

GENUINE FLYING MODEL AEROPLANE FREE

*Next
week!*

No. 1,121. Vol. XXXVI. Week Ending August 10th, 1929.

The **MAGNET**

**GIVEN
FREE**

*This Wonderful Working
Model Aeroplane*

FIRST PART

**NEXT
WEEK**

2^p

EVERY SATURDAY.



**The Aeroplane
will be Given in two Parts**

*Next Week: The Plane
The Week After: The Driving
Mechanism*

DON'T MISS THIS STUPENDOUS OFFER, BOYS!

The Finest Free Gift Ever Offered—See Below!



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.—All Jokes and Limericks should be sent to
c/o "Magnet," 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.).

GEST ready to shout, boys—only another week and then you will have in your hands the first part of our record-breaking Free Gift Aeroplane. Isn't it something to shout about? Well, you wait and see. This MAGNET aeroplane is the goods; it's an improvement even on the model plane which was given away in our companion paper, the "Modern Boy" some time ago. And that's saying something, for the "M. B." Aeroplane was the talk, and still is, of the country. Never before had a model aeroplane that would cost several shillings in the shop, been

PRESENTED FREE TO READERS.

You fellows will bless the day you started to read the MAGNET more than ever now for this stupendous Gift will cost you nothing: will not take you very long to build and, once assembled, will provide you and your chums with hours of sport. Yes, it really DOES FLY. With next week's MAGNET you will be given the fuselage, wings, undercarriage, rudder, etc., all printed on strong cardboard, coloured in orange and blue. Directions on how to cut out the card and assemble the various parts in their correct order will also be found. These directions, supplied by the designer of the model, are to be relied on, so you chaps won't have any difficulty if you do exactly what he tells you. The following week, between the pages of the good old MAGNET, you will find the second part of the model, namely, the unbreakable propeller, elastic, metal bearings, etc. And all this costs you nothing more than the normal twopenny which is the fixed price of the MAGNET. Once you have assembled the aeroplane, you will possess something of which you can be proud. No, it doesn't break up easily. Biff it up against a tree or a wall and there's no damage done. I hasten to say this because some of you may think that being made of cardboard the MAGNET Model Aeroplane won't stand up to rough treatment. In my opinion, this model is stronger than a good many fabric models which are sold in the shops for many shillings. I'm not going to rub in the old reminder about ordering the MAGNET To-Day—the sensible chap will have done so already. And by this means, and this means only, can he be sure of getting this amazing gift. Nuff said. Now to the star programme I've referred to in earlier issues. To start with, there is the opening story of a new Greyfriars series, on lines that are distinctly novel. Summed up briefly, this series is of the "thriller" type. Harry Wharton & Co. figure in it, of course, to such good effect that I feel certain my readers will frankly admit this to be the finest set of stories Mr. Frank Richards has ever given us. Now to the new serial. This is by an old favourite, Geo. E. Rochester, and it deals with the French Revolution, about which so much has been written. But for all that, Geo. E. Rochester has given this soul-stirring period in the history of the French a fresh

glamour that is at once appealing. His story is one that will hold you enthralled; one you'll remember for many a long day. The supplement? Yes, Dicky Nugent is well to the fore. He's supplied you with a new series of "shockers" dealing with the laughable adventures of Jack Jolly & Co., at the seaside. And then there's another jolly cricket article from "Sportsman" who takes for his subject "Pasey" Hendren. These features, together with the Free Gift Aeroplane, will make next week's MAGNET the proudest in the world.

Now we'll have a laugh at this yarn which has earned a penknife for Richard George England, of 11, Colenso Road, Clapton, E.5.



NOTES ON A HIGH SCALE!

Miggs: "Say, old man, I had a bargain the other day. I got a pair of ambush scales quite cheap!"

Biggs: "Ambush scales?"

What ever are they?"

Miggs: "Scales that lie in weight!"



Do you remember me telling you something about Mexican revolutions recently? Well, Evan Jones, of Rhyll, wants to know exactly how many revolutions they have had there. The exact figures are hard to find, but over a period of 90 years they had over 260 revolutions, which means an average of nearly three per year. You can't say that life in Mexico is unexciting, can you?

Here is someone trying to pull my leg again. Fred Worrall, of Middleton, asks me:

WHAT IS XYLOTECHNOGRAPHICA?

You can't pull my leg, Fred! Don't you remember me telling you about one of the sub-editors who can rattle off information on anything like this? He tells me that "Xylotee, etc., etc." is a process for staining wood various colours. And he didn't even turn a hair when I asked him.

Here's a query put up to me by Ralph Stokes, of Nottingham, who wants to know what luminous paint is made of. It is composed of lime and sulphur mixed with oil or water. Clock faces, statues, etc., painted with this mixture and exposed to light, afterwards remain luminous for some time. Next, please? What was the first naval battle? Frank Winston, of Southampton, wants to know this. The first on record is the encounter between the Corinthians and Coreysans, which took place in 666 B.C.

WHY DO KINGS SAY "WE,"

instead of "I"? Stanley Hughes, of West Bromwich, doesn't know. Neither do I. But I can tell Stanley that the first

king was a male of address was King James IV. The French and German kings were quick to copy his example, and the practice survives to the present day.

Here is a letter from an American reader. (Yes, the good old MAGNET even circulates in America!) asking me why we don't play baseball in this country. He thinks it would have been a good idea if Harry Wharton & Co. learned to play it and feels sure that Fisher T. Fish would be very pleased to teach them the game. I daresay Fishy would, but I am afraid he would find "no takers."

Several attempts have been made to introduce baseball as a game into this country, but they have met with no success. Even nowadays, readers who live in London can see games of baseball at Stamford Bridge, where various American teams play matches when visiting this country.

One of my chums mentions in his letter this week that he speaks four languages. That's jolly good, and I wish I could say the same. But my chum will have to get a move on if he wants to break records, for the record for knowing foreign languages was held by an Italian cardinal, who is said to have known no less than 114 languages or dialects, and to have known 50 of them really well! I hardly think that record is likely to be broken!

By the way, chums, don't forget to look out for our special representative at the seaside this summer. To all boys and girls he sees displaying their copy of the MAGNET prominently, he will present FREE, a novel gift selected from the following list: Kittos, windmills, large balloons, mystery packets, and flags.

Now, by way of a change, we will turn to the following winning limerick that comes from S. Roberts, of 31, Colenso Terrace, Holbeck, Leeds:

When Harry Wharton goes to the wicket
You can depend on really good cricket.
With his eye on the ball,
He makes fielders look small,
And his drive to the off, you can't
beat it!

It's worth a pocket wallet, don't you think? If you haven't had a wallet yet, why not sit down straight away, and see if you can turn in a limerick as clever as the above.

Finished, chums? Right—run round straight away to the nearest newsagent and tell him you want next week's Free Gift issue of MAGNET reserved for you, otherwise you'll miss the opening scene in a grand new series of Greyfriars yarns, entitled:

"THE HOUSE OF TERROR!"

By Frank Richards.

Then comes the opening story in a grand new seaside series of St. Sam's yarns, entitled:

"WAKING UP WINKLESEA!"

by our youthful laughter merchant, Dicky Nugent, together with the opening instalment of the new serial I mentioned above, and which is entitled:

"THE SHADOW OF THE GUILLOTINE!"

By Geo. E. Rochester.

Then there's another cricket article by "Sportsman," and a few words—space will be hunted next week—from

YOUR EDITOR.



An unusual story written in Frank Richards' best vein.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

By the Silvery Thames!

"WHY not?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Hem!"

"Why not?" repeated Bob

warmly.

"Bicycles aren't allowed on the tow-path," said Harry Wharton.

"A tricycle isn't a bicycle."

"Rot, old chap!"

"Well, is it?" demanded Bob.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

The Greyfriars walking-party were at a halt.

There was a disagreement of opinion. From a leafy Oxfordshire lane, the Famous Five had turned into the tow-path by the Thames.

Before them the river rolled gleaming in the sunshine.

It looked attractive. There was no doubt about that. Every member of the walking-party felt its attraction. There were boats and punts, skiffs and canoes on the shining river. The water rippled and sang by the green rushes that bordered the tow-path. Every fellow in the party would have been glad to continue the journey by the green banks of the glorious Thames.

But there was a lion in the path, so to speak.

It was Methuselah!

Methuselah, the motor-tricycle, was the difficulty.

In the course of that summer ramble, the trike had caused many difficulties—many more than he was worth, in the opinion of all the members of the walking-party except Bob Cherry. Now he was causing one more.

There was a notice up, to the effect that bicycles were not allowed on the tow-path. There was no mention of tricycles. Possibly the authority that had put up the notice had forgotten the existence of such things as tricycles. But if bikes weren't allowed, obviously trikes—especially snorting motor-trikes

—were not allowed. That was obvious to four members of the Co., at least.

That, however, was not the only reason why Harry Wharton & Co. paused.

The fact was, Methuselah was not an ordinary trike. He dated from early days—very early days, when motor-trikes were in their infancy. All over Sussex, and Surrey, and Bucks, and Oxfordshire, Methuselah had attracted a lot of attention. Bob Cherry did not mind. Methuselah was a splendid jigger, amazingly active for his age, and Bob was proud of him. Appearances might be against him, but proverbially one should not judge by appearances. The other fellows did mind! They were, in fact, rather sensitive about Methuselah. They were annoyed when

begin, Billy Bunter's fatuous remarks were superfluous.

But Bunter, like a cheap penknife, was difficult to shut up.

He went on.

"I say, you fellows! I've got a suggestion to make."

"Well, don't!" said Frank Nugent.

"Beast!"

"The esteemed Bunter's suggestive remarks are preposterously superfluous," observed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Remember, my worthy fat Bunter, that speech is silver, but silence is the stitch in time that saves ninepence."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Will you dry up?" demanded Bob.

"No, I won't! I've got a jolly good suggestion to make," said Bunter. "Let's camp for lunch."

"What?"

"Lunch," said Bunter, blinking at the Famous Five through his big spectacles. "We've done nearly three miles this morning. Well, let's camp for lunch."

"You fat idiot!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Shut up! Look here, you chaps, we're going along the towpath," said Bob. "Look at the river! Ain't it lovely?"

"The loveliness is terrific," agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But—"

"But the butfulness is also terrific," grinned Nugent.

"Bikes aren't allowed—" began Wharton.

"Blow bikes! This is a trike!"

"But when it says bikes, it means trikes as well!" argued Johnny Bull.

"The people who put up all these notices along the river are silly owls," said Bob. "But they're not such silly owls as not to know the difference between a bike and a trike. If they mean trikes, they can say trikes! See?"

"Now, look here, Bob—"

"Rot!" said Bob.

"Motors ain't allowed," said Johnny Bull. "Well, Methuselah is a motor. You can't get away from the fact."

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Anyone can have Bob Cherry's "bargain" motor-tricycle for the asking, is the private opinion of Bob's chums. But it's a case of "he who laughs last laughs longest," for that much maligned "trike," comically dubbed "Methuselah," turns out to be a bargain indeed!

little boys asked them what it was, or inquired where it had been dug up. And they hesitated to display it to the summer crowd on the river. Already a young man in a punt near the bank was surveying it with a startled look—such a look as he might have worn had a mastodon or a woolly rhinoceros suddenly emerged into view. Much as the green, sunny banks of the Thames attracted them, four of the juniors would have preferred to turn back into a shady lane.

Bob was looking obstinate.

His chums had long ago discovered that, on the subject of Methuselah, Bob was not open to argument.

"I say, you fellows," repeated Billy Bunter.

"For goodness' sake, shut up, Bunter!" said Johnny Bull.

With a heated argument just going to

"Not if I shut off the gas," said Bob. "There's pedals on the jigger, and with the gas shut off he's just a tricycle."

"My dear chap—"

"The fact is—"

"The fact is," interrupted Bob Cherry hotly, "that you're ashamed of Methuselah, splendid jigger as he is. He's carried our baggage for miles and miles and miles, and we couldn't possibly do without him. This walking-tour would have been a rotten frost without this trike. And you're shy about him, because that grinning little Cuthbert in that punt is goggling at him as if he'd never seen a tricycle before."

"I'll bet he's never seen one like this," grinned Nugent.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!" roared five voices in chorus. If the Famous Five were agreed about nothing else, they were agreed that William George Bunter should shut up.

"I say, I'm thirsty!"

"Put your silly head in the river, then," growled Bob Cherry. "Put it in deep, and keep it there!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"As for that grinning ass—" said Bob, with a resentful glare at the young man in the punt.

That young man, it was evident, was interested in Methuselah. He was a good-looking young man, in spotless white, hatless, with hair carefully brushed and parted. Bob Cherry had no great admiration for "summer boys," anyhow, and this spotless, elegant youth's keen interest in Methuselah annoyed him. Standing in the punt, the elegant young man poled a little nearer, as if to get a better view. Really it was impertinent. Thoughtless little boys might stare at Methuselah in wonder, but the young man in the punt was old enough to have known better.

"Never mind him," said Harry. "But—"

"I say, you fellows, is there any ginger-beer left?" Billy Bunter, as usual, was deeply concerned about his inner Bunter, to the exclusion of less important matters.

"No!" yelled Bob Cherry. "Shut up!"

"I'm thirsty! I told you so before!" said Bunter warmly. "Blessed if I ever saw such a selfish lot as you chaps—standing there wagging your chins, while a fellow perishes of thirst. If there's nothing else, I can do with soda-water. I can rough it! I never expected to be treated decently when I came along with you fellows on this trip. I know you too well. Look here, is there any soda-water left?"

"There's a siphon in the bag on the carrier," said Harry Wharton. "For goodness' sake guzzle and shut up!"

"I think a fellow might get it out for me," said Bunter indignantly. "You know I'm tired. I've mentioned it at least twenty times since we started."

As no fellow made a movement to get the soda siphon out for Bunter, the fat junior grunted with annoyance and proceeded to get it out for himself. He extracted the siphon, and blinked for a glass.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Kill him, somebody!"

"Where's a glass—"

"Shut up!"

"Beasts!"

"Well, is it settled we're going along the tow-path?" asked Bob. "If we get warned off we can clear, I suppose. If we don't, all right! As for that grinning ass in the punt, blow him! Let's get on."

"Well, if we get run in, they may confiscate Methuselah," said Frank Nugent. "The chance is worth it."

"You silly ass!"

"He might topple into the river, too!" remarked Johnny Bull hopefully. "It would be worth while losing the baggage if we lost the trike along with it."

"Excuse me!"

It was the voice of the young man in the punt. He had poled into the rushes and was quite close at hand.

He spoke very politely. But all the juniors could see that there was a tincture of irony in his politeness. Undoubtedly he was an impertinent young man.

"I say, you fellows, you might hold this siphon while I'm looking for a glass! Where the thump do you pack the glasses? Of all the silly idiots—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

Bob took the siphon from Bunter's hand, while the Owl of the Remove rummaged for a glass.

"Excuse me!" repeated the young man in the punt, with the same polished politeness as before. "May I ask what it is?"

Bob Cherry gave him a glare.

"What—what is?" he demanded.

"That!" said the elegant young man, with a gesture towards the ancient Dionysius tricycle.

"Never seen a tricycle before?" grunted Bob.

"By Jove!" said the young man.

"Is it a tricycle?"

Snort from Bob Cherry. The other fellows smiled.

"I'm sure you'll excuse my interest in your—your tricycle," said the impertinent young man in the punt. "I've seen a lot of machines, but never one quite like that. Quite a rara avis. What?"

Another snort from Bob. He was fingering the soda siphon almost convulsively. Any fellow might have seen that Bob was getting angry. But the impertinent young man in the punt, regardless of danger-signals, rushed heedlessly on to his fate.

"Might a fellow ask where it was disappeared?" he asked blandly.

"What?" growled Bob, in a tone that would have done credit to a royal Bengal tiger.

"I'm frightfully interested," explained the young man in the punt. "I'm rather a whale on antiquities. They find such interestin' things in excavations nowadays. I'd like awfully to know where it was dug up."

"That, so to speak, tore it."

Squissssssst! From the siphon in Bob's hands a jet of soda-water whizzed suddenly, catching the young man in the punt just under his nose.

Possibly it was an accident. More probably it wasn't.

Accident or not, the effect on the impertinent young man in the punt was deplorable.

He gave a gurgling gasp, staggered, and sat down—over the side of the punt.

Splash!

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Wharton.

"Great pip!"

"The great pipfulness is terrific," gasped Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Gerrrooooooogh!" came from the elegant young man, as he clambered back into the punt.

But he was no longer elegant. He was drenched and dripping, his hair was ruffled and streaming with water. His sardonic politeness had dropped from him like a cloak. He fairly spluttered with fury.

"Better get on, I think," remarked Nugent. "Cuthbert looks cross."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter."

The walking-party moved on along the tow-path. That question was settled now. The trike trailed on with the Greyfriars juniors. Cuthbert—if his name was Cuthbert—was left standing in the punt, dripping with water, brandishing his fists, and yelling out remarks that were neither elegant nor polite. He was still going strong when a turn of the tow-path hid him from the sight of the Greyfriars walking-party.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Old Foes!

BOB CHERRY had had his way. But it was a little doubtful, after a time, whether even Bob considered that his way was the best way.

Even admitting that Methuselah was the wonderful jigger that Bob claimed it to be, it did seem a little out of place on a tow-path.

There were plenty of people on the river, and a good many on the bank. All of them seemed interested in Methuselah, just as the impertinent young man in the punt had been. And Bob could not treat them all as he had treated Cuthbert. Even had he thought of doing so, it would have been impossible, as Bunter had now scoffed what remained of the soda-water.

On the King's highway, in leafy lane, and shady path, Methuselah had always attracted attention. But on the tow-path by the silvery Thames, he seemed to be the cynosure of all eyes.

Progress, of course, was slow. Bob could not venture to turn on the gas and charge along the tow-path on a motor-tricycle. Methuselah had to be regarded, so long as he was on that path, as a push-trike. And Methuselah required some pushing. He was antiquated, and he was heavy; and the weight of the baggage on the carrier behind was not light. It was really easier to push him than to pedal him. Still, it was not easy to push him. Bunter had a narrow escape from slaughter when he suggested that he should sit in the saddle and be pushed along with Methuselah. It seemed a good idea to Bunter, who was tired of walking; but the looks of the Famous Five warned him not to repeat the happy suggestion.

Several people asked the juniors what the thump they were doing with that thing on the tow-path. They replied cheerfully that they were pushing it along—a reply that did not seem to satisfy the questioners.

A small boy, who had been fishing with a string tied to a willow switch, and who carried a tin can in which there were no catches, quite forgot the gentle art when he saw Methuselah, and gave up angling to follow on as if he were following a circus.

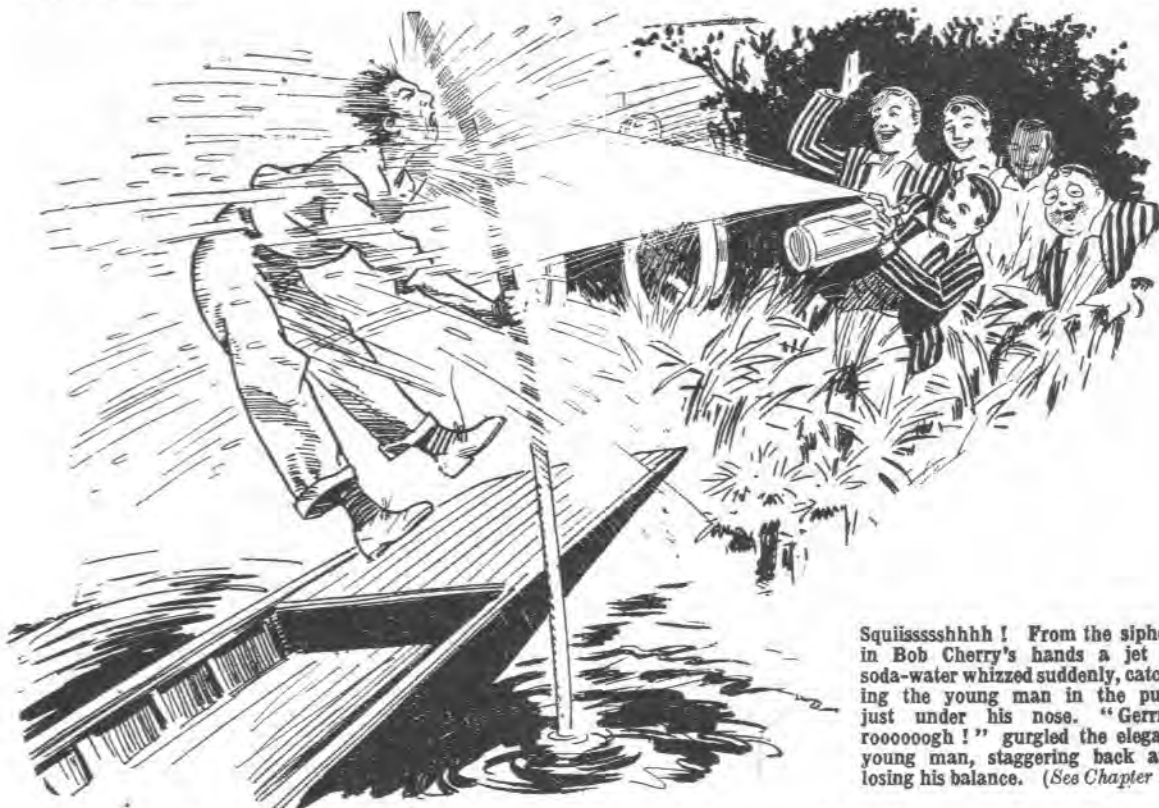
From behind came a sudden shout of: "Hi!"

