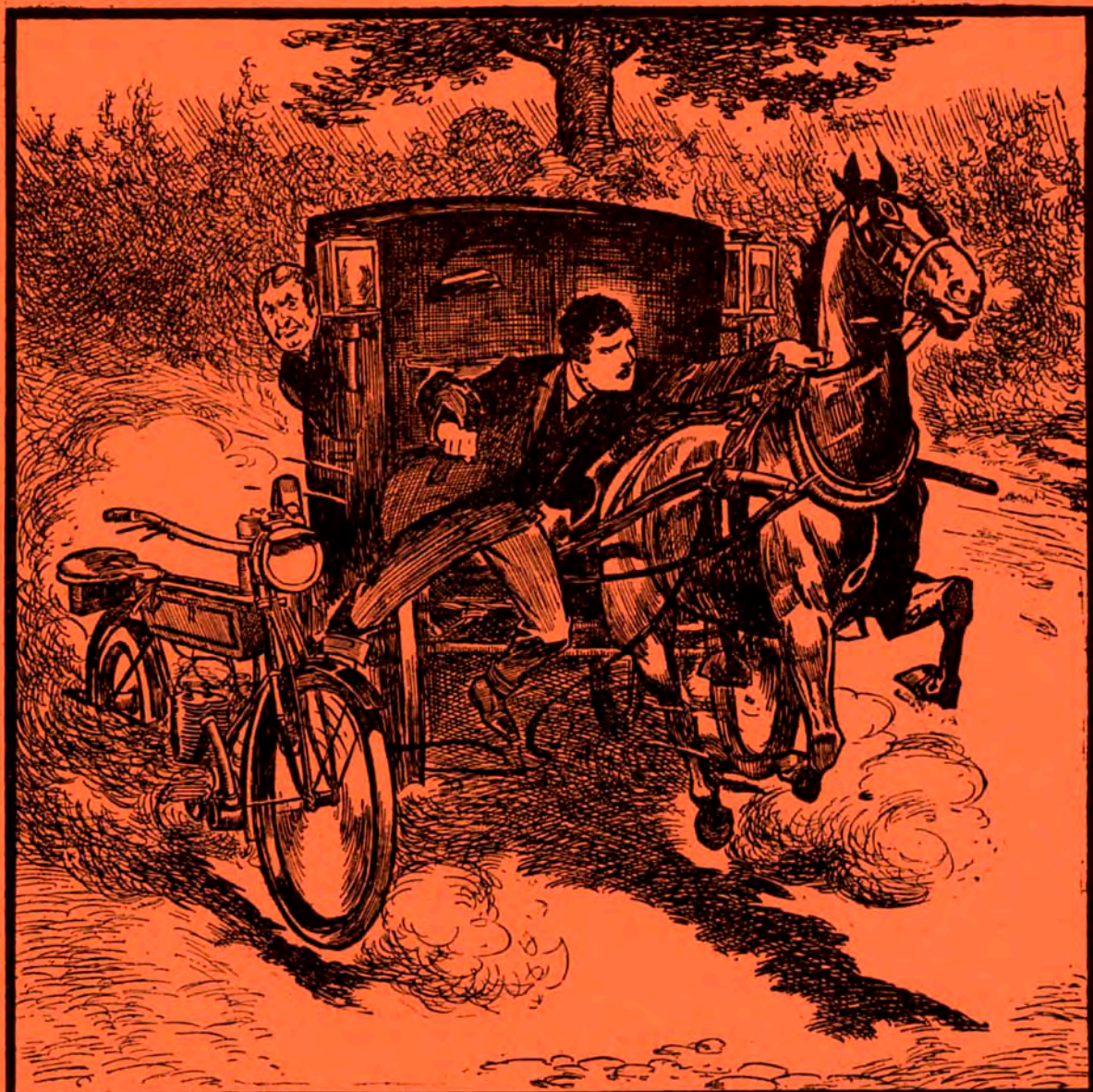


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This Week's Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of Greyfriars School,
By Frank Richards, is entitled:

Blundell's Prize!



Blundell and Bland looked at the motor-bike
reposing in the shop window. "H'm, not bad!"
said Bland. "Nothing to go dotty over though!
What's the good of it to you in this weather?"
(See Chapter I.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Very Cheap—But Out of Reach!

COURTFIELD was looking its best.
The day was keen and clear, and the sun shone down
from a bright blue, cloudless sky. A touch of frost
was in the air, making everyone feel healthy and
invigorated.

Blundell, captain of the Fifth Form at Greyfriars School,
strolled leisurely down the High Street with Bland, his chum
and study mate. The pair had paid a visit to the picture
palace, and were now taking a walk round before returning
to Greyfriars.

A poster caught Bland's eye, and he paused before it.

"Five hundred quid in prizes!" he exclaimed. "By
jingo, that's a decent sum! Offered by the editor of 'Weekly
Jottings' in the great 'Scheming' Competition! First prize,
two hundred—"

"Oh, come on!" said Blundell.

"Wait a minute. I want to look at this poster."

"Rot! It's all bunkum!" said Blundell.

"That's a jolly sweeping statement," said Bland, grinning.
"Personally, I think these competitions are run on strictly
honourable lines. Of course, there may be exceptions—"

"And that's one," interrupted the captain of the Fifth.
"'Weekly Jottings' is a beastly rag, and all that rot about
five hundred quid is swank! I don't believe they give tuppence in prizes!"

Bland stared at his chum.
 "Have you had a shot, then?" he asked.
 "Three giddy shots!" answered Blundell warmly. "I was ass enough to believe in that piffle, and sent a tanner postal-order! The attempt I sent in was a jolly good one, but I didn't get a cent! That tanner vanished for ever!"
 Bland chuckled.

"Well, you can't expect to win first go off, you ass!" he said.

"I didn't expect it—so I tried it twice more," said Blundell. "The third result hasn't been published yet, but I'll bet you anything you like I sha'n't get a penny. 'Weekly Jottings' is a swindle!"

Bland stared at the poster.

"Blessed if I can see it!" he replied. "For all you know, you might get ten quid in a few weeks' time. If you keep it up for eight weeks it'll cost you five bob; and if you get ten quid at the end of eight weeks you'll have done jolly well!"

"Oh, rats! I'm not going to bother about it any more," said Blundell impatiently. "If I go in for any more competitions, I'll have a shot at the bigger and better weeklies!"

The two Fifth-Formers walked on.

"It makes you wild, after spending all the blessed evening puzzling out those things, to get nothing at all," said Blundell. "I'm fed-up with the business!"

"Perhaps the things you sent in weren't good enough?" suggested Bland.

Blundell glared.

"They were first-class," he declared. "A jolly lot better than the rot that got the first prizes!"

"Nothing like being modest, old man!" chuckled Bland. "I don't say that I sent in anything specially good," retorted the captain of the Fifth. "All I say is that they were a lot better than the piffle that gets the first prizes!"

They walked on, and presently they came to a big cycle and motor works. Bland halted outside.

"Wait here a tick," he said. "I want to get some patching rubber for my back tyre. It's busted, you know!"

"Right-ho!" said Blundell. "Buck up!"

Bland entered the shop, and Blundell lounged about outside. For a few moments he was interested in the passers-by; then he turned to the window and looked in.

Right in the middle of the window was a motor-bicycle. It was second-hand, and perhaps eighteen months old; but it was a thoroughly good one, in good condition, and made by a famous firm. It was all complete, with lamp, horn, and accessories. The tyres were nearly new, and the ticket bore the information that it was ready for the road at a moment's notice.

The ticket also bore the information that the price was £18 cash.

"My hat!" murmured Blundell. "That's thundering cheap!"

There was no doubt about the matter—it was cheap. Eighteen pounds is a very low figure for a good motor-bicycle, and this one seemed to be in excellent condition.

The only explanation for the low price was the unseasonable time of the year. Motor-bikes are not in demand in the winter-time.

"It's a ripping article!" said Blundell to himself. "I should like to have that, blessed if I shouldn't!"

He gazed at it interestedly.

Blundell had never felt any great desire to possess a motor-bike before, but the sight of this machine seemed to fire his enthusiasm.

Coker had a motor-bike, but it never seemed to go well—especially when Coker wanted it for a special purpose. But this machine, although dirt-cheap, seemed to be a wonderfully good article, and Blundell was certain that he could manage it properly. Coker of the Fifth was a bit of an ass, and couldn't be expected to run his machine well.

"Yes," thought Blundell, "it's a ripping thing!"

But how could he purchase it?

What with the licence, petrol, oil, etc., he would need twenty pounds straight off, and then it would cost a bit to run.

And Blundell possessed exactly ten shillings and three-pence!

Which wasn't any use at all, under the circumstances.

"Anyhow, I'm going to inquire about it, just for curiosity," decided Blundell.

And he strode into the shop. Bland was just paying for the rubber he had bought.

"You're jolly impatient!" he said. "I'm just coming!"

"I've come in about that motor-bike," said Blundell—"that second-hand jigger in the window."

"The motor-bicycle, sir?" said the shopman, coming forward before Bland could answer. "Ah, yes—a splendid bargain, that machine!"

"Is it in running order?" asked the Fifth skipper.

"Absolutely ready for the road, sir," said the shopman. "It's the finest machine I've ever seen for the money. I've sold scores in worse condition for thirty pounds. It's nearly new, with perfect tyres, and hasn't been run five hundred miles!"

Blundell nodded interestedly, and Bland looked on in wonderment.

"What's the idea?" asked Bland. "You're not thinking of buying it, are you, old man?"

"Well, I thought I'd like to know all about it, you know," said Blundell. "I might be able to raise the tin in a week or two."

The shopman smiled.

"I am afraid if you come back in a week or two you will be disappointed, sir!" he exclaimed. "I have two people after it already!"

"By George!" said Blundell.

"It will be sold to one or the other of them in three days at the outside," went on the man. "But, of course, if somebody comes in meanwhile with the cash, it will be sold straight off!"

"Then it'll be gone next week?"

"Most certainly. Eighteen pounds for a motor-bicycle in perfect order—and practically new—is a mere song," said the shopkeeper. "The owner, you see, is going abroad, and must have his money at once. It is a genuine bargain, and simply must be sold. Why not settle on the matter at once?"

Blundell smiled sheepishly.

"It's a question of money," he said. "I'm jolly sure I can't raise twenty quid in three days, so it's no good talking any longer. All the same, I should like to have it!"

And Blundell and Bland went out.

"What a rotten shame I haven't got the tin!" said Blundell regretfully. "Just look at it, old man, it's a ripper!"

Bland looked into the window.

"H'm, not bad!" he said. "Nothing to go dotty over, though."

"Who's going dotty?"

"You are, nearly," said Bland. "The motor-bike's all right, but what's the good of it to you—this weather, too. Besides, eighteen quid is a jolly big sum."

"You're right," said Blundell glumly. "Rotten!"

After a last look at the machine, the two Fifth-Formers walked on, and arrived at the station just in time to catch the train for Friardale, the station for Greyfriars.

In the train Blundell still discussed the motor-bike, and Bland began to get angry with his study mate. As they stepped out of the train at Friardale, Bland looked at the Fifth Form skipper squarely.

"If you mention motor-bikes again," he said, "I'll biff you!"

"Look here—"

"Jolly hard!" said Bland darkly.

And Blundell held his tongue. He wasn't in the least afraid of Bland's biffs, but it was below the dignity of a Fifth-Former to be seen exchanging blows with another Fifth-Former.

They emerged into the open space before the station. It was beginning to get dusk now. Nobody was within sight except two figures against the hedge near the first row of cottages.

One of them wore the Greyfriars cap, but the other was a small village boy. And the small village boy was crying lustily.

"What's that kid blubbing about?" asked Blundell. "That's one of our chaps with him, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Looks like a case of bullying!" said Blundell grimly. "One of those Remove scamps—Bolsover major or Trevor. Let's walk over and see who it is."

And the two Fifth-Formers hurried forward to the spot.

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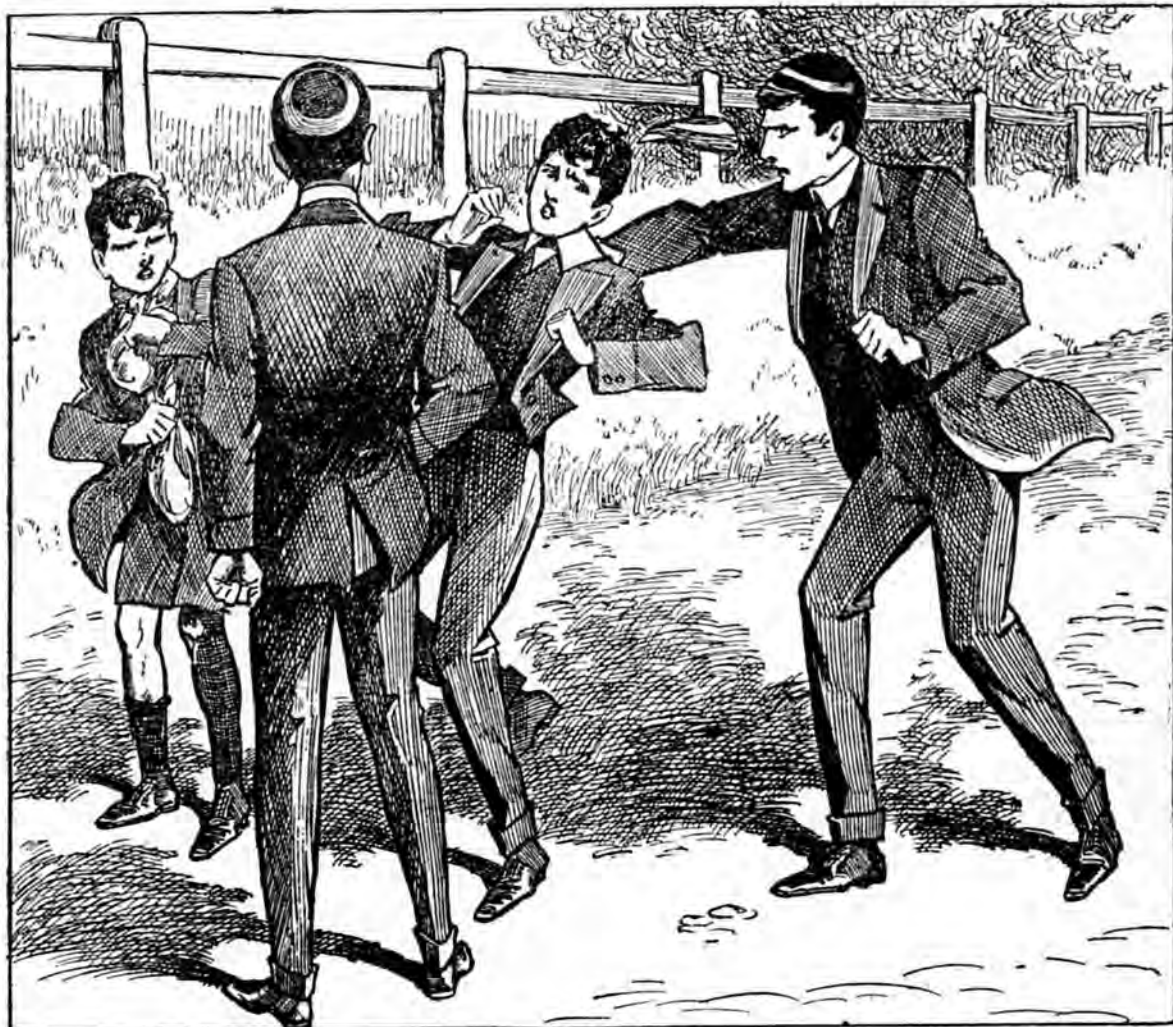
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"You contemptible little hound!" roared Blundell. "What do you mean by spoiling that kid's goods? I'm going to give you a licking!" "Leggo!" yelled Snoop in alarm. (See Chapter 2.)

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Snoop Catches It!

BLUNDELL and Bland reached the two figures without being noticed. Then they saw that the boy in the Greyfriars cap was Snoop, the sneak of the Remove.

"Thought as much," murmured Blundell.

Snoop was chuckling heartily. The village boy was only a little youngster of eight—just about Snoop's mark. And the Fifth-Formers took in the situation at a glance.

Snoop was bending over an opened parcel. It contained groceries—sugar, tea, salt, jam, etc. And the Remove was taking great pleasure in mixing all the different packages together—pouring the sugar with the tea, the salt with the jam, etc. He was concluding his mischievous work by inserting lumps of soda into a pound of lard. Nearly everything that the parcel had contained was ruined.

"There, you little sniveller!" said Snoop, with a grin. "That's what you get for being cheeky!"

"Boo-hoo-oo!" wailed the youngster. "Please don't do any more. Them things was all muvver 'ad money 'nuff to buy. She'll half-kill me when she sees 'em—an' we sha'n't 'ave nothin' to eat!"

Snoop chuckled. "Good! It'll teach you a lesson!" he grinned.

Blundell and Bland strode forward.

"You rotten little cad!" exclaimed Blundell hotly.

"You beastly worm!" said Bland.

Snoop started back, and looked at the two angry Fifth-Formers in quick alarm. Then he made a dart to get away.

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FOR NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE MISSING CHINEE!"

But Blundell was too quick for him. The Fifth Form captain grasped Snoop by the collar and shook him.

"Ow!" howled Snoop. "Leggo, you rotter!"

"You contemptible little hound!" roared Blundell angrily. "What do you mean by spoiling all these good groceries?"

"He—he checked me!" gasped Snoop.

"Whether he checked you or not, I'm going to give you a hiding for acting the cad!" said Blundell wrathfully. "You're a worm, Snoop—a rotten little worm!"

"Don't you touch me!" roared Snoop.

"I'm touching you now," said Blundell grimly, "and I'm going to touch you a jolly lot harder before I've done with you."

"You rotten bully!"

"Oh, my hat!" said Bland. "Pile into him, Blundell. This isn't a case of bullying, Snoop. It's corporal punishment, administered by the hand of a senior. You've been bullying this little kid, and it's our duty to correct your horrible faults."

"That's it," said Blundell. "But I'll give you a chance, Snoop."

"Don't be a soft ass!" exclaimed Bland. "Give the rotter a lamming."

Snoop struggled.

"Let go, you bully!" he gasped.

"Wait a minute," said Blundell. "I'll let you go if you apologise to this kid—"

"I won't!" roared Snoop.

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"If you apologise to this kid, and give him enough tin to buy another lot of groceries," said Blundell firmly. "If you do that, Snoop, I'll let you off the hiding."

Snoop uttered a savage exclamation. "I won't give the little cub a farthing!" he growled. "He checked me, and I taught him a lesson."

"I never checked him, sir," wailed the village boy. "I never said anything to him at all. He started on me first."

"I believe you, little chap," said Blundell. And Bland nodded in agreement.

"Are you going to let me go?" panted Snoop. "Not until you apologise and pay up."

"I won't!" Blundell shook the sneak of the Remove.

"I'll give you a last chance," he said patiently. "Will you beg this kid's pardon?"

"No!" "Will you pay for some more provisions?"

"No!" "Then you'll get a swiping!" said Blundell cheerfully.

"Stand clear, Bland, old man. This is where the dusting starts!"

"Good!" said Bland. "You daren't hit me!" panted Snoop.

"We'll see about that!" And Blundell wasted no more time. Blundell was no bully, but he was down on juniors who acted in a disgraceful manner. And Snoop caught it hot—very hot.

Blundell steadily and firmly proceeded to administer a sound thrashing. Snoop roared and howled, but all to no purpose. He had to go through it to the end. Bland stood looking on in approval.

"There," panted Blundell, "you can slink off now, you worm!"

Snoop staggered back, and something rolled on to the ground. It was a half-crown.

Blundell picked it up, and gave it to the village boy. "There you are, young 'un," he said kindly. "Buzz off to the shop, and get a fresh lot of things."

The boy stared at the money, and then took it. "Oh, thank you, sir!" he gasped joyfully.

He ran off, and Snoop gazed after him speechlessly. "Come on, Bland!" said Blundell.

Snoop recovered his speech. "That was my half-crown!" he bellowed furiously.

"It was," agreed Blundell. "But it isn't now."

"You've given the kid my tin!" roared Snoop. "Exactly! You mucked up his groceries, and it's only right that you should pay for some more!"

"You—you rotten thieves!" yelled Snoop. Blundell clenched his fists.

"By George, if you say that again—" "Thieves! Robbers!" roared Snoop—from a safe distance.

Bland chuckled. "Don't take any notice of him," he said. "He's wild and sore. You've given him a thrashing, and it's only natural that he should be wild. Let's call in at Uncle Clegg's and get some tea!"

"Right-ho!" said Blundell. The two Fifth-Formers could see Snoop walking along ahead of them. He wriggled every now and again painfully, for Blundell had smote him hip and thigh. And Snoop was aching from head to foot.

He saw the Fifth-Formers turn into Uncle Clegg's, and went on his way to Greyfriars, with a black brow and shuffling gait.

"The rotters!" he muttered. "My hat, I'll make Blundell sit up for this! I'll find a way to pay the beast out!"

When he reached Greyfriars it was nearly tea-time, and juniors were streaming in from the playing-fields. Snoop lounged about the School House steps in the Close.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Wherefore that worried and dark look?" said Bob Cherry's genial voice.

The Famous Five were coming in from footer. "Feeling blue, Snoop, my son?" asked Bob Cherry.

Snoop glowered. "Mind your own bizney!" he growled.

"Something's the matter, evidently!" laughed Harry Wharton. "Come on; we haven't any time to waste on Snoop!"

Frank Nugent gave Snoop a slap on the shoulder. "Ow! Yow!" howled the sneak of the Remove.

"My hat! What's the matter?" asked Nugent. "You hurt me, you rotter!"

"Why, I only just tapped you, you ass!" "Keep your hands to yourself!" growled Snoop.

Johnny Bull chuckled. "I grasp the facts!" he grinned. "I deduce the obvious! Snoop has been treated to a dusting by somebody, and he's

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FOR NEXT MONDAY

"THE MISSING CHINEE!"

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THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Snoop's Revenge!

SNOOP had no trouble in opening the envelope so that it could be stuck up again without showing signs of having been tampered with.

He took out the single sheet of paper which the envelope contained.

"Hallo! What are you doing there, young gent?" Snoop started.

Gosling, the school-porter, had approached, and he looked

sore. That's why your tap touched him on the raw, Franky."

"Who's been lamming you, Snoopey?" asked Bob Cherry. "Oh, go to the dickens!" muttered Snoop.

"The honourable and august Snoop is in a bigful temper," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The ludicrous hiding must have been terrific!"

"Well, one thing's certain," said Harry Wharton. "If Snoop's had a hiding, he deserved it! I expect he's been up to some of his usual tricks, and was discovered in the act."

Snoop glared round him, for Harry was saying the literal truth.

"Can't you let a chap alone?" he growled. "We have no intention of staying in your delightful company!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "Come on, chaps!"

And the Famous Five entered the School House. Other juniors were coming in, so Snoop lounged across the Close to the entrance-gates. There he propped himself against one of the posts, and muttered savagely to himself.

"I'll make Blundell sit up!" he said darkly. "The rotter! I'm aching all over. I'll tell Smithy all about it, and ask his advice."

Snoop was sure that Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, would be able to suggest a plan of revenge, and the sneak stood there thinking about the matter.

Other juniors would have taken their hiding, and thought no more about it. But Snoop was a revengeful, spiteful junior, and he would not be satisfied until he had made Blundell "sit up."

The shadows were growing thick now, and the Close was almost deserted. Lights gleamed from the windows of the School House, and they looked cheerful and bright.

Snoop shivered. "I'll go in and find Smithy," he murmured.

He moved away from the gatepost. As he did so he saw a figure approaching. Snoop paused for a moment to see who the new-comer was. Possibly it would be Vernon-Smith.

But it wasn't the Bounder; it was the postman with the evening letters. He looked at Snoop in the failing light.

