THE CARAVAN DETECTIVE!

Another Long Complete Story of the Greyfriars Holiday Tourists!

The Magnet Library

1½d

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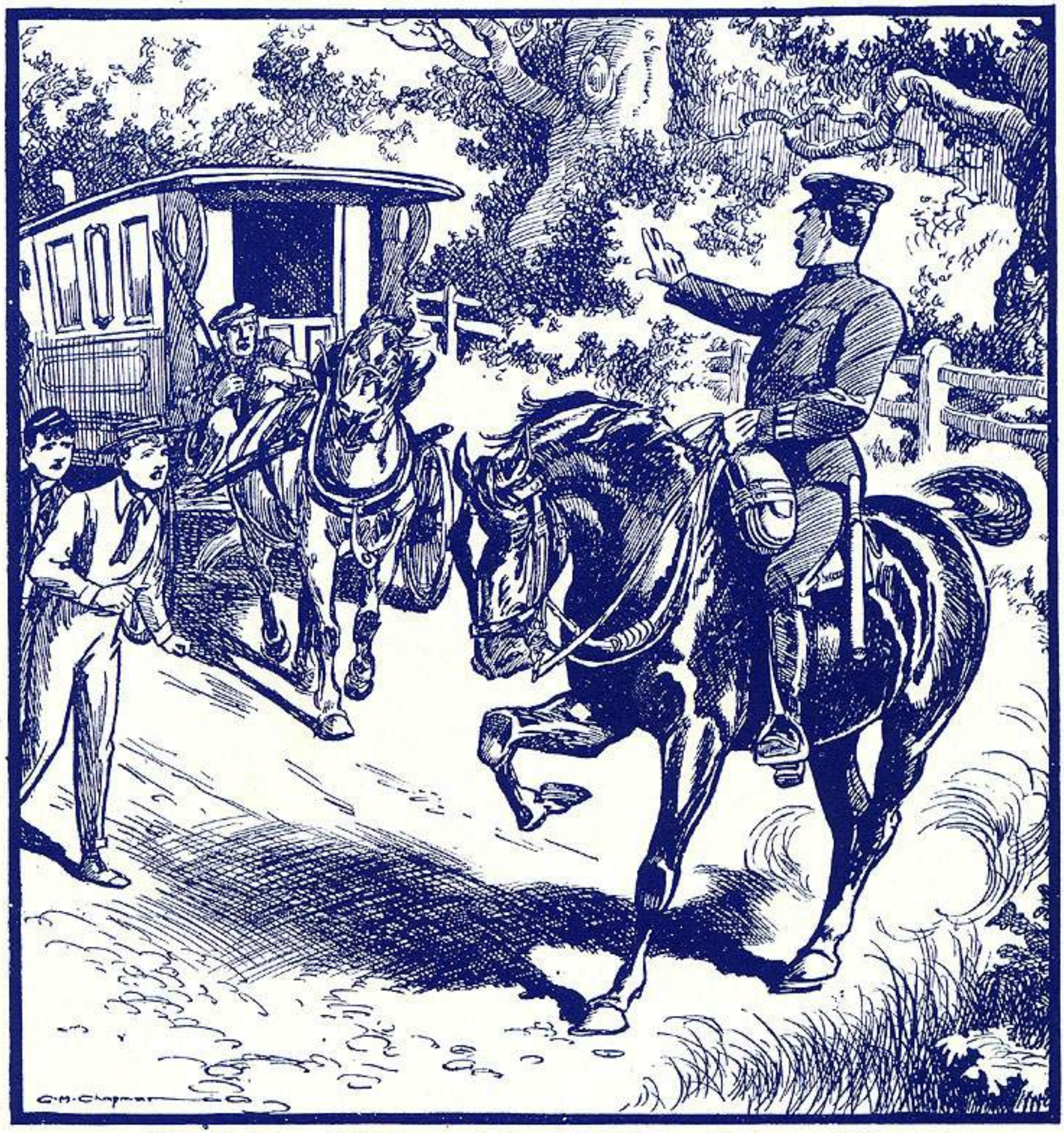
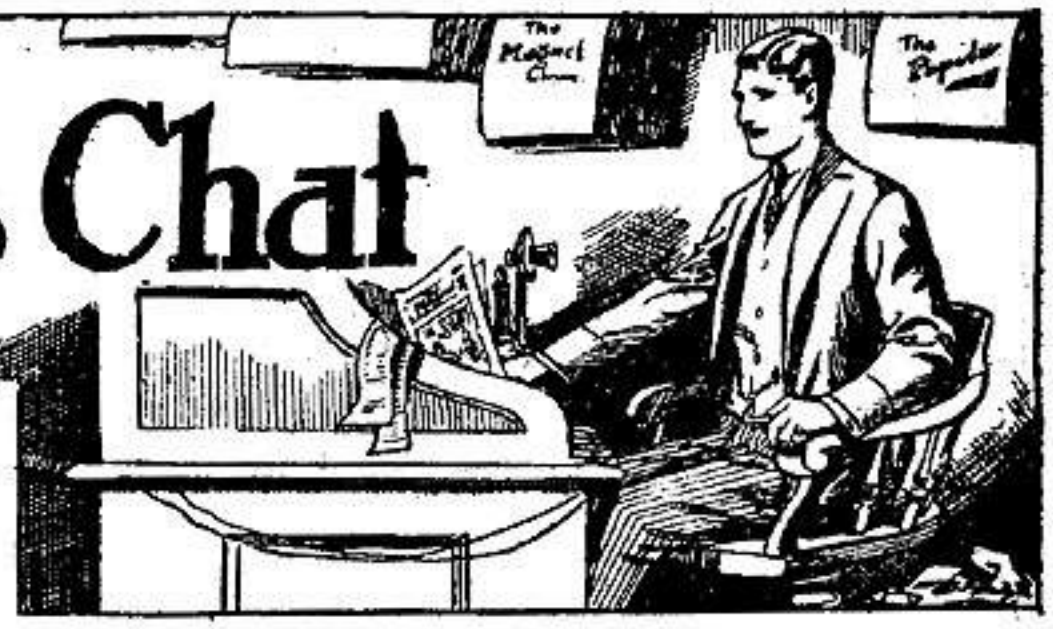


HELD UP BY THE POLICE!

(A tense moment in the long complete tale in this issue.)

The Editor's Chat



Address all your letters to:
The Editor, "The Magnet Library,"
The Fleetway House, Farringdon St., London, E.C.4.
I am always pleased to hear from my chums.

FOR NEXT MONDAY

we have another splendid long complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., the chums of Greyfriars, on their holiday tour. The story is entitled:

"CARAVANNERS AFLOAT!"
By Frank Richards,

and, needless to say, we are told how Harry Wharton and his chums take their caravan aboard ship, and land in France. Colonel Wharton accompanies them on a great part of the journey, and the gallant colonel has no reason to depart with a feeling of warm regard for William George Bunter.

Probably the funniest part of the whole story is where Billy Bunter speaks French. His knowledge of the language of our friends across the water is so remarkable that he succeeds in getting quite a lot of things he doesn't want. But he keeps his companions in roars of laughter, so everybody is happy!

ANOTHER SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT.

Harry Wharton has informed me that he is sending a special half-holiday number of the "Greyfriars Herald" for next week's issue of the MAGNET LIBRARY. If it is anything like so good as the holiday number, then I am sure we have something to look forward to.

By the way, Harry Wharton would be glad to receive letters from readers who would care to criticise his supplement. As he rightly states, a postcard frequently helps him to launch out on to some new ideas. When you have a moment to spare, therefore, send Harry a postcard, addressed care of the MAGNET office.

THE "POPULAR" SERIAL.

I hope all my chums who read the MAGNET LIBRARY have given an order to their newsagent for a copy of the "Popular," our famous week-end companion paper, to be delivered or saved for them. Sidney Drew's remarkable serial is proving even more popular than I thought possible—the readers of the "Popular" are demanding more and more, longer and longer instalments. Sidney Drew is most deservedly popular with all my chums, for he is without doubt one of the foremost authors of boys' fiction in the world. We have read his stories of Ferrers Lord many times, but this time he has surpassed himself, and is turning out the finest adventure story ever conceived.

Of course, the "Popular" has many other attractions—complete school stories of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, and Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood, Billy Bunter's famous supplement, and a simple competition for money prizes. Get the current number of the "Popular."

THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL.

I would again remind my readers that the "Greyfriars Holiday Annual" will be on sale at your newsagent's on the first day of September. He will let you have a look at a copy—and to have a look at it means a keen desire to possess a copy, for there is an enormous amount of interesting reading matter in this wonderfully popular annual.

It makes an ideal birthday present—or, if you are unlucky enough to have your birthday earlier in the year, ask for the "Greyfriars Holiday Annual" to be presented to you as your first Christmas present! Better still, take dad round to the shop, and show him what a splendid volume the "Holiday Annual" is, and he'll buy it for you, never fear.

Correspondence.

Walter J. Smart, 5, Woburn Road, Kimpston, Beds; wishes to hear from readers interested in his International Correspondence Circle, for the purpose of facilitating the exchange of foreign stamps.

Your Editor.

LONG COMPLETE TALE OF THE CHUMS OF GREYFRIARS EVERY WEEK.

The Magnet Library

The Editor will be obliged if you will hand this copy, when finished with, to a friend.

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.
An Unexpected Guest!

TAP!

Tap, tap, tap!

Harry Wharton sat up and listened.

It was a strange and eerie sound, coming through the silence of the night.

Tap, tap, tap!

The Greyfriars caravan was camped by the roadside. The tethered horse was asleep in the grass, and Billy Bunter's snore echoed from the van. Harry Wharton & Co. were sleeping in the tent—or, rather, the Co. were sleeping, and Wharton was sitting up in his blanket, listening to the faint, queer tapping that came up the road.

It was very faint at first, but grew clearer as it approached the tent of the caravanners.

Tap!

It stopped suddenly, in the road, just opposite the tent.

"My only hat!" murmured Wharton. "What the thump——" He threw aside his blanket, and rose.

Something, or somebody, had stopped in the road, and Wharton wanted to know what or who it was.

He looked out of the opening of the tent.

The full moon rode high in the sky, and silvery light streamed over the Wessex downs.

The tent was pitched a dozen yards from the road, on the broad belt of grass. The road, winding away over the downs, looked like a white ribbon in the moonlight.

On the white road Wharton caught sight of a black patch. It was the figure of a man, standing still and silent, regarding the caravan and the tent.

There was something eerie in his stillness and silence, after the strange tap-tapping that had heralded his approach.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came Bob Cherry's sleepy voice from within the tent. "Who's that shifting around?"

"Little me!" answered Harry.

"Wharrer marrer?" murmured Bob.

"There's somebody in the road——"

"Let him rip!"

"He's stopped——"

"Well, let him stop!" And Bob Cherry turned his head comfortably on his pillow, and closed his eyes again.

"I'm jolly well going to know what he wants," said Harry. "Might be a tramp looking for something to pinch."

"I hope he'll pinch Bunter, then!" yawned Bob. "I'll stand him a ten-bob note if he will."

Harry Wharton slipped on a coat, and stepped out of the tent into the moonlight.

The motionless figure in the road moved then.

It backed away hastily, and there was a sudden sound again of the tap-tap-tap. Wharton smiled as he observed the cause. The stranger's right leg, from the knee down, was a wooden stump. It was the wooden leg that had tap-tap-tapped along the hard high-road.

"Hallo!" called out Wharton. "Want anything?"

The man put his hand to his ear.

"Eh?" he said.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry was looking out of the tent now. "The poor chap's deaf. He's rather a queer customer."

The wooden-legged man blinked at the juniors in the moonlight. The wooden leg tapped on the road again, and he came nearer. He came stumping over the grass towards the tent.

Johnny Bull and Nugent and Hurree Singh had awakened by this time. They crowded round Bob, and looked out of the tent.

As the man came closer in the moonlight, the Greyfriars juniors looked him over with some interest.

He was a man of powerful frame, short, and thick-set, with a sun-tanned face, and a stubbly beard. His clothes were almost in tatters, his boots worn down and split. Certainly he looked as if he had been through the hardest of hard luck. His face was not, perhaps, prepossessing to look upon; but the chums of Greyfriars could feel sympathy for any man who was down on his luck.

"Camping here, what?" asked the stranger, as he stopped in front of the caravanners' tent.

"That's it," said Harry.

"Eh?"

"Deaf as a post," said Frank Nugent. "He reminds me of old Dutton at Greyfriars. You talk to him, Bob; you've got a voice like a megaphone."

"I'm a little deaf," said the wooden-legged man. "It was the guns, sir—that's what did it."

"Oh!" exclaimed Harry.

The Famous Five were all sympathy at once. A man who had lost a leg, and his hearing, in the war, was a man they could feel for, to the bottom of their hearts.

"He's been a Tommy," said Bob. "On tramp now, I suppose. If he wants helping on the road, we're the party to do it."

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

The wooden-legged man gave the dusky nabob a quick, curious look. Deaf as he was, he certainly seemed to have noticed the nabob's weird and wonderful variety of English.

"Inky, old man, your complexion is making him jump," said Bob. "You shouldn't spring your beautiful chivvy too suddenly on a chap at night."

"My esteemed and ludicrous Bob——"

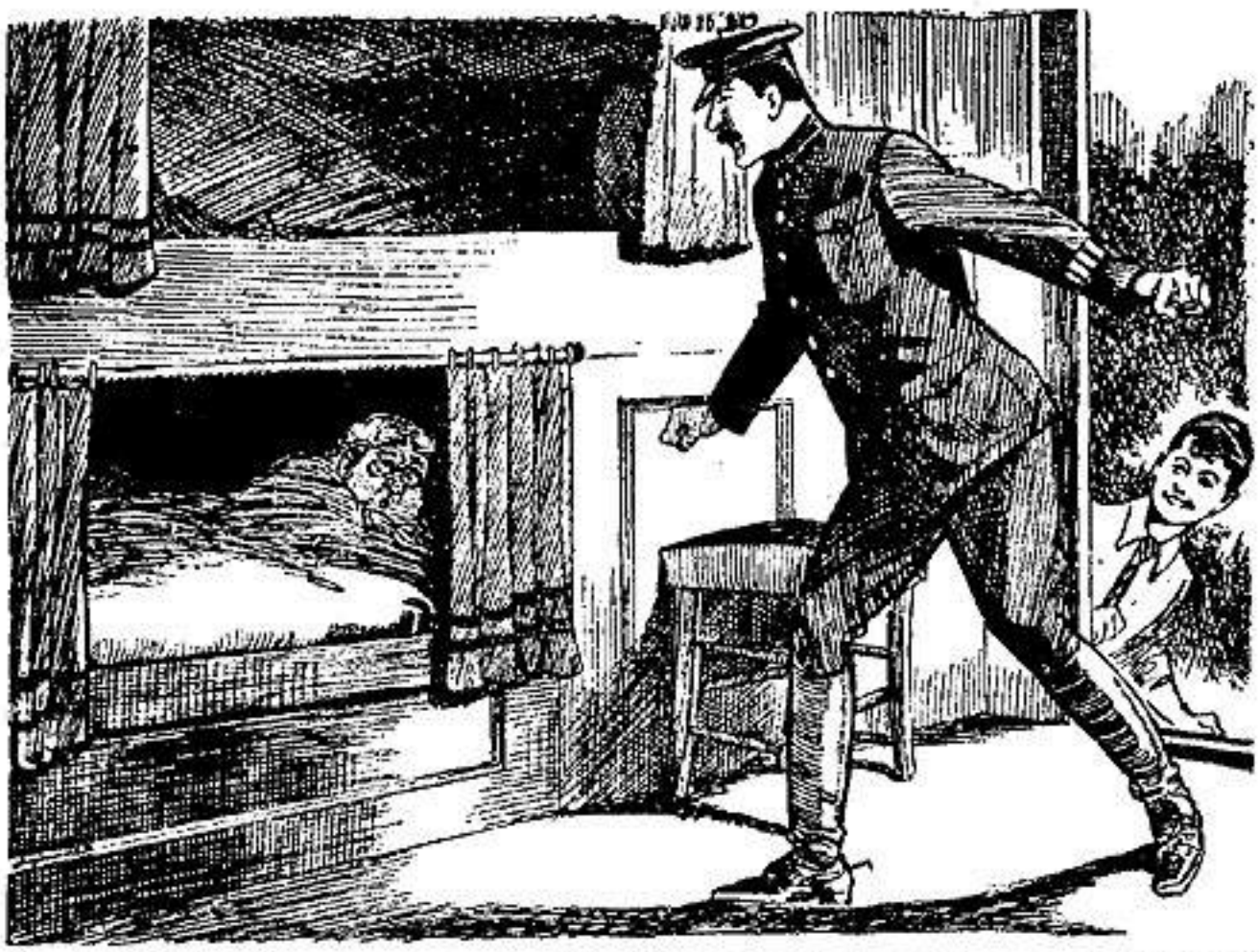
"I suppose you couldn't give a man a shake-down for the night?" said the wooden-legged man, eyeing the juniors. "I'm pretty tired out—legged it all the way from Shaftesbury to-day. And the going ain't easy with this 'ere stump."

