

CRICKET—BY GREAT CRICKETERS!

DICK TYLDESLEY - - CHARLES PARKER.

Read the Special Signed Articles by these Brilliant Players—inside.

No. 953. Vol. XXIX.

Week Ending May 15th, 1926.

The Magnet 2^d

EVERY MONDAY.

Library



SO NEAR AND YET SO FAR!

In sight of the Tuck Hamper he cannot touch, Billy Bunter endures the tortures of Tantalus! (See the grand school yarn inside.)



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

CHUCKING HIS JOB!

A LOYAL Magnetite from Yorkshire writes for advice on the subject of "chucking up" his job. He is apparently doing very well where he is, but wants to come to London. I rather fancy he imagines London to be a place paved in gold, and that those who tread it are rolling in money. Such, however, is not the case. London at the present moment has its unemployed, its misery, as well as any other city, and in many cases is even worse off. No, my chum, I strongly advise you to stick to your job. You say you are doing well, that you have good prospects if you care to give of your best. Well, then, what better? Good jobs are not picked up every day, and the few there are on "offer" in London draw a pretty formidable number of ambitious applicants. There is a deal of truth in the old saying that "a bird in hand is worth two in the bush." In the case of the labour market it's better than a dozen birds in the bush. Stick to what you are doing; you're keen, ambitious to a degree, I know, and painstaking. These qualities will take you a long way in Yorkshire, you know—perhaps a longer way than old overcrowded London. Let me know from time to time how you progress. Keep smiling.

THE BIG BROTHER!

Should an elder brother stand up for his young brother? That's the query in a letter I received this morning from the eldest boy in a MAGNET family—I say MAGNET family, for there are three boys and two girls and all read the MAGNET. Certainly, a "big" brother should! My correspondent goes on to say experience has taught him that elder brothers, as a general rule, take little or no notice of their younger brothers. If these latter get into a hole they are usually left to get out of it unaided. If they cry when another chap "biffs" them one and run to their brother for sympathy or protection, my correspondent says that the elder brother usually washes his hands of the matter by remarking "Don't be a baby!" I don't think my chum is quite right there. True, some brothers would act like that, but thank heavens it isn't general. Youngsters instinctively look up to their elder brothers for guidance. Some, in fact, hero-worship them, which is quite natural and praiseworthy if the character of the elder brother is as it should be. Remember, the elder brother sets the example. If he is a sport, if he is sympathetic when sympathy is required, if he likes a straight deal, and thinks anything of his family name, he'll take more than a casual interest in the affairs of his younger brother. By that I don't mean he should fight all his battles. Not a bit of it. But he should be ready at all times to support his brother morally, to give him the right sort of advice, and to strengthen the natural bond of affection between them. In after life this small self-sacrifice of the elder brother, if we can call it such, will be repaid a thousand times over. Therefore, my big brother correspondent, throw aside the wrong impressions you appear to have gained in this matter and do by your young brothers as you would like to be done by if you had an elder brother.

TABLE FOOTER!

Although most of us have said good-bye to football until the start of next season, Magnetites who have been fortunate enough to win one of our topping table football games will, I feel confident, find many a spare hour in which to make use of them, even if King Cricket does reign supreme on the playing-fields. Already I have received many letters from delighted readers who have bagged one of these games, and the following list of prizewinners doubtless will bring many more letters of appreciation and satisfaction. Here's the result of "Pars" No. 7.

Fred S. Campling, 28, Victoria Road, Bloemfontein O.F.S., S. Africa; J. McCluskey, 27, Speedwell Street, St. Aldate's Oxford; B. J. Highton, The Village, Meriden, near Coventry; J. Hudson, 135, Ham Park Road, Forest Gate, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 953.

E. 7; I. A. Aschmann, Cheltenham, Main Road, Pine Grove, Cape Town, S. Africa; Lionel Johnson, 20, Newhouse Lane, Clayton Heights, Bradford; Redmond Banville, 2017, St. Jerome Street, Montreal; Quebec, Canada; N. Molyneux, 34, Delamere Road, Flixton, Manchester; Stanley Thomas, 30, Wern Road, Sandre, Swansea; S. H. Birch, 3, Mersey Road, Blackpool; R. Bishop, 5, Stour Street, Canterbury; Leonard Hardcastle, 49, Wells House Road, Willesden Junction; Thomas W. Hunt, 2, Hargrave Terrace, Kentish Town, N.W.5; Ernest Grundy, 29, Waring Street, Leicester; John Cedric Bury, 30, Brentwood Avenue, Aigburth Road, Liverpool; L. Morgan, 10, Beechwood Road, Uplands, Swansea; O. E. Orman, 51, Clive Road, Canton, Cardiff; G. H. Birch, 139, Queen's Parade, Scarborough, Yorks; Clifford Thomas, 7, Higher Scout, Waterfoot, near Manchester; N. Brown, 16, Villiers Street, Murton, Durham.

THE "GEM" LIBRARY.

I feel I must make a reference to the splendid series of "Cousin Ethel" and "George Figgins" stories now running in our companion paper, the "Gem." Most of you know how interested "lanky" George Figgins is in Cousin Ethel—that he would gladly lay down his life for her if it would save her a moment's pain. Well, then, this particular series deals with the bond of admiration and affection existing between Figgins and D'Arcy's cousin, and Martin Clifford handles it in a particularly vivid manner, which shows a close knowledge of human nature—its strength and its weakness. I strongly advise you to read this week's tale—"Figgins' Sacrifice." It's a—well, "Gem" of a story!

THE MONTH OF MAY!

After the cold winds of March, after the showers of April comes glorious May, with its sunshine and flowers. Hearts are light, faces are cheerful, for summer is heralded, and the sunshine feeling predominates. And in the dusk of the evening, just after a vigorous hour at the nets, what's better than a quiet read before bedtime. How many of us—youngsters and grown-ups—fly to a book. And how disappointed we are if we find the book dull. But Magnetites need never know that feeling, for the "Schoolboys' Own Library" is obtainable at the nearest bookstall. And what great stories are those in the issues of this popular library for the month of May. No. 27, entitled, "The River House Rivals," is a winner from beginning to end, and No. 28, "The Boy Who Was Soft," is, if anything, better than its companion volume, which is saying something. Therefore, my chums, in the quiet evening hours you can't do better than have these two excellent volumes close handy. You'll find no disappointment attached to them—they are books with a reputation, and I recommend them in all earnest.

A COURAGEOUS POLICY!

A high-class, British-built bicycle, guaranteed for five years, delivered free anywhere within the British Isles on payment of a deposit of only 2s. 6d., is the startling offer made by the Mead Cycle Co. (Inc.), of Sparkbrook, Birmingham. And the buyer does not have to remit another penny till he has ridden the cycle one month.

Obviously, the Mead Company has sufficient confidence in the high quality of its productions to know that once the customer has seen and tested the bicycle he will keep it, otherwise they would not make such a daring offer.

Readers who are contemplating the purchase of a bicycle would be well advised to get into touch with the Mead Company at once.

For Next Monday.

"FOR ANOTHER'S SAKE!"

By FRANK RICHARDS.

Your favourite author gives us a very powerful story of Harry Wharton & Co., in next week's issue, which is a sequel to the fine yarn you have just read. Having said that, you will need little urging from me to read it. 'Nuff said!

"THE PHANTOM OF THE DOGGER BANK!"

And next week's instalment of this magnificent story is simply it. Ferrers Locke is going great guns in this tricky case, and friend Stromsund will have to look slippery if he's going to dodge the net the great detective is gradually but surely casting for Stromsund's especial benefit.

THE CRICKET SUPPLEMENT.

You cricket fans can look forward to another brilliant supplement next week in which Wilfred Rhodes, the famous Yorkshireman, and W. W. Whysall, of Notts, each contribute a special signed article. How's that?

YOUR EDITOR.

OUT OF BOUNDS! Schoolboys who visit places which are, according to the authorities, out of bounds, know beforehand that they run the risk of a flogging, or worse, should they be caught. Yet Wharton & Co. of the Remove run that risk and bump into as pretty an adventure as they have met for many a long day!



A Magnificent New Long Complete Story of the Chums of Greyfriars,
featuring James Walker of the Sixth Form.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Too Inquisitive!

GRUNT!
It was an expressive grunt, and it came from Billy Bunter of the Remove Form at Greyfriars.

Bunter was standing in front of the letter-rack in Hall, and as he grunted he elevated his podgy little nose in an expression of deep disgust.

The reason for the disgust was because there was no letter in the rack for Billy Bunter.

Really, Bunter had scarcely expected one. Letters—especially letters containing remittances—were few and far between for Billy Bunter. Yet, though Bunter had no great expectations in that respect, he always made a point of visiting the letter-rack regularly in the faint hope that there might be a letter there addressed to W. G. Bunter.

On this occasion, as on numerous other occasions, there wasn't one, hence Bunter's disgust.

"Some fellows have all the luck," he murmured, scanning the few letters on the rack enviously. "One for Bulstrode, and one for Snoop, and one for Wharton, and one for Walker; but none for me. Blow! I think I'll take Walker's and Wharton's up to them. Might get a tanner from each, especially if they're tips. Here goes!"

And brightening up again, Billy Bunter reached up and jerked the two letters addressed to Harry Wharton and James Walker out from the rack.

"No good trying either Snoopy or Bulstrode," he grunted. "There ain't likely to be cash in Snoopy's, and if there was the mean rotter wouldn't part with any. And that beast Bulstrode would only kick a fellow, without even thanking him for his trouble."

Musing thus, Billy Bunter rolled away with the two letters he had selected to deliver to their owners. Though not noted for being kind and obliging,

Bunter was always ready to risk being so with good-natured fellows like Walker of the Sixth and Wharton of the Remove. Either of them might hand him a tanner or a bob for his trouble, especially if the letters did prove to contain a remittance.

So Bunter took charge of the letters and rolled away upstairs, hoping for the best.

He decided to try Walker first, knowing that that senior was playing for the First Eleven that afternoon, and might be going out very soon. Wharton's letter he crammed into his jacket pocket for the time being. The other letter he looked over as he went upstairs, and he grunted as he noted the postmark was Melford, a town some miles from Courtfield.

Bunter's hopes of getting a bob for being a kind and obliging fellow faded away. Walker's people did not live at Melford, nor had he any doting aunts or uncles there—not to Bunter's knowledge, at all events. Therefore, there was not likely to be a remittance in the letter. It was far more likely to be a bill.

In that case Bunter was more likely to get a kick for his trouble than a bob or a tanner!

Still, Walker was rather an easy-going and good-natured chap, and there was a chance that he would tip him before opening the letter.

Bunter felt it was worth risking, and so he rolled on to Walker's study, and, being very careful to knock first, he opened the door and rolled in.

Walker was at home. He was busy oiling a cricket-bat, and he looked up at Bunter's entrance.

"Hallo! That letter for me, kid?" he remarked, sighting the letter in Bunter's fat fist. "Chuck it on the table and clear!"

It was not a very promising beginning. But Bunter was not so easily discouraged.

"Oh, really, Walker!" he said. "It looks rather an important letter, you know. I thought it might be urgent, so I took it from the rack and brought it up specially for you."

"Like your dashed cheek!" grunted Walker.

He took the letter carelessly, but as he noted the writing and postmark he raised his eyebrows a trifle. Then, dropping the cricket-bat, he tore open the letter and started to read it.

Had Bunter been a modest and retiring youth he would have retired at this point, possibly. But Bunter was not, and he waited expectantly. If it proved to be good news, then he was all right, but if it proved to be bad news he was ready to bolt for the door on the instant.

"Good gad!"
It was a sudden startled exclamation from Walker, and it almost made Bunter leap out of his skin. As he blinked up Bunter saw that Walker's mouth was wide open with amazed alarm, and his eyes were fairly glued to the letter he was reading.

Bunter was curious now—very curious. Whether it was good news or bad news in the letter, it was evidently very amazing news.

His curiosity overcoming caution, Bunter stole a look at the letter. Walker had no eyes for Bunter; he seemed to have forgotten Bunter's very existence.

Unfortunately—from Bunter's point of view—Bunter's eyesight was none too good; but the handwriting was round and clear, and the fat youth's eyes glimpsed several words.

"—police—on Popper's Island—Come soon—don't fail me, or I shall be—"

Those brief snatches of sentences were all Bunter saw, but they were quite enough to make him give an involuntary gasp.

"Oh!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 953.

Walker heard the gasp and lowered the letter abruptly.

Then he saw Bunter's inquisitive eyes glued to the letter, and his amazed look changed to sudden anger as he made a swift grab at him.

"Why, what— Well, you prying little sweep," he gasped. "I'll teach you to stand there prying, you little beast!"

His grasp closed on Bunter's collar.

"Leggo! I didn't—I wasn't prying at all!" roared Bunter, squirming desperately. "Yarrooop! Leggo! I tell you—"

"I thought you'd gone," gasped Walker, his face showing mingled alarm and rage now. "You sneaking little worm! If I thought you'd read a word of—"

"Leggo!" choked Bunter, for Walker's grasp was savage. "I tell you I didn't—I wasn't reading it at all. Honour—ow-wow!—bright, Walker! I was just—just waiting—"

"You were trying to read the dashed thing, you fat little sweep!" hissed Walker, glaring at the fat youth anxiously. "Did you see—did you read—"

"Yarroop! No, not a word!" roared Bunter frantically. "I tell you I didn't! Can't you believe a fellow? I know nothing whatever about Popper's Island or the police. Honour bright, Walker!"

"What!"

"I tell you I know nothing about the pol—I mean about—about anything!" stammered Bunter. "I didn't even know— Oh, crumbs! Leggo! Yarrooooooh!"

Thump!

With one savage sweep of his arm, the Sixth Form prefect—enraged now and almost livid with something approaching fear—swung the fat junior across the top of the table. Then he grabbed his ashplant from the top of the bookshelves and started to lay it on Bunter's tightly-stretched trousers.

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

Again and again he brought the ashplant down across Bunter's fat person, and the Owl of the Remove fairly howled with anguish. Walker stopped, panting, at length, and allowed the almost weeping Billy Bunter to drop from the table.

"There!" panted the prefect. "That will perhaps teach you not to be so dashed inquisitive another time, Bunter! Now get out!"

And, grasping Bunter by the collar again, the enraged prefect ran him to the door, and helped him out into the passage with a parting kick. Bunter collapsed on the linoleum, roaring.

But he did not stay there long—scarcely a second, in fact. For Walker made a stride towards him, and as he had his ashplant raised, Bunter decided swiftly not to wait. He scrambled to his feet and fairly flew for his life.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Good Suggestion!

"I SAY, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's our prize fat man—"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Outside, Bunter!"

"Roll away, you fat barrel!"

"Close the door after you, Bunter!"

"Certainly, Wharton, old fellow!" said Bunter.

And he rolled inside the study and closed the door after him.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 953.

It was not what Harry Wharton had meant him to do, of course. Wharton had meant him to get outside the door before closing it. Bunter was perfectly well aware of that. He purposely misunderstood Harry Wharton.

Several minutes had elapsed since Walker had laid his ashplant about Bunter's fat person, yet, though the pain of the chastisement still lingered unpleasantly, Bunter scarcely realised it, or thought of it.

But he had not forgotten the interview with Walker of the Sixth by any means. Bunter was an exceedingly curious—if not "nosey"—youth, and the few words he had glimpsed in the letter, and Walker's significant attitude afterwards, had made a deep impression upon him.

Obviously—to Billy Bunter's suspicious mind—that letter had contained startling news, and, equally obvious, Walker had been furious and alarmed at the thought that Bunter had glimpsed some of the contents. Had it been merely an ordinary letter, Walker, being an easy-going, tolerant fellow, would have just cuffed him carelessly for his "cheek."

Bunter saw that, hence his curiosity. And when Bunter was curious, he never rested until he had satisfied his curiosity—just as, when hungry, he never rested until he had satisfied his hunger. Curiosity and hunger were Bunter's besetting sins—not all of them, though, by any means!

At all events, Bunter was excited and curious now. In his pocket reposed Wharton's letter, but he had forgotten all about that now. His visit to Study No. 1 was for another reason altogether.

"I say, you fellows," he went on before anyone could speak again. "Where are you off to this afternoon?"

The Famous Five glared at him. As a matter of fact, they had just been debating that important question among themselves, it being a Wednesday "half" and a bright, Spring afternoon. There was no sporting event on, and the Co. wanted to make the most of the holiday. Harry Wharton had plumped for the river; Bob Cherry for a cycling spin; Frank Nugent for a walk to Cliff House; Johnny Bull for a ramble along the cliffs; and Hurree Singh had no suggestion whatever to make. They were just arguing the matter rather heatedly when Bunter entered.

Bunter's question served to exasperate them still more.

"To get away as far as possible from a fat nuisance named Bunter!" snorted Johnny Bull. "Open that door, Franky, and I'll kick the fat ass out."

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"That's a suggestion, anyway," remarked Bob Cherry. "What about spending the afternoon dribbling Bunter about the quad? It would be jolly good exercise, anyway. I vote we start now."

And Bob made a significant move towards Bunter. Bunter jumped behind Harry Wharton with a yelp.

"Yarrooop! I say, keep him off, Wharton, old fellow!" he gasped. "Hold on, you fellows. I've got a jolly good suggestion to make."

"Good man!" said Bob Cherry. "What is it—going to peg out, or leave Greyfriars for good? Either is a jolly good suggestion."

"Oh, really, Cherry, don't talk rot!" grumbled Bunter. "Look here, what about a picnic on Popper's Island for this afternoon?"

"With you or without you?" inquired Bob Cherry. "It all depends on that whether we think it's a good suggestion or not, old fat man."

"Well, it's not a bad suggestion," remarked Frank Nugent, smiling. "Providing, of course, that we don't take Bunter. What about it, chaps?"

"What about it?" repeated Harry Wharton witheringly. "Have you forgotten that we're all stony, and haven't the cash for a blessed picnic-basket—never mind the grub? We could think of lots of good ways of spending the half if we only had some cash."

"Oh dear! That's the trouble!"

"It is," grunted Harry. "If only nunky hadn't let me down—"

"Perhaps the letter's come and is in the rack now," said Johnny Bull suddenly. "The noon post—"

"No good!" growled Harry Wharton. "I've been down to see less than three minutes ago. There was only a letter for Snoop in the rack. I'm blessed if I can make it out. My uncle said he was sending a couple of quid by the next post—that's two days ago, blow it!"

"Ho, ho, he!"

"Hallo! What the thump are you cackling about, Bunter?" snorted Harry.

"He, he, he!" chuckled Bunter. "I say, you fellows, if I put you into the way of getting the cash for a picnic, will you let me come with you?"

"You fat chump!"

"I mean it," grinned Bunter, blinking about him cheerily. "You fellows agree to take me and I'll see you have plenty of cash for the grub. Well, is it a go?"

"No, but you're going," said Bob Cherry. "Outside, you—"

"Hold on, Bob," said Harry Wharton, staring curiously at the grinning Owl of the Remove. "What's the game, Bunter? You say you'll find the cash for a picnic?"

"Yes, certainly—on condition you take me, though!"

"Have you been robbing a bank, or pinching somebody's wallet, Bunter?"

"Oh, really, Wharton!" said Bunter. "That's a rotten thing to suggest. I haven't pinched or borrowed or begged anything, you ass!"

"Turned over a new leaf, then?" inquired Cherry.

"No!" roared Bunter. "I tell you I mean what I say! You fellows include me in the party, and I'll hand you the cash for the outing. There! I can't say fairer than that, can I?"

"My hat!"

The juniors stared blankly at Billy Bunter. The fat junior was obviously in earnest, and not, so to speak, talking out of his hat!

Yet it was an extraordinary thing for a fellow like Bunter to offer. When Bunter had cash he usually—always, in fact—kept it to himself; that was, when he had any—which wasn't often, by any means.

And here he was, offering to supply the funds for the picnic if only they would be kind enough to allow him to join the party.

It was a trifle too generous on Bunter's part—for the credulity of the Famous Five. But though the rest chuckled, Harry Wharton eyed Bunter fixedly. He was very curious indeed to know what Bunter's "game" was.

"Look here, Bunter!" he said. "That sounds queer. Whose money is it you're offering us, to begin with?"

"Oh, really, Wharton, what a suspicious chap you are!" said Bunter. "I tell you it's straight enough. The money hasn't been pinched, or borrowed, or begged. Well, is it a go?"

"You'll hand us the funds for the outing if we allow you to come, Bunter?"

"Just that! Here and now, old chap!"

"Well, yes," agreed Harry, smiling. "If you'll find the cash, and it's been got honestly, then we'll allow you to come, Bunter. That so, you fellows?"

"Ha, ha! Yes!"

"The yesfulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Singh. "I think the esteemed Bunter will ask us to timefully wait until his ludicrous postal-order comes!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "That's it!"

"Quite a mistake!" said Bunter calmly. "Well, do I take it that you fellows agree to my terms?"

"Yes, yes!"

"Oh, yes!"

Bunter chuckled.

"Right!" he said. "Here you are, Wharton, old fellow!"

And, with another chuckle, the Owl of the Remove pulled from his pocket a crumpled letter and handed it over to Harry Wharton. It was the letter Bunter had taken from the letter-rack—a letter addressed—as Bunter had already noted—in the hand-writing of Colonel Wharton, Harry Wharton's uncle and guardian.

Harry Wharton blinked at it, and then he glared at Bunter almost speechlessly.

"Well, you—you—you—" Words failed him.

"What the thump is it?" asked Bob Cherry.

"It's my uncle's letter!" gasped Harry. "The—the awful fat fraud! It's the letter I was expecting with the dashed remittance!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The rest of the juniors roared as they understood Bunter's "game." Having heard Harry say he was expecting two pounds from his uncle, Bunter had obviously been pretty certain it was in that letter.

"Well?" asked Bunter. "Open it and see, Wharton. If the money's in that letter I shall keep you to your word; if it isn't, of course, the agreement's off. That's fair enough!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton tore open the letter, and surely enough there were two one-pound notes inside. But though it was a cheering sight, Harry Wharton was still wrathful.

"You—you fat fraud!" he stuttered. "What the thump are you doing with my letters, Bunter? Why, I'll smash you!"

He made a rush at the fat junior, and Bunter howled and took refuge behind the grinning Bob Cherry.

"Oh crumbs! I say, keep him off, Bob, old fellow! It's all right, I tell you, Wharton. I was just bringing the letter up, of course—just to oblige you. You fellows know what an obliging chap—"

"Collar him!" gasped Harry. "We'll teach him to bag fellows' letters, and hold 'em back like this!"

"Yes, rather!" chuckled Bob, turning round and grabbing hold of Bunter. "If you went down some minutes ago, Harry, then the fat ass must have had it some time! Bump him!"

"I say, you fellows, I tell you—Leggo! Oh crumbs!"

Bump!

"Yoooooooooop!" roared Bunter.

"Now again!"

"Yarooooop! I say, you fellows, stop-pit! Can't you see I haven't touched the rotten letter?" shrieked Bunter. "I had another letter to take to Walker. That's why I didn't bring it sooner!"

"Then why didn't you say so?" snorted Harry. "Like your cheek to touch the things at all! I hope Walker lammed you for your cheek."



The handle of the scull jammed itself into Bunter's fat chest and sent him backwards over the thwart. Crash! "Yooooooooop!" "Oh, my hat!" roared Bob Cherry. "Look out, Bunter!" (See Chapter 3.)

"The beast laid into me with his ashplant," groaned Bunter, staggering to his feet. "Said I was trying to squint at his rotten letter. As if I would!"

"Of course you wouldn't!" said Bob, with heavy sarcasm.

"Certainly not! I was just standing waiting, you know. I thought perhaps the mean beast would stand me a bob for being such an obliging chap," grunted Bunter. "And all I got was a laming with an ashplant."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's nothing to laugh at, you fellows. But, I say, there was something jolly queer about that letter," went on Bunter, with excited eagerness. "It was something about Popper's Island and the police, and wanting Walker to meet him there. What do you think about that?"

"Then you did read it?"

"Eh? Of course not—not at all!" gasped Bunter. "I—I just guessed that was in it. But, never mind Walker," went on Bunter hurriedly, realising he had said more than he had intended saying. "What about making a start, you fellows? I'm going to keep you to your word, Wharton."

"So that's why you want to have a picnic on Popper's Island!" snorted Johnny Bull, in deep disgust. "To spy on Walker—eh?"

"My hat!"

"Nothing of the kind!" said Bunter indignantly. "I never even thought of such a thing! Besides, I was only joking when I said—I mean, when I didn't say—"

"Oh, can't you see the fat ass is romancing?" snapped Harry Wharton. "It's all part of his little wangle to get us to take him there!"

"Well, what if it is?" said Bunter calmly. "You said that if I found the funds for you, you'd let me come with you to a picnic on Popper's Island this afternoon. Well, I found you the cash, and—"

"What's that?"

It was a sharp voice from the doorway, and it was the voice of Walker of the Sixth. The juniors turned abruptly and found Walker standing in the open doorway. His eyes were glinting, and his face red with sudden anger.

His look quite startled the Famous Five. It more than startled the guilty Billy Bunter.

"What was that, Wharton?" repeated Walker, in a grinding tone. "Did I hear Bunter saying you were intending to have a picnic on Popper's Island this afternoon?"

"Ahem! Well, yes, we did rather think of doing so, Walker," said Harry.

"You know it is strictly out of bounds, Wharton?"

"Ye-es. But—"

"There's no 'but' about it!" snapped Walker. "I forbid you to do anything of the kind, Wharton. If you dare to approach anywhere near that island this afternoon, Wharton, I shall report you, and make it hot for you myself. Understand?"

"Yes. But—"

"That's enough! In case you think of defying me," went on the prefect thickly. "I forbid you to go on the river at all this afternoon! If you do you'll be sorry for it, mark my words!"

