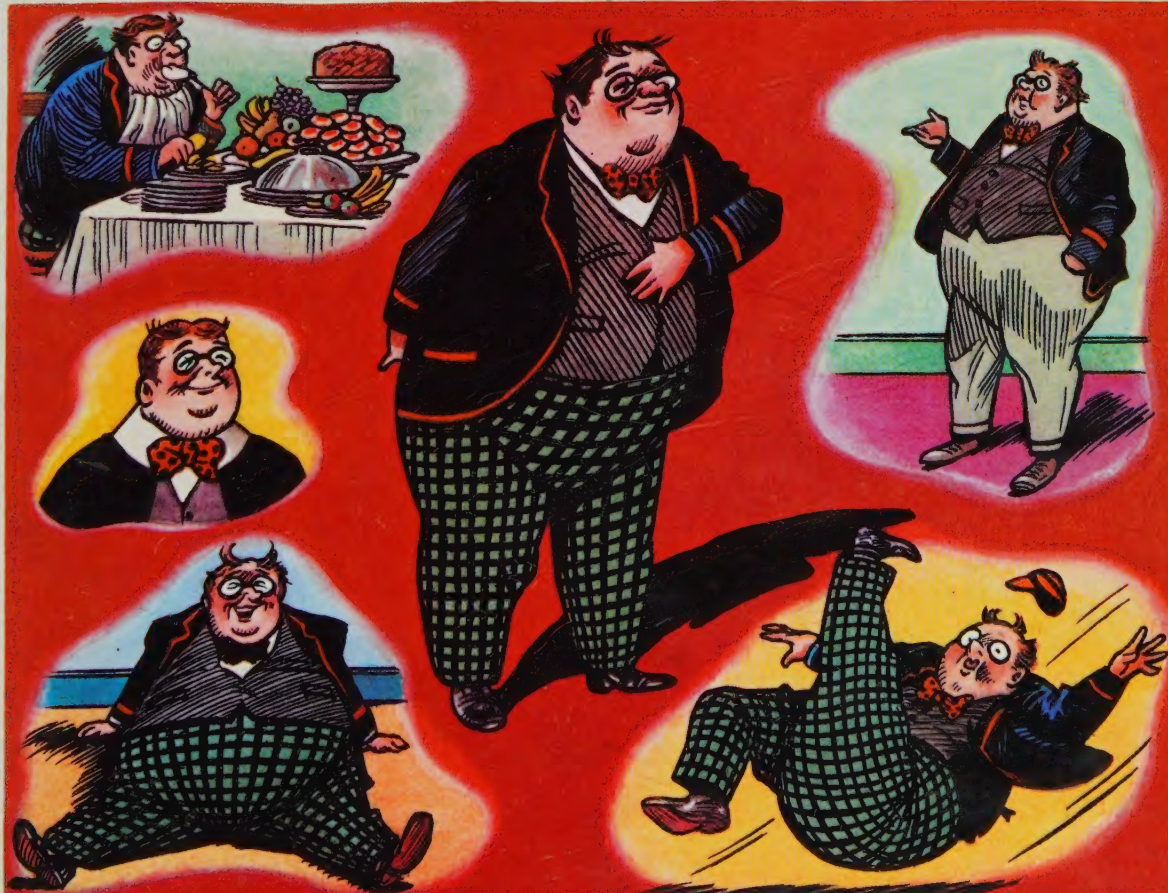


THE HOWARD BAKER

GREYFRIARS HOLIDAY ANNUAL FOR 1928



ANNIVERSARY EDITION

The Magnet The Gem

The GREYFRIARS HOLIDAY ANNUAL

The writing phenomenon known to the world as Frank Richards (real name Charles Hamilton) died at his home at Kingsgate in Kent on Christmas Eve 1961 at the age of eighty-six.

By then it is estimated that he had written the equivalent of one thousand full-length novels.

His work appeared continuously for over thirty years in those famous Fleetway House magazines *The Magnet* and *The Gem*. Most famous of all was his immortal creation Billy Bunter, the Fat Owl of the Greyfriars Remove, whose exploits together with those of the other boyhood heroes Harry Wharton and Co., delighted generations of readers from 1908 to 1940.

The war unhappily saw the end of *The Magnet*, but though the post-war years brought the return of Greyfriars stories in other formats nothing ever quite recaptured the evergreen magic of the original much-loved boys' paper. It was for this reason that, two years ago, W. Howard Baker presented the first of his now world-renowned facsimiles.

The brilliant character studies of boys and masters created by Frank Richards ensured his own immortality. Apart from the boys of Greyfriars, not forgetting Horace Coker, the duffer of the Fifth, there was the unforgettable Mr Quelch, the Remove form-master ("a beast, but a just beast"), the Rev. Dr. Locke, venerable Headmaster of the School, William Gosling, the crusty, elbow-bending school porter who firmly believed that "all boys should be drowned at birth", Paul Pontifex-Prout, the pompous form-master of the Fifth, the excitable but kind-hearted "Mossoo" (M'sieu Charpentier, French master), the odious Cecil Ponsonby, involved in murky goings-on at The Three Fishers, and peppery Sir Hilton Popper, irascible School Governor. All these characters and many, many more are to be found in the pages of these volumes.

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PUBLISHERS' PREFACE

One of the major events in the popular 'annual' field between the wars was the publication of the now legendary Greyfriars Holiday Annual. Today original copies change hands at many times the original price.

The steady increase in the number of collectors in recent years has endowed yellowing, frayed copies still in existence with a value undreamed-of by their original purchasers.

In 1969 Howard Baker embarked on a programme of producing iconographs, facsimile editions, and part-works of the most well-beloved of these pre-war publications, on good quality paper, hard-bound, and built to last.

The Greyfriars Holiday Annual ranks high amongst these much-sought-after collectors' items and it is with pleasure and pride that we present this abridged volume of the 1928 edition as a worthwhile accompaniment to our collection of Magnet and Gem reproductions.

Nostalgia in excelsis.

THE
GREYFRIARS HOLIDAY
ANNUAL



Howard Baker, London.

THE GREYFRIARS HOLIDAY ANNUAL

(c) Copyright, The Amalgamated Press, 1927, 1971
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THE GREYFRIARS HOLIDAY ANNUAL

This Book Belongs to

1928



The Editor to his Friends

FOR the ninth successive year the GREYFRIARS HOLIDAY ANNUAL turns up trumps! We improve with each birthday—though thousands of readers write regularly to tell me, decidedly and with great emphasis, that no improvement in the HOLIDAY ANNUAL is possible!

It is, however, my most pleasant task annually to refute the kindly “critics” and effect improvements where already there is perfection! The very first HOLIDAY ANNUAL was received with immense acclamation. The ninth volume, which now makes its bow to you, will, I am supremely confident, like its eight predecessors, set thousands of youngsters chuckling—and thereby recompense the Editorial staff for the year’s labour which has gone to the making of the new volume of the ANNUAL—a feature of the year as important as the Christmas holidays or the summer “vac.”!

Clean, healthy, rollicking fun: that sums it up to a nicety. But with merriment we mix adventure also, for it is hazard and derring-do as well as frolic and fun which make the world go round! Boys and old boys will once again be delighted to meet in these pages the incomparable, world-famous schoolboy characters of Greyfriars, St. Jims’ and Rookwood Schools—Harry Wharton & Co., of the Greyfriars Remove; Tom Merry and his chums of St. Jim’s; and Jimmy Silver and his merry satellites of Rookwood.

Like all these merry fellows we are deeply imbued with the Peter Pan spirit and therefore, we hope, can *never* grow stodgy! So to the young boys and grown-up boys *and* their girl friends the new GREYFRIARS HOLIDAY ANNUAL is presented, with a cheery and supremely confident “Here we are again!” by

THE EDITOR.

THE FLEETWAY HOUSE,
FARRINGDON STREET,
LONDON, E.C.4.



THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL has grown out of its infancy, and is now a healthy and flourishing youngster of nine.

With each successive birthday, the popularity of our ANNUAL has grown more and more pronounced, until it is now practically world-wide. "Remember, remember, the First of September!" is the slogan of thousands of British boys and girls; for on that day—or thereabouts—THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL makes its welcome appearance.

When this, the ninth volume, had been prepared for press, and the mountainous labours of our authors and artists were completed, it was proposed to hold a great celebration at Greyfriars School, in Kent, to commemorate the ANNUAL's ninth birthday.

Why, you will ask, was Greyfriars chosen as the venue of the celebration? For two reasons. In the first place, this volume, to give it its full title, is THE GREYFRIARS HOLIDAY ANNUAL. The schoolboy journalists of Greyfriars—Harry Wharton, Dick Penfold, Billy Bunter, and others—were among its pioneers. They have a sort of proprietary interest in the ANNUAL, and they are entitled to claim some of the credit for its production and popularity.

Secondly, there were to be over one hundred guests at the birthday celebration; and I could not possibly entertain so large a party at my suburban villa, or in my editorial sanctum. A spacious and commodious meeting-place was required; and Greyfriars, with its ample accommodation, its fine facilities for catering, and so forth, made an ideal place for a gathering of the clans.

A certain day in July was set apart for the celebration. And everything went off in splendid style. Glorious weather favoured our project; and, to quote Bob Cherry, the sunny-faced optimist of the Greyfriars Remove, "everything in the garden was lovely!"

Greyfriars Invaded!

I WAS the first guest to arrive, having risen with the lark in order to travel down to Greyfriars.

When I arrived, Harry Wharton & Co., the heroes of the Remove Form, were punting a football about in the Close. They "spotted" me at once, and their reception was so cordial and overwhelming that I was almost swept off my feet! Schoolboys simply swarmed around me, and I became

aware of a babel of voices.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" I heard Bob Cherry exclaim, in his dulcet tones. "Here's the Editor of THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL, you fellows!"

"Jolly pleased to see you, sir!" said Harry Wharton heartily.

"Delighted!" chanted Frank Nugent and Johnny Bull.

"The delightfulness, on this very suspicious occasion, is terrific!" chimed in Hurree Janset Ram Singh, the Indian junior, in his weird English.

Everybody seemed to be trying to shake my hand at the same time.

Judging by the way it was seized and shaken, I think it must have been mistaken for a pump-handle!

"I say, sir, you're looking awfully fit!" remarked Billy Bunter, the plump Falstaff of the Greyfriars Remove. "Do you train on jam tarts?"

There was a laugh at this.

"The idea of celebrating the ANNUAL's ninth birthday is perfectly ripping!" Bunter went on. "I hear there's going to be a banquet, and a cricket-match between the Remove and the HOLIDAY ANNUAL staff, and a concert to wind up with. I suggest we cut out the cricket and the concert, and devote the whole day to banqueting!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fear it is too late to alter the arrangements now," I said, smiling. "In any case, some of us would not care to devote the entire day to feasting. We are not all blessed with the digestions of ostriches!"

"Oh, really, sir——"

"I suppose we shall be seeing lots of familiar faces to-day, sir?" said Harry



When Frank Richards, Martin Clifford, and Owen Conquest entered the gates they were immediately besieged by a crowd of fellows! The scene was reminiscent of a Rugby scrum.

Wharton. "Will Mr. Frank Richards, the MAGNET author, be coming?"

"Yes."

"And Mr. Martin Clifford, of the GEM?"

I nodded.

"Those two gentlemen, together with Mr. Owen Conquest, who writes the Rookwood stories, will be travelling down together," I said.

"Hurrah!"

"There will also be a large company of authors and artists who have helped to prepare the HOLIDAY ANNUAL. All will arrive in the course of the morning."

"Oh, good!"

"And now I must have a few words with your headmaster," I remarked.

Escorted by a happy crowd of schoolboys, I made my way to the Head's study.

Doctor Locke received me in his charming and courteous manner, and we chatted pleasantly on a variety of topics.

From the Head's study window we saw the other guests arriving at intervals.

When Frank Richards, Martin Clifford, and Owen Conquest—that renowned trinity of school-story writers—entered the school gates, they were immediately besieged by a crowd of fellows, many of whom flourished their autograph-books. The three authors were swallowed up from sight in the eager press of schoolboys. The scene was reminiscent of a Rugby scrum.

"Such is fame!" murmured the Head, with a smile. "Your writers, my dear sir, are held in high esteem at Greyfriars. If they expected a day's freedom from writing, I am afraid they will be disappointed. They will be kept busy signing autographs until they get writers' cramp—or until somebody

else arrives, and enables them to escape from their admirers!"

Fortunately for the three authors, a fresh diversion was soon created by the arrival of Tom Merry & Co., the cheery schoolboy heroes from St. Jim's. They came trooping in at the gates, Tom Merry and Harry Manners and Monty Lowther heading the procession.

All "the old familiar faces" were there. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the elegant swell of St. Jim's, immaculate as ever from the summit of his shining silk "topper" to the soles of his patent-leather shoes; Fatty Wynn, who seemed to be growing outwards instead of upwards, and whose eyes were sparkling in anticipation of the banquet; Baggy Trimble, another fat fellow, whose circumference seemed to have expanded since last I saw him; Jack Blake, the sturdy Yorkshire junior; George Figgins and Reginald Talbot and Bernard Glyn—all these, and many more, I was able to recognise from the Head's study window.

When the St. Jim's crowd came in sight there was a sudden rush of feet in their direction, and Frank Richards and his fellow-authors were able to make good their escape. They slipped unobtrusively away, and vanished smiling into the building.

And Still They Come!

MORE arrivals! Jimmy Silver & Co., the bright and breezy band of Rookwood heroes, were the next to invade Greyfriars. They had come by motor-coach from the famous Hampshire school, and a loud tantara on the coaching-horn announced their arrival.

Glancing over the Head's shoulder as we stood at the window, I was able to distinguish Jimmy Silver and Lovell and Raby and Newcome—the famous Fistical Four of the Classical Side.

Then I saw Tubby Muffin, as fat and fatuous as ever, rolling through the gate-

way of Greyfriars with chubby hand outstretched, and smiling as broadly as a ventriloquist's doll.

Trotting along in Tubby's wake came the three Tommies—Tommy Dodd, Tommy Cook, and Tommy Doyle—the leading lights of the Modern Side. Then there were Valentine Mornington, and Kit Erroll, and Teddy Grace, and all the other heroes who figure weekly in Owen Conquest's inimitable



Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the elegant swell of St. Jim's, immaculate as ever, from the summit of his shining silk topper to the soles of his patent leather shoes!

stories of Rookwood. The Greyfriars fellows hurried forward to greet them.

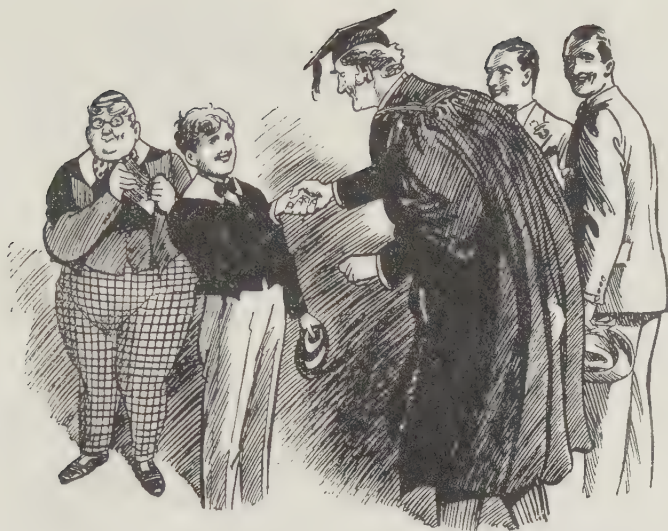
Dr. Locke turned to me with a smile.

"I feel tempted to misquote Shakespeare," he said. "When visitors come, they come not in single spies but in battalions!"

"Very true, sir," I responded. "St. Jim's and Rookwood have sent large parties; but the influx is not yet complete. All the HOLIDAY ANNUAL contributors, both authors and artists, will now be on their way to Greyfriars. There will be fully a hundred guests."

"Excellent! I will make it my pleasure to see that everything possible is done for their entertainment," said the Head.

We strolled out into the Close together; and Dr. Locke, no longer a majestic and



Doctor Locke, no longer a majestic and awe-inspiring personage, shook hands warmly with many of the guests.

awe-inspiring personage, but a kindly and genial host, shook hands warmly with many of the guests, with each of whom he stopped to have a brief chat.

Then the little army of authors and artists arrived, and there were more greetings, more handshakes, more autograph-hunters hungry for signatures; and the old Close of Greyfriars presented a most animated spectacle, in the brilliant summer sunshine.

Amid all the gay commotion I could hear Billy Bunter's voice, peevish and petulant.

"I say! Why don't they cut the cackle, and come to the hosses? All this polite palaver—'How d'you do?' and 'Delighted to meet you!'—fairly gets my goat. There's a cold lunch laid in hall, and I'm jolly peckish! If the Head knew the first thing about entertaining, he'd say, 'This way for the cold chicken and salad! Pile in, everybody!'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter seemed to be the only disgruntled person in the whole of that vast assembly. Bunter did not regard the Head as an efficient host. He considered that the whole of the arrangements for the HOLIDAY

ANNUAL's birthday celebration should have been placed in the capable hands of William George Bunter!

Billy's idea of entertaining would have been to provide one colossal banquet, on a scale hitherto unsurpassed, so that the guests could feast from the rising up of the sun unto the going down thereof! No doubt Bunter would have been able to stay the pace, and so would Fatty Wynn and Baggy Trimble and Tubby Muffin; but an hour's banqueting would have been quite sufficient for the average guest, with an average appetite!

Eventually, a move was made in the direction of the dining-hall, much to Billy

Bunter's relief; and the cold collation was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

There was no speech-making, and no toasts were honoured. Those cheery functions were being deferred till the banquet in the evening.

I sat at the same table as Frank Richards, Martin Clifford, and Owen Conquest. And so infectious was the schoolboy atmosphere all around us that we forgot, for a time, that we were staid and sober adults, and chatted away as merrily as high-spirited fags. And we ate our lunch with the healthy and hearty appetites of youth; though I am afraid that our combined appetites fell far short of Billy Bunter's!

King Cricket!

THE cricket-match between the Greyfriars Remove and the Staff of THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL was the next item on the day's programme.

Harry Wharton put his strongest side into the field; he was resolved to leave nothing to chance.

Wharton knew that most of our authors and artists were sadly out of practice, owing to the fact that their professions gave them

little leisure for cricket. But Wharton was aware that Frank Richards knew a thing or two about batting; that Martin Clifford was capable of skittling out a side with his weird "googlies"; and that Owen Conquest was no duffer at the game.

I had been requested to captain the HOLIDAY ANNUAL team, and when I won the toss it was regarded as a good omen for us.

We speedily made the discovery that run-getting was no easy matter, against the deadly bowling of Hurree Singh and Tom Brown, backed up by wonderful fielding.

Going in first with Frank Richards, I managed to hit up a dozen runs before Hurree Singh spreadeagled my wicket; though, judging by the ovation I received on returning to the pavilion, one would have imagined I had scored a century, at least!

Frank Richards and Martin Clifford were



Frank Richards and Martin Clifford were now together, and batted very steadily until Frank Richards was smartly run out!

now together, and they batted very steadily, until Frank Richards was smartly run out.

With the score at 40, Bob Cherry brought about Martin Clifford's downfall with an amazing catch at mid-on. The batsman made such a terrific and powerful drive that we held our breath, almost expecting the ball to go clean through Bob Cherry! But Bob stood his ground, and held and hugged the whizzing sphere. It must have seemed like catching a cannon-ball! Loud applause, in which Martin Clifford joined, greeted Bob's great effort.

A Feast for the Gods!

THE banquet to which we sat down in the historic dining-hall of Greyfriars was a wonderful affair. I ought to have engaged Billy Bunter to give you a full description of it.



When everybody else had finished and whilst others were exercising their tongues, Bunter was still exercising his fangs!

Being such an authority on foodstuffs and feasting, Billy would have given a masterly description, which would make your mouths water. He would have described the banquet course by course, mouthful by mouthful. He might have spelt the names of some of the French dishes wrongly; but no matter. Bunter's version of the banquet would make thrilling reading!

The Head and all the masters were present; the authors and the artists mingled and chatted with the merry throng of schoolboys. Seldom had the old dining-hall witnessed such scenes of revelry and rejoicing.

From time to time, I glanced towards the table at which Billy Bunter was seated. Bunter was busy! He had eaten a large lunch and a tremendous tea; but he was in great form for the banquet. His little round eyes sparkled behind his spectacles; his face was beaming like a full moon.

When everybody else had finished, and the speeches were in full swing, Billy Bunter was "still going strong." I don't believe he heard a word of what was said. Whilst others were exercising their tongues, Bunter was exercising his jaws!

Considerations of space will not permit me to reproduce any of the speeches; but lots of complimentary things were said about THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL; and it was a happy touch of Bob Cherry's when he said that he hoped to be present at the ninety-ninth birthday celebration of the ANNUAL!

After the feast, an adjournment was made to the concert-hall, where there were many amusing incidents.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was restrained by violence from inflicting a tenor solo upon the audience! Jack Blake declared that it would constitute a breach of the peace. So Arthur Augustus, owing to circumstances over which he had no control—his chums were sitting on his chest!—remained mute.

Some capital songs were rendered, and Billy Bunter, none the worse for his orgy in the dining-hall, enlivened the proceedings with an exhibition of ventriloquism.

That self-same gift of Billy's has on previous occasions brought tribulation and

trouble in plenty to him—when used for Billy's own ends! On the present occasion, however, his exhibition brought him nothing but applause and good-natured banter. Stay, though. It brought back his appetite! The scarcely-finished feast belonged to the very dim and distant past, it seemed to him—just a faded, hallowed memory! So, faint with hunger, Bunter at last desisted. Talent replaced talent. Never had such an exhibition of entertaining art been displayed. But all good things have an end.

The hours sped by all too swiftly and there

were mutual farewells in the twilight Close.

To the strains of "Auld Lang Syne," chanted by juniors, and played by fags on their mouth-organs, the great company of guests passed through the school gateway in the deepening dusk. And thus the curtain was rung down upon one of the happiest days of our lives—a day which I shall often recall, with a wistful smile, as I sit at my desk in the great publishing house which is the home of that most popular of boys' books—THE GREYFRIARS HOLIDAY ANNUAL!



Billy Bunter, none the worse for his orgy in the dining-hall, enlivened the proceedings with an exhibition of ventriloquism.



Billy Bunter's Postal Order!

SOME AMUSING EXTRACTS
FROM THE FAT JUNIOR'S
DIARY

Monday

I WAS in the middle of a delightful dream when rising-bell rang. I dreamt that one of my titled relations—Baron Bellamy de Broke Bunter—sent me a postal order for twenty shillings. With a beaming face I rolled into the tuckshop, and gave orders right and left to Dame Mimble.

I had sampled about a duzzen jam-tarts, and was in the act of rolling a strawberry ice on my tongue, when the rising-bell roodly shattered my dream, and I awoke feeling awfully peckish. However, I regarded my dream as a happy omen that a postal order would arrive for me this morning; and I jumped out of bed, scrambled into my togs, and rushed down to meet the postman. My heart beat high with hope, and when the postman rummaged in his bag and handed me a letter, I made sure my dream had come true.

But alas! the letter was merely a little bill from the Elysian Café in Courtfield, where I had dined a few days ago, and then

discovered that I had left all my money behind at Greyfriars! The proprietor of the Café had added a note to the bill, as follows: "Please settle at your earliest inconvenience." Sarkastic beast!

Tuesday

HOPE springs internally in the human breast, as the poet says; and I hoped to find myself in luck's way this morning. Things are getting rather unplezzant for me in the Greyfriars Remove, as I have borrowed trifling sums of money here and there, and my credditors are pressing me for repayment. I can clearly see that I shall have no chance to settle down until I settle up!



"My credditors are pressing me for repayment!"

So it was with an anxious mind, as well as a hopeful one, that I rolled down to the gates to meet the postman. "Any letters, Blogg?" I asked eagerly. "Yes, Master Bunter." There was one letter, and I pounced upon it greedily. But there was no crest on the en-

veloped, so I knew it could not be from a titled relation. However, sometimes my untitled relations turn up trumps with a remittance, so I did not despair—until I saw the letter! It was a circular from the Society for the Care and Culture of Cannibals, begging for subscriptions.

"The small sum of five shillings," the circular ran, "will keep a cannibal in socks and mittens for the whole of the winter." I crumpled the letter savagely in my hand, reflecting that the small sum of five shillings would keep a starving school-boy in tuck for the whole of the morning!

Wednesday

ANOTHER disappointment this morning. It seems to be raining disappointments just lately! Had a letter from my Uncle Claude, and foolishly expected that my long-delayed postal order had turned up at last. Uncle Claude is as rich as Crocus—or whatever the fellow's name was—and he could afford to send me a postal order every day of his life. Eagerly I opened his letter, only to find that it contained a lecture on thrift, and a printed pamphlet entitled, "HOW TO SAVE MONEY." How on earth can a fellow save money, I should like to know, when his wealthy uncles won't send him any to save?

Saturday

THURSDAY and Friday were blank days. No letters of any sort, from any source. My creditors have become so threatening that I have had to lock myself in my study for hours together, to avoid their attentions! I have been hunted and hounded all over the school, and it hasn't been a happy eggspereience, I can tell you!

This morning, however, the postman handed me a letter, and I saw by the handwriting that it was from my Aunt Prudence. Imagine my joy when, on opening the letter, a postal order fluttered to the ground! At last—at long, long last—my postal order had arrived! My creditors swarmed round me like flies round a honey-pot.

"Bunter's postal order has come!" they shouted. "Square up, Billy!"

But I didn't see the fun of squandering my postal order in paying off a few trumpery debts. I snatched it up, and took to my heels. Straight for the tuckshop I

fled, with my creditors hot on my heels like a pack of wolves. Breathlessly I pushed the postal order across the counter to Dame Mimble.

"Give me five bobs' worth of tuck, ma'am—quickly!" I gasped. "Then these rotters won't be able to claim my postal order!"

Dame Mimble picked up the postal order, and gave a sniff.

"I should not dream of supplying goods to the value of five shillings, Master

Bunter," she said sourly, "when this postal order is merely for sixpence!"

"Sixpence!" I groaned, aghast.

"Yes—and I cannot change it here," said Dame Mimble. "It is made payable to you at Courtfield post office."

I nearly collapsed. The prospect of having to tramp all the way to Courtfield, just to cash a postal order for sixpence, was anything but cheering.

I felt very dissatisfied, and my creditors were dissatisfied, and Dame Mimble was dissatisfied; in fact, there was dissatisfaction all round, as a result of the long-delayed arrival of my postal order!



"Straight for the tuckshop I fled, creditors hot on my heels like a pack of wolves!"

Bunter Goes Skating!



"BRING me my skates!" the porpoise cries.

"The lake is frozen over;
The ice, they state, will bear my weight,
So I shall be in clover!"

Then off we go a cheery crowd
(We can't keep Bunter waiting);
What Greyfriars boy does not enjoy
The thrills and spills of skating?

The charming girls of Cliff House school
Are keen to join our party;
Wharton and Toddy, and everybody,
Give them a greeting hearty.

We halt beside the frozen lake,
Our skates we gaily buckle;
"Bunter the Great will demonstrate!"
Cries Cherry, with a chuckle.

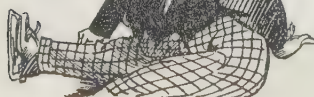
"He always was a slippery chap!"
Exclaims the grinning Wharton;
"This sheet of ice, so grand and nice,
Billy will now disport on!"

Then Bunter makes a sudden dash,
And skates with vim and vigour;
No "Figure Eight" will he create—
He'll cut a comic figure!

Like the plump hero, long ago,
Of Dickens' "Pickwick Papers,"
He rolls and reels, he grunts and squeals,
And cuts some curious capers!

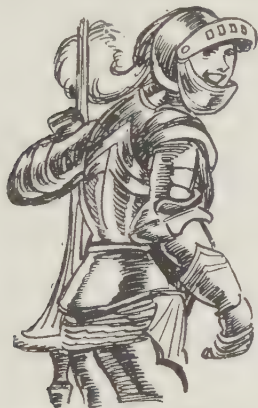
Then comes a most terrific crash!
A painful, sharp concussion;
And Bunter lies beneath the skies—
He's glaring like a Prussian!

Such dire disasters always come
When Bunter's demonstrating;
And, bruised and sore, he'll never more
Prate of the joys of skating!



THE GREYFRIARS FANCY-DRESS BALL!

WHEN GREYFRIARS HOLDS ITS
NEXT FANCY-DRESS BALL —



HARRY WHARTON WOULD
LOOK WELL AS A KNIGHT
IN ARMOUR —



WIBLEY COULD
BE "SHYLOCK"



BOB CHERRY MIGHT
GO AS A CAVE-MAN
AND —



BOLSOVER IS ABSOLUTELY
CUT OUT FOR AN EXECUTIONER
WHILE —

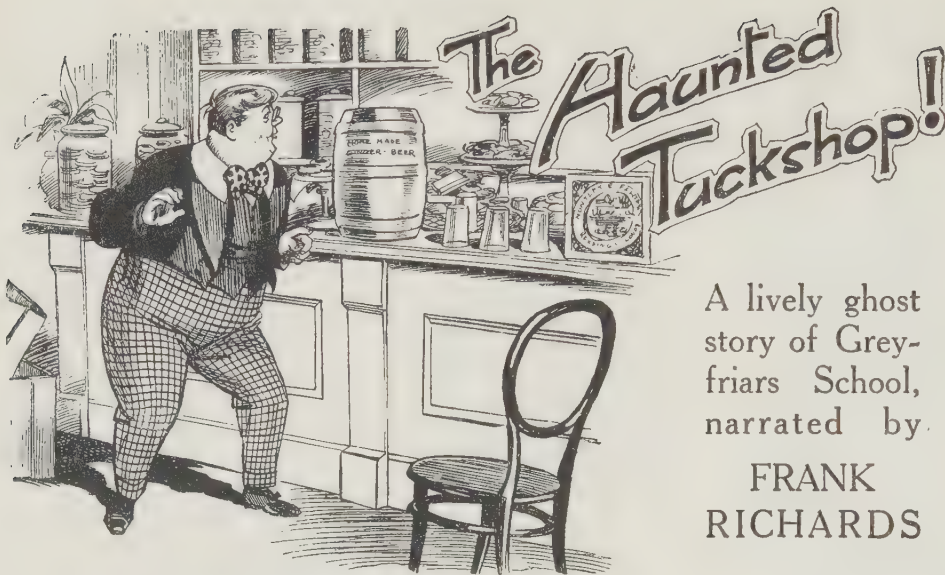


HURREE SINGH WOULD
NEED NO MAKE-UP!

C. H. CHAPMAN



BILLY BUNTER COULD THINK
OF NOTHING BETTER THAN TO GO
AS A JAM TART!



A lively ghost
story of Grey-
friars School,
narrated by

FRANK
RICHARDS

THE FIRST CHAPTER

The Voice !

"NO, Master Bunter! I would not dream of it!"

Dame Mimble's tone was firm—and final.

Billy Bunter gave the tuckshop dame an appealing blink. But Dame Mimble was proof against appealing blinks. She had been proof, also, against Bunter's stream of eloquence. For the space of five minutes, the fat junior had begged, and entreated, and cajoled, but all to no purpose.

It was the old, old story. Billy Bunter was hungry, and he badly wanted some jam-tarts; but he lacked the wherewithal to procure them. He had therefore requested to be supplied with the tarts on credit—to be paid for as soon as his postal-order turned up.

Mrs. Mimble knew that postal-order—and she knew Bunter! And she was not to be drawn. She pointed out to the fat junior, as she had done many a time and oft, that her establishment was a tuckshop, not a tick-shop.

Billy Bunter launched a last appeal.

"Oh, really, ma'am! If you realised how fearfully hungry I am—jolly nearly starving, in fact—you'd serve me without a moment's hesitation! It's nearly locking-up time, and I've had nothing to eat since tea. And I shall get nothing more for twelve hours! People have died of starvation in less time than that. You wouldn't like to see me starve; would you? You wouldn't like to attend the inquest, and to have to admit that you refused to serve me with the nourishment which would have saved me?"

"Don't be dramatic, Master Bunter."

"Six twopenny tarts!" pleaded Bunter. "And you shall have the shilling first thing in the morning. My postal-order's bound to arrive then. It's been in the post since——"

"The day you first came to Greyfriars?" suggested Dame Mimble sarcastically.

"Since the day before yesterday!" said Bunter desperately. "But it's been hung up somewhere. These incompetent postal officials, you know——"

"Kindly leave my shop, Master Bunter. I am waiting to put up the shutters."

Dame Mimble's tone showed clearly that

the discussion was closed. But Billy Bunter lingered. Hope was dead in his breast; yet he could not tear himself away.

"Dame Mimble!"

The name was suddenly rapped out in a harsh voice—a voice that sounded strangely uncanny. It seemed to come from the ceiling, and Mrs. Mimble gave a startled jump, and gazed upwards.

The tuckshop was in semi-darkness, and that voice had a most unnerving effect. Describing her sensations afterwards to her husband, the school gardener, Mrs. Mimble admitted that she was "all of a-trimble."

"Dame Mimble!"

The name was repeated—more insistently this time; and again the voice seemed to come from the ceiling.

Dame Mimble stared upwards with starting eyes, but in the half-light she saw nothing—though she hardly knew what she had expected to see.

"Mercy me!" gasped the tuckshop dame, in great alarm. "Who—who is calling?"

"I am the Ghost of Greyfriars!"

That alarming information was imparted in the same weird, uncanny voice.

Billy Bunter, still lingering in the shop, uttered a startled yelp.

"The—the Ghost of Greyfriars?" faltered Mrs. Mimble.

"I have spoken!"

Dame Mimble shivered. Had it been broad daylight, she might have laughed at the idea of a ghost. She was a practical, matter-of-fact person, who did not believe in such phenomena as "ghosties and ghoulies, and things that go bump in the night."

But the Voice? It was not, apparently, the voice of any human being. It had scared Bunter, and it scared Dame Mimble. She decided to light the gas, with a view to locating the owner of the voice; but somehow her limbs refused to function, and she stood rooted to the floor.

"I—I say, ma'am——" faltered Billy Bunter.

"Be silent, varlet! I have nought to say to thee. I would fain hold converse with Dame Mimble. Dost hear me, dame?"

"Ye-e-s," quavered Mrs. Mimble. And she wondered whether she ought to add "sir." Not having conversed with spooks before, she could not be sure whether or not they were entitled to that respectful appellation.

"Listen!" went on the voice. "This night, and for many nights to come, I will haunt thy premises!"

"G-g-good gracious!"

"I depart now, but at the witching hour of midnight I will return, to affright thee!"

Dame Mimble shuddered.

"As for that plump and scurvy knave——" continued the Voice.

Billy Bunter did not wait to hear more. Panic appeared to seize him, and he fled precipitately from the tuckshop.

The Ghost of Greyfriars seemed to vanish at the same time; for Mrs. Mimble, listening apprehensively for the Voice to continue, heard no more.

When she had recovered the power of movement, the tuckshop dame put up her shutters, and locked up. Then she hurried into the friendly light of her parlour, where she awaited the homecoming of her husband, eager to apprise Mr. Mimble of the weird happenings which had disturbed the tranquillity of her mind.

Mr. Mimble arrived at length, and listened to his wife's story. He was bluntly, almost brutally sceptical. He averred, emphatically, that there were no such things as ghosts, and that Dame Mimble had imagined it all. When she pointed out that Billy Bunter had also heard the voice, Mr. Mimble was not impressed.

"Wot I says is this 'ere—you both imagnated it!" he said, with a snort.

"Very well," retorted Mrs. Mimble. "Just you wait till midnight, Joseph, and then p'r'aps you'll be convinced."

Mr. Joseph Mimble shook his head doggedly, and knocked out his pipe, and picked up the evening paper. He was not prepared to discuss the Ghost of Greyfriars any further; indeed, he was quite satisfied in his own mind, and in his own words, that "there wasn't no sich person."

THE SECOND CHAPTER

The Witching Hour !

MIDNIGHT came—and with it came the ghostly visitant, as per promise, or rather threat.

In their bed-room over the tuckshop, Mr. and Mrs. Mimble passed a very uncomfortable ten minutes. They saw nothing—not even when Mr. Mimble rose reluctantly from his bed and lighted a candle; but they certainly heard something.

The weird, uncanny voice, which had startled Mrs. Mimble in the twilight, now informed them that the Ghost of Greyfriars was present.

Mr. Mimble had laughed at his wife's fears; but he didn't laugh now. He stood quaking and shaking, candlestick in hand, blinking round the room like a frightened owl.

"Joseph Mimble!" said the Voice sternly. "Tremble!"

The command was superfluous, Joseph Mimble was already trembling like an aspen leaf.

"I have come hither to haunt thee!" went on the Voice. "Canst thou see me?"

Mr. Mimble directed a startled glance at the ceiling, from whence the Voice seemed to come; then he blinked all round the room.

The candlelight cast strange shadows over the walls and ceiling. They might have been merely shadows; on the other hand, one of them might have been the outline of a ghostly form.

"Canst see me?" insisted the Voice, which now seemed to come from beneath the bed.

"Nunno!" gasped Mr. Mimble.

"Look under the bed, Joseph," urged Mrs. Mimble, with chattering teeth.

Very reluctantly, Mr. Mimble dropped on all fours. In a state of abject terror, he grovelled on the floor, and nerved himself to lift up the counterpane which overlapped the bed. But the flickering light of the candle revealed no crouching, ghostly form.

Then the Voice spoke again; and this time it seemed to come from inside the wardrobe.

"Joseph Mimble! Thou art a craven



"As for that plump and scurvy knave—" continued the Voice. Billy Bunter did not wait to hear more, but fled precipitately from the tuckshop! (*See previous page.*)

wight! Screw up thy courage, man, and investigate!"

"Look in the wardrobe, Joseph," advised Mrs. Mimble.

Mr. Mimble picked himself up, and staggered across to the wardrobe. With his disengaged hand, he threw it open, half-expecting a grisly phantom to spring out at him.

But nothing happened.

"Joseph Mimble!" said the Voice. "I come to warn thee that some day thou shalt surely die!"

"Wow!" yelled Mr. Mimble. And the perspiration stood out in beads on his forehead.

This time, the voice had seemed to come from the window.

"Go to the window, Joseph!" commanded Mrs. Mimble.

And her husband tremblingly obeyed. He crossed to the little casement, and peered out into the blackness.

Greyfriars stood still and silent under the frowning midnight sky. There was no movement or motion in the dusky Close.

Mr. Mimble had more than expected to find a ghostly figure perched upon the outer window-sill. He was agreeably disappointed.

And then, just as he withdrew his night-capped head, the Voice sounded in his ear, at startlingly close quarters.

"Coward! Poltroon! Thou fearest me! Pah! I would fain strike thee with my spectral hand——"

"Yarooooo!"

With a wild yell of terror, Mr. Mimble thrust the candlestick on to the nearest chair, and darted towards his bed. He scrambled in, and drew the bedclothes over his head, and lay there, trembling as if with the ague. Mr. Mimble was no longer sceptical on the subject of ghosts. He would not be prepared to take an affidavit that he had seen one; but he had certainly heard one, and that was quite enough. In fact, it was more than enough!

The Voice was not heard again, for which Joseph Mimble and his wife were truly thankful.

For over an hour they remained awake, expecting further molestation; but apparently the Ghost of Greyfriars had fittted away into the night. And Mr. and Mrs. Mimble fell into a troubled and uneasy slumber.

Morning came—a sunny spring morning—and the terrors of the night were dispersed like a flock of rooks at a farmer's gun.

It seemed difficult to believe, in broad daylight, that the Greyfriars tuckshop was haunted. But Dame Mimble and her

husband knew only too well that it was. They had their alarming midnight experience as proof.

Probably nobody else would have accepted it as proof. The Greyfriars fellows would have laughed to scorn the notion of the tuckshop being haunted. They would have put the whole thing down to a vivid imagination on the part of the Mimbles—or possibly nightmare. Certainly they would have discredited the story of the Ghost of Greyfriars.

"We'd better not mention this affair to any of the young gents, Joseph," said Mrs. Mimble, over the breakfast-table. "I hope Master Bunter hasn't done so. We should only be laughed at, and told that it was pure fancy on our part."

Mr. Mimble nodded.

"We won't say nothin' about it," he agreed. "But I'll tell you this, Jessie—I ain't goin' to sleep on these 'ere premises to-night, not if I knows it! That spook will be pretty certain to turn up again at midnight; an' my nerves wouldn't stand it! I ain't a timid man, by no means. I'd tackle anythin' in flesh an' blood. But when it comes to the soopernatural——"

"You didn't believe in ghosts last night," Mrs. Mimble reminded him.

"No; but I believes in 'em now—I believes in 'em implicit. An' I wouldn't sleep over this 'ere shop again, not if I was offered an 'undred pounds! Why, I'd as soon sleep in the Chamber of 'Orrors at Madam Two-swords! We must take rooms down in the village, my dear. I'll fix it up durin' the day."

"But what about the shop, Joseph?" protested Mrs. Mimble. "Somebody will have to be on the premises. We can't leave the place unguarded."

Mr. Mimble stroked his chin thoughtfully. He saw the point clearly enough. It would not be good policy to leave the tuckshop to the mercy of a possible raider. Even with the shop shuttered, there were ways and means by which an agile person might gain access.

"I know!" said Mr. Mimble suddenly. "I'll let Gosling, the porter, into the

secret, an' ask 'im to sleep over the shop to-night. Gosling reckons 'e's mighty brave, an' not afraid of ghosts. Well, 'ere's a chance for 'im to prove 'is mettle."

So saying, Joseph Mimble rose from the breakfast-table, and made his way across the Close to the porter's lodge, outside which stood William Gosling, leaning upon a broom, and surveying the sunny spring morning with a jaundiced eye.

After a brief conversation with Gosling, Mr. Mimble returned, looking rather crestfallen, to the tuckshop.

"No go!" he said lugubriously. "Gosling refuses to come an' sleep over the shop. 'E won't believe a word about the ghost. Says it's all stuff an' nonsense. But it's my belief that Gosling's scared stiff!"

Mrs. Mimble nodded.

"Well, we shall have to get somebody to sleep on the premises," she said. "If we can't, we must stop here ourselves."

"Not for a pension!" said Joseph Mimble emphatically. "We're goin' to sleep in the village to-night."

"I'll see to that. I must be off to work now. Couldn't you take one of the young gents into your confidence, an' get 'im to come an' sleep over the shop? It would 'ave to be a secret arrangement, of course. The 'Ead wouldn't approve of such goings on."

"I'll try Master Wharton," said Mrs. Mimble. "He's a boy I can thoroughly trust, and he's got any amount of pluck."

Mr. Mimble signified his approval, and went off to his day's work in the Head's garden.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

Bunter's Pluck!

BILLY BUNTER rolled cheerfully into the little tuckshop.

"Good-morning, ma'am!" he said genially, blinking at Dame Mimble through his big spectacles.

"Good-morning, Master Bunter!"

Mrs. Mimble beckoned confidentially to the fat junior, and lowered her voice.

"Have you told anybody about what happened last night?"

"Eh? About the Ghost of Greyfriars, do you mean? No, I haven't told a soul. Nobody would believe me, if I did."

Mrs. Mimble looked relieved.

"I'm glad of that," she said. "I don't want this story to get about. Everybody would laugh at us."

"Of course!" said Bunter. "Hardly anybody at Greyfriars believes in ghosts. By the way, did the spook turn up again at midnight, as he threatened to?"

"Yes," said Dame Mimble, with a shiver. "It—it was terrible, Master Bunter! We

could hear that voice coming from all parts of the room, but we couldn't actually see the ghost. And we didn't want to, either! We are not going to sleep here to-night. Mr. Mimble intends to take rooms in the village."

"A jolly good wheeze!" said Billy Bunter. "But I suppose you'll have somebody on the premises, just to keep guard?"

"I have just been discussing that with Mr. Mimble," said the dame, with a worried look.

"You ought really to get somebody, you know. You need some fearless, lion-hearted



The candlelight cast strange shadows over the walls and ceiling; one of them might have been the outline of a ghostly form. "Canst see me?" insisted the voice. "Nunno!" gasped Mr. Mimble. (See Chapter 2.)

fellow, who would snap his fingers at a blessed ghost."

Mrs. Mimble nodded.

"I was thinking of asking Master Wharton——" she began.

"Wharton!" Billy Bunter's tone was scornful and contemptuous. "Why, he hasn't the pluck of a rabbit! If Wharton saw a ghost, he'd turn up his toes!"

Dame Mimble smiled.

"You weren't exactly a hero yourself last night, Master Bunter," she said. "You soon bolted when you heard that voice!"

"I didn't!" exclaimed the fat junior, in hot denial. "I'll tell you why I buzzed off in such a hurry. I saw by your clock that it was time for calling-over, and I was afraid I should be late."

"Oh!"

"Look here, ma'am. I shouldn't say a word to Wharton about this business, if I were you. He'd only laugh at you, and so would all his pals. Nobody believes in ghosts."

Mrs. Mimble felt that Bunter was right. She wrung her hands helplessly.

"But what am I to do?" she said.

"Somebody ought to be here to-night——"

"I'm your man!" said Bunter promptly.

"You!"

Dame Mimble's tone, and look, were expressive of blank amazement. She had never regarded Billy Bunter as being of the stuff of which heroes are made. She found it difficult to picture the fat junior enduring a lonely vigil in the room overhead, and defying the Ghost of Greyfriars, and denouncing him by bell, book, and candle, so to speak.

Billy Bunter nodded his head vigorously.

"I'm quite game to sleep over your shop to-night, ma'am. You wouldn't find another fellow, not in all Greyfriars, who'd be willing to do it. They wouldn't see any necessity for it. But I'll take on the job! When you close your shop to-night, leave the key of your private door with me; and after lights out I'll come along here and take up my post as night-watchman. Is that a go, ma'am?"

Dame Mimble hesitated. She had no great

liking for Billy Bunter; and her opinion of his physical bravery was not very high.

But it was necessary to find somebody who would agree to guard the premises; and, since Bunter had volunteered for that hazardous job, in defiance of the ghost and the "voice," why not close with his offer?

It occurred to Dame Mimble, for a fleeting moment, that the provisions and food-stuffs in her shop would not be safe, with Billy Bunter in close proximity. But she quickly dismissed from her mind the notion that Bunter might tamper with her supplies. For the tuckshop was haunted; and the presence of the Ghost of Greyfriars on the premises would effectively check any attempt at a raid, even if Bunter dared to contemplate such a thing. With that uncanny "Voice" close at hand, reproving and admonishing, it was extremely unlikely that Bunter would feel like helping himself to food from the tuckshop. Indeed, that weird and terrifying voice would probably have the effect of taking away his appetite.

"Are you really serious, Master Bunter?" asked Mrs. Mimble, at length.

"Absolutely!"

"You are not afraid to spend the night in the room overhead?"

"A. Bunter is never afraid, ma'am."

"But supposing they find that you are absent from your dormitory?"

Billy Bunter shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, I'll chance that, ma'am!" he said carelessly. "I'll come here after lights out, and stay till daybreak. There won't be any ghosts after dawn; they always vanish at cock-crow, you know."

"I hope you won't be dreadfully scared, Master Bunter, when midnight comes, and you hear the Voice!"

Billy Bunter scornfully repudiated that suggestion.

"It would take more than a voice to scare me!" he declared. "I'm not a funk. I fear no foe in shining armour—or ghostly trappings!"

"It is good of you to help us in this way, Master Bunter," said Dame Mimble gratefully.

"Yes, it is, isn't it?" said the fat junior

with whom modesty was not a cardinal virtue. "Awfully decent of me, really; but then, I was always a generous and obliging sort of chap. Ahem! I wonder if you would let me have a few jam-tarts, ma'am? I'm expecting the postman at any moment, and I'll settle for them as soon as he comes."

Dame Mimble promptly passed a dish of tarts across the counter, and Billy Bunter fell upon them like a ravenous wolf. Perched on a stool, the fat junior proceeded to enjoy



"Awfully decent of me, really," said the fat junior. "Ahem! I wonder if you would let me have a few jam-tarts, ma'am?" (See this page.)

himself. He felt that he needed a little snack, to whet his appetite for breakfast.

Dame Mimble did not begrudge the jam-tarts. She was only too relieved to have found someone who was willing to spend the night on her premises. Neither she nor her husband cared to stay and risk another midnight visitation from the Ghost of Greyfriars. Their hair-raising experiences of the previous night had inspired them with a wholesome dread of invisible ghosts—unseen, but not unheard!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

A Hard Life!

"You fellows awake?"

Billy Bunter sat up in bed, and peered through the gloom, and waited breathlessly for a response to his softly uttered query.

But there was no response. The members of the Greyfriars Remove, with the exception of William George Bunter, were in the arms of Morpheus. The only sound which broke the silence of the Remove dormitory was the booming snore of Bolsover major.

Billy Bunter slipped quietly out of bed, and dressed in the darkness. He donned a pair of rubber-soled shoes, and stole quietly from the dormitory.

The fat junior chuckled softly as he groped his way down the wide staircase. Jingling in his trousers pocket was a bunch of keys—the keys of the school tuckshop.

It had been one of Billy Bunter's most dearly cherished ambitions to become the custodian of those keys for a few hours. They were as precious to him as the keys of Paradise, for they gave access to a glorious realm of unlimited tuck—a land flowing with milk and honey, as it were.

Even in his wildest dreams, Bunter had never seriously thought that he would ever obtain possession of the keys of the tuckshop, or be in a position to pass the night in that delightful establishment. But he had the keys now; and the tuckshop was at his mercy.

Strangely enough, the fat junior did not seem a bit perturbed at the prospect of receiving a midnight visit from the Ghost of Greyfriars. He was remarkably cheerful, for a fellow who was about to undergo a nerve-racking ordeal. Perhaps the traditional bravery of the Bunters—of which William George was so fond of prating—stood him in good stead now.

On reaching the ground-floor, Billy Bunter made his way cautiously to the end box-room. He raised the window, and started to squeeze his huge bulk through the aperture. Owing to his rotundity, he



Even Bunter's voracious appetite was satiated at last. He seemed in imminent peril of bursting, and it was some time before he could move. (See this page.)

got stuck for one painful moment; his head and shoulders were out in the Close, and his legs and pedal extremities were still in the box-room. Bunter felt much as King Charles the First must have felt when making his memorable attempt at escape from the window of Carisbrooke Castle. But the fat junior managed to wriggle himself through at last, and he dropped down into the dusky Close—quite an easy drop.

Billy Bunter stole through the shadows in the direction of the tuckshop.

Standing in silent isolation, in a corner of the Close, the building was in utter darkness, and its aspect was ghostly and forbidding. Braver hearts than Bunter's might have quailed at the prospect of entering the place, knowing it to be haunted. Yet Bunter was chuckling quite gleefully as he made his way to Mrs. Mimble's private entrance at the back.

He unlocked the door, and let himself in, and passed through the little parlour into the shop.

If Billy Bunter had heard a ghostly voice, or felt the touch of a clammy spectral hand on his cheek, he would probably have

jumped out of his skin. But he heard no voice, and he felt no icy touch. The only sound which broke the silence of the tuckshop was the scuttling of a mouse, which had been disturbed whilst having late supper in a biscuit-tin, the lid of which Dame Mimble had inadvertently left off.

Billy Bunter lit the gas. Owing to the window being shuttered, there was no fear of the light being seen from without.

The sudden blaze of illumination flooded the tuckshop, and revealed a choice array of foodstuffs stacked upon the shelves.

Beneath glass covers, Billy Bunter had a vision of tempting jam-tarts, and dough-nuts, and meringues, and maids-of-honour. In Mrs. Mimble's safe was a large steak-and-kidney pie, recently baked. Affixed to the counter was a corpulent barrel of home-made ginger-beer.

Certainly there was no danger of Bunter starving in the midst of plenty!

The fat junior smacked his lips, and blinked around the shop.

It was Bunter's intention to have the feed of his life, but he scarcely knew where to start. The tuckshop contained a vast and varied assortment of good things—"infinite riches in a little room," as the poet puts it—and it was difficult to decide which delicacy to sample first.

But Billy Bunter did not hesitate for long! He went from dish to dish, lifting the glass covers, and taking a nibble here, and a nibble there—sampling a little of everything.

An hour passed—one crowded hour of glorious bliss, so far as Billy Bunter was concerned. And by the time the hour expired, the fat marauder had sampled not merely a little of everything, but quite a lot of everything!

Bunter had fairly let himself go, and he had done himself well—too well, in fact. It was as if a meat-eater, after a long period of enforced vegetarianism, had been suddenly let loose in a chop-house!

Even Bunter's voracious appetite was satiated at last. Like the average London omnibus, he had "no room inside." The fat junior seemed in imminent peril of

bursting, and it was some time before he could move.

At last he managed to summon enough energy to extinguish the gas, and heave himself upstairs.

The bed-room had been neatly prepared for him; but Bunter was in no state to notice that. He felt considerably the worse for food, having taken far too much cargo on board; and his one desire was for sleep.

Partially undressing, Billy Bunter



"Mrs. Mimble begged me to come and sleep here, because of the ghost," said Bunter. "This tuckshop is haunted, sir, by a fearful apparition in white, with clanking chains——" (See this page.)

crawled between the sheets, and was soon sound asleep.

Midnight came, and passed; but the Ghost of Greyfriars, apparently, was taking a night off!

When Dame Mimble arrived at the tuckshop next morning, it was to find Billy Bunter still in bed, and uttering heart-rending moans. Bunter's complexion was almost green, and he was obviously in the throes of a bilious attack.

Dame Mimble's next discovery was of an

alarming depletion in her stock. She at once connected the depletion with Bunter's bilious attack, and she accused the fat junior, accordingly, of having raided her supplies during the night.

Billy Bunter indignantly denied the charge. If there was anything missing, he averred, the Ghost of Greyfriars must be held fully responsible.

By this time, Dame Mimble was seriously beginning to doubt whether the Ghost of Greyfriars was an existent entity. She began to suspect Bunter, not only of raiding her supplies, but of engineering the whole business.

A little later, when Mr. Quelch, the Remove-master, came into the tuckshop for his morning glass of milk, Dame Mimble sent him upstairs to interview Bunter.

The interview was a painful one. Under Mr. Quelch's stern and searching cross-examination, Billy Bunter floundered helplessly, in a sea of denials and contradictions.

"I don't know anything about the grub being raided, sir!" he declared. "I haven't budged from this bed all night, sir—honour bright!"

"You have no business to be in this bed at all, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch sternly.

"Oh, really, sir—— Mrs. Mimble begged me to come and sleep here, because of the ghost. This tuckshop is haunted, sir, by a fearful apparition in white, with clanking chains——"

"Nonsense, Bunter!" Mr. Quelch looked very grim. "I think we shall find that the 'ghost' is a very substantial one of flesh and blood!"

Billy Bunter quaked beneath the bed-clothes.

"I—I hope Mrs. Mimble hasn't been making accusations against me, sir," he said. "It's quite wrong to say that the ghostly voice was due to my ventriloquism——"

"What!"

"And if Mrs. Mimble suggests that I

climbed up to the fanlight over her bedroom, the night before last, and scared her and her husband by throwing my voice all round the room, I can only say that it's an awful fib, sir!"

"Bunter!" The voice of Mr. Quelch resembled the rumble of thunder. "What you have just told me is tantamount to an admission that you have been scaring Mr. and Mrs. Mimble with your ventriloquial tricks! You succeeded, in fact, in scaring them off the premises."

"Oh, really, sir——"

"I can clearly see what has occurred," said the Remove-master. "By means of ventriloquism, you deluded Mrs. Mimble and her husband into believing that the place was haunted. You then volunteered to sleep on the premises, with the object of helping yourself to the supplies, and holding a disgusting orgy. Such conduct, Bunter, merits condign punishment. When you are sufficiently recovered from your revolting state of biliousness, I shall take you before the Headmaster!"

"But—but you've got it all wrong, sir!"

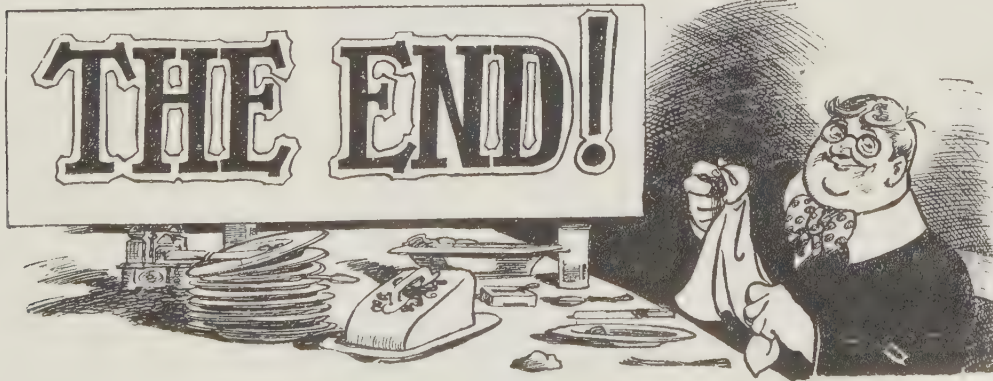
protested Billy Bunter. "I used to be a jolly good ventriloquist, but I've given it up since I strained my larynx. As for raiding the tuck, sir, such an idea would never enter my head. I've always been taught to keep my hands from sticking and peeling—I mean, picking and stealing——"

"Be silent, Bunter!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "You cannot hope to impose upon my credulity by a tissue of falsehoods. As soon as you are well enough to rise and dress, you will report to me, and accompany me to Doctor Locke's study!"

So saying, Mr. Quelch took his departure, leaving Billy Bunter to spend a melancholy morning, and an even more melancholy afternoon.

When the bilious attack had passed off, Bunter was arraigned before the Head; and there was weeping and gnashing of teeth. Those who happened to be within earshot surmised that pig-sticking was in progress.

William George Bunter was being made to realise—not for the first time in his chequered career—that the way of the transgressor is hard!



Holiday Joys- -1.



OFF TO THE SEA!

By Dick Penfold

WE board the train in cheery style,
And swarm into the carriages;
And every porter wears a smile,
Not one our joy disparages.
Our faces, to the windows pressed,
Are studies in hilarity;
We raise a cheer with joyous zest,
And frowns are quite a rarity.

The greybeard guard has waved his flag,
The train steams onward merrily;
Travel may seem a dreary drag,
But we will laugh—yes, verily!
For soon we'll be beside the sea,
Where frisky waves are capering;
And cliffs, as lofty as can be,
Toward the sky are tapering!

Oh, happy, happy holidays!
Days that are not monotonous,
But joyous days and jolly days,
With sunshine scorching hot on us!
Freed from the drudgery of class,
From primers and from lexicons,
Long days in wind and sun we'll pass,
And get as brown as Mexicans!

The train goes thundering on its way,
It flashes through a fairyland;
The level pastures roll away
Like a vast sweep of prairie-land.
And now the ocean greets our gaze,
Where the waves dance in unity;
"Hurrah for happy holidays!"
Exclaims our gay community!

Holiday Joys—2.



CARAVANNING!

MORNING wakes with its magic spell,
The birds are gaily singing;
And sunshine streams o'er hill and dell,
Its golden mantle flinging.
The caravanners tumble out,
They scorn the thought of lazing;
The horses wander round about,
Deep in the joys of grazing!

"Brekker, you chaps!" Bob Cherry cries,
"I'm hungry as a hunter."
"I say! please let me supervise!"
Entreats the portly Bunter.
Rushing around with pots and pans,
The echoes we awaken;
And there's a gathering of the clans
To feast on eggs-and-bacon!

Our noble steeds are harnessed then,
The caravans go rumbling
Down leafy lane, and shady glen,
And no one dreams of grumbling.
For every heart is light and gay,
Black looks and scowls we're banning;
This is the Perfect Holiday—
Hurrah for caravanning!

From peep o' day to twilight shade
We jog along the highways;
Then halt in some sequestered glade,
Far from the busy byways.
Weary but cheery, we retire,
To deep and dreamless slumber;
No healthier life could we desire,
No cares our minds encumber!

A Page of Greyfriars Personalities



THE HEAD.



GOSLING THE PORTER.



PAUL PROUT, M.A.
THE FIFTH-FORM MASTER.



LAWRENCE LASCELLES,
A POPULAR
ASSISTANT
MASTER.



THE FAMOUS FIVE!



HENRY QUELCH, M.A.
FORM-MASTER OF
THE REMOVE.



WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER.
(A GREAT CHARACTER
AT GREYFRIARS.)



SAMMY BUNTER



DICKY
NUGENT.



HORACE
COKER.



GEORGE WINGATE,
CAPTAIN OF THE SCHOOL.



A few of the "Shining Lights" of the famous old School, whose names will live in history!

A VISION OF THE FUTURE!



THE Greyfriars boys are Peter Pans,
They keep their youth eternally ;
And this is good, for old age would
Distress us most infernally !
Picture Bob Cherry, white of hair,
A bent old man in a hired bath-chair !



Just picture Bunter with a beard,
And greater in rotundity ;
Talking of buns to grown-up sons,
And lecturing with profundity
On how to bake a rabbit-pie,
And what to eat, and when, and why !



Can you imagine Vernon-Smith
A grey old man in goggles ?
Or " Doctor Brown," in a Head's long gown ?
Imagination boggles !
And what if Wharton were to say :
" You chaps, I'm ninety-nine to-day ! "



Coker, on reaching seventy-five,
Would sell his motor-bicycle ;
Wrinkled and bent, he'd crawl through Kent
Upon a creaking tricycle.
And Potter and Greene, for old times' sake,
Would hobble on crutches in his wake !

On Old Boys' Day, what sights and scenes
At Greyfriars we would witness !
Bent, bearded men, would gather then,
And talk of their unfitness.
Russell's rheumatics, Nugent's gout
Are topics we should hear about !



" Grow old along with me," says one
(I think the bard was Browning),
But Greyfriars clans are Peter Pans,
And Father Time's fierce frowning
Will never take from them, in truth,
The secret of perpetual youth !



WHAT I WANT TO BE!

Amusing Ambitions of Greyfriars Celebrities

BOB CHERRY



" . . . A daring, dashing aviator. . . . "

My ambition is quite a "lofty" one. You see, I want to become a sky-pilot. Not a "sky-pilot" in a clerical collar, but a daring, dashing aviator of the Royal Air Force! I have already taken part, as a passenger, in an aerial trip, and the experience thrilled me. How I envied the pilot for the masterly way he handled the machine! He seemed as much at home in the clouds as on terra firma. I look forward to the proud day when I shall take my pilot's certificate, and when Flying-Officer Cherry will dash fearlessly through the ether in a "Glyn Scout," invented by Bernard Glyn, of St. Jim's!

PERCY BOLSOVER

It is my great ambition to become the Welter-weight Champion of the World. I think I have a fine chance of attaining this ambition, because, even at the age of fifteen, I've the most punishing punch' in all Greyfriars. It stands to my credit that no less than five frail fags were knocked out by me in a single day! If I continue in such fine fighting trim, the day will soon come when I shall be able to do battle with the world's best! And when I revisit Greyfriars, bearing my blushing honours thick upon me, I shall be "chaired" through the Close, and triumphantly acclaimed as Pugnacious Percy, the Prince of Pugilists!



" . . . Welter-weight Champion of the World . . . "

BILLY BUNTER

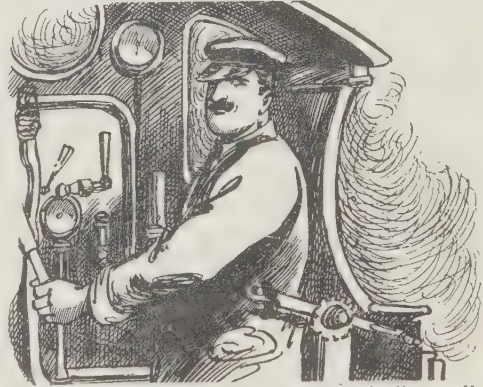


" . . . A sheff at a first-class hotel . . . "

I should love nothing better than to be a sheff at a first-class hotel. I think the sheff has a topping time of it. He soopervises the soop; he prepares the fish and the joints and the savories; and he samples every dish in turn, to see that it's properly cooked. Oh, what a lovely life! I once met a fellow who was a certified tart-taster. His job was to visit all the tuckshops in the land, and taste the tarts, to see that they were free from injurious substances. He was the fattest, fittest fellow I've ever seen. If I fail to obtain a job as a sheff, I shall certainly apply for the post of Tart-taster to the Ministry of Food!

DICKY NUGENT

i want to be an enjin-driver bekwase an enjin-driver's life is full of thrills and adventures. i can picture myself rushing along the Iron Way at seventy miles an hour, surrounded by clouds of smoke and flying sparks. In my mind's eye, i can see myself driving an express-trane from london to glasgo, and breaking all previous time-records! (Our contributor is not likely to see any of these events with any other eye than his mind's eye!—ED., "H. A.")



" . . . An enjin-driver's life is full of thrills . . . "

ALONZO TODD



" . . . I shall probably be consumed by cannibals . . . "

My ambition may appear somewhat strange to some folks. I want to take up mission work in the wild and unenlightened places of the earth. Bob Cherry warns me that I shall probably be consumed by cannibals, who are very partial to boiled bishop, or poached parson on toast. However, there is no fear of my meeting such a dreadful fate. I am so extremely slim that no cannibal would look at me twice. But I tremble to think what might happen to my study-mate, William George Bunter, if he paid a visit to the Cannibal Islands!

Holiday Joys—3.



CAMPING OUT!

DOWN in our Camp beside the sea,
We're happy as the sandboys ;
This is the holiday for me—
The finest ever planned, boys !
Exposed to sun and wind and air,
Getting as brown as berries ;
" No joy with camping can compare,"
To quote a phrase of Cherry's !

In cricket shirts and flannel " bags "
We go about our labours ;
Feeling as frisky as the fags
Who " rag " their camping neighbours.
Merrily we prepare our meals,
And Bunter's keen and curious ;
He talks of crabs, and jellied eels,
And other things luxurious !

In healthy sport we pass our days,
Days that are packed with pleasure ;
Then gather round the camp-fire rays
To take our evening leisure.
Our cheery voices all unite
To chant a swinging chorus ;
And eagerly we talk at night
Of joyous days before us !

The shades of night creep on apace,
The stars are shyly peeping ;
To ghostly tents our way we trace,
And soon are soundly sleeping.
What if the stormy breezes blow ?
What if the rain starts damping ?
Few are the pleasures here below
To equal those of Camping !



Great Games at Greyfriars!

By
GEORGE WINGATE
(Captain of Cricket.)

Greyfriars boasts a proud record
of great accomplishments in the
realms of sport!

CRICKET has been played at Greyfriars for over a hundred years. In 1815, when Waterloo was fought and won, a challenge was issued to "Eleven Men of Kent," and the match—the first of its kind—was played on the Greyfriars ground. It was a single-innings affair. The Kentish yeomen batted first, and by vigorous slog-ging hit up 240 "notches" (runs). It looked as if the Friars would be overwhelmed; but they rose manfully to the occasion. Sylvester, the captain of the school, made a century, and he was well supported by one of the junior masters. In an exciting finish, Greyfriars won by 4 runs; and the match ended in semi-darkness.

Before cricket came into popular vogue, the ancient game of "stool-ball" was played at Greyfriars. The two games have much in common, so it is hardly surprising that Greyfriars should win its first cricket match.

IN 1850, Greyfriars had the temerity to send a cricket challenge to Cambridge University. They paid dearly for their presumption, for the 'Varsity men enjoyed a "walk-over." Their brilliant batting, their deadly bowling, and their amazing alertness in the field were long remembered at Greyfriars. An interesting feature in connection with this match is that one of the participants, who played for Greyfriars, is still living. He is Sir Nigel Meredith, and is ninety-five years of age.



... The awful consequences that might result after
bowling out the Head!

GREY FRIARS cricket improved wonderfully as the years went on. After the disastrous match with the 'Varsity, its history is a record of continual advance. In 1888, we find Greyfriars meeting and defeating the famous M.C.C. It is only fair to point out, however, that the M.C.C. did not send down their strongest side. Nevertheless, the Greyfriars victory was a big feather in

the School's cap. Every member of the Greyfriars Eleven was presented with a special medal to commemorate the win.

The highest score which stands to the credit of the Greyfriars senior eleven is 640 for five wickets (innings declared closed). This gigantic score was compiled against Friardale Village, whose fieldsmen must have been in a state of collapse by the end of the day. It was a whole-day match, and it took place during a heat wave!

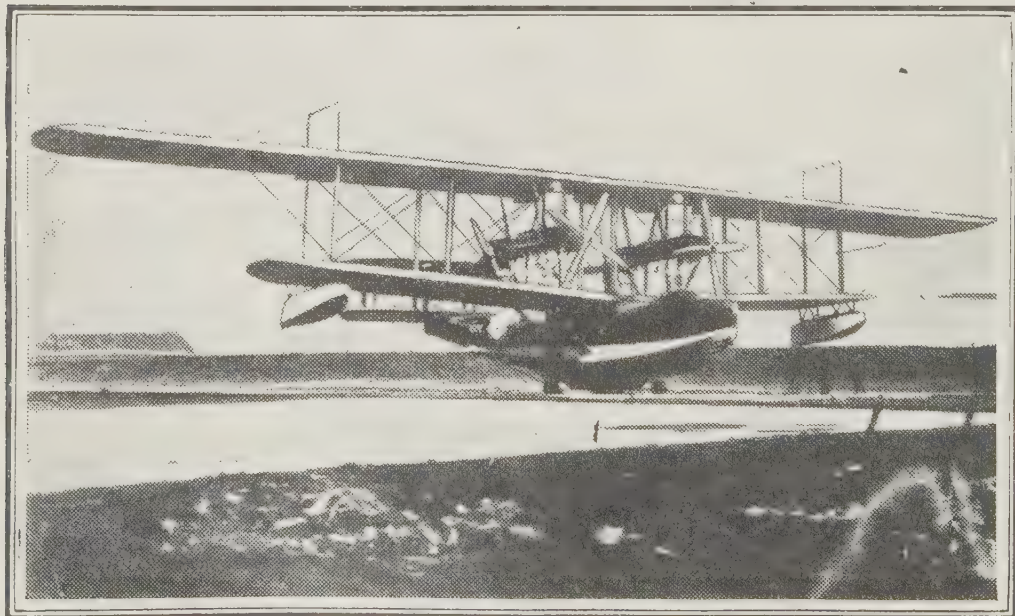
A "curiosity" match was played at Greyfriars twenty years ago. There were eleven fellows in the school bearing the name of Jackson—all related, though not all brothers—and all good cricketers. The team of Jacksons challenged the rest of the school to a match, and so keen and wholehearted was their play that they scored a handsome victory, "Tiny" Jackson batting heroically against the giants of the First Eleven!

CRICKET matches between masters and

boys have been more frequent than one might suppose. Invariably the boys have won; but in 1872 there was a notable exception to the rule. Dr. Grimwood, the Headmaster of that period, was a very majestic and awe-inspiring personage; and the masters were also inclined to be martinets. Consequently, the boys felt that it would be only prudent to present them with a victory. The awful consequences which might result from bowling out the Head for a "duck's-egg" were not to be contemplated! The bowlers had implicit instructions not to aim at the wicket; and the fieldsmen to "muff" their catches.

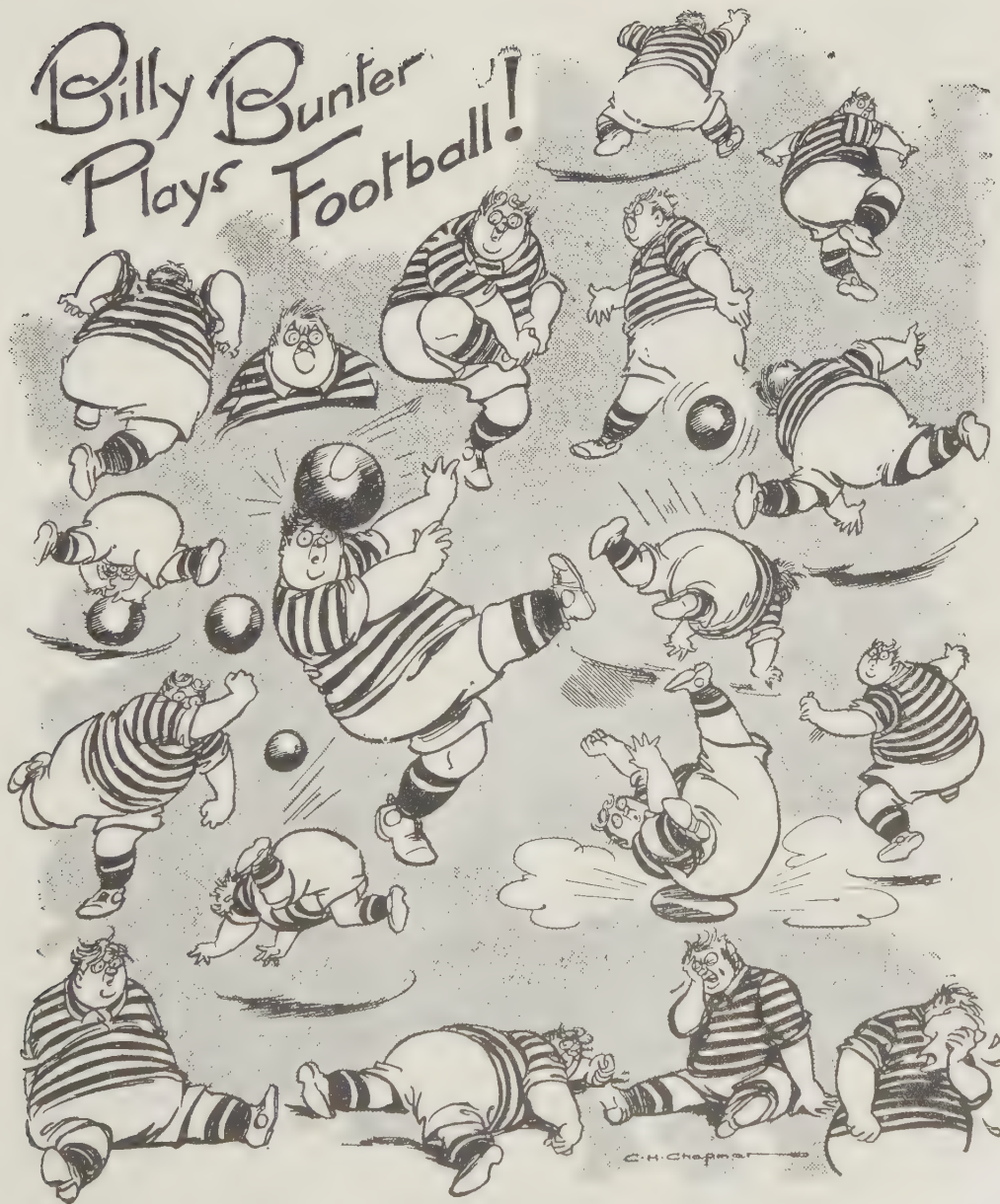
Despite these subterfuges, the masters only just managed to snatch a victory; but they retired to their studies with the impression that players like Dr. W. G. Grace were small beer compared with their estimable selves!

THE WORLD'S LARGEST SEAPLANE!



The "Titania," in use with the Royal Air Force, is, at the time of writing, the largest seaplane to fly successfully. Its span is 139 feet; height, 30 feet; length 67 feet. Driven by four Rolls-Royce Condor engines, giving a total of nearly 2,800 horse-power, it can carry several tons of bombs.

Billy Bunter Plays Football!



The woes of weight fall heavy on the Greyfriars 'porpoise' (and on the ball!) when that inexperienced footballer takes the field!



The entire form marched out from morning lessons and trooped up to the old tower.

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR MAX RENTON,
D.S.O.

PEERING back through the mists of memory to the days when I was a boy in the Greyfriars Remove I recall some stirring and exciting scenes. In 1885, I was the ringleader of a Remove rebellion, which was directed against a tyrannical Form-master of that period. This man—his name, appropriately enough, was Tanner!—had been far too free with the cane, and we had reached the limit of our endurance. At a given signal from me, the entire Form marched out from morning lessons, and trooped up to the old tower, where ample supplies had been laid in. Here, in our lofty and ivy-mantled refuge, we held a “barring-out,” which lasted nine days. Surely a school record? We defied all efforts to dislodge us; and it was not until my father, a retired colonel, came on the scene, that we yielded to persuasion, and declared the barring-out at an end. Some of us were secretly relieved, for we had become weakened by privation. My father ascertained the reason for the rebellion, and he conferred long and earnestly with the Head. The sequel was that Mr. Tanner was requested to resign—ample evidence of his brutality having been revealed—and the Remove Rebels were let off with a “gating.” But I tremble to think what

STORIES OF MY SCHOOLDAYS!

*Related by a number of Celebrated
Old Boys of Greyfriars*

might have happened but for my father's timely intervention!

REAR-ADMIRAL SIR BRIAN BEVERLEY,
K.C.B.

I HAVE vivid—and painful!—recollections of my first, and only, public flogging. Doubtless I deserved it, for I was guilty of the enormity of “walloping” a prefect. I forget what led up to the affair, but I know the prefect must have been hurt, because I damaged my own knuckles severely in the process! At all events, I was arraigned before the Head in Big Hall, and sentenced to receive a round dozen with the birch. Floggings were floggings in those days. They did something more than merely take the dust out of one's jacket! So painful was the ordeal that I decided to give my prefect foe a wide berth in future, and not run the risk of further chastisement. A flagellation is apt to make one's elation flag!

SIR PERCIVAL PORTLEIGH, Bart.,
(*Head of the firm of Portleigh & Co.,
Wholesale Provision Merchants.*)

WITH one exception, I believe I was the plumpest boy who ever passed through the portals of Greyfriars School. The exception is one of the present pupils, William George Bunter, to whom I was introduced on Founder's Day. I think I must have been a trifle less plump than Bunter, or I should assuredly have burst! The incident of my schooldays which stands out most vividly is my participation in a midnight feast—a veritable orgy, into which I threw myself with tremendous zest. I blush to say how much “tuck” I disposed of on that occasion! I was the victim of a bilious attack the next day, and the victim of a flogging next

The French Lesson!

By
DICK PENFOLD



L ATIN and Greek, six times a week,
Make many boys unhappy ;
Science we hate, and Maths. we slate,
And Euclid makes us snappy.
The only lesson not taboo
Is French conducted by Mossoo !

His guileless ways provoke our praise,
He's always neat and dapper ;
Preferred to Prout, without a doubt,
And also Quelch and Capper.
An hour of happiness we woo
When in the hands of meek Mossoo !

He never canes the boys with brains,
He seldom canes the brainless ;
And this is fine, for chums of mine
Prefer their lessons painless !
They like to take things easy, too ;
And that is why they like Mossoo !

He has been known to grieve and groan
At Bunter's French translations ;
Even a saint would make complaint
At Billy's perpetrations !
And Bunter's "pidgin-French" won't do
For skilled French scholars like Mossoo !

Skinner and Stott will "make things hot,"
For this most patient master ;
He tears his hair in his despair,
And thinks it a disaster.
Skinner's "Tray-bong !" and "Parley-
voo !"
Is French that does not suit Mossoo !

Swiftly will pass the hour in class
Under Mossoo's direction ;
When Quelch appears, we quake with fears,
And walk with circumspection !
For "ragging" Quelchy would not do—
He's sterner, firmer than Mossoo !



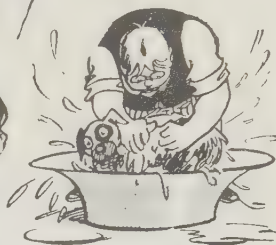
HOW SAMMY BUNTER WASHED THE PUP!



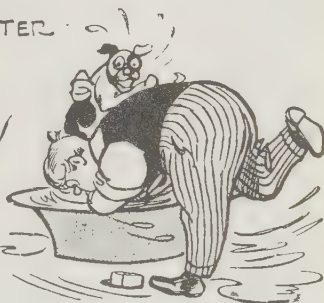
"I'LL GIVE YOU
A JOLLY GOOD
WASH, YOU
DIRTY LITTLE
PUP, AND



— THEN WE WILL SEE WHAT
A LITTLE SOAP
AND



WATER



— WILL DO FOR YOU!



C. H. Chapman

THE GREYFRIARS OF YESTERDAY

Brevities and Levities from my
"HISTORY OF GREYFRIARS,"

By Mr. HENRY QUELCH, M.A.

STRANGELY enough, the very first boy to be enrolled as a scholar at Greyfriars School was named Alpha. No, the name of the second boy was not Beta; it was Smith!

THE Greyfriars tuckshop was established in the reign of Queen Anne. It was not, as a certain Second Form boy supposed, founded by Friar Tuck! The Governors sanctioned the inception of "Tuck Shoppe," as a place where, to quote the words of these grave and reverend seigneurs, "reft and refreshment might be supplied to scholars after their strenuous pastimes on the playing-fields."

GLANCING through the School Register, I find that there was a Wingate at Greyfriars in Queen Elizabeth's reign; also a Gwynne. There have been several Bunters, but they have differed in many respects from the present Bunter. In the time of Charles I., there was at the school a certain Boniface Bunter—a youth of high intellectual attainments, who rose to be captain of the school. Later, there was a Reuben Bunter—a boy who was slim to the point of emaciation, and who eventually fell into a decline. I can hardly believe that this boy was a forbear of the present Bunter!

