

Schoolboys' Wits v. Chinese Cunning See this Week's All-Thrilling Yarn of . . . Harry Wharton & Co

The Magnet ^{2^D}

*Billy Bunter's
Own Paper*



ONE OUT OF THE BOX!

The House of PERIL!

By FRANK RICHARDS



—Telling of the Exciting Holiday Experiences of HARRY WHARTON & CO., of GREYFRIARS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bunter Takes Precautions!

WAKE up, Bunter—it's bedtime!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter, probably, was the only fellow in the Greyfriars Remove who ever required waking up at bedtime.

Even Billy Bunter did not require it when he was at school. But the Owl of the Remove was not at Greyfriars now.

His plump person was disposed in a deep armchair in the hall at Wharton Lodge. His spectacles had slid down his fat little nose—his eyes were shut, and his mouth was open.

Billy Bunter had had his supper half an hour ago; and perhaps his exertions had tired him. Anyhow, he slept and he snored.

Harry Wharton & Co. had had the radio on. Bunter's nasal solo had accompanied it like an extra trombone. It was not musical. But it was, on the whole, preferable to Bunter's conversation. So he snored peacefully till bedtime came round. Then he had to be woken up.

The Famous Five gathered round him, with smiling faces. Bob Cherry bawled in one fat ear. Johnny Bull shouted in the other. Bunter snored on! Once he was safely enfolded in the embrace of Morpheus, Bunter was not easy to wake.

Frank Nugent tapped the fat nose.

"Urrgh!" mumbled Bunter; and snored again.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh pulled a fat ear!

"Mmmmmmm!" mumbled Bunter.

He shook his head as if to shake off a troublesome fly. But the action was quite unconscious. He did not open his eyes. Neither did he shut his mouth. His snore rumbled on.

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"My only summer hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "He can sleep!"

"The sleepfulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Talk about Rip Van Winkle!" ejaculated Harry Wharton. "Bunter could give him fifty in a hundred and beat him hollow!"

"Wake up, Bunter!"

Snore!

"Bed-time, old fat man!"

Snore!

"We've got to travel to-morrow!"

Snore!

"Are you coming up to bed, you gurgling grampus?"

Snore!

"Me wakee fattee ole Buntie!" said Wun Lung, the Chinese junior of the Greyfriars Remove.

The little Chinese of Greyfriars was at Wharton Lodge with the Famous Five. On the morrow they were crossing the Channel, on a holiday trip, to join Wun's uncle, an ancient Chinese gentleman, who bore the remarkable and distinguished name of O Bo!

Harry Wharton & Co. were looking forward keenly to that trip. So was Billy Bunter, in his waking moments. But at the present moment Bunter had forgotten all about the trip. He was dreaming of a pie he had eaten at supper, and of a cake that, owing to lack of space, he had not eaten.

Wun Lung approached the armchair with a grin on his little yellow face. He had a pin in his hand.

"Hold on—" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Allee light—me wakee!" grinned Wun Lung. And he gave the sleeping beauty a gentle prod with the pin.

"Yaroooh!"

Shakes and shouts had not awakened Billy Bunter! The pin did it! It awakened him quite quickly and suddenly. He woke with a roar, jumping.

"Oh! What's that? Something bit me!" yelled Bunter, and he smacked out wildly with a fat hand, no doubt supposing that there were mosquitoes about.

Smack!

"Ow!" roared Bob Cherry, as that fat paw caught him suddenly and unexpectedly on his features. "Wow! You clumsy ass—yow-ow!"

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

"I say, you fellows! Ow! I've knocked my hand against something!" yelped Bunter, blinking round over his spectacles that had slid down his fat nose.

"It was my face, you blithering idiot!" roared Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, was it? Well keep your silly face away when I'm swatting flies!" yapped Bunter. "A beastly mosquito or something bit me and woke me up—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at!" grunted Bunter. "I was having a lovely dream, about a pie—"

"Bed-time, old fat man," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "We've got to start immediately after lunch to-morrow, and you'll never be up if you don't turn in."

"Oh, all right!" Billy Bunter set his spectacles straight on his fat little nose. "I say, hold on a minute, though—I can't come for a minute."

"If you want to say good-night to my uncle and aunt, they're in the library," said Harry. "We'll wait—but buck up!"

Bunter rolled away across the hall.

He did not, however, head for the library door. He headed for that of the dining-room.

"In the library, fathead!" called out Harry.

Grunt from Billy Bunter.

That was his only reply.

He was not, apparently, thinking of saying good-night to the old colonel and Miss Wharton. More important matters occupied his mind.

He disappeared into the dining-room, the six Removites staring after him.

"What is that fat duffer at?" grunted Bob Cherry, rubbing the features on which a fat paw had landed.

"Bunter!" called out Wharton.

Bunter reappeared in the doorway. He blinked at the group of juniors in the hall through his big spectacles.

"I say, where is it?" he demanded.

"Where's what, fathead?"

"The cake!"

"Eh! What cake?"

"The one I didn't eat at supper."

"Oh, my hat!" said Johnny Bull. "Was there anything on the table at supper that you didn't eat?"

"Oh, really, Bull! The pie was enough for me—it's not much I eat, as you know. I thought Wells put that cake on the sideboard! What has that silly ass of a butler done with that cake, Wharton?"

"Blessed if I know! If you're hungry—" gasped Harry Wharton.

Hospitality at Wharton Lodge was unlimited. But really it seemed impossible for even Billy Bunter to be hungry again already! He was loaded with pie right up to the Plimsoll line.

