

TWO MORE FREE MOTOR-CAR BADGES THIS WEEK, CHUMS

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The Magnet 2^d

EVERY SATURDAY.

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FREE!
THESE
Superb Metal
MOTOR-CAR
BADGES
GIVEN AWAY
INSIDE!



HELD UP BY BANDITS!

(A thrilling incident from the grand story of schoolboy adventure, featuring Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars—inside.)

HARRY WHARTON & CO. IN AMERICA!

HELD UP



Harry Wharton & Co. have certainly found America a land of hustle and bustle—even bandits put in their fair share of work. But even bandits, behind loaded firearms, get very little change out of the doughty chums of Greyfriars!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

"Halt!"

BILLY BUNTER opened his eyes, set his spectacles straight on his fat little nose, yawned portentously, and blinked round him.

"I say, you fellows, where are we now?" he inquired.

"On the train," answered Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry!"

Bunter knew that he was on the train. Its bumping had awakened him from his afternoon's nap.

Harry Wharton & Co. had been long on the train. It was a wonderful experience to cover three thousand miles in a train. But long before the three-thousandth mile was anywhere near, they were rather tired of the train.

City after city, State after State, had rushed by them; and they had hardly left the cars since Chicago had dropped behind. And they wondered more and more why Mr. Hiram K. Fish was taking them across the United States at such speed.

"I mean, where are we, you ass?" said Bunter. "Have we got to Texas yet?"

The juniors grinned.

On a journey across the Continent from New York to San Francisco, nobody but Bunter would have expected to arrive in Texas.

But Bunter's idea of geography was weird and wonderful.

"We've passed Texas, fathead," said Bob.

"You might have pointed it out to me," said Bunter reproachfully.

"You wouldn't have seen it, old chap, even with your specs—it was about four hundred miles south of the railroad."

"Well, where are we now?" grunted Bunter, blinking out of the window at a hilly country. "Is this Mexico?"

"Oh, my hat! Mexico's farther south than Texas, you ass. Do you expect to find all America strung along the railway line?"

"Well, we're somewhere, I suppose," grunted the Owl of the Remove. "I suppose this is Arizona? We've passed

the Rocky Mountains, and I know that Arizona is west of the Rockies."

"So is Honolulu," remarked Johnny Bull, "and Japan, and India! And England, if you keep on far enough."

"I say, Fishy, where are we now?" demanded Bunter, turning his big spectacles on Fisher T. Fish. "Is this Arizona or Florida?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish snorted.

"You pesky moss-head!" said Fishy. "I guess you make me tired. Do you figure that Florida is west of the Rockies?"

"Isn't it?" asked Bunter.

"Nope, you jay! Nope, you moss-head! Nope, you mugwump! Nope, you locoed gink!"

"We're in Nevada now, Bunter," said Harry Wharton, laughing. Fisher T. Fish being too disgusted by Bunter's ignorance of the great United States to take the trouble to enlighten him.

"Nevada!" repeated Bunter. "Never heard of it."

"Never heard of it!" repeated Fisher T. Fish. "And you reckon that you larn geography and things at Greyfriars! Never heard of Nevada! Waal, carry me home to die!"

"Last stop before California!" grinned Bob Cherry. "We shall be climbing the Sierra Nevada presently, and—"

"What's that?" asked Bunter.

"Mountains, ass! To-morrow we shall be in California, when we've crossed the sierras—"

"What do they call them sierras for, if they're mountains?" demanded Bunter. "I thought the Americans spoke English—a kind of English, at least."

"This used to be a Spanish country, and they've left some of their names behind," explained Bob. "It was all part of Mexico once. There was a war, and the United States bagged it. Isn't that right, Fishy?"

"Yep! I guess we whipped the Mexicans out of their boots," said Fisher T. Fish. "Just like we did the Germans."

"Like you whatted?" ejaculated Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

BY BANDITS!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

The Greyfriars juniors chortled, and Fisher T. Fish frowned.

"We live and learn," remarked Frank Nugent.

"The learnfulness is terrific," observed Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! The train's slowing down!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"I don't see any station—"

"Depot!" snapped Fisher T. Fish.

"My mistake—I mean depot! I guess and reckon I don't see any depot around, but these cars sure are slowing down some!" grinned Bob. "Got it right that time, Fishy."

The conductor came in at the door at one end of the long car, hurried through, and disappeared by the door at the other end.

Two or three passengers called to him, but the man hurried out without speaking.

Most of the passengers were on their feet now, staring from the windows.

"Something's up!" said Vernon Smith.

"The upfulness is terrific."

"I say, you fellows—"

"They're jamming on the brakes," said Harry Wharton. "Something on the line, perhaps."

"Herd of buffaloes, perhaps," suggested Bunter. "I've read somewhere of American trains being stopped by herds of buffaloes crossing the line."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You pesky moss-head," gasped Fisher T. Fish. "Do you reckon that there are herds of buffaloes wandering over the Yew-nited States in these days?"

"Aren't there?" asked Bunter cheerfully.

"Of all the dog-goned geeks—"

"It's not buffaloes," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "But there's something on the line. We're stopping."

"There's no station in sight," said Lord Mauleverer.

"I guess there's no depot for miles," said Fisher T. Fish. "We ain't stopping at a depot. Here, brakie, what's the trouble?"

The brakeman hurried through the car.

"Keep your seats!" he called out, and disappeared.

There was a buzz of excited voices in the long car. Thirty or more passengers were on their feet now, staring from the windows at the ranges of low hills and scrub that surrounded the train. Mr. Hiram K. Fish came along from the smoking-car, and stopped by the juniors' seats. They all looked at him inquiringly.

"What's up, popper?" asked Fisher T. Fish.

"You can search me!" answered Mr. Fish.

"I say, you fellows, is it a hold-up?" asked Bunter. "I've heard of American trains being held up by bandits!"

"You've heard of a lot of things about the Yew-nited States, haven't you?" snapped Fisher T. Fish.

Mr. Fish smiled.

"Don't worry about a hold-up," he said. "I guess there ain't any bandits holding up a train on the Pacific Railroad. No, siree!"

"Are bandits as out of date as buffaloes?" asked Nugent.

"Sure!"

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Three loud rifle-shots rang out, and there was a crashing of broken glass, and a yell of alarm the whole length of the train.

Mr. Fish jumped.

Bob Cherry whistled.

"That doesn't sound as if bandits are quite out of date on American railroads," he remarked.

"Great snakes!" ejaculated Fisher T. Fish.

Bang! bang!

Smash!

It was a hold-up!

American railroad seats were not planned to afford cover for travellers with the circumference of William George Bunter. His head disappeared, but the rest of him remained in full view; and considering him favourably placed for an application of boot-leather, Bob Cherry planted his boot upon the rest of him.

There was a fearful yell from Bunter. "Yooop! Keep off! I haven't any money! Nothing at all! Keep off! Help! Police!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess it's railroad bandits," said Hiram K. Fish. "Gosh! Who'd have figured on that! Gee-whiz!" Mr. Fish hurriedly jerked his "roll" from his pocket, and slipped it under a coat that lay loose on a seat. "Keep your heads, you lads; they won't hurt you if you don't kick up a fuss. I guess it's only dollars they want, not blood!"

"I say, you fellows! Keep 'em off!"

"Shut up!" roared Johnny Bull. "You fat villain, ain't you jolly well

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Hold-Up!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. caught their breath.

There was no doubt about it—the westward-bound train was "held up"—stopped by bandits!

It thrilled the Greyfriars juniors. The thrill, certainly, was not quite a pleasant one. A railroad hold-up, with bullets flying and train windows smashing, men shouting and women screaming, was an adventure more agreeable to read about than to experience. The juniors felt their hearts thumping; even Lord Mauleverer took the trouble to detach himself from his seat, and to ejaculate: "Good gad!"

But his lordship did not look in the least scared; neither did the Bunder or the Famous Five. Fisher T. Fish looked much more serious than they did—and he ducked his head at each bang, though the bullets flew nowhere near the car in which the juniors were standing. Billy Bunter gave a squeak of terror.

"Yaroo! I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Help!" yelled Bunter.

"Shut up!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Yow-ow-ow! Help!"

Bunter bounced out of his seat, and made a frantic effort to crawl underneath it.



ashamed of yourself! Why, Fishy's showing more pluck than you."

"Yaroooh!"

Bunter was not bothering about pluck. He was deeply concerned for the safety of his fat person. That, at the moment, was the only matter of real importance within the limits of the wide universe.

The juniors looked out, into the wintry sunlight that glimmered on hills and scrubby patches of wood. The hold-up was taking place in one of the loneliest stretches of the railroad in the State of Nevada—a state which prides itself upon being a hundred-per-cent modern and progressive, but is still in some respects "wild and woolly."

Under a group of trees at a little distance from the track, a hooded black motor-car was halted, which evidently belonged to the bandits. It was not, as in the wild old days, a bunch of fiery horsemen in Stetson hats, who were attacking the train. The men they could see along the track did not wear Stetson hats, or bandoliers, or guns slung in holsters. They wore Derby hats, as the Americans call bowlers, and common store clothes; and the only genuine "bandit" touch was the black mask drawn across each rascally face.

The train had been halted by a tree-trunk that was felled across the line. The engine driver had had to stop or rush to collision and destruction.

Immediately the train had halted, a number of the bandits had swung themselves aboard.

Along the track, five or six of them could be seen, and several were firing their rifles; only, it was evident, to "rattle" the passengers, and not with the intention of taking life.

That the bandits would take life if they were resisted, however, was quite assured.

Already, in a few moments, three or four of them were surrounding the express car; and the messenger in charge of it was standing with his hands held high above his head.

"I guess they're after the loot in the express car!" said a passenger near the juniors, a travelling "drummer" with a fat, shiny face and a goatee beard. "Maybe they won't worry us any."

"I guess they're after all they can get their paws on!" grunted Mr. Hiram K. Fish.

The drummer reached to his hip pocket and drew out a Colt revolver. There was a very warlike expression on his fat face.

"They ain't going through me!" he said.

"For cat's sake, put that thing away!" exclaimed Mr. Fish, in alarm. "If they see a gun in the car, they'll shoot for sure."

The commercial traveller shook his head.

"I got my samples along," he said. "They ain't freezing on to my samples, sircle! You hear me talk!"

"I'll tell the world!" exclaimed Mr. Fish. "Put it away! I guess they'll riddle the car if they see a gun."

"Look here, that's rot!" exclaimed the Bounder. "We jolly well ought to put up a fight! I don't see being robbed."

"Can it!" snapped Mr. Fish. "Are you going to put up your umbrella agin their shooting-irons, you young jay. Got a quick-firer about you?"

"I don't see giving in to a gang of thieves," growled the Bounder. "We can keep them out of the car. There's enough here—"

"Forget it!" snapped Mr. Fish.

"Let 'em put a nose into the car,"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,096.

said the fat drummer, flourishing his Colt. "Let 'em! I guess I'll let daylight through 'em!"

The door at the end of the car was flung suddenly open.

In the doorway, a man in check clothes, a Derby hat, and a black mask, appeared, with a big revolver in his hand.

That revolver was at a level, looking along the aisle down the car, and seeming to every passenger present to be aimed at him personally.

"Hands up!"

The words were rapped out sharply by the bandit.

The juniors glanced quickly at the fat drummer. Now was his chance to let daylight through the nose that had been put into the car. They were not wholly surprised to hear the Colt drop heavily to the floor, and to see the drummer's hands go up over his head as quickly as anybody else's. A bandit in hand, so to speak, was more serious than any number of bandits in the bush; and at sight of the mask and the levelled revolver, the drummer thought better of it with remarkable celerity.

All hands in the long car were lifted into the air.

The Bounder hesitated, angry and obstinate; but it was obviously folly to draw the desperado's fire, and his hands went up with the rest.

There was a grin on Bob Cherry's face as he elevated his hands. It was, as he murmured to his comrades, as good as a Wild West film.

It was rather more serious than a Wild West film, however.

Under the bandit's mask showed a square jaw, stubbly with beard, and discoloured teeth set hard. From that jaw alone, it was easy to see that the rascal was ready to shoot.

Bang! bang! bang! came from along the train. Following the shots came a loud, ringing cry. Somebody had been wounded. No doubt some reckless passenger had attempted resistance, and had been shot.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob.

"Hands up!" roared the bandit in the doorway again, catching sight of Billy Bunter wriggling on the floor.

"Bunter!" panted Bob. "Get up, you fat fool! Put your paws up if you don't want to be shot."

"Yaroooh!"

Bang!

The bandit fired a shot along the car, as a warning. It was fired with

Bunter staggered to his feet.

His fat hands shot up into the air, as if he were reaching for the roof of the car. He shut his eyes tight behind his big spectacles. The sight of the masked bandit and the levelled six-shooter was too much for William George Bunter.

"Keep 'em up, you 'uns!" growled the bandit. "Next time I pull trigger there'll be a funeral around hyer!"

The door at the opposite end of the car opened, and another bandit came in. While the first man held the whole car covered with his "gun," the second man walked along the aisle, "going through" the passengers.

Money and valuables were handed out to him on all sides.

The bandit took his time about it. When he did not consider that a passenger had handed out his probable all, he stopped, and ran his hands through that passenger's pockets, often bringing further wealth to light.

When he came to the spot where Mr. Fish and the juniors stood, Hiram K. Fish handed him a hundred dollar bill.

"Forget it, sir," said the bandit cheerfully. "Where's the rest?"

"I guess you got the lot," said Mr. Fish, shaking his head. "I guess there ain't no more in my raga."

"Sure?" asked the bandit.

"Sure!" said Mr. Fish.

"You made your will?" asked the bandit, touching a revolver in his belt.

Without answering that question, Mr. Hiram K. Fish picked out the roll he had hidden under the coat on the seat and handed it to the robber.

Then the schoolboys were called upon to hand over their money. The Bounder grinned sourly as he handed over a dollar bill—all he had. Smithy, who was generally rolling in money, had left all his wealth behind in Chicago, and was not to be in funds again till the party reached San Francisco.

He was rather glad of it at this moment. Harry Wharton & Co. had little more than a few dollars each, which they handed over, there being no help for it. Unarmed passengers could not resist armed robbers, ready to shoot; and, though there were five hundred people on the train, the seven or eight thieves had it all their own way, as is usual in railroad hold-ups. Billy Bunter had nothing to hand over, except the threepenny-piece he had brought with him from Greyfriars; and when he held out that diminutive coin the bandit stared at it and grinned.

"I guess you can keep that," he said. "We ain't here to collect curiosities."

Lord Mauleverer felt in his pockets and handed over a bill for fifty dollars. The thief was about to pass on, when he gave another glance at Lord Mauleverer, and ran his hands through his lordship's pockets. Perhaps his lordship had an expensive look that made the bandit think he might be worth more than fifty dollars. No more money came to light, however, and Harry Wharton & Co. wondered why, for they knew that Mauleverer travelled with an ample supply of cash. They did not allow their looks to express what was in their minds, however.

The bandit passed on, clearing out the passengers right and left as he proceeded, till he joined the man with the revolver, and they left the car together.

With deep relief the passengers saw them go.

"Well, this is an experience, anyhow," murmured Frank Nugent.

"I say, you fellows—"

"You got off all right, Bunter," chuckled Bob Cherry. "You've saved all your money."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

HERE WE ARE AGAIN!

This issue contains
**TWO MORE METAL
MOTOR-CAR BADGES!**

*Trim them up with a pair
of scissors and pin them
to your album.*

THERE'S MORE TO FOLLOW!

callous recklessness and narrowly missed two or three passengers as it whizzed through the air.

"Hold on, old bean," called out Lord Mauleverer coolly. "Our fat friend is a bit frightened, but he doesn't mean any harm."

"Ow! Help! Wow! Help!"

"I guess the durned guy's cleaned me out of a thousand dollars!" moaned Hiram K. Fish. "Oh, great John James Brown! A thousand dollars! Whooooop!"

Fisher T. Fish was groaning aloud. He had been robbed of fifteen dollars. Fifteen teeth drawn from Fisher T. Fish could hardly have hurt him more.

"Lucky you hadn't much about you for once, Mauly," remarked Bob Cherry.

Lord Mauleverer smiled sleepily, and took off his hat and gazed into it. Inside the hat was a roll of two thousand dollars.

"Great pip!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

His lordship replaced the hat on his head, the roll still inside it. Evidently Mauly had slipped it there at the first alarm.

"Now, if that merchant had thought of lookin' into my hat!" murmured Mauleverer.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, gum!" ejaculated Fisher T. Fish. Fishy could have kicked himself.

Had he thought of that expedient his fifteen dollars might have escaped the thievish hands of the bandit. Now it was too late, and Fishy was suffering from fifteen separate and distinct pangs.

"Great snakes!" ejaculated Fisher T. Fish. "If Mauly doesn't take the pesky cake! He sure pulled the wool over that durned gink's eyes! Why I—"

"You see you're not quite so slick as Mauly," said Bob Cherry. "You Americans have got to learn some yet!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good old Mauly!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

"Fifteen dollars gone up!" groaned Fisher T. Fish.

"A thousand dollars!" moaned Hiram K. Fish.

"Fifteen dollars!"

"A thousand dollars!"

"Fifteen—"

"A thousand—"

"Oh dear!"

"Oh, Jerusalem!"

Like Rachel of old, the two Fishes mourned for that which was lost, and could not be comforted.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh Takes a Hand!

WHRRRRRR! Buzzzz!

Harry Wharton looked from the window.

The train was still at a standstill, the bandits going along it from one end to the other, clearing out the passengers in car after car.

But apparently they were nearly "through," for one of the gang had gone back to the automobile that was standing under the trees, a score of yards from the track, and had started up the engine.

In that motor-car the gang had reached the scene of the hold-up, and in it they were to escape when the robbery was over. The wires along the line had

been cut, and there would be no news of the hold-up until the train pulled in at the next depot. By that time the swift motor-car would have carried the gang, with their loot, to a safe distance, probably to some hiding-place in the lonely hills. There, no doubt, they would conceal the car, discard their masks, divide the plunder, and disperse, to reappear in their native haunts as ordinary citizens. The masks on their faces completely hid their identity.

Another bandit came back to the car, staggering under the weight of a sack he was carrying from the express.

Evidently the bandits were making a considerable haul.

The conductor came back through the car.

"I guess we'll soon be going on, gentlemen," he said as he was passing through.

"I guess I'm going to stick this railroad for a thousand dollars, sircree!" hooted Hiram K. Fish. "You hear me shout? I guess they went through me to the tune of a thousand dollars!"

mortally wounded, perhaps—by one of the shots they had heard ringing out along the train.

Harry Wharton looked from the open window of the car again.

Another bandit had gone to the waiting motor, carrying a sack on his shoulder. The engine was buzzing, a bandit sitting at the wheel ready to start.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh followed his glance.

There was a thoughtful expression on the dusky face of the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"The esteemed and execrable villain will be getting away in that car," he remarked.

Harry Wharton nodded.

"The bumpfulness will be terrific over that rough and preposterous ground," the nabob remarked.

"They'll strike a road not very far away, I expect," said Harry. "It will be rough going, over that ground, till they reach it. But once they strike a

road they will make the car fly and get clear."

"Perhaps—"

said Hurree Singh meaningly.

Wharton looked at him.

"We can't do anything, Inky."

"But it would be terrifically rotten to let the esteemed scoundrels get clearfully away, after what they have done," said the nabob.

"Can't be helped, old chap."

"The police may get them later," remarked Johnny Bull. "An affair like this will make no end of a row."

There was a snort from Fisher T. Fish.

"Shucks!" he said.

"The police won't get them! Who's going to identify the pesky scallywags? Gee-whiz! Fifteen dollars! If I had a gun I'd sure sling them a few, dog-gone them!"

"My esteemed Fishy"—Hurree Jamset Ram Singh pointed to the Colt revolver

which the drummer had dropped when the bandits came to the car, "there is an esteemed gun—go aheadfully."

"Oh, guff!" grunted Fisher T. Fish. Apparently Fishy's remarks were only made to relieve his feelings, for he made no movement towards the "gun" that lay on the floor.

Its owner had made no movement to retrieve the deadly-looking weapon. Obviously, he did not intend to touch it till the bandits had cleared off. The drummer had gone along to stare out of the door at the end.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh stepped across to where the revolver lay, and picked it up.

He examined it carefully. It was a large calibre revolver, and loaded in every chamber.

"Keep that away, you ass!" ejaculated Billy Bunter. "How do you know it won't go off?"

"My esteemed fat Bunter—"

"Put it down, you ass!" howled Bunter.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,096.

The Popular Austin—The Car of All-Round Value!

Read what our Contributor has to say about this favourite of the road, the radiator badge of which forms the subject of one of this week's FREE GIFTS!

It is the boast of the great Birmingham firm of Austin that it makes a car for every class of motorist—and all-round value is the keynote of every Austin car turned out.

At the head of the list of models is the 20-h.p. six-cylinder Austin car that is big enough and luxurious enough for anybody. Then comes the 16-h.p. six-cylinder, known as the "Light Six," a smaller and lighter model, which is also less expensive than the 20-h.p. six. Then there is the famous Austin 12-h.p. 4-cylinder car—a type that has been in production for many years, and has amply proved its worth. Last of all comes the Austin 7 h.p.—the famous four-cylinder "Baby" car, which will do anything and go anywhere on a mere sniff of petrol!

