

THE GREYFRIARS MINSTRELS!



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SPLENDID SCHOOL TALE



BILLY BUNTER'S BAND—A MUSICAL REHEARSAL!

(An Amusing Incident in the Splendid Long Complete School Tale in this number.)



For Next Monday :

"FUN IN THE FIFTH!"

By Frank Richards.

Under the above title, Mr. Richards has written a splendid long story. Miss Phyllis Howell, of Cliff House, has a brother, who arrives at Greyfriars under very novel circumstances. Harry Wharfton & Co. thoroughly appreciate the new-comer's qualities, and do their utmost to get the new junior into the ranks of the Remove. Unfortunately Dr. Locke decides otherwise, and Howell is put into the Fifth Form.

This leads Howell to make a solemn compact with the Removites.

"In less than a week I shall be sent down to the Remove!" thus says Howell, and

"FUN IN THE FIFTH!"

describes how Howell starts to work.

There is a laugh in every line, and you must not miss it on any account.

Now, I have some more good news for you. Next Monday's issue will also contain the opening chapters of our great new serial story.

The title is:

"THE SILENCE!"

A Strange Story of the Future.

By Edmund Burton.

I have read the complete story in manuscript form, and I must admit that I have never read a story that has interested me more.

I can only urge my boy and girl chums to read it and judge for themselves.

There is sure to be a big demand for

this grand issue, and all readers are strongly advised to order their copy of the MAGNET early. It is the only way of making certain.

THE TIE OF FRIENDSHIP.

I have received the following letter from Miss Ada Moon, 42, Hinton Road, Herne Hill, London, S.E. 24:—"Dear Editor,—I am now taking the liberty of writing to you, as I see other readers are doing. I like nothing better than to take your book and devour it until I nearly know it off by heart. My sister and I always used to have quarrels as to who should read it first, so we now buy two and have one each. May I trespass again and ask you to put my name in your correspondence column for a reader between 14 and 18, as I feel rather out of it when my girl companions show me the nice letters they receive through the aid of your column. I think it is a very good thing, as it draws the tie of friendship nearer."

FROM THE TRANSVAAL.

W.F. Dietzsch, P. O. Box, 22, Pietersburg, Transvaal, South Africa, sends me a cheery line about the MAGNET:—"I think," he writes, "there is no paper as popular as the MAGNET. At school we have fights over it nearly every day. I like the serial very much. Also the Editor's Chat I appreciate very much, especially the description of London, etc. It's topside. I assure you I'll do my utmost to spread your paper. Would you kindly get me correspondents in any part of the world?"

THE DUMPS.

Two little articles have been cut out of Chat and sent to me. At first I thought the Birmingham reader who paid me this courtesy was displeased about something. Not at all. This is what he says:—"I read these two columns, 'Being Something Else,' and 'The Dreamer' over several times, why, I don't know, only this, it shows how well you must understand nature and its habits and faults." Thanks! I hope my correspondent will soon be such a long way ahead of his troubles that they will be lost to sight in the dim, dim distance, and not even to memory dear!

FROM SIX TO SIXTEEN.

John R. Bates was six when he started reading the Companion Papers. Ten years have rolled on since then. The letter I have received comes from British Columbia, and the writer tells me no other school stories are so realistic as those in the MAGNET and "Gem." Now listen to this bit: "Victoria is a city of perpetual sunshine, a fairy city situated on Vancouver Island. Thousands of tourists come here to admire the beautiful hotels and gardens." And, what is more, I should like to go over and bask a bit myself, but my duties in London—where the sunshine is not perpetual—do not allow me to!

Your Editor

OFF FOR THE HOLIDAYS.



Passenger: "Come on, Jack! Let's get out and pick some flowers."

Porter: "Put your head in! There ain't no flowers 'ere!"

Passenger: "That's all right! I've got a packet of seeds in my pocket!"

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BAD FORM.



Teacher: "Now, boys, you must never hit anybody who is smaller than yourselves."

Tommy: "But, teacher, you hit me the other day, and ain't I smaller than you?"

THOUGHTFUL LADDIE.



Ma: "Charlie, have you eaten all your sweets without thinking of your sister?"

Charlie: "Oh, no, ma! I was thinking of her the whole time. I was afraid she would come in before I had finished them!"



THE GREYFRIARS MINSTRELS!

A Magnificent, New, Long Complete
Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.
at Greyfriars School.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Maulveverer has Money to Burn!

"O H, gad, I don't know this hand-writing, you know!"

Lord Herbert Maulveverer, of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, made the remark. He had taken a letter down from the rack, and looked at it, and then stroked his chin, and looked again.

But even now the writing on the envelope did not seem to be familiar. He was sure he had never seen it before.

Maulveverer regarded it curiously, wondering. It did not seem to occur to him that he could discover more about the letter by opening it.

"Oh, gad, you know! I wonder who this is from? I don't know the fellow, anyway—at all events, I don't know his fist, you know!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Maulve! What are you grumbling about?" asked Bob Cherry cheerfully, as he came along the passage.

"I was not grumbling, my dear fellow," replied Maulveverer languidly. "I was only wondering who the letter is from. I don't know the hand-writing."

Bob Cherry glanced at the envelope. It was addressed to "Lord Herbert Maulveverer, Greyfriars School, Friarside, Kent," in a big, sprawling hand, and it had quite a commercial look about it.

"Why not open it, and have a look inside, you dummy?" suggested Bob Cherry cheerfully.

"Begad, that's a good idea!"

And Maulveverer slit the envelope, and took out the letter within. Bob Cherry waited, looking at him.

"Oh gad!"

"Well, any news?" demanded Bob Cherry. "Is it a fiver from another member of the bloated aristocracy?"

"Really, my dear fellow!"

"Is it from Viscount Cashbox or Lord Moneybags?"

"Don't be an ass, my dear fellow," replied Maulveverer. "I know who it is from now!"

"Oh! Let's have it, then!"

"It's from the Amalgamated Musical Instrument Company, Ltd.," said Lord Maulveverer, glancing at the heading on the sheet of notepaper. "It's about the brass band outfit."

Bob Cherry gave a start.

"Brass band outfit?"

"Yes, my dear fellow."

"They've written to you?"

"Yes, apparently." Lord Maulveverer readjusted his tie thoughtfully. "They've written to say that the staff has been sent by special passenger train. I must say I didn't expect them so soon."

Bob Cherry grinned.

Bob knew the uncertainties of the schoolboy earl. Maulve was one of the most erratic members of the Remove Form at Greyfriars. His funds were unlimited, and his purchases were usually regardless of expense. As a rule, though, Harry Wharton & Co., the chums of the Remove, kept a very close eye on their eccentric Form-fellow, and the saving of money to Lord Maulveverer, in consequence, was very considerable.

"Now, then, Maulve," said Bob Cherry, wagging a warning forefinger at the schoolboy earl, "what's the little game this time? Have you been throwing your filthy lucre overboard in handiuls, and not saying anything to your uncle about it?"

"Really, my dear fellow, I don't understand you!" replied Maulveverer. "I saw the announcement in the papers."

"Well?"

"And I sent them a cheque, and told them to send the blessed things along. They'll probably come in jolly useful in time."

"What on earth are you talking about, you howling dummy?" cried Bob Cherry. "What did you send for? What will come in useful?"

"The things I've sent for!"

"Fathead! What things?"

"The drums!"

"What?"

"And the trombones!"

"Explain, ass!"

"And the flutes."

Bob Cherry glared at the schoolboy earl.

"Will you explain, you silly jabber-wook?" he hooted.

"Well, really, my dear fellow," said Lord Maulveverer, with a yawn. "I don't know how much more explaining you want. I've told you there are drums and trombones and flutes."

"I know that, ass; but what next?"

"And cornets and cymbals, and all that sort of tommy-rot. It'll all help to make a row, you know—what?"

Bob Cherry spluttered.

"Who wants to get into a row?" he growled indignantly. "There's enough rows in class. Old Quelch sees to that!"

"I don't mean that sort of row," explained Lord Maulveverer. "I mean the row from the drums and the trombones and the flutes and the—"

"Oh, dry up, you burbling jabber-wook!" interrupted Bob Cherry excitedly. "If you don't jolly well explain, I'll—I'll jolly well spifficate you!"

Lord Maulveverer gazed languidly at the fighting-man of the Remove. He could read danger in the gleam in Bob Cherry's eyes, and he realised it would be wise to "explain" as his Form-fellow had put it.

"Don't get excited, my dear fellow," he pleaded. "There's nothing to get excited about!"

"Well, go on, ass!"

Lord Maulveverer gave a nervous sort of cough.

"Well, my dear fellow," he said, "I think they'll come in useful, you know. After all, life at Greyfriars is very quiet—what?"

Bob Cherry grinned.

"How can it be quiet with a raving lunatic wandering about the blessed school?" he said.

"Oh, really, my dear fellow, I don't think I should call you a raving lunatic," replied Maulveverer. "You certainly got excited; but you'll settle down one of these days, you know."

"Eh?"

Bob Cherry's face was a study. He stood and glared at the schoolboy earl, speechless.

"But we won't go into that now," continued Mauleverer. "After all, it's only a matter of opinion, and it's no use a fellow disparaging himself."

"What!" roared Bob Cherry. "I wasn't alluding to myself, you utter ass! I was thinking of you! You're the raving lunatic, if ever there was one. Now let's have the news! What about these blessed drums, and so forth? Are they coming here?"

"Yes, rather!"

"When are they coming?"

Lord Mauleverer glanced at the letter. "To-day, my dear fellow. This letter says to-morrow, but—"

"Well, you howling duffer, if it says to-morrow, probably it means to-morrow!"

"No, I think not, because it says to-morrow, Wednesday, and to-day's Wednesday; and, besides, the letter's dated yesterday, you know."

"Yes, I think they'll be here to-day," continued Lord Mauleverer. "I told the stationmaster to send them in a cab when they arrived at the station, so they may be here any minute now. This horse must have been in the rack since this morning. Blessed if I know how I speed it!"

"Well, you haven't explained yet," said Bob Cherry. "What's it all about? What's coming this afternoon—and why?"

"Really, Cherry, you're pretty dense today. Haven't I told you that they're coming and—"

"I know that!" interrupted Bob Cherry. "But what do you want all that rubbish for? Who wants a blessed garden? This place isn't a kindergarten."

"But it'll give the old show up," remonstrated Mauleverer. "A little music soothes the savage breast, you know."

"If you call banging a drum music, I don't!"

"But I've bought the whole band—what?"

"Pshaw!"

Bob Cherry gave an expressive whistle. "There's a very blessed instrument you can think of," continued Mauleverer. "They belonged to one of the regimental bands during the war, and the regiment has been disbanded now, and I've got 'em cheap."

"Oh."

"These people bought 'em from the War Office, you know, and then advertised them. Jolly good bargain! I only gave fifty for the lot!"

"What!" howled Bob Cherry. "Do you mean to say you've chucked away fifty blessed pounds for a rotten lot of musical instruments? Oh, my only Aunt Samolina, carry me home to die!"

"These people gave more than that for them."

"Oh, I don't think!" growled Bob Cherry. "Mauly! Mauly! You silly bumbling jobbercock. Fifty crisp Bradbury's for a rotten lot of band instruments! Oh, help!"

"We shall be able to get some fun out of them, my dear fellow."

"So will the masters!" cried Bob. "Oh, won't they enjoy the sound! They'll smash the lot before the day's out."

"Really, Cherry—"

"Oh, my hat! Fifty quid!"

"But—"

"What couldn't we have done with fifty quid?" growled Bob Cherry. "The chap will slaughter you for it, Mauly, you chump!"

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"But—"

"Oh, my hat, I must go and tell them the news!"

And Bob Cherry made for the Remove Form passage, followed more slowly by the schoolboy earl. Mauleverer was generosity itself; but his idea of spending money was not that of the chums of the Remove, and his latest extravagance was certainly going to cause much weeping and gnashing of teeth amongst the inhabitants of Greyfriars School.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Breaking the News!

"LATEST news!" shouted Bob Cherry.

He threw open the door of Study No. 1 in the Remove at Greyfriars, and shouted that about into the study, and the effect was electrical.

The chums of Study No. 1—Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent—were deeply occupied at that moment, as also were their guests—Johnny Bull, Hurree Janset Ram Singh, Mark Lindsey, and Tom Brown.

Harry Wharton was reading a letter. Frank Nugent was sharpening a pencil. Hurree Janset Ram Singh was lifting a glass of lemon squash to his lips, and Mark Lindsey was packing up some plates belonging to his camera. Tom Brown was giving him a little assistance.

The sudden irruption at the door made them all jump.

Mark Lindsey's packet of plates went to the floor with a crash, and smashed to pieces. Frank Nugent gave a yell as the penknife cut his finger instead of the pencil, and Hurree Singh gasped and choked with the lemon squash all over his face. Harry Wharton lowered the letter he was reading, and hunched. The others did not laugh—they yelled.

"You utter ass!"

"You bumbling jobbercock!"

"Ha, ha, ha," roared Bob Cherry.

"Did I startle you? Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh!" gasped Mark Lindsey, the Lancashire lad. "All my plates gone! I gave two bob for those plates! All wasted! You idiot, Bob!"

"What about my finger?" roared Frank Nugent, holding it up to view.

"I might have cut it off!"

"What about my respected shirtfront and my face?" gurgled Hurree Singh.

"The lemon squashfulness is all over me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You utter first-class chump—"

"I'm sorry! I really am! I didn't mean to startle you!"

"You open a door suddenly, and roar into a study like—like a buffalo, and you don't mean to startle anybody!" shrieked Frank Nugent.

"Here, lend a hand! Bump him!"

"Steady!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"It's all right!"

"Is it? Bump him!"

