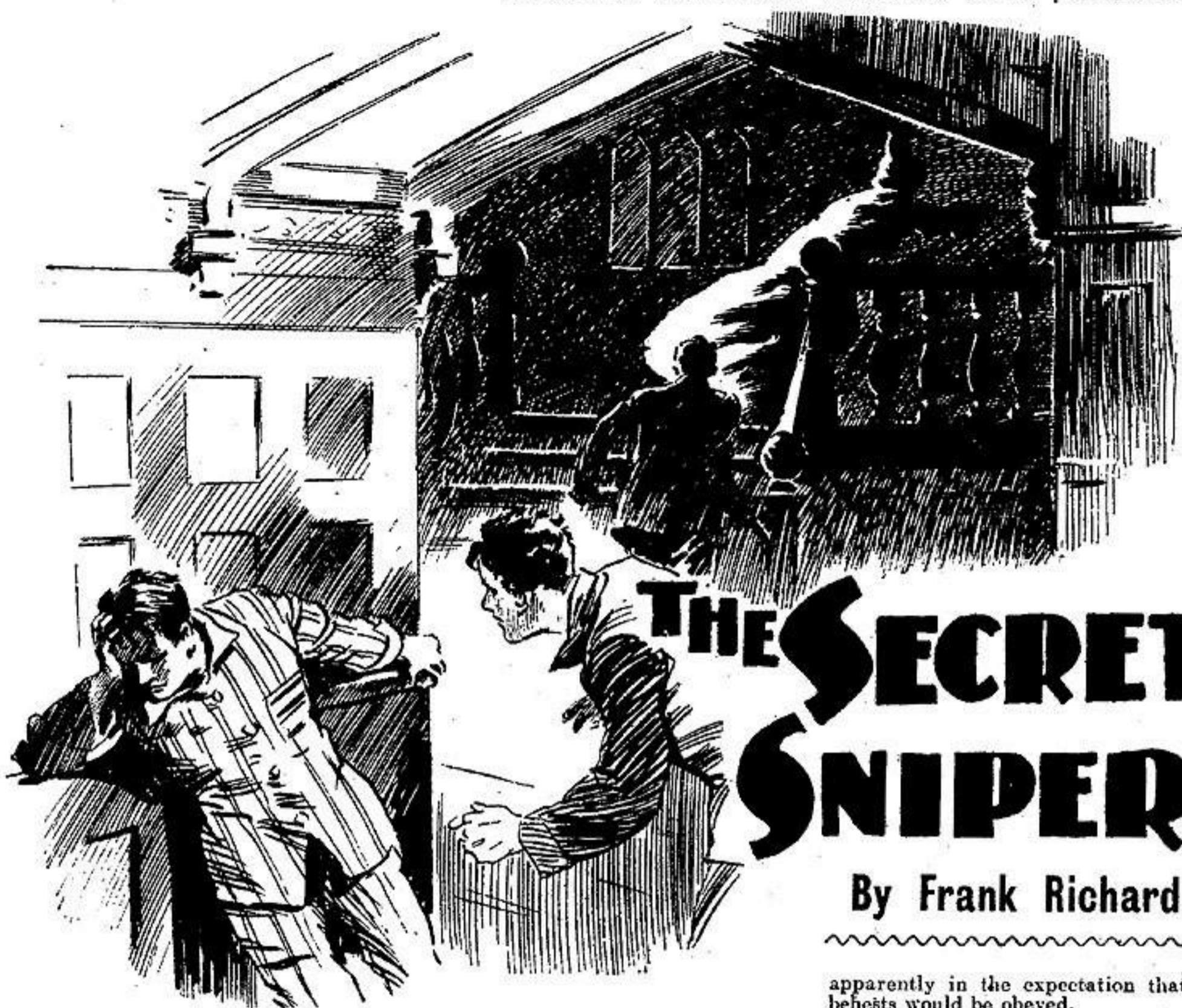


“THE SECRET SNIPER!” This week's superb story of Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars.

The MAGNET 2^o





THE SECRET SNIPER!

By Frank Richards.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

No Takers!

DON'T go!"
 "Fathead!"
 "Oh, really, Wharton—"
 "Ass!"

Billy Bunter, sitting in his favourite armchair before the fire in his room at Cavandale Abbey, turned his big spectacles on the Famous Five, with a frowning brow and a severe blink.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Rats!" said Johnny Bull.

"The ratfulness is terrific," chuckled Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"When I say don't go," said Bunter severely, "I mean don't go! What the thump do you want to go out for, anyhow? We've had a jolly good lunch—a tip-top lunch! I told you men that the grub would be good here, when I asked you to come and stay with me and my friend Lord Cavandale. I'll bet you never had such grub in your own humble homes! Well, now I've had a good lunch, I want a nap! Why can't you fellows sit down and take a rest? What do you always want to be hopping about for?"

"We've only had one lunch each," explained Bob Cherry. "If we'd had six, one after another, like you, old fat man, we might want to sleep it off like boa-constrictors. But—"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"We're going on the ice," said Harry Wharton. "The lake's frozen hard."

Buck up and come along with us, Bunter. It will do you good—much better than frowsting in front of a fire."

Snort, from Bunter.

Exertion on the ice, or anywhere else, did not appeal to William George Bunter just then.

At lunch, Bunter, as usual, had distinguished himself. With his usual disregard of the Plimsoll line, he had packed away the foodstuffs. There was no doubt that, as Bunter said, the grub at Cavandale Abbey was good. There was still less doubt that Bunter did it ample justice. Bunter had been just able to crawl to his room after lunch. Now he wanted to sleep!

"Make an effort, old fat bean," said Bob Cherry encouragingly. "Look here, we'll roll you downstairs, if you like, like a barrel—"

"Beast!"

"Come on, Bunter," said Frank Nugent. "You don't want to stay in alone."

"I'm jolly well not going to stay in alone!" hooted Bunter. "I asked you fellows here for Christmas, because I ain't safe here. I want my pals to stay with me. Sit down and be quiet! I'll come out presently—say in a couple of hours. Just sit down quietly till then."

"Look here—"

"And don't talk!" said Bunter. "I want to go to sleep! Just sit down and shut up."

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at Bunter. The Owl of the Remove settled himself comfortably in the armchair,

apparently in the expectation that his behests would be obeyed.

"You frabjous, fozzling, footling fat-head!" said Johnny Bull, in measured tones. "Do you think we're going to squat around and listen to your snoring? Nice way to spend an afternoon."

"The niceness would be terrific."

Bunter waved a fat hand.

"Don't talk!" he said. "How can a fellow get off to sleep with you chaps talking all the time? Just dry up and keep quiet. Don't go!"

"You fat idiot—"

"Oh, really, Wharton! Now, look here," said Bunter. "I don't want any jaw. If you fellows can't do as you're told, I shall have to rescind my generous invitation. We've had a ripping Christmas—house full of guests, everything tip-top, as you naturally expected when you came to stay with one of my titled friends. But there's the rest of the vac; and if you want to stay on, I can only say— Yarooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter roared as a cushion dropped from somewhere on his head. It seemed to interrupt the flow of his eloquence.

"Whoop! What beast chucked that cushion?" he roared. "Look here—"

"Good-bye, Bunter."

"I say, you fellows, you're not to go."

"Fathead!" answered Harry Wharton, from the door. "If you want company, you can go down. Ferrers Locke is in the hall—"

"Shan't!"

"Well, go and eat coke, then!"

"Look here, you cheeky rotter!" roared Bunter. "I've said what I mean, and I mean what I've said, and I repeat— Yarooooooh!"

It was a hassock this time that

dropped on Bunter. The voice of William George Bunter, like that of the turtle of old, was heard in the land. It was heard on its top note.

The Famous Five, heedless of the voice of the charmer, cleared out of the room and went down with their skates.

Somehow, the prospect of sitting round Bunter for a couple of hours and watching him snore did not seem to appeal to the chums of Greyfriars.

"Of all the cheeky rotters——" gasped Bunter, blinking at the doorway through his big spectacles. "I say, you fellows!"

But answer there came none. The Famous Five were gone.

"Beasts!"

Billy Bunter fairly snorted with indignation.

He was tired; no fellow could have packed away such a lunch without getting tired. He was sleepy; it came natural to Bunter to sleep after a meal if he had a chance. And those beasts, after all he had done for them, had basely deserted him. Bunter did not want to stay alone; above all, he did not want to sleep in solitary state. The mysterious happenings at Cavandale Abbey during Christmastide were fresh in Bunter's mind. He had specially asked the Famous Five to the abbey for Christmas in order that they might form a sort of bodyguard for him. And now they were going out skating on the lake in the park, just as if Bunter didn't matter. And he had only wanted them to sit down quietly for a couple of hours while he had an afternoon nap!

The Owl of the Remove rang the bell at last.

Harry Wharton & Co. were gone, and that was that! But Albert, Bunter's own special footman at Cavandale Abbey, was available.

Albert entered with his silent tread.

"You rang, sir?"

Bunter blinked at him.

"Yes, Frederick! By the way, is your name Frederick, or George?"

"Albert, sir."

"Oh, yes! I never can remember footmen's names," said Bunter. "We have such a crowd of them at home, at Bunter Court."

"Indeed, sir!" said Albert, with an unmoved face. Albert's opinion of Bunter was never stated in Bunter's presence. It was stated below stairs with considerable emphasis.

"Well, shut the door," said Bunter.

Albert shut the door.

"I'm going to sleep," explained Bunter. "You may sit down, Albert," he added condescendingly. "I want you to remain."

"Very good, sir."

"Of course, I'm not afraid of ghosts," said Bunter hastily. "I'm not thinking of the ghost of the abbot, William."

"No, sir."

"As a matter of fact, I don't believe that that ghost that I saw was a real ghost at all, but some beast playing tricks."

"Indeed, sir."

"And the fact is, I'd jolly well like to see him again, and jolly well punch him in the eye," said Bunter. "I'd teach him to play tricks on me! It's disrespectful, Albert."

"Yes, sir."

"Still, you may stay," said Bunter. "Keep quiet! Don't move! Just sit down and keep quiet while I snooze."

"Very good, sir."

Bunter arranged his cushions to his satisfaction, and reclined more or less gracefully in the big chair. He shut his eyes, opened his mouth, and slid into slumber.

Albert gazed at him.

Snore!

Bunter was not really a thing of beauty as he sprawled and snored. Neither was his snore precisely musical.

For ten minutes Albert remained motionless. Then he stirred.

"Sir!" said Albert.

Snore!

"Mr. Bunter, sir!"

Snore!

Billy Bunter was safe in the arms of Morpheus. Albert rose quietly to his feet, stepped quietly to the door, retired from the room, and quietly closed the door after him. Albert was a patient and long-suffering young man, but sitting out Bunter's nap was rather too much for him. Albert, like the Arab who folded his tent in the poem, stole silently away.

And the Owl of Greyfriars snored on, unconscious.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Under the Shadow!

LORD CAVANDALE and Ferrers Locke were standing before the crackling log fire in the great, oak-panelled hall of Cavandale Abbey when Harry Wharton & Co. came down. In the glow of the fire-light there was an odd resemblance between the two men as they stood there. Both were tall, lean, sinewy, supple. But the resemblance was only in figure. Locke's clear-cut, clean-shaven face was nothing like the peer's. Cavandale's face, once handsome, was

Famous Ghost Serves a Long Sentence in "Chokey"! Sensations and Revelations at Cavandale Abbey!

seamed with scars, left by a bursting shell in Flanders in the War days. And he wore a thick moustache and beard, which hid other scars from sight.

In spite of the scars that seamed both cheeks, it was a pleasant face, kindly in expression, full of genial good-nature. Lord Cavandale was liked by all his friends, liked by all the numerous household staff at the abbey, from the stately butler, Pilkington, to the youngest footman; popular on the Turf, where he was celebrated as the "sporting peer," owner of the wonderful horse, Maharajah. Harry Wharton & Co. liked him, and, in spite of Billy Bunter and his Bunterish ways, they were glad that they had come to the abbey for the Christmas holidays.

The peer gave the juniors a kindly smile as he observed them.

"Skating?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," answered Harry. "It's ripping on the lake!"

"Isn't Bunter going with you?"

"No; he wants a nap."

"The napfulness of the esteemed Bunter is frequent and terrific, honourable sahib," explained Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

Lord Cavandale smiled.

His glance followed the juniors as they went on their way.

"Splendid lads, Mr. Locke!" he remarked when they were gone. "Good specimens turned out by my old school."

"I agree with you," said Locke.

"I am glad to see them here," went on Lord Cavandale, "though in the strange circumstances I doubt whether it is wise for them to stay. I should

never forgive myself if anything happened——"

"They are not afraid, at all events," said the Baker Street detective, with a smile, "and so far as I am concerned, I am glad that they are here. Bunter, certainly, is neither useful nor ornamental, but the others——"

"Bunter has been very useful, Mr. Locke, though perhaps inadvertently. I cannot forget that he saved my life when I was attacked in the Lantham train, and several times since he has been here he has been quite a mascot."

"True!" assented Ferrers Locke.

Lord Cavandale dropped into a chair. Ferrers Locke remained standing, leaning on a corner of the mantelpiece. There was a thoughtful shade on the Baker Street detective's brow.

A less keen eye than Locke's would have observed the signs of troubled thought in Lord Cavandale's scarred face. The soldier-peer had a nerve of iron, but the mystery of Cavandale Abbey had told on him—the constant danger from an unknown source.

"Christmas is over," said Lord Cavandale after a pause. "I suppose while the house was crowded it was natural that I should have a respite from my unknown friend the enemy."

"Quite!" said Locke.

"But now," said the peer—"now that the only guests in the house are the Greyfriars schoolboys and yourself, I suppose I may look for a recurrence of the attempts on my life."

"I fear it."

"And so far?"

Locke knitted his brows.

"So far, Lord Cavandale, we have had one success at least. Captain Lankester, the traitor in the house, has been exposed, and you are now safe from the machinations of a false friend."

Cavandale's lip quivered.

"That was a heavy blow to me," he said. "I trusted the man. I never dreamed—— But—but I am glad you left his fate in my hands and he was allowed to go free. I understand that he has left England, and it is very unlikely that he will return."

"We are done with him at all events," said Ferrers Locke, "and the thug who was hired to attack you is in a prison cell awaiting trial. But——"

"But that is not the end?"

"I fear not."

"And yet," said Lord Cavandale, "it is difficult to believe that another desperate man is seeking my life."

"It may be difficult, but the facts admit of no dispute," said Ferrers Locke. "One of the attempts on your life was made in the picture gallery—a shot fired from some hidden recess. That shot could not have been fired by the man now in custody. All the circumstances disprove it; and Captain Lankester, who was in league with that dastard, assured us that he knew nothing of the picture gallery incident, and I am sure that he was telling the truth."

"Yet——" said the peer slowly.

"It is not, after all, surprising," said Locke. "I have told you why you are in danger. You are the owner of Maharajah, who is practically certain to win the Lantham Thousand when it is run next week. Immense sums were staked on Black Prince before Maharajah's form was known. Your trainer, Boone, guards the horse too carefully for anyone to get at him. The group of unscrupulous racing men, of whom Lankester was one, got at the owner instead of the horse. There are

others, that is all. Unknown to Lankester and his associates, another party was playing the same game."

"It would appear so," said Lord Cavandale, with reluctant assent.

"Whoever he is, he is a more dangerous man than the rascals we have already defeated," said Ferrers Locke.

"In what way?"

"He is closely acquainted with the interior of your residence. The shot in the picture gallery was fired from some secret recess which has never been discovered, which cannot be discovered without dismantling the whole place. Neither Lankester nor his associates had any such knowledge. It is a fortunate circumstance that your bed-room is in the more modern part of the building, out of reach of secret passages with which this ancient place seems to be honeycombed. But for that—"

The peer shivered slightly.

"We have to find a man," resumed the detective, "who is acquainted with the secrets of the abbey—secrets unknown to you, the proprietor. Obviously, it must be someone who has lived here and who made the discovery either by search or by chance. He may be a present resident in the house, or a past resident, using knowledge gained at some former time. Our clues to him are slight."

"I see none at all!" said the peer, with a faint smile.

"The fact that he is closely acquainted with Cavandale Abbey is to a certain extent a clue. It narrows down the field of search, though it leaves it, unfortunately, still very wide. And—"

"And?" repeated Lord Cavandale, as the Baker Street detective paused.

"There is the ghost of the Abbot of Cavandale, which has reappeared this Christmas after a very long retirement," said Locke.

"You do not think that was a school-boy's imagination?"

"I do not. Bunter might be frightened by a shadow; but Wharton is assured that one night the light in his room was turned out by an unknown hand, and Wharton is not a boy to be frightened. I have no doubt that some unknown person has been playing ghost."

"But why?"

"In the first place, to frighten away your guests. Bunter, fatuous as he is, saved you from the shot in the picture gallery, and he is exactly the fellow to be scared away by a ghost. The others, certainly, are not so easily frightened. But the unknown rascal may very probably count on making them glad to go. He does not want a crowd of schoolboys about the place, especially as schoolboys are naturally attracted by the idea of secret passages and likely to search for such interesting places."

"True!"

"Wharton and his friends have already made several such searches," said Locke, with a smile. "They have had no luck; but at any time chance might favour them, and a discovery of the villain's secret would make his task immensely more difficult. He, and he alone, as it appears, knows all the secrets of Cavandale Abbey. If the whole network of secret passages was laid bare, he could not use them again; he might even be run down and captured in the act of using them."

Lord Cavandale nodded.

"So you conclude that the ghost of the abbot is in reality the man who is seeking my life?"

"Provisionally, at least," said Ferrers Locke.

Locke. "He may have some other motive for playing ghost—I think it very probable; but at the present moment it escapes me. At all events, his knowledge of the hidden passages and recesses make it possible to him, and apparently to no one else."

"It is extraordinary that he should possess such knowledge," said Lord Cavandale. "The plan of the whole of the secret passages in the abbey was once in existence, but it has not been seen in my lifetime."

"It must be found!" said Ferrers Locke.

"I have asked Mr. Parker, my secretary, to make a very special search for it," said Lord Cavandale. "There are, as you know, masses of ancient documents and plans, deeds and all sorts of old legal papers, stored in the library. Mr. Parker has been engaged for weeks on examining them and cataloguing them." He smiled. "I should hardly have cared to ask him to undertake a task that seems to me dry and dreary; but Mr. Parker has natural tastes that way—a keen interest in archaeology and all ancient records. If the old plan of the abbey is still in existence, I have no doubt that Parker will find it sooner or later."

Ferrers Locke nodded.

"Once it is found, we have a better chance at the villain who seeks your life," he said.

"But," said the peer, "we must not lose sight of the possibility that it has already, in some way, fallen into the hands of the very man we want, and that from it he learned the secrets he is now taking advantage of."

"I have not forgotten that possibility," said Locke. "Indeed, I think it more than a possibility—a very strong probability."

"In that case, Parker's search among the ancient records will be futile."

"No doubt."

"Parker is a painstaking and industrious man," said Lord Cavandale. "I cannot help thinking that if the plan were still in existence here, he would have found it by this time."

"We must hope for the best," said Locke.

"In the meantime, I remain under the shadow of death," said the peer.

"Unless—"

"Unless what?"

"Unless you scratch Maharajah," said Locke. "If you withdraw your horse from the Lantham race, the attempts on your life will cease. You are marked out as a victim because the horse's engagements are automatically cancelled on the death of the owner. If he were withdrawn—"

Lord Cavandale coloured.

"You would not advise me, Mr. Locke, to make such a surrender to a skulking scoundrel?" he exclaimed.

"Not in the least."

"I could not honourably withdraw my horse, even if I were cowardly enough to yield to a miserable assassin. People who have backed him cannot be let down. Also, to scratch my horse from the race would mean that the assassin escapes. That, I think, must be avoided at all costs. My horse must run to defeat the scoundrel!"

"I do not advise scratching Maharajah, Lord Cavandale. But until the Lantham Thousand is run, you are in danger night and day; and—"

Ferrers Locke was interrupted.

There was a sudden yell in the distance.

"Yaroooh! Help! Help! Whoop! Help! Help! Help!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Narrow Escape!

"HELP!"

It was the voice of Billy Bunter.

Distant as his room was from the hall, his frenzied yell rang clearly to the ears of Lord Cavandale and Ferrers Locke.

"Help! Yarooogh! Help!"

Lord Cavandale leaped to his feet.

"That is Bunter!" he exclaimed.

Pilkingham appeared in the hall.

"My lord—"

Lord Cavandale ran to the stairs. Ferrers Locke was at his heels in a twinkling.

More slowly the portly Pilkingham followed.

"The ghost again, I suppose," said Lord Cavandale, as he ascended the stairs two at a time. "The foolish boy seems frightened out of his wits."

"Help!" Bunter was shrieking wildly. "Help! Keep off! Help!"

The peer and the detective ran along the oaken gallery above the hall, and up the second staircase that led to the corridor on which Billy Bunter's room opened.

They reached it swiftly.

Bunter's door was closed, but not locked as was usual when Bunter happened to be alone. On this occasion he had not been—so far as he knew—alone while he slumbered. Albert had naturally left the door unlocked when he softly departed. Lord Cavandale flung the door wide open and rushed into the room.

"Bunter!"

"Yaroooh! Help!"

"Calm yourself, Bunter!" exclaimed Ferrers Locke impatiently.

"Ow! He touched me—help!" yelled Bunter.

The fat junior was still in the arm-chair. He was sprawling in it in a state of terrified collapse, shrieking.

Lord Cavandale dropped a hand on his shoulder.

"Bunter, my boy—"

"Ow! Keep him off!"

"No one is here—nothing is here. Pull yourself together!" said Lord Cavandale. "What do you think you saw?"

"Ow!" Bunter shuddered with horror. "I—I saw him! He woke me up—touching me—finger cold as ice! Ow! Ow! I woke up and—and saw him! Oh dear!"

"What did you see?" asked Ferrers Locke quietly.

"Ow! The ghost!" groaned Bunter, quavering. "The abbot! Standing just there! Ow! I—I say, don't leave me! Those beasts went out and left me! Ow! I told Albert to stay—and he's gone! Ow! I won't stay here alone! I won't stay here at all! Oh crikey!"

