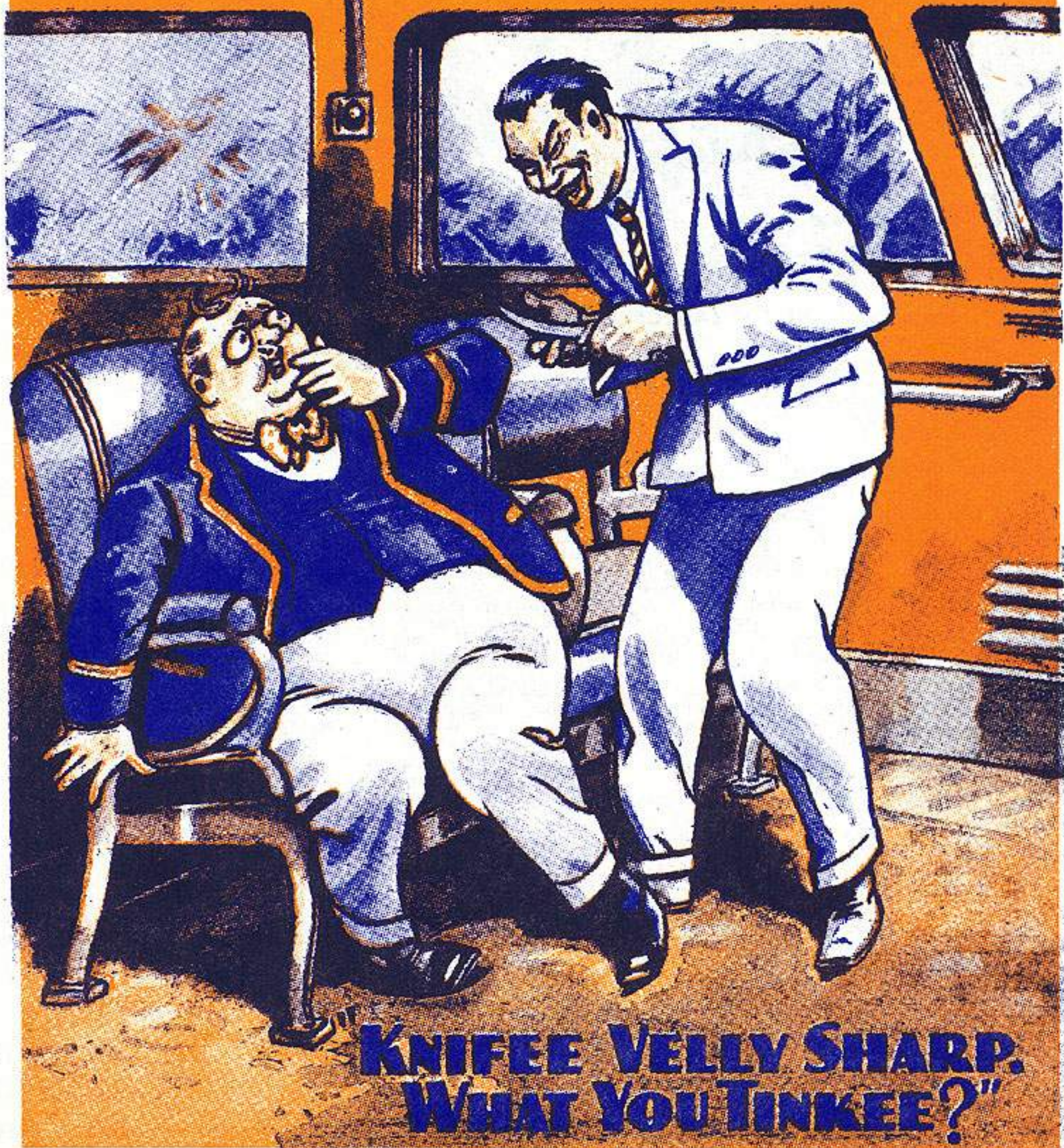


"THE GREYFRIARS CRUSOES!" Thrill-Packed
Holiday-Adventure Yarn of Harry Wharton & Co.

The Magnet ^{2^d}

Billy Bunter's
Own Paper



KNIFE VELL SHARP.
WHAT YOU TINKEE?"

THRILLS AND EXCITEMENT GALORE in this POWERFUL SCHOOL-ADVENTURE YARN—

The GREYFRIARS CRUSOES!



By
**FRANK
RICHARDS**

Featuring **HARRY WHARTON & CO., The CHEERY CHUMS of GREYFRIARS.**

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bunter Wants to Know!

BILLY BUNTER sat up in his comfortable chair in the aft cabin of the giant plane that was cleaving, like an arrow, the blue skies of Italy.

He blinked, through his big spectacles, at five serious faces.

Seldom, or never, had the fat ornament of the Greyfriars Remove been feeling so satisfied with a holiday.

Really, a holiday in a passenger plane, regardless of expense, might have satisfied any fellow.

Bunter was not easily satisfied. Generally, in the happiest circumstances, he found room for a grouse.

But even Billy Bunter found nothing to grumble at now.

The great plane ran swiftly and smoothly. It gave a fellow a sense of absolute security. Bunter had no feeling of funk. In the absence of danger, his courage was unlimited. The food supply was ample and good. The air trip was costing him nothing. Things looked good, to Billy Bunter.

True, his breakfast, that morning, had been cut rather short in the hurry of departure from Rome. But he had been eating ever since; so that was all right. The grub undoubtedly, was good—the very best! A fellow could have as much as he liked. So why Harry Wharton & Co. were looking so fearfully serious, was rather a puzzle to Bunter.

The Greyfriars fellows had the aft cabin to themselves. As it was planned to seat twenty passengers, there was plenty of room. A fellow could stroll about if he liked, which, of course, a fellow could not always do on a plane. Not that Billy Bunter was specially keen on strolling about. Sitting in a well-padded, comfortable chair was good enough for Bunter.

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If Billy Bunter was satisfied, there seemed no reason why the Famous Five should not be. Certainly they were, as a rule, much more easily satisfied than Bunter.

But they were looking very serious—in fact, quite grim. Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent were looking from the windows, catching glimpses of a smiling countryside far below, but evidently not keenly interested in a bird's-eye view of the Italian peninsula. Johnny Bull sat with his hands driven deep into his pockets, and his brows knitted. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh had a deeply thoughtful expression on his dusky face. Bob Cherry was moving about restlessly. None of them was speaking—they had hardly spoken a word for an hour or more. Obviously, the Famous Five had something on their minds—and Bunter, blinking at them, fancied that he guessed what it was.

"I say, you fellows, cheer up!" said the fat Owl of the Remove, his podgy face expressing a happy mixture of amusement and contempt. "We're all right! We ain't going to fall!"

Harry Wharton glanced at him.

"Fathead!" he answered briefly.

"My dear chap, it's as safe as houses!" said Bunter. "Nothing to worry about. Keep a stiff upper lip! What you fellows want is a little pluck!"

Johnny Bull half rose—probably with the intention of kicking Bunter. But he sat down again.

"Look at me!" said Bunter. "Do I look funky? Steady as the Buffs! A plane is as safe as a railway train, any day—and a jolly lot safer than a car! But if there's a spot of danger, who cares?"

"You!" granted Johnny Bull.

"Well, look at me!" jeered Bunter.

"You fellows look as if you were going

to your own funerals. What do I look like?"

"A fat porker!"

"Beast!"

"My esteemed Bunter," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "the pluckfulness is terrific. But—"

"You look it!" jeered Bunter. "Never saw such a dismal gang! Chap might think this plane was going to bump, any minute, to look at you! I've got a little pluck—"

"You have!" agreed Bob Cherry. "Precious little!"

"Well, I ain't looking as if I was going to be hanged, like you fellows!" said Bunter. "Keep an eye on me, and keep your peckers up! Nothing's going to happen to this plane, but if it did, I should— Yoo-hoop! Help! Oh crikey! We're going! I say, you fellows, help!"

The plane dipped.

Planes did dip, at times.

To the Famous Five, there was nothing alarming in the plane dipping. But to Billy Bunter, apparently, there was.

To Bunter's startled mind, the plane was rushing earthward, and a terrific crash was imminent. Billy Bunter had an active imagination. In that imagination, he saw the plane piled up in wreckage, himself a wreck in the midst of it. He clung to the arms of his chair and yelled.

"Ow! Help! Yarooogh! Stop it! Rescue! Yoo-hoop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Famous Five.

They had been looking fearfully serious with trouble on their minds. But Bunter had provided a little comic relief. Clouded faces cleared, and they roared with laughter.

"Where's that little pluck of yours, Bunt?" inquired Frank Nugent.

"Too little to be seen!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

"The littleness is terrific!" chortled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Hold on, Bunter!" roared Bob Cherry. "We're going—"

"Yaroo! Help! Oh crikey, I wish I hadn't come! I wish I was back at Greyfriars! I wish I'd stopped in Paris! I wish I'd stopped in Rome! I wish I'd—yarooooo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The plane levelled out again, and all was calm and bright.

Billy Bunter still held on to his chair and blinked at five laughing faces through his big spectacles.

"I—I—I say, you fellows, ain't we falling?" he gasped.

"Not a lot!" answered Harry Wharton.

"That beast Cherry said we were going—"

"So we are," answered Bob, "south-east—"

"Wha-a-t?"

"We're going south-east—"

"Beast!" roared Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter sat silent for several minutes. As he had finished eating, that was rather unusual for Bunter.

"Well, look here, you fellows," he said at last. "If you ain't funky, what's the matter with you? Looking like a lot of moulting fowls, when we're going on this splendid trip! Don't you like the food?"

"Idiot!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! The food's certainly all right," said Bunter. "I know what I'm talking about, and I can tell you there's nothing wrong with the grub. If the grub's all right, everything's all right, ain't it?"

"Ass!"

"I—I say—" Bunter looked quite startled, at a sudden, new, and alarming thought. "I say, we haven't got to pay anything, have we?"

"What?" ejaculated Harry Wharton.

"We came along as guests of Wun Lung!" said Bunter warmly. "His uncle, that weird old bean O Bo, is standing this plane! I know he bought it—he's given it an idiotic Chinese name. We're guests here—and if that old Chink thinks we're going to pay our fares, or anything—"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It isn't that?" exclaimed Bunter anxiously.

"No, you blithering, blethering bloater!"

"Well, that's all right, then!" said Bunter, greatly relieved. "I jolly well shouldn't pay anything. I shouldn't have come, if there was anything to pay. But look here, if it's not that, what's the matter? I suppose you're not afraid of that kidnapper, who was after Wun, getting on the plane, are you? Think he can jump up two or three thousand feet?"

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged glances, but did not answer. They had made a discovery, since the plane pulled out of Rome; but Bunter had not been told yet! Still, it was clear that he had to know, and before very long.

Billy Bunter caught that exchange of glances, and grinned.

He had got it at last. The chums of the Greyfriars Remove were worried about the kidnapper.

Bunter chuckled.

Mr. Sin Song, the kidnapper, had given trouble in Paris, and again in Rome! But how he was going to give trouble to fellows three thousand feet up, and pushing along at about a

hundred miles an hour, Bunter did not see. Bunter was quite amused.

"So that's it!" ejaculated Bunter.

"Well, yes," said Harry Wharton slowly. "You'd better know, Bunter! Yes, that's the trouble!"

"He, he, he!"

"What are you cackling at, you fat image?" growled Johnny Bull.

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter.

"Well, of all the funks! He, he, he! So it's that Chink you're worrying about—Sin Song, the Chink I spotted in the dormitory at Greyfriars kidnapping Wun Lung! He, he, he!"

"Yes, ass!"

"He, he, he! Well, if he gets after us again leave him to me!" grinned Bunter. "Wun's safe enough while I'm with him. So are you fellows! I'll look after you—though I don't quite see how Sin Song's going to get at us in a plane. He, he, he! Think he's going to drop in on us off a cloud?"

The Famous Five gazed at the grinning, fat Owl. Bunter evidently had no idea yet how the matter really stood. There was no doubt that he would cease to grin and chuckle when he did!

"Leave him to me, old beans!" grinned Bunter. "I'm not afraid of

"Interfere with my plans," threatens Mr. O, who is determined to kidnap his nephew, Wun Lung, of the Greyfriars Remove, "and I'll leave you stranded on a desert island!" But the unscrupulous Chinaman little bargains for the pluck and resource of Harry Wharton & Co.

Chinks, if you are! I'll handle him all right if he drops in!"

"You're going to have a chance!" said Johnny Bull grimly.

"Nothing I'd like better!" said Bunter. "Leave him to me to handle! He, he, he! Think we're likely to meet him up here in the sky?"

"Yes!" said Harry.

"You silly ass! Wharrer you mean?"

"I mean that he's on this plane!"

"Wha-a-t?" stuttered Bunter.

"He's on this plane, Bunter," said Bob Cherry, "and we expect to see him any minute. He will come in at that door."

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

"Get up, old fat man, and stand by the door!" said Bob. "Handle him when he blows in! We'll leave him to you, as you suggest!"

Billy Bunter did not get up. He did not stand by the door. He sat and blinked at the Famous Five, his little round eyes popping behind his big, round spectacles and his podgy jaw dropping. He looked as deflated as a punctured tyre.

"I—I—I say, you fellows, is that straight?" gasped Bunter.

"Quite!"

"That—that kidnapping Chink is on this plane?"

"Yes!"

"Oh crikey! Oh lor! Oh jinniny!" gasped Bunter.

And he said no more. Which, at least, was a relief!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

What Next?

HARRY WHARTON & CO. sat, with grim faces, waiting.

The giant plane roared on, and they looked out at rolling clouds and at hills and valleys spread below like a map. Southern Italy was fleeing beneath them, and they expected soon to glimpse the blue waters of the Adriatic.

How long that "hop" was to be they did not know, but they did not expect the plane to land before Athens was reached. What was going to happen, and what they were going to do, they did not know.

So far they had succeeded in protecting Wun Lung, the Chinese junior of the Greyfriars Remove, from the kidnapper. But now—

They had not seen Wun since the plane pulled out of Rome in the morning. He was, they supposed, in the fore cabin with his uncle, the venerable Mr. O Bo.

Bob Cherry was the only member of the party who had suspected that Mr. O, Wun's venerable great-uncle, was behind the kidnapping scheme, and that his secretary, Sin Song, had acted by his orders.

He had told his comrades—but only Hurree Jamset Ram Singh believed that he might be right. Harry Wharton doubted. Frank Nugent did not agree—and Johnny Bull laughed at the idea.

As for Wun, not the remotest suspicion of such a thing had crossed his mind, and Bob could not tell him. He knew—he was certain—but he had no proof.

But now—what Wun might be thinking they did not know; but the Co., at least, could hardly have any further doubts.

Mr. O had bought that magnificent plane in Paris and re-named it with a Chinese name, the "Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon." A French crew had flown it as far as Rome. But in Rome the French crew had been dropped and replaced by Chinese. That was the startling discovery that the juniors had made—that the plane was manned by Chinese, among them Sin Song, the kidnapper, and the Chinese who had helped, in Paris, in his kidnapping attempts.

Obviously old Mr. O could not be unaware of it. It must have been done by his order.

It looked as if the ancient Chinaman was coming out into the open at last. And if that were the case, overwhelming force was at his command.

Harry Wharton & Co. had joined up for that holiday with the Greyfriars Chinese partly because they liked Wun Lung, partly because the holiday was attractive—but chiefly to guard Wun from the kidnapper.

Every trick and stratagem to separate Wun from his English friends had been defeated; they had been too watchful and wary. They had put paid to Sin Song every time, cunning as he was.

But if Bob were right, and old Mr. O was at the back of the scheme, it looked as if their game was up. If the ancient Chinaman chose to throw appearances to the winds and come out into the open, what could they do?

Even if Wun, at last, realised how the matter stood, there was no escape from the soaring plane. And the fact that the kidnapper and his assistants were now on board the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon looked as if the crisis were coming. Even Johnny Bull hardly doubted now.

They could only wait, wondering what

was going to happen. They were prepared to put up a fight if an attempt were made by force to separate them from Wun. Each of the juniors had a stout stick, and was prepared to handle it on Celestial heads. But the result of such a struggle could hardly be doubtful.

On the other hand, they could hardly believe that the venerable Mr. O would resort to violence—at least, so long as duplicity could possibly serve his turn.

It was fairly certain, too, that he did not wish Wun to discover the true state of affairs till he was safe outside Europe. Neither did he wish to provoke his nephew's resentment by ill-using his friends.

So far as the juniors had been able to see, his game was to leave them behind apparently by accident, or by a pretence that it was their own wish.

If he kept to that plan they might yet be able to carry on and see Wun safe somehow.

But it was in a painful state of doubt and anxiety that the chums of the Remove waited.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" murmured Bob at last. "Here they come!"

The Famous Five rose to their feet as the door of the aft cabin opened from the passage.

It was Sin Song who entered—a plump, sleek, smiling Chinese. He came alone, and he smiled and kow-towed to the schoolboys as he entered.

This did not look like an attack in force, which was a relief.

Bob, who had gripped his loaded stick, slipped it behind him.

Dr. Sin observed that action, and smiled more broadly.

"Beneficent friends of the son of Wun Chung Lung, I greet you!" he said in his soft voice and effusive English.

They looked at him in silence!

Billy Bunter blinked at him with terrified eyes. To Bunter the Chinese kidnapper was a villain of the deepest dye, and he would not have been surprised had Dr. Sin called on the Chinese crew to hurl the whole party headlong from the soaring plane.

But the Famous Five had no such direful anticipations.

Mr. O, in spite of his amazing kidnapping scheme, was quite a good old bean in other ways. Dr. Sin, unscrupulous and ruthless as he was in carrying out his master's orders, was good-tempered and good-natured, and certainly not a murderous crook. The schoolboys' lives were not in danger, even if it came to a desperate hand-to-hand struggle.

"Look here, Dr. Sin," Harry Wharton broke the silence, "you'd better put it plain. We're not leaving Wun. If you try that on you've got a fight on your hands, and we're going to give you all the trouble we can."

"And it will be a lot!" growled Johnny Bull.

"The lotfulness will be terrific, esteemed and rascally Dr. Sin!" said the Nabob of Bhanipur.

Dr. Sin gazed at them, apparently in surprise.

"But here you are the guests of the venerable and jade-like Mr. O," he said. "What should you fear? This poor person, Sin Song, crawls at your feet in humble friendship and devotion."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Nugent.

"You're not going to deny that you've tried time and again to kidnap Wun Lung?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, staring blankly at the sleek Chinese.

"Mr. O, with the magnificent benevolence that is a part of his sun-like nature, has forgiven this poor worm and

taken me back into his service," said Sin Song blandly.

"Oh!" gasped Bob.

"I have offended, but I have been forgiven!" said Dr. Sin. "From this moment I am the humble servant of Wun and his star-like English friends."

"Oh!" repeated Bob blankly.

"I beg you to forgive my offences and to think of me with kindness, so far as you can allow your lofty thoughts to dwell upon so humble a worm!" said Dr. Sin.

The juniors could only stare at him.

"I have ventured to crawl into your venerable presence, to mention that lunch is about to be served!" said Dr. Sin.

Billy Bunter's face brightened. He was still terribly afraid of Dr. Sin, sleek and smiling as that gentleman was. But the mention of lunch was a great comfort.

"Where's Wun?" asked Harry Wharton abruptly.

"He comes to join his beneficent friends," answered Dr. Sin; and he bowed himself out of the cabin as Wun Lung of the Remove entered.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Trouble in the Air!

BILLY BUNTER, at least, enjoyed that lunch.

The Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon was running sweetly and smoothly. There was, at present, no danger of air-sickness. The lunch was of the very best, and unlimited. Soo, the Chinese steward, waited on the juniors with sedulous attention.

Harry Wharton & Co., hardly knowing what to make of the state of affairs, were relieved, at least. And Wun Lung's face was bright and cheerful.

The presence of the kidnappers on the plane did not seem, after all, to have alarmed him. What he might be thinking, behind his smiling face, the juniors did not know; but they were aware that their Chinese chum had his own spot of Oriental guile.

They had seen him exchange a cheery smile with Dr. Sin—the man who had kidnapped him; but whether he was satisfied, or whether he was affecting to be satisfied with what he could not help, they did not know. But they guessed that if he had anything to say he would not speak so long as the Chinese steward was in the cabin.

Billy Bunter, at all events, was satisfied. It was Bunter's way to pass from the extreme of funk to boundless confidence. And food always had a happy and soothing effect on William George Bunter.

"I say, you fellows, this is all right!" remarked the fat Removite, with his mouth full. "Blessed if I know what you're scowling about, Cherry."

"Who's scowling, fathead?" growled Bob.

"You are!" said Bunter cheerfully.

"I shouldn't be nervous, if I were you, old chap! Have a little pluck!"

"You frabjous, footling fathead—"

"You can call a fellow names!" said Bunter disdainfully, "but what you want is a spot of pluck. It's a bit thick, I know, for old O to take that villain Sin back into his service and let him come on this plane. Still, I suppose the old bean knows his own business best. Sin can't get up to any of his tricks under the old codger's eye. How could he?"

Bob Cherry did not answer that. Bunter had no knowledge of his sus-

picious of O Bo, and Bob certainly did not intend to tell him.

"We're all right here, ain't we, Wun?" asked Bunter.

"Lightee as laineel!" answered Wun Lung, with a smile.

"Eh—what? Oh, right as rain! I see! I don't like having that Chink about, and I think you might give your uncle a tip to drop him at the next landing-place," said Bunter. "I really think that! Still, we're all right here. Look at the grub!"

And Billy Bunter went on punishing the grub, with great satisfaction.

Lunch over, the fat Owl disposed his ample person in a comfortable chair and closed his eyes behind his big spectacles.

Soo cleared the tables and retired from the cabin with his noiseless tread. The door closed on him at last.

"Now, Wun, old man—" began Harry.

Billy Bunter blinked round.

"I say, you fellows, don't jaw!" he remonstrated. "I want a bit of a nap after that lunch. You might keep quiet, and let a fellow snooze!"

Evidently, danger no longer existed, in Billy Bunter's fat mind.

Wun Lung looked at him with a grin.

"Gettee 'long, you fellee," he said.

"No wantee disturb fattee old Bunter."

"That's right," said Bunter approvingly. "Go along to the end of the cabin, if you want to jaw! Blessed if I ever saw such fellows for jaw! Why can't you look out of the windows, and keep quiet? Jaw, jaw, jaw!"

And Bunter closed his eyes behind his spectacles again, as the juniors moved along to the end of the cabin.

The Famous Five understood that Wun's object was to speak unheard by Bunter.

"Now, old chap—" said Harry, as they sat down at the end of the cabin.

Bob Cherry watched the little Chinese keenly. He was wondering whether Wun had "tumbled" at last to old Mr. O's strange and mysterious game. But he soon found that no such suspicion was in Wun's mind.

