once!"

"Rats!" murmured Bob.

And he fled through the Cloisters.

After him the three Sixth-Formers came pelting in hot haste. They shouted to him to stop, but naturally enough Bob did not heed. He dodged and twisted among the old stone arches, and doubled back and gained the Close, with the seniors hot on the trail. He sped across the Close at top speed.

Loder put on a desperate spurt, and overtook him halfway to the School House. His hand fell upon Bob's shoulder in a firm grasp, and closed there, and dragged him back.

"Got him!" he panted.

"Leggo!" roared Bob.

"I've got you—"

Bob struggled violently. Loder dropped his lantern and grasped him with both hands. Carne and Walker came panting up.

"He's safe enough!" gasped Loder. "We were in time. Keep quiet, Cherry, you young fool—you'll be glad some day that we found you in time."

Bob left off wriggling in his amazement at this remark, and stared at Loder.

"In time for what?" he demanded.

"You know very well."

"It's not bedtime yet," said Bob. "I was coming in in time for bed, anyway."

"You know very well what I mean!" said Loder darkly. "Come along!"

"Where?" demanded Bob.

"To Mr. Quelch."

"Oh, I don't mind going to Mr. Quelch!" said Bob. "I thought it was a ragging!"

"Better take the pistol away from him first," said Carne.

Bob gave a yell of surprise.

"The pistol! What pistol?"

"The revolver," said Loder.

"Revolver!" said Bob dazedly. "Are you off your silly rocker? What on earth makes you think I've got a revolver? Have you been reading some of Fishy's papers about Deadwood Dick and Bloodstained Bill, and got it on the brain?"

"Search him for it," said Walker. "It will be safer out of his hands!"

"Look here—" gasped Bob.

But in spite of his struggles, Loder ran his hands through his pockets. But no

revolver, or any other deadly weapon, was discovered.

"He must have chucked it away in the Cloisters," said Loder. "He could easily have done that while we were chasing him."

"I never had any giddy revolver, you silly asses!" roared Bob Cherry. "What on earth do you think I had a silly revolver for?"

"To blow your brains out," said Loder severely.

Bob's jaw dropped. He began to have serious doubts about Loder's sanity.

"B-l-blow my b-b-brains out!" he stammered. "Are you potty? I—I say, Loder, have you been drinking?"

"Bring him along!" said Loder.

"But, I say, what do you mean?" gasped Bob. "Has any silly ass been telling you that I had a revolver?"

"You know very well that you had a revolver," said Loder sternly. "You went to the Cloisters to die!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Owing to the difficulties you have got into through the bad example of Wharton and the others," said Loder. "You will probably be sent home to your father. Wharton and the rest will be expelled, and Greyfriars will be well rid of them. I have always suspected them of being a gang of young scoundrels, and now it is proved!"

Bob simply stuttered with amazement.

"Mad!" he ejaculated. "Quite mad! He can't be merely drunk to talk like that—he's stark, staring, raving dotty, and potty!"

"You'll be glad some day that we found you in time!" said Loder. "I've saved your life. But you'll be punished all the same, you wicked young rascal!"

"Oh, my only hat!"

"Mind he doesn't get away, you chaps!"

"Yes, rather!" said Walker. "We've got him!"

The three seniors, each with a firm grip upon Bob Cherry, were marching towards the School House. They were taking the most elaborate care that he did not get away to carry out his rash deed. As they marched him into the House Harry Wharton caught sight of them, and ran up.

"What's the matter, Bob?" he asked.

"I don't know, excepting that Loder and Carne and Walker have gone mad," said Bob. "They're taking me to Mr. Quelch for some mad reason—not being a lunatic myself, I don't understand what the little game is."

"You'd better come too, Wharton," said Loder. "You're implicated in this."

"In—in what?"

"In Cherry's intended suicide, owing to the debts and difficulties you have got him into by your rascally conduct," said Loder sternly.

Wharton almost fell down.

"Follow me!" said Loder.

And he marched off with Bob Cherry to Mr. Quelch's study, and Harry Wharton, gasping with amazement, followed.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER

Not Guilty!

MR. QUELCH was standing by his study table in a magisterial attitude, with a magisterial frown upon his face, when Bob Cherry was marched in.

"Here he is, sir," said Loder. "We caught him in time. He tried to dodge away from us in the Cloisters, but we ran him down!"

"You actually found him in the Cloisters?" asked the Remove-master.

"Yes, sir."

"And he tried to avoid you?"

"He ran as hard as he could, sir!"

Mr. Quelch's frown deepened. It began to look as if the tragic letter was quite serious, after all, and in that case Gerald Loder had certainly performed a very important service—he had saved Bob Cherry's life!

"Cherry, this is a very serious matter!" said Mr. Quelch, resting his hand on the letter on the table. "I want you to tell me the whole truth, my boy!"

"I shouldn't tell you anything else, sir, I hope," said Bob, in wonder.

"I hope not, Cherry. What were you doing in the Cloisters?"

"I dodged there, sir, because I saw Loder after me!"

"Why did you try to escape?"

"To get away from Loder, sir!"

"But why should you wish to get away from a prefect who was seeking you according to instructions given by a master?"

Bob stared.

"I didn't know you wanted to see me, sir. I thought it was a rag, and I didn't want Loder to nail me in the Close!"

"Do you mean to say that you suspected a prefect of desiring to rag you, Cherry?" said the Remove-master sternly.

Bob was a little uncomfortable. He did not want to sneak about Loder and Loder's little ways; but since Loder had marched him into Mr. Quelch's presence to explain, he had to explain.

"Yes, sir," he said.

"Surely, Loder, it is not possible that you ever so far forget your dignity as a prefect, as to rag the juniors?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Certainly not, sir! Cherry is not speaking truthfully."

"Why, you rotter!" exclaimed Bob, in hot wrath.

Mr. Quelch raised his hand.

"Silence, Cherry——"

"He's no right to call me a liar, sir," said Bob.

"I hope you are speaking truthfully, Cherry. Did you find a revolver or any other weapon on him, Loder?"

"No, sir; he must have thrown it away when he found we were after him!"

"Is that the case, Cherry?"

"I don't understand, sir!" gasped Bob. "Why should I be supposed to have a revolver? I've never had such a thing in my life. I don't catch on!"

"Do you know anything about Cherry's having purchased a revolver, Wharton?" asked Mr. Quelch, fixing his eyes on the captain of the Remove.

"No, sir!" said Harry promptly.

"I think Loder must be a little potty, sir," ventured Bob Cherry.

"Silence, Cherry! Look at this letter, and if it is not seriously written, kindly explain to me what it means."

And the Remove-master handed the scrawled sheet to Bob Cherry.

Bob looked at it.

"Did you write that, Cherry?" Mr. Quelch asked severely.

"Yes, sir. You know my writing."

"You admit that you wrote it?"

"Certainly, sir. I shouldn't be likely to deny it when it's true. There's nothing wrong in writing that, that I know of. I don't know how it came here. I thought I had it in my pocket," said Bob, puzzled.

"You dropped it in the Close, and Loder picked it up."

"Oh!"

"Loder brought it to me, and I gave orders for you to be found and brought into my presence," said Mr. Quelch.

Bob looked astounded.

"Well, I'm here, sir," he said. "What is the matter?"

"You must explain that. If that letter was not written seriously, I presume that it is a foolish joke?"

"It's not a joke, sir!"

"You wrote it seriously."

"Certainly, sir. It's quite serious—in fact, it's tragic."

"Cherry! Am I to understand, then, that your apparently innocent and honourable career in this school is a sham and an imposture, and that you have been secretly leading a life of gambling and other kinds of recklessness?" the Remove-master exclaimed in a voice of thunder.

Bob Cherry staggered.

"I, sir?" he gasped.

"Yes, you. And that, overwhelmed with debt, and threatened with exposure, you had come to the rash and wicked determination to take your own life?"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Do not make those ridiculous ejaculations here, Cherry. Do you admit that this is the case, or do you not?"

"Not!" howled Bob Cherry.

"Then what does this letter mean?"

"Oh, my hat!" roared Bob, a light suddenly breaking on his mind. "Oh, my only Aunt Jemima! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cherry!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob. And Harry Wharton, as he, too, realised Loder's ludicrous

mistake, joined in the yell of laughter. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Quelch gazed at them angrily.