The Austin car is typically British, and the large number of all types of Austin to be seen on the road is sufficient evidence of the popularity of the make.

The soundness of its design is proved by the fact that factories both in France and Germany are turning out cars of Austin design under licence from the British company—a rare compliment indeed! The famous Austin badge, which is presented to all readers with this issue of the MAGNET, shows a wheel flanked by a pair of wings, and the inference to be drawn therefrom, quite correctly, is that Austin cars, of whatever model, can "go some"!

The conductor shrugged his shoulders. "They've touched fifty thousand in the express car, and shot the messenger," he said.

"Gee-whiz!"

"Good heavens! Not killed?" exclaimed Harry Wharton, in horror.

The conductor looked at him.

"I guess the guy's got last sickness," he answered. "He pulled a gun to defend the express car, and they got him twice."

"Oh begad!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"The terrible scoundrels!" exclaimed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"My hat!" said Bob Cherry, as the conductor passed through to the next car, seeking to calm the excitement among the passengers. "I thought it was rather a lark, and like a film; but—but the brutes! The rotters! The murderous villains!"

Only an hour before the juniors had strolled along the cars and seen the express messenger, and they could hardly realise that the man, then alive and well, now lay sorely wounded—

The nabob grinned. He had handled firearms before, and was well acquainted with their use. The chums of the Remove had spent a vacation in India with Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh, and they knew how he could shoot. But Nugent laid a warning hand on his arm.

"Don't play the goat, Inky!" he said. "There's six or seven in that gang, and they've got rifles—"

"The playfulness of the esteemed goat is not my idea, my esteemed Franky," answered the nabob quietly. "But I have a wheezy good idea in my excellent and ludicrous head."

He stood by the open window of the car, keeping the revolver down at his side out of sight.

On either side of the train two bandits stood on the track, rifles in hand, ready to fire at a sign of hostility.

But there was no hostility for them to fear from the crowd of alarmed passengers.

The express messenger, who had attempted to resist, had been shot, and his fate was a warning to the whole train, if a warning had been needed.

Wharton eyed Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh dubiously. He could see that something was working in the nabob's mind; and the glint in the Indian junior's dark eyes made him a little uneasy.

"Inky—" he muttered.

Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh did not heed. His eyes were fixed on the motor-car, a score of yards distant.

"They're going!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"And taking my thousand dollars with them!" groaned Mr. Fish.

"And my fifteen!" moaned Fisher T.

"I wonder how Coker's got on?" remarked Nugent. "Coker always has a lot of cash in his pockets, and I'll bet he never thought of hiding it in his hat, like Mauly."

Coker of the Fifth was in the next car, with Potter and Greene. How they had fared in the hold-up the juniors did not know yet.

The bandits were leaving the train.

Up to the last moment two of them remained, with rifles trained on the cars, to keep the crowd in subjection.

But, at a call from the leader of the gang, a tall, thin man, with a sharp, staccato voice, they turned and ran for the motor.

The whole gang crammed themselves into the automobile with their plunder, and it moved off instantly.

"Going!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. Although they were taking his fifteen dollars with them, it was a relief to Fishy to see the gang of ruffians departing.

The motor-car leaped into speed, and dashed off, evidently heading for the road that lay at a little distance from the railroad track.

"Inky—" gasped Wharton, as the Nabob of Bhanipur's arm shot up, and the Colt was levelled through the open window.

Crack!

In the buzz of the leaping motor-car the crack of the revolver was drowned.

Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh had acted so quickly that there was no time for anyone to raise a hand to stop him, had anyone been so inclined.

The man at the steering wheel crumpled over the wheel, his hands releasing it, and the car, rushing at high speed over rough ground, went rocketing wildly.

Hurree Singh had fired at the chauffeur; and he had fired with an aim that, swift as it was, was unerring.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,086,

There was a yell of terror and alarm from the packed car.

But the ruffians crammed in it had no time to attempt to control it.

Even as the chauffeur, with a bullet in his body, crumpled over the wheel, the car, rocketing wildly away, crashed into a tree and overturned.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Hero of the Hour!

CRASH!

Wild yells and screams and oaths came from the wrecked car, smashed and overturned, as the bandits struggled wildly in the wreckage.

"Gee-whiz!" gasped Mr. Fish.

There was a roar all along the train.

A second before the car had been rushing away with the bandits and their plunder; now it was a wreck, with yelling, screaming men in the wreckage, and flames shooting up from it.

"Oh, my hat!" stuttered Bob Cherry.

"Inky—"

"Inky!" gasped Wharton.

Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh was cool as ice. He stood with the smoking revolver in his hand, his dusky face grim.

"The esteemed scoundrels asked for it," he said quietly. "The get-away-fulness was not the proper caper."

The Bounder clapped him on the back.

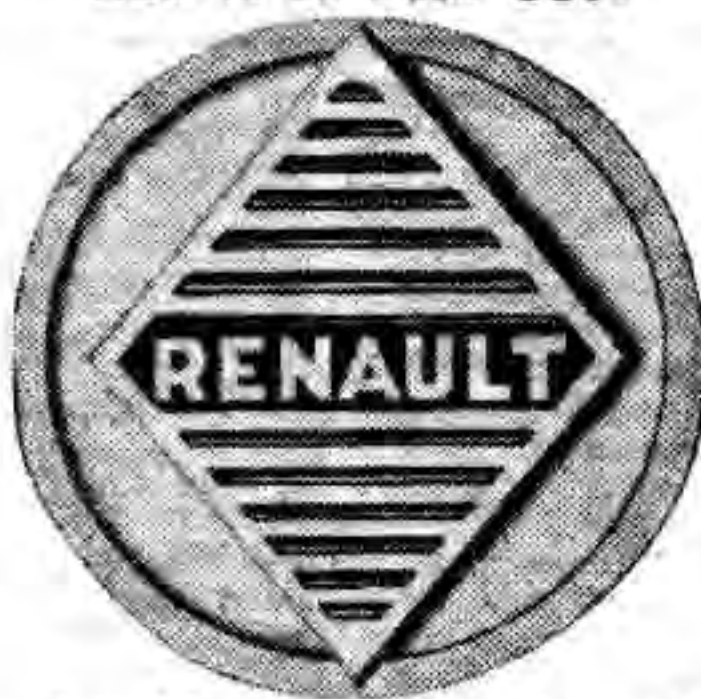
"Good old Inky!" he roared. "Now, if there's an ounce of pluck on this train, we've got the rotters!"

There was more than an ounce of pluck on the train. The sight of the wrecked car, and the bandits struggling and screaming as they strove to escape from the flames, broke the spell of terror that the armed gang had laid on the hundreds of passengers.

Fifty men, at least, poured from the long cars, many of them with revolvers in their hands. There were plenty of "guns" on the train, now that the passengers ventured to show them. The conductor, the fireman, the engine driver, and the brakeman led the rush, each of them with a six-shooter in his hand. Under cover of the bandits' rifles

.....

**TWO MORE BADGES NEXT WEEK,
BOYS—AND THIS IS ONE OF 'EM!
Add it to Your Set!**



One of the most famous names in the motor industry is the Renault, occupying, as it does, one of the leading positions in the French motor manufacturing world. It is an easy matter to identify a Renault on the road, owing to its peculiar sloping bonnet, having the radiator behind it—instead of in the usual position ahead. Look out for the world-famous Renault badge in next week's MAGNET!

there had been no resistance, except by the express messenger, who had paid dearly for his courage. But the situation was altered now. It was now the gang of bandits who were at a disadvantage.

The wrecked car, drenched with spilt petrol, was flaming and roaring. The bandits were thinking only of escaping from it.

They scrambled wildly out of the wreckage.

They were surrounded immediately, and seized—only one of them succeeding in dodging away and fleeing.

It was the tall, thin man who had led the attack on the train, and he ran like a deer, with a dozen revolvers crackling after him as he ran.

Whether he was hit or not could not be seen; but wounded or not he plunged into a belt of thickets, and disappeared from sight.

Every other member of the gang was secured, putting up their hands promptly as the crowd surrounded them, many of them scorched and burned, and howling with pain.

In their hurry to escape their own danger they had paid no heed to the man who had been driving the car, who certainly would have perished in the flames, had not the conductor and fireman grasped him and dragged him out.

Six unwounded bandits—most of them more or less burned, and one wounded—remained prisoners. Only the leader of the gang had escaped.

"Gee-whiz!" said Mr. Fish. "Oh, great John James Brown! I guess this is a sight for sore eyes!"

"Just a few!" chuckled Fisher T.

Fishy's face was beaming. His fifteen dollars, after all, were safe. The train men were dragging the sacks of plunder from the burning car. Harry Wharton & Co. lent a hand. The whole of the plunder was rescued, but the car itself was doomed. The passengers crowded back from the heat of the blaze, and the automobile was left to burn to cinders.

Many were holding the captured bandits till the conductor came along with a rope, and their hands were tied behind their backs.

When their masks were pulled off the juniors looked at their faces—a set of rough, stubbly, brutal faces.

"Nice-lookin' lot!" remarked Lord Mauleverer.

The bandits were hustled, not gently, in the train, to be taken as prisoners to the next depot, there to be handed over to the police.

Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh was most interested in the wounded bandit. He was rather anxious about him. But the conductor, who had examined the ruffian's wound and was bandaging it, reassured him.

"I guess he'll pull through, if that matters, young 'un," said the conductor.

"The matterfulness is terrific, esteemed sir," answered Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "Although he is a beastly and preposterous thief, it would be terrifically on my ludicrous mind if he pegged outfully."

"Carry me home to die!" ejaculated the conductor.

Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh's flow of English seemed to overcome him.

The wounded bandit glared up at Hurree Singh.

"You plugged me, you durned nigger!" he gasped.

"I had the esteemed pleasure of plugging you, my ridiculous and dishonest friend," answered the nabob. "But you are labouring under a ludicrous misapprehension in calling me a nigger,



There was a yell of terror and alarm from the packed car. But the ruffians in it had no time to attempt to control it. As the chauffeur, with the bullet in his body, crumpled over the wheel, the car, rocketing wildly away, crashed into a tree and overturned. The next moment, flames were shooting up from underneath it! (See Chapter 3.)

I have the esteemed honour to be a Hindu."

"You plugged me," repeated the wounded man. "You plugged me while I was driving that auto. You did?"

"The pleasure was mine," assented the nabob. "I am terrifically sorry you have been damagefully hurt, but the gladfulness is great that you are not pegging outfully."

The wounded man spat out an oath.

"That's enough from you, you durned gink," said the conductor. "Don't spill any more. You'll get over this, and get ten years in the pen!"

"I guess the chief will get him," said the bandit, with malevolent glare at Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Dandy Jim will sure get that durned nigger for this."

"Forget it," said the conductor. "Here, you-uns, lend me a hand to tote this pesky scallywag into the train!"

And the wounded bandit was carried into one of the cars.

Bob Cherry smacked the nabob on the back.

"Greyfriars wins!" he grinned. "Inky, old man, you've taken the cake! They'd have got away—"

"Yaas, begad!" said Lord Mauleverer. "And I needn't have taken the trouble to put my roll in my hat after all."

"I'll sure get back my fifteen dollars when we get to Reno," said Fisher T. Fish beaming. "Inky, old man, you're the goods! You sure are the genuine goods! I'm telling the world!"

"Gratters, old black bean!" said Johnny Bull.

But the nabob's dusky face was serious.

"Thank the esteemed goodfulness that the ludicrous rascal was not killed," he said. "It would have been a preposterous weight on my ridiculous mind, although he is only a loathsome and estimable bandit."

"Serve him right if he had been!" said the Bounder gruffly. "What did they care about the express man they shot?"

"Thank goodness he wasn't, all the same!" said Nugent.

"The thankfulness is terrific," said Hurree Singh.

The juniors walked back to the train. The passengers were taking their places again now, and the felled tree that blocked the line was being dragged away. In a short time the train was in motion again, and gliding on to the west, the windows blocked with faces staring back at the burning motor-car which was still in flames beside the track.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh glanced round and approached the fat drummer with a graceful bow, and held out the Colt.

"This ridiculous revolver belongs to you, nabob," he remarked politely.

The American commercial took the weapon and stared at him.

"What you been doing with my gun?" he asked.

"Ain't you wise to it?" exclaimed Mr. Fish. Hiram K. Fish was in almost uproarious spirits at the prospect of getting back his thousand dollars. "This young guy plugged the galoot who was driving the car, and landed the hull gang, sir."

"Search me!" gasped the drummer.

He took the Colt, still staring at Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. The nabob went back to his seat, conscious that the eyes of all the crowded car were upon him.

Hurree Singh's exploit was the talk of the train, from end to end.

Passengers came along from the other cars and stared in at the doors, and pointed him out to one another.

"That's th' guy!"

"That young darkey!"

"He ain't exactly a darkey—"

"He plugged the scallywag—"

"Got him from a window—"

"Some shooting, I'll tell the world!"

"Who's the young darkey conductor?"

"Darkey!" hooted the conductor.

"Who's a darkey? That young feller, sirs, is an Indian prince, and his name's Holy Jampot Chum Bang! Yes, sir!"

And when the news spread along the train that the dusky-complexioned schoolboy who had beaten the bandits was a prince—an Indian prince—the excitement was greater than ever. Long before Reno was reached every passenger on the train, men and women, had come along to "rubber-neck" at the Indian prince. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was the hero of the hour; but he bore his blushing honours thick upon him with becoming modesty.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Coker is Sorry He Spoke!

"ROT!" said Coker of the Fifth.

"Fact!" said Potter.

"Rot!" repeated Coker, with more emphasis than

before.

"The whole train's talking about it," said Greene.

For the third time Horace Coker pronounced that it was rot.

That the defeat of the train robbers had been brought about by a fag of the Greyfriars Remove was too steep for Coker of the Fifth to believe.

Coker & Co. had been travelling in the next car to that of the juniors. This was due to Horace Coker's keen desire not to be taken for a schoolboy on a beano. In the west of the United States, nobody had ever heard of Greyfriars, and probably never would have understood that there was a great gulf fixed between the Fifth Form and the Lower Fourth, even had they heard of either.

But wherever Coker was, he was always Coker. He was very particular indeed that nobody should suppose for a moment that he was one of that mob of juniors. This being Coker's attitude, some of the juniors had found a little harmless and necessary amusement in pulling his leg—even to the extent of addressing him a "Horace" before a car full of people. So Coker kept the

length of a car between himself and the Remove fellows now, and was comforted.

In the hold-up, Coker had parted with all the wealth he had about him, which was considerable. Coker was a warlike fellow; but a levelled gun at the end of the car had damped his warlike ardour, and he had put up his hands and parted, like the rest. It was a blow to Coker—and to Potter and Greene of the Fifth also. Potter and Greene were not wealthy, and they relied on the wealthy Horace for many little expenses. It was quite dismaying to Potter and Greene to see Coker cleared out to his last dollar.

So the turning of the tables on the bandits quite bucked Potter and Greene. It bucked Coker also as he had now a prospect of getting his "roll" back when the plunde was sorted out at Reno, and returned to its owners. But Coker of the Fifth was not likely to believe that a Remove fag had worked the oracle. Had not Coker himself stood meekly with his hands over his head, while he was cleaned out? If any Greyfriars man had been able to save the situation, obviously that Greyfriars man would have been Horace James Coker! That a Lower Fourth fag had done the trick, while Horace James Coker did nothing, was incredible—to Horace James Coker.

"Rot!" he said, for the fourth time. "Utter rot! Now, I wonder who it was potted that brute from the train?"

"It was young Inky of the Remove," said Potter.

"Don't be an ass, Potter," advised Coker. "I wonder who it was? It was a jolly good shot, you know! Not one fellow in a hundred could have brought it off! The motor was fairly racing—and it was a good distance for a pistol-shot! One of these Wild West crack shots, I suppose."

"It was Hurree Singh!" hooted Greene. "He picked up a gun that a man had dropped in the car—"

"Rubbish!" said Coker.

"The whole train knows—"

"Bosh!"

"The people are crowding up and down the train to look at him," said Potter.

"His complexion, perhaps," said Coker. "I dare say they take him for a nigger. Niggers ain't allowed to travel in the cars with white men in this country."

"I tell you—"

"Rot!"

Horace Coker left his seat, and walked along to the next car, to where the Greyfriars juniors were seated. He could see, at a glance, that Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was the centre of attraction. So many people crowded into the car that the conductor had to move them along the train.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's jolly old Coker!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "How much did they bag you for, Coker?"

"Five hundred dollars!" growled Coker. "But I'm going to get it back, now the rascals are caught. Any of you kids know who it was potted that bandit in the auto?"

"Inky!" answered Bob.

"Don't be a young ass!"

The juniors stared at Horace Coker.

"But it was Inky," said Harry Wharton. "He picked up a revolver belonging to a man in this car—"

"Rubbish!"

"And got the chauffeur of the bandits' motor-car," said Harry. "It was a wonderful shot!"

"Too jolly wonderful for a Remove

fag!" snorted Coker. "I couldn't have brought off that shot myself!"

"Go hon!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who was it potted that bandit, Mr. Fish?" asked Coker.

Hiram K. Fish looked at him. He pointed to the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"That kid!" he answered.

Coker was quite staggered.

"You saw him?" he gasped.

"I guess I saw him with my own eyes," answered Mr. Fish, "and it was some shot, I'll tell the world!"

"Well, I'm blowed!" was all Coker could say for the moment.

"I guess Inky knows how to handle a gun," said Fisher T. Fish. "I'll tell a man, he's the only galoot on the train could have winged that bandit."

"Fluke, of course!" said Coker, recovering himself.

"The flukefulness was not terrific, my esteemed Coker," remarked the dusky junior mildly.

"Rot!" said Coker. "Of course it was a fluke!"

"You silly ass!" said Bob Cherry wrathfully.

"Shut up, Cherry! It was a fluke—a sheer accident, of course!" said Coker. "It's turned out well, I admit. But it was like your cheek to do anything of the kind, Hurree Singh. A kid should not handle firearms. You might have hit anybody, firing around at random like that. Don't let it happen again!"

"My esteemed and idiotic Coker—"

"I suppose it's too much to expect that you fags will behave yourselves now that you're out of your headmaster's sight," said Coker. "But this sort of reckless fooling won't do. I won't lick you this time, Hurree Singh—"

"The obligefulness is terrific."

"I guess—" began Fisher T. Fish.

"Shut up, Fish!"

"Look here—" said Harry.

"Shut up, Wharton!"

Bob Cherry jumped up.

"Gentlemen, chap, and fellows," he said, "we haven't ragged Coker since we left Chicago. That's what's the matter with him. He wants more!"

"The wantfulness is terrific!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Bump him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now then!" roared Coker. "None of your fag larks! Behave yourselves! Leggo! Remember, you're not in the Remove passage at Greyfriars now! I'll jolly well smash you! I'll—I'll—Yaroooooh!"

Bump!

Horace Coker, in the grasp of six or seven pairs of hands smote the floor of the car. There he roared and struggled. But he was firmly held, and Bob Cherry took him by the back of the neck.

"Leggo!" roared Coker. "I'll smash you!"

"Are you sorry?" inquired Bob.

"No! I'll pulverise you!"

Bob Cherry tapped Coker's nose on the floor of the car. He tapped it rather hard, and there was a fiendish yell from Coker.

"Now are you sorry?"

"I'll spifficate you!" roared Coker.

Tap, tap!

The floor of the car was hard and unsympathetic. Coker felt as if his nose had been pushed back into his face. He struggled wildly.

"Sorry?" asked Bob cheerfully.

"Yaroooooh!"

"Say when!" said Bob, tapping Coker's nose again.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Owl! Yow! Wow!" Coker could not stand any more. "Sorry! Wow!"

"Are you awfully sorry?" asked Bob. "You little villain— Yaroooooh!"

Yes!" shrieked Coker.

"Are you awfully fearfully sorry?"

"I'll—I'll— Yes!" raved Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's a good little boy!" said Bob. "Now you can cut. And don't come back into this car until you can behave yourself!"

Horace Coker staggered to his feet. He was red, and he was rumped. The whole car was shrieking with laughter. Coker glared at the juniors, tempted to run amuck, but even Coker realised that he had had enough, and did not want any more. He retreated to his own car, followed by a shout of laughter.

It was a dusty and dishevelled Coker that rejoined Potter and Greene. Potter closed one eye at Greene, who smiled.

"What's the matter with your nose, old man?" asked Potter blandly.

"Owl!"

"Looks as if you've knocked it against something," remarked Greene.

"Wow!"

And Coker's subsequent remarks consisted chiefly of "ow" and "wow" until the train ran into Reno.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Startling News!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"What—"

"Oh, my hat!"

Under the bright sunshine of California, the train had pulled into Sacramento at last. Hiram K. Fish and his party had not arrived at Sacramento on scheduled time. The train hold-up had caused considerable delay. That had been inevitable; but Mr. Fish was comforted by getting back the dollars of which the bandits had robbed him. Even loss of time was of little account in comparison with loss of dollars. But the City of Sacramento, the capital of the State of California, dawned on the Greyfriars party at last, and they were glad enough to get out of the train once more.

