

Real Good Pals For You—Harry Wharton & Co.—Meet Them Inside!

The Magnet

2^D



The Sleuth
of Greyfriars!



Come Into The Office, Boys!

Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers. Write to him: Editor of the "Magnet," The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped addressed envelope will ensure a reply.

HAVE you ever wondered how much—or, perhaps I should say, how little—your signature weighs? Would you believe that it is actually possible to weigh it? On show at a London exhibition recently there were some balances so accurate that they could weigh

THE THREE-MILLIONTH PART OF AN OUNCE!

which proves that they could weigh even a signature! That certainly is something you'd hardly believe. But that wasn't all the latest wonders of science that were on show. Would you believe that there are lenses which are actually smaller than the head of the smallest pin? Well, there are! The curves of these lenses are worked to an accuracy of 1,250,000th of a millimetre. This is the greatest refinement yet known. These special lenses are used for examining bacteria, such as germs of sleeping sickness, anthrax, and the like.

The above are only some of the many miracles of science that were shown at this wonderful exhibition. Other such things were thermometers which would give the temperature of buildings situated fifty feet away; instruments for prospecting for gold, minerals, and oils; apparatus used for taking films of heart-beats; and aircraft machine-gun cameras. Amongst the latter was the actual camera used in the Mount Everest Expedition at a height of 34,000 feet above sea-level, and at a temperature of 60 degrees below zero.

Two of my Birmingham readers have been having a little argument concerning

THE WORLD'S GREATEST PORT,

and they have asked me to settle it for them. That is an easy job. There is no doubt that the Port of London is the world's greatest port, and the following particulars may be of interest to my readers:

Over one thousand ships enter and leave the Port of London every week. This represents over one million net registered tonnage.

There are 45 miles of quays in the various docks, apart from accommodation at riverside wharves. The warehouses will accommodate a million tons of merchandise. Some of the lifts used are capable of raising 150 tons. The grain elevators can discharge 2,500 tons per hour.

The limit of the Port of London Authority extends for nearly 68½ miles, and stretches from Teddington Lock, on the landward side, to beyond the Nore lightship on the seaward side.

I think those few details should settle my Birmingham readers' doubts on the matter!

GREAT SCHOOL YARNS TO READ.

When you have finished this week's *MAGNET*, chums, you'll want something else to read. Take a look at the "Gem," our

grand companion paper. There's a powerful long yarn of the St. Jim's chums, entitled "His Convict Brother!"—and our own author Frank Richards, writes another gripping complete story of the Packsaddle pals, the Texan cow-town schoolboys. It's called "The Bully's Revenge!" Take my tip and get the "Gem"—you'll enjoy it as much as the *MAGNET*. It's on sale now, price 2d.

SOME time ago I mentioned some of the curiously named streets of Paris. A London reader draws my attention to one of the most curiously named places there ever were in London. Have you ever heard of

"OF ALLEY,"

and wondered how it received its name? Many years ago, George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, sold his famous old mansion, York House, for building purposes. He insisted, however, that his name should be commemorated in the names of the streets which were to occupy the site of his former residence. This was done, and the new streets were named as follows: George Court, Villiers Street, Duke Street, Of Alley, and Buckingham Street.

Incidentally the old Water Gate of York House is still to be seen. At one time the river Thames reached right up to this gate, but after the Embankment was built, the gate was left high and dry, and is now to be seen in the Embankment Gardens, some considerable distance away from the river.

While we are talking about London street-names, do you know how many "High Streets" there are in the London district? There are no fewer than forty of them—so if you are trying to find anyone who lives in "High Street," don't forget to make sure which High Street it is. There are also six "High Roads," and thirty other streets the names of which begin with "High."

Now for a few

RAPID-FIRE REPLIES

to various queries from readers:

How many motor-cars are owned in Great Britain? (C. H., of Wanstead): At the present moment there are about one and a half millions. This number is increasing every month.

Is there a waxwork show in Westminster Abbey? ("Cantbelievit," of Oxford): Yes. Wax effigies of former kings and queens of England, previously carried in their funeral processions, are on show in a part of the Abbey, and can be seen by visitors upon payment of a small fee.

How many words per minute can be sent by wireless? (K. L., of Deal): By means of the Empire Beam Wireless service, over 300 words per minute can be sent. This is a record for any system of long-distance telegraph communication.

How are the latest stereoscopic films worked? ("Cinefan," of Brighton): Two films—one over the other—are shown on the screen. One film is tinted blue and the other yellow. The spectators are

provided with similarly tinted spectacles, and the effect is to make the two separate films merge into one. The device has previously been used with "still" pictures.

TALKING ABOUT TALKIES,

I saw a very interesting film recently. It was a copy of one of the earliest films made, in the days when the only picture houses in this country were in booths and tents at fairs, and so on. This was supposed to be a "comedy," and the whole film did not take more than about five minutes to show. There was no "plot" in it at all, and the film merely showed the tangles into which a short-sighted cyclist got himself. It was very curious to see him get mixed up with such things as horse-drawn tramcars. I don't suppose many of my readers have seen horse-drawn trams in this country!

This "comedy" was followed by a "drama" which lasted about ten minutes. It was a scream—for the curious dresses and the mode of acting used in those early days of the films were sufficient to make anyone laugh. Yet, when these films were first made, people used to sit tight and be thrilled by them. It just shows how far the cinema has progressed—and how far it will progress in the future. In twenty years' time or so, we will be laughing at the "thrilling dramas" which are shown in the cinemas nowadays, and wondering whatever we saw in them!

JUST to finish my little chat, here are a few more

SURNAMES AND THEIR MEANINGS,

which may interest those of my readers who bear them:

Caine comes from Caen, and means someone who came originally from that town. Other versions of the name are Cano and Cain.

Newman meant a newcomer to a particular locality and, strange as it may seem (no pun is intended), the surname **Strange** means the same.

Playfair means a playmate, the second syllable coming from the old English word "fere," meaning a companion. The surname **Fair** comes from the same source.

Leman originally meant a well-liked person. Other similar names are Lemon and Lemman.

Neave comes from an old word for nephew, and was doubtless bestowed on its original bearer to distinguish him from his uncle. **Neaves** is another form of it.

Eame means "uncle," and so do the names Ames, Erme, and Neame. Note the very slight difference between "Neave" and "Neame."

That must be all for the time being, chums, as my space is running short.

Now for next week's programme. First and foremost is

"FOOLED ON THE FIRST!"

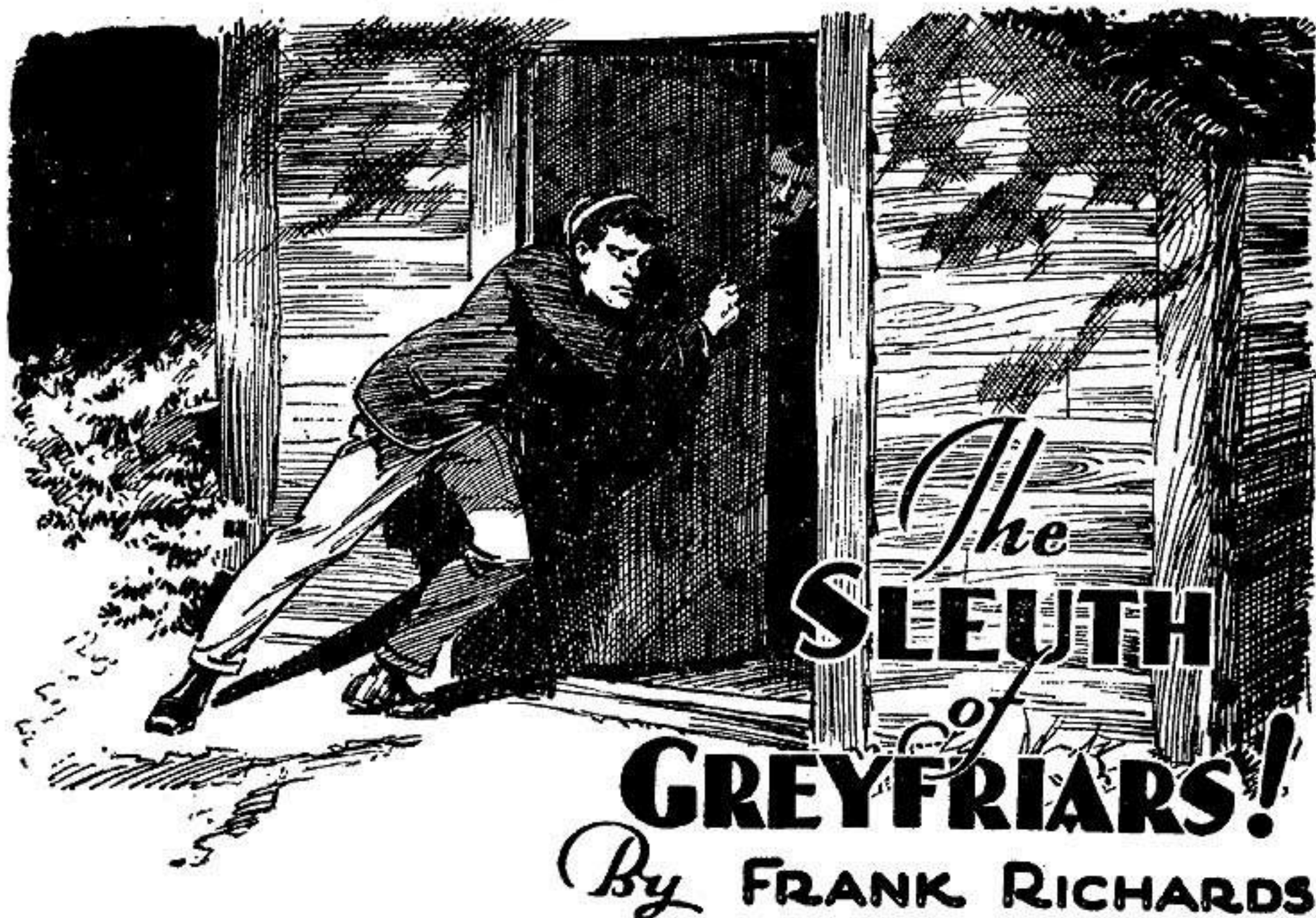
By Frank Richards,

which is certainly one of the best yarns this popular author has yet given us. You'll enjoy every line of it. Don't forget to write and let me know what you think of our present series of Greyfriars stories. Frank Richards is always pleased to hear, through me, what readers think of his yarn.

You'll find plenty to make you laugh in our topical "Greyfriars Herald" supplement. Then come further gripping chapters of Geo. E. Rochester's great pirate story, "Linesman," as usual, will be answering more readers' Soccer queries, while I, myself, will be pleased to answer any other queries you wish to send along.

Cheerio, till next week.

YOUR EDITOR.



—AND HORACE COKER, THE CHAMPION CHUMP OF GREYFRIARS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Medicine for Bunter!

GROAN! It was a sound of pain and woe.

Remove fellows, in the passage, hearing that dismal and doleful sound from Study No. 7, were quite startled.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry, glancing round towards the open doorway of Study No. 7. "That's Bunter! Is poor old Bunter pegging out?"

"Sounds like it!" grinned Frank Nugent.

Groan!

Harry Wharton pushed the door of Study No. 7 farther open, and looked in. That horrid groan was really quite alarming.

It was a half-holiday at Greyfriars. Had there been a compulsory practice that afternoon nobody would have been surprised to find that Billy Bunter was ill! Bunter had a way of developing sudden illness on such occasions.

But there was no football that day. The Remove were going on a Scout run. The Famous Five were already in Scout outfit, waiting for other fellows to get ready.

Most of the Form joined up for a Scout run. Still, it was not compulsory. There was no need for Bunter to develop one of his sudden attacks, such as came on just before compulsory games practice.

Evidently, however, one of those attacks had come on. There was Bunter, extended in the study armchair, groaning away as if for a wager.

As the captain of the Remove looked in, Bunter blinked at him through his

big spectacles, and gave utterance to another deep groan—a real hair-raiser! "What on earth's the matter?" asked Harry.

Groan!

"Too many tarts?" asked Johnny Bull.

Groan!

"Is the painfulness terrific, my esteemed and idiotic Bunter?" asked

Horace Coker, of the Fifth Form, is a great man, in his own estimation. He thinks that Sexton Blake has nothing on him as a detective! It is natural, then, that when he scents a mystery in the neighbourhood of Greyfriars, Horace, the sleuth, gets on the track at once—and makes the usual hash of it!

Hurree Janset Ram Singh sympathetically.

Groan!

Bunter seemed unable to speak. But he was able to groan—and he did! He groaned horribly.

Three or four more fellows came along and joined the Famous Five at the doorway. All of them looked at Billy Bunter with interest.

"Over-feeding!" remarked Skinner.

Groan!

"Quech had his eye on Bunter at dinner!" said Herbert Vernon-Smith.

"He had only seven helpings. Or was it eight, Bunter?"

Groan!

"Where have you got a pain, Bunter?" asked Wharton, puzzled.

"Ow!" groaned Bunter. "All over! It's all over—"

"Well, if it's all over, what are you groaning about?" asked Bob Cherry.

"You silly idiot! I mean it's all over—not that it's all over!"

"Lucid!" remarked the Bunder.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beasts!" groaned Bunter. "Cackling while a fellow is lying in fearful agony!"

"Lying all right!" agreed Smithy. "I don't know about the agony."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's all over me!" groaned Bunter. "Fearful pains, like—like burning daggers, in my—my legs and—and arms and—and all over, in fact! I think I've got plumbago—"

"Which?" gasped Bob.

"I mean lumbago! And—and a touch of pneumonia in my legs—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cackle!" said Bunter bitterly. "If you fellows ever get pneumonia in your legs, you'll know what it's like!"

Whereat the Removites in the doorway roared. They did not think it really probable that they would ever get pneumonia in their legs!

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bob. "Sure you've got it in your legs, Bunter?"

"Ow! Yes! It runs in our family!" groaned Bunter. "My—my grandfather was lame with it—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What on earth is he gammoning for?" asked Harry Wharton. "It's not games practice to-day!"

"Beast! I'm suffering fearfully!"

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"You blithering Owl!" roared Johnny Bull. "You don't have pneumonia in your legs!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "Don't you?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I mean rheumatism! I—I wonder what made me say pneumonia! What I mean is, plumbago—that is, rheumatism. It—it's awful—fearful pains like red-hot needles! I say, you fellows, I shan't be able to come on the Scout run this afternoon! Ow!"

"That's all right!" said Wharton, in wonder. "Nobody need join up unless he likes. No need for gammon!"

"Of course, I'm keen on it——"

"Yes, you look keen!"

"But when a fellow's fearfully ill with pneumonia—I mean rheumatism—a fellow can't run!" said Bunter. "I couldn't run if—if—if——"

"If Tubb of the Third was after you?" asked Smithy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast! You'll have to leave me out, Wharton."

"Pleased!" answered Wharton.

"And—and you'll tell Toddy?"

"Toddy?" repeated the captain of the Remove.

"Yes, tell Toddy I'm fearfully ill and can't come! Don't let him come here bothering me, see? You can see how ill I am!"

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

The mystery was solved!

Peter Todd, who was lord and master in Study No. 7, was as energetic as Billy Bunter was slack. Evidently Peter had insisted upon Bunter joining in the Scout run. Officially, it was not compulsory. But it might as well have been when Toddy put his foot down, and backed it up with a fives bat! Bunter's only resource was one of his sudden attacks of illness!

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" snapped Bunter. "There's nothing funny in a fellow being laid up with sciatica—I mean plumbago—that is rheumatism—I mean——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Tell Toddy I can't come——"

"Here comes Toddy!" called out Hazeldene from the passage.

Peter Todd, arrayed for scouting—a garb which showed off his bony limbs to great advantage—came up the passage. The grinning juniors made way for him to get into the study.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, Toddy!" roared Bob Cherry. "Bunter can't come! He's laid up with pneumonia in his legs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is he?" said Peter. "All right! I'll give him something to cure all that!" Toddy marched into the study, looked round, and picked up a fives bat from the shelf—a proceeding which Billy Bunter eyed with deep uneasiness, through his big spectacles. "Not changed yet, Bunter?"

"I—I say, Toddy, I—I can't come, really!" gasped Bunter. "All these fellows can see how fearfully ill I am. I say, Wharton, you're captain of the Form—you're not going to let that beast make a fellow come along when he's fearfully ill?"

"No fear!" agreed Wharton.

Billy Bunter brightened up.

"You hear that, Toddy?"

"If you're fearfully ill, old chap, you stay in," said Harry. "But Toddy says he can cure you. I think we ought to give Toddy a chance."

"I've got his medicine here!" said Toddy. He flourished the fives bat. "Get up and take your medicine, Bunter!"

"Beast!" roared Bunter.

"Are you getting out of that chair?"

"No, you beast! I'm too ill—fearfully ill!"

Peter Todd took a firm grip on the armchair, and tilted it backwards. There was a roar from Bunter, as he rolled out on the carpet.

The fives bat descended as Bunter rolled. It rang on the tightest trousers at Greyfriars like a pistol-shot.

"Feeling better?" asked Peter.

"Yow-owl! No! Worse!" roared Bunter.

Whack!

"Feeling better now?"

"Whoop! Oh crikey! Leave off, you beast! I—I—I'm better—much better! Owl! Keep that fives bat away!"

"There's some more medicine if you're not quite well!"

"I'm quite well!" shrieked Bunter.

"It—it's quite passed off! Beast! Yaroooh!"

"I told you I could cure him," said Toddy cheerfully. "Nothing like a fives bat for these sudden attacks. To be taken externally, carefully laid on."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You've got five minutes to get ready, Bunter! If you're not changed by then——"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter was changed for scouting, and ready to start, under the five minutes!

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THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Missing Man!

"HAZELDENE!" said Coker of the Fifth thoughtfully. "There's a kid of that name in the Remove."

"Is there?" yawned Potter.

"What about it?" asked Greene.

Potter and Greene, of the Fifth Form, were not in the slightest degree interested in Hazeldene, or any other member of the Lower Fourth. Had they been asked, they might possibly have remembered that they had heard that there was a Remove junior named Hazeldene. But such a trivial circumstance was not worth the trouble of remembering so far as they could see.

Between the Fifth Form and the Remove, there was a great gulf fixed. Across that great gulf the seniors of the Fifth hardly recognised the existence of the juniors of the Remove.

Neither was Hazel a prominent member of his Form, like the Boulder, or Harry Wharton, or Bob Cherry. He was just one of the crowd in a numerous Form—a nobody among nobodies.

So why Horace Coker displayed any interest in him was a mystery to his pals. Potter and Greene—a mystery they had no desire to solve, however. Whenever Coker talked, and on whatsoever subject, their only desire, as a rule, was that Coker would leave off talking. In this respect, Coker seldom gratified his friends.

Coker was sitting in the Fifth Form games study, with an illustrated newspaper open in his hands. Potter and Greene were ready to start for the pictures at Courtfield.

They could, of course, have started without Coker. But they did not want to arrive at the pictures without Coker! Coker was going to stand the seats, not to mention tea at the bunshop afterwards. So Coker's company, not in itself attractive, was indispensable.

"Yes," said Coker, with a thoughtful nod over his newspaper, "I happen to remember the kid. He's got a sister at Cliff House School, over at Pegg. I remember his sister—her name's Marjorie—quite a nice girl! I had a talk to her the other day. She's not half such a

silly idiot as most girls! I told her so——"

"Eh?"

"She had to get back to school, or we should have had a nice long talk," said Coker. "I think I rather amused her with my conversation."

"I've no doubt you did!" murmured Potter.

"Well, some fellows can talk!" said Coker modestly. "Some fellows are like bears, not to say pigs, in the company of girls. You fellows, for instance——"

"Eh?" said Greene.

"But I think they rather like me! You see, I can talk down to them—easy things they can understand! Rather like talking to you chaps, only more so!" explained Coker.

Potter and Greene made no answer to that. They considered up-ending Coker, and stuffing his illustrated newspaper down the back of his neck.

But it was fairly certain that, after that, Horace Coker would not have stood the seats at Courtfield Picture Palace.

So Coker, unconscious of his narrow escape, remained right end uppermost, and went on talking.

"But to come back to what I was saying, there's a kid named Hazeldene in the Remove! I wonder if he's a relation?"

"A relation of his sister at Cliff House?" said Potter blankly. "Yes, I should think it probable."

"Don't be an ass, Potter! I mean, a relation of that chap who has bunked from Brighton."

"Anybody bunked from Brighton?"

"Oh, you haven't seen the paper! Look at this!"

"It's about time we started for Courtfield, if we're going——"

"Look at this," repeated Coker calmly.

Potter and Greene looked. Then they stared a little. On the back page of the newspaper was a photograph of a man in the forties, with a rather good-looking, but somewhat weak face, clean-shaven. Under it were the words:

"John James Hazeldene, Whom the police are anxious to interview, in connection with the robbery at the Brighton and County Bank. Last seen near Friardale, in Kent."

Potter whistled. If John James Hazeldene had last been seen near Friardale, in Kent, he was not far from Greyfriars School, the village of Friardale being less than a mile away. Now they understood Coker's interest in the fact that there was a fellow named Hazeldene in the Remove.

"I wonder if he's a relation?" went on Coker thoughtfully. "This man's chivvy looks rather like—older, of course, but there's a resemblance. I fancy he's a relation. You fellows see what that means?"

"It means that they're related, if they're relations!" suggested Greene solemnly.

"Don't be a fathead, Greeney! I know that!"

"Oh, you know that?" asked Greene, in surprise.

"Yes, ass! What I mean is, look at it!" said Coker. "Here's a man named Hazeldene bunks after robbing a bank——"

"It doesn't say he robbed the bank," objected Potter. "It only says that the police are anxious to interview him."

