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Library



BILLY BUNTER STANDS TREAT!

Grayfriars realises that the age of miracles isn't past, for Billy Bunter actually stands his Form-fellows a feed at the tuckshop. (Read "Bunter's Treasure Trove!"—this week's fine school yarn—inside.)

£ s. d. Bunter without a penny in his pocket is a vastly different fellow from Bunter with money to burn. And his Form fellows, knowing Bunter so well, begin to wonder where on earth he has obtained all his money!



BUNTER'S TREASURE TROVE!

A Topping Long Complete School Story of the Chums of Greyfriars, featuring Billy Bunter, the Owl of the Remove.

By **FRANK RICHARDS.**

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Skinner's Joke!

“WHAT'S in a name?”

Harold Skinner, of the Remove at Greyfriars, asked that question. He asked it in a sort of meditative way, almost as if he was asking himself the question.

Stott and Snoop looked up at him—at least, they looked towards him, for Skinner was almost hidden behind a newspaper he was reading.

“What's in a name?” echoed Sidney Snoop. “What the thump are you gassing about, Skinner?”

“His mind's running on gee-gees,” grinned Stott. “Is it the name of a favourite, you mean, Skinney? If it is, then a lot's in a name, old chap!”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

Skinner lowered his paper and looked at his chums. His face was very thoughtful. Instead of answering his study-mates' questions, he asked another.

“You chaps happen to know the initials of Bunter's giddy pater?” he asked.

Stott and Snoop stared at him.

“What the dickens do you want to know that for, Skinner?” sniffed Snoop.

“I'll tell you that presently, old chap. I fancy the dear old father of our prize fat porker is Mr. Samuel Bunter, but I want to make sure,” explained Skinner musingly. “Do you chaps happen to know if it is Samuel?”

Stott nodded.

“It is,” he remarked. “I've seen it on Bunter's letters home. But—”

“And he's a giddy stockbroker, ain't he?”

“I've heard so,” sniffed Snoop.

Skinner smiled and nodded.

“I thought I was right,” he remarked. “Well, look at that, chaps.”

He handed the newspaper to Snoop, pointing to a marked paragraph as he did so. It was only a small paragraph, and it was headed, “**MILLIONAIRE RETIRES,**” and it read as follows:

“The ‘Daily Wire’ learns that Mr. Samuel Hunter, who has just purchased Lord Dunmore's palatial yacht, the Skylark, has announced his intention of retiring from active business on the

Stock Exchange, and proposes to start almost at once on an extensive world cruise with his family and a few friends.

“It will be recalled that Mr. Hunter, formerly a comparatively unknown member of the London Stock Exchange, quite recently caused a sensation in the City by a remarkable series of spectacular operations which has raised him to power and opulence.”

That was the paragraph, and, after blinking at it, Snoop handed it to Stott. Then they both blinked in no little surprise at Harold Skinner.

“Well, what about it?” exclaimed Snoop, eyeing Skinner curiously. “This merchant's name isn't Bunter—it's Hunter, you silly ass!”

“I know,” said Skinner, smiling. “Mr. Samuel Hunter. But supposing the letter ‘H’ in the Hunter was altered to a ‘B,’ making it Bunter?”

“Oh!”

“It would be of great interest to Billy Bunter to see the paragraph, then,” remarked Skinner, a gleam of mischief in his eyes. “You see, it isn't likely there'll be two Mr. Samuel Bunters on the London Stock Exchange, is it? In fact, I think it highly improbable, don't you?”

“Oh!”

Snoop and Stott repeated their exclamation again like a pair of parrots. But they were grinning now. They saw that Skinner had one of his usual clever schemes in mind. Skinner was a great practical joker. Certainly, Skinner's practical jokes were usually of the unkind—if not cruel—variety; but that fact troubled Stott and Snoop no more than it troubled Skinner himself.

“Go on,” grinned Snoop, after a pause. “I see you've got a wheeze on, Skinner. Let's hear it?”

“It should be easy to work it,” resumed Skinner, rubbing his rather sharp nose reflectively. “A mapping-pen and a touch of Indian ink—and there you are! Just alter the ‘H’ to a ‘B’! Fancy dear old Bunter's chivvy when he reads it!”

“He'll go batty with joy!” remarked Snoop, with a chuckle.

“Swallow it like a giddy fat lamb,” sniggered Stott. “He, he, he! It's great, Skinner!”

“It should work,” smiled Skinner, tapping the paragraph with his forefinger. “But altering this is merely spade-work sort of thing. The next thing will be to send Billy a letter from his pater in London letting him know the good news officially, you know.”

“Yes, but how will you manage that?”

“Easily enough, old chap,” said Skinner smoothly. “I hear Trotter's going home to London to-night—got a sister ill, or a brother or aunt, or something. We could get the letter posted to him there for a couple of bob, or less.”

“Good wheeze!”

“My hat! It's going to be a scream,” grinned Snoop. “That is if—if it comes off.”

“It will come off,” said Skinner airily. “Nothing can stop it coming off.”

“But supposing Bunter's heard recently from home? He'll think it jolly queer his people haven't mentioned their giddy good fortune,” said Stott suddenly.

“That's all serene,” said Skinner. “I happened to hear Bunter grouching only this morning that he hadn't heard from home for ages.”

“But how will you get his home address—and manage to copy his pater's fist, too?” asked the doubting Stott.

“That's the rub,” said Skinner. “But I'll manage that all right. You chaps leave it to me.”

And Skinner chuckled softly and rose to his feet, after carefully folding the paper and placing it in his pocket.

“You—you really mean to work it, then?” grinned Stott.

“Certainly. I'm rather keen to see what Bunter does when he learns his pater's blossomed out into a giddy millionaire. It should be no end of a lark. Here goes, anyway.”

And the humorous Skinner chuckled again and left the room. Stott and Snoop giggled explosively, but they made no attempt to go after him. They preferred to let Skinner work his own jokes, only aiding when Skinner forced them to do so. Somehow, though always very clever, Skinner's schemes had a way of recoiling upon his own head—an unpleasant fact known to Stott and Snoop.

So while willing to encourage him with grins and admiration, Stott and

He succeeded at last by slipping a foot behind Bunter and tripping him.

up. Bunter sat down with a hearty thump on the passage floor.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Ignoring the laughter—and the bump—Bunter scrambled to his feet again, and continued his impromptu dance, waving the newspaper above his head as he did so.

"Hurrah!" he yelled. "Hip-pip-hurrah!"

"Bunter!"

It was Mr. Quelch's voice, and the next instant the Remove master rustled up and caught the excited fat youth by the shoulder.

"Bunter! Cease those ridiculous antics this instant," thundered the master, shaking Bunter. "What is the matter with you, boy?"

"Hurrah! Good news, sir!" gasped Bunter, beaming at the astonished Mr. Quelch. "Look at that, sir!"

And, ceasing to dance now, Bunter handed the paper to Mr. Quelch, and pointed with a trembling finger at the marked paragraph.

"Just look at it, sir!" gasped Bunter gleefully. "Isn't it great news, sir?"

Mr. Quelch looked at Bunter, and then he looked at the paragraph. Skinner, Stott, and Snoop watched him very anxiously. They had lost their grins now. Mr. Quelch was a very keen-eyed gentleman indeed, and if he spotted the alteration, and made inquiries of the fatuous Billy Bunter—

Skinner & Co. trembled at the thought.

They need not have trembled. Skinner had done his work too well—too cleverly even for Mr. Quelch's keen eyes.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, looking up from the paper at last. "This—this is most surprising, Bunter. Are you sure that this refers to your father, my boy?"

"Certainly, sir!" grinned Billy Bunter. "There isn't likely to be more than one chap of that name on the Exchange, is there, sir?"

"It is certainly improbable," said Mr. Quelch dryly. "But have you heard from your parents to this effect, Bunter?" he added, tapping the paragraph with his finger.

"Oh, no, sir! I expect the pater's too busy arranging for the yachting cruise, and the mater will be too busy packing to write, you know."

"H'm! That is very possible, and I've no doubt that your father will be very busy indeed just now," agreed Mr. Quelch, glancing at the paper again. "It—it is rather strange. However, it is certainly good news for you, Bunter, and I trust it will prove to be beneficial to you personally, my boy."

Mr. Quelch said that as if he very much doubted it.

But Bunter was too excited to notice the sarcastic inflection.

"Oh, yes, sir! It's really tophole, isn't it, sir?" he rattled on cheerfully. "I say, sir, do you think the Head will allow me to go home this evening?"

"To—to go home, Bunter?"

"Yes, sir. To help pack, you know. I shall be leaving Greyfriars now, of course, and I might just as well leave to-night, mightn't I?"

"Bless my soul! No, I think nothing of the kind, Bunter!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "You will certainly not go home this evening."

With that Mr. Quelch handed Bunter back his paper, and rustled away. Bunter blinked after him wrathfully.

"Beast!" he murmured in disgust. "Cheek, I call it!"

"I shouldn't stand it, Bunter," said

Skinner gravely. "You're a fellow of importance now—a chap of substance, you know. You've got your dignity to think of."

"That's just it," said Bunter, drawing himself up with a dignified smirk. "I can afford to smile at Quelch now—tell him to go to pot, you know. In any case, I shall be leaving Greyfriars soon now."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's that, Bunter?"

The Famous Five came along the passage at that point, and Bob Cherry's voice was heard.

"What's that, old fat man?" went on Bob. "Did my ears deceive me, or did I hear you say you were leaving Greyfriars?"

Bunter grinned at Harry Wharton & Co.

"It's true enough," he said. "I'm leaving—any day now!"

"You—you really mean that, Bunter?"

"Yes. It's a solid fact."

"Oh, good!"

"Thank heaven!"

"What a blessing!"

"Oh, really, you fellows—"

"The best news I've heard for many a long day," said Bob Cherry, thumping Bunter heartily on the back. "Good man, Bunter! No more shall we need to lock our cupboard doors, and keep an eye on our grub. No longer need we stuff our keyholes full of cotton-wool. No longer need we keep a wary eye on our clobber and our bikes."

"You silly ass!" hooted Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Splendid news," went on Bob. "And have you really decided to go yourself, Bunter?"

"Of course, you silly ass! I'm jolly well—"

"The more credit to you, then, Billy," said Bob. "Your decision to leave Greyfriars is the one decent thing you've done since coming to Greyfriars, old chap!"

"You silly ass!"

"Unfortunately, as the news comes from Bunter himself," went on Bob regretfully, "it can't be true, alas! In fact, it's far, far too good to be true!"

"But it is true, you awful ass!" hooted Bunter. "I am leaving Greyfriars—I am leaving this rotten old school! I'm going on a world cruise in my pater's magnificent steam yacht. Yah! I'm a millionaire's son now; not a rotten measley pauper like you chaps! Look at that!"

And with a fat, lofty smirk on his excited features, Billy Bunter handed the paper to Harry Wharton and pointed out the paragraph.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

True!

HARRY WHARTON blinked at the marked paragraph. It did not take him long to read it. He read it and then he looked at Bunter's fat, smirking face with great astonishment.

"Great pip!" he exclaimed. "You—your pater, a blessed millionaire, Bunter! Well, this beats the giddy band!"

"Eh? What's that?" asked Bob Cherry blankly. "Bunter's pater a millionaire? Gammon!"

"Tosh!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"Spoof!" added Frank Nugent.

"It's true enough," grinned Stott. "Read it for yourselves, you doubting asses!"

Harry Wharton nodded and handed the paper round. It was read with various ejaculations of amazement.

"Phew!" breathed Bob Cherry. "But it can't be true! There must be another Bunter on the giddy Stock Exchange!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"It's true enough, I fancy," grinned Vernon-Smith, with a chuckle. "There isn't likely to be another chap of that name on the 'Change. Quelch swallowed it, anyway."

"Quelch?"

"Yes. Quelch's seen that paragraph, and he seems to think it's quite all serene," said the Bounder. "Quelch's keen enough, isn't he?"

"Phew!"

The Famous Five nodded. If the keen Mr. Quelch felt it must indeed be Bunter's pater, then they could scarcely doubt it. In any case, why should they after all? Certainly Mr. Samuel Bunter was not generally known to be a financial genius, but then success on the Stock Exchange didn't always require business genius; a reckless "plunger" might easily have a run of good luck.

But it was amazing for all that. Bunter as the son of a millionaire wanted getting used to.

"Well, that's good news, anyway, Bunter," said Harry Wharton cordially. "I'm jolly glad, old chap! Congratulations!"

"Let's hope it doesn't make your fat head fatter than it is now," grinned Bob Cherry. "My hat! There's a chance of getting our money back at last, then! Bunter owes money to nearly every fellow in the Remove, I believe. Better see that Bunter stumps up before he goes on his giddy world cruise!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter held up a fat and far from clean hand. His little podgy nose was elevated, and there was a supercilious expression on his face that was really comical. It was pretty clear already that Bunter was beginning to feel his new position as the son of a millionaire. Bob Cherry's hope that he would not get a swelled head already looked a very forlorn hope.

"Oh, really, Cherry," said Bunter with a great deal of dignity, "I'll thank you to treat me with a little more respect, if you don't mind."

"Ye gods!"

"As for the little loans you mention," said Bunter scornfully, "I shall settle up everything I happen to owe at this rotten show before I go. I must say I shall be jolly glad to shake the dust of Greyfriars off my feet! I've never been treated with proper respect, and I've never had enough to eat here, either!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"You can cackle!" said Bunter disdainfully. "I can afford to disregard envy and derision. It's what one can expect from a school like this. Luckily I shall not be coming back here after my world tour. I shall be going to a decent school, I expect—either Eton or Harrow."

"Alas! Poor Eton or Harrow!" murmured Bob Cherry. "What will be our gain will be Eton's loss—or Harrow's. Well, I must say it's jolly decent of you to think of going, Billy. I'd scarcely dared to hope even for such good luck. I herewith propose a hearty vote of thanks to Bunter, chaps, for deciding to leave us!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Good old Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly asses!" hooted Bunter, glaring round him. "Do you think it's

a rotten joke? It's serious enough. I shall be leaving Greyfriars in a day or two. You fellows wait until you see me rolling in wealth! You won't laugh then! You'll wish you'd treated me better, I can tell you! I suppose you're overlooking the fact that I'm now the son of a millionaire?"

"My dear old fat man——"

"It's no good trying to change your tune now, Cherry," said Bunter, waving a fat hand distantly. "When I'm making up my list of friends for the cruise—my pater mentions friends, you know—I shall certainly not invite any of you chaps. There's a limit, you know. You chaps are rather scrubby beasts, if you don't mind my mentioning it. I may invite fellows from this school, but I shall certainly not put you fellows down."

"Then we'll heap coals of fire on your giddy napper by putting you down, old fat man!" grinned Bob Cherry.

And he grabbed hold of the smirking, lofty Billy Bunter. Johnny Bull did likewise, and the next moment the fat junior howled as he was "put down" on the hard linoleum with a heavy thump.

Then, leaving him seated there, the Famous Five walked away laughing. They did not doubt now that the news was true, and that Bunter was the son of a millionaire; but they had no more respect for Billy Bunter for all that, nor had they the slightest intention of "sponging" on him—not even to get included in the forthcoming yachting cruise, entrancing as the prospect seemed.

But there were plenty of other fellows less particular.

That evening Billy Bunter was a great man in the Lower School, and he did not forget to let people know it. The newspaper paragraph was almost unreadable now, so many fellows had read it and handled it. And the news had caused general astonishment. Certainly the more decent fellows, while they congratulated the hero of the hour sincerely enough, did not change their attitude towards him.

The less particular fellows did, however, though it was noticeable that Skinner, Stott, and Snoop did not treat Bunter with the marked respect which might have been expected of them. But fellows like Fishy did, and even Bolsover and Bulstrode did. After all, a millionaire's son was a millionaire's son, and a fellow who could take friends on a world pleasure-trip was a fellow worth cultivating. In any case, Bunter the impecunious borrower was an entirely different fellow from Bunter the millionaire's son with plenty of money to throw about.

That evening Billy Bunter basked in the limelight of unusual popularity, and he swanked to his heart's content.

The following morning it was just the same, excepting in the Remove Form-room. There Billy Bunter learned, to his cost, that though willing to believe that Bunter was the son of a millionaire, Mr. Quelch was not willing to allow it to make any difference to his form work.

It was really hard lines on Bunter. How could a fellow with such glorious prospects before him be expected to concentrate his mind on lessons? Billy Bunter couldn't; and he had a very hot time during morning lessons in consequence.

But lessons ended at last, and at noon a letter arrived for Bunter which brought consolation and joy to him, and

also settled all doubts in the minds of those who still doubted.

It was from Bunter senior—or so everybody but Skinner & Co. believed—and it more than confirmed what was stated in the newspaper paragraph. Even Bunter himself had fostered a tiny doubt until that came. But he doubted no longer now. How could he? And long before dinner half the Remove had read the letter, while the happy Billy Bunter, and the equally happy Sammy Bunter, strutted about with their honours thick upon them.

Harry Wharton & Co. heard about the letter, and they strolled along to Bunter's study, curious to see the final proof. They found only Peter Todd at home.

"Hallo, you after Bunter, too?" he ejaculated. "Well, my hat!"

"We're not after him to sponge, you silly ass!" grinned Harry Wharton. "We just wanted to see the giddy letter."

"The fat ass is at the tuckshop; Fishy and a crowd of spongers have just yanked him off there," sniffed Toddy.

"Then it's true enough?" grinned Bob Cherry. "Bunter's pater is a giddy millionaire?"

"Oh, it's true enough," said Toddy. "I'm blessed if I can quite understand it. I didn't think Bunter's pater had it in him to plunge like that. But it's true enough. Anyhow, it's a bit of real, ripping good luck for me, you chaps."

"Then he's going to put you down on the list for the yachting trip, Toddy?"

"Eh? Not at all!" sniffed Toddy.

"That's scarcely likely, as I've kicked the swanky, fat ass more times since last night than I usually do in a month. It's just a bit of good luck for me that he's leaving Greyfriars, and especially this dashed study. See?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five did see, and they left the study laughing at Peter Todd's views on the matter. Certainly Bunter as a study-mate was a sore trial, and always had been, to Toddy. If Bunter's departure brought joy to nobody else, it certainly would to Peter.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Raising the Wind!

"I SAY, you fellows——"
"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's the giddy millionaire's son," bawled Bob Cherry. "On your knees, base varlets! Bow low before his giddy Majesty!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you fellows——"

Billy Bunter came into Study No. 1 and frowned rather severely at the humorous Bob Cherry.

It was after dinner, and, it being a half-holiday, the Famous Five were just discussing what to do with themselves that afternoon when Billy Bunter rolled in.

Bunter was alone, and he had a sheet of paper in his hand and rather a dispirited look on his fat features. This was a little surprising considering the fact that Bunter had only so recently discovered that he was the heir to millions.

As a matter of fact, though the letter had brought joy and satisfaction in one way to the Bunter Brothers, it had also brought a little disappointment. Naturally, they had expected it to contain a very substantial remittance; instead of which it had only contained the promise of a substantial remittance. And this, though hopeful, was not very satisfying at the moment.

Certainly Bunter had a good number of friends now—friends who were very willing to "stand" him a few jam tarts and ginger-pops in the hope of getting a substantial return when Bunter's



"Klek dis young rascal down der stairs, mein son," called the money-lender, to an oily, sleek-headed youth in the tiny outer office. The oily youth made a rush at Bunter. But Bunter was too quick for him. He shot through the door of the outer office, and flew down the narrow stairs, taking them two at a time. (See Chapter 5.)

"whacking" remittances began to roll in—and also in the hope of being invited to join the world trip. Many of them, indeed, had already made Bunter several small loans—sprats to catch a mackerel, so to speak.

Beyond that, however, none of Bunter's new-found friends were prepared to go, which was very disappointing to Bunter.

It was not good enough. Bunter wanted real cash to handle, and plenty of it. Certainly, the prospects were dazzling, but to a hungry fellow like Bunter prospects were not much good.

Really, it was most exasperating. What was the good of being a millionaire's son if a fellow hadn't plenty of cash to splash about? Bunter wanted money badly now, and he was determined to get it somehow.

That was his intention in visiting Study No. 1 now. He was quite ready to drop his lofty and patronising manner for once, and to treat Harry Wharton & Co. as equals, if they would only provide him with the necessary cash—or some of it.

"I say, you fellows," he said quite genially, "stop rotting, you know. I—I thought I'd just drop in for a little chat."

"That's no end good of you, Master Bunter," said Bob Cherry humbly. "We're only common fellows and poverty-stricken bounders, as you told us only this morning, but we're highly honoured at a visit from you. Let Master Bunter have the armchair, Franky."

"I say, you fellows—". Bunter blinked rather regretfully at the Famous Five; he felt rather sorry he had called them "poverty-stricken bounders" now. "I say, that was only my fun, you know. The fact is, I've just realised that I shall miss you chaps no end when I leave here, and I want to see as much as possible of you before I go."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"The—the parting will be a terrible wrench to me," said Bunter sadly. "That is why I've decided to put off the—the fatal hour of parting as long as possible."

"Oh dear!" groaned Bob Cherry. "Then you're not going yet, Bunter?"

"Oh, yes; jolly soon, I expect," said Bunter, beaming cheerfully at the juniors. "But the fact is, you fellows, I've decided to include you five in my list of guests for the yachting cruise, after all. There, that ought to make you sit up—what?"

"Good man, Bunter!"

"We'll come, old chap!"

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry heartily. "But—but does your pater agree to take your pals, Billy, old chap?"

"Oh, yes," grinned Bunter. "You fellows haven't seen the letter yet. Here it is."

And Bunter handed a rather jammy and grimy letter to Harry Wharton. The juniors crowded round to look at it. Until they saw the letter for themselves the Famous Five could not help being a bit doubtful of it all, and especially the invitation for the world tour.

But their doubts fled as they scanned the letter.

It was headed with Bunter's home address, right enough, and Harry Wharton fancied he recognised Bunter's pater's spidery "fist." The letter was not very long, and it read as follows:

"My dear William,—I have some splendid and wonderful news for you, my dear boy—news which, doubtless enough, you have already gleaned from

the newspapers. I have been far too busy to acquaint you with it before this, and your mother has also been too busy to write. In case you have not yet learned of our great good fortune, however, I will briefly relate what has happened. Quite recently certain financial schemes of mine met with wonderful success—success that has exceeded my wildest expectations. I am now a very rich man—a millionaire. This delightful state of affairs will, of course, make a big difference to you, as well as to your happy parents, my boy. Hitherto I have been obliged to restrict your allowances in every way. Now all that will be changed. All our financial worries are at an end, and all you desire you shall have.

