

TWO MORE WONDERFUL FREE MOTOR-CAR BADGES INSIDE!

The Magnet 2^d

LIBRARY

No. 1,099. Vol. XXXV. Week Ending March 9th, 1929.

EVERY SATURDAY.



FREE INSIDE!
These
2
TOPPING
COLOURED
METAL MOTOR
CAR BADGES



NOT THE "WALTER" DO IT!

(An amusing incident from "BILLY BUNTER ON THE FILMS!" His week's grand story of Harry Wharton & Co. in Hollywood.)



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.

(NOTE.—From now onwards, all Jokes and Limericks should be sent to: c/o "Magnet," 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.)

THE COMPLETE SET!

"BRAVO, THE 'MAGNET'!" That in effect sums up the opinion of thousands and thousands of readers who have been collecting our unique Free Gifts, and with all due modesty I think the MAGNET deserves such praise. Including those with this issue, twenty badges AND an album have been presented to readers. That's something in the nature of a record, I'll wager. But, there, the MAGNET has always gone out for records. Aren't you all mighty glad you "struck" the MAGNET? Of course! Apart from Free Gifts, where can you find stories to equal those that appear in this paper? Where, indeed! And you new readers—I refer to those who have joined our ranks during the past eight weeks—aren't you jolly wild with yourselves for not trying the MAGNET before? Judging by your letters, you are. Never mind you're keen now, I know, and, take it from me, the quality of future stories will not deteriorate. On the contrary, the tendency with this paper is always to go ahead, to satisfy, to give full value for money.

Now let me see which one of you wins a pocket-knife this week. Oh, here you are! John Gunn, of Leicester Avenue, Rathgar Road, Dublin. Ready for a laugh, chaps? Good!

Small Boy: "Grandma, can you help me with this sum?"

Grandma: "I could, dear, but I don't think it would be right."

Small boy: "No, I don't suppose it would. But you can have a try at it."

"JOHN BROWN'S BODY"

lies a-mouldering in the grave!" I expect you all know that old song, but how many of you know who John Brown actually was? Sid Hobbs, of Dunstable, doesn't, and he has written to ask me to enlighten him. John Brown, who hailed from Ossawatimie (yes, you're right, that is in the United States), was an anti-slave advocate, who was hanged for treason in the seizure of the United States arsenal at Harper's Ferry, West Virginia, in 1859. But John had a considerable following, and although his body was a-mouldering in the grave, his soul went marching on—in the spirit of the men who followed him.

BIG WHEELS ARE INTERESTING

to Harry Phillips, of Blackpool, who tells me that the Big Wheel there is being dismantled (I knew that, Harry), and asks me if there are any more left in existence. I know of one more, and that is in Vienna; but the one in Paris was taken down years ago. It was deemed to be a blot on the landscape, so down it came. Many people wanted the Eiffel Tower pulled down, too, but that still remains.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,099.

By the way, it must be a bit of a blow to picture postcard publishers when such a well-known landmark is removed, for it means that all their postcards which show the landmark have to be destroyed, as people can see they are obviously out of date. And that reminds me that when the big tower in the square of St. Mark's, at Venice, fell down years ago, the municipality decided to build it again exactly as it was. I couldn't help wondering at the time if the picture postcard publishers had anything to do with the decision. At any rate, they wouldn't have to destroy all their old stock and print new ones, would they?

And, talking about Venice brings me to a query from Bernard Jones, of Chorlton. Bernard wants to know—

ARE THERE ANY STREETS IN VENICE?

I wouldn't like to call them streets, but there are any amount of alleys, and narrow courts, and cul-de-sacs. Although they make a most baffling maze, it is possible to go about anywhere in Venice on foot, although one has to dive down the most unpromising-looking side alleys to do so. Once in Venice I was challenged to find my way from St. Mark's to the railway station without consulting a map, or asking anyone the way. (This last would have been very difficult, because I can't speak Italian.) I accepted the challenge, and won it, too! I rather pride myself on having a good sense of direction, and it's one of my boasts that I can generally spot

where the North is purely by instinct. There are quite a lot of people who can, and I wonder how many of my readers are in the same boat. It's an accomplishment worth having, especially by Scouts, and I advise any of you who have it to cultivate it.

JACK BAYLISS—HERE'S A LEATHER WALLET FOR YOU!

And you other chaps, don't you think Jack deserves it? Read his winning Limerick, and then have a shot at writing one yourselves. Must be about Greyfriars characters, remember.

"Billy Bunter a Fifth study raided,
With a torch that he carefully shaded;

But as he came out

He ran into Prouth,

And the grin on his face quickly faded."

The pocket-wallet is already on the way to Jack's address—Glendower, 14, Chiswick Lane, London, W.4.

STILL THEY COME!

More and more questions from my chums! "What is a Selling Plate?" asks R. L., of Brentford. It is a horse-race, the winner of which is put up for sale by public auction. J. B. wants to know who Admiral Crichton was? I imagine he means "The Admirable Crichton," who is the principle character in the play of the same name by J. M. Barrie. "Have all white rats got pink eyes?" asks Fred Hopkins. No; a species of white rat with black eyes was recently discovered in Central France. "How many Lords of the Admiralty are there?" is the question put by Dick Carruthers. There is a First Lord of the Admiralty, who is a civilian and a politician, and four Sea Lords, who are naval officers.

That's all for this week, but don't be afraid to send along any little query that might be puzzling you. I'm here to be shot at, so shoot!

TURNING TO THE BLACK BOOK!

which I keep on my desk, and in which I enter up details of all the features I have arranged for future issues, I find that next week's Greyfriars yarn is entitled:

"THE HERO OF HOLLYWOOD!"

In this yarn, by Frank Richards, Lord Mauleverer comes out strong. Beneath Mauly's languid exterior there is a fine, noble character capable of accomplishing great things. If you chaps don't enjoy next week's yarn of the Greyfriars chums—well, I'll eat my hat!

There will, of course, be another fine instalment of "The Black Hawk," while Master Dicky Nugent presents (as they say on the films) a roaring, side-splitting two-reeler, entitled: "FRANK FEARLESS' REFORM!" Frank is supported by an all-star cast from "that sellybrated skolastik instituchun," St. Sam's. While, just to wind up the programme, your editor will once again be in evidence, and extends to you a hearty invitation to "Come into the Office, Boys!"

TWO MORE MOTOR-CAR BADGES FREE WITH THIS ISSUE, BOYS!

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

FOR NEW READERS!

For the benefit of readers who missed our early Free Gift Numbers we print the following particulars. Readers who desire to bring their sets up to date can obtain back numbers by applying to:—"Back Number Dept., The MAGNET Library, Bear Alley, The Amalgamated Press, London, E.C.4. 3d. in stamps must be enclosed for each copy required, to cover cost of postage.

DATE OF ISSUE.	GIFTS.
January 19th.	Special Album, Alvis, Minerva, and Standard Car Badges.
January 26th.	Morris-Cowley, Lea Francis, Rolls-Royce.
February 2nd.	Fiat, Riley, Mercedes-Benz.
February 9th.	Armstrong-Siddley, Vauxhall, Stutz.
February 16th.	Austin, Chrysler.
February 23rd.	Bonault, Sunbeam.
March 2nd.	Crossley, Lancia.

BILLY BUNTER IN A NEW ROLE!



A long complete story dealing with the further adventures of Harry Wharton & Co. at Hollywood. By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Neck or Nothing!

"STOP!" said Billy Bunter. Bunter stopped. The other fellows didn't. They carried on.

Billy Bunter, standing outside the arched entrance of the Las Palmas tea-shop on Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood, stared after them through his big spectacles indignantly.

"I say, you fellows!" he bawled.

Harry Wharton glanced round.

"Come on, fatty!" he said.

"I said stop!" hooted Bunter.

Whereat, eight faces broke into a grin. Apparently the fact that Bunter had said stop did not seem to Harry Wharton & Co. a sufficient reason for stopping.

Besides, they wanted their tea. Tea was not provided at Long Beach Boarding-house, where the chums of the Remove were staying at Hollywood. At Greyfriars they were accustomed to tea in the study; at Hollywood they walked out to a tea-shop for that cheery meal. They had discovered a place near Vine Street, off the boulevard, where the prices, though steep, were not mountainous. For that place they were heading, when William George Bunter called a halt.

Bunter preferred Las Palmas for his tea. It was the best place on the boulevard. The prices were so high that Bob Cherry had a theory that the proprietor must have gone up in an aeroplane to fix them. But prices did not matter to Bunter. They were the concern of the fellows who paid. Bunter never paid. So sordid considerations of that sort were beneath him.

"Roll on, fatty!" said Bob. "We're teasing round the corner."

"Stop!" hooted Bunter. "I say, you tea with me," urged Bunter. "You

fellows, we're teasing here. I prefer this place. If you're worrying about the bill, I'll pay it," added Bunter, with a touch of contempt.

"What with?" grinned Bob.

"Still got that threepenny-bit?" asked Frank Nugent, laughing.

"If you fellows will lend me——"

"The lendfulness will not be terrific, my esteemed fat Bunter," said Hurren Jamset Ram Singh, shaking his head.

"Well, Mauly will pay!" said Bunter.

"Pleased!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"We're not sponging on Mauly," growled Johnny Bull, "and we can't afford the prices there. Come on, you fat image!"

"Oh, really, Bull——"

"Oh, beat it!" said Fisher T. Fish.

don't want to go to a low place with that rowdy crowd, do you, old chap?"

Lord Mauleverer grinned.

"Yaas," he answered.

"Oh, really, Mauly——"

Lord Mauleverer followed his friends. The prospect of watching Billy Bunter dispose of a Gargantuan meal at Las Palmas did not seem to attract him somehow. There was no doubt—in Bunter's mind, at least—that Billy Bunter was a charming fellow. But there were a lot of people who could resist his charms.

Bunter stopped again—and Harry Wharton & Co. pursued their way, amid the thronging crowds on the sidewalk of Sunset Boulevard.

"Beasts!" grunted Bunter.

He did not follow on.

He turned back to the arcade at the entrance of Las Palmas, adorned by flowering shrubs and palms in tubs. Las Palmas was a very handsome establishment, imposing to the view, as well as in its little bills. Billy Bunter rolled into the palatial establishment with a determined gleam in his little round

eyes behind his expansive spectacles.

Bunter had seen Mr. Hiram K. Fish enter Las Palmas, in company with Mr. Rigg Schootz, producer of the Perfection Picture Syndicate. Mr. Fish had undertaken to pay all the expenses of the Greyfriars party on their trip to the United States. Among the expenses, the most important was grub for Bunter. The Owl of the Remove did not see why he should not "touch" Hiram K. Fish on this occasion. It was Mr. Fish's duty, and it ought to have been his pleasure, to foot Bunter's bills. He ought to have been happy to do so. Bunter was going to bestow that happiness on him—if he could.

Las Palmas was crowded that sunny afternoon.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,099.

Hundreds of people in Hollywood would give all they possess to get "on the films." But getting past the studio door-keeper is an almost insurmountable difficulty. Yet William George Bunter, fresh from England, succeeds at his first attempt. How does he do it?

"I guess we don't want to stick around chewing the rag!"

"I say, you fellows!" exclaimed Bunter, rolling after the Greyfriars party. "It's all right. Mr. Fish has gone into Las Palmas; well, he'll pay. He can't refuse if we go in and have tea with him."

"I guess he could, some!" grinned Fisher T. "You can't put it over on the popper like that, you fat clam!"

"Come on, Bunter!" said Harry Wharton impatiently. "We can't afford to pay a pound a head for our tea, and if you're willing to sponge on Mauly, we're not! Get a move on!"

"Shan't!" hooted Bunter.

"Then go and eat coke!"

"I say, Mauly, old chap, come in to tea with me," urged Bunter. "You

(Copyright in the United States of America.)

It was a favourite resort of the wealthier members of the film fraternity of Hollywood, and many well-known film actors were to be seen there. Nice little tables and cosy chairs stood shaded by nodding palms in tubs. There was a buzz of conversation, which lulled every now and then as the patrons of Las Palmas rubbed their necks to stare at some celebrated "star" who strolled in.

Some day, Bunter was assured, they would "rubber" when he rolled in, and whispers would pass to and fro, and people would point out that celebrated film star, W. G. Bunter, to one another. But that day had not yet arrived.

Certainly, glances were turned on Bunter. Bunter often noticed people giving him a second, even a third glance. This he attributed to his distinguished appearance, and the easy, yet dignified, grace with which he carried himself. Nothing would have convinced him that it was due wholly and solely to his remarkable circumference.

Bunter blinked round the extensive establishment for Mr. Fish.

He spotted that tall and bony gentleman at a table in a little alcove, sitting opposite the fat and bald Mr. Schoots. The director and producer of Perfection Pictures were deep in conversation—probably on the subject of that great school film, for which Mr. Fish had brought the Greyfriars party to Los Angeles. There was one other table in the alcove, and it was unoccupied. Bunter rolled up to it. Even Billy Bunter had not the "neck" to join Mr. Fish and Mr. Schoots at their table. He landed himself as near as he could.

Many people in Las Palmas were looking towards that alcove. At Hollywood, where they live on films, great men in the film business were the "goods." A hundred people would have been glad to catch the eye of Mr. Rigg Schoots, who had power to make or mar. Merely to make their existence known to the great producer would have been something gained. But Mr. Schoots, conscious of his greatness, doled out his glances and nods sparingly. He walked the boulevards of Hollywood as Jove walked on Olympus, lofty and unapproachable. In the tea-shop, his shining bald head shone commanding, like the white plume of Navarre in olden times. A crowd of people, anxious to break into the films, would have been glad of an excuse to approach his table, and exchange a word with the great man.

He did not glance at Bunter. Mr. Fish glanced at him and frowned. Otherwise he did not heed the Owl of the Remove.

"Good-afternoon, sir!" said Bunter.

Mr. Fish gave a grunt, which might have been an acknowledgment of that greeting. By the widest stretch of imagination, Bunter could not suppose that Hiram K. Fish was pleased to see him there. Fortunately, that did not matter to Bunter.

He sat down.

A waiter came up. He gave Bunter a rather peculiar look. Although the "Palmas" was crowded, no one else had ventured to take that table so close to the two great men, within hearing of their conversation. Many onlookers envied Bunter's nerve in doing so. The waiter evidently thought it was a tremendous cheek on Bunter's part. But William George was happily indifferent to the opinion of the waiter.

He blinked over the menu, which was shaped like a palm leaf, with gilt edges, and delicately-tinted. He gave liberal orders.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,099.

The waiter took out a pencil. Generally he could trust his memory. But when Billy Bunter was ordering food, it was necessary to make notes, or a dozen or so items might have been forgotten.

The waiter glided away. His manner was respectful now. Bunter's order totalled about twenty dollars, which was equivalent to four pounds, quite a little sum for a fellow to spend on his tea, even in Hollywood.

The waiter, certainly, did not know that Bunter's total financial resources were limited to one threepenny-piece. Probably his respect would have diminished, had he been aware of that.

Hiram K. Fish looked round again, as the waiter retired. There was a steely glint in his cold eyes.

"Hyer, you Bunter," he said.

Bunter gave him an affable smile.

"I guess you ain't fixed to meet bills to that tune, boy," said Mr. Fish. "You better guess again, see?"

"Oh, really, Mr. Fish—"

"Where are your friends?" granted Mr. Fish.

Bunter's lip curled.

"They've gone to a cheap place," he answered.

"I guess you'd better follow them there," said Hiram K. Fish.

"I prefer this place," explained Bunter.

Another grunt from Hiram K. Fish.

"Besides, I'm teasing with you, Mr. Fish," said Bunter brightly. "I—I thought you'd like me to—"

Mr. Fish glared.

"You thought I'd like you to?" he demanded.

"Ye-e-es," faltered Bunter.

"You've got another guess coming, then," said Mr. Fish grimly. "If you figure that I'm paying any tea bills in this shebang for you, boy, you've sure got another guess coming. You ain't touching me for a continental red cent."

"Oh, really, sir—"

"I guess you've spilled enough," grunted Mr. Fish, and he turned back to his conversation with Mr. Schoots, who was still loftily and sublimely unconscious of Billy Bunter's fat existence.

The waiter came back with a tray.

Billy Bunter felt a tremor.

He had ordered foodstuffs to the tune of twenty dollars. His table was already being loaded to capacity with the goods he had ordered. Mr. Fish had told him that he was not going to pay. In such matters as that, if not in all other matters, Hiram K. Fish was a man of his word. Who was going to pay for the good things that the waiter was landing on Bunter's table? Not Bunter, that was certain.

William George Bunter had plenty of "neck." But he could not help feeling uneasy. A wild idea floated in his mind for a moment of telling the waiter that he had forgotten his purse, and telling him to take the things away again. But that was only for a moment. He could not face the scornful stare of the waiter, and the smiles from surrounding tables. Besides, he was hungry; and the good things made his mouth water. And it was not Bunter's custom to meet troubles half-way. Something might turn up. Anyhow, if he had the feed, that was so much to the good; it would be as easy to tell the tale of the forgotten purse after taking, as before taking. It was a case of neck or nothing—and Bunter made the plunge.

Headless of consequences, the Owl of the Remove started tea. Mr. Fish and Mr. Schoots, conversing deeply in low tones, paid him no further heed; neither did Bunter heed the two great men further. More important matters occupied his mind. The orchestra of

Las Palmas discoursed sweet music, to the accompaniment of the steady championing of the plump jaws of William George Bunter.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Coker Puts It Plain!

"**T**HAT rotter!" exclaimed Coker of the Fifth.

"What?" ejaculated Potter.

"That blighter!"

"Who?" asked Greene.

"That sneaking hound!" said Coker, with gathering wrath.

Coker of the Fifth had a powerful voice, which had been likened, at Greyfriars, to the voice of the celebrated Bull of Bashan. It was said at Greyfriars that if Horace Coker talked in the games study with the door shut, all Greyfriars knew what he was talking about; and that if he talked in open quad, most of the county was made acquainted with his views.

When Coker was annoyed, irritated, or enraged, his voice took on a deeper and louder tone, and the Bull of Bashan would have sighed with envy could he have heard it.

Standing at the corner of Sunset Boulevard and Vine Street, in the town of Hollywood, Los Angeles, California, Coker of the Fifth saw no more reason for moderating his transports, as it were, than if he had been in the games study or the quad at the old school in Kent.

Coker's voice was heard far and wide.

Harry Wharton & Co. coming along to turn the corner on their way to tea, heard it. Twenty or thirty people on the side-walk heard it.

"Rubbering" was as common at Los Angeles as at any other American city. Dozens of heads were turned. People stopped to stare, stretching out their necks to do so in the manner which the Americans describe as "rubbernecking."

Coker did not mind. Potter and Greene did; but they did not count. Horace Coker, heedless of the attention he was getting, had fixed his eyes on a young man who was lounging elegantly along the boulevard. This young man was apparently the rotter, blighter, and hound to whom Coker alluded.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Coker in a shindy again! Good old Coker!"

"That fellow's Myron Polk!" remarked Harry Wharton, glancing at the elegant young man.

Many glances, as well as Coker's, were turned on Myron Polk.

He was well known on the Hollywood boulevards; being the "star" in the Perfection studio; the languishing "sheikh" of the Perfection pictures, whose handsome face was adored on the screen by countless film fans.

Polk, undoubtedly a very handsome man, was not looking so handsome now as was his wont. No expense had been spared to clear his handsome features of the damage done by Coker's hefty fist in their "row" a short time before. The most expensive doctors and surgeons and masseurs and beauty specialists in Los Angeles had laboured at that important task. They had done wonders. Still, there was an irregularity about Polk's Greek nose, a dusky shade about his beautiful eyes, which told that success had not yet been complete.

His eyes glittered as he heard Coker's loud voice, and looked round at him. But he did not approach Coker. The great picture "The Lord of the Desert," had been hung up while the sheikh was

getting over his damages. Polk could not afford to gather any more. And Coker was the sort of reckless fellow to hit out right and left, regardless of the sorrows of film fans who had to wait and wait to see their fascinating sheikh on the screen.

"That's the rotten curl!" roared Coker.

Polk would have lounged elegantly onward. Had the Los Angeles of 1929 been the Los Angeles of 1859, Myron Polk undoubtedly would have "pulled a gun," and put a sudden end to Coker's unpleasant remarks, and to Coker at the same time. But guns being things of the past, Polk was desirous of avoiding a shindy. Coker, however, planted himself directly in the young man's path, stopping him.

"You curl!" roared Coker.

Polk's face became white with rage. He glanced round hurriedly, as if in search of a policeman.

"Coker!" gasped Potter. "For goodness' sake, Coker, don't kick up a row here, on the boulevard."

"Who's kicking up a row?" demanded Coker.

"Eh! What? What do you call this, then?" gasped Potter.

"Don't be a fool, Potter!"

"Look here—" expostulated Greene.

"Shut up, Greene!"

Potter and Greene shut up. At the same time, they backed away and sidled into the crowd. If Coker was hunting for more trouble Potter and Greene considered it judicious to leave him to it. They really did not want to be "run in" for kicking up a row on the boulevard.

"Will you let me pass, you hooligan?" asked Myron Polk, in a low, concentrated tone of fury.

Polk was slightly built, but he was as tall as the burly Coker, and he was a good many years older. Whether he could have handled Coker was a question he did not desire to put to the test. He could not afford to have his beauty spoiled again. His beauty was his stock-in-trade. Coker, of course, was under no such disadvantage. He had no

beauty to spoil. Had a mule kicked Coker right in the middle of his features it would have been painful, of course, but probably it would not have made him less handsome. Coker had reached the limit in that line, anyhow.

"No," said Coker. "I won't—not till I've told you what I think of you, you worm. I've been waiting for a chance."

"Oh, gad!" murmured Lord Mauleverer. "Let's travel on, you men. People may find out that Coker belongs to us."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't miss the show," said the Bouncer, with a chuckle. "Coker is worth watching when he gets going."

"Potter and Greene have gone," grinned Johnny Bull. "Let's watch Coker. Besides, that rat deserves it."

"The ratfulness of the esteemed Polk is terrific!" agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Coker was pointing a finger full at

the white, infuriated face of the Perfection "star."

"You worm!" he boomed. "Think I don't know your game? You put up a hooligan to beat me up, because I blacked your eye for your confounded cheek, and you faked handling me yourself. I was laid for and attacked, and I'd have been hurt if help hadn't come. That's the sort of cur you are!"

Myron Polk gritted his teeth.

"It's a lie!" he said. "If you've been attacked I know nothing about it. I don't even know you—or want to know you!"

"Liar!" said Coker. "You got that ruffian, Jose Gomez, out of Spanish Town, to beat me up, with another brute to help him, and you know it."

"I know nothing about it, if it ever happened!" hissed Polk. "Now get out of my way, or I'll call a policeman and give you in charge!"

