

THE BARRING OF BUNTER!

THIS WEEK'S TOPPING STORY OF HARRY WHARTON & CO. OF GREYFRIARS.

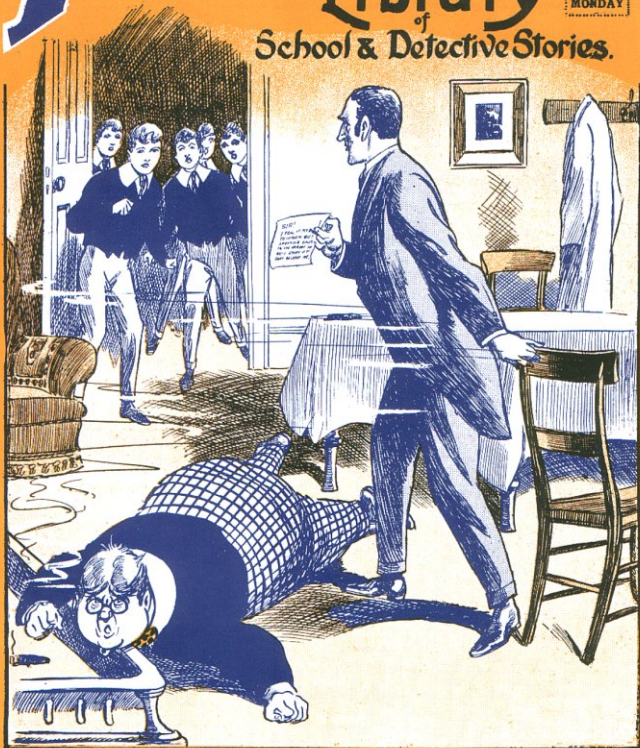
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The Magnet 2^d

Library

EVERY MONDAY

School & Detective Stories.



POETIC JUSTICE!

BUNTER'S REVENGE ON THE FAMOUS FIVE RECOILS UPON HIS OWN SHOULDERS!

(An unexpected development in this week's grand school story.)





Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his chums. Write to him when you are in trouble or need advice. A stamped and addressed envelope will ensure a speedy reply. Letters should be addressed "The Editor," THE MAGNET LIBRARY, The Amalgamated Press (1922), Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

"CAPPED FOR GREYFRIARS!" By Frank Richards.

THAT is the title of next Monday's splendid complete story of the chums of Greyfriars. It celebrates the advent of King Cricket, for the story is woven round a cricket theme that is as interesting as it is mysterious. It would be spoiling a good thing to say in advance who the lucky person is to earn his "colours," but rest assured, chums, his identity will cause you no little surprise. Look out for next Monday's treat, and take the precaution of ordering your copy of the MAGNET in advance.

"THE QUEST OF THE PURPLE SANDALS!"

Next week's splendid complete story dealing further with the amazing quest which is now occupying the energies of Ferrers Locke is even better than the first three years of this new series. The world-renowned sleuth has vowed to place the rascally Dr. Kruse in the dock and to recover the purple sandals. Little, however, did he reckon, in the first place that he would have to follow

"THE QUEST IN QUEBEC!"

But such is the case. Those sandals have a happy knack of eluding his clutches, as does the one-time eminent surgeon of Harley Street—Dr. Kruse. Join hands with the sleuth, boys, and keep an eye open for those purple sandals, containing, or alleged to contain, at least, the secret of the ages, to the discovery of which the alchemists of old devoted their lives.

"IN THE SERVICE OF THE KING!"

Another complete story of the old sea-dogs who ruled the waves in the days of our forefathers. This time we get more than a glimpse of the sterling pluck of the King's Navy, the officers and men of which were under orders to put a stop to piracy on the high seas. The central figures in this coming story are a lieutenant and midddy of the Royal Navy, and a ruthless and cruel pirate named Blackbeard, from the mast of whose ship floats the black flag of ocean outlawry. Don't miss this yarn, boys. It's great.

"PAGE-BOY" SUPPLEMENT.

Lots of things—kind and otherwise—have been written about page-boys in the past, but Magnetite will get a fresh outlook on the subject when they have perused the coming supplement to which Harry Wharton & Co. have devoted their labours. The hard-working staff of the THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 848.

"Herald" has treated both sides of the subject. You will laugh, you will sympathise, you will agree, too, that page-boys have a lot to put up with, and that, after all, they are very necessary beings to such tired mortals as Lord Mauleverer.

I am in receipt daily of appreciative letters from MAGNET readers, both young and old, and the following letter is but an example of the contents of my letter-bag. The strong point about it, however, is the fact that it comes from the pen of a member of the fair sex—trusty critics always—and that at twenty-one the writer still considers the good old MAGNET as worthy of her attention. That's the spirit—the spirit which has made your favourite paper what it is today, which has given it its proud position at the top of the tree.

"London.
"Dear Editor,—I have often seen in the Editor's page of the MAGNET an invitation to readers to write to the Editor, so I thought I would write and let you know what I think of the MAGNET.

"I have been a reader since I was eight years of age, and now I am just twenty-one. Every Monday I look forward to my leisure time after dinner, so that I can sit down and have a 'feed' of the MAGNET and have a good laugh. My mother also reads the MAGNET, and has read it ever since I have. I have piles and piles of copies on a shelf in my bed-room, and often

take them down and read some of them a second time—they never grow stale. I shall always take in the MAGNET as long as I can afford twopenny. I am being married in August, and I shall leave a standing order with my new agent the same as I do now.

"If only there were a few more books like the MAGNET, 'Gem,' and 'Popular' on the market there would not be so many murders done as there are nowadays. Many of the other books published are too bloodthirsty, but the MAGNET is quite harmless, even to a baby. I think, if there was a MAGNET published every day I should buy it. This week's tale is simply 'it,' and I hope there will be a few more like it as the weeks go by. Good old MAGNET!

"Yours faithfully,
"(Miss) FLORENCE E. L."

THE OPEN ROAD!

An enterprising chum who lives at Newcastle, Staffs, asks me about a good fourteen days' cycling tour for the summer holidays. He expresses himself delighted with the brief itinerary I sent him. This consisted of a run south via Birmingham and Oxford to Henley, thence to Ilants and Sussex. It is rather an ambitious tour; but, weather and other conditions favourable, it should be easy enough, and the cyclist will get a glimpse of some of the most interesting districts of the south. Of course, Warwickshire is alluring, so, too, are Berks and Hants.

Thirty miles a day should not prove too much, and "according to plan" the tourist should find not the slightest difficulty in seeing the most fascinating countryside of East Sussex during his fortnight in the saddle. Say what anybody may, the cycling holiday is really the cheapest. You are getting the "holiday feeling" all the time. No long journey by rail first to a given spot. I hope my Newcastle friend will bring it off, and find himself spinning through the fine country of Sussex to the marshes, and the strange old towns of Winchelsea and Rye.

FACING THE MUSIC!

A correspondent of mine away in India is very keen on the MAGNET, and all the yarns of Greyfriars. My chum is in the Band, 2nd York and Lancs Regiment, and he tells me it does him good when he gets a chatty, newsy letter addressed to him—namely, Private H. Smith, 7352 Napier Barracks, Karachi, India. The reader dotes on hearing about the Old Country, and he reads the tales of Bunter with relish. As a bandsman of the famous regiment mentioned he knows all about music. I must congratulate him on his fine letter, and I hope his mail will bring him just the sort of good cheery communications which a fellow overseas likes to have, and small wonder!

REFORMING BUNTER!

A staunch Magnetite, Geo. R. Bailey, Excelsior Avenue, Castle Hill, via Sydney, Australia, writes to say that Bunter ought to turn over a new leaf. But if he did, Bunter would promptly turn said leaf back again, so the result would be the same. This is an old question, which has agitated all those interested in the Owl ever since Bunter paddled away from peril down the corridors of Greyfriars.

The World in 1950!

Don't Miss the Sensational and Amazing Story of the Future

"FANGS OF THE UNKNOWN"

which commences in this week's

PLUCK 2

On Sale Everywhere every Tuesday

Your Editor.

To be in Coventry holds more terrors for William George Bunter than a Form master's licking. The old maxim—Silence is Golden—never did appeal to the fat and fatuous Bunter, for he revels in his own erubescence. But there is no entertainment in talking to one's self. We see in turn the talkative Bunter, the scornful Bunter, the pleading Bunter, the revengeful Bunter, and last, but by no means least—

THE BARRING OF BUNTER!



A Grand, Complete Story of Greyfriars by the world-famous author,
FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Hospitable Bunter!

"WHARTON, old fellow—"
"Stony!"
"Nugent, old chap—"
"Broken!"

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent, of the Greyfriars Remove, grinned as they made those brief but expressive replies.

It was tea-time, and Wharton and Nugent were on their way to Hall.

Funds were low in Study No. 1—so low that they had almost reached vanishing point. Tea in Hall, at tea-time, was the last refuge of the stony, and to that refuge the chums of the Remove were wending their way when Billy Bunter encountered them.

It was indeed an unpropitious moment for Bunter to encounter them, if he was, as usual, in search of a small loan to tide him over till his celebrated postal-order should arrive.

"But I say, you fellows—" persisted Bunter.

"Nothing doing!"

"I was going to ask you—"

"Try again next week," said Nugent, with a chuckle. "My dear man, there isn't even tea in the study to-day!"

"We're going down to Hall. Roll away!"

"I was going to ask you to tea."

"Eh?"

"What?"

"Tea!" said Billy Bunter, with a great deal of dignity. "I don't see anything to be surprised at in that myself. Being in funds, I naturally ask some old pals to tea."

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Wharton.

"It's a rather good spread, and I want you to come," said Bunter. "Better than tea in Hall, I fancy—wishy-wash and doorsteps!"

"What's the game?" asked Nugent.

"Game?"

"Yes. If you're pulling our legs—"

"I'm asking you to tea!" hooted Bunter.

"But you never ask anybody to a feed. When you've got anything you generally scoff it yourself."

"If you call that civil, Nugent—"

"Well, it mayn't be civil," admitted Frank, "but it's jolly true. You don't stand spreads, and you know you don't, Bunter. You only scoff them in other fellows' studies!"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Is Toddy standing a spread in Study No. 7?" asked Wharton. "Is that the giddy history of the mystery?"

"Toddy's gone out with Dutton. I've got the study to myself," said Bunter.

"I'm gathering my good old pals round me on this occasion. I've asked Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull and Inky. They're coming. Now, will you fellows come?"

"Hem!"

Harry Wharton hesitated. He was not keen on tea in Hall, by any means; but neither was he keen on "teasing" with Billy Bunter. And he was still surprised at Bunter asking other fellows to share the good things with him, instead of scoffing the whole supply in his usual style.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry's powerful voice boomed along the Remove passage. "Here we are, Bunter!"

"I say, you fellows, my guests have arrived," said Bunter loftily. "I've got to look after my guests, you know. Are you coming?"

"It's genuine, then?" asked Nugent.

"Of course it is, you ass!" hooted Bunter.

"Well, if Bob's going we may as well go, Harry," said Nugent.

"The captain of the Remove nodded.

"If you call that a polite way of accepting a kind invitation, Nugent you—"

"My mistake!" said Frank Nugent, with a smile. "Mr. Bunter, I accept

with grateful acknowledgments your extremely kind invitation."

"Same here," said Wharton.

"Oh, come on!" grunted Bunter.

And the Owl of the Remove led the two juniors away to Study No. 7. Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh had already arrived there. For some reason known only to himself, Bunter had asked the whole Co. All the Famous Five of the Remove were his guests on this unusual occasion.

Why he had asked them was rather a mystery.

True, they were extremely nice and pleasant fellows—all the five acknowledged that. Likewise, they were very important members of the Remove Form—the most important members, in fact.

This also they modestly acknowledged. It was an honour to any study in the Remove to have the Famous Five to tea. They freely admitted it. Yet they were surprised, for it was quite unlike Bunter to add five hungry mouths to his festive board—when his board happened to be festive. The honour of entertaining the Famous Five was great; but it was, in Bunter's usual estimation, a trifle light as air, in comparison with a cake or a plate of cream-puffs.

But there it was. He had asked them; he had hospitably urged them to come. He had obviously set great store by their coming. And so the five chums of the Remove were guests in Study No. 7 to tea.

Knowing Bunter as they did, the Famous Five would not have been surprised to see no preparations whatever for tea in Study No. 7. They would not have been surprised, after arriving there, to find that William George Bunter did not want their company so much as he wanted a little loan—that he expected them, in short, to stand the tea to which they had been invited, as well as tea

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 248.

for Bunter. They would not have been surprised in the least.

But it was not so.

There were preparations in the study for tea on a great scale. There was a large cake—a cake weighing at least eight pounds. There was a stack of jam-tarts, another stack of dough-nuts, and a plate of chocolate eclairs. There was a jug of cream—a rare luxury in a junior study. There were other things too numerous to mention. It was, in fact, a feast of the gods.

"Well, my hat!" murmured Johnny Bull.

It was not, perhaps, strictly polite to exhibit surprise. But Johnny was so surprised that he could not help it.

Any fellow who knew Bunter would have expected him to "scoff" even that great stack of good things without calling any fellow in to his assistance. And here he was, with five guests round his hospitable board—five guests whose appetites were quite good—in fact, excellent.

Harry Wharton & Co. could not help feeling that they had misjudged Bunter a little.

"Sit down, old fellows!" said the Owl of the Remove. "Make yourselves at home, you know."

The Famous Five made themselves at home, still astonished.

"Bunter, old man," said Bob Cherry. "I take back a lot of things I've thought about you."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"I do," said Bob. "Why, this is princely! And we're all up against it. I was going to stick Squiff for a tea when you blew in and asked me."

"Jolly glad to see you at my table, old fellow," said Bunter. "After all, you fellows have stood me a lot of feeds."

"Never expected you to remember that, though."

"Eh?"

"I—I mean, you're a good sort, old fat pippin," said Bob. "You must have had a whacking remittance to spread out like this."

"Well, I often get whacking remittances—from my titled relations, you know," explained Bunter.

"Hem!"

"Not to mention the big tips I get from my pater at Bunter Court, you know."

"Hum!"

It was not a time—as Bunter's festive board—for the honoured guests to say what they thought about Bunter's titled relations, and his palatial home at Bunter Court. Such figments of Bunter's fertile imagination were not even to be smiled at on such an occasion.

"Pile in, old chaps!" said Bunter. "Help yourselves! It's a real pleasure to me to see my old pals round me enjoying themselves."

The Famous Five were quite unaware that they were Billy Bunter's old pals. But in the circumstances, they were not disposed to deny the soft impeachment. So they grinned politely and proceeded to do full justice to the excellent spread—which had come their way, in their present stony state, like corn in Egypt in one of the lean years.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Trouble in Bunter's Study!

BILLY BUNTER did the honours with full hospitality.

He blinked across the table benignly at his guests, through his big spectacles.

Neither did he forget himself. Bunter at a feed, whether his own or another's, was certain to capture the lion's share. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 848.

His podgy jaws worked with great activity. His stowage capacity was always wonderful, and it seemed more than wonderful now.

Harry Wharton & Co. did full justice to the good things before them. And they felt unusually kindly towards William George Bunter. It was evident that they had judged him too harshly—at least, so it seemed to them now. Bunter was generally hard-up; he was an inveterate butter-in at other fellows' spreads. But it seemed that, being in funds, he was capable of generous hospitality in his turn. So the Famous Five considerably modified their previous opinion of Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove was too busy to talk much at first. His jaws were more usefully occupied.

But by the time he had eaten enough for four or five fellows, Bunter slacked down a little, and bestowed the fascinations of his conversation on his guests.

"Rather good—what?" he asked.

"Top-hole!" said Bob Cherry heartily.

"The top-holefulness is terrific!" assured Harree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Like some more cream in your tea, Bob, old man?"

"Thanks!"

"You've borrowed Smithy's cream-jug!" remarked Nugent, with a glance at the rather handsome and expensive jug that held the cream.

"Yes, I—I've borrowed a few crocks, up and down the passage, you know," said Bunter hastily. "There's never enough crocks in a study for half a dozen fellows."

"Quite so," agreed Wharton. "It's rather hard on Toddy and Dutton to be missing this, isn't it?"

"Oh, bother Peter Todd," said Bunter, with a frown on his fat brow. "He wouldn't have stood by me, like you fellows are going to."

"Eh?"

"You're not the chaps to desert a pal, are you?" said Bunter, blinking at the Famous Five.

"I hope not," said Harry.

"That's right! You stook to me and I'll stick to you!" said Bunter. "Try the doughnuts, old chap!"

"But I don't quite understand," said Harry Wharton. "What's the trouble, anyway?"

"Well, if Smithy cut up rusty—"

"Smithy!" Wharton stared. "About your borrowing his cream-jug, do you mean?"

"Well, Vernon-Smith's got a jolly uncertain temper," said Bunter. "If he cuts up rusty, you fellows will stand by me, of course?"

"What rot!" said Bob. "The Bounder's all right. He doesn't mind lending his things along the passage."

"Besides, I suppose you asked him?" said Nugent.

"Well, he's gone out, you see," said Bunter. "I believe he had a telephone call, and went out quite suddenly this afternoon."

"My hat! Chaps don't often get phone calls in the Lower Fourth!" remarked Johnny Bull. "How the thump did Smithy get a telephone call? They haven't fixed up a phone in the Remove passage that I know of!"

"It was on Mr. Quelch's telephone."

"I hope it isn't any bad news from home," said Harry Wharton. "I remember now, I saw the Bounder go out on his bike. He looked all right."

There was a footstep in the Remove passage, and a voice was heard. It was the voice of Herbert Vernon-Smith of the Remove. Billy Bunter gave a sudden start.

"Oh, he's back!" he ejaculated.

The Bounder's voice had an angry tone. As he came along the passage, apparently in talk with another fellow, Harry Wharton & Co heard his words: "I've had my leg pulled! The water wasn't at Lantham at all! By gad, when I find out who phoned—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry opened the door of Study No. 7.

"What's the row, Smithy?"

Vernon-Smith stopped and glanced into the study. His face was rather red and excited.

"I've been over to Lantham on my bike," he said. "Some silly chump telephoned to me. It was Quelch's phone, and Quelch took the call, and sent me a message that my father had come down to Lantham, and wanted me to go over and see him while he was there. I went, of course!"

"You don't mean to say it was spoof?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"I jolly well do!" said the Bounder savagely. "I called at the Lantham Grand Hotel, according to the message, and the pater wasn't there, and hadn't been there, and wasn't expected there. Some silly ass sent me the phone call to give me a journey for nothing."

"What a rotten trick!"

"The rottenfulness is terrific," said Harree Jamset Ram Singh sympathetically.

"But who the dickens could have played such a silly trick like that?" said Bob Cherry, in wonder. "A Greysfriars chap, do you think?"

The Bounder grunted angrily.

"Of course it was a Greysfriars chap—a Remove chap, too, I should think. Very likely he rang Quelch up on one of the school telephones, and made him think the call came from Lantham. I suppose you fellows don't know who it was?"

"Haven't the faintest idea," said Wharton. "I'd jolly well punch him, if I were you!"

"I'm going to!" said the Bounder grimly. "I'm pretty certain it was some silly ass in the Remove."

"I—I say, Smithy—"

"Do you know anything about it, Bunter?"

"Eh? Oh, no! Nothing at all! But I—I think it was most likely some outsider—not a Greysfriars chap at all," said Bunter.

"What rot! It was some silly dummy in the Remove, using one of the school telephones!" growled Vernon-Smith.

"Not likely," said Bunter, shaking his head. "How could a fellow get into the Head's study and use his phone without being seen?"

"He could if the Head wasn't there, I suppose, fathead. And there are other phones besides the Head's. Mr. Hacker has one."

"Hacker was in his study at the time, though."

"At what time?" asked the Bounder, with a sharp look at William George Bunter.

"At the time you got the call, you know."

"And how do you know when I got the call?" asked Vernon-Smith, taking a step into the study with a gleam in his eyes.

Billy Bunter started.

"I—I don't, of course. I don't know anything about it!"

"It's a bit too late for that," said Vernon-Smith. "It was you who phoned

ANSWERS
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"Smithy, you ass, chuck it!" exclaimed Squiff. The Bounder did not heed. He rushed right at the Famous Five, and Frank Nugent caught his first punch—a hefty one—and staggered. The next moment Smithy was in the grasp of many hands again, and he was tossed out into the passage. Crash! The Bounder sprawled again. (See Chapter 3.)

to Quelch in my father's name, Bunter."

Vernon-Smith pushed back his cuffs, and came round the study table towards Bunter, with an angry glitter in his eyes. The Bounder of Greyfriars never was the best tempered of fellows; and his futile journey to Lantham, over long muddy roads, had evidently not improved his temper.

"I—I say, you fellows—"

Bob Cherry jumped up from the table, and promptly placed himself between Vernon-Smith and the Owl of the Remove.

"Hold on, Smithy!" he exclaimed.

"Get aside, you ass!" growled the Bounder. "It was Bunter played that rotten trick on me, and I'm going to thrash him for it!"

