

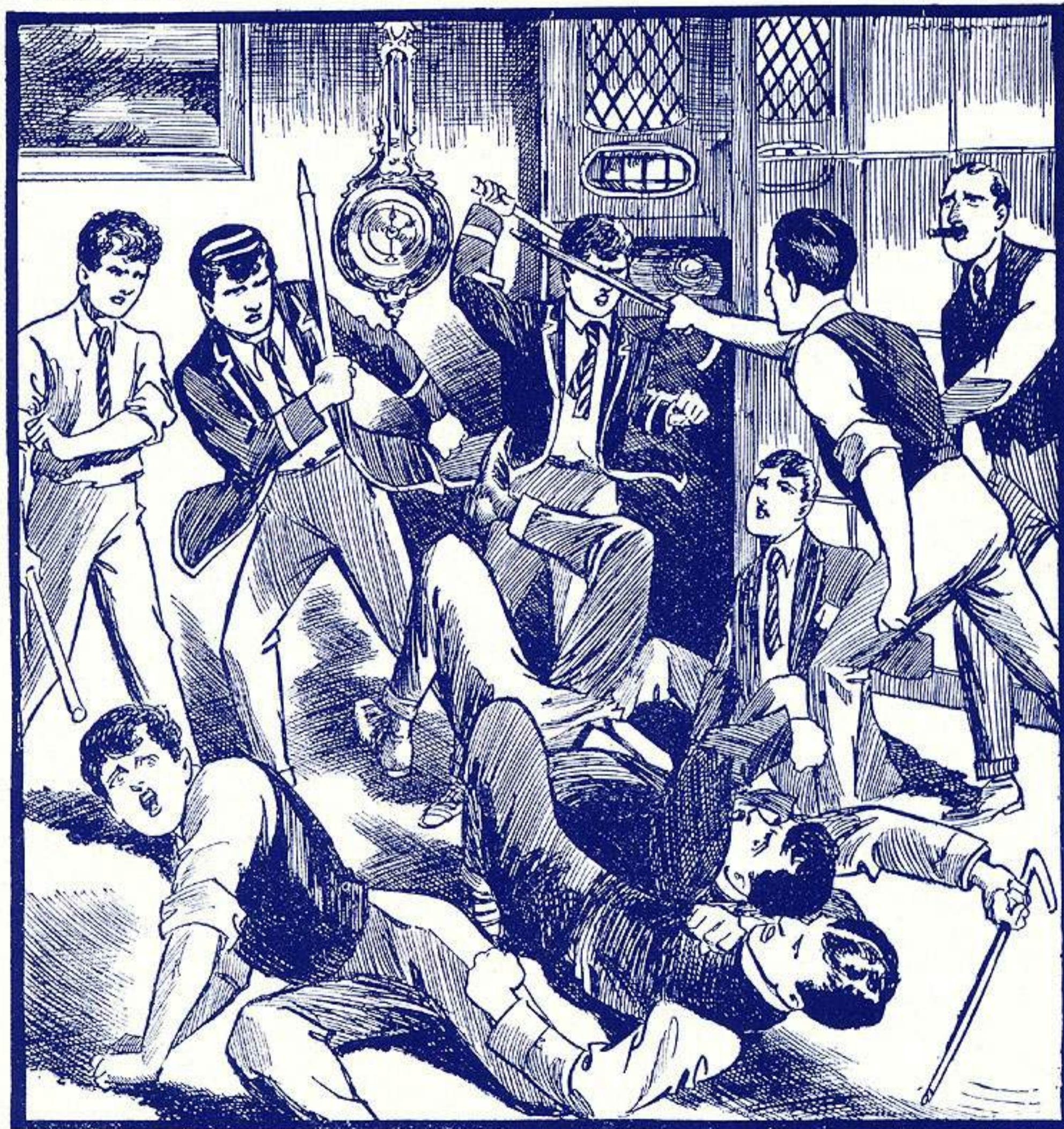
MAULY AND THE CARAVANNERS!

Another Long Complete Story of the Greyfriars Tourists.



No. 706. Vol. XX.

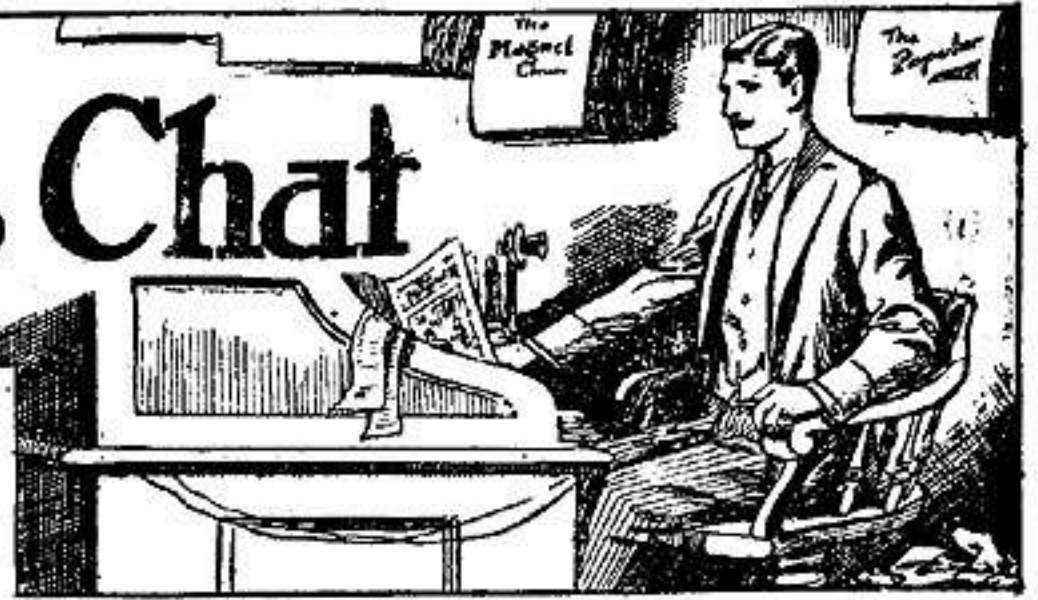
August 20th, 1921.



THE CARAVANNERS' SURPRISE ATTACK!

Harry Wharton & Co.'s Gallant Effort to Rescue Mauly! (An exciting incident from the long, complete tale in this issue.)

The Editor's Chat



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The Editor, "The Magnet Library,"
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I am always pleased to hear from my chums.

FOR NEXT MONDAY.

"THE CARAVAN DETECTIVE!"

By Frank Richards.

The above is the title of our next splendid long complete story of the chums of Greyfriars on their caravan tour. In this we learn of a peculiar character who pops up amongst the juniors. They take him into their party for the time being, giving him a ride on the caravan, as he is lame. But when Jack Drake, who left Greyfriars to go with Ferrers Locke, the famous detective, as his assistant, also happens to come across the party, the excitement becomes intense.

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"THE CARAVAN DETECTIVE!"

which will appear in the MAGNET LIBRARY next Monday morning.

ANOTHER SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT.

Next week Harry Wharton is allowing Dick Penfold, the gifted poet of the *Remove*, to run the "Greyfriars Herald" for one week only. Readers who know Dick pretty well will realise that the Supplement won't be any the

worse for Dick's handling, for he is perhaps one of the cleverest juniors at Greyfriars.

By the way, I hope you are telling all your chums that Harry Wharton's famous school magazine is appearing in supplement form in the MAGNET LIBRARY? If you haven't thought of doing so, will you make a start to-day? Thanks!

TO JOG YOUR MEMORY.

Don't forget that the "GREYFRIARS HOLIDAY ANNUAL" will appear on sale on the first day of September, and that it is advisable to order your copy now. Only a limited number have been printed, and it will not be possible to reprint this really wonderful annual.

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A Magnificent New Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co., dealing with their Adventures on a Holiday Tour with a Caravan.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Nice for Bunter!

"SISTER ANNE!" sang out Bob Cherry. "Do you see a fat duffer coming?"

Harry Wharton shaded his eyes with his straw hat, and looked down the white road that wound over the downs.

The Greyfriars caravan was camped in full view of the blue summer sea. The grass grew green almost down to the shelving sands. Away in the distance was a seaside town; nearer at hand bungalows scattered here and there, red-roofed, gaily-painted. Five juniors had returned hungry from a swim in the bay—refreshed, cheery, but hungry as hunters. And Billy Bunter, who should have had supper ready, was not even to be seen.

Wharton looked along the white road in vain. There was no sign of William George Bunter.

"The ass!" growled Wharton.

"The lazy boulder!" snorted Johnny Bull. "He's had lots of time to get to Stacliffe and back!"

Frank Nugent looked out of the caravan.

"Not a morsel here!" he said. "Bunter must have cleaned up the last crumb before he went shopping."

"Trust him!" growled Bob Cherry.

"My hat, I'm hungry!"

"The hungerfulness," remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh, "is terrific! The esteemed grub would be a boonful blessing!"

"Where has that fat duffer got to?" exclaimed Wharton. "He can't have missed the road—there's only one road. He's had ample time to shop and get back twice over! Bother him!"

"Perhaps he's staying to devour what he's shopped!" suggested Bob Cherry.

"Bother him!"

"Bless him!"

"Blow him!"

The Greyfriars caravanners were impatient.

They had had a long march before

reaching that camping-place on the Sussex Downs, and it had seemed an excellent idea to the Famous Five to have a dip while Bunter did the shopping—he was certain to take a considerable number of "snacks" while he was so employed. And nothing would have induced him to go for a swim.

The Famous Five had stayed quite a long time in the water, to give Bunter a chance. And now they were famished, and the Owl of the Remove had not even returned to camp.

"The fat duffer must have lost his way, somehow," said Harry Wharton at last. "One of us had better take the bike and go and look for him."

"We'll find him in a bunshop, feeding, if we do!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"I shouldn't wonder."

Harry Wharton wheeled out the bike from the side of the van, and mounted it in the road. Four voices shouted to him as he started.

"Bring the grub back, and never mind Bunter!"

"Yes, rather!"

Wharton pedalled down the white, dusty road. It ran straight for half a mile in the direction of the little town of Stacliffe, and then there was a turn.

As Wharton came round the turn, whizzing along on the bike, he caught sight of a fat figure in the road.

"Bunter!"

It was Billy Bunter at last.

But the Owl of the Remove was not laden with packets and parcels, as he ought to have been after such a prolonged shopping expedition.

He did not seem to have a single package about him, and he seemed to be walking with his hands in his pockets. And his fat face had a very peculiar aspect in the distance.

Wharton whizzed on, and jumped off the bike a few yards from the Owl of the Remove.

"I say, Wharton!" gasped Bunter.

"Why—what—"

"Let me loose!"

Wharton stared at him. Bunter's hands were not in his pockets, after all; they were tied down to his sides. And the peculiar aspect of his face was due to the fact that something had been smeared over it—thick. There was jam and marmalade and butter and pickles.

"What the merry thunder—" exclaimed Wharton, in amazement.

"Oh dear!" gasped Bunter.

"What's happened to you?" roared Wharton.

"Lemme loose, can't you?" gasped Bunter, blinking at him through his big spectacles. "Can't you see I'm tied, you silly owl?"

"But what—"

"Look at my face!" hooted Bunter. "I want a wash! It's drying on my chivvy in this sun—Grooogh! I've got some jam down my neck—Ow!"

Wharton opened his pocket-knife, and cut the cords. Billy Bunter stretched his podgy arms in relief.

"That's better!" he gasped.

"But what—who did this?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Those beasts!"

"What beasts, fathead?"

"They're staying down here on holiday, I think!" gasped Bunter. "Those Highcliffe rotters, you know. I saw them in Stacliffe, when I was doing the shopping, and they chivvied me—"

"Ponsonby and his crowd?" asked Harry, his brow darkening.

"Yes. And when I started home after the shopping, they followed me!" groaned Bunter. "They—they collared me—Pon and Gadsby and Monson and the rest. They're all here together, the beasts! I—I fought like a—lion—"

"Oh, cut that out!" said Wharton crossly.

"I did!" hooted Bunter. "I felled Ponsonby with a terrific blow! I knocked Gadsby flying! I—I nearly smashed up Vavasour with one of my terrific uppercuts! As for Monson—"

"Where's the grub?"

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Wharton stared at Bunter and at the jam and pickles on his fat face. "What's happened to you?" he demanded. "Highcliffe rotters!" gasped Bunter. "Lemme loose!" (See Chapter 1.)

"They plastered most of it over me

"After you had felled them and sent them spinning, and smashed them up?" asked Wharton sarcastically.

"There were six of the rotters!" gasped Bunter. "I couldn't have licked more than four of them—not at once, you know—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at!" hooted Bunter. "I've got pickles down my neck, and jam up my sleeves, and marmalade all over my face. They told me to tell you they'd serve you the same if they came across you!"

"I wish they'd come across me!" said Harry. "Have you got any of the money left?"

"How could I have any of the money left when I'd spent it all shopping?" demanded Bunter indignantly. "Jolly lucky I thought of having a snack in the teashop, wasn't it? I did, you know. That's where I first saw the beasts, blow 'em! There's nothing for supper. I might have had to go to bed hungry, only I've had that snack. Presence of mind, you know!"

"Ass! Roll on to the camp!" said Harry. "I'll run down into the town on the bike, and get something."

"Those Highcliffe cads are still there, and—"

"That doesn't matter."

Wharton remounted the bike and rode on. Bunter blinked after him, and then resumed his weary way towards the caravan camp.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Brush with the Enemy!

"GREYFRIARS cad!" Harry Wharton looked round quickly.

It was a voice he knew—the voice of Cecil Ponsonby, of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe School.

There was Ponsonby, in all his glory—and the Co. were with him. Ponsonby

looked elegant, as usual, from the top of his expensive Panama hat to the soles of his exceedingly well-fitting shoes.

He was sauntering along with Gadsby, followed by his comrades in twos—Drury and Vavasour, Monson and Merton. The six—the choicest nuts of Highcliffe—were evidently all on holiday together. And, as Ponsonby spoke, the whole half-dozen stared at the Greyfriars junior on the bicycle, with mocking looks.

Wharton compressed his lips.

He certainly had not wanted to fall in with Ponsonby & Co. during the vacation—he saw quite enough of them during the term—Greyfriars being quite near to Highcliffe. If the Greyfriars caravanners had known that Ponsonby & Co. were at Stacliffe, probably they would have turned the green van in some other direction. But at the present moment Harry Wharton was strongly inclined to jump off the bike and present Cecil Ponsonby with something that would knock the insolent grin off his handsome face.

But it was not much use for one fellow to begin handling six—and fair play was not to be expected of the Highcliffe crowd. So Wharton pedalled on, heedless of a mocking laugh that followed him from the Highcliffe nuts.

He lost sight of them in the crowded street, and soon stopped before a grocery, where he went in for shopping. The shopping Bunter had done had to be done over again, owing to the ragging Bunter had received at the hands of Ponsonby & Co.

Harry Wharton was not long about it. He did not think, hungry as he was, of stopping for a "snack" while his chums were waiting for supper—perhaps lacking Bunter's presence of mind! His purchases were fastened up in a large parcel, which he tied securely on the carrier of the bike. Then he mounted again and rode out of the town.

As he came out on the open road over the downs he was not surprised to see six Panamas and straw hats in the distance ahead.

From the direction taken by Bunter,

Ponsonby had doubtless guessed the direction Wharton would take on his return. And the half-dozen Highcliffians were there, ripe for mischief!

One or two of them would not have cared to stop Harry Wharton on his way, but there was confidence in numbers. Six of them felt quite equal to handling the fighting man of the Greyfriars Remove.

Wharton pedalled on steadily.

He was out of sight of the caravan camp until he turned the corner, and so there was no help to be expected from his chums. It was doubtful if Bunter, plodding along on foot, had reached the camp yet, so his comrades would be still in ignorance of the fact that Ponsonby & Co. were there at all.

But Wharton did not think of stopping.

As he came cycling on swiftly Ponsonby & Co. spread themselves out across the road in a line, to halt him.

The Highcliffe nuts were grinning, and Wharton did not need to be told their intentions. They intended to serve him as they had served Billy Bunter, and were evidently rejoicing in the opportunity.

Ponsonby waved a hand to him.

"Stop!" he called out.

The captain of the Greyfriars Remove slowed down.

He did not intend to stop. He did not fear Ponsonby & Co., but he knew that he could not hold his own against six. The slowing-down was a feint.

"Halt, dear boy!" chuckled Gadsby. "We want a little talk with you."

"Oh, rather!" chortled Monson.

"Absolutely!" grinned Vavasour.

Wharton was a dozen feet from the group of Highcliffians, and Pon. & Co. had no doubt whatever that he was about to stop.

Instead of which, the Greyfriars junior suddenly bent over his handlebars, and drove at the pedals with all his strength. The pedals fairly flew.

The bicycle shot forward like an arrow from a bow.

Right at the group of startled Highcliffians it rushed, and it was upon them before Ponsonby & Co. knew what was happening.

