

A PLAYER'S BEST AGE?—By ANDREW CUNNINGHAM!

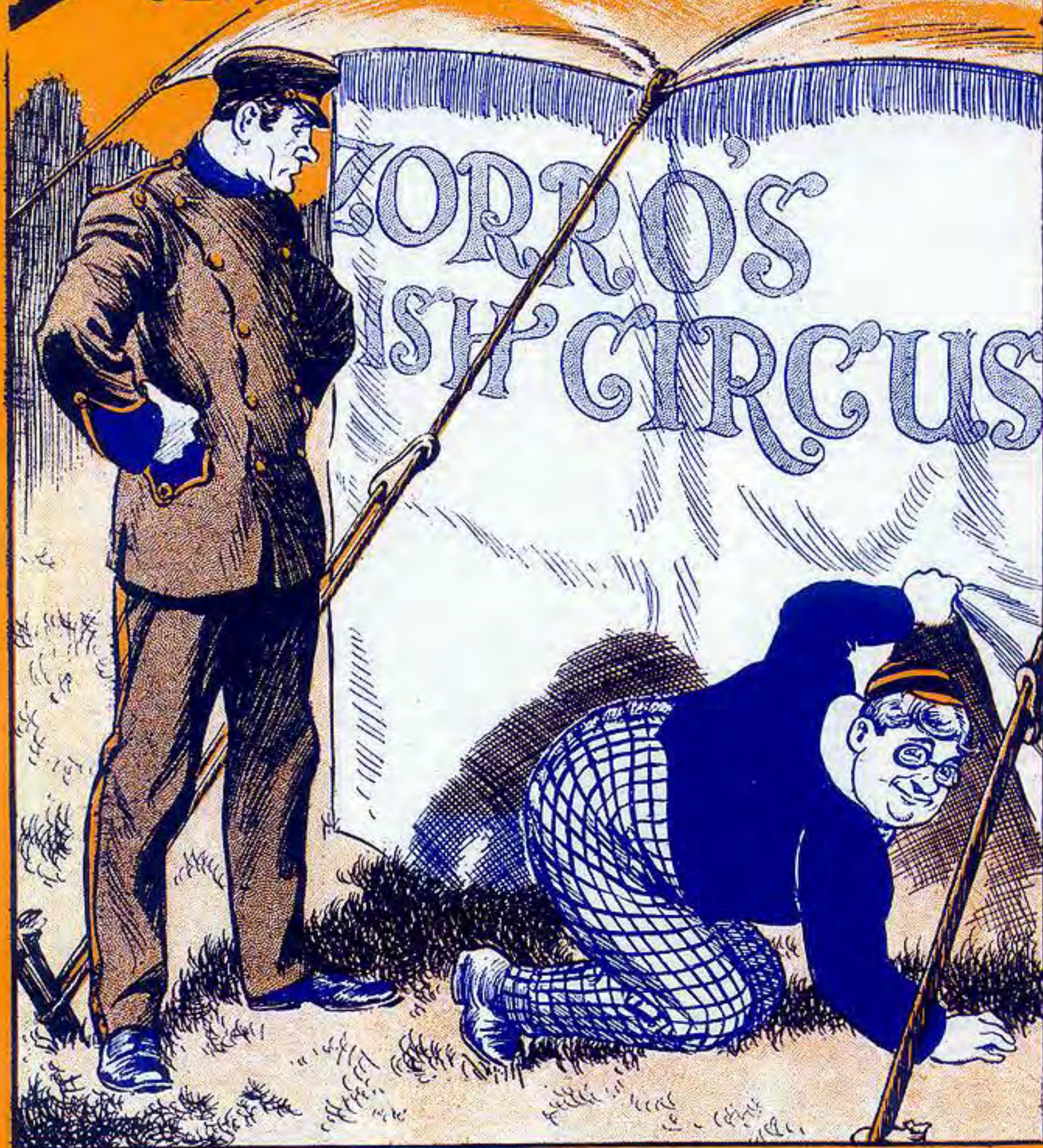
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The Magnet 2^d

No. 947. Vol. XXIX. Week Ending April 3rd, 1928.

Library of COMPLETE SCHOOL STORIES

EVERY MONDAY.



A CHEAP VIEW OF THE CIRCUS—PERHAPS!

BILLY BUNTER BOOKED FOR TROUBLE!

(An amusing incident from the magnificent long complete school story, "The Circus Schoolboy!"—inside.)



Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his chums. Write to him when you are in trouble or need advice. A stamped and addressed envelope will ensure a speedy reply. Letters should be addressed: The Editor, THE MAGNET LIBRARY, The Amalgamated Press (1922), Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

"THE PHANTOM OF THE DOGGER BANK!"

NEXT week Magnetites will have the undoubted pleasure of reading the opening chapters of this amazing story of detective adventure on the high seas. Ferrers Locke, the clever Baker Street detective, and young Jack Drake, his assistant, sign on as trawler hands on the North Star, but they are not doing the trip just for the benefit of their health—not a bit of it. There's some pretty dirty work going on, and Locke and Drake are engaged to discover who is at the bottom of it all. The story abounds in thrills and the North Sea setting is something unique. You will be able to join hands with the author, with the sturdy British characters who "go down to the sea in ships" and for the period of this serial story you will more than imagine yourselves to be on board a fishing trawler. It'll be a grand experience, and one that seldom comes your way, so make the most of it. Next week, then, you'll be ready to sign on for the voyage.

"A CANDID CRITIC!"

Such is the nom de plume of a reader who writes from St. Helens. And he is very candid, without being offensive. My correspondent declares that he doesn't like the Football Supplement, and hazards a statement that there are a good many Magnetites who think the

same way as himself. Doubtless there are a few who would prefer to see the old "Greyfriars Herald" occupying the four pages now devoted to the football supplement, but, without a word of a lie, I have only received two letters from readers disapproving of the footer supplement since its inception. That surely indicates—especially with the net sales figures before me to point the way—the popularity of this new feature. My candid critic must remember, too, that the MAGNET circulation goes into a pretty formidable array of thousands and that, obviously, there must be one or two readers who don't quite approve of this and that. Well, well, I can appreciate their point of view; it would be a poor world after all if everyone thought exactly the same as the next man; still, an Editor's job, as I have pointed out before, is to please as many people as he can. Surely my candid friend realises how impossible it would be for me to grant the requests of every MAGNET reader. There's nothing I should like better than to do that, but of course, it is out of the question. My chum then goes on to say that he expected Wharton to blossom out as an editor of all kinds of sports, but so far he has devoted all his energies to football. So far—yes! But as soon as we have prepared the supplement for Cup Final Week—which even "candid critic" must realise is a week of great excitement and interest for lovers of football—Wharton will begin to con-

centrate upon a special cricket supplement. And with the Australians coming over here, Magnetites can expect something extra special during the run of this cricket supplement. Glad you like the MAGNET school stories, my candid pal, and as regards your other query—the serial in question was written by Hedley Scott. Cheerio, and many thanks for your straightforward letter.

TWENTY READERS WIN OUR FASCINATING TABLE GAMES.

I am able to include in this issue of your favourite paper the names and addresses of the winners of our "Para" Contest No. 1. The response was excellent, as I expected. My only regret is that I can't give every reader who entered for this simple competition a prize. Still, I know you are sportsmen enough to appreciate that. To the twenty fortunate ones I offer my hearty congratulations. Here are their names and addresses:

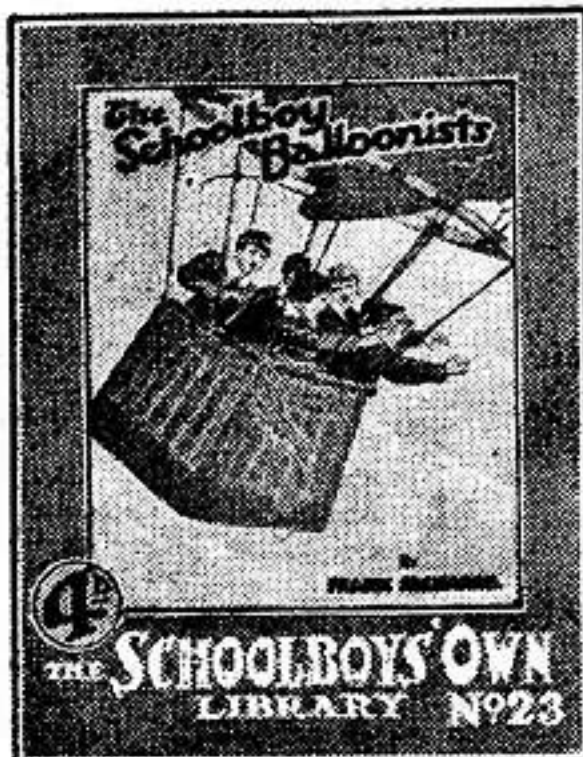
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(Continued on page 28.)

GOOD WEEK-END READING!

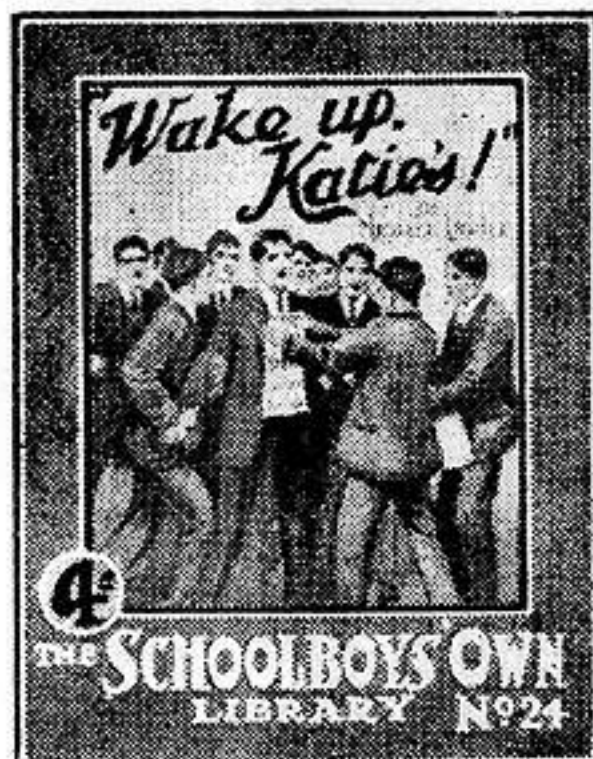
A magnificent story of school life and thrilling adventure, featuring Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars, by

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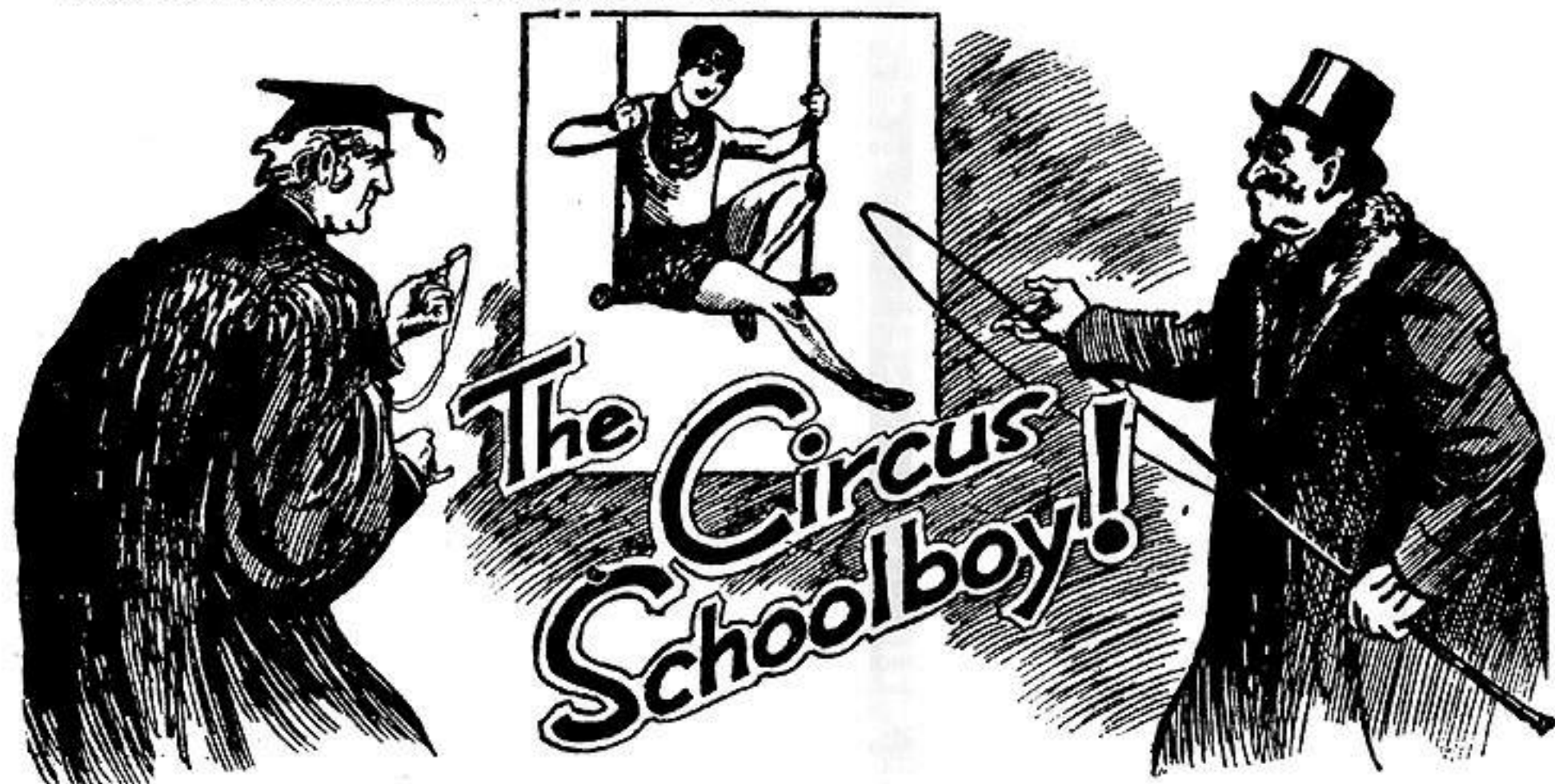
A rousing yarn of school life at St. Katie's, by that popular author

MICHAEL POOLE.



ASK FOR THE
SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY
Nos. 23 and 24.

THE MYSTERY! Why Sir James Hobson, a wealthy baronet and father of Hobson of the Shell, should be on such familiar terms with a travelling showman, has puzzled Harry Wharton & Co. a lot, especially as they feel instinctively that this alliance is to the detriment of Pedrillo—



A Magnificent New Long Complete Story of the Chums of Greyfriars, introducing Pedrillo, the Circus Waif.

By **FRANK RICHARDS.**

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Too Clever!

"DEAR old Peter!" Bunter spoke in his most ingratiating tones.

So affectionate a mode of address ought really to have touched Peter Todd deeply. It ought to have elicited a very friendly reply, at least. At the very least, it should have brought a kind smile to his face.

But it did none of these things.

Peter Todd, utterly untouched, did not make a very friendly reply, neither did he smile kindly. Without even looking at Bunter, he answered, with a brevity worthy of a Spartan:

"Rats!"

Whereat Harry Wharton & Co. chuckled.

Peter Todd was talking with the Famous Five of the Remove, in the quad, when Bunter rolled up to them. Possibly he did not want to be interrupted. Possibly the pleasures of Bunter's conversation—if any—had long since palled on him. Possibly—indeed probably—he suspected that "dear old Peter" was the preliminary to a request for a little loan.

At all events, he was no more touched by this outburst of affection on the part of his fat study-mate than a stone image might have been. And his answer was laconic and emphatic.

"Peter, old chap——" said Bunter.

"Rats!"

"Dear old fellow——"

"I've said 'rats' twice," said Peter Todd impatiently. "How often do you want me to say it before you shut up, Bunter?"

"Oh, really, Peter——"

"It looks like being fine this afternoon," remarked Harry Wharton, continuing the conversation which the Owl of the Remove had interrupted. "We might have the bikes out."

"Lots of mud between here and Lantham, though," said Nugent.

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

"Oh, we don't mind a little mud," said Bob Cherry. "If it doesn't rain, let's clear off after dinner on the jiggers."

"Let's!" agreed Johnny Bull.

Billy Bunter blinked wrathfully at the Famous Five through his big spectacles. They were going on discussing a bike spin to Lantham that afternoon, just as if William George Bunter did not matter at all. And Bunter mattered very much.

"I say, you fellows——"

"You get out your bike and come, too, Bunter," said Bob Cherry genially. "A spin of ten miles or so will do you good. It will bring down your fat—and you'll feel no end better with a couple of hundredweight gone."

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"It's a go," said Peter Todd. "I've got two hundred lines to do for Loder, but they will keep."

"Peter, old chap——"

"Rats!"

"Dear old fellow——"

"More rats!"

"Look here, Peter Todd!" bawled Bunter. "I want to speak to you, you silly ass! Can't you listen to a chap?"

"What's the good?" demanded Peter impatiently. "I've got exactly one bob in my pocket, and it's going to stay there. So what's the good of calling me dear old Peter, and old fellow, and old chap?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The goodfulness is not terrific, my esteemed Bunter," grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "You had better address me old-chapfully, as I have a large number of excellent bobs in my respectable pockets."

"Dear old Inky——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But I am not giving you any of them, my esteemed Bunter——"

"You shut up, you blessed nigger! You're interrupting me," said Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Peter, old chap, I want you to help me out," said Bunter. "I'm not after your measly bob. I've got a bob to pay admission to the circus at Lantham."

"Whose is it?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Yah! And I've got ninepence to pay my fare to Lantham, too," said Bunter loftily.

"Whose is the ninepence?"

"Beast! But I haven't got my fare back," said Billy Bunter. "That's the difficulty. I'm going over to Lantham to see the circus—you know the show we saw at Friardale a couple of weeks ago was mucked up by an accident—that silly acrobat falling off the trapeze. We ought really to have had our money back."

"Bow-wow!"

"Well, we didn't see much more than half the show," said Bunter. "I asked some of them to return my money, at the time; but they seemed to be thinking only about the blessed acrobat who fell and smashed himself up, and didn't even listen to me."

"Fathead!"

"Well, we had most of the show, and a bob isn't much," said Harry Wharton. "And the chief thing is, that the acrobat wasn't hurt so badly as we supposed."

"Rot!" said Bunter. "But never mind that. The trouble is, that if I go over to Lantham this afternoon, I can't pay my fare back. Of course, if you fellows like to stand it——"

"If!"

"I don't think!"

"Can't be done," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "We're all in Stony Street at present—only Inky is in funds, and he's got to stand admission for the lot of us if we go to the circus at Lantham. That's why we're going over on our bikes—to save the fares."

"Well, then, Peter will have to help me. You needn't be alarmed, Peter Todd," added Bunter sarcastically.

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"I'm not going to ask you for your measly bob."

"All the same if you did, old fat man," answered Peter genially.

"Why not go on your bike, as we're going to do?" asked Nugent.

Bunter sniffed.

"My bike's punctured—"

"Lots of time to mend it before this afternoon."

"I've told Bob Cherry twice that I want him to mend it for me. He's refused. Some fellows are so selfish."

"Can't you mend a puncture yourself?" roared Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"You'll want mending yourself soon, if you don't roll away, you fat boulder," growled Bob.

"I'm not going to bike it, anyhow," said Bunter. "I just want you to back me up, Peter, and I shall manage all right. You see, I've got the bob for the circus, and ninepence for the fare to Lantham, and a penny over. That will just do it, with your help."

