

# THE UNINVITED GUESTS!

A Grand Complete School Story. By FRANK RICHARDS.



Bolsover & Co., securely bound on the floor, regarded the feasting juniors with malevolent eyes. "You'll get into trouble when the bobbies come!" said Bolsover threateningly. (An incident from the grand long, complete story of the Chums of Greyfriars which is contained in this issue.)

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# THE UNINVITED GUESTS!



## A New, Grand, Complete Story of the Chums of Greyfriars School. By FRANK RICHARDS.

the cricket-field at practice. Bunter had watched them there before he ventured into their quarters. Billy Bunter liked jam, and he was not particular whose jam it was so long as there was plenty of it. He had almost travelled through the jar, growing happier and stickier with every spoonful, when he heard footsteps and voices in the passage outside.

Then dismay fell upon him. He paused, with a jam-laden spoon half-way to his mouth.

However enjoyable it was to purloin Study No. 1's jam, it would not be at all enjoyable to be caught in the act by the chums of the Remove. Billy Bunter knew that only too well.

He glanced wildly round the study, as if in search of an avenue of escape. But he had only the door and the window to choose from. The window was out of the question, and outside the door sounded the heavy footsteps and cheery voice of Bob Cherry of the Remove.

"Oh, crumbs!" groaned Bunter. "The beasts! What do they want to come in now for, and I haven't finished the jam!"

But there was no time to lose.

Bunter made a swoop for the table, and plunged underneath it, the jam-jar and the spoon still in his fat hands.

There was a cover on the table which reached within a few inches of the floor, a large and handsome table-cover, which was a present from Harry Wharton's affectionate aunt. It was adorned with many traces of jam, tea, toffee, and ink, and its state would probably have shocked Miss Wharton if she could have seen it. But it answered Bunter's purpose very well. The fat junior, crouched under the table, was hidden from sight, unless someone should stoop and look under the table, which was not likely to happen. Bunter squeezed himself there, gasping, and fervently hoping that the fellows would not stay long in the study.

Thump!

It was Bob Cherry's knock at the door, just as Bunter slithered out of sight. But the cloth had fallen into its place,

### THE FIRST CHAPTER. Under Cover!

"Oh, crumbs! They're coming!" Billy Bunter uttered the exclamation in tones of dismay.

He was standing before the open cupboard in Study No. 1, in the Remove passage at Greyfriars. In his fat left hand he held a jampot, in his fat right hand a table-spoon. There were smears of jam on his fat face.

Billy Bunter had been enjoying himself. Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent, to whom the study belonged, were on

and Bunter was quite concealed, when the door was thrown open, and Bob Cherry looked in.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Not here yet."  
 "Here we are!" called out Harry Wharton's voice from the passage. And Wharton and Nugent followed Bob Cherry into the study.

Johnny Bull and Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh, the other two members of the "Co.," came in after them.

Bunter groaned under his breath. They were all there now. He could have touched some of their feet by stretching out a fat hand. How long would it be before they discovered that a marauder had been in the study?

It was not long.  
 "Mauly's not here yet," said Bob Cherry, seating himself on the table, and swinging his long legs. And Bunter jerked his head out of the way just in time.

"Hallo, somebody's been here!" said Harry Wharton, catching sight of the open cupboard door. "Somebody's been boning the jam! Where's that jar?"

"Gone!" growled Nugent.  
 "That fat rotter Bunter again! He must have seen us bringing in the jam!" exclaimed Wharton. "He's scooped it, the whole jar!"

"I wish we'd caught him here," said Nugent, with a snort. "Now, there won't be any jam for tea. The fat rotter will have scooped the lot. I wish we'd caught him!"

Bunter shivered. Nugent's tone told only too plainly what would have happened to him if he had been caught. The fat junior hardly breathed.

"Where's that ass Mauleverer?" said Johnny Bull. "He said he had something to say to us, something special."

"Well, we're all here," said Nugent.  
 "But Mauly isn't here, the blessed slacker!"

Johnny Bull stepped to the doorway, put his head out into the passage, and bawled:  
 "Mauly! Mauleverer! Where are you, you ass? We're waiting for you, you fathead!"

"Comin', my dear fellow!"  
 "Buck up, then," growled Johnny Bull.

Lord Mauleverer, the dandy of the Remove, came down the passage in a leisurely manner. Lord Mauleverer's movements were always leisurely. If the house had been on fire it was not really likely that Lord Mauleverer would have hurried himself. He firmly believed in taking things easy.

The schoolboy earl smiled genially as he looked in.  
 "All here, my dear fellows?" he asked lazily.

"Yes, ass!"  
 "Good! You don't mind if I take the armchair, do you?" asked his lordship. "I'm rather fagged."

He sat down with a sigh.  
 "What's fagged you?" asked Johnny Bull sarcastically.

"Been breathing too hard?"  
 "Well, I was watching the cricket, you know," said Lord Mauleverer innocently. "I stood there for nearly ten minutes. I did, begad!"

"Then you must be exhausted," said Wharton, with deep sympathy. "Don't speak in a hurry. Take a little rest first. Go easy!"

"Thanks!"  
 "You told me you'd got something to say to all of us!" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"Yaas."  
 "Well, we're here, waiting!"  
 "Yaas."

"Go ahead, then!" roared Bull.  
 "Yaas. Don't hurry me, my dear fellow; it makes me have that tired feeling. I suppose you haven't got a cushion here?"

"What do you want a cushion for?"  
 "The back of this chair is rather hard."

"Give him a cushion," said Bob Cherry. "Let him rest his weary head, or the effort of talking will be too much for him. We don't want to have a dead idiot on our hands."

Johnny Bull grunted, and picked up a cushion from a corner, and gave it to Lord Mauleverer. He gave it to him

as if it had been a cricket-ball, and Lord Mauleverer a wicket.  
 Crash!

"Ow! Begad!"  
 Lord Mauleverer, suddenly stirred into activity, leaped up from the armchair as the cushion crashed upon his chest, and gasped.

"Oh! Oh! Ow! Great Scott!"  
 "There's the cushion," said Johnny Bull cheerfully. "Now pull yourself together, and go ahead, or I'll follow it up with the inkpot."

"Ow!" groaned Lord Mauleverer, sinking into his seat again, and keeping a wary eye on Johnny Bull. "I don't like rough jokes. You've shaken me fearfully."

Johnny Bull picked up the inkpot.  
 "Hold on!" said Lord Mauleverer hastily. "I'm just going to begin. Don't be impatient, my dear fellow. Give a chap a chance to speak. I've got something rather important to say to you chaps."

"Pile in!"  
 "You see, I've been feeling run down lately," explained Lord Mauleverer. "Over-exertion, I suppose; tired right out!"

"Yes, you suffer a lot from over-exertion," said Bob Cherry sympathetically. "What you want is a rest cure?"

"That's just it," said Mauleverer. "I've thought it out, and I've had a very kind offer from a relation of mine. He's a decent chap, you know, and he's got a little place in the country, what he calls a country cottage, you know? It's about fifty miles from here, near a place called something-or-other."

"I've never seen that on the map."  
 "Well, that isn't the name of the place, you know. I always forget names," said Lord Mauleverer, in a tired voice.

"But I've got his letter here. I'll look at it again."  
 "Hold on! What has the place got to do with us?"

"Why, you see, he's away, and he's offered me the use of the place and his servants and dogs and things for a week-end."

"Well?"  
 "Well, I jumped at the idea, you know. A week-end in a bracing air is just what I want to set me up. Nobody at the place, you know. We shall have it all to ourselves, if you fellows will come with me."

"My hat!"  
 Satisfied expressions came over the faces of the Famous Five. Johnny Bull replaced the inkpot on the table. Inkpots were not for fellows who had week-end invitations to scatter about.

"Well, that's a jolly good wheeze!" said Harry Wharton heartily. "I don't know that we need a change, or bucking-up, but it would be ripping to have a week-end away, if we can get leave!"

"Yaas. I'll ask the Head, and I dare say he'll give us leave. We clear off after lessons on Saturday, you know, and come back early on Monday, so it won't interfere with the work. I wish it did. Of course, I don't want to go down there alone. I'd like you fellows to come. There's boatin', motorin', shootin', and fishin', and things. How do you like the idea?"

Five voices answered as one:  
 "Ripping!"

And Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh added enthusiastically that the rippingfulness of the esteemed wheeze was terrific.

Lord Mauleverer nodded with satisfaction.  
 "Glad you like it. Then you'll come?"

"Yes, rather!"  
 "Then I'll speak to the Head. He's bound to see that I need a change—I'm so awfully run down, you know!"

"And we'll see that you get bucked-up during the week-end!" said Bob Cherry heartily. "We'll look after you, and keep you hard at it!"

"Oh, begad!"  
 "We'll see that you don't slack, and that you have incessant exercise—"

"Oh, I say—"  
 "We'll make you feel a new man by the time we've done with you," promised Bob Cherry.

"Oh!"  
 "It will be topping, if we can get off!" said Frank Nugent. "Mauly, you're a giddy genius! We have been entertaining an angel unawares!"

"What-ho!" said Bob Cherry. "I say—hallo, hallo, hallo!—what on earth's that? There's some animal under the table!"

In his enthusiasm, Bob Cherry had been swinging his long legs with more energy than ever, as he sat on the table. Under the table, Bunter had been dodging his boots with frantic alarm. But the catastrophe came—Bob's heavy heel crashed on a fat chin, and there was a wild yell from under the table:

"Ow-w-w-w-w-w-w!"

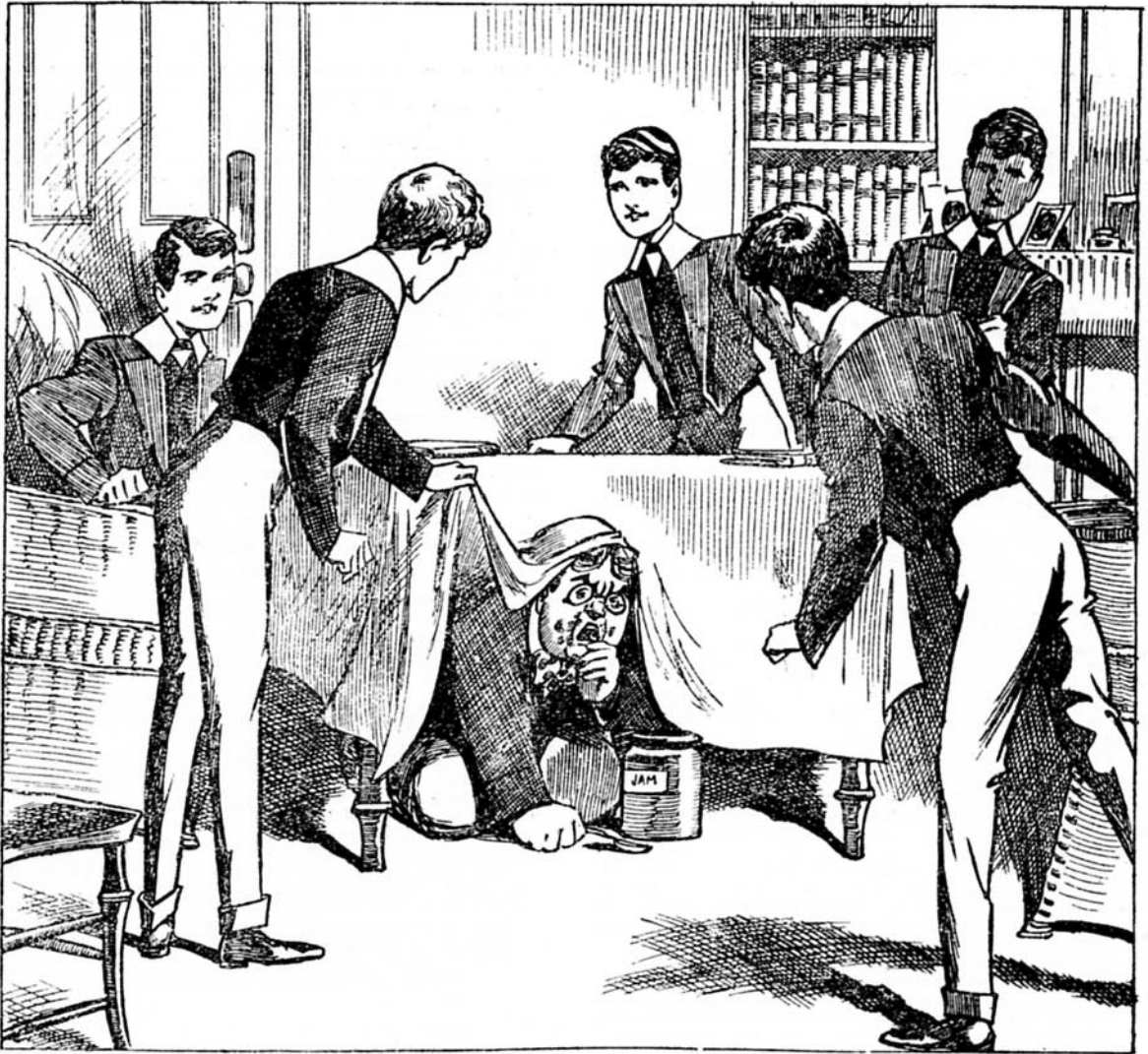
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See Page 26, "The Gem" Library, Number 326.



Bob Cherry dragged up the tablecloth. Then there was a general exclamation. "Bunter!" The fat junior was revealed, crouching with the jam-spoon in his hand, one sticky paw caressing his injured chin. "That's where the jam's gone!" shouted Nugent. "He's got it there!" (See Chapter 2.)

### THE SECOND CHAPTER.

#### The Importance of Being Good!

**H**ARRY WHARTON & CO. jumped. They had believed themselves alone in the study, but the yell under the table was sufficient evidence that there was someone else there.

Bob Cherry jumped off the table, and dragged up the cover. Then there was a general exclamation:

"Bunter!"  
The fat junior was revealed, crouching with the jam-spoon in his hand, one sticky paw caressing his injured chin.

"That's where the jam's gone!" shouted Nugent. "He's got it there!"

"You fat burglar!"  
"Yank him out!"  
Bob Cherry thrust a big boot under the table, and, thus encouraged, Billy Bunter rolled out and scrambled to his feet, still clutching the jam-jar. He blinked furiously at the Removites through his big spectacles.

"Grooh! Oh, that silly idiot's broken my jaw! Ow!"  
"You're using it pretty well for a broken jaw!" grinned Bob Cherry. "So you've been spying, as usual, you fat beast!"

"Ow!"  
"And scoffing our jam!" said Nugent wrathfully. "I'll pay for the jam, if you're so jolly mean about it!"  
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FOR NEXT  
MONDAY—

"ROUGH ON COKER!"

said Bunter, with dignity. "I'm expecting a postal-order this evening, and as soon as it comes I'll settle."

"We'll settle now!" said Bob, jerking the jar away. "Let him have the rest of it down his fat neck!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
Bunter dodged frantically round the table.  
"Keep off!" he roared. "Yow, you beast, keep away! Yaroop!"

Bob Cherry pursued him, jar in hand. The other fellows roared with laughter. Bunter took refuge behind the arm-chair, clutching Lord Mauleverer with sticky hands.

"Ow! Keep him off, Mauly—"  
"Begad! Take your paws off!" gasped his lordship, in horror. "You're making me sticky!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
Bob Cherry burst into a laugh, and slammed the jam-jar down on the table. Bunter gasped for breath, and blinked at him.

"Ow! Of—of course, I knew you were only joking!" he panted. "It's all right, you fellows; I don't mind a j-j-joke!"

Harry Wharton pointed to the door.  
"Travel!" he said tersely.  
"Oh, really, Wharton—"  
"Get out! We're talking business!"  
"Yaas, get out, Punter!"

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"I say, you fellows, I heard what you were saying, you know. Of course, I didn't mean to listen; I hope you don't suspect me of that. But I heard it all; and, I say, Mauly, if you like, old chap, I'll come!"

"Eh?"

"I should like a week-end in the country," said Bunter genially. "And, of course, you'd like your old pal with you!"

"What old pal?"

"Me!" roared Bunter.

"Oh, begad!"

"Of course I'm coming. The party wouldn't be complete without me. Besides, I could amuse you, you know, if it rains and you're shut up indoors. I'd give you one of my ventriloquial entertainments—"

"Thanks!"

"Not at all, Mauly. I'd do more than that for a fellow I really like," said Bunter affectionately. "It's settled I'm coming, then?"

"No fear!"

"Now, look here, Mauly—"

"Sorry!"

"Do you mean to say you don't want me?" howled Bunter.

"Yaas."

"Now, I say, Mauly, old fellow, be a pal—"

"Rats!"

"Look here, Mauleverer, you silly, lackadaisical idiot—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Put him out," said Lord Mauleverer plaintively. "He makes me tired!"

"Ow! Leggo, Bob Cherry! Ow! Beast, leggo!"

Bob Cherry swung Bunter through the doorway, and then let go. Bunter dropped on the floor of the passage with a yell. Then Bob closed the study door.

"Thanks!" yawned Mauleverer. "Then it's all settled, and I'll ask the Head for leave!"

"You haven't told us where the place is yet."

Lord Mauleverer sighed, and felt in his pockets, and produced a letter, and glanced at it.

"Live Oaks!" he said. "That's the name of the cottage. It's near Gunthorpe—that's a place somewhere or other, I think!"

"Go hon!"

"You can get to it on the railway—there's a station at Gunthorpe," said Lord Mauleverer. "I'll wire to Trooper to send something or other to the What's-its-name to meet us, you know!"

"Who's Trooper?"

"He's a butler or something. There are only two servants there, besides the cook, I understand, and Trooper is the head one. There's a chauffeur, too. Now I'll go and speak to the Head, and if he says 'Yes,' it's all right. To-day's Friday, I think—"

"Yes, it's a dead cert!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Then to-morrow's Saturday—"

"Did you do that in your head?" asked Bob admiringly.

"Yaas. I'll wire to Trooper to-morrow that we're coming down by the afternoon train—there's only one afternoon train there, I think. He'll send something or other to meet us, you know; it's some distance to Live Oaks. Jolly glad you fellows can come! I'd ask Bunter, too, only he makes me tired. I think that's all!"

"Hooray!" said Bob Cherry. "Go and ask the Head now, Mauly, and we'll wait for you in the passage. I'm anxious!"

"Yaas."

Bob opened the door of the study, and uttered an angry exclamation as Billy Bunter almost fell in. The fat junior's ear had been glued to the keyhole.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter.

"You spying worm!"

"I—I wasn't listening! I—I stooped to button my shoe-lace—I mean—I—I didn't hear a word. I didn't hear Mauly say anything about Gunthorpe. Ow—ow—ow!"

Bunter fled, Bob Cherry's boot accelerating his flight. The Owl of the Remove disappeared, and the Famous Five marched Lord Mauleverer off to the Head's study. They waited outside while the schoolboy earl knocked and went in.

They were anxious for the decision. A week-end away from school would be a most agreeable change, especially with the good cheer that the schoolboy earl was certain to provide. Lord Mauleverer came out of the Head's study in a few minutes, looking decidedly "down." The juniors' faces fell.

"He hasn't said 'No'?" asked Nugent anxiously.

Lord Mauleverer shook his head.

"Then he's said 'Yes'?"

Another shake of the head.

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"You ass, he must have said one or the other!"

Billy Bunter came cautiously along the passage.

"I say, you fellows, I'll speak to the Head, if you like—"

"Shut up!" rapped out Bob Cherry. "What did the Head say, Mauly? Get it out!"

"It's left to our Form-master," said Lord Mauleverer dismally. "Mr. Quelch is to be asked, and if he thinks our conduct deserves it, he'll let us off."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"It's all right," said Harry Wharton. "We'll make it a point to be extra good to-day and to-morrow morning, and soften Quelch's heart. Then we'll ask him."

"That's the only way," agreed Bob.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Seat!" roared Bob Cherry, lifting his boot. And Bunter snorted, and vanished again.

There was evidently no room for William George Bunter in that week-end party.

Harry Wharton & Co. walked away thoughtfully. They were in Mr. Quelch's good books to a certain extent; but they were not model juniors, and they were by no means certain that Mr. Quelch would regard them as being deserving of a holiday on account of their good conduct. The only thing was to be models for the short time that was left, and impress Mr. Quelch with their goodness to the greatest extent possible. As Bob remarked, Mauly was an ass not to have told them sooner, and they could have started on their new line earlier, with a better chance of success. But he added cheerfully that it is never too late to mend.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### Very Lucky!

"GOOD luck!"

Frank Nugent's handsome face was beaming with satisfaction as he looked into the junior common-room at Greyfriars.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the news?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Luck's our way," said Frank. "Quelch is giving a lecture to the Fifth and the Sixth—the old Virgil lecture, you know. I'd forgotten it was to-day."

"What on earth does that matter to us?" demanded Johnny Bull, in a puzzled tone. "Nobody below the Fifth is bound to go to the lectures."

"But they can go if they like," said Nugent.

"If!" snorted Johnny.

Nugent wagged his forefinger severely at Johnny Bull.

"Look here, Johnny, don't be an ass! Quelch pours out whole floods of learning at those giddy lectures. Linley always goes, so does Penfold."

"Well, they're swotting; we're not. You're not suggesting going to a Virgil lecture when we don't have to, you unspeakable ass!" exclaimed Bull, in astonishment.

"Yes, rather!" said Nugent emphatically.

"Fathead!"

"Ass!"

"(hump!"

The remarks of his chums were not complimentary. Evidently the prospect of attending a classical lecture they were not bound to attend did not appeal to the chums of the Remove.

"Potty, I suppose!" Peter Todd remarked.