"My dear man, we'll fix you up!" exclaimed Bob at once.

"Yes, rather!" said Harry.

"Eh?"

"We'll put you up!" roared Bob.



The constable, with a grim brow, tramped into the caravan. Bunter, under the impression that he was being sought after owing to his apple-stealing exploits, quaked under the bedclothes. "Ow! I'm not here!" he gasped.
(*See Chapter* 3.)

"Oh, thanks! Sorry to trouble you with my deafness—it was them guns that did it. The row they made, sir—you couldn't imagine it. I was at Ypres."

"We'll make room for you," said Harry.

"Eh?"

"We'll find you room!" shouted Wharton.

"Good! Many thanks!"

"Not at all. Sit down here while we fix up a bed somehow."

Nugent handed out a camp-stool, and the wooden-legged man sat down. He was evidently tired. As he stretched out his sound leg, the juniors noted how his solitary boot cracked and gaped.

"We'll jolly well fix him up better than that, somehow, to-morrow," said Bob Cherry. "I dare say he can do with some supper before he turns in. Are you hungry?"

"Eh?"

"Like some supper?" roared Bob.

"Oh, yes; thanks!"

"You fellows fix up a bed while I scout for grub," said Bob.

"Right-ho!"

Bob Cherry tramped over to the caravan to search for the larder. Billy Bunter blinked at him from the bunk. Bob's movements were not very quiet, and the van shook as he tramped in, and the Owl of the Remove had awakened.

"What's the row?" mumbled Bunter. "Wharrer you waking a fellow up for, you ass?"

"Feeding a tramp," said Bob.

"Silly ass!" commented Bunter; and he went to sleep again. William George Bunter was not likely to lose his night's rest for the sake of a tramp, even if the tramp had lost a leg at Ypres.

But the Famous Five were a little more hospitable. They were tired with a day's march, but they buckled to cheerfully to supply the wants of their unexpected guest. A cold but substantial supper was quickly supplied, and the wooden-legged man did it full justice. And then room was made for him in the tent, Nugent shifting into the second bunk in the caravan—which was generally left empty, as nobody was anxious for sleeping quarters along with Billy Bunter's snore. And then Harry Wharton & Co. settled down to sleep again, and did not wake till the summer sun was shining on the green meadows and smiling downs of Wessex.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.
Bunter is Indignant!

"I SAY, you fellows——"

"Don't say anything, old chap," said Bob Cherry affably. "Just pile in and fry the bacon."

"But I say——"

"You're cook," said Bob. "No need for you to wag your chin, Bunter. Just cook!"

"Look here," snorted Bunter. "Who's that fellow?"

Billy Bunter pointed with the frying-pan to the caravanners' guest, who was sitting on a grassy bank close at hand. In the bright morning sunlight the wooden-legged man looked more soiled and tattered than ever. Billy Bunter evidently did not approve of him.

"He's our giddy guest," said Bob Cherry.

"What on earth's his name?"

"Haven't asked him."

"If you think that measly tramp is going to have my breakfast——" hooted Bunter indignantly.

"Shut up!" roared Bob.

"Yah!"

With that indignant rejoinder Billy Bunter started cooking. The man with the wooden leg looked on with an impassive face, apparently not hearing a word. But for the fact that he was deaf, Bunter's remarks would have been cut shorter by the caravanners.

There were two spirit-stoves and an oil-stove going, and Billy Bunter was busy with the three and a frying-pan and a saucepan of eggs and a kettle. A very pleasant scent of frying bacon pervaded the camp—very pleasant indeed to schoolboys with extremely healthy appetites. And the wooden-legged man was seen to sniff with appreciation. Owing to his deafness conversation was rather difficult, and the chums of Greyfriars only addressed necessary remarks to him.

But he was looked after and waited on with the greatest hospitality.

The stranger ate his breakfast with a good appetite, washing it down with two or three cups of coffee.

Billy Bunter, with an air of long-suffering injury, searched the caravan larder for more to eat; and assumed the look of a fat martyr as he sat and consumed bread-and-butter. He had had only enough breakfast for two, so he still had an empty feeling. So there was no resource but to fill up the nooks and crannies in his circumference with bread-and-butter. He hoped that the Famous Five would feel properly ashamed of themselves as they saw him doing it. But to his great annoyance they did not look at him at all. All their attention was given, not to William George Bunter, but to the deaf and wooden-legged tramp.

After breakfast the caravanners had intended to move on their way; but they were naturally a little concerned about their guest, so they held a council on the subject.

"If the chap's going our way we could give him a lift," Bob Cherry remarked. "Tramping with a wooden leg can't be pleasant."

"Good idea!" assented Wharton.

"We'll pass the hat round for him, too," continued Harry Wharton. "A couple of quids will help him along."

"You wouldn't lend me ten bob yesterday!" hooted Bunter. Bunter's indignation was really getting too much for him.

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Yah!"

"Let's have a talk with him," said Johnny Bull. "You can do the interpreter stunt, Bob—you like roaring."

"Why, you ass——"

"Go it, Bob!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

Bob Cherry "went it." Bob certainly had very powerful lungs, and a man would have to be very deaf indeed to fail to hear him.

"We're going north from here," said Bob Cherry, addressing the guest. "If you're going our way would you like a lift?"

"Thank you, sir! You're very kind. But I'm afraid I should give you a lot of trouble."

"No trouble at all. Are you heading for anywhere in particular?"

"I want to get to Coventry when I can."

"Well, we can give you a good lift on the way there," said Bob.

"I've got a chance of a job at Coventry," explained the wooden-legged man. "I'm out of work, sir."

The juniors did not need telling that.

"Looking for work, poor chap," said Nugent. "I'm afraid there's a lot of ex-Service men in the same boat."

"My name's Wilkinson," went on the wooden-legged man. "I had a good job in a cycle shop before the war. Joined up in '14, sir."

"But you get a pension for your leg, I suppose?" said Bob.

"Oh, yes, sir! But that don't go far with my old father to keep. But once I get back to Coventry I shall be all right. I've heard from my old employer that he can take me back now."

"That's good," said Bob. "We're not

going so far as that, but we can give you a good lift on the way, and a few quids to carry you on when you leave us."

The wooden-legged man shook his head.

"Thank you, sir, I won't take your money. But if you'll give me a lift on my way I'll be thankful. I could be some use to you gentlemen, if you'll let me. I can drive well, sir, and make myself useful about your camp. I take it you're on a caravanning trip——"

"That's it."

"I was a batman once, sir, and I can be very useful, if you'll let me."

"Oh, dash it all, we're not going to let you do any batman stunts for us," said Bob. "You can take your whack, if you like."

"I say, you fellows, I think that's a jolly good idea," said Billy Bunter. "I could do with a batman. I don't like this blessed roughing it. It's not at all what I'm accustomed to at Bunter Court, I can tell you. I'd like somebody to clean my boots and brush my clothes and wash up and—— Yaroooooh!"

Bunter's detailed statement of his wants was interrupted. Bob Cherry interrupted it by jerking the toe of his boot into Bunter's fat ribs, and Bunter rolled over, roaring.

"You beast! Wharrer you up to?" he howled.

"Jump on him, somebody!" growled Bob.

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter squirmed away before he could be jumped on. He snorted with indignation as he began to wash plates and dishes. Bunter's idea of caravanning was chiefly eating and sleeping, and he did not like washing-up.

Neither did he like any other task connected with the caravan. But the Owl of the Remove had discovered that his likes and dislikes were sometimes ruthlessly disregarded. There was no room for slackers in the Greyfriars party, and though Bunter slacked as much as he could, the Famous Five saw to it that he performed his specified duties—such as cooking and washing-up. And nearly every day William George threatened to leave the caravan party in the lurch, and return to the luxurious delights of Bunter Court. But he never did!

When the Greyfriars caravan started, Mr. Wilkinson was in the driver's seat, reins in hand, driving. The caravanners walked with the van as usual, and also as usual Billy Bunter was seized and rolled out and made to walk with the rest.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

An Alarm for Bunter!

"STOP!"

"Great Scott!"

"My only hat!"

It was late in the afternoon, and the caravan was proceeding at a walk, the Greyfriars juniors sauntering along in a leisurely way. They were in Thomas Hardy's country now, and not in a hurry to get through—Dorset was looking its best in the glorious summer weather. They were beginning to think of camping, when that sudden order to stop rang out across the road.

From a side lane a mounted constable pushed out into the road. He halted directly in the path of the caravan, holding up a gloved hand.

Mr. Wilkinson glanced at him, and drew in the horse. Even if he was too deaf to hear the constable's order, there was no mistaking the rider's attitude and gesture. The caravan stopped.

Harry Wharton & Co. stopped, too, staring at the mounted man blankly. Evidently something was the matter.

"I say, you fellows, what the thump does he want?" ejaculated Billy Bunter. "Tell him to go and eat coke!"

"You tell him!" suggested Bob Cherry.

"He may be after Bunter!" remarked Johnny Bull thoughtfully.

Bunter jumped.

"After me? Wharrer you mean, you ass?"

"I saw you sneaking out of an orchard yesterday!" grinned Johnny Bull. "Perhaps somebody else saw you, too!"

"I—I say, you fellows!" gasped Bunter. "If—if it's that, you—you will all swear I—I never went into the orchard, won't you? I—I say! Do you think he's seen me? If I dodge into the van——"

Billy Bunter backed round the van hastily, hoping that the constable had not seen him. He dived up to the doorway and rolled in, palpitating. His orchard exploits did not lie heavy on his conscience; but he was aware that the owner of the apples might have been annoyed.

"I say, you fellows, if he's after me, tell him I'm not here!" Bunter gasped, blinking out of the back of the van. "Tell him I broke my neck—I mean my leg—and you left me in the Cottage Hospital somewhere—or—or tell him I've gone to Ireland for the shooting, or—or——"

"Here he comes!" grinned Bob.

Bunter vanished into the van again.

The mounted man rode up alongside, and the juniors eyed him very curiously. They wondered, naturally, what he wanted.

"Sorry to trouble you!" said the officer politely. "We're looking for a man, and perhaps you've seen something of him."

"We've seen quite a lot of men," said Bob Cherry affably. "Is it anyone in particular you want to know about?"

"An escaped convict!" said the constable sharply.

"Oh, my hat!"

"He got away from Dartmoor a week ago, and is still at large. Have you seen any suspicious character on the roads?"

"Not that I noticed," said Harry Wharton. "Certainly we've not seen anybody in convict rig."

"He wouldn't be in convict clothes," explained the constable. "His prison clothes have been found. Some pal is supposed to have left a change of clothes for him somewhere."

"This is a good step from Dartmoor, isn't it?" said Bob.

"Yes. But he struck in this direction—his broad arrow toggery was picked up a good many miles from the prison, and this way," explained the constable. "And, two nights ago, a farmhouse near Dorchester was broken into for food, and there's been another robbery nearer here since. So we've got orders to look for him along all the roads hereabouts. You youngsters caravanning?"

"Yes."

"Then you're as likely as anybody to have seen something of the man, if he's hereabouts."

"What's he like?" asked Harry.

"Five feet seven, strongly built, blue eyes and square chin, dark hair," said the constable. "His name is Bert Gunner, though he wouldn't be likely to give it."

The juniors shook their heads. Probably they had seen several scores of men answering more or less to that description.

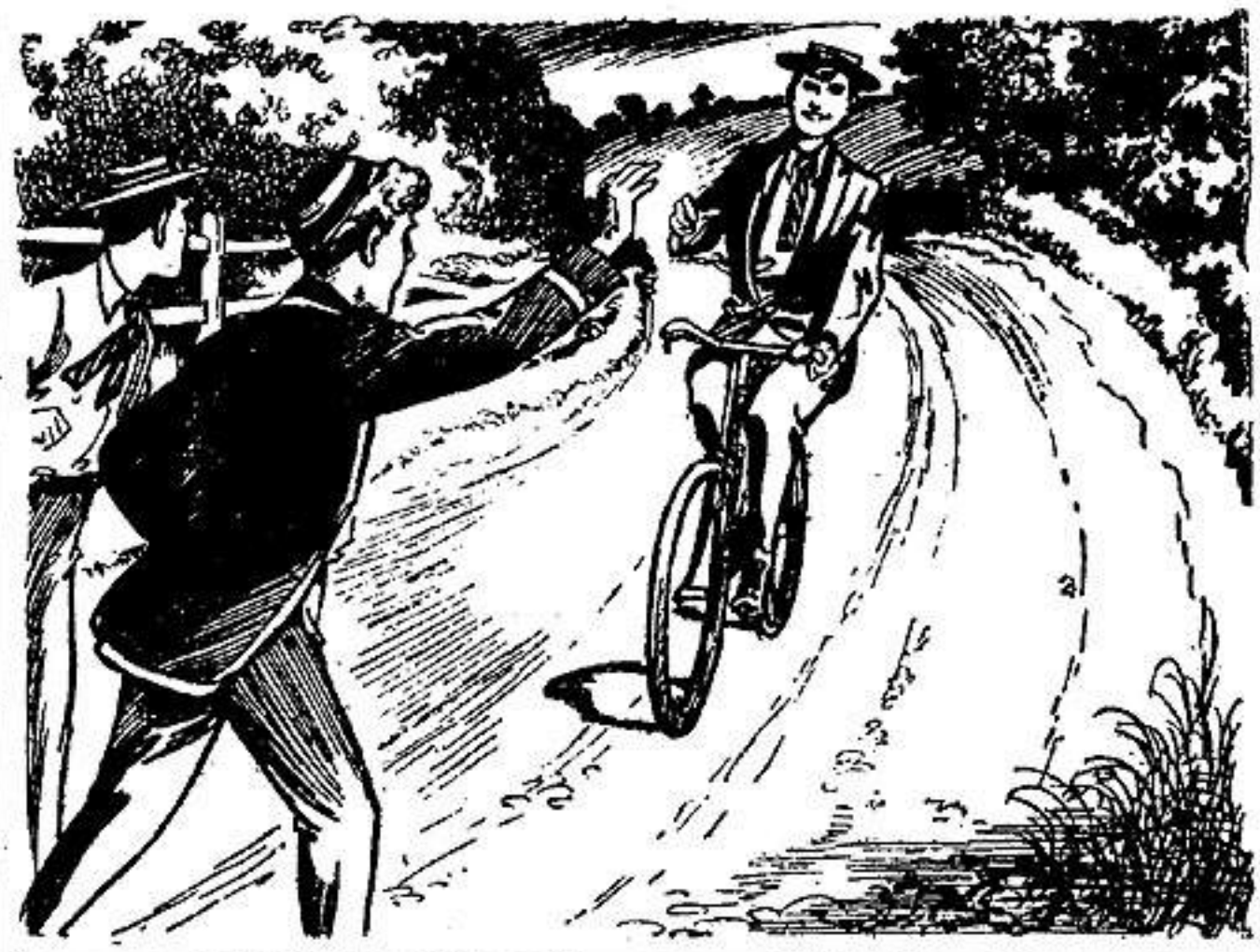
"Anybody in the van?" asked the constable.