"Will you?" roared Coker. "I'd like to see the policeman who could take

grantly. "If it happens again I shan't stop to ask questions. Any hooligan set on me again, Mister Myron Polk, and I'll come straight up to your lal-de-lal bungalow on the hill and see you about it; and what I gave you last time will be a joke to what I'll give you next time. Got that?"

"Here comes a cop!" called out a voice.

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Harry Wharton in dismay. A burly policeman could be seen advancing towards the crowd along the boulevard.

Myron Polk's eyes gleamed. Coker was quite indifferent. Coker never counted odds. And perhaps he believed he was equal in personal prowess to the whole police force of the United States of America. He did not think much of Americans, anyhow.

But if Coker of the Fifth was prepared to take on the United States in single combat, Harry Wharton & Co. were not prepared to see him do it.

Coker was a Greyfriars man, and they did not want a Greyfriars man to be lodged inside a cell at Los Angeles gaol.

No doubt Coker was in the right. Not one of the juniors had any doubt that Polk had hired and set on the ruffian who had attacked Coker to "beat him up." But there was no proof of it—not a vestige of proof. The ruffian had "skipped" his bail and vanished, and only his testimony could have implicated the Perfection star. Coker was in the right, but he had placed himself in the wrong, and certainly he could have been arrested for stopping a passenger on the street and uttering accusations and threats.

So, at the sight of the policeman, Harry Wharton whispered a word to his friends, and they intervened promptly and effectively.

Like one man, the Famous Five closed in on Coker of the Fifth and grasped him on all sides.

"Leggo!" roared Coker, in surprise and rage.

"Come on, Coker!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Leggo!"

"Quick march!" chuckled Nugent.

Coker resisted.

He was ready to mop up Hollywood with the chums of the Remover, and after that to mop up all Los Angeles with the policeman.

Fortunately for Coker, the mopping up was, as Hurree Singh would have described it, a boot on the other leg.

Resisting valiantly, but overcome by numbers, Horace Coker was walked away by the Famous Five, Lord Mauleverer and the Bouncer lending a helping hand, and Fisher T. Fish putting in an assisting foot.

A laughing crowd followed them as they went.

Myron Polk was left on his own.

Probably glad to get out of the scene, the Perfection star walked quickly away, and disappeared into the Las Palmas teashop.

Coker, resisting and roaring, turned the corner into Vine Street, half-walking and half-carried by the juniors.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,099.

THE SPORTSMAN'S CAR!

Our Motoring Expert tells you some facts about the famous BENTLEY Car, the radiator badge of which forms the subject of one of this week's topping Free Gifts.

Bentley cars are pre-eminently sports cars, and it is safe to say that not a car is turned out from the factory that is not capable of a speed of at least 75 miles per hour on the road. It follows that Bentleys are prime favourites with expert motorists, and it is very rarely indeed that one sees one of these cars on the road being indifferently handled.

Bentleys have low, sporting lines and impressive radiators—even the Bentley saloons are low-built, and speedy-looking. For speed, allied to reliability, has been the aim of the Bentley designers throughout. The performance of Bentley cars in the famous twenty-four hours' race at Le Mans, in France, last year, when a Bentley finished first, while two others put up a very stout fight, proves that this aim has been amply achieved.

Bentley cars are made in three sizes, viz., the three-litre and four and a half litre four-cylinders—about 15.9 and 27 h.p. respectively—and the Bentley Big Six, which is, of course, a six-cylinder car. The Big Six model is probably the most imposing-looking car on the road, and is an established favourite in the high-priced class of cars.

Every boy should possess the famous Bentley badge, which is given away with this issue of the MAGNET!

me in charge! I fancy there isn't a bobby in the United States that could do it."

"Don't the dear old chap beg for trouble?" murmured Bob Cherry. "Let's hope a bobby won't come along and hear him!"

"I'm speaking to you," went on Coker, "not because you're fit for a decent chap to speak to, you lackadaisical, decorated ninny, but just to give you a warning. The man who attacked me was run in. Next morning he was bailed out; and he's cleared out of the place, and can't be found. Somebody put up five hundred dollars bail for him, and had to lose it. I know who that was. You were afraid he'd give you away if you left him to it. Now, I'm not going to hit you—"

Polk looked round almost wildly.

People with excited, interested faces circled round, but there was no policeman to be seen—yet.

"I'm going to warn you," said Coker

"You cheeky young scoundrels!" roared Coker. "Wharrer you mean? I hadn't finished talking to that blighter, you—"

"You had!" assured Bob Cherry.

"I'll smash you!" boomed Coker.

Harry Wharton glanced back.

"All serene now!" he said. "Sit him down!"

Bump!

"Whoop!"

Horace Coker was landed on the sidewalk.

He sat there and gasped and spluttered for breath, and Harry Wharton & Co. walked on and left him to it.

They had vanished from sight before Coker of the Fifth got his second wind. Coker staggered to his feet at last, and glared round for them—and glared in vain. Then he tramped round the corner into Sunset Boulevard, and glared for Myron Polk. But Polk, too, had vanished. He glared round for Potter and Greene, but they were not in sight. Plenty of people were staring at him, some of them laughing; and perhaps Horace Coker realised, at long last, that he was providing Los Angeles with a free entertainment. He jammed his hat down over his frowning brows and tramped away, still boiling with wrath.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Getting Away With It!

BILLY BUNTER was happy.

There was, of course, a fly in the ointment. In this weary world nothing is quite perfect.

Bunter was enjoying a feed that put to the blush any feed he had ever graced with his presence at Greyfriars School.

It was certain that the tuck at Las Palmas was good. And there was plenty of it. Hefty trencherman as Bunter was, the cargo of goods landed on his table almost defied his efforts. His performance was wonderful, but he slowed down at last, and toyed with his tuck, while there was still a good deal left.

It was a happy day. But the further Bunter progressed through that splendid spread the nearer came the moment when the waiter would present his check, and Bunter would be expected to pay. To offer the threepenny-piece he had brought with him from England was useless. Bunter knew that. But what else he was to do, he did not know. What was going to happen when he failed to settle the bill was unknown to Bunter. But he had a feeling that it would be something very unpleasant.

It was all the fault of Hiram K. Fish. Old Fish, of course, should have settled the bill. Instead of which, he had plainly declared his intention of doing nothing of the kind. Now Mr. Fish and Mr. Schootz had left their table without even a look at Bunter.

"I say, Mr. Fish!" Bunter squeaked, as the director of Perfection Pictures moved away.

Mr. Fish turned a deaf ear.

Regardless of Bunter, he walked out of Las Palmas with Mr. Schootz. They disappeared from Bunter's sight.

"Oh crikey!" murmured Bunter.

He felt an inward quake.

The feed was excellent. But after the feast came the reckoning. The nearer the reckoning came, the more it worried Bunter. Right up to the moment when Hiram K. Fish departed, Bunter had hoped that he might, somehow, touch that gentleman for the amount of the bill. Hope springs eternal in the human breast. But now Hiram K. Fish was gone, and with him went Bunter's lingering hope.

What was to be done? Apparently, the teasop was to be "done." But what was to happen to Bunter?

In such painful circumstances, all the Owl of the Remove could do was to postpone the evil hour as long as possible, and enjoy the feed to the uttermost. If he was to be kicked out of the teasop as a "bilk," at least he would go well-laden. Perhaps his friends might come in to look for him. Perhaps the waiter might believe that he had forgotten his purse, and give him time to cut round to Long Beach Boarding-house to fetch his money. Something might turn up. Anyhow, the feed was there, and Bunter proceeded with it, though gradually apprehension was taking the place of happy satisfaction.

There was a bustle at the neighbouring table. A bowing waiter was ushering another patron to it; another waiter was hurriedly clearing away the leavings of Mr. Fish and Mr. Schootz. Bunter blinked at the newcomer. Evidently it was a person whom the Las Palmas teasop delighted to honour. Bunter started a little as he recognised Myron Polk, the "sheikh" of the Perfection Films; the man whose eyes Coker of the Fifth had blacked, and who was suspected of having set on a hooligan to "beat up" Horace Coker.

Polk glanced at him and scowled. He had had nothing to do with Bunter, so far, but he recognised him as a member of the Greyfriars party. All the party from Greyfriars were the objects of Mr. Polk's most particular dislike.

However, he gave no other heed to the fat junior. He sank down gracefully into the chair the bowing waiter placed for him, with a due regard to the crease in his immaculate trousers. There was a glitter of jewels as he removed his gloves. Polk, who was popularly supposed to draw thousands of dollars a week for acting on the films, spent a considerable amount of his income on personal decoration. His rings alone were worth a small fortune. The diamond in his tie had been priced at two thousand dollars at the most fashionable jeweller's on Hollywood Boulevard. His wrist-watch could not have cost less than a hundred pounds. Undoubtedly, Mr. Polk was got up regardless of expense.

Glances and whispers ran round the tea-rooms. People told one another that this was the Perfection sheikh.

Billy Bunter gave Mr. Polk an affable blink.

It was all very well for the other fellows to run this chap down, Bunter considered, but a fellow who exuded money as Myron Polk did, was a fellow Bunter would have liked to cultivate.

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Polk," said Bunter across the space between the two tables.

He spoke in his most respectful and affable tone. Respect and affability, however, were wasted. Polk glanced at him.

"Did you address me?" he inquired icily.

"Yes."

"Don't do it again, then."

"Oh!" said Bunter.

One rebuff was not enough for Bunter. He fortified himself with a cream tart, rallied, and returned to the attack.

"I say, Mr. Polk—"

Mr. Polk gave him a freezing stare.

"Excuse me," said Bunter, "I know it's rather a cheek to speak to a celebrated man like you, sir."

Polk's stare became less freezing.

For years the Perfection sheikh had

lived on the admiration of film fans, the adoration of callow youths and ecstatic flappers. He rose to flattery like a gudgeon to bait.

"I hope you won't judge us all by that boulder Coker," went on Bunter. "That fellow's a beast, always insulting his superiors. Goodness knows what Mr. Fish brought him out here for. I wish you'd use your influence with the Perfection people to get him sent home. I know you can do anything you like with the Perfection people. It's pretty rotten for us to have that ruffian in our party."

Polk thawed further. He did not speak, but he ceased to stare at Bunter as if Bunter wasn't there.

The Owl of the Remove felt that he was getting on. If this supercilious chump wanted flattery, Bunter wasn't the fellow to keep him short of it. Flattery cost nothing.

"You can hardly imagine, sir, what a pleasure it is to a fellow to see you in real life," went on Bunter artlessly. "When Mr. Fish told us we were coming to Hollywood, the first thing I thought was, 'I wonder if we shall see Myron Polk?' Now I've seen you!" added Bunter triumphantly, as if his greatest ambition and fondest dream had been realised at last.

Myron Polk smiled.

"Yes, you've seen me, kid," he said, quite good-humouredly.

"Now I can tell the fellows at Greyfriars that you look exactly like you do on the screen," explained Bunter. "I don't mind admitting that when I saw you on the pictures, I never really believed you were so handsome as all that. I thought a lot of it must be in the make-up. Now I know you're exactly like the sheikh on the screen."

Mr. Polk laughed.

Billy Bunter, with all his fatuousness, had a vein of cunning somewhere in his fat nature. He had touched the right chord.

The waiter brought Mr. Polk coffee and cigarettes. Having served Mr. Polk, he asked Bunter very respectfully whether he wanted anything more. A person who was in conversation with the Perfection sheikh was a person to be respected.

"Nothing, thanks!" said Bunter airily. "You can bring me my check."

The check was laid on the table.

Bunter blinked at it, and a cold feeling ran down his spine as he saw that it totalled twenty dollars. The waiter retired again, leaving the check with Bunter. But he hovered close at hand, keeping an eye on the Perfection sheikh, ready to jump to attention at a sign from that great man.

Bunter coughed.

He had put Mr. Polk into a good humour. Mr. Polk understood that, whatever Horace Coker might be like, all the Greyfriars party were not tarred with the same brush. Mr. Polk was ready to lend his elegant ear to Bunter's fat flattery. But from that, to paying Bunter's bill, was a long step.

Still, as it was Bunter's only chance, he resolved to try it on. He ran his hands through his pockets, and ejaculated:

"Oh dear!"

Mr. Polk glanced at him through the smoke of his cigarette, not unkindly.

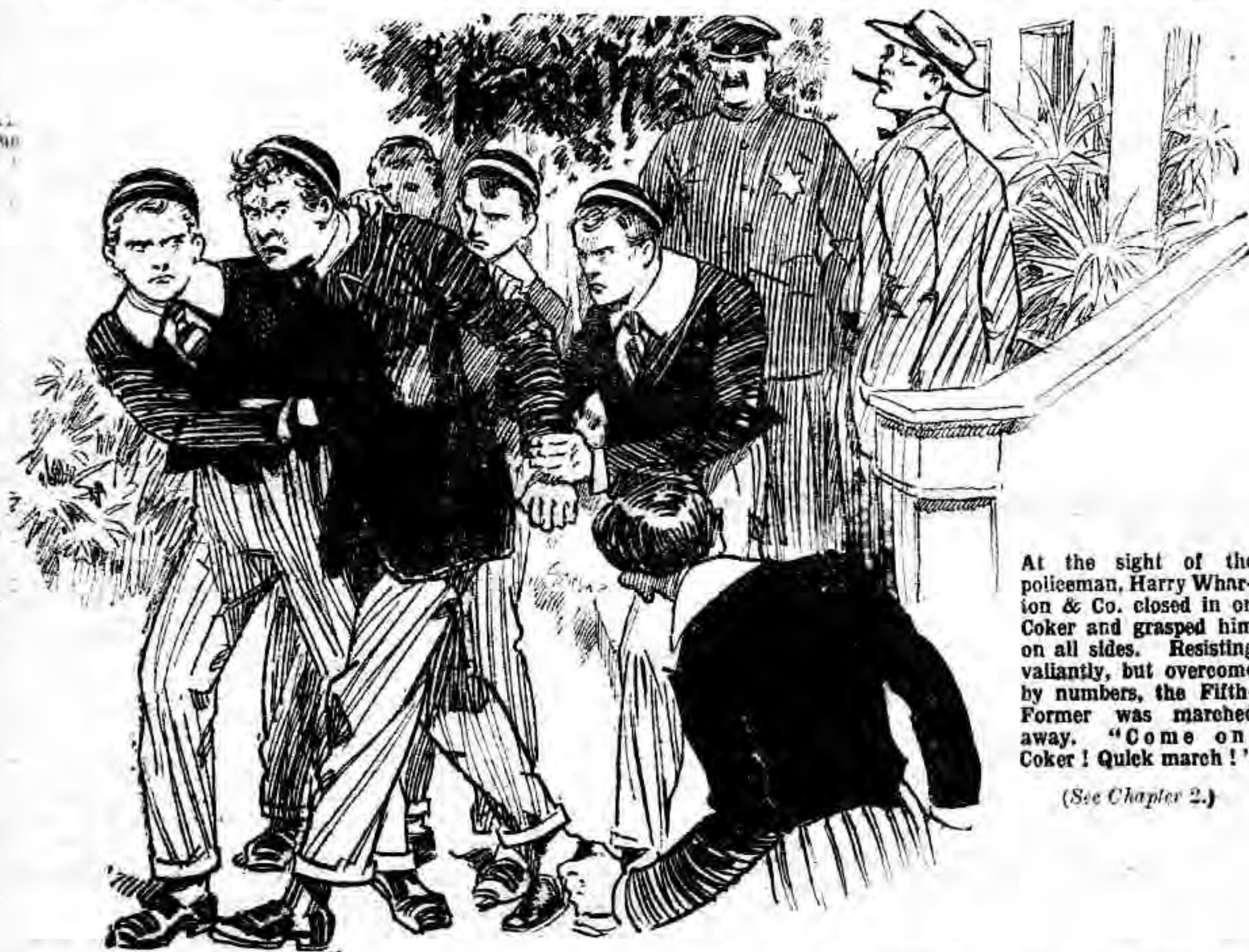
"Blessed if I haven't left my purse at the boarding-house!" said Bunter.

"Really?" drawled Mr. Polk.

"It's very unfortunate," said Bunter.

"Must be," agreed Mr. Polk.

He took up a Los Angeles newspaper and began to scan it. His attention fixed on a page dealing with the forthcoming Perfection film, "Lord of the Desert," featuring Myron Polk.



At the sight of the policeman, Harry Wharton & Co. closed in on Coker and grasped him on all sides. Resisting valiantly, but overcome by numbers, the Fifth-Former was marched away. "Come on, Coker! Quick march!"

(See Chapter 2.)

Bunter breathed hard.
"Excuse me, Mr. Polk—"

Mr. Polk glanced up from the paper.
"You see, I'm rather a stranger here," said Bunter. "But I suppose it will be all right if I tell the waiter I've forgotten my purse?"

"Maybe," said Mr. Polk.

He returned to his paper.

"The—the fact is, Mr. Polk—" murmured Bunter.

This time Mr. Polk did not look up from his paper. Having swallowed Bunter's flattery, he seemed to be done with Bunter. After all, Mr. Polk was used to flattery being breathed into his ear.

"I suppose—" murmured Bunter hopefully.

No sign from Mr. Polk.

"I—I—I suppose you couldn't lend me twenty dollars just till I run round to the boarding-house, Mr. Polk?" said Bunter desperately.

"Quite so!" assented Mr. Polk, without glancing up from a very attractive picture of himself in sheikh costume.

"Eh?"

"I said quite so."

"You—you mean—"

"Precisely what I say."

"The—the fact is—"

"I am reading!" said Mr. Polk pointedly.

Billy Bunter sat back in his cosy chair with that cold feeling in his spine intensified.

The game was up.

This decorated popinjay was willing to listen to flattery, but he wasn't willing to lend Bunter twenty dollars. Really, it had been a rather desperate hope. Such as it was, it had failed Bunter.

For some minutes Bunter sat silent, with quite a dizzy feeling in his head.

Bunter was not without experience as a "bilk." All his experiences in that line had been unpleasant. People had always objected to being "done," even by a fascinating fellow like Bunter. It seemed to the fat junior that the waiter's eye was already suspiciously upon him. He thought desperately of a sudden bolt. But it was impossible to bolt successfully through a crowded tea-shop. If he passed the desk without paying on his check his bolt would be stopped promptly enough. There was no sign of his friends coming in for him. They were heartlessly eating their tea at a cheap tea-shop where they could afford to pay for it regardless of Bunter and his more expensive tastes.

"I say Mr. Polk—" gasped Bunter at last.

"Don't bother!"

"Oh!"

There was nothing to it as Fishy would have expressed it. Bunter's soft sawdust had been a sheer waste on Mr. Polk.

Bunter's eyes glittered behind his big spectacles. He was tempted to tell Myron Polk what he really thought of him. No doubt that would have surprised Mr. Polk; but it would not have induced him to settle the bill.

The waiter hovered round Bunter's table.

"If you've finished, sir, the table's wanted," he remarked, and retired again to a little distance.

Bunter guessed what that meant. Probably the Las Palmas waiter had encountered bilks before, and knew the symptoms.

Perspiration trickled down Bunter's back.

Myron Polk, deep in his paper and his cigarette, gave no heed to his fat

neighbour. Bunter rose to his feet. The game was up! Once more the reckless Owl of the Remove had sought for trouble, and found it.

Then, like a flash, came an inspiration. For any other bilk, the game would have been up; but there was a chance yet for the Greyfriars ventriloquist. The things that Billy Bunter could not do were innumerable; but there was one thing that he could do, and that was ventriloquism. At Greyfriars his weird gift earned him more kicks than halfpence. He hoped it would have better luck at Hollywood.

He gave a fat little cough, to clear his throat, always his preliminary to a ventriloquial effort. The Famous Five would have known what was coming, if they had heard Bunter's "atmospherics." Fortunately, nobody in Las Palmas was "wise" to it.

Bunter rolled away from his table, leaving his check there. The waiter's eye was upon him.

"Waiter!"

It was the high-pitched, affected voice of Myron Polk, which the fat ventriloquist had picked up to perfection.

"Sir!" ejaculated the waiter.

"Leave my friend's check to me."

"Certainly, sir!"

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

Myron Polk must have heard the words spoken; but, like most people, he did not recognise the sound of his own voice when reproduced.

He gave no heed.

Certainly, he had no idea that he was supposed to have spoken, and that the waiter would look to him for the payment of Bunter's check. He was to learn that later.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,099.

Bunter rolled on, scarcely able to believe in his good luck.

He passed the cash desk, and the eagle eye of the young lady with the expensive complexion, who presided there, rested on him as he passed without halting. But a sign from the waiter was enough. Bunter rolled on, and descended the carpeted steps of Las Palmas, under the nodding palms in tubs, and reached the boulevard.

"Oh, crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He did not pause. Myron Polk might rise from his table at any moment, and Bunter did not want to be on the scene when the argument started. He stood not upon the order of his going, but went at once. Billy Bunter did a prompt fade-out along Sunset Boulevard.

He wondered a little what Myron Polk would say to the waiter, and what the waiter would say to Myron Polk, and how the affair would end. But he soon dismissed the matter from his mind. He was safe out of it, and he was prepared to let the Perfection Star and the Las Palmas waiter settle the matter anyhow they liked. Bunter had his own affairs to think about, and no time to waste on other people's troubles.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

In the Perfection Studio!

"REHEARSAL at ten!" said Bob Cherry.

It was the following morning, and Harry Wharton & Co. had breakfasted at Long Beach Boarding-House, on Sunset Boulevard, and strolled out into the geranium-bordered garden. Across the wide boulevard was the Perfection "lot"; the long, low building there was the Perfection Picture Studio, with which the chums of Greyfriars were familiar by this time.

That big idea of Mr. Hiram K. Fish, a film featuring public school life in England, was well under way now.

The taking of the pictures had not yet commenced. There was a lot to be done before the Greyfriars fellows were "shot." Acting for the films was not to be picked up in a day. The Greyfriars fellows were, for the most part, to represent before the cameras something like their ordinary life at school; but it had to be done under conditions widely different from those at home.

The scenario had been roughly mapped out so far. A number of scenes definitely selected and arranged, others still in embryo. Rehearsals were taking place every day, and the juniors were gradually becoming what Mr. Schootz called "camera-wise."

It was not easy to become accustomed to the blinding lights, and not easy to become camera-wise. Experimental shooting showed the schoolboy actors all sorts of shortcomings, when they saw the result in photographs.

Sometimes the great Mr. Schootz himself bellowed at them through the megaphone. Oftener they were in the hands of coaches, who coached with more or less patience and industry.

Upon the whole, the Greyfriars fellows rather liked it. It was a novel experience, at any rate.

Lord Mauleverer, certainly, had not overcome his disinclination to exertion. But Mauly was given what Mr. Schootz called a clothes-horse part. He simply had to dress well and look elegant—which was easy enough for Mauly.