The chums of Study No. 1 and their guests hardly needed a second bidding.

They grasped Bob Cherry, and bumped him with hearty goodwill.

The fighting-men of the Remove struggled, but he struggled in vain in the grasp of five pairs of hands.

He rolled over, and bumped again and again, and when the avengers let him go, he sat on the rug and gasped, with his collar hanging by a single stud, and his face dusty and red, and his hair like a mop.

"That's that!" pointed Frank Nugent.

"I feel better!"

"The betterfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"You—you chumps!" gasped Bob Cherry. "I put this blessed collar on clean about an hour ago!"

"Bob, ha, ha! It doesn't look like a collar now!"

Bob Cherry staggered to his feet.

"Look here—"

"We're looking! Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly chumps! Nice state I'm in!"

"Well, you shouldn't bounce into a respectable study like that!" said Frank Nugent.

"Why don't you come into a room less like a mad bull!"

"I—I've got some news!" said Bob Cherry indignantly. "News that's absolutely near the breaking-point."

"You jolly nearly got broken up just now."

"I've come to tell you fellows all about it—"

"What did you yell out like that for, then?"

"Well, I suppose a chap's entitled to yell when he's got some news, isn't he?"

Demanded Bob Cherry aggressively. "Look here, I've got some news for you chaps—"

"Every blessed plate smashed—"

"Oh, shut up, Mark! Sweep up that broken glass, and pay attention to me!"

"Rats!"

"The betterfulness is terrific!" agreed Hurree Singh.

Bob Cherry grimaced.

"I—I've said I'm sorry about those blessed plates," he said, "so you can let the matter drop and listen to my news. Mauly's done it! Absolutely done it!"

"Eh?"

"Blown fifty quid!"

"What?"

"Simply chucked it away, as though he isn't got any pals in the school!"

"What do you mean, Bob?" said Harry Wharton seriously.

"That's the news. Mauly's sent a rotten, fifth-rate firm in London a cheque for fifty golden quidlets, and didn't say a blessed word to a soul!"

"My hat!"

"Isn't it the limit?"

"But—"

"Sent it to the Amalgamated Musical Instrument Company, Limited," continued Bob Cherry breathlessly. "And he didn't even have the decency to ask a single soul for advice."

"But why did he send the fifty pounds, Bob?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Surely there must be some sort of reason. Mauly's an awful ass with his money; but nobody would write out a cheque for that amount just for fun!"

"He's bought a blessed band!"

"What?"

"A brass band," explained Bob Cherry.

"Drums and flutes and goodness knows what!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"The silly chump! What's he wasted his money like that for?"

"It beats me!" muttered Bob Cherry.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is!"

The door opened and Lord Mauleverer strolled leisurely into the little study.

"Hallo, dear boys!" yawned Mauleverer. "What's the meeting about?"

"You, you chump!"

Lord Mauleverer started.

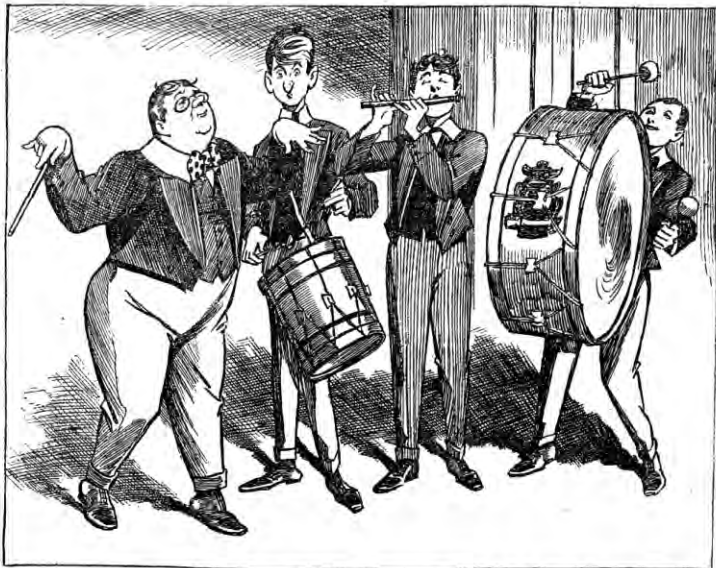
"Come and sit down, Mauly," said Harry Wharton. "We want this little business settled up. Bob's not very loud. Now, take a pew."

His lordship sank into an armchair and surveyed the anxious Removees.

"Well," growled Harry Wharton, after a pause, "we're waiting!"

"Oh, gad, are you just going to have a feed?"

"No, you ass, we're not! We're waiting for you to explain. Bob says you've



Billy Bunter made a strange hissing noise through his fat lips, and brought his baton down with a sudden jerk. "Sssssh! Steady with the drums!" he grunted. "This is the mysterious part where the hero trips on the scene!" (See Chapter 8.)

chucked away fifty pounds. When you're chucking money away you ought to remember your hard-up pals in the Remote. The thing is, can you get this fifty pounds back?"

"Oh, gad, no! It would be an awful fog to go up to London. Even if I went I don't suppose they'd hand it back. No, no, my dear fellow, I can't possibly do that."

"Why not?"

"Well, you see, I've bought the things now. They'll be here any time. We shall be able to get any amount of fun out of 'em!"

"What things? What fun?"

"The musical instruments," explained his lordship. "There's all sorts of things—drums, bassoons, cornets, flutes, cymbals, and all those kind of instruments. It's all serene, dear boys. It's a complete outfit."

"You awful ass!"

"They told me it was a first-class regimental band, y'know."

"The first-classfulness of the honourable band was terrific!" remarked the dusky Nabob of Bhosapur.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And do you mean to tell us that you've bought this lot without even asking the Head?" said Harry Wharton incredulously, when the laughter had subsided.

"Yuez, rather, dear boy!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Fancy the silly chump wasting his money like that," said Bob Cherry. "The blessed things will be absolutely useless. You won't get anything for them when you try to sell them again."

"I shan't sell them, my dear fellow!" growled Lord Mauleverer.

"I don't suppose you will, Mauly," laughed Frank Nugent. "I can see quite a decent pile of old iron arising out of this."

"What!"

"Wait until the prefects have jumped on them and the masters and the other fellows."

"Oh gad!"

"Do you think they'll let you kick up a shindy with a brass band without any retaliation?"

"But—"

"Of course, they'll smash the lot—unless we stop 'em! No, I can see you've chucked fifty pounds away, Mauly, and we might jolly well bump you for being a first-class chump."

"Half a minute," said Harry Wharton; "we might get something out of it, after all!"

"What do you mean, Harry, old bean?"

"Well, since Mauly's been such an ass as to buy them, ~~some~~ might be able to wangle something."

"Go round Earlfield with a barrow and hawk the blessed things as old iron!" suggested Bob Cherry.

"No; better than that!" laughed Harry Wharton. "As captain of the Remote I will be organiser in chief."

"Organiser of what?"

"Let's raise a band," said Harry Wharton. "After all, it'll be a pity to turn down Mauly's extravagant taste. When we get a band going we might be able to raise the wind a bit. People pay quite a lot to listen to a band."

"That's not a bad notion, Harry."

"We could call ourselves the Greyfriars Minstrels, or something like that, and give a public show."

"Mix the band up with a bit of singing and acting!"

"Yes, that's the wheeze!"

"Good idea," said Bob Cherry, with enthusiasm. "You're not such an ass as I thought you were, Mauly. When are these blessed things due to arrive?"

"They're coming to-day, my dear fellow!"

"Good!" cried Frank Nugent. "We had better wait for them to arrive before we fix up the minstrels. We shall have to see how they get round first of all. Have you got a list of the instruments, Mauly?"

"Oh, gad, I had one, my dear fellow, but I've mislaid it somewhere. It doesn't matter, they'll be here soon."

"Have you ever heard of such a duffer?" laughed Harry Wharton. "He sends a firm a cheque for fifty pounds,

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and he doesn't even know what he's bought."

Lord Mauleverer sank back in the arm-chair and gave a deep yawn.

"I know there are a good many things, my dear fellow," he drawled.

"I should hope there were," growled Bob Cherry. "Fifty quid goes a long way even in these hard times."

"Rather! Hallo, what's this?"

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Something for Mauly!

TAP! Tap!

There was a timid rat-tat on the study door, and Harry Wharton bade the caller to enter.

"Hallo, hallo!" cried Bob Cherry. "Here's Bunter! Run away, Porpoise; you're not wanted."

William George Bunter, the fat junior of Greyfriars, stood in the doorway and blinked angrily through his big spectacles.

"Really, Cherry," he began, "I—"

"Run away!"

"I say, Wharton—"

"Sorry, Bunter; but you're not wanted."

"I say—"

Bob Cherry walked across the study and picked up a cricket-bat lying in a corner.

"I'll give you thirty seconds to scoot, Bunter," he said.

"But I want you fellows to listen to me—"

"Rats!"

"I want to explain—"

"Boh!"

"It's very important—"

"Rubbish!"

"Shut up, Bunter! Run away and play!"

"For the last time, will you listen, or shall I have to—to insist upon my rights?"

There was no reply to that remark. The chums of the Remove did not often have the pleasure of listening to Bunter insisting upon his rights.

Billy Bunter still stood in the doorway, his fat face red with annoyance, and his round eyes gleaming behind his big spectacles.

Harry Wharton & Co. stared at him and grinned.

They were accustomed to all sorts of things from Bunter. He was an incorrigible borrower; he was an incurable romancer. He was several varieties of a worm, as Bob Cherry had expressed it. But when Billy Bunter talked about his rights, it was just as well to listen to him and see what it was he had to say.

"Well, hurry up and say what you've got to say, then, bunk!" laughed Harry Wharton. "We haven't got any room for porpoises in this study."

"I—I'm looking for somebody."

"Whom, say?"

Billy Bunter blinked around the crowded study.

"Ah, there you are, Mauly, old man!" he said. "I'm looking for you, dear old chap!"

Lord Mauleverer sat up in his chair and regarded the fat Removeite dubiously.

"What's the bizney, Bunter?"

"Well, old man, I don't like to discuss it with you in front of these—these fellows here."

"Oh, gad!"

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"Can you come outside, Mauly, old chap?"

Lord Mauleverer gave a yawn.

"I can," he answered.

"Thanks, old man."

"But I'm not going to!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter glared angrily at the chums of the Remove as they laughed merrily.

"I don't think you quite understand me, Mauly, old man," remonstrated the fat junior. "It's important, and I do not want to discuss it in front of these fellows."

"Go ahead, my dear fellow," replied his lordship. "You needn't worry about them."

"But I do!" grunted Billy Bunter. "And I flatly refuse to say anything."

Wharton, I must ask you to go outside for one minute whilst I speak to my friend Mauly."

"What?"

"And I want you to take the rest of the fellows as well."

"Rats!"

"Then, if Mauly refuses to come outside, and you cads refuse as well, I'm afraid I shall have to put you out one by one. Now are you going?"

"It's—it's real!" said Johnny Bull faintly. "It isn't a dream. That's Bunter talking—it's the fat porpoise himself."

"Who are you calling a porpoise, Bull?"

"You, Bunter!"

"Then you can stop talking like that. I've come here to speak to Mauly. As a friend of dear old Mauly, I'm going to keep up my end!"

"Which end?"

"Don't try to be funny, Bull. Look here, Wharton, I'm not going to stand any—"

Hurree Janwet Ram Singh caught up a big cushion and sent it spinning towards Bunter. The cushion caught the fat junior in the best-filled part of his waistcoat, and the Owl of the Remove staggered back to the door.

"Ow!" he gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What did you do that for, Inky, you rotter?"

"You told my esteemed and ludicrous chum that you were not going to stay standstill, so I was giving you a cushion thoroughly," replied the Nabob of Bhandipur in his purring voice and his beautiful English.

"Ow!" Bunter rubbed his waistcoat tenderly. "Ow! You beast! You're nearly winded me. Yow!"

"Go it!" laughed Bob Cherry. "It sounds like a locomotive letting off steam."

"I—I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, ring off," said Harry Wharton. "We're discussing something interesting."

"But I must tell old Mauly something."

"Well, what is it? Get it off your fat chest and then clear. We've had enough of you!"

"I refuse to say a word to Mauly whilst you fellows are here!" said Billy Bunter angrily. "If Mauly won't listen to me I refuse to give him the message, and there'll be an awful row, and the fellows will get more and more."

"The fire?"

"Yes," grunted Billy Bunter. "You don't think the blessed driver is going to sit out there all day for nothing, do you?"

"Hallo, hallo!" cried Bob Cherry.

"What's the fat duffer gassing about now? Come on, Bunter, out with it!"

"I want my share in the feed, then," said Bunter. "There's enough there for the whole blessed school."

"Ph!"

"Never seen such boxes," continued the fat junior. "Of course, you'll invite me, Mauly, old man?"

"By gad, who's Bunter mean?" drawled the schoolboy earl.

"Look here, Bunter," said Bob Cherry, picking up a heavy book from the study table. "I don't know what you're talking about. If you've been sent up here with a message, you'd better say what it is. If you've got anything important to say to Mauly you'd better work that off quickly as well. If it's nothing at all you can clear off. If you don't do either you'll get this where the chicken caught the axe."

"I want to tell Mauly something."

"Well, go ahead," said Bob threat-

eningly, raising the heavy volume in his right hand.

"I'll tell Mauly, but— Ow!"

The book whizzed across the study and caught the Owl of the Remove under his fat chin. Billy Bunter, with a wild shriek, went flying through the doorway and landed on the passage floor with a crash.

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

Bob Cherry dashed across to the door and shut it to with a bang, and the next instant he turned the key and Billy Bunter was successfully locked out.

"One for his nob!" laughed Frank Nugent. "I should think that'll about finish the fat fraud for the present."