"Must be raving!" said Bolsover major. "No juniors ever go to those lectures, excepting swots like Linley and Penfold, and fellows who want to suck up to Quelch, like Snoop and Skinner."

"Come on!" said Nugent, beckoning to his chums.

"We're not coming!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Yes, you are! Come on!"

"But why?" demanded Wharton. "What's the little game?"

Nugent grunted impatiently.

"Ass! Ain't we going to be good? And how can we be gooder than by attending a classical lecture when we're not bound to?"

"Oh!"

The juniors understood at last. They followed Nugent promptly from the common-room. They were indeed in luck's way, and the chance was too good to be neglected. Mr. Quelch was certain to notice them among his audience, and he was equally certain to be pleased. The seniors had to go, but for a fellow to go who hadn't to go was bound to be very gratifying to the lecturer.

Harry Wharton & Co. grinned as they made their way to the lecture-room, but assumed their gravest and most thoughtful expressions when they reached that dreaded apartment and entered.

"What on earth's the little game?" asked Tom Brown.

the New Zealand junior. "Wild horses wouldn't drag me there, I know that!"

"Same here!" said Bolsover major.

"I say, you fellows, I know all about it," said Billy Bunter. "They're sucking up to Quelch, the beasts! They want a week-end off to go down to Gunthorpe with Mauly. And they won't take me!"

"Well, that shows their sense, doesn't it?" remarked Skinner.

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"So that's the little game, is it?" grunted Bolsover major, in an aggrieved tone. "Mauly hasn't asked me!"

"Well, he can't ask everybody," said Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars. "If he takes five chaps, that's a good number."

Bolsover major snorted. He was the biggest fellow in the Remove, and very much of a bully, and he did not like being left out; though, as he was no friend of Lord Mauleverer's, he had no right whatever to expect to be included.

"They're going to-morrow, if they can get off," said Bunter. "They want to get into Quelch's good graces. I hope he'll be down on them, the beasts! I'd jolly well muck it up for them if I could—leaving an old pal behind, the rotters!"

"Thanks, Bunt!" said Harry Wharton's voice, as the captain of the Remove looked into the common-room again. He had remembered Lord Mauleverer. "Mauly!"

Lord Mauleverer was reclining gracefully in an easy-chair before the fire. He turned his head lazily as Wharton called.

"Yaas?"

"Why didn't you come, you ass? Buck up!"

"What for?"

"The lecture, of course!"

"My dear fellow," said Lord Mauleverer, in alarm, "I can't go to the lecture! I can't, really! Too much brain fag!"

"Come on, you slacker! You've got to be good as well as us. We can't go on the week-end trip without you, you know."

"Let Mauly alone!" said Bolsover major, chipping in, as Wharton caught the schoolboy earl by the shoulder and jerked him out of his chair. "Let Mauly do as he likes!"

"Oh, rats!" said Wharton tersely.

"I'll look after you, Mauly!" said the bully of the Remove patronisingly. "You shan't go to any rotten lectures if you don't want to! I'll tell you what, kid—I'll come with you to-morrow for that week-end!"

"Begad!"

"Let him alone, Wharton!"

"Bosh! Come on, Mauly!"

"Yaas, dear boy!" said Lord Mauleverer, and he walked away with Wharton.

Some of the juniors chuckled. Bolsover major scowled.

"Look here, Mauly—come back! I'll look after you!"

"Thanks!"

And Mauleverer left the common-room with Wharton. Bolsover's championship did not seem to elicit any gratitude from him. Bolsover followed him to the door.

"Shall I come with you to-morrow, Mauly?"

"Sorry, dear boy!"

"If you don't want me, say so!" said Bolsover, with a threatening look.

"So!" said Lord Mauleverer calmly.

And he chuckled lazily as he walked down the passage with Wharton, leaving Bolsover scowling savagely, and the other fellows laughing.

Arrived at the door of the lecture-room, however, Lord Mauleverer hesitated.

"I say, old chap, let me off—"

"Come in!" said Harry.

"But—but I shall go to sleep, you know," said Mauleverer plaintively, "and if Quelch catches me asleep, it won't make a good impression on him at all."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"That's all right. I've got a pin here, and whenever you show any signs of nodding off, I'll stick it into you. Rely on me!"

"Oh, begad!" groaned Lord Mauleverer.

And he allowed himself to be led meekly into the lecture-room.

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, gave the juniors a glance as they came in and took their places. His glance was approving. This thirst for knowledge on the part of fellows in the Lower Fourth was very gratifying indeed to their Form-master. The six Removites sat down in a solemn row behind the seniors, and listened to Mr. Quelch on the enthralling subject of Virgilian verse with the expressions of owls.

Meanwhile, Bolsover major had drawn Billy Bunter aside. Bolsover was very much annoyed, and he felt as keenly desirous as Bunter of spoiling the Co.'s chances of making a good impression upon Mr. Quelch.

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FOR NEXT MONDAY—

"ROUGH ON COKER!"

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"You're coming to the lecture with me, Bunter," he said.

Billy Bunter looked dismayed.

"Oh, really, Bolsover—" he murmured.

"You haven't forgotten how to play those rotten ventriloquial tricks, have you?" said Bolsover. "Well, here's your chance!"

Bunter's eyes glistened behind his spectacles. He understood.

"Get those rotters into trouble with Quelch, and we may get along with Mauly to-morrow, instead of that crowd!" said Bolsover majuly.

And Bunter chuckled gleefully:

"I'm on!"

Mr. Quelch was surprised when the lecture-room door opened again, and gave admittance to Bunter, Bolsover major, and Skinner. Skinner had come along to see the fun. But the Remove-master was pleased as well as surprised. The trio took their places sedately, imitating the owl-like expressions of the Co. as they listened to the lecturer.

Billy Bunter coughed slightly, preparing for business. About the only thing that Bunter could do well was ventriloquism, and his frequent assertion that it was a gift was fully believed, as otherwise, the Owl of the Remove certainly hadn't brains enough to acquire it. His gift for imitating voices was really marvellous—and when Bunter had first discovered his powers, he had been as full of tricks as a monkey—but a process of thumping, bumping, and kicking had induced him to keep his gift to himself so far as the Remove was concerned.

The seats were crowded with seniors, some of them listening attentively to the lecture, others trying to conceal their boredom. Coker of the Fifth was nearly asleep, and Loder was yawning behind his hand. Few of the seniors looked so enraptured in what they heard as Harry Wharton & Co. They were being very good—very good, indeed.

Bolsover major nudged Bunter, after waiting about ten minutes. He was already fed up with the lecture.

"Go it!" he murmured.

Bunter nodded, and went it.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER. Once Too Often!

"BOB, what's the time?" It was Harry Wharton's voice—or ought to have been. It spoke out loudly and clearly, interrupting Mr. Quelch in the middle of one of his periods. Bob Cherry looked at his chum in amazement and dismay. Mr. Quelch broke off his discourse, and stared grimly at Wharton, thunder gathering on his brow.

"Wharton!" he rapped out.

"Yes, sir," said Harry. Wharton had heard the voice, of course, but had not recognised it as an imitation of his own, and supposed that someone else had spoken. One's own voice is the hardest thing to recognise when reproduced.

"How dare you!"

"Wh-a-at?"

"How dare you interrupt me?"

"I, sir!" exclaimed Wharton, in dismay.

"Yes, you, sir! If you are anxious to know what the time is, you may look at your watch, Wharton. If you are anxious for the close of the lecture, I may remind you that you are not compelled to attend it."

"I—I—"

Mr. Quelch pointed majestically to the door.

"You had better go, Wharton!"

"But, sir—"

"Kindly go at once, and don't argue with me, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch, with asperity.

And Wharton, utterly dismayed and confounded, rose from his place, and, with a hopeless glance at his chums, quitted the lecture-room. Wharton, at all events, had not succeeded in making the desired good impression upon Mr. Quelch.

"The awful ass!" murmured Bob. "What did he want to speak for! He's spoiled his giddy chance."

Mr. Quelch, with an accession of dignity, resumed his lecture. There was an almost painful silence in the lecture-room. Bolsover major dug Bunter ecstatically in his fat ribs.

"Pile in!" he murmured. "It's over in half an hour."

Bunter nodded.

"Pass me the toffee, will you?"

It was Bob Cherry's voice this time. And again Mr. Quelch halted in his discourse. His eyes simply glittered at Bob.

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"Cherry, leave the room instantly!"  
 "I, sir!" said Bob in dismay. "What have I done, sir?"

"Go!"  
 "Oh, crikey!" murmured Bob. And he went.  
 "Rotter shame!" said a voice, that was apparently Frank Nugent's. And Mr. Quelch jumped as he heard it.  
 "Nugent, you impertinent young rascal!"  
 "I didn't speak, sir!"

"What! You dare to say that you did not speak, when I heard you distinctly!" exclaimed the angry master. "Take a hundred lines, Nugent, and go immediately to your study, and write them out."

"But, sir—"  
 "One word more, and I will cane you!"  
 Nugent passed out of the lecture-room, casting a furious look at Billy Bunter as he went. He had guessed now that the Remove ventriloquist was at work. Bunter closed one eye at him in return. He allowed ten minutes to pass before he resumed operations. The room had settled down to silent attention, when a loud yawn was heard proceeding from the direction of Lord Mauleverer.

"Yaw-aw-aw-aw!"  
 The room was electrified. The seniors turned in their seats to stare at the junior who had dared to yawn loudly—a thing they would have liked to do, for the most part, themselves.

Lord Mauleverer, who had been suppressing yawns with difficulty, started upright in his seat.

Mr. Quelch's burning eyes were fastened on him.  
 "Mauleverer, you seem to be sleepy."

"Yaas—no, sir!" stammered Mauleverer.

"The lecture-room is not the place to go to sleep, Mauleverer."

"Yaas, sir. I—"  
 "Kindly go to your study, and write out a hundred lines of Virgil!"

"Oh, begad!"

Lord Mauleverer departed dismayed. Coker of the Fifth looked round curiously at Bunter and grinned. He knew Bunter's tricks of old, and he had guessed the truth. He whispered to Potter and Greene, and they grinned, too.

"This is no laughing matter, Coker!" rapped out Mr. Quelch.

Coker's face became solemn as an owl's immediately.  
 "Yes, sir!"  
 "Silence!"

Mr. Quelch resumed. He was in a sharp temper by this time, and his glance rested several times upon the juniors who remained. Johnny Bull and Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh were looking daggers at Bunter. They, too, guessed that the Remove ventriloquist was at work, but they could not give him away to the Form-master. Sneaking was forbidden; but they promised themselves to simply smash him when the lecture was over.

"Rot, I call this!"  
 "The rotfulness is terrific!"

Those remarks seemed to cut the air. There was a gasp from all who heard them, and Mr. Quelch's look became absolutely terrifying.

"Bull! Hurree Singh! Stand out here!"

He stepped down from the dais, taking up a cane from a desk. The two juniors came out unwillingly.

"If you please, sir—" began Bull.  
 "Honoured sahib—" murmured Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh.

"Silence! Hold out your hands!"  
 "But, sir—"

"Not a word!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "Hold out your hands! You shall learn whether you are permitted to make unseemly interruptions in the course of a lecture. I am shocked—disgusted!"

Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish!  
 "Now go!" said Mr. Quelch, pointing to the door.  
 They went.

Mr. Quelch, very much ruffled, resumed his lecture, and silence was restored. Bolsover major was grinning with delight, and Bunter could hardly restrain his chuckles. The six juniors were in disgrace with their Form-master now, and certainly not likely to get permission for that week-end trip. Billy Bunter was so satisfied with his success that he found it impossible to let well alone. He had old grudges against Coker, on account of Coker's objection to having his study-cupboard raided. Coker's objections on that subject were always forcible. Bunter proceeded to make Coker of the Fifth his next victim.

"Heigh-ho!" came from Coker—or seemed to come from him. "I'm getting fed-up, Potter!"

"Shut up, you ass!" whispered Potter, in terror.  
 "Eh? I didn't speak!" said Coker.

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"You did, you chump—you—"  
 "Coker!"  
 "Ye-es, sir!"

"You seem to have taken it upon yourself to imitate the impertinence of the juniors I have punished. Perhaps you imagine that I shall dismiss you from the room. I shall do nothing of the sort, Coker. I shall report you to your Form-master for insolence!"

Coker looked dazed.  
 "Wha-at have I done, sir?" he gasped. "I didn't speak!"

"Don't tell falsehoods, Coker!"  
 "I didn't speak!" roared Coker, understanding now. "It was that fat villain, Bunter!"

"What!"  
 "He's a rotten ventriloquist, sir, and he's been playing tricks!" howled Coker.

Mr. Quelch's expression changed. It was some time since he had heard any of Bunter's ventriloquial efforts; but he remembered now a certain performance of Bunter's in the Remove Form-room. His eyes fixed upon Bunter.

"Oh," he said, "I think I understand! Come here, Bunter!"

Bunter's jaw dropped.  
 "If—if you p-pp-please, sir—"  
 "Come here!"

"You've done it now!" murmured Bolsover major. "Why couldn't you let well alone, you silly owl? Not a word about me, mind, or—"

"Do you hear me, Bunter?"  
 Bunter groaned and came out into the room. Mr. Quelch was gripping his cane very hard.

"I remember now, Bunter, that you played some trick of this kind in the Form-room. Have you been playing tricks of a ventriloquial nature here?"

"No, sir!" said Bunter promptly.  
 "He has!" roared Coker.

"Silence, Coker! Bunter, did you imitate Coker's voice?"  
 "Certainly not, sir! I couldn't imitate his voice, sir—never thought of such a thing. Coker must have spoken without noticing it, sir," murmured Bunter feebly.

"Did you imitate the voices of the juniors whom I have dismissed from the room?" asked Mr. Quelch, with ominous quietness.

"Certainly not, sir!"  
 "Are you sure, Bunter?"  
 "Quite sure, sir! I couldn't possibly do it. I told Bolsover so when he asked me to come here to do it, didn't I, Bolsover?" And Bunter turned to the bully of the Remove for confirmation.

There was a chuckle through the lecture-room. Bunter was always ready with the most tremendous whoppers; he could easily have beaten Ananias and Sapphira in their own peculiar line. But his falsehoods, though plentiful, had one weakness—they could never possibly be believed. The chuckle died away as Mr. Quelch glanced round. The Remove-master's face hinted that it was not a moment for laughing.

"Bolsover, did you ask Bunter to come here and play ventriloquial tricks?"

"No, sir!" said Bolsover sullenly.  
 "Bunter says you did!"

"I—I didn't exactly say that, sir," said Bunter, terrified between Mr. Quelch's wrath at present, and Bolsover major's afterwards. "I—I said I told him I couldn't—"

"Then why did you come here, Bunter?"  
 "Because Bolsover said—I—I mean, it was to hear the lecture, sir. I'm so interested in—in Virgil, sir, especially the Georgics, and—"

"Don't tell falsehoods, Bunter."  
 "Ahem! Certainly not, sir. I'm a very truthful chap. I've never told a lie in my life, sir," said Bunter. "When I first came to school, sir, my grandfather took my hand in his and made me promise—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "Silence! Bunter, you are speaking falsely. You have been playing tricks, and you did it at the request of Bolsover!"

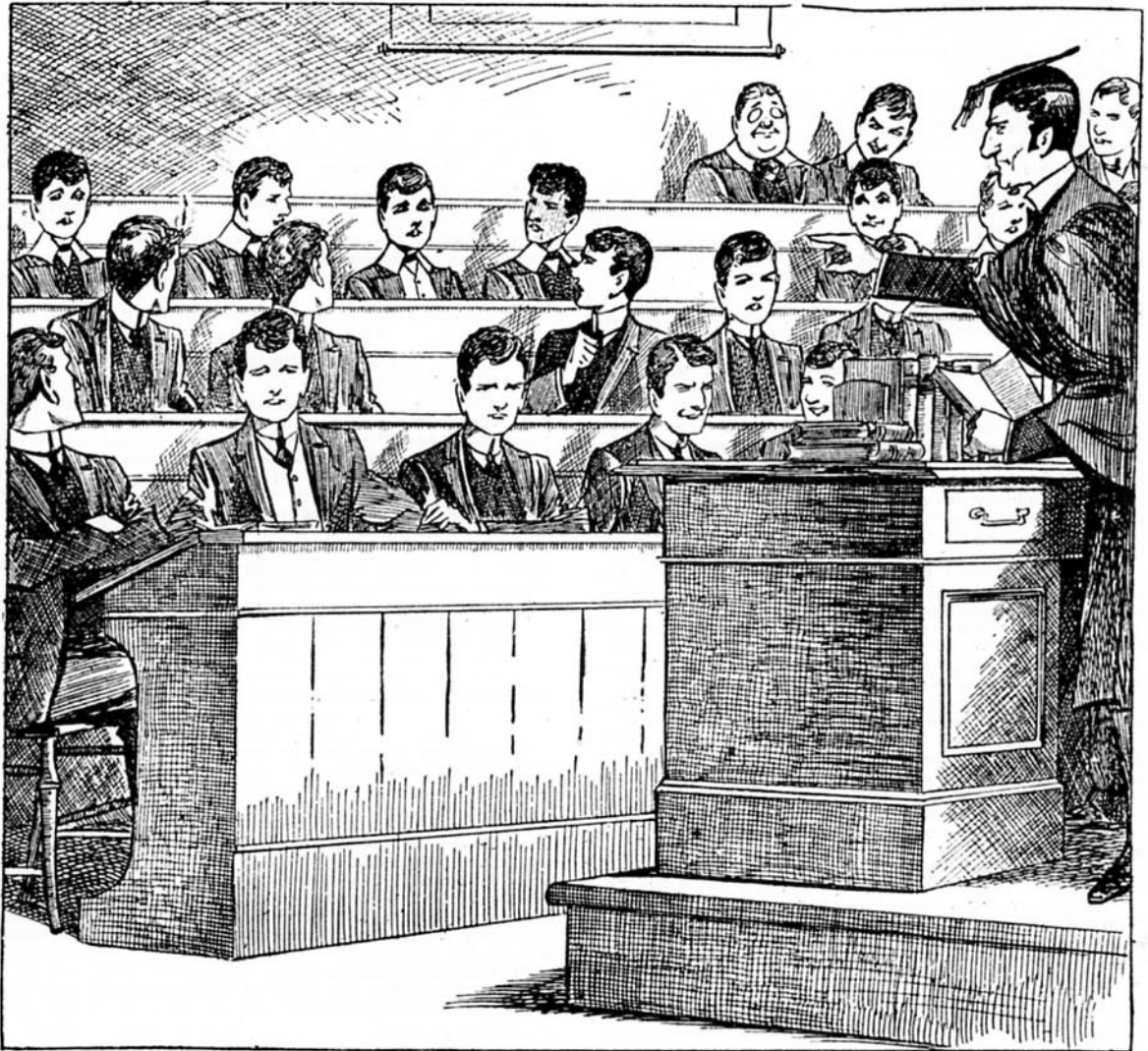
Bunter groaned.  
 "You see he knows all about it, Bolsover," he stammered. "I can't help it—I didn't let it out, and if you go for me, I'll tell Mr. Quelch, so there!"

"Step over here, Bolsover!"  
 Bolsover major stepped out. Bunter's peculiar methods of concealing the truth had made it quite clear to Mr. Quelch, and there was no more to be said.

"Hold out your hands!" said the Remove-master. "You have caused me to punish innocent boys by this abominable deception. I shall cane you, Bunter, for playing foolish tricks—and I shall cane you still more severely, Bolsover, as you are evidently the person most to blame."

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The room had settled down to silent attention, when a loud yawn was heard proceeding from the direction of Lord Mauleverer. "Yaw—aw—aw!" The seniors turned in their seats to stare at the junior who had dared to yawn in the presence of Mr. Quelch. "You seem tired, Mauleverer!" said the Form-master sarcastically. (See Chapter 4.)

Swish! swish! swish! swish! swish! swish!  
There were two for Bunter, and four for Bolsover major. Then Mr. Quelch pointed to the door, and the two young rascals, wringing their hands, were only too glad to go. Mr. Quelch's lecture was finished without any further interruption.

**THE FIFTH CHAPTER.**  
**Ungrateful!**

**"R**OTTEN!"  
"Beastly!"  
"The rottenfulness is terrific!"  
"Begad! It's all up!"  
"No blessed week-end after this!"  
The chums of the Remove were in Study No. 1, lamenting. Their unusual efforts to be good had met with woeful failure. They had only one consolation, the prospect of meeting Bunter after the lecture and making an example of him. But that was really very little consolation. The proposed holiday was "up." After what had happened in the lecture-room, it would not be of much use asking Mr. Quelch for leave.  
"We'll slaughter Bunter!" said Bob Cherry, making furious drives at the study punching-ball, and trying to imagine that it was William George Bunter's fat face.

"We'll boil the fat beast in oil!" growled Johnny Bull.  
"But we sha'n't get the week-end," said Nugent, dolefully.  
"Oh, it's rotten!"  
"And we wasted time at the lecture for nothing!" said Bob Cherry, with bitter regret. "All the bosh we listened to goes for nothing now!"

It was really too bad, and the chums of the Remove felt that it was so. Gunthorpe and Live Oaks faded in the distance. There would not be any week-end excursion at all—after their hopes had been raised so high.

Tap!  
"Oh, come in, fathead!" growled Harry Wharton, as that knock came at the door.  
He was overwhelmed with confusion the next moment as the door opened and revealed the form of Mr. Quelch. The juniors jumped at once. Mr. Quelch's face did not give any sign that he had heard Wharton's peculiar greeting.