The juniors found that a very special scene in the school film was to represent

cricket. This had not come along yet, but was to be shot on the location later. Cricket, they learned, was expected to excite interest in film fans in the United States, being a strange and weird performance of which Americans knew little. Mr. Schootz spoke of it really as if the juniors were going to be something like a troupe of performing bears.

At home in England cricket would have seemed rather odd at that time of the year; but in the climate of Southern California, the summer game could have been played all the year round. As a matter of fact, Harry Wharton & Co. were rather looking forward to that special cricket picture.

There was one member of the Greyfriars party who was by no means satisfied. That member was Billy Bunter.

Bunter had "hooked on" to the party; but he was with them, but not of them, so to speak. Hiram K. Fish regarded the Owl of the Remove as useless for film purposes; indeed, when pressed on the subject, he had stated quite rudely that he did not believe that there was a camera in Los Angeles that would stand the strain of registering Bunter's features. Bunter, in Mr. Fish's estimation, was nothing and nobody—an estimation that differed very much from Bunter's own idea of his value.

Mr. Schootz, it was true, had cast rather a favourable eye on Bunter, as peculiarly fitted by nature for a comedy part. That suggestion, however, did not appeal to Bunter. A Valentino part was what Bunter wanted. Looking in the glass, he could not help feeling that that was what he was specially fitted for. Nobody else could see it; and it appeared that Bunter was going to be crowded out by jealousy and envy as usual.

Bunter rolled into the studio every time the juniors entered, but it was simply as a looker-on.

He looked on with contempt and scorn. But that did not seem to worry anybody. Bunter's opinion was not highly valued.

It was, Bunter considered, a rotten state of affairs. He knew that he was a born film actor—he did not need telling so. And here he was at Hollywood, the centre of the film industry. All he needed was a director with sense enough to pick him out for a leading part. But that director did not seem to exist in Los Angeles.

Promptly at ten o'clock Harry Wharton & Co. arrived across the boulevard in the Perfection studio. Billy Bunter rolled after them as usual. Rather less prompt to time, Coker & Co. walked in. Mr. Rigg Schootz was there, and he gave the juniors a nod; but when Horace Coker came in he strode up to him with a frowning brow.

"Here, you Coker!" he rapped.

Coker stared at him.

It was absolutely impossible for Horace Coker to forget what an important fellow he was at Greyfriars; in his own belief, at least. Even from his Form master Coker did not care about taking too much "lip." He was not going to take "lip" from a film director.

"Well?" he snapped.

"I hear you've been kicking up a row with Polk!" snapped Mr. Schootz. "You want to cut that out. See?"

Mr. Schootz turned away with that; in the Perfection studio his word was law, and he did not want any back-chat. From Coker of the Fifth, however, he was destined to get what he did not want.

"Draw it mild," said Coker. "If you

think I'm going to let that over-dressed popinjay hire a hooligan to beat me up, without saying a word, you're making a jolly big mistake, Mr. Schootz!"

"What?" roared Mr. Schootz.

He turned back to Coker, his eyes, and almost his bald head, gleaming with wrath.

"Deaf?" asked Coker.

Potter pressed Coker's arm.

"Cheese it, old man!" he whispered.

Coker jerked his arm away. He did not "cheese it." Cheesing it was not Coker's way.

"The fellow's a rank outsider," went on Coker. "He picked a row with me, and I knocked him down. I'm ready to knock him down again. He set a rough to assault me. I've warned him that if he does it again I'll walk up to his dinky bungalow and spoil his beauty for him! I mean it!"

Mr. Schootz gasped.

"Do you know that Polk is the star of Perfection pictures?" he exclaimed. "Have you got it that he's the big noise here?"

"I don't care if he's a thunderclap," answered Coker coolly. "Let the cad keep clear of me, and I'll let him alone. Not otherwise."

Mr. Schootz gesticulated with a fat hand.

"Any more trouble with Polk, and out you go!" he said tersely. "I guess I can carry on without you, and I can't carry on without Polk. That goes!"

Mr. Schootz walked away then, before Coker had time to deliver any more back-chat.

Coker snorted.

"Does he think——" he began wrathfully.

"Oh, dry up, old chap!" said Greene. "We've come here to do pictures, not to kick up a shindy!"

"Look here, if that cad Polk——" roared Coker.

"Shut up!" breathed Potter. "Here's the man coming in."

"I don't care a straw!"

Myron Polk sauntered into the studio.

His manner was that of a man who was monarch of all he surveyed; as indeed he was, more or less, in the Perfection studio. The Perfection star was an immense draw on the films, and he was quite aware of his own value. Half a dozen big producers in Hollywood were anxious to get him away from Perfection, if they could.

Coker gave him a contemptuous stare.

There was make-up on Polk's face; and the idea of a man making himself up like a foolish girl aroused Coker's deepest contempt.

Certainly, it was no business of Coker's. But minding his own business had never been one of Coker's weaknesses.

Polk glanced at him, with a gleam in his eyes. A contemptuous stare was not likely to gratify anybody, least of all a man who was conceit personified. Neither could Polk possibly forget the occasion when he had crumpled up under Coker's heavy fist. That was an undying humiliation in his memory.

This morning, too, Polk was in a specially ill-humour. There had been a very annoying scene at Las Palmas teashop the previous afternoon. A waiter had expected him to pay Bunter's bill, actually declaring that Polk had told him to leave the check with him. Polk, naturally, denied having done anything of the kind, and refused to pay on the check. Polk was too big a noise in Hollywood for the Las Palmas people to venture to quarrel with him; and the check had

remained unpaid. But the scene had been very irritating and annoying; a number of people had witnessed it, and it was talked about and discussed, like all the doings of the prominent Hollywood stars.

Polk liked being talked about, as a rule but not in that way. The incident had a very irritating effect on his temper, which was never very good. He arrived in the studio that morning, in a mood to make himself unpleasant to everyone who had to put up with it—as most of the Perfection people had.

He ignored the doorkeeper's respectful greeting as he came in, and bestowed a cold and unrecognising stare on a man who knew him, and who was anxious to be greeted in public by so famous a star. He passed by a group of "extra girls," all of whom were anxious to catch his eye, as if they were not there. Then his eye fell on Coker, and glittered.

Mr. Fish followed him in. Having stared at Coker, Polk turned to Hiram K. Fish.

"That fellow's here!" he snapped.

Mr. Fish looked worried.

"What fellow?" he asked, though he knew quite well.

"Boker, or Joker, or whatever his name is."

Horace Coker flushed red.

"You know my name well enough, Polk!"—he boomed. "You had to give my name to the hooligan you set on me the other night."

Polk did not look at him, or seem

to hear. He fixed his eyes unpleasantly on the worried Mr. Fish.

"Is that fellow going out of the studio, or am I?" he asked.

Mr. Fish would have been glad to tell the star to go, and even to help him along with his boot. But he could not afford to quarrel with the Perfection sheikh. It had cost many dollars to capture Myron Polk for Perfection.

"Now, look here, Polk, be reasonable," urged Mr. Fish. "I've brought that galoot all the way from Yurup. He don't come on in any of your stuff. Give him a miss and keep quiet. I'll speak to him and tell him to behave." Mr. Fish turned to Coker. "Look here, you Coker. You want to apologise to Mr. Polk."

Snort from Coker.

"Catch me!" he said disdainfully.

"You figure that you've come here to kick up a pesky rookus in the studio every day?" demanded Mr. Fish.

"Let him keep clear of me, and I'll keep clear of him," answered Coker. "You know jolly well that he set the hooligan Gomez on me, and bailed him out afterwards to get him away."

"I don't know anything of the sort, and you don't," said Mr. Fish. "Keep your pesky opinion to yourself, and shut up! The police are looking for that guy Gomez this very minute!"

"I daresay Polk could tell them where to lay hands on him," retorted Coker. "He got him out of chokey."

"Oh, do shut up, Coker!" breathed Potter imploringly.

"Rats!" answered Coker.

"You've sure spilled enough, Coker," said Mr. Fish. "You're making accusations you can't prove up. If you want to step out of this studio, and stay out, now's your chance. Otherwise, shut up. Another word from you, and you're finished here. Now, Polk, come along and see Schootz, and don't waste your time on a moss-headed schoolboy."

And Mr. Polk condescended to be led away to the producer's office. Coker stared after them.

"A mossheaded schoolboy!" he repeated, almost dazedly. Coker was firmly persuaded that nobody would ever have taken him for a schoolboy, and it had never occurred to him that he was a moss-headed one. He made a stride after Mr. Fish, with the evident intention of arguing the matter out further. Potter and Greene grabbed him by either arm, and stopped him in time.

"For goodness' sake chuck it!" implored Potter. "Do you think you can act for the films here and row with the head director at the same time?"

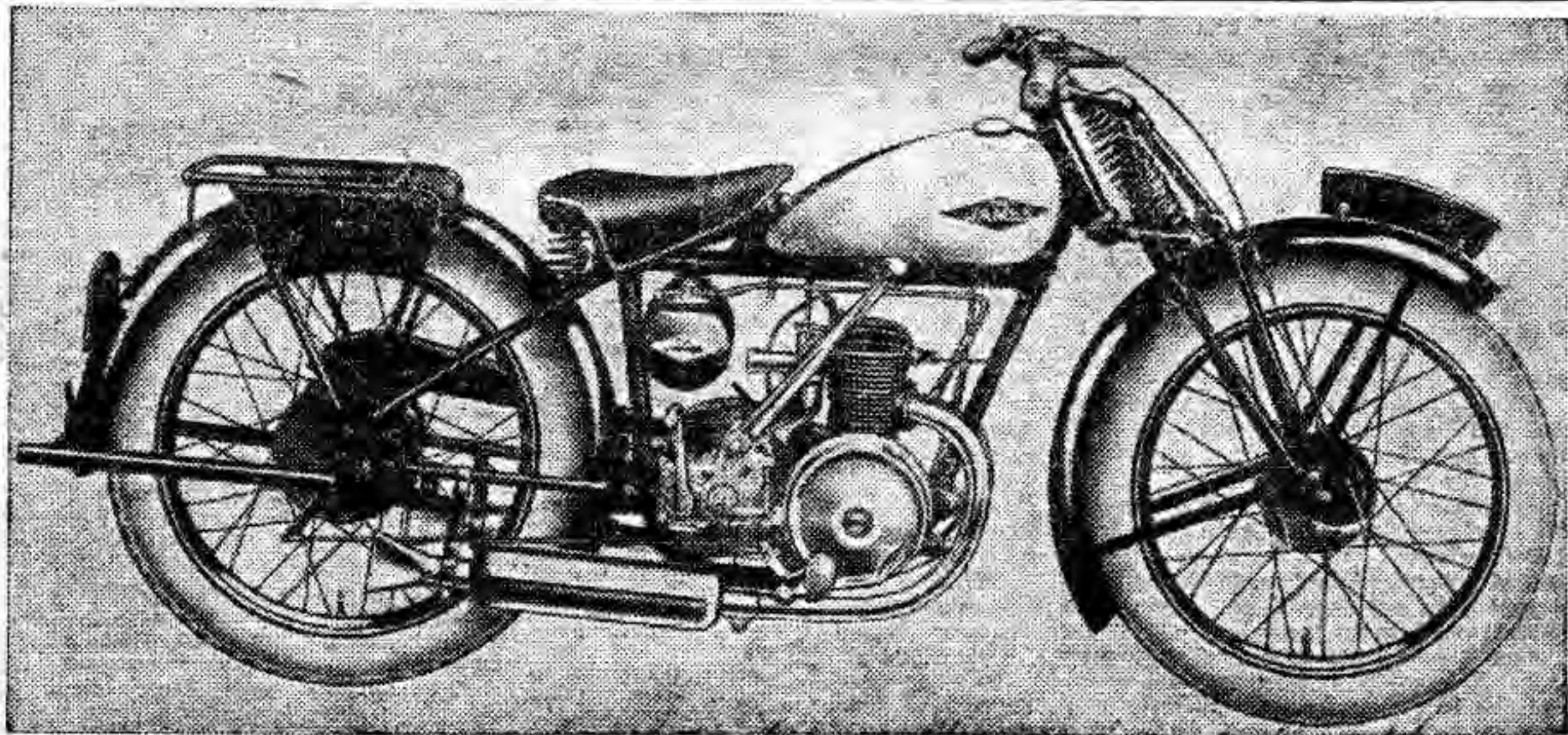
"The chuckfulness is the proper caper, my esteemed Coker," murmured Hurree Jamsat Rain Singh.

"Don't be cheeky!" said Coker, frowning.

But the great Horace consented to let the matter drop where it was. Perhaps it dawned even on Coker's powerful brain that he had said enough, and that he really could not keep on in the studio if he slanged the lord and master thereof. And Coker did not want to be dropped out of the school picture. Coker's

(Continued on next page.)

THIS TOPPING MOTOR-CYCLE FOR YOU?



YOU CAN START TO WIN IT TO-DAY!

This splendid "JAMES" SPORTS MODEL, two-stroke, three-speed gear MOTOR-CYCLE—a real beauty—a light-weight—easy to handle—a machine to be mightily proud of—is offered as FIRST PRIZE in a new, simple "TREASURE HUNT" competition in

This Week's MODERN BOY.

In addition, there are 110 CASH PRIZES—all to be won by readers of MODERN BOY, the Most Up-to-date Boys' Paper in the World. Buy this week's copy, and make up your mind to win this magnificent First Prize. Age doesn't count. You may be seven or seventy. Merit alone will win it!

This week's MODERN BOY also contains the finest adventure-story of the century, written by world-famous C. J. CUTCLIFFE-HYNE. Its title is: "GEORGE CROW—CASTAWAY." You cannot afford to miss it!

FULL OF ATTRACTIONS: This Week's MODERN BOY, 2d,

opinion was that the inclusion of his important self was going to make that picture a tremendous success, and he generously wanted it to be a success. So Coker shut up at last, much to everybody's relief.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

"Quit!"

"GET busy!"

It was Mr. Van Duck, the assistant director, who spoke. Mr. Van Duck had the chief charge of the Greyfriars party and their rehearsals. Harry Wharton & Co. proceeded to get busy.

Billy Bunter joined the group, and Van Duck gave him a glare. He was a busy man, and did not want to be bothered by outsiders.

"Here, you! What you want?" he snapped.

Bunter blinked at him. What he wanted was to be included in the picture, but there was, unfortunately, nothing doing.

"Beat it!" said Van Duck.

"Oh, really, you know—"

Van Duck took the Owl of the Remove by the shoulder and twirled him away. Bunter went twirling, and caught a foot in a tent-peg, and sat down with a heavy bump.

"Ow!" he gasped.

No further heed was paid to Bunter. He picked himself up, and stood looking on morosely. He was left out, as usual. This seemed to be the fate of a really superior fellow.

A scene had been arranged representing a school Form-room. Such scenes were new in the Perfection studio. Fisher T. Fish, who had the double advantage of having been at school in England, and of being an American and knowing the language, was of great assistance to Van Duck in arranging scenes in Greyfriars "interiors." Money, the juniors found, was spent like water, in obtaining all things that were required. Mr. Fish personally was extremely close with cash, but in the studio it seemed to flow freely. An experimental "shot" was to be taken now, with the juniors in their places in Form, Coker & Co. along with them. Coker snorted at the idea of a Fifth Form man appearing in Form with Lower Fourth juniors, but he kindly gave Mr. Van Duck his head.

All was ready for the scene to be shot, and Mr. Van Duck was about to give the signal for the lights to be turned on ready for the cameras, when Myron Polk came along from Mr. Schootz's office. Mr. Fish was trailing after him.

Polk glanced over the scene, with an eye of contemptuous indifference, and leaned idly on one of the desks that formed part of the scene.

Van Duck gave him an apologetic look. The assistant director, like everyone else in the studio, treated Polk as if he were a piece of very delicate Dresden china.

"You'll sure be shot with the scene there, Mr. Polk," he said.

Polk only glanced at him, did not answer, and did not move.

There was a pause.

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged glances. It was not for them to speak, however, and they remained silent.

Mr. Fish weighed in.

"You want to fix up the scene for Polk, Mr. Van Duck," he said. "Number ten—the one we left unfinished."

"Oh!" said Mr. Van Duck, rather blankly.

Mr. Schootz arrived. Whenever the Perfection sheikh was to be "shot," the

great producer himself was always on hand. The school film was important to Mr. Schootz, but it was not so important as the "Lord of the Desert," in which Myron Polk figured.

Van Duck had spent nearly an hour in preparing the scene, but an assistant director's time was of no value in the estimation of the star. Polk had announced his lofty intention, and that was enough. Everything else had to be cleared out of his way.

For a moment, a very unpleasant look passed over Van Duck's face. But he could not venture to display his irritation to the Perfection star, so he passed it on to the Greyfriars fellows.

"Quit!" he said briefly.

"We're all ready—" began Bob Cherry, not catching on at once.

"Quit, I tell you! You won't be wanted again to-day."

"Not wanted to-day!" ejaculated Nugent.

"Don't chew the rag! Git!"

"Well, my hat!" exclaimed Coker, in loud disgust. "Have we taken all this trouble for nothing?"

Mr. Van Duck did not take the trouble to answer him.

Men in overalls were already, at a sign from him, clearing the scene away. The camera men, who had been waiting to "shoot" the school scene, now waited for Mr. Polk to be ready.

Mr. Polk lounged away to his dressing-room.

While he was assuming the garb and make-up of Ahmed Din, the Lord of the Desert, the scene was to be prepared for him. Lesser mortals who were required were called up from all sides to be ready. Mr. Schootz in person took the megaphone, Mr. Van Duck hovered round to assist. Extra girls, made up as Arabs, trooped on the scene; palm-trees took the places of the desks. The Greyfriars fellows moved out of the way, or were hustled out of the way. Mr. Fish told them they could look on if they liked, evidently considering it a great honour for anybody to look on while Myron Polk was acting. Harry Wharton & Co. were not anxious for that honour, however, and as they had been told that they would not be wanted again that day, they left the studio, only Fisher T. Fish remaining behind.

Outside the Perfection building, Horace Coker indulged in a loud and pronounced snort.

"Jever see anything like it?" he demanded. "That dandified popinjay just enjoyed clearing us off like that!"

"I'd like to punch his nose!" admitted Potter. "I'd give something to punch his cheeky nose! But we didn't come here to punch noses."

"Well, we've got the day off," said Greene cheerily. "What about a run down to Venice?"

Coker stared at him.

"You've got a lot to learn about geography, Greene, if you think we can get to Venice in a day trip," he snorted. "Do you think we're in Europe?"

"I mean Venice—"

"If you mean Venice, you're an ass!" said Coker. "Venice is about six thousand miles away!"

"I mean—"

"We'll have the day down by the sea, as the weather's fine," said Coker.

"There's a place called Ocean Beach—"

"That's near Venice—"

"For goodness' sake, Greene, don't shout out your ignorance for all these dashed Americans to hear!" snapped Coker irritably. "What the thump will they think of Greyfriars if they hear you?"

"Greene means—" began Potter.

"If he means that Venice is in

America, he's got a lot to learn," said Coker. "My hat! Old Froot would have a fit if Greene told him that in the Form-room at Greyfriars."

"But—" protested Greene.

"Don't be an ass! If you don't know anything about geography, take my word for it!" said Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a sudden yell from the juniors.

Coker glared at them.

"You cut off, you fags!" he snapped. "Don't stand cackling there. I don't want any Remove cheek!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly ass!" roared Bob Cherry. "There's a place called Venice near Los Angeles on the coast."

"Oh!" said Coker.

That simple explanation had not occurred to Coker's mighty brain.

"Is that what you meant, Greene?" he demanded.

"Of course it is!" snapped Greene.

"Then why couldn't you say so?"

"Did you give me a chance?" hooted Greene.

"Don't yell!"

"Look here, Coker—"

"Don't shout! Let's get out of this!" growled Coker. "I'm fed up with that mob of cackling fags!"

And Horace Coker marched away with Potter and Greene, leaving the fags still cackling.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Pay Up!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Oh, shut up, Bunter!"

Harry Wharton & Co. stopped outside the gates of the Perfection lot, rather at a loss. They had expected to put in their usual work at the studio that day; but they were not wanted, and they had time to kill. The best-tempered member of the party could not help feeling a little sore. It was for Mr. Schootz to decide where and when and how they played their parts; but they were quite well aware that Myron Polk had interrupted their scene, for no reason whatever save to make himself unpleasant, and to show them that he was the "big noise" on the Perfection lot, and themselves nobodies in particular. It was, as Bob Cherry remarked, a case of a conceited ass throwing his weight about; and that was a thing which was hard to tolerate with patience.

It was, however, a waste of time to grouse. Whether they liked it or not, they had to play second fiddle to the Perfection star.

"That ass Coker was bound to dig up trouble!" growled Vernon-Smith. "Why couldn't he steer clear of the fellow?"

"Did Coker ever steer clear of trouble?" grinned Bob Cherry.

"As a matter of fact, I've never wanted to pull a fellow's nose so much as I'd like to pull Polk's!" said Harry Wharton.

"Hear, hear!" said Johnny Bull.

"Never mind!" said Bob cheerily.

"Pack up your giddy troubles in your old kit-bag! We've got the day off, anyhow. We'll have a trip somewhere."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Dry up, Bunter!"

"Beast! I know what I'm going to do!" said Bunter.

"Whom you're going to do, do you mean?" asked Nugent.

"Yah! I'm fed up with this!" said Bunter, waving a fat hand towards the Perfection studio. "I've come to Holly-

wood to act for the films, not to watch a lot of duds playing the goat."

"Thanks!" said Wharton, laughing.

"The thankfulness is terrific."

"That man Schootz is a fool!" went on Bunter. "Old Fish is a fool! Van Duck is a fool! There seems to be a lot of fools at Hollywood."

"And one more since you arrived," remarked the Bounder.

"Beast! Well, I'm not going to have my talents wasted," declared Bunter.

"They don't see my value here. But this isn't the only studio in Hollywood. I'm going to try another. I saw in a Los Angeles paper that the director of Magic Films is on the look-out for talent. I'm going to see him."

"Take a microscope with you!" suggested Vernon-Smith.

"Eh? What for?"

"To lend to the Magic Film director."

"What will he want a microscope for, you ass?"

"To see your talent."

"You silly chump!" roared Bunter, while the juniors chuckled. "I've had enough of this rotten jealousy. You'll sing to a different tune when I'm drawing my thousand dollars a week."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Let's know when it begins!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "I'll remind you of the eighteenpence you owe me from last term."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I'm off!" growled Bunter.

"You are!" agreed Bob. "Off your jolly old onion, old bean!"

"Lend me a few dollars, Mauly—"

"Oh, dear!"