"Yes."

"I'll look in, if you don't mind?"

"Not at all!" said Harry, with a smile. "We haven't got any giddy escaped convicts hidden there, I assure you!"

"I'm bound to do my duty."



Bob Cherry ran into the road and held up his hand. "Halt!" he roared. "Stand and deliver!" The cyclist stared at him for a moment. Then a look of recognition came over his face. "Bob Cherry!" he exclaimed. "Yes," answered Bob, "jolly glad to see you, Drake!" *(See Chapter 4.)*

"Oh, right-ho! Go ahead!"

The constable dismounted, and ascended the step at the back of the van. The door was locked. He rapped on it with his knuckles.

"Hallo! Open this door!"

No reply from within.

"Open the door, Bunter, you owl!" roared Bob Cherry.

No answer.

The constable glanced at the juniors with suspicion in his face.

"Who's in there?" he asked abruptly.

"Only a silly ass!" said Harry Wharton. "Not a giddy convict!"

"I'm going to see in this van," said the constable. "I request you to open the door, young gentlemen!"

"That silly duffer's locked it on the inside!" exclaimed Bob. "Bunter! Hallo, hallo, hallo! Bunter! You frabjous jabberwock, unlock the door!"

There was dead silence in the caravan. Evidently the Owl of the Remove did not intend to open the door.

The constable looked more and more suspicious. Certainly, the party of schoolboys had an innocent enough appearance; it was hard to suspect them of being in league with an escaped criminal from a convict-prison. But a caravan with a locked door, in the circumstances, demanded investigation! The constable had his duty to do. And it was his duty to make quite sure that the locked door was not hiding the convict from discovery.

He rapped sharply on the door again.

"Open this door!" he thundered.

"Bunter, you ass——"

"Bunter, you owl——"

"Bunter, you dummy——"

Billy Bunter kept as quiet as a mouse in the van. The constable looked grim.

"This will have to be looked into!" he said tersely. "The van will have to be taken to the police-station."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Can't afford to run risks; and it's jolly queer that your friend in the van won't open the door," said the officer. "I'm not taking risks of letting Bert Gunner creep through my fingers."

"Hold on!" exclaimed Bob. "One of us can get in through the window, and open the door."

"Fire away, then!"

"You're about the slimmest, Nugent. Pile in!"

"Right-ho!" said Frank.

The van windows were open, luckily. Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull "bunked" up Nugent, and he contrived to squeeze in, and lowered himself upon his hands inside the van. There was a gasp of terror from one of the bunks, in which Billy Bunter lay rolled in the bedclothes.

"I—I say, I'm not here——"

"You silly owl!" gasped Nugent.

He unlocked the door, and threw it wide open. And the constable, with a grim brow, and his truncheon ready in his hand, tramped into the van.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Wanted Man!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. crowded round the doorway, and looked in, grinning. The constable evidently half-expected to see the escaped convict crouching in the van. All he saw was a fat figure rolled in a bunk, with bedclothes drawn over the head. Bunter, still under the impression that he was being sought after owing to his apple-stealing exploits, quaked under the bedclothes.

"Turn out of that!" rapped out the policeman.

"Owl. I'm not here."

"What?"

"I—I mean, I—I'm ill! Don't come too near," gasped Bunter, still under the bedclothes. "I've got nettlerash—I mean cholera, and—and it's dangerous to come near."

"Great Scott!"

The constable grasped the bedclothes and jerked them off. William George Bunter was revealed, palpitating.

"Why, who—what——" stuttered the constable.

"I say, you fellows, tell him I ain't the chap he wants!" roared Bunter. "Tell him I never was there—not within a mile of the place——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Besides, I never bagged those apples—I wasn't in the orchard at all," gasped Bunter. "It's all a mistake."

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

The constable stared blankly at Billy Bunter for a moment or two, and then he understood, and grinned.

"You young ass!" he said.

He stepped out of the caravan, and remounted his horse. Bunter gasped with relief as he went, and mopped his perspiring brow.

The constable rode round to the front of the van, to speak to the driver. Mr. Wilkinson was sitting stolidly in his seat, his wooden leg sticking out well in view.

"Have you seen anything of a suspicious character along the roads, my man?" the constable called to him.

Wilkinson put his hand to his ear.

"Eh?"

"He's deaf," said Bob Cherry hastily. "He's an ex-service man, and he lost his hearing at Ypres."

"Oh, I see."

The constable repeated his question in a shout. Wilkinson shook his head.

"No," he answered. "What are you looking for? What sort of man?"

"An escaped convict——"

"Eh?"

"An escaped convict named Gunner!" roared the constable.

"Oh, I'm sorry I can't help! I'll keep my eyes open for him."

"We'll all do that," said Harry Wharton. "If we see anything of the man, officer, you can rely on it we'll bring the news to the nearest police-station."

The constable nodded, and set his horse in motion. The caravanners were free to proceed now, and the van rolled on its way. Bunter dropped out, and bestowed an indignant and reproachful blink upon the Famous Five.

"You awful beasts!" he said. "You knew jolly well that the bobby wasn't after me about those apples."

"So you'd have known if you hadn't been a funky idiot," grunted Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull——"

"By Jove, though, I'm glad that chap gave us the information," said Harry Wharton. "It would be no joke for an escaped convict to drop on us some night. We'll jolly well keep watch at night till we're well out of these parts. If he's committed two robberies already, he might take it into his head to give us a turn, if he came across us."

"Yes, rather."

Wilkinson looked down from the driver's seat at the juniors.

"Begging your pardon, sir," he said respectfully, "but if there's a dangerous character about, mightn't it be as well to push on a good distance before camping? We could put on some speed."

"Jolly good idea!" said Billy Bunter, at once.

The man on the bank began to gather up the clothes belonging to the Famous Five and Drake. The juniors watched him with dismay. "My hat!" said Bob Cherry, "He's bagging our clobber!" The man gave them a surly grin. "If you want your clothes you can come out for them. I've got the whip ready!" *(See Chapter 6.)*

"Well, we'll keep on till dark," said Harry. "I don't think we're in any danger; we can take care of ourselves; but we'll certainly keep watch at night."

"I say, you fellows, we'd better get right away," said Bunter anxiously. "Of course, I'm not afraid of the convict; you fellows know that I'm as brave as a lion——"

"As a rabbit, you mean," chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I know who's got most pluck in this party!" said Bunter disdainfully. "But I don't believe in running a lot of risks for nothing. Let's keep on till midnight—there'll be a full moon, and I can ride in the van, you know, so that will be all right."

"Can you?" chuckled Bob. "You can walk, my pippin; and we'll keep on till midnight if you like."

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"We'll leave it to Bunter to call halt!" said Bob.

"Yah!" grunted Bunter.

The fat junior tramped on, frowning. Between his desire to get right out of the possible neighbourhood of the dangerous Mr. Gunner, and his desire to slack, the Owl of the Remove was torn by conflicting emotions. But slackness gained the victory. After another hour's tramp Billy Bunter felt that he wouldn't put in another ten minutes to escape from all the convicts in Dartmoor and Portland together. He halted.

"I'm stopping! he announced.

"Good, it's about time," yawned Bob Cherry. "I say, doesn't that look like a convict behind that hedge, you chaps?"

Bunter gave a howl, and dived into the van.

"All right, Bunter," roared Bob. "It's not a convict."

"Wha-a-at is it, then?"

"Only a scarecrow."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!" yelled Bunter.

The road the caravanners were following wound over a wide moor, with cattle grazing in the distance. The juniors decided that they were free to camp on the moor, and the van was turned off the road. A church steeple could be seen in the distance, and it indicated that there was a village; so Bob Cherry wheeled out the bike, and rode away to do shopping.

"Bring back a paper," called out Harry Wharton. "There may be something about the giddy convict in the 'Daily Mail.'"

"Good! I'll remember."

Bob Cherry disappeared along the road, and the rest of the party pitched the camp. Billy Bunter reposed in the grass and watched them at work. Bunter's duty was cooking and washing-up; and Bunter never exceeded his duty by a fraction.

Never by any chance did the fat junior rub down the horse, or take him to water, or gather firewood, or light the fire, or clean out the van, or lend a hand in erecting the tent, or shove at a wheel going uphill. He contented himself with grousing over having to do the washing-up. He would not have done the washing-up, in fact, had he not been over-persuaded to do so, Bob Cherry's boot being the chief means of persuasion.

The camp-fire was going, and water was fetched, and all was ready for supper, when Bob Cherry returned with a bundle on the carrier of the bike. Then Bunter was routed out of the grass and set to cook. Bob had thoughtfully brought a "Daily Mail" with him from the village. For a couple of weeks the caravanners had not looked at a paper, having left newspapers along with the other worries of civilisation behind them. But they were glad to see one now, on account of Mr. Gunner, of Dartmoor.

Harry Wharton dashed along the bank with the speed of a deer. He passed the end of the bridge, and was just in time to see the struggling man swept out on the further side. Without an instant's hesitation, the captain of the Remove dived in. (*See Chapter 7.*)

"Here it is!" exclaimed Wharton.

He read out a paragraph.

"'The police have so far failed to discover the convict Herbert Gunner, who escaped from Dartmoor last week. Two robberies are believed to have been perpetrated by him, and the police have a clue. It will be remembered that Gunner was sentenced to seven years' penal servitude for a shocking crime of violence, and he has still five years of his term to serve. His capture is hourly expected.'"

"May I see the paper, young gentlemen?" asked Wilkinson respectfully, as Wharton laid it aside.

"Certainly! Here you are!"

The wooden-legged man took the "Daily Mail," and apparently he was as interested as the juniors in the elusive Mr. Gunner, for he read through the paragraph that Wharton had read out very carefully. He joined the circle of caravanners round the camp-fire for supper, but his deafness made it rather difficult for the juniors to draw him into the cheery chat that went on over supper. When the sun disappeared at last over the edge of the moor, the caravanners turned in, and Wilkinson was again provided with a ground-sheet and blankets in the tent. By this time the Greyfriars juniors were growing accustomed to the addition to the party, and they were quite willing to let the wooden-legged man stay as long as he liked. It was little enough to do, as Bob Cherry remarked, for a man who had lost a leg at Ypres, and his chums fully agreed with him. And although he offered to take his turn at watching during the night, the juniors with one accord scouted the idea, and the Famous Five took the watches in turn.

But Mr. Gunner, if he was anywhere at hand, did not trouble the camp of the caravanners, and there had been no alarm when the morning sun shone down again on the Greyfriars outfit.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Schoolboy Detective!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! I've seen that chap before!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

Breakfast was over, and Billy Bunter was washing plates, and Wilkinson was putting the horse to the van. The Famous Five were sketching out the route for the day, when a cyclist came in sight on the road over the moor. There was something familiar in the aspect of the youth on the bicycle, and Bob Cherry fixed his eyes on him.

"A Greyfriars chap, I think," said Wharton, shading his eyes with his hand, as he looked along the sunny road. "I know him. I think——"

"Drake!" exclaimed Bob suddenly.

"By Jove, so it is!"

"Jack Drake!" exclaimed Nugent.

As the cyclist came nearer the juniors all recognised him easily enough. It was Jack Drake, once of the Greyfriars Remove, who had left the school at the end of the last term.

Bob Cherry ran out into the road, and held up his hand.

"Halt!" he roared. "Stand and deliver!"

The cyclist stared at him for a moment; and then a look of recognition came over his face.

"Bob Cherry!" he exclaimed.

"His noble self!" answered Bob. "Jump down, my infant, and give an account of yourself!"

Jack Drake smiled, and willingly dismounted. His look showed that he was glad to fall in with his old acquaintances of Greyfriars School. Harry Wharton & Co. surrounded him, with cheery welcome.

"Jolly glad to see you again," said Wharton.

"The gladfulness is terrific, my esteemed and ridiculous Drake," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, beaming.

Jack Drake laughed.

"Same old Inky!" he said. "I'm glad to see you chaps—in fact, my gladfulness is also terrific."

"Trot out the ginger-beer, then," said Bob. "Sit down, Drake; there's lots of room in the grass. You can tackle a tart and some ginger-pop, what?"

"Thanks, I will!"

"What have you been doing since you left Greyfriars?" asked Nugent, when the visitor was accommodated with jam-tarts and a foaming glass.

"Working," said Drake, with a smile.

"What a life!" sighed Bob. "Is it true that you've been taken on by Mr. Ferrers Locke, the merry detective?"

"That's it."

"And you're a budding Sherlock Holmes!" said Bob admiringly. "What are you doing so far away from Baker Street? Looking for the mysterious document, or the baronet's lost will, or a needle in a haystack?"

"Just taking a holiday," answered Drake. "I'm having a week on my bike, and I happened around these parts. As a matter of fact, though, I am combining pleasure with business."

"Business a dead secret?" grinned Bob.

"Not at all. I'm keeping one eye open for a character you've probably never heard of, named Gunner."

"Haven't we, though?" exclaimed Bob triumphantly. "We had our van searched for that very merchant yesterday."

"Yes, rather. We know all about Gunner," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "We're keeping watch at night in case he happens along, too. But what the thump would you do with him if you came across him, Drake? You couldn't tackle a hefty ruffian like that."

"If I get on his track I shall be satisfied," answered Drake. "It would please Mr. Locke no end. This man Gunner is an awful brute. He cracked a man's head before he was put in chokey. If I get into touch with the rotter the police will do the rest."

"He might crack your head, too!" said Johnny Bull.

"I'll take care of my head," said Drake, with a smile. "I'm looking over every merry tramp I find on the road, and I shouldn't wonder if I hit on his trail some time. Meanwhile, I'm getting my holiday."

"Why not hang on with us for a few days?" said Wharton. "We sha'n't see you next term at Greyfriars, you know. It's great fun caravanning."

"The funfulness is——"

"Terrific!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "We can hang your bike on the van, Drake, and squeeze you into the tent. We've got one giddy guest already, but we can make room for another."

"You're awfully good," said Drake. "I'm jolly glad to see you chaps, and if I shouldn't be in the way—for a day or two——"

"Not a bit of it. Happy to have your company, old top."

"You'll have to stand Bunter, that's all," said Nugent, laughing. "But you got used to him at Greyfriars."

"Yah!" came from the washer-up.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter blinked round.

"I say, you fellows, I don't mind if Drake stays on a bit. He can do the washing-up!"

"Shut up!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"You can kick Bunter whenever you like, you know, Drake," said Bob Cherry generously. "You remember that Bunter has to be kicked occasionally. Well kicked, he can be tolerated."

"Beast!"

"You've got one guest already?" asked Drake, with a glance at Wilkinson, who was harnessing the horse near at hand.

"Yes; that chap with the stump. He looks a bit of a tramp, but he's really all right," said Bob. He grinned at Drake's surprised look. "It's all right; he can't hear me. He's deaf as a post."

"Deaf, is he?" said Drake.

He looked rather keenly at Mr. Wilkinson.

"Yes; deaf as old Dutton, at Greyfriars. You'll have to yell if you speak to him," said Nugent.

