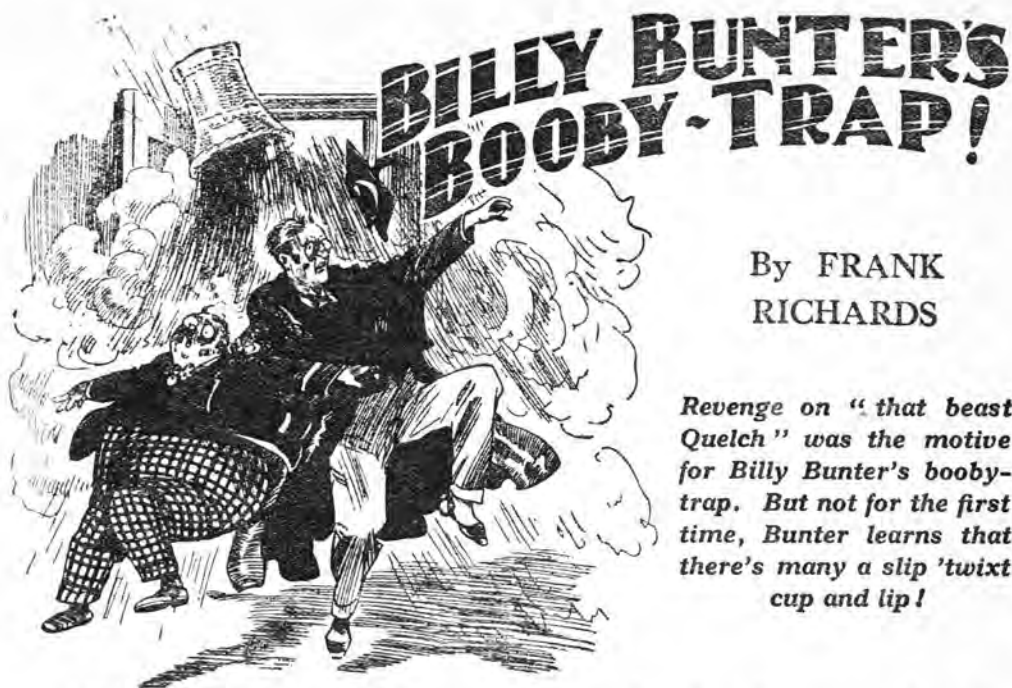




By FRANK
RICHARDS

Revenge on "that beast Quelch" was the motive for Billy Bunter's booby-trap. But not for the first time, Bunter learns that there's many a slip 'twixt cup and lip!

THE FIRST CHAPTER

BEASTLY FOR BUNTER!

OH, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

Some of the Remove fellows grinned.

The Remove—the Lower Fourth Form of Greyfriars—were in class. It was a hot afternoon. Mr. Quelch, their Form-master, was imparting valuable instruction of an historical nature. But to many of the juniors he seemed to be just droning! Somehow, their thoughts wandered to the cricket field, or the river, or the shady woods. Some of them were feeling quite drowsy. Lord Mauleverer almost nodded off. Billy Bunter quite nodded off! Hence the grin that spread from face to face in the Remove.

For the silence, hitherto broken only by the drone of Quelch, was now also disturbed by a rumbling sound—which might have been the mutter of

distant thunder; but was, in fact, the snore of Billy Bunter.

Snore!

When Bunter slept, he snored! That rumbling sound, familiar in the Remove dormitory, was unfamiliar in the Remove Form-room. So it was not so easily recognised by Mr. Quelch as by his pupils. All the Remove knew that Bunter had nodded off, and was beginning his nasal solo. But Mr. Quelch glanced out at the open window, wondering if that whirring rumble portended a thunderstorm!

Snorrrrrr!

Once started, Bunter was going strong. His fat chin drooped on his podgy chest; his little round eyes were closed behind his big round spectacles. Slumber's chain had bound him; and he snored, in happy disregard of Quelch and English History.

"The silly ass!" murmured Harry Wharton.

"Poke him, somebody!" whispered Frank Nugent.

"The pokefulness is the proper caper!" breathed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the dusky junior from India's coral strand. "The esteemed Quelch will be terrifically infuriated."

Johnny Bull, who was nearer to Bunter, made a movement. There was no doubt that Quelch would be wrathful if he discerned a fellow asleep in class. He was far from being aware that his valuable instructions had a soporific effect on his Form. The discovery would not have pleased him a little bit.

"Please do not talk in class!" rapped Mr. Quelch. "Bull! You may sit down."

"Oh! Yes, sir!" stammered Johnny Bull.

