

"At the Eleventh Hour!" Dramatic Schoolboy Adventure Yarn By Frank Richards

# The Magnet <sup>2<sup>d</sup></sup>



Lost Luggage



# Come Into the Office, Boys—and Girls!

Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers. Write to him: Editor of the "Magnet," The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped, addressed envelope will ensure a reply.

**F**ROM a Bridlington reader this week comes a rather unusual query. He wants me to answer this question:

## WHO ARE THE CHERRY PICKERS?

He heard some soldiers say that some of their friends were "in the Cherry Pickers." My chum was rather baffled, and asks me if it has anything to do with the fruit crop. No, my chum. As a matter of fact, "the Cherry Pickers" is a nickname given to men of the 11th Hussars. There is rather an interesting story connected with how they got this name.

During one of the Continental wars, in which the 11th Hussars were engaged, it was assumed that the enemy was nowhere in the neighbourhood. The Hussars were resting, and as there happened to be a number of very fine cherry trees, with plenty of fruit on them, near at hand, the "Tommys" decided to pick cherries. While they were thus engaged the enemy swooped!

It is satisfactory to recall, however, that even though they were taken by surprise, the Hussars flung themselves into the fray and defeated the enemy. But the nickname stuck, and even to-day men of the 11th Hussars are known as "the Cherry Pickers."

The 11th Hussars are not the only soldiers to have been taken by surprise in time of war. I dare say most of you have seen pictures of soldiers whose tunics appear to be hung only over one shoulder. This commemorates another occasion when a regiment was

## CAUGHT NAPPING!

In this case the enemy swooped before the men had time to dress. The soldiers rushed out of their billets, fastening up their clothes as they ran. Some of them hadn't even time to do that, and the result was that they went into action with only one arm in a sleeve of their tunic.

But they gave such a good account of themselves that, later, when their full-dress uniform was changed, they were allowed to have two tunics—one which buttoned up in the ordinary way, and another which hung only over one shoulder, and lent a most picturesque appearance to them. As a matter of fact, this particular fashion had spread all over Europe just before the war, and even little Continental states fitted regiments, which had never even been to war, with this rather attractive uniform.

Here is a paragraph which you will hardly believe. Have you ever heard of

## THE FISH THAT IS A CANDLE?

I should think that a fish is the last thing you would take to light up your way to bed, but Indians who live on the  
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north western shores of America have different ideas. They catch a certain greenbacked sea fish of the salmon variety, pass a strip of bark through it, and then set it alight. It happens that this particular fish is extremely oily and once alight it blazes like a torch!

Now and again I have given examples of some remarkable arithmetical curiosities. Here is another little trick with figures which may amuse you. Let's call it

## THE MYSTERIOUS NUMBER NINE!

Write down any two numerals you like, then reverse them, and subtract the reversed numeral from the original one. For instance, if you write down 54, you then subtract 45 from it. The answer is 9. Now this is where the curious part comes in. Whatever figures you write down, reverse and subtract, the answer is always 9 or a multiple of 9. Try it for yourselves, and see. Here are three examples:

$$\begin{aligned} 83 - 38 &= 45 (9 \times 5) \\ 64 - 46 &= 18 (9 \times 2) \\ 71 - 17 &= 54 (9 \times 6) \end{aligned}$$

But that is not all. If you put down the result which you have obtained, and then add the same number, reversed, to it, the answer is always 99! The following shows you how to do it:

$$\begin{aligned} 09 + 90 &= 99 \\ 45 + 54 &= 99 \\ 18 + 81 &= 99 \\ 54 + 45 &= 99 \end{aligned}$$

Curious, isn't it? You can puzzle your chums by doing the trick in this manner: Tell him to write down a number, then write it down reversed, and subtract the smaller number from the larger. Next tell him to put down the product, and add the same number reversed to it. Then tell him that the answer is ninety-nine. As you do not know exactly what figures he has written down, he will wonder how you did it. Try it and see!

Now for a few

## RAPID-FIRE REPLIES

to some of the queries which I have received from readers this week.

**Where does the River Mississippi Rise?** Opinion is divided on the subject. Some people say it rises in Lake Itaska. Others say that it springs from Elk Lake.

**How Many People Were Killed in the Famous San Francisco Earthquake?** The real figures were never known, but it is estimated that at least one thousand people lost their lives in the city alone.

**How Did Guineas get their Name?** Because they were first coined of gold

brought from Guinea in Africa. Originally they were worth twenty shillings, then rose to thirty. The value fluctuated until it was fixed at 21s. in 1811. Guineas have not been coined in Britain since the year 1817.

**What was the Ku-Klux-Klan?** A secret society formed in the Southern States of America, who wore fantastic robes, and carried out assassinations of their political enemies. The name was taken from the noise made by a rifle bolt being opened and closed.

**Have Stereoscopic Pictures Ever Been Projected on Screens?** As far back as 1893 stereoscopic pictures were projected by means of a magic lantern, and remarkable effects were obtained. Film producers are now trying to evolve stereoscopic "talkies."

**I**N response to requests from several readers, I am giving you a few more

## SURNAMES AND THEIR MEANINGS.

**Gooch** comes from an old Welsh word, "coch," meaning red. Its original owner was either very reddish in complexion, or had red hair. Other forms of the same name are Gutch, Goodge and Goudge.

**Drage** comes from an old English word meaning a mixed crop. The original Drage was, therefore, a farmer who did not specialise in one particular crop. Dredge is another form of the name.

**Puttock** is based on a word which meant a kite or a hawk, and was obviously given to its first bearer because he resembled these birds in some way—probably keenness of sight and swiftness of action.

**Fiske** is another form of "Fish," and was doubtless a nickname given to its original owner.

**Grice** is most probably derived from the French "le gris," meaning "the grey."

**Griswood**, if it comes from the old English, means the wood of the pigs, or boars. The first holder of this name probably lived in a forest in which wild boar were common.

**Grisdale** is a similar name, but in this case the owner of it lived in a valley of the boars.

**Ashwine** comes from the Anglo-Saxon "Ascwine," which means "a spear friend."

I am afraid I shall have to hold over a number of queries until next week, or I shall have no space to tell you of the treat in store for you in next week's Special Jubilee Number of the MAGNET. Topping the bill is:

## "UP FOR THE JUBILEE!"

By Frank Richards.

which tells of the further exciting holiday adventures of Harry Wharton & Co. and Jack Drake, Ferrers Locke's boy assistant. You'll find it packed with humour and thrills—just the kind of yarn you'll revel in reading.

Next comes a topical issue of the "Greysfriars Herald," followed by the opening chapters of "MOOSE CALL!" a superb story which tells of the thrilling adventures of two brothers who set out for Canada to settle accounts with a gang of toughs who murdered their uncle, a prospector. Don't miss this splendid treat, boys, whatever you do. Added to all this, there will be another Greysfriars "Interview" in verse by our clever rhymester, while I will do my best to have another chat with you.

YOUR EDITOR.



### THE FIRST CHAPTER.

#### Early Rising!

**U**P with you—"  
"Beast!"  
"You're wanted—"  
"Will you shut up, and let a fellow sleep?" roared Billy Bunter. It was only ten o'clock!

Billy Bunter was no early riser! At Greyfriars School certainly, Billy Bunter had to turn out when the rest of the Remove turned out, at the clang of the rising-bell. But the best thing about the holidays was that there was no rising-bell! Turning out early, except under dire necessity, seemed to the fat slacker of Greyfriars merely idiotic.

Ten was early, in Bunter's opinion. Eleven suited him better. A fellow who turned out at eleven had ample time to park a substantial breakfast before lunch! What more could any fellow want?

So, when Bob Cherry hurled his door open and roared, Billy Bunter did not think of turning out. He only drew the blankets a little closer, and glared at Bob.

He was indignant.

And he was rather surprised, too. Bob Cherry and his friends did not as a rule yearn for Bunter's society. The longer he stayed in bed, in fact, the more agreeable they found the morning.

Indeed, the chums of the Remove would have found Bunter more tolerable in holiday time, if he had slept the clock round.

So Bunter was surprised, indignant, and wrathful. He groped for his spectacles, jammed them on his fat little nose, and gave Bob a devastating blink.

"You silly idiot!" said Bunter. "Go away! Get out! Be quiet! Go and

bawl somewhere else! I was just dreaming of a spread in Smithy's study at Greyfriars—"

"Turn out!"

"You can call me at eleven if you want me!" snorted Bunter.

"Want you?" repeated Bob. "My dear chap, who could possibly want you? You're still dreaming!"

"Beast!"

**Jimmy the Fox and his friends in the underworld are determined to kidnap Jack Drake, Ferrers Locke's clever boy assistant, and trade his safety against the release of their leader, whom the famous detective has safely placed in gaol. And all goes well with their plans until, at the eleventh hour, Billy Bunter, of Greyfriars, frustrates their knavish tricks!**

"But there's somebody asking for you on the phone!" explained Bob.

"Rot!" said Bunter.

"I tell you—"

"Oh, chuck it!" said Bunter contemptuously. "You can't pull my leg like that! I'm not getting up till eleven! Now shut up!"

"You silly ass!" roared Bob. "I tell you somebody's rung up—"

"Rats!"

"And asked for you—"

"Gammon!"

Bob Cherry made a stride towards the fat Owl's bed.

Had Billy Bunter been in the dormitory at Greyfriars, undoubtedly Bob would have hooked him out of bed and bumped him on the floor. Had they been still at Wharton Lodge, no doubt Bob would have done so. But the chums of the Remove had moved on to Cherry Place; and Bob was now in the position of host! Hosts, in the best circles, did not bump their guests out of bed on the floor!

So Bob paused.

"Look here, Bunter—"

"Can't you shut up?" demanded Bunter. "If you want to jaw, go and jaw to Wharton, or Nugent, or Bull, or Inky, or that fellow Drake! Shut the door after you!"

Bunter laid his head on the pillow again.

"I tell you—" roared Bob.

Snore!

Billy Bunter, nothing doubting that the tale of a telephone call was a transparent trick to hook him out of bed at the unearthly early hour of ten, sought slumber again in the hope of recapturing that delightful dream of a spread in Smithy's study at Greyfriars.

Bob glared at him, exasperated.

"You silly ass!" he bawled:

Snore!

"Look here, Bunter—"

Snore!

There were footsteps in the passage, and several fellows looked into the room.

"Isn't Bunter coming down?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Look at him!" growled Bob.

"Bunter!" roared Johnny Bull.

Snore!

"You're wanted on the phone, Bunter!" yelled Frank Nugent. "It's a call from Mauleverer Towers!"

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Snore!

"My esteemed and idiotic Bunter!" exclaimed Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

Snore!

"Dear old Bunter!" grinned Jack Drake. "He hasn't changed since I was at Greyfriars! Same old fat and lazy Bunter!"

"Beast!"

"Hallo, he's awake!"

Snore!

Harry Wharton & Co., grinning, gathered round the bed. Bunter snored to show that he was asleep.

"Better go and tell the man on the phone that he won't come!" growled Bob Cherry. "Can't keep him hanging on a trunk line till that fat slacker chooses to turn out."

"Why not roll him out?" asked Jack Drake.

"Well, you see—" Bob hesitated.

Drake chuckled.

"I see! You're his jolly old host! But we're not—we're only fellow-guests! Let's roll him out!"

"Let's!" agreed Harry Wharton.

"Beasts!" Billy Bunter woke up quite suddenly, "Gerrout! Let a fellow sleep! I'm not getting up yet—leggo those blankets, Drake, you rotter!"

Bob Cherry, grinning, stood back. The other fellows all got busy. Drake whisked away blankets and sheets. Wharton jerked away the pillow. Nugent captured the bolster. Bunter sat up and roared. Bedclothes were piled on the floor by the bedside. Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh shoved at the fat junior, and Bunter rolled off the bed and was piled on the bedclothes.

He roared as he landed there.

"Yaroooh! Beasts! Wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now get dressed!" said Bob.

"Beast! I won't!" roared Bunter.

"I know jolly well there ain't any telephone call, and you can't pull my leg, and I can jolly well say—whooop! Leggo! Beasts!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here's his trousers!"

"Shove him in!"

"Yarooooh!"

In the grasp of many hands, Billy Bunter was crammed into his trousers. He wriggled and roared.

"Here's your slippers, Bunter—"

"Beast!"

"Here's your jacket—"

"Rotter!"

"Park him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter, still in his pyjamas, was "parked" in trousers and jacket and slippers. Then he was led to the door, with a firm grasp on either arm, Harry Wharton on one side, and Johnny Bull on the other.

"Will you leggo?" shrieked Bunter.

"I can't go down like this—"

"Will you finish dressing—"

"No!" yelled Bunter. "I won't! I'm going back to bed!"

"Then you'll come down as you are!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beasts! I say—yaroooh! Leggo! Oh, crikey!"

Bunter was led out and down the stairs, in the midst of a chuckling crowd of merry juniors. He wriggled and howled as he went. But Major Cherry had gone out in the car; Mrs. Cherry was busy with household duties elsewhere: And there was no help for Bunter. He wriggled, and howled, and spluttered, but he went; and was plumped down in a chair by the telephone.

"Now, take your call, fathead!" said Harry Wharton.

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"Beast!" roared Bunter. "There isn't any call—"

"You howling ass, can't you see the receiver's off?" hooted Johnny Bull. "It's a call from Mauleverer Towers—at least, the man said so."

Bunter blinked at the instrument.

The receiver was off, and it was borne in upon his fat mind, at last, that there really was a telephone call for him, and that it was not merely a trick to get him out of bed at the unearthly hour of ten.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "The—the—the fact is, I—I was expecting a call from my old pal Mauly—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I dare say Mauly wants me to spend the rest of the Easter hols at Mauleverer Towers. I wish you fellows would shut up that silly cackling while I take my call!"

And the chums of the Remove kindly shut up cackling, and Billy Bunter took his call. And they strolled out into the bright spring sunshine and left him to it.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Struck Down!

"IT'S rotten!" said Bob Cherry.

"The rottenfulness is terrific!" declared Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

Jack Drake shook his head and smiled.

"Right as rain!" he answered cheerily.

Drake had walked down to the gate with the Famous Five. Cherry Place was some miles from Dorchester, and the chums of the Remove were going to catch a passing motor-bus for a visit to that ancient and famous city. Naturally they wanted Drake to go—and Drake wanted to go—but it was not to be. Only when Major Cherry was able to accompany the schoolboys did Drake leave the precincts of Cherry Place: Happy and careless schoolboy as he looked, in company with his old friends of Greyfriars, Drake was in danger—and though no sign had been seen of his enemies, there was little doubt that they were keeping the house watched.

Jack Drake, once of the Greyfriars Remove, had become the assistant of the famous detective, Ferrers Locke, and Locke's enemies were his.

The chums of the Remove would have been willing, so far as that went, to throw up the excursion and remain with Drake. But that he would not hear of. He was not there to spoil the holiday of his old Greyfriars comrades.

"I'd rather chance it, of course," said Drake; "but I'm under Mr. Locke's orders! Jimmy the Fox nearly got me at Wharton Lodge. I've got to take care that he doesn't quite get me here."

"Bother him!" said Frank Nugent.

"Blow him!" said Bob Cherry.

"Bless him!" said Johnny Bull.

Drake laughed.

"You don't bother, blow, and bless him so much as I do!" he said. "But I think it's very likely that he's got his foxy eyes on us at this very minute."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob.

The juniors glanced up and down the long, white country road that stretched past the gate. In the distance they sighted the coming motor-bus. A car whizzed by. A dusty, tattered tramp leaned on a tree, munching bread and cheese. It was difficult to realise danger in such a peaceful scene. Yet the juniors knew that Drake was most likely right.

"I don't want you fellows to think me funky," went on Drake, colouring a little, "I'd chance it on my own, and I

hope I could take care of myself—especially along with you fellows. But—" He shook his head. "If they got hold of me, it would knock Mr. Locke's plans into a cocked hat! He's got the Dandy—the biggest rogue in London—and he's working up the case against him. If they get me they'll hold it over Mr. Locke's head that he will never see me alive again, unless the Dandy is let loose. And what happened at Wharton Lodge shows that they mean business."

"Right!" assented Harry Wharton. "But—"

"I'm lucky to be getting this holiday along with you chaps," said Drake, "and I've got lots to do while you're gone. Here comes your bus!"

"See you again at lunch, then," said Bob.

"Right-ho!"

The motor-bus came grinding up, stopped, and took the Famous Five on board. It rolled on with them, Drake waving his hand with a cheery smile on his face as they disappeared.

But the smile faded as he turned and walked back into the grounds of Cherry Place.

In his busy life as assistant to the most famous detective of modern times Drake had never forgotten old days at Greyfriars School. It was sheer pleasure to him to join up with Harry Wharton & Co. for the Easter holidays. Gladly he would have thrown behind him all the memory of crime and crooks and the underworld and enjoyed the holiday with the Famous Five as if he had been still a Greyfriars junior.

Neither was it in keeping with his bold and determined character to hunt cover from an enemy.

Left to his own devices, he would willingly and carelessly have taken the risk of anything that the Dandy's gang could have done.

But in the service of Ferrers Locke he had learned the lesson of unquestioning obedience.

He could best serve his master now by keeping safe; and that he was going to do, regardless of his own inclinations and the irksomeness of "safety first."

He walked back towards the house, but at the sight of a fat figure and a glimmering pair of spectacles in the doorway he changed his direction.

He was not anxious for the fascinating society of the Owl of the Remove.

He sauntered down the garden and into a path through the orchard at the end. Beyond the orchard was a fence, on the edge of a shady lane; but Drake did not go so far as that. He sat down on a bench under one of the old apple-trees that in summer was laden with blossom and took a book from his pocket.

It was a Latin school book, and in the absence of his friends he intended to put in a little study.

A sound from the fence at the bottom of the garden caused him to look up a few minutes later.

The gate in the fence had opened, and a tattered figure was coming through.

Drake smiled faintly as he recognised the tattered tramp who had been eating bread and cheese by the roadside when the Famous Five boarded the motor-bus.

He concluded that the vagrant had come round to the back of the house to beg.

He dropped his eyes to his book again as the tattered figure came shuffling up the path through the orchard. But he raised them again as the man reached the bench and stopped.

Seldom or never had the boy detective seen so dilapidated a figure. The man's age could hardly be guessed, so thickly was his face covered with stubby beard and dirt. He looked as if he had not washed for weeks—if indeed he had ever washed at all. His clothes were tattered—the battered bowler on his head looked as if it had been picked off a refuse-heap—and he carried a dirty-looking sack on his shoulder, apparently for the collection of odds and ends. Under his thick beetling brows, his eyes, set close together, were very sharp.

"Skuse me, sir!" came a wheezy voice. "P'r'aps you're Master Cherry, sir?"

"No," answered Drake, with a smile. "I'm a visitor here. Bob Cherry's gone out. I—"

It was the voice of Jimmy the Fox! Headless of the threat, Jack Drake struggled desperately.

He had stayed behind when his friends went, for safety's sake, within the walls of Cherry Place. And it was only to fall into the hands of the man who had watched his friends go. The tattered-looking tramp was Jimmy the Fox—the right-hand man of the imprisoned Dandy! In fierce rage, the boy struggled—so fiercely that, in spite of the sack, he almost succeeded in breaking loose from the crook's grip.

Crash!  
Something hard and heavy struck him on the head. The sacking softened the blow, but it stunned him. A thousand lights danced before his eyes, and he collapsed, senseless, in the grasp of Jimmy the Fox.

would have preferred Mauleverer Towers to either. The difficulty was that Mauly wasn't taking any! But if there was a chance, Bunter was going to jump at it with both feet; and he would have liked the other fellows to hear him "fixing it up" with Mauly.

His fat ear listened for the well-known tones of Lord Mauleverer of the Remove. But it was not Mauly's voice that came through.

It was a smooth voice that came; the voice of a manservant, Bunter concluded. That, however, was not surprising. It was like his lazy lordship to leave his telephoning to somebody else. And at Mauleverer Towers, there were as many real menservants as there were imaginary ones at Bunter Court!

"Master Bunter?" came the smooth voice.



Blinking through the trees, Bunter spotted a startling scene. All he could see of Drake were his boots and his trouser-ends. The rest of him was enveloped in an inverted sack. A stubby-faced man in tattered garb was bending over Drake, holding him with his left hand, and with his right hand slipping back a loaded stick into his rocket. "Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He got no farther.

The tattered man had slipped the sack from his shoulder as if for ease while he talked.

Now, with a sudden and utterly unexpected movement, he whipped it over the head of the boy on the bench.

Before Drake fairly knew what was happening, he was enveloped in the sack, the neck of which reached down almost to his knees.