"Calm yourself," said Ferrers Locke. "Whatever it was, it was gone when we arrived here. What was it like?"

"The—the abbot—cowl and robe—just like the print that Mr. Parker showed me in the library!" groaned Bunter. "Oh dear!"

The Owl of the Remove staggered out of the chair. He cast a terrified blink round him through his big spectacles.

Only Lord Cavandale and Ferrers Locke were in the room with him. The portly form of Pilkingham was in the doorway; behind him, Albert and several other footmen staring in. Billy Bunter recovered a little.

"I—I wasn't frightened, you know!" he gasped. "But—but—but—"

He blinked round uneasily.

Ferrers Locke was glancing round at the polished oak walls that glimmered

in the light of the log fire. Lord Cavandale touched his arm.

"Is it possible, Mr. Locke, that a secret passage exists behind those walls? That someone—"

"I suppose so," said Locke. "The boy has evidently seen something."

"A dream perhaps—a nightmare—"

"I tell you I saw him!" yelled Bunter. "He was standing just there—and he touched me! Ow!"

"Where did he go, Bunter?"

"I—I didn't see! I—I just yelled for help, and—and he glided away and—and vanished! Oh dear!"

"If this is true, Mr. Locke, the man cannot be far away!" breathed Lord Cavandale. "He may be watching us at this moment—"

Crack!
The report of a firearm filled the room with sudden din. There was a sharp cry from Lord Cavandale, and he staggered.

Ferrers Locke caught him as he fell. An exclamation broke from the Baker Street detective—a cry of rage! He had suspected that the hidden enemy had some other motive for playing

Crack! The report of a firearm filled the room with sudden din. The next moment there was a sharp cry from Lord Cavandale, and he staggered!

flooring near the main staircase proved Bunter's undoing. He slipped violently, skidded, and collided with a dignified suit of armour.

Crash!
Over went the pedestal figure, with Bunter's arms wrapped round it in a close embrace.

"Oh crikey! Yaroooooh!"

At the top of the stairs Bunter swayed dizzily, then the law of gravitation insisted that he should descend. With a series of bumps and wild howls both Bunter and the suit of armour clanged down the stairs.

A startled footman, hastening to the scene, almost collapsed at the strange sight. But Bunter wasted no time in explanation. He scrambled to his feet,

peer's coat and shirt, and examined the wound. He breathed more freely.

The bullet had gone close, but not close enough. It had torn its way along the shoulder, instead of penetrating. The wound bled profusely; but at a glance Locke saw that it was not dangerous.

"Thank Heaven!" he breathed.

He rapped out orders sharply, and lint and bandages were brought, and with skilled hands Locke bound up the wound.

"I can walk!" said Lord Cavandale quietly.

And Locke assisted him to his feet and helped him away to his room.

As he lay in his bandages, with a



ghost, as well as that of seeking to frighten the schoolboys away. And now he knew!

Bunter's terrified cries had brought Lord Cavandale to the room—under the fire of the wretch who was hidden from sight!

Locke grasped the falling man, and almost in the twinkling of an eye bore him out of the room, knocking aside the startled servants who stood clustered at the doorway. The hidden enemy had no time for a second shot.

"My lord!" stuttered Pilkington. "Ow! Help! Keep him off!" shrieked Bunter.

The fat junior rolled out of the room as fast as his little fat legs would carry him.

Bunter's one idea was to get away from the haunts of the mysterious assassin. In his blind haste the fat junior hardly heeded where he was going.

A particularly highly polished piece of

panting, bestowed a wrathful glare and a still more wrathful kick on the in-offensive suit of armour and tore out of the house.

Meantime, unaware of this comic interlude, Ferrers Locke laid the peer down in the corridor.

His first thought had been to take him out of reach of a second shot.

A trickle of crimson was oozing from Lord Cavandale's coat. He had been struck in the shoulder.

But he was still quite conscious. There was even a faint smile on his scarred face as he looked up at Ferrers Locke.

"A closer thing this time, Locke," he breathed.

Locke made no reply.

"Telephone for Lord Cavandale's doctor, Pilkington!" he said, over his shoulder.

The butler hurried away. Swiftly the detective tore open the

pale, set, but calm face, the peer smiled faintly at Ferrers Locke.

Harris, his valet, was in the room, and at a word from Locke a footman had posted himself in the adjoining dressing-room.

"You were right, Locke," said Lord Cavandale, in a low voice. "I have another enemy—as well as the one you ran to earth. The same game, I suppose—some scoundrel who will lose money if Maharajah runs in the Lantham race."

"Undoubtedly!"

"He came near success this time," said the peer. "Nearer than the time in the picture gallery! That shot came from one of the walls in Bunter's room, Locke; there is some secret recess—"

"That is certain; and it is the way the ghost appears and disappears," said Ferrers Locke. "When we find the ghost of Cavandale Abbey, we shall

find the villain who has attempted your life."

He compressed his lips.

"You are hurt, Cavandale; better rest quietly till the doctor comes—"

"I am not badly hurt," answered the peer calmly. "I shall be on my feet again to-morrow. Probably the sniper found it difficult to take accurate aim through some small orifice in a sliding panel, or whatever it was."

"Probably!" agreed Locke. "But your escape has been narrow, and fortunate. If you are on your feet to-morrow, as you expect, you must take care not to approach any spot where an alarm is given that the ghost is seen. That is the villain's game, Cavandale. He drew you under his fire by alarming Bunter in that room."

"I understand that," assented Lord Cavandale. "A cunning rascal. I did not think of anything of that kind."

"Neither did I," said Ferrers Locke, through his set lips. "But we are on our guard now, and you must not be caught again. I shall leave you when the doctor comes, and make a search; but I have little expectation of making a discovery."

"You have, of course, carte blanche," said the peer, "though I should be sorry to see damage done to the ancient oak of Cavandale."

"It would be useless, I think, to tear down the panelled walls," answered Locke. "Behind them is stone. I have already, since the appearance of the ghost, tested the walls in that room and the adjoining rooms, and in no spot is there a trace of a hollow behind the oak. My ear would not deceive me if there were a space behind a panel when I tapped it. There is solid stone, and some section of the stone, evidently, is movable at the will of the man who knows the secret. It will be closed now and fastened on the hidden side, and I doubt whether the entire stripping of the walls would tell us anything. That is not the way we shall find the dastard; it is not so simple as that. But here is the doctor."

And Ferrers Locke left Lord Cavandale's room, leaving the peer in the doctor's hands.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Does Not Matter!

"I SAY, you fellows!" Harry Wharton & Co. were gliding merrily on the frozen surface of the lake in Cavandale Park.

It was a bitterly cold day, with a hard frost; but they were feeling warm enough as they circled on the ice. Even Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh was not feeling the cold.

The juniors glanced round as they heard the voice of William George Bunter, bawling through the frosty air. But they did not otherwise heed.

They were enjoying skating on the frozen lake; and the society and conversation of W. G. Bunter were not so enjoyable—in fact, not enjoyable at all.

So, though they heard, they understudied the ancient gladiator, and heeded not.

"I say, you fellows!" yelled Bunter.

Still the Famous Five did not heed.

Billy Bunter stood on the margin of the lake, and glared at them with a glare that almost cracked his spectacles.

"Beasts!" he roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah! Rotters!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,194.

"I say, you fellows! Come here! I want you!"

Still the fellows did not come. If Bunter wanted them, it was obvious that the want was all on Bunter's side; they did not want him. They skated on merrily.

But Billy Bunter was not to be denied. He had scudded out of the house after the alarming incident in his room, scarcely stopping for hat and coat.

Bunter was in a state of alarm and funk. Ghosts were bad enough, but pistol-shots at close quarters were altogether too thick.

Billy Bunter had "planted" himself on Lord Cavandale for a Christmas holiday at his lordship's magnificent mansion in the most unscrupulous way, and he had been a pig in clover at that palatial establishment. He had felt extremely clever and satisfied with himself. Now he was feeling neither so clever nor so satisfied.

"Will you beasts come?" he roared. "I want you! Do you hear me? I'm telling you to come!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

MAKE
A
NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION
to send in a Greyfriars limerick.
If it's a good 'un, you're on a
FASHIONABLE
LEATHER POCKET WALLET!

One of this week's prize-winners is Robert Prescott, of 74, China Street, Everton, Liverpool, who has submitted the following effort:

Said Bunter one day, with great
glee:
"I'll bag Wharton's cake before
tea."
But Wharton got wise
And fixed a surprise
O'er the door for William George
B. I

Get busy on a Greyfriars
limerick to-day, chum!

"Lord Cavandale's been shot!" yelled Bunter.

"What?"

In an instant Harry Wharton & Co. were scudding towards Bunter.

Wharton had his skates off almost in a twinkling, and was grasping the Owl of the Remove by a fat shoulder.

"What's that?" he exclaimed.

"Oh, you couldn't come when I told you I wanted you," sneered Bunter; "but you can come when— Yaroooh! Leave off shaking me, you beast!"

Wharton shook him savagely.

"Is Lord Cavandale hurt?" he snapped.

"Ow! Leggo! Yes, he jolly well is!" spluttered Bunter. "He's jolly well been shot—"

"Not killed?" gasped Nugent, in horror.

"Well, not exactly killed—"

"You fat fool!" said Wharton, with a gasp of relief.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Tell us what's happened, you fozzling frump!" growled Johnny Bull.

"I came here to tell you, didn't I?" grunted Bunter. "I can tell you, I jolly well don't feel safe in the place—you fellows going out and deserting me, and that beast Albert sneaking off after I told him to stay—"

"Come on!" said Harry abruptly. "Let's get back to the house."

"I say—"

"Go and eat coke!"

Skates in hand, the Famous Five started at a run for the abbot. Billy Bunter rolled after them breathlessly.

"I say, you fellows," he gasped, "hold on! I say—"

But the chums of Greyfriars were too anxious to heed Bunter. They tore away as if they were on the cinder-path, and the Owl of the Remove was left hopelessly behind.

"Beasts!" gasped Bunter.

And he plugged on breathlessly in the rear.

It was a good distance to the house; but the juniors covered it in record time.

Pilkingham was in the hall when they came breathlessly in; and the portly butler's face was less impassive than usual. It was easy to see that the stately Pilkingham had had a shock.

"What's happened?" asked Wharton, panting.

Pilkingham explained.

"Thank goodness it's no worse!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Where's Mr. Locke, Pilkingham?"

"Mr. Locke is in the library, sir, with Mr. Parker."

"Oh! We'd better not interrupt him, I suppose," said Harry. "Let's go and have a look round Bunter's room, you men."

"Let's," agreed Frank Nugent.

The Famous Five went up to the handsome apartment assigned to Billy Bunter, in Cavandale Abbey. The early winter dusk was falling now, and Harry Wharton switched on the electric lights.

"It's getting pretty thick, you fellows," remarked Bob. "Not much doubt now that Bunter really saw a ghost, as he told us. It was the jolly old ghost that potted at Lord Cavandale."

"I was sure that there was some secret way of getting into this room," answered Harry. "One of those old oaken panels moves, I suppose. It's not uncommon in old places like this."

"We ought to be able to find it!" said Johnny Bull.

"I've tapped over every blessed panel in the room," said Wharton. "And so has Mr. Locke, I believe. Not one sounds hollow."

"The tapfulness has been terrific, but there was no esteemed hollowfulness," agreed Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"Well, let's have another jolly old search," said Bob.

And the Famous Five proceeded to search along the high, oaken walls of the room, tapping one panel after another. But no hollow sound rewarded them; so far as they could ascertain by hearing, the walls behind the oak were solid and unbroken.

"I say, you fellows—"

Billy Bunter rolled in. He was breathless, gasping, and evidently not in a good temper. The state of Bunter's temper, however, important as it was to Bunter, did not worry the Famous Five.

"Look here, you rotters," said Bunter, blinking wrathfully at the juniors. "I want to have this out."

"Oh, dry up!" said Johnny Bull.

"Shan't!" roared Bunter. "I asked you fellows here, and gave you a magnificent Christmas holiday—"

"Cheese it!"

"In the magnificent mansion of my titled friend!" pursued Bunter indignantly. "And what is my reward?"

"Fathead!"

"You desert me, and leave me to be

murdered in my bed—at least, in my armchair—”

“The man wasn't after you, fathead! He was after Lord Cavandale. Give us a rest!”

“The bullet might have hit me!” roared Bunter. “I expect my friends to rally round me when I give them a magnificent Christmas holiday. I expect them to stand by me. I expect—”

“The cheesefulness is the proper caper, my esteemed Bunter.”

“Well, I'm fed-up with this!” said Bunter. “A fellow isn't safe here. Not that I care for danger, of course. As you know, I'm as brave as a—”

“Rabbit?” asked Johnny Bull.

“Beast! As a lion! If you fellows had a tenth part of my pluck, whacked out among the lot of you, you'd do. Still, I'm fed-up! I'm jolly well not going to be shot at, I can tell you. Look here, Wharton—”

“Oh, dry up!”

“Your uncle and aunt were away over Christmas, looking after some silly sick relation or other,” said Bunter. “But I understand that they're back at Wharton Lodge now.”

“Yes; dry up!”

“Well, it will be rather a rotten change from my friend Cavandale's house to your humble home, Wharton; from the sublime to the ridiculous, and all that,” said Bunter. “Still, a fellow can have a nap in peace there. I've given you a splendid Christmas. There won't be much doing here now—so my idea is to clear out and go to Wharton Lodge.”

“Rats!”

“After all I've done for you, Wharton—”

“Idiot!”

“Look here!” roared Bunter. “You fellows are here on my invitation, see? Well, I withdraw it! Now then!”

Billy Bunter evidently expected that announcement to have a crushing effect. But the Famous Five did not seem crushed.

“Do you hear me, Wharton?”

“Yes, dummy!”

“Well, what have you got to say?”

“Shut up!”

“Wha-a-at?”

“Shut up!” snapped Wharton.

“Now we're here, we're staying till this matter is cleared up. Lord Cavandale has asked us; and Mr. Locke wants us here. That settles it; and you don't matter at all!”

“I don't matter?” gasped Bunter.

“Not the least little bit in the world!”

“The matterfulness of your esteemed and execrable self is terrifically infinitesimal, my idiotic Bunter!”

“Why, you—you—you—” gasped Bunter.

It seemed that William George Bunter was not, after all, so important as he had supposed. He blinked at the Famous Five in almost speechless indignation.

“Got it clear?” snapped Johnny Bull.

“We came here to protect you because you were in a funk. We're staying because we want to help to nail the scoundrel who's after Lord Cavandale. Now shut up!”

“Beast!” roared Bunter. “I can jolly well tell you—”

“If you're frightened, you can get out!” added Johnny. “Nobody wants you here that I know of. Get out, and be blowed to you!”

“Why, you—you—” gasped Bunter.

“Now shut up!”

“I—I—I say, you fellows—”

“Look out, Bunter,” said Bob Cherry gravely. “If that sniper is still on hand—”

“Eh?”

“He may take another pot-shot—”

“Wha-a-at?”

“And get you—”

“Yaroooooh!”

Billy Bunter made a wild leap for the door and vanished. And the Famous Five continued their search without further interruption from the fat and fatuous Owl of the Remove.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Help from Mr. Parker!

MR. PARKER was seated at a desk, in an alcove of the great library of Cavandale Abbey. On the desk before him was a heap of papers—many of them ancient parchments in black-letter.

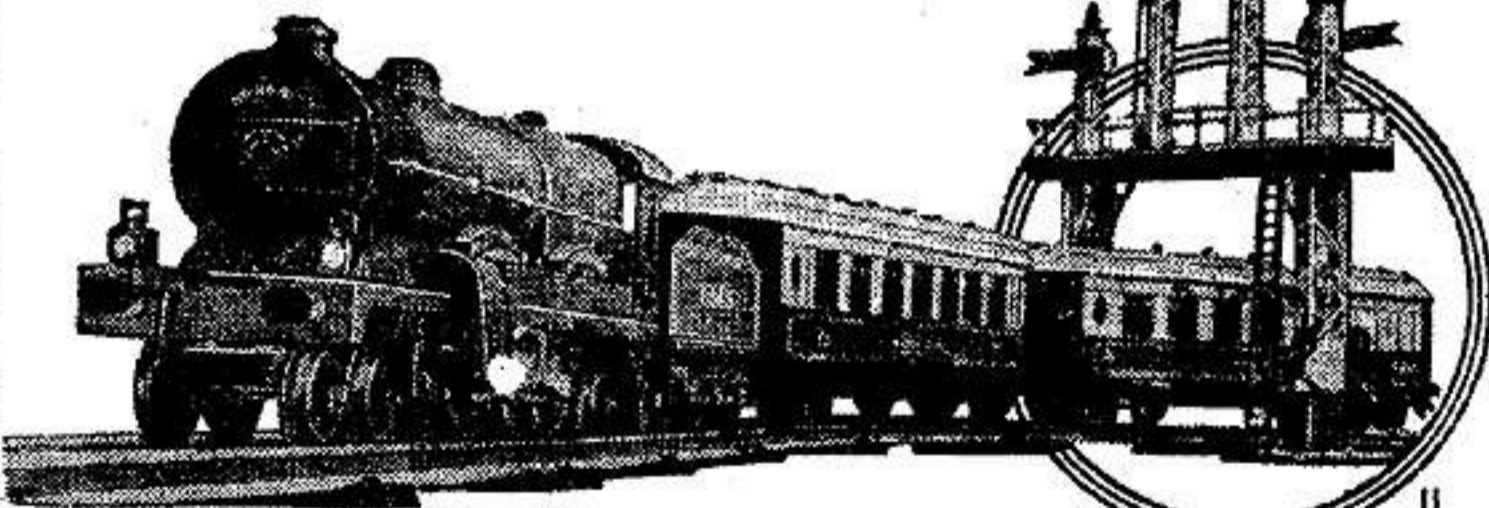
Lord Cavandale's secretary and librarian was busily occupied, in an occupation that had always seemed congenial to him.

That alcove in the library was Mr. Parker's own special domain; he had his own desk there, and his own reading-lamp, and there were heavy hangings that he could pull across the alcove when he liked, to shut it off from the rest of the library. He used it as a study, and he was frequently busy there, sorting over ancient documents, and working on the catalogue of the innumerable volumes in the bookshelves.

So far as Lord Cavandale or any other occupant of the abbey knew, Mr. Parker lived, and moved, and had his being in books and musty old documents. His work as the peer's secretary was light; but it was always well and meticulously done, while his work as librarian was at his own discretion, and he could have taken it as easily as he

(Continued on next page.)

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liked. But he seemed to like putting in plenty of time at a congenial task.

He seldom left the abbey more than once a week, when it was understood that he visited some elderly relatives who lived at a distance.

Apart from those weekly excursions, Mr. Parker took all his exercise in the grounds, generally walking no farther than the terrace; and often when he was walking on the terrace he had a book or some black-letter document in his hand.

In the servants' hall he was regarded with some respect as a man of great book knowledge, and with some derision as an absent-minded book-worm. So far as anyone had ever observed, he had absolutely no interests in life outside books and manuscripts.

He was busy at his table now, peering through his gold-rimmed glasses at an ancient sheepskin inscribed in monkish Latin, when Ferrers Locke entered the library. Mr. Parker glanced round with his watery eyes behind his rather large glasses.

He laid down the sheepskin and rose to his feet as the Baker Street detective came along to the alcove. The library was dusky, but in the alcove the reading-lamp glowed on Mr. Parker's desk.

"I am interrupting you, I fear," said Ferrers Locke, as he stepped into Mr. Parker's little domain.

The secretary smiled politely.

"Perhaps it is good for me to be interrupted, Mr. Locke," he answered. "I am somewhat given to forgetting time and space when I find myself among my papers. Please sit down."

Locke sat down. Mr. Parker resumed his seat, leaning an elbow on his desk and blinking at the Baker Street detective. He took off his glasses, wiped them, and replaced them on his rather bony nose.

"Tenth century Latin tries my eyes somewhat," he remarked. "One is apt to forget such things when deeply immersed in an interesting task. This is a wonderful place, Mr. Locke. There are records here from the foundation of the monastery of Cavandale in the reign of Edward the Confessor. Many of these old manuscripts are of inestimable value—I do not mean market value, of course, but from an antiquary's point of view."

He picked up the illuminated parchment he had laid down.

"This, for instance, is an account of a visit paid to Cavandale by Edward the Confessor himself," he said. "It tells us——" Mr. Parker broke off, with a smile. "But there I go again—forgetting that others are not as interested as myself in these matters. To you, with your busy life among wholly modern things, such lore as this must seem very musty and fusty."

"Not at all," answered Ferrers Locke. "I understand your interest in such things, Mr. Parker, and share it to a great extent. But I admit that at the present moment my thoughts are in the twentieth century, not the eleventh." He paused. "You are not aware that there has been another attempt on Lord Cavandale's life?"

Mr. Parker started.

"Is it possible?" he exclaimed.

Locke described briefly what had occurred in Bunter's room. The secretary listened with a distressed expression on his face.

"This is terrible, Mr. Locke!" he said. "I certainly thought—and hoped—that after the arrest of the man who attacked Lord Cavandale in his room, and the exposure of Captain Lankester, and the dreadful affair was at an end."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,194.

"It is clear that Lord Cavandale has another enemy—a still more determined and ruthless one," said Locke. "Captain Lankester was little more than a tool—a man desperately in debt, reckless, and unscrupulous, but quite incapable of lifting a hand against Cavandale's life himself. But the man we have to deal with now is a very different sort of character."

Mr. Parker nodded.

"I quite understand that," he said. "But I am convinced that, whoever he is, he has met his match in you, Mr. Locke." He smiled. "I am not so much of a bookworm that I have not heard of your fame, you know."

"I am afraid you flatter me," said Ferrers Locke gravely. "With Captain Lankester and his associates I was able to deal, but this man is more cunning and wary. I had hopes of assistance from you."

"Anything in my power would be gladly done, I need not say, sir. In what way can I help you?" Mr. Parker peered curiously at the Baker Street detective over his gold-rimmed glasses.