Bob Cherry stared round in exasperation.

A boat was being towed up the river. Three or four fellows were in the boat, and two fellows were walking along the bank with the tow-ropes. They had almost overtaken the Greyfriars party, and apparently wanted to pass. The party were evidently schoolboys on holiday, as the Greyfriars fellows were. And their faces were not unfamiliar to the Famous Five.

"Highcliffe cads!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Hi! Get out of the way!" called



Squissssshhhh! From the siphon in Bob Cherry's hands a jet of soda-water whizzed suddenly, catching the young man in the punt just under his nose. "Gerrrr-rooooooogh!" gurgled the elegant young man, staggering back and losing his balance. (See Chapter 1.)

out one of the fellows with the tow-rope, recognised as Cecil Ponsonby of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe. He did not seem to have recognised the Greyfriars party; or perhaps the superb Pon was affecting not to have recognised them.

"Do you want all the river and all the tow-path, Pon?" demanded Bob Cherry sarcastically.

Pon stared at him.

"The blighter knows your name, Pon," said the other fellow with the tow-rope, who was Gadsby of the Highcliffe Fourth.

"These dashed cheeky trippers!" said Ponsonby. "They spoil the river for decent people."

"They do!" agreed Gadsby. "What on earth is that thing they are trundlin' along?"

"Goodness knows! Looks like something out of the Ark."

Bob Cherry turned his back on the Highcliffians and tramped on, pushing Methuselah. Strictly speaking, it was Bob Cherry's job to look after Methuselah. But the others lent him a hand now. As a matter of fact, the Co. were tired of the sensation they were causing along the Thames, and they fully intended to turn off at the next opportunity, whether Bob liked it or not. Meanwhile, the Highcliffians were at their heels; and Ponsonby & Co. were not losing the opportunity of chipping their old enemies of the Greyfriars Remove.

Monson and Vavasour and Drury, of the Highcliffe Fourth, were in the boat. They had recognised the Greyfriars party now, and they kept up a running fire of comment on Methuselah.

"What is it?" inquired Monson.

"Can't guess," said Drury, shaking his head. "It's got me beat."

"Absolutely!" chuckled Vavasour.

"What do you call that thing, you fellows?" shouted Monson.

The walking-party made no reply.

"Where did you dig it up?" yelled Drury.

"I should say it's been a tricycle, once upon a time," remarked Gadsby.

"There's a sort of resemblance."

"Not much of a resemblance," said Ponsonby. "Looks to me more like one of those knife-grinding machines."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry's eyes glittered.

Really, there was nothing in Methuselah's looks to suggest that he was a knife-grinding machine. His appearance was uncommon; Bob admitted that. Few machines like Methuselah were ever seen on the roads—if any. But it was obvious that he was a motor-tricycle, though of antiquated pattern.

"Or is it a musical-box?" asked Gadsby.

"You've got it, old man," said Ponsonby, "that's what it is! I can't make out the tune it's playing—American music, I expect. It's a travelling musical-box."

Bob breathed hard through his nose.

The sounds that Methuselah made in travelling were many and various. He often gave the impression that most of his parts were loose, and in disagreement with one another. Bob spent a considerable portion of his summer holiday in tightening nuts on that ancient machine. But something always seemed to be working loose. The Co. made plenty of remarks on the subject—they likened Methuselah to a jazz-band, and all sorts of disagreeable things like that. But Bob was not disposed to accept the same criticism from Highcliffe fellows.

He glared round at them.

"You fellows looking for a thick ear all round?" he shouted. "We've given you some at Greyfriars, and we'll give you a few more now, if you like!"

Ponsonby stared at him superciliously.

"Is that tripper speakin' to us, Gaddy?" he asked.

"Looks like it," answered Gaddy.

"What frightful cheek!"

"Well, you know what trippers are!" said Gadsby.

"By gad! A crew like that ought to be warned off the river!" said Pon.

"It's rather disgraceful!"

"Awfully!" agreed Gaddy.

"Look here, you lot, whoever you are," called out Ponsonby. "You'd better get off the tow-path. You won't be allowed to give a performance."

"A what?" roared Bob Cherry.

"I suppose you're thinkin' of givin' a performance and takin' round the hat," said Ponsonby. "Isn't that it?"

"You cheeky worm!"

"That sort of thing won't do here," said Ponsonby. "It isn't done, though I suppose you don't know it. Take your travelling musical-box and your nigger and your champion fat man somewhere else."

"My esteemed and disgusting Ponsonby—" began Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Look here, you cheeky beast—" squeaked Billy Bunter.

Bob Cherry paused.

"I'm going to mop up the tow-path with those cheeky cads!" he said sulphureously.

"For goodness' sake, come on!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "After all, we're in the way of the tow-rope here."

"Blow the tow-rope!"

"Well, let those Highcliffe cads get by, and we shall see the last of them."

"Blow the Highcliffe cads!"

"Shove away!" said Johnny Bull.

"Hi!" shouted Ponsonby, behind. "I've told you to get out of the way! Take that funny bag of tricks out of the way of this rope! Do you hear?"

"There's plenty of room for you to pass, you rotter!" roared Bob Cherry. "Shut up, or I'll come and shut you up!"

"Oh, these blackguardly trippers!" said Ponsonby. "The river's becomin' simply sickenin' these days! The police ought to turn off a crowd of strollin' vagabonds like that lot."

"The police are never where they're!"

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wanted," said Gadsby, shaking his head. "It's rather sickenin'."

"Shove away!" said Frank Nugent.

The juniors trundled the tricycle on. As a matter of fact, the tow-rope and the fellows with it could have passed between the walking-party and the water, and gone ahead as fast as they liked. But Ponsonby did not choose to do so. The tow-rope sprawled right across the tow-path, and several people who passed had to hop over it. It was one of Pon's little ways to make himself a nuisance to everybody in general, right up to the point of getting a kicking. At that point Pon generally stopped, on the principle that discretion was the better part of valour. When a hefty gentleman, who looked as if he would stand no nonsense, came by, Ponsonby would give him ample room to pass, with perfect politeness. But elderly gentlemen, and quite inoffensive people, had to take their chance with the sprawling tow-rope. When one old gentleman caught his foot in it and sat down suddenly with a startled exclamation, Ponsonby found it most amusing.

So Pon was not disposed to pass the Greyfriars party and leave them in peace. He had an amiable desire to worry them as much as he could; partly on account of old scores, and partly because it was his nature to.

Harry Wharton & Co. would gladly have put on speed, and left the Highcliffians behind. But it was not easy to put on speed with Methuselah, with the gas turned off. He was awkward to wheel, and he was heavy, and he was well-laden. Ponsonby & Co. easily kept pace.

"Hi, will you fellows clear out of the way?" shouted Ponsonby.

"No, you rotter!" bawled Bob Cherry. "Hurry up a bit," said Wharton.

"Rats!" hooted Bob. "I'll jolly well go as slow as I jolly well like. Does the tow-path belong to those Highcliffe cads?"

"My esteemed Bob—"

"Rats!"

And Bob, instead of pulling his weight, so to speak, slacked down, and the pace became slower.

"They're stoppin' to give the performance!" remarked Gadsby.

"I shan't put anythin' in the hat," said Ponsonby.

"Might give the poor beasts a copper or two," said Gadsby. "They look frightfully hard-up. That chap looks as if he hasn't been able to stand himself a cake of soap for weeks."

"Oh, really, Gadsby—" squeaked Billy Bunter.

Bob Cherry swung round, glaring.

But Wharton grasped him by the arm and pulled him onward. The walking-party was already getting enough attention along the crowded, sunny river without a fight on the tow-path being added to its attractions.

"Come on, for goodness sake!" grunted the captain of the Remove.

"I'll smash him, if he doesn't shut up!" breathed Bob Cherry.

"Oh, rats!"

"The ratfulness is terrific, my esteemed Bob. The scrapfulness is not the proper caper."

Bob Cherry suppressed his feelings, and marched on with Methuselah. Ponsonby & Co. grinned at one another with great enjoyment. This chance meeting by the silvery Thames seemed quite a happy chance to Ponsonby & Co. There was no doubt that they had succeeded in getting the Greyfriars party's "rag" out. In the many "rows" between Greyfriars and Highcliffe, Harry Wharton & Co. had generally had the best of

it. Now Pon & Co. were feeling that they were getting the best of it.

They trailed on behind the walking-party, in great spirits. The walking-party elaborately took no notice—keeping at the same time an eye on Bob, lest he should charge back at the enemy. As Pon failed to "draw" the juniors, he proceeded to make himself more disagreeable. He put on speed at last with Gadsby to pass the walking-party. But instead of passing between them and the water, he passed on the other side, so that they could not possibly avoid entanglement with the trailing tow-rope. The juniors could have jumped out of the way, but Methuselah certainly couldn't. Even had Methuselah been the wonderful jigger Bob believed him to be, there were limits to his powers—he could not jump.

Billy Bunter, last of the party, found the tow-rope suddenly catching him behind his fat knees as Pon and Gaddy pressed on.

"Whoop!" roared Bunter, as his fat little legs were suddenly plucked from underneath him.

Bunter sat down with a terrific bump, which almost seemed to make Oxfordshire shake as he landed.

One of this week's MAGNET pocket knives has been won by H. Wicks, 26, Filey Road, Reading, Berks, who sent in the following amusing joke.

REASONING ?

An economical Irishman went into a saddler's and asked for a single spur at half the price of the pair. "And what will you do with one spur, my good man?" said the shopkeeper. "Sure and begorra," replied Pat, "I'll use it. If I get one side of my horse to go, sure the other side's got to go wi' it!"

Come on, you humorists, step up with your rib-ticklers. I've plenty more pen-knives in stock!

"Yaroooooh!" howled Bunter. "Ow! Wow! Yooop! Help! Yaroooo!"

Bunter sprawled and roared.

"Clumsy!" said Ponsonby, glancing back.

"Yow-ow-ow! Help!"

"Oh, get up, fathead!" said Frank Nugent, going back to help up the fat junior. He tripped over the trailing rope, but jumped clear, and helped Billy Bunter to his feet.

"Mind what you're doing with that rope, Ponsonby, you fool!" bawled Bob Cherry.

Ponsonby did not heed. He knew very well what he was doing with the rope, and he fully intended to do it. He passed on with Gadsby, dragging hard on the rope, which now stretched taut across the towing-path, slanting back to the boat on the river. As the tricycle was in the way of the rope, and as Ponsonby did not stop, what happened was inevitable—and the inevitable happened!

Harry Wharton & Co. jumped out of the way of the rope as it caught them in the rear, and then it caught Methuselah. It whisked over the rear wheels, hooked on the carrier and fairly upended the tricycle. Methuselah gave an intoxicated lurch and toppled over.

Crash!

"Oh, my hat!"

The next moment there was another crash!

It was caused by Cecil Ponsonby, of

Highcliffe, landing on the tow-path, with Bob Cherry sprawling over him, punching frantically.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Rough on Rats!

"Ow! Ow! Stoppit! Help!" Ponsonby yelled wildly. Thump! Thump! Thump!

"Yow-ow-ow! Whooop!" "Go it, Bob!" roared Johnny Bull. "Give him jip!"

Bob did not require encouragement. He was already giving the Highcliffe junior jip.

Thump! Thump! Thump! "Ow! Wow! Oh, my hat! Oh, gad! Help!" shrieked Ponsonby.

Gadsby rushed to his aid. Johnny Bull promptly interposed, and collared Gadsby, and they rolled on the tow-path, scrapping fiercely.

The boat shoved in to the bank, and Monson, Drury, and Vavasour scrambled ashore. But they had no chance to help Pon or Gaddy. Wharton, Nugent, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh met them.

The Greyfriars party had really tried hard to avoid a row with their old foes of Highcliffe. But a row now being unavoidable, they went into it with vigour. Pon & Co. had asked for it, and insisted on having it; and now they were getting it—hot!

The three fellows from the boat found their hands full as they met the three Greyfriars men on the bank. Bob and Ponsonby, Johnny Bull and Gadsby, were fighting furiously. Methuselah lay on his side with petrol leaking out on the tow-path. Billy Bunter retired to a little distance—out of the reach of scrapping—and sat down on the grassy bank beside the path and watched. Fortunately he had some toffee in his pocket, and he proceeded to devour it while he rested and watched. Bunter was not needed in the scrap; the Highcliffians had a large order on hand, without paying any attention to Bunter. Had it been otherwise, the Owl of the Remove would probably have retired to a greater distance.

As it was, the fat junior tried to look as if he did not belong to the scrapping party. A crowd of people gathered round on the bank—five or six craft stopped on the river—fifty pairs of eyes, at least, were fixed on the wild and whirling scene. Two or three voices called for the police to come and put a stop to it, but no police, fortunately, were visible.

Splash!

Vavasour went into the shallow water by the rushes, shrieking, and scrambled into the boat again. He remained there. Vavasour had had enough scrapping.

Then Monson and Drury were tossed into the rushes, and they, too, scrambled into the boat.

By that time Ponsonby was yelling for mercy. Gadsby was sprawling on his back, and Johnny Bull was hammering the tow-path with Gaddy's head. Gaddy wished from the bottom of his heart that that happy meeting with the Greyfriars crowd had not happened, after all.

"Ow! Leave off! Chuck it!" moaned Gaddy. "Stoppit! I give you best! Wow! I'm sorry! Aw!ly sorry! Wow! Stoppit!"

"Sure you've had enough?" asked Johnny Bull, ceasing to dent the towing-path with Gaddy's head.

"Ow! Wow! Yes."

"Then you can bunk," said Johnny Bull cheerfully. "I give you one second to get back into that boat! If you ain't

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gone in a second, I'm beginning on you again."

The second was enough for Gadsby. He leaped to his feet and made one wild bound into the boat.

There was a fiendish yell as he landed in it. He landed among Drury, Monson, and Vavasour, knocking them right and left.

Ponsonby alone remained on the bank now, still engaged in frantic conflict with Bob Cherry.

Pon really hadn't intended matters to go so far as that. He had not been looking for a scrap. But it was not uncommon for Pon to carry his unpleasantness past danger-point. Now he was "for it." It was quite a terrific fight; Pon putting all his beef into it, as it could not be helped. But the hefty and indignant Bob fairly walked over him, and Pon yelled for peace.

"Stop it, you beast! I give in!" he howled. "Let a chap alone! Oh, you rotter! Leave off!"

Bob left off at last.

He collared Ponsonby, who really had been punched quite enough, and ran him down to the margin of the water.

The boat was only a few feet out, the dilapidated crew waiting for their leader to join them, though not venturing to come to his aid.

"Jump!" snapped Bob.

"You beast, I'm towing the boat—"

"You're not! Jump!"

"Look here—" yelled Ponsonby.

"Ow! Groogh! Ooooooh!"

Bob Cherry shook him by the collar, like a terrier shaking a rat.

"Ow! Leggo! Stop it! I'll jump!" gurgled Ponsonby.

"You'd better!" growled Bob.

"The betterfulness is terrific," chuckled the Nabob of Bhauipur.

Ponsonby did not want to jump. He had a premonition of what would happen when he jumped. But there was no help for it, and he did jump.

As he did so Bob Cherry kicked, landing nicely on Ponsonby, and the Highcliffe junior fairly flew into the boat.

He crashed down among his comrades, roaring.

Bob Cherry picked up the tow-rope and tossed it in after him. The boat drifted off from the bank.

A chorus of howls and groans came from it as it floated out into the river. Never had a more dishevelled and dilapidated crew been seen on the sunny Thames.

"Oh, my hat!" said Wharton, looking round with a very red face at the staring crowd. "For goodness' sake, let's get out of this!"

"Let's, for goodness' sake!" said Nugent.

"We shall get run in soon!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Get a move on!"

Bob Cherry ran to the overturned tricycle.

"Lend a hand here!" he snorted.

His comrades lent a hand. Methuselah was righted, in a pool of spilt petrol. Hurriedly the juniors wheeled it on. Some of Methuselah's ancient parts seemed to have become loosened by the crash on the tow-path, for he was clinking and rattling and banging wildly when he resumed his way. Sounds of laughter from the crowd on the tow-path followed the party.

"Come on, Bunter!" shouted Wharton, as the party pressed on and passed the fat fellow sitting on the grassy bank.

Bunter turned a deaf ear.

"Come on, Fatty!" called out Bob.

Still Bunter did not seem to hear.

He was gazing past the walking-party at the river, apparently ignorant of their existence.

The juniors paused a moment, staring at him. They did not understand what was the matter with Bunter.

"Deaf, you fat ass?" asked Frank Nugent, stepping across to Bunter and

giving him a poke in the ribs with the toe of his shoe.

"Wow!" gasped Bunter.

"Come on, ass!"

"Look here, you get away!" snapped Bunter. "Don't let all those people know that you belong to me."

"Wla-a-a?"

"Pretty low scene to be mixed up in," sneered Bunter. "Hooligan row on the tow-path! Pah!"

"You fat chump—"

"For goodness' sake, get off!" hissed Bunter. "I'm not going to be mixed up with a low crowd rowing on the tow-path. I'll see you later! I decline to let all those people know that I belong to a crowd like you lot!"

"Fathead!"

The Famous Five trailed on, leaving Bunter sitting on the bank with a supercilious sneer on his fat face.

At the first turning from the tow-path the tricycle was turned away from the river. Bob made no objection—though no objection on Bob's part would have been heeded by the Co. They had had quite enough publicity for one day. The shining river was left behind, and they tramped along a shady, leafy lane—to an accompaniment of clinking and clanking from Methuselah. Since his fall on the tow-path, Methuselah's resemblance to a jazz band had become stronger than ever.

"Well, we jolly well gave those cads a licking!" said Bob Cherry, breaking a long silence.

"We did!" agreed Wharton.

"They asked for it!" growled Bob.

"Oh, quite!"

"The quietfulness is preposterous," remarked Hurree Singh. "But—"

"But what—" growled Bob.

The nabob grinned.

"Nothing, my esteemed chum! All is serene."

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"We've shocked Bunter," grinned Nugent. "Bunter wouldn't own us in public. Bunter's ashamed of us."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry snorted.

He glanced back along the lane. Against the shining river at the end of the lane, a fat figure appeared. Bunter was following—now that the party were out of sight of the crowd along the river.

"That fat rotter has chosen to stop behind," said Bob. "Let him keep behind! We'll jolly well put on speed and chuck him. He can turn up his silly fat nose all on his lonely own."

"Good egg!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ripping idea!" exclaimed Johnny Bull heartily. "Start up that blinking engine, and get going, and we'll trot. If Bunter can catch us up then, he's welcome."

Bob's frowning face broke into a grin. He turned his attention to the engine. With the juice on, Methuselah could be quite speedy; and if Methuselah went ahead and the Co. trotted, it was obvious that William George Bunter would never be able to rejoin the walking party, which undoubtedly was exactly what Bunter deserved.

"Just a tick!" said Bob.

The juniors paused for a "tick" while Bob started the engine. It proved to be an uncommonly long "tick."

That crash on the tow-path apparently had disordered some of Methuselah's antiquated works. No answering snort came from the engine. Bob set his teeth, and put his beef into it, but it was futile. Something was wrong with the works, and Methuselah would not go.

"Buck up, old chap!" said Johnny Bull.

"Don't worry, ass!"

"Bunter's coming up—"

"Hang Bunter!"

"But aren't we going to drop him behind?"

"For goodness' sake shut up!"

"Look here—"

"Dry up!" roared Bob.

"Oh, my hat! Is that blessed old trike going to give more trouble?" sighed Johnny Bull. "What a life!"

"Idiot!"

The Co. sat in the grass beside the lane to rest. Methuselah was "at it" again; and evidently it was going to be a long halt.

The fat figure that laboured behind drew nearer and nearer.

It arrived at last.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"That weird thing on strike again?" grinned Bunter. "I say, you fellows, you'd better take my advice and scrap it. I've told you a lot of times that it's no good. And, look here, you fellows, I want you to understand one thing, and I want you to understand it clearly. If I'm going to remain with this party there must be no more of your dashed hooliganism—no more shindies and that sort of thing. It's rather disgraceful, you know. There's a limit! All very well for you fellows, but I've got appearances to keep up. See?"

Bunter paused for a reply. As he received none, he continued:

"It won't do! Friends of mine might have passed and seen that low shindy—and what should I have felt like then? You can't expect a fellow to stand it. I want you to understand that quite clearly."

Bob Cherry turned from Methuselah. Methuselah was giving him a lot of

trouble, but he could not punch Methuselah. Bunter had come in the nick of time, so far as Bob was concerned. Bob, with a feeling on him that he had to punch somebody or burst, turned to William George Bunter, who was so cheerfully asking for it at the right moment.