Had they stood their ground, Wharton would certainly have been overthrown, and the whole crowd would have gone over together, with extremely painful results for everybody concerned.

But to stand up to the rush of a whizzing bicycle required more nerve than Ponsonby & Co. possessed.

As the machine rushed down on them they had barely time to scramble aside—but they just managed it.

Gadsby fell, and Vavasour fell over him; and Wharton, freeing one hand, struck at Ponsonby's face as he passed, and sent him spinning. There was a loud yell from Pon as he sprawled in the road.

The next second the cyclist was passed.

"Oh, gad!"

"Ow!"

Ponsonby staggered up, dazed, and stuttering with rage.

"Stop him! After him! Oh, gad!"

"Grooh!"

Wharton, going at a tearing speed, glanced back for a second. The Highcliffe nuts were shaking furious fists after him. Ponsonby ran a few paces in pursuit, and then, realising its uselessness, he stooped and groped savagely for a stone.

Whiz!

Wharton drove harder at his pedals. The stone whizzed by a foot from his head and crashed by the roadside. If it

had struck him he would have been hurled, half-stunned, from his machine, in full career. But Ponsonby was too enraged to think or care for that.

A few moments more, and Harry Wharton was round the bend of the road, and the green caravan was in sight in the distance. He was safe from his enemies now. He slackened speed, and rode on cheerily, overtaking a fat and plodding figure a hundred yards from the camp. Billy Bunter jumped and spun round as he heard the bike behind.

"Yah! Keep off, you beasts—"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Oh, it's you, Wharton!" gasped Bunter, greatly relieved. "I say, got the grub?"

"Yes, tubby!"
 "Oh, good!"

And they went into camp together. Cecil Ponsonby & Co. did not appear round the bend of the road. Apparently they had had enough. In fact, the little party of nuts were sadder, if not wiser, as they loafed away—Pon caressing his nose, which felt several sizes too large for him!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Lord Mauleverer Joins In!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"
 "What's the trouble?"
 The caravanners surrounded the returning juniors. There was a general chuckle at the sight of Bunter's face.

Billy Bunter blinked at them wrathfully.

"There's nothing to cackle at, you chumps! I'm smothered with jam and marmalade and pickles—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I say, you fellows—"
 "But what's happened?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Ponsonby & Co. are on holiday at Stacliffe, it seems," said Harry. "They bagged the grub from Bunter, but I've got a fresh lot. We're going to have trouble with that Highcliffe crowd if we stay here."

"Then we'll stay!" said Bob Cherry.
 "The stayfulness will be terrific," said Hurree Singh, with a nod of his dusky head.

"I say, you fellows, I've had an awful time. I fought like a lion, you know, but—"

"You'd better go and get a wash," said Harry. "Now for supper, you fellows. I'm famished!"

"Same here!"

Billy Bunter blinked hungrily at the juniors as they started preparations for supper, but even Bunter felt that a wash was necessary. However, he decided that the wash need not be too extensive, and he was finished by the time supper was ready. The day had been hot, and the setting sun was still warm; but a keen breeze blew from the sea, and the juniors were glad of the camp-fire. As the shadows of the evening deepened they sat round the camp-fire and discussed the poached eggs and cocoa and corned beef and cheese and cake—and the Highcliffians. Bunter did not discuss the Highcliffians; his jaws were too busy at present for talking.

"The rotters!" said Bob Cherry. "It's rather rotten that gang being down here, as we meant to camp here for a few days. They spoil the giddy landscape. Still, a row with Pon & Co. will seem like old times at Greyfriars."

"We'll walk round Stacliffe to-morrow

and look for them!" suggested Johnny Bull.

"They're only six, and we're five, so we can mop them up easily enough!" said Johnny.

"We're six, ain't we?" hooted Bunter. Having by this time disposed of the lion's share of the supper, Bunter was able to talk.

"Five when it comes to a scrap!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"And they won't handle us so easily as they did Bunter!" remarked Nugent.

"They didn't handle me easily," snorted Bunter, "I gave them a black eye all round, I think."

"I didn't notice any of their eyes were black!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"I don't suppose you stopped to see!" retorted Bunter. "You ran for it, didn't you?"

"What?"
 "I didn't run," said Bunter, blinking at the captain of the Remove. "Not that I blame you, Wharton—they were six to one, so you were justified in buzzing off on your bike. Still, I wouldn't have done it."

"Why, you—you—" gasped Wharton.
 "Not my style," said Bunter, shaking his head. "I say, pass that cake! When they tackled me, you know, I stood up to them! I didn't count the odds—I never do! Just stood up to them like a lion, you know."

"More likely scuttled like a rabbit," grunted Johnny Bull.

"I faced them like—like that chap who defied the lightning!" roared Bunter. "I forget his name—Ulysses, was it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I—I mean Achilles—"

"Make it Ajax," grinned Nugent.

"I don't care who it was—Ajax, if you like—that's how I faced them," said Bunter. "Knocked them right and left. Still, I don't blame you for running away, Wharton. Some fellows have pluck. Some haven't. Yarrah! Leggo my ear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter jerked his fat ear away, and glared.

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

"Do!" said Harry, laughing.
 "Only I'm tired with thrashing those Highcliffe chaps," said Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't keep on cackling," said Bunter, crossly. "Pass me some more cake. Isn't there any more? Dash it all, Wharton, you might have brought some more cake. I got a big cake, and those Highcliffe cads ate it, right under my nose, you know."

"While you were thrashing them," grinned Bob Cherry.

"I—I mean—"

There was a sound from the direction of the road, and Harry Wharton looked round.

Darkness enwrapped the downs now; in the distance the lights of Stacliffe twinkled faintly. Lights twinkled, too, from the bungalows dotted along the shore.

"That was a footstep," said Harry.

"Ponsonby coming for Bunter, perhaps," chuckled Bob Cherry. "We'll all stand round and see fair play, if it is—and watch Bunter thrashing him again—"

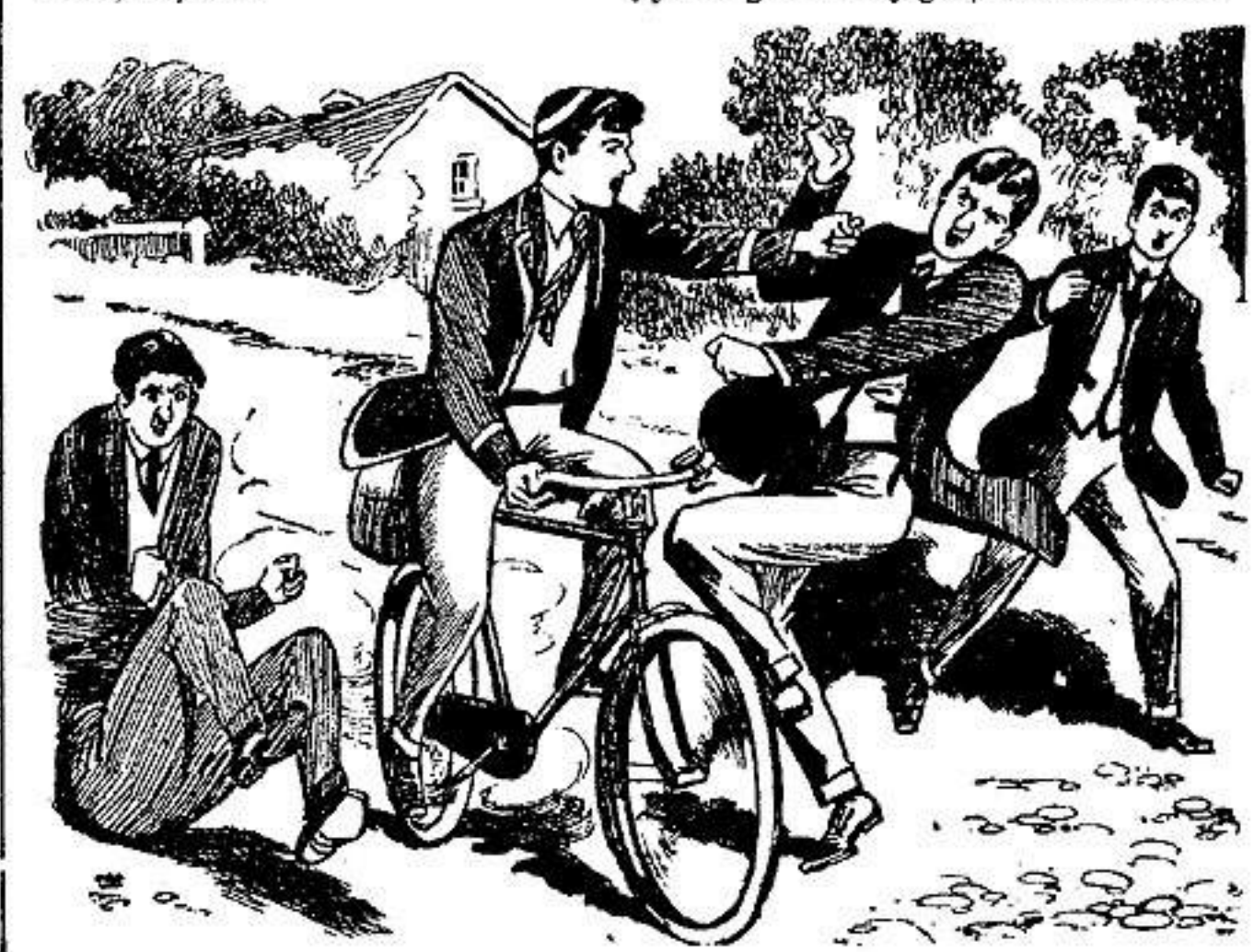
"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors, as Billy Bunter made a strategic movement towards the caravan.

Bunter disappeared into the van. The Famous Five looked round in the direction of the road, curiously. The footfalls were distinct now, and they had left the road, and were crossing over the grass towards the caravan camp. Someone was evidently approaching the camp; and the Greyfriars juniors rose to their feet, wondering whether it might be a raid on the part of Ponsonby and Co.

But it was only one figure that loomed up in the radius of ruddy light cast by the camp-fire.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What—"

"Excuse me." The figure stopped in the firelight, and blinked at the juniors. "I think I've lost my way—and seeing your light—By gad, is that Wharton?"



Wharton, freeing one hand, struck at Ponsonby as he passed and sent him spinning. "Oh gad!" gasped Pon. "Ow!" (See Chapter 2.)

"Mauleverer!" exclaimed Harry.
 "Mauly, by Jove!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, and he rushed at the surprised newcomer, grasped him round the shoulders, and waltzed him towards the camp-fire.

"Oh, gad!" gasped Lord Mauleverer.
 "Good old Mauly!" chuckled Bob.
 "What are you doing here? Dropped down from the clouds, or from a giddy aeroplane?"

Lord Mauleverer jerked himself away from the exuberant Bob.

"Fancy meetin' you fellows here!" he exclaimed. "What jolly luck, what? Caravannin', what? Oh, gad."

Nugent pushed a camp-stool towards Mauleverer, who sat down on it at once. He was evidently tired. But Lord Mauleverer generally was tired; he was the tiredest fellow at Greyfriars in the term, and apparently had not changed in the vacation.

"Jolly glad to meet you, dear men," he said, blinking in the firelight. "I believe I'm lost, what? Horrid, ain't it?"

"You're found, you mean," grinned Bob. "Had your supper?"

"Begad, no! I haven't tasted a bite since tea-time," said Lord Mauleverer, plaintively.

"Lucky we've got lots."

"You're awfully good—"

"I say, you fellows." Billy Bunter blinked out of the caravan. "Is that my old pal Mauly?"

"It's Mauly!" said his lordship.

Bunter rolled out of the van.

"No end of a pleasure to meet you, Mauly," he said, affectionately.

"Begad, that's awfully good of you, Bunter. Trot it out."

"Eh! Trot out what?"

"Don't you want me to cash a postal-order for you?" asked Lord Mauleverer, in surprise.

"Eh! No."

"Then why the dooce are you glad to see me?"

"Oh, really, Mauly—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here you are, Mauly," said Nugent,

hospitably. "Take the plate on your knees. Can you eat corned beef?"

"My dear man, I could eat anythin'. This is jolly good of you," said Lord Mauleverer. "I say, have you ever heard of a place called Stacliffe? It's not near the railway."

"It's a mile away yonder."

"Another mile—oh, gad! I say, this beef is good. Ever heard of a bungalow near Stacliffe?"

"There's two or three dozen."

"The one I want is called the Firs."

"Never heard of it," said Wharton.

"Easy enough to find it to-morrow. We can put you up for the night, Mauly."

"That's jolly kind of you," said Mauleverer. "But I sent on my bags in the trap, you know."

"We can lend you some things."

"You're a good Samaritan. I suppose they'll be expectin' me at the bung," said Lord Mauleverer, thoughtfully. "You see, I got down by the afternoon train, and hired a man to drive me over. It was a rotten old trap, and I couldn't stand it—never could stand bein' jolted, you know. So I sent him ahead with my things and walked the rest. I wonder if I took a wrong turnin'?"

"Looks as if you might have," grinned Bob.

"Yaas. Anyhow, I've been wandering around for goodness knows how long. I hope the man has found the Firs, and delivered my bags there. I'd like to camp here—I'm aw'fly done up—but—but I suppose they'll be expectin' me to blow in, won't they, after gettin' my bags? I—I shall have to find the place, somehow. Hard cheese, what?"

"Here's your cocoa, Mauly."

"Thanks, old bean. Begad, this seems aw'fly comfy," said his lordship, looking round. "Jolly good mind to go caravannin'. Still, I suppose there's some work attached?"

"A little," said Wharton, smiling.

"Perhaps I'd better stick to the bung—if I can find the bung. You fellows feel inclined for a walk, you can come and help me find it, what?"

"We'll certainly see you through, if you're going wandering again to-night," said Harry Wharton. "I suppose if the people are expecting you to-night, you ought to turn up."

"Yaas."

"Anybody we know?" asked Nugent.

"Yaas."

"Oh, good. I didn't know we knew anybody in this quarter," said Nugent.

"Greyfriars chaps?"

Lord Mauleverer shook his head.

"Who then?"

"Some Highcliffe people—"

"What?"

"Chap named Ponsonby. You remember Ponsonby?"

"Oh, my hat!"

And Harry Wharton & Co. stared blankly at Lord Mauleverer as that youth cheerfully sipped his cocoa.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Ponsonby's Guest!

"PONSONBY!" murmured Bob Cherry.

Lord Mauleverer nodded over the tin cup of cocoa.

"Yaas. You remember him? You've had no end of rows with him, haven't you? I believe I had a row with him once—or was it twice? Now I'm goin' to put in a week at his seaside bung. Odd, ain't it? You fellows seen anythin' of Pon since you've been campin' here?"

"This afternoon," said Harry.

"No rags, I hope?" said Lord Mauleverer. "After all, there's no need to keep up the raggin' during the vac, is there? Lots of it durin' the term."

"How on earth do you come to be spending a holiday with Ponsonby, Mauly?" exclaimed Bob Cherry bluntly.

"He's not in your line."

"I should hope not!" murmured Nugent.

"No, I suppose he isn't," said his lordship reflectively. "It came about like this. I was at Brighton. You fellows know Brighton? It—it's a town on the coast—the South Coast, I think."

"Yes, ass! Get on!"

"Uncle Braithwayte, you know. That's where I was. I'd had a week with Uncle Brooke, and then I went on to Uncle Braithwayte. Sort of uncle, you know. He married somebody, or somebody married him, or somethin', so he's a sort of uncle once removed, or twice, or somethin'—"

"Don't waste time being so lucid," said Bob Cherry gravely. "Get on with the washing."