Peter Todd stared at him.

"Am I to ask the railway company to bring you home for a penny?" he demanded.

"No, you ass. I've got a wheeze."

"Let's hear the wheeze," said Bob. "If there's any way of getting back from Lantham for a penny, we'll be glad to know about it. It may come on to rain."

"Well, I've thought it out, you know," said Bunter. "I've got rather more brains than you chaps, and I get these ideas, you know. You see, after the circus I go into the railway station at Lantham and buy a penny platform ticket."

"You can't travel on a train with a platform ticket," said Harry Wharton.

"I know that, ass. I get on the platform with that," Bunter gave a fat wink. "But once on the platform, what's to keep me from stepping into the Friardale train?"

"Eh?"

"What?"

"Honesty, I should think," growled Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"But suppose you did?" howled Peter Todd. "When you get to Friardale you have to give up a ninepenny ticket

from Lantham, not a penny platform ticket, you howling ass!"

Bunter winked again.

"That's where you come in," he said.

"Eh! How?"

"You meet the train at Friardale?" explained Bunter. "You go on the Friardale platform with two platform tickets."

"Well, ass?"

"You meet me getting off the train, and give me one of the Friardale platform tickets—"

"Eh?"

"And I walk out of the station, and give it up—just as if I'd only been on the platform at Friardale!" concluded Bunter triumphantly.

The Owl of the Remove blinked at the juniors, waiting for a burst of admiration for this brilliant wheeze.

It did not come.

Harry Wharton & Co. stared at him blankly.

"You—you—you've thought all that out, as a dodge for bilking the railway company!" stuttered Wharton, at last.

"Oh, railway companies are fair game!" said Bunter. "Look at the fares they charge!"

"You fat villain!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

Peter Todd spluttered.

"And I'm to help you, am I? I'm to take a hand in cheating the railway company, to save you the trouble of mending a puncture in your bike! Am I to go to chokey with you when you're copped?"

"Oh, really, Peter—"

"You fat scoundrel!" roared Peter Todd.

"Now, look here, Peter, old chap, don't be a goat!" said Bunter, impatiently. "It's as safe as houses. A penny platform ticket at Lantham—and a penny platform ticket at Friardale—and it's all serene. You needn't be jealous because I thought of the wheeze; some chaps are clever. It's not your fault that you're not clever; Peter; it's simply a misfortune. I don't blame you for it; I pity you. Now, old man, you're going to help me in this, aren't you?"

Peter nodded.

"Yes; I'm going to help you," he said.

"Dear old Peter! Thanks!"

"Don't thank me in too great a hurry," said Peter grimly. "I'm going to help you—not to bilk the railway company, but to keep out of chokey. I'm going to impress on your mind—if you've got any—that honesty is the best policy. And this is how I am going to do it."

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter, as Peter Todd grasped him with great energy.

Bump!

"Yow-ow-ow-w! Help!"

Crack, crack, crack!

Peter Todd proceeded to bang the fat junior's head on the trunk of the nearest elm. Fiendish yells rang out from Billy Bunter.

"Yaroooh! Help! Draggimoff, you fellows! I say, Wharton—Bob, old chap—Yaroooh!"

But the Famous Five were not likely to render aid. In their opinion, Bunter was getting exactly the reward he deserved for his brilliant scheme for swindling the railway company.

"Can I help you?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Yarooogh! Yes! Ow—"

"I'm speaking to Toddy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bang, bang, bang!

"Whooop! Fire! Murder! Help!" roared Bunter.

Peter Todd did not seem in need of any help. Bunter was—but there was no help for Bunter. The way of the transgressor was hard—and so was the trunk of the elm. Bunter roared and squirmed and wriggled and yelled frantically.

"There!" gasped Peter, at last. "There! Are you still thinking of bilking the railway company?"

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter. "No! Certainly not! Yoooop!"

"Good! Tell me next time you think of it, and I'll give you some more of the same."

"Beast! Ow! Wow!"

Peter Todd walked away with the Famous Five. Billy Bunter sat under the elm, and rubbed his head, and gasped and groaned. He was feeling hurt, and he was burning with indignation. This was his reward for being cleverer than other fellows in the Remove—for thinking of brilliant wheezes that other fellows never dreamed of thinking of. This was his reward; and it did not even occur to William George Bunter that it was exactly the reward he deserved.

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THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Unpleasant for Hobson!

"E N un lugar de la Mancha—"

"Um."

"De cuyo nombre no quiero acordarme—"

"Ah!"

"No has mucho tiempo que vivia un hidalgo—"

"Hem!"

Hobson of the Shell grinned.

Hobby had come out of the House, in morning break, with a deeply thoughtful expression on his rugged face. Hobson—not usually given to deep thought—was obviously doing a lot of thinking that morning; so obviously that several Shell fellows asked him what was the matter, Stewart of the Shell even asking him if it gave him a pain.

That he was not thinking about his Form work was clear, at least, to Mr. Hacker, the master of the Shell. Mr. Hacker had found Hobby quite inattentive, and had bestowed upon him a hundred lines in consequence. But Hobby was not thinking even about the

lines. More serious matters apparently occupied his thoughts.

Still, he grinned as he came along the path under the old Greyfriars elms, and found Hoskins of the Shell sitting on a bench there, beside Pedrillo, the new Shell fellow.

Pedrillo had a book in his hand; Hoskins had a book also. Pedrillo's book, evidently, was a copy of "Don Quixote," in Spanish. Hoskins' book was a music book.

Since the Head had decided to put Pedrillo, the circus waif, into the Shell, there had been three fellows instead of two in Hobby's study in the Shell passage. And, extremely unlike as all three were to one another, they were great friends.

Hoskins, the musical youth, had always been very chummy with Hobby, the rugged footballer. He would talk music for hours with Hobby, and Hobby did not mind very much, so long as he was not expected to answer or to understand. In return, Hoskins would sometimes listen to Hobby on the subject of Soccer—sometimes, but not so often. Claude Hoskins had the artistic temperament, and consequently was not a good listener. Both of them had struck up a friendship with the new fellow—who had been an acrobat in Zorro's circus before he came to Greyfriars.

Hoskins liked him because he knew something about music. Hobson liked him—he hardly knew why. Pedrillo was a pleasant fellow enough; but there were plenty of fellows in the Shell quite as agreeable. Hobby hardly knew why he liked Pedrillo; but he did, and he was glad that Mr. Hacker had put him into Study No. 3 in the Shell.

Pedrillo was already benefiting from both his study-mates. Hoskins had undertaken to instruct him in music—Hobson in football. Probably Pedrillo benefited more by Hobson's instructions than by Hosky's. He seemed to take rather to football; but he seemed a little slow on the uptake, so to speak, when Hoskins got on the subject of the chord of the minor ninth.

There was something that Pedrillo could teach, in his turn. Having passed most of his life in Spain, with Zorro's Circus, he spoke Spanish as easily as English, if not more easily. He was more than willing to instruct his study-mates, if they so desired, in that beautiful and useful language.

Hobson did not so desire. He found Latin and French, which were compulsory, as much as he could stand—a little more, in fact. But Hoskins was keen.

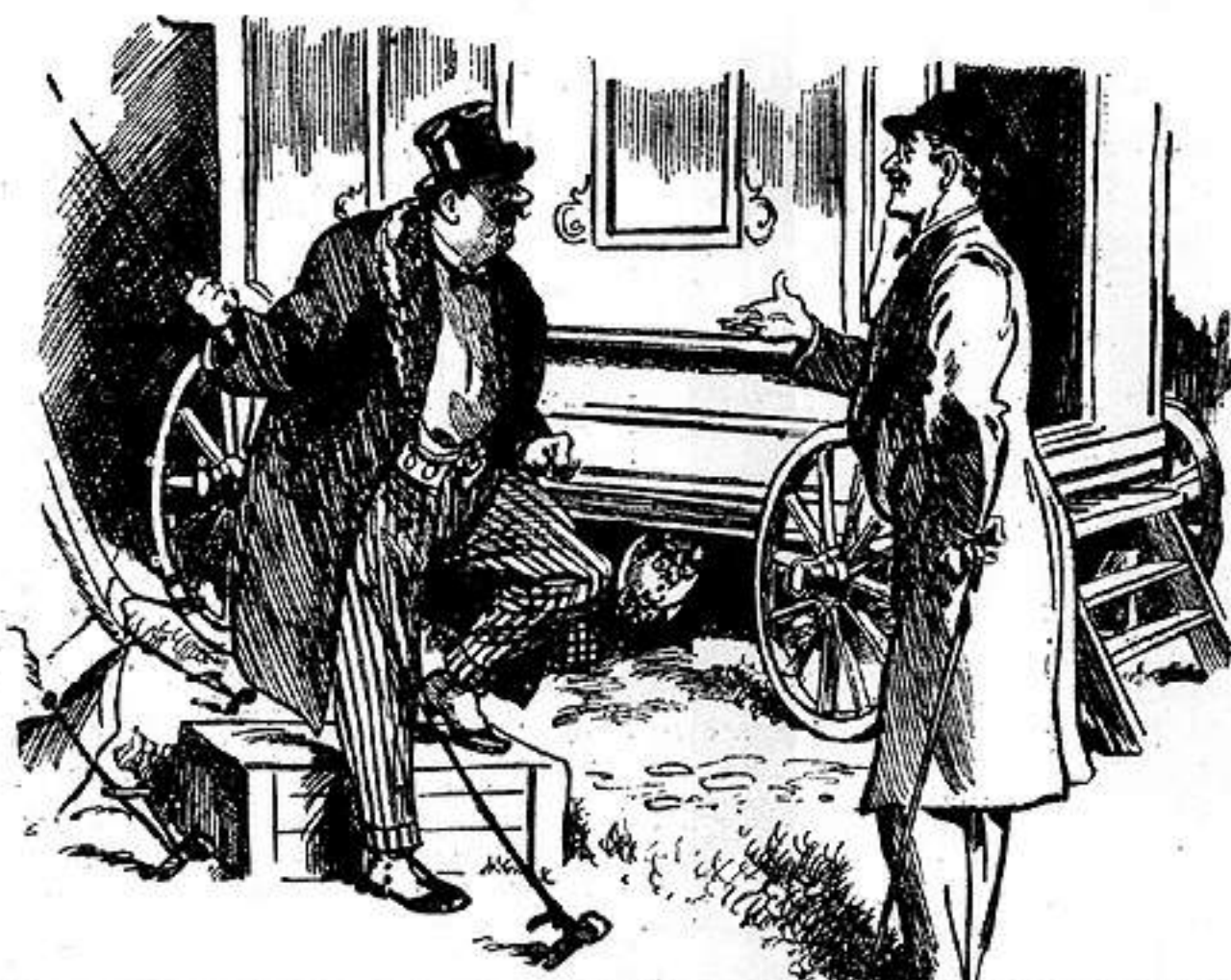
Hoskins was keen on the subject of Spanish music and Spanish songs; and a knowledge of the language would help him there. So there was an interchange of instruction in Study No. 3 in the Shell. But Claude Hoskins being blessed, or the reverse, with the artistic temperament, the time-table was not always adhered to. When music was the subject, that subject was pursued to the end, the bitter end. When Spanish was the subject, the lesson was only too liable to be cut short, and turned somehow into a talk on the subject of music.

This it was, and for this reason James Hobson grinned as he came up to the two juniors on the bench under the elms.

In morning break they were to have a "go" at Spanish for ten minutes. That was the arrangement.

Pedrillo was reading out a section of "Don Quixote," which he was to explain and translate to Hoskins, by way of a lesson.

But Hoskins, during second lesson with the Shell, had thought of something really striking in the way of minor



"Pedrillo must be got away from Greyfriars—at once, at once," said Sir James Hobson. "No stone must be left unturned—you understand that, fool that you are, Juan Zorro!" "Do not trouble yourself, senior. I will claim him, and he will be given back to me." Billy Bunter, hiding under the van, blinked at the feet of the speakers, and wondered whether he was dreaming. (See Chapter 5.)

ninths. Hoskins was fairly bursting with it. Like a loyal fellow, prepared to play the game, Hoskins was ready to stand the Spanish, and to keep the minor ninths bottled up, as it were, in his musical breast. But it really seemed as if the minor ninths would burst all bounds and overflow.

Hoskins fairly wriggled on the bench under the stress of the situation.

Soon, too soon, he had to return to the Form-room, to Mr. Hacker, to Latin prose, or some such rot. And Pedrillo, who did not know his new friend very thoroughly yet, remained in ignorance of his almost bursting state, and went on innocently with the Spanish.

"En un lugar de la Mancha," repeated Pedrillo, explaining in his pleasant voice, "As who should say, in a village or hamlet of La Mancha, which is a district in Spain, Hoskins."

"Oh!"

"De cuyo nombre," went on Pedrillo, while Hobson stood and grinned. Hobby knew Hoskins better than Pedrillo did. He had been there before, so to speak.

"Nombre is in English 'name.'"

"Um!"

"Now, if you repeat the sentence, you will learn the pronunciation," said Pedrillo. "En un lugar—"

"Eh, what did you say, old chap?" asked Hoskins, waking up, as it were. "I—I see, quite! Splendid! I was going to tell you about a little thing I've thought of—something absolutely new and novel in the arrangement of minor ninths. And now we've finished the Spanish—"

Pedrillo laughed.

"Verdad," he said, closing the book good-naturedly. "It is done. I am listening."

"Now, when you use the chord of the minor ninth—" began Hoskins, his face lighting up with sheer happiness.

"Hold on a minute, Hosky," broke in James Hobson at this point. "I want to speak to Pedrillo."

"Don't interrupt me, old chap," said Hoskins reproachfully. "This is rather important, Hobby."

"I know, old fellow, I know," said Hobson. "But the fact is—"

"The chord of the minor ninth—" resumed Hoskins.

"My father's coming down to Greyfriars this afternoon, soon after dinner, I think," said Hobson.

"Well, let him come," said Hoskins impatiently. "What does that matter?"

"Well, it's a bit awkward," said Hobson, colouring. "I—I say, Hosky, I know minor nineteenthths are awfully clever, and all that—"

"Ninths!" yelled Hoskins.

"I mean ninths. I know they're no end clever, but I'm really worried about this," said Hobson. "I am, really, old fellow."

Hobson did indeed look worried and distressed.

Claude Hoskins looked at him.

He sighed, and manfully bottled up the minor ninths again. It was a greater sacrifice than Hobby could have imagined. The man who gave his life for his friend was not "in it" with an enthusiastic musician who bottled up his minor ninths from the same cause.

"Go it, Hobby," said Hoskins manfully.

"Thanks, old chap," James Hobson sat down on the bench. "It's like this. Pedrillo's in our study now, and we're jolly good friends, ain't we, Pedrillo?"

"Si, amigo," said the circus waif softly.

"We're jolly glad to have him there," said Hobson. "We pull together wonderfully well. He's coming on with the footer, too. At games practice yesterday, Hosky, you ought to have seen him."

"Mean to say you want to talk football?"

Hobson started guiltily. He realised that he was wandering from the point. Soccer was to him what minor ninths were to his pal Claude.

"Eh? Oh, no! But you remember, my father has got a down on circus people. I've told you about it, Pedrillo, and you don't mind, do you, old scout?"

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You see, the pater's never seen you. He doesn't know you from Adam. That's how it is. But—but—" Hobson rubbed his nose. "He ordered me not to go to the circus when it was at Friar-dale, and, of course, I never went. When he learned that you'd been injured in an accident, and the Head let you be brought into sanny here, he came down to see me, quite ratty."

Pedrillo nodded.

"He told me to keep clear of you—very clear. No offence to you, personally, old scout, you know that. It's just a prejudice, and he's never seen you. But—but when the Head put you in the Shell, and Hacker shoved you in our study, and asked Hosky and me to lend you a friendly hand, what was a fellow to do?"

"What you did," said Hoskins. "Pedrillo's a good sort, and we both like him. You were bound to be friends, and write to your pater and tell him how I was."

"That's what I did," said Hobson. "I—I didn't write at once. I—I didn't exactly know how to put it best. But I wrote."

Pedrillo's handsome face clouded.

"I hope your father is not angry with you for making me your friend?" he said.

Hobson rubbed his nose again.

"Well, he must see that a fellow couldn't be a pig in his own study," he said. "Besides, I told him you were a jolly decent chap, and that I'd taken a liking to you."

"Muchas gracias!" said Pedrillo with a smile.

"But he's coming down to-day, in no end of a hurry," said Hobson. "Whether it's upset him or not I don't know. But the pater is the best chap going, you know—one of the very best, but a bit stiff. Some chaps think him a rather grim dodger. I—I wondered—"

"You wish me to change out of your study, amigo?"

Hobson shook his head vigorously.

"No fear!"

"Couldn't have that," said Claude Hoskins decidedly. "Pedrillo is the only fellow in the Shell who understands anything about music. I'm not parting with him."

"I—I was thinking—" Hobson coloured. "Zorro's Circus is over at Lantham now, you know. I—I was thinking you might like to run across and see it. As you don't belong to it now, you might like to see the show, as a member of the public, you know. Hoskins would like to go with you, wouldn't you, Hosky?"

"Any old thing," said Hoskins. "But I'm quite willing to stay in and help you stand your pater, Hobby. Don't say I'm letting you down."

"No, no! If you'll take Pedrillo over to Lantham—"

"Right-ho!"

But it was Pedrillo's turn to shake his head.

"I do not wish to go to the circus," he exclaimed quickly. "I—I dislike it very much."

"Oh dear!" mumbled Hobson.

He had a helpless look. Hobby was a great man with his hands and his feet, but when it came to thinking things out, and laying plans, and scheming schemes, Hobby was not quite in his element.

Evidently he had given deep and unaccustomed thought to this little scheme for keeping Sir James Hobson from meeting the circus waif at Greyfriars. Now he was floored.

"I do not wish to see Senor Zorro again," said Pedrillo, his face flushing.

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"He was a hard master to me—a cruel master. No, no, amigo, I cannot go to the circus!"

"But that's jolly odd," said Hobson. "Haven't you told us that that man Zorro picked you up somewhere when you were a kid and took you into his circus, because you had no home?"

"Verdad! He has told me so," answered Pedrillo.

"Well, then, he can't be such a bad sort, can he?"

"He is a hard and cruel man, and I cannot go near him again if I can help it," said Pedrillo. "If the senior school-master had not so kindly allowed me to stay at Greyfriars I should not have gone back to the circus! Never!"

"Well, that's that, then!" said Hobson, discouraged.

Pedrillo smiled.

"But it is easy," he said. "I will go out of gates for the afternoon. I will not let your father see me if he dislikes me."

"It isn't that. He can't dislike a kid he's never seen," said Hobson. "And he's got a kind heart, too. You mightn't guess it, looking at him, but he has. But it's a fact that he's somehow got such a down on circus people that he won't listen to reason on that subject. If—if you wouldn't mind keeping clear of the study till he's gone, old chap—I know it's a shame to ask you—a rotten shame; but—"

"Caro amigo, it is nothing," said Pedrillo. "There is little I would not do for friends who have been so kind to me—a nameless waif from a circus. Your father shall not see me. I will take a walk until teatime. I am very glad to see the countryside. I have seen so little of England."

"If you wouldn't really mind, old bean."

"Of course not."

"I know it's a shame. You ain't stuffy about it, are you?" asked Hobson anxiously.

"Stuffy? Angry? Oh, no! Why should I be?" smiled Pedrillo. "It is nothing—nothing at all."

"That's all right," said Hoskins cheerfully. "Pedrillo can take a little walk with me, and I'll tell him what I was thinking about a new arrangement of the chord of the minor ninths—"

Clang!

