

Meet the Prince of Mirthmakers—FRANK RICHARDS—Inside!

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The Magnet 2^d

EVERY MONDAY.

Library

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(Bunter of the Remove and Loder of the Sixth unknowingly perform for the Greyfriars Animated Gazette! See the extra-long school story inside.)

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TO AND FROM YOUR EDITOR!

"THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL!"

THE demand for this world-famous volume has exceeded all expectations—everywhere the cry is for the "H. A." It behoves those of my readers, therefore, who have made up their minds to get a copy, and who have not yet visited the newsagent's, to do so right away. This is not idle talk, believe me. I should hate to think that any of my loyal chums met with a disappointing "Sold out!" simply because they were careless about "giving the order."

PRACTICAL JOKES!

We know something about these humorous affairs, for we are all possessed of a sense of humour, otherwise the MAGNET would not be such a "pull." There's a limit, however, to japing. When jokes border on bad taste it's time to leave them severely alone, likewise their perpetrators. A letter from Manchester reached me yesterday, and the writer, a typical Magnetite, complains that his schoolmates say that he can't see or take a joke. The joke in question took the form of a number of tacks placed on my correspondent's chair. When he sat down—well, you can imagine the rest for yourselves. A very painful affair altogether, and certainly nothing humorous in it for the victim. It takes a remarkable sense of humour in a case like that to see the point of a joke—as well as feel it! No, my Manchester chum, you needn't think that you are lacking in humour. It would appear that the fellows who sprang that "joke" on you were possessed of a misguided and rather vicious sense of humour. I wonder how they would take the joke if it were played on them?

SIGN WRITING!

John E. Willis sends me word from Bath that he is taking up sign-writing. Like all arts, the art of sign-writing takes time and pains to learn, but the reward is great for the fellow who masters the business. Good luck to my chum in Bath! He must remember one thing, however. If he takes to paintwork he should knock off before he has his lunch. Some enthusiasts run their meals into their work, and it does not pay. I'm thinking of the enthusiast who carried on with his art work and snatched at his food while he was hard at it. He got lead-poisoning from the paint!

Next Monday's Programme.

"THE BOUNDER'S WAY!"

By Frank Richards.

A magnificent, new long complete yarn of Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars, featuring Tom Redwing, the fisherman's son, and Herbert Vernon-Smith. A real treat!

"THE PHANTOM BAT!"

Another grand instalment of this splendid serial story, with Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake well to the fore.

"RUGGER!"

Rugger is not over-popular at Greyfriars, but Harry Wharton & Co. have given us a special Supplement dealing with this winter game, in which those who are in support of Rugger, ditto those not in support, air their views.

PORTRAIT GALLERY!

Another topping portrait of a Greyfriars' celebrity to add to your set.

Your Editor.

PALS! It is not often that Billy Bunter of the Greyfriars Remove is able to claim the friendship of a Sixth Form prefect but when the chance does come his way he makes the most of it—even to the point of overdoing it!



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bunter to the Rescue!

"THIS is awful!"

William George Bunter rolled to the door of Study No. 7 in the Remove passage at Greyfriars and gazed anxiously up and down.

It was nearing tea-time, and Bunter was hungry. There was nothing new in Bunter being hungry. Really, it would have been a novelty had he been otherwise. Bunter was always hungry, but just now he was more hungry than usual.

And to make matters worse, Bunter was in that tragic, but not altogether unknown state of being broke. In fact, at that moment the fat junior possessed literally not a bean in the whole wide world—if he had he would have eaten it there and then!

"Ow!" he groaned. "It's awful! To think that in a school like Greyfriars a fellow can starve to death so easily! Wow! I can't stand it much longer! With a delicate constitution like mine I need constant nourishment to keep me going. I wish some beast would invite me to tea—I'm starving!"

The Owl of the Remove blinked lugubriously through his big spectacles up the passage again, but not a junior hove in sight. He groaned again, but this time it was not hunger that caused the groan.

If the worst came to the worst, Bunter knew he could at least partly appease his enormous appetite with a few dozen slabs of thick bread-and-butter washed down by a quart or so of weak tea in Hall.

But mere bread-and-butter did not appeal to Bunter—if he could possibly obtain anything better. The trouble was, however, that the chance of getting anything better seemed to the fat junior remote—very remote indeed.

A gentleman described by Fisher T. Fish, the American member of the Remove, as a "wise fish," once stated that truth will out; and that being the case, it must be placed on record that, at the moment, Billy Bunter was not

exactly on what might be called rollicking terms with the remainder of the Removites.

In fact, quite recently, they had been giving him a wide berth. This was one of the reasons—among many others—that Bunter's chances of obtaining tea other than in Hall were remote.

Neither Bunter nor his manners possessed that mark which is supposed to cast the stamp of Vere de Vere. In short, the Owl of the Remove had been behaving much after the manner of that animal he so closely resembled in appearance, the domestic pig, and he had been given the cold shoulder in consequence.

The Removites were fed up with William George Bunter, and they were endeavouring to make him mend his ways by not speaking to him until he had polished up his manners a bit.

When Bunter had first heard of this resolve on their part he had mentally consigned them to a place he termed "Thump," and had decided to let them see that he could get on quite nicely without them.

Now, however, since he was more hungry than usual, Bunter magnanimously decided to overlook their conduct and find someone upon whom he might inflict his fascinating society at tea. But he realised that he would have to proceed warily about it. So, closing his study door behind him, he rolled as softly as his excessive avoirdupois would permit, up the passage towards Study No. 1.

That celebrated apartment was occupied by Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove, and Frank Nugent. There had been a time in days gone by when Bunter had been an inmate of Harry Wharton's study. But, like the Israelites of old, when they had gone forth from the land of Egypt, Billy Bunter had looked back with great regret at the flesh-pots he had quitted.

Study No. 1 seemed like a land flowing with milk and honey to the fat junior, and whenever in search of food he was still drawn to it by some irresistible force.

Billy Bunter continued his way to the study in a more cheerful frame of mind.

He paused outside the door, mentally debating whether to spy out the land first or boldly to announce his arrival. Even as he did so there came a moan from within.

"Ah, spare me! Spare me!"

Bunter jumped.

The voice was that of Frank Nugent.

"White fool!" hissed another voice.

"My day has come! My day has come!"

"Inky!" gasped Bunter.

Bunter would have no difficulty in recognising the voice and the weird English of Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh, the dusky Nabob of Bhanipur, anywhere.

"All these esteemed years," went on Inky, "have I watchfully waited, and now—now—"

There followed a sibilant hiss like that of a blood-thirsty tiger.

The Owl of the Remove felt a cold shudder run down his well-covered spine.

"Oh! Yoop!" he gasped. "He's—he's mad!"

Bunter, torn between the desire to run for his life and an insatiable curiosity to know more, stood rooted to the spot.

Then his podgy hand felt for the handle of the door.

But the door was locked.

"Beholdfully observe the bodies of thy friends," went on the nabob in the same soft, strange voice. "Already they have departfully gone to the Valhalla of their people, where you, fool, shall soonfully join them! Then, and not before, will the nabob's revenge be of the esteemed completeness."

"Oooooooooo!" gasped Bunter.

There followed a low sobbing sound from within the study.

Once again Bunter's instinct was to turn and flee, but once again he failed. The Owl of the Remove possessed curiosity and cowardice to an equal degree. But the fact that he was on the right side of a locked door caused his curiosity to triumph momentarily over his fears.

Trembling like an enormous jelly, Bunter bent down and applied his eye to the keyhole. Such a point of vantage would not have revealed much to most

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juniors. But the Owl of the Remove was a past-master at peering through keyholes.

It was some moments before Billy Bunter could accustom his sight to the dim light within the study, but eventually he made out a queer shape moving on a level with his head, about a yard from the door. The shape gradually resolved itself into the head of the Nabob of Bhanipur.

Bunter realised with a start that he was wearing a turban, and that the rest of his form was covered with flowing Oriental robes. The Owl of the Remove could see the eyes of the dusky junior glinting with an orange fire, and that he was trembling with suppressed excitement.

Inky seemed to the junior in the passage without to have become suddenly transformed. He was no longer the quiet schoolboy he had always known, but something panther-like and sinister.

The fierce spirit of his forefathers, who for countless generations had ruled with a rod of iron thousands of savage men in the wilds of far-off India, seemed to have burst into flame through the veneer of civilisation.

There was a look of fierce triumph in his gleaming eyes that made the fat junior shiver with a dread he could not have named.

The nabob was bending over someone on the floor, his talon-like fingers working convulsively.

That someone was Frank Nugent.

In the junior's eyes was a look of deadly fear.

"Spare me! Spare me!" moaned Nugent again. "Think of my wife and chee-ild!"

Inky emitted a fiendish chuckle and pointed dramatically to a corner of the study.

"Behold the gorefulness of thy friends, O foolish white sahib!" he said. "Behold their crimson ber-lud, with which yours shall soonfully mix!"

"Mercy, great one!"

"Blood, blood, blood!" hissed Inky.

"Spare me!"

"More bloodfulness!" sneered the nabob.

"Oooooooooooooer!" gasped Bunter from the passage without.

The Owl of the Remove's solitary eye followed the direction of Hurree Singh's outstretched hand. Then he beheld a spectacle which held him frozen with horror.

Lying with their backs propped against the wall in a corner of the study he made out two more figures.

They were Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry.

Wharton's face was splashed with red. Nearby was an inverted ink-bottle.

But so fascinated was Bunter by the two figures that, while he saw the bottle plainly enough, his brain failed to register or attach any meaning to the fact. His teeth rattled like castanets, and his hair seemed to turn to millions of pins in his scalp. His fat face turned a chalky colour, and he let off a terrific shriek.

"Oooooooooooooer!"

Even as he did so there came fresh cries from within the study, followed by the sound of heavy blows.

Biff! Thud! Bang!

"Die, white fool!"

"Help, help, help!"

"Die, die, die!"

Thud!

Crash!

There came the sound of a falling body and a muffled groan.

Bunter shrieked.

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"He's killed him!"

As though in reply to the fat junior's exclamation, came a yell of fiendish laughter.

"Ha, ha! So perish all my esteemed enemies! The nabob's revengefulness is complete!"

The Owl of the Remove waited for no more. He lumbered to his feet and fled down the passage as fast as his fat little legs would carry him, yelling at the top of his voice.

"Help! Fire! Police!"

Bunter's face had now turned to a pale green colour. His brain was in a whirl. He seemed to be conscious of nothing but a dusky face surmounted by a scarlet turban, glaring into the terrified eyes of Frank Nugent.

He continued his headlong flight along the passage, utterly oblivious of his surroundings.

Three juniors loomed up before him.

They were Harold Skinner, the cad of the Remove; and his two precious pals, Stott and Snoop.

They gave a yell of alarm as they saw the heavy form of Bunter charging down upon them.

"Look out, you fat ass!"

But if Bunter heard, he heeded not. His one and all-absorbing ambition was to place as great a distance between himself and Study No. 1 as was possible in a minimum of time.

"Ow! Help!" he yelled wildly.

"They're all dead!"

Skinner & Co. endeavoured to get out of Bunter's way.

But they were too late!

Crash!

Bunter charged full into them. Skinner & Co. and the Owl of the Remove collapsed to the hard and unsympathetic linoleum in a struggling heap.

"Ow!"

"Yoop!"

"Gerroff!"

Skinner & Co. yelled.

Bunter let them yell.

Hardly conscious of what he had done, he struggled to his feet and sped up the passage again.

"After him!" yelled Skinner.

"I'll smash him!"

"The fat worm!"

Three sore and vengeful juniors followed in Bunter's wake.

On and on went the Owl, running as he had never run before. Straight for the junior Common-room he made, at a speed besides which a Marathon runner of old would have looked like a modern messenger-boy with an urgent telegram.

And close behind him, yelling threats of vengeance, sped Skinner & Co.

William George Bunter reached the Common-room door, his eyes rolling with fear, and panting for breath.

Several juniors, including Mark Linley, Bulstrode, and Fisher T. Fish, were standing just inside the door discussing a chess move. But at the sound of Bunter's heavy footfalls and Skinner's howls they turned.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Sold!

"MY hat!"

"Jumping Jerusalem!"

"What the thump—"

The juniors in the Common-room stared at the excited face of Bunter in amazement.

"They're all dead!" yelled Bunter, unable to relax his speed. "I've seen 'em! He's killed them! He's mad! They're all dead! Ow!"

Bunter tripped over a hole in the linoleum and crashed into Mark Linley.

Linley crashed into Bulstrode, Bulstrode crashed into Fisher T. Fish, the American crashed into the junior next to him, and the next moment the whole crowd crashed to the floor together, the fat form of the Owl of the Remove beneath them.

Bump!

"Ow!"

"Yoop!"

A split second later Skinner & Co. sped in from the corridor.

They saw the heap of struggling juniors on the floor, tried to dodge them, and failed.

Bump!

"Yow-wow!"

Crash!

Skinner & Co. joined the heap of yelling juniors on the floor one after another.

"Wow!"

"Draggimoff!"

"Yaroooh! Help! My back's broke!"

— Wow!"

A yell of laughter went up from the rest of the juniors in the Common-room.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"On the ball!"

Bulstrode broke away from the combatants. His nose was minus a portion of skin, the linoleum where that organ had struck it was plus the skin, and both his aural appendages felt as though they had been kicked by a mule.

Bulstrode was hurt—and he was angry, too!

He glanced around for someone to assault. As he did so Billy Bunter's head, followed by his fat shoulders, appeared from under the mass of struggling juniors. Bulstrode's powerful hands gripped the fat junior by the scruff of the neck, and he commenced to pull.

"I've got the fat rotter!" he shouted.

"Here he is! Gimme a hand to yank him out, someone!"

Several juniors rushed to Bulstrode's assistance. But to pull the weighty carcase of Bunter from beneath half a dozen juniors was no easy task. What the juniors lacked in skill, however, they made up for with force. And after several minutes' hard tugging, Bunter was hauled free and dragged to the middle of the Common-room.

"Ow!" he gasped, rubbing the injured parts of his anatomy. "Yoop! I'm hurt! M-my back's cracked in a dozen places, and I've broken my heart! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Really, you fellows—"

"Never mind about that!" snorted Bulstrode. "I want to know what the thump you mean by barging into this Common-room and knocking people down?"

By now the rest of the juniors had struggled to their feet and had sorted themselves out. They gathered round Bulstrode and Bunter threateningly.

"What's all this rot about some galoots being dead?" demanded Fisher T. Fish, tenderly caressing his lean jaw, where a heavy boot had struck it. "If you don't explain why you went mad, I guess and calculate you'll be dead, too!"

Bunter blinked at his interrogators dazedly for a moment. He had not yet fully recovered from his rough-and-tumble on the floor. Suddenly, however, the memory of what he had witnessed in Study No. 1 returned to him, and he let off a roar.

"Oooooooooer! Keepimoff! Oooooooooer!"

The Removites stared at each other in amazement. That Bunter was scared nearly half out of his fat wits was obvious enough.

"What's the matter, ass?"

"Explain!"

"Expound!"

Somewhat assured by the juniors around him, Billy Bunter pulled himself together.

"It's—it's Inky!" he exclaimed. "He's turned native again—"

"Great Scott!"

"Turned whatta?"

"Turned n-native!" stuttered Bunter. "I—I went along to Wharton's s-study to invite him to tea, you know—"

"Don't rot!" cut in Bulstrode sharply.

"Oh, really, Bulstrode—"

Bulstrode's jaw squared.

"Anyway, you chaps," resumed Bunter hurriedly, "when I got there I heard awful groans. I saw poor old Wharton and Cherry on the floor. They were both dead, and Inky was just going to kill Nugent—"

"You—you thumping Ananias!" snorted Mark Linley, nevertheless greatly puzzled over the fat junior's behaviour.

"I'm not!" exclaimed the Owl of the Remove, with a show of anger. "I saw them both with my own eyes. Inky was all dressed up in a turban and robes, and he kept saying something about having waited years for his revenge. Ow! It was horrible!"

Bunter's face turned a shade paler as his mind went back to the scene in Study No. 1.

The crowd of Removites regarded him curiously. It was obvious to all of them that for once Bunter was telling the truth—or, at least, what he believed to be the truth.

"The study was full of blacks," went on Bunter, his imagination getting the better of him. "Inky had a—a blow-pipe in his left hand, a chopper in the right, and—and a whacking great Indian sword in the other."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's nothing to laugh at!" gasped the Owl of the Remove. "Nugent was on the floor, and kept begging to be spared. Then there came a blow and a shriek, and I—I—"

"Bunked!" put in Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But the Removites' mirth was short-lived.

Something was wrong in Study No. 1. The juniors' grins quickly faded to looks of alarm.

Inky, though one of the most popular members of the Remove, had always been something of a mystery. After all, despite his European training and the time he had spent at Greyfriars, he was an Oriental still, and the juniors realised they would never know or understand the strange workings of his complex mind.

"Look here, you fellows!" exclaimed Bulstrode, in alarm. "We've wasted enough time with this fat ass already. Let's cut along to Wharton's study and see what's up."

And pushing his way out of the Common-room, the burly junior raced along the corridor towards the Remove quarters. The rest of the fellows needed no urging. They streamed out after him, leaving the Owl of the Remove to follow on behind.

Bunter's queer story had spread like wildfire, and before the crowd of juniors had proceeded very far they were joined by a number of others who came racing from all quarters.

The crowd reached Study No. 1, and stopped by common consent, fearfully surveying the closed door.

A deep silence fell on the assembly.

"Suppose that, after all, Bunter was right? The juniors had heard queer stories of civilised Indians suddenly reverting to native ways. They had heard stories, too, of certain countries in the East where a man would suddenly run



Bulstrode's powerful hands gripped the Owl of the Remove by the scruff of the neck and he commenced to pull. "I've got the fat rotter!" he shouted. "Here he is. Gimme a hand to yank him out, someone!" Several juniors rushed to Bulstrode's assistance. But to pull the weighty carcass of Bunter from beneath half a dozen juniors was no easy task. (See Chapter 2.)

amok, and become for a while little better than a madman.

It did not seem possible that the usually cheery Nabob of Bhanipur, one of the best-tempered fellows in the Remove, could have changed in such a manner. But—

An ominous and brooding silence seemed to hang over Study No. 1. If the inmates were alive and well, they were certainly keeping very quiet.

Bulstrode approached the door and gripped the handle.

"Get ready to back me up, you fellows," he said softly. "I think the door's unlocked now. When I say go, all rush in and collar Inky!"

"Right-ho!"

Bulstrode turned the door knob. As he had thought, the door had been unlocked. He pushed the portal in several inches, and turned to the waiting Removites.

"Collar him!" he shouted suddenly.

Crash!

Half a dozen juniors hurled themselves into the study.

Even as they did so there came a yell of alarm from within.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"What the thump!"

"You burbling jabberwocks!"

"Chuck 'em out!"

"Cherry—" ejaculated Bulstrode in amazement.

"I'll Cherry you, you cheeky asses!" roared the stentorian voice of Bob. "I'll teach you to rush into a study like a gang of lunatics! Hold that—and that!"

Biff! Smack! Thud!

Bob's hard fist shot out right and left.

"Ow!"

"Yoop!"

Smack! Thud!

"On the ball!"

"The ballfulness is terrific!"

In less than a couple of minutes Study No. 1 was in a state bordering almost on chaos. Ornaments were swept from the mantelpiece, the study table was overturned, and pictures were sent flying from the wall.

"Yow!"

"Grooh!"

Biff!

As though in a daze, Bunter's rescue party realised that something had gone wrong with the works. The Famous Five were certainly not dead. They were very much alive and—punching! And they seemed to be punching very hard at that.

"Chuck it!" yelled Mark Linley, as

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Frank Nugent's fist caught him on the nose. "Hold up, Franky, it's all a mistake!"

"It's all through Bunter!" exclaimed Bulstrode, frantically dodging the flying fists of Harry Wharton.

"Ow! Yoop!"

"He said you were all dead!"

The Famous Five suddenly ceased their onslaught, and glared at the intruders.

"Dead, are we?" snorted Johnny Bull.