"Only for a few hours!" said Bunter. "I'm expecting a postal-order."

"Great pip!"

"In fact, I'm expecting several remittances from England," said Bunter.

"They haven't arrived yet, and I expect they'll all come together. Fifty dollars will see me through, Mauly."

"Oh, gad!"

"Make it twenty!" said Bunter.

"I'm going to make a round of the Hollywood studios to-day, and I shall want something for fares. You fellows won't see me again to-day."

Lord Mauleverer brightened.

"Begad! That's worth a twenty-dollar bill."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!"

Having thus expressed his gratitude for the loan, William George Bunter pocketed the bill. He bestowed a disdainful blink on the Famous Five.

"You fellows can cackle!" he said.

"Thanks—we will!" said Bob Cherry, chuckling. "Don't forget that eighteenpence out of your first million dollars."

"You're an envious and ungrateful lot," said Bunter. "But later on I'll do the best I can for you. When I'm on the films I may be able to use my influence to get you fellows some small parts. You'll have to ask civilly."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah!"

Billy rolled away.

His fat mind was made up.

It stood to reason, Bunter considered, that there must be at least one film director in Hollywood with an eye to real, genuine talent. All Bunter needed was to find that director. Now he was going to look for him.

He rolled cheerily along the boulevard. Outside the palm-adorned arcade of the Las Palmas tea-shop, he paused.

His intention had been to hire an automobile, and make a round of the Hollywood studios, in search of that director with an eye to talent. But it was two hours since breakfast, and at

Looking in the glass, Billy Bunter saw a handsome, distinguished-looking fellow, whose distinguished look was rather increased than diminished by the glasses perched on a fine nose. Any fellow looking over his shoulder would have seen a fat and flabby youth, with a little fat stub of a nose, and little round eyes blinking behind big spectacles. (See Chapter 7.)

the sight of an establishment where food was sold, Bunter realised that he was hungry.

He hesitated.

He needed Mauly's twenty dollars for taxi fares if he was going to "do" Hollywood thoroughly. The alternative was walking. Walking from one studio to another did not appeal to Bunter. There were considerable distances to be covered, and even a short distance was too considerable for Bunter. And the Las Palmas tempted him. He remembered the magnificent feed he had enjoyed there the previous day. His mouth watered at the remembrance. He stood under the pepper trees, and hesitated. It is well said that he who hesitates is lost. Bunter mounted the brightly-carpeted steps of the Las Palmas, and rolled into the tea-shop.

Had Bunter reflected a little, he might have chosen some other establishment for his morning spread. Considering the masterly manner in which he had eluded payment for his tea the previous day, Las Palmas was a place he would have done wisely to avoid.

But Bunter was not thinking of that. Bunter had left so many bills unpaid,

in the course of his fat career, that one more was not likely to linger in his memory. Having landed his check on Myron Polk on that occasion, Bunter had dismissed the matter from his fat mind, as a thing that was done with.

He rolled into the teashop and blinked round for a table.

A surprised waiter stared at him.

That waiter had given up the hope of ever seeing the twenty dollars due for Bunter's Gargantuan tea. Polk had refused to pay it, and the waiter did not expect to see the "bilk" again. So he was naturally surprised to see him roll in. He was pleased, too. Twenty dollars was a serious consideration even to a Hollywood waiter.

Bunter sat down at a table and blinked at the waiter as he came up. He did not recognise the man, who looked just like any other waiter. Unluckily for Bunter, his own appearance was a little more unique. Bunter was one of those fellows who once seen are not quickly forgotten. He had been lost to sight, but he was to memory dear, so far as that waiter was concerned.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,099.



Instead of presenting Bunter with a menu, as he expected, the waiter laid a check on the table. Bunter blinked at it, perplexed.

"What's that?" he asked.

"Your check, sir," said the waiter politely.

Bunter stared.

"Eh? I haven't had anything yet!"

"Check for your tea yesterday, sir," said the waiter.

"Oh crikey!"

"Twenty dollars, please," said the waiter, still with politeness, but with more firmness than politeness—much more. "I'll walk with you to the desk, sir, if you please."

Bunter blinked at him in dismay.

"I—I say, you know, did-did-didn't my friend pay?" he stammered. "Polk, you know—my friend Polk—"

"He did not!" said the waiter. "He denied any responsibility. I've kept the check for you, sir. Will you pay at the desk?"

"The—the fact is, I—I've left my purse at the boarding-house—" began Bunter.

"I'm sorry for that, sir," said the waiter smoothly.

"Yes, it's rather unfortunate," agreed Bunter.

"Very much so, sir; as I shall be obliged to detain you while the manager telephones for a policeman," said the waiter, with polite regret.

Bunter jumped.

"Wha-at?" he gasped.

A twenty-dollar bill came out of Bunter's pocket as if by magic. The waiter smiled. Really it was fortunate for Bunter that he had not yet spent any of Mauleverer's twenty dollars.

"I—I—I'll pay this trifling amount, of course," said Bunter haughtily. "I—I shall certainly pay it—"

"You sure will!" agreed the waiter.

And Bunter did.

William George Bunter rolled down the carpeted steps once more dismally. A twenty-dollar note was gone from his gaze like a beautiful dream. That

round of Hollywood in search of a film director who knew talent when he saw it was off. So was Bunter's intended spread.

The Owl and the Remove hurried along the boulevard; but when he reached the gates of the Perfection lot the Greyfriars juniors were gone. Bunter hurried across into Long Beach Boarding-House, in the hope of finding them there. Mr. Coot, the proprietor, was reading a paper in a rocker on the porch.

"My friends come in?" asked Bunter breathlessly.

"Yep!"

"Oh, good!" gasped Bunter.

"And gone out again!" added Mr. Coot genially.

"Oh! Where are they gone?"

"They allowed they were heading for Santa Monica," drawled Mr. Coot. "Making a day of it, I guess."

Bunter breathed hard and deep. If the Co. had gone off to Santa Monica for the day, Bunter was not likely to overtake them—on foot. He blinked at Colonel Coot. So far Bunter had not attempted to touch Mr. Coot for a loan. In the circumstances, however, he decided to risk it.

"The fact is, Mr. Coot, my friends are minding my money for me," he explained.

"Oh! Sho!" said Mr. Coot.

"I suppose you couldn't lend me twenty dollars till they come in?" suggested Bunter.

Mr. Coot nodded.

"Right in once!" he agreed. "I couldn't!"

"Or ten?" murmured Bunter.

"Or ten!" said Mr. Coot genially.

"What about five dollars?" asked Bunter desperately.

"Nothing about five dollars," answered Mr. Coot, still genial.

Bunter gave it up.

He spent the rest of the morning waiting for lunch—and reflecting, with natural bitterness, on the ingratitude

of fellows who left him in the lurch like this after all he had done for them.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Trying It On!

BILLY BUNTER looked into the glass in his room at Long Beach Boarding-House and gave a satisfied smirk.

He could not help feeling pleased with what he saw.

One of the greatest of poets has observed, "O wad some power the giftie gie us to see oursel as ithers see us!" But really that "giftie" would have been of little use to William George Bunter.

It would have spoiled all his most cherished illusions.

Bunter would have had the shock of his life had he been able to see himself as others saw him.

Looking in the glass, Bunter saw a handsome, distinguished-looking fellow, whose distinguished look was rather increased than diminished by the glasses perched on a fine nose.

Any fellow looking over his shoulder would not have seen anything of the kind. Such a fellow would have seen a fat and rather flabby youth, with a fatuous grin, and a little fat stub of a nose, and little round eyes blinking behind big glasses.

They would have been observing the same object, but with very different prepossessions.

So it was just as well that W. G. Bunter lacked the "giftie" referred to by Burns, and could not see himself as others saw him. Had he been able to do so, his hopes of figuring in a Valentino part of the films would have been dashed.

Satisfied with what he saw, Bunter smirked at his reflection, and even that fat and fatuous smirk appeared unto Bunter as a graceful and winning smile.

"That's all right!" said Bunter to the other Bunter in the glass. "Appearance counts for a lot. People here seem to agree that appearance means almost everything on the films. Well, I've got that."

And he nodded cheerily to the reflected Bunter.

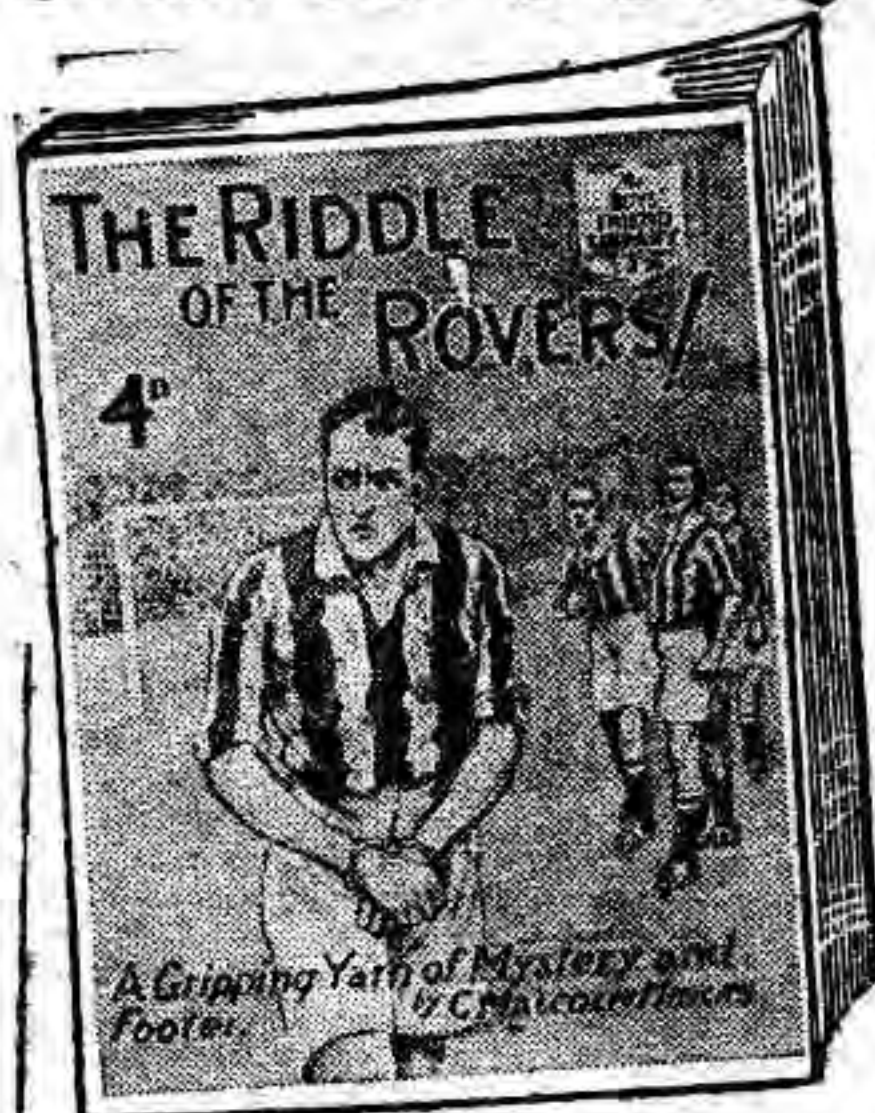
"Manner, too," soliloquised Bunter. "You need a good manner—well-bred and all that. Easy and graceful, without being common or familiar. I think I can say that next to good looks that's my long suit."

And Bunter, cheered by that reflection, as well as the reflection in the glass, prepared for his visit to Magic Films.

The "round" of Hollywood was postponed—walking round an extensive town was not in Bunter's line. But Magic Films had their studio within an easy walk, and Bunter intended to pay one call that afternoon. After all, one might work the oracle. It might turn out that the Magic Film Co. possessed that director with an eye to talent, whom Bunter was so anxious to meet. He hoped so, at least.

Bunter realised that a fellow needed to look his best on such an occasion. Clothes count for a lot, as well as good looks and a patrician manner. Good looks and a patrician manner Bunter did not need to borrow, having those already. Clothes, however, were a different matter. Bunter had started on the journey to the United States with little more than he stood up in. He had relied on borrowing what he wanted from the other fellows—a system

Tales For All Tastes



TAKE YOUR CHOICE FROM THESE:

No. 181.—THE RIDDLE OF THE ROVERS!

A Gripping Yarn of Mystery and Foots. By C. MALCOLM HINCKES.

No. 182.—THE STARS OF DOOM!

A Baffling Mystery and Adventure Story. By JOHN HUNTER.

No. 183.—BLACKBIRDER'S TREASURES!

A Stirring Tale of Adventure in Borneo. By ERIC W. TOWNSEND.

No. 184.—LOYAL TO PRINCE CHARLIE!

An Enthralling Story of Fighting in the Days of the Young Pretender.

THE **BOYS' FRIEND** 4D LIBRARY
PRICE 4d. PER VOLUME. ON SALE THURSDAY.

that Bunter often carried to wonderful lengths. On the present occasion the problem of clothes was not difficult to solve. He had the run of the rooms occupied by the Greyfriars party. They had gone to Santa Monica for the day, and what they had left was at Bunter's mercy. The juniors, as was customary in the boarding-house, had left the keys of their rooms on the rack downstairs, but Bunter had no difficulty in bagging them. As a member of the party, that was easy enough. And from one room or another he had collected what he wanted.

Bunter was quite a well-dressed fellow when he prepared to start. Wharton's best trousers fitted him rather tightly, but they looked very neat. One of Nugent's waistcoats had had to be split up the back to induce it to go on; but Bob Cherry's nicest jacket covered up the split.

A collar of Johnny Bull's fitted Bunter as if it had been made for him; Lord Mauleverer's tie was quite tasteful; Hurree Singh's socks were an excellent fit; the Bounder's best hat was a little tight on Bunter's bullet head, but looked a very nice hat; altogether, Bunter felt that he had reason to be satisfied with his get-up.

He rolled downstairs at last and out on the piazza, where he found Mr. Coot in his rocker, smoking an after-lunch cigar.

"Which is the quickest way to Magic Films studio, Mr. Coot?" asked Bunter.

"Auto!" answered Mr. Coot genially.

"I rather want a walk this fine afternoon," said Bunter.

"Three blocks to the left, along the boulevard," said Mr. Coot, with a wave of his cigar, leaving a blue trail in the air.

He eyed Bunter rather curiously.

"Ain't you working for Perfection?" he asked.

"I'm thinking of making a change," explained Bunter, not explaining that he was only a looker-on in Perfection studio. He did not desire to stress that point. "Not much scope for a fellow of real talent there, I think."

"My!" said Mr. Coot.

"I hear that the Magic Film director is looking for talent," remarked Bunter.

"They all are," said Mr. Coot blandly. "You got talent, you can sell it anywhere in Hollywood."

"Thanks," said Bunter; "that's very encouraging."

"My!" said Mr. Coot.

"I suppose you know a lot about film studio work, living here in Hollywood," said Bunter.

"What I don't know about the studios," answered Mr. Coot, "you could put into a nutshell without taking out the nut."

"Well, then, how does a fellow break into the films?" asked Bunter. "Of course, I don't mean an ordinary sort of fellow; I mean a fellow with good looks, good appearance, and real talent."

Mr. Coot seemed to be suffering for a moment from some internal pain. When he spoke it was in a gasping voice.

"Meaning——" he asked.

"Me, of course," said Bunter cheerfully.

"You, of course!" gasped Mr. Coot.

"My! Well, you just walk into the studio, give your name, let 'em see how good-looking you are, and leave it up to them. Depend on it, they won't miss a good thing."

"Think so?" asked Bunter eagerly.

"Sure!" answered Mr. Coot.

And Bunter, feeling much encouraged, rolled away, leaving Mr. Coot gazing after him.

"My!" said Mr. Coot, and again he said, "My!" And he watched the Owl of the Remove till he was out of sight; perhaps looking for those good looks that Bunter had mentioned, but failing to spot them.

Bunter rolled away down the boulevard, towards the Magic Films headquarters. A highly polished, purple auto passed him, going fast, and he noticed Myron Polk at the wheel, lounging there with an air of studied carelessness, though driving at a reckless speed. Bunter blinked enviously after the Perfection star. It irritated him to see Mr. Polk "throwing his weight about"; but he longed from the bottom of his fat heart for an opportunity to throw his own weight about. He considered that he would do it better than

THIS AMUSING JOKE WINS A USEFUL POCKET-KNIFE!

"Rose," said mother, "just open the oven and see how the cake is getting on. Stick a knife into it—if it comes out clean, you will know the cake is cooked."

"Yes," added father, "and if it comes out clean, stick the other knives in as well!"

A pocket-knife has been forwarded to A. J. Aylmer, Alexandra Hospital, Swanley, Kent.

Raise a laugh, and you win a penknife! Send in your effort to-day, chum!

Polk did. Perhaps he was right, for certainly he had much more weight to throw about.

The purple car vanished up the winding, hilly road leading to Myron Polk's handsome bungalow on the hill above Hollywood. Sea Mist, as Mr. Polk called his residence, was one of the handsomest and most expensive bungalows in the Hollywood film community; and Bunter, who had seen it from the outside, was very anxious to see it from the inside. He intended to model his own Hollywood residence on Sea Mist as soon as he was a film star drawing thousands of dollars a week.

As yet, however, he was not a film star; and Mr. Polk was a great man whose notice might be useful to a film aspirant. So Bunter raised Vernon-Smith's hat very respectfully to Mr. Polk as he shot past in his car.

Mr. Polk took no heed of the salute. The effect of Bunter's "soft sawder" of the previous day had apparently worn off; or perhaps Mr. Polk was merely in one of his moods of insolent indifference. At all events, he took not the slightest notice of Bunter.

"Beast!" murmured Bunter, as the purple car whizzed on and disappeared up the hill.

He rolled on towards his destination.

Magi Films was easy enough to find. It was a building very like that of Perfection, on a similar lot on Sunset Boulevard. Bunter found the gates open and rolled in. A good many people were about, but they paid Bunter no heed, and he went into the entrance

building. There a voice hailed him, not in polite tones!

"Hi! You!"

Bunter blinked round.

"You with the headlights!" went on the voice rudely.

Bunter coloured with wrath. This was a disrespectful allusion to the glasses which gave Bunter much of his distinguished appearance.

"What you want?" demanded the man, apparently a doorkeeper or janitor.

"I've called to see the director," answered Bunter, with dignity.

The man stared at him.

"You ain't called to see the President of the United States?" he asked.

"No," answered Bunter, without realising that this was sarcasm, and that it implied that the Magic Film director was inaccessible to common mortals. "Let me see. Honk is the name—Mr. Honk. Can I see him?"

"I'll say you can't!" grinned the man. "You want to turn right round and hoof it back where you came from. You want to do it quick."

An inspiration came to Bunter. In Long Beach Boarding-House, where the talk ran largely on films and film acting and studio work, Bunter had heard it said again and again that the way to "hit" the films was to get a "boost" from some director or star high up in the profession. To be able to mention a well-known name was something.

"My friend Mr. Polk——" he began.

The doorkeeper, who was coming towards Bunter apparently with the intention of assisting him to depart, paused.

"Myron Polk?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Message from him, you mean?"

"Yes."

The doorkeeper eyed him doubtfully.

He was accustomed to every kind of trick and device on the part of people anxious to break into the films, to get into the presence of the director.

"I guess you can hand me the message," he said. It was plain that Myron Polk's name had a considerable effect on him, though he doubted whether Bunter was telling the truth.

Bunter breathed rather quickly. It was a case of "neck or nothing" again, and Bunter plunged.

"It's a personal message," he explained. "I've got to see Mr. Honk himself. Polk was very particular about that."

There was another pause.

"I guess you can come in hyer," said the man at last, and he showed Bunter into an office and pointed to a chair and left him.

Bunter sat down, his fat heart beating rather fast. He had penetrated the outer defences of the Magic Films, at least. True, it was rather a problem what he was going to say to Mr. Honk when he saw him. Still, he was going to see him; and that alone was something that a hundred other people in Hollywood were anxious to do.

From somewhere close at hand he heard the doorkeeper speaking into a telephone, apparently communicating with the private office of Mr. Honk, where the great man sat in state, accessible only to other great men.

"A fat guy," Bunter heard the man saying. "Claims to have a personal message from Myron Polk."

Bunter did not hear the answer, but evidently it was favourable, for the man came back and motioned to Bunter to follow him. With a mingling of hope and trepidation, Bunter followed.

(Continued on page 15.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,099.



Frank Fearless has never been known to lack thoroughness, and when he sets out to be a bold, bad boy, he carries on with a recklessness that leaves the blades of the Fourth breathless!

I.

"G RATE pip!"

Jack Jolly, the kaptin of the Fourth at St. Sam's, stood rooted with astonishment in the doorway of his study.

He had just glarnsed in to see if his pals, Merry and Bright, were about. In doing so, the thought had occurred to him that Frank Fearless, who also shared the study, might be there. But the thought that Frank Fearless might be holding a card-party there had certainly not prezzented itself to his mind.

Yet such was the case! Frank Fearless, his one-time pal—the pal from whom he was now estranged; for, unfortunately, there had been a rift in the loot—was sitting at the study table, as large as life, puffing away at a cigarette and dealing out cards from a pack in his hand.

His companions were the two worst fellows in the Fourth—Ruff, a booly and a cadd of the first water, and Bigger, a smoky waster, with a carrickter as black as soot. Strange pals for a chap like Fearless, Jack Jolly reflected!

The three gambollers looked up from their desprit game with mocking smiles, as Jack Jolly glarnsed in.

"Like a game, Jolly?" asked Ruff, with a sneer.

Jack Jolly ignored the beastly cadd, and addressed his remarks to his old pal, Frank Fearless.

"I can only say, Fearless, that I'm sorry to see you in company like this," he said in sorrowing accents.

For a moment Frank Fearless winced, as from a blow; but he recovered immediately, and an insolent, sinnical eggsspression appeared on his dile.

"Ratts! And many of 'em!" he said scornfully. "I should have thought this would have sattisfied you, as a matter of fact. You beleaved last week that I was a deceeving rotter and a smoky blade. Well, now I've become one. Isn't that sufficient for you?"

As he spoke Fearless sinnically blew a cloud of sigarett-smoke into Jack Jolly's face, making him coff and splutter.

That was the last straw, so far as the

kaptin of the Fourth was concerned. He fired up at once with burning anger; his eyes blazed, his cheeks flamed, and his fists flashed into action.

"Come on, you rotters!" he shouted hotly. "I'll see you don't turn my study into a smoky gambolling-den, anyway!" And with that he waded in, hitting out right and left.

Crash! A tremendous straight left sent Ruff spinning out of the study like a catherine-wheel. He landed in a huddled heap a duzen yards down the passidge, and some passing juniors carried him away to the sannytorium.

Thud! His right landed with terrific force on Bigger's boko. Bigger bounced twice on the floor, then crawled away, whimpering for mercy.