Wilkinson led the horse and van out into the road, ready for starting. Drake still watched him curiously.

"Sure he's deaf?" he asked suddenly.

"Oh, quite!"

"I thought he was interested in what we were saying."

"Couldn't have been; he couldn't have heard a word of it," said Bob. "He lost his leg—half of it, anyhow—at Ypres, and he was deafened by the guns. It happened to a lot of poor fellows, you know."

"I know!" assented Drake. "So you're giving him a job?"

"Not exactly a job; we're giving him a lift, and he insists on doing his whack in the work," said Bob. "He's got a job waiting for him in Coventry——"

"That's a jolly long way from here."

"Yes; but we're going in that direction, and every little helps when a man's on tramp with a timber leg."

"I suppose so," assented Drake. "It's only decent to help an ex-Service man. What regiment was he in?"

"I give that up. It's a bit difficult talking to him, on account of his deafness," said Bob. "Even my lungs couldn't keep it up for long. His being an ex-Service man is enough for us, though."

Drake nodded.

"I'll be jolly glad to come along with you chaps for a day or two," he said. "It's no end nice of you to ask me. I shouldn't wonder if I turn out rather useful, too."

"As well as ornamental," grinned Bob Cherry. "Lift your bike into the van; there's room."

And when the Greyfriars caravanners started on their march, Jack Drake marched with them, cheery and smiling, and feeling very pleased at finding himself among his old schoolfellows again.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Little Swim!

"WHO'S for a swim?" asked Jack Drake.

"Good egg!"

"I say, you fellows, we haven't had tea yet——"

"Bother tea!"

"That's all very well," said Billy Bunter warmly. "If you fellows did as much work as I do, you'd want your tea. And there's nothing for tea till we come to a shop somewhere."

Harry Wharton consulted his road-map.

"There's a village about a mile on," he said. "We shall get there in lots of time. You can go on to the village, if you like, Bunter, and do the shopping. Get the stuff and wait for us there."

"Oh, all right!" said Bunter, mollified. "I'll take the bike, then. Just give me a few pounds——"

"Eh?"

"A couple of pounds, then——"

"Here you are," said Bob Cherry, clenching a formidable fist. Billy Bunter jumped away just in time.

"Wharrer you at, you ass?" he stuttered.

"I was going to give you a couple of pounds," said Bob innocently.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't play the goat, you chump!" roared Bunter. The Owl of the Remove evidently did not want to be pounded in that way. "Look here, shell out some cash, and I'll get off!"

Harry Wharton extracted a pound-note from his pocket-book. Billy Bunter took it, and sniffed.

"Is this to get grub for eight?" he demanded.

"That's so."

"Well, I'll do the best I can for you," said Bunter. "I wish you wouldn't be so jolly mean, Wharton; but I suppose you can't help it."

"You can put another pound to it, if you like!" suggested Wharton sarcastically.

"I'd do more than that," said Bunter. "Only this wandering about without a fixed address is awkward for getting remittances. When we stay somewhere for a couple of days, I'll telephone home for some money. I'm getting pretty sick of going short, I can tell you."

"You might have brought some with you," remarked Johnny Bull.

Bunter decided not to hear that remark. He tucked the pound-note into his pocket, and wheeled out the bike and pedalled away. Wilkinson looked down from the driver's seat inquiringly.

Across a green meadow to the left, a stream glistened in the sun, flowing between banks clothed in willows. It was a tempting spot for a bathe, after a long tramp in the sun and dust. All the juniors were keen for a swim, with the exception of Bunter, who was keener on tea. The place was quite solitary; with the exception of a young man in shooting-clothes, leaning on a gate at a little distance, there was no one to be seen in any direction. The young man was smoking a cigarette, and looking rather curiously towards the caravanners.

"I suppose there can't be any harm in borrowing that river for half an hour," said Bob Cherry meditatively. "But we'll ask that chap; he looks as if he belongs here."

Bob Cherry moved off towards the sportsman at the gate, and called to him.

"Any objection to chaps bathing yonder?"

"None at all," answered the young man politely.

"Thanks!"

"Don't mention it!"

The young man carried his politeness so far as to open the gate for the caravanners to enter on the footpath that ran down to the stream. Then, with a friendly nod, he sauntered away.

"Decent sort of chap that," remarked Drake.

"Yes, rather!"

Wharton shouted up to Wilkinson.

(Continued on page 13.)

The Greyfriars HERALD

SUPPLEMENT No. 35.

Week Ending August 27th, 1921

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 Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, E.C. 4.

OUR POET'S CORNER!

By BOB CHERRY.

There has been an epidemic of poetry fever in the Greyfriars Remove of late. Everybody is either swotting, spouting, or composing poetry. It's infectious! Dick Penfold first caught the poetry germ, and he's passed it on to others.

* * *

Billy Bunter's pathetic poem, "An Ode to an Expiring Porpoise" is in the nature of a prophecy. Bunter has just raided the cupboard in Study No. 13, and when I catch him he will share the fate of Coker's motor-bike licence, and expire!

* * *

Alonzo Todd has composed a weird and wonderful "Ode to a Bluebottle." It has set the whole Form in a buzz!

* * *

Bolsover major has challenged me to a fight. His audacious challenge has inspired me to the following limerick:

"When Bolsover scraps in the gym,
He'll find that I'm sturdy of lym.
The audience will see
A knock-out, I agree:
But the person knocked out will be hym!"

* * *

Dick Penfold declares that English poetry, once of such a high standard, is now dropping. We thought so ourselves when, on entering our study the other day, three hefty volumes of Byron descended on our devoted napper!

* * *

It is rumoured that Mr. Quelch has just composed an "Ode to a Skylark." Frankly, we are surprised. We little thought that our staid and dignified Form-master went in for skylarking!

* * *

Tom Brown took a copy of "The Merchant of Venice" in to breakfast with him the other morning. He was so engrossed in studying it that he hardly knew whether he was eating Shakespeare or Bacon!

Supplement i.]

FOREWORD!

By HARRY WHARTON.

"Dear Harry,—Will you persuade Dick Penfold to edit the 'Greyfriars Herald' for one week only?"

This request has been echoed and re-echoed by readers up and down the country. And as I am not at all averse to taking a brief rest from my labours, I am handing over our paper this week to the tender mercies of the bard of the Remove.

I had better perform the necessary introduction first.

Readers of the "Greyfriars Herald," allow me to introduce Dick Penfold, perpetrator of potty parodies and perfectly priceless poems!

Dick Penfold—readers of the "Greyfriars Herald!"

And now I will bob behind the scenes until next week.

EDITORIAL!

By DICK PENFOLD.

As "Richard the Rhymer" I have gained some sort of reputation among readers of the "Greyfriars Herald."

Without wishing to boast in any way, I confess that the stringing together of rhymes comes as easy to me as shelling peas. I was cradled in poetry, and I love writing it.

But I am no editor. Harry Wharton has planted me in the editorial chair for this week only, and I am already in a hopeless muddle!

I got together as many contributions as I could, only to find, on going to press, that I was still a page short! So I have had to make up the deficiency by writing a page of poetry. When you have digested that page, dear readers, methinks you will have had enough Penfold to last you for six months!

Not until now have I realised what a difficult job Wharton has got. I wouldn't be permanently in his shoes for a pension!

I am a clumsy editor, but I hope you will forgive any shortcomings in this issue. More, I hope you will be able to squeeze some enjoyment from the perusal of this number.

DICK PENFOLD.

A PERFECT DAY!

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

When you come to the end of a Perfect Day,
And you sit on a tuckshop stool;
When you eat ice-cream, like one in a dream,
To make you cheery and cool.
Do you think what the end of a Perfect Day
Can mean to a chap like me,
When others feed with a glutton's greed,
And I'm lacking L. s. d.?

Well, this is the end of a Perfect Day,
For you—and for you alone!
From the doorway near, where I stand and peer,
You can hear a hollow groan.
Don't prate to me of a Perfect Day,
The expression makes me sick!
For how can a day be "perfect" when
You can't get grub on tick?

NEW BOOKS!

FROM GREYFRIARS.

"WHEN IT WAS DARK."
By Gerald Loder.

"YOUNG RIPS THAT PASS IN THE NIGHT."
By P.-c. Tozer.

"HOW TO SHOOT GOALS KICKFULLY."
By Hurree Singh.

"AFLOTE ON THE SPANNISH MANE!"
By Horace Coker.

"THE VIRTUES OF UNCLE BENJAMIN."
By Alonzo Todd.

"THE COMPLETE CAD."
By Harold Skinner.

"HOW TO BE UP AND DOING—NOTHING!"
By Lord Mauleverer.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 707.

SPECIAL POETRY PAGE, CONDUCTED BY DICK PENFOLD.

THREE FISHERS!

An Up-to-Date Version of a Classic Song.

Three fishers went sailing out into the Sark,
Out into the Sark, as the sun went down.
There was Bunter and Todd, in a rowing-boat odd,
And Fish T. Fish was the champion clown!

For Fishy must fish, though the boat springs a leak,
And Toddy's so funky he can't even speak,
And the Bunter-bird is moaning!

Three fellows looked on from the boat-house door,
They were Russell, and Ogilvy, and Brown.
And Alonzo's wild shriek, and Bunter's loud roar
Smote their ears as the boat tilted upside-down!

For Fishy must fish, though the boat goes West,
And the fellows on board tumble in fully dressed,
And the Bunter-bird is moaning!

Three fishers lay prone on the grassy bank,
With their Eton togs in a shocking state.
'Twas Russell & Co. that they had to thank
For saving them all from a tragic fate.

But Fishy must fish, though warnings were shrill,
And all that he caught was a beastly chill,
And the Bunter-bird is moaning!

KING CRICKET!

By DICK PENFOLD.

Here's to the grand old summer game,
The game we all adore.
The gentle snicks, and the hits for six,
And the crowd's excited roar!
Here's to the tea in the lime-tree's shade
When the thrilling tussle's over;
When the game is won by a single run,
And Wharton's team's in clover!

Oh, it's good to bathe in the briny sea,
Or to go with chums a-biking;
But the cricket ground, and the willow's sound,
Are much more to my liking.
Oh, it's good to sit on a tuckshop stool
And sample strawberry ices;
But it's better, I deem, to help your team
In a most exciting crisis!

Cricket, King Cricket, long may you reign!
The boys of Britain love you!
What finer fun than to hit and run,
While the blue sky smiles above you,
To gather around at close of play
For a bumper celebration;
To toast and sing, why, "Willow the King!"
Best sport of a sporting nation!

LODER, THE FIREMAN!

(Owing either to accident or to malice aforethought, the cricket pavilion caught fire the other evening. Loder, of the Sixth, gives his version of the affair hereunder!—ED.)

I was playing Carne at "poker," when
that silly fathead Coker
Galloped up and grabbed me wildly by the arm,
And I saw the smoke ascending in a volume never-ending,
And perceived the sudden cause of his alarm.
The pavilion was a-blazing, and the pony ceased his grazing,
And departed at the double for the trees.
And the atmosphere was "breezy"; I confess I felt uneasy,
And a trifle insecure about the knees!

'Twas a time for instant action. With a feeling of distraction,
I discharged old Prout's repeater in the air.
Then I waited for the scurry of the fellows who would hurry
With the engine and the hose towards the flare.
But the Greyfriars special picquet were concealed behind a thicket,
And they watched the conflagration with delight.
"Let the merry fire keep burning; let the great big world keep turning,
Yes! But we refuse to give a 'turn' to-night!"

I could see the Head a-prancing as he watched the gay sparks dancing;
I could picture to myself his words of strife.
And old Quelchy gently stroked him, or his fury would have choked him,
And he'd doubtless have disfigured me for life!
It was soon a wrecked pavilion, and the sparks flew by the million;
'Twas a sight I'm never likely to forget!
But, by Jove, I'd like a minute with the silly ass who in it
Lighted other things besides his cigarette!

NEXT WEEK:

SPECIAL HALF-HOLIDAY NUMBER.

THE VITAL QUESTION!

(Assuming that Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, has a son, we can imagine him firing the following questions at his father one of these days, when they are together.—ED.)

"What did you do in the war, daddy?
Did you join the King's Hussars?
Did you scare the Hun with your loaded gun,
And make the brute see stars?"
"No, no, my boy. By a lucky chance
I kept away from the fields of France!"

"What did you in the war, daddy?
Did you fly a Sopwith Scout?
Did you sweep the sky with your eagle eye,
And put the Hun to rout?"
"Nay, nay, my son—though I would fain
Have soared the skies in an aeroplane!"

"What did you do in the war, daddy?
Did you man a kite balloon?
Did you swiftly scoot in your parachute
When you heard the first maroon?"
"Although a 'gas-bag' myself, my son,
I've never patrolled the skies in one!"

"What did you do in the war, daddy,
For your one-and-six a day?
I should think, for that, you'd have laid out flat
A dozen Huns, anyway!"
"I wish, my son, you would hold your peace;
I belonged to the Friardale Special Police!"

THE ENGLISH POETS!

When Quelchy asks us, "Who was Chaucer?"
We say, "A chap we view with awe, sir!"

When Quelchy says, "Now, who was Spenser?"
We make reply, "A man of sense, sir!"

Said Bunter, when asked "Who was Milton?"
"The fellow who invented Stilton!"

We all see nothing to admire on
The pages of the poet Byron.

And when it comes to Percy Shelley
We'd like to squash him to a jelly!

We can't get on with Tommy Hood,
His works are seldom understood.

We pay no heed to Robert Browning
(No wonder Quelchy's always frowning!)
Instead of reading Johnny Keats,
We pass our time in chewing sweets!

When we neglect the poet Swinburne
Old Quelchy's pointer makes our skin burn!
Why don't I swot up Tennyson?
No; I'm not having any, son!

The Misfortunes of Horace!

By DONALD OGILVY

"I WANT a word with you, Penfold."

Coker's tone was quite genial.

As a rule, when Coker of the Fifth condescends to visit a Remove study, he doesn't exactly display the politeness of princes. He is blunt, not to say rude. But on this occasion he spoke quite affably.

Dick Penfold, who was engaged in composing a parody on a popular song, looked up.

"Go ahead!" he said.

Coker dropped into a chair.

"I understand you're a bit of a poet," he said. "You scribble a lot of tommy-rot for the 'Greyfriars Herald.'"

Penfold glared.

"If you allude to my poetry as tommy-rot ——" he began wrathfully.

"No offence meant, I assure you," said Coker. "What I meant to say was, your poetry is quite good—almost readable, in fact. Now, I'm a bit of a poet myself——"

"Only a bit of one!" murmured Penfold, sotto voce.

"But at this particular moment, when I badly want an inspiration, it won't come. I've been sitting in my study for two hours, trying to compose a poem, and I haven't written a single line. So I want you to help me. I don't expect you to do it for nothing, of course. I'll pay you half-a-crown, or whatever you consider fair and reasonable."

"That's all right," said Penfold. "I'll help you; but you can keep your money in your pocket Now, what subject do you want to write a poem about?"

Coker lowered his voice confidentially.

"I'm in the habit of dropping into the bunshop at Courtfield," he said. "They make awfully ripping strawberry ices——"

Penfold grinned.

"Are the strawberry ices the only attraction?"

"No," said Coker, flushing. "There happens to be a young lady there—a Miss Miranda Peach. She helps in the shop, and she makes the ice-cream with her own hands."

"And Miss Peach is a perfect peach of a girl, what?"

"Exactly! I've been trying to get into her good graces, but I haven't met with much success, so far. You'd think that a handsome chap like me would attract her like a magnet, wouldn't you?"

"Yes. Being very 'Popular,' you ought to appeal to the 'Gem,'" said Penfold humorously. "But then, if you're the "Boys' Friend" you can't very well be a girl's."