"That fellee Sin pull leg blong uncle blong me!" said Wun, in a low voice. "He makee O Bo tinkee him velly solly! This li'll Chinese no tinkee!" He grinned. "What you tinkee?"

"We don't trust Sin, of course," said Harry. "He's after you, to kidnap you, Wun, the same as before."

"Me tinkee!" said Wun. "Me tinkee velly muchee! He pull leg blong O Bo. O Bo velly old, he no savvy. He tinkee Sin velly solly—tinkee Li Yi velly solly—me no tinkee! Me watchee out!"

Bob opened his lips—and closed them again.

Wun was, at least, on his guard against the wiles of Dr. Sin.

He did not realise that O Bo was pulling the strings. He believed that the artful Dr. Sin had imposed on the ancient gentleman's unsuspectingness.

"O Bo no savvy!" repeated Wun Lung. "But this li'll Chinese savvy plenty. Me watchee 'long that fellee Sin—you fellee watchee allee samee. You stickee 'long this li'll Chinese likee glue."

"Rely on that!" said Harry.

"Long plane, Sin no can kidnappee," said Wun. "S'posee me leavee plane, 'long we stop, you fellee come! Allee light! Sin Song no catchee!"

If that was really how the matter stood, the Famous Five had no doubt that they would be able to see Wun through, as they had seen him through before. But was it?

After a little further talk, Wun quitted them, to go along to the fore-

cabin, to sit with his ancient relative there. O Bo had no desire for the company of the others—for which they were duly thankful.

When he was gone the chums of the Remove exchanged troubled looks.

"Look here," said Bob abruptly, "what about telling him? If he knew that that cranky old bean was at the bottom of the game—"

Harry Wharton shook his head.

"No good thinking of that," he said. "Only the plainest proof would make Wun believe that his uncle came all the way from China to kidnap him. I can hardly believe it myself—"

"It's too jolly steep!" said Johnny Bull slowly. "I was beginning to think you were right, Bob; but—but, after all, it's more likely that that artful old rascal, Sin, has pulled the old bean's leg, as Wun thinks."

all, was explained if Sin Song had pulled the wool over O Bo's eyes.

"We can only wait and watch!" said Harry Wharton at last. "After all, it's not long to the new term now. Wun will have to go back to Greyfriars with us. If we can keep Wun safe till then—"

"If!" grunted Bob.

"Well, look here—"

Wharton was interrupted as the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon gave a sudden dip and banked steeply.

"Hold on!" he gasped.

"Yaroooh!" came a roar along the cabin.

Up to that moment Billy Bunter's snore had been rumbling along the aeroplane cabin, as it was wont to rumble along the Remove dormitory at Greyfriars. But that sudden dip had rolled Bunter out of his chair.

Bunter rolled, and roared as he rolled.

"Ow! We're falling!" shrieked Bunter. "I say, you fellows! Save me! Oh crikey, I wish I hadn't come! Yaroooooh! Where are you, you beasts? Save me! Hold me! I say, you fellows—I say—yoo-hooop!"

Again the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon dipped, a terrific dip.

Billy Bunter came along the cabin like a stone from a catapult. He crashed into the other fellows, and two or three of them went spinning, and mixed up with Bunter on the slanting floor.

"You fat idiot—" gasped Bob.

"You clumsy chump—" yelled Nugent.

"Hold on, you blithering bloater!"

"Yaroooh!"

The juniors scrambled up.



The sudden dip of the giant plane rolled Bunter out of his chair, and the fat junior bumped on the cabin floor. "Ow!" he roared. "I say—Yaroooh!" "Hold on, you fellows!" said Wharton. It was necessary for the Greyfriars juniors to hold on, as the plane was dipping and banking in a manner that was alarming to stouter hearts than Billy Bunter's!

"I tell you, it's certain!" grunted Bob.

"Well, it may be certain to you, old chap, but it's not certain to me," said Johnny. "It's too jolly steep."

"Oh, you're an ass!"

Johnny Bull grinned.

"I fancy you'd find Wun the same kind of an ass, if you told him," he said. "He wouldn't believe a word of it; and ten to one he'd get his back up! That isn't what you want, is it?"

Bob gave an irritated grunt. That, certainly, was not what he wanted. And it was clearly useless to expect Wun Lung to believe what his own chums could not quite swallow.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was the only fellow who was convinced that Bob was right. Wharton still doubted—and Nugent and Johnny Bull simply could not believe it. The discovery of a Chinese crew on the plane had given them a severe jolt; but that, after

Bunter was not easy to wake, but the bump on the cabin floor woke him! He bumped and roared!

"Ow! I say, you fellows—yaroooh!" roared Bunter.

"What the dickens—" exclaimed Nugent, hanging on to the back of a chair as the giant plane dipped, and dipped.

"I say, you fellows—" yelled Bunter.

"Hold on, Bunter!"

"Yaroooh!"

It was necessary to hold on. The Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon was dipping and banking and gyrating in a manner that was alarming to stouter hearts than Billy Bunter's.

Loose articles slipped about the cabin. One of them was William George Bunter!

The Famous Five were holding on, to keep their footing.

Harry Wharton, holding on to the clamped table with one hand, grasped Bunter's collar with the other, and held him.

Bunter sat and bellowed

"Ow! Save me! Hold me! Where's my specs? Yaroooh! I want to get out! Go and tell the pilot to stop! Yaroooooop!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Try Again, Dr. Sin!

BOB CHERRY plunged to a window, and stared out dizzily. Mountains, thick with dark woods, were below the plane, and seemed startlingly near. He had a wide view of rocky ridges and cliffs, brawling mountain streams, dusky woods—the wild and beautiful scenery

of the mountainous regions of Southern Italy.

Of town, village, road, or railway, he could see no sign. Beautiful as the scenery was, its beauty was quite lost on Bob, as he stared down at it, rocking, as it seemed, under his eyes.

The plane dipped and banked—levelled out, and dipped again—and unless the pilot was simply stunting, or had lost his wits, it seemed that there must be something seriously wrong with the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon.

Bob had plenty of courage, and he had been "up" a good many times with his father, Major Cherry. But the thought of a crash from the height of the clouds was far from pleasant.

Again the plane banked, and it seemed about to roll over. Then it shot down at a dizzy slant.

Earth, rocks, streams, and cliffs seemed rushing up to meet Bob, and for a second he closed his eyes.

But it was only for a second. If this was the end, he was not afraid to face it. He looked steadily; his lips set.

Again the plane levelled out, with a roar of the engines; and then it was climbing.

Bob's friends joined him at the window.

Billy Bunter was left clinging to the clamped leg of a table, uttering a series of scared squeaks.

Steeplly, the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon climbed. Mountains and forests below came a blur, dappled with clouds.

"What the thump is up?" breathed Frank Nugent. He was cool, but his face was white. "Engine trouble?"

Bob shook his head.

"Then what?" asked Johnny Bull.

"I—I suppose their Chinese pilot knows how to handle a plane?"

"He's handled it all right for some

hundreds of miles to-day," said Bob. "He's handling it all right now. He's stunting."

"What the thump for?"

Bob's lip curled.

"Sin Song might fancy we should get the wind up," he said. "Might think we'd be glad to clear—after this. If we were all like Bunter—"

"Oh!" gasped Harry. "If that's it—"

"We're climbing. The plane's all right! Oh crumbs! Hold on!"

The plane had climbed thousands of feet. With a suddenness that took the breath away, it slanted down.

Like an arrow it went, and mountains and dark woods shot into view again, rushing up to meet the plane.

Closer and clearer, till the juniors could make out every detail of the earth—and could even see a dark Italian peasant, with a red cap, staring up at the plane with wide, startled eyes. They saw the swarthy man duck and dodge, and run like a hare, evidently under the impression that the giant plane was coming down with a crash on him.

Bob gritted his teeth.

The pilot was stunting—he was sure of it. He was master of the plane—as good a pilot as the Aviation Company's man who had driven the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon from Paris to Rome. But he was taking risks in playing such tricks.

It was not as if a level meadow lay below, or the open sea. The earth was wildly irregular—hills rose here and there, great rocks jutted—huge trees with great branches.

As the swooping plane roared over a mass of rugged rocks, it seemed to Bob that the landing-wheels must catch—

and he was almost certain that they grazed.

A moment's miscalculation on the part of the man in the pilot's seat, and the crash was inevitable. If Sin Song had given the pilot orders to play this trickery, he was taking the risk of piling up the giant plane in a mass of wreckage, tenanted only by shattered dead.

"I say, you fellows!" came a moan from Bunter. "I say, are we going down?"

"No!" answered Bob.

"Then what's the matter?" wailed Bunter.

"Only air-stunting."

"Oh crikey! Go and tell the silly idiot to stop!" howled Bunter. "Look here, I want to get out! Do you hear? Go and tell the beast to stop, and let me get out!"

"Fathead!"

Up went the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon again steeply, with a terrific roar from the engines. Almost in an instant, as it seemed, the juniors were in the clouds again, and the clouds shut off the earth from view.

Then, at last, the plane levelled out, and ran smoothly once more.

The chums of the Remove gasped for breath.

Bunter sat on the floor and moaned, with the perspiration running down his fat face.

The cabin door opened, and Dr. Sin came in.

A smile flickered over his yellow face as he glanced at Bunter. Then his eyes turned very curiously on the Famous Five. That they were startled, it was easy to see—but if Dr. Sin expected to read signs of funk in their faces, he was disappointed.

"Anything up, Dr. Sin?" asked Harry Wharton quietly.

"I fear," said Dr. Sin softly, "that the inestimable lives of the friends of Wun Lung have been endangered. But for the present, all is safe. The pilot has been changed."

"The pilot?" repeated Harry.

"It appears," said Dr. Sin, "that Foo-Loo, the chief pilot, has been smoking opium. This is the cause of his very extraordinary antics. The second pilot is now in charge. Whether he is addicted to the same deplorable habit, I know not; but I trust that all will be well."

"I say, you fellows, I want to get out!" wailed Bunter. "I'm not going to be smashed up by a mad Chink!"

Dr. Sin smiled.

"If that is your desire, you shall land at the earliest opportunity," he said. "And if your friends desire to land with you—"

"Is Wun going to land?" asked Bob, with a curl of his lip. "You needn't trouble to tell a lie, Dr. Sin. Go and eat coke!"

"I say, you fellows—" wailed Bunter.

"Shut up, fathead!"

"I tell you we're in danger!" yelled Bunter.

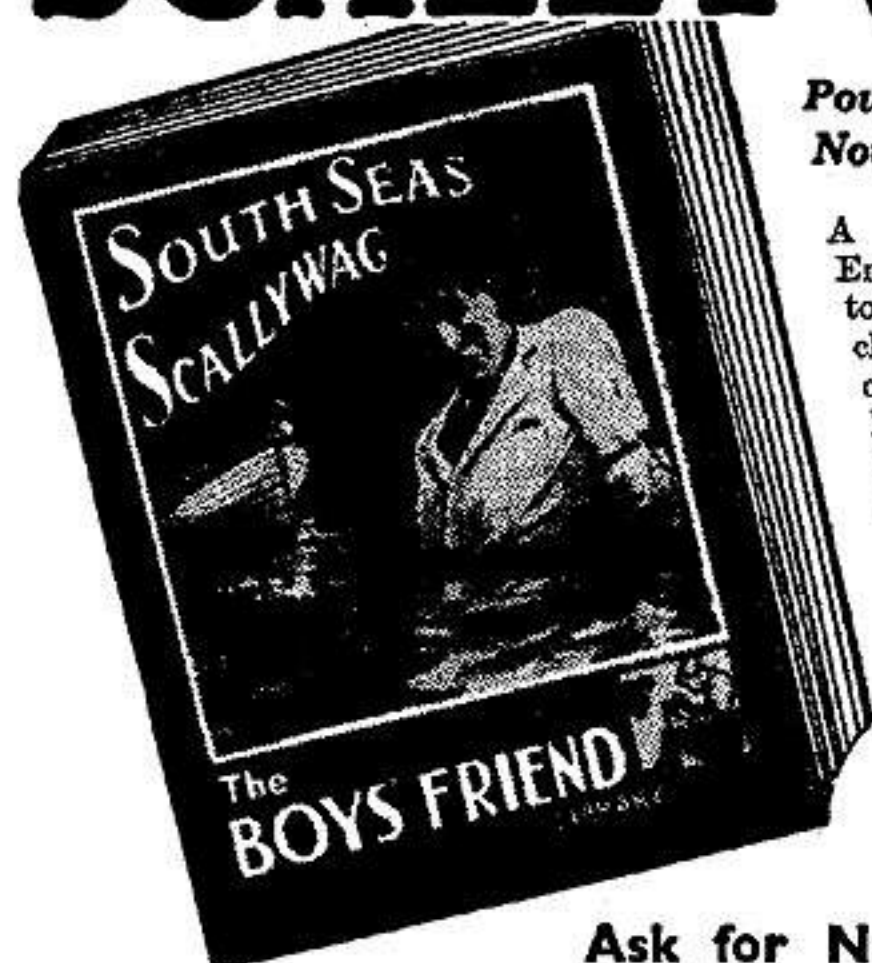
"The danger has certainly been very close!" said Dr. Sin. "Foo-Loo, under the noxious influence of opium—"

Had the Greyfriars fellows believed that the plane was driven by a man liable to stupefy himself with opium, they certainly would have been very seriously alarmed—though not to the extent of deserting Wun Lung. But they did not believe the smiling Dr. Sin.

"Try again!" growled Bob.

"I do not catch your honourable meaning," said Sin Song.

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"I'll make it clearer, then," said Bob. "I don't believe you're fool enough to fly with a pilot likely to go potty and pile up the plane. If you are, we'll be the same kind of fools. If you want to frighten us, Dr. Sin, you'll have to think of a cleverer trick than that!"

"I say—" wailed Bunter.

"Shut up, fathead! They're only trying to pull our leg!" growled Johnny Bull. "Safe as houses, you gurgling gargoyles!"

"Beast!"

Dr. Sin gave the juniors a long, long look, and quitted the cabin without speaking again.

Bob gave an angry grunt.

"The cheeky Chink—thinking he could put the wind up us with flying stunts! What does he think we're made of? Bunter, if you don't stop yowling, I'll come and kick you!"

"Beast!" wailed Bunter.

"We're going down again!" said Harry.

The Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon shot downward on a dizzy slant.

There was a wild yell from Bunter.

"Ow! Hold me! Help!"

"Shut up!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Yaroooo!"

Again the earth rushed up to meet the plane. At a low level, the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon circled and circled, strangely like a huge bird seeking a resting-place.

"Is he looking for a landing?" breathed Bob.

"Looks like it!"

There was no sign of a drome—no sign of a town, a village, a road, or a building of any sort. Exactly where they were, the juniors could not tell; but they could see that it was one of the most solitary and wild mountain tracts of Southern Italy. To land there could hardly be safe—yet it was growing clear that that was the intention.

The pilot found, at last, what he wanted—a gently sloping hillside, clear of trees and rocks. And the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon sank to it, like a bird to its nest.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Messenger for Mr. O.

HARRY WHARTON & CO. stood tense, waiting.

The plane had come to rest on that level hillside, landing easily and safely. But all round the landing-place, wild hills and forests shut in the view—with no sign of a building or an inhabitant.

It seemed to the juniors that the pinch was coming now. Sin Song had failed to frighten them, as he had evidently hoped to do, into willingness to leave the plane. They wondered whether open force was coming now—whether the design was to pitch them from the plane and leave them to find their way back to civilisation while the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon soared to the clouds again with the kidnapped Chinese junior.

If that was the game, they were going to resist, so long as they could strike a blow. With grim faces, and beating hearts, they waited—more than half-expecting the cabin door to open, and let in a rush of the Chinese.

But it did not come.

The engines had shut off; the plane was silent. Minute followed minute—and nothing happened.

Billy Bunter picked himself up, tottered to the window, and blinked out.

"I say, you fellows, that ain't an aerodrome!" he squeaked.

"Go hon!" said Johnny Bull sarcastically.

"Where are we?" demanded Bunter.

"In Italy!" answered Bob.

"You silly idiot, I know that! But where?"

"Ask me another!"

"I'm jolly well fed-up with this!" groaned Bunter. "This ain't the holiday I was expecting! I know the grub's all right, but—"

"Give us a rest!"

"Beast! I'm jolly well going to get out!" yapped Bunter. "If I can pick up a taxi, and get to a railway station, I—Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! What are you cackling at, you beasts?"

"I don't think you'll find a taxi here, Bunter, or a railway station, either," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Looks to me as if we're about sixty or a hundred miles from anywhere."

Dr. Sin came into the cabin, followed by Li Yi, Soo, the steward, and two or three more Chinese.

The juniors stood together, fully expecting attack. But Sin Song only gave them a smile in passing.

The door was opened, and the steps placed in position for leaving the plane. The Chinese descended; and Dr. Sin, after glancing about him, cut off across the hillside at a rapid walk.

The other Chinese loafed idly about—but whatever they had in mind, it was plainly not hostility towards the Greyfriars fellows.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Wun!" exclaimed Bob.

Wun Lung came along from the fore cabin. He gave his friends a cheery grin.

"What's up, Wun?" asked Harry.

"Trouble 'long engine, Sin Song say," answered Wun. "He goey 'long town, plenty long way off, fetchee help."

"Then we're staying here?"

"Me tinkee, stop plenty long time. You likee walkee, stletchee leggee!" suggested Wun. "Uncle O say me goey walkee a piece."

"Right-ho!" said Bob.

The juniors were not averse from a walk, on terra firma, after long hours in the cabin of the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon. So long as Wun came with them, they were glad to stretch their legs.

Billy Bunter rolled after them as they left the plane. He was not fearfully keen on walking; but he was less keen on being left alone among the Chinks.

Li Yi and the rest glanced at the juniors carelessly, but gave them no other attention. They were evidently free to do as they liked.

They walked across the green hillside towards the woods that fringed it on the farther side, and no attempt was made to stop them.

The juniors were sorely puzzled. They did not believe that it was a forced landing; or anything, but one more of Dr. Sin's innumerable tricks. But the object of it was not apparent. Nothing would have induced them to step from the plane without Wun; but Wun was with them, and there was no attempt to separate him from his friends.

It was a wild, picturesque spot in which they found themselves, with no sign, so far as they could see, of human habitation.

Billy Bunter was satisfied when he had covered about a hundred yards, and he sat down on a shady rock to rest.

Not fearfully grieved by the loss of his company, the Famous Five and Wun

Lung rambled on, by shady woods, and along brawling torrents.

It was a couple of hours later that they started back to the plane, for tea, following a track under heavy, overhanging branches.

Bob Cherry uttered a sudden ejaculation.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's a jolly old native at last!"

Ahead of them, tramping in the same direction through the wood, was a tall figure, with thick black hair covered by a red handkerchief tied on in the place of a hat.

The giant plane was in sight in the distance, and the Italian was tramping directly towards it.

"I suppose there's inhabitants about, though we've seen nothing of them," remarked Harry Wharton. "That's somebody spotted the plane, at any rate."

They walked on behind the Italian; and suddenly he seemed to catch their footsteps, and looked sharply round.

He stopped, and his keen black eyes scanned them as they came up, from under heavy black brows.

"Buon giorno, signori!" he said civilly.

"Buon giorno!" answered Wharton, who had picked up the Italian greeting.

The man's sharp eyes scanned and scrutinised them, and they could hardly help noticing how keenly he seemed interested in them.

His hard, dusky, unwashed face, with its ragged black moustache and untrimmed beard, did not impress them favourably. He did not look the kind of native whom they would have liked to meet on the lonely path after dark. But his manner was very civil.

"Parlate Italiano?" he asked.

Wharton smiled and shook his head.

"Son Giovanni Lecchi, signore!" the man added. "Son guida. Speak Engleesh! I signori sono inglese? Yes. I go a message—uomo giallo—yellow man—he give one message to take! Signore O e qui?"

He grinned as he uttered the name, evidently a little amused by the singularity of the Chinese name of "O."

"Oh!" said Harry. "You've got a message for Mr. O from a yellow man! That must be Dr. Sin! Mr. O is on the plane! We're going there."

Giovanni Lecchi nodded and walked on with the juniors.

Apparently Dr. Sin had sent a message to his master by this dusky individual. If he was, as he stated, a guide, he did not look the sort of guide that the Greyfriars fellows would have liked in lonely places.

"I say, you fellows!" Billy Bunter rose from the shady rock, where he had been resting his fat limbs, as the juniors came along. "Where the thump have you been all this time? We're late for tea!"

"You couldn't guzzle without us to watch the performance?" asked Johnny Bull.

"I'm not going on that plane by myself!" grunted Bunter. "I think it's pretty thick to keep a fellow waiting for his tea. Where did you pick up that dirty dago?" he added, blinking at Giovanni.

"You fat chump, shut up!" hissed Bob. "He understands English!"

Giovanni evidently understood, and equally evidently, did not like Bunter's description of him. "Dago" is not a popular word among the Latin races; and, though this particular dago certainly was dirty, he had a natural

disinclination to have the fact pointed out to him.

His black eyes flashed at Bunter, and his dusky hand went to the back of his leather belt, as if in search of a knife.

Harry Wharton hurriedly stepped between him and the fat junior.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. "I say, you fellows, keep that dago off!"

"Non importa — niente!" gasped Wharton, putting it into his best Italian. "E pazzo il piccolo porco."

Giovanni stared at him, grinned, and relinquished the knife without drawing it. He strode on towards the aeroplane.

Billy Bunter was glad to see him go. The flash of ferocity in the man's dark face had quite alarmed the fat Owl.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. "I say, that beastly dago looked jolly savage!"

"You fat image! Can't you be civil in a foreign country?" snapped Wharton. "The man's got a messago for Mr. O."

"Well, I don't like his looks!" grunted Bunter. "What was that you were gabbling at him in Italian?"

"I told him not to mind, because the little pig was potty!" answered Harry.

"What?" yelled Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you cheeky beast!" roared Bunter, in great wrath. "Look here, if you think I'm going to stand that sort of thing, you're jolly well mistaken—see? I'm not going to stand—"

"Right in one!" said Bob Cherry. "You're going to sit!"

And a shove on his podgy waistcoat caused Bunter to sit—quite suddenly.

Bump!

"Yoo-hooooop!"

Bunter sat, and roared.

The juniors walked on towards the landing-place, leaving him to roar.

They saw Giovanni Lecchi stop and speak to the Chinese near the plane.

Li Yi led him up the steps, and he disappeared into the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon.

The juniors followed in, Billy Bunter panting after them, his fat face red with wrath and indignation.

The juniors were at tea in their cabin, and Soo was supplying Billy Bunter's multifarious requirements with activity and unfailing politeness when the Italian came back from the fore cabin with Li Yi.

He glanced at the juniors in passing them, and went down the steps from the plane. A few minutes later, from the windows, they saw him disappear into the shadowy wood.

He passed from their sight and from their thoughts, and they went on with their tea, little dreaming how soon they were to see the black-browed Giovanni again, and under what circumstances.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Wants a Rest!

