

MORE METAL MOTOR-CAR BADGES FREE WITH THIS ISSUE!

No. 1,007. Vol. XXXV. Week Ending February 23rd, 1929.

The Magnet

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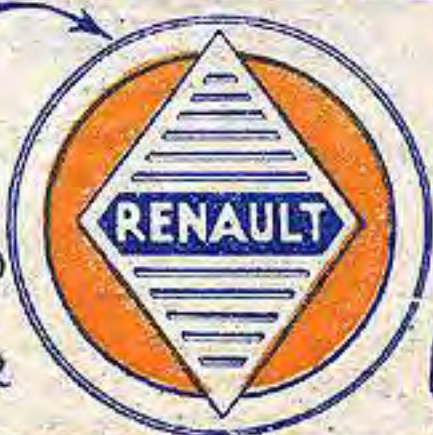
ELEVATOR



FREE INSIDE



THESE
2
TOPPING
COLOURED
METAL
MOTOR-CAR
BADGES



BILLY BUNTER GETS THE ORDER OF THE BOOT!

(A "moving" incident from the grand schoolboy adventure yarn: "BUNTER'S GREAT ADVENTURE!" complete in this issue.)



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.

WITH this issue, "Magnetites" get the sixth set of our splendid coloured metal motor-car badges, so if you have been keeping them in your special album, it will be beginning to look like a really good collection now. Don't forget that next week's issue contains two more badges—of the famous Crossley and Lancia cars. If your chum isn't collecting these unique badges he's missing something that's not likely to come his way again for a long time. But, if he's keen, he can still bag a complete set by applying to our "Back Number Dept.," Bear Alley, Amalgamated Press Ltd., Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, enclosing threepence in stamps for *each copy* of the MAGNET required, to cover cost of postage.

CAN YOU BEAT THIS

yarn, which earns a splendid penknife for Rowland Wilson, 109, Comeragh Road, Baron's Court, London, W.?

A certain regimental band was stationed at K—, and the Sultan invited them to come and play him a selection of British tunes. At the conclusion, the conductor inquired which piece he liked best. "The first 'one,'" answered the Sultan. The piece was played over again, but the Sultan shook his head. "No, that's not the one, it must be the next." This was replayed. "No, it must be the third one, after all," said the Sultan. The whole selection was played over again, with the same answer after each. Having finished, the band prepared to play something new, so everybody started to tune up. Trumpets bellowed, flutes screeched, in fact, everybody was making a terrible din, when the Sultan suddenly shouted out: "That is the tune, that is the tune!"

TALKING ABOUT PENKNIVES,

one of our artists—who shall be nameless—came into my office the other day, and I offered him a penknife. Now, he comes from the North, and they have a superstition up there that one should always give something in return for a knife. As he seemed to want to do that, and hadn't anything with him, I suggested that he should pay me a half-penny for the knife. But he hadn't anything less than a penny, and I hadn't a halfpenny change to give him. "Never mind, then," he said magnanimously, "just keep the other half-penny, and I'll have another knife!"

MY POST BAG

has been very full lately, and I am beginning to wonder whether I'll manage to answer all your letters. Many I have already answered by post, but here is a selection from others.

W. T., of Durham, wants to know when the magic lantern was invented. It was in the year 1646. J. Jones, of Newport, asks who the Navajoes were. They were once a very powerful tribe of Red Indians, and there are still about 20,000 of them living. Their reservation is in New Mexico and Arizona. The word can also be spelled "Navahoes." Joe Walker, of Huddersfield, wants to know the greatest depth of the ocean. The greatest known is 5,269 fathoms, in the Nero Deep, off the Ladrone Islands.

HERE'S ANOTHER WINNING EFFORT.

By the way, you chaps who haven't seen my earlier announcements will be pleased to learn that I'm offering penknives to senders of winning jokes. And, wait a moment—you merchants who are keen on Limericks have not been left out in the cold, either. Winning Limericks—they must deal with Greyfriars characters—earn for their authors a jolly useful pocket wallet. So get busy and send in your attempts to the address underneath the heading of this page. Now for the Limerick for which Stanley Buckley, 65, Spring Street, Oldham, Lancs, bags our first wallet.

When Bunter goes down to play cricket,
He straddles in style at the wicket,
His bat sweeps the air—
The ball isn't there!
Then he falls on the stumps! Can you
lick it?

A TOPICAL QUESTION

is asked by S. Harris, of Whitstable. In view of the fact that we are likely to have a General Election this year, he wants to know how much an election costs, and who pays for it. Well, the candidates, or their parties, pay the piper, and the amount spent at the last General Election was £921,165. As 615 Members of Parliament were elected, that means that each member cost about £150. But, as many more voters will take part in the next election, the cost will be much greater this year.

GET YOUR ALBUM OUT, CHUM!

This issue contains
TWO MORE
MOTOR-CAR BADGES!

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

THERE'S MORE TO
COME NEXT WEEK!

THE NORTHERN LIGHTS form the subject of a question from Harry Lee, of Bristol. He wants to know if they are caused by the reflection of the ice in the Arctic regions. No, Harry, that's an exploded theory. No one knows exactly how they are caused, but it is certain that they are due to electrical emanations. Have you ever seen them? They are really a wonderful sight, and are sometimes seen in this country, although to see them at their best you ought to go to the Arctic. They

form all sorts of queer designs in the skies, and their colours range from smoky black or grey, to flaming crimsons, yellows, greens, etc. I expect some of our readers who live in the Orkneys or the Shetlands have seen wonderful displays of these lights.

IS MARS INHABITED?

asks Leonard Harvey, of Stoke. That is a question which I cannot answer—nor can anyone else, for it has long been disputed by scientists. Some hold that Mars is inhabited, because the canals which can be seen on the body of that planet look as though they have been constructed by living creatures. Others maintain that the canals are merely optical illusions. It might interest Leonard to know that Mars, when it is nearest to the earth, is 36,000,000 miles away, although it shines twice as brightly as Sirius, the Dog Star.

F. C. wants to know what "Portuguese Men-o'-war" are. This is the name which a sailor gives to the nautilus, which is a shell-fish furnished with a sail-like membrane. When several of these are scudding along before the wind, they present the appearance of a toy fleet of ships. Hence the sailors' nickname for them.

Now we come to Channel swimming (a rather chilly subject for this time of the year). Still, Frank Dawson, of Penge, wants to know who holds the

CHANNEL SWIMMING RECORD

both for the fastest time and the slowest. Georges Michel, the Frenchman, holds the record for the fastest swim. He did the trick in 11 hours and 5 minutes. The "Booby" prize for the slowest swim goes to Sullivan, who, in 1923, took 27 hours and 25 minutes to do it. Captain Webb, the first to swim the Channel, took 21 hours and 45 minutes. It might interest Frank to know that the average time taken over the swim works out at about 16 hours and 5 minutes.

NEXT WEEK'S PROGRAMME.

First and foremost, of course, is the long complete Greyfriars yarn, which is entitled: "Harry Wharton & Co. at Hollywood!" in which Coker and Lord Mauleverer play a very prominent part indeed. You'll find this fully up to the mark of all our yarns—and I can't say more than that, can I? Then there's a fine instalment of George E. Rochester's tip-top serial, a humorous "shocker" from Dicky Nugent, entitled: "Circumstantial Evidence!" And, of course, two more wonderful Free Gifts. That's all for the present. So long until next week. Oh! I nearly forgot to tell you that you'll find another winning joke and a limerick on page 28 of this issue; couldn't squeeze 'em in on this page. Cheerio, chums!

YOUR EDITOR.

BUNTER'S AMAZING ADVENTURE!



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bound for 'Frisco!

"I'M hungry!"

Billy Bunter made that statement, apparently with the expectation that it would cause a general movement of interest and concern.

It didn't!

Harry Wharton & Co., who were looking from the train windows at the Californian sierras, seemed more interested in the sierras than in William George Bunter.

Fisher T. Fish, who was chewing gum, continued to chew gum, without offering any chewing-gum to Bunter.

The Bounder, who was reading an American newspaper—studying the native language, as he said—went on reading that paper, regardless.

Lord Mauleverer, who had closed his eyes for a little nap, did not open them.

Billy Bunter's statement might have fallen upon deaf ears, for any result it produced.

"I say, you fellows, I'm hungry!"

Still no reply.

Perhaps the fellows knew that Bunter was hungry, and did not need telling. It was an hour since the Greyfriars party had breakfasted at Sacramento, before taking the cars for San Francisco. Bunter had been rather late for breakfast, and had had time to eat only enough for three. So naturally he was hungry again.

William George Bunter blinked round him through his big spectacles indignantly.

"I say, you fellows——"

The Bounder looked up from his paper for a moment.

"Shut up!" he remarked.

"Oh, really, Smithy——"

The Bounder resumed his newspaper.

"I say——"

"I guess you've spilled enough, Bunter!" observed Fisher T. Fish.

"I'm hungry!"

"I guess there's a candy boy on the train."

Bunter shook his head.

"He won't take English money," he answered; "and I haven't any American money."

Which was true enough. Bunter had no American money—and his supply of English money was, unfortunately, limited to a threepenny-piece. And even that diminutive coin was a bad one. It

"Yaas."

"I've only got English money. They won't take it on this train."

Lord Mauleverer sighed and sat up. He disliked being disturbed and he disliked being poked in the ribs; but his lordship was always polite and obliging.

"I'll change it for you, old fat bean. How much?"

Bunter coughed.

"I don't know exactly," he answered cautiously—and truthfully—for Bunter, who did not love arithmetic, had never worked out whether a threepenny-piece was worth five or six cents. "Give me a five-dollar bill, anyhow—can't keep this kid waiting."

"Yaas!"

Lord Mauleverer found a five-dollar bill and passed it over to Bunter.

Bunter proceeded to make purchases to the exact value of five dollars. Four dollars

and three-quarters went on eatables, which Bunter thought might last him till lunch; the remaining quarter Bunter expended on a cigar. Now that he was far from Greyfriars, some thousands of miles away from headmaster and Form master and prefects, Bunter did not see why he should not spread himself a little if he liked.

The candy boy passed on, leaving William George Bunter with a beaming countenance.

"I say, this is rather good," he said. "Have some, Mauly?"

"Thanks, no, old chap. Where's that quid?"

"Quid?" repeated Bunter.

"Yaas; five dollars is a quid."

"Is it really?" said Bunter. "How much is a threepenny-piece, old chap?"

"Eh? A few cents, I suppose."

"Then I'll owe you the balance, old fellow," said Bunter. "Here's the

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Here's another magnificent long complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., dealing with their further adventures in America, the land of hustle and bustle. By FRANK RICHARDS.

was not surprising, in those circumstances, that the candy boy had declined to take English money.

"I say, Fishy——"

"Can it!"

"Your pater is supposed to be standing the expenses of this trip," said Bunter warmly. "Well, I want some grub. Lend me——"

"Forget it!" said Fisher T. Fish.

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter leaned over to Lord Mauleverer and jabbed a knuckle into his lordship's ribs.

"Ow!" gasped Mauly, coming out of his doze quite suddenly.

"I say, Mauly——"

The candy boy came into the car. His tray was laden with candies, cigars, cigarettes, newspapers, and all sorts of attractive things. Bunter beckoned to him at once, and the candy boy stopped.

"Got any American money, Mauly?" asked Bunter.

threepenny-bit. Remind me when we get to Hollywood. I've given instructions for my correspondence to be sent on there, and I'm expecting a postal-order—"

"Oh, begad!" said Lord Mauleverer. "Jevver get left?" grinned Fisher T. Fish.

Lord Mauleverer did not take the threepenny-piece. He smiled faintly and went to sleep again. Billy Bunter restored his supply of English money to his pocket.

Then he devoted himself to the candy. The candy went the way of all candy; and though prices were high in the United States, sufficient candy was obtainable for nineteen shillings to make Bunter feel very well filled—in fact, rather too well filled. He had a feeling as if he had got very near to the Plimsoll line, if not even a little beyond it.

However, all the candy was disposed of at last, and then Bunter bit the end off the cigar, in a way which he fondly believed was awfully like a man of the world.

"I say, you fellows, got a match?" The Famous Five had not heeded when Bunter stated that he was hungry; but they looked round as he made that request.

"What the thump do you want a match for?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry! How can I light a cigar without a match?"

"You fat ass!"

"Yah!"

"Chuck it, you ass! Do you want to be seasick, like you were on the steamer coming over?" said Frank Nugent.

"Smoking is not allowed in the cars," said Johnny Bull. "You have to go along to the smoker if you want to play the goat."

"I didn't ask for a lot of jaw," said Bunter. "I asked for a match."

"My esteemed fatheaded Bunter, the smokefulness is not the proper caper," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Oh, cheese it!" snapped Bunter. "Will you fellows lend me a match, or will you not lend me a match?"

"Not!" answered the Famous Five, with one voice.

"Beasts! Lend me a match, Fishy."

"Matches cost money!" answered Fisher T. Fish, and went on chewing gum.

"Lend me a match, Smithy."

"Fathead!" was the Bounder's reply.

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter rummaged through his own pockets—always the last place where he searched, if he wanted anything.

Unfortunately for himself he found a loose match.

The cigar was lighted.

"You howling ass!" said Harry Wharton.

Bunter blew out a reckless cloud of smoke. That was his contemptuous answer to the captain of the Remove.

"You born idiot!" said Johnny Bull.

Bunter's fat lip curled over the cigar.

"You fellows are soft," he pronounced. "Anybody would think that old Quelch was just round the corner, instead of six thousand miles away. Have a smoke yourselves."

"Idiot!"

"Be men, you know," said Bunter encouragingly. "Like me."

"Like you!" said Bob. "Oh, my hat!"

"Yah!" said Bunter scornfully.

And he leaned back in his seat, and enveloped himself in smoke, with an air of great enjoyment.

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THE SECOND CHAPTER.

After the Feast—

HARRY WHARTON & CO. watched from the train windows with great interest. They could see the summits of the Coast Range, and they were interested in all they saw. Spring comes early in the sunny land of California, and there were already many signs of spring, though to the west sea-fog rolled up from the Pacific Ocean.

LOOK OUT FOR 2 MORE MOTOR-CAR BADGES FREE IN NEXT WEEK'S "MAGNET"!

The Greyfriars party were drawing near to their destination at last. The last stop had been at Sacramento, the Californian capital, and from there to San Francisco was only a few hours run on the Southern Pacific Railway. That day they were to see the City of the Golden Gates; the following day they were to go on southward, to Los Angeles and Hollywood. And all the party were looking forward to the sights of Hollywood, and to their coming experiences in the studio of the Perfection Picture Syndicate.

Now that they knew why Hiram K. Fish had brought the party to the United States, they were more than pleased. Acting for the films rather appealed to their imaginations, and they agreed that it was ripping of Mr. Fish—and it did not occur to them, for the time, that Mr. Fish was getting a considerable part of his cast on rather cheap lines. There had been no mention of salaries or emoluments of any kind. Mr. Fish put it, in a breezy way, as a sort of treat and entertainment for his young friends. Bunter, no doubt, would have thought of the neglected detail, and would doubtless have fixed a very high price for his services, but Bunter was not included in the scheme. Bunter was only a passenger, and though he firmly believed that he was marked out by nature for a Valentino part, he could persuade nobody else to share that belief.

Harry Wharton & Co., looking out at the mountainous scenery, forgot Bunter and his cigar—till they were suddenly reminded of both by a strange sound that was reminiscent of a frog in a serious state of ill-health.

Bunter had been enjoying his cigar for some minutes now in uninterrupted bliss.

Had the conductor passed through the car, certainly he would have swooped down on him for smoking in forbidden precincts. But the conductor did not come through. And there were only a few passengers in the car beside the Greyfriars party, and they were at the other end and paid no heed. So Bunter's bliss was uninterrupted. At any rate, it was uninterrupted—if it was not bliss. Bunter began to have doubts about the bliss after a couple of minutes. The cigar was strong, and his doubts grew stronger.

It was no end doggish, of course, to smoke a cigar, and Bunter looked like a man of the world as he did it—in his own opinion, at least. But men of the world needed harder insides than Bunter's. Strange feelings began to rise in Bunter. He had a sort of floating feeling, and, at the same time, he seemed glued to his seat. Perspiration came out on his fat forehead. He had pulled hard at that cigar, smoking not wisely, but too well. He ceased to pull, but the damage was done.

He removed the cigar from his mouth at last, deciding not to finish it. He had a misgiving that the cigar might finish him before he could finish the cigar.

He held it in trembling fingers for a few moments, and then it dropped to the floor of the car.

Bunter did not heed it. He had given a quarter for that cigar—twenty-five cents. He had not smoked more than five cents' worth. But he wasted the other twenty cents' worth without a second thought. Not for twenty thousand dollars would Bunter have smoked the twenty cents' worth that remained of that cigar.

He sat very still.

He had a feeling that if he moved, something would happen—something of a calamitous and catastrophic nature.

Only a faint sound came from him.

"Ooooooooooogh!"

"My hat!" said Bob Cherry. "I heard a passenger say that there are a lot of bull frogs in this section. Has one got on the train?"

"Ooooooh!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! It's Bunter!"

"Mooooooooogh!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Enjoying life, old fat bean?" roared Bob Cherry.

"Ooooooooooogh!"

"Where's the jolly old cigar?"

"Gone to fetch up the candy, I guess!" chuckled Fisher T. Fish.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow!" moaned Bunter. His fat face was bedewed with perspiration. He had only too well-founded a fear that what he had smoked of the cigar had gone to fetch the candy. There was too much candy inside Bunter—much too much—and he realised that it was on the worst of terms with the cigar.

He had had a feeling like this before—on the Ruritania, coming across the Atlantic. Only this was worse. Much worse. This was awful. Bunter's sufferings might have touched the heart of a Grand Inquisitor. He sat still, awfully still, not daring to move, and perspired, and mumbled faintly.

"Woooooooooogh!"

"Poor old Bunter!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"After the giddy feast, comes the jolly old reckoning," remarked Bob Cherry. "Anybody want to be a man-like Bunter?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm!" said Bunter faintly.

"Shall I pat you on the back, old bean?" asked Bob Cherry.

Bunter found his voice.

"Ow! Keep off, you beast!"

"Think a shaking would do you any good?" asked the Bounder.

"Crrrrrrrrrrh!"

Fisher T. Fish picked up the stump of the cigar.

"Finishing this?" he inquired.

Bunter turned his face away.

"Is there a steward and a basin on this train, I wonder?" remarked Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Better get out on the platform, Bunter," said Harry. "The fresh air may do you good."

"I kik-kik-kik—" gurgled Bunter.

"What?"

"I kik-kik-kik-kik—"

"You want to be kicked, do you mean?" asked Bob. "If that will do you any good, I'm your man. Stand up!"

"I kik-kik-kik-kik-can't move!" Bunter got it out at last. "I kik-kik-can't move, you fellows! Ow! Ooooooooooogh!"

"Help the born idiot out of the car!" said Harry.

Wharton and Bob Cherry lifted the Owl of the Remove by his arms.

"Kik-kik-kik—" gurgled Bunter. "Kik-kik-careful! Dood-dood-don't jolt me! If you jig-jig-jig—jolt me—Groooogh!"

"Turn him over," suggested the Bounder. "He will roll along like a barrel!"

"Moocooooogh!"

"This way, old fat idiot!" said Bob, and Bunter was tenderly led along the car to the platform at the end.

The anguish on Bunter's face would have touched a harder heart than any in the Greyfriars party. Quite compassionately Wharton and Bob helped him out of the car, into the fresh air.

The cool breeze from the mountains revived the unhappy Owl a little.

"Ow! I'm bob-bub-bub—"

"You're what?"

"But-bub-better! Leggo! I'm not sus-sus-sus-sick, you know!" gasped Bunter. "I can smoke cig-cig-cigars. I'm a goo-goo-goo-goo smoker! Yrrrrrrrrrrggghh!" added Bunter, suddenly and involuntarily, as the train gave a lurch.

That did it!

Bunter had been through it on the Ruritania. Now history repeated itself. He clung to the nearest support—his hat blew off, and vanished along the line, unheeded. He would hardly have heeded, in those fearful moments, if his head had blown off under the hat.

The juniors left him seated on the platform, in a state of misery and repentance. Oakland Ferry, and the great Bay of San Francisco, were in sight, before William George Bunter felt anything like himself again. It was likely to be quite a long time before William George smoked another cigar.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bunter Borrows a Hat!

"OAKLAND!" said Mr. Fish, strolling into the car. "I guess we're just hitting Frisco."

All the Greyfriars fellows, of course, had heard of the wonderful Bay of San Francisco, and were eager to see it. Oakland, they learned, was where the train stopped on the edge of the bay, San Francisco itself being across the bay on a peninsula that jutted up from the south. Beyond lay the Pacific Ocean, already glimmering vast and blue to the eye.

The juniors had been looking at a mound from the car windows, as the train approached Oakland, and they wondered a little what it might possibly be. It appeared to be composed of sea-shells, and it was two or three hundred feet in length, and nearly thirty feet high. Harry Wharton pointed it out to Mr. Fish.

"What may that happen to be, Mr. Fish?" he inquired.

Mr. Fish turned his horn-rimmed glasses on it.

"You can search me," he answered. "Looks like a pesky heap of shells, sonny."

"If Bunter had been here before we might have supposed that he'd stopped there for an oyster supper," remarked Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There were a good many millions of shells in the mound, and such a supper would have been far beyond the powers even of W. G. Bunter.

"Must be one of the sights," said Nugent. "It's enclosed in a sort of park. Here's the conductor. Ask him." The conductor came through the car.

He stopped and obligingly gave information.

"I guess that's where the Greasers used to chuck their clam shells," he told them.

"The Greasers?" asked Bob.

"Mexicans," explained the conductor. "Native Californians. They sure must have used up a lot of clams."

The conductor passed on, having imparted that valuable information. The juniors looked doubtful. Western American history was not in the curriculum at Greyfriars, and there was quite a lot of Californian history that the juniors did not know. But they knew that white men could not have been long enough in America to account for that immense mound of shells.

An American gentleman in a neighbouring seat "horned in," as he would probably have expressed it himself, to explain more accurately.

