

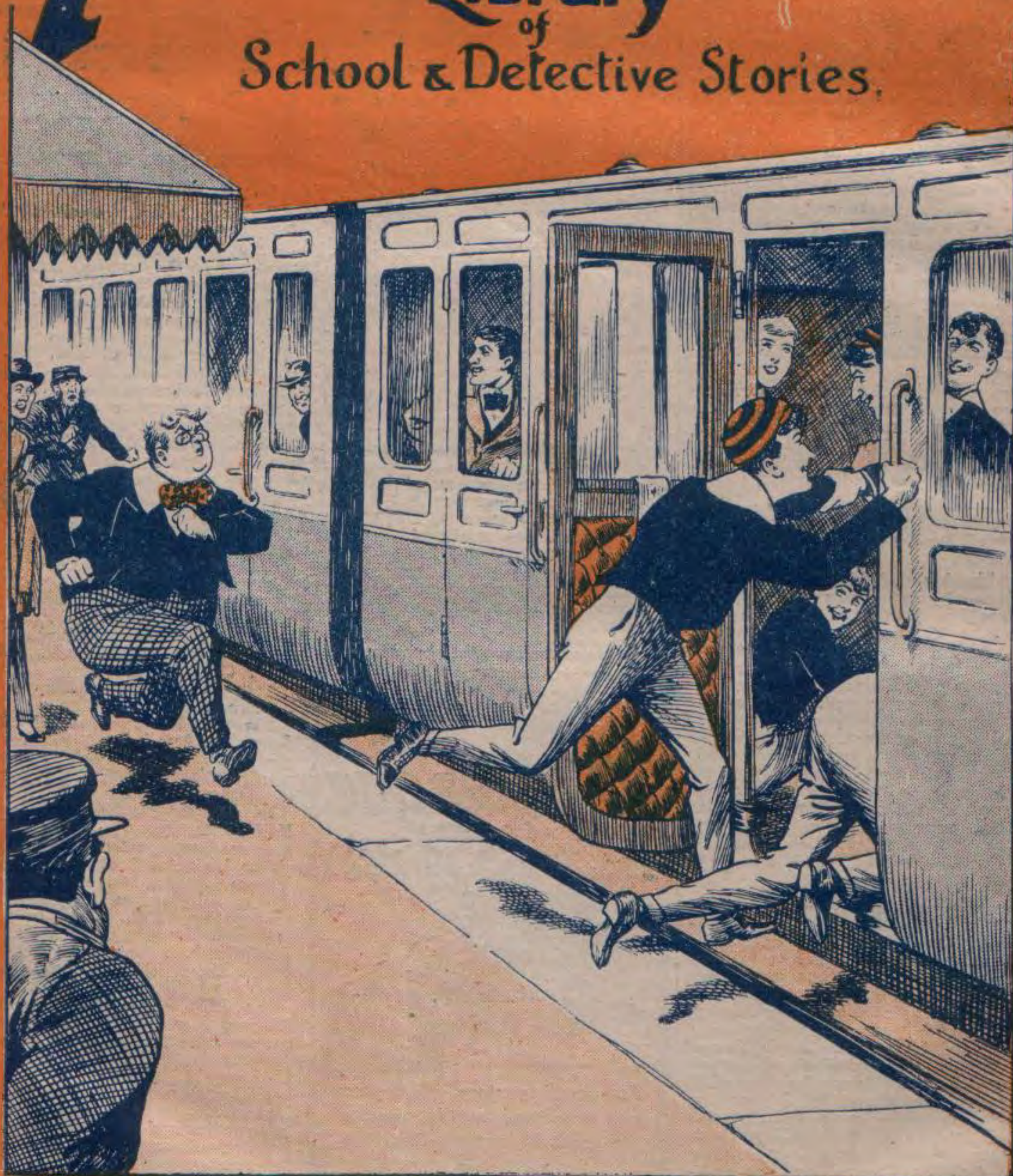
SPECIAL HIGHWAYMAN STORY INSIDE!

No. 810. Vol. XXIV. Week ending August 18th, 1923.

The Magnet 2^d

EVERY MONDAY

Library of School & Detective Stories.



LEAVING BILLY BUNTER BEHIND!

(A humorous incident from this week's long complete story of Harry Wharton & Co.)



"THE HOUSE OF PENGARTH!"

An ordinary title, chums, and a house like any other, you might say, but there you are "off the rails," as Bob Cherry would put it. Sir Jimmy Vivian's old-world mansion on a lonely part of the coast of Cornwall possesses some sinister secret, which, in next Monday's ripping story of the Greyfriars chums, fully occupies the minds of the Removites who are staying there during the vacation.

Even before Harry Wharton & Co. arrive at "Pengarth," some amazing incidents happen, which, to a level-headed person like the leader of the Co., are suggestive of more than mere accidental occurrences.

Then, on arrival at the old mansion, the Greyfriars juniors find Keeley, the caretaker, in a state of collapse, the cause of which he lays at the door of ghostly Spaniards, of whom stories abound amongst the fisher-folk in the neighbourhood.

Having no belief in the occult Harry Wharton & Co. determine to unravel the tangled skein of mystery hovering above their heads, so to speak, and as to how they fare must be left for you, my chums, to discover upon reading.

"THE HOUSE OF PENGARTH!"

By Frank Richards.

And having read this latest effort from the pen of your popular author, I feel positively certain that you will vote it the best yarn Mr. Richards has ever given you. That is saying a lot when one bears in mind the ripping stories which have appeared under his name. It would be advisable to order your copy of the MAGNET in advance if you don't want to miss this coming treat. An oft-repeated warning, you might say, and absolutely superfluous. Well, hundreds of my chums write to me to the effect that they missed such and such a story owing to their newsagent being "Sold out!" So take the tip for what it is worth!

"THE MISER OF FERRIS HALL!"

That is the title of our next Galloping Dick story, and it shows the youthful highwayman fulfilling his promise to help the poor. Misers are miserable people at the best of times, and their hoarded wealth is usually the outcome of sweated labour and oppression. A member of this greatly despised fraternity, much against his will, is shown the error of his ways by the gallant Dick Langley, whereat the inhabitants of a certain district in Dick's "territory" are freed for ever from a heavy yoke of tyranny and oppression. They are loud in acclaiming Galloping Dick as a friend indeed. With a sunny smile and a gallant sweep of the hat the highwayman waives the matter aside as a mere bagatelle, and gallops off in search of further adventure. He has left behind him, however, some

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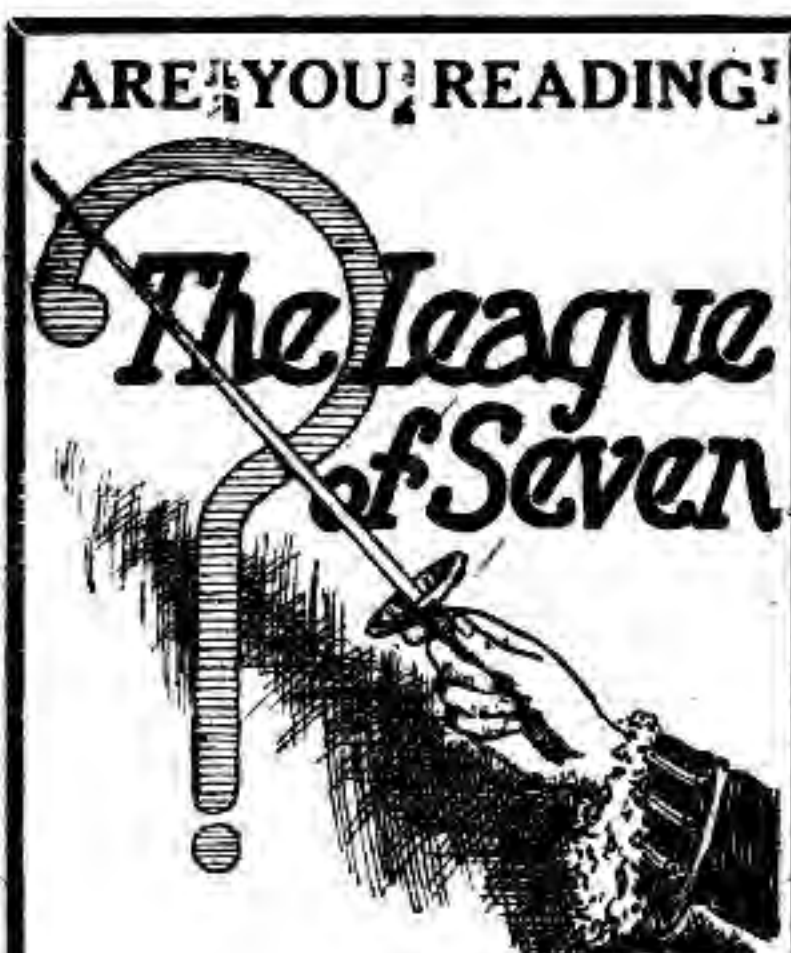
grateful hearts upon which is stamped for all time the noble service he has rendered.

"THE SNAKE'S TOOTH!"

A taxicab, its passenger dead, is the starting point of next Monday's splendid detective story featuring Ferrers Locke and his redoubtable young assistant, Jack Drake. The case in point has baffled the cutest of Scotland Yard detectives, and Locke himself finds it no easy task to score where such clever exponents of crime detection have failed. A small clue, however, puts him on the right track, and the subsequent adventures of the world-famous sleuth are thrilling and dangerous in the extreme. Don't miss this special story, chums; Mr. Conquest has given you something to think about in the unfolding of his intricate plot.

GOOD HEALTH!

A time-honoured saying significant of meaning. Health of the A.I. category is something to strive after and to maintain. The budding journalists under the supervision of Harry Wharton & Co. have taken this subject to heart, and although space does not permit of their giving all there is to be said about it from the serious side, the "Heraldites" have provided something new in the way of humour. Look out for this sparkling feature.



An amazing story of mystery and adventure, at the time of the great Monmouth Rebellion, in the

POPULAR

Out on Tuesday!

A SCORE FOR ERIN!

An Irish chum, Mr. Shawn Ryan, has sent me along from St. Brendans, Cross Avenue, Booterstown, Co. Dublin, a smart little specimen copy of his amateur magazine, "The Boys' Companion." A very excellent companion it is, well set up, with some good up-to-date stuff about Egypt—all the rage just now—and something about the working of the Press. I am always getting queries as to amateur magazines. Those interested in the subject should communicate with Mr. Shawn Ryan at the address given.

Your Editor.

READERS' NOTICES!

Correspondence.

C. West, 8, Eldon Terrace, Windmill Hill, Bedminster, Bristol, wishes to hear from readers of the Companion Papers who collect the stories, also postcard views, stamps, etc. Readers in China, Japan, and the Colonies specially asked. All letters answered.

A. S. Richards, 16, Upper Winchester Road, Blythe Hill, Catford, S.E. 6, and F. S. W. Wiffen, Bridge End, Bocking, near Braintree, Essex, have started a monthly magazine called "The Correspondent," and wish to hear from readers interested. F. S. W. Wiffen also wishes to correspond with readers in Canada and England keen on competitions.

All round Club.

A. H. Monis, 58, Brand Street, Greenwich, S.E. 10, wishes to hear from possible members for his club. It will include football, running, draughts competitions, and cricket; ages 14-16.

Kingsley Sports Club (Cricket Section) has a few vacancies for members; Saturdays and Sundays; Ground, Gladstone Park, Cricklewood. Apply for particulars to Victor Rae, 3, Kingsley Road, Kilburn, N.W. 6.

The British and Colonial Amateur Journalist Association. For particulars apply, J. Clegg, Brook Street, Tottenham, Yorks, or W. T. Jagers, 105, High Street, Battersea, S.W. 11.

Harold Knight, 85, Lunn Street, Hyde, Cheshire, wishes to correspond with readers anywhere; ages 19-22.

Abe Dickman, 2, Eaton Place, off De Villiers Street, Cape Town, South Africa, wishes to correspond with readers; ages 15-17.

Gordon Forsyth, c.o. Messrs. Lennon Limited, P.O. Box 76, East London, South Africa, wishes to correspond with readers anywhere; ages 19-20.

Miss I. E. Dilley, 81, Duncombe Road, Hornsey Rise, London, N. 19, wishes to correspond with London readers of the MAGNET interested in biography; ages 14-16.

Herbert Francis Eastlake, Glenfell, Goorambat, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers; ages 17 up; hobbies, stamp, book, and postcard collecting.

A. Youens, 16, Morville Street, Tredegar Road, Bow, E. 3, wishes to hear from readers interested in boxing.

Miss Ina Livingston, Red Chapel Road, Lower Sandy Bay, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers; ages 14-17.

Billy Bunter invites himself to the party visiting Sir Jimmy Vivian's old-world mansion on the coast of Cornwall. Harry Wharton & Co. are not exactly charmed with his company, and the long journey to the west of England finds the "Co." putting into force every dodge they know to shake off Bunter's unwelcome attentions.



A Long Complete Story of
Harry Wharton & Co., of
Greyfriars. Told in the
inimitable style of
FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Helping Mauleverer!

"BUSY, old chap?" Lord Mauleverer did not look busy.

Virgil lay on the table before him, with a Latin dictionary and a Latin grammar. The pen stood in the inkpot, beside a little pile of spotless foolscap. All was ready for work in Study No. 12. But Lord Mauleverer was devoting his whole attention to a straw, through which he was imbibing a refreshing lemon-squash.

It was a warm evening, and Lord Mauleverer seemed to prefer lemon-squash to prep.

Billy Bunter blinked in at the doorway and watched him. Mauleverer did not turn his head.

He had his prep to do, although he was not doing it. On a hot evening in August, with prep on hand, Billy Bunter was superfluous. Matters were bad enough without Bunter added.

"Getting on with it?" asked Bunter.

"Yaas."

"How is it going?"

"Nearly gone," said his lordship.

"I mean the prep, you ass, not the lemon-squash! How are you getting on with the prep?"

"I haven't started yet," said his lordship plaintively. "I'm waitin' for Vivian to come in. Vivian's goin' to look out the dashed words in the dashed dic."

Bunter smiled genially.

"I've come to help you, Mauly."

Lord Mauleverer finished his lemon-squash and looked at Bunter. Follows were not supposed to help one another with their prep, but that was a rule that was often broken.

"You're awfully good, Bunter," said Mauleverer doubtfully; "but—"

"That's all right!" said Bunter cheerfully. "We're pals, ain't we, Mauly?"

"Are we?" said Mauleverer still more doubtfully.

"Yes, old chap. And I'm coming to Cornwall with you and Vivian when we break up at Greyfriars, ain't I?"

"I think not!"

"Oh, really, Mauly—"

"But you can jaw to Vivian about that," said his lordship hastily. "It's Vivian's place we're goin' to. Don't talk to me about it, Bunter, there's a good chap. Go away."

"I've spoken to Vivian about it," said Bunter. "Of course, Vivian would be glad to have any friend of yours in the party. You'd like me to come, Mauly, I suppose?"

Lord Mauleverer did not answer that question. He hated to hurt any fellow's feelings, even Bunter's. Though, as a matter of fact, he need not have troubled about Bunter's feelings. Billy Bunter was not thin-skinned. He was, indeed, as well protected as a rhinoceros.

"But about the prep," said Bunter briskly. "I know what a worry it is to you, Mauly, and I've come here to do it for you."

"But that means trouble in the mornin' with Quelch," said Lord Mauleverer. "If my con. is just the same as yours—"

"Well, two translations of the same thing are bound to be rather alike, ain't they?" said Bunter.

Lord Mauleverer grinned.

"Not always," he said. "Didn't you once construe 'arma virumque cano' into 'the armed man and the dog'? I'll bet there wasn't another construe in the Remove that resembled it!"

"Besides, we sha'n't both be called on," said Bunter. "Stands to reason, Quelch won't drop on both of us—especially as it's so near the end of term. He's not so jolly keen at the end of term."

"That's so," assented Mauleverer thoughtfully. "Form masters seem to get a tired look at the end of term."

"Jolly good thing, too!" said Bunter. "If they kept on all through the term as they start, there'd be no standing them. He's got the exams to think about, too. Quelch looked quite fatigued in class this afternoon. With luck, he may get really ill."

"Oh, begad!"

"He might, you know," said Bunter brightly. "Old Capper, the master of the Fourth, was ill at the end of last term, and it was splendid for the Fourth. I don't see why the Fourth Form should have all the luck!"

"Quelch's tough!" said Lord Mauleverer, with a grin.

"Well, we can only hope for the best, as far as that goes," said Bunter. "Now, you shift on to the sofa, Mauly. I know you're tired. I'm going to do your prep."

"But—" said Lord Mauleverer feebly.

"Not a word, old chap! I mean it!" Lord Mauleverer was strongly tempted.

He had a constitutional repugnance to anything in the shape of work, and P. Virgilius Maro on an August evening was hard work. And there was a good chance that Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, would not call on both Bunter and Mauly the following morning in class. And even if he did, probably he would have no suspicion.

Lord Mauleverer undoubtedly was tired that evening.

He had walked round the quadrangle with Harry Wharton & Co. after tea.

That terrific exertion had not tired the Famous Five, but it had made Mauleverer more inclined for the sofa than for P. Virgilius Maro.

"Safe as houses!" said Bunter. "Quelch won't call on us for the same bit, even if he does nail us both. You rest, old fellow, while I work!"

That was a remarkable speech for William George Bunter. He was not much given to working while others rested.

But Bunter had an axe to grind now.

Mauly's relative, Sir Jimmy Vivian, declined to include Bunter in the holiday-party for Cornwall, at any price. Lord Mauleverer was Bunter's last hope.

Sir Jimmy could not refuse to take him if Mauly wanted him to go, and so Billy Bunter was going to be Mauly's devoted pal, whether Mauly liked it or not.

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"But—" said Lord Mauleverer.
 "Gimme your chair," said Bunter.
 "But Vivian's just comin' in to help—"

"No, he isn't!" grinned Bunter.
 "Vivian's in the gym, and they've got a boxing match on. I'll bet you Vivian won't be in in time to do much prep before bed!"

The Owl of the Remove fairly pushed Lord Mauleverer out of his chair. His lazy lordship collapsed on the sofa.

"That's right!" said Bunter. "Now, you take a rest and watch me working jolly hard!"

"Well, that will be worth watchin'!" smiled Lord Mauleverer. And he put a cushion under his noble head and watched.

Billy Bunter started on P. Virgilius Maro. And there was silence in the study, broken occasionally by an irritated grunt from Bunter as he strove to disentangle the meaning of the great Roman.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Skinner Helps Bunter!

"TU quoque litoribus nostris, Aeneia nutrix—" Bunter mumbled.

He blinked across at the recumbent Mauleverer.

"Litoribus" is dative, ain't it, Mauly?"

"Shouldn't wonder," assented Mauleverer.

"Might be ablative—"

"So it might," said Mauleverer amiably.

"Couldn't be genitive, could it?" argued Bunter.

"Why not?"

"Anyhow, it ain't nominative."

"Glad to hear it! If it can't be nominative, that leaves you only five cases to choose from," said Mauleverer.

"Take your choice!"

Bunter grunted.

"Nostris, of course, is in the same case with litoribus, ain't it?" he said.

"Very likely."

"Look here, you ass, it makes a lot of difference whether a fellow says to our shores, or from our shores, or of our shores."

"Does it?"

"Of course it does!" howled Bunter.

"I'll take your word for it, old chap," said Lord Mauleverer. "Say any old thing you like."

"Nutrix!" said Bunter. "I suppose that's got something to do with nuts."

"Sounds like it," assented Mauleverer.

"Look it out in the dic., old chap."

"Who's doin' this prep?" demanded Lord Mauleverer indignantly.

"Well, looking words out in the dic. will keep you awake."

"But I don't want to keep awake."

Another grunt from Bunter.

In Study No. 7, Bunter was accustomed to bagging as much assistance as he could from Peter Todd. He generally, by that means, obtained a more or less vague idea of the meaning of the passage set for study. There was no reason why he could not work it out for himself—but that meant the serious use of grammar and dictionary. And Bunter hated grammars and dictionaries. If he couldn't get through prep without all that trouble, he preferred to chance it with Quelch in the morning.

But on this occasion, Bunter was "up against it."

As Mauly's devoted pal, he had to disentangle some sort of meaning from the section of the Aeneid; he couldn't place Mauly under the necessary obligation without that.

But he almost groaned at the idea of looking out elusive words in the dictionary, and conjugations in the grammar. He began to feel that he was purchasing Lord Mauleverer's friendship too dearly.

But there was no help to be had from Mauleverer.

If Mauly had consented to take the "dic." Bunter would next have requested him to take the grammar also; and, in fact, would have landed the whole task on his lordship.

And as Mauly was only standing Bunter in the study in order to get out of working, he felt fully entitled to remain a looker-on.

He closed his noble eyes, and declined to listen to a word further. Bunter's mumbling voice lulled him to slumber.

"Aeternam moriens famam, Caieta, dedisti," mumbled the Owl of the Remove glumly.

"How the silly asses ever understood one another is more than I can make out!" said Bunter. "Quelch told us that the Emperor Augustus was delighted when Virgil read this muck to him. He must have been a silly fat-head. Don't you think so, Mauly?"

No reply.

"Gone to sleep, you owl?"

Lord Mauleverer breathed gently and peaceably. Either he was asleep, or he chose to give Bunter that impression.

"Oh, dear! I wonder whether nutrix is a nut!" groaned Bunter.

He reached for the dictionary and opened it. Skinner of the Remove looked into the study.

"Vivian here?" asked Skinner.

"No, he isn't," growled Bunter; "and you needn't try to stick Vivian for an invitation to Cornwall, Skinner. I can tell you that the party's complete."

Skinner looked at him unpleasantly.

"What are you doing here?" he demanded.

"Prep. Can't you see?"

"Helping Mauly?" grinned Skinner.

"I'm the sort of fellow to help a pal," said Bunter, with dignity. "I'm not like you, Skinner."

"I see. You're going to see Mauly through, and he's going to put in a word for you with Vivian?" said Skinner comprehending. "Well, Mauly would do anything for anybody who saved him work. Not a bad idea of yours, Bunter."

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Bunter. "There's such a thing as disinterested friendship, Skinner."

"I've heard so," assented Skinner. "I've never come across it outside a book; but I dare say there's some somewhere. But if there is, you don't know anything about it."

"Yah!" was Bunter's elegant rejoinder.

"Is he there?" asked Snoop, coming along the passage. Evidently Sidney James Snoop, as well as Harold Skinner, had an eye on Sir Jimmy Vivian and the holiday at Pengarth in Cornwall.

"No; Bunter's here," said Skinner. "Bunter's doing Mauly's prep out of disinterested friendship."

Snoop chuckled.

"Oh, get away, do!" said Bunter crossly. "How can a chap work with two silly asses cackling in the doorway? If you're going to stick there, you can look out some words in the dic. for me."

"Pleased!" said Skinner blandly.

Bunter looked more genial.

