

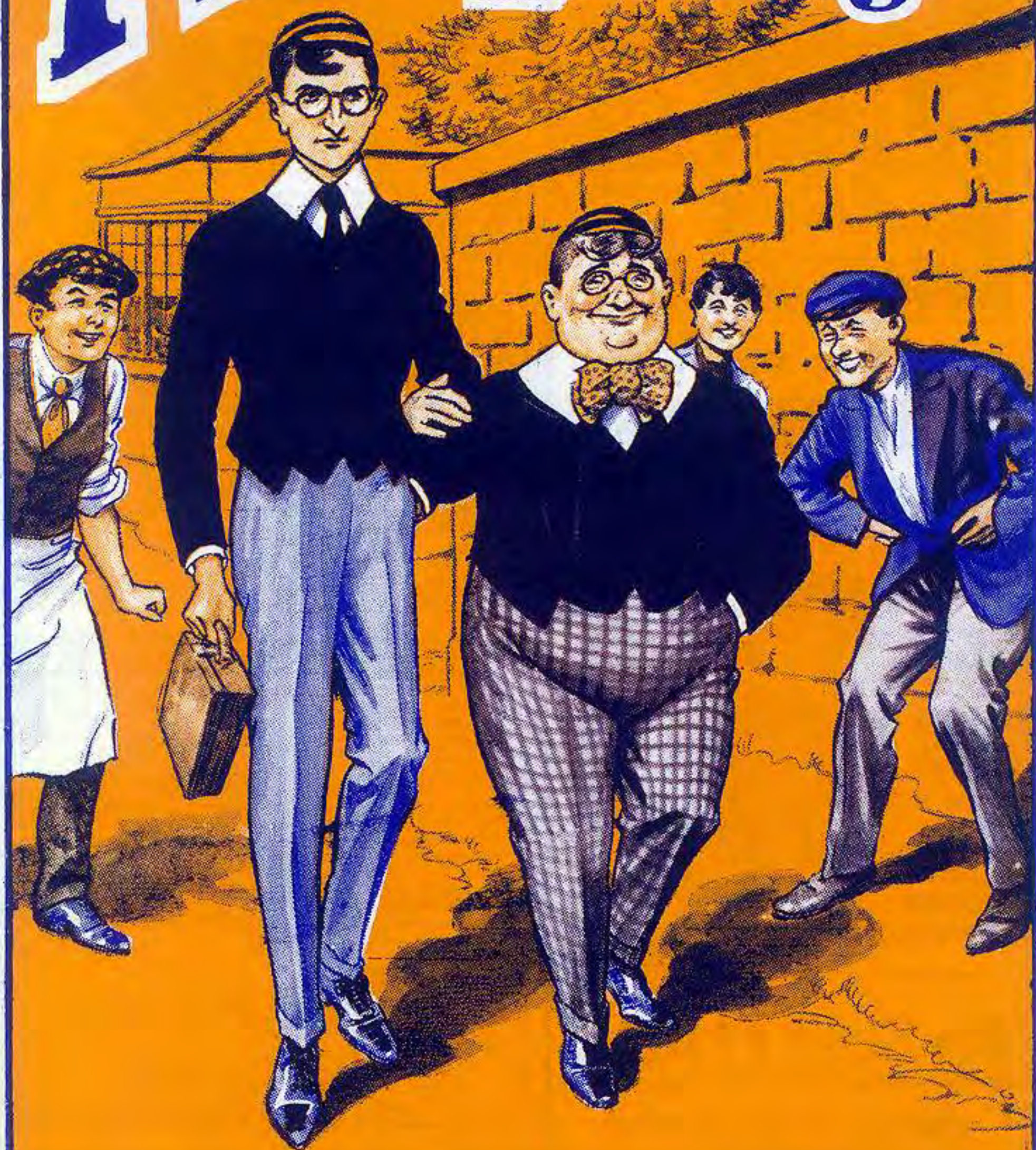
"WINNING THE TOSS!" By MAURICE TATE.

Splendid Signed Article by the Famous Sussex and All England Bowler.

No. 952. Vol. XXIX. Week Ending May 8th, 1926.

The Magnet 2^d Library

EVERY MONDAY



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LAST WEEK OF MAGNET "PARS."

THOSE of my readers who have not had a shot at winning the table football games which have been on offer now for nine weeks will have to look sharp if they mean to make a start, for with this week's offer the competition closes. Still, there are twenty of these fascinating games to be won, and it's up to you to do your best to win one. All efforts should be addressed "Pars" No. 10, The MAGNET Library, Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C. 4. Winners of "Pars" No. 6 are as follows:

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Ronald Macpherson, Meadows House, Ainsworth Lane, Bolton.
Frank A. Smith, 15, Byron Rd., St. Heliers, Jersey, C.I.
and to each of these readers a table football game has been forwarded.

QUESTIONS!

It's really surprising how many questions have come into my mail just recently. Here's a few of them, complete with answers:

What do I think of plus fours? (I think they're very striking!) Why doesn't Skinner turn over a new leaf? (Because he's not strong enough.) Does Bunter Court really exist? (Yes—but only in Bunter's imagination.) How long has the tuckshop been open? (Since Greyfriars boys developed appetites.) How many chickens does Coker "do in" on his motor-bike every year? (No room to tell you here.) Did Wharton come to Greyfriars on a scholarship? (No; but he came by train.) Why do Remove fellows "howl" when they get six? (Because six is five and three-quarters too many.) What do I think of Oxford bags? (I don't think about them at all.) How long are the MAGNET portraits going to continue? (Until you chaps get fed-up with them.) Who won the fight between Bob Cherry and Harry Wharton some time ago? (Bob Cherry, of the big feet and large heart.) Why don't— Sorry I shall have to ring off here, as the wet towels and strong coffee have run out. More questions and answers another time.

For Next Monday.

"THE MYSTERY OF POPPER'S ISLAND!"

A topping long complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., at Greyfriars.

THE CRICKET SUPPLEMENT!

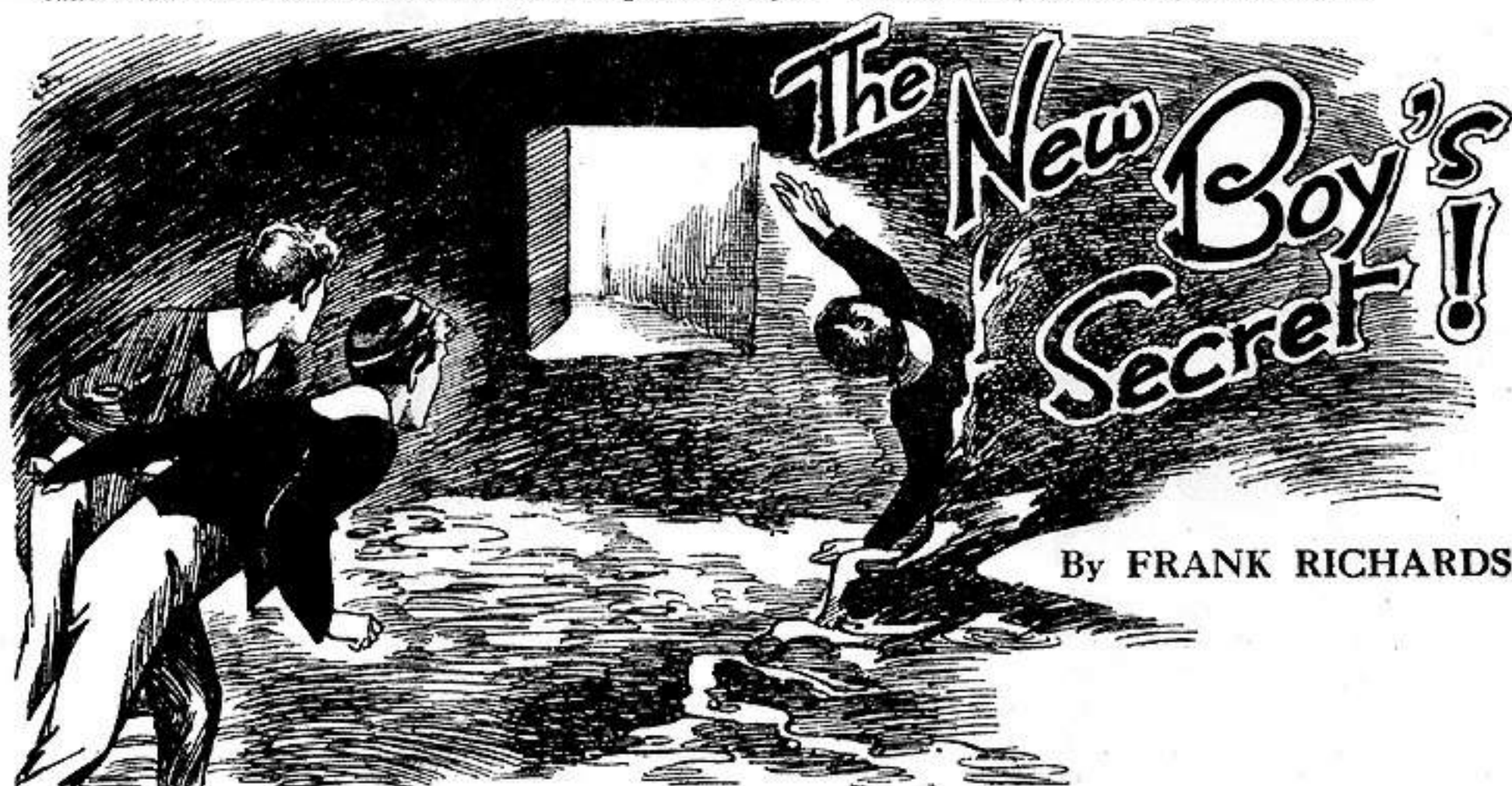
Another special four-page cricket supplement which contains signed articles by Parker, of Gloucester, and Tyldesley, of Lancs.

"THE PHANTOM OF THE DOGGER BANK!"

And another long and thrilling instalment of this amazing detective story. Cheerio, till next week, my chums!

YOUR EDITOR.

OUT OF THE ORDINARY! When Wilfred Punter arrives at Greyfriars he causes "some" stir, for he is about a foot taller than Bunter and is about as thin as Billy Bunter is fat. What is more, he's a bit of a dark horse!



A Magnificent New Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co., the Chums of Greyfriars, introducing Wilfred Punter, a new boy.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Hungry!

"I'LL risk it!"

Thus William George Bunter of the Remove Form at Greyfriars.

He had been feasting his eyes on the good things in Uncle Clegg's window, in Friardale, and now he blinked in rather doubtfully at the door.

Tho' day was bright and sunny, and Bunter was feeling an even deeper yearning for food than usual. Not that he was ever anything else but famished—according to himself—for whatever effect the weather had on other people it was certain to stimulate Bunter's appetite!

And Uncle Clegg's doughnuts looked extra tempting to-day, as did the cream-horns, and the jam-tarts, and the stone bottles of ginger-beer.

William George was well-known to Uncle Clegg—too well known for his fat comfort! Many a time and oft had the Owl of the Remove done himself well at the little counter, and then endeavoured to placate the old gentleman with the famous story of his postal-order.

Of late, Uncle Clegg had refused to supply Bunter with anything unless spot cash were forthcoming, a state of affairs which was decidedly humiliating—not to say inconvenient—to a fellow of Bunter's high moral code.

On this especial afternoon, it being Wednesday, and a half-holiday, Billy Bunter felt that he did well to be aggrieved. After a poor dinner—when he had eaten only three helpings of pudding, and captured a lecture from Mr. Quech on the subject of gluttony—he had roamed the length of the Remove passage in a determined attempt to raise the wind.

But the fellows were all hard up, or not in the mood to listen to Bunter, and he had drawn blank. Vernon-Smith had shoved him rudely out of the way and gone out with Redwing.

Johnny Bull had snorted and offered to lend the fat junior his boot—an offer which was declined unthankfully. Even Mauly, patient and long-suffering as he was usually with Bunter, had sleepily requested him—from the inside of a locked door—to "run away and play, dear boy."

Which was really too bad, in Bunter's opinion. It was hard if a likeable fellow such as himself could not find a pal in all Greyfriars who would advance him a little on the tale of his postal-order—almost as ancient and venerable an institution as the grey old walls of the school themselves.

So, in desperation, Bunter had turned from the Remove to the Shell, where Hoskins, who regarded himself as a musical genius, and was just composing a new march in an ear-splitting key when Bunter intruded, immediately hurled a lexicon at the Owl's head. Bunter slammed the door, grunted indignantly, and sought out Coker of the Fifth.

He found Coker arguing—as he was nearly always to be found—with his faithful henchmen, Potter and Greene, as to how the half-holiday should be spent.

Coker was in favour of a run on his celebrated motor-bike, with Potter and Greene crammed in the side-car, and Potter and Greene were doing their best to avoid such a sudden and premature demise.

Bunter arrived at an unfortunate moment. No sooner had he raised his fat voice in pleading, than an inkpot, hurled by Coker, crashed against the doorpost an inch from Bunter's nose, and spattered him literally with black fluid. With a howl of wrath and a shout of "Rotter," Bunter had fled from the Fifth Form passage, just in time to escape a cushion.

Having dried the ink with a grubby handkerchief, the fat junior had drifted aimlessly down to the village, there to feast his eyes on the good things in the

tuckshop, and to jingle a bunch of keys and a French penny dismally in his pocket. But, money or no money, Bunter's inner man refused to be denied, and caused him now to blink longingly at the little counter and the choice things it held.

"I'll risk it!" he muttered greedily. "The rotter can only say no, and he might take my word—a common, low shopkeeper, he ought to be glad to have me patronise him at all!"

But he still stood outside the door and eyed the paradiso from which he was barred. Then it was that a gleam in the dust at his feet caused his eyes to gleam behind his spectacles. He bent down, grunting at the exertion, and picked up—a shilling!

The Owl of the Remove gave a little chirrup of delight.

"My hat! I can get a snack for this, anyway!" he ejaculated joyfully. "My luck's turned. He, he!"

Gripping the shilling tightly in his podgy palm, he rolled into the tuckshop and plumped himself down on a high stool at the counter. Uncle Clogg emerged from the rear regions, and gave him a grim glance. As he met that glance, Bunter was glad he had not decided to "try it on" without the necessary cash.

"Well, Master Bunter, what can I do for you?"

The old gentleman's politeness veiled a deep sarcasm.

"Ginger-beer, jam-tarts, doughnuts—up to a bob, please!" ordered Bunter recklessly.

He tossed his windfall carelessly on the counter, and set to work swiftly and noisily on the dainties which were put before him. But a shillingworth of tuck was a mere "taster" to Bunter. He disposed of the tarts and doughnuts in no time, guzzled down the ginger beer, and looked round for more.

Uncle Clogg was casually flicking the flies off a ham, and did not appear any more benevolent than usual. But

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having once tasted food, the fat junior like a tiger after its first sample of human blood, yearned for a real feast.

"I—I say," he gasped, "I'll have some more of the same, and—and I'll pay you out of the cheque I'm expecting to-morrow—"

Uncle Clegg smiled grimly and shook his head.

"I—I mean, out of the ten shillings Bob Cherry owes me! I hope you can trust me for such a paltry sum—an old customer, you know!"

From the fat junior's tone, it might have been thought that he was really embarrassed by the doubt cast on his integrity. But Uncle Clegg knew his Bunter, and he was adamant.

"I'm sorry, Master Bunter. No more do you have till I see the money—that's flat!"

The Owl gave him a basilisk glare, and set his glasses straight with jammy fingers.

"All right! I'm disgusted with you!" he said, elevating his fat little nose and slipping heavily off the stool. "I shall have to consider seriously whether I shall take my custom elsewhere in future."

Uncle Clegg sniffed and picked up a newspaper.

Bunter stood, glaring as if he would crack his spectacles, while Uncle Clegg calmly digested the latest sensations from Courtfield.

Sad as it was, there was evidently no further supplies for the hungry Owl, whether he threatened or pleaded. He gave one last ferocious blink, sniffed, and rolled towards the doorway.

It was unfortunate for both of them that somebody was coming in just as Bunter was going out. They collided on the threshold with startling suddenness. Bunter yelped and sat down with a concussion which shook the shop. The newcomer gave a painful gasp, and shot back into the street again. Bunter, who was bound to come off best in an affair of that kind, owing to his tremendous bulk, sat up first, pumping in breath.

"Yah! You idiot! What d'you want to come barging into me like that for?" he howled. "I've broken my collar-bone in three places, and my back-bone's bent."

That the other unfortunate individual might be hurt did not seem to occur to Bunter, who was not famous for his ready thought for others. He groaned as he got to his feet.

Luckily, the stranger was not hurt seriously—only winded. He staggered up, breathing hard, and politely offered Bunter his hand.

"I'm sorry! It was my fault!" he hastened to explain. "Let me dust you down!"

While that operation was being performed as thoroughly as by a valet, Bunter sniffed and snorted, and finally began to smirk. Bunter liked being waited upon.

The stranger flicked off the last speck of dust from Bunter's rather greasy and grimy garments, and smiled ingratiatingly.

"You're from Greyfriars, aren't you?" he asked in a thin but steady voice. "I'm going there—I'm the new boy—Wilfred Punter!"

The Owl returned the new boy's grip with a jammy paw, eyeing him with unconcealed curiosity.

"My hat! Hope they won't think you're any relation of mine!" he gasped.

Wilfred Punter was certainly a remarkable person to behold. Just as Bunter was short and wide, Punter was

tall and thin—nearly a foot-taller than the Owl, and thinner even than Alonzo Todd, who was the slimmest fellow in the Remove. His complexion was pale, and his features nearly as pointed as Skinner's. He had soft, dark brown eyes, and he wore big, horn-rimmed glasses, a size larger than Bunter's own!

His Eton's were well-cut, and he carried a small suit-case. He had a retiring, conciliatory manner, but to anybody but the fatuous Owl it would have been evident that he was not by any means a fool. His easy speech and unassuming self-confidence told that. While the Owl rudely surveyed him, Punter began to smile slightly.

"Pleased to meet you, Punter!" said Bunter at last, at the same time switching on an oily grin.

Having recovered from the first shock of the meeting, Bunter's thoughts turned instinctively towards extracting a loan from the new boy, as he had done from countless new boys in the past. He turned back to the counter, waving a fat hand airily to the stool he had just vacated.

"Here you are, old man! I'm Bunter—William George Bunter, of the Remove. Squat down and have a snack! It's my treat!"

Wilfred Punter assented quietly, and waited for the fat junior to order. Bunter blinked at Uncle Clegg, and coughed.

"Ahem! I—I'm sorry, Punter—it's quite against my usual practice—but I've just remembered lending my last pound to that beast Toddy, and I'm afraid I haven't a bean on me! I suppose you couldn't oblige me with ten shillings or so till to-morrow—I'm expecting a postal order, and I'll pay you back immediately, of course—"

His eyes gleamed as Punter, with an easy smile, pulled out a wallet, and, selecting a note from a little wad, handed it to him.

"Don't thank me!" he said cheerily. "Wire in—I'll stand the racket!"

Hardly able to believe his good fortune, Bunter tucked away the ten shillings and sat down.

"This is something like, I must say!" he mumbled, with his mouth full of jam tart. "I like an open-handed fellow, Punter—I'm like it myself! Don't worry about getting used to Greyfriars—I'll stand by you, and I've got a lot of influence in the Remove, of course. I think we shall be great pals, Punter!" he went on affectionately.

Punter smiled agreeably, and pressed another dish of cakes on him. Bunter began to demolish them with his usual despatch, and the new fellow's eyes opened a little wider. But he did not know the Owl of the Remove. Bunter was only getting his hand in, so to speak.

"It's only jealousy keeps me out of the form captaincy!" continued Bunter, fairly started in his favourite vein. "But I'll put you up to the ropes. Rely on me! By the way, have you been to school before? I heard there was a new kid coming, but I didn't hear—ahem!—any more!"

Bunter omitted to mention that he had gained his information with his ear to his Form-master's keyhole, while Mr. Quelch was in conclave with the Head.

"My people are in London," responded Punter, flushing a little. "I've had a—a tutor up till now. I hope I shall like Greyfriars. Awfully old place, isn't it?"

"Eh? Oh, yes!" Bunter was gurgling down ginger-beer, without waiting for

a reply. He condescended to pause before refilling his glass.

"Greyfriars is hundreds of years old, of course. Built by—by some king or other, for the Grey Friars. There's a ruined priory in Friardale Wood, you know, and a ruined chapel at the school. It was sacked by Cromwell—you've had it all in class, or from your tutor, I expect. But you're not interested in that rot, are you?"

"Rather!" exclaimed Punter, with excitement. "I'm awfully keen on that kind of thing, Bunter. Is that all you know about it?"

The fat junior swallowed the last tart and grunted.

"My family's ever so old," he remarked casually. "Came over with the Conqueror—or was it the Armada? There's been a Bunter in nearly all the big battles of history. Sir Fulke de Bunter—one of my most famous ancestors—fought at the Battle of Crecy. Then Sir Brian de Bunter saved Henry VIII's life at the Battle of Bannockburn!"

"Not really!" said Punter politely.

"We Bunters are one of the biggest families in England," went on the Owl, puffing out his fat chest like a pigeon. "You should see my pater's place—Bunter Court—a gift from Queen Elizabeth for chucking his coat in the mud for her to walk on—I mean a gift to one of my ancestors, of course!"

"I'm honoured to know you, Bunter!" said Punter humbly. He stifled a grin with an effort.

"Oh, I don't mind who I associate with, old chap, so long as they don't expect me to introduce them to all my swell relations, you know!" said Bunter agreeably.

The new boy eyed him fixedly for a moment. Then he rose. He was not used to Bunter's brand of politeness yet.

"Let me have the bill, please!"

Bunter glanced hungrily at a pile of doughnuts, stuffed two in his pocket and began to eat another as a "top-off."

Punter paid the bill in silence, perhaps unable to think of anything to say to a pal of Bunter's calibre. The Owl rolled off his stool and linked his arm chummily in Punter's, and they strolled down the old High Street together.

Several villagers stopped in pardonable astonishment to view them as they passed, as if they had been a menagerie. Perhaps the combination of Bunter's bulk and Punter's thinness suggested that they had escaped from a circus.

The fatuous Owl did not appear to notice the publicity which they were gaining, but the new fellow began to get restive. He went along with long, loping strides that made Bunter's fat little legs go like clockwork to keep up. Bunter was soon puffing and blowing stertorously. He was obliged to relinquish his hold on Punter's arm at last.

"I—I can't keep up this pace, Punter!" he gasped. "I—I'll come along after. Keep straight on—you can't miss the school!"

Punter smiled and nodded, and swung on.

Bunter sank down on a grassy bank to rest and take in air. He was not an athlete, and Punter, for all his peculiar appearance, could obviously walk Bunter off his feet.

As he rested, Bunter dwelt happily on a vista of feeds unlimited which he hoped to squeeze out of the unsuspecting new boy. If Harry Wharton and those rotters did not warn Punter first, of

course. That was just the kind of thing they were likely to do, thought the fat junior, vengefully. If they did—Bunter's lips framed one word, and he muttered:

"Beasts!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Surprise for Bolsover!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

Bob Cherry shaded his eyes with his hand, and looked towards the gates.

"My hat, you fellows! See what's blown in!"

His chums, the rest of the Famous Five, turned from a cricket discussion and stared.

"Great Scott! Is it alive?" asked Nugent, in tones of awe.

"Looks to me like a walking skeleton!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"If he's not careful he'll get blown away!" laughed Harry Wharton.

And Hurree Singh chuckled, and remarked that the bonefulness was terrific!

The fellow who had just wandered in at the gates was certainly an unusual specimen of humanity, and the Co.'s humorous comments were well merited.

He paused uncertainly, blinking round through his big glasses at the old school buildings. Then, finally, he spotted the Famous Five, and ambled slowly towards them.

"Excuse me, you fellows!" he began in a thin, but level voice. "This is Greyfriars, I suppose?"

Bob Cherry bowed low, doffing his cap in playful salute.

"Quite right, old son!" he grinned. "And in us you behold the cream of the Lower School!"

While the stranger watched him rather blankly, the cheery Bob waved his hand theatrically at his chums.

"On my right you see Wharton, skipper of the Remove and a mighty pajandrum! The fellow with the feet is Johnny Bull—"

"What about your own, Bob Cherry?" came an indignant snort from Bull.

Bob tactfully ignored that interruption, and continued.

"This is Nugent with the girlish looks—"

"I'll give you girlish looks—" began Nugent sulphurously.

Nugent took feminine roles in the Remove dramatic performances, and was a little touchy on the subject.

"And this is Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, Nabob of Baniphur, and a great potentate in his own giddy native land. I'm Bob Cherry—now you know us! What's your name? I suppose you're a new kid?"

Wilfred Punter smiled faintly.