"The window had better be closed," said Mr. Quelch. "I think there is going to be a thunderstorm! Wharton, you may close the window."

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Wharton.

He left his place and closed the window.

But the sound that Mr. Quelch had mistaken for the rumble of distant thunder was heard even more distinctly after the window was closed. Bunter, deeper in happy slumber, was putting on steam.

Snorrrrrre! Rumble!

Mr. Quelch closed his book with a snap. He became aware of an epidemic of grinning in the Form. He realised that something was "on." And he realised that that whirring rumble was near at hand. He frowned. He came nearer to his class, and his gimlet-eyes searched over the Form. And then he knew.

"Bunter!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

No reply.

"BUNTER!"

Snore!

"Upon my word!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch. "The boy is asleep—actually asleep! BUNTER!"

Snore!

Mr. Quelch laid down his book. He picked up a pointer. The expression on his face was one that the fabled Gorgon might have envied. Bunter needed waking up! His Form-master was going to wake him.

All eyes were fixed on Mr. Quelch as he came along to Bunter's place, pointer in hand.

"Bunter!"

Snore!

Rap!

"Yaroooooh!" roared Billy Bunter, suddenly, as the pointer smote. He woke up then! He woke up quite suddenly!

"Bunter——"

"Ow! Beast!" roared Bunter. "Rotter! Yah! Leave a fellow alone! 'Tain't rising-bell yet!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Remove. Billy Bunter, evidently, had awakened under the impression that he was in bed in the dormitory.

"Bunter!" almost shrieked Mr. Quelch. "Silence in the Form! Bunter!"

"Oh, crikey!" The hapless Bunter realised where he was. He rubbed his eyes, set his big spectacles straight on his fat little nose, and blinked at his Form-master. "Oh! I—I—I wasn't asleep, sir!"

"You were not asleep!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, no, sir!" groaned Bunter. "I—I may have had my eyes shut! I—I listen better with my eyes shut, sir! I—I heard every word you were saying."

"You were snoring!" hooted Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, no sir! I never snore," stammered Bunter. "The fellows keep

on making out that I snore, sir! But I don't! I—I stayed awake one night, sir, to see whether I did—and I—I didn't!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! Bunter, you were fast asleep, in Form, and you have not heard a single word——"

"Oh, yes, sir—every syllable!" gasped Bunter. "I wouldn't miss a word, sir—I'm so keen on grammar."

"Grammar! This lesson is English History!"

"Oh, lor'! I—I mean history, sir! I—I wonder what made me say gig-gig-grammar! I—I meant to say history, sir! I—I haven't missed one syllable, sir!"

"Indeed!" said Mr. Quelch, in a grinding voice, "then in that case, you will give me the dates!"

"I—I haven't any, sir!"

"Wha-a-t?"

Quelch had been giving important historical dates to his Form. Bunter had missed them, and he was not even aware of the dates to which his Form-master was alluding. His fat thoughts ran on quite another kind of dates. Just before class he had been eating dates. There were still traces of them smeared round his extensive mouth.

"I really haven't, sir!" gasped Bunter. "You—you can search me, sir—I swear I haven't."

"Is this boy out of his senses?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Bunter, give me the dates at once."

"I've eaten them, sir."

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

"You—you—you have what—what?" stuttered the Remove master.

"I ate them before I came into class, sir!"

"You ate them!" repeated Mr. Quelch, like a man in a dream.

"Yes, sir! I—I haven't any left! We ain't allowed to bring tuck into class, you know, sir! I finished them before I came in."

"You—you incredibly stupid boy!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Do you imagine that I am speaking of edible dates? I am alluding to the dates I was giving out to the Form—historical dates."

"Oh!" Bunter realised that there was a misapprehension. "I see! I—I mean—oh, lor'!"

"Give me the dates at once, Bunter! To begin with, the date of the Spanish Armada."

Billy Bunter blinked at his Form-master almost in anguish. He had not the remotest idea of the date in question. But he had to answer; so he made a shot at it. It was by no means a bull's-eye!

"Nineteen-fourteen, sir!" gasped Bunter. He remembered vaguely that some big event had happened in 1914. He hoped that it was the Spanish Armada!

But Mr. Quelch's expression told him that it was a bad shot. He tried again in a hurry.

"I—I mean 1815, sir."

"You—you—you mean 1815!" gurgled Mr. Quelch. Bunter evidently remembered Waterloo year, though not in connection with Waterloo!

"Yes, sir—I—I—mean, no, sir——"

"Bunter! After class you will write out, 'The Spanish Armada came in the year 1588,' five hundred times."

"Did—did—did it, sir?" gasped Bunter. "That's not in my book, sir."