"Ow! Yoop!" groaned Bulstrode, blinking at the chums of the Remove as though they were visitants from another world. "You're—you're not dead, then?"

"Doesn't seem like it," grinned Bob Cherry, sucking a split set of knuckles.

"Ow!"

"My hat!"

"And Inky didn't kill you, then?"

The Famous Five gazed at each other for a moment. Then a look of understanding came into their eyes. Suddenly they smiled, then they laughed, then they doubled themselves up and roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My only Aunt Jemima!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry staggered round the study. His usual ruddy face was a deep purple. He held his hands to his sides as though in pain. Tears streamed down his face, and he laughed until it seemed he would choke.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly chumps!"

"Tain't no laughing matter," hooted Fisher T. Fish angrily. "That fat galoot Bunter rushed into the Common-room like a blessed tornado, and told us that Inky had killed you all. Yoooop! I'm hurt!"

At length, but not without considerable effort, the Famous Five seemed to regain control of themselves. They ceased laughing, and stared.

Harry Wharton shook his head.

"I think Bunter must have made a mistake," he said slowly.

"M-mistake!" echoed the Removites.

"That's it. We don't look as though there's much wrong with us, do we?"

"N-unno!"

The rescue party stared.

It was true enough. Apart from the injuries sustained in the study fight, the Famous Five seemed to be as right as rain. There had been nothing unusual about the study or its occupants when the rescue party dashed in, but in their excitement that fact escaped them.

"But the fat fraud said Inky was wearing robes and a turban," said Bulstrode, puzzled.

"Are you wearing robes and a turban, Inky?" asked Bob Cherry, turning to the dusky Removite.

"The esteemed answer is of the negative order, my worthy chums," purred Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh. "As you can see, I am wearing the Eton clothes as prescribed by my honourable preceptors."

Bob Cherry had asked Inky a plain, straightforward question, and Inky had answered in a plain, straightforward manner. He certainly was wearing Etons, but he failed to mention that he had only donned them about five minutes before the arrival of Bulstrode & Co.

"Well, I'm thumped!" gasped Bulstrode at length. "And you didn't have a chopper or a sword in your hand?"

Inky shook his head.

"Bunter must have been pulling your leg, or imagining things," said Frank Nugent.

"The fat fraud!"

"I calculate I'll smash him!"

"Same here!"

"Where is he?"

But William George Bunter was missing.

He had waited just long enough to learn his mistake. He felt, after that, it would not be exactly wise to stay. So, emulating the exploits of the Arab gentleman in the poem, and unobserved by the rest of the juniors, he had swiftly—and silently—stolen away.

"Well, we'll get that fat spoofer later," growled Bulstrode. "It's jolly queer he should have behaved like that, anyhow. There's something I can't understand about it all."

"In the cirs, we'll overlook the way you treated us when we came to rescue you," grinned Mark Linley.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Thanks for nothing!" snorted Harry Wharton, surveying the wrecked study. "Only don't rescue us too often."

The Famous Five commenced to straighten their littered apartment.

The rescue party regarded them in silence for some moments.

"Oh, come on!" growled Bulstrode at length. "Let's clear off!"

And the juniors cleared.

When they had gone the Famous Five broke into a series of subdued chuckles.

"That was a near thing," grinned Frank Nugent.

"They nearly spoilt the whole blessed show!"

But if the rescue party accepted Wharton's statement that nothing unusual had happened, they were not altogether convinced. As Fisher T. Fish guessed and calculated, there was "more in the funny business than met the giddy optic."

And that was the opinion of the rest of the party.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The School Cinema!

CLANG, clang, clang!

"My only Aunt Jemima!"

"What the thump was that?"

Mark Linley and Dick Penfold uttered those remarks.

It was the evening following the reported demise of Harry Wharton & Co. in Study No. 1. Lessons were over for the day, and Linley and Penfold were standing on the School House steps with a number of other juniors getting a breath of air before going in to tea.

Clang, clang, clang!

The brazen notes of a hand-bell rang out again.

Almost immediately there came a yell of laughter from a group of juniors on their right.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mark Linley & Co. surveyed each other in amazement. Then, led by the Lancashire lad, they dashed down the steps and sped across the Close in the direction whence the sound of the bell had come.

Even as they did so they made out the figure of Dicky Nugent of the Second Form, and his two pals, Gatty and Myers.

The three fags were surrounded by a crowd of Removites, who seemed to be suffering from an advanced form of hysteria. As Mark Linley & Co. approached closer they quickly saw the reason for it.

The three fags were parading up and down with a big board on the back and front of them, suspended from their shoulders by straps, much after the manner of those used by the sandwich-men in London.

"My only Sunday topper!" gasped Dick Penfold.

"If this isn't the outside edge!"

In their right hands the three fags each held a bell, which they were swinging with more vigour than a rabid muffin-man.

Clang, clang, clang!

Mark Linley & Co. pushed their way through the crowd, and gazed at the boards. The boards, which were done out in lurid colours, read as follows:

"Roll Up! Roll Up! Roll Up!"

THE SUPER-MAJESTIC CINEMA
(LATE WOODSHED),
The Close, Greyfriars.

GRAND OPENING CEREMONY AT
5.30 TO-NIGHT.

Sole Lessees, Proprietors, and Managers,
Harry Wharton & Co., Ltd.

SPECIAL OPENING ATTRACTION!
THE NABOB'S REVENGE!

A Thrilling Drama of the Wild and
Woolly Jungles of the Mystic Orient,
Featuring Famous

HURREE JAMSET RAM SINGH.

Followed by
THE GREYFRIARS ANIMATED
GAZETTE.

Scenes, Intimate and Otherwise, of
Celebrities and Nonentities.

Admission: 2d., 3d., and 4d. No Free
List.

ROLL UP! ROLL UP!"

The Removites gazed at the sandwich-boards in amazement.

"A cinema show!"

"My giddy aunt!"

"The Super-Majestic!"

"In the woodshed, too!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sure you fags are not spoofing us?" demanded Hazeldene.

Dicky Nugent looked alarmed.

"Here, hold up!" he exclaimed. "This is straight. Wharton gave us tuppence apiece for this, and promised us a free seat in the show to-night."

"Well, I'm thumped!"

The Removites chuckled.

"Won't old Fish tear his hair when he hears of this?" grinned Peter Todd.

"He's got left this time!"

The juniors grinned.

Fisher T. Fish, the self-styled business man of the Remove, was a junior who devoted a great deal of his time thinking out schemes whereby he could transfer the wealth of his schoolfellows—if any—from their pockets to his own.

He had worked many weird and wonderful schemes since his arrival at Greyfriars, but this time the Famous Five seemed to have crept in and stolen his copyright. A school cinema, or a Greyfriars Animated Gazette, was a wheeze such as the "sick" American junior had never thought of.

The juniors were still chuckling at the discomfiture in store for the American member of the Remove, when there came a sudden yell from Bulstrode.

"I've got it!"

"Got what, ass?"

But Bulstrode did not reply. Instead, he turned and raced across the Close in the direction of the Super-Majestic Cinema (late woodshed). And within a couple of minutes the whole assembly of juniors followed in his wake, leaving Dicky Nugent & Co. staring after them in amazement.

Several things that had been puzzling

the Removites were now beginning to become clear. Bulstrode's remark, coupled with the notices displayed on the Second Formers' boards, had set them thinking—and running.

As they neared the woodshed they heard a sound of shouting, followed by an occasional blast on a bugle, resembling a country fair. From the babel the stentorian voice of Bob Cherry rose predominant.

"Roll up—roll up—roll up! Come and see the greatest show on earth!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Bob!"

"Come and see the wicked nabob in a rushing, roaring tornado of terrific thrills—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Admission tuppence, threepence, and fourpence a kick. Every seat guaranteed. Standing room only—"

"On the ball!"

Bob Cherry, mounted on an upturned soapbox, was flourishing a bugle, and exhorting the crowd of juniors to part with their pence to see the wicked nabob.

A sheet of canvas, stuck on the wall behind him, depicted in lurid colours a dusky gentleman, attired in a scarlet turban, who seemed to be juggling with half a dozen white men with one hand and a dozen heavily-jewelled choppers with the other.

Bob Cherry banged the sheet with his bugle from time to time, to emphasise his remarks. Just behind him, with a haversack slung from his shoulder, stood Harry Wharton, gathering a rich harvest of coppers into the treasury.

"Roll up!" yelled Bob Cherry, as the fresh crowd arrived. "Come along, my lucky lads! Any more for the jolly old nabob?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mark Linley, Bulstrode, Peter Todd, and several others who had belonged to the rescue-party, pushed their way through to Harry Wharton, and paid their twopences. Skinner & Co. followed, while Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Upper Fourth, forgetful of their dignity in their desire to see the show, yelled to them to get a move on.

A cheer went up as Horace Coker, the genial ass of the Fifth, loftily laid down a shilling for the admission of himself and his pals, Potter and Greene, to the best seats the "house" boasted.

"Mind the wicked nabob, Coker!" yelled Bolsover from the back of the crowd. "He'll have you if you're naughty!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker grunted, and pushed his way into the woodshed.

It was already packed with juniors and seniors. There was no doubt about it. Wharton's idea of a Greyfriars Cinema had caught on. But the big attraction was, without a doubt, the Greyfriars Animated Gazette.

Where or how the Famous Five had obtained the film was a mystery. If an animated gazette photographer had been near the school, or the village, the Greyfriars fellows thought they would have heard about it.

Quite a number of juniors were of the private opinion that the Famous Five, for some reason of their own, were indulging in an elaborate leg-pull. Indeed, many of the fellows, less cute than Bulstrode, still had a feeling that the chums of the Remove had been indulging in a leg-pull at Bunter's—and their expense the evening before.

They comforted themselves, however, with the reflection that if there was any leg-pull about what they had paid twopence to see, they could make Harry Wharton & Co. sit up for it afterwards.

When Coker & Co. entered the shed, Johnny Bull was at the far end, putting

the finishing touches to the "screen," a sheet specially borrowed from the Remove dormitory for the occasion, fastened to the wooden wall with drawing-pins.

At the other end was the "operating box." It was an affair of heavy canvas, with a hole pierced in the front for the projector lens. Behind it, Frank Nugent and Inky, his assistant, were working industriously.

"Buck up!" shouted several voices.

"We want to see the wicked nabob!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton put his head into the "hall" and grinned.

By now the place was packed. All the seats, mostly wooden forms, were occupied, while the rest of the available space was crammed with juniors standing and peering over each others' shoulders.

"Right-ho!" sang out Wharton. "Let her rip!"

"Good egg!"

The two lanterns with which the place was illuminated were suddenly extinguished. A beam of light shot from Nugent's box at the back. The audience waited expectantly. The great show was about to commence.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Seen on the Screen!

TRRRRRRRRRRRR!

There came a soft buzzing noise as Frank Nugent commenced to turn the handle of a miniature projector.

The next moment a sub-title flickered on the screen.

"THE NABOB'S REVENGE!"

A Stirring Story of Mystic Adventure in the Backwoods of India.

Written by Harry Wharton.

Adapted by John Bull.

Produced by Frank Nugent.

Sub-edited by Frank Nugent.

Photograph by John Bull.

Edited by Harry Wharton.

Sub-titles by Bob Cherry.

Produced by Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Censored by No One.

A roar of laughter went up from the audience.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The sub-title flickered off and another took its place.

"THE NABOB'S REVENGE!"

A Stirring Story of Mystic Adventure in the Backwoods of India.

Costumes by

Lazarus & Co. (Friardale).

Exteriors by

Nature.

Interiors by

Using Study.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

Colonel Heeza Skamp Harry Wharton.

Dr. Sawyer Bones Bob Cherry

Signor Corta Tarta Frank Nugent.

Ima Cheese John Bull.

THE NABOB OF BHUMPEM

HURREE JAMSET RAM SINGH.



Billy Bunter tried to execute something in the nature of a double somersault on the study table, forgetful for the moment that one of the legs was kept in place by the friendly aid of a piece of string. The table, minus one leg, was not meant to stand such a weight as the Owl of the Remove's, and it didn't! Crash! It collapsed to the floor, and Bunter collapsed with it! (See Chapter 6.)

Another roar went up from the audience.

"My only hat!"

"My only Sunday topper!"

"My giddy aunt!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fact that the sub-titles were obviously written on a slate, and then photographed, seemed to matter not at all. There was no doubt about it, Harry Wharton & Co. had done their work well.

The audience waited expectantly for what was coming next. They were not kept waiting long.

The sub-title flickered away, its place being taken by four figures creeping stealthily through what seemed to the juniors to be remarkably like Friardale Woods, but which, in reality, was supposed to be the jungle of the Indian State of Bhumpem.

Two of the figures carried a cricket-stump each, while the other two were armed respectively with a tennis-ball stuffed into the toe of a football stocking, and an Indian club. Judging by the expressions on their faces, and the ferocity with which they swung their weapons of assault about, they appeared to be looking for someone to use them on.

Suddenly the leader paused and pointed ahead.

Sitting cross-legged on the ground was a figure attired in Oriental robes and wearing a great turban. By the side of the figure was a hookah pipe filled with herbs. The pipe was giving off a cloud of smoke which almost rivalled a chimney-stack on fire.

"Inky!" gasped several voices in unison.

"The wicked nabob!"

The leader of the four figures crept closer and raised his stump.

There came a sudden yell from the back of the hall.

"Look behind, ass!"

"They're going to dot you one!"

"Ooooooooooer!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up, young Nugent!"

"Colonel Heeza Skamp and his evil associates have been hired to slay the young Nabob of Bhumpem," flashed the sub-title. "Unaware of his danger, he sits idly watching the chutney petals being wafted from the curry plantation on the scented evening breeze. Will Colonel Skamp succeed, or—?"

Apparently Colonel Skamp did not succeed.

The next picture showed the Nabob of Bhumpem wading into the colonel and his pals right and left.

Heeza Skamp went down to a stunning blow on the jaw. Dr. Sawyer Bones, and Signor Corta Tarta followed in quick succession. Suddenly, however, when all seemed lost, Ima Cheese, who was less of a cheese than he looked, handed the nabob a blow over the cranium with the hookah pipe.

"Oh!"

The audience yelled with excitement.

"How's that, umpire?"

"Out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The nabob slumped to his knees. Colonel Skamp & Co. seemed quickly to recover, and, rising to their feet, fled through the jungle for all they were worth.

There flashed another sub-title.

"Ten years later, seeking revenge for the attack made upon him in the jungle, the Nabob of Bhumpem tracks Colonel Skamp and his accomplices to the smoke-room of the Titanic Club, London."

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The film flickered for a moment, and the audience made out the nabob creeping into what looked more like Study No. 1 of the Greyfriars Remove than a club smoke-room.

Colonel Skamp & Co., otherwise the remainder of the Famous Five—excepting Johnny Bull, who was working the camera—sat apparently oblivious of his presence. But they were not oblivious of it for long. In about two seconds the vengeance-seeking nabob got to work.

With several well-aimed blows he put three of his opponents down for the count.

"Go it, nabob!" yelled the audience.

"On the ball!"

"Give 'em socks!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The nabob went at it. He may have had to wait ten years for his revenge, but he was getting it now, with a vengeance. Only Signor Corta Tarta, otherwise, Frank Nugent, remained to be dealt with. He lived up to his name, and went down with a left to the jaw. The nabob sprawled over him, his talon-like fingers working convulsively.

Don't Miss

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"Ooooooooooer!" gasped Gatty and Myers from their free seats.

"Ain't he fierce!"

The most dramatic moment of the thrilling story of mystic Oriental adventure had arrived.

Frank Nugent, in order to aid the dramatic effect, cranked the handle of his projector slower and slower.

The audience were almost breathless with excitement.

Suddenly the solemn notes of the Dead March burst mournfully from the front of the house.

Johnny Bull had brought his concertina into play!

Bull was not a great musician, but what he lacked in artistry he made up for with noise. It seemed, however, to urge the nabob to greater efforts, whatever its effect on the audience might have been.

The nabob's dark eyes rolled and his teeth gleamed.

The unfortunate Signor Corta Tarta begged for mercy.

Another sub-title flashed for a second.

"My day has come! I have waited, O white fool! All these esteemed years have I watchfully waited, and now—now my—"

Even as the sub-title flickered away there came a sudden howl from the back of the hall.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Ooooooooooer! I told you so! I saw it all. I didn't—nunno, I mean, of course, I knew it was a picture. I wasn't really afraid. Ow! Yoop! Shut it off! I can't stand it!"

There came a terrific yell of laughter from all over the hall.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly ass!"

By now, of course, the reason for Bunter's terror of the day before was obvious enough. Indeed, many of the juniors had guessed at the explanation as soon as they had seen the posters Dicky Nugent & Co. had been carrying in the Close.

But the mentality of William George Bunter was not as keen as that of most of the Removites. It was not until he had seen the whole scene being enacted over again that he fully realised what was happening.

He had not so far fully recovered from the shock to his nervous system, and the rapidity and reality with which things had happened on the screen had brought all the old terror rushing back into his mind.

Bunter collapsed into his seat, gasping.

The audience concentrated their attention on the nabob again. He suddenly ceased working his fingers. Then, as though having come to a decision, he picked up a cricket-stump and commenced to polish off his victim.

Meanwhile, John Bull worked his concertina frantically.

At length the wicked signor collapsed to the ground, and the thrilled audience were treated to the spectacle of the nabob standing over his fallen foe much after the manner of Ajax defying the lightning.

The concertina slowed to a mournful wail, and the stirring story of mystic adventure in the wild and woolly jungles of the Orient closed with another flickering sub-title:

"So perish all my esteemed enemies. May their soles rest in peace. The nabob's revengefulness is complete. I have spoken."

The audience rose to their feet and yelled.

Craaaash, ta-ra, craaaash!

The applause was interrupted by Johnny Bull's concertina, as it broke into a jazz melody. Almost immediately No. 1 of the Greyfriars Animated Gazette flashed on the screen.

"Billy Bunter takes a little exercise after an unofficial visit to the studio during the filming of 'The Nabob's Revenge.'"

The picture showed the fat junior scampering down the Remove passage with his arms waving wildly. In the foreground could be observed Hurree Janset Ram Singh, still wearing his robes and turban. And around him, now resurrected, stood his late enemies, Colonel Heeza Skamp & Co., otherwise the Famous Five, grinning like a crowd of Cheshire cats.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the audience, going almost mad with mirth.

"Look here, you rotters!" hooted Bunter, starting from his seat. "I didn't run like that. That's not me. It's all lies. You can't pull the wool over my eyes—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wharton faked that out of pure personal jealousy—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter's protests were drowned by the juniors' howls.

Then came No. 2 of the Gazette.
"When the cat's away the mice will play. Greyfriars juniors enjoying a little unofficial relaxation."

There followed a close-up of three juniors standing inside the door of the woodshed. They were puffing with well-simulated enjoyment at a cigarette, which was being handed round one to the other. The three juniors in question were Harold Skinner and his two precious pals, Stott and Snoop.

An angry yell went up from Skinner.

"You—you rotter, Wharton!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" howled the audience.

"Caught in the giddy act!"

"This is great!"

"My only Aunt Jemima!"

Skinner jumped from his seat and made a wild dash towards the improvised operating-box, behind which Frank Nugent was handling the projector.

"Look out!"

"Stop him!"

Skinner's face was white with anger. Had he reached the operating-box there would have been little left of the projector. But, unfortunately for Skinner, he tripped over the extended leg of Harry Wharton and crashed to the ground.

Bump!

"Yooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Serve him right!"

Nugent suddenly switched off the projector, and the performance came to an abrupt end.

"Look here, you blessed spics—" began Skinner, scrambling to his feet.

But no one was interested in Skinner just then.

"Three cheers for the nabob!" yelled a voice.

"Hooooooray!"

"An' now tell us how yez did it, in-toirely, yez spalpeen," demanded Micky Desmond, the lad from the Sorrowful Isle.

Harry Wharton grinned and jumped on to a form.

He explained in a few words how a "Home Cinema Camera and Projector" had been sent to Lord Mauleverer, the Slacker of the Remove, by his uncle, who had recently entered upon a business career in the film trade. Mauly, however, had been too lazy to try the camera out, so Harry Wharton & Co. had borrowed it to see what they could do with it.