"Oh, dear! There's the bell for third!"

And the Shell fellows went to their Form-room for third lesson, James Hobson looking considerably relieved, and at the same time a little clouded. That extraordinary and unreasonable prejudice on the part of his father was a worry on his mind—more so than ever since he had chummed up with the circus junior.

To Hobby's simple mind it had seemed a good idea for Sir James to meet the circus lad, when he would see at once what a decent chap he was. But for reasons which poor Hobby did not even begin to understand, Sir James had told him explicitly that he was resolved not to see the boy.

It was very puzzling and very unpleasant, but Hobby had no choice but to respect his father's wishes.

As they were going to Mr. Hacker's Form-room, Hobby tapped the circus junior on the arm.

"Sure you're not stuffy?" he asked.

Pedrillo laughed.

"Not in the least."

"Quite sure?" asked Hobby anxiously.

"Quite."

"That's all right, then, old chap," said Hobson. "I know it's a shame, but if you're not stuffy about it, all right."

And Hobson of the Shell went in, relieved in his mind, and was able, in third lesson, to bestow a little attention at last upon Mr. Hacker and his valuable instructions.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Two of a Kind!

"SAMMY, old fellow."

Sammy Bunter of the Second Form winked.

When Bunter major addressed Bunter minor as "old fellow," it was obvious to the meanest intelligence that Bunter major was going to ask for something.

Fraternal affection did not flourish in the Bunter family. In that happy family circle it would have been difficult to let brotherly love continue, because it had not begun.

"Sammy, old chap—"

"Can it!" said the fat fag disrespectfully.

"Old fellow" and "old chap," indeed, were as futile with Sammy Bunter as "dear old Peter" had been with Peter Todd. William George Bunter was a little too well known.

Bunter gave his minor a wrathful blink through his big spectacles.

"Look here, you young rotter—"

"That sounds more like you, Billy," said Sammy of the Second agreeably.

"What do you want? I'm not giving anything away."

"I'm hard up."

"Not really?" said Sammy sarcastically.

"Yes, really, old chap."

"Been disappointed about a postal-order?" inquired the fat fag, with deep derision.

Billy Bunter breathed hard. Only the fact that he required the services of Sammy Bunter saved the fat fag from an unbrotherly hack at that moment. But Billy Bunter controlled his just wrath.

"I'm going over to Lantham to the circus this afternoon," said the Owl of the Remove. "I've got the bob admission, and the fare over. It's getting back that's the difficulty."

"Don't get back," suggested Sammy brightly.

"Eh?"

"Look how it would improve Greyfriars if you didn't," argued Sammy. "There's lots of fellows would stand you your fare to any station in the kingdom if you wouldn't take a return ticket."

"I—I—I—" spluttered Bunter.

"Is that all?" asked Sammy. "I'm stony, as it happens. All the same if I wasn't, though."

"I've got a little scheme—"

"Bow-wow!"

"I want you to help me, and I'll do the same for you another time," urged Bunter. "Dash it all, brothers ought to back one another up."

"They ought!" agreed Sammy. "Lots of things that ought to happen don't happen, though. Haven't you noticed that?"

"You help me this time, and I'll help you next time you're stuck for a railway fare," said Bunter. "That's cricket."

"Well, let's hear it, anyhow," conceded Sammy.

William George Bunter proceeded to explain the brilliant scheme he had unfolded to Peter Todd with such disastrous results.

But Sammy's ideas on the subject of honesty did not resemble Peter Todd's. They rather resembled Billy Bunter's.

In all things, there was a strong family likeness in the Bunter clan.

"He, he, he!" cackled Sammy.

"Good wheeze, what?" grinned Billy Bunter.

It was said of old that a prophet is without honour in his own country. But William George Bunter was certainly getting more appreciation from his brother than he was likely to receive from anybody else at Greyfriars.

"But where do I come in?" demanded Sammy. "Looks as if you'll get through all right. But I—"

"I'll do the same for you next time you're up against it," said Bunter. "One good turn deserves another, you know."

"Well, that's fair," agreed Sammy. "What train do you get in by?"

"Five-thirty at Friardale. You'll be on the platform with two penny platform tickets—one for you and one for me."

"That will cost tuppence," said Sammy, holding out a fat paw.

"Well, you've got twopence, I suppose?"

"Suppose again!" suggested Sammy.

Billy Bunter unwillingly extracted two pennies from his pocket and passed them to his minor.

"Done!" said Sammy. "Mind, you'll have to play up when my turn comes. I'm going over to Canterbury next Saturday."

"Right-ho!"

And the precious pair parted, with mutual satisfaction.

Billy Bunter rolled in to dinner, feeling pleased. That great difficulty of the return fare from Lantham was off his fat mind now—owing to his brilliant scheming and the assistance of his minor. Bunter was feeling very pleased with himself.

There was only one difficulty left—he lacked a penny now for his platform-ticket at Lantham. But that was a small sum—Bunter was equal to that emergency. He tapped Peter Todd on the arm when they came out after dinner.

"Peter, old chap—"

"Shut it!"

"Lend me a stamp!" urged Bunter. "I've got to write home; you don't want a chap to neglect his parents, Toddy. My father's getting quite anxious about not hearing from me."

"Do you mean give you a stamp?" asked Peter Todd grimly.

"Well, yes, blow you!"

Peter grinned.

"I've got a stamp you can have. Here you are!" And Peter Todd gave Bunter a three-halfpenny stamp for his letter home.

Billy Bunter blinked round the passage, and blinked round the quad, and rolled into the House again, and made his way to the Remove passage. Had Peter Todd observed him he might have supposed that he was going to Study No. 7 to write his letter home. But it was to Study No. 14 in the Remove that Bunter directed his steps.

Fisher T. Fish, the American junior, was there. It was the youth from New York that Bunter sought.

"I say, Fishy, can you—"

"Nope!" said Fisher T. Fish, at once.

"Can you—"

"Nix!"

"Give me three-halfpence for a stamp—"

"Oh! Nope, all the same. I'm not buying odd stamps from fellows," answered Fisher T. Fish. "I'll give you a penny for it, if you like."

"Done!" said Bunter.

Fisher T. Fish received the three-half-penny stamp, and Bunter received



The red-faced farmer handed over his ticket for inspection, and then the old lady with the bundles followed suit. The inspector held out his hand to Bunter. "Ticket, sir." Bunter gasped. "I—I—" "Ticket!" "I—I—" The inspector fixed an eye on the Owl of the Remove that was like a gimlet. "You show your ticket here, sir! Quick, please! Can't keep the train waiting!"

(See Chapter 6.)

the penny he needed. He rolled away satisfied, leaving Fishy equally satisfied. Making a halfpenny on a "deal" was quite enough to bring a smile of happy satisfaction to the sharp face of Fisher T. Fish. And Bunter really was not much of a loser by the transaction—he had got the stamp very cheap. It had cost him only a "whopper"—and that was a trifle light as air to William George Bunter.

A quarter of an hour later Billy Bunter rolled out of the House. Harry Wharton & Co. were near the steps, and Bunter blinked at them in passing.

"You fellows grinding through the mud this afternoon?" he asked, with a grin of derision.

"Yes, old fat top!" said Bob Cherry.

"Silly asses! I'm going by train!"

"Well, we could go by train, too, if we were bilkers," said Bob. "I hope you'll have a good time picking oakum when you're copped!"

"Yah!"

Bunter rolled on.

"Bunter, you fat duffer—" called out Harry Wharton.

"Go and eat coke!"

And William George Bunter rolled away, and caught his train for Lantham, with a shilling in his pocket for the circus, and a penny for a platform-ticket, and a happy belief that he was going to travel homeward later on at

the expense of an unsuspecting railway company. Which happy belief might have been well-founded—or, on the other hand, might not!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Hobby's Pater!

"N OW, old chap, the chord of the minor ninth—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton & Co. chuckled; they really could not help it. Hoskins of the Shell passed them, a few minutes after Bunter was gone, coming out of the House with Pedrillo.

Claude Hoskins was losing no time. He was going for a long ramble with Pedrillo, to show the circus junior the English countryside, now looking bright and cheery in the early green of spring. He had some hours before him in which to enlighten his comrade on the subject of minor ninths. But he was not wasting a minute. Minor ninths started at the same time as Hoskins and Pedrillo.

Hoskins glanced round at the Famous Five.

Pedrillo gave them a pleasant smile and nod. The circus waif was very friendly with the heroes of the Remove, who had come to his aid after the accident at the circus.

"What are you fags cackling at?" demanded Hoskins gruffly.

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"Going for a walk with the minor ninety-ninths, old bean?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, rats! Shut up! Come on, Pedrillo! Don't take any notice of these cheeky fags!" said Hoskins loftily.

And he walked on with his smiling chum; and a moment later forgot the existence of the cheeky fags. Minor ninths claimed all his attention and filled up his universe.

"About time we wheeled out the jiggers," yawned Bob. "Is that ass Toddy coming?"

Peter Todd came out and joined the chums of the Remove. Evidently he was letting his lines for Loder "keep."

"Ready?" he announced.

And the six juniors proceeded to wheel out their machines. They wheeled them out of gates, and in the road came on Hobson of the Shell. He was standing outside the school gates, with a cheerless expression on his rugged face.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, Hobby!" called out Bob Cherry.

The captain of the Shell glanced round.

"You're looking merry and bright!" said Bob. "Get your jigger and come along with us to the circus!"

Hobson shook his head.

"My pater's coming," he answered. "Besides, I don't go to the giddy circus—the pater's down on it. Have a good time!"

"Hard cheese, old bean!"

The juniors mounted their machines and rode away, leaving Hobson of the Shell at the gates, evidently waiting there for his father's arrival.

A mile along the road a car came in sight, speeding in the direction of Greyfriars. A tall, severe-featured man, with an eyeglass screwed into his eye, sat bolt upright in it.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! That's Hobby's pater!" said Bob Cherry.

The tall baronet did not glance at the passing cyclists. There was a frown on his brow, and, judging by his expression, the chums of the Remove did not think that Hobby was booked for a pleasant afternoon. The car rushed by, and was gone in a few moments.

"Muddy—what?" said Bob Cherry, as the juniors turned into a lane that led towards Lantham by way of Redclyffe.

"The mudfulness is terrific!"

"Can't be helped," said Harry Wharton. "Put it on!"

There had been recent rain, and the country lanes undoubtedly were very muddy. Billy Bunter, in the train, was undoubtedly travelling more luxuriously than the Famous Five and Toddy.

Up hill and down hill, by lane and byway and field-path, the Greyfriars juniors ploughed on. They were good riders all, but on the sticky mud the going was not good, and progress was not very rapid.

All of them were glad when they came out of the lanes at last into the Lantham High Road.

"This is better!" remarked Bob Cherry. "My hat! We've been an hour and a half grinding up the mud. We can put it on now, though."

And the juniors put it on, and whizzed on towards the town of Lantham.

Zorro's Spanish Circus was camped in a field at a short distance from Lantham Railway Station. The juniors came in sight of the big marquee, and heard the sound of the thumping of a big drum. It was a fine afternoon, and a good

many Lantham folk were heading for the circus. By the roadside a man with a barrow was doing a good business with ginger-beer, buns and bullseyes. Harry Wharton & Co. dismounted at the railway station, to put up their bicycles in the building. Then they walked to the circus field, and joined the stream of people heading for the tent.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Bunter—turned up like a bad penny."

"Did you get muddy?" grinned Bunter.

"The mudfulness was—"

"Terrific," grinned Bob Cherry. "And we shall get muddier going home—but what's the odds so long as you're 'appy. You'll get something worse when you go back, Bunter."

"Eh, what?" asked the Owl of the Remove.

"You'll get copped!" chuckled Bob.

"Yah!"

Billy Bunter sniffed and rolled away. He was heading for the big tent, but he paused at the barrow of refreshments by the roadside. He blinked at the refreshments with longing eyes. Then he blinked at the circus tent, and then he blinked at the barrow again. Harry Wharton & Co. grinned as they watched him.

Evidently the fat junior was torn between his desire to sample the refreshments, and the grim necessity of keeping his shilling if he wanted to go into the circus. He blinked round at the chums of the Remove.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Nothing doing!" chuckled Bob.

"Beast!"

Bunter rolled on, but he seemed unable quite to detach himself from the sight of the refreshments. He rolled back again, and stood gazing at the barrow. There was a hoot of a motor-car on the road, and it stopped, and a tall gentleman stepped out and crossed into the circus field with a quick stride.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Johnny Bull. "Hobby's pater is haunting us this afternoon."

"It's jolly old Sir James!" said Bob in amazement.

"Going to the circus!" grinned Nugent. "He doesn't let Hobby go—and he's going himself! I don't call that cricket."

Harry Wharton glanced after the tall figure of the baronet in surprise.

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Nearly a couple of hours ago the juniors had passed his car, then heading for Greyfriars School. Evidently the baronet had not spent a great deal of time with his son, for here he was—at Lantham. But the surprising thing was that he had evidently come over to Lantham, after going to Greyfriars, on account of the circus.

"Well, that's dashed queer," said Harry. "He can't be going to see the show, surely, or he wouldn't mind Hobby going."

"No—he's going round the tent," said Bob. "Circuses can hardly be in his line, I should think."

"It's jolly odd," said Nugent. "You remember we saw him talking to that man Zorro, the day the circus was at Friardale—the day Pedrillo had his accident. Fancy a stiff old stick like Hobby's pater knowing a circus proprietor—and calling on him."

Sir James Hobson's tall figure disappeared beyond the big tent, and the juniors knew that he could only be heading for the camped caravans behind the tent. It was odd enough to see him there, after his stern prohibition to his son, and the juniors could not help realising how extremely odd it was.

But they dismissed the matter from their minds as they joined the stream of people pouring into the big marquee. The performance was beginning, with galloping horses thundering round the ring, and the chums of the Remove took their seats and gave their attention to the circus.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Makes Discoveries!

BILLY BUNTER hesitated. It is well said that he who hesitates is lost.

Bunter was hungry.

That was not surprising, as it was a couple of hours since dinner, and at dinner Bunter had only eaten enough for three fellows.

He had manfully resisted the automatic chocolate machine at the station. But the barrow of refreshments was too much for him.

He wanted to go to the circus—he had come over to Lantham for the circus, taking the risk of "bilking" the railway company on his journey back. But when Bunter was hungry, all minor considerations had to go by the board.

Besides, Bunter remembered that he had once seen a circus by the extraordinary expedient of creeping under the edge of the tent canvas, and thus insinuating himself into the audience without paying for admission. On that occasion, unfortunately, he had not been detected and kicked out.

So he was tempted to try his luck again in the same way.

In unfolding his scheme for bilking the railway, Bunter had explained to the juniors that railway companies were fair game. Perhaps he considered circuses fair game also. There were, in fact, few things that Bunter did not consider fair game when it was a question of benefiting W. G. Bunter of the Remove. Perhaps, however, Bunter did not think at all; he was not, as a rule, much given to thinking.

Bunter's shilling passed over to the keeper of the refreshment stall, and refreshments, liquid and solid, to that value, were disposed of by Bunter in a very few minutes.

With his financial possessions reduced to one penny—which was absolutely essential for a platform ticket when he went back—Bunter rolled away, feeling better.

He did not head for the entrance of the big tent now, however. That was useless as there was a hefty gentleman standing there to take the money as the people went in.

Bunter, assuming an air of exaggerated carelessness, strolled round the tent, trying to look like a fellow who was merely sauntering about admiring the landscape.

Between the tent and the camped vehicles belonging to the circus was a deserted space, and there Bunter stopped.

He blinked round him very cautiously, and stooping, pulled up the edge of the rough canvas where it touched the grass.

The lighted interior of the circus tent burst upon his view, and he had a glimpse of packed spectators and galloping horses, and a clown jumping through a paper hoop.

But it was only a glimpse. The next moment a grasp that seemed like an iron vice closed on Bunter's arm, and he was jerked to his feet—outside the tent.

"Ow!"

"You young rogue!"

It was one of the circus attendants, a horsey, rough-looking man. The short-sighted Owl of the Remove, when he blinked round to make sure that he was unobserved, had been in full view of the horsey man, without seeing him. The man had watched him in blank astonishment as he stooped to worm his way into the tent in the happy delusion that he was unseen.

"I—I say—"

"You young rascal!"

"Ow!" gasped Bunter, as the circus man shook him. "Wow! Leggo! I—I wasn't going in—"

Shake! Shake! Shake!

"Yaroooh! Leggo! Help!"

Shake! Shake! Shake!

The man was a rather rough fellow, and no doubt he considered that Bunter needed a lesson for his dishonesty. He proceeded to give him one.

Bunter was shaken till his teeth chattered, and his little round eyes almost bulged through his glasses.

"Ow! You beast! Leggo!" he spluttered.

In sheer desperation the Owl of the Remove hacked the horsey man's shins.

It was the circus man's turn to yell then.

He released Bunter quite suddenly, and staggered against the tent, with a yell of anguish.

The next moment he was springing at the Owl of the Remove, with an expression on his stubbly face that was quite alarming to contemplate—had Bunter stayed to contemplate it.

But he didn't. The instant he was released Bunter spun away and fled wildly.

There was a tramping of heavy footsteps after him.

Bunter fled round the camped vans and shelters belonging to the circus, panting for breath; and then, stopping, he stooped and dodged under a van. He knew that he must be caught long before he could get across the field and escape, and he was right; for he had hardly disappeared under the van when the pursuer came tearing round the van after him. Had Bunter still been running, he would have been clutched a moment or two later.

Under the van, Bunter crouched and palpitated, watching with a terrified gaze the rough trousers and boots of his pursuer, which were all he could see of him.

Fortunately, those trousers and boots passed on.

Bunter gasped with relief.

"MAGNET" PORTRAIT GALLERY.

No. 30.—George Blundell (Captain of the Fifth).



A good-natured, unassuming fellow, very popular amongs the Fifth, of which he is captain—and the Lower School. Perhaps Blundell's chief worry in life is Horace Coker, but, bit by bit, Blundell has learnt the knack of handling the champion duffer and firework of his Form. Blundell shines to best advantage in the First Eleven cricket and footer teams, for he is an extremely useful player and a thorough sportsman. Shares Study No. 1 in the Fifth Form with Bland, who is his closest chum.

Evidently, the man had not guessed that he had dodged under the van, and was running on, expecting to sight him somewhere, scuttling among the vehicles.

"Oh dear!" moaned Bunter.

He gasped and panted and palpitated, and fairly squirmed with apprehension when he saw, through the wheels of other vehicles, the trousers and boots stop and turn back. Was the beast coming back to root him from under the van?

But the man stopped again as a sharp, hard, authoritative voice spoke suddenly.

"Here, my man! Where is your master—Senor Zorro?"

Bunter started. He had heard that voice before, though he did not remember where and when. Certainly it was not the voice of anyone belonging to the circus.

"In the tent, sir," answered the attendant who had shaken Bunter.

"This is his van, I think?"

The speaker was standing on the steps of the van, under the other end of which Bunter had dodged.

"Yes, sir."

"I will wait here. Tell Senor Zorro that I must see him at once."

"The show's going on now, sir," answered the man gruffly. "Mr. Zorro won't leave the tent now."

"Give him my message!" rapped out the imperious voice.

"What name shall I say, then?"

There was a moment's pause.

"Say Sir James; the other name does not matter."

"Very good, sir."

The trousers and boots got into motion again, greatly to Bunter's relief, and vanished in the direction of the big marquee.

Bunter lay on the grass under the van, still palpitating, but with funk giving place to keen curiosity. He knew now where he had heard that sharp, commanding voice before—the name of Sir James had given him the clue. It was Sir James Hobson—the father of Hobson of the Shell—who was standing on the steps of Senor Zorro's caravan.

