

Amazing Yarn of "LAND OF LOST PLANES!" STARTS  
Flying Adventure: TO-DAY!

# The MAGNET 2<sup>D</sup>



# THE SHADOW OF THE UNDERWORLD!



Introducing **HARRY WHARTON & CO.**, the Cheery Chums of **GREYFRIARS.**

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### Bunter on Guard!

**G**ET out!"  
"What?"  
"Keep off!"  
"You fat duffer——"  
"Clear!" said Billy Bunter. "Don't jaw! Just clear!"

Harry Wharton stared at Billy Bunter. He was quite surprised.

He had come along to Study No. 12 in the Remove to give Lord Mauleverer a look-in. Mauly's door was shut, and the fat figure of William George Bunter leaned on it in a more or less graceful attitude. Bunter, as he leaned on the door, blinked through his big spectacles, with suspicious blinks, up and down the Remove passage. Bunter really looked as if he were keeping guard over Lord Mauleverer's study.

Several fellows who passed him stared at him, and Bunter's suspicious blinks followed them till they were out of sight. When Harry Wharton came along and stopped, Bunter waved him off with a fat hand.

"You burbling ass!" said Wharton. "What the thump do you mean? Are you wandering in your mind—if you've got one to wander in?"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Get away from that door, ass!"

"Shan't!"

"You fat chump!" exclaimed Wharton. "I want to see Mauly——"

"I know that!" said Bunter. "I know! Mauly doesn't want to speak to you. He doesn't want to see you. Just clear off!"

Harry Wharton lifted his foot—with the idea of removing Billy Bunter out of the way by the quickest and simplest method.

Billy Bunter eyed him warily.  
"Look here, you beast, you get out!" he exclaimed. "I tell you you're jolly well not going to butt in! I think you ought to be jolly well ashamed of yourself!"

Wharton lowered his foot again in sheer astonishment. It really seemed to him that Bunter must have gone "off his rocker." It was well known in the Greyfriars Remove that he had not far to go.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry came down the passage with Johnny Bull and Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "Ready, old bean? Time we got out! Where's Franky?"

"Adsum!" said Frank Nugent, coming up the passage. "Have you called Mauly, Harry?"

"Just going to," answered Wharton. "But there's a fat slug sticking to the door——"

"Look here——" hooted Bunter.  
"Shift, you fat ass!" said Nugent, staring at the Owl of the Remove. "What the thump are you sticking there for, Bunter?"

Bunter did not shift. He remained, as it were, glued to the door. He blinked wrathfully and indignantly at the Famous Five of the Remove.

"I say, you fellows, you can chuck it!" said Bunter emphatically. "It won't wash, see? I'm going out with Mauly this afternoon. You're not! Mauly doesn't want your company; and I don't! I wonder you ain't ashamed to butt in where you're not wanted."

"You burbling ass——" said Bob Cherry.

"You fellows just get out," said Bunter. "You can leave Mauly to me. I'm seeing him through. I've arranged to walk down to Courtfield with him. I've told him so. He doesn't want you."

"My esteemed, idiotic Bunter——" began Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

Bunter waved a fat hand again.

"I mean it," he said. "I may as well tell you plainly that I'm looking after Mauly this afternoon. I know what you fellows are after, and I tell you it won't wash. Disgusting, I call it, greasing after a fellow for his money!"

"What!" roared the Famous Five, with one voice.

"Mean!" said Bunter contemptuously. "Paltry!"

"Why you—you—you——" gasped Johnny Bull, glaring at the fat Owl as if he could have eaten him. "You—you——"

"Get out!" said Bunter. "Mauly's my pal——"

"Does he know?" asked Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mauly's my pal," roared Bunter, "and I'm looking after him! Keeping off fellows who're after his tin, if you want to have it in plain English! I'm not going to see Mauly plundered, I can tell you!"

"Slaughter him!" said Bob Cherry.

"The slaughterfulness is the proper caper!" declared Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "Let us strew the idiotic Bunter bonefully along the passage!"

"I say, you fellows, be decent, you know!" urged Bunter. "Can't you see for yourselves that it's pretty rotten to be after Mauly like this because he's

going down to the bank to cash a cheque?"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Wharton. "Is Mauly going to the bank to cash a cheque?"

The mystery was elucidated now. It was clear, at last, why William George Bunter was keeping guard over Lord Mauleverer's study. When Mauly cashed that cheque at the Courtfield Bank Bunter wanted to be on the scene—and he did not want anybody else on the scene. Bunter had a little way of measuring other fellows by his own measure. When the Famous Five gathered round Mauly's study, Bunter had no doubt—not the shadow of a doubt—what they were after. Bunter saw it all!

"You didn't know, of course?" sneered Bunter.

"No, you fat chump! You see, we don't spend our spare time at keyholes or reading other fellows' letters!" grinned Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry! If you think I saw Mauly's letter from his uncle, you're quite mistaken. He didn't leave it on his table, and I didn't see it when I went into his study to look for the cake. I never went into the study at all."

"Great pip!"  
"I'm going with Mauly this afternoon because he's my pal," said Bunter, with dignity. "I'm going to see that he gets the money safe home."

"It won't be very safe if you're with Mauly!" said Bob, shaking his head.

"Beast!"  
"Well, now you've done your funny turn, Bunter, roll away from that door!" said Wharton. "I want to see Mauly!"

"I jolly well know you do, and I jolly well know why!" sneered Bunter. "And I can jolly well tell you that there's nothing doing! I refuse to allow my pal to be plundered! You're not going to loot Mauly, simply because he's got a cheque for twenty pounds to cash at the bank! I must say you ought to be jolly well ashamed of yourselves! Paltry, I call it! Well, you're not getting away with it, see? Mauly's got a pal to look after him."

"You benighted bandersnatch—"  
"That will do!" said Bunter. He waved a fat hand once more, "shooing" off the juniors like a flock of geese. "Chuck it! I know what you're after, and I'm not having it! Leave Mauly alone!"

And Billy Bunter, folding his fat arms across a podgy chest, leaned on Mauly's door, regarding the Famous Five with a devastating blink.

It was unfortunate that Mauly opened the door from within at that moment—unfortunate for Bunter, at least.

Bunter's weight was not light. He leaned on the door rather like a sack of coke. The moment the junior inside turned the handle the door flew open under Bunter's weight.

"Great gad!"  
"Yarooooh!"  
"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Famous Five.

Lord Mauleverer, in the study, jumped back, his noble nose narrowly escaping the door as it shot open. Billy Bunter landed on his back in the doorway, roaring.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the juniors in the passage.

"Great gad!" gasped Lord Mauleverer. "What—what— Why, it's Bunter! What is Bunter up to? What are you doin', Bunter? Is that a game?"

"Yaroooooooop!"  
"Ha, ha, ha!"  
Lord Mauleverer stared down at the roaring Owl. Bunter seemed to have been damaged by the sudden impact on Mauly's floor. His voice, like the voice of the turtle of old, was heard in the land; and it was heard far and wide.

"Ow! Wow! Beast! You did that on purpose! Rotter! Wow!" roared Bunter. "Rotter! Ow, my back! Wow, my napper! Whooooo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
Lord Mauleverer stepped round Bunter and emerged into the passage. He smiled cheerily at the Famous Five.

"Was Bunter leanin' on my door?" he asked.

"Ha, ha! Yes."  
"Well, it's frightfully careless to lean on a door that opens inwards when a fellow might come out any minute. What the thump did he pick out my door to lean on for?"

"Yaroooh! My napper! Whooop!"  
"You fellows goin' out?" asked Mauleverer. "I've got to trot down to Courtfield—got to call at the bank. If you're goin' that way—"

Harry Wharton laughed.  
"I was coming to root you out," he said. "We're going for a trot—and we may as well go Courtfield way if you're going there. Come on!"

"Yaas, old bean. Jolly glad of your company!" said Mauly.

And his lordship walked down the Remove passage to the stairs with the Famous Five. Billy Bunter sat in the doorway of Study No. 12 still hooting. He rubbed the back of a bullet-head

**Greyfriars School spells a new life for the school-boy cracksman . . . but the menacing shadows of the past haunt him at every turn!**

and forgot for the moment even Lord Mauleverer's cheque from his guardian. The back of Bunter's head had smitten Mauly's floor. Bunter's head was hard, but the floor was harder. The floor did not seem to have suffered; but it appeared that the head had, judging by Bunter's hoots and howls, which went on and on and on like the "unending melody" in Wagnerian music. And Harry Wharton & Co. cheerfully left him to it and strolled out of the House in the bright May sunshine.

**THE SECOND CHAPTER.  
Warm Work for Bunter!**

"SHUT up, Potter!"  
Harry Wharton & Co. grinned.

Not only the familiarity of the voice, but the politeness of the remark, told them that it was Coker of the Fifth who spoke.

Six cheery juniors had turned out at the gates and were starting to walk towards Courtfield, when Coker dawned on them.

Horace Coker of the Fifth was arguing with his motor-bike. The motor-bike was not arguing; it was stonily silent. Potter and Greene of the Fifth were looking on, offering helpful advice.

Harry Wharton & Co. stopped to look on also. Coker was always entertaining when he was starting up that stink-bike.

"I say—" began Greene.

"Shut up, Greene!"  
Helpful advice was of no use to Horace Coker.

Potter and Greene exchanged a glance. They were seeing Coker off for the afternoon on his jigger, after which

they were going to enjoy the half-holiday. They had been seeing him off for a quarter of an hour now, while Coker argued with the jigger. They were getting tired, and perhaps Coker's polished politeness had a wearing effect on them. After exchanging that glance they strolled away.

Harry Wharton & Co. remained. They had plenty of time on their hands on a half-holiday. As for Mauleverer, he was always willing to come to a halt—much more willing to halt than to start again, as a matter of fact. He leaned gracefully on a tree and looked on sleepily.

"Hand me that spanner, Potter! Where's that idiot Potter? Hand me that spanner, Greene! Where's that idiot Greene?" Coker glared round with a fiery eye and spotted the backs of Potter and Greene vanishing into space. "Potter! Greene! Fatheads! Here! Asses! Here!"

Potter and Greene disappeared. Coker breathed hard.

"Where's that spanner? Where's that dashed spanner? Where the thumping thump has that dashed spanner got to? Where—"

"You've got your foot on it, old bean," said Bob Cherry mildly.

"Oh!" Coker removed a large foot and clutched up the spanner. "You fags clear off! I don't want cheeky fags hanging about here! Bunk!"

Coker set to work with the spanner. What he was doing with the spanner was not clear to his audience. Perhaps it was not quite clear to Coker. There was a clashing and a clinking, but no great effect seemed to be produced on the motor-bike.

A Sixth Form man wheeled another motor-bike out of the garage gateway.

It was Lancaster of the Sixth.

Lancaster, the new fellow in the Greyfriars Sixth, was the happy possessor of a motor-bike—indeed, Lancaster seemed to possess anything he wanted. Even Lord Mauleverer, the wealthiest fellow at Greyfriars, did not seem better provided with that useful article—cash—than the new man in the Sixth.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" shouted Bob Cherry as the new senior came in sight. "Help wanted here, Lancaster!"

The handsome senior glanced round and smiled and nodded to the chums of the Remove; then he glanced at Coker.

"Anything amiss, Coker?" he called out.

Horace Coker gave him a glare. There was no doubt at all that Coker needed help, but Coker was the last man in the world to admit as much.

But the cheery, good-natured smile on the handsome face of Dick Lancaster was disarming. Coker's rugged brow cleared.

"Oh, no!" he answered. "I know all about motor-bikes. I don't fancy there's any jigger that I couldn't manage. Still, you might have a look at it if you like."

"Right-ho!"

Lancaster of the Sixth left his own machine by the roadside and came over to Coker. Harry Wharton & Co. looked on with interest. Lancaster had deft hands with a machine—quite unlike the great Coker, whose fingers all seemed to be thumbs when he was handling anything. The juniors had no doubt that Lancaster would solve the difficulty that had brought perspiration to the brow of Horace Coker and a sharp edge to his temper.

Coker looked on rather grimly.  
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He wanted that bike to go, but at the same time he would be rather incensed if another fellow got it to go when he couldn't. That was Horace Coker all over.

Chug, chug, chug, chug!  
The stink-bike began to talk. Lancaster gave the Fifth-Former a cheery smile.

"All sereno now," he said. "It was only—"

"I know what it was," interrupted Coker. "I should have had it all right in another tick."

Coker glared at the Sixth Form man for contradiction. But Lancaster only nodded amiably.

"No doubt," he agreed. "Well, here you are."

"I don't want teaching about motor-bikes!" added Coker.

"Quite!" agreed Lancaster.

The soft answer turneth away wrath. Coker of the Fifth condescended to smile.

"Thanks!" he said—quite graciously for Coker.

"Not at all!" said Lancaster, and he walked back to his own machine, mounted, and whizzed away in a cloud of dust.

Coker followed on, chug-chugging off at a great rate.

"Well, that's that!" remarked Harry Wharton. "Come on."

The two motor-cyclists disappeared in the distance, and the chums of the Remove walked on, Lord Mauleverer rather reluctantly detaching himself from the tree.

"I say, you fellows!"

A fat figure came labouring after the Removites. Long minutes had been spent in watching Coker's performance—and delays were dangerous. Billy Bunter was in the offing again.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Bunter!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Run for your life, Mauly!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you beast! I say, Mauly, old man, don't hurry! I'm coming with you, old chap!" gasped Bunter.

It was not Lord Mauleverer's way to hurry, but if anything could have made the schoolboy earl put on speed it would have been the menace of Billy Bunter's fascinating society. Lord Mauleverer sighed.

"I say, you fellows, you can clear off!" said Bunter. "I'm going to Courtfield with Mauly. You want me, don't you, Mauly?"

"Not at all, old bean."

"Oh, really, old chap—" Bunter blinked at him reproachfully. "I've turned down Smithy this afternoon for your sake. He wanted me to go out in a car with him. Lancaster of the Sixth wanted to take me on his motor-bike, but I told him I was sticking to you, and—"

"Oh gad!"

"If you'd like me to clear off, Mauleverer—" said Bunter, with a great deal of dignity.

"Yaas."

"I mean, come on, old fellow! Like to take my arm?" asked Bunter.

Lord Mauleverer grinned, and the Famous Five chortled. Mauly was rather tall and slim; Bunter was short and anything but slim. Walking arm-in-arm would have been a really difficult process, and certainly worth watching as a performance.

"Oh, no!" gasped Mauly. "Oh dear! I—I say, Bunter, if Smithy really wanted you this afternoon—"

"I hope you don't doubt my word, Mauly."

"Oh, nunno! But there he is, just coming out of gates. Cut off and let him have it—I mean, join up with him!"

"I don't care much for the Bounder's company, Mauly. After all, you're my best pal, ain't you?"

"Am I?" groaned Lord Mauleverer.

"Yes, old chap! Come on!"

Lord Mauleverer, not looking happy, came on. Bunter trotted by his side, giving the Famous Five ferocious blinks as they followed on. Although it would have been quite incomprehensible to Bunter had he realised it, Harry Wharton & Co. were not "after" Mauly's cash, and did not care a bean whether he was going to cash a cheque or not that afternoon. They liked old Mauly, and considered that it did him good to yank him out of the House to exert himself a little. But in the Famous Five Billy Bunter saw five rivals for the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table.

Blinks having no effect on them, Bunter broke out at last into angry and scornful eloquence.

"I say, you fellows, will you walk another way? Mauly doesn't want you to walk his way—do you, Mauly?"

"Yaas!"

"Well, I don't want them to walk my way!" snorted Bunter. "I say, you fellows, can't you take a hint? Clear off! I tell you I don't want you to walk my way!"

"We couldn't walk your way if we tried!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "You walk like an over-fed porpoise! We couldn't walk that way."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't mean that, you silly ass!" hooted Bunter. "I mean—"

"Never mind what you mean, old fat man! Put it on Mauly—we're going to cover some ground before we get into Courtfield."

"Yaas, old bean."

The Famous Five accelerated. Mauly accelerated to keep pace, Bunter had to accelerate or to be left behind. He accelerated.

"I say, Mauly, don't hurry! Stop! Hold on! I say, I'm getting out of breath!" gasped Bunter. "Go slow, old chap!"

"I'm keeping up with the fellows, you know."

"You don't want to keep up with them."

"I do, old fat bean!"

"Look here, I shan't keep on if you're going to walk like a blinking race-horse!" roared Bunter.

"Take a rest, old fat man."

"Oh, really, Mauly—"

Lord Mauleverer generally sauntered in a leisurely way. But there were occasions when he could walk fast. This was one of the occasions.

Bob Cherry's long legs set the pace. The other fellows kept level. Bunter's little fat legs had to go like clockwork.

He trotted, he panted, he puffed, and he blew! It was a warm afternoon—very warm for May. William George Bunter began to feel that he would have earned those crumbs from the rich man's table by the time they fell to his share.

The cheery bunch of juniors turned from the main road and followed the Woodend footpath. As this took them several miles out of the direct way to Courtfield, the prospect was awful for Bunter.

He rolled on in perspiring pursuit. On the village green at Woodend Bunter had reached a point when flesh and blood could stand no more. He halted, gurgled for breath, and brushed flies

from a face that streamed with perspiration.

"I say, you fellows! Stop! We can get some ginger-pop at the inn here! I say, it's my treat! Stop!"

Six juniors walked cheerily onward.

"Mauly, old man—"

Lord Mauleverer seemed afflicted with deafness. The Famous Five walked on, and Mauly walked on with them.

"Beasts!" gasped Bunter.

By the way the juniors were going it was several miles by leafy lanes to Courtfield. Bunter gave it up. He stood and mopped a streaming brow, and glared after six disappearing forms till they vanished among green hedges. Then he rolled to the Woodend Inn in search of ginger-pop. And Lord Mauleverer, after all, arrived at the bank without Bunter.

## THE THIRD CHAPTER.

### An Unexpected Meeting!

**B**ILLY BUNTER grunted.

He was feeling extremely irritated.

He had walked over two miles that warm afternoon. On a warm afternoon two yards were enough for Bunter.

He was hot, he was tired, he was perspiring. And Lord Mauleverer, with his guardian's cheque in his pocket, had disappeared over the horizon.

It was all the fault of those beasts, Harry Wharton & Co. Bunter felt sure that they had deliberately walked a long way round in order to shake him off before Mauly got to the bank. Just as if they suspected that a fellow was after a fellow's tin!

They were beasts, and Mauly was a beast; in fact. Bunter felt, as he had often felt before, that he was the only really decent fellow in a beastly world.

There was still balm in Gilead, so to speak. Bunter had a few coppers in his pocket, and there was ginger-pop at Woodend Inn, and in his present warm and dusty state, ginger-pop was grateful and comforting. Bunter rather disliked spending his own money on it, but there was no help for that, and he rolled to the inn, to consume exactly as much ginger-pop as could be obtained for five pennies and two halfpennies.

Outside the ivy-clad inn a motor-bike was standing, and Bunter stopped and blinked at it. He was not in the least interested in motor-bikes, as a rule, but this one looked familiar. In fact, he recognised it as the handsome and expensive jigger of Lancaster, of the Sixth.

"Lancaster's bike!" murmured Bunter. "Then he's here."

He had seen Lancaster of the Sixth start on his motor-bike. He had not given him a thought since. Now he gave him some.

Dick Lancaster, evidently, had buzzed to Woodend on that jigger, and stopped at the inn. He was there now, as his bike was there. Coker of the Fifth would cover unnumbered miles when he was out on his stink-bike; but the new man in the Sixth, apparently, was content with a very short run.

If he was going back to the school when he left the inn Bunter saw no reason why he should not give him—William George Bunter—a lift. It would save Bunter a long and weary walk, which was a matter of the first importance. And Lancaster was a good-natured chap, and might do it. Bunter had met him in the holidays, before he came to Greyfriars School, and he

considered that that gave him some sort of a claim on the Sixth-Former.

That was Bunter's first thought. His second was that Lancaster had no doubt stopped at the inn for refreshment. What else could he have stopped for? Bunter wondered whether he could get on in that scene. After all, he knew Lancaster—had known him before he came to Greyfriars—and the chap was frightfully good-tempered and civil for a Sixth-Former. Anyhow, it was worth trying on. At the very worst, Lancaster could only kick him—and Bunter had been kicked before, many a time and oft.

Bunter rolled into the shady inn, with an eye open for Lancaster, behind his big spectacles.

The Greyfriars senior was not to be seen, and Bunter quenched his thirst with ginger-beer. Having parted with his coppers, he next inquired of the waiter for Lancaster.

"Friend of mine here," explained Bunter. "His jigger's outside. I suppose he's about?"

"The young gentleman's in the garden, sir," answered the waiter. "Both of them at the table under the oak, sir."

"Both?" repeated Bunter.

