

OUR 900th ISSUE—AND STILL GOING STRONG!

No. 900. Vol. XXVII.

Week Ending May 9th, 1925.

The Magnet Library

EVERY MONDAY

Complete School Stories.



"STOP, THIEF!"

BILLY BUNTER BAULKS THE BANDIT!

(An astonishing incident from this week's magnificent story of Harry Wharton & Co., featuring the fattest and funniest schoolboy in the world.)

TO AND FROM YOUR EDITOR.

"PEP" FOR THE 'FRIARS!"

By Frank Richards.

THAT'S the title of next week's grand extra long story, chums—a title that gets you "guessing," I'll be bound. Mr. Frank Richards gives us an idea of how an American educational authority would run Greyfriars—how he would speed up things. Fisher T. Fish's hustling is a byword at the old school, but Fishy, "slick" as he undoubtedly is, is a tortoise by comparison with Mr. Hiram K. Parks. The story runs along on a tide of unexpected incident, and Magnetites will laugh till the tears run down their faces. But you'll like Hiram K.—his heart is in the right place, although his "head" could possibly do with a little adjustment. I'm leaving you curious at this stage purposely. Mind you read this grand yarn, boys. It's a scream!

"THE GOLDEN PYRAMID!"

Next week's instalment of this powerful mystery story sees the curtain lowered over one of Ferrers Locke's most difficult cases. There is a surprise twist at the end of the yarn, though, that will be appreciated. Mind you are "in at the death."

RIPPING NEW MYSTERY SERIAL!

On top of the last paragraph it comes as a sort of consolation to announce to my myriad readers the next treat in store. This coming story is really tip-top, and strikes an original note in the way of mystery yarns. It is penned by Mr. Hedley Scott, whose work you have

already sampled, and, according to your letters, enjoyed. In it appears the arch-criminal, Dr. Fourstanton, who filled the stage in "The Deputy Detective." In it also appears Montague Manners—a Society favourite who has jumped into sudden fame as a detective. We get a glimpse of Ferrers Locke as a man at the top of the tree suppressing an occasional twinge of jealousy at the repeated successes of this Society swell Manners. But you'll like Manners, you'll like his rather foppish tendencies, his optimism, and his cleverness. And when it comes to cricket you'll see a different Manners—a man who can wield the willow with untiring energy, a man who "breaks the bowler's heart." That's whetted your appetites, I'll wager. Look out, then, chums, for

"THE SPORTING DETECTIVE!"

the opening chapters of which start in this paper in a fortnight's time. 'Nuff said.

RESULT OF "PUZZLE PARS" COMPETITION No. 1.

In this competition no competitor sent in a correct solution. The **FIRST PRIZE** of £5 has therefore been awarded to:

BERNARD WALLIS,
14, Exeter Road,
Bishopston, Bristol.

whose effort, containing two errors, came nearest to correct.

CONSOLATION PRIZES of POCKET-KNIVES have been awarded to the following fourteen competitors whose solutions came next in order of merit:

Walter E. Adkins, 48, Derby Road, Ponder's End, London, N.
Ronald Ashby, 15, Claro Road, Leeds.
Douglas Baker, 28, Thornhill Road, West Croydon.
F. L. Barber, 34, Prince of Wales Road, Custom House, E. 16.
Ernest Blake, 23, Norfolk Terrace, Aylesbury, Bucks.
L. G. Dowdell, 46, Manchester Road, Portsmouth.
C. A. Leach, 14, Ballina Street, H.O.P. Forest Hill, S.E.
Doris E. March, 47, Cornwallis Gardens, Hastings, Sussex.
R. W. Nesbitt, Broken Sear, Darlington, co. Durham.
R. Ottaway, 8, Perch Street, Hackney, London, E. 8.
L. Rashbrook, 92, Langthorne Street, Fulham, London, S.W.
W. E. Swain, 143, South Street, Greenwich, London, S.E.
F. Taylor, 12, Kendrick Place, Sussex Place, Sth. Kensington, S.W.
G. E. Thomas, 23, Westbrook Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey.

The Correct Solution was as follows:

Harry Wharton & Co. were very fed-up at not being at the Boat Race this year. Bob Cherry thereupon had a brilliant idea, and the "big Five" were soon down at the boathouse. It was unfortunate that a Form master should be strolling along the riverside when they launched the boat. A sad five went back to the school to write a hundred lines each.

Result of "Puzzle Pars" Competition No. 2 next week.

MIND YOU READ THESE TWO NEW NUMBERS OF—

The Greyfriars Businessman
By FRANK RICHARDS
No. 3 of THE SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY 4d

A ripping story of your old favourites, Harry Wharton & Co., featuring Fisher T. Fish as a "business man."

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By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS
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ON SALE NOW AT ALL NEWSAGENTS!

THE WORM TURNS! Brave as a lion as Bunter thinks he is, he really wouldn't say "bo" to a goose if he thought the goose would retaliate. But a cake makes all the difference—especially when it belongs to Bunter! Bunter will fight furiously for a cake, as you will learn from reading—



A screamingly funny story of
Harry Wharton & Co., of
Greyfriars, featuring the Owl
of the Remove.

BY

FRANK RICHARDS

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Rally Round!

"RALLY round!"
"Eh?"
"That's the word!" said Billy Bunter impressively. "Rally round! It's jolly serious, I can tell you! I expect all my old friends to rally round me now. Otherwise—"

Billy Bunter paused dramatically. Harry Wharton & Co. looked at him. Serious as the matter was, according to Bunter, the Famous Five of the Remove did not seem to be very greatly impressed.

"Otherwise," repeated Bunter, "otherwise you may lose me!"

"Lose you?"
"Yes. It may come to that!"
At this point the chums of the Remove should certainly have shown some signs of emotion, if not of consternation.

But they didn't! Bunter evidently expected it. But Bunter often expected things that never came to pass.

There was no sign of consternation; not a flicker of emotion. Johnny Bull yawned. Frank Nugent grinned. But that was all. Neither a yawn nor a grin could be supposed to indicate any overwhelming dismay at the prospect of losing William George Bunter.

Wharton, with absolute heartlessness, went on with the remarks that Bunter had interrupted.

"About the cricket—" he resumed.
"Oh, really, Wharton—"
"Dry up, Fatty! You're interrupting, you know," said the captain of the Remove.

The Famous Five were standing by the window in the Rag, discussing the prospects of the coming cricket season. Even the serious state of Bunter's affairs, apparently, could not take their minds off that comparatively unimportant subject.

But Bunter was not to be denied.
"I've said that this is jolly serious!" he exclaimed.

"Yes. And now run away and play!" suggested Bob Cherry.
"I may have to go—"

"Just what we want, old top," said Nugent. "Go quickly!"

"The golfiness is the proper caper, my esteemed fat Bunter," concurred Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I may have to go home, and leave Greyfriars!"

"Well, you couldn't possibly expect to take Greyfriars with you, old bean," urged Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly ass!" roared Bunter. "I mean, I may have to get out! Leave the school. Fancy Greyfriars without me!"

"What's the good of thinking of those delightful things?" asked Bob. "They never come to pass, really."

"Beast!"

"The first game, with St. Jude's—"

Wharton went on.
"For goodness' sake, Wharton, stop talking that piffle!" exclaimed Billy Bunter irritably. "Talk about Solomon fiddling while Carthage was burning! Look here, at this crisis—"

"This what?"

"This crisis—this serious crisis, I expect all my friends to rally round me!"

"Then go and look them out, and tell them so!" suggested Bob Cherry.

"What's the good of telling us about it?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"But what on earth's happened, Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton. "Are you going to be bunked for bagging pies from the larder?"

"Or sent to a home for incurable fat men?" asked Bob.

"It's my pater!" explained Bunter, unheeding those frivolous questions. "He's not satisfied with my progress in the school."

"Well, if he was, he would be jolly easily satisfied, I should think."

"Mr. Quelch gave him a rotten report of me at the end of last term."

"What did you expect?"

"He said I was lazy—"

"Naturally!"

"That I slacked in class—"

"Of course."

"That I seemed to dislike exertion, either mental or physical—"

"Quelch knows you all right."

"Of course, I explained to him that Quelch was prejudiced," went on Bunter, "and I explained that a fellow at a public school who was a whale at games couldn't really find the time for mugging up Form work. It's not to be expected."

"Oh, my hat!"

"A whale at games," repeated Bob Cherry dazedly. "You mean a whale at dinner!"

"Did you tell your pater that you know the difference between a football and a fancy dress ball?" asked Johnny Bull. "It was a whopper if you did!"

"I wish you fellows would be serious at a— a crisis like this," said Bunter peevishly. "The pater would have been satisfied with that explanation—if I could have shown him a good games record. But—well, nobody knows better than you, Wharton, how I've been kept out of games. You can't deny that I've offered to play against Highcliffe and St. Jim's and Rookwood, and every time you've turned me down."

"Guilty!" chuckled the captain of the Remove.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've explained all that to the pater, and he actually said that it was rubbish, that a good man couldn't be kept out by personal jealousy in that way—"

"Oh, my hat! You told him it was that?"

"Of course! I had to tell him the facts!"

"The facts! Oh dear!"

"I made it quite clear that you fellows had the Form games practically in your hands, and were in a conspiracy to keep me in the background."

"Phew!"

"You cheeky owl!" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"But he didn't seem convinced," said Bunter sorrowfully. "It's pretty thick, isn't it, for a man to doubt his own son's word. But he did. And the long and the short of it is, that he says it seems to him that I'm wasting my time at Greyfriars, and he's thinking of taking me away."

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"More power to his elbow," said Johnny Bull cordially. "Your pater seems to have some jolly good ideas, Bunter."

"Beast!"

"I think a meeting of the whole Form should be called, if that is the case," said the captain of the Remove thoughtfully. "The least we can do is to pass a vote of thanks to Mr. Bunter."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter glared at the Famous Five, with a glare that almost cracked his spectacles.

"You awful rotters——"

"Well, what can we do, old fat man?" asked Harry Wharton, laughing. "Your pater wouldn't listen to us, even if we told him how much we should miss you and——"

"The muchfulness would not be terrific!"

"I think it's up to you to rally round me, at a fearful crisis like this!" said Bunter indignantly. "If I'm taken away from Greyfriars, the pater will find me a place in his office! Me, you know, among common people who work! I should have to work, myself——"

"Awful!"

"Terrific!"

"Rally round!" said Bunter. "You fellows can work the oracle if you like to try. My pater's coming down to Greyfriars next Saturday to look into the matter himself, he says. Now, I don't suppose I can satisfy him about Form work—Queelch wouldn't make me top of the class; you know he's prejudiced. But it will be all right if he discovers that I'm a great man at games—for that's really what a chap goes to a public school for. You're picking out men for the cricket now, Wharton."

"Well?"

"Pick me out."

"Eh?"

"And explain to the pater that you're relying on me to see the Remove Cricket Club safely through the season."

"Great Scott!"

"He would be bound to believe you, as captain of the Form," explained Bunter. "You other fellows can back me up, too. For instance, you, Bob, can tell my pater how I beat you on the cinderpath——"

"But you didn't!"

"What difference does that make?"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"You, Nugent, can put in a word about my swimming."

"But you can't swim!"

"I wish you wouldn't wander from the point, Nugent. Tell him how I fetched you out when you went out of your depth."

"But you didn't!" shrieked Nugent.

"You, Bull, can explain to him how unfortunate it was that I was left out of the football team last season, and that we owe several defeats to that alone."

"My hat!"

"And you can pile it on, Inky; you can tell him that later on, when we leave Greyfriars, you want me to come out to Bhanipur and instruct your dashed niggers in football and cricket, and English games generally."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the chums of the Remove. Hurree Janset Ram Singh stared speechlessly at Bunter.

"That's the idea—rally round!" urged Bunter. "Blessed if I see anything to chuckle at. I'd do more than all that to back up a pal. Tell my father about me, and tell him the exact truth."

"My dear man!" gasped Wharton.

"If we told your father the exact truth

wouldn't it hurt his feelings? After all, you're his son."

"You silly ass!" howled Bunter. "I mean tell him what a splendid fellow I am at games, and generally——"

"Weren't you asking us to tell the truth?"

"That is the truth."

"Oh, my hat!"

"You might exaggerate a little, of course, in a good cause. Pile it on a bit all round. See? Mind, if my father isn't satisfied he may take me away from the school. You may lose me. Think of that!"

"If you have any tears, prepare to shed them now!" said Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Apparently the chums of the Remove had no tears. At all events, they did not shed any. They roared.

"You don't seem to understand," said Bunter. "I may actually have to leave the school; you may never see me again! How will you fellows like that?"

"Fine!"

"Tip-top!"

"Bravo!"

"Look here!" roared Bunter. "This is a jolly serious matter. Are you going to rally round, or are you not going to rally round? Are you going to back me up, or are you not going to back me up?"

"Oh, dear!" said Harry Wharton. "My dear old barrel, we're not going to tell your jolly old pater a heap of terrific whoppers, that's a cert. We'll tell him the truth, if you like. I'll mention that you're the funniest, laziest ass in the Remove——"

"I'll tell him you're a dud at footer," said Bob Cherry.

"I'll let him know that you can't run three yards without bursting," offered Nugent.

"I'll point out that you can't play cricket for toffee, or anything else for nuts," said Johnny Bull.

"I will mention to the esteemed Mr. Bunter that your dudfulness is terrific," said Hurree Singh.

"Beasts!"

Billy Bunter bestowed a wrathful glare on the Famous Five, and rolled away. He left the chums of the Remove chuckling, undismayed by the appalling prospect of losing Bunter.

But the Owl of the Remove did not see anything to chuckle at. It was a serious matter, in his opinion.

Taken away from Greyfriars, there was a dreadful possibility that he would have to work.

The bare thought of it made him shudder.

Something had to be done to avert such a calamity; and William George Bunter felt that he was up against it. And the Famous Five went on talking cricket, just as if it didn't matter!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Stuffing Mr. Quelch!

"U-T trabe Cypria."

Billy Bunter grunted contemptuously.

On one of the old benches under one of the ancient Greyfriars elms Mark Linley, of the Remove, was seated.

He had a book on his knee, and was evidently studying it. It was his muttering voice that reached Bunter's ears as he rolled along with his fat hands driven into his pockets—thinking.

Thinking was an unaccustomed exercise to William George Bunter. He did

not like it at all. But he had to think out what was to be done in this crisis of his fat career, since he had received that stern letter from Mr. Bunter.

"Swotting, as usual?" he grunted, as he blinked at Linley.

On that sunny spring afternoon it was very pleasant to sit with a book under the old elms, with the grey old facade of the School House in the distance. But Linley's book was not one that would have appealed to the average Remove fellow. Bunter could see the title on it—Linley was studying Horace. Q. Horatius Flaccus was, of course, beyond the ken of the Lower Fourth. The Sixth found him troublesome enough. It was just like that swot, Linley, Bunter reflected, to be mugging up a blighter whose stuff would make any other fellow's head ache.

Bunter leaned on a tree and regarded Mark through his big spectacles. Mark was a hard worker—he had to be. No doubt he was working up now for some prize exam, in which he was likely to beat fellows much older than himself.

Billy Bunter realised, at the same time, that if he could have shown Mark's Form record he would not have been in danger of the chopper coming down in the drastic way threatened by Mr. Bunter.

Mark was one of Mr. Quelch's favourite pupils—beastly favouritism, according to Bunter, who calmly ignored the fact that Linley worked, and that he, William George Bunter, never did, if he could help it. Mark was in no danger of receiving a bad report, Bunter never escaped one. In Bunter's valuable opinion Horace was "tosh." But he wished he could have mugged up that tosh as Linley was doing, just for once. If only, on Saturday, his Form-master would mention to Mr. Bunter that William, after all, was a studious and pains-taking fellow, and getting on well in his class, that would make it all right!

Bunter was no good in class, no good at games—no good anywhere, in fact, but in the tuck-shop, where, indeed, he could break anybody's record. It was necessary to demonstrate that he was good at something or other to convince Mr. Bunter that his fees at the school were not mere money thrown away.

Mr. Bunter was a stockbroker, with a very keen sense of the value of money. He had received an impression that he was wasting money on William—as, indeed, he was. Somehow or other that impression had to be removed.

Mark Linley laid his book on the seat and rose. In his preoccupation he did not observe Bunter; he walked to and fro, with his hands in his pockets, under the elms, evidently thinking out the somewhat difficult Latin he had just been going through. Billy Bunter watched him sourly.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Come on, Marky!"

It was Bob Cherry's powerful voice in the distance.

Mark glanced round.

"Looking for you, old bean!" said Bob. "Forgotten that you're coming out for a spin? Come on!"

"I——" began Mark.

"This way, old pippin!"

Bob Cherry grabbed Mark by the arm and rushed him away, chuckling. Billy Bunter blinked after them as they disappeared in the direction of the bike shed.

Horace lay on the seat where Mark had left it.

Evidently Mark had forgotten his book.

Billy Bunter rolled to the bench and sat down, and picked up the "Odes and Epodes."

He opened the book at the first ode, which Mark had been conning over, and blinked at it.

It really made him shudder.

"Maecenas atavis edite regibus,
O et praesidium et dulce decus meum."

What the thump was a fellow to make of that? Certainly William George Bunter, who found insuperable difficulties in Caesar, was not likely to make much of it.

An idea had crossed Bunter's fat mind for a moment of engaging in the desperate task of mugging up Horace, as a move towards averting the impending chopper.

One glance at Ode 1 was sufficient to drive that idea from his mind. The chopper was better than this.

He blinked at Q. Horatius Flaccus with brows knitted over his spectacles, wondering how any fellow could possibly make sense of it, and doubting very seriously whether there was any sense in it at all.

"Bless my soul!"

Bunter started.

Mr. Quelch, master of the Remove, was enjoying a gentle stroll under the old elms, and he had come on Bunter quite unexpectedly.

Much more unexpected was Bunter's occupation.

Mr. Quelch was naturally surprised to see Bunter with a school book at all at any moment when he was not compelled to have one in hand.

But to see him with Horace was staggering.

Bunter blinked up.

Mr. Quelch sat down on the bench beside him. His kind and approving glance surprised Bunter, till he realised his Form master's misapprehension.

"My dear Bunter," said Mr. Quelch cordially. "I am glad to see this."

"Oh, sir!" said Bunter.

"If you are beginning to take an interest in your studies, Bunter, it is a very welcome sign of improvement."

"Thank you, sir!" stammered Bunter.

His little round eyes glimmered behind his spectacles.

Mr. Quelch's little mistake came just at the right moment, like corn in Egypt in one of the lean years. Bunter was an adept in the art of "stuffing," and if he could only "stuff" Mr. Quelch with the belief that he, Bunter, was a studious fellow like Linley, it would very likely work the oracle.

"The—the fact is, sir," murmured Bunter, "I—I'm rather keen on—on this, sir. I—I'm hoping to improve my place in class, sir."

"A very worthy ambition, Bunter."

"I don't see why I shouldn't go in for a prize, sir. My father would be pleased."

"Very good indeed, Bunter. Your father has been greatly disappointed by the report I have been compelled to make of you. But, really, Bunter, I am very surprised to see you taking up Horace. You must not aim too high at first."

"Well, sir, my idea is to get hold of something really hard, and—and go for it, sir," said Bunter. "The harder the work the better I shall like it, sir. I—I've got a lot of lost time to make up for."

"You have indeed, Bunter," assented Mr. Quelch. "And if you are making a serious effort to deal with Horace I shall be very glad to give you any assistance in my power. Do you feel that you are making progress?"



"Do you dare to tell me that this is a translation of the first ode of Horace, and that it is your work?" thundered Mr. Quelch. "Ye-e-es," gasped Bunter. "Boy," rumbled the Form-master. "It is a translation of the fourteenth ode!" "Wha-a-at?" stuttered Bunter. "B-but Greene t-told me that it was all right, sir!" (See Chapter 4.)

Bunter trembled.

The awful thought came into his mind that Mr. Quelch was going to take the book and ask him to construe, as a sample of his progress with Horace.

Bunter could no more have construed a single verse than he could have flown over the elms.

"I—I—yes, I—I think so, sir," he stammered. "I—I'm doing my best, sir. Of course, it takes time."

"Quite so, Bunter." To the Owl's intense relief, Mr. Quelch did not seem to think of putting him to the test. "Well, Bunter, I am glad to see this, and I shall be glad to help you. Come to my study at five o'clock, and bring me your construe, and we will go over it together."

Bunter quaked.

"Yes, sir," he murmured.

"You are engaged on the first ode at present?"

"Ye-e-es, sir."