He nodded kindly to the juniors. Their first thought had been that there was further punishment in store; but Mr. Quelch's expression was quite benignant.  
"I have come to tell you that I am sorry I punished you, my boys," he said genially. "I have discovered that a trick was played in the lecture-room by Bunter, who appears to have a gift of ventriloquism. I am sorry!"

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**"ROUGH ON COKER!"**

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"Oh, sir!"

"I was deceived," said Mr. Quelch. "I felt it due to myself to tell you that I am sorry for the misapprehension."

"That's all right, sir!" said Wharton, much relieved. "It was Bunter, of course!"

"You need not do the lines I have imposed."

"Thank you, sir!"

"Unfortunately I cannot take back the caning. If, however, there is anything I can do to compensate you for having punished you without cause, I shall be happy to consider any reasonable request you may make."

The juniors exchanged quick glances.

There was the chance! Billy Bunter's ventriloquism had served a good turn after all—though not the kind of turn the Owl of the Remove had intended.

"Oh, thanks, sir!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "There is something we—we were going to ask you sir—if—if—"

"Speak, my boy!"

"Lord Mauleverer has an invitation to spend a week-end in the country, sir, and he wants us to go with him," said Wharton.

"Ahem!"

"The Head said we were to ask you, sir; he leaves it to you."

"H'm!"

"We should leave after lessons on Saturday, sir, and get back in time for second lesson on Monday morning," said Nugent eagerly.

Mr. Quelch nodded graciously.

"Very well, my boys, you have my permission. And I trust you will have an enjoyable holiday."

"Oh, thanks, sir!"

"The thankfulness is terrific, most honoured sahib!"

Mr. Quelch quitted the study, leaving the Famous Five in a state of the most complete satisfaction. Bob Cherry executed a wild war-dance round the study table.

"Hip, hip, hurrah! Quelchy's a giddy brick! Hurrah!"

"Yaas, begad!"

"We won't slaughter Bunter now," grinned Nugent. "Bunter's done us a good turn! Ha, ha, ha!"

And the chums of the Remove yelled with laughter. That outcome of Billy Bunter's trick tickled them immensely.

They left the study with smiling, cheerful faces. Billy Bunter was in the lower passage, grunting mournfully. He caught sight of them, and started to run; but Bob Cherry grasped him by the collar.

"Now, you fat rotter—"

"Ow!" roared Bunter. "Leggo! Bolsover's been licking me already! Ow!"

"What has Bolsover been licking you for?" demanded Wharton.

"Because Quelchy spotted us, and caned him!" growled Bunter. "Of course, I was only doing it for a lark. I—I really meant to please you chaps, you know."

"You blessed Ananias!" said Bob, shaking him. "We were going to scalp you, slaughter you, bump you, and boil you in oil—but Quelchy has given us leave for the week-end—all through you—to make up for being down on us for nothing."

Bunter jerked himself away, blinking.

"You've got leave?" he gasped.

"Yes."

"And it's all through me," said Bunter. "Of course, that was what I intended all along!"

"What!" gasped the juniors.

"I—I foresaw how it would turn out, you know," said Bunter, gaining confidence as he proceeded. "I really intended that it should turn out like this—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you fellows—"

"Well, if that chap don't beat Ananias and Baron Munchausen and Dr. Cook hollow!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, in wonder.

"If you doubt my word, Cherry—"

"Ha, ha, ha! I jolly well do!" roared Bob.

"I decline to argue with a fellow who doubts my word," said Bunter, with a great deal of dignity. "I say, Mauly, it was really I that got you leave for this week-end trip—of course you're going to take me with you now!"

"Begad!"

"But for me, you know, you wouldn't have got leave," urged Bunter. "It's really up to you, Mauly. Do the decent thing, you know!"

"Well, of all the cheek!" said Nugent. "The fat beast

tried to muck up the trip for us, and now he wants to be taken along as a reward. We shall have to bump him, after all!"

"Look here, if you fellows don't know there's such a thing as gratitude—"

"Gratitude!"

"Yes," said Bunter firmly. "If you can't be decently grateful to a fellow who's done you a whacking big favour—"

It was too much for the juniors. They fell upon Billy Bunter, and smote him hip and thigh, and walked on, leaving the Owl of the Remove sitting upon the floor in a very breathless state.

"Ow!" gurgled Bunter. "Beasts—ungrateful beasts! But I'll jolly well go, all the same! Yah! I don't believe there's such a thing as gratitude in this world at all!"

And Bunter limped away disconsolately, quite determined to contrive, by hook or by crook, to join in that week-end trip.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### Bunter is Quite Brilliant!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. looked particularly cheerful the following morning. It was a bright and sunny spring morning, promising fine weather for the week-end. And the week-end was now a certainty, thanks to Billy Bunter. That morning Lord Mauleverer was the recipient of many kindly attentions from fellows in the Remove and the Fourth Form. Never had he seemed to have had so many admiring friends; but fishers for invitations found themselves disappointed. Lord Mauleverer did not seem to understand. The plainest hints were lost upon his obtuseness. Harry Wharton clapped him on the shoulder, when the Remove came out after morning lessons.

"Have you sent that telegram to Live Oaks?" he asked.

"Begad!" said his lordship.

"Forgotten it, you ass?"

"Well, I haven't sent it yet."

"Then trot down to the post-office, and send it at once," said Harry. "You don't want to take Trooper by surprise, fathead."

"No, begad."

"We're going to put in some cricket practice before dinner. If you haven't sent the wire by dinner-time we'll bump you."

"Yaas."

And the Famous Five went down to the cricket-ground. Lord Mauleverer groaned in anguish of spirit. He had been about to stretch himself on the grass and drowse over a book, and a walk to the village post-office was an unwelcome exertion. He was nerving himself for the effort when Billy Bunter rolled up. The sight of Bunter gave the schoolboy earl energy. He made a rush to escape, but Bunter caught him by his jacket.

"It's all right, Mauly—"

"Excuse me, I've got to go to the post-office," said Lord Mauleverer dismally.

"I'll go for you."

Lord Mauleverer brightened up.

"Begad! That's very decent of you, Bunter. Come into the tuckshop afterwards, and I'll stand you some tarts."

"Leave it to me," said Bunter. "Write it out, and I'll take it."

"Thanks awfully!"

Lord Mauleverer fumbled for a pencil, and wrote on a leaf of his pocket-book. He handed the result to Billy Bunter.

"It's really awfully good of you, Bunter. Buzz off!"

"I shall have to pay for this, Mauly."

"Begad! So you will!"

Lord Mauleverer extracted a half-sovereign from his pocket, and handed it to Bunter. Bunter looked at the telegram. It ran:

"Trooper, Live Oaks, Gunthorpe. Arriving by afternoon train, with some friends for the week-end. Mauleverer, Greyfriars."

"That's all right," said Bunter. "I suppose if they didn't get this they wouldn't expect you."

"Begad, no!"

"Trooper a friend of yours?" asked Bunter inquisitively.

"Begad, he's a butler or something."

"Jolly place, isn't it?" went on Bunter.

"I really don't know. I suppose so."

"You suppose so? Haven't you been there?"

"Never."

"Then you're not known there, what?" asked Bunter, a peculiar gleam coming into his little round eyes.

"Not from Adam," said Lord Mauleverer cheerfully.

"They don't know you by sight?"

"How could they, dear boy, when they've never seen me?"

"No, of course, they couldn't," said Bunter. "I suppose

# ANSWERS

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you haven't changed your mind about taking me with you, Mauly?"

"You make me tired," said Lord Mauleverer plaintively. "I'll stand you a couple of dozen tarts, and as much ginger-beer as you can drink, if you'll buzz off with that telegram."

"That's good enough," said Bunter. "I'll help you pack your bag when I come back, Mauly. I suppose you're taking a bag?"

"Yaas."

"Well, I'm off," said Bunter, as Lord Mauleverer yawned portentously.

"Thanks, my dear fellow."

Lord Mauleverer sauntered away, and Bunter blinked after him. He watched him out of sight, and then moved off himself, but he did not go in the direction of the gates. He bore down on Bolsover major and Skinner, who were chatting in the Close, in no very good humour. They were distinctly annoyed at not being asked to share in the week-end excursion, and Bolsover especially was annoyed by the failure of his little scheme for stopping it, and the caning that had been the result of his scheming. He scowled at Bunter as the latter came up.

"Do you want another thick ear, you fat brute?" was his genial greeting.

Bunter backed away a little.

"I say, you fellows, I've got a jolly good idea——"

"Bury it!"

"It's about that week-end party——"

"You don't mean to say you're going?" demanded Skinner.

"They don't seem to want me," said Bunter, with dignity.

"I should refuse to join them now if they asked me."

"Yes, I can see you doing it—I don't think."

"But I've got an idea—if you fellows will help," said Bunter eagerly. "Mauly's just given me a telegram to take to the post-office for him. It's to let the servants at the place know he's coming."

"Well, take it, and be hanged."

"They don't know him by sight," said Bunter, unheeding.

"His friend isn't there—the man the place belongs to, you know. He's lending it to Mauly while he's away. Mauly's never been there before, and they don't know him from Adam."

"Well, what——"

"Don't you see," said Bunter, his eyes glistening behind his spectacles. "Read that telegram."

Bolsover major and Skinner read it.

"Blessed if I see what you're getting at," said the bully of the Remove testily. "Can't you explain, you fat duffer?"

"Well, suppose they could be prevented from catching their train somehow——"

"Oh, good!"

"There's only one train in the afternoon to that place. I heard Mauly say so. If they could be prevented from catching it, they couldn't get down there to-day."

"And serve 'em right!" growled Bolsover.

"But that isn't all," said Bunter eagerly. "We could go instead."

"What!"

"You know, I was taken for Lord Mauleverer once," said Bunter, drawing himself up to his full height, which was not stately—in his pride at the remembrance.

Bolsover major sported.

"Taken for Mauleverer! That was because you called yourself by his name, and the fellow who took you for him had never seen him."

"Yes, but it's the same now. They've never seen him at Live Oaks, and I shall call myself by his name."

"What!" ejaculated Bolsover and Skinner simultaneously.

"Don't you see? If we can make those rotters lose the train somehow, we can go down instead, and have the afternoon there anyway, and have a high old time. They'll come along some time to-morrow!"

"My hat!"

"And we shall have done them right in the eye!" chuckled Bunter. "There's nothing to stop us, and it would be a first-class jape."

Bolsover major caught his breath. Skinner's eyes glittered. It was a jape that just appealed to them. They were always on the look-out for chances of giving the Famous Five a fall.

"Well, that beats the band!" said Bolsover major.

"Bunter, you're a fat genius."

Bunter chuckled with self-satisfaction.

"Well, I do think of things," he said modestly, "and I can pass myself off as a lord quite easily, you know. I've got some titled relations, and I have a certain air that—that suggests noble blood. Don't you think so?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. My ancestors came over with William the Conqueror—Sir Bunter de Bunter."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bolsover. "Cheese it, you fat ass! But it's a good idea, although you thought of it. Alter that wire a bit. Put in that you're arriving with two friends?"

"Yes, that's a good wheeze."

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FOR NEXT MONDAY—

**"ROUGH ON COKER!"**

Bunter made the alteration. Bolsover chuckled gleefully. If the scheme came off, it would be the biggest "jape" he had ever succeeded in working off on the famous Co.

"We've got to prevent them from catching their train," Skinner remarked. "You buzz off with that wire, Bunter, while we think it out."

"Oh, certainly! I'll leave that to you."

And Bunter rolled away grinning, and took the road for Friardale. Bolsover major and Skinner exchanged glances of keen satisfaction.

"It won't be so jolly easy," Bolsover said, after a pause. "We've got to prevent them from catching the train, and catch it ourselves, you know."

Skinner nodded.

"We'll find a way to do that. But that isn't all—I've been thinking. Why shouldn't we make a week-end of it?"

Bolsover stared at him.

"They'll follow us down there to-morrow, and bowl us out," he said. "We shall have to get out when the real party arrives."

"No fear—we'll depounce them as 'impostors.'"

"Wha-a-at!"

"The telegram says Lord Mauleverer with two friends. Well, when they arrive, there'll be six of them—that won't bear out what the telegram said."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And we'll talk to the servants about them—explain that a gang of fellows have got a joke on, and intend to follow us down there and bother us," said Skinner coolly. "The Trooper and the rest will be ready for them."

Bolsover major gurgled.

"Oh, crumbs! Skinner, you're a giddy genius, and no mistake—if we can pull it off."

"It only requires nerve—and we've got plenty of that," said Skinner. "Bunter's thought of the wheeze; I've improved upon it, and you'll find the money for the fares down—that's fair all round."

"Oh, shall I?" said Bolsover major, becoming quite grave.

"Yes, you will—no good being mean," said Skinner.

"Bunter's got no money, and I'm nearly stony. Dash it all, you've got plenty of dibs, and it's worth a few bob. Why, the feed alone that we shall get will be worth more than that!"

"Well, all right."

"And think of their faces—when they arrive, and the servants turn them out of doors," grinned Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bolsover. "But hold on," he added.

"We haven't got leave for the week-end yet, Skinner—and it's not much good asking Quelch, after what happened in the lecture-room yesterday."

"We sha'n't ask. We'll send a wire from Gunthorpe this afternoon, saying that you've met with a slight accident, and asking leave to remain with Lord Mauleverer over Sunday; Quelch couldn't refuse that."

"He'd know it was a whopper," said Bolsover major.

"No, he wouldn't—if a letter followed from the local doctor testifying that we were all badly shaken in a motor accident——"

"But—but——"

"My dear chap, the local medical johnny would testify to anything to please a lord—and we can work up an accident to take him in."

"Skinner, old man, you ought to be in the House of Commons, or in gaol, or something of that sort," said Bolsover major admiringly. "Blessed if I don't think you'll turn out to be a famous criminal when you grow up."

"Oh, rats!" said Skinner crossly. "Look here! What we've got to do now is to make those rotters lose the train——"

"Hold on—when they arrive they'll have things about them to prove their identity," said Bolsover. "I mean Mauleverer will have his dressing-case with his giddy crest on the silver tops, and things like that. We sha'n't have anything."

"I've thought of that."

"Well, what are we going to do about that?" demanded Bolsover. "Looks to me as if that knocks it on the head, for the week-end, anyway."

"Rot! We're not only going to make them lose the train—we're going to collar their bags."

"Oh, jumping Moses!" ejaculated Bolsover.

"Then we shall have all the proofs on our side, you see," said Skinner calmly.

"Ha, ha, ha! But how——"

"That's what we've got to think out. They're not on their guard—they haven't the slightest suspicion, of course—and we can work it all right. The train goes from Courtfield station—I'll get a time-table and look out the exact time. They'll be packing their bags immediately after dinner, I expect—we've

got to get hold of Mauleverer's bag, at least—some of the others if we can."

"Good egg!"

And the two young rascals discussed the scheme in low voices, and with deep earnestness; while Harry Wharton & Co., unconscious of the plot, were knocking the ball about on the cricket-field.

### THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

#### Bagged!

**A**FTER dinner, the week-enders were busy. Lord Mauleverer was rushed away with Bob Cherry's grip on his arm, to pack his bag. Bob Cherry helped him to pack it—shoving in the things with reckless speed. Lord Mauleverer had a magnificent travelling-bag, fitted with everything that the most fastidious dandy could require, with an endless array of bottles with wonderful silver tops engraved with the Mauleverer crest. Lord Mauleverer lazily watched Bob cramming into the bag the articles he would want for the week-end.

"How are we going to get to the station, my dear fellow?" asked his lordship, as if that difficulty had only just occurred to him.

"Walk!" said Bob tersely.

"But the bags—"

"Carry 'em!"

"Begad!" said his lordship, in dismay. "I can't carry that bag! It weighs a fearful lot when it's packed."

Bob Cherry surveyed the bag rather doubtfully. It was a bag, certainly, but it was almost as large as a small trunk. The Famous Five had agreed to take only two bags among them, to save luggage. Their bags could be carried easily enough by sturdy fellows, but Lord Mauleverer's bag was quite a different matter.

"And I shall have to carry my coat, too," said Mauleverer, as a clincher.

"Better take a smaller bag, then."

"Impossible, my dear fellow; I haven't one. But I'll tell you what—I'll give Gosling a tip to drive us to the station."

"Good egg!" said Bob Cherry. "Gosling will want a quid, though."

"Yaas, that's all-right."

"Go and tell him, then, while I fasten up your bag."

"Yaas!"

Lord Mauleverer ambled away. He returned in about ten minutes to say that it was all right about Gosling. The school porter had been able to discover that he had some business in Courtfield, and a sovereign from Lord Mauleverer made him only too willing to take the trap out—with the six juniors in it.

"Gosling says the train goes at half-past two," said Lord Mauleverer. "He's going to have the trap in the road at five-past two, all ready."

"Good!" said Bob.

And the bags, packed and fastened, were left in the Remove dormitory ready for Gosling to come and fetch them away. It was barely half-past one yet, and the chums of the Remove had plenty of time before them. They were sunning themselves on the steps of the School House, when Skinner joined them.

Skinner was geniality itself.

"You fellows just off?" he asked.

"In half an hour," said Harry.

"Come and have a ginger-pop before you go," said Skinner. "We'll drink to a happy week-end."

That invitation from Skinner was a little surprising; he was not given to standing treat recklessly to half a dozen fellows at once. But the Famous Five assented, and the week-enders followed Skinner in a party to the little tuckshop in the corner of the Close. Skinner stood the ginger-beer handsomely, and talked most agreeably, showing an amiable and genial side of his nature that the Co. had never observed before.

While Skinner was being so genial in the tuckshop, Bolsover major was not idle.

Once the chums of the Remove were safe inside Mrs. Mible's little establishment, Bolsover major hurried up to the dormitory.

He caught up Lord Mauleverer's bag—the weight of it was little to the burly Bolsover—and hurried away with it. He deposited it in the box-room at the back of the house, and then fetched the other two bags, which the Famous Five were sharing among them.

He closed the door of the box-room, grinning, and opened the window. Below stood Billy Bunter, blinking up through his spectacles. They were not likely to be observed at the back of the house.

"Stand ready!" called out Bolsover.

"Right-ho!"

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Bolsover uncoiled a rope he had placed ready in the box-room, attached the end to Lord Mauleverer's bag, swung it from the window, and lowered it to the ground. Bunter grinned and unfastened the rope, and Bolsover drew it up again. In a few minutes the other two bags were lowered.

Then Bolsover threw the rope into a corner, and clambered down from the window and joined Bunter.

"Got 'em!" chuckled Bunter.

"Yes. You take the two small bags—I'll take the big one," said Bolsover. "Buck up!"

"I say, I can't carry—"

"Buck up, I tell you!"

Bolsover major picked up Lord Mauleverer's bag, and Bunter, groaning, picked up the other two. He staggered under the weight of them; he was not an athlete. But he did not venture to dispute the burly Removeite's orders.

"Which way?" asked Bunter.

"The tradesmen's entrance, fathead!"

"Oh, good!"

In a few minutes the two young rascals had passed out of the tradesmen's gate with the bags. They reached the high-road, and Bunter set down his burden with a gasp. The village hack from Friardale was waiting there. The driver touched his hat to Bolsover. Bolsover had cycled down to Friardale before dinner to fetch the hack, and it had been waiting for him for half an hour.

"Here's our luggage, Jenkins," said Bolsover major calmly. "Shove it in the cab."

"Yessir."

The bags were put into the hack.

"We've got to catch the two-thirty at Courtfield," said Bolsover. "Plenty of time—eh?"

"Eaps, sir," said Jenkins.

"Then you can take it easy. Come on, Bunter."

"What about Skinner?" asked Bunter.

"He's following on his bike, ass!"

"But—but the other chaps—they—"

"Shut up!"

"Look here, Bolsover, it was my idea, and I—"

"Get in, if you're coming."

Bunter grunted, and got in. It was his own brilliant idea, and he did not like having the management of it taken out of his hands in this way. Bolsover major and Skinner had not even troubled to acquaint him with the details of the scheme. The burly Removeite followed him into the hack, and Jenkins drove away for Courtfield. Bolsover major chuckled gleefully as they started.

"Clean done!" he murmured.

"But those chaps will follow!"

"Ass!"

"And they'll claim their bags if they get to the station."

"They won't see their bags, even if they come!" grinned Bolsover.

"Why won't they?"

"You'll see."

"Look here, Bolsover, it was my idea from the start, and—"

"Oh, ring off!"

The hack ambled on, and stopped at last outside Courtfield Station. A porter carried the bags in, and Bolsover coolly registered them for Gunthorpe. The bags were taken away.

"Oh, my hat!" said Bunter, understanding at last.

The bags were safely out of sight now. Even if anything should go wrong with the rest of the scheme, and the Famous Five should arrive at the station, there was nothing to indicate that their bags were there, or that Bolsover had had anything to do with them. Bolsover major chuckled with satisfaction, and waited cheerfully for the train and Skinner.

### THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

#### Left Behind!

**T**IME we were moving," said Bob Cherry, looking at his watch.

It was ten minutes to two. Skinner nodded pleasantly to the party in the tuckshop, wished them a good journey, and strolled out.

"Plenty of time," said Lord Mauleverer, who was comfortably seated and not anxious to move. "Gosling hasn't brought the bags down yet."

"Time he did, then," said Harry Wharton. "We don't want to risk losing the train, as there isn't another one this afternoon. If we lose this, we shall have to get slow trains, and change three or four times, and not get to Gunthorpe till evening."

"We're not going to lose it," said Bob. "Get a move on. Hallo, hallo, hallo, here's Gossy! Got the bags down, Gosling?"