There was only one of Lancaster, that was certain.

"The young gentleman and the friend he met here," further explained the waiter.

"Oh!" murmured Bunter.

He rolled into the long inn garden.

Lancaster, of the Sixth, it seemed, had biked over to Woodend to meet somebody. Bunter wondered who that somebody was. Nobody had visited the new man at the school since he had come at the beginning of the summer term. If the senior was meeting a friend at the inn, it was extremely unlikely that he would want a fat Lower School fag butting in. Such considerations as that, however, did not bother Bunter. He was not a sensitive fellow.

He rolled along, looking for Lancaster. He heard a clink of a ginger-beer bottle touching a glass, and caught the scent of smoke.

The next moment he sighted Lancaster and his friend.

At a little table under a spreading oak-tree, far down the garden, the handsome Sixth-Former of Greyfriars sat, with a glass of ginger-beer in his hand and a thoughtful moody look on his face.

That moody look drew a second blink from Bunter.

Lancaster, at Greyfriars, always looked cheery and good-humoured; like a fellow who had never a trouble on his mind and never dreamed of having any. So far as most Greyfriars fellows could see he had been specially favoured by fortune, and had nothing to grouse about.

Handsome, athletic, wealthy, popular, a great man at games, a good man in class, friends with nearly everybody he met, Dick Lancaster seemed a good deal like a spoiled child of fortune; and if there was a fly in the ointment, no one would have suspected it from his looks—at the school.

Now he looked as if black care sat heavy on his young shoulders; as if he had dropped a mask, now that he was out of sight of the little world that knew him day by day.

His companion at the table was a fat man of middle age, with a shiny, greasy complexion and bright, sharp, black eyes. He was smoking a large cigar.

He was speaking as Bunter came up, and his voice sounded as oily and greasy as his looks.

Bunter was leaning on the door of Mauly's study, regarding the Famous Five with a devastating blink, when the handle was suddenly turned from the inside. The door flew open, and the Owl of the Remove shot backwards, roaring!



"I've come here to talk sense, Dick! I tell you—"

"Oh, chuck it, Sugden!" said Lancaster, with a weary gesture. "I'm fed-up with it—fed-up to the back teeth!"

"I tell you, Dick—"

Lancaster made a gesture. His eyes, over his glass of ginger-beer, had fallen on the fat form of Billy Bunter.

Sugden broke off instantly. He glanced round, his black eyes glinting at the Owl of the Remove.

"Is that a Greyfriars boy, Dick?" He spoke in a whisper, which Bunter was not near enough to hear.

"Yes."

"What is he doing here?"

"How should I know?"

"Get rid of him!"

Mr. Sylvester Sugden, alias Slimy Sugden, rose from the table and strolled away up the garden, blowing out cigar-smoke. Bunter rolled on, and Lancaster gave him a smile. Black care, if it haunted the Sixth-Former, was out of sight now, as if the accustomed mask had been replaced.

That smile reassured Bunter. He

rolled on, and dropped into Mr. Sugden's vacant chair.

"Fancy meeting you here, Lancaster!" he remarked.

"Taking a walk?" drawled Lancaster, with much more civility than any other Sixth-Former of Greyfriars would have shown to a fag who had the cheek to sit down at his table unasked.

"That's it," said Bunter. "I saw your bike, and came in to look for you." Lancaster stared at him.

The new man in the Sixth had, perhaps, his own reasons for adopting pleasant manners, even towards so inconsiderate a person as Bunter of the Remove. But he was, after all, a Sixth Form man, and Bunter's cheek was really intolerable.

Loder of the Sixth, or Walker, would

have kicked the fat and fatuous Owl across the garden; and even good-natured old Wingate would have given him a look that would have sent him scuttling away lest worse should befall him.

"Did you?" said Lancaster, very dryly.

"Yes! I say, I see you've got ginger-pop here," said Bunter. "Mind if I help myself?"

"Yes," said Lancaster briefly. This was rather discouraging. It seemed that there was a limit even to Lancaster's good-natured tolerance.

"I was thinking you might give me a lift back to school on your jigger," said Bunter, with rather less assurance.

"Were you? Then the sooner you leave off thinking such impudence the better. Bunter! You'd better cut!"

"It's rather a long walk back—"

"Then the sooner you start, the better!"

"Oh, really, Lancaster—"

Sugden, at a little distance, was smoking his cigar under a tree. Either by accident or intention, he kept his

face turned away from the Greyfriars junior, and Bunter had only a view of his portly back.

"I—I say, Lancaster, as—as we met in the hols, you know—" stammered Bunter. "I say—"

Lancaster seemed to control his growing irritation. The smile returned to his face.

"Help yourself to the ginger-pop, kid," he said. "It's a dry day. Then you can cut—you've interrupted my talk with Mr. Robinson."

Bunter did not need asking twice. But as he helped himself to the ginger-beer he blinked curiously at Lancaster.

Evidently the Sixth Form man was unaware that Bunter, as he came down the garden, had heard him address the greasy man as "Sugden."

Lancaster, apparently, wished to keep his "friend's" name a secret from the tattling Owl of the Remove, and Bunter wondered why.

He finished the ginger-beer, and bestowed an inquisitive blink on Mr. "Robinson." Sugden still stood with his back towards them, smoking.

It came as rather a shock to Bunter to realise that Lancaster was telling an untruth. Bunter's own "whoppers" were numberless as the sands on the sea-shore; but they did not shock Bunter. But, somehow, he had taken it for granted that the magnificent Lancaster was far above such things.

"I say—" he began.

Lancaster looked restive. Bunter rose from the table. Good-tempered as Lancaster always was, Bunter was aware that he was asking to be kicked; and he did not want what he was asking for.

"Cut!" said the Sixth-Former.

Billy Bunter rolled away rather reluctantly. He was curious, and he was inquisitive. As Lancaster's affairs did not concern him in the very least, he

was, naturally, deeply interested in them. But there was a look in Lancaster's eyes which warned him that he had better not try the good temper of the Sixth Form man too far.

He blinked back before he left the inn garden. Sugden had stepped back to the oak-tree, and was seated at the table again, in talk with the Greyfriars senior.

Bunter would have given a good deal to hear what they were talking about. He wondered with intense curiosity who this greasy-faced man was whom Lancaster had come to Woodend to meet, and whose name he did not desire a Greyfriars junior to know.

As he blinked back Lancaster glanced after him, a gleam shot into his eyes, and he half rose. Bunter jumped and went his way in a hurry. It dawned on his fat brain that if he lingered a kicking would be the next item on the programme; and Billy Bunter departed in haste, un-kicked.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

### The Crooks I

**S**LIMY SUGDEN did not seem to be watching Billy Bunter, but a corner of his keen eye was on the fat junior till he disappeared. Lancaster sat frowning; the greasy man smoked silently and thoughtfully for a few minutes. He was the first to speak.

"I'd better see you farther from the school after this, Dick. I suppose that young mug doesn't matter; but—"

"He is a tattling, cackling young sweep!" grunted Lancaster. "Still, all he can tattle is that he saw me talking with a man named Robinson. I mentioned the name casually."

Slimy Sugden grinned.

"I thought this little village was far

enough to be out of the way of Greyfriars men," said Lancaster. "Still, we can't be too careful—if I have to see you again, Slimy."

"If!" repeated Sugden, raising his eyebrows. "I don't see any 'if' about it, Dick. We have to keep in touch."

Lancaster was silent. The eyes of the "fence" watched him stealthily. Sylvester Sugden, money-lender, receiver of stolen goods, thief, and trainer of thieves, was already well aware that the schoolboy crook was kicking over the traces.

Greyfriars had had an unexpected effect on the "Wizard"; he seemed to be forgetting that he was the light-fingered cracker of safes, and to fancy that he was a schoolboy like the rest. And the sooner Richard Lancaster got that idea out of his head, Slimy considered, the better. He had not sent Lancaster to Greyfriars "for his health."

"We'd better have this plain, Dick," said Sugden. "You know why you're at a Public school—we needn't go into that. It's a good thing for you, as well as for me, and, believe me or believe me not, I was thinking more of your advantage than of my own when I planned it. I may be a bad hat, Dick, but I haven't been bad to you."

"You only made me a thief and a breaker of the law!" said Lancaster, with bitter sarcasm. "Only that!"

"What else could I make of you?" "I suppose you could have left me alone," muttered Lancaster. "Goodness knows, I wish you'd leave me alone now."

"Now that you're a Greyfriars boy—or man, as you call it in your school jargon," said Sugden, "now that you've had all the benefit of what I could do for you. But if I'd left you alone when 'Handsome Lancaster' of the Loamshire Regiment was killed on the Somme, and you came into the hands of a drunken wastrel, your uncle, what would have become of you then? Who had you taught all you know, gave you all that made you the splendid athlete you are now—fit to cut a fine figure at a school like Greyfriars? Could you have dreamed of entering the school without my help? If I've made you a crook, Dick, I've made you everything else that you are, for without my help you would have sold papers in the gutter, and you know it."

"I know it!" muttered the Greyfriars senior miserably.

"And that was before you became of any use to me or to the gang, Dick. I stood your friend, for your uncle's sake, for many years before you were able to make any return, before I ever discovered that you had the power to make any return."

"I know it!" repeated Lancaster.

"Well, then—"

"I'm not ungrateful, Slimy," said Lancaster, with a sigh. "I know what you've done for me, and I know that it was unselfish, in the beginning, at least, though there are plenty who would laugh at the idea of Slimy Sugden having a human heart in his body. You could only train me your own way, I suppose, and at least you made me a success. But—"

"But what?"

"Oh, it's no good talking!" said Lancaster, with a weary gesture. "I'm what I am. If I could change the future—I can't undo the past! And I can't change the future! Let it drop."

"The sooner it drops the better," said Sugden. "This is only a fit, Dick, and it will pass. Once a crook, always a crook."

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"Don't I know it!" muttered Lancaster bitterly.

He gave Sugden a sudden sharp look. "Your coming here, Sugden—does it mean that—that you want me? You've got a job for the Wizard's fingers again?" He shivered.

"No; I've business in this quarter—near Courtfield, but you're not in it, Dick. It's up to Ratty."

"Ratty the Rogue!" muttered Lancaster. His handsome face paled a little. "That means motor-bandit work. That's his line."

"You need ask no questions about it, Dick; it's not your line, and you're not wanted to help. You cannot say I've ever asked you to take a hand in a job where a gun may be used."

"Ask me if you like—I should refuse."

"I shall never ask you, at any rate. You've kept clear of that, and you shall always keep clear. But I came here chiefly to speak to you about the job at the school. You butted in and stopped the Weasel."

Lancaster's eyes blazed.

"I told you that the school had to be left alone! You promised me it should be cut out. I stopped the Weasel, and I can tell you that I came within an ace of handing him over to the police."

"Friends of yours?" asked Sugden, with bitter satire.

"I tell you, Sugden, I mean it! I came very near to it, and if the Weasel's told you all he's told you that he came near cracking my skull with a jemmy. I don't blame him—we're confederates, and I turned on him. But I'd do the same again, and next time, Slimy, if there is a next time, the thing goes as far as the police. I mean every word of it! Touch the school again and I throw up everything, and shout out the whole truth."

"What is the school to you?"

"You wouldn't understand! To you it's only a crib to be cracked," said Lancaster. "I'm trusted there, but to you that only means that it's an easy job! I'm liked there, but you can't see that that makes any difference. I'm not going to try to make you understand. But I tell you, fair and square, that if the school isn't cut out, the game's up for the whole gang."

"You—a squeaker!" said Sugden, smiling.

"I mean it! I owe you a lot, Slimy, but I'll put Scotland Yard on you if you don't let Greyfriars alone."

Sugden waved a greasy hand.

"I'm giving you your head, Dick, so far as that goes. Greyfriars is let alone. But you've made an enemy of the Weasel."

Lancaster laughed contemptuously.

"By the way," went on Sugden casually, after a pause. "There's a rather big place near Courtfield called Hogben Grange. If you get an opportunity, you might visit the place, and look round. Quite an interesting old place."

Lancaster's lip curled.

"I understand," he said, in a low voice.

Sugden threw away the stump of his cigar and rose. He looked at his watch.

"Time I was moving on," he remarked. "I've got an appointment a bit later. Good-bye, Dick!"

They shook hands, and parted.

Mr. Sylvester Sugden walked away with a portly, ponderous tread. Dick Lancaster remained a long time at the table under the oak after his companion had gone.

Greyfriars schoolboy, First Eleven man, with a University career before him on the one hand. Crook and

cracksman, the light-fingered Wizard, on the other! It was a black and bitter contrast, and it was no wonder that the handsome face was clouded as the hapless boy thought of it.

But he shrugged his shoulders at last, and rose and went round the inn for his motor-bike.

His clouded face brightened as he rode away. It was a good jigger, and he handled it well. He rode with breathless speed, enjoying the rush, covering many a long mile of hill and dale, before he turned homeward at last. His homeward way to Greyfriars lay through the town of Courtfield, and he slowed as he came into the old High Street.

He smiled a little as he saw a burly figure on another motor-bike ahead of him. It was Coker of the Fifth, also on his homeward way through Courtfield, zigzagging merrily in his well-known style. Coker was a score of yards ahead of Lancaster as they came down the High Street between the bunshop and the bank. And when there came suddenly, sharply, through the hum of traffic, a loud, whip-like crack, Lancaster fancied for a moment that Coker's tyre had gone. The next moment he knew that it was a pistol-shot that he had heard.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### The Bank Raid!

BOB CHERRY chuckled.

"Nice walk, Mauly?" he remarked.

"Oh, rippin'!" gasped Lord Mauleverer.

"Enjoying life, old bean?"

"Fine!" gasped his lordship.

Billy Bunter had been shaken off at Woodend; that was Mauly's only comfort. Miles had passed under the feet of the walkers since then.

Harry Wharton & Co. were good walkers. They enjoyed that long ramble by woody paths and leafy lanes in the bright May sunshine. The beautiful countryside of Kent was beginning to put on its summer dress; sights and sounds and scents were delightful. Mauly, no doubt, would have been a good walker had anyone ever invented a method of walking by sitting down and not moving. What he did not like about a walk was the locomotion. Long before the juniors turned into the streets of Courtfield his lordship was wondering whether his noble legs were going to drop off.

"Pity we had to cut it short!" went on Bob.

"Did—did you cut it short?" almost groaned Mauleverer.

"Yes; we'd have put on another five miles—"

"Oh gad!"

"Only we wanted to get you to the bank before it closed," explained Bob. "That's why we cut it short."

"Good gad! I'm glad you thought of that, old bean! I'm jolly glad you didn't cut it long!" ejaculated Mauleverer. "Not if that's what you call cutting it short! How many miles have we done?"

"About five," said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Leagues, you mean?" asked Lord Mauleverer. "If they were miles they were dashed long ones. But here we are at last."

The juniors stopped outside the bank. "We can get a taxi home when I come out of the bank, you men," said his lordship anxiously.

Bob Cherry shook his head.

"Waste!" he said severely. "You've got legs, haven't you?"

"I don't feel as if I have!" groaned Mauleverer. "I feel as if I've got two big aches. Still, we'll walk back, if you like. We can get tea of the bunshop before we start back. It's just over the way. You fellows comin' in or waitin' at the tuckshop?"

"Oh, we'll bag seats over the way," said Harry.

"Right-ho!"

Lord Mauleverer went slowly up the granite steps of the bank. The Famous Five crossed the pavement, to cross the street.

As they did so, a dark blue saloon car drew up sharply. It was driven by a small man whose ferret-eyes were almost hidden by the peak of his chauffeur's cap. Another man was in the car—a man with a pointed black beard and a foreign look.

The car came up so suddenly, and stopped so sharply, that the juniors, about to step off the pavement, jumped back.

The door flew open, and the black-bearded man jumped out, and ran up the steps of the bank, disappearing in at the swing doors at the same time as Lord Mauleverer—his movements being much swifter than those of his lazy lordship.

"My dear man, do you want to fill the local hospital?" said Bob Cherry politely, to the driver of the dark blue car. Bob had had a foot off the pavement when the car rushed up. He had jerked that foot back only in time.

The chauffeur glanced at him, with sharp ferret eyes under the peak of the cap, but did not speak. Bob's glance at him was casual, but the next moment it became fixed in surprise.

"The jolly old Weasel!" he ejaculated.

The chauffeur gave a start.

All the Famous Five stared at him. They remembered that ferret face; the sly, shifty face of the man they had seen meet Lancaster of the Greyfriars Sixth; the man who, had they only known it, was the burglar who had entered Greyfriars, and had been defeated by the new senior, and had escaped. The juniors did not know that. But they knew the Weasel's face, and knew that he was acquainted with Lancaster of the Sixth.

The Weasel, from what Lancaster had said, was an old servant of his family, who was pestering him to get a job. It looked as if the man had got a job now.

Either the man did not, or did not choose to recognise the juniors. After that stare, they gave him no further attention.

They moved along the pavement, to cross round the end of the saloon car. A motor-bike came chug-chugging along, distant, but very audible.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, there's jolly old Coker!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Let him pass, for goodness' sake! Nobody in the road is safe from Coker on a stink-bike—or on the pavement, for that matter."

Chug! Chug! Chug!

Horace Coker came merrily on. At a little distance behind him, the juniors saw Lancaster of the Sixth. Both were still at a good distance, but the juniors waited.

Crack!

Sharp and whip-like, came the crack of a revolver, from the direction of the bank.

The juniors jumped.

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"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What the thump—"

"Was that a tyre?" exclaimed Nugent. "It sounded—"

"It was a shot!" said Johnny Bull.

"Who the dickens is taking pot-shots in Courtfield High Street?" ejaculated Bob. "What—"

"It's from the bank—" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"But what the thump—"

Crack!

It was another whip-like report, unmistakably a pistol-shot, and unmistakably from the bank.

"It's a raid!" yelled Bob. "A hold-up at the bank! Come on!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Bob started running for the bank steps. As he did so, the swing doors moved, and a man came running out.

It was the black-bearded, foreign-looking man who had alighted from the saloon car. Bob almost collided with him.

"What's up in the bank?" he shouted.

"Run!" panted the black-bearded man. "Run for your life!"

He ran on, across the pavement, and leapt into the saloon car. In an instant the Weasel had set it in motion, and it shot away down the High Street, dashing at a reckless speed through the traffic.

"Help! Police!"

Lord Mauleverer came racing down the bank steps. His lordship did not look like a slacker at that moment.

"Police! Help! Stop him!" yelled Mauleverer.

"Stop whom?" shouted Wharton.

"Man with a pistol—man with a black beard!" panted Mauleverer. "He's raided the bank, and wounded two men—"

"Great Scott!"

"Stop him!"

"He's gone!" yelled Bob. "He passed me—I thought he was running away from the shooting—"

"He's gone in the car!" roared Johnny Bull. He pointed to the dark-blue saloon car, vanishing at a terrific speed down the street.

"Oh gad! Police!" yelled Mauleverer.

Two constables were running up from different directions. From the open doors of the bank came a shouting and calling. A hatless man ran out, waving his arms and shrieking.

Harry Wharton & Co. made a dash into the road. It was hopeless to attempt to reach the car in which the bank-robber was fleeing, however.

Chug! Chug! Chug! Coker was arriving on the spot.

"Get out of the way, you potty young idiots!" roared Coker of the Fifth, angrily and indignantly. He glared at the juniors in the road.

"Coker!" yelled Wharton. "Coker! After that dark blue car—" He raced along beside Coker, and yelled at him. "See that car—it's a bank hold-up—they've shot two men—after that car—"

Coker of the Fifth, as a rule, was not quick on the uptake. But he caught on now. A score of voices shouted, as well as Wharton's, and Horace Coker understood.

He did not reply, but he let out his bike and fairly flew after the saloon car. The next instant, Lancaster was on the spot.

Harry Wharton & Co. yelled the news to Lancaster as he shot by. He made no sign, but they had no doubt that he understood. Lancaster went whizzing after Coker, both of them in pursuit of the dark blue saloon car.

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Car and motor-bikes vanished from sight, in the midst of a roar and buzz of excited voices.

"My hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "My only hat! Who'd have thought it! I say, Coker will spill himself somewhere, but Lancaster will hang on to that car. Lancaster's the man to do it."

"What-ho!" said Johnny Bull.

"Jolly lucky they were passing," said Harry. "If they keep in sight of the car, the scoundrels may be run down."

"The esteemed and ridiculous Lancaster will not lose sight of the excellent rascals," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Let's see what's going on in the bank," said Nugent.

"Let's!" agreed Wharton.

The juniors turned back. Two or three cars were already starting in pursuit of the bank-robbers, though the dark-blue car had so good a start, that pursuit did not seem hopeful. But the whizzing motor-bikes were close behind the fugitives as they swept out of Courtfield, and there seemed a good chance that they would be kept in sight and stopped somewhere along the road. The telephone was already at work.