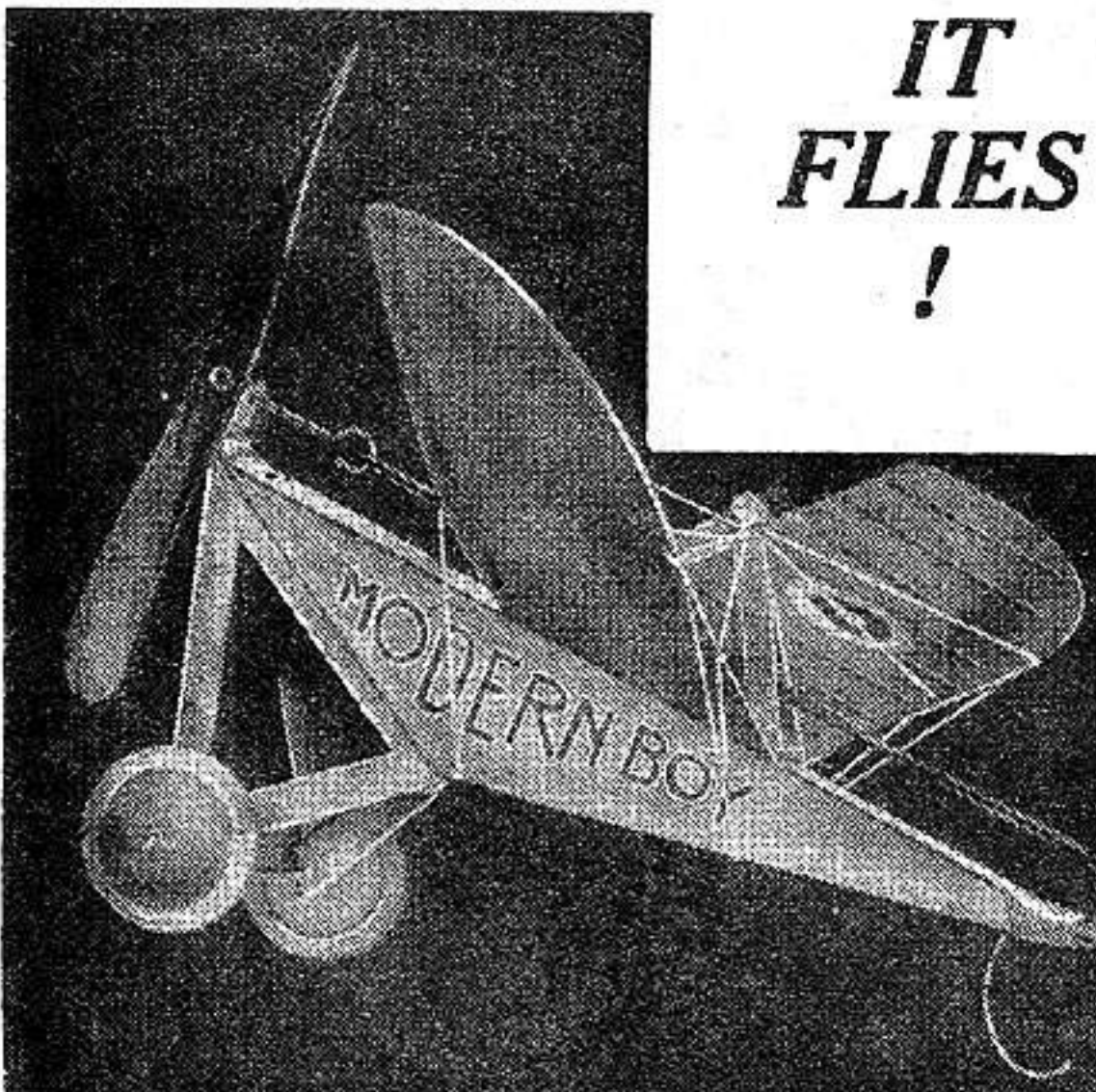
"Prehistoric," he told the juniors. "There's hundreds of those stacks around Frisco. They date before the Mexicans—and before the Indians who were here before the Mexicans. I guess that heap was growing bigger at the time your ancestors were moseying up and down the Thames in coracles, sonny."

And the juniors watched the mound till it disappeared from sight, with great interest. In their journey across the United States, and through California, they had been struck chiefly by the newness of things. They had seen whole towns looking so new, that they seemed more like the scenes of a theatre than human habitations.

Amid such newness, where almost everything seemed to date from yesterday or the day before, it was curious to come upon prehistoric relics, and to

(Continued on next page.)

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C. J. CUTCLIFFE-HYNE'S GREAT NEW SERIAL STARTS THIS WEEK!

realise that men had lived there hundreds of thousands of years ago. The shores of San Francisco Bay had been populated at the time when the ancient Britons were painting themselves with woad. And of the race that had populated them nothing remained but heaps of sea-shells, to hint that they had once dwelt there.

After that prehistoric mound Oakland brought them back to modern times with a jerk: The train ran out on the long mole that stretched into the bay, and already they could see San Francisco across the waters, and the Golden Gate that gave access to the ocean.

"Serene, indifferent to fate, Thou sittest at the western gate!" Bob Cherry remembered that quotation, and addressed it to San Francisco as the cars clattered along the mole.

The sea-fog had cleared away, and a brilliant sunshine poured down on San Francisco and the vast bay.

North lay the Salinas Hills; south lay San Francisco; between them the Golden Gates, the broad strait that opens into the Pacific; east of them the great bay, like an inland sea.

Oakland lay on the edge of the bay, facing 'Frisco, and the long mole ran out from Oakland more than a mile into the shining waters, reaching out towards San Francisco—after which came a ferry of four miles across to the city.

"Some bay!" remarked Bob Cherry.

"I guess," said Mr. Fish, "that this is a sight for sore eyes. The old country hasn't a thing on this, I guess."

"I'll say it hasn't," remarked Fisher T.

Whereat the juniors only smiled cheerfully. They had seen many wonderful sights in the West, but nothing that, in their opinion, was equal to the little old island in the North Sea.

Only a grunt of dissent came from Coker of the Fifth. Coker and Potter and Greene had travelled from Sacramento in another car, but they rejoined the party now, getting ready to take the ferry. Horace Coker had looked on everything, from New York to San Francisco, with a disparaging eye, having a hearty British contempt for everything outside Great Britain. Coker remarked to Potter and Greene that this was all very well, but it wasn't like Brighton Pier.

"I say, you fellows!"

It was a dispirited voice, as William George Bunter appeared in the offing. Bunter looked pale and worn.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Enjoying life?" chuckled Bob.

"The train made me feel a bit sick," explained Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, I've lost my hat. It blew off," said Bunter. "Which of you fellows is going to lend me a hat?"

"Echo answers which," said Bob.

"The whichfulness is terrific."

"I can't go on without a hat, you fellows," said Bunter. "Do you mind if I borrow your hat, Mauly?"

"Yaas."

Lord Mauleverer had taken off his hat while he had his little nap, and laid it on the seat. Bunter picked it up.

"Your hats fit me, Mauly," he remarked. "You remember you used to lend me your topper at Greyfriars."

"I remember you used to borrow it."

"Not quite the same thing!" chuckled Bob.

"Well, I'll borrow this hat, old chap," said Bunter. "You've got a cap somewhere, haven't you?"

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"Yaas."

"You don't mind letting me have the hat?"

"Yaas."

"Thanks, old chap," said Bunter, apparently construing that into permission; and he jammed Mauly's handsome and expensive hat on his bullet head.

Lord Mauleverer gazed at him.

"I want my hat, old fat bean," he said plaintively.

"Don't be selfish, old chap. You've got a travelling-cap with you."

And Bunter settled the matter by rolling away, with Lord Mauleverer's hat on his head.

"Oh, begad!" said his lordship.

And he sorted out his travelling-cap. Lord Mauleverer was a long-suffering youth.

"Here we are, sonnies," said Mr. Fish, as the train clanked to a stop. "I guess we take the ferry here."

The Greyfriars party transferred themselves to the ferry. They passed three islands in the great bay and landed, at last, in the City of the Golden Gate.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Cyrus Parker, from Hollywood!

"M R. FISH, I guess?"

"Sure!"

"I have been waiting to see you."

Mr. Fish grunted.

The gentleman who greeted him had been waiting to see him, but Mr. Fish did not seem anxious to see that gentleman.

Mr. Fish was shepherding his party towards the hotel omnibus, which was to convey them to the Pacific Hotel, in San Francisco, when the stranger butted in.

He was a little fat man, very carefully and expensively dressed, with a good deal of jewellery, and a rose in his button-hole. There was something theatrical in his look to the eyes of the juniors, and they wondered whether he came from Hollywood. His manner was very pleasant, indeed, effusive, but Mr. Fish did not respond. He fixed his keen, searching eyes on the fat gentleman without cordiality.

"Look here, Parker—" he said.

"Looking!" said Mr. Parker, pleasantly.

"How'd you know I'd hit 'Frisco jest here and now?" demanded Mr. Fish suspiciously.

"I guess they long-distanced me from Sacramento," explained Mr. Parker.

"I guess I wanted to see you, Mr. Fish."

"I calculate that the want was all on your side, Parker."

"Sho'. now!" said Mr. Parker, deprecatingly.

"Yep!" snapped Mr. Fish. "You ain't on in this Perfection Picture deal, Parker. You sure ain't! This is where you got off. See?"

"You got him?" asked Mr. Parker.

"Search me!"

"They long-distanced me that you'd got him."

"I guess you been keeping a busy eye on this outfit," said Mr. Fish, resentfully.

"Sure!" assented Mr. Parker, as pleasantly as ever. "If you got him I—"

"Oh, shucks!" snapped Mr. Fish.

Harry Wharton & Co. had stopped, when Mr. Fish stopped, and they politely tried to appear unconscious of the conversation. But they could not, of course, help hearing, and wondering who it was that Hiram K. Fish was supposed to have "got." If it was a

member of the Greyfriars party, that member was evidently an important person in the eyes of Mr. Parker. And it could scarcely be anyone else, for only Greyfriars fellows were travelling in company with Mr. Fish.

"Can't a guy see him?" asked Mr. Parker, running his eyes over the group of Greyfriars fellows.

"A guy can mind his own business," snapped Mr. Fish. "You figure that I've been across the pond to pick up a thing for you? No, sir! The Perfection has bagged that guy, and the Perfection freezes on to him. You hear me toot? You beat it, Parker—and beat it now!"

"But which?" said Mr. Parker, his roving eye on the group.

"I ain't spilling anything. Look here, jest a word with you, Cyrus," said Mr. Fish, and he drew the fat gentleman aside.

After that their conversation was lost to the juniors. Coker of the Fifth stared after Mr. Fish and grunted.

"This is all very well," he said, "but I'm not hanging about here."

"I guess we're waiting for popper," said Fisher T. Fish.

"Guess again," said Coker disagreeably.

He looked round and beckoned to a taxicab.

"I think we're going in the hotel bus, old chap," murmured Greene.

"We're not," said Coker.

"But—" said Potter.

"I don't care about going in a bus with a mob of fags. Tell your pater we've gone on to the hotel, Fish."

And Coker & Co. packed themselves into the taxi and rolled away.

Billy Bunter blinked after them.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Want another cigar?" asked Bob.

"Oh, don't be an ass! Look here, I don't see why we can't take a taxi," said Bunter. "I don't care for hotel buses. I think your pater ought to stand a taxi to the hotel, Fishy."

"Better tell him," grinned Fisher T. Fish.

"Well, I don't see crowding into an hotel bus," grunted Bunter. "Look here, you fellows, I'll stand the taxi, if you like."

"The taxi man mightn't take English money," grinned Bob Cherry. "And even if he would, a threepenny bit wouldn't see us through."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm expecting a postal-order—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Mauly can lend me the money, and I'll settle up at Hollywood," said Bunter, with dignity. "You don't mind, do you, Mauly?"

"Yaas."

"Shut up, Bunter, old bean!" said Harry Wharton. "If the hotel bus isn't good enough for you, you can walk."

"Yah!"

A keen wind was blowing across the bay, and the juniors stood in it, shifting rather uncomfortably. At a little distance Mr. Fish and Mr. Cyrus Parker were still talking, and seemed to be disagreeing. The juniors had to wait, not caring to clear off, as Coker & Co. had done. They felt it was up to them to display rather better manners than Horace James Coker. But the wind was very sharp and uncomfortable, and once or twice they had to clutch their hats, to save them.

"I guess that guy is trying to put it over on the popper," Fisher T. Fish remarked, with a grin. "He never figured that the popper would bag a real live lord for the Perfection."

"Oh, old Mauly?" exclaimed Johnny Bull.



A sharp blast of wind swept by and blew off Lord Mauleverer's hat from Billy Bunter's head. "Oh!" gasped the Owl of the Remove. "My hat's gone again! Run after it, you fellows!" "I don't think!" said Bob Cherry.
(See Chapter 4.)

"Sure!"

"Oh, begad!" murmured Lord Mauleverer.

"I guess a belted earl is some prize!" Fisher T. Fish explained. "I guess Cyrus would hand out the stuff to a good tune to get hold of popper's belted earl."

"Earls aren't belted these days," remarked Bob. "Mauly uses braces, just like a common person."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You see, on the film Mauly will only get a clothes-horse part," Fishy explained. "It's his title that rings the bell, every time."

"Begad! What's a clothes-horse part?" asked Lord Mauleverer, in astonishment.

"You walk on and wear clothes," explained Fisher T. Fish. "Lots of clothes-horse parts in the pictures. You just wear stunning clothes and look nobby."

"Oh, begad!"

"But titles go a long way," said Fisher T. Fish, with a wink. "Think any other crowd in Hollywood has an English earl on their pay roll? No, sir! Why, the Enterprise Pictures—that's Parker's outfit—they'd give their ears to get Mauly away from us. They never believed we'd get him. They wouldn't care if he walked on looking like a wooden doll, so long as they could advertise him as a nobleman. They'd do anything short of kidnapping him."

The juniors chuckled.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"I'm getting hungry."

"Oh, my hat! Shut up, all the same!"

"Beast!"

A sharp blast of wind swept by, and the juniors caught at their hats, and

saved them—with the exception of Bunter. Lord Mauleverer's hat blew off Bunter's head and skidded along at a great rate.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "My hat's gone again. Run after it, you fellows."

"I don't think!" said Bob.

"I say, Mauly—"

Lord Mauleverer backed away. Bunter had borrowed his hat, and Mauly was rather alarmed lest a demand for his cap should follow. And even the patient and long-suffering Mauly did not want to travel on bareheaded.

Billy Bunter snorted and ran after the hat. Nobody seemed specially disposed to save Bunter that trouble, though he waited long enough to give them a chance.

It was rather unfortunate that he waited so long, for a fresh gust of the merry breeze caught the hat before he reached it, and bowled it onward; and Billy Bunter disappeared beyond countless passengers, still in pursuit of the elusive hat.

Mr. Fish came back to the group of juniors. His sharp face was quite grim in expression.

"Hop in!" he said briefly. The hotel bus was about to start, all other passengers for the Pacific Hotel being already aboard.

"Bunter—" began Harry.

"Hop in!"

"But Bunter—"

"What about that fat clam?" asked Mr. Fish crossly.

"His hat blew off, and he ran after it—"

"I guess he knows where we're heading, and he can follow on; hop in," grunted Hiram K. Fish. "Time's dollars."

And as Mr. Fish entered the omnibus the juniors had no choice but to follow.

It was easy enough for Bunter to find the hotel, as soon as he had found his hat; and Mr. Fish evidently expected that he would walk there. The juniors opined that he would take a taxi there, leaving Mr. Fish to pay for it on arrival. However, that was not their concern, so they followed Mr. Fish into the omnibus, and it rolled away from the Ferry House. As it rolled off they had a last view of Mr. Cyrus Parker, standing and staring after them with a frown on his fat face, and they smiled.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

His Lordship Billy Bunter!

BILLY BUNTER gasped. The high wind was playing fantastic tricks with Bunter's hat round the Ferry House at San Francisco. The playful spirit of spring seemed to have entered into the breeze: Twice, thrice, and a fourth time Bunter nearly captured the hat, but the wind caught it again and it skidded on. It dodged him like a thing of life. People stopped to watch him; two or three newsboys cheered him. Heedless, Bunter chased the elusive hat, and once more his grasp was almost upon it when it was spun on by a gust and banged against the fur overcoat of a fat gentleman standing outside the Ferry House. That fat gentleman grasped it with a hand that gleamed with rings.

"Here, sonny!" he called out.

Bunter came panting up.

The fat gentleman—Mr. Cyrus Parker—beamed on him pleasantly. He knew Bunter at once as a member of the party he had seen with Mr. Fish. Bunter had a figure calculated to strike the

eye and draw a second glance. Apparently Mr. Fish had left one of his party behind at the Ferry House, and this was a chance for Mr. Parker to get some information. Hiram K. Fish had refused to point out the member of his party who was a belted earl; probably fearing that Enterprise Films nourished some design of enticing that valuable young gentleman away from the Perfection Picture Syndicate. From this fat fellow, Mr. Parker figured, he would learn that much, at least, after which he would get in touch with the titled bird and see whether he couldn't "put it over" on the Perfection.

So Mr. Parker held out the hat by the brim very politely for the fat junior to take it as he came gasping up.

Then he gave a jump.

Holding out the hat to Bunter in that manner, he naturally saw the inside of it.

On the inside lining was stamped the name "MAULEVERER."

It was an invariable rule at Greyfriars for fellows to have their names written in their hats. Lord Mauleverer's name was stamped in the leather in gold letters by his hatter.

Mr. Parker jumped quite convulsively.

It was Lord Mauleverer he wanted to see; and he was holding Mauleverer's hat in his hand!

This fat fellow in the specs was, therefore, Mauleverer.

Mr. Parker was quite justified, on the evidence, in jumping to that conclusion; though it was an incorrect conclusion, all the same.

His fat face beamed more than ever.

"Your hat, my lord," he said, presenting it to the Owl of the Remove, who grabbed it breathlessly.

"Thanks!" gasped Bunter.

There could be no doubt, of course, that it was Bunter's hat, as Bunter was bareheaded in chase of it. In Mr. Parker's country men had been hanged on less evidence than that.

"A little muddy," said Mr. Parker. "Let me brush it for you, my lord."

"Oh, thanks!" gasped Bunter.

Mr. Parker took the hat again and carefully brushed every speck of mud from it with an expensive silk handkerchief.

Then he restored it to Bunter with a bow.

Bunter blinked at him.

This was the politest American he had struck since he had sighted Sandy Hook.

He guessed the reason.

In a free republic like the United States, where every man is as good as every other man, or a little better, such infantile distinctions as titles might be supposed to be regarded with contempt. In point of fact, however, a traveller may observe that an American will go further on foot than a European would go in a Rolls-Royce to see a lord. Nature's noblemen are simply "not in it."

This fat man took Bunter for a lord; that was proved by his addressing him as "my lord," and by his effusive courtesy.

Bunter smiled.

He had quite forgotten that he was wearing Mauleverer's hat, and that Mauleverer's name was in it. It did not occur to him for a moment that Mr. Parker had seen that name and drawn his own conclusions.

He simply set down Mr. Parker's mistake to Mr. Parker's good judgment.

A fellow of distinguished appearance, carrying himself with an air in which hauteur and courtliness were delicately

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blended, would naturally be taken for a lord.

That Bunter looked like a nobleman, or like a nobleman ought to look, he had long been assured. On that point there was no shadow of doubt, no possible, probable shadow of doubt, no possible doubt whatever. It was true that this had never been recognised in his own country. But Mr. Parker, with an American's keen eye for a nobleman, recognised it!

Bunter almost purred.

He was not likely to set Mr. Parker's mistake right. The daw in the peacock's plumes "hadn't a thing" on Bunter. The Owl of the Remove was only too glad of a chance to swank.

"Your lordship is a little breathless," said Mr. Parker. "Your lordship's friends have gone on. Perhaps your lordship would take a lift in my car."

Bunter beamed.

"Well, I was going to take a taxi," he said. "No hotel omnibuses for me, you know. But—"

"I guess my car's right handy," said Mr. Parker.

"Thanks," said Bunter.

This kind offer saved him from the argument that would certainly have resulted, had Mr. Fish been called upon to pay for the taxi to the Pacific Hotel.

Mr. Parker walked along to his car and opened the door of it for Bunter.

"Step in, my lord."

Bunter stepped in.

Cyrus Parker followed him in and sat down at the wheel. The car glided away from the Ferry House.

"My party are going to the Pacific Hotel," remarked Bunter. "I suppose you know where that is."

"Sure," assented Mr. Parker. The car was gliding in the busy traffic of Market Street, and Cyrus Parker kept one eye on the traffic and one eye on Bunter. "The Pacific, my lord?"

Bunter noticed a curl to Mr. Parker's plump lip.

"That's it," he answered. "You know where it is."

The curl on Mr. Parker's lip became more pronounced.

"South of the slot," he answered.

"The which?" ejaculated Bunter.

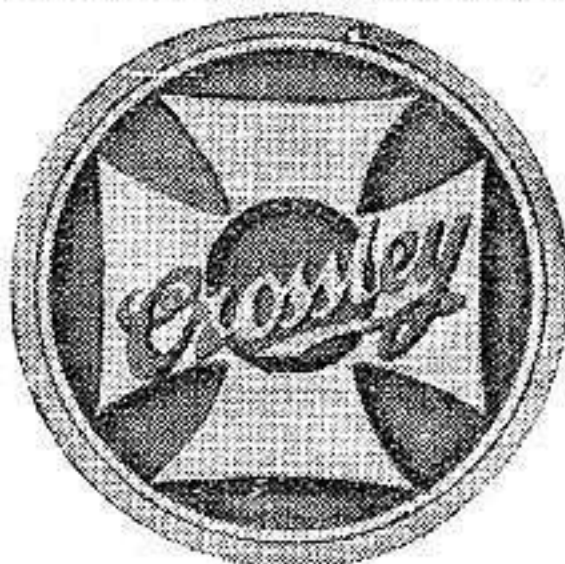
"Slot!"

Billy Bunter blinked at him. He knew, of course, what a slot was. He was acquainted with the slots on auto-

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matic machines—well acquainted with them. Often and often had Bunter drawn chocolates from slot machines. But Mr. Parker's remark was Greek to him, all the same. He glanced round him, but in all the roaring space of Market Street, San Francisco, with its street cars and its innumerable automobiles, its endless throngs, he could see nothing that resembled a slot.

"I guess that's like Fish," said Mr. Parker, deeply disparaging. "I guess he would locate south of the slot. I'm surprised, though, that he should put it over on your lordship."

Bunter realised that the slot must be some sort of geographical dividing-line, and that on the south side of the slot you were less distinguished than on the north side of the slot. Apparently the West End and East End of Frisco were North End and South End, and the slot warned you where you began to be superior, going north, or ceased to be superior, going south.

Bunter grinned. In a new country, where the institutions were democratic, and Jack was as good as his master, there was something comic in this sort of snobbery imported from the old world.

Still, if quarters north of the slot were superior to quarters south of the slot, Bunter was prepared to be indignant at being located on the south, or inferior, side of that dividing line. From Bunter's point of view, all Americans were much of a muchness, and it was rather funny for them to make snobbish distinctions among themselves. But that did not alter the fact that William George Bunter, himself, was a most superior person. And the extremely civil, not to say toadying, manner of Cyrus Parker, encouraged the fat and fatuous Owl in his feeling of superiority.

He was unaware that the acute Mr. Parker had already "sized him up" as a fat, fatuous, swanking sort of empty-headed jay—which judgment showed that Mr. Parker was a judge of character, at least. Mr. Parker was playing upon the disposition he attributed to the fat youth, and he played upon it with easy success.

"I'm sure surprised," he said. "Your lordship can't have known that your lordship would be located south of the slot."

"Certainly not!" said Bunter warmly. "I shall speak to old Fish about this. He's mean."

Mr. Parker smiled.

"Mean ain't the word for that guy," he agreed.

"Awfully mean," said Bunter. "It was understood, you know, that old Fish paid all the expenses of this trip. But he's done it on the cheap all through."

"He sure would!" agreed Mr. Parker, greatly delighted to perceive that "his lordship" was dissatisfied with Hiram K. Fish.

"I don't think I shall put up with it," said Bunter. "I consider that it's like old Fish's cheek."

"That man's neck, sir, would take the weight of a Central Pacific string of cars," said Mr. Parker. "He sure has played it low down on your lordship. And your lordship moseying all the way from the Old Country to act for him on the films, too."

Bunter opened his lips, and closed them again. Bunter was the one member of the party who was not going to act in the Perfection Picture Studio at Hollywood. Bunter was superfluous. Bunter was not wanted. But Bunter was not going to correct Mr. Parker's misapprehension. Not Bunter.

"Exactly," he assented, after a pause.

"Just so! The fact is, I'm the only one in the whole lot that's worth anything for acting on the films."

"You've said it," said Mr. Parker.

Evidently he meant it. There was no end, it seemed to Bunter, of Mr. Parker's excellent judgment. Not only had he taken Bunter for a nobleman, but he had discerned that Bunter was a born film actor! Bunter had always known it, of course; but it was rare and refreshing to find the fact recognised by a stranger in this way.

"Why, I wouldn't give ten cents for the rest of the party," said Mr. Parker. "Old Fish can keep that outfit, sir! You're the goods, my lord, if you don't mind my saying so."

"Not at all," said Bunter. "In fact, I knew it. I say, you know something about the films, Mr. Parker?"

"I should smile," said Mr. Parker. "Head of the Enterprise Films—that's me. I've got Hollywood in my pocket."

"Oh!" ejaculated Bunter.

His little round eyes danced behind his big spectacles.

Hiram K. Fish had rejected, with scorn, Bunter's many offers to include himself among the film actors from Greyfriars. Hiram K. Fish had told Bunter, with brutal frankness, that he was no earthly use. He had said that you could get on the films if you had looks, and you could get on the films if you had brains; but without either, you were of no earthly use on the films. And here was a film director who spotted Bunter, at a glance, as the very man for the films! It was the chance that Bunter had dreamed of, and it had dropped at his feet like a ripe apple.