WHARTON is a name which has figured largely in Greyfriars history, and most of the bearers of this name have had distinguished school careers. The same remark applies to the Nugents and the Russells. Of course, there were no Hurree Singhs or Wun

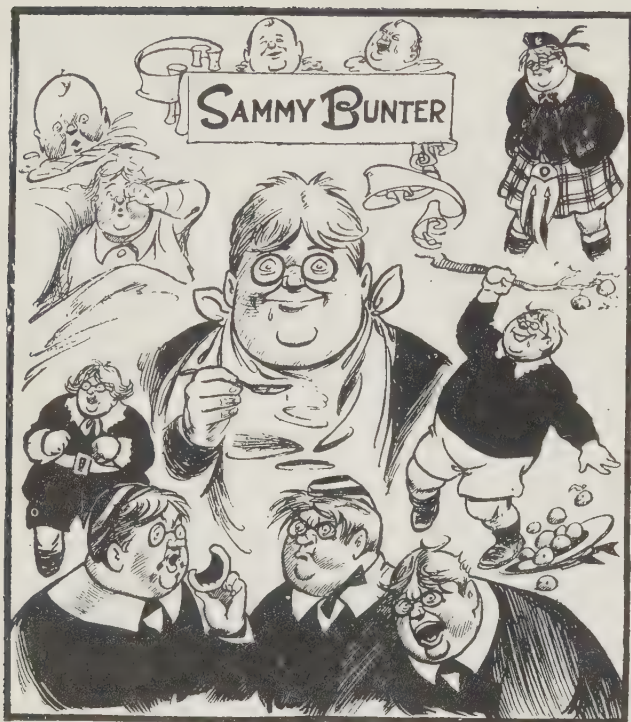
Lungs in bygone days, as Greyfriars was then strictly confined to boys of British parentage.

THERE were 80 pupils at Greyfriars in the year of its inauguration. The pupils now number 320, which makes calling-over a tedious business!



Was Reuben Bunter, who was at Greyfriars round about the time of Charles I., a forbear of the present Billy Bunter? Reuben was slim and eventually fell into a decline. Would Billy know his ghost?

MANY Greyfriars scholars have won distinction in varying walks of life. Among its Old Boys the school can boast a Cabinet Minister, a Major-General, a famous explorer, several County cricketers, and a newspaper proprietor.



Nothing to approach Sammy Bunter was seen or known at the Greyfriars of old. Here he is depicted in a number of easy stages, growing plumper and plumper, and ever more ravenous as the hair encroaches farther and farther in unruly waves over his massive brow.

THERE have been three great fires in the history of the school, and five great rebellions. Both fires and rebellions were satisfactorily extinguished! The most serious of the fires occurred on Guy Fawkes' Night, in 1869, when the bonfire was built in the Close. A strong wind from the sea drove the flames towards the school building, and fired it. Since that time, the Guy Fawkes celebrations have been held in the playing-fields. The most serious rebellion was one in which the whole school was involved, in 1789, the year of the French Revolution. The rebellion lasted nearly a fortnight, with the inevitable result—a triumph for law and order, and the surrender of the rebels.

DURING the Great War, the Greyfriars district was bombed from the air by Zep-

pelins. The damage, fortunately, was slight, and the casualties nil. A bomb fell just beyond the school boundary, however, and Greyfriars may be said to have had a narrow escape.

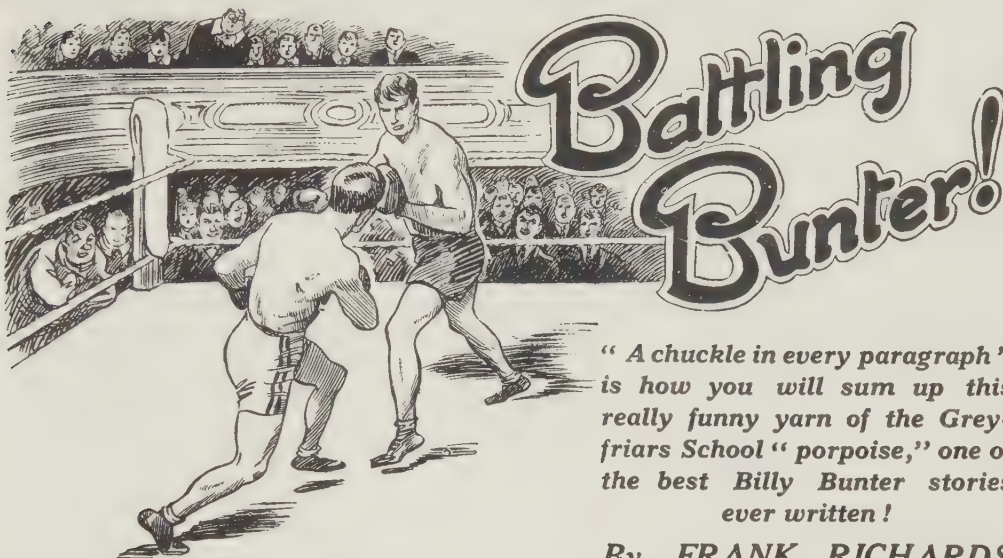
THE most famous Headmaster of Greyfriars was Dr. Marvell, who held office for thirty-six years, in the time of the Tudors. The school prospered exceedingly under his wise and equitable rule. The present Headmaster, Dr. Locke, bids fair to outrival this venerable pioneer.

THE average number of expulsions from Greyfriars has been one per year. No less than 21 scholars were expelled in 1789—the year of the Great Rebellion—but for many years after that there were no expulsions.

THESE regrettable incidents are mere specks, however, on the bright escutcheon of Greyfriars. They are more than outweighed by acts of heroism, as recorded in the school archives. As, for example, on that black, storm-torn night well over two centuries ago, when a great ship foundered and broke up on the shore near the school.

No boat could possibly live in that swirling, roaring sea for more than a moment or two. The obvious, but extremely perilous, thing to do, of course, was for the boys to form a human chain, and to wade into the crashing surf until the few survivors from the wreck could be reached. In this way, seventeen of the crew and passengers were dragged ashore. The bravery of this act was no whit lessened by the fact that eighty-eight souls perished that never-to-be-forgotten night, when the Greyfriars boys vied with each other in acts of heroism.

Billy Bunter as bruiser—and prime comedian!



"A chuckle in every paragraph" is how you will sum up this really funny yarn of the Greyfriars School "porpoise," one of the best Billy Bunter stories ever written!

By FRANK RICHARDS

THE FIRST CHAPTER

Five in a Hurry!

"WHERE'S that ticket?"

"Eh?"

"Where's that blessed ticket?"

"What?"

"Where's that blinking ticket?"

Bob Cherry seemed a little excited.

His voice, which was powerful in his calmest moments, now bore a striking resemblance to the roar of the celebrated Bull of Bashan. It awoke all the echoes in No. 13 Study, and most of the echoes in the Remove passage.

Bob was in a hurry.

It was a half-holiday at Greyfriars; and his chums were waiting for him on the Remove staircase. The Famous Five were going down to Courtfield that afternoon, where a new and attractive show was on at the Courtfield Coliseum. They had reserved seats for the show—or rather, Harry Wharton, Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Singh had reserved seats. Bob Cherry had had one. The pluperfect tense made all the difference.

Seats being reserved, it was not necessary to start early. The chums of the Remove gave themselves just time to walk down to Courtfield before the show started at the Coliseum. Four of the five were ready, with tickets numbered 20, 21, 22, and 23, Grand Circle, in their pockets. Ticket numbered 24, Grand Circle was in No. 13 Study—or should have been. Apparently it wasn't.

Bob Cherry distinctly remembered placing that ticket on the mantelpiece, with the clock on it to keep it safe.

The clock was still there. The clock in No. 13 was not likely to go. It never did go. But the ticket had gone.

Some ass, evidently, had shifted that ticket. Bob rooted about the study after it. He searched the study right and left, up and down and round about. And still the ticket did not materialise. The study was soon looking as if an earthquake had happened to it. Books and papers, football boots, and foils, all sorts and conditions of things, were strewn in all directions. Had the ticket been there, Bob's exhaustive search could scarcely have failed to unearth it.

It was not there! Hence Bob's growing excitement.

Harry Wharton looked in at the study door, with an expression of mild impatience.

"We're waiting," he remarked.

"Where's that thumping ticket?"

"Lost your ticket?"

"No."

"Then come on."

"But I can't find it."

"You haven't lost it, but you can't find it?" asked the captain of the Remove.

"Some ass has shifted it—or rather, bagged it," roared Bob Cherry. "It's not in the study at all. It's gone."

"Better ask your study-mates——"

"They've gone out, bother them, except Inky! Inky, you dummy, have you shifted my ticket?"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's dusky, smiling face looked in over Wharton's shoulder.

"The shiftfulness was not terrific, my esteemed Bob."

"Somebody's borrowed it," grinned Johnny Bull. All the Co. had gathered now at the doorway of No. 13. "You should have kept it safe, old bean."

"Come without it," said Nugent.

"Can't get in without it, fathead."

"We shall be late."

"We haven't much time left, and that's a fact," said Harry Wharton. "If you can't find the ticket, Bob, better come without it, and we may be able to get another at the Coliseum."

"Three and six!" said Bob. "I haven't another three and six to blow."

"Let's all look for it."

"I've looked!"

"Let's look again!"

The Famous Five all joined in the search for the missing ticket. It is said that many hands make light work. It is said, with equal wisdom, that too many cooks spoil the broth. Certainly, after five juniors had rooted about the study for five minutes, it would have been difficult for anybody to have found anything in the general havoc.

"N.G.," said Bob, at last. "You fellows get on, and I'll come and have a shove for the shilling gallery. I don't want to miss

the show if I can help it. I want to see the boxing turn specially."

"That's the best we can do, I suppose," said Wharton.

"Buck up, then," said Nugent. "We're late already."

And the Famous Five hurried out of the study, scudded along the Remove passage, and went down the Remove staircase three steps at a time.

They were in a hurry—anyone could have seen that they were in a hurry, excepting Billy Bunter. Bunter was coming up the stairs. Bunter was short-sighted, and his spectacles, big as they were, did not warn him in time that five juniors were coming down like a cyclone.

Crash!

"Whoooooop!" roared Bunter, as he was strewn on the middle landing.

"Oh, my hat!"

"You fat duffer!"

"Yaroooogh! Help!"

Bunter rolled and roared. Harry Wharton & Co. were in a hurry, but they stopped to pick up Bunter.

They did not pick him up gently. There was no time to waste on ceremony. They grabbed him where they could, and set him on his feet. Bob grasped his ears, Nugent his hair, and Johnny Bull his collar, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh his nose. Bunter did not express any gratitude for the help thus rendered. He roared protest.

"Yarooogh! Leggo! Beasts!"

"There you are!" growled Bob Cherry.

"What do you butt into the way for, you fat duffer? No harm done."

"Yow-ow-ow! I'm hurt."

"Luckily, that doesn't matter. Come on, you fellows."

Billy Bunter clung to the banisters and gasped for breath. Harry Wharton & Co. turned down the lower stairs.

"I say, you fellows!" gasped Bunter.

The Famous Five did not stop.

"I say!" roared Bunter. "Hold on a minute! It's important."

Harry Wharton paused for a moment.

"What is it, fathead? Sharp—we're in a hurry."

"You're going to the Coliseum?"

"Yes."

"I'm going, too."

"Well, go, and don't bother."

"I'm going in a taxi——"

"Eh?"

"I was coming up to offer you fellows a lift in my taxi."

"Oh!"

The Famous Five turned back. They were late for the show at the Coliseum, and a lift in a taxi to Courtfield was a boon and a blessing. Certainly they would not have cared to waste money on a cab fare, and they considered that Bunter was an ass to do so. Still, the offer was certainly an agreeable one, and very useful in the circumstances, and they felt that Bunter was entitled to thanks, at least.

"Sorry we floored you, old fat bean," said Johnny Bull. "It's jolly decent of you, fatty. Is the taxi here?"

"That's all right—I'm going to telephone for it. Lots of time in a taxi."

"Come on, then."

Bunter, still gasping, rolled down the lower staircase with the Famous Five.

"I can use Quelchy's 'phone—Quelchy is out," he said. "The taxi won't take long to get here. But I say, you fellows——"

"Well?"

"I told you I was expecting a postal order this morning——"

"Never mind that now, ass!"

"I've had a disappointment," explained Bunter. "My postal order hasn't come."

"That's all right—it never does come."

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Get a move on."

"You see, I was going to stand myself a taxi out of my postal order," Bunter further explained.

"What?"

"As it happens, I'm stony——"



Harry Wharton and Co. were in a hurry, but they stopped to pick up Bunter. There was no time to waste on ceremony. They grabbed him where they could, and Bunter roared protest. (See Chapter 1.)

"Stony?"

"Yes. I suppose one of you fellows can lend me the taxi fare, and I'll settle out of my postal order—when—when it comes."

For a moment, the Famous Five stood and stared at Bunter, as if bereft of the power of speech. The Owl of the Remove's generous offer of a lift in his taxi was explained now. The Co. were to have the privilege of paying for "his" taxi—to be indemnified at some later date—some very much later date—when Bunter's celebrated postal order arrived.

"You fat villain!" roared Bob Cherry, finding his voice at last. "If we could raise the tin for a taxi, we could do it without pretending that it was your taxi, you fat spoofer."

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"You—you—you——" gasped Wharton.

"We haven't a minute to spare, and you

stop us to spin a yarn about a postal order ! Bump him !”

“ I say, you fellows—yarooooooooop !”

Bunter, grasped in five pairs of exasperated hands, bumped on the lowest stair, and sat there spluttering. Harry Wharton & Co. left him to splutter, and sped on their way. They came out of the House with a rush—and met Coker of the Fifth coming in. Coker fancied, for a moment, that a bombshell had hit him fair and square. He was reclining on his back, gazing dizzily at the clouds, as the Famous Five rushed on to the gates.

They did not stop to inquire whether Coker was hurt. Perhaps they knew he was ! Leaving Coker of the Fifth star-gazing, the heroes of the Remove rushed out of the gates—fortunately without meeting anyone else. They then proceeded at a rapid trot down the road to Courtfield.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

Bunter, Too !

“ JUST in time !”

“ Just !”

“ The justfulness is terrific !”

Four juniors settled down in the reserved seats at the Courtfield Coliseum numbered 20, 21, 22, and 23. The show was just going to begin.

Grand Circle No. 24 remained empty

Somewhere in the crowded gallery, Bob Cherry had pushed for a place, it being impossible to claim his reserved seat in the Grand Circle without a ticket to show.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked round for him as they sat down ; but it was impossible to pick out Bob in the gallery. The variety show at the Coliseum was quite a popular one, and the house was full. The gallery was a mass of faces, among which Bob Cherry’s ruddy countenance was not to be distinguished.

It was quite a decent show at the Courtfield Coliseum—and the various items, conjuring, clog-dancing, trick cycling, and so forth, were quite entertaining to the Greyfriars juniors. But the turn that had chiefly drawn them to the place was a boxing affair, which appeared rather late on

the programme. Bob Cherry, the champion boxing man of the Remove, was keenly interested in that turn—and his chums hoped that he had succeeded in pushing into a place in the crowded gallery to witness it. It was shortly before the boxing turn was announced that a late-comer came shoving along the row of seats where the chums of the Remove were sitting.

“ Bunter !” ejaculated Wharton

Billy Bunter glanced at the juniors and grinned, and progressed towards them, amidst expostulatory grunts from the people he was disturbing. There was not much room to spare between the rows in the Grand Circle at the Courtfield Coliseum—and Bunter’s circumference was against him. He came on very slowly towards the juniors.

“ What is that fat duffer butting in here for ?” asked Johnny Bull. “ There’s no seat here.”

“ No. 24, sir ?” came an attendant’s voice, addressing Bunter. “ There, sir—just in front of you.”

Bunter squeezed on, and dropped into the vacant seat—vacant because Bob Cherry had lost his ticket.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at him.

There was the half of a ticket in Bunter’s fat fingers—the other half, evidently, had been given up when he entered.

Bunter’s unexpected appearance in the Grand Circle was explained now

And the disappearance of Bob Cherry’s ticket was explained also !

“ Why, you—you—you villain !” gasped Wharton. “ You’ve got Bob’s ticket.”

Bunter grinned.

“ You bagged it from Bob’s study !” exclaimed Nugent.

Bunter chuckled.

“ You — you — you fat burglar !” exclaimed Johnny Bull.

Bunter chortled.

Evidently the Owl of the Remove found something entertaining in the situation.

He settled himself down comfortably in the seat which should have been occupied by Bob Cherry.

“ Bit late,” he remarked. “ Have I missed anything good ?”



There was not much room to spare between the rows of the Grand Circle at the Courtfield Coliseum; and Bunter's circumference was against him! He came on very slowly towards the Juniors.
(See Chapter 2.)

"You've got Bob's ticket!" breathed Wharton. "It was you bagged it off the mantelpiece in Bob Cherry's study."

"What's the next turn?"

"You've got——"

"Oh, give a chap a rest, Wharton," urged Bunter. "You keep on saying the same thing over and over again."

"You—you——" gasped Wharton.

"I'm jolly late," said Bunter crossly. "I had to walk to Courtfield, owing to you fellows being so mean about the taxi. As for the ticket, I shall pay for that, of course. I intend to settle with Cherry for it immediately my postal order comes."

"You fat villain! I fancy Bob will settle with you before that," said the captain of the Remove.

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"I've a jolly good mind to kick you out now."

"I hope you're not going to make a shindy here, Wharton. Greyfriars fellows are expected to behave themselves in a theatre," said Bunter. "You might think of your manners, as you belong to my school."

Wharton breathed hard and deep.

Somewhere up above, Bob Cherry was crammed in the gallery, if he had succeeded in getting into the Coliseum at all. And here was Bunter, comfortably ensconced in a comfortable seat for which Bob had paid three-and-sixpence. Had it been practicable, the captain of the Remove certainly would have ejected the fat junior neck and crop from the seat. It really was too thick, even for William George Bunter. But it was not feasible to create a shindy in a place of entertainment, and the captain of the Remove had to consume his wrath as well as he could.

"Fellows shouldn't leave tickets lying about, if they don't want to lose them," said Bunter.

"That ticket wasn't lost."

"Well, it might have been, if I hadn't taken it off the mantelpiece in No. 13," argued Bunter. "Might have dropped into the fire. Might have been swept away. I saved it from being lost."

"Well, my hat!" murmured Nugent.

"Not that I expect any thanks," said Bunter.

"Thanks?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Well, a chap might thank a chap for saving a three-and-sixpenny ticket from being lost," said Bunter. "But I don't expect anything of the sort from Cherry—I'm accustomed to ingratitude."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"The thankfulness of the esteemed Cherry will probably not be terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But the thrashfulness will be a boot on the other leg."

"Oh, really, Inky! One of you chaps might lend me a programme——"

"It's the boxing turn next," said Johnny Bull. "Shut up, Bunter."

"Oh, really, Bull——"

"Save your breath till after the show," said Johnny. "You'll want it all then, to express your feelings when Bob begins on you."

The juniors chuckled.

Billy Bunter looked a little uneasy.

"I—I say, you fellows, d-d-do you think Cherry will cut up rusty about this ticket?" he asked.

"Just a few!" grinned Nugent.

"He will give you the licking of your life, and serve you jolly well right, you fat rascal," said the captain of the Remove.

"I—I say, I—I don't want to have to lick him, you know."

"Don't worry about that. You'll get the licking."

"You fellows can mention to him that I wasn't here——"

"What?"

"Swear it, you know," said Bunter.

"See?"

"We're to swear that you weren't here!" said Wharton dazedly.

"Yes, that's it. Then there won't be any fuss, see? I don't want any trouble with Cherry about a paltry three-and-sixpenny ticket. I hope I've got a mind above such sordid trifles."

"Oh, dear!" said Wharton. Really, William George Bunter was too much for him.

Bunter calmly annexed Wharton's programme, and blinked at it through his big spectacles.

"Battling Benson!" he read out. "That's the boxing turn! I say, you fellows, I believe that is a good show. That man Benson has been in the ring in his time. He gives boxing lessons at his rooms in Courtfield—I've seen the advertisement in the 'Courtfield Gazette.' I——"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

The "turn" was beginning, and Billy Bunter shut up at last, and fixed his gaze upon the stage.

This item was the most interesting on the programme, to the Greyfriars fellows at least, who were keen on the manly art of self-defence.

Battling Benson, the boxer, a thick-set man with a square jaw, had been a fighting-man in the roped ring in his time; but his fighting days were over. Now he turned an honest penny by giving boxing displays in music-halls, and boxing instruction to pupils when he could secure any. On the present occasion, Battling Benson and a stubby gentleman, called on the programme the Game Chicken, were putting up a ten-round contest, for the delectation of the patrons of the Courtfield Coliseum.

They wore well-padded gloves, and there was no real harm done; but the way Mr. Benson knocked the Chicken about showed that he must have been a hard hitter in the days when he had fought for prizes and purses.

It was quite a good turn, and Harry Wharton & Co., who knew something about boxing, watched it with interest.

Two or three times Wharton glanced up at the gallery, wondering whether Bob had

succeeded in getting in there. It was really hard lines if Bob had to miss the boxing show, after he had booked a seat for the especial purpose of witnessing it.

But nothing was to be seen of Bob, and Wharton could not help thinking that he had probably failed to get in. All the unreserved seats had been crowded before the Famous Five had arrived at the Coliseum.

"Looking for somebody, old chap?" asked Bunter.

"For Bob," said Wharton curtly. "I'm afraid he never got in."

"He, he, he!"

"You fat villain! Is that something to rattle at?" demanded the captain of the Remove.

"Well, poor old Bob's rather an ass, you know," said Bunter. "Just the ass to get left. He, he, he!"

"He didn't have a chance of pilfering another fellow's ticket, you see," remarked Johnny Bull, with deep sarcasm.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

The boxing turn was completed, and the other items followed on in due course. Billy Bunter lounged in his comfortable seat and quite enjoyed the show. Bunter's only worry was that Bob Cherry might make an unreasonable fuss about the ticket later on. But Bunter was not accustomed to meeting

troubles half-way—or at all, if he could help it. He dismissed Bob from his mind, and enjoyed the entertainment.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

The Way of the Transgressor!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

It was Bob Cherry's cheery voice, as Harry Wharton & Co. came out of the Courtfield Coliseum after the show.

Bob was waiting for them outside.

"You got in?" asked Nugent.

Bob shook his head, with a grimace.

"Too thick," he answered. "Packed like sardines before we got here. Was the boxing turn good?"

"Pretty good," said Wharton. "What have you been doing?"

"Oh, just strolling around and waiting for you fellows to come out," said Bob good-



Bunter, secure in the presence of a prefect, crawled out from under the bed. "What the thump were you doing under your bed, you young ass?" Wingate demanded. (See Chapter 4.)

humouredly. "No good grouching. But I'm going to find out who bagged my ticket, and punch him hard."

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! I didn't know Bunter was with you," said Bob. "Did you let him stick you for a ticket?"

"No; he stuck you for a ticket."

"Me!" ejaculated Bob.

"I—I say, you fellows, there's no need to go into that now," said Bunter hastily.

"I—I owe you three-and-six, Bob Cherry. I'm going to settle out of my postal order."

"What?"

"I suppose that's satisfactory," said Bunter, blinking at him. "Dash it all, I'll make it four bob if you like. Nothing mean about me."

Bob Cherry stared at him.

"What is the fat image burbling about?" he asked. "Oh! My hat! Did Bunter come in on my ticket?"

"Just that," said Wharton.

"You bagged the ticket from my study, Bunter?" roared Bob.

Bunter backed away.

"Nothing of the kind," he exclaimed.

"I—I hope I'm not the fellow to bag a fellow's ticket. You shouldn't have been careless with it. I—I took it off your mantelpiece to—save it from getting lost. Of course, I—I didn't want to waste a three-and-sixpenny ticket. So—— Yaroooh! Keep off!"

Billy Bunter went down Courtfield High Street as if he mistook that thoroughfare for the cinder-path.

"Why, the—the—the fat rotter!" gasped Bob, in burning indignation. "Sitting in there with my ticket, while I was kicking my heels outside. I—I—I'll burst him."

Billy Bunter had vanished.

Somehow or other, he had worked it out to his own fat satisfaction that his proceedings in the matter of that ticket were fully justifiable. Bunter's podgy intellect had its own mysterious processes. But it was clear, even to Bunter, that Bob Cherry was not equally satisfied, and that after the feast there was the reckoning to come. So Bunter, like the guests in "Macbeth," stood not

upon the order of his going, but went at once.

Harry Wharton & Co. walked back to Greyfriars; Bob fuming with indignation, and his chums fully sympathising.

As a rule, the Famous Five erred upon the side of patience in dealing with William George Bunter. They had never been able to make up their minds whether the Owl of the Remove was more fool than rogue, or more rogue than fool. It was certain that he was a good deal of both. Generally they gave him the benefit of the doubt, and bore with him.

But there was a limit; and on this occasion it was agreed that Bunter had exceeded the limit. What Bunter wanted, in the opinion of the Co., was a record thrashing, to teach him the difference between "meum" and "tuum," and to keep his fat paws from picking and stealing. And it was Bob Cherry's fixed intention to bestow upon W. G. Bunter the thrashing he so evidently needed.

Bob's usually sunny face wore a grim frown when the Famous Five arrived at Greyfriars and came into the Remove quarters.

"Seen Bunter?" Bob called out to the fellows in the passage.

"I don't think he's come in yet," said Peter Todd.

"I'm going to slaughter him when he does."

"What's Bunter done?" asked Peter.

"You mean, whom has he done?" remarked Skinner of the Remove.

"He's done me," growled Bob. "He bagged my ticket for the Coliseum, and went in on it, leaving me to cool my heels."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Skinner.

"It's not a laughing matter, Skinner," growled Bob.

"My mistake!" said Skinner politely. "I thought it was. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, rats!"

The Famous Five went to No. 1 Study to tea.

After tea, Bob Cherry walked along to No. 7, the study in the Remove that had the

honour—or other-
wise—of harbour-
ing William George
Bunter.

He found Peter
Todd there, and
Peter grinned as he
looked in.

"Looking for
Bunter?" he asked.

"Yes. Hasn't he
come in?"

"Come and
gone!" grinned
Peter. "He doesn't
seem to want to
meet you. Your
society seems to have
palled on him, old
bean!"

"Br-r-r!"

Bob Cherry pro-
ceeded along the Re-
move passage look-
ing in all the
studies for Bunter.

But he found him
not.

Evidently, the
Owl of the Remove
was keeping out of
the way.

Prep. claimed Bob at last, and he went to
No. 13 to work; but he finished prep. early,
and came along to No. 7 to look for Bunter
there again.

The door of No. 7 was locked on the
inside.

Bang!

Bob Cherry smote the door with his fist,
with a smite that rang the length of the
Remove passage.

"Who's there?" called out Peter Todd.

"Me, you ass!"

"I, you ass!" corrected Peter. "Where's
your grammar, old man?"

"Fathead! Open this door."

"It's locked."

"Unlock it, then, ass."

"I—I say, Peter. tell him I'm not here!"
came a quavering squeak.



Bunter was not a sprinter. But fear lent him wings. Right along the dormitory
he went, with Bob Cherry on his track brandishing the fives bat!
(See Chapter 4.)

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Toddy——"

"Bunter says he's not here, Cherry,"
called out Peter Todd. "I suppose you can
take his word for it."

Bang!

"Let me in, Bunter!" roared Bob
Cherry. "I'm going to thrash you."

"I—I say, old chap——"

"Open this door!"

"I—I say, I'll make it five bob, when
my postal order comes. That's generous,
you know."

"I'll leave it till dorm.!" growled Bob
Cherry, through the keyhole. "I'm going
to make an example of you this time, you
fat villain. I'm going to wallop you till
you can't crawl."

"Oh, dear! I say, old chap——"

Bob Cherry bestowed a final thump on the door, and went down to the Rag to join his friends.

In No. 7 Study, Billy Bunter blinked dolorously at his study-mate.

"I—I say, Peter, old chap——" he mumbled.

"You're for it!" grinned Peter. "Can't say I'm sorry. You've asked for it, old fat bean!"

"I—I say, Peter, you oughtn't to put up with a fellow thumping at your study door that way," urged Bunter. "You could lick him, you know. Look here, I'll hold your jacket."

Peter Todd chuckled.

"It's cheek, you know," urged Bunter. "It's up to you to lick that cheeky cad, Toddy, old chap."

"Go hon!"

"I—I say, Peter, what am I going to do?" groaned Bunter. "The beast is going to pitch into me."

"More power to his elbow!" said Peter unfeelingly.

"He makes out that I bagged his ticket for the Coliseum, you know——"

"And didn't you?"

"Oh, really, Peter! You're as big a beast as he is. I've a jolly good mind to complain to a prefect."

"And tell him about pinching Cherry's ticket?" asked Peter.

"Of—of course, I shouldn't think of sneaking to a prefect," said Bunter. "I'm not that sort of fellow, I hope. But I say, Peter, that beast really means to pitch into me. What would you do if you were me, Peter?"

"I'd leave other fellows' property alone," grinned Toddy. "I'd keep my paws from picking and stealing."

"Beast!"

Peter went on with his prep. Bunter was not giving much attention to prep. that evening. Much weightier matters occupied his fat mind.

"I—I say, Peter——"

"Shut up, old fat man. You talk too much."

"But what's a fellow to do, Peter? You

might advise a chap! D-d-do you think I could lick Bob Cherry?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Peter.

"Oh, really, Toddy——"

"You might lick him if he were blindfolded and had both hands tied," chuckled Peter. "Not otherwise."

"I—I wish I'd taken up boxing now," groaned Bunter. "I'm just the build for a boxer, you know, if I'd taken the trouble."

"Oh, my sainted aunt! Are boxers built like barrels?" asked Peter.

"I'm accustomed to fellows being jealous of my figure," said Bunter. "That's nothing new. I've never had the time to give to it—a fellow with so many engagements can't do everything. If I took the trouble to go into training a bit, I'd make rings round you, Peter."

"Ye gods!"

"I'm rather a hefty chap, you know—active, agile, springy, quick, and all that," said Bunter. "And boxing needs pluck, too."

"That leaves you out, then."

"If you had as much pluck in your whole body as I've got in my little finger, Toddy, you'd do," said Bunter.

"Fan me!" murmured Peter Todd.

"But there it is—I've never had the time to give to it," said Bunter. "It's rather rotten."

"Nothing else necessary but the time?" asked Peter blandly.

"Exactly. But there it is—as the matter stands, I think very likely I couldn't lick Bob Cherry."

"Very likely indeed, I think," chortled Peter. "As Inky would say, the likeness is terrific."

"But I'm jolly well not going to be licked, Peter Todd, over a sordid dispute about a paltry three-and-sixpence."

"Looks to me as if you are," chuckled Peter, "and if you're bursting with pluck, as you say, why not unlock the study door?"

Billy Bunter did not unlock the study door. If he was bursting with pluck, it was evident that he preferred to do so on the safe side of a locked door.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

A Challenge to Combat !

"PUZZLE—find Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry stared round the Remove dormitory.

Very thoughtfully, Bob had brought a fives bat up with him.

The bat was for the benefit of Bunter.

Bunter, however, plainly did not want to be benefited. He was not to be seen.

"Where's that fat villain?" demanded Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The wherefulness is a mystery," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The fat and esteemed rotter came into the dormitory."

"He's here somewhere," said Harry Wharton. "Look under his bed, Bob."

"Ow! I'm not here!" came a startled squeak from under William George. Bunter's bed.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Removites.

"Come out!" roared Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Come out, you fat brigand."

"I—I say, Bob, old chap——"

"Cave!" chuckled Russell. "Here comes Wingate."

Wingate of the Sixth looked in at the doorway. Bob Cherry hastily shoved the fives bat out of sight in his bed.

"Now, then, turn in," said the prefect. The Removites proceeded to turn in. Bunter, secure in the presence of a prefect, crawled out from under his bed.

Wingate stared at him.

"What the thump were you doing under your bed, you young ass?" he demanded.

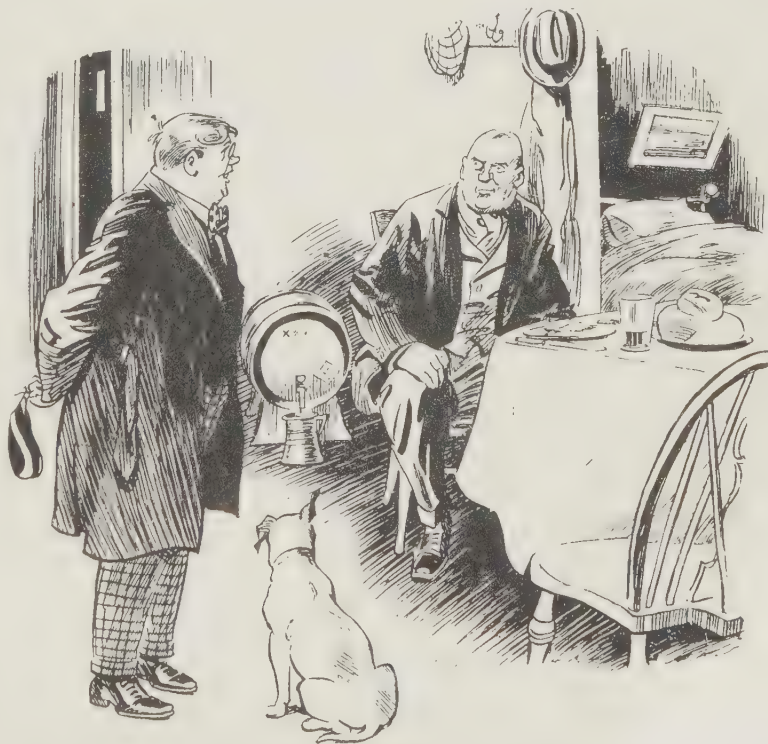
"N-n-nothing!" stammered Bunter.

"Turn in!"

"Oh, dear!" mumbled Bunter.

Bunter had only postponed the evil hour. He had no choice about turning in now that the Sixth Form prefect had arrived on the scene; and he knew what to expect after Wingate had put out the lights and left the dormitory.

The Owl of the Remove was strongly tempted to demand protection from the



The Owl of the Remove explained to Battling Benson that he wanted lessons in boxing, being booked for a fight the following week. "I fancy I'm rather the build of a boxer, what?" (See Chapter 6.)

prefect. Certainly, Wingate would not have allowed a batting to take place in the Remove dormitory. Equally certainly, he would have taken a very serious view of the purloining of the Coliseum ticket. Bunter might satisfy his own fat conscience on that subject; but he had a feeling that a prefect would not be so easily satisfied.

Indeed, he was well aware that had Wingate of the Sixth become acquainted with the affair he would have reported it to Bunter's Form-master. And the bare idea of standing under the gimlet-eyes of Mr. Quelch, and explaining to that severe gentleman, made Bunter shiver.

So Bunter resisted the temptation to call on Wingate to stand between him and his just punishment. It was better to deal with Bob Cherry than with Mr. Quelch, as a matter of choice.

Bunter turned into bed in the lowest possible spirits.

Not for the first time in his fat career, he had discovered that the way of the transgressor was hard.

Wingate put out the lights, and left the Remove to repose. So he supposed. As a matter of fact, the Removites were not thinking of repose just yet.

Five minutes were allowed to elapse, and Bunter began to hope. Then his hopes were dashed to the ground, by the sound of a fellow getting out of bed.

A match was scratched, and a candle-end ignited. A dim illumination glimmered through the dormitory.

"Bunter!" boomed Bob Cherry.

Snore!

"He's asleep!" chuckled Peter Todd.

"BUNTER!"

Snore!

"You're asleep, ain't you, Bunter?" asked Toddy.

"Yes!" gasped Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll wake him up," said Bob Cherry grimly. And he started for Billy Bunter's bed, with the fives bat in his hand.

Bunter promptly rolled out of bed on the other side. He landed on the floor in a tangle of bedclothes, with a howl.

"Ow!"

"Bend over the bed," said Bob cheerily. "I'm going to give you six, Bunter—hard! May as well get it over."

"Keep off!" yelled Bunter.

Bob Cherry came round the bed. Bunter scrambled to his feet in a hurry, and dodged away.

All the Removites were sitting up in bed, looking on with grinning faces. So far from sympathising with the hapless Owl of the Remove, they seemed to be enjoying the entertainment.

"Go it, Bunter!" chuckled Vernon-Smith, as Bunter streaked along the dormitory, with Bob in pursuit.

"Put it on!" chortled Squiff.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter was not a sprinter. He had much too much weight to carry. But fear, as a novelist would say, lent him wings. He fairly flew.

Right along the dormitory he went, with Bob Cherry on his track, brandishing the fives bat.

At the end of the long room, Bunter dodged desperately, and just escaped a swipe of the bat as he twisted, and fled again.

"Stop!" howled Bob Cherry.

"Yaroo!"

Bob rushed in pursuit again. Again Bunter was nearly cornered, but he dodged among the beds, and plunged across Skinner's bed headlong. Again he just escaped a swipe of the bat as he rolled off the bed—but the swipe was not wasted. Skinner caught it.

There was a fiendish yell from Skinner.

"Yow! You silly idiot!"

"Sorry!" gasped Bob. "I meant——"

"You dangerous maniac!" yelled Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Stop, you fat villain!" gasped Bob Cherry, dodging among the beds after Bunter. "Do you think I'm going to chase you up and down the dormitory all night, you fat villain? Stop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter dodged again, and plunged across

Vernon-Smith's bed to escape. The Bouncer grasped him as he plunged, and pitched him back.

Bump!

Bunter landed on the floor fairly under Bob Cherry's feet. He squirmed and roared as a hefty grasp was laid on him.

"Now, you fat burglar——"

"Yaroooh!"

"Bend over!"

"Yow-ow-ow! Keep that bat away!" roared Bunter, in dire apprehension. "I—I—I'll fight you if you like. Put that bat down! Fair play!"

"You fat dummy——"

"You fellows see fair play!" shrieked Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll fight you, you rotter!" roared Bunter. "Put that bat down. Put up your hands! Yah!"

"Fuf-fuf-fight me!" gasped Bob Cherry. "You silly owl, I've no time to attend inquests."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hold on," said Peter Todd. "Fair play's a jewel. If Bunter's prepared to fight you, old bean, it's up to you."

"Hear, hear!" chorused the Removites.

"Give Bunter a chance!" chuckled Vernon-Smith.

"Go it, Bunter!"

"You silly asses!" exclaimed Bob. "I'm going to lick him for bagging my ticket. Bunter couldn't fight a bunny rabbit."

"Yah!" roared Bunter. "Funk!"

"What?"

"Funk!" yelled Bunter.

"Oh, my hat!"

"It's up to you, Bob," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Bunter's entitled to fight it out if he likes. Chuck the bat away."

"Rot!" growled Bob Cherry, greatly exasperated. "The fat dummy would burst if I hit him."

"Yah!"

"Fair play's a jewel," repeated Peter Todd. "It's up to you. Let him off, or else fight him."

"I'm not going to let him off—and I'm

not going to fight a fat frog!" roared Bob. "I'm going to lick him."

"Yah! Funk!"

"Oh, come on, then!" exclaimed Bob angrily, throwing down the fives bat. "Come on, if you prefer it that way."

And Bob put up his hands and advanced upon the fat junior.

Bunter promptly backed away.

"I'll fight you——"

"Come on, then."

"In the gym., with the gloves on," said Bunter.

"You fat fraud!"

"On Wednesday," said Bunter. "I'm a bit out of training, and I'm not sure that I could lick you at the present moment."

"Lick me!" said Bob dazedly. "Oh, my hat!"

"You'll be my second, Toddy," said Bunter.

"Certainly, old bean," chuckled Peter Todd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you're not getting out of a licking like that, Bunter," roared Bob Cherry.

"Yah! You come up to the scratch in the gym. on Wednesday, and I'll give you more than you want," said Bunter valorously. "You won't be allowed to crawl out of it, Bob Cherry."

"Kik-kik-crawl out of it!" gasped Bob.

"Yes. If you don't show up in the gym., I'll jolly well come after you, and thrash you."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That settles it," said Bunter. "We can't fight in the dorm. I don't want Quelchy or a prefect to come in and interrupt me when I'm thrashing you."

"Thrashing me?" stuttered Bob. "Oh gum!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Leave it till Wednesday. I shall expect you in the gym. Now shut up and let a fellow get some sleep."

Billy Bunter rolled to his bed.

Bob stood staring after him. The Removites were howling with laughter.

"That Bunter had the remotest intention of facing the champion boxer of the Remove with the gloves on, nobody believed for a moment. Obviously, it was a trick to gain time.

"Look here," roared Bob. "If you think you're getting out of a licking by a dodge like this, you're mistaken."

"Yab!"

"Bunter's within his rights," chuckled Peter Todd.

"Rats! You know that he doesn't mean to turn up on Wednesday in the gym. It's all spoof!" hooted Bob.

"You can keep him to it," grinned Peter. "Besides, he's asked me to be his second. I'll jolly well keep him to it."

"And I jolly well will!" exclaimed Bob, in great exasperation. "Look here, Bunter, you're for it on Wednesday. Mind that!"

"I'm going to lick you on Wednesday," said Bunter. "Look out for the thrashing of your life."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter rolled into bed. Bob Cherry followed his example, amid the chuckles of the Removites. Obviously, Bunter hoped that the trouble would blow over before Wednesday; Bob's wrath never lasted long. But the Owl of the Remove was within his rights in claiming a fight to settle the dispute. Bob turned in, resolved that when Wednesday came round Bunter should find that the trouble had not blown over, and that his last state was worse than his first.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER

"For It!"

BILLY BUNTER wore quite a cheerful countenance on the following day.

He had enjoyed the matinee at the Court-field Coliseum, and it had cost him nothing. He had escaped the licking that was due to him for his sins. So Bunter was feeling satisfied.

Indeed, he was prepared to dismiss the whole matter from his mind. He had other matters to think about. His celebrated postal order had not arrived, and funds were short. That was quite enough to

occupy Bunter's fat mind, without wasting time on thinking about Bob Cherry and the absurd fuss he was making over a trifle.

But that afternoon Bunter had an unpleasant reminder.

"What time in the gym. on Wednesday?" asked Bob Cherry, joining the Owl of the Remove when the Form came out after class.

Bunter blinked at him.

"Eh?"

"Forgotten that you're booked for a fight, what?" asked Bob sarcastically.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Would you rather take the batting now?"

"Of—of course, I'm going to fight you," said Bunter. "I—I hadn't forgotten. I'll lick you all right."

And he rolled away, with the cheerful expression gone from his podgy countenance. Bob Cherry's memory was longer than he had supposed. For once, the most good-natured fellow in the Remove seemed implacable. Bunter had overstepped the limit, and Bunter was to have a lesson. For his own sake, if for no other reason, Bunter was to have impressed upon his mind some realisation of the rights of property.

The Owl of the Remove was looking quite thoughtful when he went into No. 7 Study to tea.

Peter Todd eyed him with a smiling face.

"Feeling fit?" he asked.

"Wha-a-at?"

"You've taken on a rather hefty job for next Wednesday," said Peter. "Of course, you'll be licked——"

"Oh, really, Toddy——"

"But I expect you to put up a good fight, for the honour of the study," said Peter. "No. 7 Study never funks, you know."

"I—I—I——"

"I'll put you through a few rounds with the gloves, if you like," said Peter kindly. "I shall hurt you a bit—you'll have to get used to that. I shan't hurt you so much as you'll get hurt on Wednesday."

"The—the fact is, Peter——" stammered Bunter.

"Burning for the fray?" asked Peter blandly.

"Ye-es, exactly," gasped Bunter. "But—the fact is—I—I've been thinking of letting Cherry off."

"I thought you had," assented Peter. "Give it a miss, old man. You can't let Cherry off now. He won't be let."

"You—you see——"

"I see—quite!" assented Peter. "But you're for it, old man. You're too forgiving, Bunter."

"The—the fact is, I'm a forgiving chap, Peter."

"Oh, quite!" said Peter. "After Bob's called you all sorts of names!"

"I—I can overlook that."

"And chased you up and down the dormitory with a fives bat——"

"I—I forgive him."

Peter Todd shook his head.

"It's generous of you, Bunter——" he said gravely.

"I—I mean to be generous, old chap."

"Oh, I'm sure of it. Generous and kind and forgiving, and all that," said Peter.

"Just so."

"Only it won't wash, old bean," said Peter cheerily. "You're standing up to Bob with the gloves on, on

Wednesday. I'm your second."

"I—I won't trouble you, Peter."

"No trouble at all," said Peter. "You're taking it on now, as you've asked for it. This study never backs down. You see, if you dodge fighting Bob Cherry, after all your gas, I shall lick you myself."

"Look here, Peter Todd——"

"I'm looking," said Peter. "I'm looking after you, old fat pippin. I'm seeing

that you don't funk and disgrace the study."

"I'm not funkng, of course——"

"Of course not. Only feeling forgiving, and generous, and so on. Cut it out, old man. It won't wash."

"Oh, dear!"

That evening, the cheerfulness of William George Bunter had departed.

He realised that he was "for it."

It was not only that Bob Cherry was deter-



"I'm sorry, but you're for it! I've got two or three more fellows on the list," said Bunter, with a ferocious blink. "I'm beginning with Bob Cherry. I hope he won't have to be taken away in an ambulance!" (See Chapter 7.)

mined that the pilfering Owl of the Remove should not escape punishment by so palpable a trick.

Peter Todd, as Bunter's second, was determined that his principal should come up to the scratch.

And all the Remove were keen on it. The prospect of watching a fight between Bob Cherry and Billy Bunter was entertaining. A contest between the champion fighting-man

of the Remove and the fat and fatuous Owl could not fail to entertain. The Removites would not have missed the show for any consideration. So Bunter, to his dismay, found the whole Form keen on it, and all of them looking forward to Wednesday afternoon.

Bunter was "for it."

He had brought it on himself, and now there was no escape for him.

His fat knees knocked together at the bare thought of standing up to Bob Cherry's hefty punches. At supper that evening he ate only enough for four or five fellows. Worry was affecting his appetite.

In the Remove dormitory that night a general chuckle greeted Billy Bunter. For once, the Owl of the Remove was in the lime-light, and all the Lower Fourth were interested in him.

"Made your will, Bunter?" inquired Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Better sign the 'Daily Mail' coupon, at least, before Wednesday," remarked the Bounder.

And there was another chuckle.

"I say, you fellows——" Bunter blinked at the Removites. "If you think I funk it, you're mistaken. Only, as it happens, my pater wants me to go home on Wednesday, so it will have to be put off."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. It will have to be put off, of course——"

"Not at all," said Peter Todd cheerily.

"It will have to be put on."

"Eh?"

"We'll make it Tuesday after class, instead of Wednesday afternoon. That suits you, Bob?"

"Quite!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"I—I say, you fellows, I—I—I think I can put off my pater on Wednesday, after all——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!"

And Bunter went to bed in such a worried frame of mind that it was fully five minutes before his deep snore resounded through the Remove dormitory.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER

A Brain-Wave!

"I've got it!"

Billy Bunter uttered that ejaculation suddenly in morning break the next day.

Bunter had been thinking.

In the extraordinary and unpleasant situation in which he now found himself, Bunter had been putting in an unaccustomed amount of thinking. It was quite unusual on his part. But he was up against it now, and he pondered and pondered on the matter, seeking a way of escape from the scrape in which he had landed himself.

"I've got it, Toddy."

"Well, what have you got, old fat bean?" asked Peter.

"I'm going to lick Bob Cherry."

"Hem!"

"That's the only thing now," said Bunter seriously. "I've offered to let him off, and he's refused."

"He has!" agreed Peter.

"So the only thing is to give him a jolly good hiding," said Bunter. "I've told you more than once, Toddy, that I should be the best boxer in the Remove if I took the trouble."

"Better take the trouble, then," advised Peter. "Otherwise, you will want a new set of features after next Wednesday."

"I'm going to train," said Bunter. "The difficulty is, that it will cost money. I depend on my old pal to see me through about that."

"Good! Go and speak to him about it," said Peter. "Who is he?"

"Oh, really, Peter——"

"Anybody I know?" asked Peter blandly.

"Look here, Peter Todd, if you're not going to lend me a quid or two, you'd better say so plainly," said Bunter wrathfully.

"So plainly!" replied Peter.

Evidently Peter was not going to lend Bunter a quid or two, even now he had discovered that he was the old pal to whom the Owl of the Remove had referred.

"After all, I can run it on tick," said Bunter thoughtfully. "Man is bound to

trust a Public-school chap for a small sum—a mere trifle."

"Not if he knows you," said Peter.

"Well, he doesn't know me, if you come to that," said Bunter peevishly. "That will be all right. I'm going down to Courtfield after classes, to see that man Benson."

"Who on earth is Benson?" asked Peter, mystified.

"Battling Benson," said the fat junior. "He gives a boxing show at the Courtfield Coliseum. He used to be in the ring. He takes pupils for boxing lessons."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I'm going to him for a few lessons," said Bunter determinedly. "I'm the very fellow to make a splendid boxer, as you know, Peter. Strong and sturdy, lithe and active, no end plucky——"

"Oh, my sainted Sam!"

"All I need is a little training, and some really good professional instruction," said Bunter. "It's merely a question of taking the necessary trouble. Well, it's up to me to take it."

"Oh, crikey!"

"I'll jolly well lick Bob Cherry, and Wharton, too," said Bunter, with a warlike look. "I've stood a lot of cheek from those fellows, as you know, Peter."

"You have!" agreed Peter. "Lots! They've kicked you, and cuffed you, and you asked for it every time. Certainly you've had a lot to stand."

"Beast! I'll jolly well lick you, too, Peter, when I get into form."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're not much good, anyhow," said Bunter, blinking at him. "A skinny sort of scarecrow, Toddy."

"What?"



"Keep off, Bunter!" exclaimed Bolsover, in alarm. "You've been jolly cheeky to me, a lot of times!" said Bunter, full of courage now. "You're a bully!" (See Chapter 7.)

"You'd break in two pieces if I hit you really hard, you know," said Bunter. "You've given me a lot of cheek in the study. That's got to stop."

"Oh, that's got to stop, has it?" asked Peter, with a glare.

"Yes—from now on," said Bunter firmly. "A few lessons from a professional pug will bring out all my natural abilities."

"If any!" murmured Peter.

"Don't be cheeky, Toddy. I warn you that I'm not going to stand any more cheek, from you or anybody else," said Bunter, with a scornful blink through his big spectacles. "I've stood all I'm going to stand from cheeky rotters in the Remove. In future, look out for a licking if you're cheeky."

"Aren't you counting your chickens rather early?" inquired Peter, with a

shuckle. "You're not Battling Bunter yet, you know."

"Shut up!"

"Wha-a-a-t?"

"Shut up!" said Bunter.

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Peter. "If you really could fight anything bigger than a bunny rabbit, Bunter, I think you would be a nice, pleasant sort of chap to have about the place. But as you can't, you'd better learn to be civil, or I might collar you—like that——"

"Yaroooh!"

"And kick you, like that——"

"Yoooop!"

"And sit you down like that."

Bump!

Peter Todd strolled away whistling, leaving Bunter sitting on the hard, unsympathetic ground, and gasping for breath.

"Ow, ow! wow!" gasped Bunter.

He picked himself up, and shook a fat fist after the retreating form of Toddy.

"You wait a bit!" he murmured darkly.

"You wait till I'm in form! Bob Cherry first—then that cheeky ass Wharton—then you, you cheeky rotter! I'll lick the lot of them in turn."

Billy Bunter did not need to imitate the gentlemen in the story, who prayed to be given a good conceit of himself. Billy Bunter was already endowed with that.

A brave, strong, sturdy, mauly fellow like Bunter only needed a little professional instruction—which, of course, would be easily assimilated by a fellow of such keen intelligence! That was how the Owl of the Remove looked at it.

It was quite a simple way out of the difficulty, and Bunter grinned a fat grin as he thought it over.

It was quite a glorious prospect.

To knock out Bob Cherry, or any other fellow in the Remove, Bunter only needed to take the trouble to go into training a little. He was going to take the trouble!

In his mind's eye, he saw himself standing up to the lefty Bob, and knocking him right and left like a skittle. In his mind's eye, he saw himself thrashing the captain of

the Remove, and putting him in his place—where he ought to have been put long ago, in Bunter's opinion. He saw himself the champion boxer of the Remove, monarch of all he surveyed—fellows trembling at his frown—Peter Todd reduced to order and submission in the study!

Bunter saw all this in his mind's eye. Unfortunately, he was never likely to see it with the eye of the flesh. But the fat and fatuous Owl was not yet aware of that.

After dinner that day, Billy Bunter borrowed a bicycle—without mentioning the circumstance to the owner thereof—and pedalled down to Courtfield to interview Mr. Benson.

He found that rather battered gentleman in his lodgings near the Coliseum, dining elegantly off a kipper, in an untidy room that had an unmade bed in the corner.

Battling Benson had a standing advertisement in the "Courtfield Gazette," to the effect that he was prepared to take pupils for boxing lessons. But he did not seem to secure many pupils. His look was anything but prosperous.

So he was glad to see Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove explained to him that he wanted lessons in boxing, being booked for a fight the following week.

Mr. Benson eyed him over the kipper.

What he thought of Bunter's possibilities as a boxer he did not state. He did not want to lose this pupil.

He gave Bunter hearty encouragement. Business was business.

"I fancy I'm rather the build of a boxer, what?" said Bunter.

Mr. Benson gasped a little.

"You think so?" asked Bunter.

"Oh, yes! Jest the figger, sir," said Mr. Benson.

"I thought so. I saw you handling the Chicken at the Coliseum the other day," said Bunter. "I want to be able to handle a fellow like that—see?"

"I see," gasped Mr. Benson.

"There's no doubt about my abilities. The question is, whether you can bring 'em out."

"Oh!"

"Can you do it?" said Bunter.

"My eye!" said Mr. Benson. "Hem! Rely on me, sir! I'll put you through it. My tooition, sir, will bring out anything you've got in you, sir."

"That's all I want," said Bunter.

So it was easily arranged.

Neither was there any difficulty about fees. Mr. Benson—in the innocence of his heart—supposed that that would be all right, when he learned that Bunter belonged to Greyfriars. Bunter agreed cheerfully to half-a-guinea a lesson, one lesson daily. The whole amount was to be paid in a lump at the end of the lessons. Perhaps Bunter thought that his long-expected postal order would arrive by then. Perhaps he did not think about it at all. Sordid considerations of lucre could not be allowed to stand in the way of William George Bunter's development as a champion boxer.

When Bunter was gone, Battling Benson remained deep in thought for some minutes before he resumed operations upon his kipper.

Then he ejaculated:

"Well, of all the young idjits!"

Mr. Benson grinned.

"If he pays a bloke 'arf-a-guinea a time for a-pulling of his silly leg, why shouldn't a bloke pull his silly leg?" said Mr. Benson, as if answering some objection of his conscience.

Which was a mode of reasoning that not even Mr. Benson's straitened financial circumstances could excuse.

Mr. Benson, however, appeared satisfied with it, and he attacked his kipper with renewed zest. Bunter, too, was satisfied as he pedalled back to Greyfriars. As in a glorious vision, he saw himself "Battling Bunter," the terror of the Remove. And when Ogilvy kicked him for having borrowed his bicycle without leave, Billy Bunter only murmured darkly:

"You wait a bit!"

And Ogilvy's name was added to the list of the fellows whom Bunter was going to lick.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

Battling Bunter!

BATTLING BUNTER!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a roar of laughter in the Rag. Billy Bunter looked surprised.

He did not see why his arrival in the Rag should be the signal for that irresistible outburst of merriment.

But it was!

Peter Todd had told the story of Bunter's ferocious intentions. He had told it with tears in his eyes—tears of mirth. Bunter, indeed, made no secret of his intentions. He was willing to let the fellows know what was in store for them—hard-heartedly condemning them to all the terrors of anticipation.

It was known that Bunter had started taking boxing lessons with Mr. Benson, who in his days in the ring had been known as Battling Benson. It was natural that that awe-inspiring title should be passed on to Bunter by his convulsed Form-fellows. "Battling Bunter" took the Remove by storm.

Bunter was known, in the Lower Fourth, to be every sort and kind of an ass. The Remove fellows had supposed that they knew every sort and kind of an ass Bunter was. But it transpired that they still had something to learn about their Bunter. Nobody had been aware previously that he was this particular kind of an ass. It seemed that there was always something fresh to learn about the Owl of the Remove. Bunter as a boxer—Bunter as a champion with the gloves—made the Removites fairly howl.

So when Bunter rolled into the Rag that evening he was greeted vociferously and hilariously.

"Battling Bunter!" sobbed Bob Cherry.

"The Game Porpoise!" chuckled Smithy.

"The Greyfriars Pet!" chortled Peter Todd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What next, Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton, wiping his eyes.

Billy Bunter gazed at the Removites. He gazed at them with lofty contempt. His very spectacles gleamed with scorn.

"You can cackle!" he said.

"Thanks, we will! Ha, ha, ha!"

"You'll laugh in a different style when I begin on you!" said Bunter darkly.

"Will the beginfulness be terrific, my esteemed ludicrous Bunter?"

"You wait and see," said Bunter. "I've stood all the cheek I'm going to stand from this cheeky Form. I'm thrashing you on Wednesday, Bob Cherry."

"Help!"

"Thrashing you within an inch of your life!" said Bunter impressively.

"You won't let me off?" moaned Bob.

"Never!"

"Mercy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I offered to let you off once," said Bunter. "You refused. That did it. You're for it now. And after I've licked you I'm going to lick Wharton."

"Poor little me?" ejaculated the captain of the Remove.

"Yes. After you, Bull."

"Me, too!" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"And then Nugent."

"Oh, dear!" gasped Nugent.

"And then Inky," said Bunter. "The lot of you, one after another. Then you, Toddy."

"Save me!" gasped Peter Todd.

"Then you, Ogilvy——"

"Spare me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You kicked up a fuss about my borrowing your bike," said Bunter. "I'm sorry, but you're for it. Make up your mind to it."

Ogilvy wept.

"I've got two or three more fellows on the list," said Bunter, with a ferocious blink at the Removites. "I'm beginning with Bob Cherry on Wednesday. I hope he won't have to be taken away in an ambulance."

"Phew!"

"Bravo, Battling Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Isn't he a nice lad?" said Peter Todd. "Wouldn't he be jolly if he could really

knock fellows about? How lucky he only fancies he can."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's all you know," said Bunter, with a lofty sneer. "It may interest you to hear that Battling Benson says I'm the aptest pupil he has ever had."

"Has he ever had any others?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He says I've got a drive with the left that would surprise any old prizefighter."

"What did he charge you for that?"

"I've knocked him down in practice."

"You've knocked down that old pug?" roared Bob Cherry.

"Yes." Bunter grinned complacently.

"He stood up to me all he could, but I was too much for him. I knocked him spinning."

"He must have charged extra for that," said Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can jeer," said Bunter. "I know what I know, and I know what I can do. You can beg on your bended knees, now, Bob Cherry, and I won't let you off. You're for it."

And Bunter shook a fat and admonitory forefinger at Bob Cherry, and rolled out of the Rag, turning his podgy back contemptuously on the hilarious Remove.

Bob Cherry wiped his eyes.

"Jevver hear of such a born idiot?" he inquired.

"Never!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Well, hardly ever!" chuckled Toddy.

"That old pug is pulling Bunter's leg, of course," remarked the Bounder. "He's hard up, and he's willing to lead the fat duffer on by the nose so long as Bunter will pay fees to be made a fool of."

"Pulling his own leg, too, if he thinks he is going to get any fees out of Bunter," said Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors yelled again. Bunter being in his usual impecunious state, it was fairly clear that he was getting the boxing instruction "on the nod." No doubt Mr. Benson, knowing that Bunter belonged to a big

Holiday Joys—4.



TREASURE HUNTING!

IN the dark caves beneath the cliff,
Rare prospect of adventure is;
Where smuggling men had many a tiff
Back in the bygone centuries:
They say that old oak chests lie hid
Containing golden treasure;
The ill-got gains of Captain Kidd—
Locate them at your leisure!

Whether the tale be false or true,
It claims investigation;
We sally forth, a cheery crew,
Intent on exploration.
We carry lantern, spade, and pick,
Our party numbers twenty;
We fondly hope to "get rich quick,"
By finding spoils in plenty!

"How shall I spend a thousand pounds?"
Soliloquises Bunter;
A thousand! what a lot it sounds
To every treasure-hunter!
And so we dream our golden dreams,
And dig with vim and vigour;
The light from swinging lanterns gleams
On every crouching figure.

But though we dig with might and main,
Until our arms are aching;
No golden harvest do we gain,
Our labours we're forsaking.
The only "treasure" we unearth
After our toil and trouble,
Is an old sea-boot, which is worth
No more than seaside rubble!

school, considered that his money was safe, and was piling up a considerable bill for the Owl of the Remove.

If he was pulling Bunter's leg to the extent of letting Bunter knock him about, and knock him down, there was no doubt that he was going to charge Bunter for that satisfaction. Whether he would ever receive the sums he charged was a more doubtful matter. But, as yet, Mr. Benson was in blissful ignorance of that.

There was no doubt that it was easy for the unscrupulous Battler to pull Bunter's fat leg. Only flattery was needed—it was only necessary to play up to Bunter's egregious vanity and fatuousness. The Battler had earned money in harder ways than that, in his time.

Perhaps he could not afford to be particular. Perhaps he was not a particular gentleman, anyway. At all events, there was no doubt that he was fooling Bunter to the top of his bent, and that the fatuous Owl believed he was, by this time, more than a match for the old pugilist himself.

Obviously, Bunter was now looking forward to Wednesday's combat with complete confidence. It was not to be the terrific licking he had at first anticipated. It was to be the first of a series of sweeping fistical victories, which were to land Bunter in his proper place—as boxing champion of the Remove.

Naturally, in the circumstances, William George Bunter was disposed to swank.

He walked away from the Rag with his fat little nose in the air, already feeling monarch of all he surveyed.

He left the Remove roaring.

Of all the jests that ever had been jested, as Bob Cherry remarked, Battling Bunter was the best. Battling Bunter was a scream—a real shriek. And the Remove fellows laughed till they almost cried over Battling Bunter.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER Bunter the Bully!

SKINNER was responsible for the next development.

Skinner of the Remove was a humorist.

Sometimes Skinner's little jokes did not find favour in the Form; they were not always good-natured, and sometimes they led to Skinner finding his head in chancery, or held under a flowing tap.

But on this occasion the whole Remove rallied round Skinner like one man. It was passed, *nem con.*, that Skinner's wheeze was the goods.

Why, Skinner wanted to know, should Mr. Benson have the sole pleasure of pulling Bunter's egregious leg? Why shouldn't the Remove share that entertainment with the battered gentleman at Courtfield?

The Removites agreed that there was no reason why they shouldn't. And they did.

Bunter, of course, fell into the trap with his eyes open. Bunter could always be relied upon to take the bait like a gudgeon.

In his firm and fixed belief in the wonderful development of his boxing powers, Bunter was already growing lofty and domineering in his manner. That pleasant development of Bunter's fascinating character made Skinner's scheme easy.

But for Skinner's scheme, Bunter's new manners and customs would probably have found a rapid cure, for in point of fact there was not a fellow in the Remove who could not have licked Bunter with one hand tied behind his back. Skinner's scheme came in time to save Bunter from learning the unpleasant truth on that subject.

"Don't shove!" snapped Bunter, as Skinner pushed against him in the Remove passage. "Do you want a licking?"

Skinner assumed a look of alarm.

"Keep off!" he exclaimed.

He backed away hurriedly.

Bunter grinned.

"You're too cheeky, Skinner," he said loftily.

"Sorry, Bunter," said Skinner meekly.

"I—I—I wouldn't offend you for worlds. Don't hit me, old chap."

"I've a jolly good mind to knock you along the passage!" said Bunter, his courage expanding as Skinner backed off with a scared look. Bunter was always brave as a lion when there was no danger. And to judge by Skinner's looks, there was

no danger now. Harold Skinner was quite a creditable member of the Remove Dramatic Society, and he played his part well.

"I—I'll call for help!" gasped Skinner.

"Yah! Funk!"

"I'm not a funk," said Skinner indignantly. "But I'm not going to tackle a fellow who can knock out prizefighters."

Bunter purred.

"Well, mind your p's and q's, that's all," he said. "I'm not taking any back-chat from you, Skinner, or anybody else."

"Very well, Bunter," said Skinner meekly.

Billy Bunter swaggered down the passage in a state of great elation. Bolsover major was lounging by the stairs.

"Get out of the way!" rapped Bunter.

Bolsover major gave him a look. For a moment, the Owl of the Remove quailed. Bolsover was a hard and heavy hitter, and his temper was not good. But the next moment Bolsover, as if remembering something, jumped back.

"Keep off, Bunter!" he exclaimed, in alarm.

"You've been jolly cheeky to me a lot of times, Bolsover," said Bunter, full of courage now. "You're a bully."

"Sorry, Bunter," said Bolsover major meekly.

"I've a jolly good mind to lick you."

"Please let me off."

"Take that!" said Bunter, in a bullying tone.

And he gave Bolsover major a shove, and walked past him, with his fat nose in the air.

For a moment Bolsover major clenched his hands. Billy Bunter never knew how near he was, at that moment, to being lifted off his feet by a drive of Bolsover's right. But the burly Removite remembered the rag, and Bunter passed him unabashed.

The Owl of the Remove rolled into No. 1 Study. Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent were at tea there.

"Anybody ask you here, Bunter?" inquired the captain of the Remove.

"No!" snapped Bunter.

"Then shut the door after you."



Bob Cherry was entering the gym, with Harry Wharton on one side of him and Johnny Bull on the other. They were holding his arms, and apparently helping along his slow and reluctant feet. "Buck up!" chortled Bunter derisively. "It's only a licking!" (See Chapter 10.)

"I've come to tea," said Bunter.

"Ask next door."

"I've come to tea here," said Bunter, pulling a chair up to the table, "and I don't want any cheek. I never stand cheek."

"Oh!"

"If you want a licking, say so. If not, you'd better be civil."

"Phew!"

"I mean it," said Bunter, with a truculent glare at the occupants of No. 1 Study. "I've just cuffed Bolsover major for cheek——"

"Oh, my hat!"

"And I'll start in and mop up this study at a moment's notice. Now then, you needn't grin at Nugent, Wharton—this isn't a laughing matter."

"Isn't it?" said the captain of the Remove. "My mistake."

"I've said I don't want any cheek!" roared Bunter. "Now then, do I stay to tea or don't I?"

"Please stay to tea, Bunter!" said the captain of the Remove meekly.

"Oh, do!" implored Nugent.

Bunter sat down victoriously.

He had tea in No. 1 Study—and he made a good tea of it. More and more was Bunter satisfied with himself and his new stunt. He only wished that he had taken up boxing seriously before. It was turning out better than he had dreamed. Bullying fellows, like Bolsover major, sometimes asked themselves to tea with timid juniors who did not care to argue the point with them. It was Bunter's turn now.

Instead of being a hanger-on, dodging into a study at tea-time, warily prepared to dodge out again if the owner reached for a loaf or a cushion, Battling Bunter could now, if he liked, walk into any study and have his own way by the sheer terror of his glance. It was new, and surprising, and very pleasing. No more would the grub-hunter be kicked out of studies. He would be asked to stay, in fear and trembling. It was really a glorious prospect.

Wharton and Nugent looked at one another, after Bunter had gone.

"Nice boy!" grinned Nugent.

“Ripping!”

“Bunter’s improving. But how can he be ass enough to swallow it?”

Wharton shook his head.

“Ask me another,” he said. “I give that one up.”

There was no doubt that Bunter was swallowing it whole. There was nothing surprising in it, from Bunter’s point of view. He had set out to become the terror of the Remove. He had become the terror of the Remove. That was all there was about it.

Bunter had his faults—indeed, their name was legion. But he had never figured as a bully. His opportunities in that line had been small. Now a new and delightful side of his fascinating character came to light—brought to light by Skinner’s wheeze, to which all the Remove were playing up.

Bunter was developing into a bully.

In the dormitory that night he ordered Peter Todd to take his boots off. Peter gave him an astonished glare for a second. The next moment he dropped humbly on his knees and unlaced Bunter’s boots.

Bunter gave him a shove with his foot, by way of thanks. Peter rolled over on his back.

“Why, you—you——” he gasped.

“Shut up!” snapped Bunter.

And Peter Todd shut up. It was agreed in the Remove that the jest should go on till Wednesday. But Peter wondered a little whether his patience would hold out so long.

“Poor old Toddy!” said Skinner.

“You’ll have to mind your p’s and q’s in No. 7 now.”

Bunter sniffed.

“You’ll all have to mind your p’s and q’s now,” he said. “I don’t mean to stand any rot from any of you. What are you laughing at, Snoop?”

“Eh? Nothing,” said Snoop.

“I’ll give you something to laugh at,” said Bunter.

“I—I say——”

Billy Bunter charged at Snoop. Sidney James Snoop fled for his life, with Bunter in pursuit.

“Keep him off!” shrieked Snoop.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

Less than a week before, Billy Bunter had been chased up and down the dormitory. Now he was the chaser instead of the chasee, so to speak. It was an exhilarating change.

Crash!

Wingate of the Sixth stepped in, and Snoop collided with him. The captain of Greyfriars grasped Snoop by the shoulder.

“You young ass! Where are you running to?” he demanded gruffly. “What are you scudding about the dormitory for?”

“Bunter’s after me,” gasped Snoop.

Wingate stared at him.

“Bunter! Are you afraid of that fat duffer?”

“Awfully!”

“Looks like it, doesn’t it?” grinned Bunter. “But it’s all right, Snoop—I’ll let you off. You’re not worth licking.”

Wingate stared at Bunter, and then at the grinning Removites.

“What’s this game?” he asked.

But nobody enlightened Wingate as to what the game was. Bunter, indeed, could not have enlightened him. Bunter the Bully was taking himself quite seriously.

Bunter sat up in bed when the prefect was gone.

“I say, you fellows.”

“Hallo, hallo, hallo!”

“When I’ve licked Bob Cherry on Wednesday——”

“When!” murmured Bob.

“The whenfulness is terrific.”

“Don’t interrupt me!” roared Bunter.

“It’s cheeky.”

“Oh, my hat!”

“Don’t cheek him, you fellows,” gasped Skinner. “Don’t make him angry.”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“When I’ve licked Bob Cherry on Wednesday,” went on Bunter, “I’m going to lick Wharton. Then there will be a new election for captain of the Remove. I shall put up for the job. I shall expect an unanimous vote for me. Any fellow who doesn’t vote for me will be thrashed.”

“Great pip!”

“I’m the man you want, if you only knew it,” said Bunter. “You’re going to



Bob's hands were trembling to such an extent that he seemed unable to don the gloves without assistance. Wharton helped him on with them. Bunter grinned cheerily. With an adversary in this state of funk, his task was even easier than he had anticipated! (See Chapter 10.)

have me, anyhow, whether you like it or not. Got that?"

"Yes, sir," said Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's all," said Bunter. "Now shut up—I want to go to sleep. Don't talk! I won't have any talk in this dormitory after lights out."

And Battling Bunter laid his head on his pillow in a mood of complete contentment. Bunter was cock of the walk in the Remove at last—as he realised that he ought to have been long ago. He felt that that was exactly as it should be—like the king coming into his own again, as it were. And he snored cheerily, and dreamed a happy dream of William George Bunter being hailed by a submissive Form as captain of the Remove.

THE NINTH CHAPTER

The Day!

"WEDNESDAY——"

"The day of doom!"

"The doomfulness is terrific."

And the Famous Five chuckled.

The great day had arrived, when William George Bunter, with the gloves on, was to stand up to Robert Cherry in the gym., and to bestow upon him such a licking as would break all Greyfriars records.

Bunter, in putting off the day of reckoning, had in the first place counted upon Bob Cherry's wrath being dissipated by the lapse of time.

As a matter of fact, he had calculated well.

Bob had almost forgotten, by this time,

Bunter's original offence, and though he had not changed his opinion that Bunter ought to be licked for bagging his theatre ticket, probably he would not have taken the trouble to lick him. Bob Cherry seldom let the sun go down on his wrath, and it was quite impossible for him to remain wrathful for a whole week.

But it was no longer Bob who was to decide the matter.

Bunter was keen on combat.

Had Bob Cherry desired ever so earnestly to let the matter drop, Billy Bunter would not have assented.

Bunter was out for scalps, so to speak.

Skinner's jest, in which all the Remove had played up to pull Bunter's fatuous leg, had had its effect.

Not the slightest doubt troubled Bunter. Remove fellows allowed him to slang them, to cheek them, to blink at them scornfully. It never even occurred to Bunter's obtuse brain that his leg was being pulled, and that a great surprise awaited him on Wednesday.

Bob Cherry, entering cheerily into the joke, had allowed himself to betray uneasiness in Bunter's presence, and once he had even asked Bunter whether he didn't think, after all, that he had better go home and see his pater that Wednesday.

To which Bunter had replied that the fight was coming off on Wednesday, and that Bob was "for it" without mercy.

So Bunter was looking forward to Wednesday as keenly as any other fellow in the Lower Fourth.

The other fellows were looking forward to entertainment. Bunter was anticipating victory.

Bob was the champion fighting-man of the Remove. Once Bob was thoroughly licked, Bunter's position was assured. There would be nothing to prevent Bunter from "spreading" himself to his fat heart's content, and displaying his delightful character in all its fascinating charm. Fellows who had kicked him, and called him by uncomplimentary names, were to tremble at his frown. No feed in the Remove would be complete without Bunter. Not a Remove man would ever venture to say him nay

Billy Bunter carried his fat little nose high in the air these days. It was clear—to Bunter, at least—that he was the goods!

His confidence was unbounded. He had taken his last lesson from Mr. Benson—and in a round or two with that battered gentleman he had had decidedly the better of it.

Certainly, any fellow but Bunter might have felt surprised at getting the better of a hefty old professional "pug."

But there was nothing surprising in it to Bunter. It was simply the natural development of his great abilities. Merely that and nothing more. He had always known that he would be a crack boxer if he deigned to take the trouble. Now he had taken the trouble.

The way the Remove knuckled under to him was proof positive that they recognised, and dreaded, his wonderful prowess. At least, it was proof positive to Bunter. He did not yet know that he was the happy victim of a jape. That knowledge was to come later.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, here he is!" said Bob Cherry, as the Famous Five strolled in the quad, after breakfast on Wednesday morning. "Mind your eye, you fellows. Respect your betters."

The juniors chuckled. Bunter rolled up to them with a frown. He did not see why the fellows should chuckle at the sight of him. Certainly, he could not see himself swanking with his fat little nose in the air. Had he been able to see himself as others saw him, no doubt he would have seen reason for chuckling.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Good-morning, old chap!" said Bob Cherry meekly.

Bunter grinned.

"Jolly civil all of a sudden, what?" he said. "Well, it won't save your bacon. You're for it."

"You're not letting me off?"

"No!" said Bunter firmly.

Bob Cherry gave a deep sigh.

"Half-past three in the gym.," said Bunter.

Sports Day at Greyfriars



VERNON-SMITH WINS
THE LONG JUMP!



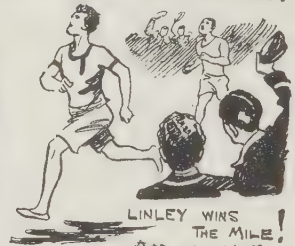
THE HURDLES!



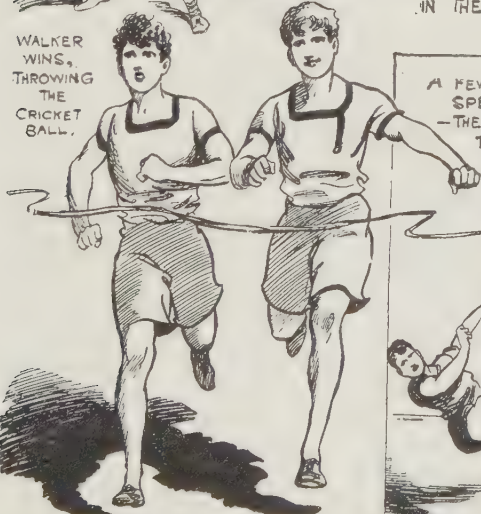
WALKER
WINS,
THROWING
THE
CRICKET
BALL.



BILLY GETS INTO DIFFICULTIES
IN THE OBSTACLE RACE!



LINLEY WINS
THE MILE!



A DEAD HEAT IN THE 100 YARDS
BETWEEN BOB CHERRY AND
HARRY WHARTON.

A FEW OF THE
SPECTATORS —
— THE SISTERS,
THE COUSINS,
& THE AUNTS!



THE HIGH JUMP!



C.H. Chapman

They cater for all tastes at Greyfriars School on Sports Day!

"I—I'll try to remember. But if I forget——"

Bunter sneered.

"If you funk it, Cherry, I shall come after you. You may as well stand up to it like a man. You've got to have it."

"Suppose I apologise?" asked Bob gravely.

"I refuse to accept any apology till I've licked you. You've wanted a thrashing long enough. Now you're going to get it."

"Nothing will stop you?"

"Nothing."

"Oh, dear!" sighed Bob Cherry. "Well, if I'm for it, I'll do my best, Bunter. Fellow can't do more."

"Your best won't help you much," said Bunter scornfully. "If you'd seen the way I handled Benson yesterday, you'd be shaking in your shoes."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I fairly knocked him spinning," said Bunter. "He simply hadn't an earthly. And he's an old pugilist—he's earned his living in the ring. And I knocked him about just as I pleased. It's Benson I want to speak to you fellows about. I owe him some money."

"That's all right," said Nugent. "You owe everybody money. Why shouldn't Benson be owed some, too?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't want any cheek!" roared Bunter.

"Sorry, my lord."

"I arranged to give him half-a-guinea a lesson," said Bunter. "But there's nothing mean about me. I'm paying the man handsomely. Not that he's done such a jolly lot for me, if it comes to that—I've simply developed my natural powers. Still, I'm not the fellow to be mean. I told him I'd put in a bit extra, if I got into form to knock him out. That was to make him put his beef into it, you know. I'm making it a total of five guineas for him—since I've knocked him out."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Famous Five involuntarily.

If they had wondered how Bunter had succeeded in knocking out the old pug, they

would have been enlightened now. Double pay for being knocked out was quite good enough for Mr. Benson. Probably Bunter's knocks had not hurt him much.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at," said Bunter crossly. "Look here, shut up! I don't allow fellows to laugh at me. Do you want me to take the lot of you by the scruff of your necks, and bang your heads together? You're asking for it."

The chums of the Remove became grave again—with some difficulty.

"About that five guineas," went on Bunter. "I've been disappointed about a postal order. I'm short of money."

"Not really?"

"Yes, really. I shall want you fellows to lend me the tin."

"The wantfulness will be terrific."

"I'm relying on you for it," said Bunter calmly. "I've got to pay Benson this week. If you refuse me this little service, I shall take it as meaning that you want trouble."

"And what will happen then?" asked Harry Wharton gravely.

"See what happens to Bob Cherry this afternoon, and you'll know," said Bunter disdainfully.

And he rolled away.

"Well, my hat!" said Bob. "If Bunter were really the terror he fancies he is, what a nice chap he would be to be at school with!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But perhaps the dear lad will have a bit of a surprise this afternoon," chuckled Bob.

"The surprisingness will be terrific."

But Bunter had no doubts—as yet. For the first time in his fat career, Billy Bunter was looking forward to a fight with keen anticipation. He expected to polish off Bob Cherry in a couple of rounds. Harry Wharton was to follow—Bunter had decided that he might as well handle the captain of the Remove while he was on the job. That would show the Greyfriars Remove who was who, and what was what. This was to be a great day for Bunter.

It was "der Tag!" Like the Huns before the Great War, Bunter was looking forward to "the Day!" And—though Bunter did not yet know it—the result was to be similar also.

THE TENTH CHAPTER

The Great Fight!

"ROLL up!"

"This way for the show!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Remove fellows seemed in great spirits that afternoon. They crowded into the gym. for the great combat.

Bunter was there early, with his second, Peter Todd. Peter wore a smiling face. Perhaps he was smiling in anticipation of a great victory for a member of No. 7 Study. Bunter supposed so. But possibly Peter was smiling for other reasons.

The Remove rolled up to a man, to witness the fray. Fellows of other Forms, who had heard of it, came in to see the combat. Bunter had a good audience, and he smirked with satisfaction as he saw the fellows crowding into the gym. The more the merrier, was Bunter's opinion. He would have liked all Greyfriars to be present, to witness his deeds of derring-do.

When the fight had first been arranged for Wednesday afternoon, no one had expected to see Bunter turn up in the gym.—unless he was carried there. Fellows had been prepared to head him off if he attempted to sneak out of gates, and to root him out if he concealed his fat person in a trunk in the box-room. But circumstances had changed since then. Now it was Bunter who was early on the scene, and Bob Cherry who was late. At half-past three, the Owl of the Remove was ready, and Bob had not arrived.

Lord Mauleverer, who was to keep time, looked at his watch and smiled.

"Cherry's late!" he said.

Bunter grinned.

"Some of you fellows go and root him out," he said. "He's hiding somewhere."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here he comes!" called out Ogilvy.

Bunter blinked round.

Bob Cherry was entering the gym., with Harry Wharton on one side of him, and Johnny Bull on the other. They were holding his arms, and apparently helping along his slow and reluctant feet.

"He, he, he!" chortled Bunter.

"Buck up, Bob," said Wharton encouragingly. "After all, it's only a licking."

"Oh, dear!" mumbled Bob.

"Courage, old man!" said Johnny Bull.

"Face the esteemed music manfully," urged Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"That's all very well for you fellows," groaned Bob Cherry. "But you haven't got to face Bunter."

"You can't back out now, Bob," said Frank Nugent gravely. "You're for it, old man."

Bob Cherry stopped. His heart seemed to fail him as he drew near the crowded ring, where Bunter awaited him.

"Come on!" urged Wharton.

"I—I—I think I—I—" stammered Bob.

"Oh, come on!"

And with a jerk, Bob Cherry's chums landed him in the ring, and the grinning crowd of juniors closed round him.

"Buck up," chortled Bunter derisively. "Have a little pluck, Cherry. It's only a licking. You'll be counted out in the second round."

"Oh, dear!"

"Be a man!" said Bunter scornfully.

"Like me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Off with your jacket, Cherry!" roared Bolsover major. "Here's the gloves."

Bob Cherry fumbled with his jacket. Wharton helped him off with it, and handed him the gloves.