"You have heard, of course, of the appearances of the phantom abbot of Cavandale during Christmas."

Mr. Parker coughed.

"I have heard of them, of course," he said. "But I have attributed them rather to imagination——"

"I have not the slightest doubt that there were such appearances," said Ferrers Locke. "The object was to frighten the schoolboys away——"

"But who—why——"

"The man who has played ghost, Mr. Parker, is obviously the man who has attempted the life of Lord Cavandale."

"If you think so, Mr. Locke, I have no doubt that it is the case," said the secretary.

"He would prefer the schoolboys to be out of the place. But he had another motive—which has transpired to-day. Lord Cavandale was drawn upon the scene by the alarm of the ghost—as was, indeed, certain to happen sooner or later. That gave the villain his chance."

Mr. Parker nodded.

"Whoever the man is, he is thoroughly acquainted with the interior of this ancient building," said Ferrers Locke. "He knows secrets that are unknown to any other occupant of the house."

"It would appear so," said Mr. Parker. "For instance, the shot that was fired in the picture gallery more than a week ago——"

"Exactly! Now, Mr. Parker, there is only one way in which the scoundrel can have acquired such knowledge, in my opinion."

"And that?"

"By the discovery of the ancient plan of Cavandale Abbey, which existed somewhere among the accumulation of ancient documents here," said Ferrers Locke. "How this parchment came into the man's hands it is, of course, impossible to guess at present; but that, I think, is what has occurred."

"The same thought has occurred to me," confessed Mr. Parker; "for if the document is still in existence here it is very remarkable that my thorough search has failed to unearth it."

He pursed his lips thoughtfully.

"I have already suspected," he went on, "that the old parchment had been found and purloined by someone who is now making lawless use of it."

"If you have the remotest suspicion of his identity——" said Ferrers Locke.

Mr. Parker shook his head.

"That is where I am absolutely at a loss," he answered. "Lord Cavandale

has frequently allowed antiquaries and others to examine the documents in the library. Any one of them may have extracted a single paper."

"During your time as librarian——"

"Not during my time, I think," said Mr. Parker. "Although all the documents are not yet catalogued, I am a very careful man—very careful indeed. But I have been with his lordship only a few months."

"It is in this matter that you may be able to help me, Mr. Parker," said the Baker Street detective earnestly. "I may tell you that my belief is that the theft of this ancient plan is quite recent."

The secretary started a little.

"Indeed! Why?"

"Because until recently it possessed absolutely no interest or value to anyone outside this house," answered Locke. "It is useless now, except to the man who is seeking Lord Cavandale's life."

"That is certainly true," said the secretary slowly.

"It is only a few weeks since it became known that Lord Cavandale's horse, Maharajah, was a certainty for the Lantham Thousand," went on Ferrers Locke. "Until then no one in the kingdom had the remotest desire or reason to harm his lordship. No one could have anticipated anything of the kind. Until the beginning of December, in fact, that ancient plan of the secret passages in the abbey had no imaginable interest to the man who is now using it for his own dastardly purposes."

"Perfectly correct, Mr. Locke. Then you conclude that the plan has only been purloined since the beginning of December?"

"That seems certain to me."

Mr. Parker nodded and pursed his lips.

"The theft, therefore, must have taken place during your time here as librarian, if I am correct," said Ferrers Locke; "and I want you to search your memory, Mr. Parker, and give me a complete list of every person who has had access to the documents of Cavandale Abbey since December 1st."

"And among them——"

"Among them I may find my man."

"My dear Mr. Locke, I will lose no time in preparing the list you require. I have an excellent memory; and, moreover, I have a habit of making notes. The complete list of names will be quite easy to furnish."

Ferrers Locke rose.

"Thank you, Mr. Parker! I am giving you a good deal of trouble, I am afraid."

"That is nothing—less than nothing," answered Mr. Parker. "Anything I can do will be done with my whole heart. If I can help to preserve my kind employer from a miserable assassin I shall thank you for having given me the chance. Apart," he added, with a smile, "from the honour of acting, in some slight degree, as the assistant of so famous a detective as Ferrers Locke!"

Locke smiled, too.

"I was sure you would be willing to help Mr. Parker," he said. "Now I will interrupt you no further."

And Ferrers Locke left the library.

His face was very thoughtful as he went. There was a possibility, at least, of a clue in the list of names that the secretary had undertaken to furnish. That the plan of the secret passages at Cavandale Abbey had been abstracted seemed certain; that it had been abstracted recently seemed practically a certainty. The librarian was acquainted with every person who had had access to the Cavandale documents. There was



"You beasts!" roared Bunter. "Are you coming or not? Lord Cavandale's been shot!" "What?" Harry Wharton made an instant rush towards the fat Removeite.

no doubt that Mr. Parker could help if he liked.

After Ferrers Locke had left him the secretary sat down at his desk again; but he did not immediately resume his perusal of the sheepskin in dog-Latin. He remained buried in thought for a long time before he resumed his labours.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

In the Night!

"PILKINGHAM!"

"Sir!" said Pilkingham. The sedate and polished suavity of Pilkingham's manner did not desert him, even in dealing with William George Bunter. But there was a faintly tired note in Pilkingham's fruity voice. It was only by keeping a strict eye on the traditions of butlerhood that Pilkingham was able to treat William George with the respect due to a guest of Lord Cavandale.

Had it been possible, or even imaginable, for a butler to kick a guest of a peer of the realm, probably Pilkingham would have kicked Billy Bunter across the extensive hall of Cavandale Abbey.

But great as were the pomps and privileges of a nobleman's butler, joys of that sort were denied to him; and Bunter never knew how Pilkingham's toe twitched when he came into the office.

"Yes, sir, I await your instructions, sir," said Pilkingham.

"I'm changing my quarters," said Bunter, blinking at the butler through his big spectacles.

"Indeed, sir."

"See to it, Pilkingham!" added

Bunter, in his best "See to it, Tigelinus" tone.

"Very good, sir! I will order the car—"

"Eh?"

"If you will inform me, sir, of the train—"

Bunter stared at him.

"You silly chump!" he ejaculated.

"Sir!"

"I'm not going away, you fathead," said Bunter.

"Indeed, sir! I'm sorry—"

"What?"

"Sorry I seem to have misunderstood, sir; but as you remarked, sir, that you were changing your quarters—"

"Oh, don't be an ass, Pilkingham!" said Bunter. "I mean my quarters in the house. I'm fed-up with them. I'm not going to sleep another night in my old room. Find me a new room, Pilkingham, and see that my things are transferred. My friends' things, too! Don't forget."

"Very good, sir."

Pilkingham looked after Bunter as he rolled away expressively. If the phantom abbot of Cavandale was trying to frighten Bunter away there was no doubt that Pilkingham wished him luck.

Bunter's latest experience would probably have fed him up with Cavandale Abbey, magnificent as that palatial residence was, but for the fact that the alternative was the Bunter villa, alias Bunter Court.

Bunter was prepared to migrate to Wharton Lodge, or to Cherry Place, or to Nugent's or Johnny Bull's home, and he had suggested each in turn.

Greatly to his indignation, his suggestions had been passed over by the

Famous Five, like the idle wind which they regarded not.

There was no doubt that it was Bunter who, in the first place, had asked the chums of the Remove to Cavandale Abbey, and they had come to protect him from real or imaginary dangers. But now they were there, made warmly welcome by Lord Cavandale, they were staying with or without Bunter. To his immense indignation, Bunter did not matter.

The only alternative to Cavandale Abbey, therefore, being home, Bunter was sticking to Cavandale Abbey, in spite of ghosts and pistol-shots. Home, sweet home, had no strong appeal for him.

Hence his change of quarters. In the modern wing of the abbey there were none of the ancient rooms, none of the ancient oak-panelling and stone walls, and even Bunter's obtuse brain had realised by this time that the "ghost" was some trickster who must have entered his room by a secret way.

By that change of quarters the Owl of the Remove hoped to put "paid" to the activities of the phantom abbot.

That night, therefore, Harry Wharton & Co. found themselves in new quarters, opening on the same wide corridor in which Lord Cavandale's own private apartments were situated.

There were six beds in a long, lofty room, for Bunter still insisted on the company of the Famous Five by night. He felt safer thus, and as Bunter was the only fellow that really mattered, that was all right.

"Lot of rot!" growled Johnny Bull, as he kicked his boots off. "We ought to have stuck to our old quarters and

bagged that sportsman who's playing ghost, next time he came."

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"You fat funky fathead!" grunted Johnny.

"If you think I've changed my quarters because I'm afraid of the ghost, Bull—"

"Well, what have you changed them for, then?"

"You see, I wanted to be nearer my friend, Lord Cavandale, to protect him," explained Bunter.

"Oh, my hat!"

"My titled friend being in danger, naturally I want to be near him," said Bunter with dignity. "If you fellows are afraid—"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Not that there's anything for you to be afraid of," added Bunter. "I'm here to protect you. If you wake up frightened in the night, remember that."

"The rememberfulness will be terrific," chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. Shut up and let a fellow go to sleep."

Billy Bunter had placed his ample circumference outside an enormous supper, and he was ready for slumber. His Gargantuan snore was soon awakening the echoes of his new quarters.

The others fellows dropped off to sleep one by one. But Harry Wharton lay wakeful. He was thinking of the startling events of the afternoon—and of the peer who lay in his room farther along the corridor, bandaged, probably sleepless, wounded, and still in the shadow of incessant danger.

Ferrers Locke, he knew, had taken up his quarters in Lord Cavandale's dressing-room, and Harris was watching

by the peer's bedside. It did not seem likely that danger could threaten the owner of Maharajah, so well watched and guarded.

Yet it was certain that the secret enemy might be at work. Whether he was an occupant of the house or not, it was certain that he had easy access to the place, and could enter and leave as he liked. In Wharton's mind there was a picture of the unknown enemy, stealing through the silence by dark corridors.

He turned again and again, but could not sleep. There was a faint sound of the winter wind wailing among ancient chimneys; otherwise the night was very still.

The light was burning in the room; Bunter had made it a rule that the light should burn all night. By Ferrers Locke's order the light had been left burning in the corridor outside.

Wharton closed his eyes and opened them again, and at last turned out of bed.

He looked at his watch. It was one o'clock. He opened the door, and looked out into the corridor. Half a dozen shaded electric lights were burning there, and he could see the whole length of the corridor, from the oak gallery over the hall, to the tall window at the other end. He fully expected to find the corridor vacant; it was only to banish the uneasiness in his mind that he was looking out of his room. But as he glanced up the corridor, he gave a sudden start, and his heart thumped violently.

At a distance, motionless outside a door a dozen yards away, was a strange, silent figure.

Wharton's startled eyes fixed on it. The dark, flowing robe, the cowl that

hid the head and face, told him what it was.

Wharton stood rooted to the floor, staring along the corridor, at the phantom abbot of Cavandale.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

At Close Quarters!

HARRY WHARTON did not stir. For some moments he almost doubted the evidence of his eyes, and wondered whether it was not his disturbed, uneasy fancy that had conjured up that strange figure.

His teeth came hard together. It was no fancy. A dozen yards away from him, clear in the light, stood the ghostly figure that had terrified Billy Bunter that day.

A creeping thrill ran through Wharton's veins.

Strange, eerie, unearthly, looked the ghostly figure of the phantom abbot. It stood motionless, by one of the doors.

Wharton watched. The door by which the figure stood was that of Lord Cavandale's bed-room. That door, Wharton knew, must be locked.

The figure was still, the head slightly bent, in a listening attitude. With thumping heart, Wharton watched.

The figure suddenly stirred.

It approached closer to the door, and bent. From under the flowing robe, a hand groped over the lock of the door.

No sound came to Wharton's ears. But he knew what was happening. He knew that the door would open under that cunning hand; and then—

Harris, the valet, was at Lord Cavandale's bedside. Ferrers Locke was in the dressing-room adjoining. But neither could save the sleeping peer from a sudden, ruthless bullet.

As if he could read the thoughts of the man in the abbot's robe, Harry Wharton knew what was intended.

Who the man was, what he was like, it was impossible even to guess. The robe and cowl were a complete disguise. But Harry Wharton knew that he was looking at Lord Cavandale's secret enemy. He knew that there was no time to lose; and he knew, too, the terrible danger of intervening. But he did not stop to think of that.

He stepped out of the doorway, and raced up the corridor. His bare feet made little or no sound; and he was close on the ghostly figure before the man in the abbot's robe looked suddenly swiftly round.

The ghostly figure started violently, and spun round towards the Greyfriars junior.

"You scoundrel!" panted Wharton. "Help! Help!"

His shout rang along the corridor. From the slits in the cowl gleaming eyes burned at him, for a second; then a hand flashed up, with a revolver in it, from under the robe. But the trigger was not pulled.

The ghostly form leaped at the junior, and Wharton, for a second, clutched at the sweeping robe. Then the barrel of the revolver struck his head, and he reeled and fell.

The dressing-room door was flung open, and Ferrers Locke leaped out into the corridor.

There was an automatic in the hand of the Baker Street detective.

"Wharton!" he panted, in amazement.

Wharton, half-stunned, sprawled on the floor. But he raised himself on an elbow and pointed.

(Continued on page 12.)



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I TAKE it for granted that you have made your resolutions for the New Year. I have made mine. Some of them are secret resolutions, but there is one which I can tell you about. I made up my mind to start with a new page so far as my correspondence is concerned: to rub off all arrears.

As I have been getting a bit behind-hand with my "answers to correspondents," I am going to work off several this week, replying to lads who have written to me upon points concerning football which I think will be of general interest.

First of all there is Jack Lee, who has been studying the League tables and is a bit worried as to how the positions are determined when two clubs have the same number of points. The first answer is on goal-average, of course, but Jack wants to know how this goal-average is worked out.

He sends me two actual cases which, on the face of them at any rate, are the same. He cites the goal records of two clubs in the Southern Third Division. One has scored 34 goals and had 33 goals scored against them. The other team have scored 40 goals and had 39 scored against them. In each case, as you will notice, there is a difference of one goal only in the for-and-against column.

This, however, does not mean that their goal-average is the same. It isn't. If you will adopt the method by which these things are worked out—

that is, divide the goals scored by the goals against, you will see that the team scoring 34 and having 33 against has a better average than the one having scored 40 goals and had 39 scored against them.

The difference as I work it out, and I hope my arithmetic is good—is 1.03 in the first case, and 1.02 in the second instance.

Now you know how to find out which team has a better goal-average when the figures suggest that they are the same.

AT this mid-season period, of course, goal-average doesn't matter a great deal, but it often does matter when the final reckoning comes at the end of the season. I recall a very important case of a few years back which directly concerned Portsmouth—a team surprisingly successful this season—and Manchester City.

These sides were fighting a neck-and-neck race for promotion from the Second Division. When the last match had been played they had an equal number of points, and their goal-average was very similar, too. When the two averages had been properly worked out, however, it was discovered that Portsmouth had 1/200th part of a goal the better average.

The figures were so close that at least one big newspaper, having worked it out, but also having made a mistake in arithmetic somewhere, announced that Manchester City and not Portsmouth had gained promotion to the First Division. Apart from the interest in the way these things are worked out, there is a moral in this goal-average business, too, for the players of all teams. The moral is

to go on trying for every possible goal even though a match is well won, and alternatively, not to give away "cheap" goals when on the face of it a goal against won't affect the issue.

Clubs out for promotion, or struggling to avoid relegation, may find one goal all important at the end of the term.

AKINGSBURY (London) reader, who signs himself "Jim," has a "throw-in" query. He says that in a recent match he saw a player penalised for a "throw-in" because the player raised his heels when he was throwing the ball. Isn't a player throwing allowed to do this? The answer is that the player throwing the ball is allowed to raise his heels, and I think it possible that there may have been some other infringement which caused the referee to give a free kick for a foul throw in the match which "Jim" was watching.

In an official explanation issued to referees of the "throw-in" rule, these words appear:

"It is an improper throw if thrower had not some part of both feet on the ground outside the touchline at the moment of throwing."

I have underlined the words which matter in connection with the situation of the feet, and those words clearly show that the player throwing the ball may, if he so pleases, raise his heels so long as he keeps a part of both feet "attached" to the ground.

There is also a query which reaches me as to whether I think it is fair for a referee to be "booed" during a match because of the way he controls it or because of certain decisions. Of course, it isn't fair, this booing and barracking of the referee. He is doing his best with a difficult job, and, moreover, the booing is often unfair because the referee, from his position in the middle of the field, may frequently see things which the watchers cannot see.

I am afraid, however, that this criticism of the referee will go on so long as human nature remains what it is. Many of the watchers of football are partisans. They want to see their favourite team win, and with this feeling getting the better of them they do not always view incidents impartially. If you are watching a match between your own school and another school you cheer a bit louder when your own pals do something good than when the other fellows do the same thing, don't you? And that, strictly speaking, is not fair. But it is very natural.

NOW for an answer to a letter on how to improve at the game; and I trust this answer, though it is specially meant for F. C., of Newport, Mon., will be a help to others. This young reader, concerning whose football exploits I am very much interested in, is worried because he has a feeling that he is too slow to get the maximum result from his football skill.

"I am not a fast runner," writes my friend, "so will you please tell me how I can work up speed."

Actually there is much misconception over the value of speed in football. Actually, I don't believe it matters a great deal as to the length of time in which a footballer—a forward particularly—can do a hundred yards. What really matters is the length of time a footballer takes over the first ten yards or so of his run; that is, how quickly he gets off the mark.

For an inside forward—and it is in this position that my correspondent plays—the quick burst is very important, for a sudden jump to top speed will enable the player to slip past the defenders before they can get across to stop him. So the thing to practise is not long-distance running, but quick starting. As a part of your training I should certainly advise sprints of a few yards length. The long runs round the track are not done with a view to increasing pace at all, but with a view to getting the wind right.

SHORT sprints, with concentration on starting, are the things which affect the speed much more. As a typical instance to illustrate this point I should take Jimmy Seed, the captain and inside-right of Sheffield Wednesday. There are scores of footballers—indeed, the vast majority—who could give Seed a few yards and beat him before he had done a hundred. On the other hand Seed can beat the majority of them in the first six yards. He is quick off the mark, and I repeat that this is what tells.

Short Answer to G. W., of Canning Town. Portsmouth beat West Ham 3—2 at Portsmouth in the F.A. Cup Sixth Round of 1928-9. Arsenal beat West Ham 3—0 at West Ham in the F.A. Cup Sixth Round of 1929-30.

"OLD REF."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,194.

THE SECRET SNIPER!

(Continued from page 10.)

In the distance, fleeing swiftly, almost at the oak gallery, the Baker Street detective's eyes picked up the ghostly figure, in full flight.

Crack!

The automatic barked sharply.

But at the same moment, the fleeing figure vanished round the end of the corridor into the gallery over the hall.

Ferrers Locke rushed in swift pursuit.

Harry Wharton staggered to his feet. His head was reeling, and he leaned on the wall and gasped, his hand to his forehead. There was a bruise on his head, and the blood was running down under his hair.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

Bob Cherry, in his pyjamas, ran out into the corridor. The crack of the automatic had awakened the Greyfriars fellows.

"What the thump——"

"Wharton——"

"My esteemed chum——"

In a moment the four juniors had joined the captain of the Remove. From Lord Cavandale's doorway, Harris' startled face looked out.

"What on earth——" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"You're hurt——"

"It—it's nothing!" gasped Wharton.

"He was here——"

"He! Who?"

"The abbot—the ghost—I mean the rotter who plays ghost, at Lord Cavandale's door. I spotted him. Locke's followed him. Come on!" panted Wharton.

He ran down the corridor. His comrades followed at his heels. As they passed the open doorway of their own room, there was a terrified squeal from within.

"I say, you fellows——"

They rushed on unheeding.

"Yarook! Help! I say, you fellows! Oh crikey!"

The juniors reached the oak gallery over the hall. Ferrers Locke was there—alone!

"He's gone, sir!" panted Wharton.

The Baker Street detective gritted his teeth.

"He is gone!" he answered quietly.

"He must be in the house!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Possibly; but he will not be found," said Ferrers Locke. He stared along the wall of the gallery, panelled in ancient oak blackened by age. His face was set, and his eyes gleaming. "The gallery was empty when I reached it, but he had not had time to get away by the stairs—there is a secret way, unknown to us——"

Locke compressed his lips.

"Come with me," he said.

He hurried up the corridor to Lord Cavandale's room. Harry Wharton & Co. followed him.

Lord Cavandale was sitting up in bed. His pale face was calm; and he glanced inquiringly at the Baker Street detective.

"He has been here?" asked the peer quietly.

Ferrers Locke nodded.

"Tell us what happened, Wharton, when you gave the alarm," he said.

Harry Wharton told briefly what he had seen. The Baker Street detective bent over the lock of the door, and examined it with intent eyes. He gave a nod as he rose again.

"Wharton interrupted the scoundrel," he said. "But for that, the lock would have been picked. And then——"

"Then a shot from the corridor!" said Lord Cavandale quietly. "By

gad! The man means business!" He gave the captain of the Remove a faint smile. "Thank you, Wharton!"

"You saw nothing of the man, Wharton, except——"

"Only his disguise, sir," answered Harry. "He looked exactly like the old abbot of Cavandale, in the picture in the library. I haven't the faintest idea what he looked like under the cowl."

Ferrers Locke nodded.

"We have to deal with a cunning scoundrel," he said. "He could not have adopted a more complete disguise. Go back to your room, my boy—you must attend at once to that bruise on your head."

The Famous Five returned to their room. Billy Bunter was not in sight when they entered.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Where's that fat bouncer?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, staring at Bunter's empty bed.

"Ow!"

"What the thump——"

"Oh dear! I—I say, you fellows, is—is—is it you?"

"Where the dickens——"

"Oh, my hat!"

A fat face and a large pair of spectacles were pushed out from under Bunter's bed. Evidently the fat junior had taken refuge there when the other fellows rushed in pursuit of the phantom abbot. Bunter blinked up at them with a terrified blink.

"You fat chump!" roared Johnny Bull. "Roll out, you footling funk! He's gone. There's no danger, you fat-head!"