"Don't you know what that means?" demanded Coker.

"Yes. It means that they want an interview with him!" said Potter blandly.



Peter Todd tilted the armchair backwards, and there was a roar from Bunter as he rolled out on the carpet. The fives bat descended as Bunter rolled. "Feeling better?" asked Peter. "Whoop! Oh crikey! Leave off, you beast! I—I—I'm better—much better—ow! Keep that fives bat away!" wailed the fat Removite.

"You silly ass! I know that—"
"What a lot Coker knows!" murmured Greene.

"It means," elucidated Coker, "that the fellow's on the run, and they jolly well want him. If they get that interview, they won't say good-bye to him after it. They'll snaffle him." Coker gave an emphatic nod. "It's a sort of will-you-walk-into-my-parlour-said-the-spider-to-the-fly sort of bizney! See?"

"I say, if we're going to the pictures—"

"Never mind the pictures. I'm pretty keen on this," said Coker. "Here's a man bunks from Brighton after robbing a bank—"

"But it doesn't say—"

"Do shut up! Here's a man bunks from Brighton after robbing a bank. Where does he hike off to? A village near the school where there's a chap of the same name. What does it look like? Now, last week, you fellows may remember that Inspector Grimes came along from Courtfield two or three times, to see Quelch, the Remove beak. A lot of fellows noticed it, and wondered what it meant, at the time. I fancy I know what it meant."

Potter and Greene looked grave now. They could see what it implied, as well as Coker could.

"Look here, Coker, shove that paper into the fire," said Potter uneasily. "I don't know that kid in the Remove, but it's not his fault if a relation of his has come an awful mucker. I say, it would be pretty rotten for him if it got all over the school."

"Yes, shove it in the fire and say nothing about it!" agreed Greene. "You don't want to start that sort of talk in the school, Coker."

Coker looked at his friends with calm scorn. Then he detached the printed

photograph from the newspaper, and carefully packed it away in his pocket.

"I suppose you fellows can't help being silly asses!" he remarked. "I'm going to look into this. If there's a bank robber hanging about the place, the sooner he's snaffled the better. Every member of the public is bound to help the authorities snaffle a crook."

"But it doesn't say—"

"A fellow has his duty to do!" said Coker loftily.

"A fellow ought to mind his own business!" remarked Potter.

"Don't be an ass, Potter!" Minding his own business was not an idea that appealed to Horace Coker.

"Well, look here, are we going to the pictures?" demanded Greene restively.

They had waited half an hour for Coker at least, and they were getting a little impatient.

"Eh! Pictures!" said Coker. "Did you say pictures? No, I've no time for the pictures now! I'm going to look for that kid Hazeldene—"

"You're not coming to the pictures?"

"No; you fellows go without me," said Coker, crossing to the door of the games study. "I don't mind."

Now, Potter and Greene did not mind, either, if they went without Coker. In fact, they preferred it. But Coker was essential! Coker had to pay for the seats, stand tea at the bun-shop, and a taxi back. It was all very well for Coker to tell them in this airy way to go without him! Gladly as they would have done so, they couldn't!

"Look here, Coker, we've been waiting for you!" said Potter. "Look here, I say, you'd better come."

"Rot!" said Coker.

"After we've waited," hooted Greene, "and listened to your gabble, into the bargain—"

"What?" roared Coker.

"Are you coming or not?" demanded Potter, with heat.

"I've said not! Can't you fellows even go to the pictures without me to take care of you?" snapped Coker scornfully. "Afraid of getting run over?"

Potter and Greene did not answer that.

It was clear that Coker was not coming, and the excursion was off. They had to find some other occupation for the afternoon. First, however, they decided to deal faithfully with Coker. They were not going to wait half an hour, and listen to Coker's "gabble," for nothing.

So, as Horace Coker opened the door of the games study to stride out, he found himself suddenly grasped by the shoulders from behind.

Coker sat down suddenly.

"Why—what—Wow!" spluttered the surprised Coker. "What the thump are—Yarooooooooop!"

Why Potter and Greene tapped his head on the floor of the games study Coker did not know. But he knew that they tapped it! He knew that they tapped it hard!

Leaving him on the floor in a dizzy state, Potter and Greene departed, rather hastily. They slammed the door of the games study on Coker and left him.

"Why, I—I—I'll—" gasped Coker. He sat up and rubbed his head. Coker's head was hard, but the old oak planks were harder. "I—I—I'll—I'll spifficate 'em! I'll—"

Horace scrambled up and dragged open the door. It was rather fortunate for Potter and Greene that they were already out of sight.

Coker spent ten minutes looking for them—luckily, in a wrong direction.

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Then, realising that he was wasting his valuable time, he went to look for Hazeldene of the Remove—to make the happy discovery that ten minutes or so ago Hazeldene of the Remove had gone out of gates with most of his Form, on a Scout run.

"Cheeky little tick!" growled Coker. It was, of course, cheeky for any junior not to be on the spot when Coker of the Fifth wanted him. However, there it was—Hazel was not on the spot! And Coker, having inquired of Gosling which direction the Remove Scouts had taken, tramped down Friar-dale Lane after them, his long legs covering the ground at great speed.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Coker Wants to Know!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Buck up, Bunter!"

"Shan't!" roared Bunter.

Bucking up was not in Billy Bunter's line. Slacking down suited him ever so much better.

The Scouts were going down Friar-dale Lane, and were already a quarter of a mile from the school. A quarter of a mile was enough for Bunter—in fact, too much. Bunter would have dropped out in the first hundred yards, but for one pressing reason. That was Peter Todd's staff. It pressed into Bunter's podgy back when he slowed down.

"I say, you fellows, don't race!" howled Bunter. "Think I'm going to be walked off my legs?"

"For goodness' sake let that fat slacker chuck it!" exclaimed Hazeldene. "What's the good of rolling that barrel along?"

"Good for him, if not for us!" explained Toddy. "No fellow in Study

No. 7 is going to slack! Bunter's going through it!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"It will do you good, Bunter," he said. "You remember how you came home the other day when Smithy stranded you the other side of Lantham Woods. You'd have perished on the way if Marjorie Hazeldene hadn't picked you up and got you home on her bike. You want some exercise."

"I could walk your head off, and chance it!" gasped Bunter. "And Marjorie never helped me home, either—"

"What?" roared Bob Cherry. "Why, a crowd of fellows saw you on the carrier of her bike!"

"Nothing of the sort! Marjorie was certainly rather keen on my society! Girls are, you know! Yaroooh!" added Bunter in a wild roar. "Keep that staff away, Toddy, you beast!"

But it was not Toddy this time! It was Hazel who had given the fat Owl of the Remove a lunge. It was rather a savage lunge, too, and it made Billy Bunter gurggle.

"Urrgh! Beast! I say—Groooh!"

"Kick him!" said Bob Cherry.

"The kickfulness is the proper caper!" agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Billy Bunter dodged wildly.

"I say, you fellows! Keep off, you beasts! You needn't show your rotten jealousy like that, Bob Cherry! It's not my fault if I'm a good-looking chap and girls take a fancy to me, and I can jolly well say—Leave off, you beast! Yarooooooh!"

"Stop!"

It was a shout from behind in the lane.

Quite a number of the Scouts were poking Bunter, and he was hopping

wildly to elude the lunges of the staves. But they gave Bunter a rest, and looked round as a powerful voice called on them to stop.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! It's Coker!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What does Coker want? Are we stopping?"

"No fear!" answered Harry Wharton. "Smithy and Redwing have had their start, and we're not losing time."

The Scouts tramped on. Vernon-Smith and Redwing had long disappeared ahead. The Scouts were going to track them through the wood, if they could; good practice in sign-reading. From Coker of the Fifth, coming on astern, came another roar:

"Stop!"

Bob Cherry glanced round and kissed his hand to Coker! But he did not stop. Nobody stopped. Nobody wanted to stop, except Bunter—and Bunter still had the same pressing reason for keeping on.

Coker, frowning wrathfully, broke into a rapid run. Remove juniors, of course, ought to have stopped instantly at a shout from Coker. But they didn't, and Horace had to put it on.

He came up, panting and breathless. "You cheeky young ticks! I called to you to stop!" panted Coker. "I've a jolly good mind—"

"Gammon!" said Bob Cherry. "If you've got a mind at all, old bean, it's not a jolly good one!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker clenched a big fist. But he unclenched it again. He was not there for a row with the Remove. And possibly it dawned, even on Coker's powerful brain, that he could not handle twenty fellows at once. They smiled at him, quite ready for trouble if Coker began. They did not want to waste time; still, they would have spared a couple of minutes to dust up Friar-dale Lane with Coker of the Fifth. But Horace controlled his wrath.

"I've come after Hazeldene!" he snapped. "Is he here? Oh, here you are!"

Hazel stared at him.

"Yes, here I am," he answered. "What the thump do you want me for?"

"I want to speak to you," grunted Coker. "You other kids can go on. I don't want you! You stay behind, Hazeldene!"

"Go and eat coke!" answered Hazel.

He walked on with the other juniors. Coker made a stride at him. He lifted a hand to grasp Hazel by the shoulder and jerk him back. A dozen staves rose in the air as one! Coker did not grasp Hazel's shoulder.

"Look here, Hazeldene, you little fool!" bawled Coker.

"Look here, Coker, you big fool!" retorted Hazel.

"Will you stop?"

"No, I won't!"

Hazel was not a specially obliging fellow, even among his friends. He had no desire whatever to oblige Coker of the Fifth, anyhow. What Coker had to say to him was a mystery to the Remove; and he did not want to hear it, whatever it was. He walked on.

Coker breathed hard. He tramped on with the Scouts, towering over them. Some of them were very sturdy fellows, but Coker was a large size in Fifth Formers.

"Look here, Hazel, you young ass—" he recommenced.

"Oh, shut up!" said Hazel.

Coker almost exploded.

"You cheeky little tick!" he gasped.

"Oh, run away and play!" said Hazel.

"I've got to ask you something," roared Coker. "I was going to ask you

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quietly, but if you prefer to have it out before all these fags, I don't mind, if you don't. See?"

Hazel stared at him.

"What are you driving at, you silly fathead?" he asked.

"I want to know whether the bank robber that bunked from Brighton a few weeks ago, named John James Hazeldene, is a relation of yours?" said Coker.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Beastly for Bessie Bunter!

"I SAY you girls!"

Bessie Bunter, the plumpiest girl at Cliff House School, blinked through the big spectacles which accentuated her resemblance to her brother Billy, at Greyfriars, with a very serious expression on her fat face.

Wednesday afternoon was a half-holiday at Cliff House, as well as at Greyfriars. There was net-ball that afternoon at Cliff House, and most of the Fourth were going to be busy. Bessie Bunter rolled up to Barbara Redfern, Mabel Lynn, and Clara Trevlyn, and interrupted net-ball talk. Babs waved her away.

In such circumstances, Billy Bunter, at Greyfriars, would have been told to shut up, roll away, or ring off. But though the Cliff House girls did not tell Bessie Bunter to shut up, roll away, or ring off, they made it clear that they were not frightfully keen on conversation from Bessie.

"I say, you girls——" went on the fat Miss Bunter, unheeding. "I say, Marjorie's gone out again!"

"Bow-wow!" said Miss Clara.

"Every half-holiday now, Marjorie goes out on her bike," said Bessie, with a serious blink. "I fancied she went over to Greyfriars to see that brother of hers, at first——"

"Run away, Bessie!" said Babs.

"But she doesn't. You see, I asked her last Saturday to take a message to my brother, Billy, about that half-a-crown he owes me, and it came out that she wasn't going to Greyfriars——"

"Wound up!" said Clara, with a sigh.

"Oh, really, Clara! I say, I'm worried about Marjorie," said Bessie Bunter. "I say, where does she clear off to?"

"I'd like Miss Bellew to hear that," said Mabel Lynn severely. "She would give you lines for ending a sentence with a preposition."

"Oh, really, Mabs! Every half-holiday she goes off on her bike," said Bessie. "Sometimes she doesn't even come in for tea. I can tell you, girls, it's jolly mysterious. She even missed a roll-call one day, and the Bull jawed her. I've asked her a dozen times what's up, and what do you think she says?"

"Does she say you're an inquisitive little beast?" asked Clara.

"Cat!" snapped Bessie. "She says it's her own business, not mine. But I say, it's jolly mysterious, isn't it? I offered to go with her to-day, and she refused. Almost snappish!"

"And you're such good company!" remarked Clara.

At which there was a laugh from a group of girls.

"I've noticed that she always has the carrier fixed on her bike," went on Bessie. "Looks as if she goes shopping. But she never brings anything back with her. I can tell you, girls, there's something up! I think, as Marjorie's friends, you ought to look into it."

"Rot!" said Miss Clara, frowning.

As a matter of fact, Clara was rather mystified and worried by those excursions of Marjorie Hazeldene's, which she never explained, even to her dearest pal, and which all the girls were beginning to notice. If Miss Primrose, the Head, or Miss Bellew, the Form-mistress, came to take note of those mysterious excursions, it was certain that they would want to know. Still, it was quite certain that the matter did not concern Bessie Bunter.

But Bessie, like Brother Billy, was deeply interested in matters that did not concern her. Inquisitiveness ran in the Bunter family.

"Well, you girls may not care about it, but as Marjorie's best friend, I do!" said Bessie, with dignity. "What about chucking net-ball this afternoon——"

"What?"

"And going after Marjorie on our bikes."

"Eh?"

"And seeing what's up."

"You inquisitive little wretch!" said Barbara.

"Spying little beast, you mean!" said Clara.

"For goodness' sake, Bessie, run away and be quiet!" said Mabs.

Bessie blinked at them through her spectacles indignantly. Bessie was far from admitting, even to herself, that she was inquisitive. If Bessie had any faults—which seemed to be the general impression at Cliff House—they were quite hidden from Bessie. Bessie, indeed, regarded herself as the only really nice girl at Cliff House School!

"Cats!" said Bessie.

"Do run away——"

"Oh, I'll go," said Bessie loftily. "Play your silly net-ball, if you like! I'm going after Marjorie, to—to see that she comes to no harm. She always goes the same way—by the lane that leads into the Lantham road. If you girls like to come with me——"

"Look here, Bessie——"

"You'll do nothing of the sort!"

"Little beast!" said Clara.

Bessie sniffed.

"Cats!" she answered.

And Bessie rolled away.

Other girls, as well as Bessie, rather wondered why Marjorie cleared off on her bike without any of her usual companions. On this special afternoon, too, she was cutting net-ball, and she was usually keen on the game. Cliff House girls were allowed to take bicycle rides on half-holidays, certainly; but there was no doubt that Marjorie Hazeldene was rather going over the understood limits. Still, it was her own affair, so far as the rest of the Fourth were concerned.

Bessie, however, was evidently under the impression that it was her affair, also. Was she not Marjorie's best pal? True, Marjorie was ignorant of that fact! Whether it was friendship, or whether it was curiosity, Bessie Bunter was going to look into this mystery.

She rolled away to the bike-shed. Miss Clara glanced after her, frowning.

"Inquisitive little animal!" she remarked.

"Oh, never mind Bessie!" said Barbara. "In fact, bother Bessie!"

Babs dismissed Bessie from consideration.

Clara, however, detached herself from the group and walked after Bessie. Whatever might be the mysterious reason why Marjorie Hazeldene went on those rides, it was fairly certain that she did not want a fat Nosey Parker nosing into the matter. Clara, though perhaps a little sore at her friend's want of confidence in telling her

nothing, was still prepared to play a friend's part.

Bessie, in the bike-shed, blinked over the machines through her big spectacles. Her own machine was not in the best condition, and she was considering whether to borrow another girl's.

Before the fat girl had solved that problem the door of the bike-shed suddenly closed with a slam.

Bessie blinked round.

For a moment she supposed that the wind from the sea had slammed the door. It was a windy March day. But the next moment she heard the key click.

Old Cutts always left the key in the outside of that door, ready for locking up at night.

"Oh crikey!" exclaimed Bessie.

She jumped to the door and smacked at it.

"Here, come and let me out!" she bawled.

Why old Cutts had come along and locked the shed early in the afternoon was a mystery. It did not occur to Bessie that it was Miss Clara who had done the trick. She smacked and thumped on the door.

"Let me out!" bawled Bessie. "What have you locked me in for, you old duffer? Unlock that door!"

There was no reply.

Whoever had locked the door—old Cutts or not—was gone! Bessie thumped and smacked in vain.

"Oh dear!" gasped Bessie Bunter, desisting at last.

She was a prisoner in the bike-shed. And she really had no time to lose. It was easy to follow Marjorie in the lane, but when she turned into the Lantham road, she would be lost. Whether she was going to turn towards Lantham, or in the other direction towards Courtfield, Bessie did not know. She had to get out of that shed.

There was a window! It was small! And there was a bar across it. Bessie got the window open.

Any Cliff House girl but Bessie Bunter could have squeezed easily between the bar and the window-frame. Bessie had no doubt that she could do the same. Bessie was aware that she had a good figure. She was not aware that it was double-width. That fact, which leaped to every other eye, never leaped to Bessie's.

She started to squeeze through the window.

It is said that where the head can go, the body can follow. But that is not always the case. Bessie's head went through, but Bessie's circumference was another matter.

She squeezed and squeezed! She gasped and gasped! Her plump face became like unto a peony in hue. Her little round eyes almost popped through her big round glasses.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bessie.

There was nothing doing! It was borne in upon her mind that she could not squeeze through.

The only thing to be done was to get back into the shed. To Bessie's horror, she discovered that she could not do that, either. She had squeezed so far through the narrow aperture that she was jammed in tight—there was no escape either way!

"Oh!" gasped Bessie. "Ow! Oh crikey! Oh dear! Wooooooooooooogh!"

She wriggled wildly.

But there she was—jammed! A little less than half of Bessie was outside. A little more than half was inside. And there she stuck!

"Ow! Help!" yelled Bessie. "I say,

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you girls! Yaroooh! Help! I'm fixed! I say, come and help me! Cats!"

But by that time the net-ball game was going on, and the Cliff House girls had no ears and no eyes for what might be happening at the bike-shed. Unless somebody happened to come along for a jigger, Bessie was a prisoner.

"Help! Come here! Cats! I say, you girls! Oh dear! Yooop!" yelled Bessie Bunter. "Oh crikey! Cats!"

Distant calling could be heard from the direction of the net-ball ground. But no other answer came to Bessie's fat ears. She wriggled and yelled and howled in vain.

It was rather fortunate for Bessie that Miss Bellew was taking a stroll in the grounds with Miss Bullivant, the mathematics mistress, that afternoon, and that their stroll led them down the path by the bike-shed.

"Dear me! What is that?" ejaculated the Fourth Form mistress, suddenly, as Bessie's wild howls impinged on her eardrums.

Miss Bullivant frowned. The Bull was a severe lady.

"A noisy girl!" she said. "A very noisy girl! I do not approve of such exuberance of expression, Miss Bellew. Such an uproar may be all very well in a boys' school—"

"Yaroooooh! Whoop! Help!"

"It sounds as if something has happened," said Miss Bellew. "Let us see."

They saw—as they arrived at the bike-shed. They stared blankly at the red face and untidy hair of the struggling Bessie in the window. Miss Bullivant's gold-rimmed glasses almost slid off her Roman nose in her astonishment.

"Bessie!" exclaimed Miss Bellew.

"Upon my word!" gasped the Bull.

"Ow! Yow! Can't you help me?" shrieked Bessie. "Wow!"

"Climbing through a window—like some rough boy!" snapped Miss Bullivant. "Such conduct—"

"Wow-ow-ow!"

"Get back at once, Bessie!" said Miss Bellew.

"Ow! I—I c-c-can't!" wailed Bessie.

"Dear me! Then get out—"

"I—I kik-kik-can't!"

"The foolish girl is jammed in the window!" said Miss Bullivant. "Such absurd, monkey-like pranks—"

"I couldn't help it!" wailed Bessie. "Somebody's locked me in, and I tried to get out of the window, and I kik-kik-kik-can't!"

"Dear me! The door is locked!" said Miss Bullivant, making that discovery. "Absurd!" She unlocked the door.

"Now, Bessie—"

"Yaroooooh!"

"Help her from the outside, Miss Bellew. I will assist from within," said Miss Bullivant.

"Yow-ow-ow! I'm getting a pain!" squealed Bessie. "I'm getting a pain in my tummy!"

"Silence!" hooted the Bull.

Miss Bellew, outside the window, helped to push Bessie in. Miss Bullivant, inside, strove to pull her in. But she was tightly packed, and it was not an easy task. Two fat legs thrashed in the air, and there was a sudden wild howl from Miss Bullivant as a foot landed under her chin.

"Yoo-yoo-hoo-whoop!" spluttered the Bull.

"Ow! Wow! Ow!"

"Do not kick!" shrieked Miss Bullivant. "Have you no common sense? If you kick again, I will— Whoop!" Bessie kicked again. "Warooop!" yelled the Bull. "Ow! My nose! Oh! Miss Bellew, I see nothing—nothing"

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whatever—to laugh at! I shall be glad, Miss Bellew, to know at what you are laughing?"

Miss Bellew suppressed her emotions.

"One more effort!" she gasped.

One more effort did it! Bessie Bunter was extracted from the window, like a tooth at the dentist's. She sat on the floor and roared. The Bull gave her a most expressive look as she turned away, rubbing her chin and her nose—both prominent, and both damaged. But for the presence of the Form-mistress, the Bull would probably have given Bessie Bunter something additional to roar for—or, as she would have expressed it more precisely, for which to roar! As it was, she marched off, snorting.

Bessie Bunter did not go out on a bike that afternoon. After her wild adventures as a window-climber, she did not feel equal to cycling.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Shadowed Schoolgirl!

"HOLD on!" said Herbert Vernon-Smith.

"They'll be after us!" said Redwing.