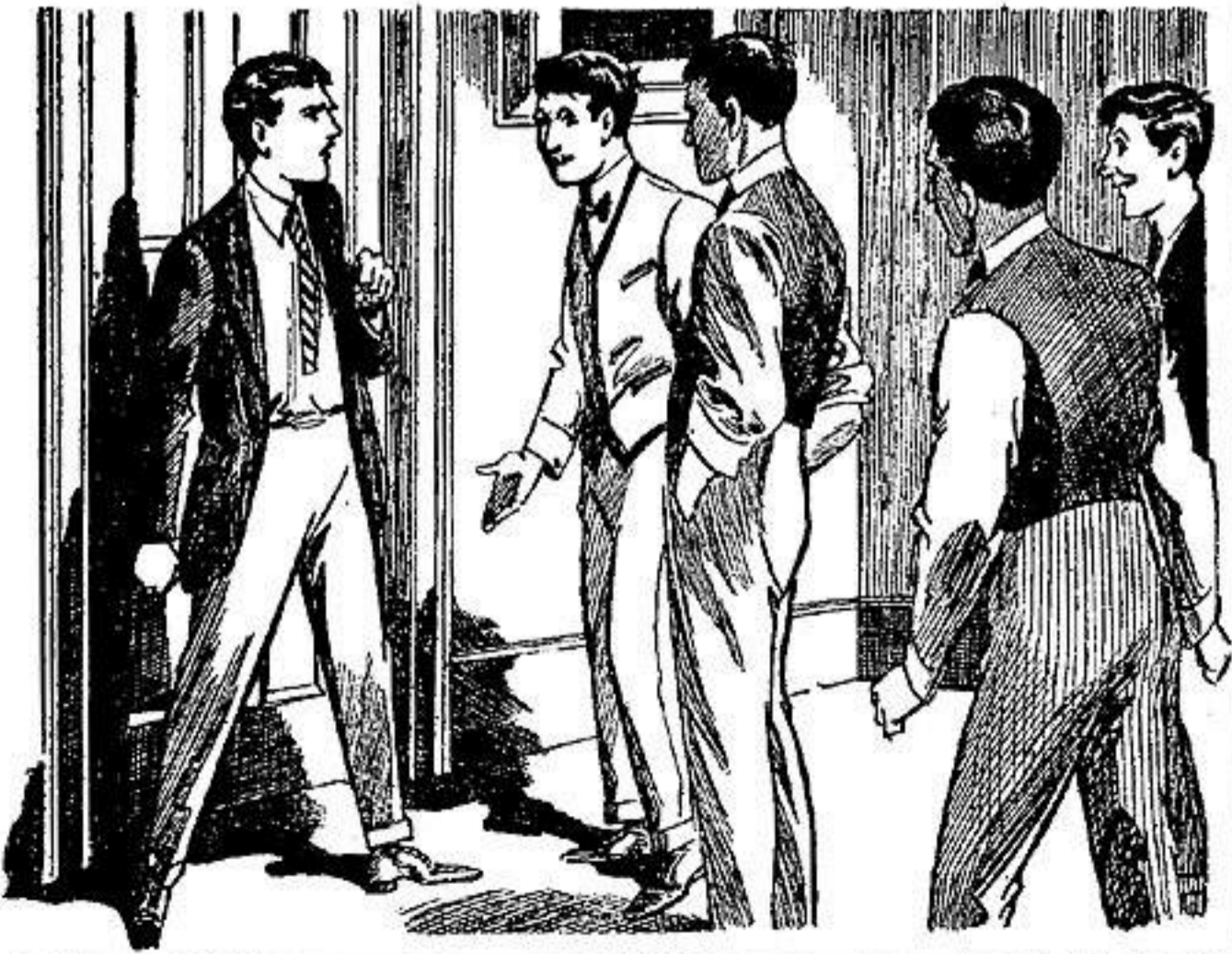
"Begad, yaas, quite so!" assented Mauly. "Well, that's how it came about. I ran across Pon in Brighton. He fairly froze on me; no end chummy. Bit puzzled me. I don't ever remember bein' chummy with Pon, but he seemed to think we were old friends. So he came to dinner with my old uncle, and pleased the buck no end—listened to him, you know, and never even winked at me. Uncle liked him immensely. So he stayed a couple of days, and asked me to return the visit, and uncle was agreeable, so I said yaas. Couldn't very well say no, could I?" added Mauleverer thoughtfully. "I dare say Pon is quite a decent chap; shouldn't wonder."

"Ass!" said Bob.

"Oh, begad!"

"What does he want you for?" asked Johnny Bull, who was sometimes quite painfully direct in his way of speaking.

Lord Mauleverer blinked at him.



"You owe the bank thirty pounds, Mauly!" said Ponsonby, between his teeth. "Play or pay!" "I shall not pay a cent!" said Mauly calmly. "I shall leave to-night!" (See Chapter 7.)

"Blessed if I know!" he said. "What does any chap want any chap for? Every fellow you meet is more or less of a bore, isn't he? I suppose Pon thinks he may as well let me bore him as anybody else. He said they had swimmin', and cricket, and rowin', and fishin', and shootin', and all sorts of things. I said I'd sit in a hammock and watch 'em while they did it all. Begad! Catch me rowin' and swimmin' and fishin', and so on! I don't think!"

"Surely Pon isn't running a bungalow on his own for the summer holidays?" said Nugent curiously.

"There's a giddy elder there," said Mauleverer. "Gadsby major—Captain Gadsby, you know. I don't know him, but he's an elder brother of Gaddy of Highcliffe. I believe he was pushed out of the Army for somethin', but I never asked—rather a delicate matter, you know. I believe it's really his bungalow, and Pon's standing the exes for the vac. Anyhow, Pon seems to be lord and master. I'm goin' as Pon's guest. I believe he has lots of fellows, on and off. Sort of Liberty Hall, you know. I dare say I shall enjoy myself, if they let me have plenty of the hammock."

"Better cut that crowd and come caravanning with us," said Bob.

"You're awf'ly good, but I should be a worry to you. You see, Wharton says there's some work attached—"

"It would do you good."

"Very likely," said Lord Mauleverer. "I hate things that do me good. I say, it's no end topping of you to stand me some supper! Rotten shame to drag you out of camp. Look here, I'm goin' to try to find my way alone. I'm bound to end up somewhere or other—what?"

"In the sea, very likely, or over a cliff!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "We'll see you through, Mauly. We needn't come in, as relations are rather strained with Pon; but we'll find the place for you and land you. Some of us had better stay and look after the camp. Two will be enough to guide Mauly."

"But it's a shame!" said Lord Mauleverer. "I say—"

"Bosh! If you're ready—"

"Quite, dear man!"

Lord Mauleverer yawned, and rose, and yawned again. Billy Bunter had gone back into the caravan. In spite of his great affection for Mauly, he seemed to be rather anxious to avoid the danger of being called upon to take a walk. It was decided that Wharton and Bob Cherry should go in charge of the lost nobleman, and Johnny Bull, Nugent, and Hurree Singh remain at the camp. They started out as the moon peered in a glimmering crescent over the sea.

"Beastly shame to drag you out!" said Lord Mauleverer remorsefully. "You're awfully good. Everybody's good to me, somehow."

"Well, we know the paths about here," said Harry. "We'll soon come along to the bungalows, and it'll be easy to pick out the one we want. I suppose the name will be on it?"

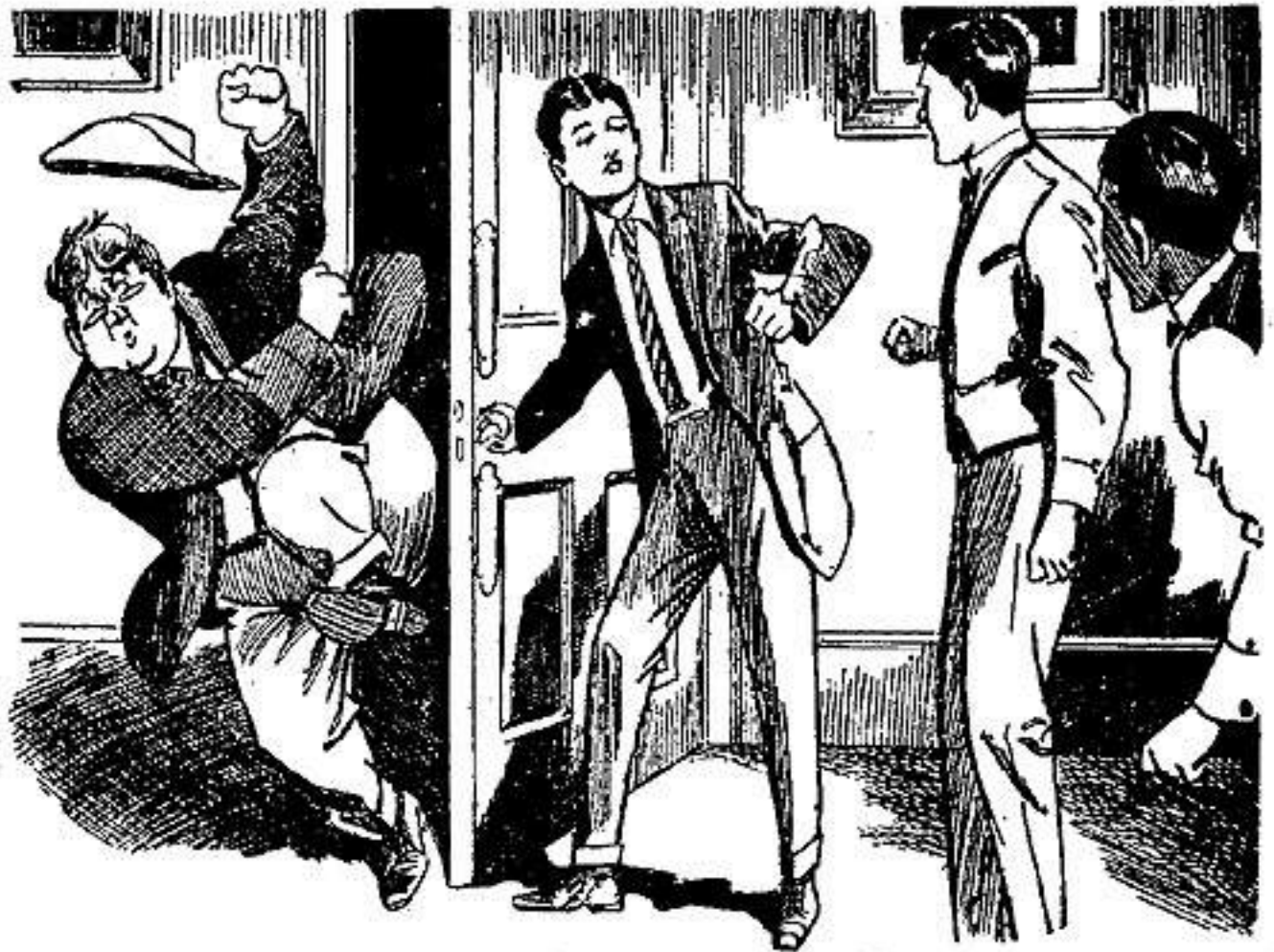
"Yaas."

The juniors moved along in the gathering moonlight, rather silent.

Wharton was rather exercised in his mind on the subject of Lord Mauleverer.

That youth had a considerable amount of simplicity, but he was as straight as a die; and what Ponsonby wanted with a fellow who was straight was rather a puzzle.

Knowing Pon's manners and customs as he did, Wharton could not help won-



Mauleverer walked to the door and threw it open. There was a sudden gasp and a fat figure tumbled into the room. "By gad! yelled Ponsonby. (See Chapter 8.)

dering whether gambling was going on at the bungalow, and whether Lord Mauleverer was wanted as a gull to be rooked. His lordship had an almost unlimited supply of cash, and if that was Ponsonby's game the victim would be a rich prize.

No suspicion, evidently, had crossed Mauly's unsuspecting mind. If he had wondered why Ponsonby was so suddenly friendly and cordial, he had not taken the trouble to think it out.

But Wharton was thinking.

It was pretty clear to him that Pon had been playing a part with Mauly's uncle—pulling the old gentleman's leg—for the sake of getting the schoolboy earl into his clutches. Taking Mauleverer to the Firs was a good deal like taking a lamb to the slaughter, Wharton could not help feeling.

And yet what was to be done? Certainly he could not begin preaching to Mauleverer, or reading him solemn warnings. After all, Mauly was able to take care of himself.

"You're staying a week with Pon?" asked Wharton at last, breaking a long silence.

"Yaas."

"If you get fed up, and want a change, come along to the caravan," said Harry. "We shall be here a few days—bathing and swimming, and so on—after that we move on along the coast east. You'll find us if you want us."

Lord Mauleverer looked at him rather quickly.

"Thanks!" he said. "I'll remember. But I shall get on all right with Pon, you know. School rags are over now; and, besides, I shall be his guest."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's a bung!" said Bob Cherry.

But it was not the one they sought, and they moved on. Wharton inquired of a little bunch of loungers coming along, and one of them directed him. The Firs lay well back from the rest, and was rather solitary, well up on the slope of the down. As they followed

the path indicated, the juniors caught a glimpse of brightly-lighted windows through tall trees. The strains of a powerful gramophone came through the night air. The music ceased as they drew nearer. Wharton opened a gate that gave upon a large and well-kept garden. Across the garden loomed up a large bungalow, with a wooden verandah running along the front. French windows were open in one room to the summer night, bright light streamed out, and two or three fellows in evening clothes could be seen. Wharton caught sight of Cecil Ponsonby, leaning gracefully on a mantelpiece, a diamond gleaming in his spotless shirt-front, and a cigarette between his well-cut lips. There was a red swelling visible on Pon's nose—a reminder of the encounter of that afternoon.

"This is the place, right enough," said Harry Wharton. "We'll leave you here, Mauly."

"Won't you stay and speak a word to Pon?" asked Lord Mauleverer.

"Ahem! I think not!"

And Bob Cherry chuckled.

As they were speaking, Ponsonby lounged to the open French windows and looked out into the moonlit garden. He started a little at the sight of three figures, and called out:

"Is that you, Mauleverer?"

"Yaas, dear man."

"You're late, old bean. Dined?"

"Supped instead," said Lord Mauleverer, as Ponsonby came down the path towards him. "Jolly little caravanning supper, you know. You know these fellows, Ponsonby? Begad, they seem to be gone!"

Wharton and Bob Cherry were already outside the gate again. They did not want to meet Ponsonby, especially on his own ground. So they had taken rather sudden leave.

Lord Mauleverer looked round, rather perplexed.

"Wharton, wasn't it?" asked Ponsonby, compressing his lips. His hand passed gently over his swollen nose.

"Yaas."

"What the thump—"

"I lost my way, dear man, and they took me in and fed me like good Samaritans," said Lord Mauleverer. "They guided me here. Dashed if I think I should have found the place! Decent of them, what?"

"Oh, very! Come in!"

"Have my bags come, dear man?"

"Oh, yes; hours ago! They're in your room all right. Come in, old fellow!" said Ponsonby, and he slipped his arm through Lord Mauleverer's and led him in by the French windows.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Idea!

HARRY WHARTON and Bob Cherry walked rather quickly away from the bungalow, and took their way towards the camp on the downs. In the circumstances, as Mauleverer was a guest of Pon's, they had been anxious to avoid any unpleasantness. And certainly they could not have met Cecil Ponsonby on friendly terms.

Wharton's brow was a little contracted, and he walked on in silence for a time. Bob glanced at him once or twice, and hummed a tune as Wharton did not seem in the mood for conversation. Then he began to whistle. Bob found some difficulty in keeping silent at any time. His shrill whistle rang through the night, rather out of tune.

"I don't like it," said Wharton abruptly, at last.

"What, my giddy music?" asked Bob. "Was I sharp or flat, old chap?"

Wharton laughed.

"I mean, I don't like it about Mauly. He oughtn't to be staying with that crowd."

"Not our bizney, old man."

"No, I suppose not. Still, I don't like it. You know what Ponsonby is. You know what his friends are. I've seen Gadsby's elder brother, too—a regular blackguard!" said Harry. "They will be having what they think a high old time at that bungalow, and it's not the place for Mauly."

"His uncle knows—"

"Old Braithwayte is a simple old johnny, and Ponsonby has pulled his leg. He can put on anything he likes, and take almost anybody in," grunted the captain of the Remove. "Mauly's uncle thinks he's a decent chap, of course; thinks that Mauly has gone to stay with some fellows he knew at school, who are decent. Just as if he'd come with us."

"I suppose so," assented Bob.

"Mauly's too decent for that crowd," said Harry. "I shouldn't wonder if they've simply got him there to fleece him."

"Likely enough. But I don't see how we can chip in," said Bob seriously. "We can't play kind auntie to a chap as old as ourselves. If Mauly finds they're too rorty for him he can clear. But this rather knocks on the head my stunt of looking for that crowd in town to-morrow, and mopping them up. Mauly may be along with them, and we don't want to mop up old Mauly."

"Better keep clear of them if we can," said Harry. "I wonder if I ought to have given Mauly the tip? But a fellow doesn't like to butt in."

The juniors reached the caravan camp, and found the tent up, and their three comrades fast asleep in it. From the

caravan came the deep and unmusical snore of William George Bunter.

"Better turn in," yawned Bob.

And the chums of the Remove turned in. But Wharton, as he rolled himself in his blanket, could not help thinking of Lord Mauleverer among the "rorty" crowd at Pon's bungalow. Mauleverer had gone there, Wharton felt convinced, like a lamb to the slaughter. But it was not much use thinking about it, and the captain of the Remove was soon asleep.

His eyes did not open again, till he suddenly started out of slumber, with a stentorian voice in his ears.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Wake up!"

Bob Cherry was first up, as usual. It was six o'clock, and the surf was streaming down on the camp by the sea.

A dip in the sea was the first proceeding of the Famous Five, while Billy Bunter snored on in the caravan. Bunter did not care for dips in the sea. Indeed, Bunter was of opinion that a holiday wasn't a holiday unless there was a minimum of anything in the shape of washing. Bunter had brought a cake of soap with him on the trip, and it was not very much worn yet. It was probable that he would take most of that cake of soap home with him at the end of the caravan excursion. Extravagant in some things, William George Bunter was extremely economical in such matters as soap.

The fat junior was still snoring in the caravan bunk, and dreaming of unlimited jam-tarts, with a beatific smile on his fat face, when he was awakened by a powerful shake.