He pushed forward; but Bob placed a hand on his chest, and a shove from Bob's powerful arm sent the Bounder back again.

"Easy does it," said Bob coolly. "We happen to be Bunter's guests just now, and we're not going to see him bullied, Smithy."

"Who's bullyin'?" roared Vernon-Smith savagely.

"You are, if you pitch into Bunter without waiting for any proof. Anybody might have played that trick on you; and I don't see why you should jump to the conclusion that Bunter did it."

"That's reasonable enough, Smithy," said the captain of the Remove. "You want to find the right chap before you punch anybody, you know."

"It was Bunter—"

"How do you know it was Bunter?" demanded Nugent. All the Famous Five were on their feet now, and they were all looking rather warlike.

"I do know it was! I never said anything to him about the telephone-call, and yet he says Hacker was in his study at the time," growled Vernon-Smith.

"It's plain enough to me that Bunter went mooching after a telephone to play that rotten trick, and found that Hacker was in his study, and then tried the Head's study. He's as good as admitted it."

"I haven't!" roared Bunter.

"Well, whether you admit it or not,

you did it!" snapped the Bounder. "And I'm jolly well going to lick you for it! Get out of the way, Bob Cherry!"

Bob Cherry did not stir. The Bounder's angry looks had no effect on him. Johnny Bull moved to get between the Bounder and Bunter also.

"You must make it a bit clearer than that before you begin punching Bunter," said Johnny Bull in his slow way.

"Has Bunter been feeding you?" sneered the Bounder.

"Bunter's just stood us tea," said Harry Wharton. "That's got nothing to do with it, and you know it, Smithy! If Bunter played a rotten trick like that on you, you can punch him as hard as you like; but you're not going to handle him on suspicion."

"How did he know the time I had the call, then?" hooked the Bounder.

"How did you know that, Bunter?" asked the captain of the Remove.

"I didn't!"

"Fathad! You've admitted that you did."

"I—I mean, I heard Smithy tell Redwing."

"Well, that's likely enough," grinned Bob Cherry. "Bunter generally hears everything that's said inside Greyfriars."

"Oh, very likely!" sneered the Bounder. "Only it happens that Tom Redwing has gone up to Hawlescliff for the afternoon, and I haven't seen him since dinner."

"Oh!" ejaculated Bob.

"I—I mean, I heard him tell Ogilvy," stammered Bunter.

"I haven't spoken to Ogilvy to-day," said Vernon-Smith.

"Bunter—" began Wharton.

"I—I mean, I—I—"

"Well, what do you mean, Bunter?" demanded the captain of the Remove, frowning.

"You fellows know I'm short-sighted," said Bunter. "I heard Smithy tell a chap—perhaps it wasn't Ogilvy."

"We know you're as blind as an owl, if that's what you mean," said Bob. "Did you mention the call to anybody at all, Smithy?"

"Yes, I told Newland."

"That was the chap—Newland," said Bunter promptly. "I heard Smithy tell

Newland. Personally, I don't know anything about it."

"That won't do," said Vernon-Smith. "It was you, you fat rotter—though I can't imagine why you should take the trouble to play such a silly trick on me. What have I done to you?"

"Nothing, old fellow! I like you, you know," said Bunter.

"Well, I'm going to scrag you for giving me a bike ride to Lantham for nothing," said Vernon-Smith. "Let me get at him!"

"Keep back, you ass," said Bob Cherry. "You're not going to touch Bunter unless you can prove what you say."

"It's proved enough for me."

"Not enough for Bunter, though," grinned Bob. "Take it calmly, old fellow! A scragging will keep."

"It won't keep! Will you let me pass?" shouted the Bounder.

"No, I won't! You'll have to walk over me before you touch Bunter," answered Bob Cherry coolly.

"I'll walk over you fast enough, if you don't get out of the way," snarled Vernon-Smith.

"You're welcome to try."

"Smithy—" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

But the angry Bounder did not heed. He rushed at Bob Cherry, and in a second more they were fighting.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Chucked Out!

"SMITHY!"

"Bob!"

"Stop them!" shouted Harry Wharton.

"I say, you fellows, let them go it!" squeaked Billy Bunter. "Bob can lick him all right! Go it, Bob!"

But Billy Bunter was not heeded. Four juniors closed in on the combatants, and the Bounder was grasped and dragged forcibly back.

Bob Cherry dropped his hands at once. He had not backed an inch under the

Bounder's furious attack. Smyth had had the worst of the brief encounter. The Bounder's nose was streaming crimson, as the Co. grasped him and forced him back.

"Let me go, you rotters!" roared Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, let him go, you fellows," said Bob, whose blue eyes were gleaming now. "If he wants it bad, let him have it."

"Rot!" said Harry Wharton decidedly. "Look here, Smyth—"

"Let me go, you fool!"

"Keep your temper, you ass!" said the captain of the Remove, tightening his grip on the struggling Bounder. "I can understand you're annoyed, but you've no right to pitch into Bunter without proof. Keep your temper. There's nothing to fight about."

"Mind your own business!"

"Look here," exclaimed Wharton impatiently, "you're not going to touch Bunter, and you're not going to turn this tea-party into a prize-fight! Get out of the study!"

"I won't!"

"We don't want to handle you, Smyth, but if you don't go you'll be put!"

"Yes, rather!" growled Johnny Bull.

"The puffedness will be terrific, my esteemed and hot-headed Smyth!"

The Bounder made a savage attempt to break loose. That was more than enough for the patience of the Co. Smyth was lifted off his feet and whirled to the door.

"Chuck him out!" squeaked Bunter.

"Will you go now, Smyth?" asked the captain of the Remove.

"No!" roared Vernon-Smith. "I won't!"

Bump!

The Bounder sprawled in the passage. The Famous Five were angry now, and they did not handle him gently. Right or wrong, Smyth's methods were rather too high-handed to suit the chums of the Remove.

Vernon-Smith lay gasping for a minute or two, and then he scrambled to his feet.

A dozen fellows had come crowding along the Remove passage at the uproar from No. 7. There was a buzz of excitement as Vernon-Smith scrambled up.

"You fellows chucking Smyth out?" exclaimed Skinner. "Oh, what a fall was there, my countrymen!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I'd stand it, Smyth," said Skinner.

"You shut up, Skinner!" growled Bob Cherry.

The Bounder stood panting for a few moments. Billy Bunter was safe behind the Famous Five, who crowded the doorway of No. 7 Study. There was no chance whatever of getting at Bunter; but the Bounder was not content to go. If anything was needed to increase his rage, Skinner's words had added fuel to the fire.

He clenched his fists hard, and made a rush at the study doorway, recklessly charging at the five juniors clustered there.

"Go it, Smyth!" sang out Skinner.

Anything like trouble between fellows who had been friends was pleasing to the amiable Skinner.

"Smyth, you-ass, chuck it!" exclaimed Squiff.

The Bounder did not heed. He rushed right at the Famous Five, and Frank Nugent caught his first punch—a hefty one—and staggered. The next moment Smyth was in the grasp of many hands

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 848.

again, and was tossed out into the passage.

Crash!

The Bounder sprawled again. Some of the fellows laughed, and some looked serious. The Bounder of Greyfriars was not a fellow to be handled like this with impunity. The Famous Five certainly did not fear him—but he was a fellow to be feared, all the same. The Remove had not forgotten the time when the Bounder had been "up against" Harry Wharton & Co., and there had been a long and bitter feud in the Form. Since then they had been good friends, if not exactly chums; but it looked now as if all the Bounder's forgotten bitterness had revived. There was sheer evil in the look he gave the chums of the Remove, as he sprawled breathlessly in the Remove passage.

He picked himself up again, slowly, panting. Frank Nugent was dabbing a damaged nose; but four of the five were still in the doorway, looking grim. If the Bounder continued the contest, it was clear that he had rough handling to expect.

A junior came running along the passage from the stairs. It was Tom Redwing, just returned from his visit to Hawkscliff. He arrived on the scene as the Bounder was rising, and gave Smyth a helping hand up.

"What on earth's this, Smyth?" exclaimed Redwing in amazement. "You're not rowing with these chaps?"

"The old scout's lost his little temper," said Bob Cherry. "Take him away, Redwing, till he's cool."

"Smyth, old man—"

"Let me go, Redwing!" muttered the Bounder.

"Better come away, now, old chap," said the perplexed Redwing. "Come along to the study."

The Bounder hesitated a moment. His chum Redwing was the only fellow in the Remove who could have influenced him in his present temper. Redwing pulled gently at his arm.

The Bounder fixed his eyes on the Co. in the doorway of No. 7 Study with a bitter look.

"You'll hear more of this," he said.

"Bunter's played a dirty trick on me, and it looks to me as if you fellows are in it. The matter won't end here."

And with that Vernon-Smith walked away with his comrade, and the door of No. 7 Study closed on them.

Harry Wharton & Co. turned back into Bunter's study, in a rather uncomfortable frame of mind. They did not regret having handled the hot-headed Bounder in the circumstances; but they regretted the necessity. No member of the famous Co. wanted the old trouble with the Bounder to break out again.

"I say, you fellows, you ought to have licked him," said Billy Bunter. "He asked for it, you know."

Bunter's guests did not reply to that.

"I—I say, you'll stand by me if he goes for me again, won't you, after that topping feed!" exclaimed the Owl of the Remove anxiously.

"The feed's got nothing to do with it!" snapped the captain of the Remove.

"We shall stand by you, of course, if you didn't play that silly trick on Smyth."

"It's up to Smyth to prove it, before he begins punching Bunter or anybody else," said Johnny Bull. "I suppose you didn't do it, Bunter?"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

The spread in No. 7 Study finished rather less cheerfully than it had started.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Bunter on his Defence!

TOM REDWING eyed his chum rather anxiously in No. 4 Study. The Bounder stood panting, his face still dark with anger, his eyes gleaming. But the fact that he was angry was no proof, even to his best chum, that he had good cause to be angry. Redwing knew only too well the uncertain temper of Smyth of the Remove.

Vernon-Smith threw himself into the armchair at length, and Redwing stirred the study fire to a blaze. He did not break the silence, but waited for Smyth to speak.

"Had a good time at Hawkscliff?" the Bounder asked at last.

Redwing smiled faintly.

"Yes—I saw a lot of old acquaintances there," he said. "But what's the trouble between you and Wharton's crowd, Smyth?"

"Bunter!" growled Smyth.

"I should hardly have thought that Bunter was worth ragging about, old man."

"He isn't."

"Well, then—"

"I've biked over to Lantham on a fool's errand," growled the Bounder, and he explained about the telephone call.

"A rotten trick!" said Tom Redwing. "But what made you think it was Bunter?"

"He as good as admitted it."

"Wharton didn't think so?"

"He said not."

"Draw it mild, Smyth, old man!" said Redwing seriously.

"Whatever Wharton said, he believed, and you know it as well as I do. It's more like one of Skinner's tricks, to my mind—Bunter's too jolly lazy to take the trouble, unless he had a good reason. What reason could he have had?"

"I know he did it—I'm no fool! I don't know his reason, and I don't care!" growled Vernon-Smith. "It looks to me as if those fellows stood by him because he was feeding them—there was no end of a spread going on in the study."

"Oh, that's rot!" said Tom.

The Bounder grunted angrily.

"Let's have tea," he said. "After tea I'm going to call those fellows to account for handling me. I'll make them stand up one after another, and jolly well lick them all round if I can! You can be my second—or if you're too jolly peaceable, I'll ask Skinner."

Tom Redwing made no reply to that. He began to prepare the table for tea.

"Lots of stuff in the cupboard," said the Bounder. "I was going to have a spread, and ask those very chaps—and then I was called away to Lantham. Never mind—it will keep, and we can ask somebody else to-morrow. I don't feel much inclined for a party now."

Redwing looked into the study cupboard.

"Lots of stuff, did you say?" he asked.

"Yes—I'd laid it in ready for the spread when that dashed message came."

"I don't see it."

"What rot! It's there, I suppose."

"It doesn't seem to be," said Redwing, with a perplexed look. "There's nothing here but a loaf."

"What?"

The Bounder sprang out of the armchair, and ran across to the cupboard. His brow blackened as he stared into it.

"That makes it clear enough!" he said between his teeth. "That's why Bunter played that trick! I know now where that feed in his study came from—and Wharton's crowd were in it, too. They all had a hand in it."

"I can't believe that," said Redwing. "But it looks as if you were right about Bunter, after all. The stuff's certainly gone."

Herbert Vernon-Smith breathed hard. He turned away and left the study, without speaking to Redwing again.

"Smithy!" called out Redwing. But the Bounder did not heed. He strode along the Remove passage to No. 7, and threw open the door. The study was in darkness; the guests had departed, and Billy Bunter had prudently followed their example. The Bounder strode on to Study No. 1, where he found Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent. He hurled open the door and entered without a knock, and Wharton and Nugent rose to their feet at the sight of his furious face.

"You rotters!" shouted the Bounder. Wharton gave him a grim look. "That will do, Smithy!" he said. "If you're looking for trouble, you can begin with me, and without kicking up a shindy. We've got some gloves here."

"You were all in it!" shouted Vernon-Smith. "The whole gang of you! That's why you stood by Bunter! Which of you sent that spoof message—you or Bunter? You all had a share of the plunder!"

"What the thump are you talking about?" exclaimed the captain of the Remove.

"What plunder?" demanded Nugent angrily.

The Bounder sneered. "I found you all had a feed in Bunter's study! Do you want me to believe that you didn't know the stuff was raided from my study while I was fooled into going over to Lantham?"

"What! I don't believe it!" "You don't choose to admit it, you mean!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith. "My study's been cleared out, and that's why I was spoofed on the telephone. Where did the spread come from?"

"Bunter stood it," said Harry. "He asked us all to tea."

The Bounder laughed. "Well, we'll see what Bunter says," he sneered. "Where is he?"

"I don't know. But—"

"I'll find him!"

The Bounder strode away; and Wharton and Nugent looked at one another.

"So that was it!" said Nugent.

"You—you think—"

"I'm afraid it's pretty clear. We were rather asses to trust Bunter," said Frank ruefully. "We might have known him better."

Wharton compressed his lips.

It was dawning upon his mind now that the Bounder had been right in finding Bunter guilty; and now that the study raid was known, the motive was supplied. And he realised, too, that that was why the Owl of the Remove had been so keen on having the Famous Five as guests in No. 7. The fatuous fat junior evidently expected them to stand by him and rescue him from the wrath of the Bounder. He had been making use of the chums of the Remove, and they had been simply led by the nose.

"The awful rascal!" muttered Wharton.

The Bounder's voice was heard in the passage. He was demanding where Bunter was at the top of his voice. Vernon-Smith was in one of his worst tempers; and at such a time he was not a pleasant fellow. Bob Cherry and Bull and Hurree Singh came into Study No. 1.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob. "You fellows heard? It seems, from

what Smithy's saying now, that Bunter raided that feed from his study."

"Looks like it," said Harry.

"Then it's pretty certain that Bunter did the telephone stunt after all," said Johnny Ball.

Wharton nodded.

"Nice for us!" said Bob.

"The niceness is terrific!" said Hurree Singh. "The esteemed and disgusting Bounder is making out that we were parties to the surreptitious and execrable raid on his study."

"He's no right to do that," growled Wharton.

"I say, you fellows—"

Billy Bunter suddenly bolted into Study No. 1, like a very fat rabbit into its burrow. Behind him came the Bounder, and behind the Bounder a crowd of Remove fellows, most of them laughing.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Bunter—"

"I say, you fellows, stand by a chap!" gasped Bunter. "Keep him off! You promised to stand by me if he cut up rusty, you know!"

"You fat villain!" roared Wharton. "Did you raid Smithy's study while he was out?"

"I—I—"

"You know he did!" said Vernon-Smith, in the doorway. "You jolly well know it, and you knew it all along, too!"

"We knew nothing of it—"

"Looks jolly suspicious to me!" said Skinner. "They had the grub. That's clear. This is rather a come-down for his magnificence, our honoured Form

captain! Who ever expected Wharton to come down to grub-raiding?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, they put Bunter up to it," remarked Snoop.

"Of course!" agreed Skinner.

Wharton's face was crimson.

"Bunter, you've got to own up," he said. "You sent that telephone message to Smithy?"

"Oh, yes, Wharton—"

"Yes or no, you fat rotter!"

"Certainly not! I never went near the Head's study this afternoon," said Bunter. "I never telephoned. I don't know Quelch's number. I never knew Smithy had a feed ready in his study. I didn't see him ordering the stuff in the tuckshop, and never saw him take the bag to his study—in fact, I knew nothing at all about it. I never even asked Toddy to phone from Courtfield—you can ask him when he comes in! He never refused to do it, either—the subject wasn't mentioned. I hope you can take a fellow's word!"

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Besides, you fellows had the feed," said Bunter warmly. "You promised to stand by me if Smithy cut up rusty. You know you did!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a roar of laughter from the passage. Even Vernon-Smith grinned. Bunter on his defence was rather entertaining.

"Where did the feed come from, Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton, as



"I said 'honour bright!'" shrieked Bunter. "Fight? You couldn't fight a fag in the Second Form!" said Dutton, the deaf junior, contemptuously. "But if you'd like to try it on, there's something to begin with!" "Yarrah!" roared Bunter, as the incensed Dutton grasped him by the shoulders and sat him down forcibly. "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Peter Todd. (See Chapter 6.)

patiently as he could. "You told us you'd had a remittance."

"So I had!" said Bunter promptly. "I had a postal order, you know. I've mentioned to you fellows before that I was expecting a postal-order!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why did you ask Toddy to telephone from Courtfield?"

"I didn't! I've just said I didn't, haven't I?" demanded Bunter. "Don't you understand plain English?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton compressed his lips.

"It's clear enough now," he said. "Bunter sent that spoof message, and raided Smithy's study. He asked us to tea so that we should protect him afterwards. The fat idiot—"

"Mind, you promised!" said Bunter. "You had the feed?"

"We didn't know you'd raided it!" hooted Bob Cherry.

"That doesn't make any difference. I had all the trouble, and you had the feed!" said Bunter. "I can tell you that it wants some nerve to sneak into the Head's study and use his phone. He might have come in any minute!"

"Oh, my hat! Then you own up that you did it?"

"Certainly not! Nothing of the kind! I don't believe Smithy had a telephone call at all," asserted Bunter. "I don't believe he's been over to Lantham. More likely playing billiards at the Cross Keys—that's his style!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"As for the feed," continued Bunter, "I stood that myself. I had a cheque from my uncle—"

"For goodness' sake, ring off!" exclaimed Wharton impatiently. "It seems that we've bagged your feed, Smithy. Bunter took us in. But you ought to know that we were taken in."

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders. A gleam came into Wharton's eyes, and he made a step towards the Bounder.

"The stuff will be paid for," he said. "You can put your own figure on it, and we shan't dispute it. It will have to stand over till next week, as we're all stony just now. But I suppose my word is good enough for you?"

"They're bound to pay for it now they're found out," said Skinner, and Snop giggled.

"And what about my ride over to Lantham?" asked the Bounder unpleasantly. "Do you think I'm going to let Bunter play a trick like that on me without licking him for it?"

"Lick him as much as you like, and be blowed!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—" Bunter dodged round the table. "I—I say, you fellows, you promised to stand by me, you know. You keep that beast Smithy off."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Rather rotten to put it all on Bunter, I think," said Skinner gravely.

"Oh, very rotten!" said Snop.

Wharton did not heed those remarks. He fixed his eyes on the Bounder.

"Are you satisfied that we had nothing to do with raiding your study, Smithy?" he asked.

"No!" said the Bounder deliberately.

And, without taking any further heed of Bunter, Herbert Vernon-Smith turned and walked away to his own study.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 848.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Disappointment for Skinner!

HERE was excitement in the Remove that evening.

The trouble between the Famous Five and Herbert Vernon-Smith was the one topic.

Skinner and his friends rejoiced openly. They were always "up against" Harry Wharton & Co.; but they were negligible in the Remove, and the Co. went on their way quite regardless of Skinner and his set. But Herbert Vernon-Smith was a fellow of quite another calibre. He had once given the captain of the Remove plenty of trouble—and it was still an open question in the Remove whether the Bounder could not wrest the captaincy of the Form from Harry Wharton if he chose to exert himself to that end. Most of the Removites were of opinion that Smithy was thinking of giving the captain of the Form a "fall," and if that was the case, the contest was certain to be an exciting one. And the Bounder was certain to receive the wholehearted support of Skinner and the other black sheep.

There was much discussion in the junior Common-room that evening; and it was the general belief that there would be a fight between Wharton and Smithy on the following day.

Skinner & Co. looked forward to it keenly.

"Fancy his Magnificence getting the kybosh!" said Skinner to his friends. "I believe the Bounder could turn him out if he tried. I know I'd back him up."

"Yes, rather!" said Stott.

"Smithy's looking for trouble with that gang anyhow," said Snop. "I think he means business this time."

"I hope so," said Skinner.