"Yah! Cads!"

Billy Bunter's voice came floating through the keyhole.

"Go away, Bunter!"

"Yuh! Rotters!" howled Bunter. "If you let me in I'll scrag the lot of you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah! That cad, Mauleverer, can pay the blessed cabman before he goes to bed to-night!"

"What on earth does the fat dummy mean?" muttered Harry Wharton.

Bob Cherry suddenly leapt out of the chair he had only just fallen into.

"Oh, my hat!" he cried. "I know what the idiot means. Mauly's cab has arrived with the band outfit."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"And Bunter thinks the boxes are full of tummy, and wants to get into Mauly's good boxes."

The chums of the Remove leapt up.

"That's the idea!" laughed Harry Wharton. "Come on, Mauly, you slacker. We'll all go down and lend you a hand to open the boxes."

"Oh, gad!" drawled his lordship. "I'll stay here, my dear fellow, and you can carry the boxes up."

"Come on! Just hark at that fat rascal at the keyhole!"

"Really, my dear fellow, I'd sooner wait here."

Harry Wharton caught Lord Mauleverer by his noble ear.

"Oh, let go, begad!"

"Are you coming down to settle up with the caddy?"

"Oh, no— Ow! Yes, my dear fellow!"

Harry Wharton grinned as Lord Mauleverer jumped up from the arm-chair and Bob Cherry took the lead and dashed out of the study.

Unfortunately for William George Bunter, Bob Cherry's exit was a little unexpected. Bunter was just preparing a parting shaft when the door was flung open, and Cherry dashed into the passage.

Crash!

With a wild shriek the Owl of the Remove caught Bob Cherry's knee full in the chest. He went down on to the hard, unsympathetic floor with a bang that shook the place.

"Ow! I'm killed!"



"Try to rob two poor women, would you!" shouted Mrs. Harris. "Oh, you young scallywag! I call it disgraceful! You a respectful schoolboy—and all!" "Ow! Leave me alone!" roared Billy Bunter. (See Chapter 7.)

"Sorry, Bunter, old man!" laughed Bob Cherry. "Come on, you fellows!" Harry Wharton & Co streamed out of the study and dashed past Bunter, as he wriggled and squirmed.

"Ow! I've broken my back. Yaroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

No sympathy was wasted on William George Bunter. As the last of the chums ran round the corner of the passage, the fat Remove sat up, and blinked angrily after them.

"Oh, you rotters!" he cried. "Yah!"

But Billy Bunter's anger was quite wasted upon the chums of the Remove, and by the time he had crawled to his feet Harry Wharton & Co. were clustered excitedly around the old cab, which was drawn up at the steps at the front entrance of the school.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Little Music in Study No. 1!

BANG, bang, bang!
Rata-tat-tat! Rata-tat-tat! Rata-tat-tat!

Zoomph, zoomph, zoomph! Harry Wharton looked amazed as he hurried along the Remove passage. He had heard the terrific din as he came upstairs, and he knew what it was, and whence it came.

Bang, bang, bang!

Zoomph, zoomph, zoomph!

"My only hat! Those idiots will have the whole blessed school here if they keep that up!" muttered the captain of the Remove, as he ran along to the door of Study No. 1, and turned the handle.

But the door was not opened. It was locked on the inside. Harry Wharton shook the handle and thumped on the panels.

But the noise he made was effectually drowned by that in the study.

Rata-tat-tat! Rata-tat-tat! Rata-tat-tat!

Bang, bang, bang!

Zoomph, zoomph, zoomph!

It was the kettle-drum and the big drum and the trombone. All three instruments were being played upon for all their worth. In the midst of the fearful din the voice of Bob Cherry could be heard:

"Keep it up!"

Harry Wharton kicked and rattled.

"Open the door!"

"Rata!" came back Bob Cherry's voice. "Can't stop! Sheer off!"

"It's I—Wharton!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Is that you, Harry?" Bob Cherry flung open the door. "Come in! Mind the packing cases! Why the dickens didn't you help to carry the blessed things up? Look the door after you, or we shall have a lot more asses coming in—ahem!—I mean, a lot of asses coming in! Go it, Bunter!"

"What on earth—"

"Keep it up!"

Zoomph, zoomph, zoomph!

Bang, bang, bang!

Rata-tat-tat! Rata-tat-tat! Rata-tat-tat!

Harry Wharton stopped up his ears, and gazed at the scene blankly. The inhabitants of the study seemed to be enjoying themselves immensely.

Billy Bunter had an enormous trombone, and was blowing and puffing away down the mouthpiece, regardless of the noise he was blaring forth. Peter Todd, who had joined the party, was banging with regular beats upon a snare drum. Johnny Bull was crashing unmercifully upon a big drum.

Lord Maclever was seated in the armchair, wheeled back into a corner out of the way, and, by way of adding to the din, he was flashing symbols.

Bang, bang!

Zoomph, zoomph, zoomph!

"Go it, Bunter! Keep it up! That's right, lanky, try your hand at the bassoon!"

The nabob had just unpacked a bassoon, and he put his lips to the mouthpiece, and blew hard, and a grin spread over his dusky features at the result.

"The keep-it-upfulness is terrific!" he exclaimed. "If my worthy chums could beat time a little more timefully, the advantages would be great!"

"You're out with that side-drum, Toddy!"

"Rats!" Mauly's out with the exclamation.

"I say, you fellows, you're both out!" said Billy Bunter, giving the trombone a rest for a moment, and blinking at the Removies through his big spectacles. "Better leave this band to me!"

"Better chuck it!" exclaimed Harry Wharton laughing. "What do you think the fellows in the next study will say about it?"

"That's all right! I saw Bulstrode and Hazeldean go out."

Quechly will be up here, if you don't shut up! You know he always jumps on us when we make a bit of extra row, and this is absolutely the limit!"

"That's all right," Bunter said he saw Quechly go out, too."

"Oh, I see!"

"While the cat's away," explained Bob Cherry, picking up a side-drum and banging away merrily, "the mice will play! Go it, Inky!"

"The goodness is great!"

The nabob blew into the bassoon. Crash, crash, crash! went Mauleverer's cymbals. Bang, bang, bang! on Johnny Bull's big drum. Zoomph, zoomph, zoomph! from Billy Bunter's trombones. Rata-tat-tat! Rata-tat-tat! went the side-drums.

The chums of the Remove were fairly letting themselves go, and the noise from Study No. 1 penetrated far beyond the Remove passage.

There was a furious kicking at the locked door.

"Stop that row!" roared the voice of Holover, the bully of the Remove.

"Bang, bang! Zoomph, zoomph!"

Bolover major went angrily on his way. Then there was a fresh rattle on the door, and Vernon-Smith's voice called out:

"You fellows gone off your rockers?"

"No!" yelled Bob Cherry. "That's all right!"

"You're only testing Mauly's instruments."

"Then put the soft pedal on, for goodness' sake!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Go it, Inky! Keep time!"

"The timefulness is terrific!"

Zoomph, zoomph, zoomph! Bang, bang, bang! Crash, crash, crash!

The door rattled again.

"Go away!" roared Bob Cherry.

"You're interrupting the music!"

"The music!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"Oh crumbs!"

But the applicant for admission kicked

and rattled again, and the twangy voice of Fisher T. Fish, the American junior, was heard through the keyhole.

"I guess you silly galsots will listen to what I've got to say about this lyeer noise!"

"Get away, Fishy!"

"You silly, lopedaid jays! I tell you that—"

"Ring off!"

"I guess I'll ramoose as soon as I tell you—"

"Buzz away! Buzz off! Go and eat cokes!"

And the musical Removites continued all the louder.

There was sharp knock on the door a few seconds later, and Bob Cherry, exasperated, ceased playing for a moment to give the knocker a piece of his mind.

"Will you go away?" he roared. "I know who you are, and I'll simply wipe up the floor with you if I come out!"

You utter ass, what do you want to come bothering for? Don't you want to listen to decent music? Sheer off, fathead!"

"Open the door!"

Bob Cherry jumped clear of the floor.

For the voice was not the voice of a junior of the Remove, and Bob Cherry's blood almost ran cold as he recognised the metallic tones of Mr. Quechly, the master of the Remove—his own Form-master!

"M-m-m-my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "I—I—I—said that to Quechly! Oh, my only silk topper!"

Mr. Quechly knocked at the door angrily.

"Open the door!"

Harry Wharton opened it. The Form-master strode in, his brows contracted in a dark and heavy frown.

The Removites stood dumbfounded. According to Billy Bunter's statement Mr. Quechly had gone out; but the information from the Owl of the Remove ought never to have been taken seriously. Mr. Quechly looked very angry, indeed.

His keen glance roved round the study. Bob Cherry still had the side-drum slung round him. Inky was still holding the trombone. Mauleverer was trying to conceal the cymbals, and Billy Bunter and Johnny Bull were endeavouring to twist themselves free of their cumbersome instruments.

The Owl of the Remove freed himself first, and he slid hastily into an armchair and closed his eyes, with an elaborate pretence of being asleep in the armchair. How he could expect Mr. Quechly to

believe that he had been asleep through such a din was a mystery; but Billy Bunter seldom thought very far.

"Well!" said Mr. Quechly.

"Well, sir," said Bob Cherry feebly, "I—I—I didn't know it was you, sir! I thought it was that silly ass Fish, sir."

"I presume you would not have spoken as you did had you known that it was I," said Mr. Quechly grimly. "I shall not allude to that. You were making a deafening noise in this study!"

We're—we're only—only testing the hand instruments, sir."

"Very necessary to test them, sir," said Johnny Bull.

"The testfulness was great, honoured sir!" murmured the nabob.

"And—and we thought you were out," ventured Bob Cherry.

Mr. Quechly smiled grimly.

"I can quite believe that, Cherry. But I cannot have you disturbing the whole school in this way. Now where did all these remarkable orchestral instruments come from?"

"They—they're ours, sir."

"I trust they are, since they are in your possession," said Mr. Quechly. "But to whom do they belong?"

"Mauleverer, sir!"

Mr. Quechly turned a gimlet eye on the schoolboy earl.

"Mauleverer," he said sternly, "you will get up out of that chair and explain to me how you obtained all these valuable instruments."

His lordship slowly rose from his chair.

"Well," said Mr. Quechly, "I am waiting."

Poor Mauly jumped.

"I—I thought them, sir!"

"You bought them, boy! Explain yourself."

"It—it was a bargain, sir," stammered Mauleverer, rather apprehensively. "I thought it would be a good idea for us to have them."

"And what for, pray?" said Mr. Quechly.

Lord Mauleverer remained silent.

"I suppose you bought these expensive instruments out of pure extravagance, and in order to make as much noise as you possibly could."

"Oh, no, sir! We wanted some music."

The Remove Form master smiled grimly.

"That noise you have been making strikes you as being musical, you are making a very great mistake," he said.

"If I hear such a disgraceful uproar again I shall confiscate every instrument. As it is you will each do me a hundred lines before classes to-morrow morning. That is all. Now, not another sound!"

And Mr. Quechly grimly quitted the study, leaving the silence of dismay behind him.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Mauleverer's Gift to Bunter!

PHEW! Bob Cherry gave an expressive whistle as Mr. Quechly's footsteps died away down the Remove Form passage.

"My hat!" he exclaimed at last, "that was a bit warm whilst it lasted, wasn't it?"

"Jolly deceitful of old Quechly not to take the things away!" remarked Johnny Bull.

"I should think it was," agreed Harry Wharton. "You are a howling duffer, Bob!"

"Me?"

"Yes, you dummy! What's the good of making a shindy like that. You jolly nearly spoil the whole show. You

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wouldn't listen to a chap when he tried to stop you."

Bob Cherry grinned. "Sorry, Harry, old man," he said. "I suppose I was a bit too anxious to see what the things were like. It's all Mauly's fault really."

"Oh gad!" drawled the schoolboy earl. "I was only beating time with the cymbals, y'know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "There's no sense in just kicking up a shindy! If we want to raise a decent show, we shall have to go for it properly."

"Hear! Hear!" "What we must do is to make up our minds to get across of Mauly's ill-spent money bag. We've often done some good acting in the past, and our shows have always been well attended. The reason for that is because we never do anything heavy and stodgy like the Sixth."

"Rather not!" said Frank Nugent. "Their's is always the same old piffle! The masters and seniors all go and see it out of politeness, and the lags in case they should be licked for not going."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Now we've got all these band instruments, we can give something decent and bright."

"It'll mean plenty of kudos for the Remove."

"The kindness will be terrific." "Our entertainments have always been jolly good in the past," continued Harry Wharton, warning to his subject. "Do you remember we once gave a show in a foreign language? That had never been done at Greyfriars."

"Oh, back-pedal, Harry, old bean!" said Bob Cherry. "What about the Greek play the seniors give every year?"

"A whole act from Sophocles and Euripides," said Johnny Bull.

"Yes, and enough to make Sophocles and Euripides turn in their graves," said Wharton. "I said entertainment! I suppose that the widest stretch of the imagination could not regard a Greek play by the seniors in the light of an entertainment!"

"Rather not!" "Therefore we can regard ourselves as the only individuals who have given what can properly be called an entertainment in a foreign tongue," said Harry Wharton. "It was a jolly big undertaking for juniors."

"And it was very entertaining," said Bob Cherry.

"Well, it is true that something went wrong, and we had to make it a comic instead of a tragic entertainment," admitted Harry Wharton.

"Hear, hear!" "I'm not thinking of giving that sort of show again. As I have said, we've got all these blessed instruments of Mauly's, and what we want is to give a show, so that we can get a bit of Mauly's money back!"

"Hear, hear!" "That point being settled," said Wharton. "We've got to discuss the matter and decide what sort of show we can give. I want to receive suggestions from you chaps."