Gosling, the porter, looked into the tuckshop evidently in search of them.



"Come, come, young gentlemen!" said Mr. Trooper. "If you do not go away quietly, I warn you that you will be removed by force!" "We're coming in!" roared Bob Cherry. (See Chapter 12.)

"No, I ain't, Master Cherry," he said.  
 "Well, buck up. I'll lend you a hand if you like."  
 "Didn't you tell me as the bags was in the dormitory, Master Cherry?"  
 "Yes, they're there—three of them."  
 "Well, wot I says is this 'ere, they ain't there," said Gosling. "I been up to the dormitory, Master Cherry, and there ain't no bags there."  
 "Oh, rats!" said Bob. "I left them there."  
 "Well, they ain't there now."  
 "Some ass has shoved them under the beds for a lark, perhaps," said Harry Wharton, frowning. "Let's go and see. There's no time to lose now."  
 "Wot I says is this 'ere—"  
 "Come on, Gossy; no time to jaw!"  
 Gosling followed the juniors into the School House. They hurried up to the Remove dormitory, and ascertained that Gosling's statement was quite correct. The three bags certainly had vanished.

"Some silly chump joking, I suppose?" growled Johnny Bull. "Look under the beds."  
 They looked under the beds, but there was no sign of the bags. Two o'clock struck from the clock-tower, and the juniors began to be exasperated.  
 "There ain't much time," said Gosling. "We order start in five minutes, young gentlemen, if you're goin' to catch that there train."  
 "We can't go without the bags, begad!" said Lord Mauleverer.  
 "Well, there ain't much time, my lord!"  
 "They can't be far off!" exclaimed Wharton. "Look for them. Ask the fellows. It's only some idiotic jape!"  
 They hurried from the dormitory.  
 "I'll go and get the trap ready, young gentlemen," said Gosling. And he went downstairs.  
 The exasperated juniors searched high and low for the bags. They asked everybody they met, but nobody seemed to have seen them. And the time was getting very close now. Gosling came back to inform them that the trap was

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"ROUGH ON COKER!"

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ready, and that it was high time to start. The bags had not been found, and Gosling went away again grumbling. It looked like being a race to the station for the train, and Gosling did not like hurry.

Skinner had been busy in the bike shed. He brought his machine out, and left it by the school gates, and walked into the School House.

"We shall have to go without the blessed bags or miss the train!" Harry Wharton was exclaiming angrily.

"Hallo!" said Skinner. "Lost your bags?"

"Some silly idiot has hidden them!" snorted Bob Cherry.

"I wish I knew which particular idiot it was. I suppose you've not see them?"

"Three bags?" asked Skinner thoughtfully.

"Yes, yes; have you seen them?"

"Have you looked in the top box-room?"

"The top box-room. How on earth could they get there?"

Skinner laughed.

"Well, if you look there, I fancy you'll find something. I thought there was a jape on when I saw them there, but—"

The chums of the Remove did not wait for him to finish.

They dashed up the upper stairs in hot haste. Skinner followed them as fast.

The top box-room was very little used, being high up in the building and out of the way. It was mostly occupied with lumber. Harry Wharton threw the door open hurriedly, and the juniors ran in. In their haste they were not likely to notice that the key was on the outside of the door, but it was. Skinner had seen to that.

"They're not here!" exclaimed Wharton.

"I can't see them!"

"Where the dickens—"

"Look here, Skinner!"

Slam!

The sudden slam of the door interrupted the excited and impatient exclamations of the juniors. Skinner had suddenly drawn it shut from outside. As they swung round, staring in stupefaction at the closed door, the key turned in the lock outside. Then they heard it withdrawn from the keyhole.

Wharton made a rush to the door, caught the handle, and dragged at it. The door, of course, did not open. Wharton rattled the handle furiously.

"Skinner!"

"Skinner, you ass!"

"You idiot, Skinner!"

"Open this door!" roared Wharton. "This isn't a time for jokes, you silly fathead! We've got to catch a train."

"Open the door, Skinner."

"We shall lose our train, you ass!"

"You silly chump!"

There was no reply from Harold Skinner. The juniors heard a chuckle, and the sound of footsteps dying away on the stairs. That was all!

Skinner was gone; and they were locked in the top box-room—prisoners!

"What on earth does he mean by it?" Nugent exclaimed in amazement. "We'll smash him if he makes us lose the train."

"The smashfulness will be terrific."

"And the bags aren't here," said Johnny Bull, looking among the lumber. "He was pulling our leg all the time."

Harry Wharton breathed hard.

"It was a trick to get us up here," he said. "Skinner knew they weren't here. I dare say he's hidden them somewhere himself. He's trapped us here to make us lose our train."

"Begad!" said Lord Mauleverer in dismay.

"And we shall lose it, no blessed doubt about that," said Nugent, consulting his watch. "It's nearly a quarter-past."

"And we can't get out."

Harry Wharton ran to the window. But the window of the top box-room opened upon a sheer wall, with sixty feet to the ground outside. There was no escape that way. And the door was locked on the outside.

"The window's no good," said Johnny Bull. "We'd better make a row, and somebody will hear us and come up."

"That rotter's taken away the key!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"It's the only thing to do," said Wharton desperately. "We've lost the train, but we'll have the satisfaction of ragging Skinner half-headed for this. Hammer on the door!"

They hammered on the door furiously. But the top box-room was very much out of the way, and they were not likely to be heard soon. The minutes passed swiftly. There was a sound of footsteps outside at last.

"Here comes somebody," said Johnny Bull. "Hallo, there!"

"What's the matter?" asked the voice of Trotter, the page, outside.

"We're locked in," said Wharton. "Skinner's locked us

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in, and taken the key away. Get the door open somehow, Trotter."

"My heye!" said Trotter.

"There goes the train!" said Bob Cherry, as the half-hour chimed out from the clock-tower. It was half-past two.

"I'll do my best, Master Wharton," said Trotter through the keyhole. "I dunno if there's another key to fit the door."

"Find Skinner, and make him give you the key."

"Master Skinner's gone out, sir."

"What!"

"He went out some time ago, sir, on his bike. He asked me to give you his kind regards, sir, when I saw you again."

Wharton gritted his teeth.

"I'll give him my kind regards, when I see him again," he muttered. "Find a key as soon as you can, Trotter, and let us out."

"I'll do my werry best, sir."

Trotter departed, and the six juniors resigned themselves to wait with as much patience as they could muster. It was nearly half an hour before Trotter succeeded in finding a key that would fit the lock. Then the door was opened, and the chums of the Remove came forth—dusty and infuriated.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.  
In Borrowed Plumes!

HERE he comes!" Bolsover major waved his hand to a breathless cyclist who dashed up to the station in Courtfield.

Skinner jumped off his bicycle. He had scorchd to Courtfield at top speed, and he was in ample time for the train.

"All serene?" asked Bolsover.

Skinner chuckled breathlessly.

"Yes; locked up in the top box-room. And the key's in my pocket."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ten minutes before the train goes," said Bolsover, looking at his watch. "Put up your bike, and let's get on the platform."

Skinner put up his bike at the station cloak-room, and the three juniors walked on the platform in great spirits. Bolsover had taken three first-class tickets. The train came in.

Bolsover & Co. took their seats in a first-class carriage and closed the door. Until the train moved, they kept a somewhat anxious eye on the platform. The Famous Five had a wonderful gift for getting out of scrapes, and the plotters would not have been surprised to see them turn up at the last moment. But it did not happen. The whistle went, and the train moved out of the station.

"Safe as houses, now!" chuckled Bolsover major.

"Hurrah for us!" giggled Skinner.

"I say, you fellows, did you think of bringing any sandwiches?" asked Billy Bunter anxiously. "It's a long run to Gunthorpe; we have to go a long way round, you know, and change at two places. I shall be hungry."

"You'll get a feed when we get to Live Oaks, not before," said Bolsover major.

"Oh, really, Bolsover—"

"Shut up! Now," said Bolsover thoughtfully, "we've got to settle about who's to be Lord Mauleverer this afternoon."

Billy Bunter blinked at him indignantly.

"I'm Lord Mauleverer, of course!" he exclaimed. "What do you mean? Wasn't it my idea from the start?"

"Well, you made the first suggestion, I admit," said Bolsover. "Skinner and I carried it out, and improved on it. You haven't brains enough to play the part of a lord, Bunter—and you don't look the part either."

"I was taken for Lord Mauleverer once—"

"Rats! It's between Skinner and me, of course."

"Oh, really—"

"Better leave it to me," said Harold Skinner. "I've got the brains of the party, you'll admit that."

"I don't admit anything of the sort," said Bolsover warmly. "Besides, a lord ought to look something like a nobleman."

"Well, then, it's no use you thinking of it—"

"If you want a thick ear, Skinner, you've only got to say so," said Bolsover major unpleasantly.

"I say, you fellows, you must leave it to me, you know. Anybody would naturally take me for a lord. My aristocratic appearance, and—"

"Shut up, you fat ass!" roared Bolsover.

"Look here, Bolsover—"

"I really think you'd better leave it to me," said Skinner.

"I'd like the part, and I could play it all right. My accent—"

ahem—is extremely good, owing to my being highly connected. Besides—

"Lords are supposed to give good tips," said Bolsover major, with a sniff. "Whoever plays the lord will have to give the tips."

"Ahem!" said Skinner. "I don't mind leaving it to you, Bolsover, if you're really set on it. I don't know that I care about it specially myself."

"That's settled, then," said Bolsover.

"But I say, you fellows, Bolsover could hand me the money for tipping—"

"I'll hand you a thick ear if you don't shut up," said Bolsover. "That's settled, I tell you. You ought to be glad to be allowed to come along at all—you're not exactly the kind of chap a lord would care to be seen with."

"Why, you—you—" spluttered Bunter.

"Ring off!"

Billy Bunter sulkily gave in; there was no arguing with Bolsover major. He knew that the bully of the Remove would be quite capable of dropping him out of the train at one of the stations where it stopped, and leaving him. Billy Bunter had looked forward to playing the noble lord that afternoon, but he had to relinquish the fond idea now. Percy Bolsover had cast himself for the leading role in the little comedy.

"You chaps had better get into the way of calling me Mauleverer," added Bolsover. "I'll make it a point to give you a rap with my cane whenever you call me anything else."

"Oh, really, Bolsover—yaroooh!"

"Mauleverer, fathead!"

"Ow—yow."

The train rushed on, and Bunter sucked his rapped knuckles and glowered. Bolsover major and Skinner wondered what Harry Wharton & Co. were doing, and they chuckled as they wondered. The Famous Five certainly would not suspect that the trio had gone for the week-end in their place; that was not likely to occur to them.

"They won't find the bags," grinned Bolsover. "They'll pack fresh ones, and come to-morrow—or else by the late train this evening—but that means about three or four hours crossing country and changing at places. Most likely they'll leave it till to-morrow. Anyway, we shall be ready for them when they come. Mind you don't forget to call me Mauleverer."

"I say, Bolsover—"

Rap!

"Yow—ow! Beast!"

"Here's our first change," said Skinner, as the train stopped in Lexham Station. "There's another change after this at Pulford. I suppose there'll be something to meet us when we get to Gunthorpe."

"A motor-car," said Bunter. "I heard Mauly say so."

"Good egg!" said Bolsover major. "We're going to do this week-end trip in style!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

They changed trains again at Pulford, and then there was a half-hour's run to the secluded village of Gunthorpe. They looked from the windows with interest as they approached their destination. Wide meadows and woods, with hills in the distance, and a shining river greeted their eyes. Live Oaks was evidently in a spot favoured by Nature.

The train stopped in a little country station, where flower-beds sloped up from the uncovered plank platforms. The three juniors alighted, and Bolsover major claimed the bags that were handed out of the train. Bolsover had jammed an eyeglass into his eye before he alighted. He had an idea that it made him look considerably more like a lord. It was an eyeglass of plain glass, which was used by the Remove juniors in their amateur theatricals. Bolsover major had some difficulty in keeping it in his eye, and his features were screwed up in a rather alarming way. Skinner caught sight of his face suddenly and started.

"Anything the matter, Bol—Mauly?" he asked.

"No," growled Bolsover. "What do you think's the matter?"

"The way you screwed up your chivvy—"

"Oh, rats!"

"I say, Bolsover—yow—ow—I mean Mauleverer, Mauly doesn't wear an eyeglass, you know. And you don't look as if you were used to it, you know. You look a silly ass, you know. Yow—ow—ow—leggo my car!"

"What did you say, Bunter?" asked Bolsover, keeping a tight grip on William George's fat ear.

"Ow! I—I said it suits you down to the ground, you know: it—it looks simply topping!" groaned Bunter.

"That's better. Now, shut up!"

A porter came up to claim the bags. Bolsover major screwed the monocle a little more tightly into his eye, and the porter started at the expression on his face. Bolsover looked as if he were scowling ferociously.

"Beg your pardon, sir!" gasped the porter.

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ONE  
PENNY.

"Aw," said Bolsover drawlingly, "is my—er—car waitin' for me, my man?"

"There's a car outside, sir—from Live Oaks, sir!" said the porter, touching his cap respectfully.

"Thank you, my man! I suppose it is for me—for Lord Mauleverer?"

"That's right, my lord."

"Put the bags in it."

"Yes, my lord."

The porter walked off with the bags. The three juniors followed him at a leisurely pace; Bolsover major especially endeavouring to perform a "Piccadilly crawl," in a manner he deemed befitting to a noble lord.

"I say," murmured Skinner, "Wharton's name is on his bag, and Nugent's name is on the other. We shall have to use those names, or they'll smell a rat."

"That's all right. You're Wharton, and Bunter's Nugent. Understand, Bunter?"

"Yes, Bol—Mauly!"

"Take care, fathead!"

And the three young rascals walked out of the station. The chauffeur with the car touched his cap respectfully. The porter had already informed him that Lord Mauleverer and his companions had arrived.

Bolsover major acknowledged his salute condescendingly.

"Troopah—er—had my telegram, I presume?" he asked.

"Yes, my lord."

"Good! Get in, you fellows!"

The porter had opened the door of the car. Skinner and Bunter got in, and Bolsover major followed them: The porter still seemed to linger, and Bolsover felt in his pocket. He handed out half-a-crown, feeling that he must keep up the character of a noble lord. Then the car rolled away.

## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

### A Good Time!

**B**OLSOVER MAJOR jammed the troublesome eyeglass into his eye again, and grinned. Bunter and Skinner grinned, too. It had all been perfectly easy. Lord Mauleverer and two friends had been expected by that train, and three fellows had arrived, calling themselves Lord Mauleverer and his friends. No other passengers at all had alighted at Gunthorpe. It was not surprising that the imposture had passed without a hitch. It had been as easy as rolling off a log.

"My hat!" murmured Bolsover, as the car sped along the white road, away from the village. "We'll have a high old time here!"

"A ripping feed to start with!" said Bunter, his eyes glistening behind his spectacles with gleeful anticipation.

"They're bound to have something decent!"

"And wine and cigars, too!" said Skinner, with a chuckle.

"A regular giddy orgy!" said Bolsover. "We might have had the Bounder with us, only Smithy has turned awfully good lately. We'll paint Live Oaks red, my pippins! We can have whatever we like without paying for it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here's the place, I suppose."

They looked out eagerly. It was a handsome cottage, standing in extensive grounds that sloped down to the river, shaded by noble trees. There was a little boathouse and a garage. The owner of that country cottage evidently knew how to "do" himself comfortably. The car ran up a gravel drive and stopped.

The chauffeur alighted and opened the door.

Bolsover & Co. alighted.

The door had opened, and a most respectable-looking gentleman with mutton-chop whiskers stood ready to receive them.

Bolsover turned his eyeglass upon him with lordly inquiry.

"Aw! Crooper, I presume?" he asked, remembering Lord Mauleverer's habit of forgetting names.

"Trooper, my lord."

"Aw, yaas! Never remember names!" said Bolsover negligently. "Glad to see you, Chooper! You—aw—had my wire?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Got everything ready—what?"

"Perfectly, my lord."

The eyeglass fell from Bolsover's eye, and he angrily jammed it in again.

"Well, show us to our rooms," he said, "and have a feed—ahem!—have a lunch prepared, Cooper! We're hungry!"

"Yes, my lord."

The butler showed his noble visitor into the house, and the three juniors were taken into their rooms. Their bags

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were carried in after them, and the car went round to the garage.

Mr. Trooper, a staid and respectable middle-aged man with a gravity of demeanour it was evidently impossible to ruffle, had prepared everything for the week-enders. The trio of juniors removed the stains of travel, helping themselves to what they wanted from the bags belonging to Harry Wharton & Co. Then they descended to the dining-room—a very pleasant apartment with a verandah overlooking the river.

It was getting near tea-time at Greyfriars, and they were hungry after their journey.

Bolsover took his place at the head of the table. Under the staid eye of Mr. Trooper he felt a secret inward uneasiness, which he strove to conceal under an exaggerated assumption of aristocratic haughtiness.

"We shall not—aw—dine late, Trooper," he said, putting the troublesome monocle into his eye again. "We dine at midday at Greyfriars."

"Yes, my lord."  
"Buck up with the grub!" said Billy Bunter, who was too hungry to think of being aristocratic just then.

Bolsover glared at him.  
"Served immediately, my lord," said Trooper.  
It was what the butler called a "cold collation," but it

was what the juniors pronounced as ripping. It was served by Trooper himself with the assistance of a footman.

Bolsover cultivated a noble languidness of manner, but Billy Bunter tucked into the good things as if he had been in the tuckshop at Greyfriars.

Mr. Trooper and James, the footman, glanced at him out of the corners of their eyes; but Bunter was too busy and too happy to notice that.

"I say, you fellows, this is prime!" said Bunter, as he finished a cold chicken. "I wonder if they've got any jam-tarts! Ow, ow! Who's that stamping on my foot?"

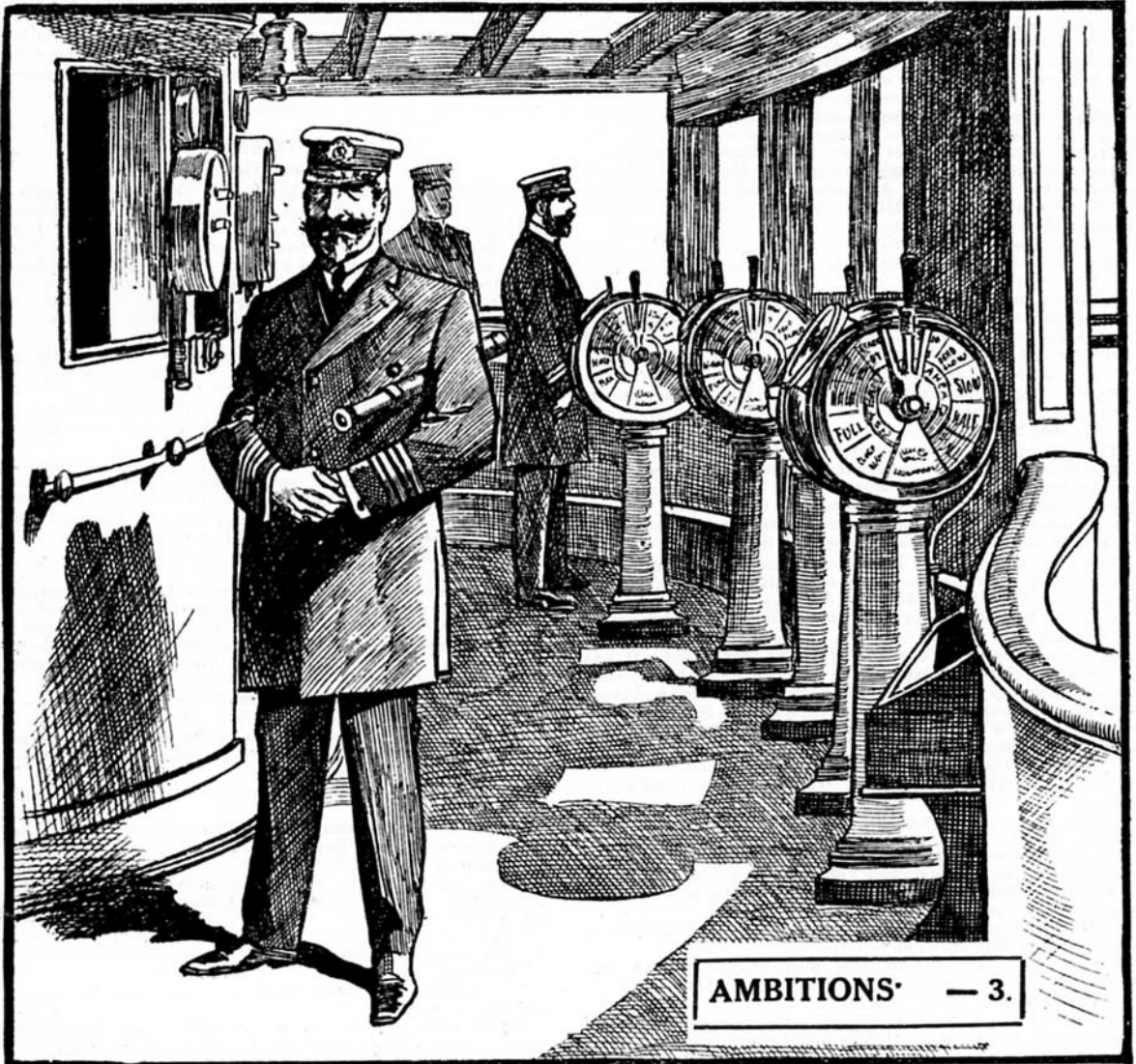
"Shut up!" murmured Bolsover.  
"Look here, Bol—"

Skinner stamped on his foot just in time.  
"I say, this is a ripping rice-pudding!" said Bunter. "I wonder if they've got any ginger-beer? I'm thirsty!"

