"STUDY 1 ON TOUR"

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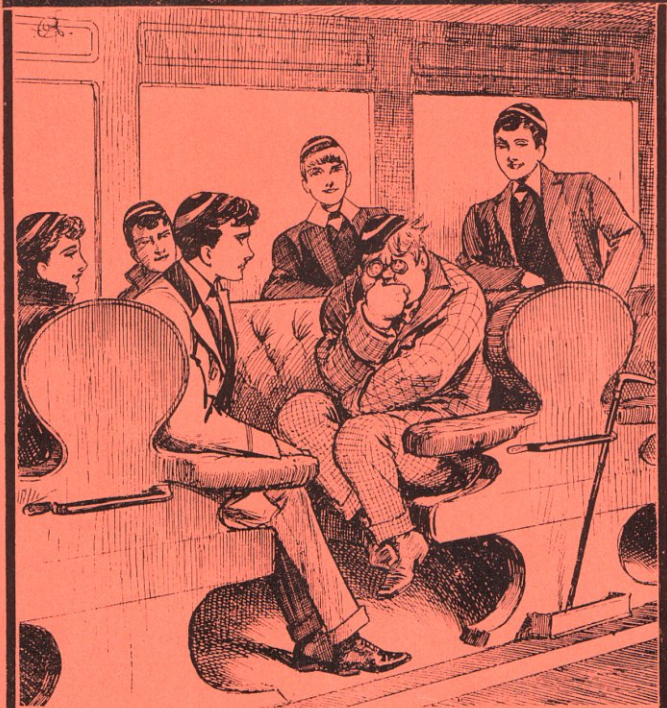


Billy Bunter Eats a Cigarette!

Study 1 on Tour

A Splendid, Long, Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.

— BY —

FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.
A Very Important Letter.

HARRY WHARTON looked at his watch, and then rose and crossed to the study window, and looked out into the Close of Greyfriars. The sunset was red behind the elms, and the shadows were stealing over the old green Close. Fellows with bats under their arms were coming in from the cricket-field. Harry Wharton looked away towards the gates, as he stood at the window of No. 1 Study in the Remove passage.

There were two other juniors in the study—Frank Nugent, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. Both turned their heads to glance at Wharton.

"Anything on out there?" asked Nugent.

"No."

"Then what are you looking for?"

"It's time for the post."

"Expecting a letter?"

"Yes."

"Important?"

"Yes."

A fat junior had just opened the door of the study, and he was in time to hear that laconic dialogue. He blinked at Harry Wharton through a pair of big spectacles.

"I say, Wharton——"

"Can't see him yet," said Harry.

"You're expecting a letter?"

"Yes, Billy."

"A remittance, I suppose?"

"I don't know."

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Don't bother, Billy. Run away and play!"

Billy Bunter blinked at him, and then turned and went down the passage. Bunter was generally one of the first to greet the postman. Bunter was in a perpetual state of expecting a postal-order, and he had a touching faith that sooner or later it would come.

Wharton turned to the window again. The postman was late; but he was late very frequently.

"No trouble at home, Harry, I hope?" said Nugent, after a pause.

"Oh, no," said Harry, turning from the window. "My aunt, Miss Wharton, has gone to Switzerland for her health, but she always goes—she's not ill. I'm expecting a letter from my uncle. He joined aunt there, and——"

Wharton paused.

"And?" repeated Nugent.

"Well, it's possible I may go out there for a run."

"To Switzerland?"

"Yes."

"Some bounders have all the luck," said Nugent, with good-natured envy. "Jolly uncle you've got. Look here, if you feel inclined for a swop, I'll trade off two aunts and a cousin for him!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"He's a jolly good sort," he said. "He knows I should like a run abroad, and I think he will fix it. But——"

"I hope you'll have a good time."

"If I do, you will," said Harry quietly. "I shouldn't go alone—and if the Head lets me go, he'll let you and Inky, and perhaps Bob."

Nugent jumped up.

"How gorgeous! What do you think of that, Inky, old man?"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh smiled his sleepy Oriental smile.

"The gorgeousness is terrific," he remarked. "I should have the enormous pleasure in accompanying my worthy chumful friend."

"Think how beautifully your complexion will show up against the glaciers," said Nugent enthusiastically.

The nabob grinned.

"And then, the giddy winter sports," said Nugent. "Think of the bobsleighs, and the skis, and the giddy skating—what?"

Wharton smiled.

"There won't be any winter sports in June, old chap," he remarked.

"I forgot that. Never mind, there will be plenty to do—and it will be jolly—ripping—first-chop!"

"Yes, if it comes off!"

"Can you see the postman yet?" asked Nugent eagerly.

Wharton turned to the window again.

There was no one in sight in the quad. now.

"He may have passed while I wasn't looking," said Harry. "I think I'll go down and see if he's been. I'm rather anxious for uncle's letter."

"By George, I should say so!"

"Bob, old man!" exclaimed Harry, as he reached the door, and caught sight of a sturdy junior passing. "Has the post got in?"

"Yes," said Bob Cherry.

"Good! Is there a letter for me?"

"Yes. Bunter said he would bring it up."

"Oh, good!"

Bob Cherry swung on his way, and Wharton remained at the study door, glancing down the passage, expecting Billy Bunter to appear in sight.

But the fat junior did not appear.

After waiting a few minutes Harry started down the passage, to descend into the hall and look for his letter. Billy Bunter was just coming up the stairs.

He started, and blinked at Wharton.

"Where's my letter?" asked Harry.

"Eh?"

"My letter!"

"Your—your letter!"

"Yes," said Harry sharply. "You were going to bring it up, Bob says. Where is it?"

"Oh, really——"

Harry Wharton grasped the fat junior by the shoulder and shook him. Billy Bunter gave a breathless howl.

"Ow! Oh, really, Wharton, I wish you wouldn't be such a rough beast! You may make my glasses fall off——"

"Where's my letter?"

"And if they get broken, you'll have to pay for them, so there!"

"Where's the letter?" roared Wharton, shaking the fat junior. "What have you done with it? Hand it over!"

"Ow Oh! Yow!"

"Where's my letter, you fat villain?"

"Yarooh!"

Harry Wharton left off shaking the fat junior. He took a tight grip upon the back of his collar and marched him into No. 1 Study, taking no notice of his wriggles and writhings.

He jammed him down into a chair, and closed the door.

"Now," he said, "where's that letter?"

"Ow! Yow!"

"Hand it over, or I'll give you a licking with a cricket-stump. Mind, I mean it!"

"What—that letter?"

"The letter that's just come for me!"

"The—the one with a foreign stamp?"

"Yes—a Swiss stamp, I suppose."

"I—I—I——"

"Where is it?"

"This is what comes of being obliging!" said Billy Bunter plaintively. "Hanged if I ever try to do you a good turn again, Wharton!"

"Will you give me the letter?" shouted Harry.

"I—I—I c-can't find it!"

"You—can't—find—it?"

"N-n-n-no! You must have made me drop it when you shook me in the passage," said Bunter, feeling in his pockets.

Harry Wharton went out of the study without a word, and looked in the passage for the letter. There was no sign of it there.

He returned to the study.

"Got it?" asked Bunter.

"No!" said Harry wrathfully.

"I'm sincerely sorry. It's most unfortunate, isn't it?" said Bunter. "I suppose the letter contained a remittance. Of course, it will be recovered. I suppose you will be willing to lend me a trifle——"

"You—you fat young rascal——"

"Oh, really, Wharton! This is how the case stands. I'm expecting a postal-order by the first post in the morning——"

"Shut up, you young ass. What have you done with my letter?"

"I'm sincerely afraid it's lost. I'm very sorry, of course. Look here, Wharton, suppose I succeed in finding the letter, will you advance me a small loan——"

Wharton almost gasped. The coolness of Billy Bunter was no new thing, but it was a continual surprise to his study-mates in the Remove.

Wharton took a firm grasp upon the stump.

"So you've hidden that letter, and you think you'll extort a loan from me for finding it," he said grimly.

"Oh, really, Wharton! I hope you don't think me capable of a mean thing like that. Of course, if I take the trouble of finding the letter, I ought to have a small loan."

"I'll give you one minute to find it!" said Wharton.

"But I—I can't——"

"I'm sorry for you if you can't. If you don't hand it out in one minute, I'm going to larrup you with this cricket-stump."

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

Harry took out his watch.

Billy Bunter blinked at him nervously, and edged towards the door.

"Where are you going?"

"To—to look for the letter, you know."

"Sit down!"

"B-but——"

"Sit down!"

Billy Bunter sank weakly into his chair. Harry Wharton glanced at his watch.

"Thirty seconds gone," he remarked.

"If-I-how am I to find the letter if you won't let me go and look for it?" murmured Billy Bunter feebly.

"Forty seconds!"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Fifty seconds!"

"I——"

"Fifty-five seconds. Now, then——"

"You see, I——"

Wharton put the watch back into his pocket.

"The minute's up!" he remarked.

"Oh! Ow! Oh, really——"

Wharton caught the fat junior by the collar and swung him off the chair. Then the cricket-stump came into play.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Ow, ow, ow!"

Whack, whack!

"Oh, hold on—leave off—leggo!" roared Billy Bunter. "I—I think I can find the letter! Yow!"

Whack, whack!

"Ow! I'll find the letter! Yarooh!"

Whack!

"Look here—yoop, yowp—yah! Ow!"

Whack, whack!

Bunter plunged his fat hands despairingly in his pockets. He dragged out a letter with a blue Swiss stamp upon it, and the postmark of Lausanne.

"Ow! Yow! Here you are—yarooh! Leggo!"

Wharton laughed as he took the letter. Bunter had only succeeded in deceiving him for a moment, and then he had guessed that the fat junior had the letter still about him.

Billy Bunter subsided into the armchair, groaning.

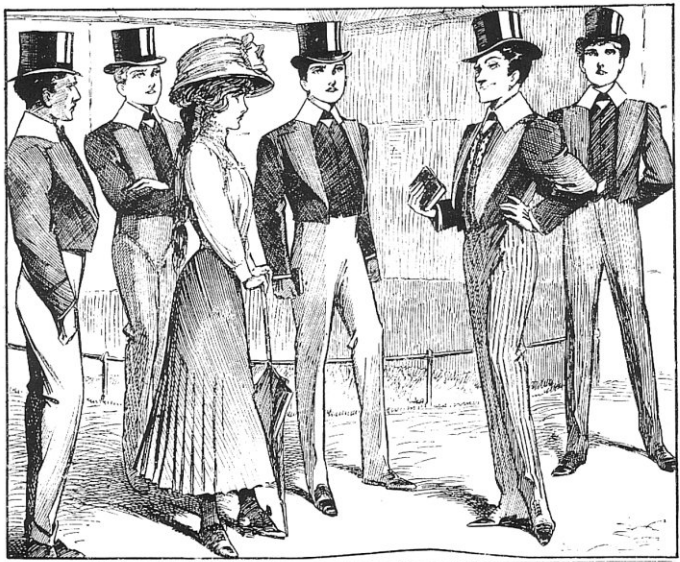
"Ow! Groo! I'm hurt! I—I think I'm dying!"

"Well, die quietly, old chap," said Nugent heartlessly.

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

"Shut up, Bunter. I want to read my letter!"

"Ow! Ow! Yow!"



"You are going home, Miss Marjorie?" said the Bounder. "May I walk with you?" Marjorie did not like the Bounder, but she could hardly refuse his request. She nodded coldly, without speaking.

Harry Wharton made a threatening motion with the stump, and Billy Bunter ceased his groaning. Wharton slit the letter and took out the contents. He opened the sheet, and read the close, firm writing of his uncle, and by the time he was half-way through the letter he broke off, waved it above his head, and shouted:

"Hurrah!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.
Bob Cherry is Surprised.

"HURRAH!"

Harry Wharton's shout rang through No. 1 Study, and along the Remove passage. Nugent and Hurree Singh looked at him excitedly. Billy Bunter blinked from the armchair in astonishment.

"I—I say, Wharton, is it a big remittance?" he exclaimed.

Harry did not reply. His eyes were dancing with delight as he looked over the letter again.

"It's splendid!" he exclaimed.

"Well, let's have the news!" exclaimed Nugent eagerly. "Are you going to Switzerland?"

"Yes. Hurrah!"

"And we?"

"You're coming, too—and Inky—and Bob."

"Bravo!"

"Listen!"

Harry Wharton read out a passage in the letter.

"'I have obtained Dr. Locke's permission for your friends to accompany you, Harry, as I know you would miss company of your own age. Short as your stay in the country will be, I hope you will enjoy your holiday—and your friends also.'"

"Hurrah!"

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NEXT WEEK: "THE THIEF."

"Hip-pip!"

"Isn't it ripping?" exclaimed Harry. "You follows want to come—eh?"

"What-ho!"

"The what-ho-fulness is terrific."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Dry up, Bunter! Hurrah!"

"Hurrah!"

The door of the study opened, and Bob Cherry looked in in great astonishment.

"What on earth's the matter here?" he exclaimed. "I heard you—— Oh, ah! What—who—how—— Gerroff! Yah!"

Bob Cherry was seized by the three chums and dragged into the study, and the next moment was being waltzed round the room by the three of them.

Amazed and breathless, Bob struggled for his freedom, and yelled to the excited chums of the Remove to let go.

"You asses!" he roared. "What's the giddy game? Chuck it! D'ye hear? I'll pulverise you! Leggo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hurrah!"

"The hurrahfulness is terrific."

"You chumps! You frabjous asses! Oh!"

The waltzers stumbled over Billy Bunter's legs, and rolled on the fat junior, and thence to the hearthrug in a heap.

"Oh!" gasped Nugent.

"Groo!"

"Yow!"

"Yaroob!"

Bob Cherry dragged himself from the heap.

"You asses!" he roared, getting Nugent's head into

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chancery, and beginning to pommel. "Is this a study rag? Take that, you chump!"

"Ow! Groo! Draggimoff!"

"Hold on, Bob."

"And that!—and that——"

Wharton and Hurree Singh dragged the excited junior off Nugent. Frank mopped his nose with his handkerchief.

"You ass!" he howled.

"It's all right, Bob."

"All right—eh? Why——"

"We were only celebrating," gasped Wharton. "We're going on a holiday to Switzerland, old chap."

"What!"

"And you're coming with us."

"My only hat!"

"Hence these tears—I mean, hence these gloats."

"Well, that's jolly good," said Bob Cherry, calming down a little. "Sorry—ha, ha!—sorry I bashed your boko, old man."

"You frabjous duffer!" snorted Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha! But how, why, and wherefore are we going to Switzerland?" demanded Bob Cherry. "Expound."

Harry Wharton explained, while Nugent mopped his nose, and Billy Bunter groaned deeply in the armchair.

Bob Cherry's eyes danced as he listened, and he executed a war dance round the study table to display his exuberant satisfaction.

"Ripping!" he exclaimed. "Splendid! My hat! Your uncle is an uncle in a thousand, Wharton. I wish I had a few like him. I'd keep 'em in lavender. How ripping!"

"Yes; it's jolly good."

"But hold on," said Bob Cherry, becoming serious. "What about tin? It will cost a lot of money, you know."

Wharton smiled.

"That's where my uncle comes in," he said.

"Colonel Wharton's footing the bill?"

"Yes. He's making arrangements for our tickets to be sent to us from Cook's, and he's enclosed a remittance for incidental expenses."

"My hat!"

"He's a brick!"

"Well, I suppose he knew we couldn't pay our exes. as far as Switzerland out of our weekly pocket-money," said Harry, laughing.

"No; I suppose not. My word, it will be ripping!" said Bob Cherry. "When do we start?"

"On Monday."

"Gorgeous!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, Bunter!"

"Of course, I'm coming," said Bunter, blinking at Harry Wharton.

Wharton looked uncomfortable.

"Sorry, Bunter—you're not," he said.

"Oh, really Wharton——"

"My uncle doesn't mention you at all, and he hasn't mentioned you to the Head. Anyway, you'd be too much trouble abroad, Bunty."

"Look here——"

"You always make yourself such a nuisance, and get us into all sorts of rotten scrapes," said Harry. "You're such a rotter, you know."

"Oh, really——"

"We'll spring ten bob to give you a feed the day we go," said Harry. "That will make you happy, I suppose?"

"I think I ought to come to Switzerland."

"Can't be did."

"Look here, you fellows won't be able to get on without me. Suppose you do any camping out on the—the glaciers, you'll want me to cook. Suppose——"

"Now, look here, Bunter——"

"I don't think it's chummy to leave me behind."

"Well, I can't take all Greyfriars," said Harry. "I should like to take Tom Brown and Mark Linley, but I can't."

"Yes; but I'm a special chum——"

"Are you? This is the first I've heard of it."

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Sorry, Bunty; but you'll have to be satisfied with the feed."

Bunter grunted. He did not mean to be satisfied with the feed. If Harry Wharton & Co. went to Switzerland, Billy Bunter meant to go with them, by hook or by crook.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bunter Means Business.

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were the objects of a good deal of interest and of envy to the other fellows for the next day or two.

There were some fellows at Greyfriars who spent their vacations in Switzerland or on the Riviera, but the greater number did not, and Wharton's expedition was looked upon as being considerably adventurous.

Most of the fellows, however, felt no envy, except of a good-natured kind, and hoped that the Famous Four would have a good time.

"Blessed if I know what you're taking Bunter along for, though," Tom Brown remarked to Wharton the next day. "He'll be a fearful trouble to you."

"Eh? I'm not taking Bunter."

"You're not?"

"Certainly not. The four of us are going. My uncle had the Head's leave for the four, and I couldn't take Bunter if I wanted to."

Tom Brown laughed.

"Well, he's saying around that he's going."

"He's talking out of his hat, then."

As a matter of fact, the general impression in the Remove was that Bunter was going. The fat junior had quite made up his mind about it.

He borrowed a guide-book to Switzerland from Temple, of the Upper Fourth, who had been at Territet with his people the last vacation. He asked many questions about the kind of clothing required, and the prices of refreshments. In fact Bunter obtained a great deal of eclat on the strength of his supposed invitation to Switzerland. The fat junior was quite in earnest. He meant to go.

"What town shall we be staying at, Wharton?" he asked suddenly.

"We?" said Harry pointedly.

"Yes. I suppose we shall make some place our centre for excursions?"

Harry laughed.

"Don't be an ass, Billy! My uncle is staying in Lausanne at present, and we shall go there. We are going to do Lake Leman."

"Good! Temple's guide-book has all about Lake Leman in it. It's the same as the Lake of Geneva, Wharton—same lake," said Bunter, with an air of great knowledge.

"Go hon!"

"There's lots of interesting things there—the Castle of Chillon, where Byron's prisoner lived, and where his hair grew grey, but not with years," said Bunter. "I shall borrow Temple's guide-book to take with me."

"Where to?"

"Switzerland, of course."

"Ass!"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Look here, Billy, don't be a duffer. The Head wouldn't let you go, even if my uncle had asked him, and he hasn't."

"Suppose you ask him."

"No fear."

"I wouldn't mind putting it to him myself," suggested Bunter.

"Bosh!"

"Well, I'll mention it to him, as you wish, Wharton."

"I don't wish."

"It's all right; the trouble's nothing," said Bunter. "I'd do more than that for a fellow I like."

"Look here, you young ass——" began Wharton wrathfully.

But Billy Bunter developed a sudden attack of deafness. He rolled away in the direction of the Head's study.

In response to his tap at the door, Dr. Locke's deep voice bade him come in.

Billy Bunter entered the study.

"Well, what is it, Bunter?" asked the Head, looking down at the fat junior.

"If you please, sir, Wharton wanted me to speak to you——"

"Indeed!"

"Yes, sir. It's about the trip to Switzerland, sir. He wants me to go with him, but he didn't care to ask you, sir. He thought it would look a check on his part. I thought I'd mention it, sir. I'm in his study, you know, sir, and we're close chums."

Dr. Locke looked at the fat junior thoughtfully.

"I've been in rather weak health lately, sir," said Bunter, working a quaver into his fat voice. "The change would do me good, sir."

"Ahem!"

"Wharton would be very disappointed if I didn't go, sir."

"If Wharton wishes to take you, he may come and ask me himself," said Dr. Locke.

"Yes, sir, but——"

"You may go, Bunter."

"Ye-e-es, sir."