"Turn out!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Yaw-aw-awl 'Tain't rising-bell! Gerrout!"

"Half-past six!" roared Bob.

"Call me at eleven!"

Bump!

Bunter landed on the floor with a yell. Then he dressed, and rolled out of the caravan. The camp-fire was already going strong, and the kettle was singing over it. Bunter washed, a task that occupied him two-thirds of a minute. Then he started to cook. Bunter could cook, at all events, and as usual he cooked enough for eight, Bunter being equal to three at meal-times.

It was a glorious summer's morning, and the Greyfriars caravanners were feeling very cheerful.

Over breakfast they chatted on the subject of Lord Mauleverer and Ponsonby & Co., Billy Bunter listening with all his fat ears, evidently very much interested.

"I say, you fellows," he remarked, "I suppose Pon & Co. are bound to be playing the goat at their show?"

"Pretty certain!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Bridge, and smokes, and champagne, very likely!" said Bunter, his eyes glistening behind his spectacles.

"The likelifulness is terrific!" said Hurree Singh.

"I say, you know, what's the good of keeping up old school quarrels on vac?" said Bunter. "Pon isn't such a bad chap."

"Eh?"

"As for his ragging me yesterday, I can take a joke," argued Bunter, blinking at the astonished caravanners. "Fellow ought to be able to take a joke,

you know. I don't see why we shouldn't be civil to Pon if we come across him."

"Don't you?" growled Johnny Bull.

"No, I don't!" said Bunter firmly. "He might ask us to dinner at the bungalow, you know."

"You silly owl—"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Do you think we'd go to dinner at his blessed bung, if he asked us?" roared Johnny.

"Well, probably he wouldn't ask you," said Bunter. "Your manners ain't quite up to the mark, you know."

"Wha-a-at?"

"I've not got any evening-clothes with me," said Bunter thoughtfully; "but I dare say that could be managed. Rather rotten to come on a trip without any decent clothes. All you fellows' fault. You would cut down the baggage. If Pon asks us—"

"He won't!" snapped Nugent.

"But if he does—"

"We shall refuse in that very unlikely case!" said Harry Wharton curtly.

"Oh, really, Wharton, I jolly well sha'n't refuse! Suppose they're playing the goat?" said Bunter argumentatively. "Well, why shouldn't a chap let himself go on a holiday? I'm a bit goey myself, you know."

"Ass!"

"In fact, I'm no end of a giddy goer when I get started," said Bunter. "I'm a dab at bridge, too. Very likely I could clean them out. You fellows could lend me some money—"

"We'll lend you a thick ear!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Shut up, Bunter, for goodness' sake."

"I'm not going to shut up," said Bunter. "I've been thinking this out. As for money, that's all right—I'm expecting a postal-order—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"At—at the next town we stop at," said Bunter, "you fellows can cash it for me—in advance, you know."

"Oh, cheese it!"

"If you're going to be mean, I'll ask Mauly. After all, Mauly is my pal. You remember how thick we were at Greyfriars."

"Blessed if I do!" said Bob.

"Well, we were," said Bunter. "Close pals—bosom chums, in fact. Mauly will lend me a fiver if I ask him. Now, I'll tell you what, you fellows—"

"Shut up!"

"The question is," said Nugent, "whether we'd better break camp, and move on. We don't want to get any more Highcliffe; we have enough of that rowdy crowd at school."

"Well, we arranged to stick here for a few days," said Harry. "I don't think we ought to let Pon make any difference to our plans. We can keep clear of them."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, do dry up, Bunter."

"I think we'd better hang on here," said Bunter. "Let's go for a walk—round by the bungalows, you know."

"What on earth for?"

"Well, we might fall in with those chaps, you know, and if we're civil, Pon may ask us in— Yaroooooooh!"

Johnny Bull, who was sitting on the grass near Bunter, reached out with his foot, and his boot jammed on Bunter's well-filled waistcoat. The Owl of the Remove rolled over backwards, with a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaroooh! You beast! Wharrer you at?" roared Bunter, sitting up dazedly.

(Continued on page 13.)

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY...PRICE 2!

DETECTIVE! A SPLENDID TALE OF THE JUNIORS OF GREYFRIARS.

BY FRANK RICHARDS.

NEXT
MONDAY! **THE CARAVAN**
THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 706.

The Greyfriars HERALD

SUPPLEMENT No. 34.
Week Ending August 20th, 1921



THE SCHOOL-HOUSE



Harry Wharton
Editor



THE ENTRANCE GATES

Assisted by BOB CHERRY (Fighting Editor), VERNON-SMITH (Sports Editor), MARK LINLEY, TOM BROWN, and FRANK NUGENT.

Address all letters to HARRY WHARTON, c/o The Magnet Library, The Flestway House, Farringdon Street, E.C. 4.

OUR CAMERA CORNER!

By MONTY NEWLAND.

When I set out on holiday, I shall certainly take my camera with me. Amateur photography is great sport. Some fellows object to it on the ground that it is expensive. But believe me, there are far more expensive ways of spending a holiday than by touring around with a camera!

I ought to get some ripping snapshots, especially if I run across any of the Greyfriars fellows, which is quite probable. A "snap" of Coker of the Fifth, dashing into a duckpond on his antiquated motor-bike, would cause roars of laughter when the school assembled again.

I might wander on to the golf-links, and get a snapshot of Mr. Prout in the act of uprooting a huge mound of earth! That would be perfectly priceless. What Prout would say if he saw the snap I don't know. He'd probably soap! Dear old Prout. He's an excellent old buffer in his way, but he can't play golf for monkey-nuts!

Or, again, I might be able to get a snap of Billy Bunter taking a bathe in the briny. I should send it to one of the pictorial papers, and it would appear next day under the heading, "Another Porpoise Washed Ashore!" or "Tubby Preventing the Tide from Coming in!" Verily, Billy Bunter bathing is a sight for gods and men and little fishes!

There will be heaps of amusing scenes which I shall have an opportunity of snapping. It will be great fun, and I guarantee I shall enjoy my holidays as much as anybody. A vest-pocket camera is one of the best companions a fellow can have. Here's to the holiday!

I have been debating in mind whether to write to Herbert Skimpole of St. Jim's, and see if he can invent something for me. You see, we have films which we can put in the camera in daylight, and I think it is rather remiss of inventors not to supply us with a camera which will deliver our films developed and printed by simply turning a handle. (You don't want Skimpole; you want Colney Hatch!—Ed.)

Supplement i.]

EDITORIAL.

By Harry Wharton.

Holidays are the spice of life. A wise man once said that variety was; but then holidays bring variety.

Of course, it wouldn't do to have holidays all the year round. If this were the case, playing games would be as tedious as working in the Form-room.

So long as we have our vacations at regular intervals, with the Bank Holidays thrown in, we haven't much to grumble at.

August holidays are probably the most popular of all. One conjures up visions of the seaside, of caravan tours, and of camping out. There are heaps of things you can do in August that the weather would not permit of your doing, say, Boxing Day.

Of course, it would be unthinkable to let this opportunity pass of publishing a Special Holiday Number of the "Greyfriars Herald."

Last August Bank Holiday there was no four-page supplement in the "Magnet" Library. Neither the "Herald" nor "Billy Bunter's Weekly" had appeared in supplement form. Seven months ago we started on our course, and we have been jogging along merrily ever since. Let us hope that when the next August Bank Holiday comes round, it will find the "Herald" still very much alive. I also hope the "Weekly" will continue to flourish, for we can't do without Billy Bunter's four-page scream!

I hope that all my chums, near and far, will have a right ripping time on their holidays. And if the "Greyfriars Herald" contributes in any way towards that good time, I shall feel more than happy.

Several hours of cricket have been sacrificed in order to turn out a number that will find favour in the sight of the boy and girl public; and I feel sure that the labours of my energetic staff will not be in vain.

You will notice that Dick Penfold is again in the limelight with one of his parodies on a well-known song. Pen is the acknowledged poet laureate of the Greyfriars Remove; and I have ample proof that his poems and parodies are extremely popular. This being the case, I shall continue to publish his little ditties—until the great poets' strike comes off, and editors have no doggerel to feed their office fires with!

Next week there will be another Special Number, of a particularly novel nature.

Look out for it, and tell all your chums to do likewise.

HARRY WHARTON.

THE TUCKSHOP IN THE TOWN!

Written by DICK PENFOLD.
Warbled by W. G. BUNTER.

There is a tuckshop in the town, in the town,
Its tarts and buns have won renown, won renown,
And there I sit, with rapture and with glee,
And scoff sufficient tuck for three!

Fare thee well! for I must leave you,
Do not let this parting grieve you,
But remember that the best of pals must part, must part.
Adieu, adieu, you chaps—adieu, adieu, adieu!

I can no longer stay with you, stay with you,
I have set my heart on a plate of treacle tart,
And a dish of dainty doughnuts, too!

At that quaint tuckshop in the town, in the town,
I've squandered many a half-a-crown, half-a-crown,
And with cakes and buns I have been so jolly full
They've had to lift me back to school!

Fare thee well! for I must leave you,
Do not let this parting grieve you,
But remember that all porpoises must feed, must feed.
Adieu, adieu, you chaps—adieu, adieu, adieu!

I can no longer stay with you, stay with you,
I have set my soul on a tempting sausage-roll,
And I've got a fat P.O. to blue!

KEEP DICK PENFOLD'S PARODIES BY YOU UNTIL YOU HEAR THE SONG—THEN YOU'LL LAUGH!

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 706.

OUR AGONY COLUMN.



(The Editor will not hold himself responsible for any tragedies which may arise out of the following advertisements!)

PUBLICK SKOOLBOY wishes to spend his hollerday with a wealthy English family, as a non-paying guest. He must have at least six meals a day, and every comfort and consideration. He is accustomed to swell society, as he comes from a titled family himself!—Write S. T. B., Form-room, Third Passage, Greyfriars.

WANTED—a partner for a caravan tour of Kent, Sussex, and Hampshire. He must provide the caravan, the equipment, the horse, and the grub. He must also cook all the meals, and keep the caravan clean and tidy. Members of the Bunter family need not apply!—**TOM BROWN**, c.o. the "Greyfriars Herald."

WILL somebody kindly finance my holiday? I'm broke to the wide! No large sum required. A hundred quid will be ample. Cheques should be made payable to **HAROLD SKINNER**, c.o. "Herald" Office.

LISTEN, my dear fellows! The poor benighted inhabitants of the Golly-Wolly Islands have never had a holiday. I am anxious to raise a sufficient sum of money to give a party of them a month's holiday in England. Can you resist this appeal? Send your donations to **ALONZO TODD**, Study No. 7, Remove Passage, and in a few months' time the Golly-Wolly Islanders will be here at Greyfriars as our guests. (And they'll probably dine off Roast Dutton and Todd!—Ed.)

IF any boy intends to go fishing in private waters during the holiday, I will give him 100 lines!—**MR. QUELCH**. (We don't mind that, sir, so long as you spare the rod!—Ed.)

HAS anybody any golf-balls to spare? I bought two dozen only the other day, and lost them all in the gully, owing to my powerful driving. I am taking part in a golf tournament during the holiday, and if only some kind person will loan me a dozen golf-balls, I shall be the winner!—**MR. PROUT**. (And the lender of the golf-balls will undoubtedly be the loser!—Ed.)

HOLIDAY-MAKERS!—Travel to your destinations by motor-charabanc! The Fishy Transport Company, Ltd., will fix you up! They have hired special charabancs from Courtfield. Terms—a hob a mile. Whether you live at John o' Groats or Land's End makes no diff. The Fishy Transport Co. will see you through! Get in touch right away with the slick proprietor, **F. T. FISH**.

IF anybody wants any packing done for the hollerdays I shall be pleased to do it at tuppence a trunk.—**H. TROTTER**, Page-boy, Greyfriars.

PERSONAL.—I want every fellow and—spare my blushes—every girl to start reading the new serial in the "Popular." I read the first instalment when I was visiting the Editor of the Companion Papers, and I can honestly say it's the best I have ever seen. Rally round the "Pop," chums!—**H. W.** (I don't mean to hint that I have some ginger-pop in my study!—H. W.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 706.

WHERE TO SPEND A HOLIDAY!

By Tom Brown.

Don't spend it in London.

A holiday in London is the limit.

If there happens to be a heatwave in progress, all that will be left of you to tell the tale will be a small grease-spot in the middle of Piccadilly Circus.

Don't go to a popular seaside resort. If you do, you won't be able to breathe.

I spent one never-to-be-forgotten holiday at either Brighton or Blackpool or Bournemouth—I forget which. Anyway, there was such a crush of people in the town that it was like being in the thick of a football crowd on Cup Final day. You couldn't breathe. You couldn't raise your hand to wipe the perspiration off your brow without digging your elbow in somebody's ribs. You couldn't take one step forward without treading on somebody's pet corn.

Of course, if you want to feel like the inmate of a sardine-tin, go to a popular seaside resort by all means. But you mustn't mind if you have to line up with a queue of ninety thousand people who are waiting to hire a bathing-machine. You mustn't mind if you have to wait for six hours outside a teashop before you can get in, only to find that they're sold out.

Cut out London. Cut out the popular seaside resort. They are excellent places in the ordinary way, but not on a holiday.

"But if I can't go to London, and the popular seaside resorts are taboo, where the merry dickens am I to go?" I can imagine you saying.

Hearken unto the words of Thomas Brown, who knoweth what is what.

You must select some very remote little hamlet in the heart of the country. One of those places situated about twelve miles from a railway-station—one of those snug little retreats to which the noisy motor-charabanc never penetrates.

There is a tremendous advantage to be gained by doing this. You won't be able to get back to school again!

You see, there is nearly always a railway strike during holiday-time. They always choose the most inconvenient time to launch a strike in order to leave the public stranded.

The majority of people, however, travel home by charabanc without any inconvenience, and at a much cheaper cost than going by train.

But YOU will be in a place where charabancs are not obtainable, and you will have no means of getting back to school.

You will, accordingly, send a letter to your headmaster, as follow:

"Dear Sir,—Owing to the railway strike, and the fact that there is no transport at Mudford-on-Splash—in which hamlet I am now stranded—I regret to inform you that I am unable to get back to St. Tom's—or St. Timothy's, as the case may be.

"I shall return when the strike is over—which will probably be in two years' time."

Now, my friends, you can see the wisdom of spending a holiday in a remote hamlet, instead of in London or at a popular seaside resort.

(We do not advise any of our readers to take Tom Brown seriously or—despite the shortage of road transport—they will find themselves "in the cart"—ED.)

Impertinent Interviews!

BY OUR SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE.



No. 7.—Billy Bunter.

"Last week," said the editor, fixing me with a ferocious glare, "you let me down badly. I had no contribution from your pen."

"I was indisposed," I murmured. "Moreover, I fear you will not get a contribution this week."

"How's that?"

"Going out! You see, it's holiday-time, so I can't possibly stay in."

The editor snorted.

"Is that supposed to be a joke?" he snarled.

"Not at all! But if you expect me to wander around interviewing people on the eye of breaking up, you're expecting a jolly sight too much!"

"Very well," said the chief grimly. "No work, no pay!"

Now, this was rather awkward, for I had arranged to spend my holidays at the seaside, and I couldn't possibly do so without money.

"I give in," I said at length. "Whom do you wish me to interview?"

"Billy Bunter."

"Oh, good! I can't possibly come to any harm at the hands of that podgy porpoise. When interviewing other people I've generally come a cropper. But Bunter wouldn't harm a fly. I'll go and see him at once!"

Armed with notebook and pencil, I strolled away in the direction of the tuckshop.

As a rule, you needn't look farther than the tuckshop for Billy Bunter. He simply lives in the place, and in years to come his spirit will haunt it.

But on this occasion I drew blank.

Mrs. Mimble, the tuckshop dame, had not set eyes on the podgy William George.

I tried Study No. 7, and here I had better luck.

Billy Bunter was kneeling on the floor, beside a large trunk. Into this trunk he was packing a miscellaneous collection of articles.

"Hallo, barrel!" I said cordially.

"I've come to interview you for the 'Greyfriars Herald.'"

Mentioning the "Herald" to Billy Bunter is like dangling a red handkerchief in front of a mad bull.

"I don't want to hear about that trashy rag!" he exclaimed. "I have no use for it whatever. It annoys me. It makes me tired. It's not in the same street with my 'Weckly,' and you know it! If you mention the name of Wharton's potty paper again I—I'll kick you out of my study!"

"Shush!" I said. "The footer season hasn't started yet. Now, look here, Bunt, I want to ask you a few pertinent questions."

(Continued on page 12.)

[Supplement 4.]



A Cricket Comedy!

By George Bulstrode.

I.

"I SAY, kid!"
Vernon-Smith, on hearing himself addressed, jumped off his bicycle, and turned, to find himself confronted by a tall, military-looking gentleman in flannels.

It was the afternoon of an August holiday. Smithy was taking a solitary cycling tour through the byways of Kent, and he had been passing the entrance to a private cricket-ground when the voice hailed him.

"I see by your cap that you're a Greyfriars kid," said the military-looking stranger.

