

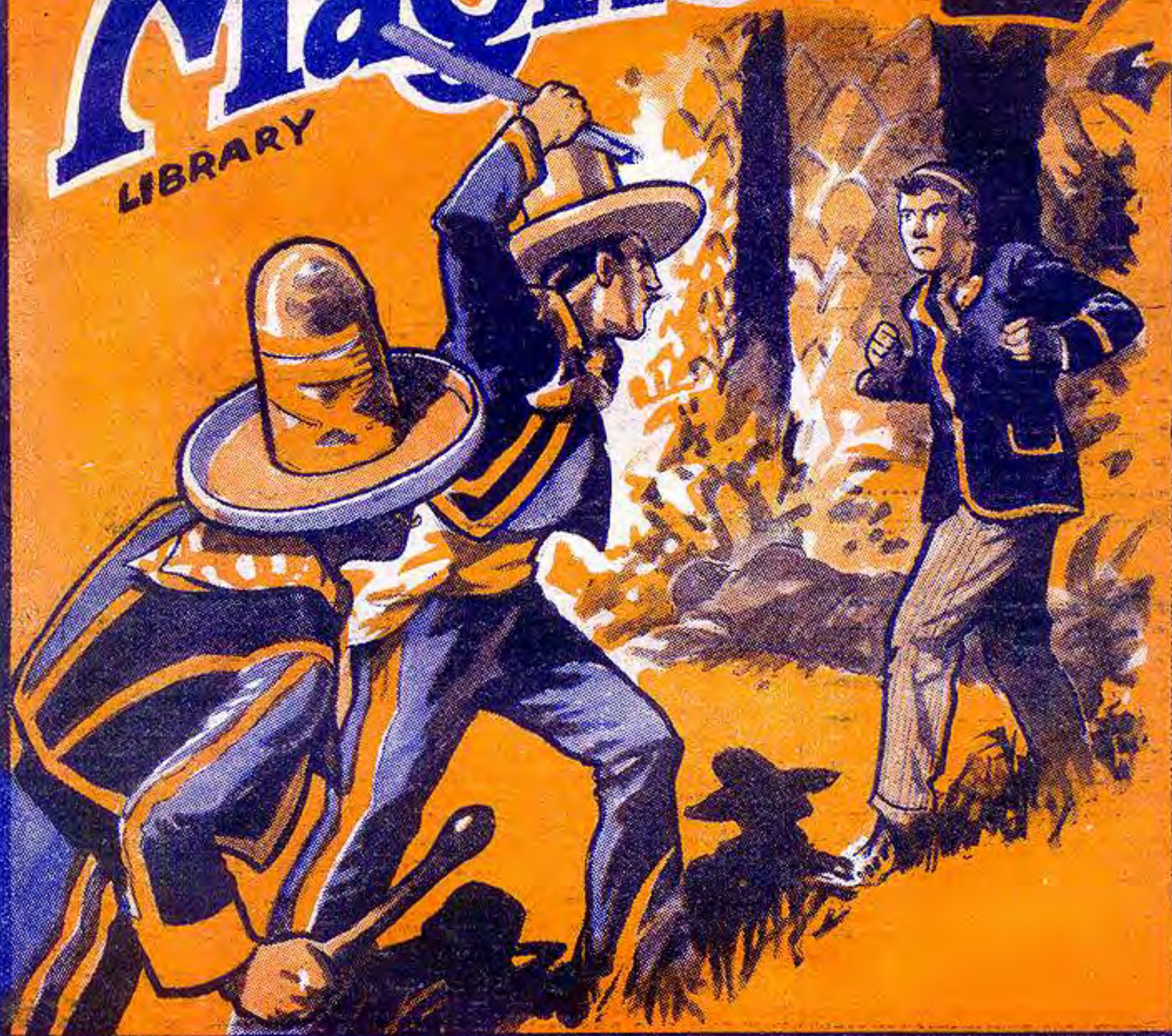
MORE FREE MOTOR-CAR BADGES FOR READERS IN THIS ISSUE!

No. 1,098. Vol. XXXV. Week Ending March 2nd, 1929.

The Magnet

2^d EVERY SATURDAY.

LIBRARY



These Two
WONDERFUL
MOTOR-CAR
BADGES
Free
INSIDE!



A SCHOOLBOY'S PERIL!

(Inside—a nerve-tingling story of thrills and adventure, staged in Hollywood, featuring Harry Wharton & Co., the world-famous chums of Greystriars.)



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.

escaped in the London Museum. The existence of Sweeney Todd, on the other hand, is doubtful, but Claude Duval, "Blueskin," Nick Nevison, Captain Kidd, and dozens of others actually lived, and if your local reference library has any copies of "The Newgate Calendar" you can find out all information about them there.

WITH this week's Free Gifts, you chaps now have eighteen motor-car badges—but there are still more to come. In next week's bumper number every reader is presented with Bugatti and Bentley radiator-badges, and with these two, "Magnetites" will possess a collection that will be the envy of all their non-reader pals. You'll be careful not to spoil your set, I know, so order next Saturday's issue of the MAGNET to-day.

Now, let's congratulate F. G. Chilton, of 34, Skinner Street, Stockton-on-Tees, who wins one of our pocket knives for the following joke:

A READY RETORT!

The old lady had accidentally seated herself in a railway carriage reserved for smokers. With unconcealed indignation she saw the man next to her light his clay pipe. "Sir," she exclaimed in frigid tones, "smoking makes me sick!" "Does it now, ma'am?" said the man, somewhat surprised, as he proceeded to puff away at his evil-smelling pipe. "Then take my advice and chuck it!"

If you know a good joke, send it along and see if you can gain a penknife, too!

A FILM-STRUCK "MAGNETITE,"

whose name and address I withhold, asks me for advice this week on how to get work on the films. Well, I'm sorry to disappoint this chum, and also many others of you who might be the same way inclined, but I must certainly advise him to think of some other career for himself. The film business is absolutely crowded with beginners, and the chance of even getting a job in a "crowd" is most remote. To begin with, this reader lives in the provinces, and most of the British film companies have their studios near London. Even then, "extras" are only required on rare occasions, and a young chum of mine who works on the films occasionally, told me he had only had half a dozen days' work during the last twelve months.

So you can work out for yourselves what chances you've got if a London boy, who has had experience in the work, can only get that amount in a year! Give up the idea of going on the films, chum. All the extras who may be required are taken from the ranks of unemployed actors—and there are more of them than can possibly be absorbed!

"JINGLER'S HOLE!"

No, this isn't the title of a story, but the history of "Jingler's Hole" would make a jolly fine yarn! Ralph Crawford, of Liverpool, asks me if I know anything about a place of that name. Yes, I do, and I expect a lot of my THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,098.

Northumbrian readers know something about it, too! It's a tiny bay, nestling underneath tall cliffs near Tynemouth, and it takes its name from a local character who was called "Jingling Geordie!" He appears to have been such another ruffian as was Abednigo One-Eye in our last serial. Geordie had both his eyes, but he only had one leg, and he got his name because the iron end of his stump used to jingle on the rocks when he walked.

In the bad old days when "wrecking" was constantly carried out, "Jingling Geordie" used to lure ships ashore near Tynemouth, by means of exhibiting false lights. When the ships were wrecked in "Jingler's Hole," he and his followers used to go down and secure what booty they could. His name is not likely to be forgotten, for you'll find "Jingler's Hole" marked on the charts issued by the Admiralty. I wonder how many old-time scoundrels have their names commemorated in this manner?

THIS LIMERICK WINS A LEATHER WALLET!

"There's a Greyfriars fellow named Dutton,
Who's as deaf as a piece of cold mutton.
He makes a chap shout,
Until he's about
Just as black as an overcoat button!"

Sent in by S. Calow, 69, Grosvenor Road, Lower Edmonton, N. 9.

Now, you budding rhymsters, send in your "Greyfriars" Limericks to the address shown underneath the heading of this page.

HIGHWAYMEN AND CUT-THROATS

seem to interest Jim Handley, of Redruth. Did all the well-known characters really exist, he asks? Most of them did, but so much has been written about them that it is difficult to get at the truth nowadays. Dick Turpin existed, but it was not Turpin who made the famous ride to York. Jack Sheppard also existed, and you can still see part of one of the cells from which he

WHEN YOU ARE NEXT IN LONDON

take my tip and visit the London Museum, which I have mentioned above. I can't imagine a place that is of more interest to boys. You'll find it in Stafford House, not far from St. James' Palace—any policeman will tell you how to get there. In addition to Jack Sheppard's cell, you'll see some of the cells from the old Fleet Prison, the old manacles and leg-irons that were used, and dozens of tiptop models showing what London used to be like. There's a fine one of the Fire of London, and another of the great frost showing the ox-roasting and revels on the frozen Thames.

Space won't permit me to tell you one-hundredth part of the interesting things they've got there. I know most of you fellows think museums are dry-as-dust places—but you'll find that this one isn't. It's just chock-full of romantic reminders of what were called "the good old days."

I mentioned the Fleet Prison above. I wonder how many of you know

WHERE THE FLEET PRISON WAS.

I guess it will surprise you to know that it was not a stone's throw from where I'm sitting now! Yes, chums, your Editor's den is practically on the site of that place. What's more, I am simply surrounded by the romantic atmosphere of old London. I can see the site of Newgate out of my den window, and as I walked to the office this morning I passed a place with the old-time name of HANGING SWORD ALLEY!

This last-named is a relic of the days when the Fleet Street district was known as "Alsatis," and was the lawless haunt of so many of the highwaymen about whom my chum Jim Handley asks me.

Gosh! I've nearly filled all my space without telling you what I've got in store for you next week! That's what comes of being too interested in the questions my chums ask me. So here goes for next week's issue:

"BILLY BUNTER ON THE FILMS!"

By Frank Richards.

Another long story of Harry Wharton & Co.'s adventures at Hollywood.

"THE BLACK HAWK!"

By Geo. E. Rochester.

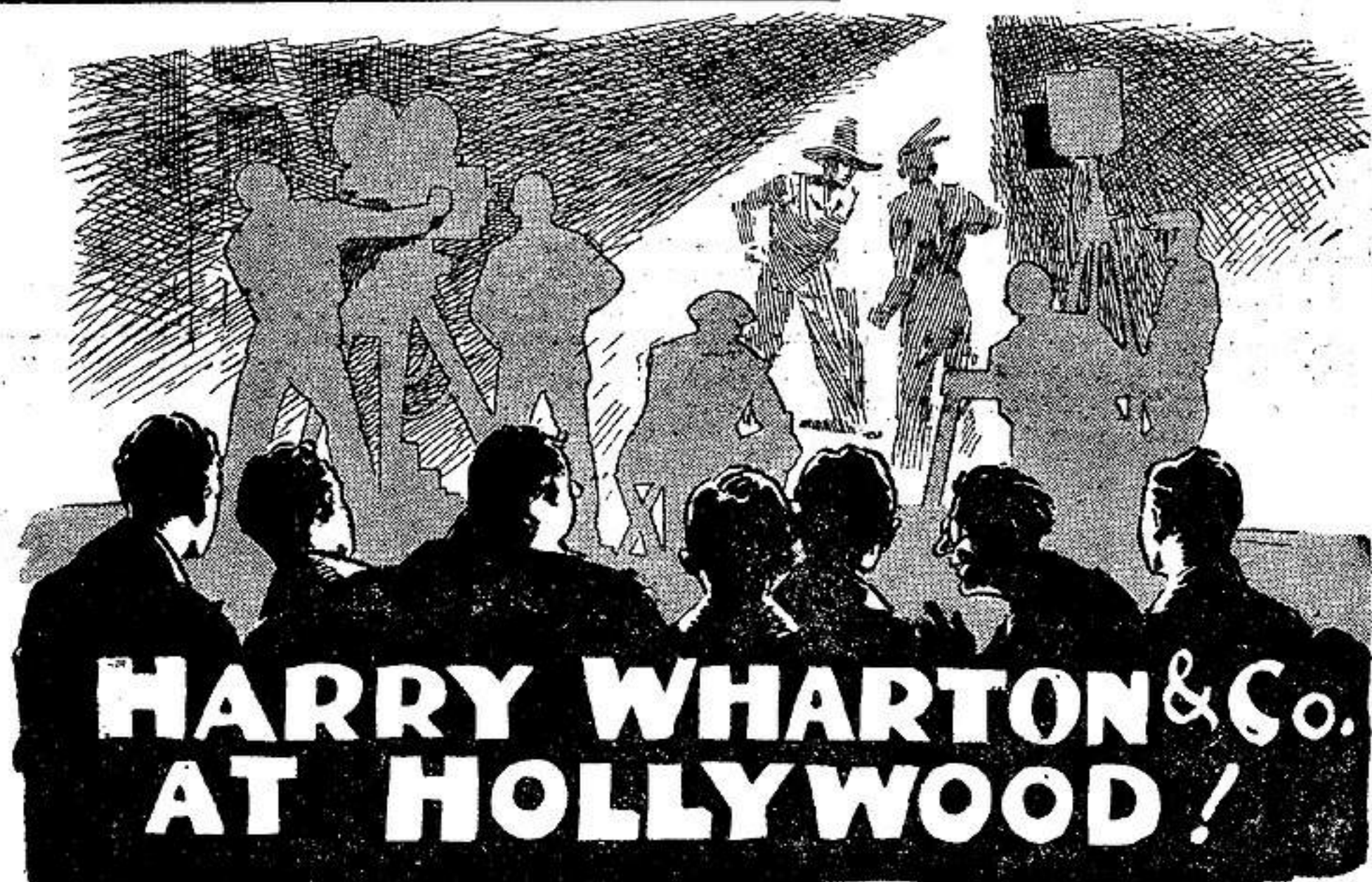
More about the intrepid young airman who is the hero of our popular serial, and

"FEARLESS, THE BAD LAD!"

a short complete "shocker" from the gifted pen of Dicky Nugent. Order this bumper twopennyworth now, and don't forget that you'll find two more wonderful free gifts in next week's issue, making in all a total of twenty motor-car badges. Cheerio, chums!

YOUR EDITOR.





HARRY WHARTON & Co. AT HOLLYWOOD!

Here's another unique story dealing with the adventures of the chums of Greyfriars during their trip to Hollywood, U.S.A. By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Dates for Bunter!

CONDUCTOR!" Billy Bunter sat up and squeaked, as the conductor passed through the car, on the train that was bearing Harry Wharton & Co. southward to Los Angeles.

"Yeh?"

The conductor did not stop.

Like everybody else between the Atlantic coast and the Pacific Slope, he was in a hurry.

He threw that curious American word "yeh," over his shoulder, as he was passing on.

"When do we get to Loose Angels?" asked Bunter.

The conductor stopped then.

That stopped him.

Many and various are the pronunciations of the musical name of the famous city of films. But Bunter had found a new one.

"Search me!" ejaculated the conductor.

Bunter blinked at him.

"I want to see Loose Angels from the train," he explained.

"Nothing doing, sir!" answered the conductor, shaking his head. "I guess you won't see any loose angels from this train. There sure ain't any angels around loose in California."

Harry Wharton & Co. chuckled.

"Oh, really, you know—" said Bunter.

"But p'r'aps you mean Los Angeles?" said the conductor, as if that idea had suddenly struck him.

Bunter sniffed.

He was not the fellow to have his pronunciation set right by an employed person on a train.

"No, I don't!" he answered. "I said

Loose Angels, and I mean Loose Angels."

The conductor shrugged.

"Can't help you, sir," he said. "If there's any loose angels around, I ain't wise to it."

And he passed on along the car, and disappeared into the next. Billy Bunter blinked after him through his big spectacles, and sniffed again.

"Cheek!" he said.

"Fathead!" said Bob Cherry. "The place is named Los Angeles—"

"I'm rather a dab at Spanish, Cherry. The place is named Loose Angels," said Bunter.

"I guess the folks who live in a place know what it's called," said Fisher T. Fish.

"Rot!" said Bunter. "Why, you live

explained Bunter. "I'm getting hungry already."

"We're not lunching till we get in, and we don't get in for over an hour yet," said Johnny Bull.

"Then what's to be done?" asked Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove propounded this poser with great seriousness, blinking round at the Famous Five.

"Echo answers what!" remarked Frank Nugent.

"The whatfulness is terrific, my esteemed fat Bunter."

Bunter grunted.

There was a candy-boy on the train, and the candy-boy was the natural resource in these urgent circumstances.

But the candy-boy required a financial equivalent in exchange for his wares, so he might as well not have been on the train at all, so far as Billy Bunter was concerned.

"I say, you fellows, what about some coconuts?" asked Bunter.

"Coconuts?" repeated Wharton.

"Yes; I've seen some palm-trees, so it stands to reason that there must be coconuts," said Bunter.

"Not quite," said Wharton, laughing. "I don't think you'll find any coconuts on the Los Angeles palm-trees."

"Date palms, perhaps," said Bunter.

"Well, what about some dates?"

"No dates, either, ass!"

"Well, I suppose something grows on them," said Bunter peevishly. "Americans wouldn't plant palm-trees just for ornament. I've no doubt we could get lots of dates cheap, if you fellows weren't so mean. If I happened to have a dollar bill, I'd stand you fellows some dates. You've got a dollar bill, Bob."

Bob Cherry smiled cheerily.

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Hollywood the city of romance, of triumphs and failures . . . the home of the cinema! And to this glittering city come Harry Wharton & Co., fresh from England, keen to get a "close-up" view of Hollywood's art!

in New York, and you call it Noo Yark. I heard a man in Chicago call the place Chicawgo."

"Oh, guff!" said Fisher T. Fish.

The juniors grinned. As a matter of fact, they had not found Americans safe guides in the pronunciation of their own place-names. Los Angeles, for instance, was generally pronounced with a hard "g"; which certainly would have made a Spaniard, like Quintilian, stare and gasp.

"Anyhow, when do we get there?" asked Bunter. "That's the important point."

"Is the importance terrific?" asked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I mean, if we're not getting in soon, we shall have to lunch on the train;"

"You'd like some dates?" he asked.

"Yes, rather!"

"I'll get you a box of dates."

"Good!"

Bob Cherry rose from his seat.

"I don't believe they grow dates here," said Nugent doubtfully. "You're wasting your time, fathead!"

"My dear chap, feeding Bunter couldn't be a waste of time," said Bob. "That's the most important thing in the jolly old universe. Besides, I'm sure I can get a box of dates."

And Bob left the car.

Billy Bunter turned a scornful blink on the other fellows.

"I'm glad to see that there's one chap who isn't frightfully mean," he remarked. "I'd have given the candy-boy a jolly good order, if you fellows would have paid him. But you wouldn't."

"My dear ass—"

"You needn't deny it," said Bunter loftily. "Mean all round! Even Mauly's growing mean."

"You've had all my change, old fat bean," remonstrated Lord Mauleverer.

"Oh, really, Mauly—"

"And you'd have had all mine, if I'd been an ass like Mauly," remarked the Bounder.

"I shall settle up these small amounts when we get to Hollywood," said Bunter, with dignity. "I've given instructions for my letters to be sent on there. I'm expecting a postal-order—"

"Oh, ye gods!" ejaculated Nugent. "The same one you were expecting at Greyfriars last term? Or the one you were expecting the term before?"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter blinked anxiously towards the door of the car. Since breakfast he had had nothing but a bunch of bananas, a box of chocolates, and a bag of nuts, some biscuits, and a cake. So it was scarcely possible to hold out till lunch, without something in the way of refreshment.

The door opened at last, and Bob Cherry came back into the car.

He carried a cardboard box in his hand, neatly tied with string. Bunter's eyes glistened behind his spectacles.

"Oh, good!" he exclaimed. "Hurry up, old chap! I'm famished!"

"That's a chocolate-box," said Nugent, glancing at it.

"It was," said Bob. "But there's dates in it now. Didn't I tell Bunter I'd bring him a box of dates? There it is, Bunter."

Bunter's fat face beamed. Bob Cherry sat down and watched him with a cheery smile as he jerked at the string.

The string snapped, and Bunter lifted the lid of the box.

He blinked at the contents—several bulky American newspapers, folded up to fill the box.

There was no sign of the dates that Bunter expected to see. He blinked at the box, and he blinked at Bob Cherry.

"Where's the dates?" he roared.

"Eh! Can't you see them?" asked Bob.

Bunter stared.

"No, I can't. There's nothing here but newspapers."

"The dates are on them."

"Wha-a-at?"

"My dear chap, you'd better get some new specs if you can't see the dates," said Bob. "Why, I can see them from here."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors. The expression that came over Billy Bunter's fat face was too much for them.

"Why, you—you—you—" gasped Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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"You—you beast—"

"Well, there's no satisfying some people," said Bob. "Why, the box is full of dates. There's dates on every page of every paper—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!" roared Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Crash!

William George Bunter hurled the box and the newspapers—dates and all—to an empty seat across the car. Evidently those dates were not the kind that Bunter wanted. Bunter could eat almost anything, but the dates on newspapers were of no use even to Bunter.

William George Bunter sat and glowered with wrath and indignation—dateless!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Train-Jumper!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Something's up!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"The upfulness is terrific."

The train had stopped in a station—the juniors still thought of a railway

MAGNET READER WINS A USEFUL PENKNIFE!

This Week's Winning Joke!

VERY APT!

Disgruntled man staying in hotel: "Did you say the Duke of Wellington actually slept in the bed I was sleeping in?"

Proprietor: "Yes, sir; in that very bed!"

Gentleman: "No wonder they called him the 'Iron Duke!'"

Sent in by: John Ramsay, 24, Braewick Road, Lerwick, Shetland, Scotland.

**You must have heard a
good joke—send it in
to-day!**

station as a railway station, though to natives it was a railroad depot. Some excitement was going on outside the car and around it. There were fifteen or sixteen passengers in the long car, as well as the Greyfriars juniors, and all of them were on their feet, staring out of the windows, or the doors at the ends—"rubber-necking" at what was going on. Harry Wharton & Co. "rubbered" also, wondering what was happening. A number of railroad employees of various grades had gathered, and a crowd of other people, and all of them seemed to be staring at something under the car, and there was a volleying of excited exclamations. The conductor and brakeman had alighted, and were bending to look under the car, shouting angrily:

"Come out, you hobo!"