"But look here, Walker," said Harry, with a trace of angry resentment. "I know the island's out of bounds, but

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 953.

you've no power to forbid our going on the river, prefect or no prefect."

"I order you to keep away from the river this afternoon!" snapped Walker. "That's enough!"

"Oh, really, Walker—Yarrooop!"

Bunter howled as Walker's flat hand caught him a terrific box on the ear, sending him spinning across the room. Bunter, collapsed on the hearthrug, wishing he had not interrupted, and rubbed his ear dismally.

"You hold your dashed tongue, Bunter," said Walker meaningly, "or you'll regret it, my lad! You understand, Wharton, and the rest of you? I forbid your going up river this afternoon!"

And with that Walker strode away, his eyes gleaming.

The Famous Five stared after him, and then they blinked at each other. Such autocratic and overbearing treatment from such a usually easy-going and good-tempered fellow like Walker amazed them.

But they were angry for all that. Harry Wharton helped the gasping and groaning Bunter to his feet.

"Well, the rotter!" he gasped. "Fancy Walker going on like that, you fellows. We're not standing that!"

"Rather not! He must be potty!"

"The pottiness is terrific," agreed Hurree Singh. "The esteemed Walker has a buzzful bee in his bonnet!"

"We're not standing that sort of thing," said Harry, his eyes gleaming rebelliously. "He's no right to forbid us going on the river, anyway! And he's no right to browbeat us like that."

"Rather not!" agreed Bob Cherry. "Let him go to pot!"

"He can for me!" said Harry grimly. "That settles it, you fellows. We're going up river, and we're going for a picnic on Popper's Island, Walker or no Walker! Blow him! The Remove aren't to be bullied like that. We're going!"

"Hear, hear!"

"I say, you fellows, that's the spirit," said Bunter, brightening up a little, though he still rubbed his burning ear. "Let old Walker go and eat coke! Shall we start at once?"

"Bunter's taking a lot for granted!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Going to keep your word, Harry?"

"Oh, dry up, and blow Bunter!" said Harry. "The fat rotter spoofed me into saying it!"

"Oh, really, Wharton, it was fair enough!"

"Oh, rats! Well, we'll let him come, chaps," said Harry grimly. "We'll keep our word. But he's got to pay his passage by working. He can take his turn with the sculls."

"Oh, crumbs! I say, you fellows, I sprained my wrist just before dinner. I'm afraid you'll have to excuse—"

"We'll excuse nothing, old man!" grinned Bob Cherry. "And, of course, we only agreed to let you come with us. We didn't agree to let you have any of the grub. You understand that, of course, Bunter?"

"Oh dear! I—I say, you fellows, I hope you're not going to be mean."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on, chaps!" said Harry, laughing at Bunter's dismay. "Now let's get busy!"

The Famous Five grabbed their caps and hurried out of doors towards the tuckshop to order the picnic-basket, and Bunter followed them, looking not at all cheerful. He had got what he had schemed for—inclusion in the picnic-party. By doing so, Bunter had hoped

to kill two birds with one stone. He had hoped to have a nice afternoon's outing, with a good feed to finish up with, and he had also hoped to investigate those strange words he had glimpsed in Walker's letter. That there was something "jolly queer" going on on Popper's Island he was convinced, and he was determined to find out what it was.

But Wharton's words regarding work and Bob's words regarding the grub sounded ominous, and Bunter didn't feel quite so happy about it all as he otherwise would have done.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Coker is Dictatorial!

"A L! aboard! Keep away from that picnic-basket, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Splice the mainbrace, and shiver me timbers!" bawled Bob Cherry. "Is Bunter going to row, or isn't he?"

"He is," said Harry Wharton, with a grin.

"Then the galley-bench is the place for you, Bunter, and not the stern-sheets. Get a move on, Bunter, and mind you don't shove your hoofs through the floorboards."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Get a move on and don't gas!" roared Bob.

"Oh, crumbs!" groaned Bunter.

He was already finding out that the picnic on Popper's Island was not going to be quite so delightful as he had anticipated—for him, at all events. It was plain to Bunter that though he had succeeded in "wangling" himself into the party, the Famous Five were determined to keep him on the move—and Bunter hated being on the move.

But he seated himself with a grunt on the bow thwarts, and grabbed the sculls with a grunt.

"That's the spirit, Bunter!" said Bob approvingly. "Now you chaps get ready to swim for it, if necessary; Bunter's going to row."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's a chance that he'll either upset the boat or dig a hole in the bed of the river that'll let all the water out and leave us stranded," said Bob. "Do be careful, Billy!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"We're risking a lot bringing you at all, old fat man," went on Bob seriously. "This isn't a cattle-boat or a mud-barge; it wasn't built to carry a weight like yours, old chap. Mind you pull steady, and keep in the centre of the seat."

Grunt.

Bunter did not deign to answer in words. Despite the fact that he always boasted of his powers as an oarsman, Bunter had a good idea that the Famous Five would very soon get tired of his sculling. Had he not had that idea he would never have consented to scull at all. Bunter did not like work.

So he merely grunted as Harry Wharton pushed off from the school raft, and the skiff danced away over the shining river. He was only biding his time.

It came soon enough—though Bunter wasn't ready for it, or expecting it.

As the boat reached mid-river Harry gave the word and started to pull. Bunter started about three seconds afterwards. His right scull dipped upwards, and his left scull dipped downwards.

It was the left that did the damage. It sliced into the water at an acute

angle, and as the blade vanished the haft came up violently.

Bunter had caught a "crab"—a very ferocious member of the species. The handle of the scull jammed itself into Bunter's fat chest and sent him backwards over the thwart.

Crash!

"Yooooop!"

"Oh, my hat! Look out!"

"Great Scott! Steady, Bunter!"

Bob Cherry fairly bellowed the warning, for it was very necessary, the boat all but capsizing, while Bunter's efforts to scramble up made matters worse.

It rocked violently while Harry Wharton strove madly to keep it on an even keel. Luckily he succeeded, and the vicious tug on the almost submerged scull eased as the boat slowed down.

"You—you fat duffer!" roared Harry Wharton. "You jolly nearly had the boat over then. Great Scott! Stay where you are, for goodness' sake, and let somebody else pull."

"Oh, crikey!" groaned Bunter, rubbing the back of his head. "I—I think you'd better, you know. Something seemed to grab hold of my scull, you know. It wasn't my fault!"

"You fat idiot!"

"Oh, really, Wharton, couldn't you see it wasn't my fault? Honour bright! I never intended to try any tricks so soon—I mean to say, it was—was an accident."

"Ha, ha, ha! It was a crab, you duffer!"

"I don't care what sort of a blessed fish it was," groaned Bunter, glaring over the side of the boat as if in search of the "crab." "but I'm jolly well not risking it again, you fellows."

"We'll watch that," grinned Harry Wharton. "Take his sculls, for goodness' sake, Bob! A joke's a joke, but if we let Bunter go on sculling it'll be carrying a joke too far."

"Ha, ha! Yes."

Bob Cherry took Bunter's place on the bow-thwarts, and the next moment the skiff glided away up-stream, with Harry and Bob pulling leisurely at the sculls.

Billy Bunter smothered a fat chuckle; he had not expected to dodge his task quite so soon or as easily as this. The Famous Five also chuckled. They had never really intended to allow Bunter to row for long.

The two juniors took it easily, for the afternoon was warm and sunny. Overhead the blue sky was dotted with fleecy clouds, and the sparkling water danced and rippled musically alongside the gliding craft. Between green banks and woods and smiling meadows the boat glided, passing dozens of school boats that were either tied up below the towing-path or hauled up high and dry where the banks shelved. The river had tempted many fellows out of doors that bright afternoon.

Presently the river widened considerably, and here the stream divided round a thickly-wooded island—known locally as Popper's Island. But though the Greyfriars fellows called it by that name, they never admitted that it really belonged to its namesake, Sir Hilton Popper, Bart., of Popper Court. To Greyfriars fellows, past and present, the island was common land, and many and oft had been the disputes between the schoolboys and Sir Hilton who claimed to own it.

Had Sir Hilton been a generous-minded gentleman there need never have been any disputes. But he was a crusty, narrow-minded old gentleman, who's main occupation seemed to be complaining to the Head regarding the trespassing of Greyfriars fellows. But he was a

magistrate, and also a governor of Greyfriars, and Dr. Locke—whatever his own private views regarding the ownership of the island were—was obliged, for the sake of peace and quietness, to place it strictly out of bounds to juniors and seniors alike.

Naturally, the Greyfriars fellows resented this strongly, and the juniors, at all events, visited the island in reckless disregard of the ban, the danger making the island all the more attractive and alluring to them.

Hence, on approaching the island now, Harry Wharton scanned the banks and river carefully.

"Keep your eyes peeled, chaps," he called. "We don't want to be spotted going there by gamekeepers or prefects either. Hallo! There's a boat! Hold on."

Bob Cherry, who had been pulling gently, slowed down, and looked over his shoulder. Ahead of them a skiff was lumbering along in their direction past the island. In it were three fellows, one of whom—a burly, rugged-faced senior—was tugging with desperate earnestness at the sculls.

"It's Coker," grinned Bob. "Dear old Coker! Look at the way he handles the sculls! Talk about turning a mangle!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors laughed, and waited for the boat containing the three Fourth-Formers to come along. It soon came up amid a tremendous amount of splashing from the oarsman.

"Cheerio, Coker!" bawled Bob Cherry. "Top of the afternoon, old top!"

Coker ceased his labours and turned round.

"Oh, it's you kids!" he growled, sighting the Removites. "Nice row you're making, I must say—like a blessed Bank Holiday gang of roughs! Stop that bawling, Cherry!"

"Certainly, Coker," said Bob meekly. "I hope you don't mind us rowing in the same river as you, old chap."

"I want no cheek!" snorted Coker.

"I'm sure you don't, Coker; you've got more than enough of your own," said Bob. "By the way, what have you got in your hands, Coker?"

"Eh? In my hands? Why the dashed sculls, of course," said Coker, staring.

"Oh!" said Bob in astonishment. "Are they sculls? I thought from the way you were waving your arms up and down and in and out just now that it was a muscle developer you were using. Sorry!"

"You—you—" Coker spluttered. "You cheeky young cad!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He must have been sculling all the time," said Bob, looking at his chums in surprise. "I suppose it's a new style of rowing—a windmill style! When the blades are up in the air they sort of catch the wind and send the boat along, I suppose. And when they're in the water they act as paddles; that accounts for all that splashing, chaps."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker glared at the grinning Removites, his rugged, heated features red with wrath. Coker always prided himself on his rowing and his finished style, just as he always prided himself on his skill as a footballer and cricketer. The thing that Coker could never understand was why nobody else saw any reason for his pride.

"You cackling dummies!" he spluttered. "Why, I'll jolly well come and smash the lot of you! That was cheek, Cherry!"

"Go hon!"

"Cheek!" roared Coker. "I'll teach you Remove kids to cheek me. You Remove fags are getting out of hand. Come on, Potter, and you, too, Greene. We're going to duck the cheeky cads!"

"Oh, leave 'em alone, you silly chump!" snorted Potter. "I'm not asking for trouble, if you are."

"Nor me," said Greene promptly. "They're six to three, Coker; it isn't good enough."

"Well, you—you funky cads!" snorted Coker, glaring at his henchmen witheringly. "Fancy finking a gang of fags! Bah! You fellows make me sick. Well, I shall have to deal with the cheeky little sweeps myself, then."

Coker grabbed at the sculls again, his rugged features grim with determination. As Coker was always declaring, he had his dignity and prestige to think of.

The next moment, under the propulsion of his brawny arms, the Fifth-Formers' skiff went forging towards the Removites' craft. Though Coker's style of sculling left a great deal to be desired, he certainly managed to send the boat along.

With grins of anticipation the Famous Five waited for it. They were not afraid of Horace Coker, mighty man as he undoubtedly was. Bob Cherry and Harry Wharton stood up in the boat with cheery grins on their sun-burned faces.

"Here he comes!" chuckled Bob. "Stand by to repel boarders, me hearties."

"Yes, rather!"

Thud!

The Fifth-Formers' craft crashed into the Removites' skiff, and the two boats rocked alarmingly.

"Coker, you idiot!" yelled Potter.

But Coker took no heed; he evidently meant business. He dropped his sculls and made a flying leap into the juniors' craft.

It was quite a good leap, but unfortunately—for Coker—Bob Cherry's scull was in the way. It jammed Coker full in the chest, and after seeming to stand on nothing for a brief instant Coker, his wild leap stopped in mid air, dropped.

Splash!

There was a clear yard of water between the two boats, and Coker fell into that space.

There sounded a terrific yell, which ended in a choking gurgle as the shining waters of the Sark closed over the crimson features of Horace Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites yelled with laughter, and even Potter and Greene joined in.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

On the Island!

"H A, ha, ha!"

Coker's head appeared above the disturbed surface of the river—a dripping head and streaming, furious face. He gasped and spluttered as he clutched madly at the Removites' boat.

Bob Cherry dug at him cheerfully with his scull, keeping him off with ease.

"Stay where you are, old chap, and cool down a bit," he advised. "There are six of us in this boat already, you know—twelve, counting for Bunter's weight."

"You—you—gurgle—you cheeky cads!" spluttered Coker, treading water and glaring at the laughing juniors. "Oh, just you wait! I'll thumping well make mincemeat of you kids for this! Ow, ow-wow!"

"Come on, Coker!" grinned Potter. "Lend me a hand to yank the awful ass into the boat, Greene."

"Right-ho!"

Potter and Greene moved to the stern of the boat to give their leader a helping hand—a hand he plainly needed, for he was not a good swimmer. But Coker would have none of it.

"Go for 'em, you grinning asses!" he roared. "Never mind me. I'm going to board their boat and chuck 'em all out!"

With that Coker made a savage onslaught on the Removites' craft. As he did so Harry Wharton pulled gently at the sculls, and the boat danced away from Coker.

Coker glared after it speechlessly and started to swim in pursuit.

"Come back, you silly ass!" snorted Greene. "Can't you see they're making a dashed fool of you, Coker?"

But Coker either wouldn't or couldn't see that. He went on swimming, and Wharton waited until he was a yard away from the boat, and then went on pulling. In this wise the boat neared the island, and a last few pulls sent the boat aground on a sandy beach.

The grinning Removites jumped ashore and waited for Coker.

Coker came forging wearily up, plainly at his last gasp. His weary feet touched firm sand, and he staggered on his knees in the shallows, exhausted and panting.

"Rotters!" he panted. "Oh, you rotters! I'll—I'll smash you to little bits for this, Wharton!"

And, staggering to his feet, Coker made a blind rush through the shallows.

"Line up!" sang out Bob Cherry.

"What-ho!"

Coker's furious rush was stopped in a flash, and five pairs of hands closed on his dripping form. There was a brief struggle, and then Potter and Greene, from their boat, caught a swift vision of Coker's waving arms and legs as he sailed through the air and dropped into the river again.

Splash!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good-bye, Coker!" called Bob Cherry. "Man to be rescued there, Potter!"

But Coker was not finished yet, by any means. He didn't wait for Potter and Greene to rescue him, but he made another dash for the shore. Coker was a stickler.

He scrambled ashore, dripping and panting and gasping, and he made another mad rush at the laughing Removites. Again he went sailing into the river, all arms and legs.

This time he made no further attempt to attack the island defenders. He was "whacked," as Bob Cherry cheerfully expressed it. He could scarcely keep his head above water, much less swim ashore, and Potter and Greene ran their boat close inshore and hauled his dripping, exhausted form into their boat.

Coker collapsed into the bottom of the boat and Potter pulled away from the island. He had evidently concluded Coker had had enough, whether Coker thought he had or not.

Roaring with laughter, Harry Wharton & Co. watched the boat as it danced away and vanished round the bend in the river, Coker bellowing at his henchmen, evidently telling them what he thought of them.

But the bellowing died away at last, and Harry Wharton was turning away with a chuckle when he paused, his gaze fixed on the opposite bank of the river.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 953.

"Oh, my hat!" he said. "Look there!"

The juniors looked. Standing on the bank, staring hard in the direction whence Coker & Co. had vanished, was a tall man in riding-breeches, and carrying a hunting-crop.

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Bob Cherry in dismay. "It's old Popper!"

"It is," breathed Harry Wharton. "Quick! Out of sight, chaps! I don't think the old buffer has spotted us. Get down!"

"Yes, rather!"

The juniors crouched down, Bunter's heart, at all events, thumping against his fat ribs. The foliage ran down to the water's edge, hiding the boat and hiding the juniors, now they were crouching low. But whether Sir Hilton Popper had already seen them was a question.

"What rotten luck!" breathed Harry Wharton. "He must have heard that silly ass, Coker, making a row, I suppose. Blow Coker!"

"Hallo!" murmured Bob. "The old hunk's off!"

"Hasn't seen us, thank goodness!" said Frank Nugent.

Apparently Sir Hilton had not seen them, though Harry Wharton had his doubts about that. At all events, after staring down-stream for some moments he gave one suspicious glance at the island, and then he vanished into the woods beyond the towing-path.

"Good riddance!" grinned Bob Cherry. "A jolly lucky escape, chaps! All serene now, Harry?"

"I hope so, though we'd better keep our eyes and ears open after this. Blow that ass, Coker! We should have been safe enough, but for him. Let's get the stuff ashore and then we'll have a ramble round."

"What about Bunter?" said Johnny Bull. "We can't leave him with the tuck."

"Oh, really, Bull! Of course you can!" said Bunter indignantly. "Looks to me as if you think a chap might touch it."

"You wouldn't, of course!"

"Of course not! But if you're so jolly suspicious—"

"We are, old nut," grinned Bob Cherry. "Very suspicious!"

"In that case I shall refuse to join you in the ramble," said Bunter, with dignity. "I refuse to accompany fellows who doubt my honour."

"Oh, my hat! Then you'll stay and look after the tuck, old fat man?" said Bob. "Good man, Bunter! That's no end kind of you."

"Not at all!" said Bunter, his eyes gleaming. "You fellows trot away and enjoy yourselves."

"While you scoff the grub," snorted Johnny Bull, staring at Bob. "Look here, Bob, are you potty? If we leave Bunter with the tuck—"

"Why not?" said Bob. "Bunter won't touch the grub—"

"Certainly not!" said Bunter eagerly. "Bob knows I won't!"

"I do," said Bob cheerily. "I'm going to see you don't, Billy. I'm going to tie you to a tree, you see."

"Eh? Wharrer you mean?" hooted Bunter in alarm.

"What I say," said Bob. "We're going to tie you to that tree, Bunter. To make sure you don't scoff the grub, you know. Collar him, chaps!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors roared at the expression on Bunter's fat face. It was only too clear that Bunter's idea in wanting to

stay behind was not to take care of the tuck but to help himself to it.

As the juniors made a move to obey Bob, Bunter jumped to escape, but they were too quick for him. Bob's hand closed on him, and he was dragged back. Then Frank Nugent unhitched the painter from the boat, and, despite Bunter's struggles and indignant protestations, he was tied with his back to the nearest tree.

"There you are, Bunter," said Harry Wharton with a chuckle. "We'll leave you to take care of the tuck now, old man. Mind you keep a close eye on it. Come along, chaps! What's the matter, Franky?"

Frank Nugent did not reply for the moment—he was staring hard at the belt of woodland some yards ahead of them with rather a puzzled look on his face.

Then he gave a short laugh.

"Nothing," he said. "I—well, I fancied I spotted a face—a man's chivvy among the trees there. But—"

"You're seeing things, Franky," grinned Bob Cherry. "Been sampling the raspberry wine from the basket, or what?"

"Must have fancied it," said Frank.

"You must," grinned Harry Wharton. "Come along and let's be moving."

And he led the way into the wood, his chums at his heels. But though Frank had agreed that he must have been mistaken, he glanced round him very keenly as he dived after his chums into the trees. He had seen something—he was sure of that.

Billy Bunter watched the five vanish amid the trees with feelings too deep for words. He had been more eager than the others to ramble round the island—for certain reasons of his own—but he had been much more eager to be left with the basket. Bunter still had a suspicion that the juniors did not intend to let him join them at tea, though he had forced them to let him join the party for the outing; and he had been determined to have his share nevertheless—and more than his share, if possible.

But that intention had been nipped in the bud by Cherry's idea of tying him to the tree. And Bunter's feelings were really too much for him as he groaned and flopped down on the ground at the foot of the tree. Only his wrists were tied, but they had been tied securely, and he knew it was no good trying to free himself.

And scarcely a dozen yards away was the picnic-basket, literally bursting with tuck—so near and yet so far.

Bunter blinked at it dismally. The sight of it made him frantically hungry. "Beasts!" he mumbled. "Oh, the awful beasts! Fancy torturing a chap like this! If only—M-mum—my hat!"

Bunter breathed that last in a whisper, his heart almost in his mouth.

For just then a rather astonishing—and startling—thing had happened.

There sounded a quick, stealthy rustle amid the foliage a few yards on Bunter's left, and then from the foliage stepped the figure of a man.

He was quite a young man, wearing good clothes, but sadly muddled and rumpled, and wearing no hat on his untidy mop of towled hair. His whole appearance was dishevelled.

Bunter blinked at him, sudden terror gripping the fat junior.

There was something decidedly unnerving in the man's sudden and unexpected appearance, and certainly in his stealthy manner.

Scarcely daring to breathe, Billy Bunter watched with goggling eyes.

The man had not seen Bunter—that was very evident.

In a few quick, stealthy steps he reached the picnic-basket, and with a few quick movements he had it open before him. His next movements staggered the watching fat youth.

From the basket he snatched sandwiches, a bottle of raspberry wine, a tin of lobster, and several other articles, cramming them into his pocket with feverish haste. Then, taking out the clean white cloth, he piled more things into it, and twisted the cloth into a bundle.

He laid that on the grass, and took out a pocket-wallet next. From this he swiftly withdrew a piece of stiffish paper—Bunter caught the rustle of it—and placed it on top of the basket, with a stone on the top to keep it from blowing away.

This done, he took a swift glance about him riverwards, and then—fortunately, without a glance in Bunter's direction—he stepped back into the foliage and vanished, his stealthy footsteps dying away almost at once.

"Mum-mum—my hat!" mumbled Billy Bunter.

He was utterly flabbergasted.

What the strange scene he had just witnessed meant he could not imagine. It was certainly queer to say the least of it. And then, quite abruptly, Bunter's terror vanished and his eyes gleamed.

He had remembered those queer words in Walker's letter.

That there was some queer mystery on Popper's Island those words had already made him suspect. Now he knew there was.

But what did it mean? And what had James Walker, a prefect at Groyfriars, to do with it?

Bunter wondered as he sat there with the nearby murmur of the river and the distant shouts of the Famous Five in his ears. He had wanted to ramble round the island solely to investigate his suspicions. And he had found out something without the trouble of investigating.

Bunter's eyes gleamed as he stared at the slip of paper on the lid of the basket. He could not see what it was, but he had heard the rustle, and he guessed. And he waited almost breathlessly for the return of the Famous Five, when he would know if that guess was a correct one.

Something else happened first, however.

As he stared, a sudden breeze came rippling over the surface of the shining river, and rustled among the willows. Then it caught the slip of paper and whisked it away, leaving on the basket the stone only. The unknown had not made it secure evidently.

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Bunter.

He watched the paper as it blew across the little clearing, and then he gave a gasp of relief as he saw it catch amid a thicket and remain fluttering there.

"Oh, good!" murmured Billy Bunter. "If only I could get free!"

Billy Bunter had already made several ineffectual attempts to break free from the rope, and he started again now with feverish energy. He was quite certain now that the slip of paper was a treasury note—amazing as it seemed—and he was anxious to get his fat fists upon it.

"If I get it first it belongs to me, of course," murmured the fat junior, arguing with himself. "Findings are keeping! Besides, that chap meant it for

the grub, and as there wouldn't have been a picnic but for me, that belongs to me by rights. If those beasts get here first they might collar it for themselves."

With this remarkable argument to support his claim, Billy Bunter went on struggling, and suddenly he felt the rope loosen.

"Oh, good!" he grinned. "Here goes!"

Another wrench and the rope fell away from him, and Bunter was just starting towards the paper fluttering among the bushes when the sound of footsteps came to his ears.

He jumped back into hiding like a flash—fearful of the return of the unknown stranger of the island. But the next moment his fears fled as the sounds became louder—the crashing of more than one person approaching. Then came a voice—a well-known, cheery bawl.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here we are, Bunter!"

"Oh, blow the luck!" groaned Bunter.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Scores Again!

INTO the clearing dashed the Famous Five, ruddy and cheery, from their ramble over the island.

"Here we are again!" called Bob Cherry. "Jove, I'm hungry enough to eat Bunter! I—Hallo, hallo, hallo! Where is Bunter?"

It was a question that brought alarmed looks quite suddenly to the faces of the Famous Five, as they blinked round the clearing in search of the fat junior.

They did not see him—Bunter took care of that. Even yet he felt there was a good chance of getting hold of that mysterious slip of paper if he could only manage it without being seen.

So he lay low and said nothing.

"Well, my hat!" breathed Harry Wharton, sighting the loose piece of rope below the tree. "The fat rascal's broken loose!"

"Then it's a poor look-out for the tuck!" gasped Frank Nugent, making a sudden rush for the basket.

"Oh crumbs!"

The others followed Frank and stood round him as he tore up the lid of the basket.

There was a simultaneous howl.

"Gone!"

"The—the fat burglar!"

"He's done us, after all!"

The chums of the Remove gazed into the interior of the picnic-basket, with deep, deep feelings. There was still a fair amount of tuck in the basket, but the greater amount by far had vanished—with Bunter, or so they suspected.