And Billy Bunter left the study. He returned to the Remove quarters, and found Harry Wharton & Co. at tea, with Mark Linley and Brown and Hazeldene. The juniors grinned at the Owl of the Remove. They knew that he had been to the Head. Harry Wharton was frowning, but the rest were amused.

"Well," said Frank Nugent, "what said the oracle?"

Bunter blinked at them.

"It's all right, you fellows."

"What!" exclaimed Wharton.

"It's all right. The Head says I can go if Wharton likes."

"I jolly well don't like!" said Harry.

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"What did the Head really say?" asked Tom Brown.

"Well, he said Wharton could come and ask him for permission for me to join the party," said Billy Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, Wharton will rush to do it."

"I don't think!"

"I consider Wharton ought to," said Billy Bunter warmly. "I think it would be only chummy. I've been studying the subject, too, and I shall be very useful in guiding you chaps round Switzerland."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at. Are you going to the Head now, Wharton?"

"No."

"You think it would be better to see him to-morrow morning?"

"No fear!"

"Then when are you going to see him about it?" demanded Bunter.

"Oh, on the thirty-first of June, or the twenty-ninth of February."

"Oh, really, you know——"

"Pass the sardines!" said Hazeldene. "Ring off, Bunter! You're too numerous. Have you chaps got your tickets yet?"

"Yes; they came in a registered letter to-day," said Harry. "I've got them safe in my desk. I wish all you chaps were coming."

"So do we," said Tom Brown, laughing.

"Never mind; we'll send you some picture-postcards," said Bob Cherry. "That's the next best thing."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Yes, but——"

"Oh, pass him the jam-tarts, and shut him up!"

And the jam-tarts were shoved towards Bunter, and for the moment, at least, he was too busily engaged to talk.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.
The Bounder Makes a Suggestion.

VERNON-SMITH, the Bounder of Greyfriars, was sitting in his study, talking to Hazeldene.

It was late on the Saturday evening, and getting near bedtime for the Greyfriars Remove.

There was a dark expression upon the Bounder's face, and a worried look on Hazeldene's.

"So you won't come?" he exclaimed.

Hazeldene shook his head.

"I'm not going to break bounds at night," he replied. "It's enough."

"I don't know about that. Besides——"

"It's a short walk to the Cross Keys, and there will be heaps of fun there. Hang it, I want somebody to go with me!"

"Ask Skinner."

"I'd rather take you, Hazel. Besides, I want you to come, and it will be jolly. Why can't you come?"

Hazeldene coloured.

"I've promised my sister, for one thing," he replied awkwardly.

The Bounder sneered.

"You are under a girl's orders, then?"

"Not exactly, only—— Hang it, I won't come, Smithy! Besides, there's Wharton. I've as good as promised Wharton not to begin this sort of thing again. It was understood, when he let me row in the Remove Eight."

The Bounder frowned.

Harry Wharton's influence was always against him; but he remembered with satisfaction that Wharton was going on a holiday abroad that might be a long one, and that he would have a freer hand in the absence of the captain of the Remove.

His face cleared at the thought.

"Well, as you like," he said; "I don't care. I—— Who's that?"

NEXT WEEK: **"THE THIEF."**

The door opened, and Billy Bunter blinked in.

The Bounder looked at him irritably. Vernon-Smith was rolling in money, and in spite of endless rebuffs, Billy Bunter would persist in trying to borrow of him. The Bounder had plenty of money, but he was not generous. But the impecunious Owl of the Remove never gave up hope.

"What do you want?" asked Vernon-Smith angrily.

"I—I say, Smithy, I want to speak to you—rather important," said Billy Bunter.

"Oh, get out!"

"But it's important."

"Buzz off, you rotten cadger! I've nothing to give away."

"Look here, Smithy, it's a really important matter. If Hazeldene doesn't mind, I should like to speak to you in private, too."

Hazeldene rose to his feet.

"Don't go!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith. "It's all rot. The fat rotter is only cadging, as usual. You can stay here, Hazel."

"That's all right," said Hazeldene, who was secretly glad of the opportunity of escape, to save further argument with the Bounder. "I'll go."

And he left the study before the Bounder could make any rejoinder. Vernon-Smith looked angrily at the fat junior.

"You fat toad!"

"Look here, Smithy, it's really important," said Billy Bunter, closing the door. "I know you're up against Wharton and his friends, or I wouldn't mention it to you."

The Bounder's expression changed. Anything against Harry Wharton & Co. was welcome to him, even from Billy Bunter.

"What have you got to say?" he asked, a little more civilly.

"You know Wharton and his lot are going to Switzerland on Monday? It's rotten, but they actually think of leaving me behind," said Bunter.

"No wonder!"

"H'm! Well, I'm jolly well going, if I can fix it. Wharton could ask the Head if he liked, but he won't; but I could go without that, and settle it afterwards, if——"

"Well?" said Vernon-Smith, more amiably. He was quite ready to help Bunter now if he could. It occurred to him that he could not do Harry Wharton & Co. a worse turn than by fastening the fat junior upon them for their holiday abroad.

"If I could get the ticket," said Billy Bunter, "I can raise my fare to London, as I'm expecting ten shillings on Monday."

"Expecting a postal-order?" asked Vernon-Smith, with a sneer.

"Yes, I am, as a matter of fact," said Bunter. "I was expecting one to-day, but it hasn't come, so it's bound to be delivered on Monday. But that wasn't what I meant," he went on hurriedly, as Vernon-Smith made an impatient gesture. "Wharton is going to stand me ten bob, for a feed, as a—a sort of compensation for not taking me with him."

"Oh, I see!"

"So I can manage the fare to London, even if my postal-order doesn't come. Of course, it's practically certain to come; and if you'd like to lend me five bob off it now, I'd stand a supper. Mrs. Mumble's isn't closed yet."

"Oh, cheese it!"

"Well, to come back to business, what I want is a ticket from London to Lausanne. Wharton's going via Paris, second-class, and the ticket costs about five pounds. If you cared to lend me five pounds——"

The Bounder stared.

Billy Bunter had plenty of nerve; he was famous for it. But Vernon-Smith had never expected even Billy Bunter to have nerve enough to ask for a loan of five pounds.

"You utter ass!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, really, Smithy—— Five bob, let along five pounds," said the Bounder. "I'd spring a half-crown, perhaps, to plant you on Wharton. It would be worth that."

"Oh, really——"

"But did you say that Wharton has his tickets?" asked the Bounder, a new idea working in his brain.

"Yes; he has four of them. His uncle sent them through Cook's," said Billy Bunter dolefully. "He's got them in his desk in the study."

"Does he keep his desk locked?"

Bunter started.

"No."

"Then you've seen the tickets?"

"Well, I just looked at them."

"Why don't you take one?" said the Bounder coolly.

Billy Bunter jumped. He was certainly not particular in his notions of honesty, but that idea had never occurred to him.

"T-t-take one!" he stammered.

"Yes."

"B-b-but that would be stealing!" faltered Bunter.

"Nonsense!"

"Well, wouldn't it?" exclaimed the fat junior, his eyes opened wide behind his big spectacles.

"Of course not! It would if you meant to keep it, and not pay for it. But suppose you took the ticket, and put an IOU for five pounds in its place, or whatever the ticket costs. Then it's simply a debt."

"Yes, I never thought of that."

"You could settle up afterwards, when your postal-order comes," added the Bounder, with a sour grin.

Billy Bunter reflected.

"B-but Wharton would miss the ticket," he said. "He would know I had taken it, and——"

"Well, you needn't put the IOU there," said Vernon-Smith. "Write it out, so as to be perfectly honest, and give it to Wharton when you get to Switzerland."

"Well, that's a good idea. But when Wharton misses the ticket——"

"I don't suppose he will miss it till it's time to start," said the Bounder. "Then he can't do anything, even if he's suspicious. He'll have to pay the fare for one of them in cash, that's all."

Billy Bunter nodded.

"You—you think it would be perfectly honest, Smithy?" he stammered.

The Bounder smiled sarcastically.

"Of course, if you intend to pay Wharton afterwards."

"Oh, of course I should do that!" said Bunter, with dignity. "I trust that I'm not the kind of fellow to be willing to remain under an obligation to anybody."

The Bounder chuckled.

"Then go ahead—it's all right."

"Blessed if I don't!" said Billy Bunter.

And he left the study in a determined mood. Vernon-Smith chuckled softly.

"I've put a spoke in Wharton's wheel this time," he murmured. "He'll have that fat, greedy rotter planted on him for the holiday, as sure as a gun. I think I shall be getting a little of my own back this time."

Billy Bunter met Wharton in the passage as he left the Bounder's study. Harry looked at him with a smile. He could guess—he thought he could—the object of the fat junior's visit to the Bounder's quarters.

"I—I say, Wharton," said Billy Bunter, stopping and blinking at him. "I've just seen Smithy, and——"

"How much have you screwed out of him, Billy?"

"Oh, really, Wharton! Look here, I suppose if I can raise my own expenses to Switzerland, there's no objection to my joining the party, eh?"

Wharton started.

"My hat! You don't mean to say that the Bounder is standing the exes. for you, Billy? Impossible! He's not that sort, even for a friend, and you're not a friend of his."

"Never mind what I mean," said Bunter, with dignity. "Some fellows may have sufficient confidence in me to lend me money, Wharton."

"Not fellows who know you," said Harry, laughing.

"Well, as I was saying, I suppose I can come if I can raise the exes," said Bunter.

Wharton looked perplexed.

"I suppose so," he said. "Switzerland's a free country, and anybody can go there, if he's got the time and the money."

"That's all right, then."

"But you haven't the money!"

"Well, if I haven't, I haven't," said Billy Bunter mysteriously. "Never mind."

And with that he rolled on, leaving Harry Wharton in a state of considerable perplexity. But he came to the conclusion that Billy Bunter was, as usual, talking through his hat, and he dismissed the matter from his mind.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.
Hazeldene's Sister.

THE next day was Sunday, a very quiet day at Greyfriars. Somewhat to Wharton's surprise, Billy Bunter made no further reference to the Swiss expedition. He did not ask to come, or say that he was coming, but there was at times a peculiar grin on his face which would have made the chums of the Remove suspect that he had something up his sleeve if they had had time to observe him, or think about him. But they had plenty of other matters to occupy their minds, as a matter of fact.

The Famous Four had preparations to make for the journey, and good-byes to say to various people. Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent had communicated with their people, of course, and obtained permission to make the journey. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's guardian in London—a gentleman in the India Office—had left it to the Head, who saw no reason why the Nabob of Bhanipur should not go. Billy Bunter had written home that he was going on the first day that he heard about the proposed expedition. That was Bunter's way. He was now under the necessity of living up to his better home.

Harry Wharton wanted to say good-bye to the Cliff House girls, and he had an opportunity, as the Greyfriars fellows went to the same church on Sunday.

After church it was frequently the custom of the juniors to walk home to Cliff House with Marjorie and her friends.

On that Sunday afternoon Harry Wharton & Co. joined the girls, on coming out of church, as usual.

Hazeldene was standing near the old stone porch of the church, talking to Vernon-Smith, and Harry noticed it. Hazeldene seemed to be declining something that the Bounder was asking and urging upon him. Harry did not need telling that Vernon-Smith wanted to speak to Marjorie. More than once the Bounder had cast glances at Hazeldene's sister, and it did not need a very sharp wit to guess that that was chiefly the reason why Vernon-Smith took so much pains to cultivate Hazeldene.

Hazeldene shook his head finally, and walked away with his hands in his pockets, without more than a nod to his sister.

Vernon-Smith looked after him for a moment.

"May we walk home with you, Marjorie?" asked Harry.

Marjorie smiled.

"Of course, Harry."

"We've got something to tell you, too. We're going away for a week or two."

"A holiday?"

"Yes; the four of us are joining my uncle and aunt in Switzerland. How I wish you were coming, Marjorie."

"So do I," said Marjorie, with a smile. "How nice it would be."

"Ripping!" said Miss Clara.

"We are going abroad next vacation," said Marjorie. "Perhaps it would be possible for us all to be together then."

"By Jove, I shall manage it if I can!" said Harry, with dancing eyes. "It would be jolly! I——"

He broke off as Vernon-Smith joined the group.

The Bounder raised his hat to the girls.

"You are going home, Miss Hazeldene?" he asked.

"Yes," said Marjorie coldly.

"You are walking to Cliff House?"

"Yes."

Marjorie's tone was like ice. She did not like the Bounder, and she strongly resented his evil influence over her brother. But Vernon-Smith was impervious to rebuffs.

"May I walk with you?" he said coolly.

As Marjorie had just accorded permission to the other juniors, she could hardly say no. She nodded without speaking.

The Famous Four exchanged looks.

Had the girls not been present they would have made Vernon-Smith understand very clearly what they thought of him, but it was impossible to be candid now.

They moved off by the footpath towards the sea.

Vernon-Smith walked with the party.

Harry and Marjorie walked a little ahead, increasing their pace to be rid of the undesired company of the Bounder.

"When are you starting?" asked Marjorie.

"To-morrow morning by the first train. We have to be in London by nine."

"That will be very early."

"Yes."

"I hope you will have a nice holiday," said Marjorie brightly. "You will write to me?"

"Yes, rather," said Harry; "and send you picture-postcards if you care to have them."

"I should like them very much."

"We're all sorry Wharton's going," said the Bounder, who had quickened his pace and was now walking on the other side of Marjorie. "We shall miss him."

Harry compressed his lips. There was no love lost between him and the Bounder of Greyfriars.

"Bunter is so fond of him that he's actually going too," said Vernon-Smith, with a grin. "He simply declines to be left behind."

"Bunter is not coming," said Harry.

The Bounder laughed.

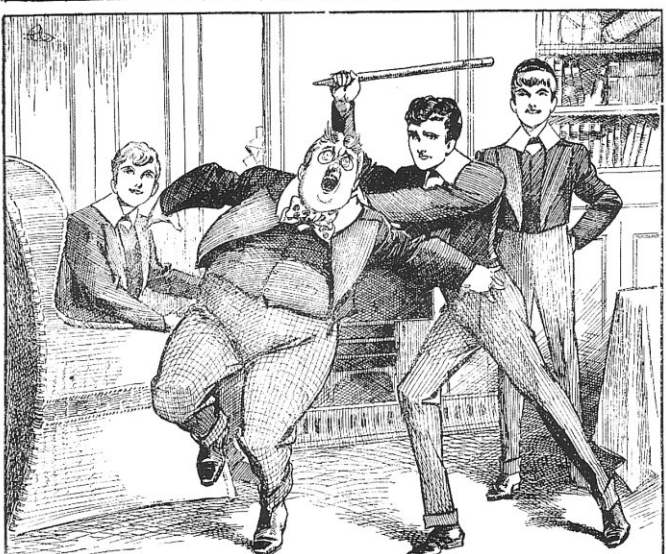
"I think you'll find him in Switzerland, all the same," he said. "What will you bet on it?"

"I don't bet."

The Bounder bit his lip.

"Will you be engaged to-morrow, after school, Miss Hazeldene?" he asked, with a sidelong look at Harry.

NEXT WEEK: "THE THIEF."



Whack, whack! Wharton brought the cricket-stump into active play. "Oh, hold on—leave off—leggo!" roared Billy Bunter. "I think I can find the letter!"

"I don't know," said Marjorie.

"We were thinking of getting up a boating-party up the river," said Vernon-Smith. "If you would come with Miss Clara, it would be jolly. Your brother is coming."

"My brother!"

"Yes; Hazel has promised to come with us."

Marjorie was silent.

"It would be ripping if you would come," said the Bounder. "You see, when there are girls present it makes a party a much better success, and it prevents any rotting, you know—I mean, if you were there there would be no smoking, or anything of that sort. If we go alone we're always much more giddy, of course."

Wharton's teeth came hard together.

Marjorie understood.

Vernon-Smith must have been very sure of his influence over Hazeldene to put it so plainly. He meant that if Marjorie refused to come he would do his best—or his worst—to influence Hazeldene for the bad.

The girl's eyes burned for a moment.

"I cannot come," said Marjorie, after a pause.

"I'm sorry!"

"And I hope my brother will not come."

The Bounder smiled mockingly.

"He's agreed to come."

"I shall ask him not to do so."

"You're very hard on me, Miss Hazeldene."

Marjorie did not reply. She walked faster, and the Bounder, having said his say, allowed himself to fall behind.

Harry stole a glance at Marjorie's face. The girl was looking very troubled.

"Don't let what that cad said worry you, Marjorie," said Harry.

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The girl nodded.

"I cannot help it, Harry. Hazel is so weak—so foolish. He has promised me to let Vernon-Smith's company alone, but he is weak. When you are away, too——" She paused.

"That's what he meant," said Wharton. "He means to take advantage of my being away. It won't be longer than a week or two, however."

Marjorie was silent. She knew how much harm might be done in a week or two by the evil influence of the Bounder. Twice in his career Hazeldene had come dangerously near getting expelled from the school.

They did not speak again till Cliff House was in sight. Wharton's brows had been wrinkled in thought. He spoke as they stopped at the gates.

"Don't worry, Marjorie."

The girl smiled faintly.

"I won't Harry—not more than I can help. I believe that boy is thoroughly bad at heart, and he will do my brother any harm he can."

"I'm afraid so. But I've got an idea."

"Yes?"

"Suppose Hazel came to Switzerland with me?"

Marjorie's eyes opened.

"Harry! Could it be managed?"

"I think so," said Harry. "I know the Head would give permission, and, as it happens, I've got heaps of tin—my uncle sent me twenty pounds for incidental expenses out."

"Oh, Harry! You—you are too good!" faltered Marjorie. "No one but you would have thought of that!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Oh, stuff, Marjorie! Hazel's a decent chap, when he's not with the Bounder, and we shall be glad to have his

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company. And it will quite take the wind out of Vernon-Smith's sails."

Marjorie smiled.

"Yes, that is true, Harry. I should be ever, ever so glad if Hazel went with you. But I could not allow you to pay his expenses."

"Oh, that's all right! I'm in funds, you know, and my uncle stands the exes. of the whole party when we've once joined him."

"Will he be willing——"

"He'll be willing for me to take half Greyfriars if it were allowed."

"Then that is all right, Harry. But my father will pay for Hazel's ticket, at all events. I could not allow you to. Dad is glad to have him with you—he knows what a good influence you have over him—and he will be pleased. He has spoken to me about you, and he's always glad when you're with Hazel in the holidays. I will write to him to-night, and he will send the money."

Wharton nodded.

"Just as you like, Marjorie, though I could afford to stand it just now. But arrange it as you like."

And they parted with an affectionate hand-clasp.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.
The Bounder is Checkmate.

"DID you ask my sister?"

Hazeldene asked the question, as Vernon-Smith strolled in.

The Bounder nodded.

"Yes, I asked her."

"Is she coming?"

"No!"

Hazeldene looked relieved.

"I thought she wouldn't, Smithy. She doesn't like you, and that's the plain fact of the matter."

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.

"Perhaps we'll alter all that in time," he remarked. "Anyway, it will be gayer without the girls—that's one thing. As Wharton's going away the first thing in the morning, we needn't be afraid of his coming down on us like a wolf on the fold, as he did at our last little picnic."

Hazeldene grinned slightly at the recollection of that incident. Wharton had smashed the bottle of champagne, and given the Bounder a licking he had been long in recovering from.

Vernon-Smith had been much more careful since then.

Vernon-Smith scowled as he caught the grin on Hazeldene's face.

"I suppose you're coming all the same?" he asked.

"I suppose so," said Hazeldene hesitatingly.

"It will be jolly! Skinner and Stott and Snoop will be there, and I'm spending three pounds on the feed."

"My hat!"

"Oh, I've heaps of money," said the Bounder. "What's the good of being the son of the Cotton King if you don't have money?"

"By George! I wish my pater was a millionaire!" said Hazeldene enviously.

"We'll get out immediately after school and carry the stuff there in bags," said Vernon-Smith. "It will be jolly!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Hazeldene!"

It was Harry Wharton's voice. He came up quickly, with a dark glance at the Bounder.

The latter put his hands in his pockets and stood his ground.

"Yes, Wharton," said Hazeldene.

"Would you care to come to Switzerland with us?"

Hazeldene jumped.

"Switzerland!"

"Yes!"

"But—but can I come?" asked Hazeldene. "You're joking!"