"At the moment I am very busy making final arrangements for a pleasure trip round the world in my yacht, the Skylark, which I recently purchased from Lord Dunmore. This will be splendid news for you—especially when I tell you that I have decided to take Bessie, Samuel, and yourself on the tour, and to allow you each to bring six friends as your guests on the cruise.

"I will write again shortly, giving all details, and will enclose a substantial remittance to carry you over until the day arrives for you to leave Greyfriars.

"Your affectionate father,
"SAMUEL BUNTER."

"Well, my hat!"

"You—you lucky fellow, Bunter!"

"The luckfulness is terrific, my esteemed and fat-headed Bunter!"

The Famous Five eyed Bunter's fat, satisfied face enviously, as they finished reading that letter containing the joyful tidings.

"All serene—what?" grinned Bunter, elevating his nose a trifle. "Makes you fellows envious, I bet! He, he, he! I can tell you it's going to be no end of a ripping trip. The Skylark's a ripping craft, I believe—all shining brass and white paint, you knew. Money will be flowing like water, and you fellows will have the time of your lives!"

"Great Scott! Then you actually intend to invite us five, Bunter?" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Of course. Haven't we always been great pals?" said Bunter. "I made up my mind to take you fellows the moment I heard the good news."

"Good man, Bunter!" said Frank Nugent heartily. "I always knew you'd pay us back some day, somehow, for the loans you've had from us—"

"And the grub you've pinched from us!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Good old Bunter!"

"I thought you fellows would jump at the chance," said Bunter, blinking seriously at the juniors. "Well, I would send your names in to the pater at once, only—"

"Only—?" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Only there's a condition," went on Bunter. "It's like this, you fellows. I'm rather disappointed with the pater's letter. I expected it would contain a whacking big remittance—a hundred quid at least. It didn't. The pater hasn't sent a blessed stiver! Blessed if I know why he hasn't sent it now—too thumping busy, I suppose. But it's coming!"

"Yes, it's coming!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Go on, Billy; you're expecting a postal-order, and you want us to cash it—is that the condition?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course not, you silly ass!" snorted Billy Bunter, his lip curling. "Postal-order—bah! My pater's a millionaire

now, fathead! Think he'd send me a postal-order?"

"Then you're not expecting one?"

"No, you silly dummy!"

"And you don't want us to cash it in advance?" said Bob, in great astonishment.

"No," roared Bunter. "Of course not! Think my pater's got any use for measly postal-orders? Isn't he a millionaire now, fathead? It will be a cheque—for fifty quid at least. I expect afterwards he'll place a substantial sum in the bank in my name, and let me have a cheque-book soon, so that I can draw on it just when I like."

"Oh, my hat!"

"That's what I'm expecting," said Bunter. "Only he hasn't sent it yet. That's the trouble. And I'm in urgent need of funds now. Fancy a millionaire's son without a blessed penny in his pockets, you fellows!"

"Just fancy!" grinned Harry Wharton.

"It's an unheard of position!" said Bunter indignantly. "Some of the fellows are quite decent about it; they've made me small loans and stood me a few measly jam-tarts. Fishy even has offered to lend me ten bob at a hundred per cent. interest. But that's not good enough. I want more than that. A fellow in my position can't go on accepting small loans and scraps like that from ordinary poverty-stricken bounders, you know. You understand that?"

"Oh, quite!"

"That's the position, you fellows," explained Bunter. "I must get cash from somewhere to tide me over until the hundred quid comes. I want to stand the whole Form a really sumptuous spread to celebrate the rise in the family fortunes, you know. I shall want five quid at least to do that. Now, my idea's this. You five fellows shall accompany me on the tour on condition that you supply the funds now for the farewell spread to the Form. I shall only ask a quid each—that's only five quid—as a kind of thank-offering, you know. You fellows will admit that a world tour for a quid would be jolly cheap—what?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Too cheap!" agreed Harry Wharton grimly.

"But, in point of fact, it won't be a thank-offering at all—only a loan," explained Bunter firmly. "I shall insist upon repaying the five quid with five hundred per cent. interest the moment the cheque comes from the pater. That will mean you will have a decent amount for pocket-money when we start the trip. Well, what do you think of the idea? You fellows hand me five quid now, and it's a go!"

The Famous Five chuckled. Certainly a world trip for the cost of a quid each would be cheap—very cheap. But it was a bit too cheap for Harry Wharton & Co. They had no wish to be paying guests, and they did not intend to accept Bunter's hospitality on those terms. Moreover, Billy Bunter was a fellow who might easily change his mind—very easily.

"Well, is it a go?" repeated Bunter eagerly.

"Not much!"

"Nothing doing, Billy!" grinned Harry Wharton. "We'll come on the trip, certainly; but not on those terms, old fat man!"

"You silly asses—"

"Good-bye!"

"But I mean it!" howled Bunter. "Mean to say you'll lose a splendid chance like this for the sake of a measly quid?"

"Exactly, old chap! Good-bye!"

"But look here—"

"I knew there was a catch somewhere," said Bob Cherry. "I knew Bunter wasn't really doing us a kind action in deciding to leave Greyfriars. He meant all along to take us with him, of course. It's not good enough. I'd rather miss the world trip than miss seeing the last of Bunter!"

"Ha, ha! Yes, rather!"

"You silly asses!" shrieked Bunter. "Can't you see what you're missing?"

"Yes, that's why we intend to miss it," said Harry. "Good-bye, old chap! Now, you fellows, let's be starting for up-river. Outside, Bunter!"

"But, look here—"

The Famous Five did not stay to listen to Bunter. They grabbed their caps, and then they grabbed Bunter and rushed him out of the study. Then Harry Wharton paused.

"You're hungry, I suppose, Billy?"

"Eh? Of course, I'm hungry! I've scarcely had—"

"Then we'd better lock the study door," said Harry, taking out the key from inside the door and placing it outside. "Even a millionaire's son isn't above suspicion, you know—especially if his name happens to be Bunter!"

Click!

The key clicked in the lock, and then, placing the key in his pocket, Harry Wharton walked away with his grinning chums. Bunter glared after them wrathfully. Then he rolled away dismally.

There was obviously nothing doing in Study No. 1. But Bunter was still hopeful. He had already made his splendid offer to a dozen fellows or more—though he hadn't told the Famous Five that—and he intended not to lose hope yet.

He rolled along to Vernon-Smith's study, and looked in. Vernon-Smith was oiling a cricket-bat, and he pointed it at the door significantly.

"Outside, Fatty," he said.

"Oh, really, Smithy!" grunted Bunter. "Look here, old chap, I'm just making up the list—"

"Go and bury it, then!"

"But, listen to me, Smithy—"

Smithy, however, was not in the mood to listen apparently. He took Bunter by a fat ear and led him to the door. Then he planted his boot behind him.

Thump!

"Yarroooooh!"

The Bunder retired into his study, and Bunter limped away, rubbing himself and groaning. It was really amazing to Billy Bunter. How any fellow in his right senses should turn down an offer like his was utterly beyond him. And he had been kicked—he, a millionaire's son. It was really beyond bearing.

But suddenly Bunter remembered Lord Mauleverer, and at the thought of the schoolboy millionaire Bunter's face brightened, and he hurried along to his study. Mauly, at least, was too lazy to lift a hand, much less a boot.

As he expected, he found the youthful lord reclining on a luxurious couch, amidst soft, expensive cushions. He gave a sleepy groan as Bunter plumped down on the edge of the couch and woke him up.

"Oh dear! Go away, Bunter, there's a good fellow!" he groaned.

"Oh, really, Mauly, I want a few words with you, old chap!" said Bunter. "It's on a most important matter. You've heard the news, of course, about the change in my family's fortunes, Mauly?"

"Oh dear! Yes. Go away!"

"Oh, really, Mauly, I should have expected you to be a bit more interested, old chap!" said Bunter, blinking down at his tired lordship. "After all, you and me and Smithy are members of wealthy families now—not like the rest of the measly paupers here, you know. You're a millionaire, and Smithy's the son of a millionaire, and so'm I. Well, we ought to stick together and keep aloof from the rest of the poverty-stricken rotters here. That's my idea."

Snore!

"Wake up, you silly ass!" snorted Bunter, shaking Lord Mauleverer. "Wake up, and listen, old chap!"

Mauly woke up again—suddenly. On occasions the tired schoolboy millionaire had been known to exert himself, and this was such an occasion. He raised his arm, and his fist took Bunter, who was stooping over him, full on his fat little nose.

Bunter yelped fiendishly, and sat down suddenly on the expensive study carpet. "Yooooop!"

Mauly's arm dropped again, and he closed his eyes.

"Now go away—do!" he murmured.

"Ow! Wow! Oh, you beast, Mauly!"

Snore!

Lord Mauleverer was in the land of slumber again, and Billy Bunter, deciding that "let sleeping dogs lie" was a wise saying, left him to go or sleeping. He scrambled to his feet, and after glowering at his lordship for a moment speechlessly, he rolled out of the study, mopping his damaged little nose as he went. As in the case of the Famous Five, the Bunder, and others, there was evidently nothing doing.

(Continued overleaf.)

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Bunter's kind offers of a world trip on his pater's magnificent yacht were going a-begging—on Bunter's terms, at all events.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Amazing!

"**R**OTTEN!"

That was Billy Bunter's well-considered view of the situation.

What was the good of being a millionaire's son if one's pockets were empty—likewise one's inner man?

None whatever in Bunter's view.

Certainly he had splendid prospects. There were great and glorious times ahead for Billy Bunter in the future. But the future was not the present. And Billy Bunter was a fellow who lived and moved and had his being in the present. The past and the future did not interest Bunter over much. His pockets were empty, and he was hungry.

Moreover, since he had learned that he was a millionaire's son, Billy Bunter had discovered that he had expensive tastes. He wanted heaps of money for grub and for clothes; he wanted a motor-car, and he wanted lots of cash to swank about with.

And he wanted all these things now—not in the future.

It was really most exasperating to know that all these things would be his soon, but that he would have to wait for them. Billy Bunter didn't like waiting.

True he had made any amount of friends since the news had become known on the previous evening. Quite a lot of fellows had suddenly discovered what a really fine fellow Bunter was, and they had stood him jam-tarts, and several of them had even made him small loans. But the jam-tarts had gone now, and the loans had gone, and already those friends seemed to have tired of being his friends on such terms.

The letter had been welcome, confirming the news as it had done, but there had been no money with the letter. Doubtless, when that whacking big remittance did come along, those new-found friends would rally round again, and the remittance would act as a spur to their friendship.

But the remittance had not come along, and, in any case, Bunter would have no need for such friends when it did come. Bunter had already decided upon that.

And, until the remittance did come Bunter was firmly resolved to get some cash from somewhere. The question was—how, and from where?

Bunter felt like a castaway on a desert isle, with a whacking great sea-chest full of gold, but with no grub or clothes, and with no use for the chest of treasure.

It was indeed rotten!

The fat junior rolled disconsolately out of the School House into the quad, and turned his footsteps towards the tuckshop. He had already showed Dame Mimble the paragraph and the letter, but though Mrs. Mimble was ready to believe that he was indeed the son of a millionaire, she was not ready to let him have any grub on tie.

But Bunter felt it was worth while trying her again for all that. So Bunter started for the tuckshop now, but before he reached it he paused. A new, and—to Billy Bunter—simple way out of the difficulty occurring to him.

"My hat!" he murmured, blinking thoughtfully through his big glasses. "Why the thump didn't I think of that before now? Just the very thing!"

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After all, it's only for a few days at most. The cheque may even come in the morning. My hat! I'll do it!"

And, after reflecting for a moment, Bunter started off at a run for the cycle-shed. Bunter's own bike was in permanent dry dock, so to speak; but there were plenty of other machines in the shed. Bunter selected Lord Mauleverer's new "jigger," and ran it down to the gates. Skinner, Stott, and Snoop were lounging round the gates, and they grinned broadly as they sighted Bunter.

This was nothing new. Skinner & Co. had done nothing but grin at sight of Billy Bunter since the previous night—why, Bunter was far from suspecting.

"Whither away, old lard-barrel?" grinned Skinner. "Just going to see your bankers, old chap?"

Bunter blinked rather haughtily at the three.

"As a matter of fact I am," he replied loftily. "You fellows needn't grin. You seem to think it's something to cackle about, Skinner, but I'll jolly well soon show you something when I come back rolling in wealth."

"When's the Rolls-Royce coming along, Bunter?" grinned Skinner. "I'm surprised to see a fellow like you biking it—especially on another chap's bike!"

"He's going to pop it," grinned Snoop. "That's how he'll manage to come home rolling in wealth."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Rats!" sniffed Bunter, and he rode away, wondering a little at the yell of laughter which followed him.

As a matter of fact Bunter was no little surprised at the attitude of Skinner & Co. Those shady three were spongers all, and he had expected them to come fawning round him just as Fishy & Co. had done. Instead of which they just laughed, even when he offered that morning to place them on his list of possibles for the world tour.

It was really rather surprising to Bunter, but he did not dwell upon the matter now—he was too anxious to get to Courtfield. It was a warm afternoon, and the fat junior was soon perspiring freely and panting freely also; but he stuck it and ground away at the pedals.

He reached Courtfield at last, and dismounted outside a grocer's shop, leaning his bike—or, rather Mauly's bike—against the curb.

But Bunter didn't enter the shop. Next door was a narrow, dingy staircase leading upwards to a still, dingier office, and on a rusty brass plate at the bottom of the stairs was the significant legend: "The Courtfield Finance Company," proprietor, Isaac Moses."

Bunter was just setting his foot on the bottom stair when five fellows came along, wheeling their bikes. They were the Famous Five, and Wharton sighted Bunter at once, and shouted to him.

"Bunter, you awful ass!"

Bunter drew back guiltily, and blinked round. He grunted on sighting Harry Wharton & Co. Harry Wharton dropped his machine and jumped across the pavement, grabbing the fat junior by the shoulder.

"You fat idiot!" said Harry. "What the thump are you up to? You're not going to visit that rotten moneylender, are you?"

"Mind your own business, Wharton," said Bunter, with a snort. "Lemme go, you rotter!"

"Not much! Great Scott! You'll get the boot if you're spotted visiting a blessed moneylender, Bunter. Come away, you fat idiot!"

"Sha'n't!" gasped Bunter wrathfully. "You cheeky ass! Leggo! Like your dashed cheek to come butting in on my business, Wharton. Leggo!"

And wrenching his shoulder free, Billy Bunter dashed up the stairs.

Harry Wharton blinked up after him in great alarm. Mr. Isaac Moses was a German Jew who carried on a moneylender's business as "The Courtfield Finance Company," and both Moses and his business were rotten through and through. It would certainly be a serious matter if Billy Bunter were caught visiting the shady moneylender.

"My hat! The—the raving idiot!" gasped Harry Wharton. "We must yank the silly idiot back, you fellows. Come on!"

"Oh, let him rip!" grinned Bob Cherry. "A merchant like Moses isn't likely to do business with a fat little ass like Bunter—trust the giddy Shylock for that! He'll boot the fat ass out pretty sharp. Let's get on!"

"And let's take Mauly's bike with us," grinned Frank Nugent. "Bunter's pinched Mauly's bike without a doubt, and it'll serve the fat ass right to make him walk home again."

"Good wheeze!" grinned Johnny Bull. "Teach the fat toad a lesson."

"Yes, but—but—"

"Let him rip," grinned Bob Cherry. "Here goes."

And Bob Cherry grasped Mauly's glittering new "jigger" and started to walk away with it, wheeling his own as well. Harry Wharton grinned and followed, as did his other chums. After all, Bob was right enough. It was scarcely likely that a sharp, careful gentleman like Mr. Isaac Moses would lend a fellow like Bunter money. Bunter was a minor, and he could never claim the money if it wasn't paid. He would show Bunter the door even if he didn't kick him through it.

So the Famous Five walked on to Uncle Clegg's tuckshop grinning, and left Billy Bunter to his own devices.

Meanwhile, Bunter had reached the little office, and was soon standing before the usurer's desk. Mr. Moses was a fat, crafty-eyed gentleman, and he looked like a great, fat spider. He looked Billy Bunter up and down, and sniffed. Apparently he was not impressed with Bunter's appearance.

"Well, mein liddle man," he said briefly, "and what can I do for you?"

"I want some money, of course," said Bunter, with no little show of dignity. "I want you to let me have a little loan, Mr. Moses—only a few pounds, say ten quid! I shall be able to pay it back very soon—perhaps to-morrow!"

"Ach! Do you, mein young friend?" said Mr. Moses, with heavy sarcasm. "Put I do not do piziness with minors, mein poy. Dere is der door—" He paused, having caught sight of Bunter's cap. "You are from Greyfriars, ain't it?" he said, changing his tone suddenly.

"Yes. My pater is Mr. Samuel Bunter, the millionaire," said Bunter, with a fat grin. "So you've no need to fear about not getting your money, Mr. Moses. I'm expecting a big cheque from him by any post now."

"Ach! So your fader is one millionaire, mein friend?"

"Yes. He made his money on the Stock Exchange, you know."

"And can you give me one proof that your fader is a millionaire, mein young friend?" asked the moneylender with an oily smile.

"Oh, yes. Here you are," grinned Bunter. "And I've a letter, too, that came only this morning. Look at that."

And Bunter showed the moneylender the marked paragraph in the newspaper. The print was scarcely decipherable by this time, so grimy was the paper. And the moneylender peered closely at it. Then he looked up.

"So your name is Hunter, mein young friendt?"

"No, Bunter—the son of Mr. Samuel Bunter, of course."

"Den dere is one liddle mistake," was the grim answer. "One moment, mein friendt."

And the moneylender waddled across the room to a sheaf of newspapers lying on a table. He selected one, and, opening it out, studied a paragraph in it. Then he looked up at Billy Bunter, his crafty eyes glittering nastily.

"You say dat your name is Bunter, hein?" he said.

"Certainly!"

"Den you are one impostor," snapped Mr. Moses. "You are one rascal, mein poy!"

"Wha-at?"

"You hav come to try to get money from me on false pretences," snapped the moneylender. "You are one rascal. Get out of mein office!"

"But—but—"

"Get out!" roared the usurer. "Ach! You young scoundrel!"

The irate usurer grasped Bunter's fat car between a fat thumb and forefinger and rushed him to the door.

"Kick dis young rascal down der stairs, mein son," he called to an oily, sleek-headed youth in the tiny outer office. "Ach! Der rascal!"

He slammed the door on Bunter, and the oily youth made a rush at Bunter. But Bunter was too quick for him. He shot through the door of the outer office and fairly flew down the narrow stairs, taking them two at a time. He reached the bottom of the stairs with a heavy bump and in a sprawling heap. Then he picked himself up and jumped into the street.

It was only too clear that there was nothing doing in the business line between Billy Bunter and the Courtfield Finance Company. Once again Billy Bunter had drawn blank. It was a dismal discovery to Bunter, and he made another dismal discovery a moment later when he found that his bike—or, rather, Lord Mauleverer's bike—had gone. It was the last straw.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

More Amazing!

"Oh dear!"

Billy Bunter groaned.

It was a weary groan.

The walk from Courtfield to Greyfriars was no light matter to a heavy, unconditioned fellow like Billy Bunter.

Up and down the Courtfield High Street Billy Bunter had hunted for the missing bike, and he had made extensive and anxious inquiries right and left—to no avail. The bike—Lord Mauleverer's new, expensive machine—was gone, probably stolen.

It was a serious matter, as Bunter fully realised. He had been seen with it. Skinner & Co. and Harry Wharton & Co. had seen him with it. And now it was gone, and he was responsible.

Certainly, to a millionaire's son and heir a bicycle, however expensive, was a matter as light as air. He would very soon be in a position to make ample compensation for the loss.

But then no fellow likes to have his bike taken without his permission, and

it was certain that Lord Mauleverer would make it hot for him for taking it, whether he made the loss good or not.

So, with the disappointment of having failed to get a loan from the Courtfield Finance Company, his bumps and bruises in that hurried flight downstairs, that long, long trail on the Courtfield road, and the dismal prospect of serious trouble with Mauly, Billy Bunter was feeling very unhappy and very dismal and doleful.

Without cash the life of a millionaire's son seemed no better than anyone else's—worse, in fact.

"Oh dear!"

Bunter groaned again as he trudged wearily on. He had left the main Courtfield road now, and was trudging along a narrow, rutty lane. This was a short cut to Greyfriars, and saved him the tramp through Friardale village. But it was not a good road for tramping, being rough and rutty and hard going all together. Moreover, the sun was hot, and Billy Bunter was fairly streaming with perspiration.

Altogether Bunter was in a bad way.

hungry state. He remembered having seen Smithy and Redwing carting a heap of cakes and things from the old tuckshop to their study only that noon, and he happened to know the lock on their cupboard door was broken. The thought made the fat youth groan again.

Musing thus, Billy Bunter lay back on the warm grass, with his head resting on his hands. It was a very pleasant afternoon and a very pleasant spot. A warm breeze rustled the foliage, birds twittered and sang, and the air resounded with the humming of insect life.

Then quite suddenly another—less musical—sound reached Bunter's ears; it was the hum and roar of a rapidly approaching motor-bike.

Bunter sat up and blinked above the screen of thickets.

The motor-bike and side-car—Bunter saw that it was that—was approaching from the direction of Pegg, and going Bunter's way. If only he could persuade the driver to give him a lift!

Bunter was about to heave his fat form upright when, to his surprise, the roar of the engine died away suddenly, and next

ALL THE WINNERS!

RESULT OF "PARS" COMPETITION No. 9.