"Oh dear!" groaned Bunter below his breath, as he blinked out and saw the wrathful faces of the juniors. "Oh crumbs! I never thought of that! They'll blame me for it!"

There was little doubt about that.

"Well, the little rotter!" breathed Harry Wharton. "Oh, great Scott! Supposing—"

Harry broke off, as a sudden new fear took possession of him, and ran through the fringe of bushes to the water's edge. Then he breathed deeply with relief. The boat was still drawn up where they had left it, its nose aground on a sandy ridge.

"Oh, good!" said Harry. "I feared the fat rascal had taken the boat, too; he's rotter enough!"

"Then he must be on the island yet," snapped Johnny Bull, his eyes gleaming.



As Coker leapt, Bob Cherry's scull caught the Fifth-Former full in the chest, and after seeming to stand on nothing for a brief instant, Horace Coker dropped like a stone. Splash! There was a clear yard of water between the two boats and Coker disappeared into it with a wild yell. "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Removites. (See Chapter 3.)

"Come on, we'll search the blessed island for the fat worm!"

"Yes, rather!"

The juniors were a little tired, and more than a little hungry; but they were more furious now than either tired or hungry. All they wanted at the moment was to catch Bunter. The fact that the tuck—or most of it—was gone was bad enough, but the thought that Billy Bunter had "done them" after all was exceedingly exasperating to them.

They started off at once, seething with wrath. From his hiding-place Bunter watched them go, with a fat grin. He had been almost on the point of coming out to explain matters, but the sight of the juniors departing made him pause, his eyes gleaming.

Now was his chance to get the Treasury note—Bunter did not doubt it was that—and with luck he might get the chance to get outside some of the tuck that was left. He could easily put the blame on the unknown man of the island.

Musing thus, Bunter waited until the juniors had vanished, and then he dashed across the clearing towards the thicket, where the paper still fluttered, caught among the brambles.

Then his heart leaped.

It was a Treasury note, right enough—a note for ten shillings.

"Oh, what luck!" babbled Bunter.

He pocketed the note gleefully, and

then he made a dive for the picnic-basket—intending to make hay while the sun shone, so to speak.

But he did not get the chance. Even as his hand touched the lid, a hurried footstep sounded among the trees, and next instant Johnny Bull crashed into the clearing.

Bunter was caught in the act, and Johnny gave a howl.

"Here he is, chaps!" he howled. "Oh, you fat rotter!"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter.

He made a sudden rush for the boat, but Johnny Bull was too quick for him. He leaped on Bunter from behind and brought him crashing down.

"Yarroooooop!" roared Bunter, as his face was jammed into a bed of nettles. "Oh dear! Lemme gerrup!"

"Not much!" grinned Johnny Bull, seating himself on the fat junior's broad back. "Here he is, chaps!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Great pip!"

Amid a crashing of thickets Bob Cherry appeared in sight, followed instantly by his chums. They stared and gave yells as they sighted Bunter.

"Caught him in the act, just lifting the lid of the basket!" said Johnny grimly. "Thundering good job I suggested that one of us should go back to guard the basket. We might have known the fat worm would be hanging round waiting the chance to finish the job!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 953

"Phew! Yes, rather!"

"I say, you fellows—" gasped Bunter. "It's all right! It wasn't me—"

"Oh, no—not at all!" said Bob Cherry, with heavy sarcasm. "You fat burglar, we'll put you through the mill for this!"

"Oh dear! I say, you fellows, it wasn't me, I tell you!" panted the fat junior, squirming desperately. "Look here, I'll tell you just how it was!"

"You needn't bother!" said Harry Wharton in deadly tones. "We want no fearful whoppers, Bunter. We're going to teach you a lasting lesson, Bunter!"

"Oh crumbs! I say, you fellows, listen!"

"We're not listening! Yank him up, chaps! We'll bump him soundly, and then we'll duck—"

"Ow! I say, leggo!" roared Bunter, as they laid angry hands on him. "I tell you it wasn't me! I swear it wasn't me! It was a man—a hulking great villain—who came and pinched the grub!"

"What?"

"It's a fact!" almost shrieked Bunter. "He came while I was tied up, and he sneaked the grub. I tried to get free to stop him, and I only managed to get loose after he'd gone."

"Well, what a fearful whopper!" said Harry Wharton. "You fat ass, can't you tell a better one than that?"

"But it's a fact!"

"Rot! Where were you when we came back, then?" snorted Johnny Bull. "You must have been hiding, you fat worm! Why didn't you show yourself?"

"Oh crumbs!"

Bunter realised, with deep dismay, that that little fact wanted some explaining.

"It—it was like this, you fellows!" he gasped desperately. "I was lying there—"

"And now you're lying here!" sniffed Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry!" stammered Bunter. "I'm speaking the truth! I was lying there—unconscious, you know—when you fellows came back. I—I had a fearful struggle with that great hulking brute, but it was no good."

"Oh, my hat!"

"It was no good!" repeated Bunter, gaining confidence. "He was too much even for me. He stunned me with a blow—a fearful blow on the right temple. I—I lay unconscious until just before you came up. That—that's just how it was!"

"You fat ass!"

"I fought like a lion!" said Bunter, blinking up hopefully at the juniors. "I did my utmost to save the grub, I can tell you. But it was no good. I—I hope you fellows don't doubt my word."

If Bunter hoped that he was an optimist of the first water. The looks on the faces of the Famous Five ought to have told him that he need have no hopes in that direction.

"Up with the fat rascal!" roared Bob Cherry. "A good sound bumping and then a ducking in the river! That's the programme!"

"Good!"

Only Bunter thought it wasn't good. He howled with fear as five pairs of hands grasped him, but his howls were ignored, and he was lifted up.

Bump!

"Yarrooooooh!"

Bunter gave a fearful yell as his fat person smote the grass. The grass was not hard, but Bunter descended with great force, and he was hurt for all that.

But that was only the beginning. Again and again he was lifted and

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 953.

dropped, and again and again Bunter's yells of anguish awoke the echoes.

The juniors stopped, breathless, at last, to Bunter's heartfelt relief.

It was a relief that did not last long.

"Now for the river!" said Harry, winking at the others. "We'll teach Bunter not to be so greedy, chaps!"

"Yow-ow! Ow! I say, you fellows, I can't swim—you know I can't!" shrieked Bunter frantically. "I say—leggo! Oh, crumbs! Lemme go! I tell you—Yooooop!"

Bunter fairly shrieked as the juniors obeyed him and let him go. They swung him through the air and let go, and Bunter sprawled in a foot of water on the margin of the river.

It was not as bad as Bunter had feared, but the water was wet, naturally, and Bunter roared with dismay. He scrambled up, gasping and groaning.

"Now again!" called Harry Wharton, chuckling. "Come on, Bunter!"

But Bunter did not "come on." He did something else quite unexpectedly. He fully thought the juniors would throw him next into deep water, and he was desperate.

Instead of splashing out, he turned suddenly, and before the juniors grasped his intention he gave a sudden desperate heave at the boat which was but a yard to his left.

It had only been rested with its nose on a little ridge of sand, and it slid off at once, and Bunter fairly hurled himself into it.

His weight sent it dancing out, and the juniors yelled in sudden alarm.

"Stop him! Oh, my hat!"

Harry Wharton made a grab at the bows of the moving skiff, but was just a second too late. The next moment the skiff, with Bunter sprawling in the bows, was gliding out into the river.

"Oh, great Scott!" gasped Harry Wharton in great alarm. "The fat cad's done us!"

"Come back, you fat worm!" roared Bob Cherry angrily. "Come back, or we'll scalp you for this, Bunter!"

"He, he, he!"

A fat chuckle floated over the water. Bunter scrambled up into the gently-moving boat, and grinned back at the alarmed juniors.

"He, he, he!" he cackled. "I say, you fellows are slow, you know! Who's top dog now—what? This is where I smile, chaps! He, he, he!"

"You—you fat rotter!"

Bunter grabbed a pair of sculls and seated himself on the stroke-thwarts. After a great struggle and a great deal of splashing he managed to turn the boat round with its nose pointing downstream towards Greyfriars.

The operation filled the Famous Five with alarm. Was Bunter going to leave them marooned on the island?

"Bunter, you fat worm!" yelled Bob Cherry. "You dare—you dare to leave us stranded here and you'll regret it!"

"Yes, rather! Bunter, you fat clam," shouted Harry Wharton, "you're not going to leave us stranded here?"

Bunter rested on his sculls and grinned at them cheerfully.

"It all depends," he said. "I shouldn't like to leave you chaps all alone on the island all night, of course. I'll tell you what, Wharton. Make it pax, and let me have my whack of the tuck that's left and I'll come back. How's that?"

"You howling fat rotter—"

"That's enough, Bull!" said Bunter, with dignity. "I strongly object to being called names by you! Another insult from you and I shall just pull

away and leave you! So mind your eyes!"

"You—you—"

"Chuck it, Johnny!" said Harry Wharton, almost grinning. "The fat rotter's got us in a cleft-stick, and he knows it. We'll have to give in."

"No doubt about that," groaned Bob Cherry. "Give way to the fat rotter—I'm hungry. We can take it out of his fat hide afterwards."

But Bob was wrong there. Bunter had already thought of that possibility.

"Well, is it a go?" he asked sweetly. "Buck up, you chaps! I shall only hold the offer out for another minute. Make it pax, and let me have my whack of the tuck, and I'll bring the boat back. Is it a go, Wharton?"

Harry Wharton breathed hard.

"Yes; it's a go, Bunter. Bring that boat back."

"Good! I thought you chaps would agree, somehow," grinned Bunter. "And you won't touch me for this—either now or when we get back to Greyfriars?"

"Bring that boat in and see!" hooted Bob Cherry.

"Oh, all right!"

Bunter bent to the sculls. Harry Wharton yelled. He knew that Billy Bunter was quite capable of any idiotic trick. So long as he got out of present troubles Bunter never looked ahead before leaping for future ones.

"All right, Bunter!" he yelled. "We agree!"

"You'll let bygones be bygones, old chap?"

"Yes, yes!"

"Yes, blow you!"

"Oh, good!"

Bunter chuckled—a fat chuckle that echoed over the water, and a tremendous splashing followed as he turned the boat round. But it was round at last, and then Bunter pulled for the shore. Luckily he managed to reach it without upsetting the boat, and as the boat grounded on the sandy beach he stepped cheerily out.

He could afford to feel cheery just then. He had had the satisfaction of "doing down" the Famous Five, he had a ten-shilling note in his pocket, and he had the prospect of a feed before him. True, most of the grub had already gone, but Bunter was quite satisfied that most of what was left would find its way into his interior. He could afford to feel cheery, and he cackled as he landed.

"He, he, he!"

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Very Queer!

THE Famous Five glared and glared at Bunter as he stepped cheerily from the boat and blinked round through his big glasses at them. They would have parted willingly with a term's pocket-money almost to be in the position to mop up the earth with the fat youth's podgy form. But they had given their word, and they meant to stick to it to the letter.

"He, he, he!" grinned Bunter. "I say, you fellows do look a set of moulting owls! Brighten up! Be cheery—like me, you know! No good scowling at me just because I've made you look a set of perfect idiots!"

"You—you—"

"Bite the bullet!" advised Bunter. "Take it smiling—like me, you know! He, he, he!"

"You—you— Bump the fat rotter!" gasped Bob Cherry. "I can't stand much more of his dashed cackling—" "You can't do that," grinned Bunter. "You can't touch me without breaking your word, old chap. You are rather a silly ass, Bob, you know! I rather think— Here, wharrer you at? Leggo! You promised—"

"I'll show you what I'm at!" snorted Bob Cherry. "We promised not to touch you over that other business, and we won't; but we didn't promise to let you give us your dashed cheek, and we're not going to let you, my pippin. Bump the fat ass for cheeking us, chaps!"

"Ha, ha! Yes, that's it."

"I say, you fellows— Leggo!"

Bunter roared with sudden alarm as the juniors grasped him. He had not expected them to be quite so particular regarding the terms of the truce. He knew now that he had gone too far.

He was lifted and bumped with a resounding bump on the wet earth. Then he was lifted and bumped again.

"Yarrooooo!" roared Bunter. "Stop-pit! I'm sorry. I won't—ow, yow!—cheek you again."

"He says he's sorry," grinned Harry Wharton. "Let him go, then, chaps. Mind you, that's just to go on with, Bunter. Any more silly cackling or crowing, and you're for it. See?"

"Grooooooh! Beasts!"

Bunter did see, and he cackled no more; he saw it didn't pay. He rolled after the others as they made for the basket. Like the Famous Five, Billy Bunter was hungry—only much more so.

The juniors soon had what was left of the tuck out of the basket, and Billy Bunter was stretching out a fat hand for a jam-tart when Harry Wharton rapped it sharply with the back of a table-knife.

"No, you don't!" he snapped. "You've already had most of the grub, and you'll have just your share and not a scrap more. We agreed to give you that under compulsion, and we'll keep our word."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Squat down there, and we'll hand you your whack," said Harry. "Reach a hand for any yourself, and I'll rap it again with the knife—like that!"

Rap!

"Yoooooop!"

Bunter withdrew his hand—which had reached for a biscuit—with a yell as Harry rapped it smartly.

"Yow! Oh, you awful beasts!" howled Bunter. "Haven't I told you that I haven't touched a blessed scrap of the grub yet? It's a blessed fact—I swear I haven't!"

"Gammon!"

"I haven't!" howled Bunter frantically. "You fellows are making a mistake, I tell you. It was that fellow I told you about who took the rotten grub."

"My hat! The fat ass is keeping that yarn up," said Bob Cherry. "I should have thought— Hallo, hallo! Where's the silly tablecloth? There was one in the basket."

"That's queer," said Harry Wharton blankly. "Bunter, have you eaten the cloth as well as the grub, you fat billy-goat?"

"Don't I keep telling you I didn't touch the grub?" said Bunter, furious at the thought that he wasn't going to get the lion's share of what was left, after all. "I can tell you where the rotten cloth is; it was taken by that rotten tramp. He wrapped it round the tuck, and— Look! There you are! Isn't that proof?"

Bunter's voice ended in an excited yell as he pointed to something lying in the grass just by the basket. It was a

pocket-knife—a neat, pearl-handled knife, obviously not belonging to Billy Bunter.

Nor did it belong to any of the juniors, and they blinked at it in sudden wonder.

"Great Scott! Where did this come from?" ejaculated Harry, picking the knife up and looking it over. "The blade's open, and it's pretty clear that it was used to cut the cords on the basket."

"Of course it was," snorted Billy Bunter. "I saw the man cut it myself."

"You footling ass! For goodness' sake drop that yarn, Bunter!"

"But it's true!" shrieked Bunter. "I'm telling the truth, I tell you. He sneaked in here while I was lying there, and he took the tuck and cleared off. He didn't see me—"

"I thought he knocked you senseless?"

"I—I— That was just a figure of speech," explained Bunter lamely. "But it's true enough, you fellows. A chap did come along and take the grub."

The juniors looked at Bunter fixedly. Bunter was obviously telling "whoppers" regarding having been stunned, and having fought "like a lion"—very obviously. And yet his desperate earnestness impressed them, nevertheless.

Bunter was safe enough from punishment now, so why should he still stick to the story, in any case?

Harry Wharton eyed him keenly, and then something about Bunter caught his eye—or, rather, something that wasn't about Bunter, as it were.

Bunter was a very careless eater, to say the least of it. He was constantly being called to task by Mr. Quelch for his

slovenly behaviour at table. After a feed there was never any doubt that Bunter had fed by the state of his face and clothes.

But now Bunter showed no outward and visible signs of having fed. His face was not jammy, or custardy, or sticky, or crumby, so to speak. There was no jam on his waistcoat, nor were there any signs of crumbs. Nor had Bunter a fat, satisfied appearance. On the contrary, he had a decidedly lean and hungry appearance.

It was decidedly queer.

"Hold on!" said Harry. "I do believe the fat ass is telling the truth for once. He doesn't look as if he's been feeding, does he, chaps? You know what Bunter looks like after a feed."

"Ha, ha! Yes. Like a well-fed pig."

"And that's not all," said Harry, his eyes scanning the clearing. "Those sandwiches were wrapped in paper, and several other things, too. There's no mess of paper or crumbs, and there's no mess of jam and stuff on Bunter's chivvy. There's not a sign that anyone's been feeding here."

"Phew! You're right, Harry!"

"My hat!" said Nugent suddenly. "What about what I saw just when we were starting out—or what I thought I saw, anyway? I'm certain I spotted a man's form among the trees, sneaking about. I had a feeling all the time that I was right."

Harry Wharton glanced rather uneasily into the underwoods. Then he looked at the knife in his hands.

"Blessed if the fat ass wasn't telling the truth, after all," he said. "This knife's got some initials scratched on the haft—'L. S.' they are. You said it was a tramp, Bunter?"

"Ahem! Well, not exactly a tramp," said Bunter. "But he looked as if he'd been jolly well sleeping out anyway. And he looked as if he wanted a shave, too."

"Well, it's queer," said Harry. "I'm blessed if I can quite make it out."



Bunter made a sudden rush for the boat, but Johnny Bull was too quick for him. He leapt on Bunter from behind and brought him crashing down. "Yarroooooop!" roared the Owl. "Oh dear! Lemme gerrup!" "Not much!" said Johnny Bull grimly. (See Chapter 5.)

"It is queer—too jolly queer for me," grunted Johnny Bull, eyeing Bunter suspiciously. "Why didn't Bunter show himself when we came along—that's what I want to know?"

Bunter grunted. He wished he could explain that—without explaining about the Treasury note, which he did not intend to do. Bunter saw no reason why he should give that up. But a sudden idea occurred to him.

"Oh, really, Bull, you are a suspicious chap, you know," he said indignantly. "I should think you fellows could guess why I didn't show myself. I didn't show myself because I knew jolly well you fellows would blame it on me. And you did. You ought to apologise now for your rotten suspicions."

"Oh, rats!"

All the juniors were fairly convinced now that, for once, Bunter was speaking the truth in saying that a man had taken the tuck. The strange knife, the missing cloth, Frank Nugent's certainty of having seen someone or something, and Bunter's cleanliness, and the absence of litter, all agreed with Bunter's story.

"Well, let's get tea now—or what's left of it," growled Harry. "And after tea we'll have another ramble round the island, chaps. And this time we'll keep our peepers open for the merchant, whoever he is."

"That's the wheeze. And we'll give the blighter what for! We'll teach him to pinch our grub!"

"Hear, hear!"

And the juniors settled down to tea grimly having agreed upon that. It was not a very satisfying tea by any means, and it did not take long. It was exceedingly short commons for five fellows with healthy appetites—not to mention Bunter's unhealthy appetite. Over the meal Bunter gave further details—without mentioning the detail of the Treasury note—and the juniors looked grim at his description of the fellow. Had it been a hungry tramp, the juniors would not have minded so very much. But for a fairly-well-dressed chap to pinch their tuck was rather too much.

After the meal the juniors left Bunter to his own devices and started off, eager enough now to begin the search. They had scarcely gone a dozen yards into the wood when Harry stopped suddenly with a warning cry.

From ahead of them had sounded the sharp snap of a twig.

"Someone in front!" snapped Harry, peering ahead. "Come! There he goes! After him!"

He jumped forward at once, having glimpsed a figure among the tree-trunks ahead. The other juniors saw it also now.

"Bunter was right, then!" snapped Harry, leading the way with a rush. "The beggar must have been watching us from the trees just now. Go it, chaps!"

The juniors "went it," charging through the trees headlong, amid a crashing and smashing of the undergrowth. The man ahead had dropped all caution now, and was running. They could hear him smashing his way on recklessly.

"Tally-ho!" bawled Bob Cherry. "There he goes!"

A sudden break in the trees revealed the figure of the fugitive, and the juniors yelled and redoubled their pace. They yelled again the next moment as the man ahead suddenly tripped over a trailing creeper and went down headlong.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 953.

"On him!" shouted Bob Cherry. "Got you, my hearty!"

They were on the fellow with a rush, just as he was scrambling to reach his feet. He went over again, with the juniors clinging to him like terriers.

Had the man not dashed away so suspiciously, the juniors might not have taken such drastic measures as this; but his very haste to escape showed his guilt—in the eyes of the juniors.

"Hold on!" he gasped. "Hold on, youngsters! Easy does it!"

"Easy does it, eh?" snorted Bob Cherry. "What about our tuck, my friend? Why, the merchant's jolly well laughing!"

Bob had caught a brief glimpse of the fellow's face, and if he was not laughing, he certainly was wearing rather a grin on his bristly features.

"We'll make him laugh!" snorted Harry Wharton. "Over with him, you chaps!"

"Yes, rather!"

The man was swung over, and the juniors sat on him, pinning him down. He was a rather hefty-looking man, and Harry at least was surprised at the ease with which they had overpowered him.

But the man's rather grim smile irritated him intensely.

"Now, my pippin," he snapped, "we want to know why you pinched our dashed grub just now! We know it must have been you. You've mucked up our picnic, blow you!"

The man spoke then—calmly, and—to the juniors' surprise—in cultivated tones.

"If you'll allow me to get up, my friends," he said sarcastically, "perhaps I'll have the breath left to answer. I don't want to have to use force, you know!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Well, the cheek!"

For the man—after being overpowered—to threaten to use force was the limit.

"Use force, eh?" snorted Bob Cherry.

"Why, you rotter, you've had plenty of chance to do that, and you've failed. We've bowled you over, my pippin!"

The man's answer was to get to his feet. He did it quite easily, sending the clinging juniors sprawling to right and left of him without hurting one of them with his hands.

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Oh, great pip!"

"Oh, my hat!"

The juniors rolled among the brambles. They were seething with wrath, and a laugh from the fellow did not make them any happier.

"Rush him!" yelled Harry Wharton. "My—"

"Hold on—pax, youngsters!" laughed the man.

The juniors stopped. Somehow, that cheery laugh and the schoolboyish expression caused their anger to subside. They stared at the man very curiously. They saw now that he had a rather good-looking, cheery face, with steady, keen grey eyes, though at first glance his unshaven chin gave him a somewhat unprepossessing appearance.

"Pax!" grunted Harry Wharton. "I like that! What about our tuck?"

"You think I pinched your tuck, kids?"

"Of course you did!"

"Not at all. At least, it could hardly be called that!" said the stranger, smiling rather grimly. "Sheer necessity made me take it, but I left ten shillings to pay for it."

"What rot!"

"I placed a ten-shilling note on the basket beneath a stone," explained the man calmly. "It was to pay for the tuck I took, boys. Did you not find it?"

"Oh!" gasped Harry. He stared keenly at the man. It was almost impossible to disbelieve him. His face was frank and his voice calm and steady. "We—we found a stone on the basket, but there wasn't a note there."

"Then the wind must have blown it away, boys," said the stranger ruefully. "Hard lines! I shall have to give you another!"

Harry Wharton gave a start, and looked at his chums. The same thought struck them all.

"Bunter," breathed Bob Cherry. "That fat burglar must have collared it. That's why he hid, of course."

"Phew! But—but why did you run away?" asked Harry, staring at the young man. "If you did that—What's that?"

It was a shrill whistle—repeated three times—and it came from the direction of their boat. It was followed almost instantly by a crashing in the undergrowth, and the next instant a fat form burst through the trees. It was Billy Bunter, and his fat face was red and excited.

He sighted the group, and he gave a yell.

"Run for it!" he yelled. "Old Popper, and his keepers! They've collared the boat!"

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Narrow Escape!

"O H, my hat!" "Great pip!" "That's done it!" groaned Harry Wharton. "I thought I knew what that whistle meant!"

The juniors looked at each other in great alarm. But if they were alarmed, the stranger showed still greater alarm. He grabbed Bunter by the arm—that fat junior having been too excited even to notice him up to now.

"You say that they are keepers?" he snapped. "Quick!"

"Ow! Oh, yes! Three of them, and old Popper!" panted Billy Bunter, almost fainting with alarm as he recognised the man who had "lifted" the tuck. "Oh dear! I—I say, you fellows, if this chap tells you he left ten bob, it ain't true! D-dud—don't you believe him!"

"Never mind the ten bob!" snapped Harry Wharton. "Oh, great Scott! We're fairly in the soup, chaps! Were they following you, Bunter?"

"Ow! Yes, yes. They spotted me and shouted after me!" groaned Bunter. "Listen! Oh dear! They're coming!"

There was no doubt about that—heavy crashing in the distance told of the keepers' plunging approach. It was enough for the juniors.

"Run for it!" snapped Harry. "We'll give them a run for their dashed money, anyway. Blow that ass Coker! Old Popper must have seen us, and—but never mind, come on!"

They started off with a rush, and the stranger followed. Harry Wharton had noted that his face was pale now, and

(Continued on page 17.)

ANSWERS
Every Saturday—PRICE 2:

HARRY WHARTON'S Cricket Supplement

No. 3 (New Series), Vol. 2.

May 15th, 1926.

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"

WHEN Ranjitsinhji played for Sussex and England he was never given the whole of his name. "Ranji" always being good enough. I suppose Duleepsinhji will be called "Duleep," but it will sound rather like "Tulip," won't it?

Providing all our other bowlers fail to dismiss the Australians, what about trying the Worcester bowler to "Root" them out?

Bell, a Yorkshireman, is now fully qualified to play for Glamorgan. Perhaps the county will be able to make more noise than in the past.

W. H. Ponsford, the Australian, is on the right side of thirty, and yet in his own country he has already beaten A. C. Maclaren's record of 424 in one innings, scoring 429. It is to be hoped he won't try to go one better at England's expense.