"Done your prep?" he asked.

"Just finished," answered Skinner. "I don't need to look out the words—I've been through the stuff. Quite an easy passage."

"It don't seem so jolly easy to me," said Bunter. "But if it's easy for you, you can tell me a bit."

"Glad to," said Skinner.

"What rot!" said Snoop warmly. "Let's get down to the gym; I hear they've got some boxing on there."

"Never mind the boxing," said Skinner. "Let's help Bunter! After all, Bunter's a pal."

He closed one eye at Snoop, and they came into the study together. Lord Mauleverer slumbered on peacefully, while Skinner and Snoop sat on the table and helped Bunter.

Bunter was looking much brighter now.

Harold Skinner was a slacker, and generally scamped his work when he felt that he could venture to do so; but when he chose, he was a clever fellow, and work that perplexed Bunter was nothing to Skinner. Bunter would rather have had his help than Peter Todd's, as a matter of fact.

It really looked as if Bunter was in for a good thing. Having done Mauly's prep for him, Mauly was bound to stand by him in the matter of the holiday in Cornwall. Bunter considered; and Skinner was going to take all the labour off his hands!

"Go ahead," said Skinner, with another wink at Snoop. "Where does the shoe pinch, old fat tulip?"

"Tu quoque," said Bunter, "that

RESULT OF

MAGNET Limerick Competition (No. 13).

In this competition the First Prize of £1 Is. for the best line sent in has been awarded to:—

N. EDWARDS, 16, Burford Road, Nottingham, whose line was:—

Said "P.O. hasn't come, so I canna."

Three consolation prizes of 2s. 6d. each for the next best have been awarded to the following competitors:—

EDWIN ACWORTH, 8, Crieff Road, Wandsworth, S.W. 13.

JAMES SHEEHAN, 25, Great Earl Street, Bloomsbury, W.C. 2.

J. WENDEN, 91, Mildmay Road, Chelmsford.

Follow the adventures of Harry Wharton & Co. in "The House of Pengarth!"—

means 'Thou also,' of course. That bit's easy. *Litoribus nostris*—that's dative, ain't it?"

"Yes—our literary men," said Skinner carelessly.

Snoop suppressed a chuckle just in time.

"Eh! Doesn't that mean 'to our shores'?" asked Bunter.

"That's where you get caught, in Latin, by the similarity of words," said Skinner gravely. "Were you going to make that 'to our shores'?"

"Ye-e-es."

"Lucky I came in, then. Quelchy would have scalped you."

"Bald-headed," said Snoop impressively.

"Well, how does the rotten thing go, then?" asked Bunter, bending a perplexed frown upon the mysterious verses.

"Is nutrix nuts?"

"Just that!"

"Well, I knew that," said Bunter loftily; and Snoop suppressed another chuckle. "*Aeternam famam*—is that something about eternal fame?"

"Fathead! I'll run it over with you," said Skinner, giving Snoop a kick under the table as a hint to keep quiet. "*Tu quoque litoribus nostris, Aeneia nutrix, aeternam moriens famam, Caieta, dedisti—Thou also, Caieta, to our literary men, eternally hungry, gave the nuts of Aeneas.*"

Sidney James Snoop slipped from the table, and bolted from the study. He could not trust himself to keep serious while Skinner was giving such remarkable translations.

"Got that?" asked Skinner calmly.

Bunter nodded.

"Yes; that's simple enough," he said.

"I really didn't need your help with those verses, Skinner."

"Oh, didn't you?" gasped Skinner.

"No; that's as plain as anything. But the next line—*et nunc servat honores sedem tuus*—"

There was a yawn from the sofa.

"Gettin' through, Bunter?"

"Yes, old chap! You go to sleep and leave it to me," said Bunter.

"Good!"

His weary lordship dozed again. Billy Bunter continued to labour, with the kindly help of Harold Skinner, till the task was done—done in a really remarkable manner. Never had prep passed so quickly and easily.

Bunter rose from the table.

"Much obliged, Skinner," he said carelessly. "You have saved me about five or ten minutes, I dare say."

"That all?" asked Skinner sarcastically.

"Hardly that," said Bunter calmly.

"I'm rather a dab at Latin, you know."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Practically read it off like English," said Bunter. "Still, you've saved me the trouble of looking out two or three words. *Ta-ta.*"

"What I like about you, Bunter, is the grateful way you have of acknowledging a favour," said Skinner. "It makes a fellow so keen to help you!"

And Skinner strolled out of the study. Billy Bunter shook Lord Mauleverer by the shoulder and brought his lordship back from the land of dreams.

"Yaw-aw-aw! Finished?" asked Mauleverer.

"Yes, old chap. You'd better look at it—better get it off by heart, if you can, and then you'll be able to rattle it off if Quelchy calls on you to construe."

"Oh dear!"

"Buck up!" said Bunter encouragingly. "It was a frightfully



Billy Bunter began to pour out the tea. The stream of hot tea missed the cup and saucer and saturated Bob Cherry's trousers. There was a terrific yell from Bob. "Yow! You clumsy idiot!" he roared. "I'm scalded!" (See Chapter 7.)

difficult passage, and I've put in a lot of hard work."

"Did you really?" yawned Lord Mauleverer.

"Yes, with that ass Skinner chattering there all the time," said Bunter. "He thinks he knows a lot; but I could construe his head off. Now I'll read it to you, Mauly, and you look at the Latin, and then you'll have an idea how it goes. I've written it out for you to go over as often as you like."

"Thanks awfully, old chap. You're a brick!" said Lord Mauleverer.

And for ten minutes his lordship gave what attention he could muster to the task. Then he was interrupted by the entrance of Sir Jimmy Vivian.

"I say, it's jolly late," said Vivian.

"Done your prep, Mauly?"

"Yaas."

"Good! I shall have to mug it up somehow before brekker in the morning," said Sir Jimmy. "We've been boxing, and it's just on bed-time. Gimme Virgil, and I'll run it over once or twice."

"I'll let you have my con, old chap."

"Rats!" said Sir Jimmy cheerfully. "Haven't you told me a 'undred times not to slack, and now you're encouraging me. I'm ashamed of you, Mauly." He stared at Bunter. "Hand me that Virgil, Bunter, that you've got in your paw, and cut."

"Oh, really, Vivian—"

"Hook it!"

"I say—"

"Hook it!" roared Vivian. "I've got

no time to waste while you wag your silly, fat chin! Houtside!"

"I've been helping Mauly with his Latin—"

"Bosh! 'Ook it!"

"And if you like, I'll help you with your English!" said Bunter with crushing sarcasm.

Sir Jimmy Vivian made no reply to that. He was rather touchy on the subject of his English, which was, indeed, of a rather original variety owing to Sir Jimmy's peculiar upbringing. He picked up the Latin dictionary and took aim at Bunter instead of answering him.

The Owl of the Remove dodged out of the study, and the schoolboy baronet kicked the door shut after him. Then, for the short time he had left, Sir Jimmy struggled with Virgil. There was little time before bed, and Sir Jimmy did not make much of a success of his "con"; but undoubtedly he made something better than the remarkable production Billy Bunter had supplied to Lord Mauleverer—with Skinner's kindly help.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Troubles of a Slacker!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

Smack!

"Oh, gad!" gasped Lord Mauleverer.

His lordship was ambling thoughtfully in the quadrangle after breakfast the following morning.

Mauly had food for thought. That morning Bunter had been extremely

—next Monday's magnificent story of the Greyfriars heroes!

pally, and Mauly had dodged him with difficulty. He felt that he had brought it on himself. He couldn't cut a fellow who had done his prep for him the previous evening. It had been extremely convenient and gratifying to escape prep. But, like all benefits, it had to be paid for. In this weary world it is impossible to get something for nothing. There was an hour of reckoning.

Concerning Next Monday's Story! What is the secret of—

Mauleverer was reflecting dismally upon that undoubted fact, when Bob Cherry greeted him with his usual cheerfulness.

"Ow, wow, yow!" were Mauleverer's next remarks as he rubbed his shoulder. He blinked dismally at the Famous Five. Harry Wharton & Co. were looking very merry and bright that sunny morning.

"I was just thinkin'," said Lord Mauleverer, when his noble shoulder had recovered a little from Bob Cherry's greeting.

"The thoughtfulness must have been terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Was that why the worthy and ridiculous Mauly was scowling?"

"Not scowlin', old chap; frownin', perhaps," said Lord Mauleverer mildly. "I—I say! Would you fellows mind very much if Bunter came along with the party to Cornwall?"

Harry Wharton laughed. "It isn't for us to mind," he said. "Vivian can make up his own party the way he pleases."

"But Vivian doesn't want Bunter," said Johnny Bull. "I've heard him say that he won't have him at any price."

Lord Mauleverer wriggled uncomfortably.

"I've undertaken to put in a word for Bunter," he said. "Jimmy's a good little chap, and he always does what I ask him."

"But you don't want Bunter?" exclaimed Nugent.

"No fear!" "You won't be able to stand him yourself," said Johnny Bull.

"Well, I sha'n't have to stand him, you know," said Lord Mauleverer. "I'm not comin' to Cornwall. I really can't rough it in a dashed old house by a roarin' sea. You fellows enjoy that sort of thing; Nature designed you for the jolly old strenuous life. I'm goin' to the Alps with my guardian, old Brooke, after all."

"Sorry!" said Wharton. "You ought to come! We'd make you row, and swim, and climb cliffs, and—"

Lord Mauleverer shuddered. "I was going to take you for a special walk from Penzance to Land's End, Mauly," said Bob Cherry.

"Oh dear!" "You'd get cured of your blessed laziness," said Bob. "I'm sure it would be a case of either kill or cure."

"Yaas. But about Bunter—can he come?" asked Mauleverer.

"That's for Vivian to say," answered Wharton. "We've stood Bunter often enough; I suppose we could stand him again. But why the thump are you asking Vivian to take him?"

"He did my prep for me last night."

"Slacker!"

"Yaas; but I get so worn out at the end of term," said Lord Mauleverer pathetically.

"You mayn't even be called on to construe," said Nugent.

"Sure to be if I hadn't done any prep," sighed his lordship. "It always turns out like that."

"And Bunter's con won't see you through, if you are called on," said Bob Cherry. "You'll get lined, anyhow."

Lord Mauleverer started.

"By gad, I hadn't thought of that! I'll tell Bunter that I sha'n't put in a word for him unless the con sees me through. That's fair, ain't it?"

"The fairfulness is terrific," grinned Hurree Singh.

Lord Mauleverer drifted away to look for Bunter. He found that fat youth seeking him.

"Oh, here you are, Mauly; looking for you," said Bunter, slipping a fat arm through Mauleverer's. His lordship jerked away; there was a limit, even if Bunter had done his prep for him.

"Oh, really, Mauly—" Bunter blinked wrathfully. "Look here, have you told Vivian yet?"

"No. I'm not goin' to speak to Vivian unless your con sees me through with Quelch," said Lord Mauleverer. "I know he's goin' to make me sit up and talk—after the show I made yesterday. I know his eagle eye will drop on me. You think your con's all right, Bunter?"

"Absolutely first-class," said Bunter confidently. "If I did the whole Aeneid

—“THE HOUSE OF PENGARTH”? Sir Jimmy Vivian's—

like that publishers would be running after me for it to publish it as a new and splendid translation of Virgil."

"By gad, would they?"

"Sure thing," said Bunter. "You're all right for Quelch, old chap. Don't you worry. Now, about Vivian—"

"All right, after class," said Lord Mauleverer.

"He's over there, talking to Skinner."

"Let him rip!" said Lord Mauleverer, and he strolled into the house. Mauly had set himself a painful task in "putting in a word for Bunter," and he was not eager for it. Perhaps he hoped that Bunter's "con" would fail him in the hour of need, and thus relieve him of his obligation. But if it did the vials of Mr. Quelch's wrath would be poured upon his lazy head; so there was trouble either way. Indeed, life seemed full of trouble to his lazy lordship.

His only consolation was that he was going to the Alps that vacation, and was not going to lead a strenuous life at Pengarth, the ancient house on the Cornish coast that Sir Jimmy Vivian had inherited. Yet even then there was a fly in the ointment, as somebody was sure to expect him to do some climbing on the Alps.

Meanwhile Sir Jimmy Vivian was busy "mugging" up what he ought to have prepared the evening before, and he was receiving unexpected assistance from Skinner. Skinner was helping him industriously, much to Vivian's relief, as

class was close at hand and the school-boy baronet was quite at sea with his "con." Why Skinner was so kind Sir Jimmy did not inquire. And Skinner's help on this occasion was very different from the help he had given Bunter in Study No. 12. But even if Skinner had wanted to be humorous, he would have found it difficult to make Sir Jimmy believe that "litoribus nostris" could be construed into "to our literary men." William George Bunter was the only fellow at Greyfriars who could be stuffed to that extent.

Billy Bunter rolled into the Remove Form-room that morning feeling quite bright and cheerful. Having seen Mauly through a difficult construe, he was to reap his reward. The reward was out of all proportion to the service rendered, but that only added to the satisfaction of the Owl of the Remove.

But Lord Mauleverer had not passed through his ordeal yet, and when the time came for him to do so there was likely to be a surprise for him, and for W. G. Bunter.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Vials of Wrath!

MR. QUELCH came into the Remove room looking very serious, perhaps just a little cross. Mr. Quelch was too just a man to be cross with his class simply because he had a tired feeling towards the end of term, and the last days seemed of endless length. He would have been shocked at the bare idea of such injustice. Nevertheless, it was an indubitable fact that Mr. Quelch did grow tart and tarter towards the end of term, and that when he looked as he looked now it behoved the Removites to be on their very best behaviour.

Mr. Quelch certainly would not have turned his wrath upon any fellow who had not committed a fault. But it was very probable that he would take severe notice of faults that, earlier in the term, would have escaped special attention.

So the Remove fellows, after a glance at Mr. Quelch's countenance, decided to be very good that morning. Skinner dropped to the floor an ink-ball which had been designed for the back of some fellow's neck. Hazeldene sat in a state of suppressed panic, and wished from the bottom of his heart that he had done his prep the evening before, and hoped fervently that he would escape the Form master's eye. Bob Cherry wondered whether he had given too much time to boxing and too little to P. Virgilius.

—Mystery Mansion on the Lonely Coast of Cornwall!

Maro. Fellows who felt that they were well primed for the ordeal before them congratulated themselves. Fellows who felt the reverse sat in dismal apprehension.

Lord Mauleverer felt very thankful indeed that he had learned Bunter's construe almost by heart. It had been a fearful fag; but he was glad of it now that he saw Mr. Quelch's severe features.

Keep your eyes open for our next Galloping Dick yarn!

Billy Bunter gave his lordship an encouraging wink.

Mr. Quelch's steely eye fixed on Bunter. But the Owl of the Remove was too short-sighted to notice that.

Catching Mauly's embarrassed eye, Bunter gave him another wink to assure him that it was all right.

"Bunter!" rumbled Mr. Quelch.

The fat junior jumped.

"Eh! Oh! Yes, sir?"

"Why are you making signs to Mauleverer?"

"I, sir! Not at all, sir!"

"I saw you, Bunter!"

"I—I mean, I—I wasn't winking at Mauly, sir!" stammered Bunter. "I—I—I had a fly in my eye, sir."

"You will take fifty lines for untruthfulness, Bunter."

"Oh, dear!"

"Mind your p's and q's this morning," murmured Vernon-Smith. "Quelch's on the giddy warpath."

"Vernon-Smith!"

"Oh! Yes, sir?"

"You were speaking to Redwing."

"I—I—"

"I will not have whispering in the class," said Mr. Quelch. "Kindly repeat aloud what you were whispering to Redwing, Vernon-Smith."

"I—I—" stammered the Bounder.

"Well?"

"I—I said we'd better mind our p's and q's, sir," said Vernon-Smith, with a crimson face.

"If that odd and absurd expression means that you had better pay proper attention to your lessons, Vernon-Smith, you are undoubtedly right," said Mr. Quelch. "Was that all you said?"

"Nunno, sir."

"I told you to repeat what you said to Redwing, Vernon-Smith. What else did you say?"

Vernon-Smith drew a deep breath.

"I—I said Quelch's on the giddy warpath, sir!" he said.

"Wha-a-t!"

Mr. Quelch stood transfixed for a moment. There was a chuckle in the class, which died away instantly under the Remove master's freezing glance.

"You are impertinent, Vernon-Smith!" gasped Mr. Quelch at last.

"You asked me, sir," said the Bounder.

"You will take a hundred lines."

"Thank you, sir!" said the Bounder imperturbably.

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips. He could not very well double the Bounder's imposition, merely because Smithy had thanked him. But he felt very much inclined to do so.

Lord Mauleverer felt a slight tremor when the Remove master's eye fixed on him. With Mr. Quelch in this Tartaric mood, his lordship felt a good deal like Daniel in the lions' den.

"I trust, Mauleverer, that you have not neglected your preparation this time," said Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, sir!" murmured Lord Mauleverer. It was a little difficult to reply to Mr. Quelch's remark. Undoubtedly Mauleverer had neglected his preparation even more thoroughly than usual; but he did not want to tell his Form master so.

"Yesterday, Mauleverer, you made an exhibition of ignorance that would have been disgraceful in a Third-Form boy."

"Oh, sir!"

"I trust you will do better this morning."

"I—I trust so, sir!" gasped Lord Mauleverer.

Skinner smiled sweetly. He was preparing to enjoy himself.

"Well, you may construe, Mauleverer," said Mr. Quelch, a little more graciously. "I shall be very glad if you have contrived to exert yourself a little. Yesterday you had actually forgotten the section set you for preparation."

Poor Mauleverer wriggled. He had forgotten again, as a matter of fact. The Form master's gimlet eyes did not fail to note that wriggle of discomfort.

"Which book of the Aeneid are we dealing with now?" he demanded sharply.

"Seventh book, sir," said Jimmy Vivian, before the hapless Mauleverer could speak.

"I was speaking to Mauleverer, Vivian!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Was you, sir?" said the schoolboy baronet innocently.

"You should not say 'was you,' Vivian!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "Really, it is time that you learned to express yourself a little more grammatically in your native language."

"Yessir!"

"Do not say 'yessir.' 'Yes' and 'sir' are two distinct words."

"Yessir!"

"If that is intended for impertinence, Vivian—"

"I 'ope, sir—"

"Do you mean that you hope?"

"Yessir!" said Sir Jimmy, with a crimson face.

"You must be more careful, Vivian," said Mr. Quelch. "But never mind that now; we are wasting time. Mauleverer, you will construe."

Lord Mauleverer proceeded to give his rendering of "Tu quoque litoribus nostris, Aeneia nutrix, aeternam moriens famam, Caieta, dedisti," etc.:

"Thou, also, Caieta, to our literary men—"

Mr. Quelch gave a convulsive start. "Eternally hungry—" proceeded Mauleverer.

Mr. Quelch stood transfixed. "Gave the nuts of Aeneas—" added Mauleverer.

Lord Mauleverer got no further. Mr. Quelch did not interrupt him; he seemed hypnotised. But a yell of laughter from the class interrupted his lordship.

Serious as the state of affairs was in the Remove-room just then, Lord Mauleverer's "con" was a little too much for the juniors.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lord Mauleverer looked round in astonishment.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The nuts of Aeneas?" gasped Bob Cherry. "Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, in a formidable voice.

There was silence.

"Mauleverer! How dare you play pranks like this in the Form-room?" exclaimed the Remove master.

"Pranks, sir?" gasped Mauleverer.

"Is this a time and place for practical jokes, Mauleverer?" roared Mr. Quelch.

"P-p-practical j-j-jokes?" stuttered Mauly. "C-c-certainly not, sir. I—I—"



Bunter sat up in bed and rubbed his eyes. "I say, it's early, ain't it?" he inquired of the servant. "Half-past ten, sir." "Where are the fellows?" next demanded Bunter. "They've gone, sir." "What!" shrieked the fat junior. (See Chapter 8.)

Your old favourites, the Famous Five, prove their mettle next week!

I wasn't joking, sir! I was giving you my con, sir."

"Boy!"

Billy Bunter felt an inward quake. Apparently there was something wrong with that construe after all. He blinked at Skinner, and found that cheerful youth's face irradiated with smiles.

"Do you mean to tell me, Mauleverer, that the string of absurdities you have just uttered is intended to represent anything like the meaning of the Latin verses?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Yaas, sir!"

"You—you—you actually render 'Aeneia nutrix' into 'the nuts of Aeneas'?" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Yaas, sir!"

"Bless my soul! I cannot believe this, Mauleverer—I cannot believe that any boy, however stupid, could so render such a passage, if he gave the slightest attention to what he was doing. This is intended as a practical joke—as a piece of deliberate impertinence!"

"Oh, sir! I—" gasped the dismayed Mauleverer.

"I shall not cane you, Mauleverer—"

"Thank you, sir!"

"I shall not give you an imposition—"

"You're very kind, sir!"

"As you affect to have the obtuseness and benighted ignorance of a backward boy in the Second Form, I shall treat you like an infant!" rumbled Mr. Quelch. "You will stand in the corner of the Form-room, Mauleverer!"

"Oh gad!"

"You hear me?"

"But, sir, I—I—I—"

"Stand in the corner!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

Lord Mauleverer, with a face that was like unto a newly boiled beetroot, drifted into the corner, and stood there. Every face was turned towards Mauleverer, and every face was grinning.

It was not Lord Mauleverer's lucky morning!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Reward!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. gave Mauleverer sympathetic looks; but they could not help smiling.

All the Remove smiled.

Even Mr. Quelch's grim face relaxed a little as his unhappy lordship stood disconsolate in the corner of the Form-room.

Lord Mauleverer had a keen sense of the ridiculous, and Mr. Quelch could not, probably, have punished him more severely than by this method. Mauly stood first upon one leg, and then upon the other, with a burning face. For once his calm placidity of disposition deserted him, and Mauly was in a state of suppressed but almost volcanic wrath.

He was longing for classes to be over, not only to escape from his ludicrous position, but to get at Bunter. It was Bunter's precious construe that had brought him to this! He yearned from the bottom of his heart to punch Bunter.

Meanwhile, Skinner had been called on to construe, and he acquitted himself well; and Lord Mauleverer, as he listened to him, realised how wide of the mark he had been in his rendering of 'Tu quoque litoribus nostris,' and the rest.

"Thou, too, Caieta, the nurse of Aeneas, dying, to our shores gavest deathless fame."

"Oh gad!" murmured Mauleverer, as he listened to Skinner. "That silly ass

Bunter was yards off the wicket! Nothing about nuts in that!"

Billy Bunter's plump jaw dropped as he heard Skinner.

This was very different from Skinner's rendering in Study No. 12, when he had so kindly helped Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove realised that his fat leg had been pulled on that occasion, and he hoped from the bottom of his heart that he would not be called on. He could only go on as Lord Mauleverer had started, if Mr. Quelch's eagle eye sought him out.

Fortunately, he did not catch Mr. Quelch's eyes.