A Table Football Game has been awarded to each of the following readers:

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Frank O. Rettie, 18, Orchard Street, Aberdeen, Scotland.
C. Dance, 162, Battersea Park Road, London, S.W. 1.
F. Bassett, The Beeches, Blunsden Abbey, near Swindon, Wilts.
S. Bottone, St. Veronica, Church Road, Hadleigh, Essex.
Douglas Newman, 3, Bath Road, Warmley, near Bristol.
Walter Russell, 52, Sallsbury Street, Blandford, Dorset.
Sydney Pogson, 41, James Street, Crimble, Slaithwaite, near Huddersfield.
L. Payne, 41, Baalbec Road, Highbury, London, N. 5.
Harry Cantor, 189, Stanley Road, Bootle, near Liverpool.
W. M. Dear, 89, Ramsden Road, Balham, S.W. 12.
D. Howarth, 67, Emerson Street, Belfast, Ireland.
Robert Dalton, 32, Broad Street, Carlisle, Cumberland.
Thos. Tomlinson, jun., 37, Harvie Street, Bridgeton, Glasgow.
Geoffrey Kempster, 61, Pine Street, Bury, Lancs.
D. T. Britton, 206, Whitehall Road, Easton, Bristol.
G. G. Rattee, 18, Baldwyn's Road, Maypole Estate, Bexley, Kent.
Edward Miley, 101, Ling Road, Canning Town, London, E. 16.
George W. H. Stretton, 1, Shepperton Street, Coton, Nuneaton, Warwickshire.

(Result of No. 10 next week, chums.)

He was footsore, and his fat little legs ached, and he was dusty and cross, and he was hungry—frightfully hungry. Even the reflection that he was now the son and heir of a millionaire was no comfort to him just then. He felt he would have exchanged his glorious future prospects for a good square meal and a gallon of foaming ginger-pop in the present.

"Oh dear!"

Once again Bunter groaned, and then he left the road and rolled wearily across the grass at the roadside to a thicket, and flung himself down under its welcome shade.

It was not the first time Bunter had been obliged to rest since he had left Courtfield. A mile was usually Bunter's limit, and he had come several weary miles.

"Oh crumbs!" mumbled the fat junior dismally. "What an awful afternoon! And I might have stayed indoors and had a good feed. Nearly everybody has gone out, and they aren't all such suspicious beasts as Wharton and his lot. Fancy locking a fellow's study door! Beasts!"

The thought of the empty studies that he might have raided, had he remained indoors that bright afternoon, made Bunter feel like weeping in his present

moment the motor-combination rattled to a halt just beyond the screen of thickets, and scarcely a dozen yards from Bunter.

It had scarcely stopped when its rider leaped from the saddle, and, after a swift, stealthy glance up and down the narrow road, ran the bike and side-car off the road on to the grass and deep into the thick foliage.

Bunter saw the man's cap as he halted his machine about twenty yards off from the road, above the screen of thickets.

"M-mum-my hat!" breathed Bunter.

Somehow, Bunter did not feel like showing himself now, either to ask for a lift or anything else. There had been something curiously stealthy in the man's manner and the way he glanced up and down the lane before leaving the road. It struck Bunter as being very curious, and Bunter was a very, very curious youth indeed, not to say inquisitive and nosy.

So now Bunter, like the celebrated Brer Fox, lay low and said nothing.

But he parted the screen of foliage with his hands and peered through.

He did not see much. He saw the man's face—a rather sharp face, quite young, with a smart, close-clipped, dark

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moustache—and he caught the glitter of a pair of sharp, dark eyes. The man was tall and he was fairly well-dressed—a clerk in a fairly decent job, Bunter took him for.

As Bunter looked he was busily engaged on his engine, and suddenly Bunter heard a sharp snap of breaking wire, it seemed to him.

It seemed very curious, as if the chap was smashing something on his bike, Bunter thought.

Then, as the snap sounded, the man lifted a bag from under a rug in the sidecar, and, after a sharp look about him, he left the spot, vanishing abruptly through the trees.

"My hat!" breathed Bunter.

For barely a second Bunter hesitated, and then, his curiosity aroused fully now, he jumped up and trod after the stranger, pushing his way cautiously through the undergrowth.

Bunter couldn't quite make it out at all. Once Bunter paused as a possible explanation of the affair occurred to him. The man was making for the sea—already Bunter could hear the murmur and splash of the waves at the foot of the cliffs—and it seemed possible that the man was going for a bathe, and that the bag held his costume and towel.

But a second's thought told the fat junior that it was unlikely. To begin with, the distant splash of the waves told Bunter that the tide was in, and bathing anywhere near the spot was pretty nearly out of the question. Moreover, a fellow was scarcely likely to carry a bathing-costume and a towel in a whacking great handbag.

And then there was his stealthy manner, and his strange action in smashing something on his machine—possibly putting it out of running order.

It was scarcely likely that he was going bathing, and at the reflection Bunter's eyes gleamed again, and he trod on, the man's footsteps still sounding ahead, though his form was out of sight.

The rustle and footsteps ceased suddenly, and Bunter knew the man had reached the open sward on the cliffs. And a half-minute later Bunter himself emerged from the trees and blinked about him cautiously.

Before him was the jagged edge of the cliffs, with a sparkling blue expanse of water beyond, on which a few brown sails glimmered. To his right in the hazy distance showed the little fishing village of Pegg, nestling under its red roofs in a cosy cove.

But there was no sign of the strange motor-cyclist.

Even as Bunter blinked about him, however, he heard a sudden rattling of displaced stones, and as he turned swiftly he saw a man's head and shoulders appear above a deep gully twenty yards away. The head and shoulders were followed instantly by the rest of the man's person as he clambered out of the gully.

It was the strange motorist, and he had already seen Bunter. Bunter saw his dark eyes glint, and, though he felt more like running, he deemed it safer to keep his ground.

For a moment the fellow stood motionless, as if taken aback; and then he started as if to enter the trees again. But just as abruptly he turned and came up to Bunter. It needed all Bunter's nerve to stand his ground now. Certainly the fellow looked a normal, ordinary kind of fellow, but—

Bunter had been spying on him, and he had a guilty conscience on that score. Moreover, the fellow's actions certainly were strange.

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Yet Bunter stayed where he was.

The man reached him and bent a keen, rather savage glance on the fat junior.

"What are you doing here?" he demanded.

"Nothing—I mean I'm only looking for my—my pals," said Bunter, with a gasp. "I—I suppose you haven't seen them about here—five fellows wearing Greyfriars caps?"

"No, I haven't!"

"The—the beasts!" said Bunter, striving to get wrath into his tone. "They must have gone on to Cliff House without me—given me the slip, the rotten beasts!"

And with that Billy Bunter rolled on towards the direction of Cliff House, while the man nodded and walked on into the woods.

Bunter almost grinned. He felt he had done that very well, and he meant to do better. Bunter was a very crafty youth and he could see the man was not quite satisfied. So Bunter kept on his way for a bit. Then he took a stealthy glance behind him.

As he fully expected, the man had emerged from the trees again and was staring after him. Bunter grinned and kept on for another twenty yards, and again he glanced back. The man had vanished, apparently quite satisfied now.

"Oh, good!" murmured Bunter.

He walked on, edging closer to the fringe of trees, and then he dived among them and started to make his way swiftly and cautiously towards where he deemed the motor-cycle and sidecar stood.

Bunter saw it all now—or thought he did. It was plain enough, of course. The man was hiding a bag of grub on the cliffs—obviously in readiness for a picnic there later on. Most likely he was going now to fetch someone else—a girl, probably—to join him in the picnic.

That was how Bunter's wonderful mind worked it out. Bunter's mind revolved always round the thought of grub, and he knew that if he had hidden a bag of tuck in readiness for a picnic he would have moved and acted just as stealthily. He hadn't smashed anything on his machine, after all—that was absurd. And as he hurried Bunter's eyes were alert for the sound of the motor-engine.

It would have been a welcome sound to Bunter, for he wanted to make quite sure the fellow had gone, so that he could return and hunt for the hidden bag of foodstuffs in safety.

He reached the spot at last and peered into the little clearing. The man was not there, however; he was in the roadway, and what he was doing made Bunter's eyes goggle.

He was sliding and stumbling and kicking stones up. As Bunter looked he suddenly lay down full length in the road and started to roll over and over in the dust. This done, he slipped back into the clearing.

His actions next made Bunter fairly tremble. The fat junior was certain now that he was watching the antics of a madman. He felt he wanted to bolt for his life, but fear held him rooted to the spot.

The man started to tear at his clothes now—he ripped his jacket and trousers, and then he tore his tie and collar loose. Then a sudden thought seemed to strike him, and he pitched his cap and a rug from the car into the roadway.

Next he did a thing that quite settled the question of his sanity for Bunter.

He took from a thicket a handful of brambles and deliberately scratched his face down with the sharp spikes—Bunter

saw his teeth clenched hard as he did it, and saw the blood trickle from the livid scratches.

The man's next move was still more curious.

From his pocket he took a handkerchief and something else—the man's back was to him now and he did not see it, nor did he see what the man was doing. But after standing thus a moment the fellow placed the handkerchief to his face and held it there, while he seated himself on the grass, still doing so.

It seemed to Billy Bunter that he was nursing the scratches; but the next moment Bunter gasped as the man sank back and lay still.

Trembling with excitement and fear, the fat youth watched him as the seconds went by, but he did not move when several minutes had gone. There was a curious, sickly smell in the air now; but Bunter scarcely noticed it—and if he did he certainly did not connect it with the man's stillness.

He was obviously asleep—so Bunter imagined—and how the fellow could fall asleep after such curious behaviour was utterly beyond Bunter. But he was undoubtedly asleep; his heavy breathing reached Bunter's ears clearly.

"M-mum-my hat!" breathed Bunter, his fat little legs shaking under him. "M-mum-my hat! This is a go, and no mistake! Crikey! Fancy a chap dropping off to sleep after scratching his blessed chivvy like that! It—it beats me hollow!"

But, though the strange and startling incident had affected Bunter greatly, it had not affected his terrific hunger, or thoughts of the contents of the bag.

If he was going to act at all he had better act at once, thought the fat youth. At any moment the chap might wake, and he might even go back for the bag.

In that case Billy Bunter was done fairly!

So, after blinking doubtfully at the recumbent form on the grass, Bunter trod softly away and made his way back to the cliffs. He reached the gully in no time and blinked down into it. At the bottom—it was about ten yards deep and a dozen or so wide—was a mass of brambles, thick and covering the whole of the gully at that spot.

"Oh, good! That's where he's hidden the stuff!" grinned Bunter; and he dropped down on to a ledge in the rocks, and from thence reached the bottom of the gully. The next moment he was searching eagerly amongst the thick brambles.

It was not an easy matter. Bunter grunted and panted as he tried to squeeze his fat person into the mass. And then, quite suddenly, the ground seemed to drop away from the fat youth, and he yelped as he felt himself falling.

But he did not fall far. The next thing Bunter realised was that he was sitting on hard rock and blinking up at the brambles through which stray gleams of light filtered.

"Ow! Ow-wow!" gasped Bunter.

Short as it was, the fall had shaken the fat youth up not a little, and his fat face burned and smarted where the brambles had scratched it as he smashed through.

He blinked dazedly about him to find that he was only in a slight hollow, and he gasped with relief as he saw that it would be very easy to climb out again.

Then he saw the bag.

It was lying on its side, and had obviously merely been dropped into the hole by the strange motor-cyclist.

But was it locked?

Bunter waited until he had regained

his breath and then he grabbed it. To his great astonishment, he discovered that it was very heavy—extraordinarily heavy for its size.

"My word!" breathed the fat junior. "It—it can't be tuck, after all. Wonder what the thump it is?"

Bunter was almost quivering with excitement now. He fumbled with the fastenings with trembling fingers. It was an old-fashioned bag, rusty black, and with sliding catches. And it was not locked!

In a flash Billy Bunter had it open, and then he jumped.

Inside was a pile of cylinder-shaped packets—blue, with perforations in them. Through the perforations Billy Bunter caught glimpses of silver—silver coins.

"Phew!" breathed Bunter, his eyes opening wide. "Mum-my hat! It—it's money!"

It was undoubtedly money—and plenty of it!

There was a pile of paper packets—coins of various denominations—and there was, in addition, a fat wad of pound-notes, a fatter wad of ten-shilling notes, and a smaller bundle of five-pound notes.

Bunter gazed at them blankly.

And as he gazed a strange glimmer came to his eyes.

Evidently strange thoughts were working in the fat mind of Billy Bunter.

"What—what—my hat!" he murmured. "Hundreds of pounds! I wonder—"

Bunter stared at the heap of money with gloating eyes. He was wondering; but he wondered just what he wanted to wonder—as the fatuous Bunter often did.

"It—it can't be stolen, of course," he mumbled. "It belongs to that chap, I suppose. He—he must be one of those chaps who won't trust to banks and he's hidden his money here to be safe. Or perhaps he didn't hide it here at all—in fact, I don't believe he did. The—the bag he carried had grub in, I'm sure, and he must have left it somewhere about here. This—this money really is treasure trove. It belongs to nobody. And—and I've found it."

The happy thought made Bunter's eyes glimmer for a few moments. But, obtuse and fatuous as Bunter undoubtedly was, he could not quite satisfy his fat conscience on that score—though he badly wished he could do so. It struck him then what a jolly inconvenient thing a conscience was!

"No," he murmured, shaking his head sadly, "it—it can't be that! Some fellows—some unscrupulous chaps might pretend to believe that, and steal the money. Plenty would! But not me! I suppose that chap must have left it there after all."

Bunter blinked longingly at the money. Here was he, a millionaire's son, in such urgent need of cash—only to tide him over until his whacking great cheque came—and here before him was heaps of money—perhaps belonging to nobody! If that was so, then the money was his, as findings were keepings! And if it wasn't treasure trove—if it did really belong to that chap, then—then—

"I ought really to go back and speak to him—ask him to let me have a little loan out of it—just until the cheque comes. He—he'd let me have some like a shot—I know he would! He—he looked a nice, kind fellow—awfully generous, I should think. But—but if I go and wake him up he may be angry—Mauly was this afternoon when I woke him up—and then he may refuse.



Billy Bunter fumbled with the fastenings of the old-fashioned bag with trembling fingers. In a flash he had it open, and then he jumped. Inside was a pile of cylinder-shaped packets—blue, with perforations in them. Through the perforations Bunter caught glimpses of silver. "Phew!" he breathed. "Mum—my hat! It—it's money!" (See Chapter 6.)

Besides, it ain't kind to wake a chap up just for a little thing like this. I think that—"

Bunter thought again, blinking at the money as he did so. And as he blinked the temptation grew and grew.

"After all," he murmured, shaking his head, "it's only until my remittance comes—perhaps in the morning. A little loan until then, and this chap, being so generous, won't mind, I know. Besides, he won't know. I—I'll just borrow it and keep the paper packets, and then when my remittance comes in the morning I'll put it back again, and there'll be no harm done—not at all."

And with that Billy Bunter stretched out a fat hand and took out one of the packets of silver and placed it in his trousers-pocket. Then he took another and another until five of the packets were bulging from his pockets.

"That's five quid—a mere nothing to me now," murmured Bunter, communing with himself again. "It won't last me long, but I can come again and ask that chap to lend me more; I'm sure he would be such a kind chap."

And Bunter, after a regretful blink again at the rest of the money, closed and fastened the bag and stood up. Then he paused.

"I—I think I'd better not leave this bag here after all," he murmured. "It—it really isn't safe here. And if that chap comes back before I've refunded the loan he may miss it and think some dishonest chap's stolen the money. I—I think I'll hide it somewhere else."

Having come to that decision, Bunter braved the prickly brambles and

scrambled out again into the gully. Then, after making quite sure that nobody was in sight, he clambered out of the gully and made a dive for the trees. He reached them, and, with ears still alert for footsteps, he hurried on, keeping just within the fringe of trees. He soon found what he sought—a giant oak with a hollow trunk—and Bunter slipped the bag into the hollow and piled dead brushwood on top of it.

He was feeling quite bright and cheery now. Yet his action in hiding the bag in a hiding-place of his own did not at all agree with his view that the money belonged to the man who had hidden it in the gully. As a matter of fact, at the back of his peculiar mind Bunter had a dim suspicion that the money did not belong to the man—though he was far from suspecting what the man's extraordinary actions meant. At the back of his mind also he had a dim idea of letting the police know where it was—later on when he had refunded what he had "borrowed."

But it was only a dim theory and a dim intention, and Bunter, at the moment, preferred to believe in his other theory. Bunter's beliefs had a remarkable way of accommodating themselves to his desires.

Not that Bunter had the slightest intention of taking the money and refunding it. Far from it. Bunter was obtuse, and he often sailed very close to the wind indeed, but he never dreamed of doing that. He honestly believed that he was now the son of a millionaire, and he honestly believed

there were heaps and heaps of money coming to him soon, and he honestly intended to refund the money at the earliest possible moment.

Those were Bunter's views and intentions, and he felt quite virtuous and cheery as he rolled away from the old oak and started home for Greyfriars. His hunger was still to be felt; but it would very soon be amply satisfied now, and he would soon be able to do what he longed to do—swank and fling his money about as befitted the son and heir of a millionaire!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Treat!

"WONDER if Bunter's got home yet?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton asked the question, and his chums roared at the thought of the fat and flabby Bunter trudging all the way from Courtfield to Greyfriars.

More than an hour had passed since the Famous Five had called in at Uncle Clegg's, where they had had a quick ginger-beer each, and then they had gone round to call on their girl chums at Cliff House. They had called there with an invitation for the girls to come to tea the following day at Greyfriars, and now they were on their homeward way when Harry Wharton suddenly asked that question.

As a matter of fact, Harry Wharton had been thinking very seriously about Billy Bunter since they had left him, and he wished now that they had gone up the stairs after the fat junior. Bunter was, after all, several sorts of an ass, and sometimes he certainly was scarcely responsible for his actions. And, as the captain of the Remove, Harry felt that he had neglected his responsibility in not having done more to save Bunter from his folly.

And it was folly to visit a money-lender, in more ways than one. It meant very serious trouble with the authorities at Greyfriars if it came to their ears. It was true that the money-lender was scarcely likely to do business with a junior under age, and certainly not with a fellow like Billy Bunter. Nevertheless, Harry felt worried about it.

But though Harry asked the question now quite seriously, his chums did not take it seriously—they roared. Bob Cherry, who was wheeling Lord Mauleverer's machine while he rode his own, almost wobbled off his machine with laughter.

"Serves the fat ass right!" grinned Harry. "I know that, you chaps. But—but I don't like the look of things. The fat ass came trying to screw money out of us, you know, and he's tried to do it out of others, too. It—it looks to me as if the awful idiot is trying to get some from that rotten old Shylock, Moses."

"Well, so long as he doesn't, what does it matter?" chuckled Bob.

"But it does matter, you ass!" said Harry, becoming serious again. "If he's collared going there, he'll get the boot or a flogging."

"But he won't go there again," chuckled Bob. "I bet old Moses would hoof the fat ass out pretty quickly. In any case, what's the odds? Bunter's going soon, in any case—going like a beautiful dream from our sight. No more shall we hear his dulcet tones asking for a little loan; no more shall

we miss grub from the cupboard. It—it seems too good to be true."

"It does," agreed Harry, looking thoughtful. "I—I wonder if he really will go? Somehow, I don't think he will."

"Oh, my hat!" groaned Johnny Bull. "Let's hope so, anyway. I have a feeling that Bunter, the millionaire's son, will be heaps worse than Bunter the borrower and pincher. He's swanking enough already."

"Well, that's so. But—Hullo! Somebody's been throwing his weight about here. My hat!"

Harry jammed on his brakes, and his chums did likewise. Then the juniors jumped from their bikes and gathered round something on the rough surface of the narrow lane.

It was a motoring-rug and a cloth cap. The juniors eyed the articles in no little surprise, glancing about them as they did so.

"Looks queer," said Harry Wharton blankly, his eyes keenly scanning the roadway. "Looks to me as if there's been a bit of a scrap here, chaps."

"Yes, rather!"

All the juniors were scouts, and at first glance it certainly did look as if there had been a scrap in the road. Harry Wharton frowned, and then he looked at the grass bordering the road. The next moment he was hurrying into the trees.

He did not go far, for the next moment a shout from him brought his chums rushing to his side.

They soon saw why. On the grass of the clearing was a motor-bike and side-car, and lying by it was the dishevelled form of a man, lying, apparently, asleep.

"He—he can't be asleep!" breathed Johnny Bull. "It—it looks to me like foul play!"

"My hat!" said Harry suddenly. He was sniffing the air suspiciously, and suddenly he stooped and bent over the man. Then he straightened himself, and his face was startled as he met his chums' questioning glances. "My hat!" he repeated tensely. "It—it is foul play! Can't you smell chloroform, chaps?"

"Phew! Yes, rather!"

All the juniors stooped in turn over the man, and then they nodded as the sickly smell reached their nostrils. It was undoubtedly chloroform.

For a moment the juniors eyed each other silently, and then Harry stooped again and raised the man gently. The man's eyelids flickered, and he gave a low groan. Again Harry raised him, and at last he looked up, and his hands went dazedly to his head.

"What's happened?" breathed Harry Wharton. "You—you look as if you've been through it."

The man closed his eyes again, and then, after a few moments, he opened them, and he stared dazedly at the juniors, both hands pressed to his head.

"My head!" he groaned. "My—my—Oh!"

He sat up dazedly, and his glance turned to the side-car close by him.

"The—the money!" he panted.

"The what?"

"The money—in the bag! Is it there?"

Harry followed his glance, and thought he understood.

"There's nothing in the sidecar," he said quietly.

"Good—good heavens!"

"Why, what—?"

"Nothing in the sidecar?" gasped the man faintly. "Is the bag gone? The bag—?"

"There's no bag here at all!"

The man's head fell back, and he closed his eyes with a groan. He opened them again the next instant.

"Get help!" he gasped. "Go for help! Get on the phone for the police, if you can—quick! I've been robbed—drugged and robbed! I was attacked on the road—bike went wrong. There were three hundred pounds in that bag. Oh, my—my head's spinning! Go—quickly!"

"Right!" said Harry. "You fellows stay here and see to him. I'll rush to Cliff House and phone from there."

Without waiting longer, Harry dashed to his bike, mounted it, and rode away at his very hardest. His chums brought the rug, and persuaded the man to lie quietly on it until he had recovered from the stupefying effects of the drug. Already he seemed steadier, and he was eyeing the juniors very keenly now. At first a hard glint had appeared in his eyes at sight of their caps, but it soon went, and he lay back with closed eyes, after another brief explanation.

"The bike went wrong, and I had just jumped off, when three men, wearing masks, sprang at me from the hedge. They'd evidently been waiting for me to come along. I struggled all I knew, but it was no use. They dragged me here, and shoved the beastly stuff over my face. That's all I remember."

"And—the bag?" asked Bob Cherry excitedly. "They've taken it, of course?"

"I'm afraid so. Good heavens! I was just taking it from the Courtfield and County Bank to Cowley's, my firm at Ashton, beyond Friardale," groaned the man. "What on earth will the gov'nor say?"