"Never mind that—hold on!" rapped the Bounder.

Somewhat puzzled, Tom Redwing came to a halt. The two juniors had passed through Friardale Wood, and emerged on a slanting hillside that led down into Pegg Lane. Somewhere behind them, the crowd of Greyfriars Scouts were on their trail; they had been given only a brief start. Both of them were keen to beat the pack, the Bounder the keener of the two; but it was the Bounder who called halt, standing by a tree and staring across the open country beyond the wood.

The scene was worth stopping for if they had time. From the height where they stood, they overlooked a network of lanes that ran amid woods and fields, with the fishing village of Pegg and Cliff House School in the farther distance, and, beyond, the rolling sea, bright in the spring sunshine. But it was not the scenery for which the Bounder had stopped. He lifted his stave and pointed to the figure of a cyclist in the distance, coming away from the direction of Cliff House.

"That's Marjorie Hazeldene!" he said.

Tom Redwing glanced at the distant figure—recognisable though distant. He nodded.

"No time to stop and speak now, Smithy," he said.

"Fathead!"

"Well, what—"

"Look at that Johnny on the bike behind."

Redwing's glance went farther. Some distance behind the Cliff House girl was a cyclist. He was a portly and evidently rather elderly man, but a soft-brimmed hat was slouched so low over his face that nothing could be seen of his features but a plump chin. Redwing noticed that he was keeping a precise distance behind Marjorie's bike, never gaining on her, and never losing ground.

"That man's following Marjorie Hazeldene," said Smithy quietly. "I noticed him a few minutes ago. She stopped to fix something, and he stopped, too. He went on again the minute she did. He looks a bit podgy, but he could beat her easily on the bike if he liked. He doesn't want to. He's just keeping level."

"Oh!" said Tom. His face became serious, and he watched the two riders with a new interest.

"She's stopped again!" said Vernon-Smith. "Now watch!"

Marjorie stopped and dismounted. She stooped beside her bike, and now that they were keenly watching, the two juniors noticed that she looked back, while apparently fumbling with something on the machine.

Redwing caught his breath.

"Smithy! She knows—or suspects—that that man is following her!" he exclaimed. "That's why she's stopping."

"Right!" said Smithy.

The man in the slouched hat, if he was really shadowing the schoolgirl, was doing his work well. He seemed to know, as if by instinct, that she was stopping to look back, for he shot from the road into the hedge, jamming himself and his machine out of sight there, before the girl's eyes could pick him up.

Unaware of the eyes on him from the high hillside at a distance, he remained there, only stretching out his neck to spot Marjorie when she resumed her way. That the Cliff House girl did in a minute or so, and from her look Smithy and Redwing had an impression that she was relieved, and no longer fancied that she was followed.

But she was! From the thick hawthorn hedge the portly cyclist emerged, and rode on again at the same distance as before.

There was no possible doubt now, and both the Greyfriars fellows looked grim. What the man's object might be they did not know, unless it was robbery, in which case he was biding his time till the schoolgirl was in a more lonely spot, farther from the village and the school. But it was certain beyond the shadow of a doubt that the man on the push-bike was following Marjorie Hazeldene.

The Bounder set his lips.

"This is where we chip in!" he said quietly.

"You bet!" agreed Redwing.

The Bounder pointed.

"They're heading for the Lantham road. They'll have to pass Giles' gate. We can cut across and get ahead of both of them easily."

"Come on!"

They ran down the hillside into Pegg Lane. The two cyclists were coming up that lane, but were not yet in sight, from the lower level.

"Stick here!" said the Bounder.

Panting from the run, the two Scouts took cover in a clump of bushes beside the lane. There they watched.

Five minutes later a graceful figure on a bicycle shot by. Marjorie Hazeldene passed without seeing the two schoolboys. They made no sign. Smithy's idea was to give her plenty of time to get on her way, while he and his chum dealt with the man who was following.

Less than a minute later the portly man in the slouched hat came pedalling by.

"Snaffle him!" breathed Smithy.

The two juniors rushed out into the lane and blocked the way of the rider. They crossed their staves in front of his machine, as a warning to stop. But he did not stop.

"Get out of the way!" he roared angrily, and came pedalling on.

Getting out of the way was the very last thing that Smithy and Redwing intended. They stood firm, and as the cyclist did not stop, his front wheel crashed into their staves. The next second the bike was over and the portly man sprawling in the dust of Pegg Lane.

The Bounder laughed breathlessly.

"Stopped him!" he remarked.

"Looks like it!" grinned Redwing.



Miss Bellew, outside the window, pushed, while Miss Bullivant, inside, pulled. But Bessie Bunter was tightly packed, and it was not an easy task. There was a sudden wild howl from Miss Bullivant, as a foot landed under her chin. "Yoo-yoo-hoo-whoop!" spluttered the Bull. "Ow! Wow! Ow!" shrieked Bessie.

"Oh! Ow! Oh!" came in a roar from the man sprawling in the dust. "You young rascals! I will report this to your headmaster! Ow!"

"He seems to know us!" grinned Smithy. "He can report us to the Head as soon as he likes! While he's about it, he can report that I stamped on his jolly old jigger."

And the Bounder coolly stamped, and there was a crunch as a mudguard mixed with the spokes of a wheel under his stamping foot. That bike needed some attention before the man in the slouched hat got it going again!

Marjorie Hazeldene, in the distance, disappeared in the direction of the Lantham road. The man in the slouched hat scrambled to his feet, panting for breath, evidently rather shaken by his fall.

"You lawless young rascals!" he panted.

"Oh, cut it out!" snapped the Bounder. "We spotted you following that Cliff House girl, you rotter, and we've stopped you! Give me any lip and I'll lay my staff about you into the bargain."

"And mine along with it!" said Redwing.

"You young fools!" The portly man pushed back the slouched hat that hid his face, and for the first time the Greyfriars fellows had a view of his features.

They stared at him in blank amazement.

"Grimey!" ejaculated the Bounder.

"Inspector Grimes!" stuttered Tom Redwing.

Mr. Grimes, of Courtfield, rubbed dust from his clothes, gasped for breath, and granted rather spasmodically. The juniors could only stare, utterly amazed by the discovery that the man was the police inspector of Courtfield. Mr. Grimes was in plain clothes, and there was nothing official in his looks, and the slouched hat had hidden his face. Certainly it had never for an instant crossed the minds of Smithy and Redwing that the shadower was an officer of the law. And now they knew, they could not understand it.

"Grimey, by Jove!" repeated Vernon-Smith. "This beats it! Sorry we had you over, Mr. Grimes. I—I suppose you must have had some reason for what you were doing, but—but how were we to know? All we knew was that we spotted a man on a bike following a girl we knew—in a stealthy sort of way, and—"

The Bounder paused. He was sorry, now that he saw that the man was Mr. Grimes. But he did not blame himself for his action.

"You young idiot!" grunted the inspector.

"Look here, you were following Marjorie Hazeldene, and in plain clothes, too, so that nobody would know you!" exclaimed the Bounder warmly. "I'd like to know why."

Grunt from Mr. Grimes.

"If you think so, my boy, the less you talk about it the better!" he snapped, and he went to his bike and lifted it.

The look that came over his face as he saw that it was unrideable was quite

alarming. Setting his lips, the Courtfield inspector set to work to twist the mudguard into shape again and the bent spokes into some sort of order. The Bounder winked at Redwing, who smiled, and they scuttled away, leaving Mr. Grimes busy and in a bad temper. Evidently he wanted to get on his way again as quickly as possible. Equally, evidently, he had no chance of picking up his trail. Marjorie was long out of sight, and might have taken any one of a dozen turnings ahead.

"We're well out of that, Smithy!" remarked Redwing, as they plunged into the wood again. "It's not exactly a jest to hook a bobby off a bike. It was a mistake, of course, but—"

"Oh, Grimey's not a bad old bean!" said the Bounder, laughing. "He doesn't want us to jaw about this, and we won't! But—"

"But why was he following Marjorie?" asked Redwing, in wonder.

"Goodness knows—but we've jolly well stopped him. He won't spot her in Lantham Woods to-day!" grinned the Bounder.

"Lantham Woods!" repeated Tom. "That's miles away! Why should Marjorie be going there, and how the dickens do you know, Smithy?"

The Bounder laughed again.

"She was heading for the Lantham road," he said, "and last Saturday she was in Lantham Woods—she picked up that fat ass Bunter there, and assisted him homo because he was pegging out. Puttin' two and two together, old bean, I fancy Marjorie's got

some business on in Lantham Woods—goodness knows what—no bizney of ours."

"None!" agreed Redwing. "Come on! I can hear the fellows in the wood now."

And they went on their way—saying nothing more about the curious incident, though not quite able to dismiss it from their minds. But whatever Inspector Grimes' game was, they were glad of one thing—that they had put a spoke in his wheel and thrown him off the track of the shadowed schoolgirl.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Marjorie's Uncle!

JOHAN JAMES HAZELDENE, late cashier of the Brighton and County Bank, stood looking over the gate of Joyce's cottage in the heart of Lantham Woods.

The woodcutter's cottage was lonely; miles from any other building. The garden round it was encircled by a high fence. The man who was on the run could hardly have found a more remote spot for keeping in hiding.

Old Joyce often let that cottage in the summer to people who liked a few weeks in such a romantic spot, and went off with his wife and his horse and cart to his relations at Woodend, six miles away. He had never been able to let it in the winter before, and he had jumped at the chance when a respectable-looking gentleman giving the name of "Jasper Harrington" turned up and paid three months' rent in advance.

Old Joyce understood that his tenant was in delicate health, requiring quiet, repose, and fresh air—all of which were to be had in abundance at the cottage in the woods. Mr. Harrington explained that his housekeeper would arrive later, but that imaginary dame had never arrived. For weeks the fugitive cashier had been alone in the solitary place—with no visitor there till his niece at Cliff House had learned of his coming.

In the first weeks he had ventured out, feeling safe with a false moustache and a false name.

He had left his hiding-place, to the extent of doing necessary shopping in Lantham, and of haunting the neighbourhood of Greyfriars School, to get in touch with his nephew there.

But for two or three weeks now John James had not ventured outside the garden gate, even to take a walk in the woods.

Since the day he had met Marjorie in Friardale Wood, and Harry Wharton had come with the warning that Inspector Grimes was at hand, the hapless man had hugged cover.

What he would have done without Marjorie was a mystery. Hazel, terrified at the bare idea of being mixed up with an absconding bank cashier, had not only refused to have anything to do with him, but had babbled out all he knew to Inspector Grimes. It was Marjorie who stood by him in his extremity, coming twice a week to the lonely cottage with the carrier of her bike stacked with supplies bought at Lantham.

Standing within the gate John James watched the cart-track that led away from the woodcutter's cottage to the bridle-path through Lantham Woods. By that way Marjorie came.

His furtive eyes roamed to right and left, scanning the silent woods like those of a hunted animal.

But his gloomy, apprehensive face brightened up at the sight of a graceful

figure on a bicycle coming up the cart-track.

He had the gate open by the time Marjorie arrived. He closed it, and bolted it after she had wheeled her bike in.

Quickly it was wheeled into the wooden porch in front of the cottage, and its load taken off the carrier and conveyed into the house.

Hardly a word was spoken till man and girl were inside, and the door shut. John James did not seem to breathe freely till then.

A fire was burning in the cottage kitchen; a kettle singing on the hob. Marjorie proceeded to make tea. It was impossible for her to remain long; but she always stayed as long as she could, to relieve the solitude and monotony of the unhappy fugitive's Crusoe-like life.

While she made the tea John James looked over a bundle of newspapers she had brought in. Only when Marjorie came did he get news from the outer world from which he had fled.

A sudden, sharp, scared exclamation came from him.

He sat staring at a picture on the back of the newspaper in his hands. It was the same printed photograph that Horace Coker had shown to Potter and Greene in the games-study at Greyfriars that afternoon.

It had rather startled Coker & Co. But it had more than a startling effect on John James Hazeldene. He leaned back in his chair, the colour draining from his face.

Marjorie turned to him quickly.

"Uncle, what is it?"

He pointed to the photograph in the paper without a word, his hand trembling. Marjorie glanced at it, her face clouding.

Marjorie was fond of her uncle, who had been good and kind to her since early childhood. She respected him as much as she could. And she could make all the more allowance for him because he so closely resembled her brother—weak-willed, irresolute, easily scared. But her own nature was so steady and courageous that she found it difficult to understand such weakness.

That her uncle was an innocent man, she was absolutely assured. But what was an innocent man doing in hiding, skulking in a miserable disguise. Every day that he remained in hiding blackened the suspicion that rested on him.

But it was useless to urge him to face the music. Only too well she knew that Hazel, in his place, would have acted as John James was doing. Yet she was convinced that all this misery and terror would roll away like a shadow if he could have found the character and courage to stand up to it. True, there had been cases of miscarriage of justice. It was possible that he was right, but she could not believe so.

"They do not doubt now—now that they have gone so far as this," said John James, tapping the pictured photograph with a trembling finger. "At first there was an S O S on the wireless. Then Inspector Grimes—Now—" His voice was husky. "You see now, Marjorie, that I was right to keep clear. If I were found now it would mean arrest."

"Uncle," said Marjorie earnestly, "what can they think, when you have disappeared, and the money from the bank has disappeared at the same time? Even now if you would go back—"

"Do you want to condemn your uncle to prison?" muttered John James. "Are you getting afraid to help me—as your cowardly brother was afraid?"

Marjorie coloured painfully, but she

did not answer. The unhappy man's nerves were in rags. The fear that had caused him to run, in the first place, had intensified a hundredfold during the dreary weeks of hiding and incessant anxiety.

"I tell you they believe it was I. Only I, beside the manager, had a key to the safe. A key was used, and the money taken. I should have been arrested that day if I had not got away. I tell you—" His voice failed.

"Even now," said Marjorie quietly. "I do not believe they think you guilty, uncle. They want to get you back—that is natural. But there is no warrant out for your arrest. It would be stated in the paper if there were. They want you to explain, to help—"

"A trick!" muttered John James, through dry lips. "They want to interview me." He laughed mirthlessly. "A trick to take me off my guard. If they once found me the interview would last long enough—with the handcuffs on my wrists. I tell you the proof against me is overwhelming. If I were not your uncle, you would believe me guilty, like the rest. I should believe any other man guilty on such evidence. It is overwhelming."

Marjorie was silent again.

"I must get away!" he breathed. "I have my passport, and friends in France, if I could get across the Channel. If that coward, that poltroon, your brother, would have helped, a motor-boat could have been obtained before this—"

Marjorie winced. He broke off again.

"But I am safe here in hiding. I think I am safe. They will—they must find out who robbed the bank! As soon as the thief begins to put the banknotes into circulation they will get on the right track. The numbers are known; the police have the numbers. Unless he keeps them back for safety. All depends on that. But the villain may keep them back—months, perhaps years—and all that time I should languish in prison if they had me. I must get away to France, somehow."

He gave a groan.

"You, a schoolgirl, can do nothing—nothing!"

He seemed to have forgotten what Marjorie was doing, and had done—that she was his only friend, his only helper in his extremity.

"But I am safe in this hidden place—for the present, at least. Those schoolboys who came here by chance last week—Wharton and his friends—they are keeping my secret. No one else knows. Thank goodness my nephew Hazel does not know! And I trusted him; I counted on him. If only he were a boy like Wharton! But he is weak, cowardly selfish, thinking only of himself—"

Marjorie sighed. That description surely would have applied to a man who was seeking to drag a schoolboy into his own disgraceful and dangerous troubles. Hazel ought not to have refused to help; but John James ought never to have asked him. But Marjorie did not utter the thoughts that she could not help coming into her mind.

"You are careful when you come here?" asked John James suddenly. "You are sure that you have not been followed? Remember, they know that I have seen Hazel—that is certain. They may guess that, failing him, I have got in touch with you. You might be watched—"

"I thought there was a man on a

bicycle when I left Cliff House, who followed," answered Marjorie. "But I think I must have been mistaken. I did not see him again after passing Pegg Lane. I am certain that I have not been followed from Lantham."

"You cannot be too careful. If you were followed—"

"I shall be very careful, uncle."

The tea Marjorie had prepared was unheeded on the table. John James paced the little room uneasily, like a caged animal. He sat down at last to peruse the newspapers, searching them for some possible reference to himself and his flight. He was so deeply and anxiously engrossed that he seemed hardly to notice Marjorie when she said good-bye to him. But he roused himself and followed her out, and bolted the gate when she was gone.

The girl's face was darkly clouded as she rode away through the green woods. Once more the missing man was left to his solitude and terror. He was safe; she hoped that he was safe. But how was it all to end?

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Horrible for Horace!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. came to a sudden halt in Friardale Lane as Coker of the Fifth propounded his surprising and unexpected question.

The Greyfriars Scouts stared blankly at Horace. Nobody had known why the Fifth Former wanted to speak to Hazel, or had cared. Certainly it had not crossed Hazel's mind for an instant that Coker was going to ask such a question as this, or he would have taken care that it was not asked in the hearing of a crowd of Remove fellows.

Hazel stared almost wildly at Coker, the colour deserting his face, leaving him ghastly.

That Harry Wharton knew that his fugitive uncle had run from Brighton, and was under suspicion, Hazel was aware; but he had never dreamed that any other fellow at Greyfriars knew. Least of all would he have expected Coker of the Fifth to know anything, or care anything, about the missing bank cashier.

Hazel, his face white, almost tottered. The other fellows could only stare at Coker. The Famous Five exchanged a quick glance of dismay. They knew—but for Marjorie's sake, if not for Hazel's, they had hoped that no one else would know.

"Do you hear me?" snapped Coker impatiently. It was Coker's way to drop bricks, in happy unconsciousness of what he was doing. Never had he dropped a larger brick. But he was happily regardless of it, as usual. Coker wanted an answer to his question. "Hazeldene, you young ass—"

"What is the fool burling about?" asked Peter Todd, in wonder.

"Shut up, Coker, you silly idiot!" hissed Bob Cherry.

"Is he mad?" asked Squiff.

"Barge him into the ditch!" muttered Nugent.

Hazel seemed to be struggling for speech. He was overwhelmed. Colour flooded his white face, and faded away again. He had hoped and hoped that the missing man would flee from the vicinity—hoped and hoped that he would hear no more of him. Deliberately he had avoided his sister Marjorie so that he should hear nothing—know nothing—of the wretched man. The discovery that his disgrace was known in the school came as a stunning blow to Hazel.

He hardly heeded Coker. As he recovered a little, fury flashed into his face, and he turned on Harry Wharton with clenched fists, and burning eyes.

"Oh you cur! You cur!" he panted. "What!" gasped Wharton, taken utterly aback.

"You cur!" yelled Hazel. "I trusted you—you promised—and now you've tattled it all over the school—oh, you cur!" He sprang towards the captain of the Remove, and in his rage struck at his face.

Bob Cherry knocked his arm aside in time.

"Chuck that, Hazel, you fool!"

"The cur! Oh, the cur!" Hazel was almost weeping with rage. "I trusted him—I trusted his word—and he's given it all away—"

"I've not said a word, Hazel!" said Harry Wharton, quietly and contemptuously. "But you're giving it away yourself, pretty thoroughly."

"Liar!" shouted Hazel. "How does that fool Coker know anything about it if you've not told? How—"

"Park it, old man!" murmured Lord Mauleverer. "You're talkin' too much."

"Look here—" bawled Coker. "You shut up, you born idiot!" snapped Johnny Bull.

"Bargo the fool over!" growled Bob.

"But what the dickens—" exclaimed Tom Brown.

"I say, you fellows—" squeaked Billy Bunter. Billy Bunter's eyes almost popped through his spectacles with curiosity.

"Shut up, you fags!" hooted Coker. "I've asked Hazeldene a question! I want to know whether that man who bunked from Brighton is a relation of yours, Hazeldene. If he is—"

"And you say you've told him nothing, Wharton, you hound!" yelled Hazel.

"Nothing!" snapped Wharton.

"Eh? Wharton hasn't told me anything," said Coker. "Do you know anything about this, Wharton?"

"Find out, you fool!" snapped the captain of the Remove.

"I'll jolly well—"

"How do you know if Wharton hasn't told you?" howled Hazel.

"Don't be a young ass! I suppose I'm not the only fellow that's seen it in the papers!" answered Coker.

Hazel staggered.

"In the newspapers!" he gasped.

"Yes—it's in the papers, about the cashier of the Brighton and County Bank bunking, and there's a picture of a man named John James Hazeldene, who's wanted by the police—"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Billy Bunter.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured a dozen fellows blankly. This was startling and thrilling news to the Remove.

"I want to know," continued Coker sternly, "whether he's a relation of yours? If he is, I fancy I can guess why he's hanging about this quarter—and the paper says he was last seen here. If you've seen anything of him, Hazel, you're going to tell me—and—Yooooo!" roared Coker of the Fifth, with startling suddenness, as a Scout's staff lunged hard on the spot where he had packed away his dinner.

Coker went over backwards, and sat down, gurgling. Bob Cherry had given him that lunge, as the shortest way of stopping Coker from talking so much. It had the desired effect. Horace Coker left off talking, and gurgled horribly instead.

Hazel stood panting. He realised now that he had wronged Wharton by his miserable suspicion.

But he was not thinking of that, or

caring for that! It was in the newspapers—with a picture of his fugitive uncle! That was the overwhelming fact.

No further concealment of his disgrace was possible. Several fellows in the Remove knew that he had an uncle at Brighton named John James. Some of them had listened in when the S O S came on the wireless for him. Some of them had seen him when he visited the school a term ago to see his nephew. They would know his photograph in the papers. It was all up. And if he had thought of denial, it was too late, after his wild and angry words to Wharton.