"I—I—I say, Mr. Parker—" he stammered.

"Yeh?"

"You think I'm all right for the pictures—"

"You bet!"

"I'm not bound to stick to old Fish," said Bunter, carefully concealing the fact that old Fish declined, in any ease, to be stuck to. "I don't see why I should—hem!—act for the Perfection Syndicate, if I can get a better offer. What about giving me a trial for the Enterprise Films?"

Mr. Parker smiled with enjoyment.

He had hoped to bring his lordship round to this; he had been laying mental plans to that end; he had, in fact, determined not to land his lordship at the Pacific Hotel at all, but to keep him away from the rest of the party, while he strove to induce him, and entice him, to turn Mr. Fish down, and throw in his lot with the Enterprise firm.

And, lo and behold, the offer came from his lordship himself!

It was a stroke of luck that Mr. Parker had not dreamed of, not dared to dream of.

He was prepared to go any length, short of kidnapping his lordship, to get him away from Hiram K. Fish. And here was his lordship, keen to get away from Mr. Fish, jumping at the chance.

"What about it?" asked Bunter.

"Your lordship does me proud," declared Mr. Parker. "Naturally, I'm on. Look here, my lord, you come to my place and see my partner, and we'll fix up a deal. You don't want to horn into that cheap down-town hotel of Hiram's. Not your lordship. I guess if you sign on with the Enterprise Films, you'll touch more dollars than Hiram would ever let you see cents—if that matters to your lordship."

Bunter grinned. A contempt for wealth was never one of Bunter's weaknesses. Hardly an inhabitant of the United States was keener after dollars than W. G. Bunter.

"It's a go!" he gasped.

"I got a leetle flat in this city," said Mr. Parker. "North of the slot, of course. On California Street. You beat it there with me in this auto, my lord."

"I say, though—"

"Yeh!"

"I'm getting hungry."

"I guess you'll find a better lunch at my leetle flat than Hiram could scare up south of the slot," said Mr. Parker.

BRITAIN'S RACING CHAMPION!

Read what our contributor has to say about the **SUNBEAM** car—the radiator badge of which forms the subject of one of this week's Free Gifts.

Since the conclusion of the Great War, the famous Wolverhampton firm of Sunbeam has, with its associated companies, done more to uphold the prestige of Britain in the great Continental road races than all other British firms combined.

The names of such famous racing champions as Resta, Lee Guinness, Divo, Segrave, and latterly, Kaye Don, are all associated with Sunbeams in the mind of the motor-racing enthusiast. Rumour has it that after having retired from racing for a spell Sunbeams are coming back into the game for 1929. It is to be hoped that rumour speaks truly, for no one knows better how to build a thoroughbred racer than the wizards of Wolverhampton. It was in this famous works that Major H. O. D. Segrave's first record-breaker was built, the car which put up the splendid performance of over 203 miles per hour at Daytona Beach in America.

Sunbeams do not make small cars—the 16 h.-p. six-cylinder chassis is the smallest of the range—and they do not make cheap cars. They build fast touring cars, in which the lessons learned in the course of many years of road-racing are embodied, and as a result the name of Sunbeam stands in the very forefront of typically British cars.

"Best restaurant in 'Trisco in that block of buildings, my lord, and I'll sure be honoured if you'll lunch with me."

Bunter beamed.

Here was a chance of a lifetime. Grub of the very best and plenty of it floated before the vision of William George Bunter. Could he resist it?

"It's a cinch?" asked Mr. Parker.

"What-ho!" said Bunter.

This was very different from the treatment he received in the Fish party. It was very different, and much more gratifying.

"Done, then!" said Cyrus Parker.

"And I guess you'll be glad that you've shook that outfit, Lord Mauleverer."

Whirling the car out of Market Street into Geary Street on the way to California Street, Mr. Parker had his hands full, and his eyes busy, to deal with traffic at a busy corner. Thus it was that he did not note the effect of his last remark on Billy Bunter. It was several minutes before Mr. Parker was again at leisure to observe his lordship.

By that time Bunter had recovered from the shock. And he did not mention to Mr. Parker that he was not Lord Mauleverer.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Looking After Mauly!

"WHAT about Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Nothing," answered Mr. Fish.

And with that Mr. Fish sat down to lunch in the Pacific Hotel. That reply, Spartan in its brevity, seemed to satisfy Mr. Fish; but the Remove fellows were not quite satisfied.

It was no great distance from the Ferry Building to the Pacific Hotel, and it really seemed impossible for Bunter to get lost, unless he wanted to specially. He had only to take a street car down Market Street, or to walk. Or, he had only to take a taxi, leaving Mr. Fish to pay at the end. There were stacks of taxis at the ferry.

On the other hand, Bunter was every known kind of an ass, and if he did get lost the matter was serious.

However, the Greyfriars party gave their attention to lunch, being hungry after their journey down from Sacramento, and hoped that Bunter would roll in sooner or later.

Mr. Hiram K. Fish seemed a little grim and perturbed at lunch. His meeting with Cyrus Parker at the Ferry had obviously disturbed him. Certainly he was in no mood to bother his head about so unimportant a personage as William George Bunter.

Mr. Fish had taken the trouble to cross the "pond" to the old country, to pull the wool over the eyes of Dr. Locke, the headmaster of Greyfriars, and to go to considerable expense, to bag the Greyfriars fellows for the Perfection films. That great picture syndicate contemplated a picture of public school life in England, for which the genuine article was required. Mr. Fish had corralled the genuine goods, and

the most valuable of all his recruits was Lord Mauleverer.

Mauly, no doubt, might not exactly "ring the bell" as an actor, but he had a handsome and distinguished presence, and was eminently suitable for a "clothes-horse" part. But it was, of course, his title that was his great attraction. All sorts and conditions of people drifted to Hollywood to wedge into the films, nine-tenths of them failing to do so. But among them there was no holder of an historic English title. A real live lord would have been a draw even in England. In a republican, democratic country, it was an irresistible attraction.

A film that showed a real live lord would be "some" film. And Lord Mauleverer was not only a lord, but he looked the part, and was wealthy in addition; he was undoubtedly the genuine goods. Lord Mauleverer alone was worth all the trouble Mr. Fish had taken. And the bare idea of a rival getting his prize away from him, or even attempting to get his prize away, got Hiram's "goat."

Moreover, in a deal between a democratic American and an English peer, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,097.

the latter was bound to come out at the little end of the horn, as Mr. Fish would have expressed it. No mention was made of a salary, and Mauly had not even given it a thought.

Mr. Fish had not only bagged a great prize, but he had got it cheap. That guy, Parker, would certainly offer Mauly big inducements to go over to the Enterprise, if he got in touch with him. Mauly gave little thought to money; but Mr. Fish, who judged others by himself, could not imagine anyone resisting bribes of heaps of dollars. He might have to offer a big salary himself, to counteract a similar offer from Cyrus Parker, and the mere thought of that gave Mr. Fish a pain.

Mr. Fish would not have wept had he heard that Cyrus Parker had been run down by a trolley car in Market Street. There was one American citizen whom Mr. Fish would have gladly seen left out of the next United States Census.

"I guess," said Mr. Fish, during lunch, "that we'll hit the cars for L. A. to-day, you lads. Time's dollars."

"What's the hurry?" asked Bob. "Aren't we going to have a look at 'Frisco?"

"I guess you can rubber neck at 'Frisco on your way home," said Mr. Fish. "We want to hit L. A. on schedule time."

"L. A.," apparently, was a way of saving time on Los Angeles.

"Sure," agreed Fisher T. Fish, who was aware what was in his worthy popper's mind. "Can't get located in the Perfection studio too airy. We want to hit Los pronto."

Harry Wharton & Co. could not help feeling disappointed. They wanted very much to see the City of the Golden Gates. It was a far cry from Greyfriars to the Pacific Slope. And they had a suspicion, too, that when Mr. Fish was done with them he would ship them home by the quickest possible route, and that there was likely to be very little sight-seeing on the way.

However, Hiram K. Fish was head of the party, and it was for him to decide.

"Let's hope Bunter will trickle in in time, then," remarked the Bounder.

Mr. Fish snorted as he was thus reminded of the unimportant existence of William George Bunter.

"If that fat guy don't turn up in time to take the cars, that fat guy will get left!" he snapped.

Harry Wharton & Co. glanced at one another. Mr. Fish had taken precisely the same view when Coker of the Fifth was lost in New York, and the Greyfriars fellows had differed. They differed now. If Bunter did not turn up in time to take the cars, the juniors certainly had no intention of going on to Los Angeles and leaving him lost in San Francisco. As they expected him to come in any minute, however, it was not worth while to argue the point—yet. Coker butted in. Coker could always be relied upon to butt in.

"That won't do, Mr. Fish," said Coker.

"Hay?"

"As a Fifth Form man and a senior I'm responsible for these kids," said Coker. "I can't go on and leave one behind."

Mr. Fish glared.

"I guess you ain't so all-fired valuable that it will matter very much if you stop behind and look after him," he said crossly.

"I shall not allow these juniors to go on without me," said Coker calmly.

There was a chuckle from the juniors. All the way from Greyfriars they had tried to make it clear to Coker that he

was not in charge of them, and that they did not value his fatherly care at a continental red cent. But it was not easy to make things clear to Coker.

"Oh, can it, Coker!" said Fisher T. Fish.

Mr. Fish rose from the table.

"This party hits the railroad depot at four," he said.

"Not without Bunter," said Coker.

"Oh, bury it!" snapped Mr. Fish.

"Bunter will turn up all right," said Harry Wharton. "But if he doesn't, Mr. Fish, we can't possibly go on without him."

"It would not be the esteemed proper caper, honoured sahib," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Snort from Mr. Fish.

"Mr. Fish." A waiter came up to the table. "Calling you on the phone, sir."

Mr. Fish hurried away to take the call. But he stopped half-way and turned back to the juniors.

"Don't you quit this hotel," he called out.

"Not for a walk?" asked Harry.

"Nope! Not Lord Mauleverer, anyhow."

"Begad! Why not, sir?" asked Mauleverer.

"I guess you might land in trouble," said Mr. Fish. "I guess you ain't safe in a burg like 'Frisco. You stop here till I come back."

And Mr. Fish hurried away. Undoubtedly Mr. Fish was very uneasy about his lordship until he had him safely landed on the Perfection lot at Hollywood.

"Hello!" snorted Mr. Fish into the transmitter.

"That H. K. Fish?" came a voice over the wires.

"You've got it."

"Parker speaking."

"Shoot!" grunted Mr. Fish.

There was a fat chuckle on the telephone.

"I guessed I'd ring you and put you wise," said Mr. Parker. "You figured you'd got Lord Mauleverer safe for the Perfection—what?"

Mr. Fish started.

"Sure!"

"You want to guess again," chuckled Mr. Parker. "I guess it's the Enterprise that's roping in that titled guy. Put your money on that."

"Forget it!" snapped Mr. Fish.

"I guess I want to thank you, Hiram," went on Mr. Parker. "It was real kind of you to bring him over here for me."

"What the John James Brown do you mean by that?" demanded Mr. Fish.

There was another chuckle.

"I'm putting you wise, Hiram. You can sure cancel all that publicity about Lord Mauleverer for the Perfection. It don't go."

"I guess—"

"I've put the reporters wise already," said Mr. Parker. "I'll say there's some pleasant reading for you in the papers this afternoon, Hiram. So-long!"

"Look here—"

But Mr. Parker had hung up.

Hiram K. Fish jammed the receiver down and hurried back to the dining-room. He stared round for Lord Mauleverer at once, as if he feared that the Perfection Syndicate's rival had already somehow spirited away that exceedingly valuable young gentleman. But Lord Mauleverer was still there, eating an orange with his usual leisurely deliberation.

Mr. Fish breathed hard through his long, thin nose.

He was extremely uneasy.

That Cyrus Parker supposed that he had Lord Mauleverer already in his hands Mr. Fish could not, of course,

guess. He had no idea that Mr. Parker had rung him to announce a triumph, having no knowledge of that supposed triumph. Had it been Mauly, instead of Bunter, who was missing, Mr. Fish would have "tumbled" at once; but he did not connect the missing Owl with what Parker had said over the wires. He was alarmed, because he saw in Cyrus Parker's words a confidence in his ability to get hold of his highly-prized lordship. Having brought Lord Mauleverer all the way from England to San Francisco, it would have been a fearful blow to Mr. Fish to lose him on the last lap of the long journey.

"What about walking down to the ferry and looking for Bunter?" asked the Bounder, as he rose from the table.

"Not Mauleverer," said Mr. Fish hastily.

"My dear sir—" yawned Lord Mauleverer.

"You're tired," said Mr. Fish. "You want a rest, lad. That's what you sure want. Ain't you tired?"

"Yaas," admitted his lordship. Lord Mauleverer generally was tired.

"Well, you take a rest," said Mr. Fish. "I guess Son will stay with you and keep you company."

"Sure!" assented Fisher T. Fish.

"Don't trouble, old bean," said Lord Mauleverer hastily. "I wouldn't keep you in for worlds!"

"That cuts no ice with me," answered Fisher T. Fish. "You other guys can mosey along to the ferry; I guess I'll stay in with Mauly."

And when the Famous Five and the Bounder walked forth, his lazy lordship, quite willing to oblige Mr. Fish by refraining from anything in the shape of exertion, selected a very comfortable chair in the lounge and sat down there to repose.

Mr. Fish whispered to Fisher T.

"Keep tabs on that guy, Fisher."

"You bet!"

"That gol-darned skunk Parker has got some scheme for getting hold of him somehow," said Mr. Fish. "Don't you let him get out of your sight."

"I guess I'll stick closer than a brother!" grinned Fisher T. Fish.

And Lord Mauleverer took his little nap under the keen eyes of Fisher Tarleton Fish, which left him for hardly a moment. But, as a matter of fact, the genuine Lord Mauleverer was in no danger from the enterprising Mr. Parker. Mr. Parker had already made his capture, and he was quite satisfied with it—though it was probable that later on Mr. Parker would not feel quite so satisfied.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Pig in Clover!

BILLY BUNTER smiled.

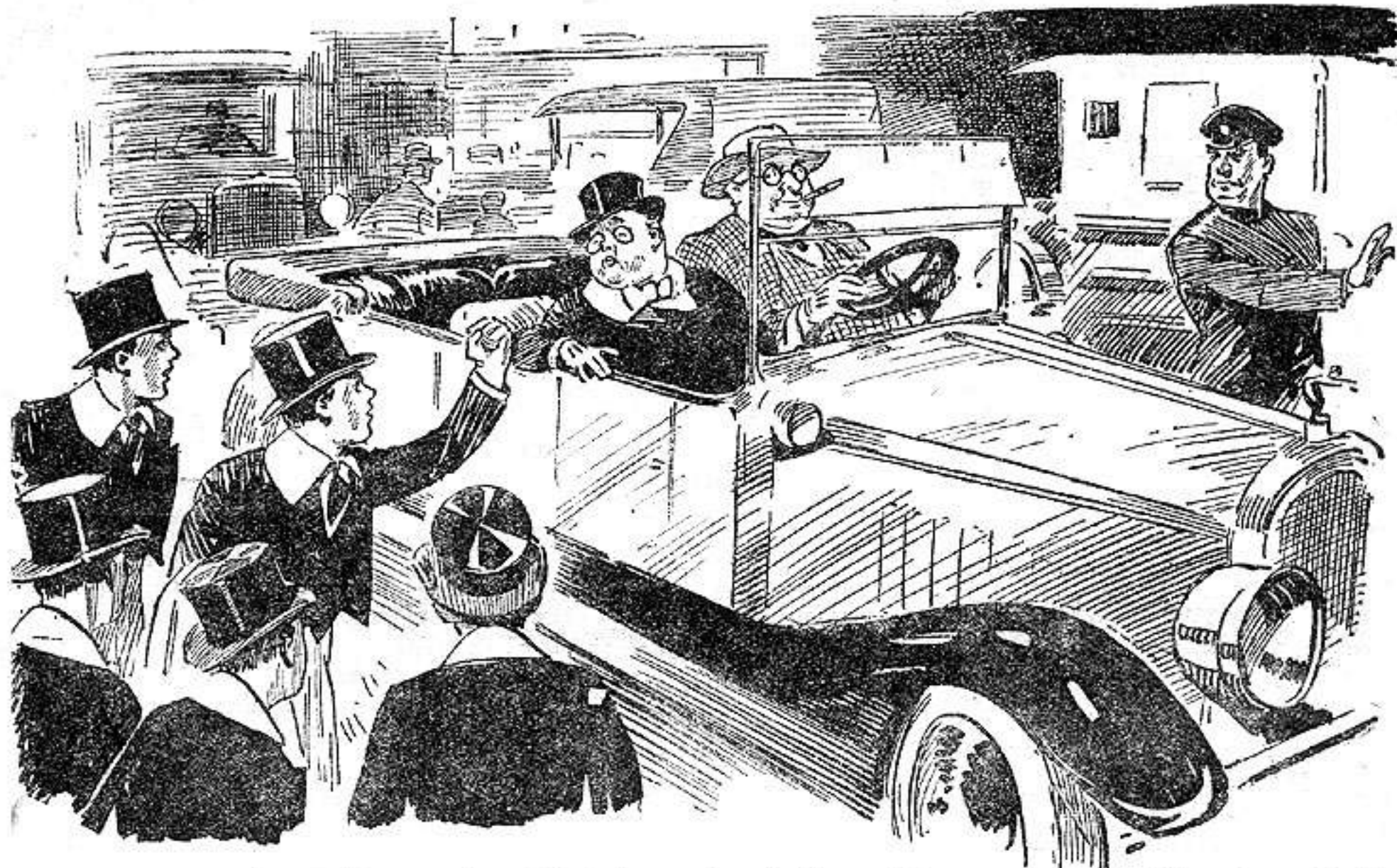
He had occasion to smile.

Bunter was in clover.

In a deep easy-chair, William George Bunter reclined at ease, his fat little legs stretched out over a hassock, his fat thumbs elegantly inserted in the armholes of his ample waistcoat.

Had the Enterprise Films desired to take a lifelike film of a pig in clover, Bunter, at the present moment, was the man they wanted.

Bunter had lunched with Mr. Parker in the restaurant attached to the block of flats in California Street. It was an excellent restaurant, and it had provided an excellent, varied, and extensive lunch. Owing to the effects of the cigar on the train, Bunter had ample room for that lunch. He had proceeded methodically to pack up every available



"Look here, Bunter," said Wharton, "you'd better come along! We can't leave you to go off with a stranger in this way!" "You jolly well can!" grinned the Owl of the Remove. "In fact, you've jolly well got to! Drive on, Mr. Parker, and get out of this no-class crowd!" "You fat villain!" roared Johnny Bull. (See Chapter 8.)

inch of space. Mr. Parker, all hospitality, had watched him, at first with satisfaction, then with surprise, then with amazement, then with something like alarm. Bunter's performance at the luncheon-table had given him a startling idea of the appetite of a British aristocrat.

Of British aristocrats, of course, Cyrus Parker knew little; but he had never reckoned or calculated that they consumed food on the lines of an octopus or a boa-constrictor. If all the rest of the British aristocracy consumed food on the same scale as this specimen, it seemed remarkable to Mr. Parker how one little island could provide for them all.

Cyrus Parker was a little uneasy lest this fat nobleman should faint after his exertions, or undergo a fit of apoplexy. He kept a careful eye on him as they went up in the elevator to Mr. Parker's suite. It almost seemed to Mr. Parker that the elevator lagged under the weight of the lunch Bunter carried up inside him. However, nothing happened, and Bunter was safely landed in Mr. Parker's suite; and a Japanese servant brought coffee and cigarettes.

Bunter eyed the cigarettes; but the remembrance of the cigar was strong upon him, and he did not touch them. He suggested cakes with the coffee, instead of cigarettes; and Mr. Parker, wondering by what miracle Bunter would be able to pack in a cake after that lunch, ordered cakes. Bunter packed in several.

"Won't you have another, my lord?" asked Mr. Parker, with involuntary irony, as Bunter stopped at the fourth.

Bunter shook his head.

"Thanks, no. I don't want to spoil my tea."

"Your tea!" murmured Mr. Parker.

"Enough's as good as a feast, you know," said Bunter.

"Oh! Ah! Yep!" gasped Mr. Parker. Bunter sipped coffee negligently. He

was happy and satisfied, and he liked Mr. Parker ever so much better than he liked Mr. Fish. Mr. Fish would never have witnessed that lunch with such equanimity. He would have stopped Bunter short—or, at least, he would have regarded him with a grudging and malevolent eye. Mr. Parker had beamed all the time with hospitality. Mr. Parker was exactly the man Bunter wanted to meet.

As Bunter seemed inclined for a little nap after his exertions, Mr. Parker left him to himself with a pile of newspapers and magazines—and, on a hint from Bunter, a box of chocolates and a box of creams. Mr. Parker went to telephone.

Bunter, left alone in the luxurious apartment, smiled.

He was happy.

There was, it is true, one fly in the ointment. In the first place, Bunter had supposed that Mr. Parker had taken him for a lord, on account of his air and manner of natural nobility. He had supposed that Mr. Parker wanted him for the Enterprise Films, because he had spotted him as a born film actor. The discovery that Mr. Parker believed him to be Lord Mauleverer had given Bunter quite a nasty jolt. It enlightened him as to Mr. Parker's motives. It was not the individual that Mr. Parker wanted, it was the nobleman; the title, not the person. Any old thing, so to speak, would have satisfied Mr. Parker, so long as it bore the title of earl. For some mysterious reason, Cyrus had mistaken Bunter for Mauleverer, hence his overflowing courtesy and hospitality. It was annoying: Bunter wanted to get all this on his own merits.

But he realized that on his own merits he was likely to get no more from Mr. Parker than from Mr. Fish.

So he cheerfully left Cyrus in his delusion.

It dawned on Bunter, on reflection, that Cyrus must have seen Mauleverer's

name in the borrowed hat, hence his misapprehension. Bunter smiled as he thought of it. It had been a fortunate thing, after all, that his hat had blown off on the train. But for that little accident he would never have borrowed Mauleverer's hat, and Mr. Parker would never have made this mistake—and Bunter would not have been a pig in clover.

Some fellows would have put Mr. Parker right as soon as they learned that he had made a mistake in identity. Not so Bunter. Bunter was after "the goods."

If that sharp, keen-eyed American business man chose to make mistakes, that was his own look-out, in Bunter's opinion. He had not come to the United States to teach the natives business.

Mr. Parker was anxious to keep his capture from any communication with Mr. Fish. Bunter was equally anxious to keep Mr. Parker from any communication with that gentleman.

The present state of affairs suited him admirably.

Sooner or later, of course, it would be discovered that he was not Lord Mauleverer. In the meantime, however, he would demonstrate to the Enterprise Co. what a magnificent film actor he was, and they would want to secure him on his own merits. Bunter had no doubt about this, and he considered that a little harmless deception, therefore, would be for the benefit of Mr. Parker as much as for his own.

In the meanwhile, Bunter was going to keep up the game, and let Cyrus fool himself to the top of his bent.

His eyes closed.

He did not go to sleep, but dozed gently and comfortably in the depths of that very easy chair.

Thus dozing gently, Bunter did not hear footsteps on the deep pile of the carpet, and did not know that anyone

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had entered the room till the sound of muttering voices fell on his ears.

He did not open his eyes.

From the fact that Mr. Parker and his friend were talking in Bunter's presence, it was obvious that they supposed him to be asleep. Bunter continued to appear to be asleep, and thoughtfully added a slight snore as a convincing detail. He was quite curious to know what Mr. Parker and his partner had to say to one another, and he was not at all scrupulous about listening. A nice sense of honour had never been one of Billy Bunter's weaknesses.

"So that's the guy?"

It was a voice Bunter had not heard before; evidently that of the partner Cyrus had mentioned to him.

"That's the guy, Kearney."

"Gee-whiz!" said Mr. Kearney. His tone did not indicate that he was vastly impressed by the aspect of this guy.

"It's the lord, Kearney."

"Yep! But—"

"Looks ain't everything," said Mr. Parker.

Billy Bunter inwardly registered a vow to pay out Mr. Parker for that remark.