And the man buried his face in his hands and groaned again. The juniors watched him silently. They could understand his despair in the circumstances. They remembered that Cowley's was a fairly large factory at Ashton, and they guessed the man was a clerk there, or a cashier.

But when the man did not answer Bob Cherry's next question, they did not worry him again, but waited in silence for Harry's return.

He soon came whizzing up on his bicycle, and he nodded as he jumped off and ran to them.

"All serene," he said. "I've spoken on the phone to Inspector Grimes, and he's sending some men in a taxi at once. They should be here very soon now."

"Oh, good!"

Harry ran out again into the road and waited there so that the police should not pass the spot. He had not to wait long. In ten minutes a taxi came along at a terrific speed, and it drew up as Harry waved, and a sergeant and a constable sprang out.

The junior led them to the man still lying on the grass, and the police were soon listening to his story.

"Right!" said the sergeant at length. "You young gents can leave it to us now."

The juniors watched the police as they helped the young fellow to the taxi, and then, as the taxi vanished towards Courtfield in a cloud of dust, they mounted their bikes and resumed their journey home.

"Well, my hat!" said Harry Wharton, wrinkling his brows. "This is a queer business, and no mistake!"

"Daylight robbery," said Bob Cherry. "I'm sorry for that merchant. He

(Continued on page 17.)

HARRY WHARTON'S Cricket Supplement

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

HARRY WHARTON, Editor.



CAN ENGLAND WIN?

There are plenty of pessimists in England who seem to think a win all the way along the line for the Australians a foregone conclusion. In this article, however, "REPORTER" gives us an optimistic view of England's chances.

ENGLAND'S cricketers have not emerged triumphant from a series of Test matches since 1912, when we managed to win out in Australia. Obviously, then, a victory for the Mother Country is overdue, and the time is rapidly approaching when we shall get a definite answer to the question of whether at long last England can win against Australia. Meantime, let us examine the position as impartially as possible.

It has been assumed in many quarters that the coming Test matches, the first of which will start at Nottingham on June 12th, can be regarded as something in the nature of a walk-over for England's visitors. There are plenty of pessimists in England; people who seem to have lost all faith in the ability of our batsmen, our bowlers, and our fielders. Or, rather, perhaps it should be said that these people are pessimists because they do not think we can field as good a side as the team which can be selected from the sixteen Australians now in this country. Personally, I think this pessimism is entirely unjustified.

A HARD TUSSLE.

I know that the prowess of these Australians has been shouted from the housetops. We have been told that the team as a whole is as good as any which has ever visited this country; that certain players who have been here before are better than ever they were, and that the new chums of the party are equal to the task of upholding the credit of Australia in the cricket field. Well, it may be that events will prove that these prophecies are justified, but I can tell you this: that the Australians themselves are fully convinced that there lies before them perhaps the hardest task they have had since the year England won.

At the moment there is no necessity to decry English cricket. It is, if anything, on the upgrade, and it will indeed be remarkable if all the new chums which have come from Australia prove that they are just the right men for the different conditions, and the different style of cricket demanded, in this country. We have all known players of whom a great deal has been expected who have not come up to those expectations.

ONE-SIDED LUCK.

On the face of it the record of the last series of matches in which England and Australia took part do not suggest that, unless there has been a real improvement in English cricket meantime, we have very much chance. But the actual result of the last series of games—four to one in favour of Australia, does not tell the whole story. Let us not forget that one of those four matches was lost by eleven runs; and that in another game we only finished eighty runs behind. Seeing that England lost the toss four times out of five in Australia, and that the luck was clearly on the side of our opponents most of the time, it will be seen that a little bit of luck the other way would have given us the victory by three games to two.

THE HOME TEAM.

Now, it should always be borne in mind that there are certain advantages on the side which is playing in its own country. The choice, so far as Australians are concerned, is

limited to sixteen players, whereas during this summer England will be able to choose from the whole of the men in the country. Provided that in other respects we are anything like equal, then this advantage may make all the difference. Let me show you briefly one or two directions in which this freedom to call up any players works in favour of the country playing at home.

In the first place, men who are in form at the particular moment can be chosen. We all know that form varies even in the best of players, and, as a matter of fact, we lost out in Australia because several of the men on whom we had placed a lot of confidence did not strike anything like their true form. There is no necessity for me to dwell on this matter of form; you know quite well what it is. When you have played one or two good innings you are likely to play some more good innings, and when you are getting wickets—when you are in form—you are likely to go on getting them. Therefore, it is a distinct advantage to any country to be able to choose according to current form.

A DISTINCT ADVANTAGE!

We had an instance of this out in Australia. In the later months of the last tour Clarence Grimmett, the Australian, proved to be in excellent form, so he was put into the team for the last Test, and in the course of the match dismissed eleven England batsmen for less than a hundred runs.

Another point in favour of the country playing at home is that men can be picked according to the sort of wicket likely to be provided by the weather. Suppose, by way of example, that when we come to play the first Test match at Nottingham, the clerk of the weather is in a fickle mood, and promises to provide a tricky wicket. We can then, at the very last moment, as it were, call up a bowler or two whose style of bowling is specially suited to that type of wicket. This is a very real advantage, and, is included among the little points which, other things being equal, may make all the difference.

FULL OF CONFIDENCE!

I don't suppose any of us who are sportsmen want England to gain the victory over the Australians by having all the luck. But if we can get an ordinary English summer: that is with a fair amount of doubtful weather providing more or less damp wickets, we ought to win. In Australia they very seldom get these sticky wickets, and consequently there are few opportunities for their batsmen to practise on this sort of pitch, while their bowlers are not specially trained to take advantage of such conditions.

But perhaps the biggest reason of all why I think England has a chance to win this time round lies in the fact that our players are full of confidence, and of the will to win. During the past few weeks I have talked to at least half a dozen of the leading cricketers of England: the men who are most likely to play against Australia in the Tests, and I have found a confidence and a keenness which is all to the good. If this confidence of the players is backed by the confidence of the public I honestly think that England has a good chance. All the matches won't be finished, of course, but I think we shall just about win enough to regain those "Ashes." It won't be out of turn if we do, and the Australians are such good sports that they will be the first to hold out the hand of congratulation if we do beat them.

(In next week's Cricket Supplement J. B. Hobbs, the famous Surrey and England cricketer, contributes a striking article dealing with the strong and weak points of the Australian team. Mind you read it, boys.)

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WHERE MATCHES ARE LOST AND WON!

Maurice Tate

Who speaks of some "Mighty Little Things" which tell in the field.

THERE are many problems connected with cricket which serve to puzzle a comparatively young and inexperienced player such as I am. Among the problems which I have frequently tried to solve in my mind is the relative importance of the various departments of the game. Is it, for instance, most necessary to have in a good county side a number of excellent batsmen who can get runs at a fairly good pace? Or, for match-winning purposes, is there greater value in a variety of bowlers who can be depended upon to get the other fellows out for a reasonable score? Again, are each of the above-mentioned departments less important than that of fielding?

THE DECIDING FACTOR.

Perhaps there is no real solution to the problem, and it may well be that the only way to complete success in cricket of any class lies in the possession of the best all-round side—a side which possesses good bowlers, good batsmen, and safe fellows in the field. Now the foregoing sounds very logical, and might be accepted as conclusive. But if teams of practically equal merit run up against each other, it is not in the bigger departments of the game that the issue is necessarily settled, but in the little things. The place where the little



MAURICE TATE.

things happen is in the field—the little things which count, but which are frequently ignored by the man in the crowd, and may in some cases even be ignored by the players themselves. So after much thought, I have come to the conclusion that when teams of equal merit meet, the fielding of one side or the other may well decide the result.

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

To all the issues of this life that mighty little word "if" can certainly be applied, and I can assure my readers that I have heard it used quite a lot in connection with cricket. At the end of a match which has been lost you will frequently hear some such remark as this:

"If only So-and-so had held that catch right at the start of Brown's innings we should probably have won." Or, again, if only the captain had done this, or the bowler had done that, what a different story might have had to be told. Sometimes the consequences of a slip in the field—some blunder or error of judgment—can be summed up safely and accurately, but not always is the importance of the little things which happen appreciated at their true worth.

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COUNTING THE COST.

By way of example, take the catch missed right at the outset of an innings. The batsman, missed in the early stages, may go on to score 70 or 80 runs. In such a case the temptation is to reckon the cost of the mistake in the field merely by the number of runs scored by the batsman after the miss. I am convinced, however, that this is often a rank under-statement of the cost of the error. There is the psychological effect of a missed catch to be taken into consideration. When does a bowler send them down at his very best? The answer to that question, so far as I personally am concerned, is a very easy one—when I am getting wickets. If one or two catches are missed the result may be to take some of the heart out of the bowler—some of the enthusiasm, shall we say?

BACKBONE FOR THE BOWLER.

It may be argued that this should not be so, and that the bowler, realising that all fellows are human, should go on trying to remedy the mistake made all unwittingly by a colleague. Of course he should, and I may add that we bowlers do our very best to overcome the disappointment which arises over some wicket which we should have obtained save for a mistake in the field. Sometimes, though, and in spite of the very best will in the world, a catch or two missed gives the bowlers a disheartened feeling.

BEATING BETTER TEAMS.

While on this subject of the importance of the happenings in the field, I should just like to say how very much I have been helped in my bowling by the other players of the Sussex eleven. We are fortunate in the possession of a captain of imagination and enthusiasm, and I think I can say without fear of contradiction that we came through successfully more than once last season, not because we had the best bowlers or the best batsmen, but because whatever we lacked in these departments was more than compensated for by accuracy in the field.

HARD ON THE CAPTAIN.

Clearly, the little things which the captain does may also have a very big bearing on the result of a match. A change of bowlers just at the right time, a cute reshuffling of the field, must often have turned the whole complexion of the game. But while this is true, I sometimes think that there is a modern tendency to criticise captaincy far too completely by results.

JUSTIFIED BY RESULTS.

I remember once a bowler who was "tying down" a big hitter being taken off. I happened to be watching the game, awaiting my turn to bat, and immediately the move was made there was a storm of criticism from the people around me. But the storm died out, and the captain who had made the move was hailed as an extremely smart fellow when the new bowler got the big hitter caught in his first over. The change looked a bad one; it was criticised as such, yet it turned out to be quite a good move. After all, this criticism of captains is the easiest thing in the world. What is more simple than to sit back at the end of a game, and declare that if the captain had done this or that the match would have run a different course?

Maurice Tate

NOBODY takes a very great deal of notice of a fellow simply because he is called the vice-captain of a cricket team. The position is regarded, by the average onlooker, as a sort of complimentary post without any real responsibilities. But I know one famous cricketer who thinks a very great deal of his "second in command." This is Herbert Collins, the captain of the Australian team. He has Warren Bardsley for his vice-captain, and at once let me say that the choice is a most excellent one.

Second in Command

"Paul Pry" has something to say about Bardsley, Vice-captain

WISE HEADS.

If you doubt whether Collins appreciates the value of a good vice-captain, watch the pair of them when you next see the Australians. The other day I was watching them, and it was necessary for our visitors to make a change in their bowling. Quietly, and without any show, Collins went across to Bardsley. They said a few words to each other: a change was made in the bowling, and a partnership between two batsmen who threatened to settle down to make a big stand was broken up almost immediately.

I am not going to tell you whose idea it was that the particular bowler should be put on to break up the partnership, because I don't know, but that little incident assured me that the vice-captain of the Australian team is not regarded just as a figure-head who takes charge when Collins wants a rest. Bardsley is the fellow who is consulted by the captain, and what is equally important, he is just the sort of fellow to give the right sort of advice.

A TYPICAL AUSTRALIAN.

We have heard a lot in recent days about the thoroughness of the Australians: of the business-like way in which they tackle their cricket problems. Well, I have run my tape measure over the whole of the sixteen tourists now in this country, and my definite conclusion is that Warren Bardsley is the most typical of Australian cricket and Australian spirit in general. See him walk to the wicket, a figure rather less than the average height, but with the real "intent on business" impression given by every step he takes: by the way he holds the bat in his hand: his quick little look round before he prepares to receive his first ball. "The trouble with that fellow," said an English bowler to me the other day, referring to Bardsley, "is that the minute he arrives at the wicket his manner gives you the impression that he is your master: that you won't bowl him out."

There was a suggestion that because Bardsley did not do particularly well in Australia when the last English team was out there he might not come to England again. I know several bowlers who would have been pleased if the Australians had left him out of their sixteen, and I think you will find when the Test matches come along that Bardsley is there opening the innings, and in his inimitable left-handed way giving the side a good start.

"I love England and English cricket," he told me, and, as a matter of fact, he has every right to do so; because though he is an Australian, he is one of the few men from down under who actually seem more at home on our pitches than on his own particular wickets.

A VETERAN.

"Second in Command" Bardsley is also typical of the Australian will to make themselves into players. Early to bed and early to rise is his favourite motto, and he used to carry out the second part of it most faithfully long before anybody heard of him as a possible first-class cricketer. During the "budding" stages of his career he used those early-morning hours—often before he had taken a bite of breakfast—for practising his cricket.

Born, strangely enough, at a place called Warren in New South Wales on December 7th, 1884, Bardsley is thus 41 years of age, and the "veteran" of the team in years as well as in Test match experience. He has played in 25 Test matches in all, so he ought to know something about this form of cricket.

He played two or three times for New South Wales against Queensland before getting his real chance in 1908. That was in a game between New South Wales

WARREN

Command!

thing to say about Warren of the Australian team.

time match he played cricket which stamped him as a coming master. And in the summer of 1909, when he first came to this country, he showed us without any shadow of doubt that he had arrived.

A DOUBLE FEAT.

Bardsley is just as superstitious as other ordinary people, and is a great believer in presentiment. In that 1909 tour of the Australian team in England Bardsley told me that on the evening prior to the first day of the last Test match at the Oval he got an idea firmly fixed in his mind that he would make two separate hundreds. Such a feat had never been accomplished up to that time by any England or Australian cricketer in Test matches, and Bardsley was reminded of this fact when he told his colleagues of his presentiment just before the game started. In the first innings of that match he scored 136, though he was once missed rather badly in the slips before he had got the century.

However, that miss only served to make him all the more certain that his idea would work out. And sure enough it did, for in the second innings of the same match he scored 130. We had some wonderful bowlers in England in those days, but they could not move Bardsley. This most excellent left-hander is not a poet, or really a believer in dreams, but he has his visions, and in these he sometimes believes, as he did on that occasion. How far his belief helped him to accomplish the feat which was unique up to then I have no means of knowing.

HIS FAVOURITE GROUND.

Never shall I forget seeing Warren make 219 in an innings in 1912 against Essex at Leyton, and this, I may tell you, is his favourite ground. There are plenty of batsmen who can drive better than Bardsley, but few even in the whole history of the game have ever had anything on him when it came to cutting, and pulling round to leg. He is not only the breaker of bowlers' hearts, but a heart-breaker for the fielders as well, because he so seldom puts one up in the air. In a word he is just the thorough Australian.

BARDSLEY.

A Word with the Umpire!

Norman Beech (Putney).—Hobbs made his first century in first-class cricket for Surrey against Essex at the Oval as long ago as 1905, and he has been doing it ever since. We hope he will keep on doing it, too.

M. McPherson (Liverpool).—There has been one occasion when not a single ball was bowled in a Test match which had been arranged. This was—I don't know whether I ought to say "of course"—at Manchester in 1890, when the weather was so bad that it was impossible to make a start. If the same thing happens this season there will be no rearrangement.

B. Bradley (Nottingham).—The complete total of Test matches played between England and Australia is 109. Of these the Australians have won 47, England has won 41, and the remaining 21 have been drawn.

Peter Gascoigne (Bradford).—Two batsmen have performed the very excellent feat of scoring two separate hundreds in the same Test match. Warren Bardsley, the Australian, did it in this country in 1909, and Herbert Sutcliffe, the famous Yorkshire batsman, equalled the feat in the last series of games played in Australia.

L. Tait (Maidstone).—A new bowler, coming on when both batsmen are at the wicket has no right to trial balls. He used to have in the old days, as you say, but this privilege was withdrawn by the authorities several years ago.

and the England eleven which was visiting Australia at that time. Bardsley didn't make a happy start, really, for he failed in the first innings, but in the second innings of the

DEADLY SERIOUS—AND DEADLY DULL!



Cecil Parkin



The Lighthearted Lancashire and England Bowler who takes this opportunity to defend his attitude towards the game.

Clearly there is no necessity to treat each cricket match, no matter how important from some points of view, as if it were a funeral. I have always made that sort of reply when critics have suggested that I do not take either the game or myself with sufficient seriousness. Personally, I think I am serious enough, and it certainly does not amuse me to see four or five boundaries hit in one over when I happen to be the poor fellow whose average is suffering to that extent. Quite frankly, though, I believe I enjoy my cricket better than many players who take part in it; but, on the other hand, I am willing to agree that one's outlook is very largely a matter of temperament. All of us are made differently, and in saying this I completely realise that some people may remark, thinking of me: "Thank goodness!"

NOT THE RIGHT MEDICINE.

I have not consciously set out to be, on the cricket field, other than myself, and I am not going to suggest that anybody else should dwarf his personality because of some fancied benefit to the game. But I do not suppose for a moment that when people talk—as they often do—about the advantages of brighter cricket they really mean all they say. I will not believe that the man in the street who is interested in this best of all games considers that everything should be sacrificed in order to make the game itself brighter. Why, if the sole object was to brighten up the game—to order every batsman to get on or get out, no matter what the conditions or under what circumstances—we should kill the sport as such in next to no time. Obviously, you don't brighten up a thing by killing it, do you?

THE SPICE OF CRICKET.

Let us look at the thing logically for a moment or two. If we are going to brighten up the game in the shape of speedier run-getting, then it must mean that many of our leading batsmen will have to alter their tactics. As an example to drive home my point, perhaps we cannot do better than to take Jack Hearne, the famous Middlesex player. Are we going to try to turn him into a Jessop—offer him up at the sacrifice of brightness? Decidedly not, without dealing a serious blow at the game as a whole. Hearne I regard as a classic batsman—a player for whom I have no end of admiration, even though he has stuck at the wicket for hours, in spite of all the dodges I have tried to get him sent back to the pavilion. It takes years of practice to make fine batsmen like Hobbs, Hendren, Makepeace, Hallows, Mead, Sutcliffe, etc. About the methods and the style of each there is something distinctive, and we must not interfere with their styles; variety is the spice of cricket.

THE MEN WHO ARE ALWAYS "FOR IT."

Up to now I have spoken of the batsman's part in brightening up the game. As I don't see that he should have all the responsibility, we will now look from the bowler's view-point. It would be very easy for we bowlers, at the demand of the public, to toss them up nicely with a smiling invitation to the batsmen to help themselves. But it wouldn't be cricket, would it? In any case, though, we bowlers would not be much worse off, for we generally get it where our last Sunday's chicken had "got it"—in the neck! Do we bowlers ever get any

credit for the things we do? I haven't noticed it too much. If a class team gets out for a small score, one of two possible explanations is given by your morning paper—either the wicket was bad or the batting was poor! Don't whisper words about ultra-wonderful bowling! Oh dear, no!

RUNNING THE GAUNTLET.

It may be argued that all this is really beside the point, and that what is wanted is more players of the same temperament as myself. Don't be so sure. You wouldn't be if you had heard some of the remarks which have been passed when I have got out rather foolishly, shall we say? Of course, if things come off it is all right. Against Middlesex some time ago I was sent in to assist Harry Makepeace to get about a hundred in an hour. We got them, taking risks, and I submit that there are times when every risk is worth while, and is in the true spirit of the sport. But always must we be prepared for the consequences. At the Scarborough festival once, against the West Indians, we wanted a mere 30 to win with all our wickets to fall. Jack Hobbs and Herbert Sutcliffe went in, "had a 'go,'" and came out. So did four other crack bats, so that in the end we had a real job to win. It was a lesson on the foolishness of taking unnecessary risks.

I don't believe the people who were watching thought it was very good cricket.



M. FALCON, the Norfolk and former Cambridge cricketer, who captained the Minor Counties against the Australians.

THE ONE THING NEEDFUL.

On the other hand, if a batsman can go to the wicket, as Collins did in that eventful Test match at Old Trafford in 1921, and stay there for nearly five hours while making 40 runs only, I raise my hat to him as a great player. And take it from me that the average man—the onlooker who is in tune with the spirit of the game—understands well enough. It takes all sorts to make up a team, because we have to play on all sorts of wickets, now engaging in a terrific uphill fight to ward off defeat, or anon running every conceivable risk to drive home an advantage to the point of victory. So long as we all remember the spirit of sport—that the team is the thing—then we can safely leave alone this finest of all games. And, playing within the spirit of the sport, we sha'n't give the impression of attending a funeral.

Cecil Parkin

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Boundary Hits!

"SCORER"

ELEMENTARY schoolboys are admitted to the Oval for big matches in charge of their teachers. We are told that none of the boys play truant on these days.

Andrews, the Australian, is a monumental tombstone maker at home; and he says there is quite a lot of unseen humour in the occupation. This, of course, depends upon the point of view.

The weather prophets, thinking about cricket, declared that the present summer is going to be a very dry and very hot one. Well, that should prevent the England players suffering from "cold feet."

According to A. E. R. Gilligan, who is on the Selection Committee of England, "there must be no favouritism about the choice of our team, which should consist of an amateur skipper and ten men chosen for their temperament as well as their skill." That looks like providing a ready-made excuse for the man who gets out for a duck: "I was chosen for my temperament."

Officially there are nine ways of getting out. Our office-boy says he has tried them all, but the one he likes least is being kicked out.

As a means of showing appreciation of the efforts of the workmen who played their part in completing the improvements at Lord's before the opening of the cricket season, the M.C.C. Committee have given to each man one free ticket of admission to a first-class match for every four weeks he worked on the job. Some of them have done enough to earn a free season ticket, but how are they going to get the time off to use them?

Among the curios which Roy Kilner brought back from the West Indies were a couple of baby alligators. We understand that he is now waiting for them to grow up, so that if he can't beat the Australians, the alligators will eat them.

This is what might be called cutting sarcasm: There was once a famous county bowler who was not renowned for his prowess

with the bat. As he emerged from the pavilion on his home ground as last man in, the groundsman's mare instinctively took up her position in the shafts in readiness to haul the roller to the pitch at the close of the innings.