"I say, you fellows—yarrooh! Wharrer you up to?" roared Bunter, as the exasperated Bob grasped him.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

"Yow-ow-ow! Wow! Help! Oh, my hat!"

Thump! Thump! Thump!

"There, you fat idiot—"

"Yarroooh!"

Bump! Bunter was deposited in a heap in the dry ditch beside the lane. Bob returned to the tricycle.

Bunter scrambled out of the ditch.

"Another word from you—" said

Bob in a concentrated voice.

He left the rest to Bunter's imagination.

And there were no more words from Bunter.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Wet!

"LOOK 'ere, Alf—"

"Look 'ere, Bill—"

"I tell you, Alf—"

"And I tell you, Bill

Harris—"

"My only hat!" murmured Harry

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NEXT WEEK!

Wharton. He stopped suddenly, and signed to his comrades to stop.

It was a golden afternoon. The juniors had remained on the spot where Methuselah had halted. Bob Cherry was still busy with running repairs. The walking party had had lunch—Bob taking hurried mouthfuls while he worked at Methuselah. Parts of Methuselah were spread beside the lane—he had a dismantled look. Bob had refused—curtly—any aid from his comrades. There was no doubt that Methuselah and his vagaries had a deteriorating effect on Bob's temper. At Greyfriars Bob was the best-tempered fellow in the Remove. On the road with Methuselah he had many lapses. When it was a case of engine trouble his comrades had learned that it was best to leave Bob alone.

So after lunch four members of the Co. went for a stroll, leaving Bob hard at work with Methuselah and Bunter snoring in the shade of a tree. The river was only a short distance away, and it naturally attracted the four. They came out of the lane on to the tow-path, and noticed, without particularly heeding, two shabby and frowzy figures stretched in the grass beside the path under the trees. Tramps sprawling in the grass were no uncommon sight along the silvery Thames; and the juniors would have passed them unheeding had not the voices of the two frowzy gentlemen struck on their ears. They recognised those voices.

The two tramps were engaged in argument, which seemed to be rather warm. One of them, a slight man, had red hair and a cast in the eye, and was recognisable as Honest Alfred Snooks. The other, a fat man with a flattened nose, was his friend, Mr. Harris. The juniors stopped on the path and stared at the two sprawling figures. They had last seen Messrs. Harris and Snooks in Buckinghamshire. They had supposed that the two rascals, who had so mysterious a yearning to get possession of the ancient Dionysius tricycle, had been shaken off the trail of the trike at last. But they had turned up again like two bad pennies in Oxfordshire.

The sprawling tramps did not observe the juniors; many people passed them on the tow-path without drawing a glance from Messrs. Harris and Snooks. And they were deep in argument.

"I tell you, Bill Harris," said Mr. Snooks, "we ain't chucking it. I tell you, we're arter that trike! Blow me tight! Ain't we been arter it for weeks, ever since we fast spotted it at that shop in Lantham? Ain't we follered them kids over three or four counties arter that trike? Don't I keep on telling you that it's worth twenty-five quid to us? Blow me tight!"

Grunt from Mr. Harris.

"We 'ad a chance to pinch a car this mornin'," he growled. "There it was, standin' with the engine runnin'—"

"Pinching cars has got me into trouble afore now," said Mr. Snooks. "I don't say that a covey can't turn an honest penny at times, by pinching a car. I don't turn up my nose at pinching cars! But there's a lot of risk pinching a car, and there ain't no risk pinching that old Dionysius trike. Why, nobody knows what it's worth—even them young coveys what bought it don't know that it's valuable. Nobody knows anything about them old Dionysius trikes except a man what worked in the Dionysius factory twenty years ago when they was made. I know a man what'll buy the stuff off us, and glad, when we get it off that old trike. Easy work, Bill."

"If they'll let us!" grunted Mr. Harris. It was clear that Mr. Harris was fed up with following the trail of the trike.

"If I can't put it across on a gang of silly schoolboys, my name ain't Alfred Snooks!" said the honest one. "We got on the track agin now, Bill. I've picked up noos of that trike. 'Arf a dozen coveys have told me about a row there was on this 'ere tow-path, not a quarter of a mile from 'ere, this very morning—and the party had a blinking old motor-trike with them. Well, that was the jigger we're arter."

"Ow do you know?" grunted Mr. Harris.

"There ain't a lot of 'em about," said Mr. Snooks. "It was the trike all right. We got to pick up their camp, and sneak the trike away arter dark."

"We've tried that afore, Alf."

"We'll try it agin," said Mr. Snooks. "We've 'ad bad luck. But we're going to grab that trike, Bill, and get that old tube out of it, and that means twenty-five pounds in our trouser pockets."

Harry Wharton & Co. grinned at one another.

There was something rather entertaining in the two frowzy gentlemen discussing the intended theft of the tricycle in the hearing of its owners.

Mr. Snooks sat up to knock out his pipe, and suddenly caught sight of the four figures on the tow-path.

He gave a violent start.

"Blow me tight!" he ejaculated.

Mr. Harris sat up, too, looking alarmed.

"Them coveys!" he said. "My eye!"

Harry Wharton walked towards the two tramps, his comrades following him. Messrs. Harris and Snooks regarded them uneasily.

"So you're still after the trike?" said Harry.

"Blow me tight!" murmured Mr. Snooks.

"What about fetching a bobby, and having them run in?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Selp me," said Mr. Snooks hastily, "we ain't after that trike, young gents. Nothing of the sort! Never give it a blooming thought, sir! Never knowed you was in these 'ere parts at all."

"Oh, my hat!"

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

Harry. "What's the good of a bit of old tubing off an old trike?"

Still no reply.

"They're not likely to tell us," said Frank Nugent, laughing. "If there's anything really valuable about that trike we could make money on it ourselves if we knew what it was."

"There can't be anything valuable about it," said Johnny Bull. "Only an ass like Bob would have given four pounds for it. I wouldn't give four shillings myself."

Mr. Snooks' eyes glimmered. "I'm a pore man," he said. "I been looking for work a long time, but I ain't found any. But if you young gents would sell that trike for ten bob, my mate and me could raise the oof."

"We could that," agreed Mr. Harris. "That's a good offer when you think there's something on it worth twenty-five pounds," said Nugent.

objections, ran them across the towing-path to the water.

"Elp!" roared Mr. Snooks wildly. The prospect of going into water seemed to horrify him. Mr. Snooks' objections to water were as strong as his objections to soap, which were very strong indeed. Had Mr. Snooks suffered from a severe attack of hydrophobia he could not have been more horrified by his near approach to water.

But there was no help for Mr. Snooks. The Greyfriars juniors had been trailed for weeks by the cycle-thieves, and they were fed up. They felt that it was time for Messrs. Harris and Snooks to have a lesson which might help them to realise that honesty was the best policy.

Splash!

Mr. Snooks went flying through the rushes, and landed on his back in shallow water! He disappeared for a



Dragging hard on the rope, which was stretched taut across the towing-path, Ponsonby passed on. The rope caught Methuselah, whisked beneath the rear wheels of the trike, and fairly upended it. There was a loud crash as it toppled over and sent Bob Cherry flying! (See Chapter 2.)

"We have been listening to your excellent and idiotic remarks, my worthy, dishonest Snooks."

"Oh, blow me tight!" said Mr. Snooks.

"Look here," said the captain of the Remove, "you're after us again to pinch that triecyle. What do you want it for?"

Mr. Snooks glanced at Mr. Harris, and Mr. Harris glanced at Mr. Snooks. Neither made any reply.

"You've got an idea that there's something valuable about that old trike," went on Wharton. "You tried to steal it from the cycle shop at Lantham before we bought it. You've hung about after us all through the holidays trying to pinch it. So far as I can see, it's not worth anything. We gave four pounds for it to carry our baggage; but nobody would give us fifteen shillings for it if we wanted to sell it. Why do you want it?"

No reply.

It was clear that Messrs. Harris and Snooks wanted that old trike, and wanted it very badly; but they had no intention of explaining to the Greyfriars fellows what its mysterious value consisted.

"From what I can make out, you want to get an old tube off it," said

"Blow me tight! That's only my little joke, sir," said Alfred Snooks. "Jest a little joke, sir. Fact is, it's old association makes me want that there trike. I 'elped to build it in the Dionysius factory twenty years ago. That's all there is to it, sir. I'm sort of fond of that old jigger."

"Liar!" said Nugent pleasantly.

"Struth, sir, blow me tight—"

"Well, we're not selling it for ten shillings," said Harry, "and we're not letting you two rogues pinch it. You've tried to bag that trike half a dozen times, and now you're after it again, and we're fed up with you."

"The fed-upfulness is terrific."

"'Ere, 'ands off, you know!" exclaimed Mr. Snooks, scrambling to his feet in alarm.

"'Ands off!" repeated Mr. Harris.

"My esteemed and disgusting scoundrels," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "you must learn to keep your absurd hands from the pickfulness and the stealfulness. A ducking in the ludicrous river will teach you a lesson."

"Look 'ere—" roared Mr. Snooks.

"Look 'ere—" howled Mr. Harris.

"Duck them!" shouted Johnny Bull.

"'Ands off!"

But it was not hands off; it was hands on. Four juniors collared the two cycle-thieves, and in spite of their strenuous

moment, and came up spluttering horribly.

"Look 'ere—" raved Mr. Harris, struggling frantically.

Splash!

Mr. Harris followed his friend into the Thames.

"Grooooh! Ooooh! Gug-gug-gug!"

The water was shallow, and rather muddy near the bank; there was no danger of Messrs. Harris and Snooks being drowned. But, what was almost as bad to the two frowzy gentlemen, they were getting a wash.

They struggled wildly out of the water.

"Take that as a tip, and let us and our trike alone," said Harry Wharton. "Next time you'll be handed over to the police."

"Gurrrrrrrgg!"

"Ooooooooh!"

The juniors turned away, leaving Messrs. Harris and Snooks crawling out of the Thames, drenched and dripping. The chums of the Remove did not continue their walk. With the two cycle-thieves in the vicinity it was not judicious to leave Bob Cherry alone with the triecyle, so they returned to the lane where Bob was still wrestling manfully with Methuselah.

On the tow-path two bedraggled

figures crawled out of the rushes, gouged water from their eyes, and spluttered.

"Blow me tight!" gurgled Mr. Snooks.

"Ow!" moaned Mr. Harris. "I'm wet! Wet all over! I ain't been wet all over for years and years and years! Ow! I shall catch blinking pneumonia. Ow! Groogh! Ow!"

"Look at me!" moaned Mr. Snooks. "Well, look at me!" snarled Mr. Harris.

"Oh, jiminy!"

"Oh, 'oly smoke!"

"We're going to get that trike off them, all the same!" hissed Mr. Snooks.

"Blow the trike!"

"Look 'ere—"

"And blow you!" snorted Mr. Harris.

Two exceedingly ill-tempered tramps meandered away along the tow-path. The way of the transgressor was hard—and wet!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Halt!

CLINK! Clank! Jingle!

"Three cheers!" said Johnny Bull sarcastically.

Snort from Bob Cherry.

Methuselah was going!

A lazy afternoon had been spent by most of the walking-party. Only Bob Cherry had been busy. But he had been busy enough for all six.

He looked tired now. He also looked cross. But Methuselah was on the move once more. The Greyfriars walking-party were able to proceed.

Even Bob had to admit that the state of Methuselah was not satisfactory. That crash on the towing-path had hurt him somewhere. He was going again, but he went with obvious reluctance. He jolted, he jarred, he jammed, and he jingled. His saxophone effects were more pronounced than ever.

Still, it was a relief to see him moving; and the Greyfriars party were thankful for small mercies.

Only Bunter wasn't pleased. Bunter had had several meals, alternately with several naps, during the long rest. Bunter, apparently, would have been satisfied to remain permanently on the spot, alternately feeding and napping, at least until the end of the vacation. But it was not to be; and Bunter dragged his weary fat limbs after the walking-party.

His fat face was morose. The beauties of highways and byways in Oxfordshire did not appeal much to Bunter. Bunter had no objection to attractive scenery, when he could admire it lying down with his eyes shut. But walking through it was not to his taste. Bunter, in fact, was beginning to think that he had made a mistake in attaching himself to the walking-party at all. He did not like walking; and he did not like the party. Many times he had thought of giving them the go-by. The difficulty was that, if Bunter was to be with anybody in the holidays, he had to be with somebody who did not want him. There was nobody else in the kingdom. So Bunter grumbled and grouched, and continued, for the present, to honour the Famous Five with his fascinating society.

The heat of the day was over when the chums of Greyfriars resumed their way, the sun sinking in the west in a glory of purple and gold. When they emerged into the main road to Oxford, Bob was for going ahead—he pointed out that Oxford was worth seeing, and that the party were on a ramble to see things. Gently but firmly his comrades

turned him from the way. They were not going to trundle Methuselah through Oxford; especially now that, since his trouble on the tow-path, he resembled two or three jazz bands rolled into one. They preferred that Methuselah should be like one of those flowers which are born to blush unseen and waste their sweetness on the desert air. Byways were much more suitable than highways for so remarkable a vehicle as Methuselah.

So they had but a distant glimpse of Oxford's spires and antique towers, and kept to country roads and lanes.

"I say, you fellows, when do we camp?"

Billy Bunter asked that question about once every ten minutes. The walkers did not trouble to answer it.

But when the last gleam of the sunset was going, the other fellows began to consider the matter.

Bob, however, was for pushing on.

"We've rested nearly all day," he said. "It's going to be a lovely night. Fine and starry! Let's push on till midnight."

"Ow!" from Bunter.

"Well, that's all right," said Harry Wharton. "We can see the jolly old country by starlight. Still—"

"We shall want supper soon," remarked Johnny Bull.

"You can leave that to Bunter," said Bob. "for goodness' sake, don't begin talking about grub! We get enough of that from Bunter."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Look here—"

"We've got sandwiches in the bag," said Nugent hastily, "we can scoff them as we go."

"Of course we can," said Bob. "and any man that likes can take a turn at driving the trike."

"Hem!"

That offer was not received with eagerness. Many times during the walk the other fellows had rather envied Bob in the saddle of the old trike. But they did not envy him now. Methuselah was making strange noises, as if suffering from complicated troubles in his interior; and every moment they expected him to crock up. In the present state of Methuselah, they preferred to leave him in the hands of the expert.

Under the shadows of night, the walking-party sauntered on, Bunter rolling morosely in the rear. Having decided to keep on under the silvery starlight, the Co. were not the fellows to go back on their word; and when they arrived at the foot of a hill later, they braced themselves to it. There was a groan from Bunter: but Bunter's groans were always passed unheeded. His groaning was almost as incessant as the rattling and banging of the ancient motor-tricycle. Bob Cherry put Methuselah to the hill.

About a minute later, he stopped and got down.

"Look here, you men—" he said in a very thoughtful way.

"I say, you fellows, I'm tired!" came in a wail from Bunter.

"Shut up, Bunter!" said four voices.

"Hold on, though!" said Bob. "If Bunter's tired—"

"Blow Bunter!" said Johnny Bull.

"Still, if he's tired—"

"I am—frantically!" groaned Bunter.

"Legs almost dropping off,"

"Bunter's always tired," remarked Frank. "He's tired before he starts. Never mind Bunter."

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Let's get on," said Wharton.

"Bunter can hang on behind the trike,

and get a pull up the hill."

"I'd rather camp!" groaned Bunter.

"Rats!"

"Well, it's possible to overdo this idea of pushing on," said Bob, standing beside Methuselah and regarding his friends thoughtfully. "After all, we don't want to wear ourselves out, tramping all through the night."

"Why, it was your idea to push on," exclaimed Wharton.

Bob Cherry coughed.

"Well, you see, a chap doesn't want to be inconsiderate," he said. "I don't get tired, sitting on the trike; but you fellows—"

"That's all right—we're not tired."

"The tiredness is not terrific."

"Still, if you'd rather camp—"

said Bob, showing a concern for his comrades which, good-natured fellow though he was, was rather surprising.

"We wouldn't," said Nugent. "Now we've settled that we're going on, let's go on! We're wasting time."

"Well, Bunter would rather camp and—"

"Bless Bunter!"

"He's a worrying fat ass, but we don't want to wear that fat duffer out," said Bob.

"Look here, do you want to halt, Bob?" demanded the captain of the Remove. "If you do, say so."

Bob Cherry coloured.

"I'm really thinking of you fellows and—"

he said haltingly.

"We're all right."

"Well, Bunter, then—"

"Bunter's all right."

"I'm not!" howled Bunter. "I'm

tired!"

"Oh, come on!" exclaimed Johnny Bull impatiently. "Might as well have camped, if we're going to stand round jawing. Look here, I'm going on."

And Johnny tramped on up the hill. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh followed him. Nugent went on, and Wharton.

"Come on, Bob!" called back Harry.

"You needn't have shut the engine off. What did you do that for?"

"I think I know how to handle this trike," said Bob gruffly.

"Oh, all right! Come on, then."

Wharton followed his comrades, and the shadows swallowed them. Billy Bunter trailed after them wearily. But there was no sound of Methuselah snorting in their wake. Apparently Bob Cherry was not following.

After a few minutes, Wharton paused and looked back. The light on the trike could be seen gleaming, lower down the hill, but it was motionless.

"Why the thump is that ass still stopping?" exclaimed the captain of the Remove, in wonder.

"Come on, Bob!" bawled Johnny Bull.

"Coming!" came back a shout from the dusky distance. "Don't wait."

"Well, why don't you come?"

No answer.

There was a soft chuckle from Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"My esteemed chums, I respectfully opine that the esteemed and ridiculous jigger has jibbed at this ludicrous hill—"

"Oh, my hat!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Crooked again!"

Harry Wharton burst into a laugh.

"The fathead! That blessed trike is crooked, and that's why that ass was so concerned about Bunter! He can't get the thing on, and he wouldn't own up."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The chums of the Remove waited for several minutes. The light of Methuselah still gleamed cheerily, like a beacon in the night, but his jazz band effects were still; he no longer sounded

(Continued on page 12.)

Giants of Cricket

By "Sportsman."

Only 17 years of age, and he skittled seven of the Surrey giants out for 7 runs. That early feat foretold the success of W. E. Astill, the popular Leicester cricketer.

No. 6. W. E. ASTILL.

"**W**HAT a pity it is that he didn't play for one of the leading counties! He'd have been more famous, and would have been selected for many an Australian tour."

This was a statement which I overheard as I took my seat in the pavilion at Lord's a few days ago. And I was eager to learn of whom two friends of mine were speaking.

"Who's the man?" I asked.
"Astill of Leicester," replied one. "A great all-rounder, and if he'd played for Middlesex, Surrey, or Kent, he'd have been given more chances."

As a matter of fact, although my two friends were not aware of it, I have known William Ewart Astill since he was a small child. He was named after the late Mr. Gladstone, young Astill's father being a very staunch follower of that wonderful statesman. W. E. Astill was a cricketer in his infancy, and now at the age of 39 he can proudly boast of having scored nearly 14,000 runs, and taken nearly 1,500 wickets in first-class cricket.

Ewart Astill was born in the atmosphere of cricket, his father being quite a prominent player, and his uncle, Tom Jayes, being one of Leicestershire's finest all-rounders. It was while I was in the company of the latter, nearly thirty years ago, that I first met young Astill. I had been to see the match, Leicester v Sussex, and, at the conclusion of the day's play, was driving out to Ratby, five miles away, having given Tom Jayes a lift.



W. E. ASTILL, Leicester's popular all-rounder.

remarks about "this promising boy" in a magazine article. And during the next five years Astill did not miss one match. This, I think, is a record following a first appearance.

The M. C. C. soon got to know of this phenomenal boy cricketer, and he was engaged on the ground staff at Lord's to play for the M. C. C., on those days when Leicester hadn't any fixtures.

Then, as years went on, and Astill became the backbone of his county team he was sought after by Colonial organisations who required the best English players for coaching purposes. Thus it was that during three English winters he was domiciled in South Africa, where he became very popular.

ASTILL is probably the most popular cricketer in the county of Leicester, and wherever he goes has the habit of making close friendships. Only a few days ago I was told by a famous batsman that there is no more popular cricketer than Astill in South Africa, in the West Indies, and in India, in which countries he has toured with representative teams.

Only a few days ago I asked Ewart Astill to tell me of the occasion when he experienced the greatest pleasure in a first-class match. He did not refer to a Test match, nor to any of his century innings, but to the game, Leicester v. Surrey, at the Oval in 1907, when he was only seventeen years of age.

Surrey went in before lunch and had scored 100 for no wicket when the interval arrived, 34 runs being scored off Astill. "But," he said, "we got them all out for 139, I getting seven wickets for 7 runs after lunch."

Seven wickets for 7 runs by a boy bowler against Surrey when that side was a far more powerful side than it is to-day! When Surrey were a team of giants! Good going, eh?

(Next week's interesting article by "Sportsman" deals with "Patsy" Hendren, of Middlesex.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,121.

WE were about half-way on our journey when I had to swerve to avoid running over a youngster.

"Why, that's my young nephew!" said Jayes. We stopped, made the boy get into the car, and then ascertained that he, also, had been to see the match, having played truant from school for the purpose.