Bob's hands were trembling to such an extent that he seemed unable to don the gloves without assistance. Wharton helped him on with them.

Bunter was grinning cheerily. With an adversary in this state of funk, his task was even easier than he had anticipated.

"Ready?" asked Lord Mauleverer. "Seconds out of the ring! Pull yourself together, Cherry, old bean."



"Go it, Bunter!" roared the Removites. Bunter "went it." He charged at Bob Cherry, his fat fists thrashing the air. Bob Cherry backed round the ring, with Bunter following him up—still thrashing the air with his fists! "You funky rotter, stand up to it!" he spluttered. (See Chapter 10.)

"Oh, dear!"

"Come on, you funk!" hooted Bunter contemptuously.

Bob Cherry faced his adversary, his knees knocking together. Bunter handed his spectacles to Peter Todd, and blinked at Bob Cherry, with a truculent blink.

"Time!"

"Go it, Bunter!" roared the Removites.

Bunter went it.

He charged at Bob Cherry, his fat fists thrashing the air. Bunter's idea was that he was going to finish the fellow off with one terrific drive—just as he had knocked out Mr. Benson.

Bob Cherry jumped back hastily.

He backed round the ring, with Bunter

following him up, still thrashing the air with his fists.

Whether the Owl of the Removite had learned to box or not, he was still as short of wind as in the days before he had developed into Battling Bunter. He was soon gasping, with bellows to mend.

"You funky rotter, stand up to it!" he spluttered.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"After him, Bunter!"

"Go it!"

"Bravo, Battling Bunter!"

Bunter rushed on valorously. But his adversary dodged him somehow, and still backed off.

That terrific finishing drive had not been

administered. Bunter stopped in the ring, panting for breath.

"Gooorrrgh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Stand up to it, you funk!"

"Time!" rapped out Lord Mauleverer.

Bunter sank on his second's knee. He wanted a rest, after all the strenuous exercise he had put in in the ring.

"Jevver see such a rotten funk, Toddy?" he gasped.

Toddy chortled.

"I can't get near enough to the beast to hit him," said Bunter. "Wait till I do, that's all. I'm going to smash him."

"Poor old Bob!" murmured Toddy.

"I'm going to smash his nose right in," said Bunter ferociously. "One drive will do the business for him, as soon as I get at him. Funking won't save him, I can tell you."

"Time!"

Bunter rolled up again promptly. But Bob Cherry had to be pushed into the ring by his second.

Bunter attacked ferociously.

This time Bob Cherry seemed unable to dodge. Bunter got to close quarters, and his boxing-glove tapped on Bob's chest. It was not a hard tap, but it had a surprising effect on Bob. He went down with a bump.

"Man down!" chuckled Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Get up, you funk!" roared Bunter.

Bob Cherry lay and groaned.

"Gerrup! You're not licked yet."

Groan!

"I tell you——"

Groan!

"Count him out!" jeered Bunter.

Lord Mauleverer was counting, keeping his face as serious as he could. The crowd of juniors were yelling with laughter.

"One—two—three—four—five—six——"

"Buck up, Bob!" called out Wharton.

"He's done," grinned Bunter. "Hardly worth while counting him out. You next, Wharton."

"Seven—eight——" went on Lord Mauleverer.

"Can't you get up, Cherry?"

Groan!

"Nine!" said the timekeeper.

Bob Cherry rose to his feet. He seemed to rise without much effort, too.

"Just in time!" sneered Bunter.

The combat was resumed. Bunter rushed on to give the knock-out blow.

This time Bob Cherry did not back away, neither did he bump down under the truculent attack of Battling Bunter. Perhaps he considered that he had pulled Battling Bunter's egregious leg long enough.

He stood up to the attack with a smiling face.

Bunter's fat arms thrashed the air like the sails of a windmill. He was putting all his beef into it. His fat face was red with exertion, and he was gasping and panting for breath. But somehow—Bunter could not understand how—his terrific onslaught did not penetrate Bob Cherry's defence.

Bob did not seem to be funkng now. Indeed, he was laughing. He stalled off the attack without an effort occasionally giving Bunter a gentle tap on the chest if he got too near.

The Owl of the Remove had bellows to mend with a vengeance now. His breathing came in stertorous gasps. Perspiration streamed down his podgy face. The Removites roared with merriment, as Bunter persistently attacked, with as much success as would have fallen to his lot had he been attacking a stone wall.

"Time!"

The call came in time to save William George Bunter from collapsing under the stress of his own exertions.

He dropped on Toddy's knee for a rest with a gasp that sounded like air escaping from a badly-punctured tyre.

"Grooooooooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll finish him off in the third round!" gasped Bunter.

"Oh, do," said Peter.

"Think I can't, you ass?"

"Hem!"

"He hasn't touched me yet."

"Perhaps he didn't want to," suggested Peter blandly.

"You silly chump!"

"Hem!"

"If you give me any cheek, Toddy, I'll thrash you next, instead of Wharton."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Peter.

"Time!" chortled Lord Mauleverer.

Bunter tottered into the ring. He was still confident, and still game. But there was no doubt that his wind was short.

Bob Cherry came on cheerily, greatly to Bunter's surprise. Still more to Bunter's surprise, he received a tap on his fat little nose that made him totter back.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter.



Bob went down with a bump. "Count him out!" jeered Bunter. Lord Mauleverer was counting, keeping his face as serious as he could. The crowd of juniors were yelling with laughter. (See Chapter 10.)

A GREYFRIARS "RAG."



STRANGELY enough, the porter of Greyfriars School, in the days when George the Third was King, bore the same name as the present guardian of the School gates—Gosling. Between him and the village beadle of Friardale bitter rivalry existed. Many a little disagreement in public between the twain had enlivened the village.

But never had the Greyfriars boys been provided with such a spectacle, and opportunity for a joyous jape, as when the two actually came to blows in public and the beadle exercised his authority by promptly clamping the School porter in the massive wooden stocks which adorned the old marketplace!

With outthrust legs locked between the ponderous boards, almost exploding with amazed wrath, Gosling struggled for speech. With the key of the stocks poised in extended, podgy fingers, the beadle began to feel rather nervous at what he had done. His blown-up pomposity oozed rapidly away, and vanished completely as a troop of Greyfriars boys bore down the village street, obviously intent on rescuing their porter.

The boys ploughed through the laughing villagers and made straight for the troubled beadle. The key of the stocks was snatched from his fat hand, and—so swiftly was it done he thought he had been Black Magic'd there—the beadle found himself where a moment before Gosling had been!

Pushing the rescued porter before them, pausing only to deposit a snowball or two in the region of the stocks and to fling away the key, the boys hurriedly departed for the School—where, an hour later, the beadle wended his way. All sorts of rumours gained credence concerning his interview with the Head.

But as the ringleaders in the escapade were never discovered, nor any really serious effort made by the School authorities to satisfy the beadle's impassioned craving for vengeance, it was presumed the Head of Greyfriars wisely rested content to treat the whole affair as a light-hearted "rag!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tap!

"Yaroooooh!"

The juniors shrieked.

The taps on Bunter's nose were not very hard; but they were harder than Bunter liked. He jumped back promptly, and as Bob followed him up he jumped back again. Bunter proceeded to circumnavigate the ring in a series of backward jumps, while the onlookers yelled.

Tap!

"Yooooop!"

Bump!

Bunter sat down.

He sat and blinked, in great amazement. This was not at all according to programme.

"Ow! wow! wow!" spluttered Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lord Mauleverer began to count.

"One, two, three, four, five——"

Bunter staggered up again. He fairly hurled himself at Bob Cherry

Tap!

Bump!

Bunter sat down again.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The onlookers were almost in convulsions by this time. Battling Bunter had been expected to be funny. He was turning out a real shriek.

"Go it, Bunter!"

"Up again, old fat bean!"

"Up and at him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter picked himself up somehow. Even upon the almost impenetrable brain of William George Bunter, it was slowly dawning that his leg had been pulled. But he made one more effort. He gasped, and spluttered, and hurled himself at Bob Cherry—hurling himself fairly on a boxing-glove that met him with a jolt.

Bump!

Once more Bunter sat down.

This time he continued to sit.

"Go it, Bunter!" shrieked the Removites.

"Up again, old man."

But Bunter did not get up. He sat and



Bunter sat and gasped and blinked. He was not a boxing champion. He realised it now! At last he was in possession of the joke that had entertained the Remove for days. (See Chapter 10.)

gasped and blinked. His fat leg had been pulled. He was not a boxing champion. He realised it now. He was now in possession of the joke that had entertained the Remove for days. But he found no entertainment in it.

"Ow! Beasts!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gimme my spectacles! Toddy, you beast—gimme my specs."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Finished?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Beast!"

"You haven't licked me yet."

"I—I'm letting you off! Ow!"

"But am I letting you off?" chuckled Bob. "That's the question."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter picked himself up at last, and jammed his spectacles on his fat little nose. He blinked round with an infuriated blink at the shrieking juniors.

"I—I say, you fellows, I—I—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on, Bunter!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Ow! Keep off, you beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry made a move—enough for Bunter. He charged at the grinning ring of Removes, and burst his way through.

"Bunter—"

"Stop!"

"Hi!"

"Come back, Battling Bunter!"

"You're not finished yet!"

But Battling Bunter knew better. He knew that he was finished. He disappeared from the gym at top speed, leaving the Remove in convulsions.

BATTLING BUNTER was no longer a Battler. He was no longer a bully.

No longer did he swank with his fat little nose in the air. No longer did he dream of filling the post of captain of the Remove.

The jest had run its course, and Bunter was himself again.

All that was left for Bunter was the happy problem of settling his little account with Mr. Benson. And that problem Bunter was left to solve entirely on his own. And for quite a long time afterwards, to set the Remove in a roar it was only necessary to mention "Battling Bunter."

THE END

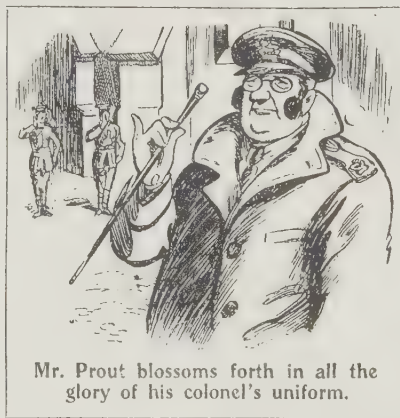
Great doings in BILLY BUNTER'S HOME - Mr. Bunter Puts Down (!) a Carpet!



OUR CADET CORPS IN CAMP!

By **SERGEANT HARRY WHARTON** (Remove Battalion, Greyfriars Cadet Corps)

IT was a proud day for Honorary Colonel Paul Pontifex Prout, Officer Commanding the Greyfriars Cadet Corps, when we went away to camp for our annual training. In the ordinary way, the master of the Fifth is plain Mr. Prout—merely that and nothing more. But when the call to arms is sounded, and the Greyfriars Cadets hold their annual Rally, he blossoms forth in all the glory of his colonel's uniform, and is saluted with great respect by all the lesser ranks. Mr. Prout makes a very imposing figure in uniform—more so than in gown and mortar-board. If he should have his celebrated rifle with him, he makes not only an imposing figure but a terrifying one! Mr. Prout armed with a rifle is as real a peril to the community as an anarchist armed with a bomb. One never knows where the rifle will go off, or where the bullet will find a billet! "Safety First" is the motto of the Greyfriars Cadets, when they see that their Commanding Officer is armed.



Mr. Prout blossoms forth in all the glory of his colonel's uniform.

THE gallant colonel, however, is by no means a duffer at soldiering. He is well versed in matters military, having read, marked, learned, and inwardly digested the various manuals dealing with cadet training. He knows the difference between "forming fours" and "sloping arms," and he has grasped the subtle distinction between "Left wheel!" and "Eyes right!" Moreover, he is very efficient at skirmishing, trench-digging, bayonet practice, and the like. He also knows how to organise and control a camp. There are no flies on Colonel Prout, so to speak—save on one memorable occasion

when a bluebottle alighted on his nose whilst we were "trooping the Colour."

OUR camp this year was in Sussex, not many miles from our rivals of St. Jim's. This being the case, there were a good many "skirmishes" which were not included in the official programme! We encountered Tom Merry & Co. on several occasions, and engaged in friendly warfare—if, indeed, such a thing is possible. Honours were fairly even at the finish.

I HAPPEN to be a sergeant in the Remove Battalion, and my chums Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent are corporals. Hurree Singh once held non-commissioned rank, but he eventually had to revert to the rank of private, owing to his weird and wonderful way of giving orders. He used to say, "Mark the esteemed timefulness!" and "Stand easefully at ease!" Corporal Singh's

quaint rendering of the English language used to send the troops into convulsions; and Colonel Prout considered it "prejudicial to good order and discipline." So the Nabob of Bhanipur had to forfeit his stripes.

MOST of us thoroughly enjoyed our camp manoeuvres. One of the few who failed to do so was Private William George Bunter. Route-marching and skirmishing are rather too strenuous for the corpulent Owl of the Remove. However, Private Bunter thoroughly enjoyed himself in the dry canteen. The slackers of the Remove—Privates Mauleverer, Skinner, and Snoop—were also unhappy in camp; but the majority of us look back upon our annual Rally with the keenest delight.

SCHOOLBOY CELEBRITIES VERSIFIED !

1. *Tom Merry, of the Shell Form, St. Jim's.*

Take a pair of sparkling eyes,
Shining in a handsome face,
Take a mouth that never lies,
Take a body full of grace,
Add to these a pretty wit,
Commanding mien, and noble mind—
You get a boy that's full of grit,
Tom Merry—kindest of the kind !
And yet—he's shown it oft and oft—
The very opposite of soft !

With a foe ; yet knows when to desist !
Harry Wharton—to put it in short—
Is the best of all types—a good sport !

3. *Jimmy Silver, Captain of the Fourth Form, Rookwood.*

Full of fun and full of sense,
His head is great, his heart immense ;
He's known by the best of affectionate
names—
He's called by his schoolmates—" Uncle
James " !

2. *Harry Wharton, Captain of the Re- move Form, Greyfriars.*

He's a most obstinate fellow—
A boy of the old soldier's breed—
Let Bolsover growl and Bull bellow,
Harry Wharton will still keep the lead.
He's learned to control a quick passion,
Yet he knows how to use a quick fist—
He can deal, in most summary fashion

4. *George Alfred Grundy, of the Shell Form, St. Jim's.*

In enterprise and jest,
In tournament and sport,
Competing with the best,
In games of every sort,
You'll find a lout of immense size
Who ne'er succeeds, how'er he tries !
GRUNDY !

THE FAMOUS



FIVE !!!

Frank
Nugent

Johnny
Bull

Harry
Wharton

Hurree
Singh

Bob
Cherry

5. *Horace Coker, of the Fifth Form,
Greyfriars.*

Indeed, there's but one thing to say of you
If Grundy's an idiot, you are two!

6. *Adolphus Smythe, of the Shell Form,
Rookwood.*

Oh, Smythe, beloved! Adolphus dear!
How glossy is your topper!
The head inside is cracked, I fear!
Look out! You'll come a cropper!

7. *Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth
Form, St. Jim's.*

Oh, weally, you know! He's wathah a
swank!
He's plenty of cah in the till at the bank!

He's vewy partic. in the choice of his socks,
But he always will help a poah chap on the
wocks!

8. *Billy Bunter, of the Remove Form,
Greyfriars.*

He cannot help his feeble eyes,
He cannot help his form,
But he can help the tricks and lies,
That make him the butt of the dorm.

9. *Valentine Mornington, of the Fourth
Form, Rookwood.*

A bit of a dandy, a bit of a rake,
A bit of a reckless scamp; yet
A bit of all right! He takes the cake!
He knows "what's what," you bet!

A CONUNDRUM IN VERSE.

Attractive and smart this puzzle will be,
I really think ('twas evolved by me!);
And the person possessing the smartest
brains

Might hit on the answer. This rhyme con-
tains

A name, undoubtedly known to you all,
And popular, too, for it never will pall.
Whose name? A youth whose amazing
whims

Continually amuse the boys of St. Jim's.
He is clever at games, and though slim and
slight,

He's reckoned as quite a luminous light.

He is recognised by seniors, and juniors, too
As a sportsman that's trusted to dare and
to do.

And all declare throughout the school
That he's fine, though he's sometimes a bit
of a fool.

His name is concealed here. Does anyone
guess

The rightful solution? If so, answer "Yes!"
No prize will be offered, I'm sorry to say,
But the keen ones will solve this conundrum
to-day.

May the joy of success now gleam on your
way!

THE SOLUTION.

Attractive and smart this puzzle will be,
I really think ('twas evolved by me!);
And the person possessing the smartest
brains

Might hit on the answer. This rhyme con-
tains

A name, undoubtedly known to you all,
And popular, too; for it never will pall.
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to-day.

HAVE WE LIVED BEFORE?

A Lively Outbreak by the Humorist of St. Jim's—
the Great Monty Lowther!

I DON'T propose to discuss this subject seriously. It is a question which can never be satisfactorily answered, least of all by a schoolboy.

I admit, however, that it is just possible that we may have had a previous existence in some remote, far-back age when the world was young. If this is so, we have, at any rate, forgotten what our first innings on earth was like! I personally have no recollection of being an Ancient Briton, painted with woad and garbed in goat-skins; though, of course, I might have been one. Nor can I remember taking a hand in the Siege of Calais, or in chasing the Spanish Armada!

Those who have studied these things, and believe in them, declare that Napoleon Buonaparte was a resurrected Julius Cæsar. Certainly there is a marked similarity between these two mighty men. Both were ambitious, and chock-full of energy; and both were great warriors and leaders of men.

Cases of this sort, where people have a likeness to those who lived long ago, are numerous. You even find them at St. Jim's; and that is my reason for writing this article.

I have been studying certain fellows here, and trying to fit them into the niches they would have occupied in past ages had they been alive. Of course, this is pure specula-

tion on my part, and I don't expect anybody to take me seriously. But then, nobody ever does!

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the grandiose swell of St. Jim's, if he had a previous existence, was probably Beau Brummel, the dandy of Regency days. I have heard Gussy confess to a sneaking regard for Brummel's smartness and elegance; and he often says he wishes he had been alive then, when male attire was so much more picturesque. Perhaps he was!

Fatty Wynn fits quite easily into the scheme of things. Look back through the pages of history, and whom does Fatty remind you of? The plump and genial Falstaff, without a doubt! I suggested to Fatty that he was a re-born Falstaff, but he would have none of it. He is certain he did not live in the spacious days of old; but he wishes he had done so.

"They knew how to eat in those days!" declared Fatty, with a sigh. "None of your miserable snacks which we now have three times a day, and

flatteringly call 'meals'; but big banquets and bumper celebrations! I was born about three hundred years too late!"

Big George Darrell—"The Fighting Perfect"—is possibly the duplicate of Tom Sayers, the lion-hearted prizefighter of the past. If I suggested this to Darrell he would



Monty Lowther thinks the role of King's Jester suited him very well!

probably laugh to scorn the notion that he is Tom Sayers come to life again; but "there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy."

I will not go so far as to suggest that Gerald Knox, the bully of the Sixth, lived in a previous era under the name of Nero, Emperor of Rome. But it cannot be denied that Knox has inherited some of Nero's tyrannical ways.

Tom Merry, I should say, was one of the great leaders of history. He has a natural aptitude for leadership which seems to have been born in him. It is drawing the long bow to suggest that Tom Merry was formerly Sir Walter Raleigh or Sir Francis Drake.

Aubrey Racke was possibly an extremely wealthy landowner in the days of the Inquisition. It is possible he was tortured; his name suggests as much!

Carrying our speculations still farther, the fellow who discovered the laws of gravity, by lying under an apple-tree and studying the fall of a pippin, was probably Bernard Glyn—though in those days he would have been known as Isaac Newton.

And myself? Well, I should imagine that the rôle of King's Jester suited me very well; and, for all I know to the contrary, my merry wit may have sent many a Court into hysterics!

CRICKET GOSSIP OF ROOKWOOD

By GEORGE BULKELEY, Head of Games.

THE most remarkable cricket match ever played on Rookwood's historic ground took place in the summer of 1888. I cannot speak of it as an eyewitness, for there was no George Bulkeley at that time! There was, however, a James Bulkeley—my illustrious pater—and he played a prominent part in this very astonishing match.

"Past versus Present" was the fixture; and the Old Boys brought down a team of giants, which included a couple of County players and a sprinkling of M.C.C. men. They won the toss, and batted all day on a peach of a wicket piling up 420 runs. It was a two-day match. On the second day, the School went in to bat against this formidable total, and they were skittled out like rabbits, 90 runs being all they could muster. So the wise old greybeards who were looking on shook their heads sagely, and confidently predicted an innings victory for the Old Boys.

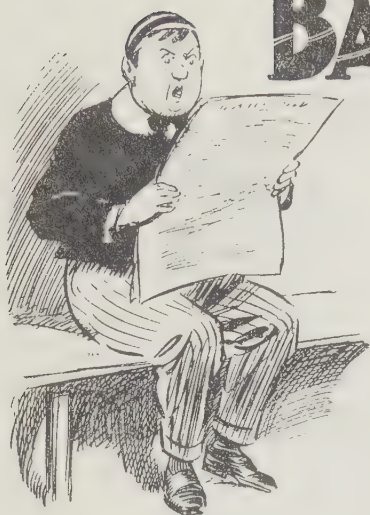
And then the fortunes of the game veered round in sensational fashion. The School took their second "knock," and this time they were not so easily disposed of.

My pater, and a fellow called Forrester, broke the back of the Old Boys' bowling, and helped themselves to a century apiece. Others followed up the good work, and, when the total had been taken to 400, the School audaciously "declared," leaving their opponents only 70 odd runs to get to win. Time was short; and rather than allow the match to fizzle out in a draw, my pater, who skippered the School, made this apparently rash declaration.

You can guess what followed. By means of brilliant bowling, backed up by excellent work in the field—and aided, it must be confessed, by all the luck that was going—the School skittled out their redoubtable opponents in record time. The Old Boys, driven to the wall, made desperate efforts to save the game, and several wickets were thrown away through over-anxiety. Try as they might, they could only muster 64 runs; so that the School snatched a sensational victory on the stroke of time. In celebration of this great achievement, every member of the Rookwood Eleven was presented with a special medal; and my pater still cherishes his among his most treasured possessions.



A PORTRAIT GALLERY OF FOUR-LEGGED "CHUMS."



BAGGY TRIMBLE'S ROMANCE !

By MARTIN CLIFFORD

An Advertisement in the "Wayland Gazette"
leads to the most unexpected results in this
humorous little story.

THE FIRST CHAPTER

Baggy Writes a Letter

"If only I had a girl chum!"

Baggy Trimble spoke wistfully. The Fat Falstaff of the Fourth was reclining on a bench, under the old elms of the quadrangle.

It was a half-holiday, and the St. Jim's fellows were streaming out of gates, in merry parties. The sound of their gay laughter smote upon Baggy Trimble's ears with a jarring effect. And the sight of the picnic hampers which some of the fellows carried served to remind Baggy that he was hungry—his usual state. But it would be no use angling for an invitation to one of the picnics. Nobody wanted Trimble's company. The fat junior was universally avoided. The song, "Nobody Loves Me" would have been very appropriate for Baggy's present plight.

It was not surprising that nobody loved Trimble, or even liked him. He was not a lovable or even a likeable person. Chumming with Trimble was out of the question. Those who had tried the experiment had soon abandoned it in disgust. Trimble was a sneak, and a spy, and several sorts of a worm. And that explained why Baggy, like Eugene Aram in the poem, "sat remote from all."

"If only I had a girl chum!" he repeated to himself. "I'm fed up with fellows! Mean beasts, most of 'em—mean and selfish, greedy and grasping. But girls are different. Wish I could get to know a nice girl—a high-born young lady, of my own class."

Baggy knew very few girls, as a matter of fact. Perhaps this was because very few girls wanted to know Baggy. The few he had met at St. Jim's—D'Arcy's cousin Ethel and Levison's sister Doris, and one or two others—had not been impressed with Trimble. They had given him the cold shoulder, and when he had tried to worm himself into their good graces he had been promptly snubbed.

Yet Baggy would have given a good deal to be on terms of friendship with Cousin Ethel or Doris Levison. They were charming, high-spirited, fun-loving girls—very different from Baggy's cousin Bertha, who attended Burchester High School.

Cousin Bertha was the feminine prototype of Baggy himself. She was plump, and stupid, and greedy, and far from good-looking. Baggy had seen quite a lot of Cousin Bertha during the Vacation, but they had not hit it off at all well. Like does not always respond to like. Baggy and Bertha had quarrelled fiercely over a last remaining slice of plum-cake. Bertha had tweaked Baggy's nose, and Baggy had pulled Bertha's plait. There had been quite a scene, and the cousins had to be dragged apart by a horrified aunt. Baggy had painful recollections of that episode.

And he never wanted to meet Cousin Bertha again.

Baggy pined for a girl chum—but not of Cousin Bertha's type. He pined for some amiable and charming young lady, to whom he could pour out his troubles.

As he reclined on the old oak bench he fell into a reverie, conjuring up visions of the sort of girl he would like to know. She must be young, and sympathetic, and, above all, beautiful. The sort of girl a fellow would be proud to be seen out with.

It was a sheet of newspaper which roused Baggy from his reverie. The summer breeze sent the sheet whirling across the grass, and it came to rest at Trimble's feet. Idly, the fat junior picked it up. It was the front page of the "Wayland Gazette," and several columns of advertisements greeted Baggy's gaze. He looked at them with lack-lustre eyes, which presently became round and saucer-like with wonder. For in the "Agony Column" appeared the following advertisement:

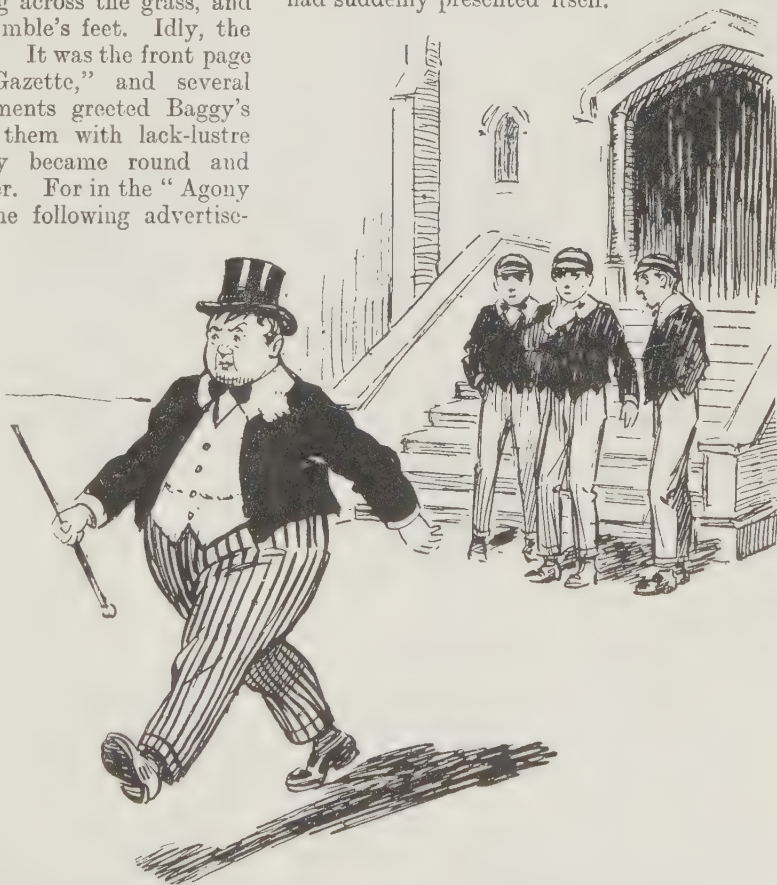
"L O N E L Y
S C H O O L G I R L,
considered very
good-looking,
wishes to meet
lonely schoolboy.
View to friend-
ship. Applicant
must be handsome
and athletic. Send
photograph when
applying, and fix
appointment.—
Miss X., Box
No. 1234, 'Way-
land Gazette'
Offices."

"My hat!" ejaculated Trimble. "Here's the very chance I've been wanting! What a stroke of luck that this sheet should

have been blown across to me! I'll write to 'Miss X.' right away."

Baggy jumped to his feet, folding up the sheet of newspaper and tucking it into his pocket. His eyes were glistening. He stood on the threshold of Romance, and the world seemed suddenly to have become brighter. Birds twittered gaily in the branches of the old elms; and the pleasant quadrangle was bathed in sunshine. Baggy had scarcely noticed these things before; but they seemed to have a special significance for him now.

As he rolled away towards the building, however, Baggy's jaw dropped. An obstacle had suddenly presented itself.



When Baggy Trimble appeared in the quad, he caused quite a sensation. Tom Merry & Co. stared at him in blank amazement. "Hello! Here's Baggy sallying forth to meet his lady-love!" chuckled Lowther. Baggy blushed, and hurried on.
(See Chapter 2.)

"Miss X.," the lonely schoolgirl who wanted a boy friend, had stipulated that applicants must send their photographs. And Baggy Trimble had no photograph to send. He could not afford the luxury of being photographed. This was a pity, for a photograph of Baggy would have impressed the mysterious "Miss X." very favourably, Baggy being quite an Adonis—in his own opinion!

On reaching his study, Baggy had a sudden brainwave.

On the mantelpiece was a photograph of Kit Wildrake, Baggy's study-mate. Wildrake was one of the most manly-looking fellows in the Fourth. He was not only handsome, but his face was full of character.

Baggy Trimble stood looking at Wildrake's photograph for a moment; then he reached it down.

"I'll send this to Miss X.," he murmured. "Wildrake won't miss it; he's got several more in his desk. Of course, when Miss X. meets me, she'll say that I'm nothing like the photo. But I'll tell her it was taken a couple of years ago, and that I've put on flesh and got more handsome in the meantime."

Chuckling softly to himself, Baggy sat down at the table and wrote a letter to "Miss X." He described himself as a lonely schoolboy, anxious to meet another lonely soul of the opposite sex, and suggesting an appointment for Saturday afternoon, outside the Wayland Cinema. Baggy signed the letter "Master T." At this early stage of the romance he was chary of giving his full name.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

Keeping the Tryst

THE letter, with Wildrake's photograph enclosed, was duly despatched. And for the next forty-eight hours Baggy Trimble was in quite a fever of excitement. He watched every post come in; he waited hungrily for a reply from "Miss X."

It was not until Saturday morning that a reply came. The postman had three letters for Master Bagley Trimble. The first was from Baggy's pater, and it contained—joy of joys!—a remittance for five shillings. The second letter was not really a letter at all, but an unpaid bill, which Baggy screwed up in his

fat palm and flung to the winds. And the third communication was addressed in a round, girlish hand. Baggy's heart jumped at the sight of it.

"At last!" he exclaimed. "This is from Miss X.!"

It was the briefest of brief notes—quite a curt epistle, in fact. But to Baggy Trimble, in his highly romantic state of mind, it had the tonic effect of a love-letter.

"Dear Master T.,—Letter and photo received. Will meet you on Saturday at the time and place mentioned.—Miss X."

Baggy Trimble fairly danced with elation. A short distance away, Mellish of the Fourth was also dancing with delight, having received a letter by the same post. And there was another fellow who held an open letter in his hand, and seemed very happy about it. This was George Alfred Grundy, of the Shell.

But Baggy Trimble was too busy with his own thoughts—too excited at the prospect of meeting "Miss X."—to care about the elation of Mellish and Grundy, or to wonder what was the cause of their elation. All that morning, he seemed to be walking on air. And he was impatient for the afternoon to arrive.

It was observed at the dinner-table that there was something wrong with Baggy Trimble's appetite. He ate considerably less than usual, being satisfied with only two helpings of apple-pudding, instead of the usual five. Mr. Railton inquired, solicitously, if Trimble was ill. And Baggy's school-fellows looked quite concerned about him. They did not know that Baggy was in too great a state of excitement and suspense to consume his usual quota of dinner.

When the meal was over, Baggy paced feverishly to and fro, in the quadrangle. He saw Percy Mellish go out of gates, dressed in his Sunday best, and looking very smart and spruce. In the ordinary way, Baggy's curiosity would have been aroused by the incident, and he would have asked Mellish if he was going to a wedding. But his mind was too full of that unknown charmer, "Miss X.," to bother about the doings of Percy Mellish.

An hour after Mellish's departure, Grundy of the Shell went out of the gates. Curiously enough, Grundy was also habited in his Sunday best. A silk "topper" was perched jauntily on his head, and he wore a big carnation in his buttonhole. Grundy was looking very flushed and excited, as he swaggered majestically past Baggy Trimble. But the self-absorbed Baggy scarcely noticed him.

When three o'clock came, the fat junior went up to his dormitory, and followed the example of Grundy and Mellish, dressing himself with meticulous care. Trimble was a slovenly fellow, as a rule. He had the reputation of being the worst-dressed junior of St. Jim's. He was the despair of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the dandy of the Fourth. But he could furbish himself up quite smartly, on occasions; and he was now at great pains to transform himself into a modern edition of Beau Brummel.

When Baggy Trimble made his appearance in the quad, at half-past three, he caused quite a sensation.

Tom Merry & Co., the chums of the Shell,

were chatting on the School House steps, and they broke off in astonishment to stare at the resplendent Baggy.

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Monty Lowther. "I'm sure there's a wedding on, this afternoon. First Mellish goes out of gates, dressed

to kill; then old Grundy goes swaggering out, like Solomon in all his glory; and now Trimble!"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Let us into the secret, Baggy," he said. "Whose wedding is it?"

"Eh? There's no wedding," said Trimble.

"Pr'aps it's a funeral?" suggested Manners.

"Or else Baggy is sallying forth to his trysting-place, to meet his lady-love!" chuckled Lowther.

Baggy flushed crimson, and walked on very hurriedly. Monty Lowther had merely spoken in jest; but he was much nearer the truth than he knew. Trimble was certainly

going to meet a young lady, by appointment; and if that fact were broadcast through St. Jim's, Baggy would have to suffer a good deal of chaffing and chipping.

For the first time in his life, Baggy Trimble walked to Wayland at a really brisk pace.



Baggy Trimble uttered a cry of astonishment as the girl drew near. "Cousin Bertha!" They regarded one another in stupefied silence. "I'm meeting a St. Jim's fellow here," said Bertha, and as she spoke an awful suspicion flashed upon Baggy's mind. Was she Miss "X"? (See Chapter 3.)

But Baggy's fat little legs were now going like clockwork. He simply dare not be late for his all-important appointment.

As he hurried along, Baggy speculated as to what manner of young lady "Miss X." would prove to be. Was she dark or fair? She was good-looking, unless her advertisement misrepresented the facts. Was she as attractive a girl as Gussy's cousin Ethel, or Levison's sister, Doris? Was she plump or slim? How would she greet Baggy? Would she expect him to take her to the pictures, or to treat her to a spread at the Café Royal, in Wayland?

These, and many other questions, tumbled over each other in Baggy's mind as he hurried along.

The fat junior was in funds, for he had converted his pater's remittance into cash, and the five shillings jingled pleasantly in his trousers pocket. He was prepared for any contingency. How fortunate that he was not in his usual state—broke to the wide!

THE THIRD CHAPTER

A Surprise for Baggy

BAGGY reached Wayland in record time.

He was panting and perspiring as he made his way up the High Street.

Four o'clock was striking when he halted outside the Wayland Cinema. There was no young lady waiting on the steps; and Baggy drew a sigh of relief.

"I haven't kept her waiting, anyway!" he murmured.

But the young lady, it seemed, had no compunctions about keeping Baggy Trimble waiting. The minutes passed, and she failed to appear, as they say in the police-courts. The quarter rang out from the old church steps, and still there was no sign of "Miss X."

Baggy fidgeted impatiently on the steps of the cinema. He was beginning to feel uneasy. He began to fear that he might have been hoaxed, and that "Miss X." had no intention of turning up.

He had been waiting nearly half an hour, when a young and attractive girl in a smart tennis-frock came tripping along the street, and halted at the foot of the steps.

Baggy's heart gave a bound.

"Here she is—at last!" he ejaculated.

And he ran down the steps so precipitately that he nearly overbalanced.

"Miss X.?" queried Baggy, lifting his topper to the girl in the tennis frock.

The girl looked at him coldly.

"I beg your pardon?" she said stiffly.

Baggy had replaced his topper on his head at a ridiculous angle, and he stood looking very awkward and sheepish.

"Ahem! Are you Miss X., the—the lonely schoolgirl?" he faltered.

"Indeed I am not!" retorted the young lady. "Please go away. I don't like the look of you."

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Baggy.

"I am waiting here for a friend, and he will be very angry if he sees me in conversation with you," said the young lady. "He may even go so far as to punch your nose!"

"Ow!" yelped Baggy. And he promptly bolted up the steps, as an athletic-looking young man came striding up.

Baggy was painfully aware that he had made a mistake, and he eyed the athletic-looking young man with inward quakings. The young man glared at him in return, and then walked off with the girl in the tennis-frock.

Baggy Trimble continued his vigil on the steps of the cinema. After waiting nearly an hour, he was almost in despair. It seemed futile to wait any longer.

And then, just as Baggy was about to wend his way disconsolately back to St. Jim's, a plump figure came into view—the figure of a girl, wearing a school frock and a straw hat. There was something familiar about that figure, and as it drew nearer Baggy Trimble uttered a cry of astonishment.

"Cousin Bertha!"

The girl was no less astonished.

"Cousin Bagley!" she gasped.

The two cousins regarded each other in stupefied silence for a moment. Then Baggy extended his hand, not very cordially, however.

"Fancy meeting you here, Bertha!" he exclaimed. "Why aren't you at Burchester?"

"I've got an appointment in Wayland," explained Bertha. "Afraid I'm rather late, but it's the privilege of the fair sex to be late. I'm meeting a St. Jim's fellow—here."

An awful suspicion flashed upon Baggy Trimble's mind.

"You—you're not the Miss X. who advertised in the 'Wayland Gazette,' are you?"

Bertha nodded. As for Baggy, he gave a groan of dismay.

"And I'm Master T.!" he exclaimed.

"Oh!"

Cousin Bertha appeared deeply disappointed. She had, of course, expected to meet the handsome schoolboy of the photograph—not her fat and egregious cousin, Bagley.

Trimble was equally disappointed. He had expected to meet a charming and good-looking young lady—not his plain, plump Cousin Bertha!

The girl's eyes flashed angrily.

"You have fooled me Bagley!" she cried. "You sent me another boy's photograph!"

"I—I——"

"You might have wasted my afternoon!" said Bertha reproachfully. "I tell you frankly, I shouldn't have come all the way from Burchester for the doubtful pleasure of meeting you!"

"And I shouldn't have fagged all the way over from St. Jim's to meet you!" groaned Baggy, with equal candour.

Bertha glanced up at the church clock.

"My train doesn't go for an hour," she said, "and I'm hungry. There's a nice tea-room a few doors from here."

It was a significant hint, but Baggy Trimble hesitated. He could be excused for hesitating. He knew what an illimitable appetite Cousin Bertha possessed! Baggy had been there before, so to speak.

"Come along!" said Bertha briskly. And she took her cousin's arm, and led Baggy willy-nilly down the street. The swing doors of the tea-room closed behind them.

When they had settled down to tea, Baggy was relieved to find that Bertha's appetite was less hearty than usual. She nibbled nonchalantly at a number of fancy cakes, while Baggy cleared a dish of doughnuts with his usual avidity.

"I say, Bertha," he mumbled, when the girl pushed her plate away, to signify that she was finished, "your appetite isn't quite so keen as it used to be, you know."

"Oh, yes, it is," answered Bertha, with a smile. "But



Cousin Bertha waved the bill gaily. "Pay up, Baggy! I know, it's like having teeth out for you to part with your money!" Baggy did not look pleased. His fond dreams had been rudely shattered—but he paid! (See Chapter 3.)

"I've already had one feed here."

"What!" almost shouted Baggy.

"Earlier in the afternoon," explained Bertha. "I met one of your fellows by appointment—a fellow named Grundy. He stood me an excellent spread. Charming fellow, Grundy—isn't he? But he's so ugly—almost as ugly as you. I was quite relieved when he went, so that I could go and meet Mellish."

Baggy Trimble stared blankly at his cousin.

"You—you met Mellish?" he stuttered.

"Yes. We spent a pleasant hour together at the cinema. Then we went for a stroll, and after that I went back to the cinema, to keep my appointment with Master T. Of course, I didn't dream that Master T. would be you."

"Well, of all the nerve!" he ejaculated. "Did Mellish and Grundy answer your advertisement?"

"Certainly!"

"And you arranged to meet them at different times, and squeezed a feed out of one, and a cinema-show out of the other? And then, to crown it all, you've squeezed another feed out of me! Well, of all the blessed nerve! If you

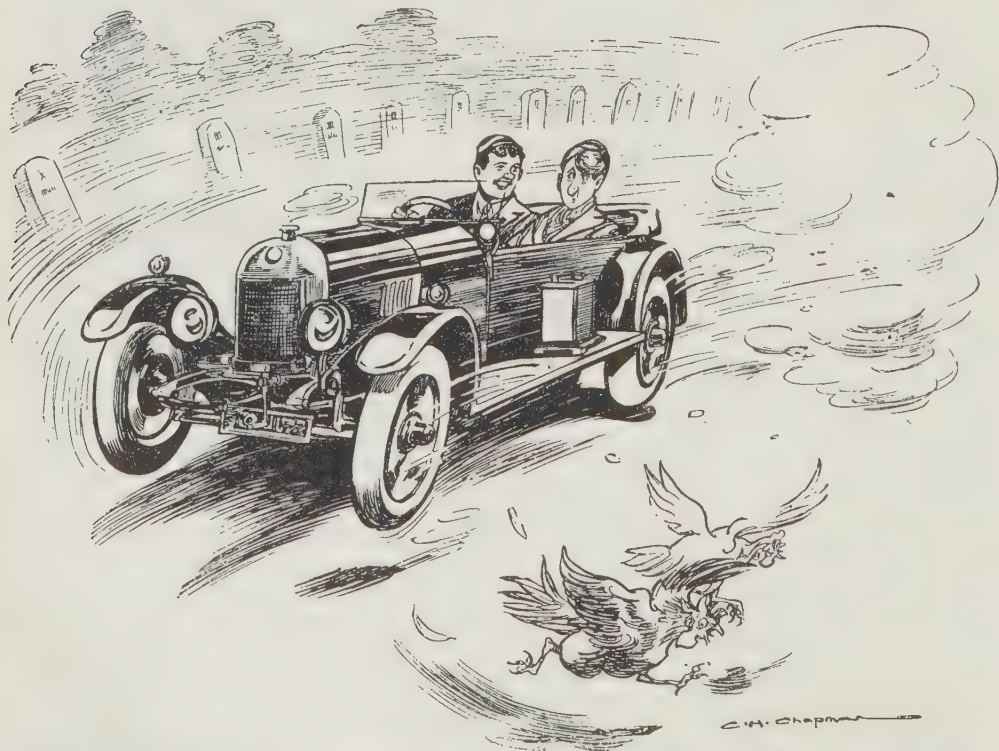
were a fellow, Bertha, I'd jolly well give you a licking!"

Bertha merely smiled. She had had a very enjoyable afternoon, and her cousin's wrath merely amused her.

"Here's the bill!" she said, gaily. "Pay up, Baggy! I know it's like having teeth out, to part with your money."

Baggy paid, but he did not look pleasant. It might almost be said of Baggy, like it was said of the monarch in the poem, that he never smiled again! His little romance had ended in a frost. His fond dreams had been rudely shattered. And it was a very forlorn Baggy Trimble who made his way back to St. Jim's, after seeing Cousin Bertha off at Wayland Station.

ALONZO TODD'S JOY-RIDE!



Speed! Horace Coker, of the Greyfriars Remove, tries to convince Alonzo Todd that one has never really "enjoyed" a motor ride till the milestones whizz by so dizzily that you mistake them for the palings!



Some Famous Headmasters

By
MR. VICTOR RAILTON, M.A.
(SCHOOL HOUSE MASTER)
AT ST. JIM'S.

*Wielders of the Rod
in Olden Times*

ST. JIM'S can boast a long and honoured scroll of Headmasters. The majority of them have been kindly and lovable men, who have ruled by kindness rather than by fear. Some few, however, were severe martinets and stern disciplinarians; but allowance must be made for the fact that they ruled during stormy periods of history.

The first Headmaster of St. Jim's was Dr. Josiah Oldacre, who was appointed in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. We know very little about Dr. Oldacre personally; but as he held office for thirty-five years, and the school prospered exceedingly under his sway, we may safely assume that he was a wise and good ruler, hard-working and energetic—what we should to-day call “a live wire.”

Dr. Oldacre's son succeeded him as Headmaster. He found everything running smoothly at St. Jim's, and perhaps this made him think that he could afford to govern with a loose rein. At all events, the new Headmaster shut himself up in his study, and was not seen by the boys for weeks together. He was nicknamed “The Hermit,” on account of his retiring disposition. Dr. Oldacre, junior, was a very learned man and a great scholar.

He liked and understood books, but he neither liked nor understood boys. Instead

of entering wholeheartedly into the politics of Public-school life, he held aloof from his pupils, seeming to take no interest in them. This was fatal for the welfare of the school.

St. Jim's was soon on the down-grade—“going to the dogs,” as we should put it. The masters did their best to arrest the decline, but without the support and co-operation of the Head they were practically powerless.

When Dr. Greville Mason became Headmaster, in the seventeenth century, he found the school in a shocking state of apathy and neglect. Immediately he set to work to restore the *morale* of St. Jim's, and win back some of its former prestige. Dr. Mason succeeded beyond all expectations.

He was a great-hearted man, just and humane, and an untiring worker. The power of his personality was extraordinary; masters and boys rallied round him; he was beloved by all. What Dr. Arnold was to Rugby, and Dr. Thring to Uppingham, so Dr. Mason was to St. Jim's. He died in the fullness of years, honoured and lamented by all.

Dr. Mason was succeeded by a brilliant train of Headmasters, none of whom, however, was so great and good as he.

Many amusing stories are related of Dr. Mulvaney, who was appointed Headmaster

of St. Jim's in the year 1840. Like the celebrated Dr. Spooner, he had an unfortunate habit of muddling his phrases. He was frequently known to say, when dismissing a class, "The miss will now dis-class!" On another occasion he announced, "I shall leave no turn unstoned to preserve order in this school!"

After the school tuckshop had been raided, Dr. Mulvaney summoned a general assembly, and astonished everybody by saying, "I wish to know who stifled the roar!" He meant, of course, "I wish to know who

rified the store." The "Spoonerisms" perpetrated by Dr. Mulvaney would fill a good-sized volume.

Our present Headmaster, Dr. Holmes, is immensely and deservedly popular. He is a man of wide sympathies and boundless tact; and every culprit who comes before him knows that he will receive fair play. Dr. Holmes has the interest of the school deeply at heart. He has brought about many valuable improvements; and future historians will doubtless speak of him as I have spoken of Dr. Mason.

Hidden Schoolboys!

In each of the sentences printed below is hidden the names of well-known schoolboys at Greyfriars, St. Jim's and Rookwood. See how many you can discover! The letters of the hidden names will be found to run consecutively, as in this example:
The hero faced the mob *un*terrified.—Bunter.

Greyfriars Boys.

1. There is always risk in nerve-racking experiences.
2. The waters of the Mighty Deep enfolded the shipwrecked mariner.
3. He has no opponent with whom he can quarrel in Leyton. Next item, please!
4. Is it odd that a father should teach his tot to play cricket?
5. To wing a telegram, or to communicate by wireless with new lands, are marvels unknown to our forefathers.
6. My erstwhile friend Tubby is ill, but the latest bulletin is favourable.

St. Jim's Boys.

1. We must allow the rascals their late passes.
2. In Egypt, the Sirdar relies on his soldiers.
3. No blessing can equal good health; when you are ill you appreciate this.
4. A capital botany lecture was delivered last evening.
5. Having unnecessary brutality, and an ugly nature, the bully is feared by all.
6. Those who hanker ravenously after riches often dig by moonlight, among red ferns, for buried treasure.

Rookwood Boys.

1. A new comet flashed above the silvery clouds.
2. "I'll Sing Thee Songs of Araby"—that is my theme this evening.
3. His tailor considered the cape elegant and graceful.
4. Clovelly is an ideal holiday resort.
5. From morning to night, cooking is in progress in the school kitchen.
6. Those who wished to go were conveyed in a hansom-cab, drawn by doddering horses.

SOLUTIONS.

Greyfriars Boys.

1. Skinner.
2. Penfold.
3. Snoop. Linley. Temple.
4. Todd. Stott.
5. Wingate. Newland.
6. Myers. Tubb. Bull.

St. Jim's Boys.

1. Lowther.
2. Darrel.
3. Noble. Reilly.
4. Talbot.
5. Gunn. Glyn.
6. Kerr. Digby. Redfern.

Rookwood Boys.

1. Newcome. Silver.
2. Raby. Smythe.
3. Peele. Grace.
4. Lovell.
5. Mornington. Cook.
6. Gower. Hansom. Dodd.

REPLIES TO TROUBLED QUERISTS

BY MONTY LOWTHER, of the Shell Form, St. Jim's.

*When troubles come and things look glum,
You're tired of persevering;
Just write to me and you'll agree
That my remarks are cheering!*

"GUSTAVUS" (No. 6 Study).—Alas, my poor old aristocrat! I am greatly grieved to learn that certain rash and misguided youths played football with your best Sunday topper. However, you must take consolation from the fact that you have ninety-nine more toppers to play with. True, your best topper (which now resembles a concertina) was the apple of your noble eye; but you must endeavour to bear your sorrow with fortitude. Here is a little verse which may help you to do so:

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day;
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea.
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

"BAGGY" (School House).—Sorry to hear that you are being "reduced to a skellington through lack of nourishment." I suggest that you approach the Head with the request that your daily diet chart may be as follows:

Breakfast: 12 eggs (6 boiled and 6 fried),
6 rashers of bacon, 20 slices of bread-and-butter, 1 tank of tea.

Dinner: 6 bowls of soup, 6 joints, 6 entrees, and 6 sweets.

Tea: Same as breakfast, with the addition of 6 cakes (3 currant and 3 seed).

Supper: This will be a "movable" feast, as it will consist of Stilton cheese!

If the Head consents to your requirements, all well and good. If he doesn't, recite to him the following verse:

Man wants but little here below;
He likes it nice and hot.
But I am just a kid, you know,
And, therefore, want a lot!

LORD M. (Greyfriars).—Yours is a pathetic tale of woe, my poor brother! You have lost your heart to the young lady in the Friardale bun-shop, and she—callous damsel!—repudiates your advances with scorn. Are you certain that you have done everything possible to win her hand? Have you been punctual in keeping appointments, or have you gone to sleep and forgotten all about them? Have you worn your most killing fancy waistcoat and your most flaming necktie? Has the hue of your socks been sufficiently fascinating? And, above all, have you been tactful and discreet in your wooing? If you have done all these things, and the damsel still says you nay, I can find only one verse from which you may imbibe consolation. Here it is:

It was the schooner Hesperus
That sailed the wintry sea,
And the skipper had taken his
little daughter
To bear him company.

"TOMMY" (School House).—Sorry to hear that, after a hefty feed of lamb cutlets and apple turnover, you find yourself unable to write the editorial for "Tom Merry's Weekly." I will cheerfully undertake this task for you by writing an extra Comic Column. The readers are never able to twig the difference between your editorials and the other comic features. And now, brother o' mine, let us sing:

Merry had a little lamb,
And promptly came to grief.
Said little Merry, "After this
I'd better stick to beef!"

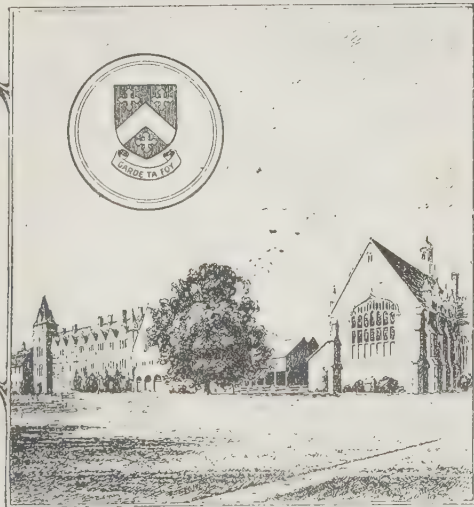
FOUR FAMOUS PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Ashburton Grammar Sch.



Bradfield College



Felsted School



King Edward's Sch. Birmingham

NEWSPAPER EXTRACTS

Which *may* appear in the year 1950!

By MONTY LOWTHER

AIR-MARSHAL SIR TOM MERRY, K.C.B., D.F.C., has been appointed to the command of the British Aerial Forces, now mobilising for a massed attack on Mars.

LORD EASTWOOD—formerly the Hon. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy—delivered a rousing speech in the House of Lords yesterday. His lordship made an eloquent appeal for the revival of the "topper" and the fancy waistcoat, which have gone out of fashion.

PRESIDENT KILDARE is one of the most popular Presidents the Irish Free State has ever had. Not for many years has "John Bull's Other Island" enjoyed such peace and prosperity.

IT is interesting to note that HARRY NOBLE, the popular skipper of the Australian cricket team now touring this country, received his education at St. James' College.

MR. AUBREY RACKE, the multi-millionaire, is making negotiations for the purchase of all the Elizabethan mansions in England.

MR. VICTOR RAILTON, M.A., has been appointed Headmaster of St. James' College, in succession to Dr. Holmes, who is retiring.

PROFESSOR SKIMPOLE claims to have disproved Darwin's theory that man is descended from monkeys. The learned professor's facial appearance, however, would seem to indicate that Darwin was right, after all!

KIT WILDRAKE is now the owner of Boot Leg Ranch, in British Columbia. His early boyhood was spent there, before he proceeded to England for his education.

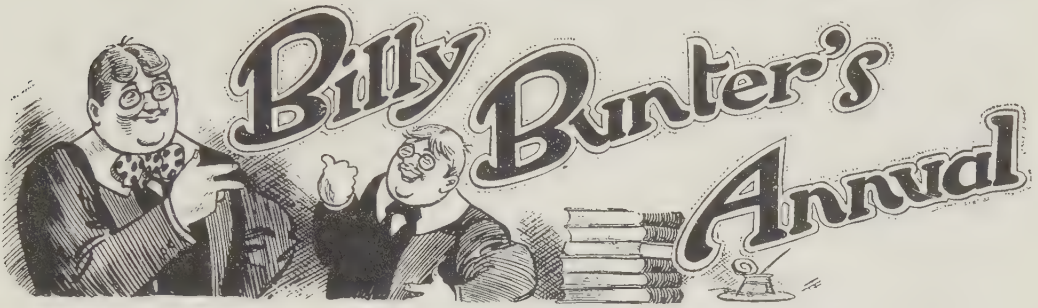
MR. BERNARD GLYN, the celebrated inventor, has been knighted by the King for his wonderful invention of an aerial tank, which has been found of great value in the war with Mars.



Lord Eastwood—formerly the Hon. Augustus D'Arcy—made an eloquent appeal for the revival of the "topper."

DETECTIVE GEORGE FRANCIS KERR, of Scotland Yard, has received a special presentation from his colleagues, on the completion of his hundredth successful "case." Detective Kerr has encountered many perilous situations, but he seems to bear a charmed life.





Major Thrasher, the retired Army Officer, happened to be walking right in the line of fire. Fortunately the ball was somewhat spent when it got to him, but——!
(See "Larks on the Links!" inside.)

FROM YOUR EDITOR'S DESK.



By BILLY BUNTER.

MY DEAR READERS.—A fine, fat feast of fun and fiction is before you again with the cream—in other words, my own Annual—in the centre of it all. Eight pages, I admit, do not bulk large in the make-up of the entire Annual. But, as I said before, I have crammed so much entertaining stuff into my Special Supplement that even my fiercest rivals—jealous ignoramuses, who think they know more about read, live journalism than I do—reluctantly admitted, when they saw my pages in proof, that I had excelled myself.

MANY a time and oft—perhaps oftener than that—I have martyred myself to the noble cause of sport. Smacked in the eye by a cricket ball, with my shoulder out of joint through excess of zeal in fielding, I have been cheered by shouts like, "Billy, my boy, you're pluck personified!"

But there. Empty boasting was never in my line. The clan of Bunter abhors it. However, about my sporting self. As I was saying, a Bunter duzzent swank—he *does* things. In the feeding line, frinstance. Many a time and oft—if I might use the expression once again—people have turned giddy and faint at the bare sight of me ploughing steadfastly through a gorging contest.

On those strenuous okkasions I have been born up by the thought that the loser—who would not be B. B.—was doomed to pay for the feed; and that at the end of the gorgeous meeting fresh laurels would be wound round my brow—in a manner of speaking—by the more enthusiastic members of my audience, roused to sheer, screening frenzy by my grate egshhibition.

Jealousy on the part of many rivals has prevented me taking part in hundreds of sporting contests. But I've whacked 'em all in the tuckshop! It was jealousy on Harry Wharton's part, frinstance, that made it impossible for me to do ort but cast covetous eyes on the Cricket

The scoffers are humbled. It's time, too, they admitted my superiority in this sphere, just as they do in the feeding line, 'cos some of them were in danger of scoffing their silly heads off.

Every year my Annual-inside-an-Annual behaves like a sort of giant snowball. The core of the snowball is my Annual; the wrapping is letters—millions of them, from every civilised and many uncivilised corners of the Earth. I have long since given up trying to reply to any of them. The spirit is willing, but the pen is weak. The letters praising my last year's Annual have not yet finished coming in. I ask you, what would *you* do—with last year's letters from delighted korrespondents still flooding into the Editorial Den and getting all mixed up with letters from *this* year's ditto ditto, writing impatiently in advance?

It can't be done, dear readers of both sexes. So I pick out just a very few for brief acknowledgement on this page. Those whose names have not been singled out for this signal recognition this year can rest content and be mollified with the knowledge that nightly I rest my pillowed head on stacks of their epistolary communications!

But writing always makes me hungry. I must bid me to the tuckshop, and bid you adieu till another year has flown, and meantime start pegging away, with never-slackening appetite and enthusiasm, with the preparation of *next* year's jolly old Annual-within-an-Annual!

YOUR EDITOR.

Answers to Enkwriters.

PATRICK MACPHADDEN (Sandwich Islands).—How the dickens do I know what happens to Marconi's blessed wireless waves when they're finished with? If you had written Marcel waves, now, my sister, Bessie Bunter, might have supplied the information. Anyhow, why do you want to know?

"WOULD-BE AUTHOR" (Nether Wallop).—That's a funny-sounding place you live in—or is it your idea of humour? Old Quelchy knows all about nether wallops. Your query should have been addressed to him.

PHYLLIS STAGGERS (Kalamazoo).—So you think Orstraler would be blessed with my presence? Blessed if I don't think so, too! But I am afraid England would make a fuss if I attempted to taro myself away from her shores. In fact I'm shore she would. England has need of branes, you know, and it would be wrong to disappoint her!

"LITTLE JIM" (Klondike).—No, thank you, Little Jim. At present I prefer the known uncertainties of my postal-order-which-never-turns-up to the unknown uncertainties of a horrible life of grind in the Klondike goldfields. I'm afraid nothing would turn up there either, and I am sure digging for gold makes a chap fearfully hungry. **BRR!**

EPHRAIM GLOCK (Newcastle).—Couldn't they find you a more comfortable name than that? Hard luck, old chap! But it's a poor mind that never rejoices—and after all, beauty is only skin deep. Try Dr. Turpin's Tablets for Twisted Teeth.

MY SPORTING SELF!



(NOTE.—Modestly prevents me embellishing my name here, in large type, like some rather fellers are so proud to do.—B. B.)

Championship. I couldn't—absolutely couldn't—get a game with the Remove.

But old Wingate recognised my value and troo worth as a sportsman. The First Eleven were a man short one day, when Wingate, with knees in his eyes, and bended tears—I mean to say, with tears in his eyes and on bended knees—implored and beseeched me to fill the breach, to bridge the gap, and generally come to the rescue.

I did. A trooly marvellous game it was. Things were going very badly for Greyfriars when I went in to bat. Only a paltry twenty runs had been scored, and nine wickets were down. I quickly altered all that.

I knocked the ball clean out of the field, six times running. The pavilion roof was dented and bashed a good deal. Quite a lot of tiles went west, but I couldn't help that. The Cricket Frenzy had seized me!

Old Quelchy's tile, too, got in the way—his poor old silk hat! As clean as a whistle the ball took it off his head. Of course, everybody was absolutely amazed at my marvellous egshhibition of batting. Naturally, I made a century, won the match for Greyfriars, and by common consent was unanimously declared to be the Cricket Champion of Greyfriars.

Then, as to swimming. The sketch that heads this article is an untruth—a slander. A couple of pairs of water-wings, perhaps, but never have I ploughed through the ocean waves with such a redikerulous collection of lifeboas and things strung round me as that sketch mite lead you to suppose. I have allowed the piktorial slander to appear here simply to confuse my enemies—to show them that a Bunter can soar above such paltry things, and that I leave it to the judgment of his—my—readers to decide wether or not the greatest side of Billy Bunter is his sporting self.



Larks on the Links

By
TOM BROWN

"BROWN!" said Mr. Prout, bearing down upon me in the Close, on the last half-holiday. "Have you anything on this afternoon?"

"Of course, sir!"

"Anything special, my boy?"

"A fancy waistcoat and a new pair of silk spats, sir!" I said.

"Do not jest with me, Brown! You know perfectly well what I mean. Have you an important engagement?"

"No, sir."

"Then perhaps you would like to accompany me to the golf-links, and carry my clubs for me?"

I made a grimace.

"Aren't there any caddies on the links, sir?"

"Yes; but I cannot tolerate them!" said Mr. Prout. "They are impudent and impertinent to a degree. If it should happen—and it does not very often happen—that I miss the ball, my caddy invariably sniggers, and puts me off my game. You, Brown, would not be so rude as to titter at me. That is why I am asking you to come. I will, of course, provide you with tea at the golf-house."

Having nothing special to do that afternoon, I fell in with Mr. Prout's wishes. I hoped that the master of the Fifth would telephone for a taxi to come and pick us up at Greyfriars, and convey us to the golf-links. But Mr. Prout didn't believe in luxuries.

"We will proceed on foot, Brown," he said, handing me his bag of clubs. It was a long way to the links. When at last we arrived, I was perspiring profusely, despite the fact that it was a bitterly cold day.

"I suggest, sir, that we have tea first, and that you go round the links afterwards," I murmured.

Mr. Prout turned to me with a snarl. "When I stand in need of your suggestions, Brown, I will ask you for them! Meanwhile, be good enough to hold your tongue!"

My companion made his way to the first tee. He had two golf-balls in his possession. They were known as

"Dimple" and "Pimple." Dimple had dents in its surface, and Pimple had bumps. Mr. Prout was at great pains to explain that these golf-balls had cost him two shillings apiece.

"On no account are they to be lost, Brown," he said. "Each time I make a stroke, follow the flight of the ball with your eye. Then, after it, and stand beside it, so that I shall know just where it has fallen."

"Very good, sir!"

Mr. Prout placed Pimple upon a little

mound of earth. He then helped himself to a driver from the bag I carried, and proceeded to chastise the ball, just as he might have chastised an erring pupil. Pimple was a very obstinate ball. When it was struck it rolled stupidly for about two yards, and stopped dead.

"Perdition!" said Mr. Prout.

"If at first you don't succeed—"

I began.

Mr. Prout spun round, flourishing his club dangerously near to my head.

"Pray refrain from quoting moth-eaten maxims!" he snapped. "You really are a most trying boy, Brown! Replace that ball on the mound, and I will address it again."

Prout's next shot caused an avalanche of dirt to shoot into my face, almost



"You have done me a serious injury, begad!" he thundered. "I shall have a bump the size of a pigeon's egg where your confounded ball struck me! Dash it, sir, you might have killed me!"

choking me. The Form-master had removed not only the ball, but the mound on which it had rested.

"Follow its flight—quickly!" he panted.

"How can I follow the flight of the ball when I'm blinded?" I growled. "You should not have got in the way!" said Prout. "I fancy I have cleared the bunker!"

"Talking about bunkers," I said, "I feel like doing a bunk myself!"

"Be silent, boy. Go and ascertain where the ball fell!"

I then spent the best part of an hour searching for Pimple. But the wretched ball refused to show itself. It was hiding probably in some tuft of grass,

or was peeping out at me from beneath some stone.

I was obliged to give up the search at length, and report to Mr. Prout that Pimple, like the lady in the song, was lost and gone for ever.

"You should have noted the direction it took!" said Prout. "Really, Brown, you are a most incompetent caddy! Your negligence has cost me the sum of two shillings. I shall now have to use Dimple."

Mr. Prout seized the sole surviving ball, placed it on a mound, and attacked it savagely. More by accident than design, he made a wonderful drive. Dimple went careering into space. Mr. Prout puffed out his chest with pride.

"There would be a fuss about that stroke had it been made by Braid or Vardon!" he said.

"There'll be a fuss about it now, sir!" I said, with a chuckle. "It's hit Major Thrasher on the head!"

"What!" Mr. Prout saw that I spoke correctly.

Major Thrasher, the retired army officer who lived near Greyfriars, happened to be walking across the course, right in the line of fire. Fortunately, the ball was somewhat spent when it got to him; but it gave him a nasty crack on the head all the same. Spluttering with fury, the major came striding towards Mr. Prout.

"You have done me a serious injury, begad!" he thundered. "I shall have a bump the size of a pigeon's egg where your confounded ball struck me! Dash it, sir, you might have killed me!"

Mr. Prout was equally wrathful.

"You spoilt my stroke!" he said. "The ball would have travelled another dozen yards at least, had you not got in the way. You are a clumsy intruder, sir!"

"And you, sir!" thundered the major, "are a public danger! You ought to be chained up!"

"You—you—" Mr. Prout was almost foaming at the mouth. "Where is my ball? What happened to it after it struck you?"

"I put it in my pocket," said the major, "and there it is going to remain!"

"But it is the only golf-ball left in my possession—"

"So much the better! You won't be able to do any more damage!"

Mr. Prout glared fiercely at the major. The major glared fiercely in return.

"Give me back my golf-ball!" spluttered Mr. Prout.

"I refuse, sir! The public must be protected!"

"Were I a younger man," said Mr. Prout, "I should recover the ball by force!"

The major snorted contemptuously. "Bah! Do you suppose you would stand the slightest chance of overcoming a seasoned warrior like myself? You flatter yourself, sir!"

"Until you return my ball, I shall be unable to proceed with my game!" said Mr. Prout.

"And a good job, too, begad!" said the major and he turned on his heel and strolled away.

Mr. Prout looked as if he would follow. But he thought better of it.

"Come, Brown," he said, turning to

me," we will go and refresh ourselves."

I brightened up considerably at this. Mr. Prout's idea of a good tea, however, did not coincide with my own.

"I have lost golf-balls to the value of four shillings this afternoon," he said, "and I must be economical. I will merely order you a cup of tea, Brown. Are you hungry?"

"Havenous, sir!"

"Then you may have a modicum of shortbread with your tea. It will cost me an extra penny; but I promised you a tea, and I must keep my word."

I have had some disappointing teas in my time; but the tea I had that afternoon at the golf-house was the

limit. One cup of lukewarm tea, one small piece of shortbread! When I thought of my cosy study at Greyfriars, and of the choice array of tuck set out on the table, I could have hurled the piece of shortbread at Mr. Prout.

"A meal like this, Brown, is far better for you than a miscellaneous assortment of indigestible and messy compounds!" said Prout. "This cup of tea will fortify you for your journey back to school!"

I emitted a deep and hollow groan. And I resolved that never again, under any circumstances, would I act as caddy to Mr. Prout. He may get hold of some quileless youth on the next half-holiday. But the name of that youth won't be Thomas Brown!

WHEN WE ALL FLY!



By BOB CHERRY.

FROM the master's point of view, aeroplanes for all would be a calamity. You would have fellows popping over to Paris for a half-holiday and getting stranded in France with engine trouble. Or you would have them taking a nose-dive into the English Channel. The result would be a thinning in the ranks of the Form-room!

Then, again, you would have air-hogs. Can't you just picture Coker of the Fifth flashing through the ether like greased lightning and finally colliding with his Form-master's machine?

Billy Bunter in an aeroplane would be an enormous peril to the public. He would be barging and bumping into everybody in the course of his flight. Then, when he felt peckish (but, then, does Billy ever feel otherwise?), the fat junior would attempt to land on the roof of the tuckshop. What a wallow there would be!

Alonzo Todd, the gentle duffer, would be a priceless idiot of a pilot. Alonzo would come down quicker than ever he went up. The bits of his machine would strew the Close, and he would not be moved to make further experiments in flying. On the contrary, he would be moved to the nearest hospital!

Gosling the porter in an aeroplane would be a sight for gods and men and little fishes! But I don't think you would ever persuade Gosling to go up in "one of them noo-fangled contraptions," as he calls them. No, I don't

think you will ever find him "galliwanting" about "in the clouds!"

If Lord Mauleverer flew, he would imagine, in a moment of forgetfulness, that he was on his sofa study. Mauly would take forty winks in mid-air, and goodness knows what would happen to the poor old "bus." Quite probably he would never wake up again in this world!

Now, when I go a'flying, I—

(No, you don't swank here, Bob Cherry! I'm Editor of this little outfit, and if there's any swanking to be done—ahem!—B. Bunter, Editor.)

ENGLISH AS SHE IS SPOKE!

(By the St. Jim's know-all. No prize for guessing his identity.—B. B.)

A YOUNG Scottish stalwart named Kerr,
Had travelled one night from afeer;
But, sad to relate,
All his foes lay in wait
And daubed him with feathers and terr!

A sturdy, fat fellow named Wynn,
Became most remarkably thynn.
It transpired that his pater,
A noted tuck-hater,
Had failed to supply him with tynn!

An ill-tempered prefect named Knox
Once had the most awful of shox;
When marauding one night
He was challenged to fight
By a man six-foot-three in his sox!

A boy who was known as Joe Frayne
Once treated his chums with disdayne;
To the floor he did bump,
And was whacked with a stump.
But he shouted: "I can't feel the payne!"

There is a young fellow named Gunn,
Of Grundy's two chums he is wunn;
And often they tell
In the ranks of the Shell
Of the glorious deeds he has dunn!

THE SCHOOLBOY HEADMASTER!



By DICK RUSSELL.

THE age of miracles is past,
So other fellows tell me;
But let me state the curious fate
That recently befell me.

In cap and gown I strode about,
A strong and sturdy giant;
With frenzied joy, I birched each boy
Who dared to be defiant!

The masters all had changed to fags,
The prefects into boot-boys;
When I was nigh they used to cry:
"My hat! We'd better scoot, boy!"

Old Quelch had to toe the line,
And murmured many sore words;
And as for Prout, he skipped about
Among the dashing forwards.

None dared dispute my iron will,
Or come to me complaining;
I caused old Locke a nasty shock
By giving him a caning!

The chaps who played about in class
Were flattened to a jelly;
I made them work, and never shirk:
They scrawled out yards of Shelley!

I'll tell you how I flogged old Quelch,
While he was wildly screaming:
Great Scott! The bell! Oh, what a sell!

I'VE JOLLY WELL BEEN DREAMING!



The Gorgers!

*A catastrophic, bank bursting interview with Tubby Muffin of Rookwood,
by the Special Representative of Billy Bunter's Annual.*

"**H!** Stop!" I was just whizzing out of the gates on my jigger when the familiar voice of Sammy Bunter of the Second Form hailed me from the rear.

"Go and eat coke!" I roared, in return.

But Sammy, his fat little legs going like clockwork, seemed intent on business, so I dismounted.

"What's the matter?" I enquired. "Want me to cash one of your major's mythical postal orders?"

"Nunno!" panted Sammy, his fat face streaming with perspiration. "I say! You're going over to Rookwood, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"You're going to see Tubby Muffin?"

"I am."

"Good! Just wait while I pinch Nugent minor's bike, and I'll come along."

"No, you jolly well won't!" I said wrathfully. "I don't want a lumbering great porpoise like you to come over and eat the Rookwood fellows out of house and home! Keep off the grass!"

Sammy Bunter's eyes gleamed behind his spectacles.

"Look here," he said, "there's no need to cut up rusty! Would you like to earn a quid or so?"

"Don't rot!"

"I'm dead serious!" said Sammy. "Listen! Let me come over with you, and then I'll challenge Tubby to an eating contest. You can back me up to beat him to a frazzle. The Rookwood chaps, of course, will pin their faith to Tubby. How does that strike you?"

I gave a low whistle.

"What a wheeze!" I exclaimed. "If only it can be worked!"

"It'll be worked all right, don't you fret!" said Sammy, with a smirk. "I can eat Tubby off his head!"

"That's a go then!" I exclaimed. "But half a jiffy! Who's going to supply the grub?"

"The losing side," said Sammy. "If I beat Tubby the Rookwood fellows must stump up for the tuck, and give you a quid in addition. If Tubby beats me—which is next door to impossible—the boot's on the other foot."

I had great faith in Sammy Bunter as a gorgor, for he could eat his major to a dead heat every time, so to speak. He could stow things away in an

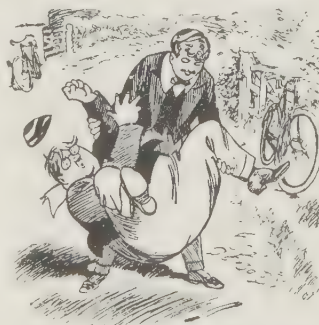
astounding manner; and although Tubby Muffin was nearly as bad, he wasn't quite up to Sammy's weight. So I congratulated myself that I was on to a good thing.

Besides, it was about time I made my reporting bizney profitable.

"Buck up, Sammy!" I said. "It's a long, long way to Rookwood!"

Sammy Bunter scuttled away, to return in a few moments with Dicky Nugent's bike. Dicky was playing footer against the Third, and was not likely to discover the loss till afterwards. Sufficient unto the day was the evil thereof.

Billy Bunter's a rotten cyclist, and Sammy proved to be even worse. How we managed all those miles without casualties is still a mystery to me.



I had one joy remaining: Sammy Bunter came along a few minutes later and I stopped him in the roadway and gave him the bumping of his life!

Pedestrians just managed to hop out of the way in time. Sundry fowls had narrow escapes of being crushed under wheel. And on nearing Rookwood, Sammy's machine nearly skidded into Mr. Railton, who's one of the House-masters there.

However, we got there at last, and Tubby Muffin, who had been notified several days before of my coming, greeted us at the gates.

"Here I am," said I, "with the Greyfriars second string prize porpoise as it were. He wants to eat his way through a feed against you!"

Tubby Muffin's eyes sparkled. He had a ravenous look about him which suggested that he was in the throes of horrid starvation.

"I'm game!" he said. "If I can't beat that silly scarecrow in eating, then I'm weak and ailing, or something!"

Sammy Bunter grinned all over his fat face.

"Just come along to the tuckshop," he said, "and I'll jolly soon show you!"

"Half a jiffy!" said Jimmy Silver, who, with his chums, had stopped to gaze at the beaming, expectant features of Sammy Bunter. "This shall be done in order. What are the terms of the contest?"

"If my man wins, as he's bound to do," I said, "you've got to brass up for the grub consumed, and pay me a quid over and above that. If your champion cormorant wins, by some miraculous means, then I have to pay for the grub and give you a quid."

"Ripping!" said Raby. "Couldn't be fairer! Kim on! This way to the tuckshop! Ha, ha, ha! We'll set the pigs feeding in no time!"

"Good afternoon, Sergeant!" said Jimmy Silver cheerily, as they all trooped into the tuckshop. "We've come to buy you up. Will it be all right if we settle the bill afterwards?"

Sergeant Kettle opened his eyes wide when he saw Jimmy Silver and Co. with Tubby Muffin in tow. Tubby Muffin was not their "meat," exactly. But Jimmy Silver was buying the grub, and the gallant Sergeant cared not who ate it. He nodded assent to Jimmy's question.

"Right! Now we'll set the ball rolling with sausage rolls. Half a dozen for each, please, Sergeant!"

Sammy and Tubby were served with the rolls, and the exhibition began. I had felt serenely confident up to now that Sammy Bunter would carry off the honours. But as I watched Tubby Muffin frantically chewing away I began to have qualms. Tubby was, indeed, going great guns. He got through three rolls to Sammy's two. Supposing he were to win after all? It wouldn't bear thinking of! I should have to pay out almost a term's pocket money!

"Buck up, Sammy!" I murmured. Bunter smiled complacently. "Trust me!" he chuckled. "I'm in great form. Wait till we get to the pastries!"

The sausage rolls were demolished, and then came the ham sandwiches. Bunter was a very valiant trencherman so far as ham sandwiches were concerned, and as he got through them at a terrific rate my hopes revived.

But Tubby Muffin showed no signs of wavering. Indeed, he seemed impatient for the next course. When the sandwiches were finished, six good-sized doughnuts were set before each of the competitors.

"Stick it, Tubby!" roared the spectators, for the tuckshop was crowded by this time. "Go it, you glutton!"

I fully expected Tubby to show some signs of distress by this time, but he really seemed only to be starting. He champed away contentedly, and Sammy began to look a bit wild. Tubby's unaccustomed popularity did not seem to affect his appetite in the least. His hunger was almost unbelievable!

"I—I'm beginning to feel a bit—er—played out!" Sammy stuttered.

"Oh, rot!" I growled. "Don't chuck up the sponge yet! You can beat Tubby any day of the week. Keep going, for goodness' sake—or you'll ruin me!"

Sammy plunged heroically into the fourth doughnut. Tubby, who had already finished, waited impatiently until his rival was ready for the next item—pork pies: big, well-stuffed, juicy fellows. Slowly but surely these disappeared, six apiece.

Then came a dramatic pause, whilst

the gorged contestants breathed heavily.

"Try chocolate cream next!" said Lovell. "Give Sammy and Muffin six bars each!"

"Good egg!" said Jimmy Silver, and straightway ordered what was destined to be the last item on the bill of fare.

Tubby Muffin pitched into the chocolate like the horrible glutton he was—and is. A beatific smile lurked about the corners of his over-stuffed mouth. He looked, indeed, as though he were just getting into his stride.

As for Sammy Bunter, he was whacked, hopelessly and completely. He told me that the delicious chocolate cream tasted to him like rancid tallow candles, and that he couldn't possibly negotiate six whole bars. I replied that if he didn't I'd negotiate six tremendous kicks on his fat person.

With a despairing groan Sammy got on with it.

Tubby Muffin soon finished. But Sammy managed only five bars, and all the threats and abuse in the world would not induce him to continue. Sammy was beaten—by a solitary bar of chocolate!

I was almost dazed. Was it possible that Sammy Bunter, the second fattest and greediest cormorant in all Greyfriars, had allowed himself to be beaten in the gormandising line? And by an outsider like the bloated Muffin!

The rasping voice of Sergeant Kettle broke in rudely on my mournful reflections.

"That'll be eighteen-and-six, please!"

"And a quid for little us!" chuckled Jimmy Silver.

Like a fellow in a dream I paid over the money to the respective claimants. It left me with exactly twopence halfpenny.

"I—I can't understand it!" I gaped dazedly.

"Then let me explain," said Jimmy Silver. "We put this beast Tubby on short rations a couple of days ago, for raiding our tuck. Up to the time of this contest he hadn't eaten a solid meal for forty-eight hours. Consequently he was in great form this afternoon, and—"

"You—you—" I choked. "Oh, you—you—you—" Words failed me.

"Ha, ha, ha! Poor old Greyfriars! Still, you have the consolation of knowing that the stakes you've lost are going to be spent in a good cause. I think, you fellows"—Jimmy turned to the Co.—"we might present the winnings to the Cottage Hospital fund, eh?"

With feelings too deep for words I recovered my jigger and prepared to ride back to Greyfriars, forlorn and practically penniless.

But stay—I had one joy remaining. Sammy came along a few minutes later and I stopped in the roadway and gave him the bumping of his life. Dicky Nugent gave him another when Sammy got back to the school, for boning his bike. So I didn't lose one pound, eighteen-and-six entirely for nothing!

(If I had been there Tubby Muffin wouldn't have stood an earthly—not if he had been on hunger-strike for a fortnight! Yah! Serve you right for taking young Sammy!—B. BUNTER, Editor.)

POOR QUELCHY!



Why life is hard for the Greyfriars master!

"Now, Bull," said Quelch. "Who was Chaucer?"

"Your question makes me quake with awe, sir!"

"Skinner! Recite the works of Spencer!"

"I can't. I've got no common-sense, sir!"

"Bunter! What do you know of Hood?"

"It's put on prams to make kids good!"

"Now, tell me, Russell, what was Moore?"

"Please, sir, what Oliver Twist asked for!"

"Nugent! Recite to me from Browning!"

"I can't, sir, while you stand there frowning!"

"Bolsover major! Who was Keats?"

"A chap who manufactured sweets!"

"Newland, pray tell me, who was Scott?"

"Forgive me, sir, I've clean forgot!"

"Wun Lung! Who was the man Rossetti?"

"Me velly solly—me forgettee!"

"Brown! Where was the abode of Pope?"

"He lived at Rome. I'm right, I hope?"

"Stott! Tell us what you knew of Shelley."

"He lived on apple-tart and jelly!"

"Todd, pay attention! Who was Grey?"

"I'm sorry, sir—I couldn't say!"

A GREYFRIARS "CASE."

A BRUTAL-LOOKING youth named George Tubb was summoned for wilfully and with malice aforethought, thrusting a penholder through a herring and afterwards cooking it.

The prosecutor, Mr. P. Todd (for the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Fish), told the magistrate that this was a glaring act of frightfulness. He suggested that prisoner should be flayed alive.

Magistrate: More mess! (Laughter.)

Mr. M. Linley, counsel for the defence, submitted that the herring was already deceased at the time of the alleged ill-treatment.

Magistrate: That is neither here nor there. Would my learned friend care to have a pitchfork thrust through his body after his demise?