After that Frank Fearless and Jack Jolly faced each other; and a mitey battle ensued.

Frank's face was as white as chalk as he put up his fists, for in his hart of harts it greeved him gratefully to have to scrap with his old friend. But he couldn't forget the fact that Jack Jolly had condemned him, unherd, when he was falsely convicted of entering a shady inn at midnite. With that injustiss still rankling, he couldn't very well make piece—so he did his best to make peaces of his opponent, instead!

Biff! Crash! Bang! Wallop! Thud! Boom!

The sound of furious pummelling filled the study, drawing a large crowd of specktators to the doorway. Jack Jolly and Frank Fearless fought like champions. No $\frac{1}{2}$ was asked for, or given. It was a battle to the deth—more or less, of course!

Blud was soon streamng in all directions, but that didn't make any difference to Fearless and Jolly. They meerly larfed carelessly and slogged all the harder.

As they were both mitey men of valter, the battle might have gone on for the rest of the day. Forehunty, however, an interruption soon came.

The crowd in the doorway suddenly melted away, and a horrified voice eggssclaimed:

"Bless my sole!"

It was Dr. Birchmall, the Head of St. Sam's!

At the sound of the Head's voice the two juniors, of course, left off fighting. They couldn't very well carry on in the majestick prezzence of the headmaster of the skool.

Dr. Birchmall regarded them with a brow like thunder. Lightning seemed to flash from his eyes. It seemed doubtful weather he could trust himself to words, so angry did he seem.

The Head found his tang at last. "How dare you!" he roared. "I repeat, how dare you! I am shocked beyond all mezzure to witness such a barbarous scrap!"

Jack Jolly cullered and began to feel rather ashamed of himself. Not so Frank Fearless, however. The sound of the Head's voice had brought back all his old resentment again. He remembered bitterly that unhappy nite when, out of sheer good-natcher, he had broken bounds to warn Bounder of the Sixth that the beaks were after him; the memory of Bounder's trechery, and the Head's scendish glee at catching him—Frank Fearless—as he came out of that shady inn, returned with redubbed force. So Frank Fearless did not culler up, like Jack Jolly. Instead of that, he eyed the Head up and down with an insolent stare.

Dr. Birchmall notissed that stare, and faredly bristled with rage.

"Can I beleieve my own peepers, or am I suffering from a Lucy Nations?" he cried seereely. "Is it possibal, Fearless, that you have the ordassity to skoff and sneer at me?"

"It's just possibal, sir!" answered Frank Fearless, a mocking smile on his handsome face.

That sinnical answer put the finishing tutch to it. With a savvridge growl of fury, the Head whisked Fearless off his feet and laid him across the table. Then the birch that the Head carried rose and fell with deadly effect.

Frank Fearless bit his lip till the blud came, to stop himself yelling out. And though he roared and bellowed in angwish, not a sound did he utter.

Dr. Birchmall desisted at last, and flung Fearless from him with an angry



gesture. He had not succeeded in ringing a cry from his victim's lips!

"Let that teach you to treat your headmaster more respectfully!" he panted.

He turned to Jack Jolly.

"Jolly, your behaviour in scrapping like a prizefighter is deplorable. Nevertheless, you treated me with all due respect, and I will therefore let you off lightly. Take fifty thousand lines!"

"Thank you, sir!" murmured Jack Jolly quietly.

Dr. Birchmell rustled out of the study, and Jack Jolly and Frank Fearless were left staring at one another.

Jack Jolly took a step towards Fearless, his arm outstretched.

"Fearless, I'm sorry—" he began.

But Frank Fearless cut him short by pointing a trembling hand to the door.

"Hop it!" he said between his set teeth.

Jack Jolly dropped his arm and, with a shrug, hopped it.

Left on his own, Frank Fearless lashed harshly

"That closes the last avenue to peace," he eggshelled in a voice choked with emotion. "Nothing now can ever heal the breach!"

And it certainly looked as if he was right.

II.

AFTER that Frank Fearless went from bad to worse. Nobody had ever been able to say that Fearless of the Fourth was lacking in thoroughness. And having set out to be a bold, bad blade, he was certainly very thorough about it.

He chummed with Ruff and Blagger, and knocked about with them in his spare time, though all the while his heart sorely ached for good old Jack Jolly and his pals. He accompanied his preshus acquaintances on syruptitious visits behind the woodshed for the purpose of smoking cheap cigarettes; he got up in the middle of the nite to attend gambolling-parties in one of the box-rooms, and gambolled with a recklessness that left the blades of the Fourth breathless.

He did a thing that even the worst of them had never dreamed of before; he brought ginger-ale to one of their little midnite parties, and even drank some of the poisonous licker! But all the time his heart craved for the lemonade of happier days, and he inwardly longed to chuck up the life of a gay dog and return to the innocent, care-free days of youth.

Bounder of the Sixth dropped in to his study one day, and was gratefully surprised to see Fearless calmly puffing out clouds of blue smoke.

"Grate pip! I always imagined you were a Good Little Eric, Fearless!"

"So I was," retorted Fearless. "Since the nite when you acted like a beastly cadd and a trecherous traitor, however, I have come to the conclusion that being a Good Little Eric duzzent pay!"

Bounder flushed slightly.

"I should advise you to keep a civil tongue in your head, my lad!" he remarked grimly. "I came to thank you for getting me out of a rotten scrape—"

"And landing myself in a worse one!" finished Fearless bitterly.

"Well, that was the luck of the game," said Bounder, with a casual laugh. "Anyway, I didn't intend to let the matter drop without showing my gratitude. That's why I've called."

"And how are you going to show your gratitude?" asked Fearless.

"By the only possible way—viz., hard cash," replied Bounder sinically. "You treated me decently the other nite. Now I'm going to be jenneros with you. Don't refuse it and tell me it's too much, for I can tell you it was worth it to me. Here you are!"

Bounder placed two pennies on the study table.

Frank Fearless jumped to his feet and took the munny. But he didn't keep it. Bounder didn't know eggactly what he did do or what happened next, as a matter of fact. An earthquake and a hurricane and a cyclone seemed to hit him all at once, and the next thing he knew was that he was sprawling on the floor at the end of the passidge, with his preshus money raining on his head.

Bounder didn't go back for an explanation, in spite of his six feet of hite, and twelve stone of wait. Bounder of the Sixth had had quite enuff of Frank Fearless for one day!

The following Saturday was a grate day in the Fourth at St. Sam's, for the Form team was to meet the Junior Eleven from the neighbouring collidge of St. Alf's in the afternoon, and it was generally considered to be the most important match of the season.

In spite of the rift in the loot, Jack Jolly had included Frank Fearless in his team, for Fearless was a regular tower of strength at inside-right in the usual way, and his prezzence seemed indispensable if victory was to be secured.

But, sad to relate, a shock was in store for Jack Jolly and the Fourth generally.

Five minnits after the kick-off Fearless received a bewtiful pass from Merry, on the wing. Everybody fully eggpected to see him work through the St. Alf's defence and score a magnificent goal in his old style.

But—a lass a lack!—instead of doing that, Fearless hezzitated. That hezzitation was fatal. A St. Alf's back bore down on him, pulling ugly faces to put him off his stroke. Fearless fumbled with the ball and eyed his opponent dewbiously, and the St. Alf's man, with a jeer, robbed him of the leather, and sent it whizzing down the field again.

A loud groan went up from the speektators, and all round the ropes the question was asked:

"What's the matter with Fearless?"

That question was asked pretty frequently during the remainder of the game, to. Frank Fearless couldn't do a thing right. Whenever he received a pass he made a mess of it. Whenever he kicked the ball he kicked it to a St. Alf's man.

The speektators' surprise soon changed to rage as the goals mounted up against St. Sam's. Cries of "Send him off!" and "Chuck him out!" resounded on all sides.

Fearless turned as red as a pony as they fell on his ears.

The mizzerable eggshibition ended at last, and St. Alf's walked off the field the winners by 20 goals to nill!

To such a pretty pass had Frank Fearless reduced St. Sam's football!

Nobody spoke to him as he came out of the dressing-room. Skornful glances and condemning looks were flung at him from every direction, and he could guess only too well what the St. Sam's fellows thought of him.

Frank Fearless slunk off to the lonely Cloisters, feeling sick at hart, and full of bitter thoughts. He had fulfilled his threat; he had become a gay dog and a bold blade. But the only result was that he was now a Parish in the land, so to speak, with every man's hand against him.

"Whoa is me!" cried Frank Fearless horsely, as he paced the gloomy Cloisters. "Can nothing help me in my hour of dyer need?"

The only answer he got, however, was the mocking echo of his own voice across the lonely Cloisters!

THE END.

(There'll be another rollicking fine story of Jack Jolly & Co. in next week's bumper issue of the MAGNET, chums, entitled: "FRANK FEARLESS' REFORM!" Make a point of reading it; order your copy well in advance!)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,099.



(Continued from page 13.)

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Only Way!

DARIUS HONK, director of Magic Films, swung round in a swivel chair and fixed his eyes on Bunter, as the Owl of the Remove was shown into a large and luxuriously appointed office. The door closed behind Bunter, and he was alone with the great man.

Mr. Honk had a pair of very keen eyes, set in a large, blonde, plump face. They seemed to bore into Bunter.

"Message from Polk?" he rapped.

"Yes!" gasped Bunter.

"Shoot!" said Mr. Honk.

Bunter could see that he was keen to hear a message from Myron Polk. Bunter knew the reason. There was plenty of talk at the Perfection studio of directors who were trying to get the sheikh away from Perfection. Darius Honk's name had been mentioned as one of Perfection's rivals for the services of the handsome film sheikh. Why anybody should want Polk, when he could get Bunter, was a mystery to William George Bunter; still, it was the case.

"The—the fact is—" gasped Bunter.

"Shoot!" repeated Mr. Honk. He seemed to be a man of few words.

"I want to put my name down—" stuttered Bunter. "Bunter, you know, I—"

"Eh?"

"To act for your films—"

"What?"

Quite a startling change came over Darius Honk's face.

"Gee!" he ejaculated. "You've used Polk's name to horn in here and waste my time, you pie-faced jay! Gee! I guess I'll sure tell Simmons to wear out his boots on you."

"No!" gasped Bunter. "I mean—"

"If you've got a message from Polk, shoot!" snapped Mr. Honk.

There was nothing for it but to deliver a message. Bunter had a natural disinclination to letting Simmons, whoever Simmons was, wear out a pair of boots on him.

"Polk says—" he gasped.

"Cough it out!"

"He says—" gasped Bunter.

"Waal, what does he say?" snapped Mr. Honk impatiently.

"He says he'll ring you up," gasped Bunter, "at—at five."

"I guess I'll be on hand. Tell him so, if you're going back to him. Is that the lot?"

"He wants you to give me a trial for the films," said Bunter. It was a case of "in for a penny, in for a pound."

Mr. Honk eyed him.

"Polk says that, does he?" he asked.

"Yes. He thinks a lot of me, you know," said Bunter, more easily. In the great art of untruthfulness, Bunter was second to none. At Greyfriars it was doubted whether Bunter could have told the truth had he tried. It was not on record that he had ever tried.

"Guff," said Mr. Honk. "What does

Polk know about comedy films? 'Tain't in his line!"

Really, it was irritating that if anybody thought of Bunter in connection with films, it was in connection with comedy films. Nobody recognised him as a second Valentino.

"Still, I'm ready to oblige Polk," added Mr. Honk. "Might find room for an extra boy, if he makes a point of it. I'll say you might be some use if you photograph as funny as you look."

"Look here—"

"Got a letter or anything from Polk?" asked Mr. Honk suspiciously.

"No. You see—"

"Then I guess I'll wait till I hear from Polk," said Mr. Honk dryly. "I've been had before." He touched a bell. "Simmons, show that kid out."

The doorkeeper showed Bunter out.

Bunter had not finished the interview, by any means, but Mr. Honk had, and that was what mattered. The door of the great man's office closed, and Bunter was civilly, but firmly, shown out of the building by Simmons.

He found himself on Sunset Boulevard again.

"Beast!" murmured Bunter.

According to the Los Angeles paper, Mr. Honk, of Magic Films, was eagerly on the look-out for film talent. Evidently, he didn't know talent when he saw it. Billy Bunter rolled away down the boulevard. He had succeeded in interviewing the Magic Film director, only to discover that there was nothing doing. His use of Mr. Polk's name had gained him admittance, and there was no doubt that a "boost" from Myron Polk would gain him a trial on the films. But the only boost Mr. Polk was likely to give him was one with his boot, if he discovered the use Bunter had made of his name. That sort of boost would have been of no use to Bunter.

Then suddenly a fat grin overspread the visage of William George Bunter.

"Oh, crumbs!" he ejaculated.

A brilliant idea worked in his fat brain.

He had told Mr. Honk that the Perfection star was going to ring him up, simply because he had to invent a message on the spur of the moment, and that was the first thing that came into his head.

Darius Honk was going to get that call!

Not from Mr. Polk, certainly. Mr. Polk knowing nothing of the matter, and assuredly having no intention of boosting any member of the party from Greyfriars. But on the telephone only Mr. Polk's voice was needed—so long as Polk's voice was there, the rest of Polk could be anywhere from China to Peru. And his voice, at least, was at the command of the Greyfriars ventriloquist.

Bunter grinned.

He strolled cheerily under the pepper trees, thinking of that wonderful wheeze, and the more he thought about it, the better he liked it.

It was great! It was, as Fisher T. Fish would have expressed it, "some stunt!"

A few minutes before five, William George Bunter ensconced himself in a telephone kiosk, and rang up Magic Films.

"Hallo!" came a voice, doubtless that of a secretary, that Bunter did not know.

"Polk speaking," said Bunter, with a really masterly imitation of Myron Polk's high-pitched, affected voice. "Put me through to Honk."

He was put through immediately.

"That you, Myron?" came the sharp, staccato voice of Mr. Honk.

"Myron Polk speaking," said Bunter, with his best ventriloquial skill. "Sorry I can't find time to drop around." Bunter had already learned a good deal of the American language, and on the present occasion he spoke it like a native. "Say, Honk, I sent a kid around to-day—you saw him?"

"Yep!"

"I guess you want to give that kid a chance on the pictures," said the temporary owner of Myron Polk's voice. "I guess I'll take it as a favour if you do."

"I'd sure be real glad to oblige you, Polk," answered Mr. Honk. "Who is the fat guy, anyhow?"

Bunter scowled at the telephone. This description of himself was not pleasing. But he did not tell Darius Honk what he thought of him.

"He sure belongs to a big family in England," was his answer. "Titled people—high-steppers, I'll tell the world! I spotted that kid at Perfection studios, and I'm telling you, Honk, that he's the genuine goods—the real gilt-edged stuff. He's rather a friend of mine, and I guess I want to see him started. Told him I would. Give him a trial, to oblige me."

"I guess that goes," answered Mr. Honk cheerfully.

"He's dining with me this evening. I'll tell him to call around to-morrow morning, what?"

"Sure!"

"Give him a phone call at Long Beach Boarding-House in the morning, and fix it, then," said Mr. Polk's borrowed voice. "So-long, Honk—I'll say I'm real obliged to you!"

"O.K.," answered Mr. Honk. "So long, Myron!"

Billy Bunter hung up the receiver and grinned at it. In the Magic Films office, Mr. Honk hung up, and smiled. Whatever he may have thought of Myron Polk's judgment in the matter of Bunter, he was undoubtedly glad to oblige the famous film star. Bunter, with a fat grin of satisfaction on his face, rolled homeward. Alone of the Greyfriars party, Bunter was going to receive a telephone call in the morning, asking him to call on a big Hollywood producer. It was quite delightful to think of the astonishment and envy of the other fellows when that happened.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Glory for Bunter!

HARRY WHARTON & CO., came back to Long Beach Boarding-House, tired but cheery, after their long day at Santa Monica. They had had a happy day by the shore of the blue Pacific, seeing the sights of Santa Monica, and exploring Port Los Angeles, with a visit to the rather uproarious attractions of Venice.

They had quite forgotten William George Bunter; but they remembered his existence when they came in, and found him reclining in an attitude of grace in a rocker on the piazza.

"Hallo hallo, hallo! Here we are again!" said Bob Cherry cheerily. "Bagged that million dollars, Bunter?"

"Have the Hollywood producers been falling over one another to capture you, old thing?" inquired Nugent.

Bunter blinked at them.

"Oh, really, you fellows! The fact is, I only had to call at one place," he answered carelessly. "As I expected, it was all right."

The Famous Five gazed at him.

"Taken on?" asked Johnny Bull, sceptically.

"Well, I can hardly say taken on," said Bunter. "I'm getting a phone call in the morning to settle the matter. Mr. Honk seemed rather keen on securing me for Magic Films."

"I don't think!" remarked the Bounder.

Bunter shrugged his fat shoulders.

"You can see me take the call in the morning, if you like," he answered. "It's practically settled. Honk was very keen on it, but the fact is, I told him I should want time to think it over a bit. I pointed out to him that there were a lot of producers in Hollywood, and I might do better. I'm going to give him his answer in the morning."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I think I shall give his studio a trial, at least," said Bunter. "It's a rather big firm—rather better than Perfection, I fancy. You fellows are welcome to old Schootz. I'm done with him."

"You haven't begun with him yet," grinned Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Well, if it's true, I'm glad," said Harry Wharton. "But—"

"The butfulness is terrific!"

"You'll see!" said Bunter.

"The soefulness will be the believfulness!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I guess if we see Bunter on the pictures it will be a sight for sore eyes," said Fisher T. Fish. "I've heard of that man Honk, and he's business from the word go, and I sure reckon he wouldn't touch Bunter with a telegraph-pole."

"Oh, really, Fishy—"

"Waal, how did you get to see him, if you've seen him?" demanded Fishy. "I guess a Hollywood producer ain't so easy seen by a fat jay trying to break into the films. It's as easy to get an intervoo with a President of the Yew-nighted States. How'd you get to see him?"

"Just called," answered Bunter. "Naturally, I was shown in to him at once."

"Guff!" said Fisher T. Fish.

"Oh, really, Fish—"

"Go on, shoot!"

And he was impressed, I could see that," continued Bunter. "I don't mind telling you fellows that he was keen to get me to sign a contract there and then. But I considered it best to think the matter over first. I told him so quite plainly, and then—"

"And then you woke up?" asked Fisher T. Fish.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter's fat lip curled.

"I'm accustomed to jealousy," he remarked. "I never expected to get on the films without making you fellows wild."

"The wildfulness is not terrific, my esteemed fat Bunter."

"Fathead!" said Harry Wharton. "Gratters, if it's true—but you can't expect us to swallow it all at once, you know."

"Wait and see!" grinned Bunter.

At the dinner table that evening, a good deal was heard of Bunter's appointment with the director of Magic Films.

Mr. Coot, who eyed him dubiously at first, was impressed at last. Other people at the table regarded Bunter with interest. Many of the guests at Long Beach Boarding-House were in Hollywood in the hope of breaking into the films. If Bunter had succeeded at the first shot, undoubtedly it was a rather remarkable performance.

The Greyfriars fellows, knowing their Bunter, did not expect that there would be any telephone call for him in the morning. They expected him to invent some elaborate explanation to account for Mr. Honk failing to ring him up.

After breakfast that morning, therefore, they were rather interested in

The reply evidently impressed Mr. Coot.

He turned from the instrument, and looked round at William George Bunter, holding out the receiver.

"Call from Magic Films," he said. "Mr. Honk himself speaking. Mr. Bunter wanted."

Bunter rolled over to the telephone.

"My call?" he said. "Thanks."

He took the receiver from Mr. Coot, whose manner was deeply respectful. A call from so great a man as the director of Magic Films was a distinction.

"Well, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"The hatfulness is terrific."

"Yes," said the fat junior into the telephone, "Bunter speaking. Certainly, I'll come round at once, Mr. Honk."

He hung up, and blinked round at the juniors. They were all gazing at him. There was no doubt about it now. Billy Bunter had been specially telephoned for by the director of Magic Films, and asked to call. It was remarkable. And Bunter had been telling the truth, which was more remarkable still.

"Well, I'd better be getting along," remarked Bunter. "Honk's waiting for me. Ta-ta, you fellows!"

Bunter rolled away.

"Waal, carry me home to die!" ejaculated Fisher T. Fish. "If that ain't the elephant's hind leg!"

"Blessed if I can make it out," said Bob. "What on earth can a film director want with Bunter?"

"Gammon!" said the Bounder. "The fat ass has fixed up that phone call. It's all spoof!"

"Oh! That's it!" exclaimed Bob.

"Of course that's it," said Vernon-Smith. "He's going out for a walk, and coming back with another yarn."

"I suppose that's it," said Harry Wharton slowly. Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Let's take a walk with him," he suggested. "If he's spoofing, his face will be worth watching."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the whole party walked out after Bunter. That fat youth had reached the boulevard when they rejoined him. He blinked round at them.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Mind us coming along?"

asked Bob Cherry. "We want a little walk before we go over to Perfection."

Bunter grinned.

"Trot along," he answered.

And Bunter rolled away, with an escort of surprised juniors. They crossed the boulevard with him, and walked along to the gates of Magic Films. There, the whole party expected him to stop, and hand out some plausible excuse for not going in. Instead of which, Bunter rolled placidly in at the gates, and up to the entrance.

"The fat ass," said Bob Cherry.

"Keeping it up till the last minute," said the sceptical Bounder. "He won't have the nerve to go into the building."

The Bounder was mistaken, however. Billy Bunter marched up to the open

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,099.

FREE! Souvenirs of the
Test Matches!
Superb Coloured Metal Portrait Badges
of . . .
ALL THE ENGLAND PLAYERS!



These THREE famous cricketers' portraits
given away FREE this week.

**DON'T MISS THIS WONDERFUL OFFER—
AND TELL YOUR PALS!**

Ask for the

NELSON LEE SCHOOL STORY LIBRARY.

OUT ON WEDNESDAY - PRICE 2d.

Bunter. They wondered what yarn he was going to produce.

Bunter, however, seemed quite confident.

He loafed in the hall that morning, near the telephone, with every appearance of waiting for a phone call.

As Harry Wharton & Co. were not wanted at Perfection until eleven that day, they waited with Bunter. In spite of themselves, they almost began to believe that the Owl of the Remove had told the truth for once.

Buzzzzzz!

The telephone bell rang. "Colonel" Coot took the call, and Billy Bunter blinked at him eagerly.

"Yep!" answered the Colonel into the transmitter. "There's a guy of that name here. Who's speaking?"

doorway, as if the place belonged to him. Simmons, the door-keeper, met him there, and bowed respectfully. He had orders to show Bunter into Mr. Honk's private office immediately he arrived.

"This way, sir!" said Simmons, in the hearing of the astonished Greyfriars party.