"I—I say, you fellows," bashed Bunter, "you're s-s-sure he's g-g-gone?"

"Yes, you howling ass!"

"Oh dear!"

Billy Bunter crawled out from under the bed.

"I—I say, you fellows, shut the door. Lock it! I—I say, was it the gig-gig-ghost? I say, what are you bathing your napper for, Wharton?"

"The gig-gig-ghost gave me a rap on it," answered Harry.

"Well, why didn't you call me?" asked Bunter, feeling better now that he was in company once more, with the door safely locked. "Mean to say you let him get away?"

"Cheese it!"

"Well, I think you might have col-lared him," said Bunter. "If you'd called me, I shouldn't have let the beast get away. I'd have bagged him."

"Were you looking for him under the bed?" asked Johnny Bull sarcastically.

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter rolled into bed again.

"Don't you fellows make a row," he said. "I want to go to sleep. Don't make a lot of fuss about a crack on the napper, Wharton. It's really nothing, you know. I shouldn't make a fuss!"

"You fat idiot!"

"Yah!"

Billy Bunter laid his bullet head on the pillow and closed his eyes. There was little sleep for the other fellows during the remainder of the night, but they had the pleasure—or otherwise—of hearing the unending melody of the snore of William George Bunter.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

No Surrender!

FERRERS LOCKE stepped into the car in the clear, frosty morning, gave a nod to the Greyfriars juniors grouped on the terrace, and shot away down the avenue. Harry Wharton & Co. watched him disappear, wondering a little.

Lord Cavandale was keeping his bed that day, by doctor's orders. His wound was not dangerous, but it required care. Harris was with him, and a police constable from Ashwood was on duty in the corridor, to remain there till Locke returned. It seemed, therefore, that the peer would be secure enough. Yet the juniors were a little surprised to see Ferrers Locke go out in the car.

Of the man who had lurked at Lord Cavandale's door the previous night, his identity hidden under the garb of the Abbot of Cavandale, no trace had been discovered. He had vanished from sight and knowledge as if he had been, indeed, a spectre from another world. Somewhere, in the great oak gallery that surrounded the old hall on three sides, there was a secret opening in the panelled walls, and by that secret way the unknown villain had disappeared when Ferrers Locke, automatic in hand, was almost at his heels. And that morning Harry Wharton & Co. rambled about the old oak gallery, examining the walls, tapping the panels, searching for the secret they knew must be there, but searching in vain.

Mr. Parker came along while the Famous Five were at their task, and he paused on the landing to glance at them with a blink of his watery eyes through his gold-rimmed glasses. Bob Cherry was tapping at an oaken panel with a rather emphatic tap that sounded a good deal like a pistol shot. But there was no hollow ring to reward him. Solid stone was behind the ancient oak.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Parker.

"What ever are you boys doing?"

The juniors glanced round.

"Looking for the jolly old secret passage, Mr. Parker," answered Bob. "We don't seem to be having a lot of luck."

"The esteemed luckfulness is far from terrific," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur ruefully.

Mr. Parker smiled faintly.

"There's an opening somewhere," said Harry; "that's a certainty; and there's another in Bunter's old room, and another in the picture gallery. We know of these three for certain, and there may be a lot more. I wish you could find that old plan of the abbey, Mr. Parker."

"I am afraid there is no longer any doubt that it has been abstracted," said the secretary. "That is Mr. Locke's opinion, and I agree with him."

"You mean that scoundrel who knows all about the secret passages must have bagged the plan some time ago?"

"Mr. Locke thinks so," answered Mr. Parker. "It seems to admit of no doubt. I am afraid that no discovery is likely to be made by chance. Probably there is a moving stone behind the moving panel, and once it is replaced by the man who knows the secret, it is as solid as the rest of the wall."

"Looks like it," agreed Wharton. "Still, the rotter was scooting in a hurry last night, and he might have left it unfastened."

Mr. Parker laughed.

"Not likely, I admit," added Harry. "Still, we may be lucky and spot something."

"There is a certain element of risk," said the secretary. "If you should by some strange chance find the secret, you might find the unknown scoundrel in the secret passage when you entered it."

"That's what we jolly well want," said Bob Cherry.

"You must remember that he is an

armed and desperate man, and would think little of firing on you," said Mr. Parker. "His conduct shows that he is not a man to be trifled with."

"We'll chance that if we can get at him," said Johnny Bull.

"Anyhow, he's not likely to be on the spot now," said Frank Nugent. "He's got some way of getting into the house. But after what happened last night, I fancy he would clear right off for a time."

"I don't see that," said Johnny Bull, shaking his head. "I don't believe that he comes from outside the house."

Mr. Parker glanced at him.

"That is a curious suggestion, Master Bull," he said. "It appears to me quite clear that there is some secret entrance to the house by way of the unknown passages, and that the villain uses it."

"That's what it looks like," said Nugent.

Johnny Bull shook his head again.

"I jolly well believe he's in the house all the time," he answered. "The man belongs to the household, though goodness knows who he is."

"I can hardly imagine so," said Mr. Parker, with a smile. "There is no one employed in the house who is not devoted to Lord Cavandale."

"All the same, that's my belief," said Johnny Bull. "If the man came from outside he'd have been spotted before this, with the police patrolling the grounds, all the keepers on the alert. If he only came by night, it would be different; but he has shown up in the daylight several times. There may be a secret way in and out of the house, but he couldn't use it in the daylight over and over again without being spotted. I'll bet it turns out that he's in the house all the time when Mr. Locke gets him."

Mr. Parker smiled, and went on his way to Lord Cavandale's room. The juniors resumed tapping and searching along the panelled wall.

The secretary tapped at the peer's door and entered. Lord Cavandale was sitting up in bed reading a newspaper, and Harris was in the room. He gave the secretary a kind smile.

"I hope you feel better this morning, my lord?" said Mr. Parker.

"Thank you, Parker, quite as well as can be expected," said Lord Cavandale, "but not quite equal to dealing with business matters."

"I was not thinking of troubling your lordship with business matters," said Mr. Parker. "To-day is Wednesday, my lord."

"Quite so. Your little holiday," said the peer, with a smile. "I am glad you have a very fine day, Parker."

"I should be very glad to give up my little holiday, my lord, if I could be of any use to you," said Mr. Parker. "The fact is, I feel some uneasiness in going away even for a day in the present circumstances."

"Not at all, my dear fellow," said Lord Cavandale. "I am well guarded,



As Wharton clutched at the ghostly figure the barrel of a revolver flashed in the air and descended on his head!

and there is no occasion for uneasiness, though I assure you that I fully appreciate your solicitude."

"Then I will go as usual, my lord," said the secretary. "May I beg to have a few words with your lordship before I leave?"

"Certainly!" Lord Cavandale made a sign to the valet, who retired to the window out of hearing.

"Sit down, Parker. What is it?" "According to the theory formed by Mr. Locke, my lord, these dastardly attacks upon you are due to some person who stands to lose money if Maharajah runs in the Lantham Race next week."

"There is little doubt of it," said Lord Cavandale. "It certainly did not occur to me; but now that Mr. Locke has pointed it out, I have no doubt on the subject. The dastard must have a motive, and that is the only imaginable motive any man can have for desiring to destroy me."

"I am also of Mr. Locke's opinion," said the secretary. He coughed. "Lord Cavandale, if I appear to be taking a liberty in what I am about to say, will you please attribute it to my devotion to a very kind and considerate employer, and excuse me?"

"Say anything you like, Parker,"

answered Lord Cavandale, looking at the secretary in some surprise.

"So far, sir, you have escaped the attempts of this unknown dastard," said Mr. Parker. "But you have had narrow escapes—"

"That is certainly true." "Yet the danger, which haunts you night and day, my lord, would disappear at once if—"

"If what, Parker?" asked Lord Cavandale, frowning slightly.

"If Maharajah were scratched for the Lantham Race, sir."

"Parker!" "I am aware, my lord, that it is not my place to venture to offer counsel," said Mr. Parker, "but I do not share your lordship's courage and iron nerve, and what you refuse to fear for yourself, those who wish you well, my lord, fear for you."

Lord Cavandale smiled. "I am sure you mean well, Parker," he said. "But such a resource for escaping the attentions of my friend the enemy is quite impossible."

"After all, my lord, Maharajah has a long career before him, and a single race can matter little—"

"Many of my friends have backed Maharajah, Parker, and I could hardly

(Continued on page 16.)



(Continued from page 13.)

let them down, if I desired. But you do not seem to realise that if I scratched my horse for the Lantham Thousand, I should be yielding to a scoundrel—surrendering to a base rascal! If his pistol were at my head at this moment, Parker, I should refuse to do anything of the kind."

The watery eyes behind the gold-rimmed glasses scanned the scarred face of the peer. There was no doubting the determination in that face.

Mr. Parker rose.

"You will forgive me, my lord, for having made the suggestion. My uneasiness on your account—"

"Oh, quite!" said Lord Cavandale. "But say no more about it. Such a thing is not to be thought of."

And the secretary took his leave.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Shadow of a Clue!

THE car jolted over the ruts of the narrow lane, powdered with snow. Ferrers Locke drove swiftly, but with his usual care. It was an hour since the Baker Street detective had left Cavandale Abbey; but the narrow lane into which the car had now turned was scarcely more than a mile from Lord Cavandale's residence. Locke had covered many a long mile by a roundabout route, and was approaching his destination from the other side.

If watching eyes had been on him when he left the abbey they were on him no longer—the car had not been followed. He drove up the narrow lane, through an open gateway, into a yard beside a small cottage, and jumped out. Leaving the car in the yard, the Baker Street detective walked quickly round the cottage, and entered by the back door.

"Mr. Locke!"

"Well, Drake?"

Jack Drake, the famous detective's boy assistant, rose from a chair before the fire as Locke entered. Locke shook hands with him, his eyes on Drake's face.

"Nothing, sir!" said Drake, in a tone of discouragement.

Locke sat down.

"I need not ask if you have carried out my instructions," he said.

"To the very letter, sir!" said Drake. "There are six of the keenest pairs of eyes in London on the watch round Cavandale Abbey—without counting my own," he added, with a smile.

"Which are the keenest of all," said Ferrers Locke.

"Ever since the watch was taken up no one has left Cavandale Abbey without being shadowed," said Drake. "In every case but one the shadowing has been completely successful, the person

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,194.

concerned traced to his destination, and proved to be perfectly unsuspecting and harmless."

Ferrers Locke smiled.

"But there is one exception?" he asked.

"One, sir," said Jack Drake. "That was last Wednesday, and I have already reported it to you. The man was missed at Ashwood Railway Station by an accident, but—"

"You refer to the man with watery eyes and gold-rimmed glasses—his lordship's secretary, Parker?"

"That is the man, sir."

Ferrers Locke nodded.

"You had the impression at the time, Drake, that you missed the man by accident?" he asked.

"Well, yes, sir. He seems to be rather an absent-minded sort of johnnie," said Drake. "He got into a train, and I got into the next carriage. At the very last moment he stepped out, and the train carried me on before I could follow his example."

"The man is a scholar and a book-worm," said Locke. "He is, in fact, exactly the man to get into the wrong train."

"Of course, I did not leave it at that," said Drake. "I got back to Ashwood as soon as I could; but he had taken another train—the train for Reigate. I got into talk with a porter, and found that he generally, if not always, takes the Reigate train. I went on to Reigate, but of course there was no sign of him there. But I have already reported this to you, sir."

Drake looked rather anxiously at his chief.

"If the man is of any importance in the case, sir—"

Ferrers Locke smiled.

"Every occupant of Cavandale Abbey is of equal importance, Drake. I am at a loose end."

"You, sir?"

"I, my boy," said Locke gravely. "The earlier case was child's play to this. Captain Lankester was no match for me. But we are dealing now with a very different kind of character."

"Not a match for you, sir, in the long run," said Drake confidently.

"I hope not! But he has the advantage of me in every way," said Locke, compressing his lips. "His knowledge of the secret passages in the rambling old abbey gives him the upper hand. Even yet I cannot be assured whether he is an occupant of the house, or whether he enters secretly by some unknown point of ingress. So careful a watch has been kept that the latter theory seems almost inadmissible. Yet, in all the household there is no one upon whom suspicion can reasonably fall."

Drake was silent.

"Obviously," went on Locke, "he has access to the interior of the mansion at all hours of the day and night. If he comes from without, he has on many occasions run the gauntlet of my men, who are on the watch, of the police who patrol the grounds, and of more than a dozen keepers, who are on the alert. He may, of course, enter by night, and spend the whole day lurking in hiding, watching for his opportunity. Yet even at night I doubt whether he could escape the surveillance again and again. I am driven to the conclusion, Drake, that he is a member of the household. But—"

"But—" said Drake.

"But I have made a study of every member of the household in turn, my boy, and there is not a single man upon whom to fasten the faintest suspicion. I had a hope that, by shadowing every

member of the household who might leave, something might be discovered. It is some man with a deep stake in the Lantham Race who is seeking Lord Cavandale's life. There is not a single man in the house who appears to have any undue interest in racing matters. Many of the grooms and other servants have backed their master's horse for the Lantham Thousand, naturally; but, apart from such trifles, nothing has come to light."

"It looks like an inside job, sir," said Drake.

"It does. And yet it may be that the plan of the abbey was purloined by some man who had access to the Cavandale documents, and that there is a secret mode of ingress now being used by him. But, as you say, it looks like an inside job. If there were a single man inside upon whom to lay one's finger. The watch that has been kept has had the result, so far, of clearing all the occupants of the house of suspicion."

"That is so, sir—except that it is possible—"

"What is possible?"

"Well, that man Parker," said Drake. "It's possible that his mistake in the train at Ashwood last Wednesday was not a mistake. What I mean is, he's the only man who has left Cavandale Abbey during the last week, and has not been shadowed to his destination."

"I have not forgotten that," said Ferrers Locke. "He leaves the abbey again to-day, Drake. He has a weekly holiday, and goes away for the greater part of the day to visit relatives who live at a distance."

"Name and address known, sir?"

Locke smiled.

"Mr. Parker makes no secret of it, Drake. He has talked to me about his relatives at Streatham, London. He visited them last Wednesday."

"You know that, sir—although I missed him at Ashwood?"

"Yes, my boy; I made it a point to ascertain that he really did visit his relatives there. I have received certain information on that point, and they are perfectly respectable people, living in a very respectable suburban street."

"Then my missing him at Ashwood doesn't matter a lot, sir?"

"Probably not," said Locke. "But you must not miss him again, Drake. That he had tea with his relatives at Streatham last Wednesday is certain; but what he may have done with his time earlier in the day I do not, of course, know, as you failed to shadow him. You will not fail again."

"No fear, sir."

"You will make some little change in your appearance, Drake, and wait at Ashwood Station," said Ferrers Locke. "At the present moment I am groping in absolute darkness, and I have nothing to go upon except the bare possibility that Parker may have suspected that he was shadowed, and made that mistake with the train to throw a possible shadower off the scent. You will shadow him, Drake, and ascertain where he goes and what he does. If his time is spent innocently, that will eliminate him."

Locke rose to his feet.

"You will telephone me to-night, Drake—my private number at Cavandale Abbey," he said. "That is all, my boy."

A few minutes later Ferrers Locke was in the car again, and speeding by a roundabout route back to Cavandale Abbey.

When he arrived there another car passed him on the avenue as he drove up to the house. It contained Mr. Parker, evidently on his way to the station. The secretary sat hunched in a

corner of the car, with a dog-eared, ancient volume in his hand, at which he was blinking with his watery eyes through his gold-rimmed glasses. Locke glanced at him, but the secretary did not look up.

The Baker Street detective smiled faintly.

If Mr. Parker was not a born book-worm, living, breathing, and having his whole being in musty documents and ancient volumes, he was certainly playing the part exceedingly well. Yet there was the fact that he alone of the occupants of Cavandale Abbey had been missed by the shadower on his excursion outside the building, by chance or design.

Locke shook his head.

He was, as he had told Drake, groping in utter darkness. A hidden, unknown enemy had the upper hand; and for a whole week yet, until the Lantham race was run, Lord Cavandale's life had to be defended against a desperado who could choose his own time for striking.

Ferrers Locke spoke to Pilkington when he came in.

"Mr. Parker is in the library, Pilkington?" he asked.

"No, sir," answered Pilkington. "He drove to the station only a few minutes ago, sir."

"Indeed! He has changed the day for his weekly excursion, then?" said the detective, with a smile.

"Oh, no, sir! Mr. Parker always has Wednesday—ever since he has been in his lordship's service, sir."

"Ah! My mistake, then," said Ferrers Locke, and he went on to Lord Cavandale's room.

"Still safe and sound, Mr. Locke," said the peer, with a smile, as the Baker Street detective came in.

"Good!" said Locke. "By the way,

do you remember which day it was that the mysterious shot was fired in the picture gallery?"

"Certainly—a Thursday."

"You are sure that it was not a Wednesday?"

"Quite."

Locke went to his own room. Twice Lord Cavandale had been fired at in the day-time by the hidden lurker in secret passages, and on neither occasion had it happened on a Wednesday, the day of the week when Mr. Parker was always absent from the abbey. And Mr. Parker was the only man in the abbey who had, whether by chance or not, eluded the shadowers when he left the building. Was it even the shadow of a clue?

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Secret Measures!

"IMPOSSIBLE!" said Lord Cavandale.

"Inevitable!" answered Ferrers Locke.

It was the following morning.

Lord Cavandale had breakfasted in his room. The peer was in a somewhat restive mood.

Close and pressing as was the peril that threatened his life, it irked him to be guarded, watched, continually cared for.

In the old War days he had known danger, hourly danger by day and night; long weeks and months at a time in the shadow of death. But that had been open peril that a man could face. The haunting danger of a blow from a hidden hand was a different matter, and it was bitterly irksome to the soldier-peer to be taking incessant precautions against an enemy whom he despised.

"Impossible!" he repeated. "In the first place, Locke, I will not run away from the enemy. In the second place, nothing would induce me to allow another man to face danger in my place."

Ferrers Locke smiled.

"These questions do not arise, Lord Cavandale," he answered. "It is a matter of strategy. By falling in with my plans you will, I think, enable me to bring this case to a successful conclusion."

"But—"

"You have placed yourself in my hands," said Ferrers Locke. "I must insist upon your keeping to that, Lord Cavandale. It is essential."

"But—" muttered Lord Cavandale uneasily.

"In another week," said Ferrers Locke, "the Lantham Thousand will be run. Admitting that your life may be guarded till the date has passed. The attempts will then cease—the motive having lapsed. But the scoundrel we want will then be secure—unpunished! That must not be, Lord Cavandale! Even more important than saving your life, sir, is the duty of bringing that villain to justice."

"If such a plan as you suggest will really enable you to lay hands on the scoundrel, Mr. Locke—"

"I answer for nothing, but I have every hope," said the detective gravely. "The man we are dealing with is as cunning a scoundrel as I have ever encountered in the course of my career as a detective."

"And when this plan is carried out, nothing is to be said?"

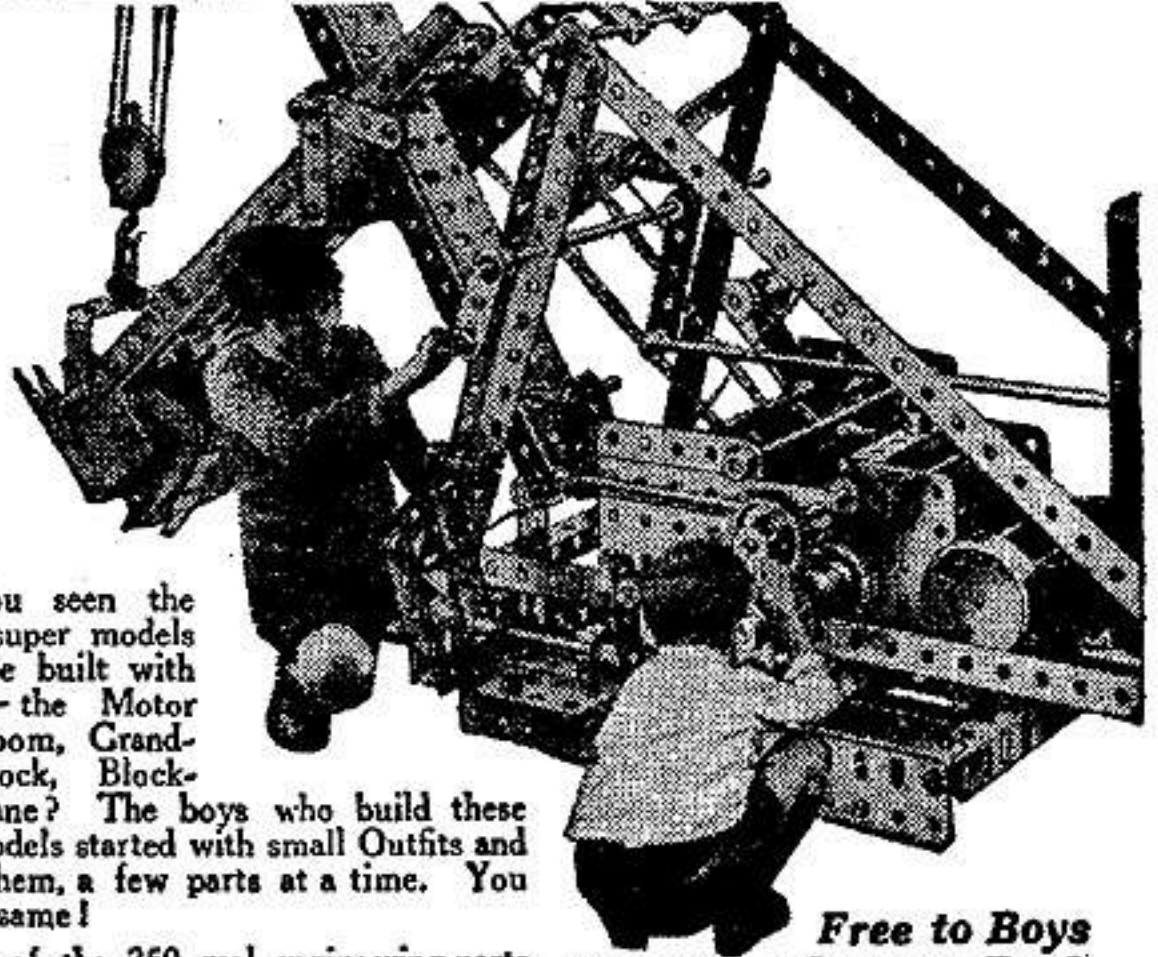
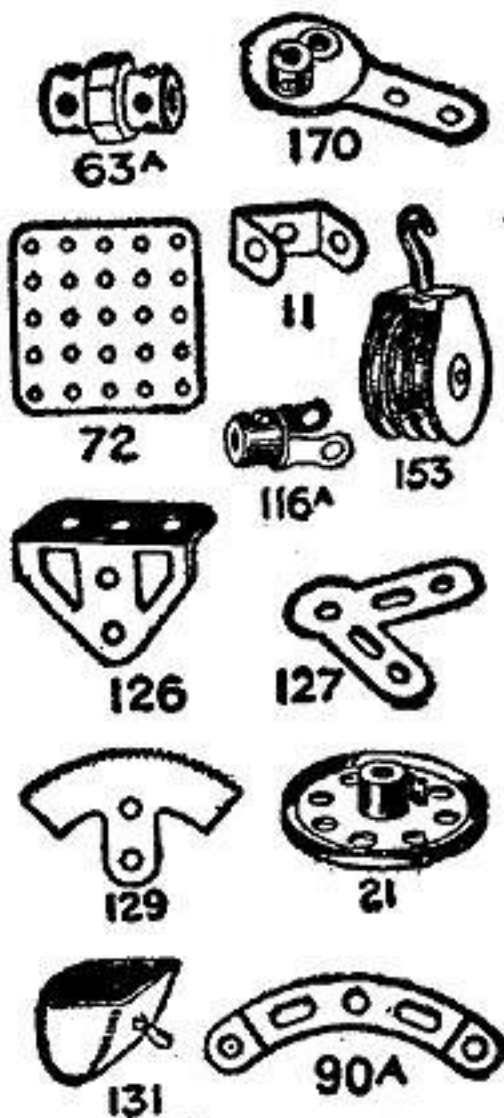
"Nothing!"