"Very good. Bring me the best you can do, and we will see. Keep this up, Bunter—keep it up, my boy!"

And Mr. Quelch quite graciously nodded to Bunter and resumed his walk under the elms.

Thus encouraged by his Form master, Billy Bunter ought to have felt considerably bucked.

But he didn't.

"Stuffing" Mr. Quelch was not, after all, a very profitable proceeding. Indeed, it might be likened, as an occupation, to twisting a tiger's tail.

Bunter was booked to see his Form master at five o'clock with his construe of the first ode. In about ten years, with a wet towel round his head, Bunter might have produced some sort of a construe.

"Oh dear!" murmured Bunter. "That beast Linley— Blow him, and blow Horace, and blow Quelch, and—and blow everybody!"

It was all Linley's fault, of course. If he hadn't left his beastly book on the beastly bench Bunter would never have looked at the beastly thing, and his beastly Form master would never have noticed him and made a silly mistake, and Bunter would never have 'stuffed' him.

But he was for it now.

To confess to Mr. Quelch that he had stuffed him, that he didn't understand a line and hardly a word of that great author Horace, was impossible.

To construe Horace was still more impossible.

Already Bunter was up against it. Now he was more up against it than ever. Really, life at Greyfriars seemed hardly worth living for a fellow who only wanted to slack in peace.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Corn in Egypt!

"PETER, old man!"

Peter Todd was just coming out of Study No. 7 in the Remove. Bunter met him in the passage with a book under his arm and a woebegone expression on his fat face.

Peter grinned.

"Nothing doing!" he answered. "Money's tight."

"It isn't that, Peter."

"Great Scott! Haven't you been disappointed about a postal-order?" exclaimed Toddy.

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"No," howled Bunter.

"My only hat! You'll own up next that you're not expecting a whacking remittance from a titled relation!" exclaimed Peter, in amazement.

"I say, don't be a beast, Toddy! I'm in a hole, and I want you to help me out!" groaned Bunter.

"Well, I'm just going out of gates," said Toddy. "But what is it. If it's lines, you can do them yourself."

"It isn't lines."

"Well, give it a name," said Peter. "I suppose I'm your keeper, as they were cruel enough to plant you in my study. What's the jolly old row?"

"I want you to help me with Horace."

Peter jumped.

"Horace?"

"Yes."

"Do you mean Horace Coker of the Fifth? What's Coker been doing?"

"I don't mean Horace Coker!" howled Bunter angrily. "I mean a much worse beast than Coker—that villain Horace who wrote rotten tosh in Latin."

"But we don't have Horace in the Remove," said Peter, staring. "I'm a clever chap—none cleverer—but I don't think I'm quite up to Horace's weight. I give him best."

"I've got to do it!" groaned Bunter.

"I—I've been stuffing Quelch that I can mug up Horace, and—and I've got to show him something at five o'clock. And—and I can't make head or tail of the brute."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Toddy.

"Tain't a laughing matter!" howled Bunter. "What will Quelch say, after I've told him I'm mugging up Horace, if I can't show him some sort of a construe, can't even translate a line?"

"I don't know what he'll say," chuckled Peter, "but I know what he'll do. He'll jolly well lick you for pulling his leg."

"Well, then, you grinning beast, help me out," said Bunter. "You dig into the stuff, and I—I'll sit and watch you. I will, really."

"I've no doubt you would!" chuckled Peter. "But I'm not exactly keen on spending a half-holiday mugging up Latin, just to help you out in telling lies to Quelch. Give Horace the go-by, and stick to the truth. That's my tip, old son!"

And Peter Todd went on his way whistling.

"Yah!" howled Bunter. "You couldn't do it, you dummy! You couldn't construe a line any more than I could!"

Even that taunt failed to move Peter Todd. Perhaps Bunter was right; at all events, Peter was obviously indisposed to spend his half-holiday on an ancient Latin author. He disappeared down the Remove staircase.

"Oh dear!" murmured Bunter.

He rolled on to Study No. 13, where Mark Linley was to be found when he was at home. The Lancashire junior was a good-natured fellow, and Bunter hoped for help in that direction.

But another disappointment awaited him.

Study No. 13 was quite vacant. Bunter remembered that Linley had gone out for a bike spin with Bob Cherry.

"Beast!" murmured Bunter.

He rolled into the study in a dismal mood. At five o'clock he had to show something to Mr. Quelch, and it occurred to him that if Mark had been labouring at Horace, he might have left something of his work about the study. There were a good many papers on the study table, some of them in Mark's handwriting, and Bunter blinked over them eagerly.

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Indeed, it was practically certain that Linley must have written down something about this tosh. Possibly, even probably, he had construed the whole of the first ode, as that was the section of the beast that he was engaged upon. It was likely, even more than likely, that his construe was lying there, on the study table.

If such was the case, Bunter had no scruple whatever about borrowing it. All that concerned him was to prevent Mr. Quelch from discovering that he had been "stuffed."

Indeed, if he took in a good construe, it was certain to please the Remove master, and deepen the favourable impression Bunter had already made.

That meant a very flattering report when Mr. Bunter came along on Saturday, and the impending chopper would be averted.

Eagerly the Owl of the Remove blinked over the papers.

"My hat!"

He clutched up a sheet of impot paper.

It was closely written, in Mark Linley's small, neat hand. Freshly written, obviously very recently done.

"That's it," murmured Bunter, his little round eyes glimmering with satisfaction.

He read through the sheet.

"Once more Cæsar, O people, so lately like Hercules in quest of glory or death, returns to his household gods, victorious from the shores of Spain!"

There was more of it; and Bunter, for once, read through a Latin construe with satisfaction.

In fact, he was grinning with glee.

This, obviously, was a translation from Horace, and it was a translation from Horace that Bunter was looking for.

He sat down in Mark's chair, picked up Mark's pen, and proceeded to copy out the construe on a sheet of Mark's paper. It was necessary, of course, to have the paper in his own "fist."

That task completed, Bunter rolled out of the study in a mood of great satisfaction.

Stuffing Mr. Quelch was, after all, quite simple. Bunter was now quite anxious for five o'clock.

He rolled out into the quad, and in the quad he sighted Greene of the Fifth. Greene of the Fifth was said to be rather a "swot," and Bunter—very cautiously—decided to get Greene's opinion on his construe before he took it in to Mr. Quelch. He rolled up to the Fifth-Former with his most ingratiating grin.

"I say, Greene—"

"Hook it, fatty!" answered Greene unceremoniously.

"I say, look at this paper for me, will you?" pleaded Bunter. "I've been translating Horace, and I know you know all about it."

Greene stared at him.

"You fat fibber! Fat lot you know about Horace! Don't try to pull my leg!"

"Well, look!" said Bunter.

He held out his paper, and the Fifth-Former glanced at it, with a sniff. Then he stared.

"My hat! Did you do this, Bunter?"

"Yes. Of course, it isn't like you'd do it, Greene; but is it pretty good?" asked Bunter anxiously.

"Quite good!" said Greene, staring. "Mean to say that you construed Horace like this?"

Bunter grinned. So it was really Horace, and it was really good! That was all he wanted to know!

"Oh, I'm rather a dab at the more difficult classics, you know!" he said airily.

"You mean, you've got hold of a crib somewhere, and copied it out," said Greene of the Fifth. "You're trying to pull my leg, Bunter, and when a cheeky fag pulls my leg, I always kick him—like that!"

"Yaroooooh!"

Greene walked away, laughing, and Bunter glared after him. Greene had rather a hefty kick.

But when the pain had worn off Bunter grinned again. It was all right. If Greene supposed that he had copied that translation out of a "crib," it was obviously good enough for Mr. Quelch.

When five o'clock was sounding from the clock-tower of Greyfriars, Billy Bunter made his way to Mr. Quelch's study. He came on Johnny Bull in the passage. Johnny had an impot with him, to deliver to Mr. Quelch.

"Hallo! You got lines, too?" asked Johnny Bull.

"No fear! I'm going to have a chat with Quelch about Horace!" said Bunter airily.

"About which?"

"Horace."

"Gammon!"

"Just like you, Bull, to fancy other fellows as ignorant as yourself. The fact is, Horace is just pie to me," said Bunter. "I read him as easily as you would read Eutropius."

"I don't think!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"Well, you just come in with me and see!" snapped Bunter.

"I jolly well will!"

And the two Removites entered their Form master's study together.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Slight Mistake!

MR. QUELCH was in quite a good temper. He even seemed pleased to see Bunter.

Johnny Bull could not help noticing it. It really was rather extraordinary for anybody to be pleased to see Bunter.

"Ah, your lines, Bull!" Mr. Quelch was not specially pleased to see Johnny. "You may lay them on the table."

That meant that Johnny Bull might go. But Johnny was rather interested in Bunter, and he did not go.

"May I wait for Bunter, sir?" he asked meekly.

Mr. Quelch gave him an indifferent nod, and turned to the Owl of the Remove with real interest in his face. Any fellow who took a genuine interest in the classics was sure of Mr. Quelch's good graces. Such fellows were, perhaps, few in number in the Lower Fourth; doubtless Mr. Quelch prized them all the more on account of their rarity. And he was unusually pleased with Bunter's new development because it was so very unexpected.

"Well, my boy, and how are we getting on with Horace?" asked Mr. Quelch, in quite a genial manner.

Johnny Bull opened his eyes wide. If Bunter really was "mugging" Horace, without being driven to it, it was time for the skies to fall, in Johnny's opinion.

"Oh, very well, sir, I think!" said Bunter brightly. "The fact is, sir, I don't find it's quite so difficult as I thought."

"That is good, Bunter. I shall be glad to see what you have made of the First Ode."

"I think I've worked it out pretty well, sir," said Bunter. "In fact, I may say that it fairly ran off my pen."

Mr. Quelch gave him a quick look. Unless Bunter had changed very much indeed in a very short time, even old Eutropius was not likely to run off his pen easily. And a Remove fellow who found Horace easy would be something in the nature of a phenomenon.

"One moment, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch. "I take it for granted that you have not been cribbing."

"Oh, certainly not, sir! We haven't any cribs to Horace in the Remove," said Bunter. "I suppose they have in the upper forms."

Mr. Quelch coughed.

They were not supposed to have any cribs at all at Greyfriars; though that, of course, was chiefly supposition.

"Well, well, quite so, quite so, Bunter. Let me see your construe, and I shall judge of the progress you have made."

"Here it is, sir."

Bunter laid his paper on the table before the Remove master.

Mr. Quelch looked at it.

For a moment or two he seemed slightly puzzled, as he read "Once more Cæsar, O People!"—etc.

Then he looked up at Bunter.

Johnny Bull could see the danger-light in the gimlet-eyes of Mr. Quelch. But Bunter did not see it. The Owl of the Remove was short of vision, and he did not observe the glitter in his Form master's eye. He smirked contentedly, expecting words of praise.

"Bunter! I found you at work upon the first ode in the first book of Horace this afternoon."

"Yes, sir."

"You have construed that ode?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where is your work, then?"

"There it is, sir, under your eyes," said Bunter, staring. Really, he wondered whether Mr. Quelch was taking leave of his senses.

"This!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch, tapping the paper.

"Yes, sir."

Johnny Bull was almost startled by the deep wrath that gathered in Mr. Quelch's brow. Bunter observed it now, and he was alarmed. He could see now that something was wrong, though for his fat life he could not guess what it was.

"This!" repeated Mr. Quelch, in a grinding voice.

"Yes, sir!" faltered Bunter.

"You young rascal!"

"Eh?"

"You reckless impostor!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

He blinked at the Form master in amazement and alarm. It was true that he was a young rascal and a reckless impostor. But how the thump did Quelch know?

For one awful moment Bunter wondered whether he had made a mistake, and brought Mark Linley's paper there instead of his own copy of it.

But no; it was his own sprawling fist that was before Mr. Quelch's eyes—and it was the translation that was so good that Greene of the Fifth had supposed it to be cribbed.

What did it all mean? Mr. Quelch ought to have been surprised and pleased. Instead of which, he was obviously in a very bad temper, and getting worse!

"You dare to tell me that this translation is your work, Bunter!" thundered the Remove master.

"Ye-e-es, sir."

"And you bring it to me as a translation of the first ode of Horace?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Are you so utterly ignorant of the Latin tongue, Bunter—

are you so stupidly incapable of construing a single line of Horace—as to suppose that this is anything of the kind?"

Bunter gasped.

"But—but it is, sir—Greene told me it was Horace all right—I mean I—"

"It is a translation of the fourteenth ode in the third book of Horace!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Wha-a-at?"

"And you bring it to me as a translation of the first ode in the first book!"

"Oh!"

Bunter fairly crumpled up.

How was he to guess that that swotting beast, Linley, had been mugging up two of Horace's beastly odes—that he had been swotting over the first ode under the elms in the quad, and had left a translation of the fourteenth ode on his study table?

Certainly, Bunter hadn't guessed it. He had taken it for granted that that Horation translation was a rendering of the ode he had seen Linley at work on under the elms.

Evidently he had taken a little too much for granted.

His fat knees knocked together as he stood and blinked at Mr. Quelch. The Form master's brow was like thunder.

"What have you to say, Bunter?" boomed Mr. Quelch.

"I—I—"

"Well, you young rascal?"

"The—they're very much alike, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"What?"

Mr. Quelch could not believe his ears.

To Bunter, certainly, all the odes of Horace were very much alike, all being equally tosh and equally incomprehensible. But to be told that the ode to the victorious Cæsar was very like the dedication to Mæcenas, was too much for the Remove master—it almost made him jump out of his chair. He stared at Billy Bunter as if the substantial Owl of the Remove had been a spectre.

"Alike!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Did you—did you say alike, Bunter?"

"Yes, sir. You see, I—I mean awfully like—practically the same thing, in fact!" gasped Bunter. "That—that accounts—"

"You utterly obtuse boy! Silence! It is clear that you cannot understand a line of Horace, and that you have copied this translation from some book. You—you bring me a translation of the fourteenth ode as a construe of the first ode! Such ignorance—such dense stupidity—is unheard of. I shall not punish you for your stupidity, Bunter!"

"Oh, thank you, sir!"

"But I shall punish you very severely for your attempted decoit."

"Ow!"

"Bull! Hand me that cane!"

"I—I say, sir—"

"What your object was, Bunter, in pretending to knowledge you do not possess, I cannot say. But you must learn that deceit is despicable. Bend over that chair!"

"Oh dear!"



"You're not a beast like the other chaps," said Bunter. "You help me, Bob—I know a way!" "I'll do anything I can," said Bob Cherry. "Good! My father will walk along the towing-path on his way from the station. Suppose you fall into the river—" "Eh?" "And I'll rescue you at the risk of my own life," said Bunter. "See?" "Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Bob. "Not quite!" (See Chapter 5.)

Whack, whack, whack!
 "Whoooooop!"
 Whack, whack, whack!
 "Yaroooooh!"
 "Leave my study, Bunter!"
 "Wow!"

Bunter was glad enough to leave Mr. Quelch's study. He limped out, wriggling with anguish. Johnny Bull followed him out, grinning.

"Did you enjoy your chat with Quelch over Horace?" he inquired, in the corridor.

"Ow, ow, ow! Beast!" groaned Bunter.

He rolled away dolorously. Johnny Bull chuckled and walked away to the Rag, to tell the story to the fellows there, amid roars of laughter. Billy Bunter limped to Study No. 7, repenting him deeply that he had attempted to stuff so downy a bird as Mr. Quelch—and painfully conscious of the fact that his Form master would have no good report to make of him to Mr. Bunter on Saturday. Certainly Mr. Bunter was not likely, now, to hear how remarkably his hopeful son was getting on with that difficult author, Horace.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Up Against It!

"It will have to be games!" said Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove made that remark to himself the next day. He had thought the matter over carefully.

Stuffing Mr. Quelch, and getting a good report from his Form master under false pretences, was evidently a hopeless failure. It was, as Bunter dismally realised, a chicken that would not fight.

The alternative was to display to the dissatisfied parent something impressive in the athletic line.

At first sight this really did not seem much easier than Q. Horatius Flaccus.

The matches had scarcely begun; but if there had been a cricket match that week, it was absolutely certain that William George Bunter would not have figured in it.

On that point there was no doubt, not the slightest possible probable shadow of doubt, no possible doubt whatever.

Whether it was jealousy of Bunter's magnificent form, or some other reason, certainly the captain of the Remove was not likely to ask Bunter to play for School.

If only his friends had rallied round him, as requested, it would have been all right. Mr. Bunter, hearing on all sides what a valuable man Billy Bunter was in games, how his Form were depending on him to keep their end up through the cricket season, could not have failed to be impressed.

But Bunter realised bitterly that his friends were not going to rally round him—not to that extent, at all events.

For reasons inexplicable to Bunter, they were not going to join in a lying competition to pull the wool over Mr. Bunter's eyes.

He realised that if he wanted to be given the credit for being able to do anything, he would have to do something. And the trouble was that he could do nothing.

If Mr. Bunter asked the captain of Bunter's Form how his son shaped as a cricketer, he would not be told that Bunter's proper place was in an England eleven. He was more likely to be told that Bunter's proper place was in a lunatic asylum.

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If he had wanted to know how Bunter had played football last season, the description was certain not to be a flattering one. Bunter knew what a first-class footballer he was; but the other fellows had an obstinate conviction that he played footer like a potty elephant.

It was the same thing in other departments—envy and jealousy and detraction all round. If the question was, how did Bunter swim, the answer was certain to be, like a stone. If the question was, how did he sprint, the answer would be, like a snail. How did he box? Like Punch and Judy, only not so well. What was he good at? Bagging tuck from other fellows' study cupboards, and scoffing it when bagged.

In these circumstances, what was the use of telling Mr. Bunter that he was rather low in the Form, because he devoted himself to games, and was a whale in that line!

Nevertheless, that was what the fatuous Owl had told Mr. Bunter, and now the suspicious old gentleman was coming along to see for himself.

Such distrustfulness was quite painful to Bunter. If a parent couldn't take his son's word, things were coming to something. Bunter felt that life in the City had had a deteriorating effect on Mr. Bunter. It had made him carping and suspicious.

"It will have to be games!" repeated Bunter.

In the Form-room that morning it had been borne in upon his fat mind more clearly than ever that he would get no good report from his Form master. Mr. Quelch had been very tart with him. He did not seem to have forgotten yet the incident of Horace. He had given unusual attention to Bunter, dragging his ignorance to light on all sorts of subjects, and had wound up by telling the Owl that really he ought to be in the Second Form along with his minor, Sammy. There was no hope whatever in the direction of Mr. Quelch. That gentleman was too obviously prejudiced against the brightest pupil in his Form.

It would have to be games!

Billy Bunter was tramping in the quad, with a wrinkled and moody brow, thinking it out, when he came on the Famous Five. They grinned heartlessly at the trouble in his fat face.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the jolly old worry?" asked Bob Cherry. "Hasn't that giddy postal-order arrived yet?"

Bunter gave the chums of the Remove a mournful look.

"I say, you fellows, you might help a chap! I'm jolly nearly down and out, you know!"

"Oh, not so bad as that, old bean!" said Bob good-naturedly. "I dare say your governor's bark is worse than his bite."

Bunter shook his head.

"You see, he thinks he's wasting money on me here," he said. "He says I'm not learning anything, and not doing anything, only growing fatter and fatter every term."

The Famous Five chuckled. It was clear that Bunter senior was a man of some observation.

"There's not much time left before Saturday, you know, only a day or two," said Bunter. "I shall have to get on to something. I've told the pater, among other things, that I'm a whale at boxing."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Suppose we got up a boxing match on Saturday?" suggested Bunter. "The pater could come into the gym and watch us. Then I'd knock out all you fellows one after another—"

"But you couldn't, you ass!"

"Couldn't you let me, just to help a fellow out of a hole?" hooted Bunter. "Oh, dear! But it would be so jolly improbable, you know," urged Bob. "A blind cat could see that you'd fall down if we pushed you."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Cut it out, Bunter, old man!" said Harry Wharton. "You won't get anybody to tell your pater lies just to cover up your rotten slacking. You're a fat duffer, but there are lots of things you could do if you weren't so dashed lazy."

"There isn't time now," said Bunter gloomily. "A fellow expects his friends to rally round him at a time like this. You're not such a beast as the other chaps, Bob. You help me. I know a way."

"I'd do anything I could," said Bob, rather puzzled. "But what?"

"My father will walk from the station on Saturday by way of the towing-path," said Bunter. "Well, suppose you stroll along with me to meet him."

"What good would that do?"

"You fall into the river."

"Eh?"