"Anything for me?" asked Snoop. "I've only got three," said the postman. "I mostly have nothing for the school by this post, but the letters were delayed somewhere. Three I've got, Master Snoop—one for Master Desmond, one for Master Hobson, and one for Master Blundell. I s'pose you ain't goin' in now?"

"Yes, I am," said Snoop. "I'll take 'em if you like. I'm going straight into the House, and I'll shove 'em in the rack."

"Thank you, Master Snoop!" said the postman, handing over the three missives. "My feet are that bad I can't hardly walk. What with chilblains an' corns—"

"Rotten!" said Snoop. The postman tramped away into the dusk, and Snoop looked at the three letters in his hand. One for Micky Desmond of the Remove, one for Hobson of the Shell, and one for—Blundell.

Snoop started. Blundell's letter was a thin one, and the flap had been very carelessly stuck down. It was almost unfastened, in fact.

Just at the moment Snoop had a great spite against Blundell, and at all times he was extremely curious. He enjoyed the pleasure of prying into other people's affairs, and at the risk of being found out, he often carried his prying to dishonourable lengths.

Not that Snoop saw it in this light. He considered it quite right and proper to read other people's letters, and that carelessly-stuck flap was a great temptation.

"Blundell's a beast!" he muttered. "Why shouldn't I see what's in this letter. It might be from a bookie, and then I could pay him out properly!"

Snoop looked round him with a show of carelessness. But the Close was deserted; all the fellows were having tea, or preparing for tea.

Snoop looked at the letter again. Then he inserted his thumb, and gently forced the flap open.

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"Hallo! What are you doing there, young gent?" Snoop started.

Gosling, the school-porter, had approached, and he looked

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at Snoop suspiciously. Gosling disliked all the juniors, from the worst to the best. In his opinion, they were all "young rips."

Snoop recovered his presence of mind.

"I'm reading a letter," he said. "Buzz off, Gossy!"

Gosling came closer.

"Young himp!" he muttered. "I've come to light the gas—p'r'aps you'll be able to see better then. I'm blowed if I know how you can see now; it ain't far off dark!"

"I can see all right," said Snoop.

Gosling lighted the gas over the gateway, and Snoop leaned carelessly against the gatepost watching him.

"I'd advise you to get indoors," said Gosling. "You'll only get your death o' cold, an' then be a lot o' trouble to Mrs. Kebble, who's got more than she can do now, what with you young rips makin' her all the work you can."

"Oh, rats!"

"Wot I says is this 'ere—it ain't right for you to be 'anging about 'ere!" said Gosling.

"Go and eat coke!"

"Ho, you can be himpertinent—"

"Mind your own bizney, Gossy!" snapped Snoop. "You've got a jolly lot too much to say. You're only a blessed menial, after all!"

Gosling glared.

"A menial, am I!" he snorted. "Wot I says is this 'ere—"

"I don't care wot you says," interrupted Snoop. "Clear off! Scat! I want to read this letter of mine! Buzz off!"

"Young raskil!" muttered Gosling wrathfully. "Ain't got a mite o' respect for no one! Wot I says is this 'ere, they're all young himps, hall the lot of 'em!"

He went into his lodge, and Snoop looked round again.

All was quiet once more.

"Blessed old fool!" he muttered.

All the same Snoop was glad of the light, for it enabled him to read the letter distinctly.

It was not a letter, strictly speaking. At first Snoop was disappointed, for he had expected to find a loving missive from home, and Snoop delighted in hearing of other people's private affairs.

The contents of the envelope was merely a printed form, and Blundell's name was filled in at the top. The printed words ran as follows:

"The Editor of 'Weekly Jottings' has very great pleasure in informing you that you have won a prize of £1 in our Great 'Scheming' Competition No. 23. Your name will duly appear in the list of prize-winners in next week's 'Jottings,' and the cheque will be posted to you in two days' time."

Snoop puckered his lips.

"Only a measly competition," he muttered. "A quid's not bad, though. I'm blessed if I don't have a shot at the thing next week! If that ass Blundell can get a prize I'm jolly certain I can!"

He looked at the form. The "£1" was filled in in ink, right in the centre of the blank space provided.

"It would have been a bit of all right for Blundell if that figure one had been followed by two noughts," thought Snoop. "That would have meant a hundred quid for him!"

He continued looking thoughtfully at the form, then he gave a sudden start.

"My only Aunt Jemima!" he gasped.

A grin overspread his face, an unpleasant, vindictive grin.

"Two days' time!" he muttered. "Oh, my only hat!"

He burst into a chuckle.

"It can be done as easy as rolling off a giddy form!" he murmured. "Blundell will never guess the truth until the cheque comes! Then there'll be a terrific fuss. Oh, crickey, what a surprise, what a great and glorious surprise!"

Snoop's cunning and vindictive brain had evolved a scheme whereby to get even with Blundell.

The "£1" was written right in the middle of the blank space, and it would be the easiest possible thing to write in two noughts after it. There would be no altering to do, simply a second's work with a pen.

Then he would stick the letter up again, place it in the rack, and Blundell would open it, never dreaming that it had been tampered with.

He would think he had won £100!

He could think nothing else, for it would be right before him, on the form from the weekly paper.

And the cheque would not arrive for two days. Blundell would have two days' joy and anticipation. Then the cheque would arrive for £1 only. It would be a terrible shock to Blundell after reckoning on the £100.

"I'll do it," chuckled Snoop, hugging himself. "My hat! The Magnet Library.—No. 317.

FOR NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE MISSING CHINEE!"

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

What a grand wheeze! It's as safe as eggs, too. Not a soul will know that I even saw the beastly letter!"

It was a contemptible scheme, a mean, utterly caddish idea. Yet Snoop did not see it in that light. In his opinion it would be a first-class joke on Blundell.

The sneak of the Remove carefully folded the form again, and entered the School House.

There was no time to be lost, for Blundell might be back at any minute, and he would possibly look into the letter-rack as he came in.

So Snoop hastened along the deserted passages to one of the box-rooms. He shut himself in, lit the gas, and took out the letter.

He had a fountain-pen on him, and in less than two minutes he had completed his task. He stuck the letter up so that there was no trace of its having been opened.

"Now I'll shove it in the rack!" he chuckled.

Snoop was in high good humour. His despicable plan could hardly fail to succeed, he told himself, and while Blundell was glorying over his good fortune he, the perpetrator of the joke, would be laughing up his sleeve at the great surprise to come.

There was nobody in the entrance-hall when Snoop arrived there, and he walked across to the letter-rack. It was the work of a moment to place Blundell's letter in the "B" division. Then he put Hobson's and Micky Desmond's letters in their respective places.

"Good!" muttered Snoop. "Glad that's over!"

He heard a door slam upstairs, and dodged out into the Close. He was still in his overcoat and muffler, so when he walked in a minute later it seemed as though he had just come in from the village.

Tom Brown of the Remove was descending the stairs. He could hardly fail to notice the smug look of satisfaction upon Snoop's face.

"You look jolly pleased with yourself," he remarked. "Had a nice fat remittance?"

"No," said Snoop. "Mind your own bizney."

Snoop passed upstairs, and Tom Brown went into the common-room. For five minutes the entrance-hall was deserted, then Snoop appeared again.

He had removed his coat, and he lounged about close to the radiator, for it was the warmest in that corner. As a matter of fact, Snoop was waiting for Blundell and Bland to come in. He wanted to be present when Blundell opened the letter.

Of course, it was possible that Blundell would take the letter to his study. But in all probability he would open it in the hall. Snoop didn't want to be there alone, and he looked about anxiously for somebody else to appear.

"I say, Snoop—"

Snoop turned.

"Hallo, Bunter!" he said genially, looking at Billy Bunter's fat form descending the stairs. "What's up with you? What do you want me for?"

Billy Bunter crossed the entrance-hall.

"I say, you know, I'm hard up for a little while," he said eagerly. "I—I suppose you couldn't lend me a bob or two?"

"You've supposed right first time!"

"Oh, really, Snoopey, don't be a rotter!" said the Owl of the Remove. "Be a sport, you know. If you lend me half-a-crown I'll pay you back to-morrow."

Snoop jingled some money in his pocket. He had no intention of lending Bunter any money, but he wanted to keep the fat junior in the hall until Blundell arrived, which would be in a few minutes now for certain.

"Oh, if it's only half-a-crown," said Snoop, "I might be able to oblige you."

"Ahem! Five bob would be better," said Billy Bunter. "If you're flush, Snoopey, five bob wouldn't hurt you, especially as you'll get it back to-morrow."

"Oh, very well!" exclaimed Snoop. "We'll see."

"Good! You're a brick, Snoopey!" said Billy Bunter, rubbing his fat hands together. "I always said you were a jolly decent chap."

The common-room door opened, and Stott came out.

"Oh, I want you Snoop!" he said, catching sight of the sneak of the Remove. Stott was one of Snoop's chums. "I want to talk to you about something."

"Right-ho!" said Snoop. "Buzz off, Bunter!"

"Yes, scoot, you fat porpoise!" said Stott.

"Oh, really, you fellows—"

A Magnificent, Long, Complete School Tale
of the Chums of Greyfriars. Order Early.

"Scat!"
 "But you said you'd lend me half-a-crown!" protested Billy Bunter. "Hand it over, Snoop, there's a good chap."
 "Go and eat coke!"
 "Ain't you going to let me have it?" howled Bunter.
 "No."
 "You—you rotter!" gasped Billy Bunter indignantly. "I always said you were a beastly worm, Snoop!"

"What!"
 "I—I mean—" Bunter broke off and hurried to the stairs. Then he looked over the balustrade, with a red and wrathful face. "Beast!" he roared.

"Oh, don't take any notice of him!" said Stott.
 And the two Removites talked as though Bunter didn't exist. Bunter afforded himself the pleasure of calling out a few more choice remarks, and then tramped away in search of some trusting junior who would lend him five shillings—a rather vain search, for Billy Bunter's borrowing habits were famous in the Remove.

Snoop engaged Stott in conversation for some minutes. Then other juniors came into the hall, and a little knot gathered round the notice-board.

"Why doesn't Blundell come?" thought Snoop impatiently.
 And at that very moment the captain of the Fifth Form presented himself. He was talking to Bland, and they paused to wipe their feet on the big mat.

"Sure, an' the postman's been," exclaimed Micky Desmond, from the letter-rack. "And I've got a remittance, bedad!"

Micky Desmond spoke loudly, and Bland looked up.
 "That reminds me," he said. "I'm expecting a remittance."

"Hope you get it," said Blundell. "I'm going upstairs—"

"Hold on! There's only one letter in the 'B' division, and that's for you," said Bland. "It's jolly thin, and doesn't seem like a giddy tip from home," he added, with a grin.

Blundell took the letter and turned it over in his hand curiously. Snoop had stuck it up carefully, and it bore no traces whatever of having been already opened.

"Blessed if I recognise this," said Blundell. "London E.C. post-mark, too! Who the dickens can it be from?"

"Well, it wouldn't be a bad wheeze to open it and see," advised Bland, with a grin. "It's only an advert, I expect."

Blundell tore the envelope open.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Blundell's Prize!

NOBODY in the entrance-hall was taking any interest in Blundell's letter, except Bland—and Snoop. And Snoop took care to keep up his conversation with Stott, for he did not want to seem interested until the letter had been opened.

Blundell took out the printed form and unfolded it.
 "What the dickens is this?" he muttered. "My name's there, right enough, but what's all this printing?"

"The Editor of 'Weekly Jottings' has very great pleasure in informing you that you have won a prize of £100 in our Great 'Scheming' Competition No. 23. Your name will duly appear in the list of prize-winners in next week's 'Jottings,' and the cheque will be posted to you in two days' time."

Blundell's eyes bulged.
 "Great Scotland Yard!" he yelled.
 "Ow!" roared Bland, starting back. "You silly ass! What on earth do you mean by bawling into my ear?"

Blundell's face was red with excitement, and the paper shook in his hand. He gazed round him dazedly. All eyes were upon him, and several other juniors had appeared.

"G-g-good heavens!" muttered Blundell wildly.
 Bland looked at his chum quickly.

"My hat, there's something wrong!" he exclaimed, in alarm. "He's shaking all over. What is it, Blundell, old man? Bad news?"

The crowd gathered round.
 "Poor old Blundell!"
 "What's up?"
 "Is it very serious?"

Blundell gazed at the form again.
 "It's true!" he muttered. "Oh, my only Sunday tile! One hundred quid—one hundred quid! Great Scott!"

The juniors pressed closer.
 "What's the matter?" asked Bulstrode. "What's that about a hundred quid?"

"I expect his pater owes a hundred quid to somebody," suggested Treluce brilliantly.

"Or his pater's pinched a hundred quid," said Trevor.
 "That's it. His pater's shoved in gaol for pinching a hundred—"

Blundell started.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 317.

"You silly ass!" he roared.

"Is it bad news, old chap?" asked Bland.

Blundell burst into a roar of laughter.

"Bad news?" he shouted. "Why, you silly chumps, it's the best news I've ever had in my life. I've won a hundred pounds!"

The juniors looked incredulous.

"A hundred pounds!"

"Rats!"

"Piffle!"

"Bosh!"

"You can't stuff us, Blundell!"

Blundell pushed the printed paper into Bland's hand.

"Read that!" he said excitedly. "Read it out, so that the chaps can hear."

Bland did so.

"It can't be true!" he gasped.

The juniors clamoured round excitedly.

"Let's see the paper!"

"Pass it round!"

"Let's have a squint!"

The paper was passed round from hand to hand. The Famous Five had been attracted by the noise, and they were as excited as the rest when they saw the printed form.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "A hundred quid!"

"It's amazing!"

"The amazefulness is terrific!" said Hurree Singh.

Blundell regained the paper again, and looked at it with joyous eyes.

"It's wonderful!" he exclaimed animatedly. "And I never expected to get a cent out of the giddy competition. I told Bland to-day that the thing was a swindle."

"Show's how wrong you were," said Harry Wharton.

"Rather!" said Blundell. "It's genuine enough, and the cheque will be here in two days' time."

"No, it won't," said Nugent. "They say they'll send it in two days' time, but you won't get it until the day after that. It's got to come through the post, you know."

Blundell laughed.

"Well, it's coming," he said lightly. "A hundred pounds! Why, I never expected a farthing; or, at the very outside, not more than a quid."

Snoop grinned to himself.

"And that's all you've got, my beauty!" he murmured, under his breath. "By Jingo, the jape's going fine! Oh, what a surprise when the cheque arrives!"

And Snoop chuckled aloud. But the other juniors were too excited to hear that chuckle.

Blundell and Bland hurried off upstairs, leaving the entrance-hall and common-room buzzing with excited juniors. Although the prize had been won by a senior, that did not alter the case in the least.

Never in the memory of the juniors had a boy belonging to Greyfriars won such a large amount; and had they only known it, that amount was still un-won.

Blundell burst into Coker's study in the Fifth Form passage.

Coker & Co. had finished tea and were standing round the fire, talking.

"I say," burst out Blundell, "what do you think?"

"Well, by the look of things, I think you've gone off your silly rocker," said Coker pleasantly. "What's that paper you're wagging about?"

"It's a preliminary notice, saying that I've won a hundred pounds!" said Blundell pantingly. "I went in for that competition in 'Weekly Jottings,' and I've won a hundred quid!"

"Rats!" said Coker.

"It's true!"

Coker looked interested.

"Really?" he said. "Honour bright?"

"Yes, honour bright, you ass! Look at the thing yourself!"

Coker took the paper.

"Phew!" he whistled. "This is a bit of all right, Blundell. I'm blessed if I don't go in for that competition myself!"

"It can't be true," said Potter doubtfully.

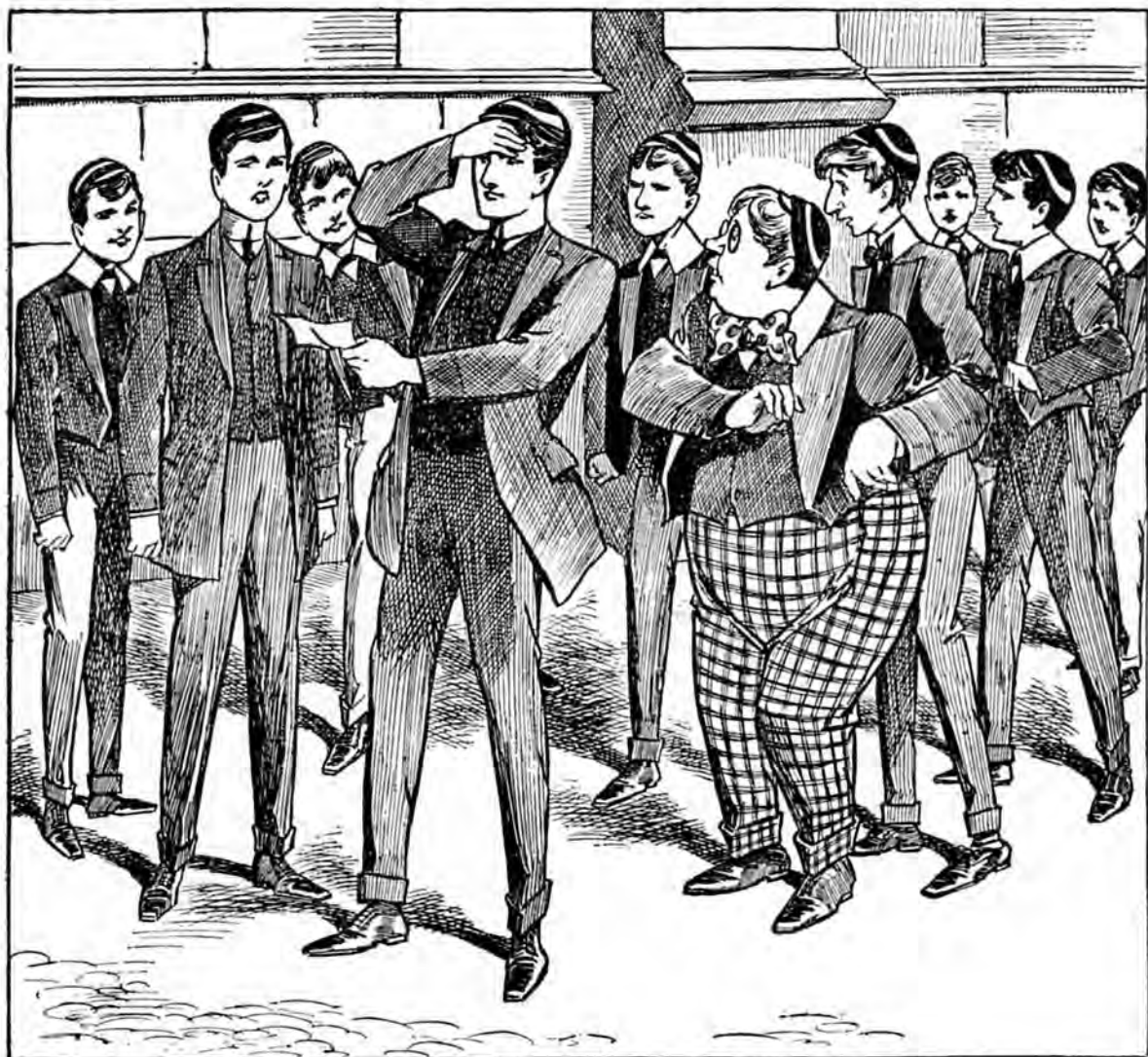
"It's such a huge sum," added Greene, shaking his head.

"There's no doubt about the matter at all, you prize asses!" exclaimed Bland impatiently. "Can't you read? Do you think they'd send that form to Blundell if he'd only won a fiver?"

"Perhaps it's a mistake," said Potter, still unable to believe it. "It might refer to somebody else, and they shoved it in the wrong envelope."

"Can't you see my name on it, as plain as your face?" roared Blundell.

"Yes, by Jingo, that's plain enough!" said Potter.



All the colour left Blundell's face as he looked at the cheque in his hand. It was for £1! "Great Scott!" he ejaculated, and staggered back; and the amazed juniors pressed round to see the cause of the Fifth Former's dismay. (See Chapter 9.)

"Your face, do you mean?" grinned Coker. "Yes, that's quite plain, Potter, old man. Glad you admit it!" Potter turned red.

"You ass!" he said witheringly.

"Congratulations, old man!" went on Coker, holding out his hand to Blundell. "I'll bet you're feeling happy."

"Rather!" said Blundell. "And when the cheque comes I'll stand a great feed to the whole of the Fifth to celebrate the occasion."

"Good egg!"

"Good for you, Blundell."

The captain of the Fifth left with Bland, and they went to their own study. Bland shut the door, and turned a glowing face to his chum.

"Well, you're in luck, old man," he said genially.

"Absolutely!" agreed Blundell.

"I know where to come now if I want a fiver," added Bland, with a chuckle.

"I'll lend you a fiver with pleasure."

"Rot!" laughed Bland. "I sha'n't want a fiver. I don't like getting into debt myself, unless I absolutely know I can pay the tin back on a certain day. That's how you're placed now. If you borrowed fifty quid this evening for a few days, you'd be as safe as eggs—simply because you know positively that you can pay it back almost at once."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 317.

FOR NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE MISSING CHINEE!"

"Quite so; but I don't want fifty quid," said Blundell.

"That was only an instance, you chump!" replied Bland.

"Well, I'm going downstairs to tell some of the other chaps. Do you know, I'm as excited as if the giddy money was mine!"

Blundell laughed, and Bland departed.

The captain of the Fifth sat down before the fire, and held the paper in his hands. It was rather crumpled now, but the magic "hundred pounds" was still as clear as ever.

"A hundred sovereigns!" muttered Blundell. "My hat! It's ripping! Just when I'd decided 'Weekly Jottings' was a fraud, too! It's a splendid paper, and I shall buy it every week now."

He sat there thinking.

Then he suddenly started.

Next second he was on his feet, pacing the room, and his face was flushed with keen pleasure and anticipation.

"The motor-bike!" he murmured. "By George, I can get that now! It'll only cost twenty pounds—a fifth of the prize-money. There's nothing I should like better."

Yes, that was the idea—buy the motor-bike. Even then, and when he had taken a fat sum for pocket-money, and had paid the bill for a gorgeous Form feed, he would be able to put fifty pounds away.

What a marvellous stroke of luck!

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of the Chums of Greyfriars. Order Early.

"It's just come at the right moment," thought Blundell delightedly. "Of course, I could get a better jigger, but I don't want to blue the whole lot straight off. No; that one's good enough to start with. I can run over to Courtfield as soon as the cheque arrives—"

He stopped in his walk, and stared blankly at the mantel-piece.

"By Jove!" he muttered, in dismay.

By the time the cheque arrived, the motor-cycle would be gone! The shopman had said positively that it would be sold immediately, and it would be three days before Blundell could go to the shop with the cash.

In three days' time the bike would be sold—in all probability, it would go before the following evening.

"Oh, rats!" murmured Blundell, sticking his hands into his pockets. "What the dickens shall I do? If I let that jigger go, I shall never be able to get another one as good at the price."

Blundell knew a bit about motors, and he was quite sure that the motor-cycle in Courtfield was a great bargain. Besides, it might be days—weeks—before he could get another.

And Blundell, although a senior, was only a boy, after all. He had set his mind on that motor-bike, and he wanted it at the earliest possible moment. He hated the thought of waiting days and days.

How could he get it?

It was galling to know that the money was his, and that while he was waiting for it the bike would be sold.

For Blundell absolutely reckoned on the hundred pounds. Not a single shadow of a suspicion of the truth had entered his head. The alteration in the amount had been such a simple matter, and had been carried out so thoroughly that it was impossible for him to guess the awful truth.

Then Bland's words came to his mind.

"Why shouldn't I borrow it?" he thought suddenly.

"The money will be here in a day or two, and the fellows would lend it to me like a shot. Yes, that's what I'll do, rather than let the bike go. I'll go round and raise the tin. The chaps will dub up without a second's hesitation."

Blundell looked happy again. The cloud had gone from his face. Of course, he could easily borrow the money from his Form fellows. It was an easy matter to borrow money when he was sure of paying the sum back immediately.