"What?"

"It says in my book that it came only once, sir——"

"Boy!"

"But—but it does, sir!" gasped

Bunter, feeling that he had got this right, at least. "I—I'm almost certain that the Spanish Armada came only once, sir. I—I don't see how it could have come five hundred times."

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a yell from the whole Form.

"Silence!" roared Mr. Quelch. "This boy's stupidity and impertinence are not a laughing matter. Bunter, you will write out five hundred times that the Spanish Armada came in 1588."

"Oh, lor'!"

"And now stand up! Bend over the form!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

Whack!

"Whoooooop!"

Whack!

"Yaroooooooooop!"

Whack!

"Whoooooo-hoooooop!"

"You will now give attention to the lesson, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch. "And if you fall asleep again——"

Mr. Quelch did not finish. He left the rest to William George Bunter's imagination.

But Billy Bunter was in no danger of falling asleep again! Those three hefty whacks were more than sufficient to keep him awake. He was not feeling sleepy now. He could not even keep still! He squirmed on his form, and seemed to be under-studying the young man of Hythe, who was shaved with a scythe, and could do nothing but wriggle and writhe!

THE SECOND CHAPTER

SOME SCHEME!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter blinked into No. 1 Study. The Famous Five had finished tea, and were discussing

whether to go down to the nets, or to push a boat out on the Sark, when the fat face and glimmering spectacles of the Owl of the Remove appeared in the doorway. The Famous Five looked merry and bright, as was natural when classes were over on a bright summer's day. But Billy Bunter looked neither merry nor bright. Bunter was worried.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "Enjoying life, old fat bean?"

"Done your lines?" asked Harry Wharton.

"I haven't finished them," said Bunter, shaking his head. "Quelch told me to take them in at six. It's nearly six now. I simply can't get them finished in time."

"How many have you done, then?"

"Two!" confessed Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

If Bunter, at a minute to six, had done only two lines out of five hundred, it was fairly certain that he would not get that "impot" done in time.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" said Bunter peevishly. "I asked Toddy to do the lines for me, but you know how selfish Toddy is; he wouldn't. I say, you fellows, Quelch will come up for those lines, if I don't take them down to him. He said he would. He will bring his cane with him."

"Better put some exercise books in your bags!" suggested Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull! Now look here, you fellows. I want you to help me; it's up to you, after all I've done for you, you know."

Bunter rolled into the study, and planted a heap of foolscap on the table, pushing aside the tea-things. The tea-pot tipped over into the



"Mind that table-cloth!" shrieked Nugent. But his warning came too late. Bunter did not mind the table-cloth! With a smack of his hand he up-ended the ink-bottle over the foolscap. "There, that's all right," he said.

butter-dish, and spilled its contents into the jam. That did not matter to Bunter—it was not his butter and jam.

"Look out, fathead!" exclaimed Frank Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent! Don't waste time jawing," said Bunter. "You've got a bottle of ink in the study cupboard, Wharton."

"How do you know what's in the study cupboard, you fat villain?"

"I didn't look into the cupboard after class for the toffee," said Bunter hastily. "I never heard Nugent mention it. I hope I'm not a fellow to listen to what fellows say to one another. Besides, there wasn't any toffee there, and I never ate it, and I

left it just as it was when I found it——"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Never mind the toffee. For goodness' sake, don't start making a fuss about a measly stick of toffee. I want that bottle of ink."

"To wash down the toffee?" asked Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you listen to a chap!" howled Bunter. "It's striking six now! Talk about King Henry the Eighth fiddling while Constantinople was burning. Look here, I'll get the ink if you're too lazy to move."

Billy Bunter dived into the study cupboard, and reappeared with a large bottle of ink, more than half full.

He put it on the table and jerked out the cork. The chums of the Remove watched him, in astonishment. What he wanted with the ink was a mystery to them. There was no time left to write his impot, and anyhow he did not need a bottle of ink for that purpose. Apparently some deep and mysterious scheme was working in the fatuous brain of the Owl of the Remove.

"Now, you knock that bottle of ink over, Wharton!" he said.

Harry Wharton jumped.

"Knock it over!" he ejaculated.

"Yes, over my impot! See? Mop the ink all over it—smother it, soak it, drench it all over! Just leave the two lines I've written, to show that the impot was done before you knocked the ink over it. Then I can take it down to Quelch."

The Famous Five gazed at Bunter. Slowly his masterly scheme dawned on their minds. The top page of foolscap was already adorned by two lines of writing in Bunter's scrawl and Bunter's spelling:

"The Spannish Armader caim in 1588."