"The camera we took the films with is in my study now," concluded Wharton, "and any fellow who wants to come and have a look at it is welcome. Meanwhile, I propose a vote of thanks to Mauly as the founder of the feast—or, rather, the camera."

"Good egg!"

"Come on, Mauly!"

But Mauly did not come on. His name was shouted again and again. The only answer the juniors received, however, was a snore from a bench in the front of the "house."

The schoolboy earl was fast asleep!

"Never mind about Mauly now," grinned Tom Brown. "I vote we get back and have a look at this blessed camera."

"Hear, hear!"

And excitedly discussing the possibilities for the future use of the film camera, the juniors trooped out of the woodshed and across the Close to the School House.



All unconscious of the Owl of the Remove's presence, the bold blades of the Sixth commenced their game. When they had properly got going Billy Bunter carefully poked the lens of the stolen film camera round the edge of the curtain and slowly began to turn the handle. (See Chapter 6.)

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Wharton's Scoop!

"YAH, beasts!"

Billy Bunter uttered that remark.

He stood outside the deserted woodshed and glared through his big spectacles at the retreating juniors.

Bunter was angry—and his anger was due to more reasons than one.

For several days the juniors had given him the cold shoulder. That fact had made Bunter very sore. But he was even more sore from the bumping he had received at the hands of Bulstrode's rescue party after their adventure in Study No. 1.

Then had come the Greyfriars Animated Gazette.

Bunter had temporarily possessed the power yearned for by the poet—he had seen himself as others saw him. And he had not found the spectacle of himself fleeing wildly down the Remove passage very edifying. Indeed, it seemed to the fat junior to be adding insult to injury with a vengeance.

"Beasts!" snorted Bunter again. "I'll show 'em!"

The fat junior rolled into the School House trying to think of some scheme whereby he could get even with the Removites—Harry Wharton & Co. in particular—for what he had suffered. But think as he might, no idea would come to him.

For the rest of the evening Bunter walked about with a heavy frown on his fat brow. But by the time the juniors retired to the dormitory he was just as far from getting his bright idea as he had been in the beginning.

Lessons passed the next day, but still Bunter's plan for getting even had failed to form itself. The Removites, however, save for an occasional grin when they recalled the figure he had cut in the Animated Gazette, took no notice of him. It seemed that, as far as they were concerned, no such person as William George Bunter so much as graced the earth with his fat presence.

"Ow! It's no good!" moaned Bunter, as teatime approached. "I can't get any blessed idea! I'm too hungry!"

As the pangs of hunger began to affect the fat junior, the idea of revenging himself on his Form-fellows seemed to abate. There was not room in Bunter's powerful mind for more than one idea at a time. And the sole idea that dominated his mind now was to find nourishment—and lots of it—for the delicate constitution he persuaded himself he suffered from.

As the hour of tea approached nearer Bunter began to relent. Bunter would have forgiven his greatest enemy for a doughnut.

"After all, it's rotten to bear malice," he told himself, with a fat smirk. "I hope I'm generous enough to overlook the faults of minds smaller than my own. It's not Wharton's fault that he's so beastly jealous of me. I can't help being so—so good-looking and—and so talented. It's only natural, I suppose. I forgive the rotter!"

As Bunter's process of relenting proceeded he grew almost mellow towards Wharton. After all, there was usually a well-laid table in Study No. 1, he thought, and if he was big-hearted enough to forgive Wharton, perhaps the

captain of the Remove, shamed by his noble example, would endeavour to make amends by inviting him to tea.

"That's it," murmured Bunter to himself. "I'll go and tell them they're forgiven. Personal jealousy is a horrible thing. It's not my fault I'm so blessed talented—I wish I wasn't sometimes. Still, I suppose if Wharton was as clever as me I should be the same."

A succulent odour of fried eggs wafted from an adjacent study clinched the fat junior's decision. Opening his study door, he made his way out into the passage and proceeded towards Study No. 1.

He had not gone far, however, when he met Bulstrode coming down the passage with a parcel of tuck under his arm. Bunter thought that if he was going to forgive Harry Wharton & Co., he might as well throw in Bulstrode, too, and do the job properly. He approached the burly Removite with a smirk on his fat face.

"Hallo, Bulstrode, old chap!" he began genially. "Can I help—"

"Roll away!"

"Really, Bulstrode, you look tired, you know, old fellow—"

"Buzz off!" roared Bulstrode, swinging up his powerful fist threateningly. "Come back when you've learned to behave like a gentleman instead of like a pig! Savvy?"

"Wow!" Bunter gasped; and deciding that discretion was the better part of valour, he rolled on in no very pleasant frame of mind. For a moment he was tempted to reconsider his decision to forgive his Form-fellows, but the fragrant odour of freshly made tea from the end study caused him to go on.

He thought of Bruce and the spider, and decided to try again. So, endeavouring to put on a pleasant expression, he arrived at Study No. 1 and pushed open the door.

The Famous Five, who were sitting at tea discussing the making of another film, looked up in surprise.

"I say, you fellows," began Bunter, by way of a real friendly opening, "I haven't seen you for quite a long time, you know."

The Famous Five stared.

"I beg your pardon, sir?" said Harry Wharton, with mock politeness.

"Oh, really, you rot—I mean, how are you, Harry?" inquired Bunter, inwardly seething with rage. "I—I was saying, it's a long time since I saw you last."

Bunter blinked expectantly through his big spectacles. So far, his friendly overtures did not seem to be going quite the way he had hoped.

"Do any of you fellows know this—ahem—stout gentleman?" inquired Wharton, turning to his chums.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Nunno!"

"And don't want to!"

"The nofulness is terrific!"

"Look here, you silly asses!" suddenly roared the "stout gentleman," exasperated beyond all control. "You can't make me look a fool—"

"No need to," said Bob Cherry sweetly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Can't improve on Nature," added Frank Nugent.

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

Harry Wharton turned to Bunter with a serious expression on his usually cheery face.

"It's like this," he said. "As we told you the other day, we don't want anything to do with you until you alter. Stop spying through keyholes. Stop

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raiding study cupboards. Stop telling lies. Stop being an awful, fat, swindling glutton—then we might tolerate you."

"And the next time I catch you playing Paul Pry through the keyhole I'll take a shot at you with the film camera and send the result to the Head," threatened Bob Cherry grimly. "Now, buzz off, before we bump you!"

"Hear, hear!" added the rest of the Co.

"Let the buzzfulness be terrific."

Bunter glared.

"You—you rotters!" he hooted.

"Scat!"

"I came to forgive you—"

"Buzz off!"

"I overlooked your rotten personal jealousy—"

"Vamoose!"

"But I don't want to know you after all—"

"Good!"

Bunter was blinking rapidly through his big spectacles. The lack of interest in his remarks seemed to infuriate him still more.

"Yah, cads!" he shouted.

The chums of the Remove restrained themselves with an effort. Had they not been at tea the fat junior would have been thrown out on his neck long before.

"Buzzfully vamoose, my plump chumpfulness," advised the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"You—you rotten black-faced nigger!" hooted Bunter, letting himself go.

There is a limit to all human endurance. Harry Wharton & Co. had reached that limit. Bunter's last remark was more than they could be expected to stand. They did not stand it. They rose suddenly to their feet, their faces suffused with anger.

"Collar him!"

Bunter realised that he had said too much. He made a rush to escape—but he was too late. The angry juniors surrounded him, and he was promptly collared.

"Bump him!" yelled Johnny Bull.

Many hands gripped the fat junior. He yelled and squirmed, but in vain. He was yanked off his feet, and the next moment his heavy carcass struck the hard and unsympathetic linoleum with considerable force.

Bump!

Bunter let off a wild howl.

"Yawwooh!"

Bump, bump, bump!

"Ow! Yooooooooop!"

"And again!"

Bump!

"Yarooooooooh!"

The fat carcass of the Owl of the Remove smote the linoleum many more times in rapid and painful succession. Then, feeling that justice had at last been done, the Famous Five dribbled him out into the passage.

"Ow! Yooop!" howled Bunter, aching in every bone. "My back's fractured in three places! Wow!"

"That's only a sample!" snorted Bob Cherry. "Now buzz off before you get the rest!"

"Ow! You rotters!" groaned Bunter, glaring wrathfully at the Famous Five. "I'll—I'll make you sit up for this, you beasts! Groooooooooh!"

The Famous Five withdrew into their study and slammed the door behind them. Bunter remained on the floor glaring at the portal. If looks could have killed, Bunter's look would have withered the door, and caused the Famous Five to expire behind it.

"Ow! Beasts!" groaned Bunter again.

The Owl of the Remove picked himself up. Adjusting his spectacles on his

fat nose, he proceeded up the passage, all the brotherly love he had conceived for Harry Wharton & Co. some ten minutes before turning to hate again.

Bunter had not gone far, however, when the form of Gerald Loder, the bullying prefect of the Sixth, loomed up before him. In Loder's hand was a stout ashplant, and on his face was an expression that plainly denoted trouble for someone.

Earlier that day, Bunter had made an unofficial visit to Loder's study cupboard. Loder had not been in his study at the time. But Bunter was not a youth to stand upon ceremony. He had helped himself to what he had wanted—as much as he could get—and had departed, forgetting to mention the fact.

Bunter often forgot little things like that. In fact, he did not trouble to remember them. But what he had tried to remember he had forgotten—and that was to keep strictly out of Loder's way.

The fat junior saw Loder at precisely the moment Loder saw him.

"Ow!" he yelled, in alarm.

"Come here, Bunter!" shouted Loder, swishing the ashplant.

Bunter did not accept Loder's invitation, however. He felt it was not given in a spirit of friendliness.

"Ow!" he yelled again.

The next moment he turned and bolted.

Loder was after him like a shot.

As the fat junior reached the end of the passage, the prefect's hand closed on the collar of his jacket.

There are moments when the human mind works with a rapidity that would make a slow-motion film look like a flash of lightning.

Bunter's mind worked like that now. He gave a yell of fear, and, wriggling his arms from his jacket, dashed on down the passage, leaving the infuriated prefect holding the collar of his empty garment.

"You—you young hound!" grated Loder.

"Ow! Lemme go!"

A yell of laughter went up from several juniors at the top of the stairs.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Old clo'!"

Regardless of the yells of the Removites, Loder sped after Bunter. The prefect reached the top of the stairs a split second behind the fat junior. The next moment, Loder slipped up on the shiny linoleum, and shot, feet first, down the entire flight.

Bump, bump, bump!

Bunter was not expecting Loder at that moment. And before he had time to jump out of the way, the prefect's outstretched legs caught him up like a cow-catcher, and the two finished the journey together, landing with a loud bump at the bottom.

"Ow! Yeroooooooooh!"

Loder was still clutching Bunter's jacket with one hand and the ashplant with the other. Before the fat junior had time to rise, the prefect had flung the jacket over his head, and commenced to wade in with the ashplant.

Thwack, thwack, thwack!

"Ow! Stoppit, you beast! Yooooooooop!"

"Take that—and that—and that!"

Each "that" was a heavy swipe with the ashplant. Bunter held them! He had no choice in the matter.

"You thieving young rascal!" panted Loder, doing deadly work with the ashplant. "I'll teach you to keep your fat paws out of my cupboard!"

Thwack, thwack, thwack!

By now a crowd of juniors had assembled at the top of the stairs, and were urging the prefect on to greater efforts with loud yells. But Loder needed no

urging. He waded into the unhappy Bunter until his arm ached. At length, however, he desisted, and flung the groaning Bunter away from him.

"That'll do for now!" he snorted. "I'm going to give you the same to-morrow, and so on for the next three days. I'll cure you of pilfering, you young rotter!"

And with that, Loder proceeded on his way.

"Ow!" groaned Bunter. "I'm—I'm dying!"

He staggered painfully to his feet to ascend the stairs. As he did so, he saw the Famous Five standing at the top. Harry Wharton had Mauleverer's film camera in his hand, and a smile of marked satisfaction on his face.

"All right, Harry?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Got the lot," replied Wharton.

"My giddy aunt! Won't the fellows roar when they see this! It's the biggest scoop we've got for the Animated, so far. Come on, chaps, let's get back and develop it."

And still grinning, the Famous Five vanished.

A cold feeling ran down Bunter's spine as the meaning of Wharton's remarks dawned upon him. To suffer as he had done was bad enough, but to have his sufferings filmed for other fellows to laugh at, he felt, was the absolute limit.

Bunter staggered away. There was one thought only in his mind now, and that was to get even with Harry Wharton & Co.—and Gerald Loder—at all costs!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Brain Works!

WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER reached Study No. 7 in no very pleasant frame of mind. He settled himself in the armchair and scowled at the empty fireplace. "Yah! Beasts!" he snorted. "I'll show 'em!"

The Owl of the Remove thought furiously for some moments.

Instead of having only Harry Wharton to get even with, he had now included Loder in his vendetta. To score off the Famous Five was no small task in itself; but to score off Harry Wharton & Co., and Loder as well, seemed to the fat junior a very tall order indeed.

"Ow!" groaned Bunter. "It's all through that blessed film camera!"

It certainly seemed that since the arrival of the film camera Bunter's troubles had increased, and he had a vague feeling that those troubles were to increase still more.

First, there had been the business in Study No. 1, when Harry Wharton & Co. were filming the "Nabob's Revenge." And as a direct result of that, there had followed a rough—very rough—handling from the rescue party afterwards.

Ridicule had been added to pain by the picture Bunter had seen of himself on the Greyfriars Animated Gazette, and it looked as though more ridicule was to follow when Harry Wharton developed the film of the incident with Gerald Loder.

"Ow!" groaned Bunter again. "The awful beasts! Life in this blessed school isn't worth living!"

Bob Cherry's threat to photograph him, and to send the resultant film to

the Head if he caught him at any of his "keyhole tricks," flashed back to Bunter's mind.

"It's blackmail, that's what it is!" groaned the fat junior. "The awful rotters! It isn't even safe for me to borrow a snack from a cupboard now. The rotters might be sneaking about at the time and make a film of it! Ow!"

The thought of what the owner of the "borrowed" grub would say when he saw the "borrowing" taking place on the screen in the woodshed caused the Owl of the Remove to shiver with apprehension.

Bunter had been filmed without his knowledge or consent once, and he realised that it could easily be done again. The more Bunter thought, the more he became convinced that the film camera was the cause of all his troubles.

The frown vanished from Bunter's face as though by magic, its place being taken by a fat grin.

The next moment he commenced to execute a wild dance round the study, until the ornaments trembled and jumped on the mantelpiece and one of the pictures came crashing from the wall.

"He, he, he!" he cackled. "The very thing! They can't make a fool of me—I'm too fly! He, he, he!"

In his exuberance, the Owl of the Remove tried to execute something in the nature of a double somersault on the study table, forgetful for the moment that one of the legs was kept in place by the friendly aid of a piece of string.

The table, minus one leg, was not meant to stand such a weight as Bunter's—and it didn't!

It collapsed to the floor, and Bunter, unable to save himself, collapsed with it.

Thud!

"Yarooooogh!" he roared, picking himself up and tenderly feeling his ample carcase. "I'm hurt! Groooogh!"

But the Owl of the Remove did not permit the incident of the collapsed study table to worry him for long.

Bunter was used to bumps!

He had thought of the great wheeze whereby he hoped to escape the series of lickings promised by Loder, and by which he hoped to get even with Harry Wharton & Co. at the same time.

"I'll do it!" he chuckled delightedly. "What a really ripping idea! I'll teach the rotters!"

The fat Owl surveyed his ample reflection in the cracked mirror over the mantelpiece with marked satisfaction. The fat Remove had conceived many ideas for getting even with various members of his Form in the past. Unfortunately, however, those ideas had come home to roost, as it were. Now, however, he felt he had really got the one idea without a single flaw that was going to prove a winner all along the line.

The Owl of the Remove carefully went over the points of his scheme again. But think as he might, he could find no way of improving upon it. As Fisher T. Fish might have remarked, it was the "real, gilt-edged goods!"

"Jolly good job I happened to drop into that beast Loder's study, after all!" murmured Bunter, to himself. "I don't

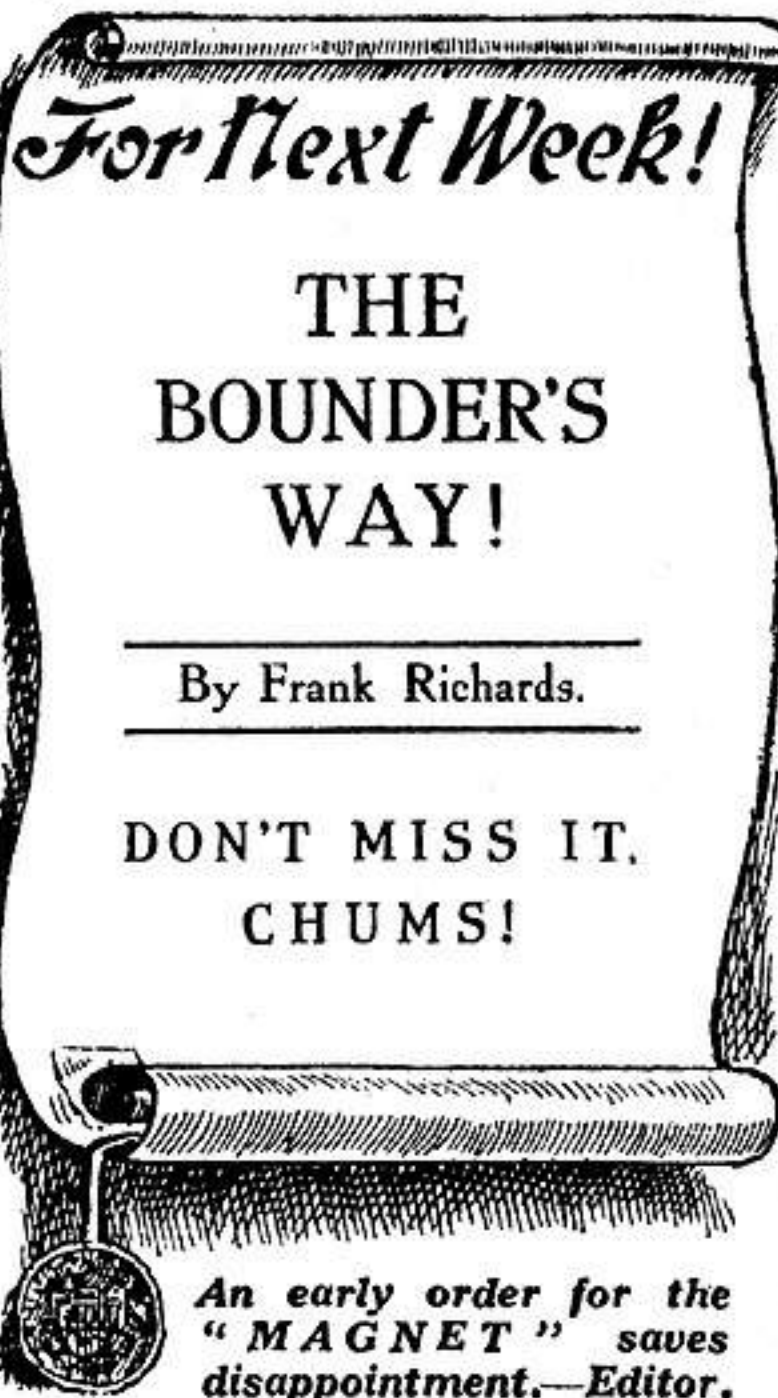
believe the beast knew I'd spotted the port and stuff at the back of the cupboard. Loder's going to have one of his rotten smoking parties with Carne and Walker! Disgraceful, I call it!" he added virtuously.

William George Bunter pondered further.

"Lemme see, now," he went on. "I'd better grab that camera, first of all, and get it along to Loder's study in readiness. I expect Wharton and Nugent are up in the box-room developing that blessed film they took a little while ago. He, he, he! Things couldn't have worked out better."

He glanced at his watch. It was about time that Loder, in his capacity of prefect, would be visiting Wingate, the head prefect, to make his report. Bunter realised that if his scheme was to have any chance of success, he would have to get to work quickly.