The Fifth-Form skipper looked into the fire.

"Yes, I'll go round now," he murmured. "Then I can run over to Courtfield, and fetch the jigger to-morrow."

There was a tap at the door.

"Come in!" said Blundell.

The fat form of Billy Bunter rolled into the study. He blinked at Blundell through his big glasses.

"I—I say, Blundell, old man, I've come to congratulate you, you know," said Bunter hesitatingly. "I'm awfully glad to hear you're in luck."

"That's all right, kid!" said Blundell genially.

"It's ripping!" said the Owl of the Remove. "I hear you're going to stand a feed, or something."

"Quite right."

"Jolly good of you, old chap!" said Bunter. "Thanks awfully!"

Blundell stared.

"What do you want to thank me for?" he asked. "The feed's going to be for the Fifth—not the Remove."

Billy Bunter blinked.

"Oh, really, ain't I going to be in it?" he complained.

"Ain't you going to let your best pals into the feed?"

Blundell nodded.

"Of course!" he agreed.

"Then I can come?" asked Bunter eagerly.

"Come! You come?" repeated Blundell. "Rather not, you fat ass!"

"But you said—"

"I said the feed was for the Fifth."

"And your best pals, you know."

"Quite right; but you're not among 'em," said Blundell blandly.

"Buzz off, Bunter. You're a giddy nuisance!"

"Oh, really—" protested Bunter, in an aggrieved voice.

"You know jolly well we've always been good chums, Blundell, old fellow!"

Blundell frowned.

"Not so much of the 'old fellow'!" he said sharply.

"And if you say I've always been a chum of yours again, I'll give you a thick ear! The feed's for the Fifth, so you can clear off, you little cadger!"

Billy Bunter blinked through his big spectacles.

"I—I say, that's a bit rotten of you, you know!" he protested. "Still, I don't mind, if you lend me a quid or two out of the hundred."

Blundell reached for a ruler.

"Buzz off!" he said warmly.

"Oh, really—"

"If you're not gone in ten seconds I'll lam into you with this ruler!"

Bunter backed away.

"I say, can't you lend me a bob or two now to be going on with?" he gasped. "Only a bob or two, Blundell. Be a pal, you know. I'll pay you back out of my next postal-order. I'm expecting one by the morning post."

Blundell advanced threateningly, then laughed, and laid the ruler down. He was feeling in a generous mood, and felt in his pocket.

"You're the limit, Bunter!" he declared.

He threw a half-crown on to the table, and Billy Bunter grabbed it up eagerly and hurried to the door.

"You're a good sort, you know, Blundell!" he said.

"Thanks awfully for this! I'll pay you back next week."

"Oh, clear off!"

And Bunter cleared off. As a matter of fact, he had not expected to get anything, and he was consequently in high spirits. Without delay he hurried downstairs, and made a bee-line for the tuckshop in the corner of the Close.

Blundell left his study thoughtfully, and decided to go to Horace Coker for his loan of twenty pounds. Coker was nearly always flush, and would lend the money without hesitation if he had it.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Not So Easy!

COKER & CO. were still in their study when Blundell presented himself.

"Hallo! Back again?" said Coker intelligently.

"Yes; I'm rather worried," explained Blundell.

"Worried?" asked Potter. "What the dickens are you worried about? Got so much money you don't know what to do with it—like the giddy American millionaires?"

Blundell grinned.

"Don't be funny!" he said. "I haven't got any money at all. That's the trouble."

Coker stared.

"Explain yourself, ass!" he said politely.

"Well, it's this way," went on the Fifth skipper. "Bland and I were in Courtfield this afternoon, and we saw a ripping fine motor-bike—miles better than your old thing, Coker!"

Coker glared at the visitor.

"My old thing—eh?" he snorted. "Mine's a jolly good motor-bike, let me tell you!"

"Oh, rot! It's always going wrong!" said Blundell.

"Well, this one is a splendid article. It's only eighteen quid."

"Eighteen quid!" scoffed Coker. "It'll be a fat lot of good, then! Why, you can't get a motor-bike for eighteen quid! They cost sixty or seventy pounds when they're new."

"Well, this isn't new. It's a year or two old. But it's in good condition, and is quite good enough to learn on," said Blundell.

"The chap in the shop said that it would be sold immediately, and if I wait until my cheque comes it'll be too late. So I want to raise twenty quid to-night and fetch it to-morrow."

Coker & Co. exchanged glances.

"You've come to the wrong shop, old man," said Greene.

"I'm worth seven-and-two-pence exactly."

"And that's about my mark too," said Potter.

"As for me," said Coker, "I'm rather tight just at present. I'm sorry, Blundell; but there you are. I've got two quid—no, one pound nineteen. But I shall get a remittance on Saturday."

"That'll be too late."

"Of course," said Coker. "Sorry! I shouldn't worry about it. That shopman was only pulling your giddy leg. He'll have the bike on his hands for weeks."

Blundell shook his head.

"He said there were two chaps after it," he said.

"All bunkum!" grinned Coker. "Swank, my dear chap!"

"Well, I don't believe it was," said Blundell. "And if you'd seen the bike you'd say the same. It's miles better than yours, and I'm certain that if I leave it until my cheque comes I shall find it gone. Who can I borrow twenty quid from?"

"Ask old Prout," suggested Potter.

But Blundell didn't think Mr. Prout, the Fifth Form-master, would cotton to the idea. So Blundell left Coker's study and went in search of other victims.

ANSWERS

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 317.

FRANK RICHARDS

Contributes a Splendid, Complete School Tale "CHUCKLES." 1st ed. in our New Saturday Companion Paper—

Meanwhile Coker & Co. descended to the common-room, where everybody was discussing Blundell's wonderful stroke of luck.

Several members of the Sixth had dropped in to hear about the matter, and they were rather incredulous.

But there was no getting over the fact. The form had come from the editor of "Weekly Jottings" himself.

The only fellow who knew the truth was Snoop. The sneak of the Fourth was feeling highly pleased with himself. Through him, and through him alone, all this excitement was being caused. It was unusual for such an insignificant person as Snoop to cause excitement.

Snoop lounged about the common-room, chuckling to himself on the quiet. The best—to his vindictive nature—part of the joke was yet to come. But that would not be until the cheque arrived.

And much was to happen before that event.

Mark Linley, the Lancashire lad, entered the common-room.

"Have you chaps heard the latest?" he chuckled.

"No. What is it?" asked a chorus of voices.

"Why, Blundell's going in for a motor-bike!" said Mark Linley. "He's going to buy it out of his hundred quid!"

"Guess Blundell's a slab-sided jay, then!" remarked Fisher T. Fish. "He won't have much change out of his wad if he buys a stink-machine!"

"Oh, but the one he's going to buy is a second-hand bike in Courtfield!" said Linley. "It's twenty quid, I think. Anyhow, he's been round to the Fifth Form chaps trying to borrow the money."

"Trying to borrow it?" asked Harry Wharton curiously.

"Yes. He can't wait until the prize-money comes."

"My hat! He's in a hurry!" said Nugent; and Hurrea Jamset Ram Singh remarked that the hurryfulness was terrific.

Mark Linley shook his head.

"It isn't that," he explained. "Potter just told me that Blundell thinks the bike will be sold if he waits for two or three days. You see, it's a tremendous bargain, and there are some chaps after it now. So Blundell wants to get it to-morrow."

"Well, he oughtn't to have much trouble in borrowing the tin," said Bob Cherry. "The chaps know they'll get it back soon enough."

Snoop, in the corner, blew his nose violently in order to hide his involuntary burst of laughter. It struck him as being irresistibly funny for Blundell to be borrowing twenty pounds, when he would only have one solitary sovereign to pay it back out of.

"Has he got the dollars?" asked Fisher T. Fish.

"I don't know," said Linley. "Better go an' see."

"Guess I will."

And Fisher T. Fish left the common-room and went to Blundell's study. The captain of the Fifth was sitting on his table looking rather glum. He looked up as Fish entered.

"Well, what do you want?"

"Guess I've come on business," said Fish briskly. "Have you raised your loan yet? Have you fingered the dollars?"

"No," admitted Blundell. "I've been round to the fellows, but they're all hard up—at least, they can't spare as much as I want. I don't think I could raise more than three quid."

"Good!"

"Look here—"

"Guess you want twenty pounds. That's about a hundred dollars in real money, I guess?"

"Yes."

"Waal, I'm your man."

"You!"

"Yep; sure thing," said Fish promptly. "I'll show these jays how to do business. Guess I'll loan you that hundred dollars, Blundell!"

Blundell looked at Fish eagerly.

"Do you really mean it?" he asked.

"Guess I was never more earnest in my life, sir!" replied Fish. "Say, is it a deal? Do we do business?"

"Rather!"

"Good enough!" said the American briskly. "I reckoned you'd see that I was your man. This is a business proposition, and I guess you'll take it in a business spirit."

"Of course! But cut the cackle," said Blundell.

"Sure! To begin with, I guess you'll be willing to pay interest on the loan?"

"Interest! Oh!"

"Guess I said this was a business deal," said Fisher T. Fish. "And all business deals have to show a profit."

Blundell grunted.

"Well, I agree," he said. "But if you lay it on thick, Fish, I shan't pay it. When can I have the money?"

Fish slapped the table.

"The day after to-morrow," he said promptly. "I'll hand you the twenty pounds, and you'll pay me back twenty-five!"

Blundell gasped.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 317.

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
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ONE
PENNY.

"The day after to-morrow?" he echoed.

"Yep, you've got it!"

"You—you fatheaded idiot!" roared Blundell wrathfully.

"My cheque will be here by that time!"

Fish nodded coolly.

"Yep, but it won't be cash!" he said.

"And do you think I'm going to pay you a fiver for—"

Blundell paused, and glared at the business man of the Remove. "You frabjous lunatic!"

"Guess—"

"Outside!" bellowed Blundell angrily, his wrath intensified by his fallen hopes and disappointment. "Scoot! Buzz off!"

"Say, don't get riled—"

"Outside!" roared Blundell. "By George, if you're not out of this study in ten seconds I'll slaughter you! You're the second dotty Remove merchant I've had here to-night!"

"Guess you'd best listen—"

But Blundell was exasperated. He strode across the room, grabbed Fisher T. Fish with one hand, swung the door open with the other, then he hurled the American Removeite forth.

"Ow! Yowp! Oh!" howled Fish.

The study door slammed, and Fisher T. Fish picked himself up hurriedly and departed.

"Guess they're all alike in this snail-house!" he muttered.

"They want speeding up some—just a few!"

Blundell paced his study angrily. His quest had not been successful. Twenty pounds was a large sum to raise, and the bulk of the Fifth-Formers didn't possess twenty shillings; nearly all of them received their remittances at regular intervals—and a whole lot of remittances were just about due. Consequently the Fifth-Formers were on the point of being stony.

All told, after borrowing from a dozen fellows, Blundell could not have collected more than five pounds—and by doing that, he would be putting his Form-mates to a great deal of inconvenience.

No, he would have to think of some other way of raising the money.

Who possessed money in bulk?

"The Fifth is a broken reed so far as tin is concerned," murmured Blundell. "I simply must have the money. I can't let that bike be sold to some other chap because I haven't got the cash in hand. It's rotten! I've practically got the money and I can't use it!"

He paced up and down.

"Who could do it?" he thought. "I can't ask any of the masters—they wouldn't understand. And the Sixth Form fellows wouldn't like to be bothered. There's only the Shell, the Upper Fourth, and the Remove, and they're all no good. Nobody in the Remove—"

Blundell started, his thoughts interrupted.

"By jingo, Mauly!" he exclaimed aloud.

Why not approach Lord Mauleverer, the schoolboy millionaire? Mauly was a Removeite, but he was simply rolling in money as a rule. Surely he would be able to lend him the twenty pounds?

Blundell didn't waste time. In less than a minute he had left his study, and was hastening to the Remove passage.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Thin Ice!

LORD MAULEVERER, the dandy of the Remove, was in his study when Blundell walked in.

As usual, the most consistent slacker in the Remove was taking things extremely easy. He was loling back amongst a pile of cushions on his luxurious couch.

The fire was burning glowingly, and altogether the study looked the very last word in comfort.

"Mauly!" said Blundell.

No answer.

"Mauly!" exclaimed the visitor loudly.

Still no answer.

"Well, I'm blessed," murmured Blundell. "The lazy young beggar's asleep!"

He walked across the study and grasped Lord Mauleverer's shoulder. Then he shook the schoolboy earl vigorously.

"Grook! Wassar matter? Begad!" gasped Mauleverer.

"Wake up, you slacker!"

Lord Mauleverer opened his eyes.

"Oh, it's you, Blundell," he murmured sleepily. "Sit down, my dear fellow. I've just been taking a little nap!"

"So I found," said Blundell. "What's up with you, eh?"

"Tired."

"Tired?" echoed Blundell. "Great Scott, how on earth

FOR NEXT
MONDAY--

"THE MISSING CHINEE!"

A Magnificent, Long, Complete School Tale
of the Chums of Greyfriars. Order Early.

did you make yourself tired? Have you been for a long walk?"

"No."

"Have you been working hard?"

"No."

"But you're tired all the same?"

"Yaas."

"It's not tiredness," said Blundell. "It's sheer laziness!"

"Yaas."

"You admit you're a lazy slacker, then?"

"Yaas—I mean no!" said his lordship, gazing at Blundell dreamily. "I can't help feeling tired, you know. I've been sitting here for a long while, and it's made me sleepy."

Blundell grinned.

"Well, you can go to sleep again when I've done with you," he said. "I want your help, Mauly!"

"It's yours, my dear fellow!"

"Good! I'm hard up for a day or two. I dare say you've heard about my whacking great prize?"

Silence.

"You must have heard about it," went on Blundell.

"Well, the cheque won't be here until— Mauly, you young ass, are you listening?"

Silence.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" gasped Blundell. "He's asleep again!"

He bent forward.

"Mauly!" he roared.

Lord Mauleverer started again, and opened his eyes.

"Eh? Oh, it's you again, Blundell!" he murmured.

"Have you heard what I've been saying?"

"Yaas."

"What did I say?"

"You asked me why I was tired."

"What else?"

"Nothing else, my dear fellow."

Blundell stood up, grabbed hold of Lord Mauleverer's cushions, and threw them on the floor.

"My dear fellow—"

"Attend to me!" roared Blundell.

"But my cushions—"

"Blow your cushions! Are you awake now?"

"Yaas."

"Then listen to me!"

"Yaas; but buck up! I'm awfully sleepy."

"If you go to sleep again, Mauly, I'll sling you round your own study, and empty the coals on your head!"

"Begad!"

The schoolboy millionaire sat up, rubbed his eyes, and looked at Blundell warily. He had no wish to be slung round his own study.

"I'm all attention, my dear fellow."

"Good!" said Blundell. "I suppose you've heard about my prize?"

"Yaas—a hundred pounds, isn't it?"

"That's right, but I haven't got it yet!"

"How's that?"

"Well, they're not going to send it for two days," went on Blundell, keeping his eye on Mauleverer, and making sure that the schoolboy earl kept awake. "Until the cheque arrives, I'm hard up!"

"That's rotten!"

"I want to buy a motor-bike in Courtfield," went on the Fifth Form skipper. "It's only eighteen quid, and a jolly good machine. I shall want another two quid for licence and running expenses."

"That's twenty quid, my dear fellow."

"Exactly!" said Blundell. "Can you lend me that amount until my cheque arrives?"

"Eh?"

"Can you lend me twenty quid?"

"Begad!"

"Well, can you do it?"

"Begad!"

"Can't you answer me in plain English?" demanded Blundell impatiently. "What the dickens do you mean by 'Begad'?" Does that mean you'll do it?"

"Begad! I—I mean—please wait a few minutes!" said Lord Mauleverer thoughtfully. "I had a remittance only a day or two ago, but I'm bothered if I know how much I've got!"

He rose from the couch, and felt in his pockets, watched anxiously by Blundell. Finally he produced thirty shillings in gold.

"That's not enough," he remarked.

"Not enough!" gasped Blundell blankly. "Do—do you mean to say that's all you've got, Mauly—thirty bob?"

Lord Mauleverer considered.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 317.

"I might have some more, but I really can't remember," he said. "I'll have a look in my desk."

Blundell felt that his quest was hopeless. If Mauleverer didn't know how much money he had beyond thirty shillings, the unknown amount couldn't be much.

His lordship searched the desk.

"Begad!" he exclaimed suddenly. "There's some money here!"

"How much?" asked Blundell eagerly.

"Two fivers and a sovereign," answered Mauleverer, holding up the crisp banknotes. "And, begad, here's another two pounds under the inkpot!"

Blundell jumped up.

"Good!" he exclaimed.

"Yaas, it's ripping. I had no idea all that money was there."

"Sure you haven't got any more?"

"Yaas, quite sure."

Blundell looked round.

"There's no telling where you keep your tin, you know, Mauly," he said. "There might be a fiver or two in the coal-scuttle, or under the couch, or even in the waste-paper basket. You're such a careless young ass!"

"Yaas, but there's no more," said his lordship. "I only keep money in this desk. Now, I've got fourteen pounds ten, my dear fellow. That's not twenty, is it?"

"No, but it's a good slice of it," said Blundell. "But, of course, you'll want a fiver for yourself."

"Yaas—I mean, no! Two-ten will be enough for me until I get another remittance," said Lord Mauleverer generously.

"I'll lend you twelve pounds, my dear fellow."

"You're a brick, Mauly!" exclaimed Blundell, taking the two fivers and two sovereigns. "I'll pay you back the very minute I get my cheque, or as soon as I get it cashed, anyway."

"That's all right, my dear fellow, don't worry about it," said Mauleverer. "Any time will do. Good-bye."

"That's a hint you want to have another doze?" grinned Blundell.

"Yaas," said the slacker of the Remove, dropping into the couch.

"Right-ho! I'll buzz off," said Blundell. "Thanks awfully."

Blundell left the study in high spirits. He had got twelve pounds of the money, anyhow.

He went straight to his study, placed the money on the table, and stirred the fire.

"Now, how about the other eight?" he thought. "There's Hurree Singh and Vernon-Smith, of course. They're always rolling in tin. But I don't want to go to the whole blessed Remove. Besides, I heard that Inky is hard up, and I'm bothered if I'm going to that young rotter, Vernon-Smith."

It never occurred to Blundell that if he took the twelve pounds to Courtfield he would, at least, be sure of getting the machine. In all probability the shopman would allow him to take the machine away, and would be willing to wait a day or two for the balance of the money.

But Blundell wanted to make absolutely sure. In his opinion, if he went in with twelve pounds, and paid it as deposit on the motor-bike, it wouldn't be his. He considered that the shopkeeper would sell it outright to the man who came in with the full eighteen pounds.

But how could he raise the rest of the money?

Blundell was very worried. He had set his heart on that motor-bike, and it was galling to him that it should be lost simply because he hadn't got the cash in hand.

Blundell was rather sensitive, and he hadn't relished the task of going round asking for money amongst his Form fellows. To go borrowing from other Forms would be humiliating. Mauly didn't count—he wasn't like the other fellows.

"Well, I'm not going to be diddled now," Blundell declared to himself. "I've got the bulk of the money, and before I go to bed I'll have the rest."

But how?

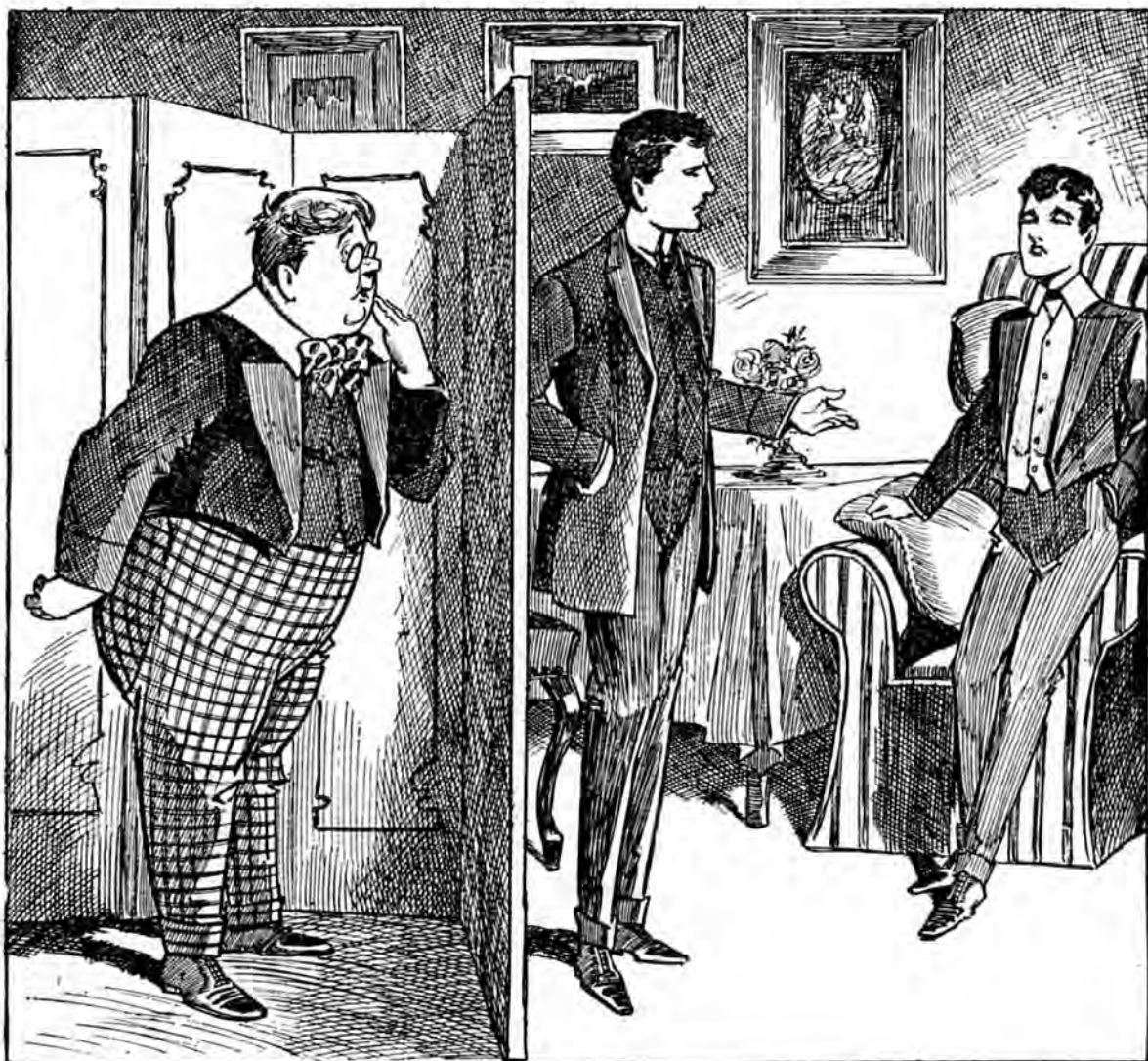
He picked up the banknotes and gold, and thoughtfully unlocked his table drawer. He opened it, and placed the money inside. Then his eyes rested upon a little cash-box, and he started.

"By George, I'd forgotten all about this!" he muttered. "Here's ten quid odd, lying idle, and— No, it's not mine. It wouldn't be right to touch it."

Blundell sat down, and stared at the cash-box. It contained ten pounds nine shillings, and it was the Fifth Form Club funds. As captain of the Fifth, Blundell naturally had charge of it.

Why shouldn't he borrow eight pounds of it, and so make up the twenty?

"No, it would be dishonourable," thought the Fifth



"I want to tell you a secret, Mauly," began Blundell, and Billy Bunter, hiding behind the screen, pricked up his ears. "I wanted that motor-bike, but I was eight pounds short, so I borrowed them from the Fifth Form Club funds!" "Begad! Good gracious!" ejaculated Lord Mauleverer. (See Chapter 12.)

Former. "It belongs to the chaps. They've trusted me with it, and it would be rotten to take it."