"My man Harris—"

"Harris is to know nothing."

(Continued on next page.)

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"Or Pilkington—"

"Not a word."

"There are certain business matters in the hands of my secretary. A word to Mr. Parker—"

"Not a syllable."

The peer smiled again.

"You are a hard taskmaster, Mr. Locke. But I have said that I place myself in your hands, and you have a right to insist. It shall be as you say."

He glanced at the Baker Street detective very curiously.

"You count on this plan to draw the enemy?"

"I do."

"We are much alike in build," said the peer. "But in feature"—he passed his hand over his scarred face and smiled slightly—"in looks, Mr. Locke, we are extremely dissimilar. But the success of your plan depends upon such a close resemblance—"

"You may leave that in my hands, sir," said Ferrers Locke. "That is merely a matter of professional skill, in which I do not think I am wanting. It is a settled thing, then?"

"Quite! It is for you to arrange details."

"To-night," said Ferrers Locke, "you will send your man Harris to bed early. He has watched a good deal of late, and there is reason to give him a rest. I shall be occupying your dressing-room as usual. Counting on your consent, sir, I have already given instructions for preparations to be made. But once more, sir, let me caution you. Not a word, not a syllable, to any living human being. Your valet, your secretary, your butler, your doctor—all must remain in the dark."

"Rely upon me, Mr. Locke."

After a few more words, Ferrers Locke left the peer, Harris coming in again to take his place. In the corridor, Locke passed the Ashwood constable, pacing slowly.

The Baker Street detective descended the stairs, with a thoughtful shade on his brow. Harry Wharton & Co. were in the hall, and he gave them a kind nod and smile in passing.

He entered the library.

The great apartment was dusky, for it was a misty winter morning. But from the alcove occupied by Mr. Parker, came a gleam of bright light.

Ferrers Locke crossed to the alcove.

Mr. Parker was seated at his desk, which as usual was covered with papers and documents. He was engaged in transcribing an old parchment, on which the monkish Latin was half obliterated by age. With his watery eyes keen behind his glasses, the secretary was so engrossed in his task that he did not observe the detective looking in at him.

For some moments Ferrers Locke watched him in silence.

Perhaps he had a momentary impression that Mr. Parker was playing a part—affecting the deep interest in that black-letter document, aware of the eyes that were upon him.

But if so, the impression quickly passed. The man's interest in his work was genuine—obviously genuine. Whether there was more in Mr. Parker than met the eye, or not, there was no doubt that he was a keen and enthusiastic scholar and antiquarian. His task at Cavandale Abbey was a congenial one, and he liked it.

Ferrers Locke coughed.

Mr. Parker gave a little start and looked up. Then he smiled, and rose to his feet.

"Good-morning, Mr. Locke! Please be seated."

"You are busy, I'm afraid."

"I am always busy," said Mr. Parker. "The fact is, I am something of an enthusiast. But I dare say you have noticed that."

"I could hardly fail to do so," said Locke, with a smile, as he sat down. "You must find your life here very congenial, Mr. Parker. For a man of your tastes—"

"You are right! I could not be more happily placed," said the secretary. "When one cannot possess what one desires, it is a great thing to have access to such possessions. I should be sorry to leave Cavandale Abbey."

"Tastes differ strangely," remarked the detective. "Lord Cavandale, the possessor of these ancient parchments, seldom, I suppose, gives them a thought or a glance."

"Never is a more correct word, Mr. Locke! There are treasures here—absolute treasures." The watery eyes shone behind the glasses. "I do not mean in a monetary sense. Nevertheless, many museums would be glad to possess some of these old documents, and would give a good price. But Lord Cavandale's thoughts are fixed on much more modern things—horses chiefly, I believe." There was a faint, involuntary sneer in the secretary's tone. "His lordship is not a scholar. I have sometimes attempted to interest him in the ancient records of his own family—generally with the result that his lordship has fallen asleep."

Locke smiled.

"That is a little discouraging," he remarked.

"His lordship is a man of action," said Mr. Parker. "Tastes differ strangely, as you say."

"You are, after all, far from sharing his lordship's interests," remarked Ferrers Locke. "I doubt whether you have given a second thought to the Lantham Thousand or the chances of Maharajah and Black Prince."

"I confess that I should find it difficult to cultivate an interest in such things," admitted Mr. Parker, laughing. "I have never betted on a horse race in my life."

"You have probably saved a good deal of money, then, though, according to all accounts, those who backed Maharajah in time are on a good thing. Until a short time ago, nobody fancied Maharajah; and immense sums were laid on Black Prince. That, as you know, is the cause of his lordship's present danger."

The secretary nodded.

"It is a state of affairs of which I do not approve," he said. "My own opinion is that gambling on races should be prohibited by law."

"I agree!" said Ferrers Locke. "But Lord Cavandale is one of those rare characters, a genuine sportsman. He races for the sake of the race, and makes no bets. But I think most of the household have plunged a little on Maharajah, from what I have heard."

"Very likely," said Mr. Parker. "I was, in fact, tempted to depart from my own usual rule, in this instance. But with me it is a matter of principle. If I won money on a race, I could not conscientiously regard it as my own. A prejudice, perhaps, but there it is! A matter of far deeper interest to me is the document I hold in my hand. Mr. Locke, prepare to be surprised."

"You have found the plan of the abbey for which you have been searching so long?" asked Locke.

"Not at all! No, no! This document, Mr. Locke, I suspect to have been inscribed by the hand of the Venerable Bede himself."

"You don't say so!"

"I do, Mr. Locke! I am not certain yet; but I shall make certain!" The watery eyes shone again through the gold-rimmed glasses. "Think of it, Mr. Locke—Bede's own hand!" Then he shrugged his shoulders. "If I find that this is correct, and report this amazing discovery to Lord Cavandale, what do you think his lordship's answer will be? Probably he will ask me who was the Venerable Bede!"

Mr. Parker laid the parchment down.

"But you did not come to discuss horse races or monkish documents with me, Mr. Locke."

"That is true," assented the Baker Street detective, smiling. "I want the list you promised me, of all the persons who have had access to the Cavandale documents in your time—among whom there is a possibility, at least, of discovering the man who purloined the plan of the abbey."

"I have prepared it for you, Mr. Locke. You will find every name there, with the date of the man's visit."

Mr. Parker drew a folded paper from a pigeon-hole in the desk, and passed it to the detective.

"Thank you," said Ferrers Locke. "This will, of course, necessitate my leaving the abbey for a time."

"No doubt."

"I leave to-night," said Locke. "But I leave Lord Cavandale well guarded. I am very much obliged to you, Mr. Parker. I believe that your assistance may enable me to lay my hands on the man I want."

"I can only hope so," said Mr. Parker. "Anything else that I can do, at any time—"

"Once more, thanks," said Ferrers Locke.

And he slipped the folded paper into his pocket and rose.

Mr. Parker looked after him through his gold-rimmed glasses, as he went down the long library. There was a smile on his face as he turned to the documents on the desk before him.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Gone!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Bow-wow!"

"I say, that man Locke's going!"

"Rats!"

"The ratfulness is terrific."

"You fellows never know anything!" said Billy Bunter contemptuously. "Locke's leaving to-night."

Harry Wharton & Co. gave Billy Bunter their attention. They were strolling on the terrace, when the Owl of the Remove rolled out with his startling news.

"Locke leaving!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Yes; and I can't say I'm sorry!" said Bunter, shaking his head. "That fellow's never been really respectful to me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. The man doesn't seem to understand the difference between a common detective and a Public school man!" said Bunter. "I've tried to make him understand—"

"You fat ass!"

"But he's obtuse," said Bunter. "That's the word—obtuse. I'm rather glad he's going. When I consented to come here to pass the school vacation with my titled friend, Lord Cavandale, I never expected to find a common detective in the party. I was rather surprised at Lord Cavandale. It's not the sort of thing I should do myself."

"My esteemed, idiotic Bunter—"

"Anyhow, he's going," said Bunter.

"How do you know, fathead?"

"Oh, he told me—he would, naturally, tell me first," said Bunter. "He knows what is due to my position here, to that extent."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Well, he's going to-night," said Bunter. "I heard him tell Pilkingham at ten o'clock. He's going up to London by car. Like his check, really—using my titled friend's cars as if they belonged to him. But some fellows have a neck!"

"Some fellows have, certainly!" said Johnny Bull, with a glare at the fat junior, "especially fat, crawling snails of fellows."

"Oh, really, Bull. I—"

"Blessed if I understand it, if Mr. Locke's really going," said Harry Wharton. "Lord Cavandale will be in danger when he's gone."

"I shall be here," said Bunter.

"Fathead!"

"I came here, really, to protect Cavandale," said Bunter. "I've done it, so far. I really don't quite know what he called Ferrers Locke in at all for. Too many cooks spoil the broth. Besides, what has Locke done? Nothing. He's an overrated man, you know. I fancy he's clearing off now because he knows he's no good. Very likely my friend Cavandale has got fed-up with him and sacked him. I hope so."

"Cheese it, fathead!"

"If he thinks I'm going to stay up to say good-bye to him, he's mistaken," went on Bunter. "I regard the man with contempt. I shall certainly be in bed when he goes."

"He will feel that an awful lot!" said Bob Cherry, with deep sarcasm.

"I dare say he will; but I don't care. He has never treated me with proper respect, and I refuse to take any notice of him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton & Co. went into the house, curious to ascertain whether Bunter's news was well founded. It was a complete surprise to them to hear that Ferrers Locke was leaving Cavandale Abbey.

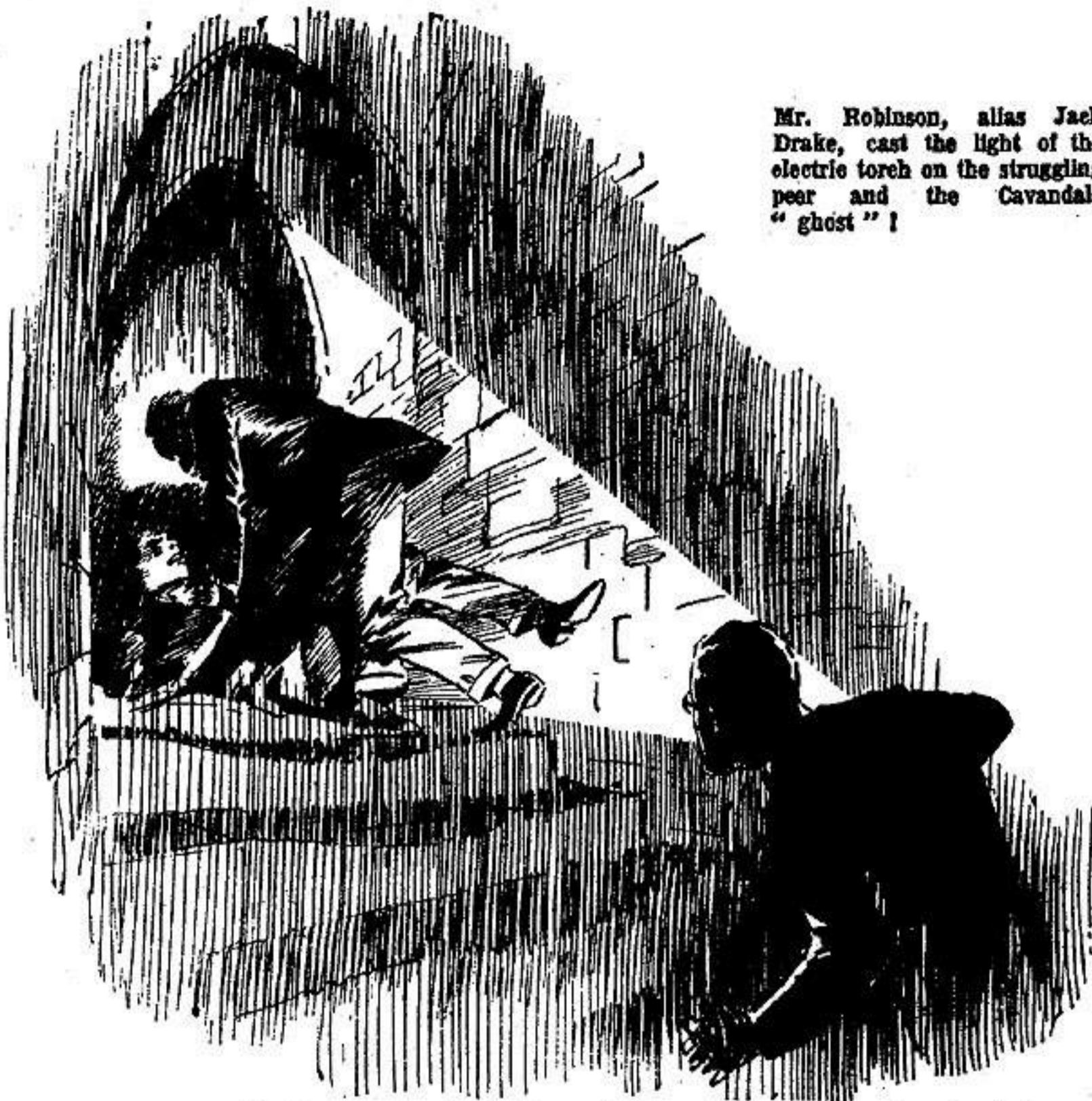
They found the Baker Street detective in the hall with Lord Cavandale. His lordship was downstairs again, looking pale, but otherwise his usual self.

Locke gave them a smile.

"I shall not see you boys when I leave—you will be in bed," he remarked. "So I will say good-bye as well as good-night!"

"We were thinking of staying up to see you off, sir," said Harry. "If you're really going—"

"Not at all," said Locke. "You must not stay by any means."



Mr. Robinson, alias Jack Drake, cast the light of the electric torch on the struggling peer and the Cavandale "ghost"!

"You'll be coming back, sir?" asked Bob.

"Certainly. You will see me again before you go back to Greyfriars for the new term," said Locke, with a smile.

With that the juniors had to be content, though they were rather puzzled.

"Blessed if I understand it," said Bob Cherry, when the Famous Five and Bunter went to their room at half-past nine. "Locke must jolly well know that Lord Cavandale won't be safe here without him."

"Rot!" said Bunter.

"I dare say Mr. Locke knows best," said Wharton. "But I'm blessed if I can understand it, either."

"The understandfulness is not terrific," agreed Hurree Singh. "But the worthy Locke is a preposterously brainy personage, and perhapsfully knows what he is about."

"Very likely," said Harry, laughing.

And the juniors, still puzzled, turned in.

It was half an hour later that the car came round for Ferrers Locke. It did not belong to Cavandale Abbey. It was Ferrers Locke's own car, which had arrived from London, driven by Locke's own chauffeur, early in the evening.

Ferrers Locke's suitcase was brought down and placed in the car. Locke was with Lord Cavandale; and Pilkingham proceeded to his lordship's apartment to announce that the car was at the door. There was a constable pacing the corridor, who had relieved the man on duty during the day.

Pilkingham tapped and entered.

"My lord!"

The well-known, tall, lean figure was reclining in a big armchair before the

crackling log fire in the bed-room, enveloped in the ample folds of a dressing-gown. The scarred, bearded face turned towards the butler.

"Yes, Pilkingham!"

His lordship's voice was husky. Pilkingham looked gravely and properly concerned.

"I trust that your lordship is not catching a cold," he said.

"A trifle—a mere trifle, Pilkingham!" The voice was undoubtedly husky. "I am nursing myself a little, as you see. What is it, Pilkingham?"

"Mr. Locke's car is at the door, my lord."

"Very well, Pilkingham. You need not wait."

The butler retired.

A few minutes later a tall figure emerged from the door of Lord Cavandale's dressing-room on the corridor.

The night was bitterly cold, and the traveller was well protected against the weather. A fur cap, with flaps, was drawn down over his head and ears; and the collar of a thick fur coat was turned up round his neck and over his face, covering it to the eyes.

The muffled man descended the stairs quickly and passed out to the car.

Pilkingham hovered; but the departing guest was gone in a moment, the door of the car slammed, and it glided away down the dusky avenue.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" murmured Bob Cherry drowsily, as he lifted his head from his pillow. "That's Ferrers Locke's car going, you men! Locke's gone."

The sound of the car died away in the winter night.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Mysterious I

"MY lord!"

Mr. Parker coughed.

It was morning; a clear, bright, frosty morning. Harry Wharton & Co. were skating on the frozen lake. Billy Bunter had not yet finished breakfast.

Mr. Parker had come up the corridor to Lord Cavandale's room, blinking through his gold-rimmed glasses, exchanging a nod and a word with the Ashwood constable who was pacing there. Harris let him into the peer's room, and a scent of essence of cinnamon greeted Mr. Parker as he entered. Apparently his lordship was using that mild and sweet-smelling disinfectant for his slight cold.

The tall, lean figure was in a settee before the fire. The bearded face, with the cheeks seamed with scars, turned for a moment to the secretary.

"Good-morning, my lord! I fear that you have a cold."

"Very slight, very slight, Parker!"

"The doctor—"

"Yes, yes, I have seen the doctor. I shall have to be careful for a day or two—it is nothing."

"But your wound, my lord—"

"A mere scratch, Parker—a flesh wound, though my friend the enemy intended it to be serious enough. But he does not possess the skill of the snipers I once had to deal with. But I sent for you, Parker, to ask you a favour."

"I need not say that I am wholly at your lordship's orders," said Mr. Parker.

"You know that Mr. Locke has left—"

"He informed me of his intention yesterday, my lord," answered the secretary. "I understand that he left last night."

"A chance for my friend the enemy, now that he is gone, Parker; but the night was quite uneventful. I wonder whether the rascal has given up the game, now that he has had so many failures."

"I think it very probable, my lord," answered the secretary. "Certainly the villain has had little to encourage him. But what is it that your lordship desires me to do?"

"I require to send someone to London this morning, Parker, to see Ferrers Locke—someone upon whom I can absolutely rely. I thought of you."

"You flatter me, my lord," said the secretary. "Needless to say, I shall be very pleased."

The peer made a sign to Harris, who retired out of hearing. The lean figure bent a little towards the secretary.

"I can rely upon you, Parker! You are a man able to keep his own counsel. You are, in fact, discretion itself. I understand from Mr. Locke that you are, to a certain extent, in his confidence, and that you are aware of the line of investigation he is now following in London."

The secretary bowed.

"That is the case, my lord."

"I understand that you furnished him with a list of all the persons who have had access to the Cavandale documents since the first of December last."

"Exactly. Mr. Locke's opinion is that one of these persons may have abstracted the plan of the abbey, showing the secret passages. I think he is right, my lord."

"You have seen nothing of the plan, Parker?"

"Nothing, my lord."

"Then it is fairly certain that it must have been abstracted."

"I think so."

"Mr. Locke certainly seemed hopeful," said the peer musingly. "I have every faith in him; he has a great reputation. But there is an old saying that while the cat is away the mice will play." A faint smile flitted over the bearded, scarred face. "The fact is, Parker, that I feel a good deal easier in my mind when Ferrers Locke is here, on the spot."

"I imagine so, my lord."

"I cannot help thinking that when my secret enemy learns that Locke is gone he will take advantage of his absence to make another desperate

attempt on my life. I have had two very narrow escapes, Parker, and though I am not, I hope, a nervous man, it is telling on me a little."

"That is only to be expected," said Mr. Parker, blinking curiously at the peer through his glasses. "You desire Mr. Locke to return?"

The peer coughed.

"I think of suggesting to him that his present investigations might possibly be left in other hands," he said slowly. "If Mr. Locke assents to this he will return with you. But," added the peer hastily, "I leave the decision entirely to Mr. Locke. I do not desire to dictate his actions in any way. You will make that perfectly clear to him."

"I quite understand."

"You will simply place my views before him," said the peer. "I slept little last night, Parker—"

"That is not surprising, my lord, in the circumstances."

"But I was thinking a great deal. And, in a word, I have told you the outcome of my reflections. You will tell Mr. Locke precisely what I have said, and leave the decision to him."