"Cease this untimely and unseemly merriment!" he exclaimed harshly. "Unless you can explain this satisfactorily, you will both be severely punished. Once for all, Cherry, explain to me the meaning of this wicked letter."

"Ha, ha, ha! I mean, I'm sorry, sir!" gasped Bob Cherry. "I—I—I don't mean to be disrespectful, sir—ha, ha, ha!—but—but— Oh dear! This is too funny!"

And Bob went off into a fresh yell.

"Cherry! For the last time——"

"Yes, sir! Excuse me," said Bob, wiping away his tears. "Is it possible, sir, that Loder fancied I wrote that letter for myself, to be found—ha, ha, ha!—on my body in the Cloisters? Oh, crumbs!"

"Certainly!" said Mr. Quelch. "You admit writing the letter. You had it in your pocket, and you dropped it by accident. Then you proceeded to the Cloisters, and tried to avoid the prefects sent to look for you. You must explain this."

"Ha, ha, ha! It's easy enough to explain, sir. That letter's quite serious—only it isn't written about myself."

"Then whom——"

"Dick Dodger, sir."

"Dick Dodger!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "I have never heard the name. Who is he?"

"The hero of my serial in the 'Greyfriars Herald,' sir."

"What?"

"The Road to Ruin; or, The Debts and Difficulties of Dick Dodger," explained Bob Cherry, choking back his merriment. "I've got the rest of this instalment in my pocket, sir, if you would like to read it. It's a good story, sir—full of warning to reckless chaps like Loder—ahem!—I mean full of warning to reckless chaps who go on the razzle-dazzle——"

Mr. Quelch drew a deep breath of relief.

"Then that foolish letter is simply part of a silly and ridiculous story you are writing for the school paper?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, sir—only it's a really good story——"

"It is so, sir," said Harry Wharton. "All the staff have seen that copy. It's part of Bob's serial."

Loder's face was a study.

"It—it isn't true, sir!" he panted. "I don't believe a word of it! I have suspected those young rotters for a long time—"

"Then you have suspected them unjustly!" said the Form-master tartly. "You have also wasted my time over a perfectly ridiculous matter, Loder. I was convinced from the beginning that it was mere nonsense."

"You—you believe them, sir?" stuttered Loder.

"Of course I do! You are absurd, Loder. Pray be more careful in the future. You may go!"

Loder left the study with a brow like thunder. If Bob Cherry's life had been in danger just then, the bully of the Sixth certainly wouldn't have taken the trouble to save it.

Mr. Quelch frowned at the two juniors, but there was a queer twitch at the corners of his mouth which showed that he found it difficult to keep from smiling.

"I should recommend you to print some-

thing a little less lurid and sensational in your paper," he said. "This kind of nonsense should not be read by boys of intelligence. You may go!"

"Yes, sir!" said the juniors demurely.

And they departed. In the passage they grinned cheerfully at one another.

"Loder's come a cropper this time!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Fancy thinking that I had been following in his footsteps, and gambling and getting into debt—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Quelch's a good sort, but he doesn't know a good story when he sees one," said Bob, with a shake of his head. "I say, let's go and tell the fellows. This giddy joke is too good to keep."

And in ten minutes all the juniors in Greyfriars

knew how Loder of the Sixth had saved Bob Cherry's life, and were roaring over it.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER

Football and Football!

"WEATHER'S all right!" said Bob Cherry, as he looked out of the School House on the following morning.



Harry Wharton kicked a goal, in spite of the Southgate full-back, who tackled him and brought him to the ground just after the ball flew from his foot. "Ow, gerroff, you ass!" gasped Wharton. (See Chapter 15)

It was a bright, keen winter morning—just the day for a football match. Harry Wharton and Co. were looking forward to the afternoon with keenness. As the regular fixture for that afternoon had been scratched, they had not expected to get a match until the meeting of Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh with his old chum Dhoolah Das at Courtfield. And a match with the junior eleven from Southgate was much better than a scratch match among the juniors to fill up the afternoon.

"Blessed if I see what the other fellows are cackling over the Southgate match for!" Peter Todd remarked that morning. "What is there funny about it, Wharton?"

Harry Wharton shook his head.

"Can't guess," he replied. "Temple of the Fourth started it. He's got a cousin at Southgate School, and seems to know something or other about them, but I don't see where the joke comes in."

"All the fellows say they're coming to see the match," remarked Billy Bunter. "The fact is, Wharton, Southgate are a strong team, and you've no right to leave out one of the best players in the Remove."

"Mark Linley is working for an exam., and can't play."

Billy Bunter snorted.

"Who's talking about Mark Linley. If you care to play me at centre-forward, I should be quite willing——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I'll keep goal, if you like. I've kept goal before——"

"The match would be funny enough to be cackled at then," remarked Bob Cherry. "If we were playing Bunter, I could understand the fellows taking it as a joke."

"Oh, really Cherry——"

"Hallo!" said Coker of the Fifth, coming along with a broad grin on his face. "Still going to play Southgate this afternoon?"

"Yes, of course, you ass!"

"Don't you think they'll be too many for you?"

"We're going to try to be too many for them, but we're willing to take what comes," said Wharton. "What's the joke?"

"Oh, you'll see—you'll see! But, you mark my words, you'll find that the Southgate

team is too many for you!" said Coker. And he exploded into a series of cachinations as he walked away.

Wharton puzzled over the matter during morning lessons—somewhat to the detriment of morning lessons, as a matter of fact—but he could find no solution to the mystery of the merriment with which the Southgate football match was regarded. The mystery would be explained, doubtless, when Dhoolah Das and the Southgate team arrived at Greyfriars; and all the Remove were anxious to see them arrive.

After morning lessons, the Remove eleven punted the ball about the junior ground for a while before dinner. Temple of the Fourth stopped to look at them.

"Are you going to play Southgate with that ball?" he asked.

"No; we shall use our match ball," said Wharton, puzzled. "Why?"

"Oh, I wondered," said Temple chuckling. "I don't know whether the Southgate fellows will be satisfied with your match ball, that's all."

"Why shouldn't they be? The ball's all right."

"Oh, you'll see—you'll see!"

And Temple walked off evidently in a state of great internal enjoyment, to judge by the chuckles that escaped him.

His words mystified the Removites more than ever. Why the Southgate fellows should not be satisfied with the really first-class match ball provided by the Remove was a very deep mystery. Yet Temple evidently meant something by what he said.

"The mysteryfulness is simply terrific," Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh remarked. "I fancy that the esteemed school must be going off its august rocker!"

After dinner the Remove team prepared for the match, and waited for the arrival of the Southgate fellows with considerable impatience.

Other fellows were waiting for them, too, just as impatiently.

There was a shout from Temple at the school gates when a brake came in sight, crowded with fellows.

The brake rolled in.

A Hindu junior jumped down and embraced Hurree Jamset Ram Singh warmly, and Inky presented him to the Co. as Dhoolah Pertab Ramajee Das, his esteemed chum.

"Here they are!" grinned Coker. "Now for the match! It will be worth seeing!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"A description of it will make a ripping comic column in the Christmas Number of the giddy 'Herald'!" remarked Temple.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Harry Wharton crossly. "This way, you fellows!"

Dhoolah Das and the Southgate fellows looked surprised at the laughter, which they did not understand any more than Wharton did.

The footballers adjourned to the junior ground.

"Hallo!" exclaimed one of the Southgate players, as he looked out at the field. "Are those your goals?"

"Of course!" said Harry.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Great Scott!"

"Great Julius Caesar!"

"Dooly-Booly, you silly ass——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Laughter and exclamations of surprise came from the Southgate football team. There were sixteen fellows in the Southgate party, the additional ones being taken for the spectators who had accompanied the team, by the Greyfriars fellows.

Harry Wharton & Co. had reached the climax of astonishment now.

That Temple and Hobson, and Coker, and a crowd more fellows should have been hilarious over the match was surprising, but the amazement and the laughter of the Southgate juniors were simply incomprehensible.

"What on earth's the joke?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Where does the esteemed joke come in, my worthy friends?" inquired Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Dhoolah Pertab Ramajee Das smote his dusky forehead.