"Don't talk rot!" growled Coker. "Now, look here. If I write a nice poem in praise of Miss Peach, and hand it to her, she might sit up and take notice."

"She probably will," assented Penfold. "Though not in the way you mean!" he added, under his breath.

"And you'll help me to compose a suitable poem?" said Coker eagerly.

"Certainly! Here's a fountain-pen and a sheet of paper. You'd better write at my dictation."

Coker took the pen, tested it by squirting a jet of ink over the bookcase, and then turned to Penfold.

"What shall I call the thing?" he asked.

"'To Miranda.'"

"All serene. I've got that. Now, how do we start off?"

The amused twinkle in Dick Penfold's eye showed that he was enjoying the situation. Coker failed to notice the twinkle.

"This would make a good opening," said Penfold:—

"Miranda, you're a perfect dream,
Far sweeter than your own ice-cream!"

"But how can you call a human being a dream?" protested Coker. "A human being is something tangible. A dream isn't."

"Ass! That's a figure of speech," said Penfold. "But if you like you can amend it, as follows:—

"Miranda! You're a perfect scream!"

Coker shook his head.

"You're not such a good poet as I've been led to believe," he said. "I refuse to address Miss Peach as a dream, or a scream, either. She'd think I was trying to be funny."

"Well, aren't you?" said Penfold, in surprise.

"Of course not! This is to be a serious poem."

"Oh, well, we'll have another shot! Supposing you start off like this:—

"Miranda, you're a perfect peach!
Gaze on me kindly, I beseech!
Look not on me with eyes of rage,
Nor cast me off in mine old age."

"That's better," said Coker. "It's not quite what I want, but it will do. Let's have the next instalment."

"Be patient," said Penfold. "You can't expect me to rattle off serious poetry like

The proprietor gripped Coker by the collar and marched him out of the shop, speeding the parting guest with his boot.

this without stopping to think. Now, let me see. I think you'd better proceed on these lines:—

"Miranda, there is only one shop
That I adore, and that's your bunshop!
What delicacy could be grander
Than ices fashioned by Miranda?"

"Now we're getting along first-rate!" said Coker, scribbling away industriously. "How many 'k's' in 'delicacy'?"

"None, you chump!"

"Oh, that's all rot, you know. Surely you spell it 'd-e-l-i-k-a-s-s-y'?"

"Spell it that way, if you like," said Penfold. "I don't suppose Miss Peach will know whether it's right or wrong."

Coker gave a snort.

"Look here, young Penfold, if you say another word against Miss Peach, I'll—I'll burst you! She's an absolutely stunning girl! I'm hoping to take her to the pictures one evening this week."

"Well, you'd better suggest that in the poem," said Penfold. "How's this?

"I long to take you (pray don't laugh)
To see the cinematograph.
To watch each celebrated 'star'
And give you chocolate by the bar."

"Better and better!" said Coker approvingly. "That's bound to fetch her! 'Cinematograph' begins with an 's,' doesn't it?"

Penfold did not reply. He was mapping out in his mind the final stanza.

"This should make a good climax," he said, at length:—

"Miranda, you will find, my peach,
There's other pebbles on the beach.
But you won't find a worthier joker
Than your devoted Horace Coker!"

Coker went into rhapsodies over that last verse. He declared it was a masterpiece. He was certain that when Miss Miranda read it, he would find favour in her sight.

Having written out the poem in his sprawling handwriting, Coker carefully folded it and put it in his pocket.

"I'm much obliged to you, kid," he said. "Sure you won't accept anything for your services?"

"Quite sure, thanks!" said Penfold.

A few moments later, Coker was speeding away on his motor-cycle in the direction of Courtfield.

He dismounted half-way up the High Street, and strolled into the bunshop.

Miss Miranda was there, busily engaged in serving ices. It was a hot afternoon, and there were many customers awaiting attention. Miranda had no time to waste on Coker. She ignored his soulful gaze, and said briskly:—

"What can I get you?"

"A strawberry ice, please," said Coker. "But before you fetch it there's something I want you to read."

"I've no time for reading," said Miranda frigidly.

"Oh, but you simply must read this! It's my own composition."

With an impatient shrug of the shoulders, Miranda took the manuscript which Coker handed to her.

The Greyfriars fellow watched her face eagerly as she read the poem. He expected Miranda to be all blushes and smiles.

The girl blushed, certainly; but instead of smiling, she flashed a glance of wrath and indignation at Coker.

"I—I'm going to call——" she began.

"Yes, call me Horace, by all means," said Coker, misunderstanding.

"I'm going to call the proprietor!"

"Oh!"

With an angry toss of her head, Miranda flounced away.

The next moment the proprietor appeared on the scene. He was a burly man—a man who in his day had been the heavy-weight boxing champion of Kent. He advanced grimly upon Coker.

"I'll teach you to write insulting poems to my waitress!" he exclaimed. "Out you go!"

Coker jumped to his feet in alarm.

"I—I say, you've got hold of the wrong end of the stick! I didn't mean to be insulting——"

But the proprietor of the bunshop was a man of action, rather than words. He gripped Coker by the collar and marched him out of the shop, speeding the parting guest with his boot.

Coker landed on all fours on the pavement, wondering if an earthquake had happened.

He sorted himself out, and limped back to the school, vowing vengeance on Dick Penfold.

And it will be a long, long time before Horace Coker again patronises the Courtfield bunshop!

THE END.

MY POERTORY KOLLUM!

By Billy Bunter.

IT is only rite and propper that I should kontribute to this issew, being such a grate poet.

Sum felloes seem to think I karn't write poertory. They are only jellus. In there hart of harts, they no that I can tern out wunderful stuff.

My poertory is yew-neek. Nuthing kwite like it has ever been seen before.

This is wear my brillyance comes in. I can write poertory on any toppick under the sun.

Sum felloes have to wait untill respiration comes to them—or is it inspiration? But I don't. I can tern out poertory to order.

The other day we were wandering along the seashore, and Toddy suddenly said to me:

"Make up a rime about a winkle!"

On the spur of the moment I perduced the following tuching lines:

"Twinkle, twinkle, little winkle,
In yore tiny shell,
If I'd a pin, I'd stick it in,
And here yore angwished yell!"

Yes, I can write poertory about the most trivvial tringe—myself, for instanse. Of corse, it's a natcheral gift, which only one fello in a millyun possesses.

Those who read my Speshul Verse Number of my "Weekly," which appeered a few weeks ago, have ritten to say that my poertory reeches a dizzy height, and that I ought to be menshuned in the same breadth as Byron and Shelley. My mind is of such a depth that noboddy can fathom it.

Dick Penfold stiles himself the Poet Lorry Ate of the Remove; but this is sheer swank. Penfold can sertainly string rimes together, but their is no lofty sentiment in his verse, like their is in mine. Besides, the fello karn't even spell, so it's impossibul to take his claim seriously.

I was only four yeers old when my tallents as a poet first came to lite. We were spending a hollerday at the seeside, and my pater was about to take me out for the day, when I said:

"Daddy deer, before we start,
May I have just one more tart?"

"Bless my sole!" ejaculated my pater. "The boy is kwite a Hogg!"

Hogg, as everyboddy knows, was the shepherd poet, so I took this as a grate kompliment.

By the way, Mister Frank Richards has prommist to write a MAGNET story, deeling with my eggsperiences as a poet. This story—like Wingate of the 6th when he's batting—should make a grate hit! I trussed you will not miss it on any account, deer reeders.

I have been looking up my ansestry, and I find that I am a direckt dessendant of William Shakespeere. So you can see wear I inherrited my wunderful gift of poertory from.

But I must finnish now, in order to write an "Ode to a Voel and Ham Patty." I shall send the ode to "Punch," with a stamped enverlope enklosed for rejeckshun if unsootable. But it won't be unsootable. It karn't be. Bekawse it will be the work of W. G. Bunter, the gratest poet sinse Kromwell!

HOW TO BECOME A GREAT POET!

By TOM BROWN.

"GREAT poets are born, not made."

This is about the biggest bit of tommy-rot ever penned.

I don't deny that great poets are born. We all have to be born at some time or other. But what I do most emphatically deny is that great poets cannot be made.

Why, at certain literary clubs in London, they turn out poets like sausages from a machine!

Even a fellow who doesn't know the first thing about poetry can become a skilled versifier after a little tuition.

Now, we will assume that your name is John Jones, and that you are anxious to rise out of the rut of common or garden people, and become a great poet.

First of all, you must cultivate wild eyes and flowing locks.

Stand in front of your mirror every morning, and roll your eyes in a fine frenzy, until you have become perfect at the art. Allow your hair to grow until the tresses fall over your shoulders. If over the age of sixteen, try to cultivate a beard.

It is a generally accepted belief that poets have long hair, wild eyes, and straggling beards. So that if you want to look the part, you will know how to go about it.

Now we come to the actual poetry writing.

Your aim should be to write very simple stuff—the simpler the better. Long words should be avoided like a plague.

One of the greatest masterpieces the world has ever known commences something like this:—

"I met a little cottage girl,
She was eight years old, she said.
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head."

What a touching picture! The sweet little cottage girl, who had seen eight summers (and, I suppose, an equivalent number of winters), and whose head was a mass of curls. (This was before bobbed hair came into vogue.) No wonder the name of the writer of that poem has gone down to posterity! It was the same man, I believe, who wrote that soul-stirring ballad, commencing:—

"A simple child, dear brother Jim,
That lightly draws his breath."

We should advise Brother Jim to go in for deep-breathing exercises!

But you see what I mean, don't you? Simplicity should be the keynote of your poetry.

You should also take great care in selecting your subject. Poems about sheep, and daffodils, and primroses by the river's brim, are always popular. And occasionally you can drag in a weeping willow, or a sobbing oak-tree.

Lots of people seem to think that the most important part of a poem is the rhyming.

This is a great mistake. The rhyming doesn't matter a bit. In fact, if you can dispense with it, so much the better. All the really great poets write blank verse.

I will give you an example of what I mean:—

"I met a little cottage girl,
She told me she was eight years old.
Her hair was a mass of gorgeous curling tresses,
Which clustered like roses round the door."

That, my friends, is a sample of real poetry. The imagery is wonderful! Of course, I got the main idea from Wordsworth, but you must admit it looks much better in blank verse than in rhyme.

But what I want to impress upon you more than anything is this: Stick to simple words. Long, jawbreaking words only make a poem appear cumbersome and top-heavy.

Now, if Wordsworth's verse was worded as follows, it would lose all its charm:—

"I encountered a diminutive cottage damsel,
My interrogations elicited the fact that she was eight
The integuments of her head incorporated a superabundance of clustering curls."

That sort of thing isn't done—at least, it ought not to be. There is only one place for a man who writes poetry of that description—Colney Hatch!

Now, you may find it rather difficult, at first, to put your thoughts into words. You can't make poetry as easily as you can make, say, batter-pudding. But if any difficulty arises, come and consult Tom Brown, whose knowledge of poetry is both extensive and peculiar. He will give you lessons at a tanner a time, and put you well on the road to fame and fortune.

Of course, one doesn't write poetry for the benefit of one's health. There's money to be made at the game. I know a fellow who gets his living at it. He made nearly five pounds last year, before they sent him away to the debtors' prison.

You will meet with some crushing disappointments at the outset, but you mustn't mind that.

For the first four years or so, everything you write will be rejected. But after that—provided you haven't starved in the meantime—you will rapidly make good.

You might even aspire to the post of Poet Laureate, which carries with it, I believe, a salary of something like eighty pounds a year.

And when that happy day dawns, and you are touring the country in your Rolls-Royce, spare a thought for the writer of this article, to whom you will owe your success.

And don't forget to dedicate your works to me, in the following strain:—

"I'm certain I should never be
A poet of renown,
Unless I'd read each particle
Of that delightful article
By good old Thomas Brown!"

PROFESSOR BALMYCRUMPET!

Contributed to the Greyfriars Herald by HERBERT SKIMPOLE of St. Jim's

Jack Blake in cricket takes delight,
And Herries blows a comic trumpet;
But *I* get busy, day and night,
With Balmycrumpet!

Some fellows see a punching-ball
Hung in the gym, and long to thump it;
But I am happier than them all
With Balmycrumpet!

Some worship Towser; *I* regard
The bulldog as a very rum pet;
And all the time I'm working hard
With Balmycrumpet!

And others, when they see a fence,
Display their eagerness to jump it;
But I, the genius, get me hence
With Balmycrumpet!

If others find that life is tame,
I fear that they will have to lump it,
Until they learn to love the name
Of Balmycrumpet!

[*Supplement iv.*

"The Caravan Detective!"

(Continued from page 8.)

"Stop here a bit! We're going to swim!"

"Eh?"

"Swim!" roared Bob, pointing to the river.

"Oh, yes! I'll look after the van, sir."

"Why not come for a swim, too?" asked Drake. "The horse can be tied to the fence. The van will be safe enough, you fellows; it will be in sight all the time."

"Certainly!" said Harry. "You come, too, Wilkinson."

"Eh?"

"Come for a swim!" shouted Wharton.

The wooden-legged man shook his head.

"I can't swim, sir."

"Well, you can bathe, anyhow," said Bob Cherry. "It will do you good, Wilkinson. Trot along with us."

"I don't care for it, sir, thank you!"

"Oh, all right; just as you like!"

"After all, it's safer for somebody to stay with the van, if Wilkinson doesn't mind," remarked Frank Nugent.

Drake glanced rather curiously at the juniors.

"Why not take the horse out for a bit, and let him mop up the grass?" he asked. "It would rest him. I'll do it while you chaps start."

"Well, for such a short halt——" said Harry.

"Oh, come, let me make myself useful for once!" said Drake. "Suppose that giddy convict came along and borrowed the van?"

"Wilkinson wouldn't let him."

"Mightn't be able to stop him," said Drake, with a smile. "Safer with the horse out."

"Go ahead, if you want to," said Wharton. "We'll get off to the river."

"Right-ho!"

Wilkinson looked rather oddly at Drake, as he released the horse from the shafts. But he did not speak. Harry Wharton & Co. started across the meadow for the stream, where the sporting young man had so obligingly given them permission to bathe. Drake led the horse from the road, and tethered him to the fence with a loose tether, to allow him to crop the grass by the roadside.

Wilkinson stepped down, and laid himself in the grass to rest. Drake gave him a glance, and then followed his comrades across the field. In the shade of the willows, the juniors quickly changed into their bathing costumes, and plunged into the water.

It was a delightful spot for swimming, and the Greyfriars juniors thoroughly enjoyed themselves for about ten minutes. Then they were suddenly hailed from the bank.

A stout man in gaiters, with a whip under his arm, and an angry red face, shouted to the swimmers:

"Come out of that!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "I wonder who that merchant is?"

"What's the trouble?" called out Wharton, treading water, and looking at the red-faced man on the bank.

"Trouble! I'll give you trouble! What do you mean by bathing in my water, and trespassing on my land?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Disturbing my fish!" roared the red-faced man. "Do you think I pay for fishing rights 'ere to let a gang of young tramps swim in the water? Come out of it!"

"Are you the owner of this show?" asked Bob.

"Yes, I am, you young rascal!"

"A chap told us we could bathe here," said Harry. "We asked a young man who was at the gate yonder. He said there was no objection."

"Don't talk to me! Come out!" The red-faced man took a business-like grasp on his whip, and it was only too evidently his intention to use it when the juniors came within range. "You 'ear me?"

"My word!" murmured Nugent. "That young fellow was just pulling our leg! He must have known bathing wasn't allowed here!"

"He said there was no objection——"

"I suppose he hadn't any objection, if the place wasn't his," said Harry, with a wry face. "He was just pulling our leg, bother him!"

"The silly ass!" breathed Bob. "I'll jolly well pull his nose if I see him again!"