Here is the explanation of the term "Ashes" used in connection with Test matches between England and Australia. In 1882 the English team, which included "W. G.," Barlow, Ulyett, the Hon. A. Lyttelton, C. T. Studd, and A. P. Lucas, lost a remarkable game at Kennington Oval by seven runs. Arising out of that defeat, the "Sporting Times" published an "In Memoriam" as follows:

"In Affectionate Remembrance
of
ENGLISH CRICKET,
Which Died at the Oval on August 29th,
1882.

Deeply Lamented by a Large Circle of
Sorrowing Friends and Acquaintances.

R.I.P.

N.B.—The Body will be Cremated, and
the Ashes Taken to Australia.

W. G. Quaife, although in his fifty-fifth year, is again playing for Warwickshire, and his son is also in the same side. Will W. G. stick it until his grandson gets into the team?

The minimum price of admission to Test matches is three shillings per day at Lord's and the Oval, and two-and-six at Nottingham, Leeds, and Manchester. I suppose London people will be able to afford the extra sixpence all right.

Glamorgan are always looked upon as "easy meat" for the other counties, which explains the remark of a well-known bowler who had just had twenty-two runs scored off him in an over: "I'll make Glamorgan pay for this!"

Frank Sugg, who used to play for Derbyshire and Lancashire, has, at the age of sixty-four, now gone on the list of first-class umpires for the first time. One of his friends told him he is old enough to know better.

In reply to an inquirer, it is not true that the Derbyshire men are referred to as belonging to the Peak County because they all wear caps.

Before the start of the present county season the attention of umpires was directed to the fact that in the past many games have not been resumed after rain as soon as they might have been. All spectators agree on this point.

The MONEY IN THE TESTS!

Cricket's Not Such a Bad Game for the Player After All.

IT doesn't need a large amount of really deep thinking to arrive at the conclusion that it costs much money to bring sixteen cricketers all the way from Australia to take part in a tour in England. What with the fares, the luggage, and the hotel expenses when the fellows get here, it is as obvious as anything that the bill before Australia is reached on the return journey will be a big one.

However, so far as the present season is concerned, there is no necessity for anybody to worry as to whether it will be a paying proposition. The Australian touring team will certainly make more money than is necessary to pay their expenses. Indeed, such is the interest now being worked up in the forthcoming Test matches that, so far as it is safe to prophesy at all, it is safe to say that the attendances at all the grounds which the Australians visit will be greater than ever in the past.

The tragedy of it is that most of our county grounds are so small that the house-full notices are sure to be required for the Test matches. I believe it is a fact that every ticket for the first Test match at Nottingham was sold last February, or five months before the game was due to take place, and there is sure to be some pushing and shoving in order to get into the grounds on which the Test matches will be played.

In view of all this interest in the big cricket games, the question naturally arises as to what becomes of all the money taken at the turnstiles and for reserved tickets.

The men who take part in these cricket tours get some of it, of course. The English professional players who went to Australia for the last tour received in round figures, four hundred pounds each, in addition to their expenses, these being allowed for at the rate of thirty shillings per week while they were travelling between England and Australia, and two pounds per week during their stay in that country.

In addition to this, of course, there are certain bonuses allowed for good work in the field or at the wicket, so it is not surprising that English professional cricketers rather like being chosen for these trips to Australia. But the takings out there were such that this money could be paid to the players without any risk of the sponsors of the trip landing themselves in the Bankruptcy Court. In one day at a Test match at Sydney nearly five thousand pounds was taken at the turnstiles from an attendance which numbered close on fifty thousand. There is no cricket ground in this country on which we can put such a number of spectators in anything like comfort, but we shall be able to take enough money to make a bit of profit both for ourselves and for Australia.

It may surprise some people, but it is a fact, that, although the whole of the Australians who are now in this country are amateurs, they get well recompensed in the monetary sense for their visit to this country. Australia's share of the profits of the last tour of an Australian team in this country was eighteen thousand pounds. The players also paid a visit to South Africa in connection with the same trip, and when they got back they received about eight hundred pounds each. This, of course, was in addition to their expenses being paid during the tour.

Even in Australia the Australian cricketers get a fair recompense for any business loss which may be sustained by them while they are playing cricket, for thirty pounds was paid to each man who played for Australia for each match during the winter when our men went "down under." They did not have to pay their travelling or hotel expenses out of that; this was paid separately.

When all the money which is paid to the players has been handed over, there is still a considerable sum left. From the five Test matches which were played in Australia during our last trip the M.C.C. received, as half-share, after expenses had been paid, over thirty thousand pounds.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 953.

The MATCH WINNING ELEVEN!

By Dick Tyldesley

(Of Lancashire and England.)

WHO AIRS HIS VIEWS ON THE IDEAL CRICKET COMBINATION.

NOT always do we realise the necessity for a cricket eleven to be a team in the very real sense of the word. Too often we are apt to think of a cricket side as a thing of individuals; but it is undoubtedly a fact that the county—or even the club—side which hopes to be successful must be built on definite lines with particular objects in view in the building. I would not go so far as to say that the two games of football and cricket are exactly alike in so far as the necessity for building a real team is concerned, but I wish the constant efforts which are made to get a real football team were more frequently copied in regard to cricket. Perhaps it is that weak spots in a football team are more easily found or more clearly obvious in the play. It is certainly a fact that in cricket too many club sides struggle along with too many batsmen of the same type or too little variety in their attack. They have eleven players, but not a complete team.

HOBBS, SANDHAM, AND LUCKY SURREY.

Now, there can be no harm in thinking over some of the requirements of a complete side. Merely because we must start somewhere, I will take the opening pair of batsmen first. The complete eleven will have a fairly reliable pair with which to start off their innings when the occasion is normal. Lucky the side, whether in county or club cricket, which has a couple of men on whom it can depend for a fair start nine times out of ten, shall we say? I don't necessarily mean that this opening pair shall score a hundred runs or so, though clearly the many hundreds which Hobbs and Sandham have scored for Surrey at the start must have been a distinct help to the side. Possibly the value of a steady opening pair is even greater than the man in the street generally appreciates.

STARTING THE ROT.

The opening batsmen have to be good and steady, because they face the men who, in the opinion of the opposing captain, represent the best bowlers at his command. Let these bowlers get an early wicket, and for at least a few overs thereafter they will bowl with more enthusiasm. The reason why nothing succeeds like success is because success provides the inspiration. The men in the field too, meeting with that early success, rise a little bit higher on their toes. Hundreds of times in the past must it have been true that a side which was turned out for a very small score would have obtained quite a lot of runs if only the opening batsmen had stayed long enough to take some of the sting out of the attack.

FIRST WICKET DOWN.

To follow these opening batsmen there must also be one or two men capable of standing in the breach right nobly when things are going wrong. These are the fellows who are called upon to stop the rot if by any chance the opening pair have given the team a bad send-off. The opening pair of batsmen are very important, but I am rather inclined to think that first-wicket-down man is even more important still. Think what the Ernest Tyldesleys and the Jack Hearnings, by way of example, mean to their teams!

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 953.

MAKING THE MOST OF IT.

Further down the line of batsmen there must be, in the complete eleven, one or two fellows who can readily make things hum when the opportunity arises. Time after time, in all classes of cricket, there come occasions when the real question is not how many runs can be obtained, but how quickly they can be got. The speedily hit thirty or forty by some later batsman may be just as necessary, just as valuable, for match-winning purposes, as the stylishly correct century put together by one of the earlier batsmen. Yes, there is very real virtue in what might be called the hit-or-miss batsman, and he will certainly be in the complete eleven, ready to punish bowling which may be a trifle tired around a field which has become a little slack. The quick-fire batsman may even be of value during a rot, for while his colleagues are being "tied up," he may put the bowlers off by sheer courage, not to say cheek.

WORTH OF THE WICKET-KEEPER.

I suppose the ideal eleven would contain batsmen right down the line to No. 11; but, alas! this is one of the things beyond ordinary possibilities. Your fast bowler is essential, and the probability is that if he gets a number of runs he will so tire himself that a little bit of that pace will vanish from his bowling, and thus will be lost on the swings what has been gained on the roundabouts. Your wicket-keeper, too, is usually only a so-so batsman, but I will not agree with those who say that there is no room in the ideal side for the wicket-keeper who can't get runs. Your Strudwick is worth his place if one ball sufficed to send him back to the pavilion every time he went out to bat. A specially smart catch, a quick bit of stumping, or speed in getting the balls off may dismiss a batsman for a mere bagatelle who, let off just once, might make a century. I know this applies to all fielding, but by the nature of his job there are more chances come the way of the wicket-keeper.

A BIG YORKSHIRE SECRET.

To turn to the bowlers for a brief space. Variety is obviously the first essential. There is the express man, on whose pace your side must largely rely to get the other fellows out when the wickets are in first-class condition. Then, if you can find him, the bowler of the Parkin type, who can be put on no matter what the pitch is like—the bowler who so mixes them that the batsman never knows quite what he is going to get. Then you must have one bowler at least who can, in popular language, make the ball talk when the wicket is right. Perhaps in this country two bowlers of this type are better than one. Always, so far as my memory of first-class cricket goes, have the Yorkshire side possessed men who could skittle out any and every opponent when the pitch was difficult. A left-handed break bowler is specially valuable in a side. Thus in the complete eleven there is need for four—or three at the minimum—really good bowlers. Behind these there must be one or two useful change men.

Richard Tyldesley

SOME people say that there is no longer any necessity for batsmen to tremble when the "googlie" bowler comes on. Well, Australia evidently still believes in this sort of bowling, for they sent over two who deliver this type of ball—Arthur Mailey and Clarence Grimmett. As it is so easy to get on the wrong side of a man who sends down the "wrong uns," as they are called, I thought it would be going far enough if I tackled these googlie men of Australia one at a time. So I started with Mailey. Grimmett may come up for judgment later if somebody doesn't take my life before I get down to his name.

Certainly Arthur Mailey is enough to be going on with as a bowler of the "wrong uns." I believe there is only one thing he likes better than putting other people into hot water, and that is to get into hot water himself. He is never so happy as when he has a nest of hornets buzzing about his ears.

His people meant him to work in a bank, I believe, and he started to follow out their wishes like the good boy he was. But the calling didn't appeal to him very much there were, I take it, so few chances of getting into hot water. So he started sketching, and is quite a good caricaturist now, earning his living mostly by drawing more or less faithful pictures of cricket personalities.

"SEAM RAISING."

Mind you, he is a very clever artist, this fellow Mailey, but some of the people he has tackled with his pencil say he hasn't done their features justice. To these Mailey is apt to reply: "Well, take a look in the mirror, and then you may conclude I have flattered you."

The idea of bowling "wrong uns"—you know those are the balls which should break one way but break the other—was just the sort of thing which would appeal to his nature, and he started practising, and kept on practising until wickets began to fall to his wiles. One thing I will say for him, though. He doesn't take the credit for discovering googlies, and his sketches are signed with the pen-name of "Bosey." In this name there is a compliment and an acknowledgment of the fellow who discovered the secret of googlie bowling, B. J. T. Bosanquet. Mailey has been to England before, and taken a lot of wickets here, too, with those deceptive deliveries of his.

He is now thirty-eight years of age, and has spent most of those years thinking out revolutionary ideas regarding cricket. You will remember that some time ago something was said in England about bowlers who raised the seam of the ball. Well, this is what Mailey had to say on the subject:

"In justifying the practice of seam raising, I do so more because of the thought of it being unsportsmanlike, in my opinion, should not enter the heads of those who allow the use of sawdust, resin, or towels, to allow the bowler to improve his grip."

"It is admitted that rubbing a new ball on the ground is quite permissible, as no official objection, to my knowledge, has been taken to it. Yet if a new ball is rubbed judiciously on the ground the effect would be more disastrous to the batsman than if the seam were raised by some mechanical device. No matter what is done to the seam of an old ball it cannot affect the flight as much as the seam of a new ball. If, therefore, a swerve bowler requires his greatest asset—a new ball—it is possible that the umpire will produce one, if the seam of the old one has been tampered with. If this is allowed it is possible that a new ball will be requisitioned after every 50 runs or so."

"In the face of this we must be careful about doubting the sportsmanlike attitude of a bowler who does his best to preserve the ball till the end of its official life—200 runs."

DRAWING THE CROWD.

Then the question of slow cricket—a popular topic—cropped up, Mailey had something hot and strong to say: "Consideration for the public seems to be the main excuse why cricket needs brightening, yet the attendances during the last series of Tests were beyond the dreams of the most optimistic supporters of the game. Were the 18,000 people who surged into the Adelaide Oval on the last morning of the memorable third Test bored to death? Why did they stand round the Oval in a frenzy of excitement to see a paltry 27 runs scored? Surely those people did not come down to see Strudwick or Freeman or Tat slog six after six into the river! No; they came down to see the finish of a keen contest that at no time during the progress of the match needed the assistance of 'slatheremwhack' batsmen to draw a crowd."

"A keen, scientific struggle, to my mind, is far more acceptable to the Australian public than a competition"

*Hush—Here
the Googlie*

A few words on Arthur Mailey bowls the right "V"

BY "PAUL"

(Our Travelling C)



A. A. Mailey

Here Comes The Man!

Arthur Mailey, the man who
right "Wrong 'Uns."

PAUL PRY."

(Wellington Correspondent.)

starts any minutes is quicker than a man who scores the same later number of runs in two hours. Very often one batsman monopolises the strike, and receives three-fourths of the deliveries. If those people whose annual holiday is spent with a meaning about slow batsmen were to take this into consideration, they would find that the slow batsmen are not so slow as in 'the grand old days.' When one reads the reports of meetings and the suggestions given out to brighten cricket one wonders on which side of the fence the dullness really is.

EXPENSIVE BOWLING.

"One person has suggested that the selectors should pick nobody but quick scorers. As one who has had this honour (?) passed on him without seeking it, I would ask why have selectors at all? Why not allow the batsmen who score runs in the quickest time to automatically drop into the team? The post-office clock would then be the sole selector, and everybody would be happy again.

"When sensible suggestions are made to brighten cricket or chess, or an undertakers' picnic, no wise person would turn a deaf ear."

On other cricket points, too, Mailey has ideas of his own. He never says what people expect him to say, and never does what they consider he will do. In the first Test Match at Sydney in the last series he helped J. M. Taylor to add 127 for the last wicket. Do you know why, in my opinion, he did this? It was because he overheard somebody say that he was the worst batsman on the side. That's Mailey, the perverse, the bowler of wrong 'uns.

It has always seemed to me that googlie bowling demands the Mailey type of temperament, for the simple reason that at times it is apt to be extremely expensive, and the googlie bowler who really objects to being hit all over the place had better give it up quickly. But being hit for sixes now and then doesn't upset Arthur; indeed, I got the impression that he likes it, at any rate in preference to the batsman who just sits back and watches the ball like a cat watches a mouse.

But when Mailey is in form then it is the batsmen who come to regard it as costly bowling, because it so often costs them their wicket. America has a very high opinion of him, for when he went there a year or two before the War he took 189 wickets, and they only cost him seven runs apiece. His outstanding performance in this country was to take the whole of the ten wickets of the Gloucester batsmen in one innings in 1921 for 66 runs.

in, or
round
known
faded
disas-
ed by
so the
ch as
bowler
seem-
e old
it is
ever.

abbing
a best
—206

pic-
ing to
main
ances
me of
the
n the
eath?
xcite-
people
Tat
down
uring
ce of
more
cting

"CURIOUS" (Manchester).—In Test matches and all other big games in Australia they have eight balls to the wicket, and the suggestion that the same idea should be adopted in England has often been put forward. We may copy Australia one of these days, but there are things to be said both for and against the idea.

J. MACINTOSH (London).—The captain of the Australians is Herbert Collins; Bardsley is the vice-captain; and Ryder holds a position on the team-selection committee.

B. LAWSON (Bolton).—It does not follow that the man who is chosen to captain England in the first Test match shall be captain in all the five games. In fact, if we want to do so we can change for every match.

L. SMITH (Glamorgan).—The average age of the sixteen Australians now in this country is 32. Ellis, who is only 24, is the youngest, and Bardsley, who is 42, is the eldest member of the party.

ALF. LOCKETT (Northampton).—To answer your question as to why there are really no first bowlers of tip-top class in England would take a column rather than a few lines. One of these days I hope to find space in which to answer it at length.

YOU NEVER CAN TELL!

by Charles Parker

(Gloucester's Crack Bowler.)

THRILLING MATCHES IN WHICH THE GLORIOUS UNCERTAINTY OF CRICKET HAS BEEN REVEALED.

WE often speak of the glorious uncertainty of cricket, but we do not always appreciate the truth behind that hackneyed saying. So far as my memory serves, there never was a season in which so many matches have been pulled out of the fire in startling fashion as last summer—so many games which were won against the odds, as it were. We had a typical example of the manner in which one match can sway first this way and then that in the game between the Gentlemen and Players at the Oval. The odds at the start were on the Players, of course, for so much had previously been said about the lack of first-class amateurs that the unpaid were scarcely considered to have a chance.

A BID FOR VICTORY.

Moreover, any forlorn hope which the amateurs may have possessed at the start was generally considered to have vanished when the Players scored over four hundred in their first innings, and then declared. Tate got to work for the pro's, too, and the early amateur wickets fell rapidly. But then the game swung back in favour of the Gentlemen; there was fine batting by the later batsmen, and the Players' total was headed. Again the men under Jack Hobbs batted, and again the Players got to the position when the captain thought it safe to declare, leaving the amateurs the well-nigh impossible task of scoring 200 in 104 minutes. But they did it with a few seconds to spare. It was the sort of successful bid for victory which not only demonstrated the wonderful possibilities of the game, but also stirred the hearts of the enthusiasts.

THREE MEN THREE CENTURIES.

Possibly there is no type of cricket result which so appeals to the man in the street as a quick-scoring feat which enables a side to beat the clock and the team which has declared its innings closed. The game between the Gents and the Players was not the only one of its type last season. Playing Warwickshire at Birmingham, Sussex declared, in the happy position of a lead of nearly four hundred runs. Now, 400 is a lot to get in a fourth innings, anyway, even if there is plenty of time at the disposal of the batsmen who are set the task. But so splendidly did the Warwickshire batsmen "weigh in" that they scored the runs with a considerable amount of time to spare. Three men only went to the wicket, and each of these three men—Smith, Parsons, and F. S. Calthorpe—passed the century mark.

A RECORD MATCH.

So frequent were the wonderful recoveries from losing positions during last season that one could easily fill the space available with little more than a mere mention of them. There was the victory which Kent gained over Warwickshire, for instance, by a fine recovery after the Hop County men had been disposed of for 42, and left with a deficit of over two hundred on the first innings. Then there was that history-making effort by Middlesex at the expense of Notts, the Londoners scoring beyond the five-hundred mark in the fourth innings of the match, to win after all had seemed lost.

THE BIGGEST SURPRISE OF ALL.

Looking a little further back, however, I recall what was perhaps the most sensational result in recent years. Again Warwickshire, who seem to make a habit of being concerned in this type of match, were active. I refer to the match against Hampshire in the summer of 1922. So far as I remember the circumstances, the Hampshire captain won the toss, and put his opponents in to score a comfortable two hundred odd. When, in their turn, Hampshire were dismissed for a mere bagatelle of 15 all told, and had to follow on, it did indeed seem as though their skipper had made a mistake. Practically speaking, Hampshire were down and out. But the match was not over by any means. Following their first innings total of 15, Hampshire passed the five-hundred mark at their second knock, the total including a last-wicket partnership of nearly two hundred made by fellows who weren't considered as batsmen at all. In the end Warwickshire were beaten by no fewer than 155 runs. It may be that the history of cricket can tell of other remarkable results on these lines, but I have searched in vain for a parallel story of a side dismissed in its first innings for 15 runs which eventually won the match with such a big margin to spare.

A RED ROSE REVIVAL.

Just as Gloucester v. Somerset are the games in which we revel in the West Country, so are the meetings between Lancashire and Yorkshire of primary importance up North. And the match between these two which was played in Yorkshire a couple of seasons ago was more than ordinarily memorable. On the last day of the game the victory seemed to be assured to Yorkshire, for they were left with only 57 to get and ten wickets to fall. I remember the newspapers of that morning putting up headings on these lines: "Yorkshire Winning Again." But on that last day the Lancashire bowlers reaped a surprising harvest, and demonstrated the glorious uncertainty of cricket by dismissing the last Yorkshire batsman when 24 runs were still required for victory.

THE MAINSPRING OF HOPE.

And so we could go on. But perhaps a thought ought to be given to why these things happen. How is it that seeming defeat is oft-times turned to victory? Occasionally, of course, a change in the weather enables a satisfactory explanation to be given. But much more frequently the cause is just human nature. One or two players strike amazing form, or, alternatively, a whole side has a bad day. But what is the use of inquiring too closely into the why and the wherefore? Let us be duly thankful that cricket is the most gloriously uncertain of games. So long as we remember that uncertainty, the bottom dogs can take courage.

Chas Parker.

FIVE GOOD MEN and TRUE!

The Fellows Whose Job it is to Pick England's Eleven.

WHETHER we beat Australia in the forthcoming Test matches depends, of course, to a very large extent on the form of the men who play. But there is work of the utmost importance to be done in preparing to beat Australia before a single ball is bowled in the Test matches, and that work belongs to the fellows who have been appointed to choose England's team.

Everybody knows that the one thing these selectors will not lack is advice. Already most of us have had a shot at telling the world who should play for England in the coming games, and between now and the time of the first Test match next month, the amateur team-builders will be very busy indeed.

I have no means of knowing to what extent the selectors of England teams read the newspapers, but the men who have been selected for the job are worthy fellows who have minds of their own and much experience to back their judgment. Here are the names of the "five good men and true," whose job it is to find the teams good enough to beat Australia and recover those Ashes—P. F. Warner, Arthur Gilligan, Percy Perrin, Jack Hobbs, and Wilfred Rhodes. These five will

be joined, in due course, by the England captain, but for a minute or two I want to talk about these original five who have agreed to shoulder what is at once a heavy responsibility and an unenviable task.

First of all there is the man who no longer takes any part in first-class cricket—Pelham Francis Warner, who will, I take it, be chairman of the selection committee. But though "Plum," as everybody called him in his playing days, is no longer actively engaged, there are few who will quarrel with his right to be on the selection committee. He has had cricket experience in all parts



MR. A. E. R. GILLIGAN.

of the world, and has twice been captain of an England team in Australia, on each occasion bringing the "Ashes" back with him.

Warner was born in Trinidad, and he is ever ready to recall even now that his first experience of cricket was having a negro to throw the ball at him while he tried what he could do with the bat. One imagines that the particular negro will be well pleased with his pupil, for "Plum" Warner came to be regarded not only as a great captain but one of the most brilliant batsmen of his time. He scored over 29,000 runs in first-class cricket, and made 61 centuries. Always a most popular figure on the field, "Plum" Warner invariably wore a harlequin cap—that affair of bright colours which could never be overlooked. Indeed, to quote an American who saw Warner in this cap for the first time, "It is so loud that if he played in New York it would be heard above the noise of the traffic."

Although Percy Perrin scored over nine hundred runs for Essex in county games last season, he is now "getting on," as they say, and perhaps the placing of this Essex man on the selection committee was something in the nature of a surprise. I wonder if it had anything to do with the fact that in his heyday he, like Warner, scored over sixty centuries—he was a wonderman when facing fast bowling. If he can help us to find men who can stand up and defy the fast bowlers who have always been a source of real strength in Australian teams he will have done more than a little to justify himself. Perrin joined the Essex side in 1896, and is the only member of the selection committee who has not had Test match experience at one time or another. In connection with his advancing years, of which the player himself is conscious, a good story may be told. Last season a friend asked him how his cricket was getting on, whether he was as good as ever. To this Perrin made reply: "Well, it's like this. My eyesight is not now

so good as it used to be, and as a matter of fact when a fast bowler is put on nowadays I can't see the ball." "How do you manage to make runs then?" Perrin was asked. "Oh," came the reply, "I play at the noise made by the ball."

While the other four members of the Test Selection Committee have years of ripe experience behind them, Arthur Gilligan may be said to represent the younger generation. His appointment is a well-earned recognition of his captaincy of the England team which went to Australia in the winter before last. With one voice Australia agreed that no more charming personality had ever visited their country in charge of an England team, and the players under his command in that tour are loud in their praises of the "skipper."

An all-round sport—he is an athlete of parts, and plays football, golf and hockey well—Gilligan only came into cricket in 1920, and his first top-class captaincy was achieved in 1923 when he became "boss" of the Sussex eleven. He has been to South Africa with an M.C.C. team, and playing against South Africa in the first Test match in this country in 1924 he took six wickets for seven runs.

Some people assume that the placing of Gilligan on the Selection Committee inevitably means that he will not be considered as captain for the coming tests. But there is no reason why he should not be, and if he has completely recovered in health, and is able to bowl as well as ever, there is no reason why he should not lead England again, and play his part in dismissing the Australian batsmen. A man who knows him well, told me that there is only one thing wrong with his bowling, and that is that he has not yet learnt to conserve his energy: that he tries to send down his first ball at his fastest.

It is a compliment to professional cricketers as a whole that two "pros" should have been given places on the Selection Committee, with equal voting powers with the other members. And it is specially a compliment to Jack Hobbs and Wilfred Rhodes that when the idea of having two "pros" was mooted, these men were immediately suggested and met with general approval. There is little necessity to say a great deal about either of them. Their deeds are too well known.

Jack Hobbs and Wilfred Rhodes are world famous: the former as the record-breaking batsman of Surrey, and the latter as one of the greatest—if not the greatest—all-round player that amazing county of Yorkshire has ever produced.

For many years past, although Rhodes has not been actual captain of Yorkshire, he has always been regarded as the man to whom the skipper always went for advice. In this connection a story is told, which is good enough to be true even if it isn't. Yorkshire were batting, with the captain, Mr. Wilson, and a professional at the wicket running up a big score. At a certain point the professional went to the captain, and said: "Come along Mr. Wilson, Wilfred has declared."