The police were in the bank now, and the juniors were not allowed to enter. But they learned that two men had been wounded by the desperate rascal who had raided the bank, and that he had escaped with a bundle of banknotes for a large sum. The quiet town of Courtfield was humming and throbbing with excitement; seldom or never was there such a sensation in the old country town.

"Well, let's hope they get bagged," said Bob. "They'll pass Greyfriars, if they keep on the way they've started—we may pick up news of them on the road."

And quite forgetting tea at the bunshop, the Famous Five and Lord Mauleverer started for the school, with eyes and ears eagerly open for news of the bank-robbers and their pursuers.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### A Hot Chase I

**R**ATTY THE ROGUE stared back from the dark blue car as it swept out of Courtfield.

The Weasel, leaning over the wheel with fixed gaze ahead, drove on at a furious speed. Once out of the town, there was little traffic on the road, and the Weasel let out the car like lightning, without a split second to spare for a glance back. But from the little window at the back of the car the man with the black beard watched the road, and scowled at Horace Coker, of the Greyfriars Fifth, coming on behind. His glance passed Coker and fixed on Lancaster of the Sixth, and his eyes opened wide with astonishment.

"The Wizard!" he breathed. "Dick Lancaster, by thunder!"

He grinned faintly.

Lancaster's pursuit, if he was pursuing, meant nothing to him. The Wizard was one of the gang, though, to all appearance, a Sixth Form man of Greyfriars School.

But Coker of the Fifth was coming on as fast as his machine could move; Coker's rugged face was set and determined.

Ratty's hand slid into the pocket where his automatic lay—the automatic that had already been used twice.

Leaving out Lancaster, who did not matter to the rogue, there was only one pursuer—the sudden, swift flight

of the saloon car had left all other pursuit hopelessly behind. Ratty's hand gripped the butt of the pistol that he was only too ready to use.

But he did not draw it. Coker was coming on frantically, but the saloon car was well able to drop him, with a clear road ahead.

The Rogue watched tensely.

The Weasel drove on.

There was a wide, clear country road, with cars whizzing by occasionally, and now and then a country cart jogging along. Grey old buildings rose into view beyond the trees; Greyfriars School lay off the road ahead. It was such a road as the Weasel liked for such a drive—not the first in his experience by many a one. But the chapter of chances had to be reckoned with.

Suddenly, without warning, a cart pulled out from a rutty lane, horse and cart almost filling the high-road from side to side. The stolid carter did not even look towards the car that was coming down on him like a flash of lightning.

If the Weasel had wasted a second then, the saloon car would have piled up on the cart. But the Weasel was the man for sudden emergencies; he was an old hand at this game.

On his left was a ditch and a fence, on his right the open space of Courtfield Common. The Weasel had one chance, which he had to take without stopping to think, at the mad speed he was going. He swung to the right, and the saloon car swept from the road over the grassy common.

Bump, bump, bump, bump the car went rocketing over the grass, and Ratty the Rogue sprawled inside, spitting out startled oaths.

The car cut across the grass; the carter staring round after it, his mouth opening, dropping the straw he had been chewing.

Inside the saloon car Ratty the Rogue sprawled and pitched about like a nut in a shell.

The Weasel had no eyes for him.

Twice the car almost overturned, but it kept to its wheels and rocketed on.

"My hat!" gasped Coker of the Fifth breathlessly.

Where a car went a motor-bike could go. Coker swerved, too, and charged across the common after the saloon car. How Coker escaped turning a dozen somersaults, one after another, he never knew. But Coker on a motor-bike was always acrobatic, and he never realised what narrow escapes he had.

Lancaster, behind Coker, laughed. He, too, swept off the road in unslackening pursuit.

Ratty the Rogue scrambled up. He was dazed and breathless. His hat was gone, and his black beard hung by a single wire. He cursed fluently, held on, and peered back.

With a bump and a jump the saloon car left the grass and ran into a narrow lane lined with oak-trees.

It whizzed on.

Behind it whizzed Coker; behind Coker, Lancaster. Coker knew that lane, if the Weasel did not. It ran by the gates of Popper Court, in the direction of the river.

Coker grinned.

The lane was narrow; there was no room for even baby cars to pass one another. When two country carts met in such a lane, one had to back till a gateway or an embayment in the hedge was reached, to make room to let the other pass.

A single vehicle of any sort appearing in that lane meant that the saloon car had to stop, if the driver had left himself time to stop. Once driven off the



main road the bank-raiders had to take desperate chances.

"Got 'em!" breathed Coker.

It did not occur to Coker that he was running single-handed into danger. He did not even know that Lancaster was behind him. But Coker was not the fellow to think of danger, or care about it. He had started out to run main road the bank-raiders had to take going to run them down if he could.

What he was going to do after he had run them down was on the knees of the gods. Coker left that to be settled when the time came. Meanwhile, he swept on in unrelenting pursuit.

The Weasel, desperate and reckless driver as he was, had to ease down in that narrow, rutty, hilly lane. Overhanging branches tore and scratched at the car as it rocked by; the windings and turnings were so sharp that at every one there was danger of overturning or crashing into a hedge or a clump of trees.

Any leafy corner might have hidden a cart or a horse or a barrow, which the Weasel would not see till he was upon it. It was sudden death to do fifty, or even twenty-five, on such a route, and the Weasel, desperate as he was, was not looking for sudden death.

Coker grinned cheerily.

On a clear main road the car would have dropped him with ease; in this winding route Coker had the advantage. For he had a clear road—so long as the car kept on ahead. It was the Weasel who had to watch for a block on the road.

Coker, behind him, had only to follow the saloon car; and the forced slowing of the fugitives enabled Coker to keep them easily in sight. He swept on triumphantly.

He did not know that a foxy face with sharp, rat-like eyes watched him, and that a hand was gripping an automatic in the closed car. He did not know that Ratty the Rogue was debating whether to stop his pursuit with a rain of bullets. Not that Horace Coker would have stopped had he known. Horace Coker feared no foe.

There was a sudden, sharp hiss from the Weasel. What he had feared at every moment happened suddenly as he swept round a corner.

A wagon stood by an open gateway, filling the lane; two labourers were with it, one standing by the horse, the other bending to secure a buckle in the harness.

The Weasel jammed on his brakes.

He could not turn from the road here. High, thick hawthorn hedges, dotted with ancient trees, lined the lane on either side.

Had the Weasel been doing even twenty at that moment nothing could have prevented a crash, which would have reduced the saloon car and its occupants to shattered wreckage.

The Weasel was fervently glad, at that moment, that he had slowed.

But as it was, it was touch and go.

With a screaming of brakes the saloon car rocketed right on till it almost hit the wagon. There was a yell of alarm from the labourers, a squeal from the horse. For an instant it seemed that a collision was inevitable. But the saloon car stopped barely in time. Once more Ratty the Rogue was flung over, sprawling on the floor.

The Weasel glared round.

The two labourers stared at him blankly. Across the field a farmer in gaiters came running. Behind came the rapid chug-chug of a pursuing motor-bike.

Coker of the Fifth came sweeping round, shut off, and escaped crashing into the back of the car by the skin of his teeth. Farther back, still out of sight, Lancaster's bike was still chugging.

The Weasel, after that one desperate glare round, leaped from the driver's seat. He knew when the game was up.

Unknown, unseen pursuers were behind him; two men were close at

armed and desperate he could not have acted more promptly and effectively. Coker's leg-of-mutton fist, with all Coker's weight behind it, came on Ratty's jaw like a sledge-hammer, and the bank raider pitched over like a log.

He gave one anguished squeak as he went down in the dust. The next instant Coker's sinewy knee was on his chest, pinning him down. And the next, Lancaster of the Sixth came spinning round the corner and leaped from his bike.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Coker's Capture!

**D**ICK LANCASTER'S face was flushed with excitement, and his eyes were sparkling. He had thoroughly enjoyed that wild and breathless rush across country. He had entered fully into the spirit of the chase. In those wild and whirling



"Coker!" yelled Wharton excitedly. "Coker! After that dark blue car! It's a bank hold-up! They've shot two men! After it—quick!"

hand, another coming across the field; and in that narrow lane it was impossible to turn the car. The Weasel did not need to think. Leaving the car, he burst through the hedge and ran, bolting across a field like a rabbit.

It was not the first time that the Weasel had had to run, and leave a stolen car to be reclaimed by its owner.

Almost in a twinkling—while the two labourers were still staring, the farmer running breathlessly up, Coker clambering off his machine—the Weasel vanished across the field, without wasting a second's thought on his companion in crime. In Slimy Sugden's gang it was every man for himself.

The Weasel was gone, but the man in the car was not so fortunate.

Ratty the Rogue, dazed and dizzy, struggled up and hurled open the door of the car. He leaped out, and as he leaped, Coker of the Fifth reached him.

Had Coker known that the man was

moments he did not remember that he was a breaker of the law himself—that, had all been known, he himself would have been in flight with resolute pursuers on his track.

The truth was that at heart he was no law-breaker. Heart and soul had always been against the way of life into which a strange fate had cast him. When there was no time for thought, and he acted on instinct, he acted like a Greyfriars man and a law-abiding citizen, forgetful that he was the Wizard of Slimy Sugden's gang.

Picking up the news of the bank raid as he rode through Courtfield High Street, seeing Coker of the Fifth ahead of him on the chase, Lancaster had entered into it keenly, resolutely, his real nature rallying instinctively to the side of law and order.

Had he known that it was Ratty the

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Rogue in the car, that it was the Weasel who was driving, he would no doubt have taken thought.

But he did not know! All he saw was a dark blue closed car speeding away ahead; and a roar of voices told him that the bank had been robbed, and two men wounded by a desperate hand. The hint Sugden had dropped at the inn at Woodend had passed from his mind. He did not, at the present moment, connect the bank raid with Slimy's gang at all.

It was with the fixed intention of bringing a murderous villain to justice, if he could, that Lancaster raced on with humming motor-bike, heedless of risks and perils.

Not till he came spinning round the last corner, and shut off barely in time to avoid clambering over Coker's jigger and the halted car, did the truth dawn on the schoolboy crook.

He leaped down, and ran to Coker's aid, as he saw him pinning down the man who had sprung from the car.

Then his eyes fell on the foxy, furious, upturned face of Ratty the Rogue, and he knew.

He stopped dead.

Back into his mind came Slimy Sugden's words, of the work Ratty had on hand that afternoon at Courtfield. This was the work! Lancaster, staring at the sprawling man struggling under Coker, could have laughed. The man of whom he had been in desperate chase was one of the gang—his associate and confederate—Slimy Sugden's right-hand man. He could have laughed—with the bitterness almost of death in his heart! It was not for him to lend aid in bringing the desperado to justice. Far from that! It was for him to help in defeating the ends of justice!

The Rogue's ratty eyes were on him instantly. Ratty did not call to him; his look said enough. Ratty the Rogue took it for granted that the Wizard had been following to help the escape, if needed. He relied on the Wizard's aid now.

Lancaster could have groaned aloud. His hand, already raised to help Coker to secure the scoundrel, dropped to his side.

Coker stared round. He was surprised to see Lancaster of the Sixth on the spot, though he had been dimly aware of another motorcyclist behind him. He was glad enough to see the Greyfriars man.

"You, Lancaster! Look for the other man! I've got this rascal; but the driver's hooked it!"

"He's gone!" said Lancaster dully.

"Well, this is the villain who raided the bank, and we've got him," said Coker. "The other man was driving. This must be the bank-robber, and I dare say he's got his plunder about him. Keep still, you rascal!"

Ratty the Rogue had begun to struggle to get at his pistol-pocket. But he relinquished the effort now. He looked to Lancaster to save him from this scrape. Not a sign of recognition passed between them. Both were too well on their guard for that.

"You've got me!" muttered the Rogue. "I'm giving in!"

"You'd better!" grinned Coker. "I'll jolly well bang your napper on the ground if you begin any funny business. Lancaster, old bean, get something to tie this chap up."

Lancaster nodded. He took a strap out of the car, and buckled it round Ratty's arms, behind him, Coker allowing him to sit up for the purpose. The Rogue's eyes glimmered for a moment.

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The strap was buckled so that he could get his hands free at any moment he liked.

"Now let him get up," said Lancaster.

Coker jerked the foxy-faced man to his feet. The black beard was gone, revealing a clean-shaven, cunning, sharp-featured face.

The farmer was on the scene now, and the two labourers drew round curiously. The captured bank-raider scowled at them.

"Hold-up at the Courtfield Bank," Coker explained to them. "Man shot at the bank—and we've got the man that did it! And we're jolly well holding on to him, what, Lancaster?"

"Yes, rather!" said the Sixth-Former. "I fancy we'd better shove him in the car, Coker, and I'll back the car to the next turning, get her round, and run the fellow back to the town."

"I think I'd better keep hold of him," said Coker decidedly. "I don't doubt you'd be careful, of course, old bean. Still, the master's eye, you know, and all that."

Lancaster laughed.

There was no doubt that Horace Coker was greatly bucked by the capture, and his manner, always lofty, was distinctly patronising. Coker rather liked Lancaster of the Sixth; but he had no use, as he often said, for Sixth Form swank. Coker had made the capture, and the matter was in Coker's hands, and Horace intended to leave no doubt on that point.

"All serene," said Lancaster. "I don't mind in the least. How are you going to manage it, anyhow? We're a long way from Courtfield."

"Well, I can drive a car," said Coker. "I'll jolly well drive him into town and hand him over. After all, I caught him."

"Just as you like."

Ratty's eyes gleamed. His "gun" was still in his pocket, and once he was safe in the car with Coker, out of sight of the farmer and his men, he had no doubt of the result.

But Lancaster caught that gleam in Ratty's eyes, and he was aware of the rascal's thoughts. Lancaster, whatever he was, and whatever he did, had no idea of allowing a Greyfriars man to fall into danger from the bank-raider's gun. Rather than that, the schoolboy crook would have handed over the rascal where he belonged, if he had to face arrest along with him.

"But first," went on Coker, "we'll jolly well get the loot off him. That will be safer in my hands. They were yelling out in Courtfield that he had robbed the bank, and if he had, he's got it on him."

"Very likely," assented Lancaster carelessly.

About the loot the schoolboy crook was not in the least concerned. He was driven, or felt himself driven, to save the rascal himself, but the loot was nothing to him. Not that he could have saved it without giving his whole game away to Coker of the Fifth.

Coker groped in the prisoner's pockets.

Ratty's eyes turned on Lancaster. But there was no help from the Wizard, even if the Wizard had cared to throw appearances to the winds, and openly help him. The farmer and his two men were there, more than ready to lay hands on the desperate rascal if required.

"Here we are!" grinned Coker.

He jerked out a wallet, which was crammed to the very brim with Bank of England notes.

"That's a big sum!" said the farmer,

opening his eyes, as Coker held up the open wallet.

Horace Coker chuckled.

"Hundreds of pounds!" he said. "Seven or eight hundred, I fancy. I say, Lancaster, the bank will be glad to get this back."

"What-ho!" smiled Lancaster. "What about one of us cutting off at once with it, and the other looking after this merchant and the car? The sooner that money's put in safety the better. I'll look after the man while you take it."

Coker considered slowly.

"It will take a jolly long time to back this car up the lane and get her round," remarked Lancaster. "One of us ought to take in the money and the news. You're entitled to do it, as you made the capture, Coker. Still, leave it to me, if you like."

"We'll stay together," said Coker. For a moment Coker had jumped at the idea of careering up to the bank with the recaptured loot, and the great news, as Lancaster guessed that he would. But second thoughts, proverbially, were the best. Coker shook his head. "You see, you may not be able to keep this rotter safe—"

"My dear chap—" murmured Lancaster.

"The master's eye, you know," said Coker. Evidently Coker regarded his own eye as the master's eye. "I caught him. He's my game! You can drive the car, Lancaster, while I keep hold of this foxy-faced thief!"

"What about the bikes—"

"I'll have your machines run into a shed, sir, with pleasure," said the farmer.

"That's all right," said Coker. "Now, shove this scoundrel in, and we'll get going."

Lancaster paused a second.

Had Coker consented to ride into Courtfield with the recovered loot, and leave him to bring in the prisoner, the schoolboy crook's course would have been clear.

But Coker, in his usual masterful way, wanted to keep everything in his own hands, having no great reliance on anybody in the wide world except Horace James Coker.

After that second's hesitation Lancaster nodded assent. There was nothing else for him to do, without an open break with Coker and the end of all things for him at Greyfriars. And the schoolboy crook was not at the end of his resources yet.

"Right you are!" he said lightly.

Ratty the Rogue was placed in the car. Coker followed him in and sat down beside him.

The wallet of banknotes was on Coker's knees, and his right hand was slipped through the prisoner's arm. As Ratty's hands were strapped behind him, he seemed safe enough. Coker's unsuspecting mind naturally had no idea how that strap was fastened.

Lancaster sat in the driver's seat and backed the car. The engine buzzed, and the saloon car backed along the rutty lane. The farmer and his men took charge of the two motor-bikes, to be reclaimed later by their owners.

Slowly the car backed in the narrow lane between high hedges till it reached a wider space where it could turn.

Then Lancaster swung it round and drove on swiftly. Ratty the Rogue sat silent, his eyes on the back of Lancaster's head. Coker was grinning with satisfaction. Out of sight of the farmer and his men in the lonely lane, shut in by

high hedges and fields, Lancaster slowed down.

"Hallo! What are you stopping for?" asked Coker.

"Something's up with the engine."

"Oh blow!" said Coker.

The car halted.

Lancaster stepped down and opened the bonnet. Coker leaned out and watched him anxiously. Moments were precious to Coker, who was anxious for the dramatic arrival in Courtfield with the prisoner and the loot. As the prisoner's hands were bound, Coker saw no reason why he should not take his eyes off him for a moment.

Lancaster, affecting to be busily engaged with an engine that needed no attention, waited tensely. He was giving Ratty the Rogue a chance to leap from the car and bolt, little as Coker dreamed of it.

The Rogue jerked his hands from the strap. He could have leaped out and run for it now, but that was not in the Rogue's mind.

Coker gave a sudden, violent start as something round and hard was pressed suddenly to his side.

"Keep quiet, you fool!" came the Rogue's hissing voice.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Coker.

And Coker, realising that somehow the prisoner was free with a pistol in his hand, kept still.

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

### Turning the Tables!

"GET out! Drop that wallet and get out!"

The Rogue hissed the words with a snarl.

The muzzle of the automatic pressed to Coker's ribs enforced obedience.

Coker of the Fifth was not a bright fellow. But he was too bright to raise objections when it needed only the light pressure of a desperate man's finger to send a bullet smashing through him, and he dropped the wallet at once.

He opened the door and stepped out. His rugged face was black with wrath. He turned, and the automatic in the hand of the man in the car looked him in the face, Ratty the Rogue's eyes gleaming over the barrel.

"Stand back to the hedge!"

Coker, almost trembling with rage, stepped back.

There was no argument possible with a levelled automatic. The villain had used the weapon at the bank, and there was not the slightest doubt that he was ready to use it again if driven to it. There was no fear in Coker's stout heart—only deep wrath. He could have kicked himself for not having searched the rascal for weapons. Coker thought of that too late; it was not uncommon for the great Coker to think of things too late, when he thought of them at all.

Lancaster straightened up, a spanner in his hand. His handsome face was set with anger. His eyes glittered at the Rogue.

He had given the rascal his chance to escape. Against the grain, driven to it by his own association with the lawless gang, he had given Ratty that chance.

Ratty, instead of taking it, was taking the upper hand. His intention was to recapture the loot and the car, and to drive away with both. With the automatic in his hand, Coker could not stop him, and the farmer and his men

had been left a mile behind. Indeed, it was probable that Ratty supposed that that was Lancaster's plan as well as his own. So long as appearances were kept up, he concluded that the Wizard was with him, not against him.

On that point he was mistaken. The sight of a deadly weapon, threatening the life of a Greyfriars man, had an effect on the schoolboy crook of which Ratty never dreamed.

Lancaster's face was almost pale with passion. His grip on the spanner was convulsive.

The Rogue made a motion towards him with the automatic. It was his game, of course, to treat Lancaster, so

### ANOTHER "MAGNETITE" WINS A PENKNIFE!

All he did was to send in the following joke:



A spectator at a cricket match was very disgusted with the players and, turning to the man next to him, said:

"Fancy putting on a rotten bowler like that!"

"Well," returned the listener angrily, "it's better than your old straw, anyway!"

Congratulations to G. H. Cetti, of 5, George Road, South Chingford, E.4. Hope you'll find the penknife useful.—Ed.

far as appearances went, as if he were a schoolboy whom he had never seen before.