"The fault is mine!" he exclaimed. "I did not think of it. Neither did you, oh, my noble chum."

"The incomprehensibleness is terrific."

"Think of what?" roared Johnny Bull.

Dhoolah Das pointed to the goals.

"That!" he said.

"What's the matter with the goal-posts?"

"It is very unfortunate."

"What is?"

"But in the hurry of seeing my worthy chum Hurree Jamset Ram Singh I did not think of it," said Dhoolah Das distressfully.

"Of what?" shrieked Wharton exasperated.

"The game that you play."

"We play footer!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"I suppose you didn't come over here to play cricket, did you?"

"Or kiss-in-the-ring?" howled Nugent.

"Yes, but there is football and football," murmured Dhoolah Pertab Ramajee Das sorrowfully. "We did not know the game you played. It is equally clear you did not know the game we played."

"But what—what——"

"Those are Association goals," explained Dhoolah Das.

"Of course, they are," said Wharton. "I suppose you didn't expect to find Rugby goals here did you?"

Dhoolah Das nodded.

"My dear friend, as a matter of fact we did," he admitted.

"Wha-a-at!"

"We play Rugby at Southgate," murmured Dhoolah Das.

"Oh!"

"My hat!"

"Great Julius Caesar!"

"And it appears that you play Soccer," said Dhoolah Das. "I did not think about it. My esteemed friend Hurree Jamset Ram Singh did not think about it. The regret is great, but we shall not be able to play."

"Oh!"

And dismay fell upon the Removites. They understood at last. Temple of the Fourth had known it all along, owing to the fact that he had a relative at Southgate. That was the cause of the hilarious mirth with which Temple and the other fellows in the secret had looked forward to the match.

Southgate played the Rugby game, and

Greyfriars played Soccer! Dhoolah Das had brought over a fifteen to play the Remove eleven!

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Coker of the Fifth. "Pile in! Play up! One of you can play Rugger, and the other Soccer! It will be worth watching! Ha, ha, ha!"

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER

A Novel Game!

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Harry Wharton. The Remove footballers turned upon the dismayed Nabob of Bhanipur.

"You ass, Inky!"

"You fathead!"

"You duffer!"

"You sooty lunatic!"

"My noble and esteemed chums, the sorrowfulness for the lamentable misapprehension is terrific!" murmured the distressed nabob. "I did not think——"

"And I did not think——" murmured Dhoolah Pertab Ramajee Das.

"If I had thought of it——" said Inky.

"Oh, you can't think!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Play up!" roared Coker. "You can have a ball each."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up!" roared Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The situation was curious. Wharton could have raised a fifteen in the Remove, but they would have played a very poor game of Rugger. And it was doubtful if a Rugby ball could have been found within the walls of Greyfriars. On the other hand, the Southgates could have left four men out and played Soccer; but they were not used to the game or to the ball, and they would certainly have made an equally poor show. And neither side naturally wanted to enter into such an unequal contest, certain to be followed by a defeat.

But for the Southgate team to come a great distance and not to play, and for the Remove to reserve the afternoon and have nothing to show for it—that would have been extremely disagreeable and disappointing.

Harry Wharton thought it over.

"Look here, we're not going to waste the afternoon, and you fellows don't want your journey for nothing," he said.

"Quite so," said Dhoolah Das.

"Then we'll play all the same," said Harry.

"Ah! You are willing to play Rugger?"

"Ahem! No. I thought perhaps you fellows might like to play Soccer."

"H'm! You see——"

"Well, you see——"

"Dash it all, we've got to play something!" said Bob Cherry. "Suppose each side plays its own game."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, rot!" said Wharton uneasily.

Dhoolah Das grinned.

"We should be willing to do that," he said,

"You'll agree not to handle the ball, then?" asked Wharton.

"My dear friend—we must handle the ball in Rugger."

"But it's not allowed to handle the ball in Soccer."

"Then your side shall not handle the ball, and our side shall handle it," said Dhoolah Das. "That will be just."

"But you'll have all the advantage, then."

"Hold on! They won't be allowed to pass the ball forward," said Bob Cherry. "That will give us a chance."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But you'll have fifteen men to our eleven!" said Nugent.

"Leave out four," suggested Johnny Bull.

But Dhoolah Das shook his head.

"Must play fifteen in a rugger side!" he said firmly. "Let each side stick to its own rules."

"Might play thirteen men, same as they do in the Northern Union Rugby game," Bob Cherry suggested.

"But we play the Rugby Union game, my dear fellow."

"And we shall have the disadvantage of playing with a Soccer ball," one of the Southgate fellows remarked.

"Well, go it then!" said Wharton at last.

"We must play something."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How are you going to score, though?" inquired Vernon-Smith, starting a new diffi-

culty. "They score by points in the Rugby game."

"And we score by goals," said Nugent.

"Each side can score in its own way, then," said Wharton desperately. "For goodness' sake, let's get going, and get away from those laughing hyenas!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was evidently nothing else to be done.

The Southgate team went into the dressing-room to change, and Harry Wharton & Co. punted about the Soccer ball while they waited for them.

The news of this extraordinary match that was impending brought fellows from far and wide to the junior ground. The most important matches played by the first eleven had seldom brought so crowded an army of spectators to the field.

Even members of the high and lofty Sixth came to Little Side to see that amazing match. As Coker said, it would be worth seeing. Certainly no match like it had ever been played on the Greyfriars playing-fields before, or was likely to be played there again.

With fifteen men against eleven, the odds were certainly on the side of the Southgate team; but to compensate for that was the fact that they were playing with a Soccer ball and on a Soccer ground.

Blundell of the Fifth had agreed to referee

the match for the juniors. But Blundell of the Fifth almost fell down when he found what kind of a match he was to referee. However, he grinned good humouredly, and agreed to go ahead. But with two different sets of rules to apply to the players, the task of the referee was not likely to be an easy or simple one.

The Southgate fifteen came out of the pavilion, and were greeted with cheers by the Greyfriars crowd.

Wharton tossed with Dhoolah Pertab Ramajee Das for choice of ends, and then the teams took their places.

"Now look out for the fun!" murmured Coker of the Fifth.

And the crowd grinned and looked out for it.

The fun was not long in coming.

The Southgaters and Dhoolah Das collared the ball, and led a rush for goal. And there was

an indignant yell from several of the Remove players:

"Hands!"

But hands were allowed in the Rugby game, and the Southgaters rushed on unheeding. Passing the ball, they bore down on goal, and Bulstrode, in goal, looked out for the attack with all his eyes.

As Soccer rules do not allow the backs to collar a man and bring him down, the rush of the enemy was difficult to stop.

Dhoolah Das brought the ball right up to



There was a startled exclamation from Fish as the Famous Five threw open the door. "What have you been doing?" demanded Wharton sternly (See Chapter 17)

the goal line, and touched down yards away from the goal-post.

Bulstrode in goal did not think in time of issuing forth to tackle him further along the line and the try was easily scored. And the Southgate team yelled:

"Try! Try!"

And the Greyfriars crowd roared:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's three points for the enemy," growled Johnny Bull, as the ball was carried out.

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"But we count by goals," he said. "Never mind their giddy points."

"But if they make more points than we make goals—"

"Blow their points! We shall only count goals for a win."

"Then both side may win!" howled Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha! All the better—please both parties!" grinned Bob.

"Stand back!" shouted the Southgaters, as Dhoolah Das prepared to take the kick after the try. "Where's the referee?"

"We're not going to look on while you kick blessed goals!" howled Nugent.

"Order! Where's the referee?"

Blundell of the Fifth blew a blast on the whistle.

"Back, there!" he ordered. "Rugby rules—they've got to have a kick from a try. But you've got to put it over the cross-bar, you chaps."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But the ball did not go over the cross-bar, so the goal was not scored. Southgate were three points up for the try; but as the Remove side had agreed not to count points they did not care.

Ten minutes later Harry Wharton kicked a goal, in spite of the Southgate full-back, who tackled him and brought him to the ground just after the ball flew from his foot.

"Ow!" gasped Wharton, as he rolled over in the grip of the full-back. "Yow-wow! Gerroff my neck, you ass!"

"Goal!" roared Bob Cherry.

And the crowd roared and cheered:

"Goal! Goal! Ha, ha, ha!"