"The Spannish Armader caim in 1588."

Those two lines were to be left, to show that the imposition—which had not been written—had been written. Spilt ink was to disguise the fact that the rest was a beautiful blank. Lots of ink would be required, but there was lots of ink in the bottle.

"My only hat!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"Buck up," said Bunter urgently. "I want to get to Quelch before he comes after me. You see, if I told him I upset the ink over the paper after writing it, he mightn't believe me. He's doubted my word before! It's rather ungentlemanly to doubt a

fellow's word; but the fact is, Quelch is no gentleman. Look how he jumped on me this afternoon, when I told him I hadn't been asleep. Practically made me out a liar!"

"Oh, scissors!"

"But it will be all right if I tell him I dropped in here to speak to you, and you—like a clumsy ass, you know—knocked the bottle of ink over on my impot. If he asks you, you can tell him so. See?"

"And tell him you asked me to?" roared Wharton.

"Eh? No! Of course not, you silly ass! Tell him it was an accident, of course. You can tell him anything you like, old chap, so long as you stuff him. So long as he believes the lines were written, it will be all right. In fact, I think you'd better come to the old codger's study with me, and explain. It would sound better."

"I'm to come with you to Quelch, and tell him a string of thumping lies because you've been too jolly lazy to write your lines?" gasped the captain of the Remove.

"Yes, old chap! I'll do as much for you another time. I say, get on with it; there's no time to lose. You haven't knocked the ink over yet."

"And I'm jolly well not going to, you howling ass!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! Well, look here, I'll knock it over——"

"Mind that table-cloth!" shrieked Nugent.

But he shrieked too late. Bunter did not mind the table-cloth! It was not his table-cloth! He had no time or inclination to think of trifles like that! With a smack of his fat hand, he up-ended the ink-bottle over the foolscap. Ink swamped out in a flood. The top sheet was inundated



"Look here, Cherry," said Bunter. "All you've got to do is to tell that old idiot Quelch that you upset the ink over my impot. The silly old ass——" Bunter broke off suddenly and blinked over his shoulder—to see Mr. Quelch standing in the doorway!

at once. So was a goodly portion of the table-cloth.

"There, that's all right," said Bunter. "Give it time to soak through, and old Quelch won't be able to see that there wasn't any writing. It would have been better for you to knock the bottle over, Wharton. Then you'd have been telling the truth when you told Quelch you did it. But you're not quite so particular about the truth as I am, I know."

"You—you—you blithering bandersnatch," gasped Wharton, "I'm not going to tell Quelch anything of the kind. You can tell your own fibs."

"Oh, really, Wharton! Ten to one Quelch won't believe me if I say I had the accident! A fellow expects his pals to back him up," said Bunter, warmly. "I say, Bob, if Wharton's too jolly mean to help a fellow out, you'll do it for me, won't you? Old Quelch——"

"Shut up!" gasped Bob Cherry.

From where he sat, Bob had a view of the Remove passage through the open doorway. In that passage an angular figure appeared; the figure of Henry Samuel Quelch, the master of the Remove. Evidently Mr. Quelch was on his way to Bunter's study, as the fat junior had not delivered the goods! But at the sound of Billy

Bunter's voice in No. 1 Study, Mr. Quelch suddenly stopped and looked in.

Bunter was not aware of it. Bunter, of course, had no eyes in the back of his head.

"Look here, Cherry, you do it—you're not so funky as Wharton! What are you making faces at a fellow for, you ass? Look here, all you've got to do is to come down with me to Quelch, and tell the old idiot that you upset the ink over my impot—once it's soaked through he will never know there wasn't any writing on it, and we shall pull his leg a treat! The silly old ass——"

The horror in the faces of the Famous Five made even Billy Bunter realise that something was amiss! They were gazing at the doorway—now filled by the angular figure of Mr. Quelch—as if a grisly spectre had appeared there.

Billy Bunter blinked round over a fat shoulder, to see what it was that horrified them so.

"Oh, crikey!" he gasped. He almost fell down at the sight of the Remove master.

Mr. Quelch stepped into the study.

"Bunter! I heard you——"

"Oh, lor'! I—I wasn't calling you a silly old ass, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I was speaking of another silly old ass, sir——"

"What?" roared Mr. Quelch.

"I—I—I mean——" gurgled the hapless Bunter.

"You have not written your lines, Bunter! Your imposition is doubled. You will stay in on Wednesday afternoon, and write a thousand lines. For your attempted deception, and the disrespectful expressions you have used, I shall cane you——"

"Oh, lor'!"

"Follow me to my study, Bunter!"

"Oh, crikey!"