The lesson ended without Bunter being dealt with, and the fat junior breathed more freely.

Lord Mauleverer did not share in the next lesson; he was still standing in the corner. He was not sorry to lose the lesson—he could have sustained many losses of that kind with great fortitude. But his noble legs were tired, and he was feeling more and more ridiculous every moment.

Moreover, Mr. Hacker, the master of the Shell, came in to speak to Mr.

WHO WANTS SOME MONEY?

£10! £10! £10!

RESULT OF MIDDLESEX PICTURE-PUZZLE COMPETITION!

In this competition one competitor sent in a correct solution of the picture. The First Prize of £5 has therefore been awarded to:

Wm. MAY,
Vauxhall,
Llanelly,
S. Wales.

The Second Prize of £2 10s. has been divided between the two following competitors, whose solutions contained one error each:

Leslie Wallis, 14, Egerton Road, Bishopston, Bristol; F. C. Love, 20, Enmore Green, Shaftesbury, Dorset.

The ten prizes of 5s. each have been divided among the following nineteen competitors, whose solutions contained two errors each:

E. G. Boughton, 3, Surrey Road, Peckham Rye, S.E. 15; S. Ogden, 41, Nugget Street, Oldham; E. Nelson, 29, Ley Street, Ilford, Essex; James Edwards, 64, Tutnalls, Lydney, Glos; Thomas Williams, 43, Glamour Road, Llanelly, S. Wales; Norman Delamare, 59, Heidelberg Road, Southsea; F. G. Bissenden, 36, Nightingale Road, Dover; Dorothy Ogden, 41, Nugget Street, Oldham; Alex Shaw, 61, Pontypriid Road, Porth, Glam; F. W. Ballard, 71, Graces Road, Camberwell, S.E. 5; Willie Entwistle, 7, Lord Street, Radcliffe; R. W. Kernick, 62, Ivor Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham; N. Willis, Whelford, Leckhampton, Cheltenham Spa; Miss L. Marshall, Tanyard, Cranbrook; A. Thomas, c/o 2, Douglas Street, Birkenhead; John Macdonald, 118, New City Road, Glasgow; Miss V. E. Love, 20, Enmore Green, Shaftesbury, Dorset; S. A. Love, 20, Enmore Green, Shaftesbury, Dorset; Miss C. E. Love, 20, Enmore Green, Shaftesbury, Dorset.

SOLUTION.

Middlesex play fewer matches than most counties. Their list does not contain some of the weaker sides. P. F. Warner, well known all over the globe as Plum, resigned the captaincy in 1920, and F. T. Mann is leader at the present time. Middlesex secured the County Championship in 1920 and 1921, but were unsuccessful in their endeavours to retain it last year.

Quelch, and he saw Mauleverer in the corner. Evidently he asked Mr. Quelch what it meant, for, after an exchange of words in low voices, the master of the Shell smiled, glanced again at Mauleverer, and smiled again.

Lord Mauleverer's crimson face grew more crimson.

Genial and good-tempered as he was, he could have knocked the two Form masters' heads together just then, and derived enjoyment from the process.

But the knocking together of the august heads of Form masters was a pleasure denied to juniors. Lord Mauleverer had to remain in his corner and endure till the morning break.

Then he was allowed to leave the Form-room with the rest of the Remove. In the passage he made a rush at Bunter.

"I say, Mauly— Yaroooooooh! Leggo!" roared Bunter, as the exasperated Mauleverer grasped him by the collar.

"You fat villain!" gasped his lordship.

"Whoop! Leggo! Wharrer marrer?" yelled Bunter. "I say, you fellows, draggimoff! Mauly's gone mad! Help!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's Bunter done, Mauly?" exclaimed Bob Cherry. He seized the excited Mauly by the collar and jerked him back.

"Let go, you ass!"

"Hold him, Bob!" gasped Bunter. "He's potty! Hold him!" And Billy Bunter dodged away and fled.

"Gently does it, old chap," said Bob soothingly. "What on earth's the matter, Mauly? Why are you going for Bunter? You never go for anybody."

"I'm goin' to burst him!" howled Lord Mauleverer.

"But why and wherefore the burstfulness?" asked Hurree Singh.

"I'm going to squash him!"

"But what's he done?" asked Wharton, in amazement.

"He's done my con!"

"What?"

"The fat villain came to my study and did my con last night!" gasped Lord Mauleverer breathlessly. "I told you he did it for me, so that I'd ask Vivian to take him to Cornwall. I—I was goin' to put in a word for him if it worked all right."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "It didn't."

"So that was Bunter's con!" exclaimed Frank Nugent, with a howl of merriment. "Ha, ha, ha! I wondered how even you got it as bad as that, Mauly."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Even Mauly wouldn't turn the nurse of Aeneas into Aeneas' nuts!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

"I'm goin' to slaughter him! Stand in' in a corner like—like—"

"Like little Jack Horner!" grinned Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll give him nuts!" said Lord Mauleverer.

And he ran out of the School House in search of Bunter and vengeance.

But he did not find Bunter.

That plump youth kept out of Mauly's way till the bell rang for next lesson; and he came into the Form-room a minute late, in order to make sure of keeping clear of Mauly.

After third lesson was over Bunter felt pretty safe. Lord Mauleverer never let the sun go down on his wrath; and by the time the Remove were dismissed, his lordship's placidity had returned.

At dinner Bunter passed him things,

Another detective masterpiece: "The Snake's Tooth!"

and was glad to see that Mauly did not seem to remember his offence.

After dinner Bunter joined his lordship, a little uneasy and wary, perhaps. But Lord Mauleverer did not kick him.

"Spoken to Vivian yet, Mauly?" asked Bunter.

"Eh?"

"About the holidays," hinted Bunter.

"Begad! Go an' eat coke!"

"But you were going to speak to Vivian if I did your con, you know," urged Bunter.

Lord Mauleverer breathed hard.

"Was it a success, you fat spoofer?" he demanded.

"Well, you see—"

"Worst show I've ever made in the Form-room!" growled Mauleverer.

"Better if I hadn't looked at the thing at all, and chanced it. I was goin' to give you the hidin' of your life!"

"Oh, really, Mauly—"

"I'm lettin' you off, you worm! But get out of reach, or I shall kick you! It's a fearful fag, kickin' a fat bounder, but I shall do it if you don't clear!"

"I say, Skinner's trying to stick Vivian for an invitation for the holidays, Mauly."

"Bother Skinner!"

"You'd rather have me than Skinner, wouldn't you, old fellow?"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Look here, you said you'd speak to Vivian, and there he is—"

His lordship breathed hard through his noble nose.

"I'll speak to him. Come on."

"Good old Mauly!" chirruped Bunter.

And he bore down on the schoolboy baronet with Lord Mauleverer.

"Jimmy, old man—"

"'Ere I am, Mauly!" said the baronet.

"Bunter wants me to speak to you about takin' him along to Pengarth for the holidays," said Lord Mauleverer.

"My advice is, don't!"

Sir Jimmy chuckled.

"I'm taking your advice, old covey," he said.

"I—I say, Mauly!" howled Bunter, as his lordship walked away; having thus "put in a word" for Bunter in a rather unexpected fashion.

Lord Mauleverer did not heed. He walked away, evidently having done with Bunter. The Owl of the Remove turned to Sir Jimmy Vivian as a last resource.

"I say, Vivian, old chap—"

"Nothing doing!" grinned Sir Jimmy.

"You see, it's like this," said Bunter.

"Mauly having urged me to join the party for Cornwall, I've refused a lot of other invitations. My old pal D'Arcy of St. Jim's wanted me badly."

"No accounting for tastes, is there?" said Sir Jimmy.

"Look here, Vivian—"

"You'd better drop a line to your old pal," suggested Sir Jimmy. "Now, roll away, afore I roll you."

Billy Bunter's eyes glittered behind his spectacles.

"Of course, it would be a bit infra dig for me to come with your party," he observed.

"That's all right; you ain't coming."

"On second thoughts, I don't quite see how I could stand you," said Bunter thoughtfully. "I was willing to take you in hand a bit, and help you to learn to speak English—"

"What?"

"But really, I don't see how I could take a holiday with a fellow who drops his h's all over the place," said Bunter. "Better call it off."



William George Bunter raised a straw hat and bowed gracefully to Miss Bull. "Good afternoon, ma'am." "Dear me," murmured Miss Bull. "You remember me, ma'am?" The lady looked at him thoughtfully. "You are not the butcher's boy?" (See Chapter 9.)

"Look 'ere—" roared Sir Jimmy wrathfully.

Bunter raised a fat hand.

"No," he said, "I'm sorry; but I've got to be firm. I simply couldn't stand you, Vivian! There's a limit."

"You—you—" gasped Sir Jimmy.

"I don't mind being kind to you, low bounder as you are," said Bunter, "but you must keep your distance. I insist upon that. As for my joining any holiday party with you, that's absolutely out of the question."

And Billy Bunter turned and walked away, with his fat little nose high in the air, leaving Sir Jimmy speechless.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Who Wants Bunter?

DURING the next few days William George Bunter was a thoughtful youth, and frequently wore a look of deep reflection.

Bunter often had food for thought towards the end of the term.

He did not worry much about end of term exams; he had more important matters to think of.

Considering what a really ripping place Bunter Court was, to judge by Bunter's descriptions, it was really surprising that Bunter was never keen to spend his holidays there. But he never was. The subject of his reflections now was, what was he to do for the holidays; or, to be more precise, whom was he to do.

He had turned down Sir Jimmy's party for Cornwall, as he confided to all the

Remove. Having turned that party down, Bunter sought fresh fields and pastures new.

But there was in the Remove a plentiful lack of enthusiasm for Bunter's fascinating society.

He told Ogilvy that he was thinking of going up to Scotland with him; and Ogilvy politely requested him to think again. He told Micky Desmond that he had often wanted to see Ireland; and Micky assured him that Ireland didn't want to see him. He mentioned to Morgan that he had a great admiration for Welsh scenery, and hoped to see some this vac; to which Morgan replied that Bunter's features would spoil even a Welsh landscape.

Vernon-Smith, it transpired, was going on a motor tour, and taking Tom Redwing with him. Bunter generously offered to keep Smithy company instead of that outsider Redwing; and to his surprise, he had barely finished making that generous offer, when he was sitting in the Remove passage outside Smithy's door in a state of breathless bewilderment.

Hazeldene was tackled next. Bunter pointed out to Hazel that his sister Marjorie would scarcely enjoy her holidays if she didn't see Bunter. This was, in Bunter's opinion, a self-evident fact; a thing that needed only to be mentioned to be acknowledged at once. But Hazel did not seem to see it like that. He reached for a cricket-stump, and Bunter had just time to jump out of the study.

—featuring Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake—next Monday!

Up and down the Remove went Bunter as breaking-up drew near, fishing for invitations, though to do him justice, he did not realise it. He thought he was offering to make a fellow's holiday a real success—for how could a holiday be a success without Bunter?

But there was evidently a difference of opinion. Bunter's kind offers were declined on all hands, with more or less politeness—generally less!

So, as a final resource, Bunter was driven back to the party in Cornwall, which he had, as he declared, turned down.

He rolled into Study No. 12 one evening and offered to do Lord Mauleverer's prep. This time the noble slacker of the Remove did not fall to the temptation. He had been there, as it were. Instead of taking the offer, he took the Latin dictionary, and it whizzed only an inch from Bunter's car as he fled.

The hapless Owl of the Remove drifted along to Study No. 1, where he found Wharton and Nugent. They grinned as he rolled in.

"I say, you fellows—" began Bunter. "Try Vivian!" said Frank Nugent, laughing.

"The fact is, I've come to speak about Vivian," said Bunter, blinking at the chums of the Remove. "I really think I've been too hard on him."

"How's that?" asked Wharton, with a stare.

"Refusing to join his party, you know—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't cackle," said Bunter, peevishly. "Of course, he's a low rotter. I can't stand the fellow. Still, I don't want to be hard on him because he was born in a slum. After all, he's a baronet; and a baronetcy is decent; though, of course, it's not like the titles in my family. On the whole, I think I shall be able to stand Vivian."

"But will he be able to stand you?" asked Nugent.

Bunter did not answer that question.

"Besides, I wouldn't desert old pals like you for the holidays," he said. "You can count me in. It's rather awkward for me to tell Vivian, after turning him down, you know. Will you fellows arrange it? Just tell Vivian you want me to come, you know, and say I'm willing."

"But we don't want you to come."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Shut the door after you."

"Look here—"

"You take the inkpot, Frankie, and I'll take the ruler, and see which of us can catch Bunter in the eye from this distance."

"Good!" said Nugent.

Slam!

Billy Bunter was gone.

The chums of the Remove chuckled, and resumed their prep. Billy Bunter rolled dismally into his own Study, No. 7. He blinked despondently at Peter Todd.

"I say, Peter—"

"Don't jaw when a fellow's at prep!" remonstrated Peter.

"I've never been home for the holidays with you, Peter."

"And never will," assented Peter.

"I don't know about that," said Bunter thoughtfully. "Look here, Peter! I know your people are not well off. Your home surroundings are not what I'm accustomed to in my own circle.

It's a bit of a come-down for me to spend a vac with a fellow whose father is only a poor rotter of a country solicitor. But, dash it all, I'm no snob."

Peter Todd looked fixedly at his fat study-mate.

"You're no snob!" he repeated.

"No," said Bunter. "I can stand it. If I find it's too thick, I'll stay only one week in the vac. You wouldn't mind my clearing off, would you?"

"I should enjoy it."

"Well, it's a go!" said Bunter. "Count on me, Peter."

"You really think you could put up with my place, Bunter?"

"I do, old chap. At least, I'll try."

"And you could put up with me?"

"Yes, Peter. I mean it. As I said, I'm no snob."

"Good!" said Peter. "But isn't there one trifling thing you've forgotten?"

"What's that?"

"That I couldn't put up with you!"

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"Now, shut up!" said Peter. "I won't kick you, as you're a born idiot, and can't help it. But shut up—"

"Look here, Peter—"

"Shut up!" roared Peter.

"If you think I'd come home with you for the holidays, Peter Todd, you're jolly well mistaken. I— Yarooooooh!"

One application of the ruler was enough. The voice of William George Bunter ceased from troubling, and the weary were at rest.

The last days of the term were running out, and Billy Bunter was no nearer to the solution of his problem. Never had the Owl of the Remove seemed to be at such a discount.

Indeed, the matter was becoming a standing joke in the Remove.

"Who wants Bunter?" the juniors would ask one another, when the Owl rolled into sight, and the answer was, "No takers."

Nobody wanted Bunter. It was amazing, but true.

When, on the last day, parents and relations, sisters and cousins and aunts, began to arrive in their myriads, Sir Reginald Brooke came with the crowd. Billy Bunter spotted Lord Mauleverer's uncle, and contrived to get speech with him. He explained to the old gentleman how, a few weeks before, he had been kidnapped in mistake for Sir Jimmy Vivian, and how he had allowed the mistake to happen, simply to save Vivian from danger. Sir Reginald stared at him through his eyeglass in a fixed, rather disconcerting way, and said "Huh!"

Afterwards, Sir Reginald mentioned the matter to Sir Jimmy.

"You've made up your party for Cornwall, my boy?"

"Yes, uncle," said Sir Jimmy. "Maully ain't coming; but there's five fellows to come—"

"I hope Bunter is not one of them."

"No fear!" said Sir Jimmy.

"Very good!"

Which was what Bunter should have expected, but certainly didn't expect. And when Greyfriars broke up, and its inhabitants were scattered to the north, south, east, and west, William George Bunter did his share of the scattering all by himself. He kicked his minor, Sammy of the Second, for getting in the same carriage with him, and that slight solace was all he had to console him on his homeward way.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Unexpected!

"YOU fellers don't mind—" Sir Jimmy Vivian paused.

Six cheery schoolboys were having tea on the lawn at Wharton Magnus, Harry Wharton's home. The chums of the Remove were staying there a few days before going to Pengarth, in Cornwall.

Bob Cherry was seated in a hammock, swinging gently, and balancing cup and saucer in one hand and cake in the other, with great skill. He grinned cheerfully at Sir Jimmy.

"Don't mind what?" he inquired.

"You see—"

"We don't mind anything, on a day like this," said Frank Nugent lazily. "Harry, old chap, this cake is topping! Simply topping!"

"The topfulness is terrific," concurred Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"It's jolly here," remarked Johnny Bull. "Sorry old Maully isn't here. But how nice not to see Bunter!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Old Maully's climbing the jolly old Alps by this time," said Harry Wharton. "What were you saying, Jimmy?"

"You fellers don't mind—"

"Not at all!" said Harry, laughing.

"Any old thing."

"We leave 'ere to-morrow," said Sir Jimmy.

"We do—we does."

"You fellers won't mind if Skinner comes to Pengarth?"

"Skinner! Didn't know you were pally with Skinner," said Harry, looking at the schoolboy baronet.

"Well, I ain't, exactly," said Sir Jimmy. "But he made himself very pleasant the last week of the term, and I thought he'd like to come. You fellers can get on with Skinner?"

"Dear old man, we can get on with anybody," said Bob Cherry. "Owing to our nice natures—"

Sir Jimmy grinned.

"Then you fellers won't mind?" he asked.

"Not a bit, old top," said Wharton. "Have Skinner, by all means, if you want him. Bunter too, for that matter."

"No jolly fear!" said Sir Jimmy. "No Bunter for me. Then I'll drop Skinner a line."

"Right-ho!"

Sir Jimmy walked away to the house.

Bob Cherry held up an empty tea-cup.

"Who's filling this for me?" he asked.

"Can't get out of the hammock."

"I will, old chap," said an unexpected voice.

"Wha-a-at!"

"Bunter!"

"Great Scott!"

Billy Bunter came round the hammock with a cheery grin on his fat face. The Famous Five stared at him.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Where did you spring from, Bunter?"

"Just walked from the station, old chap. I was going to wire to Wharton to send the car, but I thought I wouldn't give him the trouble."

"You wouldn't have given me the trouble," said Wharton coolly.

"He, he, he!"

"Your memory's going, Harry," said Nugent.

"Eh! How?"

"You seem to have forgotten all about asking Bunter here."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Off for the holidays? Mind you take the MAGNET with you!

"I never asked him!" growled Wharton.

"Oh, really, Harry, old chap—"

"Look here, Bunter—"

"The cheekfulness of the esteemed Bunter is terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Oh, really, Inky—"

"It would be a lot of trouble to get out of this comfy hammock," said Bob Cherry. "But I'll get out if you like, Harry, and kick Bunter all the way back to the railway station."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

Harry Wharton was frowning. He wanted to be hospitable to any Greyfriars fellow that dropped in. But really, William George Bunter was the limit.

"I met your uncle on the drive, Harry," said Bunter. "You don't seem to have mentioned to Colonel Wharton that I was coming."

"I didn't know you were coming," said Wharton grimly.

"Might have guessed, though," murmured Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I saw Miss Wharton at the house," continued Bunter calmly. "Your aunt is really nice, Wharton. She gave me some cake at once when I mentioned that I was hungry. But I'm ready for tea."

"You can stay to tea if you like," said Wharton.

"I will, old chap, as you're so pressing," said Bunter affectionately. "I've had to cut a lot of engagements to get here. But I don't mind—it's such a pleasure to see old pals again, and to see them so glad to see me."

"Oh, my hat!"

"My boot's at your service, Wharton," said Bob. "I don't mind kicking Bunter as hard and often as you like."

"You want some more tea, Bob, old fellow?" said Bunter, taking up the teapot. "Here you are."

"Well, if you're here, you may as well make yourself useful," said Bob, holding up his cup.

Billy Bunter began to pour out the tea. Perhaps, owing to his short sight, he did not see the teacup very clearly. Certainly the stream of hot tea missed the cup, and missed the saucer, and poured upon Bob Cherry's trousers.

There was a terrific yell from Bob. The tea was hot—very hot. The hammock swung violently as Bob jumped and yelled.

His foot caught Bunter on a well-filled waistcoat, and the Owl of the Remove sat down suddenly on the grass with a roar. The teapot landed on the earth in fragments.

"Ow, ow, ow!" roared Bob.

He rolled out of the hammock and bumped on the ground.

"Yow-wow!" howled Bunter.

"You fat idiot!"

"You clumsy ass!"

"Ow! Oh! I'm scalded! Wow-wow-wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter sat up, gasping.

"You silly ass! You've broken the teapot now," he exclaimed. "If I were Wharton I'd make you pay for it!"

"You scalded me!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Rot! What a fuss about a little tea!" snorted Bunter. "You ought to be able to bear a little pain. Be a man—like me!"

"I'll jolly well give you a little pain to bear, then!" howled Bob. And he grabbed Billy Bunter by the back of the neck.

"Yaroooooh!"

"Dear me!" said a quiet, surprised voice, as Colonel Wharton came across the lawn. "Is anything the matter?"

Bob Cherry released Bunter, as if the Owl of the Remove had become suddenly red-hot.

His face was scarlet.

"Nunno!" he gasped. "Only—only—nothing, sir."

"Yow-ow-woop!" roared Bunter.

"Keep him off! Keep off, you beast! I'd jolly well lick you, only I won't kick up a shindy here. I've got some manners if you haven't."

"My dear boy—" murmured the colonel.

"Don't mind him, sir," said Bunter.

"Cherry can't help being a bit of a pig. He's well known at Greyfriars to have the manners of a Hun."

"I—I—" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Quiet!" said Bunter reprovingly.

"Don't shout in Colonel Wharton's presence. It's awfully bad form."

Bob Cherry almost choked. Certainly it was only Colonel Wharton's presence, at that moment, that saved Billy Bunter from the licking of his life.

"I apologise for him, sir," said Bunter, blinking at the colonel. "As a Greyfriars chap, sir, I apologise for his shocking bad manners."

"Really—" gasped the colonel.

"Excuse him, sir. He can't help it," said Bunter, enjoying the fact that he was reducing Bob Cherry to a state of almost homicidal fury. "Once he's away from school he breaks out like this. It's

his upbringing, sir. He's not really to blame."

And having delivered that Parthian shot, Bunter rolled away to the house, not feeling quite safe with Bob Cherry.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

"Stole Away!"

BILLY BUNTER joined the Greyfriars fellows at the supper table that evening with a beaming face. Six other faces were not beaming. But Bunter did not mind that.

Bunter had informed Miss Wharton that he was staying, and a room had been prepared for him, Wharton saying nothing. The old colonel and his sister hardly knew what to make of Bunter, but as he was a schoolfellow of Harry's, they bore with him politely. Harry Wharton was rather puzzled to know how to deal with the pertinacious Owl.

He disliked the idea of kicking a Greyfriars fellow out. As the chums were leaving the place on the following morning, Wharton decided to grin and bear it.

"It's only for the last evening, anyhow," he told his chums after supper, when they strolled on the terrace, Billy Bunter being still busy at the table.

"I'd jolly well boot 'im out!" said Sir Jimmy.