O BO, with a swish and a rustle of costly silks, stepped, slow and stately, into the aft cabin.

Through the windows of the resting plane the red sunset streamed over the Calabrian Mountains. The juniors, after tea, were discussing another ramble over the woody hill, to which Billy Bunter raised objections.

Bunter did not want to walk, neither did he want to be left alone among a lot of Chinks, and the only alternative was for the other fellows to sit around and do nothing, so long as it pleased William George Bunter so to do.

At sitting around and doing nothing Billy Bunter was more adept than the Famous Five.

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Argument was proceeding when O Bo entered the cabin, and Wun Lung jumped up at once to salute his uncle with great respect.

The Famous Five followed his example.

The ancient Chinaman bowed gravely to the schoolboys. His old face, like very old yellow ivory, expressed little or nothing, but his black wrinkled eyes were very keen.

To Billy Bunter, the old Celestial was rather a figure of fun; he had seen figures exactly like O Bo on Chinese jars. To the Famous Five, he was an old gentleman to be treated with respect. To Wun Lung, he was an elderly relative, whose lightest word was law—unless, indeed, it came into conflict with parental authority, which with a Chinaman came before everything else.

Even Bob Cherry, who suspected—or, rather, knew—that O Bo was behind the kidnapping scheme, could not regard him with dislike or without respect.

He had guessed that old Mr. O had a reason for his actions which seemed to him good—a Chinese reason which, to the Western mind, seemed rather "cracked," but which was serious enough to a Chinese.

But the other fellows, as they looked at the grave old Chinaman, felt less and less sure that Bob's belief was well founded. They did not, in fact, quite know what to think, and, in that state of dubiety, they treated O Bo with great respect, and hoped for the best.

"Please give me your arm, my Little Pink Toad, to walk!" said Mr. O.

In private conversation Mr. O. talked to Wun in Chinese; but in the presence of the English schoolboys he used English, from motives of politeness.

Apparently, Mr. O was going to walk in the cool of the evening, which was natural enough after a day in the fore cabin of the plane and as the departure of the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon was indefinitely postponed.

Likewise, it was natural enough for the ancient gentleman to require the company of his dutiful nephew.

Natural as it was, Bob Cherry did not mean to let the Chinese junior get out of his sight in Mr. O's company.

Whether O Bo asked him or not, Bob was going to join in that walk. He gave his friends a quick glance, which they understood. But Mr. O went on at once:

"Will your honourable and beneficent friends walk with us, my Little Pink Toad?"

"You fellee comey?" said Wun Lung.

"Yes, rather!" said Harry. "We were just thinking of taking a walk, sir."

Mr. O bowed gravely and passed on to the doorway, leaning a little on Wun Lung's arm. Li Yi and Soo helped him down the steps.

"I say, you fellows," squeaked Bunter, as the Famous Five were following—"I say, you're not going to leave me here with all these Chinks!"

"Come on, lazybones!" said Bob, over his shoulder.

"I'm tired!" hooted Bunter. "Look here, they jolly well don't want you! Why the dickens can't you stick in and have a rest? What the thump do you always want to be moving about for?"

Without bothering to answer that question, Harry Wharton & Co. followed the old Chinaman and Wun down the steps from the plane.

"Beasts!" hooted Bunter.

He half-rose, and sat down again.

Bunter had done well at tea—perhaps a little too well. Any fellow watching Bunter at tea might have supposed that

it was not merely tea, but dinner and supper as well that the fat Owl was packing away.

Loaded over the Plimsoll line, the Owl of the Remove was disinclined for exertion.

He did not like being left alone among the Chinks. But laziness supervened, and he stayed where he was. He blinked morosely from the window, watching the slow and stately presence of Mr. O across the green hillside in the direction of the shadowy wood.

Li Yi came up the steps and looked into the doorway, with a peculiar expression in his slanting eyes.

Bunter blinked at him uneasily.

He was not so afraid of Li as of Dr. Sin, but he knew that Li had helped Sin Song in the kidnapping attempt in Paris. He knew that Li had a knife about him, and did not like thinking of that knife.

However, he supposed that Li was going to pass through to return to the fore cabin, so he remained where he was, anxious to see the last of him.

Li Yi did not pass through. He stayed in the aft cabin, his black, slanting eyes on Bunter.

That Li wanted him to follow the rest of the party, or that he had any motive for wanting him to do so, Bunter did not guess. He watched the yellow man uneasily, with growing tremors, and he gave a gasp as Li took a knife from its sheath and felt the keen edge with a yellow thumb.

The Chinaman did not speak, but he looked at Bunter as he felt the edge of the knife.

Bunter jumped up.

The most powerful disinclination to exertion would not have kept Bunter alone on the plane, with Li Yi only a few yards from him, knife in hand, feeling the razor-like edge.

The fat Owl fairly scuttled to the door and scuttled out. In his hurry he missed the top step, and did the rest in one.

There was a heavy bump as he landed on Italy, and a loud yell.

Li grinned, and put away the knife, which he certainly had had no intention of handling on Bunter. The sight of it had been enough.

Billy Bunter scrambled up and rushed after the walking party, his fat little legs going like clockwork.

"I say, you fellows, stop for me!" he yelled.

The juniors looked round.

"What on earth's the row?" asked Bob, as Bunter came panting up.

"Beast! Leaving a fellow alone with a gang of murdering Chinks!" gasped Bunter.

"Shut up, fathead!"

"Beast!"

Mr. O walked on, slow and stately. Wun Lung gave the ancient gentleman dutiful assistance.

The Famous Five walked behind with Bunter.

The pace set by Mr. O was leisurely enough even for Bunter. It was barely a quarter of a mile to the wood, but nearly half an hour had elapsed by the time they reached the shady trees.

That leisurely progress suited Bunter, but it was a little irksome to the Famous Five. However, they patiently accommodated their pace to that of the old Chinese.

At the edge of the wood Mr. O paused for a few moments, as if debating in his ancient mind whether to proceed farther or turn back.

Finally he walked on, under the thick, shady branches that shut out the hot, red glare of the Italian sunset.

But at a little distance in the wood



The dusky rascals crowded round Harry Wharton & Co., their knives gleaming. "We're not giving in!" muttered Bob Cherry. "This is a trick to get hold of Wun Lung—and we've been fools enough to walk into the trap! Stick it out!"

he stopped where a fallen tree-trunk lay. He sat down on the log.

The juniors came to a halt. "I am tired, my Little Pink Toad," said Mr. O. "I will rest for a time. Walk on with your friends, and I will await you here."

The wish of an elder was a command to a Chinese boy. Wun walked on, and the Famous Five, rather glad to accelerate a little, walked on with him.

Billy Bunter blinked after them, and blinked at Mr. O on the log. Bunter did not want to accelerate. Bunter wanted to halt. And the ancient O Bo was a "Chink" of whom even Billy Bunter was not afraid.

So Bunter plumped down on the other end of the log to take a rest also.

"Come on, Bunter!" called out Bob Cherry.

"Shan't!" called back Bunter, far from politely.

Mr. O glanced at him.

"Will it not please you to walk with your friends?" he asked.

"I'm tired!" answered Bunter.

"You comee, Buntree," said Wun Lung, to whom it was quite clear that his elderly relative did not want Bunter's company.

It was clear enough to Bunter, for that matter; but that did not bother Bunter. The fat junior wanted to sit down, and that was that!

"I'm staying here," answered Bunter calmly. "You fellows can walk all over Italy, if you like; I'm not going to."

"You'd better come on, you fat ass!" said Harry Wharton, frowning.

"Shan't!"

"You lazy, loafing lobster!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Yah!"

Mr. O, sitting like an image carved in yellow ivory, took no further notice of Bunter. The juniors gave him expres-

sive looks, which were quite wasted on the fat Owl.

They walked on at last, and Billy Bunter blinked after them through his big spectacles, grinning, and settled down to rest his weary, fat limbs.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Fight in the Forest!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"What—"

"Look out!"

The juniors were strolling through a shady aisle of the wood. Red rays of the sunset gleamed through the foliage overhead.

The place seemed absolutely solitary.

With the exception of Giovanni Lecchi, whom they had already forgotten, the juniors had seen no inhabitant since the plane had landed in that remote nook of the mountains of Calabria.

Neither did they expect to see anyone, and it startled Bob to catch sight of a dusky, bearded face looking out through the thickets.

The next moment there was a rush of footsteps.

From the trees and thickets a dozen wild-looking figures started out, and before the juniors quite realised that they were no longer alone they were surrounded.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Nugent.

"What the thump!" gasped Johnny Bull.

The six schoolboys drew together. A dozen dusky Italians surrounded them, and in some of the dusky hands were drawn knives. Among them was the man they had seen before—Giovanni Lecchi.

Harry Wharton set his lips.

Brigandage, once a thriving industry in Italy, was a thing of the past. But no doubt it lingered here and there in remote spots when opportunity offered. This looked like it!

"Stick together, you fellows!" said Harry quietly. "Let's see what they want. That man Lecchi speaks English."

"If they think they're going to rob us—" began Johnny Bull, in a deep growl. He clenched his fists in readiness.

Giovanni stepped towards the juniors with a knife about a foot long in his dusky, grubby hand.

He scanned the party, as if looking for someone who was not there.

"Dove e il porco?" he snapped.

Apparently he was inquiring for Bunter.

"He is not here—non e qui!" said Harry, staring at the man. He could hardly suppose that this ambush in the wood was due to Giovanni's resentment of the fat Owl's reference to him as a "dirty dago." But it was clear that the black-browed man wanted Bunter.

Giovanni scowled.

"That one, he no come wiz you?" he asked.

"No; he stayed behind to rest."

"Niente! More late, I will take. Si, si! You, signori, you come!"

"Come!" repeated Wharton. "What do you mean?"

The black-browed man grinned.

"You come wiz me," he explained.

"Andiamo, signori. You was prisoners. No have fear. Ma andiamo."

"What the thump does the silly ass mean?" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "We're jolly well not going with that crew!"

"What on earth is the game?" exclaimed Frank Nugent.

Bob Cherry gritted his teeth.

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He fancied he knew what the game was, and why O Bo had taken that evening walk from the landing-place.

"They've got us, you fellows!" he muttered. "That villain Sin—"

"Sin!" repeated Harry blankly.

"Can't you see? That message he sent back had nothing to do with the engines. Can't you guess what it was—now?" breathed Bob.

"Oh!" gasped Harry.

"You come!" repeated Giovanni, flourishing his knife. "Andiamo! Kill with one knife if not! Capite? Andiamo, signori!"

"I'm not going!" said Johnny Bull stolidly. "I don't believe they'll dare to use their knives; but I'm chancing it, anyhow. They won't get me so long as I can punch a dirty face!"

Giovanni rapped out an order in Italian to his tattered followers. The whole dusky crowd closed more closely round the Greyfriars party. Knives gleamed on all sides in the shafts of red sunlight that came through the tree-tops. It was strangely, grotesquely like a scene from a film, but it was deadly reality.

"We're not giving in!" muttered Bob. "This is a trick to get hold of Wun, and we've been fools enough to walk into the trap! Stick it out!"

A grubby hand was laid on Johnny Bull's shoulder.

"Hands off!" roared Johnny.

And as the grip tightened, Johnny Bull bit out, straight from the shoulder.

His clenched knuckles landed on a stubby chin, and the Italian, with a yell, went over backwards, as if he had been shot.

There was a howl of anger from the rest, and they closed in on the juniors with a savage rush.

The next moment the Greyfriars fellows were fighting against heavy odds.

Whether this was a scheme of Dr. Sin's, or whether the lawless gang were bent on capturing them for robbery or ransom, they did not know; but they were not going to be taken away into the depths of the forest if they could help it.

But they had no chance against the odds.

Had the dusky rascals used their knives, the resistance of the schoolboys would have been overcome in a very few moments. But the knives disappeared when the struggle started. Lawless and ruffianly as the gang looked, they did not want to shed blood. Neither did they need to use their weapons. There were six of the juniors against a dozen sinewy men, and the fight was hopeless from the start.

For three or four minutes it raged, and hefty blows were given and received; but it could only end one way.

One by one the panting juniors were overpowered, and their hands bound behind their backs.

In a breathless, gasping, and enraged group, they stood in the midst of the gang of dusky bravos, some of whom eyed them evilly and threateningly. The juniors had been overcome, but most of Giovanni's gang had had some hard knocks, and there were damaged noses and darkened eyes.

"Andiamo!" snarled Giovanni, dabbing at a streaming nose.

And the juniors, each of them grasped by the arm, were hurried away into the shadowy depths of the forest.

At a little distance from the spot where they had been seized, Giovanni called to the man who was holding Wun Lung by the arm.

"Pietro!"

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The ruffian looked round at him. Giovanni spattered out rapid Italian, which the juniors did not understand.

But they could guess its purport when Pietro dragged Wun Lung aside, and started in a different direction.

If they had doubted before, they could not doubt now, for clearly the Chinese junior was to be separated from his friends.

"Oh, the rotters!" panted Bob.

Wun Lung wriggled in the grasp of Pietro.

"You lettee go!" he exclaimed. "This li'll Chinese stop 'long friends! You lettee this li'll Chinese stop 'long friends blong him!"

Unheeding, Pietro dragged him away.

Bob Cherry wrenched his arm loose from the hand that held it, and, bound as he was, made a desperate attempt to reach Wun Lung.

Immediately he was seized by two or three pairs of hands and dragged back. He strove desperately, but in vain.

Wun Lung stared back as he was dragged away among the trees. The next moment he was gone from their sight in the rough grasp of Pietro.

Giovanni and the others hurried the juniors along the track. They stumbled along, roughly pulled and shoved when they stumbled. Only too well, now, they knew that they were to be prisoners in the dark Calabrian forest till the plane had taken off again—with Wun Lung! They could not help him now.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Prisoners of the Cave!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. stumbled on in the midst of the dusky crew.

Where they were being taken, they had no idea—except that it must be to some hiding-place where they could be held prisoners, as long as it suited the plans of O Bo and Sin Song.

They stumbled wearily on, noticing, after a time, that the gang diminished in number. Every now and then, one of the dusky ruffians disappeared through the trees and left them.

They knew now as well as if they had been told that Sin Song had laid this cunning scheme, and hired Giovanni to carry it out. No doubt Giovanni, in his turn, had called on a number of his associates for assistance, which they were willing enough to render for a few lire each. Now that the schoolboys were bound prisoners, they were wanted no longer, and they went their own ways, to attend to their own business, whatever it was.

The juniors understood that; but they drew little hope from the fact that there were fewer enemies about them.

Their hands were tied behind their backs with knotted cords of leather, and they had not the slightest chance of getting loose. Giovanni needed no help in keeping them prisoners, when they were hardly able to move a finger.

One by one, the dusky gang dropped off, till only one of the crew remained with Giovanni—a bull-necked, swarthy ruffian whom he addressed as Marco.

With their hands free, the Famous Five would gladly have undertaken to deal with Giovanni and Marco, and make short work of them.

"If a fellow could use his fists—" breathed Johnny Bull.

"They're not likely to give us a chance, old chap!" said Harry. He had wrenched and wrenched at the

cords on his wrists again and again, with no result but to make his arms ache. "They've got us safe enough!"

"The safeness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But while there is life there is a bird in the bush, as the English proverb remarks."

The juniors grinned—cheered, for a moment by that English proverb!

A mile had been covered, by winding ways through the forest, when the party reached the steep bank of a torrent.

Even had they escaped from the lawless rascals, it was doubtful to the juniors whether they could have found their way back to the anchorage of the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon.

The thick, tangled forest was trackless to their eyes, and there was no sign to enable them to pick up the way they had come. Not that there was any chance of escaping—even Bob had almost given up hope of that.

It was a steep descent into the ravine cut out by the torrent. The juniors stumbled down the rugged, stony declivity, loose stones rolling from their feet and splashing into the water below.

Thirty feet down, the water foamed and bubbled and murmured among the rocks. Bob Cherry's foot slipped on a loose stone and he fell. With his hands bound behind him, he could make no effort to save himself, and he rolled helplessly down the steep slope, and slid into shallow water at the bottom.

Luckily, it was shallow, and he scrambled out, breathless, and drenched almost to the skin. Dozens of stones, loosened by his rolling, splashed into the stream.

Giovanni burst into a laugh, and Marco showed discoloured teeth in a grin.

Bob's mishap seemed to amuse the two ruffians.

"Hurt, old chap?" asked Harry, when they rejoined Bob on the edge of the torrent.

"Oh, a bump or two!" said Bob. He breathed hard. "By gum, I'd like to have my hands loose, and give these scoundrels something to grin at!"

But there was no chance of that.

Giovanni and Marco pushed the schoolboys on their way up the bank of the torrent. But they were close to their journey's end now.

Hardly a dozen yards more were covered, when they stopped at the opening of a deep, dark cave in the side of the ravine.

"Entrate!" said Giovanni. "You go in!"

The juniors stumbled in, over the rugged floor of the cave. This, clearly, was their destination, and here they were to remain.

The cave was deep and shadowy. The rocks arched over their heads, a dozen feet above. Loose boulders were strewn about the cave. A dozen feet back from the entrance they stopped. The cave extended a few yards farther into the rocky hill.

"Here you stop, signori!" said Giovanni. "Soon there is another—the little fat pig!" His eyes flashed at the mention of Bunter, and he half-drew his knife. Evidently the fat Owl's words still rankled. "Soon he come, also he stop—but him I beat—oh, yes, I beat him with a stick! One man, I kill him with a knife—one boy, I beat him with stick! Si, si! He say dirty dago! Yes! I beat him with one stick!"

"How long are you going to keep us

here, Giovanni?" asked Harry Wharton quietly.

The bravo shrugged his shoulders. "Non so! You stay in a cave till uomo giallo—yellow man—he say! He pay me many lire! He give orders! Si, si!"

He turned to speak to Marco. "That means we're to stick here till that scoundrel Sin tells him to let us loose!" said Bob.

"Which won't be till after the plane's taken off—with Wun on it!" said Nugent. "That rotter's beaten us at the finish!"

"He couldn't have brought it off without old O to help!" said Bob bitterly. "We let that old graven image walk us right into the trap!"

"You think—?" began Johnny Bull.

"Oh, don't be an ass!" Bob's temper was suffering a little. "Isn't it plain enough now? They picked out the most solitary place they could find for a landing—and Sin cleared off, to get hold of some gang of footpads—and set them on us. Easy enough, when he had plenty of money to spend. Those scoundrels would stick us with their knives for an extra half-crown each!"

"Looks like it now," admitted Johnny; "and the yellow blighter sent Giovanni to tell old O that all was ready for him to walk us into the trap."

Giovanni, having finished his talk with the bull-necked man, left the cave, without another word to the juniors.

They heard his footsteps ringing along the rocky ravine, and then there was silence.

Giovanni was gone—to add Bunter to his bag! The rascals had expected to capture Bunter with the rest, and it was only his fat laziness that had kept him out of their hands so far.

That Bunter would be snaffled like a fat pigeon, the juniors had no doubt.

Not that it mattered very much—Bunter could not have helped Wun.

The bull-necked man came to the group of juniors, after Giovanni was gone, and carefully examined the knotted cord on their wrists. Evidently he was left to watch them, and was going to take no chances.

If the prisoners had had some faint, lingering hope of getting loose and dealing with him, they had to give it up now. For Marco, taking a long cord, knotted it in turn round each of them, and knotted the ends to points of rock. The rope allowed them to sit down, but not to move from the spot where they were tied—and secured them at a distance from one another. Even the almost hopeless hope of trying their teeth on each other's bonds had to be abandoned now.

Grinning with satisfaction, the bull-necked rascal left them. He sat at the mouth of the cave and drew a flask of red wine from some recess of his dingy garments.

The sound of gurgling in the bull-neck mingled with the gurgle of the torrent among the rocks without.

Having finished the red wine—at least two pints of it—Marco lighted a foul-smelling cigar and smoked it to the end.

During that time the juniors sat on the rugged floor of the cave in grim, savage silence. Every now and then, from without, came a splash in the water as some loose stone rolled into the stream from the steep banks. But no other sound, save the murmur of the water, broke the silence.

The bull-necked man rose—a little unsteadily.

The quart of raw red wine seemed to

have dizzied him a little. He came over to the juniors, and once more examined their bonds—breathing over them the fumes of wine and tobacco.

As Frank Nugent involuntarily made a movement of disgust, he scowled, and kicked the junior in the ribs.

After which, the ruffian spread his tattered cloak on the floor of the cave in the shade from the red sunset that streamed in at the entrance, stretched himself on it, and snored.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Beastly for Bunter!

BILLY BUNTER, sitting on the fallen log, leaning back against the trunk of a tree behind him, was feeling quite comfortable.

He blinked along at Mr. O once or twice; but the old Chinaman's look did not encourage conversation, and Bunter did not speak.

The fat Owl was quite satisfied to sit there and rest in the shade, while less sensible fellows fagged about in a heat that was almost tropical. It was an hour since the juniors had disappeared through the dusky aisles of the forest, when Mr. O made a move.

He rose from the log and started walking back towards the landing place of the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon without a glance or a word to Bunter.

Bunter blinked after him.

He was waiting there for the juniors to come back; and so, he supposed, had Mr. O been. If so, Mr. O Bo had given it up and decided to return without them.

From where he sat on the log, Bunter could see open hillside, where the plane lay at rest, and moving figures, though they were too far off for recognition.

He blinked after Mr. O as he went, quite indifferent whether the ancient gentleman went or stayed. Bunter, certainly, did not intend to return to the plane without the other fellows. He gave a reminiscent shiver when he thought of Li Yi's slanting eyes, and the yellow thumb feeling the edge of the knife!

Bunter had no intention of moving


until Harry Wharton & Co. came along again.

But, having watched Mr. O disappear on the hillside, he blinked round in the other direction, and saw something that—undoubtedly—Mr. O's much sharper eyes had seen, before he stirred. And when Bunter saw a dark face, surmounted by a red cap, among the trees, he jumped up from the log as if it had suddenly become red-hot, with a gasp of dismay.

It was Giovanni—and he was coming through the wood, directly towards the spot where Bunter stood blinking at him.

The fat Owl had forgotten, or almost forgotten, the existence of the man he had called a dirty dago. Of what

(Continued on next page.)



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had happened deeper in the wood, he had not the remotest idea or suspicion.

It was hardly an hour since Harry Wharton & Co. had left him there, and it was not likely to occur to him that in that brief space of time they had been ambushed in the forest, seized, and dragged away to a hidden cave as prisoners.

Neither did it occur to his fat intellect that O Bo, his keen old eyes having spotted the bandit at a distance, had left the spot to be off the scene when Giovanni dealt with Bunter.

Bunter did not, in fact, think at all! He blinked at the dusky, black-browed Italian, at first in dismay, tintured with alarm—and then with deepening alarm and terror.

Short-sighted as he was, he caught the glint in Giovanni's black eyes, and noted that he gripped a stick in his hand.