He was about eleven years of age, but he talked most enthusiastically about the wonderful score of 275 made by Prince Ranjitsinhji for Sussex.

"Wait until you're a man," I said, "and then you may play for your county."

"I'm not going to wait until then," he replied. "I'm going to play for Leicester when I leave school."

I shall never forget the serious expression on the boy's face as he said this, nor the loud laugh which Jayes and I had over the child's optimism.

Soon, four years later, or when Ewart Astill was fifteen years of age, the Leicester County Club advertised for four young players, and one of the written applications for a trial was from this boy. He referred the secretary to his uncle, who, by the way, had never seen his nephew perform. But young Astill interviewed Tom Jayes, and told him that he would be quite safe in recommending him as he was absolutely IT."

ANYHOW, the enthusiastic young cricketer was invited to attend the county ground for a trial, and, being perhaps one of the pleasantest-looking lads one could meet in a day's march, he immediately made friends for himself. His supreme test was when he had to bowl about a dozen balls to C. B. J. Wood, who was then one of the most difficult batsmen in England to get out, but Ewart Astill managed to hit his stumps. It looked suspiciously like a conspiracy, but, at any rate, the youngster was engaged, and began his long association with the Midland county.

At the end of the season, or when he had just passed his sixteenth birthday, Astill played in his initial first-class match for Leicester against Hampshire. I did not forget his words when he had played truant from school, so I sent him a wire worded: "Bravo! I laughed at your boast, but am now overjoyed at its fruition." And the acknowledgment was typical of the youth. "Thanks very much! I am nervous but nippy."

He scored, to the best of my recollection, 12 not out, and took three wickets for 30 runs, his performance and whole bearing upon the field of play being so creditable as to inspire the great C. B. Fry to write some eulogistic

THE MYSTERY OF METHUSELAH I

(Continued from page 10.)

like several saxophones in competition—he did not sound at all. Evidently he had developed some internal weakness, and that was why Bob Cherry had changed his mind about pushing on.

"We made rather a mistake in ducking those tramps," said Johnny Bull. "We ought to have tipped them. Then we might have got rid of that awful trike."

"Too late!" said Nugent, with a sigh.

"Let's go back," said Harry; and the juniors retraced their way down the hill.

Bob Cherry was busy. Tools and parts of Methuselah were spread round him, and evidently it was another case of running repairs wanted.

"Crooked?" asked Harry.

"Not exactly crooked," answered Bob cautiously.

"Well, can the brute go?" asked Johnny Bull.

"He can go splendidly, as you know."

"Why don't you come on, then?"

"Give a fellow a rest."

"Look here, Bob, do you want us to halt, or not?" asked Nugent.

"Not!" answered Bob.

"Camp!" said Wharton.

"No need to camp," said Bob gruffly. "I shall have this jigger going in a few minutes. Ten at the most."

"We know your few minutes, old bean. Camp!" said the captain of the Remove, and the walking-party camped. By the time Methuselah responded to his persuasions, Bob was feeling much more inclined to turn in than to push on. He crawled into his blankets. "You awake, any of you?" he grunted.

Snore from Bunter.

"I say, Wharton—"

"Wharrer marrer?" came a drowsy voice.

"Look here, I think, instead of pushing on in the morning, we'll go back down the river," said Bob.

Wharton started into wakefulness.

"Eh, why?"

"To look for Ponsonby!" said Bob.

"Ponsonby!" repeated Wharton. "What do you want to see Ponsonby for?"

"To smash him!"

"Fathead!"

"That trike's damaged," said Bob. "That Highcliffe cad did it! I've got it going again, but there'll be more trouble—"

"More than usual?" yawned Wharton.

"Don't be an ass! Look here, I'd like to go back down the river to-morrow to see if we can find Ponsonby, and smash him to pieces—"

Wharton turned over to go to sleep again. Bob grunted, and followed his example.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Sold!

"GREAT Scott!"

Billy Bunter half-opened his eyes, but did not take the trouble to fully open them.

It was a glorious morning.

So lovely was the summer weather that even Billy Bunter was not grouching that morning. Still, Bunter had another and a better reason for not grouching. The walking-party were not going on; Bunter was able to get a rest. Leaving the tent and the trike, after breakfast, in Bunter's charge, the Famous Five had walked out of the camp. Far over the meadows in the distance the morning sunlight had shown the towers of Oxford still visible; and the Famous Five had agreed that it was a good idea to take a walk round that historic city. They were out to walk, anyhow; and a walk

without Methuselah was quite delightful, in the opinion of four members of the party. It was doubly delightful without Bunter as well; and Bunter, of course, did not want to walk to Oxford and walk about Oxford. Bunter preferred to rest in camp; and as there were plenty of provisions on hand, a quite contented Bunter was left behind when the chums of the Remove started for Oxford's cloistered calm. Having seen the last of them with great satisfaction, Bunter prepared and disposed of a second breakfast, and then stretched his fat limbs in the grass to rest. All the walking-party intended to enjoy the morning—and Billy Bunter not the least.

Bob, it was true, felt a little uneasiness about leaving Methuselah. But the camp was many miles from the spot where the two tramps had been ducked, and it was to be hoped, too, that the ducking had been a warning to them. Four fellows, at least, were glad to get out of sight of Methuselah. So they went; and by that time they were in Oxford, while Bunter napped under the trees by the lane and listened to a familiar voice that ejaculated "Gad!"

The voice was familiar to Bunter, though for the moment he did not remember to whom it belonged.

Someone had come along, seen Methuselah, and stopped to look at that ancient and remarkable machine. The ejaculation showed that the beholder was surprised and interested.

"Great Scott! Whatever is it?"

Then Bunter sat up.

He knew the voice now, though it was a long time since he had met Peter Cuthbert Gunner of the Fourth Form at Rookwood.

"Great Scott!" said the burly youth, for the third time. "What ever is it?"

"I say, Gunner!"

Peter Cuthbert Gunner started, and glanced round. He had not observed the fat figure reposing in the grass.

"Great Scott!" He turned on the Owl of Greyfriars. "Bunter!"

"Yes, old chap," said Bunter affectionately.

He scrambled to his feet.

Perhaps the Rookwood junior was rather sorry he had stopped to gaze at Methuselah. For a moment he seemed disposed to resume his way quite abruptly. Gunner of Rookwood was one of the innumerable fellows who did not realise what a fascinating fellow William George Bunter was.

But there was no escape for Gunner. Bunter rolled over to him with effusive affection and held out a grubby hand—which left a mark on Gunner's hand as he reluctantly but politely shook hands with the fat junior.

"Awfully glad to see you, old top!" said Bunter. "Sit down—here's a camp-stool! Take a pew, old fellow."

"Thank you very much, Bunter," said Gunner, and he sat down.

"Just a minute, and I'll get you a ginger-pop," said Bunter hospitably. "I'll have one myself."

"You're awfully good."

"Jolly glad to see such an old pal," said Bunter.

"Great Scott!"

Billy Bunter was dusty and grubby. Gunner, who had evidently been walking, too, was spotless by comparison. The contrast between the two juniors was really striking, but it did not strike Bunter.

"Travelling in these parts, old chap?" asked Gunner, as he accepted a glass of ginger-beer. It was a warm, sunny morning in August, and ginger-pop was quite acceptable.

"Yes, old chap," said Bunter, sitting down on another camp-stool. He guzzled

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ginger-pop, took breath again, and went on: "Looking at my trike, what?"

Gunner coloured faintly. "I was not aware that you were close at hand, Bunter, or I should certainly not have made any remarks regarding the trike," he said. "I am sorry, Bunter."

Bunter grinned. "That's all right, old chap. Lots of people have made remarks about that trike."

"I don't doubt it," agreed Gunner, with another glance at Methuselah. "It seems to be rather an uncommon design."

"But it's a good machine," said Bunter, blinking at Gunner through his big spectacles.

"Yes, I'm sure it is."

"Goes like anything," said Bunter.

"Does it, really?" said Gunner, in surprise.

"Fine! If you happened to want a motor-tricycle, Gunner, I'd sell you that one quite cheap."

"Don't worry, old chap," said Gunner. "I do not happen to be in want of a motor-tricycle."

"Ten quid would buy it," said Bunter. "Great Scott!"

"I mean, from an old friend like you, I'd take five."

"No thanks, old chap."

"You should see me handle it," said Bunter. "I've covered two thousand miles on that machine this vac. All over the kingdom. With a man who knows how to handle it, it does forty easily."

"Great Scott!"

"Look at the baggage it carries, too," said Bunter. "If you were getting up a walking-party, for instance, it's simply ripping for carrying the baggage."

"I suppose so," assented Gunner.

"What are you doing about here—walking?" asked Bunter, blinking curiously at the Rookwood junior.

"Yes. The fact is, I was cycling," explained Gunner. "You see, I'm staying with some people near Oxford, and I came out for a run on a bike this mornin'."

Bunter stared. Except for a pair of trouser-clips, he could see no sign of a bicycle about Gunner.

"But I have lost the bike," explained Gunner. "I left it at the foot of a hill while I walked up to admire the view, and when I came back it was gone."

"He, he, he!"

"What are you cacklin' at?" asked Gunner.

"He, he, he! It's been pinched, of course!" said Bunter.

"I hope not," said Gunner. "As a matter of fact, it doesn't belong to me. I borrowed it from a chap at the house where I am staying. No doubt some chap has taken it in mistake for his own."

"He, he, he!"

Gunner rose from the camp-stool.

"I had better be getting along," he remarked. "I'm ten or twelve miles from the place where I'm stayin', and it's a long walk, you know."

"Hold on a minute, old chap! We haven't had a talk yet," said Bunter. "Have another ginger-pop! And I've got some tarts here."

"You're extremely good," Gunner sat down again and accepted refreshment. "You travellin' with this trike on your own, Bunter?"

"That's it," said Bunter cheerfully. "But the fact is, I wind up my tour to-day, and I should be glad to get the trike off my hands, even at a loss. I don't mind admitting that I've spent all the money I started with—money goes, you know, when a fellow's on a holiday and does himself regardless of expense. I've spent every bean."

That statement was quite correct. Bunter had started his summer holiday with threepence in his pocket, and undoubtedly he had spent it all. It had not lasted long.

"I'm taking the train from Oxford for a friend's house, where I'm spending the rest of the vacation," explained Bunter. "I'd like to sell that trike before I go. I gave fifteen pounds for it."

"You must have been caught, then," said Gunner.

"Well, I never haggle about money," said Bunter carelessly. "What's the good, when a fellow's wealthy?"

"Oh!"

"You drive a car," said Bunter, "you

"Great Scott!" yelled Peter Cuthbert Gunner, as Bob Cherry grasped him firmly and dragged him off the saddle of the tricycle. "Got you, you thief!" panted Bob. "I'll smash you!" "You'll do what?" "Why—what—who—" Bob Cherry suddenly relaxed his ferocious grasp, as he became aware of the identity of his adversary "Gunner!" he gasped. (See Chapter 9.)



"Licence paid up to the end of the year," said Bunter. "You get that in. Book's in the bag! Everything in order! It's a bargain, what?"

There was no doubt that the motor-tricycle, with its appurtenances, was a bargain at thirty shillings, the lamp alone having cost that sum. The only drawback was that Gunner didn't want it. But that difficulty Bunter brushed aside, like a trifle that he regarded not.

"Just try it and see how it goes!" said Bunter.

"Does it really go?" asked Peter Gunner, regarding the ancient trike with a very doubtful eye.

"Just you try it."

"I think I will."

Gunner knew a great deal about motors, and was interested in them. No doubt that was why he had stopped to admire the ancient Dionysius. As a relic of a long-forgotten past, it had its interest.

He proceeded to examine the machine and to start it up. He really found interest in the experiment. To his surprise it went. It sounded strangely—it grunted spasmodically—it creaked and moaned. But it went. Gunner handled it quite as well as Bob Cherry. He careered along the road for some distance, turned without overturning, and came careering back.

"Goes all right," he remarked, "although it makes an awful noise."

"You won't be sorry you've bought it, take my word for it," said Bunter.

"But I haven't—"

"Like a receipt?" asked Bunter.

"Between friends, I suppose that's hardly necessary."

"What—"

"By the way, you haven't handed me the thirty bob," said Bunter pleasantly. "Short accounts make long friends, you know."

Gunner gazed at the fat Owl of the Remora.

(Continued on page 16.)

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CRASH! Bang! Wallop!
 "Yaroooo!"
 "Geroff my chest!"
 "Woooooop!"

"Ugh!"

In the hart of a forest on the banks of the Amazon, Jack Jolly & Co., of St. Sam's, were fighting a desprit battle.

It was ruff luck that One-eyed Pedro should have turned up just at the moment when our heroes had unearthed the trezzure they had come so far to find. But if their attackers had been merely One-eyed Pedro and his gang of pirates, the St. Sam's party would have felt quite capabul of licking them to a frazzle.

Somehow or other, however—the juniors didn't quite know how—their villainous Spannish enemy had succeeded in gathering under his banner hundreds of feroshus Indians, armed with tommyhawks and stalping-knives. Natcherally, four skool-boys and a cuple of grown-ups couldn't eggsept to lick that lot.

Needless to say, however, they put up a first-rate show—with the eggseption, of course, of Dr. Birchermall. That cowardly old fogey gave one yell of alarm as the Indians attacked, and climbed up the nearest palm-tree, from which spot he watched the battle in fear and trembling.

"Soek it into 'em, chaps!" yelled Jack Jolly, giving one of the eavvidges a biff on the boko that sent him herling into a kaktus tree.

"What-ho!" cursed Jack Jolly's loyle college, hitting out right and left with a hearty zest.

But it was a losing battle. Against hundreds of wild Redskins and a score of Spannish desperadoes, what could a small band of British heroes do?

Defeat came all too soon. In less than an hour Mr. Fearless and the juniors were overwhelmed by sheer wait of numbers, and beaten.

"Bueno! That's the stuff to give them!" leered One-eyed Pedro, lounging forward to the spot where our heroes still struggled despritly in the hands of their Redskin captors. "So you thought you would beet One-eyed Pedro, did you, senors? Ha, ha, ha!"

And the villainous rotter burst into a peep of mocking sinnical larfter.

At that moment, there was a sudden crash as Dr. Birchermall dropped lightly from a tree.

Now that the battle was over, the Head considered it safe to descend to terry-firma. Slithering down the stately tropical tree with the ajility of a monkey, he waved a cheery greeting to the pirate chief.

"Good afternoon, Pedro! You worked the giddy oraekle, I observe?"

"Si, senor!" smiled One-eyed Pedro. "Thanks to you, senor Birchermall, the trezzure is mine."

"Ours, you meen!" reminded the Head, giving his fellow-conspirator a playful dig in the ribs.

One-eyed Pedro smiled again—a leering, sinnical, sardonik smile.

"Ours, then, if the senor wishes," he said.

Mr. Fearless and the St. Sam's juniors listened to this dialogg in open-mouthed wonder.

"You—you—" gasped Frank Fearless, as the garstly trooth pennyrated his branebox.

"Well, of all the villans!" ejaculated Jack Jolly.

"Dished, diddled and done!" cried Mr. Fearless savvidgely. "Birchermall has betrayed us again, boys!"

"The awful rotter!" cried Bright.

"We mite have known you were up to some deep game, you old villan!" grunted

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Dr. BIRCHERMALL REWARD



Dr. Birchermall is a first-class reward hunter, but the reward he receives in connection with Jack Jolly & Co.'s famous "Trezzure" Hunt is certainly not what he bargained for. Still it's a 100 per cent more than he deserves.

Mr. Fearless. "Never mind, boys! If they take our trezzure, we'll never rest until we rest it back from them again!"

"No fear!" cursed Jack Jolly & Co. grimly.

"Some hopes!" chuckled the Head. "Hear what they say, Pedro!"

"I hear, and I larf. Ha, ha, ha!" sneered One-eyed Pedro.

"We go back to the river now, with the trezzure, and leave these dogs with the natives, isn't it? The clever English senors catcha us—if they can! Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Spanniard went off into another peep of mocking larfter.

"Well, what about getting down to brass tax?" asked Dr. Birchermall briskly, when his leader had finished larfing.

"I suppose I shall come along with you and your pals, eh?"

"Si, senor!" answered One-eyed Pedro. "You come with us and carry the trezzure, isn't it?"

"Well, it's a bit waity, but I don't mind that!" chuckled the Head. "If you'll just lift it up on my back—"

The pirate chief bared his yellow fangs in another grin, and wrapped out an order in Spannish. Instantly, half a duzen villainous cut-throats sprang forward and hoisted the hevvy box containing the trezzure on the Head's back.

"Steddy the Bulls!" grinned Dr. Birchermall. "Yaroo! Mind my corn, you silly ass! Up she goes! Grooooo! It's hevvy!"

"And now we leave you!" smiled One-eyed Pedro, turning to our heroes again. "I trusted the weather keeps fine for you senors! Adios!"

Turning to the chief of the Redskins he remarked in fluent nativ langwidg:

"Om tiddiom pom pompom!"

To which the chief replied, with dignitty:

"Ugh!"

Then Pedro and his party started off through the forest, followed by Dr. Birchermall bearing the trezzure of the Amazon.

For some hours they trudged on through the grate tropical forest, and by now Dr. Birchermall was boughed down under the wait of his vualuable burden.

At last the River Amazon came in site and it was a glad site for the weary Head of St. Sam's.

With a loud gasp of relief, he dropped the trezzure-chest to the ground and stretched his weery lime.

"My giddy aunt! I'm jolly glad that's over," he remarked. "What's the neckst move, Pedro, old scout?"

The chief of the desperadoes grinned.

"We make the return to our pirate ship, senor—in the canoes," he replied, pointing to some canoes that were concealed under the river bank. "But I no taka you with me."

"Eh?" eggscclaimed the Head, a vaig feeling of alarm taking hold of him.

"One-eyed Pedro no take Ingless fools aboard his ship," leered the pirate chief. "We make other arrangements for him. Savvy?"

"Oh, well, so long as you see me righted, I shall be satisfied!" said the Head, rather uneezily. "But, of course, in that case, we shall have to whack out the trezzure before we leave each other. I shall simply refuse to go without my reward."

Ha, ha. You get your reward, right enuff, senor!" grinned the swarthy scoundrell.

"When do I get it, then?"

For answer, One-eyed Pedro turned to

his grinning followers and yelled out a stern command in Spanish.

Instantly, to Dr. Birchermall's utter dismay, the swarthy villains fell upon him and seized him in a grip of iron.

"Yaroooooo! Look here, what's the giddy game? Callemoff, Pedro!" roared Dr. Birchermall indignantly.

One-eyed Pedro shook his head.

"You ask for your reward. Now I give it," he replied, his evil eyes glaring feendishly. "You have help me, senior. Now I tell you what I do. I tie you up to a tree—"

"T—t—tie me to a tree?" hooted the Head.

"Si! Then I leave you to the Redskins. The savvidge Redskins come along and scalp the Ingloes senior—"

"Sk-skalp me!" shrieked Dr. Birchermall.

"That will be your reward, Senior Birchermall!" sneered One-eyed Pedro. "I hope you enjoy it! Ha, ha, ha!"

And he roared with kallous, brootal laughter.

Grinning all over their villainous diles,



One-eyed Pedro's swarthy followers tied the head to the trunk of a tree.

"Bueno!" ejaculated the pirate chief, when they had completed their handwork. "Now we buzz off to home and booty. Mind how you go with that trezzure-chest, dogs!" he finished in Spanish.

"I, I, sir!" answered his men—in Spanish, of course.

Dr. Birchermall watched them lifting the trezzure into one of the canoes, with feelings that were almost too deep for words.

A minnit later Pedro had taken his place in the leading canoe. Half a minnit after that, the canoes were in mid-stream.

Another quarter of a minnit, and One-eyed Pedro and his merry men had vanished from site.

Dr. Birchermall was left in an eggstremely

worried frame of mind, tied to a tree in a perilous forest, thousands of miles from civilisation.

II.

"MY giddy aunt! This is annoying, and no mistake!" muttered the Head, for the fiftieth time, as he vainly tugged at his crool bonds. "Surely there is someone in this garstly place who will sucker a gentleman in distress?"

As if in answer to his question, a fierce-looking Redskin jumped out from behind a bush almost immediately.

"Ai-ai-ai!" he yelled, as he jumped out—this being the war-cry of the Redskins.

"Yaroooooo! Whattisit?" roared the Head, his scanty hair farley standing on end.

"Ai-ai-ai!"

The Redskin eggssamined the kaptiv paleface with grate interest for a few minnits, then he turned round, and putting his fingers to his lipps bloo a shrill whistle.

In a cuple of seconds, the place was simply swarming with savvidges, all armed to the teeth. They crowded round Dr. Birchermall, then cut the crool bonds that bound the Head to the palm-tree. Then they laid ruff hands on him and marched him through the forest towards the distant flicker of camp fires.

"Grooooo! Blessed if I like this!" groaned Dr. Birchermall, as he tramped along.

His mitey brain brooded over the problem of escaping the fearful fate that threatened, and suddenly a grin flitted across his classic face. A wheeze had entered his nut—a daring, desprit wheeze which mite work, and mite not—but a wheeze for all that.