"Stand back with the other!" snapped Ratty.

Lancaster stood rigid.

"Oh, you idiot!" gasped Coker. "You silly ass, Lancaster! You fathead! You never fastened him properly! He's got loose! Why, a silly fag could have fastened him safely with that strap! You howling ass!"

"That's enough from you!" snarled the Rogue. "Here, you, close that bonnet and stand back from the car!"

Lancaster stepped back from the car. Ratty the Rogue dropped into the driving-seat. As he did so, Lancaster's arm moved with the swiftness of a lightning-flash.

Whiz!

Before Ratty knew what was happening, before it dawned on him that the Wizard was not with him but against him, the heavy spanner struck him on the temple.

With a sharp cry the Rogue reeled over sideways, his right hand, with the automatic in it, dropping to his side.

Lancaster was on him the next moment with the spring of a tiger.

The automatic was torn away and tossed high over the hedge beside the lane. Ratty, crumpling up in the powerful grasp of the Greyfriars Sixth-Former, was dragged headlong from the car and flung bodily into the road.

He crashed and sprawled.

There was a roar of delight from Horace Coker.

"Good man!" he yelled.

He rushed towards the sprawling rascal. Disarmed, the bank-raider was scarcely a match for the hefty Horace; no match at all for Lancaster of the Sixth.

But in that moment, as Coker of the Fifth leaped to secure the rascal, Lancaster barged clumsily into his way.

Coker crashed into him and reeled.

It was a brief respite, but it was enough for Ratty the Rogue.

His temple was bleeding where the spanner had struck him; he was still dazed from the shock. The look he gave Lancaster was that of a demon. But he knew that his liberty depended on seconds; that if Coker's powerful grip closed on him now that the Wizard was against him, he was booked to pay for his murderous crime at the Courtfield bank. The Rogue leaped to his feet, and while Lancaster was helping Coker up he sprang away through the hedge and fled across the fields.

"You ass!" Coker was spluttering. "You dummy! He's getting away! My hat! After him!"

Coker scrambled to his feet, panting. He hurled himself at the hedge after the escaping Rogue.

But a few seconds had been enough for the man who had ten years of penal servitude hanging over his rascally head.

He was vanishing in the distance across the field, and he disappeared beyond a clump of willows as Coker burst through the hedge.

Coker ran a little distance and stopped. It was useless to chase the elusive rascal among the fields and hedges. Disappointed and angry, Horace Coker tramped back to the car.

Lancaster was sitting in the driver's seat, waiting for him. There was a faint smile on his face.

"He's gone!" growled Coker.

"Bad luck," said Lancaster.

"Your fault!" growled Coker. "You barged into me!"

"Didn't you barge into me?" asked Lancaster mildly.

"No, I didn't!" roared Coker. "You barged into me, you clumsy Sixth Form ass! I'd have got him if you hadn't."

"My dear chap—"

"And he'd never have got loose if you'd fastened that strap properly!" hooted Coker. "I thought he was safe. Of course I did! Any fool ought to have been able to buckle a strap safe. The silliest fool could have done it!"

"I ought to have left it to you, then!" said Lancaster.

Coker, fortunately, did not catch the drift of that remark. He took it at face value, as it were.

"Well, if you'd left it to me I'd have made him safe," he grunted. "I can tell you, it made me jump when he

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jabbed that revolver into my ribs. He nearly got away with the car and the loot, after all."

"Luckily, I got in the with the spanner!" said Lancaster.

Coker's frowning brow cleared. He had to admit that it was Lancaster, with his prompt handling of the spanner, who had saved the situation.

"Well, that was lucky," said Coker. "I must say you handled him a treat, so far as that went, Lancaster."

"Thanks," said the Sixth-Former. "If you think so, Coker, there's nothing more to be said."

Coker was blind and deaf to sarcasm. He nodded quite amiably.

"Well, after all, we've got the car and the loot, though the thieves have got clear," he said. "I fancy they'll be jolly glad to see us at the bank. And we can give a description of that villain with his beard off. That ought to be useful to the police."

"Yes, rather!" said Lancaster. His gaze dwelt curiously on Coker.

Not the faintest suspicion was in the Fifth-Former's mind of any collusion or connection between the Sixth Form man and the bank raider. That Lancaster had deliberately allowed Ratty the Rogue to get away did not occur to Coker for an instant.

In point of fact, it could hardly have occurred to any observer. Lancaster's action in bowling the rascal over with the spanner placed him above suspicion.

"Let's get going," said Coker. "Waiting for you."

Coker stepped into the car and picked up the wallet of banknotes. Lancaster set the engine going, the "trouble" that had caused the halt having disappeared now in the shape of Ratty the Rogue, if Coker had only known it.

There were no more halts. Lancaster toolled the saloon car swiftly along the lane and turned into the Courtfield Road. Swiftly he drove on to the town, Coker sitting in the car, nursing the wallet of banknotes on his knees, and once more grinning with satisfaction.

## THE NINTH CHAPTER.

### Thrilling!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter fairly hurled open the door of Study No. 1 and put a fat face, blazing with excitement, into that celebrated apartment.

Harry Wharton & Co. were finishing tea. They had been discussing the startling episode at Courtfield. On the way to the school they had seen and heard nothing of the fugitive car, and they were wondering, with the keenest interest, whether Coker or Lancaster had succeeded in keeping in touch with the bank raiders, and whether the rascals had been taken.

"I say, you fellows, have you heard?" spluttered Bunter. "I say, it's frightfully exciting! You fellows heard?"

"Which and what?" yawned Bob Cherry.

"There's been a raid on a bank at Courtfield!" yelled Bunter.

The Famous Five grinned.

Billy Bunter rather prided himself on being first with the news. On this occasion the Owl of the Remove was a long way behind.

"Honest Injun!" gasped Bunter. "I say, you fellows, I've just got in from Woodend. I've had a fearful long walk back, owing to you beasts. I say, I heard it as soon as I got in. Smithy was saying—"

"Go hon!" said Bob Cherry. "Smithy told me. He's heard it from some fellows who were in Courtfield this afternoon."

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. It's true! Smithy was telling a lot of fellows. You chaps never hear anything," said Bunter. "I say, from what I hear, some Remove men were right on the spot. I don't know who they were, but they were right on the spot."

"Now, I wonder who they could have been?" said Frank Nugent.

"The wonderfulness is terrific!" chuckled the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Fellows in the Remove?" asked Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Yes—right on the spot," said Bunter. "They heard the firing and the screaming, and saw the dead bodies."

"The which?"

"Dead bodies—rolling on the bank steps. I understand that four men were shot dead."

"Great pip!"

"And a bobby or two," said Bunter. "One bobby had his brains blown right out in the street!"

"Poor old bobby!" said Johnny Bull. "What a comfort it must be to him that it never really happened!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I tell you it did!" roared Bunter. "Three bobbies shot dead, as well as the bank manager and five or six clerks!"

If Bunter had heard the story from Smithy, he had evidently improved on it since. Cold facts never satisfied Billy Bunter. Every story related by William George Bunter was as prolific as the little peach in the orchard—it grew and grew and grew. The present story seemed to have grown at a really alarming rate. Bunter was spreading himself over the bank raid.

"You fellows never hear anything!" sniffed Bunter. "Why, you've been in Courtfield yourselves this afternoon—actually been to the bank with Mauly, and you never saw anything!"

"We didn't see a jolly old massacre of the Courtfield police force," admitted Bob Cherry. "Not a single body was on view while we were there."

"Tell us some more about it, Bunter," said Harry Wharton. "I suppose you've got the whole story?"

"Yes, rather! It seems that a car drove up to the bank, and a gang of masked men jumped out—"

"A—a—a which?" gasped Nugent.

"A gang of masked men. About a dozen, I think. They rushed into the bank, shooting right and left. The bank manager was picked up afterwards, riddled with bullets. Thousands of pounds were taken, and the bank left swimming in blood. On fire, too, I think!"

"Good!" said Bob Cherry. "Sure it wasn't blown up sky-high with a barrel of dynamite which one of the masked men had in his waistcoat pocket?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I tell you some Remove men were on the spot and saw it all!" declared Bunter. "Ten or twelve people were shot—"

"Go it!"

"Everybody's talking about it," said Bunter. "Some Greyfriars men got after the bank robbers, I hear, on motor-bikes. A dying policeman called out to them, I understand—"

"Pile it on!"

"I tell you it's true!" hooted Bunter. "You can cackle as much as you like. What do you know about it, I'd like to know?"

Ripping School Stories of Tom Merry & Co.  
in the **GEM** Every Week.

"Well, we know a little," chuckled Bob Cherry. "You see, we happen to be the Remove men who were on the spot."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

"You'd have been on the spot, too, if you'd come on from Woodend, instead of breaking down there," grinned Johnny Bull. "See what you've missed, you fat slacker!"

"I—I say, you fellows, if you were there, tell a fellow about it!" gasped Bunter. "Mean to say Smithy got it from you?"

"Ha, ha! Just that."

"Well, tell a fellow. Did you see the bodies? Did you—"

"Sorry, no. There weren't any bodies."

Bunter's fat face fell. Evidently the fat Owl had pictured something, in his podgy mind, like a crook film. Bodies were required to make the picture complete.

"Two men were wounded at the bank, if that's any comfort," said Bob Cherry kindly, "but neither seriously. The bank raider wasn't asking to be hanged. But he got away with some banknotes—anything from five to eight hundred pounds, from what we heard—and Coker and Lancaster got after him on their stink-bikes. They happened to be passing through Courtfield at the time. And that's the lot!"

Billy Bunter snorted. Evidently he vastly preferred his own version of the story, which undoubtedly was the more thrilling of the two. He rolled away from Study No. 1 to pour the thrilling tale into other ears that were less well-informed on the subject.

The chums of the Remove chuckled as he went.

But there was a rather thoughtful look on Wharton's brow. He had been thinking, since the juniors had returned to the school; and the rather uncomfortable subject of his reflections was the fact that it had been the Weasel who drove the bank raiders' car.

There was no doubt of the man's identity; all five of the Co. had seen him at the wheel of the dark blue car. For the Weasel himself, of course, the juniors cared nothing; but the fact that he was acquainted with Lancaster of the Sixth was disturbing. It would certainly cause a great deal of comment if it came out that there was even a remote connection between Lancaster and the bank raiders.

If the man was caught there was no need for the juniors to speak. But if he was not caught it was their obvious duty to tell the police all they knew of him. They had his accurate description, and knew his nickname—a nickname by which Lancaster had been heard to call him. They could not possibly keep such information to themselves if the man escaped; yet they shrank from the idea of dragging Lancaster's name into the affair.

"Let's get down," said Harry. "Coker or Lancaster may have got in by this time. I'm rather anxious for news."

"Let's!" said Bob.

The Famous Five left the study. There was a sound of knocking along the Remove passage, and they glanced up the passage.

Outside Study No. 12 Billy Bunter was thumping on the door.

"Mauly! I say, Mauly!" Bunter was hooting.

There was no reply from Study No. 12. If Lord Mauleverer was at home, he did not seem to want Bunter's company. Apparently he had locked his door when he heard Bunter coming.

"Mauly, old chap! I haven't come to tea! I just want to speak to you, old fellow! Open the door, old chap!"  
No answer. Bunter thumped again.

"I say, Mauly! Did you cash the cheque, old man?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. Bunter blinked round.

"I say, you fellows! Come along here! I think Mauly must be ill! He's locked his door and doesn't answer. I say, you ask him to open the door, Wharton. He will open it if you ask him. I want to know whether he's cashed that cheque—I mean, whether the poor old chap's ill."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! Poor old Mauly being ill isn't a laughing matter!" exclaimed Bunter indignantly. "I say, you fellows! Did he cash that cheque after all? You know, as you were with him."

## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

### Coker in all His Glory!

**H**ORACE COKER was in his element.

Coker was enjoying life.

Limelight was the due of so great a man as Coker of the Fifth; but he seldom or never got his due.

Now he was getting it in abundance.

Fellows hung on his words. A buzzing crowd surrounded him, all anxious to hear what Coker had to say. This sort of thing never happened when Coker was talking cricket, or anything else. But the bank raid at Courtfield, and Coker's part in the pursuit of the bank raiders, had brought Horace into his proper prominence for once. For once, though positively for one occasion only, Coker had a large and eager audience, hanging on his words as if they were pearls falling from his lips. For once Potter and Greeno were

generously. "I'm bound to admit that Lancaster helped."

"Lancaster?" said Loder of the Sixth.

"Yes. It was his fault the man got away—he barged into me when I was collaring the brute!"

"Oh!" said Loder.

"But, all the same, the villain would have cleared off with the car and all, but for Lancaster. Lancaster knocked him out with a spanner when he had the revolver in his hand. It was frightfully plucky!"

"Oh!" said Loder again.

"Still, Lancaster will tell you himself that he only helped. He was behind me all the time, chasing the rotters. I ran them down and got the thief in the first place. I got the bank-notes off him. He would never have got at that gun if Lancaster had tied his hands safely. I must say he was careless there. But he knocked him out with the spanner all right when he was handling the gun. Plucky chap! Barged into me like an ass, and let the man get clear. But awfully plucky."

"Where's Lancaster now?" asked Potter.

"Blessed if I know. He came back, I



The bank raiders' car went rocketing over the grass to avoid the farmer's cart. The startled farmer looked round, his mouth agape!

"The knowfulness is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Well, did he?" asked Bunter anxiously.

"Better ask Mauly!" chortled Bob.

"The beast won't answer. I say, Mauly! Do open the door, old fellow. I'm afraid you're ill! I'm awfully anxious about you, Mauly!"

Billy Bunter's anxiety did not seem to touch Mauleverer's stony heart. There was no answer from Study No. 12.

"I say, Mauly! Look here, old fellow, I've been disappointed about a postal order!" gasped Bunter, through the keyhole. "If you've cashed that cheque, old fellow—"

Harry Wharton & Co. went down the Remove staircase, leaving Billy Bunter still at Mauly's door, like a fat Peri at the gate of Paradise. A stentorian voice downstairs reached their ears, loud above a buzz of other voices.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! That's Coker!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "He's got back!"

And the Famous Five hurried down to hear the news.

quite proud to be Coker's pals. Coker, for the moment, was the goods!

Even Blundell, the captain of the Fifth, listened to him with respect. Even old Wingate, the captain of the school, gave him attention, acknowledging that for once Coker had acted otherwise than as a born idiot might have been expected to act. Juniors and seniors, fags and prefects, surrounded Coker and hearkened unto him as he held forth. Harry Wharton & Co. swelled an already numerous audience as they arrived on the scene.

"Yes, they got away," Coker was saying. "I never even saw the driver's face, worse luck; but I can give a jolly good description of the other man. I've given it at the police station. Foxy-faced villain! They'll get him all right. Inspector Grimes is telephoning all over the shop. They'll root all over the country for the rotters. They've lost their car, you see. It turns out it was a stolen car. We've got that, and got back the loot! Hundreds of pounds in banknotes! You should have seen old Grimes' face when I handed over that bag of money! A picture!"

"Bravo, Coker!" said Wingate.

Coker grinned cheerily. The captain of the school was acknowledging that he was the goods! It was like the king coming into his own at last!

"Lancaster helped," said Coker

think, after we were through with the police. Of course, Lancaster only played second fiddle all the time. But he was plucky."

Lancaster, apparently, was not keen on an audience like the great Coker. He was not to be seen.

"He's rather an ass, too," went on Coker. "I mean, he seems to have no eyes. I mean, about giving the description of the man. I had him down all right—foxy face, with a sharp nose, and greenish eyes, about five feet five. Lancaster thought he was taller, and had brown eyes—we had quite an argument at the police station about it. Old Grimes seemed to think that Lancaster had got it right, and I'd got it wrong."

"Ass, you know. Why, I can see the man's foxy face now, with greenish eyes like a cat's. Can't make out why Lancaster thought they were brown; but he thought so, and said so. It's awkward, you know—may prevent the bobbies from getting him, the description being mixed like that. I believe Inspector Grimes has put brown eyes in the description—he seemed to listen to Lancaster more than me all the time."

Some of Coker's audience grinned.

They were not surprised that the Courtfield police-inspector had given more attention to Lancaster of the

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(Continued from page 13.)

Sixth than to Coker of the Fifth. Coker was the only fellow who was surprised at that.

"Then the driver got away, Coker?" called out Harry Wharton.

"They both got away," answered Coker.

"No description of the driver?"

"No, I never saw his face, and Lancaster never saw him at all. He bolted first thing. I fancy they'll get them both, now they've lost the car. If they get on the railway they'll be stopped."

Coker, of course, was unaware that Mr. Slimy Sugden had been waiting at a certain spot, in another car, in case of accidents.

Coker, and everybody else, remained unaware that the Weasel and Ratty the Rogue were packed in Sugden's car, and were already many a long mile distant from the scene of the bank raid, doing forty or fifty m.p.h. on the road to London. If anyone knew that, it was only Lancaster of the Sixth! And he was not likely to speak on the subject.

"Well, I jolly well want my tea," said Coker; and he started for his study.

Horace Coker's study, that tea-time, swarmed with fellows; and, for once, it was not only on account of the good things provided by Coker's Aunt Judy. For once, Coker himself was the attraction.

Harry Wharton & Co. withdrew from the buzzing crowd of Greyfriars fellows. Their faces were serious. The Weasel had escaped; and his description was unknown. Obviously, the time had come for the Famous Five to tell what they knew.

"It's rotten awkward!" said Harry. "After that yarn Loder of the Sixth was spreading about Lancaster, it's beastly awkward. Loder's taken it all back, I know; but—"

"We're bound to speak out," said Johnny Bull decidedly. "We can't let a criminal escape."

"Impossible!" said Nugent. "But what about speaking to Lancaster first? He can advise us what to do. In fact, as he knows the man, he can help to get hold of him, very likely."

Harry Wharton nodded. "Let's go and see Lancaster," he said. "Coker says he's come in, so I suppose we shall find him in his study."

The Famous Five proceeded to the Sixth Form passage. Lancaster's door was open, and a buzz of voices came from the room. Five or six Sixth Form men were there with Lancaster, asking questions about the pursuit of the bank raiders.

The handsome senior glanced at the juniors in the doorway, and smiled.

"You kids want anything?" he asked.

"Well, we wanted to speak to you, Lancaster," said Harry, and paused. He did not want to speak about the Weasel before a crowd. "We'll wait till you've got time."

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Lancaster nodded, and the Famous Five withdrew. They waited by a window in the passage, till the fellows in Lancaster's study drifted out at last. After they were gone the new man in the Sixth glanced out of the doorway and smiled at the juniors.

"You can come in," he said.

Harry Wharton & Co. came in.

"You fags were on the spot, I remember," said Lancaster. "You called out to me in Courtfield High Street. But what did you want to see me for?"

"It's about the driver of the thieves' car," said Harry, plunging into the matter at once. "We saw him outside the bank, and recognised him."

The smile left Lancaster's face as if suddenly wiped off. For a second he sat perfectly still. For that second the colour wavered in his handsome face. It was an utterly unexpected blow, and it needed all the nerve and presence of mind of the schoolboy crook to hide its effect. But it was only for a split second that he wavered. His voice was cool and even as he spoke again:

"That's rather curious, Wharton! Sure of what you say?"

"Quite," said Harry. "We all knew him."

"The knowfulness was terrific!"

"Some local character?" asked Lancaster carelessly.

"Oh, no!" said Harry. "We've only seen the man two or three times before, Lancaster. You know him, too."

"My dear kid—"

"It's that fellow nicknamed the Weasel," said Wharton. "The man who was hanging about in Surrey in the holidays, and whom we saw near the school a week or two ago."

"That's rather odd."

"You remember you told us he was an old servant of your uncle's, bothering you to get him a job," said Harry.

"I remember!" Lancaster nodded.

"Well, that's the man," said Harry. "We're bound to tell what we know; but we thought we'd speak to you first. You'd know the man's real name, of course, and perhaps where he is to be found."

"The fact is, I know very little of him," said Lancaster slowly. "His name is Smith—George Smith. He was a servant of my uncle, who died years ago, and I'd never seen him for years till he turned up that time in Surrey. I helped him with a little money, as he was in hard luck. I had no idea, of course, that he had gone to the bad. But, if you are right, he must have gone to the bad with a vengeance."

"There's no doubt that he was the man driving the car," said Bob.

"Unless you're absolutely certain of that it would be hardly cricket to drag the man into this."

"We're absolutely certain!" said Harry.

"I mean, are you prepared to swear to it as witnesses against the man in a court of law?"

"Quite!" said Wharton, without hesitation.

"The quitefulness is preposterous!"

"Then there is only one thing to be done," said Lancaster quietly. "You'd better come with me to the police station, and you and I will tell Inspector Grimes all we know about the man."