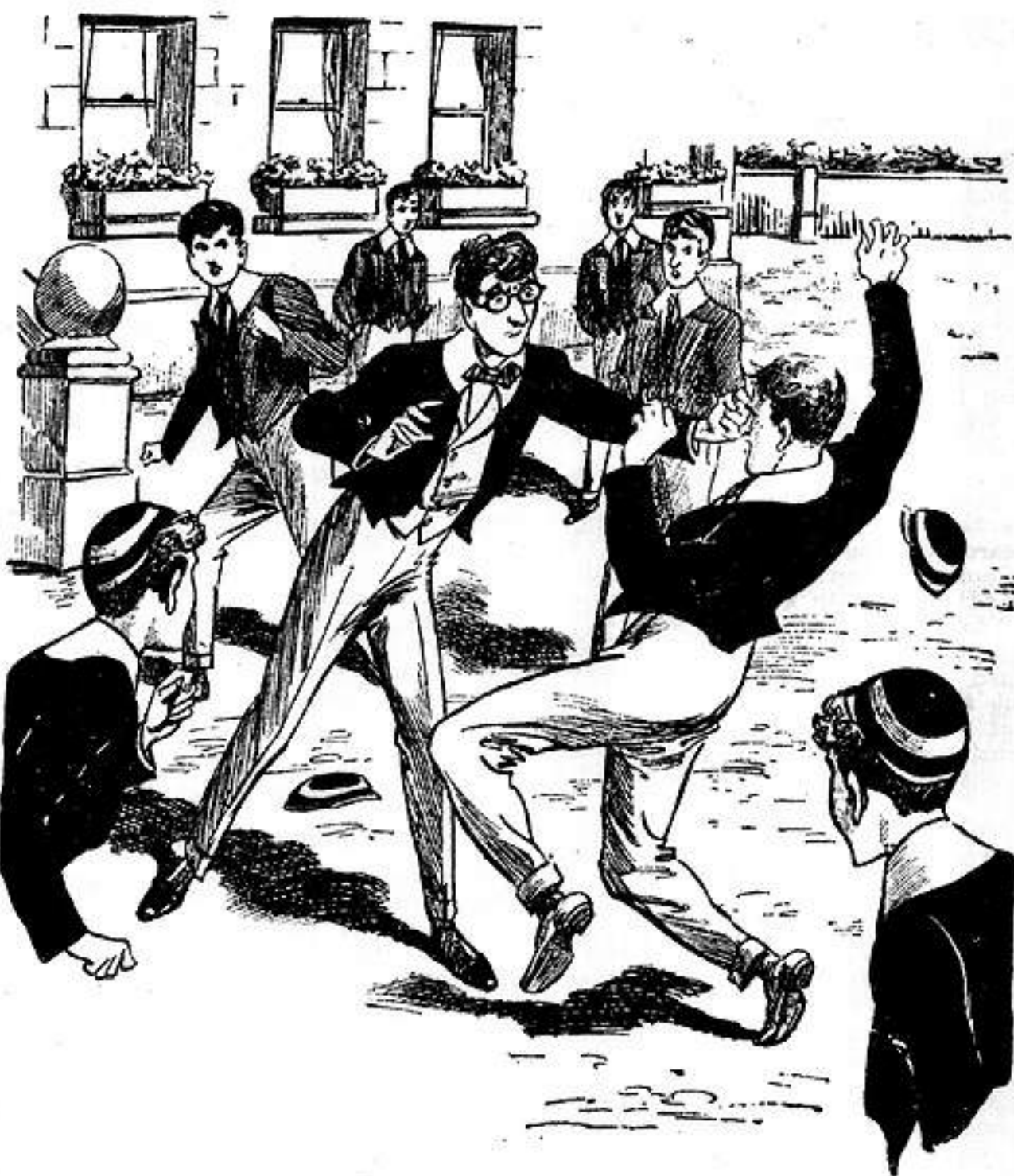
"Punter," he responded quietly—"Wilfred Punter. I'm pleased to meet you all!"

"Honoured!" said Bob politely.

"I wanted to ask you if you could direct me to the Remove master's study. I've been told to report to him first."

"You'll be in our form, kid," said Harry Wharton. "Come on, we'll take you to the Quelch-bird. You'll like him, Punter. He's a bit of a tartar at times, but he's decent enough in the main. Handle him carefully, and you'll be all right. This way!"

With the new junior under their collective wing the Famous Five strolled towards the house with the benevolent intention of presenting Punter to Mr. Quelch—this side up with care, so to speak.



"Come here, you freak!" cried Bolsover, aiming a fierce blow at Punter's somewhat prominent nose. The new junior ducked cleverly, and instead of Bolsover's fist inducing a spurt of crimson, Punter's skinny knuckles went home in Bolsover's eye. "Yaroooooh!" The bully of the Remove gave a yelp of surprise. (See Chapter 2.)

There was a group of fellows at the bottom of the steps, and the new fellow attracted a good many curious glances as he came up.

"Look at the giddy moulting fowl!" sniggered Skinner, and there was a chuckle.

Bolsover, in his usual bullying manner, detached himself from the stone balustrade, and barred the new junior's progress. The Remove bully had put on his most truculent expression, and stuck his hands in his pockets, surveying Punter arrogantly.

"New kid—eh? What's your name?" he began uncompromisingly.

"Yes, I'm Punter," returned that lanky youth.

"Get out of the way, Bolsover!" interjected Wharton angrily. "We're taking him to Mr. Quelch. We don't want any of your bullying tricks just now!"

"Who asked you to interfere, Wharton?" inquired Bolsover, his eyes gleaming. "I've got a right to speak to the kid if I want to, haven't I?"

Wharton made no reply, but eyed him grimly. Bolsover turned again to Punter.

"Where d'you come from?" he growled. "Any objection to telling us?"

The new fellow flushed.

"Why should I?" he asked quietly.

"Because I ask you!" retorted Bolsover angrily.

"Well, I won't. So you can let me pass!" rejoined Punter.

An evil expression came over Bolsover's face. He took his hands from his pockets, and clenched them ominously.

"That's not the way I'm accustomed to being talked to by new kids!" he snarled. "If you don't answer my question, I'll make you sorry for yourself!"

Harry Wharton, his patience at an end, strode in between them, and glanced scornfully at the bully.

"That's enough, Bolsover!" he snapped. "You can shut up! Punter is coming with us to Mr. Quelch!"

"Get out of my way, Wharton!" roared Bolsover, his temper flaming up. "I'll do as I please, and if you choose to interfere, I'll handle you, too!"

"Hear, hear!" chirruped Skinner joyfully. "Go it, ye cripples! Wharton and Bolsover are going to settle it between them!"

"Smash him, Harry!" roared Bob Cherry.

There was a chorus of shouts at once. "Go it, Wharton! Into him, Bolsover!"

Harry Wharton needed no urging, and he was about to advance on the bully when he felt a touch on his shoulder. It was Wilfred Punter, pale-faced but calm.

"Stand aside, please, Wharton!" he said, with no trace of fear in his voice.

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"This is my affair, and I would prefer to deal with it myself!"

"But Bolsover will knock you into a cocked hat!" ejaculated Wharton.

"All the same, let me stand up to him, please!"

"He's not a funk, anyway!" said P'enfold.

"Jiggered if he hasn't got a nerve!" said Johnny Bull admiringly. "He's as thin as a rake, and Bolsover will absolutely massacre him!"

"Ha, ha! Let Bolsover hit him once and he'll howl for mercy!" jeered Skinner.

Still looking and feeling very doubtful, Wharton stood aside, and Bolsover and Punter faced each other.

Bolsover's methods of fighting were not based on scientific lines. But his advantage in weight and strength appeared enormous.

"Come on, you freak!" he growled, and advanced with a fierce rush calculated to sweep Punter off his feet.

His huge fists, whirling like flails, seemed likely to knock the new junior flying at any moment.

But Punter had thrown himself into a defensive pose, and was skipping lightly just out of reach of the bully's whirling fists.

"Running away, you rotter!" jeered Bolsover. "That won't save you!" And he aimed a fierce blow at Punter's somewhat prominent nose.

The new junior ducked cleverly, and instead of Bolsover's fist inducing a spurt of crimson, Punter's own skinny knuckles went home in Bolsover's eye, and he gave a yelp of surprise.

"Why, I'll smash the cad! Come here, you—you—"

He dashed at his opponent, swinging a series of sledge-hammer blows at him, none of which, however, managed to reach their mark. Punter was as elusive as a will-o'-the-wisp.

A terrific lunge which met nothing but empty air took the bully clean off his balance, and then—thud! The new junior's right connected with Bolsover's jaw, and the bully of the Remove went over like a ninepin.

"Man down!" roared Bob Cherry. "Good man, Punter! You've knocked out Bolsover—the one and only!"

Skinner and his pals rushed to pick up the fallen bully, and he groaned and leaned heavily on them. He caressed his jaw tenderly with one hand, and bent a new glance on the unperturbed Punter.

"You're a good man!" he admitted grudgingly. "Mind you, I can lick you—and I will, too, any time you like—because you took me by surprise. Still, you're a good man, and there's my hand on it, if that's to your liking."

"It's all right," smiled Punter, taking Bolsover's hand firmly. "I didn't want a row. Let's forget it!"

Skinner & Co. helped Bolsover into the House and left Punter smiling at the crowd. He nearly doubled up as Bob slapped him cheerily on the back.

"Yow!" ejaculated Bob a moment later. "You're as bony as a blessed skeleton! I've hurt my hand!"

"This way for Mr. Quelch!" said the Remove captain, and led the way into the House, leaving the juniors discussing the remarkable new arrival who had knocked out Bolsover without getting touched himself.

On the spot, several fellows who had contemplated ragging Punter because of his eccentric appearance decided to postpone the ragging indefinitely—it was only too obvious that the ragger might easily become the ragged!

Meanwhile, Harry Wharton & Co. The MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 952.

brought Punter to Mr. Quelch's study, where they left him, having arranged that he should come along to Study No. 1 to tea after the interview.

In due course Punter arrived, to partake of hot toast and tea, eked out with a few things hastily purchased at the tuckshop and arranged attractively for his especial benefit. Over tea Punter relieved Wharton and Nugent by informing them that he had been put in Study No. 12, where he would have the restful company of the languid Lord Mauleverer and his study-mates.

As they were only two in a study, Wharton and Nugent had rather feared that Mr. Quelch might billet Punter on them, but evidently the Form-master had decided that Punter would be happier in quieter company—for which the chums were duly thankful.

"Queer chap, Punter, but I rather like him!" said Wharton, after the new junior had gone.

"So do I," assented Nugent. "But we don't want any additions to this study—what?"

"Hear, hear!" agreed Wharton, settling down to his prep.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Startling Discovery!

SOME days had passed since the sensational advent of Wilfred Punter. Bolsover had spent the time in nursing a damaged chin, and showed no inclination to come to close quarters with the new fellow again.

Harry Wharton & Co. had found Punter likeable enough, if a little strange in his ways, and it was soon evident that he was a crank on the subject of archæology.

Alonzo Todd, who thought he had discovered a kindred spirit, made an attempt to interest him in "The Evolution of a Potato," a volume sent to Alonzo on his birthday by his fond Uncle Benjamin. But Punter, although civil, showed a lamentable lack of interest in everything but his own hobby—poking about in the school library after old legends concerning Greyfriars when it was a monastery, and wandering among the ruins of the old chapel.

Alonzo had pressed one of his favourite volumes on Punter, assuring him that, as it was Sunday, he would have ample time to investigate the wondrous growth of an onion, as described by the inimitable pen of Professor Wat Bilge.

Now it was Monday, and it had occurred to Alonzo to stroll along and see how much progress Punter had made.

He arrived at Study No. 12, which Punter shared with Lord Mauleverer, Sir Jimmy Vivian, and Piet Delarey, the South African junior, just in time to hear the voice of Billy Bunter raised in protest.

"Yah! You rotter! Making a fuss about a paltry ten bob! I don't know what new kids are coming to! Of course I shall pay up—when my postal-order comes. I'm expecting it—"

"You've been expecting it a jolly long time, haven't you?" came Punter's voice sarcastically.

"Oh, really, Punter! If you can't trust me, I suppose I can borrow the money from Wharton or Cherry, if that will satisfy you, you rotten Shylock!"

Alonzo Todd couched, and looked into the study.

"Pray do not make use of such opprobrious epithets to my friend Punter, my dear Bunter!" he entreated.

Bunter turned on him, his little eyes gleaming behind his spectacles.

"You shut up, Alonzo!" he shouted.

"Mind your own business! This is a private matter between the new kid and myself. I'm surprised at you, Punter," he continued, elevating his fat little nose, a task which Nature had already performed adequately. "I'm afraid I shall have to drop your acquaintance after this! Don't worry about your measly ten bob. I'll pay you quickly enough, and glad to get out of your moneylender's clutches!"

The fat junior paused dramatically after uttering the last sentence, and then turned, with portly dignity, to the door. He looked back from the passage and remarked:

"Yah! Shylock!"

With that Parthian shot, he thought it safer to scuttle down the passage, in case Punter saw fit to give chase. But he need not have worried. Alonzo Todd was fully occupying Punter's attention, and had brought him another supply of learned tomes. While the new junior was doing his best to disclaim any interest in the works of Professor Bilge, Billy Bunter rolled into Hall and paused before the letter-rack.

He looked from force of habit in the "B's," but there was nothing for Bunter. One for Bull, and another for Bulstrode. He fingered them longingly, wondering whether either contained a remittance, and if they did, what his chances would be of touching the recipient for a little loan to tide him over till Wednesday. Not that there was anything great to expect on Wednesday, but he sometimes got a small remittance from home on that day.

Deciding that both envelopes were too thin to contain much, he put them back and glanced idly over the rest. A letter for Punter suddenly caught his eye, and he took it in his fat fingers. It was a well-filled envelope, fairly bulging, in fact, and, to Bunter's keen imagination, seemed literally stuffed with banknotes. Even allowing for several sheets of notepaper, this must contain a remittance. Then Punter's people must be rich!

So far, Bunter had been unable to squeeze much out of the new junior, for he had quickly got "wide" to Bunter's methods of cadging, and after that ten shillings at Uncle Clegg's, had refused to advance Bunter any more. Even when the Owl increased his postal-order to a cheque for five guineas, the new junior callously advised him to go and play on the feelings of a detachment of Marines, but leave him alone, anyway.

"Mingy beast!" grunted Bunter, turning the envelope over and over like some particularly choice morsel which he was forbidden to eat.

"He—he could only thank me if I took it to him, and then he might let me have a pound!" muttered the Owl, fingering the flap. "Of course, I wouldn't open it! Wonder who Punter's pater is? He wouldn't tell Bolsover the day he came, though that was cheek. Must be a careless bounder to send his son all this money at a time—and not even registered! It's shocking, the careless way some people handle money. Why, if this got into a fellow's hands, and he was hard up—"

He blinked at the flap, which somehow—Bunter persuaded himself successfully that he didn't know in the least how—had become torn.

"Oh, my hat! He'll think somebody has been trying to open it!" he gasped, his fat thumb inserted in the opening. "There, it's come right open! Nobody could blame him for that. Some of the beasts would, though."

He blinked round short-sightedly, but there was nobody near. He looked at the envelope as if it hypnotised him.

"I—I can't take it to him like that!" he muttered at last. "And if I put it back in the rack somebody's sure to say I opened it—they're such an unjust lot of rotters here, I get the blame for everything. And Punter, he's as bad as the rest, though he's only been at the blessed school five minutes. He doesn't deserve to get remittances like this—"

His mutterings ceased, as, almost unconsciously, he drew out the contents of the letter. It was a long envelope, and well packed. The Owl blinked inquisitively at a thick, folded paper marked "General Plan." As he took this from the envelope a letter fluttered to the floor.

"What—what on earth is this rot?" he ejaculated, peering disappointedly at the first paper. It was covered with designs in blue carbon, suggesting nothing to Bunter, and here and there he read the familiar words, such as "Priory," "Ruined Chapel," and so on.

Examining the strange document more closely, the fat junior began to have some glimmering of understanding.

"It's a plan of Greyfriars and the surrounding district!" he gasped suddenly. "A plan of the school! What on earth has this been sent to Punter for?" His little eyes gleamed behind his spectacles. "Something in this, I reckon!" he murmured. "More than meets the eye, I'll bet. Looks to me as if Punter has a secret. Hallo! I forgot the letter!"

Grunting, he stooped and picked it up, opening it and reading it without compunction. It was his duty, as a Greyfriars fellow, to investigate anything fishy, and he persuaded himself into quite a conscientious frame of mind as he proceeded to do it. Investigation—that was what it was! Nobody could call it prying.

As he read the first few lines his fat jaw dropped, and his little eyes gleamed with suppressed excitement till he reached the end. He perused the letter a second time, as if unable to believe his own eyes.

"My hat!" he breathed. "My hat! What a scheme! And they believe they know where it is! Why, it's almost daylight robbery! I—I suppose I ought to take this to Mr. Quelch."

He blinked cautiously round again. "No, I won't!" he decided. "Quelch would only ask me how I came to know what was inside the envelope. He'd probably lick me, the beast. It's not good enough. My hat! I wonder—" He broke off, a far-away look in his eyes.

"I'll see Skinner!" he muttered, slipping the plan and letter inside his coat and buttoning it carefully round his ample form. "He'll be bound to treat me on the square, or I could give him away. And it'll want a bit of thinking about before we can do anything. Skinner's a crafty bounder, and he'll think of something."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Day-dreaming, Bunter?"

Bob Cherry's booming voice broke in unceremoniously on the fat junior's reverie, and Bob's heavy hand descended with a loud report on Bunter's broad back.

"Yah! You silly ass!" roared the Owl, dodging. "You've nearly busted my backbone! You—you didn't see—" An anxious look appeared on his fat face. "If you think I'd take a letter that doesn't belong to me, you're mistaken, Bob Cherry, that's all. I hope I'm far too honourable a fellow to do a thing of that sort. Besides, it may have been meant for me all the time—a mistake in the name. Not that I've touched anything," added Bunter hastily.

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

Bunter sniffed, and rolled away rather quickly. Not until he was safe in his study did the fat junior's confidence return.

"Suspicious cads, all of 'em, in this place," he muttered peevishly. "Always ready to believe the worst of a fellow, when he's doing his school a good turn—that's what it amounts to. I'll go and find Skinner."

And Billy Bunter rolled out of the study again.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Schemers!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

The big glasses of the Owl of the Remove glimmered in at the doorway of Study No. 11, the study occupied by Skinner, Snoop, and Stott, the black sheep of the Form.

Skinner & Co. were enjoying a chat on "horses" before dinner. All three of the young rascals had been pretty thoroughly "rooked" by Mr. Hawke, the card-sharper and bookmaker, of the Cross Keys, over a "cert" which had unaccountably come in last, and they were discussing the chances of retrieving their losses by investing in another of Mr. Hawke's "dark horses." Naturally they had no welcome for Bunter.

"Scat!" said Skinner briefly.

"Roll away, old fat barge!" advised Snoop amiably.

"Nothing to lend, no grub for you to bone, so clear off!" added Stott.

Bunter gave the juniors a basilisk glare, and drew himself up to his full height—not a very imposing altitude.

"Really, you fellows!" he protested. "Anybody would think you'd been brought up in the slums, like young Vivian, by the way you greet a visitor. As for your remarks about borrowing your rotten money, or scoffing your mouldy grub, I regard them with scorn, Stott."

Skinner silently picked up the poker. "Are you going, Bunter?" he inquired politely. "We're just having a private confab. Fat porpoises barred. If you want any help—" He lunged forward with the poker, missing the Owl's equator by a fraction of an inch. Billy Bunter gave a yelp, and jumped back into the passage with surprising alacrity.

"Yah!" he gasped, and there was a chuckle from inside the study. "Beasts! You don't deserve to be let into this, Skinner! I've a jolly good mind to keep it to myself, and have all the treasure—"

"What's the fat ass babbling about?" asked Stott, in wonder.

"Some rot, as usual!" opined Snoop carelessly.

"All right, you rotters!" growled the Owl vengefully. "I won't tell you, after all! Perhaps you'll be sorry you wouldn't listen when I'm riding about in my Rolls Royce! I sha'n't lend you fellows a penny then! You'll smile on the other side of your face, I'll bet!"

With a facial contortion which he fondly imagined to be a scornful smile, the Owl turned and began to roll along the passage. Skinner jumped to the door.

"Hold on, Bunter!" he said.

"Oh, really—"

"Come in, you fat ass, and get what's worrying you off your chest!" growled Skinner, shoving the fat junior into the study. "And mind, if you've been bluffing, look out for a record bumping, that's all!"

Bunter sniffed, and plumped his ponderous form down in the best arm-chair, regardless of a series of agonised creaks from the chair.

"Careful, you great elephant!" ejaculated Stott. "You'll be smashing up the happy home!"

"Now, Bunter!" said Skinner grimly. "What's all this about treasure? Some potty yarn, of course. But out with it!"

The Owl of the Remove carefully adjusted his glasses on his fat little nose before replying. Bunter realised that he occupied—however temporarily—a position of importance, and he invariably made use of such rare occasions to be as annoying as possible.

"I'm doing you a big favour, really, Skinner, in letting you into this," he began impressively.

"Oh, get on!" urged Skinner.

"You see, it's a delicate matter, and I thought your advice would be useful," explained Bunter flatteringly.

The cad of the Remove was silent. There appeared to be more in this than there was usually in Bunter's tattle. Snoop and Stott thought so, too. Three pairs of eyes were fixed on the Owl.

"It's about the Greyfriars treasure," announced Bunter at last, taking the plunge, as it were.

Skinner looked disappointed.

"Don't say you've found a clue to that, you fat idiot!" he growled angrily. "Hundreds of fellows have searched for the treasure left by the Grey Friars, but it's never been unearthed—and it's never likely to be!"

Bunter winked.

"That's all you know!" he responded cautiously. "But I happen to have got hold of some special information which alters the case. How much is the treasure supposed to be worth, Skinner?"

"Goodness knows!" said Skinner.

"An awful lot," put in Snoop. "The Grey Friars hoarded up a terrific amount of stuff, and hid it without leaving a solitary clue. It might be worth millions. But go on, Bunter. Surely you haven't got a real clue?"

The thought of millions of pounds went to the juniors' heads like new wine.

"Perhaps—and perhaps not!" said Bunter cryptically and irritatingly. "What I do say is this—if Skinner can do what I think he can, there will be a whack in the Greyfriars treasure for each of us—enough to make us rich for life!"

Skinner strolled across the study, glanced up and down the passage, and closed and locked the door.

"Carry on, old fat pippin!" he said, seating himself on the edge of the table. "This sounds interesting. What have you found out?"

"Ahem!" Bunter coughed. "Really, I hope you fellows won't think I opened somebody else's letter; but the name was almost the same, and the writing my Aunt—Aunt Tabitha's. I naturally thought—"

He groped inside his jacket and produced a crumpled envelope.

"Mind, it's share and share alike in this!" he warned, as he handed it to Skinner. "I'm letting you fellows in because I shall want some help, and—because you fellows are my pals!" he said eagerly.

Skinner took the letter and glanced at the address:

Master W. Punter,
Greyfriars School,
Near Friardale,
Kent.
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"Whew!" he whistled. "You've been opening Punter's letters!"

"Really, Skinner! I told you how I came to open it! I thought it was from my Aunt Matilda!"

"Oh, yes. We know your Aunt Matilda!" grinned Skinner. "It was Aunt Tabitha just now! But what's this? By Jove! Look here, you fellows!"

Snoop and Stott craned their necks to read the letter over their leader's shoulder, while Bunter watched them with a cunning gleam in his fat little eyes. The letter, which was written on good paper, with a business heading, was certainly enough to startle anybody.

"Dear Wilfred,—I hope you are settling down comfortably at Greyfriars, and have managed to look over the place with the aid of the general plan I gave you. I enclose another which gives a few more indications.

"You will be pleased to hear that the final documents we are preparing from the old sources are almost complete, and I will bring them down to Courtfield in person on next Wednesday afternoon. I have time only for a flying visit, so you must meet the three-fifteen at the station.

"I have instructed you how to read the charts I shall bring, and the rest I must leave to your acumen, as you are on the spot. You know what to do when you have succeeded in your mission.

"Please on no account be late at Courtfield.—Your affectionate father,
"BERNARD R. PUNTER."

Skinner perused that letter twice before he fully grasped the gist of it. Then he drew a deep breath.

"Jove!" he gasped. "What a stunt! Punter planted here to find the Greyfriars treasure—and let some outsider get a claim on it—practically pinching it from under our very noses!"

"Rather!" gasped Snoop. "It's—it's a jolly clever idea, really. But—but where do we come in?"

Skinner grinned craftily and looked at Bunter.

"You hinted that you had a scheme, old fat man?" he asked jovially. "Let's hear it. We're all in this together, and we're going to be rich—rich!"

Skinner's eyes glittered avariciously at the thought, but Snoop and Stott looked a little blank.