About Jack Hobbs there is scarcely any necessity to say one word. It is obvious to everybody that a batsman with such wide knowledge of bowlers of all sorts, who has scored more centuries than any other cricketer the game has ever known, should know a thing or two worth knowing. Hobbs, however, is not only a man who plays the game—he is a fellow who thinks about it deeply from every angle, and his advice should be invaluable when the selectors meet together.

There are people who think that Hobbs should be given the captaincy of the England team, but that would be a departure most unlikely to be made, though Hobbs has more than once captained the Players eleven in matches against the Gentlemen. Hobbs is certain to be in our team to meet the Australians, and this means that on the field he will be able to give his captain the value of his advice.

Looking back on the five good men, it will be seen that they make up a representative "crew." They come from places so wide apart that there is not the slightest chance of any one part of the country supplying a majority of the players, unless those players are truly worthy of their places in the side.

I have said that these selectors, when chosen, met with general approval. There remains only one thing to be done—to back them with every possible confidence. When they have done their work, don't let us start pulling it to pieces.



MR. "PLUM" WARNER.



MR. PERCY PERRIN.



(Continued from page 12.)

anxious. He was at Harry's heels as that junior followed Bob Cherry, Bunter and the rest. The juniors had little hope of escape—if their boat was captured, their retreat was cut off. Certainly some of them could escape by swimming, but even that was a risky proceeding. Moreover, there was Bunter; Bunter could never swim the distance dressed or undressed, and they could scarcely leave him in the lurch.

But they did not mean to be captured without a struggle, nevertheless.

They went charging through the green undergrowth, and almost with the first strides Harry Wharton came to grief.

As in the stranger's case a few moments before, he caught his foot in a trailing creeper, and he went crashing down headlong.

But he was not so lucky as the stranger.

In falling, his head struck the trunk of a tree with terrific force, and he lay there sickened and half-stunned. None of his chums heard him fall, but the stranger saw him go, and, after running on a few yards, he turned and came rushing back.

"Steady, youngster!" he muttered. "We'll do 'em yet. Jove, this reminds me of old times!"

His grasp closed on the junior, and Wharton felt himself lifted like a child in the man's strong grasp.

By this time the crashing retreat of his chums had become fainter, but the sounds of the keeper's plunging approach was terribly near now.

As in a dream Wharton heard it, but it did not grow nearer after that. The stranger crashed on, carrying the junior with amazing ease, though at the moment Harry was far too dazed and sickened to notice that.

The shaking and swinging of being carried at such a pace made the junior's senses reel, and his head throbbed with sickening pain. But it did not last long.

Quite suddenly, the man stopped running, and what happened next amazed the junior.

He felt the man stoop low, and then, amid a crashing of parting bushes he felt himself dragged, rather than carried, through prickly, scratching brambles, and the next instant the sunlight was blotted out with startling abruptness.

The crashing sounds of pursuit died away at the same moment.

Harry Wharton was staggered and bewildered.

He blinked about him, but he could scarcely see anything, a queer sort of twilight filling the place, while an earthy smell was in his nostrils.

A second dazed glance round him showed that he was in a sort of small cave, however. The queer twilight was caused by the dim specks of light that filtered through a mass of brambles at one end.

"What—what—" he gasped.

He felt himself laid gently on something soft—a great coat, it seemed to be.

"Never mind where you are," said the stranger's voice grimly. "I think you're

safe enough for the present. You gave yourself a tidy knock, didn't you? Let's have a peep at it, youngster!"

"It—it's all right," panted Harry. "I biffed my head, but it's feeling better already. Thanks for helping me like that. It was no end decent of you. If I'd been caught it would have been a flogging at least."

"You're not out of the wood yet, kid!" was the grim response. "If they've got your boat—"

"We can swim it," muttered Harry. "At least, one of us could and run for another boat. I hope none of the others were collared. Anyway, I think I'll clear now. I'd rather take my chance with my pals, you know."

"Better wait a few moments, anyhow," was the answer. "Stay here, and don't move. I'll slip out and scout round, youngster."

The next moment Harry heard the rustle of brambles, and saw the screen of greenery shaking. Then he found himself alone.

But it was not for long. Three minutes passed, and then again came the rustling, and a vague form loomed up before the junior's blinking eyes.

"All serene," came the stranger's voice in relief. "Your chums are hiding in a couple of trees scarcely a hundred yards away. The keepers seem to be searching the far end of the island. If you mean to risk it, now's your chance, youngster."

"Oh, good!" breathed Harry. "And—and thanks very much. It was jolly decent of you to help me like this."

"Hold on!" said the stranger grimly. "Hand me your handkerchief."

Harry took out his handkerchief wonderingly, and after a moment's fumbling the man grasped it. The next instant Harry felt it being tied round his face and eyes.

"Leave that on," ordered the man in a sharp voice. "You needn't be afraid, kid—I have my reasons for this. You say you're thankful for this?"

"Oh, yes, yes!"

"Then you can show your thanks best by not breathing a word to a soul about me, and by asking your chums to keep their tongues quiet concerning me also, was the curt answer. "Can I rely upon your word not to mention me to anyone?"

Harry was silent for a moment. He could not understand the amazing mystery at all, and he didn't quite like it, either. Yet the fellow seemed a very decent sort, and not many chaps would have done what he had done—have risked capture to save him.

"Yes," he said quietly at last. "I think I can promise that. My chums will keep silent if I ask them to do so. But—"

"Never mind questions. I think I can trust you, kid. Now, come on!"

Harry felt the man grasp his arm and lead him forward. The next moment he felt himself being thrust through the screen of brambles with the man's strong grasp on his arm. The brambles tore painfully at his flesh and clothes, but he was out in the sunlight the next moment—though he felt rather than saw it.

"Come!"

With the grasp on his arm, Harry was led for fully a hundred yards through the wood, and then the handkerchief was whipped abruptly from his face.

He blinked dazedly in the strong sunlight. There sounded a quick rustling, and, as he blinked about him, Harry found himself alone.

As he stood there he heard a sudden delighted exclamation above him.

"My hat! It's Harry. Here we are, Wharton!"

It was Bob Cherry's cautious voice, and as he looked upwards, Harry saw his chums' half-hidden forms amid the greenery above his head.

The next moment Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, Frank Nugent and Hurree Singh came shinning down from the branches of a couple of trees, and a moment later there sounded a grunting, and the fat form of Billy Bunter fell rather than slid to the ground.

"Great pip! We feared you'd been collared," gasped Bob Cherry. "Good man! How the thump did you manage it?"

"Never mind about that now!" snapped Harry, stroking his head, which still throbbed unpleasantly. "Those dashed keepers may be back any second now. Come on—we'll make a dash for the boat!"

"But it's bound to be guarded—"

"We'll risk that," snapped Harry. "Come on, Bunter! Sharp's the word!"

He led the way without further ado, and the rest followed, Bunter panting and grumbling in the rear. They heard no sound as they trod cautiously through the woods towards the spot where they had left the boat and the basket.

Reaching the fringe of bushes at last, Harry peered out, and then he drew back quickly. As he had guessed, the boat was guarded by a brawny keeper.

"Blow!" groaned Harry. "We're stumped. I'm afraid, chaps, unless we can trick that chap into moving. He's much too hefty for us to tackle, anyway."

"Oh, crumbs!"

The sight of freedom so near and yet so far was not very comforting. But suddenly a fat chuckle sounded, and it came from Billy Bunter.

"You fellows leave it to me," he chuckled. "I've got an idea—a jolly good idea, too! When that chap moves away make a rush for the boat. Got that?"

"You fat ass!"

"Leave it to me," grinned Bunter. "Ready? Here goes!"

He took a deep breath, and the next instant a loud, rasping voice came from a spot away to the left of the juniors—or, at least, it seemed to come from there.

"This way, my men—this way! Here the young rascals are! Huh! Help there, every man Jack of you! Help!"

It was the sharp, angry voice of Sir Hilton Popper—or a remarkably good imitation—and the effect on the man in charge of the boat was instantaneous.

He looked sharply round, and then he set off at a run for the spot.

"Now, chaps," said Bunter. "Come on!"

And the juniors came on, following Bunter in a mad rush for the boat. That well-known voice had almost startled them out of their senses for the moment. But when Bunter spoke they understood.

It was Bunter's ventriloquism, that fat youth being an expert at the ancient art of imitating and "throwing" voices.

They needed no further knowledge than that to make them follow him.

They arrived at the boat with a rush, and they swarmed aboard as a quick push from Harry sent it dancing out into the stream. Bob Cherry had caught up the picnic basket as he ran, and he flung it into the stern pell-mell and thumped down on the bow thwart.

In a flash the sculls were in the

juniors' hands, and as the boat rocked away, Harry dug in his sculls. The next instant Bob had his dipping also.

They had scarcely covered a dozen yards from the bank when a wild bellow of rage came from the island, and the keeper came thudding down to the water's edge, obviously having guessed the trick that had been played upon him.

"Come back, you young rascals!" he roared. "My heye! Dished and done!"

"Good-bye, Bluebell!" called Bob Cherry.

"Don't let him spot your faces," gasped Wharton. "Hold your head down, Bob. You other chaps keep still and don't look round. We've done them!"

"Hip-pip!" gurgled Bob Cherry. "Good man, Bunter! I take back my share in the bumping we gave you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the juniors roared—they could afford to roar now—as the boat danced and rocked over the shining river schoolwards. They felt they could forgive Bunter now. He had not shown up well, by any means, for most of the afternoon, but he had amply made up for it at the end. And Bunter sat in the stern and grinned. After all, the afternoon had been a great success, and in his pocket still reposed the ten-shilling note. His one hope was that the Famous Five knew nothing of that.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Walker is Angry!

BILLY BUNTER was very thoughtful as the boat glided homewards. The afternoon's adventures had certainly been strange, and Bunter was very puzzled and curious. He had gone to Popper Island hoping to find a mystery there, and he had found one, without a doubt.

What did it mean? Who was the mysterious stranger who was in hiding on the island? Bunter had no doubt whatever that the man was in hiding on the island. He also had no doubt that James Walker, of the Sixth, was in some way connected with the amazing business. Those words he had glimpsed in Walker's letter were certainly curious, and in view of what had happened they were very significant.

And Walker had done his utmost to prevent the juniors from visiting the island. Why?

Bunter was exceedingly curious and suspicious now. He was on the track of a mystery, and Bunter loved mysteries. He also loved poking his fat little nose into other people's business still more. Bunter, at first, had been tempted more than once to mention his suspicions to Harry Wharton & Co. But he felt glad he hadn't now. He wanted to keep what he knew—or suspected—to himself for a bit. He had a vague idea that there was a good possibility of making something out of it—if he could find out anything more about it—and especially James Walker's connection with the affair.

And Bunter meant to find out more about it somehow.

At the boathouse he left the Famous Five to house the boat without his help and scuttled up to the school. That ten shillings was burning a hole in his pocket, and he wanted to exchange it for tuck at the tuckshop as soon as possible. There was just a chance that the Famous Five knew he had got it, and

it was quite possible that they might remember about it if that was the case.

The Famous Five scarcely noticed he had gone; in any case, his help to carry the boat in was not needed nor desired. Besides, Harry Wharton wanted to discuss the astonishing events with his chums—without Bunter on the spot. He had not yet told them of the stranger's generous aid, or of his hiding-place—that queer cave in the woods, if cave it was.

As they walked up to the school he told them, and his chums stared.

"Phew!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Then it's pretty clear the fellow is hiding on the island. It beats me altogether, chaps!"

"It was jolly decent of him to risk capture to help you, anyhow, Harry," said Frank Nugent. "I saw he was as afraid of being collared by the keepers as we were."

"He was," agreed Harry. But we're not out of the wood yet, chaps! Old Popper knows Greyfriars fellows have been there, and he's bound to kick up a fuss. We'll have to lie low, I can tell you. And if old Walker suspects and finds out we've been up river we're for it, my lads!"

"Yes, rather!"

"We'll keep the yarn to ourselves, mind!" said Harry. "But that fat ass, Bunter, is the trouble. We must warn him to keep his mouth shut for his own sake. If he thinks there's a chance of it getting to Walker's ears he'll keep silent easily enough."

"What about that ten bob?" grinned Bob Cherry. "That merchant said he'd left ten bob for the grub."

"Phew!" growled Harry. "I'd forgotten all about that. I believe the chap did, too, and Bunter's collared it. That's the queer part about it all. The fellow seemed a decent enough chap, and I can't see that he's done anything wrong, though he is hiding. It's queer!"

"Jolly queer. Shall we tackle Bunter about the ten bob?"

"No," Harry grinned. "Let the fat rotter keep it. He deserves it for saving us this afternoon. I hope old Walker doesn't—Hallo! Here's Coker. Seems to be waiting for someone."

"He's waiting for us," grinned Bob Cherry. "Note the giddy warlike gleam in his optics. Better look out!"

"Ha, ha! Yes."

The chums walked up to the gates smilingly. Coker, with Potter and Greene, was standing in the gateway, and he gave the juniors a dark look as they walked cheerily up.

"So you've got back, then?" he said.

"Here we are, Coker!" said Bob. "Hope you didn't catch cold. Perhaps the water wasn't damp, though! Was the water damp, Coker darling?"

"You—you cheeky little sweeps!" snorted Coker, glaring. "I'm just waiting for you chaps. I'm going to give you all the hiding of your lives!"

"One at a time, or all together, Coker?" asked Bob Cherry anxiously. "I do hope it's one at a time. If it is, take me last, old chap!"

"I want no more cheek!" snorted Coker, as his chums chuckled. "Now, look here, kids. Before I lick you I've got something to say. Walker knows you kids have been up-river."

"Oh!"

"I let it out by accident," explained Coker. "I want you fellows to understand that. I don't want you to think I sneaked. See?"

"We see, O king!"

"Walker saw I was wet through, and asked me how I got wet," explained

Coker, with a grunt. "I told him it was you cheeky young scamps, not knowing he had forbidden you to go up-river. He was waxy—especially when I told him where it happened. Blessed if I know why! Anyway, I want you to clearly understand that I didn't sneak. I let it out by accident."

"We understand, old chap. Your mouth being so big, it sort of slipped out—what?"

"That's enough cheek!" roared Coker. "Well, now I've explained that, I'm going to lick you. Now, Potter and Greene pile in and back me up. I'll teach the little sweeps to duck me in the dashed river! Go for 'em!"

And Coker made a blind rush at the Famous Five. As he did so Potter and Greene smiled and walked away. Not having been ducked by the Famous Five, as Coker had been, they did not see any reason why they should risk getting a ragging by a mob of Removites.

So Coker had what happened next all to himself.

As he rushed at the Famous Five they closed round him cheerfully, and Coker found himself next instant flat on his back. Fighting-man that he was, he stood little chance alone against the redoubtable Removites.

As he sprawled on the gravel, Harry Wharton whipped his jacket over his head and rolled him over. Then he rubbed a handful of gravel into his hair, and jammed another handful down the back of his neck. Then, after wiping their feet on Coker, the Famous Five walked away, chuckling.

Coker gasped and gasped, and roared after them, as he strove desperately to shake the gravel from down his collar. He was still busily engaged doing so when the Famous Five disappeared into the School House.

"Dear old Coker!" murmured Bob Cherry. "What would Greyfriars be without him? But—Oh, great Scott! What putrid luck that that idiot Coker told Walker. We're for it now!"

"Yes, rather!"

The juniors ceased laughing, and looked suddenly dismayed at the thought. Walker, being a prefect, would be obliged to report them for having set foot on the island, in any case. And they had defied him—which made matters much worse.

Their fears were very soon realised.

They had scarcely been in their study three minutes when Walker opened the door and looked in. His face was dark, and his eyes glittered.

"So you've come back!" he snapped. "You little sweeps! You went up-river, after all?"

The juniors did not answer. They stared curiously at the furious senior. They couldn't make Walker out at all.

"I happen to know you did!" went on Walker savagely. "And I happen to know you set foot on Popper's Island. You know what that means?"

"If you can prove we went there—" began Harry rather lamely.

"Coker's word's good enough for me, Wharton," said Walker sharply. "You can't deny it, you reckless little sweeps! Look here! I want to know—" He paused, flushing. Then he nodded savagely to Harry Wharton. "Come to my study, Wharton!" he gritted.

He turned and walked out. Harry gave his chums a grim look and followed him. His chums went promptly after him. They were determined to see what happened to their leader.

Harry was looking puzzled as he walked after Walker. It was Walker's duty to report them, and leave it at that, as far as he himself was concerned. Why he did not do so at once, instead of

making all this fuss was beyond the junior.

He followed the senior into his study, and he began to feel uneasy as he noticed that Walker reached for his ashplant, after kicking the door closed.

"Now," gritted the prefect, "I want to know just why you visited that island, and—and all that happened, Wharton. Tell me!"

Wharton was silent. He did not intend to admit anything, if he could help it.

"You went on the island—Coker had to admit that he left you there," said Walker. "Did—did you see anyone on the island, Wharton?"

"I'm saying nothing, and admitting nothing," said Harry coolly.

His coolness increased the prefect's fury.

"You'll tell me!" hissed Walker. "If you don't I'll lay this ashplant about you until you do!"

"No, you won't!" said Harry calmly. "I'm not standing that, even from you, Walker! If you think we've been breaking bounds, it's up to you to report us, right enough. But you've no right to take it on yourself to lick me on suspicion, or because I choose to tell you nothing!"

"You—you——" Walker spluttered furiously, and then he made a rush and grasped Harry. Another moment and the ashplant was lashing the junior across the shoulders. Walker had plainly lost his temper now.

The first cut made Harry yelp, and the next instant the door was shoved open and Bob Cherry looked in. Behind him showed Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Singh. They took in the scene in the instant, and acted swiftly.

Walker was a prefect, but he was exceeding his duties as a prefect, and the Removites never stood that sort of thing—even from Walker.

"Rescue, chaps!" called Bob grimly. "Back up!"

"Yes, rather!"

There was a rush into the study, and Walker staggered back as several hands gripped him and dragged him off Harry. Bob Cherry grasped the ashplant and tore it from his hands.

"You little sweeps!" howled Walker. "By Jove! I'll make you sorry for this! Attack a prefect, would you?"

He grabbed at the ashplant and tore it from Bob's hand. The next moment he was laying it about the juniors with a will. There was a chorus of yells, but before Walker could strike many blows he was collared, and rolled on the hearthrug with the five of them grasping him.

It was mutiny, with a vengeance, and Walker could scarcely believe the evidence of his own senses. He lay on his back, with the juniors swarming over him.

"You little fiends!" he gasped. "Let me get up—d'you hear? By gad! I'll make you squirm for this! Get up, hang you!"

"Let him get up, chaps," called Harry. "If he starts again we'll down him again!"

"Yes, rather!"

The juniors got up. Harry tossed the ashplant on top of the bookshelves. All the juniors were looking grim now. They had attacked a prefect—though with justification, in their view—and they knew they were "for it."

Walker staggered to his feet, breathing hard.

"You little rotters!" he breathed. "I—I——"

He was interrupted. The door opened just then again, and this time Wingate

looked in. The captain of Greyfriars stared at the sight of Walker's red, furious face, and the heated faces of the juniors.

"Hallo! What's going on here, Walker?" he asked. "What the thump——"

Walker bit his lip hard.

"It—it's nothing, Wingate," he said a trifle thickly. "I was just dealing with these cheeky kids. It's nothing—nothing that I can't manage myself, anyway."

It was a pointed hint to Wingate to clear out, and Wingate took it. He glanced sharply at the juniors, and then he went out again, shrugging his shoulders.

The juniors were staggered. They had expected Walker to storm and accuse them to Wingate. Walker turned to them.

"Get out!" he hissed. "Get out, you little sweeps!"

"If—if you mean to report us, Walker——" began Harry.

"I don't mean to report you!" gritted Walker. "Get out! And mind you, the less you say about going to Popper's Island the better for you! You understand?"

The juniors did not quite understand by any means; but they nodded, and got out quickly enough. Harry closed the door as they swarmed into the passage, and then the chums looked at each other.

"Well, this beats the band!" gasped Harry Wharton. "He—he's not going to report us—after what's happened! Walker must be potty!"

"Going off his nut, that's clear!" said Bob Cherry, grinning. "But it's jolly lucky for us!"

"It's queer, though!"

"He, he, he!"

It was a fat cackle, and it came from Billy Bunter, who was standing in the passage. His fat features were smeared with jam and crumbs, and he looked very full and very satisfied.

He grinned at the juniors.

"I say, you fellows, I can tell you what's up with Walker," he grinned. "At least, I could if I wanted to."

"You fat ass!"

"Fact!" grinned Bunter. "I could tell you fellows something if I liked. He, he, he! I fancy I know why Walker didn't want you to go to the island, and why he's waxy because you did."

And Bunter rolled away, wearing a fat grin and a knowing look.

"What does the fat idiot mean?" grunted Harry Wharton. "Why shouldn't— Oh, I remember!"

Quite suddenly Harry had remembered the little Bunter had let out that afternoon about what he had glimpsed in Walker's letter.

At the time Harry had taken it for Bunter's usual idiotic chatter, and he had dismissed it from his mind—as had the others. But he wondered now.

"That's queer, you fellows!" breathed Harry, as the juniors walked back to their study. "You remember this afternoon in the study here? Bunter was gassing something about having spotted something in a letter for Walker—something about the police and Popper's Island."

"Great Scott! So he was!"

"I thought it was just his rot then," said Harry. "But I wonder——"

And Harry's chums wondered, too, now. Why had Walker been so desperately anxious to stop them going on the island? And why had he been so furious—so utterly unlike himself—because they had gone there?

It certainly wanted some explaining.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Island Again!

"YOU fellows coming down to the Common-room?"

Johnny Bull asked the question as he looked into Study No. 1 on the Remove passage. Behind Johnny was Hurree Singh and Bob Cherry. Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent were seated at the table, just finishing their prep.

"Shan't be a sec!" said Frank cheerfully. "Just about finished, thank goodness! Buck up, Harry!"

"I've finished!" grunted Harry Wharton. "But I've got to write a letter yet to post first thing in the morning, chaps. You shove off down, and I'll follow later."

"Must be a jolly important letter," remarked Bob Cherry. "Come along, and postpone the giddy letter. I always postpone letters unless I'm writing home for a remittance. I never postpone writing those letters."

"This is not quite so urgent as that," grinned Harry. "But it's got to be done, for all that. It's to acknowledge that two quid from Nunky; you know what he is for wanting an acknowledgment by return. It won't take me a sec, though. You fellows wait."

Bob Cherry and the others groaned, but they entered the study to wait, for all that. Harry removed his prep books and cleared the table to write his letter. When Harry wrote asking for a remittance he usually wrote quite long ones. There was a difference.

Having got pen and ink and paper, Harry put his hand in his pocket, fumbling for his pocket-wallet. He withdrew his hand, with a sudden gasp of alarm.

"Great pip! It's gone!" he gasped.

"What's gone?"

"My wallet!" exclaimed Harry, fumbling hastily in his other pockets. "Oh, Great Scott! It must have fallen out of my pocket when I fell this afternoon—on the island, you know."

"Well, we can run up and get it to-morrow, old chap. Nothing to worry about," said Bob Cherry easily. "You know where you dropped it, I suppose?"

"But that's not it," said Harry, his face showing great concern. "The letter was in it, with my uncle's address on—he's staying at a silly old hotel in London. Oh crumbs!"

"Yes, but——"

"It's jolly serious!" said Harry, groaning. "It's bad enough about the address—I can't remember it. But there was that other quid in the wallet. Besides, there were other things in it, too—things I wouldn't like to lose. And as for the wallet, it—it belonged to my father, and I wouldn't lose it for worlds. Oh, great Scott! What rotten luck!"

"We can get it to-morrow, old chap."

"But supposing it rains—the thing will be ruined!" hooted Harry, in great exasperation. "Look here, you chaps, I'm not going to leave it to lie there all the dashed night and most of to-morrow. Besides, that's not the only thing, either. My name's in it, and if it's found there—if those keeper chaps find it, or old Popper, I'm in the soup."

"Phew! That's serious!"

"It is serious, you grinning asses!" snorted Harry. "Look here, what the thump can we do?"

"Sure you did drop it there, old chap?" asked Bob Cherry.

"I must have done. In fact, I seem to remember hearing something drop when I went down. Oh, what rotten luck! If it's lost——"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 953.

"No reason to allow it to be lost," said Bob Cherry calmly. "Why not have a pull up there to-night?"

"What?"

"I mean it," grinned Bob. "It's a nice night, and it would be a jolly old lark to sneak out and have a moonlight pull up to the island. By Jove! It'll be no end of a game! Let's do it!"

Harry Wharton drew a deep breath.

It was a daring suggestion—Bob's suggestions usually were daring. To break bounds to visit an island that was out of bounds, and to do it after dusk, was taking a very big risk. But—but—

Harry Wharton's eyes glimmered.

He was genuinely upset about the wallet. He did not want it to be damaged by possible rain, and he certainly did not want it lost, or stolen. Besides, his name was in it, and that meant serious risk for his chums as well as himself. And the wallet was one of his most prized possessions for family reasons. The thought of losing it brought a lump to Harry's throat.

And then, as Bob had said, it would be a ripping adventure. A pull upstream after dusk was something new and would undoubtedly be enjoyable.

"Let's do it," said Frank Nugent. "Why not?"

"The why notfulness is terrific," smiled Hurree Singh. "My esteemed Harry, it would be the larkful caper."

"Hear, hear! Let's do it," said Johnny Bull eagerly.

"I'll do it," said Harry after a pause.