It was just before bed-time that Vernon-Smith came into the Common-room. Most of the fellows there regarded him curiously.

Skinner & Co. joined him at once. They wanted to make it clear that he had their support.

"There's going to be a scrap, I suppose," said Skinner.

The Bounder looked at him.

"Do you?" he asked.

"Well, you've practically given Wharton the lie, you know," said Skinner.

"He can't take that lying down."

"I suppose not," agreed the Bounder.

"Of course, they were all in the game," remarked Snop. "Rather mean of them to put it all on Bunter. Don't you think so, Smithy?"

Vernon-Smith regarded Sidney James Snop rather curiously, but made no answer.

"We're backing you up, Smithy!" said Stott.

"Thanks!"

"Not at all, old fellow!" said Skinner eagerly. "We'd be jolly glad to see you give Wharton a fall. We'll back you up all along the line, and so will a lot of other fellows."

The Bounder nodded thoughtfully. "When are you going to have it out?" pursued Skinner.

"In the dormitory."

"Oh, good!"

Skinner, grinning with satisfaction, proceeded to spread the glad news. It added to the general excitement and interest in the Lower Fourth. Ere long all the Remove knew that the Bounder and the captain of the Form were to have the matter "out" in the dormitory that night. As a rule, the Lower Fourth did not look forward to bed-time. On the present occasion they were quite pleased when Wingate of the Sixth marched them off to their quarters.

Harry Wharton had heard the news, but he did not look at Vernon-Smith when they met in the Remove dormitory. He was annoyed and angry—but he had a keen sense of the ridiculous. A fight with Smithy over such an absurd incident as a grub-raid was not attractive to him, and he had no desire to appear as Bunter's champion in such a cause. At the same time, he bitterly resented the Bounder's refusal to accept his word, and his feelings just then were not friendly towards the Bounder.

The dark look on Wharton's face was very perceptible to Skinner & Co., and they exchanged grins. The captain of the Remove was in a mood for "trouble," if Smithy sought it—and they had no doubt whatever that Smithy was going to seek it.

The Removites turned in, and Wingate put out the lights and left them. As soon as the prefect was gone Skinner sat up in bed.

"Smithy!" he called out.

"Hallo!" yawned Vernon-Smith.

"Shall I put on a candle, old fellow?"

"Certainly, if you like!"

"Right ho!"

Harold Skinner turned out of bed and lighted a candle-end. Most of the Remove fellows sat up.

"Not gone to sleep yet, Wharton?" chuckled Snop.

"No!" snapped Wharton.

"Smithy's got something to say to you!"

"He can say it!"

Two or three more candle-ends were lighted. There was an atmosphere of excited expectancy in the Remove dormitory. Herbert Vernon-Smith sat up in bed, and Redwing, from the next bed, gave him an anxious look. The Bounder did not seem to notice it.

"Wharton!" called out Vernon-Smith.

"Well?"

"I've something to say to you."

"Go ahead!"

"Go it, Smithy!" encouraged Skinner.

"I was pretty ratty when I came in this afternoon," continued the Bounder calmly. "Any fellow might have been after slogging through the mud to Lantham and back for nothing. I guessed that it was Bunter who had played that trick on me, and you fellows stood by him. I was in a rotten temper afterwards, and didn't choose to see the facts. I'm sorry for it."

"Oh!" ejaculated Wharton, utterly taken aback.

"I know, of course, that you fellows had nothing to do with the raid on my study, and that Bunter took you in," said Vernon-Smith. "I should have known it at once if I'd been cool. But you don't make a fellow cool by pitching him out of a study on his neck. I'm sorry to disappoint you, Skinner; but I'm owing up that I've played the goat. Is it all serene, Wharton?"

"Yes, certainly, old chap!" answered the captain of the Remove. "I hoped you'd see things better when you were cool. I'm jolly glad!"

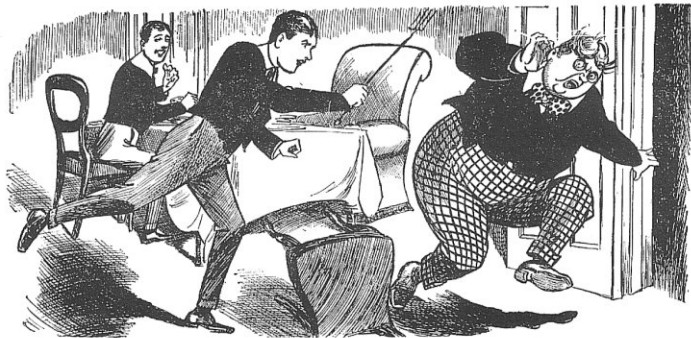
"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry. "Has Redwing been doing his peace-making stunts again?" sneered Skinner, quite unable to restrain his chagrin.

"Or is it a case of cold feet, Smithy?"

"Redwing has certainly been talking sense to me," admitted the Bounder.

"You see, Redwing doesn't want to make a catspaw of me, as you do, Skinner. And it's not a case of cold feet. I'm not going to row with Wharton to please you, old man; but I'm prepared to get out of bed and mop up the dormitory with you, Skinner, if you're looking for trouble. Say the word."

Skinner did not say the word. He remained judiciously silent.



"You ass, you're speakin' to him, Mauly!" exclaimed Vivian. "Yaas, begad, so I am!" said Mauleverer. "Buzz off, Bunter—I'm not goin' to say a word to you. You're in Coventry, you know!" Bunter did not buzz off—he advanced further into the study. Sir Jimmy Vivian picked up the toasting fork and lunged at Bunter, and the fat junior dodged round the table. "Yow! Keep off!" he roared. Vivian lunged again, and Bunter dodged out of the study into the passage. (See Chapter 7.)

"Well, I'm glad to hear you talk sense, Smithy," said Frank Nugent. "As for that fat villain Bunter—"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Bunter's played a dirty trick, and bagged my tuck," said the Bounder. "I think something ought to be done to Bunter. I really think he's gone over the limit this time—especially by dragging the captain of the Form into his rotten games."

"I agree!" said Wharton.

"Hear, hear!" said Squiff.

"The agreefulness is terrific," remarked Hurree James Ram Singh. "The esteemed and execrable Bunter should be made a horrible example of."

"Oh, really, Inky—"

"I'm not going to lick him," went on the Bounder. "I don't want to burst him all over the dorm—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I leave the matter in Wharton's hands, as Form captain," said Vernon Smith, and he laid his head on the pillow.

"I—I say, Harry, old man—"

mumbled Bunter. "Smithy, old man, you've played up jolly decently," said Harry Wharton. "I think every fellow here will agree that Bunter has gone over the limit this time. My opinion is that Bunter ought to be barred by the Form for the rest of the term."

"Hear, hear!"

"Good egg!" said Peter Todd. "As Bunter's study-mate, and the fellow who has to stand him at close quarters, I fully endorse the sentence of our worthy Form captain. Bunter's sent to Coventry."

"I say, Peter, old chap—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"But I didn't—"

"Silence!"

"I wasn't—"

"Bunter's barred!" said Harry Wharton. "It's no good kicking him; he's been licked lots of times. It's no good kicking him; he's worn out more boot-leather than any fellow at Greyfriars. He's barred by the Form for the rest of the term."

"Hear, hear!"

"Passed unanimously!" said Bolsover major.

"I say, you fellows—"

Nobody answered Bunter. The sentence of "Coventry" was already in force.

"Peter, old man—"

Silence.

"Harry, old chap—"

No reply.

"Beast!"

And Billy Bunter laid his head on his pillow, and his deep snore soon resounded through the Remove dormitory.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

In Coventry!

CLANG, clang, clang! Billy Bunter yawned portentously as the rising-bell awakened him on the following morning. He was in no hurry to turn out of bed; he never did turn out till the latest possible moment. But he kept one eye open for Bob Cherry, who was wont to assist the fat slacker out of bed with the help of a pillow or bolster if he stayed in too long. But on this particular morning there was nothing to fear from Bob; he did not even glance at Bunter's bed. Nobody called to Bunter to turn out—nobody even called him a slacker or a frowster.

It was rather a relief to Bunter, till the cause dawned upon his fat mind. He remembered suddenly the proceedings of the night before, and realised that he was "in Coventry."

Then he sat up in bed. He groped for his big spectacles, and jammed them on his fat little nose, and blinked round at the Removites.

"I say, you fellows!" he began.

Skinner grinned, and Snoop laughed. But the rest of the Remove paid no heed to Bunter.

"Bob, old man, what's the time?"

No answer from Bob Cherry.

"I say, Wharton—"

Wharton did not heed.

"Getting deaf?" roared Bunter. "Nugent! I say, Franky, you're not such a silly owl as those chaps!"

Nugent grinned, but did not speak. Billy Bunter glared round, and rolled out of bed.

"I know you silly asses are only pulling my leg!" he exclaimed. "I've done nothing to be barred for. I never telephoned to Smithy, and I only did it because that beast Toddy wouldn't!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I never touched Smithy's grub, either!" said Bunter indignantly. "I stood that feed out of my postal-order. I hope I'm not the fellow to raid a study cupboard. If Smithy's missed his grub, it was most likely Redwing bagged it."

Tom Redwing opened his lips, but closed them again.

"I say, you fellows, how long are you going to keep this up?" demanded Bunter. "Not that I want you to talk to me. I've got plenty of friends in other Forms, if you come to that. I'm welcome in Fifth and Sixth Form studies, if I care to go. Toddy, you beast, what are you sniggering at?"

Peter Todd did not explain what he was sniggering at.

"I say, Fishy," Bunter turned to Fisher T. Fish, as a last resource. "I say, Fishy, old man."

Fisher T. Fish grinned but did not speak.

"I owe you a bob, Fishy," said Bunter. "Would you like me to settle up this morning?"

"Yop!" answered Fisher T. Fish at once. Bunter might be in Coventry; but a shilling was a shilling, and a serious matter to Fisher T. Fish. And Bunter had owed him that shilling for a very long time.

"Now then, Fishy!" called out Bolsover major. "You know you're not to speak to Bunter!"

"I guess I want my dust," said Fisher T. Fish. "Hand it over, Bunter, if you've got it!"

"I haven't exactly got it," said Bunter cautiously. "I only asked you if you'd

like me to settle up. You see, I'm expecting a postal-order to-day.

"You fat clam!" roared Fisher T. Fish.

"Oh, really, Fishy—"

"I guess I'll—"

"Shut up, Fishy!" shouted Five or six Removites. And Fisher T. Fish turned an angry back on William George Bunter.

Billy Bunter tried again and again, until the Remove went downstairs; but he did not succeed in eliciting any replies from the juniors. Even Lord Maulverer, the kindest-hearted fellow in the Remove, had joined in the condemnation of Bunter. Even Skinner and Snoop, though not at all particular fellows themselves, agreed that Bunter had asked for it, and ought to have it. Their own sins were many, and they regarded them with a lenient eye; but, naturally, they had no such leniency to spare for other offenders.

Even Peter Todd, Bunter's study-mate, raised the heel against him. Peter heard Bunter's remarks with a face like a stone image, and answered not.

The Owl of the Remove frowned wrathfully, as he rolled down after his Form-fellows.

It dawned upon his fat mind that he was in a scrape, and Bunter felt that it was hard. Often and often he had raised a fellow's study before; often and often he had been kicked for doing so. Now the chopper had come down in earnest, and the Owl of the Remove felt that he was hardly treated.

He rolled rather dismally out into the quadrangle after breakfast. Being barred by the Form was not a pleasant situation, and it was especially unpleasant to Bunter. He could not possibly hope to raise his usual little loans from fellows who would not speak to him, and he could not ask himself to tea in a study where he was to be treated as a stranger. It looked as if there was a thin time ahead for the Owl of the Remove.

He rolled up to Peter Todd and Tom Dutton in the quadrangle, with a beseeching expression on his fat face.

"Peter, old man," said Bunter appealingly.

Peter's face was of stone.

"Can't you speak, you rotter, after all I've done for you?" howled Bunter.

A faint smile glided over Peter's stony face, but that was all. Bunter turned to Dutton, the deaf Removite. Dutton had not heard a word of what had been said in the dormitory, and was still in ignorance of Bunter's offence and sentence.

"Dutton, old man!" shouted Bunter.

"Eh?"

"You're sticking to an old pal, ain't you?"

"Eh! What? Yes! What's the row?" asked Dutton, in surprise.

"Shut up, Dutton!" bawled Peter Todd. "Bunter's in Coventry. He's barred."

"Hard? Who's hard?"

"Barred!" yelled Peter. It was not easy to explain matters to Dutton, but Peter felt that it was up to him. "Bunter's been raiding a fellow's grub again. See?"

"I don't quite see," answered Dutton. "What fellow's a cub? Do you mean Bunter?"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Peter.

"Bunter is a nice chap, but I don't think you ought to call him names like that. 'Todd,' said Dutton reprovingly. "Pig, if you like. I shouldn't call him a cub!"

"I didn't call him a cub!" shouted Todd.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 348.

"Blessed if I understand you at all," said Dutton, peevishly. "What's that about a tub?"

"Oh, nothing!" groaned Peter. "Nothing about a tub, or a cub, either. Why the thump don't you use a car-trumpet?"

"He, ho, he!" chuckled Bunter.

"What are you talking about?" demanded Dutton. "You mumble so I can't hear a word. That makes fellows think I'm deaf."

Peter Todd, feeling that his vocal powers were not equal to the strain, took a pencil and an old envelope from his pocket. Dutton watched him while he scrawled:

"Bunter's sent to Coventry for bagging Smithy's grub."

"Oh, is that it?" said Dutton. "Good! Why couldn't you say so before, Peter, instead of talking rot? What was it you meant about a tub?"

"I say, Dutton, it's all whoppers," shouted Bunter. "You stand by me, old chap! I never touched Smithy's grub, and I was going to whack it out with you, too, only you were out of gates. Honour bright."

Dutton frowned.

"Who's a fright?" he inquired.

"Oh, my hat! I never said anybody was a fright," gasped Bunter.

"What about your own face?" demanded Dutton indignantly. "Not a thing of beauty, I fancy."

"I said 'honour bright'!" shrieked Bunter.

"Fight? You couldn't fight a fag in the Second Form," said Dutton contemptuously. "But if you'd like to try it on, there's something to begin with."

"Yaroooooh!" roared Bunter, as the incensed Dutton grasped him by the shoulders, and sat him down forcibly on the cold, hard, unsympathetic ground.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Peter.

"Yow-ow!"

Dutton walked away with Peter Todd, leaving Bunter roaring, and realising, perhaps, that even "Coventry" was better than conversation with Dutton of the Remove.

"Cheeky fat duffer, you know," remarked Dutton, with a frown. "Fancy his calling me a fright, and then talking about fighting me. What are you cackling at, Todd? And what the thump did you mean by talking about a tub?"

But Peter Todd did not explain.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Barred!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. came on Bunter, when they arrived at the door of the Remove Form room that morning. They did not seem to see his beseeching blink. They walked into the Remove room regardless of Bunter, as if he were not there.

"Beasts!" howled Bunter.

The chums of the Remove seemed deaf as well as blind. Billy Bunter rolled after them into the Form-room.

"You silly asses!" he howled. "Can't you speak?"

Apparently the Famous Five couldn't. At all events, they didn't! Billy Bunter stood before them as they sat at their desks with expressionless faces, and glared at them with a glare that bade fair to crack his big spectacles.

"After I stood you that splendid feed yesterday!" he hooted. "Do you call this grateful?"

Bunter's voice echoed through the Form-room; but it seemed to make no impression on the ears of the Famous

Five. They gazed straight before them, as if looking right through Bunter.

"Wharton, you silly chump! I've a jolly good mind to yank you off that form and dust up the room with you!" howled Bunter.

The captain of the Remove remained unconscious.

"Inky, you black nigger!"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh remained impervious.

"Nugent, you milksop! You ought to be sent to a girls' school, not to Greyfriars," pursued Bunter.

Frank Nugent grinned, but did not speak.

"You silly asses, sitting there like a family of moulting owls!" shouted the exasperated Bunter. "What sort of blessed idiots do you call yourselves! I'd jolly well mop up the lot of you, if old Quelch wasn't just due—"

"Bunter!"

It was the deep voice of the Remove master. Mr. Quelch was not only due, but he had arrived.

Billy Bunter spun round.

"Oh, I—I didn't hear you, sir—I mean I didn't see you—I—I mean I—I never called you old Quelch, sir!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch angrily. "Bunter's prevarications are no subject for laughter. Bunter, how dare you allude to your Form master in such a disrespectful manner!"

"I—I didn't, sir! I—I mean—I—I'm always respectful, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"I—I respect you no end, sir! I—I don't think you a beast like most of the fellows, sir—I don't really."

Mr. Quelch's face was a study.

"Bunter!" he stuttered.

"I don't really, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"I—I've often said to the fellows, sir, that looks ain't everything."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

He grabbed a cane from his desk.

"Bunter, you impertinent young rascal, hold out your hand."

Swish!

"Whooooohooooop!"

"Now go to your place, Bunter, and if you repeat that ridiculous noise I shall cane you again."

Billy Bunter was careful not to repeat the "ridiculous noise." He squeezed a fat hand under a podgy arm, as he rolled to his place. He sat down by Lord Maulverer, and blinked pathetically at his lordship.

"Hard cheese, old man!" murmured Mauly, forgetting for the moment that the Owl of the Remove was in Coventry.

"Shut up, Mauly, you ass!" whispered Squiff.

"You let Mauly alone, blow you," said Bunter. "Mauly can speak to me if he likes. He knows I'm innocent, don't you, Mauly?"

"Bunter!" It was Mr. Quelch's deep voice again. "You are chattering, Bunter!"

"Oh, no, sir; I never opened my lips!"

"I only said to Maulverer—"

"You will take fifty lines, Bunter."

"Oh dear!"

It was not Billy Bunter's lucky morning. The Owl of the Remove sat with a dismal face during lessons. After classes he rolled out of the Form-room with the juniors, and hooked his arm into Peter Todd's. Peter cheerfully shook him off, and walked out into the quadrangle.

"I say, Peter—"

Peter Todd walked on without turning his head.

"Beast!"

Skinner and Snoop came by and grinned at the unfortunate Owl of the

Remove. Billy Bunter addressed them, and Skinner and Snoop walked by regardless. Skinner and Snoop, certainly, were not shocked at Bunter's conduct, which had brought on him his punishment; but they had entered heartily into carrying out his sentence, probably on the principle of "going for" any fellow when he was down.

Bunter's fat face did not brighten again till dinner-time; dinner always made him look cheerful.

During the afternoon Billy Bunter was very thoughtful.

Possibly he was meditating upon his sins. If that was the case, he had ample subject for meditation.

More probably he was meditating upon his punishment, and wondering how he was to escape from it.

At tea-time that day he looked in at Study No. 1. The Famous Five had gathered there. A remittance had arrived for Bob Cherry, and when a remittance arrived for one member of the famous Co. all the members were in funds while it lasted. So there was tea in Study No. 1—quite a nice tea. Bunter stood in the doorway and blinked in on the festive five, like a podgy Peri at the gate of Paradise.

"I say, you fellows—"
"Pass the jam, Nugent," said Bob Cherry.

"I say, Harry, old man—"
Bob Cherry looked round. He did not speak to Bunter. He picked up a loaf and took aim.

The Owl of the Remove jumped back into the passage hurriedly.

"Beast!" he roared.
And he rolled on up the Remove passage in search of other victims.

In Study No. 12 Lord Mauleverer and Sir Jimmy Vivian were at tea. The kind-hearted Mauly looked quite uncomfortable as he spotted Bunter's fat face at the door.

Sir Jimmy Vivian did not look uncomfortable. He frowned at Bunter, and jerked a commanding thumb towards the passage.

"Mauly, old chap—" pleaded Bunter.

"Oh, gad!" said his lordship. "You see, Bunter, you know you're in Coventry, you know, and so I can't speak to you, don't you know, what?"

"You ass, you're speakin' to him!" exclaimed Vivian.

"Yaas, begad, so I am," said Mauleverer. "Buzz off, Bunter; I'm not goin' to say a word to you, you know! Not a syllable, begad!"

Bunter did not buzz off; he rolled in, with a hopeful eye on Mauly and a wary one on Vivian.

Sir Jimmy jumped up and seized a toasting-fork from the fender.

He lunged at Bunter, and the fat junior dodged round the table.

"Yow! Keep off!" he roared.

Another lunge and Bunter dodged again. Sir Jimmy Vivian followed him up, grinning and lunging, and the hapless Owl dodged out into the passage once more.

Vivian slammed the door after him. Bunter only paused to howl "Beast!" through the keyhole, and then rolled distally away. He looked in at Study No. 7, and found Peter Todd and Dutton there. As it was his own study he could not be excluded from it, and he rolled in and sat at the tea-table. But as his fat hand reached out Peter bestowed a heavy rap on it, and Bunter jerked it back with a yell.

"Toddy, you beast—"
Peter smiled, but did not speak. Bunter glowered at him across the table with deep wrath and indignation.

"Do you want me to miss my tea, Peter?"