In the lowest of spirits, Billy Bunter followed the Remove master to his study. He entered that study in fear and trembling. He left it looking as if he was trying to shut himself up like a pocket-knife! And for a good hour afterwards, Billy Bunter's remarks were limited chiefly to "Yow!" and "Ow!" and "Wow!" The way of the transgressor was hard!

THE THIRD CHAPTER

HELPING BUNTER!

GROAN!

That dismal sound was heard from the Remove Form-room on Wednesday afternoon. It fell on the ears of five fellows who were approaching along the Form-room passage in a rather cautious manner.

It was a half-holiday, and a glorious summer's afternoon. Billy Bunter, detained till he should have written out his thousand lines, sat at his desk in the Form-room—and groaned! Mr. Quelch had marched him in at two o'clock. Now it was half-past two; and Bunter had not started writing. He just groaned.

"Poor old Bunter!" murmured Bob Cherry, and he opened the Form-room door. Billy Bunter blinked up in surprise at the sight of the Famous Five. They came in rather quickly, and Harry Wharton closed the door after they were in. It was strictly forbidden for any fellow to speak to a fellow under detention; and it was necessary to be wary.

"I say, you fellows——" Bunter blinked at the chums of the Remove hopefully. "If you've got any toffee——"

Toffee would have comforted the hapless Owl of the Remove.

"Fathead!" said Bob. "We've come to lend you a hand. We're

going to take a page each—and we can make a scrawl like yours, if we try hard——”

“Many hands make light work!” said Frank Nugent.

“But too many cooks spoil the absurd broth,” remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, “and that is a boot on the other leg.”

“Get on with it,” said Johnny Bull. “If Quelch catches us here——”

“Oh, good!” said Billy Bunter, in great relief. “If you do two hundred lines each, old chaps, that will make the lot——”

“And what are you going to do, you fat villain?” hooted Johnny Bull.

“I’ll watch you, old fellow.”

“You slacking bandersnatch, get on with it. You do the top page, and leave the rest to us,” said Harry.

“Well, look here, be a bit careful with your writing,” said Bunter. “If Quelch is to think that I did it, your usual rotten scrawl won’t do, you know.”

“You blinking, blithering, fat-headed, foozling frump,” said Bob Cherry. “It’s only because your fist is a spider-leggy scrawl that the wheeze will work at all. If it was anything like handwriting, we couldn’t do it.”

“Oh, really, Cherry——”

“Shut up, and start!”

“Beast!”

Having thus expressed his gratitude, Billy Bunter started. Greyfriars fellows sometimes helped one another out with lines; and in Bunter’s case, it was quite easy—it was only necessary to produce a smeary, smudgy, shapeless scrawl, and it would be recognised as genuine Bunter calligraphy at a glance!

“I say, you fellows——”

“Shut up, Bunter!”

“But you’ll have to spell properly,” exclaimed Bunter peevishly. “If I spell right, and you fellows spell wrong, Quelch will spot it at once. You’re spelling ‘Spanish’ with only one ‘n’.”

“Oh, my hat!”

“And you’re spelling ‘Armada’ with an ‘a’ at the end!” said Billy Bunter, “and look how you’re spelling ‘came’—c-a-m-e! That won’t do.”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! We’ve got to have the same spelling all through——”

“Better put it in Bunter’s spelling,” chuckled Bob Cherry; “it will look more genuine!”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

And the Famous Five re-started, and proceeded to write, like Bunter, “The Spannish Armader caim in 1588.” Certainly that looked more like Bunter’s work than their own! Whether Mr. Quelch would be satisfied with that new style in orthography, was another matter. Still, he was not likely to suspect any fellow but Bunter spelling like that.

Taking great care to produce a smeary, smudgy, almost illegible scrawl, the Famous Five got on with it. Bunter proceeded more slowly. Bunter did not like work.

“I say, you fellows——”

“Shut up!”

“But, I say, sure you haven’t got any toffee about you?”

“Yes—shut up!”

“Or any butterscotch?”

“Shut up!”

Snort, from Bunter.

“I think you might have brought a fellow something, when he’s in detention. I must say you’re a mean lot! After all I’ve done for you, too! Look here, one of you cut out and get some toffee.”

"You fat owl——"

"I'll pay for it, if that's what you're worrying about," said Bunter, scornfully; "I'm expecting a postal order shortly——"

"Will you dry up?"

"I'll stand toffee all round, if one of you fellows will cut down to the tuck-shop and get it," said Bunter generously. "All you've got to do is to pay for it—and I'll settle when my postal order comes——"

"Shut up!" hissed Bob Cherry.