"I don't see it," said Stott. "We can stop Punter laying his hands on the treasure by going to the Head. But how does that help us? We can't get hold of it!"

William George Bunter gave a fat chuckle.

"If you fellows would listen," he grinned, "I'd explain my scheme. I thought of this straight off. But I couldn't do it myself, so I thought of Skinner."

The scheme had only just come into his head, but that was a mere detail to Bunter.

"Silence for Bunter!" chuckled Skinner greedily.

"Old Punter is coming down to Courtfield by the three-fifteen on Wednesday," resumed the Owl, with a cunning grin. "He'll expect to meet his son there and give him the papers he mentions. If we can get hold of them the stuff's ours."

"But how?" inquired Stott, patiently.

"Waylay young Punter on his way back and bag 'em!" suggested Snoop hopefully.

"Too clumsy!" said Bunter, with a

shake of the head. "This is my idea. Suppose old Punter got a letter saying that his son was detained for the afternoon, and he was sending a pal instead? How about that?"

Skinner nodded slowly. He saw the cunning Owl's idea, and it seemed workable.

"You mean we'll write a letter to old Punter in reply to this, saying that Punter can't come, but one of us will be there as Punter's pal? But it would look too fishy. Old Punter would expect his son to write, not a friend."

"That's where you come in, Skinner," said Bunter, nodding. "You can imitate handwriting awfully well; you remember when you were nearly expelled for—"

"Shut up!" growled Skinner.

The cad of the Remove did not like to be reminded of the trouble in which his precious gift of penmanship had landed him on more than one occasion.

"Well, you see the idea!" went on Bunter earnestly. "Skinner writes the letter in Punter's handwriting, mentions that he can't come—detained by Quelch—but is sending a pal. You can give yourself another name, Skinner, just to make it quite safe. Then Skinner collars the papers, and the treasure is ours!"

"That sounds all right," said Stott. "Old Punter would understand that his son didn't want to attract attention by asking Quelch for special leave; that was why he didn't register that letter, I expect, to keep things as unobtrusive as possible. But look here, doesn't the Government take all treasure-trove and leave the finders with hardly anything?"

Snoop started, and his face fell.

"No, I don't think so," said Skinner slowly. "I think all treasure is Crown property, but it's usual to reward the finder with the full value of the boodle. I read that somewhere."

"Oh, good!" said Snoop.

"The question is," put in Bunter, "is Skinner game to write the letter and meet old Punter at the station? I've done my bit in getting the information—ahem!—and working out the scheme. It's up to you, Skinny, old man!"

Skinner eyed his cronies thoughtfully. "What about a specimen of Punter's handwriting?" he asked. "I shall have to have that!"

"I'll get that for you," volunteered Bunter eagerly. "And just think of the reward—the pieces of eight, and—and all that kind of thing, you know!"

"There might even be a few doughnuts preserved in the treasure chests," grinned Snoop.

"Good for you, old fat man!" said Skinner, slapping Bunter quite affectionately on the back, and in a manner that made the Owl gasp. "I believe you've done yourself and all of us a good turn by your prying into what doesn't concern you. My hat! Think of the value of the stuff, you fellows. It's worth a bit of risk."

"If the Head got to know—" began Snoop nervously.

"The Head won't know!" snapped Skinner. "Even Bunter's got sense enough to keep his mouth shut till we've actually found the stuff; after that there'll be no need for secrecy. I'm on, Bunter!"

A wave of generosity surged over the cad of the Remove—quite an unusual occurrence with him!

"There's a cake in the cupboard," he said cheerily. "You can have it, if you like!"

Already Skinner was visualising the

piles of crisp bank notes which would be his after the treasure had been unearthed.

"Thanks, Skinner!" beamed the Owl, rolling to the cupboard.

He started on the cake at once, in case Skinner should change his mind.

"The sooner you get that specimen of Punter's fist the better," said Skinner, as Bunter wiped the crumbs off his fat cheeks.

"I'll get it to-day," promised the Owl, with a fat grin. "There goes the dinner-bell. No time now!"

And, his appetite apparently unaffected by the cake he had just gorged, he rolled hastily in the direction of Hall. Skinner, Snoop, and Stott ate hardly anything at dinner. Their thoughts were fixed on a glorious vista of wealth unlimited, which they fondly hoped would shortly be theirs. But only a stern admonition from Mr. Quelch kept Bunter from attempting his fourth helping of pudding. Bunter's appetite, as usual, refused to be upset!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Way!

AS soon as dinner was over Billy Bunter rolled cautiously along to Punter's study, otherwise the palatial abode of Lord Mauleverer. He realised that this was probably the only chance he would get of searching for a sample of the new boy's "fist" without the presence of one of the owners of the study. Even if Vivian and Delarey were out, Mauly was generally to be found reclining at his ease on the sofa.

The fat junior's luck was in. Delarey had buttonholed Mauly as he came out of Hall and taken him for a stroll in the quad. Bunter had watched them go with great satisfaction. Then he had seen Vivian make for the gym, and he knew that, barring accidents, the coast was clear till afternoon classes.

Now the Owl stopped before the door of No. 12, and by sheer instinct lowered his fat ear to the keyhole. There was no sound from within, but to make quite sure Bunter knocked. Receiving no reply he turned the handle, rolled into the room, and closed the door quietly behind him.

His big spectacles gleamed round the study in quest of property of Punter's, and alighted on the waste-paper basket. The very idea! Punter would not miss anything taken from the waste basket, and a discarded exercise would serve Skinner quite adequately as a copy.

The Owl jerked the basket from the corner where it stood and upended it on the nice new cloth which covered Mauleverer's mahogany table. The basket had been nearly full, and an assortment of squeezed-up paper was presented to Bunter's eyes. He unravelled each piece systematically, tossing those bearing Mauly's elegant caligraphy or Sir Jimmy's painstaking scrawl back into the receptacle. He made a little pile of Punter's work—a couple of half-completed Latin exercises, a list of books, and a spoiled page from an essay. When he had discovered these Bunter gave a fat chuckle and swept the rest into the basket.

"These ought to be enough for Skinner!" he murmured.

There was a heavy step in the passage, followed by a loud thump on the door, and Bob Cherry's voice.

"Mauly! Mauly, you slacker—you're wanted! Hallo! Bunter, you fat bounder, what game are you up to?"

The exuberant Bob had swung open the door, and caught the Owl with Punter's exercises grasped in his podgy paw.

Bunter gasped.

"I—I— That is, I just dropped in to speak to my old pal Punter, you know!" he managed to say, with an attempt at dignity.

"How long have you been a pal of Punter's?" inquired Bob grimly. "I saw him kick you outside the tuckshop the other day when you tried to touch him for a loan. Hardly the way to treat a pal—what?"

"That—that was only a joke, Bob Cherry! Punter and I are absolutely bosom pals. We—we can't get on without each other!" protested Bunter fatuously, at the same time endeavouring to conceal the pilfered exercises in his trousers pocket. "As—as he's not here, I'll go now, if you'll let me pass, Bob Cherry!"

"Hold on, you fat bladder of lard!" said Bob suspiciously. "What's that you've just shoved into your pocket? Papers, weren't they? Turn 'em out!"

"Oh, really!" protested Bunter feebly. "I'm surprised at you, Cherry, I am really!"

Bunter was playing for time, and working his fat brain desperately to think of some plausible explanation for his unauthorised presence in the study.

"You see," he began cautiously. "I—I came here to get an exercise Punter said he'd leave on the table for me—he's helping me with my Latin, you know! There! Now let me pass, you beast!"

Bob grinned, but there was a serious look in his eye.

"Not so fast, old fat pippin!" he said. "Turn out that pocket, and let me see what you've been up to. You don't know what Punter would think if he caught you! It's bad enough when you pinch things from fellows who know you, but when you start on new kids, you're getting the Form a bad name. Show up, you fat frog!"

Bunter glanced longingly at the doorway, guarded by Bob's stalwart form, and he groaned inwardly. He shoved his hand slowly into his pocket and carefully drew out one of the exercises.

"There you are, you beast!" he mumbled. "You can see for yourself that it's only an exercise book for me to copy. Here, you rotter—gimme it back—"

For Bob had taken it from Bunter's hand, when the Owl had intended him to have only a glimpse at it, and was now examining the exercises with care. As Bunter opened his mouth to protest still further, a junior appeared in the doorway, and the Owl gave a gasp of dismay.

Wilfred Punter glanced, first at Bunter, then at Bob, reading the exercise. His face darkened, and he strode suddenly into the study, snatching the paper from Bob's hands.

"You rotters!" he cried. "What do you want meddling in my study? Is this the kind of thing Wharton encourages in the Remove? You prying cads—"

"Steady, Punter!" interposed Bob Cherry, laying a hand on Punter's arm, his eyes gleaming a little. "Wait till you've heard the facts of the case before you start shouting. From what I can see, this is only an old exercise, which Bunter said you had left on the table for him. It doesn't look much use to me—it's yesterday's work!"

"What made you come butting in



His eyes gleaming, Wilfred Punter strode into the study and snatched the exercise from Bob Cherry's hand. "You rotters!" he cried. "What do you want meddling in my study? Is this the kind of thing Wharton encourages in the Remove, you prying cads?" (See Chapter 5.)

here, either of you?" asked Punter savagely.

Bob Cherry eyed the junior's white face coolly.

"I came to speak to Mauly," he said. "As I opened the door, I saw Bunter with this exercise in his fat paw, and naturally, knowing Bunter, I made him give it up!"

"Oh!" said Punter, turning to the fat junior. "So you were prying in here, were you? You fat slug, what were you after? Out with it!"

"Nun-nun-nothing!" wailed Bunter, scuttling behind Bob Cherry. "I—I just came in to—to—" Bunter tried desperately to think of a lie, but a lie would not come. It was rare, indeed, that Bunter was stumped for a yarn, but he seemed landed in a net of circumstances that defied his powers for once!

"I say, suppose you lick the beast, Bob?" he suggested brightly, glaring over Bob's shoulder at Punter. "I'll hold your coat for you, old man! That rotter could do with a licking. Accusing fellows of prying into secrets—yah! What have you got that a fellow mustn't see, Punter?"

Bunter's little eyes gleamed vindictively as he lit on that channel of escape.

"Looks jolly fishy to me—flaring up like that over a paltry matter. I think he must be hiding something, Bob, and he's afraid we shall find it—that's what made him lose his wool!"

Armed with exclusive information regarding Punter's affairs, Bunter felt himself on the high road to victory. Bob could not help grinning, but Punter's face was white with fury.

"Let me get at him, the fat toad!" he gasped fiercely. "I'll—I'll smash him!"

He made a sudden leap across the study, and before Bob could stop him, he had seized Bunter by the coat-collar and began to shake him as if he had been a rat.

"Ow! Yow! Yaroogh!" roared Bunter. "You rotter! There goes my glasses. If they get b-broken you'll have to p-pay for them! My collar-bone's broken, I believe. Stop it, you beast!"

"Drop that, Punter!" rapped Bob Cherry.

Punter made no reply, but continued to shake Bunter as if for a wager. Bob strode forward, and wrenched the infuriated new junior from the Owl, who stood gasping, like a newly-landed fish.

"That's enough, Punter!" said Bob, his big fists clenched. "If you want anybody to work off your rotten temper on, I'm waiting!"

Punter stepped back, breathing hard. He realised that he had made a fool of himself by losing his temper over a trifle—as it appeared to Bob. But if Bunter had seen any of his private papers, and found any reference to his mission at the school, Punter trembled inwardly. He dropped his hands and forced a laugh.

"Let the fat little beast go!" he said. "I don't think he'll put his nose in this study again. There was no need for you to interfere, Cherry!"

Bob looked at him.

"I've no wish to interfere!" he retorted coolly. "But you'd better keep a civil tongue in your head, Punter, or I shall interfere with you—hard!"

He gave the new junior a glance, and turning, left the study, followed rather closely by Bunter.

Punter closed the door and locked it. Then he swung up the lid of his desk.

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He breathed a sigh of relief as he noted that the contents were quite undisturbed. Evidently Bob Cherry had arrived in time to prevent Bunter from discovering anything of importance. At that moment Punter felt almost grateful to Bob. He would get a letter regarding the final documents soon, he expected. Then it would be but a short while before his mission was completed. He would have been considerably surprised, not to say alarmed, if he had known exactly what Bunter knew of his plans, and how the Owl and his rascally accomplices were plotting to forestall him!

Meanwhile, Bunter paused before the door of No. 11, and knocked happily on it. He felt that he deserved well of his country. His part of the affair was done now. He congratulated himself, that with rather less than his usual obtuseness, he had seen that this was a matter which could not be bungled through in his habitual manner—and that a clever accomplice such as Skinner would take practically all the risk off his fat shoulders—which was just what he wanted!

Bunter agreed that it was Skinner's job to write the letter to Mr. Punter—and incidentally, to take any risk that might be attached thereto. And interviewing Mr. Punter at the station would be a ticklish job which the Owl felt would be much better left in somebody else's hands—even at the expense of a share in the treasure. But then, Bunter reflected, there would be plenty to go round, and make them all rich for life—so why worry?

He rolled cheerily into the study where Skinner & Co. had foregathered to await his arrival with the purloined exercises.

"Got them, old man?" asked Skinner anxiously.

"Trust your uncle!" responded Bunter, dragging the rest of the exercises—which he had not shown to Bob Cherry—from his pocket. "Here you are, Skinner—a page from an essay, and some Latin!"

"You weren't seen?" asked Snoop, picking up one of the papers.

"That beast Bob Cherry caught me—and Punter found us in there—but he didn't suspect!" concluded Bunter hastily. "He flew into a rage, but he hasn't the slightest idea that we know his little game—I'm sure of that. It's all right, Skinner—you've only got to do your part now!"

Skinner looked at him grimly.

"Of course, you had to be seen, you fat bungler!" he growled. "Still, Punter can't suspect—we're safe enough. By Jove! I can get the trick of the fellow's handwriting from these easily enough! Let's see—if I write the letter to-night, I could post it so that he'd get it to-morrow morning—that's Tuesday. No time to write back before Wednesday afternoon. That'll do a treat!"

"And you'll meet him at the station?" asked Stott.

"Of course!" replied Skinner easily. "Nothing in that! He'll recognise his son's list, and there'll be no reason for him to suspect that anything is wrong. I shall tell him when I write that I—Wilfred—have been detained for the afternoon by Mr. Quelch, and that I am sending a pal and confidant along instead—mentioning myself under another name—Cecil Hawkins, say!" wound up Skinner enthusiastically.

"My hat, Skinner! You've got a nerve!" said Snoop admiringly.

"I'll just jot down the gist of the

letter now!" said Skinner. "There's just time before classes. How about this?"

The cad of the Remove sat down at the table and drew a sheet of impot-paper towards him, chewing his pen. After thinking a few moments, he began to write, and the others watched him expectantly.

"What do you think of that for a rough draft?" asked Skinner, throwing down his pen. "Look at it!"

"Dear father,—I am awfully sorry, but I have been detained for Wednesday afternoon by Mr. Quelch, my Form-master, and I shall not be able to meet you as arranged at Courtfield station.

"However, I have confided in a pal, Cecil Hawkins, in order to get some of the information I wanted—and I am sending him in my place. You may rely on him—I have told him that you will treat him handsomely when the treasure is found—and he will bring the papers to me safely enough.

"It would only attract attention if I asked special leave from Mr. Quelch to meet you, so I think this is the best course for me to take.

"Your affectionate son,
"WILFRED PUNTER."

"My hat! That's great!" said Snoop.

"First class!" agreed Stott.

"Not bad!" admitted Bunter. "That will pull us through all right so long as Skinner can imitate Punter's hand well enough to deceive his pater. You'll have to be careful, Skinny, old man!"

"You fat ass!" grinned Skinner. "Leave it to me!"

Bunter sniffed, and rolled out of the study, while Skinner practised assiduously to reproduce Punter's "fist" until the bell went for afternoon classes. By that time the cad of the Remove was smiling with satisfaction—an indication that his efforts had not been without success!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Skinner the Diplomat!

THROUGHOUT Wednesday morning, Skinner & Co. and Bunter might have been observed wearing an air of subdued excitement. In the Form-room, Mr. Quelch found them unduly attentive for once. Even Bunter's construe was not quite so atrocious as usual, and there were evidences that he had done his prep the previous night—quite a shock for the Form-master! For the first time in the Removites' memory the porpoise was able to sit down again with a satisfied smirk on his podgy features, instead of incurring a caning, or lines, or at best, a few sarcastic remarks from Mr. Quelch.

It was plain to the rest of the Remove that there was "something on" for the afternoon, and that neither Skinner & Co. nor Bunter were running any risk of detention. To the four young rascals, the hands of the clock seemed to revolve with leaden slowness, but at last the welcome dismissal arrived, and the fellows streamed out into the passage.

"Match against St. Jude's at two-thirty, you fellow!" sang out Harry Wharton cheerily, as he and Nugent headed for the study. In the general discussion over the match, the cads of the Remove were forgotten, which was just what they desired at that stage of their scheme.

After dinner the four conspirators met in Study No. 11, three of them keen

and excited, Skinner not feeling quite so sure of himself now that the matter was to be put to the test. He carefully locked the door and put on a cigarette.

"The old boulder's coming down by the three-fifteen," he said. "I haven't got much time."

"Don't forget to put it to him like a Dutch uncle!" urged Snoop. "He's certain to believe you if you carry a bold front."

"I think you fellows ought to leave it to me!" interrupted Bunter, blinking seriously at his confederates. "This is a matter requiring a lot of tact—and I'm bound to say I'm just the man for the job! Skinner's all right," he added rather hastily, as Skinner glared at him, "but I could carry it through much better myself, I think. If Skinner loses his nerve—"

"Shut up, you fat idiot!" growled the cad of the Remove. "You're no use in this act! It'll be easy enough if I play my cards carefully. I can see him swallowing the yarn whole and handing over the papers like a lamb! I'm not worrying about that. But we must keep it dark. If the Head got to know before we find the treasure and claim it as our own, we should capture a flogging apiece, at least. So you'd better keep your tattling tongue still, Bunter—unless you want Gosling to hoist you in Big Hall!"

Bunter quaked at the thought.

"Oh, dear! Do be careful, Skinner. I sha'n't breathe a word. I'll be as mum as an oyster! And it's safe enough dealing with this man Punter," went on the Owl craftily. "He daren't make a fuss if we get the stuff first—we can destroy the papers and say we've been exploring on our own, and stumbled on the treasure by accident."

"That's so," agreed Snoop. "As long as we keep our own counsel, we're safe as houses."

"Hear, hear!" said Stott. "And look what a haul it will be—we shall have pocket-money for a bit, I know."

Skinner grinned greedily, and threw the end of his cigarette in the fire.

"I'd better be going," he announced. "Trust me to pull the old buffer's leg. He'll never have a doubt. So-long!"

He took his cap and left the study.

After telling Bunter in lurid tones what would happen to him if he let the secret out, Snoop and Stott strolled off together to the woodshed for a quiet smoke.

Meanwhile, Skinner was striding down Friardale lane, his brain busy framing the words he would use in interviewing Mr. Punter. Everything depended on his carrying this part of the programme through successfully. If Mr. Punter for any reason suspected his bona fides, it would be all up. But as Skinner thought over the various points of his scheme, he became more confident, and chuckled quietly once or twice. The man could not suspect. The letter he, Skinner, had sent was perfectly plausible. What could be more natural than that Punter junior, with such a delicate task before him, had felt the need of a confederate, and had confided in Cecil Hawkins? Hawkins, naturally, knew all the twists and turns of the old school, and his aid must obviously be invaluable to a fellow entrusted with Wilfred Punter's delicate mission. Mr. Punter must be aware that schoolboys might at any time incur detention—yes, the scheme was sound as a bell, thought Skinner.

Half-way to the village he passed Monson and Vavasour, members of the select society of Highcliffe "nuts," but he nodded to them and was not

molested. Had the "nuts" been in a playful mood, there might have been a "ragging," or they might have stopped him to arrange a "little game." Fortunately, Monson owed Skinner a matter of ten shillings or so, and there was no desire on his side to do more than nod at present.

At Friardale Station, the cad of the Remove had some minutes to wait before the old local ran in. Arrived at Courtfield, after a journey full of impatience, he strolled on the platform until the three-fifteen was signalled.

Though experiencing several inward qualms, Skinner nerved himself to the business in hand and glanced keenly at the passengers as the train stopped.

An old farmer descended, followed by a soldier. Then an elderly, very tall gentleman in a frock-coat and shining "topper" stepped out of a first-class carriage.

Skinner eyed him anxiously from a distance. He did not look at all the kind of gentleman whose leg it would be simple and easy to pull. He struck Skinner as a City gentleman. His eyes were dark and keen, and he had a short, dark moustache. He carried a silver-knobbed cane, and walked with a stiff, assured stride. He looked about him on alighting, evidently expecting to see his son, and then his eyes rested on Skinner's cap. He gazed intently at the junior for a moment, and then approached him.

"Pardon me—you are a Greyfriars boy, I believe?"

Skinner raised his cap and smiled ingratiatingly.

"Yes, sir," he responded. "I suppose you are Mr. Punter?"

The man nodded.

"Quite right," he said sharply. "And you are Hawkins, then? Why have you come? I expected my son to meet me here this afternoon. I expressly said I should arrive by the three-fifteen. Yet this morning I received a letter from him, apologising and saying that he had been detained."

"Wilfred told you in the letter that his pal Hawkins would come instead, sir," answered Skinner craftily. "He is detained till five, and asked me to explain to you."

Mr. Punter arched his brows.

"What do you mean—detained? He knew my business was important!"

"He fell foul of Quelchy, sir—our Form master," explained Skinner. "He's in the Form-room now, grinding at an impot. Fellows often get detained on a half. But shall we go into the waiting-room, Mr. Punter? Wilfred said you would have something to give me."

Mr. Punter eyed him grimly for a few moments, and then turned towards the waiting-room.

"Come along, then, Hawkins," he said. "Let me see—your name is Hawkins, is it not?"

"Yes, sir," responded Skinner innocently.

"To be sure. Here we are. Sit down, Hawkins."

Skinner, smiling slightly, and inwardly congratulating himself on the success of his plans, obeyed. Mr. Punter took out a cigar, and lighted it slowly. Without appearing to, he was scrutinising Skinner in a very thorough manner. But the cad of the Remove was aware of it, and stood the ordeal well. Mr. Punter spoke at length.

"Now, you speak as if you are a close friend of Wilfred's?" he began questioningly.

"We've been pretty pally since he came to the school, sir," lied Skinner

coolly. "He had a lot of things to find out—as you know, sir. A fellow already at the school could tell him a lot. Being my study-mate, he told me the—ahem!—reason for his coming to Greyfriars. It struck me as a rather clever idea, if I may say so. So I offered to come here this afternoon and get the papers you have brought down with you."

Skinner grinned coolly, hardly able to believe that the thing was going off so easily. He was surprised at his own nerve. Mr. Punter gave him a very puzzled look.

"You seem rather a cool customer, Master Hawkins," he said. "I must be frank with you. You say you understand the reason for the installation of my son at Greyfriars? I must ask you to be frank with me. Exactly how much do you know?"

Skinner coughed.

"Your son said that he had to locate the Greyfriars treasure, sir," he replied. "You intend to unearth it, believing it to be worth a very big amount, and you needed somebody on the spot to get first-hand information—"

"Go on!" said Mr. Punter.

"You gave Wilfred a general plan of the place, and wrote saying you would bring down the complete papers relating to the treasure to-day. Under the circumstances, your son asked me to come in his stead."

Mr. Punter dabbed his forehead with a silk handkerchief.

"You evidently understand my plans pretty thoroughly!" he gasped, taking a wallet from his pocket. "And did Wilfred mention your remuneration when the affair is completed?"

"He said I could rely on you to give me a look-in, sir," Skinner coolly replied.

Mr. Punter was silent for a little while, chewing at his cigar. He rose to his feet at last.

"You are a very cool young man, Hawkins," he remarked. "Very cool indeed. But you can rely on me to give you a look-in, as you call it. See here. I am willing to offer you five per cent. of whatever is secured as the outcome of this—this business. That is for keeping the matter secret until the time is ripe for disclosure. What do you say to that, my lad?"

Skinner grinned, almost hugging himself.

"That will satisfy me, sir," he said diffidently. "My part of the affair ceases as soon as I've taken those papers back to school."

Mr. Punter eyed him again before opening his wallet, as if wondering at the cool self-control exhibited by the junior. Skinner, with success in his grasp, did not turn a hair. He met the man's gaze cheerfully, only concealing his elation.

Mr. Punter closed the wallet and handed him a bundle of papers.

"There you are, Hawkins, my young friend," he said. "And, whatever you do, don't lose them. Tell Wilfred that I am annoyed that he could not avoid being detained on such an occasion. He has no excuse, for I mentioned that I could only pay him a flying visit, but that it was safer to hand the documents to him personally. I am very much obliged to you for coming here, and for rendering Wilfred assistance in his task which he has probably found extremely acceptable. You do not appear the kind of boy to spoil his chances by unguarded talk, and you have your share to look forward to, as we arranged. I think that is all. My train is due in a few minutes, I believe."