Every member of the Co. felt a sense of relief as he spoke. They would never have admitted, or even realised, that their faith in the fellow they liked and admired was wavering. But they were conscious of relief when Richard Lancaster took this line. The Sixth-Former rose at once.

"You'd better explain to your Form

master first, and then get out your bikes," he said. "Better lose no time in a matter like this."

"Right-ho!" said Wharton.

The juniors left the study. When they were gone, Lancaster stood in silent thought for some minutes. There was a worn and harassed look on his handsome face.

Loder of the Sixth suspected; but he held the black sheep of Greyfriars in the hollow of his hand, and Loder had to be silent. He had hoped that that was the end; but it was not the end. The shadow of the underworld, the world of crime, was still dark upon him.

Lancaster's mind and heart were wavering. Two ways lay before him, and he could take neither definitely.

His actions that afternoon had been inconsequent, disjointed—the sign of the uncertainty of his mind. A breaker of the law himself, he had helped the escape of another breaker of the law. Yet at the sight of the automatic in Ratty's hand he had struck the man down without compunction, associate and confederate as he was. From moment to moment he was Lancaster of the Sixth, a Greyfriars man, and the Wizard, the lawless member of Slimy Sugden's gang. How was it to end?

How was it to end? That was a question he could not answer.

With a weary shrug of the shoulders he left the study. The future was on the knees of the gods, and he could only leave it there.

Half an hour later Lancaster and the chums of the Remove were in Inspector Grimes' office at Courtfield Police Station, telling what they knew. What Lancaster told was not likely to help pursuit on the track of the Weasel!

When they returned to the school Harry Wharton & Co. said nothing of the matter. They had placed the information in official hands, as was their duty, and that was enough. There was no need to make the matter the talk of Greyfriars, if it could be helped. No need to let the school know that a man who had been connected with Lancaster of the Sixth was mixed up with the bank robbery.

Yet the juniors hardly knew why they kept silent. They would naturally have told the other fellows all about it. And they told the other fellows nothing.

Deep down in their hearts, perhaps, a doubt was creeping in. They did not realise it; they would not realise it. They would have repudiated the bare suggestion that they did not believe Lancaster of the Sixth to be the splendid, straightforward fellow they had always deemed him. But the chill of doubt had crept in.

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Bunter Begs for It!

WINGATE of the Sixth stood at his study window, looking out into the quad. It was tea-time; and Harry Wharton & Co., coming along to the House, noticed the captain of Greyfriars at his window. Wingate signed to them, and they came up.

It was several days since the exciting affair at the bank at Courtfield, and the matter had ceased to be discussed at Greyfriars. Some fellows kept their eyes on the newspapers, to note whether the bank raiders were arrested, that was all. But there had been no such news, so far. The two rascals had vanished as if into space.

Harry Wharton & Co. were talking cricket as they came along; the bank

raid having faded to the back of their minds by that time.

"Seen Lancaster about?" asked the Greyfriars captain, looking down at the cheery five from the study window.

Five heads were shaken.

"The seefulness has not been terrific," answered Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "But I thinkfully opine that the excellent Lancaster went out on his execrable and absurd motor-bike this afternoon."

"I know that," said Wingate. "But he was coming to tea with me. He's not in yet, I suppose."

He nodded to the juniors and turned from the window. They heard his voice in the study speaking to Gwynne of the Sixth.

"I hope Lancaster hasn't had a spill on that stink-bike of his. It's not like him to be late."

"Oh, he's all right!" answered Gwynne. "He's not Coker, you know."

The juniors heard the two seniors laugh. They walked on towards the door of the House. Tea was in Bob Cherry's study that day, and the Famous Five proceeded to Study No. 13 in the Remove. Mark Linley and little Wun Lung were already busy getting tea, and the doorway was adorned by the fat figure and fatuous face of William George Bunter.

Bunter blinked at the chums of the Remove through his big spectacles as they came up the passage.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Roll away, barrel!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I haven't come to tea," said Bunter with dignity. "I'm going to tea with Mauly! Only I can't find him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter sniffed. He could see nothing entertaining in the fact that he could not find Lord Mauleverer. It was far from entertaining to Bunter at tea-time.

Ever since Lord Mauleverer had cashed his cheque at Courtfield bank Bunter had been his faithful shadow. Had Mauly been Robinson Crusoe and Bunter his Man Friday he could not have stuck to him more faithfully.

So far from appreciating the devotion of his Man Friday, Mauly caused considerable gaiety in the Remove by his endeavours to dodge his shadow. Mauly seldom or never used the plain English that was current in the Lower Fourth at Greyfriars, and he hated kicking a fellow—even Bunter. Bunter was the man to take ruthless advantage of his lordship's irreproachable manners.

How many loans Bunter had already had out of that cashed cheque only Bunter knew, but apparently he wanted more. Bunter was still in a state of disappointment about an expected postal order.

"I say, you fellows, you needn't cackle like a lot of hens," said Bunter peevishly. "Look here, have you seen Mauly?"

"Yes, rather!" said Johnny Bull.

"Where?" asked Bunter eagerly.

"Keep it dark, Johnny!" said Wharton, laughing. "Poor old Mauly is dodging that fat boulder! Don't give him away!"

"You shut up, Wharton!" roared Bunter indignantly. "I suppose Bull can tell me where to find a pal if he likes. Look here, Bull, where did you see Mauly?"

"In the Form-room," answered Johnny Bull.

"The silly ass!" exclaimed Bunter. "Dodging a fellow; he jolly well knew I shouldn't think of looking in the Form-room."

And Bunter rolled away down the

Remove passage in a great hurry to the stairs.

Johnny Bull's comrades gave him grim looks.

"You silly chump!" said Bob.

"What the thump did you want to tell Bunter for, if Mauly's taken cover in the Form-room?"

"Has he?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Well, you told Bunter he was there!" grunted Bob.

"I wasn't aware of it. I told him I'd seen Mauly in the Form-room," answered Johnny Bull placidly.

"Well, if you saw him there, he's there, I suppose."

"I don't see why. It was in third school this morning that I saw him there," answered Johnny Bull. "I think it's jolly unlikely that he's stayed there ever since."

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

Billy Bunter had rolled away to the Form-room in search of Lord Mauleverer. In the circumstances, it was highly improbable that he would find Mauly there.

Bunter being happily occupied in a vain search for an undiscoverable Mauly, Harry Wharton & Co. settled down cheerfully to tea in Study No. 13. There was a tap at the door a little later and it opened, to reveal the aristocratic countenance of Lord Mauleverer.

"Trot in, Mauly!" said the tea-party all at once.

"The trotfulness in is the proper caper, my esteemed and ridiculous Mauly," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh, with a dusky grin of welcome.

Lord Mauleverer trotted in.

He closed the door carefully behind him and sank contentedly into a chair that Wun Lung pulled up to the table for him.

"Hope I'm not buttin' in?" he remarked.

"Welcome as the flowers in May, old bean!" answered Bob. "Find another plate, Marky. Shove some more water in the pot, Wun Lung. Inky, hand over the sandwiches."

"Somebody asked me to tea," explained Lord Mauleverer. "I accepted, but I can't remember who it was. If it was you, Bob, it's all right."

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"It wasn't me, fat-head. But I'll ask you now. Pile in!"

"Sure you don't mind?"

"Fathead!"

Lord Mauleverer smiled cheerily and piled in. It was a very cheerful tea-party in Study No. 13. Tea was nearly over when footsteps and a sound of grunting approached along the Remove passage. The footsteps might have been anyone's, but the grunting was William George Bunter's own; he had so much weight to carry up.

"Oh gad!" murmured Lord Mauleverer distressfully. "Is Bunter comin' here, you men?"

"Most likely, as we're having tea," grinned Bob.

Grunt, grunt, grunt! sounded nearer and nearer. Lord Mauleverer rose from the tea-table. His Man Friday was after him again.

"All serene, old man," said Bob; "I'll kick him out if he puts his nose in here."

"No, don't kick him," said the good-natured Mauly. "I hate scein' a fellow kicked. Besides, Bunter squeals when he's kicked, and it's a dashed unpleasant row. Horrid, in fact!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The door-handle turned, and the door opened. As it opened Lord Mauleverer backed behind it.

The open door hid him from Bunter's sight as the Owl of the Remove blinked into the study.

"Mauly here?" demanded Bunter sourly.

"Didn't you find him in the Form-room?" asked Johnny Bull blandly.

"No, he wasn't there. Look here, when did you see him in the Form-room?"

"This morning."

"Beast!" roared Bunter. "You rotters can cackle!"

"Thanks, we will. Ha, ha, ha!"

"That beast Skinner told me to look in the Cloisters," grunted Bunter. "I went over to the Cloisters, and Mauly wasn't there; and Loder and Walker of the Sixth were there, and they kicked me because I saw them smoking. I say, you fellows, Mauly's let me down after urging me to come to tea with him—begging me, in fact. I'll tea here if you like."

(Continued on next page.)

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"The likefulness is not terrific."  
 "Oh, really, Inky! As for that cad Mauly, I'm done with him!" said Bunter. The long hunt for the elusive Mauly seemed to have told on Bunter's temper a little. "I think he's a rotter, and you can tell him I said so! I'll jolly well punch his silly nose next time I see him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Removites. Bunter, had he turned his head, would have seen Lord Mauleverer behind the door. But Bunter did not turn his head. He stood blinking at the grinning juniors round the table.

"The silly, footling ass!" went on Bunter. "Anybody would think I wanted to borrow money of him, the way he dodges a fellow! Suspicious cad, you know! After all I've done for him, too! Next time I see that silly, soft, footling ass I'll jolly well kick him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "You can cackle!" snorted Bunter. "You can make up to Mauly for his money. I'm not that sort of fellow, I hope! I'll jolly well show him what I think of him, too! The silly, soft, spooney, footling, footling—"

"Oh, gad!" ejaculated Lord Mauleverer.

Billy Bunter spun round.

"Oh!" he gasped, as his big spectacles discerned the elegant figure of Lord Mauleverer gracefully leaning on the study wall behind the door. "I—I say, is—is that you, Mauly? I—I say, I never knew you were there! I mean, I knew you were there all the time, old chap, and I was—was j-joking! He, he, he! I say, Mauly, old chap—"

"Get on with it, old bean," said Lord Mauleverer.

"Eh? Get on with what?"

"Weren't you goin' to kick me?"

"N-n-no, old chap! That was—was my little joke!" gasped Bunter.

"But you said you were going to kick me, old fat bean," persisted Mauly.

"I didn't mean it, old fellow."

"Well, I never said so; but I do mean it," said Lord Mauleverer. "Turn round, Bunter."

"Oh, really, Mauly—"

"Turn round! Don't give me the trouble of slinging you round! You know I'm tired."

"I—I say, old chap—"

"Will one of you fellows sling him round?" asked Lord Mauleverer. "I hate touchin' Bunter. He's so sticky."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows—leggo, Bob Cherry, you beast. I say, Mauly—"

"Yarooooooh!" roared Bunter as, slung into a favourable position by Bob's hefty hand, he received what was coming to him. "Whooooooop!"

Billy Bunter departed from Study No. 13 roaring. The door closed on him, and Lord Mauleverer sat down to finish his tea. For the first time since he had cashed the cheque Mauly was relieved of the faithful attendance of his Man Friday.

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

### The Way of the Wizard!

**H**ARRY WHARTON & CO. strolled down to the Rag after tea. There were a good many fellows in the room, and the buzz of voices showed that some topic of unusual interest was under discussion. Vernon-Smith called out to the Famous Five as they came in.

"You fellows heard about Lancaster?"

"I say, you fellows," Billy Bunter chimed in, "it's awful, you know!"

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Frightful! You fellows never hear anything. Guzzling tea in a study, while poor old Lancaster was getting killed—"

"What?" yelled Bob.

"Well, not exactly killed—"

amended Bunter hastily.

"Not exactly," grinned Skinner.

"Only slightly killed."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Skinner! He might have been killed, anyhow," said Bunter, "hurled off his motor-bike when it exploded—"

"My hat! Did it explode?" ejaculated Skinner.

"It did! I heard Wingate telling Gwynne and Sykes. It blew up with a frightful report—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You fat chump, cheese it!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Has anything happened to Lancaster of the Sixth, you men?"

"Spill on his motor-bike," answered Smitty.

"Hurt?" exclaimed Nugent.

The Famous Five felt a sharp shock.

"Not badly, I believe," answered the Bounder. "But he had to be carried into Hogben Grange, and a doctor sent for. I got it from Wingate. He was expecting Lancaster to tea; but the man never came in. Sir Julius Hogben telephoned to the Head about it."

"Poor old Lancaster!" said Johnny Bull. "Fancy him getting a spill on his stink-bike! Coker's the man for that."

"But what happened exactly?" asked Wharton.

"Lancaster was coming back from somewhere, from what I hear," answered the Bounder. "Something got in the way just as he was passing the gates of Hogben Grange, over by Courtfield. He crashed into the gates. He must have been a bit hurt, as they took him in and got a medical wallah to him. Old Hogben's a decent old johnny, and a pal of the Head's; so Lancaster being a Greyfriars man, I dare say he thought it was up to him. Anyhow, Lancaster's there, and it seems that he's going to stay the night."

The Famous Five felt duly concerned and sympathetic. The news that Lancaster had been hurt in an accident made them realise more than before, how much they liked their friend in the Sixth Form.

"Jolly odd," remarked Skinner.

"That ass Coker careers around like a giddy lunatic on his stink-bike, and never gets damaged; and Lancaster's a splendid rider. Rotten luck!"

"The rottenfulness is terrific."

"I jolly well hope he's not hurt much," added Skinner, which was quite unusual from Harold Skinner. Even Skinner rather liked Lancaster.

"Well, he will get off Greek in the Sixth to-morrow—I dare say that will be a consolation," remarked the Bounder.

"I say, you fellows, I wonder if that's the little game?" remarked Billy Bunter. He bestowed a fat wink on the juniors.

"What do you mean, you fat ass?"

"Well, he gets out of classes," said Bunter. "Greek with the Head is no joke, is it? I'd rather have a spill on a bike, than a day in class with old Quelch, I know that."

"You wouldn't mind telling lies about it," granted Johnny Bull. "Old Lancaster's rather different."

"Is he?" grinned Bunter. "That's all you know! Not that I'd tell whoppers myself—I'm above it, I hope. But if you think Lancaster couldn't get a grammer off his chest, you should have heard him the other day—"

"Oh, shut up, Bunter!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up!" roared Bob Cherry. And as he whizzed a cushion at the Owl of the Remove, to enforce the command, Billy Bunter shut up, and rolled away with a snort.

There was no further news of Lancaster of the Sixth by the time the Remove went to their studies for prep.

After prep, Bob and Hurree Singh and Johnny Bull joined Wharton and Nugent in Study No. 1, where there was a bag of doughnuts to be disposed of.

Naturally, their talk ran on Lancaster, and the spill on the motor-bike. They could not help feeling a little anxious.

"It's too bad, you know," said Bob Cherry. "Can't understand Lancaster coming a mucker like that. It's in Coker's line, not his. I hope he's not knocked about much. It wouldn't matter if Coker knocked his chivvy out of shape—any alteration would be an improvement."

The juniors chuckled.

"The hopefulness is great that the esteemed Lancaster has not damaged his ridiculous and good-looking chivvy," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "His beneficent countenance is a thing of beauty and a joyfulness for ever, as Poet Keats remarks."

"We'll ask Wingate at lights out," said Harry. "He's bound to know."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Nugent. "How did Bunter know we had doughnuts?"

"Oh, really, Nugent! Can't a pal drop in, without a fellow thinking that a fellow's after a fellow's tuck?" demanded Billy Bunter. "I never knew you had any doughnuts. I never saw Wharton get them at the tuckshop. I wasn't there at the time. Wharton knows, as he saw me."

"Oh crikey!"

"Still, I don't mind having one," said Bunter, helping himself. "I say, you fellows, don't you worry about Lancaster. He's all right."

"Any news?" asked Wharton.

"Oh, no! But he's all right! Take my word for it," said Bunter, with his mouth full. "It's gammon, you know. I say, you fellows, Lancaster's getting off class with the Head, and I've been jolly well thinking—"

"You silly owl!"

"I've been jolly well thinking that it might work with Quelch," said Bunter, blinking at the Famous Five seriously through his big spectacles. "What do you fellows think? Do you think Quelch would be sympathetic, and all that, if a fellow had a spill off his bike, and—couldn't turn up for class?"

"You benighted ass," said Bob Cherry. "Quelch is too downy for that. You'd better not try it on."

"Well, Lancaster seems to be getting away with it," argued Bunter. "I don't see why it shouldn't work with Quelch."

"You frabjous cuckoo!" said Johnny Bull. "Lancaster doesn't want to cut classes. If he did he wouldn't tell lies about it."

"That's all rot," said Bunter. "Any fellow would draw the long bow a bit to get out of classes. That stands to reason. Besides, I jolly well know that Lancaster can stretch it a bit when he likes. He jolly well told me a whopper the other day at Woodend."

Harry Wharton & Co. stared at the fat Owl.

"What the thump do you mean?" demanded the captain of the Remove. "Lancaster wasn't at Woodend the other day when you were there. He



was out on his jigger. It was the day of the bank raid."

"He jolly well was there, though," said Bunter. "I went into the inn for ginger-pop, and he was there, meeting a man. Greasy-looking, shifty sort of blighter, too, if you ask me."

Bunter helped himself to another doughnut.

"And he jolly well told me a crammer," he went on. "I heard him call the man Sugden, as I came down the garden; and he didn't know I'd heard it; and he told me afterwards the man's name was Robinson. If that wasn't a whopper, I'd jolly well like to know what is."

The Famous Five stared blankly at Bunter. The fat junior masticated doughnut, and grinned.

"What utter rot!" said Wharton at last. "If Lancaster told you a man's name was Robinson, it was Robinson."

"What did he call him Sugden for,

into his mind came an incident of a few weeks before, almost forgotten.

"Lancaster knows a man named Sugden," he said abruptly. "Blessed if I know how Bunter got hold of the name unless he heard it, as he says."

"How the thump do you know, Bob?"

"Well, I do," said Bob uncomfortably. "It was some time ago—the day you men catapulted Loder's study window. I bumped into Lancaster in the Sixth Form passage, getting away from Loder, and he dropped a letter. I picked it up for him. I suppose I needn't tell you fellows that I never looked at it. But picking it up I couldn't help seeing the name written on it. It was Sylvester Sugden."

"Oh!" said Harry.

There was a brief silence in the study.

"Well, if Lancaster met a man named Sugden he never told Bunter that the man's name was Robinson," said

reply was reassuring—Lancaster had had a fall and a shaking, the doctor had seen him, and he was remaining the night at Hogben Grange. But on the morrow he would be back at Greyfriars, and in the Sixth Form room, as usual.

Which was a relief to Lancaster's young friends in the Lower Fourth.

They did not see Lancaster till dinner the following day, when he was in his usual place at the high table. He looked very much his usual self; though some fellows noticed that he seemed to limp a little when he left Hall.

That limp, however, could not have been severe, for it left Lancaster entirely when he strolled away after dinner, and Greyfriars was out of sight behind him.

At a distance from the school he dropped a letter into a letter-box—a letter which was addressed to a name now known to the chums of the Remove—that of Sylvester Sugden.

As Ratty the Rogue dropped into the driving-seat, Lancaster's arm moved with the swiftness of a lightning flash. Whiz! The heavy spanner flew through the air and struck the rogue on the temple!



then, before he saw me?" chuckled Bunter. "I say, I wonder who the fellow was? Looked a rank outsider to me. I say, do you fellows think Lancaster goes in for blagging, like Loder of the Sixth? Think the man was a bookmaker?"

"You fat chump!" roared Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton! You needn't yell at a chap! I'm not going to give Lancaster away, if he was putting a bit on a horse like Loder or Carne. Dash it all, I'm a bit of a dog myself! Anyhow, he was trying to keep the man's name dark. I say, any more doughnuts?"

"No, you boa-constrictor."

"If I asked a fellow to a study supper I should have more than a couple of doughnuts to offer him. I wonder if Smithy's got anything in his study. Sorry I can't stop, you fellows—I've got to see Smithy."

Billy Bunter rolled out of Study No. 1.

"What has that born idiot got in his silly head now?" growled Harry Wharton. "Spying, as usual, I suppose, and getting it all wrong."

There was a rather strange expression on Bob Cherry's face. The name of Sugden had struck him at once. Back

Nugent at last. "He wouldn't. Bunter fancies these things."

"He couldn't fancy that," said Johnny Bull. "Either it happened as he says, or he's made it up. It's the truth or a lie!"

"Well, he's always telling lies," said Frank. "Or—or Lancaster may have stuffed him, as he was prying and spying."