A big heading on a newspaper, peddled by a newsboy along the train, caught Bob Cherry's eye, and he bought the paper at once. Headings in large type sprawled over it. The Greyfriars juniors gathered round to stare at the newspaper. For the first time since they had been on the American continent, the Greyfriars party were "featured" in the American Press. By telegraph and telephone the news of the hold-up had spread, and it was an item of news not to be missed by the reporters.

RAILROAD HOLD-UP!

PRINCE HONEY JAMJAR BANG DEFEATS BANDITS!

Harry Wharton had captured another paper. On this the staring headline ran:

BOLD BOY BEATS BANDITS!

HANKEY PANKEY BANG WALLOP, PRINCE OF BOGGLEY-BANG, RATTLES RAILROAD ROBBERS!

"Oh, my hat!" said Harry. "That's you, Inky! Have they got the name quite right?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The esteemed namefulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh ruefully.

Evidently the enterprising American reporters were keener on startling their

readers than on giving accurate information.

A young man with a sharp, clean-shaven face, a Derby hat screwed down on his head, and a notebook in his hand, cut across to the group of juniors like an arrow from a bow.

"Prince Bung?" he exclaimed.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What—"

"Sacramento Eagle," explained the young man opening his notebook. "I guess I've been watching out for this party. Which is Prince Bung?"

"Oh! A reporter," said Wharton.

"Sure! You Prince Bung Wallop?" asked the young man briskly.

"Ha, ha! No."

"I guess I want the details for my paper! Which of you is Prince Bung Wallop of Boodle-Boo?"

"Where did you get that name?" gasped Nugent.

"Eh! Over the long-distance," answered the representative of the "Sacramento Eagle."

"The which?"

"I guess you'd call it a trunk call in your little island," said Fisher T. Fish.

"Oh, the telephone!" said Nugent. "They didn't give the name quite correctly."

"The correctfulness is not terrific, esteemed salub," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, shaking his dusky head. "Such a preposterous namefulness is both estimable and ludicrous."

The reporter started almost convulsively.

"Geel! Would you mind saying that again?" he gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Got the name right," said Bob Cherry. "Hurry Scurry Booley-Boodle-Booch-Wooch! Got that?"

The reporter jotted it down hastily. "Prince of Hoodle-Woodle-Goodle-Gum!" added Bob.

"Yep!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My esteemed Bob—"

"Now, then, the auto's waiting to take you guys to the Golden West Hotel," said Mr. Fish. "Hop it!"

"I guess this is an interview," said the representative of the "Eagle." "I guess—"

"Come along to the hotel," said Mr. Fish. "I guess I can give you all the particulars."

"Sure!"

Harry Wharton & Co. and their baggage packed into a big automobile.

Coker & Co. taking a taxi on their own. Mr. Fish followed with the reporter in another taxi. For some reason unknown to the juniors, Mr. Fish seemed elated by the newspaper celebrity that had fallen on the Greyfriars party. They were to discover the reason shortly, and at the same time Mr. Fish's reason for having brought the party to the United States.

The juniors found that the Golden West Hotel was in K Street—which at first they supposed to be Kay Street, discovering later that street names in the Californian capital were alphabetical.

Sacramento, on the Sacramento River, was a very different city from what it had been in the old days of the gold rush:

It was laid out on the usual rectangular American plan, with numbered streets running in one direction, and alphabetically-named streets crossing them at right angles.

The Golden West stood at the corner of K and Tenth, an address which sounded rather odd in English ears. It was near the Plaza on one hand, and the Capitol Park on the other.

"I say, you fellows, are we at Los Angeles now?" asked Billy Bunter. "I say, where's Hollywood?"

"Fathread!" said Bob Cherry. "Los Angeles is about three hundred miles from here."

"What do they call this place, then?"

"Sacramento, ass! It's the capital of California."

"Eh! I thought San Francisco was the capital," said Bunter. "In fact, I know it is, Cherry! You don't know much about geography, you know."

"Any old thing," said Bob. "Hollywood's the capital, if you like." He looked out of the auto at the rectangular streets. "This place is rather changed since they used to put one another with six-guns here. We've come seventy years too late to see the fun."

At the Golden West Hotel the Greyfriars party found themselves in comfortable quarters. After whole days and nights in the train it was a relief to get under a roof again, and to feel themselves no longer in motion.

Mr. Fish joined them at lunch, having apparently sent the reporter happy away. There was a thoughtful expression on the face of Hiram K. Fish, and a thoughtful wrinkle in his brow. Now that the party were drawing near to their real destination, Mr. Fish felt that

the time was coming to enlighten them as to the real object of the trip. He had intended, however, to keep the secret till Los Angeles was reached. But his interview with the newspaper man had hurried on the disclosure.

Like a true American, Mr. Fish knew the value of advertisement. The Perfection Picture Syndicate, of Hollywood, was to benefit by the sensation caused by the hold-up on the railroad. For the moment that hold-up and its exciting finish held the stage in the newspapers; but ere long it would be pushed into oblivion by some new sensation. While it lasted Mr. Fish aimed to make the most of it.

"I guess I got something to tell you guys," he remarked over lunch. "No time like the present—what?"

Billy Bunter blinked at him. Bunter was aware of the secret; indeed, it was his knowledge of Hiram K. Fish's real intentions, which had enabled him to "glue" himself to the party. Bunter grinned. He guessed that it was coming out now, but it was too late for Mr. Fish to "shake" that unnecessary and undesired member of the party.

The Bunder give Mr. Fish a keen glance. Smithy had been sure all along that there was something behind Mr. Fish's generous offer to take a party of Greyfriars fellows touring in the United States at his own expense. He did not know what it was, but he was sure that there was a "nigger in the woodpile," so to speak. Smithy was right, for certainly, if this was a "tour" of the United States it was conducted on rather rapid lines. Except for a few days in New York, a day in Chicago, and the stop at Reno, they had spent the whole time on a rushing railway train, and all they had seen of the United States had been seen from the train windows.

"We're in California now," went on Mr. Fish. "I guess we shall hit the cars again for Los Angeles."

"And Hollywood!" grinned Bunter.

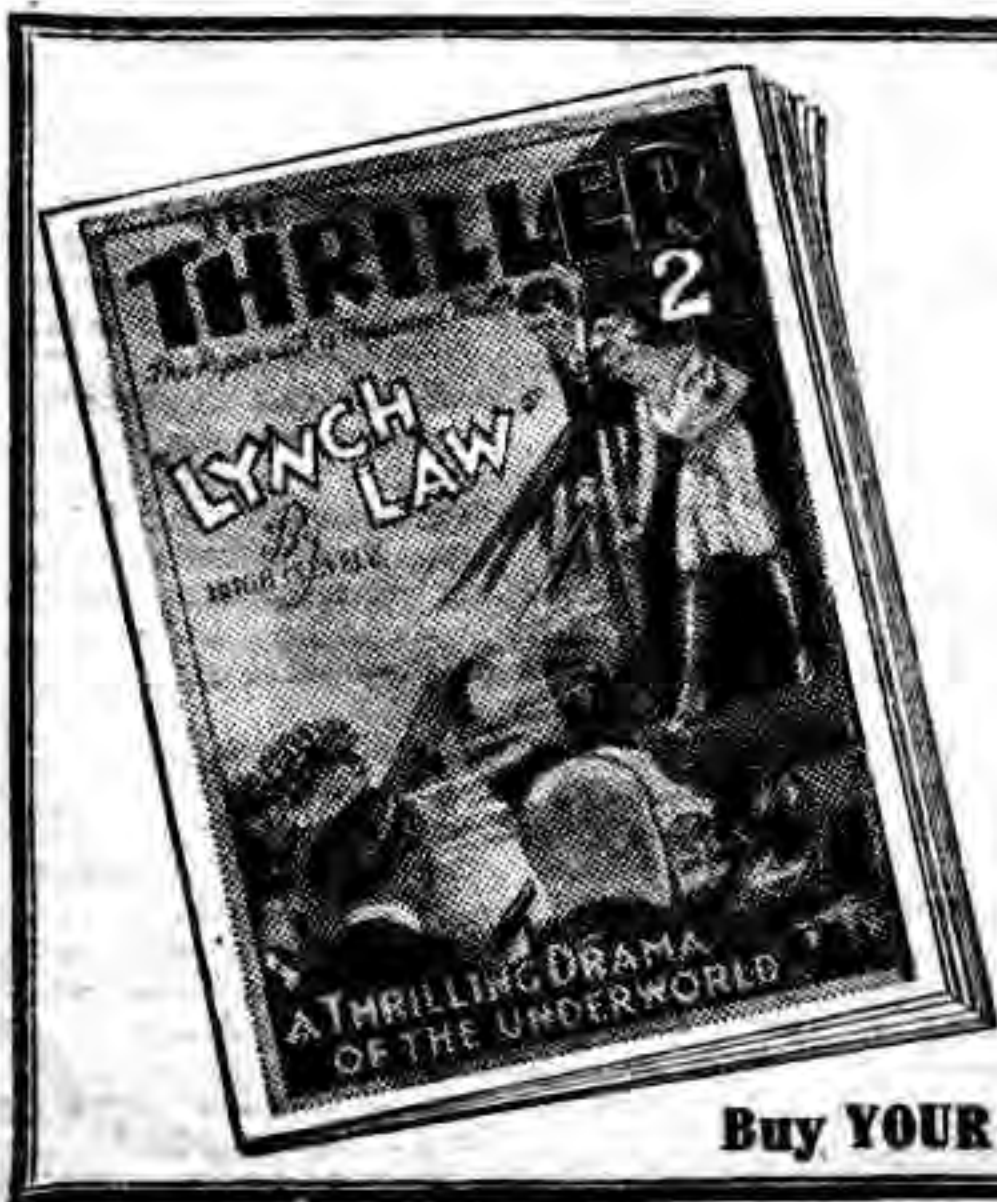
"Good!" said Bob Cherry. "I'd like to have a look at Hollywood, where the pictures come from."

"Do we stay at Los Angeles?" asked Harry.

"Sure!" said Mr. Fish. "At least, we stay at Hollywood, which is a suburb of Los Angeles."

"I say, you fellows! I knew—"

(Continued on next page.)



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"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Now," said Mr. Fish, "I guess I got a proposition to put before you lads. How'd you like to take part in a film?"

"In a film?" ejaculated Johnny Bull.

"Yep."

"Ripping!" said Bob. "But are we any good for film acting?"

"I say, you fellows, I can do a Valentino part—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Don't spill any more, Bunter," said Mr. Fish. "You sure talk too much. Now, my lads, the Perfection Picture Syndicate—I guess you've heard of that—is going to do a film of English school life."

"Oh!" said Harry.

"I guess you kids will fill the bill," said Mr. Fish. "You know the game. You'll get some knocking into shape in the Perfection studio. You'll have good quarters on the boulevard, in the finest scenery and the best climate in the world. Bunter's no good, but I reckon the rest of you will fill the bill handsomely."

"Oh, really, you know—"

"It's a chance for you to become famous," said Mr. Fish. "The Perfection picture, when it is made, will go all over the world. It will be shown in every city and town of the United States and the United Kingdom. It's going to be some picture, I'll tell the world! What?"

The juniors listened in astonishment. There was no doubt that the suggestion appealed to them. Acting for the pictures at Hollywood would be a novel experience, and undoubtedly a "lark." But they could not help wondering why Hiram K. Fish had not told them before. They could not believe that the idea had come suddenly into his mind, since the party had arrived in California. Evidently it had been in his mind all along.

"Like the stunt?" asked Mr. Fish breezily.

"Yes, rather!" said Bob Cherry. "But—"

"Oh, quite!" said Nugent. "But we—"

"The butfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Chance of a lifetime," said Mr. Fish. "I guess there's heaps of galoots would jump at a chance like this with both feet. What?"

"Yaas," said Mauleverer, "but—"

"Not a bad idea, sir," said Coker of the Fifth thoughtfully. "But I don't see what use these fags will be."

"I guess you can leave that to the director of the Perfection Picture studio," said Mr. Fish dryly.

"I'm on!" said Potter.

"Same here!" assented Greene.

"But—" said Harry Wharton.

"I guess you guys are butting in like a lot of pesky billy-goats," grunted Fisher T. Fish.

"But—" repeated Wharton. "This wasn't mentioned before we left England, Mr. Fish. We understood that this was a tour of the United States, and I suppose we can take it, now, that we've rushed across the States at top speed because we were heading for Hollywood all the time. Of course, I've no objection; I like the idea no end."

"That goes, then," said Mr. Fish.

"But—" said Johnny Bull.

"But—" said Harry. "I don't know whether our headmaster at Greyfriars would have given his permission if he had known. We ought to have

asked him before we left, if that was our object in coming out here."

"He, he, he!" chuckled Billy Bunter.

William George Bunter was aware of the fact, unknown to the other fellows, that the Perfection Picture Syndicate had made that request to Dr. Locke, the Head of Greyfriars, and had been refused. Hence the rather surreptitious proceedings of Hiram K. Fish.

"I guess you can't put it to the headmaster now," remarked Mr. Fish casually. "You can't long-distance him from California."

"I like the idea," repeated Wharton. "We all like it; in fact, we're keen on it. But we're bound to let Dr. Locke know, and find out whether he approves."

"That kid's talking sense, for once," remarked Coker of the Fifth. "It's for our headmaster to decide."

And there was a general nod of assent round the table.

"Sure!" said Mr. Fish airily. "But cables to England cost money—a lot of money, from here. Still, that cuts no ice! I guess I'll write out a cable for Dr. Locke instant. No need to put him to the expense of cabling back if he approves. What?" Mr. Fish took out a pocket-book and his fountain-pen, and scrawled on a page. "There! How's that?"

The juniors read:

"Dr. Locke, Greyfriars School, England.—Propose boys taking part in big picture. Cable 'No' if not approved.—FISH."

"That O.K.?" asked Mr. Fish blandly.

"Quite all right," said Harry. "That will settle the matter. Of course, we're all keen on it, Mr. Fish, but you understand that we can't do it if our headmaster refuses consent?"

"Quite!" said Hiram K. Fish.

He rose from the table.

"I guess I'll see to this while you're finishing your lunch," he said. "Time's dollars."

And, with the written slip in his hand, Mr. Fish left the dining-room—to send off the cable, as the juniors supposed.

The cable did not go very far, however.

It went as far, to be exact, as the vestibule of the Golden West Hotel, where Mr. Fish carefully tore it into small pieces and dropped the pieces behind a tub of shrubs.

It was extremely unlikely that the Head of Greyfriars would cable "No" in reply to that message.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Silence Gives Consent!

"FATHEAD!"

"What?"

"Idiot!"

Harry Wharton stared at William George Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove glared at him, his very spectacles glittering with wrath.

"Chump!" he snorted.

"What's the matter, you howling ass?" demanded Wharton, in astonishment.

"Dummy!"

"Kick him, somebody!" said the captain of the Remove.

"I say, you fellows, Wharton's spoiled it all now," said Billy Bunter. "We may as well pack our bags and go home."

"Why, ass!" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Because the Head will cable 'No'—"

in answer to old Fish," growled Bunter. "He said 'No' when he was asked before, and he will say so again. What on earth did you want to make old Fish send that cable for, you chump?"

"But the Head hasn't been asked before!" exclaimed Wharton. "He knows nothing about it."

Bunter snorted.

"That's all you know, you chump! He will know now he's told—and he will knock it on the head. He will cable back that we're not to get into the picture. You've practically robbed me of a million dollars, I've always wanted a chance to get into the films! You fellows know what I should look like in a Valentino part."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at! I might have got fifty thousand dollars a week—"

"The mightfulness is terrific!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now it's knocked on the head!" groaned Bunter. "As soon as old Locke gets the cable, he will know that old Fish was pulling his leg about an educational tour in the United States. He will cable back 'No,' and tell us to come home. Idiot! Fathead! Ass!"

"If the Head cables back 'No,' we shall let Los Angeles alone," said Harry Wharton, "and how do you know that Mr. Fish was pulling the Head's leg, you fat duffer?"

"Oh, you're a silly ass!" snorted Bunter.

"I guess you're spilling too much, Bunter," said Fisher T. Fish. "Use your jaws on your grub, you fat mug-wump!"

The Bunder roared.

"Bunter knew it all along," he said. "I knew there was a secret, and that Bunter knew what it was. It's out now. You were rather an ass to insist on Mr. Fish sending that cable, Wharton."

"How's that?" asked Wharton, rather gruffly.

"Because it will knock the whole thing on the head. If Dr. Locke would have consented, Mr. Fish would have asked him before we started. He didn't ask him because he knew there was nothing doing—that's as clear as daylight."

Harry Wharton frowned.

"All the more reason why we should cable, then," he said. "If the Head objects to our taking part in a picture at Hollywood, we've no right to do it. We're bound to get the consent of the headmaster of Greyfriars, as we belong to Greyfriars, before Greyfriars figures in a film."

The Bunder shrugged his shoulders.

"We could have done as we liked if we'd kept our mouths shut. Now it's knocked on the head, as Bunter says."

"I don't see it," said Harry. "It depends on the Head—but I hope he will consent. Anyhow, we shall know to-morrow."

"I know now," growled Bunter. "You silly chump, the Perfection Picture Syndicate tried to get men from nearly all the public schools in England to play in that film, and they were refused all round."

"How do you know?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"I happened to hear—"

"Oh, blow what you happened to hear!" said Bob. "You happen to hear too many things, Bunter, and you generally hear them wrong. We don't want any of your keyhole news."

"Oh, really, Cherry!"

"I don't care what you happened to hear, you fat ass!" snapped Harry Wharton. "As likely as not you made



"Now," said Mr. Fish, "I guess I got a proposition to put before you lads. How'd you like to take part in a film?"
 "Ripping!" said Bob Cherry. "But—but are we any good for film-acting?" "I say, you fellows," said Bunter, jumping up from his chair like a jack-in-the-box, "I can do a Valentino part!" (See Chapter 6.)

a mistake. It rests with the Head, and unless he cables 'No,' we're free to go ahead. That settles it, and you can shut up."

Fisher T. Fish winked at the orange he was peeling. Fishy guessed that that cable to the headmaster of Greyfriars would not get very far from Sacramento. In which case, Dr. Loeki certainly was not likely to answer it.

All was plain sailing, and Fishy was satisfied. Even the Bounder, keen as he was, did not suspect that Hiram K. Fish was not going to dispatch the cable at all. But really, Mr. Fish had left himself little choice in the matter. Certainly he had not undertaken the expense of bringing the Greyfriars party out as far as Sacramento, only to send them home again. After the great picture had been taken, and the Greyfriars fellows had served their turn, they could go home as soon as they liked—and then the Head would learn the "true inwardness" of that "educational tour" in the United States. And if he went off on his ear, as Mr. Fish would have expressed it, it would not matter a continental red cent.

Once the picture was filmed, all was O.K. from Mr. Fish's point of view, and the views of the headmaster of Greyfriars would not disturb his equanimity in the very least.

As the party had to stay in Sacramento until the Head's answer—if any—was received, they had time to take a look at the Californian capital. After so much hustle and rush, it was quite pleasant to be able to take a leisurely stroll. Billy Bunter retired to his room for a nap—without being missed sorely by the other fellows—and Lord Mauleverer preferred to see Sacramento from a seat in the porch, while Fisher T. Fish disappeared with his popper.

But the Famous Five and the Bounder went for a ramble in the town. A yelling newsboy in 10th Street arrested their attention, and they bought a copy of the "Sacramento Eagle." There was news in it which showed that Mr. Fish had not been losing his time. The Press gentlemen had not yet succeeded in getting Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's name quite correctly, but they were getting nearer—he was now Hurry Jampot Chang Wing. And the headings in the paper made the juniors stare.

**"BOYS WHO BAFFLED BANDITS
PERFECTION FILM STARS!"**

**"HURRY JAMPOT CHANG WING
TO ACT FOR PERFECTION
PICTURES!"**

**"INDIAN PRINCE OF BARNY-
POOTER FEATURED IN PER-
FECTION FILM!"**

**"SCHOOLBOY HERO FOR
HOLLYWOOD!"**

"My only hat!" said Nugent. "Mr. Fish must have given this out to the reporter!"

"Sweet are the uses of advertisement!" grinned Bob Cherry.

The Bounder whistled.

"Mr. Fish is counting his chickens rather early," he remarked. "He seems to be sure that the Head will consent."

Wharton frowned at the newspaper. "If he doesn't it's all off," he said. "If that cable comes from the Head to-morrow—"

"Let's hope it won't!" said Nugent.

"The hopefulness is terrific."

"Well, I hope it won't, as much as anybody," said Harry. "but if the Head says no, we're bound to play up."

"Yes, rather!"

"Let's hope for the best," said Bob Cherry cheerily, "and in the jolly old meantime, let's see all we can of jolly old California, in case the Head tells us to go home."