He consulted a big gold watch, nodded, and lit another cigar. He seemed to have trouble in keeping his cigars alight, and there was a certain ostentatiousness about these and his other visible signs of prosperity that made Skinner want to grin. The cad of the Remove, finding some difficulty in stopping his hands from trembling, carefully slipped the documents entrusted to him into an inner pocket.

Mr. Punter held out his hand.

"Here is my train. Good-bye, Master Hawkins! I am glad to have made your acquaintance."

He shook hands with the junior, and swung open the door of a first-class carriage. Skinner raised his cap, and walked across to the other platform to wait for the local.

There was a triumphant grin on the cad's face, and he tapped his coat to assure himself of the safety of the papers at frequent intervals. As the train for Friardale rolled in, Skinner gleefully ensconced himself in a corner seat, and fell to imagining the joyful times he and his cronies would have as soon as the treasure of the old Grey Friars should be unearthed and the reward of his trickery reaped.

Skinner was well aware that the whole of the treasure was the property of the Crown, but he also knew that it was customary to reward the finder of bullion with the full value of his discovery. And as he dwelt on that pleasant thought he hugged himself again.

There would be card-parties, and horses, and unlimited "smokes." Skinner and his pals would be able to paint the town a particularly vivid shade of red when they got their rascally hands on the monkish pieces of eight. The hoard of the Grey Friars was reported to have been fabulous, and Skinner could envisage gold and silver vessels, and piles of gold coins, in almost endless succession.

The short run to Friardale seemed to take an age to the impatient junior, who was fairly seething with excitement.

"Great!" he muttered as he descended from the train on the village platform. "Great, Harold, my boy! This is the best turn you ever did yourself in your life!"

As he swung out of the station into the street a thought struck him, and he chuckled involuntarily.

"My hat!" he grinned. "I should like to see old Punter's face when we've found the treasure. It'd be worth a guinea a box!"

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

III—Gotten Gains!

"LOOK! The old priory!"

Pilly Bunter spoke eagerly, and his fat voice fairly trembled with excitement. He pointed with a podgy forefinger at the plan which lay on the table of Study No. 11.

Skinner was seated on the edge of the table, and Snoop and Stott craned their heads over Bunter's shoulders to get a glimpse of the "final documents" entrusted to Skinner by Mr. Punter.

There was nothing very "deep" about the instructions which that gentleman had enclosed for his son's guidance. He had given no clues or mysterious parchments—merely a few sheets of paper, neatly typed, and dwelling chiefly on the course of action Wilfred Punter was to follow when he had accomplished his task.

The first page, which was the one which

interested the four schemers, contained precise instructions as to the finding of the booty, and showed a little diagram.

"I was undecided," they read, "in which of several underground passages the slab guarding the treasure is to be found. Various ancient plans I have examined gave vague and conflicting information, and I have experienced the greatest difficulty in sifting the chaff from the wheat.

"Your best course will be to enter the tunnel which runs from beneath the old priory in Friardale Wood to the ruined chapel at Greyfriars, and proceed until a passage entering from the left is reached.

"The document to which I pin my faith says, 'Walk twoscore paces along that way, turn the slab, and the hoard of the Grey Friars is yours.'

"Naturally, I have modernised the spelling, but the meaning of 'turn' the stone is a little puzzling. Presumably it is balanced so that the pressure of a secret spring will effect the 'turning'—which I take to mean 'swinging open'—and solve the riddle."

There was a lot more, but none of the four felt inclined to read it. This was all they wanted—plain, straightforward directions, enabling them to walk straight to the treasure and claim it as their own! Probably, at that moment, each of the treasure-hunters wished that he had found this out by himself, and could secure the whole of the booty—but there was comfort in the reflection that there would be enough and to spare for all. Even Bunter was satisfied, when he visualised it, with a quarter share.

It was the hour supposed to be devoted to preparation, but the young rascals were thinking of anything but the next day's lessons.

"Just think of it!" breathed Skinner, gloating over the page like a miser over his wealth. "We've only got to handle this carefully, and our fortunes are made. What does it say? Forty paces, and a slab of stone—if we can't find that, chaps, we don't deserve to get anything. Thank goodness, Punter never got hold of this!"

"I say, you fellows!" burst out Bunter, his little eyes glistening greedily. The thought of so much wealth was too much for the Owl. "I think you ought to give me at least half of the stuff, considering it was me who let you into this! I think that's very generous of me. You three fellows can divide the rest up between you!"

"Shut up, you fat fool!" growled Skinner angrily. "We don't want to quarrel over the spoils now we're on the verge of handling them! I've got as good a claim as any to have a bigger share than the rest of you, but I'm not claiming it—there'll be more than enough to go round! If we start falling out at this stage, there'll be a free fight when we set our eyes on the stuff!"

Snoop nodded.

"You're right, Skinner!" he said. "You keep your fat mouth shut, Bunter. We're all in it—we've all got to help and it—and it's only fair that we should have equal shares!"

"Hear, hear!" agreed Stott heartily.

Considering that all Sidney James Snoop and William Stott had done up to this stage was to give assent cheerfully to the suggestions of Skinner and Bunter, this was rather cool, to say the least of it. But, as Skinner had pointed out, those who were going to have plenty could afford to be bountiful.

Bunter sniffed, but he did not make any more suggestions. He saw the

wisdom of Skinner's view, and turned his fat thoughts to the business in hand.

"When shall we go and look for it?" he asked.

"No time like the present!" said Skinner, looking keenly from one to the other of his confederates. "Who's game for a little expedition after lights out? If we find it, we can leave it till the morning, pay another visit, letting a few fellows know, quite casually, that we're going on a treasure hunt—and come back and announce the discovery of the genuine article! Shove your paws up, those in favour!"

Snoop and Stott shot up their hands with hardly a moment's hesitation, and Bunter followed, more slowly. The treasure was in no danger of being disturbed by anybody else, so far as he could see, and Bunter did not relish the idea of leaving his warm bed in the dead of night—especially to creep round in such a dark and lonely locality as the old priory in Friardale Wood. Still, if the rest were determined, he would have to go. It would never do, he reflected, to let these fellows discover the treasure on their own—he had a strong suspicion that they might try and do him out of his share!

"I'll come!" he announced magnanimously. "I don't like the idea of losing my sleep, but you fellows would be in a fearful funk in the woods at night if I wasn't there! I'd rather leave it till to-morrow, but if you're all set on it, I'll come!"

"Please yourself!" snapped Skinner unceremoniously. "Anybody who isn't on the spot when we find the loot won't be on in the sharing out part of the bisney!"

"Oh, really, you rotten swindler!" ejaculated Bunter indignantly, jamming his glasses more firmly on his fat little nose.

Skinner gave a gasp of alarm, for Bunter's voice had risen above a speaking tone, and could easily have been heard in the corridor. The door was locked, but Skinner did not want to excite comment. And Bunter might blab out the whole lot if he got angry.

"Keep your mouth shut, you fat fool!" he hissed. "Who said anything about swindling you? You'll get as much as the rest of us—which is more than you deserve!"

Bunter relapsed into an injured silence, merely glowering at Skinner.

"Are you chaps game to get up at eleven and start the hunt?" asked the cad of the Remove.

"Of course, we could leave it till to-morrow!" said Snoop, in the tone of one who is considering all possibilities.

"Look here!" snapped Skinner. "We've got the information, but every hour there's a risk that old Punter may write to his son for some reason or other, and put him wise straight away that somebody had taken a rise out of him! We've got to act at once, or the chance may be lost!"

Skinner's point carried weight.

"Count me in!" said Stott.

"And me," said Snoop. "I hadn't thought of that!"

"You're coming, Bunter?"

The fat junior sniffed peevishly.

"Seems to me that you fellows are pretty well running my treasure hunt on your own!" he growled. "Of course I shall come!"

"Good! Remember—eleven o'clock, then!" said Skinner with satisfaction. "Don't forget to take a pocket-torch with you. If you haven't got one, borrow one. According to this paper, that's all the apparatus we shall need. No

mention of digging for this treasure!" he chuckled.

The rest grinned. It was certainly very obliging of the old monks to conceal their hoard where it could be got at without the arduous preliminary of digging down to it.

The little conference finished with the participants in a very cheery frame of mind.

"Good-bye, Bunter!" said Snoop. "Sorry we can't ask you to supper. We're having ours in Hall!"

Bunter paused with his hand on the door-knob, and the door half open.

"We'll be able to do better than that soon!" he grinned. "So long! See you in the dorm!"

"Mind you don't breathe a word that might make Punter suspicious!" warned Skinner.

Bunter grinned knowingly, and gave a fat wink.

"Trust me!" he said. "Not a word—about—I mean, not a word!" he concluded hastily as Wilfred Punter came along the passage, and gave him a curious glance.

Skinner eyed Punter's face keenly through the open doorway, and, rising to his feet, walked across and shut it. Punter was still looking at Bunter with a strange expression on his lean face.

Skinner bit his lip.

"He can't know anything—it's impossible!" he muttered angrily. "I'm getting nervy—that's what it is!"

He put on a cigarette.

"How about a game of nap to pass the time till supper?" he asked. "I suppose we don't feel much like doing prep this evening?"

"Not exactly!" grunted Snoop.

"Nap!" said Stott.

And the young rascals were soon deep in a game of nap for ha'penny points—which, in the light of what the morrow might bring, did not give them much satisfaction.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Midnight Expedition!

"BED-TIME, kids!"

Gwynne of the Sixth looked into Skinner's study, and rapped out the command.

"Right-ho, Gwynne!" answered Skinner, yawning. "Come on, you chaps!"

Snoop and Stott jumped to their feet with alacrity, for they were far too excited to imitate their leader's studied languor. After their game of nap, the three young rascals had gone into Hall for supper, and then returned to the study for a few minutes to discuss the last arrangements for the projected expedition.

On the way to the dormitory Skinner was the recipient of several fat winks from Bunter, which he returned with scowls.

"Stop it, you fat ass!" he whispered furiously, as they entered the dormitory. "If you keep looking at me like that the fellows will soon begin to think we've got some game on!"

"Oh, it's all right, Skinner!" replied Bunter airily. "They'd give a lot to know what we know—he, he, he!"

"What's the joke, Bunter?" came Bob Cherry's voice from behind. "Let's hear it, old fat man. We're all ears!"

"Yours are big enough, anyway!" snapped Bunter rudely, stopping his cackle all of a sudden. "This is a purely private matter between Skinner and myself, Cherry!"

(Continued on page 17.)

HARRY WHARTON'S Cricket Supplement

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No trouble or expense has been spared to make this supplement interesting and informative. In it all phases of cricket will be discussed by writers chosen from the foremost cricket authorities in the land. Readers may, therefore, rely upon the facts, figures, etc., mentioned from week to week in this supplement as being authentic.

HARRY WHARTON, Editor.



Boundary Hits! by "SCORER"

LEG-BEFORE is getting very common among batsmen. In a recent match three men in succession were all out because they put their legs in front of straight ones. As a player of the old school remarked, as the last man came back to the pavilion: "Why give 'em bats when they play with their legs all the time?"

Few people remember that Jack Hobbs was once one of the opening bowlers for England in a Test match. This was against South Africa at Johannesburg sixteen years ago. But Hobbs says he has also done other things of which he doesn't want to be reminded.

D. J. Knight, the famous Surrey amateur batsman, declares "that for every single fine point and delicate nicety in football there are one hundred in cricket, and that the two games cannot be compared either as spectacles or in their intellectual aspect." There are now a lot of Soccer footballers going round looking for Knight.

"Very few people," says Jack Hobbs, "realise just how a batsman sometimes feels when he is going to the wicket." I take it, though, that we all know how he feels when he comes back bowled out the first ball.

Holmes and Sutcliffe, the two famous Yorkshire batsmen, were born on the same day of the year, and some men who have bowled against them get the feeling that there is only one hope of seeing the end of either of them at the wicket—that they will both get so tired at the same time that they will drop off to sleep.

The "Ashes" of cricket which we so often talk about don't exist, of course; but there will be plenty ready to don the sack-cloth if we don't beat Australia this summer.

The five Test matches against Australia, the last of which has to be played to a finish if necessary, may be described as grim, grimmer, and Grimmett.

Yorkshire have won the county championship four seasons in succession, but we don't hear of any support from this quarter that the honours ought to go round. However, there will be a chance for some county to beat them if the whole Yorkshire eleven are called up for a Test match when the club has a county game on.

Certain ground alterations have been made at the Oval, including, according to an official statement, additional standing room for those who have neither the means or leisure to sit down. We should like to see these people, who must be rather peculiar.

In county matches last season A. W. Carr, the Notts captain, had an average of 35 in first innings, and 93 in second innings. Why not play him against Australia? Let him go in twice in the second innings, and not at all in the first innings.

UNDERHAND BOWLING

IS IT TIME IT CAME BACK INTO FASHION?

THERE are many quaint sides to this game of cricket. When we start to play the game as youngsters we most of us bowl underhand—or what, in technical language, are known as "lobs." We don't like being "lobsters," however, and as soon as we get old enough to be able to bring the arm over the shoulder and bowl overhand with anything like accuracy, we change our style. We want to bowl like the men bowl—at any rate, I suppose that is the real explanation of why lads so soon desert the underhands.

The inevitable result of this desire to copy the men is that lob-bowling has gone almost completely out of fashion so far as big cricket is concerned. At the present moment there is not a single player in county cricket who makes a habit of bowling underhand, which is rather a pity.

It is not likely that anybody will say that the batsmen of to-day are a long way superior to the batsmen of the past, and yet some of the giants of old were often got out by subtle lobs, and, though this may surprise you, it is a fact that there have been quite a number of underhand bowlers in the past who have been quite successful in Test match cricket with this sort of delivery.

Consider for a moment what such a fine batsman as G. L. Jessop said some time ago about lob-bowling: "There are few batsmen who do not think they are the master of the lob-bowler. At the same time, in games where a good deal attaches to the result I have seen the good lob-bowler make even the best of batsmen feel extremely uncomfortable." It is well within memory how D. L. A. Jephson and G. H. Simpson-Hayward in different matches proved the actual mainstay of the Gentlemen's attack. Experience has shown that there is room for the lob-bowler in almost any team, provided he is able to take his share of the run-getting. In a dry season, when batsmen rule the roost, a lob-bowler should be looked upon as an indispensable member of a school side—not one who bowls underhand in haphazard fashion, but one who has regularly practised the art and more or less mastered it."

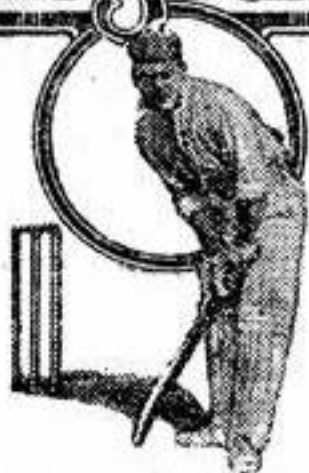
NINE WICKETS FOR 17 RUNS!

Jessop's remarks quoted above remind me of a story which I know is perfectly true, because I happened to be a member of the team concerned. We went to play a local side who were very strong, and we took down a good eleven to show them that we could be strong, too. One of our team was a good lob-bowler, and before the start he had a few minutes' bowling at the nets. When he had finished his trial a member of the opposing team came over to him. "You don't mean to say that you bowl that stuff in this class of cricket, do you?" "Of course I do!" replied our lobster. Thereupon the other fellow rubbed his hands in glee. "Then that's all right! We shall make five hundred this afternoon!" In due course the match started, and the team which was going to make 500 was all out in an hour for 43 runs, our lobster taking nine wickets for 17!

One reason why it pays to cultivate lobs is this very feeling of contempt with which the lob-bowler is usually treated. The batsmen are apt to regard it as just so much "piffle." I have seen the most heartbreaking of stonewallers induced to have a "go," and to get themselves out, when a lobster has been put on. There is this to be remembered about lob-bowling, too—that it is much easier to master than the overarm stuff. Almost anyone can learn to make a ball break while bowling underhand either from the leg or the off. Practice ensures length, and intelligence will lead to the necessary control of flight. So, although at the moment lob-bowling is anything but fashionable, I am going to suggest that if you are a good lob-bowler, don't give up this style in order to "bowl like the men." Stick to lobs. Their usefulness will be demonstrated again in due time.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 952.

All Pull Together Boys!



A factor which tells, but which is often overlooked.

By
E. "PATSY" HENDREN,
the famous Middlesex
and England cricketer.

WHERE is to be found the big secret of success on the cricket field? In reply to this question some people would find the easy way out, and declare that the surest way to victory is the possession of better bowlers, better batsmen, and better fielders than the opposing teams which are met. Nor can the bald truth of such an answer be denied. It is, however, the aim of the organisers of every cricket eleven to get the best possible players, and quite frequently there is so little to choose in the respective merits of teams struggling for the mastery that one can scarcely say that either holds a real advantage. Suppose, then, that two teams of equal merit meet. What, then, will be the deciding factor? Luck, possibly. Often have we seen in quite important cricket the match won and lost almost literally by the spin of the coin. One side has taken its knock on a good pitch; the rain has come, and then the sun, leaving it frightfully difficult for the fellows batting afterwards to put up anything like a score. Yes, luck—in the way mentioned, as well as in a score of other directions—does play its part in cricket of all grades.

BEATING BETTER TEAMS.

Yet, thinking the matter over carefully, I long ago came to the conclusion that perhaps the biggest factor of all which makes for victory when teams of equal merit meet is the team spirit. I will even go farther and declare that many a contest has been won by an inferior side, under level conditions, because the inferior side has had the team spirit developed to a much greater extent. I sometimes think that this idea of the team spirit as applied to cricket is a phase of the game the importance of which is under-estimated.

Certainly one runs up against the idea less frequently in cricket than in football, by way of example. Perhaps the explanation of this is to be found in the fact that in the winter game the team spirit is much more obvious to the casual onlooker. It is perfectly clear, for instance, that the success or failure of the forward line of a football team depends to a very large extent on every man in the line playing with absolute unselfishness, and on being supported by unselfish and unsparing half-backs.

AVERAGES DON'T MATTER.

Believe me, there are plenty of opportunities in the course of every cricket season for testing whether this or that side has got the proper team spirit from first to last. There are occasions when the batsman has got to go to the wicket remembering the team, and nothing but the team—occasions when the number of runs scored, by way of example, is not nearly so important as the length of time taken in the scoring of them. I know, of course, that it is quite nice to be able to point to a good average for every innings played, and I have even had the pleasure of finishing a season with my name on top of the averages. If I may say so, however, I should be a very disappointed player if I had ever succeeded in conveying the impression that it was my personal average which counted as against the interests of the side. It is good to score a hundred; but if your captain says that he

thinks the side has a better chance of winning if he declares when you have scored ninety-five, then the team spirit will enable you to give up your innings with a perfectly satisfied smile on your face.

WON ON TEAM SPIRIT.

A case on these lines came under my notice last season. A certain side had a comfortable lead, and the captain was batting with another player who was rapidly approaching the highest total he had ever made in a long career. The captain said to his partner: "As soon as you pass your record I shall declare." Immediately came the reply from the other batsman: "Don't you think it would be safer to declare now?"

The captain declared, and the sequel was found a few hours later, when the match was won with five minutes to spare. If the declaration had been delayed until the batsman had set up a new record victory would not have been gained. Yes, the team spirit often calls for sacrifices, and, incidentally, the team spirit also has for its basis implicit trust in the judgment of the captain. After all, the way the player with the right spirit will look at it is this: If the captain is wrong, that is no concern of the individual player. The fault is in the choice of captain.

CIRCUMSTANCES ALTER CASES.

Earlier in these notes I mentioned the matter of averages, and on this point there is just one little further note I should like to make. I suppose the followers of cricket like to see the averages, and, consequently, must have them. But, in my opinion, they are apt to foster a spirit which is in complete contrast to the team game. The merit of batting or of bowling is not in the number of runs scored or in the average cost of wickets obtained. The test is in the conditions under which the runs are made and the circumstances which surround the taking of wickets. By way of example, suppose you took the best Yorkshire bowler out of the Yorkshire team and put him in the Glamorgan side. Do you think his figures would work out so well? Of course not, because he would have to bowl much more when he was tired.

IN THE FIELD.

There are other things which could be said to prove the importance of the team spirit in bowling and in batting, but perhaps nowhere is this team spirit so necessary as in the field. Here, indeed, it must be every man for his side—no slacking, no taking a mere half-interest in the proceedings, but always on tiptoe. It is a mere truism to say that a slack field makes slack bowlers, just as it is true that a good fielding side increases the efficiency of the attack. By that I do not merely mean that catches will be made and runs saved, but good, tiptoe fieldsmen help and inspire the bowlers.

E. Patsy Hendren

IN the realm of county cricket the continued success of the Yorkshire side really threatens to become monotonous—to the people who are not specially anxious that Yorkshire should go on winning. For the last four seasons these

Yorkshiremen have just walked off with the county championship in the most selfish way, and barring the fact that the Test matches of this season may take many Yorkshiremen from county duty I confess that I do not see any side capable of wresting the championship honour from the county of many acres. For a county to win the championship four times in succession is a noteworthy feat, of course, and quietly we are proud of these Yorkshiremen whether we come from Yorkshire or not. We may think it would be better for the game if the honours went round a bit more, but certainly nobody wants the honours save by playing for them and by providing themselves a better combination than all the others.

ANOTHER BIG WIN FOR YORKSHIRE.

As we can't take this championship honour from the gallant Yorkshiremen there remains open to us an inquiry into the why and the wherefore of their continued success. How is it that these Yorkshiremen so often gain the victory that it is rumoured that in many newspaper offices they keep this headline standing right through the cricket season? "Another big win for Yorkshire"?

There are many explanations which could be given of the fact that this county has emerged victorious so frequently. In the first place even Yorkshiremen cannot deny that the county gets quite a good start because of its almost unlimited resources. Around the many big towns with which certain parts of the far-flung county is studded there is no end of really good-class cricket, and from the ranks of these clubs good material is constantly forthcoming. But that fact must not, in itself, entirely account for the predominance of Yorkshire. There is probably just as much really good-class cricket played in the county of the Red Rose as in the county of the White, but Lancashire has not won the county championship since 1904. In Middlesex and in Surrey, too, there is plenty of material, so obviously we have not the complete explanation in the fact that Yorkshire is a county of great cricket resources.

THE WILL TO WIN.

One big reason for the success of these Yorkshiremen, as I see it, lies in the fact that somehow or other everybody connected with the club gets the inspiration to do or die in the effort to bring the team home in front of their rivals for the honours. They organise for victory right down the line, treat the game seriously, and are never content with anything less than the best. Some people say, watching the Yorkshiremen in the field at cricket, that they treat their game too seriously—that the will to win predominates too much. But surely it is up to every player of every cricket team to do his level best within the rules and the spirit of the sport, to come out on top. It gives me no satisfaction to win any sporting event if I have the feeling that my opponent is not all out to beat me, and on the same lines it would be an empty victory, I take it, for any county to beat the Yorkshiremen if there was a feeling that these Yorkshiremen were not trying their utmost. No, don't let us criticise Yorkshire cricket because the men do their level best for the team.

EARLY BIRDS.

Personally, I think other counties would do better if they copied some of the Yorkshire methods: if the thoroughness with which they tackle everything in the cricket line came to be regarded as an example to be copied. Take a case in point. I happened to be at Leeds in the middle of March, when those terribly cold winds were blowing. But there were young Yorkshire cricketers hard at work at the nets, practising under the eye of that fine, typical old Yorkshireman of other days, George Hirst. I am

WHY YORKSHIRE WINNING THE FOUR TIMES

By "RE"



W. B.

SHIRE WINS! CHAMPIONSHIP IN SUCCESSION. PORTER."

which shows the thoroughness of the methods: "Well, you see, it is likely that several of our best men will be wanted for the Test matches this season, and thus we shall have to call on the youngsters. Therefore we thought it would be a good idea to give the youngsters practice earlier than usual." And I think there is something in the way the Yorkshire committee have always treated these youngsters which has contributed to the success of the county. In this connection I cannot do better than quote the words of the county secretary: "Once we take a player into the eleven," said Mr. Teone, "we persevere with him—give him chance after chance. We never play a new man about whose powers and abilities we are not fully satisfied after strong recommendation and close observation. But, once we do play him, we give him every possible opportunity to show his mettle, and, if he does not succeed in doing this he can never say afterwards he has not had a fair chance."

THE RISING GENERATION.

In this connection I may tell a story of the introduction of that fine all-rounder, Wilfred Rhodes, to the Yorkshire team. There were several bowlers of renown in the Yorkshire team when Rhodes got into it, but in his very first match with the county Rhodes was put on to bowl first. Most counties, when they introduce an untried youngster for the bowling department, never give him a trial until the regular bowlers have been on and when the batsmen are probably well set.