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER

Both Winners.

LOUD yells of laughter from all the spectators greeted the game at every point. Both sides were playing up hard, but as they were playing according to very contrary sets of rules, the result was somewhat confusing.

Soccer rules did not allow Harry Wharton and Co. to bring down a forward or a three-quarter running with the ball—and when the ball was held breast-high it was difficult to get at it with the foot.

On the other hand, Rugger rules did not allow the Southgaters to pass the ball forward, which placed them under an equal disadvantage against the Soccer players.

Tries galore were scored by the visitors, but at the same time goals piled up for the home team.

At half time Southgate had a score of twenty points, and Greyfriars Remove could boast of five goals.

"Never mind, we're beating them," said Bob Cherry, as he fanned his heated brow. "They've only got one goal among their lot."

"We've got twenty points," said Dhoolah Das.

"We count by goals."

"We count by points."

"Blow your points!"

"Then blow your goals, also, my worthy friend!" grinned Dhoolah Das.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The play was fast and furious in the second half. The spectators howled with laughter. Tries came very easily to the Southgaters, who had only to grab the ball and dash up the field, avoiding charges, as they could not be collared. But converting the tries was another matter.

On the other hand, the Remove forwards scored goal after goal when their chances came, at a rate they never had equalled when playing a Soccer team.

On several occasions Blundell was laughing too much to blow his whistle. When a Southgate man with the ball was charged over, the Southgaters claimed a scrummage, and in the

scrum, of course, they had all the advantage. But the Removites held their own very well.

By the time Blundell blew his whistle for the last time the score on both sides was quite startling.

The Remove were six goals to the good, and Southgate had the handsome score of forty points.

"Well, it's over now!" gasped Bob Cherry, stopping in his run, as Blundell whistled for time. "But who's won?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We have forty points, my worthy friend," murmured Dhoolah Das softly.

"But we have six goals," said Wharton warmly.

"A goal counts as five points; you have, therefore only thirty points."

"According to your blessed Rugger laws, yes. But, according to Soccer rules, you have only two goals. Tries don't count at all."

"Not a bit in the world!" said Bob Cherry emphatically.

"We've won this match by four goals—six goals to two."

"Pardon me, we've won by forty points to thirty."

"Look here——"

"Look here——"

"Where's the referee?" grinned Wharton.

"Referee must decide. Blundell, old man, who's won this blessed match?"

Blundell grinned.

"Southgate have scored by points," he said. "That's Rugger rule. And as they've scored more points than you have, they win."

"Oh!"

"Good man!" chortled the Southgaters. "Of course we win!"

"Hold on!" said Blundell, coolly. "But the Remove score by goals, according to Soccer rules, and as they've scored six goals to two they win!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Then we've both won!" yelled Johnny Bull.

Blundell nodded.

"Exactly."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, it's the first match I've ever played in where both sides won!" gasped Wharton. "I suppose it will be the last, too!"

"We are satisfied," purred Dhoolah Das politely. "All we wanted was to make it clear. We are the winning side!"

"And so are we!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the players streamed off the field, each side perfectly satisfied with itself and its success.

Greyfriars simply howled over the result of the match. Two winning sides in a single game was certainly an astonishing and unusual result.

Both sides having won, both sides were satisfied; and Harry Wharton and Co. entertained the Southgaters to an ample spread after the match, before they departed, and the two teams parted on the best of terms.

"We will play you again," said Dhoolah Pertab Ramajee Das, as he shook hands with Harry Wharton, "if, of course, you change your game to Rugby!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"We'll play you again with pleasure," he said, "if, of course, you change your game to Soccer!"

And Dhoolah Das grinned and shook his head.

The Greyfriars fellows gave the Southgate team a cheer as they rolled away in their brake in the winter dusk.

"And now," said Bob Cherry, when they returned into the School House, "I think the time has come to slaughter Inky for landing us in such a mess."

"Yes, rather."

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh looked distressed. "The sorrowfulness is terrific, my esteemed chums," he said. "I confess it did not occur to me in the haste of the moment, that my honourable friends at Southgate played the Rugger game."

"Fathead!"

"I fear that the fatheadedness of my honourable self is justly regarded as terrific," admitted the nabob; "but the mistakefulness shall never occur againfully."

"We'll take jolly good care of that!" said Wharton. "If you recommend any team



"What does this mean?" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Explain your presence here at once!" "We're getting ready the Christmas Number of the 'Herald,' sir," stammered Harry Wharton (See Chapter 17)

to play us in future, we'll take care to make inquiries—or you'll be landing us with a hockey team next."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If we'd lost the match, Inky, we'd have slaughtered you," said Bob Cherry. "But as we've won it, as well as the Southgate chaps—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll only bump you!"

"My esteemed Bob—"

"Bump him!"

And the Nabob of Bhanipur was duly bumped, but not very hard, for, as Bob Cherry said, they had won the match, and there was really nothing to complain about.

"And now for the Christmas Number," said

Harry Wharton. "By the way, I haven't seen anything of Fishy all the afternoon."

The schoolboy editors hurried to No. 14 study.

They heard the whirr of the printing-press as they came up the Remove passage.

Fisher T. Fish was busy.

He turned an ink-smudged face towards them as they crowded into the study.

"What are you up to?" demanded Johnny Bull wrathfully.

Fisher T. Fish sniffed.

"Printing the second number of the 'Herald,' I guess," he replied.

"What!"

"Where are the formes?" shouted Bob Cherry. "Where's all the type I set up?"

"I guess I had to dis. that—to set up my copy," said Fish calmly.

"You—you—you've pied my type!" howled Bob.

"Dissed it!" corrected Fish.

"You—you burglar! You pirate! I shall have to do it all over again!" gasped Bob.

"Collar the silly ass—boot him out!"

"I guess I'm not going to be booted out of my own study!" roared Fish.

"Then you guess wrong—out you go!"

"I guess I shall slaughter you if I get my mad up! I guess— Yaroooh!"

Fisher T. Fish went skidding along the linoleum in the passage; and then the schoolboy printers set to work distributing once more the type Fisher T. Fish had set up to print his valuable copy.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER

A Big Printing Order!

ALL was ready at last!

The great Christmas Double Number of the "Greyfriars Herald" was written, set up in type, and the proofs had been taken off and corrected.

All that remained was to print the copies and fasten them together, and the great Christmas Number would be an actuality at last.

That last and important piece of work was to be done on Wednesday afternoon, and then the Greyfriars editors felt that they would have deserved well of their country.

Fisher T. Fish had been very quiet the last few days. He had not by any means given up his claim to be regarded as editor-in-chief of the "Greyfriars Herald." But the other editors and sub-editors derided his claim, and as the American junior had no means of enforcing it, there was nothing for him to do but to give in. But Fisher T. Fish's eyes gleamed when he heard Bob Cherry's remark in the common-room on Tuesday evening, just before bedtime, that everything was finished, and that it only remained to turn the copies off on the following afternoon.

Fisher T. Fish was looking very thoughtful when he went to bed with the Remove.

"It's all right, Fishy," said Bob Cherry consolingly, "we're going to present you with a free copy of the Christmas Number of the 'Herald,' you know."

"It isn't published yet, I guess," remarked Fish.

"It will be to-morrow."

"Oh rats!"

And Fisher T. Fish went to bed. But Bob Cherry's eye was upon him, and he noted the fact that Fisher T. Fish did not take all his things off. Bob Cherry's suspicions were aroused. He resolved to sleep with one eye open that night. If the type were "dissed" again, after so much labour had been expended on setting it up and correcting the proofs, it would be too heavy a blow for the schoolboy printers.

Bob fully intended to keep one eye open—but he was sleepy, and dozed off. But he awoke later, and sat up in bed. He was certain that he had heard the dormitory door close softly.

He jumped out of bed and struck a match. Fisher T. Fish's bed was empty.

Bob Cherry breathed wrath as he roused his chums and made known his suspicions.

Wharton was out of bed in a twinkling. Frank Nugent and Johnny Bull followed his example, and then Hurree Jamset Ram Singh turned out. All the schoolboy editors were excited at the idea of having the result of their labours "mucked up."

"The rotter!" growled Johnny Bull.

"We shall have it all to do all over again—"

"Come on!"