Bunter blinked round.

"Ta-ta, you fellows!" he called out. "Sorry I can't take you in with me—outsiders ain't allowed in."

And Bunter rolled into the building, and disappeared from the astonished eyes of the Greyfriars juniors.

"Well, my only hat!" said the Bounder.

Harry Wharton & Co. walked back along the boulevard, in a state of great astonishment. They were astonished; but they certainly were not "wild," as Bunter expected. If the fat junior had scored a success, they were ready to congratulate him on his good fortune. But they could not understand it. The Bounder declared that there was a catch in it somewhere; but even Smithy could not surmise where the catch came in.

When the Greyfriars fellows came into the Perfection studio for their morning's work, Mr. Fish was there. He glanced over them, and asked:

"Where's the fat guy?"

"He won't be here this morning, Mr. Fish," answered Harry.

"Oh, shucks," said Mr. Fish, "Schootz has got an idea into his cabeza of trying him out for a comedy stunt. Where is he?"

"He's at Magic Films," said Bob, with a grin.

"Hey?"

"Mr. Honk telephoned for him to call."

Mr. Fish jumped.

"Darius Honk did?" he ejaculated.

"Yes."

"You giving me guff?" asked Mr. Fish suspiciously.

"I guess it's straight, popper," said Fisher T. Fish. "We sure follered him to Magic Films, and saw him go in. The doorkeeper looked like he was showing in the governor of the state."

Mr. Fish whistled.

"Great John James Brown!" he said.

Billy Bunter, evidently, had taken a

sudden jump in Mr. Fish's esteem. If an experienced producer like Mr. Honk wanted him, then Hiram K. Fish guessed that he wanted him too.

But that morning, William George Bunter was not seen at Perfection. No longer was he merely a "looker-on in Vienna." Billy Bunter was getting his chance at last; though what he was going to make of it was quite another matter.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Admirable Bunter!

"HERE, sir!" said Simmons. Simmons was no longer the man who had said "Hi, you!" to Bunter the previous day. Simmons was full of respect and attention.

Bunter's interview with Mr. Honk had been brief. It had lasted, in fact, about a minute and a half. Darius Honk was anxious to oblige the famous sheikh of Perfection Pictures; but he had no time to waste. He told Bunter that Mr. Polk had recommended him for a trial; that if he tried out successfully he would be given a small part to begin with; and turned him over to Simmons.

If Bunter had been dreaming of an immediate engagement at a thousand dollars a week, he had to wake up.

But he was fairly well satisfied. He knew that he had got further in a day, than many film aspirants got in a year. He was given a trial, and made personally known to the director. Bunter had learned enough of Hollywood, to know what that was worth.

If he had not known, Simmons' respectful manner would have enlightened him. Simmons did not exude respect to other "extras."

A friend of Myron Polk, taken up personally, to Darius Honk, was "somebody." Amid the crowd of nobodies who swarmed in the studio, Bunter was somebody!

Simmons showed him into the casting-office. A young man in a Derby hat was seated there, on a high stool tilted back at a dangerous angle, with his feet on a desk. He had an unlighted cigarette in his mouth. Smoking was forbidden in the studios, on account of the danger of fire from the rolls of film. He turned a careless glance on Bunter.

"Mr. Bunter, sir!" said Simmons.

"Yeh!" said the young man, obviously not impressed.

"Mr. Honk's sent him up for a special trial, Mr. Wooster."

Crash, came the stool to the perpendicular. Mr. Wooster sat up and took notice, as it were.

"Oh, that's the guy, is it?" he said, scanning Bunter. Apparently Mr. Honk had mentioned Bunter to the casting director.

Simmons faded away, leaving Bunter in the office with Mr. Wooster. That young man pushed a paper across the desk to the fat junior.

"Fill that up, Mr. Bunter," he said. Bunter blinked over the paper, which was type-written. It contained a number of questions to be answered.

Bunter took a fountain-pen from Mr. Wooster, and filled in the particulars of name, address, age, weight, and so forth. Mr. Wooster took the paper and looked at it, and then looked at Bunter. Bunter had put down his weight as nine stone. Mr. Wooster perhaps wondered whether he ought not to have put it at nineteen.

"O.K.," said Mr. Wooster, taking the

pen. "Now about your qualifications, Mr. Bunter. Ride?"

"First-rate!" answered Bunter. Bunter had ridden a donkey at Margate, without falling off more than once or twice in twenty yards.

"Swim?"

"Like a fish!" answered Bunter. He did not feel disposed to tell Mr. Wooster that he swam like a stone. A fish sounded better.

"Play tennis?"

"I've been considered a champion at it," said Bunter modestly.

Mr. Wooster raised his eyebrows.

"Borotra hasn't a thing on you, I expect?" he remarked, with a sarcasm that was a sheer waste on Billy Bunter.

"Not a thing!" assented Bunter.

"Oh! Row a boat?"

"Best oarsman at Greyfriars."

"Greyfriars! What's that?" asked Mr. Wooster, staring.

"My school in England," explained Bunter. "I should be captain of the school, only I hadn't the time to give to it."

"Sho!" said Mr. Wooster. "Drive a car!"

"I always drive the Rolls at home," Bunter had once handled Mr. Bunter's Ford, when Mr. Bunter was not looking. Mr. Bunter had been called on immediately afterwards to extract the Ford from a hedge, and Bunter from the Ford. But the Owl of the Remove did not think it necessary to bother Mr. Wooster with these trifling details.

"Dance?" asked Mr. Wooster.

"Like a fairy!"

Mr. Wooster seemed about to fall off the stool. He recovered himself.

"Some fairy!" he remarked. "Play any instrument?"

"Piano, violin, cello, flute, and piccolo," answered Bunter cheerfully. At various times, Bunter had produced strange noises on those instruments, and he was entitled to call it playing them, if he liked.

"Gee!" said Mr. Wooster, eyeing this Admirable Crichton with some doubt. "I guess I better put down the things you can't do—it will save time. Anything you can't do?"

"Well, no," said Bunter. "I fancy I'm a pretty good all-round man at practically anything."

"Search me!" said Mr. Wooster. "Ever done any acting?"

"Lots! In the holidays, I'm always in demand for private theatricals at aristocratic house-parties."

"Sho! I guess Magic Films is getting the whole bag of tricks along with you, Mr. Bunter," said Mr. Wooster solemnly.

"Well, yes," agreed Bunter. "I think you can put it down at that."

"Done anything for the films?"

"I've been rather a lot in Perfection studios," answered Bunter carelessly. "That's where Mr. Polk first saw me, and was struck by my appearance."

"He would be," said Mr. Wooster.

"Anybody would be if you ask me."

"Oh, quite!" assented Bunter. Mr. Wooster's sarcasm was much too subtle for the Owl of Greyfriars.

Mr. Wooster was in a state of doubt and astonishment. Why Myron Polk had recommended this fat and fatuous guy to Mr. Honk, was a mystery to him. He did not, of course, suspect that Myron Polk hadn't.

"Comedy's your long suit, I reckon?" remarked Mr. Wooster.

Bunter shook his head.

"Not at all. Nothing of the kind."

"Nope?" asked Mr. Wooster. "What's your bright particular line, then?"

"A Valentino part!" explained Bunter.



A Sensational book-length story, with a Thrill on Every Page, entitled: "The Man Who Quit," appears in this week's issue of "THE THRILLER"—Now on Sale. Price 2d.



Billy Bunter marched up to the open doorway of Magic Films, as if the place belonged to him. Simmons, the door-keeper, met him there, and bowed respectfully. "This way, sir," he said, in the hearing of the astonished Greyfriars party. "Well, my only hat!" said Vernon-Smith. (See Chapter 9.)

This time Mr. Wooster very nearly did fall off the stool, so convulsive was the jump he gave.

"Did—did—did you say a Valentino part?" he ejaculated.

"Yes," assured Bunter.

"Got the looks for it, ain't you?" gasped Mr. Wooster.

"Exactly!"

"It's the grasshopper's whiskers!" said Mr. Wooster. "Well, Honk says give you a try-out, and what Honk says goes. Come along with me, Master Jack-of-all-trades Valentino."

Bunter was rather puzzled to observe that Mr. Wooster did not seem favourably impressed. He wondered why.

He followed the casting director from the office.

After all, Wooster was nobody in particular. As he had remarked, it was what Honk said that "went." Besides, Wooster would doubtless improve his opinion of Bunter, once he had seen him in a set. He was bound to, if he had any sense or judgment. Bunter followed the young man in the Derby hat into the studio, cheerily confident.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Luck!

BILLY BUNTER blinked round him through his big spectacles with plenty of self-possession.

Some fellows, in the midst of a crowd of movie people, cameramen, electricians, under the critical eye of a director, in a big movie studio, and

about to be filmed, would have felt nervous.

Not so Bunter! Bunter had no doubt of his powers. There was no hesitating delicacy, no false modesty, about Bunter. Other people might think what they liked, but Bunter knew that he was "the goods." Being the goods, and sure of it, what was there to worry about? Bunter saw no occasion for nervousness.

The big studio was dusky, save in the one place where a brilliant light fell from above. Bunter blinked in that bright light rather uncomfortably. His eyes, even reinforced by his big specs, were hardly equal to the strain. But he was not going to admit that. Mr. Wooster observed it, however.

"Keep your optics open," he said.

"That's all right," said Bunter.

"You don't generally nousey around with your eyes shut?" asked Mr. Wooster.

"No, I don't!" grunted Bunter.

He discerned a mocking, ironical tone about this Mr. Wooster. He did not like the man at all. He decided, mentally that, later on, when he was a star, as indispensable to Magic Films as Polk was to Perfection, he would have this fellow sacked.

Wooster, quite unconscious of this future danger, continued to address Bunter in a gibing sort of way. He made it clear that he couldn't understand why Mr. Honk was giving that fat guy a try-out, and that he didn't relish the task of trying him out.

However, he had his business to do, and he got on with it. His own

opinion was but a straw in the balance compared with that of Darius Honk.

The "set" was that of a breakfast scene. A number of people, "movie extras," who appeared like magic at a sign from Mr. Wooster, were seated along a table, rather like the breakfast-table at Long Beach Boarding-House. They were not made up in any way. Some of them were extra girls, some of them men in overalls, the picture that was to be taken being only a test of Bunter before the camera. Bunter wondered where he was to come in. He had pictured in his mind a set like that of Lord of the Desert, at Perfection. But Mr. Wooster was not thinking of sheikh parts for Bunter.

"Now," he said. "Get a hold on that pile of plates!"

"What?" ejaculated Bunter, blinking at a huge stack of crockery which an assistant held, apparently ready for him.

"Not deaf?" asked Mr. Wooster.

"No," hooted Bunter.

"Only silly?" asked Mr. Wooster.

"Look here—"

"Don't chew the rag. This is a try-out, not a conversazione. Get a hold on them plates!"

"What on earth for?" demanded Bunter.

"Because I tell you, sure!"

Bunter grunted, and took the stack of plates from the attendant. He found that they were made of enamelled tin, doubtless so that they could fall, in rehearsals, without being broken.

It was a tall stack. When Bunter held

it in his fat hands the top plate rested against his podgy chin.

Mr. Wooster grinned at him.

"I'll say that you look fine!" he remarked.

Certainly Bunter's look, as he negotiated that stack of plates, was calculated to raise a smile from any film fan who saw it on the screen.

"Well, what am I going to do with these blessed plates?" demanded Bunter.

He was sure that Valentino had never carried a stack of plates before the cameras.

"You walk in—there!" said Mr. Wooster, pointing. "You're a waiter. No need to make up for the part this time; it's only a try-out. Remember you're the comic waiter. That's all. Got that?"

"Oh, really, you know——"

"Don't talk. You walk in with them plates, catch your foot, and go toppling, sending the plates all over the table. See?"

Bunter stared at him.

"That's just farce!" he exclaimed indignantly.

"You've said it."

"Do you think I'm suited for farce?"

"Born for it," answered Mr. Wooster.

"Look here——"

"Ever looked at yourself in the glass?"

"Eh? Yes."

"And don't you know you're born for farce?"

"No!" hooted Bunter.

"You want new specs, then," said Mr. Wooster. "But never mind that now. Do as I tell you, and quit chewing the rag."

Bunter was on the verge of rebellion. But he suppressed his indignation. This ass—this fool—this chump might think he was suited for a farcical film. Still, it was something to get a trial before the cameras, even in the hands of an ass, fool, and chump. After all, even a comedy part could be done in a masterly manner. Had it not been beneath his dignity to think of such a thing Bunter knew that he could have beaten the great Charlie Chaplin at his own game. He resolved to go ahead with this, and prove to this sneering Wooster that he could do it on his head, so to speak.

All eyes were fixed on him.

That did not make Bunter at all nervous. But the pile of plates made him a little uneasy. They weighed a good deal, and he was not used to carrying plates, especially in such enormous quantities.

Once, twice, thrice the pack wobbled, and Bunter jerked himself wildly to preserve their balance, blinking anxiously and gasping.

"Ceel!" said Mr. Wooster, condescending to look pleased. Bunter was quite unconsciously playing the part well. With his fat, unwieldy figure loaded with plates, his fat face puckered with anxiety to keep them balanced, his little round eyes peering over the top of the pile through his big spectacles, Bunter certainly looked calculated to raise a laugh from any movie audience.

The cameras began to grind.

Bunter knew that he was being filmed now, and in spite of the indignity of a comedy part, he felt a thrill of elation. It was something to be filmed, even as a comic waiter with a mountain of plates.

He approached the table gingerly. He had to catch his foot and stumble, sending an avalanche of plates swooping down on the breakfast-table. It was necessary to do this at the right

moment, of course. The right moment required judgment. Bunter paused, hesitated, and Mr. Wooster's voice rapped out:

"Get busy!"

Bunter blinked round at him and at that moment, not intentionally, but quite accidentally, he caught his foot in a rug on the floor and pitched forward.

Crash! Smash! Clatter!

"Yaroooh!" roared Mr. Wooster, as he caught the avalanche of plates with his face.

"Oh, crikey!" gasped Bunter.

Bump!

Mr. Wooster, with about fifty metal plates crashing unexpectedly on his features, sat down. Plates clattered and banged round him. He sprawled in a sea of plates.

"Thunder!" he gasped. "Oh, gee-whiz! You moss-headed jay! Whoop!"

A ripple of laughter ran through the set. But it ceased instantly at Mr. Wooster's furious glare. Mr. Wooster was not to be laughed at with impunity in the Magic Films studio.

The camera men ceased to grind. The set came to a sudden termination. Mr. Wooster scrambled up. He dabbed a cut on his nose with his handkerchief. He glared at Bunter as if he could have bitten him.

"You all-fired jay!" he roared.

"I—I say——"

"What you mean chucking them plates at me?" shrieked Mr. Wooster.

"I—I didn't! I—I slipped——"

"You moss-headed jay!"

"Oh, really, you know——"

"Beat it!" roared Mr. Wooster. "I'm through with you! Go back to Polk and tell him to put you in the idiot ward! You get me?"

"Look here——"

"Git!" roared Mr. Wooster.

And Mr. Wooster looked so dangerous that Bunter decided to "get." He backed away, leaving Mr. Wooster dabbing an infuriated face. The set, evidently, was finished.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Last Chance!

"**B**EAST!"

Bunter made that remark under his breath as he watched Mr. Wooster in somewhat excited talk with Darius

A Handy Leather Wallet has been sent to the author of this Limerick!

"Bunter," said Quelch, "you're so lazy,

You'd drive a Form-master crazy!

After all my tuition,

In such 'simple addition,'

Your answers shock and amaze me!"

Sent in by C. Bell, Wood End, Bolton, near Wigton, Cumberland.

Put your thinking caps on, chums! You'd like a pocket wallet, wouldn't you?

Honk, in the doorway of the latter's office.

Mr. Wooster was evidently in a very bad temper.

That, perhaps, was not surprising. Giving Billy Bunter a trial had proved rather a trial to Mr. Wooster.

Mr. Honk looked a little worried.

"Some jay!" he agreed. "But I've promised Polk. Polk seems dead keen on the dog-goned gink getting a chance here. I don't want to offend Polk. Look here, I'm going up to Polk's place this evening, and I'll put it to him. If he's still keen on that jay Bunter having a show, you'll have to make the best of him, Wooster, and that's that!"

And Mr. Wooster stalked away snorting.

Mr. Honk waved a hand to Bunter.

"I guess you can beat it!" he called. "I'll phone you if you're wanted again."

"But I say——" stammered Bunter.

The slam of Darius Honk's office door was the only reply.

Bunter blinked at the closed door and rolled away. He hardly knew how to get out on Sunset Boulevard again.

He was utterly dismayed.

His failure in the trial set did not worry him much. That was all Wooster's fault, of course. What worried him was Mr. Honk's remark that he was going to see Polk that evening.

Bunter fairly quaked.

The moment Mr. Honk mentioned Bunter to Myron Polk, of course, he would learn that he had been spoofed, and that the Perfection star had not recommended Bunter to him at all.

That would be the end of Bunter's high hopes at the Magic Films studio. Bunter would be let down, with a bump.

As Honk and Polk were friends, Bunter really might have foreseen that sooner or later the subject would come up between them. But Bunter never foresaw anything.

"Oh, crumbs!" murmured Bunter, as he rolled away down Sunset Boulevard towards Long Beach Boarding-House. "Oh, jiminy!"

As soon as Mr. Honk called at Polk's bungalow the game was up. And that was not the worst. Polk was very likely to cut up rusty at the unauthorised use of his name.

Polk was the kind of man to cut up rusty at a trifle. And this really was not a trifle.

Billy Bunter realised dismally that he was in a bad box.

His fat face was long when he arrived at the boarding-house for lunch. Harry Wharton & Co. had come back from the Perfection lot, merry and bright as usual.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Enjoying life?" asked Bob Cherry as he spotted Bunter's gloomy visage.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"How did you get on with Magic Films?" asked Wharton.

"Oh, fine!" groaned Bunter.

"Taken on at a million dollars a week?" grinned Nugent.

"The—the salary isn't fixed yet," mumbled Bunter. "I shall hold out for something substantial, of course."

"Then you've had a success?" asked Bob.

"Splendid, old chap."

"You ain't looking very happy about it."

Bunter forced a feeble grin.

"I'm not the fellow to be cock-a-hoop over a little success," he answered. "The fact is, I'm not sure that I shall stick to Magic Films, after all. I rather think I can do better elsewhere."

"Booted already?" asked the Bounder.

"Beast!"

Bunter's look, that day, certainly did not seem to indicate that his success had been splendid. He looked much more like a fellow who had received the order of the boot.

At lunch he ate hardly more than any two of the other fellows. His appetite seemed affected.

In the afternoon Bunter pondered desperately on the situation. He debated in his fat mind whether it would be any use to appeal to Myron Polk.

Bunter had "cheek" enough for anything. If cheek could save him, he would be saved. After all, Polk was amenable to flattery—he knew that. Bunter felt that he had made rather a good impression on the star at Las Palmas. An appeal to Polk would not cost anything, anyhow—it would do no harm if it did no good. The very worst that Polk could do would be to kick him out of the bungalow. It would not be the first time that Bunter had been kicked.

The fat junior could not help realising that an appeal to Myron Polk was a desperate resource. But his fatuous scheming had left him no other; and he resolved at last to try it on.

After dinner at the boarding-house that evening the Owl of the Remove decided to try his luck with Mr. Polk.

"I say, you fellows," Bunter joined the Famous Five on the piazza. "I've got an appointment this evening."

"More jolly old producers after you, old fat bean?" asked Bob Cherry. "There's a rush on Bunter, you men."

"The rushfulness is terrific!"

"The fact is, I'm going to see Polk," said Bunter carelessly.

There was a snort from Horace Coker.

"What are you going to see that rotter for, you fat young rascal?" demanded Coker.

"He's rather a friend of mine," answered Bunter calmly, "and I'll thank you to speak a bit more civilly of my friends, Coker!"

Another snort from Coker.

"I want a taxi up the hill," went on Bunter. "My postal-order hasn't come yet. Who's lending me ten dollars?"

"Echo answers who!" chuckled Bob.

"The whiffulness is terrific, my esteemed Bunter."

"I can't walk up the hill, and you know it," said Bunter. "I don't want to disappoint Polk. He's rather a big man in the movies, and worth knowing. I'm temporarily short of cash. I say, Mauly—"

The long-suffering Mauleverer placed a five-dollar bill in a fat hand.

"Thanks, old chap," said Bunter.

"Will you have this back out of my postal-order when it comes, or out of my first week's salary at Magic Films?"

"I'll leave it to you, old bean," answered Mauleverer amiably.

"Blessed if I catch on to this," said the Bounder, as Bunter rolled away to phone for a taxi. "Bunter seems to be getting on in the movie world. Is he really going to see Polk?"

There did not seem to be much doubt about it, for when the taxi came Bunter was heard to give the direction to the chauffeur, "Sea Mist Bungalow." The taxi rolled away with the Owl of the Remove.

Harry Wharton & Co. were booked for the Grauman Egyptian Theatre that evening, at Hollywood. The loss of William George Bunter's society did not spoil the entertainment.

While the chums of the Remove headed for the theatre, in a cheery crowd, Billy Bunter was rolling up the hill in a taxi, in a much less cheery mood.

He dismissed the taxi at the gate of Sea Mist Bungalow, and rolled up the orange-tree-shaded drive to the house.

A Japanese servant answered his summons at the door.

"Mr. Polk at home?" inquired Bunter.

The Japanese inclined his head gravely.

His slanting eyes scanned Bunter, and he made no move to let the fat junior in.

"Tell Mr. Polk that I want to see

But the Owl of the Remove was not beaten yet.

He had come there to see Myron Polk; and he was going to see Myron Polk—somehow. By hook or by crook he was going to see Polk, and try the effect of his eloquence upon him.

He stood in the shadow of the orange-trees on the drive, debating the matter in his fat mind.

He blinked towards the lighted windows on the veranda. One of them was a french window, and Bunter wondered whether it gave access to the apartment where Polk was to be found.

Bunter had cheek enough for almost anything; but to open that french window and walk into Mr. Polk's presence unannounced required a degree of cheek that even Bunter did not quite possess.

He made a step towards the veranda, and paused. His fat heart failed him.

As he stood in the shadows of the orange-trees in distasteful indecision, he heard the sound of an opening door in the distance.

It was the french window on the veranda that had opened.

A man's figure appeared dimly in the dusky shadows there. Behind it was the light from the room, which, however, was immediately shut off.

Bunter wondered whether it was Polk.

He saw the figure move along the veranda, to the steps, and descend into the garden, at a little distance from the orange-shaded drive.

In the dimness of the stars the figure looked like the graceful figure of Myron Polk, but Bunter could not be sure. Visibility was never very good to Bunter, even with the aid of his big spectacles.