"I know they ain't," said Kearney; "but they're a lot. Wake snakes! What sort of a figure will that guy make on the screen? All very well for a comedy part; but—"

Bunter registered another silent vow to pay out Mr. Kearney somehow.

"A lord," said Mr. Parker sententiously, "is a lord."

"Sure! But if a guy don't look a lord—" said Mr. Kearney. "It's what a guy looks like that tells on the movies."

"I ain't denying that that's a difficulty," said Mr. Parker. "When I found that this fat guy was a lord, you could have knocked me over with a trolley-car. But we were out to grab the lord, and we've grabbed him. I reckon we can fix him up somehow so that he won't look such a fat, flabby, all-fired mugwump as he does naturally. A guy can't have everything. We've got the lord, and we can't help his looks."

"That's so," agreed Kearney. "I guess Hiram will be hopping mad, anyhow. He's brought this figure of fun all the way from Yurup, and we've got him, such as he is. I reckon we want to let the newspaper guys know that Lord Mauleverer is acting for the Enterprise. I guess I'll go along and give them the office."

Bunter heard a door close.

His eyes were still shut behind his big round glasses but he knew that Mr. Parker was standing before him, looking at him.

There was an element of doubt in Mr. Parker's looks. He had captured the nobleman—or he thought he had. But he really did wish that the nobleman looked the part. Any other member of the crowd of schoolboys he had seen at the Ferry Building looked the part better than this specimen did. Still, as he had said to his partner, a guy couldn't have everything. Having corralled the nobleman, he had to be satisfied with his looks.

He shook Bunter by the shoulder at last.

Bunter gave a dramatic start, and opened his eyes and blinked at him.

"I say, you fellows, have I been asleep?" he ejaculated.

Mr. Parker smiled.

"You sure have, my lord," he answered.

Bunter sat up.

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"Oh! I forgot where I was for the moment," he said. "I fancied I was at home at Mauleverer Towers."

"Your lordship's residence in England?" asked Mr. Parker. He rather liked the sound of "Mauleverer Towers."

"One of them," said Bunter carelessly. "One of my places in the country, you know. I've six or seven—I never can remember exactly how many."

He gave an aristocratic yawn.

"I generally prefer Mauleverer Towers," he remarked. "It's the best for the huntin' and shootin'."

"I guess you could get some photographs of the Towers," suggested Mr. Parker.

"Oh, quite! I'll write to my seneschal," said Bunter.

Mr. Parker was visibly impressed.

Bunter had read of seneschals in historical novels. Mr. Parker had become acquainted with them on historical films. Bunter would not have been called clever by his fondest relation, but, like many fatuous persons, he had a gift of cunning. He knew that the word "seneschal" would "go down" with Cyrus Parker.

The fat junior rose and stretched himself.

"Anything you want from Mauleverer Towers, you've only to say the word," he said. "In fact, it's occurred to me that if I sent for a few of my huntsmen they would come in useful in some of the scenes."

"You've said it, my lord!" ejaculated Mr. Parker.

"Just let me know what you'd like," said Bunter airily. "By the way, any objection to my taking a film name—I believe most of the stars do. My friends have a nickname for me. They sometimes call me Bunter—he, he, he!—a sort of friendly nickname, you know. I thought that that would be a good name for me to use on the films, instead of my—hem!—my own."

Mr. Parker shook his head.

"I guess that wouldn't go, your lordship. You see, we're already putting up the publicity. All the afternoon papers will be announcing that Lord Mauleverer is acting for Enterprise Films."

"Oh!" ejaculated Bunter.

"So you see—"

"Quite immaterial," said Bunter. "Now, what about a run in the car, Mr. Parker? I'd like to see something of this town before we go on to Los Angeles."

"Sure!" assented Mr. Parker. "What about a run along the Embarcadero? It's the biggest sight in 'Frisco."

"Certainly."

"Your lordship's prepared to hit the cars for Los to-morrow morning?" asked Mr. Parker anxiously.

"Oh, yes. I'll call at the Pacific Hotel for my baggage—"

Mr. Parker looked alarmed.

"I guess that could be sent on," he remarked. "I reckon I'll make all the arrangements for that, my lord."

Bunter smiled genially. He was quite aware that Cyrus did not want his supposed lordship to get into touch with Mr. Fish again.

"But you see, I'm here with nothing but what I stand up in," he said. "I haven't much baggage—only a dozen trunks or so. But I really must have a few things to take with me. Is there any decent shopping place in 'Frisco?"

"Heaps," said Mr. Parker.

"Well, I don't specially want to see old Fish again, after the way he's treated me," said Bunter. "I'll do a little shopping in the car. Pick out the best places—I'm accustomed to doing things rather in style."

"Sure!" assented Mr. Parker.

The elevator carried Mr. Parker and his lordship, Bunter, downward, and they stepped into Mr. Parker's handsome car. Mr. Parker headed for the Embarcadero, not because it was one of the famous sights of 'Frisco, but because it was "north of the slot" and farthest from the hotel which sheltered Mr. Fish's party south of that dividing line. He did not want his lordship to get into touch with Mr. Fish—very much he did not want it. He desired to avoid Mr. Fish, as keenly as if that gentleman had had the plague. As a matter of fact, Billy Bunter was equally desirous of keeping out of touch with the Fish party. Had Mr. Parker only known it, it was a case of two souls with but a single thought, two hearts that beat as one.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Turned Down!

"NOT here!" said Bob Cherry. "O where and O where can he be?" sang Nugent. "The whorfulness is terrific."

Harry Wharton & Co. had walked all round and about the Ferry Building, looking for Billy Bunter.

As the Owl of the Remove had not come on to the hotel, they supposed that he must be still waiting there, unless he had wandered away and lost himself in the wilderness of the great city.

But it was clear that he was not waiting there. The Ferry Building, being more than six hundred feet in length, and over a hundred and fifty in depth, was rather a large place to search. But the juniors looked in all likely places for Bunter, and they found him not. They had to conclude that he had gone; though where was a mystery.

"Trust that fat idiot to butt into trouble!" growled the Bounder. "Any of the trolley cars would have taken him to the hotel."

"Not for a threepenny bit!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Well, the ass could have taken a taxi, and left old Fish to pay," grunted Vernon-Smith.

"I can't understand why he didn't," said Harry Wharton. "But it's clear that he didn't, or he would have arrived for lunch."

"What a state he must be in, if he's missed his lunch!" sighed Bob Cherry. "Poor old Bunter!"

"Better wander round and look for him," said Johnny Bull. "We want to see something of 'Frisco, if we can."

"Yes, rather!" said the Bounder. "I've heard about the sea front here, where the ships are; it's one of the sights of the world. Bunter's as likely to have gone in that direction as any other, I suppose, so let's get along the Embarcadero."

"Let's!" said Nugent.

"We can take a taxi or a couple of taxis!" said the Bounder.

"Oh, let's walk!" said Bob. "More likely to see Bunter if we walk; and American taxicabs are only for the idle rich."

"The walkfulness is the esteemed caper," assented Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

The Bounder grunted and assented. Smithy had plenty of money, but the Famous Five were not so plentifully blessed with that useful commodity. And American prices made them jump. In London they had found it rather expensive to take taxicabs. But in San Francisco appeared to exist the paradise of taxi-drivers. Three shillings and sixpence the first mile, to the juniors,

seemed rather too steep; while by the hour, the tariff was fourteen shillings per hour. America is the land of high wages, and the Greyfriars fellows were learning why; for certainly without high wages, no Americans could pay American prices. In the Old Country, wages were much lower; but prices were lower in proportion; so the whole thing was as broad as it was long. As the Famous Five had their pocket-money on the English scale, they certainly could not afford to spend it on the American scale.

So they walked, and a very interesting walk it was, along the immense Embarcadero, an enormous wharf and esplanade in one. Shipping of every kind met the eye along the vast front; great steamers, old wind-jammers, brigs and schooners, and even feluccas and Chinese junks, as well as a motley array of yachts, sloops, tugs, barges, and scows.

The sight of shipping never fails to draw an English eye. Harry Wharton & Co., for some time, quite forgot that they were looking for Bunter, in their keen interest in that vast variety of vessels that had come in through the Golden Gate from the boundless Pacific.

It was Hurree Jamset Ram Singh who remembered the Owl of the Remove; and he remembered him because he suddenly caught sight of him.

"My esteemed chums!" ejaculated the nabob.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What the—"

The nabob pointed to a car gliding along at a little distance.

"The esteemed Bunter!" he said.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Wharton.

"Bunter!" exclaimed Nugent, in astonishment.

There was Bunter—as large as life! A handsome open car was gliding along, steered by a fat gentleman in a highly-jewelled state, whom the juniors at once recognised as Mr. Cyrus Parker. With Mr. Parker was the Owl of the Remove, blinking round him through his big spectacles with an air of aristocratic languor—partly due to the part he was playing, and partly to the immense lunch he had tucked away under his waistcoat.

"Great pip!" ejaculated Johnny Bull. "That man's Parker, who met old Fish at the ferry. What on earth's Bunter doing with him?"

"Enjoying life, from his looks!" chuckled Bob.

Harry Wharton frowned.

"The fat ass! Rolling around in a car while we're hunting for him. Well, he's found, anyhow."

The car had halted, and Mr. Parker was pointing out some object of interest to his lordship. Harry Wharton & Co. ran across to it.

"Bunter!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Here we are again, fatty!"

Mr. Parker gave a start, and Billy Bunter jumped. The meeting was equally unwelcome to both of them. Cyrus made a movement as if to start the car; but two of the juniors were standing in the way of it. For what reason Cyrus Parker was "toting" the

fat junior round in an auto, they could not begin to guess; but they had found Bunter, and they did not mean to lose him again.

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

"What the thump do you think you're up to?" exclaimed Johnny Bull indignantly. "We thought you were lost."

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Mr. Fish says he'll go on without you, you ass!" said Nugent.

"Tell old Fish that he can go and eat coke," answered Bunter. "He can go on without me as soon as he likes."

"What?" gasped Bob.

Bunter waved a fat hand at him.

"I'm done with old Fish," he said.

"Fed up with him—and with you fellows, too. Old Fish is mean. So's

friars fellows. As it was, Cyrus only supposed that the juniors were addressing Lord Mauleverer by his nickname.

"I say, you fellows, get out of the way," said Bunter. "I'm in rather a hurry. I've got some shopping to do."

"Don't be a silly ass!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "You know jolly well you've got to come with us!"

"Rats!"

"What?" roared the captain of the Remove.

"Rats!" repeated Bunter, with cool defiance. "This is a free country, ain't it? Can't a fellow do as he likes?"

"He sure can!" said Mr. Parker emphatically.

"Tell old Fish to go and eat coke," said Bunter. "I've had a better offer from another firm at Hollywood, and I'm having nothing more to do with old Fish. Tell him so."

"I certainly shall not give Mr. Fish any cheeky message from you, you fat chump," said Harry. "Tell me what this means. What are you doing here with Mr. Parker?"

"Seeing the sights. I'm going on to Hollywood tomorrow," answered Bunter. "I've got an engagement with the Enterprise Films."

"Great pip!"

"And at Hollywood," added Bunter, "I want you fellows to keep your distance—a respectful distance—see? I hardly like to mention it, but, to be quite candid, you're not quite my class, and I prefer you to keep your distance."

"Great Christopher Columbus!"

"My esteemed idiotic Bunter—"

"Shut up!" said Bunter. "shut up, and mizzle! I've done with the lot of you. I may take you up again when we get back to Greyfriars. I may not! That depends! But at Hollywood, I want you to understand that you're to keep your distance."

"Mad!" said Bob Cherry. "Mad as a hatter!"

"The madfulness is terrific!"

"You howling ass—" roared Johnny Bull.

"You cheeky, piffing porker!" snapped the Bounder.

Bunter's fat lip curled.

"Drive on, Mr. Parker," he said. "It's scarcely dignified to stay here listening to these common fellows."

"You silly fathead!" roared Bob Cherry. "You've got to come back. Do you think we can leave you here with a stranger?"

"I decline to come back! In fact, I decline absolutely to be seen in your company," said Bunter calmly. "Can't you get it into your heads that you're turned down? I've turned you down! Now sheer off!"

"Turned down—by Bunter!" said Bob dazedly. "What next?"

"Have him out of that car and mop up the road with him!" said the Bounder. "We've wasted enough time!"

But Wharton waved back the angry

(Continued on page 16.)

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young Fish! Coker's a beast. And you fellows are a lot of mugs! I've done with the whole lot."

"Well, my hat!" said Nugent blankly.

Mr. Parker grinned. This was not exactly the kind of talk he would have expected to hear from a British lord; but he was glad to hear it, all the same. He felt that his prize was safe now.

"Look here, Bunter—" said Harry Wharton.

Bunter grinned.

In his desire to appear on the films under his own name, he had told Mr. Parker that he was nicknamed "Bunter" by his friends, as an excuse for selecting that name. He was glad of it now. But for that fortunate circumstance, Mr. Parker would certainly have been very much surprised, if not very suspicious, at hearing his "lordship" addressed as Bunter by the Grey-

JUSTISS AT LAST!

by Dicky Nugent.



Biffer and son thought they were on a good thing when they pinched some valuable bonds belonging to Jack Jolly's pater. But they made the mistake of counting their chickens before they were hatched!

"IT'S hopeless! The match with St. Bill's is already as good as lost!" Frank Fearless of the Fourth at St. Sam's made that despairing declaration to Merry and Bright as they sat round the study table.

Fearless looked a little the worse for wear. He had one arm in a sling and an eye bandaged, and in walking across the study he revealed the fact that he was limping. A shrewd observer would have guessed immediately that he had been knocked down by a steam-roller. It would have been a bad guess, for Fearless had merely been playing rather vigorously in the practiss match on Little Side.

Merry and Bright seemed to agree with their injured comrade's pessimistic views.

"We're certainly up against it," mormered Merry. "It was bad enuff when Jack Jolly's pater went bust, and Jack had to leave the Fourth to become the boot-boy. Now with you crocked, Fearless, we're in a worse plite than ever."

Crash! Bang! Wallop!

A sharp tap at the door ended the discussion for a moment.

"Trot in, fathhead!" yelled Bright. "Oh, sorry, sir!"

It was Dr. Birchmall!

The Head wagged a reproving forefinger at the cheerful Bright.

"You should make certain of the eydentity of your visitor before you make humorous remarks, Bright. In case the caller might be someone of importance, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,097.

like myself, I should advise you, in future to say, 'Trickle in, old sport! Savvy?'"

"I savvy, sir," said Bright humbly.

"And now to bizziness," went on the Head briskly. "I have just herd that you are unable to play against St. Bill's to-morrow, Fearless."

"That is so, sir," admitted Fearless, rather surprised.

It was decidedly unusual for such a majestick personage as Dr. Birchmall to take a direct interest in junior football. Sometimes he would condescend to watch the First Eleven, and on rare occasions he had been known to look on at a Fifth Form hopscotch tournament. But to make an interested inquiry about a Fourth Form match was unprecedented for him.

"That means that you have a vacancy in your team, I presoom?" said Dr. Birchmall, a cunning eggsspression appearing on his skollerly dile.

"At prezsent, yes," nodded Fearless. "But, of course, it will soon be filled. If only Jack Jolly were back in the Fourth again—"

Dr. Birchmall frowned.

"Pray do not mention the name of that dispartinent young pawper, Fearless! He is now a boot-boy—a meer menial—and as such, he is unfit to associate with sons of jentlemen like yourselves."

"But General Jolly is a jentleman!" eggssclaimed Frank Fearless hotly.

"Ratts! General Jolly is now a timber merchant in a very small way of bizziness—to be eggssact, he is a seller of

matches in the street," said the Head, his lips curling. "But enuff of the Jollys! I came to talk to you about football. To get down to brass tax, I have come to suggest a candidate for the vacant place of centre-forward in the St. Bill's match."

"Have you?" ejaculated Frank Fearless, in astonishment.

"I have! The boy I suggest is, in my opinion, the most brilliant player in junior football. Only Jolly's jellusy has kept him out of the eleven before. I am referring, Fearless, to Biffer."

"Biffer?" eggssclaimed Fearless and Merry and Bright, in unison.

Dr. Birchmall nodded.

"Biffer of the Fourth," he repeated. "Why not? His father, Benjamin Biffer, is a highly-respected City shark, whom I am honnered to know. Only last week he tipped me half-a-crown—I mean—"

Dr. Birchmall groped for words. The chums of the Fourth looked at each other with understanding. The reason for the Head's sudden interest in junior football was pretty obviuss now. It was a finanshal interest.

"Anyway, Biffer is a tip-top player—of that I'm certain," said the Head, at last. "Such being the case, Fearless, I rely on you to see that Biffer is given the centre-forward's position for the grate match."

"But I can't, sir," declared Frank Fearless. "Biffer is simply hopeless at Soccer. I don't suppose he knows the difference between a football and a tennis-racket."

Dr. Birchmall glared fiercely.

"How dare you, Fearless!" he thundered. "Am I to understand that you refuse to axceed to my wishes in this matter?"

"It simply can't be did, sir!"

The Head nashed his teeth with rage.

"Very well, Fearless. All I can say is, I hope you lose the match by a duzzen goals. Furthermore, you may take a thousand lines for dispartinence."

"Oh, crikey!" gasped Frank Fearless.

"And another thousand for using slang eggsspressions!" added the Head savvidgely. "I abhor such terms as 'Oh, crikey!' 'Oh, grate pip!' is much more jentlemanly!"

With that Dr. Birchmall whisked furiously out of the study, and slammed

the door behind him with a slam that echoed down the passidge.

The three Fourth-Formers were left looking at each other roofully.

"The beastly rotter!" said Bright, as soon as the Head's back was turned. "Fancy giving you a whacking grate impot, just because you wouldn't put that outsider, Biffer, in the team!"

"Never mind. I can bribe Lines, the champion junior impot-writer, to do them for me," said Fearless, with a larf. "And now what about it? Who is there to take my place in the team?"

Merry and Bright were silent for a minnit. Then Merry came out with a brilliant suggestion.

"I know, let's make old Jack Jolly play again!" he said.

"But it's impossibul!" objected Frank Fearless. "The Head would never allow it, now that Jack's the boot-boy."

"The Head needn't know," said Merry quietly.

"Oh, grate pip!"

The other two immediately twigged the idea, and grinned.

"It's a grate wheeze!" declared Bright. "With Jolly in the team, we can lick St. Bill's hollow. Let's go and see him."

The three chums toddled off there and then to interview their old leader in the dismal old boot-room where he now worked.

Jack Jolly was a bit dewbious about the hole bizness at first. He knew Dr. Birchmell would be furious if he got to know, and he didn't want to risk being slung out from St. Sam's on his neck, even though he was now only a meential, for he loved the old Skool with all his hart and sole.

His chums succeeded in persuading him, however.

On the following afternoon, the one-time junior kaptin of St. Sam's, slipped out of the skool by the tradesmen's entrance, and joined the rest of the team at Muggleton Station.

Frank Fearless, who was too crooked to go to St. Bill's as a spectator, watched him go, and chuckled with glee.

He wouldn't have chuckled, however, had he known that only five minnits later Dr. Birchmell discovered that Jack Jolly had left his quarters.

Immediately he had made that discovery the Head went to see Mr. Lickham, the master of the Fourth.

"Lickham," he said, his eyes glittering like a rattlesnake's, "I have reason to believe that Jolly has gone to St. Bill's with your Form team to play football. Immediately he returns send him to me. I will have him thrown out of the school."

II.

A LOT was to happen before Dr. Birchmell got the chance of fulfilling his terribul threat, however.

Having nothing particular to do, Frank Fearless limped off to the Cloisters—those mysterious Cloisters where he and his pals had watched Biffer and his father acting so strangely only a few days before.

Imagine his surprise when he saw Biffer again sneaking through the Cloisters towards the very spot to which he and Biffer senior had proceeded on that memorable nite.

Fearless crept up as close to Biffer as he could without being seen or herd and watched. His peepers opened wide with surprise at what he saw. After a cautious look round, to make sure that nobody was in site, Biffer went down on his hands and neeze, and pressed a hidden nob. Immediately, one of the

grate flagstones began to swing slowly up, revealing a flight of stone steps leading to a chamber beneath.

Biffer had evidently discovered the secret of one of the old secret cells of St. Sam's.

When he had slung the flagstone back far enuf Biffer descended into the rejions below.

Frank Fearless watched for his return with gleeming eyes. Already he had guessed what the cadd of the Fourth was after. He had gone to get General Jolly's missing bonds, which Fearless already suspected had been pinched by Biffer senior.

Frank's suspishuns were confirmed when Biffer reappeared later, for Biffer carried under his arm the leather satchel which his pater had been carrying on the previous occasion.

The cadd of the Fourth looked round again to satisfy himself that he had not been seen, then closed the flagstone and went off towards the Skool House.

Frank Fearless droo a deep breth. Now he knew the solution of the Biffers' misterious disappearance on the nite when he and his pals had followed them before. Evidently they had gone down into the vault, hidden the bonds, and made their eggssit by another secret way.

Frank followed Biffer back, to make sure that he took the satchel to his study. Then he rushed off to Muggleton, where General Jolly was engaged selling matches in the gutter.

After some hours Frank found the worthy old General, and told his story. Then the too of them visited the local Perlice-station to obtain the assistance of the Lor.

As they came out of the station a grate Rolls-Rice tore past, driven by a uniformed shover. Sitting in the reer of this, smoking a massiv cigar, was Benjamin Biffer himself!

"Hurry!" gasped General Jolly. "There goes the villain who has nabbed my bonds!"

"Probably he is going to St. Sam's to get them, thinking the hew-and-cry is all over now," said Frank Fearless.

"Eggsactly!"

Jumping into a perlice-inspector's car, they drove off in the direckshun of St. Sam's, at a furious speed.

Meanwhile, Jack Jolly had arrived back at the Skool, at the head of a victorious team. Thanks to his efforts, St. Sam's had beaten their old rivals twenty-nil, Jack having notched fifteen goals, while the St. Bill's backs scored the remaining five against their own side.

Jack's joy quickly changed to despare when he herd that he was wanted in the Head's study.

Proceeding to that dredded sanktum, he found Dr. Birchmell in the very dickens of a rage.

"What do you meen by it?" snorted Dr. Birchmell. "You have deliberately flouted my orders, wretched pawper that you are! For your offence there is but one punishment. You shall be flung out of St. Sam's on your neck and forced to beg for your grub in the gutter. Prepare for execution, my ladd! Hallo! What the thump—"

The Head broke off in amazement as the door was kicked open and a strange procession entered the study. The procession consisted of Fearless and Merry and Bright, of the Fourth, followed by an inspector and two perlice-men, leading Biffer senior and Biffer junior, securely handcuffed. Finally, came General Jolly himself, grinning all over his dile.

"M-m-my giddy aunt!" gasped Dr. Birchmell.

"Pater!" cried Jack Jolly.

"My boy!" beamed General Jolly.

"What on earth is the meening of all this?" demanded Dr. Birchmell.

"The meening is, sir," answered General Jolly, stepping forward, "that we have discovered the trooth about the missing bonds at last."

"Worse luck!" muttered Mr. Benjamin Biffer.

"Owing to the astuteness of this ladd, Fearless, a villain has been unmasked—two villains, to be precise, for the son seems to be as bad as the father," went on General Jolly.

"But—but Mr. Biffer is a City shark,"

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Fearless watched Biffer bend down on his hands and neeze and press a hidden nob. Immediately, one of the grate flagstones began to swing slowly up, revealing a flight of stone steps leading to a chamber beneath!



(Continued from page 13.)

Bounder. Bunter, after all, was his own master. If he chose to leave the party it was scarcely practicable to use force to prevent him. So far as Bunter personally went, nobody cared; it was only concern for the fat junior that made them desire to hook him out of the car and take him along to the hotel. The loss of Bunter's company could have been endured with a lot of fortitude.

But to leave the fat and fatuous Owl on his own, in company with a stranger of whom the juniors knew nothing, might be a serious matter—for Bunter, at least. Wharton made another effort.

"Look here, Bunter, you'd better come along. You can't leave the party and go off with a stranger in this way."