"But I don't see why you chaps should risk so much. Better let me go alone."

"Rubbish!"

"Bunkum!"

"We're all coming, old top," grinned Bob Cherry. "Come on—the sooner the better. It'll be a great lark. Come on!"

"Hold on, you ass!" said Harry hastily. "We'll all go if you chaps insist. But we mustn't slip out together, or we'd be spotted. Slip out one at a time, and meet at the end of the school wall. How's that?"

"Good!"

It was agreed to do that without further discussion, and the juniors separated to get their caps, which they stuffed into their pockets. Then, by devious routes, and with great caution, they made their way out into the dusky quad. They were running a great risk, but, after all, it was worth it. And there was a very good chance that they would never be missed. If they weren't in the Rag they would be expected to be in their studies, and they had until bedtime—or near enough to bedtime. Long before that time they hoped to be back, mingling with the crowd of fellows in the Rag.

The dusk was thick in Friardale Lane, but there was more than enough light to see their way by, and when the five were together at last at the end of the school wall they lost no time in moving.

It was a very short distance to the boathouse, and as the long, low building loomed up at last, with the murmuring river gleaming beyond it, they halted, and Harry Wharton slipped round to the rear of the building.

There were always several windows open, and he knew he would have no difficulty in getting in.

Nor did he. He had scarcely left his chums three minutes when the great double doors were cautiously pushed open from inside by Harry Wharton.

The rest was easy. With the aid of a pocket-torch a boat was launched, and sculls taken from the rack. Then the door was pulled to, and the boat, with

the Famous Five aboard, glided gently out on the rippling surface of the dusky river.

It was quite an exciting adventure, and the juniors were already enjoying it—though more than one of them had inward qualms as they thought of the risk. Really, the risk was very small. It was scarcely likely either senior or master would be in the vicinity of the silent river so late.

Harry and Frank Nugent took the sculls, and the boat glided upstream under their vigorous strokes between wooded, shadowy banks. It was a still night, and scarcely a sound broke the silence, save for the rippling murmur of the river and the splash of the sculls.

"This is great!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Go it, chaps! We'd better not take it easy."

"Rather not!"

But the juniors were already pulling hard, the keen night air making them glad of the exercise. Bob Cherry was at the rudder-lines, and he found no difficulty in seeing his way, for the river ran between the black, shadowy banks like a stream of silver before the boat.

They reached the island at last, and the boat was edged in cautiously, and run aground on the sandy ridge they had used only that afternoon. The juniors jumped out and were about to start off inland when Harry Wharton gave a warning hiss.

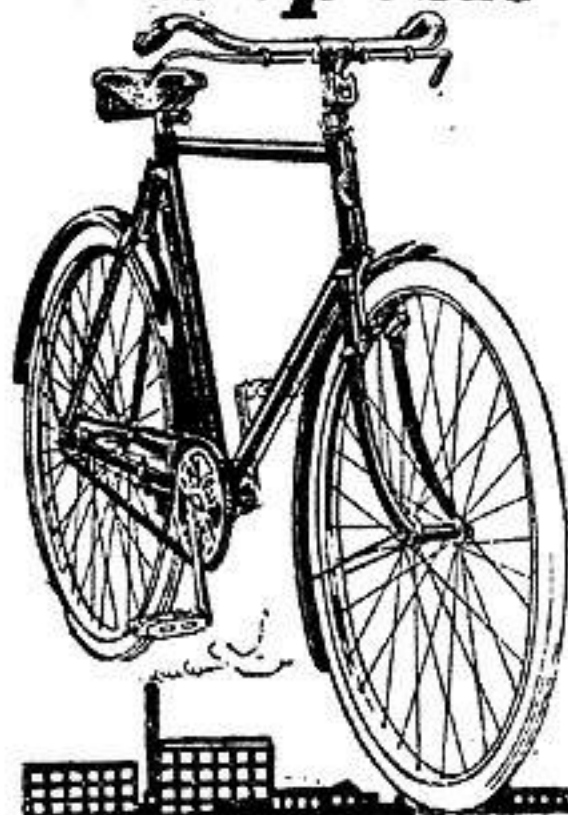
"Get down," he breathed. "Listen!"

The juniors listened, crouching down in the undergrowth. In the distance of the black woods sounded the eerie hoot of an owl. And then, above the murmur and rustle of the water in the willows, came another sound from downstream—the soft splash of oars.

(Continued on next page.)

**Boys! Tell Dad
you can have
a No. 400A
Mead Bike for**

**2/6
Deposit**



Boys! Cycling is the most glorious of all pastimes. And the world's best bike for boys is the MEAD. This is *PROVED* by the unsolicited letters of praise printed in our catalogue. So send to-day for a *Free* copy. In this wonderful 28-page pictorial portfolio we illustrate and describe an extensive range of "Sporty" Roadsters and lightweight Racing mounts.

Each model embodies all the latest improvements, is exquisitely enamelled, brilliantly plated, lined in two colours, and supplied in a variety of sizes for youths of all ages. Whatever cycle you select will be sent packed free and carriage paid on 15 days' trial. **Money refunded immediately** if you are not completely satisfied.

How you can obtain a magnificent bicycle for your own riding on payment of 2/6 is explained in our new catalogue. Write for one NOW—it is a real work of art that you will delight to peruse and be proud to possess.

Mead

CYCLE COMPANY INC.

(Dept. M601), Sparkbrook, BIRMINGHAM.

**Nothing
more to
pay till
you have
ridden
the cycle
One
Month**

MODEL 400
£4.19.6
CASH

It was approaching the island from downstream, and, as the juniors looked back, they saw the dim shape of a boat gliding over the water towards the island, the wet blades glistening as they rose and fell.

"A racing skiff," breathed Harry Wharton. "That means it's a Greyfriars chap!"

"After us," gasped Frank Nugent.

"I shouldn't think so—I hope not, anyway," muttered Harry.

It was obviously a racing skiff from its speed—it was like a dark bird skimming the glimmering water. It slowed down with a soft swishing of feathered oars.

Skilfully the sculler ran it gently alongside the bank a few yards away from where the juniors had left their boat. Here the bank was higher, and, by raising one scull, the fellow in the skiff allowed it to skim over the grassy bank as the skiff slid to a stop with a soft, grating sound.

The unknown sculler stepped ashore. Then he stooped, and from the floor-boards in front of his slide he lifted out a rather bulky bag. From its shape it was obviously a cricket-bag.

The juniors stared. What a fellow was doing bringing a cricket-bag to Popper's Island at such an hour was beyond them.

"It's Walker," breathed Harry Wharton. "This looks a bit interesting, chaps."

There was no doubt about that. Walker—they could see his profile now—left the boat and stood waiting a moment. Then he whistled softly. Nothing happened, and he whistled again.

Then, quite suddenly, Harry clutched Bob Cherry's arm as a light flickered among the trees, and cautious footsteps were heard from the dark trees.

The dancing light came nearer, and then it vanished. The next instant a dark form emerged from the trees and joined the waiting Walker. The juniors had no need to see his face to discover who he was. They had already recognised the tall, broad-shouldered stranger of the afternoon's adventure.

"Jove!" breathed Harry Wharton. "Bunter was right, then."

"You've come, then, Walker?" said the stranger in a low, grateful tone. "Good man! I was beginning to give you up."

"I thought it wasn't safe to come this afternoon," said Walker, a trifle breathlessly. "And I was playing for the first eleven, too."

He shook hands warmly with the stranger, who took the bag from him.

"Come along and I'll show you my dug-out," remarked the stranger, with a grim laugh. "I've already had one visitor there to-day. But we can talk there, and I'll soon tell you how matters really stand."

They heard Walker ask something in a low, earnest tone, and then both of them vanished among the trees. Again the light flickered on, and danced among the trees for a time, and then, after growing smaller and smaller, it vanished.

"Phew!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Well, that fairly takes the dog-biscuit, chaps. That fat ass Bunter wasn't romancing at all, then. But—but what does it mean?"

"Blessed if I know," said Harry uneasily. "In any case, it isn't our business. Come on. We'd better make the most of our time and look for that wallet. I'm not going back without it, Walker or no Walker!"

The dancing light came nearer, then it vanished, and a dark form emerged from the trees and joined the waiting Sixth-Former. "Jove!" breathed Wharton. "Bunter was right, then!"
(See Chapter 9.)



"He can't touch us if he catches us," grinned Bob. "It's a jolly sight more serious for a senior to be caught breaking bounds than for a junior."

"We don't want him to see us, for all that," grunted Harry. "He'll only think we're spying on him. Buck up! I think I know just where I fell. It was by that hollow oak."

"Oh, good!"

All the juniors knew the spot, and they started into the wood, Harry making cautious use of his electric torch. He led the way without hesitation. Though strictly out of bounds every inch almost of the island was familiar to the juniors.

He stopped at last before a great, gnarled old oak, with a gaping hole in the trunk.

"Here we are! Now for it!"

Harry shone the light round about the grass at the foot of the oak, and almost at once Frank Nugent gave an exclamation of triumph.

Stooping swiftly, he picked up something from the grass, and Harry gave a gasp of delight as he saw it. It was the wallet, wet with dew, but otherwise unharmed. A glance inside showed Harry that it had not been touched, though it was scarcely likely that it could have been.

"Good! Jolly good!" he remarked with satisfaction. "Now we'll hoof it back, chaps. We don't want any further trouble with Walker."

None of the juniors did, and they followed Harry as he trod hastily back. They soon reached the water, and boarded the boat without delay.

Harry pushed off, and he had just done so when from the dark woods behind them came a sudden, startled shout, and

a figure emerged into the dusky light and dashed down to the water's edge.

"Oh, crumbs! Walker!" gasped Harry Wharton. "Pull for it!"

"Come back!" called Walker, in a desperate hiss. "I know whom you are, you little spying cads. Come back!"

"Great expectations!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Bend to it, my hearties!"

And he bent to it, and Harry Wharton joined him. The blades dipped and the boat shot away speedily. But both the juniors at the oars soon had good reason to feel less cheery.

After staring after them for a brief instant, James Walker sprang to his own craft, and before the juniors had covered a hundred yards he was racing in pursuit, his light craft skimming the water like a sea-bird.

"Oh, crumbs!" groaned Bob Cherry. "We're done, chaps! He'll soon catch us up in that dashed racer."

"Peg away, anyhow!" snapped Harry. "If we can only get round the bend first we'll give him the slip among the rushes."

"Oh, good!"

The juniors grasped Harry's idea at once. Bob and Harry bent to the sculls with a will. The click of the buttons against the rowlocks sounded like clock-work as the juniors swung backwards and forwards with measured rhythm.

They were round the bend in the river sooner than they had expected almost, and Johnny Bull steered the craft round, hugging the bank as closely as he dared. They swished among the dark rushes, and Harry and Bob deftly shipped their sculls as the boat slowed down, its speed checked instantly by the cracking, swishing rushes.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 953.

The water was none too deep, of course, but it was deep enough for the skiff. With the rushes rising above their heads, the juniors did not fear being seen in the deep dusk.

They heard the measured splash of sculls, and then they glimpsed the light racing skiff as it came past them. Almost at once the blades ceased to dip and the boat slowed down.

"He's spotted the game!" murmured Bob.

"It doesn't matter," chuckled Harry. "He won't dare to follow us in the racer, and in any case it would take him no end of time to search those rushes."

"Yes, rather!"

"Quiet!"

Walker's craft came backing slowly alongside the belt of rushes, but though he scanned them searchingly, he did not make any attempt to come closer in. And after a few moments he gave a grunt and started away again, pulling leisurely now. The swish of his blades died away, and he and his craft were soon swallowed up in the deep gloom.

"We'll give him a few minutes and then we'll follow," chuckled Harry.

"Supposing he waits for us at the boathouse, though?"

"Oh, crumbs! I never thought of that," groaned Harry.

Only Frank Nugent had thought of that obvious possibility.

"We'll have to chance it, anyway," grunted Harry. "We'll give him longer, though."

For fully five minutes the juniors waited among the rushes, and then they started out again and continued their pull down-stream.

They reached the boathouse at last. The place was dark and silent, and the double doors were closed. Whether Walker was there or not he had taken his boat in.

The juniors jumped ashore, expecting every second to see the prefect appear from the shadows. But they had to risk it, and Harry opened the doors—they had not been fastened—and the juniors carried their boat in. Then they came out, and Harry fastened the doors from the inside, and a few moments later he joined his chums on the staging again.

As he did so a step sounded, and a dark form rushed from the shadows of the building.

"Look out!" gasped Johnny Bull.

It was Walker, as they had expected, and his grasp closed on Wharton.

"Got you!" he snapped. "You were pretty smart to hide in those rushes, but it's done you no good. You other kids needn't try to bolt. I know you all."

"My dear man, we're not thinking of bolting," said Bob coolly.

"It won't help you if you do. I spotted you when you left the island. You—you spying little sweeps!"

"We haven't been spying," said Harry quietly. "That's rot, Walker."

"Then what were you doing on the island? And what were you up to there this afternoon? I know for a fact now that you were there, with Bunter. I suppose that little cad told you something—something he'd seen in a letter of mine?" snapped Walker.

"We went for a picnic there, and for that reason only," said Harry steadily. "You can believe us or not, just as you like, Walker. We went again to-night because I dropped my wallet on the island this afternoon, and was afraid of losing it."

Walker was silent a moment. Then he went on sharply:

"You know it means a flogging for breaking bounds to visit Popper's Island, Wharton?"

"For us, yes," said Harry calmly. "But for a senior and a prefect I should think it would mean something worse than a flogging."

The shaft went home, for Walker ground his teeth. He was silent a moment, and the juniors could see he was seething with helpless rage.

He spoke at last.

"Get off!" he snapped. "Get back to school! And remember that if you gas about this it will be the worse for you. You understand? It will pay you to keep your mouths shut. Now clear!"

"Very well, Walker!"

Harry Wharton turned away, and the others followed. Walker watched them trot away, then he followed slowly.

"Well, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry as they trotted hard schoolwards. "More giddy mystery, chaps. But I fancy dear old Walker won't report us."

"He daren't, of course!" said Harry. "But—he's not really a bad sort, and I don't like the business at all. I wish I could think it was all straight and above board. But let's hope we manage to sneak in safely. We're not out of the wood yet."

But Harry need not have feared that. They separated and slipped into the School House one by one, and ten minutes later all five met again in the Rag. They had all managed it without a hitch, and nobody seemed to have missed them at all. It was very comforting knowledge, but all the juniors were very thoughtful indeed for the rest of that evening. They were wondering what was the mystery on Popper's Island, and what connection James Walker had with the unknown man in hiding there.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Strange News!

"QUELCHY looks pipped this morning, chaps."

Johnny Bull passed that remark as he met the rest of the select circle known as the Famous Five in the close the following morning, just after breakfast.

He made it carelessly, as if the matter did not interest him overmuch. But Harry Wharton frowned.

"It's rather funny," he said thoughtfully. "I noticed that myself; and he's not the only one, either. I noticed that the Head was looking jolly pipped and grave this morning in chapel. Wonder if anything's up?"

"Here's our pet Paul Pry," grinned Bob Cherry, as Bunter's fat form rolled into view. "Let's ask him. If there is anything wrong, Bunter's bound to know about it—unless he's got an ear-ache, and is giving keyholes a miss for a bit."

The juniors chuckled, and looked at Bunter as he rolled up to them. Bunter was looking rather excited, and his eyes were glimmering behind his big glasses.

"I say, you fellows," he whispered before Bob could speak. "Have you chaps heard the news?"

"No. What news, Bunter?"

"About that chap Simmons," said Bunter mysteriously, looking cautiously about him. "I knew there was something jolly fishy about the business."

"Who the thump is Simmons?" asked Harry.

"He's a solicitor chap—a fellow who was here ages ago," said Bunter, with a serious grin. "You fellows have met him."

"I don't remember meeting an old boy of that name," said Harry, wrinkling his brows. "But I seem to know the name."

"You've met him, anyway, I fancy," grinned Bunter, winking. "I knew there was something wrong—jolly wrong, you know. Trust me to smell a rat."

"Yes, you ought to have been born a ferret, or a rat-trap," agreed Bob. "But what the thump are you gassing about, Bunter? Who and what and when is this chap Simmons? What's the giddy point, any old how?"

"The Head's awfully pipped, and so's Quelch," grinned Billy Bunter. "I happened to overhear them talking about it a few moments ago. I heard Quelch say he felt the disgrace keenly, as he thought a lot of the chap when he was in his Form here. The Head seemed upset too. He said it was a blow to him. He had expected great things of Simmons. Blessed if I can see why the old chumps should bother about a chap that's left Greyfriars ages ago. Rot I call it."

"There's a lot of things you can't, and never will, understand, Bunter," said Bob Cherry. "One is that you're a fat, mean-minded little worm!"

"Oh, really, Cherry!"

"But what's this chap Simmons done, anyway?"

"He, he, he! That's the point," said Bunter. "He's a solicitor, you know—junior partner or something in a blessed firm at Melford. He's swindled some old girl, or something."

"Oh!"

"It's a fact," said Bunter. "This old girl handed some money over for the firm to invest for her, and Simmons has done a bunk with it."

"My hat!"

"How rotten!" breathed Harry Wharton.

He could understand now why both the kindly old Dr. Locke and Mr. Quelch were looking "pippled." To hear of an old Greyfriars fellow going wrong would hurt them bitterly.

Harry felt like kicking the grinning Billy Bunter.

"You fat rotter!" he breathed. "Is that a fact?"

"Yes. He's bolted with about two



SPRINGO Mechanically Propelled BOOMERANGS

These wonderful little boomerangs—as sold at Wembley—can be propelled, and will return to you exactly in the same way as the actual boomerangs used by the Australian blacks. Full particulars of how to get one for nothing in this week's

BOY'S FRIEND

Now on Sale. Buy a Copy To-day! 2d.

thousand quids—all the old lady had in the world. Left her absolutely penniless, I believe. Nice thing, ain't it? He must be a giddy worm!"

"If he did that he must be," agreed Harry, eyeing Bunter very curiously now. "But you said I'd met him, Bunter? I don't remember meeting the chap."

"You wouldn't," jeered Bunter. "My hat! You fellows are dense. He paused and glanced about him cautiously again. Then he lowered his voice to a whisper. "What about yesterday afternoon?" he said significantly. "What about that queer merchant on that island, eh?"

"Wha-a-at?"

"What about that knife you picked up?" grinned Bunter triumphantly. "It had the initials 'L.S.' on it, didn't it? My hat! It takes a clever chap like me to put two and two together. His name is Longford Simmons."

"Phew!"

"Simmons has bolted, and it's suspected he's still in the district somewhere," went on Bunter in a low tone. "Well, what about that merchant hiding on Popper's Island?"

"My hat!"

"Great Scott!"

The juniors stared at each other. It was possible—indeed it was very probable that Bunter was right in his suspicion. The fellow spoke well, and was dressed well, despite his unshaven and dishevelled appearance.

Moreover, there was the pocket-knife. The initials on the haft were "L.S." Harry had the knife in his pocket now, having forgotten all about it since the day before.

Was the fellow the missing robber—a rascally thief, a villain who had robbed an old lady of her all?

It seemed impossible. Harry could not forget the fellow's frank smile and engaging manner, nor could he forget his generous act in saving him and risking his own safety.

Yet—

Bunter's fat voice interrupted his thoughts.

"Well, what do you fellows think about it?" he asked. "And that's not all. The old girl's name is Walker, and she's an aunt of Walker's of the Sixth."

"What?"

"Fact," grinned Bunter, gleeful at the sensation he was causing. "It's in all the papers about it, I believe. I heard Quelch say she was Walker's maiden aunt, though. I say, you fellows, isn't that queer? Fancy Walker backing that awful villain up when he's robbed his aunt!"

"Great Scott!"

"It beats me hollow," went on Bunter cheerfully. "I should have thought Walker would have been fairly itching to get hold of the brute. Instead of that he's helping him! It's a fact."

"How do you know he is, Bunter?" said Harry, eyeing the fat junior curiously.

"He, he, he! I find things out, you know. What about that letter, and what about his trying to stop us going up to the island, and being so waxy when he knew we'd been?" grinned Bunter. "But that ain't all, either."

Bunter paused and blinked about him carefully.

"I was watching Walker last night," he whispered. "I spotted him packing a cricket-bag with grub and stuff, and I followed him out. Where do you think he went?"

The juniors knew the answer to that better than Bunter did. They did not answer, and Bunter rattled on.

"He went down to the boathouse, and he took the bag in a skiff up-river," said Bunter impressively. "He was going to Popper's Island, of course. I'd have followed him, only—only—"

"You daren't," sniffed Bob Cherry.

"Well, it was rather dark," said Bunter. "But it was enough for me, anyway. He was taking the grub to Simmons. What do you fellows think about that?"

"You prying little worm!"

"Oh, really, Wharton, you're only jealous because I could see through it all and you couldn't!" grinned Bunter. "I can tell you fellows—Yooop! Wharrer you kicking me for, Cherry? Ow-yow!"

"For being such a spying little rotter," said Bob. "Here's a few more kicks —"

But Bunter didn't wait for any more; he fled, roaring.

The juniors walked towards the School House. They were flabbergasted at the strange, puzzling affair. On the School House steps two seniors were standing. They were Wingate and Walker. Wingate was talking, but Walker, his face white, seemed to be only listening.

At that moment Mr. Quelch came round from the cloisters, and Wingate spoke to him.

"You've heard about Simmons, I suppose, sir?" he asked, his face grave.

Mr. Quelch nodded grimly.

EXTRA SPECIAL.

"FIGGINS' SACRIFICE!"

Dramatic Long Story of
Tom Merry & Co.
at St. Jim's.

Introducing Cousin Ethel
IN

This Week's "GEM"

"Yes, Wingate," he answered, glancing at Walker. "The news distressed me very much indeed, apart from the disgrace to an old boy of Greyfriars. He was a boy in whom I had every confidence, and I have followed his career with great pride and interest. And now—"

"It's rotten, sir," agreed Wingate. "I always thought he was one of the best, though I was only a fag, of course, when he was here. Walker here knew him better than I did. He was Simmons' fag."

Walker nodded, but said nothing. His face was white.

"I am very sorry indeed for you, Walker," said Mr. Quelch. "It is your aunt, I understand, who has been robbed by the heartless villain?"

"He has taken her money, sir," said Walker.

"You will feel it worse than any of us, then," said Mr. Quelch gently. "However, the rascal will be apprehended, never fear. I sincerely trust that the money will be recovered, at all events."

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Quelch nodded, and sailed into the School House. The next moment—evidently finding Walker not in a

very talkative mood—Wingate followed him. Walker came down the steps and walked slowly into the Close, his head sunk, kicking idly at the ground as he walked.

"It—it's true, then?" breathed Harry Wharton.

The juniors had been obliged to listen to the conversation, not being able to squeeze past the group. For a moment Harry Wharton stared after Walker, and then, his mind made up, he ran after him.

"Just a minute, Walker," he said quietly.

Walker stopped. He started a little as he saw the junior.

"Well, Wharton?" he snapped.

"It's like this, Walker," said Harry awkwardly. "We—we've heard about this chap Simmons."

"What?"

"We heard about it this morning, Walker, and we've guessed who that chap on the island is," said Harry doggedly.

Walker went white again.

"You—you've guessed?" he breathed.

"Yes. It's Simmons—it must be Simmons. It's the rascal who's robbed your aunt, Walker!"

"You—you interfering little cad!"

"What?" gasped Harry, utterly taken aback. "I—I felt that you couldn't know who he was—couldn't possibly help the chap who had robbed your aunt of her last penny, Walker. But—but if you do—"

"You little sweep!" hissed Walker. "Why can't you mind your own confounded business?"

"But—but I thought I'd better warn you," stammered Harry. "Bunter has guessed it also; he'll spread it all over the school, perhaps. You—you ought to—"

Slap!

Walker seemed suddenly to lose control of his temper, and Harry Wharton staggered back with a gasp as the prefect's flat hand boxed his ear. It was a terrific smack, and it made the astonished junior's head reel.

Walker marched away, leaving him standing there in dumbfounded amazement. Harry had acted from the very best of motives, but he felt sorry he had acted thus now.

He staggered back to his chums, and Bob Cherry could not help grinning.

"Well, you awful ass, Harry," he said.

"You fairly asked for it, tackling him just now. Let the silly fool stew in his own juice."

"Ow! Great Scott! After this I jolly well will!" groaned Harry. "I—I thought I'd better warn him about Bunter knowing, though. But—but—Great pip! This is a mystery, and no mistake!"

And as the juniors went indoors they were all agreed upon that. It certainly was a mystery. If Longford Simmons had robbed Walker's aunt—and that much seemed certain now—then why was Walker helping the heartless villain to elude capture?

It was a mystery too deep for the Famous Five. They simply could not understand it.

They were to understand all before very long, however. Harry Wharton & Co. had not yet seen the last of the mysterious fugitive on Popper's Island!

THE END.

(Now look out for the sequel to this ripping story, entitled "For Another's Sake!" and be prepared for something extra good, chums!)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 953.

CHECKMATE! The amiable intention of the owner of the Phantom ship is to ruin John Carr by sinking his fleet of trawlers and fouling his nets. But he finds a much stronger adversary in Ferrers Locke, who throws in his weight with Carr, than he bargained for!



The Phantom of the Dogger Bank!

An Amazing New Detective Serial, featuring Ferrers Locke and his boy assistant, Jack Drake.
(Introduction on page 25.)

At Ingholdt Farm!

BY evening Locke and Drake had the sulphur spring on their left, and they halted at a small farm which, they knew, must be near Ingholdt. The farmer, without any attempt to conceal his surprise at seeing two travellers out in that wild spot, answered Locke's questions which the detective put in Danish.