"Well, then, I suggest a variety entertainment," said Bob Cherry.

"Rats! No music-hall business here for—"

"I mean an entertainment with varied items."

"Oh, I see!" "And as proposer and seconder of the idea, I vote myself manager of the company. I suppose you fellows all agree to that?"

"What!" "I will be responsible for the proper

running of the show. Now, just pass that sheet of paper over, Harry."

"Ass!" Bob Cherry glanced across the study at the captain of the Removes.

"Now, we don't want any rows," he said. "A manager's a manager, you know, and any disrespect by the members of the company will be reported to the management—that's me, you know."

"Dry up, Bob!" "Yes, for goodness' sake don't talk so much, Cherry," grunted Billy Bunter. "We can't hear ourselves speak when you're about the place."

"You fat chump!" "It's no good getting abusive. Now what you fellows had better do is to fix me up for the management of this show. I'm jolly musical, y'know, and that's the sort of man you want."

"Just hark at the fat porpoise!" "Just hark at the fat porpoise!" gaped Bob Cherry. "Haven't I just

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told you that I'm going to run the Greyfriars Minstrels."

"Of course, that's all rot, Bob, old chap!"

"What do you mean, Harry?"

"We can't have that, can we, Franky?"

Frank Nugent shook his head.

"I think, as the things belong to Mauly, it would be best to let him decide," laughed Nugent.

"That's the notion!" agreed Harry Wharton. "After all, Mauly bought the blessed instruments, and he ought to have the ruling vote. I know he'll vote for me."

"Well, he's not taking much interest in the bizzny at present, at any rate," laughed Johnny Bull. "I'm blessed if the slacker hasn't dozed off."

"Well, I'm bothered!" roared Bob Cherry. "Mauly, Mauly, Mauly, you ass!"

His lordship opened his eyes with a start.

"Oh! What's in it? What's happened?"

"Wako up, you blessed slacker!"

laughed Bob Cherry. "We want you to decide."

"Ph?" "Do you want that fat booby Bunter to run the minstrel band, or Wharton, or me, or Franky?"

Lord Mauleverer yawned, and nodded his head sleepily.

"Answer!" shouted Bob Cherry. "Is that supposed to mean 'Yes'?"

"Yes, rather, my dear fellow!" drawled Mauleverer. "Bunter can do it."

"What?" roared the Removites.

"Bunter can take over the beastly things," continued his lordship drowsily. "I've got sick of them already. After all, they do make a confounded noise, don't they?"

Harry Wharton & Co. gasped.

"He doesn't know what he's talking about!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "The boulder's asleep! Bunter can't have these things!"

Billy Bunter rolled out of the chair he was sitting on.

"That's all rot, Wharton!" he growled. "Mauly's said I can have them, and I'm jolly well going to hold him to his word!"

"Mauly, you chump!" cried Bob Cherry. "Come up out of that blessed chair!"

Yawn from Mauleverer.

"Come on, you slacker! Look alive! Out you get!"

"Leave me alone, my dear fellow! I'm tired!"

"I can't help that!" roared Bob Cherry. "Haven't you said that that idiot Bunter can have the band outfit?"

"Yass, rather, my dear fellow! Now, do leave me in peace for a few minutes."

"But Bunter can't have them!"

"Yes, let him have them!" drawled Mauleverer. "Then we can get a bit of peace. Tell him to take them away and play with them."

"Oh, my giddy aunt! Just hark at the chump!"

"Don't you start calling my pal Mauly those names, Cherry," said Bunter haughtily.

"Eh?"

"You're a jealous beast, Cherry, that's what you are! Now, since Mauly has voted that I am to run the show, I should like you fellows to realise that I'm the manager."

"You—you fat chump!"

Billy Bunter blinked angrily through his big spectacles.

"No cheek, Cherry! It will pay you to be reasonable if you want to stay in the Greyfriars Minstrels."

"Errrrrr!" went Bob Cherry.

"Now, Harry, old chap," continued Billy Bunter, turning to the captain of the Removes, "how the new manager has been fixed, what may I put you down for—a couple of songs, or a turn on one of the instruments?"

"What?"

"I suppose you'll do something? It ain't much good getting up a show if there's no support from the manager's own pals."

"Oo, crumbs! Just hark at the fat idiot!"

"You ought to hide your jealousy on these occasions. Mauly's been jolly decent to me, and you ought not to let it rankle."

"Mauly didn't know what he was talking about!" snapped Bob Cherry. "He was talking in his sleep. I tell you!"

"I don't think!" grunted Billy Bunter.

"Well, I'm not going to take any interest in the blessed show, if you're going to rule the roost!"

"Nor I," said Johnny Bull. "Let's get out, Bob! Come on!"

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The two chums left the study, and the door was shut with a bang.

"Well, I know Cherry was a jealous beast!" gasped Bunter. "But I think that takes the cake! Blessed if I know what Greyfriars is coming to!"

"You worm!" said Harry Wharton. "Come on, Franky!"

The two Removites left their own study, and Billy Bunter blinked after them in consternation.

"The voraciousness of the esteemed and luxurious Bunter is terrific," said Hurree Janssen. Ram Singh, turning to Peter Todd, "Shall we follow gofully our honoured chums?"

"I'm ready!" said Peter Todd, with a grin. "So-long, Bunter, you fat chump! You'd better give Mauleverer a little light music. His snoring wants drowning."

"But you cads aren't going!" stuttered the Owl of the Remove. "How can I run this blessed show without help?"

"If that's a conundrum, I give it up." "B-but—"

"Oh, come on, Inky! We'll let Bunter talk it over with Mauly."

"Don't—don't be a rotter, Todd!" howled Billy Bunter.

"Good-bye! Cheer-oh! Invite me to the show!"

And Peter Todd and Hurree Singh strolled out into the Remove Form passage.

Billy Bunter stood surveying the sleeping schoolboy earl. Lord Mauleverer was sleeping soundly now and was quite unconscious of the fact that the Owl of the Remove was gazing intently at him through his big spectacles.

"I'll—I'll wake him up," said Bunter, and he rolled across the study and shook Mauleverer by the shoulder. Mauly opened his eyes and blinked up at the Owl's red, shiny face.

"I say, Mauly—"

"Oh, groo!" mumbled his lordship. "Is that you, Bunter? Go away!"

"Really, Mauly, it's no good talking like that. I want to speak to you about the band things."

Lord Mauleverer sat up and rubbed his eyes and yawned portentously.

"Oh, I'd forgotten! Where's everybody?"

"They've gone," explained Bunter. "They didn't like it because you gave me all the band instruments."

"What's that, begad?"

Mauleverer sat up suddenly, and stared up into Billy Bunter's face.

"They're jealous beasts, you know, Mauly, old man, and when you said I could have the lot, Bob Cherry went off in a huff, and the other fellows followed him."

"Oh, gad! And did I really give you the things?"

"Of course you did, you ass!"

"I—don't remember it, my dear fellow; but if you say I did, I must have done. Of course, they're only lent, you know. We might want them back one day for a bit of fun."

"Ahem! Of course!" replied Billy Bunter. "I had better get the things shoved into No. 7. I'll get Alonzo and Dutton to lend me a hand."

"Very well, my dear fellow," said Mauleverer. "I'll just have a little snooze. Don't bang the door as you go out, begad!"

And Bunter obliged the schoolboy earl. The fat junior rolled as lightly as he could out of the study door, and rolled again towards Study No. 7, which he shared with Peter and Alonzo Todd and Tom Dutton, the deaf junior.

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THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Scheme!

BILLY BUNTER was wearing a thoughtful expression. He had transferred all the instruments into Study No. 7, and the things were carefully piled into a corner. One of the crates had not previously been opened, and the fat Remove had found therein numerous extra instruments, including an enormous 'cello.

Bunter sat and blinked at the pile of things in the corner. He was thinking matters out. Why the chums of the Remove should have refused to join forces with him was a mystery, only explicable on the ground of jealousy.

But Billy Bunter could be obstinate when he liked. He possessed, for the time being, anyway, all of Mauleverer's instruments, and he didn't see why he shouldn't go ahead with the Greyfriars Minstrels.

The fat junior's study-mates, Alonzo Todd and Tom Dutton, had helped him to carry the instruments from Study No. 1 to Study No. 7, and they had now sallied forth to rope in likely recruits for Bunter's scheme.

There was a sound of shuffling footsteps along the passage, and the next moment Bunter was roused from his reverie as Tom Dutton flung open the study door. The deaf junior was followed by Alonzo Todd and Hoskins.

"Hallo!" said Bunter gruffly. "Where are the rest of the fellows?"

"I am afraid this is all we could get," replied Alonzo Todd weakly. "I invited Bulover and Skinner, but they said they weren't having any."

"The rotters!"

"However, Hoskins has very kindly offered to join the meeting. He is very anxious to see the instruments Mauleverer has so kindly given you."

Claude Hoskins of the Shell ran his hand through his hair, and swept back the artistic curl which hung over his forehead. Hoskins carefully cultivated the curl because he thought it looked artistic.

LIGHTING-UP TIME FOR THIS WEEK.



JUNE.

14th Monday	- - -	9.46 p.m.
15th Tuesday	- - -	9.46 "
16th Wednesday	- - -	9.47 "
17th Thursday	- - -	9.47 "
18th Friday	- - -	9.48 "
19th Saturday	- - -	9.48 "
20th Sunday	- - -	9.48 "

He did all he could to live up to the name he had at Greyfriars, as the one and only musician the school could boast of.

Hoskins stared dreamily at the Owl of the Remove.

"I understand from Todd that you want to avail yourself of my services," he said. "I am quite willing to do this. I have several nice excellent composition ready; but, of course, I must first of all see what instruments you have available."

"But—"

"Now, I have just finished what, in my opinion, is the finest thing I have ever composed."

Bunter gave a grunt.

"I know what your blessed things are like: but—"

"It starts like this," continued Claude Hoskins, striking a dramatic attitude.

"Bang, bang, bang!"

"Oh, really, Hoskins, do dry up for a minute! If you call that music, I'm blessed if I do!"

"It's the arrival of spring," explained the amateur musician of Greyfriars. "The sun has risen, and the beautiful spring flowers are waving their heads in the breeze."

"Well, I've never heard flowers making a row like that."

"Of course you haven't. That is simply the music expressing the atmosphere."

"Sounds more like a thunderstorm!" said Billy Bunter. "Besides that, we don't want to decide on the music yet."

"Oh!"

"We want to arrange the composition of the band first of all. Now I've decided to be the conductor."

Claude Hoskins stared.

"Of course," continued Bunter, "I can lend a hand with the instruments every now and again. I'm rather partial to the trombone or the 'cello. I don't mind which as a matter of fact. The 'cello's quite easy, you know, and there's quite a decent one there."

Hoskins strolled across the study, and gazed at the pile of instruments standing in the corner. He gave a whistle of astonishment as he looked.

"My hat!" he exclaimed. "They're perfect! I've never seen such a collection. What are you going to play, Dutton?"

Tom Dutton, the deafest of the deaf, looked up.

"What's that?" he said, turning to Claude Hoskins.

"What are you going to play?"

"Me? I'm not going to pay anything!" he replied, looking rather surprised at the question.

"I didn't say 'pay.' I said 'play,'" explained Hoskins. "I should say that the instrument that would suit you best is the flute."

"You hadn't better try that, you idiot! If you want to shoot, you can shoot in the rifle-gallery."

Claude Hoskins nearly collapsed.

"Have you ever heard such an idiot?" he exclaimed. "I can tell you this much, Bunter, Dutton is not going to be any use in an orchestra."

"What's the good of going to shoot?" continued the deaf junior. "I understand we were going to talk over a scheme of Bunter's."

"I know that," said Claude Hoskins irritably. "If you would only keep your ears open you might be able to understand."

"Look here, you rotter! Don't you dare say that again!"

"W-what?"

"If you say that I'm understand there's going to be trouble!"



Billy Bunter persevered on the one string. He drew his bow across for the fiftieth time, and Hazeldene lost patience at last. He snatched up the big brass instrument and crept towards the unmusical Owl of the Remove. (See Chapter 7.)

"Oh, just hark at him!" gasped Hazeldene. "The idiot ain't safe, you know."

"Yes, for goodness' sake shut up, Dutton!" cried Billy Bunter. "We don't want any rows, or we sha'n't get on with the wheezers. Come and sit down!"

"Oh, so I'm a clown, am I?" "Sit down!" "I'm not, you fat lubber!" hooted Tom Dutton. "If you call me a clown fit—I'll jolly well go for you!" "Sit down!"

"Very well, take that!" Dutton's fist shot out, and caught Billy Bunter full in his fat chest. The Owl of the Remove sat down with a bump, and the little study shook.

"Ow!" gasped Billy Bunter. "Yaroooh!"

"Come on!" roared Tom Dutton, drawing aggressively around the fallen Bunter. "Get up, you fat worm, and I'll show you what a blessed clown can do!"

"Dooer, you idiot!" "Let him alone, my dear Dutton!" shouted Alonzo Todd into the deaf junior's ear. "You have been the victim of a misunderstanding."

"Owl! I've been the victim, you say?" roared Bunter.

"I can assure you that there hasn't been any misunderstanding," said Dutton. "If Bunter wishes to refer to

me as a clown, he will have to pay for his blessed cheek."

"He didn't say clown, my dear fellow!" shouted Alonzo. "He said 'Sit down!'"

Tom Dutton gave a smile. "Oh, is that what he said? I thought he called me a clown. Ha, ha, ha! That will teach him not to mumble his words."

Billy Bunter staggered to his feet, and collapsed into a chair, groaning.

"You beastly cad, Dutton!"

"Sorry, Bunter!" said the deaf junior. "If you would only speak up, a bit clearer we shouldn't have all this trouble. Why didn't you pronounce your words properly? I'm not deaf; only a little hard of hearing."