Blundell's face was flushed, and he thought hard. He had often heard of boys appropriating club funds, and the end had generally been disgrace and expulsion.

Expulsion!

Blundell laughed aloud at the very idea.

"What rot!" he told himself. "It would be safe enough!" The thing got hold of him.

"Why shouldn't I borrow the eight quid?" he muttered, persuading himself that he would be doing nothing wrong. "Nobody would know—not a soul would dream of it. It's not as if there was no chance of putting it back. There's going to be a Committee meeting on Saturday evening, and I shall have to show the chaps the money and the accounts. But by that time my cheque will have arrived, and the funds will be intact again. Yes, it'll be as right as rain."

He got up, and paced the study.

"As right as rain," he repeated. "It would be horribly dishonest if I took the money with no chance of replacing it; but it's quite different. I know for certain that I shall have the tin, and heaps to spare. It'll be simpler and easier than going round borrowing from the chaps."

Blundell could see no danger in the proceeding. He was THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 317.

FOR NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE MISSING CHINEE!"

the soul of honour and honesty, and would never have dreamed of taking the money under any other circumstances. But before the committee meeting was held he would be able to replace the money—as he thought.

Why, there was nothing in it at all. What an ass he was not to have thought of it before. It was the simplest way out of the difficulty, and one which could never be regarded as dishonest. Even if the fellows got to know it would not matter.

All the same, Blundell thought it wisest to say nothing. It was his affair. He was positive he could replace the money. What was there in it, after all? He would merely be borrowing eight pounds for two days.

"Yes, I'll do it," Blundell decided lightly. "Good! I'll run over to Courtfield to-morrow, and fetch the jigger home."

To Blundell, in his present elated state of mind, the borrowing of the club funds did not seem worth consideration. He would borrow the money and replace it—that's all there was in it.

If only Snoop had known of his victim's decision. The sneak of the Remove would have been transported with delight could he have learned of the direful results which were to follow his contemptible trick.

But, although he did not know, he was nevertheless highly

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elated. His triumph would come when Blundell opened the letter and found the cheque to be only one pound in value.

And Blundell was in happy ignorance of the awful truth. He had come to his decision with a light heart. He thought he had a hundred pounds to come, so why should he hesitate?

He had just locked the drawer again, when Bland and Fitzgerald of the Fifth marched in.

"Blessed if the bouncer isn't here!" said Bland. "We've been looking for you, Blundell."

"Well, now you've found me."

"What's this we hear about a motor-bike?" asked Fitzgerald. "Coker says you're going to buy a rotten old crock at Courtfield—a thing that's a hollow swindle and a proper dud!"

"Coker said that, did he?"

"Yes."

Blundell laughed.

"Well, you know what an ass Coker is," he replied. "Coker's jealous, that's all. The bike I'm going to get is a ripper, and it will beat Coker's stick-can into fits!"

"But you're not going to buy it?" said Fitzgerald. "Why, you ass, it's winter-time!"

"Well, the spring's coming!" said Blundell coolly. "I'm going over to Courtfield to-morrow to fetch it home."

"But your cheque isn't coming—"

"I know that," interrupted Blundell carelessly. "I've borrowed enough cash to get the thing. If I waited till the cheque arrived I should lose it."

"You'd better wait, then," said Fitzgerald. "I think motor-bikes are rotten things!"

"Opinions differ," said Blundell. "Come on, we'll trot down to the common-room and make arrangements about the Form feed I'm going to stand."

"Good egg!"

And the three Fifth-Formers departed, all of them in high spirits. Blundell's decision didn't worry him in the least. It seemed so insignificant to him that he hardly gave the matter another minute's thought.

He was borrowing the Fifth-Form club funds, but it was his strict intention to pay the amount back immediately out of money which was already his. So what was there to worry about?

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER. Blundell Fetches It!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. found quite a lot to talk about in Blundell's prize. The following day the main subject of conversation in the Remove—and indeed, in the other Forms as well—was the expected cheque.

Dozens of juniors were already racking their brains over the competition. Copies of "Weekly Jottings" were to be seen everywhere, and the newsagent in Friarale had sold out with a rush.

Billy Bunter spent a long time in evolving a "scheme," but when he took it round he could find nobody to advance the necessary sixpence to send with it.

At last, however, after morning lessons, he met Lord Mauleverer in the Remove passage, and showed him the effort, which, after all, was not so bad for Bunter.

"I want to send it off," said the Owl of the Remove plaintively. "I'm jolly sure that when it's sent in the editor will say it's the best one of the lot. I shall get the hundred-pound prize for it!"

"Begad!"

"It's a fact!" said Bunter, waxing enthusiastic. "I know I shall get the hundred pounds!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Who's talking so freely about quids?" inquired Bob Cherry, coming up with Nugent and Harry Wharton.

"I am," said Bunter. "I want to send this 'scheme' in, and I haven't got a tanner for the postal-order."

"Why not use one of your own postal-orders?" asked Bob blandly. "You're always getting 'em, you know!"

"Oh, really, Cherry, don't be an ass—"

"What!"

"I—I mean you know jolly well I haven't got a postal-order!"

"Yes, I can quite believe that!"

"Well, I want sixpence," said Bunter. "I've taken a lot of trouble over this, and it isn't right that all the labour should be thrown away. I think it's up to you chaps to see me through."

"Oh, we'll see you through!" said Nugent.

"Good!"

"Through the door, and out into the Close on your giddy neck!" roared Nugent pleasantly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter blinked indignantly.

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"Oh, really, it's too bad!" he protested. "This 'scheme' of mine is simply a ripper, and I jolly well know it'll win the hundred-pound prize!"

"Begad, that's what you told me!" said Mauleverer.

"Of course," said Bunter. "And all for the sake of sixpence I'm going to lose a hundred quid!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If this form is sent off," went on Billy Bunter, waving the inky slip he carried, "it will win a hundred quid. I'm jolly sure of it!"

"That's as well," said Harry Wharton, with a grin. "Nobody else is!"

"So I want you to advance me three or four quid amongst you," said the Owl of the Remove eagerly. "Look here, I'll tell you what I'll do. If you lend me five quid, I'll give you ten out of the hundred when it comes!"

"My hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's all very well, Bunter," said Bob Cherry. "But we don't want to wait until we're old men. That hundred quid's like the giddy rainbow—it never comes close enough to grab!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Buzz off, Bunter!" said Nugent. "Kids like you can't do these things. It was only a bit of luck that Blundell won such a fat prize. I regret to inform you, on behalf of myself and friends, that we are unfortunately not in a position to advance the loan."

"It's only a fiver."

"Can't be did!"

"Well, lend me a tanner, then, to send it off!" howled Bunter.

"Well, that's a drop, anyhow," grinned Wharton. "Here you are, Bunter, take this and buzz off!"

Harry handed out a sixpence, and Billy Bunter grasped it eagerly. He made off with it in such a hurry that he forgot to thank the donor. And when he reached the Close he paused and looked at the form in his hand.

"It ain't such a good one after all," he murmured. "I didn't buy the paper, either—I pinched this form out of Brown's copy of 'Jottings.' If I sent it in, it won't win a prize."

Having come to a decision, Bunter screwed up the slip, and rolled across to the tuckshop, where he expended Harry Wharton's sixpence in three twopenny tarts.

The day was a beautifully fine one. The roads were dry and hard, and the sun shone brilliantly. One or two clouds were dotted here and there in the sky, but they were fine weather clouds.

"Ripping day to fetch the jigger," said Blundell, as he looked out of his study window after dinner.

"When are you going?" asked Bland.

"This afternoon," said Blundell. "I've spoken to old Prout, and I'm going after first lesson, so as to catch the afternoon train. Then I can be back here by daylight. I don't want to mess about with the giddy lamp in the dark!"

"Besides," grinned Bland, "you've never handled a motor-bike before, and you might buzz into the ditch by mistake."

"Oh, I sha'n't have any spills!"

"Well, you'd better be careful!" warned Bland. "Spills on motor-bikes are jolly serious things. You can come a cropper off an ordinary jigger without doing much damage. But on a heavy motor-bike it's a different matter. I shouldn't be a bit surprised if you walked home with a broken leg!"

"I should!" chuckled Blundell. "And I must say that you're jolly cheerful!"

"I'm only giving you advice. You might even kill yourself!"

"Oh, dry up!"

"Well, you never know," said Bland sagely.

Coker looked in and made some uncomplimentary remarks concerning Blundell's prospective purchase. But Blundell only grinned.

"You wait until you see it," he said.

"Bringing it by train, I suppose?" said Coker.

"Train! Of course not, you ass!"

"You don't mean to say you're going to push it from Courtfield?" asked Coker, in surprise.

"Push it!" roared Blundell. "I'm going to ride it here!"

"Then all I can say is that it'll be hard work," said Coker. "Just fancy pedalling a heavy motor-bike all the way from Courtfield!"

Blundell glared.

"I sha'n't pedal at all!" he exclaimed.

"How the dickens will you come, then?"

"The engine will pull me, you chump!"

Coker affected great astonishment.

"Oh, then the engine works?" he asked.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bland. Blundell picked up a Latin grammar, and Coker dodged into the passage with a chuckle.

"I suppose Coker calls that witty?" growled Blundell. "You wait until I bring the jigger home. I'll show you!" Blundell was as determined and as enthusiastic as ever. And when he left the Fifth Form classroom after the first lesson, he went straight to his study.

He got out the twelve pounds borrowed from Lord Maul- everer, and then took eight pounds from the Club funds. He had scarcely thought about the matter during the morn- ing, and only gave it a moment's consideration now.

"My cheque will be here to-morrow for certain," he said. "It'll be the easiest possible thing to put this money back."

And he got into his overcoat and cap with a light heart, and sallied out into the deserted Close.

He caught the train without hurrying, and arrived in Courtfield while the sun was still well above the horizon.

As he walked briskly from the station, he wondered whether he would find the motor-cycle sold after all. But his fears were set at rest when he saw the machine still in the window.

"Good!" he murmured with satisfaction. He walked into the shop, and the same man came forward to attend to him. He recognised Blundell at once.

"Come about the motor-cycle, sir?" he asked politely. "Yes," said Blundell. "Is it sold?"

"Oh, no."

"Then if I come to-morrow I can have it?" asked the captain of the Fifth, feeling, at the last moment, a little compunction about using the Club money. If the machine was available on the morrow he would wait, he told himself.

Then he could get it with his own money.

But the shopkeeper was out for business.

"I am afraid if you leave it until to-morrow it will be too late, sir," he said. "A gentleman came in this morning and told me he would have the cash to-night, and would then fetch the machine away."

"Then it is sold!" exclaimed Blundell blankly.

"No; not at all," said the shopman quickly. "I have only the gentleman's word that he will come back. If you take the machine now, and he does come back—well, he will have lost his opportunity. The machine goes to the first comer."

"Do you think the chap will come back to-night?"

"It is practically certain."

"Then I'll take the machine now," said Blundell, who didn't mean to lose it. "I've got the cash on me."

The shopkeeper rubbed his hands.

"Very well, sir; I will have it made ready at once," he said briskly. "Shall I have the tanks filled with oil and petrol? The machine will then be ready for you to ride away."

"Rather!" said Blundell. "And while you're doing that I'll walk round to the town-hall and see about the license. I shall tell them to transfer the number to me."

"That's right, sir."

Blundell paid over eighteen pounds, got a receipt, and then hurried off to the town-hall. He was not long getting the license, and attending to the formalities connected with the matter. Then he returned to the motor and cycle works.

"All ready, sir," said the shopkeeper.

"Good!" replied Blundell, eyeing the motor-bike doubt- fully but with great eagerness. "I—I haven't ridden one of these things before, you know."

"Nothing simpler, sir," said the shopman obligingly. "If you would care to wait here I will show you exactly how everything works. It is surprisingly simple."

And so Blundell found it.

The motor-cycle, although very low priced, was a good machine. It was low, the engine started without the least trouble, and the controls worked easily and readily.

In less than ten minutes Blundell knew sufficient to warrant his taking the machine over and riding it off.

He was rather uncertain of himself at first, and when he started he wobbled and swerved giddily. He grazed the kerb of the pavement by about an inch, and then careered into the middle of the road.

"My hat!" he gasped.

He touched the throttle levers, and opened up the air instead of the gas. As a result, the engine spluttered for a moment, and then ceased firing altogether.

The motor-bike came to a standstill.

"Well, how on earth did that happen?" panted Blundell. "I only touched these silly little levers!"

Fortunately he was on a down gradient, and was able to start again without running beside the machine—always a rather risky proceeding for a novice.

By the time Blundell reached Friardale he could handle the motor-bike quite well, and he was enjoying himself hugely.

"It's grand!" he murmured. "By jingo, this is better than sweating away at the rotten pedals!" he added as he sailed smoothly up a steep little hill.

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EVERY MONDAY, The "Magnet" LIBRARY, ONE PENNY.

He was glad the bike went well, for he did not wish to be laughed at by the juniors. When they saw him riding smoothly round the Close, with evenly-running engine, they could do nothing but admire the machine.

And had Blundell only known it, quite a crowd of juniors were collected in the Close waiting for his arrival. Coker was hanging about, for he was as anxious as anyone to see Blundell's new purchase.

Snoop had been grinning to himself all day—much to the other juniors' mystification—for it struck him as being humorous. Blundell was buying a motor-bicycle with money which he could not pay back. Snoop would have been more pleased than ever had he known where eight pounds of that money had been borrowed from.

"Blundell turned up yet?" asked Potter, coming out of the School House and addressing a little knot of Removites.

"Shouldn't be surprised," answered Peter Todd.

"What do you mean?"

"Well, he might have turned up, with the jigger on top of him," grinned Peter, "somewhere on the Courtfield road."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No, he isn't here yet," said Johnny Bull. "I expect he'll come at any moment, though. Personally, I'm rather curious to see the blessed smell-tank."

Dutton, the deaf junior in the Remove, crossed the Close from the gates.

"Any sign of him?" asked Hazeldene.

"Eh?" said Dutton.

"Any sign?" shouted Hazeldene.

"Of course it is!" said Dutton, in surprise. "You can see that for yourself, can't you?"

"See what?" howled Hazel.

"Why, that it's fine, of course!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you gatepost!" roared Hazeldene. "I said—have you seen Blundell yet? Is there any sign?"

Dutton stared.

"What the dickens do you want me to sign?" he asked.

"Oh, crumbs!"

Hazeldene gave it up, and strolled across to the gates. Peter Todd, Dutton, and the others followed. Dutton still mystified.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Blundell Arrives!

THERE was a sudden shout.

"Here he comes!"

"My hat, yes!"

"And he's buzzing like the dickens!"

"Guess he's speeding some," remarked Fisher T. Fish.

The crowd of juniors gazed down the road towards Friar- dale. Blundell had just appeared. He was travelling rather fast, and the pop-pop-pop of his motor sounded clear on the still air. The sound of the engine was altogether different to the sluggish zug-zug of Coker's "stink-bike."

"Make way for him!" yelled Bob Cherry. "He's going to ride right into the Close!"

"And up the steps into the School House!" chuckled Nugent.

Pop-pop-pop!

Blundell was getting near.

"Look out!" shouted Harry Wharton. "Clear that duffer out of the way there! Hi, Dutton, you ass!"

Dutton was standing right in the middle of the gateway. It was unfortunate that he chose that moment to put his watch right with the school clock, for he had his back to the roadway, and did not see the frantic gesticulations of the Removites.

"The chump will be knocked down!" yelled Nugent.

"Blundell can't see him until he turns into the Close, and then there won't be enough room to swerve!"

"Dutton!"

"Hi, clear the road!"

Dutton turned at last.

"Anybody call me?" he asked.

"Yes; Blundell's coming!" roared Bob Cherry. "Stand aside!"

"What do you want me to hide for?" asked Dutton. "I'm not a First Form kid, you ass!"

"Stand away from the gate!" bellowed Bob.

"Wait?" said Dutton. "What for?"

"Oh, crikey!"

Pop-pop-pop!

Blundell was riding up now, and he felt rather flattered to see the crowd waiting for him. Well, he would give them a little display of good riding; he would enter the Close in style!

13

He opened the throttle a mite, and the motor-bike went faster. At that moment Nugent darted forward towards Dutton. Unfortunately, in his excitement, he did not calculate Blundell's closeness.

"Hi, look out!" yelled Blundell, in alarm.

He swerved giddily, and a group of juniors staggered back, and fell in a heap. Blundell jammed the control lever over, but, unfortunately, he jammed it the wrong way!

The motor-bike shot forward with a buzz.

"Great Scott!" gasped Blundell.

He clung to the handlebars. There was no time to do anything. Nugent heard the sudden roar of the engine, and gave Dutton a terrific shove.

"You blithering ass!" howled Dutton, sprawling on the ground.

Nugent staggered back.

Blundell was making straight for him!

Nugent gave a yell, and jumped.

But it happened that Blundell thought Nugent was going to jump the other way, and he swerved to avoid him. Instead of avoiding him, the motor-bike thundered for him like a charging bull.

"Good heavens!"

Frank Nugent uttered a fiendish yell, and dodged. The next second Blundell's shoulder caught him, and he spun round, and sat down in the Close with disconcerting sudden-

ness. Fortunately, he was unhurt, but it had been a near shave.

Blundell jammed the brake on while the engine was pulling for all it was worth, and the smoke streamed from the brake-shoe. Two leafless elms stood in Blundell's path, and by a miracle he managed to steer between them.

Then he recovered himself—the whole incident had happened in ten seconds—and lifted the exhaust lever. But the throttle was still fully open, and, although the engine had stopped exploding, there were half a dozen deafening explosions from the silencer, caused by the hot gas.

Bang! Crash! Bang! Bang!

Blundell swerved round under the old arches of the Cloisters, and was lost to view. But as he came to a standstill, a final and loud explosion came from the silencer.

The juniors raced across the Close.

"My hat, he's busted the thing!"

"It's smashed all up!"

"Great Scott, he might be killed!"

"The giddy thing's exploded!"

"The explosionfulness was terrific!"

The Removites streamed across to the Cloisters, and a whole crowd of Fourth-Formers, Shell fellows, and Fifth-Formers followed.

They turned the corner with a rush, expecting to see a whole pile of wreckage, and Blundell underneath it all.



GOOD TURNS.—No. 34.

A Magnetite, possessed of a fine voice, willingly employs his gift at a village concert in aid of charity.



Frank Nugent uttered a fiendish yell as Blundell came straight for him. He dodged, but Blundell's shoulder struck him and sent him flying to the ground. (See Chapter 8.)

Instead, Blundell was calmly standing beside his machine, looking at it with pride. The excitement had flushed his face, but he was quite cool.

"Hallo! Look where you're coming!" he exclaimed. "What's all the excitement about?"

"Ain't you hurt?" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Hurt?"

"Yes; the thing's exploded—we heard it!" ejaculated Russell.

Blundell laughed.

"You asses!" he exclaimed. "That was only the gas firing in the exhaust pipe! Nothing's happened!"

"Then—then you're all right?"

"Of course I am!"

"Well, there's a giddy fraud!" exclaimed Stott indignantly. "We expected to find you all smashed up!"

"Sorry to disappoint you," said Blundell politely. "Shall I start up again, and ram the gym?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors were relieved to find that everything was all right. Nugent and Dutton panted up, both of them showing signs of wear.

"What the dickens do you mean by bowling me over?" shouted Frank Nugent. "You might have broken my giddy leg!"

"Well, I like that!" ejaculated Blundell. "You ran right into my path, you young ass! I only just cleared you!"

"It was Dutton's fault," said Harry Wharton. "The silly jiggins stood right in the way, and if it hadn't been for Nugent he'd have been knocked down. Dutton's a frabjous ass!"

"Rot!" said Dutton. "I'm not a muddy ass! I'm a big dusty, but it'll all rub off. You might have told me Blundell was coming, instead of letting Nugent rush up and bowl me over!"

The juniors gasped, but nobody volunteered to explain matters to the deaf junior; it was too much of a task.

Coker regarded the motor-bike critically. "Not bad," he said—"not bad at all."

"Not bad," he said—"not bad at all."

"Not bad," he said—"not bad at all."

"Not bad," he said—"not bad at all."

"Not bad," he said—"not bad at all."

"It goes rippingly," said Blundell.
 "Yes, so I saw," said Bland. "By jingo, you did tear in!"

Blundell didn't say that the tearing-in part of the programme was an accident—that he had opened the throttle by mistake.

The juniors gathered round the machine, and Blundell was showered with requests to run it under the Close a time or two before dark. Already it was getting dusk.

"Stand clear, then!" said Blundell.

The juniors stood clear, and the Fifth Form skipper ran the motor bike a yard or two forward. It fired immediately, and he swung himself into the saddle easily.

Round the Close he went, and as he was passing the School House steps an imposing figure in cap and gown dodged back suddenly, and glared at the motor-cyclist.

"Blundell!"

It was Mr. Quelch, the Remove-master.

Blundell turned, and rode gracefully to where Mr. Quelch was standing. He pulled up right in front of the Remove-master.

"Call me, sir?" he asked.

"I did, Blundell," said Mr. Quelch tartly. "Take that machine away at once, or I shall request Mr. Prout to forbid you to ride it. It is not for use in the Close. Motor-cycles are dangerous enough on the road, without bringing them in a crowded playground!"

"It's safe enough, sir," protested Blundell.

"Possibly you may think so, Blundell, but I do not," said Mr. Quelch sharply. "I was watching from my study window, and I saw you enter. It was only by sheer luck that you avoided two of my boys!"

"But that was their fault, sir."

"That will do, Blundell. Please take the machine away. If you wish to ride it, you have the roadway. In any case, it is getting very dark now."

"Yes, sir."

Blundell wheeled the motor-bike away, followed by a little crowd of juniors. Motor-bikes were not numerous at Greyfriars, and a fresh one created interest.

But after Blundell had locked his new purchase away, and had entered the School House, the juniors thought about tea—and one of the chief subjects of conversation in the junior studies was Blundell's one-hundred-pound cheque, which was expected to arrive by the first post in the morning.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Great Surprise!

SNOOP took great care to be down very early the following morning.

In all probability the cheque would be brought by the morning postman, and Snoop had no intention of missing the fun.

It would be the consummation of his revenge—for Snoop still harboured vindictive feelings against Blundell for that hiding in Friardale. It would be the keenest pleasure for him to see Blundell's disappointment and consternation upon seeing the amount of the cheque.

Blundell's purchase of the motor-bike had added to Snoop's pleasure, for he knew that the money had been borrowed; and he knew that the machine would have to be sold to repay the debt.

"It'll make the rotter look as small as a worm!" chuckled Snoop, as he descended the stairs. "He'll be the laughing-stock of the whole giddy school—and I shall be one of the first to roar!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" sang out Bob Cherry. "You seem jolly pleased with yourself this morning, Snoop! Just been twisting some Second Form kid's arm?"

"Go and eat coke!" growled Snoop.

"Say that again, and I'll give you a thick ear," said Bob warmly.

Snoop grunted and walked into the Close.

Many juniors were already down—and they all had the same object in view. They wanted to see Blundell's one hundred pounds arrive.

Coker & Co. were in evidence in the Close, but there was no sign of Blundell.

The morning was cold and windy, but the sun shone.

"Let's go down to the gates," said Frank Nugent.

The Famous Five were together, and they marched across to the entrance gates. A little group of juniors were already there.

"Expecting a cheque?" grinned Bulstrode.

"Oh, you never know!" said Bob Cherry. "Possibly I shall get a thousand pounds by this post!"

"Or possibly not!" grinned Mark Linley.

"Of course, a hitch might occur," said Bob thoughtfully.

"There might be a mistake, and I might only get a postal-order for ten bob!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 317.

"Or not even a letter at all."

"That's about the most likely event," chuckled Harry Wharton. "Blundell's the only chap who's rolling in filthy lucre—or will be to-day!"

"I don't think!" murmured Snoop, beneath his breath.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, don't bother, porpoise!"