Mr. Linley: No, your worship. I didn't look at it in that light. Come to think of it, I fully agree with the prosecutor.

Prisoner was sentenced to ninety-nine strokes with the map-pole, and the magistrate said he would afterwards be sent to a reformatory. One of the barristers suggested that the sanatorium would be a more suitable place, under the circumstances!



The Terror of St. Ted's!

(B)
Dicky Nugent.

"They who in kwarrels interpose
Must often nurse a swollen nose!"

—Frank Feernought's motto.

SLOWLY the trane rolled into the station. Slowly the door of a first-class smoker was pushed open.

Slowly a youth in eatens descended from the trane. Slowly he threw his eyes round the platform—but noboddy was struck. Swiftly he hailed a passing porter.

"Porter!"
"Yessir?"
"Send my trunk and portmanter up to St. Ted's, will you?"

"I, I, sir!"
Slipping a couple of Id's into the porter's horny palm, the youth in catens turned on his heel. The station hack was waiting outside, and the very aneshunt hoarse was berrying its head in a noschag. Our hero jumped into the hack in such a nimbel manner that it was easy to see he was a grate atherlete.

"St. Ted's, please!" he said, poking his head threw the windor.

The driver whipped up his hoarse, and the hack rolled away with its yew-man burden. Frank Feernought—for that was our hero's name—looked rather grim as he was shaken up and down as if he was in a dice-box.

"I've heard sun kweer tails about St. Ted's!" he mernured. "The fellos their are very ruff on new boys. Thank goodness I no how to hold my own in fistick kombatt! They'll find me a tuff fiting-man, and I shall stand no nonsense. I fear no foe in shining armer!"

In the midst of thes meditations, Frank Feernought, with his brane in a fogg, found himself in the kwadrangle of St. Ted's.

When he stepped out of the hack, there was a sudden rush of feat, and he found himself surrounded by a serging, jossling, klanmnerous krowd. Their was a fello there who was taller than our hero by several feet. He was a terribel fello, with pertruding jors and a face like a chunk of Margate rock. This was Savage of the 4th—Savage by name and Savage by nayercher.

"Hi, you new kid!" he said roodly.

"What's yore name?"

"Frank Feernought!"

"How's yore father?"

"He's kwite all rite, eggsept for a tuch of the roomaticks," said Frank.

with crushing sarkazzum. "And who are you?"

"My name's Savage——"

"You look it!"

"Hear, nun of yore cheek!" cried the boonly of the 4th. "Their was once a fello who insulted me. They berried him in the Head's garden."

"With fool military caners?"



His blows rained like summer hail upon the faces and boddies of his opponents. One after another they went crashing to the ground, wear they lay like logs, with all the stuffing knocked out of them.

"No, but they berried him. And if you don't want to share the same fate you'd better hold yore piece!"

"Ratts!"

"If you say 'Ratts!' to me, young Feernought——"

"More ratts!" This was more than Savage could stand. He became as savage as a savage savage.

"Take that!" he cride, rushing at our hero.

Frank Feernought·stept swiftly to one sighed. He was not to be caught napping. The boonly's fist sang harmlessly past his ear. Then Frank terned, and put every oz. of strength into a knock-out blow.

Crash! Savage fell like a logg. The

other fellos erged him to rise, but he lay proan.

"I'm dun!" he groaned, betwene his clenched fists.

Frank Feernought flicked a speck of dust from his jacket.

"Take him away to the sanny," he said. "His kattergery is now C3. I may be rong, but I fancy he will be bedridden for life!"

"Shame!" cried a skore of voices.

Frank faced the krowd with heaving eyes and flashing chest.

"If I here anuthur word," he cried horsely, "I shall lay out the hole lot of you!"

"Shame!" repeated the voices.

That was two much for Frank Feernought. He dubbled his fists, and rushed into the throng, hitting out left and rite. Biff! Thud! Biff! Thud! Fellows fell like 9 pines in all direk-shuns. You never sea such a kom-motion.

Frank Feernought did deadly dam-midge. Not for nothing had he learnt the nobel art of self-defence. Not for nothing had he put in six yeers of sollid traning in the Jim.

His blows rained like summer hale upon the faces and boddies of his opponents. One after another they went crashing to the ground, wear they lay like logs, with all the stuffing knocked out of them.

The gate porter came running to the spott.

"Stopp that!" he cried. "Stopp it, you yung hooligan! Do you here?"

For answer, Frank Feernought spun round, and gave the gate porter a blow in the chest, which maid him koff.

"Take that, you interfering old buffer!" he cried. And then he looked round for fresh worlds to konker.

Biggun of the 6th was the neckst person to arrive on the scen. He bore down upon Frank with a fierce glint in his eyes, and a wart on his nose.

"You mad yung fool!" he showted.

"Have you suddenly taken levee of yore senses? You karn't come here and start laying out feloes holesale, like this. It isn't dun!"

"Go and eat koke!" said Frank skornfully.

"Don't you tork to me like that! Don't you no who I am? I'm Biggun, the skipper of St. Ted's!"

"I don't want to here anything about you and yore peddygree!" said Frank. "And if you lay so much as a little finger on me, you'll rew it for the rest of yore life!"

Now this sounded abserd, bekawse Biggun was a big 'un in evry sence of the term. In statcher he stood about seven feat as the crow flies. Frank Feernought only came up to the senior's weskit button. But we have already seen what our hero could do when he was roused. He was roused every morning at seven o'clock; and now he was roused in the afternoon, for a change.

"You cheeky yung bratt!" cride Biggun, in toans of high dungeon. "I—I'll jolly well——" But he got no further.

Frank Feernought dashed his clenched fist fool into the senior's ugly mugg.

"Ow-ow-ow-ow-ow-ow-ow-ow-ow-ow-ow-ow!" cried Biggun, 13 times off the reel—bekawse he was unlucky, I suppose. His berly form hit the flagstoans with a sickening thud. He maia no movement, but simply kicked his leggs up and down in aggerney.

"What is all this about?" eride a sharp voice. And Mr. Swishingham, the master of the 4th, came striding on the seen, his gown flapping in the breez.

The kwadrangle prezented a strange and garstly site. Newman forms were streon about everywhere. And in the midst of the debris—pronounced "day-bres"—stood hansom Frank Feernought. Although very hot from his eggserations, Frank faced the master coolly.

"I should advise you to run away and pick flours!" he said. "You remember the old rime:

'Those who in kwarrels interpose
Must often nurse a swollen nose!'"

"Boy!" roared Mr. Swishingham. "Deprieved yung hooligan! I can only konklood that you are demented."

"So you think I'm a candid date for Colney Hatch, do you?" showedt Frank. "I don't no who you are, and

I don't care: I've had enuff of yore insultations. Stopp that one!"

So saying, our hero lorched his left, strate from the shoulder, and Mr. Swishingham went down for the kount. Of corse, it was a very serious thing to strike a master. It's one of the things that isn't dun in skools. You can strike a good idear; you can strike lucky: but you must never strike a master.

Mr. Swishingham staggered to his feet, and taking a wissle from his pockitt, he blew it (the wissle, not the pockitt). Instantly their was a rush of feat, and a krowd of felloes came running on the seen.

"I have been struck!" cried Mr. Swishingham. "I am simply thunder-struck! Take this boy away to the headmaster's studdy! He shall not remane another hour at St. Ted's! He shall be publickly dispelled!"

Frank Feernought fought like a wild-cat as the krowd closed in upon him. But he had no chane against a hundred and thirty-nine fellowes, menny of whom were armed to the teeth with cricket stumps.

They bore Frank away to the Head's studdy, wear Mr. Swishingham was already opening the case for the prosecution.

"Feernought!" said the Head: "Within a few minnits of yore arrival at this seat of learning, you have kommitted assault and battery on twenty-five boys, the kaptein of the skool, and a Form-master! Why, I beleeve you would attack even me if you had ½ a chanse!"

"Not ½!" said Frank.

"Retched boy!" said the Head, in toans of thunder, wile the lightning flashed from his eyes. "You are dispelled from the skool in deep disgrace! Go—and never darken these doors again!"

Frank Feernought crawled away. Was he about to look his last on the old skool, wear he had spent so menny happy minnits? No jolly feer!

As soon as he got out into the kwadrangle he discovered that the skool was on fire, and he swarmed up a ladder and reskewed the Head's dorter from a watery grave.

For this act of gallantry he was aloud to stopp at the skool.

I will now deskribe his fether progress—how he rapidly climed the ladder—

(No you won't. Dicky-me-lad! You take a short run. We've had quite enuff of you!—B. BUNTER, Editor.)

PARODIES UP-TO-DATE!

SING a song of sixpence, a pocket full of rye,
Bunter's postal-order is coming by and by.

When the letter's opened, the chaps will start to sing:

"Bunter's cash has come at last—what a curious thing!"

I dreamt that I dwelt in marble halls,
And I died on a fragrant kipper.
I awoke to the sound of Bob Cherry's bawls

And the lusty whack of his slipper!

The boy stood on the burning deck
When Sawbuttee had fled.
(This is how Rake recited it,
And Bulstrode punched his head!)

Little Sammy Bunter sat in a shunter
Eating a railway lunch,
When Billy espied him, and sat down beside him—

And soon there was nothing to munch!

"Mother, may I go out to swim?"

"Yes, my little grub,
For many a year has passed, I fear,
Since you had a morning tub!"

Old King Cole was a merry old soul,
And a merry old soul was he.
But he wasn't so merry as old Bob Cherry,

Who's always bursting with glee!

'Tis the voice of the sluggard,

He says, with a frown,
"This early 'getting up'
Will soon 'get me down'!"

Little Jack Horner sat in a corner,
Eating a priceless pie.
The pie was "priceless" for, you see
He'd stolen it—that's why!

Ride a cock horse to Banbury Cross,
But don't put Bunter on your hoss.
For Billy's weight is half a ton,
And your poor old steed will be undone!

Of all the girls that are so sweet,
There's none like Bessie Bunter,
Who grimly sets herself to eat
Whatever may confront her!

Hey diddle diddle, the cat and the fiddle,
The cow jumped over the moon.
The Greyfriars porpoise jumped over a fence,
And collapsed like a pricked balloon;

Jack Spratt could eat no fat.

Bunter said, "All serene,
You can digest my Sunday hat,
I'll scoff your fat, old bean!"

Higgledy-piggledy, my black hen,
She lays eggs for gentlemen.
Her eggs are much preferred at home,
To Macaulay's "Lays of Ancient Rome."

Coker had a motor-bike,
His very own, you know;
And everywhere that Coker went
That bike refused to go!

Georgie Porgie, pudden and pie,
Kissed the girls and made them cry;
Georgie Bulstrode can't do this—
He can find no girls to kiss!



Bob Cherry

of Greyfriars



ONE OF THE FAMOUS FIVE.
THE GENIAL BOB
IS ONE OF THE BEST ALL-
ROUND SCHOOLBOY SPORTSMEN.

WHEN SCHOOLDAYS END!



What shall I be? Day-dreams of what the Future may hold!

Jimmy Silver's Pupils!



By OWEN CONQUEST

A Rattling, Rollicking Yarn of Rookwood School!

THE FIRST CHAPTER

Disturbers of the Peace!

"YAH! Call yourself a cricketer?"

Jimmy Silver flushed angrily.

He spun round, bat in hand, and glared in the direction from which that sarcastic shout had come.

A practice-match was in progress on the junior ground, and Jimmy Silver, the leader of the Classical Fourth, had been batting brilliantly. He generally did. Jimmy was well set now, and the bowling had no terrors for him. He knew he had made a good score—he was somewhere in the sixties—and it was very annoying to be constantly interrupted in this way.

"I'll go and slaughter those bounders, in a minute!" growled Jimmy Silver.

"Faith, an' they deserve it, entirely!" said Tommy Doyle, who was keeping wicket. "They seem to be tryin' to put you off your game, bedad!"

Sprawling on the grass, under one of the beech-trees which bordered the cricket ground, were four fellows. Their faces were not familiar to the Rookwood juniors.

Jimmy Silver surmised that they were new boys.

One of the four—a big, burly youth in Etons—had fallen asleep. That, in itself, was an insult. It suggested that Rookwood cricket was not lively enough to keep him awake.

The second member of the quartette was also a burly youth. He lay at full length, with his chin resting in his hands.

The other two were under-sized, cheeky young rascals. These were the two who had been making uncomplimentary remarks at the expense of Jimmy Silver. Jimmy's glare, which was intended to freeze them into silence, had quite the opposite effect. Making megaphones of their hands, they continued to shout abusive remarks.

"Bah!"

"You're no batsman!"

"Better chuck cricket, and take up ludo!"

Jimmy Silver's flush deepened.

"The—the cheeky young sweeps!" he snorted. "I feel like tanning their hides for them! If they're new kids—as I believe

—they'll soon have to learn better manners."

Tommy Dodd, who was waiting to bowl, made a gesture of impatience.

"Don't take any notice of those bounders, Silver!" he called out. "You can deal with them afterwards. Play!"

And Tommy Dodd gripped the round red ball tightly and started his run.

Jimmy Silver went on batting, rather more recklessly than usual. He was anxious for his innings to come to an end, so that he could deal with the interrupters. But he had hopes of reaching his century first. He knew that he was well on the road to it.

Of course, Jimmy's chums, who were looking on from the pavilion, could have handled the cheeky strangers. But they knew that Jimmy would prefer to deal with them himself, so they refrained from interfering.

Jimmy Silver was laying about the bowling with great vigour. He opened his shoulders to a half-volley, and sent the ball speeding to the boundary.

"Fluke!" came a shrill squeak from one of the undersized young rascals.

Jimmy Silver looked grim.

"All right, my beauty!" he murmured. "Just you wait till my innings is over!"

"Shure, an' we'll give the spalpeen a jolly good bumping!" growled Tommy Doyle.

"Yes, rather!"

Tommy Cook, who happened to be fielding on the boundary line, within a few yards of the strangers, turned to admonish them.

"Keep quiet, can't you?" he said angrily. "It isn't cricket, to keep bawling rude remarks, and to put a batsman off his stroke."

"Rats!" growled the burly youth, who was awake.

"Go and eat coke!" chanted the two under-sized infants in chorus.

Tommy Cook clenched his hands hard. He felt like hurling himself at the strangers, and knocking their heads together. But he reflected that their punishment could safely be left to Jimmy Silver.

At that moment, Jimmy skied a ball in Tommy Cook's direction. The fieldsman was unprepared for it. He ran hard, but he was too late. The ball eluded his frantic clutch, and dropped in the grass.

"Yah!"

"Butterfingers!"

"You can't catch for toffee!"

Tommy Cook gathered up the ball and threw it in. Then he glared at his critics.

"I'll tell you what you'll catch before long," he said, "and that's a thundering good hiding!"

The only response to this threat was a shrill cackle.

"He, he, he!"

The game went on, and so did the interruptions. They were getting on Jimmy Silver's nerves, and causing him to make some very reckless strokes. On two occasions the ball came off the edge of the bat, and was nearly held in the slips. But Fortune smiled on Jimmy Silver, and his score rose merrily, until it stood at 99. Jimmy was on the threshold of his century!

There was a shout from the pavilion.

"Only one more for your hundred Jimmy!"

"Go easy, old chap!"

Tommy Dodd was still bowling. He had been punished terribly, but he had not despaired of taking Jimmy Silver's wicket. There was a resolute gleam in Tommy Dodd's eye as he took his run.

It was at this critical moment that the under-sized infants on the grass started to sing:

"He's out, he's out, without a doubt!

This ball will beat him hollow!

He's out, he's out, he's put to rout—

Next man, prepare to follow!"

The song was prophetic. Jimmy Silver, with that din ringing in his ears, could hardly be expected to keep his wicket intact. He lunged forward wildly, and there was an ominous clatter behind him.

The middle stump lay flat. The leg stump lay beside it in silent sympathy. Jimmy Silver stood glaring down at the wreckage.

"Rough luck!" murmured Tommy Doyle, gathering up the bails.

Jimmy Silver made no reply. It was a time for action, not for speech. Gripping his bat-handle in a business-like manner, Jimmy went striding away in the direction of the beech-tree, under whose leafy shade the four strangers sprawled.

Jimmy was snorting like a war-horse by the time he reached his objective.

The burly youth who had been slumbering was now wide awake. He blinked at Jimmy Silver in surprise.

"Hallo! You seem to be out for scalps," was his comment.

"I am!" was the grim rejoinder.

"I've no quarrel with you—nor with you." Jimmy added, indicating the other big fellow. "You've been fairly quiet. But as for these two brats, they've put me off my game, and stopped me from getting my century. I don't know who they are, and I don't care. They ought to know better than to interrupt a cricket match. I'm going to give the pair of them a jolly good hiding!"

"Pardon me," said the burly youth who had been asleep, "but we belong to the Society for the Protection of Small Boys. Algy and Cuthbert are our young brothers. We must request you, therefore, to keep off the grass."

The burly fellow spoke flippantly enough, but there was a menacing gleam in his eye.

Jimmy Silver, however, was not to be turned from his purpose. In his present mood, he would cheerfully have tackled the whole quartet, in spite of the fact that two of them were bigger than himself.

Jimmy took a quick step towards the two cheeky infants. Instantly their big brothers jumped up, with the intention of dragging Jimmy back.

But at that moment Jimmy Silver's chums came sprinting on the scene. Lovell and Newcome and Raby, Erroll and Teddy Grace and Conroy, came hurrying to the spot.

"Going to lick these cheeky bounders, Jimmy?" panted Lovell.

"Yes, if you'll look after their big brothers for a minute."

"All serene!"



Wanting only one more for his century, Jimmy Silver lunged forward wildly—and there was an ominous clatter behind him. Jimmy stood glaring down at the wreckage. (See previous page.)

Jimmy's chums promptly hurled themselves at the two burly youths, and restrained them by force from interfering.

Lovell and Newcome dealt with one big brother, and Erroll and Raby saw to the other.

Teddy Grace and Conroy pounced upon one of the small boys, and spread-eagled his arms and legs, pinning him to the grass. Then Jimmy Silver got busy with the cricket-bat.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yarooooop!"

A wild yell of anguish floated on the summer air.

"Go it, Jimmy!" chuckled Conroy. "Give the little beggar beans!"

Jimmy laid on the willow good and hard, and the dust rose in clouds from the small boy's trousers. He had asked for trouble, and now he had got it, with a vengeance!

Six strokes were sufficient, in Jimmy Silver's view. They were more than sufficient, in the victim's view! His yells of anguish could be heard at a considerable distance. They were heard, in fact, by Mr. Manders, who went to his study window to investigate.

The Housemaster gazed across the wide expanse of greensward. Then he frowned, and his lips were compressed in a hard line.

"This is outrageous!" muttered Mr. Manders. "That boy Silver appears to have taken leave of his senses! He must be stopped at once!"

And the Housemaster hurried from his study.

When Mr. Roger Manders arrived on the scene, the second victim was getting it "in the neck"—or, rather, in a lower portion of his anatomy. His yells of anguish were even more loud and shrill than those of his brother.

Jimmy Silver, flushed with his exertions, was so intent upon his task that he failed to notice the arrival of Mr. Manders. And his chums, who were equally busy, also failed to notice the Housemaster's presence, until his harsh voice grated on their ears.

"Stop!"

It was only one word, but it was enough.

Jimmy Silver spun round with a start, and the cricket-bat slithered from his grasp.

"How dare you, Silver?" thundered Mr. Manders. "How dare you castigate my nephews in this brutal manner?"

"Your—your nephews, sir?" stuttered Jimmy Silver, aghast.

"Yes!" stormed the Housemaster. "These four boys arrived this afternoon, and are temporary guests at this school. Is this the way to treat your guests, Silver?"

"Oh, crumbs!" faltered Jimmy. "I—I —"

Mr. Manders frowned.

"I have no doubt the assault was entirely unprovoked," he said. "It is disgraceful—monstrous! In the ordinary way, I should report the matter to your own Housemaster, Mr. Dalton. But as these boys, whom you have ill-treated, are my own nephews, I feel justified in dealing with this matter myself. You will write a thousand lines, Silver!"

"Oh, make it a billion!" murmured Lovell, under his breath.

"Every other boy concerned in this outrage will write five hundred lines!" snapped Mr. Manders.

The Housemaster then turned to his snivelling nephews.

"Algernon! Cuthbert! I am extremely sorry this has happened, my dear boys. Why did not Jack and Joseph protect you?"

"We hadn't a chance, uncle," said Jack—the youth who had been asleep for the greater part of the afternoon.

"These fellows grabbed hold of us, and held us back," said Joe.

"Disgraceful!" snorted Mr. Manders. "However, I have amply punished them for their complicity in this affair. You had better come in now, my dear boys. Tea is ready."

So saying, the Housemaster stalked away, followed by his four nephews—the burly Jack and Joe, and the under-sized Algernon and Cuthbert.

Jimmy Silver & Co. gazed gloomily after the retreating procession.

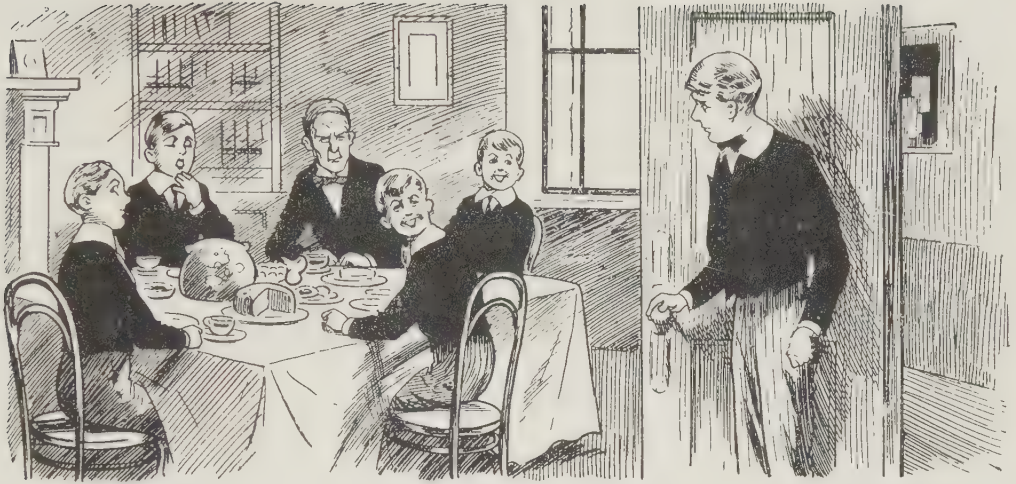
THE SECOND CHAPTER

Comical Cricket!

"YOU'RE wanted, Jimmy!"

Tommy Dodd popped a beaming face round the door of the end study, where Jimmy Silver & Co. were at tea.

"Who wants me?" growled the leader of the Classical Fourth. He was in a far from angelic mood, just then. When a fellow makes 99 in a cricket match, and then loses his wicket through no fault of his own, he can be excused for feeling annoyed. Moreover, when that same fellow has collected an imposition of a thousand lines, he can be



Jimmy Silver moodily made his way to Mr. Mander's study, and found Roger Manders and his four precocious nephews seated round the tea-table. (See this page.)

excused for feeling not only annoyed, but homicidal.

"Manders sent me to find you, Jimmy," said Tommy Dodd. "Don't look alarmed! He's not going to dole out any more impots. He's quite simmered down; he's like a cooing dove, in fact."

"What's he want me for?" grunted Jimmy Silver, rising to his feet.

"He's going to offer you a job as cricket coach to his nephews," said Tommy Dodd, with a grin.

"Oh, my giddy aunt!"

There was blank dismay on Jimmy Silver's face. He did not relish the idea of putting Mr. Manders' nephews through their paces.

Jimmy's chums chuckled over their tea-cups; and Tommy Dodd's grin was exasperating.

"Aren't you feeling awfully, fearfully bucked at getting the offer of such a job?" asked the Modern junior, in mock surprise.

"Indeed I'm not!" growled Jimmy Silver.

"Oh, I say! That's jolly ungrateful of you, you know. It was I who got you this job."

"You?" howled Jimmy

Tommy Dodd nodded cheerfully.

"Old Manders sent for me, and asked me who was the best junior cricketer at Rookwood. My reply was as prompt as a pistol-shot. I said, 'Jimmy Silver, sir!'"

"You—you—"

"So Manders said, 'Very well, Dodd. Kindly find Silver, and ask him to step along to my study. I wish him to coach my nephews at cricket.' Jolly decent of me to recommend you, Jimmy, wasn't it?"

Jimmy Silver didn't seem to think so. He seemed to think it positively horrible of Tommy Dodd. And the glance he bestowed upon that cheery youth was far from amiable.

"You've let me in for something now!" he groaned. "I feel like wiping up the floor with you!"

"Don't!" pleaded Tommy Dodd. "Such a nasty mess for the maid to sweep up in the morning."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Better toddle along to old Manders, Jimmy," counselled Newcome. "He doesn't like to be kept waiting."

Jimmy Silver moodily made his way to Mr. Manders' study on the Modern side. When he got there, he found Roger Manders

and his four precocious nephews seated round the tea-table. Algernon and Cuthbert were bolting jam-tarts for all they were worth.

"Ah! Come in, Silver!" said Mr. Manders. "I have no wish to resurrect the painful episode which occurred this afternoon on the cricket ground. I have sent for you because my nephews need a certain amount of tuition at cricket."

"They seem to know the game inside-out, sir, judging by the way they criticised my batting this afternoon," said Jimmy Silver drily.

"You can't bat for monkey-nuts!" mumbled Cuthbert, with his mouth full.

Mr. Manders frowned.

"Be silent, Cuthbert! Now, Silver, I am going to request you to act in the capacity of cricket coach to my nephews."

Jimmy Silver made a grimace.

"Afraid I couldn't teach them much, sir," he said. "I'm a very moderate player."

"But Dodd said——"

"Ahem! Dodd's rather given to flattery, sir."

Jimmy Silver tried hard to wriggle out of the job which Mr. Manders was imposing upon him. But the Housemaster was firm—so firm that his request became a command. He would not take "No" for an answer.

"You must take my nephews to the nets after tea, Silver, and impart to them the necessary tuition," he said.

Jimmy groaned inwardly.

"You understand, Silver?" said Mr. Manders sharply.

"Yes, sir," came the reluctant reply.

"Very well. Your imposition of a thousand lines is reduced to five hundred, to compensate you for the time taken up by this tuition."

Jimmy Silver brightened up a little at that. But the prospect of coaching Mr. Manders' tribe of nephews was not a happy one. Jimmy felt like seeking out Tommy Dodd, and punching him with great violence on the nose.

Jimmy went back to his study and finished his tea. Then, still wearing his flannels, he went down to the nets. His chums followed, eager to see the fun.

Mr. Manders' nephews were awaiting Jimmy Silver's arrival. Jack and Joe were looking bored; and Algernon and Cuthbert were looking decidedly spiteful. They were still smarting from the castigation they had received at Jimmy Silver's hands.

Jimmy addressed the quartette.

"I don't know why your uncle foisted this job on to me," he growled. "Still, I've got to go through with it. Put on your pads, one of you, and let's see how you shape at the wicket."

It was Joe, one of the burly ones, who took first knock. Jimmy Silver bowled, and sent down some simple stuff, but Joe was all at sea. His batting was of the rustic order, such as may be seen on village greens, when the blacksmith goes in with the avowed intention of knocking the cover off the ball.

Joe swiped savagely at every ball, but he was seconds too late, in his timing. The stumps were knocked down every time, and the little group of onlookers, standing behind the net, were chuckling with merriment.

"Coconut-shies, three a penny!" chortled Lovell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is this cricket, or a slogging competition?" murmured Raly.

Jimmy Silver shbuted some instructions to the batsman.

"You're there to defend your wicket, not to give an exhibition of bat-swinging! Keep your eye on the ball, and note where it pitches, and then make your stroke."

"I'm playing the correct game," grunted Joe. "Jessop was a slogger, wasn't he?"

"Yes; but not a blind slogger. He didn't shut his eyes and swipe wildly. What you want is a little more self-control."

"Oh, shut up!" growled the batsman. "I'm not going to be dictated to by a kid."

Jimmy Silver shrugged his shoulders.

"No use trying to teach a fellow who obstinately refuses to learn," he said.

"Your brother Jack had better take a turn."

But Jack, who evidently believed in taking his sleep in large and frequent doses, was sprawling on the grass, slumbering placidly. He seemed to regard cricket as the most boring thing in life. Jimmy Silver tried to rouse him, but he was told, in a drowsy voice, to run away and pick flowers.

"Well, you're a bright lot, I must say!" snorted Jimmy. "What you might call apt and eager pupils—I don't think! Now, Algernon, let's see what you can do with the bat."

All that Algernon could do with the bat was to knock down his own wicket. He succeeded in performing this feat several times, and the onlookers were in a state bordering on hysterics.

Never had the Rookwood juniors seen such arrant duffers at the wicket. They had always regarded Tubby Muffin, the fat fellow of the Fourth, as a comical cricketer; but Tubby was a Jack Hobbs by comparison with Mr. Manders' nephews.

The wretched Algernon, jumping back in alarm at every delivery, continued to amuse the audience by knocking down his wicket.

With a snort of disgust, Jimmy Silver called upon Cuthbert to perform.

Cuthbert proved a bigger comedian than his brother. His knowledge of cricket was not extensive, but it was certainly peculiar. He seemed to think it was the correct caper to pull an off ball round to leg, and to cut a leg ball in the direction of point. It was whilst attempting to perform the latter feat that he stopped the ball with his hip.

A fiendish yell rang out, and Cuthbert danced wildly in the air.

"Yow! I believe you did that on purpose, you rotter! I'll tell my uncle!"

"Sneak!" came a contemptuous chorus from behind the net.

"Oh, let him tell Manders the tale, if he wants to!" said Jimmy Silver scornfully. "He can mention, at the same time, that he's the biggest booby that ever handled a cricket-bat! Of all the duds and duffers, these bright beauties take the biscuit! And yet they had the brazen nerve to sneer at my batting this afternoon!"

"Calm yourself," said the burly Joe. "You haven't tried us at bowling yet. We're hot-stuff with the ball. I can generally manage to put one straight one down in every six!"



Joe's third ball came whizzing down at express speed, straight for the batsman. Jimmy Silver sprang clear, but it would have been easier to dodge a bullet than to dodge that cricket ball. It smote the batsman full on the thigh. (See next page.)

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver walked to the wicket, and relieved the whimpering Cuthbert of the bat.

"Carry on!" he said. "See if you can spread-eagle my stumps!"

Joe started to bowl. His bowling was worse than his batting, and that was saying a great deal. The first ball trickled along the ground at a gentle pace, as if a game of marbles was in progress. The second ball shot into space like a sky-rocket. And it inspired Lovell, who was looking on, to make a quotation:

"I chucked a ball into the air,
It fell to earth—I know not where!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Joe's third ball brought tragedy in its train. It came whizzing down at express speed—straight for the batsman. Jimmy Silver sprang clear, but it would have been easier to dodge a bullet than to dodge that cricket-ball. It smote the batsman full on the thigh, and Jimmy sat down with a bump and a roar.

"Yaroooooo! You dangerous madman! Are you trying to take my life?"

"Sorry——" began Joe.

"Bless your sorrow! I shall have a fearful bruise where that ball biffed me! You ought never to be allowed to try and play cricket. You ought to be shut up in a safe place. I'm fed-up with this coaching job. I resign, here and now!"

"Swelling the ranks of the unemployed," said Lovell sadly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver was in earnest about resigning. He would not have gone on with his duties, even if Mr. Manders had offered him ten shillings an hour on account of the perilous nature of those duties.

Whatever Mr. Manders had to say about it, Jimmy Silver was finished. He picked himself up, and limped away towards the building.

Straight to Mr. Manders' study he went, and he told the Housemaster, politely but firmly, that he was unable to continue his duties as a cricket coach.

Mr. Manders didn't like it. He was, in fact, quite nasty about it. But Jimmy Silver remained firm—obstinate. Mr. Manders called it—and the Housemaster had to accept his resignation. He could not have taken the matter to the Head, because there was no law which compelled a junior to act as cricket coach to a master's nephews.

Jimmy Silver was relieved of his duties. And Jimmy himself was greatly relieved in consequence!

THE THIRD CHAPTER A Surprise for Rookwood!

"THUNDERING cheek, I call it!"

Thus Arthur Edward Lovell.

It was Saturday morning, and Jimmy Silver & Co. were chatting in the sunny quadrangle. They had a cricket fixture with Greyfriars in the afternoon.

"Cheek?" echoed Jimmy Silver. "It's something more than cheek! It's absolute, brazen, cast-iron nerve! I've never heard anything to equal it in all my days!"

Jimmy spoke as if he were a doddering octogenarian, instead of a youngster of fifteen.

"Does Manders really insist upon it, Jimmy?" asked Newcome.

"Yes. I've pleaded with him, and entreated him—on my bended knees, almost. But he won't budge from his attitude. He's ordered me—ordered me, mark you—to play his four precious nephews in the team this afternoon!"

"But he's got no right to do it!" protested Raby.

"I know that, fathead," growled Jimmy Silver. "He's no right to do anything of the sort. But he's done it!"

"Can't we appeal to the Head?" suggested Lovell.

"Head's away for the day."

Lovell groaned. And the others groaned in dismal chorus.

Mr. Roger Manders was certainly acting in a very high-handed manner. He had actually ordered Jimmy Silver, the captain of the Rookwood team, to find places in the eleven for his four nephews. In vain Jimmy had protested; in vain he had



The Greyfriars' eleven arrived after dinner. Harry Wharton & Co., who had made a long charabanc journey in order to play the fixture, were always welcome visitors to Rookwood, and they received a hearty greeting. (See next page.)

Wharton & Co., who had made a long charabanc journey in order to play the fixture, were always welcome visitors to Rookwood, and they received a hearty greeting. (See next page.)

pointed out that Jack and Joe, and Algeron and Cuthbert, could hardly tell a cricket-bat from a maiden over. The fiat had gone forth, and it was decreed that the Housemaster's four nephews should take part in the cricket match against Greyfriars.

"Think what it means!" said Jimmy Silver, aghast. "I shall have to kick four fellows out of the team, to make way for those fearful duffers! Conroy and Van Ryn will have to stand down. So will Rawson and Lacy. It—it almost makes me weep!"

"Greyfriars will lick us hollow," said Lovell lugubriously. "Why, we shall only have half a team!"

The juniors exchanged moody glances. There was no way out of the predicament, that they could see. It would be no use appealing to George Bulkeley, captain of

games. Mr. Manders was a greater power than Bulkeley. It was no use appealing to Mr. Dalton, the Housemaster of the Classical Side. Mr. Manders, by virtue of seniority, was a greater power than Mr. Dalton.

Small wonder that Jimmy Silver & Co. viewed the forthcoming match with deep dismay. How could they hope to beat Greyfriars, with four hopeless duffers in the team?

Somebody suggested that the team went on strike, and refused to play the match at all. But Jimmy Silver pointed out that this would be most unfair to the Greyfriars fellows, who were making a long charabanc journey in order to play the fixture.

"We must bear it," said Jimmy, "though it's hard to grin. We shall be

whacked to the wide, of course, but we'll at least put up a fight."

"Yes, rather!"

The Greyfriars eleven arrived after dinner. Harry Wharton & Co. were always welcome visitors to Rookwood, and they received a hearty greeting.

Mr. Manders' nephews turned out in their flannels. They seemed amused at Jimmy Silver's discomfiture. Jimmy found it difficult to speak a civil word to them. He suspected that they had begged their uncle to let them play with the sole object of helping Rookwood to lose, instead of win the match.

It was to be a single innings affair. Time would not permit of the teams having a couple of innings apiece.

Harry Wharton won the toss, and elected to bat first.

It was a good wicket, and the Friars made the most of it. They scored runs at a merry pace, and they received valuable assistance in the field from Mr. Manders' nephews, who muffed catches galore, and were very slack in their fielding.

However, Jimmy Silver and Teddy Grace bowled really well, and wickets fell at intervals.

The Greyfriars total reached exactly 100. But for bad blunders in the field, they would have been skittled out for half that total.

Jimmy Silver looked very thoughtful during the tea interval.

"There's just a chance that we shall pull it off, after all," he said. "I won't pretend it's a rosy chance; still, it's a chance. It means that seven of us—we can safely leave out those four duffers—have got to get a hundred and one runs between us."

"A tall order," said Lovell. "Still, we'll do our best."

Rookwood started their formidable task in the true sporting spirit.

Jimmy Silver and Lovell laid the foundations of a good score. They rattled up thirty runs before Lovell left, caught in the slips.

Tommy Dodd came in, and hit a couple of boundaries before being caught at third man.

Thirty-eight for two!

Newcome took up the running, and he gave Jimmy Silver valuable assistance before a fast ball from Hurree Singh whipped off his bails.

Fifty-five for three!

Tommy Doyle, eager to snatch a run where no run was, had his wicket thrown down by a smart return. Raby also failed to score.

Fifty-five for five!

Matters looked very black for Rookwood now. There was only Teddy Grace to come in; for Mr. Manders' four nephews were not expected to make a single run between them.

Jimmy Silver beckoned to the incoming batsman.

"Keep your end up, Teddy," he said. "Leave the hitting to your Uncle James."

Teddy Grace followed out this injunction to the letter. He put a straight bat in front of everything.

The Greyfriars bowling was brilliant, and the fielding was almost superhuman in its smartness. But Teddy Grace was firm as a rock.

Meanwhile, Jimmy Silver, who was now complete master of the attack, continued to pile up the runs. The faces of the spectators brightened considerably. There was still a faint hope that Rookwood would pull the game out of the fire.

But the partnership between Jimmy Silver and Teddy Grace was severed at last. Teddy planted his leg in front of a straight one, and a sharp "Huzzat?" went up from the eager fieldsmen.

The umpire's hand was raised, and Teddy Grace walked ruefully back to the pavilion.

Seventy-six for six!

Rookwood required 25 runs to give them the victory, and there were only four frabjous fatheads to go in, as Lovell expressed it.

"It's all over, bar shouting," said Newcome dismally. "Jimmy Silver would hit off the runs, if only he could get somebody to stay with him. But Manders' nephews will be skittled out like rabbits."

It looked as if Newcome's gloomy prophecy would be fulfilled.

The burly Joe lumbered to the wickets. He made a herculean swipe at his first ball, with the fixed intention of despatching it to the farthest limits of the horizon. But the best-laid schemes of mice and men—and cricket sloggers—sometimes go astray. Joe's bat swept through the air, and the next moment he was sadly surveying a wrecked wicket.

Cuthbert came in next. He spooned his first ball feebly into the air, and the wicket-keeper calmly put out one hand and caught it.



The batsman, lunging forward with a smile, clumped the ball hard and true to the boundary. "Hurrah!" The air was rent with cheering. The miracle had happened, and Rookwood had snatched victory from the very jaws of defeat! (See next page.)

The wretched Algernon followed on, and was clean bowled.

Jimmy Silver groaned.

"It's all up!" he murmured. "There's only one more man to come in, and he might as well stay in the pavilion, for all the use he'll be!"

But that was where Jimmy Silver was wrong. He had never seen Jack play. Jack was the Tired Tim of the tribe of nephews. He spent all his spare time—and a good deal that was not spare—in slumber.

However, Jack knew enough about cricket

to be able to keep his end up when necessary. And it was necessary now.

To Jimmy Silver's surprise, the last man in did not fall an easy prey to the bowling. He faced it fearlessly, and played out the over with the utmost coolness and composure.

Now came Jimmy's turn. He hit a couple of boundaries, and he scored a single off the last ball of the over, which gave him the bowling again.

Ten more runs were added, by means of powerful driving; and Rookwood needed only six more to win.

But Jimmy Silver no longer had the bowling. It was Mr. Manders' nephew who held the fate of Rookwood in his hands. He faced Hurree Singh with confidence, and drove the first ball through the covers. The batsmen crossed twice.

There was a roar from the pavilion.

"Well hit, sir!"

"You can get three there!"

But the batsmen were taking no risks. The Greyfriars fielding was too smart to allow of liberties being taken.

The next ball was a scorcher, and Jack did well to stop it dead. But the next delivery pitched a trifle short. The batsman, lunging forward with a smile, clumped it hard and true to the boundary.

"Hurrah!"

The air was rent with cheering. The miracle had happened, and Rookwood had snatched victory from the very jaws of defeat—thanks to Mr. Manders' nephew!

Jimmy Silver, his face radiant, pelted down the pitch, and grasped his partner warmly by the hand.

"Jolly well played!" he said. "I thought you were a dozey sort of merchant who didn't know one end of a bat from the

other; but I'm dashed if you haven't made the winning hit!"

"It was a fluke," murmured Jack.

But Jimmy Silver knew better.

It was a merry party of cricketers that assembled in the end study that evening, to celebrate the sensational victory.

Mr. Manders' nephews were there, and Joe and Algernon and Cuthbert were forgiven their sorry exhibition. Jack's brilliance had made up for their shortcomings.

The celebration went with a rousing swing from start to finish; and there were radiant faces and beaming smiles in the Rookwood camp.

THE END

FOOTBALL GOSSIP AT ROOKWOOD

By GEORGE BULKELEY, *Head of Games.*

ROOKWOOD football has had its "miracle matches," as well as cricket. In my own day, a match was played between our First Eleven and our rivals in the next county—St. Jim's. The "Saints" seemed determined to give us a thorough trouncing, for, playing irresistible football with the wind at their backs, they rattled in four goals in the first half. The game was too one-sided for words. Hampered by the wind, and bewildered by our opponents' dazzling manœuvres, we could not get our attack going; and it looked any odds on St. Jim's winning in a canter. On our own pitch, too!

For what happened in the second half, we had to thank the wind—now in our favour—and Neville of the Sixth. You know what happens when a player suddenly gets inspired? It is infectious! Well, old Neville, who had been right off his form in the first half, suddenly woke up. Five-foot-six of football fearlessness, he went through the St. Jim's defence like a knife through

cheese. Many of his shots were saved or charged down, but he found the net twice, and this gave new heart to us all. We girded up our loins, so to speak, and gave the St. Jim's defence no peace. I popped in another goal from Neville's pass, and then Neville dashed through on his own again, and brought the scores level—4—4.

With only ten minutes to go, both sides played up desperately. All seemed lost when Kildare, the St. Jim's skipper, scored with a powerful drive from long range; but in the closing minutes we again rallied, and two goals in swift succession settled the issue. Eleven goals in one game, and Rookwood claimed six! And we had been four down at half-time! Can you wonder that the crowd swarmed on to the pitch, and carried Neville shoulder-high to the dressing-room? And can you wonder that even the ranks of Tuscany—in other words, the ranks of St. Jim's—could not *forbear* to cheer? That great game will be an abiding memory!

THE ARM OF THE LAW!



*The Famous Arthur Augustus D'Arcy
and his Chums, in a Rollicking Story
of School Life at St. Jim's*

By

MARTIN CLIFFORD

THE FIRST CHAPTER

The Only Way!

"WATS!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the St. Jim's Fourth, spoke with emphasis.

"Now, look here, Gussy!" urged Blake and Herries and Digby, with one voice.

"I wepeat, wats!"

"Look here, fathead——"

"I wefuse to be called a fathead, Blake! And I wefuse to wemain within gates this aftahnoon."

"I tell you——"

"I wegard Mr. Lathom's action, in gatin' this studay, as extwemely high-handed, and, in fact, unjust!" said Arthur Augustus hotly. "I have an appointment in Wylcombe this aftahnoon, and I am wresolved to keep it. That settles the mattah."

"But——"

"Wats!"

There was a little excitement in Study No. 6, in the School House at St. Jim's

Blake & Co. were endeavouring to induce their aristocratic chum to see reason. Arthur Augustus decidedly declined to see reason, or anything like it.

His noble mind was made up.

"I have a vewy particulah appointment," he said. "It is wotten bad form

to fail to keep an appointment. I am wresolved to keep that appointment. I assuah you, deah boys, that wild horses will not keep me away fwom Wylcombe this aftahnoon."

"Fathead!"

"Weally, Blake——"

"Look here——" bawled Herries.

"Pway do not woar at me, Hewwies. I have mentioned more than once that I dislike bein' woared at."

"You—you—you——" gasped Herries.

"Pway let the mattah dwop. I am goin', and that ends it."

Arthur Augustus spoke in a tone of finality. The swell of St. Jim's prided himself upon possessing the firmness of a rock. His comrades characterised it rather as the obstinacy of a mule.

Whether it was the firmness of a rock, or the obstinacy of a mule, there was no doubt that Arthur Augustus meant what he said.

"Oh, bump him!" exclaimed Blake, in great exasperation. "It's no good talking to him. Bump him!"

"Weally, you ass——"

Tom Merry, of the Shell, looked into Study No. 6 with a smiling face. He had heard the argument going on—indeed, it would have been difficult for any fellow passing along the passage to fail to hear it.

"Gently does it, old scouts!" said the captain of the Shell cheerily. "What's the little trouble? Tell your Uncle Thomas."

"That ass Gussy——"

"That chump Gussy——"

"That fathead D'Arcy——"

Blake & Co. started to explain, in chorus.

"One at a time, old beans," said Tom Merry. "Gussy, you bad man, what have you been doing this time?"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"We're gated!" howled Blake. "The whole study's gated for this half-holiday. Lathom's gated us for ragging Trimble. He's waxy! And that ass—that fathead—says he's going down to Rylcombe all the same."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry looked severe.

"Naughty!" he said. "Don't you know better than to disobey the orders of your Form-master, Gussy? I'm surprised at you."

"Yaas; but——"

"Take my tip, and don't do it," said Tom. "Lathom's a good little ass, but he's bound to cut up rusty if you go out of gates after he's gated you. Be good!"

"You do not fully compwehend, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "We wagged Twimble for his own good, and no fellow but Twimble would have yelled so much for bein' bumped. Twimble had bow-wowed my Sunday toppah, and we bumped him for it, which was quite wight and pwopah. Mr. Lathom did not know how the mattah stood when he gated us. I wegard it as a dutay to wag Twimble when he meddles with othah fellows' clobbah."

Tom Merry laughed.

"Quite right; the more Trimble of the Fourth is bumped, the better," he agreed. "But Form-masters can't be expected to understand these things. Their minds are a bit limited."

"I have a vewy important appointment in Wylcombe," went on Arthur Augustus warmly.

"Perhaps if you mentioned that nicely to Lathom——" suggested Tom Merry.

Blake gave a snort.

"Do you think Lathom would think it important for Gussy to see his tailor?" he exclaimed.

"Oh, my hat! Is it an appointment with a tailor? Is that important?" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"Yas, wathah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I see nothin' to laugh at, Tom Mewwy. Mr. Wiggs is makin' a new waistcoat for me, and I have pwomised to call this aftahnoon and twy it on. I was also goin' to speak to him about some pwops for the Juniah Dwamatic Society. That does not mattah vewy much, of course; but I am bound to keep my appointment."

"You can't, old man, if you're gated."

"Wats!"

"Be reasonable, old chap! Lathom would get his rag out no end if you cleared off," urged Tom Merry.

"Wubbish!"

"What's a fellow to do with such an ass?" exclaimed Blake. "We can't let him cheek Lathom."

"I wefuse to wegard my pwocceedings as cheekay, Blake. I am simply exahcisin' my wight to do as I dashed well choose on a half-holiday."

"Fathead!" roared Herries.

"I have alweady wequested you, Hewwies, not to wear at a fellow."

"Gussy, old man——" urged Digby.

"Wats! I am goin' now," said Arthur Augustus. "Pwobably Mr. Lathom will know nothin' about the mattah; but if he should learn of it, I shall not have the slightest hesitation in answerin' for my conduct. Now I am goin'."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy walked to the door of Study No. 6.

But he did not reach the door.

Blake & Co., as if moved by the same spring, jumped at him, and grabbed him, and jerked him back into the study.

"Bai Jove! Welease me, you wottahs!" roared Arthur Augustus.

"Don't roar at a fellow!" chuckled Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Put the key in the outside of the lock, will you, Tommy?"

"Certainly!" said Tom Merry. "Anything to oblige an old pal like Gussy."

"You feahful wuffians——"

Bump!

Arthur Augustus sat down in the study armchair, landed there by his faithful chums, with a concussion that took away his noble breath. As he sat and gasped, Blake & Co. whipped out of the study, slammed the door, and the key was turned in the outside of the lock.

Arthur Augustus scrambled breathlessly out of the armchair.

"Good-bye, little bird — good-bye!" sang Blake, in the passage.

"Let me out at once!"

"Will you promise not to break bounds?"

"No!" roared Arthur Augustus.

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the kind! I am goin' to keep my appointment with my tailah."

"I think not! Good-bye!"

"You uffah wottah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake slipped the key of Study No. 6 into his pocket.

"It's the only way, as the johnny says in the play," he remarked. "Gussy's a pal, and we're bound to sit on him when he wants to go off at the deep end. Come on, you chaps, and let's get some footer."

"Open this door, Blake!"

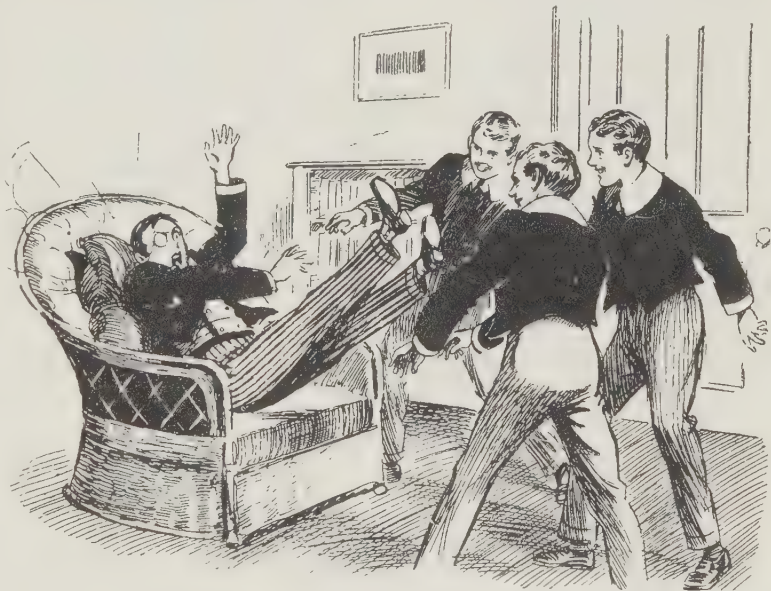
"Good-bye!"

"Tom Mewwy——"

"Take it calmly, old man. Why grouse?"

"Bai Jove! I—I——" spluttered the prisoner of Study No. 6.

Tom Merry and the three Fourth-Formers walked cheerily away, to join in a pick-up game on Little Side. And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy—thus ruthlessly restrained from keeping an important



"Bai Jove! Wefuse me, you wottahs!" roared Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Bump! Arthur Augustus sat down in the study armchair with a concussion that took away his noble breath. (See this page.)

appointment with his tailor—remained in Study No. 6, with feelings that could not have been expressed in any known language.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

Wally Works the Oracle!

"ANYBODY at home?"

It was nearly an hour later that D'Arcy minor—otherwise Wally, of the Third—came along the Fourth Form passage and tapped at the door of Study No. 6.

That hour had been spent by Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in dismal solitude.

His devoted chums, determined to save

him from himself, as it were, had locked him in the study, to keep him safe till tea-time. It was, as Jack Blake had said, the only way. But Arthur Augustus was far from feeling grateful for that kind devotion.

For ten minutes or more he had thumped at the door; but he had thumped in vain. The studies were deserted on a half-holiday, and there was no one to hear. Only Baggy Trimble had rolled by, and he had departed with a fat chuckle—Trimble, mindful of a recent bumping, was not disposed to help. Moreover, as the key was gone, it would have been a matter of some difficulty to release the prisoner.

Arthur Augustus gave up thumping the door at last, and paced the study for some time, in a state of towering wrath.

He sat down at last.

It seemed that he was booked till tea-time—and Arthur Augustus, who was a gregarious youth, was soon tired of his own company. Certainly, his school-books were at hand, and he could have improved the shining hour by “mugging” up Latin, or exploring the mysteries of mathematics. But he was not in a mood for extra studies. He was in a mood chiefly for punching the noses of his devoted pals; but those noses, fortunately, were far out of his reach.

He remembered his HOLIDAY ANNUAL, and decided to pass the weary time in perusing that entrancing volume. He remembered, next, that he had lent his HOLIDAY ANNUAL to Lowther of the Shell.

Really, Gussy's luck seemed to be out that afternoon.

There was rather a shortage of reading matter in Study No. 6; but there was a copy of the “Wayland Gazette,” a local paper which Blake sometimes bought for the football reports.

The hapless Gussy was reduced to the “Wayland Gazette” to pass the time while he waited for release.

He read the football reports twice, he glanced over the advertisements, he even read half-way through the leading article! Then he alighted upon the reports of pro-

ceedings at the Wayland County Court—a branch of activity in which Gussy was not in the least interested. But it was a case of any port in a storm.

The proceedings taken by Mr. John Hodge, against Mr. William Wurzel, whose donkey had strayed into Mr. Hodge's field, were not highly exciting to read about. For interest, they really could not compare with the HOLIDAY ANNUAL.

Indeed, to Arthur Augustus' unsophisticated mind, it seemed that the dispute between Mr. Hodge and Mr. Wurzel could have been better settled over a friendly mug of ale at the Wayland Arms, than before his Honour at the County Court.

But Mr. Hodge was assisted by Mr. Grabb, solicitor, of Wayland, and Mr. Wurzel was assisted by Mr. Gobble, another solicitor, also of Wayland.

That made all the difference.

Whatsoever the outcome to Mr. Hodge and Mr. Wurzel, there was no doubt that Messrs. Grabb and Gobble would score by the matter being settled in the County Court instead of at the Wayland Arms.

Mr. Hodge, in an angry and unhappy moment, had taken legal advice—after which the hapless Hodge found himself only a pawn in the game.

It was probable that by the time Mr. Hodge and Mr. Wurzel escaped from their legal advisers they would have incurred costs in excess of the value of the strayed donkey, and of the field ravaged by the donkey.

Arthur Augustus read through the report of the proceedings in a very perplexed state of mind, wondering that so trivial a matter should take up so much of the valuable time of two legal gentlemen. Gussy's knowledge of law was limited.

The County Court reports in the Wayland paper being exhausted, Gussy turned to the football reports again—and then came a thump on the study door, and the voice of his cheery minor.

Arthur Augustus hurled the “Wayland Gazette” across the study, and jumped up. “Bai Jove! Is that you, Wally?”



Mr. Wiggs was politely conducting his valued customer to the shop door. As he opened it, Arthur Augustus jumped back as if he had seen a rattlesnake. It was a much less dangerous creature than a rattlesnake that he saw—but almost as alarming. It was Mr. Lathom, master of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's! (See Chapter 3.)

"Yes, old chap! Let a fellow in."

"The door is locked, deah boy."

"Unlock it, then, fathead."

"It is locked on the outside, Wally. That wuffian Blake has locked me in the studay and taken away the key."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! What are you laughin' at, Wally?"

"You, old bean!" said the fag cheerily. "Never mind. I was calling on you to borrow half-a-crown! You can slip it under the door."

"Weally, Wally——"

"We're having a spread in the Third Form room," explained Wally. "Young

Manners and Levison minor are standing half-a-crown each, and I'm not going to do less. Only I'm stony, you see. Can you lend me half-a-crown, Gussy?"

"I am locked in this studay, Wally——"

"A half-a-crown can be slipped under the door—that's all right."

"You are an unweffectin' young boundah, Wally. The important mattah is for me to get out of the studay. If you let me out I will lend you half-a-crown with pleasuah."

Wally of the Third whistled.

He was quite prepared to help his major out of the scrape, if he could; and he was

seriously in need of the loan of half-a-crown. But he did not quite see how he was to render Gussy that service, as the key was gone.

"I have an important appointment to keep at Wylcombe, Wally, and there is still time, if you will take my bike out for me, and release me from this studay. Pewwaps you can find a key to fit the lock."

"Suppose I get something and bust in the lock," suggested Wally.

"You uttah young ass!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus.

"Who's got the key? A chap I could lick?" asked Wally.

"Blake has it."

"Hem! I don't think I could lick Blake—not without a lot of trouble. Hold on, though! Blake's playing footer—I saw him," said Wally. "Where did he put the key?"

"I could not see what he did with the key through the door, Wally. But I suppose he put it in his pocket."

"Good! Then it will be in his jacket in the changing-room."

"Bai Jove! Yaas, that is vevy pwob."

"Wait a tick, old bean."

Wally's footsteps were heard retreating towards the staircase. Arthur Augustus waited anxiously.

In a few minutes his minor returned.

Click!

Evidently Wally of the Third had obtained possession of the key. It clicked in the lock, and the door was thrown open.

Wally's cheeky, cheery face grinned in at his major.

"There you are, Gussy—free as air! Where's that half-crown?"

"Heah you are, deah boy—but take my bike out for me. I might be noticed wheelin' it out."

"What would that matter, fathead?"

"I am gated."

"Oh, all right!"

Wally of the Third, richer by half-a-crown, departed, to wheel his major's bike

out of the bike-shed to the road beyond the school walls.

Arthur Augustus closed the door of the study after him, locked it, and slipped the key into his pocket. There was a genial grin on his noble countenance as he walked away to the stairs.

As Blake & Co. had locked the study door, they could find it locked when they came in to tea—a just punishment for their high-handed proceedings towards their noble chum, in Gussy's opinion.

Blake, no doubt, would be puzzled to find the study key missing from his pocket; and he could puzzle over the mystery of its disappearance until D'Arcy returned from Rylcombe. That was quite a cheering reflection to Arthur Augustus.

With great caution Arthur Augustus strolled into the quad. and slipped out of gates, careful not to come under the eye of Mr. Lathom, the Form-master who had "gated" him.

But Mr. Lathom did not appear in the offing, fortunately—or unfortunately, perhaps—and Arthur Augustus gained the high-road, and was soon pedalling away cheerfully towards Rylcombe. On Little Side, Blake & Co. were "urging the flying ball," satisfied that Arthur Augustus was safe till tea-time, and never suspecting for a moment that the noble bird had flown.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

Something Like a Brain Wave!

"Bai Jove!"

It was a dismayed ejaculation.

Mr. Wiggs looked surprised.

The important appointment had been kept; the waistcoat, now in the process of construction, had been tried on, and pronounced satisfactory, so far. The really important matter being disposed of, Arthur Augustus had referred to the less important matter of certain "props" required by the Junior Dramatic Society of St. Jim's—Mr. Wiggs being the local costumier as well as tailor and several other things. Now Mr. Wiggs was politely conducting his valued customer to the shop door—

but, as he opened it, Arthur Augustus jumped back as if he had seen a rattlesnake.

It was a much less dangerous creature than a rattlesnake that he saw—but almost as alarming. It was Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's.

Mr. Lathom, obviously, was in Rylcombe that afternoon, a circumstance that naturally had not occurred to Gussy's mind. He had been thinking about his important appointment, not about the possible movements of Mr. Lathom.

But there he was!

He had not seen D'Arcy. He was pacing up and down outside the shop, and for a moment or two Gussy supposed that his Form-master knew that he was there, and was waiting for him to emerge.

But he observed that Mr. Lathom glanced occasionally at the entrance of the railway-station, which was near at hand.

Apparently the Form-master was waiting for a train to come in—doubtless having walked down to Rylcombe to greet some expected visitor.

It was quite a natural thing for Mr. Lathom to do; but it was extremely disconcerting for Arthur Augustus.

How long Mr. Lathom intended to pace up and down the street in front of the shop D'Arcy could not guess. But so long as he paced there, the junior who had broken bounds was a prisoner.

Arthur Augustus was quite satisfied with his action in breaking bounds, in the circumstances. His noble conscience was clear. But he was well aware that Mr. Lathom would not be satisfied. And he did not want his excursion to be followed by a caning from his Form-master, or a Head's licking. Very much indeed he did not want that.

"Oh, deah!" murmured the swell of St. Jim's.

Mr. Wiggs eyed him curiously.

"Pway close the door, Mr. Wiggs."

Mr. Wiggs closed the door, still more surprised. Arthur Augustus coloured under his curious look.

"The fact is, Mr. Wiggs, there is a chap in the sweet whom I do not desiah to meet," said Arthur Augustus.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Wiggs

"I twust he will be gone soon."

"Pray wait as long as you like, Mr. D'Arcy," said the sartorial gentleman politely. "May I give you a chair?"

"Oh, deah!"

Mr. Lathom had paused in his walk, and was looking in at the window—where there was an array of shirts, neckties, socks, and such articles. The dreadful idea came into Gussy's troubled mind that Mr. Lathom was thinking of filling up the period of waiting for the train by doing a little shopping. If he stepped into the shop—

The truly great mind always rises to an emergency. It was at this anxious moment that Arthur Augustus experienced something in the nature of a brain-wave.

"Mr. Wiggs—pewwaps you can lend me an old coat—"

"Certainly, sir, if you desire. The weather has turned very cold to-day," assented Mr. Wiggs.

"And please give me one of the moustaches which I have ordahed for our dwamatic society, Mr. Wiggs."

"Eh?"

"I am goin' to put it on."

"Oh!"

"There is a wathah twoublesome person in the sweet whom I desire to avoid," said Arthur Augustus. "I wathah think he will not wecognise me in an old coat and a moustache. I shall look yahs oldah."

"Dear me!" said Mr. Wiggs.

Possibly Mr. Wiggs had a lurking suspicion that some weakness was developing in Gussy's aristocratic intellect, his request was so very extraordinary.

But the swell of St. Jim's was too good a customer for Mr. Wiggs to refuse.

The artificial moustache was produced, and Arthur Augustus affixed it to his upper lip, standing before Mr. Wiggs's glass to note the effect.

Certainly it made an enormous difference.

The astonished Mr. Wiggs handed him a coat, rather too large for him, and at Gussy's request added a cloth cap—the junior's immaculate topper being received into Mr. Wiggs' temporary safe keeping.

The reflection in the glass was now that of a rather stout young man of about twenty-five.

Arthur Augustus grinned at it.

"That is all wight! Thank you, Mr. Wiggs—good-aftahnoon."

"Good-afternoon, sir!" gasped Mr. Wiggs.

Tinkle!

The shop-door opened, and the bell tinkled. Arthur Augustus' brain-wave had been acted on only just in time. It was Mr. Lathom who stepped into the shop.

Arthur Augustus' heart beat fast, as he hurried out, almost brushing his Form-master as he passed.

Mr. Lathom glanced after him. Arthur Augustus knew, without looking, that the St. Jim's master had glanced after him. Did he suspect?

With a thumping heart, Arthur Augustus hurried across the pavement, drew his bike from the kerb where it was standing, and mounted.

The pedals flew round, and Arthur Augustus fairly flew down Rylcombe High Street.

Greatly to his relief, no authoritative voice called after him—apparently he had escaped unsuspected, owing to his disguise.

But he pedalled on fast.

He was anxious to get into the lane that led to St. Jim's, where he would be able to remove his disguise unseen—a proceeding that was impossible in the High Street.

With quite a whiz of speed, the swell of St. Jim's pedalled into the lane, and dashed off in the direction of the school.

"Bai Jove!" he ejaculated suddenly.

D'Arcy jammed on his brakes.

Ahead of him appeared a man with a barrow, at a turn of the lane. The barrow was piled with such articles as tin kettles, saucepans, and crockery. The itinerant merchant to whom it belonged was wheeling

it from a field path into the lane—right into the middle of the lane, regardless of possible traffic.

The brakes were jammed on too late.

Crash!

The barrow, wheeled fairly under Gussy's front wheel, came into terrific collision with the bicycle.

The barrow, which was of light construction, rocked and reeled, and kettles and saucepans and tin pots of all kinds scattered and clanged into the road. There was a crashing of breaking crockery-ware.

But Arthur Augustus hardly saw what happened.

The bicycle, with the front wheel buckled, went spinning, and Arthur Augustus, when he next knew what was going on in the universe, found himself sitting on the grassy bank beside the lane, with his damaged bicycle curled up at his feet.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

Shell Out!

"LUMMY!"

It was not, of course, Arthur Augustus who uttered that startled ejaculation. He was incapable of it.

It was the gentleman to whom the barrow belonged.

He was a thickset, squat gentleman, with a rather stubby set of features, and a stubbly chin somewhat in need of the razor. His face, which looked as if it seldom wore an amiable expression, was red with rage. He left his rocking barrow in the middle of the road, and instead of picking up his scattered pots and pans, he strode over to the dazed swell of St. Jim's, and brandished a large fist over him.

"Knocking over a man's barrer!" he roared.

"Oh, deah!"

"Knocking over a man's barrer, I say!"

"Bai Jove! I feel vewy much shaken!" gasped Arthur Augustus. He groped for his eyeglass, set it in his eye, and blinked up at the enraged merchant.

"What the thump do you mean by

wheelin' your bawwow undah my bike, whoever you are?"

"What do you mean by running your jigger into my barrer?" demanded the merchant, in his turn.

D'Arcy staggered to his feet.

"I did not wun into your bawwow," he exclaimed indignantly. "You wan your bawwow into my bike. If it had been a motah-cah, you would have been wun ovah, as you deserved for your wecklessness."

The merchant glared at him.

"Look what you've done!" he roared. "Smashed up my goods! Who's goin' to pay for them crocks?"

"Weally, I do not know," said Arthur Augustus. "I am much more intewested to know who is goin' to pay for the damage to my bike."

"Blow your bike!"

"Vewy good; blow your bawwow, then."

"Look 'ere——"

"Oh, wats!"

Arthur Augustus picked up his machine. The wheel was buckled, and evidently it needed considerable repair before it could be ridden again. Arthur Augustus had the happy prospect of walking it back to the school.

"Bai Jove, this is wotten!" he exclaimed. "You deserve to be made to pay for this damage, my man."

"Lummy! You run into my barrer——"

"I did not wun into your bawwow. You wan your wotten bawwow into my bike!" roared Arthur Augustus, in his

anger and indignation forgetting, for the moment, the repose which stamps—or should stamp—the caste of Vere de Vere.

The merchant eyed him evilly.

He seemed tempted to settle the dispute by an application of his horny knuckles to Arthur Augustus' aristocratic nose. Arthur Augustus backed away with his damaged machine, and detached the pump therefrom, to use as a defensive weapon if needed.

"Keep your distance, my man!" he said icily. "I warn you that I shall hurt you if you attempt any violence."

"Who's paying for that damage?" roared the merchant.

"The accident was entirely your own fault," said Arthur Augustus. "But if you are a poor man, I should be sowwy to see you put to a loss. I do not admit responsibility in the vewy least, but I will give you five shillings, if you like."



The brakes were jammed on too late. Crash! The barrow, wheeled fairly under Gussy's front wheel, came into terrific collision with the bicycle. Kettles and saucepans and tin pots of all kinds clanged into the road. (See Chapter 3.)

Snort!

"What's the good of five shillings?" demanded the merchant.

"I think it would p'obably covah your loss," said Arthur Augustus. "I do not know the value of these things, but they cannot weally be vewy expensive articles. Still, if you tell me that five shillings will not covah the loss, I will make it ten."

The itinerant merchant eyed him, and his manner became a little less bullying.

"Now you're talking!" he said. "I'll go over the damage, and I'll tell you what you're let in for, young man."

"Weally, you know——"

"I won't keep you waiting long."

Arthur Augustus waited impatiently. He was anxious to get on his way, and get rid of the false moustache and the old coat and cap. But he had not long to wait.

"This 'ere will cost you five quids!" said the merchant.

"Bai Jove!"

It was the fate of Arthur Augustus, with his generous heart and polished manners, to be misunderstood and underrated by mean natures.

He was not in the least to blame for the accident, and indeed should have had a claim against the merchant for the damage to his bicycle.

But his offer to compensate the fellow for his loss had simply given the man an impression that he was "soft," and could be bullied into parting with money.

That was the Wayland merchant's impression—and never had an impression been more mistaken.

Arthur Augustus' eyes flashed with indignation.

"You wascal!" he exclaimed.

"What?"

"I do not believe that your whole stock is worth any such sum. You are tryin' to impose on me."

"Look 'ere——"

"I wefuse to bandy words with 'a wogue!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus hotly. "I wefuse to give you anythin' at all—

even a shilling. I wegard you as a swindlin' wascal."

The bullying expression returned to the merchant's surly face at once.

"You ain't paying up for this 'ere damage?" he demanded.

"Not a shilling! Not a penny!"

"Then you'll 'ear more of this, young man! There's justice in this 'ere country for a pore man! I'll County Court you."

"Wats!"

"Name!" roared the merchant. "Give me your name and address, or I'll foller you 'ome and find out."

"I have no desiah whatevah to conceal my name and address," said Arthur Augustus, with haughty contempt. "My name is D'Arcy, and my address is St. Jim's—the school up the woad."

"Well, Mister D'Arcy, of St. Jim's, you'll 'ear more of this, if you don't square while you've got the chance."

"I will give you nothin'," said Arthur Augustus grimly. "I am not wesponsible for the accident, which was bwrought about by your own carelessness, and I wegard you as a wogue. Go and eat coke."

"Look 'ere——"

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus wheeled away his damaged, crackling bike. The merchant stared after him savagely. Like the dog in the fable, he had snatched at the shadow and lost the substance.

"Make it two pun!" he shouted.

"Wats!" was D'Arcy's reply, over his shoulder.

"I'll County Court yer."

"I wegard you as a widiculous ass, as well as a wogue, and I wefuse to have anythin' more to say to you."

"You'll 'ear of this agin."

"Wats!"

And Arthur Augustus marched on, out of hearing of the raucous voice of the itinerant merchant.

He was glad to be rid of him.

The swell of St. Jim's wheeled on his bike, to a secluded spot at a good distance, little dreaming that he was ever to hear of the stubbly gentleman again, or in what

remarkable circumstances. Secluded from view, D'Arcy took off the false moustache, rolled up the cap and coat into a bundle on the bicycle, and wheeled on the bike towards St. Jim's—arriving there in his own proper person, resembling very little the young man who had walked out of Mr. Wiggs' shop under a Form-master's nose, and who had crashed into the barrow in Rylcombe Lane.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER

No Entrance !

TOM MERRY peeled off his jersey in the changing-room in the School House. The pick-up had lasted till dusk, and the juniors had come in rather late for tea. In their keen interest in the great game of soccer, Blake & Co. had rather forgotten their aristocratic chum, locked up in Study No. 6 in the Fourth Form passage.

Blake, pausing in a state of deshabille, was giving Herries his opinion on "bargaining," and Herries, with a jersey half over his head, was retorting with his opinion of Blake's opinion—while Digby was scraping mud off his neck—and the three Fourth-Formers had not yet remembered Gussy. It was Tom Merry who thought of him first.

"What I think, Herries, is this——"
Blake was saying.

"What you think, old man, doesn't count," Herries was retorting.

"Blow this mud!" Dig was remarking at the same time. "That New House ass, Figgins, rolled me right over, like a clumsy owl."

"What about Gussy?" asked Tom Merry.

"Gussy! Oh, my hat! I'd forgotten Gussy!" ejaculated Blake. "He's all right in the study, though."

"Can't have enjoyed his afternoon!" grinned Manners of the Shell.

"Well, he asked for it. He ought to be glad he's got pals to look after him when he wants to go hunting for trouble," said Blake. "We've saved him from a Head's licking very likely."

"Likely enough," remarked Levison of

the Fourth. "I saw Mr. Lathom start for Rylcombe, and if D'Arcy had gone down there, he would very likely have run into him."

"Jolly lucky we locked him in, in that case," said Herries.

Tom Merry laughed.

"Better let him out, though. It's too late now for him to go hunting for trouble out of gates," he said.

Blake nodded.

"Yes—we'll let him out, if he makes it pax. The fact is, we're bound to open up the study, as we want our tea—and the stuff is in the cupboard. But we'll make it pax through the keyhole first. Gussy may be waxy—fellows are so unreasonable, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Having finished changing, Blake & Co. headed for the Fourth Form passage. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther went with them, as the Terrible Three were "teasing" in Study No. 6 that afternoon. At all events, that was the arrangement—and they were not yet aware that tea in Study No. 6 was rather inaccessible.

Thump!

Blake announced his arrival by a heavy thump on the door of the study.

"Here we are, Gussy!"

There was no answer from Study No. 6. Dusk was deepening, and lights were now on in the School House; but no light gleamed under the door of No. 6. D'Arcy, if he was there, was apparently sitting, like the heathen, in darkness.

Thump!

Bang!

"Gussy!"

"Fathead!"

"Ass!"

"Must have fallen asleep," said Tom Merry, as no answer came from the locked study.

"Sulking, perhaps," suggested Monty Lowther.

Blake sniffed.

"Old Gussy doesn't sulk! He may be on his jolly old dignity."

"Where's the difference?" asked Manners.

Another sniff from Blake.

"Can't expect a Shell ass to see the difference," he replied. "Can't expect anything from the Shell but idiotic questions."

Thump! thump!

"Gussy, old man!" Blake shouted through the keyhole. "Can't you speak, you image? We're making it pax."

No reply.

"Is it pax, old man?" called out Digby. "We don't want to have to bump you, you know."

Silence.

"Well, he won't answer," said Blake. "We'd better go in."

Blake groped in the pocket where he had placed the key of Study No. 6. His hand came out empty.

"Hallo! Where's that key?" he exclaimed.

"Lost it?" asked Tom Merry.

"I'm not the sort of ass to lose a key," snapped Blake.

"My mistake—I thought you were every sort of an ass!" said the captain of the Shell blandly.

Blake groped in his other pockets.

"Look here, somebody's been larking," he said. "The key isn't here. One of you chumps bagged it?"

The juniors shook their heads.

"Did you leave it in your pocket?" asked Manners.

"Of course I did! Do you think I should carry a study key along with me under my arm to play footer?" asked Blake crossly. "or do you think I should take it round in my teeth, like a dog with a bone?"

Blake's temper seemed to be deteriorating.

"Well, it must have dropped out when you changed," said Tom Merry, with a laugh. "You'll find it in the changing-room."

Blake was not disposed to admit that he was any more likely to drop a key than to lose one. However, the key was not there—and there seemed no other way of

accounting for its absence. So he gave a grunt, and strode away to the stairs.

Herries and Digby proceeded to talk to D'Arcy through the keyhole, without the remotest suspicion, so far, that the study was untenanted.

No reply came from Study No. 6; but the silence was attributed to the lofty dignity of Arthur Augustus, in a state of offence at the way he had been treated by his devoted chums.

"Gussy, old man, don't play the goat!" said Herries. "You know jolly well that we shut you up for your own good."

"Saved you from a licking, old scout," said Digby. "Old Lathom's in Rylcombe this afternoon, and he would have spotted you safe as houses."

"Can't you speak, fathead?" hooted Herries.

"Look here, Gussy, you sulky image."

"Deaf, you ass?"

"Dumb, you chump?"

Tempers seemed to be rising. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther leaned in a cheery row on the opposite wall, and looked on, smiling. From the superior point of view of the Shell fellows, these little disputes in the Fourth Form were entertaining.

Thump! thump! bang!

"Can't you answer, you born idiot?" roared Herries.

"By gum, we'll jolly well rag you when Blake comes back with the key!" hooted Digby.

Levison, Clive, and Cardew came along the passage, on their way to No. 9. They paused to look on, with interest.

"What's the name of this game, dear men?" asked Ralph Reckness Cardew.

"That fathead Gussy is sulking, and won't answer," growled Herries. "I'm jolly well going to punch his head when I get in."

"I'm jolly hungry," said Dig. "When is Blake getting back with that key? Oh, here he is!"

Jack Blake came up the passage, with a frowning brow. He came without the key, however. That key, if he had only known

it, was in the pocket of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, just then busy wheeling a damaged bike along Rylcombe Lane.

"Get the door open, old man," said Herries.

"Can't! The key's gone."

"Didn't you find it in the changing-room?" asked Tom Merry.

"It wasn't there."

"Where the thump did you drop it, then?"

Blake snorted.

"I didn't drop it anywhere. Some thumping ass has been larking. It must have been bagged from my pocket when I left my jacket in the changing-room."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Tom. "Then Gussy is a giddy prisoner until the key turns up!"

"Bother Gussy! I'm not thinking about Gussy! I'm thinking about my tea."

"Same here!" said Dig, with deep feeling.

"I want to know who played that little joke with the key," growled Blake. "I'm going to give him a thick ear and a prize nose for his little joke. Was it one of you silly owls?"

"Not guilty, my lord!" grinned Lowther.

"Well, it must have been somebody who knew that the key was in my pocket," said Blake suspiciously.

The Terrible Three grinned. Their impression was that Blake had lost the key—an impression that was shared by Herries and Dig. Blake, indeed, would have



Arthur Augustus detached the pump from his damaged machine, to use as a defensive weapon, if needed. "Keep your distance, my man!" he said icily. "I warn you that I shall hurt you if you attempt any violence!" (See Chapter 4.)

thought so, too, had the key been in anybody's pocket but his own. That made all the difference.

"I say, it's jolly odd that D'Arcy doesn't answer," said Clive. "He can't be asleep in the armchair, after all this shindy."

"Sulking!" growled Blake.

"Does he sulk?" asked Monty Lowther, with an air of surprise. "I thought you said——"

"Never mind what you thought—if you can think at all!" snapped Blake. "Look here, I want that key."

Sidney Clive tapped at the study door.

"D'Arcy, old man!" he called out.

No answer.

"Oh, he won't speak, he's on his jolly old dignity," grunted Herries.

"I—I suppose he can't be ill, or anything."

"What rot!" growled Blake.

"Well, it's jolly odd."

Blake & Co. looked at one another. Really, it was very odd that Arthur Augustus did not answer—if he were in the study. A number of fellows were gathering, interested by the siege of Study No. 6—and Baggy Trimble proceeded to make a cheerful suggestion.

"Perhaps he's dead!" suggested Baggy.

"What!" roared Blake.

"You silly owl!"

"Shut up!"

"Well, you locked him in," said Trimble argumentatively. "He called to me when I passed the study, but I couldn't let him out. He may have tried climbing out of the window."

"Eh?"

"If he did, ten to one he fell and broke his neck," said the cheerful Baggy.

The next moment there was a terrific yell in the passage, as Jack Blake grasped Trimble, and jammed his bullet head against the wall. That was Blake's way of testifying his thanks for Baggy's enlivening suggestions.

"Ow! Wow! Yaroooh!" roared Trimble. "Leggo! Wharrer you at, you beast? Ow!"

"Got any more suggestions to make?" demanded Blake ferociously.

"Yaroooh!"

Trimble had no more suggestions to make. He was busy for some time afterwards rubbing his head.

"Perhaps——" began Levison of the Fourth.

"Oh, don't be an ass!"

"I was going to suggest——" went on Levison mildly.

"Rot!"

"But I think——"

"Rubbish!"

Levison laughed.

"All the same, it occurs to me that D'Arcy may have called out to some fellow passing, and that that fellow may have bagged the key from your jacket, and let him out."

"Oh!" ejaculated Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry.

"That's it, of course. Gussy isn't in the study at all."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Rot!" said Blake. "If the door had been unlocked, the key would be in the lock, wouldn't it? Gussy couldn't have locked the door on the inside if he were outside—and if he locked it outside, the key would be here."

"Unless Gussy walked it off!" grinned Cardew.

"He wouldn't."

"Looks as if he did."

"Oh, you're a silly ass, Cardew!"

"Thanks, old bean! Same to you, and many of them."

"It's pretty clear," said Tom Merry.

"May be clear to you," said Blake obstinately. "That's the kind of intelligence you've got in the Shell, I believe."

"Look here, Blake——"

"Oh, rats!"

Blake was quite fixed in his opinion; not because it was a specially well-founded opinion, but because it was his opinion. It was, so to speak, a poor thing, but his own!

"Look here, old man, Gussy can't be in the study," said Dig.

"Rot!"

"Somebody let him out, and he's walked off with the key," said Herries.

"Rubbish!"

"Look here, Blake——"

"Piffle!"

Blake thumped on the door again.

"D'Arcy, you silly owl, speak up! Answer, you silly image! I'll jolly well mop up the study with you!"

No reply.

"He's not there!" said Manners.

"Fathead!"

Blake breathed hard.

"I tell you he's gone, and taken the key!" howled Herries. "It's just as Levison said."

"Levison's a silly ass, and you're another!" hooted Blake. "I tell you he hasn't! If Gussy's gone out and taken that key, I'll eat the key, and Gussy, too—so there!"

"Bai Jove!"

It was the voice of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy—and the juniors in the passage spun round, to stare at the swell of St. Jim's, as he came elegantly along the passage from the stairs.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER

Tea in Study No. 6

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY jammed his celebrated monocle into his noble eye, and regarded the crowd of juniors. They stared at him—Blake looking at him as if he could, as he had declared, eat him!

"Gussy!" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"As large as life, and twice as natural!" chuckled Lowther. "Looks as if he wasn't in the study, after all, Blake."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you—you image!" gasped Blake.

"Weally, Blake——"

"Where have you been?" shrieked Blake.

"I have been to Wylcombe, Blake, as I mentioned to you that I should, to keep a vewy important appointment with my tialah," answered Arthur Augustus calmly.

"Where's the key of the study?" demanded Herries.

D'Arcy smiled.

"Heah it is, deah boy."

"You—you—you took it away with you?" hooted Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! You locked me in, so I locked you out," assented D'Arcy. "One good turn deserves anothah, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake seemed to be in a speechless state. He glared at his noble chum with an expression that an angry lion might have envied.

"Play up, Blake!" grinned Monty Lowther.

"Eh?"

"Weren't you going to eat the key, and D'Arcy, too, if——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors.

Blake strode into Study No. 6. Herries having unlocked and opened the door. Apparently he was not going to make good his rather hasty words!

"Twot in, deah boys," said Arthur

Augustus to the Terrible Three. "You are teain' with us, I think."

Tom Merry laughed.

"You've kept us waiting," he said.

"Yaas, wathah—that serves you wight," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "You were a partay to that cheekay infwingement of my personal liberty this aftahnoon. If my young bwothah Wally had not come along and let me out, I should have been pwevented fwom keepin' a vewy important appointment. I should be vewy angwy with you, but I excuse you as bein' wathah thoughtless youngstahs."