With a burning face Hazel turned and walked back towards the school. He was covered with shame and misery as with a garment, and only anxious to get out of sight. Coker did not see him go. Coker was in the hands of the Philistines. The Famous Five closed on the gurgling Coker like waves on a rock.

Coker's propensity for minding everybody else's business as well as his own was well known. It had landed Coker in trouble before. It landed him in worse trouble now. The affairs of John James Hazeldene might, or might not, concern the official police; but it was absolutely certain that they did not concern Horace Coker, of the Greyfriars Fifth. And the Famous Five proceeded to impress on Coker that there was much to be said for minding one's own business.

They grabbed Coker on all sides and rolled him over. There was a deep ditch beside the lane. Into that ditch went Coker, splashing.

He sprawled headlong into a foot of water and more than a foot of oozy mud. Several staves rammed him down as he sprawled.

Coker disappeared.

He came up again, clothed in mud and slime and green ooze. He gained his knees, and gurgled and blinked—a horrid object.

"Give him some more!" roared Bob Cherry.

"The morefulness is the proper caper."

"Give him gyp!" shouted Peter Todd.

"Urrrgh!" spluttered Coker. He dashed mud and slime from his face, and spluttered and stuttered and sputtered. "Wurrgh! Grooooh! I'll—Grooooh!"

Staves shoved at him again and Coker went over, wallowing. Water and mud closed over him once more.

Once more up came Horace Coker, streaming.

"Urrrrggghh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Greyfriars Scouts. Coker was an interesting object to look at by this time. Drenched with water, caked with mud, festooned with green ooze, Horace Coker was a sight for gods and men and little fishes.

"Gurrghh!"

Coker clambered frantically out of the ditch. He brought evil smells with him from those seldom-stirred depths.

The Scouts backed away from Coker and his aroma.

"That's enough!" said Harry Wharton. "Put it on, or we shall never get Smithy and Redwing!"

The Scouts re-started at a trot. They disappeared in one direction—Hazel in another—Billy Bunter in a third. While the juniors were dealing with Coker, the astute Owl of the Remove had seen his chance of escape—and taken it. Bunter had dodged through a gap in the hedge into a meadow, and was now cutting across that meadow his fat little legs going like clockwork. When Peter Todd remembered him and

looked round for him, the fat Owl of the Remove was no longer to be seen.

Coker was left on his lonely own. Oozing mud and water and slime, the hapless Horace gasped and gurgled and gurgled and gasped, as if he would never leave off gurgling and gasping. Breathing mud, bad smells, and fury, Coker sat down by the roadside to clean as much off as he could, with handfuls of grass. People who passed in the lane smiled as they glanced at him; but it was no smiling matter to Coker. Never had he had quite so drastic a lesson on the subject of minding his own business and Coker breathed fury and vengeance, along with the rich scents he had stirred up out of the ditch.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Grimes Is Not Taking Any!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

Bob Cherry jumped.

The Greyfriars Scouts were scattered in the wood, picking up sign. They were out of sight of one another, and Bob, when he heard footsteps close at hand, glanced round, expecting to see one of his comrades.

Instead of which he beheld a big and hefty Fifth Form man, in a damp and muddy state, whose eyes were gleaming wrath from an excessively grubby face.

Bob jumped—and Coker jumped—at Bob! Taken by surprise, Bob was collared before he could dodge.

"Got you!" panted Coker.

Thump, thump, thump!

It was one of the many failings of Horace Coker that he never knew when he had had enough. Most fellows would have been satisfied with being rolled in a muddy ditch. Not so Coker! Having cleaned off the worst of the mud, Coker had followed the Remove Scouts—to ask for more!

Picking up sign in the wood took time; and it gave Coker a chance of overtaking his prey! Bob was the one he dropped on first; and Bob came in for the benefit of it.

Bob roared as Coker thumped.

"Rescue! Remove! Rescue!"

The other fellows were out of sight in the wood, but they were mostly within hearing. There was a rush of footsteps, a rustling of bushes, a shouting of voices. Harry Wharton was the first to reach the spot, but fast after him came Johnny Bull and Peter Todd and Squiff, and Tom Brown and Monty Newland, and then five or six more of the Remove.

Coker was thumping, Bob was struggling and punching—when the Scouts laid many hands on Horace and wrenched him off.

"That idiot Coker again!" gasped Wharton.

"The blithering ass Coker!" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"I'll smash you!" roared Coker, putting up a tremendous, though unavailing struggle against heavy odds. "I'll spifficate you! I'll—Urrgh! Oh, my hat! I'll—Leggo! Whooop!"

Coker, extended in the grass, was sat upon. As many fellows as could find room sat on him. Then there was standing room only, and the others stood on him, wherever they could find room for a foot. Coker almost disappeared from sight.

Bob Cherry gasped for breath. Brief as had been his tussle with Coker, it had been rather strenuous. He was a very sturdy junior; but Coker was too big and beefy and brawny for him.

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"That howling ass!" gasped Bob. "Keep him safe! I've got a cord here—hold out his fins!"

Coker's "fins" were grasped and held out for the cord. Bob tied his wrists together behind him.

"Now his hoof!" said Bob.

Coker's left foot was stretched out for the cord. Bob tied the end to his ankle, leaving a short length of cord between the ankle and the tied wrists.

Then the Fifth Form man was lifted to his other foot. He was quite harmless now, except for his looks. If looks could have slain, the lives of the Remove Scouts would have been in peril!

Fortunately, looks couldn't! The terrific wrath in Coker's rugged countenance only made the juniors smile.

Coker stood on his right foot. The cord attached to his bound wrists kept his left foot about fifteen inches from the ground. He swayed and lurched, and hopped to keep upright.

"You young scoundrels!" gasped Coker. "Take this cord off me at once! Do you hear? At once!"

"The heartfulness is not the obeyfulness, my esteemed and idiotic Coker!" chuckled Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh.

"I'll smash the lot of you!" roared Coker.

"You look like doing it!" grinned Frank Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Coker's a sticker!" remarked Bob Cherry. "Let him stick to our trail now if he likes. I fancy we shall catch Smithy and Reddy before Coker catches us!"

"Good-bye, Coker!"

"Ta-ta, old bean!"

The Scouts walked off. They were done with Coker. Leaning on a tree, the great man of the Fifth bellowed after them:

"You young ticks! Come back and let me loose! You young villains, you can't leave me like this!"

Bob looked back, with a cheery grin.

"I sort of fancy we can," he remarked, "you'll be all right, Coker! You can hop back as far as Friardale Lane, and you'll find somebody there to set you free. If not, you can hop to Greyfriars! Or you can hop after us, if you like—if you're frightfully keen on a long hop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Scouts disappeared from Coker's view. They had wasted quite enough time on Coker. Hardly able to believe that they actually had the amazing cheek and nerve to leave him like that, Coker roared and bellowed after them till he was quite husky.

But it was borne in upon his mind at last that he was left! By that time the Scouts were picking up the trail along Pegg Lane, and were far from Coker. Coker had the green woods to himself!

"Oh crumbs!" groaned Coker.

Possibly he wished that he had not followed the juniors for vengeance, much as he desired the same! Anyhow, he was not thinking of following them farther. Even Coker was fed-up with that!

He started hopping. With only one foot at his disposal, he had to hop. When he could get back to Friardale Lane there was a chance of getting freed by some passer-by. As for hopping back to the school, and hopping into Greyfriars, Coker would have perished rather.

Hopping was hard work—harder than Coker had ever fancied it was. He got into the footpath at last, where the

going was easier. But it was slow work—laborious work!

His muddy face was soon streaming with perspiration; the leg that took his weight ached and ached, and felt like giving way beneath him. Many times he stopped, leaning on trees for a rest. Then he hopped on again, fatigued, perspiring, frantic with fury.

He was glad to hear a sound of footsteps behind him at last. Somebody was coming along the footpath from Pegg Lane. Coker hopped round to face the newcomer. Whoever it was, he could hardly refuse to take the trouble to release a fellow in such an extraordinary predicament.

It was a portly man, in a slouched hat, wheeling a damaged-looking bike, that met Coker's eager eyes. Coker called to him at once.

"I say, stop, will you? I say, let me loose, please!"

"What the dickens!"

The portly man stopped and stared at Coker, and then, seeing his face under the slouch of the hat, Coker recognised Inspector Grimes of Courtfield, in plain clothes.

"Oh, Mr. Grimes!" gasped Coker. "I say, let me loose, will you? I've been tied up like this by a set of cheeky fags!"

"My word!" said Mr. Grimes.

He grinned. Coker did not see anything to grin at; but the Courtfield inspector seemed to spot an element of the comic in this strange situation of the great Horace.

However, he took out a pocket-knife and cut the cord, good-naturedly, and Coker was free. He leaned, exhausted, on a tree.

"Thanks!" gasped Coker.

"All right now?" asked the smiling Mr. Grimes.

"Yes, thanks!" gasped Coker. "I'll smash those young scoundrels! I say, Mr. Grimes, hold on a minute!"

Mr. Grimes, about to pass on his way "held on."

"Well?" he asked.

"I'm glad to see you," explained Coker. "In fact, I was thinking of dropping in to see you at Courtfield, Mr. Grimes."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Grimes, with a stare.

He could not imagine what business a Fifth Former of Greyfriars could possibly have with him.

"About that man Hazeldene," said Coker. "The bank-robber, you know."

Inspector Grimes jumped.

"That—who?" His face was keen, alert at once. Coker was a school-fellow of Hazel of the Remove; and Hazel, as Mr. Grimes knew, had seen his fugitive uncle at least once. The man had hung about Greyfriars to see him. If Coker knew anything, Mr. Grimes was the man to extract it from him. All was grist that came to Mr. Grimes' mill in the way of information. "If you know anything about John James Hazeldene—"

"I don't know anything about him," explained Coker.

"Then what do you mean?" snapped Mr. Grimes.

"What I mean is, I'm looking into the affair—"

"You are looking into the affair?" repeated Mr. Grimes blankly.

"That's it," said Coker. "I've often thought I should make a pretty good detective. I've read a good many books on the subject—'Bandog Chummond,' and 'Slinker Slake,' and so on, and I've often thought—"

"If you have anything to tell me—"



"Get out of the way!" roared the portly man in the slouched hat, as he came pedalling on. Vernon-Smith and Redwing stood firm, and as the cyclist did not stop, his front wheel crashed into their crossed staves. The next second, the portly man was sprawling in the dust. "Stopped him!" remarked the Bounder. "Looks like it," said Redwing.

"The question is whether you have anything to tell me!" explained Coker. "The man was last seen about here, so I suppose you're after him. Well, as I said, I'm looking into the matter myself—and I thought we might compare notes!"

"Kik-kik-compare n-n-notes!" stammered Mr. Grimes.

He seemed rather taken aback at the idea of comparing notes about his official work with a schoolboy!

"That's it," said Coker cheerfully. "Work together on the case, you know, like Sexton Blake and Scotland Yard, see?"

Mr. Grimes gazed at him.

Scotland Yard, we are told, was always glad of the expert assistance of the celebrated Sexton Blake. But Inspector Grimes did not look as if he would be glad of the assistance of Horace Coker! He just gazed at Coker, like a man petrified.

"What about it?" asked Coker.

Mr. Grimes found his voice.

"Does it run in your family?" he gasped.

"Eh? Does what run in my family?" asked Coker, puzzled.

"Insanity!" said Mr. Grimes.

Without waiting for an answer to his question, Inspector Grimes wheeled his machine on, and disappeared up the footpath, leaving Coker staring.

"The silly ass!" ejaculated Coker.

Why Mr. Grimes had refused his offer, in so uncivil a manner, too, Coker did not know. But it was clear, even to Coker, that the Courtfield inspector was not going to avail himself of his assistance, and was not going to compare notes with him on the case! Coker wondered how such an ass could have

ever reached the rank of detective-inspector. Mr. Grimes, as he went on his way, was also wondering. He wondered what Coker was doing at Greyfriars, instead of at a home for idiots!

Coker, weary and worn, tottered out into Friardale Lane, and there, at last, fortune relented and smiled on him.

Old Mr. Joyce was passing up the lane in his woodcart; and Coker waved and hailed.

A pile of sacks in a woodcutter's cart was not luxurious, but it was an immense relief to the weary Coker. Old Joyce willingly gave him a lift, going out of his way to drop Horace near the school, for which he was duly rewarded with half-a-crown.

Coker was too tired even to talk, after his hopping experiences, and he paid no heed to the chatty old woodcutter. He was glad to get into his study at Greyfriars and sit down—and for quite a considerable time he sat there. The wicked had ceased from troubling, and the weary were at rest.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Down on His Luck!

HAZEL was in his study when the Greyfriars Scouts came home.

Tom Brown, the New Zealand junior, who shared Study No. 2 with Hazel, tramped in cheerily, more than ready for tea. Cheery and ruddy, and a little tired, after long hours in the fresh air, and decidedly hungry, Brown did not even notice the quick,

sulky, suspicious glance that Hazel gave him.

Hazel, of course, was thinking of his dismal secret, that was now out. He had thought of nothing else since the scene in Friardale Lane. He fancied that every other fellow was thinking of it as much.

Tom Brown, as a matter of fact, had entirely forgotten it. He glanced round the study, noted that the fire was nearly out, and that there was no sign of tea, and grunted.

"Dash it all, you might have kept the fire in, Hazel, as you were here," he said. "As you never came on the run—"

"Hang the run and hang the fire!" snapped Hazel.

Browney stared at him.

"You haven't got into a good temper frowsting indoors," he remarked. "A little fresh air would do you good."

"Oh, don't be a fool!"

Brown compressed his lips. He was a quiet, peaceable, good-tempered fellow; but he did not like that sort of talk.

"That will do, Hazeldene!" he said.

"You'd better shut up!"

"I'll do as I like."

"You may get your cheeky head banged on the table!" remarked Tom Brown.

"You silly fool!"

That was rather too much; and Tom Brown, with a grim expression, made a step towards his study-mate.

But, as he caught the haggard expression on Hazel's face, he stopped. Back into his mind came the recollection of what had happened in the

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(By FRANK RICHARDS)

(Continued from page 13.)

lane. He knew what was the matter with Hazel.

"Oh!" he said awkwardly. "All serene, old chap! Slang away if you like—I don't mind."

Hazel scowled at him. He expected fellows to be stand-offish, if not openly disdainful, now that his disgrace was known. He was prepared to be offensive and defiant. Tom Brown was neither stand-offish nor disdainful; but his good-natured forbearance only had the effect of angering the wrong-headed fellow! Hazel did not want to be pitied!

"What about tea?" went on Brown cheerfully. "We—"

"Hang tea!" muttered Hazel.

He lounged out of the study. Tom Brown shrugged his shoulders. He had been trying to make it clear that Coker's awkward revelation made no difference so far as he was concerned. But he had no more patience to waste on a sulky fellow who was eager to take offence.

Vernon-Smith and Redwing were coming up the passage together as Hazel stepped out. Both were looking rather elated. They had eluded the Scouts in the trailing game. As they had not been present when Coker made his revelation, they knew nothing about Hazel's trouble yet; and they glanced at his scowling face in some amusement.

A smile was enough for Hazel—sensitive, touchy, sulky and savage. He did not even remember that these fellows very likely had never heard of what had happened. To his tormented mind, everybody knew, and everybody was thinking of that and nothing else.

"You rotter!" he muttered, his eyes gleaming at Herbert Vernon-Smith.

"Eh, what?" exclaimed the Bounder. "What's biting you? Are you asking me to bang your head on your study door, you cheeky ass?"

"You can try it on if you like!" sneered Hazel.

"Well, my hat!" said Smithy in amazement. It was quite unlike Hazel to hurl reckless challenges at a fellow who could make rings round him. "I'll try it on fast enough."

Redwing caught his arm.

"Chuck it, Smithy!" he exclaimed. "What's the good of rowing?"

"Oh, let him come on," jeered Hazel.

"You, too, if you like!"

The Bounder jerked his arm away from Redwing, and advanced on Hazel. Smithy was not the man to say no to anybody who asked for trouble—and Hazel was not merely asking for it; he was fairly shouting for it. In a moment more they were punching one another.

Hazel was no match for the Bounder, either in strength or courage. But passionate resentment and sulky anger seemed to supply the place of both. He stood up to Smithy, and gave blow for blow, with such unexpected vim, that the Bounder was driven back, and knocked against the passage wall.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" shouted Bob

Cherry, as he came up the Remove staircase with his friends. "Scrapping! What's the row?"

The Bounder, panting, did not heed. He staggered against the wall for a moment and then leapt at Hazel, his eyes blazing.

Harry Wharton dashed forward and ran between them—the Bounder crashing into him as he interposed.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Harry.

"Stand out of the way!" roared Vernon-Smith.

"Hold on, I tell you!"

"By gum, if you don't stand aside, I'll knock you flying!" yelled the angry Bounder.

"You can mind your own business, Wharton!" sneered Hazel. "Nobody's asking you to chip in."

The captain of the Remove did not heed him. He faced the Bounder, and pushed him back.

"Hold on, Smithy!" he repeated. "I tell you—"

"Do you think I'm going to let that cheeky cad slang me?" roared the Bounder. "What's the matter with the sulky brute, I'd like to know?"

"Hazel's had rather a knock to-day," answered Harry. "You weren't there when it happened, but it was rather rotten for him. Chuck it, old chap!"

"Oh!" Smithy lowered his hands, and unclenched them. "If the silly ass has landed in trouble again—"

"No business of Wharton's!" said Hazel bitterly. "If you fancy I want your pity, Harry Wharton, you're making a mistake."

The Bounder gave him a very keen and curious look. Then he walked on with Redwing, saying no more. He could see that there was something very much amiss with Hazeldene, and that was enough for him.

"Tea with us, Hazel, old fellow?" asked Wharton, carefully taking no notice of Hazel's scowling brow and disagreeable manner.

"No!" answered Hazel, and he turned his back and walked away towards the stairs.

The Co. exchanged glances.

"Sulky brute!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"He's had a knock!" said Harry quietly. "He will fancy everybody's got it up against him, may as well be civil."

"I say, you fellows," Billy Bunter rolled out of Study No. 7. "I say, I've been waiting for you to come in. I was going to have tea ready for you in my study, only I've been disappointed about a postal order. But look here, I'll tea with you, if you like. You'd rather have me than Hazel, I suppose." Evidently the fat Owl had heard what had been said in the passage.

"Fathead!" answered Harry.

"Oh, really, Wharton! Perhaps you like bank robbers and their relations!" said Bunter, with a disdainful sniff.

"Shut up, you fat idiot!" hissed Nugent. Hazel was still within hearing.

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

Hazel had heard. He came striding back along the Remove passage, his face in a flame.

"Yaroooooh!" roared Bunter staggering, as a terrific smack caught him on the side of his fat head.

Another terrific smack on the other side righted him again!

"Yoo-hoo—whoop! Keep off, you beast!" yelled Bunter. "Tain't my fault your uncle bunked with the bank's money, is it, you rotter? I say, you fellows, keep him off!"

The Famous Five made no movement to keep Hazel off. If Billy Bunter liked to ask for it, they had no objection to

Bunter's getting that for which he asked!

And he got it!

Hazel, with crimson face and blazing eyes, grasped him by the collar, banged his head on the passage wall, up-ended him, and banged his head again—on the floor. Bunter's frantic yells rang the length of the passage and echoed in every study.

Bang, bang, bang!

"Ow! Wow! Help! I say, you fellows—yarooooop! Oh crikey! Leggo! I say—Whoop!" roared Bunter.

"That's for you, you fat rotter!" snarled Hazel, and leaving the Owl of the Remove sprawling and roaring, he tramped away to the staircase and disappeared.

Bunter sat up, spluttering.

"I say, you fellows! Ow! I say—"

"Serve you jolly well right, you fat owl!" growled Bob Cherry. "Can't you keep your silly mouth shut when a fellow's down on his luck?"

"Ow! Beast! Wow!"

Billy Bunter tottered back into Study No. 7. He was still gasping for breath when Peter Todd came in.

Peter eyed him sternly.

"You cut the Scout run, you fat slacker!" he said. "I've a jolly good mind to give you the fives bat! What's the matter with you? What are you gurgling about, you podgy image?"

"I—I say, Peter, that beast Hazel pitched into me," gasped Bunter. "I say, you could whop him easily, Peter! Pitched into me like a savage beast, you know, as if it was my fault that his uncle robbed the bank—"

"Oh, you've been rubbing that in, have you?" said Peter grimly. "Well, I was going to let you off the fives bat! But I think you'd better have it."

Bunter had it!

There was no rest for the wicked! The fat Owl of the Remove bounded out of Study No. 7, with the fives bat whacking astern.

"Beast!" he roared back, as he fled.

Billy Bunter, after waiting so long for the Scouts to come in, had to tea in Hall after all. There he had the pleasure, or otherwise, of sitting opposite Hazel's scowling face as he also was tea-ing in Hall.

After tea Hazel disappeared till lock-up. When he came back to his study in the Remove, Tom Brown had his wireless set going. Strains of jazz filled the study.

"Can't you stop that rotten row?" snarled Hazel.

"Go and eat coke!" answered Tom Brown. Then, remembering again, he added hastily: "Oh, yes, I'll stop it, if you like."

And he cut off. Hazel slammed the door and threw himself sulkily into the armchair, where he sat scowling. Tom Brown very soon tired of such company, and left Study No. 2. Hazel, probably, was equally tired of his own miserable company; but, unfortunately, he could not get away from it.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Shadow of Shame!

MR. QUELCH, the following morning, glanced at Hazeldene in the Remove Form Room with unusual kindness in his severe countenance.

Hazel looked sulky, wretched, and dismal.

His disgrace was known all over the school now. The loud-mouthed Coker had revealed it to the Remove; but without Coker's meddlesome intervention, it would have been known all the same.