"Well, it's only the one evening," said Nugent. "But he won't let us go without him to-morrow, Harry. As soon as he finds we're starting—"



"My dear boys—surely you are not quarrelling?" exclaimed Miss Bull in amazement. "Oh! Nunno, auntie!" gasped Johnny, controlling his wrath. "Only a little game, ma'am," said Bunter, taking care to keep out of Johnny's reach. (See Chapter 10.)

"He'll start, too," growled Bob Cherry. "We shall have to kick him sooner or later."

"And the soonfulness would be the proper caper," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Harry Wharton looked a little worried.

"I don't want any bother here," he said. "And about to-morrow, I've been thinking. Bunter's a lazy slacker, and won't turn out early. We're taking the nine train. Don't say a word to the fat bouncer, and we'll clear and leave him snoring."

The juniors chuckled.

"Good egg!" said Johnny Bull.

"He doesn't know we're going on from here to Johnny's place before we go to Cornwall," said Harry with a smile. "If he tracks us any farther he can get off to Cornwall—and he won't find us there."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's rather a long step for even Bunter to take on spec," said Nugent, laughing. "Not a word—here he comes."

Bunter rolled out on the terrace.

"I say, you fellows, what's the joke, eh? I heard you cackling."

"Thinking of your features, old bean," answered Bob Cherry. "They're enough to make a donkey laugh."

"Oh, no wonder you laughed, then," said Bunter.

"Eh?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cheeky owl!"

"Manners, old chap! Manners!" said Bunter chidingly. "You're not in the Remove passage at Greyfriars now, you know."

Bob Cherry breathed hard.

"When are you fellows starting for Cornwall?" asked Bunter, blinking at Sir Jimmy's party through his big spectacles.

"Not for some days," said Wharton.

"Good! I don't mind resting here for a few days," said Bunter. "Quite a nice little place your uncle's got here, Harry."

"I'm glad you like it," said the captain of the Remove, with sarcasm.

"Of course, it's not like Bunter Court! Hardly the same style. But a chap can be comfortable here."

"Oh!"

"Don't you worry, old fellow; I shall be all right," said Bunter reassuringly.

"Roughing it a bit won't hurt me."

"Roughing it?" gasped Wharton.

"Well, after Bunter Court, this is roughing it," explained Bunter. "I rather miss our butler and the swarm of menservants, and all that. But, dash it all, everybody can't be rich. I'm going to turn in now, Wharton. I'd like brekker in bed about half-past ten."

And Billy Bunter nodded good-night and rolled away, leaving the chums of the Remove quite speechless.

"Well," said Bob Cherry, finding his voice at last, "if that fat chump doesn't take the whole cake!"

"The cakefulness is terrific."

Wharton drew a deep breath.

"Well, he's gone to bed," he remarked. "We sha'n't see him again. He won't wake till after we're gone."

"That's a comfort."

"I'll mention to my uncle that we don't want to disturb Bunter early," said Harry. "I need only say that Bunter will be leaving later in the morning."

"Good!"

Billy Bunter dreamed of holidays in Cornwall, and doughnuts and creamy tarts, in a comfortable bed at Wharton Lodge that night; but certainly he did not dream of what Harry Wharton & Co. were intending.

The following morning when Wharton came down he stopped for a moment at Bunter's door. From within came a deep and resonant snore—a familiar sound in the Remove dormitory at Greyfriars.

Wharton smiled as he went down the stairs.

The six juniors ate an early breakfast and packed their bags, and the colonel brought round the car to take them to the station. They said good-bye to Miss Wharton, and started at half-past eight. In his room, William George Bunter was still snoring peacefully.

When the colonel came back with the car the Owl of the Remove was still safe in the embrace of Morpheus.

At ten o'clock Colonel Wharton, remembering his existence, went to his bed-room door and tapped. Only a deep snore answered him, and the colonel smiled and walked away. If Bunter wanted to go on snoring, there was no reason why he should not please himself.

Possibly the old gentleman had some suspicion as to why his schoolboy guests had left without speaking to Bunter first. It was half-past ten when there came another knock at Bunter's door, and a man came in with a breakfast tray.

Bunter sat up in bed.

"Ow!" he said, rubbing his eyes. "I say, it's early, ain't it?"

"Half-past ten, sir."

"Are the fellows down yet?"

"Oh, yes, sir—long ago."

"What are they doing this morning?"

"They've gone, sir."

"Gone out, do you mean?"

"No, sir. Gone!"

Billy Bunter grabbed his spectacles, jammed them on his fat little nose, and blinked at the man.

"Gone!" he gasped.

"Yes, sir."

"But they're coming back?" howled Bunter.

"I think not."

"Not coming back! Isn't Wharton coming back?" roared Bunter.

"I think Master Harry will be back for a few days before the new term at school, sir."

"Fathead!"

"Eh?"

"I mean, isn't he coming back here before he goes to Cornwall?" bawled Bunter.

The man looked at Bunter. He was not used to guests at Wharton Lodge with manners like William George. But he answered civilly.

"No, sir, I think not."

"Diddled!" gasped Bunter.

"Wha-a-at?"

"Spoofed!"

"Eh?"

"Have they gone by train?"

"I think so, sir."

"The rotters! The beasts! The spoofing cads!" yelled Bunter.

The man set down the tray and backed out of the room. He seemed to have an impression that William George Bunter had taken sudden leave of his senses.

Bunter rolled furiously out of bed. His first thought was to get on the track of the holiday party, whom he had hunted down to Wharton Lodge, and who had escaped him in this surreptitious way. But his glance fell on the breakfast, and he sat down to it. Feeding came first.

When he had breakfasted amply Billy Bunter rolled down the stairs, his eyes gleaming behind his glasses. Harry Wharton & Co. had escaped, but they were not yet done with the Owl of the Remove.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Tracked Down!

AUNTIE BULL sat by a sunny french window, with the green garden before her kind old eyes, as her knitting-needles clicked industriously away. The house was very quiet, which was accounted for by the fact that Johnny Bull and his Greyfriars friends were out of doors just then.

Miss Bull was feeling very happy that sunny afternoon. She was thinking what a really nice boy her nephew Johnny was, and how nice his schoolboy friends were—though, of course, not so nice as Johnny—even that rather odd boy Sir Jimmy. She was thinking, too, how they would enjoy their tea when they came back from their excursion. One of Johnny's most charming traits was the way he enjoyed the cakes made by his auntie's own hands, and the appreciation he showed for strawberries and cream. Miss Bull was quite happy as she knitted socks—for Johnny, of course.

In the opinion of Auntie Bull, there never had been such a fellow as Johnny since the universe started on its chequered career.

"Hem!"

A polite cough outside the open window made Auntie Bull look up. She beheld an ample, rotund figure, and a fat face which was adorned by a large pair of spectacles.

William George Bunter raised a straw hat and bowed gracefully to Miss Bull—as gracefully as a walrus.

"Good-afternoon, ma'am!"

"Dear me!" said Miss Bull.

"You remember me, ma'am?"

Miss Bull looked at him thoughtfully.

"You are not the butcher's boy?" she said interrogatively.

Bunter crimsoned.

"Oh, really, Miss Bull—"

"I think I have seen you before," said Miss Bull.

"My name's Bunter," said the Owl of the Remove, breathing hard. "I'm Johnny's pal at Greyfriars."

"Dear me, I thought I had seen you!" said Miss Bull. "Now I remember it, you called here once to see Johnny, and—"

"Yes, ma'am. I remember the place perfectly," said Bunter. "I thought I'd come round this way and surprise 'em. Is dear old Johnny here?"

"They are all gone out," said Miss Bull, smiling sweetly at Bunter. Anybody who referred to her nephew as dear old Johnny was sure of a place in Miss Bull's esteem.

"Oh!" said Bunter, his fat face falling. "Not—not gone for good?"

"No, they are staying until Friday."

"Oh, good!" said Bunter, in relief.

"Come in, my dear boy!" said Miss Bull. "Was Johnny expecting you?"

"I think he must have been," said Bunter, stepping in promptly. "He knows I wouldn't desert him in the holidays if I could help it."

Bunter sat down and blinked agreeably at the old lady. It was just as well, all things considered, that Harry Wharton & Co. were out when he arrived at Johnny Bull's aunt's home. It gave him time to make friends with Miss Bull.

"Is Johnny well, ma'am?" he asked, with great solicitude.

"Oh, yes, quite!" said Miss Bull.

"The dear child is never ill."

"He's a good chap!" said Bunter.

Auntie Bull beamed.

More splendid treats coming along, chums! Watch the Chat!

"A really splendid fellow!" said Bunter, seeing that he was on the right track.

"Everybody loves Johnny!" said Miss Bull placidly. That circumstance evidently raised "everybody" in Miss Bull's esteem.

"He's so popular!" said Bunter.

"And such a nice boy!" returned Miss Bull.

"So kind and generous!" said Bunter.

"So thoughtful for others!" sighed Miss Bull.

"So unselfish and good-tempered!" conceded Bunter.

He was prepared to keep up that duel as long as Miss Bull did.

"And you are a great friend of his?" asked Miss Bull.

"Tremendous!" said Bunter. "I've been staying with him, you know, at Wharton's place. I didn't come on here with the others because—because, you see, Wharton's uncle liked me so much, and seemed to feel it when he heard I was going, that I really felt I ought to hang on a little longer."

"Dear me!"

"Fellow ought to be unselfish," said Bunter loftily. "One thing is, I never was selfish."

"Oh!"

"Johnny's example has been good for me," added Bunter, seeing that he was losing ground, though he did not know why.

Miss Bull beamed again.

"I'm sure Johnny has an ennobling effect upon all his friends!" she said. "It must be so nice for Dr. Locke, having him at Greyfriars!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "Yes! Of course! It's ripping! I'm sure the Head thinks so! In fact, he said to me one day—"

"The Head did?"

"Yes. He said to me—"

"To you?"

"I—I mean, I heard him say to Mr. Quelch— That's our Form master, you know. He said to Quelch: 'If all the boys at Greyfriars were like Bull this school would take the cake!'"

"Bless me!" said Miss Bull. "What a very slangy expression for a headmaster to use!"

"And Quelch said to me," continued the Owl, "Bunter," he said, "the best thing you can do is to form a friendship with Bull and stick to him. He's the best and straightest boy in the school, and his example will be very beneficial to you."

"I have a high opinion of Mr. Quelch," said Miss Bull. "He seems to be a gentleman of very great judgment."

Bunter winked solemnly at the fat tabby cat that lay in the sunshine outside the window.

"Johnny has not mentioned to me that he expected you," said Miss Bull, "and he is usually so thoughtful."

"Well, we all forget things at times," said Bunter. "Johnny forgot to tell me he was coming here when they left Wharton's place. Luckily, Miss Wharton remembered that they were going to stay with him, and I went to Bull's home. There they told me he was staying a few days with you, ma'am, so I came on here. I miss Johnny so much I felt I ought to see him as soon as possible. I know he misses me, though Johnny isn't one to complain."

"Dear me, you have had quite a great deal of trouble!" said Miss Bull.

"Oh, not at all!" said Bunter.

"Travelling makes me hungry, but that's all."

"Then you will stay to tea, won't you? We shall have tea as soon as Johnny comes in."

Bunter really did not see any necessity for waiting till Johnny came in, but even Bunter could not say so.

"Yes, ma'am, thank you! I suppose Johnny will want me to stay here with him, as I'm going on to Cornwall with the party."

"Then I must speak to Adelaide about your room," said Miss Bull unsuspiciously.

"Thank you, ma'am. Put me anywhere," said Bunter. "I should hate to give you any trouble."

"Not at all!" said Miss Bull.

Billy Bunter grinned at the cat, while Miss Bull, having laid down her knitting, interviewed Adelaide. A surprise was awaiting Johnny Bull & Co. when they came in. They would not only find Bunter, but would find him a fixture.



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When Miss Bull returned she glanced at the clock.

"They should be in in a few minutes now," she said. "Yes, I think I can hear their voices."

A sound of cheery, youthful voices floated across the garden from the distance. Billy Bunter rose to his feet and blinked out of the window.

"Yes, here they come!" he said.

Six cheery youths came to the french window from the garden. Adelaide was bringing in the tea.

"We're not late, auntie!" said Johnny Bull, giving his aunt an affectionate pat on her dry old cheek.

"No, my dear," said Miss Bull.

"Here is a friend of yours—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Bunter!"

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Plus Bunter!

BILLY BUNTER grinned genially at the chums of the Remove. They stared at him blankly.

"Bunter—here!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"The Bunterfulness is terrific!"

"No gettin' away from that covey!" remarked Sir Jimmy Vivian.

Miss Bull sat at the tea-table and presided over tea and cake. Billy Bunter gave the juniors a fat wink.

"Surprised you?" he asked.

"Yes, rather, you fat owl!"

Bunter chuckled.

"You thought you had diddled me when you sneaked away from the Lodge surreptitiously, Wharton!"

"Eh? Oh, surreptitiously!" said Wharton, laughing.

"I rather despise fellows who act superstitiously like that!" said Bunter.

"But it's all right! Here I am!"

Johnny Bull gave him a glare.

"Are you going out by the door or the window?" he asked in a low fierce whisper.

"What did you say, Johnny?" asked Bunter loudly.

"Get out!" breathed Johnny Bull.

"What?"

Johnny Bull gave the fat junior a Hunnish glare. He did not want Miss Bull to discover that there was trouble.

Bunter was quite aware of that.

"So glad you're delighted to see me, Johnny, old fellow!" he said. "Let's have tea! I say, you fellows, that looks a topping cake!"

Billy Bunter sat down to tea.

The juniors gathered round the table, some of them smiling. Johnny Bull was not smiling, but the expression on his face made the other fellows smile.

Bunter chatted genially during tea, apparently feeling quite at his ease.

Miss Bull, quite unconscious that anything was wrong, beamed over the happy party.

"So we're starting for Cornwall on Friday, Wharton?" said Bunter cheerfully.

"You ain't!" muttered Vivian.

"What did you say, Vivian?"

"Oh, nothing!" mumbled Sir Jimmy.

"Taking the Great Western, I suppose, Harry, old chap?" said Bunter.

"Yes," said Wharton curtly.

"Won't it be jolly, all of us travelling together like this!" said Bunter.

"After we've done Cornwall I want you all to come to Bunter Court for a week or two. You'll enjoy the repose of a stately mansion after roughing it at Vivian's place—what?"

Johnny Bull seemed to be choking over his cake.

"Come and have a look at the gardens, Bunter," he said, after tea.

Bunter blinked at him warily. He had a foreboding of what might happen, if Johnny got him to himself, out of sight and hearing of Auntie Bull.

"Thanks, no, old fellow: not at present," he said. "I'm a bit tired. I'll finish these strawberries."

"Look here—"

"Pass me the cream, old chap."

Johnny Bull walked out, and his comrades followed him. In the garden, Johnny looked eloquently at his comrades.

"I can't kill him there!" he murmured.

"The kill-fulness would be the proper caper," grinned Hurree Singh. "But the shockfulness to the esteemed auntie would be terrific."

Bob Cherry laughed.

"After all, he'll have to clear after tea," he said. "Even Bunter can't hang on here for the night without being asked."

"Well, I won't ask him," said Johnny Bull. "I must find a chance of kicking

(Continued on page 16.)

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THE GREYFRIARS HERALD

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By TOM BROWN.

"COME, sing to me!" Alonzo Todd, sauntering aimlessly in the Close, stopped short and looked up. Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, stood at the open window of his study, engaged in polishing his golf-clubs. Mr. Prout sang as he worked. But he was such an indifferent singer that it sounded for all the world as if he was barking out a command.

"Come, sing to me!" he repeated. Alonzo Todd, little dreaming that Mr. Prout was supposed to be singing, actually thought that the master of the Fifth was ordering him to go up and sing to him.

"Oh, certainly, sir!" he murmured. "Nothing would give me greater pleasure!"

And Alonzo hurried into the building. On his way to Mr. Prout's study the Duffer of the Remove bumped into his cousin Peter.

"Whither bound?" asked the latter. "I am just going to sing to Mr. Prout, my dear Peter."

"Eh?" gasped Peter.

"Mr. Prout has requested me to favour him with a song. Doubtless he feels a little dispirited and needs cheering up. I shall be delighted to sing to him, but I hardly know what to sing. Can you advise me?"

Peter stood blinking at his cousin.

"I—I don't understand!" he faltered. "Do you seriously mean to say that Prout has asked you to sing to him?"

Alonzo nodded.

"He distinctly said, 'Come, sing to me!' In fact, he said it twice, so there can be no mistake. But I am at a loss what to sing. Do you think a sentimental song would appeal to Mr. Prout—something of a tender and touching nature?"

"Ask me another!" said Peter, who still looked mystified. "Dashed if I know why Prout should want you to sing to him! Instead of cheering him up, your singing will jar on his nerves!"

Alonzo looked reproachful. "You appear to forget, my dear Peter, that I am a very fine vocalist!" he said. "I think Mr. Prout will appreciate that charmingly pathetic song, 'The Wandering Waif.' You remember how it starts?"

And Alonzo burst into song. Peter, clapping his hands to his ears, promptly

(Continued in the next column.)

EDITORIAL!

By Harry Wharton.

THERE are some who can sing, some who can make a noise which remotely resembles singing, and others who can't sing a note!

The art of singing really well is a gift that few fellows possess. I don't suppose there are half a dozen first-class singers in the Greyfriars Remove. Certainly I do not claim to be one! I can join in a hearty chorus or a rousing "sing-song" without spoiling the effect, but I should hesitate to tackle a tenor solo. On the few occasions when I have done so I have had to retreat before a fusillade of bad eggs, cabbages, and other missiles!

Mind you, I am not publishing this number with a view to poking fun at singing or belittling it as an art. I consider that voice culture is a splendid thing. A fellow who can sing really well need never be unpopular. He can entertain his friends at any time.

The object of this number is not to poke fun at singing, but at those who think they can sing and can't! There are many such at Greyfriars. I have often heard Mr. Prout singing in his bath, and I have been seized with violent internal pains. I have often heard Johnny Bull singing, and have mistaken it for the booming of thunder! And I once heard Skinner sing, "Drake Goes West." Skinner nearly shared the same fate!

This number must rank with the supplements of the side-splitting variety. We don't feel a bit serious this week!

ALONZO OBLIGES!

(Continued from the previous column.)

fled. Alonzo's singing was more than he could bear.

Alonzo broke off his song and gazed at his cousin's rapidly retreating form.

"Dear me!" he murmured. "How very rude of Peter to run away while I was singing! It would almost seem as if he did not appreciate my vocal talents! But Mr. Prout will appreciate them! I must hurry along to his study!"

The master of the Fifth was giving the final touches to his golf-clubs when Alonzo entered. He advanced into the study, clearing his throat as he did so. Then, without waiting for a signal, he began in a squeaky, unmelodious voice which grated harshly on the ear:

"Neddy was an orphan boy—hadn't got a mother,
Hadn't got a father, sister, or a brother.
In his torn and tattered rags, Neddy slunk along
Through the busy London streets,
Jostled by the throng."

Mr. Prout stared at the singer in blank amazement. The golf-club he had been cleaning clattered to the floor.

Alonzo, fixing his eyes on the ceiling, plunged into the chorus:

"All alone in London,
Homeless little Ned.
Seeking food and shelter,
Begging for his bread.
Oh, the ghastly pity!
In that cruel city,
Not a friend had Ned!"

Alonzo's voice trailed off with something like a sob of emotion.

If he expected Mr. Prout to whip out his handkerchief and weep, Alonzo was disappointed. The only thing Mr. Prout whipped out was his cane.

"Boy!" he thundered. "What is the meaning of this? How dare you come into my study uninvited and croak at me in that manner!"

Alonzo backed away in alarm.

"But you—you told me to come and sing to you, sir!" he protested.

"What!"

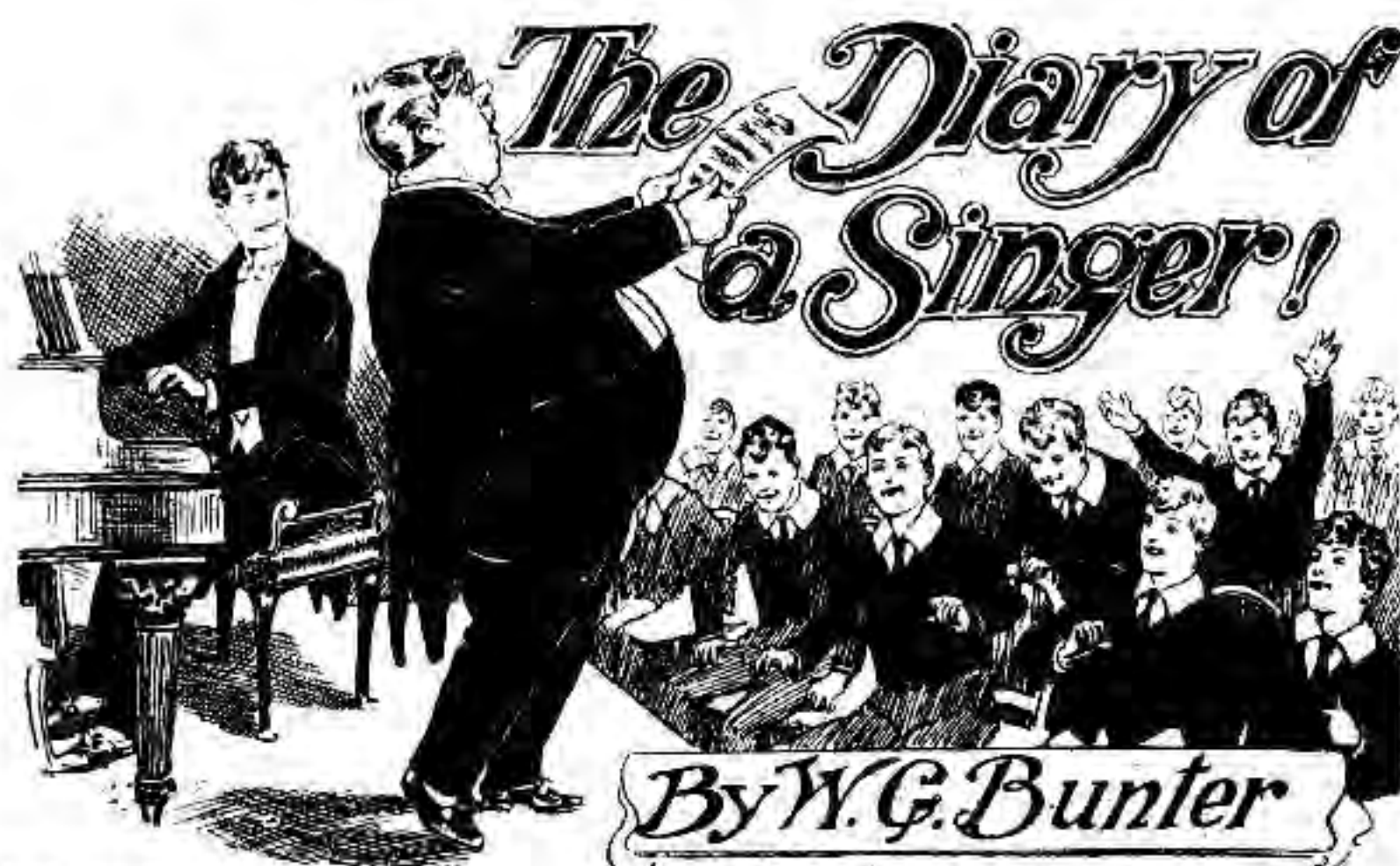
"I was walking in the Close just now, and I distinctly heard you say, 'Come, sing to me!'"