"Anyway, it's worth trying!" he muttered to himself, as he was led into the Redskins' encampment.

Passing down a lane of wigwams, the savvidges evenchally brought the Head before the chief of the tribe, who was toasting his moccasins in front of a roaring camp-fire.

"Now or never!" muttered the Head to himself.

So saying, he boughed to the chief, and before anyone could say him neigh, proceeded to put his wheeze into execution.

First, he turned a dubble summersalt and a katherine-wheel, and finished up with a hand spring.

A mermer of astonishment went up from the ignorant savvidges.

Then the Head produced half-a-duzzen tennis balls he happened to have in his pockets and gave a breek eggshhibition of juggling. Cries of amazement broke out from the Redskins, as they watched.

Concludoing his juggling performance, Dr. Birchermall cawed the balls to vanish, then brought them out of the chief's ear, one by one.

By this time the specktors were almost agast.

"Well, my hat!" ejackulated the chief of the tribe in Redskin langwidge. "This merchant takes the giddy biskit! He must be a witch-doctor! Bough down to him, you warriors! Bust me if I don't make him my second-in-command!"

And the chief was as good as his word. Then and there Dr. Birchermall was prezented with a fether headdress, a tommyhawk, and a skalping-nifo.

Crash!

It was the sound of dawn breaking over the mitey River Amazon.

For Mr. Fearless and Jack Jolly & Co. of the Fourth of St. Sam's, it was a hopeless dawn. Tied to steaks driven into the ground, they were prisoners.

Stay! What is that?

It is a figger, adorned with a savvidge headdress, kluteling a tommyhawk, and creeping through the undergrowth.

It is Dr. Birchermall, headmaster of St. Sam's!

Following on the heels of the Head comes a vast horde of real Redskins, thirsting for the blud of their enomies.

Suddenly the chief jumps to his feet.

A horse cry rings out from his savvidge lipps.

An instant later hundreds of yelling savvidges are charging into battle. Cries of dismay ring out from the surprised Redskins in the camp.

Another instant and a wild and whirling battle is in progress.

Dr. Birchermall grinned cheerfully as he watched. Then he hurried to the steaks to which our heroes were tied, and quickly cut their bonds.

"Birchermall!" gasped Mr. Fearless. "Well, of all the surprises—"

"No time to argew the toss, gentlemen!" said the Head briskly. "We've got to make ourselves scarce!"

"What ho!"

Mr. Fearless and the skoolboy adventurers were only too glad to do so. They sprinted off like champions on the cinder-track, and continued to do so until a good many miles had been placed between themselves and the Redskin camp.

Only then did Dr. Birchermall venter to eggssplain how he had manminded it. He told his astonished liseners how he had been made second-in-command of the tribe of savvidges he had run into; how he had told the Redskins by means of sines and jestures that he could take them to a spot where another tribe would be quite willing to oblige them with a good scrap; and how he had led them straight to the place where he knew his old colleags to be prisoners.

"Birchermall," said Mr. Fearless, when the Head had finished, "you're severral sorts of a rogue, and a lot of other things besides. But this time I must admit you've done well—very well, in fact!"

"Hear, hear!" corussed Jack Jolly & Co. hartily.

The Head blushed under his war paint.

"Oh, it was nothing," he said modestly.

"I only did my duty as a man—no more, and no less. I'm glad I was able to help you, and I shall be quite content to let virtue be its own reward. Of course, I shall eggsspect you to give me a few thousand pounds as my share of the trezzure, if we get it!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Well, we haven't got it, yet!" said Mr. Fearless. "I suest we go ahead with all speed and catch up those pirates before they get away with it."

"Yes, rather!"

And the party resumed their jerney at the dubble.

Space alone prevents the orther describing our heroes' advencers in full on their return jerney. Needless to say they had plenty of eggsgitement. For one thing, they caught up with One-eyed Pedro, and, after a gruelling fight, got back the trezzure, and barded the "Conkeror" without so much the loss of a tooth.

And that night, when the "Conkeror" steamed out of the River Amazon, our heroes sellybrated their wonderful suxsess with a grate feed, followed by a sing-song, and in foaming jinjer-pop the company drank the health of the gentleman, who, in spite of all his faults, had made the trip suxsessful after all—Dr. Alfred Birchermall, headmaster of St. Sam's!

Little remains to be told. Our heroes had a jolly good voyage back to England, home, and booty. Frank Fearless whacked out a goodly proportion of the trezzure very jenerously among his pals, and, of course, the Head.

THE END.

(Watch out next week for the first yarn in a grand new seaside series entitled "WAKING UP WINKLESEA!" You will roar with laughter.)

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(Continued from page 13.)

Thirty shillings was not a large sum to the Rookwood junior, and it seemed somehow—he could not quite see how—that he had bought that trike. Billy Bunter, at least, was taking it for granted. Gunner did not like to say that he would not willingly have been found dead on a machine like Methuselah. He reflected that it would carry him home, anyhow, and save him a long walk to a railway station. He groped in his pocket and produced a little Russian-leather note-case, extracted a pound note and a ten-shilling note, and handed them to Bunter.

Bunter's little round eyes danced behind his spectacles. The two currency notes disappeared instantly into his pocket.

"Good-bye, old chap!" he said.

"Fact is, I'm rather pushed for time."

"Oh!"

Now that Gunner had bought the trike, Bunter was anxious for him to get off the scene. Matters would have been rather awkward had the Greyfriars fellows returned before Gunner departed.

"Oh! Cheerio!" said Gunner stiffly, and he remounted Methuselah and snorted away on it.

Bunter chuckled.

There were thirty shillings in Bunter's pocket, which meant a gorgeous feed for Bunter next time the walking-party passed through a town. And he had got rid of that beastly trike. Bunter had double cause for satisfaction. He was only anxious for Peter Cuthbert Gunner to disappear from sight before the Famous Five reappeared in the offing. The snorting and clattering of Methuselah died away in the distance, and all was still.

Bunter chuckled again, and stretched his fat limbs to repose in the grass, under the shade of a tree. Bunter felt that he had done a good morning's work, and he settled down to sleep the sleep of the just.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Found in Unlawful Possession!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"My hat!"

"Blessed if they're not haunting us!"

"The hauntfulness is terrific!"

Harry Wharton & Co. were walking back to camp. Taking a short cut by a narrow lane that wound under shady trees, they came suddenly on two frowy gentlemen who, by this time, were well-known to them.

Alfred Snooks and Bili Harris were standing under the trees in that secluded spot, on either side of a handsome Moonbeam bicycle. They were examining that handsome and expensive jigger with gleeful faces. The Famous Five, coming round a bend of the winding lane at a good pace, almost ran into the two vagrants.

Messrs. Harris and Snooks stared round at them.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,121.

"Blow me tight!" ejaculated Mr. Snooks.

"My eye!" said Mr. Harris.

"Stop!" said Harry Wharton.

The Famous Five halted.

"They've pinched that!" said Johnny Bull.

"Just what I was thinking," said Harry, "and they're not going to stick to it."

"No fear!" agreed Nugent.

"The pinchfulness is terrific, and the stickfulness is not the proper caper," concurred Hurree Singh.

"Where did you get that bike, Snooks?" demanded Wharton.

"It's ours!" answered Mr. Snooks sourly.

"You mind your own business," said Mr. Harris. "What you butting in for, I'd like to know. Git out!"

The Famous Five did not get out.

The bicycle was a very handsome machine, looked nearly new, and had evidently cost not less than twenty pounds. That it could be the property of the two tramps was impossible. Evidently, they had been pursuing their avocation of cycle-thieves, and had picked up that handsome Moonbeam on their way. They were in the vicinity, on account of the old trike; but all was grist that came to their mill.

"You've stolen that bicycle," said Wharton unceremoniously.

"Blow me tight! This here is my own bike," said Mr. Snooks. "I bought it and paid for it, honest."

"Where and when?" asked Harry.

"That's my business, not yours," snapped Mr. Snooks. "You git out, and mind your own business. 'Tain't yourn, anyhow."

"Nor yours," said Harry. "You've tried to steal our tri-cycle, and now you've stolen somebody else's bike. You're not going to be allowed to keep it, you thieving rascal."

"No jolly fear!" said Bob Cherry emphatically.

"Look 'ere—" hooted Mr. Harris.

Wharton glanced at his chums.

"They've pinched that jigger, of course," he said. "The owner will be looking for it. We can't let them keep it."

"I should say not!" growled Johnny Bull. "Let's take it, and them, to the nearest police-station."

"Miles away," said Bob. "Let's scrag the rotters, take the bike, and hand it in at the first police-station we pass."

"Look 'ere, 'ands off!" roared Mr. Snooks, as the juniors drew nearer. "I keep on telling you that I bought this 'ere bike and paid for it—"

"Got the receipt?" grinned Nugent.

"I ain't got it about me this blessed minute," admitted Mr. Snooks. "But it ain't no business of yourn."

"We're making it our business," said Wharton. "Collar them, you men."

The next moment the two tramps were struggling in the grasp of the Famous Five. The odds were heavy against Messrs. Harris and Snooks; but they were extremely unwilling to part, if they could help it, with the plunder over which they had been gloating, when the juniors came on them. They put up quite an energetic scrap.

But the sturdy Greyfriars fellows made short work of them. Mr. Harris found himself lying on the ground, with Johnny Bull and Frank Nugent sitting on him; Mr. Snooks, in the grasp of Wharton and Bob Cherry, was backed up against an oak tree, against which his head was banged with great vigour.

Bang, bang, bang!

Fearful yells proceeded from Alfred Snooks.

"Owl! Blow me tight! Let a bloke go!" he wailed. "You can 'ave the

bike! Blow yer, you can 'ave it! Owl! Let a covey go!"

Bang, bang!

"Owl! Elp! Owl!"

"Where did you get that bike?" demanded Wharton.

"Owl! Bought it fair and square from a young gent—yarooooogh!" roared Mr. Snooks, as his hapless head smote the oak again.

Bang, bang!

"Now, where did you get that bike?"

"Owl! Pinched it!" wailed Alfred. "I owns up—I pinched it! Owl!"

"Where did you pinch it?"

"Owl! About 'arf-a-mile from 'ere! Owl!"

"Whom does it belong to?"

"Owl! 'Owd I know?" groaned Mr. Snooks. "A smart young gentleman left it agin a fence, while he went walking somewheres, and we pinched it! Owl! You can 'ave it! Owl!"

Bang, bang!

"Yoooooooop!"

Mr. Snooks collapsed at the foot of the oak, as the juniors released him. He sat there, rubbing his head in anguish, and groaning.

Deep groans from Mr. Harris accompanied the groans of Alfred Snooks. Mr. Harris was lying in a state of breathless collapse in the dust of the lane, faintly requesting the juniors to "keep orf."

Bob Cherry took the Moonbeam.

"Come on," he said. "We'll take it along to the camp—we may come across the owner looking for it, or, if not, we can take it into a police-station and leave it there. Good-bye, Snooks!"

"Owl!" moaned Mr. Snooks.

The Famous Five went on their way, leaving the two frowy vagrants groaning. Once more Messrs. Harris and Snooks had discovered that the way of the transgressor was hard.

"Jolly lucky we came on those two blackguards," remarked Bob Cherry. "This is a jolly valuable jigger. But they were after our trike, of course. My hat! We might have lost the trike!"

"Awful, if we had!" murmured Nugent.

"Frightful!" said Johnny Bull, with deep sarcasm.

"The frightfulness would have been truly terrific."

"Oh, rats!" said Bob crossly.

The juniors pursued their way. The lane ended in a footpath that ran beside a shady wood, on the other side of which was the camp where Bunter had been left with Methuselah.

Bob Cherry gave a sudden start, and stopped.

"Listen!" he exclaimed.

Through the leafy wood came echoing sounds, from a lane on the other side. Clink, clank, jingle! Jank!

"The trike!" exclaimed Bob.

"Or a band!" said Nugent.

"Cheese it, you ass! Somebody's riding that trike!" exclaimed Bob Cherry anxiously. "Perhaps I'd better cut through this wood—"

"Trespassers will be prosecuted!" grinned Nugent. "For goodness' sake, don't be an ass! It can only be Bunter on the trike! Those tramps are a long way off, and behind us."

"Well, it can't be Harris and Snooks this time," admitted Bob. "But perhaps some other thieving rascals—"

"Oh, rot! As if anybody in his senses would steal that trike!"

"Fathead!"

Bob Cherry started again. It was not far to the camp now; the path wound round the corner of the wood into the lane where the walking-party's camp lay. The sounds of Methuselah died away.

Possibly it was only Bunter, passing the time by taking a spin on the trike. But Bob was uneasy.

"Look here, I'll mount this jigger, and get on," he said. "You fellows can follow. I'm rather worried about that trike."

"Right-ho!" said Wharton. "You won't find it missing, old man."

"No such luck," said Johnny Bull.

Bob Cherry put a long leg over the Moonbeam bicycle and pedalled off. He went at a good rate. His comrades followed at a more leisurely pace; and in a couple of minutes Bob Cherry, going strong, was out of their sight.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Gone!

"O W! 'Tain't rising-bell!" gasped Bunter.

Bunter was deep in the land of dreams, when he was suddenly awakened by the toe of a boot grinding into his fat ribs.

"Wake up, you fat idiot!"

"Ow! Keep off, you beast!" gasped Bunter.

He sat up and blinked at Bob Cherry.

Bob, standing with his hand on a bicycle Bunter had never seen before, glared down at him with an excited face.

"Where's the trike?" he roared.

"The—the trike?" stammered Bunter.

"It's gone!" roared Bob.

"G-g-gone!"

"Yes, you fat idiot! Is this how you look after the camp!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Where's the trike?" roared Bob. "It's gone! Somebody's taken it! Who's taken it? Wake up, you dummy!"

Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles. How long the new owner had been gone with the trike Bunter did not know, as he had fallen asleep immediately after Gunner's departure. But he hoped that the Rookwood junior had been gone a long time. The look on Bob Cherry's face warned him that he had to be circumspect.

Bunter's fat conscience did not trouble him in the least about that transaction. But he did not expect Bob to see eye to eye with him in the matter. On the subject of Methuselah Bob was past reasoning with.

"Who bagged that trike?" howled Bob.

"How should I know?" argued Bunter. "Perhaps it isn't gone."

"What?"

"Sure you've looked?" asked Bunter.

"You fat dummy—"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Isn't it big enough to be seen if it was here?" bawled Bob. "It's been pinched. Have you been asleep all the time?"

"Never opened my eyes once," said Bunter promptly.

"I was dreaming about a feed in the dormitory when you woke me up, you beast! I dreamed that we had a bag of jam tarts—"

"Did you see who took that trike?" shrieked Bob.

"How could I see, when I was fast asleep?" argued Bunter. "I was dreaming that we had a bag of jam tarts, and a bag of doughnuts—"

"You fat chump!"

Bob Cherry turned savagely away from him. If Bunter had been asleep all the time, obviously he could give no information about the missing trike. And Bob had no time to waste.

Fortunately he knew the way the trike must have gone. Those sounds that had come floating on the breeze through the wood told him. While the juniors were coming up the path on one side of the wood, it was clear that the trike had been going down the lane on the other side.

Bob put a leg over the bicycle again.

"Bunter! Tell the fellows I've gone after that thief when they come in!" he called back.

"Oh, crumbs!" Bunter jumped up. "I say—hold on—hold on a minute while—"

Bob stopped, staring back at the fat junior impatiently.

"What is it?" he snapped.

"You—you see—" stammered Bunter, staring at the bicycle in dismay.

How on earth Bob had brought a bicycle back to camp with him was a mystery to Bunter. It was horribly unfortunate. On that bike Bob was quite likely to overtake the trike if he went in the right direction. Methuselah might be going well. On the other hand, he might not. There was a lot of risk.

"I say, where did you get that bike?" asked Bunter.

"Fathad!"

"Hold on!" yelled Bunter. "You're going the wrong way." Bob was going the right way for the trike, but undoubtedly the wrong way for Bunter.

(Continued on next page.)



O-PEE-CHEE

GOLD WATCH COMPETITION

PRIZE WINNERS:

1st Prizes—FOUR GOLD WATCHES

- (A) David Ferguson, Mull Hill Street, Catrine, Ayrshire.
(B) Ellen Dugdale, 37 Witham Road, Shelmerdale, Lancs.
(C) Elwyn Ivin, 16, Mill Street, Cwmfelinfach, near Newport, Mon.
(D) N. H. Lewin, Tydd Gate, near Wisbech, Cambs.

2nd Prizes—FOUR CRICKET AND TENNIS SETS

- (A) A. Stanlick, 106, Newbottle Street, Houghton-le-Sp., Durham.
(B) M. Pallister, 26, Westcroft Road, Grange Town, Yorks.
(C) Colin Tope, The Green, Kingsand, near Plymouth.
(D) S. G. Grange, Dock Tavern, North Street, King's Lynn.

3rd Prizes—FOUR MECCANO SETS AND WORK BASKETS

- (A) M. Laybourne, 7, Stafford Street, Sunderland.
(B) Thomas Guest, 137, Shuttle Street, Tyldesley, Lancs.
(C) P. Steeds, Ten Laurels, Holcombe-Hill, Holcombe, Som.
(D) Reginald Savage, 79, Sir Lewis Street, King's Lynn.

CONSOLATION PRIZES:

- Annie Hall, 309, Alice Street, South Shields; Henrietta Dixon, 8, D'Arcy Place, Water Works, Merton, S.O.; John W. Scott, 9, Gladstone Terrace, Sunnyside, Durham; Frederick Nichol, 22, East Bridge Street, Penzance; Dorothy B. Lumb, 64, Upper Brow Road, Paddock, Huddersfield; Miss P. Beggs, High Street, Stokesley, Yorks; James Lawson, 10, East Street, Leyland, Lancs; Arthur Marlow, 115 Whitehall Road, Drighlington; Betty Hoare, 2, Pennine Villas, Paternoster Row, Ottery, St. Mary, Devon; Jack Eason, 13, Walker Road, Bulcott, Cardiff; William Kempson, 15, Dewstow Street, Newport; Evelyn Huna, 8, Mudge's Terrace, Gunnislake, Cornwall; W. Gynell, 1, Lawrence Street, Caerphilly; E. M. Edwards, 59, Canadoc Street, Port Talbot; N. Burroughs, The Street, Gillingham, near Beccles; D. Chamberlain, 9, Springfield Road, Guildford; A. Lawson, Guy's Head, Sutton Bridge, Cambs; G. Stapley, 33, Wellington Street, St. Barnabas, Oxford.

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Bob Cherry paused again.

"What do you mean?" he panted. "Do you know which way he went?"

"Yes!" gasped Bunter. "Keep to the left—that path along the side of the wood—"

"That's the way I've just come, you born idiot! He didn't go that way."

"Oh, I—I mean—the other way—farther to the left—"

"How do you know he went that way with the trike?" demanded Bob. "You said you were asleep when it was taken."

"I—I mean—"

"Go and eat coke!"

Bob Cherry drove at the pedals of the Moonbeam bike, and raced away along the lane by the wood. He was quite assured that Methuselah had gone that way, from the sounds that had floated through the wood. Billy Bunter blinked after him in dismay.

"Oh crumbs!" he murmured.

Bob was out of sight in a few moments. The Moonbeam bike was a good machine, and it fairly raced under him. Certainly if Methuselah was going strong with the gas on, the fastest push-bike was not likely to run him down. But with Methuselah you never could tell. At the best of times he was a little uncertain, and since his crash on the tow-path his uncertainty had been more uncertain than ever.

"Beast!" murmured Bunter. "If he catches Gunner there will be a row. That beast will be sure to tell him I sold him the trike—and the other beast won't believe that he pinched it when he finds it's Gunner! Beast! Still, perhaps he won't find him! Perhaps he'll come a cropper on that bike and buckle up the wheel or something."

And Bunter cheered up at that happy possibility.

He was still standing blinking in the direction Bob had taken when a smack on the shoulder made him jump.

"Owl!" howled Bunter.

He blinked round at the Co.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Where's the trike?" asked Harry Wharton, glancing round. Methuselah was conspicuous by his absence.

"And where's Bob?" asked Nugent.

"Gone after the trike," said Bunter.

"He makes out that somebody pinched it while I was asleep. Of course, I don't know anything about it. I dare say it was those tramps, Harris and Snooks—"

"It wasn't," said Nugent, laughing.

"We've met them, and left them for dead about half a mile back."

"Mean to say you slept while some cycle-thief was starting up Methuselah and getting him away?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"Like a top!" answered Bunter.

"Never heard a sound. If you fellows think I had anything to do with it, you're mistaken. As for selling the trike—"

"Selling it!" yelled Wharton.

"Yes, as for selling it, of course I wouldn't. And, besides, nobody would be idiot enough to buy it, except Bob."

"You've sold that trike!" ejaculated Johnny Bull, staring blankly at the Owl of the Remove.

"Oh, really, Bull! I've just said I haven't—"

"My only hat!"

"I know nothing whatever about the matter," said Bunter. "Nobody's been here—nobody at all. It's hardly likely that a Rookwood fellow would happen to come this way."