Half dressed, the juniors stole silently from the Remove dormitory.

It was nearly midnight, and all Greyfriars was asleep. Fisher T. Fish had left his excursion till a very late hour, to be sure not to be spotted by a master or a prefect. The Famous Five hurried down silently to the Remove passage. From under the door of Johnny Bull's study a light gleamed.

"He's there!" muttered Nugent.

"Quick—come on!"

Bob Cherry reached No. 14 study first, and threw open the door.

There was a startled exclamation from Fisher T. Fish.

"Waal, I swow!"

The juniors crowded into the study, and Harry Wharton closed the door behind them. Fisher T. Fish backed away round the table.

"Now, what have you been doing?" demanded Wharton sternly.

The American junior grunted.

"Nothing, I guess, so far."

"Lucky for you—you'd have been scalped if you had. What were you going to do then?"

"I guess I was going to dis. the type, and set up the real genuine second number of the 'Herald'—edited by me!" said Fisher T. Fish.

"You cheeky ass!"

"I calculate I'm editor of this hyer paper—"

"You've fetched us out of bed in the middle of the night," said Wharton severely. "We're not coming down for nothing. Bob, put a rug along the door, in case the light's seen. Pull the blind down, Nugent. As Fisher came down here to work, we'll give him some work to do. Fishy, old man, you can't edit a paper, but you can print one."

"I won't!"

"Right-ho! You'll be bumped until you do! Collar him!"

Fisher T. Fish was promptly collared.

"Leggo!" he howled. "I'll yell—I'll wake the house—"

"Shove something into his mouth—that duster will do!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish choked over an extremely inky and dusty duster. Then he was solemnly bumped on the study carpet—three times, hard!

Queer, inarticulate sounds came through the duster that was crammed into his mouth.

"Now are you going to obey orders?" asked Wharton cheerfully. "Nod your head if you mean yes!"

"Grooogh!" And the infuriated Fish nodded his head.

"Pile in, then!"

There was no help for it. Fisher T. Fish's gag was removed, and he piled in. The study door was locked, and there was no escape for him.

The Famous Five watched him grimly. Johnny Bull had sorted out a cricket stump, to be used in case of necessity. Fisher T. Fish cast one despairing glance at the five faces, but all were grimly in earnest. He had to spend his night in printing the Christmas Number of the "Greyfriars Herald," or to be licked until he did, and as he had to do it anyway, he wisely decided to do it without being licked first.

Johnny Bull lighted the fire; it was cold in the study. The juniors took it in turns to watch the labouring Fish. The others dozed before the fire. The Remove studies were too far from the sleeping quarters for the noise of the machine to be heard. The juniors watched Fish too carefully to give him a chance of making any alterations in the pages set up for the Christmas Number.

Midnight tolled out, and then one, and then two—and the American junior was still labouring at the printing-press.

The printing was finished at last.

Harry Wharton woke up his companions.

"Make him bind the copies," suggested Johnny Bull.

Fisher T. Fish gave an angry yell.

"I guess I'm going back to bed! I guess I'm tired! I guess I shall be dog-tired in the morning! I guess—"

"Shut up!"

"Look hyer, you jays—"

"You brought it on yourself," grinned Nugent. "You were so blessed keen to print a number of the 'Herald.' You've got nothing to complain of."

"I guess—"

"Cave!" murmured Bob Cherry.

There was a step in the passage.

The juniors gazed at one another in dismay.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Wharton. "Spotted!"

There was a sound of the footsteps slackening down in the passage—outside the study. Something had evidently been heard after all. The handle of the door was tried, then there was a knock.

"Who is here?"

It was the voice of Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove.

Wharton reluctantly opened the door.

Mr. Quelch stepped into the study, with the blankest amazement depicted on his face. His Form was not the most orderly Form at Greyfriars certainly. But he had never expected to find six members of the Remove in the study at two in the morning—one of them in his shirt-sleeves, and daubed with ink, and the table covered with newly-printed copies of the school newspaper.

"What does this mean?" gasped the Remove master.

"I guess it means trouble!" groaned Fisher T. Fish. "All your fault, you silly jays!"

"Wharton, explain——"

"If you please, sir——" stammered Wharton.

"If you expect to please me by being out of bed at this hour, Wharton, you have very strange ideas on the subject," said Mr. Quelch, frowning. "Explain your presence here at once."

"Ahem! If—if you please, sir, we're getting ready the Christmas Number of the 'Herald,' sir!" stuttered Wharton. "Fishy is very keen on it—ahem!—and we—we've been watching him work, sir!"

"Goodness gracious! You have been sacrificing your night's rest for that absurdity!" the Form-master exclaimed, in amazement.

"Ahem! It isn't absurdity, sir—it's—it's our Christmas number!"

"You will go back to bed at once," said Mr. Quelch sternly, "and you will all be detained to-morrow afternoon in the Form-room, and will write out two hundred lines each!"

"Ahem! You see, sir——"

"Not a word! Go back to your dormitory at once."

And the schoolboy editors went, and Mr. Quelch saw them to the Remove-dormitory.

Fisher T. Fish chuckled when the Form-master was gone.

"I guess you jays get it where your hair is short this time!" he remarked. "I guess you have run up against a snag—just a few! I guess—yah, yaroo! Who threw that boot?"

"I'll throw another if you don't shut up!" growled Bob Cherry.

"You silly jay! I guess—ow—ow!"

And Fisher T. Fish shut up on receipt of the second boot.

The next afternoon the schoolboy editors had the pleasure of writing out piles of lines in the Form-room.

But, as Bob Cherry philosophically remarked, it wasn't much more trouble than printing off the Christmas Number—and that had been done for them.

The Christmas Number was a great success.

And when it came out under what circumstances it had been printed, the unfortunate Fisher T. Fish found the laugh very much up against him.

"I guess I'm done with you!" he declared, putting his head into No. 1 study, where a crowd of juniors were perusing copies of the Christmas Number with great satisfaction to themselves—each fellow reading and re-reading, and discovering new beauties in his own contributions. "I guess I'm done with you, and your blessed paper! I won't edit that rotten paper for you again, not if you ask me on your bended knees, I guess."

And he never did.



The Greyfriars Alphabet!

A Humorous Poem of some well-known Greyfriars Characters.



is ALONZO, a
dreamy young
duffer,



is for BUNTER,
the world's
greatest
"stuffer."



is for COKER, a
comical
fellow,



is for DUTTON,
at whom we
all bellow.



is for ELLIOTT,
a junior
well-dressed,



is for FISH, who
is sometimes
a pest.



is for GATTY—
gay jests
are his aim,



is for HOSKINS,
of musical
fame.



is for "INKY,"
who's dusky
of visage,



's JOHNNY BULL,
who's a marvel
for his age!



is for KIPPS—
a conjurer
clever,



is for LODER—
no good
whatsoever!



is MAULEVERER
languid and
lazy.



is for NUGENT,
as fresh
as a daisy!



is for OGILVY,
Scotland's
proud son.



is for PENFOLD
—great deeds
he has done.



is for "QUELCHY,"
a capable
master.



is for RUSSELL,
whose "left"
spells
disaster!



—the sly SKIN-
NER — plans
japes by the
dozen.



is for "TODDY,"
Alonzo's
cute cousin.



is the UPPER
FOURTH'S
elegant leader.



VERNON-SMITH
—gaily greets
every reader.



is WHARTON, a
"sport" born
and bred:



sometimes
'XTRÆ — Bob
Cherry's "YZ"
(wise head).



A Play in Verse for Amateur Actors

NOTE.—As in the case of previous plays published in the HOLIDAY ANNUAL, performances may be given by parties of our readers, without fee or licence, on condition that the words "By permission of the Editor of THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL" appear on each programme.

CHARACTERS:

HARRY WHARTON	..	..	..	Captain of the Remove Football XI.
BOB CHERRY	..	..	..	} Wharton's Chums and First Lieutenants.
JOHNNY BULL	..	..	..	
HURREE SINGH	..	..	..	
H. VERNON SMITH	..	..	..	} Other Members of the Remove XI.
PETER TODD	..	..	..	
MARK LINLEY	..	..	..	
TOM BROWN	..	..	..	} Master of the Remove.
S. Q. I. FIELD	..	..	..	
G. BULSTRODE	..	..	..	} The Famous Fat Boy of Greyfriars.
MR. HORACE QUELCH	..	..	..	
POLLY BUNTER	..	..	..	