Bunter was quite amazed.

Harry Wharton & Co. had noticed the baronet's arrival at the circus pitch, but Bunter had been too interested in the refreshment stall to observe anything that was not eatable or drinkable. Bunter knew how sternly Sir James had prohibited his son from visiting the circus. Yet here he was himself, asking to see Senor Zorro. It really was very extraordinary. It was astonishing that a man in Sir James Hobson's position should have any acquaintance with a strolling foreign showman at all. Inquisitiveness was Bunter's besetting sin. He had intended to hide under the van until it was safe to emerge and flee—now

he did not think of emerging. For the present, the Peeping Tom of Greyfriars intended to give his legs a rest and use his ears.

Minutes passed, and Bunter heard an impatient exclamation from the baronet:

The tall gentleman descended from the caravan steps, and moved to and fro beside the van, impatiently pacing.

His boots passed and repassed in Bunter's range of vision, only a few feet from the concealed Owl of the Remove.

Sir James stopped at last, and swung round, and Bunter, blinking out from under the other side of the van, had a view of another pair of boots, doubtless worn by Senor Zorro, the circus proprietor.

"Senor!"

"I have been waiting here," said the baronet harshly.

"I was not expecting you, senor," said the Spaniard in English, but with a strong foreign accent. "You have called me away from the performance—"

"Nonsense!" rapped out Sir James. Evidently the performances at the Spanish circus were a very light matter in the haughty gentleman's eyes. "I must speak to you at once."

"Speak, senor," said Zorro sulkily.

"I have just come from Greyfriars."

"Verdad?"

"The boy is there!"

"Pedrillo! Si, senor, he is there; he was taken to the school hospital after his accident. But the senor knew—"

"I knew—yes. It was a disaster, but—"

From the motions of Sir James' boots, Bunter knew that he was glancing round, turning as he glanced, evidently to make sure that no one was in hearing.

Fortunately for Bunter, it did not occur to the baronet to look under the van.

"Well, then, senor?" said the Spaniard, in the same sulky tone.

No doubt the circus performance was a greater matter to Senor Zorro than to his visitor.

"It was a disaster—a disaster," repeated Sir James. "You should have taken more care."

The Spaniard shrugged his shoulders.

"The accident was no fault of mine. How could I foresee it? How could I foresee that a car would be stopped to take the boy to hospital—that it would be the schoolmaster's car? The boy will leave the school when he is well. What matters?"

"Why did you bring your circus to England again at all?" exclaimed the baronet passionately. "But for that we—"

"After all these years, what matters? A man with his bread to earn follows Fortune wherever she leads," said Zorro sulkily. "And after all these years—"

"I tell you the boy is at Greyfriars School. He is well again, and the headmaster is keeping him there."

"Carambo! And why?"

"To care for him while some effort is made to trace his English relations."

"Por Dios! Verdad?" said the circus proprietor. "But, even so, what can they discover? The boy does not even know his own name."

"That is not all. My son is at Greyfriars."

"Your son?"

"And the Head has placed the boy in his Form—in his study. They have met—they have become friends!"

"Por Dios!" exclaimed Senor Zorro again, and this time his voice showed that he was startled.

Under the van, Billy Bunter blinked at the feet of the speakers, and wondered whether he was dreaming.

"He must be got away from the

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school—at once—at once," said Sir James. "No stone must be left unturned. You understand that, fool that you are, Juan Zorro?"

"Do not trouble yourself, senor. I will claim him, and he will be given back to me. He is useless now for his own work, after such a mischance, but—"

"What does that matter?" ground out the angry baronet. "Have you not been paid? Are you not being paid? I tell you—"

"As the senor wishes. To-morrow I—"

"To-morrow!" snarled the baronet. "Yes, to-morrow is always the word with a Spaniard! To-morrow will not do; you must take the boy away to-day."

"But my circus—"

Senor Zorro broke off, perhaps daunted by the expression on the baronet's face. He went on sulkily:

"I am at your orders, senor! I will go to the school to-day. I will leave the circus in charge of others. Satisfy yourself, senor—the boy shall not remain another night under that roof."

"Let it be so, then! And hearken to me, Zorro. Immediately he is in your hands, strike your camp and travel from here."

"We are doing good business here," said Zorro sullenly.

"I tell you—" Sir James Hobson's voice was harsh and rasping, savagely threatening in its tone. "I tell you, you will travel from here this very night, with the boy in your keeping, and you will leave England again immediately. Not a word. I will make it worth your while to go. But you leave at once—at once—and you never return."

"But after so many years—"

"Enough!"

"As the senor pleases."

"Go, then!"

Sir James Hobson strode away. Senor Zorro stood by the van, so near to Bunter that the fat junior could have touched him by stretching out a hand. He was staring after the baronet, and muttering to himself in Spanish. Bunter did not understand the words; but the tone was sufficient to tell him that the circus proprietor was swearing savagely.

Zorro moved away at last, but he did not return to the marquee. He went up the steps into his van, and Bunter heard him moving about overhead. And the Owl of the Remove, in a state of absolute amazement at what he had heard—almost wondering whether he had been dreaming—crept out from under the van, and took to his heels.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Too Clever By Half!

"OH dear!" gasped Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove did not stop till a couple of fields lay between him and the circus pitch.

What he had heard had amazed him, perplexed him, and at the same time terrified him.

The bare thought of Sir James Hobson learning that he had played the eaves-dropper, made Bunter feel cold along his fat spine. The grim-faced, hard-eyed baronet was rather a terrifying person at the best of times; and the swarthy Zorro, with his black eyes and black moustache and cruel mouth, was almost equally terrifying. Bunter's podgy heart almost stopped beating at the thought of being spotted by either of them.

But he was safe now. He sat down to

rest on a felled tree, two fields away from the Spanish Circus, and pumped in breath.

He blinked several times uneasily through the hedge, behind which he sat on the log; but there was no sign of pursuit. Nobody, in fact, was taking any heed of Bunter's existence; and for once the Owl of the Remove was glad to be ignored.

Having recovered his breath, Bunter mopped his perspiring brow, and reflected on what he had overheard. Bunter was not much given to reflection, but what he had heard was so strange, so amazing, that it filled up his fat mind, and he could not help thinking over it, and trying to elucidate what it might possibly mean.

Sir James Hobson—the wealthy baronet, father of the captain of the Shell at Greyfriars—was leagued with a more or less disreputable circus man—a foreigner, a strolling showman. Bunter rubbed his little fat nose as he thought it over, blankly amazed. What would Hobby say if he knew? What would the fellows say? Bunter, who was fond of discovering details of other people's business, had discovered something, with a vengeance, this time.

What did Sir James know about the boy Pedrillo? Why didn't he want Pedrillo at Greyfriars? Why?

It was inexplicable.

Bunter did not care much now about having missed the circus performance. He had struck something much more entertaining. In fact, it was not till he noticed, in the distance, a crowd pouring out of the marquee, that he remembered the circus at all.

The performance was over. Billy Bunter rolled away in the direction of the railway station, reminded that he had a train to catch. Sir James' affairs had to be dismissed from his fat mind for the present.

At Lantham Station he came on Harry Wharton & Co., taking out their bicycles.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here we are again!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "I didn't see you at the circus, fatty."

"I decided not to go, after all," said Bunter. "Rather a kiddish sort of show, you know. All very well for fellows like you."

"Oh!"

"Just about on a level with your intellects, what?" said Bunter agreeably.

Johnny Bull made a lunge with his boot, and Bunter skipped into the station. Harry Wharton & Co. mounted their bicycles for the ride back to Greyfriars.

Bunter was going back in a much easier manner. At Friardale Station, he was to meet his minor—armed with two Friardale platform tickets, according to arrangement. So far as Bunter could see, the scheme would work without a hitch, and he was to have a free ride home. As for the dishonesty of the scheme, Bunter really did not seem capable of understanding that at all. Perhaps he could not see it; and perhaps it was a case of none being so blind as those who refuse to see.

He rolled into Lantham Station, and extracted a platform ticket from the automatic machine, by inserting his final penny.

Then he rolled away to the platform.

"Train in from Woodend?" he asked the ticket-collector.

"Five minutes, sir."

"Oh, I'll go on and wait, then!"

Bunter showed his platform ticket, and rolled on. The train from Woodend was the one that went on to Friardale, by way of Blackwood and Redclyffe.

Bunter moved along to the farther



Still, he was relieved when the train started.

It rolled out of the station, and Bunter grinned cheerily. He was safely off—ticketless!

There were two other passengers in his carriage—a plump, red-faced farmer, and an old lady in black who carried several parcels, having apparently been shopping at Lantham. The old lady became busy in sorting out a ticket from her bag. The farmer's ticket was sticking out of his waistcoat-pocket.

The train stopped, and Hoskins and Pedrillo noticed an inspector enter one of the carriages. The next moment a fat figure emerged quite suddenly, helped by an iron grip on his fat arm. "Hallo, that's Bunter!" remarked Hoskins carelessly. "A Remove fag, you know. He's landed in trouble." Pedrillo paused to glance at the fat junior. (See Chapter 7.)

end of the platform, where a number of people had gathered to take the train.

There was a cheery grin on his face.

All these people about him had paid for their tickets—not possessing the brilliant cleverness of William George Bunter, who flattered himself that he knew a trick worth two of that. He was the only fellow there who was bright enough to travel on the railway without buying a ticket. It was to be hoped that he was also the only fellow there who was unscrupulous enough; but Bunter did not think about that aspect of the matter.

The train came in from the direction of Woodend, and stopped. A dozen

passengers took their places—Bunter among them.

His platform ticket, price one penny, was in his pocket; there was nothing to indicate that he did not possess a travelling ticket like the rest.

He felt a slight throb of uneasiness as he sat down, however, wondering whether the Lantham ticket-collector might possibly have an eye on him. Apparently that was not the case, however. The man was still at the gate punching tickets as passengers came in; and the porters on the platform, of course, knew nothing about the variety of ticket that Bunter had provided himself with.

Bunter felt a sense of intellectual superiority. Neither of these people knew how to travel cheaply like Bunter!

Why, it was as easy as falling off a form! At Friardale, he would step out of the train, and meet Sammy. Sammy would hand him a Friardale platform ticket.

All he had to do was to show that penny ticket when he left the station—just as if he had been on the platform with Sammy to see somebody off in the train!

What could be simpler?

Really it was easier than falling off a form! Sammy would have the ticket

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all ready, with a hole in it as if it had been punched at the barrier when Bunter walked on. Really this wheeze was no end of a catch; it was worth advertising in the papers as an improved method of travelling cheaply.

The train stopped at Blackwood.

The old lady had not yet extracted her ticket from among the other numerous contents of her bag, and she looked very nervous.

"Do they look at the tickets here?" she asked, addressing the farmer.

"No, ma'am, I think not."

The train restarted.

But the cheery grin had faded from Billy Bunter's face now. The old lady's remark had given him a sudden chill.

The best-laid schemes of mice and men gang aft agley! Bunter, with all his astuteness, had overlooked that little point.

There was another station before Friardale. The train would stop at Redclyffe.

Suppose some beast—some awful beast—some unspeakable beast of an inspector, asked to see the tickets there!

Bunter remembered, with a horrid sinking in his heart, that it sometimes happened.

Instead of the tickets being collected at the journey's end, it sometimes happened that an inspector came along the train and looked at them before the journey's end.

Suspicious beasts! Just as if they suspected upright and honourable members of the public of bilking them! Bunter was greatly disgusted with such suspiciousness.

He sat in a tremor while the train ran on to Redclyffe. The train stopped in that station—the last before Friardale.

Bunter quaked.

Only too clearly he recalled now that tickets sometimes had to be shown there. He had never known why.

Was it possible that his astute wheeze, his wonderful scheme for travelling without paying his fare, was not so new as he had supposed—that the railway company was "wide" to it—and that they sometimes had the tickets inspected en route, in order to catch just such clever fellows as Bunter!

Bunter listened with all his ears, and he felt almost sick when he heard a voice outside the carriage.

"Tickets, please!"

He suppressed a groan.

The door of the carriage opened. A ticket inspector's head was inserted and a hand was held out.

"Tickets, please!"

Bunter sat dumb.

Farther down the line Sammy Bunter was waiting at Friardale with that platform ticket for Bunter, which was to have enabled him to bilk the company so cleverly.

But Sammy and his platform ticket were not of much use to Bunter now—at Redclyffe, with a suspicious beast asking to see his railway ticket.

The red-faced farmer handed over his ticket for inspection, and then the old lady with the bundles followed suit. The inspector held out his hand to Bunter.

"Ticket, sir!"

Bunter gasped.

"I—I—I—"

"Ticket!"

"I—"

The inspector fixed an eye on Bunter that was like a gimlet.

"You show your ticket here, sir. Quick, please! Can't keep the train waiting!"

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"All—all right!" gasped Bunter.

He had one hope left—that the train could not be kept waiting while he made a pretended search for his ticket.

He groped in one pocket, and then in another.

"I—I forget where I put it!" he gasped.

"Look here——"

"I—I'm trying to find it!"

"I'm waiting!" said the inspector grimly.

The guard came along the train, slamming doors.

"Hold on, George!" said the inspector. "Here's a young gentleman can't find his ticket!"

The inspector's look was grim and his tone was ironical. The guard grinned. And it was borne in upon Bunter's mind that the inspector knew perfectly well that he hadn't a ticket. Bunter was not the first "bilk" in that railway gentleman's experience.

"Now, sir—sharp!"

"I—I—I can't find it——"

"The train can't wait!"

"But—but I——"

"Kindly step out of the train!"

"But—but I'm going to Friardale!" gasped Bunter.

"If you show your ticket—certainly!" said the inspector, with grim humour.

"If not, you're going to Redclyffe police-station, sir!"

"Oh!"

Bunter collapsed.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Friend in Need!

"A BIT fagged, what?" said Hoskins.

Pedrillo nodded.

The two Shell fellows had had a long ramble that afternoon.

Pedrillo was quite keen on it—and, in any case, he had resolved to remain out of gates until Hobby's pater had come to Greyfriars and gone again.

He enjoyed the ramble among the pleasant fields and woods of Kent—perhaps not enjoying quite so much the musical conversation of his friend Hoskins.

Hoskins had pointed out many objects of interest in the countryside. But he had been chiefly occupied in pointing out what he was doing in music, what he hoped to do, and what it was up to him to do, as the only musician of modern times who really understood the subject. Especially was he eloquent on that burning topic, the chord of the minor ninth.

On their homeward way the two Shell fellows walked through Redclyffe, and by that time Pedrillo was feeling a little tired, either from the long walk or from the minor ninth.

Hoskins, as a matter of fact, was rather tired, too; deeply engrossed in the luminous exposition of his views on music, he had really not noticed how many miles he had walked. But he realised now that he had walked a good many.

"We can take the train from here," he said, looking at his watch. "The 5.30 at Friardale goes through Redclyffe at about a quarter-past five. We shall catch it all right."

"Muy bien!" assented Pedrillo.

And the chums of the Shell went into the station, bought their tickets for Friardale, and walked on the platform.

"There she comes!" remarked Hoskins, as the train came in sight from the direction of Lantham.

The train stopped, and the Shell fellows noticed an inspector going along the carriages examining tickets, without giving him any particular attention.

But they sat up and took notice, as it were, as a very unusual incident occurred.

From one of the carriages a fat figure emerged quite suddenly, helped by an iron grip on its fat arm.

"Hallo! That's Bunter!" remarked Hoskins carelessly. "A Remove fag, you know! He's landed in trouble. Well, here's our carriage, old chap. Come on!"

Pedrillo paused to glance at Bunter.

It was only too plain that the Remove fag had landed into trouble. His fat face was the picture of woe.

"I—I say, I—I've lost my ticket!" he howled. "How—how dare you say I'm travelling without a ticket! Think I'm a bilk?"

"Come on, old chap!" said Hoskins. "We don't want to lose this train."

"Hold on a minute! Bunter——"

"Oh, bother, Bunter!"

"He says he's lost his ticket," said Pedrillo.

Hoskins laughed.

"Gammon! Travelling without a ticket, more likely! He's an awful young rotter!"

Bunter spotted the two Shell fellows, and yelled to them.

"I say, you fellows—I say, Hoskins, old chap——"

"Go and eat coke!" answered Hoskins.

"I say, this man says I'm travelling without a ticket!" roared Bunter. "I say, you fellows, stand by a Greyfriars chap."

"Rats!"

"Beast! Tell him I'm a Greyfriars man, and that you know I wouldn't travel without a ticket!" howled Bunter.

The inspector glanced at Hoskins.

"Do you know this young fellow, sir?" he asked.

"Not exactly," said Hoskins. "I'm in the Shell. I've seen him about Greyfriars."

"You had better come quietly with me, my boy," said the inspector. "It is quite clear that you have no ticket, and you are answerable for attempting to defraud the company."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Come!"

"Help!" yelled Bunter desperately.

The train windows were lined with faces, staring at the scene. The Redclyffe porters had gathered round, grinning. Hoskins reddened with annoyance. It really was very disagreeable to be claimed as an acquaintance by a fellow who was being taken up for defrauding the railway company. But Pedrillo, who did not know Bunter so well as other Greyfriars fellows did, felt more compassion for the terrified young rascal.

"Let's see him through, Hoskins," he said. "He says he has lost his ticket, you know——"

"Gammon!"

"Let's help him out; it may be true."

"That inspector jolly well knows it isn't, or he wouldn't have collared him."

"Still, he's a Greyfriars kid," said Pedrillo. "He may not have intended to cheat."

(Continued on page 17.)

ANSWERS
Every Saturday —PAGE 2:



Harry Wharton's Football Supplement

No. 10 (New Series). Vol. 1.

April 3rd, 1926.

I have managed to secure the services of some of the finest football experts in the country as contributors to our new Supplement. MAGNET readers who follow it regularly can be sure of getting the very latest and most exclusive news, interesting gossip, and information.—H. Wharton, Ed.

Flag-Kicks and Penalties

PARS ABOUT FOOTBALL MEN AND MATTERS.

By The Man in the Street.

NELSON FOOTBALL CLUB recently made an effort to raise £5,000 by means of a bazaar. What might be called putting the half-Nelson on their followers.

Rotherham United are said to have the smallest side in the Northern Third Division. But these little fellows of Rotherham still manage to bother 'em.

It is rapidly becoming apparent that the only solution to the everlasting centre-forward problem is for every team to play six forwards, and then there won't be any centre man.

It is quite the usual thing for twelve to fifteen thousand to attend the reserve matches of Aston Villa. But, then, the reserves of the Villa are as good as most clubs' first-choice men.

"Did you say all goalkeepers are mad?" asked the custodian, glaring at a colleague. "No, I didn't," was the reply. "I said all good goalkeepers are mad."

Talk about bad luck in the Cup draw! What about the Arsenal's lot this season? First of all, it was the Wolves they met, then the Rovers, and in the next round the Villans.

Some time ago Blackburn Rovers had the present Huddersfield Town and English International full-back on their books, but they did not appreciate Wads-worth.

Swansea Town—known as "The Swans"—have certainly played ducks and drakes with some of their opponents this season.

Although Dr. Victor Milne, the Villa centre-half, is an amateur, he likes to be treated as one of the boys, and insists on his colleagues calling him "Vic." And, after all, that's nearly half-way to victory.

Picking up a football edition the other night, the sister of one of our readers was shocked to read that a certain player lost his head."

Last season Notts Forest dropped from the First to the Second Division, and this season they have been in almost constant trouble even in the lower section. As they clearly can't get out of the wood, it might not be a bad plan for the club to change its name.