As he struggled wildly inside the sack a grip of iron was fastened on him outside it. He was strong, and he was sturdy, but he was taken at a disadvantage, cramped in the folds of the sack, blindfolded and half-suffocated. Through the thickness of the sacking came a voice—a voice he knew—quite unlike the wheezy tones that had first addressed him.

"By gum, I got you—I got you! Quiet, you young fool, or I'll crack your head as I would a nut!"

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### Great News!

"BUNTER speaking!"

Billy Bunter sat at the telephone, a large mouth to the transmitter, a fat ear to the receiver.

Bunter was no longer looking or feeling wrathful. A telephone call from Mauleverer Towers was just what the fat Owl wanted. But he was not pleased by the chums of the Remove going out and leaving him to take his call on his own! He would have preferred them to remain and hear his talk on the phone. Bunter had not, in point of fact, had the slightest expectation of being rung up by Lord Mauleverer, the schoolboy earl of Greyfriars; it came as a delightful surprise to him.

The fat Owl had landed himself first at Wharton Lodge, and now at Cherry Place for the Easter holidays; but he

"Speaking!" repeated the fat Owl.

"Very good, sir!" The smooth voice was very respectful. "His lordship has directed me—"

"Ask Mauly to come to the phone! I mean, Lord Mauleverer."

"His lordship is out driving, sir."

"Oh!" said Bunter. "Well, get on with it. Look here, who's speaking?"

"Jenkins, sir, his lordship's valet."

"All right; get on!"

"His lordship desires me to say, sir, that he would be very glad if you could pass a few days with him at the Towers—"

"Yes, rather! I—I mean, I'll see what can be done!"

"His lordship desires you to come at any time convenient to yourself, sir, but if you decided to come to-day—"

"What-ho! I mean, I might be able to manage it—"

"His lordship would send the car over, if you wished—"

"You bet! I mean, I may prefer to come in my own car! I'll see about that."

"Very good, sir!"

"On the whole, he may as well send the car! I think this afternoon will suit me. After lunch—soon after lunch—"

"Quite so, sir!"

"Better get the car off—it's rather a long run," said Bunter. "If I'm not ready, it can wait."

"Certainly, sir!"

"Tell Mauly—I mean, his lordship—that I shall be very glad to see him. Delighted, in fact."

"Very good, sir!" said the smooth voice of Jenkins. "I will tell his lordship when he returns, sir. He is lunching out to-day."

"Right-ho!" said Bunter.

He grinned as he rang off!

This was something like!

Fascinating fellow as Billy Bunter was, it was seldom that any Greyfriars fellow displayed any enthusiasm for his charming society. At Wharton Lodge, and at Cherry Place, he was tolerated; but even Bunter could not fancy that Harry Wharton & Co. were frightfully keen about it.

If he gave a hint that he might go, they were more likely to look hopeful than sorrowful. Now he was asked to a magnificent establishment, compared with which the Lodge and the Place were as moonlight unto sunlight, as water unto wine.

He would be able to turn these fellows down now! He would be able to treat them as they deserved!

He would be able to show them just how important he was! Mauly had not

asked them! He had asked Bunter! They had not even been mentioned!

Mauly was friendly with them at Greyfriars! But he had remembered Bunter, and had forgotten them in the holidays! Bunter, invited by a peer of the realm was going to let them know exactly what he thought of them and their poor show! He was going to let them learn in exactly what estimation he held them! He was going to tell them, in fact, just where they got off!

He was anxious to get going on that agreeable task!

However, he went back to his room to dress a little more completely before he went in search of the juniors to crush and mortify them with this glorious news.

Dressing did not take Bunter long. He was not thinking of going back to bed again now; and washing did not take up much time! He was very soon down.

Even breakfast did not delay him, so anxious was Bunter to overwhelm the juniors with this great news.

He rang and gave instructions for his breakfast to be ready in five minutes. Then he rolled out to look for Harry Wharton & Co., whom he supposed to be about the place somewhere.

He was unaware, as yet, that the Famous Five had gone on the motor-bus to Dorchester. But, as he blinked out at the door through his big spectacles, he sighted Jack Drake.

Drake, however, disappeared the next moment, walking down the garden to the orchard at the bottom.

Bunter's fat lip curled.

Short-sighted as the fat Owl of the Remove was, he had noted that Drake changed his direction, and divined that

the former Greyfriars junior was not keen on his charming society.

Well, the beast wouldn't have much more of it, whether he liked it or not. Bunter was going to let him know what he thought of him, as well as of the other rotters! A fellow in business—a dashed detective—putting on airs! Bunter sniffed with contempt!

He rolled out and looked round for the Co. As they were already some miles on their way to Dorchester, he naturally did not see them.

"Gone out, the rotters!" grunted Bunter. "Gone out and left a fellow on his own! That's the sort of manners I get here."

He sniffed again.

Harry Wharton & Co. had long given up the idea of getting Bunter to start anywhere before midday. Bunter's view was that they should have waited about till it pleased him to decide what he was going to do. That view was not shared by the Famous Five.

However, if the five were gone, Drake was still there; Bunter had seen him. So he rolled down to the orchard to look for Drake. He simply had to tell somebody about his invitation to Mauleverer Towers, or burst!

He blinked round through his big spectacles for Jack Drake. He was in the orchard somewhere.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter suddenly.

He came to a halt, his little round eyes almost popping through his big round spectacles.

Through the trees that grew rather thickly, he suddenly spotted a startling scene.

All he could see of Drake was his boots and his trouser-ends. The rest of him was enveloped in an inverted sack. A stubbly faced man in a tattered garb was bending over him, holding him with his left hand and with his right slipping back a short loaded stick into a pocket.

Bunter gazed for a second in utter amazement and horror. He knew that it was Drake in the sack; and he knew that the tattered man had struck him senseless. Drake lay like a log.

Billy Bunter's fat brain did not often work quickly. But it worked quickly enough now. Instinct warned him that the tattered man would look round; and the fat junior blotted himself from sight behind the nearest tree.

He was only just in time. Jimmy the Fox cast a swift, suspicious glance round him, fearful of observation, solitary as the orchard was. But he did not see Bunter.

The fat junior leaned on the tree that concealed him, hardly breathing, the perspiration clotting his fat forehead.

He forgot even the invitation to Mauleverer Towers, and his desire to swank about the same. Neither was he thinking of Drake's danger. He was thinking of his own.

He was too far from the house for a shout to be heard. It was plain that Drake had fallen into the hands of an enemy. And it was fairly certain that if the tattered man found himself observed, the loaded stick would come into prompt use again.

Bunter trembled.

He did not dare to look round the thick trunk that hid him from the sight of Jimmy the Fox. But the sound of a movement caught his ears. The man was going—or coming! Bunter listened in an agony of apprehension. But his fat ears told him that the footsteps were receding. And the Owl of the Remove gave a gasp of relief and ventured at last to peer round the tree,

*'A goodly tale,' the spectre said,  
As on his hand he held his head.  
'I've never been so breathless since  
The headsman's chopper made me wince!'*



.. and  
this  
is  
the  
yarn—

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## THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

## Bunter Butts In I

**J**IMMY THE FOX breathed hard and stood looking about him for a long minute with watchful, foxy eyes under his beetling brows.

Drake, stunned by the savage blow from the loaded stick, lay senseless in the folds of the sack; he was safe for the time.

The orchard was solitary and silent; there was no one at hand—so far as the Fox could see, at all events. He had succeeded so far—succeeded beyond his hopes. Another plan—a more cunning plan—that he had formed for the kidnapping of Ferrers Locke's boy assistant would not be needed now. Drake was in his hands—if he could get him away! And Jimmy the Fox had little doubt about that.

After a cautious survey of his surroundings that revealed nothing to alarm him, he bent over the insensible boy. Swiftly he pulled the sack round him, concealing him from head to foot; then, lifting the sack on his shoulder, he tramped down the path to the gate in the fence on the lane.

Once outside that gate there was, Jimmy calculated, nothing to look suspicious; he was simply a tramp with a sack on his shoulder—and no casual eye was likely to detect what was in the sack.

Drake was a fair weight, and Jimmy the Fox was no athlete, and he grunted and panted under his burden, but he moved swiftly enough.

He was happily unaware that as he went a fat face peered round a tree and a pair of terrified eyes, bulging through big spectacles, had a back view of him and the kidnapped boy detective in the sack.

He reached the gate, kicked it open, and passed through into the lane.

It was a narrow lane, used chiefly as a footpath; no vehicles ever passed along it.

Jimmy the Fox shot a rapid glance up and down the lane. No one was in sight. He tramped a dozen yards down the lane, grunting and sweating under the weight of his burden.

Billy Bunter, in the orchard, wiped the perspiration from his fat brow with a podgy hand.

He was safe; the ruffian had seen nothing of him and did not suspect his presence. That was, of course, the most important consideration to William George Bunter.

But Bunter—though his fat thoughts were, as usual, concentrated on himself—was hardly indifferent to Drake's fate.

He was well aware what it meant—that Ferrers Locke, engaged on his case against the remanded Dandy, would be threatened with the death of his boy assistant if he did not abandon his work against the master-crook.

Not only Drake's liberty, but his life, was in peril. The knowledge of that stirred even Billy Bunter to action.

His first thought was to scud back to the house for help. That, however, was futile; the man was already out of the gate, and it was obvious that he had some means of conveyance—most likely a car—not far away.

Unexpectedly as this chance had come to Jimmy the Fox, there was no doubt that he was prepared to make the most of it, and it was obvious that he could not design to carry such a burden any great distance on his back.

The plotters had had a car last time at Wharton Lodge, and it was a certainty that a car was not far away now.

Drake would have vanished into unknown spaces long before help could arrive if Bunter ran for it.

But what was a fellow to do—a fellow, that is, who did not even think of exposing his precious person to danger?

Bunter tiptoed down to the gate and peered out. A back view of an escaping crook was not terrifying even to Bunter.

In the narrow, shady lane he sighted the man again, the sack on his shoulder. Even at the distance he heard the slightly built crook grunt under the weight. The road, as Bunter knew, was a quarter of a mile away; the car could not be nearer than that.

So he was not surprised to see the man turn into the thickets that bordered the lane.

He disappeared.

Billy Bunter was not a bright youth but he was bright enough to guess the crook's probable intentions.

He could not carry Drake as far as the road. No doubt he had a confederate waiting with the car at a distance. It was easy to hide the sack and its contents in the thickets till he could return with his associate to help him bear it away.

Bunter wondered whether that was the game.

The most important thing was not to let the ruffian catch sight of him. Outside the gate was a mass of hawthorn-bushes. Billy Bunter crept out and

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ensconced himself in the hawthorns. There he was able to watch without the danger of being spotted.

Five long, slow minutes elapsed.

Was the man gone?

It was hardly possible, for there was no path through the wood, and the man who had grunted and panted under the burden with a clear path was not likely to attempt carrying it through tangled thickets and bushes.

If he was gone Bunter had lost him—for he assuredly had no intention of risking getting anywhere near the man.

But he was not gone!

After five minutes the tattered man with the stubby face emerged from the thickets at the spot where he had entered.

He came without the sack.

Unburdened now, Jimmy the Fox started down the lane at a run, and in a few moments disappeared from Bunter's sight in the direction of the distant road.

The fat junior gasped.

Not till the running footsteps had died away did Bunter venture to emerge from the hawthorns.

The crook was gone—obviously as far as the junction of the lane with the road, if not farther. Bunter had ample time before he could get back with his confederate, if that was his object.

The fat Owl of the Remove cut down the lane and cut into the thickets at the spot where Jimmy the Fox had entered them.

He blinked round with feverish anxiety.

Nothing was to be seen of the sack, or its contents. But that it could not be far away was a certainty, and Billy Bunter hunted for it in hot haste.

There were plenty of traces where the man had forced his way through thick bushes. Billy Bunter was no great shakes as a Scout, but he could read signs that leaped to the eye.

In the midst of a mass of hawthorns was a pile of branches newly torn—and even Bunter did not need telling that they had been piled there to hide something laid among the hawthorns.

He grabbed them away.

A sack was revealed.

There was a faint stirring in it. Evidently Drake had come to his senses. Bunter wondered why he did not cry out.

But he soon discovered.

Jimmy the Fox had been busy during the minutes he had spent in the thicket. He was taking no chances.

Bunter dragged the sack off and revealed Drake—bound hand and foot, with a gag fastened in his mouth.

His face was white as chalk, and there was a red streak oozing from under his dark hair. His eyes were wide open, and they fixed on Billy Bunter in utter amazement and great eagerness.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He blinked at the bound and gagged boy through his big spectacles, but only for a moment; even more than Drake, Bunter realised the necessity of haste.

He dragged the gag away from Drake's mouth, then he fumbled in his pocket for his pocket-knife.

Drake panted.

"Quick! Oh, quick—before he comes back! Quick, Bunter!"

"What-ho!" gasped Bunter.

He got his pocket-knife open and sawed at the cords. The knife, of course, was blunt—or it would not have been Bunter's. But he got through a cord, and then Drake's arms were free, and he grabbed the knife away from Bunter and sawed swiftly and savagely at the cords round his legs.

A few moments more and he was free. He staggered to his feet.

"Thanks, old man!" muttered Drake.

He stood unsteadily, pressing his hand to his aching head. Bunter grabbed him by the sleeve.

"I say—quick!"

He dragged Drake away through the thickets to the lane. With an aching and spinning head the boy detective tottered as he went. They scrambled down into the lane.

Bunter blinked anxiously through his big spectacles in the direction of the distant road, but no one was yet in sight.

"Take my arm, old chap," said Bunter.

Drake grinned faintly. He would have had to lean considerably to take the fat junior's arm. Bunter was tall sideways!

"That's all right; come on!" he muttered.

They hurried back towards the gate. As they reached it, there was a sound of running feet.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

"They're coming!"

He gave one terrified blink down the lane.

Two figures appeared in sight, coming up from the direction of the road at a run! One was the tattered, stubby man—Jimmy the Fox! The other was a burly, powerfully built man. They were about to turn into the thickets, when they sighted Drake.

and Bunter ahead of them, reaching the orchard gate.

A yell of fury burst from Jimmy the Fox.

He came on at a desperate run, the burly man at his heels. Billy Bunter hurled the gate open, bolted through, and flew up the orchard. Drake was after him like a shot.

Both of them were racing through the orchard by the time Jimmy the Fox and his companion reached the gate. And Bunter's voice could be heard, yelling on its top note:

"Help! Help! I say—help! Oh crikey! Help!"

Jimmy the Fox gritted his teeth. Already a voice, probably that of a gardener, was calling back in response to Bunter's yells. The game was up! That chance, which had looked so promising, had failed.

"Hook it, Biter!" muttered the foxy-faced man.

And as a gardener, with a hoe in his hand, came running down to the gate, the two crooks promptly "hooked" it, and vanished.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### Going—

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter met the Famous Five when a motor-bus landed them at the gates of Cherry Place, and they came in for lunch.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What are you doing out of bed?" asked Bob Cherry, in astonishment.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"It's hardly half-past twelve!" said Harry Wharton. "Do you think this early rising good for you, Bunter?"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"The esteemed Bunter has memorably recollected the ancient and ridiculous proverb," remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "Early bedfulness and early risefulness makes the cracked pitcher go longest to the well!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where's Drake?" asked Bob.

"Lying down!" answered Bunter.

"Eh? What? Drake taking naps in the daytime—caught it from you?" exclaimed Bob.

"Well, he's rather damaged, you know, and he's resting his napper—all done up in bandages!" explained Bunter.

The Famous Five stared at him.

"Has anything happened to Blake?" exclaimed Frank Nugent.

"Yes, rather! Lucky for him I stayed in to take care of him!" said Bunter. "If I'd gone gallivanting about like you fellows, I'd like to know what would have happened to Drake."

"You howling ass, what's happened—if anything has?" growled Johnny Bull.

"Only a gang of crooks got hold of Drake," said Bunter, with studied carelessness. "But it's all right—I rescued him!"

"You rescued Drake from a gang of crooks?" howled Bob Cherry.

"That's it! Knocked 'em right and left!"

"You—you—you knocked a gang of crooks right and left!" shrieked Harry Wharton.

"Yes—like skittles!"

"I can see you doing it!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"If you don't believe me—"

"Believe you? My hat!"

"You can ask Drake!" said Bunter, with calm dignity. "He's lying—"

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"You mean, you're lying!" said Johnny Bull.

"Beast! He's lying down with his head cracked—that villain gave him a one on the crumplet. If I hadn't rescued him—"

"Pack it up!" said Bob. "Let's go in and see if anything's happened to Drake, you fellows!"

"I'm telling you—" roared Bunter.

"Rats!"

The Famous Five ran up the drive to the house. They could hardly believe that any danger had come to Drake within the walls of Cherry Place; but they were anxious. In the hall they found Mrs. Cherry.

"Where's Drake, mums?" asked Bob. The juniors noted that the good lady was looking very grave.

"He is lying down," answered Mrs. Cherry. "He has had a rather bad knock on the head, I am sorry to say—but the doctor has seen him, and says that there is no real harm done. But he is going to rest till lunch."

"But what—" exclaimed Bob.

"You may go to his room," said Mrs. Cherry. And the juniors fairly scampered up the stairs, as Billy Bunter rolled in, grunting.

"I say, you fellows—" squeaked Bunter.

But they did not heed Bunter. They rushed to Drake's room.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" gasped Bob. "I hear you've been bagging bangs on the coconut, old bean!"

"My esteemed and idiotic Drake—"

"Drake old chap—"

"What—"

Drake was lying on his bed. There was a bandage round his head, and his face was pale. He smiled, however, at the sight of the eager and alarmed faces of the juniors.

"All serene!" he said. "It was my own fault. I ought to have been more on my guard!"

"But what—" exclaimed Nugent.

"Did you notice a seedy-looking tramp hanging about the road when you got on the motor-bus this morning?" asked Drake.

"Yes, I think I remember—"

"He came round and called on me in the orchard! He happened to be Jimmy the Fox in a new outfit!"

"Oh crumbs!"

Drake pressed his bandaged head tenderly.

"But—you're safe!" exclaimed Harry. "How—"

"All except a bump on the crumplet," said Drake, with a smile. "I suppose Bunter's told you—"

"Bunter?"

"Yes. He got me out of it."

"Bunter did!" yelled Bob.

"Just Bunter!"

"Mean to say he was telling us the truth?" gasped Johnny Bull.

"Truth is stranger than fiction—from Bunter!" grinned Drake. "But he was."

"Bunter knocked a gang of crooks right and left?" shrieked Nugent.

Drake jumped.

"Eh? No! Not quite! Did he tell you that? Oh crumbs! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then what—"

Drake told the story, the Famous Five listening eagerly. Drake's version washed out the heroics; but he made it clear how much he owed to Bunter.

"Well, my hat!" said Bob Cherry blankly. "That villain had the nerve to tackle you here, in broad daylight! And Bunter—my only hat!"

"Must have been frightened out of his wits, too!" said Nugent.

"All the more credit to him for weighing in as he did!" said Drake.

"It was pretty good for a funk like Bunter."

"Yes, rather! Thank goodness he was about!"

"Thank goodness we rooted him out of bed!" grinned Nugent. "He would have been still snoring if we hadn't hooked him out to take that telephone-call!"

"Then thank goodness that Mauly phoned!" said Harry Wharton. "It was that call from Mauleverer Towers that did it, Drake."

Drake nodded.

"Mustn't forget Bunter, though," he said. "I suppose he was scared stiff; but he weighed in all the same, and I—"

"Oh, really, Drake!" Billy Bunter's fat face and big spectacles looked in at the door. "If that's all you've got to say about a fellow who saved your life at the risk of his own—"

"I can see you taking a lot of risk!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Beast!"

"My dear chap," said Drake, "I've told you already how much I'm obliged to you, and I'll tell you again, if you like! I'm no end grateful, Bunter! Honest Injun!"

"That's all very well!" said Bunter, with a sniff. "But making out that a fellow's got no pluck, after shaving your wife—I mean saving your life—"

"Tons of pluck, old fat bean!" said Drake solemnly.

"Perhaps you fellows will believe me, now Drake's told you!" sneered Bunter. "I can't see any of you fellows doing what I did!"

"Well, if we'd been there—" said Harry.

"You weren't there!" sneered Bunter. "I was there—the right man in the right place, as usual! You go gallivanting about, and I practically give up my holiday to watch over Drake's safety!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I rescue him from a gang of desperate crooks, and at the risk of my life! I was late for brekker, too—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. I was half an hour late for brekker, and the bacon was cold!" roared Bunter. "And everybody making a fuss about Drake because of a little tap on the head, and nobody caring whether my bacon was cold or not! Not the sort of thing I'm accustomed to, Bob Cherry, when I'm staying with friends in the holidays!"

Bob opened his lips—and closed them again. After what Bunter had done for Jack Drake that morning Bunter was privileged—for the time, at least!