"I plunge in after you, and save your life at the risk of my own," said Bunter. "See?"

"Oh, my hat! Not quite!"

"The pater would be no end impressed with splendid swimming like that. If—if there was any danger, you could help me. See? You're a jolly good swimmer, Bob."

"Great pip! I'm to save your life, and make out that you've saved mine, is that it?" gasped Bob.

"Well, it would satisfy the pater—"

"You'll have to satisfy him some other way, or leave him unsatisfied!" chuckled Bob. "Not good enough!"

"Look here," urged Bunter, "the pater is bringing me a cake. The mater makes beautiful cakes—lovely! A jolly big cake, with marzipan on top! The mater knows he's going to rag me, and she's written that she's sending that cake. She thinks it will help me stand it, you know. The mater's a good sort, and I can tell you, she makes jolly good cakes. You stand by me, old chap, and I'll whack out that cake with you, honest injun!"

"Fathead!"

"There really is a cake!" urged Bunter. "Honest injun! The pater is bringing it in his bag; the mater said so in her letter. You can take my word for it that it's a jolly good cake."

"That isn't the point, old bean! I can see myself flopping into the river with my clobber on, to pull your pater's leg! Not good enough, old man!"

Bunter grunted, and rolled away. There was no help from the friends who ought to have rallied round him.

Bunter had said to himself that it would "have to be games," but he realised dismally that he might as well have said that it would have to be distinction in Form. In the noble task of hoodwinking his honoured parent, there was no help for him. It is said that truth is great, and must prevail, and that was just what Bunter was afraid of.

Skinner of the Remove was coming in at the gates, and Bunter derived some slight solace from observing that Skinner was dusty, and that he was dabbing a red stream from his nose.

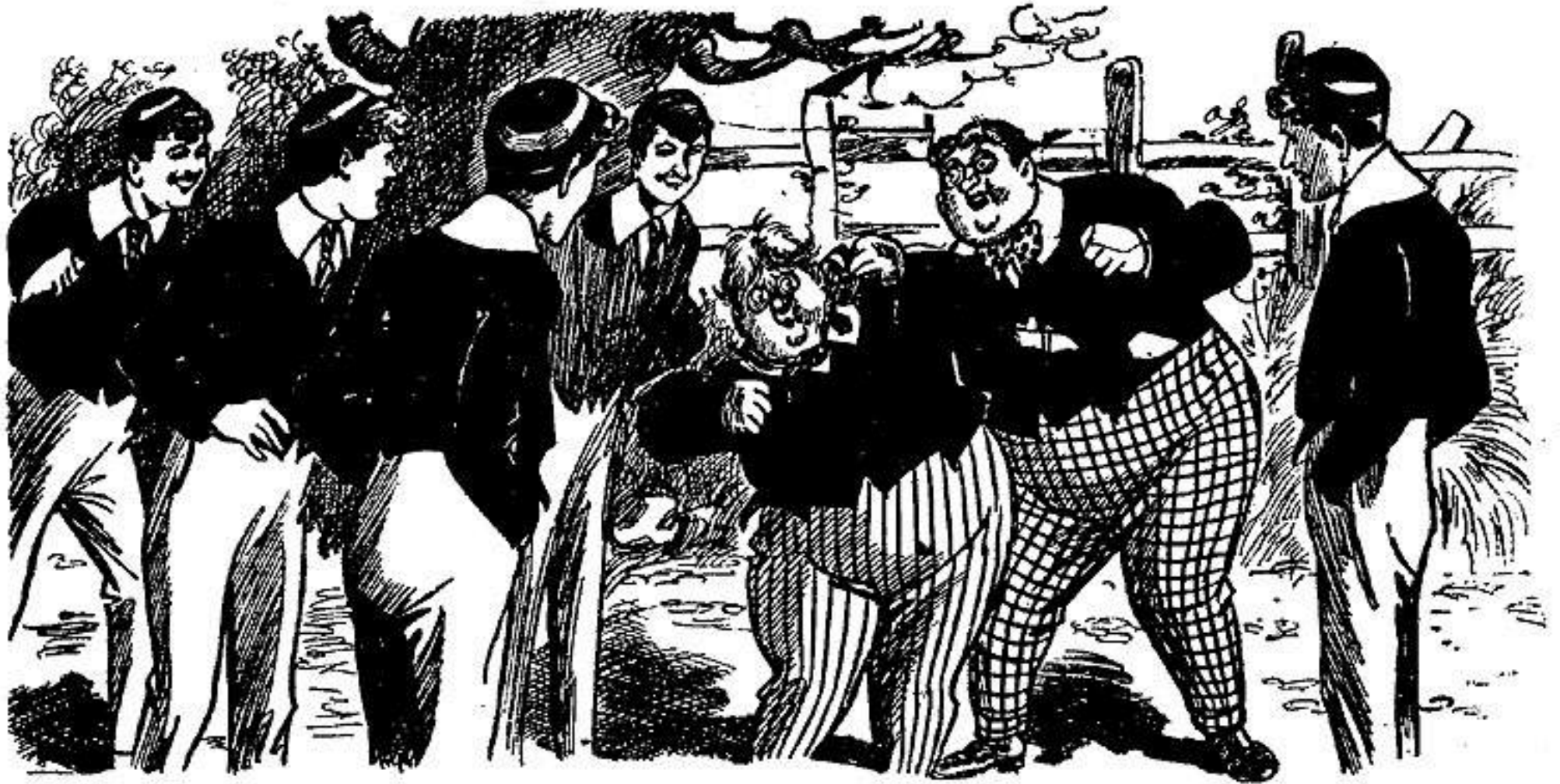
Apparently Harold Skinner had been in the wars, and had not proved the victor.

"He, he, he!"

Skinner gave Bunter a glare.

"Where did you pick up that nose?" grinned Bunter.

"That brute Linky!" growled Skinner. "He picked a row with me for nothing, and biffed my nose. He ought to be run in."



Harry Wharton & Co. sauntered along Friardale Lane with Bunter at their heels. They came on Sammy Bunter, of the Second Form, in the lane. Sammy was trying to extract his cap from the back of his neck. His fat features were daubed with mud. "That beast Linky!" gasped Sammy as the Co. stopped. "Dash it all, this is the limit!" said Bob Cherry. "That fellow Linky wants a licking!" "Leave him to me!" said Bunter major. "I'll give him one!" (See Chapter 6.)

"You ought to have licked him," said Bunter.

"You would, of course," said Skinner sarcastically.

"Oh, yes, rather!"

"You silly ass!" growled Skinner. And he walked on, dabbing his nose, in a very bad temper.

Bunter chuckled. Skinner's nose entertained him for a few minutes. But his pressing problem returned to his fat mind, and the worried frown to his fat brow. Somehow or another something had to be worked up to satisfy his inquiring parent on Saturday, and what was going to be done? It really looked as if Billy Bunter was going to be done.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Looking for Linky!

"LEAVE it to me!"

"Eh?"

"What?"

"You?"

The Remove fellows in the Rag stared at Bunter.

There was a discussion going on in the Rag. The subject of the discussion was "that fellow Linky."

Linky was an obstreperous youth who dwelt in the village of Pegg-by-the-Sea. He was not a pleasant youth. Sometimes he worked—when he could not help it. Often he was found begging, and in lonely lanes, dealing with schoolboys or old ladies, Linky's begging had a savour of threatening. He was more than suspected of stealing chickens, and even of purloining washing from the clothes lines about the village—all sorts of petty larcenies were laid to Linky's charge. He was a rather bulky fellow, and the terror of small boys about Pegg and Friardale, and rather a terror to Greyfriars' fags. He would find entertainment in his leisure hours, which were too many for his good, in tying tin cans to the tails of dogs, or shooting at birds with a catapult, or chasing small boys across fields, or pelting the cows in the pastures. Altogether, he was an extremely unpleasant fellow.

And the Famous Five of the Remove were of opinion that it was high time somebody took that fellow Linky in hand.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh declared that the terrific thrashfulness was the proper caper, and his chums agreed. Only the other day Nugent minor of the Second Form had come in with his cap stuffed down his back and mud rubbed on his face, greatly to the wrath of Frank Nugent of the Remove. Now Skinner had had his nose punched.

Skinner's nose, like the rest of Skinner, was absolutely unimportant. The Famous Five admitted that. Still, it was a Greyfriars nose.

"Can't have this lout punching Remove chaps," said Bob Cherry. "We've got to keep our end up."

"He's a bit big for any of us to tackle," Harry Wharton said, thoughtfully. "He's well over sixteen, and a rather hefty fellow. Still—"

"I think you or I could handle him," said Bob. "Anyhow, I think we ought to try. He will be thinking that Greyfriars funks him."

Wharton nodded.

"Even if we get a licking, we can give him enough to think about for a little while," he remarked. "We'll look round for him, what?"

"Good!"

"The goodfulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Besides, big as he is, I dare say he's rather a funk," said Bob. "He's a beastly bully, and bullies are often funky when a chap stands up to them. We've got some pluck."

"Lots!"

"Well, then, we'll jolly well tackle him, and what he's got extra in beef we'll make up in mustard."

"Good egg!"

It was then that William George Bunter, to the amazement of the Famous Five, chimed in, and asked for it to be left to him.

"You?"

"Little me!" said Bunter valorously.

"You fellows know how I box?"

"Ye gods, yes!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And you must have noticed that I've got plenty of pluck—brave as a lion, in fact?"

"Can't say I've noticed it," said Johnny Bull. "Do you mean brave as a bunny rabbit?"

"No, I don't!" roared Bunter. "I mean what I say. I'm jolly well going to look for this fellow Linky, and—and thrash him!"

"I don't think!" grinned Bob.

"If I thrash him——" went on Bunter.

"If!" chuckled Bob.

"The if-fulness is terrific."

"If I thrash him, you fellows will bear me out——"

"You'll want bearing out—on a giddy stretcher," agreed Bob.

"I don't mean that, you fathead! You'll bear me out with my pater that I'm a splendid boxer?"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"And that I've got a good chance of being selected to represent Greyfriars in the Public Schools Championship."

"Great pip!"

"The fact is," said Bunter, blinking seriously at the gasping five, "I'm a first-class boxer. I know, and you fellows know it. What's the good of denying it? Only my pater has got jolly suspicious in the City. He won't take a fellow's word for it. I've got to have something to show."

"You'll have something to show if you tackle Linky," chuckled Harry Wharton. "A couple of black eyes!"

"A nose stove in!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I don't care," said Bunter recklessly. "If I have some damages to show it will prove to the pater what a boxer I am. After all, who's afraid of a few punches?"

"You are!" hooted Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull!"

"Now Bunter's done his funny turn," said the captain of the Remove, "let's trot out and look for Linky. We've got an hour before lock-up, and the fellow is often loafing about these lanes."

"Right-ho!"

"I say, you fellows——"

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"So-long, fatty!"

"I'm coming!" roared Bunter. "You fellows can be witnesses when I thrash that chap Linky."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter rolled after the Famous Five as they left the Rag. He rolled after them across the quad, he rolled out of gates in their wake.

Apparently Bunter was in earnest.

Bunter was an imaginative youth. He needed a fairly powerful imagination to fancy himself a boxer. But his imagination always stopped short of unpleasant facts. That he was a good boxer, that he was as brave as a lion, and that he was prepared to take on that fellow Linky and thrash him, did not admit of argument. It was all quite certain, so long as he was nowhere near Linky.

Once in the presence of that redoubtable youth, it was extremely probable that Bunter would find his courage oozing out at his fat finger-ends, and that he would depend rather on his legs than on his hands when the matter came to the test.

But Bunter declined to realise this. In the absence of an enemy he was bursting with courage and determination, and his courage was likely to remain at the sticking-point until an enemy appeared in sight. After that, it was probable that Bunter would disappear from sight.

Harry Wharton & Co. sauntered along Friardale Lane, and like Moses of old, they looked this way and that way. Billy Bunter rolled after them.

That that unpleasant youth, Linky, had lately been in the neighbourhood they soon had proof. They came on Sammy Bunter, of the Second Form, in the lane. Bunter minor was making desperate efforts to extract his cap from the back of his neck. His fat features were almost concealed under a coating of mud. Bunter minor of the Second, evidently, had been in trouble.

"That beast Linky!" gasped Sammy, as the Famous Five stopped to question him. "Ow! Look at my face! Wow!"

"Dash it all, this is the limit," said Bob. "The fellow's a rotter to handle a fat little ass like Sammy. He wants a jolly good hiding."

"I'm going to give him one," said Billy Bunter.

Sammy chuckled, in spite of his woes. Sammy did not seem to have great faith in the fighting powers of his major.

"Leave him to me, Sammy!" said Bunter loftily.

"Jolly glad to," said Sammy. "Are you going to look for him, Billy?"

"Yes."

"Keep your eyes open, then," warned Sammy. "You might find him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter frowned at his minor. It was said of old that a prophet is without honour in his own country; and certainly there was very little mutual admiration in the Bunter tribe.

"Which way did he go, Sammy?" asked Bob.

"Across that field towards Pegg—he's only been gone a few minutes," said Sammy Bunter. "I say, Cherry, I believe you could lick him."

"I'm going to try," said Bob.

"Leave him to me," hooted Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Greyfriars party clambered over a stile, and proceeded across the field at a trot. In a few minutes they sighted the redoubtable Linky.

That happy youth was improving the shining hour by pelting a horse, across a fence, with stones. Linky had no work

to do that day—as on many days. He had spent quite a happy afternoon, according to his peculiar views. He had chased a cat, tied a tomato-can to the tail of an unhappy dog, stolen apples from the greengrocer's in Friardale, snatched a shilling from a little boy in the lane, and ragged Bunter minor of Greyfriars. Now he was winding up a busy afternoon by pelting a horse, apparently deriving entertainment from the squeals of the hapless animal. He was so happily occupied that he did not observe a little bunch of juniors trotting towards him; and it was too late for him to escape when they came up, and surrounded him against the fence.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" greeted Bob Cherry genially.

Linky scowled at them uneasily.

"You let a bloke alone!" he said. "Five to one ain't fair play!"

"Pelting that poor old gee-gee isn't fair play, you worm," said Bob; "but you're going to get it from us. Pick out your man."

Linky grinned.

He was a big fellow, half a head taller than Bob, who was the biggest of the Greyfriars party. He had no doubt of being able to handle any member of the party.

"Leave him to Bunter!" suggested Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha! Come on, Bunter!"

"Where's Bunter?"

"Echo answers where!" chuckled Nugent.

Billy Bunter was still in view. But it was only the back of Bunter that the juniors saw as they looked round. He was climbing back over the stile into Friardale Lane, and he seemed pressed for time.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "Bunter! Bunter! Here's Linky, and he's waiting for you!"

Bunter vanished.

The proximity of Linky had been enough for him. At the sight of that lanky, shambling youth, and his big bony fists, it was borne in upon Bunter's fat mind that he was not, after all, keen on distinguishing himself in the boxing line.

Bob Cherry chuckled, and turned back towards Linky.

"I'm your man, old bean," he said. "Ready?"

"Ain't I going to pick my man?" said Linky. "Well, I pick out the blooming nigger. So there!"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's dusky eyes gleamed. Linky had evidently picked him out as the least formidable of the five—and, in fact, he looked very slight and slim in comparison with the loafer. But the nabob, slight as he was, was hard as nails; and he did not like being called a "nigger." He threw off his cap and jacket.

"My esteemed and disgusting Linky, the readiffulness is terrific," he said.

Linky stared. Hurree Singh's English was rather new to him.

"Oh, my eye!" he said. "Mind, you blokes ain't chipping in. Fair play's a jewel."

"We'll see fair play!" said Harry Wharton.

Four of the party were feeling a little uneasy, however. Linky was a bulky adversary for the slim nabob; and if he had pluck in anything like proportion to his size and strength, it looked a bad thing for Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. But there was no help for it now. Linky threw down his cap, and squared up to the nabob.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Hot Chase!

"GO it!"

"On the ball!" Linky started the attack, with a terrific rush at the dusky nabob. He looked big enough and heavy enough to overwhelm Hurree Jamset Ram Singh with his rush, and he fully expected the slim Indian junior to go spinning before his thrashing fists.

But Hurree Singh was wary and watchful.

He leapt back, light as a rubber ball, and side-stepped with amazing celerity; and almost before Linky knew what was happening, a dusky fist came on his ear, followed up by another on the side of the jaw.

Linky staggered.

He was not given time to recover. The nabob fairly jumped at him, and the lurching Linky went spinning under a heavy drive straight from the shoulder.

Crash!

Linky was down, sprawling in the grass, and bellowing.

"Well hit!" chuckled Bob.

"Right on the wicket!"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh rubbed his knuckles, as he waited for Linky to rise. His knuckles had been rather hurt—though not so much as Linky's rugged features.

Linky did not seem in a hurry to rise. He lay in the grass and blinked at the nabob of Bhanipur, in a state of astonishment and alarm.

"Oh, my eye!" he gasped. "Oh, my nose! Oh, my jor! Ow!"

"Go it, old bean!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"On the ball!"

"Toe the line, old pippin!"

"My esteemed and execrable Linky, I am waiting for you," murmured the nabob of Bhanipur politely.

"Ow! Wow!"

"Knocked out already?" demanded Johnny Bull, in disgust, as the loafer still lay in the grass. "My hat! Do you call this a scrap?"

"Wow!"

The chums of the Remove were quite relieved of their doubts now. It was clear that Linky was not of the stuff of which heroes are made. His courage had petered out almost as quickly as Billy Bunter's.

"Look here, this won't do," said Harry Wharton. "You've been punching little chaps who can't stand up to you, Linky, and you've got to take your medicine. Get up and get on with it."

"Wow!"

It was clear that Linky had had enough. The fight had scarcely started; and it was at an end so far as Linky was concerned.

"You're not hurt yet," said Bob Cherry; "you're going to be—but you're not damaged so far. Get on with it."

Linky staggered to his feet at last.

He looked round him, and then made a sudden rush to escape. He went scudding along the footpath the way Bunter had gone, towards Friardale Lane, and the sudden flight took the Greyfriars party by surprise. For some moments they stood staring after the fleeing Linky.

"Well, my hat, what a rotten funk!" growled Johnny Bull. "Skinner might as well have stood up to him."

"The funkfulness is terrific," grinned the nabob, picking up his cap. "The esteemed and disgusting Linky is easily satisfied."

"After him!" shouted Bob. "We'll jolly well bump him, anyhow."

"Good egg!"

The Famous Five rushed in pursuit.

Linky looked back, and saw five juniors whooping on his track, and gasped. He put on a spurt, and reached the stile over which Bunter had clambered. He did not stop to clamber over it—he cleared it with a desperate bound, and landed in the lane.

Then there was a terrific yell.

Billy Bunter, out of sight behind the hawthorn hedge, had stopped to rest: feeling safe at that distance, with Linky occupied with the Co. Linky landed in the lane about a foot from Bunter, staggered forward, and clutched at the Owl of the Remove to save himself.

Bunter yelled as Linky grasped him, and the two went to the ground together with a crash.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter.

"Groogh!" spluttered Linky.

Bunter was not generally quick in his movements. But on this occasion he seemed made of elastic.

He was on his feet like lightning, and speeding in the direction of Greyfriars as fast as his fat little legs could go.

Linky was almost as rapid.

The Famous Five were whooping behind him, and had reached the stile. Linky leaped up and rushed away down the lane. Bunter heard heavy footsteps behind him, and blinked over his shoulder, and saw the loafer of Pegg scudding on his track. Linky looked over his shoulder, and saw the Famous Five scrambling over the stile. And both of them ran their hardest.

"Oh dear!" gasped Bunter.

Linky was close behind him, running hard. Linky was thinking of anything but Bunter; he hardly noticed the fat junior plugging on ahead—he was only thinking of escape. But Bunter was not aware of that little circumstance. To his fat and terrified mind, the ferocious Linky was rushing in pursuit of him, and Bunter put on a speed that was really wonderful, considering his handicap of avoirdupois.

Had Mr. Bunter been able to see him then, certainly he would have supposed that his hopeful son had a good chance for the School Mile—at least, with a Linky behind him.

Bunter plugged on desperately. His fat little legs fairly twinkled as he flew.

Behind him Linky came gasping on; and a score of yards farther back the Famous Five were running hard, and laughing as they ran.

"That fat idiot thinks Linky's after him!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Both of 'em seem to be in rather a hurry!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

"They do—they does!"

"Put it on!"

Greyfriars was in sight now. Billy Bunter cast another blink over his fat shoulder, and gasped with terror as he saw that Linky was coming up hand over fist. He put on a desperate spurt.