No answer.
"I'd stand my whack, I really would, Peter, only I've been disappointed about a postal-order, you know."

Frozen silence.
Billy Bunter reached out again for the cake.

Rap!
"Whoop!"

Bunter rolled out of Study No. 7. The Remove had been drawn blank, and the fat Owl went down to tea in Hall. There he munched the meal which he had described as wishy-wash and doop-steps, in the lowest of spirits.

Possibly by that time Bunter was repentant of his exploits as a grub-raider. But repentance, as it so often does, came too late.

The Owl of the Remove was "for it"—he had sinned, and he had received his punishment; and the punishment of Coventry, to the most loquacious fellow in the Remove was a heavy one. Indeed, Bunter felt, like Cain of old, that his punishment was greater than he could bear.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Rough on Bunter!

"SAMMY, old man!"
"He, he, he!"
"What are you cackling at, you little beast?"
"He, he, he!" reiterated Bunter minor.

Two days had passed—two really awful days to William George Bunter of the Remove.

The sentence of Coventry was in full force; Bunter was barred by all the Remove.

Even Bunter grew tired of talking when no one answered; and the most incessant talker at Greyfriars had had to fall into dismal silence.

But Bunter had to talk or burst; and so he remembered that he had a minor at Greyfriars, and sought the society of Sammy of the Second Form.

Brotherly affection was not strong in the Bunter family. Sometimes Billy Bunter did not even see his young brother for weeks together; sometimes he even forgot that Samuel existed at all. There was never anything to be borrowed from Sammy Bunter, so Billy had no special reason for remembering his existence.

Now circumstances were changed. Barred in his own Form, William George was prepared to bestow the delights of his conversation on Sammy.

Sammy of the Second did not receive that great honour and distinction so gratefully as might have been expected. He giggled when Billy rolled up to him in the quadrangle after lessons and addressed him in tones of unusual affection. Sammy seemed amused.

"He, he he!" giggled Sammy. "Are they still keeping you in Coventry, Billy?"

"What do you know about it?" snapped Bunter.



"I'd stand my whack, really I would, Peter," said Bunter, "only I've been disappointed about a postal order, you know." Frozen silence! Billy Bunter reached out again for the cake. Rap! "Whoop!" Peter Todd bestowed a heavy rap on the fat junior's knuckles, and Bunter hastily withdrew his hand, yelling. (See Chapter 7.)

"He, he, he! All the chaps are talking about it," grinned Bunter minor. "I've seen you going around trying to jaw to Third Form chaps, and they ain't taking any. He, he, he!"

Bunter glared at his minor. "Gatty says you'll burst if you don't talk," went on the cheerful Sammy. "What a lark! He, he, he!"

"Look here, Sammy—" "You can talk to me if you like," said Sammy generously. "I don't mind. I say, come into the tuckshop. Mrs. Mibble's kid in some new tart."

"Right—ho, kid, if you're standing treat," said Bunter. "Sammy of the Second winked. "No fear!" he answered. "You're standing treat, Billy, if you want to jaw. He, he, he!"

Billy Bunter breathed deep and hard. "You're a mercenary little beast, Sammy!" he said.

"He, he, he! Are you coming into the tuckshop?" inquired Sammy of the Second.

"No!" hooted Bunter. "Then you can jolly well buzz off!" retorted Sammy.

And the fat jag, evidently having had enough of his major's conversation, turned to walk away. Billy Bunter glared after him, and then stepped after him, and let out his right foot.

There was a roar from Sammy of the Second as he pitched forward on his hands and knees.

"Yaroooh!" "He, he, he!" chortled William George. It was his turn to chortle.

He rolled away from the spot, leaving Sammy of the Second roaring, and feeling rather better himself for the encounter. He would have preferred to be the Bouncer, or the Famous Five, or Peter Todd, but that was impracticable. It was some satisfaction, at least, to kick Sammy.

But it was only a small solace, Billy Bunter was feeling that he couldn't stand it much longer.

Bunter was a gregarious fellow. He regarded his own society as fascinating; but he did not derive much comfort from it when left to it entirely. The sentence of Coventry weighed heavily upon him.

It was not only that there was no more loans to be raised in the Remove—that the horn of plenty had run dry. It was not only that he couldn't any longer "butt" into a fellow's study at tea-time. It was not only that the long-suffering Peter Todd had ceased to stand him tea in Study No. 7. All these things were serious enough—but worst of all was enforced silence.

The most active and well-exercised part of Bunter was his tongue—and that organ was now getting a little excised. And Bunter was feeling a deep wound in his dignity and self-importance. Nobody else in the Remove had ever regarded Bunter as being of the least importance; but in his own eyes he had been very important indeed. But he could not feel important when fellows would not speak to him, or answer him if he spoke, or take any heed whatever of his existence.

He had even fallen into the way of inflicting himself upon Third Form fags—which was a come-down for a Remove fellow. But the Third Form did not want him, and told him so with the frankness that was characteristic of the Third.

Once he had even tried to attach himself to Coker of the Fifth; he was willing to listen to Coker talking about games, for the sake of getting in a word or two himself. But Coker of the Fifth had cuffed him, in his high-handed way.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 848.

which was not at all what Bunter wanted.

The fat junior realised that if life was to be tolerable at Greyfriars at all he had to get back to speaking terms with his own Form. And that seemed impossible. He was barred for the rest of the term, and the Removites showed no sign whatever of relaxing the sentence. Even the kind-hearted Maul-ever was as firm as a rock.

Bunter, the grub-raider, had asked for it, and he was getting it severely. He deserved more than he had received, as a matter of fact, but that was no consolation to him.

After enjoying the slight solace of kicking Sammy, Bunter rolled into the School House and went up to the Remove passage. Monty Newland was talking to Penfold by the end window, and Bunter stopped.

"I say, Newland—" Monty went on speaking to Penfold, unheeding.

"I say, Newland, old chap," said Bunter persuasively. "Like to come to tea in my study, old fellow? It isn't every chap who'd ask a sheeney to tea, is it?"

Penfold grinned. Bunter was seeking to propitiate Monty Newland, and he was doing it in the tactful way that was all his own.

"I don't mind your being a sheeney," went on Bunter. "I don't really, Newland! There!"

Even then Newland did not answer. Perhaps he considered that the occasion called for actions, not for words. He took Bunter by the collar, spun him round, and applied a boot to his tight trousers. Billy Bunter flew along the Remove passage.

From Study No. 4 came the sound of cheery voices. The Bouncer was entertaining a tea party to tea, and Billy Bunter blinked in morosely at the open door.

Harry Wharton & Co. were gathered round the table, with Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing. The threatened breach between the Bouncer and the Famous Five was evidently a thing of the past.

"I say, you fellows!" hooted Bunter. Not a glance was turned towards the fat figure in the study doorway.

"I'm fed-up with this lot!" howled Bunter. "Mind, you'd better chuck it! I'll jolly well make you all sit up! See!"

And still the Owl of the Remove was unregarded. He shook a fat fist at the merry tea-party and left them, quite unappalled by his threats. He rolled away to Study No. 7—and Peter Todd and Dutton strolled out of that apartment at once.

Bunter frowned after them, and threw himself into the armchair. His fat brow was corrugated with thought; behind his spectacles his little round eyes gleamed.

Bunter was meditating vengeance!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Plotting Vengeance!

"I've got it!" Billy Bunter made that observation in the junior Common-room.

Prep was over, and there were a good many juniors in the room. One or two glanced at Bunter and grinned, but there was no rejoinder to his remark. Nobody wanted to know what it was that he had "got."

Bunter scowled at the Removites over his spectacles. He had been brooding deeply—over his wrongs and grievances. His fat mind had long been made up—he was going to make the Remove fellows sit up and take notice, as it were. His fat brain had pondered deeply on

schemes of vengeance. Harry Wharton & Co., and the Remove generally, were to learn what a terrible fellow William George Bunter could be when his ire was really roused.

"I've got it!" repeated Bunter, with a defiant blink at the Removites. "You wait a bit!"

There was a chuckle from Bob Cherry, but no other acknowledgment of the fact that William George had spoken.

"You specially, Wharton!" continued Bunter. "I've got it in for you most of all! You're a rotter, you know!"

Wharton, who was playing chess with Frank Nugent, smiled slightly, but that was all.

"Wait till Quelchey catches you!" said Bunter mysteriously. "It will be a Head's licking for you, Wharton! You'll get it jolly hot—hot and strong! You know what Skinner got when Quelchey caught him smoking in his study!"

Wharton looked round from the chess at that. Bunter's remarks were quite surprising, and for a moment the captain of the Remove opened his lips to speak. But he closed them again.

"You, being head of the Form, you'll get it hotter!" went on Bunter. "Just wait till Quelchey finds you out! You, too, Nugent! You'll be in it!"

"You fat duffer!" said Nugent. "Now then, Franky—" grinned Johnny Bull.

"I forgot!" said Nugent, and he turned a deaf ear to Billy Bunter after that.

"Perhaps you fellows would like to know what I've got in for you!" jeered Bunter.

But it did not seem that the fellows wanted to know. And Billy Bunter ceased his remarks at last and relapsed into deep cogitation once more. More than once as he cogitated he chuckled.

But for the stern sentence of Coventry, several fellows certainly would have asked Bunter what he was burbling about. He had succeeded in making the juniors curious.

It was clear that the Owl of the Remove had some scheme of vengeance working in his podgy brain. But his references to Mr. Quelchey, and to smoking in the study, were deeply mysterious. Skinner and his set were accustomed to indulging in cigarettes behind locked doors, cautiously. Possibly Bunter might have found an opportunity of giving them away to the Remove master. But no such possibility existed in the case of Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent, who did not share the shady proclivities of Skinner & Co. in the very least. So Billy Bunter's remarks were shrouded in mystery; and the only explanation seemed to be that he was talking out of his hat, for the purpose of breaking through the icy silence of the Removites.

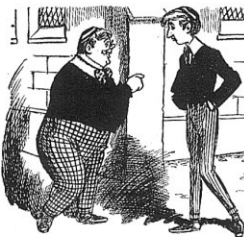
But in point of fact, Bunter meant business.

He had brooded long on his injuries, and though his fat brain worked slowly, it worked. A scheme had been gradually elaborating itself in Bunter's mind—detail by detail he had worked it out, till he was quite satisfied with it.

A weakness of Bunter's little scheme was that he never could help talking, and thus giving his fat self away. But now that he was barred, he was saved from his own indiscretion. His deep scheme, whatever it was, remained locked up in his podgy breast.

The following day was a half-holiday at Greyfriars, and the afternoon was fine and sunny. Harry Wharton & Co. wheeled out their bicycles to ride over to Highlife, for tea with Courtenay and the Caterpillar there.

(Continued on page 17.)



Keep Your Strength Up!

By Billy BUNTER.

FIZZICAL strength is one of the finest things you can have. I've got it myself. I'm as hefty as an ock, and as strong as a jiant. Peter Todd, who is glansing over my sholder while I write, wants to know what an "ocks" is. What an ignnerent chap Toddy is! An ocks is a mail cow, of course!

"How can I become strong?" you will ask. Not by taking pills and potions and patent meddisins. Not by swinging Indian clubs, or playing about with dum-bells. No; the only way to get strong is to eat lots and lots of nurishing food. I've said this before, but there's no harm in my repeating it, so that my words of wisdom will sink in. You can't possibly get strong if you never have enuff to eat. How can you build up the tissues, and the musles of your body, if you only have a thin slice of bread-and-butter for breakfast? Echo answers, "How the merry dickens can you?"

Some fellows go through life without worrying about food. Meals are a beestly bore and a new-sance to them. They have a nibble at this and a peck at that, and then push their plates away in disgust. Such fellows will never get strong. They will be puny weaklings all their lives, simply because they are not taking enuff nurishment into their cisterna.

Take the case of Alonzo Todd. Did ever you see a scraggier, skinnier spessimen of humanity? He is so thin and frail that a gust of wind would blow him over! He is so weak that his legs can hardly support his body. And why? Simply because he starves himself! He only has one rasher of bacon and a couple of fried eggs for his brekker; he never asks for a second helping of meat or pooding at dinner; he has a froggal tea of buttered toast; and he sometimes goes to bed without any supper. The silly chump! He's starving himself by inches!

What are the most nurishing foods? Well, this is a very vexed queschun. Even doctors and dietists disagree about it. But I'll tell you my opinion—an

opinion which has been arrived at after several years' eggperience of gorging and gluttony.

The most nurishing, body-building food you can possibly have is doe-nutts—nico, sugary ones, with plenty of jam inside. Jam-tarts are a good second; mince-pies come third; and then come buns and scones and assorted pastrys.

Don't take any notiss of the faddists and fannatics who tell you that pastry gives you Indiagestion. I've eaten tons and tons of pastry in my time, but my digestion is as good as that of an ostrich! I could sit and stuff pastry all day, without suffering any of those violent eternal panes that some people complain of.

Just look at my fine, fat, formidable figger! I'm the strongest fellow at Greyfriars, bar none. Coker of the Fifth is pretty hefty; so is Johnny Bull; but I'm more beefy and burly than the pair of them combined! I'm as strong as that old jossor Hercules; or that fellow Atlas, who supported the whole world on his sholders!

Of course, you can never hope to become as strong as me. I stand alone. But you can at least become stronger than you are at prezant, by acting on the advice contained in this article. Stuff, stuff, and keep on stuffing! The more you eat, the stronger you will grow. People will say of you, as somebody once said of Julius Seizer:

"Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world

Like a Colossus!"

If you are a weakling; if you are feeling out of sorts or run down; if you pine for health and vitality, vim and vigger, don't go to a doctor or a kemmist. They can't do anything for you. Go to the nearest tuckshop at once, and gorge and gorge until you can eat no more. This free advice has been put to the test and never found wanting. I have the currage of my own convic-shuns, for I am going to pay Mrs. Mimble a visit. (And that's about all you will pay her!—Ed.)

EDITORIAL!

BY
HARRY WHARTON.

WHICH would you rather have—health or wealth? "Both!" I can imagine you replying. But supposing you were only allowed to choose one of these possessions. If you were wise, you would choose health, for it is far better than treasures of gold and silver. Good health is a fortune in itself, and a priceless fortune at that.

What, exactly, is Health? Billy Bunter defines it as "What you are in when you're not bilious." Dicky Nugent describes it as "What you haven't got when you're lying in the sanny, with a temperament of 104 degrees." Bob Cherry defines Health as "That rightfully energetic feeling you've got first thing in the morning, when you feel you could push a house over!"

The majority of the Greyfriars fellows enjoy good health. There is no earthly reason why they shouldn't. For the school is situated in a particularly healthy corner of England, where the sun shines and the balmy breezes blow. Besides, a chronic invalid would not be admitted to Greyfriars. He wouldn't be able to stand the routine of school life.

There are some fellows who are not so healthy as they ought to be. Billy Bunter, for example. But there is nothing organically wrong with the fat Owl. His indisposition springs from over-indulgence in the good things of the table.

Alonzo Todd, too, is inclined to be a weakling. This is due to insufficient fresh air and exercise. Alonzo prefers the stuffy atmosphere of his study to the clean air of the playing-fields; and he pays the penalty of feeling a trifle run-down at times.

Harold Skinner is hardly a healthy specimen of British boyhood. This is because he takes no part in healthy pursuits. And Lord Mauleverer would be a jolly sight healthier if he slept less and exerted himself more.

But, as I say, the majority of the fellows enjoy good health. Bob Cherry is as fit as a fiddle and as sound as a bell. So am I. So are Johnny Bull, Frank Nugent, Vernon-Smith, Mark Lingley, and a host of others. We feel hardy and strong, buoyant, and cheerful, and glad to be alive.

"He who hath Health is rich," runs the old proverb. And personally, I'd rather be a pauper in good health than a millionaire with a disordered digestion. For happiness springs from health—not from money, as is sometimes supposed.

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A Strong Man's Diary!

Being Extracts from the
Personal Records of
BOLSOVER MAJOR.

MONDAY.

Woke up feeling very energetic. Simply had to let off steam somehow. Picked a quarrel with a dozen fellows in the dorm, and fought them all at once. Strewed the hungry churchyard with their bones, so to speak. Left them scattered about the floor, squealing for mercy. Strode out of the dorm, and made my way to the gym. Hammered at the punching-ball for half an hour, and punctured it in six places. Then I picked up a couple of dumb-bells, weighing half a ton each, and went through a series of exercises. Ate an enormous breakfast, and felt in fine fettle all day.

TUESDAY.

It was decided to hold a concert in the junior Common-room this evening. But there was one difficulty. The piano had to be moved from the concert-hall into the Common-room; and there was no time to telephone to Courtfield for a squad of professional piano-shifters. I volunteered for the job. Picked up the piano as if it was a feather, and carried it down the passage to the Common-room, watched by an admiring crowd. When it comes to weight-lifting, I'm the man! I've the strength of Samson and Hercules combined.

WEDNESDAY.

There was a cricket match this afternoon; but unfortunately, the door of the pavilion happened to be locked, and Mr. Quelch had gone off for the afternoon, with the key in his pocket. Harry Wharton & Co. were very much upset, for it was a stout door, and there was no other way of getting in. Then I came striding on the scene. "Stand clear!" I commanded. Then I hurled my burly frame at the door, and it was swept clean off its hinges, and fell in with a mighty crash! Wharton was so delighted that he gave me a place in the team.

THURSDAY.

I did P.-e. Tozer, the local bobby, a good turn this evening. I was strolling through Friardale, when I saw a gang of roughts, about twenty strong, suddenly set on poor old Tozer. He looked like having a rough handling, and he belted for help. Peeling off my coat, I dashed into the fray, hitting out right and left with my burly fists. Tozer's assailants went down like corn before the reaper. I had a delightful five minutes, bowling them over like skittles, and flooring them again the moment they attempted to rise. Presently they crawled away to have their injuries attended to. Old Tozer fell on my neck, and overwhelmed me with gratitude. "Bah! It

was nothing!" I said lightly. "I could have tackled twice that number, and put 'em out of action. I'm as plucky as I am strong. Where'er I go I fear no foe!" Tozer said he would report my heroic conduct to the police authorities. I shall probably have to appear at Courtfield Town Hall, to be publicly presented with a medal by the chief constable. What a beastly bore!

FRIDAY.

There's one great drawback to being a strong man. At times it brings you under the ban of suspicion. A number of valuable foreign stamps were "lifted" from Mr. Capper's album during the afternoon; and my fame as a weight-lifter naturally caused me to be suspected of doing the "lifting." I found myself in a very unpleasant position. This evening, however, Mr. Capper discovered his treasures. It appears they had fallen out of his album, and been swept into a corner by one of the housemaids. I was jolly relieved when this discovery was made, I can tell you!

SATURDAY.

Wingate of the Sixth had the misfortune to be injured during a cricket match. He was struck on the head by the ball, and stunned. I casually strolled towards the scene, picked up the sturdy Sixth-Former as easily as if he had been a new-born babe, and carried him off to the sunny. All the fellows marvelled at my amazing feat of strength. Then I went to fetch the doctor from Friardale. Half-way to the school his car broke down, and he was in a fearful dilemma. "Sit tight, sir!" I said cheerfully. "I'll get behind and push!" With the utmost ease, I pushed the vehicle to Greyfriars, and the doctor said it was a most enjoyable ride.

This evening, in a moment of weakness, I lost my temper and knocked out half a dozen Fifth-Formers for being cheeky. Old Prout happened to come along. "Bless my soul! If I along, and he said: "Bless my soul! If this is what you do in a moment of weakness, Bolsover, I shudder to think what you might do in a moment of strength!"

To-morrow, being Sunday, I shall take a rest from my exertions. But I've no doubt I shall break out again on Monday morning!

HEALTH HINTS!

By BOB CHERRY.

BY general consent, I am considered to be the healthiest specimen of boyhood in the Greyfriars Remove. This being so, I need not apologise for giving a few health hints to those who would fain follow in my footsteps, and become healthy and happy and high-spirited.

Tumble out of bed at the first note of the rising-bell, or the first buzz of the alarm-clock, as the case may be. Don't lie in bed thinking to yourself, "What a beastly cold morning it is! I can't face it!" Warble my revised version of an old song, as follows:

"Oh, it's nice to lie in the morning,
But it's nicer to leap from your bed!"

Do not emerge from your bed by instalment—one toe at a time—like a funk getting into a swimming-bath. Hurl the bedclothes back with one sweeping movement, and then take the plunge!

Don't over-eat. You can't be fit if you've overfed. Billy Bunter declares that the way to keep fit is to stuff and stuff until you've no room for more. Madder advice was never given. It isn't the amount of food we eat that nourishes us; it is what we can most easily digest and take into the system. There are cases on record of people who have starved through over-eating. This is quite true. What they have eaten has not nourished them; and they haven't given the digestive organs a chance to do their work. I'm not a crank or a faddist, and I'm not going to tell you to abstain from this, that, and the other, but if you find that certain kinds of food disagree with you, give them up! Some fellows can eat jam-tarts galore without a twinge of indigestion; others get shooting pains in the chest, and other unpleasant symptoms. One fellow's meat is another chap's poison. Study the effect that different foods have on your health, and adapt your diet accordingly.