"Blessed if I like the look of that whip!" murmured Jack Drake. "We're not exactly clad for it!"

"The whackfulness would be terrific in the present sparsefulness of our attire!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

The red-faced man cracked his whip loudly.

"Come out!" he roared.

"What are you going to do with that whip?" demanded Bob.

"I'm going to lay it round you for trespassing on my land!"

"Are you, by Jove? Then we'll stay in a bit longer!"

"Come out, I tell you!"

"Rats!"

"Why, you young rascals," roared the red-faced man, "if you don't come out of that there water, I'll—I'll——" Words seemed to fail the exasperated man.

"Let's hope he won't spot our clobber!" murmured Nugent.

But that was exactly what the red-faced man did do. He was aware that the bathers' clothes must be somewhere on the bank, and he started looking for them among the willows. The juniors watched him in dismay. He was not long in finding the clothes.

"My hat, he's bagging our clobber!" said Bob Cherry dismally, as the red-faced man began to gather up a bundle of garments.

"Let those clothes alone!" bawled Johnny Bull.

The red-faced man looked round with a surly grin.

"I'm taking these 'ere clothes away," he said. "If you want them, you can come to the house—it's a mile away across the fields yonder. I give you a last chance to come out and take a thrashing!"

"You blessed ruffian——"

"'Nuff said! I'm going!"

With nearly all the clothes bundled over his arm, the red-faced man strode away. He gave a last glance round at the dismayed swimmers.

"Come along to the house, and ask for Mr. Higgins," he said. "That's me! I'll 'ave the whip ready!"

"You rotter!" bawled Johnny Bull.

"I'll teach you to trespass on my land, and frighten away my fish!" said Mr. Higgins vengefully.

And he tramped towards a little bridge that spanned the stream a hundred yards or so farther downstream.

"We're not standing this!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, his eyes gleaming. "We're jolly well going to have our clobber! Never mind his whip—there's enough of us to handle him, big as he is!"

"Yes, rather!"

"The whipfulness will be terrific," remarked Hurree Singh, "but the esteemed clobber is the stern necessity!"

And, making up their minds to it, the juniors scrambled out of the water through the rushes, and ran in pursuit of Mr. Higgins.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Higgins Gets Wet!

"STOP!"

Mr. Higgins spun round.

He grinned at the sight of the six sparsely-clad schoolboys racing towards him down the bank of the stream. He threw the bundle of clothes aside, and grasped his whip grimly.

"Come on, you young rascals!" he exclaimed. "You've decided to take your hiding, hey?"

That was not exactly what the Greyfriars juniors had decided upon, as the red-faced man was to discover.

They came on with a rush, anxious to get to close quarters as quickly as possible, before Mr. Higgins could use his whip much.

Slash! The red-faced man lashed out vigorously, and there was a yell from Bob Cherry as the thong curled round his bare legs.

"Yarooh!"

Slash, slash!

Nugent and Hurree Singh yelled as they got the whip next. But then the juniors were close in. Wharton and Johnny Bull seized hold of the burly man, and Wharton succeeded in hooking his gaitered leg, and they came down on the bank together with a crash.

There was a breathless grunt from Mr. Higgins as he landed, with the juniors sprawling on him.

"You young villains!" roared Mr. Higgins. "I'll 'ave you locked up for this 'ere! Leggo! Oh!"

He struggled fiercely. The whip was torn away, but the burly man shook himself free of the juniors, and staggered up. But he was only on his feet a second. Bob Cherry promptly "butted" him, and he staggered backwards and rolled down the bank again.

Splash!

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" gasped Bob "He's in!"

"Oh crumbs!"

The panting juniors stared after Mr. Higgins. He had been butted over on the slope of the bank, which was rather steep near the bridge. He had rolled through the rushes, and splashed into the water, and for a moment or two he disappeared from sight.

He came up spluttering and blowing three or four yards out from the bank.

The red face disappeared under the water again.

"My hat!" exclaimed Wharton. "He can't swim! He's in danger——"

"Phew!"

By the bridge the stream narrowed, and the current ran faster. The red-faced man's head came up, this time under the bridge. His hands were thrown up helplessly. He was swept away under the bridge in sight of the horrified juniors.

Harry Wharton dashed along the bank with the speed of a deer. He passed the end of the bridge, and was just in time

to see the struggling man swept out on the further side.

Without an instant's hesitation, the captain of the Remove dived in.

A few powerful strokes, and he reached the red-faced man, who was sinking again, his confused struggles only making it impossible for him to keep afloat. Wharton's grasp on his collar brought his head above the surface just in time. The red face was almost white now, and the man's eyes were staring. He clutched hold of Wharton convulsively.

"Help!" shouted Harry.

His chums were racing along the bank after him. But the current was strong, and it was sweeping away both Wharton and the man he was trying to save. The clutching and struggling of Mr. Higgins made it difficult for Wharton to swim at all, without seeking to get to the bank.

"Let go!" panted Harry. "I'm holding you! You're all right! Groogh!"

He was dragged under, and he struggled afloat again, still holding to Mr. Higgins.

It was fortunate for Wharton that his chums were at hand. Bob Cherry was the first in, and he swam swiftly to the rescue, and Jack Drake was only a few seconds behind him.

They reached the almost exhausted captain of the Remove, and laid hold of Mr. Higgins.

That gentleman, in a state of utter confusion and bewilderment, struggled and clutched, and clutched and struggled, and the three juniors had plenty to do to keep themselves and him above water.

Johnny Bull and Nugent and Hurree Singh came swimming up, however, and Mr. Higgins was seized on all sides and brought to order.

In the midst of the six swimmers the stout gentleman was propelled towards the bank, still trying to struggle.

The juniors trampled through the rushes, and landed him a hundred yards down the stream from the bridge, and from the spot where their clothes had been left, on the opposite side of the water.

Mr. Higgins lay in the grass, and gurgled and puffed and blew.

"May as well get back to our clobber," said Johnny Bull. "As soon as he gets his second wind he may begin his japes again."

"Good! Let's out."

Mr. Higgins was left to puff and blow; there was nothing the matter with him to need attention. The juniors ran quickly up the bank, crossed the bridge, and reached the spot where their clothes had been left. They were very quick in towelling themselves down and getting into the clothes. True, they had probably saved Mr. Higgins' life, but as it had been Bob Cherry who had butted him into the water it was not to be expected that the red-faced man would feel very grateful. Certainly he did not look as if he were much given to feelings like gratitude. The juniors were in a hurry to get away, and they dressed in record time.

"Now for the van!" said Bob breathlessly. "Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes that obstinate old josser."

Mr. Higgins, having puffed and blown himself into a state of recovery, was coming up the bank towards the bridge, squelching out water from his big boots and gaiters. He was coming at a run, and the juniors departed at a run as they saw him.

They scudded across the meadow to the road, and reached the van while Mr. Higgins was still by the river.

Wilkinson stumped up out of the grass. He eyed the juniors very curiously.

"Buck up and get the horse in!" said Wharton. "We're off the brute's land now, but we may as well save argument."

"Yes, rather!"

Drake backed the horse into the shafts, and Wilkinson rattled on the harness. Mr. Higgins was coming across the meadow at full pelt now, his face redder than ever.

He tore open the gate and rushed out into the road, before the caravan had time to start. Bob Cherry jerked a cricket-bat out of the van. If Mr. Higgins wanted more trouble he was welcome to it.

"Stop!" panted Mr. Higgins.

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"Look here——"

"Off!" called out Wharton, as Wilkinson cracked his whip; and the Greyfriars caravan started at a trot.

The juniors trotted, too. Mr. Higgins, quite winded by his run across the meadow, gasped for breath, but after a moment or two he broke into a run in pursuit.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! He's after us!" chortled Bob Cherry. "Well, I've got this bat ready for his silly cocoanut."

"Stop!" bawled Mr. Higgins breathlessly.

"Rats!" yelled back Bob.

"I tell you——"

"Go and chop chips!"

The red-faced man put on a spurt and came up with the caravan. Then the Famous Five and Drake, quite out of patience, turned on him in wrath and collared him. In the grasp of six pairs of hands Mr. Higgins sat down forcibly in the road, with a bump.

"There!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Ow!"

"Sit there a bit and cool off," said Johnny Bull. "If you come after us again we'll give you a harder one. Catch on?"

"I was coming after you to—to—to——" The red-faced man gasped for breath. "To—to——"

"Tell us when we come this way again!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "We may be doing Dorset next vac—perhaps. Come on, you chaps!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The van was rumbling on, and the juniors ran after it. To their astonishment the red-faced man scrambled up and ran after them again.

The six juniors faced round to meet the red-faced man as he came breathlessly on. Mr. Higgins came panting up.

"All together!" sang out Bob Cherry.

"Stop! I—I—I was coming after you to—to—to—to tell you." He spluttered for breath, but he got out the next words just in time before the Famous Five seized him. "You've saved my life, though you put it in danger, you young rascals, and—and you can swim in my stream as much as you like!"

"Eh?"

"Oh!"

"Ah!"

"And as you're caravanning you can camp in my meadow if you want to!" gasped Mr. Higgins. "That's—groogh!—what I came after you to say."

"Oh!" ejaculated the caravanners.

Evidently there had been a misunderstanding.

Wharton stopped at a general stores and looked in. He discovered Bunter seated at the table, finishing the remnants of a large cake. Bunter gave a startled blink at Wharton. "Hallo, here you are," said Harry. "Y-y-yes, I'm here!" gasped the fat junior. *(See Chapter 8.)*

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Shopping!

"OH! We—we—we beg your pardon!" stammered Wharton, quite taken aback.

"We—we didn't catch on."

"The begfulness of the honourable pardon is deep and terrific, my esteemed and ludicrous friend," said the Nabob of Bhanipur.

Mr. Higgins grinned.

As Bob Cherry remarked afterwards, he seemed a better-tempered man wet than dry.

Apparently, he was not so thankless as the juniors had taken for granted. He was, in fact, quite grateful.

"You're a set of young scamps," he said; "but I see you ain't the cheeky tramps I took you for at first. If you're looking for a camp, there's my meadow. And you send your man up to the farmhouse, if you like, and I'll stand you as much milk and butter and eggs as you could want. You pitched me into the water, but you got me out; and I reckon you ran some risk. I lost my head in the water; I know that."

"You jolly well did!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Jolly nearly drowned the lot of us. But a miss is as good as a mile."

And without waiting for the juniors to thank him the burly gentleman strode away at a great rate, still squelching water. Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another.

"Not such a bad sort, after all!" said Bob.

"After all, I suppose a man naturally would be waxy at finding six chaps bathing without leave in a stream where fish are preserved," said Harry, laughing. "He had a right to be waxy, though he was rather too handy with that confounded whip. Still, I vote we forgive him and camp in his meadow; it's close on time for camping."

"And milk and eggs and butter from a Dorset farm ain't to be sneezed at!" said Johnny Bull appreciatively. "We'll accept his offer."

"Hear, hear!"

Wilkinson was waiting for the sign to drive on, the caravan having been halted during the talk with the farmer. His sun-tanned face did not wear a pleased expression, as Drake observed.

"We're camping here, Wilkinson!" Bob Cherry shouted. "I'll back the horse round!"

Bob went to the horse's head, and backed the van to the side of the road and turned it. Wilkinson did not speak.

"Who's going for Bunter?" asked Nugent. "He will be waiting for us at the village."

"Lucky we've got a second bike now," said Wharton, with a smile. "You'll lend me your jigger to run in for Bunter, Drake?"

"Of course!"

Harry Wharton mounted Drake's bike and pedalled on up the road, while his comrades led the caravan into the meadow and prepared to camp. It did not take the captain of the Remove long to cover the mile to the village on Drake's machine.

Bunter was not in sight in the sleepy little village street. Wharton looked round him, and stopped at a shop which was a post-office and a general stores, and several other things, including "Refreshments for Cyclists." He looked in, and discovered Bunter.

The fat junior was seated at a table, finishing the remnant of a large cake. He gave a startled blink at Wharton.

"Hallo! Here you are!" said Harry.

"Yes, here I am, old chap!" said Bunter, with a feeble grin. "I—I—I've been waiting for you, you know."

"Done the shopping?"

"The—the shopping?"

"Yes. We're camping where you left us—on the road," said Harry. "I've come to fetch you back—and the stuff."

"The—the stuff?"

"You fat bounder! Haven't you done the shopping yet?" exclaimed Harry impatiently.

"I had to have a snack," said Bunter. "I told you I was hungry. You must remember my mentioning that, Wharton."

"I remember, fathead!" said Harry, laughing. "Still, you've had plenty of time to do the shopping, as well as have a snack."

"I thought I'd take a snack first," said Bunter. "I was really famished, you know—quite sinking. I'd had nothing since dinner except those tarts, and some apples and nuts, and a chunk or two of toffee, and what was left of the cake, and a bit of jam-roll. So——"

"So you must have been on the point of death by starvation!" said the captain of the Remove sarcastically. "Well, I'll do the shopping if you've been too busy saving your life! Give me the pound note."

"The—the pound note?"

"Yes, ass! Have you changed it for your confounded snack?"

"You see," stammered Bunter—"being on the move as we are, a fellow can't get his remittances. I haven't the least doubt that there are nearly a dozen postal-orders in the post for me; but I can't get them, owing to circumstances, you see, and so I happen to be short of money. I—I really had to change the pound note——"

"Well, give me what's left!" interrupted Wharton impatiently.

"Wha-a-at's left?"

"Yes, ass—and buck up!"

Billy Bunter went through his pockets with sedulous care. His fat hands came out empty.

"I—I—I almost think there isn't any left, Wharton," he murmured. "The—the pound seems to have gone somehow."

"Why, you—you—you guzzling Hun!" exclaimed Wharton. "Do you mean to say you've spent a whole pound on guzzling?"

"I shall return the pound, of course!" said Bunter, with dignity.

"Hand it over, then!" snapped Wharton.

"When I get a postal-order——"

"If you say postal-order again," said Wharton, in concentrated tones, "I'll bang your silly head on that table! Shut up!"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

Harry Wharton turned away. The shopping had to be done, and the captain of the Remove sorted out a fresh pound note. Billy Bunter blinked at him.

The captain of the Remove got through the shopping, and carried out a bundle to Drake's bike. Billy Bunter rolled out sulkily after him, and mounted the other machine.

With a suddenness that made the Greyfriars juniors jump, Wilkinson spun round, a heavy billet of wood in his hand. His eyes blazed at Drake under his shaggy brows. "You spying hound! I guessed it from the first—I knew you were watching me!" he snarled. *(See Chapter 9.)*

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Jack Drake Surprises the Caravanners!

"GOING on again, sir?"

Wilkinson asked the question, as the Greyfriars juniors chatted after a hearty meal in camp. It was late for tea, but rather early for supper; but the juniors were hungry enough to roll both meals into one—especially Bunter. Billy Bunter's little snack, which had cost a pound, did not seem to have affected his appetite much. He fairly plunged into ham, and cold beef, and eggs, and cold chicken, and the other good things Mr. Higgins had supplied. He was still going strong on a big home-made cake when the other fellows had finished, and the wooden-legged man asked Harry if they were going on.

The sun was sinking, and the juniors looked at one another doubtfully. They sympathised with Wilkinson's desire to get on his way to his promised job; but, after all, they were caravanning, and caravanning was not to be done in a hurry. In fact, Mr. Higgins having turned out so hospitable, the juniors were thinking of camping for a day or two in that pleasant part of the smiling county of Dorset.

So Wharton shook his head.

"We're stopping here a bit, Wilkinson," he answered.

"Eh?"

Wharton repeated his reply in a shout.

"Very well, sir," said Wilkinson. "Start at dawn to-morrow, as before, I suppose?"