Then consider the thorough manner in which the rising generation of the county is watched. Again I quote the words of the secretary: "I keep a long list, newly made each year, of boys from the county who are showing superior form in batting, bowling, stumping, or fielding at the public schools, and these boys are brought up to the Leeds ground and coached during their holidays in April and early May. We do the same with likely lads recommended to us from town and village clubs by various members of our committee formed to observe these things. We give these lads every possible help and tuition in order to find the best talent for the county eleven."

Looking over these things, it is surely not going too far to say that Yorkshire wins because she organises for victory. Of course, the fact that such good attendances witness the Yorkshire matches incidentally means that the county is able to pay good wages to the men who wear the white rose, and benefits which the Yorkshiremen get are really worth while. On the other hand, it can never be said that the money at the disposal of the Yorkshire club has ever tempted the committee to gain an unfair advantage. It is a Yorkshire rule not to play men who were born outside the county.

REPLIES IN BRIEF!

"GEORGE M." (Ipswich).—The best of the willow trees from which bats are made grow in the counties of Essex and Norfolk, and the wood for the best bats is chosen with very great care.

"REGULAR READER" (Macclesfield).—Mr. J. T. Bosanquet was the originator of what is known as the "googlie" style of bowling, and this is his own story of how he discovered it: "Somewhere about 1897 I was playing a game with a tennis ball known as Twisty-Twisty. The object was to bounce the ball on the table so that your opponent sitting opposite could not catch it. It occurred to me that if I could pitch a ball in a certain direction and with the same delivery make the next ball go in the opposite direction, I could mystify my opponent. I did this, and then progressed to a cricket ball."

Winning the Toss!

by Maurice Tate

England's Test
Match Hero of
Sussex, who
says that too—



—much fuss can
be made about
this little matter.

IT is really rather surprising how cricket players and cricket enthusiasts get divided on the most unexpected topics. During and immediately after the last tour in Australia by an England team the question of the toss in Test matches was raised, and opinion seemed to be fairly evenly divided as to whether we should carry on with the old system of tossing for choice in every match, or whether there should be some automatic alternative on the lines that the captain who lost the toss in the first game should have choice in the second, and so on.

WHERE EXPERTS DIFFER.

Reference was recently made to this matter of tossing by such acknowledged experts as Gilbert Jessop and Jack Hobbs. The former thinks it would be a very good idea if we adopted the automatic choice as distinct from the toss every time. On the other hand, Hobbs considers that the present system is both safer and better. Where such experts differ so widely one hesitates to jump in. But though this may be one of those places where angels fear to tread, I should like to have my little say on this question of to toss or not to toss.

ONE RIGHT IN FOUR.

Of course, you are fully aware of how the whole situation arose again in acute form. Out in Australia our captain had an idea that if he called "Heads!" every time things would come out right according to the law of averages, and that he would get the choice of innings as often as the other fellow. Well, the law of averages was in a perverse mood—if one may be permitted to use such a phrase—with the result that our captain lost the toss four times out of five. And then, just to emphasise the point, we lost four Test matches out of five, the one we won being that in which our captain had the choice of innings. Alas! the coincidence—or was it something more?—was so striking that some people have not been as rational over the business as we really ought to be.

A FATAL DOCTRINE.

I have seen it suggested that we should have won the "Ashes" if, instead of losing the toss four times out of five, our captain had won the toss in that proportion. One can never tell what might have happened, of course. One or two of the matches which we lost were such near things that the difference between first and second use of the wicket might have made the difference between victory and defeat. But, personally, I am inclined to think that we pay our conquerors a poor sort of compliment by suggesting that they won the "Ashes" by winning the toss. Moreover, we sha'n't do ourselves any good by thinking on these lines, for the inevitable effect is to lull us into a false sense of security. We must not be content to think that we shall beat the Australians this summer if we win the toss. We should organise for victory, find the men, develop the will and determination to succeed.

THE LAW OF AVERAGES.

Really, this question of whether to toss right through the Test matches is not nearly so important as some people are trying to make out, especially for games in this country. In the first place, it is obvious that over a long series of matches there will be precious little in it at the end. A friend of mine who is very keen on figures and cricket history tells me that, in the whole series of Test matches between England and Australia, the toss has averaged out practically equal—there is a difference of two only—and those two are in England's favour. What is more, he tells me that the history-books show that there have been slightly more defeats for the side which has won the toss than for the side which lost the toss. If these are really facts—and I have no reason to doubt their accuracy—then why worry? The law of averages will work out.

A DOUBTFUL ADVANTAGE.

Personally, I don't think it matters a great deal whether the choice of innings is decided by tossing or some other system. There are several more reasons for abolishing the toss in Australia than in this country. Out there, for example, the weather is much more reliable; therefore, the team which wins the toss has the advantage of the wicket, generally speaking. But in England the trouble is that the weather and the wickets change so quickly that you can seldom decide till the end of the match whether there was any advantage in winning the toss.

SHIFTING THE RESPONSIBILITY.

I recall last season a particular captain who confessed, readily and openly, just before the start of a match, that he hoped the other fellow would win the toss because he wouldn't know what to do for the best if he himself did win it. This was weak captaincy, for there are plenty of occasions when no man can tell whether the wicket, so far as a three-day match is concerned, will get better or worse. Such a lot depends on the behaviour of the Clerk of the Weather on the succeeding days, or even in the succeeding hours.

WHEN MAN PROPOSES.

Take a case from last season's play. When Middlesex were due to play Essex at Lord's the Middlesex captain won the toss. He looked at the wicket and decided to bat. Just as the players were going out, though, the rain came on, and there was no play that day. When the match did start Middlesex got the worst of the wicket and lost. The choice of innings didn't do them a bit of good; it did them harm. In hundreds of matches in the past must it also have been true that a seeming advantage became a disadvantage. It being, then, clear that you can't eliminate the luck, why worry?

Maurice Tate
THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 952.



Arthur W. Carr, Skipper of Notts,
who may captain England against the Australians.

SHOW me the captain of your cricket eleven, and I will tell you what sort of a team you have got." That was a statement once made by the late W. G. Grace, when he was talking to some lads in school about their cricket eleven. Perhaps it was not meant to be taken absolutely literally; but, all the same, it is a fact that the captain of a cricket eleven is a most important person, and equally is it true that good captaincy has won many a match, while matches have been lost by bad captaincy.

The importance of getting the right man to captain England this summer has been forced on us during the past few months, when the claims of this and that candidate have been put forward by various interested people. It is not for me to say specially here on whom I think the choice should fall, but I have looked into things from every side, and can say that I should be quite ready to rely on Arthur William Carr. There may be captains quite as good, but I don't know of one who is better.

KEEPING FIT!

One thing I did gather when I chatted with Arthur Carr not so long ago, and that was that if the selectors decide to give him the responsibility of leading England's team in the forthcoming Tests, he will not fail for lack of enthusiasm. He simply bubbles over with it, and I happen to know that right through the winter he has been doing even more exercising than usual with a view to keeping himself specially fit.

There is no necessity for me to tell my cricket lovers that Arthur Carr is the present captain of the Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club, but I can just assure those who don't know the other Nottingham players that there never was a captain who

was better liked by his men. That is saying a lot when we recall that Notts have had fellows like A. O. Jones as leaders in the past.

I don't suppose I have ever got up early enough in the morning to catch Arthur Carr asleep. Just as he is bubbling over with enthusiasm for cricket, so does he seem to possess energy far beyond that of the ordinary man. He is the very essence of it—a fellow who must always be doing something. Perhaps he will forgive me if I tell you that he has not—in recent years, at any rate—followed the advice of the sage who talked about the virtues of going early to bed. He is too fond of dancing to do that; but, all the same, he is very wide awake first thing next morning, and I know there are players in the Nottinghamshire side who often wonder where in the world he finds all his energy.

COUNTY PLAYER AT SIXTEEN!

If qualification for county cricket had depended entirely on birth, then Carr must have played for Surrey, for he was born in that county—at Mickleham. He moved to Nottinghamshire at a very early age, however, and went to school at Sherborne. There he quickly showed ability out of the ordinary, and, as showing what Notts thought of him, I may tell you that he actually turned out for the county at the age of sixteen. That was a sort of trial match for him against Gloucestershire at Bristol. In the following season at his school he excelled all his previous figures, and, playing one innings of 224, he finished with an average of 62 for every innings played for his school that year. Naturally, the county called on him again, and he proved his worth with innings of 47 and 44.

Even so, it was not considered that there was anything very remarkable about him, and the world in general took little notice of the fact that a boy named Arthur Carr was coming on. This world, however, had to sit up and take quite a lot of notice when, in 1913, he made 109 against Leicestershire.

The years of war saw big cricket abandoned, but Arthur Carr did his bit in the great game of war, and at the end of the conflict Notts found themselves without a

captain, for their previous skipper, A. O. Jones, had joined the great majority.

Cricketers not being as shy about their ages as some footballers I have come across, I can tell you exactly how old the skipper of Notts is. He was born in 1894, on May 21st, so in a very short time now he will celebrate his thirty-second birthday. What a present it would be for him if he were given the honour of captaining the England team!

AN AGGRESSIVE BATSMAN!

There is a suggestion that his hair does not grow quite so low over his forehead as it used to do, but surely thirty-two is just about the right age for a captain of England. At that time of life a man has had sufficient experience of cricket to know the things which are, or are not, done, and he is still young enough to infuse the life and energy into his men which is going to be required in full if we are to beat the Australians this summer.

I have told him more than once that one of these days his hair will get so thin on top that he will have to wear a cap when at the wicket, but Arthur doesn't agree. I think he would be very hurt if he really had to wear a cap. I have seen him go out on the hottest of hot summer days, and stand at the wicket without covering at all on his head.

Perhaps it may be considered something against the skipper of Notts as an England captain that he has never had any experience against the Australians. That is true, but then the element of surprise is sometimes good in cricket. He is certainly the sort of batsman we want to encourage if we are to get sufficient runs to enable us to beat the Australians in three days. He is not one of those fellows who sit back on the splicer and wait for the ball to hit the bat. He is of the aggressive type, always looking as though nothing would please him better than to knock the cover off the ball. To field at mid-off when Carr is batting you ought to wear a pair of gloves. I saw him play what must have been about the best innings of his career at Trent Bridge last May—before many batsmen had got their "eye in." He knocked up 104, including five sixes, in two hours, and the chief bowlers who tried in vain to stop him were Maurice Tate and Arthur Gilligan. In the field, as at the wicket, he is the essence of energy. Last season was his very best, for he had an average of 51—greater than that of any other amateur—and scored in all 2,338 runs.

EXTRAS!

Stories of the Lighter Side of Cricket!

A CONTRAST IN REWARDS.

CECIL PARKIN, the famous Lancashire bowler, says all things seem to come the way of batsmen, not bowlers, and in this connection he tells a good story of what happened in Australia in 1920-21. After one match, in which Hobbs had made a big score and Parkin had skittled the other fellows out, Hobbs was summoned by the Governor-General, who congratulated him, and presented him with a gold tie-pin. "Some people have all the luck!" said Parkin. Presently word came down that the Governor-General would like to see Parkin, and, as he smartened himself up, visions of a tie-pin for him arose before his eyes. "I went up," relates Parkin, "and the Governor-General shook hands with me. 'Well bowled, Parkin!' says he. 'Thank you!' says I. And I stepped down. Hobbs—gold pin. Parkin—'Thank you!'"

A SHORT STAY EXPECTED.

A good story is going the rounds concerning a certain player who had more ambition than ability in the eyes of some people. This gentleman—I had better not say to which county he belongs—was rung up one morning on the phone. "I want to speak to Mr. X.," said the inquirer. "Well,"

replied the person who answered the call, "you can't do so at present; he's just going out to bat. Ring up again in another five minutes!"

ONE BALL—FOUR VICTIMS.

You would say it was impossible for a bowler to get four men out with one ball, but this feat is credited to an Australian named Collins, who was a regular terror of a bowler. This is how he did it. The first man (No. 9) was badly hit on the thumb and retired; the batsman at the other end fainted at the sight of blood, and had to be carried off; No. 10 declared he would be hanged before he would come out to face such a "wild cat," and there was no partner for the last man.

PAT HENDREN'S APPLE.

Most cricket is taken very seriously, but Hendren, the Middlesex man, thoroughly enjoys a joke. He once made everybody laugh during a match at Geelong in 1921. "Pat" was in the long field chasing a ball that was careering towards the boundary. It seemed a mystery how he had picked it up; but he threw it in—and it burst. He had thrown in an apple!

NO DOUBT ABOUT IT.

Some people are never out leg-before-wicket. But there are many honest men who, like a well-known player, when he reached the pavilion, was greeted with this remark: "You didn't look out from where I was. Were you out?" The batsman replied: "Well, the bowler thought I was out, the wicket-keeper

thought I was out, the umpire gave me out, and I was jolly sure I was out. Still, of course, you never know."

MAKING SURE.

An annual match between two rival villages had been arranged. Amongst the men in one eleven was the local butcher, who, before he went to the wickets, accepted a bet of a pound to five shillings that he would not make half a dozen runs. Having escaped disaster very narrowly from the first two or three balls of the over, the butcher managed to sneak a single. In the succeeding over he got two, and then contrived to swipe the last ball of that over for three, making his score to six. Immediately the butcher threw down his bat and dashed off the field towards the tent.

"Eh! Where are you going, Smith?" called out his captain. "The game isn't finished! You can't leave the wickets yet!" "Can't I?" yelled the knight of the cleaver. "If I don't get that quid in a minute or two, that chap will have bunked!"

CUTTING CRITICISM.

The Australian watchers are ever ready with remarks, and J. W. H. T. Douglas, the famous Essex bowler, tells a good story of an experience "down under." The Essex captain had been bowling a long time without success, and with his back to the scoring-board, which shows the bowler's analysis ball by ball, when one of the onlookers shouted: "Johnny, why don't you bowl at the other end? Then you could see your analysis!"



(Continued from page 12.)

"All serene, porpoise, keep your wool on!" retorted Bob cheerily. "I don't want to hear your secret communings with dear old Skinner. Carry on with the dark plotting, old barrel!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter blinked angrily at the grinning juniors, and then gave a yelp as Skinner poked him unostentatiously in the region of his fat ribs.

"Yow! You idiot, Skinner, what did you do that for?" he gasped. "Keep your bony elbow to yourself, you rotter!"

"Get into bed, you potty chump!" growled Skinner. "You've attracted quite enough attention already with your silly chatter!"

"Really, Skinner!" began Bunter. "I—"

But Skinner had walked on to his bed and was throwing off his jacket.

Bunter glared, for he considered that he had shown great diplomacy, and was feeling somewhat injured both in his podgy dignity and his well-covered ribs.

"Skinny rotter!" he murmured, and began to peel off his tight garments preparatory for bed.

"Something on to-night between Skinner and Bunter, Bob?" asked Harry Wharton, as he slipped between the sheets.

"Looks like it!" agreed Bob sleepily. "Silly asses let them get on with it!"

Gwynne looked in a few minutes later to put out the light.

"Good-night, kids!"

"Good-night, Gwynne!"

And the Remove, with five exceptions, settled down to slumber. The five who remained awake were Skinner, Snoop, Stott, Bunter, and Punter.

Quite what prompted him to stay alert Punter could not have explained. He could not dismiss from his mind the incident earlier in the evening, when Bunter had emerged from Study No. 11, and had obviously been startled at the thought that Punter might have overheard his remarks, and then there was the plainly guarded talk between Bunter and Skinner in the dormitory—all of which seemed to warn him that he would do well to keep an eye on the two juniors.

Punter had been feeling a little anxious all day regarding the non-arrival of the letter he had expected from his father. From what he had been told before coming to the school, complete information enabling him to end his mission was to have been available in a few days; at the most. He had been well supplied with cash on his arrival, but he expected and wondered at the absence of a letter. That evening he had written to Mr. Punter in London, to ask if matters were going as they should, and he hoped to get a reply by the following Friday.

As he lay awake in the darkness listening to the deep breathing of the juniors and the rustle of the wind in the old ivy, it seemed very strange that he had not received any communication from his father. Of course, nobody at Greyfriars knew him in his true colours—of that he was assured. Yet he had noticed Bunter blinking at him several

times during the evening in the Common-room and in the passages, in a manner which hinted at something Bunter knew and Punter did not—and which gave Bunter cause for a number of sly grins.

Bunter could not know! But the new junior's mind flew back to the occasion when he had found the Owl and Bob Cherry in his study. Bunter had been searching—for what? Food, most probably. Punter did not know the Owl yet as the rest of the Remove knew him, but he had soon become aware of Bunter's grub-raiding proclivities. And he could see that Bunter was too much of a fatuous idiot to merit description as a thief.

But Bunter might have come upon something by accident; only Punter's private papers had been undisturbed, so that was impossible. He was sure he had left nothing about that could be spotted by a chance visitor; if he had, one of his study-mates would certainly have found it.

Yet there was obviously some arrangement between Bunter and Skinner, giving them both cause for satisfaction. What? Possibly some jape which did not concern him in the least; but there was a chance—

With these thoughts chasing each other through his brain, the new junior could not sleep. He heard ten strokes boom out from the old clock-tower, and then the half-past. Then he seemed to doze.

As for Skinner, he was quiet as a mouse, breathing regularly, but eagerly awaiting the eleven strokes which was the signal for the commencement of the expedition. He had purposely left the start till this hour, so as to avoid all possibility of any of the other fellows being awake.

Billy Bunter's unmusical snore echoed along the double row of beds—the fat junior had fallen into the arms of Morpheus almost as soon as his head touched the pillow. It was useless to expect Bunter to remain awake. But he would have to be aroused to take part in the hunt—or he might quite possibly make a fuss afterwards—and it was essential that all four of the conspirators should swear that they had found the treasure with the aid of their own clues—and a large amount of luck! The Head might punish them for breaking bounds, but Skinner reflected happily that the discovery of the fabled treasure would cause the powers that were, too much wonder and excitement to think of punishments.

Boom!

The first stroke of eleven sounded at last, and Skinner raised himself on one elbow.

"You fellows awake?"

There was no answer, save for a faint catching of breath in the darkness which escaped Skinner's notice.

"Anybody awake?" repeated Skinner softly.

There was still no reply.

He got out of bed quietly, and dressed rapidly in the darkness. Then he groped his way to the beds occupied by Snoop and Stott, and shook each lightly on the shoulder. They were both asleep, but they roused and tumbled out quickly and silently. Bunter was more of a problem. Skinner tiptoed to the Owl's bedside, and shook him very gently. As Bunter grunted and blinked, Skinner hissed warningly in his ear.

"Quiet—it's me—Skinner! It's time to go for the treasure. Get up—and for goodness' sake, don't make a row!"

"Ow! Oh, dear!"

Bunter breathed heavily, grunted

again, and finally rolled out of bed. He dressed clumsily by the starlight from the high windows, grunting at intervals. Even a treasure hunt seemed to lose some of its attraction for Bunter when he was roused out of bed at the dead of night. He had been awakened right in the middle of a gorgeous feed—at somebody else's expense—and even the thought of riches could not quite compensate for that lost vision of happiness.

But he was ready at last, and rolled towards the door with the others. Skinner went last, and closed the door silently behind him. With their boots in their hands, the juniors made for the box-room at the end of the corridor, whence a short drop gave on to the leads, and from thence to the ground.

Bunter grunted and wheezed as he climbed out of the window and negotiated the drop, but all four of them reached the quad in safety.

"This way!" breathed Skinner.

"Wait a minute! I haven't got any breath!" gasped the Owl.

"Shut up and come on!" growled Stott.

They slipped on their boots and made for the wall, where an old and convenient oak rendered climbing over a fairly simple matter. Bunter, naturally, growled at the exertion, but dropped into the lane with the rest.

"Follow me!" said Skinner excitedly. "We're safe enough now. Put it on!"

It was dark in the lane, and the deep shadows cast by the trees rather unnerved the young rascals, none of whom were of the brave and fearless order.

They passed along the lane in silence, and led by Skinner, turned off into the wood. It was doubly dark and lonely there, and after a few minutes, Snoop drew a hissing breath.

"What's up?" asked Bunter nervously.

"Nun-nothing!" answered Snoop, his voice quivering. "I—I thought I saw somebody move—back there in the shadows!"

"Rot!" growled Skinner. "A tree swaying in the wind, I expect! Come on, and for goodness' sake keep your nerve, you fellows!"

The gaunt ruins of the old priory loomed up ahead, and they paused amid the moss-grown stones.

"Here we are!" said Skinner, with satisfaction. "Nothing to do now but get down into the old tunnel—and then the job's done!"

The other three brightened up a little as they thought of the proximity of the treasure.

Bunter still blinked short-sightedly into the shadows, and was eager to get into the underground passage.

"Buck up, Skinner!" he said. "Let's get on with it. You lead the way!"

Skinner grunted, but realising that the others would only follow him, stepped cautiously towards the dark crevice where the stone steps led down into the earth.

A good many of the Remove knew of the existence of this tunnel, but the knowledge was far from common property. A stranger might have visited the priory a dozen times without suspecting that it was there.

Skinner paused on the brink, and braced himself. He switched on his electric torch, shining the beam down a worn flight of stone steps, and then began the descent. The rest followed gingerly. They found themselves in the old tunnel, and hastened along it. There were pools of water on the ground, and the place had not a nice

smell. Still, the discomforts could hardly be compared with the reward that awaited them. With his footsteps echoing eerily along the dark tunnel, Skinner advanced until a dark opening on his left showed the entrance of a side passage.

"This is it!" he breathed. "This is the passage! Forty paces along here—and then—"

Fears forgotten in the excitement which surged over them, they followed the cad of the Remove along the side tunnel, counting their paces.

"Thirty-eight, thirty-nine, forty!" counted Skinner.

He ran his hands over the wall on one side, while Snoop and Stott did the same on the other. Bunter held Skinner's torch so that the walls were illuminated by the beam.

"We may have taken too short paces?" suggested Snoop.

"Perhaps so!" agreed Skinner. "Work a bit above and a bit below here, you fellows—here's my knife—I'll mark the exact spot where I first stopped!"

He scratched a mark on the wall, and began to work away from it, pressing and feeling for any indication of a secret spring.

"I—I don't like this place!" said Bunter, with a shiver. "It—it's—Hark!"

A sound from the darkness whence they had come caused them all to stop still as mice, listening intently. The sound whatever it was—was not repeated.

Skinner wiped beads of cold perspiration from his forehead.

"We're—we're getting rattled and imagining things!" he said. "Come on—let's find the slab!"

Bunter shone the light rather unsteadily on the slimy walls, and the juniors searched frantically for the secret slab. Skinner gave a sharp hiss at last. He had found a smooth section of stone, with faint markings on the surface.

"Bring the light closer!" he said to Bunter.

He pressed hard, and without a sound, a slab of stone some three feet square swung back into the wall.

"Look! Oh, my hat!"

An overpowering, musty smell issued from the cavity, which was a foot or so from the ground.

"We—we've found it!" gasped Snoop, in delight.

"It's the secret slab, right enough!" agreed Stott.

"Where—where's the treasure?" asked Bunter eagerly.

Skinner's lips tightened, and he groped in the blackness. His hand encountered nothing but cold stone, covered with dust and grit, and he drew it back again.

"The entrance to another passage!" he whispered. "That's it, I'll be bound. Follow me. We can crawl on our hands and knees!"

Snoop and Stott nodded without speaking.

"Oh, dear!" gasped Bunter. "I can't go in there—it's—it's dark—and what's at the other end?"

"Shut up, you fat funk!" snarled Skinner. "There's no danger—I'm

going first. You'll have to be careful you don't get stuck—that's all!"

Snoop and Stott grinned, for the passage was barely wide enough to admit of Bunter's huge bulk passing unhindered.

They followed Skinner into the cavity, and heard Bunter grunting behind them. Skinner shone the beam of his torch ahead, and it played on stone walls and a stone roof, but revealed no signs of treasure.

"Yow!" groaned Bunter, as he bumped his head on the stone above him. "I'm hurt—I believe my skull's fractured!"

"Squash that fat idiot, somebody!" growled Skinner, while Snoop and Stott grinned.

"You rotter! Wait till you cannon your head against the rotten stone!" retorted Bunter, safe in the rear of the procession.

"Close quarters, isn't it?" said Snoop. "Hardly room to turn round, if we want to!"

"Oh, give your chin a rest!" grunted Skinner. "We shall have to go on! We've found the secret slab, so we can't be far off the treasure!"

"That's so," agreed Stott, and Bunter grunted.

Click!

That sound, coming suddenly from behind the Owl, made all four look round quickly over their shoulders, with the result that there was a series of bumps as their heads collided with the stone roof.

Bunter let out a yell.

"Look! The slab's closed! We're shut in! Oh dear, we're going to be suffocated! It's all your fault, Skinner!"

Skinner, his face white, shone the beam of his torch back the way they had come. Bunter was right. The slab was closed.