"My own fault, I admit!" went on Bunter scornfully. "I'm rather an ass to stay in a place that's not up to my weight."

"Is anything in the wide world up to your weight?" asked Johnny Bull.

"I mean the social weight!" roared Bunter. "You jolly well know what I mean, you beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, cackle!" said Bunter. "Cackle! Do! I've not been treated well here! Dragged out of bed early in the morning, and all that—and my word doubted! Well, I'm going!"

"My dear chap—" began Bob.

"I'm going!" said Bunter, with dignity. "My friend, Lord Mauleverer, has asked me to stay with him. I've consented."

"Does Mauly know?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Beast! Perhaps you don't believe that, either?" sneered Bunter.

"Not a lot," admitted Johnny. "I





Harry Wharton & Co. peered into Bunter's room and found the fat junior kneeling beside an open suitcase, surrounded by various articles. "I say, you fellows, don't bother me now!" he said peevishly. "I'm rather busy packing. I've told you I'm going. The car may be here any minute now from Mauleverer Towers. What are you grinning at?"

know when we broke up at Greyfriars you wanted to hook on to Mauly, and he kicked you."

Bunter shrugged his fat shoulders.

"Go it!" he said. "Envy and jealousy, as usual! I'm used to it! Well, you'll believe me, perhaps, when the car comes from Mauleverer Towers for me this afternoon."

"Perhaps!" grinned Johnny.

"The perhapsfulness is terrific!"

"Well, you wait and see!" sneered Bunter. "I can jolly well tell you, I'm going! You can hardly expect me to stay in a show like this, Cherry when I'm asked to a nobleman's house."

"You fat idiot! I—I—I mean, look here, you fat duffer, after what you've done for Drake this morning you can stay to the end of the hols, if you like, and we'll all make you welcome," said Bob.

"Thank you for nothing!" answered Bunter scornfully. "I'm going—and you can make the best of it! And that's that!"

And Bunter, with a sniff of scorn, rolled away. He rolled off, with the impression that he left the chums of the Remove in a crushed state.

As a matter of fact, they were not fearfully crushed. For one thing, they did not believe a word of it, knowing how very anxious Lord Mauleverer had been not to enjoy the society of Billy Bunter at the Towers that Easter.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### Going—

**H**ARRY WHARTON & CO. had smiling faces that afternoon.

Billy Bunter was the cause of the smiles.

Bunter had lunched, with an air of offended dignity—the air of a fellow

who was going to stand no more nonsense. This did not interfere with his appetite, any more than his very late breakfast did. He parked a very good lunch, but dignity sat on his fat brow and gleamed from behind his big spectacles. Bunter was offended—Bunter was dignified—Bunter was going to shake the dust of Cherry Place from his feet—and Bunter was letting the whole household know it.

And the chums of the Remove did not believe a word of it. They did not believe that Mauly had asked Bunter to stay at the Towers, though it was a little puzzling why the phone call had come at all. They did not believe that Bunter was going—that was altogether too good to be true.

They supposed that Bunter was putting on "roll" simply because he had done Jack Drake a service that could not possibly be overlooked, either by Drake himself or the friends who were anxious for his safety.

There was no doubt that when the time came to depart Bunter would change his mind and decide to stay with his old pals—and tell some whopping untruth to account for his change of plan, as usual. As for the car that was to arrive for him from Mauleverer Towers, they were prepared to believe in that car when they saw it—and not before!

But Bunter, certainly, was keeping it up! After lunch he rolled out into the garden, to take a snooze on a seat under a shady tree.

"I say, you fellows, wake me up if the car comes while I'm having a nap!" he called out.

"The wakefulness will be terrific, and the if-fulness is also great, my esteemed Bunter!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I expect it pretty early in the afternoon," said Bunter.

"Bow-wow!" said Johnny Bull.

"I'm going—"

"Going, going, gone!" said Frank Nugent, laughing. "We believe in the going, old fat bean, but not in the gone."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah!" retorted Bunter, and he closed his eyes behind his spectacles and snored, making up a little for having turned out at the unearthly hour of ten in the morning!

Harry Wharton & Co. took out their rackets for tennis. There was a grass court at Cherry Place, which Billy Bunter, with a contemptuous sniff, had compared very unfavourably with the magnificent hard court at his magnificent home, the ancestral hall of the Bunter tribe.

Bob Cherry agreed cheerfully that a bit of level garden marked off as a tennis court, was not a patch on a magnificent hard court. On the other hand, it was real, and the Bunter magnificence was imaginary. It certainly had the advantage there!

Anyhow, such as it was, the juniors got a very good game on it, Wharton and Nugent playing Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh, while Bob strolled round with Jack Drake.

Drake was making light of his adventure of the morning; but he had a bump on his head, and an ache therein, though it was passing off.

Major Cherry, greatly disturbed by the occurrence, had advised his son not to leave Drake alone out of doors during his stay at the Place, and Bob and his friends were quite decided about that.

It was plain that, even within the walls of Cherry Place, Drake could not

count himself safe from the attempts of Ferrers Locke's enemies, and the Famous Five had agreed that he was never to be left alone again, so long as that peril lasted.

That was likely to be until the Dandy, now on remand in custody, came to trial and went to the prison that had long awaited him. After that it would be out of Locke's power to "let up" on the master-crook, and Jimmy the Fox would have no further purpose to serve by carrying on the campaign against the detective's boy assistant. It was only a matter, in all probability, of a couple of weeks, but during that space of time it was clear that danger haunted Drake's footsteps, and the claims of the Remove were going to see him safe through it—if they could!

When the set had been played Harry Wharton remarked that Bunter might like a game.

"Oh, blow!" said Johnny Bull.

Billy Bunter's tennis was on a par with his football, and his cricket! But in view of the late happenings, Bunter was now a person to be considered.

"Somebody can play singles with him," said Harry. "The fathead fancies he can play tennis."

"Leave it to you, partner!" said Johnny.

"Toss up for it!" suggested Drake.

"Oh, I'll take it on," said Bob. "Bunter's my giddy guest, of sorts. Let's go and see if he's awake."

The juniors went to look for Bunter. No snore greeted them, and the garden seat was vacant. Bunter, apparently, had gone into the house. This was rather unexpected. When he was not sleeping, or eating, Bunter was a gregarious animal, and liked company. His own, of course, was the best going, but he never seemed quite satisfied with it.

"Let him rip!" said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, let's look for him!" said the good-natured Bob; and the juniors went in to look for Bunter.

They found Major Cherry in the hall.

"Seen Bunter, dad?" asked Bob.

"He has gone to his room!" said the major, with a rather curious glance at his son. "He stated that he was going to pack. Is Bunter leaving us, Bob?"

"Well, he said so," answered Bob. "But—"

He paused.

Major Cherry gave a slight grunt. He had not been favourably impressed by the Owl of the Remove. But, like the Greyfriars fellows, he wanted to be as nice as possible to the fat Owl after what had happened that morning.

"Of course, Bunter must please himself," he said. "But if he has taken offence at something or other, Bob, please be a little tactful with him, and make him understand that he is welcome here. After what he did for Drake this morning, we cannot be too considerate."

"Oh, yes, rather, dad!" answered Bob. "Come on, you men—let's all go and see his Nibs."

And the juniors, rather puzzled, went up to Bunter's room. It really began to look as if he was going, which was puzzling, and it was still more puzzling to hear that he was packing! What he had to pack, even if he was going, was rather a mystery:

Bunter, as usual, was travelling light. As usual, he was relying on his pals for anything that he might need!

He had a bag, but very little in it! Certainly, he had what he stood up in; but that did not need packing. Even his pyjamas were borrowed from Wharton—his slippers from Nugent—his

collars and ties and handkerchiefs impartially from all the Co. So it was rather interesting to know what Bunter was going to pack!

However, he was packing!

They found him kneeling beside an open suitcase in his room. He was surrounded by various articles.

He gave a startled blink round as the juniors looked in.

"I say, you fellows, don't bother me now!" he said peevishly. "I'm rather busy packing!"

"What are you packing for?" asked Bob mildly.

"I've told you I'm going!" answered Bunter loftily. "The car may be here any minute now from Mauleverer Towers. What are you grinning at, I'd like to know?"

"Hem, nothing! Like us to help you pack?"

"No, I wouldn't!" answered Bunter. "Just clear off and shut the door!"

"You wouldn't like Wharton to fold his pyjamas, before you park them in your bag?" asked Johnny Bull sarcastically.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Or Bob's shoes polished before you put them in?" continued Johnny.

"Beast!"

"Sure you've got all my socks that you're likely to want?" inquired Frank Nugent, equally sarcastic.

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"I am terrifically gratified to discern that you have honoured me by annexing my ridiculous neckties, my esteemed Bunter."

"Oh, really, Inky—"

"Can't you see anything of mine?" remarked Johnny Bull. "I suppose the fat Bunder knew I wouldn't stand it! Whose are those hankies?"

Bunter sneered.

"If Drake is going to make a fuss about a few hankies, after all I've done for him—" he began.

"Not at all, old fat man," said Drake. "You're more than welcome. I—I say, though, are they my best bags?"

"If you're going to make a fuss about a pair of trousers, after I've saved your life—"

"Shove 'em in, old chap!" said Drake, laughing. "And the waistcoat, too—and the shirts! All serene!"

Bunter was left to his packing. A quarter of an hour later Bunter's well-stored bag was in the hall, ready to be taken out to the car—when it came! That Mauly was sending a car for him, that he was going to inflict himself with Bunter for the holidays, the juniors did not yet believe. But it really looked, at last, as if Bunter was going!

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Gone!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"My hat!"

"The car!"

It was a handsome Rolls that came up the drive. It was driven by a well-appointed chauffeur.

Billy Bunter grinned.

"I say, you fellows, that's the car for me!" he remarked. "Perhaps you believe me now?"

"That's not Mauleverer's car, and the man isn't in Mauly's livery!" said Bob Cherry.

Bunter's fat face fell.

"It must be the car!" he said. "Of course it must! Too jolly expensive a car to belong to anybody you know about here, Cherry."

Bob made no reply to that gracious

remark. He was looking rather curiously at the car and the chauffeur. Both of them looked very well appointed and expensive; but there was no visible sign that they belonged to Lord Mauleverer.

As the car halted, Bunter scuttled towards it. The chauffeur stepped down and touched his cap.

"Master Bunter?" he asked.

"That's right," said Bunter. "You've come from Mauly—I mean, Lord Mauleverer?"

"Yes, sir!"

"This isn't Mauly's—I mean, his lordship's—own car?"

"No, sir—from Hoscot Garage. His lordship telephoned for a car to take you to the Towers, sir."

Bunter was aware that Mauleverer Towers was near Hoscot, in Hampshire. There was nothing surprising in the circumstance; but Bunter grunted. He would have preferred Mauly's own magnificent car, and Mauly's own magnificent chauffeur. Bunter liked doing things in style. Still, it was a first-class car, there was no doubt about that. If Mauly had not sent his own car he had, at least, sent a good one.

"Oh, all right!" said Bunter.

He turned back to the group of Greyfriars fellows.

"I say, Cherry, tell somebody to bring my baggage out, will you?"

"Well, my hat!" said Bob. "I mean, oh, yes—all right!"

Bunter's bag was brought out and placed in the car.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked on.

It was, as Bunter happily realised, a "facer" for the Co. Here was the car from Mauleverer Towers—to fetch Bunter! Doubting Thomas himself could not have doubted now that Mauly had invited the fat Owl to the Towers and sent a car for him!

"I say, you fellows," Bunter chuckled, "I'll be getting off! Sorry I can't stay for tea; but my friend Mauleverer is anxious for me to get to the Towers as soon as possible, you know."

"Aren't you going to say good-bye to the pater and the mater?" asked Bob quietly.

"Eh?" Bunter had forgotten the existence of his host and hostess in his glee at the arrival of the Rolls. "Oh, that's all right! You say good-bye to them for me—I'm rather pressed for time."

Bob compressed his lips a little.

Bunter's departure was not a blow to anybody at Cherry Place. They all wanted to be nice and kind to him, in view of what had happened that morning—as the juniors had proved by letting him get away with his packing. But there were likely to be dry eyes when he was gone. Still, something was due to good manners.

Good manners, however, did not bother Billy Bunter. He was done with Cherry Place now, and all that dwelt therein—and he was only anxious to be gone.

The chauffeur respectfully opened the door for him, and he clambered into the car.

"Well, good-bye, Bunter!" said Harry Wharton.

"Good-bye, old chap!" said Jack Drake, still under the influence of Bunter's help that morning.

Bunter blinked back at them as they stood on the drive, with a devastating blink through his big spectacles.

He was done with them now!

He was booked for the rest of the Easter vacation at a place infinitely more expensive and magnificent.

At Cherry Place the fellows did not

even dress for dinner! Bunter was going to dress for dinner at Mauleverer Towers. He had indeed packed Harry Wharton's evening clothes for that very purpose!

His fat soul swelled with contempt for the fellows he was leaving behind! At last, at long last, he was able to tell these beasts what he really thought of them!

The chauffeur was in his seat, ready to start. But Bunter had a few well-chosen words to say first.

"Well, I'm going!" he said, with a scornful curl of the lip. "I've had a rotten time here——"

"Sorry!" said Bob, with a cheery grin.

"Just as rotten as I had at your place, Wharton!"

"Sorry!" said Wharton, laughing.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! It's my own fault—mixing with social inferiors!" said Bunter. "I ought to have remembered what was due to my own position."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Well, I'm done with you," said Bunter. "You're a fatheaded hooligan, Bob Cherry—that's what I think of you!"

"Thanks!" said Bob.

"You're a swanking ass, Wharton!"

"Thanks!"

"You're a cheeky nigger, Inky!"

"The thankfulness is terrific."

"You're a silly milksop, Nugent!"

"Go it, old bean!" said Frank.

"And you——" said Bunter, turning the devastating blink of his big spectacles on Johnny Bull.

"Well, what am I?" asked Johnny Bull, in a voice like unto that of the Great Huge Bear, coming a little nearer to the car, his eyes gleaming.

Bunter paused. He decided not to tell Johnny Bull what he thought of him. He did not like the look in Johnny's eye.

"Keep your distance, Bull!" he said loftily. "I prefer to have nothing to say to you! As for you, Drake——"

"Best of times, old chap!" said Drake.

"Don't be cheeky!" said Bunter.

"Eh?"

"I don't want familiarity from a fellow in business! I've treated you as a friend—that was my condescending way——"

"Oh crumbs!"

"But I expect you to remember the difference in our positions," said Bunter. "I don't want 'old chap' from you!"

"You blithering fat idiot!"

"That's enough!" said Bunter. "No cheek! Get going, chauffeur—don't keep me hanging about with that low lot!"

The car glided away, Billy Bunter bestowing a final sniff on the chums of Greyfriars as he went. They were left standing in a staring group. They stood there, staring, till the car turned out of the gates and disappeared! Billy Bunter's farewell seemed rather to have taken their breath away.

"Going—going—gone!" murmured Nugent.

"The gonefulness is terrific!"

Bob Cherry drew a deep breath.

"Well, he's gone!" he said.

There was no doubt about it! Billy Bunter was gone! His farewell had not been flattering, but his departure, at least, was grateful and comforting. Anyhow, he was gone—and it did not seem too much to hope that he would stay gone!

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

### The Kidnapping of Billy Bunter!

**B**ILLY BUNTER smiled serenely. Bunter was greatly bucked. He leaned back on soft leather, stretched out his fat little legs, and from the windows of the car surveyed common humanity with a lofty gaze through his big spectacles.

The fat Owl of the Remove was enjoying life!

He had left the Co.—as he fancied, at least—properly abashed and crushed by his scorn. He was heading for one of the most magnificent abodes in Hampshire. Most gratifying of all was the fact that he had been asked there—without even the trouble of fishing for an invitation! Entirely of his own accord, Lord Mauleverer had specially asked him—him, and not the other fellows—evidently wanting Bunter!

It was a little surprising, even to Bunter himself, as well as gratifying. For at the end of the term at Greyfriars he had not decided to honour Harry Wharton & Co. with his distinguished company until after he had tried Mauly and found that there was nothing doing in that direction.

Not only had Mauly failed to ask him for Easter, but he had promised to kick him, hard, if he saw him anywhere near Mauleverer Towers in the holidays!

There seemed to have been a change of spirit since the school had broken up. Absence, apparently, had made the heart grow fonder!

Anyhow, there was Bunter, heading for Mauleverer Towers in a big car, and in a frame of mind that could only be described as cock-a-hoop!

The car made good speed! It covered the ground at a great rate. It ran swiftly and smoothly; ever so much better than Major Cherry's car, which was not nearly so expensive, and which the major drove himself, not being able, as Bunter contemptuously reflected, to afford a chauffeur! Thank goodness he was done with all that!

Vast apartments, armorial bearings, liveried footmen, awaited Bunter—and he revelled in the prospect. Even his ever-present shortage of cash was not going to last. Mauly could hardly refuse to cash a postal order for his honoured guest—one postal order after another, in fact! And the cash would be real, if the postal orders weren't!

Altogether, it was a glorious prospect, and it was no wonder that Billy Bunter was bucked.

For quite a long time Bunter sat in a happy and glorious state, too busy with anticipations to notice the direction that the car was taking.

He knew that Mauleverer Towers was sixty or seventy miles from Cherry Place, and that it was in Hampshire; but he had only the vaguest idea of geography; neither was he giving any thought to the route the car was taking. That was the chauffeur's business.

But even Bunter, after half an hour or so, was struck by the fact that the setting sun was in his face.

Mr. Quelch, the Remove master at Greyfriars, did not find Bunter a bright pupil, at geography or anything else. Had Bunter been asked to put down the position of Hampshire in an exam paper, he might have placed it east or west or north of Dorset, or even south!

But having recently travelled from Surrey with the Co., Bunter was aware that Hampshire had been crossed to reach Dorsetshire.

Obviously, therefore, even to Bunter, Hampshire, from Dorset, lay in the

direction of Surrey—that is, east by north.

It dawned even on Bunter's obtuse mind that if the car was going eastward, it was singular for the sun to be in his face in the afternoon.

His knowledge of astronomy was as limited as his knowledge of other things, but he was sure—quite sure—that the sun set in the west!

The sun, therefore, which was sinking towards the Devonshire moors, ought to have been behind him.

Bunter, struck by this at long last, sat up and took notice. For a time he supposed that the chauffeur was making a roundabout course for some reason best known to himself.

But if that was the explanation, the chauffeur was taking a very extensive roundabout course, and Bunter began to wonder, at length, what it meant. By that time he should have entered Hampshire, and passed the New Forest. Instead of which, he was evidently still in Dorset.

He slipped back a glass panel and called to the driver.

"I say! Where are you going?"

The man did not answer.

He accelerated a little, that was all. The car, already going fast, went faster.

"I say!" roared Bunter.

No answer.

The fat Owl wondered if the man was deaf. He had shown no sign of deafness when he picked Bunter up at Cherry Place.

But he seemed deaf now. He did not turn his head or give any sign of having heard Bunter.

"Look here, stop!" shouted Bunter. "You're going the wrong way! See? Stop at once! Do you hear?"

The car rushed on.

Billy Bunter sat back again in amazement and a little alarm. The red glare of the sunset was fairly in his eyes. He had his back to Hampshire; and every revolution of the wheels was taking him farther and farther from Mauleverer Towers.

What did it mean?

Was the man mad?

He thought of grabbing the chauffeur by the back of the neck. But at the speed at which the car was travelling that would have been rather dangerous.

"Oh crikey!" ejaculated Bunter.

What could it possibly mean? It was not Mauly's own car, or Mauly's own chauffeur; but surely Mauleverer would have sent a reliable man, who knew the way, and could be trusted to deliver so important a guest safe and sound! Yet the man was taking him directly away from Mauly's place, and refused to give him any heed.

Bunter, vaguely alarmed and uneasy, yelled again.

"Look here, stop! I'll tell Mauleverer about this! Will you stop? I order you to stop at once."

The man seemed still deaf.

The car swept on.

Where he was now, Bunter did not know, except that he was somewhere in the west of Dorset, unless he was already over the border in Devon. It was only too sadly certain that he was more than a hundred miles from his supposed destination.

Suddenly the car turned from the high road into a lane. It was a deep, shady lane, with high banks of earth, crowned by hedges, on either side.

Was that idiot of a chauffeur going to look for the right road at last?

Alas! No!

After following the lane for about a mile the chauffeur turned from it into

a drive, or rather track, that led to a building about fifty yards back.

Bunter blinked at that building. It was a bungalow—a small building with a garage of concrete blocks at one side—with no other building in sight, and the only sign of civilisation, a telephone wire. It looked like one of those bungalows which are built in picturesque rural spots to be let furnished to holiday-makers. It was certainly nothing like Mauleverer Towers.