"Very good, my lord."

"It is possible, of course, that you may not find him at Baker Street. In that case, you may leave a message—but I hope that you will see him personally." A slightly troubled look came over the scarred face. "I hope, at all events, that you will be able to see him. The fact is, Parker, that Mr. Locke's departure has somewhat disturbed me, and I shall be very glad to see him back at the abbey."

"I quite understand, my lord."

After a few more words the secretary took his leave. There was a faint smile, slightly contemptuous, on his face, as he walked down the corridor.

Half an hour later a car was gliding down the avenue, to take Mr. Parker to Ashwood Station.

From a window of Lord Cavandale's room a scarred and bearded face looked down on the car as it went.

The peer smiled as the car disappeared in the distance.

He emerged from his room, and the constable in the corridor saluted him as he passed.

The tall, lean gentleman reached the oak gallery over the hall; but he did not go downstairs. He remained for some moments in the gallery, and then turned into a passage which led to a short staircase.

He ascended the staircase and stopped on a little landing, on which a single door opened.

Anyone who had observed the peer just then would certainly have been surprised by the actions of the master of Cavandale Abbey.

He turned the handle of the door silently, and smiled as he found that it was locked.

His hand went into his pocket, and something was in his hand when he withdrew it.

The faintest of clicks, and the locked door was open.

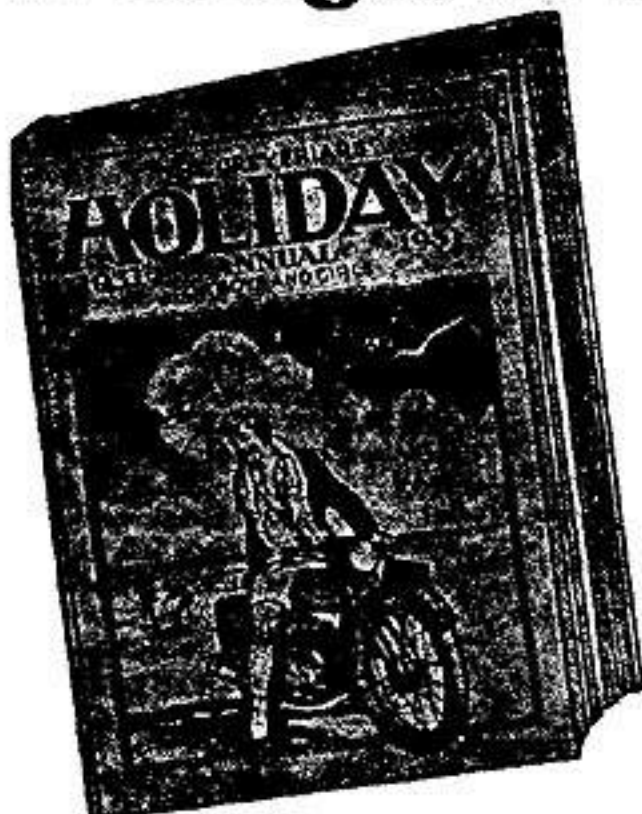
The peer stepped inside the room, and closed the door behind him softly.

He was in a room in one of the oldest parts of the ancient building—a room with walls panelled in oak black with age. It was the private room of Mr. Parker, the secretary. A communicating door gave admittance to the bed-room beyond.

Mr. Parker, in the London express, assuredly had no suspicion of how his noble employer was occupied during his absence.

Having secured the door, the lean gentleman proceeded to make a

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thorough investigation of Mr. Parker's apartment.

Doors and drawers were all locked; but no lock seemed to present any difficulties to the scarred gentleman.

And thorough as his search was, every article was replaced exactly as he found it, leaving not the slightest trace of his visit.

"Ah!"

A low, soft ejaculation fell from the bearded lips as the peer gazed into a drawer of a bureau, which, although locked, had opened to his touch.

In the drawer lay a revolver.

He picked it up and examined it closely. It was loaded in every chamber.

The eyes under the dark, heavy brows were gleaming. A peculiar smile glided over the bearded face.

The revolver remained in his hands for several minutes. Then it was replaced, and the drawer locked.

In another drawer, also locked, and also opened by a touch, were several papers which he examined carefully.

An hour had passed when the lean gentleman, apparently finished in Mr. Parker's quarters, moved quietly to the door.

He opened it a few inches and listened and glanced out. No one was in sight, and he left the room quickly, and the door was locked behind him.

With an air of casual carelessness he strolled back to the oak gallery. He descended the stairs and went out on the terrace.

There he remained sauntering till lunch was announced.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

In the Haunted Room!

"I SAY, you fellows——"
"Nothing doing!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Now, look here," said Billy Bunter, blinking severely at the chums of the Remove through his big spectacles. "I'm going to have a nap——"

"Thank goodness."

"And I want you to stay with me——"

"Bow-wow!"

"Not all of you," said Bunter. "But I'm not going to be left alone. You can take it in turns, see? I don't mind so long as you don't wake me up, of course. I never was selfish!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Come on, then," said Bunter.

The Famous Five did not come on. The pleasure and privilege of sitting by Bunter while he snored and slept off the effects of a Gargantuan lunch did not seem to appeal to them.

"You hear me?" snorted Bunter.

"The hearfulness is not the obeyfulness, my esteemed fat Bunter," grinned Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "Perhaps-fully you had better rely on the esteemed and ridiculous Albert."

"We're going to explore for that jolly old secret passage this afternoon," explained Bob Cherry. "Come and help us, Bunter."

"And very likely get potted by that skulking beast behind the wall?" said Bunter indignantly. "Catch me! Besides, I'm sleepy."

He blinked indignantly at the smiling five.

"Of all the ungrateful rotters, you fellows take the cake," said Bunter. "I had you here for Christmas, in the magnificent mansion of my titled friend——"

"Give us a rest!"

"I say, you fellows——"

But the fellows departed unheeding.

"Beasts!" roared Bunter.

And it fell to Albert, the footman, to

keep the Owl of the Remove company while he snored for the next couple of hours.

Meanwhile, Harry Wharton & Co. proceeded to Bunter's old quarters—the room in which the phantom abbot of Cavandale had made his mysterious appearance, and where the treacherous shot had been fired which had wounded Lord Cavandale.

Their keenness to discover the secret of the abbot was not at all abated. Apart from the natural attraction of secret passages in an ancient building, the discovery, if made, would have been of the greatest service to Ferrers Locke; and the chums of the Remove were very

before them. The peer was in the room.

"Oh, you, sir!" ejaculated Harry Wharton.

The peer smiled.

"Yes. I was making a little investigation here," he said. "But please come in, my boys. You may help me in the search, if that is your object."

"Well, we thought of having another look for the secret passage, sir," said Harry Wharton. "But——"

"But what, my boy?"

"Well, is it safe for you to be here, sir?" asked Harry. "This is the room where you were fired on from behind the wall."

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No. 25.

This week our long-haired poet gives you a pen-picture in verse of a fellow swot—to wit, Mark Linley, the scholarship boy of the Remove.



DEAR MATER,—I've worked like a nigger
To pull off the Founders' Exam;

My chums are amazed at my vigour;
They say I've done nothing but cram.
When dawn filtered in at the skylight
I jumped from my bed with a will,
And swotted away till the twilight
My study with shadows did fill.

I sacrificed frolic and pleasure,
And daily and nightly was seen
Devoting the bulk of my leisure
To study, whole-hearted and keen.
And now that the struggle is over,
And the papers have gone to the Head,

I'm wondering, "Am I in clover?
Or have I been beaten, instead?"

You see, there is fierce competition,
And another more brainy than I
May capture the premier position,
And blow my fond fancies sky-high.
Dick Penfold is quite a good student,
And Wharton and Toddy are "hot";
So it would be rather imprudent
To boast I can vanquish the lot!

Billy Bunter has looked in to mention
That he will be certain to score;
This causes me no apprehension—
I've heard it from Bunter before!
On the strength of his great expectations
He wants me to lend him some bobs;
The result will bring loud lamentations
And many Bunterian sobs!

The papers have all been inspected,
The verdict will shortly be known;
And few will remain unaffected—
One will dance—the remainder will groan!

Hark! Loudly the school-bell is pealing
To bid us assemble and hear.
How wildly excited I'm feeling!
The critical moment draws near!

Hurrah, mater dear! I've succeeded!
My name's at the top of the list!
I know how the cash will be needed
Your struggle in life to assist.
I'm elated, and proud, and enraptured,
My spirits have soared like a lark
To know that the prize has been captured
By—Yours most devotedly, MARK.

keen to help the Baker Street detective if they could.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry, as he turned the handle of the door.

"What——"

"It's locked."

"Oh, I suppose Pilkington, or the jolly old groom of the chambers, has locked the rooms up, now they're not used," said Johnny Bull. "We can get the key all right."

"There's somebody in the room," said Bob. "I heard somebody move."

"Oh, my hat! The jolly old ghost, perhaps!"

"Why, what——"

The door was opened while the juniors were speaking. To their astonishment it was the tall, lean figure and bearded face of Lord Cavandale that appeared

"The safefulness does not seem terrific, honoured sahib," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur.

The peer regarded the juniors thoughtfully. There was a glimmer in his eyes, as if he was slightly amused.

"Perhaps you are right," he said gravely. "I will leave you to your investigations, my boys. You will let me know immediately if you make any discovery."

"Certainly, sir!"

The peer quitted the room. The chums of the Remove immediately proceeded with their search, tapping and rapping the old panelled walls, as they had done so often before. But on this occasion, as on all previous occasions, they had no luck. That the secret opening was there was a certainty, but it

was beyond the powers of the eager juniors to discover it.

The peer walked slowly back to his own quarters. He found Harris in his dressing-room, and dismissed the valet.

After Harris was gone the peer locked the dressing-room door on the corridor, and then the bed-room door. Then he went to the telephone in the dressing-room.

He removed the receiver from the hooks, and asked for a number. The voice that came through a minute later was a voice Harry Wharton & Co. would have known, for Jack Drake had once been a Greyfriars fellow, and it was the voice of Ferrers Locke's assistant that answered.

"Here, sir!"

The peer spoke in a low but clear voice into the transmitter. There was no trace of huskiness in his voice now. For several minutes he spoke in that low, quiet voice, Drake listening attentively at the other end.

"You understand?" he asked at last.

"Quite, sir."

"Very well. I shall expect you at eight o'clock."

"I'll be on hand, sir."

The peer rang off.

He went to the door and unlocked it, and rang for Pilkingham. The stately butler of Cavandale Abbey appeared in a few moments.

"You rang, my lord?"

"Yes, Pilkingham." The peer's voice was husky again. "I am expecting a visitor—a Mr. Robinson—this evening. Please have a room prepared for him. The room formerly occupied by Master Bunter."

"Very good, my lord."

Pilkingham retired.

At dinner that evening Lord Cavandale did not appear. Pilkingham explained to the Greyfriars fellows that his lordship's cold was keeping his lordship to his lordship's room.

Neither was Mr. Parker present. The secretary, apparently, had not yet returned from London.

Harry Wharton & Co. were gathered in a cheery group round the log fire in the hall, after dinner, when there were wheels on the drive, and a taxi stopped. Pilkingham admitted Mr. Robinson.

The schoolboys glanced at him carelessly as he followed the butler. They saw a young man in horn-rimmed glasses, with a thick, dark moustache, looking about thirty.

He disappeared with the butler, and they gave him no further thought. But presently Billy Bunter joined them, with a grinning face.

"I say, you fellows!" chuckled Bunter.

"Well, what's the jolly old news?" asked Bob Cherry.

"He, he, he! Did you see a fellow—I've asked Pilkingham, and he says his name is Robinson. Well, where do you think they've put him?"

"Blest if I know, or care very much," yawned Bob.

"In my old room," said Bunter. "He, he, he! If the ghost walks to-night, we shall hear him squealing. I don't suppose he would face it with iron nerve, as I did."

"As you did!" ejaculated Nugent.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"As I did!" roared Bunter. "I wasn't frightened, like you fellows, as you jolly well know. And I can jolly well tell you that if he yells for help, I jolly well shan't go!"

"You needn't tell us that!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "We could have guessed that one."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,194.

"Ha, ha ha!"

And when Billy Bunter went to bed that night it was with a fixed determination not to turn out if there was any alarm from the new occupant of the haunted room.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

At Last!

PILKINGHAM helped Mr. Parker off with his coat. The secretary took off his gold-rimmed glasses, wiped the mist from them, and replaced them on his nose. It was a cold, misty winter's night.

"A cold journey, sir!" said Pilkingham, with respectful interest.

"Very!" answered Mr. Parker. "Has his lordship retired yet, Pilkingham?"

"No, sir. His lordship is with Mr. Robinson, in his rooms."

"Mr. Robinson?" repeated the secretary.

SMILE, LADS!

At this amusing joke which has won for L. Levenstart, of 66, Amhurst Park, Stamford Hill, N.16, a—

DANDY POCKET KNIFE.



THE TRUTH ABOUT WAR!

"Strategy," said Sergeant Murphy, to one of his raw recruits, "is a great thing in war." He paused a moment and then continued: "For example, if you run out of ammunition, and you don't want the enemy to know, just keep on firing. That's strategy!"

You'd be delighted with one of these topping prizes. Send in your ribtickle to-day—you may score a bullseye first time!

"A gentleman who arrived this evening, sir," said Pilkingham. "A young gentleman connected, I think, with his lordship's racing stable at Lantham, sir. So I judged by a remark of his lordship's, sir."

"I trust that nothing has happened during my absence, Pilkingham—to his lordship, I mean?"

"Nothing, sir. There has been no alarm of any kind, sir," said the butler. "His lordship desired me to request you to go to him immediately on your return, sir."

"Quite so. You say he is with Mr. Robinson?"

"Yes, sir. The first suite in the east corridor, sir. The rooms lately occupied by Master Bunter, sir, who has recently changed his quarters."

The watery eyes glimmered behind the gold-rimmed glasses.

"Very well, Pilkingham."

"Shall I order supper, sir?"

"Thank you, no. I dined just before leaving town," answered Mr. Parker.

"I am tired, and shall go to bed immediately I have seen his lordship. Good-night, Pilkingham!"

"Good-night, sir!"

Mr. Parker ascended the stairs, moved along the oak gallery and into the corridor, where Bunter's former quarters were situated.

He tapped at the door of the handsome apartment that had been Bunter's sitting-room but was now occupied by Mr. Robinson, and entered.

On the wide hearth a cheery log fire blazed and crackled, and in two arm-chairs, one on either side of it, two men were seated.

One of them, at whom Mr. Parker cast a fleeting glance, was a young man of apparently about thirty, with horn-rimmed glasses that caught and reflected the gleam of the fire. The other was a tall, lean gentleman with a beard and a scarred face. The latter rose to his feet at once.

"Ah! Come in, Parker! I am glad to see you!" His voice was husky, and he coughed slightly. "Mr. Robinson, you will excuse me a moment."

Mr. Robinson, who had risen to his feet, bowed and sat down again. The peer came over to Mr. Parker and spoke in a low voice.

"You saw Ferrers Locke?"

"No, my lord. He was absent from Baker Street. I waited in the hope that he would return, as your lordship desired, but he did not come back."

A shade crossed the scarred face.

"That is unfortunate, Parker! Perhaps you saw his assistant—a young man named Drake—"

"No, my lord; I was informed that he also was absent."

"But you left a message—"

"Yes, my lord; a written message to be handed to Ferrers Locke as soon as he returned."

"Well, in the circumstances, you could do no more, Parker. I have little doubt that Mr. Locke will be here to-morrow," said the peer. "I trust you did not have a disagreeable journey, Parker."

"Not at all, my lord; it was a little cold, that is all. But I am somewhat fatigued, and if your lordship has no further need of me this evening, I will go to bed."

"By all means, Parker." The peer glanced at his watch. "It is nearly ten! Time I thought of bed myself. Perhaps you will speak to Harris and tell him that I shall go to bed in a quarter of an hour."

"Certainly, my lord!"

"Good-night, Parker!"

"Good-night, my lord!"

The peer turned back towards Mr. Robinson as Parker let himself out of the room. Parker's movements were leisurely, and he heard the next remark of the peer before he closed the door.

"I must not stay up, Robinson; as you know, I am not in my usual health. But please finish what you were telling me. I have no doubt that Boone is taking every care of Maharajah; I have every confidence in him. But it's impossible to be too careful. I have a strong suspicion that the rascal who has been giving me his attention may transfer his attention to the horse."

Mr. Parker closed the door silently.

He walked away, a strange expression on his face, a strange gleam in his eyes behind the gold-rimmed glasses.

Having delivered his lordship's message to his lordship's valet, Mr. Parker sought his own room.

Meanwhile, the conversation was continuing in Mr. Robinson's room.

The lean figure of the peer reclined in an easy attitude in the armchair,

and he held a cigarette between finger and thumb as he talked.

His talk ran entirely on the subject of the horse Maharajah, and the talk of Mr. Robinson kept to the same subject.

Had it been possible that a listener lurked behind the polished oak walls, that listener could only have concluded that Mr. Robinson had come up from the racing stable at Lantham, to give the sporting peer information concerning a recent attempt that had been made to "get at" the famous race-horse.

Under his heavy brows the peer's eyes cast at times a glance towards the oak wall, from which the shot had come on the occasion when Lord Cavandale's escape had been so narrow.

Five minutes after Mr. Parker's departure the lean figure rose from the armchair and paced to and fro, hands in pockets, while continuing the conversation with Mr. Robinson, who remained seated.

Mr. Robinson, however, shifted his chair a little, perhaps to keep his face towards the peer, but that shifting position enabled him also to keep his eyes on the wall where the hidden opening existed.

That the two men, or either of them, waited and watched for anything to happen would never have been supposed by anyone who had observed their placid faces and listened to their talk.

Crack!

The sudden report of a firearm came with an effect of thunder in the quiet room.

It interrupted the peer, who was speaking, echoing almost deafeningly through the room.

Scarcely had the report crashed out when the scarred peer made a spring to the oaken wall.

As if he knew the secret of the moving panel, so long hidden and unknown, his hand glided over the oak; and a section of the panelling shot open.

Behind was an opening in the solid stone wall, where a great stone had rolled back on a pivot.

The stone was closing as the peer opened the panel, and in the darkness there was a glimpse of a dark figure.

A sharp, startled cry was heard.

Crack!

A second shot rang, as the peer drove back the closing stone and pushed through.

Mr. Robinson was at his heels in a moment, flashing the light of an electric torch in the opening.

"Quick!" breathed the peer.

He dashed through, a shadowy figure fleeing before him. Fast behind him came Mr. Robinson, showing light with the broad beam from his pocket torch.

Crack, crack!

Twice a revolver rang from the darkness ahead; but the secret sniper fired

in vain. Four shots in all had been fired, but not a bullet had found a billet.

In the darkness of a winding, twisting stone passage there were sounds of rustling footsteps, panting breath, of a man in hurried and terrified flight.

"Look out—steps!" muttered the peer.

"What-ho!" chuckled Mr. Robinson, behind.

They raced on.

The passage, evidently built in the thickness of the ancient massive walls, was narrow—too narrow for two to move abreast. Ahead of the pursuers flitted the fleeing figure. Down a short flight of steps, then round a sharp angle, then along another long, narrow passage the flitting figure went, the desperate panting coming back to the ears of the pursuers. They were not

wreton gave a cry of astonishment as the handcuffs snapped.

What was Lord Cavandale doing with a detective's handcuffs in his pocket?

"You've got him, sir!" said Mr. Robinson.

"I have him, Drake!" answered the peer, and the shrinking wretch in the handcuffs gave a strangled cry. For the peer's voice was not husky now; it was a clear and ringing voice, a voice recognisable, now that it was no longer disguised, as that of Ferrers Locke, the Baker Street detective.

One word fell from the man's writhing lips:

"Trapped!"

"Trapped, you scoundrel!" answered Ferrers Locke. "Drake, go and telephone to Lord Cavandale, and request him to return at once. I will take care of this scoundrel."



"Here's your ghost, in handcuffs!" said Ferrers Locke, pointing to the crouching figure in the armchair. All eyes fixed on the pallid face of the crumpled wretch. It was Parker!

gaining on him, but they were not losing.

The fleeing figure stopped suddenly.

Crack, crack!

Twice more the six-shooter rang; and in the narrow passage it seemed impossible that the man could miss. Yet the peer and his companion dashed on unhurt; and the fugitive, with a desperate, panting cry, turned once more, and fumbled at the stone that closed the end of the secret passage.

With a tiger's leap the peer was upon him.

The man went down in his grasp, struggling like a madman, panting and gasping hoarsely.

Mr. Robinson halted, and cast the light of the electric torch on the struggling pair. It was clear that the peer had easily the upper hand.

The struggling fugitive crumpled under him, and it was unnecessary for Mr. Robinson to assist.

Click!

It was the snap of handcuffs on wrists dragged together.

Even in his terror and despair the

Drake hurried back along the passage. Ferrers Locke groped over the stone wall, and there was a faint whir as a great stone slid back, disclosing the oak panel within. A moment more, and the panel was open, and Locke lifted his prisoner through into Mr. Parker's room.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Sniper Snared!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"That was a shot—"

Harry Wharton & Co. were chatting round the fire before turning in. Billy Bunter, already in bed, was snoring. More than a distant pistol-shot would have been required to awaken William George Bunter when he was going strong.

The chums of Greyfriars leaped to their feet. Harry Wharton ran to the door and tore it open.

Faintly, from afar, as if muffled by thick walls, yet clearly distinguishable,

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,194.

came shot after shot. The Ashwood constable came at a run down the corridor, with a startled face, behind him Harris, with starting eyes.

"Where's Lord Cavandale?" exclaimed Wharton.

"He's with Mr. Robinson, sir," stammered Harris.

Bob gave a yell.

"In Bunter's old room—they've got at him again! Come on!"

Bob Cherry dashed away, and the other fellows followed him fast, the constable and Harris after them. Pilkington's startled voice called from the hall as they raced along the oak gallery, but they did not heed.