"You utterly stupid boy!" hooted Mr. Prout angrily. "I was singing!"

"Oh!"

Snorting with wrath, the furious Form master pursued Alonzo from his study, lashing out with his cane as he went. Alonzo fled down the passage, singing an entirely different tune.

Next week—a special "Health" feature! The goods!



MONDAY.

That old tirant Quelchy met me on my way downstairs, and gave me a hundred lines for causing a disturbance, and for "making a hideous din that was calculated to cause a breach of the piece"—that was how Quelchy put it. I eggsplained to him that I was merely singing, but he wouldn't believe me. "You were shrieking at the top of your voice, Bunter!" he said sternly. "Never have I heard such an appawling noise. If you really must sing, Bunter, go to some secluded spot where noboddy will hear you." Quelchy's a beest!

TUESDAY.

Had an awful row with that cad Skinner this morning. I asked him to pay me back that five bob he borrowed of me last term; and he had the cheek to say that he had no nollidge of the transaction. Moreover, he gave me a punch in the chest, which knocked me clean off my feet. I planned revenge during morning lessons. By means of my wonderful ventrilokwism, I made Skinner appear to burst into song. Old Quelch nearly had a fit. "Skinner!" he roared in a thunderus wisper. "How dare you start singing in the middle of the lesson? Come out here, sir, and I will make you sing to another tune!" Skinner strongly denied that he had been eggsersising his vocal cords; and then old Quelch tumbled to the fact that it must have been me with my ventrilokwism. He gave me a fearful licking, and then there was more music in the form-room!

WEDNESDAY.

I kondessed to appear at a fags' konsert, which my miner, Sammy, got up. I thought the grubby little bratts in the Second Form would go into rapchers when they heard my voice. But what do you think they did? Pelted me with hefty missiles! I struggled bravely through the first verse of my song, but when I got to the corus I had to beat a retreat under a bombardment of bad eggs, cabbages, decayed apples, and so fourth. I shall never volunteer to sing at a fags' konsert again!

THURSDAY.

I felt extra cheerful when I woke up this morning, as I was eggspccting a hamper of tack from one of my titled relations. I sat up in bed and burst into song, and the fellows pressed their hands to their ears and bellowed to me to shut up. Being thoroughly wound up, I was unable to stop, until that beest Bob Cherry dashed the contents of the water-jug over my head. The rotter would have drowned me if Wharton and Nugent hadn't rendered first aid and tried artificial perspiration. I didn't sing any more to-day!

FRIDAY.

I was biking through the villidge street this afternoon, singing at the top of my lungs, when that fat old idiot of a bobby, P.-c. Tozer, threatened to put me under arrest. He didn't do so, but he nearly put me under a steemroller by pushing me off my bike! It's a hit thick when people try to stop a budding Caroso from singing. They're jellus of my wonderful voice, that's what it is. But one of these days, when I become famous as a tenner, people will pay a fiver to come and hear me sing at the Albert Hall, in London!

SATURDAY.

The Remove gave a big konsert this evening. I was due to take part, and there were no less than six songs in my reper-twire (I think that's the right word). There were loud grones from the audience when Harry Wharton announced: "W. G. Bunter will now sing, 'Many Brave Hearts Have Been Fond of Jam Tarts.'" But when I stepped on to the platform not a note would come. It wasn't nervussness. The plain trooth was, my voice had broke! How the audience cheered when they discovered that I couldn't even raise a croak! I retired behind the seens in grate confusion. Now that my voice is broke, I suppose I shall have to get it repaired, but I don't know where to take it. There's a watch-repairer in Courtfield, who might be able to put it right. He mended Bob Cherry's alarm clock the other day, when it was out of order, so perhaps he can patch up this voice of mine. I hope so. The world could ill afford to lose such a sweet singer as me. My vocal tallents aren't appreciated at Greyfriars; but, as I hinted before, I shall appear at the Albert Hall one of these days, under the soodonym—that means an assumed name—of Mr. Barry Tone!

"Bunter Goes Sick!"—next week's story by Tom Redwing!

OUR SINGING COLUMN!

Conducted by BOB CHERRY.

A Remove concert will be held in the Rag on Saturday evening. A topping programme has been arranged, and admission will be free. Standing room only for fags, and any noisy persons will be hurled forth on their necks!

Lord Mauleverer, who happens to be rolling in riches, will favour us with a "tenner" solo!

Dick Russell, the baritone, will provide a "treble" attraction, for he has three songs. Russell's voice lacks power at present, but he "alto" make a good singer later on!

Bolsover major, who is no great shakes as a vocalist, will sing "Wagoner Tom." Bolsover doesn't understand a note of music, so he seems to be in for a warm time. As Dick Penfold remarks:

"If he sings a crochiet for a minim,
The audience will surely skin 'im!
Or if he gets stuck at a semi-breve,
A ton of missiles they will heave!"

Billy Bunter, who is always peeping and prying into other fellows' studies will sing "The Noses Round the Door!" If he gets an encore—which is extremely doubtful—he will render "I've Made Up My Mind to Wail Away!" What with Bolsover and Bunter, the poor old audience will have something to put up with!

Wun Lung has promised to warble a Chinese drinking-song. Another infliction! It's enough to drive a fellow to ginger-beer!

The rumour that Gosling, the porter, intends to sing "I be Nigh on Ninety-seven!" is incorrect. Gossey declares he is not a day older than sixty-five. He's quite a babe, in fact!

Hurree Singh tells me he proposes to sing "The Songfulness My Esteemed and Ludicrous Mother Singfully Sang To Me." Inky will be still more "inky" by the time the audience have finished with him!

For my own part, I mean to be on the safe side, and sing nothing. I've got a beautiful voice, but I'm afraid the members of the audience might think otherwise, and I'm taking no risks!

ODE TO MR. QUELCH!

By DICK PENFOLD.

I passed by your window,
When the morning had broke;
You moved in your bed, sir,
Then promptly awoke.
And though I sang softly,
"In An Old-fashioned Town,"
You leaned from your window,
And thundered, "Lie down!"

I passed by your window
In the cool of the night,
And warbled as sweetly
As skylarks in flight.
And though I sang softly,
"My Little Grey Home,"
You dropped on my nut, sir,
A hefty great tome!

I passed by your window
When midnight was near;
I trilled like a tom-cat,
And hoped you would hear.
You hurled at my head, sir,
A jug, out of spite;
I'm now in the sanny—
I sha'n't sing to-night!

BUNTER THE HUNTER!

(Continued from page 13.)

him when he goes. Let's get out; I can't stand him. I don't want to punch him with auntie looking on; but I know I shall do it."

Harry Wharton & Co. went for a ramble, and when they came back, in the sunset, they hoped to learn that Bunter was gone.

Instead of which, they found him strolling cheerfully in the garden.

He blinked at them genially.

"I say, you fellows, what time do you have supper here?" he asked.

"You don't have it at all," said Johnny Bull bluntly. "What time is your train, Bunter?"

"My train?" said Bunter, blinking at him.

"Yes—when does it go?"

"Friday."

"What?" roared Johnny Bull.

"The Penzance train, you know," said Bunter. "After Penzance, I leave it to you."

"Well, if that bloke don't take the 'ole blooming cake!" said Sir Jimmy Vivian.

"Hush!" said Bunter.

"What? What do you mean by 'ush'?"

"You should be a bit more careful in your speech, Vivian, when you're visiting," said Bunter. "Don't give your rotten training away like that!"

"Why, I—I—I—"

"I'll burst him," said Johnny Bull. "Bunter, if you don't clear out of here, I'll burst you like a balloon!"

"He, he, he!"

"What are you cackling at?" roared Johnny Bull.

"Your little joke, old fellow. He, he, he! I say, what time do you have supper? I'm hungry. I didn't have much tea. Of course, I'm not grumbling, old chap; I know you don't do things here as we do them at Bunter Court. Still, a fellow does expect to be fed."

Johnny Bull did not answer that in words. His feelings overcame him, and he made a rush at Bunter, a good deal like the animal from which his surname was derived.

Bunter dodged and fled.

"Johnny!" called out Wharton.

"Johnny, old chap!" gasped Nugent.

But Johnny Bull was too infuriated to heed. He rushed in infuriated pursuit of Bunter, who sprinted up the garden-path at a wonderful speed, considering the weight he had to carry.

Bunter just won the race; and it was very fortunate for him that he did. He burst into the french windows, and staggered, gasping across the room, and Johnny, tearing in after him, almost collided with Miss Bull, who rose from her chair in astonishment.

"My dear boys!" exclaimed Miss Bull.

"Oh!" gasped Johnny. "I—I—I—"

"Keep off!" yelled Bunter.

"My dear boys, surely—surely you are not quarrelling!" exclaimed the amazed Miss Bull.

Johnny Bull controlled his wrath with a tremendous effort. Bunter, on the other side of Miss Bull, grinned at him.

"Oh, no! Nunno, auntie!" gasped Johnny.

"Only a little game, ma'am," said Bunter blandly. "Johnny thought for a minute he was back in the Remove passage at Greyfriars—didn't you, Johnny, old chap?"

Johnny Bull did not trust himself to reply. He retreated into the garden.

Bunter did not follow. He sat down to enjoy the company of Miss Bull. He felt that it was there that safety lay.

"Never mind, old chap; he's got to clear to-night," said Harry Wharton, when Johnny Bull rejoined his chums, breathing hard.

But Wharton was mistaken. When bedtime came Bunter was still in the house, and the juniors learned that his room was prepared for him. Bunter bade them a very affectionate good-night. But he locked his door when he went to bed.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.**Minus Bunter!**

BUNTER stayed.

Harry Wharton & Co., having taken counsel on the subject, agreed that it would be wisest to take it smiling—for the present. They did not want any disagreeable occurrence in Miss Bull's house; and Bunter was much too wary to be taken out quietly and kicked out. So Bunter stayed, and Miss Bull remained in blissful ignorance of the fact that he was an unwelcome addition to the Greyfriars party.

Bunter made himself as agreeable and popular as usual. As he had brought no baggage with him, he had to borrow things right and left of the juniors; and having explained to Miss Bull that he had inadvertently left his purse at Wharton Lodge, he borrowed two pounds of that unsuspecting old lady. Indeed, Bunter would have borrowed a half-crown from the cook, and sixpence from the gardener, had such borrowings been practicable.

He was not late in bed on Friday.

On this occasion the chums of the Remove were not to be allowed to depart "syrupstitionally," as Bunter called it; the Owl of the Remove was on his guard. Twice he had hunted down the hapless holiday party; but he was not going to risk it a third time.

"We get the train at Reading, I think?" he asked, at breakfast on Friday morning.

"Yes," grunted Bob Cherry.

"That's a good distance from here, isn't it?"

"There's a car coming."

"Oh, good! If we'd thought of it a bit sooner, I'd have asked my pater to lend us the Rolls-Royce to take us all the way to Cornwall," said Bunter regretfully. "One of you fellows might have thought of it. The pater would do it like a shot."

"You fat dummy!" murmured Johnny Bull.

"What did you say, Bull?"

No answer.

"I didn't know you had a car here," said Bunter.

"We haven't! It's a hired car."

"Oh!" said Bunter. "Bit rotten, rocketing about in a hired car. Still, everybody can't be rich. I hope there'll be room."

"The roomfulness will be terrific, my esteemed and ludicrous Bunter."

"Better get to Reading in good time," remarked Bunter. "They're famous for biscuits there, you know—best biscuits in the world. We can have a look at the town and sample the biscuits. I'm glad we're not taking the local train from here; but I really wish you fellows had jogged my memory in time, so that I could have telephoned home for the Rolls-Royce."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes the car!" said Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter was feeling a slight uneasiness as the bags were put on the car, and the juniors said good-bye to Miss Bull.

He was quite conscious of the fact that it was Miss Bull's presence that had stood between him and vengeance for some days past. With all his "neck," the Owl of the Remove was a little uneasy as to what would happen after the party were out of Miss Bull's sight.

He was aware, too, that the juniors had not originally intended to hire a motor-car to take them so far on the way as Reading. The change of plan might have been dictated by a regard for Bunter's comfort. That would have been right and proper, in Bunter's opinion. But he really didn't expect these fellows to do what was right and proper. So he wondered whether the change of plan was designed somehow for his discomfort.

In Bunter's peculiar position it was obviously necessary for a fellow to be on his guard.

Bunter was quite a successful hunter in tracking down his prey, but he was in the peculiar position of being at the mercy of his quarry as soon as he had hunted it down.

He felt he needed to have all his fat wits about him.

Good-byes were said, and the juniors packed themselves in the car. It was a large car, and there was room for the seven, even with Bunter taking up enough room for two.

The car started.

As it glided down the road and the house dropped out of view behind, Billy Bunter gave his comrades a rather anxious blink.

But they did not heed him.

They chatted cheerily, and seemed forgetful of the existence of William George Bunter, and for once the Owl of the Remove was satisfied to be ignored.

The car went at a good rate and ate up the miles. After an hour Billy Bunter began to look out for Reading; but the famous biscuit city was not in sight.

"I say, you fellows, there's one thing I'd forgotten," said Bunter. "Owing to leaving my purse at Wharton Lodge, I shall want one of you fellows to stand my ticket to Penzance."

"Go hon!" said Bob Cherry.

"Of course, it's only a temporary loan," said Bunter, with dignity. "I shall receive a large remittance at Penarth. I've asked the pater specially to send me something handsome there."

Harry Wharton put his head out of the window. He made a sign to the chauffeur, and the car slowed down and stopped.

"I say, you fellows, what's the matter?" asked Bunter anxiously. "We don't want to lose the train, you know."

"Lots of time for the train," said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "We gave ourselves an hour over on purpose."

"Good! We shall have time to get a snack at Reading," said Bunter. "But what's the matter with the car?"

The chauffeur was looking into his engine with an earnest eye. Harry Wharton & Co. alighted and surrounded him with serious faces.

Bunter blinked at them wrathfully from the car.

"I say, you fellows, what's the matter?" he called out.

"Oh, dry up, Bunter!"

"Just what you might have expected with a rotten hired car!" sneered,

The "Herald" staff are hard at work! Look out for their next number!

Bunter. "If I'd been standing this trip I'd have got a decent car, at least."

"Perhaps Bunter had better go and telephone for the Rolls-Royce, after all!" said Bob Cherry.

"The perhapsfulness is terrific."

"I decline to do so now," said Bunter. "You've arranged this, and you can look after your own rotten arrangements. Look here, how long are we going to stick here?"

"We'll get on before night," said Nugent.

"Night!" howled Bunter. "Wharrer you mean? It's only ten o'clock in the morning."

"I mean what I say; we shall get on before night!"

Bunter rolled out of the car, his fat face full of wrath.

"This is what you call managing a journey, is it?" he asked. "I say, how far are we from Miss Bull's house? Can we get back there to lunch?"

"About thirty-five miles."

"Oh crumbs! We shall have to get lunch somewhere. Is there a village near here?" asked Bunter, blinking round at green lanes and green woods that stretched seemingly endless. "I'm getting hungry already. You ought to have had a lunch-basket put in the car, Bull! You always were selfish! I call this rotten!"

"Patience, old fat bean!" said Frank Nugent.

Snort from Bunter.

"It won't hurt you to hang on for a few hours 'ere," grinned Sir Jimmy Vivian.

Another snort.

"For goodness' sake, Vivian, don't chuck your 'h's' all over Berkshire!" said Bunter.

"Look 'ere——"

"Oh, shut up!" snarled Bunter. "I can tell you fellows I'm getting hungry. I'm not going to starve to please you, with your rotten old hired car!"

"There's a village a few steps down the lane, sir," said the chauffeur, with a curious look at Bunter. "There's a shop where you can get ginger-beer and cake and——"

Bunter brightened up.

"Good! Which way?"

"Just round that corner, sir."

"Lend me a few bob, Wharton, old chap! You can pay yourself out of the purse I left at your uncle's place!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. Will you lend me a few bob, or won't you?" roared Bunter.

"Certainly, old nut!"

Harry Wharton felt in his pocket and produced half-a-crown. He tossed it to Bunter, who caught it with his fat little nose.

"Ow! Beast!"

Bunter held the half-crown, and started for the corner. From that corner a village shop was in sight a score of yards away up a little lane. The Owl of the Remove started for it at a trot.

"And now," yawned Bob Cherry, "we may as well get going."

"Just as well!" chuckled Nugent.

"The wellfulness is terrific."

The juniors stepped into the car. The chauffeur, grinning, and having no further difficulty with his engine, started up. A minute after Bunter had turned the corner the car was in motion.

The throb of the car caught Bunter's ears just as he reached the door of the village shop.

He started and turned.

Past the end of the lane, on the white high-road, went the car, and a straw hat was waved to Bunter as it passed and vanished.

For a second the Owl of the Remove stood transfixed.

Then he understood.

Forgetful of ginger-beer and cake, Bunter turned his back on the village shop and raced back to the road.

"Stop!" he yelled.

The car, in a cloud of dust, was vanishing in the distance, with Harry Wharton & Co. in it—and Bunter out of it. Billy Bunter stood in the road and

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

At Last!

SKINNER of the Remove joined the Greyfriars party at Reading with his most agreeable manners on. Harry Wharton & Co. were not specially glad to see Skinner, but they were cheery and genial; and, indeed, it was so nice to be clear of Bunter that nothing could have dashed their spirits just then.

Skinner was waiting for them at the station, and they did not mind when he mentioned that the train was gone—nothing mattered now that there was no more Bunter. It was worth while to lose the train for the sake of dropping William George Bunter forty miles from anywhere.



The throb of the car caught Bunter's ears just as he reached the door of the village shop. Down the white high-road went the car, and a straw hat was waved to Bunter as it passed. "Stop, you beasts!" roared the Owl. "Don't leave me behind!" (See Chapter 11.)

glared after it with a glare that almost cracked his spectacles.

"Beasts!" he roared. "Stop! You're leaving me behind! Stop!"

The Greyfriars party were far too distant by that time to hear, though hearing would have made no difference. Certainly they were not likely to stop.

Bunter gasped with wrath.

"Oh, the beasts! The car never broke down at all; they put up the chauffeur to it. Oh dear! Spoofed again! Oh crumbs! They've landed me here—goodness knows where—and—and—and——"

Words failed William George Bunter.

Once more Bunter, the hunter, was thrown off the trail, and Harry Wharton & Co. proceeded merrily on their way minus the fat junior.

The cheery party lunched in the town. The next express was at two, and they turned up in good time for it. They captured a carriage to themselves, and settled down to make themselves comfortable for the long run to the West.

Skinner had a set of pocket-chess, and he started a game with Wharton. Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull looked on and gave advice, for which the players really did not seem duly grateful. Nugent read the "Daily Mail," and Hurree Janset Ram Singh a paper from India, which had a weird look in the eyes of his comrades. Sir Jimmy looked out of the window at the passing scenery with great enjoyment.

It was a corridor train, and once or twice passengers came up and down the

Scoring boundaries—Mr. Frank Richards!

corridor, and looked into the carriage to see whether there was a seat vacant. As the seats were more than filled, the juniors did not heed them. But one passenger stopped at the carriage and looked in, through a large pair of spectacles, with a grin on a very fat face; and Nugent looked up at last and saw him.

He dropped the "Daily Mail."

"Oh crumbs! Bunter!"

"What?" roared Bob Cherry.

"Bunter!"

"Great pip!"

Billy Bunter rolled into the carriage. He nodded cheerfully to the amazed juniors. The sight of Bunter's ghost could hardly have startled them more than the sight of Bunter just then.

"Bunter—on this train!" said Harry Wharton dazedly.

"My honny 'at!" ejaculated Sir Jimmy Vivian. "I've a blooming good mind to chuck him out of the window!"

"Make room for a chap to sit down," said Bunter cheerily. "I say, you fellows, did you think you had missed me?"

"We hoped so!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"The hopefulness was terrific."

"Oh, really, you fellows!" Bunter sat down. "Hope I'm not squeezing you, Nugent—"

"You are!"

"Make room for a fellow, then. I say, I was awfully tickled by your joke this morning, you fellows. Leaving me behind! He, he, he! Of course, I knew it was only a joke, and you knew I'd turn up for the train."

"How?" gasped Wharton.

"Wasn't it lucky I'd borrowed a few pounds from Miss Bull?" said Bunter.

"You fat villain!" roared Johnny Bull. "Have you been getting money out of my aunt?"

"Oh, really, Bull! I'm going to send it back, of course, as soon as I get a postal-order I'm expecting. Why, if I hadn't had the money on me, I should never have caught up with you fellows. As it was, I found a man who had a car for hire, and he brought me on to Reading."

"Oh!" gasped the Greyfriars party.

"Sold again!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Of course, we couldn't guess that he'd been sticking Auntie Bull for cash. Might have guessed it, though."

"So here I am," said Bunter cheerily.

"Lucky, as it turned out, wasn't it? I was afraid you fellows might have gone by the earlier train, you know, but I kept my eye open at the station. I thought very likely you'd lost it, in your silly way—"

"Oh!"

"And I saw you come in for this train," continued Bunter. "I figured it out that you must have lost the first train, after wasting so much time going round the country in a motor-car, to play that silly trick on me. Lucky I saw you in the station at Reading, too, as I couldn't have taken this train otherwise—you see, I'm depending on you fellows to pay my fare to Penzance."

"Wha-a-at?"

"The motor-car nearly cleared me out," explained Bunter. "Of course, I wasn't going to spare the money, when it was a question of catching up with my old pals. I knew how you'd miss me if I didn't turn up. I had only enough left for a feed, and to get a platform ticket. But I know one of my old pals will stand me a railway ticket."

"Well, my hat!" said Skinner. "I'll stand you the toe of my boot, if you like! That's all you'll get from me."

"I know you're a rotter, Skinner. I'm really surprised to find you here. I understood that this was going to be a select party," said Bunter. "But, never mind; I can stand you, if the other fellows can."

"Why, you cheeky, fat worm—"

"Did you fellows get a lunch-basket at Reading?" asked Bunter. "I'm a bit peckish."

"You're on this train without a ticket?" asked Wharton blankly.

"Yes, old chap. I'll leave it to you."

"You fat spoofer—"

"They look at the tickets somewhere along this line," said Skinner. "Let the collector collar him for swindling the company."