"Oh, my hat!"

The grinning crowd in the passage broke up, and the guests went into Study No. 6. Blake, in a state of suppressed wrath, was lighting the fire, and Herries and Digby sorted the good things out of the study cupboard. Tom Merry & Co. made themselves useful, as guests generally did in junior studies—Tom filled the kettle at the tap in the passage; Manners sliced the loaf; Lowther went to No. 10 in the Shell for extra crocks.

Tea was soon going on in Study No. 6—and hot tea and toast and poached eggs had an ameliorating influence on the hungry juniors. Blake forgot that he was angry, and said no more of mopping up the study with his aristocratic chum. He even asked Arthur Augustus whether he had been "spotted" out of bounds.

"Not at all, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus cheerily. "I am wathah a cautious chap, you know."

"You were jolly lucky," said Tom Merry. "It turns out that Mr. Lathom was in the village this afternoon."

Arthur Augustus smiled.

"Yaas, wathah! I met him."

"You met Lathom?" exclaimed Blake.

"Yaas, deah boy."

"Then he knows you went out of gates?"

"Not at all; you see, I was equal to the occasion. Bein' a fellow of tact and judgment, you know——"

"Oh, can it," said Blake. "How did you dodge Lathom in Rylcombe, fathead?"

"Weally, Blake——"

"He's rather a short-sighted little ass," remarked Herries. "Mean to say you met him and he didn't see you?"

D'Arcy chuckled.

"He saw me all wight! I walked out of Mr. Wiggs' shop wight undah his nose."

"Then how——"

With great enjoyment, Arthur Augustus proceeded to explain the remarkable dodge by which he had escaped recognition by Mr. Lathom.

The juniors stared at him.

"Well, my hat!" said Blake, at last, "I always knew you were a bit balmy in the crumpet, Gussy! But this is the limit!"

"Weally, you ass——"

"I wish I'd been there with my camera!" sighed Manners.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wegard it as a jollay clevah stunt," exclaimed Arthur Augustus warmly. "I hardly think that you fellows would have thought of it."

"Right on the wicket!" agreed Blake. "It needs an intellect like yours to think of a stunt like that. Suppose Lathom had recognised you, and reported you to the Head for walking about Rylcombe in a false moustache."

"Oh, my only sainted aunt!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "What would the Head have said?"

"Mr. Lathom did not recognise me, so it is all wight," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "Everythin' went off all wight, except that I had an accident comin' home, and damaged my bike—or wathah, it was damaged by a vewy impudent, dishonest wascal."

And D'Arcy related the incident of the itinerant merchant and the barrow.

"Gussy all over!" commented Blake. "Some fellows are born to trouble as the giddy sparks fly upwards. So you were seen out of gates, after all."

"That wascally fellow is not likely to weport the circumstance to my Form-mastah, Blake."

"Nunno! But suppose he comes after you for damages to his jolly old barrow?"

Then it will come out that you were out of gates this afternoon."

Arthur Augustus chuckled.

"That is all wight! You see, I was still disguised when it happened, and the fellow can't know that I am a schoolboy at all. He could not possibly recognise me if he saw me without that moustache and that old coat and cap."

"But suppose——"

"It is no good supposin' things, Blake. You can wely on a fellow of tact and judgment to look aftah himself."

"Suppose——" said Tom.

"Wubbish, deah boy."

"But——" said Dig.

"My deah chap, if I see that wascally man anywhah neah St. Jim's, I shall give him a feahful thwashin'," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "I am wathah sowwy that I did not thwash him on the spot. Still, as he was twice as big as I am, pewwaps it would have been wathah a twouble."

"Perhaps it would!" chuckled Tom.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My idea," said Blake, "is that we'd better go to the Third Form-room and lynch Wally. What right had he to let out our tame lunatic when we'd locked him up safely for the afternoon?"

"You uttah ass!"

"Next thing to happen will be that merchant coming along and claiming damages for his barrow," said Blake, with conviction. "Then it will come out that Gussy was out of gates, and that he was sporting a false moustache, and so on. It will be a Head's licking, at least. Well, Gussy can't say that his pals didn't do their best for him."

"He can't!" agreed Herries.

"We locked him in," said Dig. "We couldn't do more. You'll admit that yourself, Gussy."

To which Arthur Augustus' reply was monosyllabic:

"Wats!"

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER The Lawyer's Letter !

SHAKESPEARE has told us that "the evil that men do lives after them." Certainly, even the most careless action is fated to produce its consequences, which may come home to roost, as it were, in the most unexpected ways. Thus it was with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the ornament of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's. A careless kick may start a snowball rolling downhill—and it may be an avalanche by the time it lands in the valley.

By breaking bounds on that Wednesday afternoon Arthur Augustus had started the ball rolling—and the matter was by no means ended, as he supposed, when he sat down to tea in Study No. 6 with his friends.

The matter, indeed, if Gussy had only known it, was very far from ended—very far indeed.

Gussy's disregard of his Form-master's authority remained undiscovered—rather to the surprise of his friends. Mr. Lathom evidently had not recognised the moustached young man who had brushed by him in Mr. Wiggs' shop. The moustache was now disposed in the "property-box" of the junior Dramatic Society; the old coat and cap returned to Mr. Wiggs. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy went on the even tenor of his way, unconscious that the affair was not yet ended, and that a sword of Damocles was suspended over his aristocratic head.

Yet so it was !

When, to while away the idle minutes



Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, celebrated monocle jammed into his noble eye, regarded the crowd of juniors. They stared at him—Blake looking as if he could eat him ! "Where's the key of the study ?" demanded Herries. (See Chapter 6.)

when locked in Study No. 6, Arthur Augustus had carelessly read of the "proceedings" in Wayland County Court, and the legal arguments of Mr. Gobble, solicitor, on the subject of strayed donkeys, he had little dreamed that he would ever hear personally from the said Mr. Gobble, or make any nearer acquaintance with Wayland County Court or his Honour who presided therein.

Yet it was Mr. Gobble, and the Arm of the Law, that loomed over Gussy's unsuspecting and innocent head. That false moustache, which had given Arthur Augustus the appearance of a young man instead of a schoolboy, was to have its consequences.

On the following day, D'Arcy had dismissed the matter from his mind, as a thing finished and done with.

There were plenty of other matters to occupy his thoughts—such as the waistcoat which was to come along from Mr. Wiggs,

and a new silk hat of which he was contemplating the purchase, and the approaching football matches with Greyfriars and Rookwood.

So when a letter arrived for Arthur Augustus D'Arcy on Friday morning, he was far from connecting it in his mind with the incident of Wednesday afternoon.

The letters were generally placed in the rack for the St. Jim's fellows to take in the morning break; and it was on coming out from second lesson that D'Arcy found the missive.

Blake jerked it down from the rack and threw it to him.

"Here you are, Gussy; one for you."

"Thank you, deah boy! I twust that this is a wemittance fwom my patah," said Arthur Augustus.

"It's not from Lord Eastwood—it's typed."

"Oh! Pwobably a bill fwom Blankley's at Wayland, for the new tyre for my bike," said Arthur Augustus, his interest in the epistle diminishing at once.

He glanced at the letter.

It was addressed in rather an unusual manner: "Mr. D'Arcy, St. James' School, Sussex," in typewriting.

It looked like a business letter, and D'Arcy had no doubt that it was from Blankley's Stores, especially as the post-mark was Wayland.

He slit the envelope with his little pearl-handled penknife—no earthly consideration would have induced Arthur Augustus to open it by jamming in his thumb—and drew out a folded sheet.

He opened the folded sheet, and found that it was a typed letter.

"Bai Jove! This doesn't look like a bill!" he remarked.

"Perhaps it's a reminder that you haven't paid a few bills!" suggested Blake. "You often forget little things like that."

D'Arcy did not answer.

His eyes were glued on the letter, and an expression of the greatest astonishment had come over his face.

He did not seem to hear Blake, and he

did not heed the curious glances of his chums.

The typed letter held him spellbound.

"Anything wrong, old chap?" asked Digby, at last.

D'Arcy broke silence.

"Bai Jove! The wogue!"

"What?"

"The wascal!"

"Eh?"

"The weptile!"

"Who?" yelled Blake.

"The wuffian!"

"Great pip! What——"

"The wank outsidah! I will not pay him a shillin'."

"Pay whom?" roared Herries.

"Not a penny!"

"But what——"

"Not a farthin'!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus excitedly. "I wefuse to pay the scoundwel anythin.' I would not even give him a German mark."

"What on earth——"

"The scoundwel!"

"Well, I don't know what's in that letter," remarked Blake. "But I think it's just as well that the Housemaster didn't look into it. The beaks look at the letters sometimes."

"The Housemastah would not be likely to look at my lettahs, Blake. I am not a fellow like Wacke or Cwooke, who might be gettin' all sorts of things by post. I am twusted!" said Arthur Augustus loftily.

"Well, what's in the letter?"

"Yes, let's hear it, old chap!" exclaimed Baggy Trimble, who was looking on with the keenest interest; the circumstance that the matter did not concern him in the very least making Baggy extremely keen to know what the mysterious missive contained.

"Wats! Go and eat coke, Twimble."

"But what is it?" howled Blake.

"Pway come out into the quad, deah boys, and I will show you the lettah," said Arthur Augustus. "I do not wish this wascally wapscallion's impudence to be talked all ovah the school."

"Oh, my hat!"

D'Arcy slipped the letter into his pocket, and walked out of the House with his friends.

Baggy Trimble, burning with curiosity, followed on.

The chums of Study No. 6 walked across to the elms, as a secluded spot where they could examine the letter unwatched by inquisitive eyes.

Trimble rolled after them.

"Now," said Blake, stopping at one of the old oaken benches under the elms, "buck up and let's have it before the bell rings."

"There's that cad Trimble!" said Herries.

"I—I say——"

Three pairs of hands grasped the inquisitive Trimble. The chums of the Fourth did not waste any words on him. It was a time for action, not for words.

Bang!

Trimble's bullet head smote the trunk of an elm. The concussion did not damage the elm; but it seemed to damage Trimble, for it elicited a frantic yell from him.

"Yaroooh!"

Bang!

"Whooop! Yow-owoooo!"

"Now hook it!" said Blake.

"Ow! wow! ow! Yoooooggh!"

Baggy Trimble fled for his life.

"Now hand out the giddy epistle," said Blake, and the juniors sat down in a row on the oaken bench for the perusal.

"It's a lawyer's lettah, deah boys——"

"Wh-a-t!"

"Containin' a thweat of legal pwoceedin's——"

"Great pip!"

"Look!"

Arthur Augustus handed the letter over, and Blake & Co., in a state of breathless surprise and dismay, perused it.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

Legal Proceedings I

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY sat bolt upright, his eyeglass screwed firmly into his eye, a stern and grim expression on his aristocratic countenance. Any other Fourth Form fellow, having received a lawyer's

letter containing a threat of legal proceedings, might have been dismayed.

There was no doubt that Blake & Co. were dismayed, though they were not the recipients of the letter. Not so Gussy! His feeling was scornful indignation, and he was not in the least dismayed or frightened. While his comrades perused the letter, D'Arcy repeated the word "weptile" to himself several times, apparently finding comfort in it.

Blake & Co. read the letter together, with blank faces. It ran:

MESSRS. GAMMON AND GOBBLE.

Solicitors.

13, Sharp Street,

Wayland.

Dear Sir,—We have been consulted by our client, Mr. William Hooker, of Migg's Mews, Wayland, with reference to the accident in Rylcombe Lane on the 13th inst.

Our client states that you, while riding a bicycle at a dangerous speed on a public highway, crashed into his barrow, upsetting the same, and spilling the contents, causing damage to the extent of £4 19s. 6d.

Our client's claim is for this amount, and unless we receive from you a remittance for the sum of £4 19s. 6d. by Saturday, the 16th inst., proceedings for the recovery thereof will be taken without further notice or delay.

Yours faithfully,

GAMMON AND GOBBLE.

Jack Blake read that precious epistle through twice, and then looked hopelessly at Herries and Dig. Herries and Dig returned his look with equal hopelessness. They were, as they might have expressed it, knocked into a cocked hat. Much trouble had been gathered up by Arthur Augustus D'Arcy at various times, owing to that characteristic of his which he described as the firmness of a rock, and his chums as the obstinacy of a mule. But this, as it were, put the lid on.

"Proceedings!" said Dig faintly "That means the County Court, doesn't it?"

"It means some court or other," said Herries, with an air of wisdom. "I don't know what court, but some court where an old codger sits in a wig."

"There's a court called the High Court," said Blake. "I think that's where they wear wigs. But I don't know whether there's a High Court in Wayland."

"Jolly low court, if this kind of spoof goes on in it," said Dig, with a feeble attempt at humour.

"Must be a County Court," said Blake decidedly. "Couldn't be a High Court case for upsetting a barrow. I believe there's a cash limit of some sort in these things—under so much you go to a County Court, and over so much you go to the High Court. In High Courts you have barristers in wigs; in County Courts you have solicitors with bald heads. I think that's the chief difference."

"But what's going to be done?" asked Herries helplessly.

"Looks to me as if Gussy is going to be done," said Dig, with another attempt to relieve the strained situation with a little humour.

Blake frowned. It was no time for humour.

"Don't you be funny, Dig. This is a jolly serious matter. This man Hooker, mentioned in the letter, must be the man Gussy upset on his bike the other day."

"The thirteenth instant!" said Herries. "That was Wednesday."

"I did not upset the man, deah boys—he upset me," said Arthur Augustus, with calmness.

"How are you going to prove that?" asked Dig.

"I twust my word will be sufficient, Dig."

"Rot!" said Blake. "They don't take people's word in courts of law. Lawyers are an awfully fishy lot; they don't believe anything unless it's sworn."

"I am pwepared to swear to the twuth, Blake."

"Oh, yes; but the other party will swear, too," said Blake. "He must be a rogue, or he wouldn't be making the claim at all, if the matter happened as you've told us."

"I twust, Blake, that you do not doubt my word, whatevah the judge in the County Court may do," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity.

"Of course not, ass," said Blake irritably. "But what I believe doesn't count. I must say that you are a rare egg for landing yourself in trouble."

"Weally, Blake—"

"I've heard about these people, Gammon and Gobble," said Blake, staring at the letter. "I've seen them in the local paper—they do a lot in the County Court. One of those shady firms of solicitors who will take up anything if there's any money in it."

"Bai Jove! They must believe this man Hooker's statement, Blake, or they would surely not act as his legal advisers."

Blake snorted.

"Lot you know about the law! They'll get about half of what Hooker gets out of you, if he gets anything, and that's all they jolly well care about."

"If that is the case, Blake, it is a shock-in' state of affairs, and they are weally worse weptiles than Hookah himself."

"Better tell the judge that!" said Blake sarcastically. "It would get a verdict in your favour—I don't think."

"The man is a wascal!" said D'Arcy. "He wushed his bawwow wight into my bike, you know. I put on the bwakes, but it was too late. And only some cwockewy was bwoken—pwobably a few shillin's worth. This claim for four pounds nineteen shillings and sixpence is actually dishonest."

"That's got to be proved, and his word is as good as yours," said Blake. "If he has a solicitor to speak for him, the legal johnny will turn you inside out, and make you contradict yourself a dozen times."

"Wats!"

"We locked you in the study to keep you out of mischief, and this is what comes of it," said Blake, more in sorrow than in anger.

"If you had not locked me in the studay, Blake, it would not have happened at all. I should have walked to Wylcombe if I had started earliah. As I was late, I went on my bike."

"You're bound to argue, of course," said Blake. "Never heard of such a chap for arguing."

"Weally, Blake——"

"What about getting legal advice?" asked Dig, struck by a bright thought. "Gussy could go to Gammon and Gobble as well as this man Hooker."

Blake sniffed.

"Lawyers don't act for both sides at once," he said. "They whack out a case with another firm, to make more trade."

"Well, there's other solicitors in Wayland—there's Grabb & Co.," said Dig. "Gussy can go to Grabb's."

"And pile up legal expenses!" said Blake derisively. "Gobble on one side, and Grabb on the other, would play battledore and shuttlecock with Gussy."

"Then what's going to be done?"

"Goodness knows!"

"The man is a wascal," said Arthur Augustus. "Although he was uttably in the w'ong, and to blame for the accident, I offahed him ten shillin's for his loss."

"That did it!" grunted Blake. "It made him think you were a soft ass with money to chuck away. If you'd kicked him instead, you'd never have heard from this giddy lawyer."

"Oh, bai Jove!"

"There's another thing," went on Blake. "If they make a case of this, they may or may not spoof you out of the money; but it's a dead cert that Mr. Lathom and the Head will hear of it. Then it will come out that you were out of bounds on Wednesday."

"Yaas, that is wathah wotten."

"But Gussy can't pay these rogues!" exclaimed Herries excitedly. "Dash it all, a fellow oughtn't to pay money he doesn't owe. It's wrong."

"Besides, has Gussy got the tin?" asked Dig.

D'Arcy shook his head.

"At the pwesent moment, deah boyce, I have about fifteen shillin's," he said.

"That's that!" grunted Blake.

"It makes no diffidence, deah boys. If it were a hangin' mattah, I would not allow these weptiles to fwighten money out of me," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "I wegard this pwactically as blackmail—and I shall not hesitate to tell the judge so."

"That might mean chokey for contempt of court, or something of the kind."

"I am bound to tell the twuth, Blake."

"We won't lock you in the study—we'll tie you hand and foot, if you think of going to the County Court," said Blake darkly.

"Weally, Blake——"



Trimble's bullet head smote the trunk of an elm. The concussion did not damage the elm; but it seemed to damage Trimble, for it elicited a frantic yell from him. "Yaroo!" (See Chapter 7.)

Blake rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"I don't believe you can sue minors at all," he said. "You're a schoolboy, rising fifteen—I don't believe you can be sued."

"But Gammon and Gobble must know the law, as they live on it," said Herries. "They think Gussy can be sued."

Blake jumped.

"That giddy moustache!" he exclaimed.

"What?"

"You remember that howling ass had fixed himself up with a false moustache to spoof Lathom," exclaimed Blake. "Of course, that rogue Hooker took him for a young man over twenty-one—and he's told Gammon and Gobble so. They can't know he's a schoolboy here. Most likely they think Mr. D'Arcy, of St. James' School, is a Form-master, or a secretary, or the Head's clerk, or something."

"Gweat Scott!"

Herries and Digby stared. Then they grinned.

"That's it!" said Dig. "I say, doesn't that let Gussy out? If they can't sue him, it's no good Hooker going into court and telling lies, is it? Fancy his face, when Gussy walked in, in Etons."

Blake chuckled.

But he became grave again at once.

"Only the Head would know, and what would he say—and do? It would come out that Gussy broke bounds on Wednesday."

Clang!

"Hallo, there's third lesson," said Blake, rising from the bench. "We shall have to think this over, you chaps."

"I have decided what to do, deah boys."

"Oh, my hat! And what's that?"

"I wegard this man Hookah as a wascal, and I considah that his solicitors, in takin' up such a case, have acted like wascals also. I feel bound to tell them so, and point out to them that their conduct is unworthy of their pwofession," said Arthur Augustus. "Pewwaps a word in season may induce them to weflect on the wascality of their conduct, and cause them to take to some more weputable method of gettin' a livin'. I feel bound to speak to them plainly."

"Oh, my hat!"

"The bell's stopped," said Herries. "Come on!"

And the juniors rushed for the School House, and Arthur Augustus' complicated legal affairs had to be dismissed, while attention—more or less—was devoted to third lesson with Mr. Lathom.

THE NINTH CHAPTER

Looking After Gussy I

"W AYLAND one-two-one, please!"

Arthur Augustus spoke into the receiver.

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther stared.

The scene was the prefects' room in the School House, where there was a telephone. The Sixth Form were at games practice, and for the present the Prefects' Room was deserted by its rightful owners. Monty Lowther had taken advantage of that circumstance to visit the sacred apartment, with the playful intention of spreading the contents of a bottle of gum, mixed with purple marking-ink, in an armchair specially favoured by Knox of the Sixth. Tom Merry and Manners had followed him there, with the intention of dragging him away by main force—it being the opinion of Monty's chums that they had enough trouble with Knox of the Sixth without asking for any more.

The Terrible Three were, therefore, in the room, when they were surprised to see Arthur Augustus walk in, and take the receiver off the telephone, which was supposed to be used only by those great men of the Sixth who had been appointed prefects.

D'Arcy did not see the Shell fellows for a moment, but he discerned them as he waited for his number, receiver in hand.

"You fellows heah?" he said. "Pway don't make a wow—I am goin' to telephone."

"'Phone away," said Lowther cheerily. "I'm going to put some gum and purple ink in Knoxey's chair."

"You're not!" hooted Tom Merry and Manners.

"Look here——"

"You look here——"

"Pway don't make a wow, you chaps—leave it till aftah I've 'phoned," said Arthur Augustus. "I'm gettin' my numbah."

"Buck up, then," said Lowther.

"I shall not be vewy long tellin' off those scoundwels, deah boy."

"Eh? What? Telephoning to scoundrels, are you?" exclaimed Tom Merry, in astonishment. "What sort of jolly old acquaintances have you been making outside the school?"

"I am not acquainted with the scoundwels personally, Tom Mewwy. But pway excuse me—they're speakin'."

D'Arcy gave his attention to the instrument; the Terrible Three watching him with interest and amazement. Monty Lowther even forgot his intended jape on Gerald Knox.

"Is that Wayland one-two-one?" asked Arthur Augustus. "Messrs Gammon and Gobble, solicitors?"

"Mr. Gammon's clerk speaking."

"Pway ask Mr. Gammon, or Mr. Gobble, to come to the 'phone. Mr. D'Arcy speakin'."

"Ang on, please."

A deeper and more rasping voice came along the wires.

"Hallo! Well?"

"Is that Mr. Gammon or Mr. Gobble?"

"Mr. Gobble speaking. Is that Mr. D'Arcy, to whom we wrote a letter on account of our client Mr. Hooker?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Very good. If your remittance is received at this office by to-morrow morning, the matter closes."

"My wemittance will not be weceived at your office to-morrow mornin', Mr. Gobble."

"I cannot say, for the moment, whether my client would object to a day or two's delay. However——"

"My wemittance will not be weceived at your office at all, you wascal."

"Eh?"

"I have wung you up, Mr. Gobble, to tell

you that I wegard you as an unsewupulous wogue."

"What?"

"If you are any judge of chawactah, sir, you must be fully aware that the man Hookah is a wascal—he looks it all ovah," said Arthur Augustus, warm with indignation. "And befoah askin' me for such a sum as four pounds nineteen and sixpence, it was your duty to ascertain whethah Hookah had weally suffahed such a loss. His loss was weally only a few shillings, and it was entirely his own fault."

"Our client states——"

"It was up to you to vewify his statement befoah sendin' a demand for money to me, Mr. Gobble."

"Upon my word! We are solicitors in this office, Mr. D'Arcy, not judges of the County Court."

"Wats!"

"Eh?"

"My opinion is that you are the kind of wascal who will take up any kind of case so long as you can make some pwofit out of it."

"Upon my word!"

"I do not believe you care twopence whethah Hookah is twyin' to swindle me or not, so long as you get your wotten fees!" howled Arthur Augustus excitedly, into the transmitter.

"That is a matter for the court to decide, Mr. D'Arcy. This language——"

"Wascal!"

"Sir!"

"Wogue!"

"No doubt you are aware, sir, of the difficulty of proving the utterance of injurious expressions on the telephone. If you venture to repeat these expressions verbally, in the presence of witnesses, or in writing, you will very quickly hear from us," said Mr. Gobble.

"I should disdain to set foot in your office, which I wegard as a den of thieves, or I would wide ovah to Wayland and tell you what I think of you!" retorted Arthur Augustus. "But if you think I am afraid to express my opinion othahwise than on the

telephone, I will certainly put it into writing and post it to you."

"I trust that you will do so, Mr. D'Arcy! I fervently hope that you will venture to do so."

"Wogue!"

"I certainly hope——"

"Weptile!"

Mr. Gobble rang off. Whether he recognised these epithets as suitable descriptions of himself, or not, he seemed to have had enough of them.

"Sneakin' wascalin'" went on D'Arcy. "Are you there, you wottah? Are you there, you weptile? Bai Jove! He has wung off!"

D'Arcy jammed the receiver on the hooks.

"My hat!" gasped Tom Merry, in surprise and consternation. "Gussy, old man—what—what—what——"

"What's this game?" yelled Manners.

"I am sowwy I cannot stop now, deah boys, as I want to catch the post with a lettah to Gammon and Gobble."

Arthur Augustus walked out of the prefects' room. Tom Merry & Co. stared blankly at one another.

"What can it all mean?" stuttered Tom Merry. "Has Gussy landed himself into trouble with a firm of solicitors?"

"Looks like it," grinned Lowther. "Let's go and look for Blake—he will have to muzzle Gussy, if the dear boy's going to write libellous letters to lawyers. Lawyers ain't safe to play with."

"What-ho!" grinned Manners.

And the Terrible Three rushed away in search of Blake & Co. When they found them, there was another rush to Study No. 6—where the juniors found Arthur Augustus sitting at the table, pen in hand, with a stern frown on his brow.

He waved the pen at them.

"Pway don't come in now, deah boys. I haven't finished w'iting this lettah——"

"Do you think we're going to let you finish?" roared Blake.

"Weally, you know——"

Tom Merry glanced at the unfinished letter. It began:

A RACE TO SAVE A LIFE!

EARLY in the reign of King Charles the First, all England was agog with news of the capture and impending doom of Captain Peters, the "hightobyman," who for two years had harried the country's highways.

At the trial, the captain had implicated an alleged confederate, one Mountjoy, well-known by sight to the St. Jim's boys, and hitherto regarded as a man entirely above suspicion. It may be imagined, therefore, how tongues wagged, on the day that both were to suffer the extreme penalty of the law in the market-place of Wayland.

These thoughts were uppermost in the minds of Lovat, Fraser and Gregory, of the St. Jim's lower school, as, taking a before-breaker stroll down Rylcombe Lane, they came upon a riderless horse. A second glance revealed the horse's owner, half in and half out of the ditch, blood on forehead and hands, clothes slashed to ribbons. Feebly he waved a roll of parchment, tape-tied, and, as they saw when they stooped over him, sealed with the Royal Seal.

"Take it!" he gasped. "Wayland—at once! Life or death! Mountjoy is innocent! Take it—the reprieve!"

Disjointedly he explained how horsemen had ambushed him on his journey from London, but had taken fright at some alarm and ridden away like the wind. They had wanted the parchment which he now pressed into Lovat's hand.

"The reprieve! They wanted it—to alter—name—to Peters!"

Now Lovat was a junior of resource, and a boy of action. Almost before his companions had grasped the situation, he leaped into the saddle, and disappeared in a whirl of dust down the road. How Lovat brought the reprieve to the foot of the scaffold as the hangman's noose dangled over Mountjoy's head is now a matter of history. And in the St. Jim's museum is a treasured item—a schoolboy's jacket, pierced with three bullet-holes, as evidence of a last determined attempt by Captain Peter's friends to wrest the reprieve into their own hands.

Dear Sir,—Referring to our conversation on the telephone, I repeat that you are a reptile and a rogue—

That was as far as Gussy had got. He was not destined to proceed any farther.

Blake grabbed up the letter, and tossed it into the study fire.

Then six pairs of hands were laid on Arthur Augustus.

He was jerked out of his chair, yelling.

It was no time for half-measures. Obviously, Arthur Augustus had to be saved from himself. In the grasp of his comrades he was swung up over the study carpet.

Bump!

"Yawwoop!" roared Arthur Augustus.

"You're going to promise us not to write any letters to anybody without special permission," said Blake.

"I wefuse——"

Bump!

"Oh, cwikey!"

"Promise?"

"Nevah!" yelled Arthur Augustus.

Bump!

"Oh, cwumbs! Leggo!"

"We'll keep this up as long as you do," said Blake. "Give him another."

Bump!

Arthur Augustus was of the stuff that heroes are made of. He stood it manfully till the sixth bump on the carpet.

Then—with what breath he had left—he gave the required promise.

Messrs. Gammon & Gobble never received from Mr. D'Arcy a written confirmation of the conversation on the telephone!

THE TENTH CHAPTER

Gussy's Way!

"WORRYING, old scout?"

Tom Merry asked that question, as he came on Arthur Augustus after morning classes on Saturday.

Tom's impression was that any fellow who had received a lawyer's letter threatening proceedings in the County Court would naturally be somewhat perturbed thereby. So he was sympathetic.

But the swell of St. Jim's shook his head.

"Not at all, deah boy," he answered.

"Hem! It's rather serious, isn't it?" asked Tom. "Blake seems to think so."

"Yaas, it is wathah a wowwy," said Arthur Augustus. "It is vewy shockin' to find that there are such wogues as this man Hookah in existence. I wondah how he can possibly have been bwrought up."

"Oh!"

"His mowal twainin' must have been feahfully neglected, you know," said Arthur Augustus seriously.

"Looks like it," grinned Tom.

"He has actually made a false statement, with wegard to the value of the things that were bwoken when he wan the bawwow into my bike," said Arthur Augustus. "Fancy a man makin' a false statement for the purpose of extortin' money."

"Beastly!" agreed Tom.

"But the remarkable thing is, that the law should be at the service of such a wogue," said D'Arcy. "I should have thought that it was the pwovince of the law to lock him up somewhah."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I am thinkin' out what steps to take, you know. As you sillay duffahs pwevented me fwom w'itin' to those wogues Gammon and Gobble, I think pewwaps I ought to call on them."

"You ass——"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Keep clear of them," urged Tom. "The whole thing may be let drop. Unscrupulous people will bung a solicitor's letter at a chap to rattle him—and if he won't be rattled, they let it go at that. Even a rogue jibs at telling whoppers on oath, you know, in a court of law—might get put in chokey for it. If matters are as you say—and, of course, they are—then Hooker would be committing what they call perjury—a jolly serious thing. Most likely he wouldn't dare go so far as that. Looks to me as if that rotten letter was simply sent to scare money out of you—you having given Hooker the impression that you were—ahem!—a bit soft."

Arthur Augustus nodded.

"Possibly, deah boy! I weally do not see

why he should suppose me to be soft, how-
evah."

"Hem!"

"But if that is the case, deah boy, isn't it a feahfully shockin' thing that Gammon & Gobble should w'ite such a lettah!"

"Well, they're a shady firm," said Tom. "I believe they've got a rather juicy reputation in Wayland. Black sheep in every flock, you know. They're not all like your pater's jolly old family solicitor, you know, Gussy."

"If evah I become Lord Chancellor——"
"Eh?"

"If evah I become Lord Chancellor, I shall make a law that any man who sends a solicitor's lettah demandin' money shall be bound to take the case to court whethah he wants to or not," said Arthur Augustus.

"Good!" said Tom. "Make a note of that—you might forget it by the time you become Lord Chancellor."

And Tom Merry joined in punting a footer, leaving Arthur Augustus to meditate upon his legal affairs, and upon the changes he would make, for the better, if—and when—he became Lord Chancellor.

Blake & Co. were very far from sharing Gussy's equanimity. The letter from Gammon & Gobble caused much perturbation of mind in Study No. 6.

But when Saturday passed without anything further being heard from that delectable firm, Blake & Co. were relieved, and the matter faded a little from their minds. It faded still more on Sunday; but on Monday it was revived.

For on Monday there came another letter for Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the typed superscription of which announced whence it came.

The letter was taken up to Study No. 6 to be opened, and the Terrible Three were called in. Six anxious faces surrounded Arthur Augustus as he opened the letter.

Only the noble countenance of Arthur Augustus himself was calm and equable. If Mr. Hooker was, as Tom suspected, simply seeking to scare Gussy with the arm of the law, he was not succeeding. Arthur Augustus might be a little "soft" in some

respects; but he certainly was not to be frightened.

"It's from those rotters," said Blake. "They're keeping on, you see, Tom Merry. I fancied they would."

"Let's see what they say."

Seven juniors read the letter together.

MESSRS. GAMMON AND GOBBLE.

Solicitors.

13, Sharp Street,
Wayland.

Sir,—We have seen our client with regard to the statement made by you on the telephone, and he informs us that the facts are not as stated by you.

He informs us that the accident was caused wholly by you, and further that he refused the sum of 10s. offered by you in compensation for damage to his property, the amount of his loss being approximately £5.

Unless, therefore, we receive by return of post your remittance for £4 19s. 6d., proceedings will be taken without further notice, and we shall be glad to learn the name and address of the solicitors who will accept service on your behalf.

Yours faithfully,

GAMMON AND GOBBLE.

"Getting thick, isn't it?" said Blake.

"Thicker and thicker!" said Digby.

"Gussy's for it!" said Herries dismally.

"Look here, if we had a whip round, we could raise the tin, and get Gussy out of this."

D'Arcy shook his head decidedly.

"Not a shillin', Hewwies."

"But you can't go to the County Court, you ass!"

"I would go to the Old Bailey, if necessary, wathah than allow that wascal to dwaw a shillin' fwom me."

"Oh, dear!"

"These vogues are actually impertinent," said Arthur Augustus, tapping the letter with his noble finger. "They say that the facts are not as stated by me. That is the same as sayin' that I have been speakin'

untwuthfully. No gentleman would use such language."

"They're rank outsiders, of course," said Tom Merry. "But——"

"But what's going to be done?" groaned Blake.

"I have already decided, deah boy. I am goin' to give that man Hookah a feahful thwashin'."

"Fathead!"

"I am also goin' to call at 13, Sharp Street, Wayland, and buy a horsewhip on my way there——"

"What?"

"The pwopah way of dealin' with these wogues is with a horsewhip," said Arthur Augustus firmly. "That is what I am goin' to do."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"I am goin' to horsewhip both Gammon and Gobble, and I twust it will bwing them to a pwopah sense of their wascality."

"Great pip!"

Tom Merry & Co. looked at one another.

What was going to be done in this extraordinary affair they did not know. But they knew what was not going to be done. They knew that Gussy was not going to call on Messrs. Gammon and Gobble with a horsewhip—not while he had so many devoted friends to hold him back by the hair of his noble head.

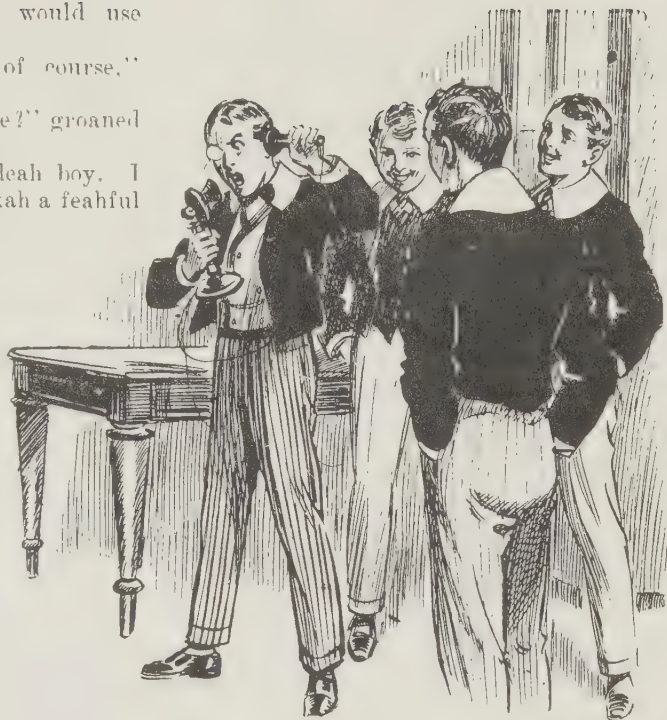
"They have asked for it, you know," said Arthur Augustus loftily. "They have had the unpwecedented insolence to cast doubt on my word. Horsewhippin' is the only possible wesource now."

"Oh, crikey!"

"Pewwaps you fellows would like to come with me," suggested Arthur Augustus. "Gammon and Gobble's clerks and messengers and things might interfere."

"They might!" gasped Blake. "I fancy it's barely possible that they might."

"In that case, deah boy, you fellows



"I have wung you up, Mr. Gobble, to tell you that I wegard you as an unscrupulous wogue, a sneakin' wascal! Are you there, you wottah? Are you there, you weptile?" (See Chapter 9.)

can thwash them, while I am thwashin' Gammon and Gobble."

"Stand by us in this, you Shell chaps," said Blake appealingly. "We're going to watch Gussy, of course; but he might dodge us—you know that lunatics do get away from their keepers sometimes."

"Weally, you uttah ass——"

"You watch him, too," said Blake. "Mind, he's not to be allowed outside the school gates alone."

"No jolly fear!" said Dig.

"Blessed if I don't think we'd better put Towser's chain on him," said Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies——"

"We'll play up," said Tom Merry. "Rely on us to grab him if he tries to start horsewhipping Gammon and Gobble."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Isn't he enough to turn a fellow's hair

grey?" said Blake. "If he gets out of our sight, he will do something that the Head will have to go and bail him out for."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is not a laughin' mattah, deah boys. I have been insulted by these wapsceallions."

"Go hon!"

"I am goin' ovah to Wayland aftah lessons——"

"Are you?" said Blake. "Wait and see, old pippin."

"I wefuse to be westwained in my liberty of action, Blake," said Arthur Augustus hotly.

"You can refuse as much as you like, old bean; but you'll be jolly well restrained all the same," chuckled Blake.

"Wats!"

D'Arcy dropped the letter into his pocket and walked out of the study. His noble mind was made up.

But the minds of Tom Merry & Co. were also made up—and neither the firmness of a rock, nor the obstinacy of a mule, was likely to avail Arthur Augustus much on this occasion.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER

No Exit!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY was a popular youth.

His company was often sought after.

He had many friends—and even fellows who were not his friends liked him, and liked to walk in the quad. with him. So it was but rarely that he was left to himself.

But it is safe to say that never, since Arthur Augustus had adorned St. Jim's with his presence, had his company been so carefully cultivated by his friends as it was after the receipt of the second letter from Messrs. Gammon & Gobble.

Blake & Co. haunted him like shadows; and when Blake & Co. were not nigh, the Terrible Three of the Shell took their places.

Even in the study, Gussy was not left alone—as if his friends feared that he might climb out of the window, or vanish up the chimney.

If he walked in the quad., at least two of

the juniors walked with him, impervious to cold and indignant looks.

Had Tom Merry & Co. been training to become detectives, they could not have done their shadowing more conscientiously.

How the queer affair was to end, they did not know and could not guess; but it was a fixed certainty that Arthur Augustus was not going to call on Messrs. Gammon & Gobble with a horsewhip.

No doubt they had, as Gussy declared, asked for it; but rather too much trouble would have followed giving them what they had asked for.

When D'Arcy went to the bike-shed after dinner that day, Blake and Dig followed him there. When he lifted his machine from the stand, they gently but firmly replaced it.

Arthur Augustus breathed hard, and left the building without his bike.

When he walked down to the gates, he found the Terrible Three chatting in a group there.

Tom Merry and Lowther took his arms, regardless of resistance, and walked him away from the gates.

Expostulations, even the threat of a fearful thrashing, did not move them.

Gussy was safely landed in the School House, and left there.

He wore a frown in the Form-room that afternoon.

But his mind was still made up. After class he donned hat and coat and went down to the gates again.

Blake & Co. were after him at once. They caught him half-way to the gates.

"We want you in the study, old chap," said Blake affectionately.

"I wefuse to come into the House, Blake!"

"Help him along, you chaps."

"Will you welease me, you cheeky asses?" demanded D'Arcy, breathing deep with wrath.

"Not quite, old bean! Shove on there."

D'Arcy walked back towards the House, securely held by the arms. His noble countenance was crimson with wrath.

"I warn you," he said, in a suppressed

voice. "I warn you, you cheekay chumps, that if you force me into the House, I shall call out to a pwefect."

"Mean that?" asked Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Right-ho—this way!" said Blake cheerily; and the juniors turned away from the House door, and walked Arthur Augustus away to the wood-shed.

"Trot in," said Blake.

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort."

Bump!

Arthur Augustus landed on the floor of the wood-shed, assisted there by his loyal chums.

Blake put the key outside the lock, closed the door, and locked it.

"Call for you at tea-time, Gussy."

"You fwiughtful wuffian——"

"Good-bye!"

"You feahful bwute——"

Blake & Co. walked away.

The wrathful voice of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy followed them from the wood-shed. Judging by his remarks, his feelings towards his loyal chums, just then were even more intense than towards Messrs. Gammon & Gobble. But Blake & Co. did not mind. If it relieved Gussy to blow off steam, they were prepared to let him blow off as much as he liked, and they cheerfully left him to it.

At tea-time, six juniors strolled round together to the wood-shed, with smiling faces. Blake tapped on the door.

"Ready for tea, Gussy?"

"I wefuse to answah you, Blake! I weward you as a wottah!"

"Not ready for tea?"

"I am quite weady for tea; but I decline

to uttah a single syllable to you, you wottah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake unlocked the door.

"Tea's ready, old man," he said affectionately. "We've got sosses and chips; we know you like them."

"Wats!"

"This way, old fellow," said Herries.

"You're going away from the House."

"I am goin' out, Hewwies."

"I think not!" murmured Blake.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy did not go out. He went in. With six juniors gathered round him, he had no choice in that matter.

As the cheery party entered the School



The juniors found Arthur Augustus sitting at the table, pen in hand, with a stern frown on his brow. "Pway, don't come in now, deah boys—I haven't finished w'iting this lettah!" (See Chapter 9.)

House, Kildare of the Sixth passed them, and glanced at them.

D'Arcy opened his lips—and closed them again. The study was better than the woodshed.

His manner was full of chilly dignity as he sat down to tea in Study No. 6. He was offended.

After tea the pressing attentions of his comrades relaxed, as the school gates were locked, and it was too late for Arthur Augustus to pay his threatened visit to the solicitor's office at Wayland.

Possibly reflections came with the night; for on the following morning Arthur Augustus loftily informed his chums that he had decided to treat Messrs. Gammon & Gobble with the contempt they deserved, and to take no further notice of their impertinent existence.

"Good!" assented Blake. "Give 'em all the contempt you like—tons of it—lorryloads of it, old man. That's the stuff to give 'em. You won't have to be bailed out by the Head for giving 'em that."

"Wats!"

Messrs. Gammon & Gobble never knew what a narrow escape they had had! Possibly Gussy's escape had been narrower!

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER

Illegal Proceedings I

TOM MERRY & Co., during the following days, gave some rather worried thought to the arm of the law that was extended towards the swell of St. Jim's.

Arthur Augustus went on the even tenor of his way, his noble equanimity quite unperturbed. But his comrades could not help feeling rather perturbed on his account.

To a junior of the Lower School, naturally, the law was a mysterious thing, which moved in mysterious ways its wonders to perform.

Whether Arthur Augustus, as a minor under age, could be sued in the County Court, or whether his father, Lord Eastwood, was the "goods," so to speak, that Messrs. Gammon & Gobble should have "gone for"—these were questions deeply

debated in Study No. 6 in the Fourth, and No. 10 in the Shell.

Tom Merry was of opinion that minors couldn't be sued, only their parents or guardians in their stead. Manners, however, declared that a fellow's parents could only be sued for "necessities"; and knocking over an itinerant merchant's barrow could not possibly be called a "necessity."

There were many differences of opinion; but all the juniors agreed upon one point, that Arthur Augustus was a first-class ass, and that he was destined on all occasions to gather up any trouble that might be going.

When the long-expected remittance arrived from D'Arcy's pater, Herries was of opinion that Gammon & Gobble had better be paid before the matter went any further. Herries had an idea that Gammon & Gobble, in the seclusion of their dusty office, were piling up bills of costs for Gussy to pay, and he remembered having read somewhere that lawyers always got their costs somehow or another.

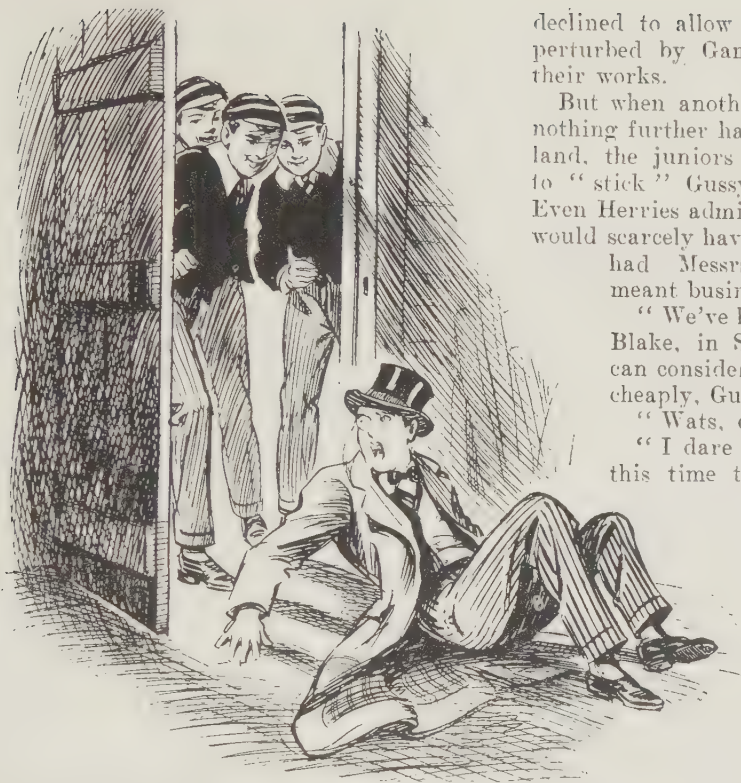
Dig suggested that something should be paid—ten bob, or so, Dig suggested. To which Arthur Augustus rejoined that, if his pater had sent him five hundred pounds instead of five, not a sixpence of that sum should have found its way into the unscrupulous hands of persons whom he designated as "weptiles."

Arthur Augustus was once more displaying the firmness of a rock; and for once his chums were doubtful whether to regard this as the obstinacy of a mule.

D'Arcy, at all events, had his way, and the communications from Messrs Gammon & Gobble were used for the useful purpose of lighting the fire in Study No. 6. Six juniors, however, were in rather apprehensive expectation of further and still more alarming communications from that quarter.

But on Saturday came the football match with Greyfriars, and that, of course, banished Gammon & Gobble, and their client, from all consideration.

No "process" had yet been served on "Mr. D'Arcy, of St. James' School"—and Tom Merry opined that they had "chucked"



Arthur Augustus landed on the floor of the wood-shed, assisted there by his loyal chums. Blake put the key outside the lock. "Call for you at tea-time, Gussy!" "You fwithful wuffians! You feahful bwutes!" (See Chapter 11.)

it. Herries, however, spoke of the "law's delays," of which any fellow could read in Shakespeare, and he declared that a process-server might drop in at any moment with an official paper for Gussy.

It was a rather alarming idea.

Should such a fearsome person arrive at St. Jim's, asking for "Mr. D'Arcy," it was really impossible to imagine what would happen afterwards.

At the very least, D'Arcy's breaking of bounds would transpire—which probably meant a Head's licking.

But whether Gussy would have to go to the County Court, and what would happen if he did, nobody knew.

It was quite an anxious time for all concerned—excepting Gussy. Arthur Augustus

declined to allow his lofty serenity to be perturbed by Gammon & Gobble and all their works.

But when another week had passed, and nothing further had been heard from Wayland, the juniors agreed that the attempt to "stick" Gussy had been "chucked." Even Herries admitted that the law's delays would scarcely have delayed so long as this, had Messrs. Gammon & Gobble meant business.

"We've heard the last of it," said Blake, in Study No. 6, "and you can consider that you've got off jolly cheaply, Gussy."

"Wats, deah boy."

"I dare say they've found out by this time that you're only a silly schoolboy, and that's why they've chucked it."

"Imposs.! They cannot have found out anythin' of the kind, Blake!"

"Why not, ass?"

"Because I am not a sillay schoolboy," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "That description only applies to the othah fellows in this

studay." This with an air of conviction.

"You cheeky ass!" roared Blake.

"Pway do not woar at a fellow, Blake! I have told you lots of times that I dislike bein' woared at."

And Arthur Augustus walked rather quickly out of Study No. 6—just in time to escape a whizzing cushion.

Tom Merry & Co. agreed that the alarming episode of Messrs. Gammon & Gobble was at an end—and they were very relieved to think so.

They did not expect to hear any more from the Wayland firm or their "client"; but, as a matter of fact, they were not quite done with Mr. William Hooker.

On the following Wednesday, Arthur Augustus walked out of gates to pay another

important visit to Mr. Wiggs—this time on the important subject of neckties. His chums were to follow him, a feed at Mrs. Murphy's tuckshop in the village being generally agreed upon as an excellent method of disposing of what remained of Gussy's liberal tip from his pater. Having finished his important business with Mr. Wiggs, Gussy was to join Tom Merry & Co. at the village shop.

But as he sauntered elegantly along Rylcombe Lane, D'Arcy's eyes fell upon a shabby figure seated on the stile half-way to the village.

He knew the stubby features, the stubby chin, the surly countenance at once.

It was Mr. William Hooker—this time minus his barrow. He was sucking at an empty pipe, and looked even more "up against it" financially than on the previous occasion when Gussy had had the misfortune to fall in with him.

D'Arcy frowned as he sighted Mr. Hooker.

He slackened his pace, debating whether he should speak to the shady rascal, and tell him what he thought of him and his rascally proceedings, or whether he should treat him, like Messrs. Gammon & Gobble, with lofty and unregarding contempt.

The merchant stared at him very curiously.

D'Arcy's appearance was very different from what it had been at the previous meeting; but there was a dawning of recognition in Mr. Hooker's surly face. Without the moustache, and in his own natty overcoat, D'Arcy looked unlike the young man, as Mr. Hooker had taken him to be, who had collided with the barrow a few weeks before. Nevertheless, Mr. Hooker half-recognised him, and stared at him very hard.

D'Arcy returned his stare with cool contempt.

"You'll know me agin!" jeered Mr. Hooker, as the swell of St. Jim's came nearer.

"Yaas, wathah, you wascal!"

"What?"

"Wogue!"

"My eye!" said Mr. Hooker, staring at him. "I know your blinking voice, and I

know your blinking face, but—— I s'pose you're a blinking relation of that blinking bloke who knocked over my blinking barrow."

"I did not knock over your bawwow—you wan your wootten bawwow into my bike, as you are perfectly well awah."

"You!" ejaculated Mr. Hooker. He stared blankly at the swell of St. Jim's.

"Mean to say it was you!" he exclaimed. "You was got up with a moustache on. So you are the bloke, are you?"

Mr. Hooker slipped from the stile.

He knew D'Arcy now, and perplexed as he was, he had no further doubt. He pushed back his dirty cuffs.

"You!" he said. "You knocked over my barrer! Where's my blinking barrer now, hay?"

"Weally, you cannot expect me to know anythin' about the whereabouts of your bawwow," said Arthur Augustus. "Pway step aside and allow me to pass."

"I don't think!" said Mr. Hooker, with emphasis. "I don't think, young feller-melad! I've 'ad to sell that barrer."

"That is no bizney of mine."

"Ain't it?" said Mr. Hooker. "I 'ad to pay twelve-and-six for legal advice, and three and six each for two blinking letters to be wrote. And what come of it? Nothing."

"Bai Jove!"

"And 'ad to sell my barrer to pay!" exclaimed Mr. Hooker excitedly. "No use going further with it, says Mr. Gobble. Leastways, not without placing us in funds for the purpose, says he."

Arthur Augustus's face broke into a grin.

The outstretching of the arm of the law had caused great perturbation in Study No. 6 at St. Jim's; but apparently Mr. Hooker's own experience had not been a happy one.

"Serve you wight!" said Arthur Augustus. "You were twyin' to extort money fwom me, you wogue, and if you have lost your own, it serves you wight. Now let me pass. I desiah to have nothin' what-evah to say to a person of your chawactah."

"I dessay!" said Mr. Hooker. "I des-say! Only I ain't done with you yet, young feller-me-lad! I'm done with blinking lawyers, I am—but I ain't done with you! See that there ditch?"

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass upon the deep ditch by the roadside, swollen with recent rain.

"Certainly I see it," he answered.

"Like to be ducked in it?" asked Mr. Hooker.

"Certainly not!"

"Then I'm sorry for yer," said Mr. Hooker, with ferocious humour. "'Cause that's jest what's going to 'appen to you."

And the hulking fellow advanced on Arthur Augustus.

D'Arcy backed away.

"Hands off, you wuffian!"

"I don't think."

"Bai Jove! I—— Oh, cwumbs!"

Mr. Hooker was upon him with a rush. Obviously he expected to overwhelm the elegant schoolboy without any difficulty. But Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was made of tougher material than Mr. Hooker supposed.

He stood up to the rush, and hit out, and there was plenty of force in Gussy's arm.

His knuckles crashed on Mr. Hooker's bulbous nose, and the merchant staggered back with a howl.

But it was only for a moment. The next he was clutching at the swell of St. Jim's, and D'Arcy was struggling in his grip.

"Now, in you go!" gasped Mr. Hooker.

"Oh, my hat! Weflease me, you wuffian!"

"In you go!"



In the excitement of the struggle, neither heard or heeded the sound of footsteps in the lane. Half-a-dozen juniors had spotted the scene from a distance, and were racing to the spot. (See Chapter 12.)

But it was not so easy to pitch Arthur Augustus in. He struggled hard, resisting every inch of the way, and Mr. Hooker was quite breathless by the time they drew close to the flowing ditch.

In the excitement of the struggle, neither heard or heeded the sound of footsteps in the lane.

Half a dozen juniors had spotted the scene from a distance, and were racing to the spot.

Tom Merry & Co. were taking it very easy, as they strolled down to Rylcombe, thinking it probable that Arthur Augustus would be detained for some time with Mr. Wiggs' selection of neckties. But they ceased to take it easy as they discerned, from a distance, the swell of St. Jim's in combat with a hulking ruffian.

"Put it on!" exclaimed Blake.

And the six juniors "put it on," fairly racing towards the stile.

Fast as they came, however, they were

only just in time. Arthur Augustus, still resisting manfully, had been whirled to the very edge of the flowing ditch, and Mr. Hooker was exerting himself to hurl him in. Undoubtedly he would have succeeded; but at the psychological moment, Tom Merry arrived, a little ahead of the rest.

Tom grabbed the merchant by the collar, and dragged him backwards from the ditch, Arthur Augustus with him.

"No, you don't!" he gasped.

"Wescue, deah boys!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"Here we are!" chuckled Blake.

"Collar him!"

"Mop him up!"

Crash!

Mr. Hooker, gasping and spluttering, went sprawling into the road, and two or three of the juniors sat on him to keep him there.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER

Just Like Gussy!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY gasped for breath.

He leaned on the stile, and gasped, and gasped again. From Mr. Hooker, sprawling on his back in the lane, came a series of emphatic objurgations. His language was not pleasant; indeed, much of it would undoubtedly have been considered, by Messrs. Gammon & Gobble, as actionable!

"Cheese it!" said Blake, taking hold of Mr. Hooker's hair, and tapping the back of his head on the earth. "That's enough! Ring off!"

"Yaroooh!"

"Keep that bwute safe, deah boys," gasped Arthur Augustus.

"We've got him," grinned Blake. "Safe as houses! I keep on telling you to shut up, my man."

Bang!

Mr. Hooker's head smote the road again, and he yelled with anguish. After that hint, he decided to shut up.

With Blake sitting on his chest, Herries holding one wrist and Dig another, and Monty Lowther standing on his legs, Mr.

Hooker was not in a position to argue the point.

"But what's the jolly old row, Gussy?" asked Tom Merry. "Can't you step outside the school gates on a half-holiday without getting into a shindy?"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Oh, it's Gussy all over," said Blake. "He goes round asking for trouble, you know."

"Begging and praying for it," assented Dig.

"Weally, you fellows——"

"Will you let a blinking bloke gerrup?" came in a fierce hiss from the prostrate Mr. Hooker.

Bang!

"Whooop!"

Again Mr. Hooker subsided into silence, with an expression on his face that was positively Hunnish.

"Dear old Gussy!" said Lowther. "One day he goes out and butts into a merchant on a bike—now he goes out and picks up a shindy with a tramp! What will he do next, I wonder?"

"I wonder!" said Blake, shaking his head.

"Wats! This is the same man—this is the wogue Hookah," said Arthur Augustus. "He pitched into me, and was goin' to thwow me into the ditch if you fellows hadn't come up. Oh, deah!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Great pip! This is Hooker, is it?" exclaimed Monty Lowther, staring at the enraged rascal. "Gobble's giddy client!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"The chap who was taking legal proceedings," chuckled Blake. "He seems to have decided on illegal proceedings, after all."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let a bloke gerrup," said Mr. Hooker, changing his threatening tone for a whine. "I'm sorry I laid 'ands on the young gent. I was ratty, I was, owing to being rooked by them blinking lawyers. I've 'ad to sell my barrer, and what's a blinking bloke to do without a blinking barrer? I ask you."

"You seem to have got off better than the Gobble man's client, Gussy," chortled Blake.

"You haven't had to sell your silk hat of your resolution?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Blake——"

"So he was going to chuck you into the ditch," said Harvey. "Well, what chance for the game he gave for the pander, roll him in!"

"Roll him!"

"Roll him!"

"Yes, roll him!" said Arthur. "Rolling!" "The water is a beautiful wash and he would have washed out my stomach if you fellows had not come up. As it is, I am beautifully cramped, and my collar is torn, and two of those buttons have gone. Well, him in!"

"Leave go of a hunk!" roared Mr. Hooker in alarm. "I say, you have got a hunk!"

"Roll him over!"

"Chuck it, I say! Roll 'ere—you chuck it! Yooop!"

Rolling Arthur. "Rolling D'Arcy into the ditch had seemed quite an attractive idea to the irate Hooker. But for himself, the ditch had no attractions—quite the reverse. He struggled frantically as the St. Jim's juniors rolled him over.

"Ow! Ow! 'Auds off!" he roared. "Elp! I'll 'ave the lor of you!"

"Haven't you had enough law yet?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Roll him in, and chance Gammon & Gobble!" chuckled Blake.

"Oh! Yow! 'Elp!"

Mr. Hooker's momentary resistance was of no avail. He was rolled nearer and nearer, and finally pitched in. Splash!

"Ooooooh!"

Mr. Hooker went headlong into four feet



He was rolled nearer and nearer, and finally pitched in. Splash! Mr. Hooker went headlong into four feet of flowing water, with a foot of mud at the bottom. (See Chapter 13.)

of flowing water, with a foot of mud at the bottom.

He splashed right under, and came up streaming.

All the ferocity was taken out of Mr. Hooker by that ducking in cold water.

He plunged to the bank, and drenched himself out by the grass, and collapsed in a gasping state.

"Give him another—what?" asked He.

"Ooooooh!"

Mr. Hooker's momentary resistance was of no avail. He was rolled nearer and nearer, and finally pitched in. Splash! Mr. Hooker went headlong into four feet of flowing water, with a foot of mud at the bottom. (See Chapter 13.)

"I trust, Hookah, that you were a very



Arthur Augustus dropped a pound note and a ten-shilling note into the muddy hand of the merchant. Mr. Hooker stared at him blankly. "My cye!" was all he could say. (See Chapter 13.)

you have been vevy pwopably punished for your wascality!" said the swell of St. Jim's severely.

"Ooooch!"

"I twust that it will be a lesson to you."

"Ow!"

"I wegard you——"

"Ow! Grooogh! Look at me!" groaned Mr. Hooker. "I'm nearly drowned! Look at me! Don't jor at a bloke."

"Weally, you cheekay wottah——"

"Ring off!" chuckled Blake. "The good man's had his medicine, and he seems quite tame now. T'ain't fair to give him chin-wag, too."

"Weally, Blake——"

"Come on," said Tom Merry, laughing. "There won't be time to go to your giddy

tailor's now, Gussy! Let's head for Mrs. Murphy's."

"Let's!" agreed Blake. "Come on!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry & Co. walked on towards the village, leaving Mr. Hooker sitting, a dismal and disconsolate figure, on the grass by the roadside. Arthur Augustus had a thoughtful expression on his noble face, and once or twice he glanced back over his shoulder at the dismal figure of the merchant. He halted at last.

"Come on, Gussy!"

"You fellows keep on," said Arthur Augustus. "I am goin' to speak a word to that person."

"He's had enough chin-wag, old chap."

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus hurried back along the lane towards Mr. Hooker. The dismal rascal blinked up at him with Jack-lustre eyes.

"Can't you let a bloke alone?" he groaned.

"I have not weturned to slang you, Mr. Hookah," said Arthur Augustus quietly. "You mentioned to me that you had had to sell your bawwow."

"'Ad to let it go for a pound," mumbled Mr. Hooker.

"I pwesume that that interferes wathah sewiously with your gettin' your livin' as a woadside merchant?"

"Course it does! 'Ow's a bloke to carry round his pot and pans without a barrer?"

"Could you wepurchase it for a pound, Mr. Hooker?"

"Course I can't! Thirty bob would do it; but where's a bloke to get thirty bob?" groaned Mr. Hooker.

Arthur Augustus hesitated for one moment.

"I have thirty shillin' left fwom a wemittance I lately weceived," he said. "If your bawwow is necessary to your gettin' a livin', Mr. Hookah, you are welcome to it."

"Eh?"

"Heah you are!"

Arthur Augustus dropped a pound note and a ten-shilling note into the muddy hand of the merchant.

Mr. Hooker stared at him blankly.

"My eye!" was all he could say.

"I am afrwaid, Mr. Hookah, that you are a vewy gweat wogue and wascal," said Arthur Augustus. "I can only twust that you will twy at least to be more honest in the future."

And Arthur Augustus hurried after his comrades.

Mr. Hooker picked himself up, and stood staring after him, in a state of astonishment from which he was a long time in recovering.

D'Arcy rejoined the Co., and they walked into Rylcombe together. Tom Merry & Co. were grinning; they had witnessed the transaction between D'Arcy and Mr. Hooker, and it did not surprise them in the very least. They had given up being surprised by any of Gussy's proceedings—even his legal proceedings!

"Here we are!" said Blake cheerily, as the party arrived at the door of Mrs. Murphy's tuckshop.

Arthur Augustus halted suddenly.

"Bai Jove!" he ejaculated.

"What's the matter now?"

"I am afrwaid that the spwead is off, deah boys!"

"What!" howled six voices.

"You see, I gave that man Hookah all I had left out of my patah's wemittance——"

"Eh?"

"And what about the feed?" bawled Herries.

"I nevah thought of that."

"Oh, my hat!"

"You've walked us all down to Rylcombe at tea-time, and—and—and there isn't any feed!" gasped Blake.

"Yaas. You see——"

"And what are we going to do?" howled Blake.

"Walk back again, deah boy."

"What!"

"That appeahs to me the only thing to do, in the cires. I twust," added Arthur Augustus hopefully—"I twust that we shall not be too late for tea in Hall!"

Tom Merry & Co. gazed at Arthur Augustus speechlessly for some moments. Then, as if moved by the same spring, they seized the ornament of St. Jim's, and sat him down on the doorstep of the tuck-shop with a terrific concussion.

"Yawwooop!"

"There!" gasped Blake. "Now give him another——"

Bump!

"Oh, cwumbs!"

And Tom Merry & Co. walked back to St. Jim's, leaving Arthur Augustus D'Arcy to follow at his leisure.

THE END



Musical Comedy At Rookwood!



Grand Performance of "H.M.S. Pinafore,"

By JIMMY SILVER.

THE Concert Hall was packed to overflowing on Saturday evening, when the Classical Juniors' Operatic Society gave a fine performance of Gilbert and Sullivan's famous musical comedy, "H.M.S. Pinafore." Admission was free; but heavy charges were made, nevertheless—by Tommy Dodd & Co., of the Modern Side. They charged so persistently at the door that we were obliged to admit them!

It was a great mistake to admit the Modern bounders. We might have guessed that they were bent on a "rag." However, they trooped to their seats with innocent faces—though I did not fail to notice that their pockets were bulging suspiciously, as if they contained ammunition! I had no time to make them turn out their pockets, because I was urgently wanted behind the scenes.

Loud cheers greeted the raising of the curtain; and our jolly Jack Tars, wearing Oxford bags which had been dyed a deep blue, chanted their opening chorus. There were no untoward incidents until they came to the line,

"When the balls whistle free o'er the bright blue sea!"

And then missiles began to whistle free from the hands of the Modern bounders. They were in the front row, and, rising to their feet, they bombarded the performers with bad eggs, cabbages, rotten apples, and other unwelcome missiles. There was a wild stampede through the wings on the part of the jolly Jack Tars, who had just been singing that they stood to their guns all day!

When I came on to the stage, in the rôle of the hero, I made an indignant appeal for

order. Evidently my words carried weight, for the Moderns suffered me to sing my opening song without hindrance. But there was more trouble when Arthur Newcome, in the rôle of "dear little Buttercup," came tripping on to the stage with a basket of wares on his arm. Probably it was the first time that Buttercup had performed in short skirts and an Eton crop! Poor old Newcome hasn't much of a voice; in fact, his voice is his only vice! No sooner did he start croaking his song, than the Moderns sprang to their feet, and peppered him with their pea-shooters.

Newcome stuck it out like a hero. Under a bombardment of peas, which rattled on the stage like hailstones, he sang his song to the bitter end—with slight variations!

"They call me the—ow!—Buttercup,
 Dear little—yow!—Buttercup,
 Though I could never tell why. Yarooo!
 But still I'm called (Ow, you beasts!)
 Buttercup,
 Dear little (Chuck it, you rotters!)
 Buttercup,
 Sweet little—ow-ow-ow!—Buttercup,
 I!"



They jerked the trap-door open—and I vanished below.
 It was the crowning outrage!



The Modern bounders bombarded the performers with bad eggs, cabbages, rotten apples . . . there was a wild stampede from the stage!

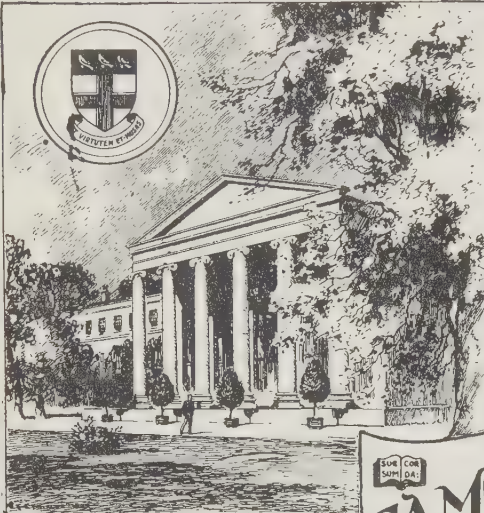
The crowning outrage occurred when I was singing my farewell song to the captain's daughter (Lovell.) With fitting emotion, I warbled the lines:

"Farewell, my own!
 Light of my life, farewell!"

Instantly I disappeared from view! And there was a howl of irrepressible merriment from the audience. The fact is, I had been standing on a trap-door, which opened downwards. A couple of Moderns were underneath the stage. They jerked the trap-door open at the appropriate time, and I vanished below—to be caught in their arms.

That, as I say, was the crowning outrage. It was decided, there and then, to eject the Moderns from the Concert Hall, and the play was held up while a free-fight took place. After a wild and whirling scrap, Tommy Dodd & Co. were cast forth on their necks. Then the play proceeded, without further interruption, to its triumphant conclusion. We have promised to give another performance next Saturday, and any Modern bounder who has the nerve to seek admission will be given the bumping of his life!

THE END

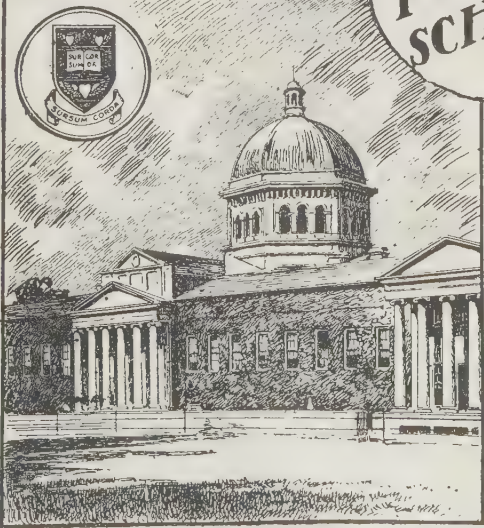


Mill Hill School



Bedford College

**FAMOUS
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS**

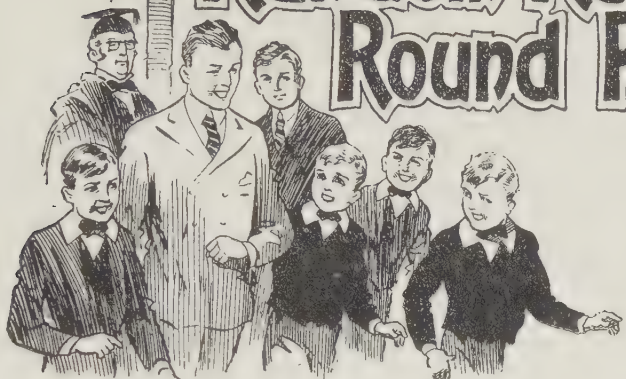


Haileybury College



Christ's Hospital

Random Ramblings Round Rookwood!



By
OWEN CONQUEST
*Who chronicles the cheery
adventures of
Jimmy Silver & Co.*

I AM in the habit of visiting Rookwood School pretty regularly. You see, in my rôle of chronicler of all that goes on at Rookwood, I have to keep constantly in touch with the old place, and glean all the latest news from Jimmy Silver & Co.

These visits of mine are very informal affairs. I am not ushered into the school quadrangle with a flourish of trumpets, and elaborate ceremonial; nor should I care to be. I have the headmaster's permission to "drop in" whenever I wish—a privilege which I much appreciate.

I expect the readers of THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL would give a good deal to be able to accompany me on my ramblings round Rookwood. Well, they can join me now, if they wish, and I will proceed to show them round. Come along, you fellows, and let us explore this very famous and historic school, in the heart of Hampshire.

We are greeted at the gate by sour-faced old Mack, the school porter—or, as he would prefer to be called, the Keeper of the Keys. Mack's position is one of great responsibility; and he would talk to you for hours—if you were to let him—about the numerous occasions on which he has saved the school from being burgled, or burnt to the ground, or invaded by undesirable characters.

Mack's wrinkled old face lights up when he espies us; and his "Pleased to see yer, Mr. Conquest, sir!" lacks nothing of heartiness and sincerity. Mack was inclined to be frigid and aloof, at first; but numerous "tips," slipped into his horny palm from



The wrinkled old face of Mack, the school porter, lights up. "Pleased to see yer, Mr. Conquest!"

time to time, have gradually thawed his heart.

He permits us to pass in; and we troop into the spacious, sunny quadrangle, bordered with beeches, and paved with ancient flagstones. Over these same flagstones the kindly monks of old often used to pass in a priestly procession. But times have changed; and the old quad now re-echoes the sound of happy schoolboy laughter.

Jimmy Silver & Co., the heroes of the Classical Fourth, leave their game of football and hurry forward to greet us. Instantly we find ourselves surrounded. "Welcome to Rookwood!" is writ large on every smiling face; and we are piloted into the building, and round a maze of corridors, with Jimmy Silver & Co. chatting away as fast as their tongues will let them.

"I say, Mr. Conquest! You'll stop and have tea with us?"

"And your friends, too?"

"Don't refuse! We're in funds, and the end study is a land flowing with milk and honey!"

Refusal, of course, is out of the question; for we are hustled willy-nilly into the end study in the Fourth Form passage. Extra chairs and cushions and crockery are commandeered from other studies; the fire is stirred into a blaze; and we are made cosy and comfortable. Our hosts then proceed to wait upon us hand and foot; and there is a constant procession to and from the tuckshop, where Sergeant Kettle is fairly rushed off his feet.

When tea is well under way, the fat face of Tubby Muffin—Rookwood's champion feeder—appears in the doorway. There is a chorus of "Buzz off, Tubby!" and "Run

away and pick flowers!" So pathetic is the expression on the fat fellow's face that we plead for him to be allowed to remain. So Tubby Muffin trots gleefully in; and with your own eyes you see what an amazing appetite he has, and that his gastronomic feats, as described in the Rookwood stories, are in no way exaggerated.

A study feed at Rookwood is one of the



When tea is well under way, the fat face of Rookwood's champion feeder appears in the doorway. There is a chorus of "Buzz off, Tubby!" and "Run away and pick flowers!"

joys of life. We feel that we are among old friends, and Jimmy Silver & Co. cannot do enough for us. We chat about every subject under the sun—"of ships and shoes and sealing-wax, of cabbages and kings." But, of course, the chief topics are the latest footer matches, and fights, and japes, and so forth, which have taken place at Rookwood. All these are stored in my memory-tank, for use when writing future stories.

After tea will come the sight-seeing; and in the course of our progress we shall meet with many people, both high and humble.

You will like the Head, Dr. Chisholm—



Before we leave, we shall be besieged by eager fags with their autograph books ; and we shall be pressed to partake of a send-off snack at the school tuck-shop.

a genial, kindly man, beaming benignly upon us through his spectacles. Yet you will not fail to observe that he can be capable of sternness and severity on occasion ; and you will come to the conclusion that he is the ideal Head.

You will like, too, Mr. " Dicky " Dalton, the master of the Classical Fourth. A very youthful master, this—a man of character and energy and charm, having " a way with him " which instantly commands liking and

respect. You will not like Mr. Horace Manders, of the Modern Side. His handshake will be of the flabby kind ; his smile will be wintry. He will be polite ; but you will see that his politeness is merely a mask to cloak a naturally sour and vindictive nature. But we soon escape from Mr. Manders, and find ourselves chatting with big, honest Bulkeley, the school skipper, and with Lawrence Neville, his stalwart and manly chum.

Before we leave, we shall be besieged by eager fags with their autograph-books ; and we shall be pressed to partake of a " send-off snack " at the school tuck-shop. And when, all too soon, the time of departure comes, we shall be escorted down to the gates by Jimmy Silver and his satellites, who will wish us good-speed, and urge us to come again as soon as ever we can.

And so—adieu to Rookwood !

THE END



A carriage-load of Rookwood celebrities. Tubby Muffin, of course, is in charge of the tuck hamper, with Jimmy Silver & Co., on his left, to see fair play. Mornington is trifling with a bottle of "pop." Putty Grace indulges in a little footer practice, whilst Clarence Cuffy on the right "swots", remorselessly.

Tubby In Nine Typical Attitudes!





Rookwood Recollections!

By Mr. RICHARD DALTON, M.A.
(*Master of the Rookwood Fourth*)

IN the far-off days which are now only a memory, Rookwood School was a famous monastery. We can picture the merry old monks, on a Friday morning, trooping down to the river in quest of fat trout for their dinner. The genial friars were great trenchermen, and did not stint themselves of the good things of the table. In the refectory—upon the site of which the dining-hall now stands—many a goodly joint of the Roast Beef of Old England was carved and

consumed with great gusto. I was telling my pupils about this the other day, and “Tubby” Muffin, of the Fourth, wistfully remarked that he wished Rookwood was *still* a monastery!

Many traces of the monks still remain. The crypt and the cloisters preserve the old-time atmosphere of hushed tranquillity. The old ivy-mantled tower has stood intact throughout the centuries, buffeted by all the winds that blow, but good for a long lease

The genial friars were great trenchermen. In the old refectory—where the Rookwood dining-hall now stands—many a great feast was enjoyed with gusto!



of life yet. And the school fountain, in the quadrangle, is extremely ancient, and a wonderfully quaint piece of sculpture. Antiquarians are attracted to Rookwood like moths to a flame; and the Head delights to show them round, and to discourse upon these surviving relics of the long-ago.

Rookwood presents a curious clashing of ancient with modern; for the Modern Side is quite a twentieth-century affair—up-to-date in every way, and fitted out with all modern conveniences. There is electric-lighting, which the Classical Side lacks; there are more bath-rooms; larger and airier studies; and corridors which are neither damp nor draughty. And yet, despite all these improvements, I must confess to a stronger affection for the older House, which has endured throughout the slow march of the centuries, and is rich in tradition, and glorious memories.

I am often asked to name the most exciting event which ever happened at Rookwood. This is very difficult to say. A Great Fire gives excitement enough, and to spare; so does a Great Rebellion; and Rookwood has tasted both. But some would be inclined to vote for the personal visit of King Charles the First, in the time of the Civil War, as being the most exciting happening. Twenty miles away, the Battle of Newbury was being fought, and was to prove a death-blow to the hopes of the Stuart monarch. Yet the King's visit to

Rookwood was not a gloomy affair, but a lively and ceremonious business. The whole school, under its loyalist headmaster, Dr. Parr, turned out to cheer the King, who was attended by an escort of gay and gallant courtiers. And scores of excited juniors wished that they had been old enough to take up swords for the Royal cause.

The Great fire of Rookwood occurred on a certain Bonfire Night, many years ago. The fireworks in those days were more highly-explosive and dangerous than they are to-day. To let one of them off inside a building was not only reckless, but positively dangerous. On this occasion, a misguided fag lighted a catherine-wheel in his master's study, with disastrous results. The window curtains took

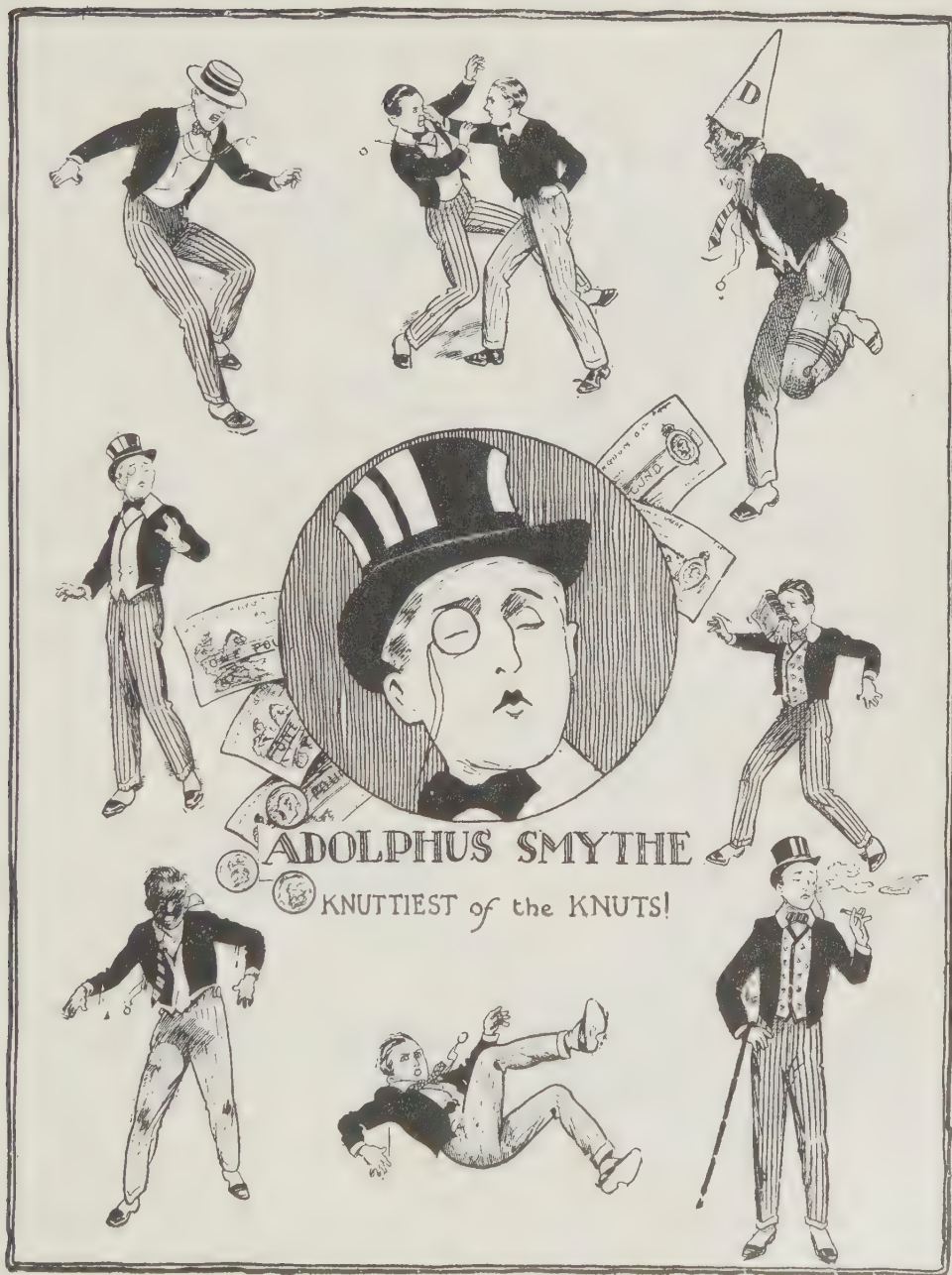
fire, and before the paralysed fag could move or act, the whole room was ablaze. Swiftly the flames spread, and the historic school building was in grave danger of being gutted. However, Rookwood turned out its amateur fire-brigade, and for upwards of an hour the fellows fought the flames with hosepipes and pails of water; and at last they succeeded in quelling the conflagration. Considerable damage had been done, but there was no loss of life. The scared fag who had caused all the trouble was not punished; but fireworks were "barred" at Rookwood for several years afterwards, as a result of his folly.

THE END



A misguided fag lighted a catherine wheel in his master's study, with disastrous results.

One of the "Lads" of Rookwood Snap-shotted!



A Trapper's Life on the Frozen Plains!



THE HUSKY TEAM.



THE GAME IN SIGHT



IN BIVOAC.



A KILL.