Harry Wharton & Co. reached the door of Mr. Robinson's room, and tore it open. They dreaded to see Lord Cavandale lying death-stricken. But the peer was not there.

"Look!" yelled Nugent.

He pointed to the panelled wall. A large panel was wide open, and beyond it was a gap in the stone wall. And from the gap was emerging a figure—that of Mr. Robinson. He started a little at the sight of the Greyfriars juniors, blinked at them through the horn-rimmed glasses, then jerked off the big glasses, and grinned.

"You fellows!" he ejaculated in a voice that was strangely familiar to the ears of the Famous Five.

"Who—what—" gasped Wharton.

Mr. Robinson placed his spectacles on a table and took off his moustache, and laid it beside them. The juniors watched him dumbfounded. In spite of skilful make-up on the face it was familiar now.

The Ashwood constable came breathlessly into the room.

"What's this? Who are you? What—" he gasped.

"My name is Drake," answered Mr. Robinson cheerily. "I am Ferrers Locke's assistant."

"Jack Drake!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Your old pal!" grinned Drake.

"The Drakefulness is terrific!" chuckled Hurreo Janset Ram Singh. "The esteemed Robinsonfulness was a delusion and a ridiculous snare."

"But—but what—" gasped Nugent.

"Who was firing—"

"The jolly old sniper!" answered Drake. "Mr. Locke's got him—and got the bracelets on him. He's all right!"

"Ferrers Locke here!" gasped Wharton.

"Just a few!" agreed Drake, with a nod.

"But where is Lord Cavandale?" demanded the astounded constable.

"About a mile away," answered Drake. "Excuse me, I've got to phone to him—Mr. Locke's orders."

He picked up the receiver from the telephone and called for a number. The juniors watched him blankly. They could not even begin to understand.

"Is that Lord Cavandale?" Drake was speaking into the instrument. "It's the finish, my lord. Mr. Locke has bagged the man—"

"Good gad!" came an ejaculation over the wires; and the juniors caught it, and in blank wonder recognised the voice of Lord Cavandale.

"Will you return, sir, as soon as possible?" went on Drake. "The coast is clear now, and the sniper in handcuffs."

He turned from the telephone with a smile.

"You men a bit fogged?" he asked.

"The fogfulness is terrific."

Jack Drake chuckled.

"Good old Inky!" he said. "Same old lingo—seems a jolly long time since I heard it last."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,194.

"My esteemed and absurd Drake—"

"But—but what does it all mean?" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "Wasn't Lord Cavandale here? What—"

"Mr. Locke will explain," said Drake, with a smile. "Excuse me, while I clean up. This make-up on my chivvy isn't wanted any more."

"But where's Mr. Locke?"

"I fancy he's keeping Mr. Parker company in his room for a bit. But Lord Cavandale will be here soon—and then it will be all clear."

In a few minutes Jack Drake had cleaned off all traces of Mr. Robinson, and was seen again as the handsome lad the Greyfriars fellows had always known him. The Ashwood constable watched him with goggling eyes; the juniors with smiling interest.

"Let's go down, you fellows," said Drake; and the Famous Five followed him down to the hall. The Ashwood constable, however, stepped through the opened panel and disappeared along the secret passage.

Pilkington, in the hall, blinked at Drake like a man in a dream. Harry Wharton hastily explained Drake's presence—an explanation that made Pilkington blink still more. Pilkington was in a dazed and almost dizzy state by the time a car was heard to grind up the avenue and come to a halt. When he opened the door to Lord Cavandale Pilkington almost fell down.

"My lord!" he stuttered. "My lord!"

Lord Cavandale smiled.

"It is I, Pilkington," he said.

"But—but—" The butler's eyes almost started from his head. All Pilkington's professional repose had deserted him. "My lord! You—you are indoors—I mean, you were indoors! I—I—"

"You will understand soon, my good fellow," said Lord Cavandale. "Where is Mr. Locke?"

"In Mr. Parker's room, sir," answered Jack Drake. "He is waiting for you."

"And the prisoner?"

"He is there, also."

"Why in Mr. Parker's room?" asked Lord Cavandale in astonishment. "However, I suppose Mr. Locke will explain."

He hurried away to the secretary's room. Jack Drake glanced at the chums of the Remove with a grin.

"You fellows want to be in at the death?" he asked.

"What-ho!" said Bob Cherry.

"Come on, then!"

And Harry Wharton & Co. followed Drake, at the heels of Lord Cavandale. They reached the secretary's room, and the door was opened at their approach by the Ashwood constable.

"Mr. Locke—"

"Great pip!" gasped Bob.

Beyond the constable, a tall, lean figure was visible in the room. It was—or seemed to be—the figure of Lord Cavandale himself.

The juniors stared from one to the other—the newly-returned peer and his double!

From the latter came a laugh.

Ferrers Locke lifted his hand, and the beard and moustache came away from his face. The clean-shaven chin and clear-cut lips of the Baker Street detective were revealed. A jerk, and the heavy eyebrows came off. Yet the face, with the cheeks seamed with great scars, seemed still strangely that of Lord Cavandale's. But the juniors could realise now that the scars were skilful make-up; indeed, it was only the fact that Lord Cavandale's face was deeply scarred that had enabled the Baker Street detective to assume his identity.

"Ferrers Locke!" gasped Bob.

"Quite!" said the detective, smiling.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Harry Wharton in amazement. "It—it—it was you, Mr. Locke—all day—"

"All day!" agreed the Baker Street detective. "Lord Cavandale was kind enough to allow me to borrow his identity in order to run his enemy to earth. It was, of course, his lordship who left last night in the car, under my name."

"I—I—I see!" stuttered Wharton.

"And your plan has been successful, Mr. Locke?" asked Lord Cavandale.

"Perfectly."

"And the man—"

"He is here—in handcuffs!"

Ferrers Locke waved his hand to a crouching figure crumpled in an arm-chair, half hidden by the high back. There was a general movement forward, and all eyes were fixed on the pallid face of the crumpled wretch. And a name dropped from every lip:

"Parker!"

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Man Who was Trapped!

"MR. PARKER!"

Lord Cavandale gasped out the name.

"Parker!" said Harry Wharton blankly.

"My secretary!" said the peer. "Mr. Locke, is—is—is it possible—"

"Quite!"

"Good heavens!"

"My only hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

The wretch in the chair raised his eyes. He gave one stare of deadly rage round at the circle of amazed faces, and dropped them again.

"Good heavens!" repeated Lord Cavandale, aghast. "Parker! Is it possible that you—you— What have I done to you? Why—"

The baleful eyes were lifted again, gleaming with hatred. But the wretch did not speak.

"His motive you already know, Lord Cavandale," said Ferrers Locke quietly, "though you would scarcely have suspected him of it—and I confess that I was equally unsuspecting at first. I was beaten by the fact that the man was evidently not playing a part here—that he was a genuine bookworm; a man who was obviously what he appeared to be; and so far from suspecting him at first, I even engaged his help."

"But why—how—" stammered the peer.

"Only one circumstance directed my attention to him—and that was that, being in charge of the Cavandale documents, it would have been easy for him to obtain possession of the old plan of the Abbey, and make surreptitious use of it. For that reason I observed him; and had he been playing a part here, I should very quickly have placed my finger on him. But he was playing no part—the man is a scholar and an antiquarian, with a genuine enthusiasm for the subject; the last man one would suspect of reckless plunging on horse races. Indeed, I suspect that it was probably from a desire to obtain resources to expend on his favourite hobby that he plunged into reckless gambling on the Turf."

Parker made a movement, but he did not speak.

"A careful watch was kept," resumed Locke, "on all the occupants of the abbey when they stirred abroad. As it happened, Mr. Parker, who was

(Continued on page 28.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,194.

UP, THE ROVERS!



Handcuffed though he was, Philip Brennan bounded for the window and went crashing through it!

By **JOHN BREARLEY.**

(Introduction on next page.)

three months came back to him. And gradually a cast-iron certainty gripped him that now, at least, he could identify one of his foes!

Raising his head, after a pause that had lasted ten aching minutes, he looked the leader of the masked men squarely in the eyes.

"And you really expect me to sign—this?" he asked quietly.

The black head nodded.

"Then you're unlucky. As I told you before, I'm not selling the Rovers' ground—Mr. Henry Sylvester!"

A Devil's Plot!

A BOMBSHELL could not have created greater consternation. Plucking at his hood with shaking fingers, the leader of the trio fell back limply, while the other two half rose from their seats like men in the grip of panicky amazement.

Watching them, Jimmy saw their slit-eyes questioning each other furtively. He was positive now that his chance shot had hit the mark; and if the man facing him was Sylvester, then the other two were probably the men mentioned in the agreement, Smith and Rogers. He wondered if he would know them by sight.

No word was spoken for several seconds until, after an obvious struggle, the chief pulled himself together.

"Who—who did you say?" he blurted.

"You heard!" growled Jimmy. "You dirty hound, so this is why you've pestered me and got so sore because I always refused to sell. I've suspected for some time you were up to some game, but I—"

"That'll do!" To the lad's surprise a curt laugh came from behind the man's cowl. "So you've discovered I'm Sylvester, have you? Well, much good may it do you. Now we're going to untie your right arm. And you're going to sign that agreement!"

"Ha, ha!" laughed Jimmy sardonically.

At his leader's nod, the man with the barked knuckles, who by now Jimmy had placed as the original masked man, rose and quickly freed the youngster's arm. A fountain-pen was thrust into his stiff fingers. A stern voice bade him use it.

"Your signature, please—in ten seconds. Otherwise, you'll be sorry!"

Jimmy's reply was to smash the nib

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,194.

"Sign, Or—"

BEFORE the masked crook could strike again, however, the leader banged on the table.

"Peace!" he snarled. "Now, you young fool, we haven't brought you here for fun—nor do we intend wasting time. We mean business, and if you give trouble—you'll be hurt!"

"Yes?"

"Yes. Are you going to do what you're told or do we have to make you?"

"That depends on what it is!" retorted Jimmy coolly, and the man on his right growled again. Slowly the leader took from an inside pocket a carefully-folded document, which he opened and pushed across the table towards the wary youngster.

"We want you to sign this!"

A grim, eerie stillness followed the words; the three hooded shapes bent forward as one, watching while Jimmy, after a long searching stare at each, dropped his eyes to the paper. It was a parchment foolscap, legally-warded in neat, crabby handwriting and liberally dotted with red seals and a stamp. One glance, and Jimmy received the shock of his life.

Amid silence so intense as to lend added weirdness to the scene, he read through the paper to the end. Even then he could not get the sense of it—the idea was too monstrous. As far as he could make it out, the document was an agreement whereby for the sum of twenty thousand pounds, he, James Alan Brennan, agreed to sell every yard of the land known as Railton Rovers Football Ground, with the stands, buildings and turf thereon—to the Dalmeny Land Society—John Harris and R. W. Rogers, directors!

When at last the full meaning of the words did dawn upon Jimmy Brennan, the whole room and the three men glar-

ing at him so fixedly seemed to spin giddily. He was to sign away the Rovers' ground—his ground—for twenty thousand pounds. And to the Dalmeny Land Society, the company to whom Henry Sylvester, the Railton solicitor, had so strongly urged him to sell just after his father's death. This, then, was the reason he had been kidnapped and brought to this lonely house; the reason for all the risks these masked men had run. But why—why?

The surprise almost stunned him. Was this, too, why his father had been deliberately ruined—why the main stand had been destroyed and his own life threatened? And why was the purchase-price in this Agreement such a tremendous advance on the offer made in the company's first letter, which Henry Sylvester had shown him weeks ago?

Twenty thousand pounds offered for Railton Rovers' ground. But Jimmy won't sell, not even under threat of diabolical torture!

Two-thousand pounds they had offered then; now, after all this, these men were trying to force him to sell for ten times that amount!

Jimmy's sobering senses began to see some glimmer of daylight. There must be something in the Rovers' ground—some really colossal value of which he was ignorant. For surely no business men would take such an appalling gamble, involving manslaughter, forgery, and other hideous crimes, just to obtain possession of an ordinary piece of land.

Amid all the whirling confusion, there came suddenly into the young owner's mind one crystal-clear thought. What lay at the back of all this persecution he could only vaguely guess as yet. But, now that he had seen this agreement, strange little incidents during the past

viciously on the table and fling the pen across the room into the cold gas-fire.

"You thieving mongrel!" he blazed. "I wouldn't sign, not if—"

"I think you will!" cut in the hooded man evenly.

"Think again, then!" A swift thought gave the sturdy youth fresh hope. "Why, you clumsy bunglers, supposing I do sign my property over to you? What could you do with it? You can't imprison me for life these days, in England. I'm bound to get free one day and hound you down, because from to-morrow all the police in the country will be searching for me. Sooner or later they're sure to trace me, and I'll expose you, unless—unless—"

He stopped. There was that in the attitudes of the three men which froze the words on Jimmy's tongue. The answer to his unspoken afterthought glittered in the steely coldness of their eyes. His lips tightened.

"I see," he nodded thoughtfully.

There was to be no escape. Whether the police found him or not, he would never be able to testify against these men. For he knew, as plainly as if they had told him, that as soon as he had signed that agreement they intended to kill him.

The leader's voice, suave as satin, gently broke the tension.

"Precisely. We realise, of course, that in the event of your escape, or release, our work would be wasted. Fortunately—"

He shrugged. "And what d'you think my uncle, friends, everyone, will say when you roll up with that agreement while I'm still missing?" fenced Jimmy desperately.

The other laughed once more.

"My dear fellow, we have thought all that out. If you will honour us by glancing at the agreement again, you will observe it is dated three days ago. Thank you!"—as Jimmy looked swiftly and bit his lip. "Now, after your unfortunate—er—disappearance, you may safely leave the legal part to—h'm—us. We shall produce that agreement when called upon, and prove that it was signed three days before you left. Doubtless your uncle and friends will be very upset that you did not tell them you had sold the ground; but, as far as the Dalmeny Society is concerned, everything will be in order.

"We shall say that you arranged the sale with us by private treaty—screwed us down to a far larger sum than we offered at first—and settled the matter there and then for an open cheque. What you have done with the money since, of course, we shall not be able to say. But possibly we shall hint that the reason for your sudden disappearance is a reluctance to face your friends and employees. Who knows? I trust you follow our plan?"

Jimmy did. Long after the soft voice had died away, the words seemed to echo in the quiet room. He sat rigid, staring blindly ahead while he reviewed the vile, clever plot from every angle. Yes, they had got him tight. Not only was all he had fought for in danger, but his life and his honour, too. The false date and the increase of price in the agreement were fiendish strokes. People—his Uncle Phil, Bill Nye, George Harvey, and the rest—would think he had surrendered to the lure of a comfortable fortune, and bolted secretly rather than

face them with the fact that the Rovers' ground was sold and the club dead!

He gave a little shiver after a while, like a sleeper waking from a nightmare.

"You—you're still overlooking one thing," he muttered. "I haven't signed yet—"

"But you will!"

"I won't!" Jimmy forced a laugh. "Why take all this trouble?" he jeered.

"Surely with such a clever forger as you have in your ranks you could have signed the agreement for me?"

The man on his left glared resentfully at the thrust. But the leader only shook a placid head.

"Unfortunately there has been too much forgery done already. This agreement, when you sign it, will come in for the closest examination. Therefore, we cannot take any risk; we require a cast-iron signature this time!"

"Then I wish you luck!" Jimmy's self-control exploded to shreds, and he fairly roared his defiance.

"You mean you refuse?" asked his opponent silkily. "You'll regret it!"

"Go to blazes!"

Young Jimmy Brennan had declared himself now. Twin devils of spite leered at him through the slits in the man's hood.

"Right—we will!" was the hoarse reply.

And, with the words, the masked man on Jimmy's right jumped briskly to his feet and strode across to the gas-fire.

In a moment every jet was alight; soon the clay rings were glowing fiercely. From the back of the fire-place the masked man produced a slim steel rod. He thrust it into the heart of the fiery glare, and stood back watching with folded arms. A feeling of cold and frantic horror made Jimmy's scalp crawl. Torture!

"You see, we were prepared for your well-known obstinacy, my friend!"

The leader's voice came to Jimmy through the roaring sound of blood in his ears; the youngster's eyes darted round the room, seeking the chance of escape that was not there. Torture! Heaving himself up, he tried to whirl his chair aloft with his free hand, but instantly he was overpowered, forced back into his seat, and held there. The gag was tied over his mouth again.

Of the three crooks, the masked man and his leader seemed utterly unconcerned. The former stood staring down at the heating rod, the latter took out a second pen and laid it methodically beside the fatal agreement. Only the man who had winced at mention of forgery betrayed any fear. Jimmy could feel the hands that pressed him down trembling violently on his shoulder.

An eternity crawled past. Silence filled the room. And all at once the masked man was striding back from the

fire, in his hand the steel rod, bright-red and glowing.

The chief of the gang reached out, taking it from him. Just for a single moment he seemed to hesitate. But at a growl from his accomplice his shoulders twitched in resolution. Then he came slowly towards his prisoner, holding the glowing point level with the boy's left eye as a fencer holds a rapier.

"Now—will you sign?" he whispered.

Jimmy's heart had almost stopped beating. Swift death was one thing—death by ghastly torture another. Yet even in that terrible moment all the stubbornness of his father came to his aid, stiffened his backbone. He faced the fiends, chin up, defiantly.

"I shall take your left eye first, then your face, then, if necessary, your right eye. Will—you—sign? This is your last chance!"

The cruel steel came nearer—nearer. Jimmy felt the heat of it searing his eyeball; the point was less than six inches away now. Madness seized him. With all his might he strained at his bonds, but with little avail.

Still he shook his head.

"Curse you, then!" howled the hateful voice, suddenly devoid of all restraint.

"Take—"

Sm-a-a-sh! Cra-ack!

In a deafening deluge of sound, made a thousand times louder by its sweeping unexpectedness, help arrived. The nearest window smashed inwards, a tongue of fire spat through a gap in the blind. Glass clashed and jangled madly, a revolver-shot cracked, and a scream of awful pain shrieked above the appalling din. Wide-eyed and shaking, Jimmy saw the glaring steel rod clatter to the floor, saw blood spurt horribly from the shattered hand that had held it.

In a half-swoon of agony, the torturer fell backwards across the table, while the masked man leapt forward, snarling deep down in his throat.

But at that moment Tim Osborne's ringing, bitter voice stopped him like a bullet.

"Hands up, you scum! I'll shoot to maim!"

From outside the window a police whistle shrilled, followed by an amazing tramp of many feet.

The men in the room stupidly raised their hands.

Rogues Unmasked!

THUS they stood, trapped in the toils.

Jimmy, almost unable as yet to believe his ears or eyes, clutched the table-edge with his free hand and struggled to his feet.

Rescued!

The sudden change, the nerve-shattering crash of Tim's entry, and the narrowness of his own escape, made his head swim violently. Through the broken window and tattered blind he could see an automatic peering into the room, the squat barrel swaying slowly from one stricken rogue to the other. The leader of the band was sagging gradually at the knees, mumbling and whining with the pain of his hand; the other two stood with hands aloft and eyes savagely blazing.

THE FIRST CHAPTERS BRIEFLY RETOLD.

James Brennan, owner of the Railton Rovers F.C., is robbed of his savings by means of a forged cheque, and then fatally injured by some unknown assailant. Further disasters follow, until Jimmy Brennan, the dead owner's son, is forced to sell his house to Charles Thurgood, manager of the Railton Bank, in order to carry on. Determined, without rousing suspicion, to find out who is at the back of the plot to wreck the Rovers, Scotland Yard connives that Tim Osborne, late of the Canadian Secret Service, should play for the Rovers. Not forgetting his official duties, Tim proves a great asset to the team, and the great day comes when the Rovers succeed in gaining the leadership of the League. The same night, however, young Jimmy is daringly abducted from his bedroom by three masked figures and taken by car to a sinister-looking house some fifty miles from Railton, where he is cross-examined. In answer to his cheeky replies Jimmy's interrogator strikes the boy a vicious blow in the mouth

(Now read on.)

Footsteps pattered in the hall outside. They headed towards the door.

At the sound the tall masked man, hardest and most dangerous of the three, leapt into action like a tiger at bay. One long arm, flashing out, pulled the second man in front of him as a shield; his right hand moved in a streak of white, and his gun cracked its spiteful defiance. Another clatter of glass splashed harmlessly from the window; the man half turned to cover the door.

But he had forgotten Jimmy. Before he could fire again the powerful youngster lurched forward, fighting-mad and hungry for revenge. He had three blows that very night to square up for—and he did so then. In a whistling, bone-crushing "haymaker," his loose right fist flashed upwards, landing on the angle of the masked man's jaw with every ounce of muscle, weight, and soul Jimmy could put behind it.

Crash!

Rising stiffly on his toes, the gunman hung for a moment, pawing feebly, on the brink of oblivion, his gun dropping from a limp hand. Then he crumpled up, hit the corner of the table, and slumped to the floor like a poleaxed steer.

"Nice work, Jimmy!" crooned Tim's calm voice from the darkness.

Crash! went the door. Jimmy looked round, to see three burly men come bursting through at the double. The last of the hooded crooks groaned and collapsed into a chair.

Throwing up the big window, Tim stepped in from the wide ledge outside. He ignored the prisoners—two were helpless, and the third had manacles on his wrists already—and gripped Jimmy with thankful hands. Just as on that night at the Blackholt Quarry, he sliced the ropes from the cramped limbs, then he forced some brandy between the boy's unwilling lips. For Jimmy felt all in, just them. He had stood the racket with the iron pluck that was typical of him; but now it was all over and help had arrived he went weak and groggy.

Under Tim's hands and the stimulating glow of the spirit, however, he recovered presently, shaking his head as a boxer does after a knock-out. A wry grin struggled across his face. He held up a grateful fist.

"Thanks! Just in time again, old son. How on earth did you find me, though?"

"I didn't," murmured Tim surprisingly; then, with a shy, apologetic smile: "Aw'fully sorry, Jimmy; but I've been here all the time!"

The staggering reply made Jimmy stare wide-eyed.