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged glances. They had no idea of adopting Skinner's suggestion. But they had still less idea of tolerating Billy Bunter's company as far as Penzance, and at Pengarth afterwards—and standing his ticket in the bargain. Bunter the hunter had been successful again, but his quarry were getting desperate now. It was a time for drastic measures.

"We're stopping," said Bob, with a glance from the window.

Harry Wharton opened the door of the carriage as the train stopped in a station.

"Two minutes," said the guard, passing him.

"Right-ho! Who's for the buffet, you fellows?" asked Wharton, jumping out on the platform.

"I am!" said Bunter promptly.

"All together," said Bob.

The juniors alighted in a crowd, leaving Skinner in the carriage to guard their places. They made a rush for the buffet.

The swing doors opened for Bunter, and closed behind him. The moment the door shut Harry Wharton & Co. bolted back to the train. The guard was already waving his flag when they reached their carriage.

The Famous Five tumbled in pell-mell, and the door slammed after them. The train was in motion as the door slammed shut.

"Saved!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Jolly neat!" chuckled Skinner.

There was a yell on the platform:

"I say, you fellows! Stop the train!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A fat figure came shooting from the buffet. The train glided along, gathering speed, as Bunter sprinted down the platform.

A porter caught him by a fat arm and jerked him back.

"You're too late!"

"Leggo!" roared Bunter. "Stop the train!"

"Oh, don't be silly!" said the porter.

"Stop!" shrieked Bunter.

From a carriage, as it vanished, a crowd of smiling faces looked—a hand, and a straw hat were waved at Bunter. Then the express vanished. The last view the Co. had of William George Bunter showed him brandishing a fat fist after them.

Then he was lost to sight.

Harry Wharton sank back breathlessly in his seat.

"That was a near thing!" he gasped.

"But we've done it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The donefulness is terrific."

Meanwhile, William George Bunter was telling the astonished porter what he thought of him in general, and the Great Western Railway in particular.

"Why didn't you stop the train?" he

shrieked. "Can't you see I'm left behind?"

"It don't require very good eyesight to see that," returned the porter crushingly. "There's plenty of you, ain't there?"

"Beast!" exclaimed Bunter. "I shall report you for incivility, my man, and—"

"What's the trouble?"

The stationmaster came up to the Greyfriars junior, and the porter explained the situation.

"There's no need to worry, sir," said the stationmaster. "There's another train in half an hour's time."

"But I haven't got a ticket. You see—" began Bunter.

"What!" The stationmaster's urbanity fell from him like a cloak. His experience of passengers who travelled on his line without a ticket was long and varied. "Then I'm afraid I shall want your name and address, young sir."

"Oh, really, you beast—I mean, old chap!" blinked Bunter through his fat spectacles. "You see, I left my ticket in the compartment—in my bag, you know."

"Fraid that won't help you, sir," said the stationmaster stolidly. "You'll have to pay the fare from Reading to here. If, as you say, you've left your ticket in the compartment with your bag, your friends will take charge of it, in which case you will be able to claim a refund from the company."

"Oh dear!" gasped Bunter. He was fairly in the toils. Not only was he deficient of the necessary cash to pay his fare from Reading, but there was his journey back to London to think of.

"I'm waiting, young sir," said the stationmaster suspiciously. "Are you going to pay the fare from Reading?"

"Yes—I mean, nunno!" stuttered Bunter. "Of course I shall pay it. But you'll have to wait until I've wired my people. I hope you don't think I'd be mean enough to dodge paying the company its due?"

"Don't worry about the company," replied the stationmaster dryly. "It's quite capable of looking after itself."

Bunter snorted, and in close company with the stationmaster made his way over to the railway telegraph office. By dint of searching through all his pockets, a sufficient sum of money was mustered to cover an appealing telegram to his pater asking for the fare back to London. Needless to say, it was not addressed to "Bunter Court."

At the time Mr. Bunter received that urgent appeal from his young hopeful, William George was sitting in miserable reflection in the stationmaster's office.

This last set-back had crushed all his hopes of joining Sir Jimmy Vivian's party, and the fat junior visualised a cheerless vacation spent in the company of his minor and an irritable father.

It was quite three hours before a telegraphic money-order arrived.

When he finally rolled into the London train, having paid the fare from Reading to the unsympathetic stationmaster, Bunter's thoughts were bitter in the extreme.

Meanwhile the chums of Greyfriars had settled down cheerily for the run into Cornwall—safe, at last, from Bunter the Hunter.

THE END.

(Some amazing adventures await Harry Wharton & Co. in "The House of Pengarth!"—next Monday's splendid story. On no account miss this yarn, chums; it's written in Mr. Frank Richards' best style.)

A formidable trio—Frank Richards, Owen Conquest, and David Goodwin!

With his heart full of bitterness against Sir Mostyn Frayne, gamester and rogue, who, in one stroke, has robbed him of a brother and the house and lands which had been the property of the Langleys for generations past, Dick Langley turns highwayman. With a price on his head he roams the countryside, seeking his livelihood behind a mask and a brace of pistols.

GALLOPING DICK.

By DAVID GOODWIN.

This Week:
**TAMING
A
BULLY!**

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Boaster!

"**E** GAD, Brereton, you may say what you like, but he's a plucky fellow! They say he'll stop six men as readily as one."

"My good Vincent, what is the fellow but a rogue? To stop a man on the highway and take his purse is no virtue, I protest."

"What harm does it do you or me if he takes a few hundred guineas off some rich old fellow on the highway? You and I would do the same across the card-table if we had the luck."

"You talk monstrous lightly of the matter," said Brereton mincingly.

They were two of the gayest young sparks in the country, if appearances were any guide, and they rode through the wood chatting and taking snuff more freely than an older man would, of which Brereton flicked away the traces with his lace kerchief in a manner of great elegance.

He was more richly dressed, and also slightly more of a dandy, than his companion. Vincent was a jovial, ruddy-faced youth of twenty-two or so.

"No wonder Sir Mostyn was furious!" said Brereton. "Had I been he the rogue would never have had my purse from me."

"Why?"

"Egad, sir, I would have pinked the fellow!"

"I know you are a deuce of a blade, Brereton, but how would you have done it under cover of his pistol? Fire's quicker than steel."

A dark shadow came up between the two riders. The wood was gloomy even in full day, but even when they rode out into the open, along the grassy path through the furze, the two young bloods were too engrossed in their chat to notice the black mare stepping noiselessly on the turf behind them, or the silent figure that rode her.

"Fire is quicker than steel," repeated Vincent. "How could you have pinked him before he put a ball through you?"

"Marry, my good Vincent, it is no difficult feat for a man of the world. One meets with these little adventures"—Brereton took a pinch of snuff with great complacency—"and one is not discomposed by them. I would have served

him as I served the rogue who stopped me on Horsham Heath a year ago."

"I never heard of that."

"My dear Vincent, if I told you of all my little adventures there would be time for nothing else. 'Twas a ruffling highwayman they called Black Boris. He would have stopped me with a double horse-pistol and an imprecation that would have choked a lawyer. I pretended to reach for my purse, knocked his pistol up, and, whipping out my rapier in the twinkling of an eye, I ran him through the body."

"Faith, you are a devil of a fellow, Brereton!" said the other admiringly. "It's lucky for Sir Mostyn's assailant that he didn't tackle you!"

"Odd's bodikins, yes!" quoth Brereton, lifting his chin and smoothing his cravat. "If this fellow Galloping Dick were to attempt to stop me—"

"Indeed, sir, you would not spare him, I presume?" said a clear voice close at the speaker's back.

The two youths faced their horses round with a start.

A horse-pistol with a barrel a foot long seemed to include them both in its attentions, and Dick Langley, one hand on his thigh, looked at his prisoners with a mischievous light in his eyes.

Vincent stared as though he could not believe his senses, while Brereton, doubtless from pleasure at finding his wish fulfilled, turned a delicate greenish-white.

"Your description of the way to defeat a highwayman is admirable," said Dick politely to Brereton. "I am glad to give you an opportunity of putting it into effect. These little adventures, of course, are nothing to a man of the world."

Brereton, turning a shade paler, said nothing. Vincent, suddenly breaking the silence, roared with laughter till he nearly fell off his horse.

"Possibly I am not near enough for you to use your sword with effect," said Dick to Brereton in tones of the greatest courtesy. "With your permission, I will come closer—thus."

He urged his mare forward till he was within arm's length of the young man, and lowered his pistol carelessly, a smile on his lips and a mocking light in his eyes.

Still Brereton made no reply, and the ruffles of his shirt shook visibly.

"Why, then, sir," said Dick, "if you are unready to accomplish this small feat, I must, with every regret in the world, trouble you for your purse, and yours, sir," he added, turning to Vincent.

Brereton pulled out his purse with alacrity and offered it with a somewhat unsteady hand.

The last thing he offered to touch was the hilt of his sword, and he kept his hand carefully away from it.

Vincent, mopping his eyes, and weak with laughter, pulled out his own gold with difficulty.

Dick looked at him with a smile of amusement as he took Brereton's purse.

"Since you love a jest so much, sir," he said to Vincent, "I beg you will keep your money as a memento of the meeting. Your friend's I will retain. And," he added politely to Brereton, "I must congratulate myself on escaping the fate of Black Boris, of whose former existence I now hear for the first time. I wish you good-day!"

He rode away down the path, leaving the two young sparks to continue their journey with what fortitude they might.

The evening found Dick riding along the comb of the hill, still chuckling to himself at intervals.

"Faith, though," he said, "I am neglecting my business! That delicate youth's purse held but nine guineas, and my funds are low. I promised Nat the gosherd fifty as a marriage portion for his daughter in return for the service he did me, and to be sure the poor girl needs it if she is ever to find a husband, for she is no beauty. Who comes here?"

A horseman came ambling along by the grove of pines, but who he was Dick could not see for the gloom. The night was falling fast.

"Some fat alderman on his way back to Milton," thought Dick, "with a pouch full of guineas wrung from the toil of his starved apprentices. Stand, sir, if it pleases you!"

He twitched his mare out from the shelter of the pines and stood across the rider's path, pistol in hand.

"Oh, don't shoot, sir! For heaven's sake don't shoot!" said a quavering voice. "I ha' got but five shillin' about me, but take 'em, and welcome!"

"Why, it's old Sam Lumley, the horse-coper! Put up your money, Sam, you

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rascal! I don't take a poor man's earnings, though I misdoubt you didn't earn 'em too honestly, you old sinner!"

"Mercy, sir, a man must do what he can at the horse-dealin', or he'll never make a living! But baint it mighty risky for you to be here now, Master Dick? I thowt you'd ha' cut into the next county double quick. Ain't ye heard the news?"

"No. What now?"

"They ha' got the King's warrant out agen ye, sir!"

"Have they, indeed, Tom?" said Dick, laughing. "Some of our excellent squires must have been bestirring themselves with great zeal."

"Ay, they be fairly scared of ye, Master Dick, an' no mistake. The foot-pads didn't trouble them much. They don't mind a poor man's pocket suffering, but when it comes to you taking fat purses from them day after day, they send up to Lunnon for a warrant that would give 'em the chance o' gettin' hold o' ye."

"The old rascals! They know well enough I never stop the same man twice in one week. But do you tell me that they are going to apprehend me themselves?"

"Ay, Master Dick! Heerd it at the Blue Boar from Squire Harding's coachman. Master Harding, an' Sir Giles Rudford, an' Sir Stephen Carthew, an' Squire Griffiths, an' some others are to wait for ye at the cross-roads, where ye always pass, every one of them wi' his gun or his pistols. They're in force, ye see, an' they mean to have the honour of takin' ye themselves."

"Odd's fish! This is indeed terrifying news!" said Dick with a smile.

He pondered for a minute or more, riding by the side of the horse-coper's ancient steed.

"Sam," he said suddenly, "you old rascal, is it true that you bought that wind-galled roan at Milton Fair, and dyed his coat chestnut, and sold him to Farmer Dodd for a Welsh rob?"

Sam chuckled.

"Well, sir, there's a lot o' folk never miss a chance o' sayin' something agen me. I heerd some such tale. But, ye see, a man must be a bit sharp, or he'd never make a living at my trade."

"You ought to be put in the stocks, you old sinner! I'm told old Farmer

Dodd's men washed him down, and all the chestnut came off his coat, and left him a roan again."

"Haw, haw!" said Sam. "Well, 'twere his own fault. I told him as how you mustn't wash a Welsh cob, or he'd change his coat."

"Sam," said Dick, "you're a wonderful hand at altering a horse. Could you do the same with Kitty here?"

The old coper cast his eye over the beautiful mare.

"Well, sir, it's a bit more difficult wi' her, seein' as she's black. But I reckon I could turn her into a warry pretty dappled grey."

"Would it do her coat any harm?"

"Not a bit, Master Dick. It'll come off wi' a wash o' water, just as though it were flour. I'll go bail I could change her so a horse-surgeon wouldn't know her, unless he washed her down. But there, you don't want her altered. You ain't goin' to sell her, are ye? If ye did, she's better as she is."

"Sell her! I should as soon think of selling my own mother!" Dick patted the beautiful mare's neck fondly. "No; but I've got a good mind to let you try your hand on her."

"Sakes alive!" What for?"

"Never mind. What will you do the job for?"

"Why, I'd do it for nothing for you, Master Dick, poor as I am!"

"You shall have five guineas for it, Sam. But, mark you, if it does her the least harm, if it stars her coat, I'll wring your neck!"

"It can't do her no harm, but—"

"Very good. Bring your stuff with you, and meet me in the Hornbeam Copse, by Milton Common, at three o'clock this afternoon."

"I'll be there," said Sam, mystified, but willing.

And Dick nodded to him and trotted away.

"Well, I'm blessed!" murmured Sam to himself. "What's he up to? I'm a deep 'un myself, but he's deeper than me."

Dick chuckled softly from time to time as he rode on, thinking busily. He took his midday meal at a good hostelry on the Milton road, with as much assurance as though he were a travelling peer; and the landlord, who recognised him easily enough, was most attentive.

"Good host," said Dick, after he had eaten; "this is sharp weather. You have good raiment on hand here, as a rule. Have you anything of the kind that I might buy at your own price?"

"By good luck, sir," said the landlord obsequiously, "there is a very fine grey riding-cloak, belonging to Sir Piers Martin, who was killed in a duel after playing at hazard in my house all night. There is with it a very fine silken scarf."

"I will take them both," said Dick.

It was not often that the cross-roads on Blackwold Heath saw such a fine assembly as met there at four o'clock on that afternoon.

Eight richly-dressed gentlemen rode their horses on to the little triangle of turf and conferred earnestly.

"Who is this advancing along the road?" said Squire Griffiths, peering round the corner. "A person of some consequence, by appearance."

A tall stranger, on a splendid dapple-grey mare, was riding nonchalantly along the road. He was dressed in a superb grey riding-cloak, as a guard against the cold, and a silk muffler was wrapped round his face up to the nose.

"Good-evening, gentlemen!" said the stranger, in a deep voice, with a most courtly bow. "Am I right in assuming that you are here to apprehend that notorious rogue and highwayman, Galloping Dick?"

"We are, sir!" chorused the horsemen.

"By your leave, then, I will join you, for I also have authority to deal with the rascal. I have had some experience in these matters."

"We should be glad to act under your advice," said Sir Giles, who had felt a little nervous at his own responsibility in dealing with the famous highwayman.

"Then we will efface ourselves behind the hedge," said the man on the grey mare, "for the rogue will soon be here. But, odd's fish, sir, can I believe my eyes? Why, the priming of your gun is as wet as mud with the evening mist!"

Sir Giles looked blankly at the lock of his piece.

"Permit me to see yours, sir," said the stranger, turning to Sir Stephen Carthew—"and yours, and yours. Gentlemen, this will never do! The rogue would have you at his mercy. The primings of your pieces are ruined by the damp. Forgive me, but I speak as an old campaigner."

"This is indeed unfortunate!" said Sir Giles blankly. "What should we do, sir?"

"There is time to remedy the fault," said the stranger, dismounting. "You must fire off your charges, or attempt to do so, and reload carefully. Shoulder your pieces, gentlemen, and when I give the word discharge them in the air. Are you ready? Fire!"

A thunderous volley rent the air as every gun and pistol among the party sent its load skywards.

Lowering their empty weapons, the horsemen turned to their instructor. Their jaws dropped, and their eyes started from their heads.

The riding-cloak and the muffler were thrown open, showing the erect figure and laughing face of Dick Langley, while a brace of long horse-pistols covered the crestfallen company.

"Your warrants and quickly!" he cried. "And with them your purses! You have wanted long to lay Galloping Dick by the heels. Here he is!"

There was no help for it. Eight warrants and eight fat purses were handed sulkily to Dick.

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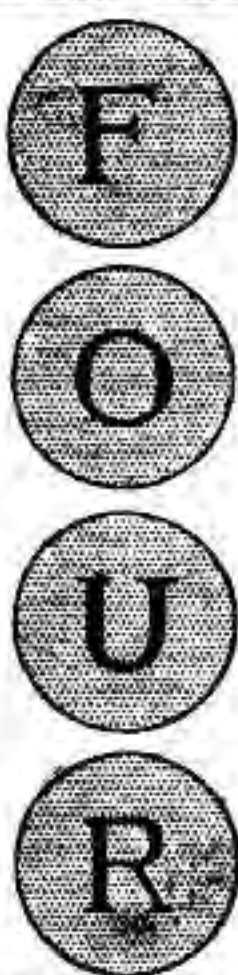
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"Stand and Deliver!"—the significant command of Galloping Dick!

"Good-evening, gentlemen," he said, as he remounted; "and a pleasant ride home!"

Then, laughing heartily, he wheeled his mare, and galloped away into the woods.

Half an hour's sharp riding brought him to the cottage of Nat, the gosherd.

The old man's daughter blushed a furious crimson as Dick gallantly presented her with a heavy purse containing considerably more than the promised fifty guineas, and made a pretty speech suitable to the occasion.

Then in an aside to the grateful gosherd Dick requested the loan of a pail of water and a cloth. Without evincing any surprise at the strange request Nat complied.

In less than ten minutes the dapple-grey body of Kitty had been sponged out, and once again Dick bestrode a coal-black mare—the finest piece of horseflesh in the county.

With a gallant sweep of his hat Dick bade his old friends farewell and rode off at a hand gallop towards the heath.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Game of Chance!

DICK had little hope of finding any traveller worth stopping that night, and he rode on for some time, walking Kitty over the soft turf, and thinking of other things.

He had passed a mile or more over Blackwold Heath, talking lightly to the mare as he went, when the sound of a horse's hoofs in the distance, on the loose gravel of the bridle-path, made him draw rein.

"Now, this will be some worthy tenant-farmer ambling home to his fire-side," thought Dick, pulling aside into the shadow of a clump of firs, "and it will not become me to ease him of his little gains, so I must let him go, though in good faith my own purse is light enough just now. Odd's life! If it were the Mayor of Milton or one of our young squires I would clean him down to the bone!"

But as the rider came nearer Dick saw he was mistaken.

"This is a good horse, and no farmer's nag, by his stride," thought the highwayman. "Here he comes—a well-dressed rider, too, and a fine, jaunty air he has. Come, Kitty, we've not done so ill."

The horseman came up. He was a slim, good-looking youth of barely twenty, neatly dressed, with a simple, honest countenance, and riding a dark roan horse. He drew rein with an exclamation of dismay as Black Kitty stepped across his path, and the muzzle of Dick's horse-pistol levelled itself at his head.

"I'm loth to make any man tarry on so cold a night," said Dick, "and so, young sir, the sooner you transfer your purse to me the earlier you will be able to reach your lodging."

"Sdeath!" said the young man ruefully, peering at Dick's black velvet mask as he hauled out his purse. "I cannot argue against your pistol, sir, but if you would replace it in the holster and measure your sword with me on the grass I would be blithe. But, of course, you have no stomach for the cold steel," he continued bitterly, "and think only of your gains, like any other tradesman."

Dick smiled at the young man's rancour.

"I never refuse any man of my own calibre," he replied; "but truly it would profit you nothing to cross your sword



The swords rang in the stillness of the night, but even as the steels crossed Dennis knew that he had met his match in Galloping Dick. Panting, retreating step by step, the bully found himself pricked in a dozen places. (See Chapter 2.)

with mine, for you would but earn a wound, or worse, in addition to your other misfortune."

"Ay," said the slim youth, drawing out a very plump purse. "I see I shall not tempt you, but I trust I shall live to see you hang for the shame you put upon me."

"Odd's blood, man," said Dick, "pull not so long a face over it! It is no pleasure to rob a man who gives with such sorry grace! It is no shame to yield but a few guineas to Galloping Dick, for better men than you have done it. Why, burn me, if the fellow is not near to tears!"

"Enough!" cried the youth bitterly. "If it consoles you to know it, you are robbing a woman. There are a hundred and ten guineas in that purse. The ten are mine, and you might have had them, with a jest thrown in, from me. But the hundred are my sister's, for which I must account to her."

"Is this true?" said Dick sharply, looking him in the eyes. But the distress and pain in the youth's honest eyes convinced him.

The highwayman sat back in his saddle and laughed.

"Ay, I see it is true," he said. "I made a vow last week that if I ever found a man who spoke the truth at first asking I would render him his money. Besides, it is my rule not to rob a woman, so here are the hundred back. Hang those plaguey scruples! I must get rid of them, or they will land me in the almshouse."

The young horseman seemed stupefied at receiving the guineas back. He sat staring.

"The ten I will keep," pursued Dick, with a mocking smile, "as a lesson to you not to ride alone at night. I wish you good-even, sir!"

And wheeling Kitty sharply, he cantered away before the youth on the roan horse could say a word in reply.

Dick thought several times of the simple-looking youth as he rode over the heath, and half regretted once or twice

that he had taken even the ten guineas from him.

Towards midnight a cold rain began to fall, and a chill wind whistled over the heath. Satisfied that no traveller worth stopping was likely to be out at such an hour and in such weather, Dick rode with his usual careless recklessness to a comfortable hostelry on the Milton road. He knew well that no innkeeper would betray him.

Riding into the yard, he sent the ostler for hot gruel for the mare, and groomed her with his own hands. When she was thoroughly comfortable, not before, he betook himself to an excellent meal, to which he did full justice.

"The house seems strangely empty of guests to-night," he thought. "I will stroll into the long parlour."

He entered the room, looked round him, paused for a moment, then took a seat in the dark inglenook by the fire. At one of the round tables two of the guests sat playing cards, so engrossed at their game that they took no notice of the newcomer.

One of them, very flushed and excited, was the youth whom Dick had held at the pistol-point two hours before.

"Faith!" thought the highwayman, watching comfortably from his dark corner. "Our young friend is out of luck to-night. First to fall in with me, and then into the hands of that rogue Jack Dennis. He will pluck the pigeon much closer than I did, I'll warrant."

At first glance Dick recognised the young man's opponent at the card-table. He was a heavy-looking fellow, gaming bully and card-sharper, and it spoke words for the youth's innocence that he played with the man at all.