The Australian cricketers, so we are told, are very keen on apples as a part of their daily food. This, however, should not be taken to mean that if they are beaten they will get the "pip."

The two little sons of Roy Kilner are already keen cricketers, and get a lot of practice on a cement pitch near their house. It is said that the lads hit so hard that it costs their father a fiver a year for broken windows, but the lads will probably pay the money back if, in due course, they get a £4,000 cricket benefit, as Roy himself has already done.

Arthur Grimsdell, the Tottenham Hotspur captain, is a wicket-keeper in summer. In due course he ought to become a goalkeeper in winter.

J. W. H. T. Douglas, the Essex captain, had to undergo an operation recently which has kept him out of cricket in these opening weeks. But though it is thus literally true that Johnny won't hit to-day, we hope that John will hit again soon.

Autograph-hunting is the rage, and cricketers don't escape. In regard to his signature, Arthur Gilligan, the Sussex captain, is somewhat modest. "I know what these lads do," he said recently. "They save up my autograph till they get half a dozen, and then exchange the lot for one autograph of Jack Hobbs."

Several well-known cricketers will have benefits during the coming season. They are Hobbs (third benefit), Dipper, Kennedy, Parsons, Roberts (H. E.), Sidwell, and Whysall. I understand that they have each insured against wet weather, so really they have the same name—Whysall.

Just before the start of the season Fender, the Surrey captain, engaged an American baseball player to coach his team in the art of fast, low throwing. More trouble for Strudwick!

Some people say that all Test matches ought to be played to a finish. Here is the view of Colonel F. S. Jackson on this subject: "A Test match without a time limit is really an abomination. In my opinion, it is almost as bad as a speech without an end."

Our office-boy's weekly suggestion is that we could make sure of getting the "Ashes" by "firing" the critics.

AT THE NETS! By a County Cricketer.

A New Series of Articles which will tell you how to improve your cricket.

No. 1.—SOME GENERAL PRINCIPLES.

IT is often said that the really great cricketers are born and not made. This is one of those general statements which is not more than half a truth. I could tell you of scores of fellows in first-class cricket to-day who were not born cricketers; they have made themselves by study and practice.

"WHERE THERE'S A WILL—"

In the long ago, Wilfred Rhodes got into the Yorkshire side as a bowler, but he had not been in the team long before the idea came to him that it would be rather nice if he became a batsman as well. He said to himself one day: "I will so improve my batting that, before I am finished, instead of being sent in ninth or tenth as I am now, I shall open the innings for my county."

Having made up his mind on these lines, Wilfred Rhodes started to improve his batting; gave a lot of attention to this phase of the game, and as everybody knows, the day duly came when Rhodes fulfilled his intention; carried out his threat, if you like, and was many times sent in to open the Yorkshire innings. Certainly, Rhodes was not a born batsman, but he made himself into one.

Similar stories could be told of many other cricketers who have risen to the top of the tree. And even if we accept it as true that the genius for any game is born, and not made, that is not a satisfactory reason why those who are below the genius standard should not be able to improve their game. That is my excuse for starting this series of articles which we have called "At the Nets."

The intention of these articles is to give little hints and ideas on how the game should be played from every point of view—batting, bowling, and fielding—so that your game all round will show an improvement. Every lad who starts playing cricket wants to improve; that may be taken for granted. And these articles are specially for the young player. We shall tell in due course how to make certain strokes, how to stand at the wicket, and the various kinds of bowling will also be explained.

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AT YOUR SERVICE.

Further, I want you to regard me as your coach. If you are worried about the absence of signs of development in any particular direction, write to me and explain the position. For instance, if in your small club cricket you find yourself getting out time after time to the same sort of delivery, this probably means that you are making a vital mistake in some particular. Write to me, and from my vast experience as a county player I may be able to help you over your "bad patch." Don't hesitate to send me a line. The more lads I help, the better pleased I shall be.

As there will be very little space left for me this week to deal with special phases of cricket, I want to lay down one or two general principles which should serve as a guide.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT.

In the first place, let me say that, in regard to cricket, as in regard to other things, practice is the thing which makes perfect. If cricket is worth playing well, it is worth the time given to practice, and what is more, I am going to say that, if you treat your practice intelligently, think about it, you will get just as much enjoyment out of it as you do of playing in a real contest. If you find you are developing a fault, make up your mind to cure it, and don't be beaten.

On this matter of practice there is one very important thing I should like to emphasise. All too often I see lads practising on pitches which are not fit. Indeed, I have often formed the opinion that there is a widespread notion that any sort of pitch will do to practice on. It won't! You won't become a good batsman by practising on a pitch on which the ball jumps and bumps all over the place. All that will happen with such practice is that you will probably develop, through fear of being hit, a fatal tendency to draw away from the ball.

Another point. Combine with your practice, whether you are a bowler or a batsman, every possible opportunity of watching the fellows who have made good at the game. Don't go to see Jack Hobbs and Herbert Sutcliffe merely to marvel at the way they get their runs, and to applaud. Watch how they do it. Watch their feet, the position of the bat when they make certain strokes, and so on. They have learnt in the hard school of experience, and it is up to you to make every possible use of the knowledge they have gained.

Next week I shall start to tell you how to stand at the wicket, and how to make certain strokes.



BUNTER'S TREASURE TROVE!

(Continued from page 12.)

seems frightfully pipped, and I don't wonder."

"Hard lines for him," agreed Harry. "I must say I wasn't taken much with the chap, but he's been through it, and it's hard luck!"

That was the view of the juniors, and they rode back to Greyfriars discussing the matter excitedly. At the school they housed their machines, and it was as they were passing the tuckshop that they discovered something unusual was afoot.

From the tuckshop came a roar of laughter, and a perfect uproar of cheery voices and shouts.

"Hallo! Something on!" said Harry. "Let's investigate!"

"What-ho!"

The juniors hurried across to the tuckshop. To their surprise they found it almost packed with fellows, and they could scarcely squeeze in at the door.

"What the thump's the matter, Bulstrode?" exclaimed Harry, addressing the junior who was standing in the doorway drinking lemonade. "Somebody standing a feed?"

"If it is, we're on it!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"It is," chuckled Bulstrode, nodding his head inside the little shop. "It's Bunter—dear old millionaire Bunter! He's fairly rolling in giddy wealth, and he's chucking it about like water!"

"My hat!"

Harry frowned, and pushed his way through the crowd as best he could. The last time they had seen Billy Bunter was when he was visiting the money-lender, and Bulstrode's news was alarming and significant, to say the least of it.

Was it possible that Billy Bunter had managed to do "business" with Mr. Isaac Moses after all?

Then Harry saw Bunter.

He was seated on a high stool at the counter, and he looked tired and dusty—very dusty. But he looked very happy. His face was beaming with happiness, and his fat cheeks shining, and smeared with jam, and chocolate, and crumbs—as was his waistcoat and the front of his trousers. He looked fat, and full, and happy.

He sighted the Famous Five, and he gave a cheery hail.

"Come in, you fellows! Come and join the merry circle!" he grinned. "Order just what you like and as much as you like! I'll stand the giddy tin! I always told you fellows that you wouldn't find me mean if ever I had plenty of tin to throw about. Well, I have now. Pile in, you fellows! Pile in!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Good old Bunter!"

"Dear old Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was quite a merry assembly, but Harry Wharton did not join in the cheery laughter. His face was very grim.

"I shall do nothing of the kind, you fat idiot!" he said, taking a deep breath.

"Oh, you awful ass!"

"Eh? Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Chuck it, Wharton!" grinned Skinner, lowering his glass. "Don't call my

friend Bunter names! Stott, old man, hand me those chocolate biscuits!"

And Skinner winked at Stott, and Stott winked back at him. Skinner & Co. were enjoying themselves. They hadn't the faintest idea where Bunter had managed to get his money from, but, though they were naturally amazed, they were determined to get what they could out of the fat and fatuous Owl. Where Bunter had got his money from did not interest Skinner & Co. a scrap.

But it did Wharton & Co.

"You shut up, Skinner!" said Wharton sharply. "Now, Bunter, you silly fool, you'd better stop this silly game! Drop it before it's too late! We saw where you went this afternoon, and we know where you've got this money from!"

"Wha-wha-what?"

Bunter's fat face paled a little. But Harry's next words reassured him.

"You know what it means going to a chap like that?" said Harry grimly. "It may mean the sack for you, Bunter. You'd better spend no more of his rotten money! If you'll come to me to Study No. 1 I'll give you a bit of advice about it, you silly, mad fool!"

Bunter understood then. Wharton obviously imagined he had got his money from the Courtfield Finance Company, which was very far from the truth.

He gave Wharton a lofty blink through his spectacles.

"Well, I like your dashed cheek, Wharton!" he said. "As if it's any business of yours where I get my tin from! When I want your dashed advice I'll ask for it! If you want to know, my pater's sent me my money at last. It was waiting for me at the post-office when I called there this afternoon. They gave me the letter—I mean, the wire—there."

"You fat fibber—"

"That's enough!" said Bunter, waving a fat and jammy hand. "I'm standing no cheek from a measly, poverty-stricken chap like you, Wharton! You seem to forget my position now. You can go and eat coke, Wharton!"

"But listen—"

"I say, you fellows, just chuck that beast Wharton out!" said Bunter with dignity. "Go on—chuck him and his dashed pals out! Stand by me, you know, and I'll stand by you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fellows roared, but they did not attempt to carry Bunter's lofty order into practice. Had it been Skinner & Co., for instance, they would cheerfully have done so. But handling five of the heftiest fellows in the Form was a different matter.

"There's not a fellow here dare try to chuck us out, Bunter," said Harry, almost smiling. "But we'll go without that. If you mean to go your own silly way, then you can stew in your own juice! Come on, you chaps!"

And with that Harry led his chums indoors for tea. It was fairly plain that it wasn't much use talking to Bunter, or warning him. But Harry's face was worried as he went indoors. The affair of the robbed clerk had faded from his mind now. He was thinking of Bunter and the dangerous game he was playing—or, at least, the dangerous game Harry imagined he was playing. If Bunter was having dealings with a moneylender, then he was heading full-tilt for serious trouble. It worried Harry Wharton.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Not Bunter!

OVER tea the Famous Five had a very interesting topic to discuss in Study No. 1—or rather two interesting topics. One was the highway robbery affair, and the other was the matter of Billy Bunter's suddenly acquired wealth.

The latter was the chief topic, however.

As a matter of fact Harry Wharton—why, he scarcely knew—could not help feeling that there was something queer altogether about the whole Bunter business. Certainly the fact that Mr. Samuel Bunter had blossomed out into a millionaire seemed sound enough—there was no reason why he shouldn't. He was engaged in a business in which fortunes were very easily won and lost.

Yet Harry had a dim sort of conviction that there was something queer about the whole business.

But at the moment Harry was only concerned with Billy Bunter himself.

Where had the fat junior got his money from? It was very certainly not from a Greyfriars fellow. And Harry was certain it was not from his father. It was scarcely likely that Bunter senior would wire the cash so very soon after sending that letter, and in any case Bunter had mentioned first a letter and then a wire.

Moreover—and this settled the matter for Harry—it was not likely the money would be wired to a Courtfield post office, and the Friardale post office was closed on Wednesday afternoons.

Bunter had told a fib—quite an easy thing for Bunter to do. He was an expert at telling fibs. If Bunter had got the money from anywhere it was from the Courtfield Finance Company—otherwise the fat and rascally Mr. Isaac Moses.

Wharton felt certain of that.

It was a very worrying thought to Wharton. Some fellows claimed that the skipper of the Remove allowed his sense of duty to over-run him at times. And, possibly, they were right. Harry Wharton was a fellow who was quite willing to risk overdoing his duty if he could help a fellow from going wrong by so doing.

Had it been any other fellow Harry would have worried about him. But in the present instance the fellow was Billy Bunter—the fat and fatuous Owl of the Remove, and the one fellow least able to take care of himself in the Remove perhaps. Bunter was a very silly fellow—a fellow who seemed quite unable to realise the seriousness of many things he did.

Harry was seriously alarmed on Bunter's behalf. His chums, at first, were inclined to "let Bunter rip" as Bob Cherry expressed it. But Harry soon brought them round to his own way of looking at the matter. And the moment tea was over he led them round to Bunter's study.

In the crowded tuck-shop Harry had deemed it unwise to mention Mr. Moses for Bunter's own sake. The suspicion would spread and might easily reach Mr. Quelch's ears. If it did—

Harry was determined to get Bunter alone and to talk seriously to him. He soon discovered that it was no easy matter to get Bunter alone now Bunter had money to burn. Usually fellows avoided the fat youth like the plague—his society was far from being sought after. But things were different now—Bunter was not only the son of a millionaire, but he had money in his pockets and plenty of it.

The Famous Five found only Peter Todd in No. 7, and Toddy grinningly explained that Bunter was entertaining a few friends in Skinner's study.

So the juniors went along to Skinner's study. From within the room sounded the merry clatter of crockery, and a hum of cheery voices and much laughter.

But the door was locked. Evidently Bunter was entertaining his friends to smokes as well as tuck, unless Skinner was supplying the smokes—at Bunter's expense.

Harry looked grim and led his chums away again. It was pretty clear that there was nothing doing in the free advice line for Billy Bunter that evening.

"We're not letting the rotter go on with it, though," said Harry, with determination. "If the fat ass won't stop his silly game, we'll see if we can make that old Shylock, Moses, stop it."

"Phew! You mean, visit the old rotter?" gasped Bob.

"Just that! We'll get to know if we are right, anyway. Then we'll put a stopper to it somehow. You know what the silly young fool is?" snapped Harry. "He'll go on and on, and he'll get himself into a fearful mess as sure as fate."

"But if his pater does send him a whacking remittance—" began Johnny Bull.

"I'll be jolly interested to see that remittance when it does come," said Harry slowly.

"Great pip! Why, you—you don't—you—"

"I'm blessed if I know what to think," said Harry. "It—it must be all right, of course, but the remittance may not be here for ages—if it is coming! By that time poor old Bunter will be deep in the mire—jolly deep!"

"The silly fool!"

"I know that," said Harry. "That's why I mean to chip in because he's such a fool. Come on. We're going to bike to Courtfield again. Let's get off—sharp! The rotten office will close at six, I expect!"

And Harry led the way without further ado back to Study No. 1. Then the juniors got their caps, and five minutes later they were spinning towards Courtfield at a good pace.

Whether it was minding other people's business or not, the juniors were grimly determined to mind Bunter's business if they could. Doubtless the proprietor of the Courtfield Finance Company would not be glad to see them, but that did not trouble them. Harry Wharton, at all events, was determined to tell that oily and dangerous gentleman a few home truths.

Leaving their bikes at Uncle Clegg's on arrival at the little market town, the juniors hurried along to the moneylender's den. Then, after making sure the coast was clear, Harry and Bob went up the narrow, rickety stairs, while their chums remained below to keep cave.

The sleek-headed and youthful counterpart of Mr. Isaac Moses showed them into the inner office where the moneylender was seated at his roll-top desk. He rubbed his hands and smiled—a fat, oily smile as he ran his sharp eyes over the juniors. They looked a little more promising than Bunter—from the usurer's point of view.

"Well, mein young friends," he remarked genially. "It is a pleasure to see you. And what can I haf the pleasure of doing for you—hein!"

"We've not come on business of our

own," said Harry bluntly. "We've come to see you about a fellow named Bunter. He came to see you this afternoon?"

The fat moneylender's face hardened, and his little eyes glinted a little.

"Ach, yes! Der poy named Bunter did visit me this afternoon; he tell me that his name vos Bunter indeed. He vos one rascal!"

"Oh!"

"He came here and attempted to get money from me on der false pretences," said the moneylender, his eyes glittering. "I had der young villain kicked down der stairs of mein office. Ach!"

"Then—then you did not lend him any money?"

"Ach! Not likely! He tells me dot he vos der son of one millionaire named Bunter, and when I asks for der proof he named Hunter, not Bunter. But why do you ask, mein young friends?"

And the moneylender eyed the juniors sharply and curiously.

Harry did not answer the question. He was looking a trifle excited. He asked another question instead.

"You—you say he showed you a paragraph dealing with a millionaire named Hunter, and not Bunter?" he gasped.

"Yes. Dat is so. He vos one rascally impostor. He had altered the letter 'H' in der paper to der letter 'B.' It vos very lucky dat I remembered to have seen der paragraph in der paper, and I remembered dat der name was Hunter and not Bunter. I vill show you der paragraph, mein friends."

And the fat moneylender waddled across to the pile of newspapers on the table. He selected one, and brought it back to the juniors, folding it up at the paragraph, and showing it to Harry.

Harry blinked at it, and then he started. It was the very same paragraph he had already read—the paragraph that told of a millionaire's retirement—of his intention to go on a world cruise in the Skylark, the yacht he had purchased from Lord Dunmore. The only difference was that the millionaire's name was Hunter, and not Bunter.

Harry gasped and handed the paper to Bob. Bob almost fell down as he read it. Both of them felt they understood a lot now.

"Vell?" asked the moneylender, taking the paper back. "And why do you ask of dis, mein young friends? I shall be very glad to do business mit you; but dot young rascal—"

"We didn't come to do business with you!" snapped Harry. "We only wanted to know if that ass—that fellow Bunter had borrowed money from you; that's all. Good-afternoon!"

And Harry started for the door. The fat moneylender's eyes glittered, and his face changed abruptly.

"Ach! You haf wasted my time, and you haf made von fool of me. Ach! Come back. Stop dose boys, mein son!"

The irate and disappointed usurer fairly bellowed that last, and his son—if the sleek-headed youth was his son—jumped to obey. Harry Wharton grasped him and sat him down with a bump on the floor. Then the two juniors walked over him and ran down the stairs.

At the bottom Harry and Bob found

their chums waiting, and they rapidly explained the amazing news. Then the five eyed each other. Suddenly Bob Cherry started to roar with laughter.

"It's all spoof, then! Can't you see it's all spoof?" he laughed. "Oh, my hat! That fat fraud Bunter will be the death of me yet. He must have altered the letter 'H' to a 'B,' of course. It's a daring spoof! He's done it to squeeze cash out of the chaps. Oh, great pip! Isn't he the limit?"

"Well—well, I do believe you're right, Bob!" gasped Harry.

It seemed a daring, reckless scheme, and yet it was just like Billy Bunter. The fat junior was capable of planning such a daring deception, and he never looked ahead for snags. It was, at least, possible.

"But—but he showed it even to Quelchy," gasped Frank Nugent.

"He's nerve enough for anything, you ass!"

"But that letter—what about that letter?"

"Oh!"

Harry had forgotten about that, so had Bob.

"Well, the fat little villain could have had that posted for him in London," said Harry, after a reflective pause. "Yes, he could have copied his pater's fist and posted it to himself. Phew! I do believe that explains the whole thing. It—it's a gigantic spoof to get hold of some money. He knew, in any case, that Fishy, and fellows like that, would come sponging round him, and standing him tuck, to make more out of it—and then there's the yachting cruise!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was really very serious, but it was also very, very funny, and the juniors could not help roaring.

"It's rather lucky we didn't hand him the quids to get included in the party," grinned Bob Cherry at last. "Oh crumbs! Won't the fellows who've stood him tuck, and loaned him bobs, feel sick!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

In the excitement and astonishment of the discovery they had made—or believed they had made—the juniors had forgotten the question of where Bunter had got the money from that afternoon. But Harry suddenly remembered it as they walked down the High Street, and his face grew serious.

If Bunter had not got his money from Mr. Isaac Moses, then where had he got it from?

It was a question that utterly baffled the juniors. They could not think that any fellow at Greyfriars would be ass enough to lend Bunter any considerable amount, even on the supposition that he was the son of a millionaire who would soon be "rolling" in wealth.

It was a question that worried Harry now almost as much as the suspicion that he had borrowed it from Moses had done.

"Well, I'll tackle the fat ass and make him own up," said Harry, setting his lips. "This game can't be allowed to go on. Hold on! I noticed the date of that paper; it was dated two days ago. We'll try to get a copy ourselves."

Harry stopped, and entered a news-agent's shop which was open, and he emerged a couple of minutes later with a paper in his hand. He opened it, and soon all the juniors were reading the famous paragraph. It was Hunter without a doubt—not Bunter! The millionaire was Mr. Samuel Hunter. It was not Bunter's pater.

ANSWERS
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"Come on!" said Harry grimly. "That fat villain's booked for a surprise and trouble! Some of the chaps—Bolsover and the rest of them—will boil the fat rascal in oil for this!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry's chums found the thought funny if he did not.

The juniors got their bikes and started back, eager now to see William George Bunter. All seemed plain to them now, excepting the peculiar and rather worrying problem of how Bunter had got hold of the money he was flinging about.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Not Guilty!

"WELL, here you are, then, Bunter!"

Peter Todd spoke grimly as Billy Bunter appeared in the doorway of Study No. 7 that evening during prep. It was the first Peter had seen of Bunter since early that afternoon. Alonzo Todd and Dutton, who were working away at the table with Peter, merely looked up at Bunter and then went on with their prep.

But Peter Todd was the leader of Study No. 7, and he deemed it his duty to keep an eye on Bunter at all times. It was long after Bunter should have started his prep.

"Yes, Peter," answered Bunter. "Here I am, you know."

Bunter spoke quite meekly—he felt very meek just then. In fact, Bunter was feeling worse than meek, so to speak. He had consumed enough tuck for a dozen hungry fellows, and he had also smoked two of Skinner's cigarettes. And Bunter was now feeling very wobbly inside in consequence.

So, instead of addressing Peter Todd haughtily and loftily, as became a millionaire's son when speaking to a solicitor's son, Billy Bunter spoke quite meekly. Moreover, he felt it was wise as Peter Todd's hand had strayed to a ruler on the table.

He rolled into the study, and Peter eyed him curiously.

"Well, old fat man," he said calmly. "And who have you been robbing since noon? I hear you're simply rolling in tin. It isn't your tin, and it can't have come from your giddy pater. Whose is it?"

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

Bunter was interrupted as the door flew open and the Famous Five filed in, closing the door after them. They looked at Billy Bunter very grimly.

"We've come to see you, Bunter," said Harry Wharton, taking a folded newspaper from his pocket. "We've bowled you out, you daring fat spoofer!"

"Oh, really, Wharton!" stammered Bunter. "I—I don't understand you. If you think I've got that money dishonestly you're jolly well mistaken, and you've got a jolly cheek to shove your oar into my affairs at all!"