All the Co. hoped, from the bottom of their hearts, that no cable would come from the Head. Silence would give consent, but, if a cable came, they had, as Wharton said, to play up. In the circumstances of the case, no cable was likely to come. They hoped sincerely that it wouldn't, and their hope proved well-founded. It didn't!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Coker on His Guard!

"LOOK out!" said Coker.

"Eh?"

"What?"

"Look out!" repeated Coker mysteriously.

"What the thump—" began Potter.

"Don't shout!"

"But what—" ejaculated Greene.

"Don't yell!"

Potter and Greene looked resigned—as resigned as they could. It was the second day in Sacramento, and the three Fifth-Formers were taking a walk around the Californian capital. Coker & Co. took their walks abroad by themselves—not with a mob of juniors, which was very satisfactory to Coker & Co., and quite as satisfactory to the mob of juniors.

"We're being followed," said Coker mysteriously—his manner was so mysterious that his comrades stared at him.

"Followed?" repeated Potter blankly.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,096.

"Don't roar! Yes, followed," said Coker. "Now, don't stare like a pair of frightened chickens!"

Potter and Greene had no intention of staring round like a pair of frightened chickens. Mysterious and impressive as Coker's manner was, they were not at all impressed. They did not believe for a moment that they were being followed, their impression being that it was only some more of Coker's rot. However, they did not say so. From long experience, Potter and Greene knew that it was necessary to give Coker his head.

"Now, look in this plate glass window!" said Coker, stopping before a large jeweller's shop.

Potter and Greene stared in at the window. Quite attractive goods were displayed to the view there. They gazed at the display.

"See?" asked Coker.

"Eh? Yes," said Potter. "Lots of things in the window! We're not going to buy watches and clocks, I suppose?"

"Don't be an ass! Can't you see that man?" snapped Coker. "This window reflects him! See? You can see him in the glass without staring round. Haven't you any sense?"

"Oh!" yawned Potter.

They were in 10th Street, one of the busiest in Sacramento. The big plate-glass window naturally reflected a number of persons on the side-walk. Which of them was the object of Coker's suspicion, Potter and Greene did not know. Neither did they care.

"That tall, skinny-looking johnny with the cock-eye!" said Coker, in a thrilling whisper. "See him?"

"I see him," assented Potter, gazing at the reflection of a rather tall and thin man with a cast in his eye, who was standing on the side-walk at a little distance from the Greyfriars seniors, apparently waiting for a street car.

"Well, that fellow's been following us," declared Coker. "I've noticed him three or four times, and he's had his eye on us all the time. What do you think of that?"

"Perhaps he happened to be walking the same way," hazarded Greene.

"Don't be an idiot, Greene!"

"Lots of people have followed us up this street," said Potter flippantly. "Quite a crowd, in fact. As many as have passed us going the other way, I think."

Coker fixed him with a grim frown. Coker's look showed that it was no time for flippancy.

"If you can't talk sense, Potter——"

"What's the good of talking sense to you, old chap?" demurred Potter. "You'd never catch on."

"Never!" agreed Greene.

"It's a pity," said Coker, "that you two fellows haven't the brains of a bunny-rabbit between you. That cock-eyed man has been following us, and I jolly well know what he's up to. I was kidnapped in New York. You fellows remember that?"

"You haven't given us a chance of forgetting it, old bean," said Potter. "Look here, don't you start telling us about it all over again——"

"We know it by heart," explained Greene.

Horace Coker breathed hard.

"I was kidnapped in New York," he said. "Now I find a stranger dogging my steps here. What does it mean? Is it the same game over again? It looks like it to me."

It did not look like it to Potter and Greene. Undoubtedly, Coker had been kidnapped in New York—having displayed unlimited cash in the public view, and then walked into a doubtful

part of the city. Coker had asked for it, and he had got what he had asked for. But a kidnapping stunt in a crowded business street in broad daylight did not appear probable to Potter and Greene. It appeared to them highly improbable.

"Well, what shall we do to him?" asked Potter, still flippant. "Shall we seize him by the back of the neck and strew the hungry churchyard with his bones?"

Greene chuckled.

"Don't be a fool! In the first place," said Coker, "we'll make absolutely sure that he's following us. See? We take a street car here, and if he takes the same car we shall be sure. What?"

"Good egg!" said Greene, with a heartiness that rather surprised Coker, and Potter gave equally hearty support. The fact was, that Coker had walked them nearly off their legs by that time, and Potter and Greene were willing to take any vehicle to anywhere.

"Come on, then," said Coker. "Don't stare at the man! Don't put him on his guard, you know."

Coker & Co. boarded a street car along K Street. Rather to the surprise of Potter and Greene, though not at all to Coker's surprise, the thin man with the cast in his eye boarded the same car. Still, they supposed that that was the car he had been waiting for. Coker gave them a triumphant look.

At the corner of K and 15th Streets Coker left the car, and Potter and Greene unwillingly followed him. They really had had enough walking; but it was, of course, futile to argue with Coker.

When the thin man with the disarranged eye also alighted from the car, Potter and Greene sat up and took notice, so to speak. It was at least a coincidence, if it had been his intention to alight at that spot.

The three Fifth-Formers walked along 15th Street towards the Capitol Park.

"Drop your hanky and look back while you pick it up, Potter," said Coker. He was getting more and more mysterious in the thrill of this excitement, and really seemed almost to be acting for the film already.

"Oh, all right!" yawned Potter.

At the entrance of the park Potter dropped his handkerchief according to instructions, and glanced back as he picked it up. He was quite startled to see the thin, tall man following.

"My hat!" murmured Potter, in surprise.

"See him?" breathed Coker.

"Yes. He's coming this way."

"What did I tell you?" breathed Coker.

"I dare say he's going for a walk in the park," suggested Greene. "I believe a lot of people do on a fine day."

"Don't be an idiot, Greene!"

"Hem!"

"We'll turn and walk back to that corner, and see whether he turns back," said Coker. Coker was developing strategy at a great rate.

"Oh, all right!"

The three Fifth-Formers swung round and started back. They passed the following man within a few feet of him, and could not help looking at him curiously as they passed. On close inspection his face was not pleasant to look at. Apart from the cast in his eye, his features were sharp and hard, his eyes deep-set and glinting, and the expression of his mouth resembled a snarl. Even a schoolboy could see that the man was a tough customer, though he was quite well dressed. For a second his deep-set eyes were on them, and then he was past.

"Looks a bit of a blighter," remarked Greene. "I say, we don't want to hunt

trouble with the man, Coker. Better leave him alone."

Coker did not heed. Fear was unknown to Coker of the Fifth, and he did not care if the man was a gunman with a "six-gun" packed in his hip-pocket.

The trio stopped at the corner of K Street again, as if to wait for a street car to come along. From that point, glancing back along 15th Street, they saw the man coming back. He had not gone into the park, after all.

Potter whistled.

Amazing as it was to discover that Coker was right, there really seemed to be no doubt about it now. The stranger was deliberately keeping the three Fifth-Formers of Greyfriars in sight.

"Well?" said Coker triumphantly.

"He's spotted us as strangers in the place, and he's looking for a chance to pick our pockets," said Greene. "I say, it's tea-time; let's get back to the hotel. None of your New York stunts here, Coker."

"He's not a pickpocket," said Coker.

"How do you know?"

"Well, I do know. He's after me," said Coker positively.

It seemed indubitable to Coker that the shadower was after him. He was the important one of the three. Potter and Greene were nobodies, only deriving what little importance they had from their association with Coker. Coker, indeed, would have been quite offended had he supposed that Potter and Greene loomed as large in the shadower's eyes as he did himself. Coker was convinced that he was being shadowed, with a view to a repetition of his experience in New York.

"Well, let's get along," said Potter uneasily. "I'm blessed if I like the look of that fellow's face—and he's coming along."

A street car came up and stopped, and Coker & Co. boarded it, up K Street. The tall man broke into a run and caught the same car.

He did not look at the Greyfriars seniors on board the car, but they could have no doubt now that he was following them. The car stopped at the corner of 10th and K, and the three Greyfriars fellows alighted. The man with the cast in his eye followed suit. Coker & Co. walked into the Golden West Hotel, and the man stopped outside. They waited in the lounge, and a few minutes later the tall man sauntered in. He passed near Coker & Co. without a glance, as if he had lost all interest in them now. They saw him speak to the clerk at the desk for a few minutes, and then saunter out of the hotel again, still without any look at Coker & Co.

"Well, he's gone," said Potter.

Coker went out into the porch and glanced down the street. He caught sight of the tall man disappearing in the crowd, walking quickly, as if he had finished his business there, whatever it was. Apparently his object had been only to trace Coker & Co. to their hotel. Coker rejoined his comrades with a thoughtful frown on his brow.

"He's run us down," he said. "I'm going to find out what he said to the hotel clerk. Come on."

The hotel clerk was affable, and ready to give information. The tall stranger had simply inquired of him whether that was the hotel where Prince Humpy Jampot Bang Ching, who was in all the newspapers, was staying.

"Oh!" said Coker, rather taken aback. "He didn't ask you anything about me?"

"Eh? Nope!"

"Oh!" said Coker again. And he retired with Potter and Greene, who were grinning.

"Pretty plain, isn't it?" said Coker, when they were alone.

"Quite!" agreed Potter. "He's some curious ass who has been reading in the papers about Hurree Singh, and wants to stare at him—rubbering, as they call it in this country."

"That's it," agreed Greene. "He saw us in the street, and recognised us as members of the same party, and followed us, to find out where Hurree Singh was staying."

"You think so?" asked Coker contemptuously.

"Isn't it plain enough?" demanded Potter.

Coker looked at his friends with pitying disdain.

"So you think that fellows are interested in Hurree Singh?" he asked. "Well, it shows what fools you are, that's all. Of course, he is after me. Asking about young Inky was simply a blind. It's me he wants! Can't you see it now?"

"Nunno!" murmured Potter.

"Not quite!" said Greene.

"Not now I've told you?" asked Coker. "Well, you fellows are the limit. I know you can't help being fools; but, dash it all, you might help being such thundering silly fools! We haven't seen the last of that scoundrel. I can tell you I'm jolly well going to keep on my guard. No more kidnapping for me. We shall see that villain again soon."

And once more Coker proved to be right. For when the Greyfriars party gathered to dinner that evening a man with a cast in his eye was sitting at a table at a little distance from them; and Coker pointed him out with his soup spoon.

"There he is!" he said.

"My hat!" murmured Greene.

"What do you think now?" jeered Coker.

Potter and Greene really did not know what to think. The man was there—and evidently had come to stay in the hotel. Coker had no doubt on the subject—it was a plot to kidnap him. The man had shadowed him, learned at what hotel he was staying, and had come and booked a room at the same hotel. It was true that he had shadowed Potter and Greene also, and that it was their hotel, too; but that consideration did not even enter Coker's mind. As usual, Coker's horizon was completely filled by the important figure of Horace James Coker. After dinner Horace Coker drew his friends apart, and whispered mysteriously:

"I'm going to stay awake to-night."

"What on earth for?" asked Potter.

"To keep on my guard."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I don't intend to be kidnapped a second time," said Coker. "I shall stay awake and watch."

"All serene," said Potter, with a smile. He had no objection to Coker staying awake and watching, if he liked. Green smiled, too.

"And so will you," added Coker.

"Eh?"

Potter and Greene ceased to smile.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Hoodlum!

"GUFF!" said Mr. Fish. "Jest guff!"

By which Hiram K. Fish meant that it was nonsense.

But the Greyfriars fellows were looking rather serious. Only Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's dusky face remained quite unperturbed.

After dinner, the juniors were looking at the evening papers in the lounge.

As they expected, a good deal of space was still given to the hold-up on the Pacific Railroad; and there were more and more details sorted out by eager reporters. Some of these details had a rather disturbing effect upon the friends of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, though none whatever upon the nabob himself.

The juniors were glad to read that the express messenger on the train was likely to recover from his wound. And the man who had been wounded by Hurree Singh was only slightly injured.

TWENTY-ONE TO-DAY!

A spirited tribute to the genius of Mr. Frank Richards and the universal popularity of Harry Wharton & Co.

By THE GREYFRIARS RHYMESTER.

Gather round with your relations,
Give us blithe congratulations,
For we've reached the noble age of
TWENTY-ONE!

Though we've had our tribulations,
Our troubles and vexations,
My word, we've had a mighty lot of
fun!

Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry,
And old Hurree Singh so merry,
Frank Nugent, and our cheery Johnny Bull,
Every week you read the stories
Of their woes, and larks, and glories,
And you know the Famous Five are
never dull.

For a chap that's fond of eating—
Well, old Bunter wants some beating,
As, of course, you may have noticed
long ago.
Where he puts the stuff, no matter,
He is daily getting fatter,
And a "Twenty-first's" a spiffing
chance, you know!

A shout of praise is swelling
Round our famous author's dwelling,
Frank Richards is the hero of the hour!
His output is terrific,
For his brain is most prolific,
And his stories all are full of punch
and power.

Dicky Nugent as a writer
Helps to make the paper brighter,
And our serials are highly praised
indeed.
All the pictures give you pleasure
In your merry hours of leisure,
And the yarns are all the kind you like
to read.

We are feeling so excited
And so very much delighted
At the letters we've received from
everyone.
Because, in reading over,
We are happy to discover,
Both young and old are proud we're
TWENTY-ONE!

There are pals we've known for ages,
Ever since the MAGNET pages
First began to see the happy light o'
day.
Now we hope that many others
Will enrol among these brothers,
To help us on along our gleesome way.

There are times when you are weary,
There are times when you are dreary,
There are times when it's a fag to be
alive:
But be sure that all your troubles
Will just burst like airy bubbles,
If you spend an hour amongst the
Famous Five!

Now will all the MAGNET brothers,
Joined by many, many others,
Give to us and Frankie Richards three
good cheers?
The Famous Five resound them,
As you rally gaily round them,
And you wish us many more successful
years!

But it appeared that all the gang had been more or less burned in the flaming automobile, not seriously but very painfully.

All of them were booked for a long term in the penitentiary; though, as the express messenger had not been killed, after all, they were safe from the "electric chair."

The search for their escaped leader had been unavailing. He was the only member of the gang who had got away; but he seemed to have got clear, with some of the loot from the express car. It seemed unlikely that he ever would be run down now, as he had been seen only with a mask on his face, and it was, of course, impossible to identify him. All that was known of him was that he was a tall, slim man, and that his associates alluded to him as "Dandy Jim."

As there were some hundreds of thousands of tall, slim men in the States of Nevada and California, the police had a difficult task before them in tracing the leader of the train bandits. The captured rascals refused to give any information; but they had one and all declared that "Dandy Jim" would "get" the gink who had baffled the gang; and of this the reporters made several scare headlines, such as:

"RAILROAD ROBBERS REGISTER REVENGE!"

HINDOO HERO HUNTED BY HOODLUM!"

A "hoodlum," the juniors gathered, was a very bad man indeed. According to the reporters, the captured train robbers had no doubt that Dandy Jim would revenge his disaster by "getting" the author of it. Which was not comfortable reading for Harry Wharton & Co.

"Guff!" pronounced Mr. Fish reassuringly. "Jest guff! I guess the reporters have to hand out something for the public to read! We like our news spiced in this country. Nothing in it, I guess. Those hoodlums are for the pen; and they've been blowing off steam some. But it's mostly newspaper gas."

"The gasfulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I suppose it's that really," said Harry Wharton. "But—"

"Anyhow, we're a long way from Nevada now, and to-morrow we're hitting the cars for 'Frisco," said Mr. Fish. "Don't you worry any, kid," he added to the Nabob of Bhanipur.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh smiled.

"The worryfulness is not terrific," he replied.

"I'll protect you, old chap!" said Billy Bunter reassuringly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you fellows—"

"All the same, we want to keep our peepers open," said Frank Nugent. "Nobody knows this Dandy Jim by sight, and he could walk the streets of Sacramento without anyone being the wiser. The paper says that it was he who shot the express messenger, so he must be a pretty desperate sort of brute!"

"Some hoodlum!" agreed Fisher T. Fish.

"It's a pity the brute got away," said Johnny Bull. "Still, I suppose this newspaper stuff is mostly gas."

"Don't be frightened, Inky. old

(Continued on page 16.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,096.

The OUTCAST of the SKOOL!

by Dicky Nugent.



From polishing Latin and other learned subjects, Jack Jolly has descended to polishing boots! How has this amazing contretemps come to pass?

picked up one of the numerous boots lying about and proceeded to demonstrate.

"First, grasp your boot firmly in the left hand," he eggspained.

"I don't quite see how—" began Jack Jolly.

"Hold your tongue!" snapped the Head.

"What—the tongue of the boot?" asked Jack, in surprise.

"Of course not!" roared the Head furiously. "You just put your hand inside the boot like this—Yaroooooo!"

Dr. Birchmall broke off with a feendish howl, as his nuckle landed on a nail that projected from the heel.

Inwardly, Jack Jolly was larking fit to bust at the sight of the revered and majestick Head of St. Sam's hopping round the boot-room like an injured frog. He mannigged, however, to preserve an eggsspression of owl-like gravity on his face; to have betrayed the slightest sign of amusement at that moment would have been calling down the viles of Dr. Birchmall's wrath on his head, with a vengeance!

"Better try this one, sir!" he advised, picking up another boot.

Dr. Birchmall grunted and took it. "To proceed: having got a firm grip of the boot, the next thing is to brush the dust off—so!"

The Head swept his brush over the boot, with an artistick flurish. Unforchuntly, the artistick flurish carried his hand a bit too far, and the brush finished up on the end of the Head's rather prominent nose.

Thud!

"Yow-ow-ow!" roared Dr. Birchmall, jumping about like a dervish.

"I see, sir!" said Jack, nodding his head gravely. "But is it essential to bash one's boko every time?"

"Certainly not; that was an axcident!" groaned the Head, rubbing his damnniged organ rooffully. "Now watch the next move carefully, Jolly! Here is a bottle of liquid blacking. We will uncork it and tip a little out in this saweer."

Jack Jolly watched with interest, as Dr. Birchmall made an effort to draw the cork out of the neck of the bottle. It was an obstinate cork, and beads of inspiration stood out on the Head's ferrid as he endeavoured to make it budge.

"Drat the wretched thing," he eggclaimed. "I must use a corkscrew!"

Diving a hand into his trowsis pocket, Dr. Birchmall drew out a weerd assortment of penknives, marbles, chunks of toffy and bits of string et settera, from which he selected a stout corkscrew. He inserted the screw into the cork, and then, holding the bottle between his neeze, tugged for dear life.

Plop!

The cork came out. So did the liquid blacking! It came out with a rush, and a stream of it shot up in the air and farley swamped Dr. Birchmall's head and

"G RATE pip! I'm late!" Jack Jolly of the Fourth Form at St. Sam's, jumped out of his bed in dismay, as the solemn tinkling of the rising-bell reverberated through the old skool.

"Half-past seven!" he muttered to himself, as he hastily dressed. "And I should have been at work in the boot-room at five o'clock. This is a bad start, and no mistake!"

It was Jack's first day as bootboy of St. Sam's. He had slept in the Fourth dormitory with his pals for the last time! Henceforth, the former kaptin of the Fourth would sleep in the musty, fusty old boot-room, surrounded by boots and boot-polish. It was indeed a black outlook for him.

The rest of the Fourth had begun to wake up by the time Jack Jolly was dressed. Many were the curious glarnses that were thrown at the fellow who was leaving their ranks to become a meer hewer of wood and drawer of water—or rather, blacker of boots and shiner of shoes.

"Well, you're off, then, old chap," remarked Frank Fearless. "It seems impossibul that you'll never be with us in the Form-room again. Isn't there any way of getting you back?"

Jack Jolly shook his head.

"I can't help my pater losing the bonds in which he had invested all his munny, can I?" he said. "And the only way you can get me back is by finding the missing bonds and restoring my pater's vannished fortunes."

"By George, and I'll do it, too!" said Frank Fearless, earnestly. "By hook or by crook, I'll find out where those bonds are, and put you on your feet again. There's my hand on it!"

Fearless rung his old friend's hand.

There was a mocking lark from Biffer, the cadd of the Fourth, whose pater had indwced General Jolly to invest his all in the ill-fated bonds.

"Some hopes!" he sneered. "I eggsspect, as a matter of fact, Old Man Jolly had to sell the bonds to pay his debts!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,096.

"Do you? Well, take that!" shouted Frank Fearless, giving the sneering rotter a terrifick swipe on the boko that sent him spinning across the dorm. like a catherine-wheel.

"Thanks, Fearless!" said Jack Jolly, gratefully. "Well, I must go now. Ta-ta!"

Teking a last fond look at the dormitory, Jack Jolly hopped it.

Down in the boot-room, Mrs. Buxom, the house-dame, was already waiting for him.

"Lawks-a-mussy! This is a nice time to start your dooties!" she said, severely.

"If Dr. Birchmall gets to know this, I don't know what he'll do."

"But I do!" said a fierce voice in the doorway, and in stalked the majestick figger of the Head himself.

He fixed an acusing glarnse on the new boot-boy.

"Jolly!" he cried feercely. "I thought I told you to begin work at five o'clock!"

"I thought so, too, sir!" agreed Jack Jolly, innoently. "However, if you meant half-past seven, it's just as well I didn't turn up before, isn't it?"