A dozen people, at least, had seen what Coker had seen in the newspaper; and as many of them knew that the missing John James was Hazel's uncle, the secret, of course, was immediately out.

As no definite accusation was made against the missing John James, the announcement being that the police desired to "interview" him, Hazel might very well have acted on the assumption that there was no question of his uncle's guilt in the matter.

Had he, in fact, been thinking a little more of his unfortunate relative, and a little less of himself, it would have been all the better for him.

For the way he had taken it left little doubt in the minds of the other fellows.

Sulky and savage suspicion and resentment gave the impression that he looked on himself as disgraced, and felt that the finger of scorn was pointed at him. That made the worst instead of the best of the matter.

Hazel, in his heart, did not believe that John James was guilty of anything

but pusillanimous irresolution and weakness of character. That, no doubt, was the actual fact.

But the impression he gave was that he believed and feared the very worst. Skinner remarked that if Hazel believed that his uncle had robbed a bank, no doubt he knew what his relations were like!

Hazel, as he sat in the Form, hardly dared lift his eyes, feeling that all other eyes were on him, which was not the case at all. Certainly, the affair had caused a good deal of talk; but the fellows had their own affairs to think of, and were very far from giving all their attention to Hazel's.

Nobody was surprised when Mr. Quelch referred to the matter before the lesson commenced. It was obvious that Quelch knew all about it, like everybody else at Greyfriars.

"Before we commence," said Mr. Quelch quietly, "there is a matter to which I think I had better refer."

All the fellows knew what was coming. Hazel's face crimsoned.

"Many of you," went on the Removo master, "may have seen a certain announcement in the daily papers, concerning a relative of a Removo boy."

"Not half!" murmured Skinner. And Snoop grinned.

"It appears," continued Mr. Quelch, "that this boy's relative has disappeared from his home. At the same time a bank robbery has occurred. There is no reason whatever for connecting these two incidents."

"Isn't there?" breathed Skinner, and Snoop grinned again.

"An impression may be abroad," said Mr. Quelch, "that there is some connection between the two incidents. There is no reason to suppose anything of the kind. I am pointing this out to my Form in order that no unpleasant misapprehension may exist on the subject. In any case of doubt the most charitable view possible should be taken."

Fisher T. Fish winked at Skinner. "The affair has, I think, caused some (Continued on next page.)



At nearly every football match discussions arise concerning decisions given by the "man with the whistle." If YOU are in doubt on any "footer" matter, write to "Linesman," c/o The MAGNET, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. The more intricate the problem the better he likes it.

THE MARCH SIXTEENTH RULE!

ONE of my reader chums writes to say that several times recently he has been involved in discussions about what is called the March Sixteenth rule, and he asks me to give him an explanation of what it really means. Is it true, for instance, that the first-class clubs are not allowed to sign on players after the sixteenth of March in each season?

In reply, I have to say that it is not true that first-class clubs are not allowed to sign on new players, or to secure the transfer of players from other clubs after the sixteenth of March in each season. There is no sort of ban against transfers between now and the end of the season.

There is, however, this important difference between players transferred from one club to another previous to and after the sixteenth of March.

The big League clubs are forbidden to play a footballer in a League match who has been signed on after the sixteenth of March without the consent of the football League. The consent of the Football League authorities is not given to a club which has signed on a player after the sixteenth of March if the match is likely to have any bearing on the important issues of the season.

A team in the middle of the table, with no hope of winning the championship, and no fear of relegation, might wish to play a man they had signed after the "closing date." But they would not be allowed to have such a player on their side if their opponents of that day had a possible chance of winning the championship or gaining promotion, or

if they were at all involved in the relegation issue.

The idea of this clause in the transfer relating to the Sixteenth of March was put on the books many years ago to prevent teams signing on new men in the later weeks of the season. There was an occasion, before the rule was made, on which Chelsea, in danger of going down to the Second Division, signed on three or four new men for their last two or three matches. Such a procedure would not be allowed now. Chelsea, or any other club, could sign the new men right up to the last match, but would not be allowed to play them if the result of that match might be important to Chelsea or their opponents. Have I made the position quite clear? I hope so.

A PENALTY KICK DEVICE!

I FEEL like shedding a tear of sympathy with one of my readers—John Heley, of York. He is the goalkeeper of his side, and already this season, so he tells me, his team have had fifteen penalty kicks awarded against them. Eleven of them resulted in goals. My goalkeeper friend feels that, somehow or other, he should have saved a bigger proportion of those penalty kicks, and he wants to know whether there is anything he can do with a view to being more successful in stopping the "spot" kicks from twelve yards out.

I don't think my chum should blame himself unduly for the fact that eleven out of fifteen penalty kicks against his team this season have resulted in goals. Penalty kicks are expected to produce goals. Indeed, I sometimes feel that defenders—full-backs that is—would be more careful not to concede penalty kicks if they had to go between the posts to try to stop those kicks. The odds are

on the kicker every time. I want to assure my reader of this, and lift from his mind the feeling that he is in any way to blame.

At the same time I can perhaps help by putting in a hint or two on how penalty-kicks can sometimes be stopped.

I think it is a good plan—and one which has been adopted by many first-class custodians—for the goalkeeper to take up his position a little to one side—that is not exactly in the middle of the goal. When the goalkeeper does this, the natural effect is to induce the taker of the penalty kick to shoot at what he considers the side where the space between the goalkeeper and the upright is greatest.

Having left this open space, and induced the kicker of the penalty to shoot at it, the goalkeeper must jump across at the moment the ball is kicked. This is a penalty kick device which often proves successful from the goalkeeper's point of view. The goalkeeper must keep his eye on the ball, too—not on the kicker of the ball. But when the fellow between the posts has done everything he possibly can, the fact remains that if the penalty shot is a good one it will score a goal.

STIFFNESS!

ANOTHER reader—Norman Swainston, of Whetstone, had an unusual experience recently. As an inside-right, he dribbled the ball some way towards goal, and then shot. The ball hit the referee and went between the posts. This player says that the incident aroused a lot of discussion, and he wants to know whether it was right that a goal should have been allowed.

Certainly it was a good goal according to rule. The referee is no more a part of the game, in this sense, than are the goal-posts or the corner-flag. If by chance the referee gets in the way, and affects the play, it is just unfortunate.

"I find that my leg muscles are often stiff after a match," writes Peter Blanshard, of York, "and I should be glad if you could tell me the cure for this." In replying, the only thing I can suggest is massage immediately after each game. A bath in really hot water, followed by vigorous rubbing with a rough towel will, I think, be found extremely useful.

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discussion," said Mr. Quelch. "The less discussion there is on such a topic the better. In the event of any ill-natured or malicious references to the matter, a very severe view will be taken by the headmaster and myself."

Quelch's gimlet-eye seemed to single out Skinner, Snoop, Bunter, and one or two other fellows. They sat very still. Then the matter dropped and the lesson began.

Quelch's opinion carried a good deal of weight with his Form. And he had given a very plain hint that Hazel was not to be chipped about the real or supposed delinquencies of his relative at Brighton.

Most of the fellows were far too good-natured to think of taunting the hapless Hazel. Others took that hint from Quelch.

In break that morning, Hazel, who seemed to have expected to hear the whole school talking of nothing else, did not hear a single word on the subject of his Brighton uncle.

In his sulky, suspicious way, however, he concluded that they were all thinking about it, and he slouched away by himself, self-conscious and miserable.

Bob Cherry, spotting him "mooh-ing" about under the elms, cut across and joined him.

"Come and help us punt a ball about before the bell goes, old chap?" he said amicably.

"Rot!" grunted Hazel.

"Look here," said Bob, in a low voice, "I think I know what's worrying you most, old fellow. This will be pretty rotten for Marjorie. But you can depend on it that the truth will come out and it will be all right."

Hazel stared at him. He was not thinking of Marjorie. He was thinking of himself. To Bob's honest mind it was difficult to understand how a fellow could be so self-concentrated.

Hazel coloured, with shame and vexation.

"Oh, let me alone!" he snapped, and he walked away.

After which, Bob let him alone! There was a limit even to Bob's patience and good nature.

In third school that morning Hazel gave very little attention to Mr. Quelch. The Remove master was very tolerant, passing him over lightly.

He was thinking incessantly of his own troubles. But for the fact that his parents were abroad, he would have asked to go home. He wanted to get away from the sea of eyes which, he felt convinced, were mocking and scornful.

But with his parents at Cannes, it was impossible for him to get away from school. He had to stand it somehow. And in his shame and bitterness he would have been glad to hear that John James had been taken by the police. That, at all events, would have brought the miserable matter to some kind of an end. So long as the fugitive cashier was free and hunted for, there was no end.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

On the Track!

"BY Jove!" exclaimed Horace Coker.

Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, stared at the great Horace.

So did the Fifth-Form fellows.

It was Saturday morning, and the Forms were all in their Form-rooms. In the Fifth they were doing Livy with Prout.

Once or twice Prout's eye had lingered

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on Horace Coker with an expression of unusual approval and benevolence.

For there was a deep frown of thought on Coker's brow—quite different from his usual expression in class.

Coker, evidently, was thinking.

This was so unusual a proceeding on Coker's part, that it was bound to draw attention!

Livy was not an author who appealed to Coker. Coker, in fact, disliked Titus Livius deeply.

The reported discovery of the lost books of Livy had left Coker quite cold. Coker would have preferred to hear that the found books had been lost!

Yet now Coker was obviously concentrating his mighty brain on something, and what could it be but Livy, as Livy was the lesson?

Coker's sudden exclamation, therefore, surprised Prout and annoyed him. He realised that Coker had been thinking about something else—not Livy at all! Coker had been in a brown study—but so far from giving deep attention to Livy and Prout, he had actually forgotten that he was in class at all, as his exclamation showed.

Coker's eyes were gleaming. Potter and Greene looked at him curiously. Other fellows stared. Prout glared.

Something, evidently, had flashed into Coker's powerful intellect, as the result of his unusual deep cogitations.

"By Jove!" repeated Coker.

"Coker!" boomed Prout.

"Oh! Ah! Yes, sir!" Coker blinked, remembering where he was. "Oh! Yes, sir! Did you speak, sir?"

"I did, Coker! You have been paying no attention to this lesson!" boomed Prout.

"Oh, yes, sir! I—I mean——"

"You will translate!" said Prout grimly.

"Oh gum!" gasped Coker.

Had Coker carefully prepared that lesson, and had he given the deepest attention to his Form-master, he would have found it difficult to construe Livy. As he had done neither, Coker floundered helplessly.

He stood for five minutes, piling blunder on blunder, bungle on bungle, like Pelion piled on Ossa, only more so, while the Fifth grinned, and Coker's cheeks burned, and Prout scarified him with his tongue.

After which, Prout boiled over.

"Coker, you will write out this section of the twenty-first book of Livy, from 'In parte operis' to 'libertas servaretur,' and translate!" boomed Prout. "I shall expect this by six o'clock this afternoon, Coker!"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Coker.

"Silence!"

"I say, sir, it's a half-holiday to-day, sir," protested Coker, "and I've something rather important on this afternoon!"

"Another word, Coker, and I shall cane you!"

Coker did not utter another word! They did not really cane fellows in the Fifth, but Prout looked exasperated enough to whop Coker as if Coker had been a fag in the Second Form.

Horace sat with a gloomy brow during the remainder of school that morning.

That section of Livy, which he had to write out and translate, meant a busy afternoon for Coker of the Fifth—if he did it!

If he didn't, it meant awful trouble with Prout, very likely the doubling of his task, possibly a report to the Head.

Coker almost wished that he had not thought out other affairs in the Form-room that morning, instead of giving a little attention to Prout.

Still, he could not quite wish that, for the outcome of his deep reflections

had been valuable—very valuable, in Coker's own estimation.

It had been worth while. Coker considered, even at the cost of that rotten imposition.

He was glad when Prout dismissed the Form at last.

With other, and more important, matters on his mind, Coker found lessons and Prout a worry!

"Well, you're for it, old chap!" remarked Potter, as they went out into the quad. "A jolly old afternoon with Livy!"

"Eh? I've no time for Livy this afternoon!" said Coker.

"Prout said six o'clock!" hinted Potter.

"Bother Prout! Besides, I fancy Prout will be all right when he hears," said Coker confidently.

"Eh?"

"I've got something on this afternoon," said Coker. "Come over by the elms, and I'll tell you! I don't want all the school to hear."

Considerably mystified, but not fearfully interested, Potter and Greene sought seclusion under the elms with Coker. Coker's face was full of eager excitement. There was no trace of it in Potter and Greene's. They had a rather bored look, which no doubt expressed their feelings.

"I told you I was taking up the affair of that bank cashier who bolted from Brighton with the bank's money," said Coker.

"Perhaps he didn't!" suggested Greene.

"Don't be an ass, Greene! I told you I'd found out that he was the uncle of that kid Hazeldene in the Remove."

Potter and Greene did not look impressed. As all Greyfriars School knew that the missing man was Hazel's uncle, this was not really a tremendous discovery for Coker to have made.

"The man's in this neighbourhood," went on Coker. "I'm convinced of that."

Again Potter and Greene failed to be impressed. It was stated in the daily papers that the man was, or had lately been, in that neighbourhood. So Coker's conviction on the subject was not impressive.

"But," went on Coker, in almost a thrilling voice, "where is he hiding? They'd be glad to know that!"

"I say, I believe that's Blundell calling me!" observed Potter.

"Never mind Blundell! I was thinking it out this morning when that old ass Prout interrupted me," said Coker impressively, "and I can tell you fellows, I've got it!"

"Got it from Prout?" asked Potter.

"Yes, we know——"

"No, you fathead! I've got it where that man from Brighton is hiding himself!"

"Oh!" Potter and Greene were faintly interested at last.

"I told you I met Grimes the other day," went on Coker. "I offered to work with him, like Sexton Blake, you know, and help him with his case—— What are you sniggering at, you silly idiots?"

"Oh crumbs! What did Grimey say?" gasped Potter.

"He was cheeky," answered Coker. "He said something silly and irrelevant about insanity in my family——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you stop cackling, you dummies? This is serious!" hooted Coker. "I tell you, I believe I can lay my finger on the man. And I can jolly well tell you I'm not letting on to Grimes, after his dashed cheek! I'm going to bag the man myself, and hand him over—like Sherlock Holmes and Sexton Blake do, you know, when they



Coker sprawled headlong in the oozy mud. "Give him some more!" roared Bob Cherry, as he sat up, gurgling and blinking. "Urrrh! Wurrh! Grooogh! I'll—grooogh!" spluttered Coker, as the Greyfriars Scouts threatened him with their staves.

help Scotland Yard! And I can jolly well tell you that if you don't stop cackling, I'll jolly well bang your silly heads together!"

With a great effort Potter and Greene stopped cackling. It was not easy. Coker, in the role of Sexton Blake, helping the official police, was really priceless. He was enough to make a stone image cackle.

However, Potter and Greene suppressed their emotions. They looked forward to relating this in the games study, and setting the whole Fifth roaring.

"But how did you get on to it?" asked Greene. Neither Greene nor Potter, of course, believed for a moment that Coker had really "got" anything, except a stiff impot from Prout!

"I'll tell you if you'll keep quiet!" growled Coker. "The other day—last Wednesday, in fact—those cheeky Remove ticks tied my leg up in the wood. I had to hop—Will you stop cackling?"

"Oh! Yes! Get on!" gasped Potter.

"Well, I was jolly tired, and glad of a lift in old Joyce's cart. You know old Joyce, the woodcutting chap! He lives in a lonely cottage in Lantham Wood! Well, he gave me a lift back to the school in his cart."

Coker's voice and manner were deeply impressive. Potter and Greene could only stare. It seemed to them that Coker was wandering far from the subject. For once, however, Coker was coming to the point.

"He jawed a lot," went on Coker. "You know how these old fogies jaw! All about this and about that, and all sorts of stuff that I never listened to! But while I was sitting at my desk in the Form-room this morning, it suddenly jumped into my mind—"

"Your desk did?" gasped Potter.

"No!" yelled Coker.

"But you said—"

"Will you listen to a chap? It suddenly jumped into my mind that old Joyce had let out something! I didn't notice it at the time—it flashed into my brain thinking it over this morning! Now listen!" said Coker dramatically. "Old Joyce, the woodcutter, has let his cottage."

Once more Potter and Greene failed to be duly impressed. Joyce, the woodcutter, often let his cottage. That he had let it once more, seemed to Potter and Greene a matter of absolutely no interest whatever. Obviously, it thrilled Coker with excitement. It did not thrill Potter and Greene at all.

"See?" demanded Coker.

"N-n-no, not quite!" said Potter.

"What about it?"

"What about it?" repeated Coker, with ineffable scorn. "Great pip! What a brain! Who wants to take a lonely cottage in the middle of a wood in the winter? In the summer, if you like! Besides, he told me the tenant's name."

"Not Hazeldene, surely!" ejaculated Greene.

"Of course not! Jasper Harrington!" said Coker. "See?"

"See what?"

"J. H., the initials!" said Coker triumphantly. "If you'd read as many detective novels as I have, you'd know that when a crook changes his name, for disguise, he generally keeps the same initials—for laundry marks and so on. That bank robber's collars, frinstance, will be marked J. H., most likely! So he calls himself Jasper Harrington. Might have called himself Joseph Hinks. But William Smith or George Wilkinson wouldn't have done."

Potter and Greene looked at Coker. This on Coker's part hinted of intelligence and observation. He really was

talking sense. His friends could not help being surprised.

It was quite probable that a fugitive changing his name would keep to the same initials, if his various personal belongings were marked with them. Coker, certainly had derived the idea from detective novels. Still, it was probable enough in itself.

"Mind, I'm not absolutely certain!" said Coker. "But I'm fairly certain. I jolly well know that if old Grimes knew Joyce had let his cottage to a man with the initials J. H., he would call and see that man."

Again Potter and Greene had to admit that it was probable.

"Not that I'm saying a word to Grimes!" added Coker. "He refused my help. He can do without it now. I shall not say a word to Grimes until I walk the bank-robber into the police station at Courtfield."

Potter and Greene jumped.

"But you can't!" gasped Potter.

"I can," answered Coker calmly. "and shall! Whether there's a warrant out for him or not, it's plain that the police want him! I shall hand him over! I fancy I'm a match for the man if he gives trouble! Anyhow, as you fellows will be with me, it will be easy enough. You are in this, of course."

"Are we?" murmured Greene.

Greene doubted that very much.

"We're going over to Lantham Woods this afternoon," explained Coker. "We shall call at the woodcutter's cottage. I've got a photograph of John James Hazeldene. If the man there isn't the man, all right! We apologise for barging in, and clear! If he is the man, we collar him."

"Do we?" murmured Potter.

"I fancy Prout will let me off that Livy when he hears that I've captured a
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man that the police have been hunting for weeks, what?" grinned Coker.

"Oh!"

"I'm banking on that, of course," said Coker. "I don't want a row with Prout! Still, I'm ready to take the risk! The call of duty, you know, and all that!"

"Is this your duty?" asked Potter. "I should have thought it was up to the bobbies to do this kind of thing."

"Don't be a fool, Potter! And don't argue! I never knew such a fellow for arguing! Look here, be ready immediately after dinner! We've got to start early for Lantham Woods."

"But—" said Potter and Greene.

"Don't jaw! Just be ready!" said Coker. And with that Coker left his friends and went into the House to make a few preparations for the afternoon's excursion.

Potter and Greene looked at one another. Potter smiled. Greene smiled.

"Are we going five miles to make blithering asses of ourselves this afternoon, Greeney?" asked Potter.

"I don't think!" answered Greene.

"There's a football match at Wapshot—Blundell and Bland and Fitz are going! What about that?"

"Good egg!" assented Greene.

After dinner that day, Coker lost no time in getting ready for the trip to Lantham Woods. Potter and Greene lost no time in getting ready for the trip to Wapshot.

When Coker, who had expected his friends to join him, went round looking for them, he failed to find them.

Greatly puzzled at this mysterious disappearance of Potter and Greene, Coker looked for them up and down and round about; but within the precincts of Greyfriars School, they were not to be found.

It was perplexing and very irritating. Coker had told them plainly, quite plainly, that he was taking them with him to Lantham. Yet they were not to be found! Coker lost more than a quarter of an hour of his valuable time before he gave them up.

Then he started for Lantham Woods on his own.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Hazel's Resolve!

"LIKE me to captain the side this afternoon, Wharton?"

Herbert Vernon-Smith asked that question—a question that caused Harry Wharton to stare.

The Remove had a match with the Shell that afternoon—not a match from which the captain of the Form was likely to stand down.

"Not specially!" answered Harry.

"What are you driving at, Smithy?"

"I thought you might like a like spin instead."

"Think again!" suggested Wharton.

The Bounder laughed.

"If I were as friendly with Marjorie Hazeldene as you are, I shouldn't say no to the idea!" he said.

"Marjorie!" repeated Wharton.

"What the dickens do you mean?"

"I'll tell you—something that happened last Wednesday, when we were on the Scout run," said Vernon-Smith. And he related the episode of Inspector Grimes.

Wharton listened, with a rather startled face.

"I couldn't make it out at the time," went on Smithy. "But since it's come out that Hazel's uncle—Marjorie's uncle—is skulking somewhere about this neighbourhood, in hiding, I've put two and two together! Either Marjorie is

in touch with him, or Grimey suspects that she is; and he's keeping her watched when she leaves Cliff House, to spot his man."

"Looks like it!" said Harry slowly. Indeed, it not only looked like it, but it was fairly certain.

"I've tipped Hazel." The Bounder glanced with a gleam of scorn in his eyes, at Hazel, lounging at a distance in the quad, with his hands in his pockets.

"He doesn't seem frightfully interested. I thought he would want to cut across and tip Marjorie; but he doesn't look like it, does he?"