With great difficulty, for the man spoke the old Icelandic, Locke found out that Ingholdt was a big farm. A steward ran the place for Stromsund. There were, perhaps, ten servants, all Icelanders. But lately Stromsund had had many visitors from Reykjavik. They had all left for the south-east only a short while ago.

"Well, my boy, we can go straight up to Stromsund's farm without danger. These Icelanders are really splendid people. They don't know what it is to lie, it seems. They are honest as the Icelandic summer day is long."

Locke talked in high good humour as they trotted on towards Ingholdt.

They saw the farm at last—a big dwelling-house, built of stone, with numerous outbuildings. Ferrers Locke and Drake rode straight up, and men and children came running out to meet them.

One man seemed to be in authority. He was a handsome, flaxen-haired Dane and when Ferrers Locke inquired for Stromsund the man was sincere in his sorrow that his master had left for four days—perhaps more.

It was evident that this man was a farmer, and nothing more. Stromsund had apparently not confided in him, otherwise he would have been suspicious of this visit of the two Englishmen.

"You come from the trawlers?" asked the man.

"Yes," replied Locke.

"Ah, Herr Stromsund has many trawlers—big trawler interest in Reykjavik," said the steward. "So
THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 953.

many trawlermen have come here lately. He has much business in Reykjavik, and often he goes there. Also, he has business in the north. He travels always—sometimes Eyafjordur, on the northern coast. That is a village—the only one on the north. He has business there with land—Brek Katel. He goes here, there—we have wireless. See!"

The man pointed to the aerial above the house.

"But you come in. I forget. You have to wait a long time for Herr Stromsund to return—"

"We cannot wait beyond to-morrow," said Locke. "So I should like to write him a letter. I am part owner of the land at Brek Katel, and it was on that business I came here. Herr Stromsund wishes to buy that land?"

"Ah, I do not know! He has big business there—that is all I know about it. But it is unfortunate—"

"I'd like to write a long letter," said Locke. "Perhaps I may, in Herr Stromsund's office?"

"In the study—yes. But his office he keeps locked—I don't know why. His office and the wireless room. He takes all wireless messages himself when he is here. When he is not, if messages come, they are not taken."

The big Dane showed Locke and Drake into a small room of polished pine walls, produced ink, pen, and paper, and left them with a smile.

"You want to write long letter?" he said. "Well, I see you are not disturbed."

The steward left the office, and when he had gone Locke spoke to Drake in a low voice.

"If only we could get into that locked office!" he said. "However, we can't. So get busy, my boy, and use your eyes while I write something. I'll have to leave a letter of sorts—a blank sheet in an envelope will do. Look alive, my lad!"

Drake stood in the centre of the room first, and looked round carefully. Appar-

ently there was nothing much to search. There was a bookcase, but it contained nothing but books. The table at which Locke sat was bare save for the writing materials.

In a corner of the room, however, were some crumpled pieces of paper, such as an untidy man might throw down. Jack pounced on these. Two were hastily written notes about the quantity of mutton drying in the sheds this year, and the head of live sheep on the farm. But the third was an envelope crushed up.

Jack straightened it out, and a quick exclamation escaped his lips.

"What is it?" asked Locke, swinging round.

"Envelope—unstamped and torn open. Addressed to 'H. E. Dunn, Esq., Ness View, Lowestoft.' Probably a letter Stromsund had addressed to him, then had torn open to put something else in as a postscript or something—"

"Then we are already repaid for our journey. That is the man who has been offering Carr twenty thousand for Brek Katel. We have forged another link in our chain of evidence. Drake, so we will not arouse suspicion by prolonging our search—"

"Wouldn't be much good, sir," replied Drake, glancing round. "There's nothing else to search. Your blotter is new, too."

Ferrers Locke had unfolded the blotting sheet only to find that it had not been used for blotting anything before. He folded the blotter up again, pocketed the envelope addressed to H. E. Dunn, then rapidly addressed an envelope to Stromsund, blotted the few words he had written, and placed the folded sheet of plain paper in the envelope and put the sealed letter before him on the blotter.

He rose, glancing out of the window to see that no one was looking in, then advanced to the bookcase and rapidly ran his hands behind the books.

"Nothing!" he said. "We might as well get out, Drake. I am well

content. We have enough proof in this envelope addressed to the man who is trying to buy Brek Katel from Carr to give us our pointer for future action. Stromsund is interested in that land. Why? It is a great interest, if my theory that his Dogger Bank outrages are so to impoverish Carr that he will be forced to break his resolution not to sell Brek Katel on any account. But why? We are linking up our chain pretty well, Drake, but there is a lot before us yet, before we can denounce Stromsund, and get the law working to see justice done. You see, to charge Stromsund with the Dogger outrages without having a knowledge of the motive for them, would probably avail us and Carr nothing, save to get Stromsund punished. Carr is a ruined man at the moment. I believe there is an uplift in Carr's fortunes; but the secret of it is locked in the barren wastes of Brek Katel and the criminal brain of Stromsund."

"Here comes the steward, sir."

A tap sounded at the door.

"Come in!" said Locke.

The big Dane entered the room, smiling. His eyes fell on the letter on the table.

"Ah, maybe it won't be necessary to leave that now," he said. "You are fortunate, for a number of Herr Stromsund's men are returning up the hill to the farm now. Perhaps some of them will be able to settle your business."

"I quite agree," answered Locke dryly.

He walked to the window, and Jack felt his heart thump heavily against his ribs. But outwardly he was calm.

Locke suddenly swung round.

"We will go and meet them," he said swiftly. "It is most fortunate, seeing these men so soon. That man at the head has probably been already settling our business with Herr Stromsund. He is Herr Scar Hosking. Come along, my boy, we mustn't waste time!"

A Prisoner at Ingholdt!

FERRERS LOCKE and Jack Drake hurried out of the dwelling-house at Ingholdt Farm, leaving the steward with a very puzzled expression on his face.

The big Dane, though he spoke English well, did not grasp the Baker Street detective's real meaning when he agreed that Hosking might be able to "settle his business for him." And he wondered why Locke and his assistant hurried to get outside.

"Why can they not meet him here, in the house?" said the steward to himself, as he followed Locke and Drake to the back door, out of which they had passed. "It is curious. I hope there is nothing wrong—no wrong-doing. Yet they do not look like wrong-doers. Rather would I trust that tall, lean Englishman than Herr Stromsund. But it is puzzling."

The big Dane leaned on the door-post and watched Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake with amazement. They were not even trying to take the shortest possible route to meet Hosking. In fact, they seemed to be keeping out of sight behind the walls of the mutton-drying shed.

Ferrers Locke was leading, Jack Drake keeping close on his chief's heels.

"This is a pretty pickle, sir," said Jack, as Locke strode on ahead.

"It is!" replied Locke grimly. "Halt here for a while, my boy. We can see from this point without being seen. I hope that big Dane doesn't take any action. He's leaning against that door-

post with a mighty puzzled expression on his face."

"What are we to do, sir?" asked Drake.

"That I do not know at the moment," replied Locke, smiling grimly. "We seem to be in a most awkward situation. Ah, Hosking has halted, and one of the men is pointing something out to him on the landscape. In the direction of the secret fiord, too. Probably pointing out the direction of the Westman Isles on an inquiry from Hosking."

"It'll perhaps give us breathing space," put in Jack. "Those chaps may be Stromsund's men, sir; but they are Icelanders."

"I have noted that. And Hosking does not seem to be in a particularly great hurry. I expect he is straight from Reykjavik. His being here so soon looks very much as if he was picked up in the boat when he escaped from his vessel, which had been playing phantom on the Dogger, by some steam craft bound for Reykjavik. That being so, he would be quite unaware of the later developments in our own activities. It is obvious that he is quite ignorant of our presence here, or he would hurry up to the house. Let me think for a bit. Hard and quick thinking was never more necessary in this case than now."

Drake peered at Hosking and his group, as they sat their ponies, Hosking scanning the country, and the Icelandic beside him talking and pointing out various hills.

Hosking must be aware that Stromsund was away, mused Jack as he stood by Locke. Probably one of the people in the huts farther down the road had told him so, as they had told Locke when they themselves approached the farm. And perhaps Hosking was quite as unknown at Ingholdt Farm as they themselves.

"I think I have a plan, Drake," said

.....

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 Icelandic 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 Icelandic—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 thrilling encounters between the two trawlers the Trumpeter falls into the hands of Ferrers Locke and his men. Scar Hosking, however, escapes. Leaving the captured Trumpeter and its crew in charge of Carr, the detective, together with Drake and a very willing crew, board the Stormcock and steam for Ingholdt Farm, Iceland, the haunt of Stromsund. En route a faked message is sent out to Stromsund, with the result that he is lured from his quarters. This leaves the way open for Locke and Drake to land unseen, with a view to making investigations at the farm preparatory to rounding up Stromsund and the remainder of his rascally satellites.

(Now read on.)

Ferrers Locke at last. "It will be risky, and we leave a lot to chance. But I see no other way. I am going to trust that Dane as an honest man. What do you do if you want to handle a nettle so that it won't sting you?"

"Grasp it suddenly and firmly in the hand," replied Jack promptly.

"Exactly. Well, we'll grasp our nettle now, and we hope it won't sting us. Quick, my boy, and take in the scheme. Hosking is now moving up towards the farm. It is obvious he does not know of our presence. He is probably unknown here. Icelanders are very honest, simple folk, and I believe that big Dane is as honest as the day. We'll meet Hosking in the yard. He'll be taken aback. He may draw and fire, but you must be ready to leap and watch his right arm. Understand? I'm going to denounce him—"

"Better be quick, then," broke in Jack swiftly. "They're turning into the yard now!"

"Come along, my boy. Walk along by this shed; then we will suddenly step out right in his path."

It was indeed a desperate measure to take. There was great danger—not so much from Hosking, but from the Icelanders, should they stand by Hosking. But Locke and Drake judged the men with Hosking to be merely guides. The surprise would keep them inactive for some minutes, no doubt. And by that time, perhaps, the steward could be made to understand the rights of the matter.

It all rested on whether the big Dane—the only man with authority about the place, it seemed—was honest, or a crook, like his employer.

Hosking was now riding into the yard, the hoofs of his pony clattering on the stony ground.

"Now!" whispered Ferrers Locke.

Together, he and Drake stepped out into view, Jack sidling swiftly close up to Hosking's right arm.

At first the man was nonplussed. But he reined in his pony, and the great weal down his crime-lined face blanched, then reddened suddenly.

A hoarse cry escaped the man's lips at seeing the grimly-smiling face of Ferrers Locke appear before him with such startling suddenness. His hand flew to his side-pocket; but Jack Drake was ready.

Like a mountain-cat guarding her young, Jack leapt and caught Hosking's arm. But the weapon was out, and as Drake wrenched at the arm that was raising it to position, the report crashed out, and the bullet splintered the wood of the mutton-drying shed.

Drake's wrench dislodged Hosking from the pony, and the man crashed to the ground. As he came down, however, he swung a cruel left at the side of Drake's head, and the youngster dropped to earth like a sack of flour.

A gasping, long-drawn-out "A-a-ah!" came from the startled Icelanders round about. And the big Dane ran forward with a frightened face.

"What is the matter?" he cried.

"What is the matter?"

But Hosking was by now on his feet, and, with a curse, he turned to fire again.

Ferrers Locke had swiftly closed in, however, and he gripped the wrist of Hosking's right arm, forcing it back, back, till Scar Hosking squealed with pain.

The revolver dropped, clattering, to the ground. Then Hosking threw his arms round Locke, and together the men came crashing to the ground, struggling desperately.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 953.

Drake was rising unsteadily to his feet. He saw Locke groping for hold round Hosking's waist as the men rolled over and over. At last the detective got one of Hosking's arms round the small of his back, and, with this scientific hold—the "half-nelson," as it is called—he was able to turn Hosking to a doubled-up position, and keep him so.

"Help me secure this man!" cried Locke to the steward. "He is a dangerous criminal wanted by the English police!"

The Dane promptly laid hands on Hosking, shouting orders to his people in rapid Danish the while.

A man came running across with a coil of rope, and Drake now joined in in securing Hosking, who had broken away from Locke's grip, and was heaving and kicking and struggling once more.

The steward, however, proved an exceedingly powerful man. Big as Hosking was, he could have overcome him single-handed. Still, they had a lot of trouble getting Hosking helpless. But at last it was done, his wrists being tightly bound behind him.

Hosking was beside himself with rage as he tugged and heaved at the hands that held his shoulders.

"Where is Mr. Stromsund?" he belated. "Mr. Stromsund is my friend! You shall pay for this, you senseless lackeys, you!"

"Is that so?" inquired the steward of Locke. "Is it true that he is friend to Herr Stromsund?"

Ferrers Locke smiled.

"He looks a nice sort of friend for a gentleman to have, doesn't he?" he said. "I have a lot to explain: so, with your permission, we will secure this man in a place where he cannot escape, and you can judge between him and me."

"There is a lot to explain. And that is right. Yes, there is. I like not revolvers flashed about in my yard when my employer is away. Either you explain to my satisfaction or I send for the nearest sysselman—"

"Let us go in and secure this dangerous man first, then I will tell you the whole story. And I don't think you will want the sysselman," said Locke.

The big Dane frowned, but he nodded. And Scar Hosking, still fuming and shouting, but now mixing curses with his repeated assertions that he was Stromsund's friend, was dragged into the house, his ankles were tied, and the door of the inner room—into which he had been placed—was locked upon him.

"Come this way," said the Dane curtly, leading Locke and Drake into the study where they had been shown before when Locke said he wanted to write a letter to Stromsund.

"My name is Langsom—Frederick Langsom," said the Dane. "and I am steward on this farm and in complete authority when my employer is away. I want explanation that will satisfy."

"And you shall have it, Mr. Langsom," said Locke.

The three seated themselves, and Langsom looked sternly at the famous detective. But Jack read his thoughts, and they were, "This man has the face of truth. I wonder what he has to say? And if my long-nursed suspicions in regard to Stromsund are correct?"

Ferrers Locke leaned forward, his forearms on his knees.

"I am an English detective," he said. And Langsom started. "I am engaged on a very serious case, and my investigations have brought me here. You have told me that Stromsund has great

trawler interests. He has, but interests that would surprise and disgust you if you knew of their nature. You have heard of the Dogger Bank?"

Langsom nodded, and the colour left his face.

"It is a great English fishing-ground, I think I am right," he said.

"Well, the British fishermen fish it a lot," explained Locke; "but it is not in territorial waters. Any nation can fish there, you understand. Your Iceland craft may shoot their trawls on the Dogger if they wish to do so."

"There is a fleet of English trawlers always at work on the Dogger. And a man called Carr has big interests there—running a number of steam trawlers. During the past twelve months, at first only slightly, but lately having assumed a grave seriousness, a steam trawler of Iceland design, with name and number covered, has been cruising the Dogger in thick weather—that is, fog or mist or on very dark nights. This Phantom, as the fishermen call her, has been wrecking the gear of Mr. Carr's boats. You know what a huge otter-trawl of a steam trawler might cost? Two hundred pounds would not buy one of the largest types."

"By explosives, cutting apparatus, and so on, the Phantom has been steadily ruining John Carr. I was called in on the case. I traced the Phantom to Iceland. In Iceland I traced the brains of that infamous trawl-wrecking business to Stanislaw Stromsund, your employer!"

In Stromsund's Office!

LANGSOM started violently, his fingers clutching nervously.

"Proceed!" he said thickly.

"It is worse than I thought. I believe you, Herr Detective, and I tell you why soon. But proceed."

"There is little more to tell," said Locke, leaning back in his chair and putting one arm behind the back of it. "The man who was so violent when he saw us is one of Stromsund's rascally skippers—the skipper of one of the Phantoms. Langley is another skipper and—"

"I know Langley. He is of Icelandic extraction. 'Lang' in a name, as mine, is common in Iceland. I know Langley, and I dislike him greatly. You would say 'hate,' you English—"

Ferrers Locke smiled.

"Well, you see, Mr. Langsom," he said, "your employer is a criminal. Now, I admit that at the moment we are in your power. Stromsund will come to justice in a very short while, whatever happens to my assistant and me, for there are others engaged on this case who are not at the moment in Ingholdt. Now, what are you going to do? Proof of what I say, I have none on my person. It is all with the others engaged on this case. Scar Hosking—that man bound in the other room—is a friend of Stromsund's, or a tool of his, which you will. I leave it to you now."

Jack, Drake and Locke watched Langsom anxiously. His face was a study. Perplexity, indignation, disgust, and anger were denoted in the different expressions that flitted across his strong features. He got up and walked up and down the room.

"And now I tell you something, Herr Detective," he said, with agitation. "I have long thought there was wrong-doing in Herr Stromsund. The locked

office; his rage when once a servant entered; the wireless which none but him must handle; this last lot of strange visitors, and the consternation they caused. Then the visits to the wireless-room, and my employer's unpleasant laughter with Langley; as they discussed something. Then their leaving in a body—Captain Langley and all his men and Stromsund. I saw that they were armed, and I wondered. Then, when you came, I wondered more; for you seemed different than the rest—"

"They left to trap me and my assistant, Mr. Langsom," explained Locke. "The excitement over the wireless messages was in communication with me, at sea in a trawler. I played a trick upon them, leading them to think they could trap me in a certain place. But, instead of going to that place, my assistant and I came here. You know the rest. We did not expect to see this man Scar Hosking turn up. But he did, and our little chat here is the result—"

Langsom crashed his fist into his hand three or four times in an agitated way.

"To think that you might have gone again, and I would not have known!" he said. "It is terrible—terrible! I am a farmer, and I love my work, here in barren Iceland. But—"

"If you take the course of a true man, Mr. Langsom, and fall in with my plans, I know you will lose your position here. It is a fine farm, as Icelandic farms go. But there are other people besides Stromsund. And, as I have said before, Stromsund won't keep out of the clutches of the law much longer."

"It is not that. It is not that I lose my position I worry. That was lost to me already. The man Langley and Stromsund discussed me fully together. I heard Langley say, 'He is too scrupulous. He land us in the soup.' I look up 'scrupulous' in the dictionary. I do not speak English like Langley does, who has been so long captain of a trawler with English-speaking men. I see that 'scrupulous' means honest, conscientious, exact. I understand that. And that is what I like to be. But I cannot see how to land in the soup, or what the soup has to do with it—"

Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake smiled.

"It is English slang, Mr. Langsom," said Locke. "It means that you might, by your honesty, get them into trouble."

"Ah, it means that? Then may it be so. For Herr Stromsund he tells me he looks for another steward, and he gives no reason why I do not please him. But I know now."

"Then you will join with us?" asked Locke. "If so, it will be unsafe for you to remain at Ingholdt. You are married?"

"Oh, no, no! No one here is of mine. They are all good people—yes. And they must know nothing, or Stromsund will visit his wrath on them. I am ready to help you, Herr Detective and—"

"My name is Locke—Ferrers Locke," said the Baker Street detective, holding out his hand, which Langsom shook fervently. "This is my assistant, Jack Drake."

Langsom shook hands with Drake, too, and he looked a far happier man. His doubts of late weeks had been explained. He knew the worst, and he was contented.

"Tell me what to do, and I will do it," he said eagerly.

"Then you give orders that the servants must attend to Hosking—feed

him, and so on, and keep him a prisoner till Stromsund's return. Leave a letter telling Stromsund that the servants were acting under your orders and are completely ignorant as to why Hosking was imprisoned. That will safeguard them. After that, Mr. Langsom, it would be best for you to accompany us to Reykjavik, to rejoin our trawler, perhaps to put to sea. In the meantime, my assistant and I intend to see what is in the little office and wireless-room, that have been kept so mysteriously locked by Stromsund."

"That shall all be done," said Langsom, immediately going out to deliver the requested orders.

"Well, we took a chance, and it worked, sir," grinned Jack Drake, as he and Locke went off to the locked office to see how they could best get in. "I like that chap Langsom, too."

"So do I," replied Ferrers Locke; "and he should prove extremely useful to us on account of his knowledge of Iceland. I'm sorry Hosking must go free again. But it can't be helped. We can do no other than leave him—Ah, this door is a simple problem, I should say. I believe my skeleton key would open it without trouble. So it will. Come along, my boy, and see if we can get further clues to help us to find the motive for Stromsund's trawler-wrecking schemes. Look particularly for anything in the way of papers in connection with Brek Katel. For there lies the solution to all the mystery, I feel sure."

Stromsund's office was in a fearful state of disorder.

"Whew!" gasped Jack Drake, as both he and Locke stood on the threshold and looked in. "Gosh, sir, there's plenty for us to search here!"

Ferrers Locke stepped into the room. It was literally covered with papers of all sorts—on every part of the floor, on the table, the desk, and on the chairs. It was hardly possible to walk without stepping on papers.

And it was not a scene that had been thrown into violent disorder suddenly. The untidiness was due to months and months of use, the steady accumulation of papers, tobacco-ash, and dead matches.

"Would never allow anyone to clean or tidy the place, and never did so himself," muttered Locke. "Well, Drake, nothing of great importance would have been dumped on the floor or left with a mass of other things on the table or chairs. It is absolutely hopeless for us to examine everything. So you take that filing cabinet in the corner, and I'll take the desk and the drawers each side of the knee-hole. I want you to look at every paper you find in the cabinet."

"Some job, I expect," grinned Drake. "What have I to look for particularly, sir?"

"I think you need bother about nothing but documents marked Brek Katel, or them having any reference to land to the north of Iceland. We may not have to search as long as we think. Well, get to it, my boy."

Locke and Drake were very busy for the next fifteen minutes, and the room was thick with dust before long. The papers, even in the drawers, were dusty and dirty. And the speed with which Locke and Drake flicked through the sheaves they got hold of made the dust rise.

Drake seemed to be getting through a mass of papers in the cabinet. There was a big field for search there. Agreements and letters, pages torn from

journals, plans of trawlers, copies of wireless messages, blue prints of building plans, and traces of Icelandic surveys were there jumbled together, as if each had been slammed in as it was finished with.

Ferrers Locke found a rather better state of affairs in the desk. There were bundles of documents tied with green tape, and in one drawer some attempt had been made to keep order.

"I've turned out plenty of copies of agreements and legal letters, sir," said Jack, hot and dusty, and worried by the mosquitoes that had found their way into the room, "but nothing has reference to land to the north. There are—"

"Ah!"

Jack Drake looked round swiftly. Locke's exclamation was one of satisfaction, and as Jack turned he saw his chief unfolding a big tracing from an Icelandic survey.

"Brek Katel!" read out Locke triumphantly. "H'm! Doesn't seem very interesting. Nothing but contour lines, parallels of latitude and the lines of longitude—Hullo! What's this? Here's my map, Drake! Open it out and get busy with a pencil. See these crosses marked on this plan, and the bearings of hills marked alongside them? Transfer them to my map, while I go through the rest of the things in the desk."

Drake was busy for a few minutes. When he had finished he handed the plan back to Locke.

The detective folded it and replaced it exactly as he had found it.

"We have all the information it conveys," he said, with satisfaction; "and though it doesn't seem much on the face of it, it may prove invaluable to us. Also, it may prove useful to us for Stromsund to be quite unaware we have this information. Now, my boy, leave everything as near as you can as you found it. I'll lock the door again with my skeleton key. No one but Langsom knows we entered here. So when Stromsund returns he'll think we have gleaned no information. Otherwise, he will argue, we would have taken the plan with us. Are you all ready?"

Tap, tap, tap!

"Ah, you, Langsom?"

"Yes, Herr Locke. I have done all you said in regard to the prisoner with the scar on his face. And I think it would be wise for us to go now. Stromsund, as soon as he knows he has been deceived, will return. If he press the ponies, as he will, he should arrive early to-morrow morning. And we have to pass along some part of the route on which he will return to Ingholdt."

"Well, we don't particularly want to pass the time of day with him just yet, do we?" replied Locke dryly. "Is all prepared for our return journey?"

"Yes, yes, I take the liberty of exchanging your own tired ponies for the best in Stromsund's stable. It is not well to press your own tired animals too much."

"A good thought," said Locke. "We, too, are tired. So could you guide us to a safe camping-place not far from here, so that my assistant and I may have four hours' sleep before entering on the fatigues of a two-days' pony journey to Reykjavik?"

"I know of the exact place," replied the steward. "It would be best for us to go as early as possible."

"We have no desire for further delay," replied Locke. "Lead on."

please, and make as plausible excuse to the servants as you can for your leaving Ingholdt with us."

It was not long before the buildings of Ingholdt Farm were lost to the trio's view behind in the north-east.

The Spy!

ALL three travellers were hot, fatigued, mosquito-bitten, and thoroughly annoyed with Iceland by the time Reykjavik was in sight. But a sight of the sea as Faxa Bay came to their view did a lot towards driving away the state of fed-upness Jack Drake had got into during that tiresome trek across the barren, treeless wastes.

The hot sun, which made the mosquitoes so thoroughly active, was shining on the shimmering water, and throwing the town into a blaze of contrasting colour; the white-walled houses, with their red-tiled roofs; the extensive fields, where the split cod were spread out to dry and blanch, the innumerable carcasses shining a pure white against the grass.

The pretty churches lent an air of placidness to the scene, and the bigger buildings—the Senate House, museum, observatory, etc.—seemed to give the impression that here was no "mean place, the dwellings of fishers," but a fine, thriving town.

The air was redolent of fish, however, and at that season was not very pleasant.

Locke, Langsom, and Drake went to a hotel and engaged rooms.

"Go out and scout about for one of the men of the Stormcock, Drake," said Ferrers Locke. "You're bound to see one or other of them. You might be able to pick out the Stormcock in the anchorage. But, for many reasons, I'd rather get aboard at night. For many reasons, also, I want you to keep as low as possible. As soon as you can accost one of our men, tell him to get aboard and tell Proctor to come and see me at once at this hotel. Then I'll arrange with him for us to be picked up after dark and taken aboard."