"I—I'm dying, I believe!" moaned Bunter. "I—I can't breathe!"

Skinner's nerve almost failed him.

"Shove it, Bunter!" he said fiercely. "Put your weight against it, porpoise! If we can't open it, we're done for!"

The Owl stopped moaning, and crawled back to the slab. He threw his whole weight against it—not an inconsiderable pressure! There was no result. The other three got behind him, but the slab remained firm.

"Shut in!" muttered Snoop dazedly.

"We shall be suffocated!" said Stott, in terror.

"The place may be ventilated," said Skinner. "Let's hope so, anyway."

Bunter let out a wail, and Stott jammed an elbow in his ribs, after which he roared, instead.

"Nobody can hear us!" breathed Skinner. "And unless somebody let's us out, we're—" He did not finish the sentence.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

To the Rescue!

HARRY WHARTON sat up in bed.

There had been whispers, and the final closing of a door had brought him suddenly into full wakefulness. He rubbed his eyes and stared towards the door, just visible in the dim starlight. Somebody had gone out—of that the Remove captain was certain. And there had been more than one, for they had whispered together.

He glanced along the rows of beds, but there was not light enough to see if any were empty, though some, he knew, must be. With an exclamation,

Wharton slipped from his bed and stole across to that in which Skinner should have been sleeping. The meaning glances exchanged by Bunter and Skinner before "lights out" came back to his mind, and he looked closely at the pillow.

There was a cleverly arranged "dummy," but no sleeper. Skinner was practised in the doubtful art of leaving his bed so that it appeared occupied, and the clothes he had stuffed together would probably have deceived a master, had one looked into the dormitory. A quiet examination revealed the fact that Snoop's and Stott's beds were empty, too.

"Silly asses!" muttered the captain of the Remove. "Wonder what game they're up to? None of my business, I suppose. They wouldn't take Bunter to the Cross Keys—unless he's in funds, for once!"

He turned back to his bed, but paused. Punter's bed was unoccupied, too. Then he had gone with the black sheep as well. The new junior evidently did not know how to leave a dummy in his bed. The clothes were roughly thrown back, and a suit of pyjamas tossed on top of them.

"So they've got Punter to join their little expedition!" murmured Wharton grimly. "He appears to have plenty of money, and that scoundrel Hawke will be glad to see him at the Cross Keys. I've a good mind—"

He slipped across the dormitory, and shook Bob Cherry gently.

"Quiet, Bob!" he whispered. "Punter has gone out with Skinner and his crowd. I'm going after him to try and keep him out of that shady business. Are you game to come?"

Bob yawned sleepily, but sat up.

"Silly young rotter!" he growled. "Asking for the sack before he's been at the school five minutes. I suppose we might give him a friendly warning!"

He yawned again, and tumbled out.

"No need to wake the others, Bob!" whispered Wharton. "Two will be enough to bring the silly idiot back. Buck up!"

"Ready, O king!" came Bob's reply, as he slipped on his jacket. "Lead on, Macduff!"

"Quiet, you ass!" breathed Wharton, tiptoeing to the door. They were out of the dormitory and into the box-room in a few seconds. The drop to the leads was accomplished without mishap, and the two juniors sped across the shadowy quad, and shinned—via the old oak—over the wall.

"I suppose they've gone to the Cross Keys?" asked Bob, staring along the lane intently.

"You bet!" agreed Wharton. "Come on!"

They had hardly taken a pace when Wharton pointed with his finger.

"Look!"

A shadowy figure loomed out of the shadows and disappeared further along the lane.

"Whoever it is, he's keeping out of sight as much as possible!" muttered Bob Cherry. "It can't be a prefect trailing Skinner & Co.—it was too small. Might be one of the gay dogs following on after the others!"

Harry Wharton led the way to the side of the lane, where the juniors could run silently on the grass, and follow the figure ahead without being seen themselves.

"Looks like Punter!" announced Wharton, after a few minutes.

"You're right, Harry!" said Bob.

"You say his and the other three were the only beds empty?"

ANSWERS

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Skinner shone the beam of his torch through the opening in the stone wall. "It's the entrance to another passage, Snoop!" he whispered. "Follow me. We can crawl through on our hands and knees!" "Oh dear!" gasped Bunter. "I can't go in there, it's—it's dark—and what's at the other end?" "Shut up, you fat funk!" snarled Skinner. "There's no danger. You'll have to be careful you don't get stuck—that's all!" (See Chapter 8.)

"Yes!" responded Wharton. "Look! He's turned into the wood!"

It was true enough. Carefully hugging the shadows, the thin figure ahead had slipped under the trees and vanished along the footpath in Friardale Wood. Wharton and Cherry quickened their pace, and were soon under the trees themselves.

"Now, where's he gone?" asked Wharton, rather blankly, for in the darkness it was impossible to tell which direction the new junior had taken.

"The old priory?" suggested Bob Cherry, after a few moments. "You remember that old passage under the ruins? Perhaps there's a card-party with Ponsonby, of Highcliffe, or some such meeting there."

"H'm!" said Wharton.

He did not consider Bob's suggestion a likely one, but what reason could Punter have for entering Friardale Wood, as they had watched him do?

"Come on, Bob!" said Wharton abruptly, leading the way towards the ruins. "We'll have a look there. If that's not the rendezvous I'm beaten!"

They hastened on till the old walls loomed up before them—grim and lifeless, as they always appeared.

"Can't see anybody!" said Bob, halting in the shadow of the wood.

"Quiet!" said Harry Wharton hastily, for a sound had come to his keen ears.

He pressed Bob's arm, for in a corner of the priory, where the chums knew the entrance to the secret tunnel to be, the lean frame of Wilfred Punter could

be seen, kneeling on the brink and peering down into the depths. As the juniors watched he straightened, and with a cautious glance round—from which Wharton and Cherry were concealed by the shadows—began to descend into the tunnel. Without a word the chums crept to the head of the steps and listened.

Punter's footsteps could be heard faintly from below, but they quickly died away.

"This looks mysterious," grinned Bob Cherry. "Punter may be going to visit the body of his victim, or something in that style!"

"Don't rot, old man!" said Wharton. "Let's get down after him."

He led the way silently down the worn flight, till they stood in the reeking tunnel, and stared ahead into a wall of darkness. Making no sound, the Remove captain felt his way along the passage, pausing every few moments to listen for Punter, but hearing nothing.

His hand, groping along the wall, suddenly felt a corner, and he drew up sharply. A cautious glance showed him a beam of light some distance away, playing on three juniors, engaged in pressing the walls at various points. Bob looked over his shoulder and drew a deep breath.

"What the giddy thump—" he said softly. "Is Punter down there, Harry? And who are the rest? Skinner & Co?"

It was easy to recognise the juniors in the beam of the torch held by Bunter. The light played brilliantly for a second on the sharp features of Harold Skinner, the cad of the Remove.

"Skinner!" ejaculated Wharton in an undertone.

"And Stott!" said Bob.

"Snoop—and Bunter!" finished Harry Wharton, as the beam flashed this way and that, illuminating the stone walls and occasionally the faces of the searchers.

As they watched there was an exclamation from Skinner, and he stood staring, it seemed, at the solid wall. Bunter, Snoop, and Stott seemed equally interested in what Skinner was examining. There was a discussion among the four, and then Skinner climbed on to an invisible ledge and vanished straight into the stone. Bob gave a gasp.

"A slab of stone has moved back!" he ejaculated. "They've found a secret tunnel. But what on earth are they looking for?"

"Goodness knows!" said Wharton, shaking his head.

One by one the four juniors climbed into the invisible cavity, Bunter going in last, and grunting audibly, even from a distance. Bob pressed Wharton's arm and they slipped quietly along the passage, eager to see what Skinner & Co. were doing in the thickness of the wall.

There was a glow from the torch to show where they had entered, and as Wharton and Cherry approached a figure appeared in it. A lean hand—the hand of Punter—reached up and pressed a spot on the wall, whereupon there was a sharp click, and the glow was suddenly cut off.

The tunnel was pitch dark. Punter had closed the slab!

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THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Explanations!

THERE was no sound in the blackness but the breathing of the three juniors. Wharton and Cherry stood in silence, trying to fathom the reason for Punter's unexpected action. They heard Punter move away from the slab and his footsteps came closer. The two chums waited expectantly.

"Now!" rapped Wharton, and they grabbed out in the dark. Bob's big hand caught Punter by the hair, while his other found a wrist, and fastened on with a vice-like grip. Wharton seized the new junior by the shoulders, and soon pinioned his arms.

Punter gave a convulsive jump and shouted. Seized by unknown hands in the darkness, his fright was understandable.

"Let me go!" he shouted fiercely. "Let me go, whoever you are! I—"

"It's us, Punter, you idiot!" growled Bob. "Wharton and Cherry. Stop struggling, you chump, we've got you!"

"Oh! I thought—I didn't know who it was!" stuttered Punter. "Let me get my torch!"

Wharton released one of his arms, and Punter quickly extracted the torch from his pocket and switched it on. The white beam reassured the trembling junior as it illuminated the rugged features of Bob Cherry and the set face of the captain of the Remove.

"What—what are you doing down here?" asked Punter, his eyes searching the chums' faces to see what they knew of his movements.

Wharton looked at him grimly.

"The question is, what are you doing, Punter?" he returned swiftly. "Bob and I followed you from Greyfriars, and saw you imprison Skinner and his pals behind that slab."

Punter's eyes held a hunted look, but he stammered out an explanation.

"It—it's only a joke! A silly joke, I know. But I woke up and saw Skinner and his pals leave the dormitory, and followed them, to see where they were going. When they got as far as the wood I thought there was some game on, and I shut that slab just out of mischief, that's all!"

"Intending to open it again in a few minutes, I suppose?" said Wharton, his lip curling. "Precious poor sort of a joke, that! Your explanation sounds a bit thin, Punter!"

Punter was so obviously unnerved that he could hardly string his excuses together coherently.

"H'm! What do you think of that for a yarn, Bob?"

"Not much," said Bob Cherry bluntly.

"I—I swear it's true!" pleaded the new junior.

"Shut up a minute!" growled Bob, striding to the slab behind which Skinner & Co. were imprisoned.

No sound penetrated through the stone, and had they not seen them enter with their own eyes the chums would have had difficulty in believing that the wall really did conceal four juniors—and one of them an out-size, at that!

"How does it open, Punter?" asked Bob at length.

The new junior pressed by the side of the slab, and in perfect silence the square of stone disappeared inwards, till there was a fearful howl that they knew well—Bunter.

"Yarough! I've bumped my head! I'm brained! Yow-ow-ow!"

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The Owl's roars echoed eerily along the old tunnel, but it was a relief—to the rescuers, at least—to hear the voice of one of the prisoners.

"So you're all right, you fellows?" asked Bob.

Skinner's voice came from the darkness in reply.

"Thank goodness you've come! We should have been suffocated if we'd stayed in here long—there's no ventilation whatever!"

A big pair of spectacles glimmered in the cavity, and the fat form of Billy Bunter squeezed out. Bob lent a helping hand, for Bunter had to crawl out head first. The other three followed quickly, thankful to emerge into the comparatively fresh atmosphere of the tunnel.

"Yow-ow!" wheezed Bunter, carefully fondling his bullet head where it had come into violent—and painful—contact with the slab as it swung back. "Which of you rotters shut us in that rotten hole?"

Punter, holding the light, was practically invisible; and endeavoured to remain so. But Skinner, staring round, spotted the slim form, and started.

"You!" he ejaculated blankly.

Knowing Punter as he did, it appeared plain to Skinner that the new boy had somehow got wind of the midnight expedition, and shut them in for some reason of his own—though how he could hope to profit by imprisoning his rivals with the treasure was a mystery. It was a situation requiring very careful handling, and Skinner was too full of rage to be cautious.

"You rotter!" he said thickly. "It was you shut us up in there—like rats in a trap! We might have suffocated if these fellows hadn't let us out. This will have to go before the Head, Wharton! We don't want dangerous cads of this kind at Greyfriars!"

"Hold on! Give Punter a chance!" put in Harry Wharton coolly. "Punter, this will require a more convincing explanation than the one you gave us. As for you, Skinner—what were you and Bunter doing down here in the middle of the night?"

Skinner's eyes darted from his cronies to Punter. They had found nothing in the cavity—nothing but dust. Their hopes in that direction had been rudely quashed, and Skinner, as did his pals, fairly yearned for vengeance on the junior who had raised their visions of wealth. This last trick, giving them a bad fright instead of the treasure, was the last straw. His expression grew venomous as he thought of the dreams which were now highly unlikely to develop into realities.

"We thought we'd found a clue to the Greyfriars treasure, if you want to know," said Skinner furiously. "But beyond this slab we've found nothing. That rotter must have followed us here. Let's hear what kind of an explanation he's got to make."

Wharton and Cherry eyed Punter very grimly as he moistened his lips to reply. But Punter, so far from thinking of his own personal safety, was burning with animosity towards Skinner & Co. The words "treasure hunt" had roused a host of latent suspicions in his mind, and he was almost beside himself at the thought that, after all his scheming, he might have been forestalled.

"Where did you get your clues from, Skinner?" he asked, his voice vibrating with excitement.

"You ought to know, you rotter!" flashed back the cad of the Remove. "Bunter got one of your letters, and

opened it—that was what put us on the scent."

Punter went white, partly with rage and partly with disappointment. He had expected it, but the knowledge that he had failed, and that the consequences would be severe, came as a shock.

"Let's hear the full story, Skinner!" said Wharton sternly. "And then we'll have Punter's version of the matter."

Skinner swiftly outlined the purloining of Punter's letter from the rack—glibly leading Wharton to believe that the letter contained sufficient information to put Skinner & Co. on the trail of the treasure. Punter could not very well disprove that without reference to his father. The cad gave a pretty clear idea of Punter's mission at the school while the new junior listened in silence.

"You can't believe that I meant to leave Skinner and his friends shut up in that hole?" he burst out at last. "I admit it was a silly trick, but I was astounded to find that they had forestalled me, and I had to have time to think. I acted on the spur of the moment, that's all, I swear!"

"Well, my hat!" commented Bob Cherry. "This will have to go before the Head, Wharton. Punter can't stay at the school after to-night."

"Yarough! Don't take me to the Head!" wailed Bunter. "I shall get flogged for taking Punter's letter; and those rotters will get off scot free! We were all in this together, Skinner, you rotter! If I get flogged, I shall tell—"

"Shut up, you fat fool!" hissed Skinner urgently.

He fairly trembled at the thought of his dealings with Mr. Punter becoming public. There was a chance that they could be kept dark—if Bunter's tongue could be stilled.

"Punter will have to go to the Head and own up!" said Wharton decidedly. "If he just says what he was sent to Greyfriars for, we may be able to keep the rest of the affair dark. What do you say to that, Skinner?"

Wharton was eyeing the cad of the Remove very suspiciously, sensing further explanations, when Punter caused a diversion.

He ducked suddenly under Bob Cherry's arm, and darted off along the tunnel, his torch illuminating his path as he ran.

"After him!" roared Bob, and set the example.

Wharton dashed in his wake, with Snoop and Stott at his heels. The light vanished suddenly as Punter turned into the main passage. Stumbling against each other, the juniors negotiated the turn and perceived the light dancing ahead, nearing the exit in the old priory. Then it vanished again as Punter took the stone steps three at a time and merged into the open air.

Back in the tunnel Skinner was groping his way towards the exit, with Bunter on his heels and in a twitter of fright.

"If—if this gets to the Head's ears I shall be flogged!" he mumbled.

"It won't!" said Skinner desperately.

"But Punter will split!" groaned the Owl.

"If he does, we can't help it!" snapped Skinner. "But if we are called up on the carpet, keep your fat mouth shut about my interviewing old Punter at the station. The young blighter won't know about that till he gets home—if that's kept dark we can only get flogged. And—and I'll stand you ten bob, Bunter, if you keep mum," said the cad, with an effort.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Last of Punter!

"WHERE is the rotter?"

Bob Cherry halted at the top of the steps and stared round amongst the ruins. There was certainly no sign of Punter, though the shadows cast by the old masonry could have concealed several fellows with ease. Wharton shook his head helplessly.

"Scatter!" said Bob suddenly. "He's probably skulking in the shadows somewhere, hoping we shall dash back to Greyfriars!"

The four juniors obeyed instantly, and Bob's plan speedily bore fruit. A yell from Stott sent them all pelting after a figure which had emerged from a deserted corner and was running desperately for the cover of the trees. The few yards' start he had would not serve him much against Wharton and Cherry, two of the fleetest runners in the Lower School, but once he could gain the wood, the fleeing junior had hope of evading them.

The pursuers dashed under the boughs, stumbling over trailing roots and colliding painfully with saplings, but the sound of Punter's footsteps drew them on. Stott crashed over a root and rolled breathlessly among a tangle of undergrowth, where he lay for a while, scratched and gasping.

The rest came out of the wood and into the lane only a short distance behind their quarry—but in the few seconds at his disposal, Punter seemed to have vanished as completely as if the road had opened and swallowed him up.

Wharton and Cherry slowed down in the lane, and Snoop came panting up from the rear.

"He's beaten us again!" gasped Bob Cherry, staring up and down the narrow road.

"Behind the hedge?" suggested Wharton. "You take that side, and I'll take this!"

The captain of the Remove essayed to leap the ditch at the side of the lane, but the grass was slippery, and his leap misfired. He slipped, crashed into the ditch on all fours. There was a gasp—and his hands encountered human limbs—there was somebody already in the ditch, using it as a hiding-place! Wharton made a grab and shouted.

"Got him! Bob—Snoop!"

He found himself rolling among nettles and caked mud at the bottom of the ditch. Punter was putting up a desperate struggle, but he had no chance against the athletic junior. By sheer good fortune, Wharton had dropped literally on top of his quarry—and the firm grasp of Bob Cherry helped to drag the new junior out of his place of concealment.

"Now you won't get away again, my pippin!" said Bob grimly, as he gripped one of Punter's arms. "You take the other, Harry. We'll soon have him back at Greyfriars like this! Fall behind and help him if he wants any encouragement, Snoop!"

Snoop grinned and fell in the rear. Punter found that he could keep pace easily with Wharton and Cherry's long strides, and Snoop had no chance for any shooting practice.

They were a strange quartette to march along the lane at midnight, but perhaps fortunately for their nervous systems, there were no villagers abroad to see them. The sound of running footsteps from behind caused Harry Wharton to look back with a grin, expecting to perceive the portly form



Bob Cherry shinned over the school wall, and slid down the old oak on the opposite side. As he landed, a voice sounded at his elbow, and he spun round to face George Wingate. "So you young rascals have come back, then!" observed the school captain grimly. (See Chapter 11.)

of old Tozer, the Friardale policeman, hot on the trail of a mystery. But it was only Stott, whose absence had passed unnoticed in the hurry.

"Where are Skinner and Bunter?" asked Harry, as Stott panted up. "What did they stay behind for?"

"They're coming on, I expect," replied Stott. "I haven't seen 'em. You've got Punter, then! I—I say, Punter!"

The new junior looked at him grimly without speaking.

"I—I suppose you're not going to mention us in this affair?" asked Stott hopefully. "There's no need—you've only got to tell the Head what you were sent to the school for, and clear out—as you intended to do all the time! No need to drag anybody else into it!" Punter laughed.

"I sha'n't let any more out than I must!" he responded. "I can't say farther than that!"

"Thanks, Punter. You're a sport!" said Stott, and Wharton glanced at him queerly.

Bunter and Skinner caught them up just as they reached the school-gates, and Wharton paused.

"Better not ring for Gosling!" he grinned. "We'll have to get over the wall. You first, Bob!"

Bob shinned quickly to the top of the wall, and slid down the old oak on the opposite side. As he landed, a voice sounded at his elbow, and he spun round.

"So you've come back, then!" observed George Wingate, the captain of the Sixth, grimly.

"Oh! You, Wingate!" stuttered Bob. Then in a mournful voice:

"It's all up, you fellows! Wingate's here—waiting for us!"

"Oh!"

There was a gasp of dismay from the

other side of the wall, and then, one by one, the juniors scrambled over and stood before the Sixth Former.

"Seven of you!" said Wingate sternly. "I'm surprised at you, Wharton! I don't often go prowling round the dormitories after lights out, but it seems that it was fortunate that I did to-night!"

The juniors groaned. They thought it was very far from fortunate!

"I happen to know that the Head is sitting up late this evening with some exam papers, so you had better all come with me and see him now!"

With Punter in their midst, the Removites followed the captain of the school into the house and along the corridor to the Head's study. Wingate's knock sounded like a death-knell, to Skinner & Co. at least.

The Head looked up with obvious displeasure, as well as surprise as the little crowd invaded his study.

"Excuse me, sir!" said Wingate. "But this is rather a serious matter, and I thought it best to bring these juniors to you now. I found seven beds unoccupied in the Remove dormitory about half an hour ago, and I waited up for the owners to come in."

Dr. Locke wiped his glasses.

"Thank you, Wingate!" he said. "I am glad you brought the affair to my notice at once. I am surprised at this, Wharton!" he said to the captain of the Remove. "Have you any explanation to offer me for this breach of the school rules?"

Harry Wharton explained in rapid, clear sentences the reason for his and Bob Cherry's escapade, and left Punter to make his confession. The new junior gave a complete account of the scheme, during which the expression on Dr.

Locke's face became more and more peculiar.

"Bless my soul!" he ejaculated at last. "And you, Bunter—what were you doing down in this tunnel after the hour when you are supposed to be in bed and asleep?"

"Nothing, sir!" said Bunter promptly.

"You assure me that you were not there in the hope of securing a share in the treasure—ah! when found?"

"Oh no, sir," said Bunter virtuously. "I'm nothing to do with this affair, really. You're quite wrong if you suspect me, sir! As for Punter's letter—I never touched that, I give you my word, sir!"

Skinner groaned. Once Bunter started to defend himself, it would not be long before the whole thing came out. He contrived to kick the Owl, unseen by the Head.

"Yow!" roared Bunter suddenly. "Some beast kicked me! It was you, Skinner!"

Skinner gave him a look that ought to have shrivelled the fat junior, but Bunter didn't even see it.

"Stand away from Bunter, Skinner!" ordered the Head grimly. "What are you saying about a letter of Punter's, Bunter?"

"I—I said I never touched it, sir, on my honour. Besides, it was stuck down

awfully carelessly—it came open as easy as anything. But there wasn't any treasure, after all. I think Punter ought to be flogged, don't you, sir?"

Dr. Locke stared at the Owl in amazement. Bunter's methods of proving his innocence were original, to say the least.

"Do I understand that you opened a letter addressed to Punter, and did it contain information from which you thought you could find this treasure of which you speak?"

"How—how did you know, sir?" asked Bunter in surprise.

"You appear to be as much fool as rogue, Bunter!" said the Head. "Who else was concerned in this attempt to forestall Punter in securing the treasure? Skinner, Snoop, Stott, am I right in associating you with this young rascal?"

Skinner licked his dry lips. It was no good lying now. Bunter had blabbed everything, as usual.

"Yes, sir," he replied. "We—we didn't mean any harm, sir. You see, we—"

"I see that you have made unscrupulous use of information which Bunter supplied. That the clues which you followed belonged to Punter there is no doubt," interjected the Head. "Did I hear you say that you discovered nothing for your pains?"

"There's nothing there, sir!" replied Stott. "It was all a fake."

"I am not surprised," said Dr. Locke dryly. "You are not the first who has tried to unearth the Greyfriars treasure—without success. Skinner, Snoop, Stott, you will be flogged in the morning, as a warning to refrain from such trickery as you have indulged in again. As for you, Bunter, were you not such a dolt, I should feel that you deserved a heavier punishment for the despicable act of stealing another boy's letter, and attempting to profit by the contents. I shall flog you with the others. Punter"—he paused—"I hardly know how to deal with you. I will consider the matter, and speak to you to-morrow. I am obliged to you, Wingate, for bringing this before me. I am astounded that such dealings should take place among lower boys. You may go!"

Wingate ushered the juniors out of the study, and saw "lights out" in the Remove dormitory.

Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry stayed awake some time discussing what would happen to Punter on the morrow.

"Punter was more or less within his rights," said Wharton. "Anybody could find the treasure—it's in a public spot, if it's anywhere near the old priory. Mr. Punter was safe enough in sending his son down to have a look round. The Head's in an awkward position—he can only punish Punter for shutting Skinner & Co. up in that tunnel."

"Leave it to him," yawned Bob. "I'm tired."

Of those juniors booked for a flogging on the morrow, only Skinner felt any cause for satisfaction. He only hoped that his dealings with Mr. Punter, under the name of "Cecil Hawkins," would remain a secret. On that score Skinner had deep misgivings.

After breakfast next morning the four plotters were called into the Head's study, and the floggings were administered. Bunter took refuge in a series of loud howls which somewhat lessened his punishment—an old dodge of the Owl's. But there was no doubt, to the grinning crowd which met the delinquents in the corridor, that they had been through it.