Three or four Greyfriars fellows were near the gates, and they stared at the chase as it came in sight.

"That's Linky!" shouted Skinner, rubbing his nose reminiscently. "Collar that cad, you fellows."

Linky paused in desperation.

There were high hedges on either side of the lane—half a dozen Greyfriars fellows before him, and the Famous Five behind. The loafer turned to the hedge, and plunged desperately through. It was a rather thick hedge, and Linky had to force a passage, scrambling and gasping frantically. He was still shoving through when Harry Wharton & Co. reached him.

Smack!

Bob Cherry's open hand smote Linky in the rear, and helped him through the hedge.

With a yell, Linky rolled through, into the field on the other side; but he did not rest there. He picked himself up again and flew.

But Harry Wharton & Co. gave him no further attention. They trotted on towards Grayfriars, with Bunter panting and pumping ahead. Bob Cherry overtook the fat junior near the gates, and caught him by the shoulder.

There was a howl from Bunter.

"Leggo! Linky, old chap, leggo! I give you best! I do really! Oh dear! You keep off."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob.

Billy Bunter spun round and blinked at him, and realised that it was not Linky who had clutched his shoulder. Linky had vanished.

"Oh, you!" gasped Bunter. "I—I—of course, I know it was you, Bob, old chap! Where's that boast Linky?"

"Gone!" grinned Bob.

Bunter blinked round. There was no sign of the Pegg loafer, and the Owl's courage revived.

"Which way did he go?" he demanded. "I haven't licked him yet."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you fellows think I was running away from him—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Bow-wow!"

Harry Wharton & Co. walked in at the gates, satisfied with the success of their expedition. Billy Bunter rolled in after them, not quite so satisfied.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Nothing Doing!

"SWIMMING!" said Bunter thoughtfully.

Peter Todd looked at him.

Prep was going on in Study No. 7 in the Remove; at all events, Peter Todd and Tom Dutton were busy with it. Bunter was reclining in the armchair, with his fat thumbs stuck in the armholes of his waistcoat, and a thoughtful frown on his face. Bunter had no time for prep.

Prep would have been essential had Bunter hoped to win his Form master's good graces, and obtain a favourable report when Mr. Bunter came along on Saturday. But the Owl of the Remove had given up hope of that. He could not help feeling that the incident of Horace had increased Mr. Quelch's prejudice against him. He realised that he was "dished" in that direction.

If Mr. Bunter asked the Remove master how his hopeful son was getting on in class this term, Mr. Quelch's answer was certain to be that Bunter was the most backward fellow in the Remove, as well as the laziest. If he asked Mr. Lascelles how Bunter was shaping in maths, the mathematics master was sure to say that Bunter's



Billy Bunter, out of sight behind the hedge, had stopped to rest, feeling safe at that distance from the formidable Linky. But Linky, fleeing from Harry Wharton & Co., landed in the lane about a foot from Bunter, staggered forward, and clutched at the Owl of the Remove to save himself. "Ow—yarooooop!" howled Bunter. (See Chapter 7.)

maths were enough to make the angels weep, or something to that effect. If he spoke to Monsieur Charpentier about Bunter's French, Bunter could see the French master shrugging his shoulders up over his ears in reply. Scholastic distinction of any kind was hopelessly out of the question; which would not have mattered at all if Bunter could have pointed to any athletic distinction as a makeweight.

He had quite abandoned the idea of getting into the limelight as a boxer. That scheme had too many painful drawbacks. But something had to be done; he simply dared not show up as a "dud" in every possible connection. Mr. Bunter was dissatisfied, and he was annoyed; and if he should carry out his dire threat of taking Bunter away from Greyfriars, there was the awful prospect of work ahead for the fat Owl. Somehow or other that fearful danger had to be averted.

"Swimming," repeated Bunter. "After all, I'm a good swimmer! A chap who devotes his time to one branch of sport can't have a lot of time left to go in for other things, can he, Toddy?"

Peter Todd grinned.

"You can help me in this, Toddy," said Bunter, blinking at his study-mate through his big spectacles.

"My dear ass, I can't make a swimmer of you before Saturday," said Peter. "Besides, I suppose you can't get up special swimming stunts on Saturday to entertain your pater."

"I don't mean that! Being the best swimmer in the Remove, I only want to get proper credit for what I can do," explained Bunter.

"Oh, my hat!"

"If I saved your life, Toddy——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You might help a chap, Toddy. After all, we're pals, ain't we—and this is a time to rally round an old pal. That beast Cherry refused——"

"I'm another beast, exactly like Cherry!" said Peter Todd. "Also, I'm doing my prep, and can't talk at the same time. Dry up!"

"Look here, Peter——"

"Give your chin a rest, old man."

"Beast!"

"You'll get more trouble from Quelchy to-morrow if you don't get on with your prep, fatty."

"Blow prep, and blow Quelchy!"

Billy Bunter detached himself from the armchair, and rolled out of the study. Having pondered over the matter, the Owl of the Remove had made up his fat mind. If, by his splendid gifts as a swimmer, he saved the life of another fellow in the Remove, all was plain sailing. Even a suspicious stockbroker would have to be convinced, by evidenced like that, that Bunter had not been wasting his time at Greyfriars—that in one line, at least, he was well to the fore.

The difficulty was to find a fellow whose life he could save before Saturday. Nobody was likely to be keen to fall into the river with his clothes on, in order to let the fat Owl pull him out. The Famous Five had distinctly declined to rally round; Peter Todd was the same kind of a beast; and Bunter's thoughts turned to his minor Sammy. If a stockbroker was capable of emotion, surely Mr. Bunter would be deeply touched and impressed by the news that Billy had risked his valuable life to save that of his young brother. In the circumstances, he could scarcely come down heavy.

But there was, as usual, a lion in the path. It would not be easy to get Sammy to play up. Sammy was selfish—
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Bunter had to acknowledge that—and he was lacking in the affection he ought to have felt for so excellent a brother as William George, and he was quite certain to demand a "quid pro quo" if he played up at all. Billy Bunter was hopeful, but rather dubious, as he took his way to the Second Form room. It was Sammy's duty, and ought to be his pleasure, to back up his major. But there were doubts on the subject.

The Second Form at Greyfriars did their prep in the Form-room in the presence of their master, Mr. Twigg. Prep was still going on when Billy Bunter arrived there, and Mr. Twigg gave him a severe glance as he blinked in at the doorway. Bunter backed out again, and loafed about the passages till Mr. Twigg came out.

Then he rolled in to seek his minor.

"Hallo, old barrel!" That was a disrespectful greeting from Dicky Nugent of the Second Form.

"What's that Remove cad doing in here?" asked Gatty. "Roll him out on his neck!"

"Careful!" said Myers. "Don't burst him all over our Form-room."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Unheeding the cheeky fags, Bunter blinked round for his minor, and discerned Sammy sitting at his desk. He rolled over to him, and dropped on the form beside him. Sammy gave him a blink through his spectacles.

"What do you want, Billy?"

"Just dropped in to see you, old kid," said Bunter affectionately. "We don't really see enough of one another, Sammy."

"Quite enough for me," answered Sammy.

Bunter coughed.

"Too much, in fact!" added the fat fag.

"Oh, really, Sammy——"

"Cut it out, old man!" said Bunter minor. "Come to the point! What do you want? I haven't any tin."

Bunter gazed at him more in sorrow than in anger. Really, this was not very encouraging to an affectionate elder brother.

"What are you after?" inquired Sammy.

"Nothing, old chap."

"Bow-wow!"

"It's rather hard, Sammy, to be dis-trusted like this," said Bunter. "It's my duty, as your major, to keep an eye on you and help you along, and all that."

"This is the first time you've remembered it," said Sammy sceptically. "Give us a rest and tell me what you want." Sammy Bunter seemed to be developing cynicism at an early age.

"Getting on all right with Mr. Twigg?" asked Bunter, feeling that it was judicious not to come to the point too suddenly. As an anxious and affectionate elder brother, he hoped to work a little on Sammy's feelings, if Sammy had any.

"No, rotten!" answered Bunter minor. "The brute has been ragging me all through prep. He's given me this rot to do."

"What is it?" asked Bunter, blinking at the paper on the desk before his minor.

"Rotten parsing exercise!"

"I'll help you, if you like."

"Well, you ought to be able to do it on your head, you being in the Remove,"

said Sammy. "Pile in! Here's the pen. No, I'd better write it; that beast Twigg might twig your list. Can you parse the rubbish all right?"

"Of course I can, ass!"

"Well, there it is. It's a verse from that beast Shakespeare. Wouldn't I like to kick him!" said Sammy. "'To be or not to be,' that is the question. To be is a blinking infinitive, isn't it?"

"Yes. But——"

"Or 'is a blighted conjunction, isn't it?"

"Look here, Sammy——"

"Don't jaw, old man; help me with this rot! Now——"

"Hold on a minute!" said Bunter, realising that it would be easier to make terms with Sammy while that bright youth still had something to gain. "The fact is, Sammy, I want you to do something for me."

"I thought so."

"You know the pater's coming down on Saturday——"

Sammy Bunter chuckled.

"Yes; he's wild with you, Billy. Shouldn't wonder if he takes you away from the school. I heard him tell the mater last vac that you were wasting your time here. So you are."

"I don't want to go, Sammy."

"Well, it would be a good thing for the school, wouldn't it?" argued Sammy. "Not a bad thing for me, either. It's rather against a fellow to have a brother in an upper Form."

Bunter glared.

"Do you call that proper brotherly affection?" he demanded.

"Can it!" said Sammy derisively.

"Well, I want you to help me out," said Bunter, controlling his wrath. "The pater won't care anything about my Form master's report if he finds that I'm doing well at games. Now, I'm good at games, but I never get a chance of showing what I can do. Judging by my mere record, the pater will think I'm merely a dud."

"Well, ain't you?" asked Sammy.

Bunter controlled a powerful inclination to bestow upon his minor an elder-brotherly punch.

"I've got to have something to show," he went on. "If the school sports were on it would be all right. I could win a lot of the events, and so—— What are you cackling at, you little beast?"

"He, he, he!"

"I've got to fix up something, Sammy. You know how I swim, don't you?"

"Like a stone," said Sammy.

Bunter breathed hard.

"The pater's bringing me a whacking cake," he said.

Sammy showed signs of interest at last.

"Is he? I hope you'll get through all right on Saturday, Billy. I do, really."

"The mater's made it specially, and dad's bringing it—a whacking cake," said Bunter impressively.

"That looks as if she thinks you're going to get it hot!" said Bunter minor shrewdly.

"Well, you back me up, kid, and you shall have the cake."

Bunter minor's eyes glistened.

"Rely on me, old man. What is it?"

"I want you to fall into the river——"

"Eh?"

"And yell for help——"

"I'd do that fast enough if I fell in."

"I shall rush up and plunge in to the rescue——"

"My hat!"

"And save you at the risk of my life. See?"

Sammy stared.

"No, I don't quite see. More likely we'd both be drowned."

ANSWERS
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"Of course, we shall have to pick a safe place," said Bunter irritably. "I don't want to be drowned any more than you do, fathead! Of course, if you swallowed a good bit of water and were rather ill, it would make the thing look better."

"Would it?" ejaculated Sammy.

"Yes, lots. A few days in sanny—in fact, if you were in sanny when the pater comes—see?"

"Catch me!" said Sammy Bunter.

"It's as easy as falling off a form, old chap," urged Bunter, "and it will see me through. You don't want to lose me, I suppose?"

"Why not?"

"Well, you—you——"

"Cut it all out, old fatty!" said Bunter minor. "I'm not falling into any old rivers, I can tell you, and I'm jolly certain you couldn't pull me out if I did. Why, you'd be afraid to jump in when it came to the pinch."

"You cheeky young rotter!"

"Look here, are you going to help me with this beastly parsing?" demanded Sammy. "If not, shut up, and let me get on!"

Billy Bunter blinked at his minor. Sammy had failed him, as he had had a misgiving that he might. There was only one solace left to Billy Bunter, of which he promptly availed himself. He seized Sammy by the back of the neck and jammed his fat face down on the desk, rapping Sammy's nose there in a post-man's knock.

"Whooooop!" roared Bunter minor.

"There, you fat young rotter!" gasped Bunter.

"Yaroooh! Rescue!" yelled Sammy, wriggling in anguish.

"Collar that Remove cad!" shouted Gatty.

Bunter jumped up and made for the door.

A dozen fags of the Second Form closed round him at once. They were not particularly concerned for Sammy personally; but Remove fellows were not allowed to swank in the Second Form room, if the Second could help it. Billy Bunter was collared on all sides by indignant fags.

"Bump him!"

"Roll him over!"

"Scrag him!" yelled Sammy, rubbing his nose. "Ow! Kick him out! Wow!"

Billy Bunter went rolling to the doorway in the grasp of the fags. He rolled out into the passage in a gasping heap.

"Oh dear! Ow! Where's my specs?" gasped Bunter, sitting up. "Oh, my hat! You cheeky little brutes—groogh! Ow! Wow!"

"Kick him along the passage!" yelled Gatty.

"Dribble him!" shouted Nugent minor.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a rush of the fags after Bunter. The Owl of the Remove, with his spectacles clutched in his hand, fled for his life. The fags came whooping after him as far as the end of the passage, where, fortunately for Bunter, Wingate of the Sixth came in sight.

"Hallo! What's this row?" inquired Wingate.

Without staying to answer, the Second Form melted away. Billy Bunter limped away to the Remove passage—breathless and exasperated. Sammy had been his last hope—and Sammy had failed him! There was nothing doing.



"Cut it all out, old fatty!" said Sammy Bunter. "I'm not falling into any old rivers, I can tell you! Why, you'd be afraid to jump in when it came to the pinch!" Billy Bunter glared at his minor. Sammy had failed him. He seized Sammy by the scruff of the neck and jammed his fat face down on the desk. "Whooooop!" roared Sammy. "There, you fat young rotter!" said the Owl. (See Chapter 8.)

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Incomplete Letter-writer!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

Prep had finished in Study No. 13 in the Remove. Mark Linley was still at the table, working at Horace—polishing the odes that had caused William George Bunter so much trouble when he essayed to "stuff" Mr. Quelch. Little Wun Lung was curled up asleep in the armchair. Bob Cherry and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh had closed their books, and were about to go down to the Rag, when the door opened, and Billy Bunter blinked in.

To the surprise of the Remove fellows, Bunter had his right arm tied up in a sling. Apparently he had been sustaining damages.

"Hurt?" asked Bob.

"Yes—frightfully!" said Bunter.

"My arm's broken——"

"Great Scott! Seen a doctor?"

"No. I'm not a chap to make a fuss about a trifle," said Bunter loftily. "I can bear pain, you know. Not soft, like you chaps."

"I shouldn't call a broken arm a trifle," grinned Bob Cherry. "Neither would you, you fat ass, if it were really hurt. What's the matter with it—a scratch from a pen, or a prick from a pin?"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"If the esteemed Bunter is really damaged the proper caper is to see the medical wallah," suggested Hurree Singh.

"Well, I don't want it made worse," said Bunter. "You know what doctors are! Besides, it isn't actually broken but——"

"I fancied not!" grinned Bob.

"It's only badly hurt; I'm suffering frightful pain, but I'm tough," said Bunter. "I'm enduring this agony without turning a hair. But that isn't what I came here to say."

"Oh, I know what you came here to say!" said Bob cheerily. "You've been disappointed about a postal-order——"

"Oh, really, you know——"

"From one of your titled relations who——"

"Look here——"

"And you want a little loan to tide you over till the duke remembers to send on that postal-order—or the marquis weighs in with a tanner," said Bob sympathetically. "Nothing doing, old bean! Better drop a line to the viscount before the post goes. It's really thoughtless the way the earl keeps on forgetting these trifles!"

"You silly ass, 'tain't that!" howled Bunter. "I want you to write a letter for me, because my arm's broken—I mean my wrist sprained, and I can't hold a pen."

"Oh," said Bob blankly, "if you've really damaged your fin, Bunter, I'll do that for you with pleasure."

"The samefulness is here, my esteemed Bunter," said the Nabob of Bhanipur. "I will inditefully write as

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THE GREYFRIARS HERALD

Supplement No. 223.

HARRY WHARTON
EDITOR

Week Ending May 9th, 1925.



I AGREE with our illustrious "chief," Harry Wharton, when he says that there are many jolly things about a picnic, quite apart from the actual grub. Of course, you can't expect Bunter to see this.

"A picnic by the river's brim
Simply a picnic is to him,
And nothing more."

as Wordsworth didn't say. But to the average fellow a picnic means freedom, fresh air, babbling brooks, shady bowers, and the Robinson Crusoe spirit. You know what I mean—the feeling of being next to Nature. Personally, I never did like feeding in a stuffy study; and I wish we could have all our meals out of doors in the summer. The only drawback to this scheme is that we seldom get a summer.

Coker & Co., of the Fifth, had a disastrous experience last Saturday afternoon. Coker's Aunt Judy having turned up trumps with a remittance, the Fifth-Formers invested in a tuck-hamper, and sought out a nice, convenient meadow where they might picnic. But it proved a jolly inconvenient meadow, for a bull broke loose from the adjoining field, and took a hand in the proceedings. The handsome spread was tossed into the air, and then trampled upon, while Coker, Potter, and Greene fled for their lives. Coker ripped his bags in clambering over some barbed wire, and Potter nose-dived into a ditch, while Greene slithered up a tree just in time to avoid the oncoming bull. That daring snapshotter, Monty Newland, managed to get a ripping snap of the incident, and it is being exhibited round the Remove, to the chagrin and confusion of Messrs. Coker, Potter, and Greene. I understand that Coker intends to sue the owner of the bull for the damage to his tuck and to his bags. No more meadow picnics for Horace!

Do masters ever take part in schoolboy picnics? Well, I can't imagine the revered and respected Head squatting on the river-bank, with his mortar-board

tilted at a rakish angle, saying: "Pass the tarts, Quelch!" or "After you with the pickles, Prout!" But it is a fact that Mr. Wally Bunter has taken part in schoolboy spreads without loss to his dignity. And on one occasion Mr. Larry Lascelles was taking an afternoon stroll when he came upon a party of picnickers, who asked him to join them; and he did. Mr. Quelch, however, is no lover of picnics. He suffers somewhat from indigestion. Bunter declares that Quelch's elementary track is out of order. I presume he means "alimentary tract." At all events, to send Mr. Quelch an invitation to a picnic would be very much like holding out a red rag to a bull!

Another person who is not particularly partial to picnics is Lord Mauleverer. Mauly enjoys a feed as much as anyone—when he is feeling energetic enough to eat it—but he simply cannot understand fellows fagging for miles, on a hot day, heaving a hefty hamper. Mauly wouldn't dream of going very far afield for a picnic unless he had a cosy limousine to take him there. Picnics are too much like hard work to suit his ease-loving temperament.

I chatted with Gosling the porter on the subject of picnics. He gave tongue as follows: "Picnics may be all right, Master Cherry, for them wot likes that sort of thing. But pussionally I prefers to take me meals in me parlour. I can't abide the waspses, an' the flies, an' all the other dratted pests that buzzes around you when you're feedin' out of doors. I was at a picnic once where a big caterpillar come tumblin' down from a tree and landed in my teacup. Then another come down, an' smit me on the back of me neck. Ugh! Beastly, creepy-crawly things! 'Ow I 'ates 'em! No more hopen-hair picnics for me!"

Dicky Nugent & Co. are holding a grand picnic on Saturday next, in the woods. We understand that Tadpole will be the chief dish, and that "Winkle Mayonnaise" will figure on the menu!

EDITORIAL!

By Harry Wharton.

I SUPPOSE William George Bunter ought really to occupy the editorial chair this week, for he is a greater authority on picnics than I.

Bunter tells me he has been keenly interested in picnics ever since he read a book by George Eliot called "The Mill on the Floss." The porpoise seems to have got a bit mixed. Certainly there is a novel by George Eliot called "The Mill on the Floss," but it does not deal with picnics. It is not even a feast of fiction, being rather a gloomy and depressing narrative. (What a cheerful lot these Victorian writers were, to be sure!)

The merry month of May is an ideal time of the year for picnics. How jolly, on a sunny afternoon, to go staggering through the school gateway with a tremendous hamper of tuck, and to seek out some shady spot on the river-bank, there to enjoy a feast of the gods! Please don't run away with the idea that I'm a food-worshipper like Bunter. I enjoy a good tuck-in as much as anybody, but I do not think about grub all day long and dream about it o' nights. There are other good points about a picnic, apart from the actual food. The cheery companionship, the rippling river, the leafy shade, the camping-out element—all these things go to make a picnic thoroughly enjoyable. I have taken part in picnics where the grub has been indifferently cooked, or not cooked at all, or there has not been enough to go round; but it has been good fun. Whatever Bunter may say on the subject, grub is not the be-all and the end-all of a picnic.