"You—all the time!" he repeated. "But—but d'you mean you watched those brutes—"

"Fraid so, old hoss!" Tim was still apologetic. "Had to, in a way. Wanted to get the full strength of things from their own ruby lips. Had my eye on 'em all the time through that ragged blind. Sorry you've had some shocks, but—well, I knew I could butt in before they did real damage, and—"

"You—you utter, cold-blooded blighter!" snorted Jimmy, grateful no longer. "Watching me outside there while that ghastly steel rod— Ugh!" He shuddered, seeing that last scene in his mind's eye once more. But after a while his grin returned—albeit, somewhat shakily. "Still, I'm glad you've got the beasts, Tim! I—I don't mind anything now!"

"That's the stuff!" beamed Tim. "I knew you wouldn't when I explained. You see," he went on in his quaint,

cool style, "in a way you were always quite safe. We knew all about this stunt; we've had our plans laid for two days. Tell you why later. We found they were after you again, so this time I let them get you. We wanted to catch them stone-cold, and you were the decoy. Don't thank me!"

Jimmy sat open-mouthed, but dumb.

"I've been on the spot all the time," continued his astonishing friend. "When I said 'Good-night!' at Bill Nye's this evening, I didn't go. Mother Nye let me out all right, but I doubled back up the ivy and into your room. I was there when your little friend sneaked in the same way; but he didn't see me, 'cos I was in your wardrobe with the door just barely ajar, and the room was dark."

"Great Scott! But suppose he'd laid me out there and then?" gasped Jimmy.

Tim smiled lightly.

"But I knew he wouldn't, don't you see? You don't think I'd have risked it otherwise, do you? My son, we've had those three beauties 'tailed' for the past month. They haven't done or said a thing we haven't known. We were all ready to follow them as soon as they'd landed you. And now we've landed them—all complete and lovely!"

"And who are they?" muttered Jimmy, looking askance at the dejected prisoners.

The masked man still lay quiet where he had fallen, and the two plain-clothes men stood watchfully over the others, while a third put a rough dressing on the wounded leader's hand.

Tim did not answer at once, but stroked his chin and glanced sideways at Jimmy's flushed face.

"We-ell, I wasn't aimin' to tell you till the mornin'." He hesitated. "You've had shocks enough for to-night. But—"

"Rats!" Jimmy sprang to his feet. "They're my enemies, Tim! And I know one of them already!"

His finger pointed straight at the injured man.

"That's Mr. Henry Sylvester, Tim—the man who called himself my father's friend!"

"Wha-at! Why—"

It was Tim Osborne's turn to betray startled amazement. His keen glance searched Jimmy through and through, gradually changing to grim amusement. He turned at last to his men.

"Pull off their masks, please, sergeant!" he ordered quietly.

At the command the sergeant's hand went out, grasping firmly at the black hood covering the leader's face.

Jimmy braced himself for an ordeal. After all these weeks he was to learn the identities of his secret, bitter assailants.

Inch by inch the cowl came off—and disclosed, not the gaunt features of Henry Sylvester, as expected, but the slabby, pain-distorted face of Charles Thurgood, the Railton banker!

"Oh!"

The boy's jaw dropped; the breath left his lungs in a harsh gasp. But the stunning jolt he had received was nothing to what followed.

Just as deliberately the hoods were dragged from the heads of the other men. Jimmy saw their faces as through a dark, nauseating mist, choking back the sob of horror that rose instantly to his lips.

Standing cowed and furtive between the detectives drooped Philip Brennan. The masked man stretched at his feet was Tony.

His uncle and cousin!

Tim Osborne was just in time with

the chair as Jimmy staggered backwards under the crowning shock of all.

Jimmy never knew how the next few minutes passed. To him they seemed like years. The hammer-stroke of that final double exposure left him sick and shaken—too numb even to think for a while. He could only sit and stare, conscious of sympathetic glances from the detectives, of Philip Brennan's haggard, grey cheeks, and that Tony had returned to his senses and was glaring up at him dazedly.

Aided by Tim's arm, Jimmy wrenched himself at length out of his chair again, savagely biting into lips that persisted in trembling.

"Uncle! Tony!" The words were all he could manage. A wild-beast snarl answered him viciously from the floor.

"Yes—uncle and Tony!" Now that the game was up, his cousin's dark eyes blazed with the light of madness. "That gives little Jimmy a jar—what? You poor, confidin' Willie-boy! We've—"

Tim Osborne snapped angry fingers. "Shut his jaw, and handcuff him now!" he rapped.

If Tony Brennan meant taking defeat that way, some rough handling might bring him to his senses.

But it acted the opposite way, for the moment the men bent to obey the order, Tony went mad.

From his position on the floor he sprang suddenly to his feet, shouting and spitting out curses as he hurled himself at his captors in a cyclone of kicks and punches, his handsome face hideous now in its malignant hatred. Raging and biting like a wild cat, Tony crashed one man down, and tore savagely into the other. The table turned over; a chair followed; Tim Osborne leapt into the fight. Overborne by sheer weight, the writhing South African was swamped, and pinned to earth howling and sobbing alternately. The bedlam was awful—all eyes were glued to the fray. It was then that Philip Brennan came out of his stupor, saw his chance, and took it!

He must have known escape was impossible. Yet, crazed by the disaster, and spurred by Tony's hysterical shrieks, he made a frantic attempt. Handcuffed though he was, he suddenly bounded to the window, brushing by Jimmy, who made no attempt to hold the terrified man, but watched him go, stony-eyed. Tim was the first of the officials to heed the flight, and, shouting an order, he sprang out of the melee, reaching for his gun, just as Philip Brennan left the ground in a headlong jump, ducked his head, and went smash through the blind, window and framework, in a rending, clattering explosion of broken glass and wood.

The watchers in the room paused instinctively as a thin scream of pain came back to them, followed by the thud of a heavy fall. Then Tim led the rush.

"Bet he's crippled himself!" he jerked. "Round the front, one of you, quickly!"

A man dived through the door, the others clambered gingerly through the gaping window and jumped to the garden path a few feet below. Tip-toeing to the window, Jimmy listened with his heart in his mouth.

(Has Jimmy's rascally uncle escaped, or has he killed himself? Don't fail to read next week's instalment of this powerful serial; it'll grip you no end!)

THE SECRET SNIPER!

(Continued from page 24.)

watched with the rest, merely because it is my method to leave no stone unturned, eluded the shadowy apparently by chance. That, and the circumstance that no attack was made on you, my lord, on his absent days, turned my attention to him more particularly; and when he left the abbey on Wednesday, my assistant, Drake, shadowed him and telephoned the results to me. Even at that stage I cannot say that I had a definite suspicion—but my assistant's report left no doubt."

"So, I was watched!" came in a mutter from the crumpled figure.

"You were watched, Parker," said Ferrers Locke. "You were shadowed to a race meeting, where you were seen staking on every race before you proceeded to pay your usual visit to your relatives at Streatham."

"Good gad!" muttered Lord Cavandale.

"That," said Ferrers Locke, "placed me definitely on the track. The dutiful secretary, the methodical librarian, the enthusiastic antiquary, was a reckless plunger on the races—and a most unlucky gambler."

"Knowing, then, that side of Mr. Parker's character—so carefully hidden that I had not suspected it before—I laid my plans," said Locke. "I borrowed your identity, Lord Cavandale, in order to draw him. I dispatched him to London to-day with a fake message to myself."

The wretch in the chair muttered a curse.

"While he was gone I made a careful search of his rooms. I examined his papers. Among them was an ancient parchment, on which was inscribed a plan of the secret passages and sliding panels in the abbey—which I memorised for future use. This was the missing document—and it had been in Parker's possession all the time. It was scarcely necessary to look further for the secret sniper—and the ghost of Cavandale Abbey."

The peer nodded in silence.

"In another locked receptacle," continued Ferrers Locke, "was the monkish

garb he had worn when playing the part of the phantom abbot. In a drawer was a loaded six-chambered revolver. I took the liberty of extracting the bullets from the cartridges."

Parker made a movement.

"That was why—" he hissed between his teeth.

Ferrers Locke smiled faintly.

"Exactly," he assented.

"Among the papers, also, were communications from a firm of Turf accountants," he added, "from which I learned that Mr. Parker had backed Black Prince with eight hundred pounds—a large sum for him—more than a month ago. He stood to lose that sum—probably all he had—if Maharajah ran in the Lantham Thousand. He stood to win nearly three thousand pounds if Black Prince should be the winner. I had guessed his motive—but this made it clear."

He paused a moment.

"When Mr. Parker returned from London this evening I was already aware, of course, that he was the man I wanted. It remained to catch him in the act. He found me in the room where he had already attempted your life, Lord Cavandale—found me there in your character—Lord Cavandale, as he believed. I told him that I was going to bed in a quarter of an hour—and I knew, as well as if he had told me his intention, that within fifteen minutes a shot would be fired from the secret panel."

"Trapped!" muttered the wretch in the chair.

"I had already, from knowledge gained from the plan in Parker's bureau, discovered the secret panel," resumed Ferrers Locke. "I had explored the secret passage, in fact, this afternoon, when other searchers arrived on the spot." He gave Harry Wharton & Co. a smile. "Consequently, as soon as the shot was fired, I opened the panel and was at the scoundrel's heels in a twinkling—much to his surprise. He fired a series of blank cartridges as he fled—ignorant of the fact that they were harmless."

Parker ground his teeth.

"That is all," said Ferrers Locke. "My work here is done; this officer

will take the man to Ashwood on a charge of attempted murder."

The constable dropped his hand on Parker's shoulder. The secretary staggered to his feet.

Lord Cavandale looked at him in sad silence.

"And for such a motive, Parker, you would have taken my life," he said in a low voice. "I have never knowingly treated you ill."

"Fool!" Parker hissed the words. "What was the value of your life? Have you a thought above horses—any idea in your head beyond the Turf! Your life was of no value. With money I could have done great things—great things! They will never be done now—and you—you will live to run horses—in races—fool that you are!"

The constable led him from the room. Lord Cavandale stood in silence for some moments. When he spoke again his voice was low.

"Maharajah will run in the Lantham Thousand," he said, "but the Lantham Thousand will be my last race. Heaven forbid that any action of mine should ever again tempt a man to crime!"

Billy Bunter was indignant in the morning.

He had snored through it all.

He told Harry Wharton & Co. that they were beasts, and added, as an afterthought, that Jack Drake was a beast, too.

Which left all of them quite unmoved.

Still, it was a comfort to Bunter that the strange mystery of Cavandale Abbey was a mystery no longer; the shadow of-peril was gone, and Billy Bunter was able to eat, sleep, and talk to his heart's content, without a worry on his fat mind, until the time came for the Removites to return to Greyfriars for the new term.

THE END.

(Be sure you get next week's MAGNET chums. It will contain the first of a grand new series of Greyfriars yarns, featuring Harry Wharton & Co., entitled: "THE BOY WITHOUT A NAME!" You're on a winner here lads!)

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LOST in Friarale Lane, near Greyfriars, A PERFORMING BLACKBETTER. A handsome reward will be paid for its return, dead or alive, to DICKY NUGENT, GREYFRIARS SCHOOL.

Greyfriars Herald

No. 26.

LAUGH AND GROW FAT.

January 3rd, 1931.

Edited by
HARRY WHARTON,
F. G. G.

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M.P. KICKED OUT OF PARLIAMENT

"Bump Him!" "Chuck Him Out!"

MINISTERS HISSED

There was a stormy meeting of the Remove Parliament yesterday. The Prime Minister, Mr. H. Wharton, regretted to state that the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. P. Todd, was not present.

A Member: "Why not?"

Prime Minister: "I regret to say that I dotted the honourable gentleman's nose this morning, and the honourable gentleman is now in the sanium."

A heated debate ensued. The point under discussion was whether it was legal for the Prime Minister to dot a colleague's nose during an argument. The Speaker, Mr. Johnny Bull, finished the discussion by referring to the Statute Book, where the law is stated: "It shall be regarded as legal for a Minister of State to dot or pull the back of any member of the opposition, but the said Minister may not administer a fearful thrashing without the consent of a sub-committee."



Mr. Harold Skinner (Lab. Member) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Mr. Vernon-Smith, when the Remove were going to have motor-boats instead of scullers.

Mr. Vernon-Smith: "Never."

Mr. Skinner: "Never—never!"

Mr. Skinner: "Yes—for hitherto." (Cries of "Order!")

"Shut up!" "Go on!" "Leave off!" etc.)

The Speaker banged the table with his mallet and said he would move the suspension of the next member who interrupted the proceedings.

Mr. Bolsover: "Hip! hip! hurrah!"

The Prime Minister: "I move the suspension of Mr. Bolsover."

The movement was carried—likewise Mr. Bolsover.

Mr. Redwing asked the War Minister, Mr. Bob Cherry, when they were due to put it across Highlife again.

Mr. Cherry: "Ponsonby is getting cheeky. He snowballed two Remove fellows in Friarale Lane last Tuesday. I have arranged for a strong platoon to waylay Ponsonby shortly and frog-march him all round Kent." (Loud cheers.)

Mr. Snoot: "May I ask the Prime Minister if he has made out the team for Abbotford yet?"

The Prime Minister: "I have. Squiff, Bull, Brown, Cherry, Linley, Todd, Smithy, Nugent, Me, Pentold, Hurree-Singh, (Loud yells, hisses, catcalls and groans.)

Mr. Skinner begged to move that the eleven names just mentioned be chucked out of the team on their necks. ("Hear, hear!")

The Prime Minister: "I beg to move that Mr. Skinner be begged to move."

The proposition was carried and Mr. Skinner hit the passage with the back of his neck.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Frank Nugent, said that, as many of the football clubs were overruled, he should now proceed to collect the money from the defendants.

There was a flash as Fisher T. Fish disappeared from the scene like a rocket. The other members jambed themselves in the doorway. In five minutes the house was cleared.

WHO IS THE BIGGEST LIAR?

Novel Contest

For the first time in history, the Remove held a special fibber's contest. It seemed hard that all the fellows in the Remove who can tell such gorgeous whoppers when needed should get no recognition. Harry Wharton appointed himself judge and the



prize for the best whopper was a pair of gloves.

There were a number of entries and some very good fibs were told.

Mr. Skinner was called upon first. He said:

"This morning, you fellows, I called on Loder of the Sixth and rebuked him. I told him I had heard that he had been playing the giddy goat, and I said how shocked I was. Loder's eyes were full of tears when I finished, and he promised me he would return."

Mr. Wharton: "Great pip!"

Lord Manselverer came next.

"I ran all round the Globe before breakfast this morning," he said. "Can't tell you any more. Too much fog."

Mr. Fisher T. Fish said:

"I calculate I saw a Third-Form kid blubbering in the quad yesterday. I asked the jay what was up, and he said he had lost a couple cents. 'Cheer up, kid,' I said, 'here's a dollar for you.'"

Mr. Snoot came next.

"I called to see Quetchly just now," he said. "Quetchly shook hands with me and said: 'Snoot, you are a credit to this Form, my boy.' 'Not at all, sir,' I answered. 'Yes, you are,' said he. 'You know more Latin than I do, you can do maths better than Mr. (Continued in next column.)"

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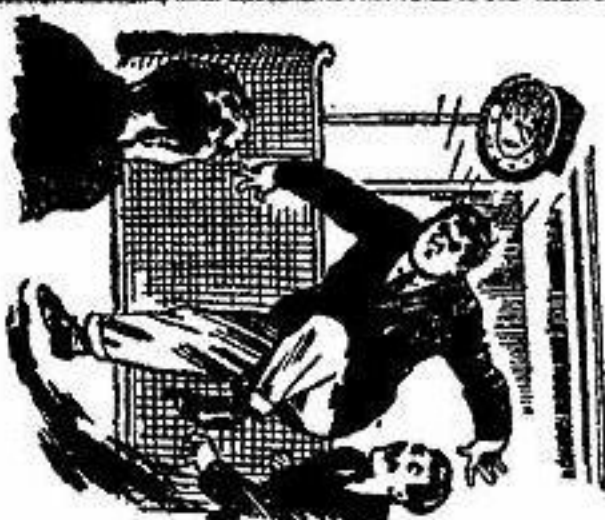
INDOOR GRES RESULT

SIX-A-SID FOOTER

The Great Indoor Sports evening (who overbalanced on the took place on Wednesday afternoon last.)

In the Remove. All the event. The Draughts Tournament fell in the Remove. It seemed hard that all the fellows in the Remove who can tell such gorgeous whoppers when needed should get no recognition. Harry Wharton appointed himself judge and the

Mr. Peter Todd took a good



(Continued from previous column)

Lascelles, and you talk French better than Monsieur Charpentier. I am proud of you, Snoot."

Mr. Wharton was observed to turn slightly green.

"A flag ran into me in passage just now," said Bols Major. "He whined me, and brushed him down, and said: 'Now, sonny, don't rush about so fast, or you'll shilling and walked on.'"

"Great Scott!"

"Meeting a burly great man in Friarale Lane, Alonzo Todd stated, 'I was involved in serious fistical encounter. I threatened me with acute perior discomfort unless I handed a trifling pecuniary emolument. I innocently refused, whereupon he delivered a hard back upon me with violence at my phlegm. I countered with perfect upper-cut which struck him in the roadway, and I walked on, leaving him for dead.'"

"Mum—my hat!"

William George Bunter rose. "I say, you fellows," he said, "you all know that I'm a thorough gentleman—"

"Nuff said!" interrupted Wharton. "Give him the prize which was winning. The crowd Mr. Bunter was present with the gloves, and immediately snatched them for two jammies and half a packet of butts and exciting game."

PUZZLING PUZZLES PUZZLED OUT

Alonzo Todd Helps

I have come across a really very ingenious puzzle this week, my dear fellows. I confess that the answer is a trifle beyond me, but no doubt some of my clever readers will be able to work it out. The puzzle is to ascertain the exact number of leguminous seeds of a mazarine hue which will reach the approximate total of five. (Or, put a little more simply, how many blue beans make five?)

It will be observed at once that this question is the kind of thing to puzzle a Higher Mathematics. No doubt a Senior Wrangler or a Professor of Trigonometry would be able to arrive at the correct solution, but it is a trifle beyond my powers.

Another ingenious puzzle concerns the vaporous activities of a hen. It seems that a hen and a half can lay an egg and a half in a day and a half. How many eggs, the questioner demanded, can six hens lay in six days?

This puzzle is open to serious faults, not only of truthfulness, of probability, but also of inaccuracy. The weak point is seen at once. Half a hen would certainly not lay half an egg. For one thing the yolk and to the law of gravity and run out of the shell, and for another thing half a hen would not be in a state to produce anything, it being patent to the meanest intelligence that the severance of the bird would reduce both halves to a state of complete mortification.

But even supposing that this puzzle is put paradoxically, a serious drawback arises in the fact that we are not told which species of hen is the bird under discussion. It may be any bird. I will grate it fully and categorically in the next issue. (Not while I'm Editor, you won't.—H. W.)



BRING YOUR LOVE AFFAIRS To Auntie Skinner

SAGE ADVICE GIVEN

W. G. BUNTER (Study No. 7) writes as follows: "Dear Auntie, I have fallen in love with a very rich fellow named Lord Mortever, and I want to propose to him that I should share his studly, as I am fadd up with that beast Todd. What shall I do about it?"

Well, my dear Owl, I should begin by sending his lordship a bunch of small love-tokens, like a bunch of flowers, a nosegay of violets or even a bowl of parsnips. After that I should call and propose very humbly to him. If he agrees, you may steal a respectful kiss and move your traps into his study. If not, I should dodge out quickly. I advise you to dodge, anyway.

HORACE COKER (Fifth Form) is still in the coils over Miss Ellis Howl. He says: "I took her to the shynyma to see Charlie Chaplin last Wednesday, but she was trying all the time. What on earth does this mean?"

It means, my dear Horace, that the sight of your face is enough even to make Miss Ellis Howl.

DICKY NUGENT (Second Form) writes bashfully: "Dere Auntie Skinner, I'm in love and I don't know what to do about it. The blushing object of my affection is Mrs. Mimble of the Tuck-shopp. Hitherto she has seemed unmindful of my regard, and she won't even allow me a jam tart on the. How can I tell this blushing maiden of my love?"

Well, Richard, your case moves me to the core. But are you sure it is Mrs. Mimble, or Mrs. Mimble's jam tarts that you really love? So many times in the past the deep, true affection has turned out to be merely cupboard love—and when the cupboard is bare, the love also melts away.

My advice to you is—make love gradually. Begin operations on a Sally Lunn and then on a Mableine, and so on until you reach a Maid of Honour. If you are successful with the latter, you can then turn your attentions to Mrs. Mimble herself.

I shouldn't marry her yet awhile, though. It would be so awkward for poor Mrs. Mimble—beg your pardon, Mrs. Nugent—to confess that she had a husband in the Second Form.

FIRE OUT. BREAK AT GREYFRIARS

C.F.B. IN ACTION



Last week Coker of the Fifth formed the Coker Fire Brigade. The fire-engine was a kind of watering tank on wheels.

Coker pressed Potter and Greene into the Fire Brigade, and he was evidently very pleased with the whole arrangement. He hoped and prayed that there would be a fire at Greyfriars, so that he could show the school what he could do. As if in answer to his prayer, a fire did break out yesterday. It was the woodshed.

The whole school dashed to the spot. We were helping Gooling to try to quench the flames when there was a loud clanging from the direction of the quad.

It was Coker's Fire Brigade. Thundering through the crowd came Coker, Potter and Greene, with the old watering-tank jumping up and down like a racing car. Watched by the admiring crowd Coker fixed his two horses. He took one, Potter the other, and Greene seized the "fire-buckets."

Just then Mr. Quetch came on the scene.

"What is all this commotion, my b— Yalwarpy!"

Swoosh!

The stream from Coker's hose took Mr. Quetch right in the mouth, and knocked his false teeth out on to the ground.

Let us draw the usual curtain. When Mr. Quetch recovered his false teeth and was able to speak, the floodgates of his anger were opened, and the vials of his wrath poured on Coker. They poured on Potter. They poured on Greene. He led them away.

Coker was gated for a month. Potter and Greene were let off. The fire-engine was sold to a scrap-iron merchant. And the woodshed was burned to a cinder.