The man, whoever he was, was walking away by a flower-bordered path of soft grass that led round the building.

Bunter rolled after him.

If this was Polk, it was a chance of speaking to him. But the fat junior wanted to be sure that it was Polk.

The man walked on, by flowery and shaded paths,

through the extensive grounds of Sea Mist. Bunter kept the figure in sight, stalking him cautiously.

The figure stopped, at last, at a little building designed like a chalet, surrounded by pepper-trees. From chinks in the green-painted wooden shutters came a gleam of light.

Polk—if it was Polk—tapped at the door three times.

Bunter, in the shadow of the pepper-trees, blinked.

Bunter was not a very keen fellow, but even Bunter could not help realising that there was something very peculiar about this. Those three soft taps at the summer-house door were obviously a signal to someone within.

The door opened a few inches, and a bar of light fell from the aperture, revealing the figure outside as that of Myron Polk, even to the vision of the Owl of the Remove.

"All O.K.!" said Polk, in impatient tones, addressing the man within, invisible to Bunter.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,099.

WELL TO THE FORE IN ALL RACES OF IMPORTANCE!

A nutshell history of the famous BUGATTI Car—the radiator badge of which you will find in this issue.

In the motor-racing world, no name is better known than that of Bugatti. The car hails from France, and is the product of a very famous designer, who believes in the strenuous test of racing to try-out and perfect his many ingenious ideas. Consequently the latest type of Bugatti car can be relied on to be the last word in speedy mounts for the racing man, and even Papa Bugatti's so-called touring cars have an astonishing liveliness, which is sheer delight to motorists of the sporting type. The experience of very many years is built into every Bugatti, and it is this factor that accounts largely for their great popularity. One of the favourite mounts of that famous racing-driver, Malcolm Campbell, is a Bugatti, which he has driven successfully in many a race on Brooklands Track. The slender bonnets and narrow radiators of the sporting Bugatti cars are familiar to all car-lovers, and the famous Bugatti badge, which is given with this copy of the MAGNET, will be one of the most prized of the whole set.

him most particularly," said Bunter. "W. G. Bunter, of Perfection Pictures."

The Japanese inclined his head again, and crossed to a hall telephone, leaving Bunter standing in the doorway.

He spoke into the instrument, and then came back.

"Missa Polk no can see!" he said.

"Tell him—" urged Bunter.

"Missa Polk no can see!" repeated the Japanese.

"But I tell you—"

Bunter did not finish the sentence. It was useless to finish it to the polished teakwood door that was closed in his face.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter Makes a Discovery!

BILLY BUNTER breathed hard. This was an unexpected rebuff.

Bunter had had many rebuffs in the course of his fat career, and every one of them was unexpected.

"Si, senor!"

Bunter heard the soft answer in Spanish.

Polk entered the chalet, and the door closed.

Bunter blinked at it, in wonder and excitement. His curiosity was keenly aroused now. The summer-house, obviously not designed as a habitation, was inhabited; and the owner of the place gave a cautious signal before the door was opened to him. Bunter almost forgot his mission at Sea Mist in his keen curiosity to know what this mystery meant.

He crept softly and cautiously towards the little building. There were many chinks in the shutters, through which the light gleamed, though the pepper-trees and thick shrubberies shut it off from view from the rest of the extensive gardens. Bunter stopped at a shutter and applied his spectacles to a chink.

There he had a full view of the interior of the chalet. Polk and another man were within a few feet of him.

It was upon the other man that Bunter's eyes were fixed, in amazement. At that moment it was all that Bunter could do to avoid betraying himself by a squeak of astonishment.

The man in the chalet was a dark-skinned, low-browed Mexican, with a villainous cast of countenance. Bunter had seen many such, in Spanish Town at Los Angeles. But this one he knew.

It was the "thug," Jose Gomez; the ruffian who had attacked Coker of the Fifth, and had been handed over to the police. Bunter knew the brutal, low-browed face at once.

The Owl of the Remove breathed hard and quick. Gomez had been bailed out through a firm of lawyers in Los Angeles; and all the Greyfriars' party believed that Myron Polk had been the prime mover in it, and had put up the five hundred dollars that had been lost when the hooligan "skipped" his bail. It had cost the Perfection star five hundred dollars to silence the ruffian he had employed to "beat up" Coker. Gomez had "skipped" his bail and vanished, and the Los Angeles police were looking for him. Certainly, they had not thought of looking in the summer-house in Myron Polk's garden on the hill. No wonder the ruffian had vanished without leaving a trace.

Bunter's eyes gleamed behind his spectacles.

The Perfection star was hiding the scoundrel from the police, doubtless waiting till it was safe for Gomez to clear off to a distance. Through the chink in the shutter the voices of the two men in the chalet came to Bunter's ears.

"Senor, I am tired of this!" Gomez was saying. "Nor do I feel so safe here as you believe, senor."

"You are perfectly safe here," answered Myron Polk coldly. "My Japanese servants do not tell tales. No one would dream of looking for you here."

"But, senor—"

"A few days more, and it will be safe for you to go. You have all you want here—food, drink, cigars. Listen! You cannot appear in Los Angeles again. But in a few days we go on location, at a distance. You will be able to make yourself useful there."

Gomez grinned.

"The senorito Coker will be there?" he asked.

Polk gritted his teeth, his face full of evil at the mention of Coker's name.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,099.

"Yes," he answered; "and then—" He started, and broke off. "What was that? The wind?"

It was not the wind; it was Billy Bunter jolting the shutter in his eagerness to hear. Polk turned quickly to the door.

In an instant, Billy Bunter backed away from the shuttered window, and vanished into the shrubberies. There were occasions when Bunter could move quickly.

Myron Polk stared out of the doorway. But nothing suspicious met his view, and he turned back into the building and closed the door again.

Bunter did not approach the chalet again. One narrow escape was enough for the Owl of the Remove.

He threaded his way through the shrubberies, putting a safe distance between himself and the secluded chalet. Bunter was not afraid of the film star; but the mere thought of coming into contact with the ruffian Gomez made him shiver.

But the fat junior was not thinking of leaving the precincts of Sea Mist. There was a fat, sly grin on Bunter's face, as he made his way back to the bungalow.

Arrived there, Bunter mounted the steps to the veranda. He tiptoed to the french window. After the discovery he had made in the garden, Billy Bunter had no hesitation in entering Myron Polk's quarters unasked and unwelcome. He did not intend to apply at the door again. Polk had closed the french window, but had not locked it. It opened to Bunter's fat hand.

Save for a glimmer of starlight, the room within was in darkness. Bunter did not venture to switch on the light. He did not want to risk an encounter with the Japanese servants at the bungalow.

He tiptoed in, groped his way to an easy chair, and sat down—there to await the return of Myron Polk.

— — —

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Gets There!

MYRON POLK stepped in at the french window, touched the electric switch, and the room was flooded with light.

The film star closed the glass door behind him.

For the moment he did not observe a fat figure ensconced in a deep armchair amid silken cushions.

He walked across the room, his footsteps silent on the thick Persian rugs that almost covered the polished parquet floor.

He stopped at a little rosewood cabinet, opened it with a key, and extracted therefrom a decanter and a glass.

Bunter grinned.

The Owl of the Remove had been long enough in the United States to have observed that the law of Prohibition was more honoured in the breach than the observance.

Myron Polk poured himself out a stiff three fingers, swished in soda from a siphon, and drank.

As he was setting down the glass he suddenly caught sight of the fat figure in the chair.

The start he gave was so sudden that the glass fell from his hand, and was smashed into a hundred fragments on the floor.

Bunter jumped up.

The look that came over Polk's face was rather alarming as he made a stride towards the Owl of Greyfriars.

"Hold on!" gasped Bunter.

"How dare you come here?" exclaimed Polk, his eyes gleaming with anger. "You impudent young rascal!"

Bunter backed round the chair.

"Hold on! I say, you know—"

Myron Polk stared at him angrily and made a motion towards a bell.

"Let that bell alone!" exclaimed Bunter. "Look here, Polk, I've got something important to say—awfully important!"

Polk pressed the bell.

"Oh, all right!" said Bunter. "Have it your own way! I'll jolly well go straight to the police station when I leave here!"

"What do you mean, you fat fool?"

"I dare say the police would like to know where to lay their hands on that hooligan Gomez!" said Bunter.

Polk gave a violent start.

"Gomez! What do you mean? I do not know the name!"

"Draw it mild!" said Bunter cheerfully. "You ain't hiding a man from the law without knowing his name, old bean!"

The door opened and a Japanese servant appeared. Polk made him a sign to go, and the door closed on him again.

Bunter grinned. It was clear that the Perfection star did not dare to order him to be thrown out of the house.

"Now," said Polk, between his teeth, "explain what you mean, you fat fool, before I wring your neck!"

His eyes glittered at Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove was not disconcerted however. He had the upper hand, and he knew it.

"No bizney of mine if you hide that hooligan in your garden!" he remarked cheerfully. "I'm not saying anything. I've called here as a friend. Treat me as a friend, and I'm mum—see?"

Polk's look was not very friendly. Probably he would have given a week's salary, large as it was, to take Bunter by his fat neck and fling him out of the window. But Bunter was in no danger. He had made it clear that he knew that Polk was hiding a man wanted by the police; and that was enough for the Perfection star.

"What do you want?" snarled Polk.

"Only a friendly chat," answered Bunter amiably. "I've called as a friend, as I said."

"If you mean you want money—"

Bunter sniffed.

"Oh, really, Polk! I hope you don't think I'm a blackmailer!"

The film star stared at him.

"Tell me what you want, then."

"Mr. Honk is coming up to see you this evening," said Bunter. "He happened to mention it to me, in a friendly way. I'm thinking of acting for Magic Films."

In spite of his anger and alarm Polk burst into a laugh.

"You! Acting for the films! Are you loco?"

"I don't want your opinion about that!" snapped Bunter. "I don't think much of you or your acting, anyhow. Look here Honk gave me a trial to-day. Owing to the crass stupidity of his assistant, a dummy named Wooster, it wasn't a success. I want you to put in a word for me. Honk will do anything to oblige you; in fact, he's got an idea that you're backing me up already."

"Do you mean you have been telling him lies and using my name?"

Bunter coughed.

"I decline to go into details," he answered. "I want you to persuade Honk to give me an engagement. I happen to know that he'll do it if you ask him."



Myron Polk emptied his glass, and was setting it down, when he suddenly caught sight of the fat figure of Billy Bunter in the chair. The start he gave was so sudden that the glass fell from his hand. (See Chapter 14.)

He thinks a lot of you. Goodness knows why. There's no accounting for tastes. You're going to back me up, and see me through with Honk—see?"

Polk did not answer. His eyes seemed to burn at Bunter. From the still evening air came the whirr of an automobile climbing the hill. A horn hooted in the distance.

"I dare say that's Honk," remarked Bunter. "Make up your mind, old bean. I want to be friendly. One good turn deserves another. Make it all right for me at Magic Films, and you can keep Gomez in your chalet till he dies of old age, for all I care—see?"

Still Polk did not speak. He lighted a cigarette and smoked it, still looking at Bunter with evil eyes.

The automobile was heard to stop. A minute or two later the Japanese butler announced Darius Honk.

The Magic Films director was shown in. He shook hands with Myron Polk, his glance turning rather curiously on Bunter.

"Good-evening, Mr. Honk!" said Bunter cheerily. "I say, Polk, it's time I was getting along; I've several engagements this evening. You know what it is when a fellow's popular—his time's never his own."

Myron Polk breathed hard.

"I believe Mr. Honk is going to consult you about my work for Magic Films," said Bunter airily. "Isn't that so, Mr. Honk?"

"I was sure going to mention it," said Honk, glancing curiously from one to the other.

"My friend Polk thinks a lot of me," said Bunter confidentially. "He thinks

I'm going to be rather a success on the films. Don't you, Polk?"

Polk gasped for a moment. He was yearning to take the fat Owl by the scruff of his neck and give him the thrashing of his life. But he dared not; Bunter knew too much for that.

"I—I guess so!" he gasped. "I—I'll see you have your chance!"

"That's all right!" said Bunter. "I'll be off! Ta-ta! Good-night, Mr. Honk!"

Billy Bunter rolled out by the french window. His fat face was irradiated with satisfaction as he descended the hill to Hollywood.

His visit to Sea Mist Bungalow had been a success, after all—a success of which the fat Owl had never dreamed.

Myron Polk was under his fat thumb—so long as the ruffian Gomez remained hidden at Sea Mist, at all events. No doubt Polk would get rid of him at the earliest possible moment, and then there would be a change! But that was in the future—and William George Bunter never thought of the future.

The Owl of the Remove seemed to be walking on air, as he rolled back to Long Beach Boarding-house.

Harry Wharton & Co. were preparing for the morning's business at the Perfection lot the next day, when there was a phone call from Mr. Honk for Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove squeaked into the transmitter.

"Yes. Bunter speaking. Oh, quite!"

"I guess you can drop around this morning," came Mr. Honk's voice.

"Look here! You want to do your best, young feller, and not get Wooster's mad up, as you did yesterday. See? Polk's

keen on it, and I'm sure willing to oblige Polk."

Bunter grinned.

"Polk's rather a pal of mine," he answered. "You see—"

"Yep! Oh, yep! Never mind that! I'm offering you seven dollars a day as an extra man. Take it or leave it!"

"I'm taking it!" gasped Bunter.

"Then drop around about ten."

"I'll be there," said Bunter.

He put up the receiver.

"That's all right, you fellows," he remarked. "I think I told you I should get into the films easily enough. Well, Magic Films have offered me an engagement."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Look here, you fat jay!" said Fisher T. Fish. "Schootz wants to see you."

"Schootz can go and eat coke!" answered Bunter coolly. "Schootz doesn't matter a rap. I can't throw over Magic Films for Schootz!"

"Well, my hat!" said Harry Wharton.

Bunter smirked.

"I say, you fellows, I told you how it would be. I simply had to get to Hollywood, and the trick was done! Later on, I may be able to do something for you fellows."

"The obligefulness is terrific!"

"Well, you've been rather rotters to me, jealous, and all that," said Bunter. "But I never was a fellow to bear grudges. I'll do what I can for you later. I may be able to get you some small parts at Magic Films."

"You fat ass—"

(Continued on page 27.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,000.

A VIVID STORY OF THE GREAT WAR!

THE BLACK HAWK!

By
Geo. E. Rochester.

"I am here on behalf of the German Intelligence Bureau," said Oslo, gripping the innkeeper's arm, "Take me where we can talk without risk of being overheard!"



(Introduction on
next page.)

A Stranger at the Inn!

MUTTERING to himself, Oslo arrived unescorted at the inn. On a long bench outside, enjoying the air of eventide, sat some half a dozen ancient peasants. Their brimming beer mugs were on the table in front of them and they sat sucking stolidly at their long, china-bowled pipes, exchanging an occasional word.

On the ground beside them sprawled Baier, the idiot; crooning to himself, the while with shaking hands he built up little piles of dust. He looked up with slobbering mouth agape, as the shadow of Oslo fell across his pitiful little heaps, then turned again to his absorbing occupation.

Oslo's first move was premeditated. If he was to learn anything in Abergau without divulging his real identity, it was necessary for him to ingratiate himself with these villagers. So, unshipping his pack and placing it on the ground, he said whiningly:

"Good-day to you, masters!"

He got a non-committal grunt from one—old Otto. The others regarded him with silent disfavour. It was no high-minded motives, either, which had prompted old Otto to acknowledge the pedlar's greeting.

Otto had a strong and unwavering affection for beer. Unfortunately, however, he was a poverty-stricken old soul, with more holes in his pocket than pfennigs. But he had persuaded the most unlikely-looking persons to buy him beer before to-day. And,

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,099.

although this newcomer certainly looked decidedly unpromising, Otto had hopes.

As Oslo seated himself on the bench in front of the inn the innkeeper appeared in the doorway and, regarding the hunchbacked pedlar disdainfully, sniffed and remarked:

"Ho! Ho, I say!"

Having thus expressed himself, he proceeded, bullying:

"Be off with you, you vagrant! Be off, else I will set my dog on you!"

Little did the fat fool think that the man he so addressed could, with one stroke of the pen, have had him sent for this insolence to solitary confinement

a vision of more than one foaming beer mug, purchased with the money he had just been privileged to see.

He was going to be subtle—so subtle. The innkeeper had slanged the pedlar, so Otto was now going to slang the innkeeper to the pedlar. Cunning, you see.

"Do not take any notice of him," he counselled, in quavering voice, with a backward jerk of his horny thumb. "He should be serving with the colours."

"Huh!" grunted Oslo.

"But he says he is too old. Too old even for the Landstrum!"

"Does he?"

"Yes; but he is a liar. He is mean, also. Nobody likes him."

"Do they not?"

"No." Old Otto hitched himself a little closer. He was getting along famously. "You would have laughed had you been

here one night!"

From the corners of his ferrety eyes Oslo surveyed the speaker shrewdly.

"Would I?" he encouraged.

"Yes." The old cadger's voice sank to a husky whisper. "It was funny—so very funny! He got his face smacked. I saw it. We all saw it."

"Oh, and who smacked it for him?"

"The officer."

"The officer?" repeated Oslo slowly.

"What officer?"

"Why, the officer from the hangar."

"What hangar?"

"Why, the hangar of the Gotha which lies one kilometre from the village," explained Otto. "You see—"

He lapsed into sudden silence, gazing fixedly in front of him whilst the innkeeper placed a brimming tankard, a

To effect single-handed the arrest of the notorious Black Hawk is the ambition of Oslo, the famous German spy. But that is an ambition which Oslo, with all his cunning, is destined not to achieve.

in some gloomy, rat-run fortress.

But Oslo merely looked up at him, humbly and abashed, to say, with whining servility:

"Could I not have some beer and food, master? I will pay you for it. I do not beg."

Pay!

At the sound of that magic word the innkeeper's scowl lifted somewhat. The rogue had money then. Ah, but better see.

"Show me you can pay!" he growled.

Oslo produced his money—a handful of coins and greasy notes of small denomination. Old Otto's eyes lit up and, as the innkeeper waddled surlily away in search of drink and viands, he shifted himself casually along the bench closer to the pedlar. He had

hunk of black bread and a slab of aniseed cheese in front of the hunchback.

"Will you"—the latter respectfully addressed old Otto—"take a drink at my expense?"

Otto's start of surprise was a really creditable affair, praiseworthy in its realism.

"I will," he replied—not hastily, of course, or thankfully, but just with that quiet and dignified condescension which befitted an honest peasant when conferring a favour on a ragged and disreputable vagabond.

"You have a Gotha near here, then?" remarked Oslo casually when his companion had fortified himself by a long and gulping draught from the replenished mug.

"No; the Gotha has gone," explained Otto. "It went away the morning of the day that the miserable Englishers came and bombed."

"And this officer who smacked the face of the innkeeper," went on the pedlar in a voice which suggested that he was pursuing the subject merely through want of a better, "he looks after the hangar, I suppose, now that they have taken the Gotha away?"

"No, he does not," replied Otto. "He has an aeroplane. I do not know, but they say that he is engaged on observation work for the Ordnance Department."

Oslo leaned back with half-closed eyes. Observation work for the Ordnance Department. It might be so, of course. Must be so, obviously. But surely observation work for the Ordnance Department had been carried out in this district prior to the war? He made a mental reservation, there and then, to take a look at the hangar when darkness had fallen.

In the meantime it was information about Darnley which he wanted.

"You will see few strangers here," he remarked idly.

Old Otto nodded morosely.

"That is true," he said. "Sometimes we used to get tourists passing through Abergau. But this war has stopped all that."

"But surely," protested Oslo, "there are days when you see a strange face?"

Old Otto fixed him with a stare.

"You can believe me or believe me not," he said, with a doleful earnestness, "but, except for the officer's, yours is the first strange face we've seen for weeks. Curse this war, say I! When is it going to end?"

He lay a gnarled and trembling hand on Oslo's arm, peering into his face.

"They say," he quavered, "that we fall back; that we are losing. They say that Morlancourt has fallen, and Harbonnières, and that we are being pushed back to the Hindenburg line. You have come along the road. What have you heard?"

"That it is but a strategic retirement," replied Oslo shortly. "And what if we do fall back to the Hindenburg line? Is it not impregnable?"

The old man shook his head.

"I do not know," he said dully. "These Englishers die in their thousands, yet still those that are left fight on. The Kaiser himself said when the war started that our victorious army would return home in triumph when the leaves were falling in the autumn. That was a lie. And if we are winning, why do we fall back? Why do we not advance? It is a lie to say we are winning. We are losing, and that is the truth."

"You are a fool!" snapped Oslo.

He was furious. Not at the gar-

ulous words of his companion, but at the thought that here again, in his search for Darnley, he had seemingly come to a dead end. No stranger had been seen in the village for weeks. If any stranger had been in the village this gossiping old fool would certainly have known about it.

Yet some spy had discovered the location of the Gotha hangar and sent word through to France. That spy, obviously, must have been somewhere in the locality. Oslo was strongly tempted in that moment to divulge his identity, produce his authority, and put the inhabitants of the village through a searching interrogation.

But by doing so he might easily defeat his own ends. There was sure to be Alsatian blood in this cursed village, and such blood was never to be trusted too far. No; better to proceed with caution for a little while yet.

He sat on while dusk deepened slowly towards night. One by one the peasants drained their mugs and departed for their homes. Baier went with them, for none was unkind to the poor witless outcast, and sometimes, if he were lucky, he was allowed to finish the scraps left from supper in some humble home.

Old Otto was the last to go, rising to reluctant feet. Willingly would he have sat there longer, for the night was warm, only this mean pedlar didn't seem disposed to buy any more beer. That being the case, old Otto's aged limbs were better abed than dallying on a hard bench.

But scarce had he taken a step than from far to the north, high in the darkening sky, came the faint drone of a powerful aero engine. Rapidly the noise grew in volume until there thundered low over the roofs of Abergau the dark silhouette of a fast, fighting scout. It passed, and suddenly the roar of the engine died abruptly away somewhere over the outskirts of the village.

"That," volunteered Otto, "is the officer who I was telling you about. He will be landing now beside the hangar."

The hunchback grunted, as though to signify that he was not in the least interested. Otto lingered a moment. No invitation to partake of a stirrup-cup in the form of a final tankard of beer was, however, forthcoming. So, turning on his heel, he hobbled disappointedly away, ruminating bitterly on the parsimonious habits of pedlars, and of one in particular.

HOW THE STORY BEGAN.