Where on earth had the man taken him? He had stopped at last, which was something to be thankful for, at least.

The chauffeur stepped down and opened the door of the car. Billy Bunter gave him a devastating blink.

"That's not Mauleverer Towers!" he bawled.

The man grinned.

"You've got it," he answered.

His manner was no longer that of the respectful chauffeur who had called at Cherry Place. That manner had dropped from him like a cloak.

"Look here! I'm going to Mauleverer Towers!" booted Bunter.

"Think so?"

"Don't be cheeky! You'll never get another job from my friend, Lord Mauleverer—I can tell you that," roared Bunter.

"I've never had a job from him yet that I know of," grinned the chauffeur. "Never seen the gent, in fact."

Bunter jumped.

"Haven't you come from Lord Mauleverer?" he gasped.

"Not a lot," answered the driver.

"Then who—what—I say, what's this place? What have you brought me here for?" gasped Bunter.

"There's a gent wants to see you, fatty—wants you to stay with him for a day or two. Don't be frightened. You're not going to be hurt. That is," added the man, with a change of manner that alarmed Bunter, "unless you give any trouble. If you do, I'm sorry for you. Get out!"

"But—!" gasped Bunter.

"Get out!"

The man had ceased to grin, and his voice came sharp and bullying. Bunter got out, trembling in every fat limb. His brain was in a whirl.

"I—I—I say," he stammered—"I say, you'll get locked up for this, you know. I say, Lord Mauleverer is expecting me at the Towers—"

"I don't think!"

"I tell you he phoned to me this morning to ask me to come over—at least, his man Jenkins did."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the chauffeur. "That's all right, fatty; don't you worry! You're talking to Jenkins now."

"Wha-a-at!" stuttered Bunter.

"That will do. Get a move on!"

Bunter blinked at him in horror. Slowly the truth dawned on his fat brain. That telephone call from Mauleverer Towers had been a surprise. Now he realised that it had also been a spoof.

For some mysterious reason—some reason that Bunter could not begin to fathom—Lord Mauleverer's name had been used to trick him away from Cherry Place in this car.

He was kidnapped!

He was in lawless hands. Why, was simply unimaginable. There was a fellow at Cherry Place whom certain parties were anxious to kidnap. But that fellow was Jack Drake, not Billy Bunter. What could it mean?

The man pointed to the house.

"Get a move on!" he repeated.

Bunter got a move on, but not in the direction of the house. He made a

sudden jump and bolted back towards the lane.

It was a hopeless attempt. The man was after him like a shot, and his grasp closed on Bunter's collar before he had covered three yards.

"You young idiot!" said Jenkins—if his name was Jenkins, which was improbable.

He marched Bunter up to the little wooden porch of the bungalow. Holding him in a vice-like grip with his left hand, he took a key from his pocket with the right, and unlocked the door.

Bunter was pushed into what the estate agent would doubtless have described as a commodious lounge-hall.

"Stick there, young feller-me-lad!" said Jenkins. "Make a row, and I'll come in to you, and you'll be sorry you spoke. That's a tip!"

He lifted his boot and kicked Bunter, sending him sprawling headlong across the little hall.

Bump!

"Yaroo!"

Bunter landed on his hands and knees with a roar.

The unfeeling Jenkins chuckled, slammed the door, and locked it. Billy Bunter sat up, a prisoner, and gasped.

"Oh crikey!"

That was all he could say.

## THE NINTH CHAPTER.

### Mysterious!

JIMMY the Fox stepped from a little two-seater, shutting off the lights. Deep dusk lay on the lonely lane, and not a gleam of light came from the bungalow. The burly Biter followed him.

"O.K.!" said the latter, with a grin and a nod towards the big Rolls that stood outside the garage beside the bungalow.

The foxy-faced crook nodded. The man Jenkins loomed up out of the shadows with a grin on his face.

"You got him?" asked Jimmy.

"Easy as pie," answered Jenkins.

Jimmy the Fox went to the door of the bungalow. The Biter remained with Jenkins. Jimmy let himself into the bungalow, and stared into the shadows within.

All was dark there.

Through the darkness came a glimmer of a large pair of spectacles with frightened eyes like a rabbit's glimmering behind them.

Jimmy the Fox closed the door and struck a match. That match revealed Billy Bunter seated in an armchair.

For long hours the fat Owl of Greyfriars had been seated in that chair in a state of amazement, funk, and trepidation, to which no words could have done justice. There were several doors on the hall, but they were all locked; and the single window was protected by a shutter. Bunter had hardly thought of attempting to escape. It was hopeless, if he had thought of it. He knew that the man Jenkins was outside.

Jimmy the Fox gave him one careless glance and lighted a swinging lamp. Bunter blinked at him.

He had already wondered whether the kidnapers, into whose hands he had fallen, were the same gang that were after Drake. Now he had proof that such was the case as he blinked in terror at the foxy face before him.

He had seen Jimmy before. He had seen him at Wharton Lodge in his attempt to get hold of Drake there. He had seen him before that, too, when Jimmy—seeming to Bunter an obliging motorist—had given him a lift in a car, and pumped him dry of information.

Billy Bunter's long tongue had often landed him in trouble. But it had never landed him in worse trouble than this.

It was Bunter's happy way to talk entirely about himself, when he was so lucky as to find a listener. He had talked to Jimmy the Fox, not wisely, but too well. Bunter, no doubt, would have forgotten all about that talk had he not learned afterwards that Jimmy was a crook. Jimmy the Fox had not forgotten. And it was from Bunter's chatter that he had learned all he needed to know to lay his present scheme.

The crook stood looking at the hapless fat Owl. He smiled faintly. In his brief acquaintance with Bunter he had judged his character correctly. He expected to find him here in a state of quaking funk, and he found him so. Obviously Bunter was going to be like wax in his hands.

"Don't be afraid, kid," said Jimmy, not unkindly. "Nobody's going to hurt you here, so long as you do what you're told."

"I—I—I'll do anything you like, of course," stuttered Bunter. "I—I say, I—I'd like to—to go back to Cherry Place, if—if you don't mind."

Jimmy the Fox grinned.

"Not just yet," he replied. "You'll go back safe and sound in a couple of days or so. Don't you worry."

That was a comfort to Bunter. For whatever mysterious reason these crooks wanted him, it seemed that they were not going to do him any damage.

"I—I say, I'm hungry!" he ventured.

"You'll have plenty to eat while you're my guest here, Master Bunter," said Jimmy the Fox. "And I've got your quarters fixed up cosy and comfortable. You'll be all right."

Bunter's fat face brightened.

For a fellow who had been kidnapped by a dangerous gang of crooks, he was getting off remarkably well. He realised that.

He could understand that the rascals had some use to which to put him, though he could not begin to guess what it was. Whatever it was, Bunter was not likely to kick.

He was, of course, hungry. Now that he was relieved of bodily terrors, that was the most important thing in the universe.

"You're going to stay here a few days," went on Jimmy the Fox. "You'll have to look after yourself—no servants in this establishment." He grinned. "But you'll be all right. Plenty to eat—books to read, if you want them—only don't try to get out of the house. You'll be knocked on the head if you do. Keep that in mind."

Bunter shuddered.

"I—I don't want to go!" he mumbled.

"Good!" grinned Jimmy the Fox. "Stick to that! A friend of mine will be about the place all the time, and I pity you if he finds you putting so much as your head out. The Biter's got rather a heavy hand with a loaded stick."

"Oh crikey! I—I—"

"Quite a comfortable bungalow—let furnished to a gentleman wanting country air!" explained Jimmy. "I'm the gentleman it's let to—but you're going to get the country air! No charge."

"I—I say—"

"I want you to phone," went on Jimmy. "Your friends at Cherry Place will naturally want to hear that you've arrived safely at Mauleverer Towers."

"But—but I haven't!" gasped Bunter.

"You are going to tell them that you have!"

"But—but, I say—"



There was a deep growl and a scampering of feet. Then from the shadows a mastiff suddenly appeared. Jimmy the Fox stopped his descent, hanging on to the rope with his left hand. In his right hand glimmered an automatic. His only way of escape was to shoot the mastiff!

Bunter broke off with a gasp of terror. Jimmy the Fox slipped his hand into his hip pocket and drew therefrom an automatic pistol. The bluish barrel glimmered in the lamplight.

"Are you going to argue with me?" asked Jimmy.

"Ow! No!" yelled Bunter. "I—I say, put that away—it might go off! Oh erikey!"

"It's fairly certain to go off if you give me any trouble, Master Bunter," said the Fox. He slipped the automatic back into its place. "Just remember it's there—and save your breath."

"Oh lor'!" groaned Bunter.

"You're going to telephone to Cherry Place and tell your friends that you've arrived safely at Maulverer Towers. Got that?"

"Ow! Yes! Oh dear!"

"You're going to tell them one or two other things, too," went on Jimmy the Fox. "I'll put you wise, and you carry out my instructions to the very letter. Got that?"

"Ow! Yes!" groaned Bunter. "I—I'll tell them anything you like! But I don't see—"

"No need for you to see. You'll do exactly as you are told, if you want to get out of this bungalow alive."

"Oh dear! I—I mean—yes!"

"As you left so suddenly, they won't be surprised by some luggage arriving for you after you'd left," said Jimmy the Fox, eyeing the fat junior narrowly.

"Eh? No! But—but there isn't any luggage arriving at Cherry Place for me!" said the astonished Owl.

"Possibly not. But that's what you're going to tell them."

Bunter blinked at him, almost forgetting his terror in his amazement.

"Do you mean that you want me to pull their leg?" he gasped at last.

The Fox laughed.

"Exactly—that's it!"

"Well, I don't mind," said Bunter. "But they'll know it's only a spoof when no luggage comes for me."

Jimmy made no reply to that. He unlocked a door on the hall, and Bunter, blinking into the room, saw a telephone standing there on a table. He noted, too, that the label giving the telephone's exchange and number had been removed.

"I am going to give you full instructions," said Jimmy the Fox, in a quiet tone of menace, "and you will carry them out. I shall be at your elbow, with the automatic in my hand. If you put in a word I don't want, or if you make any attempt to speak to the exchange and put them wise, it will be the last thing you will do in this world. Got that?"

"Oh erikey!"

"Now listen!"

Bunter listened with all his fat ears. He listened in blank amazement. A suspicion was in his fat mind that this scoundrel had somehow intended to use him in his schemes for getting hold of Jack Drake. But the Fox made no mention of Drake; so far as Bunter could see, he had forgotten the existence of the assistant of Ferrers Locke. Bunter, it was true, could not see very far; but so far as he could see, there was absolutely no harm in what Jimmy the Fox wanted him to do. It seemed to Bunter a meaningless practical joke, and nothing else.

That was a relief to him; for, terrified

as he was, he would have felt a deep qualm at the idea of being used in some treacherous trickery for getting hold of Drake.

Anyhow, he had to obey, meaningless as Jimmy's instructions seemed to his fat mind. And Jimmy the Fox led him to the chair by the table, and Bunter picked up the receiver and asked for a call to Cherry Place.

## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

### Bunter on the Phone!

PING-PONG was going on after the table was cleared in the dining-room at Cherry Place.

Jack Drake sat and looked on with a cheery face, though there was still rather an ache in his head. Bob was talking to him, while the other fellows played table tennis, when the major put his head in at the door.

"Bob!" he called.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Bunter wants you on the phone."

"Oh, all right!" Bob grinned. "News of the glories of Maulverer Towers, you fellows! I wonder Bunter's taken the trouble to ring us up, though. I rather thought he would have forgotten the existence of such small fry."

"Perhaps he wants us to send something on—something he's forgotten," suggested Johnny Bull, looking round from the game.

"Eh? What?"

"My boots, or Nugent's best hat," suggested Johnny. "He left us a few of our things when he did his packing."

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(Continued from page 13.)

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob chuckled as he went out to the hall to take the call. He picked up the receiver and hooted:

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Is that you, jolly old fatty?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Got in all right, what?" asked Bob cheerily. "Pleasant journey, what? All right with Mauly?"

"Oh dear!"

"Wha-a-t?" ejaculated Bob, surprised by that dismal ejaculation from the other end.

"I—I mean—"

"Anything amiss?" asked Bob. He took it as a matter of course that Bunter was telephoning from Mauleverer Towers, but the fat Owl did not sound as if he was at the moment enjoying life.

"Eh? Oh, no! Fine! Everything gorgeous!" gasped Bunter. "Ripping! Tip-top! Splendacious!"

"That sounds more like you, Bunter," chuckled Bob. "Mauly hasn't kicked you out, has he?"

"Beast!"

"Is that all?" inquired Bob.

"No! I've got something to tell you! It—it's rather important."

"Fire away!"

"Leaving in such a hurry, I forgot to mention that I was expecting some baggage to arrive for me," said Bunter in a curious, parrot-like way, as if repeating a lesson.

"Whose baggage?" asked Bob.

"Eh? Mine, of course."

"Oh, all right! Your baggage generally isn't yours, you know! I'll look after it if it comes; but if the owner turns up—"

"Beast! I—I mean, do listen to a chap! It's a trunk. I forgot that it was coming for me when I left. I expect it will be delivered to-morrow—some time to-morrow."

"All serene. I'll send it on after you if it turns up," said Bob.

"No, don't do that. It—it will mean delay. I'll run across in the car for it."

"Just as you like, old fat bean!"

"Or if I'm too busy to come, I'll send the car—the same car and chauffeur that fetched me away to-day. You'll know the man again."

"Right-ho!"

"I want it taken proper care of—"

"My dear old fat bean, I'll have it parked in your room here—the room you honoured with your distinguished presence before you turned us down for the jolly old nobility."

"That's all right—I mean, don't shove it in the garage or anything like that. There's a lot of clothes and things in the trunk—"

"Whose?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"All serene, old fat man! It will be all right! There aren't any Bunters here now, so the clothes will be quite safe in the trunk!"

"Beast—I mean, all right! It will be

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rather a heavy trunk—a good many changes of clothes and things in it."

Bob grinned over the telephone.

Considering how Bunter had packed for his journey to Mauleverer Towers, it seemed improbable that a trunk packed with changes of clothes was on the point of arriving at Cherry Place for him.

"You've got it clear?" asked Bunter, with a note of anxiety in his voice that surprised Bob.

"Quite!" answered Bob. "In fact, as Inky would say, the clearfulness is terrific!"

"Don't let them bump and crash the trunk about; it's rather a valuable Saratoga trunk."

"I'll take it up tenderly, treat it with care," answered Bob. "Any more?"

"I may not be able to come over; I expect to be rather busy here. But you'll know the chauffeur and the car if I send Jenkins."

"I'll know them all right. Of course, it would be a fearful pleasure to see your fat chivvy again. But if you don't come, I'll try to manage to survive it somehow."

"Beast!"

"Is that the lot?"

"Yes. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye, old fat man!"

Bob put up the receiver and returned to the dining-room. The other fellows gave him inquiring glances as he came in, smiling.

"Bunter all right?" asked Johnny Bull. "The car didn't break down under the weight?"

"No; he seems to have got in all right, but he didn't sound quite so joyful as I expected," answered Bob.

"Sort of worried sound in his voice, I thought. He seems anxious about a trunk, too; he says it will be delivered here for him to-morrow—a Saratoga trunk full of clothes—"

"Oh, my hat!" said Drake. "If he's got a trunk of clothes coming, he might have left me my bags."

"He says he forgot it, leaving so suddenly. Blessed if I can make it out quite," said Bob. "He says it's coming to-morrow—that's Wednesday—and he will run across for it in a car on Thursday morning, or else send the car that came for him to-day."

"Did you ask him to bring our clobber back with him?" inquired Johnny Bull. "He might as well, if he's really got a trunk of clothes on the way."

Bob chuckled.

"No! And I'll believe in that jolly old trunk when I see it! I suppose the fat ass is swanking as usual, and I don't suppose there will be any trunk."

In which opinion the other fellows concurred, though why Bunter had taken the trouble to ring up, just to tell one more whopper, was rather a puzzle. However, the matter seemed of no consequence to the chums of the Remove, and they dismissed it from their minds.

Which certainly they would not have done if they had been aware that Bunter had been telephoning under the foxy eyes of Jimmy the Fox—not from Mauleverer Towers, but from a lonely bungalow on the borders of Devon and Dorset. That, however, no one was likely to surmise. And when the Greyfriars fellows went to bed that night, if they dreamed, they certainly did not dream that the fat Owl of the Remove was a prisoner in the hands of the Dandy's gang, and that that telephone message was a cunning move in the game to kidnap Ferrers Locke's boy assistant.

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Billy Bunter's Big Trunk!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"Some trunk!"

"Great pip!"

"The trunkfulness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, staring at the huge Saratoga.

It was the following afternoon.

In the morning the Greyfriars fellows had packed into the major's car, with Jack Drake, for a drive, and Major Cherry had slipped his old Service revolver into his pocket before starting. But nothing had been seen of the enemy, though Drake and his friends had little—or, rather, no doubt—that Cherry Place was still being watched, and that Jimmy the Fox would not lose a chance if it came his way.

He was not going to get another chance, if the chums of the Remove could help it. In the afternoon they remained within the bounds of Cherry Place, and whenever Drake was outside the house, some of the Co. were always with him.

It was in vain that Drake told them that he was going to be carefully on his guard, and that they need not alter any of their holiday arrangements on his account. The Famous Five had constituted themselves his bodyguard—and that was that!

After tea that day they played tennis on the grass court so much despised by Billy Bunter, but where they contrived to enjoy themselves. They were coming back to the house in a cheery crowd when they sighted the trunk. They had, in point of fact, forgotten all about Billy Bunter and his trunk, but now they were reminded of both.

It was, as Johnny Bull remarked, "some" trunk.

The juniors had seen big Saratoga trunks before, but this one was the biggest they had ever seen.

Two men were carrying it into the house from the car that had delivered it, and they breathed hard and laboured under the weight.

The trunk itself was of heavy construction, and it must have been packed pretty full, to judge by the efforts of the men carrying it.

"If that's Bunter's trunk, he was telling the truth on the phone last night!" remarked Bob Cherry.

"Wonders will never cease!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"It's Bunter's!" said Harry Wharton, with a gesture towards the initials, "W. G. B.," painted on the trunk.

"Bunter's all right," agreed Bob. "But what the thump does he want a cargo of stuff like that for?"

"Goodness knows!"

"No labels on it," said Bob. "It hasn't come by rail. Have they sent it by road all the way from Bunter's home?"

The juniors could not help being surprised and a little curious. The delivery van was standing on the drive, and they could read on it, painted on a board fastened to the back, the legend:

"JONES & CO.,  
CARRIERS  
BY ROAD, RAIL, OR SEA,  
REIGATE, SURREY."

That looked as if the trunk had come by road, as Bunter's home was in Surrey, not far from Reigate.

Bunter, during his stay at Cherry Place, and during his previous stay at Wharton Lodge, had been very light on luggage. The chums of the Remove, knowing his little ways, had not been

surprised at that. Neither had they been surprised at his method of packing when he left. That was in keeping with Billy Bunter's manners and customs. But this was surprising, for it was quite out of keeping with those manners and customs.

If that big trunk contained, as Bunter had stated on the telephone, changes of clothing—and it was difficult to imagine what else it could contain—there seemed no reason why it should not have arrived earlier. With so extensive a wardrobe at his disposal, there really seemed no reason why Bunter should have borrowed—or, rather, annexed—trousers and shirts and socks from the other fellows.

Really, it was very surprising. However, there it was; there was no doubt about that. Major Cherry was looking out of the doorway, as surprised as the juniors. He spoke to the two carriers' men as they panted in.

"That is the trunk for Mr. Bunter?"  
 "Yes, sir!" answered one of the men civilly. "Where are we to put it, sir?"  
 The major stared at the great trunk. "It will not be easy to carry it up the stairs, I think," he said. "You may as well leave it downstairs somewhere."

Bob Cherry cut in. "Bunter specially asked me to have it put in his old room, dad, and I told him I would."

"What can it possibly matter, now that Bunter is gone?" said the major. "However, if you told Bunter so, and if these men think they can manage it, then—"

"Certainly, sir!" said the carrier's man. "We've handled heavier luggage than this, sir."

"Very well, then. Show them the room, Bob."

"This way!" said Bob.

He preceded the men up the stairs and pointed out Bunter's room. They carried the heavy trunk up—not without effort—and landed it in the room Billy Bunter had occupied, now vacant. Both of them were breathing hard when they put it down. Bob noticed how very carefully they handled the trunk, however, without a single jolt or bump on the staircase, and that they lowered it quite gently to the floor. It seemed that Jones & Co., of Reigate, engaged very careful men for their work.

Bob stared at the trunk when they were gone. As Bunter had stated that he was so particular about it, he looked to see if it was safely locked. It was, with an exceedingly strong lock.