The Greyfriars picnicker has plenty of places from which to choose. The river-banks are ideal, and so is the clearing in Friardale Wood. But if you want to earn your picnic, a climb to the top of the Downs is the proper caper. Of course, it is hard work; but if there are plenty of you, and you take turns at carrying the tuck-hamper, you reap a fine reward when you reach the wind-swept summit.

Those who like a spice of adventure and excitement in their picnics should hold their celebration on the private estate of Sir Hilton Popper! That fiery gentleman is ever on the look-out for trespassers, and if he happens to ferret you out, you may be assured of an exciting time. Only last Wednesday a party of us was pounced upon by Popper, and we promptly shinned a tree and hurled down defiance at the baronet and his bulldog. Neither was able to come up after us; and Sir Hilton's face, as he stamped and fumed beneath, was worth a guinea a box. We had to face the music next morning, however, for Popper reported us to the Head.

I will now leave you to "tuck in" to this "feast" of schoolboy journalism, and may nothing "hamper" your enjoyment. And don't forget to do all you can to popularise our little paper, for we cannot "grub" along without your support!

HARRY WHARTON.



Picnics— Past & Present By Tom Brown



A PICNIC IN THE TIME OF THE ANCIENT BRITONS. The scene is a cave on the coast of Kent.

FIRST FEASTER: "Gadzooks! Likewise Od's bodikins! Verily, these joints of venison be prime, and right tasty withal!"

SECOND FEASTER: "Yea, good, my comrade! Methinks so goodly a spread hath not been witnessed in this cave for many moons. Pass thou the merry pickles!"

FIRST FEASTER: "Marry, but we lads of Ancient Brit know how to enjoy ourselves, what? Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we shuffle off this mortal coil."

(Now we know where Shakespeare got his trite sayings from.—ED.)

SECOND FEASTER: "Dash down yon goblet of wine! It goeth well with the venison. A health to thee, good comrades, and a murrain on the killjoys, who would fain have us live on husks and raw carrots!"

FIRST FEASTER: "Alack! We are undone! Here cometh a fiery dragon! Is there, peradventure, a back exit from this cave? If not, all is lost. We shall be gobbled up, yea, even to the uttermost bone!"

SECOND FEASTER: "Ah, well-a-day! Back exit there is none. Thou hast better engrave thy last will and testament on the wall of the cave, for methinks our number is up. Ere we can say 'What-ho!' the fearsome monster will have us in his maw!"

(Enter Ye Fiery Dragon. Exit Ye Merry Feasters.)

A PICNIC IN THE TIME OF GOOD QUEEN BESS. Scene—the bank of the River Sark.

FIRST FEASTER: "By my halidom, 'tis good of Will Shakespeare, of the Remove, to stand us this spread."

SECOND FEASTER: "Not half—I mean, yea, verily! The worthy Will gat a goodly remittance this forenoon—a score of golden guineas!"

FIRST FEASTER: "From his sire?"

SECOND FEASTER: "Nay, from Drury Lane. Hast not heard the news? He hath perpetrated a play."

FIRST FEASTER: "My hat—I mean, by my beard! 'Tis passing strange, for Will Shakespeare seemeth to have more sawdust than brains in his cranium. Now, young Milton of the Second—"

SECOND FEASTER: "Cease wagging thy tongue, thou scurvy varlet, and pass thou the nuts of dough! Hither come Raleigh and Drake, of the Remove, trundling a hogshead of good brown ale betwixt them. That is well, for I am athirst."

FIRST FEASTER: "Verily, we are lucky dogs, to be allowed to drink ale. Dost imagine the schoolboys of the future will enjoy such a privilege?"

SECOND FEASTER: "Ask me another! Good-morrow, Raleigh! Good-morrow, Drake! Squat thyself down, and tuck in to thy heart's content!"

RALEIGH: "Zounds! Thou hast scoffed nearly all the nuts of dough and the tarts of jam, thou greedy knaves! We will e'en duck thee for thy gluttony. Lend a hand, Drake!"

(First and Second Feasters disappear into the Sark with bubbling cries; and Raleigh and Drake proceed to polish off the remnants of the feast.)

A PICNIC OF THE PRESENT DAY. Scene—a glade in Friardale Woods.

FIRST FEASTER: "All hands to the pump! Help me unpack the giddy provender, you fellows, and spread it out on the grass."

SECOND FEASTER: "Don't these veal-and-ham pies look ripping? Likewise the apple-dumplings. Let's get the fire going, and warm them up."

FIRST FEASTER: "This is a feast of the gods! What a blessing we were able to throw Billy Bunter off the scent. It would be too awful, to have that fat clam hanging around."

VOICE (off): "I say, you fellows—"

SECOND FEASTER: "Talk of prize porkers, and you're bound to hear them grunting! How did you find out where we were, Bunter?"

FIRST FEASTER: "He's got a sort of sixth sense, when it comes to tracking down a feed. Buzz off, Bunter!"

BILLY BUNTER: "Rats! I jolly well mean to have a finger in the pie—"

SECOND FEASTER: "Bad mannered beast! Why can't he use a fork? It's only heathen Chinese who eat with their fingers!"

FIRST FEASTER: "I suppose we'd better let Bunter join us? If we don't, he'll be wailing and whining for weeks, and we shall never hear the end of it."

BILLY BUNTER: "Oh, really, you fellows! I'm not going to gobble up all your supplies, if that's what you're afraid of. I merely want a light snack—half a dozen of those veal-and-ham pies, and a similar dose of apple-dumplings, and a few doughnuts, and jam-tarts, and cream-buns, and maids-of-honour. And I see you've got

some strawberries-and-cream. That will do nicely to finish up with. Don't glare at me like that, you fellows! I shall be pleased to repay you for this hospitality. I'll stand you a handsome spread the moment my postal-order arrives. I've been expecting it since Armistice Day, but there's been a slight delay in the post."

(Billy Bunter seats himself on the stump of a tree, and attacks the good things with great gusto, serenely indifferent to the glares and grimaces of his schoolfellows.)

A PICNIC IN THE YEAR 1950. Scene—the Greyfriars Roof Garden.

FIRST FEASTER: "Where's the grub?"

SECOND FEASTER: "You had it in your waistcoat-pocket, idiot!"

FIRST FEASTER: "Then it must have fallen out while I was looping the loop just now in my aeroplane. But there's another bottle of tabloids in the study cupboard. I'll fly down and fetch it."

SECOND FEASTER: "Buck up, then! I'm jolly peckish. I only had half a beef cube for brekker."

(First Feaster "takes off" from the roof in his aeroplane, returning shortly afterwards with the bottle of tabloids.)

SECOND FEASTER: "Picnics don't take very long, these days. You simply pop a couple of these tabloids into your mouth, and you're finished. Oh, for the good old days of steak-puddings and apple-dumplings!"

FIRST FEASTER: "We've nothing to grouse about. There's more nourishment in one single tabloid than there is in a whole joint of beef."

SECOND FEASTER: "All the same, I'd rather have the joint of beef!"

FIRST FEASTER: "Oh, you're hopelessly old-fashioned! You ought to have lived in the days of Billy Bunter, the champion gorgier of Greyfriars. Don't you realise what wonderful strides science has made since then? People used to spend half their lives eating and drinking. It only takes a few seconds now." *(Pops tabloid into his mouth.)* "Ah, that's better! I feel like a giant refreshed!"

SECOND FEASTER: "Dashed if I do! I don't like these modern picnics a little bit. It's a thousand pities they did away with the tuckshop, and turned it into a museum." *(Swallows a couple of tabloids, and rises to his feet.)* "Still, there's something to be said in favour of the modern picnic. We've no washing-up to do, and no crocks to clear away. What are we going to do now?"

FIRST FEASTER: "Let's fly over to Calais for the afternoon. We can get back in good time for prep."

(The feasters depart in their aeroplane, and rapidly disappear from view over the sea.)

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READ THE
**GRAND "HOBBY"
SUPPLEMENT**
in this week's issue of
"THE POPULAR."



(Continued from page 13.)

many honourable communications as you may desire, if you are really crocked in your disgusting fin."

"You're no good, Inky; the pater wouldn't understand your lingo," said Bunter. "Why don't you learn English?"

"My esteemed fat-headed Bunter, my English was learnfully acquired under the wisest moonshee in Bhanipur, and compared with your esteemed lingo it is as moonshine unto Sunlight Soap, as the poet puts it."

"Oh, my hat!" said Bunter. "You buzz off, Inky, and let Bob write my letter for me. I want to catch the collection; my pater will be expecting a letter in the morning."

Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh sniffed and walked out of the study, and Bunter took his chair at the table. Bob Cherry sat down with pen and paper, and prepared to indite the letter.

"Will this interrupt you, Marky?" he asked. Mark was deep in the Odes, with a rather wrinkled brow.

"Oh, that's all right, Bob!"

"What the dickens does it matter?" asked Bunter peevishly. "I'll help you with that stuff presently if you like, Linley."

"Thanks!" said Mark, with a smile.

"I'm rather a dab at Horace, you know; Quelch has praised me a lot about it," said Bunter.

"We've heard all about that," chuckled Bob. "Johnny Bull was there when Quelch was praising you, you know."

"Oh, I forgot—I mean—that is—Look here, let's get on with this letter, and stop wasting time. Ready? Dear Father."

"Dear Father," repeated Bob, writing it down.

"I was really delighted to hear that you were coming down on Saturday this week—"

"Phew!"

"Write it down, and stop grunting," said Bunter.

"I say, isn't this piling it on rather thick?" asked Bob.

"Mind your own business, bother you! Who's making up this letter—you or me?" demanded Bunter.

"Oh, all right!" Bob wrote it down, with Bunter blinking over his shoulder.

"Is that how you fellows spell in this study?" sneered Bunter. "You've put a G in delighted."

"Well, isn't there a G, fathead?"

"Of course there isn't! Make it d-e-l-i-t-e-d."

"Great pip! Any old thing," said Bob, laughing. "It's a free country, and you can spell it like that if you like, Heave ahead!"

"This week—you ass, you've put a double E in week. W-E-A-K."

Bob chuckled, and altered the double E. It was Bunter's letter, and he was entitled to his own original style in orthography.

"This week," repeated Bunter. "But on second thoughts, I wondered if you could make it a little later, as I am

crocked now, owing to injuries received in a fight with a ferocious rough."

"Eh?"

"The fellows," continued Bunter, "have been fairly terrorised by a ruffian called Linky, and they called on me, as the best boxer in the Form, to tackle him and knock him out. This I did."

Bob Cherry stared at Bunter as if the fat junior mesmerised him. Mark Linley stared at him, too, forgetting Q. Horatius Flaccus for the moment. Little Wun Lung, in the armchair, opened his almond eyes and blinked at Bunter. The Owl of the Remove had made quite a sensation in Study No. 13.

"Got that?" rattled on Bunter. "Now go on. I have been rather damaged in the fight, which was a fearfully hard one, sixteen rounds in all. My right wrist is sprained owing to the fight, and I am unable even to write a letter at present, as you will see by this. Bob Cherry is kindly writing it for me as I am crocked."

"Great Scott!"

Bob Cherry laid down the pen.

"Get on with it!" snapped Bunter.

"We shall lose the post at this rate."

Bob shook his head.

"If you want somebody to write a heap of whoppers to your pater, Bunter, you'll have to find somebody else," he said. "Not little me! It's not quite good enough, old man!"

And Bob Cherry walked out of the study to save the trouble of argument on the subject.

"Beast!" howled Bunter.

Bob chuckled, and disappeared along the Remove passage. Bunter turned to Mark Linley.

"I say, Linley, you'll write that letter for me, old chap, won't you? You see, it's jolly important. I don't want my pater here on Saturday."

"Better tell him so, then," said Mark dryly.

"That wouldn't make any difference—he'd come all the same. Awful old fellow for butting in," said Bunter. "Now, you copy it out, and I'll tell you where to go on—"

"Can't be done," said Mark. "I'll write the truth if you like. You can't expect fellows to tell lies for you, Bunter."

Bunter sneered.

"You're jolly particular, for a fellow who worked in a factory before he came here! Didn't you ever tell lies in your factory, blow you, before you pinched a scholarship and butted into Greyfriars?"

"Never," said Mark quietly. "And I'm not going to begin now. But I'll tell you what I will do—I'll boot you into the passage if you don't keep a civil tongue in your silly head, Bunter."

Mark half rose from the table, and Billy Bunter jumped away in alarm.

"Here, hold on!" he exclaimed.

"What are you getting your rag out for, you ass? I haven't done anything to make you waxy, have I?"

Mark stared at him, and then laughed and sat down again. Apparently Bunter could see nothing of an offensive nature in his genial remarks.

"Now, you write the letter for me," said Bunter persuasively. "I can't write it myself, or the pater won't believe I'm crocked—he's suspicious. I—I mean, I am crocked, you know—my arm's practically broken. I've been ragged by those young cads in the Second, and my wrist's sprained, see? I want the pater to understand that he'd better postpone his visit a bit—that will give me time to turn round. Now go ahead."

Mark Linley went ahead—with Horace. Billy Bunter gave him a glare of wrath and scorn.

"Yah! Rotter! Go and eat coke!"

"Hook it!" said Mark.

"I—I wonder if Quelch would write it for me?" mused Bunter. "It would be a bit more convincing coming from a Form master, wouldn't it? But Quelch is a horrid suspicious beast—"

"Bunter!"

Billy Bunter spun round towards the door in horror.

The awe-inspiring figure of Mr. Quelch, master of the Remove, was framed there.

"Bunter! What did you say?"

"Oh dear! N-n-nothing, sir!"

"Were you speaking of me, Bunter?"

"Oh, no, sir! I—I wouldn't say you were a suspicious beast for—for anything, sir! I—I'm much too respectful, sir, to say what I think about a Form master, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"What!"

"I—I always tell the fellows, sir, that you're not such a beast as you look, sir—I do, really!" stuttered Bunter.

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Oh! Yes, sir! Thank you, sir!"

"Take five hundred lines for your insolence, Bunter! Not a word! Go! Leave this study!"

Bunter was glad enough to leave the study. Mr. Quelch, with a sparo ten minutes on his hands, had dropped into Study No. 13 to give Mark Linley a helping hand with his Horace. He had dropped in at a most unfortunate moment for the Owl of the Remove.

Billy Bunter rolled away dismally. But before he had got clear, Mr. Quelch's sharp voice called to him.

"Bunter!"

"Oh dear! Yes, sir!"

"What is the matter with your arm? Why are you carrying your arm in a sling?"

"It—it's broken, sir!"

"Your arm is broken?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"I—I mean it's sprained, sir—that is, the wrist is sprained. I'm suffering fearful pain, sir. I—I don't think I ought to be caned, sir, when I'm suffering such fearful agony, sir."

"Unfasten your arm at once, and let me see it," said Mr. Quelch.

"It—it pains too much to—to touch it, sir!"

"Obey me instantly!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Oh dear!"

Bunter hastened to obey. Mr. Quelch glanced at the podgy right arm.

"There is nothing whatever the matter with your arm, Bunter."

"Isn't there, sir?" stammered Bunter.

"Nothing at all. What does this absurd trickery mean?"

"It—it's got well, sir—"

"What?"

"Quite suddenly, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"Bless my soul! I command you to tell me at once, Bunter, why you have placed your arm in a sling, when there is nothing the matter with it!"

"Oh dear! I—I wanted a—a chap to write a letter for me, sir, and—and he wouldn't have if he hadn't thought I was crocked, sir!" groaned Bunter.

"Go to my study, Bunter, and wait for me there," said Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir!" groaned Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove departed with a woebegone countenance. He waited in Mr. Quelch's study for a quarter of an hour, in a dismal mood; and his mood was still more dismal when the Remove master arrived. Bunter listened for five minutes to a severe lecture, which he would not have minded very much; but

it was followed by an application of Mr. Quelch's cane, which he minded very much indeed. When he rolled away from the Form master's study, Bunter's podgy arm was no longer in a sling, but he was feeling quite crooked.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Quelch Does Not Play Up!

"SUPPOSE a fellow was detained—"

"Eh? What?"

"Detained on Saturday afternoon," said Bunter, blinking at Harry Wharton in troubled thought. "Tomorrow's Saturday. Now, suppose it was you in my place, Wharton—"

"Suppose away!" said Harry, with a smile. "I don't mind."

"Your uncle comes down to see you sometimes," said Bunter. "Now, suppose your beastly uncle was coming on Saturday—"

"My what?" exclaimed Harry.

"Don't jump down a fellow's throat," said Bunter peevishly. "Suppose your uncle was coming to see you on Saturday afternoon, that being a half-holiday, and suppose he found you were detained for the afternoon, do you think he would come all the same?"

"Probably not," said Harry, with a stare. "I should take jolly good care not to get detention if my uncle were coming."

"Suppose he was coming to rag you, though?" said Bunter. "Suppose he had an altogether wrong idea that you were a slacking sort of loafer, and meant to come down on you like a ton of bricks. Then suppose you got detention for the half-holiday—think it would keep him away?"

The captain of the Remove chuckled. He perceived Bunter's drift now. The fat Owl had evidently given up the hope of pulling the wool over Mr. Bunter's eyes; and his last hope was to keep his respected parent from coming down to Greyfriars at all that week.

"Well, it might work," said Harry. "I suppose if your father's coming to see you, he might put it off if he found you had detention. More likely to ask your Form master to let you off, though."

"Well, Quelch's rather a ratty beast, and he mightn't," said Bunter. "Besides, I could make him so waxy that he wouldn't. If I can get the pater to put it off, that will give me time to turn round. When the cricket matches begin, you may be decent enough to give me a place in the eleven, and if the pater came here and saw me in a cricket match, that would make all the difference."

"I wouldn't count on that too much," chuckled Wharton.

"Anyway, it gains time," said Bunter. "I can get Quelch's rag out, and make him detain me. I've got five hundred lines, and I haven't done any. If I get detention for Saturday, and the pater's told, it ought to keep him away. The drawback is that I lose the cake. Still, I can ask the mater to send the cake by post, can't I? That's rather important."

The bell for classes rang, and Bunter rolled into the Form-room with the rest of the Remove, feeling quite bucked. He felt that he had hit on a solution of his difficult problem at last. It would be easy to exasperate Mr. Quelch to such an extent that he would give Bunter detention, and refuse to let him off on any consideration whatever. Surely that would make Mr. Bunter put off his threatened visit! A week's grace would give the fat junior time to think of some

fresh dodge—at all events, he hoped so. While there was life there was hope.

Bunter's mind was made up as he took his seat in the Remove Form-room for afternoon classes.

But the sight of Mr. Quelch's severe face made him hesitate. Once more it was borne in upon Bunter's fat mind that it was easier to lay schemes than to carry them out. Once more his courage, after being screwed to the sticking-point, came unstuck. Really, it required a good deal of nerve to set out deliberately to "rag" Mr. Quelch into a state of exasperation. Bunter hesitated, and he who hesitates is lost. Afternoon lessons ended without any sentence of detention being inflicted on the Owl of the Remove, and certainly without any suspicion on Mr. Quelch's part that the fat junior desired anything of the sort.

But as the Remove filed out after class Mr. Quelch called Bunter to his desk.

"Your lines, Bunter?"

"I—I haven't done them, sir!"

"What does this mean, Bunter?" demanded Mr. Quelch, frowning. "The lines must be done."

Bunter drew a deep breath.

Now was his chance.

He had only to say "Rats!" or something like that, and Mr. Quelch would be brought to a state of exasperation, beyond the shadow of a doubt. Then there would be detention, and all would be well.

That one little word would have done the trick.

But Bunter did not utter it. What he said was:

"Oh! So sorry, sir! So sorry, sir! I—I—I—"

"Well, Bunter, if the imposition is not handed in this evening you will be detained to-morrow afternoon to write the lines, and will be given a Latin exercise in addition."

"Oh, thank you, sir!" he gasped.

"What?"

"Thank you, sir! You're very kind, sir!" stammered Bunter.

"Is that intended for impertinence, Bunter?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, staring at the fat junior. It was the first time that he had ever received such a spontaneous outburst of thanks for a sentence of detention.

"Nunno, sir! I—"

"You may go, Bunter!"

"Yes, sir!" gasped Bunter.

He rolled out of the Form-room with a cheery face.