"I mean it, Hazel. I've spoken to the Head, and it can be arranged if you choose."

Hazeldene drew a deep breath.

"If I choose!" he said. "I'm not likely to make much bones about it. Of course, I shall be jolly glad to come!"

"Then it's settled?"

"What about the tin?"

"That's all right. We shall all be my uncle's guests in Switzerland, and all the expenses will be paid, of course."

"But the ticket costs a jolly lot!"

"That will be arranged."

"I say, this is awfully decent of you, Wharton," said Hazeldene, gratefully. "Blessed if it isn't! I'll come, rather!"

Vernon-Smith gritted his teeth.

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NEXT WEEK: "THE THIEF."

But the wind was quite taken out of his sails; he could not bid higher than that.

Hazeldene had already forgotten him and his intended picnic.

"You'd better shove your things together, then," said Harry. "We leave here at six in the morning."

"Good!"

And Hazeldene hurried away.

Vernon-Smith turned upon Harry with a savage scowl on his face, and his fists clenched almost convulsively.

"I know your game," he said, between his teeth. "You are doing this on purpose—because of what you heard me say to Marjorie to-day."

Harry looked at him with clear, steady eyes.

"What you said to Marjorie was rotten and caddish!" he said. "It's a jolly good thing for Hazeldene to get away from you."

"You—you interfering hound!"

Wharton's lips set.

"I don't want to slog a chap on Sunday," he said. "It's rotten bad form. But you'd better be careful what you say, Smith."

"I'll say what I choose. You can gloat over me now, if you like," said the Bounder furiously. "But I shall use Hazeldene as I please! He will be as wax in my hands. And then his sister——"

Wharton's brow darkened.

"That's enough!" he said roughly.

"Pah! I tell you that I will cut you out with Marjorie Hazeldene. You shall see me do it, and then——"

"Hold your tongue!"

"I won't! And——"

Wharton's grasp was laid upon him.

The Bounder struggled; but the weedy, unfit Bounder of Greyfriars was as an infant in the hands of the champion athlete of the Lower School.

"I won't lick you," said Harry, "though, by George, I don't know who ever deserved a licking more than you do. But if you mention the name of Marjorie Hazeldene in my hearing again, look out for squalls. You cad—you're not fit to speak her name!"

And he shook the Bounder till his teeth rattled, then released him, and strode away.

Vernon-Smith gasped for breath.

He muttered something between his teeth, and then made his way to the Remove dormitory, in which direction Hazeldene had gone. He found Hazeldene there, selecting articles from his box, with a travelling-bag wide open to cram them into.

Hazeldene glanced round with a cheerful grin.

"This is jolly, isn't it?" he exclaimed.

"I'm glad you think so," said the Bounder, with a snarl. "Can't you see Wharton's little game?"

"Yes! He's going to give me a holiday, and it's awfully decent of him!"

"He wants to get you away from me."

"Pooh! I don't suppose he'd take the trouble for that! I don't care, anyway. I get the run to Switzerland, don't I?"

"Yes, you do!" said Vernon-Smith bitterly. "You'll get nothing from me, though, after this!"

"Oh, all right."

"You don't care, eh?"

"Not a rap!" said Hazeldene cheerfully. "After all, I promised my sister not to have anything more to do with you, and a promise is a promise."

The Bounder sneered, and quitted the dormitory with a clouded brow. He was defeated all along the line, and he felt it.

Meanwhile, the fact that there was an addition to the party for Switzerland had become known, and Billy Bunter had tackled the chums of the Remove on the subject. He cornered Harry Wharton in the junior common-room, and blinked at him with indignant reproach.

"I say, Wharton, is it true that Hazeldene is going with you?" he asked.

Harry Wharton nodded.

"So you're able to take another chap, and you're taking Hazeldene instead of me—a chap who digs with you in the same study?"

"I'm sorry, Billy, but you knew you couldn't come," said Harry patiently. "I told you so from the first."

"Oh, very well; if you think that chummy——"

"I don't," said Harry. "I've never undertaken to be chummy with you, that I know of. You don't talk about being chummy, Billy, except when you've an axe to grind."

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"You're going to have a ten-bob feed to-morrow, Billy," said Wharton, consolingly. "That's more than you deserve."

"I'm sorry you don't value my friendship more highly," said Billy Bunter, with a great deal of dignity. "The subject had better drop."

And he walked away with his fat little nose in the air.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.
An Early Start.

"TIME to turn out!"

The earliest beams of the sun were peeping into the high windows of the Remove dormitory.

Harry Wharton had sat up in bed, and was looking at his watch. It was half-past five. The captain of the Remove turned out at once.

"Time to get up, you chaps!"

Snore!

Wharton smiled, and went round to his chums, shaking one after another. They grunted and turned out. Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, and Hazeldene were soon splashing at their washstands in cold water.

"I say, you fellows——"

Bob Cherry gave a whistle.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Wonders will never cease. Bunter's awake!"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Go to sleep, Billy!" said Harry Wharton. "It's not rising-bell yet for an hour and a half! It's all right!"

"When are you going?"

"We leave here at six."

"Oh, all right!" Bunter rubbed his eyes, and blinked round in search of his spectacles. "But wouldn't it be better to take a little more rest and catch a later train?"

"We've got to time it to catch the boat-train at Charing-Cross, ass!"

"Oh, I see! Of course! Well, if it's necessary, I suppose a chap must get up!"

And Bunter put one fat leg out of bed and shivered.

"No need for you to get up, Billy."

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

"You're off your rocker, ass! Get back into bed!"

"Billy's thinking about the ten bob," said Harry laughing. "It's all right, Billy, I hadn't forgotten. If you blink round you'll see two five-shilling pieces lying on your washstand."

"Thanks very much, Wharton. I suppose there's no objection to my coming to the station to see you off?"

"My only aunt, Georgina!"

"Oh, really——"

"Go to bed, Billy, and don't be an ass!"

"I think I ought to come as far as the station," said Billy Bunter. "It would be only chummy."

Wharton looked at him in surprise. Billy Bunter had never risen early in the morning to be chummy before. Harry could not make it out.

"What are you driving at, Billy?" he asked bluntly. "What's the little game?"

"I hope you can give me credit for disinterested friendship, Wharton?" said the Owl of the Remove, with dignity.

"I wouldn't give you credit for a twopenny tart!" remarked Cherry.

"You can come to the station if you like, Billy," said Wharton, "but I don't see the idea. But it's your business."

"Well, I'll come!"

And Billy Bunter was dressed as soon as anyone.

The half-dozen Removites went down together. Excepting for the early housemaid, there was no one to see them off. The juniors took their bags into the hall, and then sat down to a hasty breakfast. Then, with the bags in their hands, they left the schoolhouse, and went down to the gates.

Gosling, the porter, was up to unlock the gates for them—grumbling, of course. The juniors bade him good-morning cheerily enough.

NEXT WEEK: "THE THIEF."

"Which it's an early hour to get up, Master Wharton," Gosling remarked. "Wot I says is this 'ere—it's hawful early!"

Wharton tossed him a shilling.

"Good-bye, Gossy!"

"Good-bye, Master Wharton, and thank you kindly!"

The juniors tramped out into the lane, and set their faces towards Friardale. Billy Bunter glanced at Harry Wharton curiously several times.

It was upon the tip of his tongue several times to say something, but he restrained himself. But, as it happened, Bob Cherry mentioned the matter that was uppermost in the fat junior's mind.

"You haven't forgotten the tickets, Harry?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"No; I shoved them in my pocket last night," he said.

"Good! Four of them—eh?"

"That's right. I've kept them in the same envelope that they came in, and I've got the envelope here," explained Wharton, tapping his breast-pocket.

"Good!"

Billy Bunter breathed a sigh of relief. He understood that Wharton had not looked into the envelope before putting it into his pocket, never imagining for a moment that anyone could have removed one of the tickets.

The juniors reached the station, and caught the early train. It was waiting in the station. Wharton took tickets for the junction, where they were to change for the main line and catch the London express.

"Take care for me, Wharton," said Billy Bunter.

"What for?"

"Well, I'd like to see you as far as the junction," said Billy.

"But——"

"I can get back in time for morning lessons," said Billy Bunter hurriedly. "That will be all right."

"You'll miss your breakfast."

"I can get a snack at the station."

"Oh, all right!"

And the six juniors entered the train together.

Harry Wharton & Co. were regarding the fat junior curiously. This sudden development of anxious friendship on his part was surprising—if genuine. It was more likely that the Owl of the Remove still entertained some absurd idea of making the journey to Switzerland.

"Here's the junction!" said Bob Cherry, as the local train clattered to a halt.

The juniors poured out on the platform in the early sunlight.

"Ten minutes to wait," said Harry.

"Then a cup of coffee would be a good idea," Hazeldene remarked.

"The goodfulness of the idea is terrific," said the Nabob of Bhanipur. "Pray let me stand treatfully the esteemed cup of coffee."

And the party adjourned to the buffet, which was just opened.

"Good! We might have a bit of a feed here!" said Bunter. "I'll have some sandwiches. Yes, and another cup of coffee, please!"

No one raised any objection. Troublesome as the Owl of the Remove was, the juniors wanted to be very patient with a chap who was being left behind. Billy Bunter drank coffee, and ate sandwiches, with a wonderful appetite.

"Here comes the train!"

"Your train back goes from the other platform, Billy," said Harry Wharton, holding out his hand. "Good-bye!"

"Thanks for coming to see me off," said Nugent.

"The thankfulness is terrific."

"I—I'm coming as far as London with you," said Billy Bunter. "I—I'm feeling awfully friendly, you know, and —and chummy, and anxious about you. I shan't feel that you're all right unless I come to London with you."

"My dear duffer——"

"I'm not asking you to pay for my ticket," said Billy Bunter loftily. "I've got ten shillings here, and that's enough."

"But that was to stand you a feed, Billy."

"I prefer to see you fellows off."

"You'll get into a row with the Head."

"I'll risk that."

"Now, look here, Billy, you'd better cut back to Greyfriars," said Harry Wharton persuasively. "I don't want to seem ungrateful, but you really ought to go back, and there's no need for you to see us off at London."

"Look here, I've got the money to pay my fare, and I suppose I can come to London if I like," said Bunter. "It's a free country."

"You'll get licked at Greyfriars."

"I tell you I'll risk it."

"Oh, all right! It's your business."

And Bunter bought his ticket for London, and entered the express with the party. He curled up in a corner and went to sleep, with a parting injunction to the juniors to wake him up as soon as they arrived at Charing Cross; which they promised to do.

Billy Bunter's snore mingled unmusically with the rattle of the train. He hardly stirred from his position while the express rushed on.

When he did wake, it was with a hand clapping his shoulder, and a voice shouting in his ear:

"Wake up, Bunty!"

Billy Bunter started from slumber, and blinked round him. He pushed on his spectacles, which had slid down his nose.

"Groo! Oh! Where are we? 'Tain't rising-bell yet!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Whe-where are we?"

"In London, ass!"

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter Does Go.

HARRY WHARTON & Co. alighted from the train. They had their bags in their hands—big and bulky bags, for they were travelling without trunks. They had enough knowledge of travelling to travel, whenever possible, without any baggage that they could not look after themselves. Billy Bunter, of course, was carrying nothing, excepting an overcoat on his arm.

Wharton led the way to the departure platform for the Continent.

There was a wait of twenty minutes before the train started, but it was already standing on the metals.

Early passengers, understudying the early bird who caught the worm, were selecting the more comfortable seats already.

Harry Wharton glanced at the number of the platform. The man standing to take the tickets, looked at the bags with which the juniors were laden, and smiled.

"Train for Paris, sir."

"Thank you," said Wharton. "Take this bag, Bob, while I get out the tickets."

"Right you are!"

"This chap can come on the platform to see us off, I suppose?" added Wharton, indicating Billy Bunter.

The man nodded.

Billy Bunter scuttled first on the platform, while Harry was getting out his envelope containing the tickets.

"I have to get another for you, Hazeldene," Harry remarked. "You fellows bag some seats while I'm gone."

"Right-ho!"

Wharton drew out the big envelope, and extracted the tickets, each in the form of a little covered book. Then he uttered an ejaculation.

"My hat!"

"You haven't lost them?" exclaimed Hazeldene anxiously.

"No; but one's gone!"

"Phew!"

"There are only three here."

"Great Scott!"

"It's slipped out into your pocket," suggested Bob Cherry.

Wharton shook his head. He was feeling in the pocket which had held the envelope, but it was vacant; the missing ticket was not there.

"It must have fallen out at Greyfriars," he said ruefully. "I suppose I ought to have counted the tickets. But I never thought——"

"Stand aside, please, sir!"

The chums drew to one side to allow fresh passengers to pass. They were all looking very serious.

"It's odd," said Harry. "The envelope hasn't been moved since I put it in my desk in the study. If it had fallen out, I ought to have seen it in the desk."

"Somebody may have shifted it for a lark."

"I should like to know the chap, then!"

"Well, you're sure you haven't it about you?"

"Yes, I'm quite sure of that."

"Then you'll have to take two new tickets instead of one. You may be able to get the money back on that one afterwards."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"Yes, you chaps go on, and I'll get two tickets. It's the only thing."

And Harry ran off towards the booking-office.

He joined his chums a few minutes later, with the two tickets, but still looking very puzzled. The loss of the ticket was a mystery to him.

The juniors had secured a second-class carriage to themselves. The bags were arrayed along the rack and the seats.

"Got your tickets?" asked Billy Bunter lazily.

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He was in the carriage, seated in a corner seat, and looked as if he meant to remain there.

"Yes," said Harry; "I've lost one of them at Greyfriars, though. Will you look for it in the study when you get back?"

"Certainly," said Bunter.

The train was filling up now.

The juniors took their places in the carriage, and gave Billy Bunter several broad hints that it was time for him to get out.

The fat junior was impervious to hints, however.

The station clock indicated within a minute of the hour for starting—nine. Harry Wharton tapped Bunter on the shoulder.

"Jump out, Billy!"

"Eh?"

"Jump out! You'll be too late. Besides, you're keeping a seat, and some other passenger may want it. Good-bye!"

"Oh, there's lots of time!"

"There's less than a minute. The chap's coming in to look at the tickets. Buck up, Billy, and get out."

"Look here, Wharton, I'm coming as far as Dover with you."

"What!"

"I want to see you off at Dover, you know."

"You can't!"

"I suppose I can travel on this train if I like, Wharton. I'm not asking you to pay my fare, am I?"

"But you haven't the money."

"That's all you know."

Wharton started.

"You don't mean to say that Vernon-Smith lent you the tin after all?"

"That's my business," said Bunter, with dignity. "I'm coming as far as Dover, anyway."

"But the Head——"

"I gave a porter a wire to send to Greyfriars while you were getting the tickets."

"What!"

"The Head will get it soon, and he'll know."

"But—but you'll be flogged."

"No; it's all right."

"Here comes the ticket chap. Now——"

"Tickets, please!"

The juniors handed out their tickets. To their surprise, Billy Bunter followed their example. They stared at the fat junior, and at his ticket, in astonishment.

The man jumped out, and the train started.

Bunter restored his ticket to his pocket and blinked at the juniors. They stared hard at him. The train glided out of the great station in the morning sunlight.

"So you've got a ticket?" said Harry, at last.

"Looks like it, doesn't it?"

"Did Vernon-Smith stand it?"

Bunter grunted.

"That's a ticket all the way to Lausanne," said Nugent, who had glanced at it. "Do you mean to say you're coming to Switzerland after all, Billy?"

"I say, you fellows——"

"You fat rascal!"

"The rascalfulness is terrific!"

"Well, Wharton said he'd like me to come if I could get a ticket," said Billy Bunter, in an argumentative tone.

"I didn't," said Wharton curtly. "I said there was nothing to prevent you from coming, if you got leave and had the money."

"Well, it's the same thing."

"What do you think the Head will say," exclaimed Harry, with a frown, "when he gets a wire from you to say you've gone?"

"He won't get a wire from me."

"You said you'd sent one."

"Yes, but I thought it would look better coming from you," explained Billy Bunter.

Wharton gave a yell.

"From me?"

"Yes. So I signed your name to it."

"My name?"

"Yes I thought it'd look better, you know."

"You—you fat young villain!"

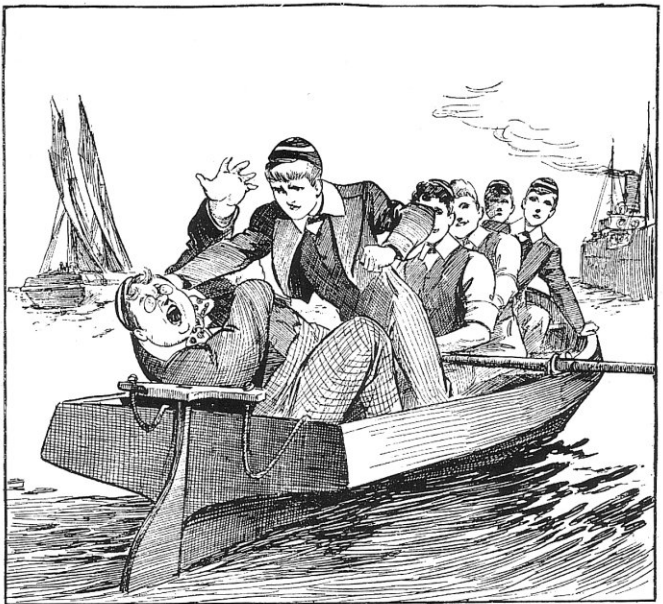
"The Head won't mind," said Bunter, blinking at him. "He knows I'm in delicate health, and he'll think it only the decent thing for you to take me abroad. I'll get Colonel Wharton to write and soften him down, too."

"Well, of all the cheek!" said Bob Cherry.

"And what have you been playing this rotten game for?" demanded Wharton. "Why couldn't you say you had a ticket, instead of telling all these blessed lies all the way from Greyfriars?"

"Well, you—you see—er——"

Bob Cherry uttered a sudden shout.



Bob Cherry fastened his finger and thumb on Billy Bunter's fat ear. "Don't you touch that rudder again," he said, "or there'll be trouble!"

"I've got it!"

All eyes were turned upon the excited Bob.

"Eh? What have you got?" exclaimed Wharton.

"It! The missing ticket!"

"What! You've got the missing ticket?"

"No, ass! I mean Bunter's got it!"

"Bunter?"

"Of course. That's where he got a ticket—he took it out of the envelope in your desk, and he's kept it quiet till the last moment."

Billy Bunter rose to his feet, a little alarmed by the looks that were cast on him.

"I—I say, you fellows, I—I hope you're not going to play the giddy ox!" he said falteringly.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Makes his Peace

BILLY BUNTER had cause to be alarmed.

Harry Wharton's face was very grim, and the rest of the juniors looked as if they would eat him.

"You—you see, I—I didn't take the ticket," said Bunter.

"You didn't take it?"

"Not—not exactly. I—I borrowed it."

"Borrowed it?"

"Ye-es. I wrote out an I O U for the amount it cost."

"You—you fat swoop——"

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"I've got the I O U here!" said Bunter, fumbling in his pocket. "I—I wrote it out all right, but I didn't put it in your desk, Wharton, because I knew you would be bound to make a rotten fuss if you knew I had borrowed the ticket."

And Billy Bunter produced the I O U.

The Greyfriars chums stared at him in utter silence.

"You—you see, it's quite in order," said Billy Bunter nervously. "I shall redeem it as soon as we get back to Greyfriars, Wharton. I shall have a lot of money then."

"Where will you get it?" asked Bob Cherry. "Out of somebody's desk?"

"Or in somebody's pocket?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Oh, really! Of course, I shouldn't have borrowed the ticket if I hadn't been sure of paying the money. It wouldn't have been honest."

"Now, don't be funny, Bunter."

"Look here, I shall have heaps of money when we get back to Greyfriars. All my postal-orders will accumulate while I'm gone, you know."

That was too much for the juniors. Stern faces relaxed into grins at the idea of the impecunious junior reaping a perfect harvest of postal-orders on his return to Greyfriars. Billy Bunter grinned, too—only too relieved to see the juniors grin. It broke the strain of the situation.

"Besides, Vernon-Smith thought it would be all right," said Bunter.

"Smith! What had he to do with it?"

"He suggested it. It was really kind of him, and the

next best thing to lending me the money himself, wasn't it?"