Billy Bunter glared at the grinning Dutton.

"Hard of hearing!" he spluttered. "I—I don't believe you would hear a blessed bomb exploding in the same room."

"I don't know what you're saying; but I dare say it's a lot of tommy rot! I'm blessed if I'm going to stop here with a silly ass like you! I'm off!"

"Here, don't go!" growled Billy Bunter, rolling out of his chair. "You don't want to leave us in the lurch."

"What? You're going to get a birch?" cried Dutton angrily. "You hadn't better try that on, you fat porpoise!"

"Oh, sing it out to him, Toddy! The silly ass doesn't understand plain English!"

Alonzo Todd drew Tom Dutton to his side, and bellowed into his ear.

"Bunter wants you to stay!" he roared. "He wants you to lend us a hand. Hoskins and I are in it."

"All right!" replied the deaf junior. "I don't mind lending a hand if I'm really required; but I don't want any rot, you know."

"That's all right, my dear fellow," said Alonzo reassuringly. "Take a seat, and let us sit down and talk the matter over."

Hoskins sat down on the edge of the study table, and played a few notes on the flute. It was a good flute, but the amateur musician of Greyfriars was not exactly a good player on the instrument, and the few notes he played made even Tom Dutton jump.

"Goodness me!" cried Todd. "What on earth have you done, Hoskins?"

"Done? Why, I'm jolly good on the flute. Listen to this!"

There was a regular stream of unmusical notes, and Bunter, Todd, and Tom Dutton gazed in amazement at the perpetrator.

"Here, steady!" said Bunter. "We'll leave this—the music for a bit, and get

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on with the other business. Shove that little down, Hoskins, old chap!"

"Half a minute!" I know a ripping bit out of a musical comedy. I'll just run over it, and I bet none of you guess what it's out of!"

The flutist blew into the instrument, and a strange melody of unmusical notes were emitted. The Removites waited patiently until the Shell fellow paused for breath.

"I—I don't think I'm very well up in musical comedy," said Bunter. "But I think that melody is out of 'The Girl in Pink' isn't it?"

"There, I knew you wouldn't guess," said Hoskins. "It's out of 'The Gaiety Girl' of course."

"Ah, that's it!" exclaimed Bunter. "I knew it was something with a girl in it. Now shove the thing down, Hoskins, old man, and let's go into this minstrel idea."

The amateur musician appeared to have satisfied his desire for musical comedy for the time being, and he placed the flute down, and pulled a chair up to the little table.

"Come along, Toddy," cried Bunter. "Pass the word to Dutton. I'm blessed if I can shout loud enough. I think we had better let Dutton have the big drum. That's about the only thing he'll know he's playing."

"Not much music in it, though," suggested Claude Hoskins. "Drums are useful things sometimes. But I've just composed a topping score, and there's not a single note for the drums."

"Ahent!" Billy Bunter gave a dry cough, but as the fat junior was anxious to retain the services of the amateur musician he very wisely refrained from arguing about the merits or demerits of the big drum.

"Well, what's the scheme, my dear Bunter?" said Alonzo Todd, after a pause. "I understand Wharton has dropped the idea of raising a band."

"Yes. Wharton's crowd are a bit frightened about it. Of course, they would only mess it up if they had anything to do with it. What it wants is a fellow of ability and personality."

"Of course," agreed Claude Hoskins. "Now, as I've got those qualities, and am recognised by everybody in the school as the best musical fellow, I—"

"All right, Hoskins, old man," interrupted Billy Bunter, "we will go into that later."

"Yes; but—"

"You see, Mauly has given me all these blessed instruments," continued the Owl of the Remove. "Of course, I can sell them, and get quite a decent bit out of it; but I want to get up a concert first, and sell them afterwards. I can make double the amount of cash then."

"I see!"

"Now, the Greysfriars Minstrels sounds all right. I shall give a de-centized concert, and charge for admission."

"How much?" asked Alonzo Todd.

"Well, what about a bob a thing?"

"I suppose you mean a shilling," said Alonzo politely. "I think that is too much. If you make it sixpence, you will be able to get all the fags to come."

"All right. We'll make it sixpence," agreed Bunter. "Now, what's the best day? We shall have to fix that, as I shall get tickets of admission printed, and all arrangements will have to be made."

"What about Saturday evening?" suggested Hoskins. "Saturday's a good day. Whereabouts will you hold it?"

Billy Bunter put on his thinking-cap.

"Well, I dare say old Locke would give us permission to hold it in the music-room," he said, after a few

moments. "But, on the other hand, if we hire the village hall in Friarale, we could let the public into it."

"What do we want the blessed public for?" exclaimed Hoskins. "I'll mean more money, wouldn't it, you ask?"

"Myes, I suppose it will."

"Then I think we will make it the village hall," said Bunter. "We will hold the rehearsals in the music-room. My hat, won't that cad Wharton be wild about it?"

"If it's a success," murmured Hoskins warningly. "If it's a failure they'll have the laugh against us."

"It's bound to be a success!" said Bunter. "Look here, I'll go down to Courtfield at once and get some tickets run off. That printer fellow is jolly smart, and he will give me a hundred whilst we wait. We can start selling them right away, then."

"Right-ho!"

"While I'm away you might ask the Head's permission for us to use the music-room to practise in, Toddy. You're pretty good at asking. Oh, by the way, what about the tickets? They'll only cost about five bob."

"Is that all?" said Hoskins.

"Well, say six bob," suggested Bunter. "If you let me have six bob now, I'll be able to pay you back when I return."

"What?"

"You see, I shall have a postal-order when I get back. I'm expecting a postal-order by this afternoon's post. It's from one of my titled relations, you know."

"Oh, I've heard that yarn before!" said Hoskins. "Your blessed postal-orders never turn up, you fat blunderer!"

"Oh, really, Hoskins, old man, I—"

"Go on, Bunter, run away, there's a good fellow!"

"But—"

"Get the printer to give you tick."

"But supposing he won't?" growled Bunter. "I don't want to fag all the way down to Courtfield for nothing."

"Then ask him for a dozen, first of all, and go out and sell them. That'll give you the six bob."

"Oh, really, Hoskins, I never thought of that!" said Bunter, putting on his cap.

"That's what I'll do. Don't let those cads get hold of the band instruments whilst I'm away!"

"That'll be all right. Toddy can look after them."

"Certainly I will, my dear fellow," said

Alonzo Todd pleasantly. "I would not allow anyone to touch them."

"You jolly well hadn't better, that's all!"

"Go on, Bunter!" cried Hoskins. "When you come back we'll have a rehearsal. I've got a ripping composition by me!"

And Billy Bunter set off on his mission to Courtfield.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Raising the Wind!

BILLY BUNTER stood outside the printer's shop, situated in the middle of the High Street, in Courtfield. The fat junior was looking quite worried.

"The rotter!" he muttered. "The absolute rotter!"

Bunter held a card up to within a couple of inches of his fat little nose, and read the few printed words.

"This sample ticket, price, seven shillings and sixpence per hundred. Two hundred copies, price, twelve shillings. Oh, the stingy rotter! Fancy not giving a chap tick! It's all that cad's fault! If Hoskins had lent me the money I would have been all right. Now I've had the beastly journey for nothing. Pahaw!"

And the indignant junior stamped his foot on the pavement in disgust.

"Paper's too expensive, is it?" muttered Bunter. "Can't do business excepting for cash down, can't he? Oh, the rotter! No wonder the blessed country is on the decline. There isn't any enterprise with these rotters nowadays."

Billy Bunter turned and glared at the printer's shop window as a parting shot, and then rolled along the High Street in the direction of home.

The Greysfriars junior had had his journey for nothing. The printer had listened to Bunter patiently. He quite understood the style of ticket required. He knew the size and shape well, but he could not supply them on credit alone. Printers' wages and the price of paper gave him such a small profit he could not think of it. Seven shillings and sixpence per one hundred or twelve shillings for two hundred. That was the terms, and he could not depart from his new method, which was cash down!

Oh, yes; he quite realised that Bunter wanted them at once. He was quite willing to supply them without any delay, so long as Bunter paid for them at once.

The old printer had listened to the junior's blatherings patiently; but he stood to his terms like a rock. Money down!

Billy Bunter left the shop properly fed up. The long walk along the dusty road had made him hot and tired. And all he had for his trouble was the printer's sample card. This price, seven shillings and sixpence per hundred!

Bunter was absolutely "fed" to the wide, and the prospect of a long and dusty walk back to Greysfriars quite appalled him.

"Not a blessed soul to buy a glass of ginger-pop!" he growled. "If only I had some money on me!"

He halted outside a confectioner's window, and blinked at the array of cakes and pastries which adorned the shelves. Doughnuts and meat-pies were there galore. But it was forbidden fruit to Billy Bunter. He could only stand and feast his greedy little eyes on the spectacle before him.

Bunter fondled the specimen card in his fat hand, and suddenly a seraphic smile spread over his features.



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"That's the wheeze!" he muttered to himself. "I'll—write it down."

He extracted, with some difficulty, a stump of pencil from his trousers pocket, and, placing the card on the shop window, he poised in a sprawling hand a few brief words on the blank side of the paste-board.

With a happier expression on his fat face he rolled along the High Street. Courtfield was practically deserted. It was about tea-time, and evidently the Courtfieldites were in their houses and shops partaking of the national beverage.

There were a few souls about, however, and only a few yards ahead of the Greyfriars junior hobbled two ladies of the charing variety.

Billy Bunter hastened his footsteps, and gained the side of the two ladies, who were chatting volubly to one another.

"Ahem! Excuse me, madam!" said Bunter, politely raising his cap.

"Wot's that, young man?"

"I—I—er—that is, could you tell me whether you are fond of music?"

"Wot?"

"Fond of music," repeated Bunter. "If—if you are I can put an evening's enjoyment in your way."

"Wot?"

Billy Bunter held out the printer's specimen card, carefully placing the trade terms on the underneath.

"Wot's the boy want, Mrs. 'Arris?" said the lady with the umbrella under her arm.

"Goodness me! I ain't the slightest!" replied Mrs. Harris.

"Road this!" remarked Bunter, holding the card up to Mrs. Harris.

"'Admit two persons to the Greyfriars Minstrel's Koncert on Saturday nite at Friardale Publick 'All, at six o'clock. Price, one shilling. Reserved."

Mrs. Harris read the announcement aloud.

"Wot's the gimme, young man?" she snapped.

"It's—it's not a game," said Bunter nervously. "I'm—I'm selling tickets for the concert, you know. We shall be pleased to see you both. That will be one shilling, please!"

"Wot?"

The two ladies glared at Billy Bunter ferociously.

"One bob! Here you are, madam, here's the ticket!"

"You young raskil!" roared the lady with the umbrella. "H't a good mind to lay into yer with this 'brella of mine."

"But—but—"

"Try to rob two poor women, would you!" shouted Mrs. Harris. "Oh, you young scallywag! I call it disgraceful! You a respectful schoolboy, and all!"

The other lady brought the umbrella down with a crash across Billy Bunter's shoulders.

"Ow!"

Thwack, thwack, thwack! "Ow!" roared Billy Bunter. "Ow! Leave me alone!"

The fat Removite staggered off the pavement, but the ladies were not finished yet. Mrs. Harris and her friend joined forces, and went for Bunter hammer and tongs. Squealing with pain, he struggled away at last, and he tore away down the High Street at the speed of an express train.

Bunter pulled up when he had gained the outskirts of the town, puffing and blowing for breath. His shoulders were feeling raw and stiff, and perspiration was rolling down his fat cheeks in a regular stream.

"Ow!" he gasped. "The beasts! Ow! My back! I believe it's broken!"

But Bunter recovered from the attack sooner than he expected. Visions of tea at Greyfriars urged him along the dusty road, and an hour later he rolled in at the gates of the school and tramped his weary way towards Study No. 7.

He staggered in at the doorway, and blinked anxiously round the room. But Alonzo Todd was not there. Nor was Dutton, nor Hoskins of the Shell.

"I suppose the beasts will be up for tea soon," mumbled Bunter. "I'll wait. Oh dear, my shoulder! Fancy that rotter Todd leaving the study door unlocked, with all those blessed instruments there! Looks as if Hoskins has been practising."

Billy Bunter rolled from the chair he had collapsed into, and turned over the leaves of a music sheet which someone had placed ready for use in a music-stand.

"H'm!" muttered the fat junior. "This evidently belongs to that ass Hoskins! 'The Chorister's Farewell!' Sounds a bit tragic."

Bunter blinked through his big spectacles at the medley of strange signs printed on the score.

"I wonder what the dickens all that rot means!" he mumbled. "I'll just try a note or two on the 'cello. May as well put in a bit of practice before those chaps come in to tea."

The violoncello was leaning against the study wall, where Bunter had stored it when he had transferred the instruments from Study No. 1. He raised it from the ground, and staggered with it across the study.

"Beastly cumbersome sort of thing!" he muttered. "The merchant who invented this blessed instrument must have been fond of carrying luggage about."

The fat junior dragged the 'cello between his legs, and sat down in front of the iron music-stand. He drew the bow clumsily across the strings of the instrument, and there was a harsh, throbbing noise.

"That's the wheeze!" murmured Billy Bunter. "Sounds ripping!"

He ran his fat fingers up and down the strings as he drew the bow backwards and forwards, and the strange noise that resulted made two juniors in the Remove Form passage outside stop suddenly.

"Oh, my giddy aunt! What's the awful noise, Hazel?"

Peter Hazeldene of the Remove turned and looked at Redwing, with whom he had been walking.

"Sounds funny. It comes from Bunter's study."

The two juniors gave a jump as the strange noise, swelling louder and louder, reverberated along the passage. "Shush!" whispered Hazeldene. "We must look into this."