And the dusky ruffian was making straight for Bunter.

The flash of ferocity in the man's face when he had called him a "dirty dago," had scared Bunter—but not so deeply as he was scared now.

Bunter was not quick on the uptake—but he could see that the ruffian was coming for him, and he did not need telling what he was going to do with the stick when he reached him. Further than that, the fat Owl suspected nothing—but that was enough to throw him into a state of terrified alarm.

Giovanni was hardly fifteen feet away when Bunter spotted him.

Escape by flight seemed hopeless—but there was nothing else for it, and Bunter started to run towards the distant plane. Even the Chinks, even Li Yi with his knife, did not alarm him so much as that savage-faced, black-browed Italian, alone in the shady forest.

There was a shout behind him as he ran.

Giovanni was calling to him in Italian to stop.

Bunter was not likely to heed. He pounded breathlessly along the woodland path, towards the open hillside ahead—and behind him sounded the heavy pounding of the bandit's footsteps in pursuit.

The fat Owl had not the ghost of a chance in a race, and he could not help being aware of it—but he pounded desperately on.

In a few minutes the bandit's heavy tread was close behind him, and a dirty, dusky hand gripped a fat shoulder and swung Bunter round.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

Giovanni gave him a savage grin, holding him with his left, and brandishing the stick with his right.

"Dirty dago, you call!" he said, showing his teeth through his ragged black moustache and beard. "Si, si! Porco inglese—Engleesh peeg—I beat you with one stick before I take! Yes! Oh, yes!"

Billy Bunter blinked at him, like a fat rabbit fascinated by a serpent.

Of Giovanni's further purpose he knew nothing—but he knew that he was going to be beaten.

As the stick swished in the air, about to descend, Billy Bunter, in sheer desperation, and hardly knowing what he did, hit out with a fat fist.

That fat fist arrived unexpectedly, for certainly it had not occurred to Giovanni, for a moment, that he had any resistance to expect from the fat, frightened schoolboy.

It landed on Giovanni's rather prominent nose, on the same spot where

Bob Cherry's knuckles had landed, nearly an hour since, and where the bravo still had a pain. And it landed with all Bunter's weight and desperation behind it.

Taken by surprise, Giovanni staggered back, releasing the fat Owl as he staggered; and, losing his footing, went down with a bump!

The stick flew from his hand as he clasped both hands to his nose, which was streaming red again.

Bunter gave him one terrified blink, frightened out of his fat wits at what he had done. Then he bolted through the trees.

He did not head for the open hillside this time. He knew now, if he had not known before, that he had no chance in a foot race. His hope was to dodge out of sight in the trees and tangled thickets.

As he went, he cast a terrified blink over a fat shoulder—to see Giovanni stagger to his feet, the rage of a demon in his face, one hand to his streaming nose, the other jerking a knife from the back of his belt.

Bunter flew on!

It was not the stick he had to fear now—it was the knife! Frantic with terror, he flew!

Panting, perspiring, spluttering for breath, the fat junior ran on, and dodged, and wound, and ducked, and twisted through the thickets and tangled bushes and trees.

Where he was running, he did not know, and cared little. There was only one thought in his mind—to get out of reach of the murderous ruffian behind.

Crash on crash sounded in the thickets as the bravo dashed in savage pursuit.

Had Bunter emerged from the wood in the open, the bandit would have had him in a couple of minutes. But in the thick wood the bandit could not see Bunter, and was guided only by the noise he made in his flight.

Rustling bushes and breaking twigs were his guide, and the chase depended rather on hearing than on speed.

Perhaps it was fortunate for Bunter that wind failed him utterly, and, unable to take another step, he stopped to get his breath, crouching in a thick bush.

His fat heart was pounding so loudly that he fancied that the bandit might hear it. He strove to suppress his breathing.

Terribly close, he heard Giovanni. But the sound stopped—and there was silence.

Bunter hardly breathed as he listened.

Terror sharpened his faculties, and he understood that the bandit, who could not see him, was listening for a sound from him.

He was not likely to make a sound!

With humping heart and eyes popping in terror behind his spectacles, he listened—and at length he heard Giovanni's footsteps again. But to his immense relief, the sound was not approaching him.

"Oh crikey!" breathed Bunter.

He realised that the ruffian had lost him and was searching through the wood for him. At any moment the dusky face and red cap might meet his terrified eyes—and he crouched in terror and listened.

Once or twice the sound of tramping feet and a harsh voice cursing in Italian, seemed closer; but all sounds died away at last, and he knew that Giovanni, for the time at least, had missed him, though he had no doubt that the bandit was still hunting.

Palpitating in every fat limb, Bunter dragged himself to his feet,

To get to a safe distance from that murderous villain was his one thought, and he had a faint hope of falling in with Harry Wharton & Co. in the forest.

He could not have found his way back to the landing-place of the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon, if he had thought of it—the bewildering trees shut off the view in every direction—neither could he guess which was the direction the juniors had taken. They had followed a broad, open aisle of the forest when they had left him with O Bo; but where it was Bunter had not the faintest idea.

All he could do was to plunge away with his fat back towards the spot where he had last heard the bandit—hoping that, whatever happened, he was getting farther and farther away from Giovanni.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter in the Forest!

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He came to a sudden halt.

How long he had been wearily tramping, what distance he had covered, where he was, he did not know.

Trees and thickets were round him, and he could see nothing but trunks and foliage. But a sound reached his ears—the sound of a voice—and he stopped, trembling in every fat limb.

If it was Giovanni, he had almost run into him, for the voice was ahead of him, the speaker only separated from him by a screen of foliage.

He listened, with thumping heart. To his utter amazement, he recognised the silky tones of Dr. Sin.

Even Dr. Sin, much as Bunter dreaded him, was an improvement on Giovanni.

The fat junior was relieved as well as startled and astonished. He had supposed Dr. Sin to be far away—gone to some town at a distance across the hills. He had not, in fact, thought about him since he had left the plane, and had no remote suspicion how the sleek and smiling Chinaman had been occupied.

It was Dr. Sin's voice that came through the foliage—but he was not speaking in his flowing English. He was speaking Chinese; Bunter knew that it was that language, though he did not understand a word of it.

That meant that there were other Chinese on the spot; and Bunter stood still and silent, listening.

To his amazement, the voice of Wun Lung answered, speaking also in Chinese, in tones of angry scorn and contempt.

"Oh lor'!" breathed Bunter.

He could have groaned. He might have hoped that Dr. Sin would guide him back to the plane; but he guessed at once what this meant—that the Chinese junior had fallen into the kidnapper's hands in the forest.

Deeply thankful now that he was out of sight, the fat junior listened—to a flow of Chinese, alternately in Dr. Sin's smooth, silky tones, and in the angry tones of Wun Lung. Then a third voice broke in, speaking in Italian:

"Si, signore! Si!"

It was not Giovanni's voice. It was if Bunter had known it, the voice of the man Pietro, who had taken Wun away from his friends when the gang were driving them to their hiding-place.

As he blinked at the screen of foliage in front of him, Bunter discerned an interstice in it, and applied his eyes and his spectacles to the scene before him.

Hardly six or seven feet away, Dr.

Sin was standing, with his back to him. Wun Lung stood facing him—his hands bound together behind his back.

Standing beside the Chinese junior, with a dusky hand on his shoulder, was a swarthy Italian, whom Bunter had never seen before—though Harry & Co. had seen him.

Wun was a prisoner, and there was no sign of the other fellows.

Bunter did not, of course, know that this was the spot where it had been arranged for one of the gang to lead Wun, and hand him over to Sin Song. But what he saw, told him that the swarthy native had made Wun a prisoner, and was at the orders of the Chinaman.

"*Si, signore!*" repeated Pietro, and he grasped the little Chinese with both hands, evidently to hold him incapable of movement for some purpose.

With his hands tied, Wun could make little resistance; but he struggled, his dark eyes flashing with rage.

Bunter watched, spellbound. To show himself would have been useless, if he had thought of it. Either Sin Song or Pietro could have dealt with him with one hand.

Wun Lung's helpless struggles ceased in the grasp of the bandit.

From an inside pocket, Dr. Sin drew a little leather case, which he opened with care. He drew some kind of a pad from the interior, and a faint scent from it reached Bunter, and he knew what it was.

Dr. Sin spoke again, in silky, apologetic tones. Then, with a steady and ruthless hand, he pressed the pad over Wun's nose and mouth as the swarthy ruffian held him helpless.

Billy Bunter, spellbound with horror and fear, watched.

He knew that Wun was being chloroformed, whether to leave him powerless in Dr. Sin's hands or for some other purpose.

Very quickly the Chinese junior was unconscious, and Dr. Sin drew the pad away, and replaced it in the case.

He made a sign to the Italian, who had watched the scene with utter indifference in his swarthy, stubbly face.

"*Si, signore!*" said Pietro.

Bunter's heart missed a beat as he saw the bravo draw a knife.

But Pietro used it only to cut Wun's bonds. Now that he was unconscious, it was unnecessary for the Chinese boy to remain bound.

Pietro replaced the knife at the back of his tattered trousers.

Dr. Sin stood looking at Wun for a few moments, and then lifted the unconscious Chinese to his shoulder.

Plump as he was, Dr. Sin was a strong man, and the little Chinese's weight was hardly more than a trifle to him.

With Wun on his shoulder, Dr. Sin turned away and tramped through the forest, disappearing in a few moments from Bunter's eyes.

Where he was going Bunter had no idea, and it did not occur to him that Dr. Sin was going back to the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon.

He was gone—and Pietro stood staring after him.

Bunter did not stir. Pietro was as terrifying to his eyes as Giovanni. He waited for the ruffian to go before he made a move.

Pietro stopped to light a cigarette before he turned to leave the spot. But he turned at last, and to Bunter's utter horror, turned in Bunter's direction.

In a moment, the dusky hand was pushing aside the foliage that screened Bunter, and Pietro would have walked into the fat Owl had he not jumped back.



As Harry Wharton & Co. were stumbling down the rugged, stony declivity, Bob Cherry's foot slipped on a loose stone, and he fell. With his hands bound behind him, he could make no effort to save himself. His mishap seemed to amuse the Italians, for they burst into a laugh.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

"*Cospetto!*" stuttered Pietro, in amazement.

He stared blankly at Bunter. He had never seen him before, but he did not need telling that this was the member of the schoolboy party who had been missing, when they had been caught in the ambush.

He stared—and then made a leap forward with a grasping hand.

Billy Bunter did not wait for the hand to grasp—he plunged away frantically through the wood.

Whether the ruffian pursued him or not, Bunter never knew!

He ran, and ran, and ran, every sound of the forest a pursuing footstep to his fat ears.

Over the tree-tops, the Italian sunset glowed with gold and red; but under the thick branches it was deeply dusky; and Bunter, as he ran, and plunged, and panted, and bounded, hardly saw where he was going.

Suddenly the ground seemed to fall away under his feet, and he found himself stumbling and rolling.

He gave a terrified squeak as he went, catching wildly at bushes and twigs, and dragging them away as he rolled. Then, with a splash, he landed in flowing water.

"Oooogh!" gurgled the hapless Owl.

He scrambled wildly up. It was shallow water, hardly a foot deep—a brawling mountain torrent, coming down from the Calabrian mountains. Drenched and dripping, the fat Owl stood with the water swishing round his fat calves.

He blinked dizzily up the steep bank through wet spectacles. The fall had shaken him, but had not damaged him otherwise.

He listened in an anguish of apprehension for the footsteps of Pietro. But no sound reached his fat ears save the rippling of the water.

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(Continued from page 13.)

"Oh crikey!" groaned Bunter.

The bank was steep to climb—neither did the fat Owl think of climbing it where he had fallen, with Pietro somewhere in the forest above.

He only stayed to recover his breath, and then started tramping down the stream, with the idea of clambering out of the ravine at a safe distance.

If Pietro had been hunting him, his fall into the ravine had thrown the bandit off the track. There was no sound or sign of him, and Billy Bunter realised, at last, that he was no longer in danger.

Tramping wearily down the rugged ravine, sometimes on the rocky bank and sometimes wading in shallow water, he blinked up, watching for an accessible spot where he could clamber out. And as he rolled wearily past the opening of a cave in the side of the ravine, he jumped almost clear of the ground, as a sudden, startled, but familiar voice fell on his ears:

"Great pip, Bunter!"

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Turning the Tables!

"BUNTER!"

Five voices uttered that name in amazed tones.

Harry Wharton & Co. could scarcely believe their eyes.

Sitting at the back of the cave, with clouded faces and heavy hearts, listening to the deep snore of the ruffian stretched at a little distance, they watched the mouth of the cave where the red sunset was deepening to dusk. Rocks, red in the sun, glistening splashing water, met their eyes. They saw nothing else, and expected to see nothing else. And when a fat figure rolled across their line of vision, they stared in utter wonder—wondering whether it really was Billy Bunter that they saw, or whether they were dreaming.

"Bunter!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"Bunter!" breathed Nugent.

"The esteemed and idiotic Bunter!" gasped Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh.

"Great pip!"

"Bunter!"

The fat Owl of the Remove, equally astonished, blinked into the cave through his big spectacles.

If Harry Wharton & Co. could scarcely believe their eyes at this unexpected meeting, neither could Bunter. His little round eyes seemed to pop through his spectacles at the sight of the five juniors, sitting in the dusk, bound and helpless.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. "I say, you fellows— Oh jiminy!"

"Quiet!" called out Bob softly.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"There's a man on watch here—"

"Oh!"

"He's asleep. For the love of Mike, don't wake him!"

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"Oh!" gasped Bunter again.

He blinked uneasily into the cave. He was glad—enormously relieved—to see the Famous Five again. But as his eyes fell on the shaggy ruffian stretched on the cloak, his fat heart quaked.

The prisoners looked at Marco, hardly breathing in their anxiety.

He was in a deep sleep; he had not stirred, and he had snored incessantly since he had lain down on the cloak. They had no doubt that the flask of red wine deepened his slumbers. But if the sound of voices in the cave had awakened him—

It was not likely, for the juniors had talked every now and then, and Marco had not stirred. But so much depended on it now that their hearts ached with anxiety as they watched him.

He did not stir.

Uninterrupted, his heavy snore went on.

They could make no sign to Bunter. They had to risk speaking. Harry Wharton spoke in a whisper:

"Bunter, not a sound—"

"Eh?"

"Not a sound." Wharton raised his voice a little. "Quiet, for goodness' sake! The brute's been drinking, and I don't think he will wake. But for goodness' sake, not a sound!"

"Oh crikey! I—I say—"

"Step in as softly as you can. Get us loose, and we'll handle that scoundrel fast enough!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

He stood in the mouth of the cave, blinking uncertainly. To reach the juniors, he had to pass within a yard of Marco.

The thought of the ruffian's sleeping eyes opening, and fixing on him, made Bunter's fat heart almost die in his breast.

For a long minute he stood, trying to collect his courage.

In tense silence the juniors watched him.

Bunter's appearance on the spot was utterly amazing—the most unexpected thing that could have happened. They could not begin to understand how he had got there. But that was a matter of no moment. He was there, and it was a chance, although a small one, if only the fat Owl had the sense and the courage to do what any other fellow would have done at once, with no word spoken.

Bunter stirred at last.

On tiptoe, with infinite caution, he crept into the cave.

His eyes and his spectacles were glued on the sleeping, swarthy face as he crept past Marco, and his fat knees almost knocked together in his terror.

With fast-beating hearts the bound juniors watched him. Whatever happened to themselves, Wun Lung's fate was bound up in the next few minutes. If only it had been any fellow but Bunter!

But the fat junior reached them, and Marco had not stirred.

Shaking from head to foot, bedewed with perspiration, the Owl of the Remove stopped. He had passed Marco in safety; but the ruffian was now between him and the mouth of the cave, and Bunter's escape was cut off, if he awakened. The fat Owl's teeth were chattering.

"Quick!" breathed Harry Wharton.

Bunter's fat fingers fumbled with the cord on Wharton's wrists. It was a long minute—an endless minute—before the knot came loose.

But it came loose, and Wharton's hands were free. He had a penknife in his pocket, and in about a second it was open, and sawing at the cords.

He freed Bob Cherry first; and Bob's first action, when his hands were loose, was to pick up a jagged chunk of rock, to use as a weapon if Marco awakened.

It was perhaps fortunate for Marco, at that stage of the proceedings, that he did not awaken; for Bob would have crashed the rock on his head without the slightest compunction had he stirred.

But the ruffian did not stir, and in a few minutes all the juniors were freed from their bonds.

Billy Bunter leaned on the wall of the cave, blinking at them.

The haft of a knife could be seen sticking out of Marco's belt as he lay. And there was no doubt that he would draw it, and use it if he had a chance. But the knife had no terrors for the Famous Five, now that they were free.

"Quiet!" breathed Wharton. "Get the brute—all together—and get his knife away! Crack his head if he gives trouble, Bob!"

"I'll crack it fast enough!" said Bob grimly.

The five juniors stepped softly towards Marco. The bull-necked man snored on, and they gathered round him.

Wharton gave the signal, and they grasped him together—four pairs of hands fastening on him, while Bob lifted the rock, ready to dash on his head, if needed.

Marco's eyes opened, glaring, as he was seized.

He was struggling on the instant, and striving to get at his knife. The ruffian was so powerful that even four sturdy fellows did not find him easy to hold. But they were not standing on ceremony with him.

As he wrenched and struggled, Bob Cherry struck, and the rock crashed on the black, greasy head.

There was a gasping howl from Marco, and he sank back, half-stunned.

A moment more, and Wharton had dragged away his knife.

He planted his knee on the ruffian, and pressed the keen edge of the weapon to the thick bull-neck.

Marco glared up with dizzy eyes. But with the knife at his throat, and the rock lifted ready for another blow, he ceased to struggle.

"Get some of those cords, Bunter!" called out Harry.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. "I—I—I say, you fellows— Oh crumbs!"

"Bring those cords here, fathead, and tie him up while we hold him!" rapped the captain of the Remove.

"Oh," gasped Bunter, "all right!"

There were plenty of cords available.

Billy Bunter eyed the swarthy ruffian very uneasily as he proceeded to tie him.

But Marco could do nothing but glare ferocious rage. He made a movement to resist as his thick wrists were dragged behind him; but he desisted, just in time to prevent the rock coming down with another crash.

Bunter looped the cord round his wrists and knotted it.

The ruffian was safe now, and Bob laid down the rock. He picked up some more of the cords, wound them round the ruffian, and knotted them, fastening his arms down to his sides.

Unable to stir his sinewy arms—hardly his fingers—Marco lay on the rocky floor of the cave, glaring rage.

But his rage did not worry the Famous Five. They had the upper hand now—the tables had been turned with a vengeance. Bob Cherry drew a deep breath.

"Now we've got to find Wun!" he said.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Heavy Hand!

HARRY WHARTON stepped to the mouth of the cave, and looked out into the deepening dusk in the wild ravine.

No one was in sight; there was no sound, save the murmur of the torrent. Night was falling on the mountains of Calabria, rocks and tree blurring in shadow.

He turned back into the cave.

"How did you get here, Bunter?" he asked. "Could you find your way back to the plane?"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. "No!" "How on earth did the fat ass get here?" said Bob, in wonder. "It's a spot of wonderful luck that he did. But how—"

"I was getting away from that beast Giovanni!" groaned Bunter. "I say, you fellows, you remember that dirty dago— Oh lor'!"

"We knew that he'd come after you," said Harry. "We expected to see him bring you here. How the thump—"

Billy Bunter gasped out an account of his wild adventures.

The Famous Five listened with the keenest interest—an interest that Billy Bunter did not often receive.

"Then you've seen Wun?" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Yes; that beast Sin Song has got him!" gasped Bunter. "I say, you fellows, it's no good thinking of going after Wun. How are you going to find him in this awful wilderness? Look here, we'd better get straight back to the plane, if—if we can find the way."

"That's what we're going to do, fat-head!" said Bob.

"Oh, all right!" said Bunter, in great relief. "Of—of course, I'm as worried about Wun as you are, but—but what's the good of trying to find him in this fearful place?"

The juniors did not explain that they expected to find Wun at the plane, or on his way there. That, they had no doubt at all, was Dr. Sin's destination with the kidnapped Chinese.

"I suppose that brute Giovanni is still searching for Bunter," said Harry. "Perhaps the other brute, too. We shall have to chance falling in with them. We can cut some sticks from the thickets here."

"But—but how are we getting back?" asked Frank Nugent. "I haven't the faintest idea, and it's getting dark, too."

Wharton's face set grimly, and he pointed to Marco.

"That brute knows the way, and he's going to guide us," he said.

"You think—"

"I know it will be the worse for him if he doesn't," said Harry. "We've got a chance now of saving Wun from that scoundrel. If they get off in the plane without us, the game's up. We can't be more than a mile or two from the landing-place, if we can find it. They can't guess that we've got away, and we may be in time yet. Take this knife, Bob, and cut us some sticks, while I talk to that scowling brute."

"Right-ho!"

Bob Cherry hurriedly cut cudgels in the thicket outside the cave.

Harry Wharton stepped to the bound man, and Marco was lifted to his feet.

He stood scowling ferociously at the schoolboys.

"Parlate Inglese?" asked Harry.

The ruffian shook his head, scowling blackly. As he had no English, and the juniors very little Italian, it was not an easy matter; but the bravo had to

be made to understand what was wanted.

"Ritorniamo!" said Harry. "Andiamo! Voi guida! Capite?"

Marco scowled more blackly than before. It was clumsy Italian, for Wharton had said, "We return! Let us go! You guide! Do you understand?" But the meaning was plain enough to the ruffian, as his black scowl and savage shake of the head showed.

"Mai!" he snarled. "Mai, mai!"

"What the thump does mai mean?" asked Johnny Bull.

"It means 'never,'" said Harry. "The good man doesn't want to oblige. I think we know how to make him. Never's a long word, and we'll see if we can make him find a shorter one. Got a stick, Bob?"

"Here you are!"

Cherry tossed a stick into the cave, and Wharton caught it. He held it up before the glinting eyes of the bound bravo.

"Guida—o bastone!" he said, which meant, "Guide, or stick!"

Again the meaning was plain enough, but Marco only shook his head and scowled.

"Si?" asked Harry.

"No!" snarled Marco.

"Put him across that rock!" said Harry. "Six on the bags, in Greyfriars style, may make him change his mind!"

"Worth trying, anyhow," agreed Johnny Bull.

Up went the thick stick, and it came down on Marco with all the strength of Wharton's arm.

The bravo wriggled and howled, and wrenched frantically at his bonds, and the words that streamed from him were evidently bad words in his own language.

But the stick went up again, and came down again, and Wharton did not stop till he had landed six of the very best.

With Wun Lung's safety at stake, he was not likely to deal gently with the ruffian, and there was plenty more to come if Marco refused to do what he was wanted to do. Six hefty swipes made that clear to the howling ruffian.

"Capite?" asked Harry, after the sixth swipe.