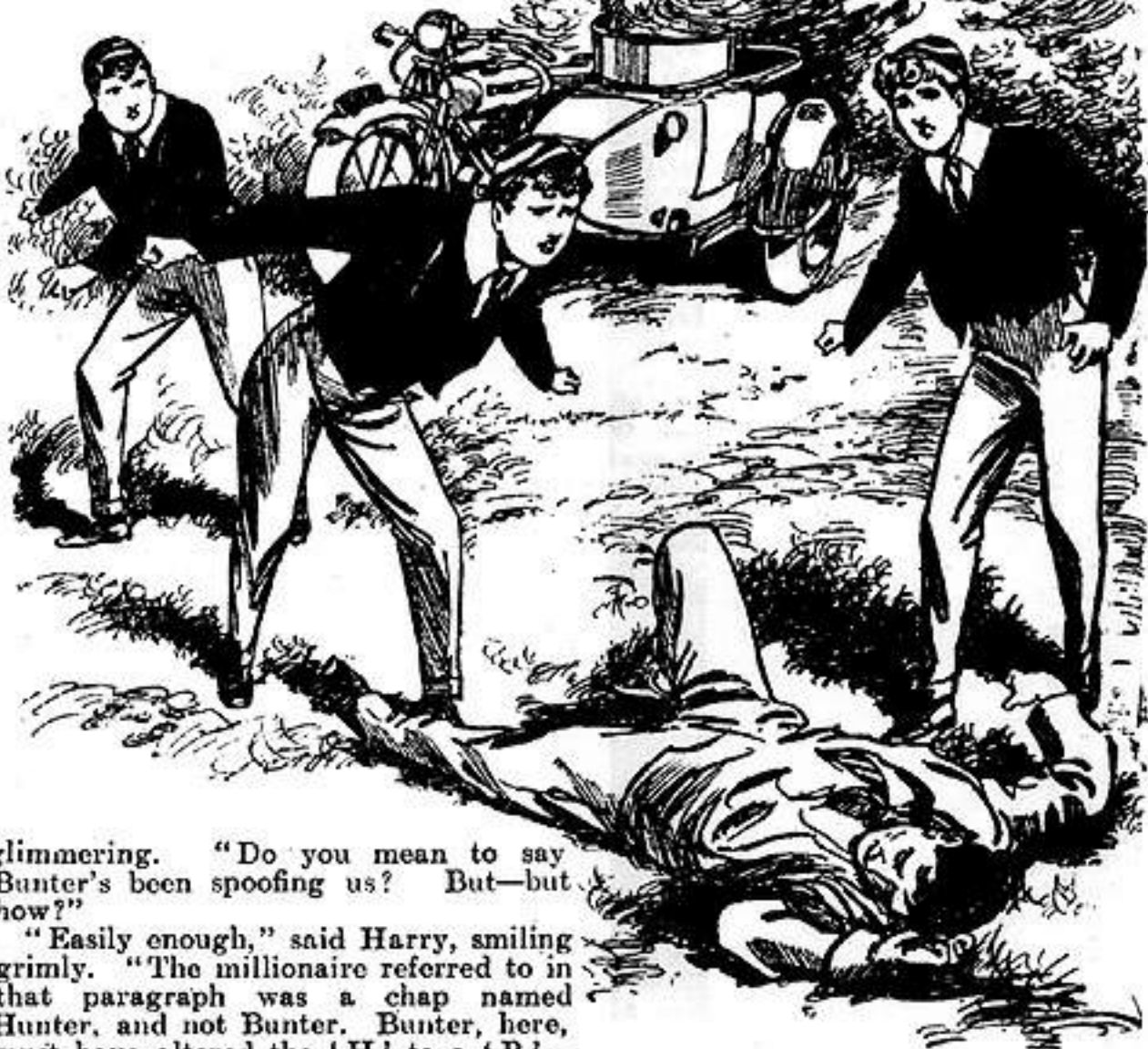
"We'll go into the money afterwards," said Harry calmly. "We just want you to own up, Bunter, that you've spoofed the whole school and even Quelchy. You're a fat spoofer! Your pater isn't a blessed millionaire at all. It's all one of your rotten schemes for raising the wind!"

"For—for raising the wind?" stammered Bunter.

"Yes, just that. You're bowled out, you fat worm!"

"What the thump do you mean, Wharton?" asked Peter Todd, his eyes

"My hat!" said Harry Wharton. He was sniffing the air suspiciously, and suddenly he stooped and bent over the man. Then he straightened himself, and his face was startled as he met his chums' questioning glances. "It—it is foul play!" he said. "Can't you smell chloroform?" (See Chapter 7.)



glimmering. "Do you mean to say Bunter's been spoofing us? But—but how?"

"Easily enough," said Harry, smiling grimly. "The millionaire referred to in that paragraph was a chap named Hunter, and not Bunter. Bunter, here, must have altered the 'H' to a 'B'—the fat fraud! He used Indian ink, or something. Anyway, look at that paper."

And Harry handed the paper to the astounded Peter Todd, and as he blinked at the paragraph Peter Todd suddenly doubled up and roared with laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter fairly glowered at him. He was dumbfounded at Harry's accusation, and, despite himself, a sudden dreadful fear was clutching at him.

Was it true? Could it be true?

The next moment Billy Bunter had good reason to suspect that it was only too true.

Still laughing, Peter Todd handed him the paper and pointed out the paragraph.

"Look at it, you fat worm! Look at it and own up! You—you awful spoofer! I felt, somehow, from the beginning that there was something fishy about it all."

Bunter blinked at the paragraph, hardly knowing whether he was on his head or his heels. But as he saw the name he almost dropped in a faint.

"Hunt—Hunter! Huh-huh-Hunter!" he yelped. "But it can't be—it can't be! Oh, dear! Oh, crumbs!"

"Where's your own paper, you fat fraud?" bawled Harry Wharton, taking a magnifying glass from his pocket. "I've brought this along for that purpose. Out with it, if you've got it."

Bunter was only too dreadfully anxious to see it himself now. His head was whirling, and he felt as though the world was dropping away from him. From his jacket pocket his trembling fingers snatched a crumpled, dirty newspaper,

and Harry took it from him and held the magnifying-glass over the paragraph marked so carefully, and thumb-marked so thoroughly.

Then his eyes gleamed, and he let the others have a look. There was not the slightest doubt about it now. The letters had been altered, without a doubt. The glass showed that only too clearly.

Even Bunter, as he tremblingly took his turn, saw that.

"Oh, dear!" he groaned hollowly. "Oh, dear! I—I say, you fellows, I swear I didn't do that."

"Of course you did!" bellowed Peter Todd. "You fat spoofer!"

"I tell you I didn't!" almost shrieked Billy Bunter. "I tell you I never dreamed it wasn't all right. Oh, crumbs! That paper must be wrong—I tell you it must!"

"You fat fibber—"

"Hold on!" said Harry. "Blessed if I don't believe the fat ass is innocent about it."

"What rot! He's—"

"I never did it!" yelled Bunter wildly. "I—I can't understand it, I tell you. I only just looked at it when Skinner showed me the paper, and—"

"Skinner?" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Yes," groaned Bunter. "Skinner first showed me the paragraph. I didn't know anything about my pater being a millionaire until then. It—it is—"

"Phew! I think I see it all now," said Harry Wharton, glancing at Bob. "You're right shouting Skinner, Bob."

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I believe it's one of Skinner's rotten practical jokes! Jove! I believe it is. I don't believe Bunter did plan it all."

"I didn't," almost wept Bunter. "But it must be true! That—that letter from the pater! What about that letter from the pater?"

"That letter from Skinner, you mean!" grunted Johnny Bull. "I think I see it all now. Skinner wrote the letter, too. You know what a clever cad he is at imitating fists. He wrote it and got the thing posted in London somehow."

"I thought it jolly funny that Skinner and his pals didn't do any sponging on Bunter," said Frank Nugent. "Jove! It seems fairly clear now. Hasn't Skinner been going about grinning like a Cheshire cat since yesterday? I—"

"Hold on!" said Harry Wharton, a sudden idea striking him. "Run along and have a chat with Trotter, Franky. He's just back to-day from London. Went the night before last, early—early enough to get a letter posted in London, anyway. Try him!"

"Good egg!"

Frank dashed out on the instant and Billy Bunter blinked dismally at the juniors as they studied the paper again through the magnifying-glass. Whatever relief he had found in the thought that the juniors did not now suspect him of spoofing was now smothered in the great and overwhelming fear—a fear that grew stronger every moment—that he was not, after all, the son and heir of a millionaire, and that, after all, there was no chance of that beautiful prospect of a world trip in a magnificent steam yacht materialising in actual fact.

It was a stunning discovery, and it almost prostrated the fat youth.

Frank Nugent was very soon back, and he nodded grimly as he came in and closed the door again.

"Yes; Skinner tipped Trotter a bob to post a letter in London," he said breathlessly. "And the letter was addressed to Bunter, at Greyfriars."

"He did?"

"Yes; Trotter wouldn't split at first, but I wormed it out of him and promised he shouldn't suffer for telling. He just caught the post out of London with it."

"Phew! That about settles it."

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific, my chums," grinned Hurree Singh. "Skinner is the esteemed and fatheaded culprit."

"Have you got the letter, Bunter?" asked Harry. "Let us see it again."

"You can have the blessed thing!" groaned Bunter. "Oh, dear! Oh, that awful beast! Oh, what a rotter Skinner is! Oh, dear!"

The juniors almost felt sorry for the hapless Billy Bunter as he fumbled in his trousers pocket and at last withdrew a handful of articles, among which was a folded, crumpled letter. For as Bunter dragged the letter and other things out something else, dragged out with the letter, fell to the floor.

Harry stooped to pick it up, and then, even as he did so, he straightened with a cry—an alarmed cry.

The something was a blue, perforated bag—a bag used by banks to hold silver coins. On the bag was the printed words:

"The Courtfield and County Bank."

But that was not all, for as Harry straightened the crumpled bag out he saw, stamped on, evidently with a rubber stamp, the legend:

"James Cowley & Co., Ashton."

Harry's eyes almost started from his head.

He remembered the name just as quickly as he remembered hearing the clerk tell the police-sergeant that the money was in paper bags, stamped with the firm's name.

What on earth did it mean? What was such a bag doing in the sticky pockets of Billy Bunter of Greyfriars? Could—could it possibly have something to do with Bunter's sudden and surprising wealth?

It seemed utterly absurd to suggest such a thing, and yet— Well, what was this doing in Bunter's pocket? There was no getting away from the fact that it had fallen from his pocket.

"Bunter!" breathed Harry Wharton. "Bunter, you awful fool! Where on earth did you get this from?"

Bunter made frantic efforts to grab at the bag, but Harry held him off with ease.

"Not much," he said, his face set and stern. "This wants looking into, Bunter. This bag is stamped with the name of Cowley, the factory people from Ashton. The money that that motor-cyclist was robbed of this afternoon on the Pegg road was in bags such as this—or some of it. It's up to you to explain that, Bunter!"

"Phew!"

"Oh, great pip!"

The rest of the Famous Five were looking very grave now. Peter Todd, his Cousin Alonzo, and Tom Dutton were just looking on blankly.

Bunter licked his fat lips. They had gone suddenly dry.

"I—I say, you fellows," he gasped. "It—it's all right! I—I know nothing at all about it being in my pocket—absolutely nothing! I—I think that beast Skinner must have put it there, don't you?"

"You—you fat idiot!" said Harry angrily. "Can't you see that this is a very serious matter, Bunter?"

"I tell you I know nothing about it," said Bunter, blinking at the paper bag and wishing from the bottom of his fat heart that he had destroyed it. "I—I've never even seen it before now. Besides, I didn't even know it was stolen money, either. Do you fellows think I should have taken it if I had known? I hope you fellows aren't trying to hint that I'm dishonest—I really do!"

"Then—then you know something about the money, then? You say you

didn't know it was stolen money? Why should you say—"

"I—I meant to say that I know absolutely nothing about this bag, or the others in my pocket either," said Bunter, trying to speak with dignity, and failing dismally. "If you fellows dare to insinuate that I found the bag of money and took some out, you're jolly well mistaken, and I shall insist upon you apologising! It's rotten to suspect a fellow of such a thing. Besides, I only borrowed it, so—"

Bunter paused, struck suddenly by the horrified looks on the faces of his hearers. They were eyeing him as if petrified now. That he had given himself hopelessly away was far from being clear to the obtuse fat youth.

"Bunter!" gasped Harry Wharton, after a silence. "Listen to me, you awful duffer! This afternoon we were returning from Cliff House on the lower Pegg road, when we came upon a cap and a rug lying in the dust. We followed the trail, and we found a bike and a sidecar standing in a clearing just off the road. By the machine a man was lying. We thought he was asleep. But he told us when he came round that he had been drugged—drugged and robbed by three men."

"Oh, what an awful whopper!" gasped Bunter. "Why, I saw it all myself, and the chap wasn't robbed at all! He took the bag and—"

Bunter's excited voice trailed off feebly as he realised how he was giving himself away.

"Go on!" said Harry Wharton, who's eyes were gleaming now. "Tell us, Bunter!"

"I—I know nothing about it—really. I don't!"

"You raving idiot!" almost shouted Bob Cherry. "Can't you see that you've said too much already? Do you want to land yourself in gaol, Bunter? If you don't, you'd better explain all this means."

"You had!" said Harry Wharton grimly. "The police are on the job; they took that chap away, and they'll soon be investigating—if they aren't already, you fat fool! Besides, we shall have to tell all we know to Quelch—the bobbies took our names. If you've got the common-sense of a bunny-rabbit you'll tell us all, and if we can save your skin we will—you can depend on that."

"Oh dear!"

Bunter knew that he could depend on that. Quite suddenly Billy Bunter realised that he was in a very serious position indeed—if he were discovered. He had "borrowed" five pounds from the bag of money—he realised it was stolen money now—and—and his father was not a millionaire, after all, nor would he soon be rolling in wealth, either. Then—then, where was the money coming from to refund that taken from the bag? He had spent almost every penny of it.

It was a very awkward position indeed for Billy Bunter. But he made a last desperate effort to throw dust in their eyes.

"I—I sus-say, you fellows!" he panted. "It's all a mistake, you know. Keep it mum, you know, but I borrowed the cash—five quid it was—from old Moses, in Courtfield. Fact!"

Harry Wharton drew a deep breath.

"Now, look here, Bunter!" he snapped. "I'll give you one last chance. We've been to old Moses, and he told us he kicked you out. It was Moses who showed us the newspaper, and he pointed out that the name had been altered. That chicken won't fight. Bunter. Unless you tell us the truth without further shuffling, I shall have to

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on
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and How
to
Hit 'em!"

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go to Quelch and tell what I know—for your own sake, Bunter!"

"Oh dear!" Bunter gasped. "I—I say, Wharton, it's all right; I'll tell you everything! But I swear I was going to put it back again!"

And with that Bunter told all he knew, and he told the truth this time. He realised that Harry was in deadly earnest, and he saw there was no help—no possible help for it. His one hope now was that Harry Wharton would save him from the trouble looming ahead.

Harry gave a gasp as he finished. "Well, my only hat!" he cried. "What—what a plot! That fellow must have drugged himself; that was what he was doing when Bunter saw him put his handkerchief to his face, of course! What a daring scoundrel!"

"It's plain enough," said Johnny Bull. "But what's to be done?"

"We've got to save Bunter, of course—though he little deserves it!" said Harry, frowning. "Look here, I'll run and speak to Mauly; he's a good sort, and will help—even to save Bunter's bacon. We shall have to have a whip round afterwards, and bear the brunt between us, I suppose. You've got some of the money left, I suppose, Bunter?"

"Oh dear! Only about seven-and-six!"

"Hand it over—sharp!"

Bunter obeyed with a deep groan, and Harry pocketed the cash. Then he went to visit Lord Mauleverer. And while he was absent the rest of the Famous Five explained the rest of the facts as they knew them to Peter Todd, who fairly gaped at the hapless Billy Bunter.

But before he could say much to the fat youth Harry Wharton came hurrying back.

"All serene, Bunter!" he snapped. "Mauly's saved your bacon—at least, he's handed over the most of five quid. I'll see he gets it back, though. Now we've got to get this money changed into silver, and then you and I will get busy and see to the rest, Bob. Two of us will be quite enough on a job like this. We can deal with friend Skinner when we come back."

"Yes, rather! Come on!" grinned Bob.

The next moment, without wasting time explaining further, Harry and Bob were out in the quad. They were going to break bounds, but they were risking capture under the circumstances. The tuckshop was closed, but there was a light in the room at the back, and, crossing the dusky Close, the two juniors slipped round to the back door, and to the surprised Dame Mimble they explained what they wanted—but not why, of course!

Dame Mimble would have been very startled indeed had she known why the two juniors wanted four pound-notes changing into shillings, florins, and half-crowns.

But she changed it without question, and the juniors packed the various coins in the bags Bunter had saved—fortunately. The juniors grinned as they reflected that the money—or most of the silver—had probably come from those self-same bags in the first place. It was unlikely Billy Bunter had spent it anywhere else.

Five minutes later, with the money bulging from their pockets, the two juniors had scaled the school wall, and were hurrying in the deepening dusk for the cliffs. They knew the old hollow oak very well, and they were breathless and panting by the time they reached it.

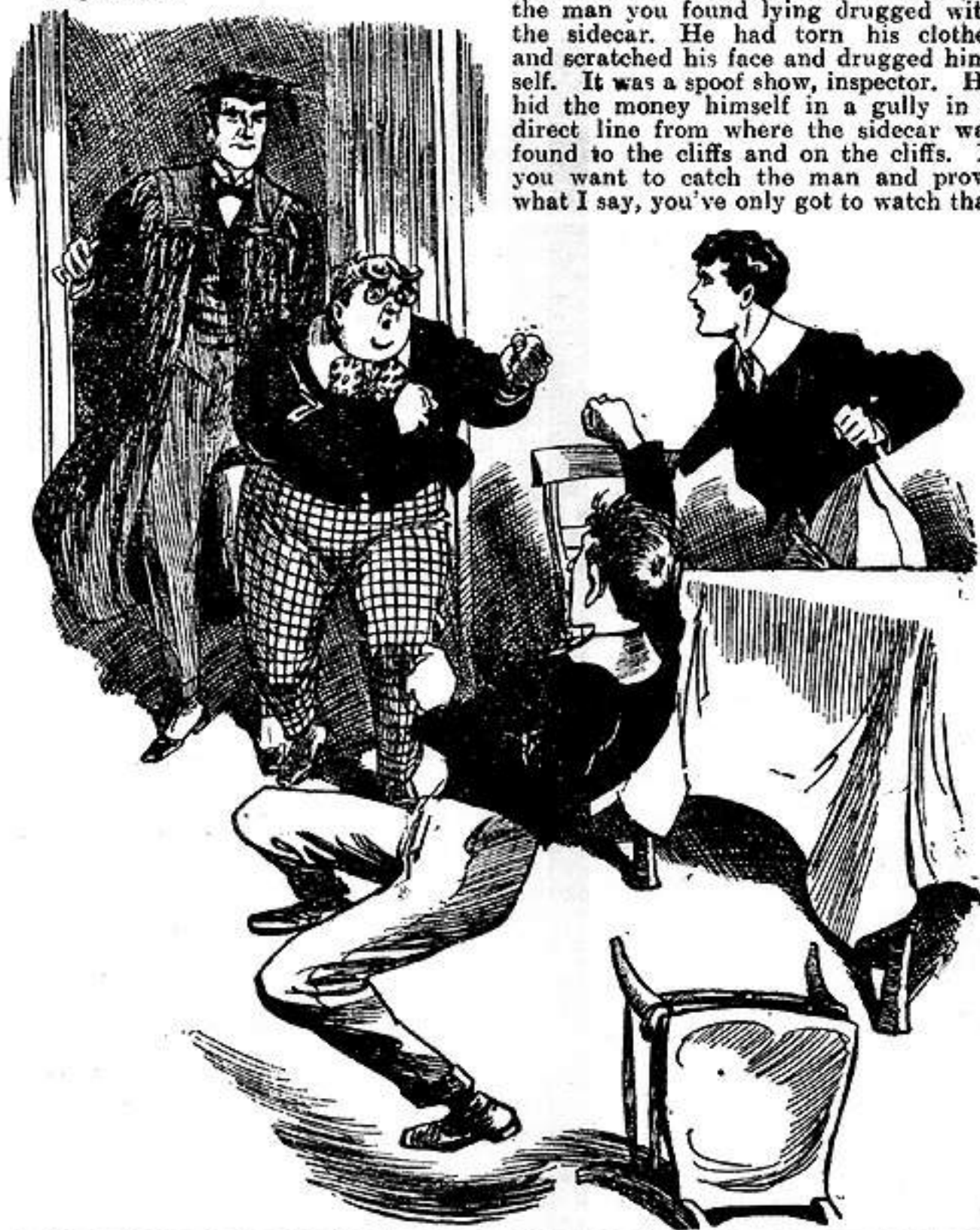
The money was there right enough—greatly to the chums' relief. Harry

lifted the heavy bag out, and dropped the packets in, and closed the bag. Then, with a final survey about them, the two adventurers set off at a brisk run for Friardale village.

Reaching the village, Harry and Bob made straight for the little station. By this time it had started to rain a little.

"Steady, now," murmured Harry. "We've got to make absolutely certain that nobody sees us now. Thank goodness it's raining, and it's dusky enough, too. You wait here, Bob."

"Right-ho!"



"Shut up!" hissed Skinner, in alarm. "Can't you——" "I won't shut up!" howled Bunter, almost beside himself with rage and disappointment. "Why, you—you—you——" Words failed Bunter just then, and he also seemed to lose control of himself. Spluttering with fury he jumped forward suddenly, and his fat fist took Harold Skinner full and square on his sharp nose. "Yarooop!"

(See Chapter 10.)

Harry gave a sharp glance about him, and then he slipped into the outer hall of the booking-office. There were no trains due for some time, and, as he expected, he found the hall empty and the booking-office shutter down.

The junior crept softly to the telephone-call box and slipped inside, closing the door gently after him. The next moment he was ringing up Inspector Grimes, at Courtfield.

The exchange soon put him through, and the police gentleman's fat, throaty voice reached the junior.

"Hallo! Who is that speaking?" "Never mind who is speaking," said Harry Wharton, in a gruff voice. "If you want to know where the money is

that was stolen between the bank and Cowley's this afternoon, listen carefully to me."