The last thing which some clubs seem to think about is giving their reserve men a chance when an emergency arises. These might remember the advice of the old showman: "If you don't speculate you can't expect to accumulate."

Blackpool supporters make a habit of dashing across the pitch at the end of each game, and they have now been threatened with legal action if they don't desist. Fancy a policeman going up to a crowd of five thousand people and saying: "Please desist!"

The estuary of the Severn at one time washed the land on which the Cardiff City club now play at Ninian Park. Some footballers we know who have played on that ground—which is about as muddy as any—have expressed the opinion that the Severn didn't do its washing job very thoroughly.

Several clubs which have been in the habit of losing their matches this season are said to have tried to secure the services of one of the Oldham full-backs. This can readily be understood, as his name is Wyne.

WHY HOME TEAMS WIN! by "Linesman"

Some Points That Are Not Generally
Recognised.

WHY do the great majority of football matches end in victories for the home side? That they do so is beyond all possibility of doubt. On a recent Saturday every home team in the First Division of the League won their match, and the average, so far as big football is concerned, showed that on a rough average two games out of three are won by the home teams. The same story is to be told of all classes of football, given anything like equality in any competition, whether senior or junior, the home teams emerge successful much more frequently than the visiting teams.

The question of why this is so is an interesting one. The usual reply to the question so far as big football is concerned is that the fellows playing at home are encouraged by their supporters to put forth greater efforts than they do on the ground of their opponents. There may be something in this, and it is undoubtedly true that a good rousing cheer has spurred many a side on to victory. It is nice to feel, when you are out there on the field, that the sympathy and the good wishes of the onlookers are on your side, and equally, so far as some players are concerned, it is disappointing when a brilliant bit of play is received by the watchers in stony silence. This often happens when a man is playing on a strange ground.

I certainly do not think, however, that it is in this matter of encouragement from the spectators that the real reason for success of the home teams is to be found. There are other and more important factors at work. In the first place, there is that very important matter of self-confidence. Everybody knows that in the great majority of matches the home teams win, and this leads to a general feeling among players that they are likely to be successful when playing on their own particular "cabbage patch." Now, fellows who think they will win very often do win, and equally fellows who, playing away from home, are lacking in confidence are really well on the road to defeat. When teams of equal merit meet temperament, or "feeling," often tells.

Then we turn to another and very real reason why the balance of matches ends in favour of the home team. This lies in knowledge of the ground—the peculiarities of the pitch, and so on. It has to be confessed that some of the pitches on which junior matches are played are far from perfect, and knowledge of the slope and that sort of thing is undoubtedly a very real help.

In regard to the games on the big grounds, however, this argument cannot be put forward, for most of them are pretty level so far as the general surface is concerned, and there is not a great deal of difference in the state of the pitches generally. And yet I am quite sure, speaking as an old player, that it is a help to play among familiar surroundings.

When you are playing on a football pitch you do not intentionally take much notice of what might be called the "trappings"—the situation of the stand and that sort of thing. But unconsciously you do notice these things, and they serve as "landmarks," if I may call them so. On a ground which a footballer knows he can "sense" his position and the likely position of his colleagues without looking round; and in doing this the player gains a fraction of time which may be very valuable. He is able to make accurate passes right from the start of a game, whereas the fellows who are surrounded by strange landmarks find their passes going astray.

This effect can be noticed in every game. All tennis-courts are exactly the same size, but you will find even the best of players driving the ball out when playing on a court which is strange to them until they get accustomed to the surroundings. My own view is that it is in the strangeness of the surroundings that we find the real explanation of why visiting teams so often fail.

Having given these explanations, there is just one fact to be stated. It is that the team which can pick up the points away from home is the one most likely to win the championship.

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STURDY SAM!

*The Career of Huddersfield's
International Left Back*

By "REFEREE."

NO one will, I venture to say, dispute the fact that Huddersfield Town is the greatest club in the Football League. Since the War, indeed, they have made football history which, as it grows with Father Time, bids fair to outshine the magnificent record of the famous Villa of Aston. In five seasons they have appeared twice in the Cup Final; twice in succession have they won the First Division championship, and at the moment of writing they are looked upon as potential winners of the championship again. To carry off such an achievement needs a really great and consistent eleven. Huddersfield have got it.

Strong in both attack and defence, the Town, perhaps, is more notable for its rock-like defence. With Taylor in goal and Wadsworth and Barkas in the full-back division there are few forwards who have a happy time when Huddersfield are their opponents. Of this defence the greatest is, perhaps, Taylor, England's custodian. But almost as great, if not as great, is Samuel Wadsworth, who plays at left back, and who, since his early connection with the Town team in 1921, has assisted them in all their many triumphs.

Have you seen Sam in action? He is a polished defender. His keenness, his thoroughness, his anticipation, his clean kicking, and, above all, his abundant pluck, stamp him as a master. Samuel is one of the "never-say-die" type, and until the last solo upon the whistle of the referee is played he goes all out. A great defender, indeed, who has played many sparkling games for his club and given many brilliant exhibitions for his country. If you've never seen Wadsworth, take my tip and pay a visit to your nearest First Divisioners next time the Town are visitors.

His age, as near as I can tell you, is twenty-five. It may be twenty-six, but as I have no means of ascertaining within a month or so, I should say that twenty-five is the more reliable figure. This I do know, however—that Samuel is a Lancashire-born lad, having first come into the world at a certain little town famous for its cotton and coal industry named Darwen.

And in Darwen Sam spent his boyhood. He spent it, as you may guess, chiefly in playing football and laying the foundation-stones of the great career on the playing-field which has since been his. Like other lads of his temperament, he played the game in all its forms, and, drifting from one club to another, was finally spotted by a representative of Blackburn Rovers and signed on.

As a Rover, however, Samuel did not please. The management of the club failed to see the promise and the possibilities in the youngster, and so offered no objection when Nelson came forward and asked to sign him on. So to Nelson Samuel went, and for Nelson he played well—so well, indeed, that the scouts of Huddersfield got to hear about him, and came to watch him; and, finding that he fulfilled their every expectation, strongly recommended his transfer to the Town of Huddersfield.

Huddersfield, we know, have never been slow in spotting potential Internationals. They recognised one in young Samuel, and so made no demur when Nelson asked £1,000 for his transfer. That was in March, 1921, and when Samuel became a "Townie" he realised he would have to do something exceptionally brilliant to displace Eli Bullock, the then left full-back of the Town whom Sam was put to understudy.

Very soon Sam proved himself to be Eli's master. He got his chance in the first team, made good, and, incidentally, made the position his own. Though he only played six times for the League that season, he was already being spoken of as a coming International when that season ended.

Two seasons later that honour was his, for in 1922 he earned his cap against Scotland, and so collected the first of what was destined to be a big bunch of football

honours. You will find the list appended to this article, but you will not find the 1924 match against Wales mentioned therein. Sam was selected for this, and would have appeared had not the flu demon got him in its grip on the very day of the match.

At the moment he can claim eight International caps; but, apart from this, he can

also claim a Cup-winner's medal (1922), which was presented to him at Stamford Bridge on the occasion that the Town won the Cup by virtue of a penalty goal against Preston North End. He can also claim two championship medals, with the possible addition of the third at the end of the present season.

His last distinction, at the time of writing this article, was to play against Wales. That was in the February of this year, and as partner to Cresswell, of Sunderland, he proved himself as good as ever. England, we know, lost, but that was no fault of Samuel's, who was easily the best back on the field. I am confidently expecting when the team for Scotland comes to be chosen that Samuel will again find a place.

It will be picked by the time you read this. I hope to see Wadsworth's name in it. I hope also that Tommy Clay will be recalled as his partner, for in the past the Clay-Wadsworth back division has been the best that England has tried since the War. With Tommy on the right and Sammy on the left, Scotland's forwards should find their sharpshooting activities very limited indeed!

Off the field Wadsworth is an enthusiastic cricketer, and as such is a playing member of the Darwen Cricket Club, where he has gained laurels both as a batsman and bowler. Oh, a great lad is our Samuel in every sense of the word—a great lad belonging to a great team! I wonder, you chaps, how much Huddersfield really owe to their brilliant full-back, and how many times now, if it were possible to judge it, he has repaid the Town for the initial £1,000 spent on his transfer way back in March, 1921?

Here is his record:

INTERNATIONALS.

- 1922-23-24-25.—For England v. Scotland.
- 1924-25.—For England v. Ireland.
- 1923.—For England v. Belgium.
- 1920.—For England v. Wales.

TRIAL MATCHES.

- 1924.—North v. South.
- 1924-25.—Amateurs v. Professionals.
- 1923-24.—England v. South and the Rest.

INTER-LEAGUE.

- 1922-23-24.—Football League v. Scottish League.
- 1925.—Football League v. Irish League.

LIGHTNING SKETCHES OF FOOTER CELEBRITIES.



An impression of Hugh Gallacher, the famous centre-forward of Newcastle United.

OUR QUERY CORNER.

"Historian" (Rochdale): Only two teams have won the Cup and the Championship in the same season—Preston North End in 1888-9, and Aston Villa in 1894-5. Whether any team will do it again is a matter of opinion.

J. McGregor (Aberdeen): It used to be a regulation in the Scottish League that if two teams finished at the top with the same number of points, a deciding game should be played between them for the title of champions. Nowadays, however, the same principle applies as in the English League—the goal average deciding.

H. Carpenter (Sheffield): The bonus which is paid to the players of the winning teams in the semi-finals of the English Cup is £4 per man. The winners of the Final Tie receive £8 each. The bonus for League matches and all other Cup ties is £2 per man for a win and £1 per man for a draw.

"Pro" (Brighton): A player who has been a "pro" cannot play for an amateur team without the consent of the authorities, but of course there is nothing to prevent him playing for a "pro" team without payment.

"O" (Clapton): The last club outside the First Division to win the English Cup was Barnsley, in 1912. Since then there have been three Second Division clubs in the final—Huddersfield Town, Wolverhampton Wanderers, and West Ham United—but they have all been defeated.

Young (Nottingham): Yes; Ironmonger, of Notts County, is the tallest goalkeeper in first-class football to-day, standing 6ft. 5½ins.

W. Kelly (Derby): In the course of his career Steve Bloomer scored 452 goals in League football alone. This is easily a record, but I am sorry there is no reliable record of the goals he scored in other competitions.

"Careful" (Wolverhampton): West Bromwich Albion share with Liverpool the credit of having obtained more points in any one First Division season than the other clubs. The Albion totalled 60 in the first season after the War. In the same season Tottenham Hotspur also gained the championship, of the Second Division with a record number of points—namely, 70. Both these clubs also scored over 100 goals.

J. Fern (Grimsby): The football clubs first started to pay Entertainment Tax in the season of 1916-17. How much they have paid between then and now nobody can tell, but some of the clubs would like to have the amount in the bank.

Granite (Aberdeen): The most notable of recent cases of a player leaving an English club for a Scottish one is Syd Puddefoot, the present Blackburn Rovers forward, who went from West Ham to Falkirk in 1922 for a five thousand pounds transfer fee. Scottish clubs do not often pay big prices for English players—the boot being usually on the other leg.

T. G. (Glamorgan): When Wales won the International Championship in 1923-4 season, they won every one of the three games against England, Scotland, and Ireland, and only conceded one goal. It is difficult to say whether their success was due to keeping the same team together, but it is significant that for the three matches only twelve players were called upon for service, and they were given special medals to commemorate their fine performance.



(Continued from page 12.)

And Pedrillo hurried up to the group. Bunter, in his agony of terror, clutched at the circus junior's arm, and held on to him like a drowning man to a plank.

"Pedrillo, old chap, help me!" he gasped. "Stand by a fellow! Oh dear! I'll never do it again—I mean, I haven't done it! Pay the fare for me, old fellow, and I'll settle up as soon as we get to the school—I'm expecting a postal-order. Help me out of this, old chap."

"There goes the train!" grunted Hoskins.

The train rolled out of the station, carrying off its swarm of grinning faces.

"We know this chap, inspector," said Pedrillo. "He belongs to our school. I'm sure—I mean—I hope—He didn't mean to do anything dishonest. I'm willing to pay his fare."

"Come along to the stationmaster and we will see," said the inspector dubiously.

"Well, my hat!" said Hoskins in disgust.

Claude Hoskins remained on the platform, while Pedrillo, Bunter, and the inspector proceeded to the stationmaster's room—Bunter still clutching desperately hold of Pedrillo's sleeve, as if fearful that he might escape.

It was ten minutes before Pedrillo joined his chum again. He came back with a smiling face, and Bunter came with him, still gasping with terror at the ordeal he had been through.

William George Bunter had had the fright of his life! Never, never again was he likely to evolve brilliant schemes for travelling free on the railroads. The bare thought of it made him shudder.

"Have they let that young scoundrel off?" growled Hoskins.

Pedrillo smiled.

"We've arranged the matter," he said. "I'm sure Bunter did not mean any harm. He says so, at least."

"He's a spoofing bilk!" growled Claude Hoskins.

"Oh, really, Hoskins—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Well, it's all right now," said the circus junior pacifically. "If Bunter's done wrong he's had a lesson."

"No doubt about that!" grinned Hoskins. "He's still shivering like a jelly with blue funk."

"I—I—I—" stammered Bunter.

"Look here, are we going to travel with that Remove fag?" snapped Hoskins. "Have you got him a ticket?"

"Yes," said Pedrillo.

"Well, give it to him, and let him sheer off, then. We don't go about with Remove fags in the Shell."

"Oh, really, Hoskins—"

"Cut off, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter took the ticket which had been so providentially supplied, and rolled away. He was still in a state of fright; and he gripped the ticket hard in his fat hand—the ticket that saved him from awful and unknown penalties.

Hoskins and Pedrillo chatted while they waited for the next train; Bunter sat in a fat tremble on one of the

seats. When the next train came along from Lantham, Bunter dived into it, Hoskins—as befitted a lofty member of the Middle School—going into another carriage, and taking his chum with him.

Bunter gasped with relief when the train stopped at Friardale, and he was able to bolt out of it. He did not even look round the platform to see whether Sammy of the Second had waited for him. He scudded out of the station and started for Greyfriars. Hoskins and Pedrillo walked past him in the lane. Hoskins loftily regardless; but Pedrillo, who had not been long enough at Greyfriars to realise that between Lower Fourth and Shell there was a great gulf fixed, gave the fat junior a pleasant nod and smile in passing.

The two Shell fellows disappeared in the direction of Greyfriars, and Bunter plodded on after them, still palpitating a little.

Near the gates of the school he sighted a fat fag, who blinked at him reproachfully and discontentedly through big spectacles.

"You didn't come by the five-thirty!" snapped Sammy of the Second.

"Br-r-r-r!"

"I went to the station to meet it," said Sammy indignantly. "The train came in and you weren't in it, you fat duffer!"

"I came by the six train," said Bunter. "Never mind."

"You silly owl—making a fellow walk to the station for nothing! And how did you get through without a ticket? I jolly well wasn't going to wait for the next train," said Bunter minor. "Did you get copped?"

"Don't you be cheeky, Sammy!" said Bunter severely.

"Mean to say you got through without a ticket, and without me to help you at this end?" exclaimed Sammy.

"Certainly not; I paid my fare," said Bunter haughtily. "At least, a friend in the Shell paid it for me. I hope you don't think I'd travel without a ticket. Sammy, and defraud the railway company?"

"Eh?"

Sammy of the Second stared, as well he might.

"Nothing of the sort," said Bunter. "You may be capable of such things, Sammy—I'm afraid you are! You're dishonest!"

And Billy Bunter rolled in at the school gates, leaving Sammy of the Second still staring after him as if mesmerised.

— — —

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Head Refuses!

"WELL, Trotter?"

Dr. Locke glanced at the House page over his glasses. "A bloke, sir—" said

Trotter.

"A—a—a what?"

It was a half-holiday to Dr. Locke as well as to the Greyfriars fellows, and in his own stately way he was enjoying the respite as much as the Famous Five in their less stately and more strenuous manner.

He had had a chat with Mr. Quelch, after lunch, on the absorbing and enthralling subject of Aeschylus.

Then he had a little chat with Mr. Hacker, the master of the Shell, and learned how the new fellow, Pedrillo, was progressing in Mr. Hacker's Form—excellently, according to Mr. Hacker, who liked the quiet industry and respectful attention of his new pupil.

Then there was a talk with Wingate,

the captain of the school, on many little matters connected with the general administration of Greyfriars.

After that came a call from Sir James Hobson, who paid his respects to the Head, having come down to Greyfriars to see his son. That little interlude was not very enjoyable, however, as the baronet seemed very curt in manner and pressed for time. Dr. Locke was not quite sorry that Sir James was pressed for time; he bade him good-day with a certain amount of relief.

Later came the vicar of Friardale, and there was a pleasant little talk about local charities, which led to the Head unlocking a drawer and taking out a cheque book.

After that there was a little walk round the Head's private garden, and instructions to Mr. Mumble, the gardener.

Then the Head walked, slow and stately, to his study, and sat down to prepare some papers in Greek for the Sixth Form.

That duty finished, Dr. Locke bestowed his scholarly figure in a comfortable chair by a pleasant fire, and opened a volume upon the cover of which appeared the name of Quintus Horatius Flaccus.

With his old friend, Q. H. Flaccus, he settled down for a really enjoyable hour, going over the Odes, after which he was due for tea in his house, with Mrs. Locke and Molly, two or three elderly visitors, and one or two specially-honoured prefects of the Sixth.

But that hour with Horace was destined to be interrupted. One more visitor was coming, this time unexpected. But as Trotter presented himself to announce the caller Dr. Locke raised his eyebrows and stared at Trotter over Q. Horatius Flaccus. Many languages the Head knew, and English was his mother-tongue. But he was unacquainted with blokes.

"What did you say, Trotter?" asked the Head mildly. "Has someone called to see me, Trotter?"

"Yes, sir. A bloke—I mean, sir, a cove—well, sir, a person." Trotter seemed to find it difficult to explain.

"Do you mean that a gentleman has called, Trotter?" asked the Head severely.

"No, sir, not at all, sir!" said Trotter. "He ain't a gentleman, sir—what I should call a person, sir."

"Bless my soul!" said the Head.

"A circus person, sir," said Trotter.

"But what—"

"Not knowing whether you would see such a bloke, sir—I mean person—"

"What name has he given you, Trotter?" asked the Head.

"He says his name is Thorough, sir; but that ain't a name, sir."

"Thorough," repeated the Head, quite surprised. Certainly Dr. Locke had never heard of such a name.

"Yes, sir. Shall I tell him to go away, sir?"

"No, Trotter. You may admit him," said the Head.

"Yessir."

Trotter retired, and the Head laid down Q. Horatius Flaccus. He wondered who this visitor was, and was rather curious to see him.

Trotter returned, conducting a rather burly, swarthy-faced man with black hawk-like eyes and a black moustache. The man, whose face was sulky in expression, had a slouched foreign hat in his dusky hand.

"Mr. Thorough, sir," said Trotter.

And he retired, leaving "Mr. Thorough" with the Head.

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"Good-afternoon, sir!" said the Head, rising and bowing politely. "I do not think I have the pleasure of knowing you." He was more surprised than ever, as he scanned the black-looking, brigandish aspect of his visitor.

"My name is Zorro, señor," said the stranger.

The Head smiled. It was Senor Zorro, the proprietor of the Spanish circus. The name being pronounced in the Spanish way, the Z like the "th" in English, Trotter had made a little mistake in catching it, Trotter's knowledge of foreign tongues being strictly limited.

"Ah! You are the proprietor of the circus that was recently at the village near this school?" said the Head.