Get plenty of fresh air. It's a food in itself. Lots of fellows have a dread of fresh air. They call it a "draught," and avoid it like the plague. Their study windows are hermetically sealed; and if the sun happens to come out they promptly pull down the blinds! These fellows ought to be made to understand that fresh air is their friend, and not their enemy. It won't hurt them. On the contrary, it will help them to keep fit. Just because fresh air costs us nothing, it should not be despised. It's a priceless gift. That reminds me. I've promised to take Lord Maulverer for a stroll on the cliffs. He doesn't want to come; he dreads the thought of coming; but he's coming! I'll see to that!

Take plenty of outdoor exercise; cultivate a sunny smile and a cheery disposition; tumble out of bed first thing in the morning; don't eat too much; cut out the worrying habit and good health will be yours!

[Supplement II.]

The Children's Best Coloured Paper
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By TOM BROWN

"SLACKER!" snorted Bob Cherry. "Don't lie there as if you're too weary to live! Cricket practice has started! Come and try your hand at the nets!"

Lord Maulveverer sighed drowsily. But he did not stir. He lay at full length on his study sofa, with a pile of cushions under his noble head.

"Run away, there's a good chap!" he said feebly. "I'm not feelin' fit, an' I don't want to be disturbed!"

Bob Cherry glared at his languid lordship.

"Of course you're not fit! How can you expect to be fit when you spend all your time in a stuffy study, instead of being out in the fresh air? What you want, Mauly, is a regular course of exercise."

"Goo!"

"And what's more, you're going to get it!" said Bob Cherry grimly. "I'm going to have another shot at reforming you."

"Help!"

"I've often tried to cure you of slacking, and I admit I haven't met with much success," said Bob. "P'raps my methods were too gentle. I'm going to be more drastic this time. Come on!"

So saying, Bob strode towards the sofa and grasped Mauly by the collar and swung him to his feet. His lordship offered a very feeble resistance.

"Steady on, dear boy! I'm feelin' awfully queer to-day. The fact is, I never get enough sleep!"

"The fact is, you sleep yourself silly!" growled Bob Cherry. "A course of outdoor exercise will do you a power of good, and you're going to start right now! This way to the cricket-ground. Are you coming quietly, or do you want me to use force?"

Lord Maulveverer saw that his energetic schoolfellow was in real earnest. There would be no slumber for him that afternoon, and he abandoned himself to his fate. Stiffing a yawn he accompanied Bob Cherry from the study.

The nets had been erected on Little Side, and the first cricket practice of the season was in progress. Harry Wharton was batting, and he was laying on the willow good, and hard. Squiff and Nugent were bowling to him, and a dozen fellows were spread out in the field.

"I've brought Mauly along," said Bob Cherry, with a grin. "He's simply dying for a game of cricket!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lord Maulveverer gave a sepulchral groan.

"I'm simply dyin'—but not for cricket," he said.

Harry Wharton made a few more hits, and then he handed the bat to Mauly. Bob Cherry was engaged in buckling pads on to his lordship's legs.

Supplement iii.]

It was a terrible ordeal for the slacker of the Remove, but he had to go through with it. He took his stand at the wicket, and half a dozen fellows started bowling to him, one after the other. The balls came whizzing down so rapidly that Mauly could not keep pace with them. And presently a loose ball from Squiff got up and hit him in the ribs, and his lordship danced round in wild anguish.

"Yaroooo!"

"He, ha, ha!"

"Stick it, Mauly!"

For twenty minutes Lord Maulveverer was compelled to remain at the wickets. Then he was compelled to bowl, after which he was compelled to field. Bob Cherry saw that he did not slack for a single instant. And Mauly had a gruelling time.

The performance was repeated on the following day, and also on the day after that. Lord Maulveverer was allowed no rest or respite. Wherever he went he was haunted by the energetic Bob Cherry, who kept him up to the mark, and who turned a deaf ear to Mauly's repeated appeals for a snatch of slumber.

The only time Lord Maulveverer was allowed to sleep was at the proper time—bedtime. He had no rest by day. And he declared that the eight hours' sleep he had in the dorm was not enough, and left him unrefreshed.

At last, after several strenuous days, Mauly managed to snatch an evening off. He knew it would be no use having a nap in his study, for Bob Cherry would assuredly burst in upon him and wake him.

Mauly was simply craving for a good long sleep, and he meant to have it—in a spot where Bob Cherry would not be likely to find him. So he secured a late pass from Wingate of the Sixth, and

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made his way to the picture-palace over at Courtfield. Mauly had no desire to see the pictures. Even the most exciting film would not have captured his interest, for he was dead tired. He had only one wish in the world just then—to crawl into a quiet corner of the cinema and sleep the sleep of the just.

The walk to Courtfield seemed endless. But at last Mauly reached his destination. He drowsily said "Good-evenin'!" to the girl in the booking-office, then he bought a ticket and staggered wearily into the building, which was practically in darkness.

On one side of the hall there was a handful of seats which were not in use and which were curtained off. They were only used on "rush" evenings, to accommodate the overflow, so to speak.

On this particular evening things were quiet. There were not more than fifty people in the cinema.

Lord Maulveverer parted the curtains and popped into that quiet little oasis. He found himself in complete darkness, cut off from the people who sat in the body of the hall. Reclining at full length on a row of seats, he dropped into a doze. The strains of the orchestra had a soothing effect, and his lordship soon passed from the dozing stage into a deep and blissful slumber.

Sweet was Mauly's repose, and delightful his dreams. After his strenuous exertions on the cricket-field and elsewhere he needed this sleep badly.

When he awoke he felt strangely cramped and stiff. His brain was muddled, and he could not recollect where he was. Black darkness enveloped him, and he peered around him into that sea of blackness, trying to get his bearings.

"Bogus," he murmured at length, "I'm in the cinema! Wonder if it's anywhere near closin'-time!"

He rose and stretched himself. Then he parted the curtains and stepped into the body of the hall. To his dismay he found it in total darkness. There was no sign of life or movement—no beam of light shone from the operator's box, no orchestra was playing, nobody was in the cinema—except himself!

Panic seized Lord Maulveverer. He glanced at his luminous wrist-watch and saw with a shock that it was two o'clock.

Two o'clock in the morning! The programme had finished hours ago, and everybody, including the cinema employees, had gone home, leaving his lordship locked in!

Mauly groped his way to the exits and tried each of them in turn, but they were securely fastened. He was a helpless prisoner!

"This is too awful for words!" he

(Continued on next page.)
THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 248.



How To Keep Fit!

Some Golden Rules
by Greyfriars Contributors

BILLY BUNTER:

"If at first you can't get fit—stuff, stuff, stuff again!" I find this an eggcellent maxim. You can't possibly enjoy good health unless you build yourself up with nourishing food. The chief cause of all ill-health is lack of nourishment. I've proved that in my own case. When I'm getting plenty of grub, I'm as fit as a fiddle. When I'm on short commons, I rapidly waist away to a shaddo. A good resippy for keeping fit is to have a duzen meals a day, and a few light snacks in between. Then the influenza germ, or any other germ, for that matter, won't be able to attack you, bekwave of your wonderful vitality. But if you start missing meals, or eating too little, you will become a prey to all sorts of ailments and affeckshuns, such as lum-bago, gout, tie-sis, and Indigestion. For, believe me, you can get Indigestion without going to India for it, and you can get it through eating too little as well as through eating too much.

BOB CHERRY:

Rise in the morning early! Then you need not fear the bogey of ill-health. No matter how cold and cheerless a morning it is, no matter if it's raining in torrents or snowing in sheets—turn out! Don't lie stodging in bed, or you will become stale and sluggish. Rise with the lark, put on your running-shoes, and go for a gentle trot of five miles or so! If the weather is favourable, go for an early morning dip. Don't slack! Don't stodge! Don't stagnate! Be up and doing, and enjoy life to the full!

LORD MAULEVERER:

"Rather a fag havin' to contribute to this discussion, begad; but I suppose I must, or that energetic bouncer Bob Cherry will be comin' along with a cricket-stump! My views on the subject of keepin' fit may best be expressed by the followin' couplet:

'Early to bed, and at midday to rise
Makes a chap healthy, wealthy, and wise!'

In other words, sleep as much as you can. Don't be content with ten hours' nightly repose in the dorm. Lie down an' take forty winks in your spare time. Any odd corner will do. I fell asleep in the tuckshop the other day, over the soothin' influence of a glass of lemonade. Unfortunately, I toppled off the stool on which I was seated, an' came down to earth with a bump. Seriously, dear boys, you mustn't take any notice of what Bob Cherry tells you. You'll never get fit unless you have your full quota of sleep—an' a bit more besides!

DICKY NUGENT:

An apple a day keeps the doctor away; and I always eat a pound of pippins every morning, so as to be on the right side! Apples are fine things, especially when you can get them for nothing. Mrs. Mimble, at the tuckshop, sells them at a penny each, but I know a place where you can get them for nicks. A sir hilton popper's orchard!

HURREE SINGH:

The finest way to keep fitfully fit, and always in the pinkfulness, is to partake of the ripe and luscious banana[®] for breakfast, and to take plenty of exercise. I do not mean the sort of exercise that the Sahib Quelchy gives us. I mean the open-airful, out-of-doorful variety. The esteemed and ludicrous game of cricket will keep you up to the markfulness, and prevent you from feeling like the cakes in Dame Mimble's shop—seedy!

THE GIANT OF GREYFRIARS!

By Horace Coker.

My strength is as the strength of ten,
I'm burly as can be, sir;
Sandow, and all the mighty men,
Could not compete with me, sir!
My muscles stand out strong and firm,
I've tons of vim and vigour;
And all the weaker spirits squirm
At my imposing figure!

I pick up fags as if they weighed
Just a few trifling ounces;
If I should drop them, I'm afraid
There'd be some squeals and bounces!
I toss them far above my head,
And then I catch them neatly;
They tremble with alarm and dread,
But they are safe—completely!

My punching prowess is sublime—
Few can withstand my punches;
I fight with fifty at a time
And scatter them in bunches!
I've punctured all the punching-balls
That hang outside my study;
I'm simply great in fights and brawls—
I'm Dempsey's understudy!

"The smith, a mighty man is he,"
Wrote some poetic joker.
However mighty he might be
He can't compare with Coker!
I shine in any fistic fray;
I am the Human Wonder!
I have a dozen fights a day,
And win them all, by thunder!

Then bow the knee, ye fags, to me—
A strong and sturdy giant!
And just obey my orders—see?
Don't dare to be defiant!
When I address you, don't omit
To murmur "Please" or "Thank you!"
For if you don't, I might see fit
To pick you up and spank you!

DICK PENFOLD:

Inky's advice is simply "Fit." Cricket will keep you fine and fit. And if you are a mighty hitter, each swipe will help to make you fitter. Whether you are a bat or bowler, or simply have to push the roller, you'll find that outdoor recreation is splendid for the circulation. You'll never suffer ailments chronic, or have to take a beastly tonic. Play cricket morning, noon, and night! You'll feel A 1, O K, all right!

MAULY'S STRANGE ADVENTURE!

(Continued from previous page.)

groaned. "Whatever will they be thinkin' at Greyfriars? They'll imagine I've bunked from the school, or somethin'!"

Mauly started to shout for help, and he banged on one of the doors with his fists, hoping that the constable on night duty would hear him and come to the rescue. He shouted until he was husky, but without result. Then he sat down at the piano and thumped it with all his might. The sounds echoed strangely through the dark building.

Bang! Crash! Bang!
Mauly thumped the ivory keys for all he was worth. And at long last his energies were rewarded. The policeman on night duty heard the commotion, and came to see what it was all about. He banged on the door, and Mauly stopped playing and started up with a cry of relief.

"That you, constable?" he called.
"Yes," came the reply. "Who are you? An' what are you doin' in there at this time o' night?"

"Locked in!" said Mauly tersely.
"Went to sleep durin' the pictures, an' the attendants never discovered me, begad! Get me out of this, for goodness sake! The place fairly gives me creeps!"
"Can't get in no how," explained the constable.
"I shall have to go an' wake the manager at 'is private 'ouse, an' get the keys from 'im."

"Buck up, then!" urged his lordship.
It was nearly three o'clock before the unfortunate Mauly was released from his prison. Then, having "tipped" the constable, he wended his weary way to Greyfriars.

There was a light burning in Mr. Quelch's study. Evidently there was great anxiety concerning Lord Mauleverer, and the master of the Remove was keeping an all-night vigil, in the hope that the absentee would turn up.

"Quelchy will be awfully ratty at losin' his beauty-sleep!" murmured Mauly as, having scaled the school wall, he made his way across the Close.

But Mr. Quelch was not angry. He was only too relieved to know that Lord Mauleverer was safe and sound. And he actually laughed when Mauly had described his weird adventure.

"Bless my soul! How extraordinary!" said Mr. Quelch. "Search-parties have been hunting high and low for you, and it was feared that you had met with some mishap. We have been deeply anxious on your account, Mauleverer, but I am happy to know that your absence has such a harmless explanation. You had better go to your dormitory now. And when you visit the cinema in future I hope you will go there to see the films—not with the object of courting slumber. Good-night—or, to be more correct—good-morning!"

"Good-morning, sir!" said Mauly, with a faint grin. And he conveyed his born-tired anatomy to the bed that was waiting for it in the Remove dormitory.

THE END.

[Supplement iv.

THE BARRING OF BUNTER!

(Continued from page 12.)

Billy Bunter hovered round the bike-shed, while the Famous Five were getting their machines out. He grinned a fat grin as they rode away on the Court-far road.

"You wait!" he murmured mysteriously.

Then he rolled away in search of his minor, Sammy. Inquiry of Gatty of the Second elicited the fact that Bunter minor was detained in the Form-room that afternoon, Mr. Twigg having set him a detention task. Bunter rolled along to the Second Form-room, and blinked in at Sammy. The hapless fag was alone in the room, seated at his desk, working dismally at a parsing exercise. He blinked up at Billy; and for once, Samuel Bunter was glad to see his major.

"Hallo, Billy! Come in, old chap."

Bunter grinned and rolled in.

"Detained, what?" he asked.

"Yes!" groaned Sammy. "Old Twigg's given me this much to parse—some rot written by a rotter named Something-or-other. Look at it!"

It was the first stanza of the "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" that Bunter minor had to parse. It was really not a difficult task, but to Sammy it seemed a herculean one. That was why he was glad to see his brother William George. To a Remove fellow—even a dunce like Bunter—the task should have presented little difficulty. The only question was, would William George take it on, and thus enable Sammy to escape from detention?

"The curfew tolls the knell of parting day," grunted Sammy. "The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea. Rot, isn't it?"

"Bosh!" agreed Bunter.

"Curfew's a beastly common noun, singular number, and I suppose it's in the rotten nominative case," said Sammy.

"That's right," said Bunter.

He was not giving the matter much thought, but he was willing to agree with Sammy.

"This would be easy enough for you, Billy—a clever chap like you," hinted Sammy.

It was the first time Sammy had acknowledged that his major was clever. And even now he was not speaking with strict veracity.

"Easy as falling off a form," said Bunter.

"Well, old Twigg isn't likely to come in," said the fat fag. "I've got to take it to him when I've finished it. Mug it up for me, old chap, and I can get out."

"I wouldn't take me ten minutes," said Bunter disdainfully. "You are a dunce, Sammy."

Sammy Bunter opened his mouth, to deliver his candid opinion of Billy's intellect in return. But he stopped in time. It was no suitable moment for telling Billy what he thought of his intellect. Billy, certainly, would have been offended.

"I—I know I am, Billy," said the fag, with unusual meekness. "You do it for me, old man."

"That depends," said Bunter. "I want you to help me, Sammy! One good turn deserves another!"

"All right!"

"You know those eads in the Remove have turned me down, and sent me to Coventry?"

Sammy Bunter grinned.

"Yes. Is it still going on, Billy?"

Bunter nodded.

"Hard cheese, old chap—such a nice fellow as you!" murmured Sammy, with transparent hypocrisy.

"I'm going to make 'em sit up for it!" said Bunter.

"I would, old chap!"

"I'm beginning with Wharton and Nugent. I'm going to get them a Head's licking."

"Good!"

"Quelchly is sure to take them to the Head for a licking—or, at least, give it them hot and strong himself, when he finds out that they've been smoking in their study," said Bunter.

"Do they?" said Sammy, raising his eyebrows. "I thought they weren't that sort."

"They ain't! But suppose Quelchly got a tip to go to their study, and found it reeking with baccy-smoke?" said Bunter, lowering his voice mysteriously.

"It wouldn't be, unless they'd been smoking there, I suppose," said Sammy, blinking at his major in amazement.

"It might be—if somebody else had been smoking there!" said Bunter, with a fat wink.

"Oh!" ejaculated Sammy.

"You know those jolly strong cigars that old Prout smokes," went on Bunter.

"A couple of those smoked in Wharton's study, would make it reek for hours. Well, I can easily bag a couple of them from Mr. Prout's study—and we're going to smoke one each in Wharton's room—see?"

"Pshaw!"

"I want two smoked—one each for Wharton and Nugent. We'll leave the ends on the table—see? I'd rather not smoke two myself, one after the other—they're fairly hefty, you know. You'll smoke one and I'll smoke the other."

"But—but they might catch us at it."

"They're gone over to Highcliffe; they won't be back till six. I heard them saying so."

"But—but—"

"I know exactly where Prout keeps his cigars. I'll show you just how to nip into his study and bag them, Sammy."

"Oh! Will you?" ejaculated the fag.

"Yes; and I'll do this exercise for you afterwards. Is it a go?"

Sammy Bunter shook his head.

"Cigarettes if you like; but I'm not taking on cigars," he said. "I don't want a blessed volcanic eruption under my waistcoat."

"Oh, that's all right! One cigar doesn't hurt a chap. I could smoke half a dozen."

"Then you can smoke two!" said Sammy promptly.

"Well, I'd rather not. You play up, old man, and I'll fix this exercise for you, and stand you threepence. There!"

"I'm jolly well not going rooting into the Fifth Form master's study," said Sammy, shaking his head. "And I ain't going to trust my inside with Prout's cigars. But—"

"Look here, Sammy—"

"You do this parsing for me, Billy, and when we'll talk it over," suggested Sammy Bunter.

Billy Bunter snorted. Trustfulness was not highly developed in the Bunter clan. "Nothing of the sort," said the Owl of the Remove warmly. "I'll come here afterwards and parse that rubbish."

"Not good enough," said Sammy decidedly. "Look here! You bag old Prout's cigars and smoke them, and I'll smoke a cigarette, if you like. But you'll have to do this exercise first!"

"You fat little rotter—"

"I like that!" said Sammy derisively.

"Fat isn't the word for you, Billy! As

for being a rotter, I haven't been barred by my Form, anyhow."

"I've a jolly good mind—"

"Look here! Are you parsing this rot for me?"

"No!" roared Bunter.

"Then get out, and let me do it!"

"You're wasting my time!"

"Look here, Billy—"

"Look here, Billy—"

"Bunter!" Mr. Twigg, the master of the Second Form, looked into the Form-room. "What are you doing here, Bunter? You know very well that you must not speak to a boy under detention! I shall mention this to Mr. Quelch."

"I—I—" stammered Bunter.

"Leave this room at once."

And Billy Bunter, with a final glare at his minor, rolled out of the Second Form room. His great scheme, if it was to be carried out, had to be carried out without the assistance of Sammy of the Second.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Vengeance!

MR. PROUT, the master of the Fifth Form at Greyfriars, left his study and walked down to the big doorway of the School House, where Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, awaited him. The two masters were taking advantage of the sunny spring weather to take a little walk together on the half-holiday—which was quite as welcome to them as to their pupils.

Neither of the Form-masters noticed that Bunter of the Remove was lurking in the corridor—neither imagined for a moment that Bunter of the Remove was interested in their afternoon stroll. But, as a matter of fact, Bunter was deeply interested.

From the hall window William George Bunter watched them walk across the quad and disappear.

"Good!" murmured Bunter.

The two Form masters having vanished from the scene, Bunter was at liberty to carry out his remarkable scheme of vengeance upon the captain of the Remove. He rolled away to Mr. Quelch's study, and entered it, closing the door after him. He was aware that the two gentlemen were walking down to Courtfield, so that it would be an hour at least before they returned. That gave the scheming Owl plenty of time to carry out his scheme.

Mr. Quelch's typewriter stood on the study table, with its cover on. Bunter jerked off the cover, slipped a sheet of paper into the machine, and typed:

"Sir,—I feel it my duty to inform you that smoking goes on in the Remove! Look in Study No. 1 if you don't believe me."

The Owl of the Remove drew the sheet from the machine, and placed it in a prominent position on Mr. Quelch's table. There it could not fail to catch the Remove master's eye when he returned. There was nothing—so far as Bunter could see—to give away the identity of the fellow who had "sneaked." The typing gave no clue to the writer, and it did not occur to Bunter that the spelling gave any clue. Bunter was quite unaware that his orthography was of such an originality as to be easily recognisable.