"By Jove, he's scored against us this time," said Nugent. "He couldn't get in a better one than by planting that fat bounder on us for the trip."

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

"And you think it was honest to take that ticket, Bunter?" asked Bob Cherry curiously.

"I hope you don't think I'm dishonest, Cherry."

"My word!"

"If you do, this discussion had better cease. I don't feel inclined to talk to a chap who doubts my personal honour."

"Great Scott!"

"Vernon-Smith thought it would be perfectly honest, and he said so. Of course, it would be different if I couldn't pay the money. But I shall settle up immediately I get back to Greyfriars, out of my postal-orders."

"Oh, don't be an ass, Billy!" said Wharton impatiently.

"Here's your I O U, Wharton," said Bunter loftily.

Wharton took the paper and tossed it from the open window of the carriage. It fluttered away on the wind.

Bunter blinked at him in astonishment.

"That's my acknowledgment of the debt, Wharton. You——"

"Oh, shut up! I shall have to lose the money," said Wharton wearily. "The only comfort is that the Head will kick you when you get back to Greyfriars."

Bunter grunted comfortably as he settled into his seat again. The return to Greyfriars was a long way off yet, and did not trouble him. Billy Bunter had a way of shutting his eyes to all immediate troubles.

"I say, you fellows, I suppose you had a lunch-basket put in the train, didn't you?" he asked, after a short silence.

"No," said Wharton curtly.

"But I say——"

"Oh, shut up!"

"We shall be awfully hungry!"

"We can get some grub at Dover," said Harry, "or on the boat. Now, look here, Billy, shut up. You've bothered us enough to-day; give us a rest."

And Billy Bunter thought it would be wiser to do so.

The train rushed on through the Kentish landscape, shimmering and glimmering in the bright rays of the sun.

The juniors looked from the windows with keen pleasure as the express tore onward.

"It's lovely," said Wharton. "It really seems rot to go abroad in the summer, when England is so ripping at that time."

"Yes, rather—but it's a change. I'm anxious to see the Alps," said Bob Cherry. "And to have a row on Lake Leman, too. The winter sports are over, of course, but we shall get plenty of boating, I suppose."

"Heaps of it."

Billy Bunter ventured to break his silence at last. He felt in his pocket and produced a well-thumbed guide-book.

"I can tell you all about that, you fellows," he said. "I've got a guide-book here, and I've been mugging it up ever since Wharton invited me."

"Since when?"

"Since we decided to go," said Billy Bunter hastily. "There are steamers on Lake Leman, which is also called the Lake of Geneva——"

"Go hon!"

"The city of Geneva is at one end of the lake, and Montreux at the other. Geneva is the place where Calvin used to dig, and they've got a cathedral there that he preached in. Rousseau was born there, and there's an island in the Rhone there that's called Rousseau's Island, with the original bloodstains."

"The what?" howled five voices.

"The—the—no, that's wrong!" said Bunter, blinking into the guide-book. "I've got it a little mixed. There's something with original bloodstains, I forget what now. But it's awfully historical and interesting. Steamers sail round the lake every day——"

"I should imagine that they steamed——"

"Well, that's what I mean," said Bunter. "They steam round the lake. You can go anywhere on the lake, both Swiss and French ports, on the steamboats. Also sailing and rowing boats to be had at moderate charges. At the Italian end of the lake is the Castle of Chillon, where a chap named Bronson was imprisoned——"

"Ha, ha! You mean Bonnivard!"

"Was it Bonnivard?" said Bunter, blinking. "Well, I dare say you're right. The Castle of Chillon can be viewed any time, and you can see the dungeon where Bronson—I mean Bonnivard—was chained to the pillar for sixty years——"

"Sixty!"

"Or six, I forget which," said Bunter. "Most likely six, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 123.

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when you come to think of it. Or perhaps three or four. He was imprisoned there by the Duke of something—I forget—something like greens or cabbage——"

"Savoy!"

"That's it, the Duke of Savoy. He was a patriot or something, and somebody wrote a poem about him. It's worth while to know these facts when you're going to see a place."

"Ha, ha! What facts?"

"I can look out the details. I began to learn Byron's poem, 'The Prisoner of Chillon,' once to recite, but, owing to jealousy, I never had a chance of getting it off. I remember a lot of it. I'll recite it to you fellows if you like."

"Chuck it!"

"'My hair is grey, but not with years,
Nor grew it white.
In a single night,
As men's have grown from sudden fears——'"

Billy Bunter broke off abruptly.

"What are you going to do with that umbrella, Bob Cherry?"

"Biff you on the napper if you don't shut up."

"Oh, I say——"

"Recitations are barred," said Bob Cherry. "Blessed if it isn't bad enough to have you, without your blessed recitations!"

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

"Oh, all right," said Bunter sulkily, "I'll tell you another time. Byron was living at Ouchy—that's part of Lausanne—when he wrote the poem. You can make long trips on the lake on the steamers, but there's one thing the guide-book seems to overlook."

"What's that?"

"It doesn't mention whether there's a buffet on the steamers."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, that's rather important, you know. By the way, Wharton, I came away in such a hurry that I brought no money with me, excepting that ten bob——"

"You left your cheque-book on the grand piano in the study, I suppose?" Bob Cherry suggested humorously.

"I'm just compared to me that I shall be rather short of tin when we get to Switzerland," said Bunter, blinking at him. "I haven't any change of clothes, either, or anything but a coat. I suppose you fellows will see me through?"

"I suppose we shall have to," said Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton, that's not a nice way of putting it."

"Oh, go to sleep!" said Wharton.

"Well, I may as well, if there's nothing to eat," said Bunter.

And he did, and did not wake again until the train stopped on the pier station at Dover, and then the hubbub of voices and trundling of luggage was loud enough to wake even Billy Bunter.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.
Across the Channel.

THE Greyfriars juniors, carrying their bags themselves, tramped down the platform to the waiting boat. The sun was shining brightly on the metal of the steamer and on the waters of the harbour. Billy Bunter had nothing to carry but a coat, and Bob Cherry filled his arms with rugs and umbrellas. As Bob remarked, since Bunter was there, he might as well be made useful, especially as he could never by any possibility be ornamental.

Bunter grunted, but he did not complain aloud. Bunter was lying very low just at present, and it was his cue to be obliging. While they were on English soil there was always the possibility that he might be sent back. Once over the Channel, he would feel safer, and then his old nature was likely to resppear.

"Can I carry your coat, Wharton?" he asked suavely.

"No," said Harry.

"Yours, Cherry?"

"Certainly!" said Bob, piling an overcoat on the rugs the fat junior held. "The macintosh, too, if you like. Give him your rug, Inky, as you've a bag."

"Certainfully, my worthy chum."

Bunter made a grimace; but he did not venture to protest.

Hazeldene also kindly gave him a macintosh, and Nugent added a coat; and Billy Bunter almost disappeared under his baggage.

"I—I say, you fellows, wait for me!" came his muffled voice from the midst of the rugs, coats, cloaks, and umbrellas.

"Oh, buck up, Bunter!"

"I—I say—"

"You don't want to be left behind, I suppose?"

Bunter plunged on, causing all sorts of emphatic remarks to be made by angry passengers he bumped into.

With a projecting umbrella he lifted off the silk hat of a testy old gentleman, and the things that old gentleman said were not polite.

They reached the boat at last, and Harry having found seats on the lee side, the belongings were plumped down.

Billy Bunter sank upon the seat gasping.

"I—I'm quite exhausted!" he gasped.

"Plenty of passengers this trip," said Bob Cherry, watching the stream pouring upon the boat. "We've got a beautiful day, too."

"Yes, rather!"

"I'm exhausted!" said Bunter.

"The esteemed Bunter has made that interesting statement already," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh gently.

"Well, I'm exhausted. It's chiefly owing to being left from want of food. I suppose we're going to have some lunch before we get to France, Wharton?"

"Better leave it," said Nugent. "The sea takes toll, you know."

"Leave it till we get to the Gare at Calais," said Wharton. "It's only an hour."

"Look here, Wharton, I shall be ill——"

"You'll be sick if you gorge now, Billy."

"Oh, I sha'n't be sea-sick, you know! I'm a jolly good sailor," said Bunter confidently. "Besides, the best way to begin a voyage is to lay a solid foundation, as that chap Wynn at St. Jim's used to say."

"Well, go and feed if you like."

"Lend me half-a-crown, then."

Wharton handed over the coin, and Billy Bunter descended to the buffet, and he was soon happy. The boat was not in motion yet. When it moved, Billy Bunter's happiness was likely to prove of short duration.

The other juniors remained on deck, interested in the busy scene. The last passenger and the last pile of baggage were aboard at last, and the boat moved off from the pier. The juniors drew deep breaths as the seabreeze blew in their faces.

"Off at last!" said Bob Cherry.

"And it's going to be a fine day," said Nugent. "No chopping or rolling—and that's a bit of good luck. I know what the Channel's like when it's rough."

"Lucky for Bunter, too."

"I say, fellows——"

"Here he is!"

Billy Bunter came on deck. There was a smear of jam on his mouth, and his fat cheeks looked a little ruddier and shinier. He had evidently disposed of the half-crown at the buffet below.

"I say, you fellows, have we started? Good! I say, I suppose we have a stop in Calais, haven't we?"

"Yes, for the Customs' examination," said Harry.

"Good! There will be time to get lunch, then."

"Do you want another lunch?" asked Nugent sarcastically.

"I've just had a snack," said Bunter, blinking at him. "The prog on this boat isn't so bad, either. If Wharton cared to hand over another half-crown——"

"Wharton doesn't," said Harry.

"Of course, I shall settle up out of my postal-orders when we get back to Greyfriars. I am going to keep a careful account of any little sums you lend me during the trip."

"Rot!"

"Though, as a matter of fact, I should really be entitled to something, considering my services as guide and interpreter."

"As what?"

"Interpreter."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! You know how jolly well I speak French, and you will want somebody to sling it to these chaps in their own lingo. I'm rather a dab at interpreting," said Billy Bunter. "I've talked to French chaps in my time, and seen 'em smile with pleasure at the way I put it to them in their own language."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"For instance, they say 'Bong!' when they're pleased with anything," said Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't, Bunter, for goodness' sake!" said Nugent. "Have mercy!"

"Look here, Nugent——"

"We're going to have a smooth passage," said Hazeldene.

"Looks like it."

The boat rolled a little, as Channel steamers will roll, when it got out into deep waters. But the passage was what a sailor would certainly call a smooth one. Some of the passengers, however, did not realise how smooth it was, as certain peculiar changes in their complexion testified. Some who were on deck went hastily below, some who were below came hastily on deck. Some strolled to the side with exaggerated carelessness, and some tried in vain to keep an appearance of unconcern.

Billy Bunter left off talking.

That in itself was enough to draw the attention of the Greyfriars chums upon him. They looked at him.

The fat junior's ruddy complexion was fading.

"Anything wrong?" asked Nugent.

"N-n-no."

"Feel hungry?"

"Yow!"

"Shall I go and get you a pork-pie?" asked Bob Cherry sympathetically.

"Groo!"

"He's got it!" said Wharton.

Billy Bunter certainly had it.

The surest way to avoid sea-sickness is to be in good physical condition when you go to sea. Bunter never was in good condition, and the varied assortment of comestibles he had just disposed of did not improve his chances of escaping the dreaded mal-de-mer.

He staggered to the side.

Wharton rose, and went with him, and lent him a helping hand to keep his balance. Frank Nugent brought him a glass of water

"Oh!" groaned Bunter. "Ow! Groo!"

After a few minutes they led him back to his seat again. He collapsed there.

The boat plunged on.

Nugent was very quiet now.

"It's the blessed smell of the engines makes you sicker than the motion," Bob Cherry remarked. "How are you feeling, Harry?"

"All right," said Harry, smiling.

"Well, so am I," said Bob slowly.

They were all feeling all right, apparently, but they grew very quiet. All right as they were, they were glad to see the French shore rise into view at last.

Bob Cherry heaved a sigh of relief as he pointed out the distant buildings and pier of Calais.

"There you are, you chaps!"

Billy Bunter looked up with a gasp.

"Is that the land?"

"Yes."

"How long before we get there?"

"Not more than ten minutes now, Billy."

"Ow!"

"Feel very bad?"

"Yow! If—if ever you find me on the sea again, you can use my head for a football," groaned Billy Bunter. "It was rotten of you, Wharton."

"Eh?"

"You got me in for this."

"I?"

"Yes, you," said Bunter. "You might have chosen a finer day to cross."

"My hat!"

"Yow! Ow! Groo!"

Wharton did not argue with the fat junior. Billy Bunter groaned on, and the steamer rolled up slowly to Calais pier.

The engines ceased to throb at last.

The steamer was still.

There was a rushing and scurrying of feet. Billy Bunter roused himself once more.

"Are we there?" he asked.

"Yes," said Harry shortly.

The passengers gave up their landing-tickets and poured ashore. The chums of Greyfriars carried their bags themselves. They followed the stream of passengers to the Douane, where a cursory examination was made of the baggage, the Customs officials showing the greatest politeness and consideration—so much consideration, indeed, that it made the whole affair look a great deal like a farce.

Then the juniors streamed upon the platform, where the train for Paris was waiting.

Bob Cherry clapped Bunter on the shoulder.

"How do you feel now, Bunter?"

"Hungry."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.
From Calais to Paris.

THE Customs examination had not delayed the juniors long, and they were in ample time to secure good seats in the train, and then to attend to lunch. They piled their baggage in a second-class carriage, and then adjourned to the buffet. Billy Bunter gave a grin of satisfaction as he looked round the buffet. It was evidently a place where a good feed could be obtained. The prices were

decidedly good, too; but that did not worry the Owl of the Remove, as he did not intend to have anything to do with that part of the matter.

"Well, I'm jolly hungry," Bob Cherry remarked. "It's past dinner-time at Greyfriars, too. I think I can manage something decent."

"So can I," said Billy Bunter. "Here, garsong!"

"What are you howling about, Bunter?"

"I'm calling the waiter."

"What are you calling him names for?"

Billy Bunter blinked indignantly at Cherry.

"I'm not calling him names, ass! A waiter is a garsong in French. You fellows had better leave the French to me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, somebody will have to do the interpreting, if we're going to stop a night in Paris," said Bunter. "Besides, they speak French in the Pays de Vaud—the part of Switzerland we're going to."

"Not your kind of French, Billy."

"Well, of course, they won't be quite up to the Paris accent, but they'll understand."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You'd better leave it to me."

Bob Cherry winked at his chums.

"Let's leave it to Bunter, you chaps, and see how he does it."

"Yes, rather."

"Certainfully, my worthy chum."

"Garsong! Garsong!"

The garcon hurried up.

"Kesker vous avey pore monnjay?" asked Bunter. "Nous voulons kelkerchose de bong."

The waiter rubbed his nose.

"Yes, sir," he said. "Would you mind speaking English, sir?"

Billy Bunter turned red.

The waiter's English was good, and could be understood; which was more than could be said for Billy Bunter's French.

The juniors chuckled.

"Oh!" said Bunter. "He speaks English!"

And Harry Wharton proceeded to order lunch.

He ordered it on a generous scale, too; and the waiter hurried off to execute his many orders. While he was doing so, Wharton went to change some of his English money into French, and by the time he returned the lunch was laid. The Greyfriars juniors did full justice to it.

"I say, you fellows, this is jolly good," said Billy Bunter.

"Ripping!" said Nugent.

"I expect the bill will be pretty steep," said Bunter. "I want you to let me know how much my whack comes to, Wharton, as I shall settle when we get back."

"Oh, that's all right!" said Wharton. "I've had the tin from my uncle on purpose, and you're all my guests now."

"H'm! I don't know whether I could accept— Well, as you're so pressing, we'll say no more about it," said Bunter graciously. "I shall insist upon paying my own fare, however."

"Oh, ring off!"

"By the way, I notice most of the people here drink wine with their lunch," said Bunter. "It's a custom in France, you know. Suppose we have some?"

"You won't!"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

Harry Wharton's brow grew stern.

"Look here, Bunter, you may as well understand at once that you're not going to begin any rot, because you've not got a master's eye on you. Dr. Locke has trusted us to make this journey and join my uncle in Switzerland. He trusts to our honour not to do anything that he wouldn't think right."

"He wouldn't know——"

"Oh, shut up!"

Billy Bunter grunted.

Hazeldene coloured a little, too. Perhaps there had been some thought in his mind, too, of taking some advantage of the absence of a controlling hand. If so, he did not now make any remark on the subject.

The juniors finished their lunch, and Harry Wharton settled the bill—the amount of which made him open his eyes involuntarily—and then they adjourned to the train.

They found their bags just as they had left them. Billy Bunter took a corner seat, as usual, and settled down comfortably.

"What time do we get to Paris?" he asked.

"About six."

"We shall want something more to eat before then."

"You won't get it."

"Hadn't we better get something to take with us, then?" asked Billy Bunter, in alarm. "We don't want to arrive in Paris hungry."

"Why not? Dinner will be ready at the hotel."

"But—but——"

"Well, go and get something, if you like."

"Oh, really, Wharton, you know I left my money behind, in the haste of coming away, and——"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, it wouldn't be a bad idea to take some sandwiches," he remarked. "I'll go and get some, on second thoughts."

And he brought a packet of sandwiches from the buffet, and deposited them on the rack. A few minutes later the train started.

The juniors settled down for the long and uninteresting run from Calais to Paris—uninteresting, that is, to anyone knowing the route, but interesting enough to the juniors. They gazed out of the windows upon dull, flat country with keen interest. Flat fields and chimney-stacks were a change from the scenery of Kent which they had lately passed through.

Billy Bunter went to sleep.

He woke up when the train stopped at Amiens, and blinked at the juniors.

"Is this Paris?" he asked.

"No, ass! Amiens."

Bunter grumbled.

"It's a jolly long journey. I'm blessed if I like these blessed long railway journeys. They make my bones ache."

"Go hon! If the French Government had known you were coming, they might have put on a special," said Bob Cherry sarcastically.

Bunter grunted, and went to sleep again. It was his way to grumble at inevitable discomforts, as if it were somebody's fault.

Wharton and Nugent played Hurree Singh on a pocket chess-board to pass the time, and Hazeldene and Bob Cherry played beat-your-neighbour with a pack of cards Hazeldene produced from his pocket. The train made another stop.

Bunter's eyes opened.

"Is this Paris?"

"No, duffer."

"I wonder if this blessed journey's ever going to end?" growled Bunter. "I tell you, I'm getting jolly tired of this train."

And he snored once more.

A long, low room lay before Harry Wharton & Co., with a stage at the further end, upon which a couple of men in ridiculous attire, and with false noses, were holding a dialogue.

Bob Cherry looked at the fat junior with an expression of great interest, as he might have looked at a zoological specimen at the Zoo.

"It's always surprised me," he remarked, "how anybody could possibly stand Bunter. How do we do it?"

Wharton laughed.

"If that's a conundrum, I give it up," he said.

And the others had to give it up, too.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.
In Paris.

"PARIS!"

Billy Bunter grunted and woke.

"I say, you fellows——"

Bob Cherry shook him by the shoulder.

"This is Paris, fathead!"

"Oh?" grunted Bunter. "Paris at last! Well, it's jolly well time! I'm tired and I'm hungry."

"You had most of the sandwiches."

"Pooh! That was only a snack. I'm famished!"

"Well, we'll soon be in to dinner now," said Harry Wharton.

"Shall I call a cab?" asked Billy Bunter, who was not too hungry to air his French if he had a chance. "They call 'em voitures here, and——"

"No."

"Look here, I can't walk to the hotel, Wharton!"

"It's not far."

"What hotel is it?"

"The Station Hotel—the Terminus."

"Well, we can't carry the bags there."

"We could, chump! But here's a hotel porter to look after them," said Harry Wharton.

He was looking out, and he caught sight of a porter, with the words Hotel Terminus in gold letters on his cap, and he made a sign to him.

The porter came up, bowing, and relieved the juniors of their many bags, another man coming to his aid.

Then the juniors walked into the hotel.

Billy Bunter was a little dissatisfied. He had wanted to call a "voiture," and talk to the "cocher" in French, and get into the limelight generally, so he was disappointed. But in a French hotel there were many opportunities for talking French.