Harry grinned as a sharp, startled exclamation reached him from the other end, and then he went on swiftly:

"It's hidden in that old, hollow oak a hundred yards beyond the Shoulder, and just in the fringe of trees. Got that?"

"Yes, yes! But who——"

"Right! And if you want to know who the thief is, I'll tell you. It is the man who was entrusted with the money—the man you found lying drugged with the sidecar. He had torn his clothes and scratched his face and drugged himself. It was a spoof show, inspector. He hid the money himself in a gully in a direct line from where the sidecar was found to the cliffs and on the cliffs. If you want to catch the man and prove what I say, you've only got to watch that

gully, and, sooner or later, he'll come for the swag. I myself removed the bag of money to that hollow oak for safety. Got that?"

"Gad! Yes, yes; but——"

"Good-bye!"

Harry rang off, and left the public call-box as swiftly and stealthily as he had entered it, and a moment later rejoined his chum.

"All sorene?"

"Yes. Let's get moving, Bob."

And Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry got moving. They knew that Inspector Grimes was a very sharp gentleman, and they felt it wouldn't be safe or prudent

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to remain there longer. They raced through the gathering darkness and rain for Greyfriars.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Reckoning!

"HERE'S dear old Bunter!" murmured Snoop.

"Jolly old Bunter!" remarked Stott. "Bow down before his golden majesty, you fellows!"

"All hail to the giddy millionaire's son!" chortled Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a laugh in the Rag as Bunter came rolling in. Prep was over, and there was quite a swarm of fellows in the Rag. Behind Billy Bunter were the Famous Five—Harry and Bob having been back some time now—and, like Bunter, they were in search of Harold Skinner. In the view of the Famous Five Harold Skinner had overstepped the limit of decency, to say the least of it, in his practical joke on the hapless Bunter, and they were determined to "bowl out" Skinner, and tell him what they thought about him.

Certainly the affair had not cost them very much—Harry had had a whip-round among the more decent fellows in the Remove—and among so many, the five Bunter had squandered was easily made up, and Harry returned all but his own little share to his lordship, though Mauly begged to stand it all himself. But the juniors would have none of that. They were only too glad to pay their little share to save serious trouble for a member of the Remove—even for a fellow who deserved it as little as Bunter did.

"You rotten beast, Skinner!" hissed Bunter, his little eyes glittering behind his spectacles with wrath. "Oh, you awful beast! It was all a spoof! One of your rotten practical jokes, you rotten cad!"

Skinner was rather taken aback, and Stott and Snoop looked uneasy—especially as they saw the grim looks of the Famous Five and Peter Todd. They guessed at once that something had come out.

"My dear man, what do you mean?" asked Skinner blandly, determined to bluff it out in any case.

"You know what I jolly well mean!" howled Billy Bunter, shaking a fat fist under Harold Skinner's nose. "My father isn't a millionaire at all. It was all a rotten joke of yours. You altered the name in that rotten paper, and you sent me that rotten letter—copied my pater's handwriting, and forged his signature! That's what you did, you howling beast!"

Skinner smiled, though his heart was thumping, and he kept a wary eye on Bunter's fat fist. The way Bunter put it, and especially when referring to his pater's signature, rather startled Skinner. He hadn't at all looked upon it as forging—merely as a practical joke. It didn't sound nice at all when put like that.

"My dear man, I don't understand you," he said calmly. "Do you mean your pater isn't a giddy millionaire, after all?"

"No, he isn't!" howled Bunter furiously. "You know that jolly well, Skinner! You're bowled out, you beastly cad! You've played a rotten trick on me! There ain't no steam-yacht, and my father isn't a millionaire! The chap in the paper was named Hunter, and you altered it to read Bunter. You can't deny it, you awful cad! And then you copied my pater's handwriting, and

wrote me a letter from London, forging my pater's signature. You know—"

"Bunter!"

It was a sharp, and amazed, voice from the doorway, and Skinner suddenly went white. But Bunter was far too excited and furious to heed or hear.

"You know you did, you beast!" he went on shrilly. "You tipped Trotter a bob to post the letter in London the other night. It was all spoof, and—"

"Shut up!" hissed Skinner. "Can't you—"

"I won't shut up!" howled Bunter, almost beside himself with rage and disappointment. "Why, you—you—you—you—"

Words appeared to fail Bunter just then, and he also seemed to lose control of himself. Bunter was no fighting-man—far from it—but even a worm will turn, and Bunter, in his dismal and bitter disappointment, turned now.

Spluttering with fury, he jumped forward suddenly, and his fat fist took Harold Skinner full and square on his sharp nose.

"Yarooooop!"

Skinner yelled and sat down suddenly hard on the floor.

"Bunter!"

It was something approaching a bellow, and Bunter would have been very deaf indeed had he failed to hear it. But he did hear it, and he spun round and gasped as he recognised Mr. Quelch just behind him.

"Bunter!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "How dare you! Skinner, stand up at once!"

Skinner stood up, mopping a streaming nose as he did so. A hearty punch from Bunter's fat fist, and with all Bunter's weight and fury behind it, was no light matter.

"Skinner," said Mr. Quelch, "I heard what Bunter said a moment ago, and though I do not usually take action when I hear anything not intended for my ears, I feel bound to take notice of this. Bunter has stated that you altered a name in a newspaper. I presume he is referring to that paragraph he showed me the other day, which apparently stated that Bunter's father had become a millionaire, and had purchased a yacht? Is that so, Skinner?"

"Ye-es, sir," groaned Skinner.

He saw that it was all up now; he knew that nothing on earth could prevent it coming out now. Trotter's evidence alone was enough.

"Do I understand that the name in that paragraph was Hunter, and that you altered it to Bunter, Skinner?"

"I—I—ye-es, sir! Only a joke, sir!"

"I do not look upon the matter as a joke, Skinner!" said Mr. Quelch, in a terrible voice. "You were present when Bunter showed it to me, and you allowed me to be deceived."

"It—it was only a joke, sir."

"That is apparently not all, however," said Mr. Quelch. "Do I also

understand that you have actually dared to send Bunter a letter, purporting to come from his father, and that you have actually signed it in Bunter's father's name?"

Skinner licked his dry lips. He could not speak. But he dare not refuse to answer. He nodded dismally.

"If you have the paper and the letter still, Bunter, I would like to see them!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, yes, sir—certainly, sir!"

Bunter handed over the paper and the letter. He was only too delighted to do so. He would have been delighted to see Harold Skinner boiled in oil just then.

"Very good—oh, very good, Skinner!" said Mr. Quelch. "As you have admitted this, there will be no need to have Trotter here in further evidence. You have played a cruel and heartless joke upon Bunter, Skinner!"

Groan!

"I shall punish you for that, Skinner. Be thankful that I do not wish to take you before Dr. Locke, for I fear he would take a far more serious view of your disgraceful and abominable conduct. You will follow me!"

With that Mr. Quelch rustled and whisked away, his face very stern in deed.

And Skinner followed him. He followed very slowly.

Harold Skinner entered Mr. Quelch's study very slowly, and he came out still more slowly. Not that he wanted to linger there by any means. But he came out slowly because he was doubled up with anguish, and could scarcely crawl much less walk. Mr. Quelch had stated that he feared Dr. Locke would take a very serious view of the matter. Skinner—by the time Mr. Quelch had finished with him—had good reason to know that Mr. Quelch also took a very serious view of it. At all events, it was one of the biggest lickings Harold Skinner had ever had in his shady career at Greyfriars.

Harry Wharton & Co. spent a few rather anxious days after that, but nothing happened, and it was evident that Inspector Grimes had not succeeded in tracing the sender of that phone message from the public call-box at Friardale. They heard that he had been in communication with the Head regarding their presence at the trial of the clerk who had proved false to his trust, as they, of course, had found him and reported the matter. But they heard nothing officially, and they realised that the matter had been settled between the inspector and the Head.

For Inspector Grimes found the money quickly enough, and he caught his man quickly enough when that rascally plotter came to the gully for the plunder. But he never learned to whom he owed his capture.

Billy Bunter told the Famous Five that he thought it was a rotten shame, and that he felt that it ought to be made public. After all, as he indignantly remarked, but for him the money would all have been lost and the man would have escaped scot-free, and he felt that he, at all events, deserved a jolly good reward. Bob Cherry quite agreed with him, and suggested that he went to Inspector Grimes about it. But Bunter did not follow out the suggestion. Possibly he was not at all sure what sort of a reward he would get! Bunter evidently had rather a guilty conscience in the matter.

THE END.

A BUMPER NUMBER OF The MAGNET NEXT WEEK, CHUMS,

containing:—

"THE PERSECUTION OF BILLY BUNTER!" By Frank Richards.

Special Four-page Cricket Supplement
Containing Signed Articles by
J. B. Hobbs and Charles Hallows,

and another thrilling instalment of
"The Phantom of the Dogger Bank!"
ORDER IT EARLY!

MAROONED! Stranded on a dreary expanse of barren, stony land with miles of sea before them and an insurmountable range of mountains behind them Ferrers Locke and his companions watch their captor's ship, the last sign of civilisation, gradually disappear from sight!



An Amazing New Detective Serial, featuring Ferrers Locke and his boy assistant, Jack Drake.
(Introduction on page 24.)

A Desperate Scheme!

"O H, so we meet face to face at last!" said Stromsund. "So often have you squirmed out of my path like a snake in the grass, Ferrers Locke! But this time I have you, and I hold—like—that—"

The man's great hand was extended, fingers hooked upwards, but drawing in together till the fist was clenched tightly, the knuckles whitening with the intensity of the man's grip. It demonstrated his feelings far better than words could have done.

"Splendid!" replied Locke. "Well, what are you going to do with us?" Stromsund snarled.

"Do?" He laughed harshly. "I hear you were nearly winch-trapped this morning. Well had it been for you if the winch had done its work! You are interested in Brek Katel?"

"Very!" replied Locke coolly. "In fact, I'm sort of part-owner of it. Mortgagee of the property."

"You went to Ingholdt, imprisoned Hosking, and talked round that traitorous rat Langsom there!" broke in Stromsund savagely. "You thought you were so smart, did you not, decoying me away to the gorge? And on my return to my farm I found that you had been in my office, and had tampered with a survey plan of Brek Katel."

"You are cleverer than I thought," said Locke. "I tried to cover up my tracks there."

"You must have copied those bearings from the plan. Where is your copy of that? It is not amongst these papers taken from you and your fellow-idiot."

"No, certainly not," said the Baker Street detective, congratulating himself on his forethought in giving Proctor the packet of the most important papers to take to the Stormcock.

"Where is it?"

"Safe from your hands, Stromsund."

"Ha, you have them by heart. Well, I expect if you had boarded the Storm-

cock instead of my trawler, the Ocean Wave—my agent at Reykjavik was clever enough to send a message to the Stormcock, as from you, not to trouble to come and pick you up at the quay, as arranged unless, to use your own words, you sent forward cancelling orders—if the Stormcock's boat had picked you up instead of mine, you would have gone round to Brek Katel, I know. Proctor's orders were to be ready to proceed to the north coast."

"I congratulate you on the way you have been informed!" said Locke. "Well, proceed. This is most interesting!"

Locke's coolness infuriated Stromsund greatly.

"Proceed I will!" he roared. "I will grant you your dearest wish. I will land you on Brek Katel, and there you can investigate to your heart's content—till you die of hunger and exposure! You will be found, no doubt. But my scheme is simple. Proctor already believes you have gone off by land to Brek Katel. It is just possible to do the journey, when well equipped. When you are found—your bones—people will shake their heads and call you foolish for trusting yourselves to the terrors of Brek Katel!"

"A very pretty scheme, Stromsund. You have not considered the possibility of a message scratched on rock, I suppose?"

"A crazed man's obsession!" scoffed Stromsund. "You would not be the first who had gone crazed on Brek Katel. Once, before John Carr's day, a surveyor worked on Brek Katel for three months. When they fetched him he was crazy—hair as white as snow on the jokuls, and the information he had got in his work could not therefore be relied on. And he was left with a good camp, servants, and stores. You will be left with nothing—except your clothes and the information you carry in that head of yours in regard to certain bearings on that land. But that won't fill the stomach. Nor will

it avail anything else without a compass, map, and instruments. Still, since you were so anxious to survey this land in which you have so foolishly invested money, so be it. You shall. Away with them, skipper, and order my launch back to the fiord. Point the trawler for the north, round the Horns and Langanaes. I will accompany you to see this work well carried out."

Locke and Drake and Langsom were hustled out of the state-room and back into the lamp-room, where the door was clanged to on them and the key turned in the lock.

When they were alone, the three discussed the situation fully.

"Gosh!" said Jack Drake. "First of all shanghaied on board this beastly trawler, then to be marooned on the north coast of Iceland! We are seeing life!"

"Ah, but we shall see death too soon, my young friend!" broke in Langsom gloomily. "You do not know our Iceland. It is a cruel land, where desolate. And Brek Katel is desolation—nothing but desolation, where nothing but rocks grow in the soil, a place shunned by beast and bird alike!"

"Thanks for being cheerful!" said Jack. "I thought it was a holiday resort!"

"Oh, no, it is not, believe me!" said Langsom seriously. "And I am glad to be with you. I know my Iceland, and that will be a help. We may find a salmon stream, and I can catch salmon without rod and line. But it is death in the end!"

"Well, cheer up," said Jack. "That'll be better than being shot through the head. And that would have happened to you in the end if you had stayed on as steward at Ingholdt, no doubt." He turned to Ferrers Locke. "You've thought something out, sir, I can see?"

"Yes, my boy," replied Locke. "I have a scheme whereby we may be able to get help. Perhaps it will be picked THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 955.

up by Proctor. Listen to me, for we must carry it through to-night, if at all."

Jack and Langsom eagerly drew nearer as Locke began to unfold his scheme in a low voice.

"To-night they will need lamps," said the detective. "They will presumably be compelled to come to this lamp-room, or lamp-locker, or whatever they call it. We must take advantage of that visit."

"This trawler—the Ocean Wave, Stromsund called her—is fitted with wireless. Since she is a Stromsund boat, available for the use of that villain for any fresh villainy, I expect she will have a broadcast-receiving set on board, as had the Trumpeter and the Wraith, which was sunk. Also I expect the wireless cabin is situated in the same position as on those other boats."

"You, Langsom, are a powerful man. You will have to fight side by side with Drake, and so fight that you'll keep most of the men engaged for a while. Now, here are the details in their proper sequence."

"As soon as someone comes to this lamp-room we make a bid for liberty. You, Drake, will run forward with Langsom, and, feigning desperation, make a stand up in the bows, or somewhere as far forward as possible. You two will fight for time, that's all."

"In the meantime I will make straight for the wireless-cabin. There I will be compelled to handle the operator rather roughly. I will tap out a short message to the Stormcock."

"Someone will be hot on my heels, of course. But not so close that I can't get my message out, no doubt. When my pursuers make their appearance I shall be in the act of sitting down at the instrument, and as they drag me away I shall, of course, be desperately and frantically stretching my hand to the key—"

"But I do not understand," said Langsom, wrinkling his brow. "You say that you will be in the act of sitting down and stretching your hand to the key. What good will that do for us, Herr Locke?"

"He means that he'll only act all that," said Jack quickly. "Just to make those johnnies after him think he hasn't been able to get out his message, when all the time he has. See? Go on, sir."

"You understand now, Langsom?" inquired Locke.

Langsom smiled and nodded eagerly. "It is a fox-like scheme, Herr Locke," he said.

"Thank you!" said Locke dryly. "Well, to proceed. We are all over-come, of course—"

"Gnashing our teeth and biting bits out of the rail," grinned Jack, "because our scheme has failed."

"Exactly! Only don't pile it on too much, my boy. Nor you, Langsom. By 'pile it on' I mean don't over-act so that they'll see what our real scheme is!"

"No, no, I won't!" said Langsom, who seemed to be warming up to the business. "I look forward to this. I have a crack on the head to pay back to someone, and we at our school at Copenhagen, we used to fight with the gloves, like you English. Only there will be no gloves this time—no!"

"Well, our course is simple. You and Drake run forward and hold as many men in fight there as possible. Leave me to my bit. A lot is being left to chance, of course, but we must leave no stone unturned. And, to be candid, I see no possibility of our escaping

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death from exposure and starvation on Brek Katel unless we can get that wireless message out."

"That thought ought to put a bit of driving power into our arms, I should think," said Jack. "Were you hard-hitters at your school in Copenhagen, Mr. Langsom?"

"Ah, yes, we used to be considered clever at boxing. And I have learnt to hit hard in other walks in life. But you are not a man. Can you fight and be useful—"

"I expect we used to hit as hard and skilfully at Greyfriars as you did at your school in Copenhagen," said Jack. "And I, too, have had to learn to hit hard where necessary in other walks of life since I left Greyfriars. You can't track down criminals without getting into a hornets' nest now and again, you know. And, of course, one must know how to get out of those hornets' nests again—"

"Enough talk!" whispered Locke. "I believe someone is coming now—"

"You're right, sir!" breathed Jack, clenching his fists. "A bunch of 'em—and with shooters, too, I expect."

"Then surprise is the word. Silence now—and wait!"

The footfalls of the men grew louder. The key rasped in the lock, and the door was thrown open; then through the opening streaked Jack Drake, like an arrow from a bow.

He landed full on the chest of a man, and down they both came to the steel plates below, the revolver the man had been carrying clattering away forward.

Brek Katel!

WILD shouts, sounded out in the trawler, fore and aft. Jack Drake, locked with the man he had crushed to the deck, was conscious of Locke and Langsom leaping over him. There was the sound of hard blows, grunts, and heavy falls. Then

NEW READERS BEGIN HERE.

FERRERS LOCKE, the private detective of Baker Street, and

JACK DRAKE, his boy assistant, have been engaged by

JOHN CARR, owner of the Carr fishing fleet, to track down a steam trawler of Icelandic design, which, with name and number covered, has been cruising the Dogger in misty weather for the purpose of wrecking the gear of Carr's boats. This mysterious vessel, dubbed the Phantom by the fisherfolk, is carrying out its foul purpose under the leadership of

SCAR HOSKING at the bidding of **STANILAU STROMSUND**, whose sole object, it appears, is to impoverish Carr, in the hope of making him dispose of Brek Katel, a big stretch of land in Iceland.

BLAIZE PROCTOR, admiral of Carr's fleet and skipper of the Stormcock, another trawler of the same type as the Phantom, on which Locke and Drake set off in chase.

After a series of thrilling encounters between the two trawlers, the Phantom falls into the hands of Ferrers Locke and his men. Leaving his capture in the hands of Carr, the investigator and his crew steam for Ingholdt Farm, Iceland, the haunt of Stromsund. Here Locke and Drake gain the confidence of **FREDERIC LANGSOM**, Stromsund's steward, and seize some valuable papers. The trio are about to make for the Stormcock and home when, by a clever ruse, they are captured and taken prisoners on one of Stromsund's trawlers, aboard which Drake is instrumental in saving his master from the terrible fate of being "winch-trapped."

Shortly after this the trio are hauled in front of Stromsund himself.

(Now read on.)

the swift footfalls of Locke and Langsom fading away.

Jack tore himself free and dashed forward. He scrambled to the upper deck and saw Langsom in the act of swinging himself up to the rounded anchor-deck of the trawler. He followed swiftly, and, ranging up alongside Langsom, turned and faced the infuriated men who rushed them.

Langsom had chosen an excellent position for defence and to hold greater numbers in fight for a long while. But he reckoned without firearms.

A revolver crashed out from aft and a bullet went ricocheting away from the steel foremast, pinging past Langsom's ear. Two, three, four shots followed, and Jack leapt down to the deck below, followed by Langsom, who had a bullet-hole through the sleeve of his coat.

Down on the weldeck, surrounded by men pressing in to capture them, the person aft with the revolver ceased fire.

Langsom was magnificent. His great arms flailed in the air like the sails of a windmill. It did not speak well for boxing style at his school in Copenhagen, but it was most effective in prolonging the fight.

Ferrers Locke, by his own skilful manoeuvring, had managed to get to the wireless-cabin before any pursuit of him had been started.

The operator confronted the detective angrily, but went down under a straight left that promised to keep him senseless for a few minutes—quite long enough for Locke's needs.

Luckily, Ferrers Locke had examined the type of set on the Trumpeter, when the Stormcock had captured her on the Dogger while she was at her evil trawling work as the Phantom. This set on the Ocean Wave was exactly the same, with a transmitting radius of a hundred and seventy-five miles.

A swift glance showed Locke that the instrument was right for broadcasting. He slammed down in the seat and rapidly tapped at the key. He worked feverishly, desperately. Even a short message takes some time to send in Morse. And when at any second an interruption might come, it seems to take a very long time indeed.

Heavy footfalls bounded pounding along the decks at last. Locke left the message at that point. He had already sent out, "LOCKE N COAST ICEL." But he drew back there, and, stooping, grasped the operator in his arms, as it still in struggle with him.

Then the men burst in.

Ferrers Locke dropped the senseless form of the operator, and nimbly leapt towards the instrument. But Stromsund had him by the waist. One, two! Locke tapped the key twice, then struggled and stretched to the full in an endeavour to get at the instrument again. He fought desperately as they dragged him away, and Stromsund laughed harshly as the detective, apparently exhausted, and panting hard, hung limp in the arms that held him.

"A clever move, Ferrers Locke," scoffed Stromsund. "But it didn't work. Many a ship at sea will be puzzled by those two sharp buzzes in their operators' earphones, I don't doubt. But I do not see that it will help you much on Brek Katel."

"You villain!" gasped Locke, feigning an uncontrollable anger and some fear.

"I am glad that at last you realise to what you are doomed," continued Stromsund. "But, believe me, it is really far worse than you imagine. Away with him! Bundle him into the lamp-room along with the other two."

He won't be anxious to try desperate measures like this again, I feel sure."

Ferrers Locke was dragged away and pitched into the lamp-room, where Langsom and Drake were already safely imprisoned once more. The steel door clanged, the key turned, and the footsteps of the men died away.

The three were rather the worse for wear, but Langsom and Drake turned anxious eyes on Locke.

The famous private detective, as he bound up a bad cut on the back of his hand with a strip torn off the sleeve of his shirt, nodded swiftly.

"I got something out, at all events," he said. "If the Stormcock picks it up, or hears of it from some other vessel, even Proctor won't be able to misunderstand LOCKE N ICEL—I fancy."