"That's all right!" murmured Bunter. And he rolled out of the room and made his way to Mr. Prout's study. He knew just where the Fifth Form master

kept his cigar-box—the number of things Bunter knew, which did not concern him, was amazing. Mr. Prout was accustomed to smoking very "hefty" Savannah cigars—generally his study retained the aroma of them. There was no doubt whatever that if a couple of those big dark Larranagas were smoked in Study No. 1 in the Remove, the scent would cling to the study for a very long time afterwards.

Bunter slipped two of the cigars into his pocket, and left Mr. Prout's room.

He was feeling elated as he wended his way to the Remove passage. That quarter of the house was quite deserted on the fine half-holiday. Even Lord Mauleverer had found energy enough to ramble out. There was no danger of the Owl of the Remove being observed.

Vengeance was in his grasp. Two cigars were to be smoked in Study No. 1, with the consequence that the room would fairly reek with it. Two cigar-ends were to be left on the table or in the fender. After that, Bunter would clear off to a safe distance.

Mr. Quelch, returning from his walk, would find the typed information on his table. Mr. Quelch, it was well-known,

did not approve of "sneaking," and despised an informer. Nevertheless, having received information he was bound to look into the matter. His duty as a Form master required that he should ascertain whether the information was well-founded or not.

The Remove master, arriving to investigate in Study No. 1, would find the room reeking with smoke, and a couple of cigar-ends lying about.

The rest was obvious. He could only conclude that Wharton and Nugent had been smoking there before they went out for the afternoon.

What other conclusion could he possibly draw? Certainly he was not likely to suspect Bunter's scheme of vengeance.

All was plain-sailing. And the captain of the Remove would be dealt with all the more severely because he was head boy of the Form, and Mr. Quelch had reposed trust in him.

To do Bunter justice, he did not in the least realise the baseness of the part he was seeking to play. That aspect of the matter did not occur to his obtuse brain at all. He had been barred, by order of the captain of the Form; he had been deeply wronged thereby, in his own

opinion, and he was going to make Harry Wharton "sit up" in consequence. And that was all there was about it, in Bunter's estimation.

He would willingly have given the captain of the Remove a licking with his own fat hands. That being out of the question, he was going to get him licked by Mr. Quelch, or the Head! Bunter would have been quite surprised to hear that there was anything mean or dastardly in such a scheme. His powerful intellect did not work so far as that.

He closed the door of Study No. 1, and sat down in Harry Wharton's armchair, with a grin on his fat face.

The two cigars lay on the table at his elbow, ready. Bunter would greatly have preferred Sammy to be there to smoke one of them. But Sammy was not there, and so the Owl of the Remove had to negotiate both. He had no misgivings on the subject.

Bunter never spent money on cigarettes, as Skinner and Snoop did. His pocket-money went to the tuckshop. But he prided himself on being a "dog" in his own way. He was always willing to smoke a cigarette if he could get it for nothing. So in his time the fat Owl of the Remove had smoked a good many cigarettes, and in that line he proudly regarded himself as a hardened young sinner.

So he grinned cheerfully as he took up one of the cigars, cut off the end, and struck a match.

He lighted the cigar, and coughed as he captured a mouthful of smoke from the first pull. Undoubtedly it was a strong cigar—quite a hefty smoke. But Bunter was nothing doubting—he was equal to the occasion. He sat back in the armchair, and smoked, and smoked, and thick vapour gradually floated over the study. Not only did Study No. 1 reek with the powerful aroma of Mr. Prout's potent Larranaga, but anyone passing the door could not have failed to become aware that smoking was going on in the study.

The cigar burned away, and the study reeked with it. Bunter was glad to drop the end into the fender.

Then he sat quite still.

He was becoming conscious of a dizzy feeling in his head, and a strange stirring in the centre of his circumference. He sagely decided to rest a little before he tackled the second cigar.

He rested!

But the first cigar had done its fell work. Its effect was growing, cumulatively.

Bunter felt dizzier and dizzier. Strange and weird emotions shook him from head to foot.

Back into his mind came the memory of a time when he had crossed the Channel for a vacation in France.

He resolved not to touch the second cigar. He decided to get out of Study No. 1 and get to his own room as fast as he could. It seemed to him that the floor of the study was heaving like the waves in the Channel.

He made a movement to rise—for a second. Then he sat very, very still!

He sat still with an awful stillness! His face was white—his mouth gaped open! Perspiration ran down his podgy brow. Horror grew in his fat face.

More clearly came the memory of that Channel crossing. That had been bad, but this was worse. He realised that if he moved the catastrophe would come!

And he couldn't remain there, to be found by Mr. Quelch, as soon as that gentleman read the note that had been left in his study—he couldn't! Again he essayed to move, and he sank back into the chair with a quivering groan.

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Only by sitting quite, quite still could he stave off the catastrophe. And then, as he sat quite, quite still, he realised that the catastrophe was not to be staved off!

Vengeance on the fellows who barred him, the success of his plot—everything vanished from his fat mind now—everything but the awful horror he was undergoing! He gave a sudden lurch in the chair and a faint, groaning howl.

And then there were sounds in Study No. 1 such as are heard on a ship in a gale; and Bunter, extended on the hearthrug, with his face in the fender, groaned and gurgled, gurgled and groaned, and wished for sudden death.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Horrid for Bunter!

"ABSURD!" snapped Mr. Quelch. The Remove master had returned from his walk. He came back to his study, and almost the first thing that caught his eye as he entered was the typed note Billy Bunter had left for him.

Mr. Quelch picked it up, read it, and frowned. The typing, as Bunter had so sagely calculated, gave no clue to the identity of the writer. But Mr. Quelch had no doubt whatever of that individual's identity. Only one fellow in the Remove spelled in that wonderful way. Bunter's spelling was Bunter's own—it was a gift, and never could have been acquired.

"Bunter! That utterly absurd boy!" murmured Mr. Quelch. "Of course, this was written by Bunter! What does he mean?"

Mr. Quelch made a motion to throw the note into the fire. But he paused. After some moments of reflection, he left the study, and ascended the staircase to the Remove passage. He did not for one moment believe the accusation contained in the typed note. But he felt that he had better look into Study No. 1.

He gave a violent start as he approached the door of that celebrated apartment. For even with the door closed there was a lingering smell of cigar-smoke to be detected.

"Bless my soul!" murmured Mr. Quelch.

He was astonished, and he was scandalised. Then from within the study came a startling sound. It was a deep groan—a groan of anguish.

Mr. Quelch grabbed the knob and threw the door open. Within the study the smell of strong cigar-smoke was only too palpable. And from an agonised figure stretched on the rug came a series of dreadful, hair-raising groans!

"Bunter!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

Groan!

"Get up at once, Bunter!"

Bunter could not have got up at once if the house had been on fire. He lay and groaned in the deepest depths of misery.

"Bunter, do you hear me?"

Groan!

Mr. Quelch's glance roved round the study. He saw the cigar-end in the fender—the unsmoked cigar on the table. He understood what had happened, but he was utterly perplexed. He bent over Billy Bunter and shook him by the shoulder.

"Bunter! Speak, Bunter!"

Groan!

"Bless my soul! The boy is really ill, the utterly foolish young rascal! Bunter! Do you hear me, Bunter?"

Groan!



"Are you coming into the tuckshop?" inquired Sammy Bunter. "No!" hooted his major. "Then you can jolly well buzz off!" retorted Sammy. And the fat fag, evidently having had enough of his brother's conversation, turned to walk away. Billy Bunter glared after him, and then stepped after him and let out his right foot. "Yaroo!" There was a roar from Sammy as he pitched forward on hands and knees. "He, he, he!" chortled William George.

(See Chapter 8.)

There was a sound of footsteps and cheery voices on the stairs. Harry Wharton & Co. had returned from High-cliffe. They came trooping cheerily up to the Remove passage.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Chery in astonishment.

"What the thump—" exclaimed Wharton.

The chums of the Remove clustered round the doorway of Study No. 1, staring in, utterly amazed. Mr. Quelch turned a frowning brow towards them.

"Wharton—"

"Oh, my hat! Yes, sir?" gasped the captain of the Remove.

"Do you know anything of this?"

"Nunno, sir!"

"I found this note in my study—typed, apparently, by Bunter. I came here, and found the wretched boy ill, as you see him. He has smoked a cigar—apparently one of Mr. Prout's cigars. I cannot imagine why, if Bunter desired to smoke, he should leave information in my study regarding his surreptitious and foolish proceeding. You know nothing of it?"

"Nothing, sir," said Harry, greatly astonished. "I don't see why he couldn't smoke in his own study, if he wanted to smoke."

Groan, groan, groan!

"It is utterly perplexing," said Mr. Quelch. "But the foolish boy has made himself very ill. He must be taken to the dormitory and put to bed. Will you boys take him, while I telephone for the doctor?"

"Certainly, sir."

Five astonished juniors carried Billy Bunter up to the Remove dormitory, Bunter groaning all the way. Kindly, quite forgetting that he was "barred," the chums of the Remove put him to bed. Bunter spoke not a word. He lay and blinked at them with glassy eyes, groaning deeply every few minutes.

Billy Bunter was ill.

For a whole day he did not appear in class, and when he did reappear he looked sickly and sorrowful.

By common consent the sentence of Coventry was rescinded—Bunter was no longer barred. He looked so seedy and sick that even Skinner & Co. compassionated him; the Bounder spoke to him quite kindly; Peter Todd was almost chummy; and Harry Wharton & Co. did all they could to comfort him.

It was not till some days later that the true history of that amazing episode in Study No. 1 was learned. Fortunately for Bunter, the Removites took it as a screaming joke. Bunter, the avenger seemed to them funnier than Bunter in any other role, and the whole Remove roared and chuckled over the story, which did not please the Owl of the Remove in the very least; but he was glad, at all events, that there was no more mention of the Barring of Bunter.

THE END.

(Be sure and read next Monday's grand story, boys, entitled "Capped for Greymans!" It's a great cricket yarn!)
THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 848.

YO-HO FOR THE SPANISH MAIN! 'BOARD SHIP, TO-DAY, BOYS!



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No. 2.—CAPTAIN KIDD'S TREASURE!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Adrift with a Madman!

"PLAY the game, I tell you! If you do not, I will send a bullet through your heart, and then I shall have all the water for myself without further trouble!"

The hoarse, cracked voice was that of a madman, and was full of deadly menace, but Rolf Silver's courage did not fail him. Yet he knew that never had death been nearer to him.

It was a summer afternoon. On the trackless waters of the South Pacific drifted an open boat, which had no rudder, nor sails or oars. Nor did it contain a morsel of food, but only a small keg less than half full of water, which was stowed away in a locker in the stern-sheets.

In the boat was seated Rolf Silver, a youth on whose features the impress of British pluck was so deeply stamped that it was still clearly visible, despite all that hunger and thirst and the beating of the winds and waves had done to make him white and haggard.

Sitting facing Rolf was Nicholas Locks, a man whose swarthy and sullen face and broad, powerful frame made him formidable at any time, but who was more than ever to be dreaded now. For madness glared in his eyes, and he grasped a loaded pistol, which was levelled at the youth's breast.

On the boat-seat, which separated the pair, was spread a pack of playing-cards. The boat was thousands of miles from land. Not a sail was visible anywhere on the far-off horizon. An intense calm brooded over the mirror-like surface of the sea; but this was so still and heavy that an experienced mariner would have known that it was cruel and deceitful—the deadly foreboder of a terrible storm.

"Take up the cards, I say!" repeated Nicholas Locks, in his harsh, vibrating tones. "If you don't obey before I have counted three, I'll fire! Ope—"

Rolf set his teeth, and looked unflinchingly into the blazing eyes fixed on him, as he calculated what chance he had of grappling with the madman before the latter could pull the trigger of his pistol.

The madman and Rolf were the sole survivors of a shipwrecked crew.

Rolf was the son of a poor gentleman in England. He had made up his mind to go to the Spanish Main, where adventures and perils were to be met, and where fortunes were to be won by brave hearts.

Not wishing to draw on his father's slender purse, he had worked his passage as a sailor before the mast on the merchant ship Orient, which was bound for Porto Bello, with a mixed cargo and a score of passengers.

Most noticeable among these passengers was Nicholas Locks. The man had proved himself gloomy and taciturn; but it had leaked out that he had once been a warder in Newgate, London's terrible prison, and it had been whispered that he had come to the Spanish Main on a secret errand. But no more than this had been found out on board the ill-fated ship.

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When the end of her voyage was still far off, the Orient had caught fire and had been burnt to the water's edge.

In the wild horror and confusion which had ensued Rolf Silver had borne himself gallantly, helping all those who needed it, heedless of himself.

Through an accident he had been left behind when the last of the crew and passengers rowed away from the doomed Orient, and his cries to them to return were drowned by the roar of the fire. But one of the smaller boats had also been left behind as he was about to jump into this, after lowering it, he had seen Nicholas Locks lying on the deck. A heavy spar had fallen from above, and, striking him on the temple, rendered him senseless.

Finding that the man's heart was still beating, Rolf lowered his inanimate form into the boat. He had been left with so little time at the end that he was unable to put anything into the boat except the keg of water. While he was seeking for the oars and some food, the flames nearly closed on him, and he was compelled to leap for his life.

The voyage in the open boat had been a fearful one. For many hours Nicholas Locks had lain like a dead man, and Rolf had been helpless to do anything as the boat drifted on and on.

He could not be sure that it was not carrying him to his doom!

And when at last the warder had moved and opened his eyes, Rolf had realised, with a thrill of horror, that the blow of the spar had injured his brain and robbed him of his reason.

He was adrift on the ocean, with a madman for his sole companion.

At first Locks was strangely quiet and sullen. He had refused to talk; but he had seemed never to sleep, and whenever Rolf had looked at him his glittering eyes were

wide open, and had continually stared greedily at the water-keg.

The youth had scarcely dared to close his eyes, lest his terrible companion should attack him when he was helpless to defend himself.

At last, when the calm fell on the sea, the madman had suddenly dragged himself from the bows of the boat, where he had been crouching, and, sitting opposite to Rolf, had taken the pack of cards from his pocket and placed them on the seat of the boat.

Then the pistol had glittered in his grasp and covered the youth's heart, and his harsh voice had said:

"You must play me a game of cards, Rolf Silver! There's not enough water left for us both; but if one of us are dead there would be enough to keep the other alive until he was picked up. We will play for the water in the keg. You shall stake your life and I'll stake the hidden, buried gold of Captain Kidd, the pirate!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Ocean Outlaws!

"THE gold of Captain Kidd!" The words echoed in Rolf Silver's brain as he gazed at his crazed companion and wondered if he knew what he was saying.

In a sense Nicholas Locks knew well enough; but he was full of a madman's cunning, and not responsible for what he said or did.

"You think I don't know what I'm talking about," he said, with a low, discordant, merciless laugh. "But I do! You are going to stake your life and I'm going to stake the pirate's gold! Did you ever hear of Captain Kidd?"

Little need was there to ask the question of anyone who sailed the seas in those days!

Captain Kidd was a skipper in the Royal Navy, who was sent out by his own Government to suppress the pirates. Instead of doing this, he went over to the ocean outlaws, and, leading the "Jolly Roger," became a terror of the waves and committed many fearful crimes.

Finally, however, he was captured, taken to England, and hanged.

But what had become of Captain Kidd's gold?

He had during his career as a pirate amassed a vast treasure; but he had hidden this in some buried hiding-place so cunningly that it was believed that no living man knew its whereabouts.

Among seamen, however, there was a legend that Kidd had written the secret of his treasure in a black-bound book—in a small Spanish Bible, and that whoever found this book would win the pirate's gold. "And I know where that black-bound book is hidden!" said Nicholas Locks, holding his pistol steady. "The world thinks the secret died with Captain Kidd, but I know better. On the night before his execution he lay in the condemned cell of Newgate, chained hand and foot. I was the warder appointed to keep watch over him. In his last sleep Captain Kidd dreamed and raved; and when

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morning dawned and he was hanged. I knew where to seek for his black-bound book. I told no one, but gave up my place in the prison, and came to the Spanish Main to seek the pirate's gold for myself.

"And now?" asked Rolf Silver.

The madman's glittering eye roved over the expanse of limitless waters, and then he snapped his teeth angrily.

"I have told you already," he said. "There is not enough water for us both, but if one of us were to drop out of the boat there would be enough for the one that was left. I might shoot you, but I will give you a chance for your life. Play the game of cards. If you lose, you must go to your death; but if you win, I will tell you the secret of the pirate's black-bound book!"

There was nothing for it but to obey.

Rolf was unarmed, and for the moment he wondered why the madman did not shoot him at once instead of waiting for the test. But then he guessed the truth.

Crazed though he was, Nicholas Locks still had some cunning left, and he was afraid of what might happen to himself if he killed the youth, and his crime afterwards found out.

But he thought he would be safe if he could make out that Rolf had jumped into the sea voluntarily.

So intent were the two on the fateful game that they failed to heed how the sky was darkening, and how an ominous ripple was disturbing the glassy sea.

"Rolf Silver spoke triumphantly as he played his last card with a steady hand.

The madman started up in the boat with a howl of rage.

"But you shall not live to rob me of the water!" he cried. "To death with you!"

He fired, and the bullet grazed Rolf's forehead, staggering him. Ere the youth could recover himself Nicholas Locks grappled with him and, exerting all the terrific strength which his madness lent to him, dung him bodily from the boat.

As Rolf splashed into the water a tropical, pitch-like darkness fell on the ocean with startling suddenness, and was riven a minute afterward by a flash of vivid lightning.

The storm had come.

The lightning flash was too transient to reveal the whereabouts of the boat; but Rolf struck out to save his life, swimming he knew not whither.

Many would have given up in despair, thinking all was lost, but he felt he must fight for his life while he had even the most desperate chance of winning it.

He had his reward, for at last, when he was exhausted and on the point of sinking, he was dashed against the mass of drifting wreckage, on to the top of which he dragged himself.

Clinging to this tenaciously, he rode out the storm, which was so furious that he doubted if any craft could live through it.

What would happen to him at last he could not tell, and hour after hour passed away in dread suspense; but at last he saw something which drew from him an astonished exclamation:

"The black flag!"

A more than usually protracted flash of lightning quivered in a bluish track across the heavens and the sea, revealing to the youth a battered, wrecked ship, at whose gaff floated the skull and crossbones flag.

There were men on her deck, working with frantic haste, and in the dazzling illumination Rolf saw, lashed to the shattered stump of the mainmast, Nicholas Locks, who was raving and shrieking aloud:

"Save me! Save me!"

His voice rang weirdly across the black sea as the lightning died out. The pirates had not seen Rolf, so intent were they on their task; nor did they know what had happened when the foaming waves swept the drifting wreckage under the stern of their ship with a shock which dashed the youth from his hold.

He would have been carried to destruction had he not clutched out blindly. He could see nothing, but his fingers closed on a rope which dangled above him.

He clung to this for dear life, and was drawn through the waves in the wake of the pirate craft.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Black-Bound Book!

FOR several minutes Rolf Silver was dragged through the waves in this fashion, and then he began to climb the rope, hand over hand, in order that he might get nearer to the deck and learn what the pirates were doing.

At last Rolf climbed so high that, clinging to the woodwork and the cordage, he was in a position to peer over the stern bulwarks and watch the deck of the pirate ship whenever this was shown up by the darting illumination in the heavens.

"The ship is doomed! Work, boys; work fast on the rafts, or we shall be too late in getting off! Never heed that crazy fool! He knows nothing of Captain Kidd's gold, and is lying to trick us into sparing his life!"

It was the pirate skipper who spoke to his men, and whose loud tones reached Rolf Silver; and while the pirates worked frantically on the construction of the rafts, which were their sole hopes of safety—for their boats had been washed away—the madman lashed to the broken mast continued to exhort aloud:

"Captain Kidd's gold! Captain Kidd's gold! I am the only living man who knows of the hiding-place of the black-bound book!"

The pirates jeered and laughed at him, and Rolf had no difficulty in guessing they had picked up Nicholas Locks from the drifting boat.

They had not been animated by any feelings of humanity; but, believing that what the crazed warder said about the black-bound book was nothing but a lie, they had set to work to amuse themselves by torturing him. While they were so engaged the storm had sprung up, and their ship had been wrecked.

Now their whole idea was to escape, and they intended to leave the madman to his fate.

Nigh breathlessly Rolf watched them as they toiled, for he knew that the pirate craft was settling down, and that ere the dawn came she would sink into the ocean's depths.

To Rolf, as he retained his grip and swung by numbed fingers from the stern of the pirate ship, each minute seemed like a dragged-out hour. Slowly but surely the doomed craft sank in the trough of the sea, until the waves washed over her bulwarks.

But at last the pirates launched a couple of huge rafts, and, crawling on these, pushed away from the sinking ship.