He went out, shutting the door of the room after him, and rejoined his friends downstairs.

"Beats Banagher!" said Bob. "If Bunter's got all that clobber, he might have left our shirts and socks alone. He generally travels with what he stands up in, and now he seems to have had enough sent him for a regiment! Blessed if I make it out!"

Neither could Bob's comrades quite make it out. The matter, however, did not concern them very much, and they did not waste much thought on it.

The carrier's car had left immediately. The juniors, so far as they thought about it at all, supposed that it was on its way back to Surrey.

But it did not, as a matter of fact, travel that distance, any more than it had already done so. It rolled away from Cherry Place at a good speed, and at a distance of about five miles turned into a solitary lane, where the two men, grinning, removed the board on which the style and title of Jones & Co. were painted.

Jones & Co., Carriers, of Reigate, had ceased to exist, and those two members

of the Dandy's gang drove the van back to the garage where it had been hired—a good distance from Cherry Place, but certainly not so far off as Surrey!

Billy Bunter, a peevish prisoner in the lonely bungalow, was still under the impression that that message to Cherry Place on the telephone was some sort of senseless jest. He could make nothing else of it. Harry Wharton & Co., at Cherry Place, were under the impression that the trunk was Bunter's, and contained things belonging to the fat junior. They could scarcely suppose anything else.

They little dreamed of guessing what it actually contained, and what it was

detective's assistant. And the precautions taken at Cherry Place certainly seemed to put "paid" to Jimmy the Fox and the rest of the Dandy's gang. The major's mastiff, a large and fierce animal, was let off the chain when the house was locked up for the night, and with the dog loose in the garden it seemed impossible for any intruder to reach the house without making a close acquaintance with a very fine set of teeth—or, at least, without an alarm being given.

As a last precaution, Jack Drake did not occupy a room by himself, but had a bed in Bob Cherry's room. The window was fastened and the door

## GREYFRIARS INTERVIEWS



"It's not all honey interviewing the 'big noises' at Greyfriars," says our clever rhymester. And I think you'll all agree with him when you read the following clever verses written around

**GEORGE BLUNDELL**

(the Captain of the Fifth Form).



(1)

For once I do not have to wait  
 Upon an Ignoramus;  
 No, here's a Mighty Potentate,  
 A fellow fine and famous!  
 The Captain of the Fifth—all hail!  
 George Blundell, great and splendid!  
 I know I'll falter and go pale  
 Before this task is ended!

(2)

These interviews are tough for me,  
 It's just what I expected;  
 For this is only Number Three,  
 And twice I've been ejected!  
 So as I went to meet my doom  
 I felt a trifle nervous,  
 And murmured, as I reached his room:  
 "May chance or luck preserve us!"

(3)

I tapped upon his study door,  
 With really painful shyness;  
 I knocked my napper on the floor,  
 And said: "All hail, your highness!"  
 "Come in!" he cried. "And take a  
 seat!"  
 (No kindness could be truer!)  
 He smiled. "I'm very pleased to meet  
 The Greyfriars Interviewer."

(4)

So everything was all serene!  
 I felt encouraged greatly,  
 And said: "Now tell me how you've  
 been  
 Enjoying all things lately!  
 They say that on the river you  
 Are hot stuff as a sculler,  
 In cricket, and in football, too,  
 You are a Double Colour!"



(5)

"I'm great at rowing, as you say,"  
 He smiled, as kind as ever;  
 "I had a race the other day  
 With Bland, who's rather clever.  
 He led at first because I thought  
 I'd let him get off lightly,  
 But when I spurted, I soon  
 caught—"  
 "A crab!" I said politely.



(6)

"At cricket once, the last man in  
 Was certainly a trier;  
 They only wanted two to win,  
 And then he knocked a skier!  
 I had to run, to save the match,  
 A hundred yards or farther,  
 But do you think I missed that catch?"  
 And I replied: "Yes, rather!"

(7)

Then suddenly the friendly air  
 Was charged with storm and thunder.  
 He rose and hooked me from my chair  
 And rent my tie asunder!  
 My shrinking form towards the door  
 He then began to trundle,  
 He raised his foot, and with a rear,  
 I took my leave of Blundell.

destined to contain when it left Cherry Place the following morning. Jimmy the Fox was nearer to them than they dreamed.

### THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

#### The Man in the Trunk!

**M**AJOR CHERRY made his usual round that night before going to bed, seeing to doors and windows.

The major, an old friend of Ferrers Locke's, had entered quite as keenly as his son and his son's comrades, into the task of keeping guard over the famous

locked, only a ventilator being left open. Altogether, it seemed that Drake was as safe in Cherry Place as he could have been anywhere, and neither he nor his friends had any doubt of it.

The Greyfriars fellows slept soundly, as usual, that night, satisfied that all was well.

At midnight all was dark and still.

It was soon after midnight that a faint sound came in the silence, unheard by sleeping ears. But it would have been equally unheard by waking ears, for it was in the room that had been occupied by Billy Bunter during his stay, and was now occupied by Bunter's big trunk.

Certainly had anybody been in that room he would have been startled, for the sound came from the interior of the trunk. But no one was in the room or near the room.

There was a shuffling sound in the great Saratoga, and then a faint click as a lock opened.

There was nothing in the outward aspect of the big lock on the trunk to indicate that it was so formed as to be possible to be unlocked from the interior, but it was!

Slowly, silently, the heavy lid was raised in the darkness of the room.

A dim, slim figure rose from within. Two sharp, glittering eyes, set close together, gleamed to and fro in the gloom like those of a wary animal.

But Jimmy the Fox saw nothing, heard nothing, to alarm him.

He stepped out of the trunk.

He stood listening for a few moments, then crossed to the door, opened it a few inches, and listened again. The house was still.

He closed the door again and stepped to the window, and looked through the curtains.

Bright spring starlight fell on the gardens surrounding the house. Across the glimmer a dark shadow moved. Jimmy the Fox knitted his brows as a mastiff glided in his sight for a moment and then disappeared again.

He stepped back from the window, and then for some time he moved restlessly about the room, with silent feet in rubber shoes, stretching his cramped limbs after the long, close imprisonment in the trunk.

Billy Bunter had never even dreamed why he was forced to give that message over the telephone to Cherry Place. His fat brain was very far from penetrating the cunning scheme of the crook.

To carry out the plan formed by Jimmy the Fox, it had been necessary for the household there to expect the arrival of a trunk which had to be kept in the house overnight.

It was for that reason, little as Bunter guessed it, that he had been kidnapped by the crooks.

All, so far, had worked like a charm. The keenest member of the household at Cherry Place could not suspect that there was anything suspicious about a trunk which belonged to a fellow lately a guest in the house, and about which that fellow himself had telephoned directions.

Jimmy the Fox was slight and slim, and there was room for him in the great Saratoga, though certainly it had been cramped and uncomfortable.

It was lined with soft cushions, and in unseen places it was perforated for ventilation.

Harry Wharton & Co. naturally supposed that the trunk had come locked all the way from Surrey. In point of fact, Jimmy the Fox had not entered it till the carrier's van was within a mile of Cherry Place.

Since then, however, he had been a good many hours in his close quarters, and he was tired and cramped and more than eager to get out.

He was in no hurry to begin operations. By that cunning trick he had passed all the defences of the house and was within. The glimmer of a luminous watch had told him the time, and at midnight he got out of the Saratoga for greater ease. But he allowed an hour to pass before he proceeded further.

From somewhere in the building the hour of one struck, and then Jimmy the Fox prepared for business.

With a soft, catlike tread he quitted the room, the faintest glimmer of a tiny torch in his hand lighting his way.

Of the interior of Cherry Place he knew nothing, but this was not the first time, by many a one, that the Fox had had to find his way about in the dark in unknown places.

That was simply "pie" to Jimmy the Fox.

Silently he opened door after door, and peered and listened. When he came to a locked door he had little doubt why it was locked.

The use of cracksmen's tools was second nature to him. The locked door opened in a few moments without a sound.

Jimmy peered in. There were two beds in the room, and each contained a sleeper. The tiny torch in his hand glimmered. It revealed the ruddy face of Bob Cherry on one pillow; Drake's dark head on another.

He shut off the light at once. The Fox had found his prey.

He stood quite still. Bob was fast asleep, but a sound might awaken him. Bob had to be made safe before he dealt with Drake.

Dim in the dark, Jimmy the Fox leaned over the Greyfriars junior as he slept. A faint sickly odour hung on the air.

Bob's eyes did not open. From healthy slumber he passed, all unknowingly, into drugged sleep.

It was only a matter of a minute or two to the crook. Then his silent tread carried him to Drake's bedside.

Again the sickly odour was perceptible.

But this time Jimmy the Fox did his work more thoroughly. With Bob, it had only been necessary to keep him asleep for the time, to keep him from intervening or giving the alarm. With Drake, it was necessary to keep him unconscious for many hours.

The boy detective stirred uneasily in his sleep. It was not merely a whiff of the chloroform that Jimmy was giving him, as he had given Bob. He stirred, and moved, and his eyes opened.

For one instant Jack Drake was conscious of the terrible truth. Then the chloroform pad was jammed on his face.

He struggled, but only feebly, and for a few moments. When Jimmy the Fox removed the pad, he was deep in insensibility.

Jimmy the Fox's eyes glittered down at the pale, unconscious face in the gloom. He showed his teeth in a savage grin.

"Ferrers Locke, you're beaten this time!" he breathed.

He stood listening. There was a faint rustle of shrubberies outside the house. The dog was stirring restlessly. Within the house silence and stillness. And Ferrers Locke's boy assistant lay drugged and senseless, at the mercy of Jimmy the Fox.

## THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

### The Boy in the Trunk!

JIMMY THE FOX stepped to the window, drew the blind aside a little, and looked out into the bright starlight—brighter than he liked. A silver crescent of moon showed over the trees. On the lawn, silvered by moon and stars, the dark shadow of the restless mastiff moved. Another shadow moved—coming up from the direction of the gate. It was that of a constable in uniform.

There was a growl from the dog, and it scuttled from the lawn to the drive—watchful for an intruder. But the policeman evidently knew the dog; Jimmy saw him pat its head. The officer moved on, and disappeared from the crook's sight in a path among the shrubberies.

The Fox grinned sourly as he let the blind fall back into place.

He was not surprised by the sight of the constable. Cherry Place had been watched by the Dandy's gang ever since Jack Drake had arrived there with his Greyfriars friends.

The crooks were well aware that, at night, the grounds of Cherry Place were patrolled by a constable, as well as by a fierce mastiff. It was the impossibility of breaking into the place, in his accustomed way, that had driven Jimmy to set his keen wits to work and devise his present scheme.

Had he designed to carry off the insensible boy, he knew that he had no chance of getting away with him. Indeed, he knew that he needed all his wary cunning to get away himself when his work was done. He was taking his chance of that; but he was making sure of Drake. Crook and rascal as he was, Jimmy the Fox was loyal to his leader, and no risk would have stopped him in his fight for the imprisoned Dandy.

Having ascertained that the blind completely screened the window, he turned on his pocket torch again.

The insensible Drake was lifted from his bed.

Then the light was shut off again.

Drake was carried silently from the room, and across the landing, to Bunter's old room where the trunk lay.

Within the room, Jimmy lowered the insensible boy to the floor and silently closed the door. His light glimmered again. He picked up Drake, lifted him to the Saratoga, and lowered him into the interior of the trunk.

He grinned down at the pale face that glimmered up from the depths of the big trunk.

Drake was unconscious, and his unconsciousness was to last many hours. But Jimmy was the man to make assurance doubly sure. With lengths of cord he bound Drake's ankles and wrists.

Perhaps feeling some lingering of humanity, he arranged the cushions in the trunk as comfortably as he could for the prisoner.

Then the lid was shut down and locked.

The Saratoga presented its former aspect. Who was going to guess what it contained? Who was going even to think of it all, when Drake was missed from the house?

In the morning, Jenkins would be there with the car, to fetch Bunter's trunk. Who was going to guess what he carried away in the Saratoga?

The scheme was faultless. Jimmy the Fox had thought it out, in all its details, and he could see no weak spot in it.

His work was done now.

All that remained was to make his own escape, leaving an impression behind that the house had been entered from without, and that Drake had been taken away by the intruder.

That was not difficult for Jimmy the Fox. He took the automatic from his pocket, and examined it carefully before replacing it. He knew that he would need it when he ran the gauntlet of the mastiff.

Then, closing the door of the room where the trunk lay, he returned on silent tiptoe to Bob Cherry's room.

A glance showed him that Bob was still in a deep sleep. He had no peril to fear from that quarter.

He shut the door and locked it on the inside. Then he posted himself at the window—to watch!

Twice he caught sight of the uniformed figure pacing. It disappeared again towards the back of the house.

The dog he could not see at all. Possibly it was sleeping—though no





Major Cherry crashed the heavy oaken stool on the lock and the door flew open. Wharton switched on the light. There was a lingering scent of chloroform in the room. Major Cherry's glance went first to his son, then he strode across to Drake's bed—empty now. "Drake!" he muttered. "He is gone!" "And the window's open!" panted Wharton.

doubt with one eye open. The constable, at all events, was now at a distance, and Jimmy lost no more time.

He opened the casement. Outside was a broad sill, below which was a cluster of ancient ivy.

Working quietly and quickly, and quite at his ease within the room, he dislocated the lock of the casement, giving it the appearance of having been forced from outside.

Then he drew a rope from a deep pocket, and let it slip down over the sill and the rustling ivy. The upper end he knotted to a bed.

One more swift, keen glance he gave out into the starlight. Then he climbed out over the stone sill and slid down the rope.

The ivy rustled as he went, slithering. His heart beat as he listened for the dog. The constable, he was sure, was at a distance on the other side of the house. But the mastiff—

There was a deep growl, a scampering of feet. From somewhere in the shadows the animal suddenly appeared in the starlight.

A loud, fierce bark broke the silence. Jimmy set his teeth.

That bark was enough to bring the patrolling constable back at a run—probably to alarm the household. And the dog, with fierce eyes and teeth, was waiting for him below.

Six feet from the ground the crook stopped his descent, hanging on to the rope with his left hand.

In his right glimmered the automatic. His danger was pressing; and he knew that he had only seconds. But seconds were enough for the ruthless crook.

The dog, barking and growling, was ready to spring on him as he reached

the ground. Hanging to the rope with his left arm, Jimmy the Fox took aim with the automatic with his steady right hand.

Crack, crack, crack!

Three shots, following one another so swiftly that they seemed blended into one, crashed into the night.

One wild, fierce yell came from the mastiff, and it rolled over on the ground, riddled with bullets.

Jimmy the Fox slid from the rope, dropping lightly to the earth. The dog lay still.

Leaving the rope where it hung, the crook raced away in the starlight. There was a shout and a trampling in shrubberies. He darted under the shadow of a clump of trees.

The constable came running up. He stopped beside the dead mastiff, panting—stared at the rope dangling from the window, and blew his whistle shrilly.

Lights flashed on in the house.

Jimmy the Fox, on his hands and knees, was worming his way through deep shadows. He gained the orchard, and ran, winding among the trees in the gloom. Two or three minutes more, and he had dropped over the gate into the lane that ran at the bottom of the orchard, and was scudding down the lane, leaving Cherry Place in an uproar behind him.

At the corner where the lane joined the road a car without lights was parked under shadowy branches. Jenkins sat at the wheel. He peered through the gloom.

"Get going!" panted Jimmy the Fox.

The engine roared. Jimmy the Fox tumbled headlong in. A minute more, and the car was racing away through the night.

## THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Gone in the Night!

**H**ARRY WHARTON leaped from his bed.

He flashed on the light, and listened breathlessly.

The fierce barking of the mastiff had awakened him, and that fierce barking was suddenly stilled as there came the crash of a firearm.

The captain of the Greyfriars Remove stayed only to jump into his trousers, and rushed out of the room.

Already the whole house was alarmed. The policeman's whistle shrieked through the night.

"What's up?" came Johnny Bull's shout.

"The esteemed Drake—" panted Hurroo Janset Ram Singh.

"The crooks—" gasped Nugent.

Wharton, without speaking, dashed along to Bob Cherry's room. His chums, half-dressed, were at his heels.

All of them knew that that alarm in the night could mean only one thing—danger to Drake.

Wharton wrenched at the door handle and thumped on the panels.

"Bob!" he shouted.

The door was locked on the inside, but the juniors knew that Bob locked the door at night on Drake's account. But they expected to hear his voice, or to hear him stirring in the room.

"Bob!" roared Johnny Bull.

They banged and thumped at the door. But only silence answered from within.

There was a heavy footstep, and Major Cherry, in his dressing-gown, came striding up, his Service revolver in his hand. Below, the door was already opened to the constable.

"Drake!" exclaimed the major.

"We can't get in!" panted Wharton. "Something's happened to Bob. He can't be sleeping through this—"

"Bob!" roared Major Cherry.

But there came no answer.

"We must get in!" panted Nugent. "The door's locked! They've been got at by the window!"

Major Cherry did not answer. He grasped a heavy oaken stool that stood in the passage, and with all his strength crashed it on the lock. That one terrific blow was sufficient. The door flew open with a crash.

It was dark within; but Wharton instantly groped for the switch and flashed on the light.

"There's Bob—" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"Asleep!"

"Bob!" Frank Nugent ran to the sleeper and shook him by the shoulder. "Bob! Wake up, you ass!"

But Bob Cherry's eyes did not open.

Johnny Bull gave a sniff. There was a lingering scent of the drug that the crook had used.

"Chloroform!" said Johnny.

Major Cherry's glance went first to his son. Then he strode across to Drake's bed—empty now.

"Drake—he is gone!"

"The window's open!" panted Wharton.

He ran to the window.

"There's a rope here!"

"That's the way they went!" muttered Nugent. "And—and—and he's shot the dog! Look!"

He pointed to the still figure on the earth below, clearly visible in the starlight.

"That was the shot we heard!"

"Gone!" muttered the major. "Gone! Drake must have been lowered on the rope, and the villain shot the dog! But—but—he stared down—"how did he get in without alarming the dog?"

"Come on!" breathed Wharton. "We mayn't be too late yet!"

He swung himself from the window, and slithered down the rope. After him went his comrades, one after another.

The constable came tramping into the room. He stared at Bob Cherry, fast asleep in bed.

"Chloroform!" said the major quietly. "And Drake is gone! The window has been forced. The villain must have climbed the ivy. You saw nothing?"

"Nothing, sir!" stammered the bewildered constable. "And the dog—he was loose all the time."

"The dastard must have eluded him somehow when he came, though Prince gave the alarm when he was getting away. But he is gone, and Drake has gone with him. Follow me!"

Major Cherry rushed from the room and down the stairs. With his dressing-gown fluttering about him, he rushed out into the starlight.

Harry Wharton & Co. were already scattering in the grounds, hunting for a sign of Drake or his kidnapper.

It seemed amazing that any man, burdened with a prisoner to carry, could have escaped in so brief a space of time.

But he was not to be found.

"Take care!" shouted the major. "The man is armed!"

But the juniors did not heed. That the unknown intruder of the night was armed and ready to use a deadly weapon was clear, from the fate of the hapless mastiff. But the juniors, wildly anxious for Drake, thought little of that.

They hunted up and down the grounds, joined by several servants, by the major, and by the constable.

But the only result of the search was proof that the intruder was gone, and that Jack Drake had vanished in the night.

They returned to the house at last.

Bob was still unconscious, his mother sitting now at his bedside. He could tell nothing of what had happened, and it was fairly certain that he would have nothing to tell when he came to. Obviously the kidnapper had put him out of action to begin with.

The constable went to the telephone, to ring up his inspector at Dorchester and report what had happened. He told the major that Inspector Parker was coming as fast as a car could carry him.

In the meantime, there was nothing to be done, and Drake's friends feared

that nothing could be done when the inspector arrived. Drake was gone—his kidnapper was gone! What could be done?

"It beats me!" muttered Wharton helplessly. "With a bobby and a mastiff in the grounds, how did the man get in?"

"Well, he did!" said Johnny Bull. "He must have climbed the ivy—a cat-burglar stunt. And you can see that the lock on the casement has been forced."

Wharton passed his hand over his forehead. He was utterly bewildered.

"How he did that without awakening either Bob or Drake, beats me!" he muttered. "And it's not easy to climb that ivy, either. I shouldn't have thought that it was possible."

"A cat-burglar—a light-weight, of course," said Nugent. "He must have done it, as it's plain that he got in here. The window's been forced. Besides, the door was locked all the time—we found it locked."

Wharton stared down from the window. The juniors had gathered in Bob's room again.

The ivy under the window was fairly thick; but Wharton would never have supposed that a man would trust his weight to it.

"That villain, Jimmy the Fox, is a light-weight," said Nugent. "If it was he—"

Wharton shook his head.