"Why, the boy looks as though he were playing for a kingdom!" muttered Dick to himself. "He is winning, too! They have not played long, then. Dennis' victims always begin that way."

Dick watched the play grimly, and with intense distaste for what he saw. The young highwayman was no saint, but he could not forget that gaming had been the cause of his brother's shameful

Will the notorious highwayman be run to earth?

death, and his own beggary and ruin came through Basil Langley's passion for the dice-box.

"Why, shake me!" cried the bully with a laugh. "You are in monstrous luck to-night, young sir. But a few more hands, and I shall be all but drained to the dregs!"

The boy gave a nervous, excited laugh. There was a pile amounting to twenty or thirty guineas beside him—his winnings.

"Indeed, sir," he said, "I fear you have little chance against such good fortune. I should be sorry to put you to inconvenience; and, if it please you to stop—"

"Nay, nay!" returned the gamester with a wave of his hand. "Even though I lose all, I will play to the end."

The game was faro, and as Dick watched he saw the little heap of guineas by the boy's side grow less and less, with only an occasional gain, till it dwindled away.

"Ay!" thought Dick. "Now the plucking begins in earnest!"

The more the boy lost the more eager he became, and the more wildly he played. The last of his gains vanished, and he took ten guineas from his purse and laid them on the table. He won a couple of hands, and they increased to twenty. But three more deals saw that twenty on Dennis' side.

The young man stopped a moment, irresolute. His eyes were bright and feverish, and he appeared to be thinking. Then, with a reckless gesture, he hauled out his purse and placed thirty or forty guineas beside him.

"Aha!" thought Dick grimly. "Now his sister's guineas are to help him to win his own back. 'Tis the usual gambler's folly. It would have been no worse for him had I taken them myself, but that I do not care to lower myself to the level of that scoundrel Dennis!"

Again and again the young man had to draw upon his purse. His sister's guineas were nearly at an end. He grew desperate, and, on realising the wretched situation he had been led into, he seemed to Dick to grow more watchful.

"His suspicions are aroused at last," thought the highwayman.

The bully, in high feather, was con-

temptuously amused at the ease with which he was plucking his victim. But the young man, once awakened from his simple trustfulness, was no such fool as he had seemed. A rather clumsy false deal of the gamester's caught his eye, and he sprang to his feet and clutched Dennis' wrist. Three kings and an ace tumbled from the lace of the gambler's sleeve. There were three of the former already on the table.

"So," exclaimed the youth, in anger and reproach, "you do not play fair, sir! You have won from me by fraud!"

"Sdeath!" exclaimed the bully. "You dare to affront me, you young bantam? As a gentleman, I demand satisfaction! You shall prove your words across my sword!"

"When and where you please, sir!" said the youth firmly.

He choked a little—not from cowardice, but from the thought of his shame; and, in fact, he hoped the bully's sword would end him, and save him from his disgrace.

"At once, then!" blustered the gamester, sweeping the guineas into his pouch. "Out upon the common we shall be free from interruption. Come!"

"One moment, gentlemen."

And Dick strode forward from his corner.

"Odd's life!" gasped the youth, staring at Dick with wide eyes. "The highwayman!"

"I will take up your quarrel, sir," said Dick to the young man. "You are no match for this knave. He will spit you like a partridge!"

He turned sharply to Dennis, whose cheeks turned a pale green colour as he listened.

"Now, sir," he said, "follow me to the common, and I will argue the matter with you."

"I won't!" snarled the bully with an oath. "I have no quarrel with you. It is that young bantam I have to deal with, and I will write his apology upon his body. I will not fight you!"

Dick replied by a sound cuff upon the bully's cheek.

"Now will you fight?" he said quietly.

"Ay!" screamed the gamester, now savage with wrath. "I'll spit that puppy first, and then I'll lay you beside him!"

"Not at all," replied Dick. "I will

honour you with the first bout myself. Come, young sir, I presume you will second me in this matter?"

"With all my heart!" replied the youth.

They went out upon the heath, to a clearing in a small coppice, the gambler chafing and fuming with rage the while. The rain had stopped, and the moon sailed high in the heavens, giving light enough for sword play.

"Fall on!" cried Dennis, bringing out his rapier, "and I'll show you how I treat whipper-snappers who come between me and my game!"

The swords rang in the stillness, but even as the steels touched the gambler knew he had met his match. Every lunge was parried, every trick of the gambler's failed, and he found himself pricked lightly in half a dozen places as Dick pressed on him with a mocking smile.

Panting, and retreating step by step, the bully's foot slipped back on the wet turf, and he came down headlong, and Dick's rapier point twinkled at the bully's throat.

"Mercy, mercy!" roared the rogue, "Would you murder me?"

"Stop that noise!" ordered Dick.

"Turn out the hundred guineas that you took from your pigeon. That is well. Here, young sir, pick up your gold, and put it away safely."

Dick picked up the bully's sword and broke it across his knee.

"Get up!" he said to the frightened gambler. "Take yourself a score of miles from Milton, and never come near it again, if you value your life."

The bully slunk away, crestfallen. The young man at Dick's side began to stammer out his heartfelt thanks.

"As for you," continued the highwayman, turning to him sharply, "you have had two sound lessons this night. Bear them in mind. Never cross Blackwold Heath alone by night, and never sit down to cards at an inn with a stranger—particularly with money that is not your own. I wish you good-night!"

THE END.

(Now look forward to next Monday's thrilling story of the open road, entitled "The Miser of Ferris Hall!"—and be prepared for something extra good!)



GALLOPING DICK

TWO OF THE
PRINCIPAL
CHARACTERS
Appearing in this
Grand Series of
HIGHWAYMAN
STORIES!

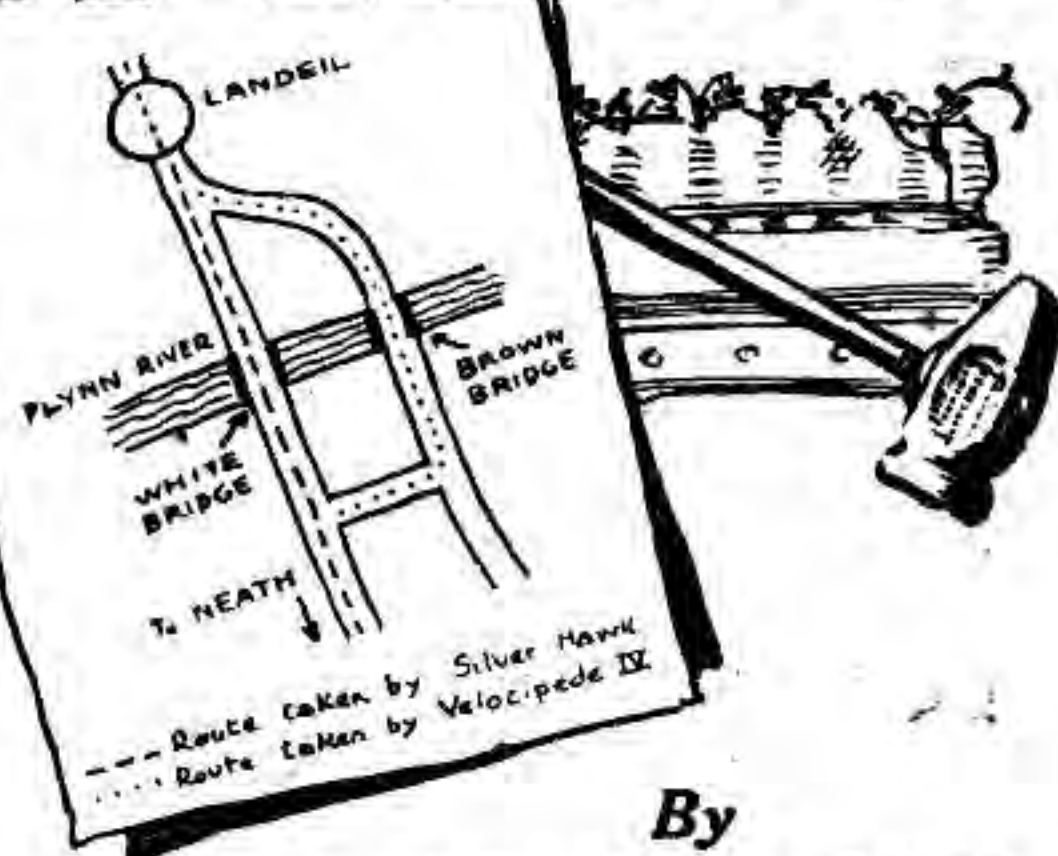
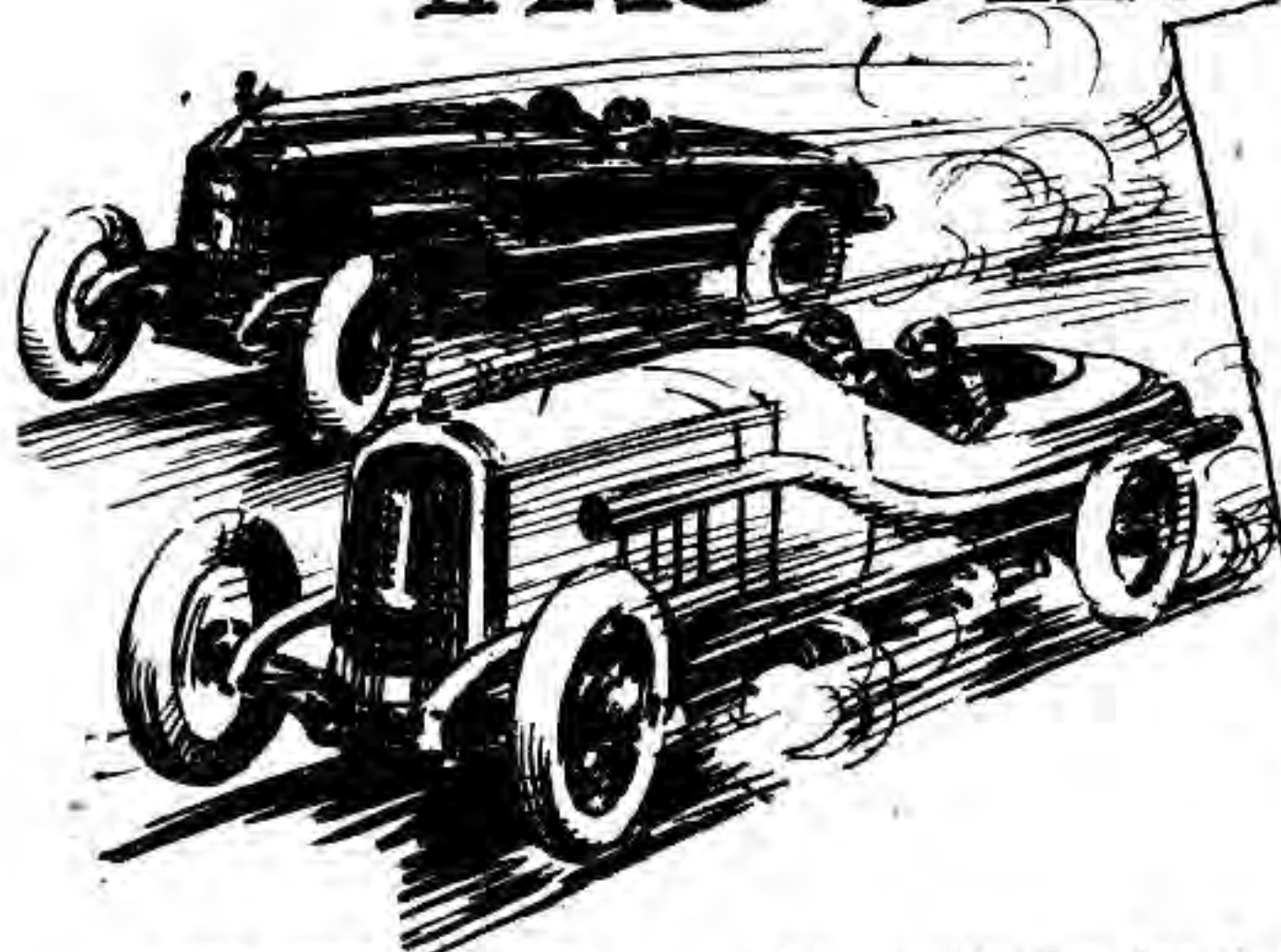
SIR MOSTYN FRAYNE



Ferrers Locke is here again next Monday—

A few days prior to the start of the Round-Britain Motor Race English motorists are horrified to learn that the engine of the Silver Hawk—entered by the Newport Engineering Works at Coventry—has been ruthlessly battered by some person or persons unknown. The wonder detective is called in to investigate, and some startling situations are reached.

The Silver Hawk!



By

OWEN CONQUEST.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Round-Britain Motor Race!

WITH a steaming cup of coffee poised in his right hand, Ferrers Locke, detective, languidly turned over the pages of the "Daily Clarion" with his left.

"Ah, there's a special motoring supplement to-day," he murmured. "That reminds me, it's high time we purchased a car."

His young assistant, Jack Drake, to whom the remark was addressed, reached across the breakfast-table for the marmalade and helped himself liberally.

"You bet it is, chief!" he said with enthusiasm. "It's all jolly well having cars lent to you and hiring taxis, but in our profession one wants a rattling good car of one's own to get about in."

"The suggestion's good," said Locke thoughtfully.

His eyes roved over the advertisements in the motor supplement of the "Clarion." They were speedily arrested, however, by a glaring headline:

"ROUND-BRITAIN MOTOR RACE!
"Daily Clarion" Gold Trophy and
£1,000 Prize!"

Then in three solid columns of type the conditions of the great race instituted by the newspaper were given, together with the chances of the competitors who had entered for it.

"By Jove, this Round-Britain Race is going to provide a gruelling test for the racing cars!" Locke said. "The start's from London. Then they are to proceed up the East Coast to the North of Scotland, down the West Coast and round Wales, and, after touching at Land's End, a final run along the South Coast back to the metropolis."

"My hat, I'd like to see it!" said Drake.

"It wouldn't be so exciting to watch as some of the racing at Brooklands," replied the sleuth. "The cars are to start within five minutes of each other, however, in this case, and time allowance made accordingly. That will make it a

bit more thrilling than if each car were to make the run separately and the race decided on time alone."

"How many British cars have entered, sir?"

"Three. Of these, the Hawk, driven by Keith Newport—son of Sir Frank Newport—the famous young motor racer, is estimated to have the best chance. Listen to this."

From the newspaper Ferrers Locke read the following:

"Not much danger is anticipated from the Belgian and Italian entries. But Edward A. Levitt, formerly a Rhodes scholar at Oxford, has returned to this country from the United States, bringing with him his famous Dakota Wolf. It was in his car that four months ago he beat the record across America from New York to San Francisco."

"Another competitor to be reckoned with is Henri Dubec, the great French racer. It will be fresh in the minds of most of our readers that it was Dubec who, in his Velocipede IV., was second in the Gordon Bennett Cup Race in France this year."

"I had the pleasure of a chat with Dubec yesterday, just before he left London for Staylham, where he will stay until the Round-Britain Race—four days hence. He looked hale and hearty, as did Pierre Boulez, his mechanic, who was with him."

"His car, Velocipede IV., was the centre of an admiring throng as it throbbed outside the hotel entrance prior to their start. I commented on the two thousand two hundred and seventy-three mileage record on the special cyclometer attached to the car, and Dubec laughingly informed me that the figures were entirely hit up during the recent road racing on the Continent. Both Dubec and Boulez were exceedingly confident of taking the 'Daily Clarion' trophy back to La Belle France with them!"

Jack Drake, who had listened with intent interest, gave a grunt.

"I hope not," he said. "Too many trophies have nassed out of this country

to the Continent and America, without our losing another one."

"I quite agree," said Locke. "And in this case there seems good reason to hope that an Englishman may nobble the prize."

"And I hope he jolly well does!" was Drake's comment. He turned, to see the Chinese servant glide into the room. "All right, Sing-Sing—just finished. You can clear away if you like."

The Chinese nodded solemnly and proffered a buff-coloured envelope to Ferrers Locke.

"A telegram for you, Missa Locke."

"Thanks!"

The detective tore open the envelope and glanced over the message. His eyebrows raised almost imperceptibly. Passing the form across the table to his young assistant, he tersely said:

"Read that."

Drake did so, and an exclamation of excitement left his lips. For the telegram read:

"Please come Hawk Motor Engine Works, Coventry, immediately.—NEWPORT."

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Outrage at the Motor Works!

CATCHING the fast train from Euston at nine, the sleuth and his young assistant reached Coventry shortly after eleven o'clock.

Having put through a trunk telephone call to Sir Frank Newport, announcing the train they intended coming by, they found a car, in charge of a chauffeur, awaiting them. In this they were rapidly driven to the works of the Hawk Motor Engine Company, just outside the city.

Without formality they were ushered into the private office of the chairman of the company. Here they found Sir Frank Newport, alone, and pacing restlessly up and down like a caged tiger.

A smile of welcome flickered momentarily across the keen face of the motor expert as he greeted his visitors.

"Thank Heaven you were able to respond so promptly to my summons, Mr.

—solving one of the biggest mysteries of his career!

Locke!" said he to the detective. "I wish to engage the services of you and your assistant until after the Round-Britain Motor Race."

"You are fearful of encountering foul play—eh, Sir Frank?" said Locke. "But tell me, what has occurred to upset your equanimity?"

"Be seated, please," said Sir Frank Newport. He dropped back into the chair before his roll-top desk and nervously entwined his fingers about a penholder. "We have suffered a severe shock here. My son, Keith, and his mechanic, Alfred Hedgley, had constructed a special engine for the Silver Hawk, the racing car which has been entered for the forthcoming contest. The engine was in my son's own private workshop, together with the chassis of the car. It was to have been installed to-day. During the night some scoundrel has deliberately broken into the workshop and put the engine out of commission. It is heart-breaking. That engine had been thoroughly tested out and found entirely satisfactory. And now, with the big race but four days distant, we are confronted with the task of constructing another. Incidentally, our chance of getting the new one tuned up in time is a poor one, and correspondingly poor is our chance of lifting the 'Daily Clarion' trophy."

"I quite understand that," Locke said. "But you mean to have a try, though?"

"We shall try—by gad, yes! My son has set his heart on winning the Round-Britain event. And I might tell you that it means a very great deal to this firm that a Hawk engine should supply the power for the first car home. Competition in motor-engines has been keen for a long time, and it will give our business a decided fillip if a Hawk is first in the 'Clarion' race."

"So I take it," murmured Ferrers Locke, "that you want us first to find out who was responsible for last night's outrage. Then to see that no one else tampers with the new engine."

"Exactly. Now perhaps you would like to see the workshop where the damage was done?"

Locke and Drake rose and followed the chairman of the motor company from the office. Passing between several buildings from which issued the whir of machinery and a metallic din, they came to a smaller brick building. Outside were standing two young men—one in greasy blue overalls—who were chatting together and looking expectantly in the direction of the newcomers.

Halting before the two, Sir Frank Newport introduced the one in the overalls.

"This is Keith, my son," he said.

The detective and Jack Drake warmly shook hands with the young fellow.

"I'm jolly glad you've come!" said young Newport heartily. He himself introduced his companion.

"My friend, Levitt. You've heard of him, of course?"

"Edward A. Levitt, the motor racer?" said Ferrers Locke.

"I guess that's me," said the American as he greeted the sleuth and the boy. "Sure, it's a shame the way Keith has been treated over this motor-engine business. I feel it particularly, 'cause he and Sir Frank have been mighty good to me. I'm a guest at their home. And, by Washington, if I don't win the big race myself, there's no one I'd sooner see waltz off with the trophy than my friend Keith."

"Thanks, old man," said Keith Newport quietly. To Locke he explained:

"You see, sir, Teddie Levitt was up at Oriel with me. We were staunch pals at Oxford, both being keenly interested in cars. So when I heard he was coming over for the Round-Britain Race I invited him to stay with me. Now come into my workshop and see what some rotter has done to the engine of my car!"

He passed through the open door of the workshop, but Ferrers Locke halted at the threshold.

"H'm, I see how an entrance was effected," he remarked. "The miscreant used an oxy-acetylene flame to cut out the lock and bolt of the door."

"Too true," said young Newport, turning back.

"Who first entered this workshop this morning?" demanded Locke.

"I did. I discovered what had taken place. Alf Hedgley, my mechanic, was late in getting here."

"Is Hedgley present now?"

"He's inside."

Entering the private workshop of Sir Frank's son, Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake made the acquaintance of Alfred Hedgley. The man, like his young master, was garbed in a greasy blue overall. He was slight in frame and unprepossessing of face.

Seeing that neither Locke nor Drake was favourably impressed by the fellow, young Newport hastened to whisper a good word for his uncouth assistant.

"A bit dour," he said, "but a thundering good mechanic. He was the best in the works, and that's why I chose him to help me with this new engine."

Ferrers Locke turned his eyes towards the silver-coloured chassis of the racing car, which occupied the central position in the workshop, and thence to the damaged engine, which rested on a couple of wooden planks near the car.

Certainly the miscreant, whoever he was, who had set out to do the mischief, had made a thorough job of it. There were clear indications that the oxy-acetylene flame had been turned on to the metal of the engine. Then, as though the flame had given out, the scoundrel had resorted to more primitive methods of destruction. This anyway, was how Locke deduced it.

His glance, roving round the workshop, lighted upon a large sledge-hammer.

"That must have been obtained from the welding shop near by for the rotten job," said Keith Newport. "It wasn't in here yesterday. I found it this morning exactly where you see it now."

Taking up the weighty hammer in his hands, Locke examined it closely.

"There's no doubt this was the instrument of destruction used," he said.

He then bent down and looked very closely at the engine, which presented a deplorable spectacle.

"Smashed entirely beyond repair, sirrah," put in Edward A. Levitt in a mournful tone.

But the detective noted that one of about a dozen specially constructed steel cylinders on the engine remained intact.

"Stand aside, everybody," he said quietly.

The others stood back a little. Locke divested himself of his coat and hung it on a nail.

Raising the great sledge-hammer in his powerful hands, he brought it down on the one remaining cylinder. Looking carefully at the engine again, he saw that the cylinder bore but a barely perceptible mark as the result of the terrific blow.

Then time and again Locke raised the sledge-hammer and brought it crashing down on the cylinder. The din was terrific. The perspiration began to appear in beads on the sleuth's forehead. Sir Frank Newport, his son, and the American, looked on in bewilderment. Jack Drake offered to take a turn, but Locke motioned him away.

At the end of five minutes Locke hurled the hammer from him, and mopped his streaming brow with a handkerchief.

"Phew!" he panted. "It's a long time since I took exercise like that. However, I'm in pretty good physical condition, and my muscles are probably rather stronger than those of the average man."

"But—but what was the idea?" asked Keith Newport.

"I wanted to test the amount of muscular effort required to smash the cylinders of that engine."