"Oh! Si, signore, si!" panted the bull-necked bravo, wriggling in anguish. "Oh, si, si, si! Andiamo, andiamo, se vi piace!"

"Keep hold of the brute!" said Harry, and Marco, still wriggling, was led out of the cave. "Come on, Bunter!"

Bob Cherry had cut a stout stick each for the party.

Keeping hold of Marco, the Famous Five moved along the ravine to the spot where they had descended into it, which was some distance below the spot where Billy Bunter had taken his tumble.

They clambered up the acclivity, Bunter panting and puffing after them.

Out of the ravine, and in the darkening forest, the juniors were quite at a loss without a guide. Marco was going to be the guide.

"Mestratemi la via!" said Harry.

"Show me the way!"

"Si, signore!" answered the bravo, through his gritted teeth.

"La dritta via," added Harry quietly, his eyes gleaming at the sullen ruffian. "Se non vedo il destinazione in venti minuti, il bastone."

"What the dickens does that mean?" asked Johnny Bull.

"I've warned the rotter to play no tricks. If we don't get to our destination in twenty minutes, he gets the stick again—hard!"

"Good!"

"Oh, signore, signore," gasped Marco,

"non posso, non posso! Trenta minuti—trenta, signore."

"That means thirty minutes," said Harry. "I fancy the brute will take us the shortest way. He knows what to expect. I know I won't leave a whole bone in his carcass if he plays tricks, and I think he understands it, too."

Marco evidently understood it. He had had enough of the stick. He started at a rapid pace, and the juniors had to hurry to keep up with him.

From Bunter, behind, came protesting squeaks, as he puffed and blew after them. But Bunter's squeaks had to pass unheeded; there was no time to be lost.

Marco, in his terror of another hefty dose of the "bastone," was hurrying as fast as he could, and they were glad enough to hurry with him. And Bunter, in his terror of being left behind, contrived to keep pace.

The deep twilight in the forest made no difference to Marco, though the juniors, without him, would have been hopelessly lost.

The bravo tramped swiftly on, without a pause, winding among trees and thickets by ways well known to him in daylight or dark.

The dusk thickened and deepened, and the juniors could hardly see one another, though there was still a glimmer of light, and they knew that they were near the spot where they had been seized by Giovanni and his gang.

A few minutes later they saw the fallen tree-trunk on which Mr. O. and Bunter had stopped to rest.

From that spot they needed no guide, for they could see the open hillside ahead, beyond the edge of the forest.

"Here we are again!" said Bob, in great relief. "We don't want that brute any longer!"

Billy Bunter plumped down on the log, gurgling for breath. He was feeling by that time as if his fat little legs were about to drop off.

Bob and Johnny Bull, who had hold of Marco, released him, and the moment he was released the ruffian made a spring and vanished into the gloom of the trees.

They did not even glance after him. They had no further use for the ruffian now.

"Come on!" said Harry.

"I say, you fellows!" gasped Bunter.

"Come on, Bunter!"

"Beast! I'm going to take a bit of a rest!" hooted Bunter. "We're all right now. You'll see the plane a bit farther on. I'm going to rest—ow! I'm fearfully tired—ow! My legs are falling off! Oh dear!"

"Better come on," said Harry Wharton. "That villain Giovanni may be hanging about, for all we know."

"Look here, you jolly well stay with me, see? I tell you I'm too fearfully tired to move—"

"Fathead!"

The Famous Five hurried on, and Bunter, forgetting that he was too fearfully tired to move, jumped up and scuttled after them.

The Famous Five emerged from the gloom of the trees, and every face brightened, as they looked across the open hillside—at the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon. The giant plane still rested on its landing-place in the distance, glistening in the last rays of the setting sun.

"Thank goodness we're in time!" breathed Bob Cherry.

"I say, you fellows—" squeaked Bunter.

But the Famous Five did not even hear him squeak, as they cut across the

hill, at a run, towards the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Just in Time!

"LOOK!" breathed Bob Cherry suddenly.

There was still a red gleam of sunset over the hilltops when the juniors had covered half the distance to the plane. But the shadows were thick, and they were close upon a figure ahead of them before they perceived it.

It loomed up before their eyes like a dim shade—the figure of a man bent with a burden on his shoulder.

From what Bunter had told them, they could guess what it was at the first glimpse. They had overtaken Dr. Sin before he reached the plane with his unconscious burden.

"Sin!" breathed Harry Wharton. "And that—"

"That's Wun! Come on!"

Bob Cherry ran like a deer, his comrades breathless at his heels.

Dr. Sin was moving slowly. He had—so far as he knew—no reason for haste, and no doubt he was feeling the weight of his burden.

On the grassy hillside, footsteps made little sound.

Bob was hardly three yards behind the Chinaman when Dr. Sin heard him, stopped, and glanced round.

Even as he turned, Bob reached him.

He did not speak. His stick was up-lifted, and it came down with a crash on Sin's head, before the Chinaman could realise that he was attacked.

As Sin Song, with a panting cry, staggered under the blow, Bob grasped Wun Lung, and dragged him away.

"Collar him!" panted Bob.

Four pairs of hands were on Dr. Sin while he still staggered, dazed by the blow. He went down in the grass with a heavy bump, and Johnny Bull planted a knee on his chest to keep him there.

"Got him!" said Johnny grimly.

"The gotfulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

The yellow face, staring up at the juniors, was convulsed with rage.

Probably Dr. Sin was as astonished to see the Greyfriars fellows as they had been astonished a short time before, to see Billy Bunter! Rage and amazement were mingled in his face as he stared at them.

"It's us, you rotter!" said Johnny Bull. "Your dago pals didn't keep us so safe as you expected!"

The Chinaman panted and struggled. But his struggles ceased in a moment or two, as he realised that he was helpless.

Bob Cherry laid Wun gently on the grass. The little Chinese's eyes were closed, and he was completely unconscious. Bob cast an anxious glance towards the plane.

But there was no sign of the other Chinese. Quite unaware that anything had gone wrong with Dr. Sin's cunning scheme, they were waiting for him to arrive with the kidnapped schoolboy.

"By gum, we're in luck!" breathed Bob. "Keep that villain safe—we don't want the rest of the crew on our necks now!"

"We've got him all right!"

"I say, you fellows—" Billy Bunter panted up, and blinked at the scene with bulging eyes behind his spectacles. "I say—Oh crikey!"

"Beneficent and honourable ones!"

Dr. Sin had recovered his calmness, and his voice was as soft and silky as ever.

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"If you will please to release this poor person—"

"I'll watch it!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Tie the brute up—he's as slippery as an eel!"

Dr. Sin made no resistance as his ankles and wrists were tied together. He was allowed to sit up when he had been secured.

"Keep quiet!" said Harry Wharton, as the black, slanting eyes turned in the direction of the plane. "I don't think your friends would hear you from here, Dr. Sin—but we're not chancing it. If you call out, you'll get hurt!"

Dr. Sin smiled faintly.

"Your honourable wish is law to this poor Chinese!" he answered. "Yet your beneficent eyes have seen that I was carrying the son of Wun Chung Lung to the plane, and I would humbly inquire why you have laid hands on this humble one."

"Oh crikey!" ejaculated Billy Bunter. "He doesn't know that I spotted him with that dago in the forest!"

Dr. Sin gave a violent start, and his slanting eyes turned on the fat Owl of the Remove.

Bunter grinned at him.

"I jolly well saw you!" he said. "I saw you stick that chloroform rag on the kid! I was right on the spot, see?"

"Oh!" gasped Dr. Sin blankly.

"You needn't try to pull our leg, you rascal!" said Harry Wharton. "We know the whole game. You put up those dagoes to collaring us, but luckily we got away in time—"

"Oh, really, Wharton! You mean, I got you away—"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Yes, old fat man—you got us away, if you like!"

Dr. Sin's black eyes gleamed at Bunter, through the dusk, with a very expressive look. If he had looked for defeat at all, he certainly would not have looked for it at Bunter's fat hands!

"That fat and foolish frog—" he murmured.

"You cheeky Chink!" yapped Bunter. "I say, you fellows, is he tied safe? I'm jolly well going to kick him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I'm going—"

"Chuck it, old fat bean!" said Bob. "Mustn't hit a man when he's down! How long will it be before Wun Lung comes to, Dr. Sin? I suppose you know."

"The starlike eyes of the son of Wun Chung Lung will open in one hour, according to my poor judgment!" said Dr. Sin.

"Then we've got an hour to wait," said Harry. "But when he comes to, what the thump are we going to do, you fellows?"

Dr. Sin, sitting in the grass, peered from face to face. It was quite dark now, and, at a furlong's distance, the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon gleamed with electric light. But the light reached nowhere near the spot where the juniors were grouped on the dark hillside.

"I say, you fellows, let's get on to the plane!" urged Billy Bunter. "You can carry Wun! I'd lend a hand, only I'm so jolly tired! Look here, what are you hanging about for? When we tell old O what's happened, he will see that beast Sin doesn't set foot on the plane again."

Dr. Sin smiled.

"I'm getting hungry!" added Bunter, as a conclusive argument.

"We can't go on to the plane, Bunter!" answered Harry. "Not till

Wun comes to his senses, at any rate."

"Why not?" demanded Bunter.

"Well, we can't!"

"I've told you I'm getting hungry!" said Bunter, with crushing dignity.

"Fathead!"

"If that's how you thank a chap for rescuing you from a gang of Italian bandits—"

"Oh, give us a rest!"

"Beast!" hooted Bunter. "Look here, I'm going on! You wouldn't let me rest when I wanted to, you beasts, and now you don't want me to get in and get some supper! I believe you don't care whether I'm hungry or not!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Look here, are you coming?" yapped Bunter.

"No, ass!" growled Bob.

Billy Bunter blinked at the lighted plane in the distance. Then he blinked at the Famous Five in great wrath. He was anxious to get in and rest his fat limbs, and feast his eyes, and his extensive interior, in the excellent provender of the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon. But he did not want to go alone, among the Chinks!

"Look here, fathead, we can't go back to the plane without Wun to see us through!" said Harry.

"Rot!" grunted Bunter. "We're old O's guests, ain't we—and I suppose he can keep his beastly Chinks in order?"

"Oh, rats!"

"Beast!"

The fact that Sin Song had been overtaken on his way back to the plane with the kidnapped Chinese, might have told its own tale to a brain less obtuse than Bunter's. But the fat Owl had not guessed how matters stood, and the juniors were not disposed to tell him. With an angry grunt, the fat Owl plumped down in the grass. He was glad, at all events, to rest, even if supper had to be postponed.

"If I nod off, you jolly well call me when you start!" he said.

There was not much "if" about it! About a minute after Bunter's fat head rested on his fat arm, his snore was rumbling over the silent hillside.

Dr. Sin sat silent, still peering through the gloom at the troubled faces of the Greyfriars juniors. He spoke at last, in low, silky tones.

"What is not known to the fat frog is known to you, honourable ones!" murmured Dr. Sin.

"If we hadn't known before we should have guessed when we caught you carting Wun back to the plane," growled Bob. "Do you think we're such asses that we don't know that Mr. O led us into the trap when those dagoes got us?"

"These are truth-words," murmured Dr. Sin. "It has crossed my poor mind more than once that perhaps you suspected."

"We don't suspect—we know!" grunted Bob.

"Yet listen to the words of this humble person," said Dr. Sin. "It is the intention of the venerable O Bo to take Wun Lung back to China, there to adopt him as a son and make him rich and very happy. I have carried out his orders as a faithful servant. Had you not laid hands on this poor person, Wun would have awakened on the plane, far up in the skies, and he would have been led to believe that his uncle's servants had saved him from my hands. This humble one would have remained behind to give colour to the story; also," added Dr. Sin, with a friendly smile, "to see you honourable ones safe out of the hands of the miserable dagoes and returning safely to your own country."



On tiptoe, with infinite caution, Billy Bunter crept into the cave, his eyes and his spectacles glued on the sleeping swarthy face of Marco. With fast-beating hearts, the bound juniors watched him. "Quick!" breathed Harry Wharton.

The juniors listened in silence. They had no doubt that Dr. Sin was speaking the truth. He had meant them no harm, apart from his ruthless determination to carry out his master's orders at any cost.

"Now," went on Dr. Sin softly, "since you know the truth, let me counsel you to interfere no more in matters that do not concern you. It is useless for you to warn Wun, for he will believe no word until he hears it from O Bo's own venerable lips—which will not be till he is safe out of the lands of the foreign devils. If you voyage farther in the plane you cannot protect the boy; and it is possible that some fresh disaster may occur to you."

He paused, peering at them with his slanting eyes.

"Will you not heed the words of wisdom?" he went on. "Wun goes to a rich and happy fate if you leave him in my hands. And if you remain with him, what hope have you of preserving him when once the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon is outside the bounds of Europe?"

"That's enough," said Bob quietly. "We came along with Wun on this holiday to see him safe from kidnapping; we're sticking to him to the last shot in the locker. Now shut up!"

Dr. Sin shrugged his shoulders and shut up, as requested; and the juniors at last were glad to see the signs of returning consciousness in Wun's little yellow face.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Back to the Plane!

WUN LUNG'S eyes opened. His head resting on Bob Cherry's arm, he stared round him dizzily.

"All right now, kid!" said Bob

softly. "You're back with your old pals, Wun!"

"The rightfulness is terrific, my esteemed and absurd Wun," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

For a long minute Wun stared about him without speaking; then, as he discerned Sin Song through the thick dusk, his eyes blazed.

He broke into words—in Chinese, addressed to the sleek secretary. Those words were incomprehensible to the Famous Five; but, from Wun's tone and the flush that crept into Dr. Sin's plump cheeks, they could guess that Wun was telling the secretary what he thought of him in very plain Chinese.

Dr. Sin did not answer.

He bowed his head to the storm, as it were, with patient meekness. For a good three minutes Wun kept on; then, with Bob's assistance, he rose to his feet. His face brightened as he looked at the gleaming lights of the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon in the distance.

"You fellees savee this li'll Chinees!" he said. "This li'll Chinees velly glateful! We goey back 'long plane. Uncle O plenty too glad see this li'll Chinees safe."

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another. Evidently no shadow of suspicion of the truth was in the little Chinese's mind. He was only anxious to get back to Mr. O and assure him of his safety.

For the tenth or twentieth time it was on Bob's lips to tell him. But the same reasons that had held him silent so far held him silent now. Dr. Sin had said that Wun would not believe the truth till he heard it from Mr. O's own venerable lips, and they knew that it was so.

Wun glanced from face to face.

"We goey back plenty quick!" he said. "Leavee that velly gheat lascal; me telles Uncle O he velly gheat lascal,

and he no comey 'long Velly Old and Benevolent Pigeon."

"Come on, you fellows," said Bob quietly.

Johnny Bull gave Bunter a shake.

"Urrggh! Beast!" came from the shadows. "Lemme alone! 'Tain't rising-bell, you beast; 'tain't light yet! Lemme alone!"

Wun Lung chuckled.

"Fat ole Buntsee tinksee back 'long Gleyfiars," he said. "Tinksee waksee 'long morning 'long dormitoly."

Shake, shake, shake!

"Wake up, you fat owl!" hooted Johnny Bull.

"Beast!"

Bunter sat up and set his spectacles straight on his fat little nose and blinked.

"Oh!" he gasped. "All right! I haven't been asleep!"

"You snore when you're awake?" asked Bob.

"Yah!"

The Owl of the Remove scrambled up, and the whole party started towards the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon.

Dr. Sin was left sitting where he was, his hands and feet still tied. It was likely to take him a couple of hours to wriggle loose, and during that time he would be out of mischief.

Wun Lung's little yellow face was eager as he hurried towards the plane. He was anxious to see Mr. O. He was hardly more eager than Billy Bunter, who was anxious to see his supper.

But it was with very mixed feelings that the Famous Five came up to the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon.

They were going to stick to Wun Lung; that was decided without discussion. They could only stick to him by going back on the plane with him.

But they could not help wondering whether, at this fresh defeat, Mr. O Bo

might not lose his Oriental patience and come out into the open.

Their hearts were beating rather hard as they arrived within the radius of light from the open doorway.

Three or four of the Chinese were outside the plane, among them Li Yi.

They stared blankly at the juniors as the party came up.

Evidently, they were waiting for Sin Song to arrive with his prisoner, and perhaps wondering what delayed him. Even their Chinese impassiveness was not proof against the startling surprise of seeing the Greyfriars juniors arrive with Wun Lung in their midst. They stared and fairly goggled at the party.

Li Yi, the first to recover himself, darted up the steps into the plane. The juniors knew that he had gone to inform O Bo of the unexpected state of affairs, and they wondered what the outcome would be.

The other Chinese made no move to interfere. They simply stared blankly at the juniors with goggling, slanting eyes.

Wun Lung ran up the steps, and the other fellows followed him.

Billy Bunter gave a grunt of deep relief as he plumped into a chair in the brightly-lighted after cabin.

"I say, you fellows, ring the bell, will you?" he called out. "Where's that steward? Where's that man, Soo? I say, ring the bell, for goodness' sake!" Bunter blinked irritably at the silent group of juniors. "What the thump are you standing there like a lot of moulting owls for?"

The Famous Five did not answer, neither did they heed.

The Chinese followed them into the plane, and one closed and secured the door. Then they passed along the passage towards the fore cabin, where Wun had already hurried.

"I say, you fellows!" howled Bunter.

"Shut up, fathead!" muttered Bob.

"I'm hungry!"

"For goodness' sake, be quiet, Bunter!" said Harry.

Bunter glared at them in angry astonishment. He was tired, he was hungry, and he was peevish! Supper filled his fat thoughts—and was likely to do so until it filled his fat circumference.

It did not dawn on his fat mind that the juniors were more than half-expecting an attack, and were tensed to meet it, if it came!

"Will you ring for that steward?" hooted Bunter.

"You fat fool, shut up!" hissed Johnny Bull.

"Beast!"

Bunter rolled over to the bell, and touched it, himself. He gave the Famous Five a look of bitter and reproachful scorn.

"Lot you care if I have to get up when I'm tired!" he said bitterly.

"Fathead!"

Soo, the steward, came in. He came with his usual soft step and bowing politeness.

Billy Bunter rapped out orders, which the Chinese steward proceeded to carry out, as if matters were completely normal.

Bunter, with great relief, found food before him. He gave his whole attention to it. He forgot that he was angry and indignant. Foodstuffs had a soothing effect on the Owl of the Remove.

While Soo was carrying in trays, Li Yi passed him, coming through the cabin. The juniors watched him as he passed—but Li did not look at them. He opened the plane door and went

down the steps, disappearing into the darkness outside the radius of the electric light.

The schoolboys exchanged glances.

They could guess that Li Yi had gone to look for Dr. Sin.

Wun was still with his uncle, and they wondered with what feelings Mr. O was listening to what Wun had to tell him.

"I say, you fellows!" Billy Bunter blinked round. "I say, ain't you hungry? Can't you see supper's ready? I say, this pie is prime!"

The Famous Five, unheeding, looked from the windows. It began to look as if there were to be no open hostility—which was a relief to their minds. Though how this strange situation was to end was a perplexing mystery to them.

It was about a quarter of an hour later that two figures came out of the darkness into the light from the aeroplane windows.

"He's found him!" murmured Bob.

Li Yi and Sin Song came into the plane together.

The juniors faced round from the window, on their guard. Li, as before, passed them without a look—but Dr. Sin, sleek and polite as ever, made them a deep bow, and gave them a smile as he followed Li from the cabin.

The Famous Five joined Bunter at last at supper. For the moment, at least, it seemed that matters were going on as if nothing had happened—and the future was on the knees of the gods!

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

O Bo Puts It Plain!

"WE'RE off!"

The drone of the engines sounded through the silence of the night.

Billy Bunter, having finished his supper, leaned back in his chair and closed his eyes behind his big spectacles.

The Famous Five listened to the drone of the engines deepening to a roar.

The Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon taxied along the slope of the hillside, and took off as lightly and gracefully as the bird after which it was named.

Up and up and up, so smoothly and gently, that Billy Bunter snored on peacefully, without awakening.

Bob Cherry glanced at the altimeter.

"Three thousand feet!" he said.

"Well, we're off!"

The Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon was still slanting up. The altimeter soon registered five thousand feet. Running smoothly and sweetly, the giant plane soared over the dark Calabrian mountains.

Obviously, there was nothing wrong with the engines. The forced landing, as the juniors knew, had been a pretence.

The Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon was resuming its flight, and had not fortune favoured them, the Greyfriars fellows would have been left behind in the keeping of Giovanni and his gang.

They had escaped that peril; they were once more cleaving the clouds in the plane. But they all knew that a climax was coming. The fact that Dr. Sin was still on the plane, could hardly fail to open Wun's eyes to the truth as soon as he saw the sleek secretary. Mr. O was, in fact, fairly driven to the end of his subterfuges now.

The juniors had no doubt that he was thinking over the problem of dealing with them, probably in consultation with Sin Song. They couldn't wait for what was going to happen.

Wun did not rejoin them, and after a time Bob Cherry opened the door and looked along the passage.

Li Yi was standing there.

He made a gesture to Bob Cherry to step back.

"Where's Wun Lung?" asked Bob quietly.

"Wun Lung stop 'long cabin blong Mr. O!" answered Li.

"Well, I want to see him."

"No can!" answered Li briefly.

Bob set his lips and made a step forward.

"You stop 'long cabin blong you, please!" said Li.

And, as Bob made another step forward, the burly Chinaman flashed out a knife, and his eyes glittered over it at the Greyfriars junior.

"You stop 'long cabin blong you!" he repeated.

Bob gave him a grim look, but he stepped back into the aft cabin, and the door was closed. If it were coming to a struggle, the juniors did not want to begin it.

"We're getting down to brass tacks now, you fellows," said Bob quietly.

"We're not to see Wun again. That Chink's on guard to keep us here."

As the evening grew older, Billy Bunter continued to snore in his chair. Harry Wharton & Co. were not likely to close their eyes.

The door opened at last, and Mr. O entered the aft cabin.

The juniors looked at him quietly. There was a faint smile on the yellow-ivory face as O Bo bowed politely.

Looking past him, they could see Li Yi outside, but nothing was to be seen of Wun. Li drew the door shut.

Mr. O sank into a chair, his rustling silky garments billowing round him.

The juniors waited in silence for him to speak. They did not need telling that the ancient one had now come to a decision, and that they were to hear it.

"Honourable friends of the son of Wun Chun Lung," said Mr. O, in his reedy voice. "It grieves me to tell you that the time has now come for my Little Pink Toad to lose the beneficent brightness of your countenances."

Bob Cherry answered quietly:

"We're not leaving Wun, sir! You know now that we all know how the matter stands. We came with Wun to see him safe from the kidnapper—though we never dreamed then that the kidnapper was acting by his uncle's orders. We're still going to see him safe, if we can."

Mr. O smiled again.