"Si, señor."

"Pray take a seat, Senor Zorro."

The showman sat down, awkwardly enough, obviously unaccustomed to such company as that of the stately and scholarly headmaster of Greyfriars School. He twisted the black felt slouched hat in his swarthy hands. The Head regarded him benignly.

"You have called with regard to Pedrillo, the lad who met with so sad an accident in your circus, señor?" said the Head.

"Si, señor."

"I am happy to be able to tell you that he is quite, or almost quite, recovered from his injury," said the Head. "The accident might have been very serious indeed, but fortunately did not prove so. The boy is in good health now, Senor Zorro. It is a great pleasure to me to be able to tell you so."

The black eyes watched the Head's kind face sharply, cynically. If Dr. Locke had known as much about men as he knew about books he would have seen that it was not concern for Pedrillo that had drawn the showman to Greyfriars that afternoon.

"The lad has made many friends here, sir," went on the Head, in the happy delusion that Senor Zorro would be glad to hear it. "He seems a very well-behaved, well-mannered boy."

"Verdad! You say, señor, that his health is restored?"

"Quite so."

"Then he is ready to return to the circus."

Dr. Locke started a little.

"You desire him to return to the circus, Senor Zorro?" he exclaimed.

"Si, señor."

"Dear me!" said the Head, blinking at the Spanish showman over his glasses. "Bless my soul!"

The man shifted uneasily.

"I regret, sir, leaving the boy on your hands so long," he said. "I am a busy man—I have many affairs—but it was my fault. I should not have let you be troubled with him. Vaya! That is soon mended. Any expense to which the señor has been put—"

Dr. Locke made a gesture.

"Pray do not mention anything of the kind," he said.

"As you please, señor. The boy is here, I suppose?"

"He is in the school."

"Then I can take him with me."

Dr. Locke paused, regarding the showman in a very perplexed way. He felt that the situation was awkward.

"That is a matter that must be discussed, Senor Zorro," he said. "From your not having called before, and having made no inquiries with regard to the boy, I naturally concluded that you were not anxious for him to return to you. The boy himself supposes that you do not desire it, as he will be unable to continue his work as an acrobat."

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"I desire his return, señor," said the showman doggedly.

"Not against his own desire, I presume? Pedrillo has expressed his wishes very clearly not to return to the circus."

The black eyes glinted.

"He is in my service, señor, and I shall not part with him. I ask that the muchacho be handed over to me."

"Against his will, sir?"

The Spaniard shrugged his shoulders.

Dr. Locke observed the man now with more attention. He read the hard, swarthy face, the cruel lines about the mouth, the shifty gleam in the deep-set black eyes. Dr. Locke knew more of books than of men; but he knew enough of men to be able to see that Senor Zorro was a hard-handed and hard-hearted man, and that Pedrillo had told no more than the truth in saying that the Spaniard had been a hard master.

There was a pause, during which Zorro shifted, and twirled his black felt hat, and his eyes glinted at the headmaster of Greyfriars.

"I will not waste your time, señor," he broke out abruptly. "Give me the boy, and let us go."

"I fear that I cannot do so, señor," said Dr. Locke quietly. "Pedrillo does not desire to return to the circus. He is an English boy, and does not desire to return to Spain with you. He has every right to please himself in the matter."

"Senor! Do you desire this boy, this nameless vagrant, to be left on your hands?" exclaimed the showman, astonished and angry.

"No, sir; but I have offered him the hospitality of Greyfriars, while an effort is made to discover his relatives, if any, who may be still living," said the Head.

"Por todos los santos!" murmured the Spaniard.

"For that reason, sir, I have desired to see you, and had intended to communicate with you," said Dr. Locke. "As the boy has been so long in your charge, you can doubtless give me information with regard to his name and origin, and help—"

"Nothing of the kind, señor. The boy was a ragged, penniless waif when I picked him up under a hedge, ten years ago and more," said the showman gruffly. "I knew nothing of him, but took him into my caravan from pity, that he should not starve."

Dr. Locke eyed the man.

Never had he seen a man who looked less likely than Juan Zorro to perform such an act of charity.

"You do not know his name, then, señor?"

"No!"

"Nor his origin?"

"No!"

"Any particulars of any kind—"

"None."

"That is very extraordinary," said the Head.

"The boy is in my service," said the showman. "I desire him to return with me. I am responsible for him, señor."

"You have been slow, sir, to realise your responsibility," said Dr. Locke quietly. "You have left him in the hands of strangers for weeks. Had he died as a result of his accident, you would not have known—unless I had taken the trouble to trace out your route after you moved from this district. It is a little late, sir, to talk of your responsibility for the boy."

"I demand—"

"It is useless to make demands, señor," said the Head calmly. "The boy is, as I judge, about sixteen years old; old enough to decide for himself whether he will return to the circus, or take advantage of the offer I have made

him to remain at this school while some effort is made to discover his family. In the meantime, his education, which seems to have been very neglected, is being cared for, and he wants for nothing. If his people cannot be discovered, after due inquiry, I shall make it my business to find him some useful employment at a later date. If your feelings towards him are kind, this should satisfy you."

The showman scowled.

"It does not satisfy me, señor. The boy is mine, and I demand that he leaves this school in my charge."

"The boy assuredly is not yours, and is not even of your nationality. You can have no rights over an English boy," said the Head. "I certainly shall not allow him to be taken out of the country against his will."

"Senor, if you keep the boy here, it is kidnapping!" exclaimed Zorro.

"Nonsense!"

"What is he to you? What does he matter to you, sir? You make all this trouble, this fuss, over a stranger—"

"If no trouble had been taken over this stranger, señor, he would hardly have survived his accident," said the Head sternly. "But for the prompt aid of some Greyfriars boys, of the school doctor, and the accommodation of the school hospital here, the boy might have died. You concerned yourself very little about it at the time."

"Carambo! Did I think that he would live after such a fall?" snapped the showman.

Dr. Locke knitted his brows.

"And thinking that he would die, you left him on my hands; and now that he is recovered, you claim him!" he exclaimed. "You can scarcely expect me to recognise such a claim, Senor Zorro."

"Let me see the boy, then!" exclaimed Zorro impatiently. "He will not refuse to return with me."

"If that means, as it can only mean, that you think you may influence him by menaces, I certainly shall not allow him to be brought into your presence, señor."

Zorro gritted his teeth.

"You refuse to give him up, señor?"

"Undoubtedly."

"The law will compel you to do so."

Dr. Locke smiled contemptuously.

"The law is at your service, Senor Zorro, if you care to invoke it," he said. "I have acted towards this unfortunate lad as a gentleman and a Christian was bound to act, and I am fully prepared to answer for it."

The Spaniard eyed him surlily, and rose to his feet.

"Then you will not give me the boy?"

"Not against his will."

"Let him be sent for—"

"I will ask him, seriously, whether he desires to return to you, and allow him to decide for himself. That is all I can say," answered Dr. Locke; "and I will say frankly, Senor Zorro, that it appears incredible to me that you know so little of the boy's origin. You speak of the law; and I can assure you, sir, that the law will require you to give an account of the boy, for I shall leave no stone unturned in my efforts to trace his family. You speak of kidnapping, señor, and I will tell you plainly that I strongly suspect that the boy came into your hands in the first place as the result of something of the kind."

The Spaniard started violently.

"Nothing of the kind," he muttered.

"I tell you I found him—a starving waif—"

"Even so, you had no right to take him out of the country without acquainting the proper authorities, even



"Help!" shouted Pedrillo. Bunter sat up dazedly. "I say, you fellows, pile in!" The chums of the Remove did not need urging. The sight of Pedrillo of the Shell, fighting hard in the savage grip of the circus showman, was more than enough for them. They jumped down from their machines and fairly hurled themselves upon Senor Zorro. (See Chapter 9.)

if your intentions were charitable," said the Head.

"We are wasting time, senor," said the showman harshly. "If you refuse to hand over Pedrillo—"

"I refuse absolutely."

"Enough, senor! Adios!"

And the Spaniard, without waiting to be shown out, left the study and tramped angrily away down the corridor.

Dr. Locke was left with an extremely thoughtful expression on his face. He did not turn back to Q. Horatius Flaccus. He was thinking of that angry interview, and of the boy Pedrillo; and a vague suspicion that had been in his mind—that the circus waif had been kidnapped in his early childhood—had hardened now almost into a certainty.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

A Fight for Liberty!

"PEDRILLO!"

"You!"

Claude Hoskins stared.

The two Shell fellows had nearly reached the gates of the school, when a burly, swarthy man, with a surly sulky face, came swinging out. It was Senor Zorro, fresh from his interview with the Head of Greyfriars. He started as he came fairly face to face with Pedrillo, and his black eyes glittered as he called out his name.

Pedrillo started back.

The bright and cheery expression faded from his face—a hunted look came into his eyes. The burly Spaniard strode across to him.

"Pedrillo! So I've found you."

"What the thump—" exclaimed Hoskins. "Who's this man, kid?"

"It is Zorro, the showman," said Pedrillo faintly. "The man who was my master at the circus."

"Oh, I remember! I saw him there," said Hoskins. "Here, keep your distance, my man! What do you want?"

Zorro did not heed Hoskins of the Shell.

He grasped at the circus waif, and Pedrillo sprang back and eluded his grasp.

"What do you want?" he panted. "I shall not return to the circus; I shall not return to Spain! I belong to the school now."

"That's so," said Hoskins. "Hands off, my man!"

"You will return to the circus with me, Pedrillo," said Senor Zorro harshly. "Come!"

"I will not! I will not!"

Pedrillo caught Claude Hoskins' arm. "Stand by me, amigo!" he panted. "Help me now! Do not let that man take me!"

"No jolly fear!" said Hoskins cheerily. "Don't you be afraid, old man. You're in England now, the jolly old land of the free. Nobody can make you do anything you jolly well don't want to. Keep your distance, you foreign bounder!"

The Spaniard closed in again on Pedrillo, and the circus waif backed farther away, still holding to Claude's arm. The black, glinting eyes of the Spanish showman seemed to have a terrifying and fascinating effect on the waif, like the eyes of a serpent. Zorro grasped at him again and caught his shoulder.

"Come, muchacho!"

Pedrillo struck fiercely at his hand.

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"Carambo!"

The Spaniard swore savagely as his grasp was struck away.

"Hands off, Juan Zorro," said Pedrillo, between his teeth. "I will not come with you. Never! Never! I will fight while I have a breath left, rather than come with you. Help me, Hoskins!"

"You bet!" exclaimed Hoskins. "Why, you lawless scoundrel, what do you mean by collaring my pal? Hands off, I tell you!"

Hoskins forgot all about minor ninths now. He clenched his fists and stood by Pedrillo.

Zorro made a spring at the circus wail and grasped him savagely. Hoskins' fist was in his swarthy face the next moment, and the showman gave a curse. Then his swarthy fist dashed at Hoskins, and the Shell fellow sprawled in the road. Hobson of the Shell would not have gone down so easily; football had a rather more developing effect on the muscles than minor ninths. But poor Hoskins went headlong, and sprawled in the road, dazed and dizzy. His muscle was not equal to his pluck.

Pedrillo struggled furiously in the grasp of the showman.

He was a sturdy lad, but he was like an infant in the burly man's grasp.

"I say, you fellows!" Billy Bunter came rolling up the road, and he stopped to stare at the scene, with his little round eyes almost bulging through his spectacles. "I—I say—"

"Help!" shouted Pedrillo.

"Oh, crikey!" gasped Bunter.

Bunter was not of the stuff of which heroes are made. But even Billy Bunter remembered the service Pedrillo had rendered him at Redclyffe Station, and he made a move to chip in. Back into his fat mind came the talk he had overheard at the circus. In his exciting adventures as a "bilk" on the railway he had forgotten all about it, but he remembered it now. He remembered how the grim old baronet had ordered Zorro to fetch Pedrillo away from Greyfriars. And this was how he was doing it, apparently. Billy Bunter summoned up all his courage—it was not much—and made a rush to help Pedrillo.

"Yaroooh!"

A thump on the chest sent Bunter spinning. He crashed down in the road, and lay there, winded.

"Help!" shrieked Pedrillo as the burly showman dragged him bodily away.

There was a whirl of bicycles on the road. Six juniors came in a bunch—the Famous Five and Peter Todd. They had to jam on their brakes hurriedly to avoid crashing into the struggling pair, and into Hoskins and Bunter sprawling in the road.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What—"

"Help!" shouted Pedrillo desperately.

"What-ho!"

Bunter sat up dazedly.

"I say, you fellows, pile in!"

The chums of the Remove did not need urging. The sight of Pedrillo of the Shell fighting hard in the savage grasp of the circus showman was more than enough for them. They jumped down, letting their bicycles run whither they would, and fairly jumped on Senor Zorro.

"Collar him!" roared Johnny Bull.

"At him!" panted Bob.

"The terrific rascal! Collar him!"

Six pairs of hands were on the Spaniard.

He went down in the road with a crash, dragging Pedrillo with him.

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Hoskins staggered to his feet. He was damaged, but he was plucky, and he stayed only to dash a stream of crimson from his nose. Then he piled in to help the juniors.

There was a desperate struggle in the muddy road.

By this time, however, the struggle had attracted the notice of other Greyfriars fellows. Five or six fellows had come out of the gates to see what was going on, among them Hobson of the

Hobson of the Shell fairly leaped at the swarthy ruffian, and drove his fist into Zorro's face.

Crash!

The showman went over again, and this time Pedrillo dragged himself loose. He staggered away, panting.

"Now get up and have another, you scoundrel!" roared Hobson of the Shell. "Shove the cad into the ditch!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Good egg!"

"I say, you fellows, let me gorrat him! He's knocked me over," howled Bunter. "Let me kick the beast, you chaps!"

"Roll him into the ditch!"

"Hurrah!"

"Boys! What—what—" It was Mr. Quelch who had arrived now. "Cease this at once! What does this disturbance mean? How dare you—"

"That rotter's trying to kidnap Pedrillo, sir!" gasped Harry Wharton. "We came up just in time to stop him."

"Upon my word."

Zorro staggered up, his dark face black with rage. In the presence of the Remove master the Greyfriars fellows did not touch him again. But they eyed him a good deal like wolves. The showman panted for breath.

"That boy," he panted. He pointed at Pedrillo. "That boy, he belongs to me—to my circus. I will take him. I will—"

"You will do nothing of the kind," said Mr. Quelch sternly. "Go—go instantly, or I will have you detained and handed over to the police!"

"Carambo!"

"Go!" repeated the Remove master. And Zorro, grinding his teeth, tramped away. The Remove fellows were rather sorry to see him go. They would have been very pleased to pitch him headlong into the ditch.

Hobson slipped his arm through Pedrillo's.

"All serene, old man!" he said.

"Si, si. I am safe from him now," said Pedrillo. "I do not understand why he should want me, but I will not go. I never will go!"

"No jolly fear!" said Hobby. "We'll jolly well look after you, old chap. Come on!"

And Hobson and Hoskins took an arm each of their new chum and marched him in triumphantly at the gates of Greyfriars.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

For Valour!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Roll in, Bunter!"

William George Bunter blinked into Study No. 1 in surprise.

The Famous Five had gathered there to tea; and it was a substantial tea, an afternoon out on the bicycles had made them hungry. By the greatest of good fortune Johnny Bull had found a letter in the rack, from his Auntie Bull, and the letter had contained a whole pound note! When one member of the Famous Five was in funds all were in funds, and a handsome spread in Harry Wharton's study was the outcome.

Naturally, Bunter had scented that spread. Seldom was a spread toward in the Remove studies, unscented by Bunter. He had the nose of a bloodhound for such things.

But he was surprised at the greeting he received as he presented himself. Had the juniors said, "Roll out, Bunter"—had they buzzed books or cushions at him, he would not have been surprised.

THE SLEEPWALKER!

A Special Contribution by
DICK PENFOLD,
the Poet of the Remove.

WHEN the stars begin to peep,
Bunter waddles in his sleep.
In the morn they miss a rabbit

Bunter took, from force of habit!
P'r'aps they miss a pie as well,
And a pudding—who can tell?
Pies and puddings will not keep,
So Bunter scoffs them—in his sleep!

When the golden moon is gleaming,
And the fellows lie a-dreaming,
Bunter's stealing down the stairs,
Raiding studies for their wares.
Cakes and tarts and buns galore,
Sugary doughnuts by the score—
Like a fat mouse he will creep
Upon those dainties—in his sleep!

Once, returning with a cake,
Hoping no one was awake,
Bunter cannoned into Prout—
Winded him, I have no doubt.
"Bunter!" gasped the angry master,
Reeling from that dire disaster.
"Are you stealing, you young sweep?"
"No, sir—walking in my sleep!"

The excuse did not avail;
In the morning, cold and pale,
Bunter sang and squirmed with pain
'Neath the lashings of the cane.
"Oh, sir! No, sir! Yow! Yaroooh!"
What a heartless thing to do!
This punishment is much too steep
Just for walking in my sleep!"

Once, upon his nightly prow,
Bunter gave a startled howl;
Met a figure, weird and odd,
The Ghost of Greyfriars (Peter Todd!).

"Tremble, porpoise! Shake and shiver!
That plum-cake to me deliver!"
One loud shriek, one frenzied leap—
The Owl was running in his sleep!

Shell. Hobby, in fact, was the first of the new arrivals to reach the spot.

"What's the row?" exclaimed Hobby in amazement. "Claude, old man—"

"It's that circus villain trying to bag Pedrillo!" exclaimed Hoskins breathlessly.

"What?"

Zorro, with a frantic effort, dragged himself free of the juniors and sprang to his feet. He was still grasping Pedrillo, who was struggling fiercely to get loose.

But really it was surprising to be greeted by a general and genial chorus of:

"Roll in, Bunter."

"I—I say, you fellows—" Bunter was so surprised that he blinked suspiciously at the chums of the Remove. "I—I say—no larks, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No larks, old fat man," chuckled Bob Cherry.

"The larkfulness is not terrific on this esteemed occasion, my fat and ludicrous Bunter."

There was a step behind Bunter, and Peter Todd came along—Peter being a guest at the spread. Toddy grasped Bunter by his fat shoulders and rolled him into the study.

"Ow! I—I say, Peter, old chap—"

"Roll him in," chuckled Nugent. "Here's a chair, Bunter! Sit down, old barrel!"

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Bunter.

It was not a "rag." Bunter, for once, was a welcome guest. He did not understand, but there it was. He sat down at the table with a fat smile of satisfaction on his face.

"I say, you fellows, this is a ripping spread," he said. "I'll begin on the ham and tongue."

"Go it," said Harry Wharton.

And Bunter went it.

Not till he had disposed of sufficient tea to make three dinners for any ordinary fellow did Bunter bother his head to think why he was made so welcome. It certainly was unusual.

"Try the cake, old bean," said Johnny Bull.

"Thanks, I will."

Bunter apparently thought that he was being requested to try the whole cake. At all events, he shifted it bodily to his plate.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob.

"Eh? Did you speak, Cherry?"

"Nunno! Go it, old bean!"

"This is a decent cake," said Bunter. "Not like the cakes I get from Bunter Court, of course; but quite good."

"Oh!"

"Jolly decent of you fellows to stand me a spread like this," said Bunter. "The fact is, I am hard up at present. Did I tell you that I was expecting a postal-order?"

"Did you!" murmured Nugent.

"Did you not?" grinned Bob Cherry.

"The didfulness was terrific."

"It hasn't come," said Bunter. "I looked in the rack. There's been a delay in the post. It's annoying."