ACT I

SCENE.—No. 1 Study in the Remove Passage.

(THE FAMOUS FIVE are present, seated round the table. HARRY WHARTON has a sheet of paper in front of him, and a pencil in his hand. He scribbles industriously for a moment, and then looks up.)

WHARTON:

We play St. Jim's on Saturday,
And all are eager for the fray.
I've got a topping team together,
So play up! Never mind the weather!

HURREE SINGH:

The playfulness will be terrific—

CHERRY:

Smart, skilful, swift, and scientific!

NUGENT:

We'll trounce the strong St. Jim's Eleven—

BULL:

And thus be in the seventh heaven!

WHARTON:

I think I've made a good selection.
Here is the list, for your inspection.
The worthy Bulstrode holds the fort,
He's bound to win a good report.

There's Johnny

Bull and Brown at back,
They'll smother the
St. Jim's attack.

The half-back line
looks useful, very!

Mark Linley, Peter
Todd, and Cherry.

The forwards are a
lively lot—

A strong eleven, is
it not?

CHERRY:

Why, man, the team
that you've drawn up
is fit to win the
English Cup!

NUGENT:

A really clever
combination,

That's bound to
make a big sensation.

(Sounds of knocking are heard without.)

CHERRY:

Hallo, hallo, hallo! Who comes?

HURREE SINGH:

The Bunter Bird, my worthy chums.

(Enter BILLY BUNTER, very cautiously.
JOHNNY BULL gathers up a cushion, and hurls
it at the intruder, who ducks in the nick of
time.)

BUNTER:

Oh, really, Bull—it's rude and silly
Thus to bombard your old pal Billy!

WHARTON:

Buzz off, old barrel! Fade away!

CHERRY:

He's like Eliza—come to stay!

BULL:

We've got no cash, we've got no tarts—

NUGENT:

So this is where our friend departs!

BUNTER (blinking wrathfully at the juniors):

I've no desire to borrow money—

CHERRY:

Oh, come off, Bunter! Don't be funny!

BUNTER:

I've no desire to cadge a tart,
For tea in Hall will shortly start.

WHARTON:

Then what's the reason of this visit?

CHERRY:

It's not a friendly
look-in, is it?

BUNTER:

Look here! I've
just dropped in to say
That I've made up
my mind to play

For the Remove
against St. Jim's;

Look at my strong
and sturdy limbs!

I'm just the fellow
that you need

To capture goals—
is that agreed?

NUGENT (aside):

The stupid and
conceited Owl!

Can't tell a goal-
post from a foul!



Bunter picked up a football and placed it in the
centre of the room. The Famous Five drew back
out of danger.

BUNTER:

I really think my form's divine,
It's splendid, all along the line!
I pass and dribble, kick and shoot;
None can withstand my hefty boot!
And my admiring cousin, Elsie,
Declares I'll one day play for Chelsea!

ALL:

Ha, ha, ha!

BUNTER:

Why do you fellows sit and cackle?
Yes, I can shoot, and I can tackle!
I've scored more goals than I remember—
I did the "hat-trick" last December!
My form is absolutely great,
And I will prove it while you wait!

BUNTER picks up a football which is lying in the corner, and places it in the centre of the room. THE FAMOUS FIVE spring to their feet in some alarm, and draw back out of the danger zone.)

BUNTER:

Now, watch me take a mighty kick,
Deadly, and accurate, and quick!

BULL:

You'll break the study window, fool!

BUNTER:

Kindly refrain from comments, Bull!

WHARTON:

You'll smash the book-case, silly clown—

NUGENT:

Or bring a picture
crashing down!

BUNTER:

What nonsense!
I shall hit the door,
And everyone will
shout, "Encore!"

Now, watch and
wait, and you will see
The form of Bun-
ter, W. G.!

(BUNTER takes a flying
kick at the ball, which
shoots up and smites
JOHNNY BULL full in
the chest.)

BUNTER:

Oh, dear, my aim
was rather wide!

BULL:

You clumsy Owl! I'll tan your hide!
(JOHNNY rushes at BUNTER, but his chums
seize him and hold him back.)

WHARTON:

Hold on, old chap! Don't make a scene.

CHERRY:

It was an accident, old bean!

BUNTER:

I meant to hit the door, of course;
Perhaps I shot with too much force!

CHERRY:

I'll show you how it should be done.
Now, gather round, and see the fun!

(CHERRY places the football in position, and takes
a running kick. The ball whizzes clean through
the open doorway—the wings of the stage—and
there is a wild yell of anguish from without.)

CHERRY (in dismay):

A tragedy, you chaps! Don't grin!
I've hit old Quelchy on the chin!

WHARTON:

My hat! You've fairly done it now!

NUGENT:

There's bound to be a fearful row!

HURREE SINGH:

The rowfulness will be terrific!
The waters of the wild Pacific
Will be less stormy than the glance
Of Quelchy Sahib—see him dance!

(Enter MR. QUELCH, clasping his chin, and
glaring at the assembly.)

MR. QUELCH:

Who kicked that
ball so recklessly?

BUNTER:

Pip-pip-pip-please,
sir, 'twasn't me!

MR. QUELCH:

Who dared to kick
it at a master?

CHERRY:

'Twas I who caused
the sad disaster!

MR. QUELCH:

Your conduct,
Cherry, is unruly!

CHERRY:

It was an accident,
sir, truly!

MR. QUELCH:

My chin is painful,

marked, and muddy;

Pray follow me, sir, to my study!

(Exit MR. QUELCH, with BOB CHERRY
following.)

BULL:

There's sure to be an awful rumpus—

WHARTON:

I wonder Quelchy didn't clump us!

NUGENT:

What will become of poor old Bob?

BUNTER:

Quelchy will make him squirm and
sob!

BULL:

Afraid the outlook's rather black.

WHARTON:

Keep smiling! Bob will soon be back.



The ball shot up and smote Johnny Bull
full in the chest

(After a brief interval, BOB CHERRY re-enters. He looks very crestfallen and dejected.)

HURREE SINGH:

You have been caned, my worthy chum!
Or you would never look so glum.

CHERRY:

No, I have not been licked, but worse!

NUGENT:

You've got to write out yards of verse?

CHERRY:

No; I'm detained on Saturday.

WHARTON:

Great Scot! That means you cannot play?

CHERRY:

Harry, you've
summed it up precisely!

BUNTER:

Events have
worked out very nicely.

Now, Wharton,
please don't pull a face,
For I can play in
Cherry's place!

No need to look so
sour and sad;

You ought to feel
extremely glad.

For I'm a better
man than Cherry;

I'll score three
goals against Tom
Merry!

WHARTON (angrily):

Conceited porpoise! Out you go!

BUNTER:

Keep off, you bullying bounders! OH!

(THE FAMOUS FIVE hurl themselves at
BUNTER, and send him whirling through the
doorway. Exit BUNTER, with wild wails of
anguish.)

WHARTON:

This is a tragedy indeed!

For Bob is just the man we need.

NUGENT:

I hoped the Quelchy bird would cane
him;

I didn't dream that he'd detain him!

BULL:

Confound old Quelchy and his whims!
We shall be beaten at St. Jim's!

HURREE SINGH:

The lickfulness will be tremendous,
Unless the gods of luck attend us.

CHERRY:

Cheer up, old chappies! Do not grieve.

If I've a chance, I'll take French leave.

I'll dodge detention, and will play

For the Remove on Saturday.

It is a feat that takes some doing,

And if I'm caught, there's trouble
brewing!

Whatever happens, don't despair;

If I can work it, I'll be there!

WHARTON:

Well spoken, Bob!

I hope you will.

NUGENT:

We have a chance
of victory still!

(CHERRY'S chums go
towards him and pat
him sympathetically on
the shoulder, and BOB
recovers his usual high
spirits.)

END OF ACT I

ACT II

SCENE: The visiting
team's dressing-room
at St. Jim's.

(THE REMOVE
ELEVEN, with the

exception of BOB CHERRY, are present, attired
in football garb. The match with St. Jim's is
about to be played.)