"Bring champagne, Trooper!" said Bolsover majestically. Trooper was almost startled out of his professional composure.

"Champagne, my lord?"  
"Yes. Don't keep me waiting, Trooper!"  
"Ye-es, my lord!" stammered Trooper.

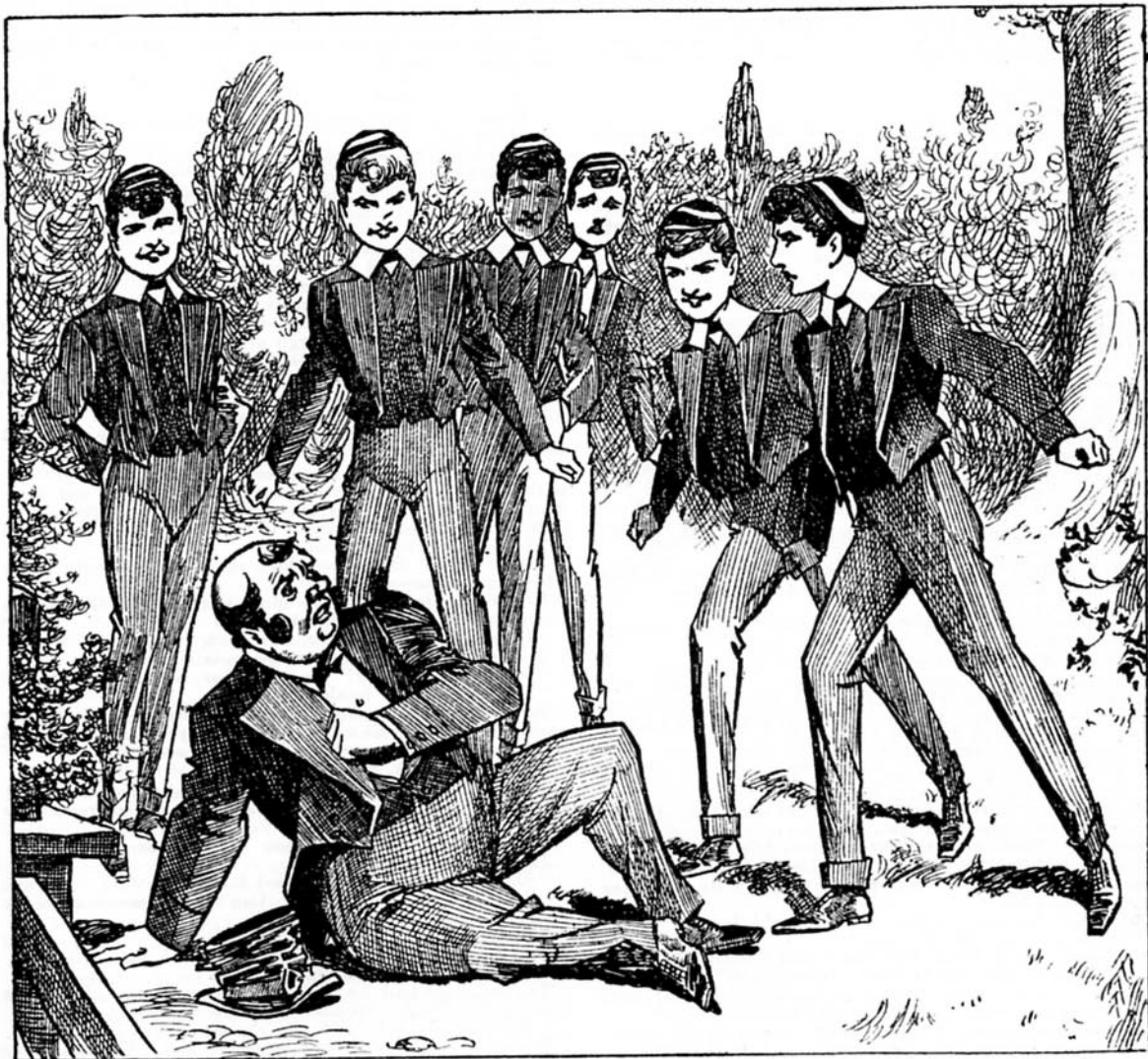
He hurried out of the room. Skipner looked rather uneasily at Bolsover.



AMBITIONS — 3.

To be the captain of a great liner is the ambition which stirs the breasts of many British boys. The captain paces the bridge, monarch of all he surveys, and the lives of every soul on board the mammoth ship are in his keeping. Such a position can only be obtained by a splendid man and gallant seaman.





Six pairs of hands closed at the same moment upon Mr. Trooper's portly form, and he came down off the stile with a bump. "Ow—ow—ow!" he gasped. "Grooh! Young gentlemen—yaroooh—help!" "Bump him!" yelled the excited juniors. (See Chapter 15.)

"I say, don't overdo it, old chap!" he murmured, after a glance round to make sure that James was out of hearing.

"Rats!" said Bolsover. "Lords always drink champagne!"

"It may make you squiffy."

"Well, people always get squiffy on week-ends."

"I—I say—"

"Oh, rats!"

Trooper brought in the champagne, and filled glasses for the three juniors. Billy Bunter tasted his and made a wry face.

"I say, this is jolly sour ginger-beer!" he said.

James turned his face away to hide a grin, and Trooper was almost overcome. Bolsover gave the Owl of the Remove a ferocious look.

"It's champagne!" he said.

"Ow! I don't like it! I'd rather have ginger-beer!"

Bolsover major tossed off his glass to show that he was accustomed to it. The colour mounted to his face as the wine mounted to his head. Skinner sipped his liquor more slowly. Skinner had tasted intoxicants often enough, as a companion of Vernon-Smith, in the Bounder's wild days, and he knew how dangerous the creamy fluid was. But Bolsover had the temerity of ignorance; he was willing to rush in where angels fear to tread, so to speak.

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"Begad! That's jolly good!" said Bolsover. "Fill my glass again, Trooper!"

"Yes, my lord."

Trooper had received instructions from his master to place himself wholly at the orders of Lord Mauleverer. But he was looking a little alarmed and distressed. However, he had nothing to do but to obey.

Bolsover major drank his second glass, and by that time he was feeling excited and utterly reckless.

Skinner looked at him uneasily. Billy Bunter was still devoted to the solids, and had no eyes for anything else.

"We'll make a night of it!" said Bolsover. "Sit down, Trooper!"

"Excuse me, my lord—" stammered Trooper.

"Sit down, and mop it up with me!" said Bolsover.

"Dash it all, you've got a mouth, haven't you, Trooper? James!"

"Yes, my lord?"

"Get some more glasses, and come and have a drink!"

"Yes, my lord."

"I say, old chap—" murmured Skinner.

Bolsover jammed the eyeglass into his eye, and glared at him.

"You speaking to me?" he demanded.

"Yes," whispered Skinner. "I say, don't—"

"Don't whisper to me! Talk out loud!"

"But—b-b-but—"

"No secrets here!" said Bolsover, who was now wildly excited. "Ain't I Lord Mauleverer? An Englishman's home is his castle, isn't it? Talk out like a man!"

"Look here, you'd better let that stuff alone," said Skinner. "You'll be getting tipsy if you have any more of it."

"You want 'sult me?"

"Look here—"

Bolsover major pointed an unsteady forefinger at Harold Skinner.

"Put that fellow out, James," he said.

"Eh, my lord?"

"Put him out of the room," said Bolsover thickly. "He's drunk! If he can't keep sober in presence of a lord, put him out! Outside with him!"

"Oh, you ass!" murmured Skinner. "You silly, thundering ass!"

"Put him out!" roared Bolsover.

James looked helplessly at Skinner.

"I say, you fellows—" began Billy Bunter.

"Put him out, too!" exclaimed Bolsover angrily. "What's he want talking for, hey? Put 'em both out! I'm Lord Mauleverer! Put them out!"

"I'm afraid his lordship is a little excited, gentlemen," said Mr. Trooper. "Perhaps if you retire for a few minutes—"

"I'm jolly well not going," said Bunter. "I'm hungry!"

Bolsover rose unsteadily to his feet, and his eyeglass clinked down upon his wine-glass, and broke. He stared at it stupidly.

Mr. Trooper gently piloted his lordship to a couch, and he sat down there, blinking.

"Feel awfully queer," he murmured. "Must be that stuff! I'm goin' sleep. I say, suppose those fellows come, what? Put 'em out!"

"Nobody's coming, my lord," said Mr. Trooper reassuringly.

"Those fellows from Greyfriars—what? Put 'em out!"

"It's all right, Trooper," said Skinner. "There are some fellows at the school who said they're going to follow us down here for a lark. That's all. If they come, don't admit them. They want to get up a rag here."

"Very well, Mr. Wharton."

"You go to sleep, old chap," added Skinner.

"Not goin' sleep!" growled Bolsover.

He curled up on the couch, and went to sleep immediately.

Mr. Trooper brought in coffee and, at an order from Skinner, cigarettes. Then the three juniors were left to themselves. Outside the door, Mr. Trooper and James exchanged significant glances, dropping their professional gravity now they were by themselves.

"So that's his lordship, Mr. Trooper," said James.

"Shockin'!" said Mr. Trooper.

"Wantin' me to drink with 'im," said James. "May be a lord, Mr. Trooper, but he ain't no gentleman."

"Don't you pass remarks on your superiors, James," said Mr. Trooper severely. "Not but what you're right."

In the dining-room, Bolsover major snored on the couch, Billy Bunter wired into the dessert, and Harold Skinner smoked cigarettes.

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER. Skinner Sends a Telegram!

"OW! My head feels bad!"

Bolsover major made that remark as he sat up on the couch and blinked round him. The setting sun shone in at the windows. There was a haze of cigarette smoke in the room.

"Hallo! Got over it?" asked Skinner sarcastically.

"I've been asleep," said Bolsover.

"Go hon!"

"Oh, I remember now—that filthy stuff," said Bolsover. "Lucky I didn't take too much. I might have given the show away. My head's aching as it is."

"I jolly well think you did take too much!" growled Skinner. "You've jolly near given it away as it is."

"What's the time?" asked Bolsover, passing his hand over his throbbing brow.

"Half-past six!"

Bolsover rose unsteadily to his feet, and opened one of the French windows on the verandah. The cool air from the river revived him.

"I have been a blessed ass," he remarked. "How was I to know the beastly stuff was so strong? I'll stick to lemonade after this. Did I shock the servants?"

"You did!"

"Oh, rats! Look here, it's time to think about that

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blessed telegram to Quelchy," said Bolsover, rubbing his forehead. "How are we going to work it? A run in the car will freshen me up, anyway."

"Order it out, then. You're Lord Mauleverer."

Bolsover major touched the bell, and James appeared.

"Kindly order the car, James. I want to go to the village," said Bolsover major.

"Yes, my lord."

James disappeared.

"Where's my bally eyeglass?" asked Bolsover major, looking about him.

"You busted it when you were squiffy."

"I wasn't squiffy!" roared Bolsover. "Only sleepy."

"When you were sleepy, then," said Skinner, with a shrug of the shoulders. "Have one of these cigarettes? They're good!"

Bolsover major made a grimace.

"Ow! No! I feel rather qualmy."

"That's the worst of getting tight—"

"I wasn't tight, you rotter."

"Yes, you jolly well were," chuckled Bunter. "Tight as a giddy owl! You—ow—leggo my neck, you beast! Ow!"

"Was I tight?" asked Bolsover grimly.

"Ow! No! Of course not! That's what I really was going to say!" wailed Bunter.

Skinner lighted another cigarette.

"I wonder if those fellows will come!" Bolsover remarked thoughtfully.

"I've warned Trooper about them," grinned Skinner: "but if they do come, you'd better be sober when they get here. You'll have to deal with them, as you're Lord Mauleverer."

Bolsover scowled furiously.

"Look here, you silly owl!"

"Well, it will muck everything up if you're squiffy again when they come—"

Bolsover major rushed at him, and caught him by the collar, and yanked him out of his seat.

"Leggo!" roared Skinner, struggling.

Bolsover major took an orange from the table.

"Now, was I squiffy?" he demanded

"Yes, you were!" howled Skinner.

Bolsover major grunted, and proceeded to squeeze the orange down Skinner's neck. The junior yelled and struggled furiously. James opened the door, and coughed.

"The car's ready, my lord."

Bolsover major released Skinner as suddenly as if he had become red-hot. He had been caught in an attitude very unbecoming to a noble lord.

"You rotter!" yelled Skinner. "You—you—"

James retired precipitately.

"Shut up, you idiot!" growled Bolsover. "Do you want to give the whole show away? Can't you remember decent manners before servants?"

Skinner snorted.

The three juniors took their coats and hats from Mr. Trooper, and went out to the car.

The chauffeur took his place, and the motor-car rolled away towards the village. Skinner was thinking deeply.

"We shall have to take the chauffeur into it," he said.

"We can't work it without a spoof accident. You'll have to tip him, Bolsover."

"Look here, I'm not made of money," said Bolsover ill-temperedly.

Skinner shrugged his shoulders.

"You can't be a lord without paying for it," he said. "You'll have to stand the man at least half a quid, if we're to make up a yarn."

"Oh, all right!"

Skinner stopped the car, and talked to the chauffeur. The latter grinned respectfully when he learned what was wanted.

"You see, we really haven't got leave for the week-end," Skinner explained. "Lord Mauleverer is going to send a telegram to the school explaining that we can't come back. You can run the car into something without damaging it, I suppose?"

"Aheh!"

Bolsover major slipped a half-sovereign into the man's hand.

"Quite simply, my lord," said the chauffeur, without moving a muscle.

"We want the local medical man to see us, so that he will back it up," Skinner explained. "Just a shaking up, you know."

"Yes, sir, quite simple."

"And I'll remember you, Thompson," said Bolsover loftily. "I shall often be spending week-ends down here."

"Thank you, my lord."

"We'll leave it to you," said Skinner.

The chauffeur grinned, and touched his cap. He quite entered into the spirit of the thing. To him, Bolsover & Co.

were three schoolboys who wanted to prolong a holiday, and he did not see any harm in helping them.

"Suppose I spill you just outside Dr. Gashem's gate, gentlemen?" he asked. "I bump the car into the hedge, and you roll out?"

"Good business!"

The car buzzed on to the village. Billy Bunter looked a little alarmed.

"I say, you fellows, I don't want to get hurt, you know!"

"You'll get hurt if you don't shut up!" growled Bolsover.

"Well, if my spectacles get broken, you'll have to pay for them."

"Cheese it!"

Bump!

The car, going at an easy pace, bumped on the hedge that bordered the doctor's garden. Immediately Bolsover major threw open the door, and rolled out artistically with Skinner. Bunter kept his seat.

"Roll out, you fat fool!" hissed Bolsover, raising himself on his elbow. "Do you want to muck it all up?"

"Oh, really, Bolsover—"

Bolsover reached into the car, caught Bunter by the ankle, and yanked him out bodily. Billy Bunter alighted in the road with a terrific bump, that was decidedly realistic. He gave a most formidable roar.

"Ow! Ow! My back's broken! Yow! My leg's fractured! Yaroooh!"

The chauffeur backed the car away from the hedge, rushed up to the door of the house, and rang frantically on the bell. A little stout, bald-headed man in glasses came dashing out. He had seen the accident!

"Quick, sir!" said the chauffeur. "Lord Mauleverer—"

The doctor rushed into the road. It was the first time the village doctor had had a chance of attending a real live lord, and he was prepared to bless the chauffeur for running into his hedge.

"Help!" moaned Bunter. "I'm dying!"

Bolsover major and Skinner groaned deeply.

The doctor examined them quickly. He soon satisfied himself that they were not hurt, with the exception of Bunter, who had several good-sized bruises.

"No harm done," he said reassuringly. "You have had a miraculously narrow escape."

Bolsover groaned.

"I feel very badly shaken," he said. "I should be glad if you could come and see us to-morrow, doctor. I'm Lord Mauleverer—I'm staying at Live Oaks."

Dr. Gashem rubbed his hands.

"Only too pleased to come and see you, my lord. Of course, you cannot be too careful. You must not risk your valuable health. I shall certainly call to-morrow."

"And—perhaps you wouldn't mind writing a note to our Form-master, that we're too badly shaken to travel home to-night," groaned Bolsover.

"Certainly—certainly, my lord!"

"Thank you so much! May we come in and rest a little? You may take the car back, Thompson—we'll walk home."

"Yes, my lord."

Dr. Gashem ushered his three patients into the house. Billy Bunter was still groaning, and Bolsover and Skinner played their parts very well. Dr. Gashem took pen and paper.

"Let me see—I shall say that Lord Mauleverer and his friends have met with an accident outside my house—"

"No; say Skinner and his friends," said Bolsover. "You see, Skinner's supposed to be in charge of us, as he's the oldest—"

"Yes, yes; quite so."

And the letter was written. Bolsover major thanked the medical gentleman effusively, and the three young rascals left the house. There was a somewhat curious expression upon the medical man's face as he watched them go. It is possible that he suspected that there was a trick; but that was no business of his. If Lord Mauleverer chose to prolong a holiday by giving Dr. Gashem an excuse for sending him in a bill, that was Lord Mauleverer's business. Dr. Gashem's business was to send in the bill—a point upon which he certainly would not fail.

"Now for the post-office," grinned Skinner, when they were clear of the doctor's house. "We've got to get the telegram off."

"What did you send the car away for?" growled Bunter. "I don't want to walk."

"Fathead! We had to let the doctor know one of us was Skinner," growled Bolsover. "And Skinner's Wharton at Live Oaks. We don't want the chauffeur to tumble, idiot! Shut up!"

They found the post-office, and Skinner despatched the telegram.

"Mr. Quelch, Greyfriars. Badly shaken in motor-accident. Staying with Lord Mauleverer. Doctor's letter following."

"SKINNER, BOLSOVER, BUNTER."

"That's settled Quelch!" grinned Skinner, as they left the THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 326.

FOR NEXT MONDAY—

"ROUGH ON COKER!"

EVERY MONDAY, The "Magnet" LIBRARY. ONE PENNY.

post-office. "He won't believe the wire, but he'll have to believe the doctor's letter. We're safe now till Monday."

"If the other fellows don't turn up," grunted Bunter.

"We'll deal with them all right when they turn up."

And they walked back to Live Oaks. It was evening now. As they arrived at the gate, they saw that the front door was open, and the sound of familiar voices reached their ears. Bolsover major grasped Skinner's arm.

"My hat! They've arrived! Now for it!"

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER. Something Like a Surprise!

HARRY WHARTON & Co., released from their imprisonment in the box-room, had to kill time for a couple of hours. There was no train until then—and the Famous Five killed time on the cricket-field, while Lord Mauleverer sat in the pavilion and watched them, finding that less strenuous.

After leaving the cricket-field, the chums of the Remove looked round for Skinner, hoping that he had come in from his spin. They wanted to see Harold Skinner very badly before they left Greyfriars. But Skinner had not come in. Neither had the bags been discovered, though Trotter, stimulated by a liberal tip from Lord Mauleverer, had looked everywhere for them.

"Skinner's hidden the blessed-bags somewhere," said Harry Wharton. "We'll scalp him when we get back on Monday. We shall have to pack some more bags, that's all. You can have a whack in ours, Mauly. We don't need more than three bags for six chaps."

"Yaas," said Lord Mauleverer.

And three bags were packed, and as they were not so bulky as Lord Mauleverer's, the juniors walked to the station and carried them.

They caught their train easily enough, and started. But it was a long journey. They had to change several times, and it was dusk before they finally stepped out of a train at Gunthorpe.

The chums of the Remove had not the slightest suspicion that they had been preceded there. At that moment, as it happened, Bolsover & Co. were in the village post-office, sending their veracious telegram to Mr. Quelch. Little dreaming of them, or how near they were, Harry Wharton & Co. started to walk to Live Oaks.

Lord Mauleverer looked along the road and suppressed a groan.

"Suppose we wait at the station and telephone for the car from the cottage?" he suggested brilliantly.

"Rats!" said Bob Cherry. "What's the matter with walking?"

"Tired."

"Come on, slacker!"

"Anyway, leave the bags for the porter," said Mauleverer. "It's some miles to Live Oaks, and they're jolly heavy to carry all that way."

"That's a good idea," agreed Wharton.

And the three bags were left to be sent on to the cottage.

Then the Removites tramped cheerfully down the road.

There was an ancient hack outside the station, but after a glance at it, they had decided that they preferred to walk. A kindly villager directed them on the way. They tramped cheerfully down the road in the gathering dusk.

"Here we are!" said Bob Cherry, as he read the name on the gate. "Live Oaks! Looks a jolly place, so far as one can see."

"The jollyfulness is terrific!"

"Yaas, here we are!"

And they walked up the drive to the house. Bob Cherry rang the bell, and the door was opened by James. He regarded them inquiringly.

"Trooper here?" asked Lord Mauleverer.

"Yes, sir."

"Tell him I want him."

James hesitated.

"What name shall I say, sir?"

"Lord Mauleverer, of course, begad!"

James almost fell down.

"Excuse me!" he said. "Wha-a-a-at name?"

"Mauleverer, of course," said his lordship, puzzled. "Begad! Didn't that fat bouncer send my telegram after all? Doesn't seem as if we're expected, begad! Call Trooper here, anyway."

James closed the door in their faces while he called Mr. Trooper. He did not mean to run any risks with a fellow who claimed to be Lord Mauleverer.