The first part of his scheme involved obtaining Mauleverer's film camera from



True, there was Loder. But the trouble with Loder could not be blamed to the same cause.

Bunter felt Loder could wait.

Then he remembered Loder's threat! The Sixth Form prefect had promised him two more lickings: one to-morrow and one the day afterwards. And knowing Loder as well as he did, the fat junior realised that his threat was not an idle one.

Bunter felt that Loder could not wait, after all!

The Owl of the Remove thought of the old tag to the effect that troubles never come singly.

"Ow! This is awful!"

William George Bunter was feeling a very much injured person.

"What I want is some wheeze to do Wharton and Loder in the eye together," he muttered, continuing to blink into the empty grate. "My only hat!" he exclaimed suddenly. "The very idea! He, he, he!"

Wharton's study before the chums of the Remove returned from the box-room, and getting it to Loder's study during the prefect's absence.

"He, he, he!" sniggered Bunter again. "I'll teach the rotters!"

And with that he quitted his own apartment and made his way in the direction of Study No. 1.

When he arrived there, as he had expected, he found it was empty.

Across in a corner near the window the fat junior made out the object of his visit—Mauleverer's film camera.

The camera was a small affair, not much larger than an ordinary hand camera. The only difference was that it was fitted with two metal drums to contain the negative film, and a small handle to turn it through the lens.

"My hat!" murmured Bunter. "This is a bit of luck, and no mistake!"

Bunter entered the study and made a rapid examination of the camera. As he did so a grunt of satisfaction escaped him.

It certainly seemed that the fickle Goddess of Luck was smiling upon the fat junior; indeed, it might almost be said that she was leaning down and caressing him.

The upper spool of the camera was charged with a roll of negative film in readiness for use—just as Harry Wharton & Co. had left it.

Bunter's knowledge of film photography was far from being extensive. But he realised that, with the camera charged ready for use, all he had to do was to open the lens shutter and turn the handle.

True, Bunter knew next to nothing about developing, but he saw it would be an easy matter to detach the lower spool when the film had been used, and get the result developed by someone else—probably the chemist in Friardale village.

"So far so good," thought the fat junior. "If I can get the blessed thing up the passage without any rotters spotting me, nearly half the job is over."

The Owl of the Remove picked up the camera and crept to the study door. Carefully opening it, he peered up and down the passage. Most of the Removites were engaged on preparation for next day's lesson in their studies. Not a soul was in sight.

Bunter stepped out of the study and

cautiously rolled along the passage towards the Sixth Form quarters. He reached Loder's study without encountering either a junior or a senior, and tapped on the door.

Silence.

Bunter was not expecting any reply, but he thought it best to be on the safe side. If Loder had returned unexpectedly, or before time, the Owl of the Remove was hoping to mumble some excuse to account for his presence. But no excuse being now necessary, he pushed open the door and stepped inside.

Even as he did so footsteps sounded in the passage without.

"Wow!" gasped the fat junior in alarm. "He's coming!"

The Owl of the Remove glanced quickly around in search of a hiding-place. The heavy curtains were still waving from the draught caused by the opening of the study door.

Bunter scuttled behind them with a sigh of relief.

The curtains, which had been provided by Loder himself, were made of thick velveteen. They reached from the cornice-pole at the top of the windows to the floor, and, providing he remained still, there was little chance of Bunter's presence in the study being suspected, so completely did they screen him.

A second or so later the study door opened, and Loder entered. Behind him were Carne and Walker, his two precious pals.

"My hat!" gasped Bunter softly. "The beast is back early. I was only just in time."

"Make yourselves at home, you fellows," exclaimed Loder genially. "Wingate and North have got the job of seeing lights out, so we might just as well get busy now."

"All serene!"

There came the scraping of chairs and the sound of the study cupboard being opened.

"Lucky for me I planted the stuff at the back of the shelf," came the voice of Loder again. "That fat clam Bunter was rooting around here this morning. If it wasn't for the fact that he was so busy stuffing himself with the pastries I'd got in he'd have seen the bottles, and then the fat would have been in the fire."

"The fat young spy!" grated Carne. "You need to watch him, Loder."

Bunter stood behind the curtain, the

film camera in his hand, his fat knees knocking together with fear. When he had first conceived his great wheeze to get even with Loder, the idea of hiding himself in the prefect's study had seemed simple enough. But now it came to carrying it out, he was beginning to think he had been over bold. Had Bunter been able to scuttle away from the study he would willingly have done so. But it was too late for him to change his plans now. There was only one thing for it, and that was to remain hidden, and carry out his plan as at first intended.

"Wow!" he groaned softly. "This is awful!"

All unconscious of the fat junior's presence, Loder produced from the study cupboard two bottles. Next followed drinking glasses, a pack of playing-cards, and a box of cigarettes.

"Help yourselves, you fellows," said Loder.

"What-ho!"

"This is something like!"

His heart beating like a hammer, the Owl of the Remove peered round the edge of the curtain. The three black sheep of the Sixth were seated at the study table smoking and drinking.

Despite his inward fear, Bunter permitted himself a soft chuckle. That the seniors had no inkling that they were observed was obvious enough. Loder undid the pack of cards and shuffled them with a dexterity born of long practice.

"What shall it be?" he demanded in a low voice. "Nap or banker?"

"Oh, make it banker," suggested Carne.

"Right-ho, then! I'll deal."

Loder dealt the cards, and the game commenced. As it proceeded Bunter felt his courage slowly return. He felt that his luck was in with a vengeance. So far, his great scheme had carried without a hitch. If only he succeeded in getting away from the study again without his presence being discovered, the rest of his scheme would be as easy as rolling off a form.

Loder drained his glass, and reached out for a bottle to replenish it. As he did so Bunter carefully poked the lens of the stolen film camera round the edge of the curtain, and slowly commenced to turn the handle.

An hour passed slowly by.

"Wow!" muttered Bunter, upon whom the strain of standing still behind the curtain was beginning to tell. "It'll be bedtime in a few minutes, and I can't get away."

Another five minutes passed, and Loder rose to his feet.

"Got any more cigs in your place, Carne?" he asked.

Carne nodded.

"Good! We're running a bit low. Let's go up and get them. It'll stretch our legs for a few minutes, then we can settle down for another couple of hours."

A few minutes later the three seniors left the study.

Bunter breathed a sigh of relief.

Detaching the lower drum of the camera, which now contained the exposed film, he hid it beneath his jacket. Then, placing the camera on the floor behind the curtains, he stole out of the study and scuttled for all he was worth to his own quarters.

"My hat!" gasped Bunter, as he saw Wingate shepherding the juniors to their dormitories. "Just in time! It worked like a blessed charm. He, he, he!"

Bunter retired to bed that night with a feeling that he had done a good day's

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work. As for Loder & Co., all unconscious of what had happened, they returned to their game, and played blissfully on until the crowing of a cock in a field at the back of the school warned them of the approach of dawn.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Sorry Spectacle!

"**T**HAT fat thief's got it right enough!" Harry Wharton uttered that remark.

His usually cheery face was clouded with an angry frown.

He was standing in the Junior Common-room, surrounded by the rest of the Famous Five and a number of other juniors.

It was Wednesday afternoon, a half-holiday at Greyfriars. The juniors had arranged to spend the afternoon with Mauleverer's film camera. The sun was shining brightly in the Close. It was an ideal day for their purpose. There was one fly in the ointment, however. The film camera was missing!

Most of the Remove had been questioned, but they appeared to know nothing about it. It seemed, therefore, that there was only one junior who could have taken it. That junior was William George Bunter. But Bunter was missing, too!

"Wait till I find him!" snorted Johnny Bull.

"I'll smash him!"

"The smashfulness will be of the terrific order!"

"Hear, hear!"

At that moment Loder of the Sixth put his head round the door.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What's up, Loder?"

"Seen Bunter?" demanded Loder.

A yell of laughter greeted the prefect's question.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Anything funny in that?" snarled the senior. "I'm looking for Bunter!"

"So are we," grinned Johnny Bull.

"He's pinched our film camera," added Frank Nugent.

Loder snorted.

In his hand was a stout ashplant. Late hours the night before had not improved the prefect's temper. He was therefore seeking out the fat junior with the kindly intention of giving him his promised licking for the day, as a means of relieving his feelings.

"All right!" he growled. "I've got to go down to the village. I might meet him!"

Loder strode on.

"Poor old porpoise!" grinned Frank Nugent. "If Loder meets him in the village and wallops him, and then he gets another wallop from us as soon as he gets in the school gates, it'll be the end of a perfect day."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder returned to his study for his cap, and five minutes later was striding down the road leading to Friardale village. The prefect eventually reached the little High Street, where he made several purchases. He was about to turn out on to the Courtfield Road when he observed a junior wearing a Greyfriars cap emerging from the chemist's shop.

It was William George Bunter!

Bunter observed Loder at precisely the same moment that Loder observed him. From instinct more than anything else he turned to bolt. But, as though suddenly changing his mind, he stood his ground.

Loder grinned savagely, and, darting across the road, gripped the fat junior by his ear.



A great yell of laughter went up from the Removites assembled round the school gates as Gerald Loder and his new-found friend, William George Bunter, appeared. "Well, if this doesn't beat the whole giddy orchestra!" gasped Harry Wharton in amazement. The Removites roared again and again. The spectacle of "little Gerald" clinging affectionately to Bunter's fat arm was certainly funny. (See Chapter 8.)

"Wow! Leggo! Yoop!" gasped the Owl of the Remove. "Don't you touch me, Loder, or you'll regret it. Lemme alone, or the Head'll know about your rotten party last night—"

Loder suddenly released the fat junior and gasped.

"What do you mean, you fat spy?" he hissed.

"You know what I mean!" exclaimed Bunter darkly. "You can't pull the wool over my eyes. I'm too fly! He, he, he!"

The prefect regarded the fat junior curiously. There was something about Bunter's attitude he could not quite understand. He felt it would pay him to move carefully for a while.

"I know all about your rotten smoking and drinking!" went on Bunter threateningly. "And you call yourself a prefect! He, he, he! You can't afford to quarrel with me!"

Loder's face paled.

It dawned upon him suddenly that not only did Bunter know what had passed in his study the night before, but that he had some other card up his sleeve as well.

"Are you suggesting there was smoking and drinking in my study last night?" demanded Loder, in a quieter voice.

"That's it!" sniggered Bunter.

"I see," said the Sixth-Former grimly.

"I almost feel it my duty to report the matter to the Head," said the Owl of the Remove, with a well-assumed air of virtue. "For the sake of the old school I should feel it my duty. I've got the reputation of Greyfriars at heart, and I wouldn't like to see its—its concussion besmirched by a rotter like you!"

"You fat spy!" grated Loder. "Do you think the Head's likely to take your word against mine?"

Bunter sniggered.

"I've got proof!" he exclaimed triumphantly.

As he spoke, the fat junior tapped a tin box he had been carrying beneath his arm. Loder snatched the box from Bunter's hand, and stepped to the side of the road. The next moment he had wrenched it open and was examining the contents.

The Owl of the Remove regarded him with a fat smirk.

"You—you awful toad!" snorted the prefect suddenly, his face turning from pale to purple. "You—you fat rotter! So this is your game, is it? You—you are—"

Words failed the Sixth-Former. He stood and glared at Billy Bunter, his

(Continued on page 16.)

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THE GREYFRIARS HERALD

No. 242.

HARRY WHARTON, EDITOR

Week Ending Oct. 3rd.



Common Room Chatter!

Contributed by Bob Cherry.

INDOOR FOOTBALL.

On Wednesday afternoon we were to have played footer against the Upper Fourth, on Little Side. Owing to the fact that rain was pelting down by the pailful, and the ground was more suitable for a swimming gala than a footer match, we arranged to play the match under cover, choosing the junior Common-room as our arena. Temple beat Wharton in the toss, and elected to kick towards the fireplace, whilst the Remove kicked towards the door. We played a quarter of an hour each way. The first half was fought at a fierce pace, but produced no goals. It produced plenty of excitement, however. Temple, in clearing a hot attack by the Remove, banged the ball clean through a window; and the spectators seated on the sill received a shower of glass on their craniums. The ball was retrieved, and play waxed fiercer than ever. In the second half, Wharton scored with a powerful shot which nearly put the fire out! It was our turn to kick towards the fireplace in the second half. Then Nugent bagged a goal, and we had high hopes of winning, when Mr. Quelch appeared on the scene—just in time to receive the football under his classical chin! The Remove master sat down with a bump and a roar, and the players stampeded wildly in all directions. The match, of course, had to be abandoned, and the members of the Remove Eleven were awarded a hundred lines apiece, for "riotous, reckless, and reprehensible conduct in the Junior Common-room." The Upper Fourth eleven were reported to Mr. Capper, and Temple was ordered to pay for the broken window.

* * *

THRILLING CHESS FINAL!

The "Rag" was the scene of another exciting encounter on Wednesday evening, when Hurree Singh and Mark Linley met together in the final for the Remove Chess Championship. Both players were reported to be in fine fettle, having gone into strict training for the great event. Hurree Singh had existed on a fruit diet for a fortnight, and Mark Linley had been paying visits to the pawnshop in Courtfield, in order to learn how pawns were taken! Interviewed before the match, both juniors were confident of success. "I shall sweep the board with my dusky opponent!" declared Mark

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Linley. "I shall dustfully wipe up the floorfulness with the Lancashire lad!" declared Hurree Singh. There was a vast crowd of half a dozen fellows present when the great duel began. The kick-off was at seven o'clock, and for a solid hour the two contestants did nothing but glare at each other across the table. Neither attempted to make a move. At eight o'clock, Linley called for a wet towel and a block of ice, to enable him to think out his first move more clearly. The crowd looked on in silence. Either they were speechless with the excitement of the situation, or they had nodded off to sleep! At nine o'clock, Mark Linley at last made a move, and so did his opponent. They had to make a move, because it was bed-time! The Chess Final will be continued next Wednesday evening, and is not expected to last more than seven years!

* * *

A FEAST FOR THE GODS!

A really wonderful banquet was held in the Common-room on Saturday evening, to celebrate the Remove's victory over Rookwood. The feast was financed from the funds of the Remove Football Club, and there were forty guests. Billy Bunter, the champion gorgor of Greyfriars, was admitted to the feast, after a great deal of argument. It was a very merry gathering, and the ginger-wine flowed freely. Harry Wharton made an appropriate speech at the close of the festivities, and he was cheered to the echo. Bunter also made a speech. "Gentlemen," he said, "it grieves me more than I can say that I have not been able to do justice to this truly handsome spread. As a rule, I've a jolly good appetite, but I'm feeling right off-colour this evening, having barely recovered from a severe bilious attack. I feel ashamed of myself for having made such a miserable meal. Apart from half a rabbit-pie, and a tin of tongue, and a small cold chicken, and a dozen or so assorted pastries, I have been unable to nibble at anything at all! But if you will do me the honour of inviting me to your next celebration, I will do my best to make amends for my feeble appetite on this occasion." Needless to add, Bunter won't be invited again in a hurry!

NEXT WEEK:

A "RUGGER" SUPPLEMENT.

EDITORIAL!

By Harry Wharton.

THE Junior Common-room, described by its occupants as "The Rag," and described by Mr. Quelch as "the most rowdy and riotous room in all Greyfriars," has never yet been the subject of one of our weekly Supplements. There has been a Dormitory Number and a Gym Number and a Tuckshop Number; but the "Rag" has somehow been overlooked.

Let me take you by the hand, as it were, and escort you into this room, which has been the scene of so many feuds, fights, debates, rags, and revels. It is a spacious apartment, containing very little in the way of furniture; and what furniture there is looks as if it has been through a battle or a shipwreck. The table—a really handsome table in its younger days—is now scored and scarred by the penknives of many Greyfriars generations. Names and initials have been engraved all over its legs, and underneath it, and on its surface. Some are names which have long been forgotten. Others are names which have become famous all the world over. There is an admiral's name and a statesman's name, and the initials of a fellow who is now a county cricket captain. All through the years these relics have endured, just as you may still see Byron's name carved at Harrow, along with other illustrious names.

I have stood on that Common-room table "many a time and oft," addressing stormy meetings, and laying down the law to a rebellious throng. I have also sat on the table, and sprawled on it; and, I regret to add, I have been hoisted across it for corporal punishment, administered by a prefect!

When Mr. Quelch comes to that chapter of his "History of Greyfriars" which describes the Junior Common-room, he ought not to forget that historic table. It has a wonderful history.

At the far end of the "Rag," you will see a fire blazing merrily in the grate. (Bob Cherry interrupts me to say that the blessed fire wouldn't be blazing merrily on the floor! He declares that "in the grate" is superfluous. But, as some famous Johnny once said: "What I have written, I have written!")

Seated around the fire you will see a number of fellows, with flushed faces and scorching eyebrows, roasting chestnuts on the bars of the grate. Others will be gathered around the table, telling each other "chestnuts" instead of roasting them! Mark Linley will be perched on one of the window-sills, buried in a book. Billy Bunter will be "telling the tale" to a scoffing and incredulous group. Hurree Singh will be indulging in the esteemed and ludicrous chessful game. Of course, I am assuming that when you peep into the Common-room it will be one of the peaceful evenings, when the ragers have ceased from ragging, and the japers are at rest! If you looked in whilst a free fight was in progress, you would form a totally different impression of the "Rag." You would also agree that it is aptly named!

Let me conclude my editorial pow-wow with the Latin tag, "Floreat Raggio!" which, being interpreted, means, "Long may the Junior Common-room flourish!"

HARRY WHARTON.



The Meeting that Wasn't Addressed.

Common-Room Comedy

I.

"NOTICE!"

"THERE will be a gathering of the clans in the Junior Common-room at eight o'clock this evening. I have an important football address to deliver to the meeting."
 "(Signed) HARRY WHARTON,

"Captain of the Remove.

"NOTE.—Those who attempt to interrupt the speaker will be forcibly ejected on their necks!"

II.

(SCENE: The Junior Common-room.
 Time: 8 p.m.)

"Gentlemen—" begins Harry Wharton.

"I say, you fellows—" begins Billy Bunter.

"My worthy and esteemed chumful comrades—" begins Hurree Singh.

"Listen to me, look you," chimes in Morgan.

"Faith, an it's meself that's addressin' the meetin'—" roars Micky Desmond.

"Me tinkee you should all shutee up, and let little Chinee say a few wordee!" squeaks Wun Lung.

"See hyer, you chattering magpies, I kinder sorter guess and calclate that I'm the galoot that's addressing the meetin'!" yaps Fisher Tarleton Fish.

"Order, please!" bellows Bob Cherry.

"Silence, Cherry! Dry up, Toddy! I'm your chairman, everybody!" exclaims the poet Penfold.

"When you've all finished butting in, gentlemen, I'll make a start with my speech!" says Wharton sarcastically.

A fresh clamour of tongues breaks forth. Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, Bolsover major, Dick Russell, and a

dozen others, each declares that he is the fit and proper person to address the meeting!

III.

(SCENE: The Junior Common-room.
 Time: 9 p.m.)

"Now that you've all finished jawing, I'll proceed to address the meeting!" cried Harry Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton— You're queering my pitch!" yells Billy Bunter.

"It's my pitchfulness that is being queerfully poached upon!" exclaims Hurree Singh. "Friends, rum 'uns, and countrymen, lend me your earfulness!"

"Arrah, now, ye spalpeens, will ye be quiet?" hoots Micky Desmond.

"I guess you're a lot of slabsided mug-wumps!" cries Fisher T. Fish excitedly.

"Order, please!"

"Silence for the Chair!"

"Let me begin—"

"Let me commencefully kick off—"

"Let me start in and say—"

"Let me politely inform you—"

"That it's bed-time!" chimes in the voice of Wingate of the Sixth from the doorway. "Up to your dormitory, all of you!"

The meeting ends exactly where it began. Nobody has succeeded in addressing it!

BUNTER THE OUTDOOR MAN! BY HIMSELF.

"I DON'T perferess, dear readers, to be very much in love with indoor games. I'm an outdoor man, that's what I am—a lover of the sunshine and the fresh air, with its body-building Oxo-gen.