PETER TODD:

Old Wharton's looking very worried!

VERNON SMITH:

He also looks forlorn and flurried.

TOM BROWN:

I've seldom seen him look less jolly

MARK LINLEY:

He has an air of melancholy.

WHARTON:

This is a sad, sad Saturday!

I hoped that Bob would get away.

He said he'd try and break detention

(A serious matter, I might mention).

We've only got a team of ten,



Mr. Quelch entered, clapping his chin and
glaring at the assembly

And Bob's the pick of all our men.
Unless he comes, we're bound to lose,
And that is why I've got the "blues."

NUGENT:

A burden of despair you carry
Upon those shapely shoulders, Harry!
But Bob will soon be here, I trust,
And then St. Jim's will bite the dust!

HURRER SINGH:

Yes; they will bite the dustful dirt!

BULL:

I hope old Bob puts on a spurt!

WHARTON:

They're waiting to begin the game—

PETER TODD:

And Bob's not with us.
It's a shame!

VERNON-SMITH:

We'll wait a little while, you chaps.

WHARTON:

We've let a good half-hour elapse!

(*Loud knocking is heard without. THE REMOVE footballers exchange glances.*)

BULSTRODE:

Hurrah! At last Bob Cherry's come!

HURRER SINGH:

Don't be too sure, my worthy chum!

(*The knocking is repeated. Then the shrill, familiar voice of BILLY BUNTER is heard.*)

BUNTER:

I say! Please let me in, you fellows!

Surely you heard my shouts and bellows?

WHARTON (*clenching his hands*):

Oh, what a sell! It isn't Bob!

NUGENT:

It's that toad, Bunter! I could sob!

(*JOHNNY BULL crosses to the door and admits BILLY BUNTER. The fat junior is attired in football garb and a raincoat.*)

WHARTON:

Why, Bunter! How did you get here?

SQUIFF (*aside*):

Wish the fat worm would disappear!

BUNTER:

I came by train from Courtfield Town.

I bribed a porter half-a-crown

To let me demonstrate my pluck

By travelling in a cattle-truck!

You see, the fare is five-and-six,

And I was in a fearful fix;

For I had only half-a-crown—

Why do you glare at me, Tom Brown?

I bribed the porter, as I said,

And came for two-and-six instead.

I travelled with a bull and pig;

'Twas really very *infra dig*.

But, anyway, I had to stick it.

For I could not afford a ticket.

That cattle-truck

it swayed and swerved,

And made me

frightened and

unnerved.

The bull began to roar and bellow.

I had to murmur,

"Shush, old fellow!"

The pig began to grunt and snort.

I had to say, "Less noise, old sport!"

At last I reached

my destination,

And fairly jumped

with jubilation.

Sound and intact were all my limbs,

So I came safely to St. Jim's.

And now I'm ready for the fray.

In which position shall I play?

WHARTON:

You're not to play at all, you chump!

NUGENT:

His antics give a chap the hump!

BUNTER:

My form is great, my passes deft;

So may I play at outside-left?

VERNON-SMITH:

You couldn't score—not if you tried—

So your position's "left outside"!

BUNTER:

Oh, really, Smithy, you're a beast!



WHARTON:

It's time this silly nonsense ceased.

Bunter! Your journey's been in vain.

Now you can toddle back again!

BUNTER:

What! After coming all this distance?

I will not go! I'll show resistance!

PETER TODD:

We do not want you in the team—

TOM BROWN:

Your football is a perfect scream!

SQUIFF:

You cannot shoot, you cannot pass—

HURREE SINGH:

So please keep off
the grassful grass!

BUNTER (*angrily*):

You're cads and
beasts! I cannot stick
you!

I hope St. Jim's
will soundly lick you!

(*There is a sudden
commotion without.*

*Enter BOB CHERRY,
flushed and breathless.*)

WHARTON:

Oh, well played,
Bob! You're just in
time!

BUNTER:

He's dodged de- "It is my painful task to mention that Cherry
tention—it's a crime! has escaped detention," said Billy Bunter, as he
took the dummy to Mr. Quelch

NUGENT:

How did you make the journey, Bob?

CHERRY:

I found it was a fearful job!

I sprinted hard, but missed the train,

So had to bike with might and main!

I simply scorched along the highways,

And tore like fury down the byways.

I covered many a weary mile

In breathless, dizzy, breakneck style!

I rode at such a frantic pace

You'd think it was a cycle-race!

BULL:

Thank goodness you've arrived at last,

And all our keen suspense is past!

TOM BROWN:

How did you get away, old scout?

CHERRY:

I worked it well, without a doubt.

LINLEY:

Did Quelch see you leave the school?

CHERRY:

No, Marky, boy; I'm not a fool!

A dummy figure, smart and neat,

I've placed upon the Form-room seat.

When Quelch looks in, and sees it there,

He'll think it's me, I do declare!

NUGENT:

But if he makes a close inspection—

CHERRY:

Oh, well, I've got
to risk detection.

BUNTER:

I say! I think it's
rather thick!

Cherry has got here
by a trick.

He's had the nerve
to spoof a master—

A thing that leads
to dire disaster!

CHERRY:

How dare a glutton,
full of greed,

Thus sit in judg-
ment on my deed?

BUNTER:

We do not want
you here, Bob Cherry.

Your conduct is

disgraceful, very!

You've broken bounds this afternoon,

And Quelch will hear about it soon!

CHERRY (*indignantly*):

You're going to tell him that I'm here?

BUNTER:

I'll do my duty, never fear!

WHARTON:

If you should dare to play the sneak,

We'll bump you daily for a week!

BUNTER:

Well, let me play for the Remove—

WHARTON:

A useless passenger you'd prove!

BUNTER (*chuckling grimly*):

All right, then! If I'm not to play,



I'll flap my wings, and fly away.
Straight back to Greyfriars I shall go.
And tell old Quelch of this, you know!
I'll tell him Cherry's dodged detention.
And there are other things I'll mention.

VERNON SMITH:

However far and wide you seek
You'll never find a bigger sneak!

CHERRY:

Let's kick the porpoise out, you chaps—

BUNTER:

You're likely to succeed—perhaps!

(There is a sudden rush of feet towards BUNTER, and the angry footballers seize him, and eject him with violence from the dressing-room.)

(There is a loud bump as the fat junior disappears from view.)

BUNTER *(from without)*:

You won't prevent
me sneaking now,

I'll tell old Quelch

— Yow-ow-ow!

WHARTON:

Let the fat bounder
do his worst!

CHERRY:

In duck-ponds he
will be immersed!

NUGENT:

We'll give him a
terrific bumping —

BULL:

Also a clumping and a thumping!

TOM BROWN:

And a chastising, and a chiding—

SQUIFF:

Also an extra-special hiding!

WHARTON:

Meanwhile, we'll exercise our limbs

In scoring goals against St. Jim's!

(A shrill whistle is heard without.)

LINLEY:

The referee is loudly blowing—

CHERRY:

Come on! We don't care if it's snow-
ing!

WHARTON:

Forward, Removites, to the fray!

Fight the good fight, and win the day!

(Exit EVERYBODY)

END OF ACT II

ACT III

SCENE.—*Mr. Quelch's study at Greyfriars.*

(MR. QUELCH is seated at his typewriter, busily engaged on his History of Greyfriars. Suddenly there is a loud knocking without.)

MR. QUELCH:

Who dares disturb me with this din!

Disturber of the peace, come in!

(Enter BILLY BUNTER, carrying a dummy figure in his arms.)

MR. QUELCH:

Good gracious,
boy! What brings you
here?

BUNTER:

One moment, sir;
I'll make it clear.

MR. QUELCH:

You have a curious
object there—

A dummy figure,
I declare!

BUNTER *(grinning)*:

I guessed it would
create a stir!

I found it in the
Form-room, sir.

Bob Cherry made
this awful dummy:

A work of art he
calls it—lumme!

A sillier guy I don't remember
Since Bonfire Night, sir, last November!

MR. QUELCH *(looking perplexed)*:

But why should Cherry make this figure?
Speak up, my boy—don't stand and
snigger!

BUNTER:

It is my painful task to mention
That Cherry has escaped detention.
I am afraid the news will grieve you,
But Cherry plotted to deceive you.