"Horrid," agreed Bob Cherry sympathetically. "The Postmaster-General ought really to order an inquiry after all these postal-orders that get delayed in the post. There must be hundreds of them hanging about—all the lot that Bunter has been expecting for whole terms—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—" Bunter finished the cake, and looked round the table and annexed a plate of tarts. "I say, it places me in a rather awkward position. I owe a chap ninepence."

"Great pip!"

"A Shell chap," said Bunter. "Of course, a fellow doesn't like being in debt. I know you fellows are rather careless in such things; but I'm a bit particular myself."

"Oh!"

"So if you fellows would lend me ninepence to square Pedrillo, I'll settle out of my postal-order, when—when it comes."

"When!" murmured Bob.

"That chap Pedrillo is jolly decent," said Bunter. "I was rather against the



"Into the ditch!" shouted Hobson. Splash! "Ha, ha, ha!" Yelling and spluttering, Senor Zorro rolled into three feet of water and mud. His hat floated away, and he came up drenched with water, smothered with mud, and almost unrecognisable. His black eyes blazed with fury at the Greyfriars fellows. "Carambo!" he yelled. (See Chapter 11.)

Head's idea at first, of letting a circus bouncer into the school."

"Did you mention that to the Head?" asked Bob.

"Nunno! But I'm jolly glad, as it turns out," said Bunter, with his mouth full of tart. "Pedrillo stood by me like a brick in a tight corner. Hoskins of the Shell would have let them march me off to the police-station. Pedrillo played up like a little man, you know."

"What on earth have you been up to?" asked Wharton, staring at the fat junior. "Oh! Were you caught bilking the railway company, you fat fraud?"

"Certainly not! I lost my ticket—"

"You mean you were travelling without a ticket, you fat frog," roared Peter Todd. "You carried out that scheme, after I took all the trouble to bang your head on a tree."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, that was only a joke," said Bunter. "If you think I fixed it up with Sammy to meet me at Friardale with two platform tickets, you're making a mistake. But I can tell you I felt pretty bad when that ticket inspector at Redclyffe wanted me to show my ticket."

"So you were copped after all!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Serve you jolly well right."

"And Pedrillo came along and paid your fare?" asked Harry.

"Yes. They actually suspected me of trying to bilk the company, you know," said Bunter.

"And what else were you doing?"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

The Removites stared at Bunter. Apparently his fat conscience was quite at ease regarding his peculiar adventures on the railway. But Billy Bunter was blessed with a very accommodating conscience.

"That chap spoke up for me," said Bunter. "He said he was sure I wasn't doing anything dishonest, and answered for me, you know; and after a lot of palaver they let me go."

"He doesn't know you yet," grinned Bob. "When he's been a bit longer at Greyfriars he will be ready to answer for it that you are never doing anything honest."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pedrillo will live and learn," chuckled Nugent. "I dare say he even thinks that Bunter will pay him the ninepence."

"I don't suppose the kid's got too much money," said Wharton. "Bunter ought to pay him, if he pays nobody else. You're in funds, Johnny."

Johnny Bull nodded, and laid ninepence on the table. Bunter gathered it up at once.

"Thanks, old man," he said. "Will you have this back out of my next allowance, or out of the postal-order I'm expecting?"

"Out of your old-age pension, if you like," answered Johnny Bull. "It will come to the same thing."

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"Ha, ha, ha!" Billy Bunter blinked round the table. The chums of the Remove had finished their tea, but Bunter was not finished so long as there was anything left to eat. He gathered up the last few biscuits.

As he munched them, he blinked at the Removites. He was still in the dark as to why the hospitality of No. 1 Study had been extended to him so genially.

"Guess!" chuckled Bob Cherry, who read the thoughts of the Owl of the Remove easily enough.

"Eh! Guess what?" asked Bunter.

"It's a reward," explained Wharton. "We saw you lending Pedrillo a hand when that circus johnny was grabbing him. You weren't much use—but you did your best—"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"You could have knocked me over with a telegraph pole when I saw it," said Bob Cherry. "Bunter joining in a scrap to help a fellow out! Who was it said the age of miracles was past?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's really a case for the Victoria Cross," said Johnny Bull, "but we thought you'd rather have a feed, Bunter."

The Owl of the Remove comprehended at last.

"Oh, really, you fellows! Of course, that was nothing—I was bound to chip in," he said. "That's me all over—brave as a lion—"

"You mean a rabbit?" asked Peter Todd.

"No, I don't!" roared Bunter. "I mean what I say. Did you see me knock that fellow Zorro spinning?"

"Oh, my hat! Not quite! We saw him knock you spinning."

"The spinfulness was terrific."

"Oh, really, you fellows!" Bunter glanced round the table, but there was hardly a crumb left, and he rose to his feet, breathing rather heavily. "I'll get along and settle up with Pedrillo now. Thanks for the spread. I'll stand you fellows one when my postal-order comes—something a bit more substantial."

"Oh!"

"Something that a fellow really can call a spread, you know," said Bunter.

And having thus gracefully expressed his thanks, William George Bunter rolled out of the study, leaving the juniors grinning.

He rolled in the direction of the Shell passage, but paused on the landing, and, after some reflection, rolled away to the stairs.

Five minutes later he was seated on a high stool in Mrs. Mimble's little shop behind the elms. There he disposed of additional provender to the exact value of ninepence. He had decided to leave over the little sum he owed Pedrillo until his postal-order arrived.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Warned Off!

"HOBBOY, old chap!"

Hobson of the Shell stared. He bestowed upon Billy Bunter such a stare as the fabled Gorgon of old might have bestowed upon its hapless victims.

It was a few days later, a Saturday half-holiday, and Hobson of the Shell was about to take his new chum, Pedrillo, down to the football ground for practice. Pedrillo was getting on quite well at soccer, which was a new game to him, but to which he took very keenly, much to the satisfaction of Hobby. Hobson had grown extremely attached to his new friend—indeed, there might have been some friction on the subject in Study No. 3 in the Shell but for the fact that Claude Hoskins was equally attached to him. Pedrillo's progress in the great winter game delighted Hobson, but Hoskins was equally pleased with the interest he displayed in the more important subject of music.

Sometimes, when the three walked together, Hoskins would be talking music into Pedrillo's right ear, while Hobson talked football into the left.

Pedrillo did not seem to mind—indeed, he was so happy at Greyfriars, and so delighted at having made two such loyal friends, that he would gladly have placed half-a-dozen ears at their service had he possessed so many.

On the present occasion Hoskins was joining up for football, having heroically given up minor ninths, augmented seconds, and consecutive fifths to please his comrades. The three were walking amicably down the Shell passage when Bunter rolled up and addressed the captain of the Shell as "old chap."

Hobson was in a good temper. He nourished a hope of getting Pedrillo into form to play in a match before the end of the season. That alone was enough to make Hobby beam with good-humour. But "old chap" from Bunter of the Remove was a little too much for the best-tempered fellow in the Shell to tolerate.

He stared at Bunter with a gorgon-like stare that really ought to have turned the Owl of the Remove into stone on the spot. Instead of which, Bunter blinked at him and went on:

"I say, Hobby, old fellow—"

"Kick him!" suggested Hoskins.

Pedrillo smiled. He was learning now that he belonged to a Form compared with which the Lower Fourth was as moonlight unto sunlight, as water unto wine—in the opinion of the Shell. Opinion in the Remove was a little different, of course.

"I'm going to," said Hobson. "You cheeky slug, turn round."

"Oh, really, Hobby—"

Hobson took Bunter by the collar to twirl him round and place him in position for the penalty-kick, as it were.

"I say, leggo!" howled Bunter. "You cheeky beast, he's after him, and I came to tell you! Leggo! I say, Pedrillo, make him leggo! He's after you!"

"Eh? Who's after Pedrillo?" asked Hobson, stopping his foot just in time.

"Ow! That circus man, Zorro! Leggo!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Hobson. He released Bunter. "That's no reason for calling me old chap and old fellow. Mean to say that that man Zorro is hanging about Greyfriars?"

Pedrillo's smiling face became hard and set now. The mention of his late task-master was enough to drive the smile from the face of the circus school-boy.

"I've seen him!" gasped Bunter indignantly. "Nice way to treat a chap who came to give you the tip! I say, if you let Pedrillo go out of gates this afternoon that brute will bag him! I tell you I saw him in the lane—hanging about—looking as savage as anything. I'd have knocked him spinning, same as I did the other day, only—only I thought I'd come and tell you."

"Much obliged," said Hobson. "Still, don't call me old chap again, or you will get the boot!"

"Muchas gracias, Bunter," said Pedrillo. "Thank you very much. It is kind of you."

Bunter grinned amicably.

"That's all right, old chap! Don't you go out of gates, that's all."

And Bunter rolled away, Pedrillo glancing after him rather curiously. He had learned a good deal about Bunter by this time, and he was aware that it was not one of the fat junior's customs to bother himself about other fellows' welfare. But a kind action is never thrown away, and Bunter remembered that Pedrillo had saved him from the disastrous results of his cleverness at Redclyffe.

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"I say, this is rather thick, you know," said Hoskins. "We're not going to have that ruffian hanging about after Pedrillo, Hobby."

Hobson set his lips.

"No fear! He's not going to hang about Greyfriars!" he said grimly.

"The Head—" murmured Pedrillo.

"Never mind the Head!" said the captain of the Shell. "We'll go and see the man—and take a few fellows along with us, and give him a lesson about hanging round the school. He won't be in a hurry to come back after we've tipped him the wink."

"Jolly good idea!" agreed Hoskins.

Pedrillo laughed.

"Muy bien! Let's!" he exclaimed.

Football was left over for the present. The three Shell fellows left the House, and Stewart and Chowne of the Shell were called up in the quad. Harry Wharton & Co. were there and the captain of the Shell called to them.

As soon as he explained what was toward, the Famous Five gladly joined up. Peter Todd and Vernon-Smith and Squiff joined up also at a word from Wharton—and two or three more Shell fellows came along. It was quite a little army that marched out of the school gates and proceeded along the lane to look for Senor Zorro.

"The cheeky brute!" Bob Cherry remarked. "Can't imagine what he wants Pedrillo so much for; but he's jolly well not going to kidnap him! That's what it is—kidnapping."

"He won't come back after we've done with him!" said Hobson of the Shell.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, there he is!"

"Don't let him get away!" said Hobson.

"What-ho!"

Senor Zorro, of the Spanish Circus, was lounging against a stile in the lane, smoking a black cheroot, and staring sullenly in the direction of the school. He gave the juniors a dark look as they came up, and his black eyes gleamed at the sight of Pedrillo in the throng. Hobson halted directly in front of the showman.

"You aren't wanted here!" he said. Hobson of the Shell was a direct speaker. "Catch on?"

The Spaniard scowled at him.

"Carambo! What do you mean, muchacho?" he growled. "Pass on your way!"

"What are you doing here?"

"That is my business!"

"You're after Pedrillo!" said Harry Wharton.

Zorro did not answer. But his purpose in hanging about the vicinity of the school on a half-holiday was obvious enough. No other business could have brought him in the direction of Greyfriars, with his circus then giving a performance ten miles away.

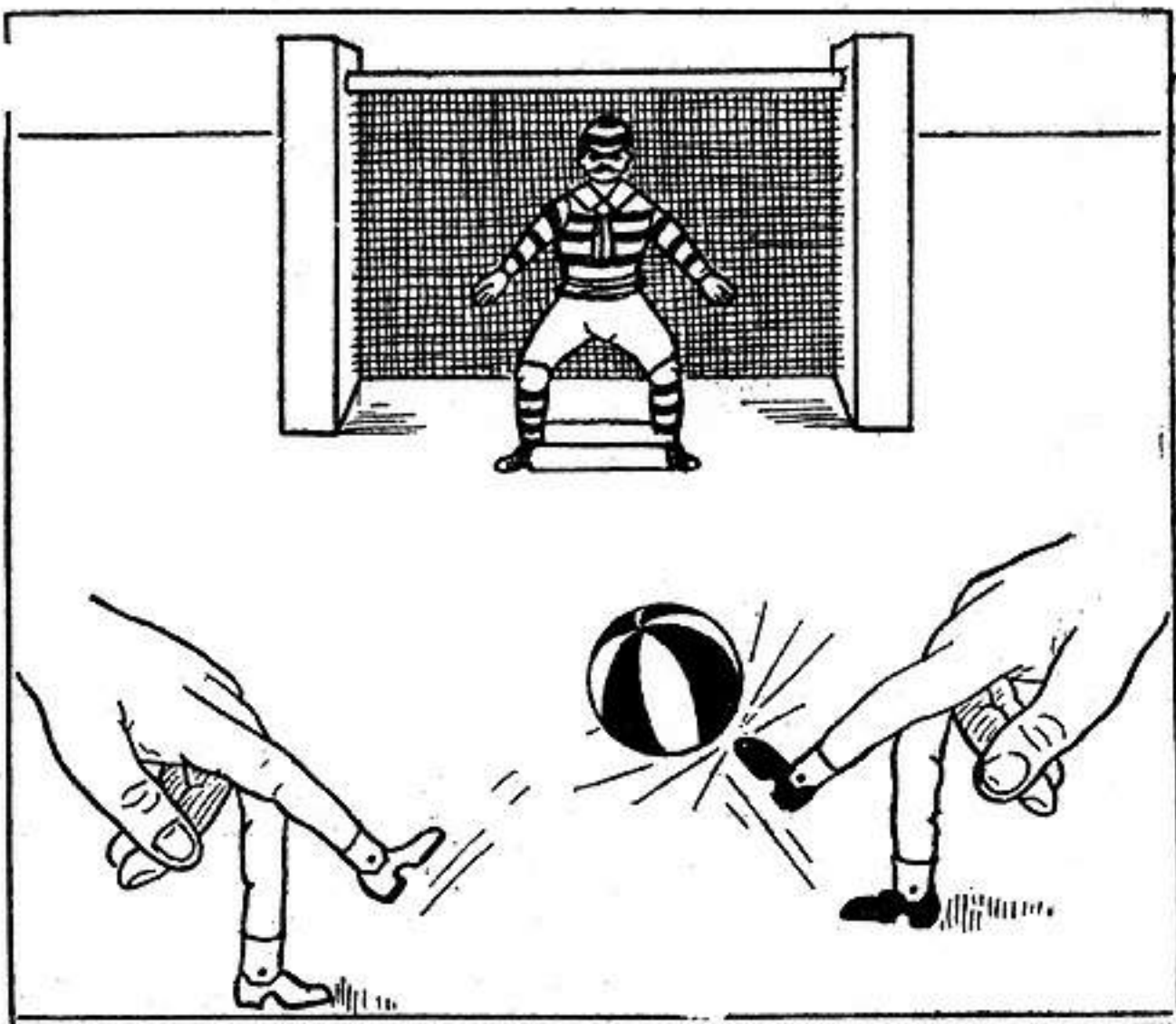
His eyes glittered at Pedrillo; but he realised that he had no chance of effecting his purpose with the crowd of Greyfriars fellows round the circus schoolboy. He leaned back on the stile and smoked his cheroot sullenly. It had not occurred to him so far that the juniors were on the warpath.

"We know what your game is, you rascal!" said Hobson of the Shell. "You've tried it before, and you're not going to try it again! You're not wanted about here."

"Vaya! I shall please myself, seniorito!"

"That's exactly what you won't do!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Now then, Hobson, give the word—what's the programme?"

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(See "Chat" on Page 2.)

"Collar him!" said Hobson.

The Spaniard threw away his cheroot, and pulled himself together. His black eyes fixed on Hobson of the Shell with a strange, startled expression.

"Hobson!" he ejaculated. "El nombre, your name is Hobson?"

Hobby stared at him.

"That's my name, if you want to know," he said. "You don't happen to know me, I suppose?"

Zorro laughed—a strange laugh.

"You had better not molest me," he said. "Your father would not be pleased, Senor Hobson."

"What the thump do you know about my father?" exclaimed Hobson, in astonishment. "Don't be a cheeky cad!"

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged glances. The circus proprietor's words brought back into their minds the two occasions when they had seen Sir James Hobson at Zorro's Circus. They knew that there was some strange connection between Hobson's father and the Spanish showman—they knew the reason of the mocking, malicious grin on Zorro's face.

But Hobby had no suspicion, and they were not likely to tell him.

"That's enough!" broke in Harry Wharton. "You're not wanted here, Senor Zorro, and you're going to have a lesson! You'll get the same again every time you're found hanging about the school. Collar him."

"Carambo! I—"

The Spanish showman broke off, as there came a rush of the Greyfriars crowd. The next moment he was down, struggling furiously.

But he had no chance, with innumerable hands grasping him on all sides.

"Into the ditch!" shouted Hobson.

Splash!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Yelling and spluttering, the showman rolled into three feet of water and mud. His hat floated away, and he came up drenched with water, smothered with mud, and almost unrecognisable. His black eyes blazed with fury at the Greyfriars fellows.

He was scrambling out of the ditch when Hobson's boot drove him in again, and he splashed and floundered and spluttered.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Carambo!"

The Spanish showman crawled out on the other side of the ditch, scrambling his way through a thorny hedge. The juniors, yelling with laughter, pelted him with turfs as he scrambled away. Senor Zorro burst through the hedge at last into the field, drenched and dripping, squelching mud, and torn by bramble and briar.

"After him!" roared Hobson.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A muddy, hatless figure went tearing away across the field, followed by shouts of laughter. In a couple of minutes Juan Zorro had vanished from sight.

Hobson of the Shell chuckled.

"I fancy he won't be in a hurry to come here after Pedrillo again—what? Come on, old bean, lots of time for football!"

And the Greyfriars juniors, grinning, walked back to the school—satisfied that they had finished with Senor Zorro, of the Spanish Circus. If a doubt lingered it was in the mind of the Circus Schoolboy.

THE END.

(Now look out for the concluding story of this magnificent series in next week's bumper issue of the MAGNET. The title is "Righting A Wrong!"—and it's a peach of a story, boys.)

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WASTED EFFORTS! Lionel Speedlow is forced to realise that all his precious scheming to keep his younger cousin out of a fortune has come to nought, for the money he has so treacherously sought to hold, belongs to neither of them!



The CASE of THE LANGSDALE WANDERERS



The concluding chapters of this amazing football and detective story.

A Sensational Story!

THE court was crowded, for Lionel Speedlow's arrest on a charge of attempted murder was still, and had been, the talk of the town for days. And during that time Curly Taylor had been recuperating down at Mersea, whilst Drake and Ferrers Locke had attended to a little business of their own. Now, as the presiding magistrate took his place, a hush fell upon the crowded court.

There was an electric tension in the air that promised something surprising in the way of evidence—a tension that grew as the case proceeded. Speedlow, very pale and haggard, sat in the dock. Beside him was the man Thompson. Some distance away sat Curly Taylor, his head in bandages, Jack Drake, and Ferrers Locke.

All eyes turned on the last-named as he rose to his feet in answer to the smiling signal of counsel for the prosecution.

"This witness for the prosecution," said counsel, in an introductory passage, "has an extraordinary story to tell, and as he has been engaged by no less a person than the Home Secretary to sift the peculiar evidence attached to the death of Marchant Taylor, I crave the indulgence of this court that he should give his evidence in his own way."

"Has witness' story any direct bearing upon this case?" asked the magistrate.

"It has," came the reply.

"He may proceed."

"I am going to tell you a fantastic story, which I shall, nevertheless, ask you to believe," began Ferrers Locke; and a pin could have been heard to drop, so still and silent was the court; "a story which starts with the shooting affair at the Langsdale Wanderers' football-ground."