The trick was done, without the awful risk of ragging Mr. Quelch into an exasperated frame of mind, in which frame of mind he would have been as likely to hand out canings as detentions.

All Bunter had to do was to fail to turn up with his lines that evening—quite an easy thing for the fat slacker, who hated work.

Billy Bunter was feeling quite bucked that evening.

His lines remained unwritten, and he did no prep. More blundering with his construe in the morning would be all to the good; it would make Mr. Quelch less likely than ever to let him off detention. For the first time in the history

GREYFRIARS CELEBRITIES. No. 4. COKER OF THE FIFTH.



of Greyfriars there was a fellow in the Remove who wanted—in fact, yearned—to be detained all through a half-holiday.

On Saturday morning Bunter rolled into the Form-room quite cheerily. Mr. Quelch addressed him severely before class began.

"Bunter, you did not bring me your lines last night! You will be detained in the Form-room from two o'clock until five this afternoon, and I shall set you an exercise."

"Yes, sir," said Bunter brightly.

Mr. Quelch looked at him, quite puzzled. It was obvious that Bunter was pleased, but the source of his pleasure was a complete mystery to the Remove master.

Bunter was in trouble over his "con" that morning, but he did not mind at all. The more Mr. Quelch was annoyed with him the better he liked it, in the present circumstances. So long as the Form-master stopped short of the cane and the pointer, he could be as cross as he liked.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Have you come into a giddy fortune, or got your giddy postal-order at last?" asked Bob Cherry, clapping Bunter on the shoulder as the Remove went out after class. "You're looking very merry and bright."

Bunter chuckled.

"It's all right! I'm detained till five," he explained. "Quelch's too ratty now to let me off."

"My only hat! Does that buck you?" asked Bob in astonishment.

"Yes, rather! You see, it bars off the pater all right."

"Oh!" said Bob.

"Rather deep, what?" asked Bunter, with a grin.

"Oh, awfully deep," said Bob with a stare. "Must be awfully nice for Mr. Bunter to have an affectionate son like you—I don't think!"

"Oh, rats!"

Bunter rolled cheerily in to dinner, feeling a weight gone from his fat mind. After dinner he made his way to the Remove master's study.

Mr. Quelch, who was settling down with a newspaper after his lunch, did not seem pleased to see him. He frowned.

"What do you want, Bunter? Your detention does not begin until two o'clock, when your task will be ready for you."

"Thank you, sir! But—"

"You may go, Bunter!"

"If you please, sir—"

Mr. Quelch laid down his paper impatiently.

"What is it, Bunter? Be brief!"

"My father's coming to see me this afternoon, sir—"

"You should have thought of that before, Bunter," said the Remove master sternly. "It is too late now. You are detained."

Bunter grinned. He could not help it.

"It—it's not that, sir! I—I'm not asking you to let me off detention, sir. But would you mind, sir, ringing up my father and telling him, so that he won't have his journey for nothing, sir. You see, sir, he's coming specially to see me, and—and I sha'n't be able to see him, and—and he could put it off till next week, or the week after—"

Mr. Quelch looked fixedly at Bunter.

"I think I understand, Bunter! For some reason you do not desire to see your father at Greyfriars. I am aware that he has the very best of reasons to be dissatisfied with you."

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"Oh! Oh, no, sir," exclaimed Bunter in alarm. "Not at all, sir. I—I'm awfully anxious to see the pater, of course. But being detained, sir, I—I thought he'd better not have such a long journey for nothing, and—and—"

"In the circumstances, Bunter, I shall not detain you this afternoon, as Mr. Bunter is coming to see you."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

His fat face fell.

Mr. Quelch rose and picked up his cane.

"You are excused from detention, Bunter, in the circumstances. I shall inflict a caning instead."

"Wha-at?"

"Hold out your hand, Bunter!"

"Oh, dear! I—I say, sir! I—I say, I—"

"You need say nothing, Bunter, you are an unscrupulous boy, and wanting in proper affection and respect for your parent. Hold out your hand!"

Whack!

"The other hand!"

Whack!

"Whooooop!"

"Now you may go, Bunter!"

Mr. Quelch resumed his newspaper and Bunter went. He went with his fat hands tucked under his arms, wriggling with anguish, and with his hopes down to zero. His last scheme, deep as it was, had failed him; even detention, generally so unwelcome, was not to be had for the asking. Detention was off, and Billy Bunter was booked to meet his dissatisfied and annoyed parent that afternoon, and the prospect was dismal. The only consolation was that he would bag the cake after all, and from that circumstance the hapless Owl of the Remove derived what consolation he could.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Shock for Mr. Bunter!

BILLY BUNTER gave an extra rub to Lord Mauleverer's Sunday topper, and carefully adjusted Harry Wharton's best necktie before the glass in Study No. 7.

The game was up now; his father was coming, and the interview was not to be dodged, even by the Owl of the Remove, with all his wonderful gifts for dodgery. It only remained to make the best possible impression on the annoyed Mr. Bunter. Bunter knew that his honoured parent was to walk from the station to Greyfriars, by way of the tow-path—Mr. Bunter had told him so. Bunter had decided to walk out and meet him on the way, like a really respectful and affectionate son; he hoped that such a kind attention would have a properly ameliorating effect on Mr. Bunter's annoyed temper. After all, it was not every fellow who would walk a mile to greet an unwelcome visitor.

Bunter was dressed very carefully for the occasion. Among other pleasant items in his Form master's last report it had been mentioned that Bunter was slovenly. That libel, at least, the fat junior was able to deal with, by turning up extremely well dressed and spick and span.

The Owl of the Remove was so careless with his own clothes that he would have found it rather difficult to turn up well-dressed had he drawn only upon his own wardrobe. Fortunately, the sunny afternoon had drawn most of the Remove fellows out of doors, and Bunter was able to help himself to the things he needed.

Lord Mauleverer's topper fitted him fairly well, and Harry Wharton's necktie looked quite nice. Vernon-Smith's handsomest waistcoat was rather tight round Bunter's extensive circumference, but a slit up the back of the garment eased it considerably. And Frank Nugent's best pair of boots undoubtedly looked well, and so did Johnny Bull's tiepin.

Billy Bunter, having finished, surveyed himself in the glass, and was satisfied. He flattered himself that a looking-glass had seldom reflected a fellow so good-looking and well-dressed. The good looks, perhaps, would have escaped the observation of any other fellow; but undoubtedly Bunter was well-dressed.

He sallied forth at last, and rolled down to the school gates. The Famous Five were in the quadrangle, and they glanced at Bunter, and grinned—and Bob Cherry shaded his eyes with his hand, as if dazzled by the magnificence of the Owl.

Bunter rolled on hastily.

He did not want Wharton to recognise his necktie, or Johnny Bull his tiepin, or Nugent his boots. There were certain risks attached to Bunter's method of turning out well-dressed.

The Bunder was loafing in the gateway talking to Tom Redwing, and he, too, glanced at Bunter.

"My hat! Bunter's been washing himself!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith, in great astonishment. "He's got a clean collar on! What's the matter, Bunter?"

Bunter rolled on without reply. A minute more, and the Bunder might have recognised the waistcoat.

In Friardale Lane he almost ran into Lord Mauleverer. His lordship glanced at him, and then stared. He was surprised.

"Congratters, old man!" he said.

"Eh! What?"

"First time I've ever seen you in a decent topper!" said Mauly cordially. "That's quite a decent hat, Bunter."

Bunter grinned.

"Not bad—what?" he said.

"You're improvin', old fat man. You'll be washing your neck next."

"Yah!"

Billy Bunter rolled on his way. He reached the tow-path, and ambled along in the direction of the village. The river gleamed in the spring sunshine, and the birds twittered pleasantly in the woods along the Sark. Bunter would have quite enjoyed his walk, but for the fact that he was going to meet an irate parent, with a very doubtful prospect of being able to placate that gentleman. Suddenly he stopped.

Ahead of him, along the tow-path, he caught sight of a shambling, ungainly figure. Its back was towards him, but he knew that it was Linky.

"Oh dear!" murmured Bunter.

He backed into cover at once.

He did not want to meet Linky. He was a good distance from the school now, and there was no help at hand. He was quite well aware of what would happen if he came to close quarters with the young rough. Lord Mauleverer's topper would suffer considerably, and probably Vernon-Smith's waistcoat—as well as Bunter's fat person.

Linky would be only too glad of the chance to pass on to Bunter what he had received from the Famous Five.

"Oh dear!" repeated Bunter.

Keeping in the cover of a clump of hawthorns, he blinked uneasily at Linky.

That ungainly youth was loafing on the towing-path, idly throwing stones into the water. He did not seem to be

going anywhere—only loafing about idly. So long as he remained there, the towpath was barred to Billy Bunter.

Bunter looked at his watch. It was a quarter past three, and Mr. Bunter's train was in Friardale at three. At any moment now Bunter's plump figure might come rolling along the path.

Bunter decided to wait.

He waited, keeping in cover.

Beyond the loafing Linky, he had a view of a good length of the towpath along the Sark, in the direction of the village. About five minutes later a fat figure came in sight.

It was Mr. Bunter.

The plump City gentleman was walking along the towpath, with the sun gleaming on his silk-hat and his diamond pin. He carried a bag in his hand, and Bunter's glance turned on that bag. That bag contained the cake which his affectionate mother had sent him, as a sort of consolation prize, in view of the ragging he was going to receive from his father.

Painful as the interview with his parent was likely to be, Bunter's face brightened as he looked at the bag. He had only eaten as much as any three other fellows at dinner, so he was already growing peckish. He wondered whether he would be able to induce his parent to sit down and admire the river scenery for a while, while the cake was disposed of.

Then his glance turned from Mr. Bunter to Linky.

Linky had spotted the City gentleman coming along, and was staring at him, and he also gave his attention to the bag.

There was something in Linky's manner that rather startled Bunter—something stealthy, watchful, lurking. Bunter had heard about Linky's peculiar methods of living without work. He knew that the young loafer was more than suspected of stealing chickens and picking pockets, and of begging in a threatening way when he came on elderly pedestrians in lonely places.

Bunter felt his heart thump.

"Old on a minute, sir!"

Bunter was near enough to hear Linky's voice as Mr. Bunter came up with the loafing rascal.

The City gentleman paused, and gave Linky a cold stare.

"What do you want?"

"Elp a bloke on his way, sir!" said Linky.

"You will get nothing from me!" said Mr. Bunter sharply. "I advise you to look for work, and to wash yourself before you apply for it. Oh—ah! What—what—Oh, gad!"

It happened swiftly.

Linky made a leap and a clutch, and the bag was torn from Mr. Bunter's hand, and before the fat City gentleman quite knew what was happening, Linky was fleeing at top speed along the towpath, the bag in his hand.

Mr. Bunter stood and gasped.

He had no more chance of overtaking Linky in a chase than an elephant would have had of overtaking an ostrich.

"Stop!" shrieked Mr. Bunter. "You rascal—stop!"

Linky grinned and flew on.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Luck at Last!

BILLY BUNTER gasped. Linky, bag in hand, was tearing along the towpath directly towards the hawthorn-bush that hid the fat junior of Greyfriars. In a few moments he would be passing Bunter—with the bag and the cake!



Linky made a leap and a clutch, and the bag was torn from Mr. Bunter's hand. Before the fat City gentleman knew quite what was happening, Linky was fleeing at top speed along the towpath. "Stop!" shrieked Mr. Bunter. Billy Bunter, behind the hedge, felt his heart thump as the loafer neared him. (See Chapter 11.)

That cake—Bunter's only consolation for the impending painful interview—was in Linky's hands, and it was going from Bunter like a beautiful dream.

Bunter was not a fighting-man; he was not of the stuff of which heroes are made. Any fellow given to punching was a fellow Bunter desired not to meet; and Linky especially was a terror to him. But there was a limit. The worm will turn; the tamest animal will put up a fight in defence of its young. If anything could have bucked Bunter to the extent of reckless heroism, it would have been the sight of tuck—his long-expected tuck—raided by lawless hands. Had that bag been stuffed with Mr. Bunter's securities and share certificates Bunter would not have moved; he would have been only too glad to see Linky vanish over the horizon, bag and all. But Bunter's cake was a different matter!

Linky, running hard, came abreast of the spot where Bunter stood unseen.

Like a bolt from a crossbow, Billy Bunter leaped out at him and grabbed him.

Linky, with a startled yell, went on, crashing.

Bunter rolled over him.

"Oh!" gasped Linky.

"Ow!" spluttered Bunter.

Bunter's spectacles had brushed off in the fall. Without them the fat junior was a good deal like an owl in the daylight. Linky was a misty form to him. Bunter could scarcely see him, but he punched at him with desperate energy.

Bunter's courage was screwed up to the sticking-point once more; and this time it stuck.

Linky, startled and scared by the sudden attack, was striving frantically to throw Bunter off and escape with the

bag. Bunter clung to him, and punched desperately.

Crash!

"Yooooop!" yelled Linky.

Bunter's fat fist crashed on his nose, and, with Bunter's weight behind it, the punch was a terrific one.

Crimson spurted from Linky's nose, and the water rushed into his eyes. He rolled on the towpath, and Bunter rolled blindly over him.

Punch, punch, punch!

Bunter realised that his antagonist was trying to escape, and that encouraged him wonderfully. Linky was more scared than he was!

"Ow! Wow!" roared Linky. "Let a bloke go! Ow! Yow!"

He hurled Bunter aside, and scrambled to his feet. He had dropped the bag in the struggle, and he was not thinking of his plunder now, but only of escape.

But he had to reckon with Bunter.

The sight of a fleeing enemy's back was more than enough to inspire the Owl of the Remove with the courage of a Paladin.

He leaped up like a jack-in-the-box, and fairly hurled himself upon Linky. Linky spun round, with Bunter's arm round his neck and Bunter's hefty right hammering his features.

"Yow! Ow-ow!"

"Take that!" gasped Bunter. "You sneaking thief, take that—and that—and that—Groooooogh!"

Linky was hitting out frantically. Bunter caught a bony set of knuckles with his nose, and then with his chin. Then a fat fist, fortunately catching Linky right in the eye, sent the young loafer spinning, and he sprawled in the grass.

"Oh! Ow! Mmmmm!" spluttered Linky.

He leaped up and fled.

Bunter rushed valorously after him.

"Stop, you funk!" roared Bunter. He realised that Linky was a greater funk than he was himself, and that was all that was needed. Bunter was fairly bursting with courage and ferocity now. "Yah! Funk! Stop! I'm jolly well going to smash you! Stop!"

Linky did not stop.

He vanished along the tow-path, going strong, and turned into the wood, and was lost.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter, halting breathlessly. "Ow! Rotten funk! Oh dear!" He dabbed his nose with his handkerchief, and the handkerchief came away red. "Ow! Oh! Where's my specs! Oh dear!"

Linky was gone. The bag lay in the grass. Mr. Bunter was coming up at a trot, gasping for breath as he trotted.

Bunter turned back.

"William!"

"Ow! My nose!"

"My dear boy!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"My dear, brave boy!" exclaimed Mr. Bunter.

Bunter jumped.

This was not the greeting he had expected from his father. The fat stockbroker picked up the bag.

"You came to meet me, William?"

"Ow! Yes! My nose!" mumbled Bunter.

"Are you hurt, William?"

Bunter blinked at him. Mr. Bunter was short-sighted, like his hopeful son. But, really, the question seemed superfluous. Really it was quite obvious that Bunter was hurt.

"Groogh! Yes! Ow!"

"I should never have dreamed of this, William—"

"Wow!"

"I had never supposed you possessed such courage—"

"Eh?"

"Such reckless bravery, in fact—"

Bunter blinked.

"Such devotion—" continued Mr. Bunter warmly.

"Oh!"

"That hulking ruffian who tried to rob me is almost twice your size, William, yet you rushed upon him and seized him in the most gallant manner to prevent him from robbing me of valuable papers—"

"Of—of what?"

"You have saved me from a serious loss, William."

"You?" stuttered Bunter. The Owl of the Remove had been under the impression that he had been saving himself from a loss—a serious loss indeed—that of a cake!

"Yes, my boy! That bag contains most important papers."

"P-p-papers?"

"I had to see a client at Lantham, William, and I called there on my way to Greyfriars. That bag contains a number of extremely important papers relative to stocks and shares."

"S-s-stocks—sh-sh-shares?"

"Yes, William! They would have been of no value to the thief, had he succeeded in getting away with them, but the loss would have caused me a great deal of trouble. By your brave conduct, William, you have saved me from very great inconvenience. I suppose you guessed that there was something of value in the bag?"

"Yes," gasped Bunter. "I thought that—"

"You thought that perhaps it contained securities—naturally," said Mr. Bunter.

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"Quite so! And you rushed upon the thief to rescue my property in the most courageous way."

Billy Bunter rubbed his nose, and rubbed his eye. Praise from Mr. Bunter was all very well. But where was the cake?

"I am pleased with you, William!" went on Mr. Bunter, beaming. "From the accounts I have heard of you, I never expected this of you. I regret now—yes, I regret—that I refused to bring the cake your mother wished to send you—"

"You—you refused?" gasped Bunter.

"I was displeased with you, William! I considered that it was no time for cakes!" said Mr. Bunter.

Billy Bunter tried to answer, but he couldn't. Words failed him. He had gathered up this eye and this nose, as well as several bumps and bruises, in a struggle with Linky—for what?

Nothing!

There was no cake!

Some silly papers in a bag! But for the paternal presence, William George Bunter would have kicked the bag, papers and all, into the middle of the river. There was no cake!

It seemed too awful to be true! But there it was! There was no cake—that long-expected cake, the only solace for the paternal visit, was not there! And that desperate scrap with Linky had all been for absolutely nothing. It was really too sickening.

Mr. Bunter, fortunately, was not a thought-reader. He rattled on brightly:

"Yes, William, I really regret now that I declined to bring you the cake. I should be very glad, William, to present you with a cake, after your gallant conduct in defence of my property. I would, in fact, give you ten shillings to buy a cake—"

Bunter's face brightened.

"But for the fact that money is so exceedingly tight at the present time and—"

Bunter's face fell again.

"But you have the pleasure, William, of knowing that you have earned your father's good opinion, and—and, yes, gratitude, William."

Bunter did not answer. This was all very well, of course; good opinion and gratitude were very gratifying. But Bunter would rather have had the cake.

"Come, William, walk with me to the school," said Mr. Bunter. "I have changed my opinion of you very much. I can scarcely believe that you are so slack, so lazy, so inert, as I have supposed, after seeing you rush upon that footpad, so much bigger than yourself, with the single-hearted purpose of saving your father's property."

"The—the— Oh, yes! Of—of course!" stuttered Bunter.

"It was noble, William!"

Bunter cheered up. After all, he had licked Linky, and he had won his father's good opinion. Not so valuable, of course, as a cake; but still, useful in its way.

The Owl of the Remove began to realise that the interview was not going to be the painful one he had dreaded. Had he not, after all, done a real genuine athletic stunt? Had he not demonstrated, in the plainest possible way, that he was a hefty fellow with his hands, that when it came to pluck and muscle and fiery courage, and so forth, he— William George Bunter—was the goods?

He could not quite forget the cake! Like Rachael of old, he mourned for that which was lost, and could not be quite comforted. But he felt that he might as well annex what was going in the way of glory. It was not so good as the cake, but it was something.

He trotted along beside the fat stockbroker, comforted.

"I shall describe this to Mr. Quelch," said Mr. Bunter. "I shall point out to him that he has scarcely done you justice, William. I shall mention it to the Head. My son must receive due credit for a gallant action."

Bunter smiled.

"All Greyfriars shall know of this!" said Mr. Bunter.

Bunter purred.

"As for my idea of taking you away from the school, that, of course, I shall think of no further. A school which trains up a lad to be gallant and brave and recklessly courageous, is the proper place for my son!"

"Oh! Ah! Yes!" gasped Bunter. And he beamed.

Many eyes were turned on Billy Bunter as he walked in at the gates of Greyfriars with a fat stockbroker, a black eye, and a swollen nose. In an hour few at Greyfriars had not heard of the way Billy Bunter had distinguished himself. After Mr. Bunter was gone—greatly pleased with his son, and almost giving him a paternal benediction when he went—the Remove fellows crowded round Bunter. Some of them asked for details of the adventure, and some inquired after the cake.

When they learned the facts, as they soon did, there were roars of laughter. Nevertheless, although Billy Bunter's heroism had been inspired wholly and solely by the thought of tuck, the fact remained that he had licked Linky. And upon that Bunter swanked very considerably for quite a long time.