A little later, Punter was called to the study, and he did not appear for morning classes. It was learned during "break" that Dr. Locke had written to Mr. Punter and arranged for Punter's removal from the school. Possibly the Head told Mr. Punter at the same time what he thought of that gentleman's diplomacy.

Punter senior evidently took his defeat with fortitude, for he did not write to Dr. Locke concerning the episode featuring "Cecil Hawkins." Perhaps he did not want everybody to know just how simple it was to swindle a smart business man from the City. But Skinner quaked when he thought of it for a long time after.

A thorough search was made officially in the tunnel beyond the secret slab, but no sign of treasure came to light. Mr. Punter's clues were just one more of many "fake" sets which had been discovered from time to time. The hidden hoard of the Grey Friars remained as safely hidden as ever.

But it was weeks before the disappointed conspirators forgot Wilfred Punter, the new boy, or his "secret."

THE END.

(Now look out for next week's long complete story of the Greyfriars chums, entitled: "THE MYSTERY OF POPPER'S ISLAND!" You'll enjoy every line of it, boys!)

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The Phantom of the Dogger Bank!

An Amazing New Detective Serial, featuring Ferrers Locke and his boy assistant, Jack Drake.

On Board the Trumpeter!

WITHIN thirty seconds Locke and Drake were on board the Trumpeter. With shouts of encouragement to their men, they joined in the fight.

At first the defenders held their ground well. But the weight of the attack told, and, more men coming from forward, having finished the job of binding the wrists of the prisoners there, the Trumpeter's men were gradually pressed back into their quarters.

The men of the Stormcock, thoroughly enjoying themselves, pitched their enemies down below with scant ceremony. At last the hatchway was slammed to and secured. The fight was won for those of the Stormcock.

Shouted orders now came from Proctor on the bridge of the Stormcock.

"Tell the engineer down the speakin'-tube as he's a prisoner wi' the rest!" bawled Proctor. "Tell him to stop the engines an' come up—him an' his second, an' the stoker on duty. Soon's they be up on deck, reliefs go down, an' stand by for orders. Barry, you'll be chief engineer o' the Trumpeter. You, Duncombe, though ye don't know anything 'bout engines, will be second. Anyone for the stoker, an' another told off for stoker relief. Get to it, lads! Where's Harper?"

"Senseless on the bridge, skip!"

"All right. Carron, you command, an' hand over to Tom when he comes round. He ain't damaged bad, is he?"

"Dunno yet, skip."

"You stayin' aboard, sir?"

"For the moment, yes!" called back Ferrers Locke. Then, to Carron, the man told off to command the prize: "See that all below decks are secured, Carron. My assistant and I will be in the wireless cabin if wanted. Hi, you two, get into the skipper's state-room, and see no one enters. And don't disturb anything!"

"Ay, ay, sir!"

Locke and Drake made tracks for the wireless cabin. There they found the operator in a deadly funk. He held his hands high above his head when the two appeared. Ferrers Locke jerked him out of the cabin, and he was at once pounced

upon by waiting men on the deck. Then Locke and Drake entered the cabin and commenced their search.

"First of all, my boy, the list of key letters and numbers for each day for the

.....

NEW READERS BEGIN HERE.

FERRERS LOCKE, the wizard detective of Baker Street, and

JACK DRAKE, his live-wire assistant, have been engaged by

JOHN CARR, owner of the Carr Fishing Fleet, to put a stop to the destructive raids made upon his fleet of vessels by an armoured Icelandman which, by reason of its mysterious comings and goings, is dubbed the Phantom.

BLAIZE PROCTOR, admiral of the fleet and skipper of the North Star, known to his associates as "Blazes."

Aboard the North Star, Locke and Drake, accompanied by an able-bodied crew, set sail to track down the mysterious Phantom.

At an early date Locke discovers that **SCAR HOSKING** is a traitor to the fleet, and decides that the best way to round up the Phantom is to set another Phantom on its track. Accordingly, Carr buys an Icelandman—the Stormcock—for the purpose. The sister ship to the Stormcock, which is named the Trumpeter, is purchased by a man named **STROMSUND**, and it is proved that Hosking is in his employ.

After a series of fierce encounters, in which Locke is captured by Hosking and his confederates and taken aboard the enemy craft, the Stormcock is forced to make a hurried get-away, with the Phantom in hot pursuit. Screened by a fog, and with no lights burning, the enemy craft is bearing down upon the Stormcock when she crashes into a barque, and is holed in consequence. Realising their plight, the crew of the Phantom clamber aboard the barque. Meanwhile, Drake makes a valiant dash for the bulkhead, and in the nick of time rescues the bound and unconscious form of Ferrers Locke from the doomed vessel.

No sooner has the Baker Street detective escaped with his life, however, than he prepares to turn the disaster to good account. A false message is sent to the Trumpeter, with the result that Scar Hosking appears upon the scene, only to find a surprise packet in the shape of the Stormcock, fully manned and ready for fight. Hardly has Hosking tumbled to Ferrers Locke's ruse than the crew of the Stormcock, led by the detective and his assistant, spring into action.

(Now read on.)

purpose of sending messages in code. Then any special orders. Then the carbon copies of the messages sent out and—"

"Here's the code list for each day, sir," replied Jack, whose sharp eyes had noted it pinned up above the wireless operator's table.

Ferrers Locke took it down, glanced at it, and uttered an exclamation of satisfaction.

"Each day till the end of the month, my boy. That's splendid!" Locke put the paper in his pocket-book. "Now search for any further information."

Locke and Drake were busily engaged for a matter of ten minutes. But they found nothing in the way of orders amongst the wireless man's files.

The most important thing, however, was already in their possession—the list of code keys for the month. With this, Ferrers Locke felt confident that he could keep Stromsund in the dark as to the disasters that had befallen his trawlers.

He meant now to get hold of the working orders to Scar Hosking, then obey them as regards time of return to Iceland, and so on. By sending wireless messages he felt he could then get back into the secret fjord of Stromsund, occasion a meeting with Stromsund in the same way as Stromsund had before met his skippers, then secure the man.

Ferrers Locke well knew that, should Stromsund take the alarm, he would prove a most elusive person. And it was Stromsund he wanted. Without the instigator of these Dogger trawl-wrecking schemes, the minor captures they had made would be useless. Hence Locke's anxiety to deceive Stromsund into thinking that all was well right up to the last instant.

"Come along, Drake. There are no orders here," said Locke at last. "We'll just slip along to the skipper's state-room. We'll find them there, right enough, probably in the same place where Proctor keeps his papers on the Stormcock."

Out on deck once more, Locke and his assistant looked round. Bound forms were lying here and there under the bulwarks, and the Stormcock's men were

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standing about in knots, joking and talking over the scrap.

"We got 'em all, sir!" said one man. "Them below gave themselves up like lambs. Tom's come round again, an' has taken command."

"We've parted from the Stormcock, I see."

"Ay, ay, sir. Old Blazes was afraid as we'd get stove in if we stayed grindin' at each other's sides much longer. There's the Stormcock, there, just visible in the fog. We be steamin' slow ahead to the nor'-west."

"Splendid! Come along, Drake, to the state-room!"

The two men standing by the state-room, their fingers to the peaks of their sou'westers, handed over their charge to Ferrers Locke, and the Baker Street detective and Jack Drake got very busy.

Locke took out all the fragments of charts and papers in the cupboard, sat down at the table, and began to study them carefully. Jack Drake searched about in other likely places.

At last a quick exclamation of satisfaction escaped Locke's lips.

"Ah, here we are, my boy! No need to search further. This is splendid! So Hosking was ordered to relieve the Wraith, and follow her within twenty-four hours back to Iceland, having done all the damage he could in that time to the Carr fleet's trawling-gear. I see he is ordered to get his own trawl down on the northern banks on the way home. An effort on Stromsund's part to make the 'phantoms' pay their own expenses to a certain extent, as well as to disarm suspicion, of course. Well, he'll get little fish this trip!"

Jack Drake had leant over the table to examine the order as Locke scanned them.

"By jingo, sir," said Jack, "everything is cut and dried for us. The false report that the trawlermen picked up by that barque, the Hanningford, were men from the Stormcock, the Lloyd's report that the Wraith passed Dunnet Head, our own tracks having been covered so carefully, ought to bear fruit when we got to Iceland. It's the only sort of fruit that rocky country will bear, it seems."

"Things certainly seem to be going well, my boy. But we mustn't—"

"Hands up, there! A shout, an' I fire twice—"

As Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake swung round to face the door, they saw Scar Hosking, the great red weal down his cheek livid, his bloodshot eyes smouldering and dangerous.

"I bain't goin' to be taken like a rat in a trap!" hissed the man fiercely. "I'd sooner swing than do twenty year, I tell ye! Now, ye'll go on deck, one of ye—the boy—an' ye'll get them three men away from under the boat, first makin' them clear the boat ready for slidin' it over. Then the men must go for'ard. Once that's done, I'll slip away, an' wish ye fare thee ill. I reckon I could lose any steam trawler in a fog like this 'ere, out in a trawler boat wi' a stout pair o' oars—"

"And what if we refuse?" demanded Locke quietly.

"Then, by heavens, I'll finish ye both! I know I'm for it, and, as I say, I'd rather swing than do twenty year. There's other things'll be raked up about me if I get into the dock. But if I have to fire, in the confusion, I'll maybe yet get away in the boat!"

"How did you get free?" demanded Locke sharply, but without raising his voice, for he knew that in Hosking's present state of mind it would take little to make him press the trigger.

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Hosking snarled.

"I ain't 'ere to be badgered wi' questions by you. Now then, no delay! Is that boy goin' out on deck? An' mind, when he does go, if he gives the alarm, you, Mister Ferrers Locke, are a dead man!"

Gone Away!

JACK DRAKE stood, hands tightly gripping the table, irresolute. Hosking had his weapon raised, covering Ferrers Locke, and the boy knew by the way the man handled the weapon that he was no child with a gun.

And those blood-shot, blazing eyes! That crime-lined face now looking like the face of a madman! That great, ugly red weal from cheek-bone to chin, changing colour every second as the blood came and went in the man's face!

Desperate he was. That he would fire on the least provocation, Jack knew. Ferrers Locke's life hung in the balance at that second. But as Drake looked at his chief he saw no sign of fear, no sign of wavering.

A grim smile played about the corners of Locke's mouth. He was looking steadily into the blazing eyes of Scar Hosking. And Jack watched intently, breathlessly. For he knew that from Locke would come an intimation of the action to be taken.

"Hosking," said Locke slowly and distinctly, "do you fondly imagine that, to save my own poor skin, I will give my assistant orders to give you safe conduct from this vessel?"

"Better decide, and quick!" snarled Hosking.

"No!"

Ferrers Locke roared the word, and at the same time his hand flew towards his hip pocket. Jack leapt at the same instant, but went staggering back, dazed and deafened, as a heavy shot crashed out from Hosking's weapon.

Thump!

Ferrers Locke dropped to the floor, and Drake leapt towards the state-room door, where Hosking had been standing. But the door was slammed in his face, and the key grated in the lock. Hosking had everything well prepared to carry through his scheme, however the detective and his assistant might act.

Three times in quick succession Jack

banged on the locked door. Then he sprang back towards Locke, a terrible fear at his heart, his brain in a whirl, for he thought his chief had been shot down.

Had Ferrers Locke played his game against desperate criminals for so many years, safely, only to be shot down far out on the Dogger by a rascally fisherman?

As Jack sprang to the table, however, he pulled himself up with a cry of amazement, for Ferrers Locke was rising.

"A close thing, my boy," said the detective coolly. "I dropped to the floor as soon as I saw in his eyes that he was going to fire. Quick, lad; see if we can burst the door open! There will be trouble on deck!"

As Locke and Drake hurled themselves at the door, they heard a big commotion on deck—a frenzied shout, Hosking's voice; two shots in quick succession, one of the bullets pinging on steel plates, then silence.

What was happening above? And why didn't the men come and release them from the state-room? Was Hosking really escaping?

Locke and Drake paused and listened. They heard the shouting of Hosking astern, then a heavy splash. Almost immediately following the splash there sounded a renewed outburst of shouting, running feet, then a confused babel of voices.

"Open this door!" shouted Locke.

The key grated and the door was thrown open from the outside. Tom Harper confronted them, his face white and wild-looking.

"Thank heaven you be safe!" he exclaimed. "We thought that cur had done for ye."

"He's gone?" asked Locke swiftly.

"Ay, ay, sir," growled Harper. "He held up the three men near the boat arter he'd locked you in. He made 'em launch the boat, then, when the men from for'ard rushed, he fired. He's a dead shot. It was suicide to come out o' the cover o' the veranda. He got away in the boat an' rowed off in the fog. We be already steamin' round tryin' to pick him up again."

"All right," said Locke. "Do your best to find him, Harper. You've informed the Stormcock?"

"One o' the men is shouting out the news now through the megaphone. We'll keep a good look-out an' get him if we can, sir, have no fear! But a boat in the night fog is a hard thing for a trawler to find. We'll do our best, sir."

Harper and the other men left the room.

"A near thing!" mused Locke. "We've played with edged tools for a long time, Drake, but we've never dealt with more dangerous tools than those in this case."

The famous private detective sat down at the table and again interested himself with the papers. Jack Drake continued his own search for fresh information in the state-room which so recently had been the private apartment of Scar Hosking.

While the Trumpeter steamed here and there in her search, the men on deck keeping a strict look-out for the runaway, the detective meantime ransacked every part of the state-room.

At last, heated and satisfied that they had obtained all the information they could get, Ferrers Locke spoke.

"Well, my boy," he said, "we have the Trumpeter now under our command. We have Hosking's orders at hand and the codes for the wireless messages for each day. But—"

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Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake stood, hidden, behind the rock, with the blankets ready, as the clattering crowd of pony riders passed close to them. (See page 28.)

"What about Hosking?" interrupted Jack. "He's free, and everyone seems to doubt that we'll be able to find him again. You see, he can dodge about so easily in a rowing boat—quite unheard by us and yet in a splendid position for himself to hear any nearby steamer and—"

"I think we'll have Harper in again, my boy," broke in Locke. "Call for him, will you?"

Drake soon had the temporary skipper of the Trumpeter in the state-room.

"How did Hosking get away, Harper?" asked Locke. "I mean, fren to beard my assistant and me in our den here?"

"That I can't rightly say, sir," replied the trawlerman. "I was knocked out by Hosking throwing his revolver in the fight for the bridge. But I heard as Hosking was left lying senseless on the starboard veranda—"

"Was left, you say?"

"Yes, sir. There were so many men who had to be secured that Hosking was left. Then, somehow, he was forgotten until—"

"He was playing 'possum, I expect," remarked Locke dryly. "Then, when opportunity offered, he crept away somewhere. From there, with his reloaded revolver in his possession—I take it he picked it up from where it fell after he had knocked you out by throwing it—he crept into the state-room, unheard by anyone, and held us up. The rest of the story of his escape we all know. It is a sufficiently good reconstruction, and we needn't bother any more about how he did it. The fact is, he's gone, and will probably remain undiscovered till the fog lifts."

"I don't think we'll get him, sir, much

as I'd like to see the swab retaken," growled Harper. "As for the men who launched the boat for him—well, sir, it was either that or get their brains blown out, an' I don't think we can blame them. Hosking looked that terrible, too—ready to do anything. But my opinion is we be wastin' time slammin' about here, sir. These fogs on the Dogger last a long time, an' there's no sign o' a lift. Skipper Proctor's been askin' when you're going to order us to point for Iceland—"

"All in good time!" broke in Locke. "We're dealing with the circumstances of Hosking's escape now. As an experienced man on the banks, Harper, what do you think he will do if undiscovered?"

"Why, situated as him, sir, I reckon I'd move heaven an' earth to clear the Carr fleet an' get picked up by some trawler out o' Leith or Banff, or somewhere where I wasn't known."

"That's what I thought. Well, at his luckiest, being picked up by a Leith trawler, homeward bound, he couldn't possibly get to Iceland before we can. But a cable can. So I'm afraid that Scar Hosking—Hullo, what's this fresh disturbance now?"

"Some craft ranging alongside," said Jack Drake, opening the door. "A powerful motor-boat of some sort. I'll see, sir."

Jack slipped out of the state-room. He returned almost immediately, and answered Locke's questioning look.

"It's Mr. Carr, sir, I think, come out in his motor yacht, no doubt to see you. We're slowing down, and a dinghy is putting off from the yacht. The men say it's Mr. Carr's yacht."

Harper vanished to attend to this now

matter, and Locke and Drake followed him out on deck, and stood under the port veranda. The dinghy, hardly discernible in the fog, came bobbing across the water, growing clearer in outline every second.

Soon John Carr, owner of the Carr Steam Fishing Company, stepped aboard the Trumpeter and uttered a quick exclamation of satisfaction on seeing Locke.

He approached with hand outstretched, a worried look on his face, and with the air of one who had important, if distasteful news to impart.

Ruin!

FERRERS LOCKE, Jack Drake, and John Carr were seated in the state-room, and Locke waited for Carr's news.

"I suppose I must congratulate you on having captured the Trumpeter, Mr. Locke," said Carr; but there was a dulness in his voice that showed lack of enthusiasm and more—a broken spirit.

Locke laughed easily.

"Half an hour ago I was congratulating myself. Then something happened which left things rather awkward. Scar Hosking escaped, thus opening up the possibility of news of the turning of the tables getting to Stromsund. That upset my little scheme, which, by the way, would have been complete without news that the skipper and crew of the Phantom, taking refuge on the barque, had been secured according to plan. News of that, I suppose, you bear, as well as something unpleasant?"

Carr smiled wanly.

"Yes, Mr. Locke, I bring news of the
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crew of the Phantom," he said. "The barque Hanningford, no doubt being heavily bribed to do so, turned and ran for Reykjavik, under the pretence that it was unsafe for her to take any other course. So those rascals are at the moment, perhaps, informing Stromsund of everything they knew. And Stromsund, unless he is a fool, will tumble to your deception at once."

Locke nodded.

"More than likely," he said. "Well, I had already resigned myself to the necessity to change plans, because of Hosking's escape. So the blow is deadened somewhat. However, I am not, in the circumstances, displeased. Now, Mr. Carr, it is most fortunate you are here. I have some questions to ask you, and will you reply without unburdening yourself of the thing that is worrying you so? Just answer my questions, and when I have finished you can have your say."

John Carr assented dully.

"Well, a postponement of an unpleasant task is always welcome," he said, with an attempt at a smile. "Fire away!"

Ferrers Locke leaned forward, his forearms on the table.

"What connections have you in Iceland?"

"None; or, rather, none of importance. I was last in Iceland well over twenty years ago, and then only was I there like many another smacksman—just for a range ashore while the trawler was at Reykjavik. But you are touching something I have on my mind, Mr. Locke, in connection with Iceland—"

"Never mind that troublesome bit of news just now," broke in the detective. "Now, what is this connection you have with Iceland that is of such small importance?"

"Some land I own there—a big stretch of it, but useless. Merely desert land—lava rock and barren mountain slopes. It's a sort of district, I suppose. Its name is Brek Katel. I've seen it. More desolate place you can't imagine. But it's about that—"

"Has someone been trying to buy that desert land from you?"

"Yes! It's about that—"

"Who is this would-be purchaser of desert land?"

"Man called Dunn—H. E. Dunn. He has property in all sorts of out-of-the-way places. But I'd better tell you the whole yarn, and please let me get my unpleasant bit of news off my chest."

"Fire away!" said Locke, leaning back on the locker on which he was seated, putting the tips of his fingers together and half-closing his eyes.

Jack Drake looked alert. He knew by Locke's attitude that now something of the deepest importance in the case was coming forth. So he, too, listened intently.

"It's not a long story," began Carr, "and it isn't very interesting. My father was a man with big ideas. He bought this big stretch of land in Iceland—Brek Katel—and though he paid so little for it it drained his capital to the last halfpenny. He died before he could see any return from his investment. And he told no one the reason for his having bought that land. He did try to raise a company, but his efforts were nipped in the bud by what will overtake all of us some time."

"I often tremble to think of the use my father intended to put that land. You follow me?"

"You mean you think he might have

been desirous of floating a bubble concern, which would explode and—"

"Exactly, sir! Heaven forgive me if my suspicions are wrong! But I swore that I would not part with that terrible land on any consideration. Now—Well, I have an offer. But, there, I'm getting too far ahead."

John Carr pressed his hand to his forehead for a second or two, then, with a deep breath, he continued:

"Mr. Locke, I want you to drop this case—"

He paused, but Ferrers Locke neither started nor looked up in surprise. Carr continued, now hurriedly: "I am a ruined man, Mr. Locke! I am at the end of my tether. For months my fleet has made no return—in fact, it has been run at a loss. I am so heavily in debt that the sale of my trawlers will not carry me through with a clear name. My bankers have refused further overdrafts. I don't seem to know whether I am on my head or my heels. Those villains tearing and wrecking my vessels' gear have gained their ends. I am ruined."

"Now, Mr. Locke, out of the ruin of my business, if I sell Brek Katel—twenty thousand pounds is the offer—I can pay my debts and still have enough over to go in shares with a steam-trawler with old Blazes Proctor. We can run her together as a single boater, and make a decent living. Blazes has a nice little nest-egg, which he'll put down with what I can salvage out of my business. I

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intend to sell Brek Katel, and start clean. Your own tees, Mr. Locke, up to date will be heavy, I know, and I am ready to realise. But if the case is continued, I—I'm afraid you'll never get your money. That's why I want you to drop out now, with my best thanks for your very great services so far."

Carr paused, as if finished, and Ferrers Locke looked at the broken trawler owner.

The detective smiled, and Carr, somehow, felt that smile thrill through him like a current of electricity. He felt a strange strength growing within him. And he wondered at it as he returned Locke's look.

"Mr. Carr," replied Locke, "I have never taken on a case and left it uncompleted. If I did that my assistant and I would never sleep soundly again—eh, Drake?"

"I'd feel that way, too, sir," said Jack.

"You are such a clean, honest man, Mr. Carr, that your thoughts are first of all for your creditors. They might not be paid in full! That is your trouble. If you were other than what you are—a business man with still the simple seaman's heart—you might be tempted to realise that there are ways of saving a nest-egg, when you go bankrupt, at the expense of the creditors. But that, and rightly so, has not received a second's consideration from you."

"Will you trust me in this matter, Mr. Carr? I'll see you through it with flying colours. The Stormcock is costing a great deal of money to run, and she is earning nothing—or apparently so, from

a fisherman's point of view. If I were not working for you, I'd work on my own behalf, to bring that villain Stromsund to justice."

"I realise your difficulties, now the banks have refused you overdrafts. But, mark this, Carr, if you would be a rich man, don't sell Brek Katel! I repeat, whatever happens, however closely troubles press upon you, don't sell Brek Katel! Ready money? Yes, yes; I'm coming to that!" Locke drew out his cheque-book and unscrewed the cap of his fountain-pen. "I'd like to lend you money on Brek Katel, Mr. Carr. You arrange the mortgage at home, and fill in the amount of this blank cheque I am signing for you. Make it a sum that will enable you to carry on your business, including the running of the Stormcock, for a month."

Carr gasped, speechless, as Locke signed the cheque and handed it to him.

"But—but, Mr. Locke, you may never get it back!" he at last managed to gasp out.

Ferrers Locke smiled.

"I am backing my chances against Stromsund to the tune of the amount you write on that cheque, Mr. Carr," he said. "And I sha'n't be the loser. If my theory is right, the mortgagee of Brek Katel will have made a splendid investment."

Carr, as in a dream, took out his pocket-book and placed Locke's blank cheque in it. He seemed at a loss for words. And he felt he was dreaming as Locke accompanied him out on to the deck. He heard the detective's words, however, repeated three or four times as they passed out into the breaking day:

"Pretend to hesitate. Give this man Dunn hope. Let him think you'll sell in the end. Barter a bit, if you like. But DON'T SELL!"

Ferrers Locke's Bluff!

JOHN CARR'S motor-yacht had disappeared in the morning haze, and beside her blustered the Trumpeter, under a prize crew, all Stromsund's men secured and locked in their quarters. John Carr was to hand the trawl-wrecking vessel over to the authorities, charging the men of the Trumpeter with being party to the wilful damage of his property on the high seas. If the case should come off before Locke's return to England, Carr was to draw witnesses from his fleet, and carry the case through as best he could without the evidence of Locke, Drake, Proctor, and the rest on the Stormcock.

Meanwhile, the Stormcock turned for the north once more, to the land of the midnight sun and aurora displays, the hot springs, the smoking mountain, the barren, rocky deserts, of which Brek Katel was a typical example, facing the bleak north, where the ice crashed down in the long, dark winter, and occasionally the Polar bear landed on the bitter shores.

Skipper Proctor drove his vessel mercilessly. The old trawler-master was having the time of his life, and, a seaman all through, he was mostly on the bridge, oil-frock glistening, and the rime white on his beard and moustache.