Vernon-Smith nodded.
"Play cricket?"

"Just a little," said the Bounder, with a grin.

"Well, look here. I'm Colonel Ranter, of the Loamshire Regiment. Incidentally, I happen to be an Old Boy of Greyfriars. There's a cricket week in progress here, and I'm skipping a side against Courtfield Wayfarers. I'm a man short, and I don't want to enlist the services of one of these country yokels. I want a public school man, if I can get one. Will you play?"

The colonel spoke swiftly and breathlessly. He was both hot and flustered. His team was already taking the field, and the first pair of batsmen for Courtfield Wayfarers were walking out to the wickets, swinging their bats with a businesslike air.

Vernon-Smith felt just in the humour for a game of cricket.

Cycling was all right in its way, but the Bounder had already ridden twenty miles under a blazing sun, and it was beginning to grow monotonous.

Fortunately, Vernon-Smith was in flannels, and it would only be necessary for him to place his bike in the pavilion and shed his blazer before taking the field.

"I'll play, sir," he said.

"Good! That solves the problem," said the colonel, looking greatly relieved. "What's your name, kid? It'll have to be entered in the score-book."

At that moment Smithy was seized with one of those mischievous impulses which come to all of us at times.

It would be rather a lark, he reflected, to withhold his name, and give the name of somebody else. After all, no harm could arise from such a proceeding.

"Call me Bunter, sir," he said—"William George Bunter!"

The colonel nodded.

"Well, Bunter, I hope you'll prove a rod in pickle for us!"

Two moments later Vernon-Smith took up his position in the field.

He was detailed to field at point—a position which requires a sharp eye and a ready hand. The Bounder had both.

Courtfield Wayfarers were a good side. Their batsmen did not beat about the bush. Their object was to get runs, and to get them as quickly as possible. Their first pair hit up seventy before they were separated.

Vernon-Smith had been given plenty of work to do, and his smart fielding and accurate returns won him several approving nods from Colonel Ranter. And presently a catch came his way—a very difficult one, low down.

The Bounder dived for the ball, and rolled over on the turf with his right hand upraised, and with the leather safe in his clutch.

"Well held, begad!" said the colonel. "Pon my word, Bunter, you're no novice at the game!"

Vernon-Smith chuckled. He tried to picture Billy Bunter holding a catch like that, and the thought tickled him.

Courtfield Wayfarers brought their total up to 226 before they were finally disposed of.

A tea interval followed, and Smithy, who was feeling in need of refreshment, thoroughly enjoyed himself. But he consumed far less than the genuine William George Bunter would have done.

Tea over, Colonel Ranter's eleven started on their formidable task.

Runs came quickly at the start, the colonel hitting up a brilliant fifty before being caught at the wicket.

Vernon-Smith glanced over the shoulder of the man who was keeping the score.

The last name on the batting list was W. G. Bunter.

When it came to the Bounder's turn to bat, there were thirty-five runs required to win.

The colonel looked rather doleful.

"Afraid we sha'n't do it," he said. "Go for the bowling hot and strong, Bunter. The other man—your partner—is no good. I only play him for his wicket-keeping."

Vernon-Smith made a good start.

The bowling was rather tired, and the Bounder fairly collared it. There was loud applause when he banged two successive balls to the boundary.

Smithy's partner, although he made no runs, managed to keep his end up. He stopped every ball dead, except those which he knew would be wide of the wicket. These he allowed to pass.



The Bounder dived for the ball, and rolled over on the turf with the leather safely in his clutches.

Hitting out with fine resolution, Vernon-Smith knocked off the runs, and won the match for his side.

Shortly afterwards his partner was bowled off his pads, in edging away from a leg ball, and the game was over. Smithy had made 44 not out.

Colonel Ranter begged him to stay and have tea at his house, but Smithy replied that he must be pushing on.

It was with a glow of satisfaction that he left the cricket-ground. He regarded that 44 not out as his best knock of the season. And as he continued his cycling tour he felt that life was well worth living.

II.

"Parcel for Bunter!"

Somebody made that announcement in the hall at Greyfriars, a few days later.

There was a crowd of fellows in the hall, and they all looked surprised.

Bunter himself looked more surprised than anybody. Parcels for the fat junior were like angel-visits, few and far between.

"It's only a small parcel," said Bob Cherry. "Can't be tuck."

Billy Bunter opened the parcel in the

presence of his schoolfellows, and drew out a glistening object.

There was a gasp of amazement from the onlookers.

"A gold watch, by Jove!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Is that a present from one of your titled relations, Billy?"

The watch was accompanied by a letter, which, after reading it himself, Billy Bunter handed round to the others.

It ran thus:

"My Dear Bunter,—Allow me to present you with the enclosed gold watch, as a mark of appreciation for your fine batting display against Courtfield Wayfarers on Bank Holiday. Your 44 not out was one of the finest exhibitions I have seen this season. You should make a great name for yourself in the cricketing world, my boy!

"Yours very sincerely,

"RUPERT RANTER, Colonel."

The sensation which this letter caused may be better imagined than described.

"My only aunt!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Do I dream, do I wonder and doubt? Is things what they seem, or is visions about? Our prize porpoise has actually won fame and glory on the cricket-field!"

Billy Bunter swelled visibly. He swelled so much, in fact, that he seemed in danger of sharing the fate of the frog in the fable.

"After this, Wharton," he said loftily, "you'll hardly dare to keep me out of the Remove eleven!"

The captain of the Remove looked utterly dazed.

"There—there's a catch in it somewhere!" he stammered. "You're the last fellow in the world to do the G. L. Jessop stunt."

Billy Bunter pointed to the letter.

"There's proof," he said. "I hit up 44 not out for Colonel Ranter's eleven against Courtfield Wayfarers on last half."

"But I understood you were going to spend that holiday at home with your people?" said Nugent.

"Ahem! I—I changed my mind. I had a telegram from Colonel Ranter to say that my services were urgently required on the cricket-ground, so I went."

"Oh, you awful slobber!" murmured Vernon-Smith under his breath. But aloud he said nothing. He wondered how far Bunter would go.

Billy Bunter tucked the gold watch into his pocket, and rolled away, looking very pompous and important.

During the days that followed, Greyfriars could talk of nothing but Billy Bunter's amazing achievement on the cricket-field. Even the high and mighty Sixth-Formers discussed it in their studies. Bunter's name was on everybody's lips.

But the true facts of the case soon came to light.

Colonel Ranter happened to be passing Greyfriars in his car, and he dropped in to the Remove Form-room to have a word with the fellow who had been responsible for winning the match.

Instead of addressing Bunter, the colonel singled out Vernon-Smith. And then everything came out.

Billy Bunter was ordered to hand over the gold watch to Smithy. And after lessons something else was handed over—to Bunter. It took the form of a record bumping!

Everybody agreed that it was like Bunter's cheek to bask in glory to which he was not entitled. But he paid dearly for it, and his yells of anguish were like one of Hoskins' pianoforte solos—discordant and shrill!

As for Smithy, he will treasure that gold watch until—to quote his own words—he is a greybearded old jossler with the gout!

THE END.

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Impertinent Interviews!
(Continued from page 10.)

I REALLY don't know where to spend a holiday.

I've read Tom Brown's article on the subject in this issue, but I shouldn't dream of following the advice of a champion chump who doesn't know what he's talking about!

There are so many charming English counties in which I should like to spend a holiday that I'm at my wits' end which to choose.

Permit me, dear readers, to burst into song!

"Oh, how my restless spirit pants
To spend a holiday in Hants!
To ride a bike, or walk on stilts,
Along the leafy lanes of Wilts!"

You didn't know I was a budding Shakespeare, did you? Dick Penfold, our bold bad bard, will have to look to his laurels!

But this holiday question is an awful poser. Hampshire is a topping county, and so is Wiltshire. But then, there are others.

Excuse me! I must inflict a further spasm upon you!

"I'd like to practise japes and pranks
Among the factory lads of Lancs.
I'd love to ride a nimble boss
Through Devon, Somerset, and Glos!"

But there is a further batch of counties which claim recognition. I dare not ignore them, or the "Greyfriars Herald" readers who live in those counties will rise up in their wrath and smite me!

There is Surrey, for instance; and Hertfordshire.

Swallow a stiff limejuice and soda, and prepare to receive the third stanza!

"I should be free from care and worry
If only I could stay in Surrey.
Or, armed with compass, maps, and charts,
Go wandering through the woods of Herts!"

Billy Bunter, who is standing at my elbow as I write, informs me that "charts" does not rhyme with "Herts." But then Bunter, in his pigheaded ignorance, pronounces that famous county as "Hurts." Matter of fact, it does give you a pain to behold such astounding ignorance!

But stay! I am going to perpetrate yet another four-lined atrocity!

"Some fellows fairly lose their heads
When talking of the charms of Beds.
While others praise the pigs and ducks
You slaughter when you bike in Bucks!"

I really can't make up my mind which county to visit.

It's no use asking Harry Wharton's opinion. He's simply crazy on his beloved Hampshire, and he can't talk cricket without dragging in the names of Tennyson and Mead and Brown. If he had his own way, he'd drag me off to his home in Hampshire every time the holidays came round. But on this occasion I flatly refuse to be drug—I mean, dragged.

Anyone would think Hampshire was the only county in England. But there are others!

I must get a further spasm of poetry off my chest.

"A splendid county, Nugent thinks,
Is that one in the east, called Lincs.
While Coker hopes to break some necks
(On motor-bike) in Middlesex!"

But we are getting no "forrader."
I shall simply have to make a decision
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soon, or my holiday will come and go, and I shall still be cudgelling my brains at Greyfriars!

Let me see. Which was Shakespeare's county? Oh, I know!

"Shakespeare, who wrote 'Alas, poor Yorick!'
Was once a resident of Warwick.
But stay! What splendid stunning stunts
A chap could have in dear old Hunts!"

It's a great pity that the crocuses and daffodils bloom rather early in the season. I'm very fond of flowers; and how topping it would be

"To gather crocuses and daffs
Within the rural parts of Staffs!
And 'twould be absolutely grand
To gather pinks in Cumberland!"

I am still as undecided as ever. Perhaps I had better give the English counties a miss, and go to Wales. Morgan, who hails from that Principality, tells me there are some perfectly priceless counties there.

"He tells me that it would be 'bon'
To spend a holiday in Mon.
To travel, on the bus or tram,
Through those big mining towns in Glam!"

But here comes Vernou-Smith. He informs me that his uncle's car is waiting in the Close, and that if I don't come quietly, he'll get a party of fellows to carry me down to the car by force.

No need to ask him where he intends to take me.

I shall spend my holiday in Hampshire, after all.

SOCIETY SNAPSHOTS.
By BOB CHERRY.

MISS BESSIE BUNTER was recently awarded first prize in a Beauty Contest promoted at Cliff House. She was the only competitor!

MR. WILLIAM GOSLING complains that a number of "young rips" played a practical joke on him the other day, as an act of revenge for his having reported them for coming in late. What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the Gosling!

HERR OTTO GANS is suffering from an attack of measles—German measles, of course!

MR. PAUL PROUT went on a grouse-shooting expedition last week-end. He shot nothing. Well, he can't grouse!

MR. W. G. BUNTER was awarded a thousand lines in class a few days ago. He is taking a long time to recover from his imposition!

LORD MAULEVERER has been accused by the critics of not having sufficient energy to play games. Nonsense! His lordship is always playing "nap" on his study sofa!

MR. CECIL REGINALD TEMPLE is in the sanny. His complaint has been diagnosed as "swelled head"!

"Impertinent ones, you mean! Well, you can ask them, but you won't get them answered. I'm busy!"

"What are you doing?"

"Packing up, ready for the holidays."

"Where are you going?"

"I'm going to stay at Bunter Park, Bunkumshire, with one of my titled relations."

Having said which, Billy Bunter proceeded to ignore my existence. He tossed a cricket blazer into the trunk, and then a pair of buckskin shoes, a stylish bathing costume, and a suit of pink-and-pale-blue pyjamas.

Presently there was a tramping of feet in the passage.

Billy Bunter rose hastily to his feet.

"I'm going to get a snack at the tuck-shop," he explained.

And then he departed—not by way of the door, but through the open window, which I thought was a very unusual proceeding.

I was left alone in the study, wondering why Billy Bunter had taken flight in such a strange manner.

Then the door opened, and Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent, and Johnny Bull strode in. They were armed with cricket-stumps, and the expressions on their faces caused me to back away in alarm.

For a moment there was a painful silence.

Johnny Bull was the first to find his voice.

"My trunk!" he roared.

"My cricket blazer!" howled Bob Cherry.

"My priceless pyjamas!" yelled Nugent.

"Blessed if he hasn't bagged my bathing costume as well!" hooted Johnny Bull. "Mob the beastly pirate!"

For a moment I was too dazed to realise what all the commotion was about.

And then the truth dawned upon me with startling suddenness.

Billy Bunter, having very few belongings of his own to pack, had calmly "borrowed" Johnny Bull's trunk and bathing costume, Bob Cherry's cricket blazer, and Frank Nugent's pyjamas. And the three wrathful juniors, on finding me alone in the study, had naturally jumped to the conclusion that I was the borrower!

I tried to explain, but I could not get a word in edgeways.

Johnny Bull seized me by the collar, and slung me across the table as if I were a sack of coke.

When the castigation was over, I felt like a limp rag.

"Oh, you champion idiots!" I groaned. "Why didn't you let me explain? That pirate Bunter's to blame for this!"

"What?"

"I came here to interview him for the "Herald," and when he heard you coming he bolted through the window!"

"Oh, my hat! There's been a miscarriage of justice!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"We are awfully sorry!"

"Hear, hear!" said Frank Nugent.

"What about a little feed in the tuck-shop; coming along, now?"

"Good wheeze!" I said enthusiastically.

"My treat!" interrupted Mauly, from the passage.

So that, in spite of my misfortune, I had a gay afternoon, after all.

[Supplement iv.]

"MAULY AND THE CARAVANNERS I"

(Continued from page 8.)

"I've a jolly good mind to thrash you, Bull."

"Shut up!" snorted Johnny.

"I say—"

"If you want me to lick you," said Johnny Bull, ferociously, "you've only got to go on jawing."

"Oh, really, you know—"

"Shut up!"

Billy Bunter decided that it would be wiser to shut up. His wonderful scheme of hanging round Pon's bungalow and fishing for an invitation did not seem to recommend itself to the Famous Five.

But if Billy Bunter said less, he thought the more—and that day his fat brain was very busy. Billy Bunter saw no reason whatever why a fellow shouldn't "let himself go" on a holiday; and Bunter's thoughts lingered enviously and longingly upon Pon's bungalow, and the "rorty time" that the Highcliffe nuts were undoubtedly having there.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Uninvited Guest!

"G LORIOUS!" said Bob Cherry. Five of the Greyfriars caravanners, at least, were enjoying themselves at the camp by the bright blue sea.

Tramping over the downs, swimming in the sea, and climbing the cliffs, were quite enough to keep the Famous Five busy and cheerful. Those occupations did not appeal to Billy Bunter; he was in rather a grouching mood that day. Even when Bob Cherry brought in a plentiful supply of eggs, cheese, and milk from a neighbouring farm, Bunter only grunted; and when quite a handsome supply of "tuck" was fetched from the town, Bunter blinked at it with a disparaging eye. Still, he did it full justice.

Certainly, Bunter was glad of a rest; he was quite "fed" with tramping along with the caravan. Generally, when a long halt was made, he was content to eat and sleep and loaf. But now other thoughts were moving in Bunter's mind.

"Rather rot, this caravanning," he remarked, when the caravanners gathered to tea.

"Tired of it?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Yes!" grunted Bunter.

"You can get a train home from near Stacliffe."

Bunter did not seem to hear that remark. It was not a train home from Stacliffe that he wanted, evidently.

"There's no fun," he said.

"What's the matter with swimming?"

"Rot!"

"And going over the cliffs—"

"Rubbish!"

"We've done ten miles on the downs to-day," said Bob. "Why didn't you come?"

"Bosh!"

"We'll trot into the town this evening, and go to the cinema, if you like, Bunter," said Harry Wharton tolerantly.

"Who wants to go to a blessed cinema?"

"Well, I rather like the idea," said Bob Cherry. "We can see a few pictures, and get home early to bed."

"Who wants to go early to bed?" grunted Bunter, still in his pessimistic vein.

"We all do I think," said Nugent. "So would you, if you didn't loaf about all day doing nothing."

"Still, Bunter can stay and mind the camp, if he likes," grinned Johnny Bull. "We oughtn't to leave the camp unguarded in the evening. Some tramp might come along and pinch the horse."

Bunter blinked at the chums of the Remove in a rather curious sidelong way.

"Well, I don't mind," he said. "Anything to oblige. I'll stay and look after the camp."

"My dear ass—" began Wharton.

"I don't mind, really," said Bunter.

"Leave it to me."

It was so unlike William George Bunter to give any consideration to any person excepting W. G. B., that the juniors stared at him in surprise. But Bunter was apparently in earnest.