Put me on a footer field, and I'm not really there at all. I'm in the seventh heaven! Put me on a mountain peak—Mont Blong, for preference—and I'm happy. But of corse, I shouldn't care about fagging all the way up there. I should eggsspect to be taken up in a lift, or hauled up by a couple of sturdy guides. (It would take more than two sturdy guides to haul Billy Bunter to the top of Mont Blanc. Even the combined exertions of Samson and Hercules wouldn't do the trick!—Ed.)

Ask me to peddle twenty miles on my bike, or gallop around on a gee-gee, and I'm in my ellyment. Put me in a punt, and I'll go gliding downstream with a face wreathed in smiles. Ask me to swim the Channel, and I'll suxceed, even against the most powerful currants. (The only "currants" that Bunter can successfully negotiate are those which are found in cakes!—Ed.)

An out-door life suits me down to the ground. But put me in a stuffy study, balancing a chess-board on my knees, or rattling a dice-box, or shuffling domynose, and I'm as mizzerable as they make 'em.

Of corse, when it comes to the push, I can play indoor games with the next fellow. I'm the Chess Champion, and the Ludo King, and the Draughts Wizard, and all the rest of it. I'm always breaking records. (Yes, you broke two records belonging to Brownney's gramophone the other evening!—Ed.) But I can't pretend to like all these kindergarten games. Give me some viggerus, muscular sport, where hard nocks have to be given and taken. (Right! Meet me in the gym to-morrow night at eight o'clock!—Ed.) Give me the joys of the open air—the sweet songs of the duck, the plezzant babbling of the brook, and all the cheery sights and sounds of Nature.

My only objection to the school tuckshop is that it's an indoor affair, instead of being an open-air establishment. I'm going to agitate for an open-air tuckshop in the Close. Those in favour of this scheme should call on me in Study No. 7, and put

their names to a petition which will be presented to the Head. I'm not going to put my own name on the petition, bekawse on the last occasion I did so the Head got awfully ratty, for some reason or other, and gave me a most terriffick licking. I'm not going to risk another dose!

I seldom honner the Junior Common-room with my presence, for the simple reezon that it's a crowded, stuffy place, quite unsuitable for an out-door man like me. Of corse, for fellows like Wharton and Cherry, who love to frowst indoors, instead of filling their lungs with the health-giving Oxo-gen, the Common-room is quite all right. But for a strong, muscular, athletic He-man, there's nothing to beat the open air.

If they were to put the Common-room out of bounds to-morrow, and make a bon-fire of all the chess-boards and draught-boards and ludo-boards, it wouldn't worry me in the least. But Wharton and the other slackers, who are always loafing and lounging in the "Rag," would find themselves without a home! And serve them jolly well right! (What an amiable, charming chappie our plump contributor is, to be sure!—Ed.)



THE SPORTIVE FAG!

BY DICK PENFOLD.

HOW doth the little busy fag
 Improve each shining minute?
 By playing ludo—what a rag!
 What fierce excitement in it!

He takes the dice-box (frantic cheers!)
 And rattles it with vigour;
 And if, perchance, a "six" appears,
 He gives a gleeful snigger.

Instead of fagging for his lord,
 And frying fish or "sosses,"
 He makes weird symbols on a board,
 And calls it "noughts and crosses."

Should Loder of the Sixth look in,
 The fag inquires: "What wantest?
 Hast come along to watch me win
 The snakes-and-ladders contest?"

Loder may ramp and rage and shout—
 The fag says: "Go to—Venice!
 How can I fag for you, old scout?
 I'm playing table-tennis!"

"I'll cook not herrings at your fire,
 And make your den a fishshop.
 To play at chess is my desire,
 With knight and pawn and bishop!"

"So run away and gather flowers!"
 Says he, in tones emphatic.
 "Here will I sit, and play for hours,
 For I'm a draughts fanatic!"

"We're happy at our games, I guess;
 Gaily the time doth roll-o!
 With snakes-and-ladders, draughts, and
 chess,
 And good old table-polo!"

"We want no prefects here to mar
 Our evening so delightful!"
 And Loder's optics gleaming are,
 His aspect fierce and spiteful.

That's how the little busy fag
 Improves each shining minute;
 His cares are packed in his kitbag—
 He's lively as a linnet!

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(Continued from page 13.)

mouth working spasmodically. Several times he endeavoured to say something, but all he achieved was a gasping choke.

Loder had an uncomfortable feeling from the first that Bunter had some card up his sleeve, otherwise he would never have behaved as he had. And as events had proved he had not been wrong.

"So—so that was the idea, was it?" spluttered Loder at length, his face dark with anger. "You'd have used it to threaten me with—eh?"

"That's what I said," grinned Bunter, feeling that he held the prefect in the hollow of his fat hand.

"You fat little spy! You're coming back to Greyfriars with me, and I'm going to thrash you until you howl for mercy. The Head won't ever see this, because I'm going to take charge of it until it's destroyed."

There was no doubt about it, if Dr. Locko had seen the contents of the tin box he had taken from Bunter, Loder's career at Greyfriars would have terminated from that moment. The prefect shuddered as he thought of his narrow escape. He felt that, with the box in his pocket, however, he was safe again.

But if Loder thought he had turned the tables on the Owl of the Remove he was mistaken—very mistaken indeed.

Instead of wilting before his threats, as Loder had expected, Bunter continued to grin.

"If the Head doesn't see that one, he'll see the copy I've got," chuckled the fat Removite, blinking at the prefect through his big spectacles. "You can't spoof me. I guessed you'd keep that one, so I arranged for another. He, he, he!"

Loder started.

"A-a copy!" he gasped.

Bunter nodded.

Loder blinked at the fat junior as though he were some strange insect. For a moment he hardly knew whether he was standing on his head or his heels.

"If you think I'm spoofing, you touch me and see!" went on Bunter, now thoroughly enjoying himself. "I've put up with your rotten bullying long enough, and I'm not going to stand it any longer!"

"Oh!" gasped Loder, all the fight suddenly gone from him.

"I don't want to be hard on you, Loder," continued Bunter, with a patronising air; "but I warn you—any more bullying, and you're for it!"

"Oh!" gasped Loder again, unable to think of anything better to say. "Oh! Ah!"

"So if you like to be pals, I'm willing," concluded Bunter, with a fat smirk. "Live and let live—that's my motto!"

Loder stared at the Owl of the Remove for a moment. But he was beaten, and he knew it! He gritted his teeth with mortification and anger. To be tricked as he had been by anyone was bad enough, but to be tricked by the fat and usually obtuse Owl of the Remove, of all people, was the absolute limit. He realised that there was only one thing to do, and that was to feign friendship with the fat junior he was far from feeling as the only price of silence.

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"Well, what's it to be?" demanded Bunter. "Are we friends or not?"

"Yes, I'll be friends, you—you—I mean, Bunter," almost choked the prefect.

"Good! Then let's shake on it!"

As he spoke, the fat junior held out one podgy hand for Loder to shake. Loder affected not to see it, and commenced to stride back in the direction of Greyfriars.

"I say, Loder, wait for me!" gasped Bunter. "Let's go back together. We're pals, you know."

Loder gritted his teeth, but said nothing. He was just beginning to realise what friendship with Bunter would mean. That the fat junior would stick closer to him than a long-lost brother he was certain. And he was wondering how he was going to explain the sudden friendship with the Owl of the Remove to the rest of the fellows.

Cold beads of perspiration stood out on the Sixth-Former's brow, despite the heat of the afternoon. He increased his pace, hoping to leave the fat Removite behind.

But Bunter was not to be left behind so easily.

By the time the two were within a quarter of a mile of the school gates the Owl of the Remove was puffing and blowing.

"Look here, Loder!" gasped Bunter at length. "I'm puffed. I propose we have a little rest."

"Oh, come on!" snarled Loder. "I've got no time to waste!"

"If that's the way you talk to a pal—" began Bunter, his eyes gleaming behind his big spectacles.

"Sorry!" gasped Loder, gulping something in his throat. "I—I forgot!"

"Well, don't forget again!" said Bunter warmly. "You wouldn't like it if I forgot we were pals."

Loder bit his lip.

The way of the transgressor was certainly hard—especially when in the power of a youth like William George Bunter!

"Look here!" exclaimed Bunter at length. "You'll have to help me, Loder. I'm fagged. I can't go your pace. You hold my arm and help me along—"

"Look here, you fat hound—" began Loder, exasperated almost beyond control.

"Really, Loder," exclaimed Bunter, "if that's the way you speak to a pal I—"

Loder glared round him helplessly. At that moment he hated Bunter more than he had ever hated anyone in the whole of his life. For a moment he was tempted to give him a licking he so richly deserved, but then he remembered that Bunter possessed a copy of the contents of the tin box in his pocket.

He groaned.

"Oh, all right! I'll hold your arm, you—you—old fellow!"

Bunter smirked.

"Now, that's what I call real pally!" he said. "Grab hold, and don't forget I'm your pal any more."

Loder took Bunter's fat arm as though it were something unclean and proceeded up the road again.

"Really, you might hold it as though you mean it, Loder!" complained the Owl. "It won't bite you."

"Nunno!" gasped Loder, his face assuming a deep purple hue.

The prefect took another hold on the junior's arm and rounded the bend in the road. The school gates loomed up about fifty yards ahead. A crowd of juniors were standing outside chatting. They were the Famous Five—Bulstrode, Mark Linley, and Micky Desmond, the lad from the Emerald Isle.

"Look here, Bunter!" exclaimed Loder in a low voice. "I've helped you along so far, you can finish without me now."

"Of course, if you're ashamed of your pal," snorted Bunter, with well assumed dignity, "we'd better break the friendship—"

"Oh, all serene!" groaned Loder desperately. "Come on!"

And, still holding Bunter's fat arm, the unhappy senior approached the crowd round the gates.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's New Pal!

"MY giddy aunt—" "What the thump—" "The lion and the lamb!" "Ha, ha, ha!"

A great yell of laughter went up from the Removites assembled round the school gates as Loder and his new-found friend, William George Bunter, appeared.

The Removites stared.

"Well, if this doesn't beat the whole giddy orchestra!" gasped Harry Wharton in amazement.

"It must be some new game!" ejaculated Frank Nugent.

"Perhaps they're playing robbers and coppers, and Bunter's the robber!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Or else little Gerald has learned the error of his ways and forgiven his enemies," suggested Bob Cherry.

"The forgiveness must be of the very tall and esteemed order, my worthy chums," purred Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The dishonourable Loder looks as though he has lostfully mislaid the worthy bobfulness and found the humble sixpence."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites roared again and again.

The spectacle of "little Gerald," otherwise Loder, of the Sixth, clinging affectionately to Bunter's fat arm was certainly funny. More especially since the last time the juniors had seen him he was seeking the blood of the fat Removite.

"Well, we'll soon see what the little game is!" exclaimed Wharton. "It's jolly thoughtful of Loder to bring Bunter back like this; we've got an account to settle with him over that camera he boned from my study."

"Hear, hear!"

"I say, you fellows!" exclaimed Billy Bunter, pushing his way through the crowd. "You might make room for me and my pal Loder, you know—"

"Your p-pal Loder!" gasped Nugent, staring curiously at the Sixth-Former.

"Yes, certainly, Nugent. Loder and I are great pals, ain't we, Loder?"

"No, hang you!" snarled Loder savagely.

"Really, Loder—"

"I mean—of course!" gasped the prefect hurriedly. "I—I was only joking, you know. It's all right, Bunter!"

"You can call me Billy," smirked the Owl of the Remove.

"Oh, my hat!" shrieked Wharton.

"Call him Billy—goat!"

"My only Aunt Jemima!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Really, you fellows!" gasped the fat Removite. "I don't see anything to cackle at. Christian names are always used between pals. And Loder's my pal. Ain't you, Gerry?"

The Removites went off into another roar of laughter, which could be heard the other side of the Close. The idea of

Bunter and Loder being pals was funny enough in itself, but the idea of the burly Sixth-Former addressing the Owl of the Remove as "Billy" and being called "Gerry" in return struck them as even funnier.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This is the limit!"

"The limitfulness is terrific!"

As for Loder, he glared at the fat Removee as though he had suddenly gone insane. A wave of white chased the purple across his face, and he all but foamed at the mouth.

Without a word he turned and strode across the Close in the direction of the School House.

But William George Bunter had not finished.

It was seldom indeed that anyone would own him as a pal, and having a Sixth Form prefect at that to do it was entirely a new sensation. Had he been less obtuse he would have realised that the juniors would guess he had got Loder in his power by some means or another. But as it was he put their laughter down to personal jealousy, and it was only personal jealousy, in his opinion, which prevented him being, if not captain of Greyfriars, at least captain of the Remove.

He trotted after Loder as fast as his fat little legs would carry him, and gripped the prefect by the sleeve. Harry Wharton & Co. followed.

"I say, Loder, old man—"

"Get away!" hooted Loder.

"Very well, then. If you want to break the friendship—"

"Oh, dear!" gasped Loder, realisation of the afternoon's happenings coming back to him. "It's—it's all right, Bunter. You mustn't mind if I'm a bit short sometimes. No offence meant—it's indigestion, you know!"

Harry Wharton & Co. stared in amazement.

This was something they could not quite understand.

"I wonder what the fat rotter's game

is?" whispered Bob Cherry to Harry Wharton. "He's got Loder on a piece of toast right enough."

"We shall find out what it is in time," grinned Wharton. "Still, it must be a pretty big pull he's got for Loder to stand for all this."

"My hat, yes!"

"Well, Loder doesn't seem to want him," chuckled Frank Nugent, "so we might just as well settle about that film camera before he gets a chance of sneaking away again."

"Good egg!"

The Removees closed up to Bunter and his pal Loder.

"I say, Loder, do you mind if we speak to your friend Billy for a moment?" asked Wharton.

Loder did not reply.

"Really, you fellows," said Bunter. "I can't keep old Loder waiting, you know—"

"No hurry," growled Loder. "I'll wait!"

Bunter blinked.

"Now, look here, you fat fraud," said Wharton, coming straight to the point. "Some fellow's boned Manly's film camera from my study. We've questioned everyone in the Remove except you, and none of them know anything about it—"

"Really, Wharton," gasped the Owl of the Remove uneasily. "I hope you don't suspect me of having had the rotten camera—"

"Well, we do, to be perfectly candid," replied Wharton. "If you don't tell us where it is we're going to bump you and then chuck you in the horse-pond. But if you like to own up we'll let you off with a bumping only. You can take your choice."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"We're waiting!"

"Look here, you rotters," hooted Bunter, "if you touch me you'll have my pal Loder to deal with—"

"Rats!"

Bob Cherry advanced upon the fat junior.

"I say, Loder!" gasped Bunter in alarm. "Keep 'em off! I'm your pal, you know. Ow! Lemme alone!"

"Leave him alone!" commanded Loder ungraciously. "He might be innocent, for once."

"He's boned our camera, and he's going to suffer for it," snorted Wharton. "The fat bandit! He's spoilt the best part of the afternoon for us as it is."

"Bump him!"

"Give him beans!"

"Wow! Yoop! Stop it!" howled the fat Removee. "I—I haven't got the blessed camera. It's in Loder's study behind the curtain—"

Loder started.

"In whose study?" demanded Wharton in amazement.

"In Loder's," gasped Bunter. "Loder asked me to b-borrow it to show him. He s-said he'd take it back and explain to you f-fellows, but he must have forgotten it!"

"You—" began Loder.

"My giddy aunt!" gasped Johnny Bull, staring first at Loder and then at Bunter. "I believe he's even lying now, the fat fraud!"

"Oh, really, Bull! That's right, what I'm saying, ain't it, Loder?"

Loder turned to the Owl of the Remove with a furious face. But there was an expression in Bunter's eyes which he could not mistake.

"I—I—that's right," he stammered uncomfortably. "It—it must have been left behind the curtain, as Bunter says. I'm sorry, you chaps!"

"Oh, that's all right," said Wharton, gazing hard at the flushed prefect. "I don't see why you couldn't have said so before, though. You knew before you went out this afternoon we were looking for it."

"I must have—it m-must have slipped my memory!" gasped Loder, mentally devising some new torture to inflict on

(Continued on next page.)

ON SALE FRIDAY, OCT. 2ND.



A Stirring Story of
Harry Wharton & Co., at
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By FRANK RICHARDS.

A Powerful Story of
School Life at St. Jim's,
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the cunning Owl of the Remove so soon as it was safe to do so.

"I reckon it's up to you chaps to apologise to me," said Bunter, blinking at the Removites. "You're quick enough at accusing me of pinching the rotten camera, but when you find you've made a mistake, you've got nothing to say."

Harry Wharton & Co. did not reply.

The information that the missing camera was in Loder's study had obviously come as much of a surprise to the Sixth-Former as it had to themselves. Yet, if Loder had had nothing to do with it, why had he allowed himself to be dragged into the affair by the Owl of the Remove?

These and many similar questions were buzzing through the Removites' brains; but, try as they might, they could find no answer to them, save that Bunter seemed to have got Loder into his power. And if this were so, by what means had it been achieved? Loder, as the Removites knew full well, was far from being a fool; while Bunter, generally speaking, was the exact opposite. It was strange, to say the least of it.

But whatever the juniors might have thought, they had no sympathy to waste on the bullying prefect. If he had got into any mess that Bunter was holding over his head, he would have to get out of it as best he could, or take the consequences.

"Well, if you rotters don't want to apologise, you needn't!" snorted Bunter. "Me and my pal, Loder, are going to the tuckshop. I was going to ask Loder if I could invite you chaps, too—but now I won't!"

"Go hon!"

"What about those jam-tarts you promised me, Loder, old fellow?" demanded Bunter, addressing the prefect.

"I didn't promise you any tarts," growled Loder. "Think again!"

"Really, Loder! As one pal to another, it's up to you to stand me a little-snack now and again. You know what a delicate constitution I've got. Of course, if you're going to spoil our friendship for the sake of a paltry snack or—"

Loder groaned.

The Removites waited to see what was going to happen next.

But Loder seemed to have lost all his spirit. He glanced helplessly around him, and drew his hand wearily across his brow.

"Look here, Bunter—"

"Billy, to my friends," smirked Bunter.

"L-look here, B-Billy, then," almost choked the unhappy senior.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Harry Wharton & Co.

"My giddy aunt!"

Loder mopped his brow. He was beginning to wonder, after all, if the game was worth the candle. Bunter was rather more than any human being could be expected to stand.

"Look here," he blurted again. "Suppose I give you half-a-crown to go and stuff yourself with? I've got an appointment."

"Oh, please yourself!" said Bunter loftily, yet in a tone Loder could not mistake. "If I'm not good enough to be seen in the tuckshop with, our friendship had better cease."

"Oh, come on, then!" growled the prefect, gritting his teeth.

"Good!" grinned Bunter. "Lead on!"

And only too glad to get away from the grinning Removites without losing Bunter's valued friendship, Loder led

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the way across the Close to the little tuckshop kept by Dame Mumble.

"My giddy aunt!" ejaculated Frank Nugent. "I thought Loder was going to slaughter him more than once."

"This is the richest thing I've ever struck!"

And once again the Removites went off into a howl of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I proposefully suggest we escort the unworthy Bunter and the absurd Loder to the honourable tuckshop to see fully observe the rest of the funfulness," grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Hear, hear!"

Their faces purple with merriment, the juniors followed on in the wake of their fat Form-fellow and his new-found friend.

When they reached the tuckshop they found Billy Bunter seated on a stool at the counter with an assorted array of sticky pastries before him. Bunter's jaws were working overtime, and the pile of good things on the counter were disappearing down his capacious throat at a terrific rate.

Munch, munch, munch!

Bunter champed away, breaking all his previous gastronomic records, while his unwilling benefactor stood nearby with a heavy scowl on his twitching face.

"Clear out!" hooted Loder, as Harry Wharton & Co. appeared in the doorway.

"Yes, clear out, and leave my pal, Loder, alone!" added Bunter, his mouth full of cream-puff.

But the Famous Five did nothing of the sort.

"Go it, Bunter!" chuckled Bob Cherry, urging the fat junior on to greater efforts.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter needed no urging.