"But that is beyond your power," he said. "Believe me, my honourable ones, I am grateful to you for your friendship to my Little Pink Toad. It would grieve this humble worm's heart if harm came to you. Yet I have but to speak a word for you to be seized and bound."

"We shall put up a scrap first, Mr. O."

"And the scrapfulness will be terrific!" murmured Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh.

Wharton and Nugent and Johnny Bull said nothing. They waited to hear more. Mr. O had come right out into the open now.

"Listen to me with your shell-like ears!" said Mr. O gravely. "Being foreign devils, you do not understand, yet you cannot dream that any harm will come to my Little Pink Toad. I

(Continued on page 22.)

ANOTHER SPECIALLY-CONDUCTED TOUR by—

The GREYFRIARS GUIDE

A TOUR OF THE SCHOOL. (The Bicycle Shed.)

(1)

Here are machines of every size,
From Wingate's bike to Paget's,
And some, the best that money buys,
Have all the latest gadgets,
With shining handlebars and frame,
And diamond-studded sprockets;
But, then, the owners of the same
Have something in their pockets!



(2)

I own a super-sports machine
Of period 1830;
Its better points are seldom seen
Because it is so dirty.
The parts all jangle, clank, and ring,
Despite my best endeavour.
In fact, the bell's the only thing
That makes no sound whatever!

(3)

When Bunter takes a bike to ride
The shed is nearly broken!
The owner comes to have his hide,
And bitter words are spoken!
And that's another fact, I fear,
To give me added sorrows,
For mine's the only bike in here
That Bunter never borrows!



A WEEKLY BUDGET OF FACT AND FUN

By
THE GREYFRIARS
RHYMESTER

GREYFRIARS GRINS

Mrs. Mimble says it was always her dream to keep an antique shop. After trying her latest doughnuts, we think it's nearly time she woke up!

A reader asks what is it that first strikes the visitor to Greyfriars. Coker's motor-bike, as a general rule.

When Quelchy asked Skinner why he took one of Gosling's chickens, he said he took it for a lark. Quelchy gave him

AFTER SCHOOL HOURS Trial by Jury

(1)

The Greyfriars Criminal Court,
Regarded with shudders of awe
By bullies and plotters and similar
rotters
Who fall in the clutch of the law,
Is held as a rule in the Rag
Before Justice Wharton or Todd,
Who're fully empowered to sentence a
coward
To dismal detention in quod!

(2)

Then off to the coal-hole he goes,
Repenting his sins in the dark,
While schoolmates and others he looks
on as brothers
Consider it rather a lark!
Or sometimes he's given a fine;
The money is paid into court
And used for supplying new tackle and
buying
The things we find useful for sport.

(3)

Or maybe he has to be ragged
Or frog-marched three times round
the room,
Then chucked out, lamenting and sorely
repenting
The errors that led to his doom.
He's always found guilty, of course,
Whatever the crime he has done.
To every attendant (except the offender!)
The punishment's part of the fun!

(4)

Here Bunter has pleaded in vain
That cake is a thing he can't bear;
To say he would steal it and try to
conceal it
Is silly—he never was there!
Alas! for his clever defence.
The jury say "Guilty!" and thus
He gets what he dreaded, we snatch him
baldheaded;
It's quite entertaining—to us!

THE GREYFRIARS ALPHABET BOB CHERRY

The Sunny-Tempered Member of the
Famous Five.

C is for CHERRY—cheery Bob,
With his grin and curly nob!
Champion boxer in the gym,
Champion cheerer of the grim,
Champion riser in the dorm,
Champion ragger of the Form;
Always full of power and pep
(Save in class, perhaps, and prep!)



He's good-natured all the while,
Greeting all things with a smile.
Even Bunter's fond of Bob,
For it is an easy job
To extract a loan and scoot,
Knowing he won't get a boot!
Who cares how the fates may frown?
They won't get Bob Cherry down!

ANSWER TO PUZZLE

An anonymous cheque is an unsigned
one and, therefore, worthless. You
can't buy anything with it.

PUZZLE PAR

Frank Nugent, as secretary of
the athletic club, received an
anonymous cheque for £10 last
week. What did he buy with the
money?

Answer at foot of column 2

an hour's natural history task to teach
him the difference.

I heard the Head ask Quelchy what
he considered the best way to prevent
the school catching fire. Judging by my
experience with study fires, I advise him
to fill it with paper and firewood and
apply a match to it.

Why ought we never to throw dust in
Quelchy's eyes?—Because it's sure to
harm his pupils! (Us—see? And it
would, too!)

Why would Quelchy be an extravagant
angler?—Because he often gives a
hundred lines to one Fish.

Bunter's size, in round figures, is One!
Now work that out!

Said a certain Paul Pontifex Prout:
"I'm rather mysterious, no doubt.

I think with some pride
That, at least, my inside
Can never be really made out!"

Coker of the Fifth thinks he has a
perfect right to wallop any fag he likes.
But some of the fags have a perfect left
for Coker when he tries it.

The Greyfriars Guide Will Be At Your Service Again. Next Saturday!

have no son—and when a Chinese has no son, he must adopt one, lest trouble await his spirit when he becomes a guest on high! This you do not understand, being foreign devils, but it is known to all Chinese."

The juniors made no answer to that. They had already guessed that Mr. O's amazing proceedings were due to what they regarded as a "potty" Chinese motive.

It was useless to argue such a point with a man who was fixed in his belief and who regarded unbelievers as ignorant and barbarous.

"When it pleases the gods that these old eyes shall close," went on Mr. O, in the same grave tone, "it is needful that a son shall survive to perform the rites and ceremonies for the peaceful passage of the departing spirit. Since it has not pleased Kwan Yin-ko that a son shall bless my old age, it is needful to adopt one—and I have chosen one of my own blood, to whom my heart goes out, and to whom I desire to leave all that I possess. The Little Pink Toad will be the richest Chinaman in Kwang-Tung when I become a guest on high."

He paused.

The ancient gentleman was explaining all this patiently, though it was clear that he had little hope of making barbarous foreign devils understand.

"You may think that there are many others whom I might take in the place of the Little Pink Toad," he went on. "There are many poor in China—many who cannot feed their children. I have only to choose from so many. This is true. But it is to my Little Pink Toad that I desire to leave my possessions, not to an adopted son of another blood."

Another pause.

There was nothing for the juniors to say in answer to this. They could not very well tell an old gentleman of Mr. O's venerable years that his lifelong belief was a cranky absurdity; the rites and ceremonies to which he attached so much importance, a matter of no moment whatever!

Not that it would have been of any use to tell him. Such opinions he would have attributed, with utter contempt, to the barbarous ignorance of foreign devils.

"I have offered great sums," went on Mr. O, "to the honourable father and the honourable grandfather of the Little Pink Toad, which they have refused. For this reason I have taken the matter into my own hands. The Little Pink Toad will be happy and rich as my adopted son, and he will remain in China, away from the influence of foreign devils, which is bad for all true Chinese. For who knows whether, in an English school, he may not learn the ways and the strange beliefs of the foreign devils, who are uncivilised and unclean?"

"Oh!" gasped Bob.

"Now I make it all clear to your understanding," said Mr. O, "and because you are good friends of the Little Pink Toad I would gladly deal with you gently and kindly, barbarians as you are. In a few hours this ship of the sky will descend, and if you are willing you shall be landed and every care shall be taken for your safe return to your own country. You shall go with rich presents, leaving the Little Pink Toad to my care."

"We're not leaving Wun!" said Bob.

"But if you will not do what is right and reasonable," said Mr. O calmly, "you will be landed, nevertheless, will—

ing or unwilling, and the Little Pink Toad will remain."

"If we are forced to leave this plane, and leave Wun in your hands, sir," said Harry Wharton quietly, "we shall do our best to get him back. An aeroplane travels fast—but not so fast as the telegraph. You cannot fly to China without landing a good many times for petrol—and at the first drome you touch at you will be stopped and detained."

Mr. O smiled benignly.

"Give me your promise to meddle no more in what does not concern you, and you land in a city where there are trains," he said. "Refuse me this promise, and you land where you will do no harm until the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon reaches China."

"We shall resist," said Harry. "We shall be glad to leave the plane if Wun comes with us. We shall not go without him, if we can help it."

"I think," said Mr. O softly, "that you will not be able to help it, honourable one. For you can no more turn me from my purpose than you could turn the flowing waters of the Yangtse-Kiang!"

He rose and left the aft cabin.

Billy Bunter snored on. The juniors left him to snore. Bunter was of no use in what they knew was coming now.

Each of the Greyfriars fellows grasped a stick—and they waited.

They had not long to wait.

Five minutes after Mr. O had gone, Sin Song entered the cabin. He entered alone—but behind him there was a sound of footsteps and muttering voices.

The struggle was at hand, and the Famous Five of Greyfriars braced themselves to face it.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Fight to a Finish!

SIN SONG bowed politely to the juniors.

Even at that moment, when he was about to order an attack on them, his sleek politeness did not fail. His slanting eyes turned for a moment, with an amused gleam, on Billy Bunter.

Leaning back in the deep, padded chair, his eyes closed and his mouth open, the Owl of the Remove was sleeping as peacefully as in the old dormitory at Greyfriars School—while the giant plane soared high in the clouds, and the Famous Five were facing a desperate struggle, five thousand feet up.

The Calabrian mountains had been left behind now, and the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon was over the sea. Far below, the Mediterranean rolled, glimmering in the stars. With a steady drone, the plane soared on to the south-east. Where it was heading the juniors did not know; but after what O Bo had said, they knew that it was not heading for an aerodrome.

"Born many years after me," said Dr. Sin softly, "it is necessary that your honourable limbs should submit to bonds. Let me advise and beg you to submit with patience to what cannot be helped."

"You can cut that out!" said Bob coolly. "If you're too tough for us, you'll get the upper hand—but not so long as we can hit!"

"Keep your distance!" said Harry Wharton. "If a finger is laid on us, Dr. Sin, we shall resist."

Dr. Sin shrugged his shoulders.

"It was said of old that it is useless to speak words of wisdom into foolish ears!" he said. "Be it as you wish!"

He called out in Chinese, and there was a scuffling of feet in the passage.

Li Yi entered, with five Chinese following him in.

One of them had a knife in his hand. But at sight of the gleaming steel, Dr. Sin rapped out an angry order, and the knife disappeared.

Evidently Dr. Sin did not want to carry matters to extremes. Utterly unscrupulous as he was in carrying out his master's orders, he was far from being a bad man. He was, as the juniors had believed him to be, a good-natured man, unwilling to do any harm beyond what was necessary for effecting his purpose.

The Chinese advanced on the juniors to seize them.

"Stand up to it, you fellows!" said Bob Cherry, between his teeth.

"You bet!"

"You put down stick blong you!" grunted Li, his black eyes gleaming at Bob.

"I'll put it down fast enough—on your napper—if you come any nearer!" retorted Bob, the stick uplifted and thrown back to strike.

Dr. Sin rapped out a word, and the Chinese rushed together.

The next moment a wild and whirling fight was raging among the tables and chairs in the aft cabin of the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon.

Dr. Sin took no part in it.

He had closed the door, and stood with his plump back to it, watching the scene. But his aid was hardly needed.

There were six sinewy men against five schoolboys; and no doubt they expected to overcome the resistance in a very few minutes.

But the Famous Five were made of sterner stuff than they supposed.

It was a desperate fight against heavy odds; but if there were a sporting chance of getting through, the chums of Greyfriars were going to make the best of it. At any rate, they were not going to give in and abandon Wun Lung in the hands of the kidnappers, so long as they could strike a blow.

Li Yi yelled and rolled over backwards, as Bob landed a heavy crash with his stick.

The next moment Bob was grasped by a Chinese, and they rolled on the floor together, struggling.

Frank Nugent and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh were grasped in their turn, and they struggled and resisted with all their strength.

Harry Wharton and Johnny Bull backed from the attack, but they still stood up to it, slashing savagely with the cudgels.

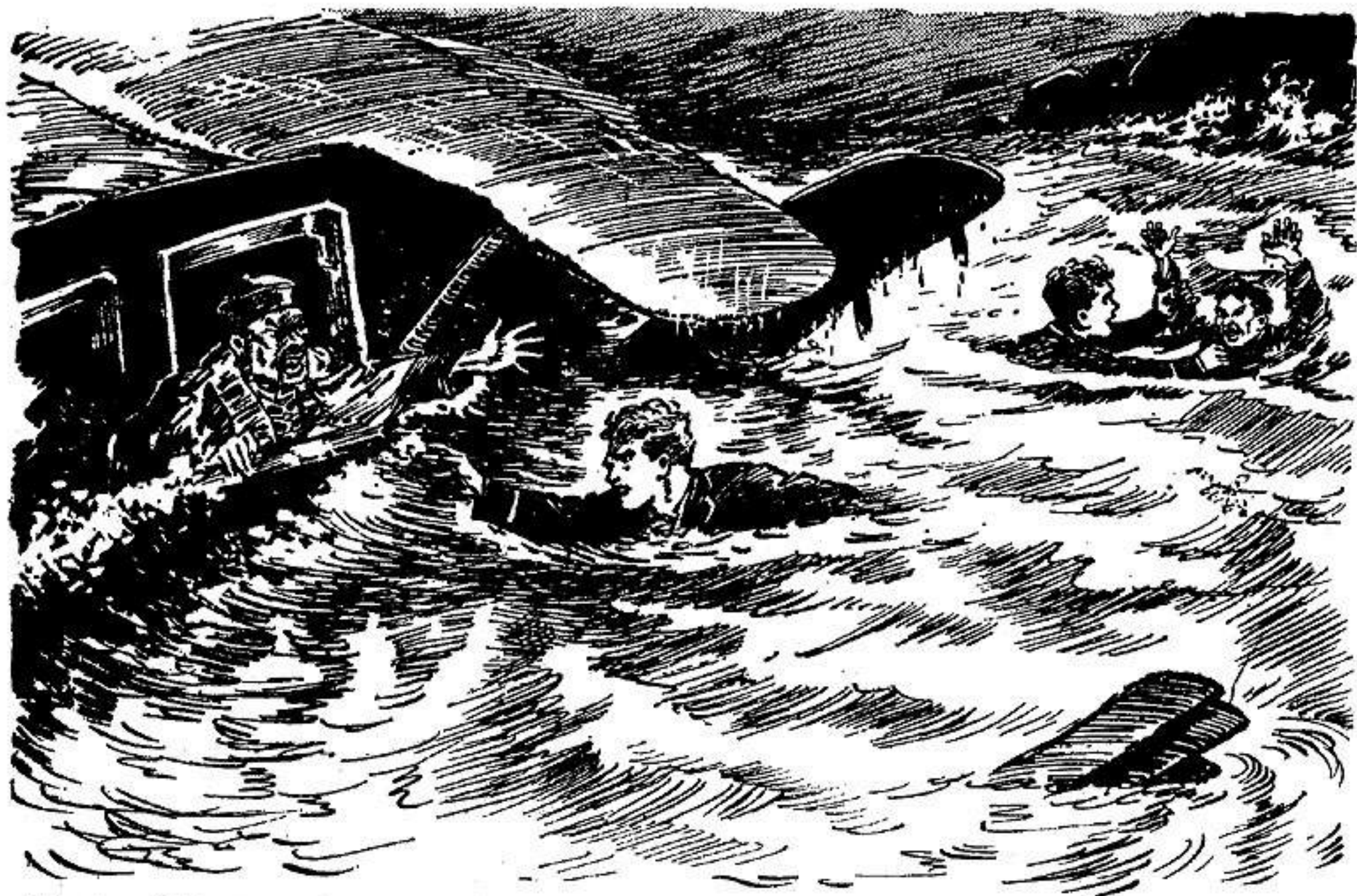
Li Yi staggered to his feet, panting with rage, the blood running down from a cut on his head. He leaped at the juniors, and receiving without heeding a slash from a stick, grasped Johnny Bull and bore him over, with a crash, to the floor.

Harry Wharton was the only one left on his feet, but he was still hitting out fiercely, and the Chinese backed away from him.

But it was only for a moment. Two of them rushed together, and the captain of the Remove was seized, and they struggled desperately.

There was a startled howl from Billy Bunter.

The roar of the engines, the booming of the plane, had not awakened the fat



"You've got Wun Lung?" panted Harry Wharton. "Yes!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Get hold of him—he's all in!" He relinquished the Chinese junior to Wharton's grasp, and then plunged towards O Bo, who was watching him anxiously from the wrecked aeroplane.

Owl. But his eyes opened behind his spectacles at the uproar of the struggle raging round him.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. "I say, you fellows—"

He blinked at the wild scene like one in a dream. For a moment or two he seemed scarcely able to believe either his eyes or his spectacles.

"Oh jiminy!" gasped Bunter.

Harry Wharton, struggling with the two Chinese, crashed into him.

"Lend a hand, Bunter!" he panted.

"Oh crikey!"

Billy Bunter did not lend a hand. He blinked, paralysed with terror.

Wharton was stretched on the floor, still struggling.

"I say, you fellows—" babbled the terrified fat Owl.

There was a gasping howl from the Chinaman with whom Bob Cherry was struggling. Bob had put in an uppercut which almost lifted the pigtailed head off, and the yellow man sprawled on the floor.

Bob scrambled to his feet, stared breathlessly round, and rushed to Wharton's aid.

He dragged off one of Harry's assailants, who instantly turned on him like a cat, clutching.

"Oh crumbs!" gurgled Bunter.

He wriggled away, keeping clear of the struggle, and disappeared into the baggage-room, which was at the after-end of the cabin.

Perhaps the fat Owl hoped to find a hiding-place among the baggage. If so, it was a very faint hope.

The Famous Five were still fighting. But Frank Nugent was down on his back, pinned by a brawny knee on his chest. Dr. Sin stepped to him, and—still smiling—drew his wrists together, and bound them hard and fast.

One man had been knocked out by

Bob—he sprawled dazedly, holding his damaged chin. But now that Nugent was secured, his assailant went to the assistance of the man dealing with Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Between them, the Nabob of Bhanipur was dragged down, and the smiling Dr. Sin tied his wrists together.

"Oh, you terrific and preposterous rascal!" gasped the nabob, as he was reduced to helplessness.

Johnny Bull was the next to be overcome. With three pairs of hands on him, the sturdy Yorkshire junior still resisted manfully; but it was in vain. His wrists were bound, and he was put out of the combat.

Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry were still fighting. But they had five assailants now, and it was hopeless. There had, indeed, been little hope from the beginning, and now it was clear that there was none. But they were not going to give in, and they struggled fiercely to the last as they were grasped on all sides and dragged down.

But as the cords were drawn and knotted round their wrists, resistance had to cease.

Bound, helpless, panting for breath, the Famous Five were flung into chairs, helpless.

The Chinese were all panting, too. There was not a yellow face that did not show signs of damage. Heavy odds had overcome the Famous Five of Greyfriars; but they had given a good account of themselves.

The Chinese gave them evil looks from their slanting eyes. Only Dr. Sin was good-tempered and smiling. Perhaps that was because he had not collected any of the damages.

He rapped out an order in Chinese, and Li Yi went along to the baggage-room.

There was a startled squeak from that apartment.

"Owl! I'm not here! Leggo! I say, you fellows, keep that Chink off! Oh crikey! Oh lor'! Oh crumbs!"

Billy Bunter reappeared in the cabin, jerked along, with Li's grasp on the back of his fat neck. He was gurgling with terror.

"I say—owl! Yow! Help! Mercy!" yelled Bunter.

"Shut up, you fat idiot!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Owl! Wow! Help! I say, you fellows, I'm not going to be murdered by a lot of Chinks!" yelled Bunter. "I say—"

"Calm yourself, honourable fat one!" said Dr. Sin reassuringly. "Not a hair of your inestimable head will be harmed!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

"Please to sit down!" said Dr. Sin.

He gave Bunter a push into a chair, and the fat Owl's wrists were tied together.

"Oh crikey!" groaned Bunter. "I say, you fellows, I jolly well wish we were out of this! Call this a holiday? Oh lor'!"

Dr. Sin smiled round at the panting, enraged juniors.

"This is not what I would have wished," he said, "but, as you say in your wonderful language, you ask for it! Here you remain till we make a landing, when my heart will be heavy to part with the light of your magnificent faces."

The Chinese, rubbing damaged faces and scowling and muttering in their own tongue, crowded out of the cabin. Dr. Sin followed them out, making a last polite bow to his prisoners before he left them.

And the Greyfriars fellows, helpless

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prisoners on the soaring plane, were left to their reflections—from which they derived little comfort!

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Left Behind!

DAWN came red from the east. It flushed in at the windows of the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon, flying low over the gleaming waters.

Italy had been dropped in the night; but where they were the juniors had only a faint idea.

With bound prisoners aboard the plane, Mr. O could hardly make for the aerodrome at Athens, or any other drome. He had to get rid of the prisoners first, and no doubt the pilots were now seeking a suitable spot.

Looking from the cabin windows, they could see the rolling waters below, and caught sight of a felucca, leaning to a strong wind.

Ahead of the plane, mountain-tops loomed against the sky—mountains of Albania, they concluded, perhaps of Epirus or Greece. The Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon circled, in the rising light, as if about to swoop.

Every now and then Dr. Sin had looked in, to ascertain that the prisoners were safe—no doubt with a recollection that they had not been safe in the bandits' cave in the Calabrian hills.

But they were safe enough now. They had escaped from that peril to fall into another, from which they could not escape. Dr. Sin was too watchful to give them any chance of giving further trouble.

Of Wun they had seen nothing.

Whether he was a prisoner in the fore cabin, or whether he had been given some Chinese drug to make him unconscious of what passed, they could not tell; but they thought the latter probable.

It was likely that Mr. O did not want him to learn how roughly his friends had been handled—an offence that the Chinese junior could hardly have for-

given. Probably he was to be told some tale later to account for the juniors having left the plane; he might even be left with the belief that they had deserted him—which was bitter enough for the Co. to think of.

But there was no help. They had done all they could, and they had been overpowered, at the finish, by force. So long as O Bo kept to strategy and trickery they had beaten him; but now the end had come. They could not blame themselves; they had had to take the risk, and face it, or else leave Wun Lung to his fate.

Billy Bunter, relieved of his fear that the Chinks might toss him headlong from the plane, had gone to sleep again.

The juniors had nodded once or twice during the hours of darkness, but at dawn they were wide awake. They could see that the plane was seeking a landing-place—not easy to find on that wild, rugged, rocky coast.

Looking down, they watched the coast as it drew nearer. Once, twice, they had a glimpse of some town, but it vanished again. Now the plane was circling over a small island at a short distance from the shore.

So far as they could see, it was a bare, uninhabited rock. Fishermen, perhaps, came to it at times, for there was something that looked like a hut, but no one lived there.

Not a sign of life met their gaze, save the sea-birds wheeling and calling.

The isle was low, rocky, barren-looking; but on the side towards the mainland there was a long stretch of level sand. That, they supposed, was the landing-place the Chinese pilot had picked.

"So that's it!" said Bob grimly.