"Gee! You got all that out, sir?" whispered Jack, whose eyes were colouring rapidly. "Then the scheme was a howling success."

"Our part of it was, so far," said Locke. "But whether it will be heard of, or actually picked up by our friends, remains to be proved. We can do no more, and, after our terrific exertions, I should imagine that sleep would do us good. I am hungry, too, but I suppose we shall have to go supperless to bed because of our little escapade."

"Well, I could chew up a capstan bar," said Jack. "But what's supper, or lack of it, with the knowledge that even now the Stormcock might be pointing north in obedience to that message?"

Ferrers Locke smiled as Jack tied the rough bandage on his hand.

"Yes, might be, my boy," he said. "I am afraid the chance of that message bringing us aid is slim. But it leaves us a hope."

"One of your poets, he writes 'The Pleasures of Hope,'" said Langsom. "That is well to have that pleasure, for there is no other pleasure in Brek Katel."

"Oh, bust Brek Katel!" said Jack. "You're getting cheerful again, Mr. Langsom. Here's one for a snooze before Brek Katel gets into my brain and gives me nightmare every sleeping moment of my life. Which won't be very long, you'd like to add to that, I know."

With that, grinning cheerfully, Jack settled down in a corner, drew one of the blankets they had put in there for Langsom over his knees, and closed his eyes.

"I think, Langsom, we might follow his example," said Locke.

"Yes, if it is possible, it is best, Herr Locke," said Langsom.

Physically exhausted as they were, the three unfortunate occupants of that little lamp-locker were soon asleep. And they did not wake till the morning, when the pitching and groaning of the trawler denoted that they were now experiencing heavy weather.

A good meal was brought to them, and they ate it eagerly. Big mugs of steaming coffee—quite good coffee, too—were brought in, and glad they were to feel the hot liquid warming them through.

Later in the day, as the trawler lurched on with the seas abeam, they had another meal.

"Stromsund's getting quite a kindly soul in his old age," remarked Drake, as he tackled some fried fish and potatoes.

"Ah, but it will make Brek Katel seem the harder, this plenty," sighed the gloomy Dane.

"There you go again, Mr. Langsom," said Jack. "But I expect you're



Ferrers Locke gave a warning cry and dodged as something came hurtling towards him from the darkness at the end of the cave. The flying missile passed over Drake's head, just missing Langsom, who jumped to one side. (See page 28.)

about right. They say that to see Niagara Falls to best advantage you should approach blindfolded, and then have the bandage suddenly snatched from your eyes, so that the might of the Falls can be fully realised, as it wouldn't be if you saw 'em growing bigger and bigger as the steamer approached. That's Stromsund's idea with us, I expect. The lack of things in Brek Katel will impress us more if we realise them suddenly, instead of having 'em grow on us gradually, you see. Anyhow, I'm going to give Stromsund full roin in this particular. Will you hand over the fish dish again, please, Mr. Langsom?"

"If it is doomed that we go down to a place of desolation, Herr Locke—"

"It looks as if we are," said Locke.

"Then I wish no better companion than your young assistant."

"He'd chatter like a monkey while falling down a cliff," said Locke.

"Oh, you English, it is no wonder you muddle through to victory."

"Thank you," said Ferrers Locke, bowing. "I, too, would like a little more fish, Langsom."

"And I feel my appetite growing," said Langsom. "Perhaps it is best for me to see what I can do before the fish dish pays you two any more visits."

"That's the ticket," said Jack. "Tuck it away, Mr. Langsom, and if

you haven't enough we'll ring for more."

Ferrers Locke laughed softly as he leant back after his meal.

"I'd like to smoke," he said, "but unhappily that villainous skipper has purloined my pipe and tobacco. I want to think."

"They say that no one can keep anything back from a dying man—I mean refuse to grant him a request, sir," said Jack. "And we're dying as sure as anything. Mr. Langsom will bear me out. Why not summon a servant, and put it up to Lord High Admiral Stanislaw Stromsund?"

"Not a bad idea," said Locke, rousing.

But the approach of men made them all forget about tobacco. The door was thrown suddenly open, and, the prisoners not being given a chance to walk on their own, they were roughly dragged to the deck.

An ugly black coastline stretched away under their lee, the water creaming white at the foot of the rugged rocks. The boat had been launched, and was bobbing up and down alongside the trawler, four men in it.

"Down ye git!" ordered one of the men conducting the prisoners.

Stromsund stood on the bridge with the evil little hang-dog-faced skipper.

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"There you are—Brek Katel!" cried Stromsund, sweeping his hand in a semi-circle to indicate the desolate coastline under their lee. "Don't forget those bearings, Locke."

The three were bundled into the boat, menaced by a revolver the while, and, still under the muzzle of the weapon, they were rowed ashore, and tipped out on to a hard, bare rock.

Then the boat returned to the trawler, which was heaving heavily as she lay to about half a mile off shore.

"It would be best for us to climb at once," said Langsom. "We may find it useful to note in what direction that trawler steams off."

So they climbed the frowning rocks, the awful solitude of the place seeming to freeze them to the very marrow of their bones. At the top they turned towards the sea. The trawler was already miles away in what they judged to be the east.

They looked round, and even Jack felt a hollow feeling round his heart, a chill that seemed to numb his brain.

To the north, nothing but bald, swelling sea; to the east and west, nothing but frowning black rocks; to the south, nothing but bare, stony, barren land, with the white peaks of the "jokuls," or mountains, in the distance—an insurmountable barrier between them and civilisation.

Ferrers Locke, Drake, and Langsom were indeed in the heart of desolation!

Marooned!

STROMSUND'S trawler faded away in the distance to the east. The three marooned people stood staring at the smudge of smoke on the horizon for a few minutes. Then Ferrers Locke spoke.

"Well, our first job is to find water—drinking water. Thirst is the first thing to overcome the senses—"

"And finding drinking water might mean the finding of at least one source of food supply," said Langsom. "If we discover anything one could call a stream there may be salmon in it."

"We must bear in mind," said Locke, "that water is not the only thing we need. Thus, as we search for water, we must remember our other needs, food, shelter, and the means to make a fire."

"There is a way of chipping fire with two pieces of flint," said Langsom. "We have plenty of flint here on Brek Katel—"

"Wish flint was good to eat!" said Jack Drake.

Ferrers Locke made an exclamation of impatience.

"Here we are talking about fire—merely the fourth on our list of necessities! Come, we must get busy while we still have strength to climb and explore. First of all, then, a search for water."

The three set off, to Ferrers Locke's advice, in a south-westerly direction. The detective could see a depression in the jokuls, or mountains, there, and that meant a valley—and a valley was the most likely place to find a stream.

"We will tramp for three hours only," said Locke. "Then we must go off at an angle to strike the coast again. If the Stormcock comes up looking for us, we must not leave them time to go away again, thinking they have not struck the right spot. It's rather a tall order, you know, to search a matter of six hundred miles of rugged coastline. So we must

have someone or something to give the warning should Proctor come steaming along by the coast."

"We shall not be able to find any sort of a flag or anything to mount it on—" began Langsom.

"Your shirt wouldn't be so bad," said Jack.

"My shoelaces for a fire-bow, my shirt for a flag, my trousers for a salmon-trap. Pray tell me with what I shall keep myself warm?" inquired Langsom.

Jack Drake laughed.

"We'll all have to contribute items from our clothing," he said. "But as to a signal on a headland, we have plenty of rocks and could build a pyramidal beacon or something—"

"Or, if we can make fire, a smoke-wreath from a smother fire of damp turf would be useful," put in Locke.

The party tramped on. Langsom broke the silence.

"I hear the sound of rushing water," he said suddenly. "It is a stream, Herr Locke."

"It will be just over that sharp rise ahead. Come along. If we have struck fresh water so soon we shall be lucky."

Eagerly the three pushed on. And, to their delight, they saw a brawling stream below them as soon as they had mounted the crest. But Langsom uttered a swift exclamation of dismay.

"What is it?" asked Locke.

"It is a sulphur stream," said Langsom. "There will be no fish there. Neither will the water be fit to drink. And, what is more, Herr Locke, this stream proves that we are in sulphur country. All the waters will be fed by sulphur springs—"

"That sounds cheerful!" said Jack, his heart seeming to drop down into his shoes.

"What did Stromsund say about Brek Katel?" muttered Ferrers Locke darkly. "A place to drive you mad! What more effective for that than hope being constantly raised and then being dashed to the ground? Then, Langsom, our only course is to look for rain pools—"

"In which there will be no fish, Herr Locke," said Langsom, as if he were chanting a dirge.

"Water is our first consideration, at all events," said Ferrers Locke. "Search about the rocks for rain pools."

And search the trio did. But the rocks were porous, and every basin was bone-dry.

Drake was not quite so chirpy now, though he did make pitiful efforts to joke now and again. Ferrers Locke remained unmoved.

"We must be thankful that I was able to get that wireless message for aid broadcast before Stromsund overcame us on the trawler," he said at length.

"Rescue from the outside world, Herr Locke, is our only hope."

It seemed absolutely useless searching for any means of sustenance inland. Rain pools, if any existed, would be close to the coast, where the rocks were not porous. So off they set, at an angle, to strike the coast again farther to the westward.

They did find a rain pool in a cup-like depression on top of a big rock. And they drank their fill, and were greatly refreshed.

With fresh heart, they searched the horizon for any smudge of smoke which would denote that Proctor was hurrying to their rescue. But the long line where sea meets sky was quite unbroken.

Their thirst quenched, the trio began to feel the pangs of hunger. The day was drawing to a close. That night without food would not be a great hardship. But the next day it would be absolutely necessary for them to find something to eat and also more rain pools.

"The sea must be full of fish," said Jack Drake, looking along the fringe of the rocks.

"But we cannot get them like we could salmon from the streams," said Langsom. "We have no hooks, lines, or anything else commonly used for taking fish from deep water."

"Some seaweeds boil up like spinach," said Ferrers Locke. "We must experiment to-morrow. In the morning, when the sun has dried up any moisture of the night, we must try to make fire for our signal, and for experiments with seaweed."

"There are limpets on the rocks," said Jack. "Limpet and seaweed soup should be all right."

"Many a true word is spoken in jest, my boy," said the Baker Street detective quietly. "You may yet be thankful that there are a few limpets on the rocks. I had already thought of the limpets."

Jack Drake clambered down the rocks to see if he could chip off one or two of the shells, to examine them to see if there was an edible fish inside. But when he was half-way down the rugged descent to the weed-festooned rocks below high-water mark, his foot slipped, and, with a yell, he fell heels over head down a chasm, up which the green water below surged with a booming note.

"What was that?" demanded Langsom, half-turning his head in a listening attitude.

Ferrers Locke sprang to his feet.

"It was a cry from Drake!" he snapped. "Something has happened to him. Quick, Langsom, follow me!"

Treasure Trove!

LOCKE and Langsom, picking their way carefully, climbed down the rocks towards the sea.

"This is the way he went," said the detective. "Here is a scrape on the rock from one of the nails in his shoe. We must descend farther, Langsom."

The way became very difficult. But Ferrers Locke made no mistake, and picked out a route which Langsom followed exactly.

At last Ferrers Locke peered over a ledge to the water below. He saw Jack just heaving himself up out of the sea on to a small projecting piece of rock.

"Drake!" called Locke.

The young assistant looked up.

"Sorry I yelled, guv'nor," he said.

"I fell down."

"Can you get up again?"

"Not here. I fell into the water. I'll have to swim round farther. There's sure to be a place where I can climb from the water farther round."

"Then why are you lingering there? Better for you to keep swimming than to stand shivering in that cold chasm."

"There's a cave here," returned Jack. "It's narrow, but it looks deep. Now I'm here, and wet, I'll have a look at it."

"If it might be useful to us, do," returned Locke, settling himself as comfortably as possible to wait for Jack's report.

From the ledge on to which he had scrambled, Jack Drake was able to edge along towards the cave mouth. It was merely a narrow slit in the rock. But its very blackness seemed to denote depth. And, in that treacherous part of the year, in such a high latitude, it would be necessary for them to have shelter at night.

The nights were lengthening, for the summer was passing, and the dark hours were very chilly. Warmth in their bodies would mean that they could do with less food, or, as Jack grimly told himself, would enable them to live longer without food.

If they could devise a means of getting up and down without becoming wet, this cave might be a good refuge for them, and handy for the headland to attend to their signal.

The boy passed through the opening, and found that the cave widened farther in, the floor sloping upwards at a sharp angle. He passed along.

It was very dim where he now stood, but, his eyes becoming used to the gloom, he could see that the cave was indeed very deep, and sloping upwards all the time. He mounted.

He came to a flat, level floor, and his foot struck something heavy. It made him yelp, but the object rolled with a metallic ring. So he fell on his knees and groped for it.

He had it in his hands at last, and found that it was round on one side, with a rim the other side. He felt inside the rim.

"Jingo, it's a metal vessel of some sort," he exclaimed to himself. "Feels like a blessed helmet."

He went back to the light with it and examined it carefully. It was indeed a helmet, made of brass. It was pale green in colour from verdigris.

"It's a Viking helmet, or I'll eat my braces, which I probably shall do before I'm finished," he said to himself. Then he went to the entrance to the cave and shouted to Locke as to his find.

"It'll do for boiling things in," said Locke, "or for fetching water. . . Explore farther, my boy. But don't waste time on antiques."

Jack discovered two more of the helmets. He also found other things of metal—the brass hilt of a sword, some curiously-linked chain, and a few small odd pieces. There seemed nothing else, so he carried his finds in his arms to the entrance.

"What have you got now, Drake?" asked Ferrers Locke, as soon as Drake appeared.

"Two more helmets, a sword-hilt, odds and ends of brass, studs from leather shields, I think, and about three feet of gold chain."

"That all there?"

"I think so, though I could only grope about and feel."

"Well, bring one of the helmets and the chain, and try to get out of that. There's a mountable part of the coast about fifty yards round from your chasm. You'll have to swim round, my boy."

Jack entered the water, and swam round to the spot Locke had indicated. He was soon up on the level ground above the coastal rocks, where Locke and Langsom awaited him.

The detective examined the helmet and the chain.

"It is Viking, for sure, this helmet," he said. "The chain, I should say, was loot. Well, if we can't make fire, we have a saucepan, at all events. I'm afraid your cave won't be much good to us unless we can devise means to get up and down without swimming, my boy."

"It's dry as a bone, farther up, sir," said Jack. "We'll be able to keep warm in it, if we can hack out a descent on the sheer rock leading down to it."

"That is so."

Darkness was falling, so Ferrers Locke said that their best course was now to look for the most sheltered place and huddle together for sleep. They found a hollow in a rock and crept in there, Jack shivering in his wet clothes. Ferrers Locke made him strip, wring out and spread his things in the open, and make himself as comfortable as possible in his own coat, wedged in between himself and Langsom.

In this way the three unfortunate adventurers passed a most miserable night. They were up at the first streak of daylight, glad to get out and "have a rest," as Jack jokingly put it. But the rawness of the morning seemed to have crept into their very bones, and they dragged themselves about with stiff movements, longing for the sun to rise and warm them.

Broad daylight brought no sign of a break on the horizon. They were all weak from want of food. They searched and found another rain-pool and gratefully drank the sweet water.

"I don't wonder that people go mad on Brek Katel," said Jack, as he spread his clothes out in the strengthening sun to dry. "Have you got an idea for a fresh move, sir?"

"No, I'm afraid not, my boy," said Locke, who was in an attitude of deep thought. "But your finding that Viking cave and our discovering that stream to be fed by sulphur springs has given me food for thought."

"Pity it won't give us food for chewing, sir," said Jack jokingly.

Ferrers Locke laughed.

"That, of course, is of greatest importance to us. But I can't help thinking about the case we are on," said Locke. "John Carr's father bought this desolate land for something. Why? Did he buy it, as John Carr fears, to boost a bubble concern on the public, be the company promoter, then burst the bubble? Or did he know of some richness that this land holds?"

"Well, we haven't discovered anything rich," said Jack.

"No, I know that. But I ask the question merely to point out that this is one of the questions we must find an answer for, if, indeed, it is to be permitted that we carry on this case. So far, my reconstruction of the case points out that Brek Katel is a place worth owning. Stromsund wouldn't go to such lengths as to have phantoms wrecking trawling gear on the Dogger to buy a pig in a poke; and I still hope we shall be able to investigate on the spots marked by the bearings which you copied on to my map, Drake, and which Proctor now holds. Langsom, what is the law of Iceland in regard to treasure trove?"

"I do not know," replied Langsom, showing no interest whatever in Locke's conversation.

"It may be well that the owner of the land claims it all," said Locke. "I wish I had my little brochure on the laws of countries in regard to treasure trove. However, Brek Katel may hold much treasure brought here by the Vikings. One never knows. And Stromsund would want to become the owner of any land holding such treasure, if the landowner can claim it."

"Couldn't he shift it on the q.t., sir, even if he doesn't own the land?"

"He could. But he could not dispose of it. And even bejewelled chalices and precious stones, such as those wild Vikings raided from ancient minster and monastery, have to go through certain channels before they can be turned into coin of the realm. Thus, where they had been found would have to be disclosed, for the sake of history if nothing else."

"So you fancy that Viking treasure may be at the bottom of it?" asked Jack, forgetting his hunger for a while.

"It may. But, as I said, those sulphur streams also give me food for thought. What is sulphur worth, Langsom, exported from Iceland?"

"Sulphur? What? Oh, sulphur!" Langsom collected his wits. "It sells in England, I believe, for four of your shillings per hundredweight. Yes, I know that was the last market price."

"Well, we can't live on sulphur, even if it is here!" laughed Locke. "So we'll waste no more time worrying about it. Drake, you stay here with Langsom, watching the horizon, till your clothes dry off thoroughly. I intend to have a little walk—to get up an appetite for breakfast."

Locke strolled off, leaving his assistant and Langsom sitting beside each other on the rocky ground.

Jack was just settling in his mind how best to cook a Viking helmetful of limpets and green seaweed, when Ferrers Locke returned hurriedly. The detective, usually calm and unhurried, seemed excited.

"Drake! Langsom!" he called. "Come over here and see what I've found!"

A Hopeful Trail!

"IS it anything to eat?" asked Jack, scrambling into his now dry clothes.

Locke laughed.

"No. But it is, no doubt, pointing in that direction," he said. "Come along."

Drake and Langsom scrambled over the rocks in the wake of the detective. Locke halted after he had travelled about three hundred yards, and was on his knees on the ground by the time Jack Drake and Langsom ranged up.

"What is it?" asked Langsom.

"A footprint," said Locke. "The bare foot of a man. See, on this sandy bit here. And made during the dark, just after the moisture of the very early morning, I should say."

Drake and Langsom peered excitedly at the footprint.

"Gosh, if a man can be moving about in this spot, he can feed!" said Jack. "What do you make of it, sir?"

"I am completely puzzled," replied Locke. "But, as you say, we don't need to overstrain our mental powers to deduce that if one man can live so can others, somehow. This imprint is pointing towards the south-west. We will follow in that direction, watching out very carefully for any further signs on any softer parts we come across."

With hope renewed, the three set off, spreading out a bit. Langsom discovered the next imprint. It was barely discernible, but was surely a human footprint.

"Still pointing south-west," said Locke. "We must push on. This seems our only link with life, unless the Stormcock arrives within the next twenty-four hours."

Jack discovered the next, and then Ferrers Locke discovered another. The toes were still pointing towards the

south-west. And there was fresh evidence that the prints had been made only a few hours previously.

The trail was lost on a gravelly stretch of ground, and the three searched diligently, till well into the afternoon, the other side of the gravel before they picked up the trail again.

A whoop from Jack denoted a fresh discovery, and Locke and Langsom hurried to the side of the youngster.

"This one is deep, sir, and shows he struck this part of the western edge of that gravel-bed," said Jack. "Still pointing to the south-west."

"He cannot have gone far," said Locke. "See if we can follow the trail again from here."

It became comparatively easy now. A footprint was found turning off at right angles to the usual direction. Jack and Langsom followed this while Locke searched about ahead, on the true direction.

Drake came running back, quite out of breath owing to his weakness.

"Jingo, there's a water-hole of beautiful water over there, sir!" he said. "Langsom and I have had a drink. He turned off for that, and we've picked up the trail again going towards the south-west once more, as near as we can judge from the sun."

"Then the rock is not porous there?"

"Yes, sir, it is. But the bottom of the pool has been cemented over with some sort of cement. Langsom says it is a cement made with lava-dust—no,

pumice-dust, he called it. But it's the same thing, I suppose?"

Ferrers Locke accompanied Jack to the water-hole.

"This is indeed a most fortunate find," said Locke, after he had drunk his fill. "We must insist on our unknown friend sharing his water-pool with us. Yes, it has been cemented on the bottom. That took some time to do, too, so the man must have some means of getting food. We must find him. Come on, follow the trail."

By evening they came to a great cluster of lava rocks, where in the face of a rocky upheaval, the result of some ancient volcanic eruption, the footprints in the sparse sand here and there led to a hole or fissure in the rock. Outside was a patch of soil—poor enough soil it was, too—spread over the rock-surface to a depth of about two feet. Some withered sort of herb growth, long since dead, covered the soil.

"This is the home of the man we have been following," said Locke. "Follow me! We will enter cautiously."

The three entered the cave, Ferrers Locke leading. The famous private detective approached cautiously, for the light was dim, and the bare-footed man who dwelt there would be certain to resent their presence. That was proved by the fact that, as denoted by the footprints, he had spied on them in the night, and had not accosted them

but slunk off to his home at the first greying of dawn.

Locke halted when well inside the cave. Drake and the Dane were close behind, the latter breathing heavily.

The three peered about in the cave. They could make out a rough bench, built with drift-wood, the gleaming of years; perhaps, at the water's edge. For drift-wood coming down from the Arctic is not plentiful.

Other than the bench, the cave seemed empty. The floor of it was covered with white turf, and it made a nice warm carpet on the cold rock floor.

"No one here?" asked Drake.

"I don't know yet," replied Locke. "Be careful, my boy! There are alcoves! Ah—"

Ferrers Locke broke off with an exclamation, and dodged as something came hurtling at him from the darkness at the nether end of the cave. It was a lump of rock and it flew with whistling precision, having been propelled by powerful arms.

Luckily, Locke dodged in time. The missile passed over Jack's head, just missing Langsom who jumped to one side, and then thundered on to the rocky floor of the cave entrance where it splintered into hundreds of pieces.

"Into the shadows, quick!" shouted Locke.

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