Wharton looked and felt rather uncomfortable. The caravanners were full of kindness and sympathy for the wooden-legged man, but this was really a little too much. The Greyfriars caravan had not started on its summer tour with the object solely of giving Mr. Wilkinson a lift.

"I think not," answered Harry, rather shortly. "We haven't decided yet whether we're going on the road to-morrow at all. I'm sorry, if you're in a hurry to get on."

"Oh, not at all, sir!" said Wilkinson very civilly. "I'm sure it's very kind of you to give me a lift at all."

"I've got an idea," said Jack Drake, "if you fellows would care to hear it——"

"Go ahead, kid!"

"If Wilkinson's got a job waiting for him at Coventry, he's wasting a lot of time tramping there, even with a lift on the road," said Drake. "Why not have a whip round and raise his railway fare?"

"That's a good idea!" said Bob. "We don't want the poor chap to think we want to get rid of him, of course. But certainly he ought to make the trip more quickly. Besides, we're not going so far as he wants to go. It'll be a week, at least, before we touch Warwickshire."

"Turn on your megaphone, Bob, and tell him!" grinned Nugent.

Bob raised his powerful voice, and explained Drake's suggestion to the wooden-legged man.

Wilkinson shook his head.

"Thanking you kindly, sir," he said, "I'd rather not take any money from you, if you don't mind."

"Well, that's the right spirit, I suppose," said Harry. "But he's welcome to a little bit to see him through, and there's no reason why he shouldn't take it."

"We could shell out an esteemed quid each for the honourable and unfortunate Wilkinson," remarked Hurree Singh. "Let us insistfully urge upon him to accept the donation."

But it was useless to urge Wilkinson. He declined to entertain the idea, and evidently did not want to quit the caravanners. Jack Drake's eyes never left his face during the discussion. Once Wilkinson's sharp glance turned on the schoolboy detective with a very penetrating look. The discussion ended by the wooden-legged man stumping away to gather firewood from the hedges.

Bob Cherry rose from his seat, and yawned.

"Let's all go for a stroll," he said. "Bunter doesn't want to walk, and Wilkinson will be here, so the things will be safe enough."

Drake glanced at him. Wilkinson, gathering firewood, was out of range of the juniors' voices, even if he had not been deaf.

"Will you fellows excuse me if I butt in?" said Drake. "Don't you seem rather to have taken that chap Wilkinson on trust?"

"Oh, he's all right," said Bob, with a stare. "He's an ex-Service man, you know—and crocked."

"Possibly," said Drake.

"I don't know what you mean by possibly. He told us he was," said Bob, in perplexity.

Jack Drake smiled.

"Any tramp could say he was an ex-Service man," he remarked. "It's the easiest way of getting help and sympathy."

"Ye-e-es," said Wharton. "But he's lost a leg, Drake, and he's deaf. Look here, old scout, I've noticed that you don't trust Wilkinson."

"Oh, you've noticed that?"

"I've got eyes, you know, though I'm not a pupil of Mr. Ferrers Locke," said Wharton, with a laugh. "You don't trust him, and that's why you wanted the horse taken out of the van while we went swimming. You had an idea that he might scoot with the caravan—what?"

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Bob Cherry in astonishment. "You must be an ass, Drake."

"I had that idea," assented Drake calmly. "I didn't think it likely, as a stolen caravan can be traced so easily, and by bagging it your timber-legged friend would have drawn a lot of attention on himself—which he probably doesn't want. But I thought it quite possible."

"Dash it all," said Bob Cherry uncomfortably, "that's awfully rotten, Drake, you know, when the chap's an old soldier."

"Is he?" said Drake.

"He said so."

"Well, if he is, he will have his papers about him," said Drake. "Why not ask to see them, if you're going to trust him."

The juniors looked at one another uncomfortably. It dawned upon them that they had, indeed, taken Mr. Wilkinson very much on trust. It had not occurred to them to doubt his story of being a man who had fought at Ypres; the wooden leg and the deafness had seemed evidence enough of that, if they had thought of wanting evidence.

"We can't hurt the chap's feelings by appearing not to trust him," said Bob slowly. "But—but it's true that we don't know anything about him but what he's told us. I—I suppose it isn't quite safe to leave a stranger in charge of the camp."

"He seems very willing and obliging," said Nugent.

"He does!" assented Drake. "He naturally would, if he has some special object in keeping in with you."

Wharton looked very keenly at the schoolboy detective.

"Look here, Drake, you've either said too much or too little!" he said abruptly. "You suspect the man of something."

"Admitted."

"Well—what?"

"Why did he refuse to go into the water?" said Drake.

"He didn't want to."

"I suggested the swim to see whether he would refuse," explained Drake.

"The dickens you did!"

"And he refused—exactly as I expected."

"Blessed if I know why you expected anything of the sort," said Bob Cherry, rather gruffly. "I shouldn't expect anybody to refuse a chance of getting a bathe in a river in this hot weather after travelling on a dusty road."

"Quite so. But I expected Wilkinson to refuse."

"Why?"

"I say, you fellows," called out Bunter. "If you're not going for a walk, you can come and wipe these plates, if you like."

"Go and eat coke!" hooted Bob.

"Yah!" Bunter went on washing-up, with a snort.

"Get on, Drake," said Bob. "Why did you expect Wilkinson to refuse to go into the water? Is this some of your merry detective business?"

"Yes," answered Drake.

"Well, why? Listen to Mr. Sherlock Holmes!" grinned Bob.

The juniors chuckled, but they listened very curiously to Drake's answer. It surprised them when it came.

"Because he couldn't go into the water without giving himself away—if he hasn't lost a leg."

"What?"

"If he hasn't lost a leg!" repeated Harry Wharton blankly. "But he has! A man wouldn't stump around on a wooden leg for fun, would he?"

"He might have his reasons."

"My only hat!" said Bob Cherry in wonder. "You're dreaming, Drake! I suppose we've got eyes in our heads, haven't we? Haven't you? Can't you see that the man's right leg is missing below the knee?"

Drake smiled.

"I've got a strong suspicion that it isn't," he answered coolly. "You fellows must have heard that it's an old trick with beggars to double up the leg and put on a wooden stump, to make out that a limb is missing."

"Jolly uncomfy way of getting about, I should think," remarked Nugent. "It would give the chap the cramp."

"But you've heard of such dodges, surely."

"Of course we have," said Wharton. "But—but—— Dash it all, Drake, it's too thick! Why should you imagine that he's spoofing with his wooden leg? Of course, if he's got a real leg hidden away in those baggy trousers it would give it away if he went into the water. But still——"

"Rot!" said Bob Cherry. "You must not mind my saying it, Drake, but you're really talking rot, old fellow!"

"The rotfulness is terrific, in my humble and ridiculous opinion," observed the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"I'm not talking out of the back of my neck, you fellows," said Jack Drake quietly. "I've learned to use my eyes and my brains with Mr. Locke. I've been thinking it out, and I wanted to speak to you while he's out of hearing, and——"

"Out of hearing!" chuckled Bob. "You needn't have waited for that, he's as deaf as a post, you duffer!"

"He's no more deaf than I am," answered Jack Drake calmly. "And when I discovered that I began to think him over."

The juniors blinked at the schoolboy detective.

"He—he—he's not deaf!" stuttered Bob.

"No!"

"You mean to say it's all a spoof?"

"Yes!"

"And when did you find that out?" demanded Bob.

"Within five minutes of joining you this morning," answered Drake quietly.

"Oh, my hat!"

"He heard us talking, then," resumed Drake. "You may remember I mentioned that he seemed interested in our talk, and when you told me he was deaf, that fixed my attention on him. He heard us talking. Ferrers Locke was mentioned, and I could see that he knew the name. He was harnessing the horse, and he kept on finding something to do to keep within hearing before taking the van into the road. I should have thought it was simply curiosity, but when you told me he was deaf, I knew that he must be playing some game."

"But—but——" stammered Wharton.

"Then I kept my eyes on him," said Drake, in the same quiet tone. "I suggested the swim, as I've said, to see whether he would refuse—as he did. I suggested raising the money to send him to Coventry by railway, to see whether he would refuse that—as he did."

"And why should he refuse that?" asked Wharton. "If he's some rogue, spoofing people with a spoof wooden leg, and pretended deafness, I suppose he is on the make! He could have had some money out of us, and needn't have spent it on a railway-ticket!"

"Answer that, Mr. Holmes!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"It suits him to travel with the caravan," said Drake. "I fancy it's the very safest way he could possibly travel—with you fellows to see him through, as you're doing. I've no doubt he will relieve you of your cash—all you've got—before he does leave you! But that won't be yet. For some time to come, caravanning is the best thing going for Mr. Wilkinson—only, he naturally wants to move on as fast as possible. Not to get to Coventry—he's no business there!"

"Then why should he want to travel north as fast as possible?"

"To put a good distance between himself and the place he came from."

"What's that?"

"Dartmoor."

"Wha-a-a-a-t?"

"Drake!"

"You—you don't mean——"

"I do!" said Jack Drake calmly. "You've been sheltering an escaped convict, and the man you've taken under your wing is Bert Gunner—Convict 22!"

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Hands Up!

"GUNNER!"

"Impossible!"

"Utter rot!"

"Good heavens!" breathed Wharton. "You—you—you mean to say that—that he's the convict, and—and we're helping him to escape?"

"That's exactly what I mean to say."

Wharton stared across at Wilkinson, who was in sight in the distance, picking firewood at the hedge.

The man looked guiltless enough, to Wharton's eyes. He could scarcely imagine that Drake was right in his surmise.

But he recalled now the description the mounted constable had given of the wanted man: five feet seven inches high, strongly built, blue eyes and square chin, and dark hair. Wilkinson was about five feet seven, and certainly he was strongly built, and his eyes were blue. His chin was hidden by his stubbly beard, but that beard was of recent growth and due to want of shaving. But under the stubble it looked square. His hair had not been revealed, for he kept his old cap on his head continually. And Wharton could not help wondering now whether it was to hide the convict "crop"—for the man's hair would not have had time to grow since his escape if he really was Bert Gunner.

"The—the description seems to fit," said Wharton at last. "But—but the policeman yesterday never saw——"

"He saw the wooden leg, I imagine, and that put him off the scent," said Drake. "Besides, he naturally wasn't looking for Bert Gunner driving a caravan with a party of schoolboys. If you'd told him you had only met the man the previous night, he would have wanted to know something about him. Instead of that, you told him he was an ex-Service man, and deaf—in fact, answered for him as if he was a regular member of the party."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob. "And if—if—— But it's impossible! Look here, Drake! It's all rot!"

"He's deaf," said Nugent. "Really, you know. Besides, why should he pretend he was deaf if he wasn't, even if he is Gunner?"

"To save talking," answered Drake. "You've remarked yourself that conversation with him is rather difficult, and you haven't asked him any questions. He hasn't been under any necessity of explaining himself in any way. And deafness is a clever dodge for Mr. Wilkinson, simply because Mr. Gunner isn't deaf."

Wharton rose uneasily to his feet.

"I can't quite swallow it, Drake!" he said. "It looks—it looks—well, I know it looks suspicious. But—but what are we going to do? We shall have to know for certain now. What the thump are we going to do?"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he comes!" murmured Bob Cherry.

The juniors were silent at once.

"Eh? Who comes?" asked Bunter—who was sitting near, having finished washing up—in surprise, blinking round through his big spectacles. Only Mr. Wilkinson was approaching, with his arms full of gathered firewood. "Do you mean Stumps? Have you fellows been jawing about Wilkinson all this time, and looking as solemn as a set of moulting owls about it?"

The wooden-legged man was heaping up the firewood near at hand now, and if he was not deaf, he must certainly have heard Bunter's remark. His head spun round as if by instinct. The glance he shot at the juniors was sudden, swift, penetrating—a glance that startled them. Billy Bunter rattled on cheerfully:

"What's the matter you've got to settle, Wharton? What's the difficulty, anyhow? What have you all shut up for all of a sudden?"

"Dry up!" breathed Drake.

Bunter blinked at him. Bunter did not see any reason for "drying" up, and he had a strong objection to drying up at any time. His fat voice was music in his own ears, though probably in nobody else's. And the Owl of the Remove was curious and inquisitive now. He was not very bright; but he was bright enough to know that something was being kept from him, and that it concerned the wooden-legged man. And Bunter wanted to know!

"You can go ahead," he said. "Wilkinson can't hear you; he's as deaf as a post. What's he done?"

"Nothing. Shut up!"

"But you said something had got to be settled, and you shut up directly Wilkinson came along," persisted Bunter. "I want to know what it is! I don't like fellows keeping secrets! Mean, I call it! Has Wilkinson been up to something?"

The juniors, grimly silent, stared at Mr. Wilkinson's back, which was turned towards them.

If Drake's suspicion was well founded, and the wooden-legged man was not deaf, he could hear every word that Bunter spoke.

In that case, if he was Gunner, he could not fail to know that he was suspected—he could scarcely fail to guess that he was under some kind of suspicion.

But, if it was so the wooden-legged man did not give himself away. He went on packing up the firewood methodically in readiness for the camp-fire in the morning. And Harry Wharton & Co. felt their doubts dissipate. They simply could not believe that a cunning criminal had taken them in to such an extent.

Jack Drake rose to his feet, his hand in the pocket of his loose jacket. His expression was grim.

"I'll get the bike out now, you fellows," he said.

"Going for a spin?"

"I'm going to the nearest police-station!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Wharton.

"I've got information to give!" said Drake calmly. "The police will be glad to hear that Bert Gunner hasn't got out of Dorsetshire yet."

The juniors' eyes were fixed on Wilkinson's back as if glued there. If he was playing a part—if Drake was right—surely the man would give some sign now? Surely——

And he did! With a suddenness that made the Greyfriars juniors jump, Wilkinson spun round, a heavy billet of wood in his hand. His eyes blazed at Drake under his shaggy brows.

"You spying hound! I guessed it from the first! I knew you were watching me!" He snarled the words through his teeth. The juniors, utterly amazed, gazed at him spellbound, doubting their eyes and their ears. The man went on, hissing out the words: "I knew it! And I've watched you, too! Hang you! But you've given me the tip, and now——"

Drake's hand flashed out of his pocket.

To the further amazement of the Greyfriars juniors, there was a revolver in the grasp of their former schoolfellow.

The barrel glinted in the rays of the setting sun as it flashed up to a level.

"Hold up your hands, Bert Gunner!" rang out Drake's voice, cool and clear. "Drop that billet, and hold up your hands, or I'll drop you where you stand!"

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Convict 22's Last Fight!

JACK DRAKE stood as firm as a rock, his eyes gleaming over the levelled revolver.

The convict made a stride forward—and stopped. There was no mistaking the determination that gleamed in Drake's steady eyes. Wilkinson—or, rather, Gunner—stopped dead, panting with rage, and the billet of wood dropped from his grasp.

"You young hound!" he panted.

"Stand where you are!"

"G-g-good heavens!" stuttered Bob Cherry. "Then—then it—it—it's true!"

Harry Wharton was the first to recover from his amazement. The truth was clear now—there was no longer any possibility of doubt. The supposed deaf man had shown that he had hearing.

"You awful rascal!" exclaimed Wharton indignantly. "You had the neck to tell us you were an ex-Service man!"

"Wounded at Ypres!" hooted Bob Cherry. "Oh, you rascal!"

"The rascally villain is as terrific a liar as the esteemed Bunter!" said Hurree Singh. "The handfulness over to the honourable police is now the proper caper!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Collar him!" muttered Bob.

The convict panted. He backed away a step or two, his eyes on Drake, taking no heed of the other juniors. It was the revolver in the hand of the schoolboy detective that daunted him. But for that, Drake would already have fallen stunned, perhaps killed, under the savage blow of the ruffian. But the levelled revolver never wavered; the eye that glanced along it was cool and steady. The convict panted, and clenched his hands with impotent fury.