"Can't I?" grinned Bunter. "I rather think I can."

"What do you know of Mr. Parker?" urged Wharton. "You've never seen him before to-day."

"I guess anybody will tell you who Cyrus Parker is!" interrupted that gentleman. "All 'Frisco will tell the world that he's director of Enterprise Films, Hollywood, Los Angeles; and you sure can ask Hiram K. Fish for my bona fides, sonny. He sure knows!"

"No offence, Mr. Parker," answered Harry. "But we can't leave Bunter—"

"You jolly well can!" grinned Bunter. "You've jolly well got to! Drive on, Mr. Parker; get out of this no-class crowd!"

"You fat villain!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Yah!"

Mr. Parker's car stirred, and the juniors moved out of the way. There was no help for it. They could not rush the car on the crowded Embarcadero and hook Bunter out by main force. Such a proceeding would certainly have led to the Famous Five being "run in" by some of the policemen in sight. The auto glided on.

Billy Bunter turned in his seat, looked back at the frowning juniors, placed his thumb to his fat, little nose, and extended his fat fingers, as a parting salute.

"Oh shucks!" ejaculated Mr. Parker.

Had he not been absolutely certain of his man, Mr. Parker might have doubted, at that moment, whether he really had got hold of a member of the British nobility! He could hardly think that Bunter's gesture was in accordance with the best traditions of that nobility.

He drove on, and the automobile glided along the broad highway of the Embarcadero; leaving the Greyfriars juniors staring.

"Well," said Bob, with a deep breath, "that does it! We're done with Bunter. We can't make the fat fool come back if he won't."

"And we don't want him," remarked the Bounder.

"The wantfulness is not terrific!" said Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"Better get back to the hotel," said Harry. "I can't understand that man

Parker taking Bunter up like this; but we can't do anything. If he'd fallen into bad hands we couldn't leave him to it; but it's not a case of that kind. This man Parker seems all right. But I'm blessed if I catch on."

The auto vanished in the throng of vehicles on the Embarcadero. Billy Bunter was gone; and the Greyfriars fellows, much puzzled, started to walk back to the hotel.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Lord Mauleverer Meets Another Gentleman!

LORD MAULEVERER sat up in his chair, yawned under an elegant hand, and looked thoughtfully at Fisher T. Fish.

Mauly, whose manners had the repose that stamps the caste of Vere de Vere, had hardly stirred since he sat down. Not so Fisher T. Fish. Mr. Fish had bidden his son "keep tabs" on Mauly, while Mr. Fisher was gone out to attend to some business or other. Mr. Fish always had some business to attend to.

Fishy was dutifully keeping tabs on Mauly. But he could not sit still. Fishy had his full share of American pep and push and go. Like a true American, he cared not what he was busied about, so long as he was busy; he recked not where he arrived, so long as he travelled in haste.

Sitting still was a prolonged pain to Fishy. His pep and push and go fairly boiled within him, urging him to motion; but he had to watch Mauly, and so the only part of him that could be indulged in motion was his chin. That was a portion of Fisher T. Fish which he was fond of indulging. So, while he sat and watched Mauly, Fisher T. Fish talked to him.

At first Mauly did not mind very much; he dozed under the incessant chatter of Fisher T. Fish, and it was not much worse than the drone of the trolley cars. But it began to get on his noble nerves at last.

Fisher T. Fish had two topics—himself and money. Neither appealed to Lord Mauleverer. The probable total cost of the hotel in which they sat, the probable individual cost of the chairs on which they were sitting, did not interest Mauly. Moreover, Mauly had remembered that Bunter had taken his hat; and it occurred to him that before the journey was resumed, he needed to buy a new hat. So, while Fishy "chewed the rag" with steady persistence, Lord Mauleverer considered the possibility of going out to buy a new hat, and leaving Fishy where he was, to waste his sweetness on the desert air—thus killing two birds with one stone.

But he did not mention that intention to Fishy. Fishy would either have objected to his leaving the hotel, which meant an argument; or he would have come along with him, which was worse. Lord Mauleverer was feeling, by this time, that the sum-total of human happiness was represented simply by getting out of the sound of Fisher T. Fish's voice. So Lord Mauleverer indulged in some unusual mental exercise, and, having thought out the problem, broke his long silence:

"You're not tired, Fishy?"

"Guff!" said Fisher T. Fish. "I guess I'm never tired. You have to be born in Yurrop to get tired."

Mauly wondered how any human being could talk for such a length of time without getting tired. But he had

noticed that Americans had an almost unlimited energy in that line.

"Well, if you aren't tired, old bean, what about gettin' a paper?" murmured Lord Mauleverer. "Mr. Fish has got somethin' about us in the papers, I think."

Fisher T. Fish nodded. Mr. Fish had been paying a lot of attention to "publicity," and, among other things, he had obtained a photograph of Lord Mauleverer for reproduction in the San Francisco papers, to illustrate an article headed, "LORD MAULEVERER: PERFECTION'S LATEST BIG NOISE!"

"You stick along while I'm gone," said Fishy.

Lord Mauleverer closed his eyes and leaned back in his chair without replying. Fisher T. Fish, only too glad to get into movement, jumped up, and scudded away in search of a newspaper.

The moment he had vanished Lord Mauleverer became imbued with sudden and unusual activity.

He rose from his chair, and in about ten seconds had obtained his coat and cap, and walked out of the Pacific Hotel.

It was very uncommon for Lord Mauleverer to hurry. But he hurried now. At every step he feared to hear the hurrying feet and unmusical voice of Fisher T. Fish behind him.

A turning brought him into Market Street, and in that roaring thoroughfare he was safe from pursuit. Along Market Street ran the old cable-car track, the original "slot" which divided San Francisco into two portions; the northern portion patrician, the southern portion plebeian.

Lord Mauleverer crossed Market Street, simply to place that busy thoroughfare between him and Fisher T. Fish, and quite unconscious of the fact that he was improving his social status thereby.

He found himself in the region of shops "north of the slot," which any dweller in the city of the Golden Gates could have told him was the best shopping centre in San Francisco.

An outfitting emporium was easy to find, with more floors than Lord Mauleverer thought of counting. In 'Frisco, as in other American cities, the Greyfriars party had found the now familiar skyscraper. They had rather wondered at finding skyscrapers there, as it was only twenty years since the city had been shaken to pieces by an earthquake, and obviously there was no reason to suppose that that earthquake was the last that would ever occur in the history of San Francisco. But the skyscraper habit is a part of the American nature, and as soon as the earth-tremors had died away, immense new buildings were started, and completed—apparently in readiness to tumble over at the next quake. Certainly there was something indomitable in the erection of fourteen-story buildings on a site haunted by earthquakes.

Lord Mauleverer, however, was thinking not of earthquakes, but of hats. He was selecting a hat, with his usual care, when he was surprised by a sight of his own hat. He did not immediately recognise the hat, but he recognised the fat face and gleaming spectacles under it.

An auto had stopped outside, and a plump gentleman, with a diamond pin in his tie, entered, with a fat youth. Lord Mauleverer, recognised Mr. Parker, who had met Hiram K. Fish at the ferry that morning, and of course he recognised William George Bunter.

"Begad!" murmured Mauly.

He had found Bunter!

His lordship was unaware that Harry Wharton & Co. had already found Bunter, and lost him again.

Bunter was shopping now. He considered it was a very favourable opportunity for shopping.

He stopped within three or four feet of Lord Mauleverer, without observing him for the moment.

"You see,"—Mauly heard his fat voice addressing Mr. Parker—"It's like this. Mr. Fish minds the money for the whole party, except a little pocket-money. That's how it is. I'm afraid I shall have to go to the Pacific Hotel for my cash."

Lord Mauleverer grinned. It was true that Mr. Fish minded the money of the Greyfriars party. As Bunter's money was limited to threepence, however, he had not troubled Mr. Fish with the care of it.

Certainly if Bunter had gone to the Pacific Hotel in search of money, he would have come away empty.

Mr. Parker, however, was not aware of that little circumstance, in the belief that it was his lordship who was addressing him.

"That cuts no ice, my lord," said Mr. Parker. "You sure ain't taking all that trouble. I guess I'm seeing you through."

Bunter smiled.

"I'm afraid I can hardly consent to that, Mr. Parker," he said, shaking his head.

"Now, see here, your lordship," urged Mr. Parker. "I guess we're fixing up a salary for you when we come down to terms. I sure can make you an advance. You get me?"

"Well, if you put it like that!" said Bunter.

"I sure do, my lord," said Mr. Parker, earnestly. He was quite scared at the idea of his "lordship" getting into touch with Mr. Fish again—as Bunter was quite aware.

"Very well then," said Bunter graciously. "Let it go at that. Now, I want a new hat, and some neckties, and a few other things, and I say—Oh, crikey!"

Bunter uttered that last exclamation quite involuntarily, as his eyes fell on Lord Mauleverer.

His fat jaw dropped, and he stared at Mauly, as if the cheery Mauly had been the ghost of Lord Mauleverer.

"Hallo, Bunter, old bean," said Mauly amiably. "Found you again, what?"

"Oh, crumbs."

Mr. Parker stared at Lord Mauleverer unamiably. He did not know who he was, of course, but he remembered having seen him in Mr. Fish's party at the Ferry.

"Here, let's get on, my lord!" he exclaimed, hastily. "We ain't got a lot of time to cut to waste, I guess."

"Aren't you comin' to the Pacific Hotel, with me, Bunter?" asked Lord Mauleverer.

"No!" gasped Bunter. "You—you see, I—I—I—"

"Mr. Fish says that we're goin' on to Los Angeles to-day—"

"Let him go, and be blowed! I've told Wharton that I'm done with old Fish!" said Bunter. "Come on, Mr. Parker."

Mr. Parker was anxious to get his "Lordship" away from contact with one of his former friends. Bunter was equally anxious to be got away. They moved on, but Mauly, greatly astonished, stepped forward and caught Bunter by the arm.

"Hold on, Bunter—"

"Leggo!"

"But—my dear old bean—"

"Let his lordship alone, instanter!"

exclaimed Mr. Parker, angrily. "How dare you lay hands on his lordship!"

Mauleverer blinked.

"Whose lordship?" he gasped.

"I—I—I say!" Bunter trembled with terror of the secret coming out on the spot. Not only the bills for the extensive shopping he had planned, but his engagement by the Enterprise Films, hung by a hair, now. "I—I say—I say—leggo! I—I refuse to have anything to do with you! Shut up!"

"But—" stuttered Mauleverer, "you've got to come back, you know. And what the thump does this Johnny mean by calling you—"

"Shut up!" gasped Bunter, just in time. "Leggo! Hands off, you low fellow. Beast!"

And Billy Bunter tore his arm away, and rolled off with Mr. Parker, into another department, leaving Lord Mauleverer rooted to the floor with astonishment.

"Begad!" gasped Mauly.

He stared blankly after Bunter. That fat youth promptly disappeared into an elevator with Cyrus Parker, and was swept up out of sight.

"Oh, great gad!" said Lord Mauleverer.

What it all meant he could not imagine. Quite distinctly he had heard Cyrus Parker address Bunter as my lord and your lordship. Much had been heard at Greyfriars of Billy Bunter's titled relations, though they had never been seen at the old school. But Bunter had never claimed personally to be a member of the peerage. It really was amazing. Lord Mauleverer took his new hat, put it on, and walked out of the store like a fellow in a dream. He had stumbled on a mystery that was quite beyond him.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Missing!

"SEEN him?" gasped Fisher T. Fish.

"Yes."

"Oh, good!" Fishy seemed to breathe again. "Didn't you bring him back?"

"No."

"You all-fired jay!" gasped Fishy.

Harry Wharton & Co. stared at Fishy. Evening had fallen and the Famous Five and the Bounder had walked back from the Embarcadero, taking in the sights of San Francisco on their way. They had stopped in Portsmouth Square to look at the memorial to Robert Louis Stevenson, once a dweller in the city of the Golden Gates—quite interested to see a memorial to the author of "Treasure Island" so far from his native land. They had been a little forgetful, perhaps, of Mr. Fish's statement that the party was to "hit the cars" for Los Angeles that afternoon. As a matter of fact, the Greyfriars fellows did not "see" hurrying on without looking at the capital of the Pacific Slope, neither had they made up their minds to go on without Bunter. They did not see any good reason why the cars should not be "hit" on the morrow, anyway.

So it was through lighted streets that they walked back to the Pacific Hotel, and crossed Market Street, and arrived at their quarters "south of the slot," little dreaming that they lost caste immediately they crossed the cable-car track.

Fisher T. Fish met them with an anxious and excited face. The juniors entirely failed to understand his excitement. Fishy, like his popper, had been quite willing to go on without Bunter.

Now he seemed wildly excited on the subject. They supposed, of course, that he was alluding to Bunter. They were not yet aware that Lord Mauleverer had gone out and not returned.

"You pesky, pie-faced mugwumps!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. "Why, the popper's been in, and as soon as he heard he rushed off again like he was sent for. He's fair rattled. I guess he's horn mad! Oh, gee-whiz! And you saw him, and never corralled him! Oh, you jays!"

Fishy, of course, was speaking of Lord Mauleverer. He had forgotten the unimportant existence of Billy Bunter.

"What the thump do you mean?" exclaimed Harry Wharton, perplexed and mystified. "What do you care whether we brought him back or not?"

"Waal, carry me home to die!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. "Ain't you got the sense of a gopher? S'pose we've lost? S'pose that guy Parker has got him? Oh, Jerusalem crickets! If this here ain't the elephant's hind leg!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Mr. Fish!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "He looks upset about something."

Hiram K. Fish looked decidedly upset.

He had come back to the hotel and learned from Fisher T. that Lord Mauleverer was missing. Instantly he had rushed off to ascertain whether his valuable lordship was still in sight.

His valuable lordship had not been in sight. Mr. Fish came back again, looking as if he had felt the first tremors of another earthquake in San Francisco.

"Gone!" gasped Mr. Fish. "Absquatulated! Vamoosed! Levanted! Lighted out! Beat it! Oh, great John James Brown!"

"These guys say they've seen him, popper!" exclaimed Fisher T.

Mr. Fish gasped with relief.

"Seen him?" he ejaculated.

"Yes," said Harry, still thinking that the cause of the trouble was William George Bunter. "We saw him—"

"Where?" exclaimed Mr. Fish eagerly.

"On the place they call the Embarcadero—"

"Gee! He can't have walked that far—"

"He was in a car—" began Bob Cherry.

"A car! Guff! There ain't any trolley cars on the Embarcadero—"

"I mean a car—a motor-car—"

"If you mean an automobile, why the John James Brown can't you say so?" snorted Mr. Fish. "Don't you know English? If he was in an auto he wouldn't be alone. Who was with him?"

"That man Parker—"

Mr. Fish almost yelled.

"He's got him! That guy Parker has corralled him! Gee-whiz! They're hand-in-glove! My! I guess I'll sort out my gun and go and look for Parker! Search me! I'll sure get him—I'll get him dead to rights, afore he totes that young jay along to Hollywood! You hear me shout!"

And Hiram K. Fish, at that moment, looked really as if he meant to go "gunning" after Cyrus Parker, in a way that had long been out of date in Frisco.

"But—but what does it matter?" exclaimed Frank Nugent. "What's all the excitement about? You said you didn't care whether he was left behind."

"Talk sense!" snapped Mr. Fish. "I

guess he's worth more than all the rest of the party put in a heap! Yes, sir."

"Oh, my only hat!"

"They're hand-in-glove!" hooted Mr. Fish. "The gol-darned guy got Fisher here to go for a newspaper, and sneaked out while he had his eyes off him for a minute. Parker's got at him somehow. But I'll get him back. I'll get him back if I have to raise Cain in 'Frisco all the way from the Golden Gates! You hear me yaup?"

The juniors stared at Mr. Fish.

"Has Bunter been here, then?" exclaimed the Bounder.

"Bunter! Bunter nothing! Who's worrying about Bunter?" snorted Mr. Fish.

"But you said he'd got Fishy to go and get a newspaper—" said Harry Wharton dazedly.

"Loco?" snarled Mr. Fish. "I said Mauleverer—"

"Mauleverer!" exclaimed all the juniors together.

"Yep! Ain't we speaking about Mauleverer?" hooted Mr. Fish.

"I thought we were speaking about Bunter—"

"Eh! What?"

"Isn't Mauleverer here?" exclaimed Wharton.

"You pesky jay! How can he be here if you saw him on the Embarcadero with that all-red galoot Parker?"

"Oh!" gasped Wharton. He realised that there was a misunderstanding. "We haven't seen Mauly—we thought he was here! It was Bunter we saw with Mr. Parker—"

"Oh, carry me home to die!" ejaculated Mr. Fish. "Talking out of the back of your neck and wasting time! Think I'm worrying any about Bunter? If he's with Parker, Parker's welcome to him, body and boots. Dog-gone Bunter! It's Mauleverer I want."

"Oh!" said Harry. "Well, we haven't seen Mauleverer. What did he leave the hotel for?"

"Parker must have got at him!" snarled Mr. Fish. "He gave Fisher the dope, and absquatulated on his own. Hasn't been seen since. You sure Parker never got him on the phone, Fisher?"

"Phone nothing," answered Fisher T. Fish. "I had the guy under my eye, right up to the minute he asked me to rustle him a newspaper. I calculated he was snoozing when I left him. I wasn't two minutes, and when I came back he had vamoosed the ranch."

"I dare say he only went out for a stroll," said Harry soothingly. "Lord Mauleverer wouldn't turn you down, Mr. Fish. That's impossible."

"Stroll thunder!" said Mr. Fish. "What's he want strolling? Dog-gone my cats! I tell you that guy Parker's got his eye on him—he bragged to me over the phone that he was sure going to take him to Hollywood with him. Great John James Brown! Here I've toted that moss-headed chump all the way from that durned old foggy island across the pond, and that galoot corrals him under my nose! It sure gets my goat!"

Mr. Fish rushed away to the telephone.

He rang up Cyrus Parker's number at the flat on California Street. By that time Mr. Parker must have returned from his shopping excursion with Billy Bunter, for his voice came through in reply:

"Hallo!"

"That you, Parker?"

"You've said it!"

"Fish speaking—"

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"I guess I spotted your toot, Hiram!" chuckled Mr. Parker. "You sure do sound like suthin' was biting you! You sure do!"

"You low-down lobo-wolf!" hooted Mr. Fish. "You got Mauleverer?"

"Right in once!"

"Shucks! You own up you've got him?" gasped Mr. Fish.

"Sure!"

"Dog-gone my cats! I guess I want that guy back!" shrieked Mr. Fish into the transmitter.

"You can sure want all you like, Hiram!" chuckled Mr. Parker. "You ain't getting him none."

"What!" bellowed Mr. Fish. "You'd sure poach on my preserves?"

"Yep!" answered Cyrus Parker. "I guess I've got the real live lord all to myself. Here me smile some!"

"Ain't he my find?" hissed Mr. Fish.

"Didn't I corral him over the pond, and tote the pie-faced mosshead all the way to 'Frisco?"

"You did, and I'm sure much obliged to you, Hiram," replied Mr. Parker. "I've got the goods, and you're left. I'll tell the world, the Perfection hasn't a thing on Enterprise Films! No, sir!"

"I'll say you're a pesky polecat, Cyrus Parker!" hooted Mr. Fish.

"Sho!" answered Mr. Parker. "You're getting riled, Hiram! What's the good of going off on your ear? It sure won't buy you anything! So-long!"

Mr. Fish raved into the transmitter till he realised that Cyrus had hung up at the other end. He jammed back the receiver and came away from the instrument breathing fury.

"He's got him!" he said. "He's got the guy."

"But—" said Wharton in perplexity.

"He allows he's got the guy!" snapped Mr. Fish. "He's got Lord Mauleverer, and he owns up he's got him. Shucks! I guess I'm going to raise Cain on California Street, if he don't hand him over! Yes, sir!"

And Hiram K. Fish, hardly staying to jam on his hat, rushed out of the Pacific Hotel, hurled himself into a taxi, and hooted to the driver to hit California Street or bust. The taxi shot away with the irate Mr. Fish, leaving Harry Wharton & Co. staring.

.....

No.18 ON THE LIST!

LOOK OUT FOR A METAL BADGE OF THE FAMOUS LANCIA CAR NEXT WEEK!



The Italian Lancia car is famous for the lowness of its build and for its marvellous system of suspension, which enables it to be driven over any sort of road at the highest speeds. And the Lancia is some flyer, too, boys! You must have this badge next week!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Coming to Blows!

BILLY BUNTER looked round the room and surveyed the result of his afternoon's shopping, and grinned with satisfaction. Bunter liked shopping, but as a rule he was not able to indulge that predilection to any great extent, owing to the shortness of cash. On the present occasion, there had been no shortage of that necessary article, and Bunter had spread himself wide and far. Packages of all sorts and sizes surrounded Bunter. He had gone through a big departmental store, buying right and left. He had done the thing in style—as was only to be expected of a nobleman. With Mr. Parker "my lording" him to such an extent, Bunter almost believed that he was a nobleman by this time. Bunter had spent money—Mr. Parker's money—right royally. Only the best satisfied Bunter, and he liked plenty of it.

It was worth Mr. Parker's while to "part," to keep his lordship out of contact with his former owner, so to speak. It was all debited to the salary Lord Mauleverer was to draw in his engagement with the Enterprise films. How many hundreds of dollars it had run into, Bunter did not know, neither did he care. Mr. Parker would have cared very considerably, had he known that he had the wrong pig by the ear. As Mr. Parker did not know that yet, he was satisfied. Having had this liberal advance on his salary, it was morally impossible for his lordship to go back to his former allegiance. So Mr. Parker considered.

Bunter surveyed his plunder with great satisfaction. Howsoever, the matter ended, it seemed to Bunter that he was bound to score. He had bought several new trunks, and he had bought enough things to fill them all to overflowing. He was now debating in his fat mind whether the journey to Los Angeles had better not be put off a day or two, while he did some more shopping. He had noticed a huge jewellery shop in Grant Avenue. A day's shopping there appealed to Bunter. Gold watches, and diamond pins, and pearl links, and ruby studs would be not only ornamental, but useful as a financial resource if anything happened—and in Bunter's peculiar position, it was quite probable that something might happen! If Cyrus Parker, of his own accord, chose to pay bills for him, Bunter did not see why he should not give Cyrus his head. It was all coming back, of course, when Bunter made his tremendous success on the films.

Mr. Parker had gone to the telephone; he came back grinning, and rubbing his plump hands.

"I guess Hiram is mad as a hornet," he remarked. Cyrus was thoroughly enjoying his triumph over his rival. It was something to get the prize away from a sharp business-man like Hiram K. Fish. It made Cyrus feel extremely elated. He was glad that Mr. Fish had rung him up; he liked to rub it in.