"That's rot, old chap," said Johnny Bull. "Stuffing a fellow is one thing, telling lies is another. Blessed if I can make it out."

"Oh, let it drop!" said Wharton. "Let's go down!"

And the uncomfortable subject was dropped, and the chums of the Remove went down to the Rag. The juniors did not refer to the matter again. But it left an unpleasant flavour behind it. There was nothing—nothing, they were assured—against that splendid chap, Lancaster of the Sixth. Only trifles light as air—trifles that no doubt could easily have been explained away. Yet those trifles seemed to be accumulating, and had, as it were, a cumulative effect.

Wingate saw lights out in the Remove dormitory that night, and a dozen voices asked him about Lancaster. His

Had Harry Wharton & Co. been aware of it, certainly they would never have guessed what was in the letter.

They would never have dreamed how the "invalid" had been engaged, under the hospitable roof of Hogben Grange, while all others slept, or that a complete plan of the interior of that mansion was now in the post on its way to Slimy Sugden.

The Wizard, repentant or half-repentant, had carried out Slimy's orders, and he had not forgotten his cunning.

But as he walked back to the school after posting the letter, with a black brow and a bitter heart, the schoolboy crook asked himself again how it was to end. More and more it was borne in upon him that it could not go on—it could not!

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.  
So Near and Yet So Far!

"PLEASE, Wingate—" "Cut it short!" said the Greyfriars captain.

"Oh! Yes! I say, please—pip-pip-please—"

"Well?" THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,214.

Wingate of the Sixth stared at Bunter. The fat figure of William George almost filled the doorway of his study. Bunter had come there, apparently, to ask something from the head prefect of Greyfriars. That much was clear. But the Owl of the Remove seemed to have some difficulty in getting it out.

"I—I say, I mean—" said Bunter lucidly.

Wingate reached for his ashplant.

Lancaster of the Sixth was in the study with the Greyfriars captain. It was after prep, and the two seniors were talking cricket, discussing the prospects for the St. Jim's match, the next big fixture in the list.

Discussing a topic like that, Wingate naturally did not want to be interrupted and bothered by a stammering fag.

"I—I want leave out of the House, Wingate," gasped Bunter, getting it out at last.

"What?" ejaculated Wingate.

As it was nine o'clock—only half an hour from the bed-time of the Remove, Billy Bunter's request was rather surprising.

"You—you see—" stammered Bunter.

"I don't!" contradicted Wingate.

"I mean, you see—that is—it's got nothing to do with a pie!" gasped Bunter desperately.

"A pie!" exclaimed Wingate blankly.

"Yes—I mean, no! Nothing at all!" said Bunter anxiously. "I wasn't even thinking of a pie, Wingate. I—I hope you believe me."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lancaster; and Wingate grinned.

"You see, this is how it was," pursued Bunter, encouraged by the laughter of the great man of the Sixth. "I left it in the ivy—"

"You left a pie in the ivy?" stammered Wingate.

"Yes—no—oh, no—I mean—not at all! I—I—I left my Latin grammar in the ivy. I—I'd taken it for a walk with me, you know, being frightfully keen on mugging up deponent verbs—I—I'm rather fond of deponent verbs, Wingate, and—and I dropped it—I mean, I hid it—that is, I left it lying about. And—and I forgot it, so—so I want leave out

of the House to go and fetch it in, Wingate, please."

"No Lower boy can have leave after lock-ups, as you jolly well know!" snapped Wingate. "If you've left anything out of doors, it can stay there. Now cut!"

"But—but I shall want the dictionary—"

"The what?" gasped Wingate.

"The—the dictionary—I shall want it in class in the morning!" gasped Bunter. "I mean, the grammar, Wingate!"

"Well, you can get it in the morning, before class."

"I—I mean, I want it to-night! You see, I—I want to mug up some verbs—deponent verbs. I—I'm going to sit and read that dictionary—I mean grammar—till dorm—"

"Come into the study, Bunter," said Wingate, picking up his cane. "I don't know why you want to get out of the House after lock-ups. I suppose you're up to some mischief or other. I'm going to cane you for telling lies. Bend over."

"Oh dear!"

Swish!

"Yaroooooh!"

"Now cut!" said Wingate, laying down the cane.

"Ow! Wow!"

Bunter cut. Whatever might be his mysterious reason for wanting to get out of the House before dorm, he did not pursue the subject with the Greyfriars captain.

Wingate and Lancaster resumed cricket "jaw"; and speedily forgot the existence of the Owl of the Remove.

Bunter rolled away disconsolately to the Rag. He blinked from one of the high windows of that apartment into the quad.

The May evening was yet light. But it was a strict rule that no junior should leave the House after lock-ups, without special leave from a master or a prefect. Plenty of fellows, certainly, managed to get out of House bounds in one way or another when the spirit moved them so to do, without troubling about the formality of leave. But William George Bunter was not of a

venturesome nature. He hated the prospect of "six" from a prefect's ashplant.

"Oh dear!" groaned Bunter, as he blinked from the window.

A heavy smack descended on his fat shoulder and he gave a yelp and blinked round.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" boomed Bob Cherry. "Enjoying life, what?"

"Oh, beast! I mean, I say, old chap," said Bunter eagerly. "How'd you like a feed in the dorm to-night?"

"No objection," grinned Bob. "Has your jolly old postal order come at last, Bunt?"

"Nunno! But there's a pie—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob. "I fancied it was you! I've heard that Mrs. Kebble has missed a pie from the pantry."

"It—it's not that pie," gasped Bunter. "It—it's a special pie sent me from home, specially made by our cook at Bunter Court. I—I hid it in the ivy under the Sixth Form windows, old chap. I—I thought it was safer to keep it out of sight till—till they'd given it up as a bad job, you know. If—if I was seen with that pie the house-dame would very likely make out that it was the pie she's missed—you know what women are, silly and obstinate—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Bob.

"Oh, don't cackle," grunted Bunter. "I can tell you this is jolly serious. I hid it in the ivy under the Sixth Form windows and it's quite safe there. Only—only when I went back to get it that beast Loder was sitting at his study window and I—I couldn't get it."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Bob again.

"I—I left it till just before lock-ups," moaned Bunter, "and when I went again, blessed if Wingate wasn't at his window and I had to chuck it again."

Bob Cherry wiped his eyes.

"I've asked Wingate for leave out of House, to fetch a dictionary I left in the quad," said Bunter. "He's refused me leave. He didn't seem to believe me, somehow."

"Now, I wonder why!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Well, he's rather a rotter, doubting a fellow's word. I say, Bob, old chap, you go and ask leave to fetch in a bat or something—a bat or a hat or something you've left out—"

"But I haven't left anything out, old fat bean."

"For goodness' sake, don't wander from the point," said Bunter peevishly. "Wingate will believe you and give you leave. Then you can bag the pie and hand it in to me at this window, see? I'll whack it out in the dorm, honour bright. It's a splendid pie—you know what Mrs. Kebble's pies are like—she made this one herself for the masters' table."

"And then it was sent to you from Bunter Court!" roared Bob.

"Oh, I—I mean—"

"I know what you mean, porpoise! You want a jolly old catspaw," grinned Bob. "Well, you can cut out and get the pie yourself, if you want it. And if you're spotted, serve you jolly well right."

"Beast!"

Bob walked away grinning. Billy Bunter remained blinking dolorously from the window.

Several times it crossed his mind to drop from the window, scoot round to the Sixth Form studies and chance it. The mere thought of that scrumptious pie made his mouth water.



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But he dared not risk it. The fineness of the May evening had tempted masters out of the House; Mr. Quelch was walking under the elms; Prout and Capper were chatting near the door. Without official leave, Bunter dared not venture.

And the minutes were passing with awful swiftness. Soon it would be dorm—after which, it was farewell to the pie. True, Bunter would be able to recapture it after prayers in the morning. But the morning seemed centuries off to the hungry Owl. He did not want jam to-morrow, so to speak.

It had seemed to Billy Bunter quite a strategic stroke to conceal that purloined pie in the quad till the hue-and-cry was over, as it were. Now he wished that he had not been quite so strategic.

From the Rag he could see the lighted windows of the Sixth Form studies, with the thick old ivy mantling round and under them. He knew exactly where he had packed away the pie. He knew still more precisely where he was now longing to pack it away. It was really awful for that pie to be almost within his sight, and yet out of his reach. Really, it was cruelty to animals!

Half-past nine came all too swiftly. Bunter, still pieless, and feeling within him an aching void that could only be filled by a scrumptious pie, had to march off to the dormitory with the rest of the Remove.

He turned in, in the lowest spirits.

Walker of the Sixth put out the lights and the Lower Fourth were left to repose. But for once, Billy Bunter's deep snore did not awaken the echoes of the Remove dormitory.

Bunter, for once, could not sleep.

He closed his eyes; but they reopened. Closed, they saw only the vision of a scrumptious pie.

He was hungry! Bunter generally was hungry; and the thought of the pie made him feel famished. And it

was not so jolly certain that it would be safe till the morning. Somebody might find it—or suppose Gosling's dog got loose and rooted it out and devoured it. Sometimes that beastly dog did get loose; and if it nosed out that pie, precious little was likely to be left for Bunter in the morning.

Bunter dozed at last. But it was a fitful doze. He woke, and woke again. He was hungrier than ever. He sat up in bed.

The deep strokes of midnight boomed through the still night. Bunter sat for some minutes hesitating. Then he rolled out of bed.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Tries It On!

HARRY WHARTON gasped.

"Ow! Ooooh!" He awoke quite suddenly. "Oh! Ow! What—my hat—who—what—" stuttered the captain of the Remove.

He was startled. A fellow suddenly awakened, after midnight, by a clutching hand in the dark could hardly help being startled.

In the darkness of the dormitory he could not see who was by his bedside bending over him. Someone was, like a black shadow, that was all he knew; and a hand was groping over his face.

Wharton started up, gasping.

Crack!

"Yaroooogh!"

"Oh!" gasped Wharton.

His head, as he suddenly sat up, came into violent contact with the head that was bending over him.

Wharton's forehead crashed on Billy Bunter's nose. The impact was sudden and sharp.

Wharton's head was rather hurt. Bunter's nose was frightfully hurt, to judge by the fiendish yell that rang through the Remove dormitory.

Wharton sat and rubbed his head

and blinked dazedly in the gloom. Bunter, clasping his fat little nose in anguish, howled.

"You potty idiot!" gurgled Wharton. "You—you—you—what are you up to? Have you gone dotty? What are you out of bed for?"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"What were you grabbing at my face for, you blithering idiot?" howled Wharton.

"Wow! My nose! Wow! It's smashed! Wow!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What the thump—" came Bob Cherry's drowsy voice. "Is that Bunter? What's up?"

"That idiot, Bunter, is," answered Harry. "Goodness knows what for! I'm going to turn out and bolster him."

"Ow! Ow! Wow! I say, old chap—ow! Oh crikey! My nose's squashed! Ow! You silly idiot, what did you bang your napper on my nose for?"

"What were you grabbing at me for, you howling ass?"

"Ow! I was going to shake you, to wake you up, you fathhead," groaned Bunter. "Now you've smashed my nose! Ow!"

"I'll smash the rest of you in a minute," gasped Wharton. "Wait till I get out of bed, you frabjous fooler."

"What on earth's the game?" asked Peter Todd. Nearly all the Remove had been awakened.

"I—I say, you fellows, you can go to sleep!" gasped Bunter. "That ass Wharton had to wake the lot of you, of course! He always was a silly idiot! I say, you shut up, you fellows! We don't want a prefect here! Wharton, old chap—"

"You fat villain—"

"Do listen to a chap!" urged Bunter. "I say, old fellow, I left a pie in the quad—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came from Bob Cherry.

"Do shut up that row, Cherry! I left it hidden in the ivy under the Sixth Form windows," said Bunter.

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You know that thick clump of ivy just under Lancaster's window? Well it's there. I—I say, I'm frightfully hungry. I mean, I want to stand you a dormitory feed, old fellow! All you've got to do is to nip out and bag that pie for me—"

"What?" gasped Wharton.

"That's all, old chap," said Bunter. "You can get out by the Sixth Form lobby. The key's always left inside the lock. Easy as falling off a form. Get the pie here—"

"Get the pie here?" repeated Wharton dazedly.

"Yes, old fellow, and I'll whack it out. It's a scrumptious pie!" said Bunter eagerly. "I say, you'll do it, won't you, old chap, for a pal?"

"Is that what you woke me up for?" gasped Wharton.

"That's it, old fellow."

Harry Wharton slipped out of bed.

He had wondered why Bunter had rooted him out of the embrace of Morpheus after midnight! Now he knew! He was to break bounds at night, to fetch in a purloined pie which Bunter had left hidden in the quad!

Words were inadequate on such an occasion! Harry Wharton did not waste time or breath in words.

He grasped his bolster.

"I say, old chap, you're going to— whoooooop!" roared Bunter.

Swipe!

Bunter rolled and roared.

Swipe! Swipe! Swipe! Swipe!

"Yow-ow-ow—wwoop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter squirmed frantically under the swiping of the bolster.

The captain of the Remove put all his beef into it.

Swipe! Swipe! Swipe! Swipe!

"Ow! Oh crikey! Oh crumbs! Wow! Stoppit! Wow, wow, wow!" howled Bunter wildly.

Swipe! Swipe! Swipe!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter rolled under a bed. There was a chortle along the dormitory. Bunter gasped and squirmed and quaked under the bed, as the captain of the Remove bent down beside it.

"Come out, you fat villain!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"I haven't finished yet, you potty porpoise."

"Yow! Wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, perhaps that will do!" said Wharton. "You won't wake me up again, in a hurry, to go after your blessed pie!"

"Yow-ow-ow! Oh crikey! Ow!"

The captain of the Remove returned to bed. Bunter crawled out, groaning and gasping. He sat on his bed, and gasped and groaned, till Bolsover major whizzed a boot at him, after which he was silent.

The Removites chuckled, and settled down to sleep again. But there was no sleep for Billy Bunter. If he had been sleepless before, he was doubly so since that emphatic bolstering.

He did not go back to bed. He waited dolorously till the Remove were quiet again. Then he dressed in the dark.

It was clear now, even to Bunter, that catspaws were at a discount in the Remove. If he wanted that pie, he had to fetch it himself. And he did want it—his fat heart yearned for it. Bunter, deprived of a pie, was like a lioness robbed of her cubs, only more so.

Some of the juniors, who had not yet dropped off to sleep, heard the dormitory door open and shut.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,214.

"My only hat!" murmured Nugent. "That fat dummy's gone down."

"Serve him jolly well right if he gets lagged!" growled Wharton.

"The lagfulness will probably be terrific!" yawned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

WHO WANTS  
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Then send me a Greyfriars  
limerick as good as the one illus-  
trated below, and the postman will  
bring you one!



Once Bull put a pail of water



On Gosling's door (he's the  
porter);



When poor Gossy came in



He was drenched to the skin,



And shouted: "You rip, I'll report  
yer!"

The above winning effort was sent in by R. Arnott, of 23, Chestnut Grove, Acomb, York, who gets a topping leather pocket wallet for his trouble.

And the juniors went to sleep and forgot Billy Bunter.

Meanwhile, the Owl of the Remove was creeping cautiously, by dark staircases and passages, through the stilly night.

Only the lure of the pie could have drawn Bunter along those dark staircases and passages.

There had been a burglar at the school some time previously, and Bunter remembered that burglar very uncomfortably, as he stole along.

But he kept on, lured by the pie. Dark corners and shadows were horrid, at midnight's witching hour, but the pie was scrumptious, when at long last he should get hold of it.

He stepped on tiptoe past the doors of Sixth Form studies, where the great men of Greyfriars slept. He groped into the lobby at the end of the passage.

There was a bright spring starlight outside, which was a comfort. It glimmered in through the lobby window.

Bunter groped over the door, unlocked it, and opened it. He blinked out into a starlit quad.

All was silent and still!

Leaving the door ajar for his return, the fat junior stepped stealthily out, and rolled across to the windows of the Sixth Form studies.

All of them were dark, at that hour, save for the glimmer of the stars on the panes. Greyfriars was wrapped in slumber.

With a beating heart, the Owl of the Remove reached the thick clustering ivy on the wall under Lancaster's window. That was where he had hidden the purloined pie—quite a safe hiding-place.

Kneeling, he groped in the thick tendrils of the ivy for the pie. His fat fingers came into contact with the hidden treasure.

He drew it out. His little round eyes gloated over it through his big round spectacles. It was a scrumptious pie!

A few moments more, and Bunter would have been on his homeward way, with the pie. But even as he dragged it out and gloated over it, there came a creak from the window above him.

Bunter's fat heart almost missed a beat.

Lancaster's window was opening.

What a Sixth Form man was opening his window for at half-past midnight was a mystery. It was a happening that no fellow could have possibly foreseen. But it was happening now.

Bunter crouched low.

He crouched into the ivy as far as he could, the pie in his arms. If the senior looked out he was not likely to see the crouching figure below, unless he bent down and specially looked for it, which surely he was not likely to do.

Bunter waited, silent, quaking.

Faintly, but quite audibly to his straining ears, came the soft sound of the lifting sash. Perhaps the beast could not sleep, and was going to sit by an open window. Bunter suppressed a groan! If he had to wait there till the brute went back to bed—

That apprehension, at least, was groundless. Bunter had not long to wait!

It did not even occur to his fat brain that Lancaster was going to leave his study by the window. He could not have imagined any reason why the Sixth-Former should do so, even if he had thought of it. Faintly, softly, he heard the window close down, and then—

A figure dropped from the high, broad sill.



In the darkness of the dormitory Wharton could not see who was bending over his bed. He sat up suddenly and his head came into violent contact with someone's nose. "Yaroooh!" "Oh!" gasped Wharton.

Crash! Bump!

Billy Bunter's frantic yell awoke every echo in the old quadrangle of Greyfriars as Lancaster of the Sixth, dropping from the sill, landed on the back of his neck, knocked him over, and sprawled breathlessly over him.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Chance!

**B**ILLY BUNTER sprawled and yelled.

There was a gasp from Lancaster.

The lithe, active senior was on his feet in a twinkling. His face was white and startled as he stared down at the squirming Owl in the starlight.

"Yaroooh! Help! Keep off!" roared Bunter. "Ow! Wow! I'm killed! Ow! You beast, Lancaster! Ow!"

Lancaster gritted his teeth.

The glitter that flashed into his eyes was one of deadly rage. That starry night he was no longer Lancaster of the Sixth—he was the Wizard; he was the crook, with a wallet hidden under his coat containing the tools of a crook. In the dark grounds at Hogben Grange the Weasel was waiting—waiting for the Wizard to join him; waiting till the light-fingered Wizard was there to crack the safe. The Weasel was waiting, and he was likely to wait long!

"Bunter!" breathed Lancaster.

"Ow! Keep off! It wasn't me!" howled Bunter. "Ow! I say, keep off, you beast, Lancaster! I never knew you were breaking bounds, did I? I came here for my pie! Ow! Lemme alone!"

"Quiet, you fool!" hissed Lancaster.

But that warning came too late. Half a dozen Sixth Form men had been awakened by Bunter's frantic yell outside their windows. Wingate's window was heard to creak.

"What the thump—" called out Wingate.

Three or four other windows opened. Sykes, Gwynne, Loder, Walker, stared out into the starlit quad. Loder's eyes gleamed with suspicion at Lancaster. The other fellows only looked astonished.

Bunter staggered up, the pie in his hands. He blinked apprehensively at Lancaster.

"I—I say—" he stammered.

"Is that a junior?" exclaimed Wingate. "Bunter! My hat! What—"

Lancaster burst into a laugh. He was Lancaster of the Sixth again now; the Wizard, for the moment, had ceased to exist.

"It's Bunter," he said. "Sorry to have woke all you men up. That young ass seems to have come out after a pie—"

"I—I say—" stammered Bunter.

"My hat! Then that's what he wanted leave for, after lock-ups!" exclaimed Wingate. "The young rascal! Is that Mrs. Kebble's missing pie, Bunter?"

"Yes—no—I mean—"

"I heard something," said Lancaster, "and looked out of my window. We had a burglary last week, you know—I fancied it might be something of the kind. I jumped out to see—and landed on Bunter—"

"You young villain, Bunter!" exclaimed Wingate. "I'll give you six for this to-morrow! How did you get out?"

"I—I got out by the lobby," groaned

Bunter. "I—I say, Wingate, this—this is my pie, you know—"

"I'll give you pie!" growled Wingate.

It was not Bunter's lucky night! He was marched in with Wingate's hand on his collar. The pie was left in Wingate's study, to be returned to its owner in the morning. Bunter was marched back to the Remove dormitory, pieless and palpitating. The Remove awakened once more, and chuckled heartlessly over the outcome of Bunter's adventure. There was no pie for Bunter, but there was "six" to come in the morning, and it was a dismal Owl that fell asleep at last and snored till the rising-bell rang.