"Robinson Crusoe—up to date!" said Nugent, with a faint grin.

Bob breathed hard.

"If I'd warned Wun—" he muttered.

"No good thinking of that now, old chap!" said Harry. "And I don't think he would believe that we owe this to Mr. O. He would put it all down to Sin! He will know nothing till the old bean chooses to let him."

Bob nodded, and stared gloomily from the window.

The sea seemed very near, and the waves were rolling high.

In the cabin they could not feel the wind; but it was clear that it was blowing hard, and that a stormy day was coming. The rising sun shone red through banks of clouds over the dim, rugged mountains of the Albanian mainland.

The giant plane settled down at last. Like a huge bird, it dropped to the sand, taxied lightly as the wheels picked up, and came to a halt.

"Now for it!" murmured Johnny Bull.

Billy Bunter's eyes opened. He blinked at the other fellows and gave a yelp as he remembered where he was and what had happened.

"Oh crikey! I say, you fellows, has this beastly plane stopped?" he asked. "I don't hear any engines."

"We've landed," answered Harry.

"Oh, good!" said Bunter. "I say, they'll have to let us go now, you know! We'll jolly well pack into the first train—after brekker, I mean, of course! I suppose they're going to let us have some brekker."

"The trainfulness will not be terrific, my esteemed Bunter," grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "We are not landing at a drome."

"Eh? Oh crikey!"

Bunter heaved himself from his chair and rolled to the window. He blinked out in dismay at the lonely stretch of sand, backed on one side by the rocky island, on the other by the stormy strait that separated the island from the mainland, a mile away. The waves rushed up the sand and broke in spray that almost reached the plane.

"Oh dear!" gasped Bunter. "Where are we?"

"Somewhere off the coast of Epirus, I should think," answered Harry.

"Where's Epirus?"

"North of Greece."

"Where's Greece?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I say, if we get off here, how are we going to get away?" asked Bunter. "I don't see any railway station—not even a house."

"I'm afraid they don't mean us to get away in a hurry," said Harry. "We've got to stick here till they're safely away."

"Oh crumbs! I say, they'll leave us some grub, I suppose?" exclaimed Bunter, in great alarm. "If they leave us plenty of grub I shan't mind so much. I shall be jolly glad to get away from these Chinks, I can tell you."

The Famous Five were thinking of Wun Lung; but Bunter appeared to have forgotten the Chinese junior. His fat thoughts, as usual, were concentrated on his fat self.

Dr. Sin entered the cabin, and bowed and smiled.

"Will the honourable ones be pleased to follow this poor worm?" he asked politely.

"Yes, as we've got no choice, you scoundrel!" growled Johnny Bull.

Soo, the steward, opened the door. Two or three of the Chinese went into the baggage-room for the juniors' suitcases and other belongings.

The Famous Five stepped out, and Dr. Sin, with good-natured politeness, helped them down the steps, one after another, though he did not carry his politeness so far as to unbind their hands.

They stood in a group on the sand, by the piled baggage.

Their eyes turned on the windows of the fore-cabin, in the faint hope of

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seeing something of Wun Lung. But there was no sign of their Chinese chum.

"You're leaving us here, Dr. Sin?" asked Harry Wharton quietly.

"With a sad and heavy heart I shall deprive myself of the light of your beneficent countenance," admitted Dr. Sin.

"Can we speak to Wun Lung?"

Dr. Sin smiled.

"I fear that it would be useless," he said. "Wun Lung sleeps soundly in the cabin of his inestimable uncle."

"You mean that he has been drugged, to keep this dark from him?"

"It is possible that some such thing has occurred!" assented Dr. Sin. "Wun knows nothing, honourable one. He will know nothing till it is explained to him that his friends decided to leave the plane, owing to news of illness of honourable relatives in England."

"Oh, you treacherous villain!" muttered Bob.

"Why should Wun be told what would only cause him heaviness of heart?" asked Dr. Sin. "Have you not a saying in your beautiful language that where ignorance is bliss, wisdom is folly?"

"I say, you fellows, this beastly wind is nearly blowing me over!" squeaked Bunter. "I say, there's a hut or something there—let's get out of this."

Dr. Sin, smiling, cut the fat Owl's bonds, and Bunter was free. But he did not perform the same service for the Famous Five. They were not to have the use of their hands again, till Dr. Sin was out of reach of the same.

"When we are gone," said Dr. Sin, the honourable fat one will release you. I shall gaze on you, as we go, with a heavy heart, for truly I like you very much, and admire you for your loyal friendship to a Chinese boy. Comfort yourselves with the knowledge that Wun will be rich and happy, and that in a short time he will be contented—and later, when his father and honourable grandfather have resigned themselves to fate, he will be allowed to see them. Is it not, after all, what you call in your language, a great catch, to be the adopted son of a millionaire? I think so! Yes!"

"What about grub?" asked Bunter.

"Shut up, you fat idiot!"

"Eh? Don't you want any brekker?" asked Bunter, blinking at the juniors in surprise. "I suppose they're not going to let us starve?"

"Ample provisions will be left for the honourable ones," said Dr. Sin, smiling. "The beneficent fat one need have no fear. Also, word will be given for a steamer to arrive at this island, after the lapse of one week, to take you away."

"Oh, good!" said Bunter. "I say, you fellows, we might be worse off. What are you fellows scowling about?"

"They're taking Wun Lung away in the plane, fathead!"

"Oh, yes! Well, I dare say he'll like it all right in China! It's his country, you know! After all, he's a Chink!" said Bunter. "Besides, I suppose his uncle will look after him. He seems to let that man Sin do as he jolly well likes, but I suppose he will look after his own nephew, even if he lets us be treated in this rotten way."

Dr. Sin laughed softly. Apparently he found something entertaining in the obtuseness of the fat Owl.

"The fact is," went on Bunter, blinking seriously at the juniors, "I've had an idea for some time that old O wasn't keen on us stopping with Wun."

"Wha-a-t?" gasped Bob.

"You never noticed it, of course," said Bunter. "You fellows never notice

anything! But I'm pretty sure of it. I notice things, you know. You can take my word for it, old O isn't jolly sorry to lose us."

The juniors gazed at Bunter. Dr. Sin almost doubled up with merriment.

Bunter blinked at him, and tramped away into the shelter of the hut. The wind was blowing hard across the little island, and there was no other shelter.

"The honourable fat one takes what you call in English, the cake!" gurgled Dr. Sin.

He turned away to give directions to the Chinese.

Boxes, packages, and parcels were landed on the sand—ample supplies for the Crusoes until they were taken off. Then Dr. Sin kow-towed deeply to the frowning five, and the Chinese went back to the plane.

The engines droned.

Harry Wharton & Co. stood in a group, watching, with knitted brows, as the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon taxied along the sand, and took off.

Thick banks of black clouds were rolling across the sky, and the wind was howling. Indifferent to the weather, the giant plane rose, and disappeared from the watching eyes of the Greyfriars fellows in the dark clouds.

They watched it, in grim silence, till it was gone, climbing and climbing to clear the high mountains of the mainland. Then, still in silence, they tramped away to the hut, for Bunter to release them.

Wun Lung was gone—and they were left behind—and if they had a hope of ever seeing their Chinese chum again, that hope was very faint.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Wreck of the Plane!

"**B**EASTLY weather!" grunted Billy Bunter.

The roar of the wind almost drowned his voice.

The day had broken dark and stormy, and as it advanced, the wind grew wilder, and with it came rain, drenching and dashing.

Overhead was a murky sky, and round the little rocky islet the sea roared and foamed with incessant din.

During the hours that had elapsed since the vanishing of the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon, Harry Wharton & Co. had explored the whole extent of their little domain.

Bunter was satisfied to rest in the hut, where he unpacked the supply of provisions, and re-packed a considerable quantity inside his extensive circumference.

With the certain knowledge that there was ample grub, and that a steamer would take them off before the supply of grub was exhausted, Billy Bunter was fairly contented. He was glad to get away from Dr. Sin and the other Chinks, and he justly remarked that the party might have been worse off. As for Wun Lung, Bunter appeared to have forgotten him again.

Harry Wharton & Co. were not likely to forget him. They still nourished a faint hope of defeating Mr. O. That depended on escape from the lonely rock where they were stranded.

They explored it from side to side, and from end to end. They stared with watchful eyes across the strait that separated it from the rugged, mountainous mainland.

The fact that the hut stood there, was a proof that the isle was sometimes visited by inhabitants from the shore—fishermen, most likely. If, by happy

chance, a boat came out from the shore, all was not yet lost. To go to a town, and set the telegraph to work, was the thought in their minds—and the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon might yet be stopped before the borders of Europe were passed.

But if there were a hope, the wild weather soon put paid to it.

Before noon, the strait was a mass of tossing foam, in which no boat could have lived. No one was likely to come off to the island that day, at all events, and the juniors had to make up their minds to that.

All round the little isle the sea roared, and surf crashed on the great rocks. Even at noon, the sky was almost black, with here and there a shaft of the red sun coming through. Rain fell almost in sheets, and the juniors were driven, at last, back to the shelter of the hut.

There was a stone fireplace in the hut, and a stack of fuel—broken-up driftwood—against one of the walls. The juniors built a fire, and dried themselves at it, while they ate their midday meal.

After which Billy Bunter reposed his fat limbs on several coats and rugs laid on the floor near the fire, and went to sleep.

His snore mingled with the roar of the wind and waves.

There were two or three rough wooden benches in the hut, and the juniors sat on them, listening to the roar of the storm that was lashing the Ionian Sea to fury.

Bob Cherry moved about restlessly. There was no window to the hut; and the door was closed against the wind. But it found its way in, blowing through a dozen slits and crannies, and circled the smoke from the fire all through the little building.

Bob went to the door at last.

"It's pretty rough outside, old chap!" said Nugent.

"Oh, blow!" said Bob. "I'm going out!"

He opened the door, and the wind rushed in with a howl like a wild animal. Bob tramped out into it, and his friends, tired of doing nothing, followed him.

Leaving Bunter snoring, they tramped down to the sand where the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon had rested that morning. The sea was rolling in heavily, and the plane's landing-place was covered with foaming water.

Bob stared across the stormy strait at the dim mountains that loomed far off on the mainland.

"This rotten weather——" he growled. "On a fine day, a fellow might be able to swim it."

"Not much chance to-day," said Nugent, with a grin.

Bob clenched his hands. It had been useless—he knew that it had been useless—to warn Wun Lung of O Bo's scheming. Yet now that it was too late, it was on his mind that he had not done so.

Where was Wun now?

Hundreds of miles away, in all probability, on his way to the Far East—listening, perhaps, to the false tale told him, to account for the absence of his friends. That was rotten enough—but another thought was in Bob's mind, too—one that troubled him still more.

The Chinese had carried on, regardless of the change in the weather—but this was no weather for flying over a high and rugged mountain range.

There was a haunting thought in Bob's mind that the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon might have hit trouble somewhere up beyond those dark banks of rolling clouds.

The Chinese pilots who had taken control, had proved themselves able to handle the plane efficiently; but Bob knew that the Aviation Company's pilots would not have taken off on such a day.

The wind came off the unseen misty shore of the mainland with terrific force. The juniors had to brace themselves to stand against it. Right up to their feet came the dashing foam and spray.

"This is rather thick!" murmured Nugent. "What about getting back to the hut, you fellows?"

"The thickfulness is rather terrific," agreed Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh, shivering as a gust of spray drenched him.

Bob Cherry was standing with his eyes fixed on the dark sky.

Harry Wharton touched him on the arm.

"Come on, Bob," he said. "Better get out of this, old bean! I'm wet to the skin!"

"Soaked!" grunted Johnny Bull.

Bob did not heed. He shook off Wharton's hand impatiently, and continued to stare at the sky.

Wharton, in surprise, followed his fixed gaze, but he could see nothing but the driving murk of the storm.

"What's up, Bob?" he asked.

Bob lifted his arm and pointed towards the black rim that told where the mainland mountains barred the sky.

"Can't you see anything?" he asked.

"Only cloud and mist—"

"It might be a bird—but I don't think it is!" Bob Cherry caught his breath. "Look—look!"

"But what—"

"A plane!" breathed Bob.

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Nugent. "A plane up in this! Somebody hunting for trouble, if it is."

"Look!" breathed Bob.

The juniors strained their eyes through the murk.

It was not much past noon, but the sun was hidden, and a murky twilight reigned over land and sea, thickened by rolling, drifting mists. Something—a strange shape—loomed through the mist, and vanished again.

But all the juniors had seen it now. It was a plane—an aeroplane fighting for its life in the grip of the storm.

"Oh!" gasped Wharton. "I saw it, then—it's a plane, Bob! A big plane—as big as the Pigeon—"

"It is the Pigeon!" said Bob.

"Wha-a-t?"

"It's O Bo's plane! Haven't you got any eyes?" muttered Bob. "It's the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon—and it's been driven back by the storm. They've hit trouble. I thought, perhaps— Oh, look! There it is again!"

Through an opening of murky mist, the giant plane showed full, for a moment. Then the Famous Five knew it—and knew that it was the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon. The mists swallowed it again, but they knew.

Bob's misgiving had been well-founded—the plane had hit trouble. It rocked and sagged in the fierce wind as it vanished into the mists.

"They'll never get across those mountains," muttered Bob. "I've been thinking for hours— Oh, look!"

For long minutes their straining eyes had seen nothing but murk. Suddenly the giant plane shot into view again—surprisingly near to them. It was over the strait that foamed and roared

between the island and the mainland, and it was shooting down.

Whether the Chinese pilot, in sheer desperation, was trying to make the sand from which the plane had taken off that morning, they could not tell. If that was the case, he had no chance. Full in their view they saw the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon roll in the fierce buffeting of the wind, and then it came down like a stone. In utter horror the juniors gazed as the vast fabric struck the stormy water and crumpled into the foaming sea under their eyes.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

From the Jaws of Death!

BOB CHERRY dashed forward.

His comrades rushed after him.

Within thirty yards of where they had been standing, the wreck of the plane was breaking up in the thundering waters. Somewhere, within that crashing wreckage, was Wun Lung, of the Greyfriars Remove; and no danger would have stopped the Famous Five from rushing to his rescue.

A swimmer whirled by them—in the dimness, they had a glimpse of the plump face of Dr. Sin. They did not heed him. Willingly, in those terrible moments, they would have helped friend or foe; but their thoughts were all for Wun Lung. They had to save Wun if they could.

Head after head appeared on the wild waters. The Chinese who were able to get out of the wreckage were making for the shore, helped by the rush of the foaming waters. That overpowering rush was against the juniors, and four of them were swept helplessly back. But Bob Cherry's grasp closed on something—some rib of a wrecked wing—and he held on, the water thundering over his head.

He struggled out of it and strained his eyes in the murk. From the sea came a panting cry.

"Ole Bob Chelly!"

"Wun!" shouted Bob.

He saw Wun Lung the next moment, clinging to some fragment of the wreck that was breaking up in the heat of the waves, even as he clung to it.

With a desperate plunge, Bob reached him, and grasped him.

"I'll get you safe, old man—let go! Wun, let go, for goodness' sake—don't you understand—let go; I'll get you out!" panted Bob.

"Uncle blong me stop 'long plane!" panted Wun. "No goey without uncle blong me."

"Oh!" gasped Bob.

A rush of water covered them both for a long moment. It passed, and their heads were clear again. Bob dashed the water from his eyes, and stared round him.

The Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon had parted amidships—the aft cabin, in which the Greyfriars fellows had travelled, was gone, but the fore-cabin, and the bows of the plane, were still over the water, though breaking to pieces fast.

Either sand, or rock, supported that part of the giant plane for the moment—but it could only be for moments.

"Uncle O!" shrieked Wun. From a rent gap in the side of the fore-cabin an old, yellow-ivory face looked—calm, even in those fearful moments.

Wun Lung made a plunge towards it,

and in another instant, would have been swept away to his death, but for Bob's grasp.

"Bob!" Harry Wharton's voice came through the roar of the waters. "Bob! You've got him?"

The captain of the Remove dashed against Bob in the swirl. He grabbed hold of him and held.

"You've got Wun?" he panted.

"Hold him!" gasped Bob. "Get hold of him—he's all in!"

He relinquished Wun to Wharton's grasp and plunged towards the old wrinkled face that was looking calmly on certain death.

There was a thundering crash of waves on the wreck, and what remained of the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon was in fragments. But Bob Cherry's grasp closed on O Bo as he went down, and dragged him back.

What followed was like a fearful nightmare to Bob. Still holding the helpless old Chinaman, he fought for his life in the whirling, swirling waters.

Twice he felt the sand under his feet and was swept away again—again his feet trod sand, and again he would have been plucked away by the swirling water, but this time a hand gripped him, and Johnny Bull dragged him up the shore.

Utterly exhausted, Bob collapsed on the sand; just beyond the reach of the sea. By his side lay O Bo—still as one, lifeless, but the gleam of his wrinkled old eyes telling that he was still conscious.

"Wun!" gasped Bob. "Where's Wun?"

"Wun's all right—Wharton got him, so—"

"Me allee light, Bob Chelly!" Wun came staggering through the buffeting wind and dropped on his knees beside Mr. O. "You savee uncle blong me, ole Bob Chelly—you savee him!"

Bob Cherry sat up dizzily.

He put his hand to his forehead—the blood was running down his face, mingled with salt water, from some blow he had received, without even knowing it, from some fragment of wreckage. His head was dizzy, and he gulped and gulped for breath.

Wun Lung raised his uncle's head and rested it against his knee.

Bob stared dizzily at the cauldron of mad waters from which he had, he hardly knew how, dragged himself and the old Chinaman, from death to life.

Hardly a fragment of the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon was to be seen now. The giant plane had disappeared in the swirling waters. On the shore the Chinese were grouped—though whether all of them had escaped from the wreck, Bob did not know. But Wun had been saved—and that was enough to make his heart light.

"Hurt, old chap?" Johnny Bull bent over him.

"Only a knock!" panted Bob. "All right! Bit wet!" He grinned. "Thank goodness we got Wun out of that!"

"Most of the Chinks got out of it, I think," said Johnny. "But the old bean would have been a goner if—"

"Beneficent one with unlimited courage, you have saved the priceless life of O Bo!" said a silky, familiar voice, and Bob stared round at Dr. Sin.

"Oh! You!" growled Bob. He gave the sleek secretary a glare. "There's the end of all your trickery, Sin Song—you're stranded here now, along with

us, and your plane's at the bottom of the sea—and you're jolly lucky not to be there with the plane!"

"Those are truth-words!" assented Dr. Sin. "How little did I think, when I sorrowfully parted from your honourable company a few hours ago that my humble eyes would gaze again so soon on your moon-like face—"

"Oh, chuck it!" snapped Bob.

Dr. Sin smiled and turned away, and called to some of the Chinese. They lifted O Bo from the sand and carried him up the shore to the hut.

No word or sign came from the ancient Chinaman; only the gleam of his old wrinkled eyes told that he was alive and conscious.

Wun Lung went with him. The Co. remained with Bob, who was dabbing the cut on his forehead with a wet handkerchief.

There was a sudden howl from the direction of the hut.

"I say, you fellows! I say! Help! I say, those beastly Chinks have come back! I say— Yaroooh!"

"Bunter's woke up!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter had slept and snored through the roar of the storm and the wreck of the plane. But the arrival of the Chinese at the fisherman's hut had evidently awakened him—and alarmed him.

"I say, you fellows—" yelled Bunter.

There was a scamper of running feet. The Owl of the Remove arrived breathless, his eyes popping through his spectacles at the Famous Five.

"I say—the Chinks!" gasped Bunter. "I say, I've seen Wun Lung—Wun's here! Did you fellows know those Chinks had come back?"

"Sort of!" grinned Bob.

"I say, how did they get here?" Billy Bunter blinked round in search of the "Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon." "I say, where's the plane?"

"At the bottom of the sea," answered Harry.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. "Has it been wrecked?"

"Oh, no!" said Johnny Bull sarcastically. "Just getting a wash at the bottom of the Mediterranean."

"Oh, really, Bull! I say, the beasts might have got wrecked somewhere else! I thought we were done with those beastly Chinks!"

"We're not done with them yet, old fat man!" said Bob. "And they're not done with us." He glanced round at his friends. "We're not losing Wun again after this, you fellows."

"No fear!" said Harry.

"The no-fearfulness is terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh emphatically.

The Famous Five had made up their minds on that point. By a strange freak of fortune, when all hope had seemed to be lost, they had found their Chinese chum again—and they were going to stick to him.

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

O Bo Makes Up His Mind!

BRIGHT morning shone on the little rocky isle.

The storm, which had raged and roared with mad fury for a whole day, had gone with the night, and the new day dawned clear and calm. At the first gleam of light, the Famous Five turned out—glad to get into the open air. Even Billy Bunter was ready to turn out early that morning.

There was no shelter on the isle,

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

AS you have discovered by now, this week's thrilling school yarn winds up with Harry Wharton & Co. nearing the end of their holidays. Next week finds them spending the last few days before the new term at Wharton Lodge, in Surrey.

During a ramble through the quiet country lanes they assist a lad who, to all intents and purposes, has met with an accident. Returning to the lodge, they make the startling discovery that they have been relieved of their cash and other possessions.

Owing to Wun Lung's peculiar skill in relieving fellows of their belongings undetected, suspicion falls on the Chinese junior—a painful misunderstanding that is cleared up by Bunter, who, fortunately, is in the know. Before the pick-pocket can be handed over to the police, however, Horace Coker happens on the scene, and as a result of his interference the light-fingered lad is able to make good his escape. But Coker has a reason for barging in this time as you will learn when you read:

"THE BOY WHO COULDN'T RUN STRAIGHT!"

next week's great yarn by Frank Richards. As it's the type of story that's bound to please, "Magnetites" should make a point of ordering their copy to-day. The other features include a mirth-making issue of "The Greyfriars Herald" and another interesting jaunt with the Greyfriars Guide.

Space for a few

RAPID-FIRE REPLIES

to readers? Yes, I think so!

Tom Croft (Lewes).—The most valuable animal is the sea-lion. It is worth nearly £5,000. The elephant, valued at £1,000, comes next in the list.

Stanley Bruce (Oxford).—No. Frank Richards and Martin Clifford are not one and the same man.

James Macfarlane (Edinburgh).—Early Adventures of the Greyfriars Chums. These are being published in the "Gem." The very early stories have already appeared.

Francis Taylor (Beacontree).—Mr. Shields draws the **MAGNET** covers and Mr. Chapman the inside illustrations. As the former is holiday-making, Mr. Chapman has taken over his work for the time being.

Gee! I'd almost forgotten to ask you fellows the all-important question: "Have you got your 'Holiday Annual' yet?" No! Then take my tip and get this bargain book before it's too late! There's not a dull line in this popular Annual, which contains school stories of all your old favourites, as well as interesting articles, breezy poems, a Greyfriars variety show, and four fine colour plates. No "Magnetite" should miss this bumper five shilling Annual.