"I'm certain the ivy would never have stood it," he said. "If it was climbed, it was by a lighter man than that scoundrel. I'd never have thought it possible."

"Cat-burglars are pretty active," said Johnny Bull. "He brought a rope with him to lower Drake out."

"They've got him!" said Nugent, dismally. "They've got him! What rotten news for Ferrers Locke when he hears!"

"The rottenfulness is terrific!"

The juniors went back to their rooms to finish dressing. No one was thinking of sleep again.

By the time Inspector Parker arrived Bob Cherry had recovered consciousness. He had nothing to tell; he was only astonished to hear that Drake was gone. Of the happenings of the night he had no knowledge whatever.

And the Dorchester inspector, when he had heard all that could be told him, was a puzzled man—and not a hopeful one.

He could only promise to do whatever could be done, which was not encouraging. There was little doubt in any mind that the kidnapper had had a car within a short distance, and had escaped in it.

How he had contrived to get Drake to the car, with the hunt so close at his heels, remained a mystery. But it was scarcely possible to doubt that he had done so, for Drake was gone, and Harry Wharton & Co., with heavy hearts, wondered whether they would ever see their old comrade of Greyfriars again.



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## A Black Outlook for the Bully!

### THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

#### Bunter's Chance!

"O H lor'!" mumbled Billy Bunter. The hour was late.

But the Owl of the Remove, generally good at sleeping, had not closed his eyes yet.

That day in the bungalow had seemed endless to Billy Bunter.

The first night he had slept by fits and starts. Escape seemed so hopeless that he hardly thought of it.

He had a room with a strongly shuttered window, and the door of it was left open on the central hall. In that hall was a camp-bed, on which the Biter

stretched his burly limbs to slumber. With Bunter's door left wide open it was hardly possible for him to make any attempt to escape without being spotted by his guardian.

In the morning the burly ruffian left the bungalow and Bunter was left to himself; with the front door locked on the outside.

It was an endless, dreary day.

There was, as Jimmy the Fox had promised, plenty of food; though most of it was of the canned variety. Such as it was Bunter had plenty to eat, which, of course, was a great relief to him.

But never had a day seemed so long.

Of Jimmy the Fox and Jenkins he saw nothing, and heard nothing, and he had no doubt that they were long gone, leaving the Biter to keep watch over him.

Every now and then he blinked from a chink in the shutters, hoping that perhaps the Biter might be gone also. Had he been left entirely alone and unwatched, even the fat Owl of the Remove would have found the nerve to make an attempt to escape.

But several times, outside the bungalow, he spotted the burly form of the cracksman loafing about smoking cigarettes, and twice the ruffian came into the building, to meals.

He took very little notice of Bunter. The fat Owl could not flatter himself that he was regarded as an important prisoner.

He realised, in fact, that the crooks were simply keeping him there out of the way, for some unknown purpose of their own.

That that purpose had any connection with the peculiar telephone message he had been forced to send he did not guess. Certainly it never crossed his fat mind that a Saratoga trunk, supposed to be his, had actually been delivered at Cherry Place! Still less could he have guessed that Jimmy the Fox had gone inside it. The fat Owl had, in fact, almost forgotten that talk on the telephone by this time.

Of the telephone itself he thought every now and then. If he could have got a call through—

But the room in which the telephone stood was kept locked, and the Biter kept the key in his pocket. Billy Bunter had no chance of getting at the telephone.

During the long, long day the Owl of the Remove found consolation in a number of naps, one after another, in the big armchair in the hall.

Next to eating, sleeping was Bunter's delight, and there was no doubt that it passed the time.

But the result was that when night came and the fat Owl would have been glad to forget his woes in slumber, even Bunter was not sleepy.

The Biter came back into the building late in the evening. He glanced at Bunter, but did not take the trouble to speak to him. He ate a large supper, smoked cigarettes afterwards, and read a racing paper, and then threw himself on the camp bed in his clothes.

Bunter, in his room, lay down on his bed sleepless.

Not only was he not sleepy but his alarm and uneasiness had intensified during his imprisonment in the lonely bungalow.

So far he had not been harmed; but he was in the hands of a gang of lawless and dangerous crooks; and one look at the Biter's hard, ruthless face told with how little compunction he would have knocked the prisoner on the head had it suited the purposes of the crooks so to do.

With all his fat heart Bunter longed

to escape. And towards midnight he sat up and blinked through the open doorway into the hall, where the lamp was kept burning.

But he shook his head dismally.

The Biter's camp-bed was across his doorway. The open door gave the ruffian a full view of the room if he lifted his head. Bunter could not have got out of the room without awakening him—he could not have fumbled with the window-shutters without being seen at once if the ruffian opened his eyes. The case was hopeless.

Late as the hour was he could not sleep. How long was this going to last? The thought of another endless and dreary day of imprisonment in the solitary bungalow was dismal. And there might be many days of it before him, for all he knew. And he had left Cherry Place in the belief that he was going to have a glorious time at Mauleverer Towers! From the bottom of his fat heart he wished he was back at Cherry Place again. If that brute at his doorway would only sleep soundly.

He got off his bed, blinking at the Biter through his big spectacles. Was there a chance?

He made little noise as he moved. But it was enough for the Biter. The ruffian raised his head and looked into the room.

"You better go to sleep, fatty!" said the Biter, in a quiet voice, but with a tone of menace that made the fat Owl shiver.

Bunter plumped on his bed again. He had remained dressed, in the faint hope of finding a chance of getting out. But there was no chance. He tried to sleep.

His weary eyes closed at last, and he dropped into an uneasy and fitful slumber.

Buzzzzzz!

The raucous buzz of the telephone-bell, through the thin partition, was more than enough to awaken the fat Owl from that uneasy sleep.

He sat up, blinking.

He heard the Biter move. The telephone-bell was ringing; undoubtedly it was a call from one of the ruffian's confederates; Jimmy the Fox or Jenkins. The Biter awoke at once and jumped from his bed, taking a key from his pocket.

He heard the click as the Biter unlocked the door of the room that contained the telephone.

He noticed, though without heeding the circumstance for the moment, that there was no sound of the key being taken out of the lock again. The Biter left it where it was, intending to lock up the room again when he had finished on the phone.

Bunter heard him drop into the chair by the instrument and call.

The fat Owl stepped silently from his bed. His heart was thumping! Was there a chance while the ruffian was at the telephone?

He peered out into the hall.

The door of the next room was wide open; it was lighted by the lamplight from the hall.

He heard the Biter's voice.

"That you, Jimmy?"

Bunter hardly breathed.

There was no chance of getting out of the house undiscovered. The front door was bolted and chained. Long before he could release those fastenings, the Biter would be after him.

But another thought was in the fat junior's mind now. He blinked at the door of the room where the Biter sat at the telephone.

It was half-open; the key in the outside of the lock!

To drag it shut and turn the key—if he dared! It would take but a second!

He had no time to unbolt and unchain the front door before the wary ruffian would pounce on him, at the first sound. But if he made a dive at the door of the room where the Biter sat at the phone—a split second would do it! Then he would have time—

Bunter's heart beat almost to suffocation.

The Biter, plainly, was not thinking of him for the moment. The Biter, in fact, was deeply intent on the call he was getting from Jimmy the Fox.

Through the shutters of the bungalow came the glimmer of the spring dawn. Billy Bunter realised that a new day was dawning—once outside the building there was a chance of help. He made up his fat mind, and crept to the half-open door.

"By gum! You've got through Jimmy?" He heard the Biter's voice speaking into the transmitter.

He did not of course, hear the reply that came.

"O.K.," came the answer of Jimmy the Fox. "All clear! The baggage is now ready for removal, and the car will call for it in the morning. Clear up at the bungalow at twelve, and say good-bye to our guest for me."

Jimmy the Fox was too cautious to risk dangerous words being overheard at the telephone exchange.

There was nothing in what he said to excite suspicion.

But the Biter knew what he meant; that the scheme had succeeded, that Jack Drake had taken the Fox's place in the trunk, and that in the morning Jenkins would call in the car for the trunk at Cherry Place.

Then the crooks would be done with Billy Bunter, and he would be set free—and left to find his way anywhere he liked, the best he could!

"Where are you speaking from, Jimmy?"

"Headquarters! Come here when you're through!"

"I'll clear up here at twelve, then!"

"Right!"

Jimmy the Fox rang off.

The Biter put up his receiver. It was good news to him; he was almost as tired of the solitude of the bungalow as his unwilling guest.

Bang!

The Biter leaped from his chair as if that bang had been that of a firearm instead of a closing door.

He sprang to the door of the room.

Click!

The key turned before he could reach it!

With a roar of rage, the ruffian grabbed at the door-handle and dragged at it furiously.

But the door was locked on the hall side, and he was a prisoner in the telephone-room.

There was a clang of a chain at the front door; a scraping of bolts dragged back.

A string of savage oaths dropped from the Biter's lips. He dragged at the door with all his strength. Then, realising that it was useless, he stepped back and hurled his shoulder at the door with all his weight behind it.

The door creaked and groaned. Again and again he flung his weight on it, and the panels burst through. That door was not strongly built, and the Biter was a powerful man. In two minutes he was barging fiercely through the wreck of the door into the hall.

But two minutes had been more than enough for Billy Bunter. The front door stood wide open. A chill wind and a gleam of early sunrise came in. The Biter rushed out with blazing eyes.

But he saw nothing of the fleeing Owl!

Terror lent Billy Bunter wings, and he was fleeing wildly by field paths, swallowed from sight by trees and hedges.

When Billy Bunter stopped at last, utterly breathless, he plunged into a dense hawthorn thicket, and lay there still. And the Biter, raging in search of him, raged and searched in vain!

## THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Billy Bunter Blows In!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"What—"

"What the thump—"

"Bunter!"

"The esteemed and idiotic Bunter!"

Cherry Place was a house of confusion and dismay that morning. The bright spring sunlight found faces pale and almost haggard. The Famous Five gathered to breakfast, but with little appetite.

Major Cherry sat silent, with a grim face; Mrs. Cherry was pale and troubled; the juniors dismal and miserable enough. Bob, perhaps, felt it the most of all; for it was in his father's house, and as his guest, that Drake had fallen into enemy hands. But all the Co. were gloomy.

When the breakfast door opened and a fat figure rolled in, the chums of the Remove stared at it blankly.

It was Billy Bunter—looking dusty, tired, untidy. They had forgotten Bunter's existence, in the stress of what had happened that wild night. And they were not pleased to remember it now.

There was enough trouble on hand without Billy Bunter barging in, when they had supposed themselves happily clear of him till the next term at Greyfriars.

"I say, you fellows—I say, I'll have some of that coffee—I'm fearfully hungry—tell them to bring me something, Bob!"

Bunter sank into a chair.

"What the thump have you come back for, Bunter?" growled Johnny Bull. "Mauly kicked you out already?"

"Beast! I haven't seen Mauly!" groaned Bunter. "I say, somebody had better pay the taxi. It's two pounds!"

"You've come back in a taxi?"

"I suppose I couldn't walk forty miles or more!" groaned Bunter. "I was jolly lucky to get that taxi, I can tell you!"

"But Mauly—"

"I tell you I haven't seen Mauly!" Bunter mopped up coffee that Mrs. Cherry passed to him silently. "I say, I've been kidnapped!"

"Don't be an ass!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"What nonsense are you talking, Bunter?" exclaimed the major, bending his grizzled brows at the fat junior.

"I've been kidnapped!" howled Bunter. "They couldn't get Drake, so they got me! I've had a fearful time! That foxy-faced beast— Oh lor! I haven't seen Mauly at all—I haven't been anywhere near Mauleverer Towers! I say, when are the eggs and bacon coming? I'm hungry!"

"But you phoned from Mauleverer Towers the night you left!" roared Bob.

"I didn't!"

"You silly ass, I took the call—"

"I mean, it wasn't Mauleverer Towers! That car never came from Mauly—"

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"Wha-a-at?"

"It was all a spoof!" groaned Bunter. "That beast Jenkins pretended he was Mauly's man, giving me Mauly's message on the phone—and he wasn't! It was a spoof! Oh dear! I've had a fearful time! That man Jenkins was one of that awful gang— Oh lor!"

"Can there be any truth in this?" exclaimed Major Cherry, staring blankly at the Owl of the Remove.

"Oh, really, sir—"

"Mean to say that invitation never came from Mauly after all?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"No, it was that beast who drove the car who phoned, just to trick me away!" gasped Bunter. "They took me to a lonely bungalow, just over in Devonshire—I've been there ever since—"

"But you phoned!" yelled Bob. "You told me about a trunk that was coming—"

"So would you if that foxy-faced beast had been standing at your elbow with an automatic in his hand!" yelled Bunter. "Think I was going to have my brains blown out?"

"Is the boy dreaming?" gasped Mrs. Cherry.

"Oh, really, ma'am—"

"Potty, I should think!" said Frank Nugent.

"The pottiffulness is terrific!"

"You silly asses!" roared Bunter. "Go and ask the taxi-man! He's waiting for his money, anyhow! Ask him if I didn't get into his cab soon after daybreak, nearly forty miles from here, at some place I don't know the name of in Devonshire—"

Major Cherry looked long and hard at the Owl of the Remove. Then he quietly rose from the table and went out of the room.

He came back in a few minutes with an extraordinary expression on his face.

Bunter blinked at him.

"You've paid him?" he asked.

"I have paid him," said the major quietly. "My boys, this is a very extraordinary affair. The taxi-driver tells me that he picked up Bunter at a place on the borders of Devonshire, and drove him here. Possibly there is some truth in what the boy says—"

"I'd wandered for hours before I got to a railway station, where there were taxicabs!" groaned Bunter. "I'd have taken a train, only I was short of money! Of course, I shall settle that taxi-fare, sir—I'm expecting a postal order—"

"Never mind that!" said Major Cherry. "Tell me now what happened to you when you left here on Tuesday, Bunter."

Breakfast was speedily provided for the hungry Owl. Between bites, and with his mouth full all the time, Bunter told the tale of his amazing and harrowing adventure.

The Greyfriars fellows listened in utter astonishment, almost forgetting even Drake in their interest in the recital.

Billy Bunter, for once, had all the limelight, and was the cynosure of all eyes.

"But why?" gasped Harry Wharton, when at last the tale was told. "Why on earth did they take the trouble to kidnap Bunter?"

"Goodness knows!" said Bob blankly.

"Oh, I know all right!" said Bunter. "They were after Drake, and they wanted to get me out of the way so that they could get at him. You see, he was safe while I was here to protect him—"

"You silly ass!" roared Johnny Bull. "Oh, really, Bull! I protected him that morning when that foxy-faced blighter got him, anyhow! That's what it was—they wanted to get me off the scene while they got hold of him!" said Bunter, with conviction. "They knew they had no chance while I was around!"

"Don't be an ass!"

"Beast! By the way, where's Drake now?" asked Bunter, blinking round through his big spectacles. "Isn't he down yet?"

The juniors exchanged glances.

"They've got him," answered Bob curtly. "They got him last night."

"Oh crikey! Poor old Drake!" said Bunter. "Well, I suppose you might have expected it as I wasn't here—"

"Chuck it, you ass!"

"What else do you think they kidnapped me for?" sneered Bunter. "They got me away, and while I was away they got Drake. Pretty plain, it seems to me."

It seemed pretty plain to Billy Bunter—but it did not seem plain at all to anyone else. Nobody but Bunter was likely to believe that his presence at Cherry Place spelled safety for Ferrers Locke's boy assistant, and that he had been kidnapped for that reason. But why he had been kidnapped at all was a mystery to the Famous Five.

Major Cherry stood, forgetful of breakfast, with a deep wrinkle of thought in his brow.

"You were forced to telephone that message to Bob, Bunter?" he asked in a quiet tone, after a long and thoughtful silence. "You were compelled to give that false message about a trunk which you were expecting here?"

"Eh? There wasn't any trunk," said Bunter. "Can't make out why he wanted me to spoof you on the phone about a trunk—"

"There was no trunk?" repeated the major.

"Of course not!"

"I think this will make my head turn round!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Don't you know the trunk's come, fathead?"

Bunter blinked at him.

"What trunk?" he asked.

"Your trunk—the one you mentioned to me on the phone!" roared Bob. "It came by road in a carrier's van, and was taken to your room, and it's there now!"

Bunter grunted.

"Don't be an ass!" he said. "There isn't any trunk! You can't pull my leg like that, fathead!"

"You silly Owl, it's in your room now!" yelled Johnny Bull.

"Rot!" said Bunter. "I say, I'd like some more eggs and bacon and some more tomatoes—"

"Good heavens!" gasped Major Cherry. "Bunter, speak plainly! You were not expecting a trunk to arrive here for you?"

"Of course not! He made me say so; he had an automatic—"

"Then the trunk that arrived yesterday afternoon with your initials on it does not belong to you?"

"Eh? No! If there's a trunk, I don't know anything about it. What—"

Major Cherry breathed hard and deep.

"It is clear now why Bunter was kidnapped," he said grimly. "It was so that that trunk could be sent into the house in his name without exciting suspicion."

"But why?" gasped Bob.

Major Cherry did not answer that question. With a grim brow he strode from the room and hurried up the staircase. And Harry Wharton & Co. hurried after him with startled faces—



The Biter leaped from his chair and sprang to the door of the room. Click! Bunter had turned the key in the lock. With a roar of rage the ruffian grabbed at the door-handle, and dragged at it furiously. But the door would not budge. "He, he, he!" cackled Bunter, withdrawing the key from the lock.

what time Billy Bunter devoted his attention to a second supply of eggs and bacon and tomatoes.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

At the Eleventh Hour!

**H**ARRY WHARTON & CO. gathered round the big Saratoga trunk, eyeing it with startled eyes. Major Cherry examined it closely, and the juniors half guessed what was in his mind.

To Bunter the whole thing was an unmeaning mystery. But it was clear to everyone else that Jimmy the Fox must have had some powerful reason for desiring to get that Saratoga delivered within the walls of Cherry Place. Obviously it was for that purpose—and for that purpose alone—that Billy Bunter had been kidnapped and forced to telephone the message about the expected trunk. Now that it was known that the trunk was not Bunter's, and that he had never expected its delivery at Cherry Place, that much was clear.

"Good gad!" breathed Major Cherry. A close inspection of the trunk revealed what no one previously had dreamed of suspecting, or looking for—a series of holes bored in the thick wood, obviously to let in air.

"Then that was how——" muttered the major.

"You think——" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"I know!" answered the major quietly. "Those holes were bored for breathing; they serve no other purpose. I know now how that scoundrel gained admittance to the house to attack Drake last night."

"In the trunk!" breathed Bob.

"Obviously."

"That's why it was so jolly heavy!" said Johnny Bull. "I suppose they couldn't have had any other reason for sending it here. But"—Johnny pushed at the big trunk—"it seems as heavy as ever. If the kidnapper was in it, he's not in it now; he got away last night with Drake."

"With Drake?" repeated the major. "I wondered how he got clear, burdened with the boy, in a matter of moments! Did he get away with Drake——"

"But Drake's gone——"

"Is he gone?" muttered the major. He grasped the trunk and judged the weight. "This trunk is not empty. If Bunter had not escaped and come back this trunk would have been called for this morning and taken away—by the man who drove Bunter on Tuesday. We should have believed that it was Bunter's trunk, taken to him at Mauleverer Towers. But——"

"Drake!" breathed Wharton. He knew what was in the major's thoughts—the same idea was in his own mind. "Drake—here——"

"I believe so," said the major quietly. "The trunk is not empty! What does it contain?"

"Oh Heaven!" muttered Nugent.

"The scoundrel never got away with Drake last night! It seemed almost impossible; yet as Drake was gone we had to believe it. But now that we know that the villains laid a cunning scheme to get this trunk into the house—now that we know that, although the man who must have been in it is gone, it is as heavy as ever——"

"And they'd have fetched it away under our eyes this morning if Bunter

had not come back!" said Harry. "We should never have dreamed——"

"With Drake in it!" said Major Cherry. "I am convinced of it! But we shall soon have proof——"

The lock on the trunk was strong. It resisted for some time even a hammer and a cold chisel, in the vigorous hands of the major. The chums of the Remove stood looking on while he worked with a grim, set face. Was it possible that the missing boy detective was there—under their eyes, hidden in the trunk? Or, rather, was it not certain that he was there? They felt it—they knew it! They knew that, but for Bunter's escape from that lonely bungalow, that trunk would have been taken away by the kidnapping gang, and that Drake would have been carried off, right under their eyes, unseen, unsuspected. They were sure of it before the lock gave way, and the lid was lifted.

Then they had proof.

Every eye stared into the interior of the trunk as the major lifted the lid.

"Drake!"

Bound hand and foot, and still unconscious from the drug, Jack Drake lay there under their staring eyes.