They had, however, been too hasty. The rafts were too weak to bear the strain put on them, and parted into a hundred fragments. With yells of terror and despair the wretches struggled in the sea, and then the blackness of the storm swallowed them up.

Rolf Silver was alone on the doomed wreck except for the madman.

Clambering to the slippery deck, he began to lash together all the loose hen-coops and broken woodwork he could lay hands on to make a raft for himself.

All the time the youth was working the madman tugged at the lashings which held him fast.

"Save me!" he raved. "Cut me free, and I will give you the secret of Captain Kidd's gold! It is hidden on board this ship!"

When the raft was finished Rolf hesitated. Should he release Nicholas Locks? If he did so he would be risking his own life, for the madman might easily attack him again. "But I can't leave him to perish," the youth decided. "He's crazed, and not answerable for what he did against me."

With a knife one of the pirates had left behind Rolf cut the madman loose. To his surprise, the warler, instead of attacking him, rushed below. The youth followed him into the captain's cabin, and as a streak of lightning darted through the porthole he saw him push back a secret panel in the bulkhead, and draw out from the secret hole in which it had been hidden the black-bound book of Captain Kidd.

Then he fell senseless, overcome by all that he had suffered.

Rolf dragged him to the raft, and they escaped as the pirate craft went down, just as they had done from the Orient.

The madman died on the raft, but not before his ravings had told the youth that the pirate craft he had boarded in so strange a way had once been Captain Kidd's own ship, and had fallen into the hands of the other rogues after the famous pirate captain had been hanged.

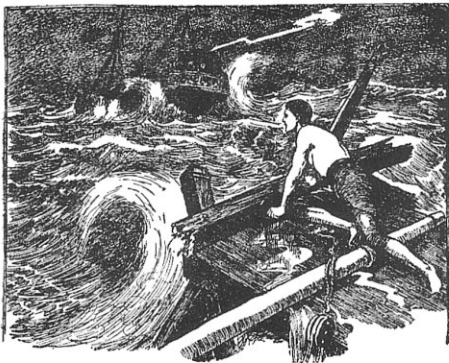
It was, of course, in the hope of finding this ship that Nicholas Locks had journeyed to the Spanish Main.

Had not Rolf risked everything to give the madman a chance of life, the secret would have gone down into the sea and been lost for ever.

The youth was rescued from the raft by a passing ship; and subsequently, helped by the writing in the black-bound book, he sought and found Captain Kidd's treasure, which made him rich for life.

THE END.

(Another grand story next week, boys.)



A more than usually protracted flash of lightning quivered in a bluish track across the heavens and the sea, revealing to Rolf Silver a battered, wrecked ship, at whose gaff floated the skull and crossbones.

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The QUEST of the PURPLE SANDALS



No. 3.—THE CANADIAN MAIL-BOAT MYSTERY!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Sale of the Sandals!

"PULL up on the left, driver, please!"

As the taxicab came to a halt, Ferrers Locke, the great private detective, opened the door and stepped out—almost into the arms of his young assistant, Jack Drake.

"Hallo, chief!" said the boy. "What luck?"

"None," returned Locke shortly. "Have you seen Hawthorne's assistant yet?"

"No; I'm just going back to Hawthorne's curio-shop. The chap ought to be there by this time."

Ferrers Locke settled the taxi fare from Baker Street and gave the driver a substantial tip. Then he fell into step with Drake, walking along the Waterloo Road in the direction of the curio-shop referred to. On the way Drake confessed to an accident with the Hawk car belonging to his chief. It was now in a garage being repaired.

The case upon which they were both engaged was the most amazing and important of their career. Professor Arnold Erskine, a noted scientist, had been shot dead in his home at Dulwich.

With official promptitude Inspector Pycroft, of Scotland Yard, an old friend of Locke's, had stepped in and arrested Derrick Erskine, the professor's nephew, who had a strong motive for seeing his uncle dead. By brilliant deduction, however, Ferrers Locke had established the innocence of the young man, and had fastened the guilt on Dr. Harvey Kruse, the famous Harley Street specialist in tropical diseases and life-long friend of the professor.

When Locke and Drake had parted earlier in the morning the sleuth had repaired to his residence at Baker Street, confident of speedily putting Kruse behind iron bars. Naturally Drake, with an unbounding faith in his chief's ability,

fully expected that this had been accomplished.

"You've nobbed the doc., I suppose, chief?" he said.

Ferrers Locke gritted his teeth, as though a spasm of real physical pain had swept his being.

"I told you I'd had no luck, my boy," he said. "By that I meant to say that Kruse is still at large. Really, though, it was not so much a question of luck as my being taken completely off my guard by as astute and clever a trick as I have come across. Just when I had the fellow cowed and covered by my revolver in the consulting-room at Baker Street, he apparently had an epileptic fit. It was so entirely realistic that it would have deceived an Army medical board. I stooped to Kruse's assistance, got a knock on the head—and the wily doctor is still at large. But we shall have to leave it to Inspector Pycroft to get on his track. I have secured the release of young Erskine, and now we must find the purple sandals."

The sandals to which the sleuth referred had been seen neither by himself nor Drake. When Professor Erskine had been shot, his last words, according to the butler, were, "Don't break open the sandals—" At first these words were a complete enigma to Locke. But within a few hours of the murder he was sent for by no less a personage than the Home Secretary himself. Then he learnt that the professor had made the discovery of the age—a method of converting base metal into gold.

Fearful of the damage to finances and the stability of the civilised nations if this discovery leaked out, the Home Secretary commissioned the famous private sleuth to find and destroy the only paper in existence on which the secret process was set out.

Unable to find the paper among the possessions of the late Professor Erskine, Locke bethought himself of the last words of the ill-fated scientist:

"Don't break open the sandals—" Did one of these sandals, which the

professor had purchased in India, contain the greatest secret of the age? Without a single other clue to go upon, it was essential to find the sandals and examine them.

But a keen cross-examination of Jennings, the professor's butler, extracted the admission from the man that he had stolen some of his master's curios and had sold them to Hawthorne, the curio-dealer in the Waterloo Road. A carved box of Indian workmanship, an ebony idol, a pair of ivory chopsticks, and the purple sandals were among the number. But the box, the chopsticks, and the purple sandals had been sold, and now Locke and Drake were impatient to interview the assistant who had sold them.

They were about to enter the gloomy precincts of the queer old curio-shop, when the terrific ringing of a bicycle-bell startled them and caused them to look round. They were just in time to see a somewhat decrepit-looking machine mount the pavement and bump into a lamp-post, and a sandy-haired youth dismount with more speed than grace in a sitting position on the ground.

"My giddy aunt," grinned Drake, "that's a novel way of dismounting, old son!"

The cyclist rose and rubbed a plump forefinger against the side of his upturned nose.

"Bedad," he said, "if Oi'd hit that lamp-post any harder the bolke wad ha' been fit only to go among the ither curios in me master's shop!"

"Ah," ejaculated Locke, "then you are Mr. Hawthorne's assistant?"

"Bogorra, ye've hit the nail on the bulbo's eye first time, sorr! And me name's Michael O'Grady, and Oi'm Oirish."

"I had a suspicion you might be," answered Locke, with a smile. "My own name is Ferrers Locke, and I wish to put a few questions to you."

The sandy-haired youth stopped on the threshold of the shop, and his eyes popped almost out of his head.

"Ferrers Locke!" he muttered. "The great detective! Faith, come into the office—I mean the shop, sorr."

The three entered the curio-shop, and the assistant pushed his bike into a small room in the rear of the premises.

Then, having provided chairs in the small room behind the shop for the two visitors, Michael O'Grady stood before them expectantly.

"Now, O'Grady," said the sleuth, "I understand from a conversation I had with Mr. Hawthorne first thing this morning that you sold a pair of purple sandals of Indian design to a customer the other day. Do you know the name of the person?"

"O! do not, sorr. He came in to buy a carved walking-stick, and the shoes took his fancy."

"What did he look like?"

"Sure, he looked as fat as a bit o' Donegal bacon. His face reminded me o' the face o' Mither O'Brian's boss in Tipperary, except that this spalpeen had a scar on his left cheek."

"H'm!" murmured Ferrers Locke. "The customer who bought the sandals was not exactly a handsome man, then? Was his voice pleasant?"

"Bedad, it was not!" replied Mick O'Grady decidedly. "About as pleasant as a foile going through tin, O! should say."

In other words, he had a high-pitched voice," suggested the sleuth.

"Exactly, sorr. And he seemed to talk through his nose—loike a New Yorker."

"He took his purchases with him, I suppose, O'Grady?"

"He did, sorr. At first he spoke about havin' 'em sent to the Spooks Hotel, by Victoria Station, but afterwards he changed his mind."

"Spooks Hotel!" muttered the detective, wrinkling his brow. "Maybe it was Stuke's Hotel he said?"

"Begorra, so it was, sorr!"

Ferrers Locke put a few more questions. He learnt that O'Grady had sold the carved box and chopsticks which had belonged to Professor Erskine at an earlier date. But the assistant was unable to recollect the circumstances of this sale, or the appearance of the customer.

On the whole Locke was well satisfied. He had definite clues to work upon, even though he had been unable to learn the name of the purchaser of the sandals.

"Thank you, O'Grady," said the sleuth, as he rose to depart. "You have been of great assistance. Pray accept this as a little souvenir of my visit."

And he pressed a crisp Treasury note into the hand of the gratified Irishman.

Leaving Hawthorne's shop, Ferrers Locke hailed a taxi that was proceeding along the Waterloo Road. He ushered Jack Drake into it, and, as he himself prepared to follow, issued a curt order to the driver:

"Stuke's Hotel, Victoria—and double your fare if you're there within ten minutes!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Summons to Liverpool!

THE visit of Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake to the curio-dealer's shop in the Waterloo Road was but one episode in a terrifically busy morning.

The pair were put down outside Stuke's Hotel within the prescribed ten minutes, and their inquiries were continued there. The description Locke was able to give the clerk in the office enabled that individual easily to recognise the man who had purchased the sandals from O'Grady.

"You mean Mr. Joseph Meech, of Montreal, sir," said the clerk. "He showed me a walking stick and a pair of purple sandals one afternoon."

"Is Mr. Meech in?" queried Locke.

"He isn't, sir. He left the hotel two days ago."

Ferrers Locke clicked his tongue with annoyance. A speedy end to his quest for the purple sandals seemed as remote as ever.

"Where has Mr. Meech gone?" he demanded.

"He has taken passage back to Canada, sir," answered the clerk. "I know he booked a passage on the Ethelbert of the Viking Line for Montreal, for I saw the name on his luggage labels. You could probably confirm that at Messrs. Cooks', in Ludgate Circus."

There was little else to learn at the hotel, and so Locke and Drake took another taxi to the offices of the famous Tours firm in the City. Here they discovered that Joseph Meech had booked a passage on the Ethelbert, and had actually sailed in the ship. The Ethelbert was now at sea en route for Quebec and Montreal, and it was apparent to the sleuth that the sandals were also on their way to the land of the beaver and maple.

It took Ferrers Locke less than half a minute to make up his mind.

"We must follow Meech to Canada, Drake," he said.

"Our one object must be to get the sandals in our hands—and as soon as possible."

Inquiries at Messrs. Cooks' revealed that there were two or three chances of reaching Quebec before the arrival of the Ethelbert, which was but an intermediate boat.

A Cunarder was sailing that afternoon from Southampton for New York, and by taking train from the city of skyscrapers to Quebec the detective and his assistant could easily accomplish the object in view.

But after careful examination of the various means, Locke decided to sail in the Rockarra of the Rock Line, due to depart at six p. m. from Liverpool direct for Quebec and Montreal. The Rockarra, being one of the crack liners on the Canadian run, would reach Quebec at least six hours before the Ethelbert, barring accidents.

With the passage tickets for himself and Jack Drake in his wallet, Locke led the way to the street again. He had ordered the taximan to wait, and now asked to be driven to Kruse's residence in Harley Street with all speed.

Arriving here he again kept the taxi waiting while he and his assistant went into the house. As Locke had expected, Inspector Pycroft of the Yard was there, as well as two plain clothes detectives. The officials had completed the examination of Kruse's housekeeper.

The information which they had obtained was little more than Ferrers Locke had been aware of before. Inspector Pycroft himself was in his most confident frame of mind.

"We shall have Dr. Kruse safely under lock and key within six hours," he promised. "He figured that he would never be suspected of the murder of his friend, the professor. Nevertheless, he had made preparations for decamping at a moment's notice."

"He took no bag with him," said Locke grimly. "I bet he didn't return here from Baker Street to pick up anything in the nature of a suitcase."

"No, Mr. Locke. You bet he had his shaving tackle, toothbrush, and a comb stuck in his pocket; likewise a few greaselines, bits o' false hair, and a

small bottle o' spirit-gum. O' course, the first thing he'd do almost after he made his get-away from your place was to disguise himself. But the Force may be expected to lay hands on him at any moment now. I've notified every police-station in the country, and there are special men watching for him at every London railway terminus and every port round the coast."

"Excellent, my dear Pycroft!" commented Ferrers Locke. "Your promptitude deserves reward. Now, I wonder if you'd be so good as to arrange for me to interview George Forgan, Kruse's former chauffeur, who was arrested last night for breaking into Logan Lodge, the professor's home?"

"With pleasure, Mr. Locke. I will send a message to have him taken to Scotland Yard, and you can come along to my office and see him there. But we've ample proof that Dr. Harvey Kruse was the murderer of the professor."

"I don't see what good you can gain in examining Forgan again."

"Perhaps not, Pycroft," murmured Locke. "But I am very anxious to find a pair of purple sandals which the professor had in his possession until a few days ago."

"Ha!" said Pycroft, with an alert expression on his rubicund face. "You're still harping on that queer remark the old scientist made before he died. As I told you before, Mr. Locke, dyni' men don't naturally mean anything in particular in their last worldly remarks. I reckon Professor Erskine was worried about the loss of the curios from his collection, and made that remark about not breaking open the sandals in a wandering, haphazard way."

"Maybe you're right, Pycroft, and I'm wrong," said Ferrers Locke. "But if you happen to come across any information whatever about the sandals in the course of your hunt for Kruse, you might put me wise to it at once."

Bound by secrecy by the Home Secretary of Great Britain himself, Ferrers Locke was unable to explain to the burly inspector anything about the missing paper. As far as Locke knew only Drake and himself of all in all the world were aware that the purple sandals purchased by Joseph Meech, the Canadian, might be the strange hiding-place of the most amazing secret of the ages. The only other person who might possibly be aware of it was Dr. Harvey Kruse. It was this thought that caused Ferrers Locke no little uneasiness.

Within a few minutes of his arrival in Harley Street, Ferrers Locke was seated again in the taxi bowling towards the Embankment and Scotland Yard. This time Inspector Pycroft was an additional passenger.

The subsequent interview with the prisoner, Forgan, was of benefit not only to Locke but to the inspector. The chauffeur now was only too willing to answer questions. At one time it appeared he had acted as valet as well as chauffeur to the doctor, and had travelled extensively with his master and Professor Erskine.

The chief points of his evidence which Locke tabulated in his memory were these: George Forgan was with the two men when the scientist bought the purple sandals at a shop in the bazaar at Agra, India. He remembered the place well, because all three of them had stood on the opposite side of the road to admire the dome of a mosque which could be seen towering directly behind the sandal-maker's shop.

This point proved to the sleuth that Dr. Kruse had deliberately lied when he

latter had stated after the Dulwich murder that he had not been aware of the existence of Erskine's purple sandals.

Another important piece of information that was revealed by the ex-chauffeur was that while in Calcutta Kruse had become a member of the Sunda Samiti, a secret society notorious for its seditionist tendencies. Therefore, above the left elbow of the doctor was a clear brand-mark made with a red-hot instrument of some kind. It represented a coiled snake poised as though to strike, the symbol branded upon every member of the Sunda Samiti.

This brand-mark, as both Ferrers Locke and Inspector Pycroft recognised, might prove a very important factor ultimately in the identification of the wanted man.

At the conclusion of the interview with Forgan, Locke and Drake shook hands with their genial friend, the inspector, and took their farewell of him.

"We have to be aboard the Rockarra at Liverpool by six this evening, Pycroft," said the great private sleuth. "We shall catch the eleven fifty-five train from Euston, which is due at the Mersey port at five twenty-five. Thus we shall have about half an hour between the arrival of the train and the sailing of the liner."

"Good-bye, Mr. Locke, and good luck!" said the Scotland Yard man. "It seems a queer go for you to have to chase a pair of sandals across the ocean, but I suppose you know your own business best. Before I see you again I expect Kruse will have met on the galleys, the fate he deserves. But he can't safely be left to me."

Leaving Scotland Yard, Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake went with all speed to Baker Street. There they hastily packed their bags, for they had but little time left for catching their train. Then, having given instructions to Sing-Sing about the motor-car which had been left at the garage for repair, and taken farewell of the faithful Chinese servant, they drove to Euston.

Hardly had they taken their seats in the express than the guard's whistle was blown and the train began to move slowly out of the station.

Suddenly a wild commotion caused Jack Drake to leap up and peer out of the carriage window.

"My hat!" ejaculated the boy. "Here's old Pycroft!"

Ferrers Locke took his assistant's place at the window. It was, indeed, Pycroft, and the burly inspector was bounding along the platform like a huge rubber ball. Stretched full length behind him was a woody porter, who had attempted to prevent the Scotland Yard man from boarding the moving train.

"Phew! Whoosh!" panted the inspector. "Open that door, Mr. Locke!"

Ferrers Locke quickly obliged, and dragged the red and breathless "limb of the law" into the carriage.

For some moments the stout inspector sat on the seat in the carriage with Locke and Drake, panting and puffing like a stranded codfish. When at last he appeared to have recovered his breath somewhat Locke fired the obvious question at him.

"Coming to Liverpool with us, Pycroft, old chap?"

"That's so, Mr. Locke," answered the Scotland Yard man, mopping his brow with a red handkerchief. "We've just had word at the Yard from the Liverpool police that a man answering to the description of Dr. Harvey Kruse has gone aboard the Rockarra!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Elusive Dr. Kruse!

THE big hand of the clock in the station at Liverpool revealed the time as exactly half-past five when Ferrers Locke, Jack Drake, and Inspector Pycroft disembarked from the train. On the station a plain-clothes man of the Liverpool police immediately introduced himself to the inspector.

"The man whom we suspect to be Dr. Kruse, sir," he explained, as they all walked towards the barrier, "is at present in the custody of two plain-clothes men in a cabin on board the Rockarra. He was not brought ashore pending your arrival, in case a mistake has been made."

"That's all right," said Pycroft gruffly. "I'll soon settle that matter. Is the man wearing any disguise, do you think?"

"I think not, sir; though I haven't seen him myself. He registered to-day at the Port Hotel under the name of Adolph Keiller, and after a bath slept for a couple of hours this afternoon in his room. I myself established the fact that he had arrived direct from London shortly after noon to-day."

"H'm! I shall be interested to see this Mr. Keiller," said Pycroft, as he handed over his ticket to a collector. "You have a car waiting?"

"Yes, sir. We'll have you down at the docks within ten minutes."

Not until they were standing by a powerful Daimler car outside the railway terminus did Pycroft think to introduce his two travelling companions. Shaking hands with Locke, the plain-clothes man of the regular force expressed his honour at meeting the great private sleuth whose name he had seen lauded so often in the daily papers.

The run to the docks was quickly made, and the captain of the Rockarra himself met the quartette at the head of the gangway, he having been fully prepared for their visit. Captain Balding, a burly, weather-bronzed seaman of the old school, then escorted the visitors to a cabin on Deck A where the passenger, Keiller, had been forced to remain under supervision pending the arrival of the Scotland Yard representative.

There were already three men in the cabin—the suspected man and the two Liverpool police-officers. And as Pycroft, the captain of the ship, and the plain-clothes man also entered, Locke and Drake remained on the threshold of the little room.

From the glimpse that Ferrers Locke could get of the prisoner in the cabin, the man certainly bore a great resemblance to Kruse. He was burly of build, and had a gorilla-like hunch of the shoulders that was characteristic of the wanted Harley Street specialist. But Keiller's face was more deeply lined with wrinkles, and his voice when he greeted Pycroft, sounded not so deep in tone. Still, Locke recognised that to a clever and unscrupulous crook like the doctor, the features and voice could be easily disguised.

The man who had taken passage that day in the Rockarra under the name of Adolph Keiller rose immediately from his chair on the entrance of Inspector Pycroft.

"Hah, you're the man from Scotland Yard, are you?" he said, in an impatient snarling tone. "Well, just tell these boobs of the Liverpool force that they've backed a loser. I'm not the fellow you want now, am I?"

"They have only done what they conceived to be their duty, sir," said Pycroft, tactfully evading the direct question. "I must say you bear an extraordinary likeness to the man I wish to meet. Now perhaps you will furnish me with a few particulars about yourself, sir, and supply me with any evidence you have of your bona fides."

"I have already given these boobs the information that my name is Adolph Keiller, and that I am the head of a publishing business in Toronto," snapped the detained man. "I have shown them letters and documents, and I asked them to put a trunk call through to Messrs. Binns & Larkin, the London publishing firm, upon whom I called only yesterday."