YOUR EDITOR.

except the hut—and it was crowded and stuffy with so many packed in it. To Billy Bunter's intense indignation, every available rug and coat had been annexed, to make Mr. O as comfortable as possible in his rough quarters. Bunter had been fearfully uncomfortable—but, as usual, nobody seemed to care whether he was comfortable or not. For once, early rising appealed to the fat Owl.

But there was still balm in Gilead, so to speak. With the morning came light and warmth, and the supply of food was still ample.

It was fortunate that Dr. Sin had kindly left so ample a supply for the stranded schoolboys; for there were now many mouths to feed.

After breakfast, the Famous Five, leaving Bunter still eating, clambered on the highest rock of the little island and scanned the sea.

The water still rolled heavily; but other signs of the storm there were none. Sunshine gleamed from a bright blue sky, and away to the east the Albanian mountains rose clear against the sky.

But they scanned the sea in vain for the sight of a sail or a boat. None was to be seen on the wide stretch of rolling waters.

"Lots of driftwood about," said Bob Cherry. "We can get a fire going, and somebody may spot the smoke sooner or later."

"Good egg!" assented Harry.

And the Famous Five set to work, gathering driftwood from the rocks, and

seaweed, and fragments of the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon. As the sun rose higher, the heat became more intense, and the fuel was soon dry enough to burn.

Wun Lung was still with his uncle; but some of the Chinese watched the juniors as they built the signal-fire on the rock.

Had they intervened, the Famous Five were prepared to resist; but beyond staring at them every now and then, Li Yi and the rest took no heed. No doubt they were as anxious to see a sail as the schoolboys were. The wreck of the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon had changed the state of affairs completely, and the whole party were now, as it were, in the soup together.

The previous day the weather had made a signal-fire impossible; now, in the calm and sunny morning, it burned steadily, sending up a thick column of smoke to the sky. There was hope, at least, that it might be observed from the mainland or from some vessel at sea.

Wun Lung joined his friends later in the morning, his little yellow face very grave.

"How's Mr. O?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Tinkee him allee light!" answered Wun. "Uncle O velly old, but him velly tough. But he no speakce. He tinkee plenty, but he no speakce! Me no savvy what he tinkee so much!"

Harry Wharton & Co. thought that
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they could guess. All Mr. O's schemes had been knocked on the head by the wreck of the Very Old and Benevolent Pigeon. It was probable that he had plenty of food for thought.

"Me no savvy how you felles come 'long this place," went on Wun. "Me goce 'sleepee, 'long plane, and when me wakee, Sin Song telles me you felles go home, 'long father blong Bob Chelly velly ill. Tinkee him telles plenty big lie."

"They forced us to land here yesterday, and left us," said Harry Wharton. "We put up a scrap, but—"

He paused.

Even yet, it was clear that Wun had no suspicion of Mr. O. He was puzzled and perplexed, but it had not occurred to him that his ancient relative was behind all that had happened.

Dr. Sin came along from the direction of the hut.

The juniors gave him grim looks as he came. But Dr. Sin was smiling and friendly, and he honoured them with a deep kow-tow.

"The inestimable Mr. O desires to speak with the honourable one who preserved his priceless life!" said Dr. Sin. "Will the lord-one Cherry deign to accompany this miserable worm?"

"I'll come!" grunted Bob.

Leaving the other fellows tending the signal-fire, Bob followed Dr. Sin to the hut.

The Chinese were grouped outside; but the venerable O was alone in the interior, reposing on his bed of rugs. He looked little the worse for what he had been through; and there was no doubt that Wun was right in describing the ancient gentleman as very tough.

Bob looked at him curiously. The old, wrinkled eyes fixed gravely on his face. Dr. Sin left them together.

"Honourable young one—young in years, but very old in all other things," said Mr. O gently, "it is you who have saved my worthless life—even at the danger of your own precious and inestimable person."

"Glad I was able to help, sir!" said Bob.

"Had I perished," went on Mr. O, "not only life would have been lost; but with no son to perform the funeral duties, my miserable spirit would have been an outcast on high."

Bob did not quite know what to say in answer to that. So he remained silent. What seemed to him incredibly absurd, was evidently a matter of the most serious import to the ancient Chinaman.

"If it please Kwan Yin-ko that I return to my own land," continued Mr. O, "I shall adopt a son. But now that you have saved me, not only from death, but from irreparable disaster afterwards, can I command a hand to be lifted against you? That, to a Chinaman, is impossible."

"Oh!" said Bob.

He could guess now what had been the subject of Mr. O's long, deep

thoughts. The ancient eyes continued to look at him gravely and unwinkingly.

"Now I am a suppliant," said Mr. O, "it is the desire of my heart to take my nephew, the Little Pink Toad, to China, there to adopt him. Now I can only beg of you to stand aside and leave him in my hands."

"That's impossible, sir!" said Bob. "We're sticking to Wun, and we're getting him back to Greyfriars with us."

Mr. O was silent.

"I hope there'll be no more trouble, sir," said Bob. "But we've got to stick to Wun! Sooner or later, we shall be taken off this island, and Wun must go with us."

A TIP-TOP STORY for MAGNET Readers

"NOT WANTED AT GREYFRIARS!"

By Frank Richards

Telling how that popular
character, Mark Linley, joined
up with the Remove, appears
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"My servants are here, and against so many you are powerless," said Mr. O calmly. "It would be easy to leave you, bound and hidden in some nook, when a ship comes to take us away. But against the honourable one who saved my poor life, no finger must be raised."

Bob said nothing.

"It is hard to me," said Mr. O, "to give up my plan, and to leave the Little Pink Toad with foreign devils. Yet if you will not grant my request, this poor person has no other choice."

He paused.

"Let it be so," he said at last. "The Little Pink Toad goes with you and I return to China alone. I shall adopt another son, and the wealth that might have been his, will go to another not of my blood."

He made a sign of dismissal, and Bob left the hut. His face was thoughtful as he rejoined his friends.

Out of hearing of Wun, he told them what O Bo had said.

"Then—it's all clear!" said Harry.

"Looks like it! He's chucked up the whole game!" said Bob. "I'm glad now that we never told Wun anything! No need to tell him now."

"Not a word!" said Harry. And no word was said to Wun Lung.

THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER.

Homeward Bound!

IT was the following day that an Italian felucca came swooping down to the rocky isle, drawn by the signal-smoke.

A greasy skipper was only too glad to take the castaways off—for a consideration of a few hundred lire.

But only the Famous Five, Wun Lung, and Billy Bunter went in the felucca.

Mr. O had decided to remain where he was, with his Chinese servants, till a steamer was sent from the nearest port.

Wun bade his ancient uncle an affectionate farewell; and the Famous Five took a respectful leave of the old gentleman.

Dr. Sin accompanied the party to the boat that took them off to the felucca, sleek and smiling and cordial as ever.

"This poor person's heart is heavy to lose the beaming light of your beneficent countenances," he told them cheerily.

And when the boat pushed off, Dr. Sin remained kow-towing on the sand, like a clockwork figure, till they were on board the felucca.

The great lateen sails spread to the wind, and the felucca shot away for the shores of Italy.

The chums of Greyfriars were homeward bound at last—bound for England and Greyfriars School.

"After all," remarked Billy Bunter thoughtfully, as the rocky isle sank into the blue—"after all, you fellows, we haven't had such a bad time! Old O was a bit of an old ass, and that man Sin seems to have done pretty much as he liked, but—after all, things might have been worse! The grub was good practically all the time!"

"And nothing else matters very much!" remarked Bob.

"Well, no!" said Bunter. "If the grub's all right, everything's pretty much all right! As the trip's been out rather short, Wharton, I suppose Wun will be staying with you when we get back, till the new term?"

"Yes," said Harry.

"Well, I'll come, too!" said Bunter. "I've looked after him all through the hols, and I'm not going to let him down now."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! It's all right, you fellows. I'm sticking to you right up to the end of the holidays!"

And Billy Bunter was as good as his word!

He did!

THE END.

(There will be another splendid story of Harry Wharton & Co. in next week's MAGNET, entitled: "THE BOY WHO COULDN'T RUN STRAIGHT!" Don't miss it, whatever you do, chums.)

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STEEPLE-JACK JOLLY!

By DICKY NUGENT

An Amusing and Amazing Story of Jack Jolly & Co., the Cheery Chums of St. Sam's.

Tinkle-tinkle!
It was the solemn hour of midnite, wringing out from the old clock tower at St. Sam's.

The last note died away into silence. Naught could be heard save the steady snoring sound of slumbering skoolboys in the sleeping section of the skool.

But stay! What is the cautious whisper that floats across the Fourth Form dormitory?

"You fellows awake?"
Can it be the voice of Jack Jolly, the cheery kaptin of the Fourth? It can be—and, as a matter of fact, it is!

A duzen fellows sat up in bed, as Jolly's whispered question echoed across the room. "Yes, we're awake, old chap!" whispered back Frank Fearless. "Was it midnite that struck?"

"Right on the wicket!" whispered the kaptin of the Fourth. "The hour has struck—and it's time we struck our blow for freedom!"

"Hear, hear!"
"We've suffered in silence long enuff. Now we're going to raise the banner of revolt!" And the kaptin of the Fourth brought to light a roll of bunting from beneath his bed. "Gentlemen, chaps and fellows! The flag in my hand contains these timely words of warning to the Head: 'STOP BEING A BEESTLY BOOLY, BIRCHEMALL!'"

I'm going to nail this flag to the topmost turret of St. Sam's!"
"Good old Jolly!"
"There won't half be some fun when they spot the flag in the morning!" grinned Jolly. "It will make Doctor Birchmall feel small—and he'll look like a loonatic at large! I'll take good care he duzzent get it down very easily, either! I'll put it where nobody but a steeplejack will ever reach it!"

"I hoap you can manage it all right, Jack," remarked Merry, with a somewhat dewbious shake of his head. "It will be garstly if you miss your footing and fall from the top of the Skool House!"
Jack Jolly larfed skornfully.

"To back out at the last moment would be white-livered—and I'm not a chap of that kidney!" he said. "I've set my hart on doing it, and I'm going to do my best!"

"Don't you think the Head will guess it's an 'inside' job?" asked Bright.
"What if he does?" grinned Jack Jolly. "We're all inside—and he'll have a

rare task to find out which of us did it! I'm going to do it, anyway!"
While the kaptin of the Fourth had been talking, he had also been donning his trowais and a pullover. He now put on a pair of rubber Jim shoes, wrapped the flag round his waste, and then walked across to the winder.

While his pals kept guard at the other winders and at the dormitory door, the dawning junior climbed out on to the winder-sill, then jumped down on to a narrow ledge that led to the grate, frowning towers that dominated the St. Sam's buildings. He tip-toed cautiously along the ledge till he reached the side of the tower. After that, he gripped the ivy that covered the tower and started hawling himself up towards the top.

It was a jerney fraught with dire peril; but dire perils didn't trouble our hero, and he went up the side of the tower with the speed and agility of a monkey.

The fellows watching from the winders drew a breath of relief when they saw that Jolly had reached the top of the tower in safety. They saw him balanced on the battlements for a few moments, having a rest before tackling the dizzy climb up the flagpole. Then he took a hold of the pole and ascended it with the ease of a yewman fly.

As it happened, there was no flag flying. Jack Jolly soon put this right. Clinging to the pole with his legs, he unferled his flag and, with the aid of a hammer and nails from his trowis pocket, nailed it to the wood.

Having finished the job to his entire satisfaction, the kaptin of the Fourth slid down the pole again and descended the ivy to the ledge that led back to the dorm. A few minnits later, he was safely back between the sheets, sleeping the sleep of the just!

"STOP BEING A BEESTLY BOOLY, BIRCHEMALL!"
These were the amazing words that met the Head's gaze when he looked out of his bedroom winder the following morning. Doctor Birchmall nearly fell out of the winder in serprize when he spotted them.

Jack Jolly's flag was fluttering proudly in the breeze high above the roof-tops of St. Sam's. In the quad below was a vast crowd of St. Sam's fellows



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(In the absence of Harry Wharton & Co. in foreign parts.)

—all of them fairly busting their sides with larfer. Doctor Birchmall's skool-larly fizz turned the culler of a beetroot as their larfer floated up to him.

"Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho! What a lark!"
"Won't the Head be wild when he spots it?"

Doctor Birchmall tore himself away from the winder and dressed himself at the dubble. His beard



simply bristled with rage and his eyes rolled ferociously. A grate knotted vein stood out from his forehead.

"I'll spifficate 'em!" he muttered. "I'll birch 'em black and blue!"

With his gown flying out behind him and his mortar-board pulled down over his eyes, the Head rushed out into the quad.

"Who is responsibul for this outrage?" he thundered. "Own up immediately and I'll flog the culprit till he shrieks for the mercy he will never get!"

"Don't all speak at once!" mormered Frank Fearless.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Doctor Birchmall glared menacingly at the grinning crowd.

"Ways and means will be found of eggstracting a

confession from the guilty party before long, I can tell you!" he roared. "In the meantime, the flag must come down at once! Fossil! Take it down!"

Fossil, the porter, who was on the edge of the crowd, looked up at the flag reflectively, and then he shook his head.

"Which I'm sorry, sir," he said, "but it can't be done. I ain't no steeple-jack!"

The Head's glare became simply terrific.

"How dare you disobey orders, Fossil! It's in your contract that you have to carry out all dewties entrusted to you."

"Which I'd rather break my contract than break my neck, sir!" said Fossil. "That there flag's nailed to that there post. Which you can't bring it down on a rope like wot you do the skool flag, sir. I'm tellin' you it can't be done!"

It was no good argewing the toss with Fossil. He just looked down doggedly on the flagstones, and Doctor Birchmall danced about like a cat on hot bricks.

"By hook or by crook I'm going to have that flag down, and by hook or by crook I'm going to find out who put it there!" roared the Head. "Burleigh!"

"Yes, sir!" said the burly kaptin of St. Sam's.

"Oblige me by fetching down that flag, will you, Burleigh?"

"Not likely, sir!" grinned Burleigh. "Why, if I went up there everybody would think I was up the pole!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Silence!" shrieked Doctor Birchmall. "What about you, Tallboy?"

"Nothing about me, sir!" said Tallboy hurriedly.

"Swotter, then! Would you mind obliging, Swotter?"

"Nothing doing, sir!"
A frightful fit of fury seized the Head.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

G. TUBB (Third).—"My hobby at bedtime is studying the moth."

That's nothing. Bunter's hobby at mealtimes is making the "butter fly."

"OBSERVER" (Remove).—"The difference between them is that Vivian is a hard worker and Mauly a slacker."

In a nutshell—Vivian is diligent while Mauly's a "dilly dally gent."

"That flag must come down, and the villain who put it there must own up!" he roared. "I'll give a handsome prize to the boy who retreives the flag, and I'll give another to the boy who tells me the name of the delinquent who did this dastardly deed!"

The next moment the crowd had a big serprize. Jack Jolly stepped forward.

"Can I have a tuck hamper if I fetch the flag, sir?" he grinned.

Doctor Birchmall mopped his perspiring brow and nodded.

"I'll make it two tuck hampers, Jolly—two of the biggest in the skool tuck-shop!"

"That's a bargain, sir!" grinned the kaptin of the Fourth. "But what do I get if I tell you the name of the chap who did it? It's worth a really ripping prize, sir!"

The Head's eyes gleamed. "As a rule, Jolly, I do not encourridge the practices of telling tales about other boys. But there is an exception to every rule, and on this occasion I shall feel justified in rewarding you handsomely for the name of the yung villain. Name your own price!"

"Certainly, sir. I suggest that you give me one month's eggseemption from lines and lickings—and it's cheap at the price!" said Jack Jolly. "How will that suit, sir?"

"Eggselemently, my dear Jolly!" gasped the Head. "I shall be delited to let you off all future punishments for a month if you will reveal the name of the culprit!"

"Done, sir!" chortled the kaptin of the Fourth. "A moment later he was climbing up the ivy-covered wall of the tower!"

Amid loud cheer, he climbed right up to the top of the flagpost and cut away the offending flag. Then he flung it down into the quad, where the Head pounced on it and stuffed it in his trowis pocket. Then he returned to terra-firma once more, to find Doctor Birchmall awaiting him with open arms.

"Jolly! You are a hero in every sense of the word!" cried the Head. "You are an eggseample to all others, and your devotion to your headmaster does you grate

credit! And now, my boy, name the kontemptible yung wretch who put up the flag!"

"With plezzure, sir!" grinned the kaptin of the Fourth. "His name is Jack Jolly!"

Doctor Birchmall jumped.

"J-J-Jack Jolly! But that is your own name, Jolly! Have we somebody else in the skool with the same name as yourself?"

"Oh no, sir!" said Jolly innersently. "I'm the one who did it!"

The Head leaped a clear foot into the air.

"YOU!" he shrieked. "Why, I'll slawter you! I'll spifficate you! To my study at once, you yung reprobate! I'll flog you into ribbons! I'll birch you till—"

"Half a minnit, sir!" broke in Jolly cheerfully. "What about my prize?"

"P-p-prize?"

"My prize for telling you the chap's name, sir," eggspained the Fourth Form skipper. "Didn't you promise, sir, that I'd be let off all lines and lickings for a month, sir?"

"You—you—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The crowd simply shrieked. They couldn't help it. As Fearless remarked afterwards, Doctor Birchmall's face was really a site for sore eyes!

"Dished!" the Head groaned. "Dished, diddled and done! You—you—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm sure you won't go back on your word, sir," grinned Jack Jolly. "The skool guvvernors wouldn't approve of it at all if you did, sir, would they? And now what about my prize hampers?"

Doctor Birchmall's eggsepression was simply feendish. If he had had the cheery kaptin of the Fourth

on his own, it was eggstremely likely that he would have cancelled both prizes without hezzitation; but with the whole skool looking on, he simply had to keep his word.

Muttering into his beard, he wrote out an order on the tuckshop for two hampers and passed it to Jack Jolly.

Then he tramped back to his house to seek solace in a big breakfast.

"Our win, I fancy!" chuckled Jack Jolly as he led his chums in triumph to the tuckshop. "Of course, it's possibl he may save up a licking for me till my month's up. But a lot can happen in that time. He may forgive and forget instead."

And, forchunitly for the kaptin of the Fourth, he did!

(Watch out for another spanking fine St. Sam's yarn in next Saturday's HERALD.)

OUR OFFER TO WINGATE!

By MARK LINLEY,

(Acting Editor)



What has happened to the First Eleven?

This is the question that everybody is asking at Greyfriars. With very good reason, too! They've opened the season with a licking on their own ground—and from St. Jude's at that, a school that hasn't won at Greyfriars in the recollection of the oldest inhabitant!

Of course, it may have been one of those flukes that crop up now and again in sporting annals. But it's more charitable to our visitors to assume that they won on their merits—and as both teams are practically the same as last year in personnel, that seems to point to a deterioration in the home team.

The "Greyfriars Herald" would like to tell Wingate right away that this won't do!

With many of the leading lights in Junior footer temporarily absent, we are going to have a hard struggle to keep our end up in the Lower School. All the more reason then why the seniors should make a special effort to retain the laurels they've won for themselves in the past!

One criticism I've always made of the First Eleven is that it's the traditional preserve of fellows belonging to the Sixth and Fifth. This sensational defeat makes me wonder seriously whether an infusion of junior blood wouldn't give fresh life to the top team.

WHY SHOULDN'T REMOVE FELLOWS PLAY FOR THE FIRST ELEVEN?

I know that most of the senior players are good men. I've nothing to say against chaps like Wingate and North

and Gwynne and Blundell of the Fifth. But there are weaknesses. Carne, in goal, is one, and Walker doesn't always shine at left-half.

We've plenty of good men left in the Remove in spite of the absentees. Russell and Bulstrode and Newland, for instance. Modesty prevents me mentioning one other I have in mind!

The "Greyfriars Herald" invites Wingate to consider these men as First Eleven recruits in an unprejudiced manner. Let him give them a trial; he may be surprised to see how good they are!

Better still, let him invite a Junior team to play the First Eleven on Big Side and see how they shape! I'm sure he'd be surprised. He might even get a severe shock!

It's up to Wingate. We await his reply to our offer!

WE WERE WRONG ABOUT THE FAGS!

Admits DICK RAKE

While I was helping Linley to sub one of Dicky Nugent's inimitable manuscripts the other evening, Tubb, of the Third, tramped in. He had a truculent look on his face and a crowd of fags at his heels.

"Is this the office of that piffing rag known as the 'Greyfriars Herald'?" he demanded.

"If you're referring, young man," I said sternly, "to that bright and breezy literary feast for youth—that wise and witty wonder-piece of juvenile journalism—"

"Chuck it!" said Tubb rudely. "We think it's rotten!"

"Hear, hear!" came in a deafening roar from the fags at the back.

"We've come to demand justice for fags in your rotten rag," said Tubb, fiercely. "You're giving the world a false idea of us!"

"But my dear kid—" I began.

"I'm not your dear kid, and if you say I am again, I'll thrash you!" growled Tubb. "Just listen to what I'm saying and don't interrupt! You're telling whoppers about us, see? You're telling the world in your paper that fags always have ink-stained fingers and blobs of ink over their faces, too. Well, they don't!"

"You make it pretty plain that in your opinion fags never wear a collar till they've made it thick with grime! You're wrong!"

"You imply that the chief recreation of the fags is frying herrings on pen-holders at Form-room fires. It's jolly well not!"

"If they're not doing that, you say, they're eating jam out of jam-jars in big spoons. They're not!"

"Worst of all, you've got the nerve to accuse us fags of ignorance. Anybody reading your paper would think we didn't know our twice times table. Well, we do!"

"But, my dear—I mean look here, old chap!" I said, hurriedly, as Tubb, who's a hulking great chap for a fag, raised his fist menacingly.

"I'm not looking anywhere!" snorted Tubb. "All I'm going to do is to give you to understand that unless you make it clear in your next number that you've been wrong about us fags in the past, there's going to be trouble!"

And, having delivered that ultimatum, Tubb led his legions out of the editorial office.

So now we've got to put things right again.

We've got to admit that we've given you a wrong impression over the kids in our back numbers.

If we've implied that they always have ink-stained faces and fingers, we're willing to admit that we've done them an injustice. They're not always like that; for about half-an-hour on Sunday mornings, they're quite clean, in fact!

The same applies to their collars. I've seen two clean collars myself amongst the fags this term—so they can't always be dirty!

As to the herring-toasting business, I'll grant at once that it's not their chief recreation. It comes second to playing marbles on the dirtiest floor they can find! And the jam-eating stunt may be an exaggeration, too, for a very good reason—the chaps in the higher Forms who own most of the jam are wise enough to keep it locked up!

Finally, in regard to their alleged lack of knowledge, we have never seriously maintained that they don't know their twice times table. Many of them, I feel sure, know a lot more than that. Their three times table, for instance!

So that puts all that right! I hope that Tubb and the fags will now be satisfied!