He tip-toed towards the open door, and peeped in warily. He was barely able to suppress a gasp of astonishment. Billy Bunter's back was to the door, and the fat junior could be seen—and heard—clumsily drawing the bow across the strings of his enormous 'cello.

Hazeldene bobbed back, and whispered the information to Tom Redwing.

"Oh, my hat! Have you ever heard such a noise?"

Billy Bunter was persevering assiduously. His fat fingers ran up and down at ever-increasing speed, and the bow was drawn backwards and forwards as though he were trying to saw it right through the instrument.

It was Redwing's turn to look now. He peered round the doorway, and the next instant Hazeldene saw his chum disappear into the study.

"Oh, my hat!" muttered Hazeldene. "What's he up to?"

He crept silently in his Form-fellow's

footsteps, and the next moment he gave a suppressed chuckle. Tom Redwing had raised a trombone in his arms, and he handed it silently across to Hazeldene.

Meantime, Billy Bunter persevered with his efforts. One note in particular seemed to appeal to his musical mind, and he drew the bow across time after time. Redwing placed his hands over both his ears, and made a very expressive; but still the unconscious Bunter persevered on that one note.

Hazeldene lost patience at last. He raised the big brass instrument over his head, and crept cautiously towards the unmusical Owl of the Remove.

The next moment the sound of the 'cello was drowned by the yell from Bunter.

The trombone came whizzing downwards, and Bunter's head disappeared into the yawning cavity of the brass instrument. The 'cello crashed to the study floor, and there was a shriek of laughter from the two Removites as they turned and fled through the doorway and clattered down the Remove Form passage.

"Ow!" came Bunter's muffled voice. "Wot'sit? Ow! Help!"

He staggered to his feet, and the chair went over with a bang, and Bunter's boots became entangled in the 'cello and the chair.

With his fat head still embedded in the trombone, he crashed to the floor, and his cries for help rang through the study. Fortunately, Alonzo Todd, Claude Hoskins, and Tom Dutton were on the point of returning to Study No. 7. They heard Bunter's wild cries for assistance, and they dashed down the passage at the double.

They gave a roar of laughter as they arrived on the scene.

Billy Bunter had just managed to extricate his head from the instrument, and he was sitting up on the floor surrounded by the 'cello, the trombone, the up-turned chair, and the music-stand, which had crashed in the disturbance.

"Oh, the cads!" roared Bunter. "The blessed rotters! They nearly killed me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, the beasts! Did you see them?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who was it? Oh, the rotters!"

"Get up!" laughed Hoskins. "Ha, ha, ha! You'll be the death of me! Here, catch!"

Bunter grasped Claude Hoskins' extended hand, and he climbed up painfully.

"Ow! I wonder who it was? The cads' rammed this rotten trombone on my head!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's nothing to laugh at!" howled Bunter. "How would you like it?"

"Not at all, my dear Bunter," said Alonzo Todd. "I shouldn't like it at all; but it is no use making a fuss about it. Have you brought back the tickets?"

Billy Bunter shook his head dolefully. "Not ready yet, I suppose."

"No."

"Will they send them to-morrow?"

Billy Bunter shook his head again.

"Well, we shall be running a bit free if they don't come until Friday!"

exclaimed Hoskins.

"They won't come then," grunted Bunter. "If you hadn't have been soating over the blessed money I could have brought them back with me. That rotten printer won't do anything now unless it's for cash down!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I had that walk all for nothing!" hooted Bunter. "Just because you chaps wouldn't trust me with a blessed

five bob. I tell you I'm getting fed-up with these rotten minstrels!" Claude Hoskins looked alarmed. "Here, don't get fed-up yet, Bunter, old man!" he said. "Toddy got permission for us to use the music-room, and we're going to practice after tea. Come along, you'll feel better after you've had something to eat!"

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER. Beating the Band!

FORTUNATELY for the Greyfriars Minstrels, they chose a time when all the juniors were in their studies or out in the quadrangle. Otherwise, a certain amount of undesired publicity might have interfered with the successful transfer to the music-room of such instruments as the big drum and the violinello.

Hoskins, of the Shell, was lucky. He had chosen the flute as his instrument, and it was an easy matter for him to tuck it under his arm, and stroll down the corridor to the music-room, which was situated at the end of the passage.

Billy Bunter and Tom Dutton, however, did not have such an easy time of it. They staggered along with their cumbersome encumbrances—to wit, the big drum and the violinello. If they had had the misfortune to meet members of the Remove Force, it would, undoubtedly, have considerably increased their troubles. The Removees, always on the look-out for a "rag," would never have missed such an opportunity as this offered.

But Bunter and Dutton were in luck. Panting with exertion, they gained their harbour safely, and as soon as Alonzo Todd arrived with the music-stands and a side-drum, Claude Hoskins slammed the door to and turned the key.

"We don't want any interruptions," he said. "And there is sure to be a little excitement later on when we get into the swing of it."

If Claude Hoskins, the amateur musician of Greyfriars, had only known, the excitement was due to arrive much sooner than he could have guessed.

"Shove the stands up, Dutton," said Billy Bunter. "We don't want to waste any time. Did you bring that baton down?"

Tom Dutton looked surprised. "What the blazes do you want bacon for?" he exclaimed. "You've only just had tea, you greedy boulder!"

"Baton!" roared Bunter, into the deaf juniors' ear. "I didn't say bacon!"

Tom Dutton gave an expressive grin. "Oh, yes, I brought that! Here it is. I thought you said bacon. You do mumble your blessed words so."

Billy Bunter allowed the subject to drop. He had had too much experience with Dutton's deafness. Arguments on the subject always led to further trouble.

Billy Bunter took up the conductor's baton, and rapped it against a music-stand.

"Come on, you fellows!" he said. "Let's get on with it. Toddy told Dutton to hitch up the big drum, and you take the kettle-drum. Hoskins will play the flute."

The musicians seemed to be quite satisfied to take orders from Bunter, for the time being, at any rate, and they lined up in the centre of the room.

"What shall we start with?" said Hoskins. "We had better open the show with a jazz thing. There's plenty of swing in a jazz, and it'll put the audience into a good humour."

"That's a good idea!" exclaimed Billy Bunter. "We can't go wrong with a jazz, especially if you all take the time from me. What shall we jazz?"

"Oh, Watch Me Gliding" is a jolly good tune," suggested Hoskins. "It goes like this."

Claude Hoskins placed his lips to the flute, and started the tune. Like all jazz music there was very little in it, and Hoskins' rendering of "Oh, Watch Me Gliding" could not have gone very far wrong.

Alonzo Todd and Tom Dutton brought the drums into play as soon as they caught the lilt of the tune, and Billy Bunter stood in front of the trio, and waved his conductor's baton through the air in professional style.

For five minutes the tune filled the music-room with its dreadful noise, and Bunter began to tire himself out. He suddenly made a strange, hissing noise through his fat lips, and he brought his baton down with a jerk.

"Stash! Steady with the drums!" he grunted. "This is the mysterious part where the hero arrives!"

What sort of hero it was who arrived in "Oh, Watch Me Gliding," Billy Bunter did not offer to explain; but, anyhow, Tom Dutton and Alonzo Todd had got into the swing of that jazz song now, and, totally ignoring Billy Bunter's command, they lay into the drums with increasing vigour.

Bang, bang, bang! The big drum fairly shook the room, and the steady rata-tat-tat of Alonzo's side-drum and the shrill piping of Hoskins' flute fairly shook the room.

In the history of Greyfriars there had been much abuse of music in the music-room; but never in the annals of the school had such a noise shaken its walls as during the rendering of "Oh, Watch Me Gliding."

The row rang through the corridors, and penetrated every room in the building, the noise earlier in the day in Study No. 1 was not to be compared to this, and Bob Cherry had not spared himself then.

Bunter recovered from his inertia, and he waved his baton wildly through the air as the trio worked away at their remarkable rendering.

There was a violent crash on the music-room door; but it was not heard by the Greyfriars Minstrels, nor was the furious voice of Gerald Loder, when he yelled at the top of his bullying voice.

Loder of the Sixth, was a prefect, and he stood outside the door, and raved. There was a crowd of juniors, and many members of the Fifth and Sixth were there also, and when the din was at its loudest, they grinned as they watched Loder raging with wrath on the outside of the locked door.

"The young scoundrels!" yelled Loder. "They'll get soaked for this!"

Thump, thump, thump! The prefect kicked and thumped on the thick door; but still the drums beat on, still Hoskins blew away at the flute.

Billy Bunter threw down his conductor's baton, and dragged a chair across to Hoskins, who collapsed into it, and continued without a pause. The fat Removee snatched up the trombone, and put the mouthpiece to his lips.

The jazz was a simple tune, and the next moment Bunter made it more simple than ever. He blew into the trombone, and increased the row tenfold. Dutton and Dodd drew aside, and never paused for a moment in their labour.

"What a giddy aunt!" gasped Harry Wharton. "Just hark at the shindy: That as Bunter will get the sack!"

"Sack!" roared Loder. "He'll jolly well get murdered!"

The crash outside the music-room was tremendous. It seemed as though the whole school was congregated there. The noise of the Greyfriars Minstrels was

beginning to get on the nerves of everyone.

"Bash the door down!" yelled Coker. Thump, thump, thump!

A volley of kicks crashed on the panels; but still the musicians continued.

"Oh, the cheek of the idiots!" roared Loder. "Fetch a sledgehammer, somebody!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How can I work in my room!" cried Coker of the Fifth. "My blessed study is right over the music-room. It's awful!"

"I'll wring their necks if I get in!" shouted Loder furiously. "Has anyone gone for the sledgehammer?"

The prefect looked round at the enormous crowd behind him.

"Go on, some of you!" he yelled. "Fetch a hammer, and we'll have the confounded door down in half a jiffy!"

"Look out!" cried Potter of the Fifth. "Here's Mr. Prout!"

Mr. Prout, Pontifex Prout, the Fifth Form master, pushed his way through the crowd.

"Good gracious, what's this extraordinary scene now?"

His voice sounded a mere whisper to the musical uproar from within.

"They say it's Bunter, sir!" yelled Loder. "He's got a band in the music-room!"

"A band?" shouted Mr. Prout. "You amaze me, Loder! Open that door at once!"

Loder rained a volley of kicks, and shook the door furiously.

"The young scoundrels won't open it, sir!" he roared. "This row has been going on for a quarter of an hour without a pause."

Mr. Prout gave a jump.

"Are the boys mad?" he cried. "Are they mad?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The drums and the trombone seemed to increase in volume, and the din was greater than ever.

Mr. Prout was a man of action, not words. In his time he had been a fearless hunter of big game. His prowess with a gun was wonderful beyond belief. His adventures in his young days had included grim hand to hand struggles with wounded beasts—according to Mr. Prout—and it was not to be thought of that a locked door was going to frustrate the aims of such a man as the master of the Fifth.

"Did I hear you asking for a sledgehammer, Loder?" he roared.

"Yes, sir!"

There was a wild cheer from the crowd in the rear.

"Here it is!"

Bob Cherry struggled through the crush, panting with the exertion of running, and in his hands he held a great sledgehammer. Bob had been to the woodshed and back in record time. He held out the heavy instrument to Mr. Prout.

"Before we smash the door down, we'll try to attract their attention once more," he exclaimed. "Loder, just try again, if you please!"

The Sixth-Former thumped on the panels with renewed vigour; but there was no response from within; only the noise of the band, which increased in volume every minute.

"Very well, then," said Mr. Prout grimly: "we will bring down the door! Then we betide those stupid lads!"

He swung the hammer over his shoulders, and in their efforts to avoid the instrument, the crowd pressed back with a yell.

"Go it, sir!" yelled one of the boys.

With a heavy gasp, the Fifth Form master brought the hammer down on the lock of the door. There was a crash and a

THE SECRET OF THE SILENT CITY.

A Magnificent New Serial Story of Thrilling Adventure.

By DAGNEY HAYWARD.



"Don't shoot—don't shoot!" yelled Larry. "It's the native with the map tattooed on his back—the man to whom we owe so much!" (See page 16.)

READ THIS FIRST.

Mr. Sherwell, producer of the Southern Film Company, accompanied by his staff, set out in search of the Silent City, which is situated in the wilds of South America.

It is soon discovered that a rival party is also in search of the mysterious city. Mr. Sherwell's staff includes Dr. Harland, Tom Rackett, the operator; Tubby Houacer, a comedian; Dick Grainger, Mike Rafferty, and Larry, three boy chums; two servants, Tung Wu, a Chinaman, and Quambo, a nigger; also three animals, Augustus, the elephant, Wonga, the chimpanzee, and Boris, the bloodhound.

Mr. Sherwell's chart is incomplete, but, after many adventures, the Silent City is sighted.

The camp is left in responsible hands, and the party enter the city. They are met by a priest of the Temple. They are surrounded by a party of armed guards and taken prisoners. In the prison they meet Mr. Snick, the leader of the rival party, who has also been captured. The captives are led into a great chamber, where the Secret of the Silent City lies, a vast treasure of untold wealth. They overpower the guard, and, after packing away as much of the treasure as they can carry, they locate the elephant and the rival party, and escape through the underground tunnels to the outside of the city.

(Now read on.)

The Earthquake.

WHEN Mr. Sherwell and his party had heard the story of Snick's American friends, and how they escaped, they all determined to help one another, and to get away from the Silent City as soon as possible.

"If I can get an opportunity of filming some of the natives in the city I shall certainly not lose the chance!" declared Rackett.

"Do whatever you can," said his leader, "but don't run any more risks. You've got some splendid films which, if we can only return to England with them safely, will make the fortune of our company."

"Good old Rackett!" cried Larry. "You'll be a regular hero when you return."