"You cheeky young cub!" hissed the Head, turning red with rage. "When I say 'five,' I mean 'five', and not a minnit later! Take that for your dis-pertinence!"

Dr. Birchmall cuffed the new boot-boy again, and again with venomous force.

Jack Jolly boughed to the inevvitable. Now that he was a meer boot-boy—the lowest of the meenials at St. Sam's—he couldn't very well argew the toss about the matter, as he might have done in happier times. So he uttered no word of complaint, and with the eggseption of an aggerized yell of pain, bore his punnishment with stoickal indifference.

"There!" gasped the Head, when he had finished. "That'll teach you to be respective to your scoopers, my boy! And now to get on with the giddy washing! You may leave me to instruct Jolly in the jentle art of cleaning shoes, Mrs. Buxom."

The house-dame dropped a curtsay and waddled off, and Dr. Birchmall

shoulders, turning him instantly into a howling nigger.

Swoooooosh!

"Ooooooh!" howled the Head.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Jack Jolly, unable to contain his laughter any longer.

"Grooooo!" gasped the unfortunate Dr. Birchmall. "How dare you, Jolly! I've a good mind—grooooo!—to birch you black and blue for impertinence—oooooh! But first, I must go to the bathroom and have a wash and brush-up. You can get on with the work without my valuable assistance, now. Yah!"

With a final sarvidge glare at the historical new shoeblack, Dr. Birchmall tramped out of the room.

The echo of his heavy bob-nailed boots died away down the passidge, and Jack Jolly, with an effort, pulled himself together again and made a start on the boots and shoes.

Of course, it was an awful come-down for the former kaptin of the Fourth to have to spend his day shining shoes! Jack Jolly was a fellow of polish, but he was never born to polish shoes for his living.

However, Jack was not the sort of chap to remain fed-up for long, and very soon, his cheery whistle was ringing through the boot-room as he perused his humble task.

II.

FRANK FEARLESS, Merry and Bright felt like lost sheep, without their old leader, that day. They wandered about after class, wondering what to do with themselves. Footer, without Jack Jolly, seemed a mockery. They tried to play, but somehow the ball seemed as heavy as lead, and they chucked it up at last in disgust.

In the evening they adjourned to the tuck-shop, with the intention of drowning their sorrows in foaming jinjer-pop. But the tuck-shop seemed as gloomy as a toom now that their old pal's cheery larfter was no longer heard, and somehow they found they couldn't swallow the bevverage.

They were crossing the quad again, when Frank Fearless suddenly started.

"My hat! There goes Biffer and his pater!" he eggscclaimed. "Where are they sneaking off to, I wonder?"

Merry and Bright glarnsed in the direckshun indicated by Fearless, and whistled. Sneaking across the quad like a couple of criminals bent on committing some dasterly deed, were Biffer, the booly of the Fourth, and his father, Benjamin Biffer, the City stockbroker. They were making straight for the Cloisters of St. Sam's—those mysterious Cloisters whose flagstones covered many a secret entrance to the underground passidges and ancient cripts which eggisted beneath the skool buildings.

"I have an idea there's fowl work afoot, here, you men," hissed Frank Fearless. "Let's follow them."

"Good egg!" cried Merry and Bright.

The chums of the Fourth eagerly followed the two Biffers, inwardly wondering what was the meening of their sinnister, sneaky behaviour.

"I shouldn't wonder if it's something to do with General Jolly's finanshal collapse," said Frank Fearless, shrewdly, as they shadowed their quarry, with the stealth of Red Indians. "See that leather satchel under old Biffer's arm?"

"Yes, rather!"

"I wonder if it contains General Jolly's missing bonds?"

"Few!"

"But—but that would mean that Old Man Biffer is a thief!" whispered Merry. "Of course, I know he's a stockbroker, but do you think he'd go as far as pinching?"

Frank Fearless shrugged, in the evening twilight,

"I daresay the old scoundril has plucked many a pigeon in a lawful way," he remarked sagely. "It's not a far cry from lawful pinching to unlawful pinching, after all!"

"Troo!" nodded Merry and Bright.

Reaching the Cloisters, the two Biffers halted.

Fearless and Merry and Bright could hear a whispered confab going on between Biffer senior and Biffer junior, and they fairly thrilled as they caught the words "General Jolly," "bonds," and "place of safety."

"They're going to hide the giddy bonds!" hissed Fearless. "What did I tell you? Hallo—"

He broke off suddenly and stared. For while he had been speaking, the two Biffers had stepped into some deep shadows and disappeared, just as if the earth had opened and swallowed them up!

A few minnits passed, and then, to the watching juniors' surprise, the Biffers reappeared from behind a pillar some distance away from where they had vanished!

"Look!" eggscclaimed Fearless, eggstidly. "Old Biffer's not carrying the satchel, now! That means they've hidden the bonds!"

"Few!"

"What shall we do?" asked Bright.

"Do?" answered Frank Fearless. "Why, go and tell Jack Jolly, of course!" "I can see all his troubles disappearing in no time, now!"

Frank Fearless, however, was a bit too optimistick, as it happened.

With his chums he raced back to the Skool House, and made for the boot-room to inform their old leader of what they had seen.

"By Jove, chaps! I beleave you've found out the trooth!" he cried, his eyes flashing. "And to think that my pater is selling matches in the gutter, while old Biffer gloats over the fortune he has theevd from us!"

"Someone taking my name in vain?" interrupted an unplezzant voice from the doorway, and the cadd of the Fourth entered, carrying a pair of muddy boots.

He sneered at Fearless, and flung his boots at Jack Jolly.

"Have these ready in half an hour, shoeblack!" he ordered.

Jack Jolly's eyes blazed.

"You beastly snob!" he roared. "I'm not likely to clean your boots when I've found out the trooth about my pater's vanned fortune! Hand over those bonds, you theeving rotter!"

Biffer turned as pale as a ghost and uttered a startled eggscclamation.

"I don't know what you meen!" he cried horsely.

"Then I'll soon teach you!" cried Jack Jolly, and he made a rush at the trembling Biffer.

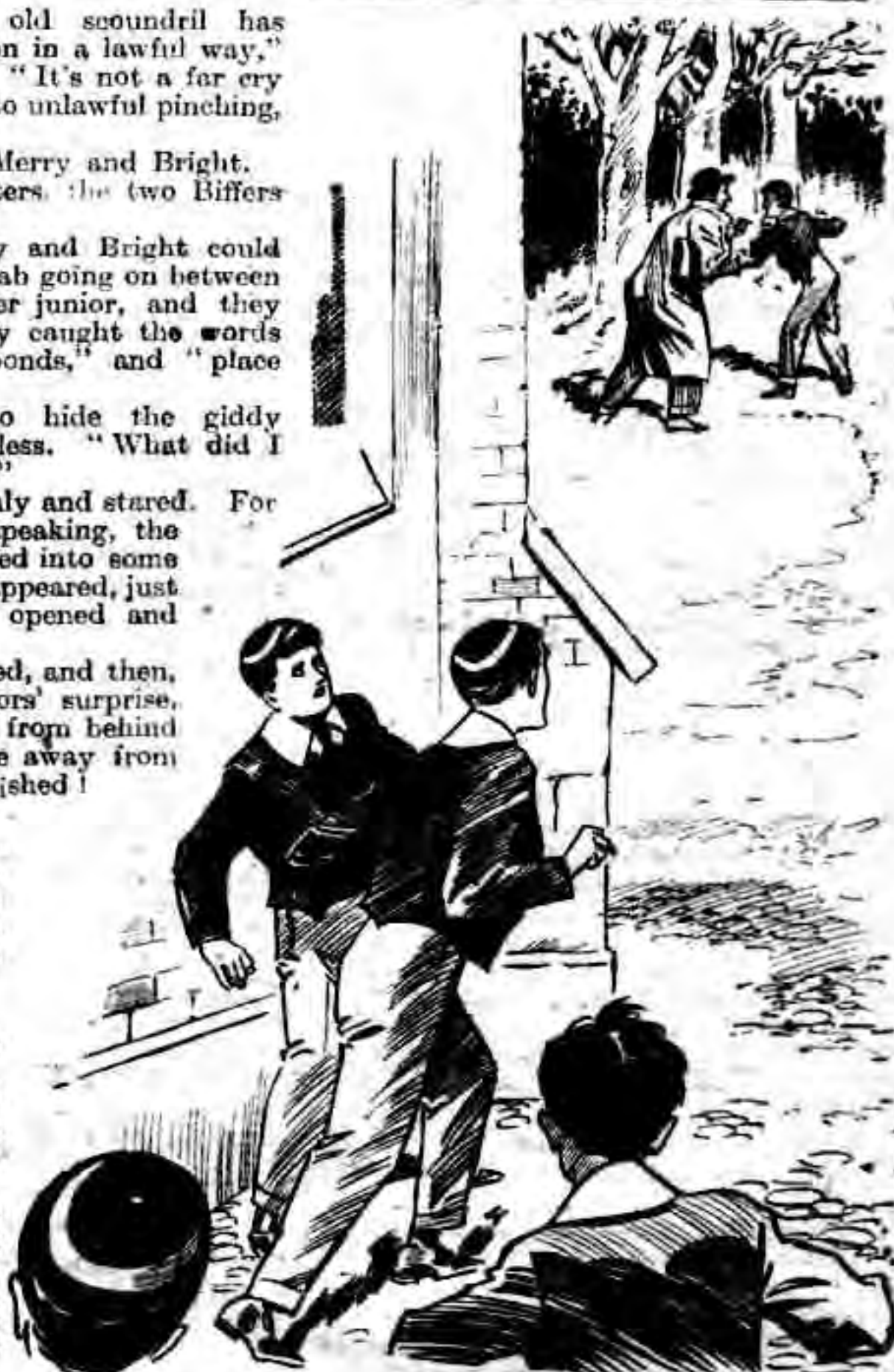
Before the late kaptin of the Fourth could get to grips with him, however, there came another interruption from the doorway.

"Bless my sole! What the merry dickens are you doing of, Jolly?"

Jack Jolly dropped his hands. It was the Head!

Dr. Birchmall glared majestickally round the room.

"A meer boot-boy—a common or garden shoeblack—attempting to assault one of the skollers of St. Sam's! Unherd of!"



The chums of the Fourth followed the two Biffers, inwardly wondering what was the meaning of their sinnister, sneaking behaviour.

he cried. "What can be the eggspianation of such goings-on?"

The culler returned to Biffer's dilemma again, and he pointed an accusing finger at Jack Jolly.

"That common meenial has been suggesting that I know where his pater's missing bonds are!" he said. "I suppose he means to insinuate that my pater pinched them."

"Preposticulous!" thundered Dr. Birchmall.

"But we saw him——" began Frank Fearless.

"You saw rats!" snorted the Head. "Return to your quarters immejately, you juniors. Jolly! You will follow me to my study, where I will birch you!"

"But you can't birch a boot-boy!" objected Jack Jolly.

"Can't I?" leered the Head. "Have another guess!"

Followed by the simperthatick glarnses of his old pals, and the triumphant sneer of Biffer, the boot-boy of St. Sam's followed the Head.

Needless to say, the scene that followed in the Head's study was too painful to be described.

Jack returned to his work with bitterness in his sole. He felt sure now that Biffer's pater had got General Jolly's bonds. But justiss was denied him, and despite his nollidge, it looked as if he was going to remain the Outcast of the Skool.

THE END.

(Don't miss the final story in this amusing series, entitled: "JUSTISS AT LAST!" which will appear in next week's BUMPER FREE GIFT NUMBER of the MAGNET!)

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General Jolly selling matches in the street!

16 INTRODUCE THE "MAGNET" TO YOUR CHUMS—THEY'LL THANK YOU!

HELD UP BY BANDITS!

(Continued from page 13.)

chap," said Bunter. "I'm with you, you know."

"The frightfulness is not terrific, my esteemed fat Bunter!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"It's rather a pity I wasn't handling that gun, instead of you, Inky," remarked Bunter thoughtfully. "I should have bagged the lot of them."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter's remark had the effect of restoring the hilarity of the Greyfriars party.

Mr. Fish looked at his watch.

"Now, if you lads are going to the Hippodrome this evening, you want to beat it," he remarked.

Seats had been booked at the Sacramento Hippodrome for the evening, the last the party were to spend in the Californian capital. On the morrow, the cars were to bear them onward to San Francisco, after which they were heading for Los Angeles and Hollywood. No cable had arrived from the headmaster of Greyfriars—for reasons that the juniors were far from suspecting. Popper and Son could have enlightened them, but certainly did not think of doing so. As they understood that no reply from the Head implied consent, it was all plain sailing now, and they were looking forward keenly to Hollywood and the studio of the Perfection Picture Syndicate.

As the Hippodrome was in K Street, the Greyfriars party took a street car from the hotel to reach it.

They went in rather a thoughtful mood.

Although most of what they had read in the newspapers was probably "guff," as Mr. Fish described it, it left Hurree Singh's friends with a very uneasy feeling. From the newspaper reports it was clear that the man Dandy Jim was a reckless and desperate character, only too likely to be revengeful. Hurree Singh's action had prevented his escaping with plunder to the extent of a hundred thousand dollars—a fortune for the gang had they succeeded in getting clear with it.

His gang was broken up and booked for long terms of imprisonment. He himself was a hunted fugitive, and it was quite possible that some of the prisoners might "squeal," and give information which would lead to his arrest. That would mean a life sentence for shooting the express messenger. There could be little doubt that the ruffian would be revengeful, and that if he came upon the schoolboy who had caused his defeat, Hurree Singh's life would scarcely be safe.

It was a very discomforting reflection for the chums of the Remove, though it did not disturb the impassive nabob in the very least. True, at Sacramento they were at a good distance from the scene of the railroad hold-up, and on the morrow they were to be much farther away. Possibly Dandy Jim was still hiding in the hills of Nevada, and thinking more of his own safety than of vengeance. Still, the juniors did not feel quite at ease.

The entertainment at the Hippodrome, however, drove the matter from their minds, and they enjoyed the evening. It was raining when they came out, and the street cars were crowded, and they decided to walk back to the hotel.

"I say, you fellows, we can get a taxi!" expostulated Billy Bunter.

"We can't all get in a taxi, fathead," answered Johnny Bull.

"Well, we can get two taxis—dash

it, three if you like!" said Bunter liberally.

"Has your postal order followed you to California yet?" asked Johnny.

"Nunno!"

"Then we'll walk."

"I say, Mauly, have you got a ten-dollar bill about you?"

"Yaas."

"Lend it to me, old chap, and I'll stand the taxis."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up, Bunter," said Bob Cherry cheerily. "It's only a few blocks. Come on! If you get wet, a wash will do you good."

"The goodfulness will be terrific!"

"Beast!"

Harry Wharton & Co. walked on, regardless of the shower of rain, and Billy Bunter rolled after them. The party were nearing the Golden West Hotel, when a tall, slim man came hurriedly round a corner and followed on behind them. Bunter blinked round at him, blinked a second time, and then grabbed Harry Wharton by the arm.

"Hold on!" he gasped. "I say—"

"What's the row now, fathead?" asked Harry impatiently.

"There's a man behind us!"

"What about it, ass?"

"A tall, slim man," gasped Bunter. "I say, you fellows, if it's that hoodlum they mentioned in the paper—"

"Oh!"

The juniors all looked round, in the glimmer of the street lamps shining through the rain.

A man, whose figure was undoubtedly tall and thin, was hurrying after them, muffled up in a coat, against the rain, and with his hat pulled down over his brows.

As he was still at a little distance, the juniors could only see that he was tall and thin, and that he was muffled up against the rain.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, come on!" said Vernon-Smith impatiently.

"Suppose he begins shooting—"

"My esteemed, idiotic Bunter—"

"Fathead!"

"He's coming after us!"

"Come on, you guys!" said Fisher T. Fish.

The juniors hurried on towards the Golden West, whose lights were glimmering out in the rain ahead. Behind them the tall, dark figure kept pace, and Bunter gave it many backward blinks of alarm.

"I say, you fellows, he's still behind us!"

"Bow-wow!"

"He may have a revolver!"

"Ass!"

"He's following us!"

"Bosh!"

"Beasts!"

The juniors chuckled and walked on. They were not likely to be alarmed by every tall, thin man they beheld on the streets of Sacramento, even if he happened to be hurrying in the same direction.

Billy Bunter broke into a run. His fat little legs fairly twinkled as he "beat" it for the hotel.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "Hold on, Bunter! Aren't you going to protect us?"

"Can't you walk behind and stop the bullets?" demanded Johnny Bull. "You're wide enough to cover the lot of us."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter did not take the trouble to answer; he twinkled onward, and scuttled into the porch of the Golden West. A few minutes later the juniors followed him in. Billy Bunter was

blinking out uneasily into the rainy night.

"I say, you fellows—"

"My esteemed, fatheaded Bunter, you—"

"I'm sure it was that hoodlum. He had a villainous look!"

"I didn't notice the villainous look," said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Well, I did! He was hurrying along in a syrupstigious way—"

"In a whatter?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He had a villainous, hangdog, syrupstigious look," persisted Bunter.

"Looked a murderous hoodlum all over. I—"

Bunter broke off with a yell.

"He's coming in!"

"Eh?"

"Here he comes! Help!" gasped Bunter.

The tall, thin gentleman was walking right into the hotel. Billy Bunter dodged in haste behind the sturdy form of Bob Cherry. For the moment he had forgotten his intention of protecting the Nabob of Bhanipur from the hoodlum.

"Ow! Keep him off!" gasped Bunter. "I say, you fellows—help!"

"I guess it's wet," said the tall, thin man, taking off his hat and shaking the raindrops from it, and revealing the well-known countenance of Mr. Hiram K. Fish. "You lads get wet—what? Gee! What's the matter with that fat sucker?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

It was only Mr. Fish. That explained the alarming fact that he had followed the juniors and entered the hotel.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Fish looked puzzled.

"What's the pesky joke?" he inquired.

"Only Bunter," chuckled Bob Cherry. "He saw a tall gent coming on behind us, and took him for Dandy Jim!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mr. Fish.

"I—I say, you fellows, I—I—" gasped Bunter.

"You fat clam!" said Fisher T. Fish, as his popper walked away, laughing. "You slab-sided mugwump!"

"Oh, really, Fishy—"

The juniors roared. Bunter had described the tall, thin gentleman as a villainous-looking hoodlum, and, as it had turned out to be Mr. Fish, Fisher T. was, naturally, indignant.

Another tall, thin man was sprawling in a chair in the lounge, smoking a cigar, and he had given a start as he heard Bob mention the name of Dandy Jim. For a moment his eyes—very keen, and one of them with a cast—dwelt very curiously on the group of juniors. Then he gave all his attention again to the rings of smoke curling from his cigar. Harry Wharton & Co. passed him without a glance, little dreaming that they had ever seen him before—on an occasion when he had had a mask on his face and a revolver in his hand. Dandy Jim, the train-robber of Nevada, was not far away!

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Strategie!

"LOOK here—" said Potter.

"Don't shout!"

"Look here—" said Greene.

"Don't yell!"

Potter and Greene looked, as they felt, exasperated. Harry Wharton & Co. had gone to bed. Coker & Co., as became Fifth-Formers and seniors, had stayed up rather late. They had spent the evening at the State Theatre, in

12th Street, Coker, as usual, standing the tickets, and Potter and Greene standing Coker. Coker certainly had given less attention to the play than to the audience, keeping his eyes about him for the man with the cast in his eye, who—Coker was absolutely convinced—was plotting to kidnap him as he had been kidnapped in New York.

Coker was rather disappointed to see nothing of his supposed enemy, but he concluded that the villain was biding his time.

When the three Fifth-Formers returned to the hotel, the man with the unusual eye was smoking cigars in the lounge, and Coker watched him suspiciously when he passed him. The man appeared absolutely unconscious of Coker's existence—which was another disappointment, for Coker had expected him to give at least a start. Still, his air of unconsciousness was, on second thoughts, obviously a blind, and proved that he was trying to still Coker's natural suspicions. That was how Coker worked it out in the depths of his powerful intellect.

Now that the Fifth-Formers had gone to bed, at a rather late hour, Potter and Greene had a natural desire to turn in and go to sleep. Coker may have felt the same, but he was above such weakness. He was not going to sleep that night, neither were his comrades.

Potter and Greene wanted to go to their own rooms. Coker almost drove them into his room.

"I rely on you fellows," said Coker, speaking in a cautious voice, though the door was shut. "As for the man himself, I could handle him—I haven't seen a man in the United States yet that I couldn't handle. But he may have a sandbag, or a slung-shot, or something of that kind about him. I expect you fellows to stand by me."

"But I want to go to bed!" said Potter plaintively.

"I'm sleepy!" almost wailed Greene. Coker gave a contemptuous sniff.

"You'd like to go to sleep, and wake up in the morning to find that I'd been kidnapped?" he asked sardonically.

"Now, look here," said Potter, "it's all rot! Fancy a man trying to kidnap anybody in a crowded hotel! Don't be an ass!"

"So that's your opinion, Potter?"

"That's it!" said Potter emphatically.