"Oh, really, Bull!" protested Billy Bunter, rolling up. "I've as much right to be here as you chaps. I'm expecting a cheque by this post, you know—"

"A cheque!"

"Yes, a cheque," said Bunter importantly.

"Well, one never can tell," said Nugent. "If you'd said a postal-order, Bunter, I should have called you a fairy-tale merchant. But as you've never received a cheque there might be a chance of your getting one—although it's very remote."

"Just about as remote as the milky way," murmured Bob Cherry.

"Look here, I'm speaking the truth!" exclaimed Bunter.

"Eh?" gasped Bob.

"I'm speaking the truth!" roared Bunter.

"My hat! Do you know how to?"

"Oh, really, Cherry!"

"It must be a new accomplishment," said Bob Cherry. "I thought you'd been telling whoppers so long that you'd forgotten to speak the plain and unvarnished truth!"

"Don't be an ass!" shouted Bunter indignantly. "I think it's simply rotten of you, that's what I think! Anybody might think, to hear you talk, that—"

"That we think that you are a liar?" said Nugent blandly.

"Seems to be a lot of thinking about the bizney!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But really, you fellows," said Bunter hurriedly. "I—I want to ask a—favour. My cheque's coming by this post, and I want somebody to lend me ten bob to be going on with. I'll pay you the cash back some time to-day."

Bob Cherry winked at Nugent, and felt in his pocket—watched eagerly by Bunter.

"Oh, thanks awfully, Cherry!" said Bunter eagerly.

There was a shout from outside.

"Here comes the postman!"

"Here's the giddy cheque-merchant!"

Bob Cherry withdrew his hand from his pocket.

"Oh, then you won't want that ten bob, Bunter!" he said carelessly. "Your cheque's coming by the postman, I understand?"

"Ahem!"

Billy Bunter blinked at Bob uncertainly.

"Isn't that what you said?"

"Ahem! Ye-es, but on second thoughts, I don't believe the cheque will come by this post," said Bunter quickly. "It's sure to come to-day, though."

"Good! When it comes, bring it to me, and I'll advance you ten bob on it!"

"Ain't you going to lend me anything now?" roared Bunter.

"No!"

"You—you—"

"Better mind what you call me," said Bob Cherry. "I'm rather sensitive, and I might not like any disrespectful names."

"Beast!" muttered Bunter.

"Eh?"

"I didn't speak," growled the Owl of the Remove, rolling away into the road.

He blinked down towards Friardale. The postman was only a short distance away. The juniors crowded round the gates, and Coker & Co. lounged up carelessly. They didn't want to appear too interested—it would not be in keeping with their lordly dignity—but they were as anxious as anybody to catch a glimpse of the wonderful cheque.

"Here's Blundell!"

Blundell had just left the School House, and he walked across the Close with his hands in his pockets, trying to look unconcerned.

"Hi, Blundell!" roared Bulstrode, from the gates.

"Hallo! Want me?"

"Yes; postman's coming!"

Blundell joined the crowd of juniors.

"Well, suppose the postman is coming?" he said.

"Your cheque's coming this morning, you ass!" said Coker.

"By George, yes!"

Coker grinned.

"Does it well, doesn't he?" he chuckled. "Might think he'd never heard of a cheque before. But I'll bet he's been watching us all the while from his study window, and came down as soon as he saw signs of the postman's approach."

Blundell turned red. For Coker's words were exactly true.

The postman presented himself, and looked at the crowd curiously.

"Good-morning, young gents!" he said.

"Anything for me?" asked Billy Bunter.

"Oh, dry up, Bunter!"

"No, there's nothing for you, Master Bunter," said the postman; and several of the juniors chuckled.

"I suppose you've got a letter for Blundell—a registered one?" asked Coker.

The postman shook his head.

"No, sir, there ain't—"

Blundell stepped forward quickly.

"No letter for me?" he asked anxiously.

"No, Master Blundell."

"Oh crumbs!"

"It hasn't come."

"Not a registered one," went on the postman. "But there's an ordinary letter for you."

"Oh!" ejaculated Blundell in relief.

He took the letter, and saw with satisfaction that on the flap at the back was the name of the weekly periodical.

"It's all right," said Coker. "The silly asses haven't sent it registered. Fancying sending a hundred quid cheque through the ordinary post."

"Silly, wasn't it?" giggled Snoop.

The postman passed on into the Close, and the crowd pressed round Blundell. The captain of the Fifth opened the envelope rather shakily, for he was quivering with suppressed excitement.

A hundred pounds—all his!

"Here's the giddy cheque!" he exclaimed, taking a pink slip from the envelope. "Made out to me, and—"

Blundell gave a shout.

"Good heavens!"

All the colour fled from his cheeks, leaving his face white and drawn. He stared at the cheque with horrified eyes. Then it fluttered from his hands, and he staggered back.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Not a Mistake!

"GREAT Scott!"

"What's the matter?"

"My hat!"

"What's up with Blundell?"

Harry Wharton & Co. and the other juniors pressed round. Coker picked up the cheque from the ground.

"Stand back!" he roared. "I expect it's the excitement that's done it. This cheque's all right—"

He glanced at it, and then uttered a shout.

"My only Aunt Maria!" he roared blankly.

"Well, what's up?" demanded Bob Cherry. "Blessed if you ain't all going dotty! What's up with the giddy cheque—is it made out for a thousand pounds by mistake?"

Coker looked blank.

"It's—it's only for a quid!" he gasped. "It's a quid!"

"One quid?" shouted Harry Wharton.

"Yes."

"Oh crikey!"

"Only a quid!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Snoop.

Blundell took the cheque again.

"I can't understand it," he muttered. "What does it mean, Coker? There must be some horrible mistake. You all saw that form, didn't you?"

"Of course. It said that you had a hundred pounds to come."

"And this cheque's only for one pound!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" howled Snoop, holding his sides.

"Shut up, you ass!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "It's nothing to laugh at. It's a jolly serious matter for Blundell."

"He, he, he!" chuckled Billy Bunter. "It's made Blundell look small, anyhow. He, he, he! I expect—Ow! Yaroo! You silly ass, Bull!"

"Well, dry up!" said Johnny Bull hotly.

"I can laugh if I want to," said Bunter indignantly. "I think it's jolly funny."

"Rather!" said Snoop. "Howlingly funny! He expected a hundred quid, and got a motor-bike on tick, and now he's only got a solitary sovereign."

Several juniors grinned—Stott, Trevor, Bolsover major, Skinner, and fellows of the same kidney. But Harry Wharton & Co. were quite serious. Blundell's distress was too acute for them to laugh and joke about the matter.

"It must be some rotten mistake, Blundell," said Wharton. "We all saw the form, and the '£100' was written as plainly as anything. It simply must be a mistake."

"But suppose the sum on the form was a mistake?" suggested Bob Cherry. "It's just as probable, you know."

"My hat!"

Blundell wiped his brow.

"It's—it's horrible!" he said. "I—I can't think what it means. One pound."

He laughed mirthlessly, then stuffed the cheque into his pocket with an exclamation.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 317.

FOR NEXT

MONDAY—

"THE MISSING CHINEE!"

EVERY
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ONE
PENNY.

"I'll find out whether it's a mistake or not," he declared.

"How?"

"I'll send a wire to the editor and ask him."

"Good idea."

Blundell pushed his way through the crowd of juniors.

"Better wait until after brekker," said Coker. "It's just upon ready, you know."

"Oh, blow brekker!" exclaimed Blundell.

The Fifth Form skipper didn't allow his thoughts to dwell on the matter much. He'd be certain of the awful truth before he worried himself.

In three minutes his motor-bike was out, and he pushed it into the road. Then he started, just as he was, without any gloves or muffler. The machine gave no trouble, but popped away instantly.

The juniors watched Blundell out of sight. Then the bell rang for breakfast, and further discussion was postponed. But all the juniors—and a large proportion of the seniors—were greatly interested in the new development of Blundell's affairs, and scarcely anything else was talked about.

Blundell reached the village, and dispatched his wire:

"Cheque one pound arrived. Think it must be mistake. Sum stated on preliminary form was one hundred pounds. Please wire at once.—BLUNDELL, Greyfriars."

"Well, that's off," muttered Blundell, as he rode back to Greyfriars. "What does it mean? One pound! And I've borrowed twenty. It must be a mistake—a rotten mistake!"

He arrived late for breakfast, but a word or two to Mr. Frost put matters right. But Blundell didn't eat much. His appetite was gone, and his haggard look put a stop to the chuckles which some of the fellows were inclined to indulge in.

After prayers Blundell walked out into the Close. He was too anxious to care for the eyes upon him, and hovered about the gateway, awaiting the arrival of the telegraph-boy from Friardale.

Harry Wharton & Co. did not bother him. They collected round the School House steps in a group.

"Blessed if I can understand it," said Mark Linley.

"It's a bit of a shock, certainly," agreed Tom Brown.

"The shockfulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Jamsel Ram Singh. "The esteemed Blundell is extremely worried over the ludicrous cheque. I feel sorryful."

"Blessed if I can see anything to be sorry about," giggled Snoop, who was enjoying the sensation hugely. "It's the best joke of the term. A hundred quid— Oh, my hat!"

"Shut up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Snoop.

"Bump him!" said Frank Nugent darkly. "Bump the rotter!"

"Rather!"

"Slaughter him!"

Snoop dodged out of the way, and the Famous Five didn't feel inclined to chase him. He wasn't worth it. But his cackle made itself heard as he walked away.

"Unfeeling little beast!" said Wharton wrathfully.

"Sure, an' ye're right," said Micky Desmond. "It must be rotten for Blundell."

"There's still a chance that some fatheaded clerk made a bloomer," said Bob Cherry. "When's that telegraph-boy coming? It'll be time for first lesson jolly soon."

"He can't be long now," said Bull. "There's been heaps of time to get an answer through."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, here he is!"

The telegraph-boy from Friardale rode into the gate. Blundell stepped forward, and took the buff envelope from him. Harry Wharton & Co. rushed across the Close.

Blundell turned to the telegraph-boy.

"No answer," he said, and the boy departed.

Then Blundell opened the envelope.

He read through the words on the form, and laughed harshly. His face went a shade paler, and the juniors knew that the wire did not contain good news.

"Can we read it?" asked Harry Wharton.

Blundell handed over the form without a word. A forest of heads craned over Wharton's shoulder to read the words:

"One pound quite right. Cannot understand your wire. We have copy of preliminary form in our books. There is no error in amount.—COMPETITION EDITOR."

"Oh, but this is all rot!" ejaculated Bob Cherry indignantly. "The sum on the form was one hundred pounds, as plain as a pikestaff!"

"I can't understand it," said Blundell dully.

"I can!" exclaimed Coker, who had read the wire.

"Some rotter tampered with the form before you opened it."

17

A Magnificent, Long, Complete School Tale
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Blundell! If the editor has got a copy there's no doubt about the matter. Some horrible scoundrel must have shoved two noughts after the one."

"By George!" said Blundell, gritting his teeth. "It would be as easy as pie to do, come to think of it," went on Coker. "Simply the addition of two noughts. Where is the form?"

"In my study."

"Then we'll go and look at it closely," said Coker briskly. "If the noughts were shoved on after, we shall be able to detect it."

And Coker & Co. and Blundell hurried into the School House, leaving the juniors excitedly discussing the affair.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Blundell Decides!

COKER felt—and looked—important as he strode into Blundell's study.

"We'll soon ferret out the truth!" he declared. Coker prided himself upon being an extremely smart fellow, although most of the other fellows thought him rather an ass—indeed, a stock phrase at Greyfriars was "that ass Coker." On this occasion, however, Coker was on the right track.

"Here's the form," said Blundell. Coker, Potter, and Greene went across to the window, and Blundell followed interestedly, but with a very worried face.

"There's the hundred pounds, right enough," said Potter. "Well, we knew that, ass!" said Coker. "What we want to look at is the two noughts. Are they written by the same hand as the pound mark and the figure one?"

"Yes," said Greene; "anybody can see that! It's a beastly swindle, that's what it is! The rotters sent it like that on purpose!"

"Oh, don't be a chump!" exclaimed Coker. "That would be the worst thing they could do to advertise the paper."

He looked at the form closely. "These noughts were not written by the same chap as the pound mark and the figure!" he declared. "Just look, Blundell! The ink's a shade different in colour, for one thing, and the pen had a sharper point; it's dug into the paper."

Blundell looked. "By jingo, you're right!" he said.

"Of course I'm right!" Coker exclaimed importantly. "Now, we'll have to get to the bottom of this affair! Did you take this off the postman?"

"No; I found it in the letter-rack."

"Ah!" said Coker triumphantly. "Well?"

"Well, isn't it clear? You found it in the rack?" said Coker. "How do you know that somebody didn't take it out of the rack, open it by steam, and write in those two noughts?"

"But it's impossible!" protested Blundell. "Who on earth would do that? There'd be no sense in it!"

Coker scratched his head. "No," he agreed. "The chap who opened it wouldn't know beforehand what was inside, would he?"

"Of course not!"

"Well, it's plain that the thing was tampered with after it left the offices of 'Weekly Jottings'!" went on Coker.

"And that proves the main question. Your prize wasn't a hundred quid at all; it was simply one quid!"

"Yes; that's plain," said Potter.

Blundell nodded. "Who did it?" he muttered fiercely. "By Jove, if I could get hold of the chap I'd slaughter him! What a mean, dirty trick!"

"Horrible!" said Coker. "I say, leave me alone for a bit, will you?" asked Blundell.

"I want to think."

Coker nodded. "Right-ho!" he said. "Come on, you chaps!"

And Coker & Co. left.

Blundell sat down at his table, and took out the cheque. "One pound!" he muttered. "Great Scott, what a frost! One pound! And I thought I was going to get a hundred!"

He laughed grimly. There was a certain humour in the situation. After he had reckoned on the hundred, after he had borrowed money, after he had promised the Fifth a huge feed—he received one pound!

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"Well, I shall have to face it!" Blundell told himself. "There's no sense in finding the chap who's responsible for the thing—yet, I must get matters straight first."

Blundell was keenly, awfully keenly, disappointed. He had kept up a show of indifference before the others, but now that he was alone he stared before him grimly, with set teeth.

The shock was a blow to him—a heavy blow. "There's only one way out," he told himself. "I owe Mauly twelve pounds, and the club funds eight. The committee meeting's going to be held to-morrow evening, and I must have the money by then. Mauly doesn't matter so much, although it will be rotten for him."

Lord Mauleverer was an easy-going youngster, and he wouldn't mind waiting for a pound or two. It was the club funds that mattered; they must be paid at all costs.

"Well, the only thing to do is to sell the motor-bike back to the chap in Courtfield," decided Blundell. "He'll give me sixteen quid for it, certain, even if he doesn't give me the full eighteen. I haven't ridden the thing ten miles altogether."

Supposing he got sixteen, he would have to pay the club funds eight pounds of it. There would then be eight pounds left, with his prize-money to add to it, making nine pounds. He would give that to Mauly, and owe him three.

"Mauly won't mind waiting for the three," thought Blundell. "He'll be decent about it—in fact all the juniors are being decent, except a few rotters."

Blundell sat thinking for another five minutes. There was nothing for it—the bike would have to go back. It was not his at all; it had been bought with other fellows' money. It was rotten, utterly rotten; but there was no help for it.

Blundell glanced at his watch.

"Ten minutes before morning lessons," he murmured. "Not time to go now. I'll buzz over to Courtfield just before dinner. It'll mean missing dinner, but that doesn't matter a hang!"

And after morning lessons Blundell was one of the first in the Close. Snoop was there before him, however, and he roared with laughter at the sight of Blundell.

The Fifth Form captain was not exactly in a good temper, and he caught hold of Snoop, and gave him something to roar about. Harry Wharton & Co. witnessed the incident.

"Serves Snoop right!" said Nugent. "The little cad ought to be drawn and quartered!"

The juniors had learned all the facts, and they had set themselves the task of discovering the fellow who had tampered with the preliminary letter.

"I shouldn't wonder if Snoop had something to do with the affair," said Johnny Bull. "He's been cackling more than anybody else, and it's just the sort of thing he would do!"

"If he did do it," said Harry Wharton grimly, "we'll give him a terrific bumping and send him to Coventry! The chap who did that rotten trick is a disgrace to his Form!"

"Rather! But it's not certain that a Greyfriars chap did do it," said Bob Cherry. "I don't think there's much doubt, though."

"The august Blundell is going for a glorious ride on his smellful tanks!" remarked Luby.

The juniors looked across the Close. Blundell was just starting off, and in two minutes he was gone.

There was no pleasure in the ride to Courtfield, for his mind was too full of bitter thoughts. What a farce it was! Yesterday he had been glorying in his new possession, now he was on his way to sell it!

And all through Snoop's contemptible trick. The sneak of the Remove ought to have felt fully satisfied with his revenge. Blundell rode into Courtfield without mishap. The bike went splendidly, and he wheeled it into the cycle works.

The shopman, who was evidently the proprietor, walked forward with a smile.

"Some little mishap, sir?" he inquired.

Blundell saw that the shop was empty, and shook his head. "No," he replied. "The jigger goes splendidly. But I—I've changed my mind. I find that I can't have it. I—I want the money, you see."

"Oh!" said the shopkeeper.

"It's rotten!" said Blundell awkwardly. "But there it is! I suppose you'll have no objection to taking the machine back? I haven't used it, except to ride to Greyfriars and back. If you'll take it back and give me my eighteen pounds I'll be awfully obliged."

The proprietor regarded Blundell curiously.

"But that's not business, my boy," he said unpleasantly. "You can't buy a thing one day, and take it back to the shop the next and have your money returned. Oh, no!"

"But—but this is different," said Blundell eagerly. "This is an exception. You said there were other chaps after the machine, so it'll make no difference to you at all."

"CHUCKLES," 1d.

"On the contrary, it will make a lot of difference," said the shopkeeper. "I cannot take it back."

Blundell stared blankly.

"You—you can't?" he exclaimed.

"No, sir; it is impossible!"

"But—"

"It is useless talking," said the shopman firmly. "I sold you the machine, and there is nothing more to say."

"You—you can have it for sixteen pounds!"

"It would not pay me!"

"Well, fifteen!" exclaimed Blundell desperately.

"No, sir; not even fifteen!"

"How about those chaps who were after it as well as me?" he asked. "Won't one of those buy it?"

"I cannot discuss the matter," replied the shopman coldly.

"Your request is ridiculous."

"Well, you can do one thing," said Blundell desperately.

"You can give me the address of the man who was going to buy the machine last night. If he was anxious to get it he'll give me seventeen or eighteen pounds for it!"

"I do not know the gentleman's address."

Blundell breathed hard.

"You mean there never was anybody!" he exclaimed hotly. "It was simply a yarn to get me to buy the machine! What an ass I was to believe you! There wasn't anybody after it, and if I had waited until to-day, instead of listening to you, I should have been all right!"

"You are impertinent!" he snapped. "I have said all I mean to say. I will not take the machine back at any price."

"I suppose it's a dud, then?" said Blundell bitterly. "You couldn't get anybody else to buy it but me!"

He wheeled the motor-bike out of the shop, and stood against the kerb breathing hard. He realised now the shopkeeper's story about other prospective purchasers was all bunkum. Probably there was some defect in the machine which would not make itself apparent until it had been used for a thousand miles or so.

"What the dickens shall I do?" muttered Blundell frantically. "To-day's Friday. The committee meeting's to be held to-morrow. How can I get that eight quid, how can I get it?"

Suddenly he caught sight of a newspaper placard. In another minute he was on his machine, riding to the local newspaper office.

It was the evening paper, and when he came out of the office he had paid for an advertisement to be inserted in that evening's issue. Possibly he might find a purchaser, but it was a mere matter of chance.

"Anyhow," thought Blundell, as he mounted his machine again, "I don't expect I shall get the money by to-morrow. It's impossible!"

It was certainly a problem. Even if people saw the advert. that night nobody would want to hurry through the purchase by the following afternoon.

Blundell thought of going to another motor works in the town and offering the machine for ten pounds. But that would be a great sacrifice, and would almost certainly be useless.

They would suspect that he had stolen the machine, or that it was badly defective if he offered it at a ridiculously low price. And to ask a reasonable figure would mean delay.

"Hang it!" murmured Blundell, as he hummed towards Greyfriars. "Hang that fellow for his trickery! If he hadn't told me somebody else was after the machine—a rotten lie!—I should have waited until to-day!"

But it was useless going over the matter again. He had the bike in his possession, and he was eight pounds short of the club funds. It was that eight pounds that worried Blundell.

"I can't borrow the money now," he murmured. "Nobody will lend me as much. There's Mauleverer, of course, but I cleared him out. He's only got to wire to his guardians for more, though. By George, that's it! I'll ask him to wire."

But Mauleverer would want to know why the matter was so urgent. He would want to know why the money had to be paid back so quickly. Well, there was only one thing to do—tell Mauleverer everything.

"Mauly's a good chap, an honourable chap," thought Blundell. "If I tell him he'll understand, and will do his best to help me. Yes, as soon as I get back I'll go straight to him."

And with that fixed intention in his mind Blundell rode on to Greyfriars.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter Hears Things!

BILLY BUNTER rolled along the Remove passage. Dinner was over, and there was half an hour to afternoon lessons. The Owl of the Remove was feeling comfortable after an extra hearty dinner, and wanted something to read.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 317.

FOR NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE MISSING CHINEE!"

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"

LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

He had noticed Lord Mauleverer reading a book the day before, and Bunter particularly wanted to read it, too. He had just left the schoolboy earl in the common-room, so the coast was clear for Bunter to borrow the book without asking permission.

He opened the door of Mauleverer's study, and stepped in. The room was empty as he had expected. Bunter closed the door, and rolled across to the table.

The book was not there, so he looked in the cupboard, and there, before his eyes, was a dish of expensive pastry which Mauleverer had got in specially for tea.

"My hat!" murmured Bunter, with glistening eyes.

"They look prime! I simply must have a taste!"

Bunter's tastes generally meant a hearty meal. And despite the fact that he was full of dinner the Owl of the Remove proceeded to "taste" Mauly's pastry.

In five minutes the pile had diminished considerably.

"My word, they're great!" murmured Bunter. "I—I'm blessed if I can eat the rest, though. I'd better shove 'em in my pocket and take 'em away! Mauly can easily afford to get a new lot, and he'll never know who took these!"

But at that moment Lord Mauleverer's voice made itself heard out in the passage. Billy Bunter cast a scared look towards the door.

"My hat! If Wharton or Cherry is with Mauly they'll chuck me out on my giddy neck!" he murmured in alarm.

He looked round hastily, and then dodged behind a screen which decorated one corner, for Lord Mauleverer's study was furnished on a luxurious scale. In a moment the screen was pulled round, and Bunter's fat form was hidden.

The door opened, and Mauleverer entered. But he was not accompanied by any other Removites. His companion was Blundell of the Fifth.

"Come in, my dear fellow!" said Lord Mauleverer, in his drawling voice.

Blundell entered and the door was closed. Bunter kept as still as a mouse.

"I say, it's awfully rotten of me to drag you up here like this," said Blundell; "but it's important, and—and I'm worried."

Mauleverer nodded sympathetically.

"Yaas, I don't wonder," he replied. "Begad, you must have had a shock when you found that your cheque was only for a quid!"

"It knocked me over," said Blundell.

"Yaas!"

"You see," went on Blundell, "I'm in a rotten position, Mauleverer. I've only got a quid—one quid instead of a hundred! When I bought that motor-bike I thought I was going to have the hundred."

"Yaas, of course."

"And I borrowed twelve quid off you and—and eight from some other source," said the Fifth Form skipper. "Well, I've got no money."

"That doesn't matter, my dear fellow," said Mauly generously. "I don't mind waiting. Pay me when you like. If you're worried over that—"

"But there's something else," interrupted Blundell quickly. "You don't understand, Mauleverer. I tried to tell the jigger this morning to raise the money, but I couldn't."

"Begad!"