"Sure and bodad," said Mike, "if

there were nothing to film Tom Rackett 'ud make a picture of it!"

"Who will you take with you, Rackett?" asked Mr. Sherwell.

"Augustus and Quambo, certainly, and perhaps the three boys and Tung Wu might be useful in case of any trouble."

"Hooray!" cried the boys all together, wildly excited at the thought of another adventure with the trusty Augustus.

"You'd better make preparations at once," suggested Mr. Sherwell, "and be back as soon as you can." By the way, he added, "have you noticed how sultry the air is? It seems horribly close."

"Now that you mention it, I think it is pretty stuffy," answered Rackett.

"I don't like the look of it," put in Dr. Harland. "I remember that when I was a good many miles away from Martinique, which was destroyed by the

frightful eruption of Mount Pelee, that the atmosphere was very heavy and stagnant a day or so before the cataclysm. I hope we're not going to experience an earthquake like that. We must remember that this place seems to be a network of underground streams of lava, and there certainly points to an eruption one of these days."

"You may be right, Harland," replied his leader; "but I hope it may prove otherwise. Come along, Rackett! You'd better get a move on!"

It did not take long for Rackett to make his preparations, with the boys, Tung Wu, Quambo and Wonga to help him.

Dawn broke clear, but there was an uneasy sort of stillness and oppressiveness in the atmosphere which seemed to get on everyone's nerves. All Mr. Sherwell's native carriers and mules were to wait for the return of Rackett's party, and the Americans agreed to throw in their lot with the Englishmen.

The former had lost all their films and equipment, so they resigned themselves to the inevitable, and, on the whole, took their loss in a sportsmanlike manner; for they realised that the rival English party had played the game all round, and had won hands down.

The cheers of the Americans were not amongst the least of those that sent Rackett—and his little crowd on their way.

Augustus had a big load to carry. There was Quambo and Rackett, who had all his apparatus near him, Tung Wu, the three boys, and Wonga, for Dick refused to be parted from his pet. Besides his human freight and Rackett's apparatus, the elephant was loaded with some very heavy baggage, so as to be ready for instant flight if attacked and compelled to return post-haste to Mr. Sherwell's party.

By sunrise Augustus, with his merry crew aboard, was going slowly round a path which, apparently, encircled the huge crater about half-way up on its outer shell.

All carried rifles at the shoulder, ready for instant reply should any attack come.

What Rackett wanted to do was either to ascend to the top of the crater, which was not very high, or try to find some unguarded entrance at the opposite side to which they had come on their first arrival.

"I hope the light's going to keep good," said Rackett, looking round, and shading his eyes from the powerful sun which was quickly gathering strength. But there was a very slight haze which seemed to overhang the whole crater from a height of several hundred feet.

"It looks to me, boys," he went on, "as if some of the heavy smoke from that lava river had been doing some thick work in the night, and that it hasn't quite cleared away. Hallo, look here!" he cried excitedly.

A sudden turn in the path had brought them to a dip in the side of the crater, a part which had evidently fallen away by some cataclysm in the past.

What the boys saw was a wonderful sight, as Augustus was brought to a dead halt.

About forty feet below them was the Silent City, its wonderful temples and buildings glittering in the sun, and looking towards the direction in which they knew the lava river ran near the temple steps, they saw dense clouds and

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puffs of steam and smoke rising now and then. But not only were these dark palls issuing from the lava stream adjacent to the temple, but they arose from various points in the city and around the base of the crater.

Away in the distance they saw figures hurrying and running as if in a panic, and presently the noise of some great gongs were heard, as if a warning signal had gone forth.

Presently swarms of natives appeared from all points, hurrying towards the temple, and soon the temple precincts were black with a vast concourse of people.

"What's up, Mr. Rackett?" asked Dick. "Have they learnt of our escape, do you think, and are vowing vengeance and pursuit?"

"It's something more than that," replied Rackett. "And—Great Scott!" he broke off. "Look at that!"

As he spoke he pointed towards the same side of the crater as themselves, and the boys saw a huge gap crumble away in the side, and an enormous volume of lava and mud came pouring out, bubbling and steaming. The awful stuff spread out, and quickly ate and burnt its way through everything.

At the same instant there was a low, rumbling sound, and everyone felt the earth beneath them quiver and rock.

"An earthquake, by gum!" cried Larry.

Augustus trembled all over with fear. His animal instinct told him of some dread danger which was quite unknown to him.

"Yes," said Rackett grimly, as he gripped his big film camera, and prepared to turn the handle, "an earthquake! Boys, if I know anything about such things, it's going to make the Silent City more silent than it's ever been before!"

The boys felt awed, for they were gazing at a titanic work of nature which nothing could quell. And they all felt a little bit sick and dizzy, for its the way of earthquakes to make one feel so.

Fascinated, they watched Rackett filming the wonderful scene just as coolly as if he were taking a snapshot of Wonga in a comic attitude.

"I'm just going to get the film of my life!" murmured Rackett, pointing his camera right on to the great crowd that surged round the temple steps.

Every now and again the boys saw with horror that other great gaps were being torn and rent asunder in the side of the great crater, as the dark, muddy, bubbling and boiling lava issued from huge rents in the side, and with incredible speed spread over everything that stood in its way. One might see it as it came, they never forgot. A little group of natives were running towards the temple, were overcome and engulfed in the awful molten mass.

Presently the boys heard a scream of mortal fear and dread just behind them. They turned quickly, rifles to shoulder, and saw a figure running towards them as hard as he could go—a small, copper-coloured native, in the extremity of fear and exhaustion.

"Don't shoot—don't shoot!" yelled Larry. "It's our little native dwarf friend with the map tattooed on his back, the man to whom we owe so much."

"It is—it is he!" cried Mike and Dick together. Just as they spoke they saw

several spears come hurtling after the poor native, missing him only by fractions of an inch.

Rackett paused in his filming, and glanced behind him.

"He's got to be saved!" he cried, and, regardless of his own danger, he slid down the side of Augustus, and caught the spent man just as he fell, a senseless heap. Like lightning Rackett took him in his arms, and the next instant both were safely on Augustus' back.

Then round the corner, running at top speed, came several stalwart natives of the Silent City.

The next moment four rifles cracked out simultaneously, and four of the pursuers dropped to the ground.

Spears came hurtling round Augustus, but the rifles again spitted points of flame and smoke, and two more of the natives fell. They waited a few moments for others to appear, but none came.

"Snakes!" cried Rackett, looking with compassion at the poor, inanimate form of the dwarf. "He had a narrow shave that time! He's utterly exhausted. Come on, boys! Do your best for him, and bring him round while I go on filming the greatest stunt that's ever been done."

The boys very soon brought the native round with the aid of a cordial given to them for cases of emergency by Mr. Sherwell, and presently the faithful native opened his eyes.

In dumb language he endeavoured to show his gratitude, but Dick made signs to him to keep still, and presently, with a sigh of content, he lay back and remained very quiet.

And now the atmosphere was getting more and more stifling. There was not a breath of air stirring, and great clouds of black smoke and dense steam arose in big volumes from the various openings and crevices from which the liquid lava streamed. Soon it began to get so dark that Rackett was compelled to give up all idea of filming.

Away in the distance they could hear the hoarse murmur of a great crowd—a murmur every now and again broken by shrieks and cries which spoke of utter and complete panic.

"We'd better be getting out of this," cried Rackett, "or we shall be caught in the lava, too. See, see!" he broke off, pointing excitedly just below and in front of him.

The boys looked and saw some of the big rock houses suddenly engulfed by an enormous stream of lava, which came pouring out of still another great cavity.

Then again came another earth tremor, but more violent and prolonged than the former one. It was a terrible experience.

The ground literally shook and swayed beneath them, and it seemed as if Augustus the mighty would be hurled to the ground, so violent were the oscillations.

Sick and dizzy, the boys clung to anything they could hang on to. The great beast swayed and tottered, and shook as if with an ague. This disturbance seemed to last for many minutes, though in reality it was but a few seconds, but the agony of endurance was such that all sense of time was lost. All those human beings that clung on to the elephant's back knew was a sense of awful nausea and panic. Only those who have been in a big earthquake know what such a panic is. It grips and renders man and beast a useless thing while it lasts, and makes the bravest man lose all sense of proportion.

"Steady, boys! Steady, lads!" cried Rackett, when the tremor subsided. "We shall get out of it."

"Of course we shall," said Dick, though a little feebly.

"We're not going to be done in by an earthquake," put in Larry, "after all we've gone through."

"Sure and badad," murmured Mike, "it's me that's quaking, begorra!"

"Me feel as if inside were coming outside," chimed in Tung Wu, trying to work his mouth into a smile.

"And dis boy," groaned Quambo, "am stood on his head and habn't got strength to get straight."

Distraught and afraid as all were, this quaint way of Quambo's of expressing that he, too, felt very sick and giddy, raised a laugh. It was not long before Rackett ordered instant action.

The fumes, smoke, and steam from the burning lava were rapidly ascending and hanging heavily in the air. Soon the whole atmosphere was overhung with oppressive gloom, and it was almost as dark as a November London fog.

There was not a breath of air to carry away the heavy pall of dark fumes. And Rackett foresaw that what had already occurred was but a preliminary to what was going to happen.

It would be impossible to convey the eeriness of the scene, or the desolation which Nature, in one of her titanic moods, cast over the land.

As Rackett ordered Quambo to turn Augustus round and make for Mr. Sherwell's party there came a series of loud detonations and explosions, and the next instant Rackett and the boys saw with horror and consternation the great lava stream opposite the temple precincts suddenly rise as if in a solid mass, and, like a great tidal-wave, heave and surge its boiling way towards the vast crowd of natives gathered near it. And then the awful sight was shut out from their gaze, for a great dark cloud gathered quickly in intensity and obscured everything.

"Not a soul will ever live to tell the tale," murmured Rackett, turning away from the dreadful scene.

The next instant he was shouting like a maniac.

"There's not a moment to lose, Quambo!" he cried. "Get Augustus on the move!"

Quambo obeyed instantly, and urged on Augustus to the utmost. The great beast lunged round and instinctively made for the camp.

They had not gone a quarter of a mile before they heard a deafening, reverberating roar. This was followed by almost inky darkness, terrible earth tremors, and a hot fire ash, which seemed to be raining down on them.

This was the last straw for Augustus. He quivered all over with terror; dreadful trumpeting screams came from his mouth. And then he stampeded.

Never would his human freight forget that frightful experience as long as they lived.

Around and above them was darkness and hot ashes and lava raining down. And they had to cling on to Augustus by seizing anything they could. It is one thing to ride on an elephant's back when he is walking steadily, but another thing to keep a hold when he is stampeding. The jolting, swaying, and jerking was fearful. Added to this was the terror of the darkness and the earth tremors and rain of lava.

Crashing through everything that stood in his path, often endangering the lives of those he carried, Augustus raced for life, never pausing for one instant in his mad dash for safety.

The fear of the eruption and what might happen if the earth gaped again held everyone in deadly fear.

"Hang on for your lives, everyone!" shouted Rackett. "We can't have much farther to go before we strike our camp, and Augustus will take us there right enough."

But Augustus took it into his head to go a long circuitous route, and it was some time before the terrified animal and his human freight arrived at the camp. But directly the elephant sighted Mr. Sherwell's party and the mules, he slackened speed, and shortly afterwards came to rest.

The leader came rushing towards Rackett's party when they came in sight. The deadend pall of gloom hung around the whole of the neighbourhood, and now, hot dust and ashes were still falling down.

"Thank Heaven you are all safe!" cried Mr. Sherwell, hurrying up to Rackett's party as they descended from the elephant's back. "Have you all returned? Is there anyone hurt?"

"All safe," cried Rackett. "But I never thought anyone of us would get back to you alive. Augustus stampeded and saved the lot of us. And we've got our good friend, the native dwarf, who showed us the way to the Silent City."

As he spoke, the native prostrated himself at the leader's feet. For he had quite recovered from his fainting attack, and wished to show that he was ready to follow Mr. Sherwell and seek his protection.

At a signal from his chief, the native rose and burst out into a loud hurrahe, which no one understood, but Harland, coming up, caught a word or two, and said that the native was voicing eternal gratitude and friendship.

"We must get on the move without a moment's delay," cried Mr. Sherwell. "Both Dr. Harland and I think there's going to be an awful eruption, and if we are not well away in time, we shall be overwhelmed by the cataclysm. We can do nothing to help the natives of the Silent City. They must look after themselves."

"I've got the most wonderful film I've ever taken," put in Rackett joyfully. "Nothing less than some grand views of the Silent City, with the natives moving about, and some startling pictures of the lava eruptions and the dreadful havoc wrought by them."

"I knew that, if you ever got back, you'd have some splendid films," answered Mr. Sherwell.

"Say," said Snuck, coming up at that moment, "but I guess you are some man, Mr. Rackett. You've won all along the line. My party have lost, and I guess that if you put out your hand, I'd like to shake it."

Rackett gripped the American's extended hand with all friendliness, for he recognised that Gilead P. Snuck was big enough to swallow his own disappointment and congratulate a rival without stint.

Snuck's American friends also joined in their praise, and told Mr. Sherwell that if they could get to the coast with his party, they would do everything in their power to give every assistance possible. Mr. Sherwell accepted them as one of themselves, and then there came a scene of busy activity.

The leader of the expedition first took a roll-call. Every one—native bearers,

mule-drivers, and baggage-men—had to answer their names. Then came a final look at the beasts and equipment. Barring the losses of beasts and men incidental to such a journey as they had undertaken since the expedition started on their venture, everything was in order. Since their arrival at the Silent City, the expedition had suffered no loss.

So, in the semi-darkness and gloom which enveloped them, the party started off to the West Coast—towards the connecting-link that would bring them to happy England once more.