"And yours, Greene?"

"Exactly!" said Greene. "Now let's go to bed."

"Go!" said Coker loftily. "Leave me to it! I'm not asking you for any help you don't want to give! Only don't speak to me again!"

"Eh?"

"What?"

"I decline to know fellows who desert me in the hour of need!" said Coker.

"I'm done with you! Hook it!"

Coker pointed to the door, with a stern and henceforth-we-are-strangers expression on his face.

"Oh, draw it mild, old chap!" said Greene uncomfortably.

"You ain't on the films yet, you know!" Potter ventured to remind the great man of the Fifth.

"I'm waiting for you to go!" said Coker calmly. "I'll face the danger alone!"

"But there isn't any danger, you know!" moaned Potter.

"None at all!" said Greene. "Just fancy—merely your fancy, old chap!"

"Most of the people in this hotel are gone to bed," remarked Coker. "I won't disturb them by treating you fellows as you deserve! Otherwise I'd knock your heads together for your cheek! Now get out!"

Potter and Greene exchanged a dismal glance. They knew that they were "for" it. They did not want to quarrel with Coker. Quarrelling with Coker not only meant the loss of his friendship and conversation—which they could have borne with fortitude—but it meant riding in street cars instead of taxicabs: it meant buying their own

theatre tickets, and paying for their own lunches in restaurants. It meant all sorts of things of that kind, which Coker's friends could not contemplate with equanimity. Coker would never have been considered ornamental by his most devoted pal, but it could not be denied that Coker was useful.

"Oh, we'll stay up!" said Potter, suppressing his feelings. "We—we—we'll keep watch with you, Coker!"

"Oh dear—I mean, yes, rather!" said Greene.

"Not if you don't want to!" said Coker loftily.

"But we—we—we do!" asserted Potter.

"You do?"

"Yes, old chap!" said Potter.

It really looked as if Potter, in George Washington's country had picked up some of George's ways, for that statement could not be considered truthful.

"Well, all right," said Coker. "If you've done jawing, I'll tell you my plan. That cock-eyed johnny shadowed me to-day, found out the hotel I was staying at, and booked a room in the same place. That's proof positive to anybody but a born idiot."

"But he shadowed us, too—" said Potter.

"Don't be an ass!"

"And booked a room in the same hotel!" said Greene.

"Don't be an idiot!"

Potter and Greene were silent. Evidently Coker meant to keep the centre of the stage. Their part was to come in as chorus.

"Why is he in the same hotel?" went on Coker, unheeding. "Plain enough! To get at me at night! Chloroform, perhaps, while I'm asleep, or a bang on the head from a slung-shot, or a sandbag! See? Well, he won't catch me napping!"

Potter and Greene sighed. There was to be no napping that night for any of them.

(Continued on next page.)

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"I've found out which room he's booked," went on Coker. "He's got a room on this floor. Another proof, if you fellows had the sense to see it! What does he want to be on the same floor for?"

"He must sleep on some floor, I suppose," remarked Potter. "He wouldn't be likely to sleep on the roof!"

"If you're going to be a funny idiot, Potter—"

"I won't poach on your preserves, old bean!"

"What!"

"I—I mean, get on with it!" said Potter hastily. "What are we to do?"

"I'll explain if you'll listen instead of wagging your chin so much! That villain—"

"What villain?"

"That kidnapping scoundrel with the cock-eye, you ass!"

"Oh, yes! Get on!"

"That dastard," went on Coker, "has a room almost opposite this, on the other side of the corridor. I've found that out. To be exact, it's just opposite the next room to this on the left—Hurree Singh's room. Now, when everybody's asleep, it's as clear as day-light that he means to creep out of bed, and—"

"Not if he's as sleepy as I am!" murmured Potter.

"Eh—did you speak?"

"I said, 'Go on,' old chap!"

"He will creep out of his room and creep into mine," said Coker. "Anybody but a born fool could see that that's his game! You fellows are born fools! But you can take my word for it. Now, my little scheme is this: After turning out the light here, I shall creep out into the corridor and hide in the doorway of the next room—young Inky's room. There's a bit of an alcove to the door, and it's just the place."

"Oh!" said Potter, with more interest.

He began to hope that he was going to escape Coker's eagle eye, in which case, there was no doubt whatever that

George Potter would fall, at one fell swoop, right into the arms of Morpheus.

"You fellows," continued Coker, "will stay in this room."

"Ah!" said Greene, as interested as Potter.

"Don't go to sleep, of course."

"Oh, no! Of—of course not."

"Keep wide awake, and keep a stick handy," said Coker. "You'll need it when that scoundrel gets going. You'll be in the dark, of course. Now, when that kidnapping villain creeps into this room, I shall be watching him from the next doorway. I shall close in behind him with a poker in my hand, or something. He will be taken between two fires—you fellows in front, and me behind. As soon as he's fairly in the room I shall shout—see? You'll switch on the light instantly."

"If we hear you—"

"You'll hear all right, fathead!"

Potter doubted it. In the first place he doubted whether Coker would have any occasion to shout. In the second place he doubted whether he would hear him if he did, in his sleep; for there was no doubt that Potter would be fast asleep in less than a minute after he was safe from Horace Coker's eagle eye.

However, he did not explain all that to Coker. He waited meekly for Coker to finish unfolding his masterly strategy. The sooner Coker had finished laying his plans, the sooner he would shut up.

"You've got it clear?" said Coker. "Mind, don't lie down and don't go to sleep. Don't close so much as an eyelid. Think of me—watching in that doorway for hours, perhaps. Now, get hold of something in case you need it—something that will give the dastard a good crack—and I'll get out."

"Right-ho, old bean!" said Potter heartily. "I must say it seems to me a jolly good scheme."

"Masterly!" said Greene solemnly. "I hardly see how it could have been arranged better."

Coker nodded, somewhat mollified by these tributes. It did not occur to him

that Potter and Greene considered the scheme so very satisfactory, because it relieved them of Coker's watchful eye. Coker was welcome to watch everybody in the hotel, if he liked, so long as he did not watch the two sleepy Fifth-Formers.

The plan having been settled in this masterly manner, it only remained to carry it out. Pokers were not available, but there were a number of sticks among Coker's extensive baggage, and they selected one each. Coker picked a heavy Malacca and swished it in the air, and Potter and Greene dodged away just in time. Coker was rather careless with his swishing.

"Better get to it," said Potter. "The light's turned off in the corridor now."

"Sure you know what to do?"

"Oh, yes, rather!"

Coker switched off the light.

Silently—for he had carefully put on rubber shoes—Coker crept to the door.

With extreme caution he opened it.

The hotel was all asleep now, or should have been. The electric light was turned off—only a dim glimmer coming from the distant lift-shaft at the end of the corridor.

Coker crept out.

He drew the door silently shut behind him, groped his way to the alcove of Hurree Singh's door, and took cover there.

Potter and Greene were left alone. They remained silent for a minute or two till it was evident that Coker was safely gone.

"We know what to do, I think, Greeney," murmured Potter.

William Greene chuckled softly.

"I think so," he murmured.

"We can't go to our rooms—that born idiot would hear us. He might swipe us in the dark with that club, taking us for kidnappers."

A smothered sound came from Greene.

"But Coker's bed is comfy enough, and we can sleep in our clothes for once," said Potter. "I'm so jolly sleepy, I could sleep on a dashed heap of cinders. Yaw-yaw-yaw!"

"Yaw-yaw-yaw!" yawned Greene, like an echo.

"The idiot may come back when he's tired of playing the giddy ox," said Potter. "But we shall hear his hoofs, I expect."

"Chance it, anyhow," said Greene. "He may keep it up till daylight. Coker's a sticker."

Potter groped his way to the bed.

Greene groped after him.

With great relief and satisfaction the two sleepy Fifth-Formers stretched themselves there. In about sixty seconds they were fast asleep. There was a happy sound of regular breathing in the room as Potter and Greene blissfully slumbered. Fortunately, it was not likely to reach the ears of Horace Coker.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Coker Comes in Useful!

COKER of the Fifth closed his eyes, jumped, and opened them again. It was about the hundredth time that Coker had closed his eyes in the course of an hour or so.

Coker was determined not to sleep.

Obviously, it was futile to lay that masterly scheme and sit up in a doorway instead of going to bed, if he was to sleep. But it seemed every now and then as if the forces of nature would be too strong for Coker.

Planning to sit up all night on the watch was fairly easy. Carrying out

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that plan was a matter of more difficulty. Coker hadn't been sleepy when he made his plans. He was fearfully sleepy when he carried them out. That made a lot of difference.

But he did not mean to yield.

Common mortals might give in to the insidious temptations of Morpheus, but Coker was made of sterner stuff.

Every time his heavy eyelids dropped and shut he jerked them open again. He simply wouldn't sleep.

It was hard work. The great hotel had long been buried in slumber. There was no sound, and the buzz of traffic in Sacramento was stilled. All lights were out, save from a glimmer on the ground floor, and a dim reflection of it from the lift-shaft. It was long past midnight, and, somehow, an hour at that time seemed much longer than an hour at any other time. The hours after midnight are called the "small hours," but they are by no means small hours when a sleepy fellow is trying to keep awake. They are big hours, lengthy hours, interminable hours, each one of them containing, of course, only sixty minutes, but awfully long minutes. They seemed longer, and longer, and longer to Horace Coker as they dragged wearily by.

If the man with the cast in his eye really had designs on Coker, he was in no hurry. Coker wondered whether Potter and Greene were keeping wide awake as he had bidden them. But he could not go back to his room to ascertain. At any moment the man with the cast in his eye might creep from his room with kidnapping designs on Coker. It would never do to risk giving him the alarm. He had to be caught in the act, and bagged. Unless he was caught in the act there was, of course, no proof against him. Coker was certain of the matter, but the attitude of Potter and Greene showed that more than that was required to convince others.

Coker waited and watched.

He was sitting in the alcove of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's doorway with his back to the wall, completely hidden in the darkness. He had chosen the place well. His own door was only a few feet away, and Coker could watch it—so long as he kept awake—unseen. His eyes being thoroughly accustomed to the gloom by this time, the faint glimmer from the lift-shaft was quite enough to show him any object in the corridor—if any object appeared. Within the room Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was sleeping the sleep of the just, and if he was dreaming he certainly was not dreaming that Coker of the Fifth was squatting outside his door, keeping a weary vigil.

Coker nodded again. Again he jerked his eyelids open, and made a fresh resolve.

After this it occurred to Coker that he could listen quite as well with his eyes shut. And he was there to listen—to listen for the sound of a door opening, and creeping, stealthy footsteps. Coker, undoubtedly, was very sleepy by this time, and his thoughts a little hazy, perhaps. At all events, he decided to let his heavy eyelids close for a few minutes while he listened with as much intentness as ever.

The natural result accrued.

Coker's eyelids not only shut, but they seemed glued together. Sitting in the dark doorway, leaning against the wall, Coker's head drooped on his manly chest, and he slept as soundly as Potter and Greene. No softly opened door, no stealthy footstep, would have startled Coker after that. With nodding head and shut eyes, and his Malacca across his knees, Horace Coker plunged deep



There was a flood of light in the room as Hurree Singh turned on the electric switch over his bed. "Got him!" gasped Coker, gripping the heavy Malacca in his hand. He stared at the crumpled figure in the doorway, and the length of lead piping, wrapped in rag, by the side of the senseless man. "He was after me," gasped Coker, "and he came to your room by mistake!"

(See Chapter 11.)

into the realms of dreams, and stayed there.

Coker awoke suddenly.

He did not stir. Caution had grown to be a sort of second nature by this time, and though he had forgotten where he was, and why, he was conscious of caution.

He sat, without motion or sound, trying to collect his scattered wits. Then he remembered. In the darkness Coker blushed. He had fallen asleep at his post!

Only for a second, no doubt. As a matter of fact, Coker had been fast asleep for a solid hour, but he was not aware of it. Something had awakened him. Had not something awakened him, Coker certainly would have slept on till morning, and would have been discovered there by an early chambermaid—doubtless much to her astonishment.

But something had awakened him. Nothing was stirring in the wide corridor—it was silent and deserted in the pale glimmer from the lift-shaft. Nothing was stirring at the door of Coker's own room, a few feet distant—

and Potter and Greene, within that room, most certainly were not stirring. But something was stirring closer at hand—and Coker became aware of it with deep amazement.

A thrill ran through Coker.

It was at the door of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's room that something was stirring. This it was that had awakened Coker, had he only known it.

A tiny bright spot of light caught his eye.

For some seconds Coker fancied that he was dreaming. Then he knew that the spot of light came from a tiny electric torch, and that it was shining on the lock of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's door.

In the alcove the darkness was absolutely impenetrable, save for that tiny spot of light. In the blackness there was a sound—only a faint sound, but very audible in the surrounding silence.

A hand—guided by that spot of light—was working at the lock of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's door.

Coker realised that someone was

standing within three feet of him—somebody who must almost have touched him as he passed into the alcove to reach the nabob's bed-room door.

His heart thumped.

Obviously, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh had locked his door on the inside when he went to bed. The unseen man was picking the lock from the outside, with the tiny light-spot to guide him.

Coker's heart thumped so fast and so hard that he wondered that the unseen depredator did not hear it. The man evidently did not, however, for he continued his surreptitious work, unheeding. Plainly he did not know that Coker was there. Coker was absolutely invisible in the darkness, as the unknown marauder was. And the most wary and suspicious marauder could hardly have anticipated that a fellow would be sitting asleep outside a door at three in the morning. The man could not see Coker, and Coker could not see the man. All he could see was that tiny glitter of light, all he could hear was some tool working on the lock.

Coker calmed himself. It was only excitement he experienced. He was quite incapable of fear. Only his grip closed convulsively on the thick, heavy Malacca across his knees.

Although he could not see the man, he had no doubt of his identity—the cast-eyed man, of course! The villain had mistaken the room for Coker's, which was next door. At least, Coker had no doubt of it. This mistake, if mistake it was, on the part of the scoundrel, rather disconcerted Coker's careful strategy. He had planned to follow the villain into his room, tackling him from the rear, while Potter and Greene tackled him in front. But if the fellow entered the wrong room, that well-laid plan could not be carried out.

Coker, keeping as still as a mouse, considered the matter. It was strange and creepy to sit there, in the blackness, with that low, faint sound in his ears, the tiny spot of light dancing under his gaze, a low, suppressed panting breath occasionally reaching his hearing. It was eerie, if Coker had been troubled with nerves. But Coker of the Fifth had no nerves to speak of.

There was a faint click.

The door had been unlocked from the outside. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's room lay open now to the marauder.

Blackness rather less black, showed the open doorway to Coker. The light had been instantly shut off.

The man was standing in the doorway, listening. He was a black shadow, faintly visible to the eye now.

That he believed he was entering Coker's room, seemed certain to Coker. And whatever it was he intended, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh would get the benefit of it!

Coker decided what to do.

To catch the villain between himself and Potter and Greene and seize him and make him a prisoner, was impracticable now. To tackle him single-handed would have been Coker's obvious plan, but for the probability that he had a deadly weapon about him. To let him get to Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's bedside, of course, was unthinkable. Coker gripped the heavy Malacca, shut his teeth hard, and lifted himself as quietly as he could to his feet.

Quiet as he was, the man must have heard some movement, for the black shadow in the doorway turned swiftly.

Crash!

The Malacca was in the air, and the shadow spun round just in time to re-

ceive it on the forehead instead of on the back of the head.

It was a terrific swipe. Coker put all his beet into it, and Coker had an almost unlimited supply of beef.

Not a sound came from the man who got the Malacca. He went down like an ox, his legs crumpling under him. Not a sound, save the thud as he hit the floor, senseless.

Coker gasped.

There was an electric light switch a few yards along the wall. Coker groped for it, and switched it on, and the corridor was flooded with sudden light. From Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's room came a startled voice. The thud of the body in his doorway had awakened the nabob.

"What the esteemed thump—"

Then there was a flood of light in the room, as Hurree Singh switched it on over his bed.

"Got him!" gasped Coker. He stared at the crumpled figure in the doorway, and at a length of lead piping, wrapped in a rag, that was clutched in the senseless hand. "My hat! Got him!"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh bounded out of bed.

"My esteemed Coker—"

"Got him!"

It was the tall, slim man, with the cast in his eye—though the latter could not be seen now that his eyes were closed in unconsciousness. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh gazed at him with startled eyes, and stared blankly at Coker.

"An esteemed and execrable hotel thief!" he ejaculated.

"Hotel thief be blowed!" answered Coker. "Does that thing in his hand look like sneak-thieving! He was after me, and came to your room by mistake!"

The man's eyes opened.

Coker held the Malacca ready. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh hurriedly picked up the deadly lead-piping by the scoundrel's side. The man stirred, gazing round him wildly, and his eyes blazed with rage as they fell on Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"You! I'll get you yet!" he snarled.

He dragged himself to a sitting posture, thrust his hand into a pocket, and a revolver flashed out.

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Crash!

Bang!

The Malacca and the lead-piping struck the ruffian together as he fired. The bullet smashed a hole in the ceiling as he went senseless to the floor again. And, following the roar of the shot, came a wild, startled buzz and uproar in the awakened hotel.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Capture of Dandy Jim!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"
"What the thump—"
"Who—what—"
"I say, you fellows—"

The roar of the pistol-shot in the silence of the night, had awakened all the sleepers on that floor of the Golden West Hotel, and many others. Harry Wharton & Co. jumped out of bed instantly.

Harry Wharton switched on his light, and threw open his door. He found the corridor outside already flooded with light. He knew that it was a shot that had awakened him, and the thought flashed into his mind at once of the threats of the railroad bandits, and the peril of Hurree Singh. He ran out in his pyjamas and in a second was at the nabob's door.

"Inky!" he gasped.

"All serene," said Coker, coolly. "I've stunned the scoundrel. Nothing to be frightened about, kid."

"The serenity is terrific, my esteemed chum," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, cheerfully.

Wharton stared at the senseless man on the floor.

The revolver, still smoking, lay a few inches from his hand. Wharton remembered having seen the man in the hotel, though he had not specially noticed him. But the fact that he was tall and slim struck him now, in view of the circumstances. That was all that was known of Dandy Jim's description.

"Dandy Jim!" he exclaimed.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh nodded. He had already guessed that.

"I think so," he assented. "The esteemed scoundrel had this lead piping in his ludicrous hand, and he seems to have unlocked my door somehowfully. He was after my esteemed self."

"Oh!" exclaimed Wharton, his face as pale as chalk, as he realised how narrow his chum's escape had been.

"The esteemed Coker woke up, and cracked him bangfully on his esteemed napper," explained Hurree Singh. "The obligefulness to the excellent and ridiculous Coker is terrific."

Coker stared at him.

"Don't be a young ass," he advised, "the man wasn't after you. He was after me."

"Eh?"

"He came to this room by mistake," explained Coker. "I've been watching him—he was after me—kidnapping, you know, same as happened in New York. It was me he wanted."

"Wha rot," said Harry. "The man must be the railroad bandit—the one who got away—"

"Rubbish!" said Coker.

"He answers to the description of Dandy Jim, as far as we know it—"

"Bosh!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What—" Bob Cherry and the rest of the Co. were on the scene now.

Hiram K. Fish, half dressed, came along from his room. He stared blankly at the senseless bandit.

"What the John James Brown—" he ejaculated.

"Oh, my hat!" said Potter, who had arrived with Greene. The shot had awakened the two Fifth-Formers and brought them out of Coker's room.

"It's the man!" said Greene in wonder. "It's the man Coker suspected!"

"I daresay you'll admit now that I was right!" he remarked. "I told you he was after me."

"He couldn't have come to this room after you," said Potter.

"Made a mistake in the rooms, you know," explained Coker. "Don't be an ass, Potter."

"It's Dandy Jim, I guess," said Fisher T. Fish. "It's sure that pesky railroad bandit, and I gum, he's been staying in this hotel—carry me home to die!"

"I say, you fellows, what's up?" yelled Bunter. "Is the hotel on fire? Help!"

"No, you ass," roared Johnny Bull. "Shut up—"

"Then what's the row?" demanded Bunter. "I heard something—sounded like a slam—"

"It was a shot, fathead!"

Bunter jumped.

"A—a—a shot? What—who—"

"It's Dandy Jim, the railroad man."

"Yaroooh!"

Billy Bunter disappeared into his room again with the swiftness of a lightning flash. In a moment he was buried deep beneath bedclothes, where he squirmed, quaking.

By this time, the whole hotel was in a buzz of alarm. A half-dressed manager, and a fully-dressed hotel-detective, came running on the scene. Horace Coker explained what had happened, but though his statement of the actual facts was accepted, he was surprised and indignant to find that his kidnapping theory was totally disregarded. Nobody but

Coker had the slightest idea that the hoodlum's presence in the hotel was connected in any way with Coker. Coker, who was by no means prepared to take a place of secondary importance, was surprised and deeply irritated. It was all quite clear to Coker.

"I tell you, he was after me," he hooted. "Can't you understand? He followed me to-day—watching me—shadowing me to this hotel—"

The hotel detective nodded.