Lancaster of the Sixth did not sleep.

In the dark grounds at Hogben Grange the Weasel waited—in vain. He waited till the dawn glimmered, when he stole away with rage in his heart.

Lancaster was not thinking of him.

Was it Fate, he asked himself, as he lay sleepless through the night. He had come to Greyfriars a crook, but that night crime would have stained him for the first time since he had been at the school. He had been saved from that. Had Fate intervened to save him, to give him another chance? Was there a chance for him?

He could not tell. The future was still on the knees of the gods!

THE END.

(Whatever you do, don't miss the next yarn in this spanking new series, entitled: "THE GREYFRIARS PRETENDER!" You'll find Frank Richards at the top of his form.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,214.

# LAND of LOST PLANES!

BY  
ANTHONY FORD.

## CHAPTER 1. Kidnapped I

**I**t was a cold, wet night; and, with no thought of danger other than the possibility of a chill contracted from piloting a heavy plane across the Channel in a bad gale in the afternoon, young Bill Lyon, chief pilot of the Trans-Continental Airways Co., swung, with brisk stride, into the street wherein lay his small bachelor flat.

His immediate thoughts were principally concerned with the prospect of a hot bath; later, a hot meal, followed by a comfortable relaxation after his arduous day's duty. If he'd noticed the shiny black car that had passed at the end of the street as he swung round the corner, it hadn't impressed him much, beyond vaguely wondering why the fatheaded driver wanted to crawl on such a foul evening as this.

He had no warning of an attack, beyond the swift purring of the car, the gentle squish-sh of wheels on the wet-surfaced road when she was braked, and the click of a swiftly opened door.

A pilot is blessed with a subtle perception of danger; he smells it, feels it. Consequently, Bill Lyon was half-way round to meet the black-hatted man who leapt out of the car at him, a short truncheon raised above his head.

Still, a pilot doesn't go around with his fists clenched ready to sock the first suspicious-looking stranger on the jaw.

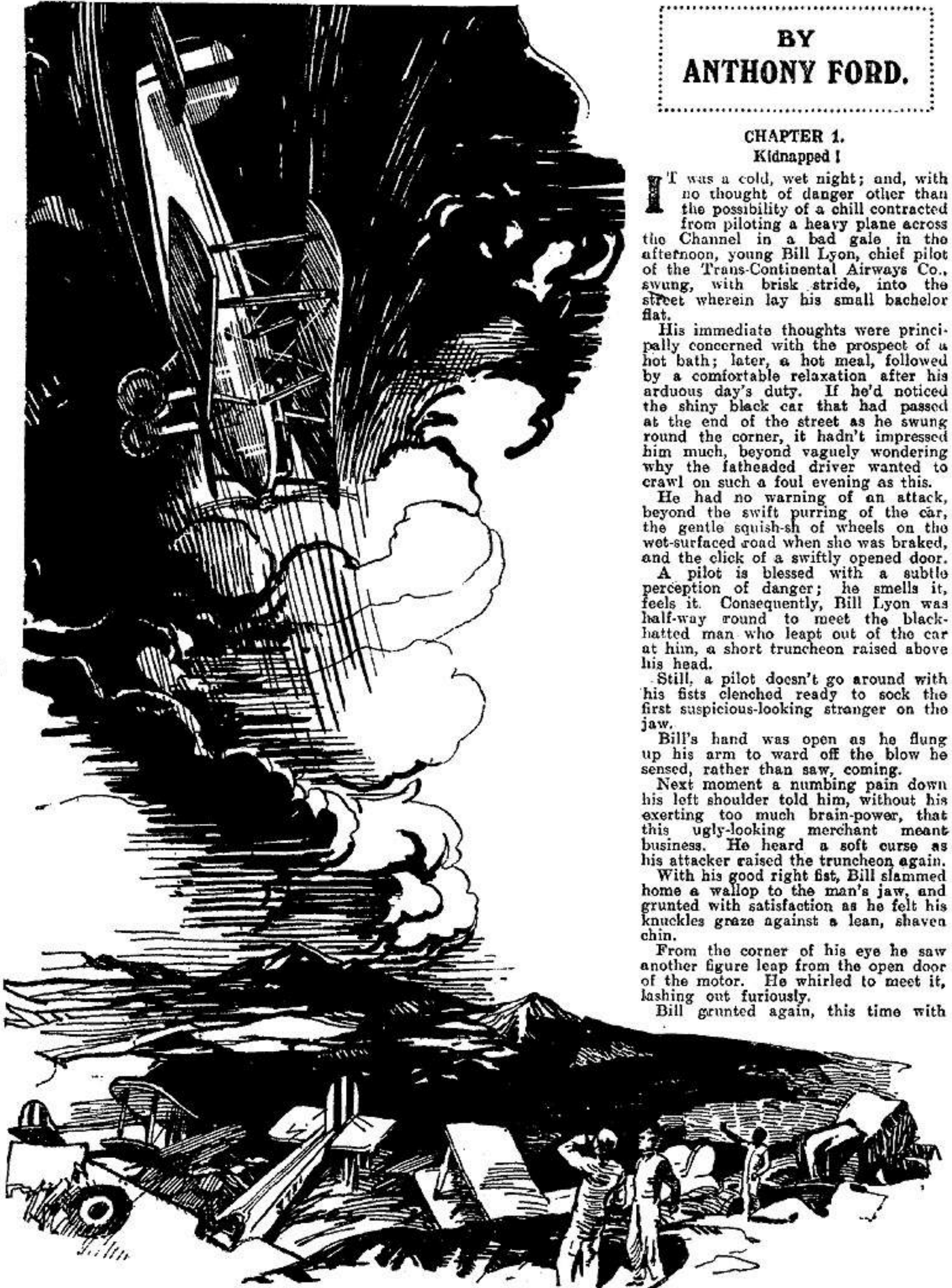
Bill's hand was open as he flung up his arm to ward off the blow he sensed, rather than saw, coming.

Next moment a numbing pain down his left shoulder told him, without his exerting too much brain-power, that this ugly-looking merchant meant business. He heard a soft curse as his attacker raised the truncheon again.

With his good right fist, Bill slammed home a wallop to the man's jaw, and grunted with satisfaction as he felt his knuckles graze against a lean, shaven chin.

From the corner of his eye he saw another figure leap from the open door of the motor. He whirled to meet it, lashing out furiously.

Bill grunted again, this time with



pain, as the first man recovered while he was meeting the second and slapped hard with the truncheon on the top of Bill's head.

A mist enveloped the pilot. Bright stars flashed before his eyes. He crumpled at the knees, and would have fallen flat and unconscious to the shining wet pavement but for the fact the second man caught him in his arms as he pitched forward.

Next moment Bill was heaved inside the car; gears slicked in, with a precision only achieved by an expert driver; the door slammed, and the car lurched round the corner and was soon threading its way through traffic.

The street wherein was housed Bill's flat was as empty as the minute before the pilot had swung round the corner.

A matter of minutes—ten or so—passed before Bill Lyon regained consciousness. It had been a particularly hard bat with the truncheon, delivered scientifically; but Bill's head was tough. He groaned now, struggled to a sitting position, attempted to raise his hand to his throbbing brow, and realised he was handcuffed.

Memory returned with a suddenness like a cold douche. Bill's chin jerked upward.

"What exactly is the game?" he demanded, peering through the gloom—the interior of the car was in darkness, although headlights knifed a clear white beam in front.

"Shut up!" clipped the man in the black hat, in an ugly voice. "You pack a nasty wallop, and it wouldn't take much for me to give you another sock."

While the fellow was talking Bill took a rapid survey. There were three men in the car—two driving, one seated each side of him. Through the front window he caught a glimpse of an infrequent lamp-post, and gathered they were rapidly leaving the town.

"Let me tell you, I'm due for duty at—" began Bill hotly.

"Shut up!" snarled the man in the black hat.

Bill's temper snapped. He lunged forward suddenly, raised his manacled hands high, and brought them down viciously on the head of the man driving. The next moment he jabbed with his elbow at the glass of the window. It went through as the car lurched. There was the tinkle of glass; Bill was about to yell when he felt another terrific wallop on the head.

Thereafter darkness enveloped him—far more completely than it had done before.

### A Strange Offer!

**B**ILL LYON awoke with a nasty taste in his mouth and the smell of leather up his nose. Opening his eyes carefully, he found himself staring at a white expanse of ceiling. He moved gingerly—his handcuffs having been removed—and discovered that he was lying prone on a comfortable couch.

The young pilot sat up silently, observing he was alone in a small room. A single light gleamed from the centre of the ceiling. Heavy, drawn curtains gave him a glimpse of a window. Besides the couch there were a couple of armchairs, a small table, decorated with a vase of flowers. A rich, soft carpet spread over the floor.

Silently Bill dropped his feet to the soft pile of the carpet, stood up and stretched his arms. His head buzzed,

and he was badly puzzled, besides being annoyed.

"I don't know what the game is," he muttered to himself, "but I'm willin' to play."

He glanced round for a weapon; an electric fire burned in the fireplace, so fire-irons were ruled out. His glance fell on the vase of flowers, and with his left hand he extracted the flowers, his right gripping the heavy cut glass with a feeling of satisfaction.

"I'll pin these to that black-hatted guy's chest with an appropriate verse," he thought.

Placing the flowers on the table, he padded across to the window. Pushing the curtains aside, he found himself staring at blank shutters.

"H'm! Not so good!"

Bill next moved quietly across to the door, his right hand clenching the vase so fiercely that he spilled some of the water over his wrist. He glanced at it, tempted to fling the water across the carpet, but having an orderly mind refrained.

And thus Bill stood, facing the door, when the handle moved, and it swung open. Framed in the opening was a pale-faced man whom Bill recognised by the bruise on his chin as the man who had worn the black hat.

A squat automatic was levelled at Bill. Like the young pilot, the fellow seemed disinclined to waste words.

"Come on!" he said briefly.

For answer Bill flung the vase of water in the man's face, ducked at the same moment, and felt the wind of a

**Through the ether came a mysterious voice from an unknown world—a voice which was ultimately identified as that of a famous airman who set out to fly the mighty Atlantic and was never seen again.**

bullet, and heard the bark of the automatic. He flung himself in a tackle at the man's knees. Arms embraced him, but not fondly, and he quietened as he recognised a ju-jitsu hold on his right arm that would snap it like a candle if he went on struggling.

Straightening, the young pilot realised the uselessness of continuing the struggle. Two men the size of heavy-weight policemen held his arms. One was wearing a bandage over his head, so Bill guessed him to be the chauffeur of the car. The white-faced man was fuming, and wiping his face with a handkerchief.

"The Chief wants to see you," he snarled. "And mind he doesn't kill you. All right, fellers, march him along."

Curiosity was stirring in Bill Lyon; besides, there was that nasty hold on his arm. He went quietly. He realised that the two who held him had been in the shadows of the passage along which they were walking when the pale-faced man had opened the door.

They halted outside a massive, white-painted door a matter of twenty paces along the corridor. Bill noticed one window; that, too, was heavily shuttered. Then the white-painted door was opened.

The first thing that took the pilot's attention was a collection of valves, tubes, and condensers occupying one corner, which told him that here was a really good wireless outfit. Then his eyes fell on the occupant of the room, seated at a table turning over the leaves of a notebook.

At first sight he was a very ordinary

looking little man, with a round, red, good-humoured face, upon which was perched a pair of rimless pince-nez. Then, as Bill gazed at the eyes behind the pince-nez, he received a distinct shock. They were grey, cold, hard, unsmiling. Despite the smile which wreathed the little man's lips, the eyes took in every detail of the young pilot's somewhat dishevelled appearance with an alert, almost cold-blooded, dissecting look.

"Ah, Mr. Lyon!" said the little man, who was apparently the Chief, in an unexpectedly deep, melodious voice.

"You said it," answered Bill. "And now, perhaps, someone might have the decency to tell me what the blazes all this is about? And call your men off, will you? My arms—"

"He's dangerous, Chief," said white face. "I'd keep him—"

"Never mind, Doak," answered the Chief. "I don't think Mr. Lyon will do anything to me. It would be—er—regrettable to end suddenly so promising a career. All right, Keek, Weiden, let him go."

It had been in Bill Lyon's mind to make an instantaneous leap at the Chief the moment his arms were released. But he caught a glimpse of a gun close to the little man's hand; and he also felt the cold glare of those grey eyes on him—killer's eyes, if ever such things were set in a man's head. Wisely, he desisted, and stood still.

"Well?" he demanded truculently.

"All right, men, you may go," said the Chief. "Sit down, Mr. Lyon, in that chair by the wall. No; no traps, I promise. But don't make any unexpected moves, or I shall kill you!"

"I'm inclined to believe you!" snapped Bill, as he seated himself in the chair. He jerked his head as the

door closed behind Doak. "Your white-faced ally there seemed inclined to have a shot at it some time ago. Is this heart-to-heart talk going to take long? Because I'd like some dinner, and then be goin' on my way."

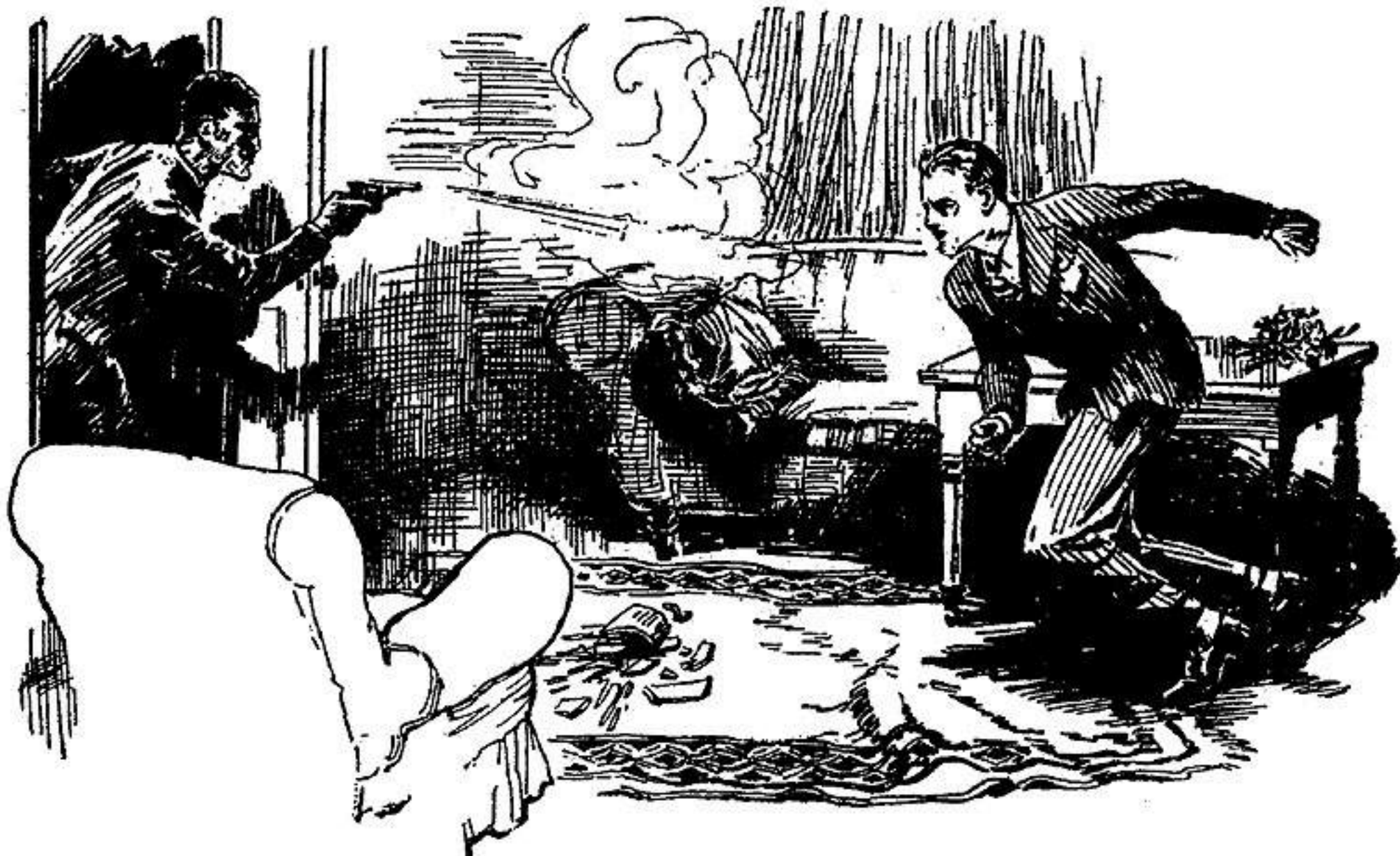
"Dinner you certainly shall have," promised the Chief. "But, henceforth, your way shall be MY way. Listen, Bill Lyon. I want a first-class pilot. There are few as high in your profession as you. You are young, yet chief pilot to a reputable air-liner company. A month ago you received a letter offering you a job to last you about six months, with a salary of one hundred pounds a week, providing you asked no questions. You were told to meet a man at a given spot. You did nothing. Two weeks ago you received a similar letter, the offer being raised to one hundred and fifty pounds a week. You threw away a matter of three thousand five hundred pounds."

"The chap who has a business that can't bear being questioned isn't my meat," said Bill brusquely. "I slung the second letter where I did the first—in the W.P.B. So you wrote 'em, huh? What's the mystery?"

The Chief leaned forward. His eyes gleamed intently.

"How would you like to fly the Atlantic from east to west, with the almost positive certainty of reaching land?"

"No!" said Bill decisively. "And I don't mean yes! It can't be done. Not yet awhile. Not until the problem of fuel-weight has been satisfactorily



As the door opened Bill let fly with the flower vase and then ducked as a bullet whistled past his head!

surmounted; wind charts surveyed with definite accuracy. Don't talk to me about flying. It's my job, and I know it!"

"I had a message from Shane Dexter early this morning," said the little, red-faced man, in a quiet voice.

A moment of silence hung in the room. Bill's eyes grew large and round.

"You"—he burst out at last—"you had a message from Dexter—Dinky Dexter, the American flyer? You're mad! Balmy! Dexter was lost flying the Atlantic four months back. That wisecracking pilot was a pal of mine, mister, and, gun or no gun, I'll sock you one on the jaw if you're bein' funny! Why—why, dash it, he was lost without a trace, like—"

"Like half a dozen others who've attempted to fly the Atlantic," nodded the Chief. He seemed unmoved by Bill's outburst. "Dexter, the American; Poineau, the Frenchman; Von Hassen, the German—those three are alive, despite the fact they were lost without trace. No wreckage found floating on the waves. In other cases bits of wing-stuff, pieces of fuselage, have been found. Not so those three—because they didn't hit the Atlantic at all."

"You're basing your supposition on the fact that because no wreckage was found, they must have landed somewhere!" snorted Bill. "As I said, mister, you're stone cuckoo. Hacha, as the Indians say—"

"I told you," said the Chief seriously. "that I'd had a message from Dexter!"

There was an air of quiet certainty about him—a definite assurance. Bill took a hold on himself. Then—

"Let's hear it," he said. "Although, mind you," he added, as a vindictive afterthought, "I expect you're lyin'!"

"I'm not," smiled the Chief, "and, what's more, young man, you know it! No; I won't talk to you now. You're

hungry, and we must keep you well fed. While you're eating, you shall read a few notes. And, if you value your skin, and have any regard for Shane Dexter, whom you spoke of as a friend of yours, you will not make any false moves."

He took two or three pages of foolscap clipped together, covered in small writing, and tossed them across to Bill. Then he pressed a bell on his table. After a moment the door opened, and Doak looked in.

"Food for our young guest," said the Chief. "And don't you two get fighting."

#### A Wonderful Story!

**B**ILL was back in the small room in which he had first awoke. A quick glance showed him that every likely and unlikely weapon had been taken. No cut-glass vases of flowers; not even a picture on the wall. And Doak had his gun handy, and from the gleam in his dark eyes, he would use it on Bill with all the pleasure in the world at the first move which would warrant it.

"Food, brother Doak," said Bill, as he flung himself into a deep, leather-padded armchair. "The ros-bif of old England, plenty spuds, greens, Yorkshire pudding, and a drink, laddie, to help wash it down, and I pray the removal of your face while I eat. It—the face—makes me feel ill!"

Doak's white teeth flashed in a crooked grin. It was nearer a snarl perhaps.

"Shut your trap!" he snapped, and slammed out of the room.

Bill heard the key click in the lock, and chuckled gently to himself. Then he started to read the papers the man referred to as the Chief had given him. From the very first his attention was riveted.