"Jolly cautious, I must say," remarked Nugent. "Even if they haven't had your wire, there's nothing surprising in your coming, Mauly, is there?"

A Magnificent, Long, Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars. Order Early.



"No. Mackenzie must have told them I should be coming some time," said Lord Mauleverer, puzzled. "Blessed if I catch on!"

The door opened again, and Mr. Trooper appeared, majestic, with James behind him. The light streamed out on the group of juniors in the porch. Mr. Trooper surveyed them with lofty scorn.

"And what may you young gentlemen require?" he asked. "We've come down for the week-end," explained Lord Mauleverer. "Are you Sloopers?"

"My name is Trooper."  
"Yaas, my mistake. Didn't you get my telegram?"  
"I received Lord Mauleverer's telegram," said Mr. Trooper, with dignity; "and Lord Mauleverer has arrived with his two friends."

"Wha-a-at!"  
"Arrived!" ejaculated Harry Wharton.  
"My hat!"

The schoolboy earl looked amazed.  
"But I'm Lord Mauleverer!" he ejaculated.  
Mr. Trooper smiled knowingly.

"Ah, you young gentlemen are from Greyfriars?" he asked.  
"Yaas."

"We know all about you," said Mr. Trooper.  
"Begad! Is that so? Then let us in, Sloopers."  
"I shall certainly not let you in without his lordship's permission; and his lordship is absent at this moment," said Mr. Trooper severely. "One of the young gentlemen warned me that some boys from Greyfriars were following them down, with the intention of playing some trick on them."

"Great Scott!"  
"Do you mean to say that somebody has come here claiming to be Lord Mauleverer?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"I mean to say that Lord Mauleverer arrived by the afternoon train as stated in his telegram," said Mr. Trooper, "and his two friends with him—Master Wharton and Master Nugent."

"What! I'm Wharton!"  
"And I'm Nugent!" yelled Frank.  
Mr. Trooper smiled indulgently.

"What were they like?" gasped Johnny Bull. "This is some jape, you chaps. Skinner's got something to do with this."

"Look here, this is Lord Mauleverer."  
"Nonsense," said Mr. Trooper. "Ah, here is his lordship himself!"

There were steps on the gravel path. Bolsover and Skinner and Billy Bunter came into view. They entered the porch coolly, the chums of the Remove staring at them blankly.

"Bolsover!"  
"Skinner!"  
"Bunter!"

"Begad, what does this mean, you sweeps?"  
Bolsover regarded them with cool insolence. He was perfectly self-possessed, and Skinner was as cool as an iceberg.

Bunter was grinning. The three young rascals had everything in their hands; it was evident that Mr. Trooper and James did not take the slightest stock in the story of the late arrivals.

"Oh, here they are, are they?" said Bolsover calmly. "It's all right, Trooper, these are some kids from Greyfriars. They've followed us down to make a row, because I declined to ask them for the week-end. Send them away."

"Yes, my lord."  
The three impostors walked into the house. Harry Wharton and Co. stood dumbfounded. When Bolsover was addressed as "my lord" they understood, and they simply gasped.

"Begad," murmured Lord Mauleverer, "the cheeky beast is calling himself by my name! Begad, this beats everything!"

"You rotters!" shouted Bob Cherry.  
"Trooper, my man, those fellows are impostors," said Lord Mauleverer. "I'm Mauleverer, you know. That fellow's name is Bolsover, begad!"

"Send them away!" said Bolsover loftily. "Don't let them make a row here, Trooper. I shall report this conduct to their headmaster on Monday."

And Bolsover & Co. went into the dining-room and shut the door.

Trooper was about to close the house door, when Bob Cherry jammed his foot in the way. Astounding as it was, Lord Mauleverer and his friends were to be shut out. Shut out they would have been but for Bob Cherry's prompt foot.

"No, you don't," said Bob, "we're coming in."  
"Yaas, begad!"

"Come, come, young gentlemen," urged Mr. Trooper, "don't make a disturbance here. You heard what his lordship said."

"The MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 326.

"His lordship! My only sainted aunt!"  
"This is Lord Mauleverer!" howled Johnny Bull.  
"Nonsense!" said Mr. Trooper sharply. "If you do not go away quietly, I warn you that you will be removed by force!"

"Oh, crikey!"  
"The crikeyfulness is terrific."  
"Now, are you going?" asked Mr. Trooper.

"No!" roared the juniors.  
"Then I am sorry, but we shall be compelled to eject you," said the butler. "You heard his lordship's orders."

"Listen to me—"  
"Look here—"  
"I tell you—"  
"Yaas, begad—"

Mr. Trooper did not listen. He was fed up. He pushed Bob Cherry out of the doorway. Bob doubled his fists, but Wharton pulled him back in time.

"Hold on, Bob! We've got to think this out! Those rotters have taken them in. No good getting wrathful about it."

"But, look here—"  
"Begad, you know, we can't be shut out!" said Lord Mauleverer dazedly. "I never heard of such a thing, you know, begad!"

Slam!  
The door closed. The Co. were shut out, and they stood in a dismayed crowd in the porch, utterly flabbergasted by the unexpected turn affairs had taken.

"Well, my only hat!" ejaculated Nugent. "This takes the cake! Fancy that bounder having the cheek to call himself Lord Mauleverer!"

"That's why Skinner shut us up in the box-room!" gasped Johnny Bull. "I'll bet they've got our bags with them, too, the rotters!"

"Oh crumbs! This looks like being a ripping week-end, I don't think!"

The door opened an inch. Mr. Trooper peered out.  
"His lordship says that if you do not leave the premises, I am to telephone for the police!" he rapped out. And the door closed again.

The chums of the Remove, retired from the porch with feelings too deep for words. They gathered upon the drive to hold a council of war.

## THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

### By Force of Arms!

"**B**EGAD! Who'd have thought it?"  
Evidently Harry Wharton & Co. would not have thought it. They were utterly flabbergasted. That Bolsover major should have the astounding cheek to call himself Lord Mauleverer, and Skinner Wharton, and Bunter Nugent, passed all their calculations. The servants at Live Oaks had been taken in; and there was no one there or in the village who knew Lord Mauleverer by sight. The other juniors, of course, were total strangers in the place. The imposture had been perfectly easy, and Bolsover & Co. were installed in the country cottage for the week-end, and Harry Wharton & Co. were left out in the cold. And it was not easy to see how the impostors were to be displaced. They were in possession, and possession was nine points of the law.

"Well, it's a tiptop jape, I suppose?" said Bob Cherry, at last lugubriously. "Must seem very funny to those bounders in there!"

"Begad, it's rather more than a jape! I'm hungry!" said Lord Mauleverer plaintively.

"Same here," said Johnny Bull. "What about rushing the place?"

Harry Wharton shook his head.  
"No go! There are two manservants, and the chauffeur, as well as those chaps. And you heard what Trooper said about telephoning for the bobbies."

"But we can't be shut out here!" exclaimed Johnny Bull wrathfully. "We can't go back to Greyfriars. It's too late. There's no train."

"How are those rotters going to get back, I wonder?" Nugent remarked.

"They're not going back. They're going to make a week-end of it, that's a cert."

"But they haven't got leave."  
"They've taken French leave—unless they've got some dodge for making an excuse to Quelchy; I shouldn't wonder," said Wharton. "Skinner's deep enough for anything. They wouldn't risk taking a week-end away from school without some stunning big whopper to excuse themselves. And now they're in, and we're out."

"What are we going to do?"  
"That's the question," said Wharton ruefully.

"The questionfulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram

Singh, with a sad shake of the head. "We can do nothing. We have been done, our esteemed and honoured selves."

"You see, they've proved their dashed identity—I mean, our identity—to Trooper and the rest," said Wharton. "They've got our bags, for a cert, and our names are on them, and they're calling themselves by our names. Mauly's bag, especially, splashed all over with crests and things—that's enough to prove that Bolsover is Mauly."

"Begad!"

"Look here, we're not going to take it lying down!" Johnny Bull exclaimed excitedly. "It would be some satisfaction to give them a jolly good licking, anyway!"

"Yaas, that's so." Even the lamb-like Lord Mauleverer was feeling wrathful. "Let's wade in and give them a good hiding."

"We can't get in," said Nugent.

"Yaas, there are French windows on the verandah," said Mauleverer. "We can shove our way in, and lick them till they own up."

"What about the bobbies they'll telephone for?"

"Blow the bobbies! We've a right in the house. Don't it belong to my relation, old Mackenzie?" demanded Lord Mauleverer. "Begad, they've no right to keep us out of our own place. They're scoffing our week-end, begad!"

"Lovely week-end it's going to be, by the look of things!" groaned Bob Cherry. "I'm famished, you know!"

"And I'm tired," said Lord Mauleverer. "Not too tired to give them a wallop, though. Let's clear off a bit to let them quiet down, and then rush the room there under the verandah."

The juniors were all keen to be on the warpath. Lord Mauleverer's suggestion was adopted with unanimous assent. "Besides, there won't be more than one bobby in a little place like Gunthorpe," Nugent remarked, "and it will take him some time to get here, if they 'phone for him. And I fancy Bolsover would stop short of that."

The juniors walked out of the gate, and three pairs of eyes that were watching them in the gloom from a window exchanged glances of satisfaction.

"I say, you fellows, they're gone," Billy Bunter remarked. "They've given it up as a bad job!" chuckled Skinner. "There never was a cleaner take-in than this, by George! They're done brown—utterly and thoroughly brown."

"What-ho!" said Bolsover. "Now we'll ring for supper, and have a smoke afterwards. We'll have the car out tomorrow, and have a ripping time."

Trooper and James served supper. It was a handsome and plentiful supper, and it made Billy Bunter's mouth water as he looked at it.

"Haw! Those young rascals gone, Trooper?" asked Bolsover major.

"Yes, my lord."

"Quite cleared off the premises, I hope?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Very good. Have the gate locked, Trooper. I don't want them to come bothering again."

"Yes, my lord."

"And you needn't wait, Trooper. We'll look after ourselves. Put the cigarettes out and the matches. Thanks! You can go, Trooper."

"Very good, my lord!"

The door closed behind Trooper's portly form. The three juniors felt relieved when he was gone. They were more comfortable enjoying a feed "on their own," without the stately assistance of the butler.

"You'll have to give that old johnny a whacking tip when we leave, Bolsover," Skinner remarked, with a grin, as he attacked the supper.

"Rot!" said Bolsover. "I'll leave that to Mauly. When we're finished here, Mauly can take possession, and he can tip the servants. I haven't got any blessed quids to waste on them."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, pass that pie!" said Bunter. "Don't keep it all, Skinner. I say, you fellows, they do you jolly well down here. I'm sorry those bounders won't have any supper. He, he, he!"

"Serve 'em right!"

"Quelch's got our wire by now," Skinner remarked. "I wonder whether he will get his hair off? Lucky there isn't another train down here to-night, or he might feel inclined to come and see. But he can't get down here, and when he gets the medical gent's letter it's bound to make it all right."

"Well, he ought to be satisfied with professional medical opinion."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wonder what those rotters are doing now?"

"Gone to the inn for some tommy, most likely," grinned Bolsover. "They must be hungry after their journey; it was longer than ours."

And the three impostors laughed again.

"Hallo, what's that?" asked Skinner, a little later, as he

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FOR NEXT MONDAY—

**"ROUGH ON COKER!"**

EVERY MONDAY.

The "Magnet" LIBRARY.

ONE PENNY.

caught a sound outside one of the high French windows that looked on the verandah.

"Wharton, by thunder!" exclaimed Bolsover, springing to his feet.

A face was pressed to the glass of the window, as Bolsover drew the curtain back. He stared through the glass at the captain of the Remove. Behind Wharton five other forms loomed up out of the shadows.

Wharton was feeling the handle of the window. But the windows were fastened on the inside, and refused to open. Bolsover major, relieved, grinned at his Form captain through the glass.

"Don't you wish you could get in?" he sang out mockingly.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Skinner. "Try again!"

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter.

Crash!

Lord Mauleverer's elbow came crashing through the pane, and fragments of glass were scattered in all directions. The trio of impostors uttered a shout of alarm. They had not anticipated a desperate step like that. Through the opening in the smashed pane Wharton thrust his hand, and caught the catch of the door, and dragged it open. The French window swung back.

"Come on!" shouted Wharton.

Skinner made a rush for the bell. Bolsover major faced the invaders with his fists up. Billy Bunter sat petrified, his laden fork half-way to his mouth.

Harry Wharton rushed right at Bolsover, and they grapsed one another, and in a moment were rolling on the polished floor.

Bob Cherry collared Skinner, who stood with his thumb pressed upon the electric bell, which was ringing incessantly. Nugent dashed to the door and locked it. Johnny Bull grapsed Bunter, and yanked him backwards over his chair, sprawling him on the floor. Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh relocked the French window, and fastened it, and dragged a table and half a dozen chairs against it as a barricade, in case the servants should go round by that way.

It all passed in a few seconds. Bunter and Skinner did not give much trouble, but Bolsover major was fighting desperately, and yelling for help.

But Harry Wharton was uppermost, and he sat panting on his enemy's chest, pinning him down on the floor.

"Got the door locked?" he gasped.

"Yes, rather," chuckled Nugent.

The handle of the door was already being tried from without. Mr. Trooper had come in answer to the bell, but he could not get in. He knocked on the door.

"Did you ring, my lord?"

"Help!" roared Bolsover. "Those villains have got in the windows! Help! Break in the door! Send for the police! Yaroooh!"

The last exclamation was uttered as Wharton bumped his head on the floor.

"Shut up!" said Harry.

"Ow! Yaroooh! Help!"

"I say, you fellows—"

There was a loud knocking on the door. Mr. Trooper and James were there in a state of intense surprise and indignation.

"Come round by the windows!" yelled Bolsover. "Yaroooh!"

"Stand by to repel boarders!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Trooper and James were heard hurrying away. The invaders were to be attacked from the verandah. There was no time to lose.

"Fasten up these chaps!" said Harry Wharton. "The serviettes will do. Tear them into strips. Can't help the damage, Mauly."

"Begad! That doesn't matter."

"Sharp's the word!"

Bolsover major, struggling desperately, was held down, while Bob Cherry and Nugent tied his wrists and ankles together with strips of table-napkins. Then the burly Remove lay helpless and panting on the floor. Johnny Bull and Mauleverer did the same for Skinner at the same time. Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh tackled Bunter, who was an easy victim. Bunter was not a fighting-man. He grinned feebly at Inky as the Nabob of Bhanipur tied him up.

"I say, Inky, old man, it was only a j-j-joke, you know," he murmured. "Lemme have one hand free, you know, so that I can go on with my supper."

But Inky did not listen to the pleading voice. He tied Bunter up securely, and rolled him under the table. Bunter blinked out mournfully.

"I say, Inky, let me have the pie, anyway."

"Certainly, my fat ludicrous Bunter," said Inky, and he

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lifted the pie down and overturned it upon Bunter's fat face. There was a spluttering roar from Bunter.

"Yarog! Gogogogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here come the enemy!" shouted Bob Cherry.

There were footsteps on the verandah, and the portly form of Mr. Trooper appeared at the shattered window.

### THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER. The Order of the Boot!

**M**R. TROOPER looked in at the lighted room from the darkness of the verandah, and gasped. The pseudo Lord Mauleverer and his two friends lay on the floor, wriggling, bound hand and foot with strips of serviettes. They were out of the combat. And Harry Wharton & Co. were lined up inside the French windows, ready to do battle.

James was behind Mr. Trooper, and Thompson, the chauffeur, was also there, called upon for active service, so to speak. They were in a state of the blankest amazement. Such an attack upon the country cottage was a thing outside their wildest dreams.

Trooper put his hand through the gap in the window, to push away the furniture Inky had piled there. Bob Cherry picked up the poker, and made a dramatic slash at Mr. Trooper's fat hand, and the hand disappeared as if by magic.

"No entrance here!" said Bob.

"Young gentlemen," said Mr. Trooper, "this is past a joke. Unless you release his lordship instantly and leave the house I shall have to call in the police. That would be very painful, as you young gentlemen belong to his lordship's school."

"Come in and turn 'em out!" roared Bolsover major, struggling desperately with his bonds.

"Ahem!"

"You fat idiot, why don't you come in?"

Mr. Trooper flushed with indignation. He was certainly fat, but he was a most respectable middle-aged manservant, and he didn't like being called an idiot, even by a lord.

"Your lordship will excuse me," he said. "I do not see how I am to get in. If your lordship's schoolfellows act in this extraordinary way—"

"Bust in the window!"

"I do not know whether I am entitled to damage Mr. Mackenzie's property in that manner, my lord."

"I order you to! I'm Lord Mauleverer, and you've got to obey my orders, haven't you?" howled Bolsover. "Bust in the window, I tell you."

"Begad! We sha'n't let you in here," said Lord Mauleverer cheerfully. "You can run away and play, Chooper, my boy. We're going to have supper now. If you try to get in you will get hurt—what?"

"The hurtfulness will be terrific, my esteemed Trooperful friend."

Bursting in the French windows and tackling six sturdy and determined juniors seemed, apparently, rather a large order to the three men outside. They naturally hesitated to undertake the task. Trooper looked in through the broken window again.

"I shall call the police," he said. "There is nothing else to be done. Your lordship wishes me to call in the police? As these young gentlemen are schoolfellows of your lordship's, perhaps—"

Bolsover major hesitated. Calling in the police was carrying the matter rather further than a joke.

"Look here, you chaps, I'll make it pax if you like," he said. "I'll let you stiy here for the week-end, if you make it pax."

"You'll own up that you're not Lord Mauleverer?"

"No, you ass!"

"Then there won't be any pax," said Harry Wharton.

"And I won't have you here for the week-end, anyway," said Mauleverer. "I won't allow a bounder to assume my name, begad."

"Shall I call in the police, my lord?"

"Yes," said Bolsover desperately.

"Very well, my lord."

And Trooper & Co. faded away from the verandah.

"Keep an eye open," said Harry Wharton. "It may be a dodge to rush us suddenly. I say, Bolsover, you've got a splendid feed here, and we're hungry."

"Yes, rather," said Nugent, sitting down in Bunter's chair. "We can't ring for fresh plates very well, but we can help ourselves somehow. I'll wipe the knives and forks on Skinner."

"Look here, don't you spoil my clothes!" howled Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The chums of the Remove sat down to supper, in a row facing the window, to keep their eyes open for a possible

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assault. But there was no assault. Trooper was evidently gone for the police, or to telephone for them.

The three prisoners lay on their backs on the floor, regarding the feasting juniors with malevolent eyes.

It was an ample supper, and there was plenty for all of them. Bolsover & Co. had by no means been finished when the interruption came.

"You'll get into trouble when the bobbies come," said Bolsover threateningly. "I suppose you know you'll be taken to the lock-up."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I don't think you'll let it go as far as that, Bolsover," he remarked. "It will mean pretty bad trouble for you if you do."

"You'll see," growled Bolsover major.

"Begad, you can't expect to be allowed to rope in our week-end and our cottage," said Lord Mauleverer. "It's too thick, begad."

"Pass the chicken," said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. We'll deal with the giddy police-force when it arrives."

Bolsover & Co.'s feelings were almost too deep for words as they watched the six hungry juniors clearing the supper-table. The supper was finished to the last morsel, and then Bob Cherry rose and looked out of the window. The moon was glimmering over the garden and the river.

"Not here yet," said Bob.

The juniors waited for the arrival of the enemy. There was a tramp of feet on the verandah at last, and a helmeted head looked in at the broken window. Under it was a podgy face. It was the village constable—all the police-force that Gunthorpe possessed.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry cheerily. "Who are you, my pippin?"

The podgy face frowned.

"Come in, constable!" called out Bolsover, major. "I'm Lord Mauleverer. I want these rotters arrested!"

"Hopen this 'ere window!"

"Rats!"

"Ave I your orders, my lord, to use force?"

"Yes, rather!" howled Bolsover.

"Then bring me a 'ammer or something," said the villago policeman, looking round at Mr. Trooper and James who were behind him.

"Yes, Mr. Podge."

James departed, and came back with a heavy hammer, which he handed to P.-c. Podge.

"Afore I come in," said Mr. Podge solemnly, "I warns you young gents that this 'ere will be a serious matter for you."

"Thanks!"

"If they go quietly now, I'll let them off," said Bolsover major magnanimously. "They are schoolfellows of mine, constable, and they are doing this for a lark."

"You 'ear wot his lordship says?"

"He's telling whoppers, my dear man," said Lord Mauleverer. "He's taken my blessed name, begad. I'm Lord Mauleverer."

"You can't fool me, young man," said P.-c. Podge severely.

"Now, are you going to open this 'ere door?"

"Not this evening!"

"Then, with his lordship's permission, I shall bust it in."

Crash! Crash! Crash!

The French window flew open, and the table and chairs tumbled away in all directions. P.-c. Podge marched in with a heavy tread, and after him came Mr. Trooper and James and the chauffeur.

Harry Wharton & Co. drew together. Mr. Trooper stooped over Bolsover major to release him, the others intervening to keep the juniors back. Bolsover jumped to his feet, grinning with triumph.

"Now, you rotters!" he exclaimed.

"Shall I take them into custody, my lord?" asked Mr. Podge majestically. Exactly how he was going to take six sturdy juniors into custody did not occur to the worthy constable.

Bolsover appeared to relent. He slipped a five-shilling piece into the fat hand of Mr. Podge.

"No; I don't want to be hard on them," he said. "They're doing this for a lark. Just see them safe off the premises, please."

"Very well, my lord. Now, you young gents, clear off!" said Mr. Podge. "His lordship has let you off very lightly."