"I guess he recognised you on the street as a member of the party in the train," he said. "He shadowed you to find out where Mister Hunky Jampot was locating."

Coker snorted. The detective might think what he liked, but Coker was not likely to think that he was not, after all, the central personage in this dramatic occurrence.

"That's it, of course," said Potter.

"Don't be an ass, Potter," said Coker.

"I guess it's Dandy Jim for sure!"

said Hiram K. Fish, rubbing his hands. Mr. Fish was almost grinning with satisfaction. The affair was startling, and might have been tragic, but all Mr. Fish saw was the possibility of more inexpensive publicity. Already, in his mind's eye, Hiram K. Fish saw the scare headings:

"RAILROAD ROBBER RAIDS HOLLYWOOD HERO! PERFECTION PICTURE PET'S PERIL! HOODLUM ATTACKS HOLLYWOOD HERO IN HOTEL!"

Publicity like that was worth dollars and dollars, to the Perfection Picture Syndicate. So Mr. Fish rubbed his bony hands and was pleased.

The detective stooped by the side of the insensible man. The latter opened his eyes again to find the handcuffs secure upon his wrists.

He stared wildly round him.

As before, he took no heed of Coker, but his eyes fixed on the dusky, smiling face of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with a deadly look.

The nabob of Bhampur gave him a cheery nod and a smile in response.

The hotel detective's practiced hands ran through the man's pockets, searching him. The tool with which he had picked the lock of the door came to light, as well as a number of cartridges for his revolver, and a large roll of bills. The

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Trying to Please Coker!

HURREE JAMSET RAM SINGH was the cynosure of all eyes in the Golden West Hotel the following morning.

"Rubber-necking" was the order of the day, wherever the dusky nabob appeared.

No fewer than six reporters interviewed the nabob that morning, and every one of them was deeply interested, not only by Hurree Singh's description of the happenings, but by the remarkable English in which he expressed it. Those interviews appeared in the later editions of the papers, under such headings as:

"SCHOOLBOY SPILLS HIS OWN STORY!"

"HANKY PANKY JAMPOT JING TELLS THE TALE!"

Some of the enterprising reporters found it a little difficult to follow Hurree Singh's uncommon English; and all of them failed to get his name quite right.

Horace Coker was cross that morning.

Properly speaking, Horace Coker should have been the centre of attraction, the object of the general attention, and the victim of the enterprising reporters.

But he wasn't!

Coker came into the story simply as a secondary figure. All the importance he had was derived from the circumstance that he was mixed up in the affair of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

It was very annoying to Coker.

Nobody in Sacramento seemed to be able to understand that Coker, of the Fifth Form at Greyfriars,

was a fellow of immense consequence, and that Hurree Singh, a junior in the Lower Fourth, was nobody at all in particular. Nobody in Sacramento, in fact, seemed to have heard of Greyfriars at all; and on hearing it they did not even understand what it was.

Coker learned, with amazement, that in the United States the national schools are called public schools; and the man who attended to the hotel elevator, and the waiter who served Coker's dinner, and the reporter of the "Sacramento Eagle," were all "public school men" in the American sense.

As for the fact that Fifth Form men were the salt of the earth, and the Fourth Form fags mere microbes, of no account whatever, nobody seemed to catch on to that. And nobody, not even Potter and Greene, paid the slightest attention to Coker's pathetic belief that he was the centre of the picture—the genuine goods, so to speak. Everybody persisted in regarding Hurree Jamset Ram Singh as the genuine goods!

There was no doubt that Coker of the Fifth had come in useful. But it was not gratifying to the great man to come in useful to a Lower Fourth fag.

Coker persisted in his opinion. It

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latter, the detective examined with keen attention, and he nodded with a grin.

"Ten thousand dollars here, I reckon," he said. "You like to put us wise where you got it, my man?"

An oath was the only answer.

"I guess you don't need to, Mister Dandy Jim," drawled the detective. "There's a roll of thousand-dollar bills missing from the loot that was taken from the express car in the hold-up. I reckon these will turn out to be the bills, when we get down to the numbers. You own up that you're Dandy Jim, the railroad bandit!"

The man glared defiantly at the detective, but his lips remained closed.

"For the last time," drawled the detective, "are you Dandy Jim?"

Another oath was all the detective received in reply. He rose to his feet.

"I guess his friends will recognise him," he remarked. "It's the man who got away after the hold-up, for sure. That's why he was after Mister Hammy Jampot. I guess the stone jug is the place for this bird."

The handcuffed bandit was taken away, and promptly handed over to the police, and removed from the Golden West Hotel to the police station. And it was a relief to Harry Wharton & Co. to see him go.

was, so to speak, a poor thing, but his own.

That there never had been any designs on him, and that the "hoodlum" had shadowed him simply to get into touch with Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, was clear to everybody else; but Coker rejected the idea with disdain. He was not going to be belittled in that way.

It was difficult for Coker to keep his temper, when he heard the Greyfriars fellows discussing the matter as if Hurree Singh was the "big noise," and Coker merely an also ran.

"It was jolly lucky," he heard Bob Cherry remark, "that that ass Coker was up last night. Goodness knows how he got the weird idea into his fat head that the hoodlum was after him; but it was lucky, as it turns out. Any sort of an ass may come in useful at times."

"The luckfulness was terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The execrable thankfulness is due to the sublime and idiotic Coker."

"Thank goodness the man is safely collared!" said Harry Wharton. "He meant to do you some jolly serious damage, Inky, with that lead pipe."

"The crackfulness of my esteemed napper might have been the estimable result," assented the nabob. "But the excellent rascal will now be disposed of stone-jugfully for the rest of his ludicrous life."

"The brute must have found that we came on to Sacramento, and followed," said Frank Nugent; "then he spotted Coker in the street, and watched him, and found out where we were staying. Coker seems to have spotted that the man was shadowing him; but he hadn't the sense to mention it, or we should have been on our guard."

"Well, nobody expects Coker to have any sense," said Johnny Bull tolerantly. "Mustn't ask too much."

Coker was not likely to stand this sort of thing with patience. He butted into the discussion, with a frowning brow.

"You cheeky young sweeps—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's jolly old Coker!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "What's the row, old man? You've been jolly useful for once!"

"The usefulness was terrific!"

"If you hadn't made that fatheaded mistake, Coker, and watched for something that wasn't going to happen—"

began Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The cackleness is not the proper caper, my esteemed chums," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The idiotic misapprehension of the ludicrous Coker was the stitch in time that saved the cracked pitcher from going longest to the well, as the English proverb says."

"Nobody was going to kidnap you, old bean!" grinned the Bounder. "You weren't in the picture at all. You just butted in."

"If we were at Greyfriars now," said Coker, "I'd jolly well wade in and thrash you all round."

"Lucky for somebody that we're not at Greyfriars now," remarked Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker, repressing his indignation with great difficulty, stalked away. The juniors smiled after him.

"Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows!" said Bob Cherry. "This is rough on Coker. It's really rotten to turn out to be nobody, when you fancy you're somebody! As we're staying on a day or two, owing to Dandy Jim's antics, there's still time for Coker to be kidnapped—as he's so keen on it!"

"Eh!"

"What?"

"Lend me your ears!" said Bob; and he proceeded to unfold a scheme for the gratification—perhaps—of Horace James Coker. And that scheme was greeted with many chuckles, and adopted nem. con.

Coker walked forth in Sacramento that day, possibly hoping to be shadowed again, which would have proved that he was right, after all. But nobody shadowed Coker; and he came back to the Golden West as cross as ever.

It was quite dark when Coker went up the elevator, got out at the fifth floor, and walked along to his room.

The corridor was lighted; but Coker's room, of course, was dark; and he felt for the electric switch as he entered. The switch worked; but no light came on, doubtless owing to the fact that the lamp had been removed from its place.

Coker, more cross than ever, groped into his room, and the next moment he was seized in many hands, and borne to the floor.

Bump!

It had come at last, and Coker knew it; but, unfortunately, he was taken completely off his guard this time.

Before he quite realised what was happening he was on the floor, helpless in those gripping hands in the darkness, and a blanket was wrapped round his head to muffle his powerful voice.

He struggled; Coker was game. But there were too many hands holding him for his struggles to avail.

A rope was knotted round his wrists, another round his ankles. Then he was lifted.

He heard a door shut; then he heard another door open and shut. He had been carried somewhere—apparently into another room. He was bumped down on the floor.

The blanket round his head was drawn a little aside, so that a deep voice could hiss in his ears:

"Silence, on your life!"

There was something vaguely familiar to Coker in that voice, though it was evidently disguised.

"Grooogh!" gasped Coker. "I'll—I'll— You scoundrels! I'll—I'll— Ooooh!"

A corner of the blanket stuffed into his mouth out short Coker's remarks. A cord was tied round it to keep it there.

"Now we've got him," went on the deep voice, "I kinder guess and reckon we'll keep him here till midnight, and then let him down from a window. We've sure kidnapped the guy this time."

"We sure have!" said another voice. "Blow his brains out if he makes a sound, you fellows—I mean galoots."

"Can't be done—he hasn't any."

"Hush!"

Coker heard suppressed laughter, which showed that the kidnappers were enjoying their triumph, and did not fear discovery.

There was a sound of creeping footsteps, a door closed, and they were gone. Coker was alone.

He struggled. He wriggled. He spluttered. But it was no use—the kidnappers had done their work well; he was bound and gagged, and he could not get loose or shout for help.

Long minutes passed—and Coker spluttered in the blanket helplessly. He knew the kidnappers' plans—to keep him in that room till it was safe, at midnight's witching hour, to lower him from a window, and carry him off to some hidden den, where, of course, he was to be held for ransom. There was, perhaps, some satisfaction to Coker, in knowing that he was now proved to

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Through the enfolding blanket Coker was aware that the light had been switched on. "Great pip!" Coker wriggled spasmodically at the sound of Potter's voice. "My only hat!" gasped Potter in amazement. "Who—what—is that Coker? I seem to know the clobber! What are you doing there with your head in a blanket?" "Groooh!" gurgled Coker. (See Chapter 13.)

have been in the right. He was kidnapped; but, unfortunately, nobody knew! Potter and Greene would look in his room, if he did not come down to dinner—but they would not guess what had happened. They would think he was still out of doors—might even think he had lost himself; they were capable of it.

There was no help!

No help, unless he could gnaw through that gagging blanket, and shout, and alarm the hotel, in time.

Coker's teeth were good; and his jaws were strong; they had always had plenty of exercise. He bit and gnawed at that blanket with fury and determination. He made so much progress with it, that it really seemed as if Coker was not likely to want any dinner that evening.

But he was still speechless, when he heard a sound of footsteps in the room. Through the enfolding blanket he was aware that the light had been flashed on.

Had the kidnappers returned?

"Great pip!"

It was Potter's voice.

Coker wriggled spasmodically. It was Potter—Potter had found him. It was rescue!

"My only hat!" Potter was evidently amazed. "Who—what—is that Coker? I seem to know the clobber! What are you doing there with your head in a blanket?"

Coker gurgled.

The blanket was jerked away; except the corner that was tied down in his mouth.

Potter stared at him blankly.

"Great Julius Caesar!" he stuttered.

"Gr-r-r-r-r!"

"Those young sweeps!" said Potter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

He was laughing! Coker could hardly believe his eyes—at this thrill-

ing, almost tragic moment, that fool Potter was laughing!

Potter released his mouth from the gag.

"Get me loose, you fool!" hissed Coker. "Haven't you any sense? Get me loose before they come back!"

"They!" gasped Potter. "Who?"

"The kidnappers!" gasped Coker.

"Oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

Potter was laughing almost too much to release Coker. However, he got him loose, and Coker staggered to his feet.

"Now let 'em come back!" he gasped.

"I'm ready for 'em! They took me by surprise, you know. How did you find me, Potter?"

"Wharton told me—"

"Wharton?"

"Yes—he told me to come up to my room—"

"Your room!" stuttered Coker. An amazed glance round showed him that it indeed was Potter's room.

Potter gurgled.

"He said—ha, ha, ha!—that you were in my room, and fancied there were kidnappers about—"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Potter.

"You cackling idiot—"

"Ha, ha, ha! Now I know what those young sweeps were chortling over," yelled Potter. "They've been kidnapping you—"

"You cackling chump—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Potter.

The truth was dawning on Coker. The hidden identity of that gang of kidnappers was revealed now. They were the Famous Five of the Remove.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Potter.

Greene looked in at the doorway.

"What's the jolly old joke? What—what—"

"Coker's been kidnapped!" shrieked Potter. "Those fags kidnapped him and dumped him down in my room—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Greene.

"You cackling fatheads—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This isn't a laughing matter," roared Coker.

But Potter and Greene evidently thought that it was. They screamed.

Coker glared at them in speechless fury for a moment or two; and then, seizing the rope the kidnappers had used, he rushed at them.

"Yaroooh!"

Potter's roar of laughter changed to a roar of anguish as the business-like end of the rope wielded by Coker's right arm smote his person.

"Perhaps you think that funny," said Coker, with a glare, and then he turned his attention to Greene.

But that cheery youth was wise in his generation, for he turned tail and fled, laughing uproariously.

Close on his heels came George Potter, not quite so hilarious.

Horace Coker had a very red face at dinner that evening. All the other faces were smiling. Coker was silent and dignified; and he remained silent and dignified; and when the Greyfriars party took the cars for San Francisco the following day, Coker was still silent and dignified. Every other face wore a smile; but Horace Coker seemed bent on understudying that king of ancient times who never smiled again.

THE END.

(Make sure you read: "DUNTER'S AMAZING ADVENTURE!" the next story in this grand new series, which will appear in next week's MAGNET, together with another TWO FREE METAL MOTOR-CAR BADGES which you MUST add to your set!)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,096.

THE MOST THRILLING WAR STORY EVER WRITTEN!

THE BLACK HAWK!

By Geo. E. ROCHESTER.



Derek's hand shot out and, gripping the peasant by the wrist, he demanded tersely: "And from what German prison camp have you escaped, my Englander?" (See this page.)

The Fugitive from Cassel!

"**D**O you tell me," sneered Derek, "that this belongs to your husband who, you say, serves with the Landsturm, at Halle?"

Dumbly the woman shook her head. She seemed too frightened to speak and there was in her eyes a strange and unaccountable fear.

"Answer my question!" rapped Derek. "Whose is this thing?"

"It belongs to my—my son, sir!" muttered the woman.

"Ah, your son? Where is he?"

"He is upstairs, sir!"

"Then why," demanded Derek harshly, "did you tell me that you lived here alone? Why did you lie?"

The woman gestured pleadingly with her hands.

"I did not want you to see my son, sir," she replied, in a low, trembling voice, which was almost a whisper. "He is deaf and dumb!"

Derek stared at her suspiciously. His first question as to whom the headgear belonged had been prompted solely by his acute realisation of the need for the utmost caution. Surrounded by enemies as he was, it was necessary to walk with extreme wariness and he had been anxious to learn what other inmates the house contained.

"You say this son of yours is deaf and dumb?" he said sharply. "Have the military tribunals found him so?"

"The tribunals of Munich and of Aachen have rejected him for service with the colours!" mumbled the woman.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,096.

"And why, merely because he is a deaf mute, should you lie to me?" demanded Derek.

The woman looked at him piteously. She did not answer. Indeed, she seemed incapable of it.

"I will see him!" rapped the boy. "Bring him here, to me!"

For a moment the woman hesitated. Then, as though realising the hopelessness of either refusal or argument, she turned slowly towards the rickety wooden staircase and ascended wearily to the upper floor.

Derek, left alone in the kitchen, listened with straining ears. He heard a door open, then softly close. Long

assure him, the woman slipped her arm around his shoulders.

Derek contemplated them in grim silence for a moment, then demanded harshly.

"His name?"

"Jacques, sir!"

"Very good! I will examine his military exemption papers. You have them?"

The woman paled. And, as though in spite of his affliction he had heard the words, the lad jerked up his head to stare half-fearfully at Derek.

"His—his papers—" repeated the woman dully.

"Yes, his papers!" repeated Derek sharply. "I wish to examine them!"

"They—they are lost, sir!"

With a short laugh, Derek stepped forward. His hand shot out and, gripping the peasant lad by the wrist, he demanded tersely:

"And from what German prison camp have you escaped, my Englander?"

The lad wrenched his wrist free from Derek's grasp and backed away until he was crouching against the wall. In his staring eyes was the look of a hunted animal.

Derek wheeled on the peasant woman. "So," he said quietly, "he is an Englander that you shield?"

The woman looked him in the eyes with a pitifully brave defiance.

"Yes," she replied, "he is an Englander."

"You know the sentence which will be passed on you by the military court for having harboured one of the enemy?"

Harbouring one of the enemy means certain death to the woman of Alsace when her secret is discovered by a German officer. But there is a surprise in store for her—and for the stricken Britisher whom she has succoured!

moments dragged by and once he thought he heard the murmur of subdued voices.

Then steps sounded on the landing and the woman descended the stairs followed by a peasant lad of about sixteen years of age. At the foot of the staircase the woman halted, the lad standing mute and bent of head by her side.

"This," she said, in a low voice, "is my son!"

Derek nodded. The lad looked ill—terribly ill. His white face was drawn and haggard and his peasant's clothes literally hung on his emaciated body. He was shaking as though with the ague and, seemingly to comfort and re-

The woman nodded dully.

"Yes, I will be shot!" she said, with a hopeless gesture. "But the good God knows that I will not be the first woman to face the rifles of your German soldiers!"

The lad in peasant garb sprang forward. Throwing his arms round the woman he turned to face Derek with blazing eyes.

"You shall not harm her!" he cried in English, with fierce intensity. "I know what you are saying. You are going to have her shot. You shall not—you shall not!"

Derek ignored him, addressing himself to the woman.

"Why do you use the phrase: 'your German soldiers'?" he questioned. "You are German, yourself!"

The woman flung back her head, the fire of pride in her age-dimmed eyes.

"No, that I am not!" she replied, her voice vibrant with emotion. "I am of this Province of Alsace and the blood of France flows in my veins. For long years we have been ground beneath the Prussian heel, but the rule of blood and iron has only served to make us love our France the more. But I tell you now that the day is coming when the armies of France and England will sweep forward to the Rhine and Germany shall pay in full for the blood which she has shed!"

The white-faced lad with a quick, almost hysterical, movement withdrew his protecting arms from about her and tore off the peasant's blouse which he wore.

"See that!" he cried passionately, displaying long cruel weals, broken and festering, across his shoulders. "See what they did to me in the prison camp of Cassel when I was lashed to the whipping-post and flogged to the bone on the dawn parade! And I am not the only one. My countrymen are dying there like flies of starvation and disease. But I escaped, and this poor woman found me—dying! She took me in and cared for me and if there is one spark of humanity in you, you will spare her—spare her!"

The words trailed away. Overcome by the violence of his outburst, the lad swayed on his feet and would have fallen had not Derek stepped quickly forward and slid a supporting arm around him.

He half-led, half-carried, him to a chair by the table and lowering him into it, seated himself opposite. The lad sat with head resting on arms sprawled out amidst the litter of dishes. Now and again a great sob racked his body. There was an infinite pity in Derek's sombre eyes as he watched this poor victim of German "kultur."

Behind the lines in France, Derek had more than once heard whispers—rumours—of the horror of certain German prison camps. But here was tangible and terrible evidence. Here, opposite him, sat an English boy broken in body and spirit by the blond beasts whose hatred of England had become a by-word throughout the world.

It was the woman's attitude, her obvious uneasiness, which had first given Derek the hint that she had something to hide. The untruth with which she had sought to convince him that she was alone in the house, the lame explanation as to why she had told that untruth, the absence of military exemption papers, had all served to give Derek a clue.

Suspicion had become almost certainty when he had noted the lad's prison-cropped hair, his obviously borrowed garb, and his white, colourless skin which, had he been an Alsatian, would

still have held some tinge of sunburn in spite of illness.

Nevertheless, Derek had drawn a bow somewhat at venture in his remark. "What prison camp have you escaped from, my Englishman?" But the shaft had gone home, and the pitiful little plot had been exposed in all its heroic futility.

Suddenly the lad opposite him lifted his drawn and haggard face.

"What are you going to do—with her?" he whispered hoarsely.

"Never mind that for the moment," replied Derek quietly. "Tell me your story!"

He listened in silence to the tragic tale which was then unfolded in weak and halting voice. But more than once his hands clenched and his eyes grew cold and hard.

It was a tale which lost nothing in its plain, unvarnished telling. Captured on the Marne, the lad had been sent to the salt mines behind Cambrai, where, in company with five hundred other British prisoners, he had toiled whilst death took grim and daily toll of those poor starved and tattered men.

Withdrawn from the mines, the remnant of the prisoners had been sent to the prison camp of Cassel. Locked in horse-boxes, packed in so tightly that they could not sit down, many failed to survive the long, weary journey into the interior of Germany.

Then had come Cassel with its unspeakable horrors of starvation, disease, and sickening brutality.

The daily floggings on the dawn parade, the bestial inhumanity of the German guards, the shooting down of starving and defenceless men on the slightest pretext will stand for all time as a stark symbol of German hate of England. Day after day the burial-party of wan-eyed and hollow-cheeked British prisoners hurried those of their comrades who would never again see England and home.