The juniors were expected at the hotel, Colonel Wharton having made all the arrangements for them by letter.

They were shown up to a large room with four beds in it, where they could remove the dust of the journey before going down to dinner.

Billy Bunter grumbled a little at that preliminary.

"I'm awfully hungry," he remarked.

"Well, dinner won't be ready for some minutes, anyway," said Bob Cherry. "You may as well have a wash. You look as if you need it."

"And change your collar, too," said Harry.

"I haven't another with me," said Bunter, dabbing at the centre of his fat face in a gingerly manner—his usual method of washing. "You know, I came away in such a hurry that I hadn't time to pack anything."

"I'll lend you a collar," said Bob Cherry.

"You don't wear my size."

"We shall have to do some shopping for Bunter," said Harry. "Even Billy can't pass two or three weeks without a change of linen."

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"We shall have a couple of hours for a walk round Paris this evening," said Wharton. "We can get him some things then."

"That's a good idea," Bunter remarked. "You may as well get me a complete outfit, and a good leather bag to carry it in, and I'll settle up for the lot when we get back to Greyfriars."

To which suggestion Harry Wharton made no reply.

"We shall have to get two beds put in here," Bob Cherry remarked. "They've only expected four of us."

"Yes; I'll speak to the manager."

And the Greyfriars chums went down to dinner.

They were hungry, in spite of the sandwiches in the train, and they were prepared to do the hotel cuisine full justice; and they did—especially Billy Bunter.

Bunter did not utter a word during dinner, excepting to ask for things to be passed. When he had finished he leaned back in his chair and blinked at the Removites through his spectacles.

"Well, this is all right," he said. "If we're going on like this, I sha'n't be sorry that I consented to come with you, Wharton. Did you say we were going out to have a look at Paris after dinner?"

"Yes."

"It's a good idea to go in a taxicab, don't you think so?" suggested Bunter. "I don't feel very much up to walking."

"You can go in a taxicab if you like. We're going to walk."

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"And we're ready to start," said Harry, rising.

"I—I say, you fellows, I'm tired, you know, and I don't feel much inclined to move after a good dinner, and——"

"Stay here and rest, old chap," said Bob Cherry kindly. "It will be all right. We sha'n't miss you."

"Suppose you wait an hour——"

"Rats!"

"You see, you'll need me to do the interpreting——"

"Bosh!"

"Well, I suppose I'd better come," said Bunter, dragging himself from his chair with a grunt. "I must say it's inconsiderate of you to drag me off like this just after dinner. I suppose we're going to a theatre?"

Wharton shook his head.

"There won't be time. We must get to bed early. The train goes at eight, I think, from the Gare de Lyon."

"Yes, but——"

The juniors were going for their coats, and Bunter broke off, and followed them. He offered to show them how to work the lift as they went up, but Bob Cherry gently but firmly crushed him down upon the seat and held him there, while Wharton handled the lift. They donned their coats and hats, and left the hotel, and strolled out into the streets of Paris.

Billy Bunter stopped suddenly when they were a hundred yards or so from the hotel.

"I say, you fellows, hold on——"

"What's the matter?"

"I've forgotten the guide-book."

"Hang the guide-book!"

"But we want to find our way—at least, I do," said Billy Bunter indignantly. "Let's go back for the guide-book."

"Rats! Besides, it's a Swiss guide-book."

"Yes, but there's a chapter on Paris, and a map," said Bunter. "You see, it's for travellers going to Switzerland, and most go by the Paris route."

"Well, go back and get it—we'll walk on," said Nugent.

"Oh, I——"

The juniors walked on, and Billy Bunter followed them. He did not care to be left behind, which he knew would happen if he went back for his valuable guide-book—or, rather, Temple's guide-book.

The juniors strolled through the gaily-lighted streets.

Harry Wharton had studied the map of Paris, and by reading the directions on the streets, he was able to find his way pretty well, considering that the city was quite new to him. The others trusted to his guidance, but Billy Bunter blinked about him very anxiously.

"Don't forget the shopping, Wharton," he remarked presently. "I shall want a good many things for my stay in Switzerland."

"All right."

"Perhaps we had better get the shopping done first," said Bunter. "I've heard that the Rue de la Paix is a great shopping quarter."

Wharton laughed.

"It's not where you'll do your shopping, Billy. Here, get on this 'bus—it goes past the Louvre."

"We don't want to go to the Louvre."

"Yes, we do, ass."

"I know it's the ancient palace of the kings of France," said Bunter, with Temple's guide-book fresh in his head. "but it's only a giddy museum now, and you're jolly well not going to get me into a museum, if I know it."

"Ass!"

"I don't want to see the Venus de Milo, or any other rot. That statue's very much over-rated. I saw a picture of it once, and the arm was broken," said Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The Louvre's closed now, ass, any way," said Nugent.

"Then what are we going there for?"

"Get on the 'bus, and don't jaw."

And Billy Bunter was heaved forcibly upon the 'bus. The juniors climbed to the top, which Wharton knew was cheaper than the inside, and the 'bus rolled on with them, with the swaying and rocking motion so familiar to the Paris omnibus.

Bunter grunted discontentedly as he flopped upon a seat.

"Look here, Wharton, I don't see any sense in going to the Louvre if it's closed," he growled. "Better look out for a restaurant."

"My hat! And you've just had a record dinner!" exclaimed Hazeldene.

"Yes, but we shall want some supper."

"We're not going to the Louvre Palace, but to the Magazine de Louvre, which is close to it," explained Wharton. "We're going to do your shopping."

"Oh!" said Bunter. "Why couldn't you say so before? All right."

The 'bus rolled on through the lighted streets of Paris.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Does Some Shopping.

HARRY WHARTON & CO. looked about them with great interest. The lights and the crowds were very interesting to them, though they noticed that very many of the shops were closed. But there was enough light and gaiety to give them a good idea of Paris, and the constant chatter of French was strange and new to the lads who had just come from England. The policemen, too, with their swords, afforded considerable amusement to the juniors. Bob Cherry was of opinion that the swords would be much in the way if the gendarmes really had to tackle anybody.

"Here, I say, you fellows, I—I wish you had taken a taxi," said Billy Bunter, who was clinging to the back of the seat with both hands.

"Oh, rats!"

"Look here, this 'bus isn't safe."

"Bosh!"

"I know it's going to fall over in a minute," said Bunter. "It will be your fault if I get killed, and you'll have to tell my people."

"Well, I'll rush to break the happy news to them," promised Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really—— Ow!"

Bunter clutched the seat again as the 'bus rolled.

The slope of the street was steep, and the omnibus swayed from side to side in a way that certainly might have seemed dangerous to one inexperienced with Paris 'buses. But the juniors knew that this wasn't the first 'bus that had navigated the streets of Paris—a fact which Bunter did not seem to understand.

"I know we're going over," he said

"Ass! They always go like this," said Nugent.

"How do you know?"

"Chump! Look at the others."

"Well, if there's an accident, it will be you fellows who're to blame. Remember that I suggested a taxi-cab."

"Oh, dry up!"

"Here's the place," said Harry Wharton. "Not closed yet, luckily."

"I shall be jolly glad to get down," said Bunter. "Nom dessongdrong ici, mespah?"

Wharton laughed.

"You ass! No need to sling rotten French at us!"

"It's not rotten French—it's good! And——"

"Come on!"

Billy Bunter was hauled off the omnibus.

The party of juniors marched into the big establishment which took its name from the ancient palace of the old French kings.

It was near closing time, but they were politely directed to the department they required, and reached it at last.

A polite shopman came up, bowing in a very French fashion.

"Now, what do you want, Bunter?" asked Harry.

"Leave it to me," said Billy Bunter; "I'll order the things. Lemme see—un douze de—de—de— What do you call collars in French, Wharton?"

"Col," said Harry. "But what the dickens do you want with a dozen? Surely six would be enough?"

"May as well have enough."

"Especially as somebody else is footing the bill," murmured Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

"A dozen shirts," said Bunter. "I suppose you don't speak English, do you?"

"Non, monsieur."

"Well, I want a dozen chemises—une douze. Is a dozen feminine or masculine, Nugent?"

"Blessed if I know."

"Never could understand how the French found time to bother with those blessed genders," said Billy Bunter. "I'll work it both ways. Je veux avoir une—un douze de chemises."

The Frenchman smiled.

"Oui, m'sieur."

"And six complete sets of underwear——"

"M'sieur?"

"And twelve pairs of socks——"

"M'sieur!"

"And a dozen neckties. I'll select 'em!"

"Mais, m'sieur, je ne comprends pas."

"Oh, I forgot! How rotten it is that these people haven't sense enough to learn English, and drop that rotten babble of theirs," said Billy Bunter peevishly. "Look here——"

"M'sieur?"

"Show me the blessed things, and I'll select 'em," said Bunter. "Permittez moi voyez——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry.

"What are you chuckling at, Cherry?"

"Your giddy French."

"What's the matter with it?"

"Nothing—it's wonderful!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, shut up! You're confusing me, and——"

"M'sieur!"

"Que nous voyons les—les—choses," said Billy Bunter. "Ought you to use the subjunctive there, Wharton?"

Wharton laughed.

"Use anything you like, Billy. The chap will understand you just as well."

"Oh, really——"

Bunter succeeded in making the shopman understand that he wanted to see the things and select them himself.

The polite Frenchman trotted out box after box, and packet after packet, and a pile of selections grew upon the counter.

The other juniors strolled through the place to look round while Billy Bunter was making his selections.

In about a quarter of an hour they returned, and found Billy Bunter just at the end of his shopping.

The pile on the counter had reached formidable proportions.

Harry Wharton stared at it. The others burst into a simultaneous chuckle. The coolness of the fat junior, in supposing that Wharton would pay for such a pile of purchases, was astonishing to them.

"I'm glad you've come back, you fellows," said Bunter, blinking at them. "I'm just through. I only want to go and buy a trunk now."

"You haven't bought all those things?" asked Wharton, with a nod towards the heap on the counter.

"Yes; that's the lot."

"You utter ass!"

"Eh?"

"Have you paid for them?"

"Paid for them!" exclaimed Bunter, blinking at Wharton in surprise and indignation. "What do you mean?"

"What I say. Have you paid for them?"

"Of course I haven't paid for them. You're going to do that, and I'm going to settle up for the whole amount when we get back to Greyfriars."

"I'm not going to pay for that cargo, or anything like it," said Wharton bluntly. "Why, you fat duffer, that lot would come to about ten pounds or more."

"Well, it's no good being stingy in getting an outfit for a foreign country," said Bunter. "The guide-book says that everything needed should be taken, as it is cheaper in the long run."

"Perhaps the guide-book was written for millionaires, and not for a sponging young rotter!" suggested Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"The lot comes to fifteen louis, odd francs," said Bunter.

"That about twelve pounds, and I think it's cheap, considering what I've got."

"It may be cheap, Bunty, but it's more than you're going to have. I've got about ten pounds left of the money my uncle sent me, and I'm certainly not going to blow every penny on you."

"Oh, really——"

"I'll go over these things, and see what you really need," said Harry.

"I say, Wharton, don't be beastly mean. I suppose you don't want to make me uncomfortable while I'm in Switzerland?"

"I don't care much, Billy!"

"Besides, how can I tell the shopman I don't want the things, after selecting them?"

"You should have thought of that earlier."

"Now, look here, Wharton——"

"Shut up!"

Wharton went over the purchases, selecting what he thought were indispensable for Billy Bunter. It was past closing time for the shop now, and the shopman was standing first on one leg, and then on another, his patience put to a strong test. The shop was closed up, and the attendants were only waiting for the boys to have done, to go.

But Wharton did not mean to spend every shilling he had on Billy Bunter, however awkward the situation. With a running commentary of grumbling from the fat junior, he made a hasty selection of necessary articles.

Bunter surveyed the new heap with great disfavour.

"Combien, s'il vous plait?" said Harry, indicating the little heap.

The shopman stared at them, and at him.

"M'sieur!"

"How much? Combien?"

"Mais, monsieur a dit——"

"Never mind him. We're going to buy this lot," said Harry. "I'm sorry to bother you, but—— Combien?"

The shopman understood at last, and the veneer of Parisian politeness peeled off in a moment. His face grew dark and sullen as he priced the articles. They came to more than three louis. It was a good order, but little enough after Bunter's original selection. Bunter looked as sullen as the shopman.

The latter wrapped the goods up. Wharton took out a fifty-franc note and a half-louis, and some silver.

"Payez a la caisse," said the shopman curtly.

They followed him to the desk, where the purchases were paid for, and Wharton slipped a five-franc piece into the shopman's hand, as a compensation for the trouble Bunter had given him. The attendant brightened up wonderfully, and was all smiles as he bowed the party out of the last door that had been left unfastened.

Bunter grunted as they gained the street.

"Here's your parcel, Billy."

"It's too heavy for me to carry," growled Bunter. "They offered to send it——"

"To-morrow, ass; we shall be gone to-morrow."

"Well, can't you get a messenger or somebody to carry it?"

Wharton laid the package on the pavement.

"There it is, Billy, if you want it."

Bunter picked it up.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.
An Evening in Paris.

"ANOTHER hour or two before we need go to bed," Harry Wharton remarked, as the Greyfriars juniors strolled down the Rue de Rivoli. "Shall we have a trot round, or look in at some place where there's something going on?"

"I don't see how I'm to trot about with this parcel to carry," said Bunter.

"We'll take that in turns."

"I don't see why you should want me to carry it at all. It's all your fault that we had any shopping to do."

"My fault!"

"Yes. There was no need for me to come away so suddenly, if you had settled the matter with me earlier. It was your rotten way of giving invitations that caused it."

"Shut up, Bunter!" said Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent! I suggest that we take a cab."

"Dry up!"

"I'm tired."

"Let's have a stroll round the Place de la Concorde," said Wharton. "It's close here."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Well?"

"I'm tired."

Harry Wharton took the package away impatiently.

"I will carry it," he said "Now for goodness' sake be quiet."

"I'm too tired to walk."

"Sit down, then."

"Oh, really, Cherry! Why can't we have a cab?"

"We couldn't all get into a cab."

"We could have two cabs."

"We're going for a stroll."

"I'm too tired to stroll. And I'm getting hungry, too."

"Look here, you're very much trouble," said Wharton; and he signed to a taxi driver, who at once brought his vehicle to a halt by the pavement. "Jump in!"

Bunter willingly clambered into the taxi.

"This is all right," he said. "You can shove the parcel in, Wharton; I'll look after it. Don't squeeze me when you get in. I like plenty of room."

"We're not getting in."

"Eh! And what's that for?" asked Bunter, as Wharton put come loose silver in his hand.

"To pay the cabby."

"But—but——"

Wharton turned to the chauffeur.

"Hotel Terminus du Nord," he said. "Tres rapide, si'l vous plait."

"Oui, monsieur!"

Wharton closed the door of the cab.

Bunter gave a shout.

"I—I say, you fellows——"

The taxi-cab whirred and started. Bunter hung out of the window waving his hand in frantic protest. But he did not dare to open the door, for the taxi was already gathering speed.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Greyfriars chums stood on the edge of the pavement, and waved their hands in adieu, laughing.

In a few seconds Billy Bunter was whirled out of sight.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "That's a relief, anyway!"

"For this relief much thankfulness, as your esteemed poet Shakespeare remarks," murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We may have a quiet stroll now," remarked Hazeldene.

"It will be a lesson to Bunter not to be such a blessed worry," said Harry Wharton. "One gets fed up with him in the long run."

They strolled on, much relieved to be rid of the fat junior and his incessant bothering. Hazeldene paused as they passed the entrance to the Palais Royal," he remarked.

"There's a theatre in the Palais Royal," he remarked. "I've heard that they have stunning farces there."

"Not fit for kids like you," said Bob Cherry. "Come on!"

"But——"

"Come on," said Wharton.

"Look here, we're in Paris now, and——"

"And we're on our honour," said Harry Wharton curtly. "Come on, Hazel. Don't be a cad like Bunter."

Hazeldene bit his lip, but he said no more on the subject. The juniors strolled on. They walked round the Place de la Concorde, and by means of several successive 'bus rides they had a good view of Paris in the evening. The smallness of the city after London was what struck them most. It was possible to get from one part to another in a very short time, the various districts lying so close together.

They were pretty tired when they turned their steps in the direction of the hotel again. But as Bob remarked, they would have plenty of time to rest in the train on the morrow. It was a long journey from Paris to Lausanne.

The bright lights of a cafe, and a sound of laughing and clapping from within, caught their attention, and they paused.

They looked at the place.

"Oh, this is one of the singing cafes," said Bob Cherry. "Let's have it a look in. If it isn't all right we can come out again."

"Right you are!"

"May as well see something while we're here," Hazeldene remarked.

They pushed the swinging doors, and entered.

A long, low room lay before them, with a stage at the further end, upon which a couple of men in ridiculous attire and with false noses, were holding a dialogue.

NEXT WEEK: "THE THIEF."

The audience were seated in long rows of seats, and on little stands there were drinks of various kinds, to be consumed during the performance.

An attendant came up to the new-comers, with a smile on his sallow face. Doubtless he was not accustomed to visitors like the Greyfriars chums.

He showed them to seats. The place was well filled, but some seats at the front—the more expensive—were empty, and the juniors took them. Wharton paid two francs each, and then the attendant asked what they would have to drink.

"My hat!" said Bob Cherry. "Mine's champagne."

Wharton smiled.

"The price of the seat here includes a drink," he said, "or the price of a drink includes a seat, whichever way you like to put it. You can have milk if you like, though."

"Good!"

"Lait chaud!" said Wharton.

And the attendant brought five glasses of warm milk on a little tray. Harry half expected that kind of refreshment to attract stares, but it did not; "lait chaud" was a common drink there, and many of the habitues took it instead of any intoxicant.

The audience were laughing loudly at the dialogue on the stage.

As it was all spoken at express speed, and in a kind of colloquial French very little like the French learned at Greyfriars, the juniors understood but little of it.

The two comedians were followed by a lady who sang.

The audience became solemn. It was evidently a serious song, the kind of song that is sandwiched between the funny ones to give the latter better effect.

Then came a comedian who danced and sang too.

Harry Wharton had bought a sheet containing the words of the songs from an attendant, for thirty centimes, so he was able to follow this singer.

He read through the first verse of the song, and then rose to his feet. There was a flush in his handsome face, and a curl of his lip, which showed that the song did not agree with his ideas, at all events.

"Let's get out," he said.

"Oh, I'm just beginning to catch on," said Hazeldene. "Let's stay a bit."

"You'll stay alone, then."

Wharton walked out, and the others followed. The attendant grinned after them, evidently much tickled by this English appreciation of Parisian humour. The juniors went back to the hotel, without looking in at any more places of entertainment on the way.

They found Billy Bunter in bed. He woke up and blinked at them as they came in.

"That you, you fellows?"

"Yes," said Harry. "So you got home all right?"

"Yes. That was a beastly trick to play. Still, I've had a ripping good supper, and I've told the garcon to make up some lunch-baskets for us to-morrow."

"We shall dine on the train."

"Yes, but I shall want a snack between times."

And Bunter went to sleep again; an example that the others soon followed; and they slept without a break till the garcon called them in the morning.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Knows Too Much.

"I SAY, you fellows," said Billy Bunter, blinking at the juniors as they turned out the next morning. "I've thought of a jolly good idea."

"Get up!"

"Yes, but I've thought——"

"You'll miss your brekker."

"Of a jolly good——"

"The train goes at sharp eight-thirty."

"Idea——"

"There's no time to lose, Bunty."

"I've thought of a jolly good idea," repeated Billy Bunter, unheeding. "I suppose we have a day in Paris, and go to Lausanne to-morrow."

"Get out!"

"Then we could have some more sleep now, and——"

"Roll out, porpoise!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—— Ow!"

Bunter rolled out of bed, on the floor, propelled there by Bob Cherry's foot. He picked himself up, and disentangled himself from the bedclothes, and grunted wrathfully.

"Look here, Cherry——"

"You'd better be quick, Bunter," said Harry Wharton quietly. "I suppose you don't want to be left behind; and we cannot wait for you."

And Billy Bunter growled and dressed.

The juniors had a hasty breakfast at the hotel, and then

piled themselves and their belongings into a couple of taxi-cabs, and buzzed off for the Lyons Station.

They arrived in good time, and found the train ready for them.