And still more agreeable to the Owl of the Remove was the fact that the danger was past. Greyfriars no longer stood in peril of losing its brightest ornament—and it was no longer necessary for Bunter to buck up!

THE END.

(Now look out for "Pep" For the 'Friars"—next week's magnificent extra long story of Harry Wharton & Co., featuring Hiram K. Parks, an American educational authority, who takes over the reins from Dr. Locke.)

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A baffling mystery story featuring Ferrers Locke, the wizard detective, and his plucky boy assistant, Jack Drake.

Bristow Springs a Surprise!

LOCKE paid a final visit to Dr. Lampton to report what he had found in Mardyke's study. Then the detective and Jack Drake took their departure from Stormpoint College, though not before Jack had had an opportunity of bidding au revoir to Val Terry and his chums of the Remove.

The White Hawk raced along the country roads at almost breakneck speed, for dusk was now falling, and the detective knew that it would be fatal to waste time.

Scarcely a word passed between him and Drake during the whole of the journey, Ferrers Locke giving his attention to driving the car, while Jack was too much wrapped up in his thoughts to want to talk.

Accustomed as he was, through his association with Locke, to running up against mystery, Jack Drake had to admit to himself that this case of the Golden Pyramid, as he now called it himself—was easily one of the most baffling problems that either he or Locke had ever been called upon to elucidate.

Much light had been thrown on the events leading up to the present stage of the case by what Locke had told Dr. Lampton, and Jack knew the detective well enough to appreciate the fact that Ferrers Locke would never have expounded his theory at such length or in such detail had he not felt tolerably sure in his own mind of its soundness.

That Gordon Carr had been taken prisoner by Mardyke purely because Carr had accidentally stumbled upon one of the secret hiding-places of the loot stolen by Bristow and his gang—of which Mardyke was obviously a member—seemed to Jack to be the most plausible and logical explanation of Carr's disappearance. And that Mr. Rennie suffered a like fate for a similar reason—for, had he found the underground crypt, he would certainly have

discovered Gordon Carr's whereabouts—was an equally sound argument.

It all "locked in" like the segments

THE OPENING CHAPTERS:

FERRERS LOCKE, the world-famous detective.

JACK DRAKE, his clever boy assistant.

INSPECTOR PYECROFT, of the C.I.D. at Scotland Yard.

SIR MERTON CARR, a South African mining magnate.

GORDON, his son.

GERALD ARTHUR BRISTOW, a professional crook, nephew of Sir Merton (known also as Arthur the Dude).

SEPTIMUS MARDYKE, the master of the Fifth Form at Stormpoint, and

EBENEZER HOBBS, a habitual criminal, both colleagues of Arthur the Dude.

The story has centred around Gordon Carr and Mr. Rennie, his Form master, who disappeared in a mysterious fashion from Stormpoint College.

Locke, in taking up the case, hits upon a tiny "pyramid" of gold which, he feels sure, supplies the motive of the dual disappearance, for it belongs to Sir Merton Carr, and repeated attempts by Bristow and his accomplices have been made to steal it.

From the outset Locke is astonished by Sir Merton's peculiar attitude towards him, for the mining magnate implores the detective to throw up the case. This, naturally, Locke refuses to do.

While the detective is exploring some secret caves in the region of Moorvale, Drake is despatched to Stormpoint College. He soon learns that Mr. Mardyke, the Fifth Form master, is responsible for Carr and Mr. Rennie's abduction. Not long afterwards he discovers the boy Carr a prisoner in a vault beneath the old Abbey ruins. But Carr has suffered a lapse of memory, and from a point of view of evidence is of little use to Drake. On top of this discovery Locke—who has arrived at the school in response to an urgent summons from Drake—finds Mr. Rennie a fast captive in a disused loft at the school.

The case is almost complete. Mr. Mardyke's duplicity is laid bare, and Dr. Lampton, the Head, sends for him. But the scoundrelly Form master has made himself scarce. Locke deduces from certain clues found in Mardyke's room, however, that he has flown to London, and thither the detective announces his intention of proceeding with all speed.

(Now read on.)

of a Cross Word puzzle, and, to Jack's mind, was above question.

But the reason for Sir Merton's strange behaviour, his wild appeal to Locke to throw up the case, and his ultimate strange disappearance, still awaited an explanation.

And—biggest and most baffling problem of all—the mystery surrounding that weird little emblem, the Golden Pyramid, had yet to be solved.

What was the Golden Pyramid? What was the reason for the frantic attempts on the part of Bristow and Mardyke—yes, and the man Hobbs, too—to gain possession of it? To whom did it originally belong, and why was such a tremendous value set upon it? What mysterious secret did it hold, or what queer spell did it exercise over these ill-assorted people that they were willing, apparently, to go almost to the length of murder to gain possession of it?

Locke had previously explained to Jack how it had been found, and had allowed his young assistant to examine it. Jack had turned it over and over in his hand, studying it from every angle.

Like Ferrers Locke, he had at first thought that perhaps it was hollow and that a hidden spring might serve to open it, revealing, perhaps, some secret within.

But though he examined it inch by inch he could find no such thing, and, besides, as Locke had been at pains to point out at the time, the very weight of the thing mitigated against the possibility of its being hollow. It was obviously quite solid, just as it was obviously made of the purest gold.

Then why, if it held no hidden clue or secret, was there such a desperate series of attempts to get hold of it?

These and a hundred other questions chased each other through Jack Drake's mind as the White Hawk sped on its way Londonwards. And finally he gave it all up, realising that, at this stage,

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at any rate, it was hopeless to seek an answer to the riddle.

The myriad twinkling lights of the metropolis were spread out like a glittering fan before them now, and soon they were threading their way through a maze of streets. Through Hounslow and on to Putney, thence to Vauxhall the speedy little car raced, though, of course, her speed was considerably slackened now.

At last they drew up outside Locke's door in Baker Street.

Night had now definitely set in, and there were signs of the approach of a thick fog, while a biting east wind caused Jack to shiver slightly as he stepped out of the car.

They hurried within and up the stairs, Locke feeling vaguely surprised that Sing-Sing, their Chinese servant, had not shown himself in answer to the "honk-honk!" of Locke's car as it drew up outside.

They found the detective's consulting-room in darkness—another disturbing discovery, for Sing-Sing usually pottered about early in the evening, making up the fire or putting away correspondence and so forth.

Jack Drake pulled up with a sudden cry as his foot prodded against something in the dark—something soft and yielding, that gave out a muffled moan as his boot came into contact with it.

"What the dickens—" he began, stepping quickly back.

"What can have happened to Sing-Sing?" asked Locke's voice in the darkness. "Where are the blessed lights?"

"There's somebody on the floor here, guv'nor," returned Jack—"somebody who's been injured or—"

Locke moved forward quickly now, feeling along the wall till his fingers closed round the electric switch. He pressed it and the room was flooded with light.

And at the same instant Jack Drake gave a cry of amazement and dismay.

"It's Sing-Sing!" he exclaimed, pointing to the heap on the floor. "He's been attacked, gagged and bound, and—"

Locke sprang forward, and stared in blank amazement at the huddled heap on the floor. Undoubtedly it was the Chinese servant. He was swathed in a positive tangle of cord, while an ugly gag protruded from his mouth, and his eyes rolled in wild, mute appeal.

"Good heavens!" gasped Locke. "What on earth can have happened?"

He broke off at a fresh cry from Jack.

Turning, he saw his young assistant's eyes staring through and beyond him to the opposite side of the room—the side on which were situated the curtained windows. And even as Jack stared Locke gasped as he saw the young fellow's arms going slowly up above his head in token of surrender.

The detective swung round like a streak of lightning, and as he did so there came the sound of a light, mocking laugh.

And then:

"Good-evening, Mr. Ferrers Locke! Sorry to trouble you, but you might please follow your young assistant's excellent example, and—put 'em up!"

The light glinted on the monocle in the eye of Gerald Bristow, immaculate and urbane as ever, his slim right hand extended, the long, sensitive fingers closed round a particularly business-like automatic.

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A Roland for an Oliver!

FERRERS LOCKE gasped and fell back a step.

The sight of Gerald Bristow there, in his—the detective's—own consulting-room, with a levelled revolver, gave Locke a genuine surprise. Accustomed as he was to unexpected happenings, he had scarcely been prepared for this.

The man with the monocle was as cool and urbane as ever, almost splendid in his sheer, dazzling impudence. Locke had a short way with crooks, but he was unable to deny this astounding scoundrel his meed of admiration. The man was so amazingly audacious, so obviously crammed with courage.

Even in this critical moment Locke could not help feeling a wave of real pity for Bristow. It seemed such a waste of real ability that the man should have turned his talents to such distorted ends.

But this was no time for moralising. Bristow was smiling, but there was a steely glint in his eyes, and the hand holding the automatic never wavered by so much as a hair's breadth.

"I hate to be rude," murmured the man with the monocle; "but I really don't like to be kept waiting. My time is so valuable!"

Ferrers Locke glared, and for an instant it seemed as if he would spring upon the other.

But he thought better of it. After all, it was useless to argue. Bristow was positively affable, but Locke knew only too well that behind that dazzling smile and those twinkling eyes was a brain as coldly determined as his own. Bristow was a desperate man, and would not hesitate to shoot if necessary.

Locke put up his hands without further ado.

"Thanks awfully," drawled Bristow with an ironical bow. "Do you know, Locke, old man, if there's one thing I like about you it's your sheer common-sense. Many another man in your position would have lost his temper and created quite a scene. And then I should have had to shoot him to put him out of his misery. And shooting's such a messy game, isn't it? I'm really very much obliged to you, Locke, old bean!"

"We'll get on with the job, if you don't mind," said the detective between clenched teeth. "You've cornered us, and done it very cleverly. Perhaps you'll be good enough not to waste time making frivolous remarks!"

"Wise words, O King!" returned Bristow with a mocking laugh. "You are indeed a man after my own heart! Businesslike to the finger-tips. What a ripping crook you would have made, Locke! They'd never have caught you, either!"

He paused, and, noticing a speck of dust on his immaculate clothes, jerked a snowy handkerchief of purest silk from his coat-sleeve, and flicked it with dainty disgust over his trousers.

Just for an instant his gun drooped, and in that instant Locke made to dash forward.

It was a bold move, but it was doomed to failure.

Swift as he was, the crook was even swifter. Almost like a lightning-flash the gun came up again, and Locke's body felt the jab of it as he rushed upon the other. The detective gave a grunt of disgust.

"Now, now, naughty!" jeered Bristow. "No tricks, please!"

"What do you want with me?" snapped Locke impatiently. "Get on with it, for Heaven's sake!"

Locke was feeling very chagrined. His personal pride had been hurt by this exceedingly clever move on the part of

Bristow. It was rare indeed that the famous detective was caught napping in such a flagrant fashion.

Bristow bowed low.

"As you please," he returned softly. "I think you know the reason for my little visit. That little matter of the Golden Pyramid—"

Ferrers Locke gave a hard, bitter laugh.

"I thought as much," he rejoined; "but you might as well have saved yourself the trouble, Mr. Gerald Bristow. You'll not get the Golden Pyramid from me, so don't let's fool about any more on that score!"

"I fancy you're wrong there, old friend!" Bristow's eyes glinted dangerously now, and the smile faded from his lips. "I'm here to get that nugget, and as I've got the upper hand I rather fancy I shall get what I want."

"You fancy yourself quite a lot, I see," murmured Locke; "but you're loitering in a fool's paradise. The Golden Pyramid is in my possession, and it remains in my possession. Please get that fixed in your crafty brain for good and all!"

"Don't be too hasty in your decisions, Locke!" snapped the other in a deadly whisper. "I warn you I'm a desperate man. I'm absolutely determined to get that Pyramid if I have to kill you first!"

Locke laughed.

"And I'm just as resolved you won't!" he retorted. "So I'm afraid it's a case of the irresistible force against the immovable object. You ought to know me by now, Bristow; you ought to have learned, surely, that I'm not likely to be intimidated by threats!"

"And if I shoot?" hissed Bristow, taking a step nearer.

The blood had drained from his face now, and he looked positively fiendish, so that even Jack Drake felt a cold shiver coursing down his spine.

Ferrers Locke shrugged his shoulders indifferently. His coolness was amazing.

"If you shoot," he returned, "you'll put an end to me, especially as your gun is so unerringly directed at my heart. I should be sorry to go, of course, but I should be sorrier to live after capitulating with a rogue! And at least, if you shoot I shall have the satisfaction of knowing beforehand that you will surely hang!"

Tense silence.

The two men faced each other, looking unblinkingly into each other's eyes. And Jack Drake counted the ticking strokes of the clock on the mantelshelf—strokes which seemed like tiny hammers beating into his brain.

And then—

And then Bristow's nerve failed him.

His gun wavered by the merest fraction and finally drooped. He shrugged his shoulders with an air of patient resignation, but he was unable to hide the glint in his eyes—the glitter which told Locke that his adversary was a beaten man.

Beaten, but still terribly dangerous.

"Very well," muttered Bristow at last; "I thank you for the gentle reminder. I, too, should be sorry to go, especially by way of the scaffold. It would be an offence to my dignity; an unworthy end for so accomplished a man as I."

"Phe-e-w!" gasped Jack Drake under his breath. "His colossal swank licks everything!"

"We'll postpone the shooting," went on Bristow, moistening his lips and obviously striving hard to fight back the white-heat anger which surged within him; "and we'll try another method. You will accompany me, Ferrers Locke, and your yapping puppy of an assistant



Ferrers Locke swung round like a streak of lightning as he saw Drake's hands shoot aloft in token of surrender. There, before the curtains, stood Bristow, revolver in hand. "Good-evening, Mr. Locke. Sorry to trouble you, but you might please follow your assistant's excellent example. Put 'em up!" (See Page 22.)

as well. We'll see what a little concentrated pressure can do!"

He backed towards the door, keeping his gun levelled at them all the time. Then he thrust his free hand behind him and jerked the door wide, at the same time motioning with his head to Locke and Drake.

"Get in front of me," he snapped harshly, "and down those stairs! And kindly bear in mind that though I'm behind you, my gun is pointed at you all the time, and will most assuredly bark if you deviate as much as an inch from a straight line. I may not shoot to kill, but at least I shall put you out of action for a very long time. Come on; right turn! Quick march!"

Locke glanced quickly at Jack. There was a queer glint in the detective's eyes.

Bristow did not notice it, nor did he notice the almost imperceptible nod which came from Jack in return. Had he done so, the scoundrel might have had fresh suspicions aroused, might have realised that something was passing between the two detectives—a sort of unspoken code message, perhaps.

Next moment Locke and Jack Drake had wheeled obediently in response to Bristow's command, and were making their way past him, through the door and down the stairs, Locke taking the lead, and Jack following close upon his heels.

Bristow kept the revolver significantly before him as they passed. There was a slight smile on the man's lips, and an ugly look in his eyes.

He may have failed temporarily to get what he wanted, but at least he had cleverly netted the great detective and his almost equally clever assistant.

He had trapped them in their own lair, so to speak, and at least he would

have the intense gratification of putting them out of harm's way, and so clearing his own path.

After all, it was not such a shabby sort of victory. Not many crooks could boast of having trapped one of the world's greatest detectives even once in their lifetime.

And as for the Golden Pyramid—well, Bristow was not worrying overmuch on that score. There were more ways than one of killing a cat, and before very long Bristow had no doubt at all that Ferrers Locke, self-assured though he was, would begin to wish he hadn't been quite so "cocky."

As Jack Drake followed behind Locke, Bristow swung smartly round on his heel and followed, barely a couple of paces behind, and so the procession moved slowly down the staircase.

The stairs were divided into two sets, with a small landing intervening. Locke and Jack Drake descended the first set quietly, and without comment, till they came to the landing.

Bristow was only a couple of steps behind, calmer and more self-satisfied now, safe in the assurance that he had the upper hand, and that Locke had had the good sense to realise his position, and not to make a scene.

Bristow felt sure now that Ferrers Locke would offer no further resistance. Such was the scoundrel's ineffable self-esteem and vanity that he really believed he had overawed the great detective.

Just as Locke reached the landing, and was moving towards the next flight of steps, he appeared to stumble, his foot catching against something, and sending him with a crash against the wall.

Jack, who was close behind him, was

brought up with a similar jerk, and fell against the detective.

"Now, then, mind where you're stepping!" snapped Bristow. "Lift up your feet, and— Holy smoke! What the thunder—"

His curt instructions broke off in a positive cry of blank amazement, and his lower jaw sagged into a vacuous gape.

Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake had completely vanished!

Bristow fell back a step till his heel caught the stair behind him, and he was all but precipitated upon his back.

He staggered and regained his balance, and then he passed his free hand across his eyes as if they were surely playing him tricks.

But there was no mistaking it. The spot where Locke and Drake had been standing but half a minute before was now absolutely deserted!

The detective and his assistant had gone as completely as if they had been figures wiped off a slate!

For a full minute Gerald Bristow continued to stare before him like a man possessed, his eyes goggling, his monocle dangling uselessly from its cord.

Then, with a roar like a wounded animal, he raced down the stairs, thrice at a time.

"They've jumped the stairs, and gone sliding down the banisters!" he exclaimed, his voice thick with rage, "but I'll nab them, never fear!"

In his haste to clear the stairs he overreached himself, with the result that his foot caught against one of them, and, with a howl of mingled fury and fright, he went crashing headlong, rolling helplessly to the bottom, where he lay for a moment, groaning and cursing.

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Then he picked himself up, glanced stupidly at his now sadly ruffled and dusty clothes, and dashed away towards the rear of the house, his lips moving in a string of amazing language quite out of keeping with his previous urbane and polite behaviour.

Barely had a door at the back of the house thudded behind him, when suddenly the landing on the stairs became alive again with two grinning figures.

Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake!

They appeared again as if by magic, and only a momentary glimpse of a dark recess in the wall behind them gave the clue as to where they had been.

Next instant the hole in the wall disappeared, as a section of the panelling slipped noiselessly into place.

"Done brown!" grinned Jack Drake.

"Absolutely!" agreed Locke, inwardly convulsed with laughter. "That little secret funk-hole comes in handy when one is cornered, doesn't it?"

"It's a wonderful wheeze of yours, guv'nor," said Jack, with an admiring glance at the famous detective, "and nobody would guess that by pretending to stumble against the wall you were really masking the touch of a finger against the secret spring."

Locke glanced round him swiftly. The smile had gone from his face now, which was once again grim and determined.

"Quick!" he muttered, clutching at Jack Drake's arm. "No time to waste! You see to poor old Sing-Sing while I chase after Bristow! Hurry, my lad—hurry!"

And without another word the detective streaked down the stairs and out of sight, leaving Jack momentarily gasping on the landing.

Number Two!

NEXT instant Jack had spun round, and was racing back towards the consulting-room, intent on carrying out Locke's orders, and thereafter to catch up, if possible, with the detective, who, he knew, had gone on the trail of Bristow.

Jack could hear the sound of moaning coming from the consulting-room, even as he raced up the stairs. Evidently poor old Sing-Sing was in some pain, thanks to the cruel bonds which held him, and the gag which had been thrust between his teeth.

"All right, Sing-Sing!" he called out reassuringly. "Hang on a jiffy!"

He reached the top stair at last, and flung out his hand towards the door, which, for some reason or other, had closed again.

Then he fell back with a yell of amazement as the very shadows around him seemed to solidify into a human shape, out of which the dull gleam of an automatic was suddenly and dramatically thrust forward till it jabbed him in the ribs.

Hard on top of this came a crisp command, uttered in a thin, rasping voice which Jack Drake knew only too well.

"Ve-ry clever, Drake, my boy; but not quite clever enough! Up with your hands! Sharp, now!"

"Mardyke!" gasped Jack, a world of sheer amazement in his voice.

The figure chuckled, and stepped out of the shadows till the light from the consulting-room shone on his features.

There was no mistaking those gleaming, ferret eyes, those thin lips, and those half-crouching shoulders.

It was Septimus Mardyke, the ex-master of the Fifth Form at Stormpoint College. And it was a new Mardyke in many ways—a viciously leering, half

snarling animal of a man, whose beady eyes glowed with malevolent hatred.

"You are surprised!" he hissed, chuckling again. "You hardly expected to see me again so soon, my too clever boy detective! But I've been here all the time, and I congratulate you and that impudent detective employer of yours on your wonderful get-away. But just the same, we, too, do not do things by halves, as you see. Now, put up your hands—higher, please!"

Jack groaned aloud and did as he was told, and Mardyke chuckled again, stepping forward.

But in Jack's eyes was a look of desperation. At whatever the cost, he must get free of this latest danger. Ferrers Locke would never forgive him, he thought, for letting himself fall so easily into this second trap.