"Git, you durned jumper!"

"You mosey out of there! You hear me?"

"Come on out!"

"What on earth's the matter?" asked Johnny Bull. "Somebody underneath the train? Can't be an accident—they wouldn't talk to an accident case like that."

Fisher T. Fish grinned.

"I guess it's a train-jumper," he said.

"A which?" ejaculated Nugent.

"A pesky hobo stealing a free ride," explained Fishy. "They've spotted him, and I guess he won't get any farther."

"My only hat!" exclaimed Wharton. "Mean to say that a tramp will steal a ride hanging on underneath a railway train?"

"Sure."

"Must have some nerve," said Johnny Bull, with a whistle.

"I guess them hoboes have got nerve enough for anything," said Fisher T. Fish. "That galoot may have hung on there for fifty miles, or a hundred—I guess tramps sometimes cross the Yew-nited States from Noo Yark to Frisco, riding under the cars, jumping one train after another. And I reckon they get handled a few when they're caught."

The juniors looked from the windows with interest, curious to see a man who had the nerve to travel, clinging under a car. But the man did not seem willing to come out, in spite of the emphatic objurgations of the conductor and brakemen.

No doubt he guessed the kind of reception he would get from those indignant gentlemen, when he came within reach of their hands—and feet! Train-jumpers are naturally not popular with train-men.

More and more people collected, adding their voices to the din. Still the "hobo" did not emerge.

"Come out, you greaser!" roared the conductor.

"Come out, you dago!" yelled the brakeman.

"I guess he's a Mexican," remarked Fisher T. Fish. "Plenty of greasers in this section. It was a greaser country once."

Harry Wharton & Co. had already learned that Mexicans were called greasers and dagos—the former from their complexion, the latter from the Spanish name Diego. Evidently the man under the car was a Mexican or "native Californian"—that is, a Californian of Spanish descent. Once the owners and masters of the country, the "native Californians" had dwindled to a poor and inconsiderable portion of the population, crowded out and dispossessed by the more energetic Americans. Los Angeles itself had once been a Mexican "pueblo," and was now a thriving American city, the remnant of its Mexican population of little or no account. From the American point of view, that was exactly as it should be; but a foreign visitor could not help feeling some compassion for a race that was conquered, dispossessed, and despised.

Fisher T. Fish had explained to the juniors that the Greasers were a lot of thieves and rascals; but as almost all their property was now in the hands of Americans, the juniors could not help thinking that there must have been some thievery and rascality on the other side, too.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, the conductor's got a gun!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Begad!" ejaculated Lord Mauleverer. "He can't be goin' to shoot the man."

"Great Scott!"

Fisher T. Fish chuckled.

"You guys, it's only bluff," he said. "I guess he's going to scare the hobo out."

The conductor had produced a revolver. The juniors could not believe that he intended to use it, but he certainly looked very angry and serious about it.

"You hear me, you durned dago!" roared the conductor. "You come out



Harry Wharton & Co. watched, with a cheery smile, as Billy Bunter lifted the lid of the box and brought to view several bulky American newspapers. "Where's the dates?" he roared. "Eh! Can't you see them?" asked Bob Cherry. "No, I can't," said Bunter, staring. "There's nothing here but newspapers!" "Well, the dates are on them, aren't they?" said Bob. "Ha, ha, ha!" (See Chapter 1.)

of that, or I'll sure let daylight right through your greasy carcass. Quit, I'm telling you!"

Still the man did not appear.

There was no doubt that he would be roughly handled when he did appear, and his reluctance was natural.

"But what's all the jolly old fuss about, Fishy?" asked Lord Mauleverer. "Can't they let the merchant alone?"

Fisher T. Fish snorted.

"The pesky hobo's stealing a ride!" he snapped.

"Bilking!" said Billy Bunter. "Serves him right, whatever he gets!"

"Well, you know all about bilking," said Bob. "You've been nabbed for riding without a ticket at home, you fat boulder!"

"Beast!"

"The pesky jay might be killed, too," said Fisher T. Fish. "Lots of these train-jumpers get all mushed up. I guess nobody wants the job of cleaning them up off the metals."

"Come out, you gol-darned dago!" roared the conductor.

Bang!

The revolver roared.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Nugent.

The shot was fired very wide of the mark to frighten the dago into emerging. It had the desired effect. A fattered figure came scrambling out from under the car.

Immediately it was surrounded.

The juniors looked at the man. He was dressed in a tattered shirt, wore moleskin trousers, a ragged hat, and nondescript shoes. His face was the swarthy face of a Mexican's, the eyes large and black, and rolling now with excitement and fear. With a cleaner face and better clothes, he would have been a handsome man.

Three or four pairs of hands were laid on him, and the hapless Mexican wriggled in their grasp.

"Turn him round!" roared the conductor. "I guess I'm going to kick that pesky hobo clear of the depot!"

"Senor!" gasped the affrighted train-jumper.

"You durned dago thief!"

Lord Mauleverer stepped down from the car. His lordship, generally very slow to move, moved very quickly now. He stepped between the hapless Mexican and the angry conductor. He was just in time to save the dago from the application of a heavy boot.

The conductor glared at his lordship. "Beat it!" he snapped.

"My dear man—"

"What do you want, horning in?" roared the conductor. "Git out of it!"

"Let a fellow speak," drawled Lord Mauleverer. "If the trouble is that this gentleman hasn't paid his fare—"

"Gentleman! Oh, gosh!" gasped the conductor, and there was a snigger from the crowd. "My cats! You figure he paid his fare, this here gentleman, to ride under the car?"

"Probably not," assented Lord Mauleverer. "I assure you I have no sympathy with a bilk, as a rule. But the poor man looks tired—"

"I guess he'll be tired by the time I'm through with him."

"But if the man's fare's paid, don't that make it right?" asked Lord Mauleverer.

"And who's going to pay his fare?" hooted the conductor.

"I am!"

"Good old Mauly!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"I say, you fellows, this is rather

thick!" said Bunter warmly. "Paying that bilk's fare, after refusing to lend me a few dollars for grub—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

Lord Mauleverer had taken out his note-case and produced his "roll." The conductor eyed him angrily. He looked as if he would rather have kicked the dago clear of the depot than have taken his fare. But he was impressed by the sight of his lordship's roll. A roll that obviously contained thousands of dollars was calculated to impress the American mind. The conductor became civil.

"How'll you know where the hobo jumped the cars?" he demanded.

"He can tell us," suggested Lord Mauleverer gently.

"Think he'll tell the truth?" snorted the conductor.

"Yaas."

"Lot you know about dagoes!" said the conductor, with pitying contempt. "I guess if you're going to pay for that pesky thief, you'll pay all the way from Bakersfield."

"Yaas. How much?"

The conductor named the sum, and Lord Mauleverer handed it over. Then he turned to the staring Californian, and bowed gracefully to the astonished man.

"Please excuse the liberty I'm takin' in buttin' in like this," said his lordship politely.

"Oh, senor!" gasped the train-jumper.

"Now you're booked to Los Angeles, and you can get on the train, an' ride in a car," said Lord Mauleverer.

"Gracias, senor!"

"Not at all!"

And lifting his hat slightly to the amazed Mexican, Lord Mauleverer returned to his car. When the train

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rolled on towards Los Angeles, the "jumper" was a passenger on board.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Hollywood!

HIRAM K. FISH came along the cars, and joined the juniors, as the train slowed down in the depot at Los Angeles.

"I guess we've arrived," said Mr. Fish.

Bunter blinked out of the windows. "Is it really Loose Angels at last?" he asked.

"Eh! What?" ejaculated Mr. Fish. "Oh, Los Angeles? Yep. You'd better call it Los Angeles if you want to find your way about, son."

Mr. Fish pronounced the word in the American way, with a hard g. In Spanish, of course, the g before an e is pronounced very like the English h; but Mr. Fish was blissfully unconscious of that. When the Americans annexed Los Angeles, they did not annex the native pronunciation.

Harry Wharton & Co. descended from the train, somewhat excited to find themselves at last in the "City of the Angels."

Once outside the railroad depot, the beauty of the place burst upon them, and they realised, so far as scenery went, the city deserved its romantic name.

It was a city of wide streets, spacious boulevards, pepper trees, and palms, and orange trees, parks and gardens, circled by blue hills.

"Begad!" remarked Lord Mauleverer. "This is somethin' like!"

"No wonder the Americans bagged it from the owners!" grinned Bob Cherry. "It was worth bagging!"

Some of the descendants of the original "owners" were hanging round the railway station, anxious for tips.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, there's your pal, Mauly!" chuckled Bob.

"Eh?" Lord Mauleverer glanced round in surprise.

The tattered train-jumper had come out of the depot, and he was loitering at a little distance, looking towards the juniors as if he would have approached them, but was nervous of doing so.

Fisher T. Fish gave a snort.

"Hook out your roll!" he said sarcastically.

"That hobo will haunt you now," said Fishy derisively. "You won't get shot of him so long as you hand out the dust. I guess that guy reckons he will live on you so long as you're in these parts."

"Oh, begad!" "You've asked for it, Mauly!" said Nugent, laughing.

Lord Mauleverer shook his head. "That fellow's a gentleman," he said. "He looks it, he sure does!" said Fisher T. Fish.

"My dear man, clothes ain't everythin'," said Lord Mauleverer mildly. "And the poor man certainly needs a wash. But I suppose there wasn't any washin' accomodation underneath the car."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "He wants to speak to you, Mauly," said Johnny Bull.

"He wants to touch you for five dollars," snorted Fisher T. Fish.

"I say, you fellows, where's Hollywood?" demanded Bunter, blinking round through his big spectacles.

"Not just outside the station, fat-head! This is a big city," said Bob. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,098,

"More than a million inhabitants, Fishy says. Hollywood's a suburb."

"Here's the auto," said Mr. Fish. "Now, pile in. The baggage will be expressed on. Get a move on!"

Coker and Potter and Greene took a taxi, the great Coker disdaining, as usual, to pack himself in with a mob of fags. A big automobile was there to meet the Greyfriars party, and the juniors packed into it. Lord Mauleverer hesitated. The lingering Mexican evidently wished to speak to him, and Mauly was always courteous. The man came towards him, lifting his ragged hat, with Spanish politeness. But what he had to say was left unsaid, for Hiram K. Fish interposed at once.

He waved a bony hand at the train-jumper.

"Here, you hobo, you beat it!" he snapped, and the Mexican backed away at once. "Step in lively, you boys!"

"I rather think that chap had somethin' to say to me, Mr. Fish," murmured Lord Mauleverer.

"Forget it!" said Mr. Fish, and he shepherded Lord Mauleverer into the automobile. Evidently Hiram K. Fish had no use for ragged greasers.

The tattered Mexican stood for some moments looking after the auto as it glided away with the Greyfriars party, and then disappeared into the crowd.

"I say, are we going to Hollywood now?" demanded Billy Bunter.

"Sure!" answered Mr. Fish.

Billy Bunter's eyes glistened behind his big glasses. Ever since Bunter had first seen Valentino on the films, he had known that he was born to be a film actor, and that a Valentino part was just suited to him. Bunter had a powerful feeling that, once he got to Hollywood, he would find some producer more intelligent than Mr. Fish, who would recognise what a prize-packet Bunter was, and jump to secure him for starring purposes on the movies. With this glorious prospect before him, Bunter was anxious to get to Hollywood, and almost forgot that he was hungry.

The auto rolled along wide boulevards planted with pepper-trees, and by streets of handsome shops. The juniors looked round them, with the keenest interest. Blue hills met the eye on all sides, and far in the distance to the west rolled the blue Pacific, Los Angeles being only fifteen miles from the sea.

TWO MORE FREE MOTOR-CAR BADGES NEXT WEEK, BOYS!

You Must Not Miss This One!



THE SPORTSMAN'S CAR!

"If I had a car, I should like a Bentley!" That's what every boy says to himself every time he sees one of these "greyhounds" in the street. The Bentley is one of the fastest cars in the world—a real sportsman's car! You'll get the famous Bentley badge in next week's "Magnet."

Early as the season was, there were signs of spring on all sides; in that favoured climate winter is little more than a name. Flourishing palm-trees and huge geraniums in full bloom met the eyes of the juniors. Overhead, the sky was azure. They noticed, too, the number of pretty girls who tripped along the handsome side-walks—most of them, however, decorated by the arts of the "beauty parlour." Beautiful girls, they learned later, were rather a drug in the market at Hollywood, where the hope of "breaking into" the films drew them like a magnet from everywhere. In every book store and drug store and beauty parlour might be found numbers of them, all of whom had come to Hollywood to break into the films, and had gone "broke" themselves in the process, and had had to take up more unromantic employment.

Hollywood is the Mecca of all who are caught by the glamour of the films; and for one who succeeds in breaking in, probably twenty or thirty have to turn to other employment, or take their departure when their supply of money has run out. It is a place of a few brilliant successes, and of countless broken hopes and broken hearts.

"Is this Hollywood?" asked Bunter eagerly, as the automobile rolled along a spacious boulevard.

"I guess this is Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood," said Mr. Fish; "and this is where we locate."

The automobile glided into an open gateway and stopped.

Harry Wharton & Co. were aware that their quarters had long ago been booked at Hollywood, within easy reach of the studios of the Perfection Picture Syndicate. They were rather curious to see those quarters. Hitherto the few halts the party had made had been passed in hotels; but it seemed unlikely that Mr. Fish would engage hotel quarters for a long stay, in view of the high hotel prices, and of Mr. Fish's carefulness with money. They had heard that Hollywood swarmed with apartment houses and boarding houses—and they now learned that it was at one of the latter that they were to stay.

"That's the shebang," said Mr. Fish, with a wave of a bony finger.

It was a pleasant-looking "shebang." A large house stood well back from the boulevard, with a green lawn in front of it, bordered by geraniums four or five feet high, blazing with scarlet blooms.

The house was painted white, with a red roof, and innumerable windows reflected the sunshine. There was a piazza, with rocking-chairs adorned by bright cretonne-covered cushions.

The whole place was pleasant to the view, and it was a relief to Harry Wharton & Co., who had rather expected to see something in the nature of a sky-scraping barrack.

The drive from the gate curved round the green lawn to the house, lined by giant geraniums. The auto stopped before the porch.

The Greyfriars party descended.

A man came out to carry in what Mr. Fish called their grips. Mr. Fish marshalled his party into a wide, airy hallway, in a corner of which a telephone was bracketed to the wall. As the auto drove on round the drive-way to the other gate Mr. Fish gave a glare across the green lawn to the boulevard and shook his head with annoyance. Coker and Potter and Greene were not yet in sight.

"Looks a decent show," Bob Cherry murmured to Wharton.

Harry Wharton nodded, "Jolly!" he agreed,

Mr. Fish was "doing" the party fairly well. Except for the words "BOARD RESIDENCE" in neat white letters, there was nothing to mark the place from one of the large private houses. On the gate was painted the name Long Beach; most of the houses had names, and the juniors had already passed a number of Sunsets, West Winds, Hill Views, and Venices. This was Long Beach Boarding House, and the juniors learned later that it was named after Long Beach, one of the shore suburbs of Los Angeles, a famous place for surf-bathing on the Pacific, where bathing goes on all the year round under the warm sun of Southern California.

"Where the John James Brown are those guys?" grunted Mr. Fish.

Coker & Co. knew the name of the place they were to come to, and they had started from the station in their taxi before the juniors, so they should have arrived already. But they were not to be seen.

"I say, you fellows, perhaps Coker's kidnapped, like he was in New York," suggested Billy Bunter cheerfully.

"Fathead!"

"Oh, really, Smithy

"Do you think the taximan has kidnapped him—and Potter and Greene along with him?" grunted Vernon-Smith.

"I guess if they miss lunch, they'll miss it!" said Mr. Fish darkly. "Meals don't wait for anybody in this shebang."

"Oh, I say, let's get in!" exclaimed Bunter hurriedly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And they got in.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Few Acquaintances!

LONG BEACH BOARDING-HOUSE proved quite an agreeable place.

The juniors found that they "roomed" in twos, two fellows sharing a room, doubtless from motives of economy on the part of Mr. Fish. But that arrangement was quite agreeable to the Greyfriars juniors, who were accustomed to "rooming" thirty together in the big dormitory at Greyfriars.

The rooms were not large, but quite clean and comfortable, and the windows gave a view of the wide, tree-planted boulevard.

As they drove through Los Angeles they had seen a good many mean and dismal streets; but in Hollywood, so far as they had yet observed, all was spacious and airy and pleasant to the view. From the windows they saw the climbing hills on all sides dotted with beautiful bungalows in fairy-like gardens.

On the first impression, at least, Hollywood was a fairyland.

There seemed a very large number of rooms in Long Beach Boarding House, and a good many boarders, or "guests," beside the Greyfriars party. Meals, the juniors learned, were served promptly, and never kept waiting; a

guest who was not prompt to his meal ran the risk of losing it altogether.

This news ended William George Bunter with a businesslike promptitude that he had never before displayed.

Mr. Fish, they learned also, was not staying in the boarding house. He was going to take up his quarters in the bungalow of Mr. Rigg Schootz, which was the name of the producer of the Perfection Picture Syndicate.

Harry Wharton & Co. were not downcast to hear it. Fisher T. Fish was staying with them—and a little Fish went a long way, so to speak.

Mr. Fish stayed long enough to present them to Colonel Coot, the proprietor of Long Beach, and Mrs. Coot, and then vanished.

Colonel Coot was a little fat gentleman with impressive manners, and the juniors wondered what he was colonel of. Judging by his rich complexion, Bob Cherry privately suggested that he was in the Booziliars. But it was probable that the title was merely honorary—the juniors had observed already that

mark, gave an almost convulsive start. His eyes, which were like large gooseberries in his plump face, turned on the dusky Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Would you mind saying that again?" he asked.

"Certainly, esteemed sahib," answered the obliging nabob. "I remarked that the goodfulness of the esteemed grub was preposterously terrific!"

"My!" said Mr. Coot.

The juniors grinned. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's wonderful variety of the English language had attracted a lot of attention wherever it had been heard. Mr. Coot seemed almost overcome by it.

"But you speak English, I guess," said Mr. Coot, after a pause.

The nabob stared.

"It is the esteemed and ridiculous English that I am speaking," he answered.

"My!" repeated Mr. Coot.

"Hurree Singh learned English in India," Harry Wharton explained, with a smile. "It's a little different from the home-grown article."

"I'll say it is!" agreed Mr. Coot.

"The difference is not terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "I was instructively taught by a wise moonshee in Bhanipur, esteemed sahib, who was deeply acquainted with the well of English pure and undefiled. In some respectfulness it differentiates from the idiots of this country."

"The what?" gasped Mr. Coot.

"The esteemed idiots of this country," answered the nabob innocently.

"My!"

"Make it idioms, ass," suggested Bob Cherry.

"My esteemed Bob

"Oh, idioms!" gasped Mr. Coot. "I see! My!"

There were three tables in the long dining-room at Long Beach, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was regarded with interest

from all of them. Even the most distant luncheon "rubbered" to get a look at the nabob, in the free-and-easy American way.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh did not mind.

In fact, he was rather used to attracting attention. Strangers never could hear him speak English without giving a little jump.

"I guess," said Mr. Coot, who knew from Hiram K. Fish that the Greyfriars fellows had come to Hollywood to act for Perfection Pictures—"I guess that lingo will hit them on the talkies! Yes, sir."

"I'll say it will!" said Fisher T. Fish, with a grin.

The nabob smiled complacently. He was quite prepared to let his remarkable English be placed on permanent record on the talking films.

After lunch the juniors went out into the gardens, with the exception of Billy.

A MARVEL FROM MANCHESTER!

A brief history of the famous CROSSLEY Car, the radiator-badged of which forms the subject of one of this week's UNIQUE FREE GIFTS.

Crossley, of Manchester, is a great name in the British engineering industry, and it is only to be expected that motor-cars turned out by this famous firm should have a name for dependability and hard-wearing qualities combined almost with the liveliness of a racing-car. There is something sporty-looking, too, about the appearance of every Crossley car; cars of this make have always been "good-lookers" as well as good performers. In the days of the Great War, the Royal Air Force chose Crossleys for all their tenders and light touring cars—and have remained faithful to this make ever since. Crossleys now-a-days are made in two standard models, the 15.7 h.p. and the 20.9 h.p.—both six cylinders. In addition there is the "two-litre" sports model. The 1929 models are, if anything, better-looking and faster than ever, and word is going round amongst the motoring fraternity that the new Crossleys are "the goods."

the United States was thickly sprinkled with colonels. Mrs. Coot was a tired-looking lady, with a peculiar imitation of "grande dame" manners, possibly derived from the neighbouring films.

Colonel Coot took the head of the table at lunch, Mrs. Coot being busy elsewhere—probably in the kitchen department. More than a score of other guests were in the long dining-room, of which the high windows gave a view of the trim lawn and geraniums and the boulevard beyond.

"I say, you fellows," murmured Bunter, with a genial smile on his fat face, "this grub's good!"

Bunter was happy.

His most serious doubt was set at rest. The grub was good and there was plenty of it; so there was nothing to worry about now.

"The goodfulness of the esteemed grub is terrific, my worthy and postorous Bunter," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Colonel Coot, overhearing that re-

Bunter, who retired to his room for a nap.

Harry Wharton & Co walked down to the gate, and looked out on the handsome boulevard.

"Coker's not arrived yet," remarked Frank Nugent.

"Lost again!" said Bob cheerfully.

"For a fellow who thinks he's in charge of a party Coker loses himself a lot!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's somebody!"

A small, but exceedingly handsome and highly-painted automobile, obviously a very expensive one, came along Sunset Boulevard at a tearing pace, and stopped so suddenly outside Long Beach House that the juniors almost expected to see it jump from the ground.