"Beast!"

In the kindness of their hearts, the chums of the Remove were giving up a portion of their half-holiday to help Billy Bunter out of detention. But they were rather repenting of their kindness, by this time. Really, Bunter was not a very pleasant fellow to help. However, they got on with it, and the lines grew and grew and grew, like the little peach in the orchard. Lines galore ran from the pens of the Famous Five, but not from Bunter's. Bunter wrote one line and took a rest—he wrote another line, and took a longer rest—another, and a still longer rest. Bunter would have preferred to sit and eat toffee, while the other fellows did the lines; and he reflected sadly on the selfishness of human nature!

It was rather unfortunate for the kind-hearted juniors that Mr. Quelch was also experiencing kindness of heart that golden summer's afternoon.

Mr. Quelch was seated in a deck-chair in the quad under his study window. A shady elm cast a grateful shadow. In the distance, white-clad figures dotted the cricket-field. A volume of Sophocles was open on Quelch's knee. Quelch was enjoying life—in his own way, though what enjoyment he found in Sophocles would have been a mystery to his

Form. Several times Mr. Quelch's thoughts strayed to the junior detained on that glorious afternoon, and at last he laid down his book on the chair, went into the House, and rustled along the passage to the Form-room. Utterly unaware of the assistance Bunter was receiving, Quelch did not guess on how many ears the sound of his footstep fell and what dismay it caused.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry suddenly. "What——"

"Oh, my only hat!"

"If that's Quelch——"

"I say, you fellows——"

Footsteps approached the door of the Remove-room. For a moment the Famous Five sat transfixed. Then they jumped up and crouched low behind the desks. If Quelch only glanced in from the doorway! They vanished from sight as the door opened.

"Oh, lor'!" gasped Billy Bunter.

Mr. Quelch stepped in. The expression on his usually grim face was quite kindly.

"Bunter!"

"Oh, crikey! I—I mean yes, sir!" stuttered Bunter.

"If you have made due progress with your task, Bunter, I shall excuse you the remainder," said Mr. Quelch.

"Let me see——"

He came across to the desks. Five juniors, crouching low, hardly breathed. Mr. Quelch glanced at the sheet that lay before Bunter. Then, in surprise, he glanced at the half-written sheets that lay on adjacent desks. Apparently, Bunter had started on a good many sheets of foolscap at once, and finished none of them—which was a rather unusual way of getting on with an imposition! Mr. Quelch was surprised! Perhaps he was suspicious!

"Bunter, if anyone has been here assisting you——"

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped Bunter. "Nobody's been here, sir, and they're not here now!"

"What?" ejaculated Mr. Quelch.

"There—there's nobody in the room, sir, except you and me, sir!"

grim expression on his face—from which all the genial kindness was now banished—he peered over the desks. Then he had an interesting view of five breathless juniors crouching in cover.

"Oh!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch.

In grim silence the Famous Five



With a grim expression on his face, Mr. Quelch peered over the desks. Then he had an interesting view of Harry Wharton & Co. crouching in cover. "Oh!" ejaculated the Remove master. "It appears that you juniors desire to write lines on a half-holiday!"

gasped Bunter. "They—they're miles away! I—I think they went up the river——"

"Who?" roared Mr. Quelch. "Of whom are you speaking, Bunter?"

"Eh! Oh, nobody, sir! I—I mean——"

Mr. Quelch had been a little suspicious. Now he was a lot! With a

rose to their feet. The game was up now with a vengeance. Mr. Quelch looked at them. Grimmer and grimmer grew his visage. The silence, for a moment, could almost have been cut with a knife. Then the Remove master spoke.

"Wharton, Cherry, Nugent, Bull, Hurree Singh! It appears that you

desire to write lines on a half-holiday. Very well. Each of you will write two hundred lines from Virgil, and take them to my study when written. Bunter, you will write the whole of your imposition, and not leave the Form-room until it is finished."

Mr. Quelch gathered up the written sheets, crumpled them together in his hand, and walked out of the Form-room. Harry Wharton & Co. gazed at one another. Bunter blinked at them accusingly.

"Well, you've done it now!" he said.

The Famous Five did not reply. Their feelings were too deep for words. They sat down to Virgil.

"I say, you fellows——"

"You piffling, pie-faced porker," hissed Bob, "if you'd kept your silly mouth shut, Quelch wouldn't have spotted us!"

"Look here, what about my lines?"

"Shut up!" roared Johnny Bull, so ferociously that Billy Bunter jumped and shut up.