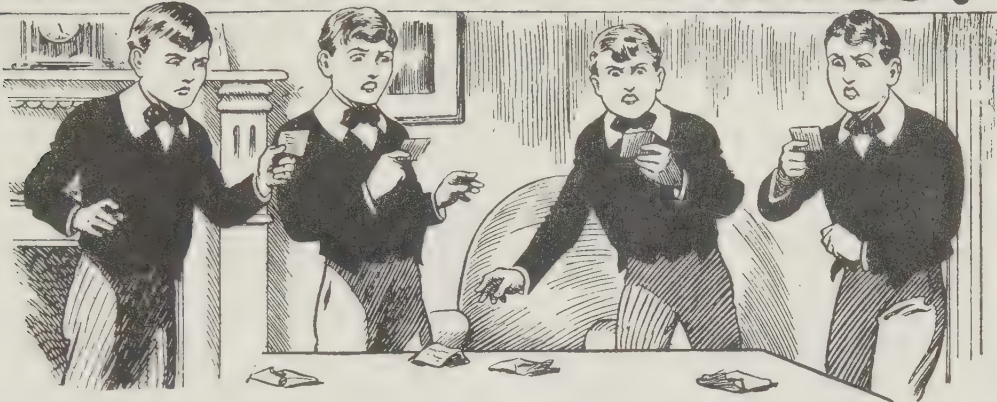


THE PORTAGE SLEIGH.



A TRAPPER'S CABIN.

TEA WITH M^R MANDERS!



By OWEN CONQUEST

Tea parties at Rookwood School are never sedate affairs. This one in particular was a—but it needs a whole, long, complete story to describe it!

THE FIRST CHAPTER Mr. Manders is Very Kind

TOMMY DODD of the Modern Fourth at Rookwood put a grinning face into Jimmy Silver's study on the Classical side.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were at home. It was a fine, frosty afternoon, and it was much against their will that the Fistical Four were at home. But they had no choice in the matter. There were lines to be done, and Jimmy and Lovell, Raby and Newcome were grinding at a great rate through their impositions, in order to get away to the football ground.

Having not a moment to spare, they were naturally not at all pleased by an interruption, especially from a Modern fellow.

Four pens pointed at once to the door as Tommy Dodd came in.

"Buzz!" said Jimmy Silver laconically.

"Get!" said Lovell.

"Take your face away!" snapped Raby.

"And bury it!" added Newcome.

Tommy Dodd did not seem at all perturbed by that inhospitable reception.

Neither did he depart. He stood and regarded Jimmy Silver & Co. with a grinning face.

"Busy?" he asked, quite cheerfully.

"Of course we're busy!" growled Jimmy Silver. "All the fault of your blessed old Manders, bless him!"

"And we shall be late for the footer," grunted Lovell—"late enough without wasting time on a Modern worm! Buzz off!"

"But Manders hasn't given you lines?" said Tommy Dodd, puzzled. "A Modern master can't give Classics lines."

"Reported us to Dalton!" snapped Jimmy. "It was quite by accident my footer buzzed on him in the quad. I really didn't see him coming. But he was bound to march us in to Dalton and report us. And here we are—two hundred lines of Virgil each, and a footer match waiting!"

"Why don't you Modern chaps lynch Manders?" demanded Lovell. "We'd scrag him if we had him on this side! Unsympathetic beast! We actually told him we'd got a footer match on this afternoon, and it

didn't make any difference. He was determined to get us detained."

"Awful rotter!" groaned Raby.

"Better fill up the team with Modern chaps," suggested Tommy Dodd.

"Rats!"

"I'll captain the side, if you like!"

"More rats!"

"The footer match is going to wait till we've done this impot," said Lovell. "We shan't be long, if you'll leave off jawing, Tommy Dodd. Have the Latcham fellows come yet?"

"Not yet," said Tommy cheerily.

"Well, you can see 'em when they come, and ask 'em to wait a bit," said Jimmy Silver. "Tell 'em we've got a detention task for biffing a footer at an awful beast, and ask 'em nicely."

"Can't be did!" said Tommy Dodd. "You'd better leave the match in my hands, as vice-captain, Jimmy. Honest Injun, you can't play. Look here!"

Tommy Dodd tossed four envelopes on the table.

"What the dickens are they?" asked Jimmy, in surprise.

"They're from Manders."

"Manders!" ejaculated the Fistical Four in chorus.

"Yes; he's just sent me over with them," said the Modern junior. "I'm really sorry, you chaps, but you're booked, unless you choose to decline Manders' invitation."

"Invitation!" yelled Raby.

"Look at it!"

Jimmy Silver yanked his envelope open, and his chums followed suit. Four cards fell out on the table. The Classical juniors stared at them.

They were invitations!

Mr. Manders, the senior master on the Modern side at Rookwood, was a very precise gentleman, as well as a very tart and sharp-tempered one.

It was supposed to be an honour and a pleasure to have tea with a master in his study, and fellows who were invited generally put on their cleanest collars and neatest ties, and went meekly.

As a matter of fact, tea with Mr. Manders, though it might be an honour, was scarcely a pleasure.

Mr. Manders' invitations were generally extended to fellows on the Modern side, naturally; and certainly Jimmy Silver & Co. had never expected to be asked to tea by him.

The Modern master disliked them cordially; and on this especial afternoon, too, he had demanded their punishment at the hands of Mr. Dalton, their Form-master, owing to a sad accident with a football in the quad.

So it was with blank faces that Jimmy Silver & Co. stared at the cards.

Other masters when they asked a fellow to tea would do it by word of mouth, or by a hasty note dashed off by a pencil, as a rule. But Mr. Manders was very precise. Perhaps, also, he was a little given to "side." He used engraved invitation cards for the purpose. Perhaps he desired to impress upon the minds of the recipients that the honour done them was very great indeed.

Mr. Manders' cards were quite well known at Rookwood. They ran:

"The pleasure of Master.....'s company is requested to tea in Mr. Manders' study, o'clock."

The blanks were filled in with pen and ink with the names of the fellows, and with the hour appointed.

In the present instance the hour read "Four o'clock," and the names of Silver, Lovell, Raby, and Newcome were written in. They were not written in Mr. Manders' own hand. The Modern master generally called in a fog to perform those little tasks for him.

Tommy Dodd grinned at the expression on the faces of the Fistical Four. They regarded one another blankly.

"My hat!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver.

"Blow him!"

"Cheek!"

"Asking us to tea, just after getting us detained!" yelled Raby. "What does the old donkey mean?"

"Awfully kind of him, isn't it?" chuckled Tommy Dodd. "Perhaps he means it to make up for the detention."

Jimmy Silver snorted.

"The mean rotter!" he growled. "I know what he means. He's not satisfied with what Dalton gave us, and he's giving us this to make us sit up."

"Well, his feed isn't worth having!" said Lovell. "Weak tea and bread-and-scraps, and a smell of jam. He's too jolly mean to stand a cake. But I suppose he can't intend it as a punishment, though that's what it is."

"He does!" howled Jimmy Silver. "He knows we can't refuse, and he knows we've got a footer match on!"

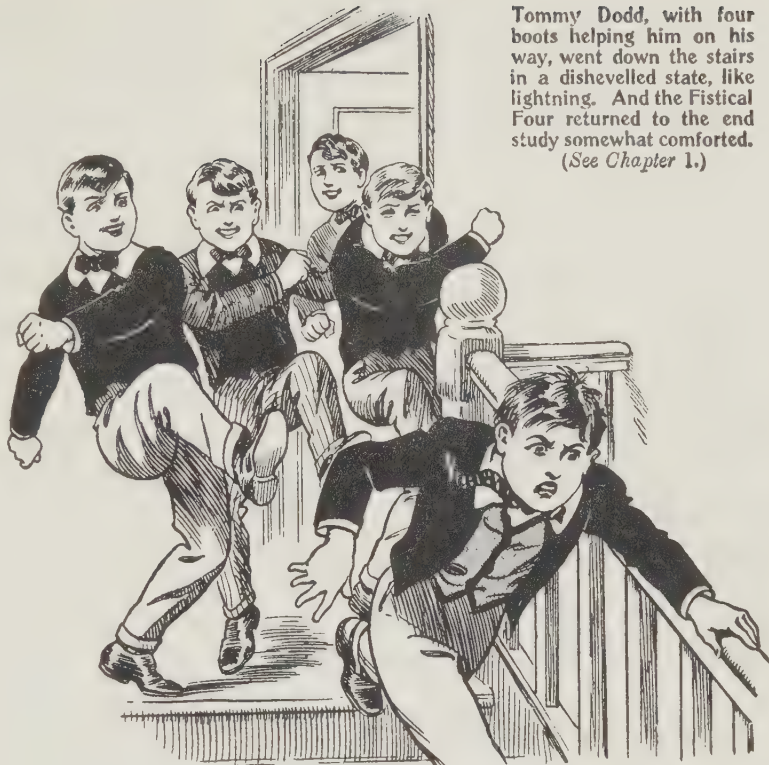
"Oh!"

"We can't finish the match by four—we're detained, and can't begin early!" hooted the captain of the Fourth. "That's his game!"

"Oh, draw it mild!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd. "Manners is rather a Hun, but he wouldn't be undignified enough to play a trick like that on kids."

"What has he asked us for, then?" howled Jimmy. "He's never asked us before. He never asks any Classics, except that swanking ass Smythe of the Shell, and Mornington and Townsend, and that lot sometimes. He knew we'd got a footer match on—Lovell told him!"

Tommy Dodd whistled.



Tommy Dodd, with four boots helping him on his way, went down the stairs in a dishevelled state, like lightning. And the Fistical Four returned to the end study somewhat comforted.
(See Chapter 1.)

"It's a trick!" said Raby furiously. "He knows we can't refuse a master's invitation, and that we're keen on the footer."

"Oh, the deep rotter!" groaned Newcome.

The Fistical Four exchanged furious looks. Almost incredible as it seemed that a master should so forget his dignity as to trick juniors in this manner, they had no doubt.

Mr. Manders disliked them—they had had many rubs. But a Modern master had no authority over Classics, and Jimmy Silver & Co. generally managed to give Mr. Manders a wide berth. The Modern master had been palpably discontented with the punishment Mr. Dalton had inflicted on the four for the accident with the football.

He was aware that they were playing a visiting team that afternoon, and that they

were keen footballers. The Fistical Four hadn't the slightest doubt that he had sent those invitations for the especial purpose of "dishing" them.

"By gad, it does look like it!" said Tommy Dodd. "Of course, you can refuse the invitations if you like."

"Go and tell him we can't come, and he can go and eat coke!" growled Lovell.

Tommy Dodd grinned. He was not likely to take a message like that to the Modern master.

"Does Manders want an answer?" asked Jimmy.

"Oh, no! He didn't say so. He takes it for granted you'll go, of course," said Tommy Dodd. "You can leave the footer to me, you know."

"I suppose we shall have to," growled Jimmy Silver. "After all, it isn't a very hard match—not like the St. Jim's or Greyfriars. If it were one of those, I'd refuse Manders and chance it."

"Let's refuse it, anyway," said Lovell savagely. "I know it's a trick. I'm pretty certain it is."

"But—but——"

"Dalton would be ratty when he heard," said Newcome. "Manders would be sure to tell him."

"It's up to us!" grunted Jimmy Silver. "It's the first time he's ever asked us, and we're not certain it's a trick. It would look jolly ungracious not to go."

"It will be all right about the footer," said Tommy Dodd encouragingly. "I'll put four Moderns in your places, so the match will be rather more of a sure thing than it was. Yaroooh!"

Tommy Dodd broke off with a wild yell as the Fistical Four seized him.

They were exasperated enough to have ragged Mr. Manders, if that had been feasible. As it wasn't, the Modern junior served their turn. He was a Modern, anyway, and he had brought the unwelcome invitations.

The Fistical Four grasped him on all sides, and Tommy Dodd, roaring, was swept off his feet.

Bump!

"Yooop!" yelled the unfortunate Modern.

"Kick him out!" roared Lovell.

"Yow-ow-ow! You silly asses! Yaroooh! Oh, my hat!"

Tommy Dodd fled wildly down the passage, with four boots helping him on his way as far as the stairs. He went down the stairs in a dishevelled state like lightning. And the Fistical Four returned to the end study somewhat comforted.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

Not Nice for Jimmy Silver!

JIMMY SILVER & Co. ground away at their lines with savage faces.

As they ground on, they heard voices in the quadrangle, which announced that the Latham Ramblers had arrived.

But it was no use going down.

There was no football for the chums of the end study that afternoon.

In any case, the match would have had to be postponed for half an hour, as they had strict orders to get their impositions done and taken in to Mr. Dalton before they left the house.

It was getting towards three now, so even if the match had been started at once it could not have been finished by four o'clock. And it could not be started at once.

Had it been one of the great matches of the season—such as those with St. Jim's, or Greyfriars, or Bagshot—Jimmy Silver would have "chanced" it, and refused Mr. Manders' kind invitation to tea.

But it was not so serious as all that. Tommy Dodd could raise a team quite good enough to beat Latham, even with the Fistical Four left out. The Rookwood colours were in no serious danger. The Fistical Four admitted that.

But it was bitterly exasperating to have to slack about for an hour or so, and then be cooped up in a study over a meagre tea with a grim master—a master they cordially disliked, and who disliked them—instead of playing the great winter game. And they could not help suspecting that Mr. Manders had timed the invitation to cause them the maximum of inconvenience. That he could

really have any desire for their company at his tea-table was not to be thought of.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were in a decidedly bad temper.

They threw the invitation-cards on the floor and jumped on them, by way of solace, and then settled down to grind at Virgil.

Oswald of the Fourth looked in.

"Not finished?" he asked. "Shall I ask Latcham to wait?"

"No good! We're asked to tea by old Manders, and I suppose we've got to go!" growled Jimmy Silver.

"Hard cheese!"

"Tommy Dodd will captain the team," said Jimmy. "It can't be helped. May as well get on with the match now. We'll give you a look in presently. Tell Duddy."

"Right-ho!" said Oswald.

And he ran off.

Jimmy Silver settled down to work again. But work that afternoon was fated to be interrupted.

An eyeglass gleamed in at the door, and Smythe of the Shell grinned in at the detained juniors. Tracy, his chum, grinned in over his shoulder. The knuts of the Shell were evidently highly amused.

"By gad, I hear you're in for it!" chuckled Adolphus Smythe. "Goin' over to tea with Manders instead of playin' footer, what?"

"Oh, buzz off!" growled Lovell.

"I'll tell you what I'll do, if you like,"

said Adolphus condescendingly. "I'll take the match off your hands, Silver."

"Bow-wow!"

"Well, I wish you joy with Manders. He has tea too weak to come out of the pot. I've sampled it!"

"And jam you need a microscope to see!" chuckled Tracy. "I've sampled it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"



The merry japers were quickly busy. Smythe mixed ink and gum with the jam, with a workmanlike hand. Ink was soaked into the extremely small cake, and gum added to the milk. Mornington arranged some jumping-crackers amidst the sticks in the fireplace. (See Chapter 3.)

"And it needs a microscope to see the butter on the bread!" chortled Adolphus. "But the bread's as thick as your head, Silver."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Buzz off, you cackling asses!" roared Jimmy Silver, seizing a ruler and jumping up.

Smythe and Tracy departed, chuckling, and the Fistical Four could hear their merry

Not So "Soft" as He Looks !



chortles dying away down the passage. The detained juniors looked at one another in exasperation.

"I suppose it's awfully funny!" snorted Lovell. "Blow Smythe, and blow old Manders, and blow everybody!"

Four pens scratched away again. Then came footsteps in the passage, and three youths in footer rig, with coats and mufflers on, smiled into the study. They were Dodd and Cook and Doyle, the three "Tommies" of the Modern side.

"We're just going to begin," said Tommy Dodd cheerily. "You chaps can look out of the window every now and then and watch our goals!"

"Br-r-r-r!"

"Faith, and you can congratulate yourselves," grinned Doyle. "You're winning the match for us, Jimmy Silver, by staying in here!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Old Manders must have planned this, to make sure of a win for Rookwood!" declared Tommy Cook.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And then the three Tommies departed hurriedly, just in time to escape a furious charge from the end study.

"Everybody seems to think it funny but us!" groaned Raby.

Scratch, scratch, scratch went four desperate pens again. The impositions were finished at last, while the shouting from the distant footer ground told that the match was in progress.

The Fistical Four were glad enough to get out of the study. They proceeded to Mr. Dalton's quarters and handed in their lines.

"Very good!" said Mr. Dalton. "These lines seem to have been somewhat hastily written—ahem!—but I shall look over that, as it is a half-holiday."

The Fistical Four were glad to hear it. There were certainly signs of haste in the sheets they had handed in to their Form-master.

"Mr. Manders has mentioned to me that he has asked you to tea with him this afternoon," went on the Fourth-Form master benignantly. "I trust, Silver, that you

fully appreciate Mr. Manders' kindness, after the very unfortunate occurrence to-day?"

"Oh, yes, sir!" mumbled Jimmy.

"I trust you will have a very pleasant hour with Mr. Manders," added the Form-master.

"Thank you, sir!" mumbled the juniors.

They left the study feeling furious. In spite of the attractions of footer, they were glad that they had not refused Mr. Manders' kind invitation. The Modern master had mentioned it to Mr. Dalton, who, in the simplicity of his heart, took it as a sign of kindness and forgiveness on his part. He would certainly have been very much annoyed if the juniors had refused Mr. Manders' invitation, and thrown his kindness and forgiveness, as it were, back into his teeth.

"Deep old beggar!" growled Lovell.

"He mentioned it to Dalton so that we can't possibly refuse—or we'd get jawed if we did. Bother him!"

The Fistical Four, free at last, left the School House. They passed Mornington & Co. in the porch. The knuts grinned at them as they passed, but the chums hardly noticed them. They were keen to get down to the footer-ground and see as much of the match as possible before duty called them to Mr. Manders' study on the Modern side.

They found the footer match going strong. Rookwood Juniors were getting the better of Latcham Ramblers, and Pons, the Canadian, had already kicked a goal. Jimmy Silver & Co. joined heartily in the cheering, and for a time they were able to forget Mr. Manders and all his works.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

Friendly Preparations I

"Go it, Morny!"

"Yaas, pile in!" said Smythe of the Shell. "What's the scheme? If it's anythin' for takin' a rise out of those cheeky cads, I'm on!"

"Same here!" said Townsend.

"They're goin' to tea with Manders," said Mornington. "Manders is with the Head now. I understand it's for four

A Spill—and a Hidden Face!



Here's a grand mix-up! Can you find the onlooker?

o'clock, the merry tea-party. Leggett told me so. He filled in the cards for Manders. You know Manders has silly cards he sends out to his victims."

"Ha, ha!"

"Well, you know how much Manders likes those chaps. My belief is that he's asked them simply to dish them over the footer."

"Looks like it, by gad!" chuckled Townsend. "Fancy a master playin' such a kid's trick! Dalton wouldn't."

"But what's the game?" asked Topham.

"You said you had a wheeze——"

"I'm comin' to that. Manders knows they don't want to come, and that they'll be ratty, though they have to keep civil. Well, suppose the merry tea-party is mucked up somehow—through somebody japin' in his study? He's bound to think they did it, Suppose there's ink in the jam, and fire-works in the fire——"

"But—but there won't be!" ejaculated Tracy.

"There will."

"But Jimmy Silver wouldn't be ass enough. He'd know Manders would know he did it," said Townsend.

"Quite so. And if we do it, Manders will know Jimmy Silver did it!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"That's the idea," grinned Mornington. "I told Jimmy Silver he'd be sorry for leavin' me out of the eleven. Come on! I've seen Manders go into the Head's House, and all the Modern kids are on the footer-ground. The coast's clear."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

In great glee the knuts of Rookwood followed Mornington across to Mr. Manders' house. As Morny had said, the coast was clear. There was a First Eleven match going on, on Big Side, as well as the junior match on Little Side. Most of the fellows who were not playing were watching the play. The knuts did not meet a soul as they entered Mr. Manders' house.

"Tracy," said Mornington. "Whistle if you see old Manders in the offing."

"You bet!" grinned Tracy.

Mornington and Townsend, Topham and Smythe, entered the Modern master's study. The dandy of the Fourth closed the door.

"Now get busy," he remarked.

The merry japers were quickly busy. Smythe and Townsend devoted their attention to the table. There were the articles for the tea-party. The table was already



Jimmy Silver & Co., who were getting tired of waiting, were glad for once to see the thin, sharp face of the Modern Master. Mr. Manders looked at them grimly. "Ah! You are here!" he said. (See Chapter 3.)

set. A small pot of jam was there—supposed to be enough for four juniors—quite enough, from Mr. Manders' point of view. Smythe mixed ink and gum with it with a workmanlike hand.

A paper "spill" was twisted into the spout of the teapot with a liberal allowance of gum to keep it there. Ink was soaked into the extremely small cake, and gum added to the milk. Bent pins were placed in readiness on all the chairs in the room.

Meanwhile, Mornington was busy. The fire was laid in the study, but not lighted. As the weather was very cold, it was pretty certain that it would be lighted when the tea-party came. In the midst of the sticks and coal Mornny arranged a number of "jumping" crackers, left over from the Fifth of November. Topham poured water into the clock, which promptly ceased to tick, and disconnected the electric bell-push, so that the bell would not ring when the button was pressed.

"By gad," said Mornington, looking round, "I rather think we have done enough to make them happy! We'd better clear."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The knuts joined Tracy in the passage. "All serene," said Tracy. "Nobody's come along."

Mornington & Co. strolled out of the house. Four o'clock was just striking from the clock-tower, and Jimmy Silver & Co. came into the porch just as the knuts were going out.

"Hallo, goin' in to tea?" said Mornington, with a grin.

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"Is Manders at home?" he asked.

"Not yet, I think. Most likely he'll keep you waitin'," grinned Mornington. "He's with the Head now."

"What are you chaps doing here?" asked Lovell.

"Oh, strollin' round! How's the match goin' on?"

"One up for Rookwood in the first half. They're beginning the second now. Chance for you to see some footer if you can leave

the smokes alone for a bit," suggested Lovell sarcastically.

"Oh, go an' eat coke!"

Mornington & Co. strolled away, greatly elated, and the Fistical Four went into Mr. Manders' House.

Jimmy Silver tapped at the door of the Modern master's study.

There was no reply from within. He tapped again, and then opened the door and looked in. The room was untenanted.

"Just like the old hunks to keep us waitin'," grunted Lovell. "Shall we wait here, or inside, Jimmy?"

"Well, I suppose we're entitled to sit down while we wait!" growled Raby.

Jimmy hesitated.

"Better wait outside," he said. "Manders' mightn't like us sticking in his study while he's not there. Blow him!"

The juniors had the pleasure of cooling their heels in the passage.

Mr. Manders was not in a hurry. But he came along at last. Jimmy Silver & Co., who were getting tired of waiting, were glad for once to see the thin, sharp face of the Modern master.

Mr. Manders looked at them grimly.

He had asked them to tea, for reasons best known to himself, but he did not seem to have much cordiality to waste upon them.

"Ah! You are here!" he said.

"Waiting for you, sir," said Jimmy Silver as cheerfully as he could. "Very kind of you to ask us to tea, sir!"

"I trust you are able to appreciate kindness, Silver?"

"I trust so, sir," said Jimmy calmly.

Mr. Manders gave a little grunt, and opened the study door. The juniors followed him in, feeling more as if they were going to execution than as if they were going to a tea-party.

The meagre preparations for their tea did not delight their eyes. After watching the footer in the keen winter air they were hungry. Another tea would be wanted in the end study after tea with Mr. Manders. That stingy gentleman expended very little upon the entertainment of fellows he invited to tea.

Indeed, Tommy Dodd had declared that old Manders asked fellows to tea from a fiendish delight in watching their sufferings. Perhaps Tommy Dodd exaggerated a little. But certainly Mr. Manders' guests were generally glad to get away.

"You may light the fire, Silver," said Mr. Manders.

"Certainly, sir!"

Mr. Manders sat down in his armchair.

He reposed gracefully in that armchair for about the hundredth part of a second. Then he leaped to his feet with a wild yell.

"Yarooop!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. stared at him. They had never expected to see the crusty Modern master go through gymnastics like this.

"Yow-ow-ow!" roared Mr. Manders.

"My hat!" gasped Lovell. "Anything wrong, sir?"

"Yaroooh! Oh! Ah! Oooooop! Dear me! What villain has placed a pin in my chair?" shrieked Mr. Manders.

"Oh, crumbs!"

The Fistical Four blinked at Mr. Manders. That gentleman regarded them with an almost purple face. He caught up a cane.

"Silver! Was it you?"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

A Very Happy Party!

"NUNNO, sir!" stuttered Jimmy Silver.

"Someone has placed a pin in my chair! I am considerably hurt!" roared Mr. Manders. "Who was it?"



Mr. Manders reposed gracefully in that armchair for about the hundredth part of a second. Then he leaped to his feet with a wild yell. "Yarooop!"

"My hat!" gasped Lovell. (See Chapter 3.)

"Blessed if I know, sir! We haven't been in the study. We waited for you outside," said Jimmy.

Mr. Manders writhed painfully. He regarded the Fistical Four with great suspicion. He knew exactly how much they wanted to come to tea with him, so he had reason for suspecting them.

However, he put down the cane. Even Mr. Manders felt that it would not be quite the thing to cane his guests on suspicion.

"Very well," he snapped, "I accept your assurance, Silver! But—ow, ow!—I mean, you may light the fire."

"Yes, sir."

"By Jove," said Lovell, "there's some more pins here! Look here!"

As the Classical juniors had not played that trick, they easily guessed that some practical joker had been making preparations for the tea-party. And Lovell looked

at the other chairs. He picked up a bent pin from each of them.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Manders. "I will find out the author of that wicked trick, and punish him! Dear me!"

The Modern master looked very carefully over his chair before he sat down again.

Lovell & Co. grinned a little, with their faces turned away. They could guess now why Mornington and his friends had been in Mr. Manders' house. It was not difficult to surmise who was the author of that trick in the study.

Jimmy Silver was applying matches to the fire. The paper flared up, and the blaze spread, and then——

Fizzzz!

Crack-ack-ack!

Bang, bang!

BANG!

"Good heavens!" yelled Mr. Manders.

Jimmy Silver jumped back from the grate, with his hair singed.

Sparks were shooting out in clouds, sticks were scattered on all sides, and from the grate came ceaseless detonations of crackers and fizzing of squibs.

Fizzzzzzzz!

Bang, bang, bang!

"Great Scott!"

Mr. Manders leaped out of his chair as sparks fell round him in showers, and backed round the table.

"What—what—what——" he stuttered.

Bang, bang, bang!

A jumping cracker spun out of the fire, exploded, and landed at the master's feet, and exploded again. He jumped wildly into the air as the cracker jumped, and it banged again between his knees. He dashed wildly across the study, but the cracker, as if endowed with the spirit of mischief, jumped in the same direction, banging again and again.

"Take it away!" shrieked Mr. Manders. "Oh, dear! You young scoundrels! Oh—oh!"

Bang, bang, bang!

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Jimmy Silver.

The explosions ceased at last. The hearth-rug was littered with scattered sticks, frag-

ments of coal, burnt paper, and dead crackers and squibs. Mr. Manders' face was like the face of a demon.

He made a jump at Jimmy Silver, and grasped him by the collar, and shook him till his teeth chattered.

"Yow-ow!" roared Jimmy, in surprise and indignation. "Leggo!"

"You infamous young rascal!"

"Yaroooh! Leggo!"

"How dare you play such tricks!" raved Mr. Manders. "You ungrateful young rascal!"

"I didn't!" yelled Jimmy. "Leggo! Oh, my hat! Do you think I'd blow my own eyelashes off if I could help it?"

"We—we didn't know anything about it, sir!" stuttered Lovell.

"Then who played this infamous trick?" roared Mr. Manders.

"We haven't been in the study till you came."

The Classical juniors could guess easily enough that Mornington & Co. had prepared that little surprise for them; but they did not feel inclined to tell Mr. Manders so. They mentally promised the dandy of the Fourth all sorts of things later. *

"I do not believe you!" thundered Mr. Manders. "No one else has been here! You have dared to play this infamous trick in my study!"

"We didn't know anything about it!" howled Jimmy Silver.

"It is false!"

"It isn't false, and you ought to take my word!" snorted Jimmy, whose temper was suffering as well as Mr. Manders'.

"Do not dare to argue with me, Silver! You have dared to play such practical jokes upon me! You shall repent it!"

Mr. Manders jumped for his cane.

"Hold out your hand, Silver!"

"What!"

"I am going to cane you!" shouted Mr. Manders. "Hold out your hand!"

"We didn't come here to be caned, sir. I thought we came to tea."

"I refuse to allow you to stay to tea, Silver! I decline to allow such rascally young hooligans in my study at all! You



"Good Heavens!" yelled Mr. Manders. Jimmy Silver jumped back from the grate with his hair singed. Sparks were shooting out in clouds, and from the grate came ceaseless detonations of crackers and fizzing of squibs. (*See Chapter 4.*)

will go, but before you go I shall punish you severely for these infamous tricks!"

"But we—we——"

"Hold out your hand!"

"We did nothing!" howled Lovell.

"Silence! Will you hold out your hand, Silver? Your turn is coming, Lovell!"

Jimmy put his hands behind him, his eyes blazing.

"No, I won't!" he shouted.

"Silver! You dare——"

"You've no right to cane Classics," said Jimmy savagely. "You can complain to our own master if you like. Mr. Dalton will believe our word."

"I dare say you could succeed in deceiving Mr. Dalton," said the Modern master

bitterly. "But you will not be allowed the opportunity. Hold out your hand at once! I take your punishment into my own hands."

Jimmy Silver did not move. He was standing upon his rights, and Mr. Manders was exceeding his authority.

"Will you obey me, Silver?"

"No, sir."

Mr. Manders said no more. He made a jump at the captain of the Fourth, the cane lashing down. It came over Jimmy's shoulders with terrific force.

Jimmy Silver yelled, and dodged for the door. Lovell and Raby and Newcome fled at the same time. Mr. Manders' quarters were growing a little too warm for them.

The door was yanked open, and the Fistical Four fled.

After them came Mr. Manders, still lashing furiously with the cane.

Quite forgetful of his dignity as the senior master on the Modern side at Rookwood, Mr. Manders pursued the fleeing juniors down the passage, lashing away for all he was worth.

Lash, lash, lash, lash, lash, lash!

"Yaroorh! Run for it!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Yah!"

The Fistical Four hardly knew how they got out of Mr. Manders' house.

But they escaped into the quadrangle at last, yelling with pain, and the Modern master halted in the doorway, glaring after them.

He returned to his study, breathing hard. The suspicious man was quite sure that the Classical Four had played those tricks in his study, but he felt that they had answered for it.

He pressed the bell angrily for the maid to come up and clear the debris out of the room. The explosion in the grate had scattered firewood and coal and charred paper far and wide. To Mr. Manders' rage, there was no answer to his ring. He pressed the bell again and again, but the maid did not appear.

"Scandalous!" hooted Mr. Manders. And he rushed out of the study and bawled down the lower stairs:

"Jane, Jane! Jane!"

"Yes, sir?" came the voice of the astonished Jane from the regions below.

"Why did you not come when I rang, Jane?" bellowed Mr. Manders.

"You did not ring, sir."

"What—what?"

"The bell hasn't rung, sir."

"Nonsense!" roared Mr. Manders. "I have rung a dozen times at least!"

"Well, the bell hasn't rung, sir," said Jane sulkily. "which the cook will tell you the same thing, sir."

Mr. Manders gasped. It dawned upon him that the bell in his study had probably been tampered with. He hurried back to

the room, and examined the bell-push. His feelings were indescribable when he found the connection severed.

"Infamous young rascals!" hooted Mr. Manders.

Jane came up, and, with a sulky face, cleared the debris away and lighted the fire. Then she flounced away.

Mr. Manders, when he was a little calmer, sat down to his solitary tea, and made a series of agreeable discoveries—that the spout of the teapot was plugged up, that there was ink and gum in the jam, ink in the cake, and gum in the milk. In a state of mind that was really terrific, Mr. Manders yelled for Jane to clear the table, and whisked away to the Classical side, to lay a furious complaint before Mr. Dalton, feeling that the Classical chums had not had enough yet. Indeed, from Mr. Manders' point of view, boiling in oil would have been too good for Jimmy Silver & Co.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER

A Roland for an Oliver!

"GOAL!"

There was a roar of cheering on Little Side, as the Fistical Four came limping on the football-ground. Tommy Dodd had just kicked the winning goal for Rookwood, and Latcham Ramblers were safely beaten. The footballers came off the field amid loud cheers.

Jimmy Silver & Co. did not feel like cheering. They felt furious. The lashing of Mr. Manders' cane had told upon them, and they were hurt. Never in their career had the Classical chums experienced so terrific a castigation.

Mornington & Co. were on Little Side, and they greeted the Fistical Four with cheery grins.

"Had tea with Manders already?" asked Mornington.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Fallen foul of the old bird?" grinned Townsend.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the knuts.

"Hallo! You merchants look awfully chippy!" said Tommy Dodd, coming off the field. "You've won the match for us by

standing out, Jimmy. Is that why you look so happy?"

The Fistical Four groaned in chorus.

"What on earth's happened?" asked Pons, the Canadian junior.

"Had a row with Manders?" asked Oswald.

Jimmy Silver explained.

The Fistical Four expected sympathy. To miss a footer-match to go to tea with Mr. Manders was bad enough. But to have the thrashing of their lives, instead of the tea, was tragic.

But, to their wrath and indignation, the other fellows did not seem to be sympathetic; they seemed to see something humorous in the occurrence. They yelled with laughter.

"Oh, my only Aunt Matilda!" shrieked Tommy Dodd. "You'll be the death of me, Jimmy Silver! You shouldn't play tricks on a chap who asks you to tea—especially Mandy!"

"I didn't!" roared Jimmy. "Somebody sneaked in and did it all ready for us. And I know who it was, too! We met Mornington coming out as we went in."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You rotten cad!" roared Lovell, shaking his fist under Mornington's nose.

Mornington chortled.

"No law against playin' a jape on a Modern master, that I know of. Why, you've done it yourselves lots of times!"

"You did it to get us in a row with Manders!" growled Raby.

Mornington shrugged his shoulders.

"That was your bad luck," he said airily. "Of course, we were just japing Manders. Weren't we, Towny?"

"Yaas, you bet!" grinned Townsend.

"Merely that, and nothin' more," chortled Topham. "Hard luck on you to go to tea with him afterwards, Silver! Some fellows do have bad luck!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The whole crowd were yelling with merriment.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were greatly inclined to wipe up the footer-ground with the knuts of the Fourth. But they had to admit that there was no law against "japing" Mr.

Manders. The jape had been timed unluckily for them, that was all.

Jobson of the Fifth came along, and called to Jimmy Silver.

"You're wanted, Silver, and you others. Mr. Dalton's study."

"Oh, crumbs!" groaned Jimmy Silver. "Haven't we had enough?"

The Fistical Four made their way dolorously to the School House, followed by a howl of laughter from half Rookwood. Their luck was out; and the Rookwooders persisted in seeing something funny in their misfortunes.

Mr. Manders was in the Fourth Form-master's study, simmering with wrath. Mr. Dalton was looking very stern.

"Silver, I am surprised at you—surprised and shocked! After Mr. Manders' kindness to you, it seems that you have played a series of extraordinary tricks in his study."

"We didn't, sir," groaned Jimmy.

"Mr. Manders assures me——"

"Silver is speaking falsely!" snorted the Modern master.

"I'm not speaking falsely!" flamed out Jimmy Silver. "Mr. Dalton, we never entered the room till Mr. Manders came! Some other fellows had done what was done before we got there. I give you my word, sir!"

Mr. Dalton looked worried.

"Mr. Manders, I cannot believe that Silver is speaking falsely," he said. "I know him to be an honourable lad. Someone else——"

"And Mr. Manders has been licking us already!" burst out Lovell. "We're marked all over with his confounded cane!"

"Lovell!"

"Well, it's true, sir!"

Mr. Dalton rose to his feet.

"It appears, Mr. Manders, that you have already punished these juniors. Nor is there any evidence to connect them with what happened in your study. I decline to take any further notice of the matter!"

"They are lying," hissed Mr. Manders—"lying unscrupulously! I regard them as the worst boys in the school! Pah!"

And Mr. Manders whisked furiously out of the study.

Mr. Dalton made a gesture of dismissal, and the Fistical Four followed. They went to the end study in a state of furious indignation.

"The awful rotter!" said Lovell, between his teeth. "Calling us liars—us, you know! And he didn't think we've been licked enough! Jimmy Silver, you fathead, if you don't get on to a wheeze for making old Manders sit up and howl, you're not leader of this study any longer! You're sacked!"

Jimmy Silver looked grim.

"We're going for Manders!" he said.

"And that cad, Mornington! I'll scalp him!"

"Never mind Mornington. Mornington will keep. Manders is our game now."

"And those cackling Modern idiots——"

"Blow the Moderns! I'm going to have a big think!" said Jimmy Silver.

The Fistical Four rubbed their shoulders and arms, where Mr. Manders' lashing cane had fallen. They were hurt, and they felt it severely. They could hear a cackle of laughter along the passage. Every fellow in the Fourth was chortling over the unhappy outcome of tea with Mr. Manders.

Never had the prestige of the end study been at so low an ebb.

Jimmy Silver, as he sat with wrinkled brow, thinking, gave a sudden start, and stooped to pick up a card that lay on the floor.

It was one of Mr. Manders' invitation-cards, which the chums had danced upon that afternoon.

"By gum!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Well?" grunted Lovell.

"Look at that card!"

"Blow it! Only one of Manders' silly cards!"

"I've got it!"

"Got what?"

"The wheeze, my son!" said Jimmy Silver triumphantly. "The merry wheeze, for making Manders sit up, and Tommy Dodd sit up, and Mornington sit up! Ha, ha!"

"What the dickens has that card got to do with it?"

"Everything! Look at it."

"We've seen it before, ass!"

"Manders makes a fag fill in these cards for him," said Jimmy. "That looks like Leggett's fist. But any fist would do."

"What the thunder are you driving at?"

"Easy enough to get some of these cards from Manders' study," said Jimmy Silver.

"What the dickens do you want them for?"

"Suppose"—Jimmy's eyes gleamed—"suppose a lot of fellows got invitations from Manders to tea on Saturday afternoon, at different times—say, every quarter of an hour from three to five—invitations that didn't come from Manders at all——"

"Eh?"

"Suppose they arrived, one after the other, all the afternoon. I rather fancy that Manders would begin to feel worried——"

"I dare say he would."

"And some of them would get what we got, I fancy. He would take it for a jape——"

"But——"

"I could disguise my fist a bit to fill in the names on the cards, and get a fag to take them round——"

"My hat!"

"And Manders would have guests arriving all the afternoon. We'll pick an afternoon when he's busy——"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"And after he's got fed-up with it, the chaps who come in will catch something—Mornington & Co., say. As Morny says himself, no harm in japing Manders, and if he has the bad luck to go there to tea when Manders is ratty, that's his look-out—same as it was ours."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Oswald looked into the study, grinning.

"Hallo! You can see the joke yourselves now?" he remarked. "You seem quite cheery."

"We can!" grinned Lovell. "It's the joke of the season. Ha, ha, ha!"

The Rookwood Champion!

"BATTLING" BATEMAN, a massively-built bully of a prizefighter, lorded it long enough over Coombe village, adjacent to Rookwood School, in the heart of Hampshire. It was Hugh Dickson, a strapping six-footer of the Rookwood Sixth Form, who eventually stood up to the bully and, in the Year of Grace 1805, showed him that as a bare-knuckle fighter he, the "Battler," was a back number. Planned as a very private and secret affair, news of the projected combat somehow leaked out among the villagers.

At once a number of farmers and local sportsmen took charge of the arrangements. A rope ring was fixed up, in a secluded spot on the Downs, and at the appointed hour the onlookers lined up, with a chosen half-dozen or so Rookwood boys to cheer on their champion. To guard against interruption, the Rookwood boys had posted two scouts on the brow of the hill.

Several years the Battler's junior, the Rookwood champion stripped as clean as a whistle, and firm muscles rippled smoothly beneath the white skin. Perspiration gleamed like silver beads on the skin of the fighters, and Hugh had just hooked a smashing upper-cut to the bully's chin, when came the alarm, "The sheriff's men!"

In the excitement of the fight, a supporter of the Battler had slunk unobserved from the ringside and informed the sheriff what was afoot. The fight must be stopped before the bully was down for the count! But that last upper-cut handed out by the Rookwood champion did its work well, and even as the school scouts came running back the bully, sagged and dropped—out for the count!

Needless to say, Dickson of the Sixth Form became the hero of the school and indeed of all the countryside round about. For the story of that brief, but furious, fight came out by degrees, and it is rumoured that it reached the ears of the Head of Rookwood eventually. But if this was so, the Head of that day was sportsman enough to take no action in the matter.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER Many Invitations!

"JOLLY queer!" said Tommy Dodd.

It was Saturday afternoon. The three Tommies had intended to spend that half-holiday out of doors. But Wegg of the Third had looked into their study while they were getting ready for their excursion, and tossed three envelopes on the table. And in the envelopes were three cards which the juniors knew well. Tommy Dodd grunted discontentedly as he glanced at his card. It ran:

"The pleasure of Master Dodd's company is requested to tea in Mr. Manders' study at three o'clock."

The card was engraved, only the name and the hour being filled in with ink in a handwriting Tommy Dodd didn't know.

"Three o'clock!" said Tommy Cook. "Fancy having tea at three!"

"It's odd," said Tommy Doyle. "Manders is doing exam. papers this afternoon. I know that. I thought he'd be busy."

"He's always ratty if he's interrupted when he's on exam. papers," said Tommy Dodd, in wonder. "Fancy asking us to tea just at that time! It's jolly queer."

"Wants to get tea over early, perhaps, before he piles in," grunted Cook. "I suppose we've got to go."

"Of course we have, fathead. We don't want to get Manders down on us. We can go down to Latcham afterwards."

And Tommy Dodd & Co., not in a very good humour, postponed their little excursion till after three o'clock.

Meanwhile, Wegg of the Third sauntered across the quadrangle, and stopped to speak to Adolphus Smythe, Tracy, and Howard of the Shell, who were airing themselves there.

"Something for you chaps," said Wegg.

And he handed them an envelope each, and walked off.

"Oh, gad!" said Adolphus Smythe, taking a card from his envelope. "Old Manders is askin' me to tea!"

"Us, too," said Tracy. "Half-past three! What a queer time for tea!"

"Jolly good mind not to go," grunted Howard. "This knocks on the head our little run down to the Bird-in-Hand."

"Must go!" snorted Adolphus. "We can get out for a bit and come in by half-past three. I don't want to offend Manders."

Wegg of the Third was not finished yet. He came into the School House, and up to No. 4 Study. Mornington of the Fourth was adjusting his necktie before the glass in the study, and Townsend and Topham were waiting for him. The knuts of the Fourth also had a little excursion planned for that afternoon.

"Hallo! What do you want?" asked Townsend.

"Something for you chaps," grinned Wegg. "I was told to bring you these—they're invitations, I believe."

He tossed the envelopes on the table, and departed, whistling shrilly.

"Oh, gad!" groaned Townsend. "That looks like invitations from Manders. He plays these silly tricks. Can't send a pencil note like any other man."

Mornington frowned.

"Is the old fool askin' us to tea?" he inquired.

"I suppose so. Look!"

"At four o'clock," said Mornington, glancing at the card. "I suppose we've got to go. It means trouble if you refuse a master's invitation."

"Oh, it's rotten! I don't want to go," growled Topham. "I thought the old donkey was busy this afternoon, too. I heard Jimmy Silver askin' Towle somethin' about him, an' Towle said Manders was on exam. papers this afternoon. He's given orders that he's not to be interrupted."

"Well, I suppose it's rather complimentary to ask us," said Mornington. "We want to keep in with the old bounder!"

"Yaas, but what about goin' out?"

"We can get down to the Feathers for a game of billiards, an' get back by four. Better not be late—he's too ratty. We can put in a word or two for Jimmy Silver over tea—make him a bit more down on that rotter."

"Yaas, that's so."

Wegg of the Third strolled along the passage to the end study. He found the Fistical Four there.

"Well?" said Jimmy Silver, as the grinning fag came into the study.

"All serene," said Wegg. "I've delivered the lot. Now, where's that cake?"

Jimmy Silver took a cake out of the study cupboard. That was Wegg's reward for his valuable services.

"Here you are, kid. Mum's the word, you know."

"You bet!" grinned Wegg.

And he departed with the cake, grinning.

"I rather think this little game is going to be a success," murmured Jimmy Silver. "Lots of the fellows think it's funny to get a licking when you're asked to tea. They can share in the fun—such as it is—what?"

"What-ho!" chuckled the Co.

"Tommy Dodd & Co. arrive at three; Smythe & Co. at half-past; and Morny and his gang at four," remarked Jimmy Silver; "and, as Manders doesn't know they've been asked, I fancy there will be some trouble."

"Ha, ha!"

"Manders should really keep those nobby cards of his locked up," smiled Jimmy Silver. "They're liable to be burgled. Still, I left twopence in his desk to pay for the nine of 'em I borrowed. And it's lazy of him to make a fag fill in the merry cards—after this, he may fill 'em in in his own fist. Towle says he's busy with exam. papers this afternoon—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lovell and Raby and Newcome.

The Fistical Four strolled out into the quadrangle in great spirits.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

Quite a Tea-fight!

TAP!

Mr. Manders gave an irritable snort.

He was hard at work in his study, with all his attention fixed on the examination papers he was preparing. He had given

strict orders that he was not to be interrupted on any pretext whatever. Yet, as three o'clock sounded from the clock-tower, that tap came at his door.

"Come in!" snarled Mr. Manders.

He supposed that it must be something extremely important for his orders to be disregarded in this way. He stared blankly when Tommy Dodd and Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle presented themselves, with their best smiles on.

"What do you want?" he snapped.

The three Tommies looked surprised, as well they might. This was hardly the way to greet fellows who had been invited to tea.

"We—we've come, sir," faltered Tommy Dodd, not at all liking the look in Mr. Manders' eye.

"I can see that you have come," said Mr. Manders, reaching for a cane. "How dare you interrupt my work, when you are quite aware that I have given strict orders to the contrary?"

"But—but we've come to tea, sir!" ejaculated Tommy, growing very red. He wondered whether the Modern-master had forgotten sending the invitation.

Mr. Manders jumped up. He could scarcely believe his ears.

As he knew nothing whatever of the sending of the famous invitation-cards, his angry astonishment was natural. Three juniors had interrupted him on his busiest afternoon with the cool announcement that

they had come to tea! It was enough to anger a more patient man than Mr. Manders.

"You have—have come to tea!" he shouted.

"Yes, sir," gasped Tommy; "we—we—"

"How dare you!" thundered Mr. Manders.

"We—we——" gasped Tommy Cook.

"Leave my study at once! Take five hundred lines each, and remain in the

Form-room this afternoon and write them out!" ordered Mr. Manders. "Go!" he thundered.

Tommy Dodd felt as if his head was turning round.

"But—but—but——" he stammered helplessly.

Mr. Manders strode round the table, grasping his cane. The three Tommies departed quickly enough then. They just escaped the cane as they dodged out of the study. Mr. Manders slammed the door after them,

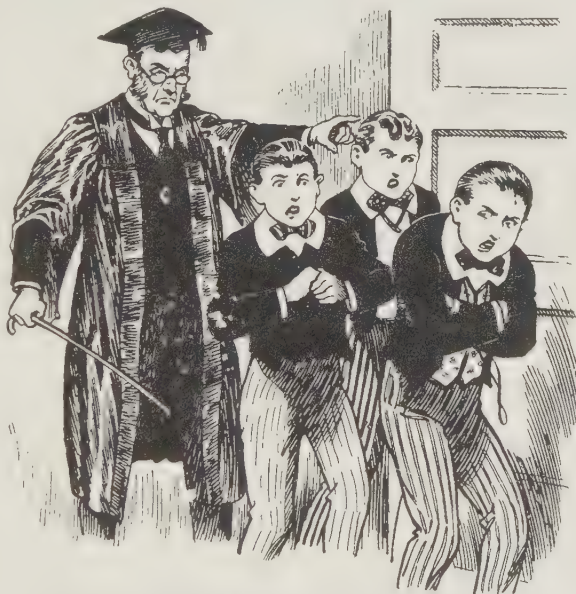
and snorted and returned to his work.

"My hat!" breathed Tommy Dodd, when they were at a safe distance. "Did you ever see such a blighter? Asking us to tea and then giving us lines and detention. Did you ever?"

"Never!" groaned Cook and Doyle. "Five hundred lines! Oh, dear!"

The Fistical Four met them on their way to the Form-room.

"Had tea already?" asked Jimmy Silver cheerily



Mr. Manders, trembling with anger, pointed to the doorway. "Go!" he thundered. Smythe & Co. limped away down the passage, wringing their hands. (See Chapter 7.)

"We're detained!" gasped Tommy Dodd.
"Five hundred lines each! Manders has gone mad! Br-r-r!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The three Tommies did not laugh. Jimmy Silver & Co.'s adventures at tea with Mr. Manders had struck them as comical. But there seemed nothing comic in their own adventures. They went dolciously into the Form-room.

The Fistical Four sauntered contentedly in the quadrangle. They were sauntering outside Mr. Manders' house when Smythe and Howard and Tracy came hurrying in at the gates close upon half-past three.

The knuts of the Shell disappeared into Mr. Manders' house.

Jimmy Silver & Co. exchanged blissful glances.

Smythe tapped at Mr. Manders' door, and opened it. The three Shell fellows entered the study.

They expected to be greeted by a genial smile and nod from Mr. Manders. But their greeting did not come up to expectations.

Mr. Manders gave a snort like a savage beast, and jumped to his feet.

"How dare you come here!" he thundered.

Smythe & Co. stared.

"By gad! We—we've come to tea, sir!" stammered Adolphus, utterly taken aback.

Mr. Manders' eyes gleamed.

He could no longer doubt that there was a concerted practical joke arranged for that afternoon, to interrupt and worry him when he was busy. He had asked no one to tea, yet here was a second party of juniors arriving with the announcement that they had come to tea.

The look on Mr. Manders' face made Smythe & Co. back towards the door. They did not like it at all. Though, unless the Modern master had taken leave of his senses, they could not guess what was the matter with him.

"Good heavens!" said Mr. Manders. "I have never in all my career heard of such an example of unprincipled audacity. Do you suppose, you young rascals, that you

can play these infamous tricks upon a busy man with impunity? How dare you! I repeat," roared Mr. Manders—"how dare you!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"We—we—we——" stuttered Tracy helplessly.

Mr. Manders whisked round the table, cane in hand.

"Hold out your hand, Smythe!"

Smythe held out his hand dazedly. Mr. Manders was evidently not to be reasoned with.

Swish, swish, swish, swish!

"Yow! Ow, ow, ow, ow!" groaned Adolphus Smythe.

"Now, Tracy!"

"B-b-b-b-but, sir——" babbled Tracy.

"Your hand!" thundered Mr. Manders. Swish! "Now the other!" Swish! "Now the other again!" Swish! "Now the other!" Swish!

"Mummmmm!" moaned Tracy, in anguish.

"Now, Howard!"

"If—if you pip-pip-pip-pip-please——" stammered Howard.

Swish, swish, swish, swish!

"Yaroo! Oh, jiminy!"

Mr. Manders, trembling with anger, pointed to the doorway with his cane.

"Go!" he thundered.

Smythe & Co. were glad to go. They had had quite enough of Mr. Manders. They limped away down the passage, wringing their hands, and the door slammed after them. They came out into the quadrangle wriggling with anguish.

"Hallo!" said Jimmy Silver. "Tea over already?"

"Yow! Ow, ow!"

"Manders cut up rusty?" giggled Lovell.

"Wow, wow, wow!"

With their hands under their arms, looking as if they were trying to shut themselves up like pocket-knives, Smythe and Howard and Tracy limped away across the quadrangle.

The Fistical Four gasped for breath.

"It's working!" murmured Jimmy Silver. "Oh dear, oh dear! Smythey



"Take that, and that, and that, and that!" Mr. Manders rushed on the three astounded knuts, lashing out furiously with the cane. "Run for it!" shrieked Mornington. "He's mad! Run for your lives!" (See Chapter 7.)

doesn't seem to think now that it's so jolly funny to get a licking when you go to tea!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Fistical Four waited in great anticipation for four o'clock. Mr. Manders was deep in his work again. He had no doubt that the practical jokers of Rookwood had plotted to worry him that afternoon, but he fancied that the example he had made of Smythe & Co. would deter any other merry youths from following their lead. But Mr. Manders was mistaken. For as four o'clock rang out again there came a tap at his study door.

The Modern master breathed hard through his nose.

It was scarcely credible that more practical jokers were coming, after what had

happened to Smythe & Co. But if they had come, Mr. Manders intended to make such an example of them that they would remember it for whole terms. He grasped his cane, and came round the table as he said "Come in!"

If any juniors entered that study stating that they had come to tea, something like an earthquake was going to happen.

The door opened, and Mornington, Townsend, and Topham walked in cheerily. Mr. Manders fixed an eye upon them like a basilisk.

"Good-afternoon, sir!" said Mornington pleasantly.

The knuts of the Fourth were somewhat surprised to see Mr. Manders on his feet, with a cane in his hand and fury in his face.

That was not how they had expected to be greeted by a gentleman who had asked them—as they supposed—to tea.

They had come back from the little game of billiards at the Feathers just in time to present themselves in Mr. Manders' study at four, and they expected to find tea ready, and Mr. Manders smiling over the festive board. Instead of which——

"You!" said Mr. Manders, in a choking voice. "You—you have come here, interrupting me! I—I presume you have come to tea, Mornington?"

"Yaas, sir!" said Mornington, in surprise.

"I thought so," said Mr. Manders, with a gasp of rage—"I thought so, sir! I was quite prepared for it, sir! Oh, quite! Take that, and that, and that, and that!"

Mr. Manders rushed on the three astounded knuts, lashing out furiously with the cane. He did not tell them to hold out their hands—he hadn't any patience for that. And that wasn't severe enough. He was going to give them such a record thrashing that any other practical jokers would never dare to follow in their footsteps.

And he did!

The cane lashed and crashed on the three astounded juniors.

"Take that," roared Mr. Manders, "and that, and that, and that!"

"Yaroo!"

"Help!"

"He's mad!"

"Run for it!" shrieked Mornington. "He's mad! Run for your lives!"

The three scared juniors bolted out of the study, with the cane lashing behind. Down the passage they went like scared rabbits, but behind them came the infuriated master, lashing and lashing and lashing. Wild yells rose from the unfortunate knuts as they fled into the quadrangle.

Mr. Manders, gasping for breath, whisked back to his study. He was angry and exasperated, but he felt somewhat solaced.

"I do not think there will be any further visitors here," he gasped, as he sat down. "I hardly think so. Scandalous!"

And Mr. Manders was right—there weren't. Mornington & Co. were the last on the list of invitations. That was the reason.

Mornington & Co. scuttled out of the house in wild alarm, fully convinced that Mr. Manders was mad. What else could explain the extraordinary conduct of a master who invited fellows to tea, and laid in wait for them in his study with a cane, and attacked them the moment they appeared?

They did not stop till they were half-way across the quadrangle, and then they halted, out of breath, gasping with anguish and terror.

"Oh, crumbs!" groaned Townsend. "I'm hurt all over! I—I say, he's mad—mad as a hatter! Oh, crumbs!"

"Mad as a hornet!" moaned Topham. "Oh, oh, oh! Ow!"

"Yow! Ow, ow!" mumbled Mornington.

"Hallo! You-chaps seem to have been enjoying yourselves," remarked Jimmy Silver, as the Fistical Four sauntered up. "How did you get on with Manders?"

"He's mad!" gasped Mornington. "The minute we got into the study he asked us if we'd come to tea, and started on us with a cane! Oh, dear! Mad as a hatter! Yow! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mornington & Co. limped away. The Fistical Four threw themselves into the grass, and kicked up their feet and yelled.

* * * * *

The suspicion as to Mr. Manders' sanity was dispelled that evening when the facts were known to the Rookwood juniors. There were exactly nine fellows who couldn't see anything funny in the matter, but the rest laughed till they wept over the story of how the nine had Tea with Mr. Manders!

◆◆◆◆◆ THE END ◆◆◆◆◆

How Horace Coker Got His Remove!

FRANK RICHARDS



How such a duffer as Horace Coker ever got into the Fifth Form at Greyfriars has long been a source of wonder to many! This lively story reveals just how it happened!

THE FIRST CHAPTER Coker Wants Vengeance!

"COKER'S coming!" A fag put his head in at the door of No. 1 Study in the Remove, shouted out that warning, and vanished.

Harry Wharton looked up from the footer he was repairing, only in time to catch a glimpse of legs vanishing past the doorway.

"My hat!" ejaculated Wharton.

He ran to the door. Footsteps were dying away up the passage, and he caught a glimpse of Gatty of the Second. Then he glanced down the passage towards the stairs, and saw that the warning had not been an empty one. Coker and Hobson of the Shell had just entered the Remove passage from the end towards the stairs.

Harry Wharton laughed a little.

Gatty's warning had been very good-natured, and might be useful; but Wharton was not at all afraid of the Shell fellows. But he was on his guard. He looked back quickly into the study.

"Back up, you chaps! It's trouble!"

Frank Nugent and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh came quickly towards him. The three juniors stood in the doorway, and watched

the Shell fellows. Coker and Hobson caught sight of them, and grinned. They were evidently satisfied at seeing that the chums of the Lower Fourth were at home, and that their visit was not in vain.

"Better lock the door," suggested Nugent.

And the Nabob of Bhanipur nodded assent.

"The lockfulness is terrific!" he remarked.

Harry Wharton shook his head decidedly.

"Let 'em all come," he replied. "We're not afraid of the Shell. Besides, they would wait outside for us, and they know we wouldn't spend a half-holiday in the study to keep out of their way."

"Yes, that's so."

"The so-fulness is terrific!" assented Hurree Singh.

"We'll give them all the trouble they want, too," said Harry Wharton. "They're big chaps, but there are three of us. And they won't take us by surprise. Let 'em come."

Coker and Hobson were coming.

"Hallo, Coker!" said Nugent, in a

casual way, as the burly Shell fellow came up. "Have you got your remove into the Fifth yet?"

Coker flushed red, and Hobson grinned. That was a very sore point with Coker. It seemed as if he would never get his remove. At exams. Coker was helpless and hopeless, and the most judicious shoving on from his Form-master could not get him that much-desired remove. The spectacle of a chap in a tail-coat still in the Shell, among the juniors, afforded great delight to the Lower Forms, and whenever Coker cuffed a fag, that fag was certain to retort with a question about the time when Coker expected to get his remove, till Coker was sick of the subject. And the more he flew out into tempers on the subject, the more he was chipped about it; and even Hobson, his special chum, was sometimes facetious about it, which led to strained relations in Coker's study.

Coker glared at the Removites.

"I'm jolly glad to find you in," he said. "I saw that cheeky fag scuttling upstairs, and I know he came to warn you to bolt."

"Well, we've not bolted," smiled Harry Wharton. "Even the door's not bolted, you see."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The ha-ha-ha-fulness is terrific!"

"I'll give you something to grin about," said Coker. "Look here, one of you chaps put a picture up on the notice-board—a picture of me."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Nugent. "Was it a picture of a chap in a grey beard with the inscription: 'Still in the Shell'?"

"Yes, it was," said Coker angrily.

"Then I'm your man!" said Nugent. "It's the artistic temperament, you know. I can't help doing these things."

Coker clenched his fists.

"I'll jolly well teach you not to do it," he exclaimed. "Come on, Hobby!"

"All serene," said Hobson, pushing back his cuffs, preparatory to backing up his chief.

"Master Coker! Master Coker!"

Coker paused as he was rushing forward, and looked round angrily. Trotter, the

Greyfriars page, came up with a telegram in his hand.

"Master Coker! Telegram for you, sir. I've been 'unting for you heverywhere," said Trotter.

"Oh, blow the telegram!" snapped Coker.

"Better open it," advised Hobson. "I've heard of people telegraphing money. You never know."

"Oh, all right!"

Coker took the telegram.

The three chums of the Remove still stood in the door of the study, waiting. Nugent grinned as a thought came into his mind, and he stepped back into the study, and took a hand-broom from the cupboard. It was a very ancient hand-broom, and had seen service in No. 1 Study. It was about to see more.

Nugent poured water over the worn head of it from the kettle, and then thrust it up the chimney. A shower of soot came down, and sparkled and fizzed in the fire. The head of the broom, when Nugent withdrew it, was thick with soot. The junior chuckled softly, and stepped back towards the door, holding the broom behind him.

Meanwhile, Coker had retired a few paces and opened the telegram.

He gave a snort as he read the message.

"My hat, this is rotten!"

"Not had news?" asked Hobson.

Coker grunted.

"It's my Aunt Judith."

"Oh!"

"She's coming down to Greyfriars this afternoon," said Coker. "Seems to have sent this wire from the station. That's just like Aunt Judy; she makes up her mind to do things all of a sudden."

"Rotten!" said Hobson sympathetically.

"May be here any minute, I suppose," said Coker. "They've been a long time bringing me this wire."

"'Unting for you heverywhere, Master Coker," said Trotter.

"Well, get out; there's no answer."

And Trotter departed, with a sniff. He had expected at least sixpence after hunting for Master Coker everywhere. But, as a

matter of fact, Coker was not in a position, financially, to present him with a sixth part of that sum. Coker was in that pleasant situation known as "stony."

"Still, there's time to lick these cheeky fags," remarked Coker.

"All serene; I'm ready."

Coker thrust the telegram into his pocket.

Then the two Shell fellows advanced again. They looked very formidable antagonists for the Remove lads. The latter were sturdy and strong fellows for their age, but the Shell was two Forms above the Remove, and the difference in age and weight was, of course, great. In addition to that, Coker was old enough, and more than big enough, to have passed into the Fifth long before, and, as a matter of fact, Coker had more than once licked fellows in the Fifth in fistical encounters. But the chums of the Remove did not flinch. They were used to rows in the Remove passage, for the Remove was a most unruly Form, and always rowing with others or among themselves, and Harry Wharton & Co. were not afraid of a few hard knocks. Coker and Hobson had chosen the time well, however; for it was a fine half-holiday, and the other studies were deserted; there was no help at hand for Harry Wharton & Co.

"Now then," said Coker, in his most truculent tone, "you're going to have a

licking all round. You can either take it quietly, or not, as you choose——"

"We'll choose not, please," said Wharton blandly.

"If you make a row you'll get it worse, that's all."

"We don't mind."

"Oh, all right! Go for 'em, Hobby!"

And the two Shell fellows rushed in at the doorway of No. 1 Study with brandished fists, and then there were ructions.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

Kicked Out!

"BACK up, you fellows!"

"The backupfulness is terrific!"

"Give 'em socks!" gasped Coker.

The three juniors were driven back into the study by the rush of the Shell fellows. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was swept off his feet by a drive from Hobson, and crashed against the table, knocking it flying into the fender. There was a crash of books and paper, and inkpot and pens.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Coker. "Groo! Yooh! Grooh!"

His roar of laughter ended thus unintentionally as Nugent whipped the sooty broom forward, and jammed it into his face.

"Groo!" gasped Coker. "Hoo! Yooh! Grooh!"

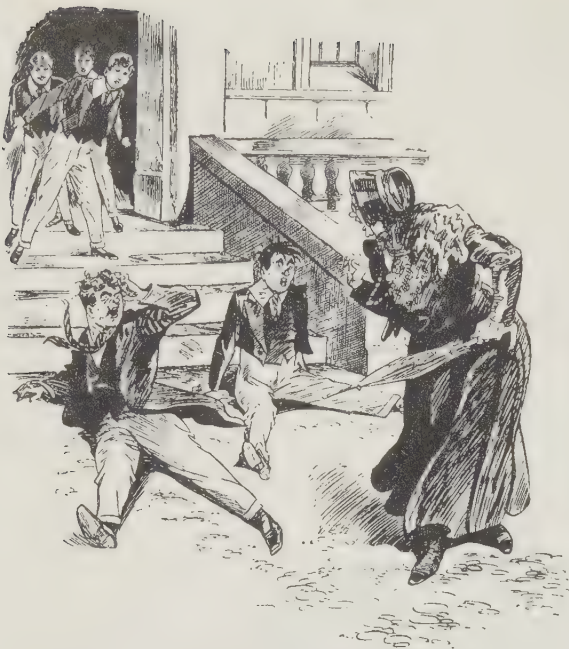
"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Nugent.

Coker staggered back.

His mouth and eyes and nose were



"Master Coker! Telegram for you, sir. I've been 'unting for you heverywhere," said Trotter. "Oh, blow the telegram!" snapped Coker. "Better open it," advised Hobson. "I've heard of people telegraphing money. You never know." (See Chapter 1.)



Coker blinked round sootily. He gasped and gaped. "My hat!" The new-comer came up with horror-stricken countenance. She gazed with wide eyes at the Shell fellows sitting at her feet. "Horace!" she shrieked.
(See Chapter 2.)

crammed with soot, and he was blinking and sniffing and gasping and spluttering.

"Oh! Oh! Y-you young bib-bib-beast! Grooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Nugent advanced upon the unfortunate Shell fellow, dabbing with the broom. Coker hit out wildly, and barked his knuckles on the broom, and yelled again. Nugent drove him to the doorway with dab after dab.

Meanwhile, Hobson was sparring with Wharton. Much bigger as the Shell fellow was, Wharton held his ground well. He was a splendid boxer, and in first-class condition.

Hobson, to his surprise, found that he had met something like his match.

Coker retreated blindly out of the study, knuckling his smarting eyes to get the soot out. Hobson was prancing round Harry

Wharton, getting harder knocks than he gave all the time.

As Coker backed away blindly down the passage to escape the lunging sooty broom, Frank turned his attention to Hobson.

Hobson saw him coming, and backed away.

Unfortunately for him, Frank Nugent was between him and the door, and he could not back out that way.

He backed into a corner.

"Look here," he roared, "you keep off! Keep that thing away! I'll smash you if you bring that thing near me! Yaroooh! Yaaohoo!"

The broom was dabbing on his face.

He made a wild clutch at it, and it dabbed under his chin, and then on his head. Then he made a break for the door. The sooty broom trailed along his ear as he fled.

He dashed into the passage and escaped; and the chums of the Remove, crowding in the doorway, sent a roar of laughter after him.

Hobson joined Coker in the passage.

Coker's eyes were streaming and smarting, and he was still knuckling them furiously. Hobson rubbed his face with a handkerchief and snorted. He reduced the handkerchief to a state of African blackness, but worked no great improvement in the state of his face.

"Oh!" groaned Coker. "Oh!"

"Groo!" mumbled Hobson.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors.

"You young rotters! I'll—I'll——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here, we can't have Shell bounders swanking about our passage!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "We've had to drop on Coker for that before now. Let's clear them out!"

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

"Back up, Remove!" shouted Harry Wharton, calling along the passage for

recruits, in case any of the fellows should be in their studies; for Coker and Hobson were furious, and preparing for a desperate struggle.

Two heads were put out of study doors. One belonged to Billy Bunter, in the last study in the passage. Seeing that nothing more promising than a row was in progress, Billy Bunter promptly withdrew his head and closed the door. The other head belonged to Alonzo Todd, the duffer of Greyfriars. Alonzo might be clumsy, and he might be unlucky, but he had heaps of pluck. He ran along the passage at once to help.

"Good old Toddy!" exclaimed Wharton. "Back up!"

"My dear Wharton, I trust there is not a serious quarrel——"

"Not a bit of it!" said Wharton cheerfully. "We're only going to chuck these Shell bounders downstairs."

"Come and do it, you cheeky young beggars!" roared Coker.

Alonzo blinked at them.

"It would save trouble if you were to retire peaceably, Coker!" he exclaimed. "You are certainly trespassing here, and encroaching upon the rights of others. My Uncle Benjamin always told me that it was very wrong to encroach upon the rights of others. I consider——"

"Oh, ring off!"

"My dear Coker, you are personal. My Uncle Benjamin says that personalities are the result of a very bad training——"

"Come on!" shouted Wharton.

"My dear Wharton——"

Alonzo stood in the way, with his hands uplifted, evidently determined to play the rôle of the peacemaker.

"Out of the way, Toddy!"

"But, my dear—— Oh!"

The chums were charging, and Alonzo, being unfortunately in the way, went spinning along the wall, and fell in a heap. Then the three Removites crashed into the Shell fellows.

Coker and Hobson hit out blindly.

There was hard hitting on both sides, and Nugent's sooty broom came into active play

once more, and it did more execution than the fists of the juniors.

Alonzo sat up, gasping. Even Alonzo realised now that peaceful words were superfluous, and he pushed back his cuffs and rushed into the fray.

He delivered a terrific swipe at Coker, which unfortunately missed Coker and caught Nugent on the side of the head.

Frank yelled, as he went reeling.

"Oh! Ow!"

Alonzo gasped.

"My dear Nugent, I'm so sorry——"

"Oh, you frabjous ass——"

"I'm sorry—— Yoh!"

Coker's fists crashed on Alonzo's chest, and levelled him with the linoleum. Nugent came up to the scratch again gallantly, and two or three more Removites, Bulstrode and Hazeldene and Linley came on the scene, attracted by the noise—and a combined rush of the juniors swept Coker and Hobson to the stairs.

Hobson went rolling down.

Coker clung to the banisters with one hand, and punched away furiously with the



Coker rushed at Hobson and smote him. Hobson retorted in kind, and they closed in an embrace that was not affectionate, and pranced round the dormitory, punching at each other wildly. (See Chapter 3.)

other, and the juniors settled upon him like a swarm of bees.

Coker was dragged off the banisters and rolled bodily down the stairs, and all sorts of things rolled out of his pockets as Coker rolled.

He was quite breathless and bewildered by the time he reached the lower hall, and had hardly a gasp left in him.

Harry Wharton looked round quickly.

It was usually far from safe to have a row just there, with the masters' studies so near at hand; but no master had appeared on the scene. It was evident that the fineness of the afternoon had tempted them all out of doors. There was no interruption from the upper powers to be feared.

"Chuck them out of the House!" shouted Wharton. "Roll 'em into the Close!"

"Hurrah!"

"Go it, Remove!"

"The hurrahfulness is terrific!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was hardly a struggle left in Hobson or Coker. They were breathless and "done." The juniors rolled them across the hall to the wide-open portal. Outside they went rolling, and the soot from them left black trails on the white stone.

"Down the steps!" roared Nugent.

"Hurrah!"

And Coker and Hobson rolled down the steps into the sunny Close. There they landed on the ground, and sat up, torn and sooty and dishevelled and gasping. The Removites crowded the steps and the doorway, gasping, too, and laughing with what breath they had left.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My hat!" ejaculated Nugent suddenly. "Look there!"

In the excitement of the struggle neither the Shell fellows nor the Removites had observed that a cab had driven in at the gates. They did not observe, till this moment, that an old lady in a remarkable bonnet had alighted, and was gazing at the scene in astonishment and horror.

"Phew!" said Wharton.

"My word! It's Coker's aunt, as sure as a gun!"

"Coker's aunt! Great Scott!"

Coker of the Shell heard the words, and blinked round sootily in the direction of the old lady. He gasped and gasped.

"My hat!"

The new-comer came up with horror-stricken countenance. She gazed with wide eyes at the Shell fellows sitting at her feet.

"Horace!" she shrieked.

Coker groaned.

"My only hat! Aunt Judy!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER

Coker's Aunt!

AUNT JUDY stared in blank horror at her beloved nephew for a moment more, and then she grasped her umbrella in a business-like manner. Her hostile intentions were evident, and the Removites hastily crowded back. Coker jumped up like a jack-in-the-box. Hobson groaned, and sat where he was.

"Aunt Judy!"

"My darling Horace! You have been assaulted!"

"Oh, no——"

"I will punish these young ruffians——"

"My hat!" gasped Harry Wharton. "Beat a retreat—quick! I don't like the look of that gamp!"

"The gampfulness is terrific!"

Coker caught his aunt by the arm, just in time to stop her charging up the steps.

"It's—it's all right, aunt!" he gasped, with an unhappy glance at the juniors.

"This is only a game!"

"Horace!"

"You see, it's a half-holiday to-day," said Coker, "and—and I got so excited at the prospect of your coming, that I—I started this game!"

"That's it," said Hobson, dragging himself so far as to sit on the lowest step. "It's all serene!"

"My darling Horace——"

"It's all right, aunt!" persisted Horace. "You see, we call this game—— Flang it, you ass!" he whispered fiercely to Hobson.

"What do we call it?"

"King of the Castle," said Hobson.

"Of course!" said Coker. "You see,



Horace Coker saw Miss Coker into her cab. . . . Then he stood, cap in hand, looking after the cab as it drove away, and in the exuberance of his spirits waved his cap round his head. It was plain that Horace had some reason to rejoice! (See Chapter 5.)

we call this game 'King of the Castle,' auntie. Those chaps there have to keep the top of the steps, you see, and we—we have to be rolled down, you know. It's a splendid game!"

"Brings your muscle up," said Hobson.

"That's it," said Coker, with a grateful look at his chum. "It's specially intended to bring a chap's muscle up, you know, auntie. The Head specially recommends it in the case of weak and nervous boys."

"My only hat!" murmured Harry Wharton. "If Coker's aunt believes that——"

"Of course, she believes her darling Horace!" said Bulstrode.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The darlingfulness of the esteemed Horace is terrific. And the beloved and venerable aunt believes him fully!"

"Looks like it."

It certainly did look like it. The Removites looked on at the scene with great interest. Coker's aunt was evidently a great admirer of Coker, and nothing that Horace did could be wrong in her eyes.

Her face cleared as he gave his explanation.

"Very well, Horace," she said. "I really thought you were fighting at first!"

"Oh, aunt!"

"I really did!"

"Fighting!" exclaimed Horace, in horror. "My dear Aunt Judy!"

"I am sorry I did you injustice, Horace!" said Miss Coker. "But your dear father was a very pugnacious man—very pugnacious. I remember once when he fought with a dreadful grocer's boy, when we were both quite young, and spilt all his eggs upon the ground. I remember it perfectly, because eggs were so dear at that

time, and he had a black eye for a week afterwards, and he was reprimanded by his employer, and when he saw him afterwards, he was very careful to take no notice of him."

Whether it was the dreadful grocer's boy, or dear Horace's papa who had the black eye, and which of them was reprimanded by his employer, and which it was saw which pass and took no notice of him, was not quite clear from Miss Coker's statement, nor did Horace seem inclined to inquire for more exact particulars.

"I should advise you to play some less rough and dirty game," said Miss Coker. "You are in a most dreadful state, Horace."

"Am I, auntie?"

"Yes. You must run away and change your clothes at once, Horace, and wash yourself, and mind you part your hair in the middle in the way that makes you look so sweet. You will have to see the Head with me."

Coker gave the grinning Removites a furious look with one side of his face, keeping an affectionate grin on the other side for Miss Coker's benefit—an effort which brought about an almost alarming distortion of his features.

"Yes, aunt," he said meekly.

"Run away, then, Horace, and mind you do not play these rough games any more. When you are in need of excitement, I should recommend guessing charades, or playing a round game for hazel-nuts, which will amuse you without spoiling your clothes."

Coker gasped. The Removites tried not to laugh, out of politeness towards Miss Coker. But the idea of Coker, the terror of the Shell, playing a round game for nuts was too much. The juniors staggered away with all kinds of mysterious chuckling sounds proceeding from them.

Miss Coker ascended the steps of the Head's house, and was admitted there, and disappeared.

Coker and Hobson looked at one another.

"Well, this is luck!" said Coker lugubriously.

"I'll smash those Remove bounders," growled Hobson.

"Oh, never mind them!" growled Coker. "I'm thinking about my Aunt Judy. She's a jolly old girl to swallow things like that, but——"

"Oh, blow your Aunt Judy!"

"She's come down for the afternoon," groaned Coker. "I shall have to show her over the school, and introduce her to the fellows."

"Groo!"

"She's awfully decent to me, and I'm very fond of her," said Coker.

"Yes, you look it."

"Well, a chap can be fond of his aunt without wanting her to come to his school, I suppose," said Coker argumentatively.

Hobson grinned.

"Yes, I s'pose so. Does she always carry that umbrella?"

"I believe so."

"Been in the family, I suppose, ever since the Flood?"

"Oh, rats!"

"And that bonnet," said Hobson. "My eyes—that bonnet! I believe it belongs to the Early English style."

"She's always worn it," said Coker.

"It looks as if she has," assented Hobson, who was very much disturbed and damaged by the tussle with the juniors, and was taking it out of his friend, in a way one's clums sometimes have. "Must have been dug up in Nineveh, I suppose, in the first place."

"Oh, let my aunt's bonnet alone," said Coker.

Coker went up the steps. He didn't want to quarrel with Hobson just then; he felt that he needed a friend to stand by him in entertaining his aunt. Now, Aunt Judy certainly was, from a schoolboy's point of view, a terror. Her old-fashioned costume and early Victorian bonnet, her corpulent umbrella, her cotton gloves, and her endearing expressions towards her nephew, made Coker simply wriggle, and made him turn cold at the thought of walking her about among the fellows.

It was at such a time that he needed a

true chum to stand by him through thick and thin, Coker felt. And a horrid suspicion was rising within him that Hobson was picking a row in order to fall out with him, and escape Aunt Judy for the afternoon—which it is probable was precisely what Hobson was doing.

Hobson followed Coker slowly in.

"I say, Coker, I'm sorry about shoving you out in that state to see your aunt," said Harry Wharton, in his frank way. "Of course, we had no idea——"

Coker grinned.

"Oh, it's all right, Wharton! I'll lick you for it another time."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Always ready," he replied. "We'll give you a warm time whenever you care to come to the Remove passage."

"The warmfulness of the time will be terrific."

Coker and Hobson went in. They headed for the dormitory to clean off the soot, and change their decidedly dirty collars. Hobson was growling discontentedly all the time.

"Don't forget to part your hair in the middle, in the way that makes you look so sweet, Cokey," he remarked sarcastically, when they had finished their ablutions.

Coker flushed red.

"Look here, Hobby, you just shut up!" he exclaimed.

"Rats!"

"If you want a thick ear,

you've only got to ask for it," roared Coker.

Hobson sniffed.

"More rats!"

"Look here——"

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

That was enough for Coker; or, rather, too much. His feelings had been already sorely tried. He rushed at Hobson and smote him. Hobson retorted in kind, and they closed in an embrace that was not affectionate, and pranced round the dormitory, punching at each other wildly.

The door opened and Trotter put his head in.

"Master Coker wanted in the 'Ead's study."

"Oh!" gasped Coker.

They parted, glaring at each other. Coker put his tie straight, and left the dormitory. Hobson followed suit; but he did not wait

for Coker to come out from his interview with the Head. He went to the bicycle-shed and in two minutes was pedalling contentedly along the Friardale Road. He had failed his chum in the hour of need; but he had escaped Aunt Judy.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER About Horace

DR. LOCKE, the respected Head of Greyfriars, sat in his study, with a far from happy expression on his face. Dr. Locke had been enjoying his half-holiday. With a bright fire



Only yesterday Coker had been a junior himself; but now he was a senior of the seniors. "Coker, old man!" "Hallo, hallo, hallo! Deaf, Coker?" "Run away!" said Coker, with a wave of his hand. (See Chapter 6.)

blazing in his study, and the open window giving a wide view upon the trees in the Close, and with the voices of the boys sounding cheerfully in the distance from the footer field, the Head had been very comfy. There were papers upon his writing-table, papers in mysterious characters, which, deciphered, would have been found to be fragments of the great Greek tragic poet; it being Dr. Locke's custom to beguile his leisure moments by preparing his new edition of "*Æschylus*"—a new edition which was intended to make some sensation among at least nine or ten old gentlemen in quiet cloisters at Oxford. Upon the doctor, so pleasantly engaged, descended Aunt Judy.

As a matter of fact, Aunt Judy's coming was not unexpected; but, deep in the fascinating work of the editor, Dr. Locke had forgotten all about Coker's aunt. The "*Seven Against Thebes*" were of more interest to him at that moment than *Horace Coker* or even *Miss Judith Coker*. When *Miss Coker* was announced, the Head looked up absently from "*Æschylus*," and passed his hand over his brow, and then he rose in his old-fashioned, courteous way, with his old-fashioned, courteous bow.

"My dear *Miss Coker*," he exclaimed. "pray sit down! How very kind of you to come so far!"

"Not at all, Doctor," said *Miss Coker*. "I am very anxious about *Horace*."

"Dear me," said Dr. Locke, who, still deep in classical reflections, and not yet quite awakened to the outside world, as it were, imagined for the moment that *Miss Coker* alluded to *Horace* of the *Satires*, our old friend *Q. Horatius Flaccus*. "Dear me, *Miss Coker*, I had no idea that you took so deep an interest in such subjects!"

Miss Coker stared, as well she might.

"Really, doctor——"

"But I am delighted," said the Head, with a pleased smile—"I am delighted to see any lady take so deep an interest in matters of this sort."

"It is quite natural, I suppose," said *Miss Coker*, puzzled, "that I should take an interest in *Horace*."

The doctor nodded.

"Quite natural," he assented—"quite natural, and very delightful. May I ask which of his works you prefer?"

"Really, Doctor——"

"You are, doubtless, devoting your attention to him especially just now," the Head suggested. "That is what you mean by saying that you have anxiety on the subject."

"Yes, yes, that is quite right."

"Very good. I was not aware that you were a Latin student, *Miss Coker*."

Miss Coker stared.

"Neither am I, Doctor."

Then the Doctor stared.

"You—you are not——"

"Certainly not."

"Then—then, may I ask, what is your interest in an author who writes in that tongue?" asked the perplexed Head.

"What! *Horace* does not write in Latin!"

The Head smiled.

"I assure you that he does, *Miss Coker*."

"Dear me! How very clever of him!" said *Miss Coker*.

The Head coughed.

"Certainly he was a great writer," he remarked. "But a person is naturally expected to be able to write in his own language."

"Dear me," said *Miss Coker*. "I do not quite understand you. I suppose you mean that *Horace* writes in Latin for his class-work—hexameters and things."

The Head rubbed his chin.