"He's afraid of getting mixed up in his uncle's affairs!" said Harry. "It's rather rotten for him, of course. Look here, do you mean, Smithy, that you think Marjorie will be going again this afternoon, and that Grimey will be watching the road for her?"

"I mean that I think it jolly likely," answered Smithy, "and I think she would get into a fearful row at her school if it came out. Worse than that, if Grimey shadows her to Lantham Woods, he will bag his man."

"Lantham Woods!" repeated Wharton, with a start. "Who's told you—"

"Nobody; but I think Marjorie must have had some business there the day she helped Bunter home," said the Bounder, laughing, "and she was heading for the Lantham road last Wednesday when Reddy and I barged old Grimey off his bike."

He laughed again.

"I can see that you know something about it, Wharton! No bizney of mine—I don't want to know anythin'. Neither do I care two straws whether they bag that weak-kneed ass from Brighton or not—he's nothing to me! But Marjorie's a jolly nice girl, and I'd like to do her a good turn. If I were pally with her, as you are, I should cut the match and get away on my bike."

Wharton smiled.

"I'll speak to the fellows, Smithy. I'd like you to captain the side this afternoon."

"Done!" said the Bounder.

And so it was arranged. Leaving his friends to carry on on Little Side in the match with the Shell, Harry Wharton wheeled out his bike.

His face was very grave as he rode away for Cliff House.

He knew that John James Hazeldene was hiding at the woodcutter's cottage in Lantham Woods, and that Marjorie was in touch with him. That she had cycled to the lonely place on at least two half-holidays he was aware. He could hardly doubt that that had been her destination last Wednesday when Smithy and Redwing had interposed to stop the shadowing of Inspector Grimes. It looked as if she went every half-holiday, and as if Inspector Grimes had found it out, and was keeping her under observation.

To interfere with a police officer in the execution of his duty was, of course, impossible. But it was possible to linger about the lanes and see whether Marjorie came out on her bike, and if she did, warn her of danger. Whatever John James Hazeldene had or had not done, Marjorie believed in his innocence. As no formal accusation was yet made against him, she was breaking no law in standing by him.

"Wharton!" Harry heard his name shouted as he rode down Friardale Lane. "Wharton! Stop!"

He slowed down and jumped off his machine as he heard Hazel's voice. Looking back, he saw Hazel running after him breathlessly from the school gate.

Wharton waited for him.

If this meant that Hazel wanted to play up, Wharton was only too willing to leave the matter in his hands.

Hazel arrived, breathless.

"You're going to Cliff House?" he panted.

"Yes."

"Because Smithy's told you; I saw him talking to you in the quad—"

"Yes."

"Can't you mind your own business?" exclaimed Hazel shrilly. "What's it got to do with you, I'd like to know?"

Wharton looked at him steadily.

"Smithy told you what happened last Wednesday," he said. "I'm going to warn Marjorie that she may be followed and watched. Surely you wouldn't like her to be followed to where your uncle is in hiding, Hazel?"

Hazel clenched his hands.

"You seem to know more about it than I do!" he snarled. "Marjorie wouldn't tell me where he was. She's told you—"

"Nothing! But I know, as it happens."

"Where is he, then?"

Wharton was silent. If Marjorie had not told her brother, it was not for Wharton to tell him.

"I fancy I can guess," sneered Hazel. "Marjorie's been over to Lantham Woods more than once. Somewhere about there, isn't it?"

No answer.

"You keep clear of it!" hissed Hazel. "If they find him, so much the better. He was a coward to come here and bring his disgrace on me! If he's innocent he ought to go back and face the charge. You know that."

"I know."

"And if he's guilty, let him go where he belongs—and as soon as they can get hold of him!" said Hazel savagely. "He's disgraced me enough already! In either case, he ought to be found—and you know it!"

"Very likely," answered Harry. "But that's no bizney of mine. I'm bound to warn Marjorie that she may be watched."

"You're not bound to do anything of the kind. I'm her brother, and I don't feel bound to do it."

Wharton's eyes gleamed.

"Because you're a weak-kneed rotter, Hazel—that's why!" he said. "I don't care twopence for you or your uncle, either, but I'm not going to have Marjorie worried and distressed because she's got the pluck to do what you're afraid to do. So that's that!"

"You rotter!" panted Hazel. "You meddling rotter!" He made a spring at the captain of the Remove, lashing out with his fist.

Wharton evaded him, restraining his desire to knock him spinning. He jumped on his bike again and pedalled away down the lane.

"Stop!" yelled Hazel. "Stop! Oh, you rotter! Stop!"

This time his call passed unheeded. Harry Wharton rode on swiftly, turned into the path through Friardale Wood, and disappeared.

Hazel was left, white with rage, clenching his hands convulsively.

In his shame and misery, his selfish concern for himself and nobody else, it seemed to him that the discovery of the hidden man was the easiest way out of the trouble—the only way. His reasoning was plausible enough. Innocent. John James should have faced the music; guilty, he deserved his fate. Yet, in John James' place, it was only too likely that Hazel would have acted precisely as his uncle was doing.

That reflection, if it occurred to him,

made no difference to his feelings. The man who had disgraced his name ought to be found—ought to be taken—ought to be got away from the neighbourhood of Hazel's school. For his own sake—yes, for his own sake—he ought to be found. For his own sake—and Marjorie's!

That was what the wretched fellow said to himself as he went on towards Priardale at last. For his own sake! Hazel was saying that to himself as he entered the telephone-box at Priardale post office and asked for a number—and the number he asked for was that of the police station at Courtfield.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Catching a Tartar!

HORACE COKER got off his bicycle at the corner where the cart-track leading to old Joyce's cottage turned from the main bridle-path through Lantham Woods.

Owing to the base description of Potter and Greene, Coker of the Fifth had come on this trip on his lonely own. But he had no doubts. Coker feared no foe. A fellow who had set out to track down a crook in the heart of a lonely wood, miles from everywhere, might have felt some little uneasiness about what might happen when he found him. Not so Coker. Coker was afraid of no man—least of all of some rascally crook.

Big and burly and beefy, Coker had no doubt of being able to handle him—if it came to handling. And he was going to handle him if he turned out to be John James Hazeldene! Coker's mind was firmly made up about that.

Leaving his jigger parked under a tree at the corner, Coker strode up the cart-track with wary eyes.

He kept in cover as much as he could as he advanced. He did not want the scoundrel to spot him and take the alarm.

Of course, he was not quite sure yet that the tenant of Joyce's cottage was the fugitive cashier from Brighton. He believed so, but he had to make sure before the handling began.

Amazing to relate, Coker, by sheer chance, was right—probably for the first time in his fatheaded career! Coker, as a rule, could be relied upon to be wrong in his facts and wrong in the conclusions he drew from them. But, for once, Coker had hit the right nail on the head. The tenant of the woodcutter's cottage was the man Coker believed him to be. It was amazing, but true!

It did not occur to Coker that in taking upon himself the duties of the police force he was very seriously overstepping the limits of the law. He pictured himself marching John James Hazeldene into Courtfield police station with a grip on his collar. He did not realise that he had no right and no authority to do anything of the kind, and that he might find himself in very serious trouble for so doing.

Undeterred by any considerations of that sort, Horace Coker marched up the cart-track under the overhanging branches of ancient trees and came in sight of the woodcutter's cottage.

He also came in sight of a face looking over the gate.

The hidden man was, in fact, watching the path in expectation of seeing Marjorie, who was to come as usual that afternoon if she could.

Coker's burly form came suddenly into his sight, and he started. Coker was proceeding with such excessive caution that his desire to keep unobserved was written all over him, as it

were—alarming enough to a hunted man in incessant fear of discovery.

John James Hazeldene gave him one quick, searching look and disappeared from view.

Coker broke into a run.

Caution, it was clear, was no use. He had seen the man of the cottage, and the man of the cottage had seen him. True, the face over the gate, had a moustache, and the printed photograph in the newspaper was that of a clean-shaven man. But why had the man darted away the instant he saw Coker? Coker rushed on towards the cottage, determined on a closer view.

The gate was bolted within. That did not stop Coker. He grabbed the top and swung himself over.

The man was disappearing in the porch.

Coker dashed up the garden path.

The man vanished into the house as he reached the porch. The door slammed on Coker's nose.

There was a fumbling sound of bolts within.

Coker shoved hard at the door.

A bolt shot, but Coker had the door an inch or two open, and the bolt missed the socket.

The door swayed under Coker's hefty shove from without, and the hidden man's desperate shove from within.

"Here, let me in!" shouted Coker.

A panting voice answered:

"Who are you? What do you want? You have no right here—"

"More than you have, I fancy!" answered Coker. "If we all had our rights, I fancy you'd be in a cell at Brighton at this very minute!"

He heard a terrified gasp.

Another hefty shove at the door, and it flew open. Coker's words seemed to have sapped the strength of the man within.

Coker tramped in.

If he had not been afraid of the man before, he was less afraid now than ever. The man seemed, to him, a frightened rat.

In the living-room of the little cottage the man faced him, white, and panting, and desperate. The sunlight from the little square window showed his face clearly.

His eyes, almost starting from his head, turned to Coker.

"How dare you force your way in here?" he exclaimed shrilly. "I will give you into custody for—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Coker. "That's good, Mr. John James Hazeldene. I don't think it's me that's going to be given into custody!"

"What—what name did you call me?" breathed the man in the cottage. "My—my name is Harrington—"

"I don't think!" grinned Coker.

He jerked out of his pocket the printed photograph he had taken from the newspaper and held it up.

"Look at that!" said Coker.

As the man looked at it with popping eyes Coker made a sudden snatch with his left hand. The false moustache came off in his grasp.

The hapless fugitive from Brighton stood revealed. He staggered back against the wall. His face was white as chalk.

Coker glanced at the photograph, and glanced at the white-faced, fear-stricken man. There was no doubt now.

Perhaps Coker, with all his self-confidence, had had some lingering doubt. If so, it vanished on the spot. The printed photograph was that of the man before him, leaning, cowering, on the wall.

"I fancy I've got you, Mister John James Hazeldene!" said Coker, with grim satisfaction. "I fancy that fool Grimsey will open his eyes when I march you in." The man made a movement. "Don't try to dodge. I'll collar you fast enough if you do. You don't look as if you'd be much trouble to handle."

That was true enough. John James Hazeldene was nothing like a match, physically, for the brawny Coker.

Leaning on the wall, he panted. There was a desperate glitter in his scared eyes.

"If you've got the loot here," went on Coker, "you'd better hand it over."

"The—the loot?" stammered the man. "The banknotes you bolted with," explained Coker. "I suppose you've got them here with you—what?"

"I have nothing—nothing that is not my own. You—you fool, who are you, and why are you meddling here?" Coker clucked.

"Nothing that's not your own! That's good—when you bolted with a bundle of banknotes!"

"I did not! I—"

"You bolted for the fun of the thing—what? And you're skulking here because you like solitude, like that Johnny in the poem?" asked Coker, with grim banter. "Well, you can tell them that at the police station."

"Stand back!" exclaimed John James Hazeldene hoarsely. "You have

(Continued on next page.)



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no right to touch me—to interfere—to meddle—"

"I'm not bothering about that!" answered Coker calmly. "Are you coming quietly, or waiting for me to handle you?"

John James eyed him. He was not so hefty, or so muscular, as Horace Coker. But his intellect was in rather better working order!

"You spoke of the—the loot," he breathed. "I—I will show you—"

Coker's eyes gleamed.

If he could take the loot, as well as the bank-robber, to Courtfield Police Station, his triumph would be complete, overwhelming! He could picture Inspector Grimes' amazement when he pitched the bundle of banknotes on the official table!

"Get on with it," said Coker.

"This way!"

"Don't try to bolt!" warned Coker. "I shall handle you if you do—and hard!"

Without replying, John James Hazeldene led the way into the little passage that ran through the cottage. Under the narrow staircase was a door, which evidently gave access to a coal-cellar.

He opened the door.

Several dim steps, leading down into dark depths, were revealed. A musty smell of coal, and firewood, and bad air came up.

"You've got it hidden there?" grinned Coker. "All right! I'll come down with you—"

"Here is a candle. Have you a match?"

"Yes, rather!"

Coker had a matchbox. He groped for it. As he stood, with one hand in his pocket in front of the open doorway of the cellar stair, John James Hazeldene made one swift step back and gave him a violent shove between the shoulders behind.

Coker toppled over headlong.

Before he knew what was happening he was rolling down the cellar stair, to land, ten feet down, on a heap of coal.

As he rolled, the door above was slammed. A key turned in the lock. Coker scrambled up, in black darkness, mad with rage. He groped for the steps, scrambled up them, and groped over the door. It was fast! He thumped on it furiously.

"Here, let me out! You scoundrel! Let me out! Oh crikey! Why, I'll smash you to smithereens! You villain, let me out!"

Only the echo of Coker's roar answered him. No reply came from John James Hazeldene. That gentleman, preparing for instant flight from the hiding-place that was no longer a secret, had no time or attention to waste on Coker. Coker thumped, and roared, and raved unregarded. He had come to the cottage to make a prisoner. There was a prisoner! Unfortunately, it was Coker himself—a prisoner in the coal-cellar!

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bessie Begs for It!

"BESSIE—"

"If you don't want my company, Marjorie Hazeldene, I—"

"I don't!" said Marjorie, driven to plain English.

Bessie Bunter blinked at Marjorie through her spectacles. But she did not turn back, or stop. Grunting a little—for she was, like Brother Billy, rather short of wind—the plump Miss Bunter pedalled on by the side of Marjorie Hazeldene up Pegg Lane.

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"I think that's unkind!" said Bessie reproachfully. "But I'm coming, all the same."

Last time, Bessie had been left. This time she had taken care not to be left. When Marjorie wheeled her machine out, Bessie also wheeled out a machine. Curiosity was the besetting sin of the Bunter tribe. Other Cliff House girls, no doubt, were rather curious about those bike rides of Marjorie's. Bessie was not merely curious; she was going to know!

Marjorie, frowning, put on speed.

There was a howl from behind.

"Don't go so fast, Marjorie! Do you hear? Mind, I'll go back and speak to Miss Bellow!"

Marjorie slowed down again. Probably Bessie was only uttering an empty threat, in her annoyance and wrath. But John James Hazeldene's niece could not take the risk of her mysterious excursions coming to the notice of her form-mistress. She rather feared that Miss Bellow had spotted something already.

Marjorie had a good and patient temper. But it was sorely tried now. Bessie Bunter was going to stick like a leech in her intense curiosity to know what was "on." Marjorie could almost have smacked her—if not quite!

"Now, look here, Bessie—" she urged.

"Cat!" said Bessie.

"You little inquisitive duffer!" exclaimed Marjorie.

"Cat!"

Marjorie, breathing hard, rode on. Bessie rolled on by her side. To allow the fat and fatuous Bessie to accompany her to the shops at Lantham, and then to the lonely cottage in the wood, was impossible. To shake her off by putting on speed was to risk her tattling at Cliff House. What she could do, in these puzzling circumstances, was rather a mystery to Marjorie.

The sight of a Greyfriars junior, standing by his bicycle farther up the lane, came as a relief. Why Harry Wharton was there Marjorie did not know; but she hoped he might be able to help her out of the difficulty.

Harry Wharton, as he sighted the two girls coming up the lane, raised his cap politely. He had kept his eyes open, but had seen nothing of Inspector Grimes in the vicinity so far.

Seeing Marjorie in company with Bessie Bunter, he wondered whether she was merely going for a spin after all. But the flush in Marjorie's cheeks, and the annoyance shining in her eyes, gave him an idea of the true state of affairs. He remembered Bessie's remarkable resemblance to her brother Billy. And Marjorie could hardly deal with Bessie as a Greyfriars fellow would have dealt with Billy in similar circumstances.

Marjorie shot ahead again at a speed that left Bessie nowhere. There was a shrill squeak from Miss Bunter.

"Stop! Don't go so fast! Cat!"

But Bessie took comfort when she saw Wharton in the distance, and saw Marjorie halt and dismount to speak to him. So long as Marjorie remained in sight she was satisfied.

"What's the trouble, Marjorie?" asked Harry, with a smile.

"That little—hem—I mean, Bessie!" Marjorie coloured. "She is curious, and persists in coming with me. And—"

She broke off.

"I came over here to give you a tip, Marjorie," said the captain of the Remove. "Smithy spotted Inspector Grimes after you left last Wednesday,

and he may be at the same game again to-day. I don't want to ask any questions, of course, but if you're going to Lantham Woods—"

"Oh!" breathed Marjorie. "Then I was not mistaken! I—I was watched! My uncle—"

"It's all right, so far!" said Harry, reassuringly. "Smithy stopped him, and he never followed you past this lane. But if he's here again to-day—you see the risk. Look here—" He paused, and then, as Bessie drew nearer, he went on hurriedly: "If you're bound to go, of course, you must; but it's a big risk."

"I know! I know!" breathed Marjorie. "But my uncle is expecting to see me, and if I do not go he will be alarmed—the slightest thing alarms him—he will fancy—"

"Would a message do?"

"A message?" repeated Marjorie.

"I'll cut over to Lantham, if you like, and tell him you can't come," said Harry. "I know where to find him, of course. If he knows you're kept away it will be all right."

"Oh!" muttered Marjorie. "But—but I can't let you—I can't let you be dragged into this—no, no! Even my brother will not help me—"

"That's all right," said Harry. "There's no harm in it; and I'd be glad to help. If a message would do—"

"Oh, yes, yes! I was going to take some things from the shops, as usual; but that does not matter—that can wait! If you'd let uncle know that I can't come to-day—then he will not worry or be anxious—"

"I'll do it like a shot."

"You're so good!" said Marjorie gratefully. "I—"

She broke off as Bessie Bunter came trundling up. Harry Wharton raised his cap again, and remounted his machine. There was no need to say more; and more could not be said in the hearing of Bessie Bunter.

"Don't hurry away!" called out Miss Bunter; a remark to which Harry turned a deaf ear. He was not frightfully keen on Bessie's entrancing society. Apparently deaf he rode away.

Marjorie breathed more freely.

She had a strong suspicion that Miss Bellow was going to ask questions. She dreaded to be shadowed by the Courtfield inspector to her uncle's hiding-place. She could not shake off Bessie Bunter. Wharton's intervention in the affair, therefore, came as an immense relief.

That that brief interview with Wharton had caused a total change in her plans was, of course, quite unknown to Bessie Bunter! Bessie was as curious and as determined as ever!

"Well, are we getting on, now that silly boy's gone?" asked Bessie.

Marjorie glanced at her with a glimmer in her eyes. Bessie had persisted in joining her for that ride! Bessie was not to be got rid of! Bessie could stick on now—for a good long ride!

By the time it was over it was probable that Bessie would regret ever having mounted her bike! Bessie was in need of a lesson on the subject of inquisitiveness! She was going to have one!

"Very well!" said Marjorie, smiling.

She remounted and pedalled on, and Bessie pedalled by her side. The pace was slow—Bessie was no great cyclist. The direction taken led towards the village of Friardale—directly away from Lantham.



As Coker groped in his pocket for a match-box in front of the open doorway of the cellar stair, John James Hazeldene made one swift step back, and then gave him a violent shove from behind. Before he knew what was happening, Coker was toppling down the cellar stair!

They rode through Friardale High Street. As they passed the post office Hazel came out.

He started at the sight of his sister, and his face flushed crimson. He disappeared promptly into the nearest shop.

Marjorie rode on with compressed lips. Why had her brother deliberately avoided speaking to her? She little dreamed how Hazel had been engaged in the telephone box.

They rode on, past Greyfriars, and across the common to Courtfield. By that time Miss Bunter was getting tired.

"I say, is it much farther, Marjorie?" she asked.

"Is what much farther?" asked Marjorie sweetly.

"Where you're going!" snapped Bessie.

"I'm not going anywhere in particular—only a spin."

"Gammon!" grunted Bessie.

"You can turn back—"

"Cat!"

They rode on. Having passed Courtfield, they next passed Highcliffe School. Courtenay and De Courcy, in the gateway, raised their caps very politely to Marjorie as they passed. They glanced rather curiously at Bessie, who was grunting and gasping, pulling and blowing, at a great rate.

"I say I can't keep on much farther!" gasped Bessie.

Marjorie smiled.

She had covered a greater distance than on the Lantham ride. She was still as fresh as a daisy; but Bessie was winded and weary. But Marjorie's kind heart came to the rescue of the hapless Bessie, and she gave up the miles she had intended to add to that ride.

"This way!" she said.

They turned off the road, and by lanes reached the Sark and the towpath. They rode down the towpath. This was taking them back towards Cliff House, to Bessie's surprise and puzzlement. But Bessie was so tired by this time that any end to that weary ride would have been welcome.

"I say, we're in Pegg Lane again!" exclaimed Bessie suddenly.

"Yes. Aren't you tired?" asked Marjorie sweetly. "If you'd rather keep on, we'll go round by way of Friardale again."

Bessie shuddered at the thought.

"Cat! I'm going in!" she gasped.

And they rode on to Cliff House and went in.

Bessie Bunter breathless, aching, tired to the bone, gasped and grunted, and almost groaned, as she put up her machine. Marjorie, as she stepped out of the bicycle-house, found herself face to face with Miss Bellow, her Form-mistress. Miss Bellow's face was very grave.

"You have been out for a long bicycle ride this afternoon again, Marjorie?" she said quietly.

Marjorie's heart beat.

"Yes, Miss Bellow."

"I must ask you, my dear, where you have been," said the mistress of the Fourth, kindly but very firmly.

Marjorie silently blessed Harry Wharton. She had to explain. Luckily, there was no difficulty about that!

"I've been round by Friardale, Courtfield, and the Sark, Miss Bellow," she answered meekly. "I should have gone farther, only Bessie was so tired."

The mistress of the Fourth started.

"Was Bessie with you?"