"Well, one of us ought to stay," said Bob. "We'll toss up for it, if you like, Bunter."

"I tell you I'll stay."

"Well, if you'd really rather," said Wharton, puzzled.

"The fact is, I'm tired," said Bunter, with dignity. "I do practically all the work of this outfit. Too tired to go gadding about. That's how it is."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And I don't see anything cackle at!" snapped Bunter.

So when the evening drew on, as Bunter definitely volunteered to remain in the camp on guard, the Famous Five brushed their clothes, and started for Stacliffe. A stroll through the holiday town, and a visit to the cinema, made a pleasant variation.

Billy Bunter watched them go, and grinned as they disappeared down the road in the sunset.

"Silly asses!" he commented.

The fat junior went into the van; and his next proceedings were rather curious.

He opened all the bags belonging to the party, and made a careful selection of the clothes therein. From one he selected a waistcoat, from another a collar, from another a tie. Harry Wharton & Co. had not brought much in the way of clothes with them, owing to considerations of space; but by "pooling" the whole outfit, as it were, Bunter had plenty to choose from.

He was soon arrayed.

Some of his own clothes he had to wear; for not by dint of the utmost stretching could he have squeezed into anybody else's trousers. The borrowed waistcoat would not button, but Bunter made that all right by splitting it at the back. The back wouldn't show; and as for the damage to the waistcoat, that did not trouble Bunter at all—it wasn't his waistcoat.

Wharton's best shoes fitted him fairly well; and a pair of Nugent's socks looked very nice. So did Nugent's tie, and Hurree Singh's tie-pin. Bob Cherry's collar was all right; and Bunter rather fancied himself in Hurree Singh's panama hat—the nabob having fortunately taken his straw with him to Stacliffe.

Bunter surveyed himself, as well as he could, in the rather tiny looking-glass, and was satisfied with the result. Certainly he looked much neater and cleaner than usual; and he had no doubt that he looked quite a nut. It was annoying, of course, that Wharton had taken his gold watch and chain with him; annoying that Inky had taken his malacca cane. But fellows were thoughtless and selfish; Bunter was used to that.

He felt fairly well satisfied as he stepped out of the caravan. Bunter was supposed to be guarding the camp; but he did not even think of that as he started off.

His object had been to get the Famous Five out of sight; feeling that they would have objected to the little scheme he had in mind—as well as to the raid upon their wardrobe.

He did not even think of locking up the van before he started. He was too busy to think of such trifles as that.

The Owl of the Remove gave a cautious blink around him in the gathering dust as he left the camp. But there was no sign of the Famous Five. No doubt they were at the cinema at that very moment.

With a grin on his fat face, Bunter started for the bungalows along the shore.

It did not take him long to find the Firs.

He opened the gate coolly, and went up the path towards the lighted house. But he hesitated to approach the door.

From the open French windows on his left came a blaze of light and the murmur of voices. Ponsonby & Co., evidently, were there. Still Bunter hesitated.

He could not help remembering his hapless adventure with the Highcliffe nuts on the previous day. They had collared him and ragged him without mercy. Bunter was quite prepared to forgive them and to extend the right hand of fellowship. But the worrying question was: were Ponsonby & Co. prepared to do the same?

Lord Mauleverer was in the party now, and he was a Greyfriars chap. And surely Ponsonby & Co. couldn't rag one Greyfriars fellow with another looking on! Mauly wouldn't stand it, surely! Surely the schoolboy earl would stand by his old pal Bunter and keep the Highcliffe cads civil, at least! Bunter thought so—at least, he hoped so—but he hesitated. Unless Mauleverer's presence was a protection, he was fairly walking into the lion's den by "butting" into Pon's bungalow.

His hesitation was very natural. He crept into the veranda and approached the window, and peered in. Three or four fellows, all in evening clothes and smoking cigarettes, were in sight there—among them Lord Mauleverer, only Mauly was not smoking. Gadsby's voice came to Bunter's ears.

"Have one, Mauly?"

"Thanks, no."

"My dear old bean, put on a smoke—just a little one!"

"I'd rather not, thanks."

"Chuck it, Gaddy!" came Monson's voice, with a sneer in it. "Don't you know Mauleverer's settin' us a shinin' example?"

"Begad!"

"Hallo! Is that Pon?" said Vavasour, with a glance towards the window.

Bunter backed quickly out of sight.

There was a scent of cigarette smoke in the shadowy veranda, and the sound of footsteps. Bunter realised that Ponsonby had gone into the garden to smoke, and would return by way of the French windows. His fat heart thumped. If Pon caught him—

He had come there to visit Pon, and he didn't know what would happen if Pon caught him! Surely never had a fisher for invitations been placed in such a doubtful and worrying position before!

He thought of stepping boldly into the light and saying: "Hallo, Pon, old bean!" But he didn't. He crouched into the shadow of a tub of palms on the veranda, and almost held his breath. Two dim figures stopped in the veranda



"There he goes!" A yell from the bungalow warned Bunter that the Highcliffe fellows had seen him, and he dashed recklessly through the flower beds to escape. (See Chapter 9.)

near him, and he heard low voices. Ponsonby and Drury were standing smoking, and looking out over the gardens towards the sea. Their muttering voices came to Bunter.

"We'd better get goin'," Drury said. "After all, that's what we've got him here for."

"I know."

"We cut it out last night," said Drury. "But, dash it all, Pon—"

Ponsonby blew out a cloud of smoke.

"He's a dashed strait-laced ninny, and the dickens knows how he will take it!" he said.

"But that's why you brought him here!"

"Oh, I know that."

"He's got lots of tin," said Drury.

"He wouldn't be here if he hadn't."

Drury chuckled softly over his cigarette.

"Well, Gaddy's brother is gettin' impatient," he said. "May as well get goin', Pon. Gaddy major is fillin' himself up with drinks, I fancy, and we don't want him screwed to begin with."

"He'd better not get screwed till we've finished with Mauleverer!" growled Ponsonby.

"Then let's get goin'."

Ponsonby smoked his cigarette through with knitted brows. Behind the tub of palms Bunter was grinning.

If he had not guessed already, he knew now why Lord Mauleverer was a guest in Pon's bungalow, though evidently the schoolboy earl himself did not know.

"Well?" said Drury, breaking the silence again.

"We'll try it on," said Ponsonby, throwing away the stump of his cigarette. "Come on!"

They moved on past Bunter, and entered the lighted room.

"Waitin' for you, Pon!" said Monson.

"Well, I'm here."

The French window closed, and a curtain fell into place. The light was almost shut off. Bunter crept out from behind the palm tub, and flattened his fat little nose against the glass. But he could see nothing. He listened with all his ears, but there was no sound from the room. He concluded at last that the nutty party had moved into another room. He ventured to push open the French window at last. It was not locked, and he put his head through the curtain. The room was empty.

Bunter drew a deep breath, and stepped in.

The electric light still blazed, though the nuts had quitted the room. On the tables were ashtrays, crowded with cigarette-ends and ash. A tumbler with the dregs of wine in it stood on the mantelpiece. Bunter stood and listened, his heart beating. Should he show himself at last, trusting to the protection of Lord Mauleverer's presence? He was debating that problem in his fat mind when there was a footstep, and instinctively he darted out of sight behind a screen in a corner.

Through an opening in the ornamental work of the screen he watched. Two men, evidently servants, came into the room—two menservants, with hard and vicious faces. They were grinning.

"They're at it!" said one of them.

"Elp yourself to the smokes, George."

The speaker scooped cigarettes from a half-empty box on the table. "They'll never be missed."

"I'm going to 'ave a drink," said George, crossing over to the tantalus in the corner.

He came very near to Bunter, and the Owl of the Remove held his breath.

There was a gurgle of liquor.

"We sha'n't be wanted any more, George. We can cut—"

"You bet! Better lock up," said George.

Bunter heard a key turned, and realised that the French windows were fastened. He was in for it now! The two men took another drink each and quitted the room, turning out the light as they went. And Billy Bunter, after waiting for them to get clear, crept to the door they had left by, and opened it cautiously. He found himself in a wide, lighted hall. A half-open door gave him a glimpse of a dining-room, unlighted. Further along was another door, from under which a light gleamed, and from that room came a murmur of voices. Evidently Ponsonby & Co. were there, and in that room they were "getting goin'," as Drury had called it. Bunter crept to the door and stopped there, longing to enter, and afraid to make the venture. And as he stood in painful doubt and indecision, a voice came from within the room, and the words he heard made the fat junior jump. "Make your game!"

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Play or Pay!

"No end amusin'!" said Ponsonby. Lord Mauleverer glanced at him and nodded.

"Yaas," he said.

"Of course," said Ponsonby, "it's only a game—only a bit of fun, you know."

"Yaas."

"Merely to pass the time, of course."

"Yaas."

"Won't you have a cig, Mauly?"

"Yaas—I mean, no."

"Well, about this game," said Ponsonby. "We're all goin' to take a hand, and you may as well. It's really no end amusin'. Isn't it, Gaddy major?"

Captain Gadsby, who was sitting on a corner of the table, smoking a strong cheroot, nodded. The worthy captain's face was flushed, and his eyes had a rather uncertain look. The "fiz" flowed freely at the bungalow, and Captain Gadsby had punished the champagne at dinner.

"Oh, yes," said the captain. "Same game as they play at old Monte, you know, kid."

"Monte Carlo?" asked Mauleverer.

"That's it! You've been there," said Ponsonby.

Lord Mauleverer nodded.

"Yaas, I've been to the place," he said.

"Didn't you take a squint into the show?" asked Monson, with interest.

"Yaas."

"And played?"

"No."

"Why on earth not? You've got plenty of money."

Mauly looked at him.

"I don't think they'd allow school-boys to play," he said. "Anyhow, I wouldn't have. You see, my uncles would be shocked if I took up gamblin'."

"Oh, never mind the merry old uncles," said Gadsby derisively. "Give the avuncular relatives a rest."

"Chuck that, kid!" said Captain Gadsby, with a warning glance at his hopeful young brother. "Mauleverer's right."

"Yaas," said Mauleverer innocently. "You see, gamblin's rather rotten an' blackguardly, isn't it? Not the thing, you know."

Some of the Highcliffe nuts coughed. As Mauleverer had been brought here specially to gamble, and to lose his

money, his straightforward opinion was not exactly what they wanted to hear.

But Cecil Ponsonby knew how to play his fish with skill.

"Quite so!" he assented. "But a little game for fun isn't gamblin'. A chap doesn't want to be self-righteous."

"Oh, no!" said Mauleverer at once. "Trot out the roulette, Gaddy!"

Gadsby "trotted out" the roulette. Lord Mauleverer glanced at it with interest. It was a circular bowl, of which the bottom formed a wheel, revolving on a central pivot. The wheels were numbered 0 to 36, and under each number was a slot, into which the ivory ball was to fall when spun. It was a replica of the roulette at Monte Carlo, but, of course, on a much smaller scale. At "Monte" the roulette is built into an enormous table. Captain Gadsby's machine was made to stand on a table, and was not more than eighteen inches in diameter.

Gadsby placed the roulette on the table, and Monson unrolled a green cloth marked with yellow numbers.

A slight uneasiness was visible in Lord Mauleverer's countenance.

Simple-hearted and unsuspecting as he was, he could not help remembering a good deal of talk he had heard at Greyfriars with regard to the reckless nuts of Highcliffe. A roulette-machine was really just what might have been expected in Pon's bungalow. But his lordship was rather relieved when Drury opened a box and turned out a heap of bone counters on the table.

If the game was to be played for counters, there was not much harm in it, any more than in a round game of cards.

The relieved expression on Mauleverer's face made Ponsonby set his teeth. He had expected some difficulty with this gull he had determined to net; but he began to see that the difficulties were greater than he had anticipated. Lord Mauleverer was not a particularly bright youth, but he had a good deal of commonsense, and he knew the difference between right and wrong. And on that difference he was as firm as a rock.

"Who's goin' to take the bank?" asked Drury.

"Oh, Gaddy major!"

"I don't mind," yawned the captain.

Captain Gadsby had "taken the bank" on many an occasion—and more than once he had been taking the bank in some shady resort when the police had dropped in. But that was in London; there was no such danger here. Pon's bungalow was not a gambling-club; though that was what he was using it for. Mauleverer was not the first gilded youth that had been invited to that cheery bungalow for a stay, and had paid pretty dearly for his sojourn there. At present Mauleverer was the only guest, outside the Highcliffe circle. He was the richest pigeon that had come Pon's way—if only Pon could succeed in plucking him.

Ponsonby handed out a stack of counters to each member of the party, and the captain took a larger stack to keep the bank. With a cigar stuck out of one corner of his mouth, and his dress-tie a little awry, the gallant captain began to spin the wheel.

"Make your game!"

The captain spoke, as if from habit, in the droning voice of the practised croupier.

Ponsonby & Co. began raining counters on the green cloth.

When they were by themselves, the

Highcliffe nuts did not play for counters—the latter were only produced for Lord Mauleverer's benefit. The pigeon had to be tempted very warily into the trap.

A game for counters was a terrible bore to Ponsonby & Co., and their looks showed that they were not enjoying it. But Lord Mauleverer found it amusing.

He knew little or nothing about the game; but he threw on his counters cheerily, and, to his surprise, he began to win heavily. It did not even cross his mind that the gallant captain was manipulating the wheel specially to let him win. Probably Mauly would have supposed such a trick impossible, if he had thought of it; and he did not even think of it. He looked quite elated when his pile of counters grew and grew.

"By gad, you've cleared a hundred quids, Mauly," said Ponsonby presently.

Mauleverer laughed good-humouredly.

The counters were of different colours, and marked with different values—white for five shillings, yellow for half-sovereigns, red for pounds. Certainly, if they had represented real money—as they were intended to do—Mauly would have been a heavy winner, for the red pieces before him made up quite a large pile.

"Lucky for the captain I'm not playin' for money," remarked Lord Mauleverer.

"Oh, I could stand it!" said the captain.

"Why not have a little money on, to make a variety?" suggested Gadsby.

"Only shillin's, of course—much the same as playin' for counters."

"Just the same," said Monson.

"Good idea!"

"Yes, go it!"

"I'll stick to counters," remarked Mauleverer.

Ponsonby set his lips. But he still

hoped that winning, and the sight of money on the table, would tempt the gilded youth's cupidity. The Highcliffe juniors started with shillings and half-crowns, and Captain Gadsby paid out his losses in coin of the realm. Not that the game was serious—the nuts knew Captain Gadsby's skill with the wheel far too well to play when he was acting as croupier. The whole proceeding was a little comedy to tempt Lord Mauleverer to play, it being understood that there was to be a fair division of the plunder afterwards. Among themselves, Ponsonby & Co. doubtless had some sort of a code of honour. But towards "outsiders" they acted in concert like any gang of sharpers. And Lord Mauleverer was an outsider.

Only Vavasour stood out of the game, smoking a cigarette and looking on languidly. Vavasour was more fool than rascal, and he often stood out of Ponsonby's more shady exploits. But he was too much under Pon's influence to dream of opposing any of his schemes, however blackguardly and shady they might be.

Lord Mauleverer continued to play with counters. There were soon currency notes on the green cloth, and then bank-notes. But Ponsonby, whenever his searching eyes turned on Mauly's face, failed to read any sign of greed or cupidity there.

If Mauly was shocked at the game going on around him, he did not say so, or allow his face to betray it; he was not there to preach to the Highcliffians. But it was very evident that he did not intend to join in gambling.

Ponsonby muttered a curse behind his cigarette.

He had taken a great deal of trouble with Mauleverer, and he had let that simple youth bore him dreadfully for a



Wharton was first in, and he rushed straight at Gadsby, giving him no time to lock the door." "Back up!" yelled Gaddy. "They're in!"
(See Chapter 11.)

whole day. He was quite determined that the pigeon was going to be plucked, somehow.

If Mauleverer would not fall into the trap, he had to be pushed into it. A champagne cork popped, and Ponsonby filled glasses. Two or three of the nuts drank, and Pon called to Mauly.

"Here you are, Mauly!"

"Ginger-pop?" asked Mauleverer innocently.

"Ha, ha! No; fizz!"

"Thanks. Too hefty for me," said Mauleverer.

"My dear fellow, you haven't come here to be a shinin' example to youth," said Ponsonby, losing his temper and his finesse for a moment. "For goodness' sake, take your drink like the rest!"

Lord Mauleverer looked at him calmly.

"I'd rather not," he said. "I don't drink."

Ponsonby tossed off his own glass savagely. It was not the first time, by many a score, that he had drunk champagne; but it brought a flush to his face and a brightness into his eyes. He was growing much more reckless, and much less tactful with his honoured guest.

A sign passed between him and the captain, and Captain Gadsby's manipulation of the wheel changed. Mauleverer began to lose steadily now. Whatever numbers he backed failed to come up. If he played on even numbers, odd came up; if he backed red, it was sure to be black. Mauleverer did not mind in the least. The game had amused him at first, but he was growing tired of it; and, indeed, roulette without the excitement of gambling is rather a childish game. Lord Mauleverer was quite content to see his stack of counters diminishing.