"I must have eight pounds," said Blundell—"must have it by to-morrow. You're a decent kid, and I know you don't mind waiting until I can get a purchaser for my bike. But the other won't wait. I must pay back the eight pounds to-morrow."

"But why?" asked the schoolboy earl. "What's the beastly hurry?"

"I'm going to tell you a secret, Mauly."

"A secret, my dear fellow?"

"Yes; a—guilty secret!"

"Begad!"

Lord Mauleverer gazed at Blundell in surprise, and Billy Bunter, behind the screen, pricked up his ears. Bunter loved secrets, especially when they were other people's.

"I wanted twenty pounds for the bike," said Blundell quickly. "You lent me twelve, but the other chaps were hard up. I was keen on having the machine, and was absolutely certain that the hundred pounds would be here this morning."

"Yaas, naturally."

"So I borrowed the other eight out of the Fifth Form Club funds," said Blundell, in a low voice. "I was so certain that I should be able to put it back to-day, that I never gave the matter serious thought."

"Begad! Good gracious!" ejaculated Mauly blankly.

Bunter hugged himself.

"I—I know I oughtn't to have taken the money," went

on Blundell. "But I was positive of the hundred quid. Now, as you know, the money hasn't turned up. Some rotter faked things up for me. There's going to be a committee meeting to-morrow, and—and it's imperative that I should have the eight pounds."

Lord Mauleverer looked at Blundell thoughtfully. "It's a rotten position," he said slowly, "but there's no need to worry. Of course you're not to blame. You thought the money was coming, and so didn't hesitate to borrow the beastly funds. Begad, you must have felt rotten when you realised the position!"

"I did," said Blundell feelingly. "I—I thought that you might be able to lend me the eight quid. I'm an awful nuisance, Mauly, and I'm frightfully sorry."

"Rot, my dear fellow!" said Lord Mauleverer hastily. "I will send off a wire to my guardians, and tell them to post off a cheque at once. It'll arrive in the morning, and everything will be all right."

"By jingo, you're a brick!" exclaimed Blundell. "Yaas—I mean rats! You can pay me back when you like, Blundell. You needn't hurry yourself about selling the bike."

"But I shall!" said Blundell firmly. "I shall sell it as soon as possible, and pay you all I can."

"As you like, my dear fellow."

"If you write out the wire now I'll rush down to Friardale with it before afternoon lessons," went on the captain of the Fifth. "There will be just time if I hurry."

"Good!"

And Lord Mauleverer wrote out a brief telegram to his guardians, asking for a cheque immediately. The schoolboy millionaire always had his remittances by cheque, and they were generally for a goodish amount.

Blundell rushed off at once. He was feeling greatly relieved, and told himself that Mauleverer was a brick—as, indeed, he was. Blundell had had no dinner, but he was too much occupied to feel hungry.

Lord Mauleverer stayed in his study for a minute or two after Blundell had left, and then strolled out and closed the door.

A sigh came from behind the screen. Billy Bunter appeared.

"Thank goodness they didn't find me!" he murmured. "I'd better buzz out of here jolly quick, in case Mauly comes back!"

And Bunter cautiously left the study, forgetting, in his excitement, to pocket the remains of the pastry. The passage was fortunately empty, and he breathed freely.

"My hat!" he muttered. "I've learned something! Fancy Blundell pinching the club money! The rotter—the frightful scoundrel! I'll go to him straight away and face him with it! I'll threaten to show him up before all the chaps!"

And Billy Bunter, with this charitable thought in mind, rolled away towards the Fifth Form passage. Then he suddenly remembered that Blundell had gone to Friardale with the wire.

And at the same moment the bell rang for afternoon lessons.

Bunter muttered savagely to himself, but it was no good. He hurried to the Form-room, so as to be there in good time. He had no wish to be detained after lessons.

The afternoon passed slowly for two juniors in the Remove at least—Billy Bunter and Lord Mauleverer. It was over at last, however, and the Remove trooped out.

Almost the last to leave was Lord Mauleverer, and he found Trotter, the page, waiting for him in the passage.

"Telegram for you, your lordship," said Trotter. "Oh, yaas; I thought there might be one!" said Mauly. "Thanks, Trotter. Here's a tanner."

Trotter took the sixpence, and went away happy. Mauly opened the wire and read it.

"Begad!" he ejaculated blankly.

Then he hurried briskly to the Fifth Form passage, causing many juniors to look after him in astonishment. Mauleverer wasn't renowned for briskness.

Blundell was in his study when Mauleverer knocked.

"Oh, it's you, Mauly!"

"Yaas, my dear fellow," said the schoolboy earl, looking worried. "I've got rotten news!"

Blundell's heart sank.

"What—what do you mean?" he asked.

"I've just had a wire from my guardians saying that I can't have any tin until next week," said Mauly. "They're away, or unwell, or something like that!"

And he handed the wire to Blundell. It merely stated that Mauleverer's guardians were not available, but that a cheque would be sent on early in the following week.

"Great Scott!" muttered Blundell.

"Yaas, it's rotten."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 317.

"What shall I do?" said Blundell desperately. "What on earth shall I do, Mauly?"

Lord Mauleverer looked distressed.

"Begad, I'm bothered if I know!" he said. "I'm fearfully sorry, my dear fellow!"

"It's not your fault, Mauly; it's my fault," groaned Blundell—"my fault completely! I've been an idiot—a fool!"

"Begad, you know, that's rather strong!" protested Mauly.

Blundell looked up quickly.

"Couldn't you wire to your uncle?" he asked eagerly. "Your uncle—Sir Reginald Brooke?"

Mauleverer shook his head.

"Nunky isn't in England," he replied. "He's in the South of France, I believe—gone there for a week or a fortnight. No, nunky isn't available."

"Then I'm done."

"Yaas."

His lordship was quite distressed, and looked at Blundell uncomfortably.

"Well, you've done your best, Mauly, and you're a little brick!" said Blundell. "Thanks awfully! I—I shall have to get the tin some other way. If necessary, I will go to Courtfield to-morrow and sell the bike for eight pounds!"

"Begad!"

"But that will be a last resource," said Blundell. "I may possibly get the money without such drastic measures."

"I sincerely trust so, my dear fellow."

And Lord Mauleverer left, with a worried look still upon his aristocratic countenance. He considered that he had added to Blundell's trouble by failing him at the last moment. But it wasn't his fault; he had done his utmost.

Blundell sat before his fire, gazing into the red embers.

What an ass he had been to buy the motor-bike so hurriedly! Why couldn't he have waited? Why didn't he show more patience?

What was to be done now? What could be done?

He couldn't go round to the fellows and ask for loans. They would probably ask, innocently enough, what the money was for, and he would be unable to tell them.

No; the money would have to come from outside.

But how?

It was a problem.

And supposing he didn't get the money? Blundell hardly dared think of it. It would all come out; it would be known throughout Greyfriars that he had taken the club funds!

He would be disgraced before all. The Head would not look at it leniently. It would mean the sack!

The sack!

Blundell turned white. With the prospect of the hundred pounds before him, the taking of the funds had seemed nothing. Now, he told himself that he had committed a terrible crime.

Undoubtedly, he had done wrong in taking the money, but he had had no dishonest intentions. He was the soul of honour, and, but for Snoop's wretched trick, all this trouble would not have arisen.

What if he could not get the money? Blundell asked himself the question again and again. It would mean expulsion, he told himself. He had been trusted with money, and he had taken it for his own use.

"Oh, what a fool I've been!" groaned the unhappy Fifth Former. "What a reckless idiot! What a—"

There was a tap at the door.

"Come in!" said Blundell, sitting down suddenly, and trying to look unconcerned.

Billy Bunter's fat form insinuated itself into the study, and Bunter's face wore a cunning and satisfied smile.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Hush-Money!

BLUNDELL waved his hand impatiently.

"Clear off, Bunter!" he said sharply. "I can't talk to you now!"

Billy Bunter grinned.

He closed the door, and seated himself in a chair opposite to Blundell. The Fifth Form skipper eyed him angrily.

"You cheeky young rotter," he exclaimed, "get out!"

"Oh, really, Blundell," said Bunter, "I want to speak to you—on most important business!"

"Well, you can't! Clear off!"

Blundell wasn't in a mood to trifle with Bunter.

He grasped the fat junior's shoulder.

"Look out!" gasped the Owl of the Remove. "Don't you hurt me, Blundell! Let go—let go, you beast! Ow! Yaaroh!"

Blundell dragged Bunter from his chair.

"You young villain!" he roared wrathfully.

"Don't you touch me again!" gasped Bunter quickly. "If you do, I'll tell about the—the money!" Blundell's grip relaxed, and he stared at the Removeite. "What do you mean?" he exclaimed hoarsely. Bunter chuckled.

"I mean what I say," he replied, putting his big spectacles straight. "I know all about it! I'm going to tell the Head!"

Blundell turned pale. "Tell the Head!" he gasped. "What? Tell him what?" "Why, that you pinched the Fifth Form money, and bought a motor-bike with it," said Bunter, leaning forward with a cunning grin. "Oh, I know all about you!"

"How did you know?" "Ah!"

Blundell clenched his teeth. Bunter knew his secret—Bunter, the biggest gossip and scandalmonger in Greyfriars! He would have to be silenced at all costs until the funds were made up to the right amount. After that it wouldn't matter. Bunter could say what he liked then.

Blundell felt like taking hold of the fat junior and shaking him until he howled. But that would be bad policy; he must see exactly how much Bunter knew.

But his wrath got the better of him for a moment. "You little spy!" he exclaimed hotly. "So you've been listening somewhere? By jingo, you deserve to be kicked out of Greyfriars, neck and crop!"

"Oh, dry up, Blundell, old man—" "If you say 'old man' again—" "Old man," said Billy Bunter blandly, "you'd better not touch me! I'll tell the fellows all I know if you do!"

Blundell dropped his hands, and glared at Bunter contemptuously.

The Owl of the Remove grinned. "I sha'n't tell you how I know, but I do know," he said coolly. "If you agree to do as I want, Blundell, there's no need for anybody to know anything about the affair. But if everybody knew that the club money was missing, there'd be a hubbub, wouldn't there?"

"Go on!" said Blundell grimly.

Bunter meant to make the best of his opportunity. He did not know about the wire from Mauleverer's guardians, and thought that the money would arrive the following morning.

"I won't say a word," said Bunter. "I'll be a good pal to you, old man, and keep it dark!"

"You want money, I suppose?" snapped Blundell. "You needn't bite my giddy head off!" protested Billy Bunter. "Of course I want money! But I'm not a black-mailer—no fear! I only want you to lend me some money. I'll pay you back when my next postal-order comes!"

"That will be never, so what I let you have will be given," said Blundell tartly. "How much do you want?"

The Fifth Former had great difficulty in restraining himself from hurling Bunter forth. But that would have been fatal. Bunter would have blabbed the facts broadcast before an hour had passed, and he would have added fiction to the fact.

"Well, a quid will do to be going on with," said Bunter smoothly.

"You won't get it!" "Oh, really, Blundell—" "You won't get it, I tell you!" snapped Blundell, who had no intention of giving Bunter a sovereign.

The fat junior would only return for more later on, however much he got now.

"I'll give you five bob, and not a penny more!" "Oh, we'll see about that!" exclaimed Bunter nastily. "If you don't give me a quid, I'll go straight to the Head!"

"All right; go!" Bunter marched across to the door. "Is it a quid?" he asked. "No; five bob!"

Bunter opened the door. "Right-ho, you rotter! I'll show you up!" he said warmly. "I'll tell the Head what a thief you are!"

And Bunter went out and slammed the door. Blundell stood before the fire with clenched fists. He opened his lips to shout out, but closed them tightly. He knew Billy Bunter, and waited.

Bunter, outside the door, paused, expecting to hear a call. But none came, and he uttered a murmur of disappointment. Then he opened Blundell's door again, and walked into the study.

"I can't do it," he said, shaking his head. "I can't be such a rotter, Blundell! I'll give you a chance, and take the five bob!"

Blundell handed out the money. "Good!" said Bunter, dropping the cash into his pocket. "I won't say a word, old chap—not a word! I'll keep your guilty secret!"

"Get out!" said Blundell sulphurously. "Oh, really—" "Get out!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 317.
FOR NEXT MONDAY—

"THE MISSING CHINEE!"

EVERY MONDAY, The "Magnet" LIBRARY. ONE PENNY.

And Billy Bunter got out. After all, five bob wasn't bad. He could get a decent feed for five bob. Then, when he got hungry again, he could approach Blundell for more cash. So Bunter, feeling highly pleased with himself, took himself off to the tuckshop, and surprised Mrs. Mimble by planking the five shillings down, and demanding refreshment, liquid and solid, in exchange.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Hope!

THAT evening was one of the most miserable Blundell had ever spent. When bedtime came he was heartily glad, and sleep made him forget his troubles.

Billy Bunter had come again just before supper, and had walked off with another five shillings. What else could Blundell do? He knew Bunter as well as anybody, and the only way to keep his tongue still was to keep it busy with entables. Which, although paradoxical, was nevertheless a fact.

So far Bunter had said nothing. But Blundell's very appearance told Harry Wharton & Co. that something was very wrong. And the Famous Five were concerned. Blundell was a decent chap, and they didn't like to see him in trouble.

The only junior who seemed highly pleased was Snoop, and the other juniors surprised Snoop by giving him a sound bumping. After that Snoop took care to do his chuckling unobserved.

Blundell came down next morning—Saturday morning—looking pale and depressed. His mind was full of doubts. What was he going to do?

The Fifth Form meeting was to be to-night, and eight pounds of the club funds were missing—the bulk of the cash. So far, not a soul in the Fifth suspected the truth.

They all saw that Blundell was worried, but they naturally thought this was the result of his disappointment.

Blundell entered the hall, and glanced carelessly into the letter-rack. This morning he was not down so early, and the postman had already been.

There was a letter for him. Blundell took it out, and opened it quickly. Then he gave a little gasp of relief.

The letter was from a man living in a little town twenty miles distant. He said he had seen Blundell's advertisement in the evening paper, and would like to see the motor-cycle the following afternoon—Saturday afternoon—with a view to purchasing it.

"Thank goodness!" muttered Blundell. "I'll make him buy it! If he only gives me fifteen quid I shall be satisfied!" The wrinkles left his forehead, and he felt almost light-hearted. It was a half-holiday to-day, and he could easily run over during the afternoon.

He would get the money, and be back at Greyfriars by tea-time. Then he would make the club funds right, and take the chair at the committee meeting with a light heart.

And Blundell told himself that after this he would never touch another penny of money which did not belong to him as long as he lived. Whatever the circumstances, it was a risky thing to do.

He met Coker in the Close. "Hallo," said Coker; "you're looking happier!" "Yes," replied Blundell.

"How about that motor-bike?" asked Coker. "You're in a bit of a hole, ain't you? Didn't you borrow the tin to buy it with, on the strength of your whacking great prize?"

"Yes; but I think I shall be able to pay the money back to-day," replied Blundell. "I'm going to sell the machine, of course!"

Coker nodded. "Poor old chap!" he said. "It's rotten for you!" "I must make the best of it."

"I wish I knew who altered that form!" said Coker darkly. "My hat, I'd make the rotter sit up!"

Snoop passed by, and a chuckle came from him. "Lend me a tenner, Blundell!" he grinned.

"You young rotter!" roared Coker angrily. Snoop darted away, and Blundell looked thoughtful. He didn't exactly suspect Snoop, but certain things were beginning to form in his mind. Before he could think further breakfast-bell rang.

After morning lessons Blundell waited impatiently for dinner. To-day he ate a hearty meal, and then got his motor-bike out.

The news that he was going to sell it had got round, for Coker had mentioned it to several fellows—it was no secret—and a little crowd of juniors watched Blundell start.

A Magnificent, Long, Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars. Order Early.

"Wish you luck, Blundell," said Harry Wharton heartily. "Thanks!"

"Don't break your giddy neck!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "It might come in useful to you some time."

"It's hard luck having to sell it as soon as you've got it," exclaimed Johnny Bull. "It's all the fault of that rotter who altered the form. If you find him, I suppose you'll bump him, Blundell?"

"If it's a junior," said Blundell. "I shall leave him to you—you'll punish him for me, won't you?"

"Rather!"

"You can do it better than I could," went on Blundell.

"A mere lamming isn't good enough!"

"Do you think it was a junior?" asked Wharton.

"Yes; I think so."

And by pure chance Blundell's eyes rested for a second on Snoop. The sneak of the Remove turned a little white, and walked away.

Blundell started up, and was soon buzzing along the clean road. He was thankful that the weather still held fine.

He was in good spirits now, for he was certain that he could effect a sale. Possibly he would be able to get the full eighteen pounds for the machine.

He arrived at his destination without the slightest mishap, and he enjoyed the ride immensely. His only regret was that he had to sell the machine.

But it was the only way of saving the situation; it was the only thing he could do. Strictly speaking, the bike was not his at all, and he ought not to grumble.

And he didn't. He was quite cheerful as he pulled up outside a large house on the outskirts of the little town. He wheeled the machine up the drive, and rang the bell.

"I want to see Mr. Belton, please!" he said to the maid-servant who answered his ring.

"Yes; I'll tell the master at once," she replied.

A minute later Mr. Belton presented himself. Mr. Belton was a small man of about thirty, and he looked at the motor-bike with interest.

"So that's the machine?" he asked, bending down and looking at the working parts critically.

"It's in splendid order," said Blundell eagerly. "I've just ridden it over from Greyfriars, and it came along flying."

"Um!" said Mr. Belton.

Blundell stood by anxiously.

"Rather odd," remarked Mr. Belton. "Must be two or three years old. How does she climb hills?"

"Splendidly!"

"Quite so! And what's the figure?"

"Eighteen pounds," said Blundell.

"Eighteen pounds—ch?" repeated Mr. Belton. "It's too much, my lad—too much!"

"But I only bought the machine two days ago!" protested Blundell. "I paid eighteen pounds for it, and the shop-keeper said it was wonderfully cheap!"

"Motor-cycles are going very cheaply now," said Mr. Belton. "When they get a bit old they're out of date, and sell for nothing. I dare say this machine goes along first-rate."

"It does," said Blundell.

"H'm! Well, it's not so high-powered as I wanted, but it will do. I will give you sixteen pounds for it, provided that I find it runs well and is in perfect order."

"Good!" said Blundell in relief.

Mr. Belton smiled to himself. For sixteen pounds the machine was dirt cheap; but the prospective purchaser was one of those very, very careful men. He did not want to buy a "pig in a poke."

"That's settled, then?" he asked.

"Yes," said Blundell. "You can have it for sixteen."

"Of course, you will not object to my having it for a day or two on trial?" suggested Mr. Belton. "Or, at least, until Monday."

"On t-trial?" stammered Blundell.

"Exactly. I will go for a spin on it to-morrow and test it. If it is satisfactory, I will send you a cheque by post to reach you on Monday."

"M-Monday!"

Blundell stared at Mr. Belton.

"I want the money to-day," he said, recovering himself.

"It's most important I should have it to-day."

"To-day? Preposterous!" said Mr. Belton flatly.

"Well, eight pounds of it," said Blundell quickly.

"Not a penny, sir, until I know what I am buying. As a matter of fact, I have only five pounds in the house at the present moment."

"But—but I must have eight pounds to-day!" exclaimed Blundell helplessly.

Mr. Belton regarded him suspiciously.

"I think you had better keep your machine, young man," he said abruptly. "I am not prepared to pay for a thing

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 317.

before I have had time to examine it at leisure. Good-after-noon!"

And Mr. Belton walked up the steps, entered the house, and closed the door.

Blundell stared after him blankly, his face haggard again. The Fifth Form skipper's troubles seemed to be never-ending.

He had drawn blank again.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Something Unexpected!

"WELL, of all the funny little rotters, that chap takes the bun!" muttered Blundell. "What on earth shall I do now?"

He wheeled the motor-bike into the road, and looked up and down rather helplessly.

What could he do? Mr. Belton was no good as a purchaser. How could he get the eight pounds? The time was getting terribly short; it was well on in the afternoon now.

If he did not turn up for the committee meeting, Bland, Fitzgerald, or one of the other Fifth-Formers would take his place in the chair, and would discover the shortage in the funds. In five minutes the news would be over Greyfriars, and when Blundell returned he would be in dire disgrace.

"I must get back in time!" muttered Blundell frantically. "I must get the money! Oh, what shall I do—what the dickens shall I do?"

All his worries were heavy on his shoulders again. He had not sold the machine, and it was getting late. He stood there gazing unseeing into the distance.

Then he suddenly clenched his teeth.

"I'll go back to the chap in Courtfield," he decided. "It's simply rotten; but there's nothing else for it. It's humiliating, but it's the only way of getting the money. If I offer him the jigger for ten quid he simply can't refuse."

Blundell made up his mind. There was nothing else for it. He would lose eight pounds clear, but there was no other way out of the difficulty. Lord Mauleverer would be the one to suffer.

"But Mauly's rolling in money, and won't mind," thought Blundell. "I can write home, explain things, and try to get the money. If I had time it would be as simple as anything. But I haven't got time. I've got to get money to-day, or I'll be sacked from Greyfriars!"

It was a terrible thought. Any sacrifice was better than that. Once he had that eight pounds he would be content. But Fate seemed to be conspiring against him all along the line.

Blundell was being taught a bitter lesson. He was being shown the folly of using money which was not his. No matter how certain he had been of replacing it, he ought not to have touched it. Hitches are always liable to occur, and disaster follows.

It was his endeavour to avert disaster. It meant sacrificing a lot, but that could not be helped.

"Yes," Blundell told himself. "I'll ride straight to Courtfield. It'll get me out of the trouble, anyhow. By George, what an ass I was to buy the bike before the cheque arrived—what a silly ass!"

He was soon pop-popping along, and the miles were left behind him. Half-way to Courtfield he stopped on the middle of a long, winding hill to put some oil into the crank-case. The oil-pump worked hard, and could not be operated from the saddle.

Blundell gave the engine one pumpful, and then prepared to mount again. He glanced up the long hill—for he had been going uphill, and had decided to give the engine oil before he essayed the long climb.

The road was clear—

No, something had appeared round a gradual curve. It was a brougham, and it seemed to be travelling fast.

It was tearing down the hill furiously.

The horse was actually galloping.

"Well, the driver of that thing must be a silly chump," murmured Blundell. "Fancy coming down a hill like this at that rate!"

He stared at the approaching brougham, then started violently.

The box was empty!

The brougham had no driver at all!

Out of one of the side-windows a head was thrust, and Blundell could see that the hair of the owner of the head was white.

"Good heavens!" shouted Blundell.

The horse was running away. It was tearing down the hill at full gallop.

And there was no driver. Those in the body of the brougham could do nothing; it was impossible to reach the reins! The horse had its bit between its teeth.

From side to side the vehicle swayed, nearly running into the ditch. Then it got into the centre of the road again, and came onwards rapidly.

Blundell's heart beat like a sledge-hammer.

He glanced round. Not a soul was within sight. Further down the hill was a sharp curve, bordered on either side of the road by a low stone wall.

"Great Scott!" gasped Blundell, aghast. "There'll be a fearful accident. The brougham simply can't get round that corner."

That fact was only too evident. At the rate the vehicle was travelling the horse would endeavour to turn the corner, and the brougham would overturn.

It would crash into the wall, and splinter to matchwood. The occupant, or occupants, would be crushed and battered in the wreckage. Death would be almost certain.

Blundell stood looking at the thundering brougham with staring eyes and pallid face.

"There's not a soul about!" he panted. "It'll mean death if I don't do something!"

He gave a frantic look round again, then rushed forward. His teeth were set, his mind was made up.

He would make an attempt to stop the vehicle.

There was nothing else to be done. None but a craven coward would have stood by and watched the brougham's occupant tear on to death.

And Blundell was not a coward; he now proved himself to be possessed of wonderful resource and courage.

He rushed forward, leaving his motor-bike resting against the bank. On came the runaway horse, its eyes showing the whites, its muzzle flecked with foam.

It thundered up. It was alongside.

Blundell made a spring, a frantic spring.