The Co. looked at one another. To resist the majesty of the law was a serious matter, although they had right on their side. But to be turned out of the country cottage was more serious still. They stood shoulder to shoulder.

"We're not goin', begad," said Lord Mauleverer. "This

cottage was lent me by my friend Mackenzie for the giddy week-end—"

"Now, you take my advice and go," said Mr. Podge, wagging a fat forefinger at them. "If there's trouble, I shall be bound to take you in charge. You go, when his lordship is willing to let you off!"

"I tell you I'm his lordship, you fat duffer."

Mr. Podge turned purple with wrath.

"You get huff, you young rascal!" he exclaimed.

"Pile in, all of you, and chuck them out!" exclaimed Bolsover. "I'll help. Come on, Skinner." He had already roused Skinner. "Pile in, I say!"

"Hands off!" shouted Wharton. "I tell you—"

"Kick them out!" shouted Skinner.

The next minute there was a wild and whirling struggle in progress. The two parties were evenly matched in numbers, but there were four grown men on one side, and that made all the difference. But the Co. put up a good fight. One by one they were dragged to the door and shot forth upon the verandah. Wharton was the last to go, but he went, and rolled over Johnny Bull.

Mr. Podge put his helmet straight. It had received some damage in the tussle.

"Young rascals!" he panted. "Only say the word, my lord, and I'll take the whole gang to the lock-up."

"No; we'll see them off the premises," said Bolsover major gleefully.

The six breathless juniors were rushed off the verandah. Mr. Trooper & Co. had lost their tempers now, and they were decidedly rough in their methods. Bolsover and Skinner piled in for all they were worth, and even Billy Bunter lent a hand. Lord Mauleverer and the Famous Five were ejected ignominiously from the gates, and left sprawling in the road. Mr. Trooper locked the gate after them.

"Good egg!" chortled Skinner. "We win!"

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter.

"Never 'eard of such impudence!" exclaimed Mr. Podge, mopping his heated brow. "Only say the word, my lord, and I'll lock 'em up."

"No; that's all right," said Bolsover, inwardly wondering what would happen to himself if he should cause Lord Mauleverer to be put into the village lock-up.

"Makes a man thirsty, this 'ere," added Mr. Podge.

Bolsover understood.

"Take Mr. Podge in and give him some refreshment, Trooper," he said. "I'm very much obliged to you, Mr. Podge."

"Not at all, my lord; only dooty!" said Mr. Podge.

And he cheerfully accompanied Mr. Trooper and James. Bolsover & Co. returned to the dining-room; and they were careful to close the wooden shutters to the French windows and secure them. Bolsover sat down, lighted a cigarette, and grinned.

"We've done them—brown!" he remarked.

"Yes, rather!" chuckled Skinner. "Blessed if I thought they'd bust in on us like that; but we've downed them! Give me a cigarette."

And the rascals of the Remove celebrated their triumph in their own peculiar way.

## THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

### A Little Too Previous!

"O W!" groaned Bob Cherry. "I feel as if I'd been through a mangle."

"The manglefulness is terrific," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, sitting up dazedly in the dust. "I have great and extreme painfulness."

"Oh, begad!"

Harry Wharton scrambled to his feet and dusted down his clothes. The Co. had been defeated, there wasn't the slightest doubt about that. Their warlike tactics had won them a supper, but the defeat had been crushing. The enemy were still in possession of the cottage, and they were thrown out in the cold—on their necks!

"My only hat!" said Nugent. "It looks to me as if we're quite done. We can't stop in the road all night; we'd better make for the inn."

There was evidently nothing else to be done. The six juniors limped away painfully towards the distant village.

"What a giddy week-end!" groaned Bob.

"Oh, it's rotten!" said Harry crossly. "We must manage to prove our identity to those asses somehow! Only Bolsover's got all the proof on his side, hang him! But if we let them spoof us out of our week-end, we shall be laughed to death when we get back to Greyfriars!"

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FOR NEXT  
MONDAY—

"ROUGH ON COKER!"

EVERY MONDAY, The "Magnet" LIBRARY, ONE PENNY.

The juniors grunted dismally at the prospect. To put up at the village inn for the week-end, and leave Bolsover & Co. in possession of the field, was not to be thought of. The Remove would howl with laughter when they heard the story. It would be the standing joke of the school for a long time.

"Isn't there anybody who knows you, and could identify you, Mauly, you ass?" asked Wharton.

"Not here, dear boy."

"What about the chap the cottage belongs to—Mackenzie?"

"I don't know where he is—somewhere motorin', I believe. Gone abroad, for all I know," said Lord Mauleverer dismally.

"Didn't you write to tell him you were coming down to the cottage?"

"Yaas."

"Well, where did you write, fathead?"

"His club in London, for the letter to be sent on."

"Oh, rats! That's no good, then!"

"He may be hundreds of miles away!" groaned Lord Mauleverer. "I say, you chaps, I'm awfully sorry it's turned out like this! I meant to give you a good time down here!"

"That's all right, Mauly; it isn't your fault," said Bob comfortingly. "We've got to think of a way of dislodging those rotters somehow!"

The Co. tried to think of a way all the time they were tramping back to Gunthorpe; but the way did not occur to them. There seemed to be no way out of the difficulty. They reached the village inn, and secured rooms for the night, and that was all they could do. Bolsover & Co. had to be left in possession.

"Never mind; we'll drop on them tomorrow," said Bob Cherry. "They can't spend the week-end indoors, that's one comfort; and when they come out we'll massacre them!"

And, somewhat comforted by that reflection, the tired juniors turned in and went to sleep.

It was late on the following morning when they rose. They made their toilet with some difficulty, for their bags were not at hand. The bags had been sent on from the station to Live Oaks, according to their instructions, and had been taken in there. The tussle of the previous evening had considerably rumpled shirts and collars and clothes; but they made themselves as respectable as they could, and went down to breakfast.

Over brekker they discussed the plan of campaign. To leave the enemy in peaceful possession of the disputed cottage was impossible; they did not think of that for a moment.

"We'll wait for them, and collar the rotters when they come out!" said Harry Wharton. "Then we'll make them own up to the jape!"

"How?" asked Nugent doubtfully.

"Bump them till they do!"

"Good! That will do for Bunter, anyway," said Bob Cherry. "We'll make the fat rotter tell Trooper the facts, and that will settle it!"

"Yaas, begad!"

And after breakfast the juniors settled their bill and left the inn, and took the road to Live Oaks once more to renew the campaign.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Here come the enemy!"

It was Mr. Trooper. He was making for the village by a cross-cut across the fields; but as he sighted the juniors on the road he altered his course, and bore down upon them. They stopped in the road. The butler was running, and his fat face was red and excited. The Removites exchanged grim looks.

"He hasn't had enough!" grinned Bob Cherry. "The cheeky ass, he's going to go for us! Making straight for us, by Jove!"

"We'll give him all he wants!" grinned Wharton. "Collar him as soon as he gets into the road, and bump him—hard!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

That Mr. Trooper was intending war could hardly be doubted. He had changed his course so as to head for the spot where the juniors stood; and what could be his intentions, if not hostile? The Removites had not a doubt about it. They waited for Mr. Trooper to come up, with grim looks.

The portly butler was clambering over a stile into the

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road, when Wharton gave the signal, and they rushed upon him.

Six pairs of hands closed at the same moment upon Mr. Trooper's portly person, and he came down off the stile with a bump.

"Ow-w-w!" he gasped. "Grooooh!"

"Bump him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Young gentlemen— Yaroooh! Help! Groooh! Ch!"

Bump!

The concussion on the hard, unsympathetic road knocked out all the breath that was left in Mr. Trooper's portly person. He could only gasp like a newly-landed fish, his eyes rolling wildly.

"Give him another!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bump! Bump!

"Young gentlemen—my lord—ow—ow!" spluttered the unfortunate Mr. Trooper. "P-p-please do not bump me! Really—ow—"

Bump!

"Oh! Ow! Help! Leggo!" shrieked Mr. Trooper. "I tell you, my lord—all a mistake! I came to tell you—know you now! Ow! Groooh!"

"Oh, my hat!"

The juniors released Mr. Trooper as if he had become suddenly red-hot. They understood now the reason of the butler's haste, and why he had borne down upon them as soon as he sighted them. The mistake had been discovered, and Mr. Trooper was coming to tell them so. The juniors had certainly been a little too previous with that bumping.

"Begad!" ejaculated Lord Mauleverer. "Why didn't you say so before, Shoooper?"

"We didn't give him much chance," chuckled Bob Cherry. "Never mind, old son; no harm done—only a button or two burst off. Get your breath!"

Mr. Trooper gasped. He was trying to.

"How did you find out?" demanded Harry Wharton.

"Groo! Mr. Mackenzie—come back!" spluttered Mr. Trooper. "Sent me to find you! Groooh! Oh, dear! Oh!"

"Oh, what a little bit of luck!" sang Bob Cherry. "Come on, you chaps! All is calm and bright again now. Let me lend you my arm, Trooper, my boy; you seem to be a little short of breath. You don't take enough exercise!"

Mr. Trooper grinned faintly; and, with Bob Cherry lending the breathless butler the aid of his stalwart arm, they hurried on to Live Oaks.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

All's Well That Ends Well!

**B**OLSOVER MAJOR had met with a surprise that morning.

The three impostors had gone to bed perfectly satisfied with themselves and with things generally. They were in possession of the cottage, they were going to have the week-end, and they had a howling joke to relate to the fellows when they returned to Greyfriars on Monday morning. No wonder they were satisfied!

They came down in the morning, and demolished a substantial breakfast.

"We'll have a run in the car this morning," Bolsover remarked, as he rose from the breakfast-table. "That medical johnny is calling this morning, and we may as well be out when he comes; it will save trouble. He's written the giddy letter to Quelehy, and that's all we wanted of him. I'll go and see to the car!"

"Better order a lunch to put in the car, in case of accidents," was Billy Bunter's valuable suggestion.

Bolsover walked out to the garage, and ordered Thompson to get the car ready, and then strolled about the grounds. By this time Bolsover major was feeling as if he were really Lord Mauleverer, and monarch of all he surveyed. He felt quite indignant when a gentleman in a Norfolk jacket came up the path by the river, opened the garden gate, and calmly walked into the garden.

"Hallo! What do you want here?" called out Bolsover major.

The stranger stared at him.

"Hallo!" he said.

"This is private ground!" said Bolsover loftily. "You can't come in here!"

The stranger stared harder.

"I can't come in here?" he repeated.

"Certainly not!"

The man in the Norfolk jacket smiled.

"Well, I should like to know who has a better right here than I have!" he remarked.

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"Who may you happen to be?" demanded Bolsover.

"My name is Mackenzie."

"Eh?" said Bolsover, remembering to have heard that name somewhere. "Well, you're trespassing here, anyway. Buzz off!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bolsover began to get angry. He did not understand the stranger at all.

"Look here, what are you cackling at?" he demanded gruffly.

"It's all right," said the stranger. "I suppose you are one of Lord Mauleverer's young friends—what?"

"I'm Lord Mauleverer himself!" said Bolsover major, in his stateliest manner.

The man in the Norfolk jacket jumped.

"You—you're who—what?" he ejaculated.

"Lord Mauleverer!"

"Oh, you're Lord Mauleverer! My word!"

Bolsover felt a twinge of uneasiness. If this was somebody who knew Lord Mauleverer by sight, he had to brazen it out.

"I'll thank you to get out of this garden!" he said, as loftily as he could.

The stranger looked at him with a twinkle in his eyes.

"You are quite sure you are Lord Mauleverer?" he asked.

"Quite sure. What do you mean?" blustered Bolsover major.

"Well, I thought you might have made some mistake."

"Look here, you cheeky bounder—"

"You see, Lord Mauleverer happens to be my second cousin," explained the stranger quietly.

"Oh!"

"And I happen to be the owner of this cottage, which I have lent to Mauleverer for the week-end!"

"OH!"

Bolsover felt on the point of collapse.

"And now, as you're certainly not Lord Mauleverer, and you're apparently not one of his friends, perhaps you'll kindly explain what you are doing here?" the agreeable stranger continued politely.

"Oh, crumbs!"

"It surely isn't possible that you have palmed yourself off on Trooper as Lord Mauleverer? If so—"

The chauffeur came round the house, and touched his cap to Bolsover major.

"The car's ready, my lord! Why, Mr. Mackenzie, I didn't see you, sir." And he touched his cap again.

"Who is that fellow?" asked Mr. Mackenzie, pointing to Bolsover, who stood with open mouth, unable to speak.

Thompson stared.

"That's Lord Mauleverer, sir."

"Indeed! He's no more Lord Mauleverer than I am. It looks to me as if there has been some kind of swindling here," said Mr. Mackenzie, with a frown. "See that he doesn't get away, Thompson, while I speak to Trooper."

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Mackenzie went on to the house. Bolsover major made



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a step towards the gate, but the chauffeur took hold of his arm.

"Let me go, confound you!" exclaimed Bolsover.

The chauffeur grinned.

"Not just yet, Mr. Swindler! You heard what Mr. Mackenzie said. You're going to stay here, my lord."

Mr. Mackenzie looked out of the porch in a few minutes.

"Bring that fellow here, Thompson!"

"Yes, sir."

Bolsover major was marched into the porch. Skinner and Billy Bunter were there, both looking dismayed, and Mr. Trooper and James, both looking fierce. Trooper had explained what had happened the previous evening, and he was shuddering inwardly and outwardly at the dreadful knowledge that he had laid sacrilegious hands upon a lord. It was only too evident now that the party that had been ejected by force were the genuine week-enders.

"Now," said Mr. Mackenzie, raising his finger. "I give you youngsters a chance to explain what this means, before I send for the police."

"It was all a j-j-joke," stammered Billy Bunter. "I—I was against it all the time. I—I was led into it—"

"Shut up, you fat cad!" growled Bolsover. "It was a jape, sir. We did it for a lark on Mauly and the others, that's all."

The owner of Live Oaks nodded.

"We'll see what Mauly has to say about it," he remarked. "Trooper, you say they went to the village last night. You'd better fetch them as quick as you can."

"Yes, sir," stammered Trooper. And he departed, as fast as his portly person could travel.

"P-p-please m-m-may we go, sir?" mumbled Billy Bunter. Mr. Mackenzie shook his head. He sat down on the seat in the porch, and lighted a cigar.

"Not till Lord Mauleverer comes," he replied. "I'm not sure whether I sha'n't have you locked up."

"Oh, dear!" wailed Bunter. "I—I say, you fellows, you'll bear me out that I hadn't anything to do with it. I was really forced into this, you know. I say, Bolsover— Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

Bunter sat down violently. The Owl of the Remove was scared almost out of his wits, but Bolsover and Skinner waited coolly enough for the arrival of Harry Wharton & Co.

They knew they had nothing to fear worse than a ragging.

"Here they come!" said Skinner, at last.

Mr. Trooper came panting into the porch.

"Here is his lordship, sir."

Harry Wharton & Co. had arrived. Bolsover gave them a glare of defiance. There was a wail from Billy Bunter.

"I say, you fellows— Wharton, old chap, you know I hadn't anything to do with it."

"Shut up!" growled Bob Cherry.

Lord Mauleverer shook hands with his cousin.

"Jolly lucky you came, begad!" he remarked. "Jolly lucky for us! These rotters had possession of the place, and wouldn't let us in, begad, don't you know!"

"I got your letter last night, and came down to see if you were comfortable here," Mr. Mackenzie explained. "This

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fellow met me with the statement that he was Lord Mauleverer. Who are they?"

Lord Mauleverer chuckled.

"Three bounders from Greyfriars," he said. "They knew I wasn't known here personally, begad! so they dropped in and called themselves us, and took in those duffers of yours."

"My lord, I'm sure I beg your lordship's pardon," murmured Mr. Trooper. "If I had known that your lordship was your lordship—"

"Begad! Not so much lordship!" said Mauleverer. "It's all right, Snooper. It wasn't your fault. Don't blame Crooper, Mac. These rotters took him in. It was only a jape, and I'll forgive them. Kick them out and let them slide!"

Mr. Trooper and James and the chauffeur promptly kicked Bolsover & Co. out, with much energy. And the three japers "slid." They picked themselves up in the dusty road, and exchanged rueful glances.

"Well, we did them!" growled Bolsover. "It can't be helped. Let's clear!"

Lord Mauleverer and the Co. looked at them from the gateway, and grinned. Bolsover scowled back at them. Skinner and Bunter looked pathetic. Lord Mauleverer waved his hand.

"Don't be in a hurry, you fellows!" he called out.

Bolsover major stopped.

"I've had you kicked out because you deserved it, begad!" said Lord Mauleverer calmly. "But if you like to come back, you can stay for the week-end. It was a jolly good jape, though it was up against me. Don't make faces, but come in, and we'll have the car out, and get a run."

The three practical jokers brightened up wonderfully. But they cast rather doubtful glances at the Famous Five.

"It's all right," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Take Mauly at his word! We'll be glad if you stay."

"The gladfulness will be terrific, my worthy and rascally Bolsover!"

Bolsover grinned.

"Right-ho!" he said. "Mauly, old man, you're a good sort, a really ripping good sort! If you really mean it—"

"Of course I do, begad!"

"Then we'll stay, and thanks!"

And they stayed, and for that week-end, at least, the Famous Five and Bolsover & Co. were on the best of terms, having mutually agreed to bury the hatchet. And on Monday morning, when they started for Greyfriars—after having had the time of their lives, as Bolsover put it—Billy Bunter settled himself down comfortably in a corner seat, and sighed with contentment, and generously promised Lord Mauleverer that he would spend a good many week-ends with him after that. To which Lord Mauleverer replied enigmatically:

"Will you, begad?"

THE END.

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READ THIS FIRST.

Ferrers Lord, the famous multi-millionaire, is engaged on one of his adventurous expeditions, in company with Ching-Lung (the Prince of China), Rupert Thurston, Gan-Waga (the Eskimo), also Prout, Maddock, Barry O'Rooney, and the rest of the famous band of stalwart seamen. Their quest is a field of blue orchids, which is said to exist somewhere up the great Amazon River, and their craft is a small steam launch, named the Blue Orchid, which has been captured from Lord's enemy in this enterprise, a German millionaire named Hausmann. Hausmann's great yacht, the Medea, has pursued the Blue Orchid into a network of lagoons, and Ferrers Lord's native guide and devoted servant, Vasco, points out that if a narrow channel could be blocked up behind the Medea, the great yacht would be a prisoner. Ferrers Lord decides to make the attempt, and with Ching-Lung and a picked party, leaves the Blue Orchid in a canvas canoe. They are successful in their errand, just as the Medea appears in sight. A landing-party from the yacht is sent in pursuit of the millionaire and his companion, but they escape to their own vessel, which immediately sets sail for the Amazon again. But late that night they see a fast motor launch rapidly overhauling them, and Ferrers Lord tells Ching-Lung to send a warning shot. The answer is given in the shape of a white flag of truce, but Lord refuses to acknowledge it. "Come closer, and we fire!" he signals.

(Now go on with the story.)

The Rockets.—What Do They Mean?

The motor-launch veered off to the left. Ching-Lung guessed what the manoeuvre meant.

"She means to run past us," he said. "Hausmann's got some card up his sleeve."

"Then we must play first. Head her off, Prout! This is not time for handling things with kid gloves. Where's the carpenter? Knock over the man at her helm if you can."

Joe was a gallant marksman. He knelt and fired.

"Miss!" cried Ching-Lung, raising his own rifle. "Perhaps I can make him wriggle. Here, mind the windows," he added, as a crash of glass sounded from below. "They cost money."

Four rifles barked at once. The launch swept round and rushed downstream.

"They found us a bit too warm for 'em, souse me!" grinned Benjamin Maddock. "We potted one on 'em, Joe. If that ain't a body they've just chucked over, I'm blind in both ears!"

It was a human body. The launch had lost one man in the brief skirmish, and the yacht had lost the saloon clock—for a bullet had come through the open porthole and embedded itself in the works. The Blue Orchid throbbed along on her way, but they all felt certain that they had not seen the end of the adventure.

"I suppose," said Rupert innocently, "that we shall be safe at Obidos. Hausmann can't interfere with us there."

Ferrers Lord smiled, and Ching-Lung laughed aloud.

"Poor, guileless youth," chuckled the prince. "He thinks Obidos a mighty city about twice the size of little London, or more so. It's a whacking great big place, Ru, about two streets long, and as hot as red-hot iron. I've never been there, you know, but I can imagine what it's like. Oh, we'll be safe enough there; as safe as a mouse in a trap. Two men with a hatchet could hold up and loot the show. The population consists chiefly of mosquitoes. You'll fall in love with it and want to live there about ten minutes. I know those places, to my sorrow."

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"I'd give something to be there, all the same," said Rupert. "I've had enough of this."

They all heartily agreed with him. Nothing could be more monotonous than crawling up the yellow river in the sweltering heat on a little boat. It was a relief when night came, though it was only a few degrees cooler than the day. Ferrers Lord took the wheel, and Ching-Lung became engineer-in-chief for the time being. Even the faithful Eskimo deserted him, for Gan could not stand the atmosphere of the engine-room a moment.

"My stars! I thought you were dead, Joe. It seems like weary years."

"I was only asleep, sir, and I was mighty sorry to wake up when I remembered I had to come 'ere and stew," said the carpenter, as he relieved the prince. "Everything all right, sir?"

"Right as rain. I've oiled her up and made a fine mess of myself doing it. Don't go to sleep again, sonny."

After washing off the grease, Ching-Lung went up the ladder to get rid of the smell of oil. The millionaire's tall figure stood out dimly against the sky.

"Is that you, Ching?"