Billy Bunter blinked along the standing train.

"This way, you fellows," he said.

"Dry up, Bunter; none of your cicerone business here," said Bob Cherry. "You go where you're told, and don't talk."

"I'm going to find a comfy carriage."

"You'll find it in the wrong train."

"Bosh! I can talk French, I suppose, and I've got a tongue," said Bunter disdainfully.

"You've got a tongue, certainly," agreed Bob Cherry, "and a jolly long one, too, but I don't know about the other part of the matter."

Bunter snorted, and called to a porter, waving a fat hand towards the waiting train.

"Cetto train for—I mean pour—Lausanne?" he called out. "Do you remember whether a train is a girl or a boy, Cherry—I mean masculine or feminine?"

"No, I don't."

"Ce train—cette train——" said Bunter. "Lausanne?"

"Oui, m'sieur."

"Oh, all right! Come on, you fellows," said Bunter, with an important air, and he marched along the train, and clambered up the steps, and went into a second-class compartment.

Bunter was too short-sighted, and too self-satisfied, to note that different parts of the train bore different inscriptions.

Harry Wharton & Co. entered another carriage, and arranged the bags there. Bunter's new property had been crammed into the different bags, to save the expense of buying a new one, and the trouble of carrying it; for it was pretty certain that Billy Bunter would have done little of the carrying himself.

"Where's that dummy gone?" asked Harry, looking round.

"Further down the train."

"The ass! He'll get carried somewhere else. Fetch the idiot back, somebody."

And Bob Cherry and Hazeldene ran down the train in search of Billy Bunter.

"Bunter! Bunter!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Where are you, Bunter?"

"Here he is!" exclaimed Hazeldene, catching sight of a fat, spectacled face at a carriage window.

They mounted into Bunter's car.

The fat junior was interviewing a train attendant.

"Vous avez le dining-car dans le train?" he asked.

The attendant understood, perhaps because he spoke English.

"Oui, m'sieur."

"Bong!" said Billy Bunter.

The attendant grinned. Perhaps Billy Bunter's "bong" did not strike him as being exactly Parisian French. Bob Cherry and Hazeldene rushed in and seized the fat junior, and dragged him from the corner seat he was settling in comfortably.

Bunter gave a yell.

"Hold on! I mean, leggo!"

"Come out, fathead!"

"I won't! It's all right here. You fellows can come into this carriage."

"You ass!"

"Look here, Bob Cherry——"

"You chump!" roared Bob. "This part of the train goes to Lyons."

"Oh!"

"Do you want to go to Lyons, barber?"

"Don't we pass through Lyons?"

"Ass! Do you think we pass through every blessed town in France?"

"Well, I don't see why we shouldn't pass through Lyons——"

"And Rheims and Boulogne and Metz and Bordeaux and Marseilles, perhaps!" snorted Bob Cherry. "Come out, you chump!"

"Look here, I asked the porter——"

"Hang the porter!"

"But——"

"Come on!"

And as Billy Bunter was still inclined to argue, the two juniors yanked him out of the carriage by main force, and bundled him along to the part of the train which bore the legend—"Lausanne," and bundled him into it.

Billy Bunter collapsed in the carriage, breathless.

"Oh!" he gasped. "Beasts!"

"Did you want to go to Lyons, then?"

"Look here——"

"Oh, shut up!"

Bunter sat down and gasped.

Five minutes later the train started, and the juniors were whirling away through the east of France, towards the Swiss frontier.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 123.

NEXT WEEK: "THE THIEF."

Billy Bunter was silent for some time.

He was feeling extremely ill-used, and not inclined to talk. The other juniors did not regret missing the pleasures of his conversation. It was not till the train had been an hour or more on its way that Bunter began to talk.

"I suppose you fellows don't want me to starve on this journey," he said, in a deeply-injured tone.

"I'm not particular, for one," said Bob Cherry.

"There's a lunch-basket beside you," said Harry.

Billy Bunter blinked round.

"Oh, all right!"

And he started on the lunch-basket.

A train attendant came along the corridor to give out the tickets for the luncheon-car, and Wharton took six.

Bunter demolished the contents of the basket, and went to sleep, and his unmusical snore mingled with the rattle of the train.

Passengers passing up and down the corridor glanced into the compartment, wondering what the mysterious noise was, and grinned as they saw Bunter.

For some time the scenery interested the juniors, but as the morning wore on, they grew tired of watching the landscape.

Lunch made a welcome break in the monotony of the long train journey.

A man in uniform came along the corridor with the information that lunch was served, and Harry Wharton shut up his chessboard, and shook Bunter by the shoulder.

Billy started out of a happy dream of pork-pies.

"Hallo!" he said drowsily. "Leggo!"

"Lunch, Billy!"

The Owl of the Remove was wide awake at once. He sat bolt upright and rubbed his eyes, and put his spectacles straight upon his fat little nose.

"Did you say lunch, Wharton?"

"Yes, it's served."

"Oh, bong!"

"Eh?"

"Bong!"

"What do you mean by 'bong'?"

Bunter blinked at him with disdain.

"'Bong' is French for 'good,'" he explained. "Now we're in France, and going to a French-speaking country, it's a good idea to get into the habit of speaking French."

"Oh!"

"Let's get to the dining-car," said Bunter. "I'm ready for lunch. I hope that will be bong, too."

And he hurried off down the corridor. The juniors followed him grinning. Bob Cherry remarked that Bunter's French, at all events, was decidedly "bong."

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.
A Little Smoke.

LUNCH quite fulfilled the expectations of Billy Bunter. It was good, and it was plentiful, and as Bunter had not to worry about the detail of settling the bill, he never dreamed of sparing the viands. He ordered right and left, and kept a waiter pretty busy by himself. The others fellows ate a good, although more moderate, meal. They were hungry enough, too.

"I say, this is good!" said Bunter, blinking with satisfaction over a cold chicken. "These fellows can cook, after all. This is bong!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?"

"Oh, bong!" said Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I expected this!" said Bunter. "I'm accustomed to jealousy in the study at Greyfriars, but I really think that you fellows might drop it here. It's not my fault that I speak better French than you chaps."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter grunted, and devoted his attention to his viands.

He finished the chicken, and looked down the menu, and ordered more—and more—and more; till the waiters, accustomed as they were to big diners, stared.

"I rather think I've had enough solids now," said Bunter, at last. "What about dessert?"

"You can finish alone," said Harry, with a shrug of the shoulders. "We're not going to pass the whole afternoon in the dining-car."

"I've said to see the animals feed at the Zoo," Nugent remarked; "but even that palls upon one after a time. You're not even entertaining now, Bunter."

"Oh, really——"

"Come on, you chaps!"

"I say, Wharton, tell the garsong to bring the bill to you, then," said Billy Bunter.

"Oh, all right!"

The chums left the dining-car Billy Bunter was not left alone there. He resumed his meal, disposing of dessert in great quantities. It was a good half-hour later that Wharton was interrupted in a new game of chess by the train garcon, who brought him the bill for Billy Bunter's repast.

"M'sieur!"

"Cheek!" said Harry.

"M'sieur!"

"Hallo! What is this?" asked Wharton, glancing up.

"L'addition, m'sieur."

"Oh, Bunter's bill!" said Harry. "Combien?"

"Un louis un franc cinquante, m'sieur."

"My only hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "A louis, a franc and fifty centimes for Billy Bunter's lunch! The pig!"

Wharton laughed rather constrainedly.

"A chap who undertakes to feed Bunter has his hands full," he remarked. "It's lucky there's not time for many more meals before Lausanne."

And he paid the bill.

"Where is Bunter now?" he asked. "Is he still eating? Le petit monsieur, mange-t-il encore?"

The garcon grinned.

"Non, m'sieur il fume."

Wharton jumped.

"What? He's smoking!"

"Smoking!" said Bob Cherry.

"My hat!"

"Oh, we're abroad, you know," said Hazeldene, colouring a little.

Wharton set his lips.

"I'll jolly soon stop him!" he remarked.

He hurried along the train corridor, followed by Bob Cherry.

Billy was lolling back luxuriously in his seat, with a cigarette between his lips, surrounded by a haze of smoke.

He started a little as he saw Wharton's angry face, and smiled a feeble smile.

"I—I say, you fellows, it's a good idea to have a smoke after lunch," he remarked. "It—it assists the digestion, you know. I—I—and we're abroad, you know."

Wharton jerked the cigarette from the junior's fat lips.

"Oh, really—I say, Wharton——"

Harry threw the cigarette on the floor, and put his boot upon it. Then he turned a frowning brow upon the Owl of the Remove.

Bunter blinked at him indignantly.

"Look here, Wharton, that's my cigarette!"

"If I catch you smoking again——"

"Oh, really——"

"Shut up! If I catch you smoking again, I'll make you eat the cigarettes!" said Harry. "Mind, I mean what I say!"

"Look here——"

"So remember!"

And Wharton strode away.

Billy Bunter blinked after him wrathfully. He took a cardboard box out of his pocket—a box of cigarettes he had bought from the attendant, and which had just been paid for in the bill by Wharton.

Then he hesitated.

Wharton might return, and Bunter did not wish to have to make a meal of a cigarette He knew that Harry would keep his word.

He put the box back into his pocket.

"Beast!" he murmured. "I'm jolly well not going to be bullied, though. I'll jolly well show them that I can do as I like. What's the good of getting into a blessed republic if you can't do as you like?"

And Bunter grumbled and rejoined his companions in their car.

They did not look at him.

It was possible that Hazeldene was a little in sympathy with the Owl of the Remove, in secret; but if he was, he did not venture to say so.

Bunter sat down, growling.

"I'm getting pretty sick of this journey!" he said. "It's a jolly long one, and I'm bored. When do we get to Lausanne, Wharton?"

"Oh, hours yet!"

"I suppose we dine on the train?"

"Cheek!" said Harry.

"Move the honourable knight," said Hurree Singh, who was advising Nugent over his shoulder.

"Good!" said Nugent.

He moved the knight, and a new position was opened up, and Harry Wharton bent his brows over it. When the Nabob of Bhanipur was his opponent, he always had his work cut out to get the better of a game of chess

Bunter blinked at him impatiently.

"I spoke to you, Wharton!"

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NEXT WEEK: "THE THIEF."

"Eh?"

"I asked you——"

"Shut up!"

"Look here——"

"Don't talk!"

"I asked you if we dined——"

"Keep that idiot quiet!" said Wharton.

"All right! I'll thump him if he speaks again," said Bob Cherry, brandishing a big fist over Bunter.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

Thump!

"Yow! Yarooh!"

"I told you I would!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Why don't you shut up and give us a rest, Bunty? There's so much too much of you!"

"Ow! I want to know whether we dine—ow!—on the—train—yow! Leave off, you silly ass! All right, I'll shut up!"

"And mind you keep shut up, too!" said Bob Cherry, warningly.

And Bunter relapsed into sulky silence.

The train was stopping in Dijon, the juniors looking out of the windows.

Billy Bunter sat dozing. There was nothing else for him to do, unless he ate—and even he was not yet ready to eat again.

The train started off again at last, and rolled towards the Swiss frontier, now drawing very near to the Greyfriars juniors.

"There'll be a Customs examination at Pontarlier, or the station before," Harry Wharton remarked.

"More giddy Customs," said Bob Cherry. "If I ever write a book on the manners and customs of this country, I shall remark that their manners are very nice, but their Customs are a confounded bother."

Wharton laughed.

"But it's Swiss Customs this time," he remarked. "I don't think they will be much trouble, though, from what my uncle said in his letter."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Aren't you asleep, Bunter?"

"No, I'm not!"

"Well, go to sleep, then."

"But, I say——"

"A nap will do you good."

"Look here——"

"Now, be reasonable, Bunter. You need a rest—and so do we."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm thinking about dinner," said Bunter. "Do we dine on the train, or don't we dine on the train? That's what I want to know."

"We don't," said Harry.

"But I'm hungry!"

"The train gets in at half-past five—that's about half-past six Swiss time, and we shall be in heaps of time for dinner with my uncle and aunt."

"I'd better have some lunch, then."

"Go and look for some, and give us a rest," said Hazeldene.

Bunter grunted and left the carriage.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

At the Swiss Frontier.

AS the Greyfriars juniors had lunched in the train, Billy Bunter knew his way to the dining-car; yet, when he now set out to seek it, the dining-car was not to be found. He navigated the corridor to the end of the train, and could go no further, but he had not passed the dining-car. The train was going at a good speed, and rocking considerably, and the fat junior staggered and rolled as he made his way back along the corridor.

He blinked round him on all sides in great astonishment.

Had he been mistaken in the direction of the dining-car? If not, where was it?

He came stumbling back to the carriage occupied by the juniors.

"Lunched already?" asked Bob Cherry, in astonishment.

"No. I can't find the dining-car."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I suppose it's in the other direction."

And Bunter stumbled off down the train.

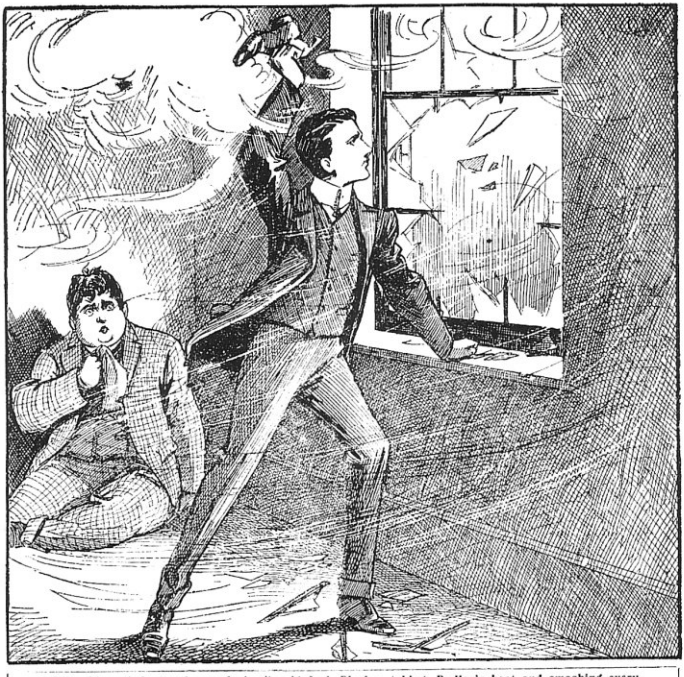
And there was no dining-car to be discovered.

Where was it?

The fat junior stopped in the corridor and blinked round him in amazement.

A train attendant came along, and Bunter stopped him.

"Ou est le dining-car?" he demanded. "Where is the blessed luncheon-car? Je cherche grub—I mean, I'm looking for some dejeuner."



"I'll add a little to the confusion," said Jack Rhodes, taking Dudley's boot and smashing every inch of glass in the window. "The firemen ought to hear that, anyhow."

(This picture illustrates an exciting incident in "Jack Rhodes' Progress," the splendid complete tale by Alfred Barnard, contained in this week's issue of "The Empire Library." Now on sale.)

"Comment?"

"Je cherche dejeuner."

"Comment?"

"What the dickens does he mean by 'comment?'" muttered Bunter. "These French are awful duffers—they don't understand their own language?"

And he tried again.

"J'ai faim! I have hunger—faim—hunger! See?"

"M'sieur?"

"I want some grub—je veux avoir tommy—I mean dejeuner—consommation?"

"Ah!

"Vous avez un dining-car, eh?"

"Non."

"Eh?"

"Non, m'sieur."

Bunter glared through his spectacles.

"Look here, don't you try to spoof me!" he exclaimed. "I had my blessed lunch in that car, and you can't take me in! Where is it?"

"Comment?"

"Where's that blessed grub department?" roared Bunter.

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"M'sieur!"

"J'ai faim—grand faim—I'm fearfully hungry! Savvy?"

"Je ne comprends pas."

"Rats! Lee rats, I mean," said Bunter, putting it into his splendid French. "Les rah! Look here, this isn't bong. I want some grub!"

The attendant tried to pass on.

Billy Bunter scuttled after him, and caught him by his gold-laced sleeve just outside Harry Wharton's compartment.

"I say, you fellows," he exclaimed, "pitch into this chap, will you? They've hidden the blessed dining-car somewhere, and he pretends he doesn't understand. I think he must be a provincial, and doesn't catch on to the best Parisian French."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Put it to him, Wharton—you can jabber the Engo."

Wharton asked the man in French for the dining-car. The attendant grinned.

"Ah, oui, je comprends," he remarked. "Parfaitement!"

"Well, where is the car?"

"A Dijon, m'sieur."

"Oh!"

NEXT WEEK: "THE THIEF."

A Splendid School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

"What is he babbling about?" asked Bunter.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"The dining-car doesn't go on as far as Lausanne," he explained. "It was detached from the train at Dijon."

"Oh!"

The attendant grinned and went his way.

Billy Bunter sat down and groaned.

"Then there's nothing to eat on the train?"

"Nothing!"

"You chaps got any sandwiches left?"

"No!"

"Oh!"

"Ha, he, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at. I'm famished!"

"Yes, you must be," said Bob Cherry. "Hardly what you'd call long, is it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you chaps had any toffee or chocolate——"

"You can get out at the next stop," said Harry consolingly. "We wait at least ten minutes for the Customs. Then you can rope in some chocolate."

"When is the next stop?"

"I don't know."

Bunter groaned.

He groaned at intervals as the train ran on. Bob Cherry rose to his feet.

"Bunter is ill," he remarked.

"I—I feel very bad!" groaned Bunter encouraged by this unexpected sympathy.

"Yes, what you want is thumping on the back. It's an awfully good thing when a chap's ill with your kind of illness."

"Ow! Chuck it!"

Thump, thump!

"Yow! Yaroooh!"

Bunter dodged out of the carriage, and took refuge down the corridor. The juniors were relieved of his company till the train stopped once more—a long stop for the baggage examination before passing over the Swiss frontier.

A good-natured looking official in uniform looked into the carriage, and glanced at the array of bags on the racks.

"You have grand baggage?" he asked in English.

"No; only these bags," said Wharton.

"C'est bien."

The official produced a fragment of chalk, and chalked the bags that happened to be lying on the seats, without opening them.

Then he backed out of the compartment.

"These bags belong to us, too," said Harry, pointing to the luggage on the racks.

The official smiled.

"C'est bien, m'sieur!"

And he departed.

The juniors looked at one another.

"Well, if this is all the bother they give you," said Nugent, "I don't see that Protection is such a fearful affliction—and I don't see what good it is, either."

"I suppose they look a bit deeper into the big luggage," Bob Cherry remarked.

"I suppose they know, too, which passengers aren't likely to be smugglers," said Harry Wharton. "But this is Protection made easy, and no mistake."

That was all the examination the juniors were subjected to. At Calais it had been very little trouble, and at the Swiss frontier less trouble still. The train rolled on again.

"But different from travelling in the old days," Bob Cherry remarked. "No blessed passports wanted, either. This is as easy as staying at home."

"I say, you fellows——"

Billy Bunter appeared in the carriage munching chocolate.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! You've found some prog, then?"

"Only chocolate. Still, I've got a lot of it. Sorry I haven't got enough to offer you fellows any, though. I'll get off at the next stop and get you some, if you hand over some tin."

"Rats!"

And Bunter munched in indignant silence.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Arrival.

THE Swiss frontier was past, and the train was on the steep gradients of the mountain railway. For a long time past the country had been growing more rocky and broken, and now the juniors found themselves in a land that was new and strange to their eyes. The Alps—the mighty Alps—were round them.

"There's a jolly lot of snow left on the mountains still," Bob Cherry remarked. "It's colder here, too. I'm going to put my coat on."

And Bob looked round for his coat, which was a big thick one, and looked as if it were designed for Arctic exploration. The coat was not to be seen.

Bob looked on the rack and the seats.

"You fellows seen my coat?" he asked.

"No."

"It was on the seat," said Harry.

"It's not there now."

"Bunter! Where's Bunter?"

"He's gone. Here's his coat, though."

"Ha, ha! Then he's got your coat, Bob—it's thicker."

Bob Cherry snorted wrathfully.

"The young bounder! I'll teach him to take my coat!"

And Bob Cherry started along the corridor in search of Bunter.

The search was vain at first.

Billy Bunter seemed to have disappeared.

As the dining-car was no longer attached to the train, he was not in that; and Bob looked into every compartment he passed in search of him.