"You should have let Levitt here try it," said Sir Frank reprovingly. "He has the muscles for that sort of job. Why he got his Blue at the Varsity for throwing the hammer."

The American reddened somewhat upon this announcement. But he said nothing.

"Then perhaps he'd have made a better job of that cylinder than I have done," said Locke cheerfully. "You will notice that with all the force I applied the steel is not damaged so much as that in the other parts of the engine. The inference is that someone of most exceptional strength was the miscreant who committed the outrage last night."

"By the way, Sir Frank," continued Locke, "it strikes me as curious that the night-watchman of your works did not report the outrage. Surely he must have heard the hammering during the night?"

"It's not really so strange," the motor manager explained. "We had a night-shift working to finish a special job. So there was a good deal of welding and other noisy work going on. No one heard anything untoward, nor did they discern any stranger prowling about the works."

Walking across the workshop, Ferrers Locke took his jacket off the nail. As he did so he saw a greasy crumpled piece of paper lying on the floor. Mechanically he picked it up and glanced at it to see whether it was of any importance or merely rubbish. On it was a message in ink which read:

"My dear friend, come over and have a game of billiards this evening at the time arranged.—Harry."

"Who owns this pretty thing?" asked Locke jocularly, holding the paper up. "I found it on the floor down here."

"It must have dropped from the pocket of Hedgley's second-best pair of overalls that are hanging on the wall," answered Keith Newport. "Hope you haven't been reading one of his love letters, Mr. Locke?" he added laughingly.

But Hedgley gave a dark scowl as he gazed at the note which the detective held out to him.

"It doesn't belong to me," he said gruffly. "Maybe Mr. Levitt knows whose it is. He was wearing that pair of overalls of mine yesterday when he

The DETECTIVE MAGAZINE
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came down to do a little job for his own machine, *Dacota Wolf*."

"That's right," admitted Levitt. "But I guess I didn't put any billet-doux in the pockets. The note doesn't belong to me."

Locke made a pretence to throw the paper under a bench. Instead, he kept it in his hand, and transferred it unobserved into his pocket.

When the detective and his assistant reached their rooms in Wheeler's Hotel two hours later, Locke mentioned the subject of the note he had found inside the workshop.

"I've kept the note for one particular reason," he told the boy. "But whether it has the slightest bearing on the case in hand is something we have yet to discover."

"It might have been dropped by the man who smashed the motor-engine," suggested Drake. "Anyway, both Levitt and Hedgley denied the ownership of it."

"From the position in which I found the paper I am convinced it dropped through a somewhat large hole in the pocket of the overalls which were hanging up," said Locke decidedly. "And, that being so, it would appear that either Edward A. Levitt or Alfred Hedgley is a deliberate liar."

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Jade Green Car!

AFTER an excellent luncheon at Wheeler's Hotel, Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake retired into the deserted coffee-room. Here the detective lighted his pipe and settled down into a comfortable armchair.

He took the piece of paper from his pocket and spread it on a small table, and nodded to the boy to close the door.

"Now note carefully what it says here, Drake, my boy: 'My dear friend, come over and have a game of billiards this evening at the time arranged.—Harry.' There, that's the message! The date at the head of the paper, as you will notice, is yesterday's. There is no address. Examine the note intently, my boy, and tell me what you make of it."

Jack Drake stooped over the table and gazed down at the paper. Then he took a magnifying-glass from his pocket and examined it even more carefully.

"I should judge, sir," he said at length, "that the note was written with a fountain-pen, and that the handwriting was disguised. There are signs of awkwardness in the formation of many of the letters."

"Good! I agree with you."

"Nevertheless," resumed the boy, "the note must have been written with a certain amount of carelessness, for the letter 'i' has been left out of the word 'billiards.'"

Ferrers Locke tapped his pipe out into an ash-tray.

"Ah! There I disagree with you, my lad," said he. "To my mind the fact that the 'i' is missing from the word 'billiards' suggests that the note was written by a Frenchman. The French word for billiards is *billard*. However, in lieu of anything better to work upon for the moment, I am going to try to find out who was the writer, and who was the recipient of the note."

"How, sir?"

"Simply like this: I shall write a couple of notes as nearly in the handwriting of the one before us as I am able. One I shall have delivered to Levitt, the other to Hedgley. The

message I shall send will be, 'Come and see me between nine and eleven to-night.—Harry.' You shall keep your eye on Levitt to-night, I shall shadow Hedgley. If one of them did indeed receive that crumpled message I found in the workshop, he may fall into the trap. So we ought to discover the identity of the sender of the message."

"And even if we do," said Drake, "we sha'n't be much forrader, surely?"

"I somehow think we shall," said Ferrers Locke quietly. "I am quite prepared to find that the writer of that note was the person directly or indirectly responsible for the smashing of Newport's Hawk engine."

With that remark Ferrers Locke set to work to practise copying the handwriting of the message. This task occupied him most of the afternoon. But at last he wrote a couple of notes on plain white paper which satisfied even himself. Each of these notes he sealed down in a plain envelope. To obtain

in fresh interest. Alfred Hedgley emerged from the side door of the house and went to the roughly-made garage at the back. From this he brought forth a Ford car.

Leaving it in the roadway outside his home, Hedgley returned to the garage for something.

Locke slipped across the road, glanced up and down, and then clambered into the back of the car. The vehicle was a four-seater, and, by crouching down at the back and drawing an old rug over himself, he felt fairly safe from discovery.

The mechanic, coming back to the car, took his seat at the wheel. There were



Crouching on their hands and knees by the side of the blown-up bridge, Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake could distinctly hear the purring engine of an approaching car. Then, even as Jack Drake cried out, a great silver shape came hurtling through the flames and smoke. Newport and his mechanic were safe!
(See Chapter 4.)

Hedgley's private address was an easy matter, and he bribed a grocer's boy, whom he met in the street, to deliver the two notes—one to Levitt, who was staying with the Newports, and the other to Alfred Hedgley, the motor-mechanic.

That evening Jack Drake spent a long vigil in the grounds of the fine residence of Sir Frank Newport outside of Coventry. Through a chink in the blind he could see Sir Frank, Keith Newport, Levitt, and a lady sitting at a card-table playing auction bridge. And there they remained until long after eleven o'clock, when, a trifle disappointed, the boy trotted back to the hotel.

During this time Ferrers Locke was busy also. From behind a boarding he watched the humbler home of the motor mechanic. The minutes dragged wearily, and more than once he was inclined to designate himself a fool for expecting any results from the vigil.

But as the town clock dimly tolled the hour of ten, the sleuth roused himself

a series of throbs and a slight jerk, and the car started off.

At what speed the car travelled it was impossible for Locke to guess. But in less than half an hour the Ford swung into a gravel drive and came to a halt. Hedgley shut off the engine and leapt out. A couple of seconds later the detective heard him give a double knock at a door.

Remaining under the rug, Ferrers Locke heard the door open, and voices raised in greeting. Then the door shut again.

Very cautiously the sleuth emerged from his stuffy hiding-place. The Ford was halted in a straight drive, which led from an open wooden gateway to a large garage.

He walked down the drive and peered out of the gateway, upon which was the name of the house, "Greenview." A road ran in front of the picturesque house, and a village green bordered the road on the other side.

—entitled "The Bullies of the Bombay Castle!" Just started!

Locke retraced his steps to the Ford, and proceeded to the garage. The door was locked, but, with the aid of a wonderful combination jack-knife he carried with him, he gently raised a window and entered. Then he switched on his torch.

No exclamation of surprise escaped him, for his mind was fully prepared for the sight which met his vision. There before him stood a great racing motor-car. It was painted jade green and bore a small silver image of Chanticleer or the cockerel—on the bonnet. It was the racing machine of the great French motorist, Henri Dubec.

Ferrers Locke gazed at Velocipede IV. with fascinated eyes. Then suddenly he picked out the special cyclometer attached to the car with the white ray of his electric torch. The mileage was revealed in four figures 2273. Taking a pencil from his pocket, the sleuth jotted the number down on his shirt cuff.

Leaving the garage by the way he had entered it, Locke silently closed the window and made towards the house. He noticed that now a light shone at a lower-floor window which before had been in darkness.

No blinds were drawn and the window was raised at the bottom, for the night was warm. So the detective was able to catch an odd snatch or two of the conversation which was being carried on inside. Hedgley's voice he recognised, though he only caught the name "Henri" from his lips.

But well did Ferrers Locke know now who the motor mechanic had come to visit. It was Henri Dubec, the great French motor racer.

The faint suspicion which had been aroused in Locke's mind by the misspelt word "billiards" had been well founded. Alfred Hedgley, the mechanic to Keith Newport, the British racer, was on visiting terms with Dubec, and Boulez, the mechanic to the rival car. Had one of these three performed that foul act of smashing the new Hawk engine at the Newport works? On the surface of things it appeared exceedingly probable.

Placing his hands on the window-sill, Ferrers Locke drew himself up slightly, to hear better. As he did so, he caught part of a remark made, he believed, by Dubec:

"... at ze Plyn if ze Hawk leads at Carmarthen."

What it meant he had no idea, for he had missed the preceding remarks. Nevertheless, the words stuck firmly in his mind.

A piece of slate upon which Locke's foot was resting snapped beneath his weight. Locke crouched down for a few moments. No one, however, appeared at the window, and so he resumed his former position.

But hardly had he grasped the sill again than a great, hairy hand shot out of the open window and gripped his wrist. An involuntary gasp of surprise left the sleuth's lips. Jerking himself violently backwards, he tore himself free and went sprawling on his back.

A snarl of rage came from the window, and the bulky form of a man leapt out. Locke had just regained his feet when the man alighted on the ground by his side. The great, muscular arms entwined themselves about the detective's body.

Then the face of Dubec appeared at the window.

"Pierre! Pierre! Avez vous l'at-trappe?"

"Oui, oui, M'sieu Henri!"

But in thus confidently announcing that

he had caught Locke the big Frenchman had reckoned without his host.

Strong as he was, Ferrers Locke knew that he was no match for the Herculean fellow who was astride him. But the sleuth squirmed on the ground until he was able to secure a hold on his antagonist's ankle. Then with his knowledge of jiu-jitsu, he gave the Frenchman's foot a twist that brought a yelp of pain from the other.

Simultaneously Pierre Boulez loosened his hold a trifle. It was Locke's opportunity, and he seized it in a flash. Exerting every ounce of his strength, he toppled the big fellow over and jumped to his feet.

As he did so Dubec and Hedgley, who had leaped from the window, came dashing for him. The British mechanic caught a glimpse of the detective's face in the yellow light from the window. He staggered back as though shot.

"Good heavens!" he gulped, "Ferrers Locke!"

Then, in a paroxysm of fear, the fellow dashed blindly round the back of the house.

But Locke had no eyes for Hedgley. He headed for the Ford car. The engine had not had time to cool, and he started it with one sharp turn of the crank. Then, leaping into the driver's seat, he began to back the car out of the drive.

Before he was able to succeed, however, Boulez, the big mechanic, came rushing up. Locke whipped a revolver from his pocket and covered the Frenchman.

"Get your hands up!" he cried in French. "One step forward, and I'll drill your carcass with an ounce of lead!"

None knew better than Boulez, who had served under the tri-colour in the Great War, that the strongest man in the world can't argue with a revolver bullet. He wisely put up his hands and remained still, though he muttered volubly under his breath. Dubec, looking white about the gills in the glare of the motor's headlights, took up a position beside his mechanic. Of Hedgley the detective saw nothing.

Getting the car on to the road, Ferrers Locke drove swiftly back to Coventry. This he found to be about fifteen miles distant from Staylham, where the house taken by Dubec was situated.

Of an astonished inspector at the police-station he demanded the arrest of Dubec, Boulez, and Hedgley. Boulez he accused as the party who had smashed the Hawk engine; Dubec and Hedgley as accessories before the fact.

So it came about that a tremendous sensation awaited the townsfolk of Coventry when, on the following morning, Henri Dubec, the famous French motorist, and Pierre Boulez, his assistant, were brought before the magistrate. Of Hedgley no trace could be found. Sir Frank Newport, his son, and Levitt, besides many others, were in court to hear the great private sleuth give his evidence against the couple.

The fact that Hedgley, the mechanic for the Hawk car, had been on visiting terms with the Frenchman created a marked impression.

"What part did the missing man play in the plot, Mr. Locke?" asked the magistrate.

"Clearly, he gave Dubec and Boulez full information about the special new Hawk engine," replied the detective in the witness-box. "Also, he would have instructed them in the situation of the private workshop and the method of

breaking in. It was left to Boulez to do the deed himself. Only a man of the giant strength of Pierre Boulez could have smashed the engine with a sledge-hammer." And Locke described his own experiment with the hammer in the workshop.

"But Boulez was staying at Staylham. There is no train from there after ten o'clock at night. And there is no evidence to show that the accused was seen coming off the train."

"For the simple reason," answered Locke, "that Boulez drove over in Velocipede IV., Dubec's jade green racing-car."

"Zat's a lie!" blurted out Boulez, speaking in English. "Ze car eet have not been used since we have come from London."

"Is that so?" murmured Ferrers Locke. Then to the magistrate he said: "When the French racing-car started from London for Staylham the cyclometer on it registered two thousand two hundred and seventy-three miles. That can be proved by a journalist on the staff of the 'Daily Clarion,' who will give evidence if necessary. When Dubec arrived in Staylham he announced to a number of folk who met him that he had a straight journey through in record time. Yet now the cyclometer of Velocipede IV. registers a mileage of two thousand four hundred and twenty-four."

"I see your point," said the magistrate after a rapid mental calculation. "The journey from London to Staylham by road is one hundred and eighteen miles."

"Yes, one hundred and twenty at the most," replied Locke. "But Dubec's cyclometer registers thirty-three miles more. And I would stress the point that the distance from Staylham to Coventry is about fifteen miles. Therefore the circumstantial evidence is damning that Boulez came over to the Hawk works in the car, and returned again after completing the destruction of Mr. Newport's motor-engine."

Under this cold reasoning and logic Pierre Boulez grew pale and nervous-looking. Henri Dubec, too, was pale, but he maintained the supercilious air which he had adopted during the hearing of the case.

"Vairy clever, vairy clever!" he remarked. "But M'sieu Locke have make ze meestake. Eet was myself who used ze car last night."

"You confess to coming to Coventry yourself?" said the magistrate sternly.

"Non, non, m'sieur," answered the French motorist. "I drive ze car along ze roads to test some adjustments I have made to ze engine. Of ze break-up of ze beautiful Hawk engine I know nuzzings. Pierre, he was sleeping like ze babe, and so I do not disturb heem or say anyzings about zat I was worried."

The explanation was coolly given, and a doubt arose in the magistrate's mind. The police had been quite unable to discover anyone who had seen Boulez in or near the Hawk works. And, in the end, greatly to the chagrin of Ferrers Locke, the bench dismissed the case against Dubec and Boulez on the ground of "insufficient evidence."

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

On the Road to Neath!

BY special permission of the Traffic Commissioner, it had been arranged by the "Daily Clarion" to have the secondary roads along the route of the Round-Britain Race cleared of traffic for the great motor test.

At ten o'clock prompt on the morning of the contest the first mighty racing-car shot out of the Speed Club ground at Hendon for the run up the East Coast of England. At five minute intervals nine other cars sped away amid a volley of cheers from the sightseers present.

Among them were the three favourites for the race—Velocipede IV., driven by Henri Dubec; Dakota Wolf, piloted by Edward A. Levitt; and the Silver Hawk, with young Keith Newport at the wheel.

In the car with him Newport had another mechanic from his father's works. Nothing had been seen or heard of Alfred Hedgley from the night of Locke's visit to Staylam. The new special engine which had been built to take the place of that which had been destroyed had been thoroughly tested, and had given every satisfaction.

Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake, who were among those who saw the start of the race, had had an eventful time during the days immediately preceding the event. They were trying days, none the less, for constant vigil was required.

Ever since that night at Staylam the snatch of conversation the detective had overheard had been running through his mind: "... at the Plynm if the Hawk leads at Carmarthen."

That there was some dark meaning underlying the remark the sleuth felt convinced.

By looking up a map of South Wales he had satisfied himself that "the Plynm" meant the River Plynm. The road that ran from Carmarthen through Landeil and on to Neath crossed this river by means of a structure known as the White Bridge. And this was the road, marked on the maps of all the motorists, which had to be followed in the race.

Still, the meaning of the strange words he had overheard remained obscure. And Locke worried more than was usual with him over the matter.

Having seen the last racing car depart in a swirl of dust, Locke and Jack Drake returned to the City.

During the next day or two the newspapers were full of reports about the great motor race. The "Daily Clarion," as the promoter of the contest, was, of course, very much to the fore. The news-bills screamed the pith of the tidings all over the town. "ACCIDENT TO LEVITT!" (This was not serious, but it put the American competitor out of the race.) "DUBEC LEADS AT DUNDEE!" "NEWPORT'S RECORD SPURT!" Every detail of the contest as it proceeded was given in the columns of the "Clarion" in the racy style of the newspapers' expert reporters.

It was all very exciting. The public, fired by the continual reports, talked of little else than the big race. Would the prize be won by a Briton or a foreigner? That was the question in every mind.

And then, as the cars were reported on their long run down the West Coast of the kingdom, Ferrers Locke received a wire which brought the deep furrows back to his brow. A man answering to the description of Alfred Hedgley had been seen by two police-constables at Cardiff.

"Drake," said the sleuth to his young assistant, "the police, as you know, have been trying to trace the missing man, Hedgley. Now it seems that the chap was glimpsed at Cardiff. And, egad, if he's in Wales we're going to be there, too! You and I will have a scour round that Plynm River bridge ourselves, before the cars pass."

They caught the first available train

for the west. With him Locke took a map of the Plynm River district, which he had copied from a small-scale map. (A reproduction of the map can be seen at the heading of this chronicle on page 23.)

But luck was against them on the journey. Some derailed goods trucks delayed them for nearly two hours. When at last they reached the Welsh town of Landeil, half a mile north-west of the White Bridge over the Plynm, the hour was nine-thirty at night.

The latest reports of the big race said that the Silver Hawk was leading, with Velocipede IV. three miles behind. A crowd was waiting in the town to see the competitors pass. But Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake hastened afoot to the White Bridge. On the near side of the bridge they saw nothing.

Suddenly there came to their ears the faint hum of a racing motor engine. From the direction of Landeil a pair of glaring headlights grew bigger and bigger.

"The Silver Hawk, I'll bet," said Drake.

Hardly had he spoken, when a mighty roar rent the air. The sleuth and the boy hurled themselves face downwards by the side of the road as the White Bridge

warning for the cars farther in the rear. Now let's—"

He stopped short as a low groan reached his ears. Going in the direction of the sound, they found a dark form lying by the roadside. It was Alfred Hedgley, the missing mechanic.

Beside the man was a light motor-bike. And the reason for the man's presence was revealed in a jagged wound on his forehead, where he had been hit by a piece of jagged wood from the blown-up bridge.

Attracted by the flames, the fire brigade came from Landeil and extinguished the conflagration. Locke, Drake, and the unconscious man were taken back to the town on the engine.

"Next morning, in the local hospital, Hedgley made a full confession. It proved Locke right in every particular. The mechanic had been bribed in the first place by Dubec to give full information about the new Hawk motor engine. Boulez had accomplished the destruction of it.

That having failed, it was arranged that Hedgley should fail to appear to take his place in the Silver Hawk for the big race. Also, he was to be well paid for destroying the White Bridge with dynamite if the Hawk was ahead

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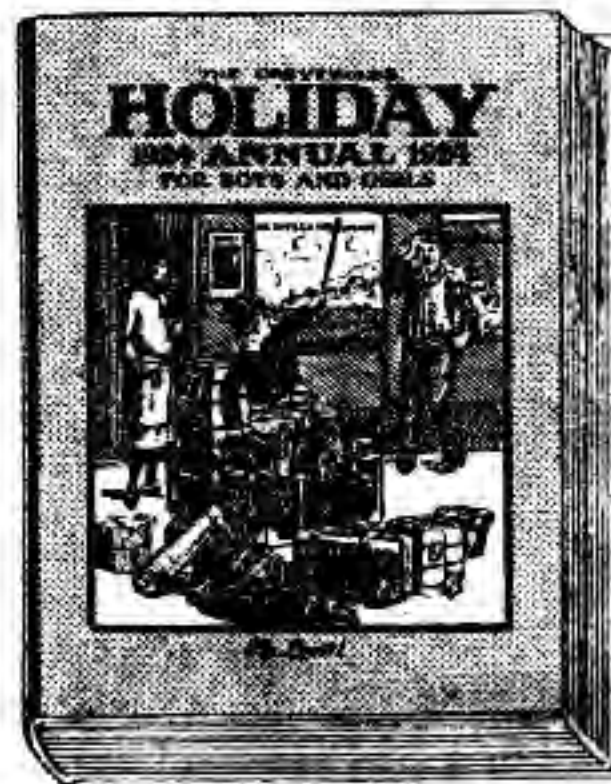
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rose in a thousand fragments into the air.

A rain of jagged pieces of wood and twisted scraps of iron fell about them, but they escaped injury as though by a miracle. Even as the sound of the explosion still echoed throughout the darkened countryside, the remaining woodwork of the destroyed bridge broke into flame.

Locke and Drake raised themselves on their hands and knees and gazed in blank horror at the sight.

"The Silver Hawk!" gulped Drake, his thought all for the oncoming racing car.

But even as he spoke a great silver shape came leaping through the flames and smoke and went tearing past them down the road. It was the Silver Hawk, and Newport and his mechanic were safe!

Locke wiped great beads of perspiration from his brow with the back of his hand.

"Good boy! Good boy!" he muttered brokenly. "If young Newport had tried to stop, nothing could have saved him. But he must have seen the danger, and accelerated his speed, and so cleared the chasm."

"But—but the other cars?" said Drake.

"Dubec, if I mistake not, will not come this way. He will turn off outside Landeil, and cross the river by the Brown Bridge, afterwards getting back on to the Neath road. The flames of the destroyed White Bridge will be quite sufficient

at Carmarthen. This he was to learn by the telephone communications that reached Landeil.

Locke upset the plan, inasmuch as he scared Hedgley off before the day of the race. But the mechanic, partly in revenge, fulfilled the other part of the programme. But a flying splinter of wood had prevented him from making his get-away.

It was a costly affair from his standpoint, for he received three years for his part in the dastardly plot. Dubec and Boulez were stopped and arrested as they alighted from their car at Hendon after the race, in which they were fairly and squarely beaten by the Silver Hawk. These two rascals also received three years apiece in the subsequent trial.

And, in addition to a handsome cheque, Sir Frank Newport, in his gratitude, presented Locke and Drake with the very commodities which they felt they needed more than anything else in the world. The sleuth received a handsome grey-painted motor-car, fitted with one of the famous Hawk engines. Jack Drake was given a handsome motor-cycle and side-car.

THE END.

(There is another thrilling detective story next Monday, entitled "The Snake's Tooth!" Be sure and read it!)

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