"You've met a Rookwood fellow?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Nothing of the sort! I shouldn't recognise him even if I did meet him."

as it's so long since I've seen him. In fact, I'd forgotten that his name was Gunner," said Bunter.

"Gunner! You've met Gunner of Rookwood?"

"Oh, no! I was just saying I hadn't. Look here, you fellows, if you've got a lot of rotten suspicions in your minds you needn't mention them to Bob when he comes back. You know his rotten temper. He's quite potty about that measly old trike, and if he knew I'd sold it—I mean, if he thought I had—he would kick up a vulgar row. I prefer to hear nothing more about the matter—nothing whatever!" said Bunter, with dignity.

And the Owl of the Remove stretched his fat limbs in the grass again, to resume his interrupted nap.

"Well, my hat!" said Nugent.

"No good going after Bob," remarked Wharton. "He will be making the fur fly on the bike. Better wait for him here. I'm ready for lunch."

"Same here!"

"The samfulness is terrific!"

The four juniors prepared lunch. Fast asleep as Bunter was, some instinct seemed to warn him that there was food about, for he woke up when lunch was ready. He cast an anxious blink round, and was greatly relieved to see that Bob Cherry was not in the offing.

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"That beast not back yet?" he said.

"Good! I say, you fellows, I'm hungry. I dare say he won't catch up the trike. It may go for once; or he may fall off that bike and crock himself, you know. It's a rough road, and he was going like lightning! Might have an accident!"

And comforted by that reflection, Billy Bunter devoted his attention to lunch.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Quite a Surprise!

THE villain!" Bob Cherry was going strong.

"The scoundrel!" Those ejaculations told that the quarry was in sight.

"The rascal!"

Bob had covered a couple of miles on the bicycle, going, as Bunter had said, like lightning, when he sighted Methuselah.

The lane had been left behind, and Bob was on an open road; and at the corner there were two ways to choose, and he dreaded that he had lost the track. Then the sound of Methuselah—like the music of the spheres to Bob Cherry's ears at that moment—floated

to him. Wild and weird came the sounds from along the road, and, as Bob knew that it could not be an American orchestra there, he knew that it must be Methuselah. So he turned in that direction, driving at the pedals like one possessed, and at last came in sight of Methuselah.

Methuselah, it appeared, had slowed down—a way he had often! Now he had bucked up again—a way he had sometimes! But he was in sight—and now Bob only feared to see him put on speed! There was no doubt that when the old Dionysius trike was in good order he could go fast, and he had been in good order several times since he had come into the walking-party's possession. But Bob drew hope from that accident on the tow-path. Since that crash Methuselah had not been himself. Bob quite unexpectedly found himself feeling glad, after all, of that meeting with the Highlife fellows on the Thames. But for Pon's playful jape with the tow-ropes, and its results to Methuselah, Bob might never have sighted the old trike again.

Now he had sighted it, and was keeping it in sight. From ahead the clinking and clanking and clonking came musically back.

Bob put it on!

There were a good many vehicles on the road, and two or three drivers yelled to Bob as he flashed past. But he had no time to heed them.

He flew!

Ahead of him, clinking and clanking merrily along, was Methuselah, with a rather nicely dressed fellow in a Panama hat sitting in the saddle.

Bob could not, of course, see the fellow's face, and he had no idea that it would have been familiar to him had he seen it. Only he was rather surprised to see a cycle-thief such a well-dressed fellow. That Methuselah was ridden by a bona-fide purchaser, and not by a thief, naturally did not occur to Bob. He had no suspicion that Methuselah had been sold. He had no doubt that the trike had been pinched while Bunter was asleep.

With a crimson face, streaming with perspiration, Bob drove at the pedals, blessing the good quality of the Moonbeam bike. That meeting with Messrs. Harris and Snooks had been lucky. But for that Bob would have been on foot, and Methuselah hopelessly beyond recapture. Really, it seemed as if bad characters had their uses in the world. Owing to the cycle-thieves, Bob was mounted on an excellent jigger. Owing to Ponsonby, Methuselah was in a croaky and cranky state, unable to beat the jigger in the race. Bob really had much to thank Harris, Snooks and Ponsonby for!

He was gaining!

The youth in the Panama hat was getting the best he could out of Methuselah. But it was a very second-best! Bob, riding as if in a race, gained and gained—slowly but surely.

Methuselah turned from the road at last into a quiet lane that led out into the country. Bob spun round the corner after him.

The lane was hilly. Methuselah, especially in his present mood, disliked hills. More slowly he ran, snorting painfully and spasmodically. Bob put all his beef into pedalling, and flew up the hill as if he were going downhill. Now he was gaining fast!

He was tempted to shout "Stop thief!" but he did not. That would only have warned the cycle-thief to make more desperate efforts to get Methuselah to put on speed. So far the youth in the Panama hat seemed to

Ponsonby & Co. had finished with Methuselah, but they had not finished with Bob Cherry. They gathered round him, grinning. "Sorry now that you punched a fellow's nose?" asked Ponsonby genially. "If I could get my hands loose—" The Greyfriars junior broke off suddenly as Ponsonby emptied the oil-can over his hair, as a final mark of attention. (See Chapter 11.)



have no suspicion whatever that he was being chased. Not once had he glanced back. No doubt his hands were full with the motor-tricycle. Methuselah was rather an exacting servant.

Closer and closer came the whizzing bike, Bob's face now like a freshly boiled beetroot, and perspiration trickling down his neck in streams. He was breathing in panting gasps. But he was closing in on the rider of Methuselah.

A few minutes more—Tired as he was, breathless as he was, Bob had beef enough left to handle that cycle-thief when he got hold of him. The thought of getting hold of him, hammering him right and left, reducing him to something like a jelly, was quite exhilarating.

Closer and closer whizzed the wildly driven bike, till Bob was only a few yards behind the motor-tricycle. Methuselah was gasping and groaning more than ever, irked by the hill. He had slowed down very considerably. Bob Cherry suddenly shot past him, jammed on his brakes, and leaped from the bicycle.

His aching legs crumpled under him as he landed in the middle of the lane and he sat down.

There was a startled exclamation from the rider of the old trike.

"You clumsy ass!"

Bob scrambled up.

"You rotten thief!" he panted.

"Great Scott!" yelled Peter Cuthbert Gunner, as he was grabbed and dragged off the saddle.

Methuselah whirled round into the hedge.

He dashed his front wheel into the hedge and stopped there, throbbing and popping wildly, seeking to drive a way through.

There was no rider on Methuselah now; no guiding hand on the handles.

Gunner was rolling in the dusty lane in the powerful grasp of Bob Cherry.

"Got you, you thief!" panted Bob.

"By Jove!"

Clatter! Crash! They rolled into the bicycle, which had fallen in the middle of the road when Bob left it. There was a wild howl from Gunner as the back of his head established contact with a pedal.

"Yaroooooh!"

"Now, you rotter—"

"Oh, you clumsy ass!"

"I'll smash you—"

"You'll do what?"

"Why—what—who—" Bob Cherry suddenly relaxed his ferocious grasp as he became aware of the identity of his adversary, Gunner.

"Great Scott! Bob Cherry!"

"My only hat!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

The fighting juniors released one another. They scrambled to their feet and gazed at each other blankly.

"Gunner!" repeated Bob, stupefied.

"Gunner of Rookwood!"

"Bob Cherry!" gasped Gunner. "Bob Cherry of Greyfriars!"

"But what the thump—"

"What the deuce—"

"What—what—what were you doing with my trike?" gasped Bob.

"Your trike!" gasped the astonished Gunner.

"Yes—I—I—thought it was pinched—I—I thought I was after a cycle-thief," stammered Bob. "What the thunder—"

Gunner was about to reply when his eyes fell on the sprawling bicycle. He stared at it, stooped over it, and stared again.

"Great Scott!" he ejaculated.

"What were you doing with my trike?" repeated Bob.

"You mean what were you doing with my bicycle?" replied Gunner.

"Your bicycle?"

"Yes, you ass!"

"That's your bicycle?" gasped Bob.

"Sure thing!"

"Well, my hat! We got it away from some cycle-thieves who had pinched it," said Bob blankly. "So it's yours?"

"I borrowed it from the chap I'm staying with this morning," said Gunner, picking up the Moonbeam. "It was taken away while I was admiring the scenery from a hill. I am very much obliged to you for getting it back for me. It will be quite a relief to get on it after riding that beastly, noisy, evil-smelling motor-trike."

"What?"

"If you happen to be in want of a motor-trike, old chap, I will make you a present of that," said Gunner. "In fact, I will give any chap ten shillings to take it off my hands."

Bob stared at him.

"What the thump were you doing with the trike?" he demanded.

"Riding it, of course, ass!"

"Well, I know you weren't stealing it now I know who you are," said Bob. "But it's rather thick to take away a motor-trike without asking leave."

"Eh?"

"Well, isn't it?" demanded Bob warmly. "You've given me five miles at top speed, in this blinking hot weather, running you down. I call it jolly thick."

"I don't understand. I was an ass to buy that trike from Bunter."

"Wha-a-a-i?"

"But, you see, I'd lost my bike, and I was ten miles from home, and Bunter offered it for a mere song—bad as it is, it is cheap at thirty shillings—"

"You—you—you bought that trike from Bunter?" gurgled Bob Cherry.

"Yes."

"Oh, crumbs! I—I—I'll—"

"As a matter of fact, I wished afterwards I hadn't," said Gunner. "I

thought the thing would give me a lift home, and then I could have given it away to somebody. But it won't go."

"You bought it from Bunter?" gasped Bob Cherry. "Oh, my hat! I'll burst him! I'll pulverise him! I'll spiticate him! I'll—"

"But surely Bunter had a right to sell his own trike?" said Gunner.

"It wasn't his!" roared Bob.

"Wha-a-at?"

"The fat villain! I'll burst him! He told me it had been pinched while he was asleep—"

"Eh?"

Methuselah was still throbbing and gurgling wildly in the hedge. Bob Cherry dragged him out.

"You gave Bunter thirty shillings for the trike?" he asked.

"I did!"

"Well, I'll get that from Bunter, as soon as I get back—and I'll square you now," said Bob, feeling in his pocket.

"Not at all," said Gunner. "You take the trike and I'll be satisfied. It's nice to be able to get rid of it."

"Oh, rats! You've got to take the money, fathead—here you are."

"Very well, if you insist."

"It's a jolly good machine, you know," added Bob. "It's had some knocking about lately, but it's a ripping jigger. Look here, if you'd like to run home on it, I'll lend it to you."

"That's good of you, Cherry," said Gunner. "But I'd rather not."

"Well, all serene," said Bob. "I'll be getting back to camp. See you again some time."

"I hope so," said Gunner cheerfully. They shook hands and parted.

Gunner, in great relief, mounted the Moonbeam bike and pursued his way home, and never had a push-bike seemed so delightful to him.

Bob Cherry mounted Methuselah, and persuaded him from the spot—and, like the ploughman in the poem "the ancient trike homeward plodded his weary way."

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Bolts!

"O H, crikey!" Bunter jumped. Fearful alarm was in his fat face.

The sound that reached his fat ears, and caused the alarm, was not musical; but was not, in itself, especially alarming. It was the clink-clank-clonk-snort-gurgle-jingle of an ancient motor-trike, that had seen better days, and seen the last of them, unwillingly taking an ascent. It was, in fact, the voice of Methuselah—the voice that Billy Bunter had hoped, and expected, never to hear again—now echoing up the hilly by-lane to the walking-party's camp in the hot August afternoon. The peaceful summer stillness was shattered and obliterated as the voice of Methuselah, like the voice of the turtle of old, was heard in the land.

Harry Wharton & Co., looting in the grass and taking a rest while they waited for Bob's return, rose to their feet as they heard the distant music of Methuselah. But, for once, Bunter was on his feet more quickly than any of the Co. He was up with a bound.

"Oh, crikey!" he repeated. He looked down the hill. It was not a really steep hill, but Methuselah was taking it protectingly. More and more he seemed to be suffering from internal spasms, brought on by the crash on the tow-path. That lingering malady had been the cause of the trike's recapture.

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and for that reason Bob had been feeling almost obliged to Ponsonby of Highcliffe. Now, as he wrestled with Methuselah on the slope, his feelings had changed again, and he longed to meet Cecil Ponsonby, in order to reduce that youth's features to a state of pulp. Since leaving Gunner, Bob—even Bob—had realised why Gunner had been glad to get back to his push-bike.

Bunter, gazing at Bob from the distance as he came into sight, could not see the expression on his face clearly. But he could guess what it was like. Besides, the remarks of the other fellows enlightened him. They were blessed with longer vision than the Owl of the Remove, and they could make out the look of almost Hunnish ferocity on Bob's speaking countenance.

"He's got back the trike," said Harry.

"Hurrah!" said Johnny Bull, with deep sarcasm.

"The hurrafulness is terrific."

"He doesn't seem to have the bike with him," said the captain of the Remove. "But he's got the trike! Oh dear!"

"Well, after all, we want it for the baggage," said Nugent, as if making the best of a very bad state of affairs.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter! We're landed

Here's a clever limerick, which has earned for its author, Edgar C. Masters, 85, Huntingfield Road, Putney, S.W.15, a useful leather pocket wallet.

Billy Bunter felt happy and merry,
He'd found tarts belonging to Cherry;
When he sampled that tuck,
He had dreadful bad luck,
For his teeth in the mustard did bury!

If you haven't succeeded in winning one of these useful prizes yet—try, try, try again!

with that trike," said Johnny Bull. "We're going to have that trike with us all the way—unless we die of it."

"Bob looks rather waxy!" grinned Nugent.

"The waxfulness is terrific."

"Looks as if he'd like to slaughter somebody," said Harry. "I dare say he's slaughtered the chap who took the jigger away. Sorry if it was a Rookwood man, as Bunter says—"

"Oh, really, Wharton, I said it wasn't a chap—"

"Well, let's hope we shan't be called on to bail Bob out on a charge of manslaughter," said Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Keep an eye on him when he gets here," said Harry, laughing. "He mustn't kill Bunter! He can thrash him as much as he likes—"

"Oh, really, you beast—"

"In fact, the harder the better. But—"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter! Save your breath—you'll want it all for yelling when Bob gets here, and he'll be here in five minutes now."

"Oh crikey!"

"If you have tears, prepare to shed them in five minutes," chuckled Nugent.

Bunter gasped.

Bob had recovered the trike, which indicated that he had overtaken Peter

Cuthbert Gunner and undoubtedly learned from him that Bunter had sold Methuselah. And he was coming back in a bad temper! In the circumstances, he could scarcely be expected to come back in a good temper. But the prospect was alarming. Already Bunter could feel the heaviest pair of fists at Greyfriars hammering on his fat carcass; he could feel his podgy person hurtling before the heaviest boot at Greyfriars or anywhere else. Bob was near enough now for Bunter to discern the look on his face. That look might have stricken terror to a stouter heart than William George Bunter's.

"I say, you fellows, I—I think, on the whole, I'm fed-up with this walking stunt," said Bunter. "I've stood you fellows, and your selfishness, and your rotten bad manners, a long time; but there's a limit. This kind of party isn't exactly the class of holiday party that I'm accustomed to. Travelling with a putrid old trike like that is the limit. I'm off."

"Wait and say good-bye to Bob!" suggested Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I decline to stay with 'this party another minute,'" said Bunter firmly. "I'm fed-up with it. Bad manners and selfishness all round. You haven't even brought any jam back from Oxford, though I specially asked you to. I'm going."

"Bob's got something to say to you before you go," urged Johnny Bull. "Hang on another five minutes."

"I refuse to do anything of the sort. You can tell Bob Cherry, from me, that he's a dunderheaded chump, and that, when I see him at Greyfriars next term, I'll give him a jolly good hiding. Now I shall want my fare home," said Bunter.

"Which of you fellows is lending me a couple of pounds?"

"The whifffulness is terrific."

"Make it a pound," said Bunter. "I can manage on that. Are you lending me a pound, Wharton?"

"I think not."

"Beast! Are you lending me a pound, Inky?"

"I think not."

"The answer is in the esteemed negative."

"Rotter! You lending me a pound, Bull?"

"I don't think."

"Pig! You lending me a pound, Nugent?"

"Ask me another!"

"Yah! Go and eat coke, the lot of you!" snorted Bunter. "If you think I need your measly loans, you're quite mistaken. I've got money in my pocket, I can jolly well tell you. Yah!"

And Bunter turned away. He had thirty shillings in his pocket, quite enough to see him safely home. And he had a strong suspicion that when Bob arrived he would lose that thirty shillings in addition to receiving the thrashing of his fat life. Obviously it was time for Bunter to go. Many times he had thought of shaking the dust of the walking party from his feet, and now he had finally decided on it. He was not only going, but going in haste. It was important to be well away from the spot before Bob Cherry reached it.

Bunter had little to carry in his very small bag. He stayed only to shove in a few of Wharton's handkerchiefs, a couple of pairs of Nugent's socks, a necktie of Johnny Bull's, and a few of Bob Cherry's collars, and then locked the bag and departed. The juniors, watching Bob's slow progress up the hill, did not observe Bunter packing, but they sighted him as he came out of the tent and started—in the direction

opposite from that by which Methuselah and Bob were approaching.

"My hat! He's really going!" ejaculated Wharton.

"No such luck!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Good-bye, Bunter!"

"Fare thee well, and if for ever, all the better, fare thee well!" sang Nugent.

Bunter blinked back over his shoulder. "Yah! Go and eat coke, the lot of you! Beasts! Yah! I despise you! Pah!"

And with that valediction William George Bunter scudded along the path by the wood, disappeared beyond the trees, and vanished from the gaze of the Greyfriars walking-party. And there were dry eyes in the walking-party when he vanished.

Clank - clank - clonk - jingle - jangle! Methuselah, more reluctantly than ever, came on, in a series of jerks and fits and starts. Close to the camp, Bob Cherry dismounted, shut off the engine, and wheeled the ancient trike the rest of the way. He arrived gasping for breath, gleaming with perspiration, and with a high complexion.

"Where's Bunter?"

That was Bob's first question.

"You want Bunter?" smiled Nugent.

"Yes," gasped Bob. "Where is he?"

But for the expression on Bob's face, one might have supposed that Bunter was his long-lost brother. But Bob's expression was not brotherly. It was anything but brotherly. But evidently he was longing to see Bunter—yearning to see him.

"Where is he—quick?"

"Gone!"

"Gone?" yelled Bob.

"The gonefulness is terrific."

"You silly chumps!" roared Bob.

"What did you let him go for? I was going to smash him into little pieces! Why didn't you keep him here for me?"

"My esteemed and infuriated Bob, he—"

"Which way did he go?" bawled Bob.

"Which way did he go, you men?" grinned Wharton.

"I wonder!" chuckled Nugent.

"Will you tell me which way he went?" howled Bob Cherry.

"No, old chap," said Wharton soothingly. "There are some things it's better for a fellow not to know—and that's one of them. We don't want Bunter burst all over Oxfordshire."

"Look here, you silly ass—"

"You got back the trike all right, old chap," said Nugent. "We're awfully—hem!—pleased to see it safe back."

"That fat villain sold it to a Rookwood man!" snorted Bob. "Sold it for thirty bob! I gave Gunner the money, of course, when he handed it over. I've got to get it back from Bunter."

"Oh, my hat!"

"What did you do with the Moonbeam bike?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Hang the Moonbeam bike! It was Gunner's bike, as it happened, and I handed it back to him. Never mind that. Where's Bunter?"

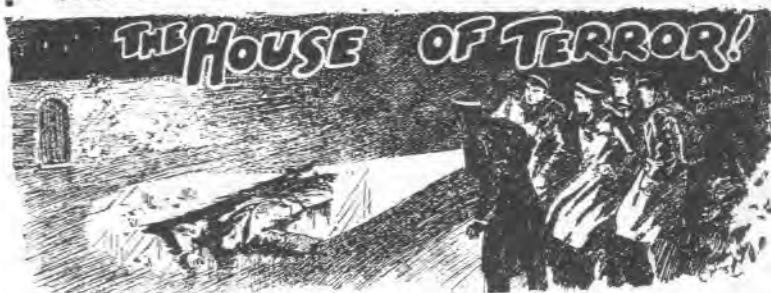
"Gone from our gaze like a beautiful dream!" said Nugent. "Never mind the thirty bob—we'll whack that out. It's worth that to get shut of Bunter."

"What-ho!" said Johnny Bull.

"Well, that's so," admitted Bob. "But he sold the trike—sold it to that Rookwood man—sold it, you know! I'm going to smash him!"

"He won't ever sell it again," said Wharton soothingly. "He's gone. Be thankful he's gone, and don't worry about anything else. Look here, your

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lunch is ready—scoff it, and let's get on."

"Can't get on this afternoon!" granted Bob.

"Eh—why not?"

"The trike—"

"Oh, dear!"

"Oh, don't be an ass! The trike's never got over that crash on the tow-path. It's got to have a thorough overhauling. I'm going to make a thorough job of it this time, and it will take at least all the afternoon. You fellows had better make up your minds to it. Now let a fellow have something to eat. I'm famished! And don't jaw!"