"Oh, yes, Miss Bellow!"

"Then you did not go alone?"

"Oh, no, Miss Bellow!"

"Gurrgh!" A loud grunt announced that Bessie Bunter was coming out of the bicycle house. "Urrgh! I'm beastly tired—aching all over! I jolly well shan't come for a ride with you again, Marjorie Hazeldene! I believe you made me tired on purpose! Cat!"

"What?" exclaimed Miss Bellow.

"What did you say, Bessie?"

Bessie jumped and blinked at her.

"Oh! I didn't see you, Miss Bellow—I mean—I—I wasn't calling Marjorie a cat—I—I was speaking of another cat—I mean—"

"You must not use such expressions, Bessie," said Miss Bellow sternly. "You will take fifty lines—"

"Oh dear!"

Miss Bellow walked away, and Marjorie, smiling, ran off to join Clara and Babs and Mabs. Bessie Bunter blinked after them with a blink that might almost have cracked her spectacles.

"Cats!" she gasped.

It was probable that, when Marjorie went for a bike ride again, she would not be honoured by the fascinating society of Elizabeth Bunter!

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

In Flight!

HARRY WHARTON started, and caught his breath. He had lost no time, after leaving Marjorie, in getting along the Lantham road to the spot where the bridle-path led away through the woods.

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He turned into the bridle-path and rode on cheerily under the arched branches overhead, quickly covering the two miles or so to the corner where the cart track jutted off to old Joyce's cottage.

But as he came in sight of that corner he sighted something else that made him catch his breath.

It was a small Austin car.

Cars were not allowed by the by-laws, on the bridle-path through Lantham Woods. But there was the car—and stepping from it was a portly figure that Wharton knew.

Inspector Grimes was in plain clothes, but Harry Wharton knew him at a glance.

He halted, jumped off his machine, and pulled it aside among the trees. His first thought was not to be observed by the Courtfield inspector.

But Mr Grimes was not glancing back along the bridle-path. Leaving his car there, the portly inspector stepped into the cart track, and strode away up that track towards the woodcutter's cottage.

"My hat!" breathed Wharton, in utter dismay.

It was startling to see Mr. Grimes at that spot! Apparently he had not watched that afternoon for Marjorie to leave Cliff House. Judging by the direction he was now taking, he had no need to do so.

It looked as if Mr. Grimes had received definite information—definite enough, at all events, to bring him in a car from Courtfield to Lantham Woods—and to cause him to disregard local by-laws about using a car on the bridle-path!

The game was up!

If Marjorie's uncle was still in the woodcutter's cottage, he was a taken man!

Leaving his machine leaning on a tree, Wharton hurried forward on foot.

There was a rustle in the thickets beside the track, and Wharton gave a jump as a pale, haggard face looked out.

He stared blankly at John James Hazeldene! The false moustache was gone, but he knew the man at once.

John James was not in the cottage! He was here! He was dressed as if for travelling, and had a bag in his hand. Wharton realised that the alarm must have been given already; that the hidden man had left the cottage to flee once more, and had dodged into the thicket at the sight of the Courtfield inspector coming up the track.

There he had waited till Mr. Grimes had gone on towards the cottage and disappeared.

With a hunted, haggard face, the wretched man glanced up and down the dusky track under the trees, and gave a low, sharp cry at the sight of the staring Greyfriars junior.

The next moment, however, he recognised Wharton as one of the juniors who had come to the woodcutter's cottage a week or more ago.

He put his fingers to his lips with an agony of apprehension in his worn, haggard face.

"Be silent!" he breathed.

Wharton nodded.

His thoughts raced! Inspector Grimes had gone on to the cottage, some considerable distance farther on, believing, or, at least, suspecting, that the man he wanted was there! He had left his car at the corner, a hundred yards farther back from the spot where Wharton stood!

The schoolboy stepped towards the hunted man, half-emerged from the thickets. His eyes were shining with excitement.

"He hasn't seen you!" he breathed.

"No, I was watching. I—I—"

"He will be some time finding out that there's nobody in the cottage. You've got time—"

"Speak low!" whispered the man.

"Yes, yes! I came with a message from Marjorie. She cannot come here this afternoon—lucky, as it turns out!"

"Yes!" breathed John James. "I was thinking of her—that perhaps— But I am glad she is safe from this! I have a chance—"

"Can you drive a car?"

The man stared at him.

"A car? Yes! Of course! But what do you mean?"

Wharton pointed down the track.

"Grimey's left his car at the corner! No harm in borrowing it, if you leave it somewhere where it can be found and returned to the owner."

The hunted man's eyes glittered.

"Heaven bless you, boy!" he breathed. "Believe me, oh, believe me, I am innocent! I am an innocent man, though everything is against me! I would not let that dear, brave girl concern herself with me if I were guilty! You believe that?"

"I believe it," said Wharton. "I believe every word! But if you'll let a boy give you a tip, sir, when you get into that car, drive straight to Brighton and face it! If you could think it over calmly, Mr. Hazeldene, I'm sure you'd see that it was best."

The man nodded vaguely.

It was good advice that Wharton gave, though it was given by a school-boy to a man more than old enough to be his father! The man's nod seemed to imply consent, though whether the frightened fugitive had the courage to act on the soundest advice, was another matter. Harry Wharton could only hope that he would—for his own sake and Marjorie's. He watched the hunted man run down the path like a scared rabbit.

Leaving the cart track, Wharton cut through the wood to the bridle-path, to the spot where he had left his bicycle.

He came out of the trees and secured his machine, and as he did so he heard the buzz of a starting car behind him.

He mounted his machine and rode swiftly back towards the Lantham road. He did not want to be anywhere on the scene when Inspector Grimes missed his car and started hunting for it!

Swiftly as he rode, he was soon overtaken by the Austin.

As it came roaring on behind, Wharton jumped down and dragged his machine into the trees, to give the car room to pass.

It flashed past him, John James Hazeldene sitting at the wheel. The path was rough and hilly, the trees and bushes encroached on it on either side: there was little room for even a small car. But John James, sitting at the wheel with fixed eyes ahead, drove fast.

It was doubtful whether he saw Wharton. He made no sign as he passed. The little car, rocking and bumping, shot by, and vanished up the bridle-path in the direction of the Lantham road.

Harry Wharton remounted and rode after it.

He drove hard at the pedals and covered the ground quickly. But by the time he came out into the Lantham road the Austin had long vanished. John James Hazeldene was a free man, but whether he was going back to face the music, or skulking away in flight, Wharton could not guess. He could only hope for the best, as he rode away for Cliff House, for a word with Marjorie before he returned to Greyfriars.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Only Coker!

KNOCK!

Inspector Grimes listened and waited.

That the cottage was occupied there was no doubt, for he could hear sounds from within. There was a sound like hammering from the little building.

Someone, it was certain, was there! Inspector Grimes waited—but only a few moments! Then he turned the handle of the door.

It opened to his touch.

(Continued on page 25.)

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THE SEA SPIDER

By GEORGE E. ROCHESTER

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

Ulverst, the greatest U-boat commander Germany ever had, accompanied by a competent crew, sets out aboard the Sea Spider to wage war against the world. The first vessel to fall a prey to this deadly underwater craft is the bullion carrier Minicapolls, from which is transferred billion to the value of £200,000. Driving on through the surging seas in mid-Atlantic, the Sea Spider eventually reaches the lost city of Atlantis. Here, Ulverst discovers treasure worth more than £1,000,000. Content with the ill-gotten gains, some of the crew demand that the loot be shared and the base at Ice Rock abandoned, but the mutineers are silenced once and for all by Ulverst. Following this, Ulverst boards a plane and sets out for the mainland with a view to making arrangements for the disposal of the treasure. Luck is against him, however, for he is caught in a blinding Arctic snowstorm.

(Now read on.)

Alone in the Arctic!

A SUDDEN violent increase in the fury of the storm sent Ulverst reeling against the side of the cockpit as the port wing dropped alarmingly.

Frantically he whipped the control-stick across, but that powerful monoplane was as helpless as a piece of paper in the cruel grip of the screaming blizzard, and was now completely out of control.

Lower and lower dropped the port wing, then the worst happened. The monoplane rolled completely over, and dropping its nose, went hurtling down through the blinding, swirling storm.

Desperately Ulverst whipped back the control-stick to try to lift the nose. But it was too late, for in that same instant there came a splintering crash, a smashing, jarring blow on head and body, then a black, engulfing wave of sheer oblivion.

How long Ulverst lay unconscious he never knew, but as his senses slowly returned to him, and with them recollection of the crash, he marvelled that he still lived and had not been engulfed in the cold and lonely sea.

He was lying across the controls in the cockpit, and pulling himself back on to the seat, he kicked open the door of the cockpit and looked out.

The blizzard had passed, and in the murk of the Arctic dusk Ulverst saw that he had crashed on one of the great floating fields of snow.

"Which is just a postponing of the end, I suppose," he muttered, as weakly he dragged himself from out the cockpit. "It would have been better to have gone into the water and finished quickly!"

His head was aching, he felt as though one of his ribs was broken, and he was in the grip of a deathly nausea. Pulling himself together as best he could, he grimly surveyed the wreckage of his machine.

The port wing was smashed to pieces, and the port engine had broken loose from its fittings, and was hanging at a drunken angle. The tail was about the

only part of the machine that was intact, and now reared itself overhead, evidence that the monoplane had crashed nose first, the full force of the smash having been taken by the crumpled port wing.

Turning away, Ulverst took stock of his surroundings. On three sides of him, as far as he could see through the murk of the Arctic night, stretched nothing but unbroken and uneven whiteness. On the fourth side, quite close to him, were the brown and sluggish waters of the Arctic Ocean.

Crawling back into the cockpit, Ulverst took the powerful Zeiss glasses from their rack, and, slipping them into his pocket, clambered out into the snow again and mounted to the top of a near-by snow-covered hillock of ice.

It was a painful and laborious enough climb, for Ulverst was bruised from head to heel, and was hurt internally. But after much slipping and sprawling, he reached the top, and with the glasses pressed to his eyes, he scanned every point of the compass.

The ice-field, as far as he could judge, was about five miles in length and three miles across. It was one of many, drifting slowly and almost imperceptibly on that dark and dreary sea.

Nothing stirred, nothing broke the great enveloping silence. And as Ulverst turned away to descend to the wrecked machine, he knew that he was the only living thing in that vast world of ice and lonely sea.

Regaining the monoplane once more, he cut away a length of fabric from the riven wing, and, collecting some of the splintered wooden framework, he moved away some little distance and trampled a square yard of snow into a firm, hard surface.

That done, he produced his penknife, and, slicing off some thin slivers of wood, built a meagre fire. Deliberately he was sparing with his fuel, for he did not know how long it would have to last him; or, in other words, he did not know how long he would be able to keep alive on a diet which, of necessity, must consist entirely of melted snow.

But whilst life remained with him he would have need of a fire.

For an hour or more he worked, dismantling the wrecked monoplane and cutting up the woodwork into small faggots for his fire.

More than once he wondered grimly just why he should trouble, but self-preservation is the first instinct of man, and it seemed to Ulverst an impossible thing to lie down in the snow and die.

Tired out at length, and utterly weary, he built up his fire and stretched himself out on the snow near the warmth of the tiny blaze.

Around him was the mark of the Arctic night, heavy with the tense and brooding silence of those dreary wastes. Nothing stirred, nothing broke the deathly hush. It was as though Ulverst was the only living thing in a world which had died.

He slept fitfully, waking with a start from troubled slumber, sometimes to raise himself on his elbow, listening intently, sometimes to rise and pile a few more pieces of wood on the reddening embers of the dying fire.

Dawn came at last, and, deciding that as long as he could keep on the move he could dispense with a fire, Ulverst set wearily off to tramp the ice-field, making towards where a distant snow-covered hillock reared itself some 300 feet into the greyness of morning.

He had no object in going there, no object in going anywhere, except merely to keep the blood circulating in his veins.

He walked stumbingly, more than once nearly ending everything by a downward plunge into one of the snow-covered crevasses with which the snow-field abounded. There were times when he wondered why he should bother to display caution in where he trod.

Was it not just a postponing of the inevitable end?

He could not be rescued, for the simple reason that there was none to rescue him in those lonely waters. He would just grow weaker and weaker each day until there came a time when he would lie down, to drift off into the

slumber from which there would be no awakening in this life.

What an end for him, who had braved the perils of the seas, and of the under-seas! To die a lonely death, with none to witness his passing, and only the lapping of the sea against the ice-floes to sound his requiem.

Reaching the ice hillock, Ulverst attempted to climb it, but twice he slipped and fell heavily. Cursing it in black and bitter mood, he started back towards his fire.

The return journey took him more than two hours, for time and again he was forced, through sheer weariness and exhaustion, to sit and rest. His head was still throbbing painfully, and he was convinced by now that one of his ribs was broken.

Eventually he trailed back to his fire and rekindled it. He was shivering with the bitter cold, and he continued to shiver as he sat, with hands outstretched to the tiny, flickering flame.

An idea came to him at last. He would build a shelter. It would be a particularly futile waste of time, but it would give him something to do.

Hugging the warmth of his fire, he sat staring at the wreckage of his monoplane. There was nothing there he could utilise, for he required every bit of wood and fabric for fuel.

Well, he would make a snow hut; but first he would sleep again and commence the job refreshed.

It was night when next Ulverst opened his eyes—the grey, dusky night of the Arctic. His fire was out, and across the frozen wastes came a moaning wind, which brought with it a bitter deathly chill.

Ulverst staggered to his feet, and as he did so a few flakes of fine, powdery snow fell on his upturned face, heralds of a coming storm.

Lurchingly he made his way to the only shelter available—the lee of the hillock of ice and snow near where he had crashed. And there, crouched in a cavity scooped out by his numbed and frozen hands, he waited until the blizzard had passed.

It was of short duration, but while it raged, howling across the ice-floes from out the Arctic night, Ulverst plumbed the very depths of misery and depression.

The storm passed, Ulverst dragged himself out of his shelter, chilled to the very bone, but with a strange burning in his veins.

Swaying on his feet, he stood staring at the wreckage of his machine and at the snow-covered heap of precious faggots. Then, dropping on his knees, he clawed for the faggots, and, finding some half-dozen, carried them to the wreck and soaked them in petrol from the tank.

They formed the nucleus of the blaze he shortly had going, and as the blood-red flames licked high he piled on every soaking piece of wood and fabric which he could find.

For this was the end. Ulverst was facing the inevitable. He knew that the bitter cold was laying its death grip on him, and beside that roaring fire he intended to stretch himself out in the sleep from which there would be no awakening.

The sizzling, spluttering flames leapt and danced like mad things, licking high into the night, and when the last bit of wood had been thrown on Ulverst wrapped his flying coat closer about him and, lying down in the snow, drifted off into the slumber of death.

Saved From Death!

IT seemed to Ulverst, however, that death was a queer business, in which there were vague and curiously muffled voices, movement, and strangely troubled dreams.

Sometimes he seemed to be awake and sometimes plunged in black oblivion. He was incapable of any coherent thought, and sensed, rather than knew, that he was no longer cold, no longer in pain.

Then suddenly he opened his eyes and stared about him. He was in a little room, illuminated by a yellow light. That did not seem strange to him at first, and for a long while he lay content.

As recollection stirred, and he began to piece together in his mind the events he could last remember, Ulverst sat suddenly bolt upright and stared about him.

It was not a room he was in, but a cabin. He could feel now the lift and sway of the ship and hear the creak of her masts and gear.

He took careful and wondering stock of the cabin. The vessel was a foreigner, a Russian, judging from the cheap coloured prints which had been pinned on the walls.

On a peg behind the door hung oilskins and sou'-wester, together with an old and greasy sheepskin jacket. Two pairs of heavy sea-boots stood in their rack against the wall, and a seaman's chest, a table, a couple of chairs, and a barometer completed the sparse and simple furnishings.

Ulverst made an effort to throw back the blankets and swing his feet to the floor, but he was still so weak and ill that he was glad to abandon the attempt and lie back again on the pillow.

A few moments later there came the clump of heavily booted feet down the ladder; the door opened, and a big, burly man, massive of chest and sinew, and wearing a thick oilskin over his reefer jacket, entered the cabin.

Crossing to the bunk, the man stood looking down at Ulverst, and, seeing him awake, smiled, and said:

"So at last you have come round, my friend? Sometimes we despaired if ever you would."

"What happened?" asked Ulverst weakly. "The last thing I remember is building up my fire and lying down in the snow to die on the ice-field!"

"It was your fire we saw," replied the other. "We had been blown out of our course by a blizzard, and when visibility became clearer, we saw the red glow of your fire."

"That was lucky indeed for me," said Ulverst gratefully, thinking what a queer twist of Fate it was that the flames which he had meant should be his funeral pyre should have proved to be his salvation. "What vessel is this?"

"The whaler Nordyck, out of Paxa, on the shores of the White Sea," replied the other. "I am Serge Tarka, master and owner."

The man looked at Ulverst inquiringly, and Ulverst knew that he was wanting to know just who he himself was, and how he came to be lying on a snowfield beside the wreckage of his monoplane.

"My name is Lester," he said quickly, lying with fluent ease. "I was flying from America to Europe via Greenland and Iceland. I was blown off my course, lost myself completely, and crashed during a blizzard."

As a story to convince Tarka he could

not have bettered it, for the whaling skipper had heard time and again of the flights which were attempted across those desolate seas.

"We are homeward bound," said the latter, "so you will not have long now to remain in this little cabin. You have been very ill, though, and will have to lie quiet for some days yet."

"How long have I been here?" asked Ulverst.

"Four days," replied Tarka. "Yes; it is four days since we found you on the snowfield."

Sudden alarm showed in Ulverst's eyes. If he had been four days aboard this whaler he had no recollection of it, and the chances were he had been delirious. And in delirium, who knew what secrets he had given away!

"I hope I have not been too much trouble?" he said, watching closely the bearded, weather-beaten face above him.

"No; you have not been any trouble," replied the skipper, laughter rumbling in his throat. "But in your fevered imaginings you cried out many strange things."

Ulverst looked at him fixedly.

"Yes; you talked of the underseas and of a spider and of lost cities," went on Tarka. "You talked, look you, as if you knew the submarine service."

"I do know it," answered Ulverst quickly. "I was with the British submarines during the War."

"Ah, then that is how it happened!" nodded the other ponderously, stroking his beard with a great calloused hand. "That accounts for it, my friend. Often have I known men in delirium speak of things as far back even as their childhood days. Well, you are better now, the good God be thanked, and I will send the cook to you with something for you to eat!"

"Thank you!" said Ulverst; then added: "I am very much obliged to you for what you have done, and I can assure you that you will not go unwarded!"

"T'ch! Do not speak of that!" exclaimed the other impatiently. "We only did what any other seamen would have done!"

"You saved my life," replied Ulverst determinedly, "and I won't forget it!"

A few minutes later, when the captain had departed, the door opened again, and a squat and hairy Slav, who acted as cook, entered the cabin and placed a steaming bowl of thick soup on the little table by the side of the bunk.

It was wonderfully appetising, and Ulverst drank it with gusto. The thick, strengthening fluid did him a world of good, and when he had drained it to the last drop, he lay back again on the pillow and gave himself up to contemplative thought.

That he was lucky to be alive, he realised only too well.

However, here he was, and the only thing to be done now was to consider his course of action. He would be landed at Paxa, on the White Sea, and, if he were well enough to travel, it should not be a difficult job to travel from there to Hamburg, which was his destination.

The crash and his injury had thrown him back days, however, and, unless he got word through to Wesel at Ice Rock by means of wireless, Wesel would become anxious about him.

There was, however, nothing he could do about that at the moment, and, closing

his eyes, Ulverst drifted off into restful and health-giving slumber from which he awakened to hear heavily booted feet tramping the deck overhead, and to see Serge Tarka bending over him, saying:

"Come, wake up, my friend! We are bathing at Paxa!"

Reds and Whites!

PAXA was just a little whaling village with a wooden quay, one low-roofed, white-washed inn, and a straggling street of little white-washed cottages. There are many such along the shores of the White Sea. When an improvised stretcher had been made ready, Ulverst was carried ashore to the cottage of Serge Tarka.

At the cottage Tarka's wife and his daughter, Marlene, a beautiful girl of some sixteen years of age, did everything they possibly could for the invalid, and under their care Ulverst grew stronger.

The pair of them puzzled him, as did Tarka himself. All three seemed to be worried as though burdened by some secret trouble, and although they tried to be bright and cheerful when in Ulverst's company, the effort they made was very obvious.

Often, when lying awake at nights, Ulverst would hear the rumble of men's voices in the kitchen below. This would continue until the early hours of the morning, when Tarka would let his visitors out and Ulverst would hear their tread dying away along the narrow street.

"What is wrong with you?" he bluntly asked Tarka after a while. "Aboard the whaler you were jovial and happy, but here at home you look as though you had the cares of the world on your shoulders."

Tarka tried to laugh, but to Ulverst, who was watching him closely, the laughter rang strangely false.

"Nothing is wrong with me, my friend," he answered. "Why do you ask?"

"Because I merely voice what my eyes see and what my common sense tells me," answered Ulverst. "Something is wrong, I know, and I ask what it is, because I may be able to help."

Tarka shook his head.

"No, there is nothing you can do to help," he said sombrely, and turning abruptly on his heel, quitted the room and strode downstairs.

That same evening he burst again into Ulverst's room, and his face was pale and drawn beneath its tan.

"My friend," he said, "we must hide you or it is very likely that you will die."

"Why—what is the matter?" demanded Ulverst sharply.

"The Vikroffs and the Vinas are coming," replied Tarka. "Ah, I should have told you of this before. It has been threatening ever since you've been here. No, it is not you they are coming for, it is us. Listen, I will tell you."