"He has never written to me in Latin," said *Miss Coker*. "But I have no doubt that the dear, clever boy could if he wished, or in Greek, either, for that matter."

"Bless my soul!" said the Head.

"And, indeed, if *Horace* is so advanced as you say, I really do not see any adequate reason for not passing him into the Fifth Form," said *Miss Coker*.

"*Horace*—in the Fifth Form!" gasped Dr. Locke, thinking for a moment that *Miss Coker* was insane.

"Certainly. I am sure he has been long enough in the Shell."

Coker Plays Football!

(AFTER "EXCELSIOR")



THE football players were falling fast,
An elephant came lumbering past,
Charging them here, and charging there,
Barging and charging everywhere!

'Twas Coker!

His brow was mad; his gleaming eye
Flashed at the grinning standers-by;
And like the sound of cannons pealed
Stentorian shouts across the field,

Of "COKER!"

Before him he could see the goal,
He heard the shouts like thunder roll.
They rang like music in his ear,
For he enjoys a rousing cheer,

Does Coker!

"Try not the pass!" George Potter said,
"But let me take the ball instead!
You're bound to make a hash of things!"
But scornful satire seldom stings

Old Coker!

"Oh, stay!" the wrathful Blundell cried.
"Come back, you duffer! You're off side!"
But charging on, with main and might,
And scattering players left and right,

Came Coker!

"Beware the goalie's doubled fist!
"Beware, I tell you!" Potter hissed.
Away went Coker, neck or nought;
That distant goal absorbed the thought
Of Coker!

A sharp concussion checked his pace,
The goalie's fist had found his face!
He saw more stars in that same minute
Than all the firmament had in it,

Did Coker!

He sprawled upon the muddy ground,
While grinning fellows gathered round.
"It serves you right," said William Greene,
"You're too intrepid, dear old bean!"

Poor Coker!

There in the goalmouth, sprawling wide,
Lay Coker, humbled was his pride.
And from the touchlines, near and far,
Came voices, "What an ass you are,
Old Coker!"



Then the facts dawned upon Dr. Locke. He had quite forgotten that Miss Coker's nephew's Christian name was Horace. Miss Coker, naturally, did not think it possible for anybody to forget an important thing like that.

"Ah!" gasped the Head. "You are speaking of—of your nephew."

"Certainly. Whom did you imagine I was speaking of?" asked Miss Coker, in great astonishment.

The Head coloured a little.

"Bless my soul! A mistake on my part; it is of no consequence. You—you came, of course, to see me about your nephew. I think you acquainted me with that circumstance in your letter," said the Head.

"Yes. I am anxious about Horace."

"Ah, yes, Horace Coker, certainly!"

"The dear, clever boy has been so long in a lower Form," said Miss Coker. "It is preying on his mind, and keeping him from attending to his studies as he desires. You may have probably noticed that he is a very keen student."

Dr. Locke coughed.

He had noticed, and the master of the Shell had noticed, that Horace Coker was one of the veriest slackers that had ever slacked at Greyfriars. But naturally he did not feel inclined to tell Miss Judith Coker so. The good lady was evidently a great believer in her nephew, and placed the greatest trust in the explanations he gave, every vacation, to account for his position in the school.

"Dear Horace would go ahead like—like a steam-engine," said Miss Coker, after pausing a moment to think of a suitable simile, "if he had proper encouragement. He would have proper encouragement if he had a place to keep up. That place is in the next Form above the Shell—I think the Form he is in at present is called the Shell."

"Exactly!"

"He is growing so big a boy, that he is chaffed—I think he called it chaffed, or chipped, or something of the sort—about being in the Shell so long. Dr. Locke, I want to appeal to you to give Horace a chance, without waiting for the examina-

tions. I know you sometimes pass a boy into a higher Form——"

"A boy who shows exceptional cleverness may get his remove earlier," said the Head, "but——"

Miss Coker beamed.

"Yes, that is exactly Horace's case. I am sure the dear boy is exceptionally clever. His Uncle James said that he was the most brilliant Latinist he had ever spoken to. I remember the incident perfectly, for it was on the day that Uncle James had an execution in the house, and came to us to borrow seventy pounds. You have surely noticed, Doctor, Horace's exceptional cleverness. You spoke just now yourself of his writing in Latin. I am sure it is very clever to be able to write in Latin, or—or in Dutch," added Miss Coker, with a glance at the papers littered on the Head's desk—apparently taking the Greek characters for a kind of Dutch.

Dr. Locke checked a smile.

"I have already been thinking about Coker," he said. "I have consulted with the master of the Shell, and with Mr. Prout of the Fifth, and we think it may be possible to give Coker his remove."

"Oh, how kind of you, Doctor!"

"Not at all. It is rather absurd, as you say, that a youth of Coker's age and size should be in the Shell, among lads of fifteen."

"It is due to over-study," sighed Miss Coker. "Dear Horace has often told me how it is. He studies so hard as to overtax his brain, and then he finds his mind quite a blank on the day of an examination."

The Head coughed.

"As a matter of fact," said Miss Coker, with a beaming smile, "I have no doubt that Horace is really fitted to take his place in the Sixth Form, if he had a chance to do himself real justice."

"Ahem!" said the Head.

"Suppose you send for Horace now," suggested Miss Coker.

"Very well."

The Head touched the bell, and Trotter was sent for Coker.

"The dear boy!" said Miss Coker. "He

ROAD "HOGGING" WITH A VENGEANCE !



Horace Coker, the champion duffer of the Fifth Form at Creytriars, fancies—amongst other things—his chances as a motor-cyclist. He's welcome to them if the above sketch—drawn on the spot—is anywhere near the truth, for Farmer Giles in the background is coming up hand over fist. You can hear in imagination Horace Coker's squeals when Giles' stick begins to raise the dust—a splendid echo to the squeals of the unfortunate pigs whose calm and placid serenity Horace Coker has so rudely disturbed !

was playing a very rough game when I arrived, and was quite covered over with soot. It is a game called 'King of the Castle.' I dare say it is one of the favourite games here, Doctor—but the soot must be very detrimental to the boys' clothing."

The Head was saved from the necessity of replying by the arrival of Coker.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER

Lucky for Coker!

COKER came to the Head's study with some misgivings. He had had to explain at home how it was that he never passed up in the school, and he had related all sorts of explanations on the subject—chiefly attributing his permanent position in the Shell to the effects of over-study. Miss Coker's promise to use her influence with the Head to get him his remove had caused him half relief and half alarm. He hoped Miss Coker would be able to do it, but he was very doubtful how the Head would take an outside suggestion on the subject. He guessed that Aunt Judith's sudden arrival at Greyfriars was for the purpose, and he felt very uneasy as he tapped at the Head's door.

Dr. Locke bade him enter.

Miss Coker gave him an affectionate glance as he came in, as who should say, "Isn't he nice?"

Coker ducked his head.

Coker probably had some qualities. He knew that he wasn't clever, and there was no humbug about him as a rule on the subject. He wanted his remove into the Fifth, because it was pleasanter to be in the Fifth than in the Shell at his age.

He said, with some justice, that it was rotten for him to have to stick among the juniors till he was a bearded man because he hadn't a taste for any language but his own, and liked cricket better than mathematics—not that he was specially good at cricket, or football, either. At the summer game he was generally called "Butter-fingers" when he fielded, and as a batsman he had a late cut that would have made the angels weep. When Coker was batting it was quite a common thing for the fags to say to

one another, "Let's go and see Coker stump himself." And at footer he was irresistible in a charge, but he was quite as likely to charge one of his comrades off the ball as anybody else, and when he passed, it was said that he generally passed to an opponent.

His general incompetence was a subject of hilarity to everybody at Greyfriars. He took it seriously only on examination-days and on occasions at home when he was cornered by affectionate relatives and asked to explain why he wasn't head of the Sixth.

The explanations Coker gave were fearful and wonderful. His most humorous explanation was attributing his failures to over-study. The idea of that appealed to Coker's sense of humour. He could never get through his prep. without a shove from Hobson, and when he construed in the classroom he would stumble over words that were perfectly familiar to fags in the Second Form. Coker was the despair of the Shell-master, who would have been glad enough to see him removed into the Fifth; but Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, was by no means eager to receive a pupil with Coker's reputation.

Dr. Locke looked long and hard at Coker.

He wondered whether he would be justified in giving the densest slacker at Greyfriars a sufficiently hard push to send him into the Fifth.

After all, what purpose was served by keeping him in the Shell? So far as his attainments went, he might as well have been left in the Fourth Form. But a fellow in tail-coats in the Fourth would have been ridiculous. But he was little less ridiculous in the Shell, with a moustache beginning to appear on his upper lip. Perhaps it would be no worse for him to be a fool in the Fifth than to be a fool in the Shell. That was how the Head put it to himself. Needless to say, he never thought of putting it like that to Miss Coker.

Coker dropped his eyes.

He wondered what effect Aunt Judy had had on the Doctor. He was quite in doubt whether he was going to get a remove into the Fifth, or a licking.

"Coker!" said the Head at last.

"Yes, sir."

"Your aunt is very anxious about you."

"Yes, sir."

"You have caused her anxiety by your continual failures."

"Yes, sir."

"She is anxious about your future."

"Yes, sir," said Coker cheerfully.

"My dear Horace——"

"Yes, aunt."

"Dr. Locke is going to give you your removal!"

"Ahem!" said the Head dubiously.

"Thank you, sir."

"Coker is really a—a difficult case," said the Head. "I hardly know what to do with Coker. I know it must be a great disappointment to his people to see him still in the Shell."

"It's rotten, sir!" said Coker. "I—I mean, I don't like it myself, sir."

"Then you might surely have made an effort!" said the Head, somewhat tartly.

"Yes, sir."

"The dear boy has made continual efforts," said Miss Coker, with a fond glance at her nephew. "I am sure that his constitution has suffered from his efforts. I had an uncle who worked so hard to pass an examination that he died of rheumatism—at least, if it was not rheumatism it was pneumonia, or something of that sort, and the doctor asked me if it was in the family, and I said 'Good gracious, no!' It was in the same year that Horace was cutting his dear little teeth, and everybody said what a fine baby he was, and you could hear him when he cried at the very end of the garden. I remember it was a very long garden, and there was a pear-tree at the end, where we used to sit and have tea in the afternoons, and——"

"Exactly!" murmured the Doctor,



There was a groan from the Shell fellows. "Wingate doesn't swank about the passages as Coker does! What I say is the boulder ought to be put in his place!" (See Chapter 7.)

despairing of ever reaching the end of Miss Coker's reminiscences, and venturing to interrupt. "Coker, then——"

"It will be so nice to see the dear boy rewarded for all his hard work and sticking to his lessons like a—a Trojan," said Miss Coker. "'At least, I don't know whether the Trojans ever stuck to their lessons, but I believe they were a hard-working race of people, and made wooden horses, or something of that sort. I distinctly recollect Uncle James making a remark that was really very learned and classical on the subject at the time that we were buying a wooden horse for Horace, who was then five years old, and a sweeter child——"

Dr. Locke murmured something.

He began to feel that he would pass Horace into the Sixth Form itself, or make him Head of Greyfriars, to get Miss Coker to take her departure.

"Then it is settled?" asked Miss Coker.

"You see——"

"The good kind Doctor has sent for you to say that it is settled, Horace," said Miss

Coker. "He knows that you are misunderstood by your Form-master."

"My dear madam——"

"You remember, Horace, the occasion you have related to me several times when you corrected your Form-master's Latin——"

"Oh, don't mention that!" said Coker, in a hurried whisper.

"But I must mention it, Horace, to do you justice. It was through your Form-master using a false quantity, you said. I really do not know how much he should have used, but if he used a wrong quantity of Latin, or anything else, I am sure it was very foolish of him, and——"

"I—I will discuss this matter with the—the masters concerned," said the Head. "I do not think it necessary for you to waste any more of your valuable time, Miss Coker."

"Not at all, Doctor!" beamed Miss Coker. "My time is of no value whatever where dear Horace is concerned!"

The Doctor groaned, and then, remembering himself, tried to change it into a cough. It was a most remarkable sound that finally proceeded from his mouth, and Miss Coker looked at him in some alarm.

"Dear me, Doctor! You are not ill?"

"A—a slight—er—it is over now!" gasped the Head. "I—I think you may safely leave this matter in my hands, Miss Coker."

"But I suppose I may remain till it is settled?"

"Till—it—is—settled?"

"Yes."

"My dear Miss Coker——"

"You are going to consult with the masters?"

"Then surely I may wait in the study?"

"Ahem!"

"I should be so glad to see my darling Horace show what he can do, and I am sure you will be very much surprised. I am sure he knows the correct amount of Latin—the correct quantity, as you would say."

Coker grinned.

Dr. Locke involuntarily passed his hand across his brow.

"So I will wait till it is settled," said Miss Coker. "I shall never be at rest till my darling has his remove"

Dr. Locke gasped.

"I—I think you may leave this matter to me, madam," he said. "I—I think I can guarantee that Coker will get his remove."

"You are sure, Doctor?" asked the relentless old lady.

"Ye-es, I think so."

"Quite—quite sure?"

"Yes," said the Head desperately. "Quite sure."

Miss Coker rose.

"So kind of you!" she said. "Perhaps you will see me to my cab, Horace?"

"With pleasure!" said Horace, with alacrity

"Good-bye, my dear Doctor."

"Er—good-afternoon, madam!"

Horace walked Miss Coker off. She had gained her point. Horace Coker saw Miss Coker into her cab, to his great delight finding that the old lady had a train to catch, and could not stay to see Greyfriars at all. She promised him another visit shortly, and, meanwhile, she held a conversation of five minutes' duration with Horace at the door of the cab. An interested crowd of fellows of all Forms gathered round to watch, but they did not hear what was said.

But they saw the expression of Horace Coker's face grow brighter and brighter, and when at last his aunt kissed him good-bye, he threw his arms round her neck, and hugged her, and gave her a sounding smack that could be heard at a great distance. Then he stood, cap in hand, looking after the cab as it drove away, and in the exuberance of his spirits he waved it round his head. It was plain that Horace Coker had some reason to rejoice.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER

Coker, of the Fifth!

THAT was how Coker got his remove.

The next day it was known all over Greyfriars that Horace Coker, of the Shell, had been removed into the Fifth, and was a full-blown senior.

But that was not all that was known.

It was rumoured in the Form-rooms and the passages that Coker's aunt had been so delighted with his success that she had come down really handsomely.

Coker's aunt was well-known to be rolling in money, as the juniors put it. Coker told wonderful tales of her wealth. His stories were backed up by the fact that he sometimes received liberal tips, and sometimes hampers, from Aunt Judith. If Coker's rich aunt had come down handsome Coker was in clover.

And it was soon seen that Coker really was in clover.

He was seen to pull out a handful of Treasury notes in the Close. On another

occasion, he absent-mindedly folded up a five-pound note to make a spill to light the gas, and stopped himself only just in time.

Such things as these took a fellow's breath away.

Greyfriars fellows, as a rule, had well-to-do people belonging to them. But a five-pound note was a very rare possession there. Fellows in the Sixth had been known to possess them. Harry Wharton, of the Remove, had had one once. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh sometimes showed a crisp fiver, and so did Wun Lung, of the Remove. But not commonly.

There was Ionides, of the Sixth, the son of a rich Greek merchant, and he was certainly plentifully supplied with money, and he was



Bewildered, with a very swollen nose, and one eye closed up, and his hair matted with jam, Hobson was greeted with a roar of laughter from the group of Removites as he staggered into view. Hobson blinked at them out of one eye. (See Chapter 8.)

the only fellow at Greyfriars who was known to carry banknotes habitually. To see Coker in possession of paper payable at the Bank of England, and so much of it that he could absent-mindedly use a banknote for a gas-lighter, was astounding. Coker's banknotes were talked of in hushed tones in the junior rooms. Immense respect was shown to Coker.

The fellows agreed that it was high time that Coker was in the Fifth, and there never was a fellow more suitable to be in the Fifth, and to grace and adorn that or any other Form.

His backwardness was attributed to incompetence on the part of his Form-master. Coker was all right. A fellow who had five or six banknotes in his trousers' pocket could not have very much the matter with him, physically, morally, or intellectually.

Blundell, the captain of the Fifth, had been inclined to give Coker rather a warm reception into the Form. But the story of the banknotes changed Blundell's opinion. He began to feel that, perhaps, he had misjudged Coker. After all, it was quite time he passed into the Fifth, and it would be only civil to give the chap a friendly reception.

Bland, of the Fifth, who was Blundell's chum, quite backed him up. He suggested taking up Coker, and making something of him. Blundell was doubtful about the possibility of making anything of Coker; but he thought of the banknotes, and said nobly that it was a fellow's duty to try.

Coker's old friends in the Shell showed that though lost to sight, he was to memory dear. Hobson, rather regretful of that little row in the dormitory, and of his base desertion of his friend—which had turned out unnecessary, after all, as Aunt Judy had not stayed for the afternoon—bubbled over with affection as he congratulated Coker on getting his remove.

It was after morning lessons on Thursday, and Coker had just come out of the Fifth Form-room after his first morning there.

Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, had received Coker with a grunt, and during the

morning had discovered that he was even a bigger duffer than he was popularly supposed to be; and so Coker had not had a wholly pleasant time in the Form-room. The only time he gave correct answers to any questions was when Blundell whispered to him what to say.

But Coker never allowed this kind of thing to depress him. If differences of opinion with his tutors had depressed Coker, Coker would have passed his whole existence in a state of depression.

Coker had a way of allowing reproof and sarcasm to flow off him like water off a duck's back, leaving him quite serene.

It was a happy faculty of Coker's, and saved him a great deal of worry. It did not advance him in his studies, though!

Coker came out with Blundell and Bland and Higgs, all three of whom seemed quite fond of him. Hobson was waiting in the passage, having cut off at once for the Fifth-Form door as soon as the Shell came out.

He came up to Coker with a sweet smile. "Hallo, old boy!" he said. "Congratulations."

Coker stared at him.

"What's that?" he asked.

"Congratulations," repeated Hobson, with a sickly smile.

"What about?"

"Why, getting your—your remove, you know," said Hobson, astonished.

"Oh, that!" said Coker, in a tone as if that had happened ages back. "Thanks."

"I was glad to hear it," said Hobson.

"Oh!"

"I'm glad, you know."

"Thanks," said Coker loftily. "You're very good. But would you mind passing on?"

Hobson stared.

"Passing on?" he murmured.

"Yes. It's a bit infra dig., you know, for a Fifth-Form chap to stand about talking to juniors."

Hobson's mouth opened wide.

He could only stare blankly at Coker, gasping like a fish out of water.

Coker slipped his arm through Blundell's,

and strolled on with him, leaving Hobson still gasping and staring.

"My only hat!" Hobson ejaculated at last.

And he drifted off in amazement.

He had not expected the remove into the Fifth to make such a tremendous difference to Horace Coker at once.

But there was no doubt it had.

Coker was a senior now.

He did not mean to let the youngsters forget it. He draped his new-found dignity round him like a Spanish noble his cloak.

Coker's nose was very high in the air as he strolled out into the Close with Blundell and Bland and Higgs.

"My hat!" said Hobson again. "My only chapeau!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as the Remove came pouring out of their class-room. "Here's Hobson in a fit."

"The fitfulness is terrific."

Hobson blinked at them.

"Have you seen Coker?" he asked.

"Coker?"

"Yes. Since he's got his remove?"

"No," said Wharton curiously. "I suppose it makes a difference. He's a senior now."

"Tremendous swell," said Hobson. "Won't speak to a chap in the Shell. Ha, ha, ha! Not that it makes any difference to me. I don't care! Ha, ha! Of course. I don't care! I call it caddish. But I don't care a rap. Not me!"

And Hobson snorted to show that he didn't care.

The Removites laughed.

"Let's go and have a look at Coker," said Nugent.

"Good egg!"

"Where is he, Hobby?"

"Oh, he's in the quad!" snorted Hobson.

"Walking with Bland and Higgs—chumming up with seniors already. He's forgotten old friends."

Hobson had forgotten, too, how Coker's old friend had failed him in the hour of need. But we all have bad memories at times.

The Removites crowded out into the Close, Harry Wharton & Co. looking for Coker. They found him. He was walking up and down in a slow and graceful promenade, with Bland and Higgs and Blundell. The four seniors looked very imposing, at least, in their own eyes, and they regarded with lofty glances some mere juniors—Shell fellows—who were playing rounders.

Harry Wharton chuckled.

"My hat! Coker's on the high horse!" he exclaimed. "Blessed if I don't think he'll get a crick in the neck if he keeps his chin at that angle. I say, Coker!"

Coker looked down on the Removites.

He did not deign to speak. Juniors were beneath his notice. Only yesterday he had been a junior himself; but now he was a senior of the seniors.

"Coker, old man!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Deaf, Coker?"

"The deaf-fulness of the esteemed Coker is terrific."

"Run away," said Coker, with a wave of the hand.

"What!"

"Run away and play."

"My hat!"

"It's rotten for these youngsters to be allowed the run of the quad," said Coker, in a complaining tone to Higgs. "I think there ought to be a playground marked off for them, you know. Haw!"

"Yes, rather," said Higgs.

"Certainly," Bland remarked. "They're a general nuisance."

"Oh, my only chapeau!" said Bob Cherry. "Coker, you're rich—you're too rich! Oh!"

"I can't waste my time talking to juniors," said Coker.

"How long have you been a senior?" shrieked Tom Brown.

"None of your cheek, kid!"

"Here, you buzz off, you youngsters!" exclaimed Blundell. "Now then, off with you!"

The Fifth-Formers looked hostile. Harry Wharton & Co. retreated, almost sobbing with merriment. The new dignity of Horace Coker was too comic.



Coker grasped Alonzo Todd by the shoulders and swept him round, and sat him down on the ground with a bump. "Now, don't talk to a senior without permission!"
(See Chapter 9.)

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

The Shell Do Not Like It!

HORACE COKER had obtained his remove, and he did not allow Greyfriars to forget that fact. His Aunt Judith had come down handsome on the strength of his remove into the Fifth, and that fact was also evident to all Greyfriars. The rise of Coker was one of the most-discussed phenomena in the history of Greyfriars.

The Fifth had received him with open arms. Blundell and Bland had asked Mr. Prout to put Coker into their study, and Mr. Prout, who was puzzled where to put him, assented at once.

Coker carried his chipped desk, and his rocky coal-scuttle, and his footer and his bat, and his dog-eared books, into Blundell's study, or, rather, they had been carried for him by admiring new friends in the Fifth. It was an honour to carry things for Coker.

Coker was becoming a great leader already. In fact, Higgs had mooted the suggestion of asking Coker to captain the Fifth Form eleven.

Coker was much flattered.

Coker's progress in the Fifth, in short, was a triumphal one.

Which was a joy to Coker.

But in the Shell there was, metaphorically speaking, weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

It cannot be said that the Shell were sorry to lose Coker. That wasn't it. But to have him passed over their heads in this manner, when the duller of them could have construed his head off, so to speak, and then to have him carrying his nose high in the air and declining to speak to Shell chaps—that was the unkindest cut of all.

The Shell were furious.

Hobson, in the Shell passage, was loud in his denunciations of the fellow who had refused to recognise old friends as soon as he got his remove, and he declared that the Fifth Form chaps were sucking up to Coker because of Aunt Judy's money.

"Just you wait till the tin's gone," said Hobson darkly; "then you'll see what you will see!"

And as this statement was really incontrovertible, no one attempted to controvert it.

But Coker went on his way serenely, regardless of the Shell.

The question was whether the Shell would allow themselves to be disregarded in this high-handed manner.

Hobson called a crowd of the Shell fellows together in the Form-room that evening, and uttered quite a philippic on the subject.

He found sympathetic hearers.

The Shell were all wrathful. There was a general desire to pull Coker down off his perch, as they put it in the familiar language of the Form-rooms.

How was it to be done? was the query. But there was no doubt about the genuineness of the general desire to do it.

"The cheek of it!" said Hobson. "Only yesterday he was a blessed Shell chap himself, you know—only yesterday!"

"And he'd have been at the bottom of the class, too," remarked Pimble, of the Shell; "only the Form-master wouldn't have such a big chap at the bottom of the class, just for appearances' sake!"

"Pimble's right!"

"Yes, rather!"

"And now," said Hobson wrathfully—"now he's a full-blown senior, with more blessed airs than a chap in the Sixth!"

There was a groan from the Shell fellows—either for Coker or for the Sixth it was not quite clear which—but perhaps it relieved the Shell feelings to deliver that heavy groan.

"Why, Wingate doesn't swank about the passages as Coker does!" Hobson exclaimed excitedly.

Another deep groan.

"What I say is, the bounder ought to be put in his place!"

Cheers.

"He ought to be lugged off his perch!"

"Hear, hear!"

"He—he deserves to have Hoskins play his flute to him!" said Pimble. "Don't you think so, Hosky?"

Hoskins, who was a musical genius, and who composed fearful and wonderful things on the piano, frowned at Pimble.

"Really, Pimble——" he said.

"Look here," said Hobson. "I think we ought to tell Coker what we think of him! Those chaps in the Fifth are making a sickening fuss of him. I hear that he's going to stand a big feed on Saturday afternoon, to celebrate his getting into the Fifth. You'd naturally expect him to stand it to his old Form-fellows. But not a bit of it. He's going to stand it to the Fifth."

"Rotten!"

"Shame!"

"Yes; that's it, it's a shame!" agreed Hobson. "Would you believe it, I chummed up with that chap all the time he was in the Shell, and stood by him through thick and thin? Many's the time I've borrowed money off him!" said Hobson indignantly. "Now he's forgotten all that, and now the Fifth will——"

"Borrow money off him!" said Pimble.

"I shouldn't wonder," said Hobson. "They're mean enough for

anything! Look here, suppose we go to the Fifth in a body, and tell Coker what we think of him before the blessed lot of them?"

"He might cut up rusty."

"Let him! We're not afraid of Coker!"

"Hear, hear!"

"He's digging in Blundell's study," said Hobson. "They're there now; I saw them through the window. They let Coker sit in the armchair—Blundell's fag told me—and put his feet on the fender."

"Shame!"

"They're soaping him up like anything I call it caddish!"

"Rotten!"

"Who's going to back me up in going to the Fifth Form passage, and telling Coker our minds?" exclaimed Hobson, who was wildly excited by this time, and completely carried away by his own eloquence.

"We'll all come!"

"Hurrah!"

"Come on, then!" exclaimed Hobson.

And the Shell fellows swarmed out, with Hobson at their head. As they made their way in a crowd towards the Fifth Form quarters, they encountered Harry Whartor & Co. The Removites stared at them.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bok Cherry. "What's the row?"



"Just looked in to see you, Ionides," said Loder cheerfully. "Busy?" "No," said the Greek, putting the paper into his pocket. "The fact is, old man," said Loder, "we're in a fix!" (See Chapter 10.)

Hobson looked round at them.

"We're going to see Coker—to tell him what we think of him!" he exclaimed. "You fellows can come along, too, if you like!"

"Where are you going?"

"Coker's study!"

"You'll have the Fifth on you."

"Blow the Fifth!"

Wharton laughed.

"We'll wait here, and render first aid when you come back!" he said.

"Oh, rats!" said Hobson.

And he led on his merry men into the Fifth Form passage.

It was the hour when most of the Greyfriars fellows had tea. The greater part of the Fifth Form were at home. Fellows were seen in the passage carrying kettles of water into the studies. From some of the rooms came a smell of frying, or a scent of tea and toast, and from one or two proceeded a sound of breaking crockery.

The door of the study shared by Coker, Blundell, and Bland was half-open, and the Shell fellows could hear movements within. Coker was at tea with his new friends evidently, and the old friends, who would so willingly and cordially have made merry upon one of Aunt Judy's banknotes, were out in the cold. The thought added fuel to their wrath.

Fifth Form fellows looked out at the Shell juniors, and frowned. As a rule, a Shell fellow found in the Fifth Form passage was liable to be cuffed at sight. But there were rather too many of them now for any one or two Fifth-Formers to venture to cuff them. They stalked on, exchanging glances of defiance with the Fifth.

They reached the door of Coker's study, and Hobson opened it further with a tremendous kick, which sent it crashing back against the wall. Then the Shell fellows crowded in.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

Old Friends!

COKER, of the Fifth, was pleased with himself just then.

He had been standing a few things to grace the tea-table in Blundell's study,

though the room now, by the way, was not called Blundell's study. Blundell himself had suggested that it should be considered as Coker's study, and himself and Bland as Coker's study-mates.

Coker consented; he was flattered. Full-fledged Fifth-Former, as he now was, it was flattering to him, for Blundell was the captain of the Fifth, and a great man in the Fifth Form passage.

As in the cases of many great men in history, Coker's soul was expanding with expanding prospects, and he was becoming a truly great character.

Coker was pleased. The study was much larger than a Shell study, and better furnished, and the easy-chair was by common consent reserved for Coker. Bland had been making toast, and Blundell had made the tea. Bland helped Coker with much grace of manner, insisting that Coker shouldn't rise from his seat.

"My word!" said Coker. "This is better than the Shell!"

"I'm glad you think so," said Higgs, who had come in to tea, on the strength of Coker's munificence. "Of course, a fellow like you was wasted in the Shell!"

"A fellow like Coker would be an ornament to any Form!" said Blundell.

"Just so," assented Bland.

"Have some more toast, Coker?"

"Thanks, I will!"

"If Coker finds any difficulty in Fifth-Form work, I'm sure there are lots of fellows will be only too pleased to help him," said Blundell. "It's not to be expected that a chap in Coker's position will be able to swot at Latin like other chaps."

"Never could," said Coker, demolishing nearly a round of toast with a tremendous bite.

"Of course not! Now, if you ever want a little help in the classics, I'm your man!" said Higgs, in the most friendly way.

"Thanks, old chap! Pass the ham!"

"Here you are!" said Blundell. "Now, if mathematics stump you at all, you just speak a word to me!"

"I will," said Coker.

And he meant it.

"You see——" began Higgs, and then he broke off. "My hat!"

The door had crashed open at that moment.

The Fifth fellows jumped to their feet as the heroes of the Shell came crowding in.

Hobson surveyed the tea-party with a sarcastic glance.

"Having a nice time here?" he remarked.

"Looks like it!" sneered Pimble.

Coker looked round.

"Hallo! Who are you?" he asked.

The Shell fellows simply gasped.

They had grown used to the "side" adopted by Horace Coker since he had passed into the Fifth; but to hear him pretend that he had forgotten their faces was a fresh surprise.

"You—you——" stuttered Hobson.

Coker looked at his companions.

"These chaps friends of yours?" he asked.

Blundell chuckled.

"Not much!" he said. "They're juniors!"

"Do you usually have juniors come bolting into your study?"

"Hardly!"

"Well, if they're not guests of yours, you might tell 'em to get out!" said Coker. "I never could stand being bothered by juniors!"

"Quite right!" said Higgs. "My belief is that in a properly regulated school the juniors should be isolated, like—like small-pox patients, you know!"

"Jolly good idea!" agreed Coker.

"You—you swanking rotter!" roared Hobson.

Blundell pointed to the door.

"Get out!" he roared.

"Rats!"

"Look here——"

"We've come to talk to Coker," said Pimble. "Coker, you're a rotten fraud!"

"Beastly cad!"

"Bounder!"

"Prig!"

"Spoofer!"

"Cad!"

The Shell fellows did not mince their words. They hurled those epithets at Coker, apparently expecting him to wither under their scorn. But Horace Coker showed no signs whatever of withering.

He yawned.

"I wish you wouldn't allow juniors in this study," he remarked. "I never could stand youngsters about me."

That was too much for the Shell.

They had come there to tell Coker what they thought of him. But now that they had come, words seemed inadequate to express their feelings. They felt that deeds were required, and, without waiting to consult about it, they rushed upon Coker.

"Rescue, Fifth!" roared Blundell.

The Shell fellows swarmed round the four Fifth-Formers.

The latter hit out valiantly, and as they were all big and strong fellows, Coker as big and strong as any, their blows told severely. But the juniors were in great force. They rushed Coker & Co. into a corner, and piled on them there. Then Pimble, who was of a humorous turn of mind, took the table by the edge and shot the whole of the tea into the fender—tea and toast and ham and crockery and everything. There was a terrific crash. Coker's tea to the Fifth was "quered" with a vengeance.

"Oh!" roared Coker. "Look there! Go for them!"

He had his old chum Hobson in a loving embrace, and was punching his nose till Hobson howled and roared.

Fifth-Formers were turning out of the other studies now in force.

The news of a junior raid upon a senior study was astounding, incredible at first, till the noise in Coker's room showed it to be true.

The Fifth came in numbers, in great wrath.

Big fellows came smiting their way into the study, and the unfortunate juniors were hurled right and left, and kicked out one after another into the passage.

There they fled as fast as they could get

away, but only to run into the hands of other Fifth-Formers further along the passage, and to be cuffed and kicked along to the end without mercy.

The tide had turned against the Shell.

In a few minutes there was only one Shell fellow left in Coker's study, and that was Hobson, and he did not stay from choice. Coker had his head in chancery, and was pommelling him with the force and precision of a piston-rod.

Hobson struggled and yelled.

"Kick him out!" exclaimed Higgs. "My hat! Look at that mess in the fender! Kick the young boulder out!"

"They've mucked up everything," said Bland, picking a jam-dish out of the grate, the jam having received the addition of cinders and a heap of salt. "We'll give him this to take with him."

He wiped out the jam-dish on Hobson's head.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Coker.

Then Hobson was kicked out.

Bewildered, with a very swollen nose that was streaming red, and one eye closed up, and his hair matted with jam, Hobson staggered along, and was helped by kick after kick from the Fifth-Formers he passed, till he escaped from the dangerous precincts.

A roar of laughter from the group of Removites greeted him as he staggered into view.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hobson blinked at them out of one eye.

"Groo!" he gasped. "Yarrah! Oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wasn't your old chum glad to see you?" asked Nugent sympathetically.

"Must have been," said Bob Cherry.

"Look at the jam he's given him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hobson passed his hand over his head, and his fingers came away sticky with jam. He staggered off, gasping, leaving the chums of the Remove yelling.

"Well, I must say that things are funnier since Coker passed into the Fifth," said Harry Wharton. "All the same, he's a cheeky beast, and I don't like him holding his nose so high in the air."

"Rather not!" agreed Nugent.

"The highfulness of his esteemed nose is terrific!"

"Nature elevated it a bit," remarked Nugent. "Coker can't help that. But he needn't add to the effect."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I think it will fall to us to take him down a peg or two," said Wharton, with a shake of the head.

And the Removites responded unanimately:

"Hear, hear!"

THE NINTH CHAPTER Rough on Coker!

THE visit of the Shell fellows to his study to tell him what they thought of him did not have the expected result of bringing Horace Coker off his perch.

As a matter of fact, it rather seemed to fix him more securely upon that coign of vantage. The Shell, after their painful experience at the hands of the Fifth-Formers, were not likely to repeat the visit. In fact, in the Shell dormitory, that night there was groaning galore, and many reproaches directed against Hobson. Half the Form had black eyes or swollen noses—in fact, the only fellows who had escaped damage were those who had taken no part in the expedition. And these fellows did not even sympathise—they grinned.

Hobson was so much damaged that he had



They laughed in chorus. Coker beamed upon them. He was taking up his rightful position as a humourist at last! His light had been hidden under a bushel all the time he was in the Shell. (See Chapter 11.)

no energy left to combat adverse criticism. One of his eyes was quite closed, and the other very nearly so, so that objects did not appear to Hobson as they appeared to other fellows. His nose was nearly twice its usual size, and three of his handkerchiefs were stained a tell-tale crimson—so much so, that if Hobson had been found near the scene of a murder there was evidence enough about him to get him hanged half a dozen times over.

So Hobson let the Shell growl, and the Shell growled.

And when Coker, the next day, met some of the damaged heroes in the Close, he grinned at them, and pointed them out to Bland and Higgs, and was overheard to say that the prefects really ought to look after those kids better.

Coker had always swanked over the Remove a little, even when he was in the Shell. Now that he was in the Fifth he had become unconscious of their existence.

When Alonzo Todd, who was polite to everybody, following the excellent precepts of his Uncle Benjamin, said good-morning to him in the quad, Coker only waved his hand, as if brushing a fly away, and walked on.

Alonzo stared after him in amazement.

"Dear me!" he murmured. "Something must be the matter with Coker. I trust I have not offended him in any way. Surely he cannot bear malice for that little row in the Remove passage the other day."

Alonzo rubbed his nose reflectively.

His Uncle Benjamin had often warned him never to let the sun go down on his wrath, and although, as it happened, the



"Another time," said Coker, with a wave of his hand. "Plenty of time, you know. I'll see you fellows later!" And he strolled away with the Sixth-Formers. (See Chapter 12.)

sun had only lately risen now, Alonzo felt that it would be better to clear up the matter. He hated being on bad terms with anybody, and if Coker was bearing malice, the sooner it was explained away the better.

So the duffer of Greyfriars hurried after Coker, and attracted his attention by digging him in the ribs with a bony knuckle—a way Alonzo had. Coker gasped, as if he had been punctured, and swung round.

"My dear Coker——" began Alonzo.

"Ow!" gasped Coker.

"I trust, my dear Coker, that you are not remembering the little tussle we had the other day in the Remove passage?" said Todd. "My Uncle Benjamin has always impressed upon me that it is wrong to bear malice."

"You young ass!"

"It is wrong, and therefore you should not allow yourself to become a prey to angry feelings, Coker. 'Let dogs delight to bark and bite,' as the poet so touchingly observes, for it is in accordance with their natural proclivities. Let bears and lions growl and

fight, for they were endowed with these propensities. But children——”

“You ass!”

“You should never permit the effulgence of such uncontrolled passions,” said Alonzo, with a shake of the head. “Your digits were never intended to be doubled up in a compact manner for the purpose of smiting one another upon the salient features, such as nose and jaw.”

“My hat!”

“Therefore, my dear Coker, I trust that you will be willing to accept the hand of friendship,” said Todd, holding out his right hand.

Coker inspected it.

“What’s that?” he asked.

“My hand,” said Alonzo mildly.

“Well, it would be the better for a wash,” said Coker. “Take it away.”

“My dear Coker——”

“And don’t you have the cheek to speak to seniors in the quad,” said Coker. “I’d lam you, only I know you’re a harmless lunatic! Only don’t do it!”

“My dear——”

“When you address me you should say ‘sir,’” said Coker, growing exalted. “I expect respect from young people.”

“Oh!” gasped Alonzo.

“Now buzz off! If you have the cheek to speak to me again I shall give you a licking. Go and eat coke!”

“Coke?” gasped Alonzo.

Alonzo had a curious habit of repeating things that were said to him when he was startled and confused. He was quite bewildered now. He could not understand Coker in the least.

“Yes!” roared Coker. “Get away, and don’t jaw!”

“Jaw?”

“Do you want me to give you a thick ear?”

“A—a thick ear?”

“My hat!” said Coker. “It’s a giddy parrot in Etons! Look here, young shaver——”

“Y-y-young shaver?”

“Look here, get off the earth! Buzz off! Bunk! Absquatulate!”

“A-a-a-absquatulate?”

“My hat! He’s fairly off his rocker!”

“Rocker?”

Coker lost patience. He was strongly inclined to smite Alonzo, but although a big, overbearing fellow, and sometimes given to bullying, he was good-natured. Instead of levelling Todd with the earth, he thrust his hands into his pockets and strode away. But Alonzo was not satisfied. He ran after Coker, and gave him a dig in the ribs again.

“My dear Coker, pray listen to me——”

“Ow! Yow!”

“Dear me! Have I winded you? I’m so sorry! I wanted to explain that my Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me that——”

“Buzz off!” roared Coker.

“My dear Coker, I——”

Coker grasped Alonzo Todd by the shoulders and swept him round, and sat him down on the ground with a bump.

Alonzo gasped.

“Ow!”

“There!” panted Coker. “Now, don’t you talk to a senior again without permission, and don’t you puncture a chap’s ribs, anyway.”

“My Uncle Benjamin would be shocked, Coker!” gasped Alonzo. “He would be shocked at your conduct—nay, disgusted!”

“You young ass! I—— Oh! Yaroooh! Yaroop!”

Coker suddenly broke off, as there was a rush of feet, and five or six hands seized him and swept him off the ground.

“Bump him!” roared Harry Wharton.

“Leggo!” yelled Coker frantically.

He struggled in the grasp of the Removites. Harry Wharton & Co. had seen him sit Alonzo Todd down, from a distance, and they had rushed up at once. As a matter of fact, it came a little hard upon Coker; but the Removites had not heard what had passed. They only knew that Coker the Great had laid violent hands upon a Removite, and they were ready to avenge the insult to the Form at once. So they rushed upon Coker, determined to make it clear to him that even if he had gained his

The Song ^{of} the Slacker!

TELL me not, in mournful numbers,
Life was meant for toil and hustle ;
It was meant for soothing slumbers,
Which relax both mind and muscle.

Life is lovely ! Life is topping !
When you lie beneath the shade,
With the ginger-beer corks popping,
And a glorious spread arrayed.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way ;
But to put off till to-morrow
Work that should be done to-day !

In the world's broad field of battle
All wise soldiers take their ease ;
And they lie asleep, like cattle,
Underneath the shady trees.

Trust no Future, trust no Present,
Let the dead Past bury its dead !
The only prospect nice and pleasant
Is that of "forty winks" in bed !

"Life is short !" the bards are bawling,
Let's enjoy it while we may ;
On our study sofas sprawling,
Sleeping sixteen hours a day !

Lives of slackers all remind us
We should also rest our limbs ;
And, departing, leave behind us,
"Helpful Hints for Tired Tims !"

Helpful hints, at which another
Will, perhaps, just take a peep ;
Some exhausted, born-tired brother—
They will send him off to sleep !

While the hustlers are pursuing
Outdoor sports, on land and lake ;
Let us, then, be up and doing—
There are several beds to make !

By
Lord
Mauleverer.



admittance into the ranks of the Fifth, he must leave the Remove alone.

"Bump him!"

"Hurrah!"

Coker struggled fiercely, and knocked down two of his assailants; but the rest were too many for him. He was swung into the air and bumped, and bumped again. Alonzo Todd staggered to his feet.

"My dear fellows," he said, "pray do not hurt Coker. He is a very bad-tempered and unreasonable person, but my Uncle Benjamin always said that one should bear with a bad-tempered person patiently. You see——"

"Oh, buzz off, Toddy!"

"My dear Nugent——"

"Bump him!"

"Give him one more!"

"Ow! Yow! Help! Rescue, Fifth! Yaroo!"

"My dear fellows——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look out!" exclaimed Tom Brown.

"Here come the Fifth bounders!"

And the Removites sauntered away, leaving Coker sitting on the ground, and gasping for breath, and his chums in the Fifth to find him there. Harry Wharton caught Alonzo by the arm and hurried him off. Todd was inclined to stay with Coker and offer him gentle ministrations, for it appeared that his Uncle Benjamin had always impressed upon him to succour the distressed. But Harry knew that Alonzo would need some succouring if he was still upon the spot when Coker recovered.

Coker did not look quite so stately as of late, as he walked away with Bland and Higgs. Bob Cherry remarked that he looked as if some of the starch had been taken out of him. And indeed he did.

THE TENTH CHAPTER

A Great Catch for Coker

L ODER, of the Sixth, came out of his study with a thoughtful frown on his face. Loder was a prefect; but it was not his duty as a prefect that was worrying him now. He could generally contrive to let his duties as a prefect shift for themselves.

Loder was thinking now of—Loder. He went along the Sixth Form passage to Carne's study, and entered without knocking.

Carne, of the Sixth, was seated in his easy-chair, with his feet on the table, and a cigarette between his lips. There was a blue haze in the room. As the door opened, Carne snatched the cigarette from his lips and threw it into the fire with the same movement of his hand. He had evidently had practice in that kind of thing.

Then he gave a gasp of relief.

"You ass, Loder! You startled me."

Loder grinned.

"You're the ass," he said. "If I had been a master coming in, what about the smoke in the room? It's risky, Carne."

"Oh, hang!"

Loder threw the window open.

"I've looked in to see if you've got a couple of quid," he remarked.

Carne laughed.

"Say a couple of pennies," he said.

"It's serious, Carne."

"Same here."

"Look here," said Loder, "I've had something on the Woodford races. I was morally certain that Blue Bird would romp home."

"My hat! So was I."

"You!" ejaculated Loder.

"Yes," said Carne ruefully; "and I had three quid on him, at three to one against. And he came in sixth."

"Well, you are an ass!" said Loder.

"What about yourself?" demanded Carne. "You were as certain as I was that Blue Bird was a winner."

"Well, he lost," said Loder. "Two quids are gone, and the worst of it is I was doing it on tick. I was so certain, you see, that Blue Bird was a dead sure snip."

"Same here again," grinned Carne.

"How much do you owe?"

"I owe Banks two pounds."

"And I owe him three."

"And you've got no tin?"

"None."

"Expecting any?"

"Ten bob on Saturday; not much use."

And the two seniors looked grimly and ruefully at one another. It seemed awfully sporty to put money on the races, and Mr. Banks, the bookmaker, had often complimented them upon their sportiveness—as he could afford to do, as he drew a regular income from them and several other foolish young fellows in the school. But being a “giddy sport” had its awkward side. Dead certs were really extremely uncertain—or, rather, they were, as a rule, certain—to lose.

“Well, this is rotten,” said Loder at last. “If you can’t stand it, I suppose I’d better try Ionides. I hate borrowing of that chap.”

“So do I,” said Carne. “But now you speak of it, I can see it’s the only thing to be done. Let’s go together.”

“All serene.”

And Loder and Carne made their way to Ionides’ study. There was no doubt that Heracles Ionides, the Greek senior, was rolling in money; and he was generally willing to lend to fellows whom he was certain could repay him. As a matter of fact, it was his money chiefly that caused the Greek to be tolerated in the Sixth, for his character was not a pleasant one; and the best fellows, like Wingate and Courtney, had very little to say to him.

The two seniors found him at home. He was sitting at his table, with a silver pencil in his white fingers, and a paper before him jotted over with figures. He looked up at his visitors and grunted.

“Just looked in to see you, Ionides,” said Loder cheerfully. “Busy?”

“No,” said the Greek, putting the paper into his pocket.

“The fact is, old man,” said Loder, “we’re in a fix; and, of course, we thought of a chum like you at once to help us out. You’re the only fellow in the Sixth, as a matter of fact, that I’d care to ask a favour of.”

The Greek showed his teeth in a grin.

“Thank you!” he said.

“Fact is, we’ve been backing Blue Bird,” said Loder. “I’m stuck for two

pounds, and Carne for three. Can you help us?”

Ionides laughed.

The two seniors stared at him.

“Blessed if I can see where the joke comes in,” said Carne testily. “I’m in the dickens of a hole, Ionides, and I don’t care about being sniggered at.”

“Pardon,” exclaimed the Greek, “but it is funny.”

“I don’t see where the fun comes in.”

“Nor I, either,” exclaimed Loder angrily.

The Greek waved his white, ringed hand deprecatingly.

“It is all right,” he said, “only it happens that I cannot lend you the money, because——”

“Because what?”

“Because I have backed Blue Bird myself.”

“My hat!”

“I have lost seven pounds,” said Ionides. “I have paid five of it, and was thinking of coming to one of you fellows to borrow the other two.”

Loder and Carne exchanged glances of dismay.

“Well, that’s what I call simply rotten,” said the prefect. “We’re all in the same ditch together, then.”

“Looks like it,” growled Carne.

The Greek showed his teeth again.

“But I have an idea,” he said.

“To raise the tin?”

“Yes.”

“Go ahead!” said Carne eagerly. “I simply must have it. Banks won’t wait for his money. Of course, I’m not afraid of his coming up to the school, or anything of that sort, but he won’t trust me a second time.”

“Of course, he must be paid,” said Loder, “but I’m blessed if I can see how. What’s your idea, Ionides?”

Ionides chuckled.

“You have heard of Coker?” he asked.

“Coker! A big, clumsy chap in the Shell?” said Loder.

“He is in the Fifth now.”

“Oh, yes, I remember; the Head gave

FAMOUS PUBLIC SCHOOLS



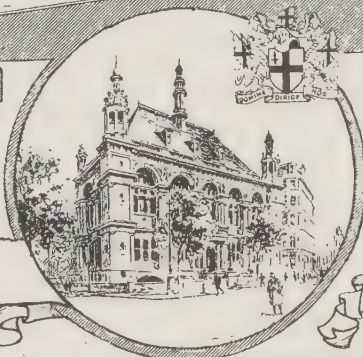
Midhurst Grammar School



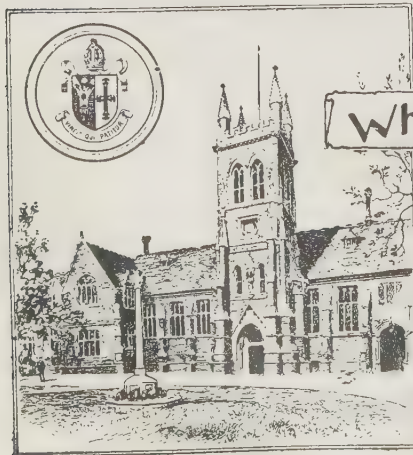
Christ College, Brecon.



City of London School



Monmouth School



Whitgift Grammar School



him his remove through being badgered by his relations, or something," said Loder. "What about Coker?"

"Ah, you are not observant," said the Greek. "You have been thinking too much about Blue Bird, perhaps. I, Heracles Ionides, keep my eyes and ears open. This Coker has an aunt, who is wealthy. She has presented Coker with unlimited pocket-money for having obtained his remove at last, and the Fifth Form are making great fuss of Coker, and he has passed over all his old friends in the lower Forms."

"Just like him, I should say."

"Exactly!" said the Greek. "You see, Coker is ambitious, like Julius in the play. It is a grievous sin, and grievously will Coker answer it, as your Shakespeare says."

"I don't see——"

"Coker rolls in wealth," said Ionides. "Fellows are all trying to pick up the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table. He has passed over all his old friends, and swanks about with the head boys of the Fifth. It has occurred to me that such a windy and vainglorious person as Coker would be very much flattered if some notice were taken of him by the Sixth."

"Ah!" said Loder and Carne together.

"It would turn his head," the Greek remarked. "His head is somewhat turned already by the favour of the Fifth. If he could be taken up by Sixth-Formers, I really believe that the worthy Coker would be as wax in our hands."

"My hat!"

"Are you sure about the money, though?" asked Carne dubiously.

"I myself have seen him produce a handful of banknotes to show to someone else," said Ionides. "I think he certainly had more than twenty pounds."

"Phew!"

"It is time to make hay during the sunshine," said Ionides, with a grin. "Let us make up to the worthy Coker, and make a great friend of him, and I do not think we shall be troubled to pay these small debts to Mr. Banks."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You agree?"

"Yes, rather!" said Carne. "It's a chance, anyway."

"Then it is settled. It will be a great catch for Coker to find friends in the top Form of the school; and, of course, he must expect to pay for it."

Loder and Carne chuckled. There was no doubt that Coker would pay for it, if he obtained the distinguished honour of their friendship. And the three seniors sallied forth together to look for Horace Coker.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER

Coker the Humorist I.

"COMING for a stroll, Coker?" asked Higgs of the Fifth. Tea was over in Coker's study that Monday evening. Coker lay back in the armchair, with a fragment of a tart in his hand, doubtful whether he should finish it. Coker was growing quite delicate in his appetite. He had always been a hungry fellow, ready to eat pretty nearly anything. But of late he had been living on the fat of the land. The horn of plenty had never ceased to flow. Aunt Judy, in her enthusiasm, had simply piled money on him. Aunt Judith was so rich that she hardly realised how much a banknote or two might mean to a schoolboy. Her liberality had made her nephew rich beyond the dreams of avarice—while it lasted. In justice to Coker, we must state that he was getting through his wealth at a really creditable speed.

Plenty had reigned in Coker's study ever since he obtained his remove, and indeed there was a time of plenty all along the Fifth-Form passage. Coker was an open-handed fellow among his friends. The Fifth thought him a jolly chap, and regretted that he had not got his remove whole terms earlier. Higgs' idea of making him captain of the Form team had caught on.

Coker had played footer in the Shell, and he was as big as any Fifth-Former, and there was no reason why he shouldn't play in the Form eleven. To captain it was Coker's ambition, of course, and it was an ambition that his new friends were disposed to gratify. In private, Blundell and Bland agreed that it would be possible to get the

captainship out of Coker's hands when an important match had to be played. It was swank that Coker wanted, and there was no valid reason why he shouldn't swank to his heart's content.

The Fifth Form rejoiced in Coker. Some fellows did not join in the general enthusiasm, but they were set down as prigs and swots—indeed, Potter won great applause by calling them Huns.

The name of Coker flourished throughout the length and breadth of the Fifth-Form passage. Nearly everybody in the Fifth had dropped into Coker's study some time or another to have tea, or to sample the cake, or to drink Coker's health in his own ginger-pop, or to borrow a bob to be repaid on Saturday, or something of the sort. And Coker was so free and generous that the fellows couldn't help liking him. It was probable that they would be able to help it when Aunt Judy's banknotes had all gone the same way. But that, as the novelists say, is anticipating.

Coker yawned.

"I don't know!" he remarked. "It's getting dark."

"Yes, so it is," agreed Higgs at once. "Let's have a game of chess."

"Oh, chess is a bore!" said Coker. He couldn't play chess, but he preferred to put it like that.

"Come to think of it, chess is rather a bore," said Bland, with a nod. "What do you say to a game of draughts, Coker?"

"Tired of draughts," said Coker.

"Come and have a box in the gym.," suggested Blundell.

"I'd rather have a box at the theatre," said Coker.

Coker was given to making puns of this sort. The most obvious and barefaced play on words was good enough for Coker. Coker's puns had always been hooted in the Shell; even his friend Hobson declaring that he regarded them as unmistakable symptoms of softening of the brain. That was before Aunt Judy had come down so handsomely, of course. In the Fifth Form, Coker's puns sent fellows into convulsions. They were looked upon as brilliant flashes of wit suf-

ficient to set any table in a roar; and it had dawned upon Horace lately that he was really a great humorist.

"Ha, ha, ha!" rang through the study. Higgs and Bland and Blundell roared in concert. Higgs wiped his eyes.

"Oh, my hat!" he gasped. "You'll be the death of me, Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now, if I were in Germany, I should have bocks at a beer-garden!" said Coker, further.

This further development of the pun was greeted with shrieks of laughter. Blundell and Bland clung to one another and almost wept. Higgs seemed in danger of going into hysterics. Coker, infected by the general merriment, and thinking that the joke must really be jolly funny, laughed, too.

While the study was thus shaking with merriment, the door opened, and Potter looked in. Potter looked surprised.

"My word!" he exclaimed. "What's the joke? I could hear you yelling in my study! Let a chap into the joke! I'll bet it's Coker again!"

"You're right!" almost sobbed Higgs. "Ha, ha, ha! It's Coker! I know that chap will be the death of me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Blundell and Bland.

"Tell a chap the joke!" said Potter eagerly. "I knew it was Coker. No chap except Coker ever raises a laugh like that. Tell a chap." He appealed to Coker.

"Oh, Higgs'll tell you!" said Coker modestly. "It's nothing really!"

"Nothing!" gasped Bland. "Oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ha! You see, Blundell said to him, 'Come and have a box in the gym.——' Oh, ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes?" said Potter.

"And then Coker said—— Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Coker said——s-s-said—— Oh, dear! hold me somebody!" gasped Higgs. "Coker said—— Ha, ha!"

"But what did Coker say?" demanded Potter, with great interest.

"He said——ha, ha!——he said——he'd rather

have a box at the theatre!" stuttered Higgs.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Potter.

"And then——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You see, that wasn't all——" gasped Higgs.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Coker said—he said—— Oh, dear! He said that if he were in Russia——"

"Germany," said Coker.

"I—I meant Germany—he said that if he were in Germany, he would box them at a beer-garden!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Potter, not in the least seeing any joke, but determined not to be left out of the laughter.

"That's not right!" exclaimed Coker.

"Of course it isn't!" said Bland, with an indignant look at Higgs. "You've got it all wrong, Higgs!"

Higgs looked dismayed.

"Well, you tell him, Blandy!" he said.

"No; let Coker," said Bland, rather hurriedly. "Go

on, Coker. It sounds so much better the way you tell it."

"Oh, all right!" said Coker. "You see, Blundell said 'Come and have a box in the gym.' I said, 'I'd rather have a box in the theatre.'"

He paused; and Potter, knowing what was wanted, burst into a roar of laughter. This was rather hard on Potter, for he had already laughed at that part when related by Bland. But Potter was an obliging fellow, and though the joke was not very laughable,

he thought that Coker's considering it funny was laughable enough; so he laughed at Coker instead of Coker's joke, which was just as good.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Potter.

"Well, then I said——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Potter again, a little too previously.

"I said—you see, that's how it was—Blundell said come and have a box in the gym., and I said I'd rather have a box in the theatre," said Coker, in his heavy way.

"Then I said that if I were in Germany I'd have boxes in a beer-garden."

Potter had never been in Germany. Boxes in a beer-garden was quite Sans-krit to him. He did not even know that Coker was using the plural of "box," and he wondered why Coker should consider it funny to say that he'd have a box in a garden. But it was his duty to laugh, and he laughed.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Potter's laugh started the others

again. They laughed in chorus. Coker beamed upon them. He was taking up his rightful position as a champion humorist at last. His light had been hidden under a bushel all the time he was in the Shell; but he was coming into his kingdom at last.

He turned over rapidly in his mind whether the unwritten laws of punning would allow any reference to Chinese Boxers, or Irish bogs, and whether a musical box could possibly be dragged in. Perhaps Higgs saw by his expression that a fresh pun



Coker tried to puff away at the cigarette in the same way that the others did. The sound of footsteps passing the door made him look round uneasily. Loder laughed. (See Chapter 13.)

was coming, and he warded it off by skillfully changing the subject.

"We haven't had that stroll," he remarked. "Coming out, Cokey, old son?"

"Cold out," said Coker.

"Quite right—let's stay in the study!"

"Bit stuffy here, too."

Coker rose and stretched his big limbs.

"Perhaps we may as well have a stroll," he remarked. "We can get some ginger-pop at Mrs. Mimbble's, anyway!"

The Fifth-Formers exchanged glances of satisfaction. When Coker was standing treat at the school shop, Coker was great.

"Good egg!" exclaimed Higgs.

"Yes, rather!"

"Come on, then," said Coker lazily.

And he strolled out of the study with his friends of the Fifth. It was getting dusk in the Close when they entered it, but there were still a good many fellows out of doors. Among them were Hobson and Pimble and Hoskins of the Shell. They exchanged glances as they saw their old friend, and lined up in his path with the cheery greeting:

"Hallo, Coker!"

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER

The Go-By

"HALLO, Coker!"

Coker glanced down at the Shell fellows along his nose.

"Who are these fellows?" he asked, turning an inquiring glance upon Blundell & Co. Blundell sniffed.

"Only some fags," he said.

"Fags are a bore," said Coker.

"They are!"

"Get away, you kids!"

"Buzz off!"

"Hallo, Coker!" repeated Hobson obstinately. "Can you settle up that tanner I lent you last week to get toffee?"

Hobson had invented the tanner on the spot. The idea of a full-blown Fifth-Former borrowing sixpence and buying toffee with it was too cruel.

Coker turned crimson.

"You blessed cheeky fag!" he exclaimed. "Get off!"

And he lunged out at Hobson.

The Shell fellow promptly retreated.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Hobson. "Who borrowed the tanner?"

"He, he, he!" shrieked Pimble.

"Where's the toffee?"

The Fifth-Formers made a rush at the juniors, who melted away, but continued to yell from the distance.

The seniors, with their noses very high in the air, walked on, pretending to take no notice of the taunters.

Coker held his head so high that he really seemed in danger of getting a crick in the neck. Perhaps that was why he received a pat on the back from Bob Cherry, as the five seniors passed a group of Removites.

Harry Wharton & Co. grinned at the sight of Coker's nasal elevation. Bob Cherry gave him a friendly poke in the small of the back that made him gasp.

"Ow!" said Coker.

"All right?" asked Bob.

"All right!" roared Coker. "What do you mean, you cheeky fag?"

"Thought you might have a stiff neck, or something," said Bob innocently. "You'll get one, you know, if you walk about like that."

Coker glared at him.

"You—you—you——"

"Don't take any notice of these fags," said Higgs loftily. "It makes them conceited."

"Just that," agreed Potter.

"Quite right," said Coker, with a wave of the hand to the juniors. "Buzz off, you youngsters. It's time you were indoors, too!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Removites.

"Look here, you kids——" Coker began angrily.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, Coker, you'll kill me!" sobbed Nugent. "You are too rich; you are really, you know, Horace."

"The richfulness of the esteemed and silly Coker is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Oh, run away and play, you kids!"

said Coker loftily. "I don't want to have to box your ears."

"My hat!" said Harry Wharton. "Don't stop for us. You can begin the boxing as soon as you like, Cokey."

Coker sniffed, and walked on with his nose in the air, and the other Fifth fellows adopted the same manner. The stateliness of their bearing was a little marred, perhaps, by a yell of laughter from the Removites, and a wild yell from the distance in the voice of Hobson:

"Where's that toffee?"

"Oh, Coker gets richer every day!" grinned Wharton. "I imagine he gets poorer, too, as he goes on standing treat as he's been doing lately. I shall be glad to see how he gets on with Blundell & Co. when all his tin's gone."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I imagine there will be a sudden drop in Coker stock when that takes place," grinned Nugent.

"The dropfulness will be terrific!"

And the chums of the Remove chuckled. It was not likely that Coker would keep up his loftiness when his financial resources were exhausted. And they were curious to see the end of the comedy. Meanwhile, Coker & Co. had met Loder, Carne, and Ionides as they walked on towards the tuck-shop with his Fifth-Form friends.

Coker glanced at the three Sixth-Formers as they came towards him, and his glance was very dubious. Coker had been on strained terms with them before. Ionides, the Greek, was given to bullying, and he had once made the mistake of bullying so big a fellow as Coker.

Now, it was very right and proper that Horace Coker should cuff fags of the Second and Third Forms; but when a Sixth-Former cuffed him, the cheek of it was astounding, and Coker had retaliated in a way that made Ionides very careful to let him alone afterwards.

So now, when Ionides came up with Loder and Carne, Coker was prepared for trouble. His Fifth-Form friends gathered round him, as if to stand by him against all-comers. Coker smiled with gratification. After all,

he was in the Fifth now, a senior himself, and his old enemy would hardly dare to attempt to bully him, even with a prefect to back him up.

But it was soon clear that the Sixth-Formers did not mean trouble. Ionides appeared, by his manner, to be oblivious to any passages-of-arms between himself and Horace Coker in the past.

Loder was smiling his most agreeable smile, and Carne was quite amiable—a sufficiently remarkable thing in Carne to attract attention.

"Hallo, Coker!" said Loder, quite affably.

"Hallo!" said Coker.

"I've been going to see you for dog's ages, to congratulate you about getting your remove," explained Loder.

Coker had had his remove for four or five days now, so Loder had evidently taken his time about it. But that did not matter. It was something to be congratulated in public by a Sixth-Form prefect, and Coker purred.

"Thanks, Loder," he said. "You're very good."

"Not at all," said Loder. "Carne was saying to me that, as a matter of fact, you ought really to be in the Sixth."

Coker nodded assent. He thought so himself.

"Just so," said Carne.

"I am sure a fellow like Coker would be an adornment to any Form," said Ionides. "I sincerely hope he will soon get his remove into the Sixth."

"Thanks!" said Coker.

"Meanwhile," said Loder, "we should be glad to see some more of you, Coker, my boy."

"Thanks!" said Coker.

"As a matter of fact, we really regard you as a Sixth-Former in effect," said Ionides. "You are resting transiently in the Fifth."

"Merely a bird of passage," said Carne.

Coker coloured with pleasure.

It was something, certainly, to be made so much of in the Fifth; but to have big fellows in the Sixth chumming up with him in this way—well, it was simply ripping!

Coker had learned to despise the Shell, and to forget the mere existence of any Form below the Shell. He now began to look upon the Fifth with disdainful patronage. Why should a fellow of his merits be thrown upon Fifth-Formers?

Blundell, Bland, Higgs and Potter saw the way things were going at once, and they were furious.

Higgs put his arm through Coker's.

"I say, Cokey, come on," he said.

"I wish you wouldn't call me Cokey," said Coker. "My name's Coker."

"Sorry. I meant Coker. Come on."

It was only a few days since Coker had thrilled with pride at being addressed in public by Higgs as Cokey. He had progressed since then.

"No hurry," said Coker.

"We were going to look in at Mrs. Mible's," said Bland hintingly.

"No hurry, that I can see."

"If you're engaged, Coker, we won't bother you," said Loder significantly. "But we thought you might like to come and have a chat in our study."

Coker's eyes danced.

"With pleasure!" he exclaimed.

"Come on, then. I should advise a fellow like you, really, not to waste his time going about with these youngsters."

"Youngsters!"

Blundell & Co. could have eaten Loder for that word. They could have eaten Coker, too, when they saw him accept Loder's arm and turn away with him.

"Here, I say, Coker," Potter exclaimed, "you're coming with us!"

"You're coming to Mrs. Mible's!" said Blundell sharply.

"Coker, old man——" Bland remonstrated.

"It's all right," said Higgs uneasily.

"Coker's all right. He's coming with us."

"Another time," said Coker, with a wave of the hand. "Plenty of time, you know. I'll see you fellows later."

And he strolled away with the Sixth-Formers.

Blundell, Bland, Higgs, and Potter stood transfixed.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Potter, staring after Coker and the Sixth-Formers, as if he could scarcely believe the evidence of his eyes. "My solitary chapeau!"

"Great Scott!" said Blundell hopelessly.

"The worm!"

"The cad!"

"What can you expect, taking up with rotten juniors?" said Blundell. "It was our own fault."

"After we've put up with him for nearly a week," said Bland pathetically.

"The worm!"

"The rotter!"

"After laughing at his rotten puns, too!" said Potter wrathfully.

"The ungrateful beast!"

"Did you ever hear of, or dream of, a sillier and fat-headed rotten punster?" demanded Higgs. And the other fellows admitted that they never had.

"Like his cheek, inflicting his rotten jokes on us!" said Potter. "I came jolly near telling him so, too."

"Hopeless cad!" said Blundell.

"I'm done with him."

"So am I."

"I wash my hands of him," said Potter, with a suitable gesture accompanying the words. "I'm done with the junior cad!"

And they walked away in great indignation. The whole scene had been witnessed by Harry Wharton & Co., and Harry burst into a laugh as the disappointed Fifth-Formers walked off. Bob Cherry looked a little puzzled.

"What's the little game?" he asked.

"Ha, ha, ha! Coker's given the Fifth the go-by, that's all!" roared Wharton. "Don't you see? He's chucked the Shell for the Fifth, and now he's chucked the Fifth for the Sixth!"

"My hat!"

"It's the same old game," grinned Wharton. "They're after Aunt Judy's tin. Old Coker is getting on. He can't get much further ahead than this, unless the Head takes him on as a special chum."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

That was not likely to happen. Coker was at the summit of his ambition now, and

he was in a state of dreamy contentment as he sauntered into the house, his arm linked in Loder's—to the wonder and admiration of all the fags who beheld him.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER

Expensive Friends !

HARRY WHARTON was right in the motives he assigned to the Sixth-Form trio; but it is probable that those same motives were visible not only to the Removites. It is quite likely that Coker saw them, too; but Coker did not mind. Coker knew only too well that he would never be valued highly for his brains, or for his manners, or for his beauty. He wanted to be rated high, and he could only be rated high for his cash. That was something.

After all—that was the way Coker put it to himself—some fellows have one quality, some have another. He had money, as it happened. But, after all, a chap who was a good cricketer was a good cricketer because Nature had made him like that; and a handsome, pleasant fellow was handsome and pleasant because the Fates had so ordained it.

The Fates had not been kind to Coker in this respect, certainly—he wasn't handsome, and nobody had ever found him very pleasant—but wealth was as good a gift as any other. Why shouldn't a chap be valued as much for having banknotes in his pocket as for having a Greek nose, or a jolly temper, or a tricky leg-break? That was what Coker wanted to know.

Anyway, whatever might be the object of the three seniors, Coker was willing to bask in the sunshine while it lasted.

He seemed to be walking on air as he went in with the seniors, and he tried to look quite cool and accustomed to it as he saun-



"Here's to Coker, Captain of the Form team—Captain Coker!" The health was drunk with acclamation. The noise was heard along the passage, and other fellows looked in to see what was the matter. (See Chapter 14.)

tered into Ionides' study, but he did not quite succeed.

Ionides stirred the fire to a cheerful blaze, and Loder closed the door, and Carne pushed an easy-chair forward for Coker. Ionides' study was very handsomely furnished, for the Greek had spent money like water for the purpose; and Coker could not help thinking that it was even a greater improvement upon Blundell's study than Blundell's study was upon his old quarters in the Shell.

"Comfy there?" asked Ionides, turning back from the fire.

"Oh, yes, quite, thanks!" said Coker.

"Have a cigarette?"

Coker hesitated. Smoking among the juniors was strictly forbidden—and no less strictly among the seniors—but Ionides' habits were well-known. When Ionides was

seen gasping across a playing-field with "bellows to mend" all the time, everybody knew the cause of it.

But Coker's hesitation lasted only a moment. Why shouldn't he smoke? There was no danger, anyway, in the presence of a prefect.

"Thanks, I will!" he said.

Ionides pushed the box towards him—expensive, gold-tipped Turkish cigarettes, which no one else at Greyfriars could have afforded to smoke, even if they had been given to the same habits as the Greek.

"Match?" said Loder.

"Thanks!"

Coker accepted a light.

The three seniors drew up their chairs, and lighted cigarettes also. Loder had taken the precaution to lock the door, and to open the window at the top. Coker tried to puff away at the cigarette in the same way that the others did, and succeeded in getting a volume of smoke down his throat, and a cloud of it into his eyes, which made him gasp and choke for some time, and blink tearfully.

But Ionides tactfully chose that moment for stirring the fire again, and made enough clatter to take attention off Coker's indisposition, and the Fifth-Form hero soon recovered, and puffed away again more cautiously.

The sound of footsteps passing the door made Coker look round uneasily. Loder laughed.

"It's all right," he said. "Nobody will come in. It's safe here. Of course, we have to put this sort of thing down among the juniors."

"Of course," said Coker.

"It wouldn't do, you know. But among ourselves—for I really regard you as one of ourselves, of course," said Loder.

"You're very kind."

"A fellow like you is thrown away in the Fifth. I shall try and use what influence I have with the Head to get you a higher remove," said Loder.

"You're awfully good."

"In that case, I hope Coker would share my study," said Ionides.

"That I jolly well would," said Coker. "You're jolly well fixed up here, old chap."

Coker trembled inwardly as he called a Sixth-Former "old chap." But the ceiling did not fall in, neither was there an earthquake within hearing. Coker breathed again.

Ionides said something in Greek.

"What's that?" said Coker.

"I was just saying that you would be a valued friend to me," said Ionides, with a smile that showed nearly every tooth in his head. "I should be honoured by your friendship if you were in the Sixth. But even as it is, I think we ought to see a great deal of our friend Coker."

And he glanced at the others. They nodded.

"I'll tell you what!" exclaimed Carne, as if an idea had suddenly struck him. "Suppose we introduced Coker to Mr. Banks. Banks could put him on to a good thing. You can see that Coker is a sportsman."

It was the wile of Mr. Banks himself, used over again at second-hand for Coker's benefit. Coker seemed to swallow it greedily enough.

"Oh, yes!" said Loder. "He's got the look of a sportsman. If he won, he'd spend his money like a prince. If he lost, he could stand it without whining."

"That's just the impression Coker gives me," Ionides remarked.

"Well, what do you say, Coker? Would you care to meet Banks?"

"What is he?" asked Coker.

"Bookmaker."

"Good! I'll sample him," said Coker.

That was meant for a joke, and in Blundell's study it would have been greeted with a roar of laughter. Coker was disappointed, and a little nettled, when the Sixth fellows failed to see that it was a joke at all.

"Look here," said Loder, "there's a jolly good thing coming off to-morrow. I've got a dead sure snip. Willoughby II for the Woodford Handicap. What do you say, Coker? If you like to place some tin in my hands I'll look after it for you."

Holiday Joys—5.



BATHING IN THE BRINY!

THE waves are dancing fast and bright,
With a restless, rapid motion;
The boats are rocking with delight
Upon the swelling ocean.
Around our heads the seagulls screech,
Then o'er the waves go skimming;
Whilst we undress upon the beach,
Eager for joys of swimming!

We all join hands, then gaily dash
Across the sand and shingle;
Into the icy sea we splash,
It sets our limbs a-tingle.
Swimming together, side by side,
We breast the bounding billows;
This joy to slackers is denied—
They much prefer their pillows!

Bob Cherry's curly head appears
Above the foaming breakers;
And you can hear the gurgling cheers
Of schoolboy merry-makers.
Wharton is swimming like a fish,
Enjoying his elation;
And honestly, we could not wish
A finer recreation!

With seaweed clinging to our hair,
With costumes all a-dripping,
We revel in the morning air,
And vote the bathe was ripping!
The joys of life are multiplied,
And troubles seem but tiny,
When chums and comrades, true and tried,
Go bathing in the briny!

"Thank you!" said Coker.

"Well, how much would you care to place?"

"Five bob," said Coker.

Loder made a gesture.

"Don't be funny," he remarked.

"Well, say ten," said Coker, who thought this was being very sportsmanlike and reckless indeed.

"Now, look here, Coker, I'm not joking," said Loder. "If you like to place seven or eight pounds in my hands, I'll see to a good thing for you."

Coker gasped.

He was prepared to hand over ten shillings, or even a whole pound, with the serene inward knowledge that he would never see it again. To that extent he was willing to pay for his friendship in the Sixth Form. To pay for it in lumps of seven and eight pounds at a time was rather beyond his mind. His cash would not last long at that rate. And Coker was no fool. He knew that the kindness of the seniors would last exactly as long as his cash.

"Well, what do you say?" asked Carne.

Coker shook his head.

"No," he replied. "Thanks awfully, but I don't think I'll do it. I remember now that I've promised my Aunt Judy never to gamble. I'd forgotten, but I remember it now."

The three seniors exchanged glances.

"Perhaps you don't trust me, Coker," said Loder, in a low and very significant tone.

Coker shifted uneasily.

"Oh, yes, I do!" he said.

"Perhaps you think I've been badly informed, and that I can't place the money for you to advantage," said Loder unpleasantly.

"Oh, no!" said Coker, getting a little alarmed. "I—I'm sure you can do it. Only, you see, I—I've promised Aunt Judy never to gamble."

Loder made an impatient gesture.

"Look here!" he exclaimed. "Will you do it or not?"

Coker looked at him squarely,

"No," he said.

The seniors exchanged baffled glances. They had not expected so much obstinacy in Coker. All three of them were greatly inclined to seize upon Coker and wipe up the floor of the study with him.

Coker blew out a cloud of smoke. He was quite cool. His position was, that he was being courted for his money, and was willing to shell out to any reasonable extent. But unreasonable demands made the whole thing "not good enough."

"Coker, old man," said Carne at last, "we happen to be rather hard up at the present moment. Could you lend us seven pounds?"

Coker shook his head.

"Sorry, I couldn't," he said.

"But you have the money," urged Loder.

Coker was silent.

"Now, look here, old chap," said Ionides, in his soft voice, "you might oblige us in this little matter, you know—as a friend."

"I'm sorry."

"Of course, seven pounds is nothing to a chap like Coker," said Loder. "He's only joking with us. Now, Coker——"

But even that failed to draw Coker. He rose, and threw the stump of his cigarette in the fire.

"I think I'd better be going now," he remarked.

The three Sixth-Formers also rose, and there were very ugly expressions upon their faces. They did not like to feel that they had blundered, and that a mere clumsy, heavy-footed Fifth-Form fellow had seen through them.

"This won't do!" said Loder abruptly.

"So-long!" said Coker.

The three seniors looked as if they would spring upon him. Coker gave them a casual sort of a nod.

Loder stepped to the door quickly.

"Hold on a minute!" he exclaimed, with his back to the door.

Coker paused.

"Certainly," he said.

"Look here, Coker, we want you to oblige us in that matter," said the prefect, with emphasis.

"I'm sorry," said Coker. "But it can't be done."

"You don't deny that you have the money?"

"Oh, no!" said Coker uneasily. "I suppose I have it."

"What are you going to do with it, then?"

"Keep it," said Coker.

Loder snapped his teeth, and sprang towards him. If Coker had lied, and pretended that he had no money left, it would have saved Loder's feelings a little. But, as a matter of fact, Coker was not a liar.

"You cheeky young cad!" shouted Loder.

Coker backed away.

"Here, hands off!" he exclaimed.

"Collar him, Carne!"

"You'd better let me alone!" exclaimed Coker. "I suppose you don't want me to tell all the fellows what you brought me here for."

Loder's hands dropped to his sides. He stared at Coker for a moment or two, and then threw the door open.

"Get out!" he said.

And Coker got out.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER

Captain Coker!

COKER ran till he reached the end of the Sixth-Form passage, and then he dropped into an easy stroll. His brief friendship in the Sixth was at an end; but Coker was not foolish enough to let the Fifth-Form fellows know how and why it had ended. Coker was not exactly clever, but he was too clever for that.

Blundell, Bland, and Higgs, and Potter were standing in a group at the foot of the big staircase when Coker strolled along. They gave him a glare, which he affected not to notice. He paused, with a grin.

"Coming into the study?" he asked. "I say, suppose we get young Trotter to fetch in the ginger-pop? That'll save trouble."

The Fifth-Formers stared at him.

They knew how valuable Coker was to them. They did not dream that the Sixth

Holiday Joys—6.



CRICKET ON THE SANDS!

OUR wicket is a wooden post,
Our bats are quaint and curious;
Our pitch, a portion of the coast—
The fun is fast and furious!
Bob Cherry's batting, with great glee,
We urge him to "go steady";
Three tennis-balls are in the sea,
And swept from sight already!

The fieldsmen are in bathing kit,
Clothes and convention leaving;
Over the golden sands they flit,
The frisky ball retrieving.
A crowd is watching with delight
Our schoolboy recreation;
They see Bob Cherry slog and smite
With keen determination!

Then Billy Bunter takes a turn,
And bats with reckless vigour;
Spectators roar when they discern
His plump and portly figure.
At every smite, he shuts his eyes,
Missing the ball repeatedly;
"You're out, old porpoise!" Cherry cries.
"I'm not!" yells Bunter heatedly.

And so we pass a pleasant hour
Of triumphs and reverses;
Until a sharp and sudden shower
Our cheery band disperses.
Bunter's the hero of the match,
According to his story;
He made no runs, he muffed each catch,
And yet claims all the glory!

fellows would lightly let him go. Had he come back of his own accord?

Coker strolled on towards his study as if he expected them to come. They looked at each other and followed him.

Coker walked into the study. His manner was jovial, as it had been before that meeting with the Sixth, and perhaps a little more jovial. Coker realised that he stood upon very slippery ground.

"You might call in Trotter," he said. "I want him to take a banknote to Mrs. Mible to change."

The banknote did it.

"Certainly," said Bland.

And he went to look for Trotter. Coker sat down in the armchair. Blundell and Higgs, unable to restrain their curiosity as to what had happened in Ionides' study, came over to him.

"Look here!" exclaimed Blundell. "What did you go off with Loder and his lot for?"

Coker yawned.

"Oh, just for a chat, you know."

"Why didn't you stay with them, then? If the Fifth Form isn't good enough for you——" began Higgs hotly.

"Oh, give him a chance to explain!" said Potter.

"My dear chaps," said Coker lazily, "I don't see why a chap in my position shouldn't be civil to the Sixth. As for chumming outside one's own Form, the idea's ridiculous, of course. It couldn't be done."

"Oh, I see!"

"Well, that's right."

"Yes, remember, a fellow in Coker's position!" said Potter. "Don't forget that! After all, it's only natural for the Sixth to be civil to a fascinating chap like Coker."

"Potter's right."

Bland returned with Trotter. The House page gaped at the sight of the five-pound note he was wanted to change, and scribbled down the things wanted as Coker dictated them to him.

The list dictated by Horace Coker was

quite sufficient to banish any lingering trace of distrust or ill-feeling in the study.

It was a long list, and when the goods were supplied Coker would only expect three pounds change from the fiver.

Trotter departed upon his mission, and peace and confidence reigned once more in the study.

"I must say that Coker's a decent chap," said Blundell. "If I've done Coker any injustice, I'm sorry for it."

"And I jolly well hope he won't get his remove into the Sixth," said Bland. "Though I'm sure Coker could get it easily enough if he chose to work for it."

"He could get it on his head," said Higgs.

Coker stretched out his legs to the fire and grinned. He had quite re-established himself in the good graces of the Fifth, and he realised that he had had an escape, and he mentally resolved not to follow the wiles of the Sixth any more. Ionides and Loder and Carne might be swagger friends to stroll about the Close with, but they were decidedly too expensive.

The chaps in the Fifth, to put it in commercial terms, were of a lower quality, but much cheaper.

Trotter returned with the heavy-laden basket lent him by Mrs. Mible, and the change of the five-pound note. The latter Coker carelessly slipped into his trousers-pocket, as if it were a mere bagatelle.

A fellow who could do that was deserving of great respect. Great respect, accordingly, was paid to Coker. He tossed Trotter a shilling for his services, and the page departed in high feather. Twopences were commoner with him than shillings. It was not so very long since the Fifth-Formers had had tea, and a very substantial tea, too, but they were quite ready to eat currant-cake, and preserved fruits, and to drink Coker's health in ginger-pop.

And they drank it. Ginger-pop flowed liberally to the tune of "He's a Jolly Good Fellow." Coker felt that he really was a jolly good fellow.

"Speaking of footer," he remarked presently.

Nobody had been speaking of footer, but the fellows were all attention at once.