"Shane Dexter calling—forty-five

thousand feet above sea. Caught in tremendous wind—too powerful to dive low out of it. No perceptible motion, but carried like a feather on wave. Estimate force of wind at anything over one thousand miles an hour. Sheerest luck had hands on controls when sighted green land beneath. Plane smashed to atoms when landed, but escaped with bruises."

Bill Lyon was absorbed. Subconsciously he heard the door open; sniffed the fragrance of hot food.

"Stick it on the table," he said to Doak over his shoulder. "Thanks! Now leave me in peace!"

Doak muttered something unintelligible, and slammed out of the room again. Bill started on the meal—a fairly large one—propping up the papers in front of him.

"Poineau, the Frenchman's here," he read. "Broken leg. And Von Hassen, the German pilot. He's pretty badly broken up, and I don't think he can last long. I've fixed up this wireless set from bits out of the three busted planes. Not very strong, but there's a possibility some can hear me. We take it in turns to send out signals, Poineau sending in French. Von Hassen too bad to send. Strange country; but weather warm and mild, probably on account of the stupendous wind which blew us here. Discussing it with two other pilots, have come to the conclusion it is a belt, or zone, like an aerial Gulf Stream. Caught us up in it: dropped us in this strange land off the map. Lindbergh and others missed it, presumably because they were flying at lower altitude. In each case we three were flying at same altitude in same latitude.

"Jewels are all right. Found them intact in case in smashed cockpit. Not much good to Prince of Levania now, but suppose insurance was heavy for them, so Levania got the money after



all. Anyway, there are enough riches in this country to make a nation wealthy. Strange people, not more than two hundred in the tribe. A golden white colour, fair haired. Have fantastic ornaments of gold; everything gold; and jewels enough to make a duchess sick with envy.

"Not afraid of us, but suspicious. Only weapons, a short throwing-spear, with head of very sharp stone. Wonderful shots; can throw tremendous distance. Hope someone gets these messages. Tried building up plane out of old ones, but too badly smashed.

"No chance of getting away unless relief party can break through here some way. Surrounded by wall of mountains, wastes beyond those. Compass behaves in extraordinary manner, so no telling where we are.

"Von Hassen died to-day. Terrible this. Only Poineau and me civilised beings. Seems so monotonous, hopeless sending out these messages, never knowing if our world can hear them or not. Some sort of feast coming off soon. Natives getting more and more suspicious of us."

Bill reached the last lines on the last page. He leaned back in his chair and breathed deeply.

"Well, if that isn't the strangest yarn!" he muttered.

His mind flashed back to the time when Shane Dexter had attempted his Transatlantic flight. There had been a lot of publicity about it, far more than usual, for the crack American pilot had been so sure of his success that he was carrying a vast fortune with him to the States.

The Crown jewels of Levania. The Principality was negotiating with the States for a loan of two millions for the jewels, and they had been entrusted to Dexter when he had flown. The tremendous publicity enhanced the value of the jewels in the eyes of the American public enormously. The insurance had been doubly heavy, but would have been worth it.

There had been an outcry when Shane Dexter was reported missing, but the insurance company had paid up without a murmur, so the Principality got its money, anyway. And now light was beginning to dawn on Bill Lyon.

He flung himself down on the sofa and again read the papers earnestly. The more he read, the more fantastic did it seem that Shane could still be alive; but there it was. And Poineau, too. Dexter had flown alone, like Lindbergh, but the German and the Frenchman had had observer companions. No word was said about them in the journal, and Bill concluded they must have been killed, or hurled out of the planes in that terrific flight with the thousand-mile-an-hour wind.

Relaxing on the couch, Bill realised suddenly that he was dead tired. He'd been going home, tired enough then, when he'd been attacked. He had no idea what time had passed since that fight in his street; but it seemed a different age altogether. Actually, he supposed, it couldn't be more than four hours or so.

Thinking thus, his mind began to wander; the papers slipped from his hand to the floor, and in another few moments Bill was snoring lustily.

"I'll Do It!"

**H**E awoke to find Doak loering at him over the barrel of his gun. Bill scowled at him distastefully.

"Chief wants you!" snapped Doak. He backed away as Bill swung off the

sofa, his dark eyes snapping menacingly, watchful of Bill's every move. He had come to respect the flying man's swift, unexpected moves; the strength behind the fist that had socked him some hours previously.

But Bill had no intention of attempting escape—yet. He was too keenly interested in what had happened so far; hearing about Shane Dexter. There were other things he wanted to find out, too. So he was quiet, and preceded Doak down the corridor, till he again found himself facing the Chief.

"Feel better, Lyon?" asked the little man, smiling cheerfully.

"Physically, yes," drawled Bill. "And I must confess my curiosity is aroused. What do you want me to do?"

"Ah!" The red face beamed satisfaction. "Sit down again. All right, Doak, you can go. Now then, Lyon," he said, as the door closed behind Doak. "I want you to fly a plane for me to where Dexter is. You read those papers I gave you?"

"Yes," replied Bill. "If they're not a fake, it's a wonderful story. I'd be willing enough to take the risk and try to get a crate there, too; but I don't understand all this gunplay of yours, all

One of This Week's TOPPING BOOKS goes to:

Stanford Jacobs,  
4, Coventry Street,  
Kidderminster,

who submitted the following Greyfriars limerick:

*Two men, looking down from  
the moon,  
Spied Bunter—that fat, clubby  
loon.  
Then one cried: "Great Scott!  
It's a boy—no, it's not,  
It's just an inflated balloon!"*

Step in and win one of these useful prizes, chums, while there's time!

the secrecy. Why didn't you approach me openly make the proposition, instead of this melodramatic kidnapping?"

The other gave a short, sardonic laugh.

"And have you snooping round the international police? Is it likely? My dear fellow, you don't seem to have got hold of my point of view. I am no more interested in Shane Dexter, humanly, than I am in you. It is the Crown jewels of Levania which interest me. They represent two millions of pounds. Their face value is one and a half millions to anyone. Said quickly, that doesn't sound a lot. But linger over the figures, and you will find they are—well, say, worth contemplating."

Bill did so—and he found that fifteen hundred thousand pounds represented something more than the price of a good dinner.

"I tried to get those jewels once before," went on the Chief; "but my little coup just missed fire. I thought they were lost for good and all when Dexter flew the Atlantic with them and was reported missing. But Fate gave me news of them in a curious way. I

am scientifically minded, deeply interested in wireless and flying. Next to money, I regard those two things as the most interesting life has to offer. But"—he smiled crookedly—"I'm a bad pilot for the simple reason that I suffer incurably, from air-sickness. Seems silly, doesn't it?"

"One night, some weeks ago, I was tuning in on my wireless set, when I discovered I was on a strange wavelength, but that I was getting signals. They were very faint, but fairly clear. Instinctively I noted them down. You have just been reading them."

"You picked up the messages Dexter was sending out!" grunted Bill. "Gosh—what a break for you!"

"An amazing coincidence, considering my interest in the jewels. I could not get the messages coherently. They came at odd times. Sometimes clearer than others. But gradually I pieced together what had happened. And as I did so the scheme suggested itself to me—to get the jewels back. And, according to what Dexter says, there are riches there enough for a nation. Even if he is mistaken there, the jewels alone are worth attempting to get—"

"You rotten crook!" snarled Bill, choking with rage. "You'd let a good man like Shane Dexter lie there and rot in some unknown land until you were dead sure that you'd first be able to get the jewels for yourself! If you thought there was nothing in it you wouldn't lift—"

"A finger," agreed the Chief. His eyes were glassy grey. "Well, you can rescue Dexter—if you will help pilot the plane—and I get the jewels. If you refuse"—he shrugged his shoulders—"I shall have to shoot you!"

He leaned forward, fixing his cold eyes on Bill's face.

"And you know," he said very steadily, "that I would do just that thing—as if I were killing a kitten!"

Bill did know it. He could read men. He'd knocked about the world a lot. And he was anxious to knock about it for a while longer. Incidentally, he was the only chance of saving Shane Dexter and Poineau.

"Have you—arranged about this?" he asked.

"I have been preparing for two months," was the reply. "I have a plane, built to my own design, somewhat special, to cope with what we have coming against us. You will pilot, and Doak and I will accompany you. I have all the data as to where we are likely to find this wind belt; everything shall be placed at your disposal."

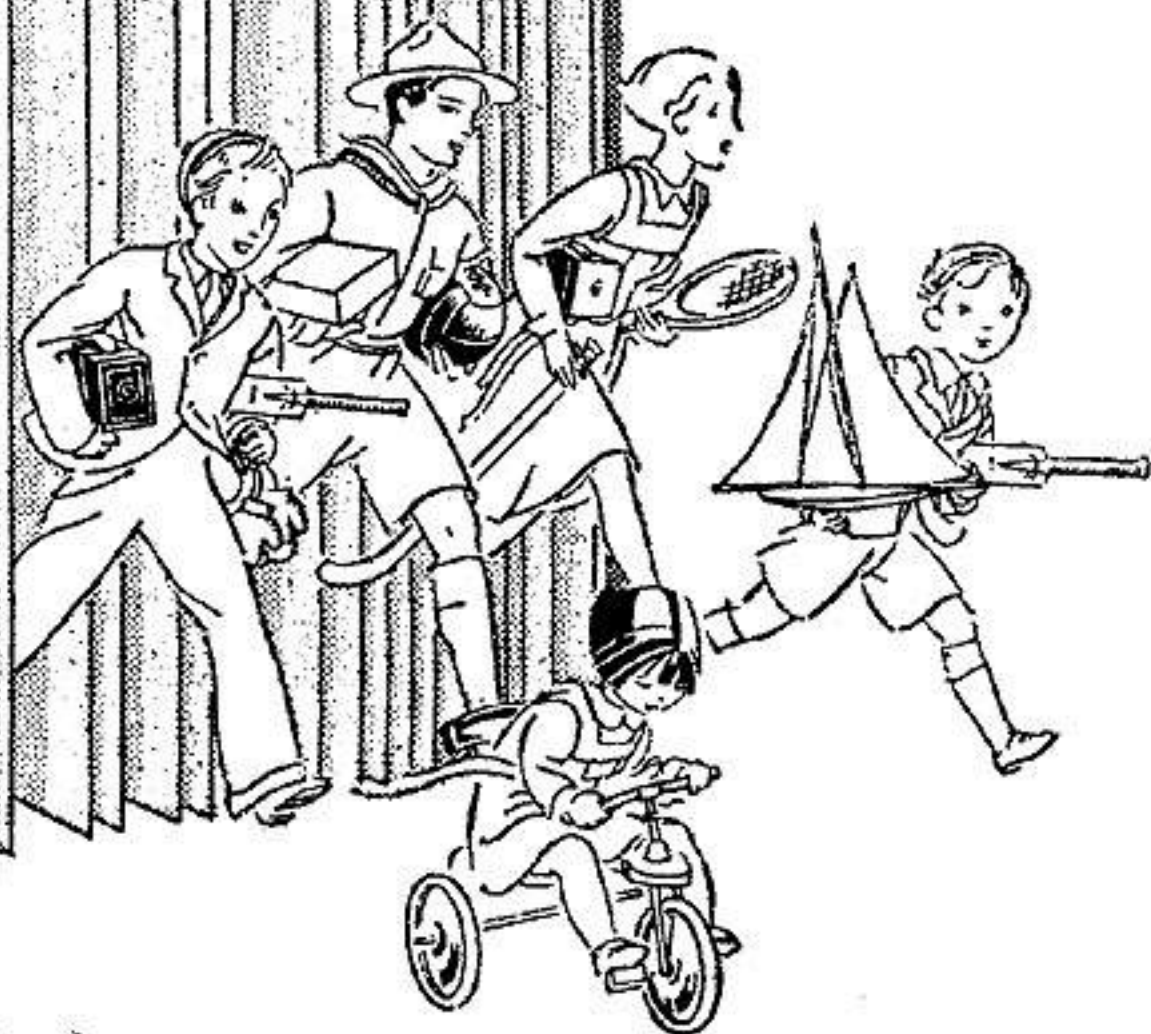
"Uh-huh!" grunted Bill, deep in thought.

"A word of advice. I no doubt will be very ill while we are flying. But Doak will accompany us, as I said. That man would take a definite pleasure in putting a bullet through you. If you have any fantastic idea of landing somewhere in order to attempt escape, he will do so. Your job is to pilot that plane to the wind belt—and through it!"

"I'll do it!" said Bill rising. "And if I see half a chance to break your rotten neck on the way, you can bet your sweet life I will! Where's this plane of yours?"

*(Perils, thrills, and adventure—our new pal Bill is in the thick of them all next week! Watch out, then, for instalment two of this powerful serial. To avoid disappointment all "Magnetites" should make a point of ordering their copy well in advance.)*

# NEW FREE GIFTS!



## FOR BOYS

Engines, yachts, cameras, electric torches, sheath knives, wallets, racquets, boxing g'oves. Boys all over the country are getting these things—free! Mobs of other useful gifts as well. They're sending for this wonderful new Nestlé's Free Gift Book. The widest choice ever offered of things you really want. Every Nestlé's packet carries Free Gift Coupons. Even a 2d. wrapped bar carries one. Send for this Book and start collecting now. With it comes a voucher for five coupons, just to give you a start. Write to-day!

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2d. Stamp sufficient if envelope is unsealed.*

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# Greyniggers Herald

LAUGH A/C GROW FAT.

May 23rd, 1931.

Edited by HARRY WARTON, F.R.S.

LATEST EXTRA GOOD EDITION

**PLAY CROQUET!** Much better than cricket and other brutal and barbarous pastimes! If you join my Croquet Club, my dear fellows, I can promise you beneficial, stimulating, and uplifting exercise. Let me tap you for the first year's subscription!—Alonso Todd, Croquet and Ping-Pong Headquarters, The Rag.

## THE JOYS OF COLLECTING

### Natural and Unnatural Objects

### DOORSTEPS AND MANTELPIECES FIGURE IN COLLECTIONS

This is the time of the year when collectors of all kinds feel again the urge to get busy and add to their collections. All the fellows at Greynders are salping forth with grim, fixed, determined expressions on their faces and the implements of war in their hands. Some carry glass jars, strings and bent pins; some lassos and butterfly-nets; while others are armed with packets of salt to put on the tails of their intended specimens.



Peter Todd, who used to collect fossils, now goes in for bigger game by taking up boulders instead. He has already accumulated a mass of weighty information regarding his new love, and intends to leave no stone unturned in his endeavours to acquire a really good collection. His brother Alonso has become interested in scarrows, and after several weeks of exploration round the neighbouring countryside, has secured a dozen fine specimens. (This number, be it

noted, does not include himself. Dick Rake, we hear, has sold his shrunks of foreign stamps and intends devoting the rest of his life to foreign stamps. It's a unique hobby, and we should be the last to damp his enthusiasm.

All sorts of odd collections are cropping up. But, strophe has begun on mantelpieces; Redwing is scouring the fields in search of spiders' nests; while Micky Desmond is looking everywhere for birds' webs. Really, there are no limits to the enterprise and ingenuity of these enthusiastic collectors!

## FROM THE MASTERS' COMMON-ROOM

### Strange tales of the Beaks

Our Masters' Common-room Correspondent sends us the following news: Dr. Locke has fortunately recovered from his recent attack of LOCKE-JAW. Mr. Backer has developed a HACKING cough. By rubbing in plenty of ointment, Mr. Quetch has managed to QUELL CHIBLAINS on his hands. After a course of electrical treatment, Mr. Prout is APPROU- ing several hairs on the top of his napper. We can only say that our correspondent deserves condigna PUNISHMENT!

## SWIMMING SUGGESTIONS HELPFUL HINTS BY H. SKINNER

Don't walk into the water! If you're not a good swimmer, of course, take care not to dive out of your depth. For the beginner, I suggest a dive of about 12 feet into, say, 2 inches of water. Having arrived safely in the water, start swimming. If you can't swim, roll gently over on your back and lift the feet into the air. This should make you float. If you feel a rushing sensation in your ears and see fish swimming about above you, you'll know that something has gone wrong, and you're not floating. Provided you don't drown, you can now try to master the breast-stroke. Simply imitate the graceful movements of an alligator and you'll find yourself swimming like a duck. The next problem to be faced is that of the stream or current. If you find yourself toiling man-

## THIS WEEK'S LECTURES

- One of our sub-editors has got the names of the lecturers all mixed up somehow, but we've put 'em down in the order he left them in and only hope we've got 'em right!
- RADIANT ENERGY** .. .. . By Lord Maulverer.
- THE ART OF SNOOZING** .. .. . By Bob Cherry.
- THE POT-HERB FROM FERRY TO STERWORT** .. .. . By H. Skinner.
- MY LIFE AS A GAY DOG** .. .. . By Alonso Todd.
- DANCEY PIANO-PLAYING** .. .. . By P. Bolover.
- MYSELF—THE HUMAN TOKE** .. .. . By Claude Hoekins.
- HOW TO LIVE ON FORTY MIND A DAY** .. .. . By Peter Todd.
- DIETING FOR HEALTH** .. .. . By W. G. Bunter.

## FEROCIOUS HOUND AT LARGE

### BREACHES AND BREECHES

### Gross Exaggeration of Prosecutor

A scene in the quad, some little less defant, and he con- weeks ago, had its sequel at the Common-room Assizes yesterday, when Ronald Norton—a well-known ing author and journalist, surrendered to his prosecutor a charge of allowing at large, a ferocious animal, to wit, one triphound, thereby causing a breach of the peace. P. Bolover, Esq., pugilist, the 32nd ult., he was strolling across the quad, peacefully pursuing his daily occupation of finding fags to torture, when a huge dog, the size of a young elephant, bounded up and leaped at his throat. Forts nately the brute missed his throat, but succeeded in biting about a square yard of material from the seat of his trousers. Mr. Justice Wharton (tremblingly) asked the prosecutor to have you at say about it. 12 Prisoner: "Rats!" (Sewer on being jammed for several minutes with a police-striker against his attitude became a



## BEAUTY KING OF THE REMOVE

### CLASSIC PROFILES

### Billy Bunter Beats Remove Beauties

Great interest was aroused by the hungry-looking specimen, with a Remove Beauty Competition, which pallid skin and furtive eyes. Style took place in the Rag, a few evenings ago. Judging was in the hands of the audience, which turned up liberally supplied with well-seasoned eggs and ripe tomatoes. H. Wharton, Esq., in opening the contest, said it went without saying that the Remove was the best-looking Form in the School. (Cross of "Hear, hear!" and "Rot!") followed by an interval of five minutes for a pitched battle between the Remove and the Fourth). Continuing, Mr. Wharton said that up till then, nobody had had the idea of setting who was the best-looking chap in the Remove. That problem, however, had now been brought before them to be settled once and for all. He left the decision in their hands with confidence. Mr. Wharton then bowed and retired hastily under a barrage of antediluvian eggs. Amid continuous cheering, counter-cheering, cat-calling, and a horn-bardment of eggs and tomatoes, the candidates proceeded to present themselves one by one. We give below, a descriptive summary of the procession.

Percy Holsover.—A tall, muscular gentleman of the Camera type of beauty. Blemishes: One black eye, two cauliflower ears, and a semi-broken nose. HAROLD SKINNER.—A lean, was found that the beauties had the fat junior's neck instead.



## Harrowing Scenes in Editorial Office

The Editorial Office was this morning the scene of an amazing episode. A dishevelled youth known as Alonso Todd staggered in, weeping hysterically. On being asked the reason for his grief, he informed the editorial staff that his Form-maester had just removed with him for not doing his prep. satisfactorily. Having finished his tragic story, the youth horrified the staff by producing a back-drawing pen-shooter. Uttering hoarse cries, sub-editors, reporters, and composers rushed forward and grasped the deadly little weapon before the youth could do himself an injury. Todd has been handed over to the care of relatives.

## BE THIRTY, BOYS

### Tabloid Sermon By Fisher T. Fish

Be thrifty, my brethren! Don't at first, but it soon becomes a forget the jolly old rainy day that's habit that sticks. I've coming along sooner or later. Lots of fellows do forget; the seen Wharton and Vernon-Smith amount of waste that goes on give a waiter a penny or two among Greynders chaps is simply with utterly reckless abandon. Why frightful! Only this morning, I waste money in this way, when a noticed Snoop eating a doughnut, simple ruse will obviate the need for a tip altogether! Any fellow with a thrifty mind! Try tripping up the waiter or ought to find it easy to exist on a throwing cups of tea at him, till he few inexpensive odds and ends. For instance, Alonso Todd tells me you impolitely. You can then tell that sawdust mixed with water, him his impoliteness will cost him makes an excellent substitute for porridge. For those who prefer a heavier breakfast, a penny bundle of wood will be found most nutritious, and full of vitamins. Eating wood goes against the grain remainder of our space!—Ed.)