They ran into heavy weather when clear of Fair Isle; it was a bitter head wind, blowing down from Greenland, and it cut like a knife.

The Stormcock punched into it gamely. Steam trawlers are small, as deep-sea steam vessels go, but they are

as safe as anything afloat, though they reel and shiver, smash and roll, as they head into a storm.

Solid water often pours over the anchor-deck, to come welling and lashing round the wheelhouse, to the great danger of anyone in the way. Thus the cry, "Water's coming!" is all too common on trawlers. And well do the fishermen know what it means!

Locke did a lot of thinking as the Stormcock forged northward.

Jack Drake enjoyed the wildness of the weather, and spent a lot of his time on the bridge with Proctor. The old skipper had a great liking for Jack and Jack for him. And many were the yarns the skipper spun as he and Locke's assistant stood in the spray-drenched wheelhouse, and watched the great grey seas rearing themselves at the Stormcock's high bows.

It was Faroe weather at its worst. But gamely the Stormcock lived up to her name, smashing her way onward with a supreme contempt for the roaring great seas. And at last they sighted Portland.

It was during the short Icelandic night, and the flashing white light was their first landfall. Then, as the daylight strengthened the red frame tower could be seen.

The sea became less as they drew into the lee of the land, and Proctor altered course for the Westaman Isles and Stromsund's secret fiord.

In the state-room, as the Stormcock, rolling like a dray, shouldered her way up the coast, Ferrers Locke was imparting some of his scheme to Jack.

"I shall carry through our old bluff, my boy, up to a point," said the detective. "We will, according to our old plan, send out a wireless message as if from one of Stromsund's trawlers. We have the code for the day. The message will be that the Wraith is in the fiord."

"I see," said Drake, beginning to get an inkling of the result of Ferrers Locke's hard thinking on the way over. "You want Stromsund to think you are ready to fall into a trap."

"Exactly! He will wireless instructions for us to enter the fiord, and for the meeting to take place at the little holding in the gorge where we saw him before. He will argue that my scheme is to trap him there. He will therefore be ready, with a big force—no doubt Langley and crew—to do a bit of trapping—on his own—"

"There's something following, I know, sir, but I don't see—"

"Why, it's simple, my boy. You and I will be approaching Ingholdt, where Stromsund lives, just as he and his gallant band leave in high feather with the idea of trapping us. Of course, when Stromsund gets to the meeting-place he will find nothing to trap!"

Jack Drake chuckled.

"By jingo, sir, that's a good move!" he said. "You will then be able to investigate at Ingholdt, knowing Stromsund to be absent for a few days, with all his fighting strength, too. But—but Stromsund might make a move to trap the Stormcock in the fiord, sir."

"That, too, has received my attention. Once the message has been sent, the reply making the appointment received, Proctor will drop anchor at the entrance to the fiord, thus being ready to escape if an attempt is made to trap him. In three days' time we will weigh anchor and get round to Reykjavik, where we will join him after our investigations at Ingholdt."

"And then, sir?"

"Ah, well, our future actions must be regulated by developments within the

next few days. Hallo, Proctor! What's the news?"

"Westaman Islands on the starboard bow, sir. Shall I steam straight in?"

"Yes, please. Drake, fetch the wireless man while I write out the message in the day's code."

Jack Drake staggered down the heavy deck and turned out the wireless operator from his post at the instrument. The young man threw away the stump of his cigarette, and, with the signal-pad and pencil in his hand, followed Jack's zigzag course on the reeling deck back to the state-room.

"Send out that," said Locke, handing the jumble of letters to the operator. "Send it letter for letter, as I've written it, mind!"

The operator took the message, which conveyed no sense to him, of course. But he was too well trained to be curious, and he rolled back to his wireless cabin with the paper.

In a surprisingly short space of time the reply came through. Decoded, it read:

"Meet noon to-morrow cabin Isa Hofde, in gorge."

Ferrers Locke looked up from the paper when the message had been decoded.

"Well, we weren't far wrong, were we?" he said. "I suppose Isa Hofde is the name of the occupier of that rough little turf-thatched dwelling in the gorge. We must get ready right away and get ashore to find our way to Ingholdt. We can fix it near enough by its position on our map. But we must get local information as to details of the route. It is Hekla country, and there

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See Page 2.

are such things as impassable streams and precipitous gorges. Slip out and tell Proctor to spy out the nearest village towards Reykjavik, prepare the boat, and prepare to land us there at once!"

Jack Drake did as he was told, then returned to the cabin to aid Locke in packing the small bundle of things the detective deemed necessary for their journey.

Off To Ingholdt!

THE Stormcock was lying about half a mile from the rugged, rocky shores, and Jack Drake and Ferrers Locke, dressed for a rough journey, came out of the state-room.

A white, shingly, desolate-looking bit of foreshore was close at hand. A few black groynes ran down the shingle into the sea. Above the beach could be seen a few rough dwellings, their blotched grey-and-black colouring and green tops contrasting with the dark rock of their background.

The arrival of the trawler was evidently causing excitement on shore. Men ran down towards the water, and one or two children, with their children, stood at the entrances to the dwellings, staring curiously across at the Stormcock.

The men were about to push off one of the boats when the appearance of the trawler's boat, being rowed towards the shore, held them back.

The detective stepped ashore when the forefoot of the boat grounded. The Icelanders crowded round, with a gabble of talk, and Jack Drake caught the word "welcome" in Danish three or four times. He looked with interest at the men. They were, for the most part, small in stature, with florid complexions, fair hair, and of open, frank countenance.

"This is Skagesnaes?" asked Locke, in Danish.

"Ja, ja! Skagesnaes!" the men nodded, evidently eager to help and be friendly.

"Any strangers here, or have been here lately?" now asked Locke.

The men were unanimous in their answer of "no," accompanied by a shaking of the head.

"Right-ho, you men! Return to the trawler," said Locke.

And the boat was poled out into deep water. Locke and Drake, with the Icelanders close round them, approached the dwellings at the fringe of the beach.

The place had the stamp of direst poverty. The dwellings were of the humblest description, built of pieces of lava, the crevices stopped with moss. The flat roofs were of turf, and a sheep cropped contentedly on one.

As the group drew near to the women and children one of the men addressed Locke.

"You Engleeshe?" he asked.

"Yes. You speak English?" replied Locke.

"Ja, ja! Iss, a leetle. Your ship-go? You stop Skagennaes?"

Ferrers Locke shook his head.

"Iss! It ver' long—this side jokul. You pass, two t'ree spring."

The man broke into rapid Danish, and Locke listened intently. When he had finished Locke followed him into the low door of one of the dwellings, signing to Jack to accompany him. Here the Iclander and his wife pressed the detective and his assistant to sit down to a meal of the coarse fare on the table—unpalatable, and with little nourishment in it.

Locke declined gracefully, telling them that he had just eaten on the trawler. Then he asked a few more questions in Danish, left a handsome present, which the man did not want to take, apparently, but seemed very pleased to have, all the same, and passed out into the open with Drake.

"Well, my boy, this is indeed cheerful," said Locke, as he and his assistant climbed to the higher ground above, the Icelanders standing in a group below and watching them out of sight. "There's a village called Reykjalyd about two miles inland. We have to follow this gorge just ahead of us. We can get a pony each there—very necessary, apparently. Then we have a pleasant little jaunt of two days in a most charming bit of country. There are such delightful things as smoke and steam issuing from cracks in the rock at places, bogs of boiling mud, deep, turbulent rivers, and holes and small craters innumerable, which we must be careful not to fall into."

Locke laughed lightly as Jack's eyes widened.

"Still," he continued, "the way is easy to follow, with so many delightful landmarks. When beyond Reykjalyd we'll see the sulphur spring at Krisuvik. Ingholdt is just to the right of that."

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THE PHANTOM of the DOGGER BANK!

(Continued from previous page.)

If we get fast ponies at Reykjalyd we might do our distance in a day and a half. Well, we must, so best foot foremost, my lad, and let us see how soon we can get to where the ponies are for hire or for sale, or whatever other way you get a pony in Iceland."

"Reykjalyd was what they expected to find—a poverty-stricken, turf-roofed village, with a little grey stone church in the centre of it. Here the detective bought a couple of ponies at a price which made Jack Drake open his eyes wide. He didn't know that you could even buy a clothes horse at so low a figure anywhere in the whole wide world.

And so off they set for Ingholdt, keeping a sharp look out on the way for fear that they might come into the path of Stromsund, who was making down for the appointment in the gorge which they wouldn't keep.

They pushed on at best speed. The route was easy to follow, though there was no defined track. The sulphur

spring was soon in view, and with this as a leading-mark, they knew that they would reach their destination safely enough, provided they kept out of the boiling mud-bogs, the deep crater-holes, or on the safe side of precipitous descents.

They were well satisfied with their progress when they camped for the night and a two-hours' sleep each. They had to keep watch, for Locke feared that they might fall foul of Stromsund.

Drake took second watch, and he sat down on a rock above his sleeping chief, and watched the rugged, rocky country darkening as the sun sank below the horizon. Mount Hekla smoked and puffed cheerfully away in the west, visible in the curious twilight of the Icelandic summer night.

Jack's eyes roved over what he could see of the country throughout that dreary two hours. Then, just as daylight was strengthening, he dropped his head with a quick, low exclamation.

Sliding down beside Locke, he shook the detective gently. "Ferrers Locke stirred, and inquired softly:

"What's the matter?"

"Men approaching," said Jack swiftly. "Jingo, it looks like a blessed army of them—a whole cavalry brigade. They've got a pony each—"

"Stand by those beasts, my boy. If they neigh when they scent others of their kind, we'll be in a nice trap. Be

ready with me to smother their muzzles in the blankets if they whinny."

But though the ponies raised their heads and pricked up their ears they made no sound. Still, Locke and Drake stood by, hidden behind the rock, with the blankets handy. For the clattering crowd of pony-riders was passing fairly close to them.

"Gee! Stromsund meant to make a job of it!" breathed Drake as he and his chief watched. "Is it the Iceland army he's got with him?"

"The whole crew of the lost Phantom, Langley at their head, I expect," replied Locke softly. "I am indeed glad we have seen them pass. Now we know they have left Ingholdt. Still, we must reconnoitre carefully before we show ourselves at Stromsund's residence. It may be dangerous—"

Stromsund and his men clattered away in the distance, and when the sun peeped up again from behind the rugged hills, the tail end of the group was just disappearing from view down a gorge.

"Pack up, Drake," said the detective. "We'll munch our breakfast as we travel, for we have no time to lose."

(Mind you read next week's instalment of this amazing detective story, boys, for Ferrers Locke is hot on the trail, and some important discoveries are made.)

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A factor which tells, but which is often overlooked.

By
E. "PATSY" HENDREN,
the famous Middlesex and England cricketer.

WHERE is to be found the big secret of success on the cricket field? In reply to this question some people would find the easy way out, and declare that the surest way to victory is the possession of better bowlers, better batsmen, and better fielders than the opposing teams which are met. Nor can the bald truth of such an answer be denied. It is, however, the aim of the organisers of every cricket eleven to get the best possible players, and quite frequently there is so little to choose in the respective merits of teams struggling for the mastery that one can scarcely say that either holds a real advantage. Suppose, then, that two teams of equal merit meet. What, then, will be the deciding factor? Luck, possibly. Often have we seen in quite important cricket the match won and lost almost literally by the spin of the coin. One side has taken its knock on a good pitch; the rain has come, and then the sun, leaving it frightfully difficult for the fellows batting afterwards to put up anything like a score. Yes, luck—in the way mentioned, as well as in a score of other directions—does play its part in cricket of all grades.

BEATING BETTER TEAMS.

Yet, thinking the matter over carefully, I long ago came to the conclusion that perhaps the biggest factor of all which makes for victory when teams of equal merit meet is the team spirit. I will even go further and declare that many a contest has been won by an inferior side, under level conditions, because the inferior side has had the team spirit developed to a much greater extent. I sometimes think that this idea of the team spirit as applied to cricket is a phase of the game the importance of which is under-estimated.

Certainly one runs up against the idea less frequently in cricket than in football, by way of example. Perhaps the explanation of this is to be found in the fact that in the winter game the team spirit is much more obvious to the casual onlooker. It is perfectly clear, for instance, that the success or failure of the forward line of a football team depends to a very large extent on every man in the line playing with absolute unselfishness, and on being supported by unselfish and unsparing half-backs.

AVERAGES DON'T MATTER.

Believe me, there are plenty of opportunities in the course of every cricket season for testing whether this or that side has got the proper team spirit from first to last. There are occasions when the batsman has got to go to the wicket remembering the team, and nothing but the team—occasions when the number of runs scored, by way of example, is not nearly so important as the length of time taken in the scoring of them. I know, of course, that it is quite nice to be able to point to a good average for every innings played, and I have even had the pleasure of finishing a season with my name on top of the averages. If I may say so, however, I should be a very disappointed player if I had ever succeeded in conveying the impression that it was my personal average which counted as against the interests of the side. It is good to score a hundred; but if your captain says that he

thinks the side has a better chance of winning if he declares when you have scored ninety-five, then the team spirit will enable you to give up your innings with a perfectly satisfied smile on your face.

WON ON TEAM SPIRIT.

A case on these lines came under my notice last season. A certain side had a comfortable lead, and the captain was battling with another player who was rapidly approaching the highest total he had ever made in a long career. The captain said to his partner: "As soon as you pass your record I shall declare." Immediately came the reply from the other batsman: "Don't you think it would be safer to declare now?"

The captain declared, and the sequel was found a few hours later, when the match was won with five minutes to spare. If the declaration had been delayed until the batsman had set up a new record victory would not have been gained. Yes, the team spirit often calls for sacrifices, and, incidentally, the team spirit also has for its basis implicit trust in the judgment of the captain. After all, the way the player with the right spirit will look at it is this: If the captain is wrong, that is no concern of the individual player. The fault is in the choice of captain.

CIRCUMSTANCES ALTER CASES.

Earlier in these notes I mentioned the matter of averages, and on this point there is just one little further note I should like to make. I suppose the followers of cricket like to see the averages, and, consequently, must have them. But, in my opinion, they are apt to foster a spirit which is in complete contrast to the team game. The merit of batting or of bowling is not in the number of runs scored or in the average cost of wickets obtained. The test is in the conditions under which the runs are made and the circumstances which surround the taking of wickets. By way of example, suppose you took the best Yorkshire bowler out of the Yorkshire team and put him in the Glamorgan side. Do you think his figures would work out so well? Of course not, because he would have to bowl much more when he was tired.

IN THE FIELD.

There are other things which could be said to prove the importance of the team spirit in bowling and in batting, but perhaps nowhere is this team spirit so necessary as in the field. Here, indeed, it must be every man for his side—no slacking, no taking a mere half-interest in the proceedings, but always on tiptoe. It is a mere truism to say that a slack field makes slack bowlers, just as it is true that a good fielding side increases the efficiency of the attack. By that I do not merely mean that catches will be made and runs saved, but good, tiptoe fieldsmen help and inspire the bowlers.

E. P. Hendren

IN the realm of county cricket the continued success of the Yorkshire side really threatens to become monotonous—to the people who are not specially anxious that Yorkshire should go on winning. For the last four seasons these

Yorkshiremen have just walked off with the county championship in the most selfish way, and barring the fact that the Test matches of this season may take many Yorkshiremen from county duty I confess that I do not see any side capable of wresting this championship honour from the county of many acres. For a county to win the championship four times in succession is a noteworthy feat, of course, and quietly we are proud of these Yorkshiremen whether we come from Yorkshire or not. We may think it would be better for the game if the honours went round a bit more, but certainly nobody wants the honours save by playing for them and by proving themselves a better combination than all the others.

ANOTHER BIG WIN FOR YORKSHIRE.

As we can't take this championship honour from the gallant Yorkshiremen there remains open to us an inquiry into the why and the wherefore of their continued success. How is it that these Yorkshiremen so often gain the victory that it is rumoured that in many newspaper offices they keep this headline standing right through the cricket season: "Another big win for Yorkshire"?

There are many explanations which could be given of the fact that this county has emerged victorious so frequently. In the first place even Yorkshiremen cannot deny that the county gets quite a good start because of its almost unlimited resources. Around the many big towns with which certain parts of the far-flung county is studded there is no end of really good-class cricket, and from the ranks of these clubs good material is constantly forthcoming. But that fact must not, in itself, entirely account for the predominance of Yorkshire. There is probably just as much really good-class cricket played in the county of the Red Rose as in the county of the White, but Lancashire has not won the county championship since 1904. In Middlesex and in Surrey, too, there is plenty of material, so obviously we have not the complete explanation in the fact that Yorkshire is a county of great cricket resources.

THE WILL TO WIN.

One big reason for the success of these Yorkshiremen, as I see it, lies in the fact that somehow or other everybody connected with the club gets the inspiration to do or die in the effort to bring the team home in front of their rivals for the honours. They organise for victory right down the line, treat the game seriously, and are never content with anything less than the best. Some people say, watching the Yorkshiremen in the field at cricket, that they treat their game too seriously—that the will to win predominates too much. But surely it is up to every player of every cricket team to do his level best within the rules and the spirit of the sport, to come out on top. It gives me no satisfaction to win any sporting event if I have the feeling that my opponent is not all out to beat me, and on the same lines it would be an empty victory, I take it, for any county to beat the Yorkshiremen if there was a feeling that these Yorkshiremen were not trying their utmost. No, don't let us criticise Yorkshire cricket because the men do their level best for the team.

EARLY BIRDS.

Personally, I think other counties would do better if they copied some of the Yorkshire methods: if the thoroughness with which they tackle everything in the cricket line came to be regarded as an example to be copied. Take a case in point. I happened to be at Leeds in the middle of March, when those terribly cold winds were blowing. But there were young Yorkshire cricketers hard at work at the nets, practising under the eye of that fine, typical old Yorkshireman of other days, George Hirst. I am

WHY YORKSHIRE WINS!

WINNING THE CHAMPIONSHIP FOUR TIMES IN SUCCESSION.

By "RE-PORTER."

prepared to wager that the players of no other county were found practising so early as these Yorkshiremen.

I went so far as to ask why these Yorkshire colts had been called up so early, and this was the reply I received—a reply which shows the thoroughness of the methods: "Well, you see, it is likely that several of our best men will be wanted for the Test matches this season, and thus we shall have to call on the youngsters. Therefore we thought it would be a good idea to give the youngsters practice earlier than usual." And I think there is something in the way the Yorkshire committee have always treated these youngsters which has contributed to the success of the county. In this connection I cannot do better than quote the words of the county secretary: "Once we take a player into the eleven," said Mr. Toone, "we persevere with him—give him chance after chance. We never play a new man about whose powers and abilities we are not fully satisfied after strong recommendation and close observation. But, once we do play him, we give him every possible opportunity to show his mettle, and, if he does not succeed in doing this he can never say afterwards he has not had a fair chance."

THE RISING GENERATION.

In this connection I may tell a story of the introduction of that fine all-rounder, Wilfred Rhodes, to the Yorkshire team. There were several bowlers of renown in the Yorkshire team when Rhodes got into it, but in his very first match with the county Rhodes was put on to bowl first. Most counties, when they introduce an untried youngster for the bowling department, never give him a trial until the regular bowlers have been on and when the batsmen are probably well set.

Then consider the thorough manner in which the rising generation of the county is watched. Again I quote the words of the secretary: "I keep a long list, newly made each year, of boys from the county who are showing superior form in batting, bowling, stumping, or fielding at the public schools, and these boys are brought up to the Leeds ground and coached during their holidays in April and early May. We do the same with likely lads recommended to us from town and village clubs by various members of our committee formed to observe these things. We give these lads every possible help and tuition in order to find the best talent for the county eleven."

Looking over these things, it is surely not going too far to say that Yorkshire wins because she organises for victory. Of course, the fact that such good attendances witness the Yorkshire matches incidentally means that the county is able to pay good wages to the men who wear the white rose, and benefits which the Yorkshiremen get are really worth while. On the other hand, it can never be said that the money at the disposal of the Yorkshire club has ever tempted the committee to gain an unfair advantage. It is a Yorkshire rule not to play men who were born outside the county.

REPLIES IN BRIEF!

"GEORGE M." (Ipswich).—The best of the willow trees from which bats are made grow in the counties of Essex and Norfolk, and the wood for the best bats is chosen with very great care.

"REGULAR READER" (Macclesfield).—Mr. J. T. Bosanquet was the originator of what is known as the "googly" style of bowling, and this is his own story of how he discovered it: "Somewhere about 1897 I was playing a game with a tennis ball known as Twisty-Twisty. The object was to bounce the ball on the table so that your opponent sitting opposite could not catch it. It occurred to me that if I could pitch a ball in a certain direction and with the same delivery make the next ball go in the opposite direction, I could mystify my opponent. I did this, and then progressed to a cricket ball."

Winning the Toss!

By
Maurice Tate

England's Test Match Hero of Sussex, who says that too—



—much fuss can be made about this little matter.

IT is really rather surprising how cricket players and cricket enthusiasts get divided on the most unexpected topics. During and immediately after the last tour in Australia by an England team the question of the toss in Test matches was raised, and opinion seemed to be fairly evenly divided as to whether we should carry on with the old system of tossing for choice in every match, or whether there should be some automatic alternative on the lines that the captain who lost the toss in the first game should have choice in the second, and so on.

WHERE EXPERTS DIFFER.

Reference was recently made to this matter of tossing by such acknowledged experts as Gilbert Jessop and Jack Hobbs. The former thinks it would be a very good idea if we adopted the automatic choice as distinct from the toss every time. On the other hand, Hobbs considers that the present system is both safer and better. Where such experts differ so widely one hesitates to jump in. But though this may be one of those places where angels fear to tread, I should like to have my little say on this question of to toss or not to toss.

ONE RIGHT IN FOUR.

Of course, you are fully aware of how the whole situation arose again in acute form. Out in Australia our captain had an idea that if he called "Heads!" every time things would come out right according to the law of averages, and that he would get the choice of innings as often as the other fellow. Well, the law of averages was in a perverse mood—if one may be permitted to use such a phrase—with the result that our captain lost the toss four times out of five. And then, just to emphasise the point, we lost four Test matches out of five, the one we won being that in which our captain had the choice of innings. Alas! the coincidence—or was it something more?—was so striking that some people have not been as rational over the business as we really ought to be.

A FATAL DOCTRINE.

I have seen it suggested that we should have won the "Ashes" if, instead of losing the toss four times out of five, our captain had won the toss in that proportion. One can never tell what might have happened, of course. One or two of the matches which we lost were such near things that the difference between first and second use of the wicket might have made the difference between victory and defeat. But, personally, I am inclined to think that we pay our conquerors a poor sort of compliment by suggesting that they won the "Ashes" by winning the toss. Moreover, we shan't do ourselves any good by thinking on these lines, for the inevitable effect is to lull us into a false sense of security. We must not be content to think that we shall beat the Australians this summer if we win the toss. We should organise for victory, find the men, develop the will and determination to succeed.

THE LAW OF AVERAGES.

Really, this question of whether to toss right through the Test matches is not nearly so important as some people are trying to make out, especially for games in this country. In the first place, it is obvious that over a long series of matches there will be precious little in it at the end. A friend of mine who is very keen on figures and cricket history tells me that, in the whole series of Test matches between England and Australia, the toss has averaged out practically equal—there is a difference of two only—and those two are in England's favour. What is more, he tells me that the history-books show that there have been slightly more defeats for the side which has won the toss than for the side which lost the toss. If these are really facts—and I have no reason to doubt their accuracy—then why worry? The law of averages will work out.

A DOUBTFUL ADVANTAGE.

Personally, I don't think it matters a great deal whether the choice of innings is decided by tossing or some other system. There are several more reasons for abolishing the toss in Australia than in this country. Out there, for example, the weather is much more reliable; therefore, the team which wins the toss has the advantage of the wicket, generally speaking. But in England the trouble is that the weather and the wickets change so quickly that you can seldom decide till the end of the match whether there was any advantage in winning the toss.

SHIFTING THE RESPONSIBILITY.

I recall last season a particular captain who confessed, readily and openly, just before the start of a match, that he hoped the other fellow would win the toss because he wouldn't know what to do for the best if he himself did win it. This was weak captaincy, for there are plenty of occasions when no man can tell whether the wicket, so far as a three-day match is concerned, will get better or worse. Such a lot depends on the behaviour of the Clerk of the Weather on the succeeding days, or even in the succeeding hours.

WHEN MAN PROPOSES.

Take a case from last season's play. When Middlesex were due to play Essex at Lord's the Middlesex captain won the toss. He looked at the wicket and decided to bat. Just as the players were going out, though, the rain came on, and there was no play that day. When the match did start Middlesex got the worst of the wicket and lost. The choice of innings didn't do them a bit of good; it did them harm. In hundreds of matches in the past must it also have been true that a seeming advantage became a disadvantage. It being, then, clear that you can't eliminate the luck, why worry?

Maurice Tate
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