"Exactly," said Higgs. "About footer, you know——"

"That idea of yours of making me footer skipper in the Fifth," said Coker. "I think it's a jolly good idea myself."

"Hear, hear!"

"I'd do my best to pull the matches off, you know."

"Nil desperandum, Cokro duce, et auspice Cokro," murmured Higgs classically.

Coker looked at him. He had heard that before, and hadn't known what to make of it, and it occurred to him that perhaps Higgs was making fun of him in an unknown tongue. Coker did not mean to stand that sort of thing.

"Look here, Higgs, if you're punning on my name——" he began.

Higgs looked dismayed.

"Oh, I say——" he said.

"I don't like it!"

"But I wasn't," said Higgs. "I was quoting Horace, altered to suit the occasion, you know. 'Teucro duce, et auspice Teucro——'"

"You said 'Cokro' just now."

"Yes, that's the ablative, old man—ablative absolute, you know."

"Absolute rot, I call it!" said Coker.

Whether this was intended as a pun, Coker's friends did not quite know, but they thought they were pretty safe in treating it as some sort of joke, anyway. There was a roar of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Absolutely!" said Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, you funny dog!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker was quite placated. An accepted wit, says the sage, has but to say "Pass the salt" to set the table in a roar. Coker was evidently an accepted wit now, for at the least remark the study was set in a shriek.

"Well, speaking of football," said Coker, again.

"Yes, Coker?"

"Go it, old chap!"

"I don't mind captaining the Form team, if you fellows like to arrange it."

Blundell slapped him on the back.

"Good egg!" he exclaimed. "We'll try it, anyway, and see how it works. Here's to Coker, captain of the Form team—Captain Coker!"

"Hear, hear!"

And the health was drunk with acclamation. The noise was heard along the passage, and other fellows came looking in to see what was the matter. The sight of preserves and cakes and jams and fruits on the table, and the endless array of ginger-beer-bottles, convinced them at a glance that they were wanted in the study.

And they came in in force.

Coker's hospitality was boundless—and Blundell & Co. were very generous in sharing Coker's property with the whole Form. The study was soon crammed with as many as it would hold. There was a scene of great enthusiasm. The idea of Coker as footer captain seemed to catch on like wildfire. He mightn't be able to play footer, perhaps—that was a moot point—but there was no doubt that he could stand first-class feeds.

"Hurrah for Coker—Captain Coker!"

"Hear, hear!"

And the joyous meeting did not break up while there was a bottle of ginger-beer left corked, or a cake uncut. What results would accrue from Coker's election as footer captain in the Fifth the fellows did not yet know. But upon one point Blundell & Co. were assured—they were secure of Horace Coker. The Sixth would not be able to wile him away from them now.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER

Bob Cherry's Little Wheeze

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Have you chaps heard?" demanded Bob Cherry.

Bob asked the question excitedly on Tuesday morning, some time after morning classes, as he met Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent in the Close.

The two juniors stared at him.

"Heard what?" asked Harry.

"The news."



Harry and Frank rushed at Bob Cherry and seized him, and waltzed him round in their glee. "Hurrah!" shouted Nugent. "Hurrah!" roared Wharton. (See Chapter 15.)

"What news?"

"About Coker."

"Coker again!" said Nugent. "Toujours Coker! Coker encore! We're getting fed-up with Coker, old son!"

"But the news——"

"Well, what is it? Have the Shell been ragging him?"

"No. No chance, I expect."

"Have the Fifth given him the order of the boot?"

"No. I think the Sixth have done that. He's thicker with Blundell & Co. than ever," grinned Bob Cherry.

"Has his Aunt Judy come again?"

"Ha, ha, ha! No."

"Has she sent him a hundred pounds this time?"

"Not that I know of."

"Then what is it?" demanded Nugent. "If you've got news, why the dickens don't you propound it?"

"You haven't given me a chance. The Fifth—— Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well?"

"The Fifth have made him—ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Get it out, you ass!"

"The Fifth have made him footer captain!" yelled Bob. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton and Nugent stared.

"Footer captain!"

"Ha, ha! Yes!"

"In the Fifth!"

"Just it."

"My only hat!"

And Harry Wharton and his chum roared too, joining in Bob's stentorian peals of merriment. Coker, as Fifth-Form footer captain was richer than ever.

"That's their bid against the Sixth, I suppose," said Harry, at last. "They're keeping him out of Loder's hands that way."

"I suppose so."

"But you've seen him play! I saw him charge his own goalkeeper once! Ha, ha, ha!"

And the juniors yelled again.

"But I've got an idea," said Bob Cherry, when his mirth had subsided a little. "It's a real, A1, copper-bottomed, non-skidding, ripping idea!"

"Go ahead!"

"We've all had a lot of airs and graces from Coker. We're all pretty well fed-up with him and his funny ways, and the swank of those Fifth-Form bounders, I think."

"Yes, rather!"

"Well, I've got a dodge for taking them down a peg or two."

"Expound, you ass."

"Why shouldn't we challenge the Fifth to a game of footer?"

"What!"

"No, I'm not off my rocker," said Bob Cherry coolly. "I think it's a ripping idea. Why shouldn't we challenge the Fifth?"

"Rats! They'd never play the Lower Fourth. They'd consider it *infra dig.*, the asses!"

"I know that—as a rule. But we may chip Coker into playing. Then, too, there's the fact that he's no good as a Fifth-Form footer captain. Blundell and the rest know

that well enough. They're only doing it to butter him up, of course. When they have to play an out-match against a team that's any good, they'll get up some excuse to leave Coker out, or else shove him in as back. He can play back after a fashion, but he's about as fit to captain a team as to captain an airship."

"But he'll see through it if they chuck him."

"That's the idea. I think Blundell & Co. will play us, thinking they can walk right over us," grinned Bob Cherry. "See—they'll think the Remove easy enough to lick, even with Coker as their skipper."

Harry Wharton nodded thoughtfully.

"Something in that," he assented.

"Then—then there'll be a surprise for them!" Bob Cherry chuckled. "We'll make up a junior team, including the Upper Fourth and the Shell—picking out the best players in the Lower School, any Form. See? We can make up a team that way that would give the Fifth Form trouble at any time—and with Coker as their captain, we may——"

"Lick them!" roared Nugent.

"That's it, lick them!" assented Bob Cherry. "What do you think of the wheeze?"

Harry and Frank rushed at Bob Cherry, and seized him, and waltzed him round in their glee.

"Hurrah!" shouted Nugent.

"Hurrah!" roared Wharton.

Bob Cherry gasped.

"Go easy, you duffers! You like the idea?"

"Ripping!"

"Good! Then it's a go!"

And a go it was.

The moment the idea was communicated to the other fellows it caught on. Lick the Fifth—beat the top Form but one of Greyfriars on the footer ground! It was like a dream—the fellows would have given weeks' and weeks' pocket-money to do it. Lick the Fifth! For that noble object, all the Lower Forms at Greyfriars were willing and ready to pull together as one man!

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER

The Junior Eleven I

HARRY WHARTON believed in striking the iron while it was hot. The next day was a half-holiday, and then, Harry knew, the Fifth had no match on. Had they had one, it was likely enough that they would have left Coker's appointment till Thursday. Now, they were likely to get up some scratch match on Wednesday afternoon, and play Coker as captain, and make him feel as if he were a real skipper. The challenge from the Remove would fall in beautifully with that. The licking the Remove intended to give them would come as a pleasant, or otherwise, surprise.

Harry Wharton, then, lost no time. He meant to get his team together that day, and challenge the Fifth to a match for Wednesday afternoon. At the thought of licking the Fifth, and even of merely playing them, the Removites felt several inches taller. Even Billy Bunter felt a glow of Form patriotism at the idea, and was observed to take some slight interest in matters outside the tuckshop.

Wharton and his chums held a discussion on the subject in No. 1 Study immediately after dinner. It was decided that Wharton would have to captain the team, and at least six Removites would have to play in it—Wharton himself, Bob Cherry, Nugent, Tom Brown, Hurree Singh, and Mark Linley, the lad from Lancashire. They were players who could give any opposing team some trouble, and if the rest of the eleven was of equally good quality, there was a good chance of snatching a victory.

"We'll ask Temple, Dabney, and Fry, of the Upper Fourth," said Harry, "and Hobson and Pimble, of the Shell."

"Good," said Bob Cherry.

"And the sooner the quicker," Harry added.

"The soonfulness ought to be terrific."

And the chums set out to look for the other fellows. They found Hobson and Pimble in the Close, looking towards Coker, who was sauntering there with some of the

Fifth. Coker seemed serenely unconscious of their existence.

"The rotter!" said Hobson wrathfully, as the juniors came up. "Look at him. You'd think he'd been in the Fifth for a term at least, instead of less'n a week."

"Swankin' beast!" said Pimble.

"What do you Remove kids want?" grunted Hobson.

"We're thinking of a little joke on Coker and his new friends," Harry Wharton explained blandly.

The Shell fellows became all politeness immediately.

"Oh, if that's it——" said Hobson, quite graciously.

"That's it!"

"What's the idea?"

"They've made Coker captain of the football team in the Fifth."

Hobson snorted.

"They're just sucking up to him, of course," he said.

"Well, they haven't given him the job on his merits, I know," said Harry, laughing. "Look here, we're going to challenge the Fifth to a match."

"My hat! Challenge the Fifth!"

"Yes," said Harry coolly.

"They won't accept."

"I think they will; but never mind that. If they do accept, will you fellows play in the team? I want to make it representative of the whole lower school—all the best players below the Fifth."

"You want me to captain?" asked Hobson.

"No, we don't," said Wharton promptly. "I'm captain, and I've got five men already. I want you two chaps to play, because you're a ripping half, and Pimble can keep goal jolly well."

"Of course, we couldn't play in a team unless there was a majority of Shell fellows in it, and a Shell chap was captain."

"Oh, all right!" said Harry shortly, turning away. "Sorry to have troubled you. It's all right."

"Hold on!" exclaimed Hobson. "Don't be in such a dickens of a hurry. I haven't said that I won't play yet."

Wharton turned back.

"Well, shall I put your name down?" asked Harry.

"Who have you got in the team, so far?"

Harry ran over the names. Hobson and Pimble looked at one another. They did not like the captaincy remaining with the Remove, and that was clear. Otherwise, the idea struck them as an excellent one.

"Of course, we could get up a Shell team, and challenge Coker's lot ourselves," said Hobson musingly.

"Oh, play the game!" said Nugent.

"Look here——"

"Quite right," said Harry warmly.

"It's our idea, and you've no right to borrow it. But get up a Shell team, if you like. You know very well that the Shell's in rotten form, and you've nothing to put into the field against forwards like Higgs and Blundell, and a half like Potter, for instance."

Hobson had to admit that.

"Still, you'll concede that the team ought to be captained by someone higher than a Remove chap," he remarked.

To which Wharton's reply was brief and emphatic:

"Rats!"

Hobson grinned.

"Well, we'll play," he said.

"All right. I'm to put your names down, then?" asked Harry, opening his notebook.

"Yes."

"Good! They're down."

And the chums of the Remove walked away to visit Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Upper Fourth. The Upper Fourth and the Remove were generally on terms of warfare; but Harry was sure they could unite for so laudable an object as licking a still higher Form, and he was right there. As soon as he found Temple, and explained the idea to him, Temple jumped at it; only he laboured under the same delusion as Hobson, that a fellow higher in Form than a Remove ought to be captain.

"Hobson thought that," said Harry Wharton. "I explained to him that it was rot."

"Well, it was rot in Hobson," agreed

Temple. "I agree with you there. Hobby couldn't captain a team of white rabbits. But in this case, Wharton, you'll admit as a reasonable chap that an Upper Fourth fellow ought to lead?"

"Rats!"

"Now, look here, Harry Wharton——"

"Bosh! The question is, what are you going to do? If you're willing to play in the team, I'll put your names down."

Temple, Dabney, and Fry looked at one another. They didn't like Wharton's way of putting it; but to have a hand in inflicting a defeat on the Fifth Form was a great temptation.

"You're a blessed cheeky fag," said Fry.

"You ought to be asking us to captain your rotten team!"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, we're not," he said. "I want Temple to play inside left, and you two as halves. Hobby's going to be centre-half. If you care to take it on, well and good; if you don't, I'll look further. I'd rather have you chaps, but I can get some decent players either in the Shell or the Remove."

"The decentfulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Singh. "It is a really great chance of an esteemed lifetime for the elegant and honourable duffers."

"Well, I think we can play," said Temple.

"Oh, rather!" remarked Dabney.

"Shall I put your names down?"

"Yes, shove 'em down. If before the match comes off, you feel it your duty to resign the captaincy to me, I shan't refuse it."

"Thanks," said Wharton, laughing. "I've got the team all right now, then, and it only remains to make the Fifth play us. I think it will work all right; and if they play, I think we shall beat them. It will be gorgeous for the lower school if we do. We shall have to go and see Coker after lessons to-day, and put it to him. I was thinking of a chap from each Form going—you, Temple, and Hobson, of the Shell, and myself. What do you think?"

Temple nodded.

"Good," he said. "I dare say we shall get caught out on our necks; but, I suppose, we can risk that?"

"Yes, we'll risk it. We must explain that it's a flag of truce," said Harry. "Upon the whole, we'll catch Coker somewhere outside the Fifth-Form passage—they're death on juniors there. Hobson and his lot had an awful time visiting Coker the other day. It's settled, then—you play?"

"Yes, it's settled."

"Oh, rather!"

"Good! Then we'll interview Coker immediately after lessons," said Wharton, with a grin, "and I rather think Coker the Great and the Fifth-Form bounders will come down off their perch a little over this."

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER

The Challenge Accepted

WHEN the Fifth came out that afternoon, there was a group of Removites standing near their classroom door, the Remove having been dismissed a few minutes earlier. Harry Wharton & Co. were waiting for Coker.

Coker gave them a lofty look as he came out with Higgs and the rest. He regarded it as really a bore that these youngsters should persist in shoving themselves under his notice.

"Coker! Hallo, hallo, hallo! Coker!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

Coker walked on with his nose in the air.

"Coker! Cokey! Coke!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Coker! Coke, Coker, Coke!" said Bob.

"Look here!" exclaimed Coker angrily, as Bob ran through the positive, comparative, and superlative of his name. "Look here, you buzz off! I don't like being bothered by kids."

"But we want——"

"You want a thick ear, I think," said Higgs.

"And you'll get it 'ere," said Coker, dropping the aspirate for the sake of another of his brilliant puns. Higgs paused a moment to reflect, and then, realising that it was a joke, he burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker smiled.

"Look here, Coke!—I mean, Coker," said Bob. "You see——"

"Oh, get away!"

"We want to congratulate you, and to



"Well, we'll play," Hobson grinned. "All right. I'm to put your names down, then?" asked Harry, opening his note-book.
(See Chapter 16.)

congratulate the Fifth," said Harry Wharton. "We've heard that you are footer captain, Coker."

"Well, that's right," said Coker.

"And a jolly good captain, too," said Higgs.

"What-ho!" chimed in Potter. "I must say that Coker would make a good footer captain for the Sixth, for that matter."

"Well, we've brought you a challenge."

"A what!" said Coker.

"A challenge from the Lower School. We're making up a combined team to meet the Fifth, and we want to play you."

"Oh, rot!" said Coker loftily.

"Mere rot," said Higgs.

"Bosh!" said Bland.

"I say, Blundell, you're Form-captain—what do you say?" asked Harry Wharton.

Blundell pursed his lips.

"Oh, it's for Coker to say," he replied.

"But we'll talk it over, kid. When do you want to play?"

"Wednesday afternoon."

"Oh, we're engaged!" said Potter.

"You're not engaged," said Wharton coolly. "I made a point of making sure of that. If you're afraid to meet us——"

"What!" roared the Fifth-Formers.

"If you're afraid to meet us, of course, we'll let you off, but we thought we'd give you a chance," said Wharton. "Besides, it will be a chance for old Coker to distinguish himself as footer captain, you know."

"We'll let you know," said Blundell briefly.

"We're all in this," said Temple of the Fourth. "All the lower Forms are represented, Blundell, so you won't be playing merely the Remove."

"Certainly not," exclaimed Hobson. "The Shell are in it, too."

"Well, I don't know that we object to playing the Shell," said Blundell. "Anyway, we'll let you know."

And the Fifth-Formers walked away.

"Think they'll play us, Harry?"

Wharton nodded.

"I think so, Bob. Blundell must mean to leave Coker out of all important matches, but he can't make him footer captain without playing him sometimes. I think he'll jump at this, as a safe occasion for playing Coker."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton showed his usual judgment in that. That was exactly the thought that was passing through Blundell's mind.

He thought over the junior challenge as he walked off with his friends, and the more he thought of it the better he liked it.

The Fifth had secured Coker for ever, so to speak, by making him footer captain. Even the wiles of the Sixth would be useless

now; Ionides and Loder could offer him no distinction so great as that.

Only, of course, it wouldn't do to let Coker captain the Form team in any match of importance. Some excuse would have to be found for Blundell to take his old place as footer captain on such occasions.

But it wouldn't do to make Coker suspicious. He must be played in some matches. And if a series of easy matches could be arranged, for Coker to play in as captain, it would be more easy to shift him out of the team for the harder matches. Blundell had already thought of that. Harry Wharton's challenge really came as if purposely designed to assist him.

It was necessary to talk it over a little; needless to say, not in the presence of Coker. Blundell murmured a hint to Bland, and that obliging youth walked Coker off to the tuck-shop, to stand him some of Mrs. Mible's special hot home-made lemonade, a very pleasant drink on a winter's afternoon. And then the other fellows discussed the matter by themselves.

"We'll play the Remove," said Blundell.

"Rather infra dig," Higgs remarked.

"Never mind that. We must play Coker sometimes, or he'll think we're only making fun of him, making him footer captain."

"That's so."

"But if we played him in the match with the Sixth, or against the Ramblers——"

"My hat!"

"Couldn't be done."

"Of course not," said Blundell. "We'll play him against Wharton's youngsters, and get up a series of matches of the same sort. It will be as good as our usual practice, for us; in fact, we'll take it instead of practice. Only mind, don't speak contemptuously of the match before Coker. Let him think it's a hard tussle, and that we depend on him to pull us through."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, we all like Coker," said Blundell, who did not wholly admit even to himself that he was "spoofing" the new fellow in the Fifth. "But it's no good blinking facts, is it?"

And the others agreed that it wasn't,

They joined the two in the tuckshop. Coker greeted them with a hospitable grin.

"Have some of this," he said. "It's my treat. Trot it out, Mrs. Mimble."

"Certainly, Master Coker."

"You're very good," said Blundell.

"Thank you, Mrs. Mimble; I'll have a large one. Look here, Coker, I want to speak to you as our footer captain."

"Go ahead," said Coker.

"Do you think we might play the Remove?"

"Cheeky kids!" said Coker.

"Yes, that's so; Coker's right, you chaps."

"Oh, yes, Coker's right!" said Higgs and Potter, drinking hot lemonade the while.

"But, after all, it isn't only the

Remove," Blundell remarked. "There are Shell fellows and Fourth-Formers in it. If you thought fit, Coker, I should like to play them."

"Oh, all right!" said Coker.

"Mind, it's not an easy job," Potter remarked. "Young Wharton is a wonderful goer, and that chap Linley from Lancashire is a real terror, you know."

"Yes, so he is."

"We shall have a tussle, as a matter of fact," Blundell said solemnly. "But with Coker to pull us through, I think it will be all right."

"Nil desperandum, Cokro duce, et auspice Cokro," murmured Higgs.

"Quite right, Higgy."

Coker nodded genially.



Coker greeted them with a hospitable grin. "Have some of this," he said. "It's my treat. Trot it-out, Mrs. Mimble." "You're very good," said Blundell. "I'll have a large one!"

"All serene," he said. "If you want to play them, I don't mind. Of course, we shall lick the young bounders hollow."

"Oh, of course!" said Blundell. "But it will be a tussle, you know, that's all. But with you in the lead——"

"Play 'em with pleasure," said Coker. "Have some more?"

"Thanks, I will!"

"Who says cake?"

"I!"

"And we'll let Wharton know we accept," Blundell remarked. "You might go and tell him now, Bland."

Bland cast a regretful glance at the cake.

"I'll go and tell him in a minute or two," he said.

And it was not till the little party in the tuckshop broke up that Bland went to take the message to Wharton. He looked into the junior common-room, where there was a crowd of Removites.

"We'll play you," he said.

"Good!" said Harry Wharton.

And that was all. Bland retired, and the juniors chuckled softly.

"There's a surprise in store for the Fifth," Wharton remarked. "Coker the Great is going to have a fall!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It had not entered into the calculations of the Fifth at all that the juniors could possibly win. They had regarded the challenge itself simply as a piece of swank. But the Removites meant business. They had the best team it was possible to pick from the lower school; and the Fifth had only an average Fifth-Form team, and the worst captain they could have found within the walls of Greyfriars. There was a chance at least for Harry Wharton's eleven—a sporting chance, at least—and that was enough for the juniors. They were already dwelling in their minds upon the gorgeous glory of licking the Fifth.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER

Bunter Does Not Want to Borrow!

"I SAY, Coker!"

Billy Bunter put his head cautiously into Coker's study in the Fifth-Form

passage, and blinked in through his big spectacles.

Bunter had been stalking Coker for some time, trying to find him alone; and at last he had succeeded.

There was no one in the study besides Horace. Horace was sitting on the table, swinging his legs, and he looked far from favourably upon Bunter.

"What do you want?" he asked.

Bunter took another cautious blink round, in case enemies should be nigh, and then came into the study.

"I want to speak to you, Coker, on a rather important subject," he remarked, as he closed the door.

"Oh, rats!" said Coker.

"Oh, really, Coker, I—I know your time is very valuable," said Bunter. "Of course, I know it's cheek of a chap to intrude on a fellow like you—a fellow with heaps of engagements, and sought after by all the school."

Coker grunted.

"I—I only wanted just to speak about old times," said Bunter, watching Coker very cautiously. "I hope you don't think I've come here on the make, Coker. I hope I'm incapable of anything of that sort. What did you say?"

"I didn't say anything," replied Coker.

"Of course, you're miles above us chaps now," said Bunter. "I know that. I feel just as friendly as ever, but I know, of course, that you haven't time to talk to juniors. But I'd like just to chat for a few minutes over old times."

Coker looked at him fixedly.

"You know my Aunt Judy's rich?" he asked grimly.

"I—I've heard so."

"You know she came down handsome when I got my remove?"

"Ye-e-es."

"And you want to borrow some tin?"

"Oh, really, Coker——"

"I haven't any to lend to juniors, and any time to talk to them, either," said Coker. "There's the door."

"Oh, really——"

"Shut the door after you."

Billy Bunter did not stir. He wriggled his fat person in a deprecating manner, all the time keeping his eyes fastened upon Coker, ready to escape if the Fifth-Former made a hostile demonstration. But Coker was too lazy to move from his seat on the table.

"You see, Coker, I know a lot of chaps have been buttering you up, because you're rich," said Bunter. "I'm not that sort. I wouldn't say nice things to a chap because he had tin in his pockets. I admire you personally."

Coker grunted.

"I haven't the least ulterior motive in coming here," said Bunter. "I just wished to have a chat about old times. If you offered me a five-pound note at this moment, I should refuse it."

"It's not likely you'll have the chance," grinned Coker.

"They were such pleasant times," said Bunter, with an air of dreamy reminiscence, "when you used to come to my study in the Remove——"

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Coker. "I came only once or twice."

"Ahem! And I used to stand you such jolly feeds——"

"That you jolly well didn't," said Coker. "It was that Chineese chap. We made him stand the feeds, and you never paid a penny towards them. You used to get a feed yourself for nothing, and that's why you asked Hobson and me."

Bunter coughed.

"It was so nice, having you in the study, Coker."

"Rats!"

"You were so pleasant——"

"Oh, pile it on!"

"And we felt so honoured at being visited by a Shell fellow——"

"Blow the Shell!" said Coker.

"I—I mean, a chap who was just getting his remove into the Fifth," explained Bunter. "Of course, we knew you ought to have had your remove long ago."

"If you're going to start joking on that subject here——"

Bunter backed away in alarm.

"Oh, really, Coker, I—I wasn't! I—I mean, we all regarded you as really a Fifth-Former, you know—and——"

"Liar!"

"H'm! And I'm sure we were all delighted to hear you were footer captain in the Fifth," said Bunter. "I know you'll lick Wharton's lot to-morrow."

"I don't need you to tell me that," said Coker.

"You're such a splendid back, you know."

"I'm going to play forward for the Fifth."

"I—I meant forward."

"No, you didn't; you meant back."

"Er—well, we really were delighted to hear you were footer captain, you know!" parried William George Bunter.

"And such a ripping back—forward," he corrected himself hastily.

"Back!" barked Coker. "You fat, ignorant sluggard, I have already remarked that you are a liar, as well as being a fat-head and—all sorts of other things!" Then, coming back to his original question with startling abruptness, he shot out, "What do you want?"

But Bunter was not ready to come to the



Bland swung Bunter to the door and Higgs planted a heavy boot behind him. The owl of the Remove spun into the corridor. "Ow! Yow! I say, you fellows—Ow!" (See Chapter 18.)

point yet! He harked back to the footer business.

"Of—of course, I meant back," agreed Bunter. "But I know you can play forward quite as well as Wingate himself could."

"You don't."

"H'm! Look here, Coker, there's another matter I wanted to speak to you about. Of course, you know I wouldn't come here borrowing money?"

"I don't know anything of the sort."

"H'm! But the fact is," said Bunter, with a burst of confidence, "I'm expecting a postal order, Coker."

Coker stared at him.

"I've been disappointed about it this afternoon," Bunter explained. "It was to have come by the five post, but it didn't. It's from a titled friend of mine, and I suppose he's so full up with social engagements that he's forgotten to send the postal order. Things like that do happen among society people."

"Do they?" said Coker.

"Oh, yes!" said Bunter. "And my titled friends move in the very best society. Well, as I was saying, the postal order hasn't come. It's rotten, of course, because I was depending on it to—to pay a bill. I suppose you wouldn't mind cashing the postal order for me, Coker, as you've plenty of ready cash? It would save me the trouble of going down to the village."

"Certainly!" said Coker, with a bland smile. "Bring it to me as soon as it arrives, and I'll cash it on the spot."

Bunter coughed.

"H'm! I mean, you wouldn't mind cashing it in advance? That's what I really meant, Coker. You see, it will be here by the last post to-night for a dead cert., and I shall hand it over to you at once."

Coker grinned.

"It's for ten shillings," said Bunter. "If you care to let me have nine-and-six now, I would willingly let the odd tanner go for interest."

"Go hon!"

"Well, say nine shillings."

The door opened, and Bland and Higgs

came in. Billy Bunter blinked at them in alarm. He had been very careful to stalk Coker and find him alone for this interview. But he could not guard against interruptions like these, of course. Bland and Higgs did not seem pleased with finding him in the study, either. They knew Billy Bunter.

"Hallo!" said Higgs. "Chumming up with fags—eh, Cokey?"

"Didn't know you had a visitor," said Bland.

Coker turned red.

"He's no visitor of mine," he exclaimed.

"I suppose you don't imagine I know persons in the Remove?"

"I suppose not."

"What's he doing here?" asked Higgs.

"Lying!" said Coker.

"Oh, really, Coker——"

"What did he come for?"

"Money."

"Oh, really, Coker! I—I distinctly said that I hadn't come for money. I told you that if you offered me five pounds I should refuse it," exclaimed Billy Bunter indignantly.

"My word!" ejaculated Higgs, in righteous indignation. "I suppose he's come to sponge on you, Coker, because you're in funds just now? How utterly rotten!"

"Disgusting!" said Bland.

"Beastly!"

"Caddish!"

"Kick him out!" said Coker.

"Yes, rather!"

"Here, hold on!" exclaimed Billy Bunter, in great alarm. "I—I'm just going. You needn't trouble. I—I was just going, really, you know. Look here, I only came here to ask Coker to cash a postal order for me. I—I—ow! Yow!"

Bland swung Bunter to the door, and Higgs planted a heavy boot behind him.

The Owl of the Remove spun into the corridor.

"Ow! Yow! I say, you fellows—— Ow!"

"Hallo! Who's this?" exclaimed Blundell, coming along the passage. "Fags in

my study! Take that, you cheeky young rascal!"

Bunter took it, on his ear, and yelled again. Then he went pounding down the passage at top speed. Bunter was not a light-weight or a runner, but he got out of the Fifth-Form quarters in record time.

"Cheeky young bounder!" said Blundell, coming into the study. "What did he want?"

"Came here to sponge on Coker," exclaimed Higgs indignantly.

Blundell was horrified.

"What! The awful young cad!"

"Simply disgusting!"

"Oh, too rotten for words!"

Coker, who was still sitting on the table, swinging his legs, laughed. Perhaps he was laughing at Bunter.

Perhaps he wasn't!

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER

Kind Offers!

HARRY WHARTON had had his challenge accepted by the Fifth, and he had selected his team. Although there was no doubt that his team was a strong one, and stronger than any eleven selected solely from the Remove could have been, there was the drawback that the Shell, Fourth Form, and Remove fellows had not practised together, and so something might be wanting in combination. Wharton made use of what little daylight was left that day to give them some practice, against a scratch team of juniors, and he was pretty well satisfied with the result. He gave orders that the team were to turn out for more practice before breakfast on the following morning—an order that the Remove took cheerfully enough, but at which the Shell and Fourth fellows were inclined to sniff. But they had accepted Harry Wharton as their captain, and there was no excuse to rebel, and they all wanted to beat the Fifth.

The match was an unusual one, and, of course, excited immense interest in the lower Forms. The Remove had sometimes played the Upper Fourth, and beaten them. They had been serenely convinced of their ability to beat the Shell, if put to the test. But to

play the Fifth—a senior Form! It was enough to send a thrill through all the lower Form-rooms.

And, the match being so peculiar and important, every fellow who fancied that he could play footer wanted a place in the team. As Wharton had already made the best selections possible, and wasn't inclined to change, he was naturally considered a hopeless idiot by half the juniors of Greyfriars. Even Alonzo Todd, who was the most patient fellow in the Remove or out of it, was inclined to lose patience with Wharton, he was so obstinate.

For Todd had a curious delusion that he could play footer. Sometimes the humorous spirits in the Remove would get up a spoof match, and make Alonzo play, for the simple purpose of rotting him and enjoying a hearty laugh. On such occasions Alonzo was really great. The number of goals he had kicked—through his own posts, as a rule—was astonishing. And the trivial rules of the game never bound down a soaring soul like Alonzo's. He would play the ball in touch, all by himself, for minutes together sometimes, and he had been known to pin the goalie against a goalpost, and hold him there by main force, and yell to another fellow to kick the ball into the net. Such exploits added to the gaiety of Greyfriars, but they did not recommend Alonzo for a place in the junior eleven to play the Fifth Form.

"My dear Wharton," Alonzo expostulated, "I am perfectly willing to play, and I am not seeking the place for my own personal glorification. My Uncle Benjamin has always impressed upon me to beware of pride and vain-glory. But it is for the good of the team. You want the best players possible. Play me."

"My dear ass—"

"You see, Wharton, my desire is to be useful. My Uncle Benjamin always told me to be useful to others."

"You really want to be useful?" asked Wharton thoughtfully.

"Oh, certainly!"

"Well, you can come and shout."

"Shout!" said Alonzo, perplexed:

"Yes," said Wharton generously. "You shall have a good place behind the goal, you know, and—and look on."

"Look on!"

"That's it. And whenever you see me kick a goal, you shall shout hurrah."

"Hurrah!"

"Or hip-pip, just as you like," said Wharton. "That will be useful. It bucks a fellow up to hear himself cheered. How do you like the idea?"

Alonzo looked at him doubtfully.

"I trust you are not jesting with me, Wharton!" he said seriously.

"Jesting!" ejaculated Wharton, adopting Alonzo's own habit of repeating what was said, with a perfectly serious face.

"Yes. My Uncle Benjamin says that one should never jest upon a serious subject."

"Subject!" repeated Wharton.

"He would be shocked—nay, disgusted!"

"Disgusted!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Nugent.

Alonzo looked at Nugent in surprise. He could not see anything to laugh at himself.

"My dear Nugent——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This is really—well, my Uncle Benjamin would characteristise this untimely merriment as unseemly."

"Unseemly!" repeated Wharton.

"Yes, indeed. Such would be the opinion of my Uncle Benjamin."

"Benjamin!"

"My dear Wharton——"

"Wharton!"

Nugent shrieked. Alonzo Todd looked at Wharton more in sorrow than in anger, and retired from the study. The chums of the Remove yelled. Todd heard it as he went, and shook his head sadly. There was evidently no making the juniors hear reason—what Todd regarded as reason.

Bulstrode was another fellow who considered his claim to play indisputable. He spoke to Wharton about it that evening, in the common-room.

"I suppose you'll let me know if you want me for the team?" he remarked.

Wharton nodded a cheerful assent.

"You can depend on that," he replied.

Bulstrode snorted.

"Well, do you want me?" he demanded.

"As a matter of fact, I don't."

And Bulstrode snorted again and walked off.

There were even generous offers from the Second and Third Forms to supply players for the match. Nugent minor, of the Second, thought that the team would be more representative of the lower school if there were a Second-Form chap in it. Nugent minor, of course, would be the chap!

Gatty, of the same Form, was inclined to agree with Dick Nugent so far as the first part of the proposition went, but disagreed with the second. The Second Form ought to be represented, but Gatty was the man.

Wharton's reply to both was couched in the same terms—the ancient and monosyllabic reply:

"Rats!"

Which quashed the pretensions of the Second Form.

Both Hobson and Temple, too, reminded Wharton that he had only to say the word, and they would gladly relieve him of the responsibility of captaining the junior team. He did not say the word.

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER

The Match with the Fifth

COKER had a new swagger on when he came out of the Fifth Form-room after morning lessons on Wednesday. That day he was to appear in public as the football skipper of the Fifth—a fellow truly great. He was to lead the Fifth-Form footballers to victory, and establish his fame as a skipper and as a centre-forward. It was true that when he had played for the Shell he had played back, but he chose to play in the front line for the Fifth, and there was no one to say him nay.

If the Fifth had not utterly underrated their opponents, they would have been very anxious about the result of that match.

But they never dreamed for a moment that the Lower School could stand up against them, however poor a team they put into the field.

Age and weight should have carried everything before them, without considering the additional experience of older fellows.

They did not reckon upon the fact that the Remove players were trained to the last inch, and habitually kept themselves at top form and in the pink of condition. Harry Wharton could have turned out a team at any time, at ten minutes' notice, in a fit condition to play the game of their lives. It wasn't so in the Fifth; and under Coker's lead, too, the best players in the Fifth weren't anxious for places. There was no glory to be got from a match with the Lower School. And any old thing was good enough to play against the juniors.

The juniors noted the carelessness on the part of their rivals, and rejoiced. A fall was coming for Coker and the Fifth, and the swank of the last week would be dearly paid for.

After morning school, Wharton led his team into the field again for a quarter of an hour's practice against a scratch eleven.

He would not keep them at it longer, for fear of making them stale for the afternoon.

There was no doubt that the junior team was a good one, and they were getting into the way of working together.

If there was any danger, it was that Hobson or Pimble might be selfish with the ball, and not let the Remove forwards have it; but that was a risk that had to be run, and Wharton meant to keep his eyes open. He didn't mean to stand any nonsense; and he wouldn't have stood any from Sixth-Formers themselves if they played in an eleven under his lead.

The question of a referee was an important one, and Wingate, of the Sixth, was asked.

The Greyfriars captain laughed when he was told of the match.

"They'll wipe you off the ground, Wharton!" he said.

"Not with Coker to captain them," said Harry.

Wingate frowned.

"But I don't know whether it's desirable for the Remove to beat the Fifth, even if they could," he said. "There's such a



"My dear Wharton," Alonzo expostulated, "I am perfectly willing to play. You want the best players possible. Play me." "My dear ass——!" (See Chapter 19.)

thing as discipline, and it will give you kids swelled heads."

"It will be a lesson to the Fifth to buck up, and not to butter up that ass Coker in the way they're doing," Wharton suggested.

Wingate grinned.

"Well, there's something in that," he agreed. "Look here. I've nothing special to do, and I'll referee if you like. But I don't expect anything but to see you juniors rushed all over the field and made wrecks of."

"We don't mind risking it."

"All right, then. I shall stop the game at half-time if I think you're not fit to go on."

"Right you are," said Wharton. "We don't mind."

And so Wingate was on the ground at half-past two with the junior team. The Fifth-Formers had not turned up yet, although half-past two was the time fixed

by mutual agreement for the kick-off.

The juniors knew, of course, that Coker & Co. were affecting to treat the match with carelessness, as a matter of no importance. But they made a mistake in assuming swank of that sort where Wingate was concerned.

Wingate looked up at the clock-tower when the half-hour had been exceeded by one minute exactly, and called a fag to him. It was Nugent minor, of the Second.

"Take a message to Coker from me," said Wingate quietly. "Tell him that I give him two minutes exactly to get his team on the ground. If he isn't here by then, the match is off, and I shall call on Coker and give him a hiding for himself."

Nugent minor grinned with delight at the idea of carrying such a message to the great men of the Fifth.

"Right-ho!" he said.

"Hurry up!"

Dick Nugent did not need to be told to hurry up with a message like that. He simply flew.

The Fifth-Form footballers were already in their playing clothes, standing in a group in their overcoats and chatting outside the School House. They grinned and winked to one another as Dick Nugent came flying up.

"Here's a message from the juniors," chuckled Higgs.

"Ha, ha! They're in a hurry."

"They're tired of waiting," grinned Blundell.

"Let 'em wait!" said Coker, with a grin.

"Ha, ha!"

"Everything comes to him who waits," Coker remarked.

This was probably a joke. At all events, the Fifth-Formers laughed loudly. Nugent minor stopped, breathless.

"I say, you Fifth bounders——"

"Hallo, young shaver! What's that?"

"A message——"

"Ha, ha, ha! Is Wharton getting cold in the feet?"

"It's from Wingate."

"Oh!"

"He says that if you're not on the ground in two minutes the match is off."

"Oh!"

"And he'll give Coker a licking."

Coker turned pink.

The Fifth-Formers looked at one another with sickly smiles. They had forgotten Wingate, and the fact that he might not wait with the patience the juniors might have shown.

"H'm! P-p-perhaps we'd better get off," said Coker, with assumed carelessness.

"May as well," said Blundell.

"Oh, yes! After all, it's time."

"You'd better hurry up," said Nugent minor, with a grin. "Wingate is in a wax, and he may lick you all round."

Blundell made a cut at him, which he dodged, and the footballers of the Fifth made their way to the footer ground.

Wingate gave them a stern glance as they came up.

"You're late!" he exclaimed.

"Only a few minutes," said Coker.

"And it really doesn't matter when a chap's playing these youngsters, does it?"

"Don't talk nonsense!" said Wingate sharply.

Coker affected to be deaf. The coats were thrown off, and the two teams ambled into the field.

There was no doubt that the junior eleven looked very fit and well. They were, of course, smaller than their opponents, with the exception of Hobson and Bob Cherry, who were big fellows for their age. But the juniors were in great form, and the Fifth came on looking far from up to their level in that respect.

And then Coker was captain!

The juniors, who were round the field in crowds, augured very much from that circumstance.

It would have alarmed the Fifth themselves, if they had dreamed that by any chance, under any circumstances, the juniors could have beaten them. They did not dream it yet. But it was coming!

Coker won the toss, and selected his goal. Sun and wind, however, were of little moment then, and it mattered little. Harry Wharton kicked off to the sharp piph of the whistle, and the game began.

From all quarters fellows had come to see the match, many juniors leaving their own play to see the team figure against the seniors.

They expected a thrilling time—and they had it.

The Fifth started proceedings with a heavy rush, which was intended to smash the juniors and knock the whole side sky-high.

It did not have that result.

Far enough from that! For as if by magic the junior forwards broke away, leaving their opponents stranded, and beating the halves quite easily, brought the leather up to the senior goal. There Hurree Singh received it from the centre, and bore it along the touch-line till it was time to send it in, and then he let Nugent have it, and Nugent slammed it over to Wharton as the backs tackled him. Harry Wharton received the pass, with only the goalie to beat—and he beat him with a kick that was so fast that it made the Fifth-Former's head swim. The ball glanced past the goalie's ear and found the net, and there was a roar:

"Goal!"

"Bravo, juniors!"

"Goal! Hurrah!"

THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER

No Glory for Coker!

"GOAL!"

The Fifth smiled. They had not expected a reverse so soon. But, of course, accidents will happen in the best of regulated teams. That was their view of the situation.

The idea that the juniors could beat the Fifth still appeared impossible to them, and though they did not like it, they restarted cheerfully enough.

They still intimidated by their bearing that the obliteration of the Lower school was merely retarded. There could be no doubt that such an event was, in the very nature of things, bound to fulfil itself.

Harry Wharton took them in at once.

"On it, kids!" he whispered, as Wingate piped them off again. "Never mind the man. Get away with the ball."

And they did. A smile went right along the junior front rank. Nugent and Temple were very ably supporting Harry Wharton, and Hurree Singh, right; and Mark Linley, left, were as keen as greyhounds, on the wings.

"Now, juniors!" yelled their supporters, as they saw Wharton & Co. coming again in very determined fashion. "Rub another in!"

The Fifth were superior to such exhortation. Evidently, they were going to win on superior smiles and disdainful laughs. Coker was in earnest, of course. But he was about as useful on a footer-field as a bull in a China shop. He was spoiling all combination.

The Fifth were standing it pretty well, but Harry Wharton saw plainly that very soon they would lose their tempers with Coker, and then they would be at the juniors' mercy.

Coker was certainly a danger to the enemy in one way. He was clumsy, and very heavy. If he fell on anyone it would certainly be painful for them.

"He'd make a good cab-horse," said Higgs, in an aside to their "right." "The thud of his hoofs is enough to break the turf."

Mark Linley heard the Fifth inside-right's remark. Higgs reddened. But there was no help for it. The jibe was soon passed down the junior rank, and the fellows could hardly play for laughing.

"We'll see that the beast doesn't get away!" said Bob Cherry from behind.

"Rather!" grinned Tom Brown, his colleague, at back. "We'll see that Coker is severely 'kopped' every time he comes this way."

But there was really no danger of the Fifth captain breaking through the junior halves, and Bob Cherry and the New Zealander might rest on their laurels.

The attack was unquestionably going the other way. The Fifth halves were hard put to it to keep Harry Wharton & Co. out.

Time and again Coker "spoiled things" for his side. The Fifth were rapidly losing their swank. Even Higgs was merely

malicious. Coker was being followed by anything but blessings. The benighted state of his mind, as regarded footer, was amply revealed in his play.

Suddenly, Harry Wharton intercepted a pass from Blundell to Coker. Higgs uttered an exclamation of annoyance. But the junior vanguard were off. Down the green they swept. Potter, the centre-half for the Fifth, took his defeat cheerfully, and, "diddling" the full-backs beautifully, Harry Wharton & Co. were in front again with the goalie only to beat.

They did it quite simply. The goalie straightened himself up. In his mind there couldn't be any doubt that Wharton would shoot. But Harry Wharton did not do that. He simply deflected the ball to Nugent, and that worthy rolled it quietly into the corner of the net with the sole of his boot.

The juniors, spectators, and team alike, roared with laughter. The Fifth were furious.

The whole thing had been got through, thanks to a mistake by Coker. Wherever did the ass learn his footer? That was what they wanted to know.

"Goal! Goal!"

"Good old Coker! What a nice chap to give things away like that to the juniors!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Higgs looked at his chief as if he would have liked to jump on him. The rest of the Fifth would probably have used "boiling oil" on their skipper.

"Buck up, Fifth!" roared their supporters.

There was no pretence now. They were anxious about their side's ability to win. It was more than in question.

"Two down, and nearly half-time!" said one fellow indignantly. "What are they dreaming about?"

"Ask Higgs and Blundell," retorted Hazeldene, grinning. "They've got Coker on board as a passenger. Tell 'em to bring out the goalie and 'dock' the skipper. He'd be a little more use in the net!"

"Here they are! Here they are again! Here they are!" cried another junior excitedly.

Harry Wharton & Co. were coming with a vengeance. The Fifth managed to send the ball back to the halves once or twice. But the junior halves, led by Hobson, were as "mighty hunters," and making no mistakes. They fed their forward line like Internationals.

"Here they are!" yelled the juniors again. "Good old Wharton! Good old Nugent! In with it!"

The junior passing was beautiful. Higgs & Co. made every effort to cover their captain's awful mistakes. But it was no use. The passing of Harry Wharton & Co. was the neatest of timing and kicking.

Down the ground they rushed. Every man in his place and moving like the unit in a regiment, they converged on the goal. Mark Linley's centre was perfect, and, without waiting to steady himself, Harry Wharton caught it "full toss" with his right, and slogged it into the bottom corner.

"Beauty, Wharton—beauty!" shouted the junior supporters. "Great shot, sir!"

And Higgs and Blundell looked relieved when Wingate blew for half-time. To put it mildly, the Fifth had not had a look in. There could not be any doubt about the juniors playing them to a standstill.

THE TWENTY-SECOND CHAPTER

Coker Duce, et Auspice Coker!

"Now, Fifth! Let's have you!"

The bumptiousness of the first-half had been entirely discarded. It was recognised that the Fifth would have to make real work of it to stave off defeat, let alone win.

"We have only been playing with them," said Coker. "We'll show 'em next journey. Make it hot for 'em; Higgs!"

Higgs turned away to hide his face. The juniors grinned. Coker was really too funny to be let loose on them so suddenly, they thought.

Higgs, Blundell, and the other fellows knew quite well that they had been overplayed. But they were determined to try and stave off defeat, whatever Coker might do.

And the second round started with Coker

more a passenger than ever. The Fifth side looked to Blundell and Higgs for guidance.

Potter was the man who could have skippered them better than anyone. But the Fifth weren't in the mood to recognise a good player to-day. The "accepted lights" must be taken, or none.

Then the Fifth pressed. Higgs and Blundell played up, and for a time it looked as if the Fifth were going to score a goal every five minutes.

But Harry Wharton & Co. were not napping. They regarded the first half as a little recreation. The Fifth had not been dangerous once, and now that they seemed to be bucking up, the juniors were not alarmed.

Bland, on the Fifth left-wing, suddenly developed a tendency to wing it down the touch-line. But he found Hurree Singh a doughty opponent, and his wild rushes were effectually stopped. Frank Nugent and Fry, too, were always on hand on that wing, and the Fifth's hope in that direction soon died a natural death.

But they were undoubtedly pressing. Harry Wharton & Co. knew it from the fact that they could not institute a real attack on the Fifth goal for some time. The juniors were assuredly on the defensive.

But at last the pace of the Fifth slackened. Higgs and Blundell were desperate.

Once or twice they were very near to fouling. But Wingate had his eye on them, and the pulling up of the right-wing man was quite sufficient to show them that that could only result in disaster. A man "off" would mean certain defeat, even if they managed to get level in the meantime.

Then the juniors came into their own again. They were distinctly the better team if not the heavier. Their footer had been consistently good all through the match.

Out went the leather to Mark Linley on the wing from Bob Cherry. The Lancashire



"It's a message from Wingate. He says that if you're not on the ground in two minutes the match is off. And he'll give Coker a licking." Coker turned pink! (See Chapter 20.)

lad was expecting it. Quick as thought he drew the opposition all on himself. Quicker still he whizzed it across to Frank Nugent as Coker & Co. crowded on him.

Frank Nugent and Hurree Singh were off with it down their wing in an instant. There was a feeble protest of offside, only for a moment. They were as "on-side" as it was possible to be.

Seeing the danger, Higgs and Blundell rushed across after the ball. They got there in time to see Hurree Singh about to centre from the corner.

Mark Linley had followed his pass, and was well up in goal.

"Let me have it!" he yelled, as Hurree Singh's centre swerved right into the goal-mouth.

And, leaping in the air as it came, Mark made no mistake.

"Goal! Goal! Goal!" cried Harry



Harry Wharton received the pass. The ball glanced past the goalie's ear and found the net, and there was a roar: "Goal! Hurrah!" (See Chapter 20.)

Wharton, shaking Mark Linley by the hand.
"Bravo!"

"Bravo, Linley!" shouted the crowd.
"It was your goal all the way!"

The Fifth were now clearly a beaten side. Four nothing just after the interval was terrible.

"Now, kids, slam it in, sure and often!" grinned Harry Wharton. "Keep her moving! That's all we've got to do!"

The junior team laughed. The day was theirs, let the Fifth do what they would. To reduce a lead of four goals was a big undertaking. The whistle went again.

Five minutes sufficed for Hobson to put the ball in the net again, and a sound was

heard from the Fifth supporters very like booing.

"It'll be merely whistle and goals now!" grinned one junior.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Phip!

The whistle went.

The match was over, and the juniors had beaten the Fifth hollow, and Coker & Co. hadn't a goal to show for themselves.

The juniors grinned as they came off. The Fifth-Form players left the field with brows as black as thunder, with one exception—Horace Coker. Coker seemed to be pretty well satisfied with himself. And Higgs, in a bitter accent, trotted out his well-worn classical quotation, in tones of the bitterest sarcasm:

"Nil desperandum, Cokro duce, et auspice Cokro!" My hat!"

Coker looked at them.

"Hard cheese!" he said. "You fellows must back me up better next time, that's all!"

The Fifth players stared at him.

It was too much.

Their already sore feelings were too lacerated.

With one accord they rushed upon Coker and smote him. The astonished footer captain rolled on the grass with a roar. The Fifth players bumped him, and bumped him again. And then, somewhat relieved in their feelings, they marched off.

"My hat!" said Coker, sitting up and looking round him dazedly. "Oh, my only hat!"

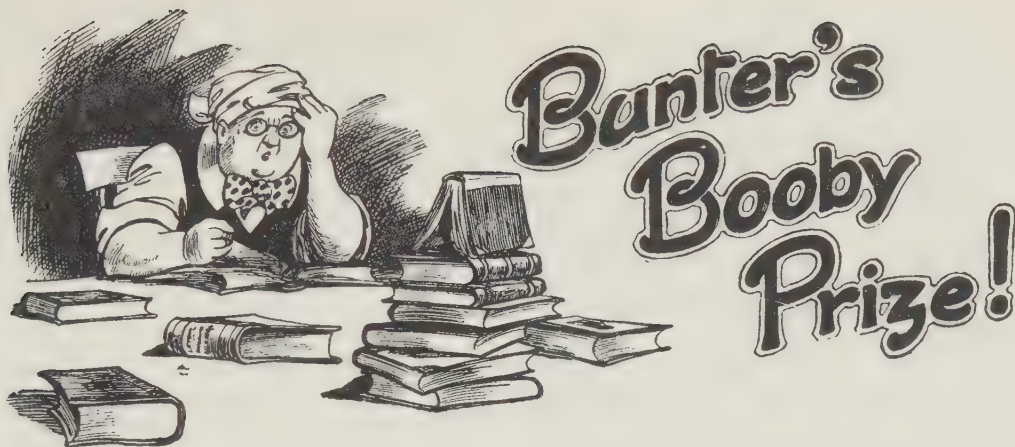
"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the crowd.

"M-m-my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh said that the "Ha-ha-ha-fulness was terrific!" And he was right; it was!

THE END



A PLAY IN VERSE FOR AMATEUR ACTORS

[NOTE.—Performances of this Play may be given by Amateur Theatrical enthusiasts, provided that the words, "By permission of the Editor of THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL," appear on each programme.]

BILLY BUNTER ...	The Fat Boy of Greyfriars.
HARRY WHARTON	} The Famous Five of the Greyfriars Remove
BOB CHERRY	
FRANK NUGENT	
JOHNNY BULL	
HURREE SINGH	
HAROLD SKINNER	The Cad of the Remove.
MR. QUELCH	The Remove-master.
DOCTOR LOCKE	Headmaster of Greyfriars.

ACT I.

SCENE.—No. 7 Study in the Remove Passage.

(BILLY BUNTER is alone in the apartment. He is seated at the table, in his shirt-sleeves, with piles of books in front of him, and a wet towel tied round his head. He seems to be deeply absorbed in study.)

BUNTER (looking up):

I'm really not in love with swotting,
I much prefer the joys of yachting.
Or, better still, a tuck-shop feed,
Or picnic in some flowery mead.

(Sighs deeply.)

But I must work with might and main,
And stimulate my sluggish brain.
I've lofty aims to realise:
I mean to win the Neville Prize!

(BUNTER resumes his "swotting." After a brief interval, enter the THE FAMOUS FIVE.)

CHERRY:

Hallo, hallo! Is Toddy here?

BUNTER (annoyed at the interruption):
He isn't; so you'd better clear.



"Put up your fists, you cheeky cad!
I mean to slaughter you, my lad!"

BULL:

Where's Todd? He's in here, as a rule——

BUNTER:

Am I my brother's keeper, Bull?

WHARTON:

Toddy has vanished off the map!
He is a most elusive chap.
We've hunted for him here, and there,
In fact, we've hunted everywhere!
I'm tired of asking everybody,
"Say, have you seen our wandering
Toddy?"

NUGENT:

But what on earth is Bunter doing?

BUNTER (*airily*):

My studies I am now pursuing.

CHERRY:

Your studies? But you're not a swot!

BUNTER:

Oh, yes, I am—my zeal's red-hot!

WHARTON:

What are you swotting for, you chump?

BUNTER:

To win a fortune, in a lump!

(THE FAMOUS FIVE stare at BILLY BUNTER in amazement.)

HURREE SINGH:

Are fortunes to be made by swotting,
Or is the worthy Bunter rotting?
This fairly takes the bunful cake——

CHERRY:

It beats the band, and no mistake!

BUNTER:

I wish you chaps would run away,

But I can see you mean to stay.
And so I'd better make it clear.
And tell you what I'm doing here

While all you lazy chaps are slacking——

BULL (*angrily*):

What! Are you asking for a whacking?

HURREE SINGH:

Draw in your horns, my worthy Bull:

Let's get the facts from this fat fool.

BUNTER (*blinking through his spectacles at THE FAMOUS FIVE*):

I say, you chaps! I mean to cram
To win the Neville Prize exam.
The prize, you know, is twenty guineas,
It won't be won by dolts or ninnies,
Nor will it go to duds or duffers,
Or brainless boobies, nugs or muffers.
It needs an eighteen-carat brain
To win that ripping prize, 'tis plain.

WHARTON:

In that case, Bunter, why compete?

NUGENT:

He'd never manage such a feat!

BUNTER (*bristling*):

Sarcastic beasts! I've got more knowledge
Than any fellow in this college!
There's not a brain can equal mine,
Its quality is super-fine!
I'm not a blockhead, like Bob Cherry——

CHERRY (*angrily*):

I feel inclined to bump you—very!

BUNTER:

I'm not a dunce, like Nugent is——

NUGENT:

You cheeky Owl! I'll smash your phiz!

BUNTER:

I'm not a wooden chump, like Bull——

BULL:

It's quite an effort to keep cool!

BUNTER :

While as for Hurree Singh, the nigger

HURREE SINGH :

I'll punch your snubful nose with
vigour!

(THE FAMOUS FIVE make a threatening
movement towards BUNTER, who jumps to
his feet and dodges round the table.)

BUNTER :

I say, you fellows! Don't be rough!
Cut out all this Jack Dempsey stuff!

CHERRY :

Not unless you apologise!

BUNTER :

I do so now, with tear-stained eyes!

(THE FAMOUS FIVE step back, mollified,
and BUNTER resumes his seat.)

BUNTER :

As I was saying, I've a brain
That will survive no end of strain.
The ancient languages, like Latin,
And Greek—and shorthand—I am pat
in.



"Yow-ow! They've punctured me! Yaroo!
Revenge is sweet—I'll have it, too!"

I've mastered French, and double-
Dutch,

And Sanskrit doesn't tax me much.

I can speak Prussian like a Turk,

And Portuguese is easy work.

And when it comes to English Grammar

WHARTON :

Bunter, you are a hopeless "crammer".

BUNTER :

Oh, really, Wharton, that's a shame!

"Be strictly truthful" is my aim.

Compared with me (no boast or bias)

George Washington's an Ananias!

But to return to our discussion—

I've learned to say "My hat!" in
Russian.

And I can spout in Japanese

Or any other tongue you please.

But History is my strong suit :

I've read the life of King Canute—

The merry monarch who, alack,

Burnt all the cakes till they were
black!

NUGENT :

Right off the wicket, old fat
bean.

Alfred the Great's the King you
mean!

BUNTER :

Nugent, you are an ignoramus!
You'll never grow up to be
famous.

'Twas King Canute who burnt
the cakes.

(Even a monarch makes mis-
takes!)

Absorbed in some hair-raising
story,

He let the wheat-cakes burn to
glory!

WHARTON (laughing) :

Who was the monarch, then,
who tried

To stay the inrush of the tide?

BUNTER :

Oh, that was Old King Cole, you
know;

My first-rate memory tells me
so!

CHERRY :

You duffer ! Don't you realise
You'll never win the Neville Prize,
Not if you study, in this room,
From now until the crack o' doom !

BUNTER (*jumping to his feet*) :

If you insult me any more——

CHERRY :

Hallo ! The Owl's declaring war !

(BUNTER clenches his fists and charges after BOB, who pretends to be very frightened, and dodges behind his chums for protection.)

BUNTER :

Put up your fists, you cheeky cad !
I mean to slaughter you, my lad !

CHERRY :

Help ! Save me from his wrath, you chaps,

Or I shall be reduced to scraps !

(WHARTON and HURREE SINGH grasp BUNTER and gently but firmly sit him down.)

HURREE SINGH :

Let not the sunfulness go down
Upon your wrathful spleen ;
Banish the fierce and scowful frown,
My truculent fat bean !

BUNTER :

All right ; I'll let the rotter off,
But if he dares again to scoff
I'll give his jaw such hefty punches
That for a week he'll eat no lunches !
Bob Cherry, show yourself, you funk !
You're quite safe now ; no need to bunk.

(BOB CHERRY emerges from behind his chums ; but he still keeps at a discreet distance from BUNTER.)

NUGENT :

Well, fancy Bunter turning swot !

BULL :

'A change for Billy. is it not ?

WHARTON :

Though if he has a thousand tries
He'll never win the Neville Prize !

BUNTER :

I don't agree with you a bit !
For this exam. I mean to sit.
All rivals will be overthrown,
And then, when the result is known,
I'll pocket twenty guineas sterling——
The prospect sets my heart a-whirling !

CHERRY (*winking at his chums*) :

What will you do with all that money ?

BUNTER :

Oh, really, Cherry——don't be funny !
There's lots and lots of things I need :
A brand-new bike, a tuck-shop feed,
A gramophone, a wireless set,
A fishing rod, a butterfly net,
A cricket bat, a pair of skates,
A box of figs, a box of dates,
A big York ham, hung from the ceiling,
To counteract " that sinking feeling."'
Also a suit of Sunday best
(I always like to be well-dressed).
'And there are lots of things beside,
With which I need to be supplied.
Oh ! won't it be a happy day,
When twenty guineas come my way ?

(BUNTER jumps up, and starts to waltz round the study, his face beaming in anticipation of the good time coming. Whilst BUNTER is capering, CHERRY slyly places an inverted tin-tack upon his chair.)

BUNTER :

My head will fairly hit the skies,
The day I win the Neville Prize !
The Head will fairly beam at me——
" Come forward, Bunter, W. G.
'And reap the harvest of your labours,
The envy of your friends and neighbours !"
'And when he hands me my reward,
Three hundred voices will applaud !

HURREE SINGH :

Count not your chickens chickfully
Until the merry hatchfulness !

CHERRY (*laughing*) :

Now we must vanish quickfully,
Departing with despatchfulness !

(Exit THE FAMOUS FIVE, chuckling gaily. BUNTER resumes his seat, and discovers the tin-tack ! He leaps up again with a yell of anguish.)

BUNTER :

Yow-ow ! They've punctured me !
Yarooooo !

Revenge is sweet—I'll have it, too !
(Exit BILLY BUNTER, rushing full-pelt after THE FAMOUS FIVE, and breathing threatenings and slaughter.)

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*The Remove Form-room at Greyfriars.*

(*The examination for the Neville Prize is in progress. BILLY BUNTER and SKINNER are seated at the front desk, and the FAMOUS FIVE occupy the desk behind. There are other candidates for the exam., but only these seven are shown on the stage. The juniors are scribbling away industriously.*)

BUNTER (*aside, to SKINNER*):

Skinner, old chap, I'm getting stuck!

SKINNER:

Put anything, and trust to luck!

BUNTER:

But if I make a silly blunder——

SKINNER:

You'll make a lot, I shouldn't wonder!

BUNTER:

I stand in need of your assistance——

SKINNER:

I only wish you'd keep your distance!

BUNTER (*eagerly*):

Help me, old chap! And when I win
I'll see that you get half the tin!

SKINNER:

You always were a
generous soul.

And so I'll help you
to your goal.

BUNTER:

Ten guineas will be
yours, old son.

The moment that the
prize is won!

SKINNER:

Now, tell me what
you wish to know.

BUNTER:

Hush! Here's the
Quelch-bird! Go
slow!

(*Enter Mr. QUELCH, in gown and mortar-board. He takes up his position in front of the desks, and smiles at the candidates.*)

MR. QUELCH:

Well, boys, and how
are you progress-
ing?"

CHERRY?

These history problems get me guessing!

MR. QUELCH:

Apply yourself with might and main,
Until the answers are made plain.
Everything comes to him who tries,
And that includes the Neville Prize!

BUNTER:

Would you object, sir, if I stop——

MR. QUELCH:

What!

BUNTER:

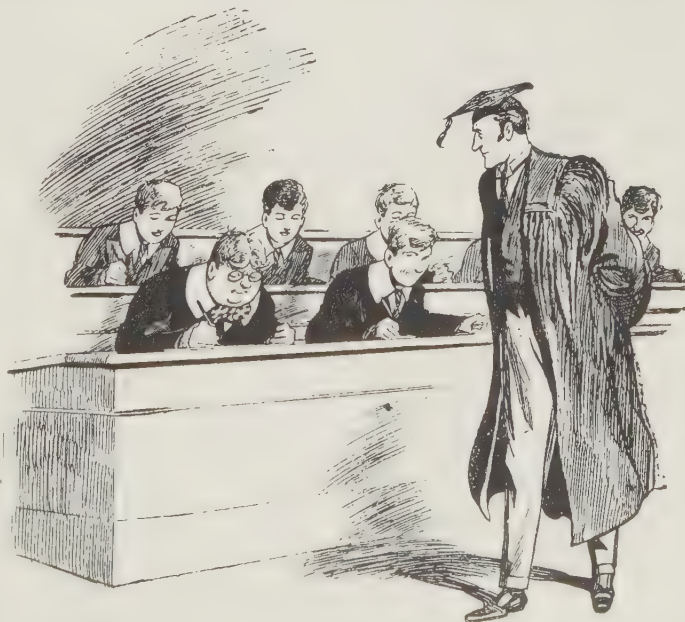
And go and get a ginger-pop?

MR. QUELCH:

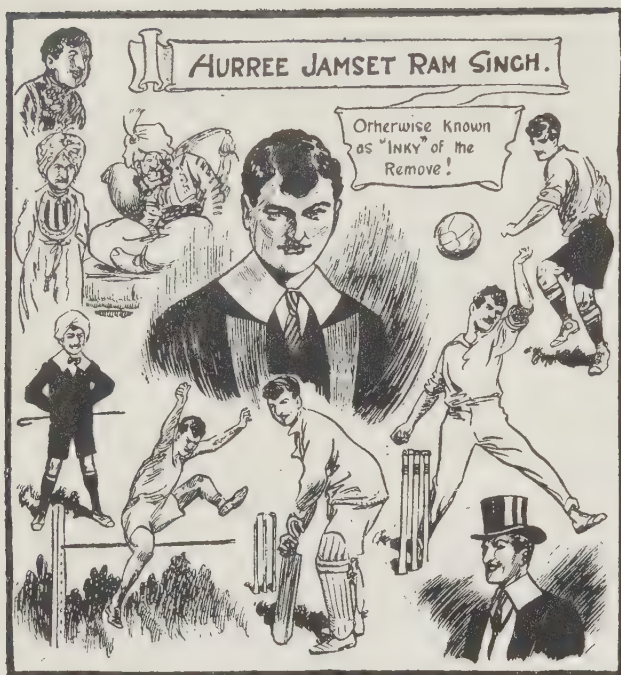
Bunter!

BUNTER:

I find that, when my brain gets chronic,
A ginger-pop's a splendid tonic!
It stimulates my mental muscles,
Tones up the little grey corpuscles,
And makes me work, sir, like a nigger,
With unabated vim and vigour!
So I'll adjourn, sir, to the shop,
And quaff the foaming ginger-pop——



"Now, pray resume your work, my boys,
And with the minimum of noise."



MR. QUELCH (*sternly*).
 You will no nothing of the kind!
 Bunter, you're lazily inclined!
 You shall not budge from where you sit
 Until such time as I think fit.

BUNTER:
 But, sir, just think of my poor brain——

WHARTON (*leaning over to BUNTER*):
 Shut up! You're asking for the cane!

MR. QUELCH:
 Now, pray resume your work, my boys,
 And with the minimum of noise!

(*The juniors bend over their papers, and MR. QUELCH paces to and fro, his hands clasped behind his back.*)

BUNTER (*aside, to SKINNER*):
 When did the Conqueror arrive?

SKINNER:
 Ahem! In Fifteen-fifty-five!

BUNTER:
 Thanks! Where was William Rufus slain?

SKINNER:
 Oh, somewhere on the Spanish Main!

BUNTER:
 By whom was Magna Charta signed?

SKINNER:
 By Milton—after he was blind!

BUNTER:
 Your fund of knowledge is surprising!
 Who organised the Monmouth rising?

SKINNER:
 I think it was Sir Walter Raleigh:
 With Monmouth he was very pally!

BUNTER:
 And who played bowls on Plymouth Sound?

SKINNER:
 'Twas Julius Caesar, I'll be bound!

BUNTER:
 I thought I was a dab at

History,
 But all these things were wrapt in mystery;
 However, now you've put me wise,
 I'm bound to win the Neville Prize!

(*MR. QUELCH suddenly stops short in his stride, and frowns at the candidates. BUNTER and SKINNER immediately become absorbed in their work.*)

MR. QUELCH:
 Bunter! I thought I heard you talking!

BUNTER:
 Pure fancy, sir! Resume your walking!

MR. QUELCH:
 Were you not holding forth to Skinner?

BUNTER:
 No word has left my lips since dinner!

MR. QUELCH (*angrily seizing a pointer*):
 How dare you state a fabrication?
 I heard you hold a conversation!
 I wish to know what you were saying;
 Tell me at once, without delaying!

BUNTER (*quaking*):

Ahem! I merely said to Skinner:
"Old Quelchy is a trump—a winner!
A master of the very best,
More wise and kind than all the rest.
A kind heart beats beneath his gown.
You never see him fume or frown.
He should be Head of Greyfriars School,
We should rejoice beneath his rule!"

CHERRY (*aside*):

Great jumping crackers! What a
whopper!

BULL:

Bunter will catch it, good and proper!

WHARTON:

Quelchy will simply give him fits——

NUGENT:

And we will gather up the bits!

MR. QUELCH (*frowning*):

Silence! I will not have this chatter!
Bunter, you lied about this matter.
A plausible excuse you've planned
Without success; hold out your hand!

(*Very reluctantly, BUNTER obeys. MR. QUELCH administers two cuts on each hand with the pointer, and BUNTER yells wildly.*)

MR. QUELCH:

Let every boy resume his task
In silence; that is all I ask.

(*The candidates resume, and MR. QUELCH continues to pace to and fro. BUNTER sits squeezing his hands, and groaning dismally. Presently, when the master is out of earshot, he turns again to SKINNER.*)

BUNTER:

What is the capital of Spain?

SKINNER:

I think it's Frankfort-on-the-Maine!

BUNTER:

Oh, good! And where is Tennessee?

SKINNER:

Just off the coast of Italy!

BUNTER:

Where does the River Ouse start oozing?

SKINNER:

Somewhere in France! (*Aside*) This is
amusing!

BUNTER:

What are the exports of Tibet?

SKINNER:

Dunno; I've never been there yet!

BUNTER:

But surely you can make a guess?

SKINNER:

Kings, cabbages, and water-cress!

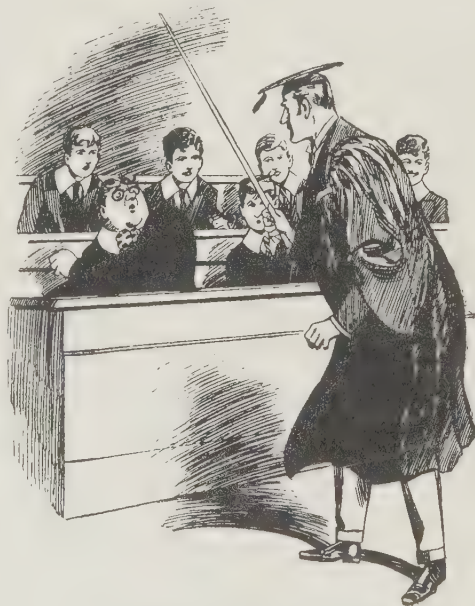
BUNTER (*scribbling down SKINNER's answers*):

By Jove, we're making ripping head-
way!

Is there a river called the Medway?

SKINNER:

Oh, no! It is a lofty hill,
The highest mountain in Brazil!



"A plausible excuse you've planned
Without success; hold out your hand!"

BUNTER:

Hurrah! I've finished all my papers!
Now we'll indulge in larks and capers!

MR. QUELCH (*pausing*):

Those who have finished, may retire:
That is, if they should so desire.

(*BUNTER and SKINNER rise to their feet, handing their examination-papers to MR. QUELCH. They then stroll slowly away, arm-in-arm.*)

BUNTER (*gleefully*):

I'm certain I shall win the prize!

SKINNER :

A fact I fully realise !

BUNTER :

Thanks to your kind co-operation
I'll win, and cause a big sensation !
Oh, it will be a happy day
When twenty guineas come my way !
We'll share the proceeds, Skinny boy,
And then we'll fairly jump for joy !

(Exit BUNTER and SKINNER. The others remain in the Form-room.)

CHERRY (aside, to WHARTON) :

Skinner's been pulling Bunter's leg

WHARTON :

'Twill take the fat fool down a peg !

CHERRY :

He's stuffed him up with tommy-rot——

WHARTON :

Serves Bunter right, Bob, does it not ?

NUGENT :

Bunter went out with quite a grin,
Believing that he's bound to win.

BULL :

But when the Head awards the prize,
Billy will have a sad surprise !

HURREE SINGH :

Let's plan a booby prize, my chums,
For Billy Bunter's benefit ;
And when the presentation comes,
He'll have an apoplectic fit !

(THE FAMOUS FIVE confer together in low tones, chuckling at intervals.)

MR. QUELCH :

Hand in your papers, boys, to me.
You have all finished, I can see.

(The juniors obey. Exit THE FAMOUS FIVE, rubbing their hands, and chuckling in anticipation of the award of BUNTER'S Booby Prize.)

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE.—A portion of Big Hall at Greyfriars.

(THE FAMOUS FIVE, BUNTER, and SKINNER, are seated on a form in front of the platform, awaiting the arrival of the Head.)

BUNTER :

My heart is beating loud and fast.

I can't sit still a minute !

Result of the exam, at last !

I'm certain I shall win it !

HURREE SINGH :

I also feel in quite a flurry,

I wish the worthy Head would hurry !

WHARTON :

Wonder who's won the twenty guineas ?

BUNTER (tapping his forehead) :

A brainy chap—not dolts or ninnies !

CHERRY :

If Bunter's won the Neville Prize,

We'll laud his prowess to the skies !



NUGENT:

But it's absurd to think
he's won it:
No brainless noodle
could have done it!

BUNTER:

Just wait until the
Head appears!
He'll call my name
amid loud cheers!
I'm certain I shall top
the list——

BULL:

Bunter, you are an
optimist!

BUNTER:

With envy you'll be
green, I guess;
And all will covet my
success!

SKINNER (*aside to*

BUNTER):

You won't forget *my* share, old fellow?

BUNTER:

Of course not. Shush! No need to
bellow.

WHARTON:

I hate to sit here in suspense——

CHERRY:

The atmosphere is taught and tense.

NUGENT:

See how excited Bunter looks!

HURREE SINGH:

In fact, we're all on "tenter hooks"!
(*Sound of footsteps without.*)

CHERRY:

Now we shall hear what we shall hear:
His Majesty the Head draws near!

(*Enter THE HEAD, in gown and mortar-board. He carries a brown-paper parcel, also a number of papers. He takes up his position on the platform, facing the juniors.*)

THE HEAD:

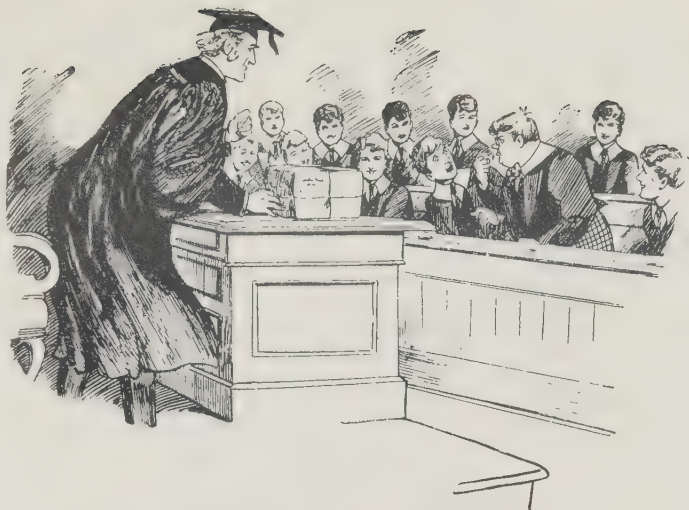
Good-morning, boys!

ALL:

Good-morning, sir!

HURREE SINGH:

The goodfulness of the esteemed morn-
ing is terrific!



BUNTER: "You cad! You led me up the garden!"

SKINNER: "And I refuse to beg your pardon!"

THE HEAD (*smiling*):

This is a very pleasant function,
Which I perform without compunction,
To all assembled I'll advise
The winner of the Neville Prize;
And give him my congratulation,
And make the proper presentation.
I now will call the boy by name——

(BUNTER *jumps to his feet, and is about to advance towards the platform.*)

CHERRY:

Sit down, you duffer! What's the
game?

BUNTER (*angrily*):

Cherry, you interfering cad——

WHARTON:

Sit down, you idiot! Are you mad?

(BUNTER *is jerked back into his seat.*)

THE HEAD (*consulting a list in his hand*):

Frank Nugent, I am pleased to state,
Has proved the winning candidate!

(WHARTON and CHERRY, seated on either
side of NUGENT, thump their chum on the
back, and overwhelm him with congratula-
tions. BILLY BUNTER sits as if stunned. He
blinks at THE HEAD in blank dismay.)

THE HEAD:

Ninety-five marks Frank Nugent gains
His papers show he took great pains.



His store of knowledge is unique,
He has excelled at French and Greek.
His skill in science is extensive,
His answers, clear and comprehensive.
The presentation I'll now make——

BUNTER (*jumping to his feet*):

Stop! I object! There's some mistake!

THE HEAD (*frowning*):

Bunter! How dare you interfere?

BUNTER:

You've blundered badly, sir, that's clear.

THE HEAD:

Good gracious! Is the boy insane?

BUNTER:

Go through the papers, sir, again,
And you will find that I'm the winner
(*Aside*) Thanks to the help of Harold Skinner!

THE HEAD:

Bunter! Resume your seat at once!
You are a dolt, sir, and a dunce!
You have a scantier store of knowledge
Than any pupil at this college!

BUNTER:

Oh, really, sir! My massive brain——

THE HEAD (*sternly*):

Sit down, or I will fetch the cane!

(BUNTER sits down. FRANK NUGENT proceeds to the platform to receive the presentation.)

BUNTER (*turning to SKINNER*):

Skinny, our scheme has come unstuck!

SKINNER:

Yes; isn't it atrocious luck?

BUNTER:

Nugent has bagged the Neville Prize!

SKINNER:

And my dismay I can't disguise.

THE HEAD (*handing NUGENT a sealed envelope*):

Congratulations, my dear boy!

A proud distinction you enjoy.

(*Cheers from NUGENT's chums. Groans from BILLY BUNTER!*)

THE HEAD:

The midnight oil you doubtless burned,
And your reward you've richly earned!
(NUGENT returns happily to his place.)

THE HEAD:

Most of the papers I inspected,
And classified, compared, corrected,
Merit my warmest commendation:
They show great skill and concentration.

There was one candidate, however,
Whose work was anything but clever

BUNTER:

I'll wager that was Johnny Bull!

BULL:

Absurd! It was yourself, you fool!

THE HEAD (*frowning at BUNTER*):

The work of Bunter, W. G.,
Was as appalling as could be!
The writing was a hideous scrawl,
And scarcely legible at all!

Big blots disfigured all the pages—
Such work exasperates, enrages!
And where the writing chanced to be
Lucid enough for me to see,
Errors appeared in rich profusion,
And I have come to the conclusion
That Bunter is a nincompoop—

BUNTER:

Oh, dear! I'm fairly in the soup!

THE HEAD:

No single answer was correct!

WHARTON (*laughing*):

Bunter's fond hopes have all been
wrecked!

THE HEAD:

In all my long career, I've never
Seen such a feeble, poor endeavour!

BUNTER (*turning
fiercely to SKIN-
NER*):

You cad! You led
me up the
garden!

SKINNER (*grinning*):

And I refuse to beg
your pardon!

(BUNTER, in his
wrath and chagrin,
starts to punch
SKINNER. There is a
lively scene, and THE
HEAD orders the
belligerents to be
separated. This is
done.)

THE HEAD (*taking up
the brown-paper
parcel*):

I found this pack-
age in my
study

(The wrapping seems a trifle muddy).
To William Bunter 'tis addressed,
With an anonymous request
That I should hand it to him here.
Bunter!

BUNTER (*stepping up to receive the parcel*):

Why don't you fellows cheer?

(Amid a burst of ironical cheering, THE
HEAD makes the presentation, and BUNTER
eagerly carries the parcel to his place. He

opens it feverishly, expecting to find that it
contains a handsome consolation prize. The
juniors crowd round with grinning faces.
The wrapping is removed, disclosing a
number of books.)

BUNTER (*examining the volumes one at a
time*):

Is this another jape of Skinner's?

"An English History for Beginners."

And "Simple Sums for Tiny Tots,"

"Poems for Children in their Cots."

"A Spelling Book for Mites and
Midgets,"

"Instructions How to Count your
Digits."

"Arithmetic for Little Chaps."

"Lessons for Babes on Mothers' Laps."



"Take that—and that!

'Tis a sorry end to all my dreams.

And all my fond, ambitious schemes!"

"Hints for the Mentally Deficient"—

Oh, help! I think that's quite
sufficient!

(The juniors yell with laughter, and
BUNTER'S face is a study. Exit THE HEAD,
smiling.)

BUNTER (*clenching his fists*):

Who dared to play this rotten trick?

I call on him to own up, quick!

SKINNER :

Not guilty of the fearful crime !

CHERRY :

We are the guilty ones, this time !

WHARTON :

We thought a booby prize would be
The proper caper, don't you see ?

BUNTER :

I hoped it was a box of candy !

NUGENT :

You'll find those volumes very handy !

(BUNTER, in great wrath, hurls a book at
each member of THE FAMOUS FIVE. They
dodge the bombardment.)

BUNTER :

Take that—and that ! It is a shame !

CHERRY :

He needs a book on how to aim !

(His wrath expended, BUNTER sinks on to
a form, and buries his face in his hands.)

BUNTER :

A sorry end to all my dreams,
And all my fond, ambitious schemes !
The Neville Prize has gone elsewhere,

And I am left in sad despair !

(Starts to sob.)

(THE FAMOUS FIVE look on, their sym-
pathies aroused.)

NUGENT (touching BUNTER on the shoulder) :

Come, cheer up, Billy ! What you need
Is a delightful tuck-shop feed.

Whenever you wish that you were dead,
There's nothing like a handsome
spread !

BUNTER (brightening up) :

Thanks, Nugent ! Now you've ample
wealth

I shall be pleased to drink your health !

HURREE SINGH :

Then to the tuck-shop we'll repair,
Both swiftly and speedily.

CHERRY :

And no one will object or care
If Bunter gorges greedily !

(Exit THE FAMOUS FIVE, cheerily, linking
arms with BUNTER. SKINNER prances after
them, eager to join the feed.)

CURTAIN.

AU REVOIR—NOT GOOD-BYE !

THE happy, rollicking schoolboys of Greyfriars, St. Jim's, and Rookwood, who have pranked through the pages of this Annual, have not "Good-bye" to offer but the much more pleasant "Au revoir !"

For they are the self-same juniors—and seniors—who "take the stage" each week in one or other of the companion papers from which the HOLIDAY ANNUAL sprang long years ago.

The Greyfriars favourites—Harry Wharton and Co., with Billy Bunter never far from their heels—present themselves regularly each Monday, in the "Magnet" Library.

Those extra-lively fellows of Rookwood School, Jimmy Silver and Co., figure very prominently each week in "The Popular," published on Tuesdays.

The famous Tom Merry and Co., of St. Jim's, with the inimitable Arthur Augustus D'Arcy always occupying a front seat, have for their happy hunting-ground the pages of the "Gem," which makes each Wednesday what it is, or should be—a red-letter day in the week. Twopence will buy each of these papers.

In addition, the real enthusiast for schoolboy stories is specially catered for by the "Schoolboys' Own Library," two issues of which appear each month. These book-length stories, price fourpence per volume, are concerned chiefly with the further adventures of the Greyfriars, St. Jim's, and Rookwood boys.

So it need not be Good-bye—only Au revoir !

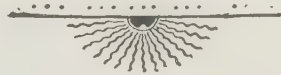
THE EDITOR.

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FRANK RICHARDS
1875 — 1961