"The evidence on that occasion went to show that Marchant Taylor had been murdered—that he had been murdered by one Sanky Badgers, the

trainer of the club. It also proved Badgers to be the guilty party, because he fled from the scene and made good his escape. You will remember, doubtless, the mysterious disappearance of the deceased. Upon those things I will build my case, for it was upon those things that prisoner in the dock came into Marchant Taylor's fortune."

The Baker Street detective paused and drew breath.

"Now I am going to ask you to discredit that evidence," continued Ferrers Locke; and his words gave a shock to all present except his counsel. "I am going to ask you to believe that Marchant Taylor was not killed—that Sanky Badgers was no more guilty of murder than any one of you!"

"Oh!"

A gasp of amazement went up from all present, and it was some time before the court usher succeeded in enforcing silence.

"I am going to suggest that Marchant Taylor framed his own death," went on Locke; and there was a greater sensation. "He was a peculiar man, you must remember—wealthy, eccentric to a degree, and something of a hermit. His one desire was for peace and quietude. A wealthy man much in the public eye often tires of the petty worries of the day. He lifts his finger, figuratively speaking, and the Press will make a story out of it. Upon that antipathy to anything approaching publicity, I base my case as it affects Marchant Taylor. Well, then, we will assume that he looked round for a way out of his troubles. Into his eccentric mind came this wild plan of framing his own demise. A letter was found in his house, intended to give the impression that he was already singled out as a victim by a conspiring, grasping secret society. The actual contents of that letter are known to you, so I will not weary you with them. But what is not known to you is the very important fact

that Marchant Taylor wrote that letter himself!"

"What! Are you sure of that?" asked the magistrate, in astonishment.

"I am perfectly sure of it," came the even reply. "That letter was written by Marchant Taylor the same day that it is alleged he met his death. The letter, almost word for word, is recorded for all time, for all practical purposes, on the sheet of blotting-paper I found in Marchant Taylor's own home."

"You mean the letter was written and blotted on the pad in Marchant Taylor's house?"

"I do!" affirmed Ferrers Locke. "More than that, I can prove that the sheet of paper upon which the message was written was sent to Marchant Taylor the day before by a firm of paper manufacturers to whom he had applied for a sample," he added impressively. "Again, the message was written with a quill pen—experts have agreed with me upon that point—and it is known that Marchant Taylor was in the habit of writing with a quill. The particular quill used on this occasion can be produced, if necessary. To proceed, assuming, therefore, that Marchant Taylor for some very good reason wished to disappear, we can throw some light upon the remarkable disappearance of his body, for I repeat that he was not killed—that the shooting affair was faked very carefully from beginning to end. I suggest that Marchant Taylor made his getaway from the club premises a few moments after everyone had started in chase of Sanky Badgers."

"This is amazing!" breathed the magistrate, his pince-nez falling on his nose in his agitation.

"Now we come to the decision of the High Court concerning the disposal of the property of Marchant Taylor," continued the detective. "It is well known that Lionel Speedlow, according to the will, was the fortunate person. Right, then. He took

up his abode in Langsdale, and lost no time in incurring the animosity of the townsfolk. The Langsdale Wanderers sampled him as a managing-director, and at once this famous club began a path downhill. Shall I tell you why, gentlemen? Shall I tell you why Speedlow delighted in ruining the Wanderers' Club, although it meant a loss to his pocket? There was an impressive pause. "Because just prior to the foundation of the club, Speedlow had tried to interest his uncle in a business proposition that was nothing more nor less than a swindle. Old man Taylor, however, would have entered into that proposition but for the fact that he had sunk all his available ready cash into the Wanderers' Football Club. Speedlow left his uncle after that unsuccessful interview, vowing that if ever he could ruin what had been the old man's hobby—namely, the formation of a successful football club—he would. Speedlow's nature is entirely destructive. His record will prove that. Right, then! The chance came his way to ruin the club—and he did it pretty effectually!"

"Meantime, Marchant Taylor, not knowing the true nature of his eldest nephew, had left the managership of the Wanderers, together with his vast fortune in the hands of this agent of destruction. But at the same time a grain of suspicion must have entered his head. I will prove later that Marchant Taylor, miles away from Langsdale, still took an interest in Langsdale football—almost a fanatical interest. He read of the club's downward progression, of Speedlow's mismanagement, and at once set out to rectify it. He sent, therefore, an anonymous message to the younger nephew, Richard—a message written in block capitals—informing him that there was another will secreted in a book entitled 'Nicholas Nickleby.' Rather a fantastic, or shall we say an eccentric, hiding-place! But there was method in that madness if you try and follow my line of argument, for the second will was destined never to be found, unless it became imperative—for the sake of the Wanderers' good name—to shift the management of that club on to more worthy shoulders."

The detective looked round upon his audience and continued:

"It must be realised also that this eccentric gentleman, Marchant Taylor, thought at the back of his mind that he could return to life, as it were, should things run contrary to his expectations. Right, then! I state that the anonymous letter was dispatched to young Richard Taylor to give him a chance of handling wealth and position. Evidently old man Taylor wanted to see how his nephews would shape, whereas most men are content to die and leave things to work out as they will. That message, gentlemen, was sent via a number of towns through the medium of the messenger service, and was eventually intercepted and partly destroyed by the accused before Richard Taylor had ever set eyes on it. To cut a long story short, I managed to reconstruct the message. The book,

however, was not to be found. Meantime, I endeavoured to trace where this message had come from, for I was convinced that the writing of the message was identical with that of the letter alleged to foretell Marchant Taylor's end—identical except where one was bold writing, the other was spidery. In the main, however, they were identical, which meant, in support of my theory, that Marchant Taylor was very much alive. Subsequently, I traced the starting-place of the message to Birmingham. In this town I instituted inquiries. First I was given the confidence of the banks, for I held sufficient authority even to do that. I requested the name of a man who had opened a current account, on or about the time it was alleged Marchant Taylor met his end, with twenty thousand pounds."

"Why that amount?" asked counsel, acting on a prearranged plan.

"Because Marchant Taylor drew that amount from his bank at Langsdale two days before he disappeared," replied Ferrers Locke, "and it was safe to assume that he would bank it somewhere else. Fortunately, such an account had been opened in Birmingham during the week following Taylor's disappearance, in the name of Appleby. Now this man Appleby proved a difficult person to trace to his lair, but at last my special agent got on his track."

"And how did he do that?" prompted Locke's counsel.

"By making inquiries at all stationers in the town for news of any man who was in the habit of purchasing, or had purchased, quills.

Quill pens are not popular in these modern times," went on Ferrers Locke, "so I knew that if my agent persevered he would eventually locate the party I wanted. He did. Unfortunately, however, this man who called himself Appleby took it into his head to leave Birmingham in a hurry. That would be on the occasion of the match between Langsdale Wanderers and Banrable, where, if memory serves me right, the Wanderers were beaten to the tune of twenty-seven nil. As I have said, Appleby was in great haste to get out of Birmingham. Why? For the simple reason that Appleby was Marchant Taylor—that he could no longer stand idle and see his beloved football club ruined by Lionel Speedlow. It must have struck him that the anonymous message telling his younger nephew Richard that there was a will to be found, leaving everything in his favour, had somehow or other gone astray. In his rage and anxiety, it is easy to see that he intended to resurrect himself, as it were."

Interest was at fever pitch now. Everyone present hung on Ferrers Locke's words. Fantastic as the story seemed, the facts were there, solid and proven.

"Mr. Appleby, alias Marchant Taylor, took the express South," went on Ferrers Locke. "We all know of the terrible accident that happened to that express. And Marchant Taylor was in it; he was dangerously near death. He was taken to hospital, but there was nothing about him to identify him. It transpires, however, that he uttered the word

BREATHLESS THRILLS AND ADVENTURE ON THE H.G.H SEAS!



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in

NEXT MONDAY'S ISSUE!

'Langsdale' unceasingly in his delirium, and to Langsdale Cottage Hospital he was sent, in the hope that someone would eventually come forward and identify him. There he is now!"

This time no usher in the world could have kept that crowded court in order. The revelations were amazing. Speedlow, Curly, and Ferrers Locke were the cynosure of all eyes. The magistrate, perhaps, was the most surprised person amongst that assembly. He had entered the court as he thought to try a case of attempted murder; instead, he had listened to the most amazing story of his career. Order was enforced at last.

The magistrate wiped his pince-nez carefully.

"A very extraordinary story!" he commented. "But it would seem to be irrelevant to the case."

"I respectfully beg to disagree," said Ferrers Locke. "To go back a point, much of the antagonism between prisoner in the dock and Richard Taylor was sprung from the possibility of there being another will—the whereabouts of which I stated in my previous evidence. And that antagonism drove Speedlow to do more than one desperate deed. It is known in this town how Richard Taylor was arrested on a charge of breaking into the club offices and abstracting a thousand pounds. The real truth of that affair has yet to see the light of day, for Speedlow connived with a friend of his to make this monstrous charge watertight in case his plans went astray. But he was not quite clever enough. Go astray they did; likewise three members of the Wanderers Football Club who were none other than three notorious cracksmen. They are in custody now, at least, so I was informed two hours ago by Inspector Pyecroft of the C.I.D. at Scotland Yard, and are willing to give evidence on oath against Lionel Speedlow should Richard Taylor wish to charge him on that account."

"Very amazing," muttered the magistrate, "and very irregular! Will you proceed with your evidence?"

Ferrers Locke bowed slightly.

"My client, Mr. Richard Taylor, also my assistant, Jack Drake—both present in court—are prepared to swear on oath that the will was eventually found; that a moment or so after its having been found Lionel Speedlow came into possession of it and destroyed it in the fire. Mr. Richard Taylor discovered the will even as the anonymous message had stated—namely, in the volume entitled 'Nicholas Nickleby.' Moreover, he read it, recognised the signatures of the parties who had witnessed the will, and doubtless was congratulating himself on his good fortune, when he had an accident. Half stunned, he had the mortification of seeing his elder cousin snatch the precious document out of his grasp and race away with it. My

assistant saw that will actually burnt before his eyes!"

"If all this be true, the case should go before a higher court," broke in the magistrate. "But I still repeat that it has little bearing on the charge of manslaughter preferred against the accused."

"With your permission, I will proceed to justify my earlier statement that all this evidence is relevant to the case," went on Ferrers Locke; "for Richard Taylor, recovering consciousness, was threatened by his cousin to be given in charge on the count of unlawfully breaking into the house of the accused with intent to commit a felony. Accused taunted him that the will was burnt—that he could say what he liked in a court of law, but he would never inherit the property. Then it was Richard Taylor attempted to bluff his cousin. He stated that there was a duplicate copy of the will in existence. The bluff told, for accused made up his mind on the spot to get rid of his cousin, and the lad Drake, whom he thought knew too much. Accordingly, he rendered his cousin unconscious, bound, and gagged him. The lad Drake, my assistant, was similarly treated. The man alongside Speedlow in the dock, Thompson, was given instructions to take Richard Taylor and Jack Drake aboard the yacht *Eagle*, belonging to the accused. You have the written statement from the man Thompson, which was taken down in the presence of police-officers, stating that his orders were to throw overboard the packing-cases which contained Taylor and Drake when a suitable opportunity occurred. That I venture to suggest is sufficient evidence for the charge of manslaughter. My previous evidence, which goes back to the time Marchant Taylor was alleged to have met his death, I beg to repeat is very necessary to this case," added Ferrers Locke; "for Marchant Taylor is lying dangerously ill. The doctors have given up all hope of his recovery!"

The Victors!

WITH a slight bow to the magistrate and jury, Ferrers Locke stepped out of the witness-box. Immediately the court was in an uproar. Order was called for time and time again; but order was disregarded. The Langsdale folk were cheering—cheering Ferrers Locke, cheering Jack Drake and young Curly Taylor—and then, as a contrast, they began to hiss for the especial benefit of Lionel Speedlow.

He sat like a man in a trance, his face pale and drawn, his eyes strangely bright and unnatural. The evidence had come as a shock to him. To think that he had committed these crimes in a desperate attempt to hold something that was neither his nor his cousin's, but his uncle's—the man whom he had fondly

imagined to be dead and done with months ago!

The crowd would have lynched him on the spot; they were in that ugly humour. But the magistrates conferred, and the chairman eventually remanded the case.

Speedlow was taken below stairs to the cells, thankful to get away from the hundreds of hostile eyes.

Curly Taylor, meantime, was shaking Ferrers Locke by the hand. The whole case had come as a bombshell to him, whilst Drake was no less astonished.

"Drake, you're a fool!" he remarked to himself, in tones loud enough for Ferrers Locke to hear, however.

"What do you mean, my lad?" queried Ferrers Locke.

"Why, to think that I was lying next to old Marchant Taylor in the Cottage Hospital without hitting on his identity!" he said.

"You can hardly blame yourself for that," said Ferrers Locke; "for he's so badly damaged that no one would recognise him by his features."

"You don't think uncle will live?" said Curly, who was all anxiety now. "Oughtn't I to go and see him?"

"Afraid it wouldn't be much use," replied Ferrers Locke gravely. "He's not able to talk to anybody. When he's able, it will be necessary for him to sign a statement, which I propose to draw up in the presence of a commissioner of oaths—a statement identifying himself, as it were; also a statement to the effect that he left another will bequeathing his property to you. Certain it is he'll have no wish to let Speedlow handle it any longer, for it must have been in a fit of rage that the old man hurried away from Birmingham."

That evening the newspapers were spreading the amazing story unfolded in the court of the cause celebre as the Case of the Langsdale Wanderers became to be regarded. It was more than a nine days' wonder; for closely atop of the memorable scene in the Langsdale Court came the news of Marchant Taylor's end.

But before the eccentric old gentleman who had founded Langsdale football breathed his last, he was able to recognise his younger nephew; was able to affix his signature to a fresh will, leaving everything to Richard Taylor. At the same time he cleared up a point that had baffled Ferrers Locke, namely, the whereabouts of Sanky Badger. The ex-trainer of the Wanderers was, apparently, comfortably settled in Australia.

Lionel Speedlow languished in gaol for some time before his case came on at the Old Bailey, and again newspaperdom revived the astonishing story of his accession to wealth, and all that preceded and followed it.

The charge of attempted murder against Speedlow was altered to attempted manslaughter, and Speedlow was sentenced to serve a lengthy term in one of his Majesty's prisons. He was a beaten, broken man as he



As the encouraging roar burst forth from a hundred throats, Curly sent in a shot that seemed to have cannon force behind it. The goalkeeper made a desperate attempt to save it, but he was a beaten man the moment the ball left Curly's foot. (See this page.)

stepped out of the dock after his trial, and young Richard Taylor felt compassion for him, and would, had it lain in his power, forgiven his rascally cousin everything and started him afresh in a new country. But that was not to be. The law was a gigantic machine that revolved slowly, but its progress was sure and could not lightly be arrested.

Lionel Speedlow was to pay the price!

It was exactly a year later, and the Langsdale Victors were in action against the Banrable eleven—the team that had made sensational history at having beaten the once famous Langsdale Wanderers to the tune of twenty-seven nil. History was not destined to repeat itself; for on this occasion the Banrable eleven were down four goals in the first half.

It was a great game—so far as the Langsdale folk were concerned, at any rate—for the Victors were aptly named, having won every match that season. At their head was young Richard Taylor, and a better captain no team could wish for. To watch him then was to remember something for all time. The ball was at his feet; he was racing away with it. The visiting centre-half came at him with a rush; but Curly, to give him his nickname to the last, simply made

rings round that hefty merchant. Then away he sped.

Boomp!

The ball left his foot and described a beautiful arc, to fall finally at the foot of his outside-right. Away raced the winger in his old style, a dazzling feint, and the opposing left-half had been passed. Then a perfect centre.

"Go it, Curly!"

The blood rushed to Curly's head as he heard that encouraging roar, but his footer sense was not lessened thereby. He took the ball on the bounce and sent in a shot that seemed to have cannon force behind it. The goalkeeper made a desperate attempt to save, but he was a beaten man the moment the ball left the foot of the Victors' captain.

Four up!

True, the amazing score Banrable had made the year previous was never equalled; but a fresh record was created for the season, anyway. When the Banrable eleven eventually came off the field they carried with them the painful knowledge that they had been licked by ten goals to nil.

It was fitting, in a way, that the first meeting between Banrable and the new Langsdale Victors should end thus. At least, the directors up in the stand thought so. Silas Chisholm, Ephraim Woodley, and the rest of the footer fans of Langsdale

were very pleased with the world in general, and Langsdale in particular. Their faith in Langsdale footer had been justified. On the ashes of the old had arisen the new. And who should say at this stage that the "New" would not outshine the "Old" with such a wonderful season's record behind it?

Just a few yards from Silas and his directors stood Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake. The former looked mighty pleased with himself, whilst Jack Drake was wildly jubilant.

"I'm glad we came down to see this match, my lad," remarked the world-famous sleuth. "Because I think—"

"Glad!" exclaimed Drake boyishly. "I should jolly well think so, guv' nor!"

"I was about to say," continued Locke, with a twinkle in his eye at his assistant's enthusiasm, "that I think it is indeed a fitting end to the case of the Langsdale Wanderers!"

THE END

"The Phantom of the Dogger Bank." That's the title of the remarkable story, featuring Ferrers Locke's latest case, billed to appear in next week's "Magnet." Look out for the opening chapters.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY, No. 947.

TO AND FROM YOUR EDITOR.

(Continued from page 2.)

Now, you Magnetites who were not so fortunate still have ample opportunity to bag one of these topping games. Why don't you have another shot this week? All you have to do—as I have said before—is to send in a par, not longer than three hundred words in length, describing as crisply as you can any incident you have seen, or anything of interest you may have heard on the footer field. Come, there must be hundreds of news tit-bits going begging on the footer field every week, such, for example, as the case of the player who sat on the ball and resisted all the efforts of the opposing team to shift him until the referee took a hand. And let me mention it again, these Table Football Games I am offering every week to the twenty readers who send in the best "pars" are really worth having. Turn to page 23 and have a look at the illustration on that page. I'm sure you'll be interested.

THE "GEM."

Our grand Companion paper is aptly named, for I, doubt whether—leaving the MAGNET out of it for a bit—there's another schoolboys' story paper going to equal it, let alone beat it. Each

week the "Gem" contains a magnificent New Long Complete Story of Tom-Merry & Co., of St. Jim's, written by the celebrated author Martin Clifford. If Magnetites want to spend another twopence every week they really couldn't do better than get a copy of this topping little paper. There's a scream of a story in it this week, entitled: "April Fools All!" which is worth reading, to say nothing of an excellent long complete adventure story by Sidney Drew, a special two-page supplement contributed by Tom Merry & Co. themselves, and a Joke competition offering delicious Tuck Hampers and half-crowns for prize-winning jokes. Trot round to your newsagent and have a look at the "Gem." It's on sale every Wednesday.

IS IT SPORTING?

A footer enthusiast, who reads the MAGNET every week and who pays particular attention to the "excellent footer supplement," tells me that he was playing in a match when the opposing side—under the instructions of their captain—calmly walked off the field as a protest against the alleged unfair decisions of the referee. My correspondent wants to know if such a

thing is allowed, and whether I consider it sporting? Well, strictly speaking, the moment two elevens begin a match they automatically come under the absolute control of the referee, and unless he gives any particular member permission to leave the field no one has the right to do so. Of course, there are exceptions to the recognised rule, such as the case of a man, or boy, who receives an injury. But certainly no skipper of a team has the right to walk off the field in the manner my chum describes. Not only is such an action against all the rules of football, but it is very unsportsmanlike. Remember, a referee's job is not an envious one. In a way, he may be compared to an Editor, for his decisions are expected to please everyone, and, of course, they very seldom do!

For Next Monday.

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