The Co. gazed at one another. Bob Cherry gave his attention to a belated lunch. Billy Bunter had gone, but it was clear that the walking-party were not to go. A "thorough overhauling" of Methuselah was not a light task, not an easy task, and not a rapid task. It was likely to last at least until night-fall and to bring out the very worst traits in Bob Cherry's character. The Co. resisted the temptation to seize Methuselah, roll him down the hill, and hurl him into a ditch. They had resisted many temptations of that kind with Methuselah, and they were learning wonderful self-control.

"Well, we're for it," said Wharton. "What about another walk round Oxford while Bob is pottering with that vile jigger?"

"Let's!" said Nugent.

Bob Cherry rose from a hurried lunch. "You fellows had better take a walk," he said. "You haven't sense enough to help—and you'll only worry me, cackling around like a lot of geese. Go somewhere and do something."

"Like us to take a walk to Oxford?" asked Wharton, smiling.

"Splendid! Come back as late as you can."

And the four juniors sauntered away in the summer afternoon, leaving Bob Cherry sitting in the midst of dis-entangled parts of Methuselah, oily and grubby and hot and perspiring, and in a mood to wish that Methuselah was

alive—in which case Bob assuredly would have been guilty of cruelty to trikes.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Pie for Ponsonby!

CECIL PONSONBY grinned. It was not a pleasant grin. "Oh, what a little bit of luck!" he said softly.

Gadsby and Monson, Drury and Vavasour agreed with Pon. It really was an undreamt-of stroke of luck.

Four of the Highcliffe fellows, at least, had been very half-hearted in that expedition. Ponsonby, however, was leader, and Pon had his way. Ponsonby & Co. were looking for the Greyfriars walking-party. Pon was on the trail of vengeance. Pon had declared that, travelling with such a thing as that antiquated trike, the Greyfriars party couldn't have got very far away. He declared that everybody must have noticed the trike and remembered it, so it would be easy to track it down. His comrades feared that he was right. They were looking for the Greyfriars party—but Monson and Gadsby, Drury and Vavasour were rather anxious not to find them. They did not see any use in finding them. The Greyfriars fellows had licked them once, and could lick them again—easily! They had been licked enough! So what was the use of taking the trail of vengeance? But Pon was obstinate. Certainly he did not want another licking. He had hopes of catching the enemy separated, or at some disadvantage—hopes which his followers considered delusive and born only of Pon's fierce desire to revenge himself on the Greyfriars fellows.

But Pon had proved to be right. For the antiquated trike had been run down, and the walking-party's camp was in sight. Late in the summer afternoon the Highcliffians sighted it—coming on it quite suddenly as they turned from a road into a dusty lane. And only one

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fellow was there! Bob, in shirt-sleeves, oily and grubby, was labouring at Methuselah, who looked like a jig-saw puzzle. Parts and pieces and portions of Methuselah surrounded Bob. And any observer might have supposed that all the King's horses and all the King's men could never have put Methuselah together again. Bob, however, was working away with great determination, evidently hopeful. Hope springs eternal in the human breast.

He was alone! Pon & Co. could see that. The tent was standing, but the flap was open, and they could see that it was empty. It was quite a lonely spot—fields on one side, woods on the other, no house within the range of vision. Nothing, from Ponsonby's point of view, could have been better.

Ponsonby grinned—and his comrades grinned, too. They had been hoping that they would not find the walking-party. In these circumstances, however, they were quite pleased to come on the walking-party's camp. They were quite able to handle Bob, with his comrades far away, and Bob was the member of the party that they desired most to handle. Really this was a stroke of luck for the heroes of Highcliff.

"The rotter's on his own!" murmured Ponsonby. "Muckin' about with that putrid old trike—the others have left him to it!"

"Shows their sense!" grinned Gadsby. "That's the rotter who gave me a pink eye!" said Ponsonby venomously. "Just the one I wanted to catch, out of the whole gang!"

"We've got him now!" chuckled Monson.

"Absolutely!" grinned Vavasour.

Bob, busy with Methuselah's various parts, had no eyes and no ears for the Highcliffians. Pon made his companions a sign to be silent, and they advanced behind Bob. Five to one as they were, they did not neglect the advantage of a surprise. Even against such odds, Bob was likely to get in a few telling blows if he had a chance. And nobody wanted to stop them.

They trod softly on the grass behind Bob, and were quite close to him when Gadsby trod on some trailing portion of Methuselah, and there was a jangle. Bob looked round.

"At him!" hissed Ponsonby.

Bob was half up when they leaped on him.

He went down with a crash, the five Highcliffians sprawling over him and grasping him.

"You rotters!" roared Bob.

"Keep him down!"

"Sit on him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry struggled furiously. He got one arm loose and landed out one terrific punch. It took effect on Gadsby's nose, and Gadsby went over backwards as if he had been shot.

But four pairs of hands imprisoned Bob, and he was jammed on the ground, sat on, and secured.

"Hold him!" gasped Ponsonby. "We've got the ruffian now! Here, Gaddy, get somethin' and tie his hands while we hold him!"

"Ow! Ow!" came from Gaddy. "My nose! Ow! Wow!"

"You ass! Get somethin'!"

"Wooh! My nose! It's smashed! Ow! My nose! Woouoooooooooooooh!"

Gadsby sat and nursed his nose with both hands, and moaned. But four fellows were too many for Bob. Monson held his right arm, Vavasour clung to his left, Drury sat on his chest, and Ponsonby jerked off one of the ropes from the tent, and Bob's wrists were

dragged together and tied fast. Then the Highcliffians breathed a little more easily.

"Safe now!" said Drury, getting off Bob's chest. The next moment he pitched over with a wild howl as Bob lunged out with a boot.

"Tie the beast's legs!" gasped Vavasour. "He's kickin'!"

There was another struggle, and Bob's legs were bound. Then he lay helpless in the grass, glaring at his foes.

"Ow, ow, ow!" said Drury, rubbing the place where Bob's boot had landed.

"Ow! Ooooooh! Ow!"

"Wow!" moaned Gadsby. "My nose! Wow!"

"Where are the other cads?" asked Ponsonby, grinning down at Bob Cherry's furious face.

"Find out!"

"I say, they may be comin' back, you know," remarked Vavasour, with an uneasy glance round. "We—we don't want a shindy with them."

"We don't," agreed Ponsonby. "But it won't take long to rag the camp! Have that tent down, and shy the baggage all over the place, while I look after that trike."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry, wriggling savagely in his bonds, looked on with an eye of fury. He was helpless to intervene. The tent was dragged down and pitched over a hedge. Bags were emptied, their contents scattered far and wide. Everything that the Highcliffians could lay hands on was mercilessly ragged. The supply of petrol was poured away, the cooking-stove jumped on, crockery smashed, and cutlery hurled in various directions. That was bad enough, but as Shakespeare has said, thus bad begins, but worse remains behind. It was the fate of Methuselah that cut Bob deep.

At a careless glance, it might have been supposed that Methuselah could not be taken into more pieces than Bob had already taken him into. But the Highcliffians soon proved that he could. Crashing blows and grinding jerks soon told on Methuselah. In a short time he was in more pieces than could have been easily counted. His wheels were separated, divided into as many fragments as they were divisible into, the saddle ripped and torn, the carrier smashed, the inlet pipe twisted out of shape, the ignition tube wrenched bodily off, the pedals smashed, the very framework rendered shapeless. Bob had said that the old motor-trike needed a thorough overhauling. There was no doubt that he was getting it.

For ten minutes or so Bob Cherry found some solace in telling the Highcliffians what he thought of them. But he was silent at last, gazing with grief at the ruined trike. Bob had great faith in Methuselah, and in his own powers as a mechanic, but even Bob could not hope to get Methuselah all in one piece again after that. It was all up with Methuselah!

Methuselah was a shapeless heap on the ground when the ragers had finished. They had finished with Methuselah, but they had not finished with Bob.

They gathered round him, grinning. "Sorry now that you punched a fellow's nose?" asked Ponsonby genially.

"You rotters!" gasped Bob. "If I could get my hands loose—"

"Better go while the going's good," murmured Monson.

"I say, we'd better clear," said Vavasour. "If those other beasts should come back—"

"Wait a bit!" said Ponsonby.

He emptied the oil-can over Bob's hair as a final mark of attention. Then the

grinning Highcliffians departed. Bob was left squirming in the grass, in the midst of the ruin they had wrought.

They chuckled as they turned the corner of the wood and left the camp behind. Undoubtedly Ponsonby & Co. had scored this time! A surprise awaited Harry Wharton & Co. when they returned to camp. All the Highcliffians wanted now was to be well off the scene before that return happened.

They walked away rather quickly. Two frowzy and unkempt gentlemen, coming along the path by the wood, passed them. Ponsonby & Co. took no heed of the two tramps, and Messrs. Harris and Snooks lounged on their way.

About a quarter of a mile farther on the Highcliffians turned into a road that led to the river.

"Oh, gad!" exclaimed Monson suddenly.

Four figures, sauntering up the road, came in sight.

"Those Greyfriars cads!"

Ponsonby & Co. halted. Harry Wharton & Co., strolling homeward in the sunset, sighted them. They came on, but the Highcliffians did not wait for them to come up.

"This way!" said Ponsonby.

And he turned off the road into a lane, and his comrades promptly followed him, and they proceeded at a run.

Harry Wharton & Co. smiled as they vanished.

"That's Pon's crowd," said Johnny Bull. "They don't seem to want to meet us again."

"The wantfulness is not terrific," remarked Hurree Singh.

"I thought they'd gone on up the river," said Harry. "Well, we don't want any more rows with them. Let them rip."

"My esteemed chums," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh thoughtfully. "I noticed observably that the excellent and execrable Gadsby's nose was terrifically swollen and fiery. Those esteemed rotters have been scrapping with somebody. If they have happened on our absurd camp—"

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Wharton. "If they found Bob on his own—"

"Let's go after them," suggested Johnny Bull. "We can give them a jolly good hiding on spec."

"Let's get on to the camp and see if anything's happened," said Harry.

And the four juniors, changing their easy saunter for a rapid trot, set out swiftly for the camp.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Prize!

"**B**LOW me tight!" exclaimed Mr. Snooks, in astonishment.

And Mr. Harris, equally astonished, made an appeal to unknown powers to strike him pink.

Bob Cherry glared at them. They stared at Bob Cherry. They stared at the wrecked camp, and at the remnants of Methuselah. Never had the two frowzy vagrants been so astonished in all their frowzy lives.

"If this don't beat cock-fighting!" said Mr. Snooks.

"I believe you!" gasped Mr. Harris.

"What do you rotters want?" growled Bob Cherry.

The question was rather superfluous. He knew what Messrs. Harris and Snooks wanted. They wanted Methuselah. However, they were welcome to Methuselah now, so far as Bob was concerned. Bob, at least, had no further use for the jumble of remnants that lay in the grass around him.

Mr. Snooks, recovering from his astonishment, chuckled.

Crash! Bump! There was a sudden collision as the four Greyfriars juniors, speeding round the corner, crashed into two frowzy figures coming from the other direction. The meeting was unexpected and violent, and the two tramps went staggering to the ground. "Ow! Blow me tight!" howled Mr. Snooks. "Strike me pink!" wailed Mr. Harris. (See Chapter 13.)



"This 'ere is luck, Bill Harris," he said.

"Not 'arf!" said Mr. Harris.

"Didn't I tell you we'd get a chance at that trike, if we kept on arter it?" demanded Honest Alfred.

"You did, Alf! And you was right."

"Ow did you get fixed up like that, mister?" asked Mr. Snooks, grinning down at the Greyfriars junior.

"Find out!" grunted Bob. "Let me loose, and I'll pay you for your trouble."

"You're all right as you are, sir," smiled Mr. Snooks. "You've got rather a 'eavy 'and when you're loose, sir."

"Wot to!" chuckled Mr. Harris.

"Ducking a bloke!" said Mr. Snooks indignantly. "Ammering a bloke! You stick there and be blowed to you."

"Somebody's mucked up that trike a bit, Alf."

"More than a bit," said Mr. Snooks.

"Owsu'mdever, that don't 'urt—whoever it was, has saved us the trouble of getting that blinking tube off of it. 'Eve it is, Bill!"

"Let me loose, you rotters!" bawled Bob Cherry.

"Not 'arf."

Alfred Snooks sorted the old discoloured ignition tube out of the wreck of Methuselah.

He held it up, grinning.

"'Ere it is, Bill!"

"Urray!" said Mr. Harris.

"Leave that alone, you thieving rotters!" growled Bob.

"I don't think," chuckled Mr. Snooks.

"Why, we been arter this 'ere for weeks an' weeks! Now we got it."

"We 'ave!" concurred Mr. Harris.

The two rascals fairly gloated over the old tube. Mr. Snooks took out a pocket-knife, and scraped it. A bright gleam came through the discolouration of the old metal.

"Genooine, what?" said Mr. Snooks.

"Look at that, Bill!"

"I believe you, Alf!"

Bob stared at them, almost forgetting

his wrath, and his exceedingly uncomfortable situation, in his surprise and curiosity. So far as Bob could see, that old bit of tubing was worth no more than any other remnant of the dismantled trike. Yet the two vagrants were fairly gloating over it, as over a pearl of price.

"Only a covey what had worked in the old Dionysius factory, twenty years ago, would 'ave knowed anything about this 'ere, Bill," said Mr. Snooks. "I dessey that trike's been through a lot of 'ands, and nobody knowed. They don't put this stuff into trikes or bikes nowadays, Bill."

"They don't!" grinned Mr. Harris.

"You sure it's the right stuff, Alf?"

Mr. Snooks sniffed contemptuously.

"Don't I know?" he jeered. "Didn't I 'elp build them old trikes?"

"They wasn't all done the same," said Mr. Harris.

"Only the first lot, Alf."

"Ain't there a blinking number on the blinking machine, and didn't I spot the blinking number on it, when it was outside that blinking shop at Lantham?"

said Mr. Snooks. "I tell you, Bill, this 'ere is one of the machines that 'ad the platinum tubing put into it."

"I s'pose you know, Alf."

"Blow me tight if I don't!" said Alf.

Bob Cherry stared blankly. The word "Platinum" struck him with amazement.

If that old bit of tubing was made of platinum, it was worth a lot of money. But how could it be so? It seemed to Bob that he was looking at a pair of lunatics.

Messrs. Harris and Snooks had trailed the bike for weeks in the belief that that old ignition tube was made of one of the most valuable of metals—a metal more valuable than gold.

It was a sheer impossibility, so far as Bob could see.

Many a time had the juniors wondered what on earth of value the two tramps could see in that old trike. Again and again they had discussed the mystery

of Methuselah. But certainly it had never occurred to them for a moment that one of Methuselah's parts was made of a precious metal.

"Twenty-five quid for us, Bill!" said Mr. Snooks. "Mind you, more'n that, if we got our rights! But it ain't easy for the likes of us to sell a lump of this 'ere stuff! But I know a cove who will 'and out twenty-five quid on it, and make as much for 'imself when he passes it on! And there may be more of these old Dionysius trikes knocking about, Bill—worth jest as much as this—if a covey knowed where to lay 'ands on them."

"What the Moses did they put that stuff into it for, Alf?"

"It was cheaper in them days," said Mr. Snooks. "It's gone up enormous since the War. Course, it wasn't exactly cheap then—but they could put it in at that time, what with the price it was, and the price they charged for the machine. Fur as I can make out, there was over a 'undred of them jiggers made with this stuff used in the ignition tube—and if a covey could get his 'ands on the other ninety-nine, Bill—"

Mr. Snooks gave an ecstatic sigh at the idea.

"Well, let's 'ook it," said Mr. Harris.

"We got it, and so let's 'ook it. I can't think 'ow that young covey got fixed up like that there; but his friends will be coming back sooner or later—"

"'Ook it!" agreed Mr. Snooks.

He sorted a newspaper out of the wreckage of the tent, and wrapped up the old ignition tube, and tied it with string.

Bob Cherry watched in silence. Amazing as the thing was, he realised that it must be true—somehow or other, either by design or mistake, that valuable metal had been used in the construction of the old Dionysius tricycle—and Mr. Snooks, who had worked in the Dionysius factory in those ancient days, knew the secret.

No wonder the honest man had been wildly excited when he spotted the old trike outside the cycle

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shop at Lantham—no wonder he had trailed it over several counties during the Greyfriars walking-party's summer tour! With a prize like that at the end of the trail, it was not surprising that Honest Alfred Snooks had kept to it like a bloodhound.

Bob wriggled furiously in his bonds. Owing to Ponsonby & Co., the prize had fallen into the hands of the two frowzy rascals! They were about to walk off with it, and Bob was powerless to intervene.

"Oh, you rotters!" gasped Bob helplessly.

"We'll 'ave to be leaving you, sir," said Mr. Snooks. "'Ope you'll 'ave a good time, sir, a-wriggling there like a blinking worm, sir."

"You rascal!" spluttered Bob. "Oh, you rotter!"

"Don't lose your temper," admonished Mr. Snooks. "Bad for a young gent to lose 'is temper."

"You—you—you—"

"Come on, Alf," said Mr. Harris.

"I'm arter you, Bill!"

Stopping only to tweak Bob's nose in a playful sort of way, Honest Alfred Snooks followed his frowzy friend from the camp, the wrapped-up tube under his honest arm.

"Oh!" gasped Bob, writhing with fury. "Oh, crumbs! Oh, my hat! If those silly asses would only butt in—"

The sun was sinking low; really, it was time for his friends to be back. Bob had sarcastically told them to come back as late as possible; but he would have been wildly delighted to see them now. In the faint hope that they might be within hearing he shouted at the top of his voice as Messrs. Harris and Snooks loafed away.

"Help! Help! Stop thief! Help!" Bob's powerful voice carried far and wide. It followed Messrs. Harris and Snooks, like the bellow of an enraged bull, as they disappeared round the corner of the wood.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Exit Messrs. Harris and Snooks!

"**H**ARK!"

"My hat!"

"That's Bob!"

Evidently, there was trouble at the camp.

After sighting Ponsonby & Co., the chums of the Remove had lost no time on the way back. They were coming along the path by the edge of the wood, at a rapid trot, when from the distance wild shouts reached their ears.

"Help, help, help! Hurry up, fat-heads! Hallo, hallo, hallo! Stop thief!"

It was Bob Cherry's voice—still distant, but easily recognisable. It came from beyond the corner of the wood where the camp lay.

"Bob's in trouble," exclaimed Wharton. "Put it on!"

"The troublesomeness seems terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Put it on!"

The chums of the Remove broke into a rapid run. They had been going fairly fast before—now they flew! Those wild yells from the distance showed that the trouble was serious.

It was rather a puzzle—for if Ponsonby & Co. had been at the camp they were long gone. Whatever might have happened then, it was long over.

"Those tramps, perhaps—" gasped Johnny Bull.

"My hat! That's it!" exclaimed Wharton. "They've come on Bob alone—and—for goodness' sake, put it on!"

The four juniors ran their hardest. Wild yells were still coming from the direction of the camp, as yet out of sight beyond the trees. It sounded as if Bob was in bad trouble; and if he was struggling in the hands of the tramps, he certainly needed help. Seldom had Harry Wharton & Co. covered the ground so quickly.

They came round the corner of the wood at full pelt.

Crash!

Bump!

There was a sudden collision.

As the four juniors came round the corner from one direction, two frowzy figures came round from the other.

The meeting was unexpected and violent.

The two parties crashed together, and every one of them went staggering to the ground.

"Ow, blow me tight!" howled Mr. Snooks.

"Strike me pink!" wailed Mr. Harris.

The parcel under Mr. Snooks' arm crashed to the earth. Mr. Snooks himself crashed, and for the moment quite forgot the precious parcel.

"The tramps—" yelled Frank Nugent.

"Sock it into them!"

"Give them jip!"

From the camp, Bob was still roaring. Why he was roaring now, the juniors did not know, as the tramps had left the place. But they did not bother about that for the moment. They were bothering Messrs. Harris and Snooks.

Several encounters already had the walking-party had with the two tramps, and each time they had tried to impress upon them that it would be wiser to keep their distance. This time they made it quite clear. They were fed-up with Harris and Snooks, and they guessed that the two rascals had been doing some damage at the camp—and probably to Bob, judging by his roaring. So they pitched into Harris and Snooks right and left.

"Bang them!" roared Johnny Bull, as he clasped Alfred Snooks round the neck, and got his frowzy head into chancery.

"Smash the rotters!" shouted Wharton.

"The smashfulness is terrific," panted Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, who was hammering Mr. Harris' features with vigour and vim.

"Ow! 'Elp!"

"Leave off! Let a bloke alone! Leave off!"

"Blow me tight!"

"Oh, 'oly smoke!"

The two tramps put up a fight, as hard as they could. But the four excited juniors were much too much for them.

They felt that Harris and Snooks wanted a lesson, and they gave them one—hard!

Blows rained on the yelling tramps; they were punched and pummelled, and thumped and banged, till they hardly knew what was happening to them.

Mr. Harris, tearing himself away at last, with closing eyes and streaming nose, bolted for his life.

Spluttering and gasping, Mr. Harris ran like a rabbit, and disappeared in the distance.

Mr. Snooks, still held, was struggling and wriggling frantically.

Thump, thump, thump, thump!