Jack slipped off and made for the water-front. Here, unnoticed himself, he soon saw one of the Stormcock's men.

"Jingo, it's Tom Harper!" said Jack to himself, with satisfaction. "What luck! Hi, Harper!"

The man started, then grinned in welcome as he saw Jack.

"The chief is in town," swiftly explained Jack. "He told me to get a message aboard for Skipper Proctor to come and see him at the Northern Hotel. At once, please."

"Ay, ay, sir!" said Harper. "Ye've been right up to that wolf Stromsund's den, haven't ye? What happened to ye, then?"

"Got well bitten by mosquitoes," said Jack curtly. "Better get off with our message, Harper. And you might remember yourself, and tell Skipper Proctor, that Mr. Locke doesn't want the fact of his presence in Reykjavik to be broadcast to all whom it may or may not concern. See?"

"Ay, ay, sir!" grinned Harper good-naturedly. "You're close blokes, you and the detective."

Jack watched him jump into the boat and row out into Faxa Bay. Then he returned to the hotel.

Proctor was not long in coming, and he arrived just as Locke, Drake, and Langsom were finishing their argument.

with a very substantial meal, which Jack Drake had voted "prime," after hard-baked Iceland cakes, and other cold tack, during their journey to and from Ing-holdt.

It was quite a nice little hotel, and the tables were separated from each other by partitions built of imported pine wood, thus making the business of having meals private and cosy, as it should be.

Proctor joined the three in one of those alcoves. Before Proctor spoke he signed to Jack, with a jerk of his head, to step out on to the carpet that ran up and down the dining-room and see if the adjacent alcoves were tenantless.

They were, and Jack came back and reported the fact. Then Ferrers Locke began to talk.

"Mr. Langsom, my assistant, and I will get aboard to-night after dark, Proctor," said Locke.

"Have to be a definite time, an' kept to the tick, then," said Proctor. "There's practically no night here now, only about an hour of semi-darkness. Have to be worked to the tick, sir, for the Stormcock is half an hour's pull from the quay."

"Well, that's easy to arrange," replied

Locke. "See that the boat is there as it falls dark, that's all."

As Locke was speaking, unknown to anyone, a man slid into the dining-room. He had been following Proctor, though Proctor was unaware that he had been kept under surveillance whenever he walked abroad in Reykjavik. Now this spy of Stromsund's wanted to find out why Proctor's short, seamanlike legs had carried him from his boat towards the Northern Hotel in such a hurry.

The man, stepping without sound on the carpet, slipped into the next alcove.

"Do you know the north coast, Proctor?" Ferrers Locke was asking the skipper.

"Ay, ay, sir!" said Proctor in reply. "A bit. But what my experience won't tell me the sounding lead will. I'll get anywhere you like where there's enough water to float, without trouble, by the use o' the hand lead."

"That's good," Locke replied, "for I fancy you'll have to take the Stormcock into little-known places—right on the north coast. I want to land there, with Mr. Langsom and my assistant. Well, enough of that. I tell you because you must have everything ready—stores and

coal, and so on. Bunkers full? Oh, good! Then there need be no delay. Well, skipper, have the boat for us to embark at dark. My assistant knows the quay you use. This, of course, unless you receive other orders from me."

"Ay, ay, sir; I'll see to it all. And I'll put this bundle away in the state-room, as ye've asked me to."

"Right-ho! Then you needn't delay here any more."

The listening man, thinking it time to change his quarters, flitted out of the dining-room as quietly as he had come in. A Danish waiter saw him go, turned and looked; but, unfortunately for Ferrers Locke and his companions, merely shrugged his shoulders and said nothing.

Proctor left soon after. He went straight back to the Stormcock, and ordered the banking of the fires and all hands on the ship by evening.

(Ferrers Locke was not to get away so easily, however. The spy had heard all, and soon his tongue would be telling of Locke's intentions. Look out for some startling situations in next week's thrilling instalment, chums.)

JOIN THE ROYAL NAVY AND SEE THE WORLD.

Boys are wanted for the Seaman Class (from which selections are made for the Wireless Telegraphy and Signalling Branches). Age 15½ to 16½ years.

Men also are required for

SEAMEN (Special Service) - - - Age 18 to 25
STOKERS - - - - - Age 18 to 25
ROYAL MARINE FORCES - - - Age 17 to 23

GOOD PAY. - - - ALL FOUND.
EXCELLENT CHANCES FOR PROMOTION.

Apply by letter to the Recruiting Staff Officer, R.N. and R.M.:
5, Suffolk Street, Birmingham; 121, Victoria Street, Bristol;
30, Canning Place, Liverpool; 55, Whitehall, London, S.W.1;
289, Deansgate, Manchester; 116, Rye-Hill, Newcastle-on-Tyne; or
6, Washington Terrace, Queen's Park, Southampton.

AMAZING BARGAIN OF "MONARCH" (Regd.) DE-LUXE LARGE CAMERAS

This Wonderful Camera, costing 1/9 only (complete with outfit) - TAKES PERFECT LARGE PHOTOS Size 3½ x 2½ ins. Lens, Viewfinder, &c. and Complete Accessories:—Best Quality Plate, Developing and Printing OUTFIT together with easy instructions for use.

- Send P.O. 2/- to-day!

THOUSANDS OF TESTIMONIALS!:

W. J. Thomas, Esq., writes:—"Developed and printed photo, and think it as good as if it were taken with a Camera which cost £3."

Miss E. Le Cheminant writes:—"I was astonished to see the result of my first effort. The picture is as good as that done by a proper photographer."

Miss P. Syms writes:—"To look at the snaps one would think they were taken by an expert instead of an amateur."

Miss Peggie Millar writes:—"Received Camera. It's taking perfect photos." - 1926 Catalogue, 1,000 Big Bargains, Post Free!

THE LEEDS BARGAIN CO. (U.J.), 31, Kendal Lane, Leeds.

SALE PRICE
1/9
ONLY
Post 3d.



MY GREAT OFFER

I supply the finest Coventry built cycles ON 14 DAYS' APPROVAL, PACKED FREE AND CARRIAGE PAID, on receipt of a small deposit. Lowest cash prices, or easy payment terms. Write for Free Bargain Lists NOW.

2/-

W. E. ARIEN THE WORLD'S LARGEST CYCLE DEALER
18 COVENTRY.

STAMPS FREE, 53 all different, including Congo, Soudan, those requesting Approvals. Send 2d. for post and packing.—**BROOKS**, 43, Edmund Street, Camberwell.

HEIGHT INCREASED 5/- Complete Course in ONE MONTH. Without appliances—drugs—or dieting. **THE FAMOUS CLIVE SYSTEM NEVER FAILS.** Complete Course 5/- P.O. post free, or further parties, stamp. **P. A. CLIVE**, Harrocks House, The Close, COLWYN BAY.

HOME CINEMATOGRAPH MACHINES and ACCESSORIES. FILMS at summer prices. Buy now and have the best at lowest price. Send for illustrated catalogue and lists, post free. **FORD'S (Dept M.)**, 13, RED LION SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.1.

SECRET SERVICE pocket DISGUISE OUTFIT—never sold before. 3/- each, post free. Dept. XX, MILTON, 128, BEULAH HILL, LONDON, S.E.19.

£2,000 WORTH CHEAP PHOTO MATERIAL.—Samples catalogue free; 12 by 10 Enlargement, any photo, 8d.—**HACKETT'S WORKS**, July Road, LIVERPOOL.

A BARGAIN! 1250 Well-assorted Foreign Stamps, 1/-.—PRICE, 53, Portland Street, S.E.17.

WHEN ANSWERING ADVERTISEMENTS
PLEASE MENTION THIS PAPER

10 UNUSED COLONIALS — FREE!!!
153 UNPICKED STAMPS
50 DIFFERENT UNUSED
210 Stamps incl. Guadeloupe, Tchad, Gabon, Madagascar, Niger, Caledonia, Oubangui, all Beautiful Pictorial, many War, etc. Send p.c. only requesting Approvals.—**LISBURN & TOWNSEND**, London Road, Liverpool.

DON'T BE BULLIED
Send Four Penny Stamps only for **TWO SPLENDID ILLUSTRATED LESSONS IN JIJITSU**; the Wonderful Japanese art of Self-Defence without weapons. Better than Boxing or any other science ever invented. Learn to take care of yourself under ALL circumstances and fear no man. You can have a **MONSTER** large Illustrated Portion for P.O. 3/9. **SEND NOW** to "YAWARA" Dept. 10, Queensway, Hanworth, Feltham, MIDDLESEX.

SAFETY REVOLVERS
NO LICENCE REQUIRED.
Accidents impossible.
For Theatricals, Sports, etc. Protection against footpads, dogs, etc.
NEW MODELS, blue steel or nickel finish.
Single chamber - - - - - 2/6 post free.
Six " pocket model - - - - - 7/6 " "
Eight " " - - - - - 10/6 " "
Ten " cowboy model - - - - - 12/6 " "
Free supply of cartridges given to all customers enclosing 9d. for carriage. Catalogue, Cameras, Cycles, Gramophones, etc., free on request.—**JAMES MANSFIELD & Co., Ltd.**, 71, High Holborn, London, W.C.1.

MAGIC TRICKS, etc.—Parcels, 2/6, 5/6. Ventriloquist's Instrument, Invisible. Imitate Birds. Price 6d. each, 4 for 1/-.—**T. W. Harrison**, 239, Pentonville Rd., London, N.1.

All applications for Advertisement Space in this publication should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, **UNION JACK SERIES**, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

The MATCH WINNING ELEVEN!

By Dick Tyldesley



(Of Lancashire and England.)

WHO AIRS HIS VIEWS ON THE IDEAL CRICKET COMBINATION.

NOT always do we realise the necessity for a cricket eleven to be a team in the very real sense of the word. Too often we are apt to think of a cricket side as a thing of individuals; but it is undoubtedly a fact that the county—or even the club—side which hopes to be successful must be built on definite lines with particular objects in view in the building. I would not go so far as to say that the two games of football and cricket are exactly alike in so far as the necessity for building a real team is concerned, but I wish the constant efforts which are made to get a real football team were more frequently copied in regard to cricket. Perhaps it is that weak spots in a football team are more easily found or more clearly obvious in the play. It is certainly a fact that in cricket too many club sides struggle along with too many batsmen of the same type or too little variety in their attack. They have eleven players, but not a complete team.

HOBBS, SANDHAM, AND LUCKY SURREY.

Now, there can be no harm in thinking over some of the requirements of a complete side. Merely because we must start somewhere, I will take the opening pair of batsmen first. The complete eleven will have a fairly reliable pair with which to start off their innings when the occasion is normal. Lucky the side, whether in county or club cricket, which has a couple of men on whom it can depend for a fair start nine times out of ten, shall we say? I don't necessarily mean that this opening pair shall score a hundred runs or so, though clearly the many hundreds which Hobbs and Sandham have scored for Surrey at the start must have been a distinct help to the side. Possibly the value of a steady opening pair is even greater than the man in the street generally appreciates.

STARTING THE ROT.

The opening batsmen have to be good and steady, because they face the men who, in the opinion of the opposing captain, represent the best bowlers at his command. Let these bowlers get an early wicket, and for at least a few overs thereafter they will bowl with more enthusiasm. The reason why success provides the inspiration. The men in the field too, meeting with that early success, rise a little bit higher on their toes. Hundreds of times in the past must it have been true that a side which was turned out for a very small score would have obtained quite a lot of runs if only the opening batsmen had stayed long enough to take some of the sting out of the attack.

FIRST WICKET DOWN.

To follow these opening batsmen there must also be one or two men capable of standing in the breach right nobly when things are going wrong. These are the fellows who are called upon to stop the rot if by any chance the opening pair have given the team a bad send-off. The opening pair of batsmen are very important, but I am rather inclined to think that first-wicket-down men is even more important still. Think what the Ernest Tyldesleys and the Jack Hearnings, by way of example, mean to their teams!

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 953.

MAKING THE MOST OF IT.

Further down the line of batsmen there must be, in the complete eleven, one or two fellows who can readily make things hum when the opportunity arises. Time after time, in all classes of cricket, there come occasions when the real question is not how many runs can be obtained, but how quickly they can be got. The speedily hit thirty or forty by some later batsman may be just as necessary, just as valuable, for match-winning purposes, as the stylishly correct century put together by one of the earlier batsmen. Yes, there is very real virtue in what might be called the hit-or-miss batsman, and he will certainly be in the complete eleven, ready to punish bowling which may be a trifle tired around a field which has become a little slack. The quick-fire batsman may even be of value during a rot, for while his colleagues are being "tied up," he may put the bowlers off by sheer courage, not to say cheek.

WORTH OF THE WICKET-KEEPER.

I suppose the ideal eleven would contain batsmen right down the line to No. 11; but, alas! this is one of the things beyond ordinary possibilities. Your fast bowler is essential, and the probability is that if he gets a number of runs he will so tire himself that a little bit of that pace will vanish from his bowling, and thus will be lost on the swings what has been gained on the roundabouts. Your wicket-keeper, too, is usually only a so-so batsman, but I will not agree with those who say that there is no room in the ideal side for the wicket-keeper who can't get runs. Your Strudwick is worth his place if one ball sufficed to send him back to the pavilion every time he went out to bat. A specially smart catch, a quick bit of stumping, or speed in getting the balls off may dismiss a batsman for a mere bagatelle who, left off just once, might make a century. I know this applies to all fielding, but by the nature of his job there are more chances come the way of the wicket-keeper.

A BIG YORKSHIRE SECRET.

To turn to the bowlers for a brief space. Variety is obviously the first essential. There is the express man, on whose pace your side must largely rely to get the other fellows out when the wickets are in first-class condition. Then, if you can find him, the bowler of the Parkin type, who can be put on no matter what the pitch is like—the bowler who so mixes them that the batsman never knows quite what he is going to get. Then you must have one bowler at least who can, in popular language, make the ball talk when the wicket is right. Perhaps in this country two bowlers of this type are better than one. Always, so far as my memory of first-class cricket goes, have the Yorkshire side possessed men who could skittle out any and every opponent when the pitch was difficult. A left-handed break bowler is specially valuable in a side. Thus in the complete eleven there is need for four—or three at the minimum—really good bowlers. Behind these there must be one or two useful change men.

Richard Tyldesley

SOME people say that there is no longer any necessity for batsmen to tremble when the "googlie" bowler comes on. Well, Australia evidently still believes in this sort of bowling, for they sent over two who deliver this type of ball—Arthur Mailey and Clarence Grimmett. As it is so easy to get on the wrong side of a man who sends down the "wrong 'uns," as they are called, I thought it would be going far enough if I tackled these googlie men of Australia one at a time. So I started with Mailey. Grimmett may come up for judgment later if somebody doesn't take my life before I get down to his name.

Certainly Arthur Mailey is enough to be going on with as a bowler of the "wrong 'uns." I believe there is only one thing he likes better than putting other people into hot water, and that is to get into hot water himself. He is never so happy as when he has a nest of hornets buzzing about his ears.

His people meant him to work in a bank, I believe, and he started to follow out their wishes like the good boy he was. But the calling didn't appeal to him very much there, I take it, so few chances of getting into hot water. So he started sketching, and is quite a good caricaturist now, earning his living mostly by drawing more or less faithful pictures of cricket personalities.

"SEAM RAISING."

Mind you, he is a very clever artist, this fellow Mailey, but some of the people he has tackled with his pencil has not done them their features justice. To these Mailey is apt to reply: "Well, take a look in the mirror, and then you may conclude I have flattered you."

The idea of bowling "wrong 'uns"—you know those are the balls which should break one way but break the other—was just the sort of thing which would appeal to his nature, and he started practising, and kept on practising until wickets began to fall to his wiles. One thing I will say for him, though. He doesn't take the credit for discovering googlies, and his sketches are signed with the pen-name of "Bosey." In this name there is a compliment and an acknowledgment of the fellow who discovered the secret of googlie bowling, B. J. T. Bosanquet. Mailey has been to England before, and taken a lot of wickets here, too, with those deceptive deliveries of his.

He is now thirty-eight years of age, and has spent most of those years thinking out revolutionary ideas regarding cricket. You will remember that some time ago something was said in England about bowlers who raised the seam of the ball. Well, this is what Mailey had to say on the subject:

"In justifying the practice of seam raising, I do so more because of the thought of it being unsportsmanlike, in my opinion, should not enter the heads of those who allow the use of sawdust, resin, or towels, to allow the bowler to improve his grip."

"It is admitted that rubbing a new ball on the ground is quite permissible, as no official objection, to my knowledge, has been taken to it. Yet if a new ball is rubbed judiciously on the ground the effect would be more disastrous to the batsman than if the seam were raised by some mechanical device. No matter what is done to the seam of an old ball it cannot affect the flight as much as the seam of a new ball. If, therefore, a swerve bowler requires his greatest asset—a new ball—it is possible that the umpire will produce one, if the seam of the old one has been tampered with. If this is allowed it is possible that a new ball will be requisitioned after every 50 runs or so."

"In the face of this we must be careful about doubting the sportsmanlike attitude of a bowler who does his best to preserve the ball till the end of its official life—200 runs."

DRAWING THE CROWD.

Then the question of slow cricket—a popular topic—cropped up. Mailey had something hot and strong to say: "Consideration for the public seems to be the main excuse why cricket needs brightening, yet the attendances during the last series of Tests were beyond the dreams of the most optimistic supporters of the game. Were the 18,000 people who surged into the Adelaide Oval on the last morning of the memorable third Test bored to death? Why did they stand round the Oval in a frenzy of excitement to see a paltry 27 runs scored? Surely those people did not come down to see Strudwick or Freeman or Tat slog six after six into the river! No; they came down to see the finish of a keen contest that at no time during the progress of the match needed the assistance of 'slathermwhack' batsmen to draw a crowd."

"A keen, scientific struggle, to my mind, is far more acceptable to the Australian public than a competition

Hush—Here Comes the Googie Man!

A few words on Arthur Mailey, the man who bowls the right "Wrong 'Uns."

BY "PAUL PRY."

(Our Travelling Correspondent.)

Any minutes is quicker than a man who scores the same number of runs in two hours. Very often one batsman monopolises the strike, and receives three-fourths of the deliveries. If those people whose annual holiday is spent meaning about slow batsmen were to take this into consideration, they would find that the slow batsmen are not so slow as in 'the grand old days.' When one reads the reports of meetings and the suggestions given out to lighten cricket one wonders on which side of the fence the dullness really is.

EXPENSIVE BOWLING.

One person has suggested that the selectors should pick nobody but quick scorers. As one who has had this honour (?) passed on him without seeking it, I would ask why have selectors at all? Why not allow the batsmen who score runs in the quickest time to automatically drop into the team? The post-office clock would then be the sole selector, and everybody would be happy again. "When sensible suggestions are made to brighten cricket or chess, or an undertakers' picnic, no wise person would turn a deaf ear."

On other cricket points, too, Mailey has ideas of his own. He never says what people expect him to say, and never does what they consider he will do. In the first Test Match at Sydney in the last series he helped J. M. Taylor to add 127 for the last wicket. Do you know why, in my opinion, he did this? It was because he overheard somebody say that he was the worst batsman on the side. That's Mailey, the perverse, the bowler of wrong 'uns.

It has always seemed to me that 'googlie' bowling demands the Mailey type of temperament, for the simple reason that at times it is apt to be extremely expensive, and the googlie bowler who really objects to being hit all over the place had better give it up quickly. But being hit for sixes now and then doesn't upset Arthur; indeed, I got the impression that he likes it, at any rate in preference to the batsman who just sits back and watches the ball like a cat watches a mouse.

But when Mailey is in form then it is the batsmen who come to regard it as costly bowling, because it so often costs them their wicket. America has a very high opinion of him, for when he went there a year or two before the War he took 189 wickets, and they only cost him seven runs apiece. His outstanding performance in this country was to take the whole of the ten wickets of the Gloucester batsmen in one innings in 1921 for 66 runs.

A. A. MAILEY.



A Word with the Umpire!

"CURIOUS" (Manchester).—In Test matches and all other big games in Australia they have eight balls to the over, and the suggestion that the same idea should be adopted in England has often been put forward. We may copy Australia one of these days, but there are things to be said both for and against the idea.

J. MACINTOSH (London).—The captain of the Australians is Herbert Collins; Bardsley is the vice-captain; and Ryder holds a position on the team-selection committee.

B. LAWSON (Bolton).—It does not follow that the man who is chosen to captain England in the first Test match will be captain in all the five games. In fact, if we want to do so we can change for every match.

L. SMITH (Glamorgan).—The average age of the sixteen Australians now in this country is 32. Ellis, who is only 24, is the youngest, and Bardsley, who is 42, is the eldest member of the party.

MR. LOCKETT (Northampton).—To answer your question as to why there are really no fast bowlers of tip-top class in England would take a column rather than a few lines. One of these days I hope to find space in which to answer it at length.

YOU NEVER CAN TELL!

By Charles Parker

(Gloucester's Crack Bowler.)

THRILLING MATCHES IN WHICH THE GLORIOUS UNCERTAINTY OF CRICKET HAS BEEN REVEALED.



WE often speak of the glorious uncertainty of cricket, but we do not always appreciate the truth behind that hackneyed saying. So far as my memory serves, there never was a season in which so many matches have been pulled out of the fire in startling fashion as last summer—so many games which were won against the odds, as it were. We had a typical example of the manner in which one match can sway first this way and then that in the game between the Gentlemen and Players at the Oval. The odds at the start were on the Players, of course, for so much had previously been said about the lack of first-class amateurs that the unpaid were scarcely considered to have a chance.

A BID FOR VICTORY.

Moreover, any forlorn hope which the amateurs may have possessed at the start was generally considered to have vanished when the Players scored over four hundred in their first innings, and then declared. Tate got to work for the pro's, too, and the early amateur wickets fell rapidly. But then the game swung back in favour of the Gentlemen; there was fine batting by the later batsmen, and the Players' total was headed. Again the men under Jack Hobbs batted, and again the Players got to the position when the captain thought it safe to declare, leaving the amateurs the well-nigh impossible task of scoring 200 in 104 minutes. But they did it with a few seconds to spare. It was the sort of successful bid for victory which not only demonstrated the wonderful possibilities of the game, but also stirred the hearts of the enthusiasts.

THREE MEN THREE CENTURIES.

Possibly there is no type of cricket result which so appeals to the man in the street as a quick-scoring feat which enables a side to beat the clock and the team which has declared its innings closed. The game between the Gents and the Players was not the only one of its type last season. Playing Warwickshire at Birmingham, Sussex declared, in the happy position of a lead of nearly four hundred runs. Now, 400 is a lot to get in a fourth innings, anyway, even if there is plenty of time at the disposal of the batsmen who are set the task. But so splendidly did the Warwickshire batsmen "weigh in" that they scored the runs with a considerable amount of time to spare. Three men only went to the wicket, and each of these three men—Smith, Parsons, and F. S. Calthorpe—passed the century mark.

A RECORD MATCH.

So frequent were the wonderful recoveries from losing positions during last season that one could easily fill the space available with little more than a mere mention of them. There was the victory which Kent gained over Warwickshire, for instance, by a fine recovery after the Hop County men had been disposed of for 42, and left with a deficit of over two hundred on the first innings. Then there was that history-making effort by Middlesex at the expense of Notts, the Londoners scoring beyond the five-hundred mark in the fourth innings of the match, to win after all had seemed lost.

THE BIGGEST SURPRISE OF ALL. Looking a little further back, however, I recall what was perhaps the most sensational result in recent years. Again Warwickshire, who seem to make a habit of being concerned in this type of match, were active. I refer to the match against Hampshire in the summer of 1922. So far as I remember the circumstances, the Hampshire captain won the toss, and put his opponents in to score a comfortable two hundred odd. When, in their turn, Hampshire were dismissed for a mere bagatelle of 15 all told, and had to follow on, it did indeed seem as though their skipper had made a mistake. Practically speaking, Hampshire were down and out. But the match was not over by any means. Following their first innings total of 15, Hampshire passed the five-hundred mark at their second knock, the total including a last-wicket partnership of nearly two hundred made by fellows who weren't considered as batsmen at all. In the end Warwickshire were beaten by no fewer than 155 runs. It may be that the history of cricket can tell of other remarkable results on these lines, but I have searched in vain for a parallel story of a side dismissed in its first innings for 15 runs which eventually won the match with such a big margin to spare.

A RED ROSE REVIVAL.

Just as Gloucester v. Somerset are the games in which we revel in the West Country, so are the meetings between Lancashire and Yorkshire of primary importance up North. And the match between these two which was played in Yorkshire a couple of seasons ago was more than ordinarily memorable. On the last day of the game the victory seemed to be assured to Yorkshire, for they were left with only 57 to get and ten wickets to fall. I remember the newspapers of that morning putting up headings on these lines: "Yorkshire Winning Again." But on that last day the Lancashire bowlers reaped a surprising harvest, and demonstrated the glorious uncertainty of cricket by dismissing the last Yorkshire batsman when 24 runs were still required for victory.

THE MAINSPRING OF HOPE.

And so we could go on. But perhaps a thought ought to be given to why these things happen. How is it that seeming defeat is oft-times turned to victory? Occasionally, of course, a change in the weather enables a satisfactory explanation to be given. But much more frequently the cause is just human nature. One or two players strike amazing form, or, alternatively, a whole side has a bad day. But what is the use of inquiring too closely into the why and the wherefore? Let us be duly thankful that cricket is the most gloriously uncertain of games. So long as we remember that uncertainty, the bottom dogs can take courage.

Chas Parker

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 953.