The train was half empty now, having disgorged many of its passengers at intermediate stations. Bob found a smoking compartment with only one occupant—a fat junior in a big thick coat three sizes too large for him in one way, but decidedly tight round the waist.

It was Billy Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove was leaning back in a corner seat, smoking another cigarette. He evidently thought that he was secure from discovery in the smoking car.

Bob glared at him with speechless wrath.

There was a trail of cigarette-ash over Bob's coat, and as it was a nearly new coat, and an expensive one, that did not improve Bob's temper.

"My hat!" he ejaculated at last.

Billy Bunter started.

"Oh, is that you, Cherry?" he ejaculated.

"You fat rascal!"

"Oh, really——"

"You've got my coat."

"Well, you see——"

"And you're smoking again!"

"Well, you see, as I was so fearfully hungry, I had to do something, and——"

Bob Cherry gripped the fat junior by the back of the collar. He jerked him out of the seat, and yanked him into the corridor.

Billy Bunter struggled spasmodically.

"Leg-g-g-go!" he gurgled. "You're chook-chook-choking me!"

"You'll be more than chook-chook-choked in a minute," said Bob Cherry. "Come along!"

"I—I won't!"

"This way!"

"Groo!"

"Buck up!"

"Yaroooh! Oooch!"

Bob Cherry propelled the fat junior along the corridor, in spite of his resistance. Passengers stared out of the compartments in astonishment, but Bob Cherry took no notice. Bunter dropped the offending cigarette, and Bob picked it up, and bore it and Billy Bunter together into the juniors' carriage.

"What on earth's the matter?" exclaimed Harry Wharton, as the fat junior was hurled in, and collapsed in a gasping heap among the feet of the juniors.

"I've caught him!"

"What the——"

"Look here!" Bob Cherry held up the half-smoked cigarette. "Look!"

Harry Wharton's brow darkened.

"Smoking again!"

"That's it!"

"Groo!"

"What have you got to say for yourself, Bunter?"

"Groo!"

"Is that all?"

"Groo-ooh!"

"Well, that can't be called an adequate defence," Nugent remarked. "If that's all, you're found guilty."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Groo!"

"You remember what I told you, Billy," said Wharton grimly. "If you were caught smoking again, you were to cut the cigarette."

"Groo!"

"You've got to do it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Groo!"

Bunter was plumped into a seat. Wharton broke off the burnt end of the cigarette and proffered the remainder to Billy Bunter. The fat junior blinked at it.

"Groo! Oh, really, Wharton—— Groo!"
"There it is!"
"Groo! I'm nearly chook-chook-choked! Groo!"
"Eat!"
"Oh, I say——"
"Open his jaws!" said Harry.
"Certainly," said Bob Cherry. "I'll prize them open with my pocket-knife."
"Oh, really——"
Bunter opened his mouth. Wharton jammed the fragment of cigarette into it. His face was hard and grim.
"Now, go ahead!" he said sternly.
"Gerrooh!"
"Eat away!"
"I c-c-c-can't!"
"You've got to!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Go it, Bunter!"
"Mangez-vous!"
Bunter made a ghastly face. The cigarette, taken that way, was not nice. Already the flavour of the nicotine in his mouth was making him feel sick.
"Ow! Leggo! Chuck it!" he mumbled. "I'll—I'll n-n-never smoke again! I won't! Ow! Yow! Chuck it! Beasts! Yah!"
Wharton relented.
"Well, is that a promise, Bunter?"
"Yow! Yes! Ow!"
"Think we can let him off, kids?"
"Well, we might, this once," said Bob Cherry.
"But only onc'efully," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "At the next rascality of the esteemed Bunter he shall be forced to eat all his honourable cigarettes."
"Hear, hear!"
"You needn't eat it, Billy; but remember what Inky says."
"Groo!"
Billy Bunter wiped his mouth out with his handkerchief. Promise or no promise, he had enough of the taste of tobacco now to last him for some time. He was not likely to smoke again in a hurry.
"Where are the rest of your smokes?" asked Harry.
"H-here rest are! Groo!"
Wharton tossed the packet out of the train window.
"Well, that's an end of them, at all events," he said. "Now, don't be such a silly young ass again, Billy, and remember that it isn't manly to play the giddy ox in that way—it's just silly!"
"Groo!"
For once Billy Bunter did not feel inclined to talk. Bob Cherry gently but firmly ejected him from the borrowed coat. Then the fat junior sat and glowered.
Harry Wharton looked out of the window.
The train slackened down at last.
The train was slowing down into a wide, open station, with many platforms, and the name "Lausanne" on a notice-board caught his eye.
"We've arrived!" he exclaimed.
The train stopped.
The Greyfriars juniors, bags in hand, poured out upon the platform, amid a swarm of other passengers.
A tall, soldierly figure advanced through the surging crowd, and a handsome face, with a white moustache, looked down smilingly upon the Greyfriars juniors.
"Uncle!" exclaimed Harry.
And Colonel Wharton shook hands with his nephew.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

In Lausanne!

COLONEL WHARTON greeted the juniors with his kindly smile, and shook hands with them all round. Two Swiss porters carried off the bags, to pile them upon the taxi-cabs which were in waiting. The colonel glanced in rather puzzled way at Bunter, but greeted him as warmly as the rest. He had been apprised by telegram of the fact that Hazeldene was added to the party, but he had not expected Bunter. But anyone that Harry Wharton chose to bring was welcome to the colonel.
"I'm glad to see you, my boys," said the bronzed old gentleman. "More glad than I can say. Your aunt is much better than she has been, Harry, and will be very glad to see you. I think your coming will do her good. This way, my lads."
And the colonel piloted his guests out of the crowded station to the wide place where taxi-cabs stood in array.
"Here are our cabs," said the colonel. "We have to go some little distance—to Ouchy."
"Yes, uncle."
"Ouchy is at the lake end of Lausanne," the colonel explained. "It was a separate village at one time—in the time when Lord Byron wrote the 'Prisoner of Chillon' there. But it is one town now, and a tram-line runs all the way.

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We are not going to take the tram, however. Here are the cabs."
The luggage had been piled on, and the porters liberally tipped.
Harry, who wished to speak to his uncle on the subject of Bunter, put the fat junior into the cab that the colonel did not enter.
Colonel Wharton, Harry, and Hurree Singh were in one cab, and Bob Cherry, Nugent, Billy Bunter, and Hazeldene in the other.
The taxis rolled off into the wide Avenue D'Ouchy, following the track of the tram-line down towards the shore of Lake Leman.
"You noticed that there was an extra chap in the party, uncle?" Harry said awkwardly, as they rolled down the steep street.
The colonel nodded.
"That is all right, Harry. All are welcome!"
"Thank you, uncle! As a matter of fact, I was not going to bring Bunter, but I couldn't very well help it. I knew you would be awfully decent about it, though."
The colonel laughed.
"Bunter is an odd boy in some respects," he said. "But I dare say we shall get on very well. What kind of a journey did you have?"
"Very good!"
"Any trouble on the Channel?"
Harry laughed.
"Only Bunter."
The juniors looked with great interest out of the windows as the vehicles rolled on. It was their first view of a Swiss town.
The journey down the Avenue was a short one, and they came in sight of the lake as they rounded the corner to the tram terminus.
The great lake burst upon their view at once.
It was a glorious sight.
The day was very fine, and the sun still shining brightly and warmly, the lake rolled like molten gold in the light.
Far away the mountains rose on the other side, like a blue wall, from the waters of the lake.
The waters were dotted with white sails.
"What do you think of it, Harry?" asked the colonel, watching his nephew's face with an amused smile.
"Splendid!" gasped Harry.
"Yes; it is very fine."
"And this is Lake Leman?" said Harry. "How ripping! How lovely the Alps look on the other side! And how close, too! We'll pull across there before breakfast to-morrow morning."
The colonel laughed.
"Would you like a pull of eight miles before breakfast?" he asked.
"Eight miles?"
"Yes; that's about the width at this point."
"By Jove! And I can see the walls of the houses quite plainly! It doesn't look more than two or three!"
"It's the clearness of the atmosphere. You will find the apparent distances very deceptive here," said the colonel, with a laugh.
The taxis turned along the lake promenade, and stopped at a garden gate, almost hidden in huge masses of wisteria.
"This is the place," said Colonel Wharton.
The juniors alighted. The bags were carried into the house, and the juniors followed more slowly.
A wide garden lay around the Villa du Lac, as the colonel's house was called, and, in spite of the general rugged and steepness of the Lausanne streets and gardens, this was as level as a billiard-table.
Past the white-walled villa could be caught a glimpse of a tennis-court, and beyond that a wall lined with purple lilac. Behind that rose a high building, which the colonel informed the boys was a school.
"There are a great many schools here, especially schools-pensions," he said. "They say that half the population of Lausanne consists of girls belonging to boarding-schools, but that is an exaggeration. Lausanne is a very quiet place. There is a casino, but I am glad to say no gambling. That is found in other resorts on the shores of Lake Leman. You will not find Lausanne very lively, but it's a good centre for excursions to many places, and especially to see all there is to be seen of Lake Leman and the places on its shores. We shall be moving on to Interlaken later, but you shall explore Lake Leman first."
They reached the house.

Miss Wharton was seated in a deep garden chair in the verandah, and she rose with her sweet smile to greet her nephew and his friends.

A trim Swiss maid showed them to their quarters, to remove the dust of travel, and Miss Wharton added that dinner would be ready in ten minutes.

Billy Bunter gave a grunt of satisfaction as he followed Harry Wharton upstairs.

"This is something like," he confided to Bob Cherry. "Miss Wharton is jolly sensible. She knows that a chap is hungry after a blessed long journey."

"What-no!" said Bob.

"Did she say ten minutes, or five minutes?"

"Ten, you porpoise," said Nugent, "and that won't be any too much time for you to get yourself fit to be seen. You're as grubby as you can be."

"Oh, really——"

"Don't jaw, old chap. If you don't make yourself presentable, you sha'n't go down to dinner," said Bob Cherry.

And Billy Bunter proceeded to make himself presentable.

The juniors descended to the dining-room.

It was a large apartment, with a row of French windows opening on the garden, and looking upon green grass and purple lilac.

Dinner was a great success, Billy Bunter thought. He did every course the fullest possible justice, and would willingly have doubled the number of courses. While they ate their dinner the colonel told them much about Lausanne and its neighbourhood, and gave them hints of excursions to come.

"You will want to go to bed early to-night," he remarked. "Your explorations shall begin to-morrow, but you shall have a walk by the lake after dinner, if you like."

"Good idea," said Bunter. "I shall be able to show them round, sir. I've looked it all out in Tem—in my guide-book, sir. There's an hotel here where Byron wrote a poem or something, with the original bloodstains——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I mean, the original—I forget what now, but it's something awfully historical and interesting. Then there's the house where Gibbon lived, when he was writing the 'Lays of Ancient Rome——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at, Bob Cherry?"

"I always thought the 'Lays of Ancient Rome' were written by Macaulay," said Bob.

"H'm! So they were. It was something to do with ancient Rome, though."

"'The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,'" suggested the colonel.

"Oh, yes; that's it! I knew it was something of the sort. Then there was somebody else lived here—I forget whom; but it's awfully historical. And somebody else did something, too, that was very interesting. I'll show you fellows round, and explain it all to you."

"Well, we shall get an awful lot of information at that rate, I must say," agreed Nugent. "Are you sure that there wasn't somebody else who did something or other as well, Bunty?"

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

"And they don't play in the casino here?" asked Hazeldene.

"No. It is proposed to introduce gambling, to popularise the place among a certain class of visitors, but I hope it will come to nothing. Gambling takes place at other resorts along the shore."

There was a curious glimmer in Hazeldene's eyes.

"At what places, sir?" he asked.

"At Geneva and Montreux," said the colonel. "Most resorts in Switzerland, as in France, have public gambling. It is a thing that should make us feel proud of our own country, where nothing of the sort is allowed."

Hazeldene was silent.

As a matter of fact, thoughts were passing through his mind which were certainly not in agreement with the views expressed by the colonel.

But of that he was careful to say nothing.

Hazeldene was a good pupil of the Bounder of Greyfriars, and from placing bets on horses it was an easy step to gambling with cards or on the petits chevaux.

And some such idea—some absurd idea of making a "coup," was certainly working in Hazeldene's mind; but he knew that it would never do to let Colonel Wharton get the least suspicion of it.

The juniors finished their dinner, and then strolled out on the lake front.

Colonel Wharton left them to themselves, only asking them to return at dark, which Harry Wharton promised to do.

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NEXT WEEK: "THE THIEF."

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

A Pull on the Lake.

LAKE LEMAN was rolling in a flood of blue and gold. The waters were strangely blue, save where the sunset turned them to gold. The juniors looked with great interest upon the mighty lake, upon the shores of which the Romans had fought battles in the old, old time. The waters of the lake rolled on, blue and placid as ever, while cities and nations had changed on its banks.

The Greyfriars juniors strolled along, and soon saw one of the sights of Lausanne which first strikes the new-comer—a column of girls, walking two and two, with hair in plaits, and demure expressions upon their healthy, ruddy faces.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's one of the giddy schools!" Bob Cherry remarked.

Half the girls were English, as they could see. Some of them glanced at the juniors with an interest which showed that their thoughts were not wholly bound up in the last lesson, in spite of their demure looks. A teacher in grey marched on with them without a thought, evidently, but that of piloting her precious charges safely through the snares and pitfalls of a wicked world.

"I wish Marjorie were here," said Harry regretfully. The Lausanne girls reminded him of Cliff House.

"Yes, it would be jolly."

"The jollyfulness would be terrific."

"I say, you fellows, there's a pier here," said Bunter, diving into his pocket for Temple's guide-book. "The chap here says there's a buffet there."

"A buffet?"

"Yes—refreshments, you know."

They looked at Bunter with great interest.

"Is it possible," remarked Nugent, "that you could eat anything more now, Billy?"

Bunter blinked at him.

"Well, I'm not ready for supper yet," he said cautiously. "But I dare say I could manage some coffee and cakes. I've heard that they have awfully good cakes in Switzerland, especially meringues."

"Well, there's the place," said Harry. "Go and feed!"

"But——"

"We'll watch the steamers."

A steamer had just drawn up beside the pier. It brought passengers from Geneva, and took on more passengers for its course down the lake.

Bunter plucked at Harry's sleeve.

"But you'll have to stand treat," he said. "I'll settle up when we get back to Greyfriars; though you did say that you were settling all the bills here."

Harry laughed.

"That's all right, Bunter; I'll settle."

"You may as well give me a five-franc piece, then," said Bunter. "I'll give you the change."

"All right!"

And Bunter rushed into the refreshment department.

He rejoined the juniors five minutes later, with a smear of cream upon his face, but he did not make any observation on the subject of change from the five-franc piece.

The juniors strolled along towards the landing-place for the sail and rowing boats, Billy Bunter with a very fat and shiny looked on his face.

There were boatmen in plenty by the shore, and one of them came up to the juniors the moment they came in sight, hat in hand.

"Good-morning!" he said cheerfully.

The juniors stared.

"Eh!" said Bob Cherry.

"Good-morning," said the boatman, with an ingratiating grin.

"My hat! I suppose he means good-evening!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I remember Bunter saying 'bonjour' in the evening, in Paris, and 'bonsoir' in the morning," Nugent remarked.

"Good-morning!" repeated the boatman; and then, as an afterthought, he added, "Good-bye!" evidently fully assured that between the two he had got it quite right.

Wharton smiled.

"Good-evening!" he said cheerily.

That was evidently a fresh variety to the Swiss, for he looked puzzled. However, he took his courage in both hands, so to speak, and plunged afresh into the mysteries of the English language.

"Fine after-midday," he remarked.

"Jolly fine!"

"Good boat! You sall say good boat."

"He wants to know whether we want a boat," Harry Wharton remarked. "What do you fellows say to a gentle pull for half an hour or so? It will clear our lungs after that beastly stuffy train."

"Good egg!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Do you want to go to bed, Bunter?"

"No, I don't!"

"Don't let us keep you out if you'd rather go to bed," said Bob Cherry, with really touching solicitude.

"Look here, Bob Cherry, I'm not going to bed. I was only going to say that the guide-book says——"

"Rosh!"

"No, it doesn't. Lake Leman is not subject to tides——"

"Go hon!"

"But there are sometimes very great changes in the level of its waters, and storms are of not infrequent occurrence."

"Never mind the storms. Come on!"

"Well, I only wanted to warn you. If, on second thoughts, you'd prefer to come and have a rest in a cafe——"

"Thanks, we wouldn't."

"Vous aurez bateau!" said the boatman. "You sall say have boat."

"Yes, rather!"

"Oui, oui, merci!" said Wharton.

"Fine good boat and so jolly," said the boatman.

"Good!"

"Beng," said Billy Bunter. "Why don't you speak French, you fellows, so that the chap will understand? Bong!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The boatman led the way down to the water.

He pointed out a boat that looked like a hollowed log, with two oars. Harry Wharton smiled and shook his head. There were plenty of good boats to be had, and he selected one of them, with four oars, and a more graceful outline.

The boatman grinned assent.

The juniors stepped into the boat.

Billy Bunter eyed the water curling up over the sand, with a doubtful eye, and then blinked at the others.

"You fellows might lift me into the boat," he remarked.

"I don't want to get my feet wet."

"Well, of all the nerve——"

"Oh, really, Cherry! You know, I've got a delicate constitution, and I only keep up to the mark by taking constant nourishment. Getting my feet wet might undo the effect of all my careful dieting for months past."

"Do you mean it would make you thinner?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No, I don't! I—— Don't shove off yet, you ass; I'm not in the boat! Ne shovez vous pah!" bawled Billy Bunter to the boatman, in beautiful French. "I'm not in the giddy bateau yet, you chump, ne pas encore! It's not bong. Get off! Allez-vous-en!"

"Buck up, Bunter!" said Wharton. "We've got to get in at dark."

"I don't want to tread in the water——"

"Can't wait!"

"Look here—lift me in!"

"Oh, all right!" said Bob Cherry. "Lend a hand, Inky."

"Certainfully, my worthy chum!"

"Careful!" said Bunter, as the two juniors leaned out of the boat and grasped him. "Mind you don't pitch me into the water. Ow! You're pinching me! Yow! I'm hurt! Yah! Oh!"

Bunter was lifted into the boat. But instead of being set upon his feet there, he was bumped down with considerable force and rolled over.

The bottom planks of the boat were wet, and Bunter had the pleasure of rubbing them dry with his clothes and his face.

He sat up and gasped.

"Ow! You asses! You chumps! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Perhaps you'll be able to get into a boat without help next time," Bob Cherry suggested innocently. "You're rather a heavy weight to carry about, you know."

"Shove off!" said Wharton.

"Here goes!"

The boat went rocking away upon the surface of the lake. Billy Bunter clutched the gunwale in great alarm.

"I—I say, you fellows, this is dangerous!" he gasped.

"Rats!"

"If we turn turtle——"

"You couldn't," said Bob. "You'd turn porpoise."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I—I believe we're going over," said Bunter.

"Bosh!"

"You're in the way, Billy," said Wharton. "Get along to the stern and sit down. I want to get my oar there."

"I—I c-can't move——"

"I'll help you," said Bob Cherry obligingly.

He poked the end of an oar into Bunter's ribs. The fat junior howled and staggered up. The others grasped him, and passed him to the stern seat, and plumped him down there.

The oars slid along the rowlocks, and the boat glided out into the deep lake, threading its way among the anchored sailing craft.

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THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER.
Rather Wet.

THE lake was rolling smoothly enough in the sunset, just a light breeze ruffling the waters, but the boat was certainly rocking. Perhaps Bob Cherry could have accounted for that, however.

Billy Bunter sat in the stern, holding on to the sides. He was blinking round in great alarm.

"I—I say, you fellows, this is simply dangerous!" he gasped. "Hadn't we better go back?"

"You can go back if you like," grinned Hazeldene.

"I—I can't without you others, you dummy!"

"You can swim, you know."

"Oh, really——"

"Chuck it, Bob!" said Harry, laughing. "We're getting among some sail boats now. Puff's as good as a feast!"

Bob Cherry grinned and left off making the boat rock. Billy Bunter understood, and he gave Bob a withering blink.

"Oh, you rotter, it was you all the time!" he exclaimed.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob.