"Ow! Leave off!" shrieked Mr. Snooks. "You can 'ave the blinking thing—I ain't got it! Leave off! Blow me tight! Oh, leave off!"

Thump, thump, thump!

"Ow! Will you leave a covey alone?" raved Mr. Snooks. "Ow! My nose! Oh, my eye! Ow, my 'cad! Ow! Ow!"

Not till they were breathless did the juniors leave off. Then, as Mr. Snooks, gasping, scrambled up, Johnny Bull's boot smote his trousers, and Mr. Snooks

received a start and fled. Not even a glance did he give to the precious parcel lying on the ground. Mr. Snooks had no chance of getting away with that—he was only too glad of a chance of getting away with himself! He tore away after his vanishing friend.

The horizon swallowed Messrs. Harris and Snooks, and the panting juniors turned towards the camp. From the camp still came the roaring of Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton picked up the parcel Mr. Snooks had dropped. What it contained he did not know, but obviously it was something stolen from the walking-party's camp. With the parcel in his hand, the captain of the Remove ran on, his comrades at his heels.

"Help! Stop thief! Help!" Bob was still yelling.

"Bob, old chap—"

"My hat! What—"

With a rush, the four juniors arrived in the camp and beheld the wreckage there, and Bob Cherry sprawling in the midst of it. Harry Wharton dropped the parcel and ran to Bob.

"What the thump—"

"Get me loose—quick!" gasped Bob.

In a few moments he was free.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Unexpected Riches!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. stared round the wrecked camp. The state of Methusalem did not worry them very much. But the state of the rest of their property was distinctly exasperating.

"Did those two tramps do this?" exclaimed Wharton.

"No, Ponsonby and his gang have been here—"

"Oh, my hat! If we'd known—"

"I suggested going after them and giving them a hiding!" remarked Johnny Bull.

"They've jolly well wrecked the place!" said Nugent. "Look at poor old Methusalem!"

"They've done for the trike," said Bob. "Jerked it to pieces under my eyes! Next time I meet Ponsonby—"

"But what were you yelling for?" asked Johnny Bull. "You sounded as if you were being murdered at least."

"I thought you silly asses might be near enough to hear me," snorted Bob.

"Harris and Snooks have been here since those Highcliffe cads left, and they found me tied up. They've stolen the ignition tube off the trike."

"But what—"

"That's what they were after all the time," hooted Bob. "It's made of platinum, and it's worth pounds."

"Platinum!" yelled the juniors.

"Yes—that's why they've been after it all the time. Snooks knew, because he was employed at the works where they made them years before the War. Can't you understand now? They've robbed us of a thing worth about thirty pounds!"

"No they haven't; we've got it back!" said Wharton.

"What?"

"Here it is!"

Wharton ran to the parcel he had dropped on entering the camp and picked it up.

"Here it is, fathead!"

"Oh!" ejaculated Bob.

The parcel—so carefully wrapped up by Mr. Snooks—was unwrapped again. The juniors gathered round it eagerly. All eyes were glued upon the ancient tube as it was revealed.

It did not look valuable. But where Mr. Snooks had scraped it a gleam showed through the discoloration. With

(Continued on page 28.)

THE MASKED DEATH!

By
John Sylvester.

(Introduction on
next page.)



A final wrench, and the helmet came off, revealing the face of the mysterious Mr. X.

The Mysterious Mr. X!

THE warning came too late. Locke had barely shouted when there was a blinding flash and a terrific explosion. The ground shook under their feet. "Gad!" stammered Webster. "But he can't hope to escape."

"He won't," said Locke grimly. "He is at our mercy now. He can't get out of that diving suit by himself, and the other man has gone."

They started to run along the shore. The reverberations of the explosion had died down, and they could hear the sound of a man moaning. It chilled their blood, but made them more determined than ever to reach the perpetrator of this dastardly outrage.

It was wanton, purposeless cruelty. It didn't in the least open any avenue of escape. The dynamite had been thrown as a final, diabolical gesture by a man who knew that his life was forfeit.

"But who can he be? Who is the man in the diving-suit?" The question clamored in Jack's mind. Locke knew, but so far he had refused to speak.

As they approached the scene, Jack noticed the diver crouching in the boat. From the trees, the police were approaching more warily. One of their number had been blown to pieces, and another lay on his back, terribly injured.

"Race after the other," said Locke, turning to his assistant. "He can't get very far. But remember he is dangerous."

"I'll find him," muttered the boy confidently.

Webster gave similar orders, and four of his men scattered to search the grounds. As Jack neared the shrubbery, he fancied he heard a stealthy sound.

He paused, drew his revolver, and his

eyes tried to pierce the darkness. Was it only fancy that he saw a vague shape moving in the shadows?

Bending double, Jack crept closer. He felt a thrill of excitement as he realised it was not his imagination tricking him. There was a man just ahead.

He considered what to do. If he fired and missed he would betray his presence and leave himself exposed to return fire. It would be better for a while if he could follow without being seen.

Fortunately, by this time Jack knew every inch of the grounds. Behind the shrubbery lay the well. Was it possible that the man was making for the well, hoping to lie low in the secret passage?

Softly the boy drew into the shrubbery, and peering through a gap

The curtain rings down on the "Bridge-worthy Case," bringing fresh laurels to Ferrers Locke, detective, and, more important still, an arch criminal to justice!

he saw that his reasoning was correct. Something black moved against the mouth of the well, and suddenly disappeared.

"Caught like a rat in a trap!" he chuckled exultantly. "I've only got to fetch help—"

But suddenly Jack broke off. He remembered the possibility that there was an exit to the passage which he had been unable to discover. Locke had hinted as much, and, in that case, if he turned back the man might make a clean escape.

He couldn't afford to take the chance. To go down that dark hole and face a desperate man in a kind of sewer was not a pleasant prospect. But there seemed no alternative.

After a minute's reflection Jack crossed to the well and peered cautiously

down. He could hear the hollow knocking of a foot against the wall as the unknown man descended.

He waited until there was silence again. Then he threw his legs over the top and started the pursuit.

Jack reached the bottom after some anxious moments. In his eagerness he had made far too much noise. Once his feet touched firm ground again he resolved to take a bold course. He flattened himself against the wall and shouted at the top of his voice:

"I've got you covered! You'd better come out!"

For several seconds nothing happened. He was beginning to wonder if he had been fooled, when a scarlet tongue of flame spat through the darkness. A bullet whizzed close to his face.

Two can play that game, Jack thought, and raising his own revolver, he fired.

A cry of pain told Jack that he had been lucky. He stole forward on tiptoe, his finger ready on the trigger. But as he advanced his ears detected a new sound. It was the squeak of rusty hinges.

So there was a way out after all. He must risk showing a light, otherwise he might find himself in a cul-de-sac, with the man gone.

Pulling out his torch, Jack pressed the button. The beam of light revealed something startling and totally unexpected. Not six yards away, on a level with the ground, was a man's head. Abruptly it vanished.

He saw it for a second only. The face was a distorted mask of fury. But it was the face that gave him such a shock. He had seen it many times before, but then it had been the craven look of a coward.

"Soames!" Jack ejaculated aloud. He suddenly realised how Soames had disappeared. There was a trapdoor in the ground, cunningly disguised by cement. There were no steps, Jack

found, when he rushed up. He had to kneel, grip the edge with his hands, and drop.

As he dropped, a revolver barked again. Jack never knew why he wasn't hit. To his dismay, however, as he struck the ground his own revolver clattered somewhere out of reach. He had no recourse but to fight the armed Soames with his fists, if he could get to close quarters.

Jack turned recklessly, reaching out in the darkness until he touched an arm. He clung to it, and a second later he was struggling fiercely with a man who knew that his adversary stood between him and liberty.

Jack had always imagined Soames to be a weakling, but he soon found out that that was another of his many mistakes. Of wiry build, Soames had muscles of iron, and he fought like a maniac.

None of the ordinary methods of self-defence were any use in the dark. The main difficulty was not being able to see each other. They wrestled desperately, but finally Jack caught a hand making for his throat. He straightened the arm across his chest, using the latter as a kind of fulcrum, while his own right arm extended as rigid as a bar, to the man's opposite shoulder. With an oath, Soames bent his head and buried his teeth in Jack's hand.

It was a last desperate effort. Without letting go, Jack jerked him off his balance, so that his whole weight fell sharply on one taut arm. The strain was so terrible that had it been maintained the arm would have broken.

Suddenly Jack let go, and Soames stumbled. Jack's arm drew back, the fist clenched. He had to rely for timing on sheer instinct, and to judge the distance without being able to see what he was striking. Jack knew, too, that if he missed, having released his man, he was giving him a chance to get at his gun again.

But he didn't miss. His closed hand moved with the precision of a piston-rod and crashed to the point of Soames' jaw as he was falling forward. The blow was so accurate that it straightened him. Soames reeled, and then collapsed.

Jack drew a breath of relief. He switched on the light, and kneeling down, trussed the man up none too gently.

"A surprise for him when he wakes!" chuckled Jack, suddenly beginning to realise the immense importance of what had happened. Single-handed he had captured the Bridgewater ghost, since he no longer doubted that that was the part Soames had originally played.

It would also be a surprise for Lomax when he returned from London, to find that the despised butler was really the criminal. After Webster's initial blunder they had all eliminated Soames from the range of suspicion.

Now it was quite obvious how Soames had worked. He had discovered the secret of the passage, and it had enabled him on many occasions to return to the house without being seen and to play the part of a nervous wreck. The man's acting had been superb.

Staring down at him, reminiscently, Jack suddenly woke up to the fact that there was still the final mystery awaiting solution. Perhaps by this time the identity of Mr. X had been discovered.

He must get back to the house. But should he retrace his steps or endeavour to find the secret entrance?

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It was clear enough that some entrance existed. Soames had been on his way back. If Jack hadn't overtaken him he would have shortly appeared in that tattered dressing-gown, looking a picture of innocence and alarm.

Jack looked round the narrow vault in which he found himself. Some distance ahead he noticed a ladder. Deciding that Soames was safe, he walked towards it, and after testing a few rungs began to ascend. It led to a stone platform from which an almost perpendicular flight of steps rose. Climbing the steps Jack reached a short passage. It ended in a wooden wall, and half-way up was a complicated piece of mechanism which had been recently oiled.

Clearly the mechanism was controlled from the other side. But it required only a brief, concentrated effort to see how it worked. Inserting his pocket-knife, Jack released the spring. Instantly the whole panel slid noiselessly back, revealing the interior of Silas Morecombe's study.

Jack no sooner put one foot across the threshold than something descended on him like a sack of coals. For a wild moment he thought that by some miracle the other criminal had escaped. He struggled frantically, but suddenly he stopped. The massive hand that gripped his collar let go.

"Well, I'm hanged!" gasped a familiar voice. And he looked up at the apoplectic face of Inspector Webster. "You are too impulsive, inspector!" he protested. "Next time I advise you to look before you leap."

Webster glared from the boy to the gaping aperture.

"Where the blazes did you spring from?" he demanded recovering his breath. "I thought I heard shots."

"You did. I've just been having an argument with Soames. He's down there," added Jack, jerking his thumb in the direction of the passage. "I've tied him up, and at the moment he's sleeping it off."

"Soames!" gasped Webster; and his face suddenly assumed an expression of triumph. "You mean it was Soames who was in the boat?"

"It was also Soames who prowled about dressed as a ghost," said Jack. "It was Soames who scared Morecombe out of his wits. It was Soames who—"

Webster interrupted with an oath.

"I always declared that Soames was the murderer. I wanted to arrest him at the very beginning. This is where I score over Locke. You say he's down there? You are sure he's safe?"

"He's safe enough," said Jack, cheerfully. "Take my lamp. But don't go too fast—and mind the step!"

He had never seen the burly inspector move with such alacrity.

Leaving the study, Jack went outside the house, and he could see a group of

men standing around a grotesque figure, lit up by the headlamps of the car.

He made out the tall form of Locke, who seemed to be directing operations. They were removing, evidently with difficulty, the diving suit.

Jack's heart beat more quickly. At all costs he mustn't miss this. He must be there when that head was uncovered. It was the last act of the drama, the unveiling of the mysterious Mr. X.

He sprinted across the open space and arrived panting. Locke turned to greet him with an unspoken question.

"It's all right, guv'nor. I've got him safe and sound. Webster's taking charge. Did you know it was Soames?"

"I knew," nodded Locke, with a faint smile. "Did you have much trouble?"

"Oh, just a bit of a scrap; nothing to speak of."

"We've had a good deal of trouble. There was another stick of dynamite and the devil would have thrown it and blown himself up as well if I hadn't been pretty quick. As you see it's taking six men to hold him down even now."

The man was lying on the ground, his hands and feet stretched out and pinioned. The constable kneeling over him gave a final wrench to the helmet and it came off.

Jack stared in utter incredulity at the face now revealed.

"Why, it's Lomax!" he cried.

"No," said Locke quietly. "His real name is Murdoch, and he is wanted for the murder of James Lomax as well as of Morecombe."

Ferrers Locke Explains!

THE study of Ferrers Locke, overlooking Baker Street, presented a curious spectacle. A table in the middle of the room had been cleared of everything except a number of small packets, each of which was labelled. Inspector Lambton and Inspector Webster were studying these mysterious packages with considerable interest, under the watchful eye of Jack Drake, when the detective himself entered. He stood for a moment in the doorway, puffing a huge curved calabash, his hands in the pockets of his dressing-gown.

"Do you approve of my exhibits?" Ferrers Locke asked, with a smile.

"I don't see what use they are," complained Webster. "You can't expect a jury to follow all this. Besides we've got our man."

"We wouldn't have got him," replied Locke, "if I hadn't applied my particular methods. A criminal with the genius of Lewis Murdoch would have escaped through the broad mesh of official detection."

"We are waiting for you to explain," put in Lambton, before Webster could make any retort.

"Sit down and make yourselves comfortable," said Locke. "Jack, will you pass the drinks and the cigars. If you don't mind, I'll remain standing. I can talk better with all my things within reach. Before I begin, have you taken my advice, Lambton, about those points that I asked you to clear up?"

"Yes, and the result is perfectly as you predicted. Murdoch—"

"We will come to that in a moment," Locke interrupted. "It is a complicated case, and I want to expound it in my own way."

Locke leaned back against the table, shifted his pipe to the other side of his mouth and folded his arms. When he

INTRODUCTION.

Ferrers Locke, the world-famous detective, and his assistant, Jack Drake, are investigating the mysterious death of Mr. Silas Morecombe, of The Grange, Bridgewater, South Devon. Hidden beneath the waters of a lake at the back of the house is half a million pounds' worth of gold bullion, stolen years before by a gang of which Morecombe was a member. Locke is convinced that this is the key to the murder. The lake is surrounded at night by police, and suddenly Ferrers Locke switches on the lights of a stationary motor car on the bank. The beam of light reveals a boat in the middle of the lake, containing two men—one in the dress of a diver. The screech of a police whistle cuts the silence, and as the police rush out of ambush the diver raises one hand menacingly above his head. "Take care!" Locke yells frantically. "He's got dynamite!"

(Now read on.)

passage, and urged Morecombe to have it unbricked. Their original idea was that if ever they were raided by the police—and Morecombe lived in dread of being traced—they might be able to elude arrest in the same way that the plotters of a previous century had escaped. Later, they found the passage useful for staging the appearance of the ghost.

"Murdoch wasn't long in realising that I was going to prove dangerous to him. When he discovered that I was investigating the Half Moon Street affair he came post haste to London. It was he, of course, who broke into my rooms, and, after trying to shoot me, managed to get away with the burnt letters I had pieced together.

"Failing to murder me, Murdoch tried different tactics, and asked me to act for him. I think I can see the hand of Soames in that faked black-mailing letter which would have sent me trailing after a red herring across the continent, while he hastily disposed of the hidden treasure. I pretended to go, but instead I secreted myself on the moors, only venturing out at night. By then, I suppose, I had practically accumulated enough evidence to justify an arrest. But I decided it would be safer to wait until I could catch Murdoch and Soames red-handed.

"Meanwhile, Peter the Pedlar's gang provided a diversion. They had recognised Murdoch's photograph in the newspapers, and jumped to the right conclusion. Red Elliot came down to deal with Murdoch.

"You will remember that, Jack. You winged him the night you first explored the secret passage. But he never went near the passage. The man who passed you was me.

"If you take a look at these exhibits you will see more or less how I followed up the clues. You will see how the guilt gradually attaches to Murdoch. First he is a vague figure, but he slowly assumes more definite shape.

"In this envelope I have two hairs I found on the handkerchief dropped in Half Moon Street. They establish that the owner was a man with fair, reddish hair. And I assumed at the time he followed the statistical average and had blue eyes.

"Next, I have a portion of cigar-ash found in the flat where Lomax was shot. It is easily recognisable as having come from a Burmese cheroot. We were looking, therefore, for a man who smoked Burmese cheroots.

"Here, again, I have the measurements of the murderer's hand. The ball of the thumb, eleven-twelfths; and the first finger, four and one-eighth, from the knuckle to the tip of the nail. Have you compared the fingers and found them correct, Lambton?"

"Perfectly correct," was the reply.

"We now come to quite a valuable clue. A surprising piece of carelessness, for which I blame Soames rather than Murdoch. The letter that was to decoy me to Belgium was sealed with wax. But one of the seals on Morecombe's desk was used. I abstracted the seal and you can examine them together.

"Finally, I have two bullets fired from a revolver. I have examined them microscopically, and they both issued from the same gun. One was taken from this room, after the murderous attack on me. The other was found inside Lomax. I have the revolver itself, which I took from Murdoch.

"That concludes the evidence. Piece by piece, I think you will agree, it fits into a very coherent pattern. And even if it failed to secure conviction, Murdoch would go to the scaffold for throwing that dynamite when we surrounded him. One of the constables was killed outright, and the other is in a critical condition.

There was a pause, and finally Lambton rose. He held out his hand.

"It was a marvellous performance," he declared. "What astonishes me even more is the fact that you are going to allow us to take the credit."

"That part doesn't interest me," said Locke simply.

"But it interests me," said Webster rising. "It means promotion—and I've got to thank you for it, Mr. Locke. I'm afraid I've been rather brusque at times, but you see—"

"I see perfectly," broke in Locke, with a smile. "Only it's a mistake to always back the favourite. Sometimes a race is won by an outsider—like myself."

When they had both gone, after still warmer expressions of gratitude, the detective sank down, with a feeling of relief in his armchair.

"That's over, Jack. But it was a fascinating case. We had a foe worthy of our steel. You, too, did extraordinarily well."

The boy flushed with pleasure.

"I suppose, sir, the next thing will be a holiday?"

"I suppose so," sighed Locke, with almost humorous regret. "However, the mind mustn't stagnate. I may have a little time to complete my monograph on 'Spectroscopy' and its relation to criminal detection. Meanwhile"—he stretched, for his tobacco-jar—"let us refresh ourselves with a little music. Go to the gramophone and give me 'The Funeral March of a Marionette.'"

THE END.

(Whatever you do, chums, don't miss the opening chapters of George E. Rochester's latest masterpiece: "THE SHADOW OF THE GUILLOTINE!" which will appear in next week's bumper FREE GIFT issue of the MAGNET.)

THE MYSTERY OF METHUSELAH I

(Continued from page 24.)

great excitement the chums of the Remove examined it.

"If it's true—" said Nugent.

"It's true all right, fathead," said Bob. "That man Snooks knew what he was talking about. It wasn't the trike they wanted—it was this old tube! That fathead Bunter suggested that there was something valuable hidden about the old trike, but we never guessed that it was part of the blessed old thing made of a precious metal. Look here, we're in funds for the rest of the hols. now."

"If—" said Johnny Bull dubiously.

"No 'if' about it," said Bob decidedly. "Look here, we'll chuck the walking tour for a bit—get off with this tube before something happens to it. Anyhow, we should have to find something to carry the luggage now Methuselah has gone west. We'll pack the things—what those Highcliffe cads have left of them—catch a train at Oxford, and then—"

"And roll in filthy lucre!" said Nugent. "Let's! My hat! Won't Bunter be sorry he bolted!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And so it was settled.

What was worth salvaging of the wrecked baggage was packed and transported to the nearest railway station, and the Famous Five took the train. Generally the Famous Five were sufficient unto themselves, but in the case of the platinum tube they realised that an older head was needed. Late that evening they arrived at Wharton Lodge—much to the surprise of Colonel Wharton, who was still more surprised at the tale they had to tell, and evidently dubious about the value of that old tube.

But the next day Colonel Wharton took the matter in hand, and when he returned to the Lodge later it was to hand out the handsome sum of thirty-two pounds, which when divided amounted to exactly six pounds eight shillings for each of the members of the Co.

Whereat they rejoiced greatly.

"I think I told you that trike was a big bargain when I made you fellows back me up in buying it," remarked Bob Cherry. "What do you say now?"

And the chums of the Remove admitted that it was so, and they resumed their walking tour in great spirits, without the motor-trike, but much bucked by the happy solution of the mystery of Methuselah.

THE END.

(Now look out for: "THE HOUSE OF TERROR!" the first of a special thriller series of Greyfriars yarns which will appear in next week's record-breaking issue!)



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