Meanwhile, the news of the extraordinary scene in the tuckshop had spread round the rest of the school, and every few moments fresh juniors were arriving to crowd round the doorway.

As for Gerald Loder, he glared at the Owl of the Remove as though he would have liked to have slaughtered him.

The limit of his endurance had been reached, however.

Looking neither to right or left, and before Bunter could prevent him, he pushed his way through the crowd of juniors round the door, and fled ignominiously across the Close in the direction of the School House.

"If this isn't the limit!"

"I say, you fellows—"

The voice was that of William George Bunter.

But if the juniors heard him, they heeded him not.

Instead, they favoured him with an icy stare, and, without a word, turned and made their way towards their own quarters.

Billy Bunter had certainly made Loder sit up, and he intended to make him sit up again. But, so far, he realised he had not made much headway with the Removites.

"Beasts!" he snorted. "I'll show 'em!"

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Turning the Thumbscrew!

"I CAN'T understand it!"

"There's something jolly fishy about the whole bisney."

"The business is certainly of the piscatorial order, my worthy chums."

Tea was over, and the Famous Five were standing in the junior Common-room discussing the strange affair of Billy Bunter and Loder.

"There's that blessed camera," remarked Harry Wharton. "Loder seemed to be jolly surprised that it was in his study."

"But he must have known something about it, otherwise why should he admit to borrowing it?"

"Dunno! The whole affair's a blessed mystery."

"Anyhow, we found it there, right enough," grunted Johnny Bull. "It didn't grow legs and walk there."

"I suppose not!"

"Well, never mind about Loder now!" exclaimed Frank Nugent. "I propose we have a turn at leap-frog before we start prep."

"Good wheeze!"

"Down you go, Franky!"

Nugent arched his back, and one after another the rest of the Famous Five leaped over it.

"And again!"

"Let's go all round the room!"

The lean form of Fisher T. Fish, the American member of the Remove, appeared in the doorway.

"Keep the pot a-boiling!" shouted Fish encouragingly.

Bob Cherry, who was doubled waiting for Harry Wharton to leap, glanced up. Wharton, who was in the act of springing from the ground, was not prepared for his movement. He gave a gasp of alarm, misjudged his distance, and collapsed on the burly junior's neck.

The next moment they both crashed to the ground.

Thud!

"Ow! Yooooop!"

"You silly ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Fisher T. Fish from the doorway. "Jevver get left?"

The two juniors growled, and picked themselves up.

"I guess you jays don't understand leap-frog," wheezed Fish, in a nasal voice. "I calculate you should see us play leap-frog over there."

"Over there" was the United States of America, and, according to Fish, nothing done in any part of the world could possibly excel the way it was done "over there."

"I reckon we know how to play leap-frog—some!" went on Fish. "Jumping Jerusalem! I've seen a guy leap over ten backs at once, balancing a cigarette-paper on his nose, without batting an eyelid—yes, sirree! That's what I call leap-frog!"

"Go hon!" murmured Wharton sarcastically.

"You don't say so!" grunted Bob Cherry.

"Yep! Lemme show you!"

"Oh, all serene!" gasped Bob Cherry, in alarm. "You're not trying it on me. Let's see you do it with a chair."

Fish grinned.

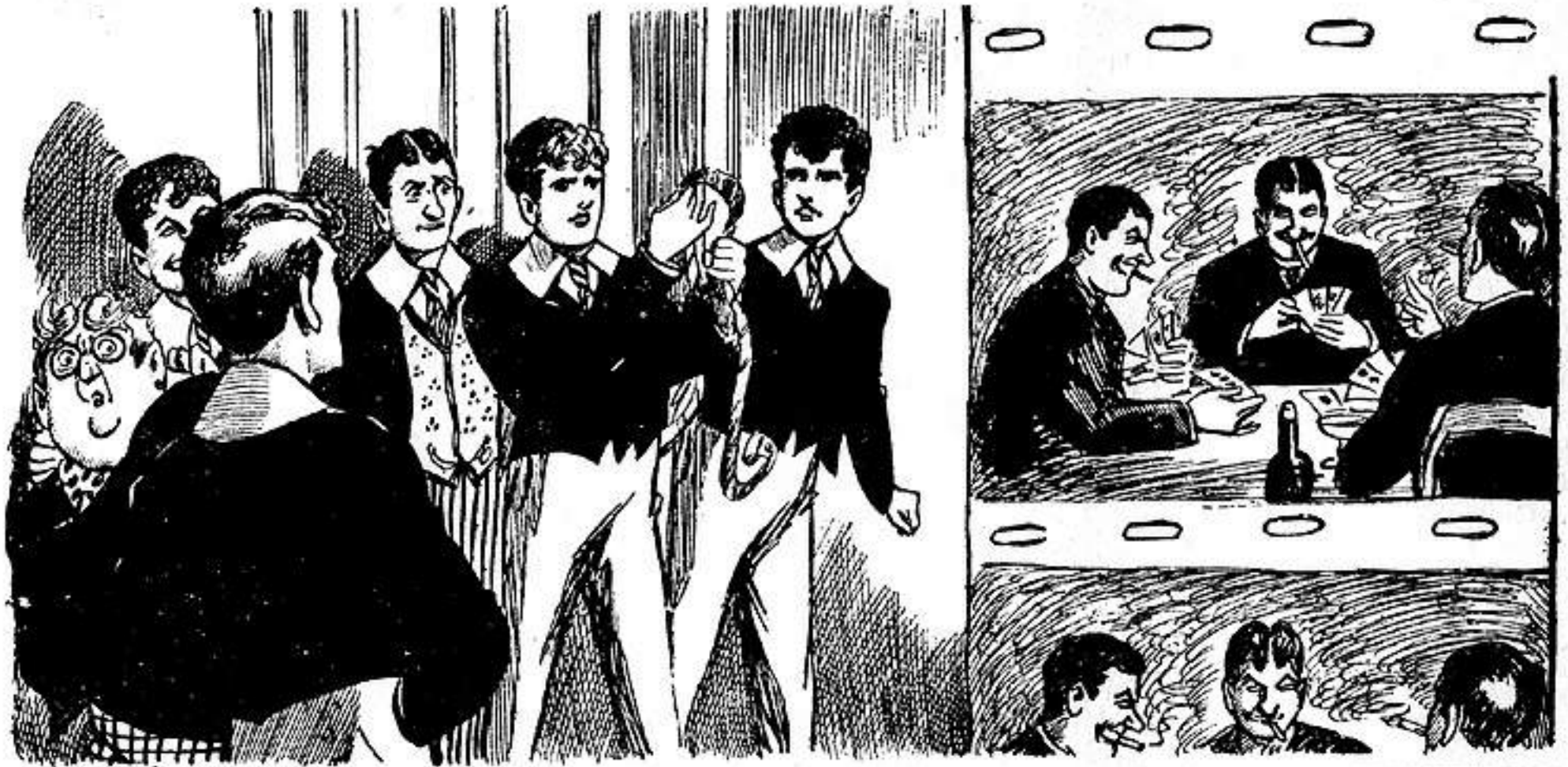
"Yeah! I guess that's easy!" he exclaimed.

As he spoke, the American junior arranged two chairs in the middle of the room, while the rest of the Removites ceased their game to watch.

Having arranged the chairs to his liking, the Transatlantic junior stepped back several paces, moistened his hands, rubbed them together, and dried them on his trousers.

"I guess this is what you jays can't do," he grinned. "You watch your Uncle Fisher."

Fisher T. Fish took a short run and jumped, his two hands extended to grip the top of the chairs for the vault. But his hands never reached their objective. Something seemed to go wrong with the



The excited Removites unrolled more of the film Bunter had taken and held it up to the light. They made out the interior of Loder's study as it had been on the night of his little party to Carne and Walker. The whole of the three seniors' actions from the time they had entered the study until they left were clearly depicted on the roll of film. Harry Wharton & Co. stared and gasped. (See Chapter 8.)

works, and the next moment, with a loud yell, chairs and junior crashed to the ground.

"Yoooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Removites, doubling themselves up with mirth.

"Look at Uncle Fisher now!"

"That's how they do it over there!"

Fish jumped to his feet, and gripping one of the unoffending chairs, hurled it with all his might at the wall.

Crash!

"Don't be a fool, Fish!" shouted Johnny Bull.

Even as the junior spoke the form of Loder of the Sixth, doubtless attracted by the noise, appeared in the doorway.

"Stop this confounded noise!" he snarled.

Then his eyes fell on the smashed chair against the wall.

"What's the meaning of this?" he demanded, his eyes gleaming. "Wilfully destroying school property, eh?"

"It's all right, Loder," exclaimed Wharton, in what was meant to be a soothing tone. "It's only Fish showing us how they play leap-frog in the United States."

But Loder was not to be soothed so easily. He had been in a raging temper ever since he had left his friend Bunter.

"Take a hundred lines each!" he grated. "And bring them to me before bedtime to-night. I'll put a stop to this horseplay!"

The Removites gasped.

As a prefect, Loder was entitled to order or administer punishment to the Lower School. But it seemed to the juniors that to come down on the whole lot of them with a hundred lines each was rather more severe than necessary.

"I say, go easy, Loder!" remonstrated Wharton. "It wasn't our fault, after all—"

"You take an extra fifty lines for insolence!" shouted Loder, glaring. "And if you're not satisfied, you can bring Mr. Quelch to see that chair, and take what he gives you instead."

"Oh!"

Loder turned to go. As he did so the fat form of the Owl of the Remove pushed into the Common-room. Bunter

had arrived just in time to overhear the latter part of the conversation. While standing outside the door his fat brain had been working overtime. He saw in what had just happened an excellent opportunity to get into the good graces of his Form-fellows again.

"I say, Loder, old man—" began the Owl of the Remove, blinking at the infuriated prefect through his big spectacles.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Bunter the friend!" gasped Boh Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I don't see anything to cackle about. I couldn't help overhearing what Loder said. I'm surprised at Loder, really I am, you chaps!"

"Get out, you fat sneak!" hooted Loder suddenly.

The Owl of the Remove regarded the prefect in mild surprise.

"Really, Loder!" he exclaimed, wagging an admonishing forefinger at the Sixth-Former. "That's not the way to speak to a friend, you know. I'm a staunch sort of chap to have for a pal, but you can go too far. I'm not going to stand insults, even from my own pal!"

The Removites grinned.

Loder clenched his fists, and glared.

"What do you want, anyway?" he demanded.

"Ah, that's better," grinned Bunter. "You can't afford to quarrel with me, you know. I'm too fly—nunno, I mean I'm too valuable as a pal to lose!"

"Look here!" hissed Loder sulphurously. "If you're sponging again, why don't you say so. How much do you want this time?"

"Really, Loder! I trust I'm above sponging on my friends."

"Oh dear!" yelled Wharton.

"This is great!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How much?" demanded Loder, diving his hand into his trousers-pocket.

"Well, since you put it like that, I could certainly do with five bob until my postal-order arrives," said Bunter, blinking. "I didn't ask for it, but since you've offered, it wouldn't be pally to refuse."

The Sixth-Former handed two half-crowns to the fat junior with a heavy scowl.

"Oh, good!" exclaimed Bunter, pocketing the coins with a fat smirk. "You quite understand, Loder? This is only a loan. When my postal-order arrives—it'll probably be for ten bob—I hand you the lot by way of interest."

Harry Wharton & Co. watched the junior and senior with puzzled brows. Loder was one of the last seniors to part with money easily, and he was certainly one of the last to stand from Bunter what he was getting, if he could help himself. But apparently he could not help himself.

Having handed the Owl of the Remove the two pieces of silver, the Sixth-Former turned as though to leave.

"I say, Loder!" exclaimed Bunter hurriedly. "Wait a minute."

Loder paused uncertainly.

"I'm in a hurry!" he snarled.

"Very well, then. If our friendship's not worth a few moments of your time, I'm through!"

The prefect gritted his teeth.

"Well, what is it now?" he almost choked.

"About these impositions," began Bunter. "These chaps are all pals of mine. I don't call it friendly of you to go and give them lines. Suppose you cancel them?"

"Do what?" thundered Loder.

"Cancel 'em!" explained Bunter, waving his hand in the direction of the amazed Removites.

"Well, of all the nerve—" gasped Johnny Bull.

"I guess this jay Bunter takes the tonic factory," grinned Fisher T. Fish.

"Well, what about it, Loder?" demanded Bunter, now thoroughly warming to his work. "Is it a deal?"

"Look here, Bunter—"

"Billy to you, Gerry, old man."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here B-Billy, you fat—ah—fellow," finished Loder weakly. "Y-you know I'd d-do anything to oblige you, confound—I mean, if it were possible—No, hang you! Get out!"

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Loder made a sudden dive at the fat junior, and missed.

"I'll smash you!" he grated, all his friendship for the fat junior seeming to have evaporated. "I'll break every bone in your fat body, you squirming, spying, over-fed, brainless toad! Come here! I'll slaughter you!"

The Owl of the Remove dodged behind the burly form of Johnny Bull for protection.

"Wow! Yooop! Keepimoff!" he howled. "Grooh! He's mad! Yow!"

"Come here, you worm!" hissed Loder, his eyes blazing.

"Yow! Lemme alone!"

"I'll smash you!"

"So this is friendship!" murmured Frank Nugent facetiously.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter retreated behind some forms in the corner of the room.

"You—you touch me, Loder," he bleated, "and I'll complain to the Head. I'll tell him about—"

"All right, Bunter!" gasped Loder, all his temper suddenly vanishing. "All right, old fellow. Only in my little joke, you know. Oh, sorry! We're pals, then!"

"Well, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry in amazement.

"That's a quick-change act, and no mistake!"

Loder's change was certainly remarkable. His face, which a moment before had been purple with anger, was now a sickly yellow, while beads of perspiration stood out on his brow.

"Is it p-pax?" asked Bunter, edging out from behind the forms.

"Yes!" said Loder, wishing devoutly that the floor would open and swallow him up. "It's all right. The impositions are—can-cancelled. I don't want to hear any more about it!"

"Oh, good!" grinned Bunter, his courage returning. "That's what I call real pally."

"Hang—I mean I want to be pally!" gasped Loder.

"I say, you fellows," cackled Bunter, addressing the wondering Removites, "I got your lines washed out for you. Don't forget, Loder's my pal!"

"He looks it!" grinned Bulstrode.

"Look here, you youngsters," said Loder in a more civil tone than the Removites had ever heard him use to them before. "You—you needn't mention to anyone else that I've cancelled your lines. I was a—bit hasty at the time, and—and I didn't mean to give them to you. I wouldn't have let you do them in any case. Bunter only sort of—of helped me to realise that I was—hem—hasty and unjust!"

"H'm!"

And with that the thoroughly discomfited prefect turned and strode hastily from the juniors, his eyes studiously avoiding their astonished faces.

"He, he, he!" sniggered Bunter when he had gone. "I know how to handle him, I do. You won't have any more trouble from Loder. I'll look after my pals. It's surprising what firmness will do!"

"Surprising what blackmail will do, you mean!" snorted Bob Cherry in disgust. "You fat worm! I'd like to know how you managed to get Loder on a piece of string. For two straws we'd

give you a bumping! Come on, you fellows!"

Leaving the Owl of the Remove blinking rapidly through his big spectacles, the Removites quitted the Common-room and returned to their own studies.

"Beasts!" hooted Billy Bunter when they had gone. "There's gratitude for you. Yah!"

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Clearing Up of the Mystery!

"SOME nice crisp sosses—" "And some grilled ham—" "With a few fried eggs—" "My hat! It'll go down well!" "The godownfulness will be of the joyful order."

The Famous Five smacked their lips. It was the evening of the day following Bunter's adventure with Loder in the junior common-room. But the chums of the Remove were not very interested in Bunter at the moment. They had put in a hard half-hour at the footer-nets. Already there was a tang of autumn in the air, and it had given them a ravenous appetite.

Earlier that day Harry Wharton had received an unexpected remittance from his uncle, Colonel Wharton. And Wharton had lost no time, with the help of his chums, in spending that remittance in good things at Mrs. Mimble's little tuck-shop in readiness for a celebration when footer practice was over.

The Famous Five were more than ready for these good things now.

"Buck up!" exclaimed Bob Cherry impatiently. "I'm starving!"

"Same here!"

A few minutes later the Removites entered Study No. 1.

"You shove the kettle on while I get the grub out, Inky," suggested Harry Wharton.

"Good egg!"

Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh proceeded to do as requested, while Johnny Bull busied himself in giving an extra clean-out to the frying-pan.

Wharton opened the cupboard door to bring out the provisions. As he did so he started back with a whistle of amazement.

"My giddy aunt!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed the stentorian voice of Bob Cherry. "What's up, Harry?"

"What's up?" almost shrieked the captain of the Remove. "My only hat! It's the grub! It's gone! Every blessed bit!"

"Gone!"

"What the thump—"

The rest of the Famous Five crowded round their leader and stared. It was true enough. Out of all that pile of choice and goodly things that had been laid in before they went down to the playing-fields not a thing remained.

Like Mother Hubbard's celebrated cupboard, when that excellent dame went to seek sustenance for her canine friend, the cupboard was bare—not even so much as a solitary crumb remained.

Harry Wharton & Co. groaned.

"If this isn't the limit!"

The juniors surveyed each other with mournful faces.

They could hardly believe the evidence of their own eyes. They stood as though expecting that by some miraculous chance the missing food would suddenly reappear. But it did nothing of the sort.

The juniors gazed at each other with angry frowns. The same thought was now passing through the mind of each.

"Bunter!" gasped Wharton at length.

"Bunter!" echoed Frank Nugent.

"Bunter!" almost sobbed Bob Cherry.

"The fat bandit!"

"The greedy toad!"

"I'll smash him!"

"I'll burst him!"

The next moment, arming themselves with whatever weapons came first to hand, the hungry juniors dashed out of the study to the apartment occupied by the Owl of the Remove.

Study No. 7 was empty.

"He can't be far!" hooted Bob Cherry. "Come on! We'll find him!"

The Famous Five searched the rest of the Remove studies in turn. They hunted high and low, and round and round. But William George Bunter, like grandfather's spectacles in the poem, could not be found.

"I propose we trail a kipper up and down the passage on a piece of string," suggested Frank Nugent facetiously. "Bunter's sure to smell the bait wherever he is, and when he comes for it we can spring out and grab him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't be an ass, Franky!" snorted Bob Cherry. "What about our blessed grub? Bunter can't be far away!"

"My hat! I've got it!" exclaimed Johnny Bull suddenly. "Let's try the box-room!"

"Good wheeze!"

The juniors dashed to the box-room at the end of the passage. Even as they reached it there came a soft groan from within.

"Wow! I do feel bad! Yooop!"

"Bunter!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Collar him!"

The next second the Removites flung open the box-room door. And there, on the floor, as they had expected, they found the missing Owl. The remains of the wonderful feed which he had raided from Harry Wharton's study lay around him, while his collar and jacket were spattered and splashed with particles of jam-tart and cream-buns.

"Yoooooop!" groaned Bunter, blinking fearfully at the Removites.

"You fat bandit!" snorted Harry. "Where's our grub?"

"Ow! Really, Wharton, I haven't touched your grub! Wow! I didn't touch those rotten jam-tarts! You hid them behind the ham, anyway! Groooh! I'm ill!"

The Famous Five wasted no further time in words. They grabbed the fat junior by the scruff of his neck and dragged him out into the passage.

"Bump him!" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"Give him beans!"

"Let the bumpfulness be terrific!"

Bunter attempted to rise to his feet and break away. But he was almost too full of the stolen provisions to move.

"Ow!" he gasped. "Lemme go!"

Many hands gripped the fat junior, and his heavy carcass smote the hard and unsympathetic linoleum many times in rapid succession.

Bump, bump, bump!

"Ow! Yoooooop!" he howled. "You rotten bullies! I'll make you sit up for this! Wait till I tell my pal Loder! Yoooooop!"

"And again!"

Bump, bump, bump!

"I think that will do for the present, you chaps!" panted Harry Wharton.

And, feeling that justice—or a little of it—had been done, the juniors, with a loud and final bump, dropped the Owl of the Remove to the floor, and left him roaring.