It was driven by a young man, a rather good-looking fellow, dressed negligently, but very expensively. He wore a tan silk pullover, without a coat, and a Panama hat, and a wrist-watch that glittered and almost blazed with jewels.

As the car stopped he glanced at the group of juniors at the gate, and beckoned.

They looked at him.

Nobody in the party felt disposed to obey that rather imperious beckoning hand.

"I guess that guy thinks no small piece of himself," remarked Fisher T. Fish.

"Horrid bounder," murmured Lord Mauleverer.

Evidently Mauly was not guided by clothes in his judgment. He had called the tattered Mexican of the train a gentleman; and this expensive-looking young man a bounder. Probably Mauly was right.

As no one heeded that beckoning hand the young man stepped from the auto, and came across the sidewalk, frowning.

Apparently, as Fishy had expressed it, he thought "no small piece" of himself, and was annoyed at being disregarded.

As he came nearer, the juniors could see traces of grease-paint, and they wondered whether he was a film actor.

The young man stopped and stared at them.

"You the outfit from England?" he asked.

"Yes," answered Harry Wharton.

Apparently the young man had heard of the Greyfriars party.

"Mr. Fish along?"

"Popper's gone to Schootz's bung," said Fisher T. Fish.

The young man favoured him with a special stare.

"You young Fish?" he asked.

"I'll say I am," agreed Fisher T.

"And these are the guys that are going to do the school business for Perfection—what?"

"Yep!"

"The very identical guys," said Bob Cherry gravely. "You've said it, I guess."

The young man did not seem pleased at being answered in his own language. He gave Bob a haughty stare.

"I guess I've got you now," said Fisher T. Fish. "You're Polk. I've seen your picture in the movie papers."

The young man nodded.

"I came along to see Fish!" he said discontentedly.

"Popper will sure be sorry he's missed you," said Fisher T., his manner very civil now that he had recognised Myron Polk, the famous Perfection film star. "You want to beat it for Schootz's bung, and you'll sure catch him!"

"I guess I dropped in on my way to

Long Beach," answered Mr. Polk sulkily.

"This is Long Beach," said Bob. He had not yet heard of the Long Beach after which the boarding-house was named.

Polk stared at him, and did not answer.

"Step in and get popper on the phone," suggested Fisher T. Fish.

"No time," answered Polk, in the same sulky tone. "I guess I got to be moving."

"I'll sure phone him a message," offered Fishy.

"You needn't."

With that gracious reply, Myron Polk swung round, and started back to his auto.

Bob Cherry drew a deep breath.

"Does that fellow go round Hollywood asking for his nose to be punched, Fishy?" he inquired.

Fisher T. Fish looked horrified.

"You jay!" he ejaculated. "That's Polk!"

"Anything special about Polk?" asked Nugent, laughing.

"Gee! He's the biggest draw on the Perfection list—he does sheikh parts," said Fisher T. Fish. "He draws a salary that would make a railroad magnate look like a piece off a ten-cent counter. Yea, sir! I guess he never gave less than three thousand dollars for that watch on his fin."

"More ass he!" said Bob. "What does a man want to decorate himself like that for?"

"Oh, guff!" said Fisher T. Fish.

Fishy had a deep admiration for a star who drew an enormous salary.

Nobody else in the Greyfriars party shared his admiration. Mr. Polk looked, to them, like a young man whose success had got into his head and made him haughty and cheeky. The fact that he was rolling in dollars and spent a lot of them on his personal adornment did not seem to them a thing to admire very much.

"He can drive a car, anyhow," remarked Bob.

Polk had started his auto, and he went along the boulevard at a terrific pace. People turned their heads to look after the highly-painted and polished auto flashing along like a rocket.

Fisher T. Fish grinned.

"I guess he makes the folks rubber!" he remarked. "That's the game in Hollywood—you want to hit the eye. I guess nobody will ever miss seeing Myron Polk when he is around."

"What an awful bounder!" murmured Lord Mauleverer.

"Oh, guff!" snapped Fisher T. Fish.

The decorative young man and his decorative auto vanished along Sunset Boulevard, on the road to Long Beach and the Pacific. He vanished also from the thoughts of Harry Wharton & Co. They were not yet aware that they were to have a good deal to do with Mr. Myron Polk, in the city of the films.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Coker, as Usual!

"LONG BEACH!" Horace Coker said to the taxi-driver.

"Yep!"

"Know the place?"

"Sure!"

Naturally, that satisfied Coker of the Fifth.

He took his place in the taxi, with Potter and Greene, and the vehicle buzzed away with the three Fifth-Formers of Greyfriars.

All the way from Los Angeles, Coker had made it as clear as possible that,

although he was travelling with a party of Remove fags, he was himself a much more important person than a Remove fag could ever hope to be. Generally, on the trains, Coker had travelled in another car. In the hotels, Coker had been pained to think that people might suppose him to be a mere schoolboy, like the others. This was a very important matter to Coker. So naturally, when the party landed at Los Angeles, Coker wasn't going to cram into the auto with the juniors. As usual on such occasions, Coker took a taxi on his own.

Potter and Greene did not mind, as Coker paid for the taxis he so lavishly took. All they minded was being landed at the wrong destination. Horace Coker, conscious of superior wisdom, was impatient of advice and even suggestions. But in point of fact, Coker had a perfect genius for taking wrong turnings and arriving in the wrong places. He often travelled under the guidance of Mr. Fish; but whenever the three Fifth-Formers were out of the range of Mr. Fish's eye, Potter and Greene always wondered where they would arrive.

On the present occasion, they were rather surprised to see the taxi-driver turn south. That Hollywood lay to the north-west of Los Angeles, they felt almost sure. Also, they believed that it was only a few miles away, being one of the nearer suburbs in the enormous space covered by the City of the Angels. But, as usual, Coker received a hint in his most Cokerish manner.

"Is that man going the right way?" asked Potter, glancing rather anxiously from the cab as the driver ran out of the city southward.

"He probably knows his way about his own town," said Coker sarcastically.

"Yes, but—"

"It's all right," said Coker.

Potter and Greene did not feel at all sure that it was all right.

"Sure you gave him the right directions, Coker?" asked Greene.

It was an unfortunate question. It implied a doubt of Coker's supreme wisdom.

Coker fixed William Greene with a basilisk eye.

"Do you think I'm likely to give the man the wrong directions, Greene?" he inquired unpleasantly.

"Well, we want to get to Hollywood, I suppose?" said Greene sulkily.

"We're going to Hollywood."

"Hollywood's north of Los Angeles."

"How do you know?"

"Well, I've heard so."

"And how do you know we're not going north?"

"I think we're going south."

"Don't think, old man," said Coker.

"Leave the thinking to me. It's not in your line."

Greene grunted, and was silent. Being a stranger in Los Angeles, he could not be absolutely sure that the taxi was taking the wrong route. But he had a strong impression that it was. So had Potter. But Horace Coker, as usual, was impervious to argument.

The mere fact that Potter and Greene doubted was sufficient to make Coker feel absolutely certain that all was right. It was only necessary to oppose Coker in order to confirm him in any opinion.

Los Angeles was left behind, and the taxi whizzed away along a country road. That Hollywood was not more than six or seven miles from the railroad depot in Los Angeles, Potter and Greene felt certain. So, when the taxi had covered ten or twelve miles, their uneasiness grew.



"Turn him round!" roared the conductor, as three or four pair of hands were laid on the Mexican. "I guess I'm going to kick the pesky hobo clear of the depot." "Senor!" gasped the affrighted train-jumper. Lord Mauleverer stepped from the train, and was just in time to save the dago from the application of a heavy boot. (See Chapter 2.)

"I say, Coker—" ventured Greene.

"Pretty scenery!" said Coker.

"Oh, quite! But—"

"That's the sea!" said Coker, with a nod towards the blue Pacific, that could now be seen in the distance ahead, by glimpses through the hills.

"Go hon!" murmured Potter.

Potter knew the sea when he saw it, without assistance from Horace Coker.

"What did you say, Potter?"

"Nothing, old chap!" answered Potter hastily.

"It's the Pacific," added Coker, who was always willing to hand out information to less gifted fellows.

"Not the North Sea?" asked Potter, with a deep and subtle sarcasm that was a sheer waste on Coker.

Coker laughed.

"My dear chap, we're six thousand miles from the North Sea. You want to polish up your geography a bit."

"Sure it isn't the Atlantic?" asked Potter, still with deep and subtle sarcasm.

"Of course not," said Coker, deaf and blind to sarcasm. "The Atlantic's on the other side of America."

"We live and learn" said Potter solemnly.

"You fellows can always rely on me to show you the way about," said Coker condescendingly. "Anything I know I'm always willing to tell my friends."

"You are!" agreed Potter fervently.

"I don't believe we're heading for Hollywood," said Greene obstinately.

"Look here, Coker, are you sure you

made the man understand we wanted Hollywood?"

Coker's look was freezing.

"I told him the name of the house where Old Fish has taken our quarters," he answered. "I asked him if he knew the place. He said he did. Anything more you want to know?"

"Might be more than one place called Long Beach," said Greene.

"Might be more than one place called Hollywood, if you come to that," said Coker.

Coker could be sarcastic, too.

"Well, we ought to be there by this time," said Greene; "and I can tell you I want my lunch. Old Fish says it's a boarding-house, and if you're late for meals you don't get any."

"We're doing a good speed," answered Coker. "The man's fairly whizzing."

"What's the good of that, if we're going in the wrong direction?"

"We're not."

Coker made that answer in a tone of finality.

That closed the matter.

Potter and Greene resigned themselves to their fate, as they often had to do with Coker, and the taxi whirled and whizzed onward. They looked out for signs of Hollywood, but saw none. As a matter of fact, by keeping on to the south they had about twenty-five thousand miles to cover to reach Hollywood. Obviously, they would not arrive in time for lunch if they kept on.

When about seventeen or eighteen miles had been covered, even Coker

had a faint doubt. He would not admit it to Potter and Greene, of course; but he leaned out and spoke to the driver.

"Far to Long Beach now?" he asked.

"Jest ahead, sir," answered the chauffeur. "'Bout three miles now."

"This the shortest route?"

"Sure!"

"Right-ho!" said Coker.

And he sat back again, satisfied.

"All serene!" he said. "We shan't be long now."

The taxi ran swiftly on, and entered Long Beach, and buzzed along the Ocean Boulevard in that town. That there was a town named Long Beach, about twenty miles from Los Angeles, Coker did not yet know. Even Coker could not know everything.

On Ocean Boulevard the taxi drew up, between a soaring hotel and the beach. The chauffeur looked round.

"Virginia Hotel?" he asked.

"Eh? No! Long Beach!" answered Coker.

"Long Beach?" repeated the driver.

"Yes."

The man waved a hand round at the line of hotels, the promenade, the five-mile beach, and the sea.

"This here's Long Beach!" he said.

Coker stared at him.

"Where?" he asked.

The chauffeur stared at Coker.

"Here," he answered.

"I don't see it."

The chauffeur stared harder.

"You don't see it?" he asked.

"No, I don't."

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"Well, carry me home to die!" said the chauffeur.

"Well, where is it?" demanded Coker. "It's not an hotel, and I can only see hotels from here."

"Not an hotel?" repeated the driver dazedly.

"No."

"I'll say it ain't!" agreed the chauffeur. "Last I heard of it, it was a town."

"A—a town!" ejaculated Coker.

"What did you think it was, sir?" asked the chauffeur politely. "A railroad depot or an oyster-bar?"

Potter and Greene exchanged a grin. Coker frowned.

"Look here, my man," he said crossly. "I told you to drive to Long Beach. You said you knew the place. Well, where is it?"

"This here is Long Beach!" snorted the chauffeur. "My! Ain't you got any eyes in your head?"

Coker grasped it at last.

"Is this town called Long Beach?" he stuttered.

"You've said it."

"Oh, my hat!" said Coker.

Potter and Greene smiled.

They had covered twenty miles in the wrong direction. As Hollywood was about seven miles the other way, twenty-seven miles lay between them and lunch. It was a satisfaction to know that they were right, and that Coker was wrong. But it would have been a greater satisfaction to find themselves within reasonable distance of lunch.

"Well!" said Potter.

"The man's a fool!" said Coker.

The Los Angeles chauffeur looked at him.

"Who's a fool?" he asked.

"You are!" retorted Coker.

The chauffeur regarded him attentively.

"You come from the Old Country?" he asked.

"Yes."

"You come a long way," said the chauffeur. "Did you come all that way to get your face mashed up?"

"Look here—"

"If you did," said the chauffeur, "you've only got to call me names. You've only got to blow off your mouth that-a-way. That's all."

Coker breathed hard.

"I don't want any cheek," he said. "I told you to drive us to Long Beach, and you've driven us here. Long Beach is in Hollywood."

"My!" said the chauffeur. "Mean to say it's the name of a house?"

"Of course it is! On Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood!"

"You didn't reckon you'd mention that?" asked the driver.

"You said you knew the place," said Coker hotly. "How the sump was I to know there was a town called Long Beach? Do you think we have Californian geography in class at Greyfriars?"

The driver blinked. Apparently Greyfriars was as unknown to him as Long Beach had been to Horace Coker.

"I guess I can take you back," he remarked.

"How far?"

"Seven miles the other side of Los," answered the driver. "We've done twenty coming here."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Looks like losing lunch!" groaned Potter.

"May get in in time for dinner!" moaned Greene.

"Well, staying here or going back?" asked the chauffeur briskly. "I guess I can't afford to spend my time chewing the rag with jays."

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"I'm certainly not going anywhere in this taxi," said Coker haughtily. "Goodness knows where you'd land us next. There may be a place called Hollywood on the top of the Rocky Mountains, for all I know, and I suppose you'd take us there."

"Your popper don't keep a strap for you at home, does he?" asked the chauffeur. "I'll say he don't, by the way you shoot off your mouth."

"Don't give me any lip!" said Coker. "I'll pay your fare, though you've brought us to the wrong place."

"I'll say you will!" said the chauffeur, with emphasis.

"But I'm done with you! Catch me trusting myself in your taxi again!" said Coker disdainfully. "Get out, you fellows!"

"But what about lunch?" asked Greene plaintively.

"I said get out!"

"And I said, what about lunch?" said Greene tartly.

Coker stepped out of the taxi.

"Please yourselves," he said.

Potter and Greene followed him out. They did not want to take a taxi twenty-seven miles, with the bill to pay at the end. Coker paid off the driver, who gave a snort, whirled round his vehicle, and disappeared in a cloud of dust. Coker & Co. were left standing on Ocean Boulevard, Long Beach—taxi-less and lunch-less—twenty-seven miles from the dining-room where Harry Wharton & Co. were lunching and where places were laid for three Fifth-Formers. Coker was angry and indignant, but he was not alarmed. He did not know that Potter and Greene were considering, with suppressed ferocity, the advisability of collaring him and mopping up Ocean Boulevard with him.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Polk Asks For It!

HORACE COKER glanced round him, heedless of his danger, because he knew it not.

Potter and Greene exchanged a ferocious look.

They drew a little nearer to Coker.

After a long morning's travel on the railroad, and more than an hour in a taxi, Potter and Greene were fearfully hungry. Coker's sublime guidance had landed them twenty-seven miles from a meal. In the circumstances, slaughtering Coker seemed the only possible satisfaction.

"They're bathing here," remarked Coker casually, with a glance at the beach in the distance.

Potter and Greene did not care whether they were bathing or not. All they cared about was lunch—or, alternatively, as the lawyers say, slaughtering Horace Coker.

"Pretty good climate, where you can bathe at this time of the year," said Coker. "Not that I'd care for too much of it. Bit soft, if you ask me. Give me England."

Potter and Greene could not give him that, but they were preparing to give him something else. With gleaming eyes and clenched hands, they drew near to Coker.

"Well, we should be too jolly late for lunch at Long Beach—the other Long Beach," said Coker. "That fool has dished us for lunch!"

"A fool has dished us for lunch, no mistake about that!" said Potter, in a deep voice.

"But there's lots of places here," said Coker.

"Eh?"

"We can lunch at one of these hotels—"

"Oh!"

"After all, I'm not keen on sitting down to table with a mob of jays," said Coker. "I daresay we can get a good lunch here."

Coker was quite unconscious that that remark saved his life. Potter and Greene unclenched their fists.

"Oh!" said Potter.

"Ah!" said Greene.

"Come on!" said Coker briskly. "Let's see what we can do at that hotel. We can get a taxi back later."

Potter and Greene smiled.

Coker, after all, had his agreeable ways. He had plenty of money, and a readiness to spend it. He never expected Potter or Greene to 'part.' His comrades had been about to fall upon him, and smite him hip and thigh. They were glad now that they hadn't.

Coker led the way, and Potter and Greene followed him. They reached an hotel that fronted on the boulevard and the blue Pacific.

There were plenty of people there, lunching at little tables on a broad piazza under a red-striped awning. The scene looked very merry and bright. The place was fairly full but a waiter found a table for the three newcomers, and they sat down round it, and Coker glanced at the menu, and ordered lunch in his usual lavish style. Potter and Greene felt quite attached to Horace Coker at that moment. They almost loved him when lunch was served. It was a good lunch and an ample one. It was probable that the bill would be an ample one, also; but that did not trouble Potter and Greene. In other matters they disliked leaving things to Coker, but such details as settling bills they were more than willing to leave to him. As a guide, philosopher and friend Coker was not useful; but in some ways he had his uses. The three seniors of Greyfriars lunched amply and happily.

There seemed to be plenty of visitors at Long Beach. Bathers dotted the beach and the hotel was crowded. Yachts and motor-boats were seen out on the blue waters. There was a cheery buzz of voices round the three Fifth-Formers as they lunched. Every few minutes an automobile would arrive and disgorge passengers. Among others, a highly painted and polished purple auto flashed into view, and stopped before the hotel with a whirr. It had come in from Los Angeles at a terrific burst of speed, and Coker glanced at it with disfavour.

"Road-hog!" he remarked to his friends.

When Coker was on his motor-bike at home he was accustomed to careering over the roads as if they belonged to him, and to regarding pedestrians with indignation and scorn. When Coker was on foot, however, he was often irritated by the reckless speed of those motor-cyclists who seemed to think that they owned the roads. In a car, Coker was a standing danger to humanity. Out of a car, he was very bitter about road-hogs. So he eyed the young man in the decorative car that drew up outside the hotel with a disavouring eye.

The young man lounged up the steps, unconscious or heedless of Horace Coker's disfavouring eye. He was a very elegant and expensive-looking young man, though dressed with a studied negligence. Hundreds of pounds had been spent on his clothes and his jewels. There was an expression on his face—a very handsome face—that Coker did not like. Though he was at least twenty-five years old, he had a curious look of a spoiled boy. Obviously,

he thought a great deal of himself. It was true that Coker also thought a great deal of himself. But then Coker had ample reason for doing so; and, so far as he could see, this elegant young man hadn't. A fellow who decorated himself like a girl "got Coker's goat," as he might have expressed it in the language of the country.

The young man stopped, with his hands in his pockets, and looked round the crowded piazza. He stopped quite near Coker's table, with his back to Coker. A waiter with a tray passed him, he stepped back a pace, and thus came into contact with the table, jolting it suddenly, and causing some of the crockery to rock.

"Here, look out!" snapped Coker.

Myron Polk did not look out. At all events he did not turn his head, perhaps not realising that that snappish remark was addressed to him.

Coker leaned over and gave him a poke in the back to draw his attention.

Polk turned then, quite suddenly.

He glared at Coker.

"What the dickens—" he began.

He did not speak with an American accent. He spoke in a rather high-pitched and affected voice that irritated Coker.

"Mind where you're shoving!" grunted Coker. "Do you want to shove the table over?"

Polk gave him a long look, and turned his head away so contemptuously that the blood flushed into Coker's face and he half-rose.

Potter dragged him down.

"For goodness' sake, Coker, don't get into a shindy!" he breathed.

"I'm not standing any cheek from that popinjay!" said Coker, in a growling voice.

But he sat down again.

Polk certainly heard Coker's words. Coker, in fact, intended him to hear them. He thought the young fellow a popinjay, and he saw no reason for concealing his opinion.

The Perfection "star" did not look at Coker again however. He stood where he was, his back to Coker, lounging, with his hands in his pockets, dangerously close to the little table. Two or three people passed him and he stepped back, and this time he gave the table a jolt that spun a glass of lemonade over, landing it on Coker's knees.

Possibly it was an accident. To Coker's view it was the sheer "cheek" of a conceited fellow who thought too much of himself. Anyhow, Coker got the lemonade, and it drenched his trousers.

Coker leaped up with a roar.

"You cheeky fathead!"

Polk turned his head lazily.

"Speakin' to me?" he drawled.

"Yes, you clumsy idiot!" hooted Coker.

"Keep your remarks to yourself, please," drawled the young man, with lazy insolence.

This was too much for Coker.

A glass of lemonade stood by Greene. Coker seized it, and, with a jerk of the hand, hurled the contents full in the face of the star.

Splash!

"How do you like it?" demanded Coker.

Polk evidently did not like it at all.

He gave a gurgling gasp, and staggered away a pace or two, dabbing at the lemonade that smothered his face and ran down over his elegant tan silk.

Coker grinned at him victoriously.

"That'll teach you manners," he growled.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Potter, in dismay.

Every head was turned towards the scene. Waiters stood looking on in horror.

But the worst had not happened yet. As Shakespeare has remarked, thus bad begins, but worse remains behind.

Polk dabbed the lemonade away, and made a jump at Coker. He had completely lost his temper.

There was a loud smack as his fist landed on Coker's rugged features, and Coker staggered over his chair.

The next moment Coker recovered himself, and fairly hurled himself at Myron Polk.

Crash!

Coker's hefty fist, with all Coker's weight and fury behind it, landed full in the handsome face, and Myron Polk went down as if he had been shot.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Chucked Out!