"Yes, old chap—or all that's left of me," answered the prince. "I've pretty well melted away. Watchman, what of the night? Is there anything to report to your superior officer?"

"Nothing at all—that is, nothing definite. I am no believer in inspirations, but I have a very strong idea that the petrol-boat has slipped past us. I have heard and seen nothing at all suspicious, and yet I have a conviction that she is ahead of us."

"Funny you didn't smell her," said Ching-Lung lightly. "Those things hum somewhat. What does it matter if she has got ahead? What can Hausmann be after? Is it possible that he means to trust to pure speed, and make a dash for the Blue Orchid? Does this new game of his strike you in that way, old man?"

"Do you see that?"

"A rocket, by Jove!" cried Ching-Lung. "I'll swear to it!"

The distant light burned in the dark sky for a few seconds, and then died out. They watched intently, but saw nothing more.

"Curious," said Ching-Lung. "The Indians are as fond of crackers and squibs as schoolboys, but this is rather a runny time of day to be firing off rockets. What saith the clock? It says ten minutes past four only. M'yes! it's queer."

"Another!" said the millionaire.

This time the light was a brilliant green.

Ferrers Lord slowly shook his head.

"I don't like it, Ching. The first rocket was sent up from the river, the second from the shore—a signal and an answer to the signal. A wise man would go back; as, I think, you have remarked before during this voyage."

"And you?"

"I shall go on, Ching," said Ferrers Lord. "Get the men up. Those rockets mean something unpleasant."

### The Night Attack—Beaten Back—Gan Waga's Bravery.

It was the dark hour that precedes the dawn. Gan-Waga was dragged from the bath, and a few hard slaps from Thomas Prout knocked all the sleep out of the angry Eskimo's eyes.

"What fo' yo' do that? I knocks the faces off'n yo', you bad 'nough miseries," wailed Gan. "Why yo' wakes me up in the middles of the night, hunk? Ow? What you means?"

"You've got to go on watch, by honey," growled the steersman, keeping a tight hold on his squirming captive's ear. "Them's the horders, Mister Soap-and-taller-factory—so shift!"

Gan shifted, but not before he had found the soap. Prout's foot help him out of the bath-room, but he turned and fired. A squeal of woe burst from the steersman's lips, and unbidden tears started in his tender blue eyes as the soap smote the bridge of his nose. It was scented soap, but Prout could not smell it. Holding the injured organ and shedding salt tears, he limped wearily deckwards.

"Use your eyes well, Gan-Waga," said the millionaire. "And your ears."

"Ears bad 'nough, no goods," grumbled the Eskimo. "Fatheads Prouts nearly pulls one offs. I eats him some day."

Gan removed his pyjamas, wrung them out, and put them on again. Then he stared into the darkness like a human owl. Half an hour crept by. Gan raised himself and leaned forward.

"Chingy!"

"Hallo!" whispered Ching-Lung. "Do you see anything?"

"Not sees nothings, Chingy," muttered the Eskimo, expanding his nostrils. "I smellses hims, Chingy."

"What do you smell?"

"It likes the little stoves in the galleys. I smellses him morer now. What wrong wid yo' noses?"

Ching-Lung waited for no more. The galley contained an oil-stove, though it was seldom used.

"Lord," he said quickly, "your inspiration has come off trumps. Gan can scent petrol."

The millionaire pushed over the indicator, and Joe promptly stopped the engines. The Blue Orchid began to drift slowly in the current. They took in long breaths, but they had not the sensitive nose of the Eskimo. The little breeze there was blew from the land, and was heavy with the odour of forest flowers.

"Perhaps it is only Gan's fancy," suggested Rupert.

"Not much, Ru. I'll back Gan's nose against anything," said Ching-Lung. "He smelled petrol, there can be no doubt of it. I can't smell anything except that beastly vanilla. Hallo!"

"Chingy!"

"Yes," said Ching-Lung, hurrying forward. "What is it now?"

"Earses, Chingy, and noses, too. Hears paddleses, Chingy."

"Paddles?"

"Yes, Chingy. They alls carefulnesses, Chingy. Not goes splish-splash, splash-splish; they goes dip-dap, dap-dip. They not wants make a row, hunk?"

Ching-Lung strained his ears, and they were exceptionally good ones.

"I give it up," he said. "Can you smell that little stove still?"

"All the times, Chingy. Looks, looks!" He grasped the prince's arm. "Sees a canoes, Chingy!"

"And, by thunder, so do I!" said Ching-Lung. "Rockets, there—rockets, Maddock!"

The bo'sun was ready. Five rockets went hissing forwards and upwards, and burst into showers of brilliant white stars that lighted up the river for hundreds of yards around. Then came a fierce, wolfish yell. Eight large canoes, crowded with Indians and half-breeds, dashed towards the yacht as fast as human arms could work the paddles. Red tongues of flame

sprang from levelled rifles. On the very edge of the light Hausmann's motor-launch appeared like a grey shadow. The mystery of the launch was a mystery no longer. Hausmann was making good use of his gold.

"Full speed ahead! Lie down!" thundered the millionaire. "Fire through the rails!"

The little Blue Orchid's engines were a credit to the yacht. There was a shock and a crash, and another chorus of howls. The yacht cut the leading canoe almost in halves. The last star of the rockets died out, making the darkness seem doubly intense. Gan-Waga shrieked "Chingy!" as he found himself suddenly grasped round the waist by some unknown assailant. They rolled to the deck together. The millionaire's revolver was spitting flame. Prout drove his fist at a shadowy figure, and a shrieking man dropped back into the water. Guns flashed red, and all was confusion.

Struggling desperately, Gan-Waga forced himself uppermost. Ching-Lung had trained him, and the Eskimo was a tough handful for any man to deal with. He grasped his panting antagonist by the throat, and beat his head against the deck. Then he stood up, and trod upon something—a revolver.

Gan had long since got over his dread of firearms. He seized the weapon. The clamour had subsided. Except for the throb of the screw and the swish of the water, there was no unusual sound. Gan looked round.

"Canoes on de lefts!" he shouted. "Shoots, shoots!" He pulled his trigger, but the cartridge missed fire. Gan tried again. A wild scream blended with the report.

"They've killed the chief!" shouted a voice in German. "Look out, souse me! The dogs is boardin' us! Tonny! Barry! Mr. Thurston! 'Elp!" roared the bo'sun.

There was a rush to starboard. Revolvers first, and then clubbed rifles settled the matter. Men tumbled back into the water, and Ching-Lung brained one of the natives with the very grapnel that held their canoe to the yacht's rail. Gan-Waga's eyes blazed red, and his ringing warwhoop was enough to strike terror to the heart of a whole army.

"They've had enough," said Ching-Lung, at last. "There's not much fight in these chaps. See anything now, Gamy?"

"They paddles fo' the shores, Chingy. All gones now. Got a matches, Chingy? I catches one bad 'nough rascal and break the boards wid hims silly heads. Come and strikes a matches, Chingy."

Ching-Lung took out his matchbox and screened the flickering flame with his hand. He bent over Gan's victim, and the light fell upon a dark face. The eyes were closed, but the mouth was open as if in death.

"By Jingo," said Ching-Lung, "it's that traitorous hound Pedro! You've not quite killed him, Wagtail. Get a rope and truss him up. This is, indeed, a joyful meeting. Bravo, Gan! You've done yourself finely!"

Ferrers Lord called the bo'sun to the wheel. His left arm, broken above the wrist by a half-spent, random bullet, hung limply at his side, and blood trickled from his hand.

"What have you there, lads?" he asked. "That precious guide of ours, old chap—Pedro. The gallant Gan has laid him by the heels."

"That is rather inconvenient for Pedro," said the millionaire drily. "I fancied I had already settled his account. Take the electric torch out of my pocket, Ching—the left one."

"Are you hit?" Ching-Lung's voice was full of anxiety. "What's the matter?"

"Nothing to speak of. Get the light and let us look at the fellow."

Pedro was not a pretty object. Gan-Waga had not treated him gently, and his face was much battered and swollen. The sham diamond rings still covered the half-breed's fingers. He had evidently found good quarters, for he had exchanged his rags for an excellent London-made suit, and there were massive gold earrings in his ears.

"You had better get Rupert to attend to him quickly," said Ferrers Lord. "or he will slip through our fingers and dodge the rope. I shall need your services for a short time, Ching, to set my arm. It is awkward, but it is the fortune of war. Why, the fellow is bleeding. Has he been shot?"

"Come away and leave him to Rupert," said Ching-Lung. "You're of more importance. Come below, old chap."

Though the rascally half-breed had betrayed them and gone over to the enemy, Prout and Maddock carried him down as carefully as possible. In the saloon, Ching-Lung cut away the millionaire's sleeve. The bone was broken, but, to Ching-Lung's intense relief, the bullet had not lodged in the flesh. He set the bone skilfully.

"Look here, old man," he said, "will you listen to reason? You're winged now, and you'll be winged for weeks. Let's change the programme. Let Hausman find the orchids.

He can't get them away, and he can't get the Medea away, so he'll send to Para, and gable for another vessel. We can fill the whole river with spies, and when he returns triumphant, we can quietly pop up with the Lord of the Deep and loot his orchids."

The millionaire smiled.

"It is a pretty scheme, but it is impossible, Ching."

"Why is it im—"

Ching-Lung said no more. Gan-Waga dropped the basin he had been holding, deluging the saloon with blood-stained water. The Blue Orchid shuddered, and muddy jets of water spurted through the cracks in the floor. She was aground, and leaning like a sieve. Ten minutes later, just as the dawn was breaking, Gan-Waga scrambled aboard, dripping.

"No blades on the propellers, Ching," he said. "Alls bad 'nough goned. We busted, Chingy."

"Motor-boat astarn," thundered the voice of Prout, "and she's towing canoes, by honey!"

### The Yacht Founders—All Ashore—Vasco Makes a Lucky Find—No Pursuers.

The little Blue Orchid was doomed. She was settling down fast in the mud. It was not far to the shore, however, but they only possessed their canvas boat. Ferrers Lord gave his orders quickly and calmly.

"Keep those fellows back, Ching!" he said. "Load the canoe with provisions and ammunition. We must take to the woods. We shall have to make two journeys. Waste no time."

His voice was quite audible above the hiss of escaping steam. If the natives could summon up enough courage to attack them again, the position would be almost desperate. Ching-Lung rushed aft with half a dozen rifles in his arms. His first shot caused some consternation, for the leading canoe dropped back.

They loaded up their canvas craft, and Prout and Maddock seized the paddles.

"Go!" cried Ferrers Lord. "No, wait! Throw that hound Pedro in, and let him take his chance in the forest."

Would she blow up? Barry O'Rooney and Filson were clearing out the furnace, and flinging the live coal overboard as fast as they could work. The water was ankle-deep already. Thurston came to their assistance, and performed wonders. The millionaire had joined Ching-Lung, and was firing at the shadowy canoes.

"They are not displaying much bravery, Ching," he said lazily. "That is the South American Indian all over. One reverse takes all the pluck out of them. They are wonderful fellows to fight a winning battle, but they are poor losers."

"That's rather cold comfort, old man," said Ching-Lung. "but it's better than nothing. I fancied I saw that beastly motor-boat, but it must have been fancy. Perhaps they've used up all their petrol. Oh, would you?"

Both rifles cracked, and a canoe that was attempting to creep shorewards beat a hasty retreat.

"Slip down below and get your valuables, Ching. Money is as useful in the Amazonian wilds as in most other places. You will be flooded out if you delay."

Joe, the carpenter, had stripped the doors from the cabins. He whistled away merrily as he built a raft to tow behind the canoe. The yacht quivered again, and the water boiled round her. Ching-Lung, Filson, and Barry O'Rooney sprang up the ladder.

"Anchors out and pull the cable up taut!" shouted Ferrers Lord. "If she slips off the mudbank she'll founder."

The two anchors held her in spite of the strong current, and Joe went on hammering away as if being shipwrecked was quite an ordinary event, and all in the day's march.

"Hurroo! She's comings back, Chingy!" crowed Gan-Waga. "See, old Prout's all butterfuls 'nough!"

Then came a loud crack. One of the cables had parted. The Blue Orchid swung round, and the water swept over her stern. The second anchor was beginning to drag.

"Look after your guns and cartridges, lads, and never mind the provisions. Stand by with a rope! Into the canoe with you! She'll carry you all if you're careful. Stand by! A fender there!"

Prout had seen the danger, and he quickened his stroke. The crowded canoe drew clear of the doomed yacht. With a noise as loud as the report of a revolver, the second cable snapped, and the little Blue Orchid slid gently backwards, pitched on her side, and went down in a yellow whirlpool.

Crack! crack! rang the millionaire's rifle.

An unsteady volley spluttered out from the nearest canoe, but the range was too great for the cheap rifles and bad ammunition of the natives. At last they reached the muddy

shore, where Benjamin Maddock welcomed them with a hoarse cheer. Ferrers Lord slashed the canvas of the canoe with his knife, and pushed it into the stream.

"Divide the goods, lads," he said, "for there'll be no peace for us while we're near the river. We are relying upon you now, Vasco, to guide us to Obidos."

"I will do my utmost, Excellency."

Barry O'Rooney gazed at the dark mass of trees and rubbed his nose.

"Tommy," he murmured, "bedad Oi thought Oi was a fool whin Oi took to the say for a livin', but av this is a fair sample of the land, Oi'd sooner have the wet salt say twice over! Sure, my Aunt Bridget's tomcat couldn't say wan inch through ut!"

"What are you grousing about, Irish?" growled the steersman. "Did you expect 'em to whitewash the show, or light it wi' electricity, by honey, for your benefit? You'll want a carpet laid next! Get that bundle on your back, and save your breath, for, by honey, you'll need it all!"

Vasco gave the word, and they plunged after him into the gloom. Within ten minutes it became plain that the task was impossible, and that they must wait for the dawn.

"Matters are pretty serious, Ching," said Rupert, in a low voice. "Worse than they've ever been—eh?"

"They're mighty bad, sonny," answered the prince. "Those copper-coloured beauties will be after us, and they'll fight a lot better here than afloat. To be potted from behind a tree isn't a nice idea, and their old guns will be quite as useful as ours at short range. Hang those blue orchids! They've got us into a nice hole!"

They stood huddled together. The howl of a jaguar swept through the darkness.

"Phwat's that at all, is ut?" asked Barry O'Rooney.

"Whisht! D'yez hear ut, Joe?"

"Jaguar," said Joe briefly.

"Faith, Oi thought ut was an ould cat wid a sore throat! Bliss the ducks!" said Barry. "Murther! Why did Oi ever lave swate Ballyunion to sail the cowlid wet say? Oi don't loike jaguars, except when they're stuffed and kept in a glass case, wid 'Please don't touch the figures!' written up! Oeh, that's me only nose, yez spalpeen!"

Prout had turned round, and the muzzle of his rifle had rapped Barry smartly across the face.

"Why don't you rub phosphorus on your dial, and then we could see it?" growled Prout unfeelingly. "I couldn't 'elp it, by honey, so don't bark at me."

The millionaire and Vasco were whispering together. "We must take a move at all risks, Vasco," said Ferrers Lord, "or they may creep ashore and surround us. Is it possible, do you think, to keep along the bank? A single mile might save us."

"We can but try, Excellency."

They turned back towards the river, and went slipping and squelching through the mud, leaving a strong trail behind them.

"Smells smokes, Chingy!" muttered Gan-Waga.

"You've got a marvellous nose, blubber-biter. What sort of smoke?"

"Burning woods, Chingy, and baccy all mixed."

Vasco uttered a soft grunt, and all halted. The Indian crept forward. A little cloud of smoke rose out of the moist grass. The stump of a black native cigar was smouldering there. Vasco stooped, and his eyes gleamed like an animal's in the darkness. Then, grasping his rifle by the muzzle, he swung it downwards, and a half-clothed human figure lay senseless at his feet.

"Excellency," said the guide, "there is the way to Obidos."

Ferrers Lord patted him on the shoulder. A long canoe was tied to the root of a tree, and the native who had been left in charge of it, would cause no trouble for at least half an hour. Noiselessly they seized the paddles and pushed off. Ferrers Lord looked keenly up and down the river.

"They all seem to have landed," he said, "but the net they have spread will take no game to-night!"

The long, light canoe climbed the stream, and there was no pursuit.

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FOR NEXT MONDAY:

**"ROUGH ON COKER!"**  
By FRANK RICHARDS.

In our next long, complete tale of the chums of Greyfriars School, Horace Coker of the Fifth has a "high old time" indeed! As usual, he gets a peculiar idea into his head which he sticks to obstinately—until circumstances compel him to give it up. Coker has a new experience in being arrested by P. c. Tozer, the local "bobby," who requires a great deal of persuasion before he will admit that he has made a mistake.

The Greyfriars fellows are mightily amused at the way Mr. Tozer is taken in, but before the end of the story they are taken in themselves by Convict 44.

The interest and amusement of this story are unflagging, and no reader should on any account miss

**"ROUGH ON COKER!"**

**CAST UP BY THE SEA.**

An interesting little item is sent me by S. W. F., of Holywood, Ireland. It is a leaf torn from a pocket-book, with a few words scrawled on it in pencil. It was found, S. W. F. informs me, on the County Down shore of Belfast Lough last March. I presume it was encased in a water-tight bottle, by the look of it.

The sheet of paper bears these words:  
"Cast into Irish Sea, March 17, 1913; to the Editor of 'The Magnet' Library, Fleet Street, London, by Irish readers, A. McClure, and J. Nixon. Will finder please forward to the Editor of 'Magnet'? Good luck to the Invincible Trio!"

This interesting little document has therefore been found and forwarded to me just over a year after it was despatched "by sea post" by my two ingenious Irish chums. No doubt they have been watching this Chat Page carefully to see if it reached me, so I will thank them here for their good wishes conveyed to me in such a novel manner. I must also thank S. W. F. very much for kindly forwarding the message to me.

**REPLIES IN BRIEF.**

L. E. C. (Southampton).—Many thanks for your letter.  
A Reader (Walton).—I am afraid I cannot do as you suggest.

"Southern Cross" (Australia).—Very many thanks indeed for your letter. I shall be glad to hear from you again, and if you will enclose your name and address, I will write to you by post. Best wishes!

"Monty Cole" (Toronto).—Readers all over the world are forming Leagues of their own. Perhaps you could get up one of your own?

Mrs. Carlton (Dublin).—I must thank you again for your letters and helpful suggestions.

H. Camenski (Glasgow).—I am afraid what you suggest is impossible; at present, at least.

"Redrof."—Thanks for letter and suggestion. Am afraid I cannot undertake to do what you suggest. Perhaps later on.

"Royal" (Glasgow).—I am afraid it is impossible for me to do as you suggest.

**KITE FLYING.**  
**A National Sport.**

At the present time the flying of kites is the chief national sport in Japan. The Japanese have their kite clubs as we have our yacht clubs, annual competitions, which are protracted for several days, being held, at which prizes are given for beauty of design and decoration, and for perfection in build and accuracy in flight.

In June whole families repair to the mountain sides, picnic fashion, with their rugs and matings to be spread upon the ground, and the hundreds of kites suspended some 700 or 800 feet above the earth provide a perfect orgy of colour for the spectator. For the Japanese kite-flier will spend hours over the decoration of his craft, using the brightest of colours, combined with gold and silver, with the artistic restraint and knowledge peculiar to these remarkable people.

On these occasions, too, fierce kite combats are indulged in. Expert fliers manipulate the cord by "catching" the kite when deflected from an upright attitude in the air, and quickly withdrawing the cord, or suddenly surging several feet of it into the air, so that the kite is caused to dart in any desired direction to attack upon competing kites.

The object of the combatants, is either to saw asunder each other's strings by means of the specially prepared surface of the upper portions of their lines, which are treated with gum and powdered glass, or to hack the fabric to pieces by the aid of knife edges and sickle-shaped pieces of glass set in the tails. Special kites are used for this purpose, and the appearance of a fighting kite in the air is quite sufficient provocation for any rival flier to attack if he have sufficient confidence in his skill to risk an encounter.

**Man-Carrying Kites.**

Man-carrying kites are now used for observation in the British Army, but they were used by the Japanese during the existence of their feudal system prior to the 17th century of the Christian era. The man-carrying kite was furnished with a species of "Bo'sun's chair," depending from the end of the tail. In this the observer was seated, and could then spy the location, and arrangement of, the men and warlike apparatus in an enemy's camp.

On at least one occasion the kite has been pressed into the service of the criminal, as is evidenced by the following account of a romantic attempt to annex treasures beyond the reach of the ordinary burglar and his methods.

The city of Nagoya, in central Japan, 250 miles from Yokohama, possesses a fine specimen of the architecture of the sixteenth century in a great castle, formerly the residence of the Daimos, but now a Government building.

The finials of the minarets were two solid golden chimerical fishes (shachi) aggregating £15,000 to £16,000 in value. They faced each other from the two opposing pinnacles, and as they glittered in the sunlight, promoted and fostered the cupidity of the villains of the period.

A certain band of outlaws conceived a scheme in which a gigantic kite should be sent aloft; suspended from the tail the most daring of their number would remove and loot one of the massive fishes of gold.

The attempt was made; the kite was flown by night, and the man was successfully carried up and safely landed, but, by a stroke of that malign ill-chance familiar to fishermen the world over, an unexpected obstacle prevented the coup from being successful. The would-be robbers escaped, but the golden fish still remained aloft on its pinnacle. The particulars of this exploit becoming noised abroad, iron cages were built round the tempting masses of gold; nevertheless they were eventually stolen.

(Next Week: Another Article on Kite Flying.)

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