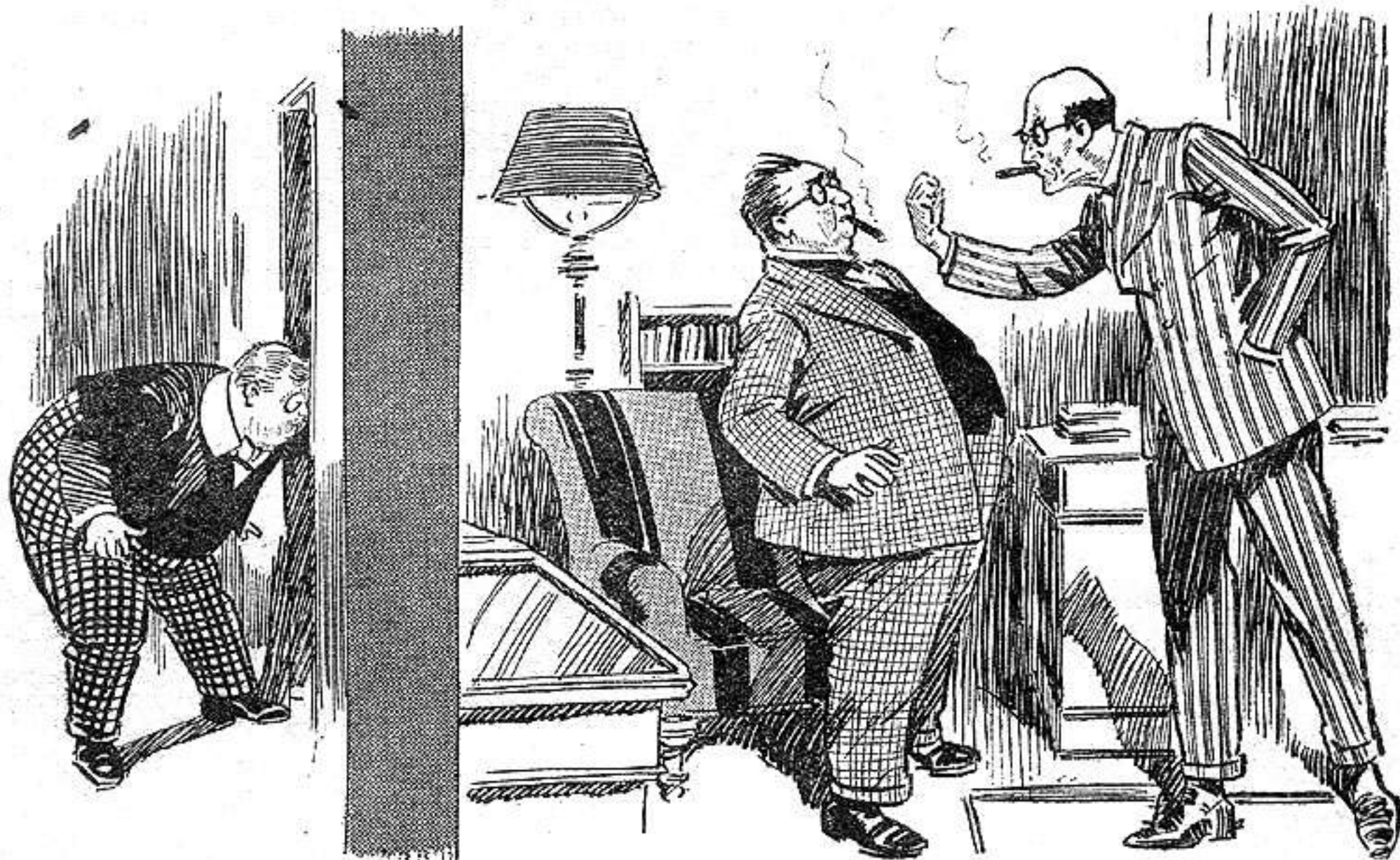
Bunter blinked at him.

"I guess Hiram may come hopping round," remarked Mr. Parker. "He sure is mad as a hornet. I guess I'll talk to him like a Dutch uncle if he comes horning in."

"Oh!" ejaculated Bunter, in alarm. "I—I say, if old Fish comes round here, I'm not going to see him. I—I don't want anything more to do with old Fish."

Mr. Parker was glad to hear it.

"I guess I ain't letting him see you, unless you want," he answered. "But



"I'm telling you to get off!" shouted Hiram K. Fish, flourishing a bony fist in the face of Mr. Parker. "Shucks!" said Cyrus Parker. In a burst of fury, Mr. Fish almost hurled himself at Mr. Parker. "Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter, on the other side of the door, with a startled eye glued on the keyhole. (See Chapter 11.)

if you'd like to tell him where to get off, you can see him."

"No fear! I—I mean, I decline to see him!" said Bunter. "He hasn't treated me well. He's got no idea how a—a—a nobleman ought to be treated. Common fellow, you know. If he comes here, I absolutely decline to see him or speak to him."

"That goes," agreed Mr. Parker. "He'll come all right—he's hopping mad. I guess I'll enjoy telling him where he gets off. You can keep in the next room, my lord."

Bunter nodded, but he was feeling worried. He knew that it could not be on his account that Mr. Fish would come round in a state of "hopping mad." He wondered why Mr. Fish was coming, and he was very uneasy. If Mr. Fish let out the fact that Lord Mauleverer was not missing from the party, it could not fail to enlighten Cyrus Parker.

"I—I say, suppose you refuse to see him," he suggested. "He's a frightfully unpleasant blighter, you know."

"You leave him to me, my lord," said Parker. "I'll sure point out to the guy where he gets off."

"But what's he coming for?" asked Bunter uneasily.

"Eh! I guess he wants you!"

Bunter jumped.

"Me!" he ejaculated.

"Sure! He ain't losing his lord if he can help it."

Bunter gazed blankly at Mr. Parker. He was quite bewildered. Cyrus believed that he was Lord Mauleverer, but Mr. Fish could scarcely be under the same delusion.

"But—" stammered Bunter.

"I guessed he'd have kicked earlier, when I first told him I'd got the goods," said Mr. Parker. "But he took it like a lamb then. Now he's rung me up hopping mad. I guess he won't be long."

Bunter opened his mouth—and closed

it again. He could not understand it in the least, and in the present delicate situation, he realised that the less he said the better.

Mr. Parker was right. It was not long before the house telephone rang, and Mr. Fish's voice was heard below.

"Come right up!" said Mr. Parker genially. "I'll be sure glad to see you, Hiram!"

He turned to Bunter.

"If you don't want to see him, my lord, hop into the next room," he said.

Bunter did not take long to hop into the next room. Certainly he did not want to see Mr. Fish.

He shut the door, and carefully turned the key. Then he stationed himself on the safe side of the keyhole. He did not want to see Hiram K. Fish, but he was very curious to hear what he had to say to Cyrus Parker.

A minute later, Hiram K. Fish strode into the presence of Mr. Parker. His thin, keen face was flushed with anger, presenting a contrast to the fat smiling countenance of Cyrus.

"You sure look peeved, Hiram," said Mr. Parker.

"Where is he?" hooted Mr. Fish.

"I guess he ain't far away," answered Mr. Parker. "But his lordship don't care to see you."

"I'll lordship him!" roared Mr. Fish. "Think I'm going to let him let me down like this, after I've toted him across the pond?"

"I guess his lordship is his own master," smiled Mr. Parker.

"Oh, guff! Where is he? I tell you I'm going to see him!"

"And I tell you you ain't!" said Mr. Parker coolly. "Lord Mauleverer don't care to see you."

Mr. Fish glared round him.

That Lord Mauleverer was in the flat somewhere, he had no doubt at all. And he was determined not to go without seeing him.

"I'll sure charge you with kidnapping

him!" he roared. "You hear me shout, you Parker!"

Cyrus Parker laughed contemptuously. "Get on with it, if you want," he answered. "I guess his lordship will put paid to it. Get on with it all you like. I guess it will be the finest sort of publicity for Enterprise Films."

Mr. Fish gritted his teeth.

"You ain't keeping him!" he snarled. "Thunder! I guess I was powerful near bringing a gun to talk to you, Parker."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mr. Parker. "I guess guns don't go in 'Frisco these days, Hiram. Forget it."

"I want to see him!" roared Mr. Fish.

"I guess you can want!"

"You figure that you're bagging Mauleverer from me?" gasped Mr. Fish, hoarse with rage.

"I do!" answered Cyrus Parker coolly. "I figure that I'm cinching his lordship, and you don't come into the picture at all. Minute I got it for sure that you'd got him, I worked it out that I'd corral him, and I done it! You're left, Hiram—jest left! I got the goods, and you come out at the little end of the horn. Chew on that!" And Cyrus Parker chuckled with sheer enjoyment of the situation.

"I ain't leaving this flat without him!" roared Mr. Fish.

"You come to stay with me for keeps?" grinned Mr. Parker.

Hiram K. Fish had noticed that Mr. Parker had glanced, more than once, at the door behind which his "lordship" had disappeared. He guessed that that door hid his lordship. And all of a sudden Mr. Fish made a rush at that door to hurl it open.

Quick as a flash, Mr. Parker jumped in the way.

"You stand back!" he shouted. "You reckon you can carry on like this in my flat?"

"Get aside!" hooted Mr. Fish.

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"Shucks!" said Mr. Parker. The tall, angular Mr. Fish towered over the fat Mr. Parker. But the latter stood his ground, undaunted.

A bony fist was flourished in his face. "I'm telling you to get off!" shouted Hiram.

"Shucks!" repeated Mr. Parker.

It was too much for Mr. Fish. In a burst of fury, he fairly hurled himself at Cyrus Parker, and they clinched.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter, on the other side of the door, with a startled eye glued on the keyhole.

Tramp, tramp! Gasp! Growl! Grunt! Bump! Crash! There was a gasping yell from Cyrus, as Mr. Fish hurled him away, and he went stumbling and crashing over several chairs. Mr. Parker sprawled on the floor, spluttering. Mr. Fish rushed at the door, grasped the handle, and turned it, shoving violently. It was fortunate that Bunter had turned the key.

"Locked!" snorted Mr. Fish.

He thumped furiously on the door.

"You, Mauleverer!" he yelled. "You hear me shout? You come out of it! Do you hear? Say!"

Bunter did not speak. Why Mr. Fish supposed that Lord Mauleverer was in that room, was a mystery to Bunter. Evidently he did suppose it, just as Mr. Parker did. As he received no reply, Mr. Fish thumped on the door again, and, still receiving no reply, he glared round for some heavy article with which to break in the door. He caught up a chair, and there was a terrific crash.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter.

Crash again!

Mr. Parker staggered to his feet. He was as enraged as his rival now, at these high-handed proceedings in his flat.

"It's!" he yelled.

The Japanese servant put a scared face into the room.

"Fetch in the police!" shouted Mr. Parker. "Quick, I'm telling you! Bring 'em along!"

Ito darted away.

Crash!

The door did not break, but the chair did, falling in fragments round Mr. Fish.

"You wait a piece!" gasped Mr. Parker. "You wait till the police come in! It's you for the stone jug, Hiram!"

"Mauleverer!" roared Mr. Fish.

"Mauleverer, you jay! Speak up! I'm telling you to come out, you young mug-wump!"

No reply.

Mr. Fish breathed hard. He gave Mr. Parker a glare, and then, reluctantly, tramped out of the room. Exasperated as he was, Hiram K. Fish realised that it would not do to wait till policemen came in to deal with him. He was defeated, and he had to admit it. He glared back from the doorway.

"I ain't letting up!" he snorted. "I guess I'm getting him! You jest watch out, you doggoned gink!"

And with that Mr. Fish tramped furiously away, and Cyrus Parker's breathless chuckle followed him.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Light at Last!

"MAULY!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

Lord Mauleverer sauntered into the Pacific Hotel, somewhat surprised by the startled exclamations that greeted him from the Greyfriars fellows. A shade of anxiety crossed his face.

"Doesn't it suit me?" he asked.

"Eh?"

"What?"

"Of course, you can't really get a hat outside London," said Lord Mauleverer.

"A—a hat!" repeated Harry Wharton.

"Yaas. But what's a fellow to do?" said Lord Mauleverer plaintively.

"That fat sweep Bunter borrowed my hat. I had to get a new one. Lincoln and Bennett's haven't any branch here that I know of. So what was a fellow to do?"

The juniors gazed at Mauly.

"Does it look very rotten?" asked his lordship anxiously.

"Have you been buying a hat?" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"Yaas."

"You goldarned jay!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. "Is that what you vamoosed for?"

"Yaas."

"Waal, carry me home to die!"

"It's an American hat," said Mauleverer. "The man in the shop told me it was the best they can do in San Francisco, and I suppose he knows, as he's a hatter. But if you fellows think it won't do—"

"You howling ass!" said Johnny Bull. "Nobody noticed whether you'd got a new hat! Bother your silly hat! Mean to say that you simply went out to buy a hat?"

"Yaas."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "Mr. Fish thinks that that man Parker has kidnapped you, Mauly."

"Oh, gad!"

"He's gone to see Parker, to get you back!" shrieked Nugent.

"I guess he went off on his ear!" snapped Fisher T. Fish. "Why, that galoot, Parker, rung him up and said he'd got you."

"Begad! He was departin from the truth a little, I think," said Lord Mauleverer, perplexed. "Must have been, you know; for, you see, he hasn't got me."

"The seefulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The worthy Fish is labouring under a ridiculous misapprehension."

"Blessed if I can make this out," said Harry. "But I'm glad you've blown in again, Mauly. We all thought you were missing."

"I guess I'll sure keep tabs on you after this, you all-fired jay!" growled Fisher T. Fish. "That guy Parker said he'd got you."

"Must have been mistaken, old bean," said Lord Mauleverer placidly. "By the way, I've seen him, and Bunter, too. They came into the hatter's while I was there. I've had a long walk back—I seem to have missed the right turnin' several times. I asked a man the way to the Pacific, you know, and he sent me to a sort of shipping place, which I found was called the Embarcadero, you know—quite in the wrong direction. Must have been pullin' my leg, or else he thought it was the Pacific Ocean I wanted. And it wasn't, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We've seen Bunter, too," said Nugent. "He was in an auto with Parker on the Embarcadero this afternoon. That fat johnny seems to have taken a fancy to him."

"Yaas. It's jolly odd, you know," said Lord Mauleverer. "The man Parker was callin' him 'my lord' in the hatter's shop. Queer, ain't it?"

"Jolly queer!" said Bob, with a stare. "What the thump could he have been calling Bunter my lord for?"

"The queerfulness is terrific!"

(Continued on next page.)

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NOW
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SALE.

Lord Mauleverer sank into a seat in the lounge, much relieved to find that it was not his new American hat that had so startled the juniors. Harry Wharton & Co. waited there with him for Mr. Fish to come in. Coker and Potter and Greene came in, Coker with a deep frown on his rugged face. Something had apparently occurred to ruffle the serenity of the great Horace.

"The cheek of it!" Coker was saying. "Hallo, hallo, hallo! Anybody in 'Frisko had the neck to come between the wind and your nobility, Coker?" inquired Bob Cherry.

Coker gave him a glare.

"I don't want any cheek from you, Cherry! I've had enough of that from Bunter! When I get hold of that fat young scoundrel—"

"You've seen Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton.

Coker snorted, and walked on without replying. But Potter of the Fifth explained. Potter was grinning.

"Bunter passed us in a car on Market Street, with that fat Johnny who came down to the ferry this morning," he said. "Coker called to him and ordered him to get out of the car. Bunter put his fingers to his nose at him. It seemed to annoy Coker."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't stay there talking to those fags, you men!" called out Coker crossly, and Potter and Greene joined their great leader.

A few minutes later Mr. Fish came in. The juniors saw him enter the hotel with a black frown on his face that drew many glances upon him. He came into the lounge with gleaming eyes. Lord Mauleverer, sunk deep in a Madeira chair, escaped his notice for the moment.

"That gink has got him!" breathed Mr. Fish. "Got him shut up in a room and refused to let me see him! I guess I gave him a sockdolager, though! I'm glad of that! But he's got Mauleverer—"

"Mauleverer's here!" interjected Harry Wharton.

"What?"

"Oh, yaas!" drawled Lord Mauleverer.

Mr. Fish spun round and stared at Lord Mauleverer. He stared at him as if he could hardly believe his eyes, as indeed he hardly could.

"You!" he gasped. "Here?"

"Yaas!"

"You pesky young rascal—"

"My dear sir—" remonstrated Lord Mauleverer.

"Why didn't you answer me when I hooted to you in that jay Parker's flat?" snorted Mr. Fish.

"Eh?"

"Why didn't you come out of that room, hay?"

"What?"

"What you mean by going off with Parker to his flat?" hooted Mr. Fish, as angry as he was relieved.

Lord Mauleverer looked bewildered.

"There's some sort of a mistake somewhere!" he gasped. "I haven't been to Parker's flat. Never knew he had a flat."

"Mauly went out to buy a hat," explained Harry Wharton. "He was a long time gone, because he asked his way to the Pacific, and somebody directed him to the Pacific Ocean."

"Great John James Brown!" gasped Mr. Fish. "Mean to say you wasn't in that guy's flat when I got there, Mauleverer?"

"Never heard of it before, sir."

"Then who was?" hooted Mr. Fish. "Parker had somebody there! He said he'd got Lord Mauleverer; and as you was missing, you young mugwump, I sure thought he was giving me the straight goods. Mean to say you haven't seen Parker?"

"I saw him in a shop with Bunter," answered Lord Mauleverer. "Only for a minute—Bunter was anxious to get away."

says he heard Parker calling Bunter my lord in the latter's shop."

"Bunter's spoofed him somehow that he's Mauly!" howled the Bounder. "He's got hold of Lord Bunter."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That accounts for that fat idiot playing the goat!" gasped Nugent. "He's pulled Parker's leg that he's Lord Mauleverer."

"Lord Bunter—ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors roared. Mr. Fish laughed so much that the tears trickled down his cheeks.

"Oh, carry me home to die!" he gasped. "He's got that fat gink Bunter, and thinks he's a lord! He reckons he's cut his eye-teeth, too! Ha, ha, ha! Waal, if this ain't the grass-hopper's whiskers! He's got Bunter! Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Fish almost choked.

When he recovered his breath, he dashed away to the telephone. In haste he rang up the flat on California Street.

"Hallo!"

"That you, Cyrus?" gurgled Mr. Fish. "Oh gophers! You still got your pesky nobleman, Cyrus?"

"Sure, and I'm keeping him," came Cyrus' reply.

"Ha, ha, ha! Keep him!" gurgled Hiram K. Fish.

"What?"

"Keep him as long as you like! I sure make you a present of him!" howled Mr. Fish; and he hung up the receiver, leaving a very puzzled Cyrus at the other end.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

What About Bunter?

HARRY WHARTON & CO. turned in that night at the Pacific Hotel, quite tired out by a long and busy day. Mr. Fish told them that they were to "hit the cars" at an early hour on the morrow, when the hotel omnibus would carry them to the Southern Pacific Depot. Tickets for Los Angeles were already taken, and the route was to run by San Jose, Monterey and Santa Barbara—a string of musical names that delighted their ears. What was to be done about Bunter they really did not know. Mr. Fish did not care, and Fisher T. Fish did not care; in fact, the less they saw of Bunter the better they were pleased.

The other fellows, perhaps, did not yearn for his company; but they were concerned about him. If, as now appeared fairly certain, Bunter had somehow imposed himself on Cyrus Parker as Lord Mauleverer, he would no doubt be unwilling to rejoin the party; indeed, he had distinctly refused to do so. He had a right to be left behind if he liked; but it was certain that when Cyrus Parker discovered the deception something in the nature of an earthquake would happen to Bunter. Perhaps it would serve him right; but the Famous Five could not feel quite so unconcerned as the Fishes, popper and son.

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THE CAR THAT'S BUILT TO LAST A LIFETIME!

A brief history of the world-famous RENAULT car—the prominent badge of which is included in this week's unique Free Gifts.

Long years of manufacturing fine cars have taught the fine old French firm of Renault how to build cars which almost literally last a lifetime! Readers who live in towns will notice that most of the oldest taxicabs are Renaults. Though not much to look at, after the passing of many years, they simply won't wear out!

Renaults have always been distinctive in appearance, by reason of their carrying the radiator behind the sloping bonnet. This position has the advantage of placing a vulnerable part well out of harm's way; for, with the radiator in the usual position ahead of the bonnet, it is the first item to suffer damage in the event of even a minor collision.

In former days, Renault built mostly high-powered cars which were somewhat expensive to buy and run. But the firm's latest programme appeals particularly to the motorist of moderate means, featuring as it does remarkable medium-powered cars offering wonderful value for money. Two of the most popular models are the five-seater saloon on the 14-45 h.-p. chassis, priced at £269, and the 9-15 h.-p. four-seater saloon at £199. Both these are 4-cylinder cars and the prices given are those current in Great Britain.

Renault have not taken part in racing for many years, but in the past many racing successes helped to build up the Renault name.

"Dog-gone my cats!" said Mr. Fish in a state of great bewilderment. "This gets my goat! Parker was bragging he'd got you; he sure thought he'd got you. Gee-whiz! He can't have mistaken somebody else for you, sure? Of course, he doesn't know you by sight—or didn't. Has that moss-headed geek got hold of the wrong man, then?"

At that thought all Mr. Fish's wrath faded away. He burst into a chuckle. That Cyrus Parker believed that Lord Mauleverer was in his flat, was certain; and it was equally certain that Lord Mauleverer was not there. From which it seemed obvious that Cyrus had made some remarkable mistake and captured the wrong goods. Mr. Fish chuckled gleefully as it dawned on him.

"That's sure it!" he chortled. "He's sure got the wrong porker by the ear! He sure has! Ha, ha! But who the thump has he got hold of that he takes for Mauleverer?"

"Bunter!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"What?"

"That's it!" gasped Wharton. "Mauly

However, they left the matter over till the morning, hoping that Bunter would yet roll in before the time came to start.

In the morning, however, there was no Bunter.

Breakfast passed and still there was no Bunter. Apparently Bunter was sticking to Mr. Parker. And now the hour of departure was drawing nigh.

"Bus starts at nine-forty," Mr. Fish told the juniors. "You want to be ready; we've wasted too much time in 'Frisco."

"What about Bunter?" asked Harry.

Mr. Fish snorted.

"Nothing about that fat clam! Ain't he refused to come on with us? You want me to hang on in 'Frisco till he changes his mind?"

Wharton paused. Certainly he could not think of making any such unreasonable demand as that.

"We're going on!" snapped Mr. Fish. "If Bunter chooses to hop over in time for the bus, he can come. If not, he can do as he darned well likes."

And Mr. Fish gave another snort. Evidently he was fed up with William George Bunter, which was perhaps not surprising.

"I agree," said Coker. "Bunter refuses to come, and he refused me in a very cheeky manner when I ordered him to get out of the car and come to this hotel. It isn't as if he was lost; in that case, I should refuse to allow the party to go on without him. As the matter stands, I agree."

Mr. Fish did not seem very grateful for Coker's support. He snorted once more.

"You sure blow off your mouth a whole lot, Coker," he remarked.

"Really, Mr. Fish—"

"Oh, shucks!" snapped Mr. Fish.

"I don't like the idea of going on and leaving Bunter behind," said Harry Wharton uneasily.

"I guess he's his own master."

"Yes, but—"

"He won't be far behind, anyhow. Cyrus will sure tote him on to Hollywood. That's what he's coralled him for," grinned Mr. Fish.

"That's so," assented the Bounder. "We shall see the fat idiot again at Los Angeles—if anybody wants to see him."

"But if Parker finds out he's been spoofed—"

"I guess he will kick Bunter out so quick, it will make his head swim," chuckled Fisher T. Fish.

"You can ring up Cyrus and put him wise, if you want," said Mr. Fish carelessly.

But that idea did not appeal to the Greyfriars fellows. There was not much doubt that the Owl of the Remove was spoofing Mr. Parker somehow. But giving him away was not an agreeable idea.

"Blessed if I know what we'd better do," confessed Wharton.

Snort, from Mr. Fish.

"We're hitting the cars," he said.

"Look here, I'll leave word at this hotel to send Bunter on, at my expense, if he comes back here. He'll sure come along if Cyrus boots him out. That settles it!"

And the juniors agreed that that would settle it. It seemed, in fact, the only thing to be done, in the peculiar circumstances.

"Leave it at that," said the Bounder.

And it was left at that.

Harry Wharton & Co. packed their bags and prepared for the journey. Exasperating as Bunter was, the Famous Five still hoped that he would turn up in time to go on with them.

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But when the hotel omnibus was ready to start for the Southern Pacific terminus there was still no sign of William George Bunter.

The Greyfriars party boarded the bus, with a dozen other passengers, bound for the Southern Pacific.

Honk! Honk!

The bus got into motion.

And then—

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Light at Last!

BILLY BUNTER leaned back in an easy-chair, in the sunny room in the flat on California Street, and grunted with satisfaction.

Bunter was feeling merry and bright.

He had disposed of a breakfast that had made Mr. Parker's Japanese servant open his slanting eyes wide. It had made Bunter feel very satisfied and comfortable. Now he was considering what he was going to do with the day.

The Fish party, Bunter had no doubt, would be going on to Los Angeles. That did not matter to Bunter. He was no longer interested in the Fish party. Cyrus Parker wanted to start for "L. A." that day, taking his "lordship" with him. But his lordship was not keen on it. For one thing, he desired to keep clear of the Fish party and give the genuine Lord Mauleverer the widest possible berth. For another thing, he was very comfortable where he was. For still another, he had in view another extensive shopping excursion, on the principle of making hay while the sun was shining.