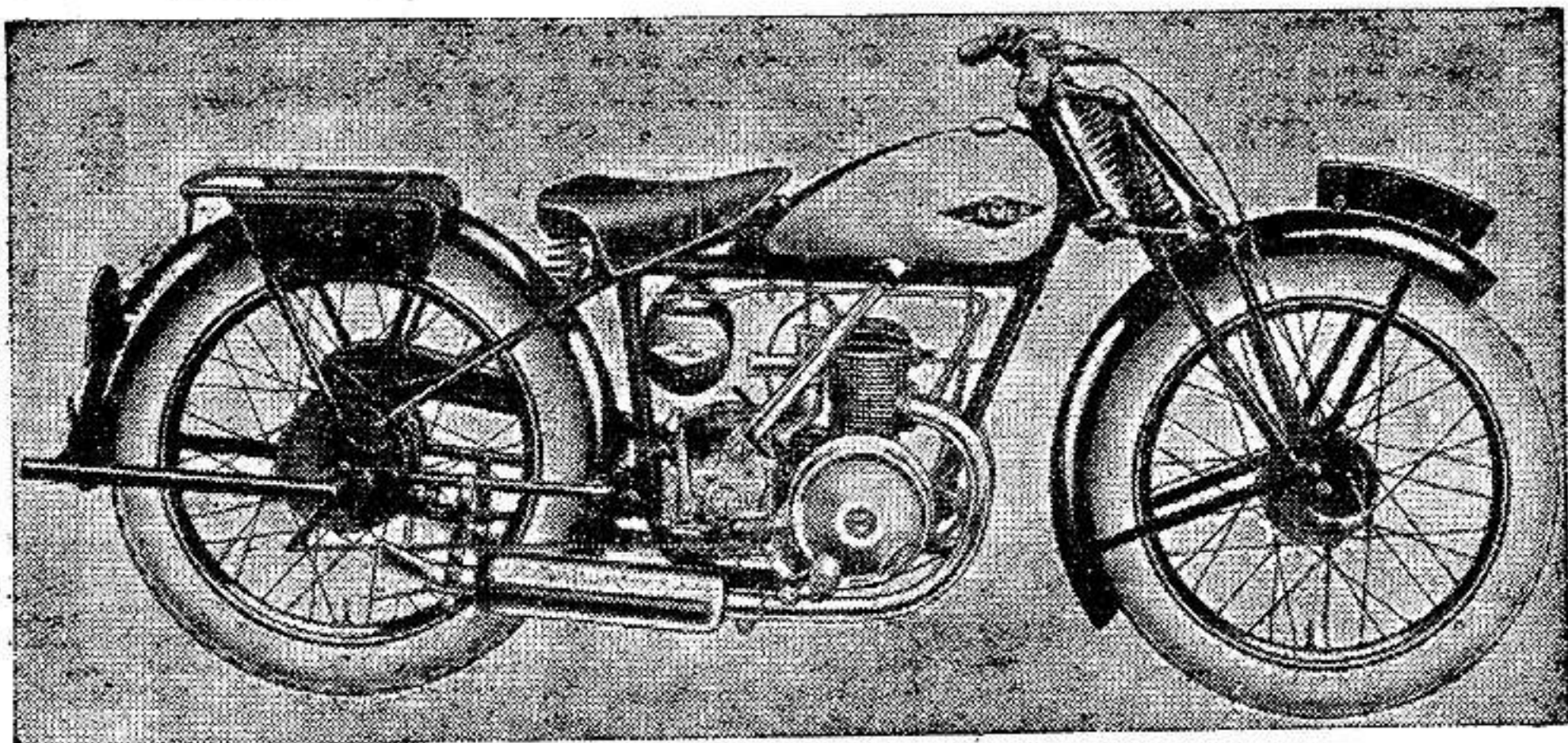
CRASH!

The piazza almost shook under the concussion as the film star landed on his back, swept off his feet by that mighty smite.

Polk lay dazed.

(Continued on next page.)

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Horace Coker stood over him, with clenched fists and blazing eyes, in towering wrath.

"Take that, you popinjay!" roared Coker. "Now get up and have some more, you loafing ass!"

"Ow!" gasped Polk.

He did not get up. He was quite dazed by that hefty smite, and he lay gasping and spluttering, with a crimson stream running from his nose, and both his handsome eyes already darkening. One of Coker's hefty punches was not a light matter.

Two or three waiters rushed to help him up.

Polk staggered to his feet, with their assistance. He hung limply in their arms.

"Thunder!" he gasped. "Oh! Thunder!"

"Want any more?" jeered Coker.

"For goodness' sake!" groaned Potter. "You're not in the games study at Greyfriars now, Coker!"

He dragged Coker back into his chair. "Think I'm going to stand that popinjay's cheek!" snorted Coker.

"For goodness' sake, shut up!" implored Greene.

"Rot!"

Coker consented to sit down, but he kept a wary eye on Myron Polk. His hefty smite had landed fairly between Polk's eyes, and it had done enormous damage. A smite from a hammer could not have done much more. Coker fully expected the young man to carry the matter further, and he was ready. But Polk allowed the sympathetic waiters to lead him into the hotel, where he disappeared from sight.

Coker snorted.

"Funk!" he remarked.

As a matter of fact, Myron Polk was not a funk. But his film career depended on his looks, and he had almost forgotten Coker in his horror and dismay at the disfigurement of his handsome face. His one thought was to apply remedies before he had two beautiful black eyes and a swollen nose.

Potter and Greene exchanged glances of dismay. No doubt that conceited young man had been insolent and aggressive; but Coker ran him fairly close in that line. Anyhow, Potter and Greene hated to get mixed up in a shindy before a crowd of people.

Everybody on that fashionable piazza was staring at them. Coker did not mind in the least. Potter and Greene minded a lot. They hurried through the remainder of their lunch. Coker did not hurry. That anyone could criticise his actions unfavourably did not occur to Coker; but he did not care a rap if they did. So long as he had his own approval, Coker was satisfied, so he was in a permanent state of satisfaction.

A fat man with gold-rimmed glasses and gleaming artificial teeth came up to Coker's table. He was the manager of the hotel, and he was almost petrified with horror at such a scene having occurred in his fashionable resort.

"I guess I shall be obliged some if you gentlemen will retire," he said.

Coker stared at him.

"I've not finished lunch yet," he explained.

"I've told the waiter to bring your bill."

"I tell you I've not finished."

"I guess you have," said the manager.

"Don't be as ass!" advised Coker.

"This hotel isn't a twenty-five cent lunch counter," said the fat man. "You want to beat it. See?"

Coker realised that he was being ordered away.

His face crimsoned.

"You fat idiot!" he said.

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"Eh?"

"Take your idiotic face away and shut up."

The manager became purple.

"You beating it?" he asked in a choking voice.

"Not till I've finished."

"I guess you'll be thrown out."

"I'd like to see the man who will throw me out," said Coker grimly. "Send him along. I'll give him a face to match that popinjay's."

Potter and Greene rose hastily.

"Come on, Coker!"

"Stay where you are," said Coker calmly. "This is a place where they sell grub, and this fat man is here to sell grub and do as he's told."

The manager almost relapsed into apoplexy. He was a very fashionable gentleman, moving with a dignified smile and a flash of artificial teeth among his fashionable guests. Never once in his fashionable career had it occurred to him that he was a mere seller of grub.

He seemed incapable of speech after Coker's remark, but he gurgled, and his subordinates seemed to catch the meaning of the gurgle. From somewhere a powerful man in shirt-sleeves appeared. Even a fashionable hotel in Long Beach had a "chucker-out" held in reserve.

Coker had stated that he would like to see the man who would throw him out. Now he saw him.

The manager, bereft of speech, gesticulated at Coker. The chucker-out approached him in a business-like way.

"Git!" he remarked.

"If you lay your paws on me—" said Coker belligerently.

He did not finish.

Hefty as Coker was, he was simply "not in it" with that big and powerful man. What happened exactly Coker never knew. But he knew, a few moments later, that he was lying on Ocean Boulevard, with the earth and sky and sea swimming wildly round his dazed vision.

"Ow!" gasped Coker. "Wow!"

Potter and Greene were strolling away, trying to look as if Coker did not belong to them.

Coker sat up.

The big man was there, towering over him, looking like a Brobdingnagian towering over Gulliver.

"You hitting the road?" inquired the big man.

He lifted Coker by the collar of his coat like a sack of wheat. Coker stood unsteadily on his legs.

"Ow!" he said. "Wow!"

"Git!"

This time Coker "got."

A ripple of merriment from the crowded Piazza followed him as he went. Coker did not hear or heed it. He tottered blindly away, not having got his bearings yet. Earth and sky were still swimming.

"Ow!" said Coker. "Wow! Yow!"

Two figures were disappearing towards the horizon. Coker blinked round him dizzily.

"Wow!" he said. "Yow! Ow!"

When Coker recovered himself a little he debated whether to return to the hotel and square accounts with the big man. He decided, on reflection, not to. Instead, he looked round for an auto to convey him to Hollywood. He had had enough of Long Beach. He found an auto for hire, stumbled into it, and this time gave rather more explicit instructions to the driver. On the road to Hollywood Potter and Greene hailed him. Coker eyed them surlily as they got into the auto.

"You fellows didn't back me up!" he said accusingly.

"Hem!"

"You see—"

"Not that you'd have been any use," said Coker disparagingly.

"Of course, we thought you could handle that fellow," remarked Potter, winking at Greene with the eye that was farthest from Coker.

"Of course," said Greene.

"Well, so I could, of course," said Coker. "He took me rather by surprise. I've a jolly good mind to go back and mop up the place with him. But it would be a bit undignified."

The auto rolled on to Los Angeles, Coker manfully resisting the temptation to go back and mop up the big man.

"Anyhow, that popinjay will jolly well have a couple of black eyes," said Coker.

And Coker drew such comfort from that reflection that he was quite cheerful by the time the auto whizzed into Hollywood and the three Fifth-Formers arrived at Long Beach Boarding-House.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Walk Round Hollywood!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. turned out the following morning in great spirits.

Bright sunshine shone in at their windows, and the blue sky over Hollywood and the surrounding hills was almost without a cloud.

"Jolly place," said Harry, looking from the window across the spacious boulevard, lined with pepper-trees.

Almost opposite Long Beach House was a long, low, white building, standing in wide grounds, and Wharton wondered what it was. It looked a good deal like a museum. He was to learn later that it was the studio of the Perfection Picture Syndicate, where Mr. Rigg Schootz ruled the roost and roared through the megaphone.

"No end jolly," agreed Frank Nugent, who was Wharton's room-mate. "We ought to have a good time here."

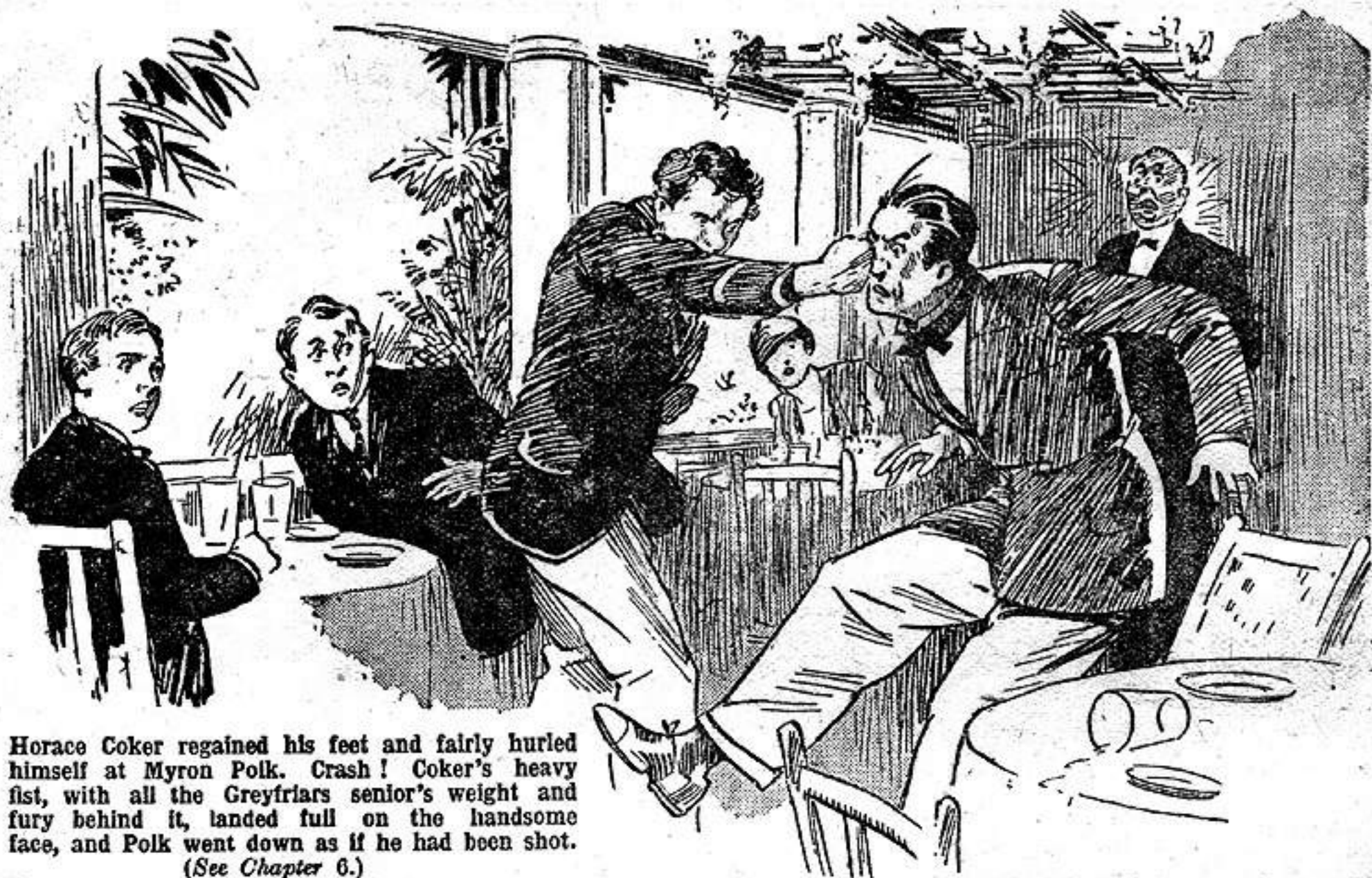
"Tip-top," said Harry.

Breakfast at the boarding-house was at nine; but the Famous Five turned out long before that hour. That day Mr. Fish was to take them to have their first look at a film studio; but they were anxious to see something of Hollywood as soon as they could. So they turned out at an early hour for a walk about the film town.

Lord Mauleverer and the Bounder turned out with them. Billy Bunter was left fast asleep. The juniors went two to a room, but as there were nine of them one fellow had a room all to himself. Bunter, of course, claimed that advantage, and he was rather surprised when the other fellows conceded it nem. con. As Bob Cherry remarked, there would be two in that room, anyhow—Bunter and his snore. Nobody wanted to share a room with Bunter's snore. In a big dormitory it was an infliction; in close quarters it was worse.

So Billy Bunter and his snore had a room to themselves, and the snore was going strong when the other fellows went down, early that bright, sunny morning.

Fisher T. Fish cut across to the Schootz bungalow to breakfast with his popper there. Harry Wharton & Co. bade a polite good-morning to "Colonel" Coot and some early guests, and strolled out into the gardens. There they found another early riser. Coker of the Fifth was already up. Coker had a room to himself; Potter and Greene shared one. Coker had told his friends that he would call them early in the morning; so his friends had taken the



Horace Coker regained his feet and fairly hurled himself at Myron Polk. Crash! Coker's heavy fist, with all the Greyfriars senior's weight and fury behind it, landed full on the handsome face, and Polk went down as if he had been shot. (See Chapter 6.)

precaution of locking their door overnight. Coker had thumped on that door in vain. Potter and Greene declined to wake up; and Horace went down at last without them.

Horace Coker gave the Remove fellows a genial nod. He was in a good temper that morning, in spite of the slacking of Potter and Greene. Coker found himself comfortable at Long Beach Hotel. Coker had run out of change, and asked Mr. Coot to change a five-hundred-dollar bill for him, which Mr. Coot had promised to do as soon as the bank opened. Coker did not see any connection between his possession of five-hundred-dollar bills and Mr. Coot's politeness and distinguished consideration for Coker. With all his gifts, Coker was not quick on the uptake. His impression was that Coot was a well-mannered, respectful sort of fellow, who recognised a fellow's superiority.

"Oh, I see you're up early, you kids," said Coker. "That's right! You haven't come here to slack about. I'm glad to see this."

Praise from Coker was praise indeed. This commendation ought to have made the Removites look very happy. It did not, however, produce any perceptible effect on them.

"Going for a walk?" continued Coker.

"Yes," answered Harry.

"I'll come with you, and show you round."

"Oh!"

"The honorific pleasure is great, my esteemed Coker," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"That's really kind, Coker," said Bob Cherry gravely.

"I mean to be kind," explained Coker.

"Oh!"

"Behave yourselves, and you'll find me all right," said Coker reassuringly. "I've had to call you to order a few times since we came to America. That was for your own good. It's not an easy thing to take charge of a mob of Lower Fourth fags. It's a lot of

responsibility. But it's all right, so long as you behave yourselves. Come on!"

The juniors looked at one another, but they followed Coker of the Fifth as he led the way briskly.

The fact was that Horace Coker was a gregarious fellow. He liked company. Had Potter and Greene been available he would have treated these fags with his usual disdain. Potter and Greene not being available Coker was putting up with the fags.

But, to do him justice, Coker did not realise this. He quite seriously intended to be kind to these kids, by wasting some of his valuable time on them. He would have scorned the suggestion that he wanted their company. Self-deception is the easiest form of deception, and undoubtedly it was Coker's long suit.

Harry Wharton & Co. smiled, but they were feeling cheery and good-tempered, and they resolved to stand Coker, if they could, during that morning stroll. The Bounder and Johnny Bull turned a corner and vanished into space; but the other fellows continued under the wing of the great Coker.

"That's a museum, you kids," said Coker, with a nod towards the long, low building that Wharton had noticed from his window.

"Looks like one," agreed Wharton.

"It is one," said Coker, positive at the first hint of doubt. "We can go in if it's open so early. Follow me!"

Coker threw open a gate and walked up a path, between green lawns stretching towards the building.

It looked as if the place was open, for a large, green-painted door stood wide, and people could be seen moving about within.

The juniors did not follow Coker up the path, however.

The building looked a good deal like a museum, they thought, but that was no proof that it was one, and there was no notice of any kind posted up. They did not want to butt into a private place without permission or invitation.

So they stayed at the gate and watched Coker's progress. Coker had no such doubts. Having said that it was a museum, it was a museum; it had no right not to be a museum, after Coker had said that it was one. So Horace, without even noticing that the juniors were not following, marched up to the open doorway and walked in.

A number of men in shirt-sleeves were to be seen inside, and all sorts and conditions of strange-looking objects stood about, like the scenes of a theatre. Inside, it did not look much like a museum. Coker continued on his way regardless.

"Hi!"

A man shouted at him, but Coker did not look round at him. It did not dawn on him that anyone could have the insolence to hail him like that.

"Hi!" came the shout again. "Hi! You! Beat it!"

A man, looking out of the doorway of a log-cabin—part of a "set" for a backwoods picture—was waving his hand and shouting at Coker.

Coker realised that the man was addressing him. He stopped and turned a haughty stare on the man.

"Did you speak to me?" he demanded.

"I'll say I did!" hooted the doorkeeper of the Perfection studio. "You want to hop it! You want to hop it quick! See?"

"My good man——" said Coker condescendingly.

"Good man, thunder!" said the doorkeeper, coming out of the log hut. "What you mean horning into this studio? Don't you know strangers ain't allowed in Hollywood studios? Where was you raised, what?"

"Studio?" repeated Coker.

"Beat it!"

"If I've made a mistake," said Coker calmly. "I'll clear off. But don't you give me any cheek. I won't have it, see?"

"Are you beating it?" demanded the gatekeeper. "I ain't paid to stand and

(Continued on page 16.)

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HARRY WHARTON & CO.
AT HOLLYWOOD!

(Continued from page 13.)

listen to a guy blowing off his mouth. Beat it, I keep on telling you! Git the other side of that door—and stay there!"

"I'll go when I please!" said Coker contemptuously.

"I guess you'll go when I say so," retorted the doorkeeper. "Here, Mike, Bill, Saul! Boast that guy out of this sheebang!"

Three rough-looking fellows in overalls came grinning up to Coker. Boosting Coker seemed to them an entertaining interlude—easier work than shifting furniture and scenes.

Coker, of course, was not the fellow to back down before three tough fellows in overalls. As they hustled him back to the doorway Coker raised objections—strenuously. So he finished his journey in the grasp of three pairs of hands.

Harry Wharton & Co., waiting at the gate to see what happened to Coker, suddenly became aware of a disturbance.

Something flew suddenly out of the doorway and landed on the green lawn by the path.

It yelled as it landed.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Coker——"

"Seems in a hurry!" remarked Nugent.

"Yaas, begad!"

"The hurryfulness is terrific!"

Horace Coker picked himself up. He rallied, to charge back into the studio and mop up the earth with those rough men in overalls. But the door had been shut after him, and he paused. Perhaps his experience at Long Beach lingered in his mind, too. Instead of charging into the Perfection studio Coker set his collar straight, picked up his hat, and walked back to the gate, with a heightened colour.

"Anything worth seeing inside?" asked Frank Nugent blandly.

"Nothing. The fact is, you were mistaken in thinking the place was a museum, Wharton."

"I was?" ejaculated Wharton.

"Yes; it's a studio. You'll know a studio when you see one, when you've been a bit longer in Hollywood," said Coker.

"Oh!" gasped Wharton.

"This way!" said Coker.