As they did so something dropped from Bunter's jacket-pocket and rolled across the floor.

ANSWERS

Every Saturday!—PRICE 2:

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"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, quickly picking it up. "What the thump's this?"

The juniors stared.

It was a roll of film!

"Give it to me, you rotters!" roared Billy Bunter, suddenly springing to his feet, his fat face purple with rage. "It's mine! Give it to me!"

"Hold the fat porpoise while we have a look at it, Bob!" exclaimed Wharton quietly. "I've got an idea we're on the verge of clearing up the Loder mystery."

Despite his struggles and protests, the Owl of the Remove was firmly secured while the Removites examined the roll of film.

"My giddy aunt!" exclaimed Johnny Bull suddenly. "There's Loder and Walker in it—"

"And Carne, too!"

"The rotters are smoking cigarettes!"

"And playing cards!"

"Oh, my hat!"

The excited Removites unrolled more of the film and held it up to the light. They made out the interior of Loder's study as it had been on the night of his little party to Carne and Walker. The whole of the three seniors' actions from the time they entered the study until they had left to obtain more cigarettes were clearly depicted.

Harry Wharton & Co. gasped.

"Whew!"

"Great Scott!"

"My only Sunday topper!"

"I—I say, you beasts!" spluttered Billy Bunter. "Give it to me! It's mine, you know!"

The Famous Five looked at the strip of film again, and then at the fat junior. The reason Gerald Loder of the Sixth had been so anxious to retain Bunter's friendship was obvious enough now.

Knowing what the fat Removite possessed, the prefect had been completely in his power!

"You deep bounder!" gasped Nugent.

"Poor old Loder!"

"Serve him blessed well right!"

"This is rich!"

The next moment the Famous Five went off into a loud and prolonged roar of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No wonder Bunter knew the blessed camera was behind the curtain in Loder's study. He must have left it there when he had done filming them!" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

Even as the junior spoke there came a wild howl of alarm from Billy Bunter as the angry face of Gerald Loder himself suddenly appeared round a corner of the passage.

"Wow! Keepimoff!"

Loder saw the roll of film in Wharton's hand, and in a fraction of a second he realised what had happened.

"Look out!" roared Bob Cherry.

But he was too late.

The infuriated prefect charged full into the crowd of juniors, and before anyone could prevent him, he snatched the film from Harry Wharton's hands. The next second he turned to his quondam pal, and, forgetful of everything but a desire to punish the fat junior for what he had made him suffer, commenced to hit out right and left.

"Yarook! Keep him off!" howled Bunter. "Wow! Stoppit!"

"Go easy, Loder!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"You—you young bound!" raged Loder, his face purple with rage. "You—you—"

Words failed the prefect. Now the film was safely in his own pocket he determined to make Bunter sit up. But if words failed him, actions did not.

"MAGNET" PORTRAIT GALLERY.

No. 5.—Peter Todd (of the Remove).



Deeply interested in matters appertaining to the Law, and possessing the "gift of the gab," Peter Todd enjoys the distinction of being the School-boy Lawyer. Shrewd and logical to a marked degree, Peter Todd has been responsible for solving many baffling mysteries that have puzzled his Form-fellows. A good all-round athlete, Peter is a prominent member of the cricket and football elevens. Cousin of Alonzo Todd, the Duffer of Greyfriars, to whom he bears an extraordinary likeness. Constitutes himself the "guardian" of Billy Bunter who, with Tom Dutton, the deaf junior, and the two Todds, occupies Study No. 7. A great favourite with Greyfriars in general and the Remove in particular, who invariably refer to him as "Good old Toddy."

Gripping the squirming Owl of the Remove by the scruff of his fat neck, he jerked him up the passage in the direction of his own study.

"Ow! Help! Rescue, Remove!" shouted Bunter.

But Harry Wharton & Co. did not move.

They felt that Bunter richly deserved all he was going to get. He did!

• • • • •

Ten minutes later the story of the film that had been found in Bunter's pocket was fairly common property.

The explanation of the Owl's extraordinary power over the Sixth-Former was out with a vengeance.

At first the Removites had been more amazed than amused. Then they remembered how Bunter, during his temporary reign as Loder's pal, had made the bullying prefect do his bidding—and they howled.

No one had any sympathy for Loder. Loder was not exactly popular in the Lower School, and they felt that he deserved all he had got. And the fact that he had got it from the usually obtuse Owl of the Remove made the joke all the greater.

This incident, however, marked the end of the school cinema, Harry Wharton

& Co. realising that a film camera was a decidedly dangerous article if it fell into wrong hands.

When William George Bunter next appeared in the Remove quarters he could hardly walk. He was aching in every bone, and wildly flicking one fat hand to and fro, whilst with the other he kept tender guard over a certain part of his anatomy where Loder had been busy with a cricket-stump.

"Ow! The smoking rotter!" he groaned. "I'm hurt! Groooogh!"

The only sympathy he received, however, was a loud yell of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Serve you jolly well right!"

Bunter staggered away to his study, where for the rest of the evening he was engaged in treating his damaged carcass with embrocation. It was a long time indeed, however, before he fully recovered from Loder's licking, and still longer before he heard the last of the time when he was Loder's pal.

THE END.

(Look out for another powerful school story of the chums of Greyfriars, entitled "The Bounder's Way!" by Frank Richards, featuring Tom Redwing, the fisherman's son, and Herbert Vernon-Smith, better known as the Bounder.)

THE MASTER MIND! Behind the depredations carried out by the curious phenomenon that has come to be styled the Phantom Bat there is the controlling power of a very earthly and material genius. Unto him all things affecting the investigations carried out by the police are known. Who is that man?



A full-of-thrills detective story featuring Ferrers Locke, the private investigator, and his clever boy assistant, Jack Drake.

The Clue of the Cloth!

PONDERING deeply on the events of the previous night, Jack Drake was finishing his breakfast somewhat disconsolately when the door of the room opened to admit Ferrers Locke.

"Hallo, guv'nor!" said Drake, starting from his seat. "I found the note you left on the table to say that you were not to be disturbed, so I thought I'd better get on with brekka."

"Quite right, lad."

"Anyhow, now you're here I'll tell Sing-Sing to see about something hot. These kidneys, or what's left of them, are cold."

"Don't bother about anything beyond a cup of coffee for me, Jack," Locke interrupted as the lad was darting to the bell-push; "you can tell Sing-Sing to bring up a fresh supply."

And, settling himself in an armchair, the criminologist stretched out his legs with a sigh of satisfaction.

"Bet long odds that you haven't had any rest all last night," Jack remarked, when the Chinese servant had departed to execute his order.

"And you'd be right, Jack," laughed Ferrers Locke. "Anyhow, I'm fairly well satisfied with my night's work."

"Good for you, guv'nor, for that means that you've struck a clue!"

"As to that, I've certainly gathered some information that will form the basis of our future operations."

"About the letter brought by the messenger-boy?" queried Drake.

"Oh, that!" Ferrers Locke shrugged his shoulders. "So far it only confirms my belief that the man against whom we have pitted our wits is not only possessed of a thorough knowledge of chemistry, but is also marvellously well informed as to what's going on around him, otherwise he wouldn't have gone to all that trouble to have attempted to give me my quietus."

"Which, thank Heaven, failed, guv'nor! But what licks me is how the fellow could have found out that you were on the case."

"Just so, my lad; but if that's going to lick you, I'm thinking you stand a

chance of having a good many more lickings before this case is over. As I said, we're not up against an ordinary crook. For example, take the way in which the lock of that safe was reduced to powder. Why, if applied in the right direction, there is a fortune awaiting any man who could place such an easily-handled and formidable means of fusion on the market."

Jack nodded.

"Did the envelope give you any clue as to where it came from?" he inquired.

"Haven't had time to go into that yet, my lad. For the moment, I'll leave that problem to Pyecroft. He can put a man on the job to trace the messenger-boy. Though I don't think we'll get much out of it, even if he succeeds. Ah, here's Sing-Sing with the coffee!"

CHARACTERS IN THE STORY.

FERRERS LOCKE, the famous private detective of Baker Street.

JACK DRAKE, his clever boy assistant.

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

"THE CHIEF", a mysterious personage, who directs the coups of the Phantom Bat, the name given to the weird, inhuman-looking object, capable of flying like an aeroplane, about which, so far, very little is known by Scotland Yard.

HUSKY and the SNARK, two prominent members of the Chief's gang.

Soon after the Phantom Bat is seen flying over London comes the news of a daring robbery at the house of Juan Fernandez—an agent of a Spanish Grandee—in whose care some priceless emeralds have been entrusted. The emeralds are stolen, and the few clues left behind point to the work being that of the Bat.

Ferrers Locke is invited to investigate the case, and forthwith the sleuth and his assistant make their way to the scene of the robbery. On the return journey Drake discovers a stray puppy in the car, and, being fond of animals, he takes it into the house. From Sing-Sing, Locke's servant, the detective learns that a messenger-boy had called with an urgent letter. The letter in question gets knocked on to the floor, whereupon the puppy, in playful mood, begins to tear it up. In less than five seconds the animal lies stretched out in a lifeless heap, having inhaled a deadly powder contained in the letter—evidently intended for Ferrers Locke.

(Now read on.)

With silent steps the Celestial crossed the room, and at a nod from his master poured out a cup of the fragrant beverage. Locke sipped it with evident relish, whilst Jack leaned back in his seat, anxiously waiting to hear more.

At length the empty cup was replaced on the table. Then turning to his assistant, the investigator drew a small envelope from his pocket, from which he abstracted a minute fragment of some dark material.

"Although you didn't notice it at the time, I removed this from the head of a rusty nail protruding from the outer framework of the window of the room in which the safe was placed," he remarked as he passed the object over to his assistant. "Now, Jack, let's see what you make of it?"

The lad pored intently over the material before replying.

"Can't say that I can make much of it, guv'nor," he at length remarked, "except that it looks as though it had been torn from a larger piece, and seems to have been messed up with something sticky."

"Very good so far as it goes. It certainly was torn from a larger piece, and also, as you express it, been messed up with something sticky, for it has been coated with a rubber solution."

"A rubber solution?"

"That's so. In my opinion, it originally formed a portion of a roll of similar material, and had been used to make a hasty patch over a rent in some larger object."

"But what?"

"Ah, there you've got me, old chap. Like yourself, all I can say at present is, 'but what?' Anyhow, this little piece of silk, for silk it is, tells a tale. Careful investigation under the microscope shows that embedded in its meshes are not only grains of ground coral, but also of lapis-lazuli, clearly proving that at one time it had borne a design painted on it by a Japanese artist, for many of those worthies use finely-powdered minerals mixed with a medium as a means of obtaining colour effects impossible to be produced in any other way."

Jack whistled softly.

"Japanese!" he muttered. "D'you

think it's a Japanese crook who's at the back of this?"

Ferrers Locke laughed.

"Running away with yourself, my lad?" he asked in return. "It's far too early days to make an assertion of that sort, though whoever the unknown is, it's evident that he possesses a thorough insight into the ways of our friends in the land of the Mikado."

The lad glanced up sharply.

"You may remember that I got the Spaniard, Fernandez, to hand over his collar?" continued Locke.

"Should rather say that I do, guv'nor! And my brain's been kicking pretty badly about it ever since," said Drake.

"Well, my reason for doing so was that I was instantly struck by the man's account of how the 'mysterious shape,' as he designates it, leaped at him and that his face instantly became damp, then icy cold, before he lost consciousness. A quick searching of his face revealed some minute green specks on his skin as well as some which showed up on his collar. In order to assure myself, therefore, as to the correctness of my theory, I brought the collar away with me."

"And you found—" Jack interrupted.

"Exactly what I expected I should. The anæsthetic with which the Spaniard had been sprayed is one that is practically unknown to Western science; one that acts with startling rapidity. And, moreover, here's the point: The exact composition of this anæsthetic is a jealously-guarded secret of the priests of Shinto, and this mysterious Japanese sect have christened it 'The Sleep of Silence.'"

"Well, I'm jiggered!" the lad

gasped, as Ferrers Locke paused. Then unexpectedly he added: "If this stuff is a secret of these Shinto priests, guv'nor, our man obviously must have it sent over from—"

"There you're altogether wrong, my lad, and that's the one thing that's giving us a start on his trail."

"A start? How? Hang me if I quite follow."

"Simple enough when you understand. But I'll explain. This anæsthetic, in order to be efficacious, must be mixed within a few hours prior to its being used, otherwise it loses its strength. So that—"

"I follow you, guv'nor!" exclaimed Drake. "There must be some of those Shinto johnnies kicking around over here, who keep the crook supplied with the stuff whenever he wants it."

"That's my theory," said the detective quietly. "So now it's up to us to dig them out. Once we locate them, it ought to be a comparatively easy matter to locate their customer."

The sleuth glanced at his watch.

"Jove!" he exclaimed. "Didn't know it was so late! We ought to have heard from Pyecroft by this time!"

"You won't be long before you do, if I'm not mistaken," grinned Jack, as he darted to the window. "Thought so!" he added. "Here's a jolly old taxi pulling up, and I'm cock-sure the inspector's inside, by the way the contraption sways."

"You'd stand a good chance of getting a box on the ear if our friend the inspector was present to hear you," laughed Locke.

"Lucky for me he's not, then," grinned Drake.

A few minutes later the portly form

of the police official stood framed in the doorway.

"Hallo, Locke!" he cried heartily. "Thought I might have seen you at the Yard."

"Nothing doing in that line yet, Pyecroft."

"Too early for you, I suppose?" the C. I. D. man answered jokingly as he flung himself in an armchair. "Well, anything doing?"

In that brief manner that was peculiarly his own, the unofficial detective narrated the strange happenings of the previous evening.

"By thunder!" burst out Pyecroft at length. "The dirty skunk! Well, there's one thing, Locke, he's shown his hand, and we shall have to keep our eyes skinned."

"You're correct; but forewarned is forearmed. Look here, Pyecroft," said Locke quietly, "I'm going to get you to put a man on to trace the messenger-boy. We may learn something in that quarter, though I expect whoever handed the letter in took jolly good care to cover his tracks. And now I suppose you've brought the list of men Fernandez got in touch with regarding the sale of the emeralds."

"Sure thing! Here it is," replied the inspector, producing a piece of paper from his wallet and handing it to his companion.

"Umph!" Ferrers Locke grunted as he let his eye run down the list. "Morris Gruenbaum, of Hatton Gardens, Best-known dealer on the market; Sherwood Forrester, St. Mary Axe. Let's see! Ah, he's the man who's reputed to have financial dealings with half the crowned heads on the map, let alone sundry other illustrious personages. Both sound men, and— Ah! Here's Count Majorca—"



With a snarl of rage the Japanese in the detective's rear sprang to his feet, shrieking out that a foreign devil was profaning the temple. He followed up this assertion by hurling himself at Ferrers Locke, endeavouring to pin him to the ground. (See page 25.)

as well known in London social life as anyone. Bit of a collector himself, I believe. Did all these three men actually inspect the stones?" he asked, turning to Pycroft.

"No; Gruenbaum and Forrester did, but the count, on learning the figure Fernandez was asking, contented himself with stating that, as he wasn't a multi-millionaire, he'd have to cry off."

"As far as can be judged, then," Locke went on, "every one of these men is absolutely above suspicion. Still, it would be interesting to interview them, for they may have someone in their employ who, having learned of the proposed transaction, has passed word on to undesirable quarters. If I were you, Pycroft, I'd make it my business to give them a look up. In a complicated case like this promises to be, it doesn't do to let a single chance slip."

"Glad that's your opinion," agreed the inspector. "As a matter of fact, I was on my way to Hatton Gardens when I thought I'd call in here first. And that reminds me. If I'm going to see Gruenbaum this morning, I haven't any time to lose. So-long! I'll phone you if anything worth reporting turns up."

And scrambling from his seat, the police official, after gripping his colleague's hand, stamped down the stairs.

A Dangerous Mission!

"I SUPPOSE you've already sketched out some plan, guv'nor?" asked Jack, turning to his chief as soon as the footsteps of the Yard man had died away.

"Why, yes. My intention is to pay a visit to a certain spot in Lambeth where these Shinto priests have fixed up a temple."

"Lambeth?" ejaculated Drake, in astonishment. "They've got a place here in London?"

"Yes, and where, it's reported, they practise rites that are—well, not strictly in accordance with our Western ideas," was Locke's reply.

"I get you, guv'nor! Think you'll be able to spot who's been supplying this anæsthetic?"

"Hardly that straight away; but I am hoping to establish the identity of the priest, or priests, and that will be a start in the right direction. Fortunately,

this evening is one on which the followers of Shinto hold high festival, the occasion being the 'Feast of Hyoshani,' as they call it. An occasion on which every member of the sect makes a point of being present and bringing offerings with him. With luck, a strange face will not be noticed as on ordinary occasions."

"Pretty hot stuff, though, aren't they, guv'nor, about any foreigner entering their shrines, or whatever they call them?"

Ferrers Locke smiled grimly.

"It's hinted, my lad, that any foreigner who is unfortunate enough to be detected is never seen alive again."

"Then it looks as though we are in for something spicy."

The criminologist looked up sharply.

"We? What d'you mean by 'we'?" he asked, with a tantalising smile.

"Why us, guv'nor, of course," replied Drake instantly. "You're not thinking of leaving me out. My giddy aunt! It wouldn't—I mean, why, who knows, on a stunt like this, I might come in handy, and—"

"There's one thing that absolutely precludes you from attempting such a thing," replied the detective kindly. "You can't speak a word of Japanese, and this fact alone would almost instantly give the show away."

"I know I can't, guv'nor. But who's to know that? Hang it! I could be as dumb as an oyster."

Ferrers Locke patted his assistant on the shoulder.

"I appreciate your motive, my boy," he said. "I know well enough that when there's danger about, you're always anxious to share it. But though it will be impossible for you to be with me, I'll see to it that you're not far away!"

Drake's face brightened considerably.

The details that Ferrers Locks had carefully mapped out were soon explained to his assistant, with the result that, just as daylight was merging into night, two forms silently quitted the Baker Street premises.

The first to emerge was a man whose thin, grey locks and bent back gave him the appearance of great age, whilst though arrayed in shabby, European clothing, his sallown skin and eyes, that by a masterly touch of make-up seemed but mere slits, would have caused an observer to have at once proclaimed him as an Asiatic.

Carefully closing the door of the yard at the rear of the premises through which he had passed, Ferrers Locke, after one keen glance round, shuffled off, almost at the same moment as a lad, bearing under his arm a wooden tray covered with a cloth, stepped briskly from the front door.

With an old cap pulled well over features that would have been greatly improved by the application of soap and water, his threadbare trousers and jacket, with a big slit above the elbow, none would have recognised Jack Drake, the criminologist's usually spick-and-span assistant.

Yet such was the individual. Not many minutes elapsed before he had gained the thoroughfare along which his disguised chief was shuffling, Drake keeping well away on the opposite side of the road.

So the distance between the detective's headquarters and a dreary street in Lambeth was slowly traversed, till the pseudo-Japanese halted before a dingy shop, in the dirt-grimed windows of which were displayed a collection of articles seemingly only fitted for the scrap-heap.

A moment's close scrutiny, and then,

without hesitation, Ferrers Locke boldly entered.

Previous residence in Japan had not only gained for the investigator a fluent knowledge of the language, but had also initiated him into much of the ritual observed at both sacred and public functions. It was to the manner born, therefore, that he kow-towed to a man who instantly came forward, one whom he inwardly noted was about as evil-looking a specimen of a Jap as he had ever set eyes on.

Very few words, however, passed between them, and after a searching look at his visitor, the custodian of the premises drew aside a curtain at the farther end of the shop, and, pointing to a flight of stairs that led upwards, indicated that Locke was to ascend.

With the utmost calmness, the investigator stepped forward, though it was with a sensation the reverse of pleasant that his ears caught a loud clang of metal, assuring him that an unseen metal door had closed behind him, effectually cutting off any chance of retracing his steps, should he desire to do so.

A light touch on his pocket, to assure himself that his automatic was at hand in case of emergency, and then, without so much as turning his head, he commenced the ascent.