As Mardyke moved forward, Jack Drake did a reckless, but infinitely brave thing, born of sheer desperation.

At imminent risk of his life—for he knew from Mardyke's look that the master would not hesitate to shoot, if driven to it, Jack suddenly let his hands fall, to drop like a pair of claws on to Mardyke's shoulders, and from there, by a dexterous twist, to his throat. And at the same instant Jack's right leg shot up in a neat and wonderfully agile kick, the toe of his boot catching against Mardyke's outstretched wrist with a positive crack.

The revolver went spinning through the air and Mardyke fell back with a howl of agony and rage—a howl quickly choked into a gurgle as Jack's lithe hands fastened like a vice round the master's thin neck.

And then "the band began to play" with a vengeance!

The sheer force of Jack's onslaught, and its complete unexpectedness, sent Mardyke reeling back to strike against the wall with a resounding crash that momentarily knocked all the breath out of his body.

Jack hung on like grim death, resolved to overpower his adversary, and for a moment it looked as if he would have an easy task.

But next instant, with surprising deftness, Mardyke wrenched himself temporarily free, lunging up with one arm and crashing his clenched fist against the side of Jack's head.

Jack went spinning back, his brain reeling, and Mardyke, with a bellow of fury, bore down upon him.

More by good luck than otherwise, Jack somehow contrived to skip aside, and Mardyke went blundering on, to come to a halt with a crash against the opposite wall.

He swung round, however, and Jack saw that the man's face was positively livid with baffled fury.

"I'll smash you for that, you—you—"

Muttering a string of oaths, the ex-master came on again. But this time Jack had to some extent recovered himself and was more or less prepared.

He met the man's bull-like rush by crouching low, letting Mardyke career up to and level with him.

Then he lunged out with his right, catching the ex-master a sidelong drive against the face.

Mardyke howled with pain and fell back, saving himself in the nick of time from tumbling headlong down the stairs.

Then he staggered round, and Jack gasped as he caught the positively, fiendish look in the man's eyes, the sagging, dribbling lips and the clawing hands.

Next instant Mardyke, like a fear-maddened wolf, had rushed upon him again. And now there was stark murder in his eyes.

But Jack was ready, every muscle flexed.

As Mardyke came on, Jack sprang forward to meet him. They closed and began to stagger back and forth on the tiny, narrow landing, missing the stairs time and again by inches.

Mardyke had a partial hold on Jack's throat now, while Jack was busy trying to force the man's jaw back. But the ex-master was no mean fighter, added to which he was in a fever of desperation and would, as Jack knew, stick at nothing.

They were inextricably locked in each other's grip and swayed and staggered dizzily across the tiny enclosed space, their breath coming and going in short, dry sobs.

It was a terrible struggle, a mad, reasonless fight.

Suddenly Mardyke succeeded in wrenching an arm free. It shot up like a flash, catching Jack clean between the eyes.

With a moan, he fell away, temporarily blinded, his senses reeling.

On the instant Mardyke seized his chance and rushed in, and, before Jack could do anything to stop him, the master had got him in a deadly "lock" and was slowly but steadily forcing the lad backwards, step by step, towards the stairs.

Jack gasped aloud as he felt his back bending steadily before the other's pressure till he felt it must snap in two. He strove wildly to swing himself clear of the stairs, but to no avail.

Inch by inch, Mardyke forced home his advantage, and Jack's feet went scudding reluctantly but unavoidably nearer and nearer to the edge of the topmost stair.

Next instant he felt his heel sagging over the edge of the stair.

Mardyke's eyes, glittering with evil fury and the sense of impending triumph, glowered into his with the light of madness.

"Got you, you policeman's whelp!" he snarled.

Strive as he would, Jack was unable to stop the hoarse cry of horror that burst from his lips as he felt himself pitching backwards into space. And next moment his already tortured body crashed against the stairs with a thud which sent up a cloud of dust, causing both Mardyke and himself to cough and choke.

But Mardyke did not loosen his hold. So blind was he in his fury, that he seemed content to fall with Jack, letting the whole force of his body drop heavily on to the boy's chest, crushing the last vestige of breath out of his lungs.

Down the stairs they went rolling and fighting, like a couple of wild animals, to the accompaniment of a series of thuds and a running cloud of choking dust, till at last they reached the second landing.

Even then they did not stop. The fall had been so great that their struggling bodies had gained impetus as they rolled down the stairs, and now they went spinning across the second landing and away down the final flight of stairs, gathering speed as they went.

Right to the bottom they went. And then, as they rolled over on the floor of the hall, the front door suddenly burst open and a tall, burly figure appeared on the threshold, staggering back with a gasp as he caught sight of the two fiercely-fighting figures.

"Well, I'll be jiggered!" he gasped. "What in thunder—"

Next instant he had jumped forward and, as if recognising instinctively the right and the wrong side, he made a snatch at Mardyke as that worthy's body rolled towards him.



Jack Drake's right leg shot up in a neat and wonderfully agile kick, the toe of his boot catching against Mardyke's outstretched wrist with a positive crack. The revolver went spinning through the air. (See page 24.)

Mardyke gasped in amazement as he felt a pair of strong hands fastening round his throat and felt his whole body being dragged forcibly back. The newcomer's arms seemed like giant cranes, irresistible in their power, and Mardyke was absolutely compelled to loosen his hold for fear of having his arms wrenched away altogether!

Jack Drake rolled over, and, through eyes blinded with dust and pain, he stared dizzily at the spectacle of a big, burly man holding aloft the wriggling, writhing, gesticulating figure of Mardyke as if he were a freak specimen from the Zoo!

"I reckon we've had enough of this dirty work for one night!" boomed the voice of the big man. "This is where little me takes a hand in the game!"

Jack Drake's brain was reeling, but the voice, distant and vague though it appeared to his dazed senses, was instantly recognisable.

"Pycroft!" he whispered, between his sobs. "G-g-good old Pycroft! Thank heavens!"

And he rolled over and lay flat upon his face, strangely still.

On the Trail Again!

INSPECTOR PYECROFT just caught those whispered words from Jack Drake's lips and his eyes softened in pity for the young fellow.

Then they hardened and gleamed dangerously as he turned them upon Mardyke, who was still gyrating madly, suspended in mid-air in Pycroft's massive and capable fingers!

"Rotten little rat, whoever you are!" grunted Pycroft, disgust all over his features. "Too blessed cheap to be given away with a pound of tea! Ugh! Get away—you make me tired!"

Without the slightest compunction he

flung Mardyke to the floor, where he lay moaning and apparently helpless.

For a moment Pycroft stood looking from one to the other.

The whole affair was in the nature of a terrific surprise to him. He had only just returned to London from Devonshire and had called round to Baker Street in the hope of seeing Ferrers Locke.

But he had hardly expected to run into this!

Jack Drake lay very still indeed, and Pycroft was about to cross to the boy and see if he was seriously hurt, when a slight, but suggestive movement from Mardyke caused him to pause and then swerve round.

"Still got some kick left, have you?" he muttered, striding towards the crumpled heap that was Mardyke. "Well, we'll soon clip your claws, you dingy little freak!"

In a trice he had whipped forth a pair of handcuffs and snapped them neatly on the ex-master's wrists.

"And you can keep your compliments to yourself," he grunted, as Mardyke's voice, weak, but sulphurous, and breathing sundry terrible oaths, came to his ears. "You'll need 'em for consolation before we've finished this little picnic, I'm thinking!"

He turned on his heel with a snort of disgust, and hastened across to where Jack Drake still lay inert.

The boy was lying on his face and sprawled out in spread-eagle fashion, his clothes torn and smothered with dust, his collar wrenched away, and his hair looking like a doormat.

Pycroft dropped to one knee and gently turned the young fellow over.

Then he gave a mutter of sympathy as he saw Jack's face, bruised and bleeding, his eyes closed, and his breath coming and going intermittently.

"Great Scott!" whispered the inspector. "Must have been a terrible fight. But Jack's made of the right stuff—one of the pluckiest kids I've ever met. Pretty nearly done for this time, though, I'm afraid!"

"Don't you believe it, old fruit."

Inspector Pycroft fell back with a gasp as the words, in Jack's voice, came back to him even as he ceased speaking.

Jack's eyelids flickered, and finally stayed open, and his blue eyes, shot with pain, but grinning cheerily, nevertheless, stared into his own.

"All serene, old buck!" muttered Jack. "Give us a lift up, there's a good chap!"

"Well, if you're not the giddy outside edge!" gasped Pycroft.

He extended a hand, and Jack, with clenched teeth, dragged himself erect, where he swayed giddily for a moment, passing his hand tremblingly across his eyes.

"You're a hospital case, young 'un," said Pycroft anxiously. "It's no good tryin' to deceive an old hand like me, you know."

"Hospital fiddlesticks!" returned Jack, with a forced laugh. "I've had a bit of a gruelling, but if you'll give me half a jiffy I'll be as right as rain. Where's Mardyke?"

Inspector Pycroft glanced over his shoulder.

"If you mean that pasty-faced old freak who was helping you to play roly-poly down the stairs," he growled, "he's over there, playin' with his rattle—otherwise, the darbies round his dear little wrists. I thought I'd better tick him off, in case he tried to do clever things while my back was turned."

Jack Drake glanced past the burly form of the inspector, noting the huddled

figure of Mardyke propped against the wall, his dark eyes glowering savagely.

"Is he much hurt?" asked Jack anxiously.

It was typical of Locke's assistant to be concerned for others, even though they were his enemies.

Pycroft stared at him and grunted indifferently.

"Wish he was," he replied tartly.

"But you can't hurt freaks like that. Their bodies are like their consciences, made of rubber. But what's been the trouble, anyway?"

"I'll explain in a jiffy," said Jack, who, now feeling considerably better, was starting off up the stairs. "Meantime, keep an eye on that fellow while I lend a hand to old Sing-Sing."

The C.I.D. man muttered something, but did as he was asked, and Jack hastened up the stairs and into the consulting-room.

In a few moments he had slashed at the cords binding the Chinaman and taken the gag from his mouth.

Sing-Sing rolled over with a groan and, with Jack's assistance, clambered to his feet.

"Me plenty sickee," he muttered, swaying slightly. "Tank you vely muchee?"

"Don't thank me, old sport," said Jack, regarding him anxiously. "Are you hurt anywhere?"

Sing-Sing rubbed the back of his head reminiscently and made a grimace.

"Not muchee hurt," he muttered. "Got nasty biff on head and see plenty much pretty stars."

"You'd better toddle off to bye-bye," said Jack. "And I'll send the medicine man round to see you."

"No wantee medicine man," returned Sing-Sing, startled. "Sing-Sing allee same first-class now. Sing-Sing have little bit sleep, and then be allee lightee."

"But I think you'd better see the doctor just the same," said Jack, noting with some concern that the Chinese manservant looked very shaky.

"No savvy," muttered Sing-Sing, shaking his head obstinately.

"You might be very ill if you don't," went on Jack, "and Mr. Locke and I

are too busy just now to look after you."

"No savvy," repeated Sing-Sing determinedly.

Jack shrugged his shoulders resignedly. He knew it was useless to argue with Sing-Sing when he was in this mood.

"Clear off to bye-bye, then," he said at last, "and you can tell the guv'nor all about it when he gets back."

The lad turned on his heel and left the room.

Sing-Sing looked badly shaken, but Jack felt now that he had not been really hurt, and that there was no cause for undue anxiety.

As to how Sing-Sing had come to get into such parlous trouble, Jack was content to leave that till later on. He had a pretty shrewd idea that the Chink had been surprised by Bristow and Mardyke, and knocked out from behind.

Anyway, Sing-Sing could explain later. Time was too precious now.

Jack hurried downstairs and rejoined Inspector Pycroft, to whom he briefly explained what had happened.

"And Mr. Locke's gone off on the trail of Bristow, then?" said the inspector, as Jack concluded.

Jack nodded.

"He wanted me to accompany him, or, at any rate, to follow," he said quickly.

"But, of course, neither of us reckoned on running into Mardyke. I'm glad you turned up when you did, Pycroft, old man. I'm afraid things were going pretty badly with me."

He stretched out his hand, and Pycroft took it, blushing like a schoolgirl.

"It's nothing, old chap," he muttered. "Glad I came. And now, what about this dirty little rat?"

He jerked his thumb over his shoulder in the direction of Mardyke, who still reposed upon the floor.

"Better march him off," said Jack, after a moment's reflection. "Charge him with assault, just to enable you to keep him locked up. The guv'nor will probably have a much more serious charge to bring against him later on."

Pycroft nodded.

"And what about you?" he asked.

"I'm going to try to find the guv'nor," said Jack at once. "It'll be a ticklish job, I expect. He must have got a good

distance away now, on the trail of Bristow. If he'd missed it he'd have come back here. Anyway, he'll be expecting me, and wondering what I'm up to if I don't hurry."

"But—but how on earth are you going to find him," expostulated Pycroft, "when you don't even know how to begin?"

"Don't know," flashed Jack, turning on his heel, and making for the door; "but I'll find out. S'long, old sport!"

And, with a cheery nod, he disappeared into the street, whistling a tune as he went.

A Startling Discovery!

WHEN Ferrers Locke rapped out his instructions to Jack Drake to see to Sing-Sing, while he himself chased after Bristow, the detective, of course, had not the slightest inkling of what was in store for his young assistant.

Indeed, his mind was already centred on getting on to Bristow's trail before it was too late for him to stop to think of anything else.

He had himself been very much surprised to find Bristow in London, and in his consulting-room of all places, and he knew now that he had a golden opportunity of tracking the man to his lair if only he was smart enough.

He streaked down the stairs like a flash, and raced along the passage which led to the rear of the house. His running feet made no sound whatever as he went, so well versed was he in the art of shadowing. He moved swiftly and silently like a human panther, his eyes everywhere, his ears attuned for the slightest sound.

He reached a room at the extreme rear of the house, just in time to see a man's leg disappearing over a window-ledge.

"What a bit of sheer good luck!" he muttered, and fell back out of sight.

When he was sure that his quarry had not heard or seen him, he crept forth again, racing across to the window and peering out.

The window overlooked a small yard flanked by a high wall, in which was a narrow wooden door. And even as Locke peered out into the darkness the light from a street lamp some yards away revealed to him a swiftly moving figure in the very act of slipping through the door, which had somehow become unfastened.

"Here goes!" muttered Locke.

He vaulted lightly through the window and streaked across the yard just as his quarry disappeared from sight. He slackened speed as he neared the door in the wall, and then crept noiselessly forward, peering cautiously through the opening.

A pair of dazzling headlights from a car shot away into the darkness on his right, the back of the car being turned towards him. He saw at a glance that Bristow had already clambered in, and was even then in the act of starting her up.

The car's engines purred warningly, and the wheels began to move.

Then like a flash Ferrers Locke, crouching low, sped across the intervening space and clambered on to the back of the car just in the nick of time.

Next instant he was being whirled away through a maze of streets, the car heading steadily eastwards.

Locke was thankful that it was night-time, the darkness increasing his chances

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of escaping detection, not only on the part of the man driving the car, but of anyone in the traffic-laden streets through which they were passing. It would be nothing short of calamity for Bristow to get any sort of inkling that he was carrying the very man whom he had so cleverly tried to capture but a few minutes before.

After a few minutes the car turned off and slipped into a network of side streets, already half deserted.

It moved fairly quickly through these, heading all the time for the East End, and quickly leaving the myriad glittering lights of the West far behind.

Soon the streets had changed to a drab, gloomy, ill-lighted procession of narrow byways through which the car crawled with scarcely more than elbow room.

Then, after traversing many corners and a long succession of ugly thoroughfares flanked by dingy tenements and cheap shops lighted by evil-smelling naphtha lamps, they came to a part of East London which Locke instantly recognised as being Limehouse. Indeed, the car was even then feeling its way along a narrow, twisting lane barely a few hundred yards from the Causeway.

The car slackened speed now, and Locke, warned of its imminent stoppage, slipped quickly from his perch to the ground, diving at once into the shadow of a recess.

A few yards farther up the car definitely halted, and Bristow clambered out.

Another figure appeared, apparently from nowhere, and for some moments the two seemed to be conversing.

Then the second figure clambered into the car and drove it off, while Bristow hastened along the dank, evil-smelling alley.

Locke stepped quickly forth from his hiding-place and followed, keeping to the opposite side of the road and walking almost on tiptoe lest the echoes of his footsteps on the flagstones should be caught up by the man ahead of him.

Bristow came to a halt at last outside a dingy-looking tenement, where he knocked three times on a rickety door.

There was a moment's waiting, then the door swung creakingly inwards, and a pair of glowering eyes peered forth.

Bristow muttered something, at the same time pushing rudely past the figure in the doorway.

Next instant the door had thudded close again, and Locke found himself surveying a blank wall of boarded windows, out of which no light shone.

He scratched his chin reflectively for a moment.

Then, making up his mind, he moved across the road towards a narrow passage that flanked one side of the building.

After a precautionary glance about him, he darted down this passage, keeping well in under the shadow of the wall, his right hand thrust into his jacket pocket, the fingers gripping the butt of his automatic.

The passage was in complete darkness, save for the feeble rays cast obliquely by a street lamp, but which served rather to intensify the gloom and make the shadows the more pronounced and uncertain of definition.

The passage ran right down the side of the building and terminated in a brick wall, beyond which a group of chimney-stacks denoted the rear of another and similar tenement facing the next parallel street.

Locke paused uncertainly before he had quite reached the end of it, wondering how he should move next.

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There appeared to be no back yard to the tenement, or, at any rate, no means of entry to it from here. Indeed, the reason for the existence of such a passage seemed a mystery since it ended only in a blank wall.

Finally he crept back to where he had seen a low window, the panes long since shattered and filled with strips of brown paper.

He stood listening intently for a few seconds, and then, without further ado, he pulled a knife from his pocket and quickly cut away the brown paper in the pane nearest to the catch. It was a matter of seconds ere he had thrust in his hand, slipped back the catch, and then gently eased the lower sash, inch by inch, upwards.

It was a tedious and nerve-testing task, for the window had obviously not been opened for a very long time, and creaked and rattled disconcertingly, despite his great caution. But at last it had been raised high enough to enable him to squeeze through.

He found himself standing in a small and apparently quite empty room, the floor of which was thickly coated with dust, while the walls were teeming with cobwebs and filth, the paper curling downwards like great leaves, and exuding the damp of years.

He was just able to make out a doorway, and crept towards it, finding to his relief that it stood ajar. It gave on to a narrow passage, and here he stood listening for a moment ere proceeding farther.

All around was utter darkness and complete silence—so complete, in fact, that he might have been persuaded that he had broken into the wrong house were he not already too sure of his ground.

He crept along the passage turning sharply to the right and coming upon a flight of narrow stairs which disappeared into the darkness above. And now he caught the sound of voices, low pitched and muttering, and a sickly-sweet odour which he instantly recognised.

"Chinese opium den!" he muttered, with a grimace of disgust.

The voices came from above, but as yet he could see no light. Evidently the stairs turned off and the landing above was hidden till one climbed half-way up.

The voices ceased and silence fell

again. And then, while Locke was standing there at the foot of the stairs, there came another sound—a sound which caused him to jerk round and catch up his breath.

It came, or so it seemed, from under his feet—a low, half-whispered moan, barely audible. Indeed, had he not been actually listening for the slightest sound, it would most probably have escaped him.

It came again, even as he halted, and there was no mistaking it this time. It was a groan of distress, of despair—a halting, half-choked sound, but unmistakably human.

Locke's eyes glinted, and impulsively he pulled an electric torch from his pocket and flashed it just for a fleeting second before him.

It revealed a small door which gave readily to pressure, and next instant he found himself slowly descending some steep steps which seemed to go down into the very depths of the earth, but which, as he very well knew, would bring him to the cellars.

He came to the end at last, on earthy soil and broken flagstones. The thick, dust-laden odour of coal met his nostrils, and the groaning now was clearer and more certain than ever. He located it, and once again switched on his torch, flashing it around.

The cellar was an unusually large one, piled high with packing-cases, lengths of rope, sacking, and a little coal and wood. For a few moments it was difficult to see anything else, and he was forced to pick his way among these things till at last he came across a huddled heap in a corner, completely hidden by a veritable wall of wooden boxes.

The figure was trussed up, with its face to the wall. It was obviously a man, and even in this position, Locke fancied there was something remotely familiar about those broad shoulders and that close-cropped grey hair.

Then he started back with a low cry of horrified surprise.

"Great Scott!" he gasped. "It—it's Sir Merton Carr!"

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