Quickly he went on:

"The next village to this has about three hundred inhabitants. They are all related by marriage. All are either of the family of Vikroff or the family of Vina. They are a clan, you understand. So are we here in Paxa. Most of us are Tarkas, and the rest are Rakovs. Since Red revolution swept Russia in the days of the Great War, there has always been a deadly feud between the two villages, for they are Red Russians, whilst we are White. They have burned our church, destroyed our school, and killed fully a score of our men. We have no redress from the



Dropping its nose, the monoplane hurtled down through the blinding, swirling snowstorm!

authorities for, being suspected of being White Russians, we are virtually outcasts, and whatever the Vikroffs and the Vinas do to us is winked at by the police and military."

"I see," said Ulverst grimly, for he did indeed clearly see with whom the sympathies of the Red Government would lie in this feud between a Red village and a White village.

"For a long time now the Vikroffs and the Vinas have been threatening to burn our village down," went on Tarka, "and things came to a head whilst I was away at sea. One of the young Rakovs had a knife fight with a Vina and killed him. The lad acted only in self-defence, but the Vikroffs and the Vinas have demanded that we either hand the lad over to them to be tried and hanged, or they will burn down the village. Naturally we refused to hand the lad over, and they are on their way here now to destroy us."

"To destroy you?" repeated Ulverst sharply. "How many do you number that you talk in that manner?"

"Scarcely two hundred, including mere boys," replied Tarka. "We are outnumbered by more than a hundred. There will be slaughter. But in the end they must prevail. That is why I say you must hide. If they find you they will kill you!"

Ulverst laughed harshly, and swinging his feet to the floor, rose from his bed.

"Get me my clothes," he said. "We'll see whether these Vikroffs and Vinas will destroy Paxa or not!"

Tarka looked at Ulverst's stern, set face, then without further argument

brought him his clothes, which had been neatly cleaned and pressed.

"Stay here with me a few moments," said Ulverst, as he hurriedly dressed. "How many guns can you muster?"

"Every man has his gun, and many of the women and the boys, too," answered Tarka. "It has always been so ever since the feud commenced."

"That's excellent," said Ulverst, struggling into his boots and straightening up. "Come on, lead the way downstairs, and we'll fix up a nice, warm welcome for these Vikroffs and Vinas. How soon do you expect them here?"

"Another half-hour at the latest," replied Tarka, quitting the room and leading the way down into the low-ceilinged living-room which was crowded with men and anxious-faced women in shawls.

Quickly Tarka explained that his guest, instead of hiding as they suggested, was determined not only to take part in the fight which was to come, but had a scheme whereby they might defeat the Vikroffs and the Vinas and thus save the village.

"But we haven't too much time," cut in Ulverst. "If you will listen to me, I'll tell you what I suggest we do. But no matter what the outcome of to-night's fight may be, I promise you that sometime within the next few weeks these Vikroffs and Vinas will be taught a lesson they will never forget. Their own village will be destroyed in a manner undreamed of by any!"

(Chums, you're booked for a feast of thrills in next week's chapters of this great adventure yarn. Don't miss 'em, whatever you do!)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,415.

THE SLEUTH OF GREYFRIARS!

(Continued from page 24.)

Surprised and very wary, the inspector stepped into the cottage. The hammering sound was clearer now—it seemed to proceed from under the staircase.

Mr. Grimes glanced round him, puzzled and suspicious.

A telephone call had started him on the trail that afternoon. The wretched Hazel had tried to disguise his voice; but Mr. Grimes was left in no doubt as to who was speaking to him on the phone. Whatever he might have thought of Hazel, Mr. Grimes had his duty to do—and did it promptly. Lantham Woods was the only clue his informant could give him; but Mr. Grimes knew that old Joyce's cottage was the only habitation in that quarter, and that the old woodcutter always let it when he had a chance. His little Austin was soon eating up the miles, to interview whomsoever he might find at the lonely cottage.

Now that he had arrived, he was puzzled.

He had found the gate open, and the door on the latch! Nobody was to be seen; but somebody was thumping on the little door under the stairs!

"Ah!" ejaculated Mr. Grimes suddenly.

He pounced on a cutting from a newspaper lying on the floor. It was the printed photograph of John James Hazeldene, cut from a newspaper—lying where Coker had dropped it when he was collared.

Thump, thump, thump!

Unheeding for the moment the thumping on the cellar door, Mr. Grimes took a rapid survey of the interior of the cottage. Nobody was there—but food on the table told of recent occupation. More puzzled than ever Mr. Grimes came back to the door under the staircase.

Someone was there! Was it his man? If so, how in the name of wonder was he locked in the cellar? Someone else, obviously, had locked him in, for the key was in the outside of the lock!

Thump, thump!

"Let me out!" came a muffled voice. "I'll smash you! Oh, you rotter, won't I spifficate you when I get out!"

Thump! Bang! Crash!

Utterly mystified, Mr. Grimes turned back the key and threw the door open.

"Who—" he began.

He got no further.

A black figure, black as the blackest Hottentot in Africa, hurtled out of the cellar doorway and leaped at him.

"You rotter!" roared Coker. "I'll show you!"

Back went Mr. Grimes, staggering under that hefty attack. Coker punched wildly, under the mistaken impression that he was dealing with the man who had locked him in the cellar.

Mr. Grimes rallied, and hurled Coker backwards!

"Who are you?" shrieked Mr. Grimes. He could see that this was not John James Hazeldene. Who it was nobody could have guessed—Potter and Greene could not have recognised that black face.

"Eh!" Coker, blinking through black dust, realised that this was not John James. "You—who— Oh! You're old Grimes! Have you got him?"

"Who are you?" raved Mr. Grimes.

"Eh? I'm Coker—you remember me speaking to you in Friardale Wood the other day! Have you got him—that bank robber? Have you let him get away?" Coker staggered up in clouds of dust.

Mr. Grimes looked at him as if he could have bitten him.

"What are you doing here?" he hissed.

"I came here for that bank robber," hooted Coker. "That man Hazeldene—I had his picture—it was him right enough—he told me the loot was in the cellar, and pitched me down and locked me in—"

Mr. Grimes understood. That fool, that idiot, that fatheaded schoolboy, had spoiled everything; he had given the alarm and the bird was flown!

"You—you—you meddling fool!" shrieked Mr. Grimes.

"Look here—"

Mr. Grimes stayed only one second longer! He occupied that second in dealing Horace Coker a tremendous smack on the side of his head.

"Yaroooh!" roared Coker, as he went over.

Leaving him roaring, Mr. Grimes hurried out of the cottage. John James Hazeldene had been there—but was there no longer! To whiz off in his car, to set telephone and telegraph to work, was Mr. Grimes' one idea! Portly as he was, he fairly raced along the cart-track to the corner where he had left his car!

His car was no longer there!

Mr. Grimes made some remarks, not

in official language! Then, with deep feelings, he tramped away.

Horace Coker did not take his departure so promptly. He realised that he needed a wash before he appeared in the public view! It was nearly an hour later that Coker of the Fifth, still a little dusty about the hair and the ears, sorted his bike out from the trees and mounted and rode away—a sadder if not a wiser Coker.

In this imperfect world, it is impossible for everybody to be pleased.

Marjorie was pleased to learn that her uncle had eluded Mr. Grimes. Harry Wharton was pleased to be able to tell her so. Hazel, perhaps, was pleased at the bottom of his heart; anyhow, he was glad to know that John James was gone from the district. John James himself, no doubt, was pleased to be scouring the open spaces instead of undergoing that dreaded "interview" with the police. Inspector Grimes was pleased to get his car back the next day, when it was found abandoned at a distance. But the inspector was not at all pleased by the escape of his man! He was terrifically displeased!

Least pleased of all was Coker of the Fifth!

For Mr. Grimes complained very seriously to the Head of Coker's egregious meddling in matters that did not concern him. Coker had a severe lecture from the Head; and a still more severe lecture from Mr. Prout. And he had not scored that great success which was to have placated Prout! Instead of getting out of Livy, as he had so confidently hoped, Coker had his impot doubled; and for days and days afterwards the hapless Horace was writing Livy! Never had any fellow been so utterly sick of Titus Livius as Horace Coker was! It was no wonder that he was fed up!

"They can find their man themselves!" he told Potter and Greene bitterly. "I'm not helping them any more! Let him rip! Let him rob all the banks in the kingdom! I shan't interfere! I should refuse to help the police now, if they went down on their bended knees."

But they never did!

THE END.

(The next rollicking fine yarn in this popular series is entitled: "FOOLED ON THE FIRST!" Make sure of reading it, chums, by ordering next Saturday's issue of the MAGNET in good time!)

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JACK JOLLY— GIANT-KILLER!

By DICKY NUGENT

Boom! Crash! Bang!
"What the merry dickens—"
Dr. Alfred Birchmull, the Head of St. Sam's, jumped to his feet in alarm. A deflating clammer had suddenly started in one of the upper floors of the Skool House. What it was the Head couldn't make out, but it sounded very much like a thunder-storm and an earthquake rolled into one.

Clatter! Boom! Wallop!
"What the thump—" gasped Dr. Birchmull. He hesitated no longer. Stuffing into his trousers pocket the penny dreadful he had been reading, he seized an ashplant and rushed out of the study.

"Juniors up to some eggstraordinary prank, I eggspect!" he muttered, as he galloped away. "It sounds like a cyclone—so the best motto seems to be 'Hurry, eane!'"

In a cuple of jiffies Dr. Birchmull had traced the source of the fearful din. It was coming from the study of Jack Jolly, in the Fourth passidge. His beard fairly bristling with anger, the Head bust into that apartment.

"Now, then, what's all this here?" he bawled, in his refined way. And then the sarkastick remarks he was starting to make tailed off into a gasp of utter astonishment.

Really, it was enuff to make anyone gasp. The seen in Jack Jolly's study was unparalleled—unprecedented!

Four juniors were in the middle of the study—Jolly himself, and his pals, Fearless and Merry and Bright. The last three seemed to be engaged in a boxing-match with Jolly. That alone was strange enuff, but it was something else that made the Head's eyes almost pop out of their sockets.

Instead of wearing boxing-gloves on their hands, Fearless and Merry and Bright were wearing heavy hobnailed boots, strapped to their wrists by leather bootlaces!

"Man-my hat!" gasped Dr. Birchmull. "What on earth are you doing of, boys? I've seen some scraps in my time, but I've never in all my life seen the like of this!"

Jack Jolly & Co. dropped their hands and looked round breathlessly.

"Sorry if we were making too much noise, sir," said Jack Jolly. "I was just having a little practice with my sparring partners!"

"But why the hobnailed boots?" demanded Dr. Birchmull.

Jolly laughed.
"Evidently you haven't herd the news, sir. I've challenged Sloggem Hall to a fight for the kaptiney of the Fourth, and as he's such a tuff proposition, I'm undergoing special hardening training!"

At the mention of the booly of the Fourth, Dr. Birchmull started violently.

"You—you've challenged Sloggem Hall to a fight?" he mermered faintly. "But, my dear Jolly, you must be potty—mad, as the vulgar would put it! Sloggem Hall is dubble your hite and at least three times your wait. He'll simply slawter you!"

"I'm not afraid of meer hite and wait, sir," said Jack Jolly lightly. "Skill counts for something, and I may be able to teach Hall a thing or two in that respect."

"But—but that's not the only thing," said the Head, dropping his voice to a whisper and glancing nervously over his shoulder. "I haven't said anything about it before, but if it's a question of saving you from being spifflicated, Jolly, I must reveal the truth now. The fact is, Sloggem Hall is here under false cullers. He is not a skoolboy at all, really, but a champion heavywait boxer, whose education has been sadly neglected, and who has decided for that reason to return to skool for a time. Why, he eggspects to be champion of the world in a cuple of years!"

"Grato pip!"

"Now that you know that, Jolly, I shall, of course, eggspect you to call off this farcical fight," said Dr. Birchmull. "It stands to reason you don't stand an earthly against a coming world champion."



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No. 130 (New Series).

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.



March 30th, 1935.

Jack Jolly took out a pencil and drew a deep broth.

"Well, it's a bit of a shock, I must admit, sir," he said. "All the same, I'm going on with it, world champion or not!"

"Supposing I forbid the banns—I mean the fight?"

"In that case, sir, we shall defy your orders and fight at a secret roudyvoo!"

"Then it doesn't seem any good argowing the toss!"

"Not the slightest, sir! I've made up my mind to give that grate boolying tirant the licking of his life, or perriish in the attempt!"

Dr. Birchmull shrugged helplessly.

"Then I've nothing more to say in the matter. Good-morning—and bust you!" he added, giving a terrific slog at the punchball that was dangling in front of him. Then he uttered a mellancolly



howl of aggerney—for the punchball, in accordance with Jack Jolly's hardening plan, was made of solid steel!

As the day of the grate fight drew nigh, the eggitement at St. Sam's attained tremendous proportions. Everybody heaped that Jack Jolly would win, but that it was a forlorn hoop was freely admitted. Bounder minor, of the Fourth, offered twenty to one in doonuts against viktory for Jolly, and found no takers; which gave a pretty fare idea of the way the wind blew.

At last the grate day arrived and the whole skool assembled in the jimnasyum to watch the massiker of the innocent, as Bounder put it.

Tinger-linger-ling!

The first round had started! Sloggem Hall, his yellow fangs bared in a sneering, looring grin, fell on Jack Jolly like an avvorlanach.

Boom! Bang! Crash!

Three-mitoy blows he landed on Jack Jolly's fizz. They were blows that would have nocked the average elephant spinning, but Jolly, after a week's hard nocking about with hobnailed boots, hardly heeded them.

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?



Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry both come from military families—which, perhaps, explains why, when leading a band of Removites in a "skirmish" with Ponsonby and the cads of Highcliffe, Wharton and Cherry distinguished themselves in the forefront of the battle!

"Is this a fight or a tickling match, Sloggem?" he laughed. Then he hit out himself.

BOOM!

It was a fearful blow—a blow that rocked St. Sam's to its very foundations! Sloggem Hall shot back like a boolit from a gun and hit the boards with a smack that sent spectators bouncing up in the air. But he was up in an instat. Wading in, he gave his opponent a hammering that would have nocked Jack Dempsey silly. But Jack Jolly only laughed louder.

"You seem to have lost your stamminer to-day!" he mocked. "Why don't you hit me, for a change?"

Then he hit out again. Sloggem Hall spun round like a top, then did a dubble-sommersalt, and crashed on to his back.

Again he rose, a vishus gleam in his evil eyes. He made a bull-like rush, and this time, instead of punching, he kicked! Jack Jolly felt the booly's steel-plated boxing-boots land with fearful force on his jaw, his nose, and his ear.

Jack Jolly saw red! He waded in and beat a terrific tattoo on Sloggem Hall's chest for several seconds, and finally, whizzing round three times first to give it added force, he hit the booly fairly and squarely on the dial.

It was the greatest blow that had ever been delivered in the jimnasyum at St. Sam's. Sloggem Hall was lifted clean off his feet out of the ring, and landed in a yelling heap right on top of the Head, who was sitting in a ringside seat!

That was enuff for Dr. Birchmull—more than enuff, in fact! Scrambling to his feet, he fled for the eggits, whimpering with fear and paffins he went, and a loud howl of derision followed him!

The next instant the jimnasyum was filled with deflating cheers for the victor. Fellows swarmed round Jolly, shaking him by the hand, lifting him shoulder-high, and warmly singing "Freeze a jolly good fellow!"

One and all realised that St. Sam's had seen the last of Sloggem Hall, and nobody felt sorry about it.

Even the Head, who had supported the booly of the Fourth all through his career at St. Sam's, looked quite happy about it.

"It is a relief to see the back of Sam," he confided to Mr. Liekham, of the Fourth. "I had begun to think that his enormous appetite would reduce the profit on his skool fees to nil. But now that he has left in the middle of the term the profits I have made out of him must be enormous—ten or twenty quid, at least! I shall really have to show Jolly my gratitude in tangible form."

And Dr. Birchmull was as good as his word. On the following day he made a public presentation to the giant-killer of St. Sam's.

It consisted of a bright new Percy.

BUNTER, the HIKER

By BOB CHERRY

I wouldn't have believed it if I hadn't seen it myself, but there was no getting away from it. Last Wednesday, dear readers, William George Bunter, of the Remove, went out hiking!

"Bunty—dear old fat man!" I gasped, as I came across him in Friardale Lane. "What ails thee? Why this thussness?"

Bunter stopped for a split second.

"I say, old chap, can you lend me a bob?" he panted.

"Sorry, haven't an oat!" I said hurriedly. "But what's it all about, old chap? You've never done any exercise in your life, except when compelled, and now there you are tearing through the countryside like a do-or-die hiker!"

"Beast!" retorted Bunter, rather ungraciously, as he pushed on.

I kept pace with him for a hundred yards or so, anxious to find out the meaning of the strange phenomenon.

"Is it doctor's orders, or are you doing it for a wager, or—"

"Yah!" panted Bunter. "Can't a chap who's hard up for the bus fare walk to Courtfield to meet a pal without all this fuss? Buzz off, Cherry!"

"Ah! Now we're getting to it!" I chirped. "Who's the pal?"

"My pal Mauleverer!" Bunter gasped proudly. "I heard him say—I mean he told me he was having tea at the bun-shop this afternoon, and I'm going down to join him. Somehow I missed him at Greyfriars! Now you sheer off, Cherry! If you come along with the idea of bagging a free feed you'll be disappointed. My pal Mauly's rather particular!"

"Oh, my hat! Go ahead on your own, then, fatty!" I



gurgled, leaving him to toddle along alone for the rest of the way to Courtfield.

And Bunter wondered why I laughed as I turned away.

The explanation was that I knew something more than he about Mauly's tea out that afternoon.

It was quite true that Mauly was having tea at the bun-shop. But it happened to be the bun-shop at Lantham, not the bun-shop at Courtfield!

Bunter found it out for himself later in the afternoon.

I don't think hiking appeals to him so much now.

In fact, the effect of the afternoon was so drastic that I seriously doubt if Bunter ever will go hiking again!

Urgently Wanted

Large bottle of laughing gas by Fisher T. Fish. He lost a shilling in the quad last week and he looks as if he'll never smile again unless something desperate is done soon!

GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT



In answer to Mr. Quelch's inquiry, Bunter said he changed his bow at least once a week. When it was pointed out that Strawberry jam had not been available at Greyfriars for over a fortnight, Bunter was at a loss to explain the dried jam on his bow. He was "all tied up!"

Peter Todd is the possessor of a cool, logical, legal mind, and will doubtless make a successful lawyer. Todd, however, has one weakness—any reference to his prominent nasal organ rousing his ire. Bolsover discovered this—and collected a "prize nose" for his pains!

It is said that Skinner, Snood and Stott never go through a day without a quarrel. Certainly they nearly came to blows when Skinner missed a penknife—accusing his "chums" of taking it—till Bunter grinningly admitted that he had "borrowed" the knife without permission.

MOUTH-ORGANISTS' GREAT TRIUMPH

By TOM BROWN

Funny the way things work out. Last week Lower school musicians were cowering under the threat that the mouth-organ was about to be banned at Greyfriars. Now, only a few days later, they're basking in the sunshine of a new and quite unexpected popularity.

For the time being, anyway, the mouth-organ has come into its own!

Nobody could possibly have foreseen that Sir Hilton Popper would be the cause of this remarkable change of programme. But it's entirely his doing.

He brought along a pal of his who happens to be a professor of music one day last week, you see. He got the Head to show the professor round the school, and the first question the professor asked was what Greyfriars did in the way of producing musicians. The Head, who is not very strong on music, was rather taken aback.

He thought of Hoskins, and hurriedly got the genius to punch out something on the piano. The musical gent did not seem greatly impressed. Then Dr. Locke got Fitzgerald of the Fifth to perform on the violin. Fitz gave of his best—but still the musical visitor was not impressed. The Head began to wonder what he could rustle up that would impress the visitor.

And then Larry Lascelles, who sometimes displays rather a sound knowledge of human beings and their peculiarities, whispered something in the Head's ear. And the head, frowning very dubiously, said:

"Of course, we have a number of self-taught musicians of a type—performers on the—er—mouth-organ and the—hem!—tin-whistle, and so on; but, of course, these would not interest you!"

"On the contrary, I am keenly interested," said Sir Hilton's pal, much to the Head's surprise. "Perhaps I could hear one of your boys playing on the mouth-organ?"

Dr. Locke sent Larry scouting for a mouth-organist.

By sheer luck he ran into me!

Need I say more?

Well, perhaps I ought to relate that the Head's visitor was simply delighted, and that he called me a real virtuoso.

I don't quite know what that means. But I do know that there has been no more talk of banning mouth-organs at Greyfriars.

I feel I must have been an instrument of Fate, or something!

BE FAIR TO 'LONZY

By PETER TODD

Someone has written to ask me if my cousin Lonzy is a freak.

Of course he's not!

He does, admittedly, differ a little from the ordinary run of schoolboys. For instance, in getting up in the morning he gets out of bed hands first, cleans his shoes with soap, and washes with boot-blackening. Just very slight deviations from the normal, you see.

He is perfectly normal in his dress. Usually he is quietly garbed in a red, white, and blue suit, a topper with an ostrich feather in it, and tennis shoes with green spats.

He enjoys excellent health, rarely suffering from anything more serious than galloping pneumonia.

These are the impressions you'd get of 'Lonzy from the questions readers send me about him, anyway!

Matter of fact, they're all wrong. 'Lonzy's a bit of a loon in some things, but in most things he's very much like anyone else.

So why not be fair to 'Lonzy, chaps? Stop looking on him as a sort of prize curiosity and start regarding him as a slightly unusual, but very likeable, fellow instead.

Then perhaps I, his double, will be able to venture out into the highways and byways without being grinned at and cackled at by people who mistake me for 'Lonzy!