He dared not attack the schoolboy detective, and flight was difficult. The wooden leg, which had been so excellent a disguise, was a heavy handicap in a foot-race.

But it was the ruffian's only resource to attempt to flee, and he backed away, his savage eyes watching Jack Drake.

"Stop!" rapped out Drake.

"Collar him!" repeated Bob.

"Collar him!" said Drake, with a nod. "If he raises a hand I shall pull the trigger. Take these!" He jerked a pair of handcuffs out of his pocket with his left hand. "Get them on the scoundrel!"

"You bet!"

Gunner made a sudden, desperate spring, and by a quick side movement placed the smouldering camp-fire between him and the caravanners. Then he dashed away across the field in flight.

He was heading for the spot where the caravan horse was grazing. Even in that moment of desperation the ruffian's brain had worked quickly, and he had thought of the horse.

Plug, plug, plug! the wooden leg went over the meadow.

"After him!" roared Bob Cherry.

There was a quick rush in pursuit.

Drake did not fire. He did not intend to do so unless Gunner seemed certain to escape. Then the schoolboy detective was grimly determined to bring him down with a ball in the leg. But he held his fire as he rushed in pursuit of the convict with the other fellows.

Gunner reached the horse, but the animal shied and backed as he grasped at it. It trotted away, and the rush of the Greyfriars juniors gave the desperate rascal no time to make another attempt. He swerved off, and headed for the road.

In spite of the wooden leg, and of the discomfort he must have suffered in the leg that was doubled up over the stump in the baggy trousers, the convict put on a good speed. The juniors were still some yards behind, when he threw himself over the low gate into the road.

Tap, tap, tap!

Down the hard high road the wooden leg went tap-tapping, reminding Wharton of the first tap, tap, tap! he had heard in the moonlit night, when Convict 22 had first dawned on the Greyfriars caravanners.

Tap, tap, tap, tappetty-tap!

"We shall get him!" panted Bob.

"Put it on!"

The six juniors sped up the road, gaining on the desperate man. Suddenly, in the dusk ahead, a burly figure loomed up. It was Mr. Higgins, evidently coming home from an evening walk round his land. The red-faced man stared in astonishment at the amazing scene before him.

"Dang my buttons! What——"

"Stop him!" roared Drake. "Stop thief!"

"Oh, I see! Stop!" shouted the farmer, and he placed his bulky person directly in the way of the fleeing ruffian.

Gunner stopped, and swerved to the right, making a desperate plunge through a hedge.

"After him!"

There came a furious yell from the convict. On the inner side of the hedge was a ditch, and the convict had jumped into it, and his wooden leg had sunk in mud to the knee.

He was pinned in the ditch by his own wooden leg!

As he strove frantically to drag it out the Greyfriars juniors came tearing through the torn hedge after him, and they fell over Gunner and over one another. After them came the astounded Mr. Higgins.

Gunner had to cease attempting to draw out the wooden leg. He was caught now, and he knew it. He struck out savagely on all sides, with the instinct of a wild animal at bay to fight to the last. His powerful blows knocked the juniors right and left, till a crash from Drake's clubbed revolver sent the ruffian spinning over, and he floundered headlong in the ditch. Then Mr. Higgins was on the scene, and he grasped Convict 22, and dragged him out. And, powerful as the ruffian was, he was no match for the big farmer.

"Got him!" said Mr. Higgins, as his brawny arms closed round the struggling, panting ruffian. "Now, what's he done?"

"Time!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "And he's got some more to do."

"Wha-at?"

"He's the escaped convict—Gunner," Harry Wharton explained.

"Well, bust my buttons!" ejaculated Mr. Higgins. "Wasn't he travelling with you youngsters?"

"Yes. He took us in, the rascal!"

Click!

The handcuffs fastened on the convict's wrists.

"He spoofed us with a yarn of being a crocked ex-Service man," Harry explained to the astonished farmer. "That wooden leg is a trick, Drake says."

"Look!" said Jack Drake.

He unfastened the wooden stump, the handcuffed ruffian held helpless in Mr. Higgins' brawny grasp. The ruffian's right leg, turned back and up at the knee, was strapped in place. Drake unbuckled the strap, and Convict 22 stretched out his leg with evident relief, though he gave Drake a bitter, evil look.

"My hat!" said Johnny Bull. "Must have been jolly uncomfortable, I should think. I suppose a man could get used to it?"

"You've got me!" muttered Gunner, eyeing Drake. "You've got me, and I'll remember you, Master Drake! I'd have got clear easy but for you."

"Very likely," assented Drake.

"Pretty certain," said Harry Wharton. "I can't say how glad I am that you joined up with us, Drake, old man. When I think of our having actually helped that villain to pass the police——"

"Thank goodness he's lagged now!" growled Johnny Bull. "Better get him off to the police-station."

"Yes, rather! The sooner the quicker."

"We can get a trap from somewhere, and a couple of us can drive with him," said Drake.

"That's all right!" said Mr. Higgins. "You walk him along with me to the farm, and I'll get a trap out. Why, they was rooting through my woods only two days ago, hunting for this chap. I reckon I'll drive him to the station, and one of you can come along and watch him."

"Good!"

And in the midst of the Greyfriars juniors the recaptured convict was marched away to Mr. Higgins' farmhouse, and there he was mounted into a trap, and Mr. Higgins took the reins, and Jack Drake sat beside the handcuffed ruffian. The trap bowled away, and Harry Wharton & Co. returned to their camp. Darkness was falling now, and Bob Cherry threw fresh armsful of wood on the dying fire. The juniors did not intend to go to bed until Jack Drake came back. As the fire blazed up there came a howl from the caravan.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "Haven't you died of funk yet, Bunter?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry, is he gone?"

"Ha, ha! Yes."

"Oh, all right!" gasped Bunter. He unlocked the caravan door, and rolled out. "I—I say, you fellows, I—I wasn't afraid of the brute, of course. Did you know that I suspected all along that he was the convict?"

"Bow-wow!"

"Cheese it, Ananias!"

"I did, you know," said Bunter. "Some fellows are keen, you know. I should have mentioned it, only—only I didn't, you know. But I can tell you I suspected him from the first. If there's a reward I think I ought to have half. What do you think, Wharton?"

"I think you're a fat owl!" said Harry, laughing.

"Oh, really, Wharton! I say, where's Drake?"

"Gone to the lock-up with Gunner."

"I wish you fellows hadn't hurried off like that," said Bunter. "I was—was looking in the van for a—a stick to stun him, you know. I was going to stun him with one fearful blow. That's why he bolted, I think. He caught the terrible expression on my face, and—— What are you silly owls cackling at? Yah!"

And Billy Bunter, with a snort, rolled back to the van to turn in for the night. The juniors waited round the camp-fire for Drake to return, to a musical accompaniment of Bunter's snore from the van. It was a late hour when the rattle of a trap was heard on the road at last, and Drake came across the field, Mr. Higgins driving on by a lane to the farmhouse. Drake looked very cheerful and satisfied as he came into the light of the camp-fire.

"All serene?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Yes; and the police were jolly glad to have him!" said Drake, with a smile. You fellows ready to turn in?"

"Yes, rather!"

And within five minutes the Greyfriars caravanners were fast asleep.

. . . . . .

Convict 22—otherwise Bert Gunner—went back to the place where he belonged, much to the relief of the whole countryside. And Jack Drake went on his way with the caravanners, till his holiday was up, and he had to return to London, much to the regret of the caravanners. Only Billy Bunter found consolation in the reflection that there was now one less to wash-up after.

THE END

(There will be another long complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled "Caravanners Afloat," by Frank Richards, in next Monday's issue of the MAGNET. *Order your copy to-day!*

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Have you ever camped out and experienced the joys of cooking your own grub? Have you ever felt the desire to seek the woods and highway, to get away from the smoke of the city and town? In these splendid articles you can learn to do all these things. AN OLD HAND tells you how.

FIRST-AID IN CAMP.

THE success of the camp depends largely on the way you look after yourself physically. You may not consider this important, but it is. It's not like being at home, where there is a doctor or chemist round the corner to attend to any accident which may happen to you. You can't just go to a doctor when you are away in the country, miles from a town, so you must understand something about first-aid, and you must also be prepared for accidents by carrying a medicine-chest with you every time you go to camp.

The object of first-aid is not to make you a sort of amateur doctor, but to prevent harm being done until expert attention can be given.

You may badly cut or gash yourself with a knife or axe. Would you know what to do, and how to stop the bleeding? Supposing you put your arm out of joint, or sprain your ankle? If it is left to be attended to when you get back home, or when you have to go miles to see a doctor, it may become worse; but if you know how to put it into splints and bandages so that it is not exposed to the dirt or any other foreign matters which will cause festers and blood-poisoning, you will be looking after yourself as an old hand does.

There are one or two things to remember in the case of accidents. Don't get flurried. Keep cool, and have your wits about you. Don't be afraid of a little blood. Immediate attention means everything. Don't wait, but render assistance at once, for at the moment it is worth more than all the aid afterwards, when it may be too late to avoid complications. Leaving a wound undressed means complications far more probable. The fact of your keeping cool means that your patient will do so as well.

Another knowledge, besides that of first-aid, which you should acquire is the preparation of herbal medicine. An old hand can make his own medicine from plants and roots suitable for small hurts. He carries a chest about with him which contains small bottles of Nature's medicine, and he is able to doctor himself at a moment's notice and dress a wound caused by thorns (dangerous if left) and cuts and other common injuries.

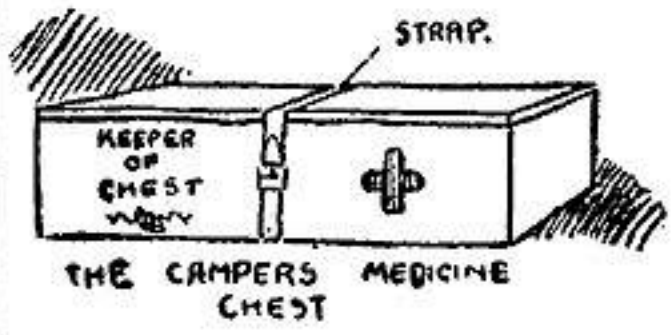
MAKING A MEDICINE CHEST.

The chest I carry with me is made out of a small wooden box which I believe originally contained Sunlight soap bars. The box is very light and the wood thin, and does not make an awkward bundle to carry. I suggest that you should make your chest of similar material. A grocer is generally able to supply a thin wooden box suitable for the purpose, and seldom asks much for it.

Paint the outside of the box brown, with a small red cross in the front, as shown in sketch, and line the inside with thick brown paper. If you are not able to get a lid, this latter can easily be made from a piece of three-ply wood, of the same size as the box, and fixed into place by two small hinges. With your chest made, the next thing to think about is the contents of the box. Choose them carefully, and do not fill the chest with unnecessary implements or too many rolls of bandages.

The following list will give you an idea of the most useful things:

Three rolls of bandages—1in. width, 2in. width, and 3in. width.
Small pair of scissors.
Small pair of tweezers (for splinters).
Six-inch square of boracic lint.



Six-inch square of cottonwool.
One large bandage one yard square (for slings).
Tin of boracic ointment.
Tin of cowslip ointment (home-made).
Small bottle of linseed oil (for burns).
Small bottle of dandelion juice (home-made).
Small bottle of marshmallow syrup (home-made).

At any chemist's you can buy a ready-made case of first-aid implements very cheaply, but the case you make is not going to cost you half as much.

(Continued on page 20.)

ROUND THE CAMP FIRE.

(Continued from page 19.)

It is a good idea, if you have formed a camping club, as I suggested a short time back, to allot to one of your members the job of keeping the chest in order, and it should be his duty to see that everything is clearly and carefully labelled.

Having dealt with the contents of the chest, I will now give you a few hints on first-aid.

For burns you must cover at once from the air with clean paper or cottonwool. Remember the great point—exclude the air at once. Bicarbonate of soda is also good to lay on, and even common flour is better than nothing. Bind up with small bandage.

Insect bites should be treated with a strong solution of washing-soda, a remedy that is also useful for rheumatism.

A wound in the forehead or scalp accompanied by bleeding can best be treated by pressure from a small pad of lint fastened over the wound and kept in position by a narrow bandage over it. Bleeding from a wound in the throat is a serious matter, owing to the importance of the arteries involved. The thumb should be applied a little above the collar-bone, pressing backwards, but taking care to avoid the windpipe. Expert medical advice should be sought immediately if possible, but don't leave your patient unless forced to.

For bleeding below the knee, a pad must be placed in the hollow of the knee, which should be bent, and then bound by a narrow bandage. The wound is then dressed and bound up.

The smallest cut should not be considered trivial, but must be dressed at once. Bear in mind that people have been poisoned in many cases through the neglect of small cuts and grazes which have been looked upon as mere trifles. All foreign matter should be carefully removed, such as dirt, minute pieces of glass, threads of clothing, etc.; but you must not pull the wound about searching for such things. The cleaning is done by damping a small piece of boracic lint in warm water, if at hand, or cold if not, and passing it over the wound gently.

When bathed well, put a little boracic ointment on the end of the bandage, and bind round the wound several times, remembering that the dressing must not be tight.

It is your duty to see that this is carried out and no wound left exposed to be covered with dirt and grit. Even if in the case of a blister it is dangerous. The blister eventually bursts, getting rid of all the bad matter under the skin, and the raw flesh is exposed. If dirt gets to it, blood-poisoning may set in at once.

For sprains apply cold fomentations, and bandage the limb tightly. After a day or two it is advisable to encourage movement of the joint, to prevent the joint from becoming stiff, still keeping the bandage on.

In the case of bruises apply cold fomentations at once, so as to prevent as much effusion of blood as possible.

A fracture is a broken bone, which can easily be recognised, as the arm or leg becomes useless, it begins to hurt, swells, and gets out of place. The first thing to do in this case, if the arm is the fractured limb, is to get the patient to sit down on the ground, his arm resting in his lap, and to keep him from getting excited. Then get a couple of pieces of wood without any notches in. Bend the arm, and apply your improvised splints, one on the inside of the forearm, and the other on the outside or back. Tie the splints to the arm by a bandage on each side of the fracture. Secure the bandage nearest the elbow first. Then sling the arm in a large arm sling.

PREPARING HERBAL MEDICINE.

MARSH-MALLOW.—A syrup made from the roots of marsh-mallow, this common wayside plant is used for soothing purposes for such as sore throats or coughs. Prepare three-quarters of an ounce of the root, and steep in half a pint of water for six hours. Strain and press out any moisture. In the liquid dissolve three-quarters of a pound of brown sugar. Heat up, and keep boiling for a few seconds. Cool off, put as much in your small, labelled bottle as you can, and then put the rest away for use later on.

DANDELION.—Collect a bunch of fresh dandelion roots, wash them well, press out all the juice, then put in another bottle. This is a good liver tonic.

COWSLIP OINTMENT is useful as a healing ointment for all sorts of wounds and broken chilblains. It should be prepared in the following way: Melt a quarter of a pound of lard, and add to it one ounce of cowslip flowers and quarter of an ounce of beeswax. Put the mixture in a pot and keep it warm for about an hour, stirring occasionally. Next strain through muslin. When partly cold add half a teaspoonful of friar's balsam, stir well, and let it cool.

When it is cold, with a knife or a piece of wood, put into a small, round ointment-tin with the label on top. Do not leave the rest lying about exposed. Keep a cover over it to prevent dirt and fluff settling on.

Extreme care must be taken in the picking of the herbs and roots. Make absolutely certain that they are the right ones first, then see that they are washed very well before put through the strainer and pounded.