He led them along the boulevard, and the juniors followed him. They grinned at one another as they went. With Coker as guide, it seemed probable that that early morning walk round Hollywood might be productive of some lively episodes.

"Good old Coker," murmured Bob Cherry. "I heard Potter and Greene talking last evening about his being chucked out of an hotel yesterday. Now he's been chucked out of a studio. Follow on, my infants, and let's see where Coker will be chucked out next."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker glanced round.

"Don't cackle like that!" he said.

"Eh?"

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"Remember you're with a Fifth-Form senior," said Coker.

"That's what makes us cackle," said Nugent, innocently.

"I don't want any cheek," said Coker, darkly.

And he led onward again followed by his flock—all of them smiling, and interested to see whether Coker would be chucked out of any more places during that interesting walk round Hollywood.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Owner of Hollywood!

"S TEEP!" said Bob Cherry.

"The steepfulness is terrific."

Coker glanced round.

"Don't slack," he said.

Coker had turned from the Sunset Boulevard, and taken a turning that led to a road up the hills.

It was a beautiful road, winding up a fertile hillside, dotted with bungalows and gardens, but there was no doubt that it was steep. However, there was likely to be a good, extensive view of the film town from the top, so the juniors followed on cheerfully enough.

Here and there, the path was quite dizzy, with a rising hillside on one side, and a sheer drop on the other. But tracks of tyres under their feet showed that it was used for automobiles, and it seemed to the juniors that a motorist would want a good deal of nerve to drive there. Higher they went, winding round the hill, occasionally catching glimpses of the blue Pacific in the distance under the morning sunshine, at other times seeing Hollywood, and Los Angeles, spread out like a map below them.

"Hollo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry suddenly.

"Mauly's jolly old pal, the greaser!" murmured Nugent.

At an abrupt turn of the path, where three or four trees made a cosy corner, a man was seated on a stone, smoking a cigarette. The juniors wondered if he had been sleeping there, in the open air. They did not envy him, if he had, for warm as it was at Los Angeles, the nights were cold enough. The dark-skinned man glanced at them, from under the ragged rim of his old sombrero, and as he recognised the party, he jumped to his feet with alacrity, and swept off his hat. It was the "native Californian," the train-jumper of the previous day.

"Good-mornin'," said Lord Mauleverer, politely.

Coker stared at the Mexican. Coker had observed the incident of the "train-jumper" from his car the day before, and he recognised the man again.

"Oh, you," he said.

"Deseo a usted muy buenos dias!" said the Mexican, with a graceful bow to Lord Mauleverer, which was oddly out of keeping with his grubby face and tattered attire.

Lord Mauleverer smiled.

"My dear chap, I don't speak Spanish," he said.

"I wish you a very good mornings," said the Californian, with another bow over his immense hat. "Senor, I would have speak to you to thank you for what you have done for me undeserving. The kindness and generosity of the senor was overwhelming."

"Not at all," said Lord Mauleverer. "Glad to have been of a little service, sir."

"Chico Valdez will always remember your kindness," said the Spanish-American.

Had Fisher T. Fish been present, he certainly would have expected the

greaser to "touch" Mauly for a five-dollar bill. But the tattered gentleman made no attempt of that kind. A keener eye than Fishy's could read in his looks a high Spanish pride, in spite of his tatters. The man was obviously a tramp, and perhaps not a very reputable one, but he was no beggar.

He had only desired to speak to Lord Mauleverer, to thank him in his flowing Spanish way for his kindness.

"My name's Mauleverer," said Mauly, feeling bound to introduce himself now that Chico Valdez had given his name.

The Californian bowed again.

"The senor is not Americano?" he asked.

"No fear," said Mauleverer, with a smile.

"Ingles?" asked Valdez.

Mauleverer guessed the meaning of that Spanish word easily enough.

"English—yes," he answered.

"It is an honour to have received kindness from so noble a hidalgo," said the Californian. "I am the servant of your grace and your grace's friends."

Lord Mauleverer nodded and smiled.

"Now I can offer the noble hidalgo my gratitude," went on Valdez, with a manner of stately courtesy that contrasted oddly with his shabby clothes and worn shoes and ragged hat. "Los Americanos have taken all that should be mine."

He waved a swarthy hand towards Hollywood, spread out like a map almost under the feet of the Greyfriars fellows.

"Believe me, senor," he said. "What you see from this hillside, is mine."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. The juniors stared.

"What is yours?" exclaimed Coker, in astonishment. He could scarcely suppose that the tattered Californian was alluding to the town of Hollywood.

"The pueblo," said the Californian calmly.

"What the thump is a pueblo?" exclaimed Coker, irritated. Anything that baffled his mighty intelligence irritated Horace Coker.

"A town, fathead," said Nugent.

"Don't be cheeky, Nugent! Mean to say that the town of Hollywood belongs to you, Mr. Valdez?" asked Coker. He wondered whether the man was a lunatic, a suspicion that occurred to Harry Wharton & Co., also. It was rather startling to hear a tattered greaser claiming to be the owner of a town worth millions of pounds.

Valdez nodded.

"It is mine—much of it, at least," he said. "The rancho of my people was here, before the Americanos came. I am a Valdez!"

The Greyfriars fellows had never heard the name which the Californian pronounced with a great deal of dignity. They were not aware that Hollywood was built over the site of old Mexican ranches, of which the owners had been dispossessed after the American conquest.

"I am Valdez!" repeated the Californian. "My father's father owned much of that land—his herds were many. He was rich—and I——!" He shrugged his shoulders.

"But if your people had a title to the land——" began Harry, perplexed.

"The title was said to be defective—all over California it was the same, after the Americanos came. It was good under Mexico, but it was—what you call—expended, when the Americanos took the country."

"Begad," said Lord Mauleverer. "That's doocid hard lines."

"Now, when I say I own these lands, they laugh, and think I am loco-rabioso

—as you say, madt!" said Valdez. "So it is, senor, that Chico Valdez can offer you only his thanks and his gratitude."

He stepped back, bowing over his ragged sombrero again. The juniors could not help wondering if he had told this extraordinary tale for a "tip." But his manner was so full of dignity that they gave up that idea. They raised their hats to Senor Valdez and passed on, but Lord Mauleverer lingered.

"Look here, old bean," said Mauly gently. "You're up against it. I'd like—"

"Gracias, senor! No!" said Valdez.

"My dear chap, as a friend," said Lord Mauleverer. He had a strong suspicion that the man whose grandfather had owned lands now worth millions, had no breakfast in prospect that morning.

The Californian shook his head.

"My dear fellow, I insist!" said Mauleverer; and he placed a hundred-dollar bill in the hesitating hand of the descendant of the line of Valdez.

"Oh, senor!" gasped the Mexican.

The tears started to his eyes.

"Senor, I will accept your kindness!" he faltered. "And if the time shall come when Chico Valdez can die for you or your friends, he will welcome the hour."

"Thanks, old bean!" said Lord Mauleverer, with a smile.

And he raised his hat politely, and followed the other fellows up the hill.

Chico stood looking after him, till he disappeared beyond a winding of the hill; and then he hurried down the path—probably to change the bill and seek a meal he badly needed.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Myron Polk at Home!

"**B**EGAD, that's a pretty place!"

"By Jove, it is!" said Harry Wharton.

High up on the hill above Hollywood, at a turn of the winding road, the juniors came on a bungalow nestling among tall trees. The gardens were bright with flowers and trim green lawns. With white walls, and red roofs, and green shutters, the low, long building looked a picture among the palm-trees and scarlet geraniums. The windows were open to the morning sun, and blue silk curtains rustled in the breeze from the sea. Harry Wharton & Co. had seen many fairy-like bungalows dotted about the hill, but this place seemed the most fairy-like of all. They stopped to glance at it. Coker gave a grunt.

"Bit theatrical, all the same!" said Bob Cherry. "Belongs to one of the film stars, I suppose; lots of money spent there."

Two or three Japanese servants were fitting about the veranda. At the open door of a garage a man was polishing a car. Harry Wharton's eyes fixed on the latter; he recognised the highly-painted purple car he had seen the day

before, when Myron Polk called at the boarding-house.

"That's Polk's car!" he remarked.

"Polk's place, then, I suppose?" said Nugent. "These film-actors seem to do themselves well."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's Mr. Fish!"

Hiram K. Fish came out into the veranda of the bungalow. Apparently, he had been paying an early morning call on Mr. Polk. The juniors noticed that his brows were knitted and his lips set; he seemed very angry about something. In the doorway behind them appeared the elegant figure of Polk himself; but he was not recognisable now, his face being almost covered with bandages. Something had happened to Polk since the juniors had seen him the day before. Coker could have told them what it was, had he

dilapidated state of Mr. Polk that was the cause of his annoyance.

"Accident nothing!" growled Mr. Fish. "He's been beaten up by some guy. Nose swelled, eyes black! Gosh! And him wanted in the set to-day! I'll tell the world that Schootz is nearly raving! I guess that guy who beat him up wants lynching."

"Hard luck!" said Bob Cherry.

"I guess the make-up won't cover them damages!" said Mr. Fish. "Not a yearthly. He's got to lay up and keep the picture waiting. Gee, I guess I feel like gunning after the guy who broke him up!"

Mr. Fish was deeply worried.

"And him the sheikh!" he said. "The picture can't go on without him. Jevver hear of such luck! I guess I've slanged him some for getting into a rookus. Shouldn't wonder if he

asked for it!" growled Mr. Fish. "It would be like him! But there you are—there's our pesky sheikh with two black eyes and a nose like a bad tomato! It gets my goat! Whoever hit him must have handed out some sockdolager. Yes, sir!"

"The punchfulness must have been terrific!" remarked Hurrey Jamset Ram Singh.

"Dog-gone my cats!" said Mr. Fish. "Couldn't have happened worse—and the worst of it is the guy wants to go gunning after the fool that broke him up. There's going to be trouble, darn it! Talking all over his mouth about setting a thug to beat up the fool, whoever he is. Search no!"

The juniors made no comment on that. Mr. Polk seemed to have been severely handled by somebody; but the idea of setting some "thug" to "beat up" the man who had handled him, rather startled them.

"Well, now you're here, chance for you to meet Polk!" said Mr. Fish. "I'll take you in and introduce you."

Harry Wharton & Co. were not very keen on seeing anything more of Myron Polk; but they did not, of course, raise any objection. The Greyfriars fellows went up the path to the veranda with Mr. Fish.

Polk was still standing in the doorway, looking out across the veranda and the gardens, smoking his cigarette.

He blinked at the party through his bandages.

Suddenly he gave a violent start, and came striding across the veranda, and hurrying down the steps.

"Here, Polk!" said Mr. Fish. "This is the outfit—"

"You!" said Polk, between his teeth, fixing his half-hidden eyes on Coker, and ignoring Mr. Fish's remarks.

Coker gave a jump. He recognised his adversary of the Long Beach hotel now.

"My hat! You!" said Coker.

"What—" began Mr. Fish, staring from one to the other.

Polk gritted his teeth.

"That's the fellow!" he said.

"Eh? What fellow?"

"The hooligan who attacked me at Long Beach!" hissed Polk.

"Oh, great John James Brown!"

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recognised the young man; but the bandages quite hid Mr. Polk's identity from Coker of the Fifth.

Leaving the film-actor standing in the doorway, smoking a cigarette, Mr. Fish came down the steps of the veranda, and tramped down to the gate. Then he became aware that the juniors were there.

"Hallo, you!" he said. "Taking a walk before breakfast?"

Mr. Fish tried to be genial, but he was plainly worried about something.

"Yes," answered Harry. "Is that Mr. Polk yonder?"

"Yep!" grunted Mr. Fish.

"We saw him yesterday at the boarding-house," Harry explained.

"He seems to have had some accident."

Hiram K. Fish exploded in wrath. The juniors found that it was the

ejaculated Mr. Fish, in astonishment and dismay. "You don't say!"

"Hooligan yourself!" retorted Coker. "As for saying I attacked you, that's a lie, Mr. Polk, if that's your name. You smacked my face, and you know it, and I knocked you down; and I'm ready to do the same again."

"Oh, crumbs!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Ye gods!" said Nugent, with a whistle.

The juniors had heard of the shindy at Long Beach; but they had certainly never dreamed that it was Mr. Polk with whom Coker of the Fifth had found trouble. It was rather dismaying to discover that Coker had hammered the star actor of Perfection Pictures. Coker, however, was not at all dismayed. He was, as he said, ready to repeat his performance, if required.

Mr. Fish gazed at Coker.

"So it was you!" he hooted.

"It was I who knocked down that popinjay!" answered Horace Coker disdainfully. "I'm ready to knock him down again, if he checks me again."

"You gol-darned jay!" roared Mr. Fish wrathfully. "You figure that I brought you out here to mush up the features of the Perfection sheikh?"

"You'll be sorry for it!" said Polk, between his teeth, his eyes glittering at Coker from the bandages.

Coker snorted contemptuously.

"You'll find me ready!" he snapped. "And if you're thinking of setting on some tough to fight your battles for you, get on with it as soon as you like. I'll give him a face to match yours."

Polk raised his hand.

"Get out!" he snapped.

"If this is your place, you popinjay, I'll get out fast enough!" retorted Coker scornfully; and he walked back to the gate, and went into the road.

Polk's eyes gleamed after him.

"So that hooligan is one of the outfit you brought from England, Fish," he said.

"Yep!" grunted Mr. Fish.

"To act for Perfection Pictures?"

"Sure!"

"You'll turn him off," said Mr. Polk. "Forget it!" snapped Mr. Fish. "I guess he's some fool, but I reckon you asked for it more or less. I guess that guy is wanted in the school scenes—why, he's naturally such a fool that he's worth his weight in gold in the comedy parts."

Harry Wharton & Co. grinned. They wondered whether Coker of the Fifth guessed on what grounds he was valued by Mr. Fish. Fortunately, the great Horace was out of hearing.

Polk's lip curled bitterly.

"You'll fire that guy!" he said deliberately. "If he enters the studio, I keep out of it."

"Never hear of contracts?" snapped Mr. Fish.

"I'll break my contract with Perfection, if you don't fire that guy!" answered Polk. "He won't be any use to you, anyhow, after I'm through with him."

"Oh, forget it!" growled Mr. Fish. "You'll guess again when you're cool, Myron. Here, you lads, beat it now."

Polk, with a last vindictive glance after Coker of the Fifth, went back into the house. Harry Wharton & Co. were not sorry to go. They had seen quite enough of the Perfection "sheikh."

Mr. Fish paused in the roadway to address a few words to Coker.

"You darned idiot!" he said.

"Look here—"

"You petrified chump!" said Mr. Fish.

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Fish. "If you wanted a rookus, couldn't you break up anybody but the Perfection sheikh, darn you!"

"He smacked my face!" roared Coker.

"Dog-gone your face!" hooted Mr. Fish. "What the thunder does your face matter, compared with a Perfection Picture film? Don't talk foolish! You've blacked his eyes—"

"Serve him right!"

"And squashed his nose—the handsomest nose in California!" yelled Mr. Fish. "A million dollar nose, you jay!"

"It's a ten cent nose now, anyhow!" grinned Coker.

"This means that 'Lord of the Desert' may be hung up for weeks!" howled Mr. Fish. "Perfection loses thousands of dollars. My! I guess I feel like booting you all the way down to Hollywood."

"I shouldn't let you do that, Mr. Fish," said Coker calmly. "You can say what you like, of course, because you're old enough to be my father. But if—"

"Shut up, Coker!" said Wharton.

"Hold your tongue, Wharton!"

"I guess this gets my goat!" said Mr. Fish. "Dog-gone you! Mushing up my sheikh! Oh, git!"

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Mr. Fish stalked away in great dudgeon.

"Well, Coker's done it now," remarked Bob Cherry.

"The donefulness is terrific!"

"Don't be cheeky!" said Coker, frowning. "That popinjay picked a row with me, and got what he asked for. It's time we got back to brekker. Shut up, and come on!"

And the juniors walked back to Hollywood, and arrived at Long Beach Boarding-House in time for breakfast. Potter and Greene met them as they came in.

"Slackers!" said Coker.

"You were going to call us!" murmured Potter.

"I thumped on your door, but you were sleeping like the Seven Sleepers of—of Mesopotamia!" grunted Coker.

"Not like the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus?" asked Potter blandly.

"Don't be an ass, Potter. By the way, it turns out that that cheeky fellow that I punched yesterday is the

star actor of old Fish's picture syndicate," said Coker carelessly. "Fellow named Polk."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Greene.

"Seems to have mucked up his face for his acting," said Coker. "I dare say it will be a warning to him. It's unfortunate in a way."

"Yes, I should rather say it was," agreed Potter, staring at Coker. "Very unfortunate, I should think."

"Old Fish will be waxy," said Greene.

"He is waxy," said Coker. "Can't be helped, of course. In the circumstances, I'm rather glad that I wasn't to blame in any way."

"Oh!"

"The fellow seems to be threatening vengeance," said Coker. "Of course, that's all bunkum. I really hope he will keep clear of me—it will be the end of his shiekking if he doesn't. I'm quite prepared to give him a couple more black eyes and another tomato nose."

"Has he got enough features for that?" asked Potter.

"Eh?"

"I mean, as he has two black eyes and a tomato nose already, I don't quite see—"

"Don't be an idiot, Potter!"

And Coker went in cheerfully to breakfast. In the circumstances it was, as he had said, a comfort to reflect that he was not to blame in any way. What ever happened, Horace Coker always had that satisfaction.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

No Sheikh Part for Bunter!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. paid their first visit to the Perfection studio that day. It was the studio into which Coker had butted, and out of which he had been ejected. Now Coker walked in with the rest of the party, and the door-keeper eyed him rather uneasily. The man had not, of course, had any idea before that Coker was a member of the party whom Mr. Fish had secured for the "school" film, and was a little uneasy when Coker walked in with the director of Perfection Pictures. But Coker was not the fellow to remember offences, and he did not even notice the man. Harry Wharton & Co. found the place full of interest, and they rather thrilled at the idea that, before long, they would be acting in front of the clicking cameras.

They were presented to Mr. Rigg Schootz, the producer, a little stout man, who was completely bald, and wore a large heavy moustache, and gold-rimmed glasses. Mr. Schootz greeted them affably, but rather absently, being a very busy man, with plenty on his hands that morning. He gave Coker rather a hard look, and the juniors guessed that he had already heard that Coker was responsible for wrecking the good looks of the Perfection sheikh. But Mr. Schootz made no remark on the subject. The "Lord of the Desert" film had to wait till Myron Polk's features were in better repair, but what was done couldn't be helped. Possibly Mr. Schootz was aware, too, that Polk had probably asked for his punishment. In truth, only the fact that Polk was an immense draw on the pictures made it possible for Mr. Schootz to tolerate the airs and graces of that conceited young man himself.

The Greyfriars party had nothing to do that day, so far as the films went, but Mr. Fish told them to hang about the studio, and observe what went on, and pick up the hang of the thing, and to keep out of the way. In fact, he carefully impressed on them to keep out of the way.

Harry Wharton & Co. were glad to look on at the work of a film studio.

It was an immense building, all on one floor for the most part, though there was a second floor of dressing-rooms and wardrobes and offices. "Sets," complete or incomplete, were to be seen on all sides; here a log-cabin scene; there a portion of Venice; somewhere else a desert oasis. The last-named, no doubt, figured in the "Lord of the Desert" picture, in which Myron Polk played the leading part.

From the dressing-room stairs a number of girls came tripping down, "made-up" in Arabian costumes and complexions. Although Mr. Polk was not now available for the more important scenes in the "Lord of the Desert," the studio was getting on with another scene in which the sheikh did not appear. Billy Bunter blinked at the veiled "extra girls" who were to represent the beauties of the Ouled-Nail on the desert film, and nudged Harry Wharton in the ribs.

"I say, old chap—" began Bunter. "Better not jaw while we're watching the scene, old fat man," answered Harry.

"They're going to do the desert film," said Bunter.

"Yes, shut up!"

"But I say, it's important. Their blessed sheikh is laid up, owing to that idiot Coker punching him," said Bunter eagerly. "I've heard old Fish say that his scenes can't be taken now. What about me understudying him?"

"What?" gasped Wharton.

Bunter smirked.

"It needs a good-looking fellow," he said.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Good-looking chap, distinguished, and all that," said Bunter, blinking at the captain of the Remove through his big spectacles. "Of course, we're here for the school film, but I shouldn't mind playing sheikh, to help them out of a hole, you know."

"Great gad!" murmured Lord Mauleverer.

"That fellow Polk is good-looking in a way," went on Bunter, "but rather soft, you know. Not manly. For a sheikh part, they want a certain amount of manliness, as well as mere good looks. Well, that's where I should come in strong."

"The strongfulness would be truly terrific!" gasped Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"It might turn out a good thing for the firm, as well as for me," argued Bunter. "I've very little doubt that after seeing me on the screen they'd cancel Polk's contract. They'd hardly want him again."

"Oh, help!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"It would save them a lot of money, too," said Bunter. "Old Fish would like that. They say that that man Polk has thousands of dollars a week. I should be satisfied with one thousand dollars a week—to begin with, at any rate."

"You're too modest, old fat bean!" gasped Johnny Bull. A thousand dollars being the equivalent of two hundred pounds, obviously William George Bunter set a good value on his services.

"Well, to begin with, I said," explained Bunter. "Afterwards, of course, I should want more. The thing is, to let them see what I can do. I've always thought that playing a sheikh part was what would really suit me. What do you fellows think?"

The fellows did not state what they thought. They simply gurgled.

"Old Fish has cleared," said Bunter,



"If you lay your paws on me—" began Coker, belligerently. He got no further, for the next minute the big chucker-out gripped him by the collar of his coat, lifted him like a sack of wheat, and carried him down the hotel steps. "Now hit the road!" he said. (See Chapter 7.)

blinking round. "He doesn't seem to take a hand in producing the pictures. It's that bald johnny, Schootz. I noticed that he looked at me rather particularly when old Fish introduced us. Do you think it struck him that I should make a ripping sheikh?"