Bunter was considering the matter when the door suddenly opened and Mr. Parker entered the room.

He came in suddenly, rather as if he had been shot in from a gun.

Bunter blinked at him.

A change had come over Cyrus.

Only ten minutes before he had left Bunter, still overflowing with effusive cordiality, and the last words on his lips had been "your lordship."

Now there was a remarkable change.

With a crumpled newspaper grasped in his hand, with fury in his face, and glittering rage in his eyes, Cyrus hurled himself into the room.

"You—you—you—"

He spluttered wildly.

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 copy required, to cover cost of postage.

Date of issue.	Gifts.
January 19th.	Special Album, Alvis, Minerva, and Standard Car Badges.
January 26th.	Morris-Cowley, Lea Francis, Rolls-Royce.
February 2nd.	Fiat, Riley, Mercedes-Benz.
February 9th.	Armstrong-Siddley, Vauxhall, Stutz.
February 16th.	Austin, Chrysler.

Bunter jumped up in alarm. Something had gone wrong. What it was he had no idea. But something, clearly, had happened.

"I—I say—" he stammered. "You scallywag!" roared Mr. Parker.

"Oh, really, you know—"

"You spoofing jay!"

"Look here—"

"You slab-sided gink!" shrieked Mr. Parker. "Taken in, by gosh! Taken in and spoofed by thunder! Search me!"

He brandished a fat fist under Bunter's nose, and the Owl of the Remove jumped away in alarm.

"I—I say—" gasped Bunter.

"Look at that!" raved Mr. Parker.

He extended the newspaper towards Bunter. The fat junior blinked at it. A displayed heading caught his eye.

"LORD MAULEVERER!"

Perfection's Latest Big Noise!"

Under that heading was a reproduced photograph. It was the picture of Lord Mauleverer!

"Oh, crikey!" gasped Bunter.

"Look at it!" shrieked Mr. Parker.

"That's the lord! That's the earl! It's the guy we met in the hat store yesterday. That's Lord Mauleverer! And you— Who are you, you pesky gink? What?"

Mr. Parker was almost dancing.

"You had his hat on. I sure saw his name in your hat. Did you steal the lord's hat, you scallywag?" shrieked Mr. Parker. "Gosh, taken in! Cyrus Parker double-crossed by a fat clam! Gee-whiz!"

"I—I—I—" stuttered Bunter.

Billy Bunter's fat brain was not quick on the uptake. But even Bunter realised that the game was up.

That photograph of Lord Mauleverer told its own tale. It had put Mr. Parker wise the moment his eyes fell on it. He comprehended then why Mr. Fish had given up the contest for his "lordship"—why Hiram had told him he could keep the lord.

"What do you mean, hey?" roared Mr. Parker. "You ain't Lord Mauleverer! You ain't one side of him! Who are you—what? Spill it!"

"I—I—I—"

"You dog-goned scallywag—"

"It—it—it's all right!" gasped Bunter.

"I—I—I—"

"All right, is it?" raved Cyrus Parker.

"Yes. You—you see, I—"

"You told me you was Mauleverer!" yelled Cyrus.

"I—I didn't!" gasped Bunter. "You said I was. 'Tain't my fault if you make a silly mistake. Besides, it's all right. I'm ever so much better than Lord Mauleverer—"

"What?" gasped Mr. Parker.

"Ever so much!" said Bunter.

"Mauleverer's an awful ass, you know; no good at all for the films. Now, a fellow like me—"

Mr. Parker did not wait for him to finish.

He jumped at Bunter.

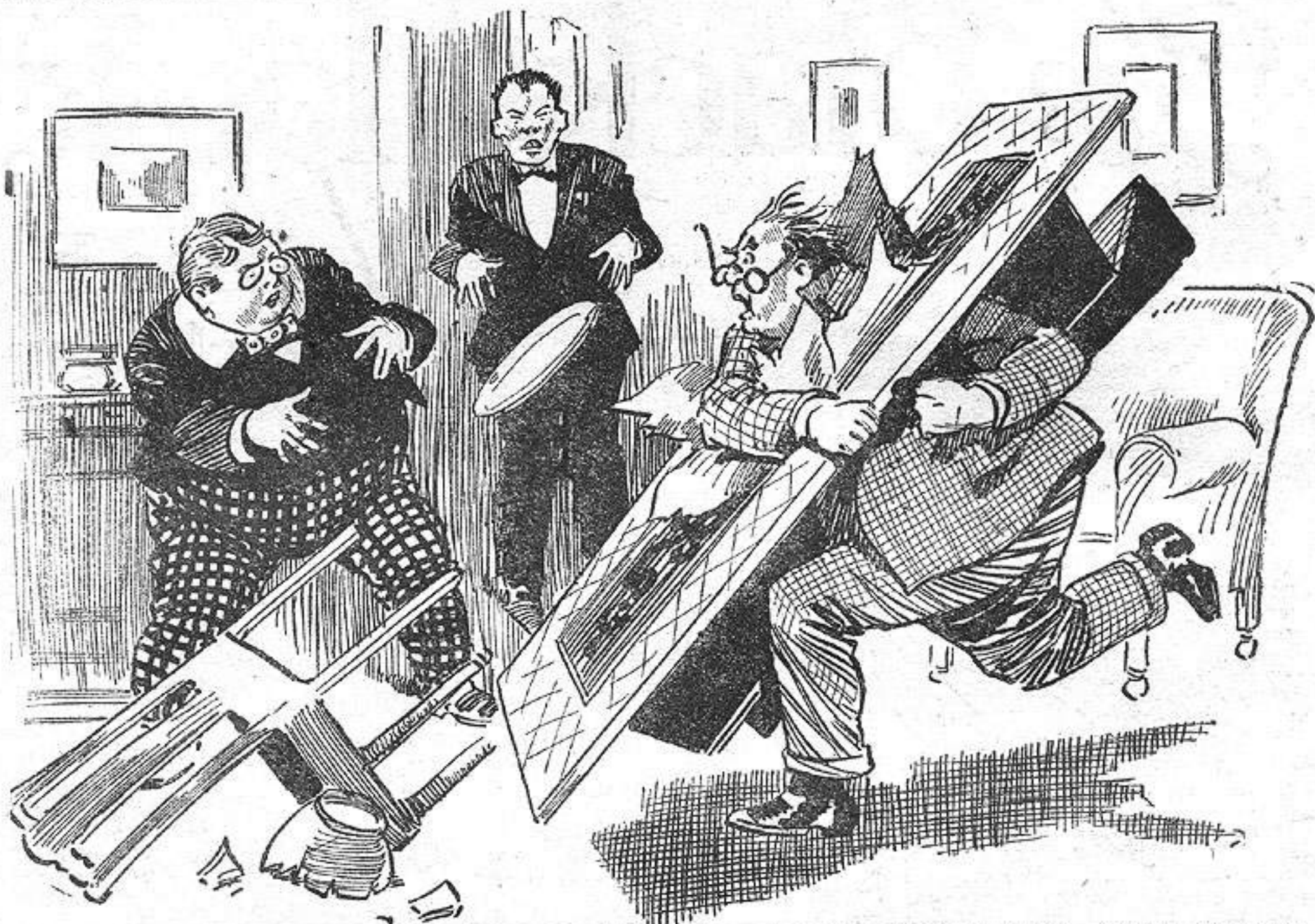
Words seemed to fail him. Besides, words were of no use in the circumstances. It was action that Mr. Parker wanted.

He went into action with considerable vigour.

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter.

He dodged Mr. Parker round a table.

Mr. Parker's boot found him twice as he went, and each time Bunter let out a terrific yell. He dodged round a tall screen, and with great presence of mind



With great presence of mind Bunter hurled the screen at Mr. Parker as he came on in furious pursuit. Crash! The screen toppled fairly on Mr. Parker, and his head came through it, like a clown's head through a hoop in a circus. The startled Japanese servant stared at the scene in amazement. (See Chapter 14.)

hurled it at Mr. Parker as he came on in furious pursuit.

Crash!

The screen toppled fairly on Mr. Parker, and his head came through it, like a clown's head through a hoop in a circus.

Bunter had a moment's breathing space. He bolted for the door.

After him rushed Mr. Parker, with the screen draping round him. In the doorway appeared Ito. The startled Japanese servant stared at the scene in amazement for a second. Then Bunter's desperate head butted him, and the hapless Japanese was strewn on the floor.

Bunter dodged round him and fled across the hall-way towards the lift. There was a crash and a roar behind him as Mr. Parker stumbled over Ito and sprawled across him, screen and all. The elevator, fortunately for Bunter, was about to descend. The Owl of the Remova bolted across to it, breathless, hatless.

Mr. Parker, disengaging himself from Ito and the tatters of the screen, rushed after him.

Bunter reached the elevator.

Mr. Parker reached Bunter.

Crash!

Mr. Parker's boot, with all Mr. Parker's energy driving it, landed on Bunter and fairly lifted him into the elevator.

"Yaroooh!"

Bump!

Bunter was in the lift. The staring attendant closed the gate in the face of the infuriated Cyrus. As the elevator glided down Bunter had a last glimpse of Cyrus Parker dancing with rage, shaking his fists, and raving.

Then Cyrus was lost to sight.

"Ow!" groaned Bunter. "Wow!"

The lift attendant kindly gave him a hand up. Billy Bunter staggered to his feet.

"That guy sure was peeved!" remarked the elevator man.

"Ow!" moaned Bunter.

The elevator clattered to the ground floor. Bunter shot out of it and fled. There was no doubt that Cyrus Parker was "peeved," and in his present peevish state Bunter wanted to get clear of him. All his new purchases were still in Mr. Parker's flat, but Bunter did not think of stopping for them. He did not even think of stopping for Lord Mauleverer's hat. He bolted out of the building.

A taxi was loitering along California Street. Bunter almost bounded into it.

"Pacific Hotel—quick!" he gasped.

He sat and gasped for breath as the taxi threaded the busy morning streets. It arrived at the Pacific Hotel just as the hotel omnibus was starting for the Southern Depot.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter, as he sighted the Greyfriars party on the bus. "Beasts! Leaving me behind! Beasts! After all I've done for them! Hi! Stop! Stop!"

He jumped out of the taxi.

"Here, you guy—" yelled the taxi-driver, as Bunter bolted for the bus. He was thinking of his fare. Bunter wasn't! With a desperate bound, Bunter landed on the bus and sprawled among countless legs.

"Yaroooh! I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "Bunter!"

"Gee-whiz!"

"The esteemed and ludicrous Bunter is—"

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

"I say, you fellows—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Waal, carry me home to die!" ejaculated Mr. Fish.

"Oh, begad!" Lord Mauleverer tossed a ten-dollar bill to the wildly excited taxi-driver, who was pursuing the omnibus. "What have you come back for, Bunter?"

"Ow! Give a chap room to sit down!" gasped Bunter. "Of course, I wasn't going to desert you fellows! Only my little joke! He, he, he! I'm fed-up with that man Parker! Oh dear! The beast kicked me! Wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, I—I left in rather a hurry!" gasped Bunter. "Who's going to lend me a hat?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors yelled. Evidently Mr. Parker had found his "lordship" out, and it was only too clear that Bunter had left in a hurry.

Bunter sat down and mopped his perspiring brow.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beasts!" gasped Bunter.

And Bunter gasped all the way to the Southern Pacific Depot, and he was still gasping when the cars bore the Greyfriars party away from San Francisco for Los Angeles on the last lap of their long journey to Hollywood.

THE END.

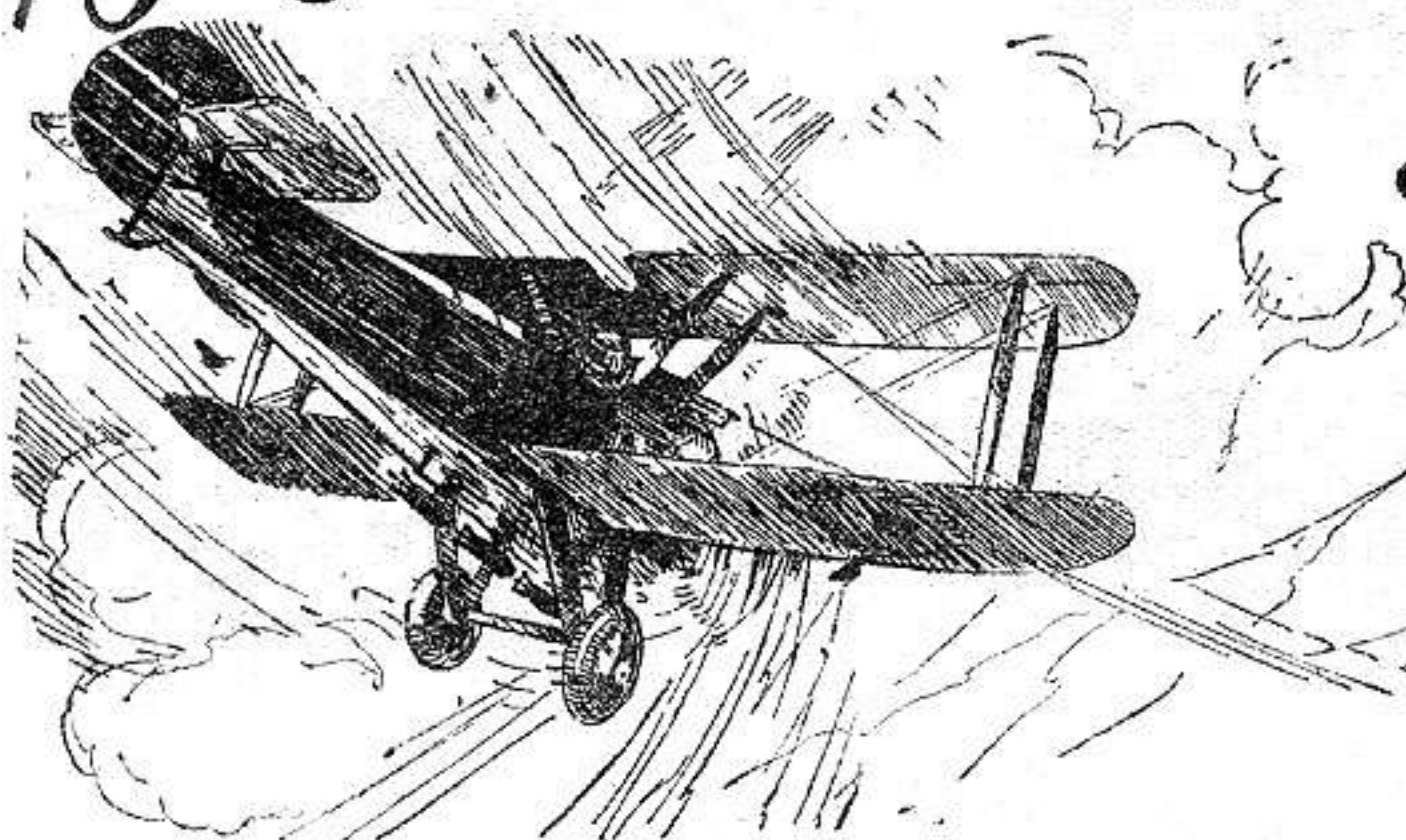
(Be sure you read the next splendid story in this grand new series, entitled: "HARRY WHARTON & CO. AT HOLLYWOOD!" You will vote it one of the finest yarns you've ever read. There's TWO MORE FREE MOTOR-CAR BADGES with this issue, chums, too. See that you add them to your set.—ED.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,097.

YOU'VE NEVER READ A MORE POWERFUL WAR STORY THAN THIS, CHUMS!

The Black Hawk

by Geo. E.
Rochester



The Return to Abergau!

STEALTHILY Derek's hand moved forward, and his fingers pressed on the switch. Then, from its rack, he withdrew the squat Nebel Verrey pistol and thrust it into his belt. Next moment his hands were gripping firmly on the propeller, and, as he swung it, the warm engine picked up with a deafening roar.

Springing clear, the young airman leapt for the cockpit, whipped up the Verrey pistol and pressed the trigger. The white magnesium cartridge soared flaringly towards the wood, revealing a stealthily approaching squad of French soldiers.

"Down on your face, you fool!" roared Derek, and as the lad flung himself flat on his face, there came a shout from the soldiers, and the crash of a hastily-fired volley.

The squad had obviously been unconvinced as to whether the machine, which must have passed low over their heads before landing, was an Allied or German plane, and were coming to investigate.

But the scout was already moving forward, and literally tumbling into the cockpit, Derek gave it open throttle. Another volley crashed out behind him and bullets ripped through fuselage and wings.

But in the darkness accurate shooting was impossible, and as Derek pulled back the control stick, the German scout soared up into the night with powerful engine thundering at full revolutions.

If any stranger had entered the main room of the inn of Abergau that same night, he would probably have imagined that he had blundered into the midst of some sort of soiree, wherein beer-mugs and beer had completely ousted tencups and tea.

Almost all the adults of the village were there—all, that is, who now remained. The young men, the middle-aged men, yes, and some even older than that, had long since been conscripted to the colours, and were away soldiering somewhere on the Western front.

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Anyway, those that were left had hied themselves to the inn, for were there not events to discuss which were passing strange? Indeed, yes! Aged and dirty-bloused peasants, toothless and whiskered, sat on forms around the walls with their beer-mugs in front of them, jabbering excitedly.

In the corner sat the village schoolmaster, his spectacles poised at a drunken angle on his nose. With long and dirty finger-nails he meditatively combed his beard the while he nodded ponderously at the words of his companion. And this companion was none other than the aged hag, whose recent mission in life it had been to wash the shirts of the Lieutenant Gottlieb Zweig.

A little black bonnet was perched on her head, and from beneath it lank wisps of hair hung down over her vinegary and sour-looking face. For the

Three English machines, hemmed in by fifteen Fokker scouts—and it looks a certain overwhelming victory for the Germans! Looks certain until, hurtling out of the blue, like a meteor of vengeance, comes the Black Hawk to the rescue of his fellow Englishmen!

rest, unclean and split boots, voluminous skirt, and cape, completed her attire.

"And he has gone," her voice, quivering with indignation, rose almost to a scream to be heard above the chatter of voices. "Yes, the pig! Away he has gone in his flying machine, and he owes me eighteen marks!"

"But," remarked the schoolmaster, a trifle wearily, "you say you have still one shirt of him?"

His companion nodded grimly, with compressed lips.

"One shirt I have," she affirmed, "and that I keep until the pig sends to me the money he owes for the wash!"

She drained her mug and set it down on the table in front of her with a bang.

The innkeeper, hovering about the room in his shirtsleeves, like some disreputable workhouse master attending to the wants of the paupers, shuffled up.

"It is wrong!" he remarked, grumblingly. "I say it is wrong—"

"It is!" snapped the lady of the bonnet. "Eighteen marks, I tell you, and away he goes—"

"Curse you and your eighteen marks!" growled the innkeeper. "Cannot you talk of something else? Here is our village half blown to ruins by the most terrible bombs, and all you can do is cackle about what the Lieutenant Zweig owes you for his washing. It was not his fault that he went away!"

"Ho!"

"No, it was not!" replied the innkeeper, his voice rising angrily. "And it is wrong, I say. We should have been told!"

He crashed a great fist on the table, and his voice rose to a bellow as he turned to address the others in the room.

"That German captain that came here this morning!" he roared. "I tell you I walked with him to the hangar of the Gotha. And what did he tell me about the Englishers coming to bomb here? Nothing!"

A growl ran round the room, a growl of disapproval and disgust.

"It would have been an easy thing, would it not," bellowed the innkeeper, "for him to have said, 'We are

leaving the hangar because the cursed pig-dogs of Englishers are coming to bomb?' But no! Not a word did he say. Blood and fury, if he had told us couldn't we have hid in the forest, after placing our furniture and things in our cellars?"

"Indeed we could!" assented his audience.

"But no!" went on the innkeeper, waving his arms in fury. "That is not the way of our High Command. They take our brothers and our sons to use as food for the enemy guns, and leave us here to rot for all they care. But we are sons of the Fatherland, and we are entitled to protection, I say!"

The sons of the Fatherland vociferously expressed their agreement with these sentiments.

"And if I had that German captain here," shouted the innkeeper, failing entirely to notice that the door of the

him the thoughts of me. I would make his ears tingle. I would make the swaggering upstart sorry that he had not told us Abergau was to be bombed. I would—I would——"

The words trailed suddenly away. His arms flopped to his sides, and his jaw dropped. With mouth agape and eyes goggling idiotically, he stood staring as though petrified at a grey-clad figure standing in the open doorway.

It was the German captain of whom he had been speaking. It was Derek Moncrieff.

Amidst a hushed silence Derek slowly advanced step by step towards the innkeeper. There was a thin, mirthless smile on the boy's lips, and his eyes, cold and hard, never for an instant left the man's face.

"Yes?" he said, halting in front of the quaking innkeeper. "You were saying——"

"I—I——" mouthed the unhappy braggart.

"My advent interrupted you, I am afraid," said Derek suavely. "Pray continue with what you were saying!"

The innkeeper looked wildly round as though for support, his terror-filled eyes returning to the boy's grim face.

"I—I did not mean anything!" he stuttered. "I—I was only—being amusing!"

"Are you often amusing?"

"Yes—yes, often, Herr Hauptmann!"

"At the expense of your country's officers?"

The innkeeper wilted. He was pale with fright, trembling in every limb. He knew he had grievously offended, and the cold, toneless voice of the boy struck terror to his cowardly heart. The German uniform was sacred. To speak slightly of it, or of those who wore it, was "verboten" in the strictest sense of the word.

"I might have you lodged in the village gaol!" remarked Derek meditatively.

"No—no!" babbled the wretched innkeeper, backing away. "Herr Hauptmann—I did not mean—I will swear that——"

"Or sent to solitary confinement with the deserters in the fortress of Berlin!" went on Derek.

The innkeeper seemed beyond speech. He shook his head like some great dumb beast, and made fluttering gestures with his shaking hands.

"Or shot!" concluded Derek sternly.

At that the innkeeper's nerve broke. His fat legs literally caved in under him, and he flopped heavily on to his knees.

"No—no!" he shrieked. "Not that! Herr Hauptmann, I meant no treason. I swear it! A true patriot am I—all can testify——"

"Get up!" rapped the boy.

The innkeeper lumbered fearfully to his feet, and Derek stepped forward.

Smack! Smack!

With his flat hand he struck the quivering wretch across the face.

"Because you are a great loutish clod," he said harshly, "of less use to the Fatherland than a cow, I will not trouble further with you than that. But in future guard your tongue, else you will find yourself standing with your back against a wall!"

He wheeled on the silent, gaping peasants.

"Get to your homes—your kennels!" he rapped. "Get out of here!"

The peasants went dumbly and without protest. Only one remained. One who sat on the floor in a corner crooning to himself. He was in ragged and tattered peasant garb. His shock of tousled hair was matted and unkempt,

his eyes vacant, and without the light of sanity, his wide mouth agrin and aslobber.

He rose to his feet as Derek turned again to address the innkeeper. Shaking as though with the ague, head lolling foolishly on his shoulders, the ragged peasant ambled across the floor and touched Derek on the arm.

The boy turned, an infinite pity in his eyes as he gazed into the grinning, slobbering face of the half-wit.

"Who is he?" he asked of the innkeeper.

"He is a lunatic," replied that individual. "We call him Baier, for he is an outcast of the Bavarian gypsies."

Baier, fingering the silver epaulets on Derek's uniform, nodded delightedly as though he knew he were the subject of conversation.

"Where does he live?" demanded Derek.

"Sometimes he sleeps in the woods and the fields, Herr Hauptmann," replied the innkeeper, his voice strangely humble. "And sometimes he sleeps with the hogs in my yard behind the inn."

"By his own choice?"

"Yes, by his own choice, Herr Hauptmann!"

"You never refuse him shelter?" persisted Derek.

The innkeeper, obviously seeing how the land lay, spread out his hands with a gesture.

"Herr Hauptmann," he said, in injured tones, "do you think I would refuse shelter to such an unfortunate as him?"