MR. QUELCH:

What! Cherry went, without my knowledge
To play against St. James's College?
And left this dummy so grotesque
Leaning against a Form-room desk!



Bob Cherry, his forehead and knee bandaged, was brought in by Wharton and Nugent

BUNTER :

Yessir ; that is a solemn fact.
I hope the beast will be well whacked !
I hope you'll lick him with your cane
Until he hops around with pain !

MR. QUELCH (*frowning*) :

Boy ! Those remarks are most malicious :
Your conduct is extremely vicious !
This afternoon, you played the spy—
An action which was mean and sly ;
Kept Cherry under observation,
And now you bring me information,
Hoping that I shall cane the pupil
Who broke detention without scruple.

BUNTER :

One moment, sir ! Please let me speak.
You seem to think that I'm a sneak.
Of course, I'm nothing of the kind.
No finer fellow could you find.
I simply had to come along—
My sense of duty is so strong !
The painful task I never funk'd,
Of telling you that Cherry bunk'd !

MR. QUELCH (*sternly*) :

You had no right to leave this place.
You, also, were in deep disgrace.
For showing constant inattention
You earned an afternoon's detention.
Why did you leave your post, I pray ?
Come, answer me without delay !

BUNTER (*beginning to tremble*) :

Oh, crumbs ! Have pity, if you can, sir—

MR. QUELCH :

Boy, I am waiting for your answer !

BUNTER :

Oh, dear ! I'm in a sad position—

MR. QUELCH :

You left the school without permission !

BUNTER :

But Cherry also planned a flight—

MR. QUELCH :

Two wrongs, my boy, don't make a right !
(*The REMOVE-MASTER picks up a cane, and*
BUNTER backs away in great alarm. The
dummy figure falls to the floor with a thud.)

BUNTER :

You—you're going to lick me, I expect ?

MR. QUELCH :

Your supposition is correct !

BUNTER :

I plead to you with eloquence :

Regard my youth and innocence !
Look at my frail and feeble figure :
Would you chastise it, sir, with vigour ?
One stroke, sir, of your dreaded cane,
And I shall swoon away with pain !
My constitution, sir, won't stick it :
Besides, you know, it's hardly cricket.
I've done my duty like an hero,
So please don't understudy Nero
And act with grim barbarity.
Show mercy, sir, and charity !
Oh, let me off, I do entreat :
I hurl myself, sir, at your feet !

(*BUNTER grovels on the floor at Mr. QUELCH's*
feet, throwing out his arms in wild entreaty.)

MR. QUELCH :

Upon your feet you'll kindly stand,
And then hold out your flabby hand !

(*BUNTER reluctantly obeys. He is given*
three sharp cuts on each palm, and his yells of
anguish are loud and shrill.)

MR. QUELCH :

You have no just cause for complaining
At such a necessary caning.
I hope this well-deserved correction
Will make you act with circumspection !
Your shrill and piercing wails of woe
Grate harshly on my ears ; so go !

(*Exit BILLY BUNTER, writhing and squirming.*)

MR. QUELCH :

I have no brief for that base boy ;
Tale-bearing is his greatest joy.
But Cherry must be brought to book :
His act I cannot overlook.
He's broken bounds this afternoon,
And ought to be returning soon.

(*Sounds of knocking without.* MR. QUELCH
calls, "Come in !" Enter HARRY WHARTON,
BOB CHERRY, and FRANK NUGENT. Cherry
is in the middle, supported by his two chums.
There is a bandage round his forehead, and
another round his knee. His football togs are
torn and muddy.)

MR. QUELCH :

Dear me ! The lad is hurt, I fear—

CHERRY :

My injuries are not severe.

MR. QUELCH :

There's a bandage round your forehead—

CHERRY :

I wish they'd take it off ; it's horrid !

Mr. QUELCH:

There is another on your knee—

WHARTON:

He's in the war, sir, as you see.

Mr. QUELCH:

How did these injuries arise?

Come! I await your swift replies!

WHARTON:

Sir, in the match against St. Jim's
We did not spare our sturdy limbs.
We threw ourselves into the fray
In the good, honest, British way.
Bob Cherry played as if inspired,
He never faltered, never tired.
With nearly half-an-hour to go,
The scores were level, don't you know.
And Cherry worked with heart and soul
To gain the glorious winning goal.
Opponents crowded all around him,
And prostrate on the ground we found him,
Smothered from head to foot with dirt,
And also rather badly hurt.
He carried on, with grim intent,
Until the final whistle went.
Right on the very stroke of time
He raced away with speed sublime.
Then took a strong and hefty kick
That absolutely did the trick!

Mr. QUELCH:

A great achievement, 'pon my soul,
To thus obtain the winning goal

When badly injured in the fray.

Cherry, you have done well to-day!

CHERRY:

I broke detention, sir, to do it.

And now I s'pose you'll make me rue it?

Mr. QUELCH:

I won't deny you acted wrongly,
And I must reprimand you strongly.
But as for caning you, why, never,
After your manly, keen endeavour!
You won the match: I think it best
To let the other matter rest.

(Mr. QUELCH puts out his hand, and BOB CHERRY grasps it warmly.)

CHERRY:

Your action, sir, is sporting—very!

Mr. QUELCH:

I cannot cane a hero, Cherry!

URGENT:

And Bob's a hero, that's a fact!
He saved his side from getting whacked.
I've never seen a fellow play
A game like Bob put up to-day!

WHARTON:

And now we'll celebrate our win
With a delightful, grand tuck-in!

Mr. QUELCH (smiling):

I wish that I could share your joys.
Your banquet has my blessing, boys!

CURTAIN

A FRIENDLY REMINDER

To New Readers of this volume of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL whose appetite has been whetted by the stories of the famous schools of Greyfriars, St. Jim's and Rookwood, it will come as good news to know that these stories are specially featured every week in the world-famous Companion Papers.

These are the MAGNET LIBRARY, which is devoted each week to the doings of Harry Wharton and Co., of Greyfriars; and the BOYS' FRIEND, in which Jimmy Silver and Co., of Rookwood, play a great part. Both these jolly papers are published every Monday. Then every Tuesday comes the POPULAR, which makes a speciality of publishing complete stories of all three of the schools—Greyfriars, St. Jim's and Rookwood, in addition to the famous school boy journal, "Billy Bunter's Weekly"; while each Wednesday morning brings the GEM LIBRARY, the special preserve of Tom Merry and Co., whose adventures, joys and sorrows have been faithfully chronicled therein every week by Mr. Martin Clifford for over seventeen years.

In addition to these, the great army of my younger readers is specially catered for by the delightful pictures and jolly stories in JUNGLE JINKS, which is printed in three colours, and is universally considered the brightest and best paper of its kind.

To the vast majority of the great host of my reader-friends the above-mentioned weekly journals need no introduction. The great reputation for clear, wholesome and vigorous fiction which has been won during many years by the HOLIDAY ANNUAL and the Companion Papers alike, and the high place which they occupy in the estimation of the reading public, are facts which in themselves form the best possible proof of my readers' appreciation.

Until the red-letter day when next year's volume of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL appears I hope to keep in touch with every single reader of this volume through the medium of the weekly Companion Papers under my control.—THE EDITOR.



AU REVOIR

By DICK PENFOLD



CHUMS and comrades, tried and true,
You have read this volume through.
Now our labours are complete,
And the fruit is at your feet.

You have shared our feuds and fights,
Our discomforts and delights ;
Laughed with us, and cried with us,
Battled side by side with us !

You have shared our schoolboy capers,
You have jested with the japers ;
Hailed the heroes, scorned the cads,
Loved the laughing, lively lads !

You have scanned the
sparkling stories
Of our Greyfriars and
its glories ;
And the boys with
sturdy limbs—
Sons of Rookwood
and St. Jim's !



Chums, a countless hosts are you,
Spread from China to Peru.
You, a mighty multitude,
Our adventures have pursued.

Gladly did we toil for you,
And burn the midnight oil for you.
Our pens were actively employed
Upon a task we all enjoyed.

And now, the parting of the ways
Comes before our wistful gaze.
"Au Revoir " must now be said,
Till another year has sped.

Chums and comrades,
tried and true,
Heart and soul, we're
one with you !
All good wishes we
extend
Ere we write the
words—

THE END





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