But the horse swerved across the road, Blundell felt himself grazed by the wheels of the brougham, and the vehicle had passed.

He had failed!

He watched, dazed. The brougham was running on two wheels only, and as Blundell looked, it righted itself with a crash. Then it rushed onwards to that fatal corner.

"Oh, heavens!" shouted Blundell, white to the lips.

Then he saw his motor-bike against the bank.

"The bike!" he yelled.

Like one possessed, he darted forward. With one spring he had grabbed the handlebars of the bicycle. He pushed it forward, and the engine commenced working.

In a second he was in the saddle. The throttle was wide open, and he was tearing down the hill at an appalling pace.

Could he reach the brougham before it arrived at the corner?

Could he overtake it in time?

All Blundell's troubles were forgotten in the intense excitement. The club funds, the Fifth Form meeting, the selling of the motor-bike, were all driven out of his head.

He bent low over the handlebars. He was overhauling the brougham rapidly, for he was travelling like the wind.

"Can I do it?" he gasped. "Oh, can I do it?"

He never thought about the dire peril of the undertaking. Yet it might mean death for him.

Faster he went. And yard by yard he overtook the tearing brougham. He was immediately behind it. With splendid judgment he swerved to one side.

He was alongside now, riding with fluttering hair and panting breath. He caught a glimpse of a terrified face, then he was past.

The horse was galloping along within a yard of him. He touched the shaft, and wobbled dangerously.

And now he was neck and neck with the animal. It was a terrifying race. Horse and motor-cycle rushed along.

Ahead, now only a hundred yards distant, was the dreadful corner.

Blundell knew that he must act at once.

With a sudden resolve, insane though it seemed, he released his hold of the handlebars. He was within a foot of the horse's bridle.

Next second he had the reins in his hand.

He leapt upwards, caring nothing what happened to the motor-bike. By a miracle his feet did not become entangled, and he was dragged along in mid air, hanging like grim death to the reins.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER. The Reward of Valour!

CRASH!

Blundell hardly heard the awful smash as his motor-cycle rolled to the ground, and was caught beneath the brougham.

The vehicle pitched and lumbered. Underneath it the motor-bike had become jammed, and it was dragged along, a shattered and worthless wreck.

Blundell hung on to the reins, and the horse seemed to realise that its mad escapade was over.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 317.

FOR NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE MISSING CHINEE!"

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PENNY.

It slowed down, and Blundell was able to run beside it, and drag backwards with all his strength.

Although he did not know it, his motor-bike was the prime cause of the sudden slackening of speed. It was firmly fixed under the brougham, being dragged along and rendered more and more of a wreck every second.

But it acted like a brake, and a very powerful brake. The brougham no longer ran freely down the hill; the horse had to drag it forcibly, and that made a wonderful difference.

Slower and slower, until Blundell was walking. He tugged at the reins violently, and the horse came to a standstill, quivering from head to foot, and streaming with perspiration.

Its breath came in great hollow pants, and it was utterly spent.

Ten yards ahead was the sharp corner. But for Blundell's wonderful spurt on the motor-cycle, disaster would have been certain. Undoubtedly, the Fifth Form captain had saved the brougham's occupant from a violent death.

He staggered back, and fell against the hedge. His clothing was torn, his face wet with cold perspiration. And blood was on his hands, caused by the chafing of the reins.

"Thank goodness!" muttered Blundell. "I've done the trick—the giddy thing's saved!"

He recovered rapidly. Now that the danger was over he felt a little faint, but he was very soon himself.

And the first thing he set eyes on was his motor-cycle—or, rather, the remains of it.

The wheels were twisted and bent out of all recognition; the petrol-tank was gaping open, the engine was twisted out of place, and the cylinder showed a fatal crack; the handlebars were missing altogether.

The motor-bike was nothing but scrap iron. To repair it would be an impossibility. Its total worth could be nothing but a few shillings. Even the tyres were torn and useless.

"Great Scott!" muttered Blundell.

The full truth dawned upon him, and he looked at the wreck in horror. His last chance was gone. Where would he be able to get the eight pounds?

He could not sell the machine—and there was no other way in which he could raise money.

He was done!

It would mean the sack from Greyfriars.

Blundell's eyes roved from the motor-bike to the brougham. Then he saw a movement inside the carriage, and pulled himself together. He stepped across to the door and opened it.

Inside was a white-headed old gentleman. He was lying back against the cushions, breathing hard and mopping his brow.

"Upon my soul!" he gasped. "Upon my soul!"

"Are you hurt, sir?" asked Blundell anxiously.

The old gentleman turned and started.

"Hurt?" he ejaculated. "Bless my life, no!"

He stared at Blundell, then waved his hand.

"Help me out," he said. "The horse might take fright again. Upon my soul, what an experience! What a ride!"

Blundell helped the old chap into the road. He gazed at the horse, then eyed the corner and the brick walls.

"H'm!" he muttered. "Not much chance there! By gad, no! If the horse had tried to turn that corner we should have run into the wall. Upon my soul, I should have been killed!"

"Perhaps not killed, sir—"

"I tell you, I should have been killed!" snapped the old gentleman testily. "I know! And, by gad, look at your motor-bicycle. Wretched things—detestable things!"

"Yes, sir," said Blundell, rather taken aback.

"It's utterly ruined, young man!"

"So I—I see, sir."

The old gentleman eyed Blundell for a moment, then a twinkle entered his eyes. He looked at the Fifth-Former with admiration and pride.

"Give me your hand, sir!" he ordered.

"My—my hand?" gasped Blundell, startled at the old gentleman's abrupt manner of speaking. "Y—yes, sir!"

The old chap took Blundell's hand and shook it heartily.

Then he patted him on the shoulder.

"I've seen some brave things done in my time, my lad," he said; "but I've never witnessed a braver action than yours. It was splendid! It was wonderful!"

"Oh, sir!"

"It was wonderful, I tell you!"

"I—only did the right thing, sir!" muttered Blundell, turning red. "It was nothing!"

"Don't dare to contradict me, boy!" thundered the old gentleman. "I say it was the bravest thing I've ever seen. To ride up on that beastly motor-cycle, and jump for the horse while going at full gallop—why, bless my life, it was the act of a hero!"

"I—I didn't think of anything, sir," explained Blundell. "I simply rushed after the brougham, knowing it would mean a fearful smash at the corner, and tried to stop it in time."

"And you succeeded—you succeeded marvellously!" said the old gentleman. "You saved my life, young man. But, by the look of things, your machine has suffered!"

"Ye-es, a little, sir."

"A little! Don't be absurd, boy—the confounded machine is utterly wrecked! It can never be ridden again. You'll have to walk home; that's all there is about it!"

Blundell nodded dismally, and with aching anxiety.

"How did it happen, sir?"

"A piece of paper, my boy—a wretched piece of paper!" said the old fellow, glaring at Blundell. "It was the wind. We were going along smoothly when a gust of wind blew my coachman's hat off. He got off, and ran back. And while he was behind I'm hanged if a great sheet of newspaper didn't blow across the road. The horse shied, and the paper lifted up and drove on to its legs. That did it! Away we went at full gallop!"

"But the coachman, sir?"

"The coachman was left behind. He could do nothing," said the old gentleman. "Things always happen that way. If Thomas had been on his box he could have steadied the horse. But he wasn't there, and I couldn't do anything, being packed away inside. The horse simply had its head, and the faster it ran the more frightened it became."

He laid his hand on Blundell's arm.

"You risked your life to save mine, my boy," he said, altering his tone of voice until it was soft. "It was a noble effort. In performing your brave action you saved my life and saved my brougham. But your own machine is a wreck."

"I know," said Blundell, in a low voice.

"I feel like rewarding you," went on the old gentleman, "but your looks tell me that you would be offended. It is reward enough to know that you have proved yourself to be a hero."

"Yes, sir," said Blundell dully.

"Nevertheless, you have ruined your motor-bicycle, and I must certainly be allowed to compensate you for the damage."

And the old chap brought out a fat pocket-book, and fingered a roll of crisp banknotes. Blundell regarded him blankly for a moment, then his eyes gleamed, and he uttered a little gasp of relief.

"Oh, sir, do you mean it?"

"Do I mean it, boy? Of course I mean it!" snapped the other. "Now, how much did you pay for that machine?"

"Eighteen pounds, sir, two days ago."

"Eighteen pounds! Preposterous!"

"But I did, sir!"

"I do not doubt you, young man, but such a sum is preposterous!" scoffed the old gentleman angrily. "Utterly ridiculous!"

And he glared at Blundell.

"Eighteen pounds for a motor-bicycle!" he repeated. "Pish, my boy! Tosh! My nephew paid eighty guineas for his. My name is Mr. Wellford, let me tell you. I do not believe the motor-cycle cost a farthing under thirty pounds!"

"But—but—"

"Do not argue! Thirty pounds, I say!"

Blundell felt his heart give a leap. "Thirty pounds! It was too good to be true! He could not accept such a sum. It would be dishonest. But the old gentleman was a curious customer to deal with."

"No, sir," said Blundell eagerly; "eighteen—"

"How dare you bandy words with me!" roared Mr. Wellford. "I say the machine cost thirty pounds! I am going to give you thirty-five! The extra five will compensate you for the inconvenience of losing your machine, and will pay for the doctor."

"The doctor!" gasped Blundell.

"Certainly! Your hands are wounded!"

Blundell looked at his hands. They were only grazed. Then Mr. Wellford thrust a bundle of banknotes into his palm.

"But—"

"Not another word!"

"Oh, thank you, sir!" gasped Blundell joyfully. "It's splendid of you! I—I don't know what to say!"

The old gentleman regarded Blundell with a twinkle. Then he gazed up the hill. A figure was hurrying down, and behind came a motor-car.

"Ah, here is Thomas!" said Mr. Wellford.

Thomas came up, panting. Blundell hardly heard what was said. He was in a whirl. He knew that the motor-car stopped, and the occupant got out. Then Blundell found himself helping to extricate the wrecked motor-cycle. It was placed on top of the brougham.

"I am going to take it with me," said Mr. Wellford. "I

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 317.

shall keep it as a memento of your wonderful action, my lad. Tell me your name."

"It's Blundell, sir, and I belong to the Fifth Form at Greyfriars."

"Ah, yes, Greyfriars—a fine college!"

"Then you will want to get to Courtfield in order to take the train?" asked the occupant of the motor-car.

"Yes."

"Jump in, then. I'm going to Courtfield."

"Splendid!" exclaimed Mr. Wellford heartily. "Well, good-bye, my boy, and thank you from the bottom of my heart. You saved my life to-day at the risk of your own. It was wonderful!"

Blundell shook hands again, and two minutes later found himself being whirled through the dusk towards Courtfield. He told the car-owner what had happened, and the car-owner informed him that Mr. Wellford was one of the richest men in the district.

They arrived at Courtfield, and Blundell caught a train at once.

He got a compartment to himself, and stared unseeing out of the window as the train steamed towards Friardale.

At last he was alone; at last he could think.

Thirty-five pounds!

It was wonderful!

All his troubles were over. He could pay the fund money, he could pay Lord Mauleverer, and he would still have plenty left. Blundell could hardly realise his good fortune.

But he had earned the money, his brave action was one deserving of the highest praise.

In Friardale he cashed two five-pound notes, and then hastened to Greyfriars. He would arrive quite half an hour before the committee meeting of the Fifth Form.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Snoop is Sorry!

BILLY BUNTER felt indignant.

It was past tea-time, and Bunter had had scarcely anything to eat. That morning he had applied to Blundell for a further sum of "hush-money," but Blundell had refused to give Bunter another farthing.

And the Owl of the Remove was feeling indignant about it. All the afternoon he had said nothing, for he thought that there might be still another hope of getting money out of Blundell. But Blundell had not turned up, and Bunter was hungry.

His hunger made him angry, and he decided to show up the scapegrace of the Fifth. For, in Bunter's opinion, Blundell was a very wicked boy indeed.

Bunter rolled into the common-room. Nearly all the Remove were there, discussing the football match of the afternoon.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Buzz off, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Nugent, I've come to tell you something!" protested Billy Bunter. "It's something important!"

"Concerning a postal-order?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Nunno! It's about Blundell," said Bunter, blinking through his glasses. "Something jolly rotten!"

Harry Wharton frowned.

"We don't want any sneaking, you fat worm!" he said sharply.

"It ain't sneaking!" gasped Bunter. "I happened to find out something—"

"By placing your ear to a keyhole, I suppose?" asked Johnny Bull contemptuously.

"No," roared Bunter truthfully. "I never do rotten things like that. I—I do know, so there! How did Blundell buy his motor-bike?"

"With tin, I expect!"

"I mean, where did he get the money?"

"What's the good of asking silly riddles?" said Bulstrode warmly. "Clear out, Bunter!"

"I sha'n't!" shouted Bunter. "Blundell borrowed twelve quid from Mauly and eight quid from the Fifth Form Club funds!"

"Rot!"

"Piffle!"

"It's true!" roared Bunter. "And I think that Blundell ought to be sacked! Nice chap, ain't he? Fancy being trusted with the funds of the Form, and then using the money to buy a motor-bike!"

"How do you know this?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"I—I found it out!"

"By listening to somebody's conversation?"

"I won't tell you!" howled Bunter.

Several juniors made a rush at the Owl of the Remove, and he hopped outside the door and slammed it. The Removites didn't follow him.

Lord Mauleverer was not in the common-room, so knew nothing of Bunter's revelation.

"It's one of Bunter's lies!" said Nugent.

"Of course."

"It seems peculiar, though," remarked Bulstrode. "I don't see why Bunter should invent such a thing. We ought to speak to somebody about it."

"It would be serious if Blundell had used the Fifth Club funds," said Bob Cherry. "Suppose we go and ask old Coker if he knows anything about it?"

"Yes, it would be as well," said Harry Wharton. "Bunter will only exaggerate the thing if we don't. Then the Fifth might get into a panic. You know what asses they are!"

So Harry Wharton & Co. left the Common-room, and went to the Fifth Form passage. Several other Removites followed behind out of curiosity, Snoop amongst them.

Harry Wharton knocked at Coker's door.

"Come in!" shouted Coker.

Harry Wharton & Co. went in, and Coker glared.

"What the dickens is the meaning of this?" he demanded.

"What do all you kids want?"

"We've just heard something from Bunter," said Harry Wharton. "He says that Blundell has pinched the Fifth Club funds!"

Coker stared.

"Rot!" he exclaimed. "Bunter's a liar!"

"We know that, but he gets hold of the truth sometimes, especially when the truth isn't pleasant," answered Wharton. Coker looked serious.

"Well, we shall soon know if it's truth or lies," he said. "The Fifth Form meeting will be held in the Form-room in a quarter of an hour. Blundell has to fork out the money then, and if he hasn't got it there'll be trouble!"

"Rather!" said Potter and Greene.

"Is Blundell in his study?" asked Coker.

"I don't know," said Harry.

"Well, we'll see."

And Coker rose to his feet, and left the room. A few moments later he entered Blundell's study, the Removites following him.

Blundell was there, looking unusually cheerful. He had had a wash, and looked spruce and tidy. He looked up in surprise as the crowd entered.

"What's this—an invasion?" he asked.

Coker hesitated.

"Ahem! These young fatheads say—"

"We don't say anything," interrupted Bob Cherry. "It was Bunter who said it. We don't believe it ourselves."

Blundell understood, and smiled.

"Well?" he asked.

"Bunter's been saying that you—er—you used the club funds for that motor-bike," said Coker, looking an ass. "It's rot, isn't it?"

"Of course it's rot!" laughed Blundell. "The funds amount to ten pounds odd, don't they?"

"Yes."

"Well, here they are," said Blundell, opening the cash-box, and displaying a little pile of gold. "Satisfied?"

Coker grinned sheepishly.

"Of course," he said. Then he turned to the juniors wrathfully. "You young fatheads!" he shouted. "What the dickens do you mean by making mischief?"

"M-making mischief!" gasped Nugent. "It was Bunter!"

"Yes, and we'll Bunter him!" growled Harry Wharton.

Blundell looked out into the passage. Then a frown came over his smiling face. He had caught sight of Snoop, and he had been thinking about Snoop when Coker entered.

Blundell rose, rushed outside, and collared Snoop before he could escape.

"Here, what's the giddy game?" howled Snoop.

The Removites looked on interestedly.

"I want a word with you, youngster," said Blundell grimly. "Before these Remove kids, too!"

"Let go!" roared Snoop, in alarm.

"Not yet. I believe you're the chap who altered that one pound into a hundred pounds," said Blundell. "Own up if you did!"

"I didn't!"

"Don't tell lies—"

"I don't know anything about it!" bellowed Snoop, shaking with fright. "I took the letter off the postman. Oh, I—I mean I—I—"

Blundell looked grim.

"So you took the letter off the postman, eh?" he said.

"I think that's enough, Snoop."

"Rather!" put in Bob Cherry quickly. "Of course it was Snoop. He's been chuckling and laughing more than anybody, and he seemed mighty pleased with himself long before the cheque came!"

"He knew all about it!" said Nugent.

"I didn't!" roared Snoop. "Let go, you rotters!"

"But why did he do it?" asked Harry Wharton.

"I think I know," replied Blundell. "That same after-"

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noon I caught him playing a rotten trick on a village kid, and I gave him a thorough laming for it. He did it for revenge, I suppose!"

Bob Cherry set his lips.

"The evidence is concluded!" he said grimly. "The prisoner is proved guilty. Snoop, you howling rotter, did you do it?"

"No!"

"Then we'll bump you until you say you did," said Wharton cheerfully. "Don't worry, Blundell, old man. We'll attend to this worm!"

"I'll leave him in your hands," said Blundell.

"If—if you let me off, I'll confess," blubbered Snoop, gazing round him frantically.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "You have confessed now!"

"And we're not going to let you off!" said Nugent darkly. "I vote we give him a frog's-march round the Close, and then send him to Coventry until next Wednesday!"

"Carried unanimously!" said Bob Cherry. "Let's get him outside, and give him a few bumps to be going on with."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The bumpfulness will be terrific!"

Snoop was yanked outside, and Coker and Blundell were left alone.

"I'll be in the Form-room in a few minutes," said Blundell cheerfully.

"Good!" said Coker, and he left.

Blundell sat looking into the fire, and on his face was a smile of content. At last his worries were over.

And from outside a considerable uproar arose, and the strongest voice distinguishable was Snoop's. He was being treated to the first part of his punishment. And presently Billy Bunter's howl was added to the din.

"All on account of me," murmured Blundell. "Well, they brought it on themselves. The whole thing was caused through Snoop's contemptible trick."

He rustled some banknotes in his pocket.

"Well, I oughtn't to grumble," he thought. "I haven't come out badly, after all. I can pay Mauly, and I shall still have enough to treat the Fifth to a decent feed."

He got up, and picked up the cash-box.

"But it's been a rotten time," he murmured. "By George, I shouldn't like to go through it again. Thank goodness I've got this money safe and sound!"

And as Blundell looked at the club funds he made a mental vow that as long as he was captain of the Fifth he would never touch another penny which was not his own property.

He had been taught his lesson thoroughly. This time he had come out of his trouble with flying colours. But Fortune might not be so considerate the next time. Next time he might be forced—

Blundell laughed, and passed out of the study.

There would be no next time.

THE END.

Another magnificent long, complete School Tale Next Monday, entitled—

"THE MISSING CHINEE!"

By FRANK RICHARDS.

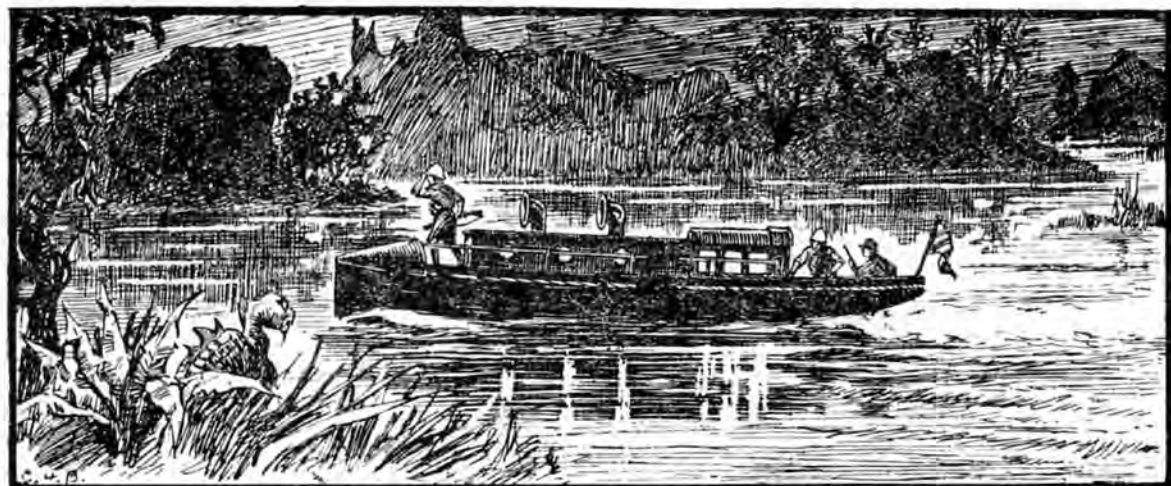
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THE BLUE ORCHID!



Magnificent Story of Ferrers Lord, Ching-Lung & Co. By **SIDNEY DREW.**

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Familiar Friends in an Unfamiliar Place—The Philomel—Whither Bound?

Thomas Prout, Esq., his bald head crowned with an enormous mushroom-shaped Panama hat, reclined on a deck-chair beneath the green awning of the trim paddle-steamer. She was only a little craft, and evidently new. Her paint was of the freshest and brightest, her decks shone like snow, and her brasswork and lights gleamed and twinkled in the sunshine with a dazzling sheen.

Seated beside Mr. Prout was his friend and comrade, the ship's carpenter, known to all and sundry as "Joe." "Sawdust," or "Chips." Joe had a paint-pot beside him, and a variety of brushes in his hands. He was artistically painting the name of the little vessel on a lifebelt, and numerous mosquitos appeared to be taking a deep interest in the work. On the tiny bridge, a gentleman attired only in a pair of shockingly ragged knickerbockers, an equally ragged shirt, and a palm-leaf sun-hat with sundry rents, manipulated the wheel and smoked vile cigarettes.

Ahead, around, and astern lay a wilderness of choppy yellow water. A deeper coloured smear away to the north appeared to suggest that there was land in that direction; but, though the sun was bright and unpleasantly hot overhead, there was a dull haze on the water that would have deceived even the skilled eye of a practised sailor. Prout occasionally moistened his lips at a brown jug, which he pushed forward to Joe after each operation, and Joe pledged him with a wink and a contented smack as he imbibed the refreshing fluid.

"It reminds me, by honey," said Prout, in a deep rumbling voice, as he cast his eye forward, "of sailin' in a paper boat wi' pictures painted on it. I feel as if I ought to crawl on my 'ands and knees for fear o' busting in the silly deck. And when I'm below, by honey, I darsent corf for the life o' me. I'm frightened o' blowin' a 'ole slap through 'er matchwood ribs. Fancy you and me, Joey, sailin' on a blessed painted orange-box, wi' a kettle for a b'iler and a wheel on each side."

Joe grinned as he gazed upon his handiwork. Very neatly and cunningly he had painted the name "Philomel." He held the lifebelt up for Prout's inspection.

"It's neat and ship-shape, Chips," said Prout; "but it's a mighty rum sort of a name for this 'ere egg-box. And what do it mean, by honey? Do it mean anything at all?"

"I axed Mr. Rupert, and he tolled me it meant nightingale. Greek for it, or some lingo," explained the artist.

"And now the nightingale's singin'," grinned Prout, as the whistle uttered a piercing scream, and the boat altered her course. A decrepit old wind-jammer dropped past, the crew waving their caps and cheering. Prout blew them a few loving kisses and sank back into his chair.

"I've been in craft drew by coal, in craft drew by petrol,

and in craft drew by sails, and also electricity," he said; "but, by honey, this is the first time I was ever on a boat drew by bricks!"