"I certainly do!" replied Derek, curtly. "But enough of this. Put him outside. I wish to talk to you!"

The innkeeper laid a fat and podgy hand on the lunatic's arm and half-led, half-dragged him to the door.

"Gently with him!" snapped Derek. "Remember you are not so far removed from his condition yourself."

Baier, having been deposited out into the warm stillness of the summer night, Derek demanded sharply:

"Now, what is this about Abergau having been bombed?"

"Herr Hauptmann, shortly after mid-day, two squadrons of Englander machines came over and bombed the hangar of the Gotha. Four bombs fell on the outskirts of the village killing no one, but burning three cottages and a hay-yard."

"The pit where the bombs were buried near the hangar, what of it?" demanded Derek.

"It was blown up, Herr Hauptmann, and now there is a hole in which one could put this inn!"

HOW THE STORY BEGAN.

As a result of a dastardly plot against him, young Derek Moncrieff is accused of treachery, court-martialled and sentenced to be shot! Determined to clear his dishonoured name, however, Derek makes a daring escape in his machine, the Scarlet Scout. The question of his plan of action is soon answered, following a fight with an enemy plane in which the German pilot is killed. Derek finds that the dead man's name is Captain Von Arn and that he carries a dispatch ordering Leutnant Zweig, the Gotha commander at Abergau to vacate the secret hangar there. Changing identities with Von Arn, Derek goes to Abergau in his stead. Suspecting nothing, for the young pilot plays his perilous part well, Zweig and his men leave the hangar in the giant Gotha bombing machine. Later, having landed near an old farmhouse, Derek makes the discovery that the old peasant woman who occupies it is shielding an English lad who has escaped from a German prison camp. Despite the great risk, the young airman takes the fugitive back to France, a few miles behind the British lines. Just as he is about to get back into the cockpit, however, Derek hears a faint metallic clink from the wood near by.

(Now read on.)

"But the hangar itself?"

"Suffered little damage, being underground, Herr Hauptmann. The entrance is blocked, but that can be cleared."

Derek nodded.

"Very good!" he said curtly. "I will sleep here to-night. First thing in the morning, every man in the village who can handle pick and spade, will proceed to the hangar and clear the debris."

"Is the hangar to be used again, then, Herr Hauptmann?" inquired the innkeeper humbly.

"Yes, by me!" replied Derek coldly. "Prepare me a bed, please. I shall return in a few minutes!"

Quitting the inn, Derek walked thoughtfully towards where he had landed his machine on the outskirts of the village. He understood now why immediate evacuation of the Gotha hangar had been ordered. The British had located it, and had intended bombing it. But, somehow or other, news of the intended raid had obviously come to the ears of the German High Command.

Undoubtedly, considering the position of Abergau, orders for the bombing raid had been issued from British Wing Headquarters at Le Courban. Then who was the traitor at Le Courban who had sent a warning of what was afoot into Germany?

News for Foulkes!

DAYS drifted on; long, weary days in which the pitifully thin line of British bayonets stood steadfast and unbroken against the grey-clad hordes. And in that welter of blood and carnage, when every hour took its grim toll of gallant lives, the sensational escape of Derek Moncrieff from Le Courban became less and less a topic for conversation and conjecture, even amongst those most immediately concerned.

Derek Moncrieff had gone—had vanished into the unknown. Some there were who, when his name was mentioned, cursed him for a traitor to his country. Others, unconvinced of his guilt, in spite of the overwhelming evidence against him, mourned the passing of a great pilot, and swore that some day the truth of the whole wretched affair would come out. Still others there were who, whatever might be their thoughts, kept their own council.

Amongst these latter was the adjutant of 108 Squadron—the squadron to which Derek had been attached. But there came a night when the adjutant's face was unusually grave and thoughtful as he sat in his flight office on Ouchy aerodrome, conning over the report of the day's flying.

He raised his head as, following a sudden knock at the door, Foulkes walked into the room.

"I've come," announced Foulkes, with a certain laboured casualness, "to report!"

"For duty?" inquired the adjutant pleasantly.

"Of course!"

"I thought," murmured the adjutant, "that possibly you'd come to collect your kit, preparatory to shoving off home to England for some sort of disciplinary course!"

"Sorry to disappoint you and all that," replied Foulkes loftily, "but—er—a severe reprimand met the case!"

"I congratulate you!"

Foulkes snorted.

"I don't know what you've got to congratulate me about," he said wrath-

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fully. "It's a whole blessed fortnight since Moncrieff escaped in his bus from Le Courban, and I've been under arrest the whole of that time pending a court of inquiry. I don't know what the dickens they wanted to hold an inquiry for at all. Dash it, man, the way those beastly Brass Hats looked down their noses at me, you'd think I'd deliberately planned to help Moncrieff to escape!"

"Which, of course," observed the adjutant dryly, "is absurd!"

Foulkes ignored the remark. Thrusting his hands into his pockets he took an impatient turn up the room, then wheeled.

"There's no news of him, is there?" he blurted eagerly. "They've never found him, have they?"

The adjutant nodded.

"Yes," he replied gravely, "he has been found!"

"What?" exclaimed Foulkes, aghast. "You don't mean to say they've got him?"

"Not in the way you think, Foulkes," replied the adjutant quietly. "Moncrieff is dead!"

There was a moment of silence, broken by the husky whisper of Foulkes' voice. "Dead? Derek—dead?"

"Yes," the adjutant's low tones went on in explanation—"an hour ago we received a telephone message from Wing Headquarters. News must have reached there after you left. The Air Ministry have been informed, via the Danish Government, that wreckage of a burnt-out machine—undoubtedly Moncrieff's—has been found in Alsace. Near the wreckage lay the body of the pilot. It was in khaki uniform, and has been identified as Moncrieff's by the papers in the pockets, and by the decorations!"

"But—but what the dickens was he doing over Alsace—behind the German lines?" demanded Foulkes.

The adjutant shrugged his shoulders.

"I cannot answer you that!" he replied. "I suppose none of us will ever know just what his motive was in flying over enemy country."

He paused, shooting a glance at Foulkes.

"You realise, of course, what view Headquarters will take of this?" he questioned.

Foulkes' fists clenched.

"No, what?" he growled.

"Well, I know you were a friend of Derek's, and always believed in him," said the adjutant quietly, "so you'd better bite the bullet. They'll say that he was returning to those in whose pay he was!"

"What?" roared Foulkes, crimsoning with sudden anger.

"Don't shout like that!" snapped the adjutant, "and don't be a fool! What other view can they take? Moncrieff is sentenced to death as a traitor. He escapes. Well, a man escaping under such circumstances naturally turns to the nearest sanctuary. And where did Moncrieff obviously seek sanctuary? Eastward—behind the German lines!"

"You—you seem to forget," replied Foulkes hoarsely, "that the Boche had put a price on his head!"

"That was mentioned at the trial," remarked the adjutant, "and was looked upon as eyewash—camouflage to cover his spying activities."

Foulkes took a step forward, his eyes blazing.

"I hope," he said thickly, "that these are not your own personal opinions?"

The adjutant rose to his feet.

"Foulkes," he said sternly, "I've asked you not to be a fool. I know how you feel about the whole wretched business. But keep your sentiments to yourself, or you're liable to find yourself in serious trouble."

Foulkes' shoulders slumped.

"I know," he said miserably. "But,

oh, confound it. I can't believe Derek was a traitor."

"Nor," said the adjutant quietly, "can I!"

The Black Hawk!

AND how—"Foulkes was first to break the silence which followed the adjutant's words "has the squadron been going lately?"

"None too well," replied the adjutant, seating himself again. "Our casualties have been heavy. We have seven new pilots!"

Foulkes nodded grimly.

"Yes," he said. "I looked in at the mess on my way along here to report. I thought for a moment that I'd either got on to the wrong aerodrome, or that our crowd had been moved up the line. I didn't seem to recognise anybody at first. Let's hear about it."

Leaning back in his chair, the adjutant lighted a cigarette, and sat watching the blue smoke curling lazily upwards.

"It's the same old story, Foulkes," he said slowly. "Mannheim one day, Metz the next, Karlsruhe the next. Sometimes the shrapnel gets us—sometimes the Fokkers. The Boche appears to be making a determined bid for air supremacy on this part of the line. More than once recently we've been heavily outnumbered. He has five fighting squadrons now operating from Mannheim aerodrome alone, and he has established two fighting squadrons of Fokker scouts on the night-flying aerodrome of Buhl. Two days ago, eight machines of our squadron returning from offensive patrol, fell in with a crowd of the Buhl merchants."

"How many of 'em?" demanded Foulkes.

"There were twenty-two of them," replied the adjutant; "and, as I say, we numbered eight!"

"I'll bet we gave the blighters a dusting, anyway," remarked Foulkes confidently.

"We did," replied the adjutant. "We got fourteen of them, but—"

"Oh, great hunting!" exclaimed Foulkes delightedly. "I jolly well knew—"

"But," continued the adjutant, ignoring the interruption, "the credit did not lie entirely with our machines."

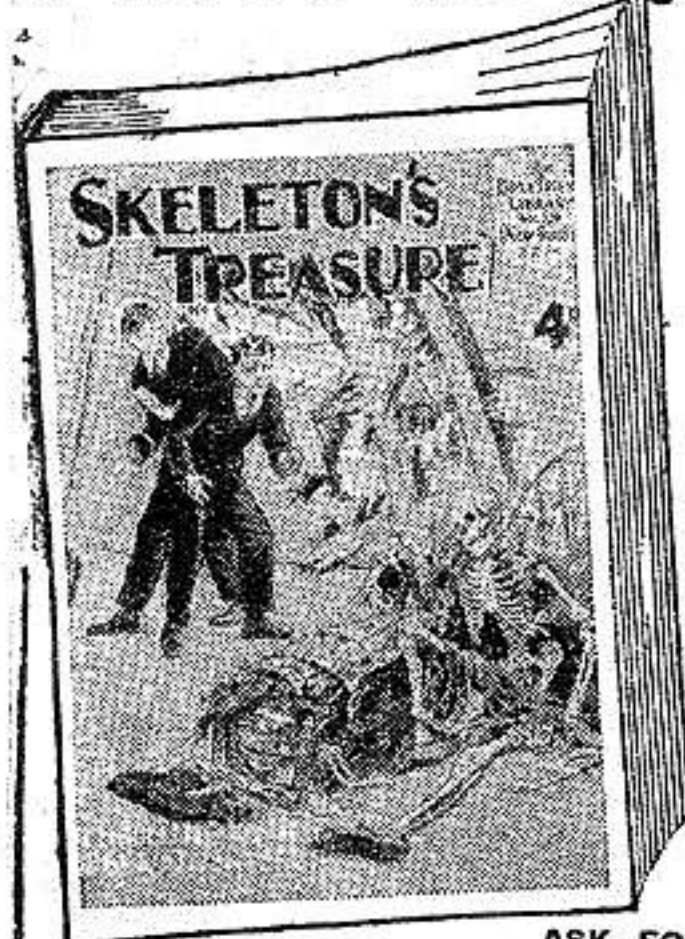
"Didn't it? Did 99 Squadron, or somebody, happen along, then? They're a good crowd in a scrap, those 99 Squadron wallahs—"

"We never saw 99 Squadron, or any Allied squadron," cut in the adjutant testily. "If you'll listen, I'll tell you what happened. We were flying at fifteen thousand feet, when, without the slightest warning, these twenty-two Huns came down at us out of the blue. They got Forster, Cartwright, and Cairns with their first bursts. That, you understand, left us exactly five machines against twenty-two."

"Sporting odds!" grunted Foulkes.

"Yes, you'd have thought so if you'd been there!" snapped the adjutant. "Those Fokker scouts were piloted by fully-trained, first-class fighting pilots, let me tell you—not fledglings, but veterans. I'm not going into details of the fight, but we lost two more machines—two boys who had just come out from England to the squadron the previous day. They went down in flames, poor kids; but not before we'd accounted for seven of the Fokkers!"

Tales For All Tastes



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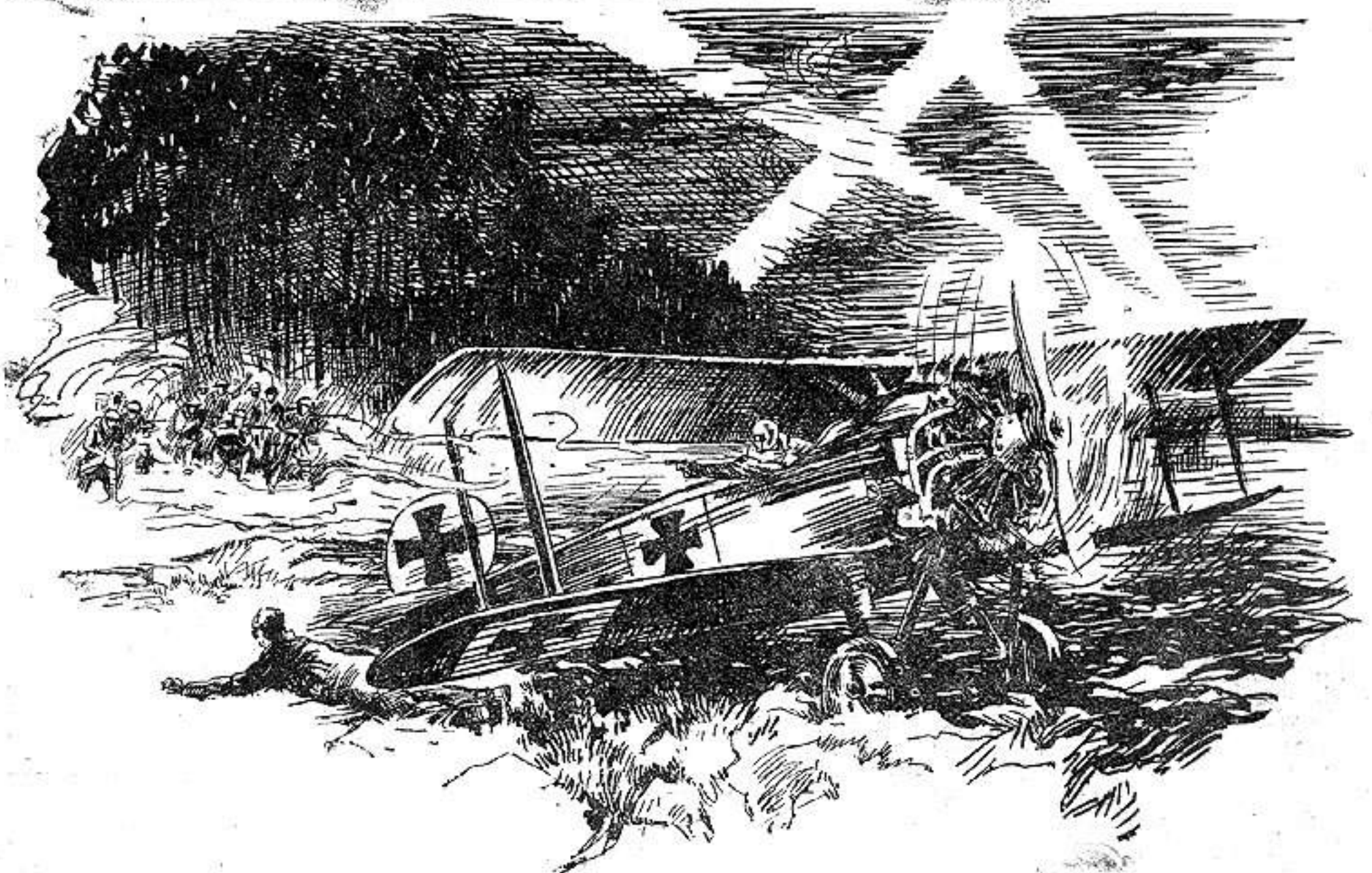
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"Down on your face, you fool!" roared Derek, as the flaring magnesium cartridge revealed the approaching squad of French soldiers. As the lad obeyed, there came a shout from the soldiers and the crash of a hastily-fired volley. (See page 24.)

"Leaving fifteen to three," commented Foulkes. "Not so good!"

"No, not so good!" repeated the adjutant grimly. "And we looked in a fair way to being completely wiped out, when an extraordinary thing occurred!"

"Don't tell me. Let me guess," said Foulkes hastily. "I know! Er—an American squadron, with Portuguese observers, came to our assistance—"

"Don't be a crass ass!" snapped the adjutant. "As I say, there were our three machines hemmed in by fifteen Fokker scouts. We were absolutely hopelessly up against it when a black machine came suddenly hurtling down out of the blue. It went through those Fokkers like a streak, zoomed up, and went through 'em again. And before brother Boche quite realised what was happening, three of his Fokkers were spinning earthwards in flames!"

"The pirate of this black bus was firing at 'em!" exclaimed Foulkes excitedly.

"He certainly was!" assented the adjutant. "And, by Jove, he knew his job! Turning and twisting like a hawk, he tore in first at this Fokker and then at that. He never gave the blighters an instant in which to rally and carry the fight back to him—and he never missed his man! We did our bit, and when four more Fokkers had gone spinning out of the fight, the rest of 'em turned tail and headed back into Germany as hard as they could burn the wind!"

"Ah, bolted, did they?"

"Yes. But the strange part about it, Foulkes, is that this mysterious pilot did so as well. I don't mean to actually say that he bolted, but he cleared off as unexpectedly as he'd arrived; and, although we wheeled, waiting for him to show up again, he did not do so. So we came limping home."

"But who was the fellow?" demanded Foulkes.

The adjutant did not reply at once. Delving amongst the papers which li-

tered his table, he produced a copy of the Officers' File—the daily news and intelligence report issued by G.H.Q.—and handed it to Foulkes.

"Read that!" he said, indicating a certain paragraph.

Foulkes took the sheet and read:

"Pilots and observers are warned to keep a look out for a black single-seater scout aeroplane, of enemy pattern, bearing on its fuselage the replica of a swooping hawk. The pilot of this machine has on various recent occasions come to the aid of Allied machines, and any pilot or observer obtaining a clue as to the identity and base of this man, will report the same at once to his squadron commander. So material and invaluable has this unknown man's assistance proved to the Allied Forces that the enemy Government has warned its squadron commanders that they have placed a price of one hundred thousand (100,000) marks on his head."

Slowly Foulkes laid down the paper and turned to the adjutant.

"Had the machine which came to the assistance of our chaps got this swooping hawk on the fuselage?" he demanded.

The adjutant nodded.

"And no one has the slightest idea as to his identity?" went on Foulkes.

"No; we know nothing about him beyond what you've read, and that he wears black flying-kit, black helmet, and black face-mask!"

"But there are theories, of course?" suggested Foulkes.

"There are many theories about him," assented the adjutant. "Some think he's a maniac. Others think he's some German pilot with a bitter grudge against his own country. But whatever he is, he's a brilliant fighting pilot!"

"But why on earth should people think he's a Boche?" questioned Foulkes.

"Because about a fortnight ago a rather mysterious Boche came tootling

over the line with an escaped British prisoner of war," explained the adjutant. "It may be that he and this Black Hawk are one and the same fellow. The only snag is that the fellow who brought the prisoner to France was flying a pukka Boche scout with the Iron Cross painted on wings and fuselage."

"It wasn't the Black Hawk's machine, you mean?"

"Apparently it wasn't!"

"Seems to be a dashed funny affair all round," commented Foulkes, after a moment of thoughtful silence.

"It is!" said the adjutant briskly, turning to his papers. "But I can't sit here all night discussing it with you. You'd better turn in now. There's a big stunt on to-morrow!"

"Oh, good!" exclaimed Foulkes. "I'll have a squint at flying orders as I pass the mess—"

"You won't find anything about it on flying orders!" chipped in the adjutant.

"Ah, I see!" remarked Foulkes fatuously, as he moved towards the door. "It's one of these hush-hush stunts, is it? I suppose, after brekker in the morning we'll all cluster stealthily round the C.O., and he'll whisper our orders in our ears, and—"

"Push off, dear ass!" cut in the adjutant wearily. "Oh, and, by the way, keep to yourself what I told you about Moneriff. The affair is blowing over, and I don't want discussion of it revived on this aerodrome. You were his friend, and you can keep your mouth shut, and there's no earthly reason why you should not know of his death. That is why I've told you. But don't talk about it. You understand?"

"Yes," said Foulkes soberly. "I understand! Good-night—and thanks for telling me!"

The door closed behind him, and, picking up a pen, the adjutant bent
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over the papers on the table in front of him.

Long minutes dragged by, and only the sound of his scratchy nib, and the rustle of papers broke the stillness in the room.

Engrossed in his task, his pen-hand moved swiftly over the paper. A night bomber from some adjacent aerodrome roared low over the hangars of Ouchy as it gained height preparatory to swinging eastward towards some German town, maybe, on the banks of the distant Rhine. The adjutant scarce heard the thunderous beat of the powerful engines, so familiar had such sounds become to his ear. But suddenly he stiffened and sat motionless with pen-hand poised.

Some indefinable sixth-sense had warned him that he was not alone. Slowly he raised his head. Then his fingers tightened convulsively on the pen, and he sat staring with amazed eyes—staring at the lithe, black-clad and masked figure of a man, standing with his back against the closed door of the flight-office, and holding in one black-gloved hand a squat automatic.

The words came in a tense whisper from the adjutant's lips.

"Remain seated—do not move!"

There was stern warning in the harsh tones of the masked man, and his gun hand moved forward menacingly.

"Listen carefully to me!" he went on gratingly. "During the last five days the symbol of the German Red Cross has been prominently displayed on the roofs of Karlsruhe railway station. British squadrons have recognised the claim of the wounded and have refrained from bombing the station. But your Intelligence Department has discovered that the German hospital trains are carrying troops and not wounded; troops which are being concentrated at Karlsruhe and poured into the line. Therefore, at ten a.m. to-morrow, 103 Squadron and 99 Squadron, escorted by the fighting scouts of 112 Squadron, will take the air and will bomb Karlsruhe railway station. You have endeavoured to keep this raid a profound secret, but the German High Command is aware of your plans!"

"What?" ejaculated the adjutant.

"Someone has betrayed your plans to the enemy!" was the harsh response. "And I warn you that four squadrons of Fokker fighting scouts have been detailed to lie in wait for the British squadrons, fifteen kilometres behind the German lines!"

"How do you know this?" "I do know it!" The words came almost in a snarl. "And I warn you to pay heed to what I say! The Germans are determined that not one British machine will return from the raid!"

"But you must give me some explanation as to how you know this—" began the adjutant, amazed.

"I will give you no explanation!" replied the Black Hawk harshly. "But I warn you to alter your plans. One other thing I say to you. And that is—find the man who, moving in your midst, is betraying you!"

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JUSTISS AT LAST!

(Continued from page 15.)

with an unblemished reputation!" cried the Head, agast.

The police-inspector smiled.

"Like a good many more, he hasn't been found out in his previous crimes, I eggspect," he said. "It was a faro cop, anyway, sir. We caught him in the act of receiving the stolen bonds from his caskil of a son."

"Then you are a theef, Mr. Biffer!" eggsclaimed the Head, turning to the City shark.

Benjamin Biffer lurled insolently.

"Not much good denying it now, is there?" he said.

"And it serves you right, you rotter!" flashed Jack Jolly. "You drove my pater to the gutter, and if this hadn't happened I should have finished there, too!"

"What?" cried General Jolly.

Dr. Birchmell smiled nervously, and intervened. Now that General Jolly was rich once more his attitude changed in a startling manner.

"It was nothing, General!" he eggsplained. "Just by way of a joke, I told your son I was going to chuck him out. Natchurally, I wouldn't dream of doing so. I was merely pulling his leg. Good joke—what?"

General Jolly didn't seem so sure about it. However, he was too pleased with the change in his fortunes to trouble much about the matter, while Jack, deluded at the prospect of going back into the Fourth again, had almost forgotten the Head's crool injustiss already!

Amid a storm of booing and hissing the two Biffers were shortly afterwards taken to the waiting car and driven away to Portland and Borstal respectively.

While they languished in their prizzon quarters, Jack Jolly, once again acknowledged kaptin of the Fourth, was contentedly sipping a jigger-pop and scoffing doemutts, while his loyle followers sang the strains of the old familiar corus: "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow!"

THE END.

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