"Oh!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Not quite! Probably it struck him that you would be a real shriek."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The shriekfulness would be terrific," chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But the sheikhfulness is a boot on the other leg."

"Oh, really, you fellows! I was asking for friendly advice, not for this eternal jealousy of a fellow's good looks," said Bunter peevishly. "Anyhow, I'm going to ask Schootz."

"Keep back, you howling ass!" gasped Wharton. "Don't interrupt Mr. Schootz now! He's busy!"

"They're just going to take the set," said Nugent. "Don't play the goat now, Bunter."

Billy Bunter did not heed. It seemed to him that this opportunity was too good to be lost. The Perfection sheikh being laid up, there was an opening for a fellow designed by nature for such a part. At the very least, Bunter considered, they ought to be glad to get him

to understudy the sheikh. He had no doubt whatever that, once having tested him on the screen, they would have no further use for Myron Polk.

So Bunter was not to be denied. He was not going to let an opportunity like this pass, on account of the carping jealousy of less good-looking fellows. Not Bunter!

He detached himself from the group of juniors, and rolled towards Mr. Schootz.

"Bunter!" hissed Wharton.

But Bunter did not heed.

Mr. Schootz was seated near the cameras, with a megaphone in his hand. The Arab girls were forming for the set. It was to be a dance of the Ouled-Nail amid the palm-trees, and men in overalls had been busily arranging the scenery. Mr. Schootz was waiting for the moment for the cameras to begin to grind, every now and then bawling some instructions through the megaphone. His manner was not what the Greyfriars fellows would have called polite, considering that he was speaking to members of the gentler sex. But to the producer they were simply items in the set, like the palm-trees.

Heedless of the fact that Mr. Schootz was obviously busy, and intent on his

occupation, Bunter rolled up to him. In doing so, he came directly within the "shooting" line of the cameras, and Mr. Schootz gave a loud snort and glared at Bunter.

"Get out!" he roared through the megaphone.

Bunter, like the deep and dark blue ocean in the poem, rolled on.

"Easy, sir," he gasped.

"Beat it, you young jay! You're in the way!"

"Oh, quite," assented Bunter. "But wait a minute. It's rather important. Now you're without a sheikh, I was thinking of offering to take the part. I've always thought it would suit me."

Mr. Schootz had been on the verge of calling to a man to shift Bunter out of the way of the cameras. Now he seemed to be on the verge of hysterics.

He gazed at Bunter, and gasped.

Everybody else gazed at Bunter—the juniors, the Arab girls, the camera men, the electricians—everybody in the studio. Bunter seemed to have taken away everybody's breath at one fell swoop.

Mr. Schootz's silence encouraged him.

"What do you think?" he asked. "You can see for yourself that I'm cut out for a Valentino sort of part."

Mr. Schootz uttered a sound resembling a moan.

"Without bragging," said Bunter, "I think I can say that I'm at least as good-looking as that fellow Polk, and I hope I look a good bit more manly. What about giving me a trial in the sheikh part?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mr. Schootz, finding utterance all of a sudden.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the whole staff of the Perfection studio. From the Arab girls grouped by the palm-trees came shrieks of laughter.

Bunter blinked round in surprise.

He seemed to have taken the whole place by storm. So far as Bunter was concerned, he could see nothing to cause merriment. A sheikh's part was not a comic one—at least, only unconsciously comic—and Bunter's offer was certainly very serious indeed. But it seemed to have sent the Perfection studio into convulsions.

Mr. Schootz wiped his eyes.

"You're great!" he gasped.

Bunter smiled with satisfaction. He wondered how the fellows who were jealous of his good looks would like to hear Mr. Schootz—monarch of the studio—saying that he was great.

"Is it a go, then?" he asked.

"Is it a go, then?" stuttered Mr. Schootz. "Great ain't the word! Stupendous! Funny! Funny ain't the word! There ain't a word in the language! Howling cats! You're the limit! I guess Fish knew what he was hooking on to when he brought you along for comedy!" Mr. Schootz wiped his eyes again. "Now get out of the way of the cameras, kid. We're not doing a comedy film now."

"But—" gasped Bunter.

"Beat it! You're interrupting!"

"But—"

"Get it!" roared Mr. Schootz, in such a tremendous voice that Billy Bunter jumped, and promptly "got."

He rejoined the group of juniors, who were almost weeping with laughter.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That man's a fool!" said Bunter. "He doesn't know his own business! Fancy him thinking that I should be suitable for a comedy part!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, it's his loss," said Bunter morosely. "They won't get another sheikh like me in a hurry!"

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"They won't!" gasped Bob Cherry. "They jolly well won't!"

"The won'tfulness is terrific."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, rats!" grunted Bunter.

And the Owl of the Remove looked on morosely and disdainfully while the scene was "shot."

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Bandit!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. watched the filming of the "desert" scene with keen interest. Later on they were to take their own places before the cameras, in the glare of the blinding, silvery light shed on the set. They were deeply interested in watching it done.

From somewhere in the background came strains of music, and the made-up Arab girls were dancing in the glare of the light, and the camera men waiting for Mr. Schootz to give the signal.

Mr. Schootz yelled two or three times to the dancers through a megaphone. Mr. Schootz was a very particular gentleman in these matters, as a producer of pictures has to be, and he did not waste much politeness.

"You, Annie, don't drag like that! You, Lottie, you're dancing, not jumping through a hoop!" Mr. Schootz boomed through the megaphone. "Now, then! Lively! Put some life in it!"

The cameras began to grind.

To the eyes of the juniors it was a beautiful scene, though the immediate surroundings of the set—out of range of the cameras, of course—were far from romantic. Mr. Schootz, behind the cameras now, was scratching his polished, shining bald head; at a little distance a man in overalls was blowing his nose. But under the glare of the lights, in view of the cameras, all was romantic. Like houris the dancing-girls looked, winding in a maze of graceful movements, every movement recorded by the clicking cameras. Exactly what the girls really were like, however, no one could have said, so thickly were their faces made up. On the screen the painted faces would look well, though in real life it was a little ghastly.

The scene changed.

The dancing-girls sat or lay about under the palms, watching the desert with looks of expectancy. The cameras recorded them in those attitudes—watching the desert for the arrival of the sheikh.

THIS CLEVER LIMERICK WINS A FINE LEATHER POCKET WALLET!

There was a young fellow named Fish,

Who had a big pie and said "Swish!

From Bunter I'll hide it."

But that fat clam spied it,

And left poor old Fishy the dish!

Sent in by: E. H. North, 7,

Abbotts Road, Southall, Middlesex.

WHY DON'T YOU HAVE A SHOT AT WINNING ONE, CHUM?

So realistic was the look of the scene that the juniors could imagine a horseman approaching in the distance, and fancy the beat of the galloping hoofs. Had Myron Polk been available for service the next scene would have featured the sheikh arriving on his Barbary horse. But as Myron Polk was sulking and nursing black eyes at his bungalow on the hill that scene was the last.

The lights were shut off, the music ceased, the cameras clicked no more. The scene had been "shot" right up to the moment when the galloping sheikh should have put in an appearance. The next scene had to wait till Myron Polk was on hand again—weeks, perhaps—though when the picture appeared on the movies there would not be a second's interval.

Mr. Schootz laid down his megaphone, yawned, passed his hand over his smooth, shining scalp, and clapped his hat thereon. "Shooting" was over for the day.

The girls trooped away up the stairs to the dressing-rooms, most of them going to the pay-office later to draw their seven dollars for the day. Most of them were "extra girls," engaged only for the one picture, after which they might be out of work for weeks, or months.

Seven dollars a day, or twenty-eight shillings, seemed a good day's pay for "extras," but sometimes there were only a couple of days' work in the week, sometimes only as much in a month, sometimes none at all. And the Bunder remarked that they must have some tidy bills to pay for rouge and powder and lipstick.

As there was to be no more shooting at the Perfection Studio that day, the Greyfriars fellows walked about the place, seeing what was to be seen, picking up what knowledge they could of the coming business in which they were to figure when Mr. Schootz was ready to begin on the school film.

In the afternoon, however, they were called upon to be photographed, and to fill in forms in the casting-office, giving names, ages, weights, and all sorts of particulars about themselves. After which they left the studio in a very cheerful mood.

Coker of the Fifth, however, was frowning a little. Coker had learned that when he came before the cameras for the school pictures he would have to "daub" his face, as he described it, just like that popinjay whose handsome features he had damaged at Long Beach. Coker did not like the idea. He disapproved strongly of girls making up their faces; and for a man to make up his face seemed to Coker the last word in squashy effeminacy.

Potter pointed out that if it was required to produce the necessary effect on the screen, it couldn't be helped. At which Coker grunted.

Bob Cherry pointed out that unless Coker's features were covered with something, they might break the cameras—a remark which did not pour oil on the troubled waters at all.

As the party were leaving the studio a man who was lounging outside the gates on the boulevard stood aside for them to pass, watching them as they came out.

He was a dark-skinned man, evidently a Mexican, but nothing like Chico Valdez in his looks. He was a squat, low-browed, muscular man, with close-set, glittering black eyes, and a rough black beard and moustache. He was plainly interested in the party, and the juniors noticed it.

Mr. Schootz happened to be coming

out, and he sighted the man, and frowned, and called to him.

"You can beat it, Jose! Nothing for you here!"

The man eyed him insolently.

"You have told me so before, senor," he said.

"I guess I tell you so again!" snapped Mr. Schootz. "And I won't have you hanging round the studio! Beat it!"

The low-browed man scowled and swung away, shuffling along the boulevard.

Mr. Schootz frowned after him.

"I guess that guy is bad medicine!" he grunted. "You kids want to keep clear of that sort. Know him?"

"Never seen him before," said Harry.

"He seems mighty curious about some of you," said Mr. Schootz. "Anyhow, if you don't know him, keep on don't knowing him. See? He's been employed by the studio in bandit parts, but he's too tough a character for us. He's pretty well known to have knifed a man down in Spanish Town. He's been fired from here, and fired for keeps."

Mr. Schootz, after another frown in the direction of the slouching "bandit," went his way, stepping into a big automobile that was waiting for him.

Harry Wharton & Co. walked back to their boarding-house. No auto was waiting for them—though Bunter was still assured that before he had been very long in Hollywood he would be master of the biggest auto in Los Angeles county.

One rebuff was not enough for Bunter, and he was still dreaming of sheikh parts. Mr. Fish had no sense, and Mr. Schootz appeared to have none; but Bunter still hoped to meet a producer in Hollywood with sense enough to see that he was a born Valentino. And when Bunter was getting a thousand dollars a week he meant to spread himself. It was, however, likely to be some time before he began to spread.

There was no "tea" in the boarding-house, and the juniors went along to the Las Palmas Teashop on the Sunset Boulevard.

When they came out of Las Palmas after tea Harry Wharton's eyes fell on the low-browed Mexican loitering on the side-walk.

"There's that fellow again," he remarked.

The Mexican glanced at them, but it was only a cursory glance this time. If he was interested in any member of the Greyfriars party, that member was not one of the juniors.

Harry Wharton & Co. walked round Hollywood before dinner, along the Sunset Boulevard and by Normandie Avenue into Hollywood Boulevard, bright with expensive shops—where Bunter wanted to do some shopping, but did none, finding nobody prepared to lend him ten pounds for the purpose.

They returned to Sunset Boulevard by way of La Brea Avenue, taking a look at the outside of Douglas Fairbanks'

studio on their way. When they arrived at Long Beach House they stared a little at seeing Jose, the Mexican, loafing by the gate.

"That fellow seems to be haunting us," said Bob Cherry.

Coker and Potter and Greene, who had been out for a ramble in another direction, arrived at the same time, returning for dinner. The loafing Mexican did not look at the juniors, but he stared at the three seniors and stepped up to them as they neared the gate.

"Senor Coker?" he asked.

Horace Coker stopped.

"That's me!" he said rather curtly. Coker did not like the looks of the low-browed, slouching ruffian.

The Mexican looked at him intently.

"You are the Senor Coker?" he asked, as if he wanted to make assurance doubly sure.

"Yes. What do you want?" grunted Coker.

"I have been employed sometimes by the Perfection, senor," said Jose civilly.

THE FAMOUS ITALIAN FLYER!

Our special contributor tells us a few interesting facts concerning the LANCIA Car, the radiator-badge of which you can now add to your album.

The 17 h.p. Lancia car bristles with points of clever design, and in the opinion of many experienced motorists, it is the best-sprung and most comfortable car to drive on the road. It is certainly one of the lowest-built, and with its separately sprung front wheels, it has a decidedly individual appearance, viewed from the front. It is easy, in fact, to pick out a Lancia at the first glance from among any number of cars. The Lancia is built with scrupulous care and beautiful workmanship in Italy, and possesses a highly-efficient engine, which in conjunction with the car's splendid system of springing, enables the Lancia to be driven at very high speeds for long periods over almost any kind of road. For this reason, this high-class Italian car is in great favour for high-speed touring on the Continent of Europe.

"Now they do not want me. Perhaps the beneficent senor would put in a word for me, Jose Gomez, with the Director Schootz?"

Coker stared at him.

"What thumping cheek!" he exclaimed. "I don't know you, and can't say I like your looks! Besides, why the thump should Mr. Schootz take a tip from me? Rubbish!"

"But the beneficent Senor Coker—"

"Oh, rot!" said Coker; and he turned in at the gate with Potter and Greene, taking no further notice of the Mexican.

Jose Gomez glanced after him, smiled, and slouched away. Harry Wharton & Co. followed the Fifth-Formers in.

"Cheek, you know!" Coker was saying. "As if I'd put in a word for a man I don't know; and as if it would do any good if I did!"

It did not occur to Coker's mighty brain that the Mexican's request had been simply an excuse for speaking to him, or that the man might have any object in seeing him and learning his identity. Horace Coker was to learn that later.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Danger Ahead!

"SENOR!"

Lord Mauleverer started a little.

Harry Wharton & Co. were chatting on the piazza of Long Beach House after dinner, with some of the other guests. A full, round moon sailed over Hollywood, turning the pepper-trees to silver, and the green, wooded hillsides to a charming fairy-land.

Lord Mauleverer was strolling in the garden, with his hands in his pockets, thinking of nothing in particular, except a desire to dodge Billy Bunter, who wanted to speak to him very specially. The big shops of Hollywood Boulevard were in Bunter's mind; and speaking persuasively to Lord Mauleverer was a necessary preliminary to shopping. A shabby figure, dark in the moonlight, stopped at the white wooden gate, and looked over, and a soft voice called to the sauntering junior. Mauleverer recognised the voice of Chico Valdez, and he stopped at the gate immediately.

"Good-evenin', old bean!" he said cheerily.

Valdez lifted his tattered sombrero.

"Senor, I am happy I see you here—I should not have dared to come up to the house," he said humbly.

"What rot!" said Mauleverer. "Anythin' I can do for you, Mr. Valdez?"

"No, senor; I have come to give you a warning."

Lord Mauleverer smiled.

"What's up?" he inquired.

The Californian's face was grave.

"One of your friends is named Coco?" he asked.

"Coker," said Lord Mauleverer, smiling.

"Si, senor; that is the name, Coker. The senor Coker has an enemy in this pueblo."

Lord Mauleverer became serious.

"I know," he said, "a fellow whose face he punched. What do you know about it, Valdez?"

"Owing to the senor hidalgo's kindness I have now a lodging," said Chico, in a low voice. "I room, as the Americans call it, in a dive down in Spanish Town. It is a rough place—there are bad characters there. One I knew well—a true lepero. I have heard him speaking with another. It was the mention of the English party staying here that made me heed them. They know not that I know anything of you—to them I am only named old Valdez. But, senor, the little I heard of their tale told me that the senor Coco, your friend, is in some danger. Some rico hombre hates him, and he will be beaten—very badly beaten."

"Good gad!" murmured Mauleverer. He remembered what Mr. Fish had said, of the film star's threats. He did not need to be told the name of the "rico hombre" who had hired the bully to "beat up" Coker. Chico did not know it, but Mauleverer could guess it.

"If they knew I had warned you——" Chico paused. "But they know it not. That is why I came, senior, to speak a warning. Jose Gomez and his comrade are in Hollywood now, and the Senior Coker is in danger. Adios, senior!"

And before Mauleverer could speak again Chico Valdez lifted his ragged hat and disappeared into the shadows of the pepper-trees.

"Good gad!" repeated Lord Mauleverer.

He had almost forgotten what Mr. Fish had said of the film star's wild words; but he remembered now very clearly.

He had no doubt of the seriousness of the Californian's warning. Of Coker's shindy with the film star, and of Jose Gomez accosting Coker on the Sunset Boulevard, Chico knew nothing; but what he knew fitted in too well with what Lord Mauleverer knew for it to be unfounded. The film star, nursing his injuries and his rage, in his bungalow on the hill, was brooding on vengeance—indeed, in his passionate rage, he had betrayed his thoughts to Mr. Fish, though that practical gentleman had regarded his wild utterances only as "guff." It seemed almost incredible to Lord Mauleverer that any man could be base enough to employ a ruffian to "beat up" a fellow he hated; but he was well aware that such things happened, and he knew it was likely that the "beating-up" would be severe. Coker, little as he suspected it, was in danger; and it was only the gratitude of the tattered Californian that had caused a warning to be given.

Lord Mauleverer walked back to the house. His face was grave and troubled. It would be easy enough to pass on Chico's warning to Coker, but it was doubtful whether the headstrong Horace would heed it.

"Oh, here you are, Mauly!" Bunter had found him at last. "Looking for you, old chap."

"Buzz off, old fat man!" said Mauleverer.

"Oh, really, Mauly——"

"B-r-r-r-r!"

Avoiding the clutching hand of the Owl of the Remove, Mauleverer hurried on to the house.

"Beast!" ejaculated Bunter.

But his lordship did not heed Bunter. He went up the steps to the piazza, and joined the cheery group there.

"Coker about, you men?" he asked. Potter and Greene were there, but the great Horace was not to be seen on the piazza.

"Gone out!" answered Bob.

"Alone?" exclaimed Mauleverer.

"Yes; Schootz wanted to see him, and rang him up," said Harry Wharton. "He's gone to M. Schootz's bungalow on the hills."

"No end bucked, too!" grinned Bob. "It's rather glorious to get a special telephone call from a big producer. Coker was beaming. Goodness knows what Schootz wants to see him for, unless it's to measure his feet and order a special large size in cameras."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But Lord Mauleverer did not smile.

"But why did he go alone?" he asked.

"Mr. Schootz specially told him to go alone, it seems," answered Bob. "Wants to enjoy Coker's fascinating society all on his own, I suppose. Told him to walk, too, as he might meet him on the way. Otherwise, of course, Coker would have phoned for a car. It's half a mile up the hill to the Schootz bung."

Lord Mauleverer compressed his lips.

"I suppose there's no doubt that the

call came from Mr. Schootz?" he asked.

The juniors stared.

"I suppose not," said Harry. "Do you think somebody has been pulling poor old Coker a leg?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "I shouldn't wonder! Who's the jolly old joker? You, Smutty?"

"Not guilty!" grinned the Bounder. "The jokeriness is probably terrific," remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "The esteemed Coker will butt in on the excellent Schootz with preposterous unexpectedness."

Lord Mauleverer went into the house. A telephone call for Coker, telling him to go alone, up a lonely road over the hills, was rather disquieting, in view of Chico's warning. Mauleverer looked out Mr. Schootz's number in the book, unhooked the receiver, and rang up the director's house. A smooth voice, probably a butler's, answered the call.

"Mauleverer speakin' from Long Beach House," said the junior. "Can you tell me whether Mr. Schootz telephoned this evenin' to Coker, here, askin' him to come up to the bungalow? Coker had the call from somebody."

"Some mistake, sir," came the reply. "Mr. Schootz is dining in Los Angeles this evening, and has not been home."

"Thanks!" said Mauleverer, and hung up.

The matter was clear now; that call had not come from the Schootz bungalow. Only too well Mauleverer could guess from whom it had come. His heart beat painfully at the thought of the low-browed ruffian Gomez, probably with another ruffian of the same kidney, skulking on the shadowy hill-path, with cudgels in their grip, watching and waiting for the unsuspecting Coker.

Lord Mauleverer was called a slacker at Greyfriars, and often his lazy lordship seemed too lazy to live. But he did not seem slack or lazy now. Swiftly he rang up a garage down the boulevard for a car, and was assured that the auto would be outside almost as soon as he had hung up. He put up the receiver and hurried out to the piazza.

"I want you fellows," he called out. "Excuse my hurryin' you, but the car's just comin'. You'd like a ride by moonlight, what?"

"Any old thing," said Bob Cherry.

The juniors came in at once, with the exception of Billy Bunter, who had settled down into a deep chair and was disinclined to move, and Fisher T. Fish, who was "chewing the rag," and disinclined to leave off exercising his bony chin. But the Famous Five and the Bounder joined Mauleverer at once.

"What's up, Mauly?" asked Wharton. He could see easily enough that there was something more than a motor-drive by moonlight in Mauly's mind.

"Somethin' serious! Get your hats and a stick apiece—quick! That ass Coker's in danger. I'll explain in the car. How long has he been gone?"

"About a quarter of an hour."

Mauleverer almost groaned.

"Then we may be too late—for goodness' sake buck up!"

Very quickly the juniors, wasting no time in asking questions, were in their coats and hats, with a cane or stick apiece, and hurrying down to the boulevard. The headlights of the car gleamed before them; it had arrived promptly. The seven of them packed in. Lord Mauleverer spoke rapidly to the chauffeur.

"You know Mr. Schootz' bungalow?"

"Sure."

"Get there as fast as you can. Only one road up, I suppose?"

"Yep."

"Fifty dollars if you do it quick."

"Search me!" said the chauffeur. "I guess nobody in Hollywood will see this auto for dust."

The car shot away.

"Now, Mauly——" said Bob.