Prout referred to the patent fuel. He was a deep-sea sailor, and had an unspeakable contempt for the little Philomel. Anything with paddles he despised. They reminded him of trips to Southend and Margate. He solaced himself with another pull at the jug and the swift slaughter of a mosquito that was taking liberties with his nose.

The expanse of yellow water over which the vessel churned was the throat of the mighty Amazon. Neither of the men knew why they were there, nor did they dream of asking. They had left the Lord of the Deep, their millionaire employer's submarine vessel, two days before, to embark on the Philomel. Possibly Ferrers Lord only contemplated a little pleasure trip up the vastest river in the world. Possibly it would be a matter of months. In any case, it was all the same to Prout and Joe. Had Ferrers Lord embarked on a voyage to Venus they would have followed without a question or a murmur.

Suddenly a chubby face decorated with goatee beard and a halo of closely-cropped red hair, appeared in view, and two bare arms were rested on the deck.

"Can yez kape warm, is ut?" inquired the owner of the arms, in a ripe rich brogue. "Phwat's in the jug?"

"Hatosphere only," answered Joe, turning the jug upside down, "and a faint smell of lager beer."

Barry O'Rooney brought the rest of his anatomy into view. He was not a tall man, but his breadth of chest and the wonderful muscular development of his arms showed enormous strength. His little eyes twinkled with honesty and good humour.

"Till me phwat that is, bedad," he said, pointing to the half-caste at the wheel, "and Oi'll pension yez off for loife, Tommy. Is ut a scarecrow, or is ut a blackbeetle wid trousers on? Spake!"

"I give it up, by honey!" growled Prout.

"Ut towld me ut's name was Pedro," said Barry solemnly. "He doesn't wear boots bekase they hoide the beauty of his iligant fate. Oi axed him whin he used soap last, and then the tears stharrted in his clear blue oyes. He said his mother washed him whin a baby and thin a toiger ate her, so he hasn't washed since. Wasn't ut sad? Faith, ut was too much for the toiger to digest, so they buried 'im in the same grave, wid the follerin' inscription on the marble toombstone:

"The coffin was a stroiped wan.

And hairy all outside;

Ut wouldn't be a coffin now

Av ut kadt'n gone and doid."

"Oi forget who composed the epitaph," added Barry, scratching his nose; "but Oi knew they opened the tomb and shoved him in as well for doin' ut. Phwat a delightful pinky-gallery mustard-and-ham-sandwich colour the wather

It reminds me of the tint of Joe's orbs when he's thinkin' there's sausages for breakfast."

Joe dipped a brush into the paint-pot warningly.

"Whist!" grinned Barry. "The boat ain't big enough for a scrap, my beautiful bhoys. Yez know Oi lav yez from the leather soles of your forty-nine boots to the wooden crown of your swate fat head. Pace, pace!"

Barry plunged a pail overboard on the end of a rope, dragged it in full of turgid water, and disappeared below. For her size and power the Philomel was very fast. The lower reaches of the Amazon are frequently swept by devastating storms quite as terrible as those met with at sea. Floating logs and huge natural rafts swept down from the pathless and sunless forests are the chief dangers to navigation. Often they float so low in the water that vessels crash into them blindly, however keen the look-out. A good chart and care can save a vessel from rocks and shoals, but only quickness of eye, quickness of hand, and a kind of premonition of danger ahead which seems inborn among some of the native pilots can elude these floating perils of the mighty river, these wandering death-traps of the Amazon.

Joe tied the lifebelt in its place, and departed to his hot little galley; for, in addition to his other manifold duties, he was chief cook and bottlewasher in general. Prout generously volunteered to peel the potatoes, and followed him down. Like most river craft, the Philomel was all upper works and no keel. In a storm she could not have lived half an hour.

Prout looked in at the perspiring engineer and at the machinery.

"By honey," he remarked contemptuously, "I've seed better engines than them built out o' the works of an old grandfather's clock, an empty termarter can, and a box of tinfoils!"

He ducked in time to avoid an oily rag that was flung at him and passed on.

"What's the matter wi' you, souse me?"

Ben Maddock, bo's'n of the Lord of the Deep, was the speaker. Prout grasped his horny hand and pressed it fervently.

"Ben," he said, with tears in his voice, "I congratulate you and so does Joe. By honey, we congratulate you from the bottom of our hearts! If ever a man deserved promotion and got it, it's you."

"'Ere, what promotion, souse me?" asked Maddock, who was somewhat of a slow thinker. "I ain't heard."

"Not 'eard! Not about bein' promoted from bo's'n of a rotten boat like the Lord of the Deep to this first-class diamond-studded battleship! Oh, don't look at me like that, by honey!"

And then, snatching an excellent and newly-lighted cigar from the bo's'n's lips, Prout flattened the Panama hat down over that astonished gentleman's eyes and passed on. Maddock restored his headgear to its original shape, and smiled. Then he repaired to Prout's locker for another of the same cigars, for he liked them.

The little saloon, decorated in pale green and white, looked deliciously cool. There had been no foolish attempt at luxury, although two of the most wealthy men of the age were on board the vessel. The floor was carpetless and highly polished; there was not even a cushion or a tablecloth. Where insects and ants swarm in countless millions, draping and upholstering would be utter folly. Two electric fans were spinning noiselessly, and a pleasant draught came in through the open windows. There was a good deal of noise, and a good deal of vibration, but these are inseparable from all small craft driven by steam power.

Had any stranger entered, he would have stopped in amazement. Prince Ching-Lung of Kwai-hal, liege lord for life and death over forty million human beings, was perched on a cane-seated chair, with his slippered feet on the table. In his right hand he held a fan, and between his lips he held a cigarette. Now and then the cigarette went spinning into the air, but, as if magnetised by the fan, it always returned.

Behind Ching-Lung was a large bath, composed of papier-mache, with overhanging flaps to keep the contents from spilling, should the vessel roll. There were many gallons of cold water in the bath, but there was more than water. A stout person, with a flat, happy face, jet-black hair, and large naked feet, slumbered there and snored. He was Gan-Waga, the immortal Eskimo. On his pyjama-clad bosom rested a piece of rapidly-melting ice. Ching-Lung's chair spun round on one leg, and his Imperial Highness looked down at the Eskimo.

"Eskimotor," he said, "awake! The grub is coming."

Two eyes opened, jet black and shining. Gan-Waga squeezed the water out of his hair and smiled.

"Yo' say grubs, Chingy?"

"I said grub, Ganus," said Ching-Lung, "but without the hess. And look hither, my sweet pet! We're going to have no slops down here. You've got to take your tank on deck, and sleep there. Like a good, kind boy, I've got you some

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 317.

FOR NEXT MONDAY—

"THE MISSING CHINEE!"

EVERY MONDAY.

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ONE PENNY.

towels and a dry change. Just strip, mop, and dress, and then have that aquarium of yours shifted higher up. That's the ultimatum."

"What ultimatumtums, Chingy? Nots knows hims."

"I said nothing about tumtums. I'm not so vulgar," grinned Ching-Lung. "Just slide out of that sloppy sleeping suit. You've got to sleep upstairs, that's all. Go and ask Prout and Benjamin to help you to shift your furniture. You're making a mildewed nuisance of yourself. Catch hold of the towel."

Gan-Waga donned the dry pyjamas, but he did not look quite happy.

"Not tink I axes Prouts and Maddock, Chingy—not friendliness wid them. Carry hims mysellufs, Chingy."

"What have you been doing to them?"

"I spilled some treacle in deir boots, Chingy," grinned the Eskimo. "Dey notes founded out yet. Dey be alls bad 'nough nastiness whens dey do, hunk?"

"Somewhat, I expect," said Ching-Lung. "Gan, friend of my youth, you're a bit of an ass! Why did you put treacle in their best boots? Out of kindness, of course, thinking it would be good for their poor corns. Up to the present date on the almanack they haven't alighted on that sweet stuff. Quite so. Eskimoses—I put it to you as a pal and a brother—isn't this the time to ask 'em to help you? The early bird catches the caterpillar, and the hawk, who doesn't oversleep himself, scoops both. Go forthwith, and ask 'em nicely and kindly. Don't wait until they tumble on the treacle, for then—ah, both of us!—'twill be to-hoo late."

The Eskimo placed one fat finger on the side of his snub nose and winked.

"Ho, ho, ho, hoo!" he laughed. "Dat butterfuls snideas, Chingy. I hopes de treacles do deir corns goods, hunk? Couldn't eat no morer treacles, so I puts him in de boots. Ha, ha, ha, ho, he-ee!"

Although many of the escapades of Gan-Waga had made the lives of Maddock, Joe, Prout, and Barry O'Rooney little better than a hollow mockery, they were all fond of their stout comrade. He had no fixed duties, and he received no pay, for he never wanted any. He took his meals in the saloon, or in the fo'c's'le, just as the fit seized him. Frequently, when his appetite was strong, he lunched and supped twice, once aft and once forward. Even when the most private and important matters were being discussed by Ferra's Lord, the presence of Gan-Waga was never resented. Gan was a favoured mortal, and Gan knew it.

Ching-Lung hid a smile when Maddock and Prout entered, seized the bath, and whisked it away.

"Kind words are more than coronets," he mused. "He has spoken to them lovingly and sweetly. But why did he put treacle in their boots? Was it as a token of affection? No, I don't think. I don't a little bit."

Rupert Thurston, still yawning after his siesta, lounged in. "Great Scott!" he said, stretching himself. "It's hot, Ching."

"Just found it out, sonny?"

"No; I found that out long ago," said Thurston. "What I want to find out is, what it is all about."

"Haven't you been told?"

"Not a word, not a whisper," said Thurston. "I know nothing, simply because I haven't been told."

"Neither have I," said Ching-Lung; "and I'm not anxious. That great and dreadful question, 'Whither bound?' stares me in the face. This lovely penny steamer bumps beneath my feet. Let her bump. She's a beauty, isn't she? Whither bound? Here's the very man to tell you."

Ferra's Lord stood in the doorway, looking at his watch.

"Seize him," cried Ching-Lung, "and wrest the secret from his black, remorseless heart! Grab him, Rupert!"

A Grand, Extra Long Instalment of this Great Serial Story will be contained in THE MAGNET Library next Monday. Order early.

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FOR NEXT MONDAY:

"THE MISSING CHINEE!"

By FRANK RICHARDS.

In our next splendid long, complete tale of the juniors of Greyfriars, entitled as above, Harry Wharton & Co. are led a pretty dance by the two little Chinese juniors. Hop II, the minor of Wun Lung of the Remove, is discovered to be missing, and Wun Lung is almost beside himself with anxiety. He determines to find his minor, but the methods he employs in order to get on the track are peculiarly Chinese, and meet with the stern disapproval of Harry Wharton & Co., who thereupon appoint themselves a sort of committee to watch the little Celestial.

Wun Lung's cunning is too much for them, but Harry Wharton & Co. come in at the finish, when the trail that Wun Lung has so craftily ferreted out leads at last to the discovery of

"THE MISSING CHINEE!"

DON'T MISS THIS!

In the current issue of our grand little coloured companion paper, "Chuckles," Mr. Frank Richards is responsible for a most amusing complete school story of the chums of Greyfriars and their rivals of Courtfield Council School. The title of this splendid story is:

"IN ARMOUR CLAD!"

and I feel it my duty to point out to all my "Magnet" chums that they will be missing

SOMETHING REALLY GOOD

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REPLIES IN BRIEF.

R. A. (Leeds).—I am afraid I cannot undertake to value your coins. Write and ask Mr. G. C. Kent, 26A, The Lanes, Brighton.

Medical (Manchester).—You are a fair height for your age, but you can expect to grow a good deal in the next two years.

C. H. C. (Lancashire).—German soldiers have eagles on their helmets, the double-headed eagle being the national symbol of Germany.

S. Alder (Australia).—Many thanks for your most interesting letter.

J. Foster (Doncaster).—The back number you want is not obtainable from this office, but your newsagent may be able to get it for you.

"Antarctic."—I am afraid you are too young. Sir Ernest has so many applications that only those specially fitted for work in the Antarctic have a chance, so I can only advise you to give up the idea, which, however, does you every credit.

G. Bamber (Lanes).—Sorry, but the copies you want are out of print, and unobtainable from this office.

C. M. (Falmouth).—Yes. The Shell is the next Form above the Fourth Form.

Nora (Notts).—See reply to G. Bamber.

Pauline D. (Salop).—Thanks very much for your letter. Certainly, I am always pleased to reply through the post to readers who wish it.

J. A. C. (Yorkshire).—Thank you for your letter and for your help in getting new readers. I shall be pleased to see you if you care to look in at this office at any time.

PIGEONS.

As old almost as the history of man is that of the pigeon, that which the dog is to human beings among quadrupeds, such is the pigeon among winged fowl—man's companion and sharer of his home. Certainly of all the lower creation, the first mentioned by name in Holy Writ is that gentle member of the Columbarian genus—the "Dove." The companion of Noah in the Ark, the first released therefrom, the first to return thereto. From this short recital of the Dove's flight and return, I think I am not at all detracting from the distinction of the creature here referred to, by saying that the same was undoubtedly not a dove in the common acceptance of the term. The natural history of the Columbarian race teaches us that the dove—ring-dove—does not instinctively make its home in rocks or cavities, or in wooden structures; while the pigeon does choose such as the place of its habitation. I therefore venture to assert that the "homing" bird used by the Patriarch at the period of the deluge, was an ordinary chequered "dove-house pigeon," to this day met with in a condition of semi-domestication, wherever man pitches his abode. In the different climes of the world different species of the Columbarian races are found to be acclimatised. It is through the interbreeding between these aborigines of different parts of the world, brought together by human travel, that the very numerous separate kinds of "Fancy" pigeons have resulted; not as a learned writer has contended from any one separate individual or local stock found in any particular part of the world. The marvellous variation among pigeons as to breeds and kinds is due solely to "selection" or artificial culture of the race. It is an unquestionable fact that among all the breeds of feathered life not one exists which has been produced in so many distinct varieties both of plumage and structure as have been attained in pigeon culture.

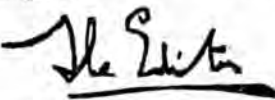
The Civil Rights of the Pigeon.

The pigeon race may be divided into two sections—Common Pigeons and Fancy Pigeons. The first consists of mongrels—that is, cross-bred birds, the result of no selection in their pairing and culture. These birds are met with wherever man has settled. They live on the waste and industry of humanity, roaming the fields, gardens and pastures, and pervading farmyards, streets and roads; they inhabit rocks and cliffs, old buildings and public structures—wherever they imagine themselves to be out of danger and risk.

These flocks are constantly recruited by strays that have lost their way, or have escaped from confinement in loft or aviary. Nearly in every town these sharers of man's habitation are to be found, and generally they are looked upon, both in Europe and Asia, as civil property, and anyone found injuring or stealing them is subject to prosecution. They become very tame through the protection thus afforded to them, and favourites are they with the local public, who not only take pleasure in watching them, but frequently minister to their food supply. It might be an interesting matter to formulate a catalogue of the several public "pigeonaries" thus maintained at the expense of the community.

Besides the common pigeons of this production, we have the "dove-house" pigeon, called by some the "duffer," by others the chequered and barred "Blue Rock." These, the aborigines of the greater part of Europe and portions of Asia, crossed with those of other climes, doubtless are the origin of all breeds of pigeons forming the second section of the genus known as "Fancy Pigeons."

(Another Grand Article on
Pigeons Next Week.)



MYSTERIA.

By SIDNEY DREW.

(Continued from Last Week.)

Ferrers Lord's Sentence.

"Of course, Harold," said Ferrers Lord, "there is a difficulty."

"You mean that pack of rascals?" said Rupert.

"Exactly! I would rid the world of a good deal of pernicious rubbish by blowing them up with Mysteria, but I am weak enough to have a conscience in some matters. Let us hear your views, Ching."

Ching-Lung took a lighted cigar from his pocket, swallowed it thoughtfully, and took another out of his right eye.

"Haven't got any views," he said. "I lost the lot when I lost my camera."

"Don't be an idiot," said Thurston. "Talk sense."

"What about?"

"Faber & Company."

"Oh, I don't know," said Ching-Lung, dipping the glowing end of the cigar into a glass of whisky-and-soda, and bringing it out still alight. "If you blow up the show—er—what-ho, like so, well, up they go! They're bound to go up, it strikes me. If you don't blow up the show, what-ho, etc., well, there you are. Anything else?"

"Lunatic!" said Rupert Thurston. "For goodness' sake, Ching, let's have something sensible for once!"

"Not for once, daddy," grinned Ching-Lung. "For a shilling, if you like, but not for once. I can't sell my valuable knowledge at that price. In fact, I don't know the coin. What do you want? I don't think you know yourselves. The thing is as straight to me as a ruler. Either don't blow up Red Nob & Co. or the island, or blow up the island and not Red Nob & Co., or blow up Red Nob & Co. and not the island, or blow up the island and Red Nob & Co. There you are. It's as clear as tar."

The millionaire clasped his hands over his knee, and leaned back in his chair.

"What shall we do with them, that is the point," he said.

"They are confessed blackbirds, and deserve to be heavily punished. They have come out a very bad second best in all their attacks on us, and so I am quite willing to give them a free pardon on such counts."

"You think they'll make a graceful surrender, then?"

"Of course, Rupert. What else can they do? We shall see their frantic signals the moment we get clear weather. Then comes the difficulty. In any event the island is doomed, whether we use dynamite or not. We must take the precious rascals on board. The simplest plan would be to hand them over to the authorities of the nearest port. That, I confess, is the proper thing to do, but it has one disadvantage."

"It's wonderful how nice it is to be naughty, isn't it?" remarked Ching-Lung, as he lighted a match and blew it out again. The match immediately burst into flame once more, and, after gazing at it sadly, the Prince of Kwai-hal put it in his pocket. "And why and wherefore?" he continued.

"Why can't you be good? Why can't you bundle Red Nob and his darlings into the limbs of the law? I know. Why not? Oh, to be sure!"

Ching-Lung winked, brought the match, still burning, from his pocket, and stuck it behind his left ear.

"Trouble," said Hal Honour.

"And delay, Harold," said Ferrers Lord. "We should be detained for the trial. While admitting that a long spell in gaol might do our friends some good, I do not want to be mixed up in it. I had thought of putting them ashore on the Cinnabar Island with provisions and plenty of anti-fever medicines; but that would be rather cruel. I shall make them do a little pearing."

"Where?"

They looked at him in surprise. They had not forgotten the two wretched creatures he had taken from the deadly pearl-swamps. Ferrers Lord laughed.

"Not there," he said. "That would be worse than the Cinnabar place, so do not look so horrified." He rose, and, taking a bundle of charts from the table, selected one and sorted them out. "I know a snug little place and a very healthy one, but it is terribly quiet. It will be several miles out of our way, and I have an appointment in London on a certain date. As I never miss an appointment, we shall have to hurry."

"And the men—do you mean to maroon them?"

"Yes; for six months, Ching," said the millionaire.

Gan-Waga Makes Some Toffee.

"That settles their little lot, then, for good," said Ching-Lung. "M'yes, you work for nothing, and keep yourself. I'm sorry to tell you that I find your conversation slow, and

your company worse. I shall fly to livelier scenes of mirth and jollity. I bid thee farewell, kind sirs. Alas, poor Red Nob! They've settled your little hash!"

"Good riddance!" said Thurston. "I'm glad you're going, Ching."

"So am I! You're a prosy, boring, wearying gang of ancient fossils! Forsooth, I— Just so. I am vamoosed!"

Ching-Lung looked in and found Herr Schwartz sound asleep, watched by the faithful Joe.

"Better?"

"Going on fine, sir," answered Joe, in a whisper. "He'll be well in a week."

"Good man! Und den dere vill pe sossitches vor preakvasdt once more," said his Highness. "Dere vill pe bolonies, is ud? Poor old Dutchy! Ja, ja; in ein veek for preakvasdt dere vill sossitches pe, Choe. Dot vas goot. Dot vas splendit. Ve shall shoudt 'Hoch, hoch' vich vas der Sherman vor 'Hooray' is ud?"

The whole ship was abnormally quiet, as quiet as if all the crew had turned in. A harsh voice from the galley informed Ching-Lung that poor Jimson was dead, but it was only the voice of Prout's parrot that announced this lamentable news. As Ching-Lung had heard of the decease of Mr. Jimson before, he did not remain to ask for fuller particulars, but passed on to the swimming-bath.

"Hallo, Chingy! What you looks fo', Chingy, hunk?"

Gan-Waga was seated on the diving-board like some ancient wizard, stirring a pot. The pot rested on an old spirit lamp, and the blue flames licked round it.

"Careful you don't burn your whiskers, child," said Ching-Lung. "May I inquire what you are doing?"

"Makes butterfuls toffees, Chingy," gurgled the fat Eskimo. "It goods enough splendids, Chingy."

Ching-Lung mounted the steps to watch the operation.

"And how do you make that stuff, Wagtail?"

"I pinches de shug browners and de treacles, Chingy," grinned Gan-Waga.

"What do you mean by shug browners? Oh, I see—brown sugar! What else? What about butter?"

"Not find no butters, Chingy, so puts in tallow cangles," explained Gan proudly. "Him smells a treats, hunk! I makes de toffee loveful. Yo' smells him, Chingy. Good 'nough, hunk? Ho-heo-oh!"

The prince bent over the bubbling mass, and smiled.

"You're the full-sized champion of the earth at toffee-boiling," he said, "and you deserve a medal made of putty. But tell me, child, when this is done, what you intend to do with it? Are you going to varnish something, or is it only to use as birdlime? I want to know. Think me not inquisitive, but—"

"Eatses him, yo' sillinesses!" said Gan-Waga. "Yo' note tink I putses him on my hair, hunk, Chingy?"

Ching-Lung kissed him tenderly, and went down the steps.

"Good-bye, Eskimoses!" he said brokenly. "I'll plant a banana-tree on your grave. Eat that, and croak. Remember in the hour you turn your toes up that I warned you not to eat it. Have a slice of bread-and-prussic-acid instead. It will have the same effect, and be cheaper. I'm off to be measured for a black suit."

"Yo' only a sillinesses!" shouted Gan after him. "Bags yo' heads, Chingy!"

Gan-Waga fancied that he was getting on wonderfully. He sniffed up the mingled scent of tallow, treacle, and sugar that ascended, and his smile grew wider and wider.

To Gan-Waga that aroma was the essence of delight, and he stirred and stirred the sticky mass until the lamp went out with a pop and a splutter.

"He doned grandfuls!" grinned the Eskimo. "I leaves him to freezed nows. Oh, butterfuls, and good 'nough nices!"

By leaving the toffee to "freezed," Gan meant leaving it to set and turn hard.

He blew at the spoon, and tasted the mixture. Any starving tramp would have dropped dead at the taste, but it suited Gan. He rolled his eyes and patted himself. It was a masterpiece.

"Splendidness, loveful, grandsome, and butterful!" he grunted. "Oh, it was niceness, and I wishes him was freezed!"

The Eskimo held the saucepan in the salt water of the swimming-bath for some time, but that was too tedious a process.

The toffee, of course, cooled off, but it did not appear to get any harder.

Possibly Gan had not mixed the various ingredients in their proper proportions, or else he had not boiled the stuff long enough to make it set. Gan scratched his nose doubtfully.

"Too warmer!" he thought. "Asks ole Joe puts him on de ices."

Then Gan remembered that Joe might want to know where the sugar and treacle had come from, and such questions would be rather embarrassing.

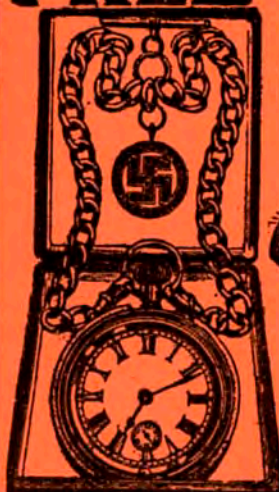
(To be concluded next week.)

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