Augustus, with Quando guiding him, went first. Then came Dick, Larry, Mike, and Wonga, followed by Tubby Bouncer, Tung Wu, Boris, Mr. Sherwell, and Dr. Harland, whilst the Americans brought up the rear, followed by the mules and native bearers.

Every now and again they heard low rumbling sounds and violent explosions,

after day, things grew quieter, and at last all danger from earthquakes had disappeared.

Before they reached the coast they had many adventures of a minor character. Several of the mules sickened and died, as did some of the native carriers, which necessitated some of the baggage being discarded.

But they pressed on, and as the weeks glided by it brought them nearer to their goal—the Western port, from where they would ship to England.

All were gathered round the camp-fire one night talking of their adventures, and what they had achieved. Tung Wu had served an excellent dinner and looked very pleased with himself. Wonga was sitting next to Dick, greedily enjoying tit-bits which every now and again came his way, when suddenly the monkey made a dive into a little satchel he carried under his coil of rope, and out came an enormous ruby!



For a moment the cage swung in mid-air, and a few minutes later was slowly lowered to the deck amidst the cheers of the onlookers! (See page 18.)

while slight earth tremors made them realise that they were by no means out of danger.

Towards sunset they heard a low but mighty roar, which lasted some time. Looking behind them—they were on the top of a great plateau—they saw a huge black cloud rise in the air and spread itself out as it rose higher and higher. What little wind there was blew from the direction of the Silent City, and though they were many miles away, fine, hot dust came drifting down on to them.

"If I'm not very much mistaken," said Dr. Harland, "there goes the top of the Silent City. I should think the whole of the crater's blown up, and not a soul is left alive to tell the tale."

All that night they were disturbed by slight earth tremors, and they knew that somewhere—in might be hundreds of miles away—a violent earthquake had occurred.

But as they pushed on steadily day

it was a magnificent gem, and sparkled and glittered in the firelight. "Good gracious!" cried Dick. "Where on earth did that come from?"

"Easy enough to explain," replied Larry. "Wonga must have secreted it when we discovered the gems in the treasure cave of the Silent City, and the little bogey has been hiding it ever since."

"It's worth thousands," put in Dr. Harland, taking it up and looking at it.

"I don't think we've done so badly," said Mr. Sherwell. "What with the jewels we took from that cave, which are all safely locked away in a stout iron box, and Wonga's wonderful gem, I should think we've got about a hundred thousand pounds' worth of jewellery—perhaps considerably more. Of course, we shall all share this equally, and Mr. Snuck's share, which he handed over to me to take care of, will be resigned to him."

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"Say," said Smick, "if you'll accept one of my stones as a token of good will, and as a memento of our adventures together, I guess it would please me mightily, Mr. Sherwell."

"With the greatest of pleasure," returned the leader.

"I suppose you wouldn't part with Mr. Wonga for a good lump sum down?" went on the American. "I reckon he'd make my fortune if I traveled with him in some show in the States. I reckon Barnum's would give thousands of dollars for him."

"Well, boys, what do you think of Mr. Smick's offer?" asked Mr. Sherwell, with a rather grim smile.

"All the money in America wouldn't buy Wonga!" said Dick.

"He, Boris, and Augustus have, between them, saved our lives many a time!" burst out Larry. "They are all returning to England with us."

"And we'll take 'em round old Oireland," cried Mike, "and let the boys over there have a look at them!"

"What's going to become of our native dwarf?" asked Dr. Harland.

"He must please himself," answered Mr. Sherwell. "He's been a good friend to us, and if he likes to come with us to England, by all means let him."

As he spoke, the leader beckoned to the dwarf, who at once came to his master's side. Dr. Harland questioned him. There was no hesitation about his answer; he would remain with the brave white men, and the man-monkey, and the thunder-animal—Augustus—till the end of his days.

So that was settled.

Tubby Bouncer declared that he was tired of being a comic-film man, and said he would retire into private life and live his share of the jewels; but none of them would hear of such a thing. He had made his mark as a comic-film man at the Great Southern Film Company, and they could not spare him.

Hardship and exertion had somewhat reduced the weight of Tubby, but plenty of rest and good living would soon set that right; so Tubby was won over, and promised Mr. Sherwell that he would continue to be a mirth-maker for the Southern Film Company. As for Tung Wu and Quambo, they vowed they would stick to Mr. Sherwell as long as they lived.

Far into the night the party went on talking, looking forward to the time when they would reach the Western port and be on their way to England.

A few days later they reached their goal, and the Portuguese Spaniards and natives at the sea town looked on their entry with amazement and interest.

Augustus caused a slight panic by playfully seizing a little Spanish boy in his trunk and placing him on his back; but when the crowd saw that the child was safe they broke into cheers.

The Port authorities and the Consul received Mr. Sherwell's party very courteously, and when they heard of their extraordinary adventures and achievements, gave a dinner of official welcome to the whole of the expedition.

Mr. Sherwell learnt that there had been a terrible earthquake in South America, and when he told his hosts of the destruction of the Silent City by an awful eruption of lava, it was realized how far-reaching were the consequences of the cataclysm.

Wonga was an honoured guest at that dinner, and his health was drunk with musical honours.

Cables went flashing over to England, telling of the discovery of the Silent

City, and of an hitherto unknown race which existed there, but which had been destroyed. One day, Mr. Sherwell said, he hoped to return there and try to discover the vast wealth that lay stored in the cave, undoubtedly some of the lost treasure of the Incas.

There was a huge crowd to see the party embark on the steamer that was to carry them, via the Panama Canal, to England. The Americans were to disembark on the eastern side of the canal, and proceed thence to New York.

"It'll be good to see Old England again!" cried Dick, as he leant over the ship's side, watching the waving, cheering crowd below.

"It's been stunning," said Larry, "and

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NEXT MONDAY

THE SILENT!

A Strange Story
of the Future.

By EDMUND BURTON.

Order Your Copy
in Advance!

I wonder what the next expedition will be.

"The films will be seen at every picture house in England—indeed, all over the world," put in Mr. Sherwell, "and when we get home our studio will be the most talked-of place in the British Isles. And I shall go on a big lecturing tour accompanied by our good friend Dr. Harland."

"Horro!" yelled Mike, "here comes Augustus!" And he pointed to the elephant's huge cage which was on the point of being raised by a steam crane on to the ship's decks.

For a moment the cage swung in mid-air, and a few minutes later was slowly lowered to the deck, amidst the cheers of

the onlookers. Then the faithful Quambo made Augustus as secure and as comfortable as possible for his long voyage.

Wonga took a keen interest in the proceedings, and continually took off his hat and waved it in the air in farewell to those on shore.

When all was ready, the big steamer slipped away from the quayside, and was soon but a speck in the distance, as she made her way through the great canal towards the land of peace and freedom.

When Mr. Sherwell's party landed in London they were besieged with reporters and representatives of Film Land. He had secured films such as would set the whole of England talking.

The big and perfectly-equipped studio of the Great Southern Film Company was soon a scene of busy activity. The great Rackett was preparing the films for the market, and he had an army of workers to help him.

Stories of the company's doings and adventures spread far and wide. Those living in the neighbourhood of the studio often climbed the walls of the enclosure to get a glimpse of Augustus, Wonga, and Boris.

Wonga and Boris lived at Mr. Sherwell's private house, and once a month there is a family gathering attended by Dick, Larry, Mike, Quambo, Tung Wu, Boris, Tubby Bouncer, Rackett, Wonga, and Augustus.

The native dwarf proved a faithful servant, and when he learnt English, never tired of telling his hearers how he had been nearly starved to death by the natives of the Silent City, but had escaped, and then had been pursued by his enemies, to be rescued by Rackett and Augustus during the earthquake.

Dr. Harland was busy writing a book about his adventures with the dwarf tribe, and intended to go on another expedition.

Dick and his two chums often go into screams of laughter as they watch Tubby Bouncer rehearsing some of his comic stunts for new films, in which Wonga and Tung Wu frequently figure, for Wonga made a reputation second to none in the animal film world.

Dick and his two chums gazed with admiration at the big posters which Mr. Sherwell intended to use as advertisements for the pictures of the Silent City.

"I never thought we should all be advertised like this!" cried Larry.

"I wish we could do the whole expedition all over again," put in Dick. "What do you say, Tung Wu?"

"This Chinaman he relly plenty content," replied the Celestial with a bland smile. "Plenty chop-chop, plenty money. Some day, p'laps, we start again, and then Tung Wu come along."

"Everyone knows ob dis fellow," said Quambo, with a huge grin of pride, for posters of him and Augustus were distributed far and wide.

"They'll hear about us in old Oireland," cried Mike, "and bedad they'll be proud of me."

At that moment Wonga appeared, and, linking his arm in Dick's, strolled off with the others to Augustus, and in answer to a shout from Rackett and Mr. Sherwell, took up their positions for a new film which was to set all the world laughing, and still further enhance the reputation of the funniest comic man and the cleverest elephant and chimpanzee that ever appeared on the screen.

THE END.

"The Greyfriars Minstrels!"

(Continued from page 14.)

splintering of wood, and as the music within ceased suddenly, the battered door swung open.

"Hurrah!"

With a mighty cheer of delight, the crowd swarmed forward. Loder and Mr. Prout were swept off their feet in the rush; and the excited Friars swept over them.

The Greyfriars Minstrels staggered back in amazement. So engrossed in their own uproar had they been, they had no inkling whatever of what was taking place without. The first intimation they had was when Mr. Prout's hammer crashed down upon the lock of the door.

What followed was so speedy that they had no time to realise anything. The excited mob swept into the room. The boys were thoroughly out of hand. They were there for one purpose, and that was to smash everything appertaining to music.

Tom Dutton had the misfortune to be a good target. He still had the drum fixed in front of him. Before the deaf junior knew what was happening, three members of the mob landed in the centre of the big drum, first.

There was a rending crash as they tore through the beautiful parchment. Boots were brought to bear upon the rest of the drum, and in a twinkling the whole instrument was reduced to a shattered wreck.

Claude Hoskins tried to ward off the attack with his fute; but his efforts were in vain. The offending fute was wrenched from him, and in less than a minute it was a mass of splinters.

Alonso Todd's side-drum was an easy victim of the mob's vengeance. Coker of the Fifth, and Wingate minor of the Third Form, reached it simultaneously, and there was a rending crash as it crumpled up under the attack.

The music-stands went flying through the windows, and at least half a dozen of the infuriated mob were stamping upon Bunter's beautiful brass trombone.

"Hurrah! Hurrah!"

When the cheer rang through the room when it was found there was nothing else to smash. Mr. Prout had dragged himself up, and he gave Loder a helping hand.

"Loder!" roared Mr. Prout. "We must restore order at once!"

Loder looked a little nervous.

"Y-yes, sir!"

"Boys!" cried the Fifth Form master

at the top of his voice. "Boys, you will retire at once. Any further damage will mean heavy punishment."

"Hurrah!"

A ringing cheer rang through the music-room, and along the passage without.

"What about Bunter's study?" shouted Skinner, one of the cads of the Remove.

"Rath!"

There was a rush for the door, and for some time the boys were unable to get through because of the crush. At last a passage was cleared, and about fifty of the excited mob dashed down the corridor, and invaded Study No. 7.

There were still some of the band instruments left. They were lying in the corner where Billy Bunter had left them, and they were spotted immediately.

Bassoons and cornets and trumpets and cymbals were leapt upon in the twinkling of an eye, and the valuable instruments crumpled like paper under the attack. Some of the invaders did not restrict themselves to musical articles alone. They looked wildly around the little study and movable articles were swept away ruthlessly.

"Oh, my giddy aunt!" gasped Bob Cherry, as he gazed into the open door. "Just look at the duffers!"

"My hat! There goes poor old Alonso's volumes!" cried Harry Wharton.

The little bookcase by the window came over with a crash, and Alonso Todd's books rolled out from their shelves, and got mixed up with the general wreckage.

Fortunately, the study was small, and not by any means elaborately furnished. The wreckers were soon finished, and when someone shouted a warning cry that Mr. Prout and Mr. Quelch were coming down the corridor, the invaders melted away like snow in summertime.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Come along, you fellows!"

Harry Wharton & Co. took Bob Cherry's advice, and they tramped along to Study No. 1, roaring with laughter.

"That's all your fault, Mauly, you see!" said Harry Wharton.

"Oh, gad! Really, my dear fellow—began his lordship.

"Yes; it's Mauly's fault!" cried Frank Nugent. "If Mauly hadn't wasted fifty quid on all that rubbish, this would never have happened!"

"Oh gad!" drawled the schoolboy earl. "It's Bunter's fault, you know. They don't belong to me. I gave them to Bunter, didn't I?"

"Ha, ha, ha! They're a lot of use to Bunter!"

"But—"

"Oh, come on, Mauly! You're an ass,

and we ought to slaughter you for wasting your blessed money on band instruments when you've got a lot of hard-up pals!" laughed Bob Cherry.

Mauleverer yawned prodigiously as he sauntered in to Study No. 1.

"Oh, gad!" he said. "It did raise a bit of excitement, anyway. At least, I'm sure Bunter will agree with me!"

And by the way Harry Wharton & Co. laughed, it was pretty obvious that the chains of the Remove were quite ready to agree with Lord Mauleverer.

Little more was heard of the Greyfriars Minstrels.

Someone said they saw Billy Bunter alone in Study No. 7 later in the evening. Whoever it was, set the rumour afloat that the fat Removeite was still alive and kicking, as he had been seen in pierrot costume singing lustily through Claude Hoskins' musical comedy.

Whether this was true or not was difficult to establish; but Billy Bunter has strong recuperative powers, and even yet we may still hear more of the Greyfriars Minstrels.

THE END.

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