With dismal industry Harry Wharton & Co. ground at Virgil. It was long before they finished, but they finished at last. By the time they had done two hundred each, Bunter had done nearly a dozen! They gathered up their lines and went to the door. Bunter blinked at them.

"I say, you fellows—you're not going! What about my lines?"

"You silly owl!" roared Bob Cherry. "Do you think that chicken will fight, after Quelch has spotted us?"

"Well, I think you'd better chance it," said Bunter warmly. "I've done only eleven—no, ten—out of a thousand! I'm not sticking in here all the afternoon to please you fellows! I should be finished by now, if you hadn't come butting in! What the

thump did you come in at all for, if you come to that? It's up to you now, and I can jolly well say—yaroooooop!"

Five pairs of hands were laid on William George Bunter at once. He was swept off his feet, and he sat down on the Form-room floor.

Bump!

"Whooooop!" roared Bunter.

And the Famous Five departed, leaving him roaring.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

BUNTER ALL OVER.

BILLY BUNTER opened the door of the Form-room and peered out cautiously into the passage, through his big spectacles.

The coast was clear, the House almost deserted on that sunny half-holiday. Bunter rolled out.

It was half an hour since the Famous Five had gone. They were playing cricket now—regardless of Bunter! Equally regardless of Bunter, Mr. Quelch was seated in the deck-chair under his study window in the quad, enjoying life with jolly old Sophocles! Everybody, in fact, was merry and bright, with the exception of William George Bunter—the victim, as usual, of selfishness and injustice! But the worm will turn! Bunter, being a good deal of a worm, was turning!

His eyes gleamed behind his spectacles! He had done a total of fifteen lines out of his thousand. A whopping was due if it was not finished. As the whopping was a certainty in any case, Bunter considered that he might as well leave nine hundred and eighty-five lines unwritten, as any smaller number! He was fed up with lines. He was thinking of something more agreeable—making that awful beast, Quelch, sit up, for detaining him!

He headed for Quelch's study.

On that glorious summer's afternoon, it was practically certain that Quelch, like everybody else, would be out of doors. But Bunter was cautious. He tapped lightly at Quelch's door when he reached it, ready with an excuse if his Form-master was there. He opened the study door, and blinked in. As he had quite expected, the study was vacant.

He rolled in, and shut the door after him.

The window was wide open on the quad. Nobody could be seen near it. It did not occur to Bunter's powerful brain that anybody might be sitting below it outside.

Bunter grinned.

From under Mr. Quelch's writing-table he subtracted the waste-paper basket. Taking a shovel from the fender, he groped with it in the chimney. Shovel after shovel of soot was hooked down, and deposited inside the waste-paper basket. Soot flew about the study, and settled on books and papers. Bunter did not mind. Nobody was going to know that he had been there—so that was all right! Ragging Quelch was an amusement which most Remove fellows would



Swiftly Bunter clambered through the window, and his fat little legs swung from the sill. In his haste he was quite unaware that Mr. Quelch was seated in a deck-chair underneath, deeply immersed in his beloved Sophocles!

have likened to twisting the tail of a tiger in the jungle! But it was said of old that fools rush in where angels fear to tread. Bunter had thought it all out, with great astuteness.

He placed the door ajar, stood on a chair, and arranged the basket of soot on the top of the door, resting against the lintel. Anybody opening that door from outside was absolutely certain to get the basket of soot on his napper!

Bunter grinned with glee.

That, he considered, would serve Quelch right! And he would never know that Bunter had had a hand in it. Bunter had a safe alibi—a fellow

under detention in the Form-room could scarcely be suspected of playing tricks in the Form-master's study. Bunter was going back to the Form-room. He was going to be there, at a safe distance, when the crash came! Quelch could suspect whom he liked—he was hardly likely to suspect Bunter.

Of course, having fixed the door in this masterly manner, Bunter could not leave the study by the door. But that was all right—all he had to do was to drop from the open window, and scuttle into the House again by the nearest door!

In a couple of minutes he would be safe back in the Form-room; safe and sound, and unsuspected.

Bunter could not help feeling pleased with this stunt. Other fellows thought it too risky to rag Quelch. Bunter was the man for such things.

He emptied Mr. Quelch's inkpot into the soot in the basket—a final artistic touch. Then he rolled to the window. It was time to go. He blinked from the window. Mr. Prout was to be seen in the distance, but his back was turned. The coast was clear. Still, it was as well to be rapid. Once he showed himself at the window he had to be quick.

And he was quick. Swiftly he swung himself into the window, and his fat little legs swung over the sill, and he dropped—on Mr. Quelch's head!

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Greyfriars Remove, had often been surprised—for life is full of surprises—but never had Henry Samuel Quelch been so surprised as he was now.