Ah, could you but realise some little of the agony of that graveyard of Cassel, you would know that at least it spelt merciful sanctuary for many who, during long, weary, endless days had been submerged in the black depths of humiliation, degradation, and despair.

The lad had escaped from Cassel. Opportunity had offered one dusk when he was returning to the camp as one of an emergency ration party which had been with the food-wagon to the town. He had risked

his life—if life the hopeless misery of his existence could be called—on a desperate dash for freedom.

Before the slouching German guards had unslung their rifles and whipped them to their shoulders the fleeing figure was already being swallowed up in the deepening dusk of the coming night.

A bullet through the arm was the worst he had suffered from the ragged volley which had followed him. In the very suddenness, the unexpectedness of his attempt at escape lay its success, and the thought of what he was escaping from had lent wings to his feet and roused in him the primitive cunning of hunted man.

In a voice which was scarce above a whisper he told of his attempt to reach the Swiss Frontier. During the long daylight hours he had lain hidden in some wood, copse, or ditch, craving for the sleep which for a time would bring merciful relief from the torture of ravenous hunger and festering wound. Yet he had been afraid to sleep in case someone stumbled across the place where he lay hidden.

Night after night he had stumbled on under cover of darkness, haunted by the dread that he might be heading in the wrong direction, fearful of who or what he might blunder into. Sometimes he would raid an orchard, and once, with the dawn, he had found and feasted upon a dead rabbit.

Slower and slower had become his progress on that nightmarish journey, and weaker his starved and emaciated body. He knew he was dying, but, true to the traditions of his breed, he had carried on with a dumb and splendid heroism.



DEREK MONORIEFF,
a dare-devil pilot and hero of
this great story.

HOW THE STORY BEGAN.

Accused of treachery, court-martialled and sentenced to be shot at dawn! The dastardly plot against young Derek Moncrieff, fearless British pilot and greatest of war aces, would seem to have succeeded up to the hilt. But not for long, for Derek, grimly determined to clear his dishonoured name, makes a daring escape in his machine, the Scarlet Scout. The question of his plan of action is soon answered as a result of a fight with an enemy plane in which the German pilot is mortally wounded. Derek discovers that the dead man's name is Captain Von Arn, and that he carries a dispatch ordering Lieutenant Zweig, the Gotha Commander at Abergau to vacate the secret hangar there. The young airman's amazing scheme is to change identity with Von Arn and to go to Abergau in his stead. This he does, and Zweig and his men leave the secret aerodrome. Afterwards Derek deliberately turns off towards the firing-line. Once out of sight of the Gotha, however, he returns and makes a landing beside a lonely farm. He is admitted by an aged peasant woman, and Derek demands to know who lives there. "Sir, I live here alone," replies the woman. "Then to whom," snaps Derek, picking up a man's red tam-o'-shanter, "does this belong?"

(Now read on.)

Then one night outraged nature had taken her toll, and he had collapsed, to be found unconscious in a hedgerow bottom by the peasant woman at dawn. Unseen by any she had got him to the house and kept him hidden, nursing him back towards the health which would not be his again for many a long month.

And as the tale drew thus to its conclusion, the lad's voice faltered. Without warning, save for his white and strangely-working face, he suddenly pillowed his head on his arms on the table and great, dry sobs racked his frame. The peasant woman moved forward. Timidly she touched Derek on the shoulder.

"What are you going to do?" she whispered.

Slowly Derek pushed back his chair. Rising to his feet, he turned towards her. For a long moment he studied the wrinkled, care-worn face and the aged eyes which stared back so steadily at

him. Then, laying his hand on her shoulder, he said softly:

"You are a brave woman! Your secret is safe with me!"

She clutched at his grey-clad arm with trembling fingers, amazed incredulity dilating her eyes.

"Do you mean that?" she gasped. "You will not betray—"

Derek shook his head.

"No, I will not betray you," he replied quietly. "But you must not keep the lad here any longer. It is too dangerous for both of you. To-night I will take him to France."

"To France?" repeated the woman, shrinking away. "Ah, you but mock me—"

"No, I do not mock you. I will take him to France, away from this vile country."

The woman peered up into Derek's eyes as though she would read his very soul.

"But—but you are German!" she whispered.

Derek turned away.

"No," he said bitterly, "I am no German. I am a man without a country!"

At Dusk!

THAT neither the woman nor the boy understood what he meant, Derek knew. Whether or not they either believed or trusted him, he neither knew nor cared. His presence at the farmstead, his statement that he was not a German, and his subsequent taking of the lad back to France were matters upon which the woman, for her own sake, must perforce keep silent.

He vouchsafed no further explanation as to who he was or how he came to be there in the uniform of a German pilot but, bidding the lad be ready to leave with him when darkness had fallen, he passed into the small parlour which adjoined the kitchen and ate in solitude the meal which the woman brought him.

Then, stretching himself full length on the ramshackle sofa by the window, he lay with hands clasped behind his head, pondering on the scheme which had come to him after reading the dispatch which Von Arn had been carrying to Abergau. He realised to the full the perilous nature of the task he was setting himself, for the first false step would mean death and disaster. But he was determined to go on—to play a lone hand and serve in his own way the England who had disowned and dishonoured him.

His thoughts drifted back to his court-martial—to Colonel Scaife. Absurd, indeed, to think that the man could in any way have been a party to the vile plot against him. No, Derek could see things clearer and more dispassionately now. True Colonel Scaife had been the prime mover against him in the investigations, but the man had merely been doing his duty. And yet, fostering suspicion in Derek's mind, was recollection of that look of malignant triumph in the colonel's eyes after sentence of death had been pronounced. That look had been engendered by hate, and it was almost incredible to think that such hate could have been bred solely through Derek's apparent treachery.

Angry scorn and contempt, the boy could have understood. But there had been nothing of that in Colonel Scaife's eyes. For some reason or other the

colonel had seemed to find malevolent pleasure in the verdict. Why?

Derek could find no answer to that question unless it were that Colonel Scaife was indeed concerned in the plot. And that merely served to bring the boy's thoughts back to where they had started.

The afternoon wore on and evening came, filling the parlour with deepening shadow. Derek swung himself to his feet, for the hour of departure was at hand. Opening the door which led into the kitchen he stood motionless for a moment on the threshold.

The peasant woman was sitting by the window gazing with lustreless eyes out into the gathering dusk. The lad was seated by the fire, elbows on knees, chin cupped in his hands, staring into the heart of the glowing coals. Both he and the woman rose as Derek stepped forward into the kitchen.

"It is time we were leaving," said Derek sombrely, addressing the lad. "You had better wear this flying kit of mine. Join me at my machine!"

He crossed the floor to where the woman was standing.

"Some day," he said quietly, "I may come here again. But you will know that I come as a friend. Good-bye!"

He held out his hand. Timidly the woman took it. There were tears in her eyes and her wrinkled face was working piteously.

"You—you will not harm him?" she whispered.

"I take him back to his own countrymen!" replied Derek gravely.

With that he released her hand and, turning on his heel, strode out into the dusk. He had no wish to witness the farewell between the woman and the lad whom she had succoured. Reaching his machine he climbed up into the cockpit and switched on. Then, dropping to the ground again, he swung the propeller. The engine picked up with a shattering roar and he leapt for the cockpit to close down the throttle.

With propeller ticking over he waited, and presently the lad loomed up through the dusk which was darkening into night.

"It's going to be a tight squeeze in this cockpit," said Derek, helping him to clamber up. "You'll have to stand, I'm afraid!"

"Yes!" said the lad dully.

He was hopelessly apathetic; not daring to think that this man in German uniform was really going to take him to France. Only one thing he knew. And that was that for the time being this grey-clad pilot controlled his destiny. The why and wherefore of it all he could not understand.

The roar of the engine rose to a high pulsating rhythm as Derek opened up the throttle and the Stahlschuss scout commenced to move forward. Derek taxied to the far side of the field; then, swinging the machine round, gave the engine full throttle. The scout shot forward with ever-increasing impetus until the blur of ground was swirling madly past. The tail came up and as Derek eased back the control stick the scout took the air in a long upward climb. It circled once, then roared away westwards into the night.

Behind the British Lines!

ON and on through the darkness thundered the German scout, climbing as it went. There was no moon, and the blackness of the night was relieved only by the faint glimmer of stars high in the heavens.

At eight thousand feet Derek passed over the German night-flying aerodrome of Buhl. To his peering eyes there was nothing to be seen, but he knew that in dimly-illuminated hangars, and out on the darkened aerodrome, bombers and leather-clad pilots would be preparing for raids westwards into France.

Towards the north and north-west he saw the wheeling beams of the searchlights guarding Saarbrücken and Metz, and knew that British aircraft must be bombing there, else the searchlights would not have been in evidence.

Directly below him, ten kilometres west of Buhl, a long string of "flaming onions"—green balls of fire—soared up into the night, token that he was passing over a German aerial lighthouse.

The Stahlschuss scout was very fast, even with its double burden, and Derek reckoned that another thirty-five minutes would see them across the trenches. He continued to climb, then suddenly his ungloved hand moved forward and he touched his passenger on the arm.

The lad turned questioningly towards him, his face but a white and pallid blur in the darkness. Derek did not speak, but pointed towards the night-shrouded ground far below. Plainly visible from that altitude was a long, sinuous, intermittent line of star shells and Verey lights, with here and there the wheeling horizontal ray of a searchlight.

It was the trenches!

Gripping the side of the cockpit the lad peered down with staring, hungry eyes. And as the trenches slid past realisation seemed to come to him that, at long last, he was behind the British lines—that his journey from Cassel was all but over.

A point to starboard on the ground far below, an electric beacon was winking an incessant dot-dash, dot-dash, dot-dash. It was the British aerial lighthouse "A," whereby pilots of night-bombing machines could pick up their bearings. Derek saw it, and his feet moved on the rudder-bar.

His altitude was fifteen thousand feet now, but, without warning, there came a sudden whip-like crack audible above the thunder of his engine, and lurid flame spurted vividly, high in the sky around him. Puffs of white smoke, phantom, and wraith-like, hung in the darkness for an instant, then merged into nothingness, and were gone.

It was shrapnel from the British and French anti-aircraft batteries.

Stabbing up through the night came the golden, probing beams of searchlights. Criss-crossing like scissors they swept the sky, darting hither and thither in an effort to locate the enemy machine—the Stahlschuss scout.

The shooting was excellent, and the screaming whine of flying shrapnel from the bursting shells was very close. Grim-faced, but with hand firm and steady, Derek whipped earthwards, down through the darkness, in a tearing nose-dive.

Suddenly he closed down his throttle, and there leapt into being the shriek of wind through flying wires and struts as the thunder of his engine died away. At seven thousand feet he pulled the hurtling machine on to its gliding angle and swung towards the south-west.

Three kilometres behind him the searchlights and anti-aircraft batteries were closing down. Lower and lower dropped the German scout, heading inland away from the trenches, until at eight hundred feet, Derek's feet moved

(Continued on page 23.)



Come Into the Office, Boys!

Always glad to hear from you, chums, so drop me a line to the following address: The Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

TWENTY-ONE TO-DAY!

THERE are many anniversaries that fall this week and call for comment, but the most important—where MAGNET readers are concerned—is the coming of age, so to speak, of their favourite paper. The first MAGNET that saw the light of day bore the date, February 15th, 1908. That's just twenty-one years ago. Just think of it, you chaps. Every week for twenty-one years the MAGNET, printed in its thousands, has found its way regularly into the homes of boys and girls whose delight is to read the adventures of Harry Wharton & Co. I said every week, but I now call to mind one occasion when the MAGNET, like its contemporaries, did not appear, and that was during the Great Strike of 1926. With that one exception the MAGNET has for twenty-one years—forgive me rubbing it in—gone from strength to strength, until now it is the most talked of, the most popular boys' paper on the market. Now, you new readers, aren't you sorry you didn't try the MAGNET before? Isn't it's very age proof, if proof is needed, that it's the

BEST BOYS' PAPER OBTAINABLE?

Of course! And it's booked for another twenty-one years or more of successful, useful life, believe me. Readers of Issue No. 1 are grown up now, naturally, but many of them still take in the old paper, and are as loud in its praises as they were twenty-one years ago. All that is very gratifying to your Editor, but he's not satisfied yet—won't be satisfied, in fact, until the present circulation is doubled. That's where you fellows can help. If each one of you "recruited" a new reader the trick would be done. Going to have a shot at it? Good!

More Badges Next Week!

In next week's bumper issue you'll find two more Metal Motor-Car Badges. Add them to your collection, for they're as good, if not better, than their predecessors. What cars do they represent? Why, the famous Sunbeam and Renault motors. And don't think these two badges spell the end of this unique series, for there are still more badges to come. You'll order your MAGNET in good time, of course!

HAVE YOU HEARD THIS ONE?

A commercial traveller, held up in the Orkneys the other week by a storm, telegraphed to his firm as follows: "Marooned here by storm. Please wire instructions." Imagine his amazement when he received the following reply: "Start summer holidays as from yesterday." A pocket-knife has been forwarded to G. Luke, 8, East Thomas Street, Edinburgh for sending in this joke. If any of you other chaps think you've got a good joke, send it along to the address at the head of this page. Winning jokes

mean a handy penknife to the sender. If you're good at Limericks, try and write one about a Greyfriars character. Authors of winning Limericks will be awarded a useful pocket-wallet.

By the way, our companion paper, the "Nelson Lee Library," out on Wednesday, is giving away a fine set of Portrait Badges of England's Test Match heroes. See that you get these fine souvenirs.

NOW YOU HOBBYISTS!

I ran into a friend whom I had not seen for many months the other day, and when I asked him how he was getting on, I was rather surprised when he replied: "Oh, I'm just taking my Robot for a tour in America!" "Robot?" I asked. "What the dickens do you mean?" And then it transpired that he was the inventor of the famous "Robot," which opened an exhibition in London a few months ago. I expect most of you fellows read about it, and have seen pictures of the weird, mechanical man which can do almost anything that a human being can do.

But I wonder if any of you fellows who are interested in mechanical gadgets have ever thought of the possibilities of building your own Robot? I myself haven't got a mechanical brain, or I'd have a shot at it. Captain "Dickie" Richards, who built this one, told me how he came to do it. He was discussing a certain person, who shall be nameless, and he finished up by saying: "I could build a tin man to do as much as he can." "Why don't you, then?" he was asked, and he replied: "Right ho, I will!" And that is how his Robot came into being.

Naturally, he wouldn't tell me his secrets, so I can't pass them on to you. But if any of you mechanically-minded fellows are getting rather tired of building the usual model locomotives, ships, and so on, why not have a try to build a model mechanical man? That would be something worth doing. Anyway, jolly good luck to any of you who attempt it! If it's a success you might be lucky enough to get a contract to take it on tour in America at a thumping salary.

Another Penknife

goes to Tom Ireland, 8, Winchester Road, Anfield, Liverpool, for the following yarn:

The leading draper in a small town wanted an apprentice. The first applicant for the situation had been employed in a fish shop, but he seemed a likely lad. "Your handwriting's good enough," said the draper. "Can you do mental arithmetic?" "Yes, sir," replied the lad. "Well, what would thirty-four pounds of salmon be at fourpence per

pound?" "Bad, sir," corrected the youngster smartly.

"Can you beat that yarn? If so, let me know, and you shall have a penknife if you can. And here is—

AN UNUSUAL LIMERICK!

The last word of each line is not given, but a clue, similar to the clues given in a cross-word puzzle, is substituted in its place. You'll find the missing words at the end of this chat, but see if you can fill them in for yourself first.

A fellow who came from (a famous school).

Said: "All of our fellows are (not easily discouraged).

And if any should (declare)

That they aren't well I (might)

Politely describe them as (prevalent)

That's an easy one, and you ought to be able to do it "on your heads." Still, I'll let you have a few more difficult ones if you wish.

"THE LONE STAR STATE"

is often referred to in adventure yarns, and C. Pearson, of Walker-on-Tyne, wants to know what the "Lone Star State" was. This is a name given to Texas which, before it became one of the United States, was formerly part of Mexico, and then became a state on its own. Its flag showed a single star, hence the name. But Texas threw in its lot with the United States many years ago—to the benefit of all its inhabitants.

MY DIARY TELLS ME

quite a lot of interesting things about this week. To begin with, Tuesday, February 12th, is Shrove, or "Pancake" Tuesday. Pancakes are the sole survival of the merry-making which used to take place on this day in former times, and at many schools all over the country there will be scrambling for pancakes on Tuesday. In other parts of the country there will be "Shrove Tuesday football," which many of my readers will no doubt witness. For the benefit of those who won't, I can tell you that it is "some" game. In Chester-le-Street, in Durham, the game is played along the main street of the town, and anyone can join in on either the "up-town" or the "down-town" side.

Every house and shop window in the place is boarded up—and it needs to be—for if the ball goes into a house or shop, the players follow it in, and continue the game with gusto, until the place looks as though a tornado has struck it. And when the ball goes in the river, which is at the end of the street, the players dash in after it. It's very exciting, but I'm afraid a little too exciting for your editor. It is said that the custom comes from the days when, after a battle, the victors cut off the heads of their opponents, and played football with them. And some say: "The good old-days!"

A MAN EVERY BOY ADMIRES!

first saw the light of day on Monday, February 11th, eighty-two years ago. He was Thomas Edison, the inventor of the phonograph, and other things too numerous to mention. Edison started life as a newsboy on the Grand Trunk Railway, and printed and circulated a newspaper, which was the first ever. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,096.

issued from a railway train. Later in life he set up his own works, and now no fewer than 500 inventions stand to his credit. That's going some, and my Scottish readers will be glad to know he was of Scottish descent.

Another Interesting Thing

which my diary tells me is that Thursday is the anniversary of the battle of Cape St. Vincent, one of Nelson's victories, and also St. Valentine's day. I remember when I was a boy we used to have great fun in sending "Valentines," which were distinctly libellous and scurrilous, to our friends and our enemies. Very often an unpopular master received a Valentine that was anything but flattering to his dignity. But I'd better not tell you too much about my own "mucky past," or you'll be doing the same thing, and I can see your masters coming down on me.

And now, as my space is getting short, let us see what we have in store for next week's issue.

The long complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co. is entitled:

"BUNTER'S AMAZING ADVENTURE!"

and it deals with Harry Wharton & Co.'s tour through America. Bunter, as the title implies, has a large share of the limelight, and his "amazing adventures" are a scream from beginning to end.

In addition there will be a fine instalment of our serial:

"THE BLACK HAWK!"

and a short, complete yarn of St. Sam's, entitled: "Justiss at Last!" Take my tip and don't miss next week's number. Now, to finish up this chap, I'll give you the missing words from the Limerick. Here they are: Greyfriars, triers, say, may, liars.

So long until next week.

YOUR EDITOR.

"THE BLACK HAWK!"

(Continued from page 26.)

on the rudder-bar, and, banking with nose well down, he came about and glided back towards the east.

He was leaning far outboards, peering downwards with straining eyes. Below him was the dark smudge of an untriven wood flanked by the greyish blur of open ground. He nodded as though satisfied, and again his feet moved on the rudder-bar. He had cut out his engine, and in silence, save for the swish of wind through wires and struts, he circled lower and lower until, with an almost imperceptible bump, the machine landed. Kicking on full rudder to bring the tail-skid into play

as a brake, Derek brought the scout to a quivering halt.

"Hurry, please!"

His voice was cool and untroubled, but he knew that at any moment running figures might burst from out that neighbouring wood.

His passenger half-scrabbled and half-fell from the cockpit. Derek joined him, swinging himself to the ground.

"Get out of that flying-kit as quick as you can!" he went on, unfastening the leather belt of the coat with his own rapidly working fingers. "Now listen! You are about four kilometres behind the British aerodrome at Xaffavilliers—the most southerly part of the line. All you've got to do is walk about till you meet somebody, and then—well, then, you'll be all right, I think!"

"But what am I to say to them?" burst out the lad, as Derek struggled into the divested flying kit. "What am I to tell them—about you? They will ask me! Who are you, sir?"

"Who am I?" echoed Derek harshly. "Then, when they ask you, tell them that I am one whom they will come to know better before many days have passed!"

He turned away, gripping the cockpit edge preparatory to swinging himself up in order to switch on. The lad stepped forward, laying a shaking hand on Derek's leather-clad arm.

"I—I cannot thank you—for what you have done for me!" he said hoarsely. "But—from the bottom of my heart—God bless you, sir!"

Derek did not reply. Hands gripping the cockpit edge, he had suddenly frozen into tense immobility.

For from somewhere out there in the darkness towards the wood he had heard a faint metallic clink!

(Will Derek be captured? Will death from a firing squad be his reward for having ventured over the "line"? See next week's splendid instalment, boys.)

AS THEY APPEARED!

For the benefit of readers who missed our early Free Gift Numbers we print the following particulars. Readers who desire to bring their sets up to date can obtain back numbers by applying to:—"Back Number Dept." The Magnet Library, Bear Alley, The Amalgamated Press, London, E.C.4. 3d. in stamps must be enclosed for each issue required, to cover cost of postage.

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