"I say, you fellows, don't you want me to steer?"

"No; that's all right."

"M-my hat, there isn't a rudder!" said Bunter, blinking round behind him.

"That's all right. We don't want one. Don't you see that hardly any of the boats here have the rudders shipped?"

"It's safer."

"Rats!"

"Look here, Wharton, here's the rudder, lying in the boat. I'm not going to have you chaps run the boat into some other craft. Let's ship the rudder."

"Go and eat coke!"

Bunter grunted and shipped the rudder himself. Then he sat down with the lines over his fat shoulders.

"I'll steer you," he remarked. "It will be ever so much safer."

"You needn't bother."

"I'd rather."

"Look out for that big sailing-boat, then!" exclaimed Harry, glancing round over his shoulder as he pulled, as a large vessel under two odd shaped sails ran down towards the port of Ouchy.

"All right! I suppose I know how to steer?"

"I'm not so jolly sure of that!" growled Wharton. "Why can't you let things alone, Bunter?"

"Port!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Eh?"

"Port, you fat duffer!"

"All right! I——"

"That's the wrong line, you champion chump!"

"Look here——"

"You'll be into them in a minute!" roared Bob Cherry

"I——"

Crash!

The bows of the boat crashed upon the side of the stranger, and the little craft reeled and rang with the shock. Two or three fellows in the sailing-boat roared out in French. The rowing-boat glided off, rocking.

"Pardon!" shouted Harry Wharton, for the fault had certainly been with the English boat.

There was an indistinguishable shout in reply, as the sailing-boat rushed on before the wind. Bunter pulled the other cord now.

The juniors glared at him.

"You utter ass!" said Harry. "It's lucky for us we weren't stove in."

"It was your fault!"

"My fault!"

"Yes," said Bunter. "It was really due to the way you were rowing. I——"

"Let those lines go!"

"Look here, it's safer for me to steer," protested Bunter.

"And I: Let those lines go! Take the rudder in, Bob!"

"Right-ho!"

"I—I say, you fellows——"

"Shut up!"

Bob Cherry unshipped the rudder, and threw it down behind the stern seat. Then he fastened his finger and thumb upon Billy Bunter's fat ear.

"Don't you touch that again," he said, "or there will be trouble!"

"Ow—ow!"

"Mind, then!"

And Bob Cherry sat down to his oar again. Four strong rowers were pulling, and the boat, clear of the other craft now, was gliding at a swift rate out on the lake.

The going was wonderfully easy.

The juniors did not suspect, at first, that a current was helping them out, and drifting them towards the middle of the lake.

The opposite shore rose more clearly to view.

Lausanne and Ouchy sank into a mass of buildings, of which the juniors could still, however, distinguish the chief ones, with the cathedral topping all, and the hill behind. The sun sank lower over the reddened snow of the Alps.

"Well, this is a jolly good pull," said Bob Cherry; "but I think it's about time to turn back, Harry. The colonel asked us to be in by dark."

Wharton nodded.

"Yes. The sun will be gone in a quarter of an hour now, and that's just about time to pull back to Ouchy."

"Back we go, then!"

"Yes, I'm getting rather hungry," Billy Bunter remarked. "The air of the lake gives you an appetite—don't it?"

"You don't need the air of the lake for that, Billy."

"The not-needfulness is terrific."

The boat swung round, and the bows were turned towards Ouchy again. The rowers bent to the oars, expecting to fly along as they had been doing outward.

But it did not happen.

The boat glided through the water, but slowly, and all the time a sideward current was drawing them westward along the shore, in the direction of distant Geneva.

Wharton looked a little puzzled.

"That's curious!" he remarked. "We rowed straight out, but we've drifted a lot up the shore. There must be a current here, and a pretty strong one."

Bob Cherry whistled.

"And we shall have to pull against it to get back," he remarked.

"Pull away, then!"

They pulled away.

For ten steady minutes they pulled, but Lausanne seemed hardly any nearer at the end of the ten minutes. The town was getting low now, in the dimness of descending evening. The juniors began to breathe hard.

"My hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry, at last.

"Well, we've been asses!" said Wharton ruefully. "There's a beastly strong current, and we shall have to pull like niggers to get back to Lausanne at all, I think."

"Let's take it in turn with the oars, then," said Nugent.

"Good!"

"I say, you fellows, I'm afraid I'm too exhausted to row. You see, I've had a very tiring day, and I'm rather delicate, and——"

"Oh, shut up, Bunter! Do you think we'd trust you with an oar, even if you weren't a lazy, rotten slacker?" said Harry impatiently.

Bunter grunted. He didn't mind being considered a lazy slacker, so long as he did not have to strain at an oar. That was the important point with Billy Bunter.

The five juniors took turns with the oars, one of them resting at a time, and the others pulling away for all they were worth.

Progress was slow and hard.

The lights of Lausanne gleamed out upon the lake like jewels in the darkness of the night. The sun was quite gone now. Wharton wondered what the colonel would think of their absence, as he tugged at the oar.

Round the boat heaved and murmured the dark waters of the lake, and the juniors could hardly persuade themselves that they were not upon the sea, so vast and dark and lonely was the great expanse of water.

The lights of Lausanne gleamed through the deep dusk, and on the Alps all round the dark waters lights twinkled at various altitudes.

But the juniors looked little around them now.

They devoted themselves to the rowing.

It was hard work.

But the lights of Lausanne and Ouchy gradually drew nearer, and the boat glided at last among sailing-vessels at anchor.

Bob Cherry gave a gasp of relief as he rested on his oar.

"My hat! We'll be a bit more careful next time, you chaps!"

Wharton laughed ruefully.

"Yes, rather! It's been dark nearly an hour, and Uncle was expecting us at dark. He may be anxious."

"I say, you fellows, I hope you won't be much longer getting in. I'm getting awfully hungry," said Billy Bunter plaintively.

Bob Cherry snorted. The juniors were tired out with rowing, and Billy Bunter had done nothing. But he was thinking of himself, and only of himself, all the time.

It was so like Billy Bunter; but he was exasperating his companions. They were not just then in the mood to be patient, and Billy Bunter, if he had only known it, was dangerously near the limit.

The boat glided on to the landing-place.

The boatman was awaiting the juniors, looking relieved as they came in. He dragged the boat upon the shingle.

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The juniors jumped ashore with great relief.

Billy Bunter blinked around him, at the waters curling up round the boat, and raised his voice in complaint.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Jump out, Bunter!"

"Look here, I can't jump out! I shall get my feet wet, and you know how dangerous that is to a chap with a delicate constitution."

"Stay there, then!" said Nugent shortly.

"Oh, really——"

Wharton was paying the boatman. Then he stepped away towards the road. Billy Bunter gesticulated.

"Look here, you fellows, you might lift a chap out!"

Bob Cherry drew a deep breath.

"Lift him out, Nugent," he said.

"Good egg!"

They reached towards the fat junior, and lifted him with hands locked behind his shoulders and under his knees. Bunter was lifted over the bows of the boat quite comfortably, and then—

A surge of water from the lake wetted the feet of the two juniors, and at the same moment they let go of Bunter.

Squash!

The fat Removite plumped down in a sitting posture into the shallow water.

"Oh!" he roared.

The water splashed up on all sides, and the other juniors beat a hasty retreat, yelling with laughter.

Billy Bunter scrambled up, his trousers and half his jacket soaked through, and his fat face red with rage.

"You clumsy asses!" he roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm wet!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow! I shall catch my death of cold! Ow! I'm wet! I'm dripping with water! Yow! I know this will be fatal! I can feel pneumonia coming on already!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, wait for me! Ow!"

Billy Bunter ran up the beach after the others, squelching with water and leaving a wet trail as he went.

A tall form loomed out of the gloom, and Colonel Wharton uttered an exclamation of relief as he saw the juniors.

"Harry! I came to look for you! I was getting anxious!"

"I'm sorry, uncle! We thought we had plenty of time to get in by dark, but there was a current in the lake, and we had a hard pull."

The colonel smiled.

"It's all right, my boy, as you're safe. But what is the matter with Bunter? He is wet! Have you had an accident?

"Oh, no!"

"Is Bunter hurt?"

"Not at all."

"Oh, really, Wharton! I'm frightfully hurt! There has been a fearful accident! I was dropped into the water. The clumsy duffers did it in lifting me out of the boat."

The colonel laughed slightly.

"Oh, I see—an accident!"

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"There hasn't been an accident," he said. "Whenever Bunter asks to be lifted out of a boat, I think the same thing will happen."

"I think it's very likely," remarked Nugent.

"The likelifulness is terrific!" murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Oh, really, you fellows——"

"Well, you had better run into the house and get some dry clothes on," said the colonel. "Supper is ready."

And at that announcement Billy Bunter broke into a trot. Ten minutes later he forgot all his woes in the joys of supper. He paused in the meal to make only one remark, and that was monosyllabic. It was:

"Bong!"

THE END.

A Splendid School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

STANLEY DARE
The Boy Detective

INTRODUCTION.

Stanley Dare, the Boy Detective, while staying at Deal with his friend, Professor MacAndrew, receives an urgent appeal for help from an unknown girl. He proceeds to investigate, and is soon in the thick of a very complicated case. The trail leads the detective and his friend one night to a lonely Martello tower, from which terrible screams are heard. Breaking in the window of the tower, the two friends spring up the stairway, when a wailing cry rings out which causes them to pause and glance at each other.

(Now go on with the Story).

What Happened at the Tower. Clearing up the Mystery.

Something was falling with horribly suggestive thuds upon each stair. Then a dark, huddled-up object slid down to their feet.

MacAndrew bent over it.

"It is Finlay," he said.

"Has he been shot?"

"No. Look here, laddie."

The professor pointed to some marks upon the man's throat.

"Strangled! He is quite dead!"

Dare shuddered. It was too horrible. The man was an utter scoundrel, and it was no use to pretend sorrow at his fate, but it was so terribly sudden and unexpected that it gave them a shock.

"We must leave him here for the present. The living must be considered before the dead."

They continued their ascent of the stairs, and presently came to an upper chamber, which had no door. It was semi-circular in shape, being one of the original circular rooms divided into two by a strongly-built wall.

The door leading into the inner room was closed.

A pitiable spectacle met their eyes. Hugo Thorndyke stood before them, but so utterly unlike the quiet and courteous gentleman whom they had interviewed a few days since at Thorndyke Lodge, that Dare had to look twice at him to assure himself that it was the same man.

He was wild-eyed and dishevelled, and his face was contorted with an expression that can only be described as fiendishly malignant. His clothes were torn, and there was a cut on his left jaw, from which the blood still streamed. He still gripped a revolver in his right hand.

"Who are you?" he snarled. "And what do you want here? Come, answer quickly! I am monarch here, and my orders must be obeyed on the instant!"

"We have come to ask you to return with us to Thorndyke Lodge," replied Dare quietly.

"Thorndyke Lodge? I know of no such place!" exclaimed the madman. "Who are you, I ask again? If you are spies, it is better that you should never have been born than that you should show your faces here!"

"We are your friends, I hope——"

"Friends? I have no friends!" yelled the madman. "Everyone is conspiring against me. You fools! You have come into the lion's den, and there is no hope for you!"

He suddenly levelled his revolver, and fired. The bullet tore a hole in Dare's coat, and spattered the wall like a molten star on the far side of the room. He was about to fire again, when the young detective and MacAndrew sprang upon him, and a fierce struggle ensued.

Strong as they both were, they had the greatest difficulty in retaining hold of their antagonist. His madness had endowed him with the strength of three men, and he yelled like a savage as he fought and struggled.

But it was merely a paroxysm of unnatural strength which could not last. It gave out at length, and he became suddenly weak and limp. They secured his wrists and ankles, in case there should be a return of the fit, and laid him down in a corner of the room, where he subsided into breathless silence.

"Puir wretch!" muttered the professor. "I feel verra sorry for him."

No sound came from the inner room. The door was locked, but Stanley Dare soon had it open with one of his skeleton keys. A lamp was standing on a bamboo table, and by its light he saw a young and very pretty girl sitting in a half-fainting condition in a chair. Her eyes were dilated, the young detective noticed, as with a certain chronic terror.

"Have no fear," said Dare. "We are friends. My name is Stanley Dare. You sent a message to me some days ago—an appeal for help——"

"Oh, yes—yes!" The girl rose to her feet and sprang towards him. "I feared that it could never have reached you. It seems so long since I threw the envelope out of a loophole in this awful tower to a man who was passing. I had heard of you when I was in Canterbury, and I thought that you would understand the best way to aid me—better than the ordinary police. Mine was a terrible situation. I explained as much as possible to the man, who informed me that you were in Deal."

Stanley Dare explained the reason of the delay in coming to her assistance, how the man had been attacked, and arrived at the hotel in a wounded and fainting condition, and his subsequent loss of memory.

"But you are safe now," he concluded. "You can come with us to the Southdown Hotel, and the manager's wife will look after you until you can communicate with your friends. Professor MacAndrew and I have much to do yet before morning."

Eventually it was arranged that MacAndrew should escort the girl—whose name they learnt was Ethel Selwyn—to the Southdown Hotel, while Stanley Dare gave information to the police of the tragic events which had taken place in the Martello tower, and also of the necessity for a prompt raid on the Lugger Inn before the criminal gang which had located themselves there took the alarm and scattered.

A sergeant and three men went to the Martello tower to bring away Hugo Thorndyke for subsequent treatment at an asylum, and to convey the body of Finlay to a mortuary, while an inspector and half a dozen constables accompanied Dare to the inn.

Drecker, the landlord, was still shut up in the room, from which he could not be released until the key was found that fitted the spring lock; and, of course, his capture was easy.

But the remainder of the gang made a desperate resistance, and wounds were both given and received before they were eventually overpowered by the force of police and marched off, handcuffed in pairs, to the cells.

. . . . . .

It was eleven o'clock on the following morning before Dare and MacAndrew came down to breakfast, for they had both been worn out with their exertions, the young detective in particular having had an exhausting experience since the eventful night when the messenger came to him at the hotel.

It may be mentioned here that this worthy fellow eventually recovered his memory, and suffered no further ill-effects from his wounds. Ethel Selwyn's friends, who were

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fairly wealthy people, made him a very handsome present as a recompense for what he had undergone.

At Dare's invitation, Miss Selwyn joined them at breakfast, and now that her danger was a thing of the past, and the expression of fear had left her eyes, both the young detective and MacAndrew thought that she was one of the prettiest girls they had ever seen.

"My story is only a short one," she said, in answer to MacAndrew's inquiries, "but it would be regarded as almost incredible by anybody who does not know much of the criminal wickedness that still exists in the world. My home is at Canterbury. I came to Walmer on a few days' visit to an old schoolfellow. We often visit each other without writing beforehand, and I have learnt now the folly of doing so. When I arrived at Walmer I found that she and her parents had gone to Paris, and the house was shut up. I determined to spend a few hours here, however, so, leaving my portmanteau in the cloak-room at the railway-station, I went for a walk towards St. Margaret's Bay. On passing the Martello tower, and seeing the door open, I determined to explore it. I supposed it was empty. Judge of my horror when, on reaching that top chamber where you found me—which has only a tiny loophole to serve for light and ventilation—the door was suddenly closed on me, and I found myself a prisoner in the power of a dangerous madman, who on more than one occasion during the awful days that I was shut up there, threatened to kill me. It is a miracle that he did not carry out his threat. You understand now why no inquiries were made for me by my friends. I live with an invalid aunt at Canterbury, for my parents are dead, and she naturally thought I was staying with my old schoolfellow at Walmer; and, of course, my schoolfellow being away, knew nothing of my visit."

"The Lugger Inn gang seemed to have some interest in keeping you a prisoner also," said Dare.

"The man who was killed, whose name was Finlay," pursued Ethel Selwyn, "and an associate who was nearly as bad as himself, tried to extort money from me. They declared that I should not be set free unless I gave them a large sum, which, indeed, I should have given them—for I have money of my own—but I could not obtain it without writing to my aunt, and that method did not meet with their approval. Then the madman came a second time, and for the moment that put an end to all their schemes. In some way they seemed to be trading upon his madness, in order to further their own vile ends."

Stanley Dare was able to explain a few days later the manner in which Drecker and his criminal associates made use of poor Hugo Thorndyke as a tool. He was entirely in the hands of the rascally manservant Finlay, until that fatal evening when he turned upon him at last and killed him in the Martello tower.

Thorndyke's fits of madness were intermittent, as we have seen, and during his sane days he had no knowledge of what he had done in the period of madness. The miscreants of the Lugger Inn were aware of this, and arranged that Finlay should always take him away to the Martello tower—which was rented in his name—when he saw the mad attack coming on. During these times Mr. Thorndyke was induced to sign cheques for large amounts, the money being divided among the members of the gang. When their mad dupe incarcerated the girl in the tower chamber, they saw a way of making another haul without any risk to themselves.

But these were not the only criminal transactions in which they were engaged, for there was murder to be laid to their account as well as robbery, though the police had some difficulty in proving the more serious charge.

Drecker suffered the extreme penalty of the law, and his associates were sentenced to varying terms of penal servitude.

But the secret of many of their crimes is, without doubt, hidden in the treacherous heart of the "Shivering Sand."

The Dark Cloud of Suspicion.

"Impossible! I can't believe it!" exclaimed Wilfred Blount, as he knocked the ashes out of his briarwood pipe. "Douglas Clayton a thief! No, no, Latimer! Your so-called proofs don't amount to anything, and your suspicions are an insult."

Clarence Latimer, pale and dissipated-looking, merely shrugged his shoulders, and lounged further back in the deep recess of an easy-chair.

"Clayton is your friend!" he said, languidly, "and it is only natural that you should champion him. But there is no getting away from facts. I am very, very glad to think that I am mistaken; but my proofs, as it happens, do amount to something, and my suspicions no longer exist—as suspicions—"

"How do you mean?"

"They amount to certainties!"

His sneering, languid tones irritated plain, manly Wilfred Blount beyond all measure; but the malicious triumph with which Latimer uttered the last words made Blount turn upon his host almost savagely.

"I believe, Latimer," he said, "that for some reason or other, you hate Douglas Clayton, and that you would go out of the way to do him an injury."

Your warm espousal of your friends' cause has made you forget yourself, I think, Mr. Blount," observed Latimer, in his most icy tones. "You have not yet heard all I have to say on the matter."

"Well, for goodness' sake let us be quick and hear it!" broke in Paget. "Don't beat about the bush. Much better that you should speak straight out, as that will give Clayton a chance of offering an explanation."

"It will puzzle him to offer one that will be accepted by anyone but his extreme partisans!" replied Vernon Forsyth sarcastically.

He was a crony of Latimer's—a creature with no will of his own, but who acted as a sort of echo to the man he imitated and toadied to, thinking it to be a fine thing to be one of Latimer's "set," notoriously the fastest and most dissipater at St. Martin's.

There were half a dozen undergraduates assembled in Latimer's rooms, which were on the second floor, overlooking the quadrangle of St. Martin's College, Cambridge.

They had been invited by Latimer to a special "wine," to discuss a matter which affected the honour of the college, to begin with, and the honour, character, perhaps even the liberty, of one of its most popular students—Douglas Clayton.

Two of these present belonged to Latimer's "set," but the other three were friends of Clayton. And it was rare, indeed, that they were found in social intercourse with the Latimer lot, for their tastes and occupations were entirely dissimilar.

Wilfred Blount and the majority of Clayton's friends were in the athletic section of the college, outdoor sports of all kinds claiming them as votaries. But Latimer & Co. were either too effeminate or too vicious to indulge in sports that tested one's courage, skill, and endurance. Billiards and cards, betting and gambling in other forms, were favourite pastimes, as might have been guessed by their pale faces and want of energy—in the morning, at all events.

The matter which had brought these two opposing sections together in Latimer's rooms was no less than the theft from the latter's bed-room of fifty pounds in gold, and a diamond ring valued at fifteen pounds. He suspected his fellow-student, who had rooms on the same floor, of the theft. And he considered it necessary for the honour of the college, as he said, to communicate his suspicions to a select committee of undergrads.

It was necessary, of course, that some of the suspected man's personal friends should be invited, otherwise some unpleasant remarks about a dished-up story might have been made. Hence the presence of Blount, Paget, and Graham.

(Another long instalment next week.)

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