The other fellows left off playing. They understood that Ponsonby was driven to his last resource now, and that an unpleasant surprise was to be sprung on Lord Mauleverer when all his counters were gone.

Mauly had started with counters to the nominal value of thirty pounds, according to the figures marked on them. In the ordinary way of a gambling club he would have bought the counters for cash, paying for them, and redeeming them at the end of the game for cash, if any were left. A few more turns of the wheel, and all Mauly's thirty pounds were gone, and the schoolboy earl rose from the table, suppressing a yawn.

"Stony?" asked Ponsonby, with a smile.

"They're all gone, dear boy," said Mauleverer. "Begad, it's about time to think of bed!"

"Oh, have some more, and try your luck again!"

"Thanks—I think I've had enough."

"All serene! Settle up with Captain Gadsby, then," said Ponsonby carelessly. Mauly looked at him.

"Settle up?" he repeated.

"Yes—for the chips, you know."

"I don't know," said Mauleverer. "I don't understand you, Ponsonby."

Ponsonby smiled.

"You didn't pay for your chips when you started," he explained calmly. "It's usual, but between friends it doesn't matter. Settle up now."

"Still I don't understand," said Lord Mauleverer calmly. "You don't mean to be sayin' that we've been playin' for money, do you?"

Ponsonby raised his eyebrows.

"The counters are marked with their value," he said tartly.

"But I understood—"

"I suppose you understood that we don't spend an evenin' here playin' a kid's game like marbles?" said Ponsonby contemptuously. "Of course the counters represent money!"

"Of course!" said Gadsby.

"Absolutely!" murmured Vavasour.

A flush crept into Lord Mauleverer's cheeks.

"You don't mean to say that you want thirty pounds out of me?" he asked very quietly.

"I!" said Ponsonby. "I've got nothin' to do with it. Captain Gadsby took the bank, and he stood to lose if you won. You've got to settle with him."

"That's that!" assented the captain, lighting a fresh cigar. "But never mind—if you're short of tin, Mauleverer, I'll take your I O U."

"You won't take my I O U," said Mauleverer. "And I'm not short of tin. But I never gamble; and Ponsonby stated distinctly that this game was only in fun. And I shall not pay anybody a single penny!"

There was a buzz in the room, and Captain Gadsby's brow grew dark and his jaw seemed to project. At that moment the gallant captain looked just what he really was—a gaming-house bully. Lord Mauleverer looked round calmly. He understood now—fully. It was because he had resisted the temptation to gamble that this trick was played on him; the young rogues were determined to get hold of his money by hook or by crook. His lip curled scornfully.

"You can go on if you like," said Ponsonby, at last. "Captain Gadsby will give you your revenge."

"Quite ready!" said the captain.

"Play or pay!" said Monson.

"I shall not play and I shall not pay!" said Lord Mauleverer serenely. "I fancy I know why you asked me here now, Ponsonby, and I'm sorry I came. I've got landed in a dashed gamblin'-den, begad! I'm goin' to my room now to pack my bags. I'm not stayin' here another night!"

And Lord Mauleverer walked to the door and threw it open. There was a sudden gasp, and his lordship started back as a fat figure tumbled into the room.

"By gad! Bunter!"

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Fallen Among Thieves!

"O W!" Billy Bunter gave a startled gasp as he rolled in, taken by surprise by the sudden opening of the door.

The Owl of the Remove had not dared to venture in. He had stood outside the card-room listening like a very podgy Peri at the gate of Paradise. He was torn between his desire to be "goey" along with the Highcliffe nuts and his fear of being kicked out by Ponsonby. In that unhappy state of uncertainty he had remained till the sudden opening of the door settled the question for him.

There was a shout of surprise from Ponsonby & Co. at the sight of the fat junior.

"Bunter—here!" yelled Ponsonby.

"You fat cad—"

"Kick him out!"

"Oh dear!" Bunter scrambled up, and blinked round the room through his big spectacles. "I say, you fellows, it's all right! I—I've come in for a little game, you know! Count me in!"

"You fat fool—"

"It's all right, I tell you!" gasped Bunter. "I'm no end of a sport, you know—not a soft ass like Mauly!"

"Begad!"

"And I've got tons of money!" said Bunter desperately.

If Ponsonby had believed that statement Bunter's reception would have been very different; all was grist that came to Pon's mill. But Pon knew Billy Bunter too well.

"You fat rascal!" he exclaimed furiously. "How dare you intrude here?"

"Oh, really, Pon—"

"Kick him out!"

"Rag the fat bounder!"

"I—I say, you fellows!" gasped Bunter, backing away in alarm. "I—I say, you know—be sports!"

Evidently Bunter's hesitation in showing himself had been well grounded. The Highcliffe nuts weren't in the least pleased to see him, and his friendly overtures were not likely in the least to be regarded. He came at an unfortunate moment, too, when the nuts were all feeling angry and exasperated over their failure with Mauleverer.

"Kick the fat cad out!" shouted Ponsonby savagely.

"Oh crumbs!"

Monson and Gadsby rushed at Bunter, and the fat junior dodged out into the hall with great celerity.

"Here, hold on!" exclaimed Lord Mauleverer. "Let Bunter alone!"

Mauly had a strong personal repugnance towards William George, but he was prepared to do his best for him. But Mauly's star was not in the ascendant now. His words were unheeded. Gadsby and Monson pursued Bunter into the hall, and there were immediate sounds of woe. Bunter yelled as they seized him and thumped him, and with a desperate effort he broke loose, squirmed across the hall into the room he had first entered, and slammed the door in the Highcliffians' faces. With great presence of mind—Bunter had plenty of that when his fat skin was in danger—he turned the key in the lock before Monson and Gadsby could get the door open. Then he stood palpitating, all his dreams of being a "goey" sportsman vanishing, to be replaced by a deadly fear of what Ponsonby & Co. would do when they got at him.

Monson and Gadsby returned to the

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card-room, whence angry voices could be heard.

"That fat brute gone?" asked Ponsonby savagely.

"He's locked himself in the smoke-room."

"Never mind—we'll get at him presently. We've got to settle with Mauleverer now."

"I'll say good-bye, if you don't mind," murmured Mauleverer.

"Not till you've paid!" said Ponsonby, with a leer.

The thin veneer of dandyism had fallen from Cecil Ponsonby now. His face was flushed with anger and malice and champagne; his eyes glittered threateningly. The other nuts gathered round. Lord Mauleverer looked at them calmly. He was not in the least afraid, and he was as firm as a rock. Ponsonby & Co. were showing themselves in their true colours at last, but their black looks did not disturb the calmness of the schoolboy earl.

"You owe the bank thirty pounds, Mauleverer!" said Ponsonby, between his teeth.

"I owe the bank nothin'," said Mauleverer tranquilly, "and I decline to pay the bank a shillin'. It's not the money, either, but the principle of the thing. I'm not a gambler."

"You've played and lost—"

"I decline to argue the matter with you, Ponsonby!"

"If you'd won the bank would have paid cash."

"That's a lie, dear man!"

"What!" roared Ponsonby.

"A lie!" said Lord Mauleverer calmly.

"Why, you—you insultin' cad—"

Lord Mauleverer's lip curled.

"I suppose you took me for a dashed fool," he remarked. "Perhaps I am—must have been, in fact, to come here at all. But now you've opened my eyes, Ponsonby, I can see the whole game easily enough. Don't talk to me about cwin' the bank anythin'. You're all in the swim together!"

"What!" shouted Monson.

"Yaas. You wanted me to gamble, and when I wouldn't, you fixed up this rot of playin' for the counters," said Lord Mauleverer. "I may be a fool, begad, but I'm not a dashed fool! And even a dashed fool wouldn't be taken in by a yarn so thin as that, Ponsonby. Cut it out, old man!"

Cecil Ponsonby clenched his hands.

"You refuse to pay?"

"Yaas."

"A gentleman can't refuse to pay a debt of honour," said Captain Gadsby. "Come, now, Mauleverer—"

"I fancy I'm a better judge than you of what a gentleman can do," said Lord Mauleverer disdainfully. "You can't bamboozle me into payin' money for a swindle, dear man!"

"A swindle!" roared the captain.

"Yaas."

"You dare to call me a swindler?"

"Yaas."

The captain came whipping round the table, his brows black, and his fists clenched. If he expected his threatening manner to have any effect on Lord Mauleverer he was disappointed. Mauly looked at him with perfect calmness.

"You'll apologise this instant!" shouted the captain.

Mauly shook his head.

"Dear man, I can't very well apologise for tellin' the truth," he said placidly. "I've fallen into a den of gamblin' blackguards and swindlers. That's the truth, isn't it?"

"Why, you—you—"

"If you'll get out of the doorway, Monson, I'll go to my room an' pack my bags!" said Mauleverer.

Monson looked at Ponsonby.

"Stand where you are!" said the latter. "Mauleverer isn't goin' till this is settled."

"I'm not stayin' another night under this roof!" said Lord Mauleverer calmly.

"How will you help it?" sneered Ponsonby. "Do you know what you're askin' for? A thunderin' good lickin'!"

"Which you'll jolly well get, if you don't do the decent thing," said Monson.

Lord Mauleverer shrugged his shoulders.

"You'll stay in this room," said Ponsonby between his teeth. "I'll give you till midnight to think it over. If you don't decide to pay your debt by then, we'll—"

"I owe no debts, dear man!"

"If you don't pay up by then," hissed Ponsonby, "we'll give you such a raggin' as you've never heard of, and turn you out at midnight with nothin' but your shirt and trousers, and your face blacked and your hair shaved. How will you like that?"

"Oh, gad!"

"You can think it over!" said Ponsonby. "Come on, you fellows. We'll have bridge in the smoke-room till he makes up his mind."

Lord Mauleverer made a step to the door. The Highcliffians hustled him back, and he staggered towards the table. The nuts crowded out, and Ponsonby closed the door, and locked it after him. Lord Mauleverer stared at the locked door, and ejaculated, "Begad!"

Then he went to the window, and jerked aside the blind. The window was covered by an outside wooden shutter, padlocked outside. There was no escape that way.

Lord Mauleverer returned to the table and sat on the corner of it, and ejaculated again, "Begad!" The situation was too much for Mauly. He was in the unfortunate position of the gentleman in the parable who fell among thieves. And how he was going to get out of his scrape Lord Mauleverer hadn't the faintest idea.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Startling News for the Caravanners!

BILLY BUNTER quaked.

He was locked in the smoke-room, and safe for the moment.

The French windows offered a way of escape, but the loud voices from the card-room across the hall reached his ears and chained him to the spot. Bunter wanted to know what was happening, and, as he listened, he was rather glad that he had not been admitted to the precious "game," after all. Being "goey" with Ponsonby & Co. was not, after all, such a fascinating amusement as Bunter had anticipated. He was quite glad he was not in Lord Mauleverer's shoes just then.

As the nuts crowded into the hall, and the door of the card-room was locked, Bunter quaked—curiosity giving place to concern for himself. The nuts seemed to have forgotten him for the moment, however. They were talking angrily in the hall, and seemed to be indulging in recriminations. Ponsonby's proceedings were, apparently, a little too "thick" even for his faithful followers.

"Fat lot of good bringin' the fool here!" Bunter heard Drury growling.

"Makes us look a lot of sharpers!"

"Oh, shut up!" snapped Ponsonby.

"Well, lockin' a chap in a room till he squares—"

"He's not goin' ~~til~~ he's paid!" hissed Ponsonby.

"Might as well take the money off him and have done with it!" said Drury, evidently suffering from qualms.

"Absolutely!" said Vavasour.

"Well, we can't do that, but we can make him pay!" said Ponsonby. "And I'll make him pay, too! Do you think I've wasted a day's time on the cad for nothin'?"

"You shouldn't have brought him here!"

"You were jolly glad to hear that he was comin', all the same," sneered Ponsonby.

"Well, money's tight," said Drury. "Rookin' the fool was all right, if you come to that. But this—this—"

"There's nothin' else for it!"

"Well, I think—"

"Hang what you think!"

"Don't row," said Captain Gadeby.

"Let's have a drink!"

Bunter jumped as the door-handle was turned.

"This dashed door's locked—"

"I forgot; Bunter's in there! Rout that fat cad out!" exclaimed Ponsonby. "We'll take it out of him! Some of you cut round to the French windows!"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter.

He rolled across to the French windows. He remembered that he had seen the manservant lock them, and he was smitten with terror. If the key was gone—

Fortunately for the Owl of the Remove, the servant had left the key in the lock.

Bunter turned it back hastily, and dragged the window open. Already the front door of the bungalow had opened, and light was streaming out into the veranda and the garden.

Billy Bunter scudded across the veranda, rolled over the low balustrade, and dropped into a bed of flowers. There was a yell from the doorway.

"There he goes!"

"Oh crumbs!" spluttered Bunter.

The fat junior was on his feet in a twinkling and scudding away. He trampled recklessly through shrubberies and over flower-beds. Behind him were footsteps and voices, and he knew only too well what to expect if Ponsonby & Co. caught him in their present exasperated mood. The fat junior blundered on wildly in the gloom, and found himself at the gate. Drury was sprinting down the path towards the gate, and he shouted as he sighted Bunter again.

Billy Bunter tore open the gate desperately, and rushed out.

He dashed away down the path at top speed, lost his footing on the slope, and rolled over, yelled, and scrambled up again, and fled as if he were fleeing for his life.

He had covered a good half-mile before he ventured to stop and pump in breath, and then he discovered that there was no pursuit. The Highcliffe nuts had not followed him farther than the gate.

"Oh dear!" gasped Bunter. "Ow, ow, ow! What a night! Oh dear!"

He sat on a knoll and rested, and pumped in breath. He was feeling quite winded, and streaming with perspiration. In the distance a ruddy gleam of flame against the night caught his eye. It was the camp-fire at the caravan camp, and the restarting of the fire announced that Harry Wharton & Co. had returned from Stacliffe.

"Oh dear!" groaned Bunter.

He staggered to his feet and limped on.

He came up to the caravan camp at last, and found five juniors sitting round the camp-fire, discussing cocoa and buns, and the absence of the Owl of the Remove.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is!"

"Bunter—"

"You fat villain—"

Billy Bunter staggered into camp, and sat down, or rather collapsed, in the grass.

"Gimme something to eat!" he gasped.

"I'm done up!"

"I'll give you my boot!" rumbled Johnny Bull. "What do you mean by leaving the camp when you undertook to keep watch?"

"Oh dear!"

"And going over all our bags!" roared Bob Cherry. "That's Inky's tiepin you've got on!"

"And my waistcoat!" exclaimed Wharton. "You must have split it at the back, or it wouldn't button!"

"And my tie!" howled Nugent.

"My shoes—"

"My socks—"

"My esteemed hat—"

"You fat burglar!"

"I—I say, you fellows," gasped Bunter, "I—I've had an awful time, you know."

"Now you're going to have another," said Johnny Bull, rising grimly.

"Yah! Keep off, you beast! Is this the way you treat a fellow for looking after old Mauly, while you've been gadding about in cinemas?"

"Looking after Mauly!" exclaimed Johnny Bull, in astonishment.

"Yes."

"You fat spoofer—"

"Where have you been?" demanded Harry Wharton.

"Gimme something to eat first!"

"Collar him!"

"Hold on!" roared Bunter. "I'll tell you! I—I—I thought I—I—I'd better keep an eye on those rotters and Mauly, you know—"

"Bump him!"

"Yaroooooooop!"

"Now the truth!" said Harry.

"The giddy truth, the whole giddy truth, and nothing but the giddy truth!" admonished Bob Cherry.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Bump him again!"

"Hold on, you beasts!" gasped Bunter. "Leggo! The—the fact is, I—I went to Pon's bungalow—"

"What for?"

"To—to look for old Mauly, you know."

"And you borrowed our clobber to go in?"

"Well, you see, I—I—"

"Bump him!"

"Yoop! Help! Beasts! Ow, ow, ow!" roared Bunter.

"Now cough up the facts," suggested Bob Cherry. "You're a bit of a weight, but we don't mind giving you a few more bumps—"

"Keep off, you beasts!" gasped Bunter. "The—the fact is, I—I went to—to call on Pon, and—and—and I went in, and—and they were going to kick me out—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's nothing to cackle at, you beasts! If I hadn't locked the door I should have been ragged something awful, like poor old Mauly!" gasped Bunter. "Owing to my wonderful presence of mind, I got clear. Ow!"

"Like Mauly!" said Wharton. "I suppose Pon & Co. are not ragging their giddy guest, are they?"

"That's all you know!" snorted Bunter.

"Well, we want to know some more,"

said the captain of the Remove. "If Mauly's been looking for trouble and finding it, we're the fellows to stand by him."

"Hear, hear!"

"Gimme something to eat!"

"You can eat afterwards, you fat porker. Now tell us what's been happening at the bungalow."

"I'd rather have some supper—"

"Bump him!"

"Sheer off!" howled Bunter. "I'm telling you as fast as I can, ain't I? They've locked Mauly in the room, and if he don't pay up thirty pounds by midnight, they're going to snatch him bald-headed. That's all. Now gimme something to eat!"