Lord Mauleverer quietly explained. The automobile turned from the boulevards, and buzzed up a narrow hill-road similar to the one the juniors had followed that morning to Polk's place, but in a different direction. The chauffeur was evidently bent on earning the fifty dollars, for he made the car fairly fly, and it dashed up steep ascents, wound round dizzy corners on two wheels, and seemed every other moment about to plunge into eternity with all its passengers. But when they had heard what Lord Mauleverer had to tell them, Harry Wharton & Co. cared nothing for the reckless speed on a dangerous road, and would have shouted to the driver to go faster had it not been obvious that he was already going "all out." With a rush and a roar, the car swept up the winding, steep road into the silver, glimmering hills—to save Coker, if there was yet time.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Chico Keeps His Word!

HORACE COKER tramped cheerily up the lonely winding path, by pools of moonlight and patches of dark shadow. Coker was feeling extremely bucked. Now for a moment had it crossed his mind that the telephone call might be a trick.

He had forgotten Myron Polk and his threats, and he was thinking of far pleasanter things. The big producer of Hollywood wanted him specially for a special interview, and Coker could not help feeling bucked at the idea. He would have preferred to take a car up the hill, and to bring Potter and Greene as witnesses of his important interview; but he had been told to come alone and on foot, and he graciously conceded those points. If Mr. Schootz was coming to meet him on the way it only showed how important he considered Coker. And Coker had been long enough at Hollywood to have learned how very important a person a big producer is, and how distinguished it was to be sent for to a special interview by him.

So Coker's countenance was merry and bright as he tramped up the hill, pausing every now and then to make sure of his way, for he had not travelled the road before, and he had only Mr. Coot's directions to guide him. And when the crash came Coker was utterly unprepared for it, and taken by surprise.

He was passing under the shadow of some trees that overhung the road, when there was a sudden muttering, a moving of shadows, and two dark figures leaped out on him and gripped him.

Before Coker knew what was happening, he was on the ground on his face, and an unseen man was kneeling on the back of his neck.

"Ow!" gasped Coker.

Crash! A heavy, flexible stick descended across his shoulders with a blow that made Coker yell with agony.

His first thought had been of footpads and robbery. Now he understood that he was being attacked with sheer brutality, for what reason he could not even begin to imagine. But whatever the reason of the ruffians was, there was no doubt of their purpose. One of them held Coker down securely, in spite of his frantic struggles, the other deliberately and savagely beat him with the heavy stick. Coker yelled and roared and wriggled frantically. But his face was



"That's the fellow," said Polk, blinking at Coker through his bandages. "Eh!" ejaculated Mr. Fish, staring in amazement. "What fellow?" "The hooligan who attacked me at Long Beach!" hissed Polk. "Oh, great John James Brown!" gasped Mr. Fish, in astonishment and dismay. "You don't say!" (See Chapter 10.)

jammed hard into the dust, muffling his cries, and still the stick lashed and lashed and lashed.

Then all of a sudden Coker felt himself released. He rolled over, groaning with the pain of the lashes he had received—not a tithe of what he had been intended to receive. But something had interrupted the hooligans. Coker, sitting up dizzily, leaning on a tree-trunk, watched with dazed eyes a furious fight going on within a few feet of him. Someone had rushed on the two ruffians and was struggling with them, having taken them as completely by surprise as they had taken Coker.

Suddenly a glimpse of moonlight showed Coker the faces of the fighting, furious men, and he recognised Chico Valdez. It was the "hobo," the train-jumper, the tattered descendant of the old ranchers of Los Angeles, who was fighting the two "thugs" of Spanish Town.

Coker strove to get up, but he sank back again, gasping. The fight was raging fast and furious, Valdez seeming, for the moment at least, to hold his own even against the two powerful ruffians.

But Gomez got his right arm clear of the struggle, with his cudgel in his grip. Even as Coker succeeded at last in getting on his feet, he heard the sickening thud of a heavy blow, and Chico Valdez crumpled upon the path.

The two ruffians stood panting, breathless from the struggle.

But it was only a few seconds before they turned on Coker again, closing in on him with wolfish eyes, cudgels in hand.

Honk, honk, honk!

The roar of an automobile was followed by the flashing of the headlights round a curve of the road below.

"Carambo!" breathed Jose Gomez.

"Pronto!" muttered the other; and he dashed away up the road and disappeared by a winding path over the hill,

Jose hesitated a moment, and then, as the bright headlights came flashing up the steep road, he turned to run also. But Coker, by this time, had got his wind, and he sprang after the ruffian, grasped him round the neck, and dragged him to the earth.

"Now, you rotter!" panted Coker.

Gomez struggled like a wildcat, with blazing eyes and gnashing teeth. But Chico Valdez struggled to his feet and added his grip to Coker's. The thug was pinned to the ground under the two of them as the automobile clattered to a halt, the headlights only a few feet from the wrestling group on the road.

A door was flung open, and Lord Mauleverer leaped out, the Famous Five and the Bounder following him fast.

"We're in time!" panted Mauleverer.

"Collar him!" yelled Bob Cherry.

In the glare of the headlights Gomez was recognised at once. The juniors grasped him on all sides, and he was speedily reduced to helplessness. Chico Valdez staggered against a tree, his face white, and a streak of crimson running down it from the cut on his head.

Coker stared dazedly at the juniors.

"You kids!" he ejaculated. "Well, it's rather lucky you came along. Hold that brute tight. There was another man, but he's got away. They set on me—"

"Valdez!" exclaimed Lord Mauleverer.

The Californian smiled faintly.

"Senor hidalgo, I have tried to pay my debt!" he muttered.

"That chap saved me," said Coker.

"The rotters were fairly smashing me up, goodness knows why, when he butted in."

"My dear fellow, you're hurt!" exclaimed Lord Mauleverer, with deep concern.

"No es nada, senor."

"They'd have smashed me up!" gasped Coker. "Pitching into me with a cudgel, you know—what they call beating up in this country. Goodness

knows why! I fancy I'd have had some bones broken if that Johnny hadn't butted in just in time. Much obliged, Mr. Valdez, if that's your name."

"My dear chap—" said Lord Mauleverer.

"Senor, I was watching them," said Valdez. "I knew why they were here, after what I heard; and then—then I heard the Senor Coco cry out. I came—"

He reeled, and would have fallen but for Lord Mauleverer's prompt support.

"Lend a hand here, you men," said Mauleverer. "Get him into the car. He's had a fearful crack on the head. I must get him to a doctor."

"No es nada!" murmured Valdez; but Mauleverer did not heed.

The Bounder, by this time, had secured Jose's wrists together with his own gaudy neck-scarf, and the prisoner was safe. The juniors helped the Californian into the car.

"Search me!" said the chauffeur. "This here is some circus! Where you want me to take that hobo?"

"Nearest doctor," said Lord Mauleverer, "and quick. Coker's all right now, you fellows, with you."

"Don't be a young ass, Mauleverer," said Coker. "I'm all right without the help of the Lower Fourth fags, I hope."

"Good old Coker!" chuckled Bob. "Always the same silly old ass!"

"Shut up, Cherry!"

The chauffeur backed the car and turned, and it faded away down the hill, Lord Mauleverer sitting with the half-conscious Californian supported by his shoulder. With unceremonious hands Jose Gomez was dragged to his feet, when the car had gone.

"Chokey for you, you beauty!" said Coker.

The Mexican sneered.

"But I have friends, senor. There is one, at least, who will go bail for me."

(Continued on page 28.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,098,

The Black Hawk

by Geo. E. Rochester



A Change of Plan.

THE Black Hawk groped behind him with black-gloved hand for the handle of the door.

"Look here, man," burst out the adjutant, leaping to his feet, "who are you, and what—"

The sentence remained unfinished, for the door had opened, then banged shut, and the black-clad figure was gone. Kicking back his chair, the adjutant darted round the table, and, rushing to the door, wrenched it open with eager hand.

But nothing was to be seen outside on the night-shrouded aerodrome save the vague silhouette of near-by canvas hangars.

Whipping his revolver from his belt, the adjutant fired three rapid shots up into the night, in order to give the alarm, then, dashing back into the room, he snatched up the telephone receiver.

With hands clasped behind his back, Brigadier-General Sir Freville Howard paused in his pacing of the floor to gaze with sombre eyes out through the window of the flight office.

Dawn was breaking over Ouchy Aerodrome, and the hangars were beginning to show grey and ghostly through the swathing mists of early morning. From eastwards came the rumble of heavy gunfire, grim token that the dawn strafe was commencing in earnest.

At the littered table sat Colonel Milvain, Colonel Scaife, the adjutant, and Sir Freville Howard's aide-de-camp. Immediately on receipt of a telephone message from Ouchy, telling of the strange visit of the Black Hawk, Sir Freville had flown over from Le Courban, accompanied by his aide-de-camp and Colonel Scaife.

"Then that is agreed, gentlemen?" said the brigadier, turning suddenly from the window. "The time of the raid will be changed, and the Sopwith scouts of 116 Squadron will form additional escort to the bombers."

"I think we are wise to take such precautions, sir," murmured Colonel Scaife; and Colonel Milvain nodded his agreement.

"We cannot afford to ignore the warning we have received," went on Sir Freville, "although one, also, cannot help but deplore the unsatisfactory and mysterious source from whence it has come!"

"Yet the Black Hawk has always proved a good friend to us, sir," commented Colonel Scaife.

"Yes"—the brigadier's voice was impatient—"but why doesn't the fellow come out into the open and declare himself like a man, Scaife? I hate a business of this sort. Everything points to his being a renegade German officer. If he is not I fail to see how he can have become aware of this aerial ambush which the German has planned. I am assuming—as we must assume—that he has told us the truth."

Colonel Scaife turned to the adjutant. "You saw him," he said. "You say he was masked; but of what build was he? Would you judge him to be a young man, or middle-aged, or what?"

"Er—um—oh, youngish, I should

100,000 marks are offered for the capture of the Black Hawk, dead or alive, but the Germans can't catch him. He's too "fly" in every sense of the word!

think," replied the adjutant slowly.

"In fact, I might almost say boyish."

"Boyish?" echoed Colonel Scaife sharply.

Something in his voice caused the adjutant to look at him in surprise.

"Do you mean that—boyish?" persisted the colonel.

"Yes, boyish, sir!" replied the adjutant. "Of course, that was merely my impression. It was difficult to judge, as he was clad in heavy black flying kit."

"I don't know what the dickens you were thinking about, anyway, to let the fellow escape as he did!" commented Colonel Scaife angrily.

"As I have already explained, sir," retorted the adjutant, flushing, "I was at the wrong end of his gun!"

"And if he is only half as useful with his automatic as he is with his synchronised gun you were certainly at a disadvantage," cut in the brigadier dryly. "But come, gentlemen, we have little time for such a discussion at the

moment. As I say, we have agreed upon a change of plan. The raid, therefore, will take place at once!"

The adjutant, watching Colonel Scaife half resentfully, saw him unmistakably start as though in surprise. But the next instant the man had sufficiently recovered himself to say in an almost casual voice:

"But will not such a course leave very little time for preparation, sir?"

"Ample time, for the preparation required!" snapped the brigadier. "Squadron leaders concerned will be warned at once, and machines will pick up formation over this aerodrome without delay. Within the hour they should be en route for Karlsruhe!"

The Alarm!

SIX a.m.!

The sun was swinging up into a sky of cloudless blue, and on Mannheim aerodrome there was an unwonted bustle. The routine officer of the day, Lieutenant Esterharn, making his way without haste towards the commandante's office, paused to take stock of the scene and to drink in the fresh, clean air of that glorious August morning.

The hangar doors had rumbled back with the coming of dawn, and now, out on the aerodrome in front of the hangars stood twenty-five double-seater, fast, fighting Fokkers. Mechanics and armourers were working busily on engines and guns, and by each machine lay ammunition drums, and cartridge-belts for the synchronised guns.

In front of its private hangar stood the Commandante Federkiel's single-seater fighting scout. The gunnery officer himself was stripping and cleaning its synchronised gun, whilst two sergeant mechanics overhauled the engine and controls.

The Lieutenant Esterharn moved on, and, reaching the commandante's office, took over from the German orderly sergeant, who had been on duty by the telephone throughout the night hours.

There was little of importance to report, and the sergeant withdrew to seek his bed.

Seating himself and tilting back his

chair, Esterharn rested his feet on the table and leisurely produced a thin gold cigarette-case. Selecting a cigarette, he closed the case with a snap. It was then that the telephone-bell trilled sharply and insistently.

Unperturbed, Esterharn slid the case back into his pocket and felt for his matches.

Shrilly, more insistently, the bell continued to ring!

Esterharn allowed it to ring. Producing a small leather match-case, he lighted his cigarette with an almost meticulous care, and returned the case to his pocket. Blowing a fragrant cloud of blue smoke, he watched it drifting upwards with an appreciative eye.

Then, and only then, did he deign to take notice of the clamouring telephone-bell. Well, what hurry was there? As like as not it was only some old wind-bag on the staff wanting to know why the petrol consumption returns had not been sent in; or some imbecile from the same quarter wanting to know if he was speaking to the governor of the garrison of Strassbourg.

So, deftly hitching the telephone towards him with one elegantly booted foot, the Leutnant Esterharn leaned forward and picked up the instrument. Then, resuming his former attitude, he unhooked the receiver.

"Yes—Mannheim aerodrome!" he drawled languidly.

"Air Headquarters of Frankfurt speaking!" came a sharp, guttural voice over the wire. "Who are you?"

"Routine officer speaking!"

"Your name?"

"Esterharn—Leutnant Esterharn!"

Leutnant Esterharn felt slightly uneasy. There was a harsh imperative something about this voice which he did not like. He liked it less as it continued:

"Leutnant Esterharn, you will be asked to explain why this call was not answered at once. Meanwhile, take urgent orders for the Hauptmann Federkiel. Are you ready?"

"Yes!"

Esterharn was ready. Gently he had lowered his feet from the table, and now a free hand was poised over paper ready to take the message in pencil.

"Thirty-five minutes ago," went on the harsh voice, "two British D.H.9 squadrons, escorted by twenty fighting scouts, passed over the German lines at a height of fifteen thousand feet. These squadrons are heading towards Karlsruhe. The Hauptmann Federkiel will take the air immediately with every machine at his disposal, and endeavour to intercept them. This is the raid which was expected to take place at ten a.m. Every available machine is being sent up, but the Hauptmann Federkiel must not delay one moment. This is of the greatest urgency—do you understand?"

"Yes," gulped Esterharn—"yes!"

"We will hold the line—report to us the instant your machines take the air!"

Next minute a pale-faced Esterharn was running madly towards Federkiel's quarters.

Federkiel, half-dressed, and shaving, grasped the situation at once.

"Warn every pilot to stand to his machine within five minutes!" he rapped. "You," he wheeled on his orderly, "instruct mechanics and gunners to have every machine ready to leave the ground within that time!"

Esterharn and the orderly departed hotfoot on their respective missions. And, whilst engine cowlings were being bolted down with frenzied speed, and gun casings whipped into position, pilots came running from the living

quarters towards the hangars, flying kit over their arms.

Within ten minutes from the time Esterharn had given the alarm, Federkiel's fighting Fokker scout was roaring across the aerodrome to take the air in a steep, upward climb. Following him swept the double-seater fighting Fokkers to the accompaniment of deafening thundering high-powered engines. And as the parched and withered grass of the aerodrome dropped away beneath them, Esterharn was babbling into the phone.

"Herr Hauptmann Federkiel is already in the air—twenty-six machines, all told."

At one thousand feet above the hangars of Mannheim, the Fokkers picked up formation—flying in two formations of thirteen machines each. Federkiel, crouched over his controls, swung them southwards towards Karlsruhe. There was no time to get height. They must get height as they flew. Already the Englishers would be almost to Karlsruhe.

But scarce had the hangars dropped behind, than down from out of the blue came hurtling a black machine in a screaming nose-dive. With engine thundering at full revolutions, wind shrieking madly through flying wires and struts, it tore straight down towards the formation led by Federkiel.

Flaming Guns!

RIGHT through the first formation hurtled the black machine, holding that mad, tearing dive, until it was less than eight hundred feet above the ground. Then up in a wild, soaring zoom, to roll and dive again with lurid, snarling gun.

The amazing unexpectedness, the grim and ruthless savagery of the attack, had thrown the Fokkers into temporary confusion. The German pilots were veterans with nerves of steel; men who had won their spurs in many a hard-fought battle high above the trenches. They broke formation, banking to port and starboard. Control sticks were whipped forward and the Fokkers tore earthwards, gathering in a few seconds the requisite speed to take them soaring up into the blue in a zoom which would bring them flattening out above this mad, intrepid stranger.

Two Fokkers failed to pull out of that dive. The pilot of one, his spine shattered by a burst of bullets from the black machine thundering on his tail,

HOW THE STORY BEGAN.

As a result of a dastardly plot against him, young Derek Moncrieff, a fearless British pilot, is accused of treachery, court-martialled, and sentenced to be shot. Determined to clear his dishonoured name, however, Derek makes a daring escape by changing identities with Captain Von Arn, a dead German airman. Von Arn carries a dispatch ordering Lieutenant Zweig, the Gotha Commander at Abergau, to vacate the secret hangar there, and Derek decides to go 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.

During the days that follow, the name of the Black Hawk, a mysterious airman flying a black machine with the replica of a swooping hawk on its fuselage, becomes known on both sides of the trenches. Again and again this unknown daredevil has come to the aid of Allied machines when hopelessly outnumbered by the enemy, and the German High Command has placed a price of 100,000 marks on his head. One night, in the flight office of Ouchy aerodrome, the adjutant of 108 Squadron is surprised by a man clad and masked in black. The intruder tells him that a raid planned by British bombing squadrons on the railway station at Karlsruhe is known to the enemy. "Alter your plans," warns the Black Hawk, "and find the man who, moving in your midst, is betraying you!"

(Now read on.)

leapt to his feet with a scream. Then he crashed forward over the controls, and his machine roared earthwards.

The other Fokker spun out of the fight with rudder and tail plane shot to ribbons, its grim-faced pilot striving desperately to pull out of what, in his heart, he knew was the death-spin. But, as though to make certain of its prey, the black machine tore in at him again, tracer bullets from its belching gun ripping through wings and fuselage.

The German pilot turned his head, his face grey with the fear of death. He had a vision of the black-clad head and shoulders of the masked pilot, and of the replica of a swooping hawk which the machine bore on its fuselage. Then it was gone, as the stranger tore southwards, away from the Fokkers overhead.

With engines thundering at full revolutions, and gloved fingers curling round the triggers of synchronised guns, the German pilots roared down in pursuit. Federkiel's fast fighting scout led them in the chase. But no chase it was, for, when less than three hundred feet above the ground, the black machine went soaring up and up into the blue sky of morning. Then, when at the very top of its loop, with undercarriage pointing upwards, it rolled, and came thundering down again on the Fokkers.

Ah, the madness of that dive! For already the noses of the Fokkers were up, and above the tumultuous roar of their engines, sounded the snarl of their flaming guns as they converged on the black machine hurtling down towards them.

Crouched over his controls, his face livid with passion, Federkiel was conscious of only one thought. No matter what the risk, no matter if it meant death for himself, he must get this fiend incarnate—this Black Hawk! But it was impossible to train a gun on him for he was swerving wildly on that downward, hurtling dive.

A veritable hail of bullets whistled up to meet him. But the Black Hawk lifted his machine by a backward movement of the control stick, and next instant was roaring low over Federkiel's top plane.

Bolke, piloting the machine behind Federkiel, and so close that he was almost in Federkiel's slip-stream, whipped up gloved hands, then slithered limply against the side of his cockpit, shot through the throat. His machine stalled and fell away into a spin, the white-faced gunner in the rear cockpit making frantic efforts to haul Bolke back and reach the controls.

The whole fight from the moment the Black Hawk had appeared, had not lasted three minutes. And already this maniac of the skies had shot down five Fokkers. His machine, twisting, swerving, diving, presented such a small and elusive target, whereas the Fokkers, by their very numbers, were easy prey for his blazing gun.

But get him they would, no matter what the cost. On that, Federkiel was determined.

With lips drawn back from his teeth in an almost animal snarl, he threw his machine into a corkscrew dive. Then, in that instant, his dashboard was riven as though by an invisible axe. He lifted his head, glancing upwards, then his fingers tightened convulsively on the control stick.

For, thundering down from out of the blue, were coming ten British Sopwith fighting scouts with guns aflame. Wing-tip to wing-tip in fighting V-formation, they went through the wildly wheeling

Fokkers, zoomed, and tore through them again, keeping formation with grim tenacity.

Five Fokkers fell away into the death-spin. But the British squadron had not come through scatheless, for two of the Sopwith scouts were plunging earthwards out of control.

Undaunted, the remainder held their formation, and, zooming, tore down again, a solid wedge of flaming guns.

Three more Fokkers went spinning out of the fight, and, following in their wake, a Sopwith scout enveloped in leaping, writhing flames and swirling smoke. By now Federkiel had lost half his machines; and already wounded pilots of those that remained were diving for the cover of the anti-aircraft guns of Mannheim.

He knew that the fight had been against him from the start. He had never had height—had never had an opportunity of getting height.

Realising the inevitable, the Herr Hauptmann Federkiel withdrew the reeling and scattered remnants of his formations from the fight, and, turning, dived for the hangars of Mannheim, leaving the triumphant Englanders to wing their way westwards towards the line.

There was no sign of the Black Hawk. He had gone, and Federkiel had, in those hectic moments, little time in which to mark the course which he had taken. But, whatever he was—roving Englander or renegade German—grim indeed would be the vengeance for this latest exploit. For they would get him. Yes, for were not the finest brains of the Secret Service already engaged in locating his base?

Fifteen minutes later he landed, to be confronted by an agitated Esterharn with a message from Air Headquarters at Frankfurt. Snatching the grey slip of paper from the routine officer, Federkiel read:

"To the Commandante, Mannheim Aerodrome.

"By telephone.