They had expected it; they had felt sure of it; yet they gazed blankly at the still figure in the trunk.

"I say, you fellows." Bunter blinked in at the doorway. He had finished breakfast at last. "I say, what's all the row about—hammering and banging! I say, is that the trunk? I say—Oh lor'!"

Bunter broke off with a gasp, his eyes almost popping through his spectacles as Major Cherry and Bob lifted the

incomprehensible boy from the interior of the Saratoga.

"It—it—it's Drake!" stuttered Bunter. "I say, you told me Drake was gone! I say, what did he get into that trunk for? Larking?"

Nobody answered Bunter. Wharton cut through the cords on Drake's wrists and ankles, and he was carried out of the room, back to his own room, and placed in his bed.

"I say, you fellows, what's the matter with him?"

"Chloroform, fathead!" snapped Bob. "But—but what was he doing in the trunk?" gasped Bunter.

"You blithering idiot! Can't you understand why that villain made you telephone a string of lies?" exclaimed Bob savagely. "He got here inside the trunk, and planted Drake in it last night to be taken away this morning!"

"Oh crikey!"

"That's why they picked Bunter!" said Johnny Bull. "Nobody else would have been idiot enough, or rotten enough, to telephone those lies and help the villains get away with it—"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Thank goodness the fat fool got away in time and came back here!" said Bob. "But for that—"

"The thankfulness is terrific."

"Oh, lor'!" mumbled Bunter. "I—I say, then that was why he made me phone all that spoof about a trunk! Of course, I never knew—"

"Idiot!"

"How was a fellow to know?" demanded Bunter warmly.

"Dummy!"

"I never knew there was a trunk at all—I thought—"

"Oh, cheese it!"

"Beast! That's the way you thank a fellow for saving Drake from being bagged!" said Bunter scornfully. "I hope Drake will be a bit more grateful! You fellows were going to let him be taken off under your silly noses."

It was true enough that Bunter's unexpected return had saved Drake. But it was equally true that it was through the obtuse Owl that Jimmy the Fox had been able to carry out his cunning scheme to within an ace of success. It was no time for Billy Bunter to "gas."

"The right man in the right place, as usual!" said Bunter, having quite recovered his self-satisfaction, which never deserted him for long. "You can call a fellow names—but who's saved that chap from being kidnapped? And when Drake wakes up, I shall jolly well tell him so! I shall say— Yaroooooh! Wow! If you kick me again, you beast, I'll— Whoooooop!"

Billy Bunter retired rather hastily from the scene.

Nobody called for that trunk at Cherry Place.

Jimmy the Fox had been very near to success—very near indeed! Almost had he got away with his cunning scheme for the kidnapping of Ferrers Locke's boy assistant! But not quite—and a miss was as good as a mile!

Drake, in a day or two, was none the worse for what had happened. Harry Wharton & Co., glad and relieved at the escape of their old comrade of Greyfriars, were very merry and bright. Billy Bunter, in fact, was the only fellow who took a rather pessimistic view of things. For that supposed invitation from Mauly having turned out to be trickery, a gorgeous time at

Mauleverer Towers was as far off as ever—and even Bunter felt that it was a little awkward to stay on at Cherry Place, after the peculiar farewell he had taken when he left with Jenkins in the car! However, Bunter Court still failed to attract the heir of that magnificent abode homeward; so he stayed.

"I find that I shall be able to give you another week, Bob, old chap!" he told Bob Cherry the following day.

Bob grinned.

"Fraid not!" he said. "Drake's heard from Mr. Locke, and he's to go to London—"

"That's all right; I shan't miss him, with my old pals about me!" assured Bunter.

"And we're going with him."

"All serene, old chap! What I really meant to say was, that I had to go up to London in a day or two!" explained Bunter. "The fact is, I'm rather expecting a Royal invitation for the Jubilee celebrations!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"And I'll try to wangle one for you, old chap!"

To which Bob Cherry ungratefully replied:

"Chuck it, fathead!"

However, when Jack Drake and the Famous Five started for London, the Owl of the Remove started, too. Sticky as ever, William George Bunter declined to come unstuck!

THE END.

"UP FOR THE JUBILEE!" is the title of Frank Richards' next grand long yarn, dealing with the humorous and thrilling adventures of Harry Wharton & Co., and their chum, Jack Drake. Watch out for it in next week's special Jubilee issue of the MAGNET.)

## WILLY AND NILLY

Our Coloured Coons  
have a lot to say about  
Music and Boxing

"S TOP niggah! Where yo' goin'?"

"I've bin fishin', Willy. I'm just takin' dese fish to de fish-monger's."

"Why, say, youse got wastin' disease in de brain-box, niggah. You ain't got no fish."

"No; dey all got away."

"Bless my soul, niggah! If you had been twins, and one of you was sensible and one was a fool, de sensible one would be dead."

"Black man, I'd have you know dat I know all de men of note in dis town."

"You know all de men ob note in dis town?"

"Yeah; I play in de same jazz orchestra with dem."

"You suttinly reckon yo'self some musician, Nilly."

"Yeah; when I play de piano de man upstairs rings for a doctor."

"I know a man who plays better dan you, niggah. He plays wid his fingahs."

"Well, so do I!"

"Yeah; and he plays wid his toes."

"Well, babies do dat all day long. You suttinly do not know a man who plays de cornet better dan me. Why, I lived in a house in de heart ob de country."

"To practise de simple life?"

"No; to practise de cornet, you fool! I tell yo', niggah, I had to be miles away from anywhere to practise dat cornet."

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"Dat's nuttin', dat ain't. I've lived in de country, too. Where I lived, dere wasn't a house for miles round."

"Where did he live, den?"

"Who?"

"Miles Round."

"Niggah, if you didn't talk, you could still be a fool. Say, black man, what yo' been doin' to yo' face?"

"Been in a boxin' match."

"A reg'lar boxin' match?"

"No; dis yer match was with a white man."

"What was de prize?"

"An eight-day clock, niggah."

"An eight-day clock! And how did you get on?"

"De white man and me fought a draw."

"Well, niggah, go on. How did dey distribute de prize?"

"Oh, dey split it in half!"

"Split it in half! Go slow, niggah, and lubricate yo'self."

"Well, de white man got de clock, and I got de eight days. You see, he found me tryin' to steal it out o' his sleepin' tent."

"Was it a good fight, niggah?"

"Nunno, not so good. He hit me, and—dat's all."

"Didn't you hit him back, yo' dark horse?"

"No, 'course not."

"Why not?"

"Well, it would have been his turn again den. Dere was only two blows struck."

"Two! Yo' mean one, yo' foolish niggah!"

"No, two. He hit me, and I hit de ground."

"Well, 'pon my soul, niggah, you 'stonish me."

"I'll 'stonish you still more now,

Willy. I want you to lend me ten bob."

"Ten bob! What do you want dat for?"

"Well, y'see, I'm gonna start savin' up for mo' old age."

"How come, niggah! Haven't you heard dat lendin' money destroys friendship. Our friendship ain't gonna be destroyed for ten bob, black man."

"Good! Den make it a quid!"

"How long for?"

"Till to-morrow."

"Will it do if I post it on to you to-night?"

"Sure, dat'll do!"

"Well, it'll be to-morrow before you get it, and by dat time you won't want it. So, you see, niggah, you've as good as saved yo'self a quid already towards yo' old age."

"Gee! Yo' am right, black man. I wish I'd made it a t'ousand quid now."

"Listen, coon! I'll show you how to make a t'ousand quid. If you had put a t'ousand quid on Mayflower in de first race dis afternoon, you'd have lost it, 'cos Mayflower didn't win."

"Well, go on, niggah."

"But you didn't put a t'ousand quid on Mayflower."

"Dat's de truest t'ing you said since de last time yo' called yo'self a fool, niggah."

"Well, den, you're a t'ousand quid better off. See?"

"Golly, so I am! But, niggah—I say, niggah—"

"Well, big-boy?"

"Can I take back dat t'ousand and make it a million?"

"Sure you can, niggah!"

"Well, dat's fine. I t'ink I'll just go along and order a Rolls-Royce. So-long, big-boy!"

# THE SEA SPIDER

By GEORGE E. ROCHESTER



## WHAT'S GONE BEFORE.

*Ulverst, the greatest U-boat commander Germany ever had, accompanied by a competent crew, sets out from Ice Rock aboard the Sea Spider, a deadly under-water craft, to wage war against the world. Following a series of thrilling adventures, the Sea Spider returns with a rich haul to its lair. Later, a British gunboat arrives, and sends a landing-party ashore. Hopelessly outnumbered, the naval men are taken prisoners, after which Ulverst gives orders for the gunboat to be sunk. In answer to a wireless message from the ill-fated gunboat, H.M. Aircraft-Carrier Hawk races to the scene, and the Sea Spider is driven from its lair. Holed by bombs from attacking planes, the water-logged craft sinks to the ocean bed. Realising the impossibility of carrying out necessary repairs to the Sea Spider without the aid of the plans, which have been left behind in Professor Dubowsky's quarters on Ice Rock, Ulverst dons a diving-suit and attempts to get ashore unobserved.*

(Now read on.)

### A Desperate Venture!

**S**LOWLY the door in the outer shell of the hull was raised, allowing the water to seep gradually in. At length, when the door was completely raised, Ulverst stepped out on to the ocean floor.

Turning, he stared for a long moment at the stricken monster squatting there on the rocky floor of the depths, then slowly he moved away on the first stage of a quest more desperate than any which had gone before.

As Ulverst had said, he knew his way about the island blindfold, and he knew to a foot the soundings which surrounded it, for this latter had been essential if the Sea Spider was to be navigated successfully when in the depths.

The underwater craft had not been far offshore when she had been holed, and when less than a hundred feet separated the slowly trudging Ulverst from her, he felt the ocean bed sloping upwards to the sea-washed rocks at the foot of the cliffs above.

It must have been a strange sight, had there been anyone to witness it, when Ulverst's helmeted head slowly broke water near the base of the cliffs.

But already the Arctic night was swathing the lonely sea and the island fastness in murky darkness, and Ulverst's landing went unobserved.

He unscrewed his helmet when still waist deep in the icy water and stood a few moments gratefully filling his lungs with the cold but incredibly refreshing air of night.

Then, trudging onwards, he gained the rocks, and divesting himself of the diving-suit, pulled his gun from his pocket.

The gun was loaded in every

chamber, and clutching it in his hand, Ulverst made his laborious way along the foot of the cliffs until he reached a point which gave access to the higher ground above.

Here the going was treacherous in the extreme, but at the expense of lacerated and bleeding hands, Ulverst scaled the ice-coated rocks and stood looking about him.

The Hawk was lying close inshore, and by her riding lights Ulverst could see that she had developed a heavy list to port. In fact, it looked to him as though she was ashore. With a grim smile, he turned towards the caves which had been the quarters of himself and his men.

They were aglow with lights, and as he stood watching, he could see the figures of armed sentries pacing backwards and forwards.

"Trust the British Navy to keep a watch!" he muttered. "Well, here goes!"

A shadow amongst the shadows, he commenced a reconnoitring advance, moving from boulder to boulder as he cautiously approached the caves.

It was quite possible that the naval officers were sleeping aboard the aircraft carrier, and if that was the case, Dubowsky's quarters might be unoccupied.

With a stealth born of the desperate nature of his quest, Ulverst neared the main living caves, then sank into the black shadow of a boulder as he saw the pacing and overcoated figure of a sentry passing and repassing the entrance.

Intently he watched the man, counting the paces he took and mentally timing him. Then, his gun in his hand, he commenced to crawl forward, dropping flat on his face and lying rigid and motionless whenever the sentry turned to pace in his direction.

Foot by foot, yard by yard, he moved closer to the entrance of the cave. When the sentry reached the end of his beat he was within fifteen paces of Ulverst.

He failed entirely to see him, however, for Ulverst was stretched flat on the ground. Halting, the sentry wheeled smartly, and marched away with his back to Ulverst.

Instantly, Ulverst was on his feet, speeding silently and swiftly towards the cave. He reached the entrance, and, gaining the interior, froze rigid and motionless against the rocky wall as the sentry passed again.

The worst was over for the moment, and when the coast was clear again Ulverst crept forward into the cave which had been used by Dubowsky.

It was in darkness, and, letting the curtain fall to behind him, Ulverst switched on the light.

That the place had been thoroughly searched was evident, but with a triumphant smile Ulverst crossed the smooth floor and pulled a small slab of rock from out of the wall.

Inserting his hand into the cavity disclosed, he withdrew a small steel box, which contained the complete plans of the Sea Spider. The lock had been untampered with, which meant that the papers were safe.

With the box under his arm, Ulverst turned to retrace his steps to the curtained doorway. As he did so, however, there came a sudden quick step outside, the curtain was pulled aside, and the sentry confronted him with rifle levelled.

"Up with your hands!" snapped the man.

Ulverst dropped the box with a clatter, and mingling with the roar of his gun came the crash of the rifle.

With an oath Ulverst staggered back, his arm dripping blood. Before he could recover himself the sentry

was on him, his menacing bayonet against Ulverst's chest.

"Put 'em up!" he rapped.

Ulverst looked into the man's grim face; then, with a faint smile, he raised his hands above his head.

### A Million-to-One Chance!

**S**WIFTLY the news was signalled to the aircraft-carrier that another prisoner had been taken.

Accordingly, Ulverst was thrust into one of his own cells, and after his arm had been banded he asked the square-jawed petty officer in charge of him if he could have some food sent in to him.

"I've had nothing to eat all day," he lied, a desperate plan of escape already forming in his mind.

"Fresh soup and coffee will be ready at dawn," said the petty officer.

With that, the petty officer withdrew, and the iron door of the cell clanged shut on Ulverst.

Throwing himself down on the plank bed with which the cell was furnished, Ulverst gave himself up to his thoughts.

If only food was sent in to him now, he could put his plan of escape into action.

Ulverst was determined, however, to make some effort to escape. How he could ever hope to get away now he failed entirely to see, but he would rather be shot down than live to swing on the gallows.

So ran his thoughts as the long hours of the Arctic night dragged slowly past. With the dawn he suddenly tensed as a key grated in the lock and the door swung open, to admit a steward carrying a mug of

coffee and a bowl of steaming soup, and accompanied by the petty officer.

As the steward approached him, Ulverst rose to his feet, his eyes grim and hard, and every nerve and muscle taut.

Suddenly he whirled into action, and with savage, smashing force his fist whipped up. It took the steward full on the point of the jaw, sending him reeling back, the soup and coffee flying from his hands.

The next moment and Ulverst was on the petty officer, his hands about the startled man's throat, his knee driving with savage force into his stomach.

With a gasp, the man doubled up, and, oblivious of his reopened wound, which was pumping blood, Ulverst tightened his grip about the man's throat.

There was every atom of Ulverst's strength in that merciless, strangling grip, for he was fighting for very life itself. Of the steward he took not the slightest notice, for he knew that that limp and huddled individual was temporarily out to the wide.

Again Ulverst brought his knee up with smashing force into the petty officer's stomach, driving the wind out of him in a whistling grunt of sheer agony, and tighter and tighter pressed his fingers about the man's throat.

Suddenly the petty officer went limp, and, as Ulverst released his hold, the man slumped heavily to the floor.

Stooping, Ulverst snatched the heavy Service revolver from the holster about his victim's waist, and, after rapping him sharply over the head with the butt, treated the stirring steward in the same way.

That done, Ulverst ripped the blanket from his plank bed into strips. First binding and gagging the steward, he pulled off the petty officer's uniform and gagged and bound him.

The whole business had taken an incredibly short time, and, ripping off his own worn and oil-stained reefer jacket and trousers, Ulverst donned those of the petty officer.

That done, he buckled the revolver belt about his waist, thrust the gun into its holster, and after a quick examination of his two victims, stepped from the cell into the biting chill of the cold, grey dawn.

Clanging the cell door shut behind him, Ulverst locked it, and, thrusting the key into his pocket, stood a moment staring about him.

Almost immediately grim exultation crept into his eyes, and his livid lips twisted in a mirthless smile.

He had staked everything on a million-to-one chance against escape, and it seemed as though the goddess of fortune was smiling on him, for riding close inshore, already being tuned up by heavily muffled mechanics, were a dozen or more fighting scouts from the aircraft-carrier.

It was fairly evident to Ulverst that they had been taken off the badly damaged vessel for safety's sake. Probably the between decks hangar was flooded, or it might be that the heavy list of the flying-deck gave no possible chance of a take-off.

Be that as it may, the aeroplanes were there, and as Ulverst moved away from the cell, the stillness of early morning was shattered by the sudden reverberating roar of first one powerful aero-engine, then another.

"Going to search for the Sea Spider, I suppose?" muttered Ulverst grimly, as, making a detour to avoid the usual paths, he strolled down towards the jetty alongside which the scouts were lying.

A thin, icy mist was shrouding the island at that early hour, and, gaining the jetty, Ulverst stood boldly staring at the nearest machine.

The mechanic, busy in the cockpit, glanced outboards at him, nodded cheerily, and continued to run up the engine. It was obvious that he had not the slightest suspicion of Ulverst's real identity.

Carefully gauging the distance, Ulverst leaped on to the port float.

The machine rocked violently under his weight and, closing down the throttle, the surprised mechanic looked down at him.

"Hallo, what's the idea? Who—?" The mechanic broke off suddenly as he found himself covered by Ulverst's heavy Service revolver.

"Get out of that cockpit!" grated Ulverst.

The mechanic gaped at him in open-mouthed astonishment.

"If you don't get out of that cockpit," said Ulverst, in a low, fierce voice, "I'll blow your brains out!"

The mechanic rose to his feet.

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There was something radically wrong here.

"Who the dickens are you?" he began. "And what's the game—"

The roar of Ulverst's gun cut in on his words and he staggered back, clutching at a shattered shoulder. Purposely Ulverst had refrained from shooting the mechanic dead, but the report of the gun had attracted the attention of the other mechanics, and Ulverst knew there was not a moment to spare.

Ignoring the agony of his own wounded arm, he swung himself up to the cockpit with cat-like agility.

"Get out of that cockpit, or I'll shoot you dead!" he snarled.

The mechanic hesitated no longer. He'd have been a suicidal fool if he had with that heavy barrel threatening him so menacingly.

He swung one leg over the other side of the cockpit and, scrambling in, Ulverst gave him a savage heave which sent him plunging head-first into the icy sea.

Then, slumping down into the pilot's seat, Ulverst yanked open the throttle to full.

Under the pull of its whirling screw, the little scout tore forward across the water, the thunder of its engine drowning the shouts of alarm from the other mechanics.

Crouched over the controls, Ulverst laughed aloud. The million-to-one chance had come off. He had escaped, and as he inched back the control-stick, the scout bored up into the grey of the Arctic sky.

#### To the Death!

**S**WINGING on the climb, Ulverst headed westwards towards the distant coast of the mainland. If he could reach Black Bay he would wait there until the Sea Spider limped in.

If she was cruising on the surface he would sight her and, gaining height as he thundered westwards, he searched the waste of waters with eager eyes.

He had another reason for gaining height. He knew that pursuit was inevitable and, should he be overhauled, he did not intend his pursuers to have the advantage of altitude.