As a result of a dastardly plot against him, young Derek Moneriff, a fearless British pilot, is accused of treachery, court-martialled, and sentenced to be shot! Grimly determined to clear his dishonoured name, Derek makes a daring escape by changing identities with Captain von Arn, a dead German airman who carries a dispatch ordering Lieutenant Zweig, the Gotha commander at Abergau, to vacate the secret hangar there. The young pilot goes to Abergau in Von Arn's stead, and, suspecting nothing, 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 on his head. One day, after the Black Hawk has taken grim toll of enemy machines in one of his lightning attacks, a ragged, barefooted, hunchbacked pedlar arrives in Abergau. It is none other than Oslo, the super-German spy, who is on the trail of Captain Darnley, a British Secret Service agent.

(Now read on.)

The Closing Net!

THE innkeeper appeared in the doorway, glanced at the solitary occupant of the bench, then gave tongue.

"Well, are you going to sit there all night?" he demanded querulously. "Come on, now, be off with you!"

Oslo turned his head towards him.

"Shut your mouth, you fat toad!" he said quietly.

In fact, he said it so quietly that for a moment the insult failed to penetrate the thick skull of mine host. But it did percolate through, bringing a bellow of wrath and astonishment.

"What did you say?" shouted the innkeeper. "What did you call me?"

"I told you," replied Oslo evenly, "to shut your mouth. And I called you a fat toad. I am sorry. It was an insult—"

"An insult?" shouted the innkeeper, advancing beligerently. "I should think it was—"

"To the toad?" cut in Oslo coldly.

He rose to his feet, and his hand shot out, gripping the furious innkeeper by the arm.

"Calm yourself, you fool!" he said gratingly. "I want a word with you."

"I—I'll give you something else than a word, you—you—" spluttered the innkeeper, striving in vain to wrench his arm from the cruel, vice-like grip of the hunchbacked pedlar's fingers.

"And I shall give you a taste of service with the Colours if I have any trouble with you!" rapped Oslo.

Something in the harsh, peremptory voice froze the innkeeper into sudden, terrified immobility.

"What do you mean?" he gasped.

"I mean that I am here on behalf of the German Intelligence Bureau!" replied Oslo sternly. "Take me where we can talk without risk of being overheard."

For just a moment the innkeeper hesitated. Then, as Oslo released his arm, he turned and led the way waddling into the inn.

Service with the Colours! Oh, anything but that! Blood and mud and bullets! Oh, knee-knocking, heart-quailing, hair-raising thought! No pedlar, this! Oh, cursed, unruly tongue! Would it never learn to cease wagging? First the officer, and now this—this devil from the Intelligence Bureau! It had offended both, earning for its poor owner a smacked face from the former, and a threat of the trenches from the latter.

It matters little just exactly what transpired between Oslo and the innkeeper behind the locked door of the latter's private room. Convinced already in his palpitating heart of Oslo's identity, the innkeeper scarce needed to see the proofs. He would do anything to serve. Yes, anything! Oslo need only command. Yes, there was a telephone in the inn—a single line affair connecting with the township of Zarn, thirty kilometres distant.

"Then," said Oslo at length, "go and bring my pack inside while I use your telephone."

At about that same hour six men were seated at a table in the office of the commandante of Air Headquarters at Frankfurt aerodrome. There was the commandante himself; the Herr Hauptmann Federkiel of Mannheim, sullen and silent; the Herr Hauptmann von Furcht, commandante of Cologne, lowering of brow and growling of speech; the Count Eberhard von Ergstrom, flushed and angry; and Von THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,099.

Zeis—Germany's greatest war ace—slim, elegant, and unperturbed.

The sixth man, seated at the head of the table, was in civilian dress. He was fine of feature with dark, piercing eyes and carefully trimmed Vandyck beard. There was an intangible something about him which gave one the impression of cruel and ruthless strength. And ruthless he was. For this was the dreaded Zanderberg, the man who had succeeded Dr. Kauterfauld as chief of the German Secret Service.

"I have convened this meeting, let me repeat"—there was biting contempt in Zanderberg's voice—"to inform you, who are the foremost leaders of our fighting aircraft, that, owing to your deplorable failure either to kill or capture the Black Hawk, I have been instructed by the High Command to lend you my assistance in apprehending him!"

He paused a moment, drumming on the table with his white, tapering fingers.

"You have already received an intimation to that effect," he resumed; "and I trust that to-night, between us, we can arrange some concerted form of action. My men have received instructions from me to spare no effort in discovering his base. You will appreciate, however, that they have work of their own to do—"

"Then let them get on with it!" cut in Federkiel sullenly. "It is not we of the Air Service who have asked your assistance. Sooner or later our machines will get this Black Hawk."

Zanderberg smiled.

"The Herr Hauptmann Federkiel is very confident," he said softly. "After the episode of this morning, I should have thought that a humbler attitude would—"

"Stop that!"

With blazing eyes, Federkiel leapt to his feet, crashing clenched fist to the table.

"If you mention again what occurred this morning," he went on passionately, "I shall hold that you are being deliberately insulting. I have not made, nor do I make, any excuse for my failure. But I tell you that had the British Sopwith scouts not appeared we would have got the Black Hawk."

"I do not doubt it!" replied Zanderberg coldly. "But you forget yourself, Herr Hauptmann, when you venture to accuse me of being deliberately insulting. I shall be glad to hear you withdraw your words!"

Federkiel squared his grey-clad shoulders.

"I refuse to withdraw them!" he replied harshly.

Zanderberg looked at him from under twitching lids.

"It may be," he said softly, "that the alternative, Herr Hauptmann, will be the resigning of your commission."

Federkiel's hands clenched; but, beyond that, he betrayed no emotion, as he answered steadily:

"In that case, I should accept the alternative."

And it was at this moment that the telephone-bell trilled, jarring and insistent.

With a muttered apology, the commandante of Frankfurt pushed back his chair, and, rising to his feet, crossed the floor and unhooked the receiver.

"Yes?" he said crisply.

"Personnel department speaking, sir," came the response. "An urgent inquiry

from the Intelligence Bureau of the Wilhelmstrasse, Berlin. They wish to know if any officer has been posted to the recently vacated Gotha hangar of Abergau."

"No; the hangar is empty!" replied the commandante. "Arrangements are being made for the removal of petrol and ammunition. But why are they asking?"

"One of their men, sir—Agent No. 17—now in Abergau, reports that a German flying officer is operating from the hangar."

"Tell them that their man's a fool!" began the commandante angrily; then checked himself abruptly.

"Wait! Hold the line!"

There was smouldering excitement in his eyes as he turned to Zanderberg.

"Is your agent, No. 17, a reliable man, sir?" he asked quickly.

"No. 17?" muttered Zanderberg. "That is Oslo. Yes," he went on, addressing the commandante, "my most reliable man. Why?"

"He reports from Abergau that a German pilot is using a hangar which has been vacated, and which is standing empty—or, rather, which should be empty."

"What?" cried Zanderberg, leaping to his feet. "You are sure of this? You are certain no officer has been posted to the hangar?"

"Absolutely certain, sir!"

"Then ascertain if No. 17 is now in communication with the Wilhelmstrasse!" rapped Zanderberg.

There was tense silence in the room whilst the commandante put through the inquiry. Then he turned from the phone.

"Yes, sir. No. 17 is at the moment in telephonic communication with the Wilhelmstrasse," he said. "He is waiting information and instructions."

"Then tell them—" rapped Zanderberg. "No, let me speak to them!"

He snatched the receiver, and a moment later was in communication with Berlin.

"The Baron Zanderberg speaking!" he said tersely. "Inform Oslo that we are instructing the officer commanding the garrison of Zarn to dispatch an armed escort to Abergau without delay. In the meantime, Oslo will keep the pilot in question under observation, and will arrest him on arrival of the soldiers. The man is to be brought here, to Frankfurt!"

"Then you think—" began Von Ergstrom excitedly, as Zanderberg replaced the receiver.

"That this man may be the Black Hawk!" cut in Zanderberg harshly. "Yes, I do. It is far from impossible."

"And will explain," drawled Von Zei, examining his beautifully-manicured nails, "what has been puzzling all of us—where the pig-dog has been getting his petrol and ammunition?"

Oslo, at his end of the line, re-booked the receiver. There was a delighted grin on his lips. He had failed to get Darney, but, it seemed, he was going to more than make amends for that. If only this mysterious pilot should turn out to be the Black Hawk—the man with a price of one hundred thousand marks on his head! Well, who ever the fellow was, he had no right at the hangar. Oslo had taken the elementary precaution of ascertain-

ing the fact before moving in the matter.

From a pocket he withdrew a loaded automatic, then said to the innkeeper:

"A squad of soldiers are on their way here from Zarn," he said. "If they arrive before I return tell them to wait."

"Where—where are you going?" inquired the innkeeper nervously.

"I am going to the hangar," replied Oslo, then thrust forward his head and snarled. "And, remember, keep your mouth shut about this, or you'll never live to see another dawn!"

Turning, he vanished into the darkness, going towards the hangar.

The Road to the Hangar!

IT was a glorious night, hushed and still, and filled with the sweet, elusive fragrance of wood and copse and dewy grass. There was no moon, but as Oslo left the outskirts of the village behind, the rough and narrow roadway leading towards the hangar stretched before him, grey and ghostly beneath the star-spangled sky.

He walked with an infinite caution, keeping in the dark shadow of the bushes which bordered the left-hand side of the road. More than once he halted, immobile, to peer about him with probing, searching eyes.

There came a moment, also, when, with a sudden, panther-like swiftness, he merged with the shadows and, crouching against the gnarled trunk of a straggling oak, listened with straining ears, every sense on the alert. For somewhere in the darkness behind him he could have sworn that he had heard a soft footfall.

Long minutes passed as he crouched there, motionless. But nothing stirred to break the brooding stillness. Convinced at last that he must have been mistaken, he quitted the black shadow of the trees and continued on along the road. But not without many an abrupt halt and searching backward glance.

And thus, eventually, he came to where the bushes ended. Now, if that fool of an innkeeper had directed him aright, he should be within thirty paces of the cave which had served the Gotha as a hangar, and which was now being utilised for the same purpose by this mysterious pilot, who professed to be engaged on observation work for the Ordnance Department.

Drawing his gun, Oslo moved stealthily forward, step by step. Suddenly he stiffened, a scarce-breathed exclamation of satisfaction on his lips. For there, fronting him, loomed the entrance to the underground hangar, black and forbidding.

Nothing moved. Nothing broke the hushed and almost deathly silence. To his nostrils came a faintly perceptible odour of warm oil and petrol fumes. Oslo was no coward, but he knew that he dare advance no farther. For somewhere inside that hangar, if his suspicions were correct, was one who would never tolerate spying such as this; one who, the chances were, would greet intrusion with lurid, flaming gun.

And yet, how great the temptation to see this thing through alone—to effect, single-handed, the arrest of this pilot. For if, indeed, he proved to be the Black Hawk, then, apart from the great personal triumph resultant in his capture, there would be a reward of one hundred thousand marks for Oslo.

But the voice of prudence counselled caution—bade him not be a fool, but return to the inn, then retrace his steps here with the soldiers at his back. And yet—

Undecided he stood. And indecision such as this was unlike Oslo. But what a devilish problem. Was the man inside the hangar the Black Hawk—or was he not? Would he greet an intruder such as Oslo with a polite, if startled, query as to his business—or with a bullet through the head?

On one point Oslo was confident. So silently and stealthily had he approached the hangar that the man inside must be totally unsuspecting of his presence. But—and here came sudden disturbing thought—was there anybody inside the hangar at all? Everything was so quiet and still. What if the fellow had housed his machine and gone off somewhere?

One hand gripping his gun, the other fingering the electric torch in the pocket of his ragged jacket, Oslo suddenly froze into tense rigidity. Near him in the darkness, something had moved.

He wheeled, whipping into lightning-like action. His gun hand jerked up, and at the same instant the blinding ray of his pocket torch split the darkness, illuminating the white and pallid features of a man who was moving swiftly towards him with grim and deadly intent.

For an instant Oslo hesitated—rooted to the spot in bewilderment and incredulous amaze. Then, as the man hurled himself forward, the torch dropped from Oslo's hand, and his gun barked viciously, stabbing the darkness with blood-red flame. Again the gun exploded, but harmlessly, for strong arms had gripped themselves round

Oslo's knees, and he crashed heavily backwards, his assailant atop of him.

Desperately, snarlingly, Oslo fought to wrench his gun from the fingers which had closed on the barrel. He knew this man. It was Baier—the idiot who had lain sprawling at his feet in front of the inn, slobbering of mouth, witless of antic.

Baier, yes! But idiot? Ten thousand times, no! For in an unnerving and illuminating flash the truth had come to Oslo. This man was Darnley!

By the torch's golden beam Oslo had beheld a momentary vision of lips firmly set, and of cold, purposeful eyes which held nothing of insanity in their depths.

"Darnley—you—you—" he choked, fighting frantically to retain his hold on the gun.

"Yes—Darnley—you fool!" panted the other.

Then the gun was wrenched savagely from Oslo's grasp, and the butt crashed sickeningly against his skull.

Mark well the tragic irony of fate. For long, weary months, patiently, relentlessly, Oslo had followed the trail of Darnley, looking forward with vindictive eagerness to the triumphant moment when, eventually, he would run him to earth. And at long last, in front of this lonely hangar, the trail had ended with dramatic suddenness.

For in limp unconsciousness, Oslo the Hunchback lay with arms asprawl and face upturned to the starry sky.

(In this battle of wits Darnley, the British Secret Service agent, has come out on top! Will Derek be equally lucky? Be sure you read the thrilling follow-on of this powerful serial which will appear in next week's MAGNET.)

BILLY BUNTER ON THE FILMS.

(Continued from page 23.)

"Sorry I've no time to talk to you now. I'm due at Magic Films," said Bunter airily. "The whole studio's waiting for me, and it's rather bad form to keep a director waiting, especially when he's planning a big picture, with me in the title role!"

Bunter rolled away.

Harry Wharton & Co. gazed after him.

"Well, if this doesn't beat the band!" said Bob Cherry.

Greatly astonished, Harry Wharton & Co. crossed over to the Perfection lot for their morning's work. They encountered Mr. Polk in the studio that morning, and observed that the Perfection star seemed to be in a state of half-suppressed anger and irritation. Never, in fact, had Myron Polk "thrown his weight about" so disagreeably as he did that morning. The juniors did not know the cause.

Billy Bunter could have told them.

It was a happy morning for Billy Bunter. He was fulfilling his first engagement in the film business. Even Bunter, perhaps, would not have boasted of the means by which he had secured that engagement. But he had secured it!

How long he was going to keep it was another matter. Fortunately for Bunter he did not worry about the future.

THE END.

(You'll be missing the treat of the week, chums, if you fail to read the next topping yarn in this series, entitled: "THE HERO OF HOLLYWOOD!" Look out for it in next week's grand number of the MAGNET!)

You Can See Thro' It!

The ENGLEBERT Transparent AMBER TYRE



Now that cycling days are coming along, you want a tyre you can rely on.

The new and wonderful ENGLEBERT AMBER CYCLE TYRE is the one you must fit. Ask your cycle shop for particulars.

Made in Belgium.

It Will See You Thro'!

OUTFIT Album, 100 diff. stamps, Pocket-case, Jamaica 6d., 1/-, 2/- stamps. Send 3d. postage requesting approvals.—LISBURN & TOWNSEND, Liverpool.

SUPER CINEMA FILMS!—Sale, Hire, Exchange. Sample Reel 5/-, or 100 ft. 9d. Post 3d. LISTS FREE!—ASSOCIATED FILMS, 34, Beaufoy Road, Tottenham.



MY GREAT OFFER

I supply the finest Coventry built cycles ON 14 DAYS' APPROVAL, PACKED FREE AND CARRIAGE PAID, on receipt of a small deposit. Lowest cash prices, or easy payment terms.

Write for Free Bargain Lists NOW.

Edw. O'Brien THE WORLD'S LARGEST CYCLE DEALER, 99, S. COVENTRY.

FROM ABOUT
2/6
WEEKLY.



Packing and Carriage FREE

Delivered to your door for 3d. A DAY.

'4 DAYS' FREE TRIAL without obligation to buy. **Juno Cycles** are British throughout and sent straight to you direct from our factory.

£3/15/0 cash or 7/6 monthly

Superb quality and easy running. Guaranteed for ever. Don't delay. Write for Free Art Catalogue.

JUNO CYCLE CO. (Dept. U.2.), 168, Bishopsgate, London, E.C.2. Established 51 years.

BE TALL!

Your Height Increased in 14 days or money back. 3-5 inches rapidly gained! Amazing Complete Course sent for 5/- P.O. Or stamp brings Free Book with further details. Write NOW to:—

LIONEL STEBBING (Dept. A.), 167, High Street, LOWESTOFT

HOME CINEMATOGRAPHS

Call or Write.



Films and Accessories.

Projectors at all prices from 5/- to £90. Film Spools, Rewinders, Lighting Sets, Screens, Sprockets, etc. Films all lengths and subjects. Sample Film, 1/- post free.

FORD'S (Dept. A.P.), 15, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1. (Entrance Dane St.)

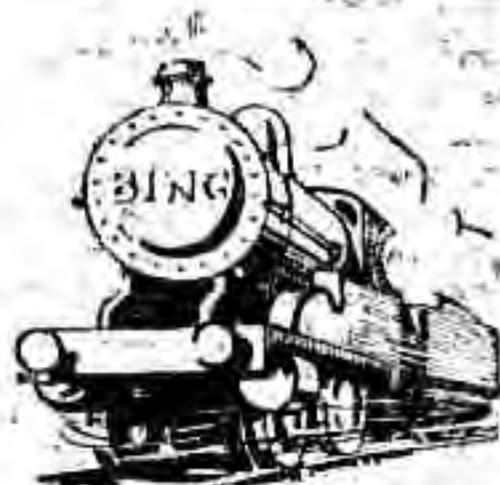
HANDSOME MEN ARE SUNBURNT.—Sunbrounze, 1/9, 3/6, remarkably improves appearance. 6,000 Testimonials. (Booklet stamp.)—Sunbrounze Laboratories, Colwyn Bay, Wales. (Est. 1902.)

300 STAMPS FOR 6d. (Abroad 1/-), including Airpost, Barbados, Old India, Nigeria, New South Wales, Gold Coast, etc.—W. A. WHITE, Engine Lane, LYE, Stourbridge.

WHEN ANSWERING ADVERTISEMENTS : PLEASE MENTION THIS PAPER :

All applications for Advertisement Space in this publication should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, UNION JACK SERIES, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

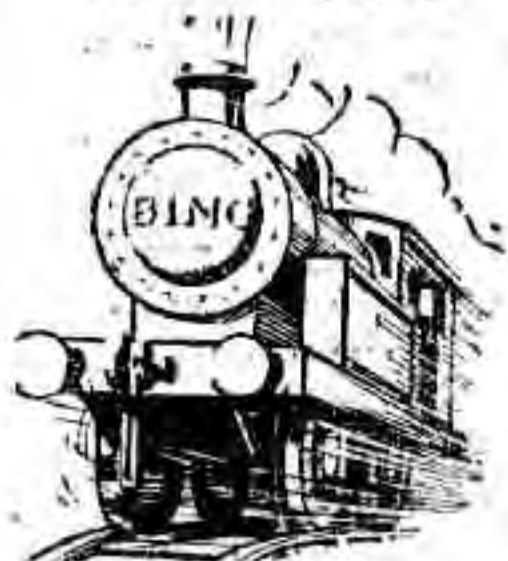
Drive the "Night Mail"



BING 'VULCAN' ENGINE

Powerful clockwork loco with tender. Coupled wheels. Heavy hand-calls. Brass buffers. L.M.S., G.W.R., or L.N.E.R. Gauge 0.

260 coupons



BING TANK ENGINE

Beautifully finished, weighty tank engine. L.M.S. or L.N.E.R. Gauge 0.

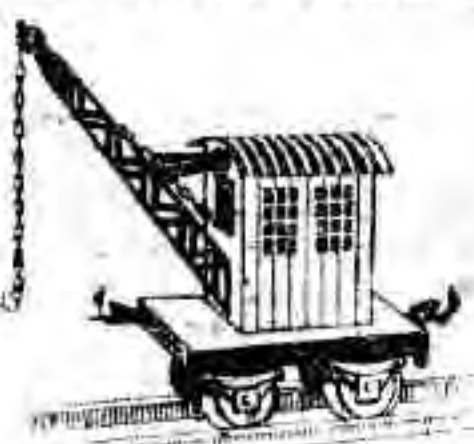
120 coupons



L.M.S. GOODS BRAKE

Accurate model of 5-ton brake, 5 in. long. With steel chimney. Gauge 0.

175 coupons



CRANE TRUCK

Strongly made, sturdy wind-up, 5 1/2 in. long, 3 in. high.

80 coupons



The night mail's due out in five minutes... Have you got the 'Duke of York' ready, Bill? ... away, past Kitchen Crossing and Drawing Room Branch line to ... Tom, see the points are right this time ... Long sleeping cars, with the sorting vans fore and aft ... Jimmy, just see the pick-up is working properly ... and ... Hi! Right away!

Drive the express yourself. You can get the engine, coaches, the complete model railway FREE, in exchange for B.D.V. Coupons. Start saving to-day and get your friends to help you. (Send coupons by registered post.)

GET THE 96-PAGE GIFT BOOK

Worth 5 coupons. It contains full particulars of the Bassett-Lowke and Bing model railway systems. Godfrey Phillips, Ltd. (Gift Dept. Main), 112, Commercial Street, London, E.C.1.

B.D.V.

CIGARETTES

"—just like hand made"

10 for 6d 20 for 11½d. Plain or **Cork Tips**

Coupons also in every packet of B.D.V. Tobacco, 11d per oz.

COMPARE THE VALUES WITH OTHER GIFT Schemes



BASSETT-LOWKE ENGINE

Scale model 'Duke of York' loco with spring-motor mechanism. Forward, reverse, and stop levers. L.M.S., L.N.E.R., G.W.R., or S.R. Gauge 0. Complete with tender.

375 coupons



ELECTRIC RAILWAY

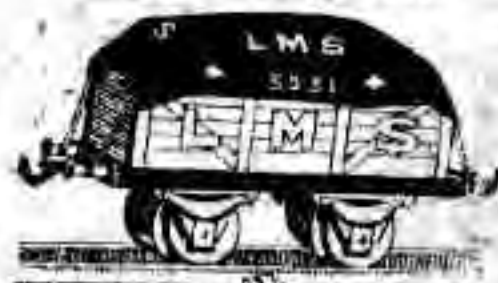
Complete miniature electric railway. The real thing on a small scale. Full particulars in the B.D.V. Gift Book.



SIGNAL BOX

Realistic signal box. With deep one-arm signal, and candle-holder. Height 5 in.

120 coupons



L.M.S. OPEN GOODS TRUCK

Made of strong sheet-iron, stamped to represent timber construction, painted grey. Contains six sacks of produce and a detachable tarpaulin.

100 coupons

A/B N.B.S.