"Enemy raid on Karlsruhe Railway Station successful. Report in person, without delay, to the Commandante, Frankfurt Aerodrome."

Crumpling the paper in his hand, Federkiel strode towards his quarters, his powder-grimed and oil-bespattered face grim and set.

The Pedlar.

THE day wore on and it was towards mid-afternoon that Oslo, the hunchback, came limping along the white and dusty road which led to Abergau.

A strange fellow, this Oslo, with his little ferrety eyes, his straggling unkempt beard, his pedlar's pack, and his filthy, tattered garments. He wore neither boot, shoe, nor sock on his feet and would tell you with snivelling pride that he had never done so since he was a boy. His wrinkled skin was deeply-tanned and weatherbeaten through long years spent in the open.

Yes, a strange fellow. But stranger far than any would have guessed. During the years preceding the War, it had been his habit to proceed by train almost to the frontier of France or Russia—or whatever European country he had in mind.

He would then cross the frontier either by slow local train or on foot—preferably the latter. And throughout the long summer months he would wander the highways and byways, his pedlar's pack very much in evidence, selling his cheap trashy wares in one village, whining for bread in the next.

He had seen the inside of more than one gaol, sometimes for petty stealing, sometimes for violence. But what did he care, this thieving, ragged, hunch-backed knave—this super German spy?

There were few agents of the German Intelligence Bureau with a finer record than Oslo. He loved the fields, the woods, the pleasant countryside, and the role he had adopted came so easily to him as to be perfectly natural. Sheer impudence, whining servility—he was a pastmaster at both—had more than once won him the entry to localities where his ferrety eyes had been able to take rapid and expert stock of what were intended to be closely-guarded military secrets.

But the War had come since those days and the frontiers had been closed. Along the roads which he had known there now swung marching men; and what had once been smiling meadowland was now a shell-pocked shambles strewn with dead and dying.

During the earlier part of 1914 when the War clouds were gathering, Oslo had been particularly active both in England and in France. So active, indeed, that he had been none too sure he was not suspected. The middle of August of that fateful year had found him safe behind the German lines and he had stayed behind them ever since. For his malformation, you see, rendered him conspicuous, and Oslo was far too valuable to be sent anywhere where he might be pounced upon and shot. So the Intelligence Bureau found work for him within the borders of the Fatherland.

And, indeed, there was work to do—the smelling out of British spies. More than one had stood erect, facing a firing party, solely through the activities of Oslo. There was Cartwright, for instance, and Frobisher; one masquerading as a wounded German soldier on leave, the other as a peasant. But Oslo had got them. Yes, Oslo had been too clever for them. They had gone smiling to their deaths, of course, but what of that? They knew how to die, these Englanders. Oslo was prepared to admit that, and admit it ungrudgingly.

But there was one man whom Oslo could not get; and that was Captain Darnley of the British Secret Service.

Willingly would Oslo have sacrificed all his previous successes to lay hands on Darnley. Night and day, for six months, he had sought this elusive Englander only to fail ignominiously at every turn.

Darnley was too skilful, too dangerous altogether. When the German High Command had proposed, and actually commenced, a great lay-out of railway track behind St. Quentin, shortening by forty miles the communications between the ammunition factories in the interior and the supply dumps behind the line, it was Darnley, undoubtedly, who had got the word through to the British bombing squadrons. The result was that the work and planning of weeks was brought to nought in a single day and night by means of thirty tons of high explosive bombs dropped by British machines. And that was only one instance of what Darnley had done.

Oslo had trailed him from Essen to Cologne, from Mayence to Munich. But at Munich the trail had ended. Darnley had vanished, completely. Then had come the news, that some spy had discovered the location of the Gotha hangar at Abergau and had sent word through to France.

Other clues having proved fruitless, Oslo had turned almost in desperation to this one. Darnley might be the man who had sent word through to the British bombers. The trail had been leading southwards towards the Vosges. It might be that Darnley was in the neighbourhood of Abergau. One could only search, anyway.

Although not directly concerned by it, there was another cursed Englander for whom Oslo had been instructed to keep a watchful eye. A particularly clever flying ace, known as the Black Hawk. Who or what he really was, or from whence he was operating, none appeared to know. But he had taken, and was taking, grim toll of German machines.

There were some who professed to doubt if he was an Englander. Not so, Oslo. He knew. None but a mad Englander would indulge in such perilous and suicidal antics. Well, pity help both the Black Hawk and Darnley if Oslo ever laid his hands on them. There would be a firing-party for each of them.

And thus, his mind full of such thoughts, Oslo, the Hunchback, reached the outskirts of Abergau as the sun was setting in a blaze of glory and mists of evening were creeping up to swathe the lovely Vosges.

Abergau lay well off the beaten track. Even in times of peace it had few visitors. But now that War had come things were worse. So the advent of Oslo did not go unnoticed.

A half starved mongrel, curled sleepily on the step of a cottage doorway, was the first to see him. It raised its head, eyeing the ragged Oslo with obvious suspicion. Getting to its feet with the air of one who has a duty to perform, it stretched itself, yawned, then proceeded down the garden path and out through the gate into the roadway.

Here it got a quite unimpeded view of Oslo's rags, and went for them, half in earnest, half in play. Oslo wheeled with a snarl, and swung the heavy, knobby stick he carried viciously at the cur's legs.

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POPULAR WIRELESS

Every Thursday. At all Newsagents.

Wind shrieking madly through flying wires and struts, the Black Hawk tore straight towards the formation of Fokker planes, sending two of them spinning earthwards and throwing the others into temporary confusion! (See Page 25).

Yelping and yowling, the sadder and wiser brute retired in haste from the fray. Adding to the din came sudden shrill and screamed abuse from the cottage doorway. There, shaking scraggy fist in fury, and looking more disreputable than ever, stood the aged laundress.

"You hit my dog, did you, you dirty, sneaking, thieving rogue?" she shrieked. "I'll have you put in the gaol, you service-dodging pig!"

The next moment a crowd of excited urchins came racing from a near-by field.

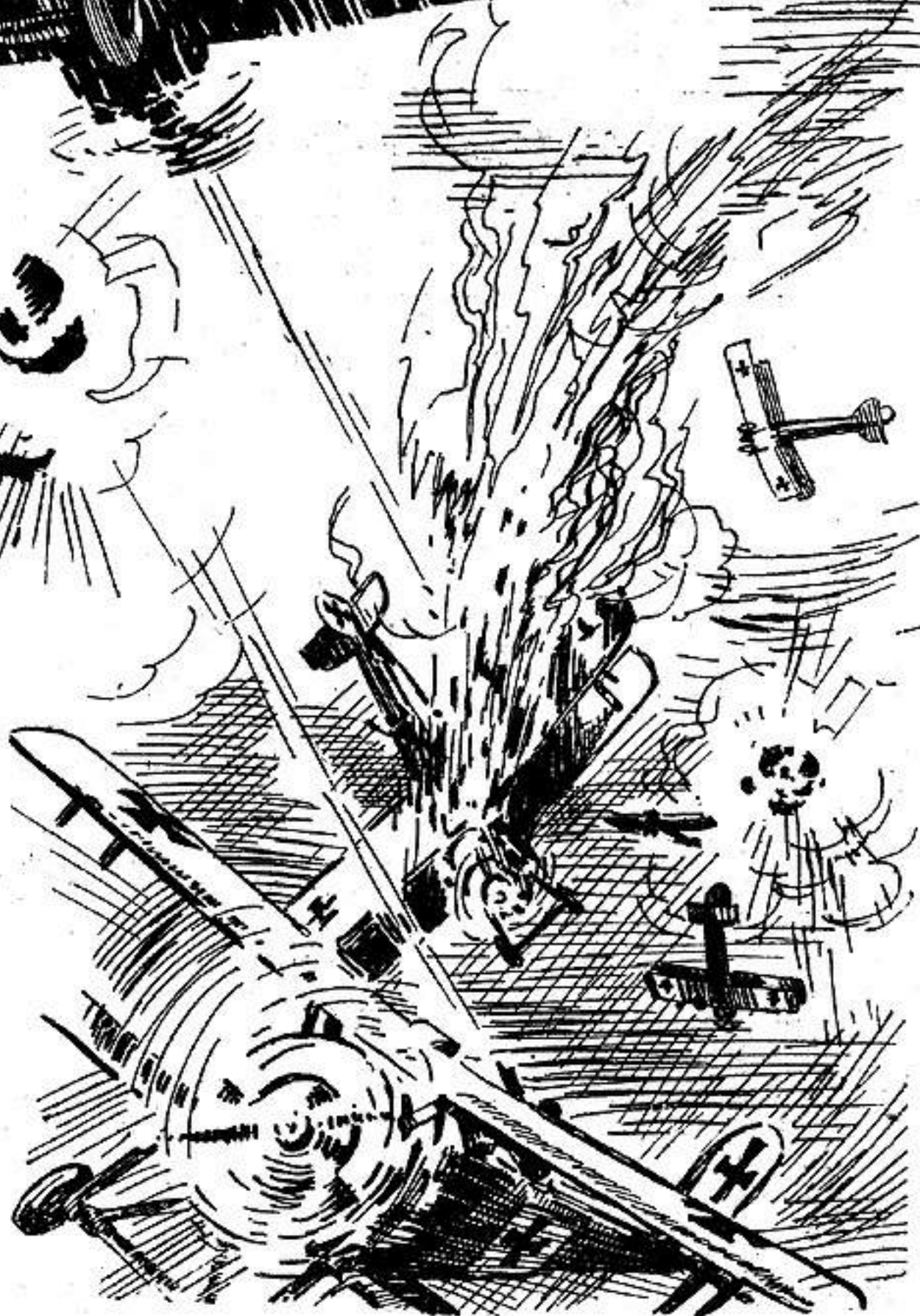
"Boo!" they howled. "Who hit the widow's dog? Yah! Who hit the dog of the widow?"

Oslo gripped his cudgel-like stick, passion flaring in his eyes. But, as though realising the futility of prolonging the scene, he turned on his heel and went limping away up the road.

A torrent of imprecations and choice epithets from the indignant female followed him. So, did the small boys. They followed, booing and hissing.

Oslo stuck it just as long as he could, then swung on his tormentors, with an oath. But it was not the oath which sent them scattering. It was the almost fiendish fury of his face and the passion in his blazing eyes which struck sudden terror to their hearts and set them bolting. An evil man, this. Perhaps beneath his rags he had a long, curved knife.

(Will Oslo, the Hunchback, succeed where others have failed—in catching this particularly clever flying ace, known as the Black Hawk? Be sure you read the continuation of this powerful serial in next week's MAGNET, which will also contain TWO MORE FREE METAL MOTOR-CAR BADGES. See that you get them, chums!)



"HARRY WHARTON & Co. AT HOLLYWOOD!"

(Continued from page 23.)

"The man who put you up to this, you scoundrel!" exclaimed Harry Wharton hotly.

The Mexican shrugged his shoulders and did not answer. He did not intend to betray his employer, upon whom he depended to gain his freedom.

"You fags can take that rotter to the police station," said Coker. "I've got an appointment with Mr. Schootz—"

"You jolly well haven't!" grinned Bob Cherry. "That telephone call was spoof, to get you up here for those rotters to beat you up."

"Rubbish!" snapped Coker.

But the juniors succeeded in convincing Coker at last, and he gave a discontented grunt in acknowledgment. Upon the whole, however, he was not sorry to turn back.

Lord Mauleverer had not yet returned to Long Beach House when Harry Wharton & Co arrived, after conducting Gomez to the police station and formally charging him there. It was nearly bedtime when Mauleverer turned up at last.

"How's Valdez?" asked the Co. with one voice, when his lordship appeared.

"Not so bad," said Lord Mauleverer. "I've left him with the doctor, who's

undertaken to care for him till he's mended. He's had a nasty knock, but he will be all right. He's in good quarters, getting good care. I told you men that that chap was a gentleman."

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

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"How much has he touched you for?"

inquired Fisher T. Fish.

"Shut up, Fishy!"

"The poor chap thought he owed me somethin', you know," said Lord

Mauleverer, disregarding Bunter and Fisher T. Fish. "He was grateful—not that I did anythin', you know. Those hoodlums—were goin' to smash up Coker, an' Valdez chipped in because he was a friend of mine, as he puts it. And he got it hard, poor old chap. But he's goin' to pull through all right, and somethin's goin' to be done for him when the doc's done with him. He's the right stuff, you know."

"That greaser!" said Fisher T. Fish.

"I think one of you fellows might kick Fishy," said Lord Mauleverer plainly. "That's the second time he's asked."

"Yes, rather!"

"Yoooooop!" roared Fisher T. Fish, as Bob Cherry obliged. "You pie-faced jay—Yarooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess—"

"Give him another."

But Fisher T. Fish had fled.

THE END.

(Now look out for: "BILLY BUNTER ON THE FILMS!" the next yarn in this grand series by Frank Richards. That you'll enjoy every line of it goes without saying. A word about next week's FREE BADGES—they're absolutely, tip-top! The wise "Magnetite" will make sure of securing them by ordering his copy WELL IN ADVANCE!)

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CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE!

Everybody appreciates being done a good turn, but some people have a weird fashion of showing their appreciation. That's what Frank Fearless, of St. Sam's, finds out this week!

Bounder, groaned miserably, and running his hands in despair. "Too late!" he cried. "I am caught like a rat in a trap!"

II.

BOUNDER was in a state of complete blue funk for a few seconds, for he knew that the Head and Mr. Lickham were bound to spot him as soon as he got outside.

Suddenly a cunning wheeze occurred to him. If only he could get Frank Fearless to go out first, he might be able to stop past, unnoticed, while the beaks were capturing the Fourth-Former, he reflected. And if he could plant some interesting trifles such as cards and cigarettes on Fearless, the minnies and give him time to get half-way back to St. Sam's again.

It was the scheme of a heathier rotter and an unprincipled cad, but Bounder didn't hesitate. With the skill of an eggspert, he pretended to barge into Fearless in the darkness of the passageway, and managed to slip a couple of packs of cards and a dozen cigarettes into that unspeaking junior's pockets.

"Look here, Fearless, we're in a hole," he hissed.

"I quite agree; the jolly sailor is the rottenest hole in Muggleton," said Frank Fearless, his lips curling in the darkness.

"Oh, rets! What I mean is, that we're cornered; and there's only one way out."

"What's that?" asked the Fourth-Former anxiously.

"To open the door and make a dash for it," replied Bounder, villainously leading on the innocent junior to his doom. "We can easily give the beaks the slip and get away before they recognize us!"

"H'm!" murmured the Fourth-Former dubiously.

"Go on; don't funk it!" whispered Bounder. "I'll be jenneros and allow you to go first so that you'll be able to get a good start. It's the only way out."

"Oh, very well, then," said Fearless bravely. "I'm not funkng it, if you're not."

"Good! Out you go then!"

As he spoke, Bounder opened the door and gave Fearless a vicious shove that sent him staggering right into the arms of the waiting beaks, who swooped down on the unfortunate junior like haws upon their prey.

"Gocheor!" yelled Dr. Birchmell, savagely by the scruff of the neck. "Hold him fast, Lickham!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" grinned the master of the Fourth, obeying the order with alacrity. "Why-bless my sole, sir, it's Fearless—Fearless of the Fourth!"

"Grato pip!" So it is! eggspelled the Head. "I fully eggspected to find it was a senior. Ha, ha! What's this I see? Sigarettes? And—my giddy aunt!—two packs of cards! This is a peepare, and no mistake!"

While the Head was speaking, a tall

figger, flashed by and was swallowed up by the nite. Neither of the beaks spotted him; it was Bounder of the Sixth, making his escape!

Fearless heard the senior's mocking laugh from some distance down the lane, and fairly ground his teeth with rage, as he realised what a dewp he had been.

"Dished, dished, and done!" he said bitterly.

"What's that?" asked the Head sharply.

"I was saying, this simply takes the bun!"

"It does!" agreed Dr. Birchmell. "Never before in the whole of my skollastic career have I caught a junior emerging from a low inn, with playing cards and cigarettes on him. Fearless, I may tell you that you are for the jumps!"

"What are you going to do, sir?" gasped Frank Fearless. "Surely you are not going to eggspel me?"

"No, Fearless; not while your pater continues to pay your fees promptly."

"Instead of eggspelling you, I intend to fog you before the entire skool, to-morrow morning."

"Bad enuff!" remarked the junior. "And all because I was good-natured, too!"

"Ah! That means you have a companion in crime. Tell us his name!" commanded Dr. Birchmell fiercely.

"I can't sir, I never split!"

"You're wrong. You are splitting at the present moment!" said the Head, pointing to a bursting seam in the junior's Eton jacket. "Anyway, I won't insist. And now, as the beakholes say, along!—let us away!"

In charge of Dr. Birchmell and Mr. Lickham, Frank Fearless was marched back to St. Sam's.

On the following morning, Frank Fearless was fogged before the whole skool. He didn't mind that; foggings were like water on a duck's back to Fearless; you could fog him dozens of times and he would merely laugh and inkivro who was stroking him. But what he did mind, was the unexpected sequel.

The skool certainly came as a shock to him; yet, when you come to think of it, it was only natural, after all, in consequence of what had happened Jack Jolly & Co. shunned their old pal!

Frank Fearless turned as red as a penny when he saw that they turned their back on him.

"Surely you're not going to shun me?" he cried hoarsely.

"What else do you eggspert?" cried Jack Jolly scornfully. "You have deceived us, your old pals. Can you eggspert us to be the same?"

Frank Fearless bit his lip till the blood spurted out in a fountain.

"So be it," he murmured. "Go your own way, and I'll go mine. You think I'm a pub-hawking waster—a blagging blade. Very well, then, I'll be one!"

And there, in his bitterness of heart, he decided to become a bold, bad blade!

THE END.
(The sure you read the second yarn in this magnificent new series, entitled: "FEARLESS, THE MAD LAD," which will appear in next week's BRIMMER. THE NEXT NUMBER of the Moxer.)
THE Moxer Library—No. 1,098.

"EW!"

Frank Fearless, of the Fourth Form at St. Sam's, gave a whistle of dismay. He was in Dr. Birchmell's study, improving the shining hour by preparing one or two surprises for the Head on his return. He had already filled the inkwell with black glue and placed some drawing-pins on the Head's chair, and he was just about to fill up the study coffee-cup with dirty pieces of soap, when he suddenly realised that footmarks had become visible in the passageway outside.

"Grato pip!" I really believe it's the Head!" gasped Frank Fearless. "If that's not the patter of his hob-nailed boots, then I'm a Dutchman!"

As Fearless was not a Dutchman, but a fine specimen of a British lad, it seemed highly probable that Dr. Birchmell was indeed one of the new comers—for the heavy clatter that preceded from the passageway indicated that there were two of them.

Frank Fearless looked round wildly, his heart pounding furiously against his ribs. In emptying the Head's inkwell he had spilt a lot of red ink over his fingers, so it looked as if he was going to be caught red-handed. He wanted to avoid that at any cost.

For a moment he thought of leaping out of the study window into the quad beneath. It was an eighty-foot drop, but Fearless wouldn't have worried about that for he was the sort of chap who always landed on his feet. What put him off was the thought that undoubtedly he would be spotted by prefects and hawled on the carpet again. Escape by the window, therefore, had to be ruled out.

That meant he had to hide in the study. And the best hiding-place in the study being beneath the sktee, Fearless made a dive for that select spot.

He wasn't a bit too soon, for a couple of socks afterwards the door was kicked open, and Dr. Birchmell stalked in with majestic tread, followed by Mr. Lickham, the master of the Fourth.

Frank Fearless wondered uneasily whether they were likely to sprawl on the floor in front of the fire, in which case he would be in a bad way.

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case they were likely to spot him. But he needn't have worried, for shortly after they had arrived a leonish yell woke the echoes of the study, and Frank breathed a sigh of relief in the knowledge that Dr. Birchmell had set down on his chair.

"Grato pip!" What ever are you doing, sir?" Frank Fearless heard Mr. Lickham say.

"Doing of?" hooted the Head. "I thought perhaps you were giving me an exhibition of the Charleston, sir," ventured Mr. Lickham humbly.

"Bah! Likewise, pah and faw!" cried Dr. Birchmell. "You ought to know by now that I do not approve of dancing. As a matter of fact, I was giving vent to my aggrany. I have just been punched, Lickham. Some careless idiot has left some drawing-pins lying on my chair!"

"Ha, ha, ha! I mean, how unforunt, sir," corrected Mr. Lickham hastily. "Well, sir, let's get to bizness. You called me in to discuss a matter of grato importance, I believe."

"Crooco! Yes, Lickham, that is so. I want you to assist me."

"Sorry, sir," said the master of the Fourth briefly. "But I'm stony!"

"You silly ass, Lickham! Do you think I have called you here to borrow money?"

"Of course!" said Mr. Lickham, in surprise. "Haven't you, then?"

"No, Lickham, I have not!" roared the Head furiously. "If you think I'd owe money to a meek junior master, perhaps you'll pay me back, the half-crown you borrowed from me a couple of terms ago, then," said Mr. Lickham blandly.

"Pray do not bother me with trifles, Lickham! Let us get on with the riddy washing!"

"So be it," said Mr. Lickham, with a bow.

Dr. Birchmell then came to the real business—the crukes of the matter. Frank Fearless, mean-

while, was forced to be an unwilling listener—unwilling, because, being a troo British lad, he wasn't in the habit of Eve's dropping. He tried to plug his ears, so that he shouldn't catch what was said, but the Head's bawling accents pennyvined, all the same, so Frank gave it up and listened.

What he heard made him sit up and take notice—metaphorically speaking, of course, for he couldn't very well sit up where he was!

"Lickham," said Dr. Birchmell solemnly, "you are doubtless already aware of the eggspistence of an evil resort in Muggleton, known as the jolly sailor."

"I have heard roomers of the place, certainly," admitted Mr. Lickham, frowning fiercely.

"I want you, Lickham, to accompany me to this foul den to-nite."

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