Deep in Sophocles, his head bent over that entrancing author, he was suddenly aware of something—he did not know what it was—crashing on him from above.

For one wild and whirling moment Mr. Quelch had the impression that it

was an earthquake or that the skies were falling.

But it was neither. It was Billy Bunter!

Bunter was as surprised as Quelch.

When he swung over the window-sill he had naturally expected to drop on the ground. It was quite surprising to drop on something that reeled and rolled and roared!

Crash! Bump!

Mr. Quelch, in a dumbfounded state, sprawled over, and Billy Bunter sprawled headlong over him.

"Oh! Ow! Ooooooooooh!" spluttered the amazed Remove master.

"What—how—oh—ah—urrrrgggh!"

"Oh, crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He sat up dazedly, too astounded and confused to realise what he was sitting on. Only he noticed that it felt bony. Later he discovered that it was Mr. Quelch's face.

"Wurrrrgggh!" came from under Bunter's fat form. "What—who—what—urrrgh! Moooooooooooooh!"

"Oh, lor'!"

A sinewy hand grasped Bunter and hurled him aside. An angular figure rose from the earth with a crimson face, gasping and spluttering. Bunter sat on a collapsed deck-chair and blinked at his Form-master. He had wondered dizzily what he had fallen on. Now he knew. It was Quelch!

"Bunter!" almost roared Quelch.

"Oh, lor'! Oh, crikey! It—it isn't me, sir! I—I mean—oh, crumbs!" gurgled Bunter.

"You—you—you have been in my study, you—you—you have jumped from the window—on—on my head! You—you—you—Come!" Mr. Quelch grasped Bunter by the collar and hooked him to his feet. "Come! I shall cane you—I shall cane you with the utmost severity! I—I—Come!"

Mr. Quelch whisked into the House. Bunter, spluttering, whisked along with him—with an iron grip on his collar! Quelch was taking him to his study to be caned. Billy Bunter's fat heart almost died within him, and he quailed as he remembered what awaited Quelch when he reached his study.

"I—I—I say, sir——" squeaked Bunter.

"Come!"

"But—but—b-b-but—I—I say, sir, d-d-don't go to your study—oh, lor'—oh, my hat—I say—oh, sciss-sors!"

Mr. Quelch reached his study. The cane was there, and he was anxious—in fact, eager—to reach the cane. Bunter struggled to hold back.

"I—I say, sir, d-d-don't open the door—oh, jiminy!"

Grasping Bunter by the collar with one hand, Mr. Quelch hurled open the door with the other and strode in, yanking Bunter.

Crash!

What happened next Quelch hardly knew. For the second time something unexpected descended upon him. This time it was not a fat schoolboy; it was a waste-paper basket crammed to the brim with inky soot! It up-ended on Quelch's head, fairly bonneting him. Soot smothered him—and Bunter. Soot descended on both of them in clouds, in volumes, in swamps. They were of the soot, sooty!

"Urrrrrggggh!" gurgled Mr. Quelch, staggering in the doorway, suddenly transformed into the blackest of negroes. "Wurrrggh! Grooogh! Ooogh!"

"Ug-gug-gug!" spluttered Billy Bunter, nearly as sooty as his Form-master. "Oooooogh! Wooooogh! Ooo-er—oh, crikey—gooooogh!"

"What the—ooogh! What—ooooch!"

"Ow! Wow! Groooooh!"

"Bunter, you—you have—groogh—you have—ooooch!"

"Oh, lor'!"

Billy Bunter fled. He left a trail of soot as he fled. Mr. Quelch did not pursue him. He wanted to skin Bunter. He yearned to skin Bunter. But skinning Bunter had to wait till he had had a wash and a change. The skinning process came later.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's that ghastly row?"

Groan!

Harry Wharton & Co. came in cheerfully after the cricket. Sounds of woe greeted them as they came up the Remove staircase. They gazed at Billy Bunter. He was leaning on the banisters on the Remove landing, uttering deep and dismal groans.

"Licked?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Ow! I say, you fellows—wow! That beast Quelch took me to the Head—wow—I've been flogged—ow—he made out that I fixed a booby-trap for him in his study—oooooh—just because I was there, you know—wow—and fell on his head when I got out of the window—yow-ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say—wow—the Head laid it on—yow-ow! I shan't be able to sit down for weeks—yow-ow-ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Groan!

"Buck up, old fat bean!"

Groan!

"Come into our study to tea."

Bunter ceased to groan.

"We've got a cake——"

Bunter brightened.

"And two kinds of jam."

Bunter smiled.

THE END