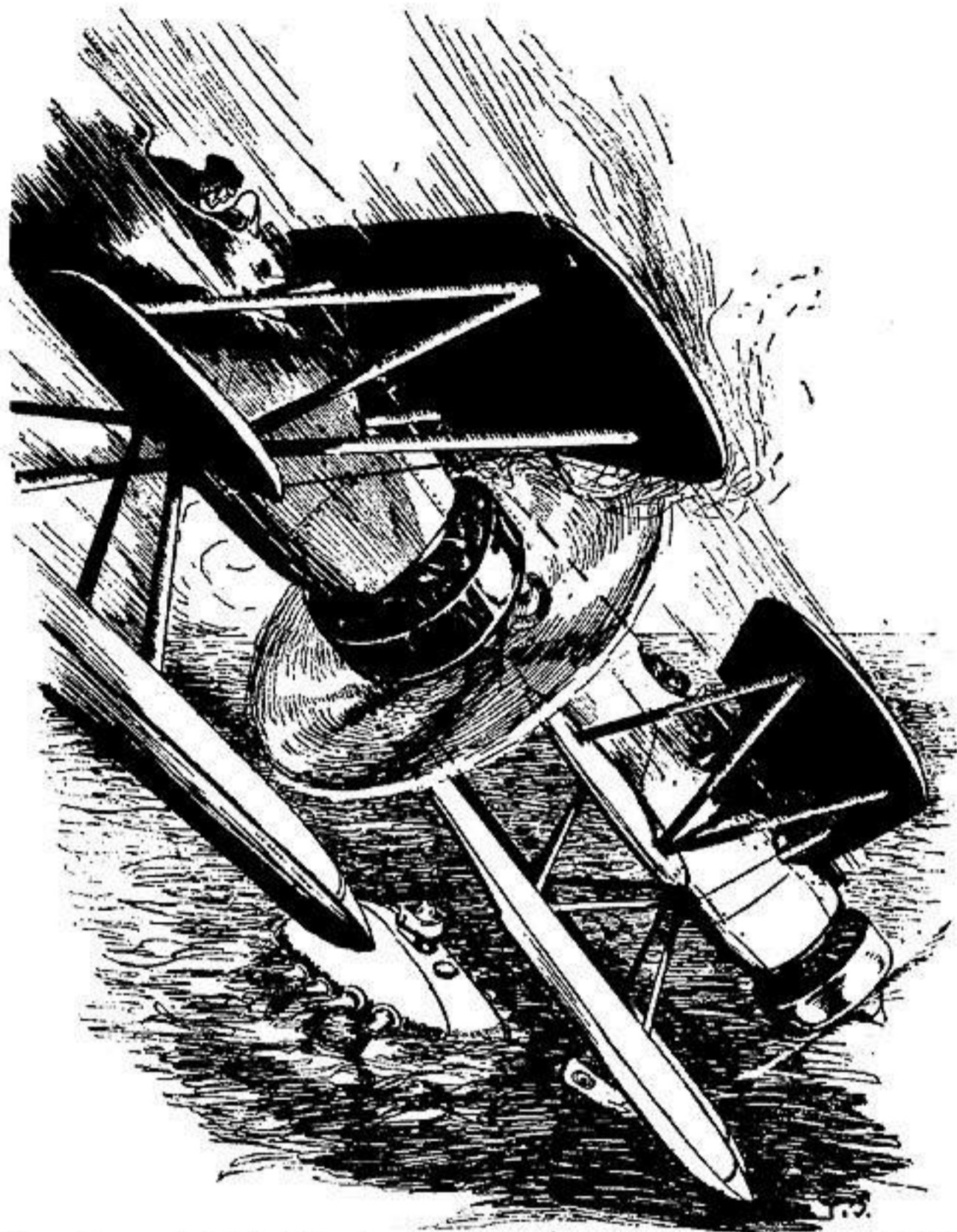
His engine was not firing any too well, but hoping against hope that it would be all right once it got warmed up, Ulverst gave it every inch of throttle.

Continually he kept looking behind him, and before he had reached two thousand feet he saw two machines tear across the water and come boring up in his wake.

Whether they were manned by officers or mechanics he did not know, but there were ammunition belts in his own synchronised gun, and his pursuers would carry the same.

Well, if it came to a fight, Ulverst was confident that he could more than hold his own. If only his engine were pulling properly it wouldn't come to a fight. But as the moments passed he saw that the two machines behind were steadily overhauling him.

They were climbing for height as they closed in on him, and to avoid



Ulverst drove straight at the wheeling plane ahead, and his gun roared into life!

having them come thundering down on his tail, Ulverst himself was forced to climb.

At three thousand feet he realised that there was nothing for it but to turn and fight. The two machines behind him were coming up hand over fist, as their engines warmed to the job. As he swung his own scout to meet them, Ulverst saw on the water far below the slow-moving, crawling bulk of the Sea Spider.

Whipping forward his control-stick, he went down towards her in a screaming dive which he held only long enough to give him sufficient speed to go zooming up and up into the Arctic sky again.

At the very top of that whirlwind climb, he whipped the stick across and, rolling, tore down on the two scouts which he had momentarily outwitted by the swiftness of his manoeuvre.

The pilot of the nearer machine saw him coming and had one split second in which to decide what to do. Throwing his control-stick forward, the pilot roared seawards, his engine thundering at full revolutions.

Swooping like a hawk on the dive, Ulverst thundered down on the second machine, which had lifted its nose to meet the attack. His fingers were clamped round the trigger of the synchronised gun and lurid flame tore

viciously from the belching muzzle as the deadly stream of bullets screamed through the whirling screw.

Livid of face with the nearness of death, the pilot of the scout kicked frenziedly on the rudder-bar and whipped his control-stick across.

The little machine responded instantly, whirling out of range of that stream of bullets. But Ulverst had anticipated the move, and his own foot moved with deadly precision on his rudder-bar.

Next instant, the pilot's nerveless hand fell from the control-stick and, as he collapsed over the controls, shot through the lugs, the nose of his machine dropped and he tore seawards in a death-dive, his engine thundering at full revolutions.

He struck the water within a cable's-length of the Sea Spider, there came a terrific spouting of swirling foam and, watched by the amazed eyes of Wesel, the scout vanished from view, to reappear a few moments later as splintered, floating wreckage.

Meanwhile, Ulverst had gone up and up in a wild, soaring zoom, but with the speed of a hornet the second pilot was tearing at him with vicious gun aflame.

The boy—he was only a boy—had seen his comrade's death-dive, and his face was white with passionate  
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determination to send this murderous devil down in flames.

To that end, he held his deadly line of flight, his bullets shattering Ulverst's dashboard and splintering the glass of dials and gauges.

Whirling outwards in a frenzied wing-turn, with bullets ricocheting off his engine cowling, Ulverst whipped back his control-stick, and, keeping it hugged close into his jacket, completed a whirlwind loop.

Swerving wildly on the downward dive, Ulverst drove straight in at the wheeling boy, and again his gun roared into life, blood-red, lurid flame and steel-coated bullets stabbing from the flaming muzzle.

The boy threw his scout into a spin, from which he emerged with a sudden roar of high-powered engine, to go tearing seawards in a screaming dive.

Above the thunder of his engine sounded the shriek of wind past wings and streamlined fuselage; then back came the stick, and the scout soared skywards in a wild zoom.

Ulverst followed, grimly and relentlessly, but already the boy had rolled and was roaring down on him, intent on avenging his dead comrade.

Ulverst pulled a sharp wing-turn, but the bullets from the other's gun were drilling his fuselage, and Ulverst's face was not nice to see, for with the exception of one fleeting moment the fight had been all his adversary's.

By superb piloting he pulled clear, and, thrusting his control-stick forward, roared down towards the water, zigzagging madly as he went.

Risking a quick glance over his shoulder, Ulverst saw that the scout was following him down, firing as it came, and he knew that it was only his own wild swinging which was saving him from taking a burst of bullets through the back.

But grimly Ulverst held his dive; then suddenly his foot jerked hard

on the rudder-bar, and he whipped the control-stick across.

The scout whirled out of its dive with a jar which sent Ulverst sagging wildly against the side of the cockpit. Grimly he kept his foot pressed on the rudder-bar and, with stick across, completed a whirlwind bank.

Taken completely unawares by the amazing swiftness of the manoeuvre, the boy yanked back his stick in an effort to pull out of his dive in a soaring zoom.

But Ulverst was already tearing in at him from the flank—so close that it seemed as though nothing could prevent the two machines from crashing, and, locked together, hurtling seawards in the death-spin!

Ulverst, however, had judged the distance with deadly precision. His foot moved on the rudder-bar, and bullets from his blazing gun raked the scout from engine cowling to cockpit.

Then back came Ulverst's control-stick, and as he zoomed up the scout fell away into a spin. A tongue of flame licked back from its riven petrol tank, and as Ulverst peered down he saw the machine go plunging seawards, enveloped in flame and swirling black smoke.

Passing his hand wearily across his damp and powder-begrimed brow, Ulverst pushed forward his control-stick, and, throttling down, glided seawards towards the Sea Spider.

His late adversary had put up a great fight, and Ulverst wished in his heart that the fight had not had to be one to the death.

But it had to be either he or the boy—and he had lived to return to his beloved Sea Spider.

Landing on the water beside the steel monster, Ulverst surged in alongside, and, scrambling out on to the wing, clambered up into the

conning-tower, where Wesel grasped him warmly by the hand.

"I thought you were lost when you did not appear at twelve-thirty," said Wesel. "And now you arrive like this. What happened?"

Ulverst did not reply. To his ears had come the swiftly approaching roar of powerful aero engines, and, wheeling, he stared in dismay at a dozen low-flying scouts which were coming up at terrific speed.

"We've got to get under, Wesel!" he said grimly.

Wesel shook his head.

"If we go under, we'll never surface again," he said. "Our compressed air is finished. It took all we had to get us surfaced off Ice Rock."

Ulverst looked at him. This indeed was the end!

"Surrender means we hang!" he said. "Every man jack of us. What is it to be, Wesel?"

"You are in command!" said Wesel quietly.

Ulverst nodded, and, with lips tightly compressed, walked to the voice-pipe which connected with the control-room.

"Take the boat down!" he said.

To his ears there came the slow creak of the valves, followed by the gurgling inrush of water. Turning from the voice-pipe, he crossed to where Wesel was standing.

"Good-bye, old friend!" he said, holding out his hand. "I would not ask to die in better company than yours!"

"Nor I in yours!" said Wesel.

Their hands met in a last, firm clasp, and as the leading scout roared low overhead the Sea-Spider sank slowly beneath the sea, never to rise again.

THE END.

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# THE HEAD'S TRETCHERY!

By DICKY NUGENT

"Swotter minor!" Swotter minor, of the Fourth, jumped. He was strolling under the trees in the quad at St. Sam's, reading the latest number of the "Stowdent's Jernal," and had he been a betting man he would have wagered ten to one in doonuts he was alone. The sudden sound of Dr. Birchmall, the Head, addressing him gave him quite a shock.

"Oh!" he gasped. "Yes, sir!" "Swotter minor," went on the Head's quiet, cultured voice, "what are you doing of?" "Reading the 'Stowdent's Jernal,' sir," Swotter minor answered. "Nothing wrong in that, sir, is there?"

He heard an eggsplosion of wrath from the invisible Head. "Nothing wrong in reading the 'Stowdent's Jernal'?" Why, you must be potty! You'd better realise, my lad, that every minute of your time at present should be spent in studying for the Sir Gouty Greybeard Skollarship—every second of it, in fact! Are you not aware, Swotter, that I have made your father a solemn promise that you shall win the prize at all costs?"

Swotter minor smiled slightly. He knew that his pater had promised Dr. Birchmall the grate sum of fifteen shillings if he won, and he knew how anxious the Head was on that account to keep him swotting. However, he thought it best not to go into that.

"Yes, sir, you're quite right," he said; then, looking upwards, he saw for the first time that the Head was perched in the branches of a neighbouring tree, and added: "Why, you're up a tree, sir!" "Eggsactly!" barked the Head, in sudden anger. "I am up a tree, Swotter—and for why? Becawso you're not swotting hard enuff, if you want to know the trowth!"

Swotter, who was a cowherd and a cur at the best of times, cringed under the Head's akkowsing words.

"Please, sir, there's no need for me to swot like the others," he whimpered. "I'm a better skollar than they are, and—"

"You mean you WERE a better skollar—but whether you still are or not is open to question!" Dr. Birchmall leaned down from the tree and shook a bony forefinger at the swot of the Fourth. "Let me tell you this, Swotter: Fearless, for one, is going ahead like a house on fire. Unless you're very careful, you'll find when it comes to the eggsum, that he'll wack you hollow!"

Swotter minor larfed nervously. "Fearless? But he's one of the biggest dunces in the Forn, sir!"

"A week ago—yes!" snapped Dr. Birchmall. "But something has happened to Fearless since. His father has lost all his munny in a Stock Exchange gambol and the only chance Fearless has of remaining at St. Sam's is to win the Gouty Greybeard Prize. That circumstance has bucked up Fearless something remarkable. He is now your most dangerous rival."

"I can hardly believe it, sir." "Nevertheless, it is trow," said the Head, sternly. "It follows, Swotter, that you will have to pull your sock up and toe the line and put your sole into it. Otherwise, I shall step in myself and bring you to heel."

# THE NEW Greyfriars Herald

No. 135 (New Series).

EDITED BY HARVEY WHARTON.



May 4th, 1935.

"Oh, yes, sir!" "Mr. Lickham tells me," went on the Head, with a frown, "that Fearless has made wonderful strides in jommety and triggernommatry—particularly the latter. How do you get on with triggernommatry, Swotter?"

"I—I'm not very well advanced in it, sir!" "Just as I thought! Well, you'd better get advanced in it immediately—sooner than that, if possible! Forchunitly, I have something with me that will help you," said Dr. Birchmall, producing a metal object from his trowis pocket. "Catch!" "Yarooo!"

Swotter minor uttered a yell of mingled pain and surprize. The object the Head had thrown down was a pistol and it caught him right on the tip of his nose!

"Ow!" groaned Swotter minor, as he jinjerly picked up the deadly weppon. "Whatever have you given me this for, sir?"

"To help you in triggernommatry, of course!" the Head snorted. "You'll find the trigger in good working order and it ought to assist you gratefully!"

"But—" Swotter was going to eggspain something the Head apparently didn't know—that triggernommatry was a branch of jommety and was not connected in any way with pistols; but the Head cut him short.

"Enuff!" he said sternly. "Take it away and study triggernommatry with it. And don't let me catch you wasting your time reading comic papers like the 'Stowdent's Jernal' again!"

And Swotter minor decided to buzz off, leaving his remarks unsaid.

For some minnits after he had gone, Dr. Birchmall sat in the tree, wearing a very crafty eggspression on his skollarly fizz as he thought things out. Then he climbed down to the lowest branch and jumped. It was rather a long drop for a gentleman of Dr. Birchmall's years, but forchunitly a passer-by in the shape of Mr. Lickham broke his fall for him.

Crash! Bang! Wallop! "Wooooooop!" roared the master of the Fourth, as he felt himself flattened out on the carth.

"Ah! You came along at the right moment, Lickham—I was just on my way to see you," remarked the Head brightly, as he helped his assistant to his feet. "The fakt is, Lickham, I want your help in enabling a most deserving lad to win the Gouty Greybeard Skollarship."

"You mean Fearless, I presoom, sir?" asked Mr. Lickham, rather brothlessly. "Certainly not; I mean Swotter minor. This

lad, Lickham, is in danger of being cheated out of viktory by the mean, grasping yungster you have just named—Frank Fearless. I want you to ward off that danger—and you can do it in a very simple way."

"And that is, sir?" prompted the serprized master of the Fourth.

"By giving him the wrong dopi—er, as the vulgar would put it, by imparting incorrect instruction to him!" said the Head, in a lowered voice. "He will then fail in the eggsum and the skollarship will go to the lad whose record entitles him to it—Swotter minor! Well, Lickham, what do you say?"

Mr. Lickham produced a pencil and a piece of paper and drew a deep breth. He then wrote down these words:

"Sir, I can only say that I am speechless with indignation. I refuse!"

Dr. Birchmall raised his eyebrows and shrugged. "So be it, Lickham. I shall have to do the job myself, then. Mum's the word, of course!"

And, with a sly wink, he passed on, leaving Mr. Lickham staring after him like one in a dream!

Two minnits later Frank Fearless looked up from the desk at which he was swotting, to see the grinning face of Dr. Birchmall peering round the door.

"Bizzy?" asked the Head. "Good! I've come to help you, Fearless—to help you win that skollarship! What you need at the moment is extra toot, and that's what I'm going to give you, free, grattis, and for nothing! To begin with, what's twice two?"

"Four!" answered the wondering Frank Fearless.

"Wrong!" groaned the Head. "The correct answer is five. Four is often thought to be correct, I know, but that is quite a fallacy. Now let me sit down beside you and put you right in other matters."

"Thanks, sir! It's very kind of you!" said Frank Fearless.

And he got a chair for his visitor and sat down to learn—not for one moment dreaming that he was the intended viktim of the Head's tretchery!

(Will Fearless survive being prepared for the eggsum by the wily old Head? For the answer, read the amazing conclusion to this series in next week's "grate" yarn—"St. Sam's on the Spree!"—Ed.)



## HOW MAULY SPED THE UNWELCOME GUEST

Described by Sir JIMMY VIVIAN



Mauly's cousin Clarence was the only fly in the ointment during our first few days at Mauleverer Towers. He really was a One, old pals!

You see, he'd been out East, and he had a bee in his bonnet about omens, portents, astrological signs, and what-not. We shouldn't have minded that, of course, if he'd kept them to himself. But he did nothing of the kind. On the contrary, he insisted on ramming them down our unwilling throats on all conceivable occasions.

Apart from occasional references to fortune-telling, about which this tame loony seemed to be particularly rabid, we understood very little of what he was saying, and it cost us many a noble effort to endure his society without being rude!

Fortunately, just when we were reaching the end of our tothor, something happened to send him flying away from Mauleverer Towers.

That "something" was in the shape of an old gipsy woman we met at the roadside when we were all out walking. She told our fortunes. The Greyfriars men treated it purely as a lark, of course. But Cousin Clarence took it in deadly earnest.

Funnily enough, she picked out Cousin Clarence for her very worst prophecies! She foretold the most fearful calamities for

Cousin Clarence—if he stayed on at Mauleverer Towers! Vipers would attack him, dark men would cross his path, evil tongues would be loosened against him, he would lose all his money, his health would suffer, and a dickons of a lot more besides!

Cousin Clarence didn't even wait to hear the finish. He set up a dismal howl and bolted, explaining as he went that he was going to pack his bags and quit!

The sequel was remarkable. No sooner had Mauly's goofy cousin vanished than the "gipsy" removed a wig and rubbed off some greasepaint, to reveal the grinning face of Wibley, the actor of the Greyfriars Remove!

"Think I managed it all right, Mauly?" Wib asked calmly.

"Dear man, it was marvelous!" smiled Mauly. Then he turned to us and added: "I guessed that goofy cousin of mine was gottin' on your nerves, my dear sportsmen, so as Wib was stayin' near by, I dropped him a line an' got him to help!"

And Mauly cheerfully turned to Wib to inquire what kind of a holiday he was having—leaving us temporarily stunned.

Unique kind of bird, Mauly—even to the methods he employs to get rid of unwelcome guests!

### WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?



Bolover major said that as old-time fighters engaged for as many as one hundred rounds, why shouldn't Removites? Bolover changed his mind when opposed to Bob Cherry in the gym, though. After half a dozen rounds, Bolover "took the long count"—up to about one hundred!



Skinner & Co. invited Johnny Bull to try and burst a tape by expanding the muscle of his upper arm—and to their surprise, Johnny did it! It "burst" upon Skinner & Co. that Johnny Bull is a magnificently developed specimen. Skinner & Co. are "weeds"!



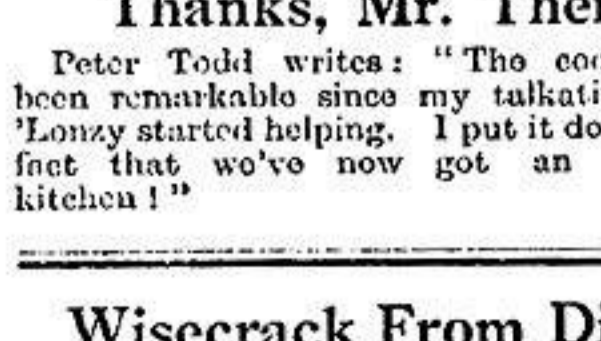
Trevor and Treluce are both very "natty" fellows, and Treluce was very annoyed when Bob Cherry playfully ruffled his well-brushed hair in the class-room. Trevor and Treluce together, however, were no match for Bob—they are not in his "class"!



Tom Dutton really is a little hard o' hearing, but it is in one way a blessing when Bunter wants to borrow something! Bunter has frequently talked himself hoarse trying to make Dutton understand, but Dutton remains conveniently deaf if he wants to!



Keen amateur actor that he is, William Wibley often interrupts prep in Study No. 6 by reading aloud from a play. The other evening Rake and Morgan showed him it was not "allowed" by hurling him into the passage. As Bob Cherry said: "Exit Wib!"



For kicking Wingate's shin, Sammy Bunter, of the Second Form, received a severe dose of Wingate's assplant. When Billy Bunter chortled at Sammy's convulsions, Sammy turned on brother Billy and kicked his shin, too! Then Sammy "shinned" off—rapidly!

### "Hamper"-ing His Style

Some cakes Bunter's mater sent him were so doughy that even Bunter couldn't get through them. Mrs. Bunter evidently believes in the old proverb "More paste less greed"!

### Answer To Correspondent

"ANXIOUS LEADER."—"Snoop wants to join the Boy Scouts. Do you think he'll do his good turns all right?" "Well, we can't exactly say he's a Good Turner, but we're perfectly sure he's a Good Twister."

### GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT!

### Thanks, Mr. Therm

Peter Todd writes: "The cooking has been remarkable since my talkative cousin 'Lonzy' started helping. I put it down to the fact that we've now got an 'all-gas' kitchen!"

### Wisecrack From Dicky

Dicky Nugent and his pals were greatly amused at Margate last week-end by the antics of a confectioner, who manufactures sticks of sweetstuff in public and retails jokes as he does it. Dicky says he made them "rock" with laughter!