Inspector Pycroft turned and looked at one of the Liverpool police-officers, raising his bushy eyebrows slightly in query.

"His credentials seem all right, sir," whispered the Liverpool member of the force. "Moreover, I'll admit that when we put through a trunk call to London, Mr. Binns, of the publishing firm, confirmed that a Mr. Adolph Keiller had called on him yesterday. But then, credentials may be stolen and information picked up easily, and so we thought we'd better be on the safe side until you'd seen this man."

"You acted quite rightly," said Inspector Pycroft. "Now, sir," he said, turning to the passenger, "you can assist me to settle the matter of your bona fides in less than a minute."

"Indeed?" sneered the man. "How?"

"By taking your coat off and rolling up your left sleeve."

Ferrers Locke, framed in the doorway, unnoticed by the detained man, looked keenly to discern any trace of emotion on the fellow's face. But Keiller heard the request of the Scotland Yard officer unmoved, and with a shrug, calmly divested himself of his coat.

"I'll submit to the indignity that this farce may end as soon as possible," he said testily. "Now, what do you wish to see my arm for?"

Pycroft made no reply. He himself rolled up the man's shirt-sleeve and gazed searchingly at the flesh above the elbow. And almost a groan left the lips of the inspector as he failed to find the slightest trace of anything resembling a brand-mark.

"Thank you, Mr. Keiller," he said quietly. "I agree that you have spoken the truth. You are not the man I am looking for."

All the police were disappointed, for it would have been a great feather in the cap of the Liverpool Division to have apprehended the notorious Dulwich murderer. However, the statement of Adolph Keiller were further confirmed a few minutes later by the appearance on board of a gentleman and his wife who knew him well in Toronto.

After Adolph Keiller had been given his liberty and tended many apologies, a thorough search of the ship was made for stowaways. Then the police, with the exception of Inspector Pycroft, left the vessel. Standing by the rail in company with Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake, the Scotland Yard man scratched his head ruefully.

"Well, that's that, Mr. Locke," he remarked, in a disappointed tone. "It looks as though I might have to make a few more wild goose chases before I get the elusive doctor. But get him I will in the end."

"And you may rest assured that if he crosses my path again, I shall make a mighty good attempt to get him for you, my dear chap," said Locke, who was still



Suddenly a wild commotion on the platform caused Jack Drake to leap up and peer out of the carriage window. "My hat!" he ejaculated. "Here's old Pycroft!" Ferrers Locke joined his assistant at the window in time to see the burly inspector struggling with a porter who was trying to prevent the C.I.D. man from boarding the moving train.

(See page 24.)

smarting under the mistake which had let Kruse slip through his fingers. "But look! They are about to take down the gangways. You will have to be going ashore."

Hardly had he spoken the words when the great siren of the liner blew as a warning for visitors to disembark. Giving Locke and Drake a final handshake, Pycroft moved off among the throng lining the vessel's rail to the head of a long gangway, amidships. For a moment or two he stood there, giving the seaman on duty there a message for the captain, who had gone on the bridge.

Suddenly he noticed a diversion among the large crowd on the deck, who were assembled to wave God-speed to the parting Canadian mail-boat. A small messenger boy was elbowing his way through to the foot of the gangway. Ere he could reach it he was stopped by a bulky official in blue with brass buttons, who gave the boy a shilling and took the telegram from the lad.

Armed with this the Customs officer mounted the gangway and addressed the seaman stationed there.

"Is Inspector Pycroft on board this ship?" he boomed. "Here's a wire for him."

At once the Scotland Yard man stepped forward, hand extended.

"I'm Inspector Pycroft, of the Yard," he said.

The Customs officer handed over the telegram.

"This is for you, sir. I was coming on board to speak to the chief officer before the ship sails, so I brought it on with me."

"Thank you!" said Pycroft.

As the Customs man moved off down the deck, Pycroft tore open the buff envelope. Opening the message it contained, he read:

"Wireless received from S.S. Octave

bound for Quebec. Captain reports presence of man resembling Kruse in stowage. Proceed to Quebec per Rookarra to meet Octave on arrival."

With the telegram in his hand, and his red face flushed even deeper in hue with excitement, Pycroft hastened back to where Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake were standing. Drawing them towards the saloon entrance, he conveyed the tidings.

"I'm coming with you, you fellows!" he announced. "Just been ordered to go by Superintendent Dexter." But his face fell as a thought occurred to him. "Hang it, I haven't even a pair of pyjamas with me!"

"Never mind!" said Locke, laughingly. "There's a barber's shop on board. And, as you know, in a barber's shop on board a liner, you can buy anything from a pair of pyjamas to a packet of safety-pins."

Luckily, despite the time of year, there were one or two vacant berths in the Rookarra. Thus when the situation was explained to the purser, room was found for the inspector in the ship. Just before the mooring-lines were cast off the captain himself received word from the company's London head office, that the inspector's passage had been paid for by Scotland Yard.

For two days after leaving Liverpool the Rookarra forged ahead into a westerly gale, shipping mountains of spray as high as her smokestacks. During this period Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake, both excellent sailors, had the promenade deck practically to themselves. Pycroft, a thoroughly hard sailor, was soon "under the weather," and remained in his bunk, groaning at the unkind fate which caused inconsiderate criminals to slip through the net of the law and take to the high seas.

On the third night, when the seas had

abated, and Pycroft and his fellow-sufferers had recuperated somewhat, Ferrers Locke and his young assistant took their usual constitutional round the decks before turning in. On this occasion, as they were descending the companion ladder to Deck C, on which their cabins were situated, Drake suddenly touched his chief's shoulder.

"Look, sir! By the galley!"

The sleuth followed the direction indicated by his young assistant, and was in the nick of time to see a burly form, garbed in what appeared to be a grey shirt and dark trousers, slip out of the galley door. There almost before the two could turn on the companion, the apparition glided swiftly up the ladder on the opposite side of the deck.

Bounding up again to Deck B, Locke and Drake raced across to the port side, but the man who had slunk so furtively from the galley had disappeared. Neither did a prolonged search reveal anything of the mysterious being.

"At first I almost thought it was Dr. Kruse," muttered Drake. "But it was that chap Keiller—or I'm a silly oyster!"

"Fiddlesticks, my boy!" said Locke. "It certainly looked like Keiller, I admit. But why should a respectable Canadian publisher be slinking about the deck like a common thief at this hour of the night? More likely it was a member of the crew who was trying to nab a few dainties from the galley."

None of the cooks were in the galley, and cautious inquiries from a pantry-man revealed no evidence that anyone answering to the description of Kruse was on board.

"The ship was searched from stem to stern just before she sailed," muttered Locke. "It seems impossible that there may be a stowaway in the ship."

Nevertheless, on the following day he

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requested the skipper of the Rockarra to institute another thorough search of the vessel. Only for a man with the established reputation of Ferrers Locke would Captain Balding have consented to this course, which he plainly imagined to be perfectly futile. The genial Inspector Pycroft, now in full possession of his wits and appetite, openly pool-pool'd the stowaway hunt when he saw what was taking place. He concurred, however, to accompany Locke and Drake to Deck A—the boat-deck—as a party of seamen and stewards started operations there.

And hardly had the three set foot on the upper deck than a shout from the Rockarra's bo'sun brought them rushing to Number Four Lifeboat, which, like the other boats on that deck, was secured inboard to a white-painted steel rail, with the falls hanging loosely from the davits.

Now the bo'sun stood holding up the tarpaulin which had covered the boat as a protection from the weather, and, ashen of face, was pointing under it.

Locke, Drake, and Pycroft clambered on to the steel rail and peered in the boat also.

Inside was an awful, huddled human form, its face upturned, but unrecognisable. It was dressed in a blue uniform with brass buttons, grey shirt open at the throat, and no collar. By its side was a peaked cap.

Immediately Pycroft thought of the man who had come aboard at Liverpool and had handed him the telegram.

"Good heavens!" gulped the Scotland Yard man. "It's the Customs officer!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Man in Irons!

LIKE wildfire the news spread through the liner. A stowaway had been found in one of the lifeboats. He was dead. Some even breathed it in a whisper that the unfortunate man had committed suicide.

On Locke's request, the astounded captain of the Rockarra had Deck A cleared of passengers and crew, and sentries posted to prevent anyone from approaching the lifeboat, which had proved a sepulchre for some unfortunate human soul.

The tarpaulin was completely stripped from the boat, and Ferrers Locke and Pycroft made a thorough examination of the boat and its grim contents, without, however, in any way disturbing the body.

The first thing that neither could fail to notice was that the features of the unfortunate man had been destroyed with vitriol, or some other corrosive acid. Finger-marks on the throat plainly indicated the cause of death. Therefore, it was appallingly clear that this was no suicide, but a foul and brutal murder.

But who was the murdered man? That was the mystery. Why did the Customs officer who came on board stow away in the ship? For it was certain now that he did not go ashore again, as Pycroft had supposed he would.

Suddenly Pycroft gave a grunt, and a curiously alert expression shone in his eyes.

"I may have Kruse on the brain, Mr. Locke," he muttered. "But it's just struck me this unlucky chap in the boat is about the same build as the doctor."

"You are right, Pycroft," said Locke gravely.

He watched in silent approval as the inspector took a knife from his pocket and carefully cut through the left sleeve of the coat and shirt of the dead man.

Leaning over, both looked eagerly for the thing they half expected to see. But there was no brand-mark like a poised serpent on the victim's left arm—nor mark of any kind, for that matter.

The Scotland Yard man straightened himself and scratched the back of his head with the knife-handle, in utter perplexity.

"It's a fair knock-out, Mr. Locke!" he muttered. "Here's a murder committed under our very noses, so to speak, and there ain't a solitary clue to show who did it, or why it was done!"

"I'm not so sure of that, Pycroft," replied Locke. "It is early to talk about there being no clues. Ah, here is the ship's doctor! Perhaps we may learn something from him."

The body was reverently lifted from the boat, and examined by the surgeon, who confirmed the theory that the victim had died by strangulation. He estimated the time of the crime as about four o'clock that morning.

"Now, tell me, doctor," said Ferrers Locke, "have you missed any acid from your dispensary?"

"I do not think so, Mr. Locke," was the reply. "But, to make certain, I will take an inventory as soon as we have placed this poor chap in one of my rooms adjoining the sick-bay."

While the doctor was seeing about the disposal of the victim of this strange ocean crime Ferrers Locke, Jack Drake, and Pycroft examined the deck and rails near the boat and the interior of the boat itself.

Obviously a stowaway had been living in the boat, for there were crumbs of bread and meat plainly visible.

Locke, remembering the stranger he and Drake had seen flitting so suspiciously from the galley, told Pycroft of the incident.

"We thought it looked like Keiller," said the sleuth; "but now it seems as though it must have been the stowaway who came aboard at Liverpool disguised as a Customs officer."

"Keiller's off the map, as far as this case is concerned," said Pycroft. "I've established it to my entire satisfaction that he's what he says he is. And a respectable publisher gen' travelling in a liner would have no cause to do in a stowaway. My theory is that one o' the Rockarra's crew looked into that boat, and was grabbed by the stowaway by the throat. Unable to cry out, he got his own fingers on the throat of this chap he discovered hiding under the tarpaulin. And, being a stronger man, he throttled the stowaway; then, fearful o' being charged with murder or manslaughter, kept mum about the affair."

"But why should he have been so anxious to destroy the identity of his victim by afterwards pouring acid on him?" asked Ferrers Locke quietly.

Pycroft scratched his head and shut up like a clam.

Long after the C.I.D. man had given up hope with the words that "There was no more clues to be found in the lifeboat than in Southend cockles," Ferrers Locke was busy still with his magnifying-glass. But even he discovered but one tiny fact that might possibly prove a clue to the solution of the crime. This was a minute clean mark on one of the dark polished thwarts of the lifeboat where a little splinter had broken from the wood.

When this was pointed out to Pycroft, the inspector gave a grunt.

"Well, a fat lot we're likely to learn from that, Mr. Locke," was his comment.

Questioning of passengers occupying cabins on Deck A was devoid of result. No one had heard any sounds of a struggle. So, in the absence of anything else to go upon, Ferrers Locke followed up the small clue to hand. Firstly, he went to the sick-bay and examined the hands of the victim of the crime. There was no splinter in either of his hands. Returning to the boat, he helped Drake to examine the bottom of the craft. There was much dust and dirt and grease, but no small splinter of wood.

Abandoning the search, Locke and Drake, in the company of Pycroft, made their way to the dispensary, there to learn from the surgeon that a small bottle of sulphuric acid had disappeared since the last inventory had been taken just before the ship sailed.

"Oho!" said Pycroft. "Here's a clue, if you like. We've got to find that bottle the acid was contained in!"

"You'll need a diving-suit," said Ferrers Locke dryly. "The murderer, after destroying the identity of his victim in the boat, would have tossed the little bottle overboard. The splash would not have been heard in the rush of the waves against the ship's side."

"Not necessarily so," answered Pycroft somewhat tartly. "I have my own theory of the crime, Mr. Locke, and I shall obtain permission from the skipper to make a thorough search of the crew's quarters."

"And I am beginning to conceive a theory, too, my dear Pycroft, and shall early take an opportunity of testing it."

Leaving the Scotland Yard man to adopt his own methods, Ferrers Locke led Jack Drake to Deck A again. By this time the sentries had been withdrawn, and quite a number of the passengers were standing gaping open-mouthed about the fatal boat. Among the number was a burly man with overcoat-collar well drawn over his ears to shelter him from the keen wind.

Walking up to the man, Locke murmured:

"A ghastly affair, Mr. Keiller?"

"The man swung round with a start."

"Dreadful, Mr. Locke!" he said, in a hoarse voice. "I hope you and your Scotland Yard friend may find the assassin, and send him to the fate he deserves so richly. But I must not stand about here long; I have sustained a cold on the chest and must take care of myself."

"A somewhat sudden chill, Mr. Keiller," murmured Locke sympathetically. "You seemed perfectly fit last night."

"I was. But I slept with my cabin window wide open, and—"

"Yet you heard nothing of a scuffle across the deck during the early morning?" said Locke, casually glancing at the other's hands. "You must be a sound sleeper, Mr. Keiller?"

"I am. But I must get away from this exposed part of the deck."

With a nod the passenger walked to his cabin some fifteen paces from the scene of the crime. Just before reaching the cabin he stood aside to permit the exit of the steward, who had been cleaning the room.

As Keiller shut the door of the cabin behind him, Locke glided with panther-like agility across the deck to the steward, who bore a dust-pan and brush in his hands.

"Listen, my man," whispered Locke to the steward's ear. "Cover that dust-pan over with a handkerchief so that the contents do not blow away. Then take it



Suddenly the far end of the tarpaulin lifted and "Keiller" staggered out. His shirt was in threads and almost torn from his back. "How dare you, sir!" he roared, glaring at the detective. "How dare you attack me under—" He stopped abruptly as he became aware of Ferrers Locke's eyes glued upon his bare left arm. (See this page.)

down to my cabin. I'll give you a pound note for those sweepings!"

The astounded steward looked as though he thought Locke had taken leave of his senses. Nevertheless, he did what he was bidden, and, covering the dust-pan, went down to the sleuth's cabin on Deck D. Locke and Drake sauntered down some few yards behind him.

As good as his word, Locke paid the man a pound note, and then, closing his cabin door, began carefully looking through the deck sweepings, examining the litter with his microscope.

At last he gave an exclamation of satisfaction.

"By Jove, I believe my theory is the right one, after all!" he muttered.

"Drake, my boy, I have found the splinter that was chipped from the thwart inside the lifeboat. It was swept up by the steward on the deck of Keiller's cabin."

"Crumbs!" said Drake. "Then Adolph Keiller, the Canadian publisher, murdered the stowaway!"

"No," answered Ferrers Locke quietly. "The stowaway murdered Adolph Keiller!"

For some moments the two remained silent, each lost in his own thoughts.

"There is the question of motive," murmured Locke at last, as though talking to him-self. "Only a very desperate man—a fugitive from justice—would conceive the notion of encompassing the murder of a stowship passenger to assume the other's identity. But it is clear in the light of the discovery of this splinter that the acid was used to disguise the body so that no one should know that the victim was the Canadian, Keiller. I noticed that the man who has taken his place has a small wound on the right hand caused by this splinter he afterwards extracted in the cabin. As I conceive the crime to have been committed, the stowaway, whose quarters were in the lifeboat, crept into Keiller's

cabin before daylight this morning and strangled the unfortunate man in his bunk. Having changed clothes with the dead publisher, the scoundrel then carried the body to the boat, poured acid on it, threw the bottle into the sea, and returned to the cabin to take up the role of Keiller himself."

"My hat, the fellow's a super-crook!" exclaimed Drake. "His disguise is perfect."

"His knowledge of the effect of acid and his dexterity in stealing the right stuff from the doctor's dispensary is equally remarkable," returned Locke. "The ordinary common or garden type of stowaway is not sufficiently conversant with Latin as to be able to select a powerful corrosive like sulphuric from among many other kinds of chemicals."

"Jumping snakes!" gasped Drake, sudden light dawning on him. "You—you mean chief, the man who is now taking the role of Keiller, may be a doctor!"

"I do, my boy—and none other than Dr. Harvey Kruse himself!"

Well, however, did Locke realize that having one of the most astute criminal minds in existence to deal with, he would have to act warily. Instead of visiting the man who called himself Keiller he waited a day until that individual showed himself below in the saloon. So amazing was the man's disguise and mimicry that even Locke at first doubted whether after all his theory was not all wrong.

Securing opportunities of chatting to the man, he found that "Keiller" showed little inclination to discuss publishing.

"I never talk shop," he said, when the subject was broached. On the other hand, when Locke introduced a few remarks about India into a general conversation, and mentioned that dread scourge of the tropics, elephantiasis, "Keiller" began to reveal an excellent

knowledge of the subject, until he suddenly came to a halt.

But Locke was chiefly concerned in seeing the bath-room steward so that he himself in disguise took over the man's job one morning two days after the crime had been committed. But he was unlucky in finding "Keiller" swathed from head to foot in a bath-towel when he abruptly unlocked the door and entered the bath-room.

An obstacle race arranged for the saloon passengers gave him the opportunity he sought that same morning. Somewhat to his surprise "Keiller," who had become exceedingly cock-a-whoop, entered for the event.

About a dozen men started in the race, and Ferrers Locke, with a decided purpose in hand, kept in close attendance on the suspected man who ran in shirt-sleeves.

Amid roars of laughter and shouts of encouragement from their fellow-passengers who were lining the route round the decks, they dashed beneath the principal obstacle together. This was a large tarpaulin tied down to the deck. They were the first under the tarpaulin, but at least four others raced them, and were out first. There seemed to be some sort of a struggle going on beneath the great tarpaulin, and the onlookers shouted with merriment.

Suddenly the far end of the tarpaulin lifted, and "Keiller" staggered out. His shirt was in threads, and almost torn from his back. Ferrers Locke was in close attendance on him.

"How dare you, sir!" roared the infuriated runner, glaring at the detective. "How dare you attack me under the—"

He stopped abruptly as he became aware of the sleuth's eyes glued upon his

(Continued on the next page.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 248.

THE QUEST OF THE PURPLE SANDALS!

No. 5. THE CANADIAN MAIL-
BOAT MYSTERY!

(Continued from previous page.)

bare left arm. He spun round, but not in time to prevent Ferrers Locke from seeing the clearly branded sign of the poised serpent above his elbow.

Next instant Locke whipped out a pair of handcuffs and leaped on the man. Dr. Harvey Kruse—for there was no doubt that it was he—swung about face again, a small automatic pistol in his hand. Twice he fired, and the shots smacked just Locke's head against a

steel bulkhead. Screams from the women passengers and shouts from the men broke out simultaneously.

Before Kruse could fire again Jack Drake, who had been among the passengers standing near the tarpaulin, kicked the gun from the crook's hand. Within another five seconds the amazing scoundrel was on his back on the deck, a pair of darbies on his wrists, glaring hatred in the face of his captor, Ferrers Locke.

When Pycroft ambled up and found that Locke had caught Dr. Harvey Kruse, murderer of Professor Erskine and Adolph Keillor, his amazement knew no bounds. Forced to admit he had been on a wrong scent, he expressed his regret at not having had the pleasure of snapping the darbies on the scoundrel's wrists himself.

"Never mind, Pycroft," said Locke, "I hand the rogue over to you now. He's your prisoner, and you can have the credit for his arrest. Only the purple sandals interest me now."

And that very day the jubilant inspector, with blissful thoughts of promotion in his mind, sent a brief but eloquent wireless message to Superintendent Dexter at Scotland Yard:

"Have captured Kruse.—PYCROFT."

THE END.

(Did the super-crook, Kruse, reap the penalty for his sins, or did he miraculously escape the net of the law? That and the further thrilling adventures in "The Quest of the Purple Sandals" will be revealed in the next thrilling tale of this series entitled: "The Quest in Quebec!")

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