"Great Scott!"

"But why?" exclaimed Wharton, in amazement. "What's happened?"

"They played roulette—"

"Great pip!"

"They told Mauly it was only fun." Bunter grinned a little. "Pulling his leg, you know. He used up thirty pounds in counters, and then they told him it was real play, and he owed the bank the money. See?"

"The swindling rotters!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"Mauly wouldn't pay—"

"Good old Mauly!"

"So they've locked him in," said Bunter. "They're going to black him all over, and turn him loose at midnight in his shirt and bags—he, he, he!—after licking him, you know, if he don't square. I fancy he'll square. I know I would. He, he, he! Now gimme something to eat."

"Well, my only hat!" said Wharton, with a deep breath. Bob Cherry whistled expressively.

Wharton looked at his watch.

"Half-past eleven!" he said. "Lucky we sat up for that fat idiot to come back. How many of the cads are there at the bung, Bunter?"

Bunter's mouth was full now.

"Eh? I say, this beef is good—real good!" he said. "You might make a fellow a cup of cocoa. Don't be selfish."

"How many are there?" roared Wharton.

"Don't yell at a chap! You might make this beef go down the wrong way, making me jump like that. You're an awfully inconsiderate fellow, Wharton. Yaroooh! Leggo my ear, you beast! There's six Highcliffe rotters, and Gaddy's brother. Ow!"

"Any servants?"

"Two men—rotten-looking pair of rotters, stealing cigarettes and drinks," said Bunter. "They went out. I don't know if they're back. I say, where's the mustard?"

"Seven—perhaps nine," said Harry Wharton thoughtfully. "We'd better take some cricket-stumps with us, you chaps."

"You bet!"

Bunter stared.

"You're not going to the bung!" he gasped.

"We are, fathead!"

"They'll rag you!"

"We'll chance that," said Wharton. "Chuck the cricket-stumps out of the van, Bob. It'll be odds against us, but that crowd aren't much in the fighting line."

"I'm not coming," said Bunter. "I'll stay and look after the—the camp. If any tramps come along, you can rely on me."

"You can go and eat coke!"

Harry Wharton & Co. lost no time in starting. It was a good walk to the

bungalow, and midnight was near at hand. Bunter blinked after them.

"I say, you fellows. I forgot—"

Wharton looked round.

"Well?" he asked, thinking that perhaps Bunter had remembered some detail of the bungalow affair that was of importance.

"I forgot to ask you what you've done with the cake?"

"What?"

"Cake! There was a cake—"

"You fat dummy!" roared Bob Cherry. And the juniors hurried on. Bunter blinked after them, and growled.

"Rotters! I shouldn't wonder if they've eaten the cake! Just like them—selfish to the bone!"

And Bunter rolled into the caravan in search of the cake.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Caravanners to the Rescue!

BOOM!

It was the first stroke of midnight, from somewhere in the town, as Harry Wharton & Co. reached the gate of the Firs Bungalow.

"Just in time!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"The justfulness is terrific!"

The five juniors crowded up the gravel path. That the occupants of the bungalow were still up at that late hour was obvious; from two or three windows light gleamed through the curtains.

There was no other light to be seen along the shore nearer than the distant, twinkling lights of Seacliffe. Silence lay over the scene, broken only by the faint murmur of the sea on the shelving sand.

The juniors gripped their cricket-stumps as they moved on quietly to the house. Mauleverer was there; and, whatever reception they might get, they were going to see Mauleverer, and see him clear.

But they realised that there would be trouble. Even without the servants there were seven foes to face—one of them a full-grown man. But they did not think of hesitating. They were there to rescue Lord Mauleverer.

The Famous Five stopped at the green-painted door. From within the bungalow came the sounds of movement and a sound of voices, faint through the door. The last stroke of twelve had died away. Loudly and sharply the voice of Cecil Ponsonby was heard in the house.

"There goes twelve! Now for that cad Mauleverer!"

"Just in time!" murmured Bob again, gripping his stump a little harder. "Mauly would be glad to know we're here, I fancy!"

"Better knock," said Nugent.

"If they don't open the door—"

"We'll burst it in!" said Bob Cherry cheerily. "But knock first."

Harry Wharton raised his hand to the knocker, and gave a loud, ringing rat-tat-tat.

There was a buzz at once inside the bungalow.

"What the thump—"

"Who the dickens, at this time of night—"

"Better sec. Keep the chain on."

The door opened a couple of inches, with a clink of the chain, and a bar of light streamed into the veranda outside. Cecil Ponsonby peered out.

"Who's there?" he snapped. "What's wanted? Why, my hat! It's that Greyfriars crowd!"

He had recognised Wharton.

"Shut the door!" called Gadsby. Bob Cherry's big foot was already in the way. But the door was on the chain, and, though Ponsonby could not shut it, it opened no farther.

"What do you want?" snarled Ponsonby. "What do you mean by coming here at this time of night?"

"We want to see Mauleverer." "This isn't the time to pay visits," said Ponsonby, more civilly. "You can come in the mornin', if you like."

"The morning won't do," said Harry quietly.

"Look here——" "Let us in—or let Mauleverer out, whichever you like," said the captain of the Remove.

"Mauleverer's my guest," said Ponsonby calmly. "He's gone to bed now, as it happens, or certainly you could see him. You can call in the mornin'. You're unwelcome, as far as I'm concerned, but I sha'n't stand in the way of my guest seein' anybody he wants to see. Now good-night!"

He essayed to shut the door again; but Bob Cherry's foot did not move.

"Cut it out, Pon!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "Can it, old man—can it! You see, we know the facts! We want Mauly!"

"He's gone to bed——" "He's locked in a room, and we're here to see him," said Harry Wharton.

Ponsonby gritted his teeth. "Oh, my hat!" came Drury's voice. "That fat cad Bunter must have heard us——"

"Absolutely!" said Vavasour. "Bet you he had his ear to the keyhole while he was locked in the smoke-room, absolutely!"

"Shut up!" hissed Ponsonby. Harry Wharton laughed. It was rather too late for Ponsonby to tell his unguarded comrades to shut up.

"You see, Bunter's told us a lot," said Harry. "We're not looking for trouble, but we want Mauly!"

"The wantfulness is terrific, my esteemed and rotten Ponsonby!"

"Well, you're not comin' in!" said Ponsonby, between his teeth. "And if you kick up a row, I'll telephone for the police!"

"Good; they'll be interested to see the roulette, when they come," remarked Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "I say, Pon, let them have their dashed Mauly, and don't have a row," murmured Drury.

"Shut up, Drury! Cherry, take your boot away——"

"Not half!" smiled Bob. "Give me a pin, somebody! I'll soon make him shift it!" said Ponsonby savagely.

"Oh, my hat!" A finger and thumb appeared, with a pin between them. Bob Cherry shoved the business end of his stump in, and the pin dropped from Ponsonby's hand, and there was a loud yell.

"Hurt, old dear?" asked Bob cheerily. "You musn't stick pins in my fatted calf, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Shove on the door, the lot of you!" hissed Ponsonby. "Line up there! Captain Gadsby, lend a hand!"

There was a heavy pressure on the door from within. Harry Wharton & Co. shoved on it from without. But the pressure of seven was heavier than that of five, and the door squeezed shut. Bob Cherry gave a howl as his foot was jammed between door and post, and he just managed to extricate it. The door shut, and the lock snapped.

There was a mocking laugh from Ponsonby within.

"Now for Mauleverer!" he shouted. "We'll rag the cad here, and they can hear him yell."

"Give him a chance to pay——" "Of course, idiot! Come on!"

Harry Wharton panted. "Come on, you fellows! They're going for Mauly now, and we're not going to stand on ceremony."

He ran along the veranda to the French windows.

"I—I say——" gasped Nugent.

But Wharton did not hesitate. He raised his cricket-stump, and brought it down with a crash, and there was a smashing of glass that rang through the bungalow.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Fight at Close Quarters I

LORD MAULEVERER was sitting at ease in an armchair, nodding a little, for he was sleepy, when Ponsonby unlocked the door of the card-room, and strode in, with the nuts at his heels.

Mauly looked up sleepily. "Now, you welshin' rotter——" began Ponsonby.

The schoolboy earl rose quietly to his feet. His look of cold scorn brought a slight flush even to Cecil Ponsonby's hardened face.

"Are you goin' to pay up?" snarled Gadsby.

Mauleverer shook his head. "I'm not payin' a shillin'!" he answered calmly. "Matter of principle, you know."

"For the last time!" shouted Ponsonby furiously.

"Any number of times you like, dear man!" said Lord Mauleverer urbanely.

"You can pick my pockets, if you like; I can't prevent that. But I warn you that if you do I shall go to the police in the mornin'!"

That was enough for Ponsonby. He rushed for Mauleverer, and the rest of the nuts rushed with him. Drury and Vavasour hung back a little; but Ponsonby, Gadsby, Monson, and Merton grasped the schoolboy earl.

Lord Mauleverer hit out.

He was not a fighting-man, as a rule; but being handled by the gang of young sharpers was more than enough to rouse his noble blood to fighting heat.

And, to the surprise of the Highcliffe nuts, the schoolboy earl put up a stout fight.

They struggled and swayed, and went out into the hall in a fighting crowd. Captain Gadsby, who had been sampling the champagne again, not wisely but too well, stood and looked on, with a cigar in his loose mouth, rather unsteady on his pins.

In the din and excitement of the struggle, the Highcliffe fellows hardly noticed the crash of glass from the smoke-room.

Lord Mauleverer was fighting gamely, and Monson had backed out of the struggle, nursing a streaming nose.

But the odds were too great, and, with a crash, the schoolboy earl went to the floor, with three or four Highcliffians sprawling over him.

Crash came the glass again.

"Those cads are gettin' in!" yelled Monson.

"Lock the door between!" panted Ponsonby, pinning Mauleverer down with a knee on his chest.

Gadsby ran into the smoke-room, to jerk the key from the inside of the door. But through the shattered French windows Harry Wharton & Co. were pouring.

Wharton was the first in, and he ran straight at Gadsby.

Gaddy jerked out the key, and whipped into the hall again, striving frantically to jerk the key in on the outside of the lock. But he had no time.

Harry Wharton's grasp was on the door-handle, and he tore the door open, leaving Gadsby with the key still in his hand.

"Back up!" yelled Gadsby.

"Oh, begad! Rescue, you fellows!" panted Lord Mauleverer, realising now that the chums of Greyfriars were at hand.

"We're coming, Mauly!" roared Bob Cherry. "Up guards and at 'em! There's one for your nob, Gaddy!"

"Yarooooh!"

Ponsonby leaped to his feet.

The Famous Five were swarming out of the smoke-room into the hall. Ponsonby tore a heavy Malacca from the hall-stand, and led the defence. The Malacca crashed on Wharton's stump, and was sent flying out of Pon's hand, and the stump tapped on his head.

"Back up!" shrieked Ponsonby.

He closed with Wharton, and they struggled.

Snatching up any weapon that came to hand, the Highcliffe nuts desperately backed up their leader. Captain Gadsby rushed into the fray, but, fortunately, his three bottles of champagne told against him. He was hurled over, and instead of rising, he lay gasping on the floor, while the fighting juniors trampled over and round him.

Lord Mauleverer scrambled to his feet.

"Go it, dear men!" he yelled, and he, too, rushed into the fray. And Monson went to the floor in Mauly's grasp.

The fight was fast and furious while it lasted. But Ponsonby and Monson were both at close quarters and held, and Bob Cherry was doing great execution with his stump. Vavasour was the first to flee. He fled into the kitchen at the back, and locked the door after him.

And Drury was the next, bolting into a bed-room. Merton dodged into the card-room and slammed the table against the door.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Gadsby, backing into a corner, finding himself hard pressed. "Chuck it! Hands off, you fellows! I chuck up!"

"Back up!" yelled Ponsonby, still struggling with Wharton.

"The game's up!" growled Gadsby. "Chuck it, for goodness' sake! All your fault, Pon, turnin' the place into a bally tap-room!"

"Oh, don't chuck it yet!" gasped Bob Cherry. "I'm just getting my hand in. Won't you have another round, Gaddy?"

"Sheer off, you mad fool!" roared Gadsby. "Keep that stump away, confound you!"

"Our win!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

"The wantfulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

Captain Gadsby sat up dizzily.

"What—what—wharrer——" he mumbled.

"Oh, you go to sleep, old top!" said Bob Cherry, and he gave the gallant captain a shove with his boot, and he rolled over again, gasping.

Wharton rose, leaving Ponsonby gasping on the floor. Monson had escaped from Mauleverer, and fled into regions unknown. Ponsonby scrambled up, and was promptly knocked down again by Bob Cherry. Then he decided to remain on the floor.

"Looks to me as if we've got the best of this little rumpus," remarked Bob.

"Going to get up again, Pon?"

Ponsonby's only reply was a look of savage hatred.

(Continued on page 20.)

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"MAULY AND THE CARAVANNERS!"

(Continued from page 19.)

"Begad! Awfully good of you to look in for me, old beans!" said Lord Mauleverer breathlessly. "How did you know?"

"We heard it all from Bunter," said Harry Wharton, with a laugh. "Even Bunter has his uses on rare occasions."

"The rarefulness is terrific."

"Begad!" Lord Mauleverer looked round. Of the Highcliffe party, only Ponsonby and Gadsby were in sight, and they were evidently down and out. And Captain Gadsby lay where Bob had pushed him, blinking dizzily, perhaps wondering whether it was all a champagne nightmare. "Begad! I think we may as well be movin', dear men. I wonder if I can get put up in the town to-night—"

"You're coming along to the caravan," said Harry. "Come on, you fellows! I don't think Pon & Co. want any more."

Wharton threw open the door, and the Greyfriars party marched out with Lord Mauleverer. A loud curse from Ponsonby followed them, and then the door slammed.

"Nice boy!" murmured Bob Cherry.

The Greyfriars caravanners took their way back to camp cheerfully enough, though some of them had received pretty hard knocks in the conflict. Lord Mauleverer walked along with them in great spirits.

"By the way, your baggage is still

there, Mauly," remarked Frank Nugent, as the camp-fire came in sight.

"I'll send a man for it in the mornin'," said Mauleverer. "I don't think even Pon will steal my pyjamas."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm awfully obliged to you chaps," said his lordship. "I was goin' to have no end of a raggin'. Begad, I'm jolly glad to get clear of Ponsonby & Co."

"My young friend," said Bob Cherry, in his most solemn tones, "beware of bad company! Evil communications corrupt good manners. You can see that in any copy-book!"

"Yaas. Don't be a goat, old chap!" said Lord Mauleverer. "I say, what's that awful row? Has a bull wandered into your camp?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Only Bunter!"

"Oh, begad!"

The deep and echoing snoring from the caravan showed that William George Bunter had turned in. And Harry Wharton & Co. and their guest followed Bunter's example. Lord Mauleverer was offered the second bunk in the caravan, but he decided that he would rather squeeze into the tent. Bunter's snore at close quarters made his lordship feel that he could rough it for once.

Lord Mauleverer breakfasted with the Greyfriars caravanners round the camp-fire the following morning.

The caravanners urged his lordship to throw in his lot with them, and take the road with them when the caravan moved on.

Lord Mauleverer thought it over, but his final answer was in the negative.

"You see, if I went caravannin' with you chaps, I couldn't loaf around while you did all the work," he remarked.

"Well, you could do your whack!" said Bob.

"That's just what I shouldn't want to do!" yawned his lordship. "So I'll bore you with my company till I can get a car, if you don't mind, and then I'll travel!"

Nothing more was seen of Ponsonby & Co. while the caravanners remained in camp. The Greyfriars fellows rather expected a hostile raid, but it did not happen. Pon & Co. had evidently had enough. And a man was found to fetch his lordship's luggage away from the bungalow, and a couple of days later a Rolls-Royce car came for his lordship.

"Thanks, awfully, you chaps!" said Lord Mauleverer, as he stepped into the car. "I've had no end of a good time with you, no end! I hope you'll enjoy the strenuous life—I do, really. Lightin' fires, and cookin', and trampin', and washin' up, and all that. I've learned a jolly valuable lesson while I've been stayin' with you."

"Learned what?"

"Learned never to go caravannin'!" said Lord Mauleverer sweetly, and he waved his hand in cordial farewell as the car rolled away.

Harry Wharton & Co. broke camp the same morning, and moved on, still without having seen anything of the Highcliffe crowd. And Billy Bunter wore a fat smile as he started, and his fat hand, in his pocket, caressed a pound note, which he had surreptitiously borrowed of Lord Mauleverer while the Co. were not looking. And while Mauly rolled home luxuriously in his car, the Greyfriars caravanners tramped cheerily on with the van, up hill and down dale, in glorious summer sunshine and the best of spirits.

THE END.

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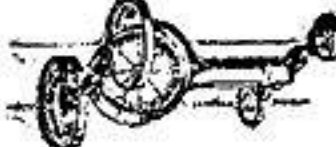
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