Some twenty steps, and he found his way barred by a heavy curtain. From behind the curtain came a confused murmur of voices that, gradually increasing in volume, burst into some weird sort of chant, above which now and again floated the harsh notes of reed instruments.

Drawing the curtain slowly on one side, Locke passed through into a long, low-roofed chamber. The walls were covered with flowing draperies, and the whole place was illuminated by scores of small tapers affixed to brackets around the walls.

A swift glance round assured the detective that some fifteen or sixteen men (some, like himself, wearing European clothing, and others the flowing garments of the East), grouped before a shrine or altar, which supported a hideous carved effigy, men who, at the moment the detective entered, prostrated themselves to the ground. Following their example, Locke flung himself down, though taking care to remain in such a position that he was enabled to see around.

Almost instantly, a strange, wailing note from some barbaric instrument echoed out, as there slowly entered one whose shaven crown and gorgeous robes proclaimed him to be the officiating priest, and who, after a low obeisance, mounted the altar steps.

Ferrers Locke took a peep at the fellow, and started involuntarily.

"Where had he seen the man before?" was the thought that surged through his brain.

Far above the average height of his countrymen, the priest was not only noticeable on that account, but also from the fact that a curious triangular scar disfigured his left cheek.

That they had met before Locke was firmly convinced. But where? In vain the detective racked his brain for an answer, as once again he bowed his head.

Little did he dream how near to upsetting, not only all his well-thought-out plans, but even imperilling his life, that unexpected recognition was destined to prove.

When dressing for his assumed character, Ferrers Locke had discarded his collar, substituting a somewhat worn scarf. The start he had involuntarily given at the entrance of the priest had caused this to shift slightly, so that

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when again prostrating himself, a thin line of neck in its natural colour appeared below the material, a line of white skin, in vivid contrast to his otherwise sallow features.

This thin streak of neck, shown up in the flickering light of the tapers instantly caught the eye of a wrinkled Japanese in the detective's rear, who, with a snarl of rage, sprang to his feet shrieking out that a foreign devil was profaning the temple. He followed up this assertion by hurling himself at Locke and endeavouring to pin him to the ground.

The effect was magical, the cry being taken up on all sides, and even as the sleuth flung his attacker on one side, and leaped to his feet, it was to find every man in the room, many of them brandishing weapons, rushing towards him.

There was no time to draw his automatic, for, with eyes gleaming with hate, the fanatics were almost upon him. But Locke was not one to be easily overcome, even though taken at a disadvantage. Like a flash, his left flew out, the foremost man staying a pile-driving blow on his chin that not only lifted him from his feet, but sent him hurtling back amidst his comrades.

A second shared a similar fate, and then, before his enemies could realise his intention, Locke had sprung backwards towards the wall, causing those who were shrieking out curses at the "foreign devil" to pull up with a jerk, as they found themselves covered by an ugly-looking, blue-barrelled automatic, grasped in a hand as rigid as though carved out of stone.

"Stand where you are, or I'll shoot!" hissed Locke in fluent Japanese.

The pack of Asiatics paused, snarling.

For the moment Locke was holding his foes at bay, but he well knew that, should they make a concerted rush, his number would be up.

To attempt to cross the room and gain the door by which he had entered would be worse than useless, besides which, should he succeed, there would still be the steel door at the bottom of the stairs to bar his progress. There was only one chance for him. The priest had entered the chamber from somewhere at the rear of the altar, clearly demonstrating that at that particular spot there must be some means of egress.

With Ferrers Locke, to think was to act.

Crack, crack! His automatic barked spitefully, though harmlessly, he having purposely aimed above the heads of those confronting him. Then, covered by the momentary confusion his action had caused, Locke dashed across the intervening space, to find, as he had anticipated, a narrow doorway, through which he darted just as the infuriated followers of the priest, recovering from their panic, raced after him.

Once more, to face round and lash out at the leering face before him was the work of a moment. In doing so, however, some inequality in the flooring caused the sleuth to stumble, with the result that his automatic dropped from his hand.

There was no time to attempt to recover it, so, turning, he sprinted up the flight of steps that lay before him, speeding upwards, he knew not whither.

Up he went, with the howling, screeching mob close at his heels. Several doors the detective passed in his headlong flight, a hasty examination showing that they were secured. So on, till what was evidently the top landing was gained,

from which a ladder led upwards to a trap in the roof.

This the sleuth instantly mounted, and with a heave of his shoulders he forced the heavy covering upwards. Another second, and Locke had drawn himself through. Then, slamming it back into its place, the detective flung himself panting upon it.

He was just in time, for as the woodwork clattered into position the nearest of his sallow-faced foes had gained the lower rung of the ladder.

Glancing around, Ferrers Locke found that he had arrived on the flat roof of a building that formed the end of the row of houses. On one side, and at his back, lofty walls reached upwards to a height precluding any possibility of scaling them. Before him lay a sheer drop of some sixty feet to the street below, whilst the remaining side, protected by a low parapet, overlooked a narrow passage, facing which was a similar flat-roofed structure, but too far away to attempt the risk of a leap to gain it.

Ferrers Locke was in an awkward position, and he knew it. It was impossible for him to move, for it was the weight of his body alone that prevented those below from forcing their way through. Should that happen, unarmed as he now was, the detective knew he would be absolutely at their mercy.

A few blasts on the police whistle in his pocket would, he knew, bring him aid, but that was the last thing he desired in the circumstances.

So far, his investigations had met with unqualified success. He had secured a mental photograph of the only priest of Shinto in the country, for had there been others they would never have absented themselves from the temple on that day of all days. All Locke desired now was to get away without his identity being discovered. But how?

Suddenly, from the street below, a shrill cry was wafted upwards.

"Here yer are! Only a penny!"

It was Jack's voice. As arranged, the lad, in order to remain near the premises without attracting notice, had rigged himself out as a street hawker, in which guise he had been perambulating up and down, offering the toys on his tray at a penny a-piece.

Snatching an electric torch from his pocket, together with his letter-case, Locke, with the aid of the light, rapidly scribbled a few words on an envelope. Then, wrapping the piece of paper round a coin, he paused, for a sudden thud,



The detective retreated up the narrow flight of stairs with the howling mob at his heels. (See this page.)

accompanied by a jerk that almost unseated him, told that his yellow-skinned enemies, failing to dislodge him by other means, had procured a heavy beam of wood, which they were evidently using as a battering-ram.

There was no time to lose, and instantly Locke whistled three times in succession, a signal he knew his assistant would understand.

A second later, and the welcome sounds of an answering whistle rang out, and knowing that Jack would be on the look-out, the detective flung the weighted message into the street below.

The Interrupted Message!

JACK DRAKE, as he sent back the answering whistle, bundled the contents of his tray into a bag slung across his shoulders, so as to be ready for any emergency. Then, as he tried to pierce the gloom in the direction from which the signal had seemed to proceed, the clatter of some small object falling on the pavement caught his ear.

Darting across the road that was almost deserted, Jack's keen eyes soon detected something white on the sidewalk, and stooping, he snatched it up to discover that it was a piece of paper wrapped round a coin.

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A couple of strides, and he was beneath a street lamp, ripping open the paper as he did so.

The message ran:

"Get to the roof of the corner house where they are doing repairs."

The message was short, but the lad instantly realised what it was his chief wished him to do, though why, he was at an utter loss to understand. However, that mattered little; he had received his instructions, and he was going to carry them out.

The corner house referred to was undoubtedly not the one which Locke had entered, but one on the opposite side of a narrow passage, one against which builders' ladders were still reared. To clamber over the hoarding surrounding it, and fling aside his now useless bag and tray, was to the young athlete but the work of a moment. Then, gaining one of the ladders, Drake swarmed up it with the agility of a bluejacket.

In a very few seconds the staging round the coping of the building was gained. Pausing, Jack repeated the whistle.

"That you, Jack?" came a voice that he knew well from somewhere amidst the gloom on the farther side of the passage.

"Me, right enough, guv'nor!" he called back. "Where are you?"

"Can't show myself, lad. But can you find a plank up there long enough to bridge over this passage? If so, get it across as quick as you can."

Too accustomed to act on an emergency to waste time in asking questions, Jack instantly measured the distance between the building with his eye, and then glanced at the planks of which the scaffolding was composed.

There were plenty long enough, but how could he get one across the gap?

"My hat!" he jerked out suddenly, as he glanced up. "The very thing!"

Swaying above his head, attached to a rope, was a long plank, presumably as the workmen had left it when knocking off time had arrived.

Nothing could be easier. All he had to do was to rest one end on the scaffolding, and then, swinging it round so that the other end pointed outwards, lower away the rope, and allow it to drop in the required position.

Without wasting a second, the lad secured the end of the plank in position, then, with a mighty shove, sent the other end over the passage. To his dismay, however, he found that there was not the least possibility of lowering away the rope as he had intended, for no sooner had he turned aside to attempt it than the planking swayed back again towards him.

Again the end was secured, and once again the timber swung outwards. Only this time Jack did not leave go his hold. With a warning shout to his chief to stand clear, he wrenched a sheath-knife from a belt around his waist, and with a swift stroke severed the rope supporting the length of wood.

With a resounding crash the timber landed on the opposite building, the impact causing it to bounce up before finally settling into place. No sooner had this happened than the rays from an electric torch unexpectedly flashed out, and a form that, even in the uncertain light, Jack recognised as Ferrers Locke, sprang upon the extemporised bridge, and, guided by the light he carried, commenced the perilous passage.

Too astounded to speak, Jack stared in silent astonishment, though the silence was not long unbroken, for a chorus of yells sounded in the detective's rear, as some four or five dim figures appeared on the roof the investigator had just quitted.

Ferrers Locke had also heard the shouts. The weight of his body being removed from the trap-door, his enemies had swarmed through the opening.

To continue his comparatively slow progress along the swaying plank would be impossible, for long before the sleuth could gain the farther end his pursuers would, in their mad rage, sweep his frail support away and hurl him to eternity.

Swift to decide in moments of danger, the investigator, raising the light that guided his footsteps, flashed its rays on the building before him, then, calculating to a nicety the distance to a cross-beam that had arrested his attention, he thrust the lamp into his pocket.

Next, before either his relentless enemies or his assistant could determine what his intentions were, the detective had crouched low to give himself the necessary impetus, and boldly leaped.

With a clatter the plank that had formed his support crashed into the street below, a clatter almost instantly drowned by the yells of execration that rose from his pursuers.

But above the din there rose a frantic "Hurrah!" from Jack, as his beloved chief, having grasped the beam towards which he had launched himself, dropped safe and sound at his assistant's side.

It required but a very few moments for Locke and Jack to descend from their lofty position. Nor were they anxious to remain, for the crash of the falling timber, coupled with the wild shouts of the Asiatics, had caused people to rush from the neighbouring houses. And, as it was, Ferrers Locke and his assistant had barely gained the ground before the passage was filled with a shouting, gesticulating mob.

"Slip on the other side of the road, Jack," whispered Locke, as they wriggled through an opening in the fencing surrounding the building. "We'll get out of this as quickly as we can!"

Drake, followed by the detective, darted past a number of people hurrying towards the scene of the excitement, and gained the comparatively deserted pavement. A rapid walk through short cuts with which both were familiar brought them in the vicinity of Westminster Bridge, where a taxi was soon secured. Inside half an hour the famous criminologist and his assistant were mounting the steps of the former's chambers in Baker Street.

Barely, however, had Locke opened the door with his key than a light flashed out from a landing above, and a voice that unmistakably emanated from Pycroft roared out:

"That you, Locke? By gad, I'm glad you've turned up!"

"Oh, yes, I've turned up, like the proverbial bad halfpenny," came the laughing reply. "And what's brought you round here at this time of night?" he added, as he mounted the stairs.

"Brought me round?" snorted the inspector. "Rang you up some dozen times, and as all I could get out of your confounded Chink was 'No savvy,' I guess I had to come."

"Well, don't stand there puffing like a grampus!" the private investigator went on, as he flung aside his wig. "You can get on with your yarn just as well in a comfy chair. Now, what's the trouble?"

"Well, it amounts to this," blurted out the inspector, as he lowered his portly frame to a chair. "The Phantom Bat's been seen again."

"Come, that sounds interesting," Locke commented. "Any developments?"

"Not up to the time I left the Yard, but I thought you'd like to know as soon as possible."

"Thanks! Jolly sporting of you, old man. And now, when was it seen, and by whom?"

"About a couple of hours ago, and by young Harry Dimsdale. You've met him, haven't you?"

"Oh, yes, more than once! He's the fellow who's perfecting an invention of his own, something to do with silencing the engines of aircraft, isn't he?"

"That's the chap. Well, he was making a night flight in one of his own machines when all at once this Bat thing, emerging from a bank of cloud, passed straight in front of him."

"And what did he make of it?"

"Well, to tell the truth, he saw very little of it, for it shot swiftly across his bows, so to speak, though the rough description he is able to give tallies with what young Jack told us, though he is as much at a loss to understand how the wretched thing is propelled as you or I."

"Where was Dimsdale when he came across it?"

"Over Aldershot."

"And was the Bat proceeding towards London, or from it?"

"Neither!"

"Neither?" queried Locke, raising his eyebrows.

"No. Dimsdale states that it was flying practically due north, so that, unless it altered its course, it wouldn't pass within some miles of London."

"Making due north was it?" As he spoke, the detective rose and removed a map from the wall; then, placing it on the table, began ruling pencil lines across it.

"What's the stunt?" inquired Pycroft, from the depths of his armchair.

"Working out a little problem, that's all. Let's see. On the night the emeralds were lifted from Myrtle House the Bat passed over here in a nor'-westerly direction, as was proved by its being seen over Hampstead Heath. Got me?"

"Well, that's stale news!"

"May be; but useful all the same. Now, see. I'm ruling a line through London exactly nor'-west, and now that's done, I'm going to rule another, taking Aldershot as the base and continuing the line due north!"

The detective's pencil streaked across the paper as he spoke.

"D'you follow what that's for?" he asked.

"To spoil a good map, I should say!" grunted Pycroft.

"No, my worthy official friend, nothing of the sort. Of course, to a certain extent it's guesswork at present. But mysterious objects like this Bat don't go dodging around scooping in emeralds and other trifles without having some base of operations. Now, taking it for granted that on each occasion on which it has been seen it continued on a straight course, as marked



Before either his relentless enemies or his assistant guessed his intention Ferrers Locke crouched low to give himself the necessary impetus, and boldly leaped. With a clatter the plank that had formed his support crashed into the street below. (See page 26.)

by these pencil-lines, I find that they bisect at the Chiltern Hills, which, as it is a sparsely populated district, would be a handy spot for stowing away this aerial curiosity."

"By thump, but there's method in your madness, after all!" the inspector agreed. "For, after all, the blessed thing must have a garage, or hangar, or something!"

"So far, so good!"

Removing his coat, and donning an old dressing-gown, Locke exchanged his boots for a pair of old carpet slippers. Then, selecting a pipe from a rack on the wall, he stuffed it with black tobacco and lit up.

"Found out anything about the messenger-boy who brought that letter for the gov'nor?" Jack asked the inspector.

"By jingo, yes, my lad! With my head so full of this blessed Bat, I forgot to mention it," Pyecroft answered apologetically.

"Oh, that's all right!" smiled Locke. "Anyhow, what's the result?"

"Odd thing, but Jackson, who's one of my best men, has visited every District Messenger office in the metropolis, and not from any one of them was a lad despatched with a letter to you."

Jack Drake whistled.

"Anyhow, it jolly well was a messenger-boy who came," he remarked, "for next morning I made Sing-Sing fully describe his uniform."

"Uniform or no uniform, Jack," the detective interrupted, "according to

the inspector's statement, you're wrong."

"But if he wasn't a messenger-boy, who was he, and how could he have got hold of a uniform?" the lad persisted.

"Uniform. Are you forgetting, Jack, that there are such people as theatrical costumiers?"

"Oh—"

"Somehow I didn't think that an individual like the one we've evidently got to deal with," said Locke, "would have fallen into such an error as to employ a public servant who could be easily traced."

"There I'm quite with you!" Pyecroft agreed. "But when sending the messenger, why rig him out in uniform at all?"

Ferrers Locke shrugged his shoulders.

"Who can say? Yet there are two reasons that are not unlikely. One, to give the transaction an appearance of urgency; and the other, which, to my way of thinking, seems the most probable, to provide against the contingency of his messenger being recognised, for, at a casual glance, one lad in uniform closely resembles another."

"Strikes me, gov'nor, that it wouldn't be half a bad stunt if I make a round of these theatrical people to-morrow, and if any of them have recently let out one of these uniforms, I might be able to drop on something."

"Quite a good idea, my lad. You can easily pitch a yarn that you are going to a fancy-dress dance. But, while I

think of it, Pyecroft, how about your interview with those fellows who inspected the emeralds? What transpired in that quarter?"

"Absolutely nothing, as far as Gruenbaum and Forrester were concerned. They at once admitted that they had been negotiating for the purchase of the stones, but had been unable to come to terms. Forrester, in particular, seemed pretty sore that he'd lost them. Fancy he's in touch with some rajah, who'd got his eye on them."

"And their employees?"

"All old hands. Been with them donkey's years!"

"Good! And the count?"

"The count? Why, hang it all, man, what was the good of bothering him? Beyond having an interview with Fernandez, he had nothing to do with the matter."

"Oh, well, of course you please yourself as to the line of investigation you intend to follow, but for myself, I should certainly have interviewed him."

"And wasted your time!" Pyecroft grinned.

"Possibly, or possibly not," Locke answered dryly. "Anything fresh occurred at Myrtle House?"

"No, don't think so! Oh, did I mention that the day before the robbery some surveying fellow with a theodolite, and all that, was measuring up the grounds there?"

"No. What for?"

"A new branch tube that the Cosmo

politan Railway are going to run under the building. A line that is to run to Beckenham."

"You've seen the man?"

"Oh dear, no! Heard it from the Spaniard's servant!"

"Then all I've got to say is that the man was an impostor, for I was dining with the traffic manager of that company a few nights ago, and he then told me that they had definitely given up the idea of opening that line some months ago. I'll pop across to-morrow and see the servant."

Leaning back in his chair, Pycroft laughed.

"Why, Locke, what mare's nest have you got hold of now?" he asked.

"Can't say till I've climbed the tree. But one thing's certain; men don't go lugging theodolites around in private grounds without having some definite reason. No, take it from me, that fellow wasn't prowling around there for a change of air."

"Perhaps not; but all the same, what earthly connection can he have with the matter we've got in hand?"

"Not good at guessing riddles, old

chap. But I may be able to tell you one day!"

The inspector granted and reached for his hat.

"Guess I'll have to be shifting. It's jolly snug here, but the best of friends must part," he remarked.

"Right-ho!" said Locke. "If there's any news of a further exploit, by the—Hold on, there's the phone! Wait till I find who's ringing me up!" And, crossing the room, the investigator unhitched the receiver.

"Hallo!" he shouted. "Yes, you're right, Ferrers Locke speaking! Who are you?" Then, swinging round with a start, he held up his hand to enjoin absolute silence, and remained with the instrument glued to his ear for several moments.

At length he replaced the receiver. "Looks as though developments may be expected," he said quietly.

"What d'you mean?" asked Pycroft.

"Why, just as whoever it was who rung me up the lines crossed, and I caught part of a conversation carried on between two others."

"Well?"

"Apparently someone was giving instructions to another, but the odd part is that those instructions referred to me."

"To you?" cried Jack, in astonishment.

"Yes; for I distinctly caught the words 'You know the house,' to which the reply came, 'Of course I do! Doesn't everyone know where Ferrers Locke hangs out?' That reply brought forth a sharp reprimand for mentioning names over the phone, followed by this remark. 'Then see that everything's ready to be there to-night at—' which was all I was able to hear, for at that instant the lines became disengaged, and I found I'd been cut off!"

"But what, in the name of all that's wonderful, can it mean?" stammered the inspector in astonishment. "To-night at—"

"Simply means this," said Locke grimly, and an ugly gleam came into his eyes. "There's some devilment afoot, and you and I, Jack, my boy, will have to keep our eyes open!"

(What adventure does this intercepted phone message lead to? Mind you read next week's thrilling instalment, chums.)

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