"Well, I'm not exactly hungry now!" admitted Bunter. "But a fellow might wake up in the night hungry! I do at Greyfriars, sometimes! I was awfully hungry that night when I was awake, the night when I rescued Wun Lung from the kidnapper. It might happen again! I thought I'd take that cake up with me, in case of accidents."

"Oh!"

"But it's gone!" grunted Bunter. "I believe Wells knew that I had an eye on it, and that's why he's locked it up! I can't see anything in the sideboard, but a box of biscuits."

"Oh!"

"I'll take them!" grunted Bunter. "After all, I don't expect much here—this isn't Bunter Court! I expect to have to rough it a bit, here."

"Oh!"

Bunter rolled back into the dining-room for the biscuits. Harry Wharton gazed after him—the other fellows grinned.

"Nicey ole Buntsee velly nicey guest, 'long any felleo's house!" murmured Wun Lung. "Velly nicey mannels, old fat Buntsee."

"The nicefulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Billy Bunter reappeared once more with the biscuit-box under his arm. Having looked into it and observed that it was full of nice, fruity biscuits, the fat Owl was, on the whole, satisfied. He would have preferred the cake; but the biscuits were good, and there were several pounds of them. Two or three pounds of biscuits made an agreeable little snack, if a fellow woke up hungry.

The juniors went up the staircase. Bunter, with the biscuit-box under his arm, grunted. It was a silver-plated box and rather heavy.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, come on, fatty!"

"I think one of you might carry this box as far as my room! Blessed if I ever saw such a lazy lot!"

"You fat, slacking frog—" began Johnny Bull.

"Beast!"

"Oh, hand it over!" said Bob Cherry. "I'll carry it!"

"Ass!" said Johnny. "Why can't the lazy porpoise carry it himself?"

"My dear chap, can a fellow be better occupied than in saving Bunter

trouble?" asked Bob. "Come on! Race you upstairs!"

"I'm not going to race, you silly ass!" yapped Bunter.

Bob Cherry scampered up with the biscuit-box. His friends scampered after him. Bunter followed at the pace of an old and very fatigued snail. Bunter liked to take stairs slowly. He had more to carry up than most fellows.

By the time he reached the passage on which the juniors' rooms opened Wun Lung had gone along to his room, and the Famous Five had gone into Harry Wharton's "den." Bunter rolled on to his own room.

On his bedside table stood the silver biscuit-box, left there by Bob Cherry. He gave it a blink of satisfaction. Even Bunter was not prepared at the moment to deal with the contents; he had no room for even a single biscuit. But it was a comfort to see it there, all ready if he woke up hungry. If he woke up at all, there was no doubt that he would wake hungry. Bunter could always rely on that.

It did not occur to Bunter's fat mind that anything had happened to that biscuit-box while it was in Bob's hands.

Had he looked into it again, he would have made the startling and dismaying discovery that there was nothing in it.

Unaware of that awful state of affairs, Bunter turned in. And once more there

Unscrupulous, ruthless men, with money and power behind them, are determined to kidnap Wun Lung, the Chinese junior of Greyfriars. What chance have Harry Wharton & Co., alone in the rambling old house of Mr. O, in Paris, of preventing them?

was a sound as if a particularly savage trombone had got loose from a jazz band!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Bob Cherry's Burglar-alarm!

"GIVE it a name, Bob!" said Harry Wharton, with a smile.

The chums of the Remove were gathered in Harry's sitting-room, otherwise his den. All of them were ready for bed, but Bob, it seemed, had something to say to his friends before they turned in.

Bob's face wore a grin as he came into the room. Having tipped the biscuits out of the box into a corner of the wardrobe in Bunter's room, he was rather amused by the idea of the fat Owl sitting up in bed and reaching out for the same. Only the box remained, and even Bunter could not eat the box.

But the grin faded off his face, leaving him looking very serious. Bunter and biscuits were dismissed from his mind.

"Go it, old man!" yawned Johnny Bull. "I'm jolly sleepy!"

"I'm worried about old Wun," said Bob.

"My dear chap, he's all right here," said Harry Wharton. "And it's only for to-night; to-morrow we're off for the Channel boat."

"What the dickens have you got there?" asked Frank Nugent, as Bob Cherry drew something from his pocket.

It was a coil of thin cord, with a small bell fastened to it.

"Burglar-alarm!" said Bob.

"Oh my hat!"

"My dear chap—" murmured Harry Wharton.

"Now, look here," said Bob, "you've not forgotten that, a week before Greyfriars broke up, Wun Lung was jolly nearly kidnapped from the Remove dormitory. If that fat ass Bunter hadn't been awake, and buzzed a pillow at the blighter, he would have had him!"

"But he's not likely to try it on here, old bean!"

"Well, I don't see that," said Bob. "He never dared butt in at Greyfriars again after we'd been put on our guard. But it seems to be jolly likely that he's been keeping an eye open; and, if he has, he knows that Wun has come here, and he might think it a jolly good chance to try the same game again."

"Um!" murmured Wharton.

"You know why we've fixed up this trip with Wun," said Bob. "Of course, we're jolly glad to accept old Mr. O's invitation for a holiday on the Continent, but chiefly we're going with Wun to see that that kidnapping blighter doesn't get hold of him. Wun wouldn't have gone without us; he knows that he will be in danger if the man's still after him, and it's pretty certain that he is. Well, we should look pretty blue if the blighter got him under our very noses at the very start."

"The bluefulness would be terrific!" agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"So—with your leave, Wharton, old man—I'll fix up this cord in the passage, and if the blighter gives us a look-in, he will give us a ring at the same time—see?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"All serene!" he said. "Go ahead with it! After all, I suppose there's a chance that the man, whoever he is, is watching for another opportunity."

"You can bank on that," said Bob. "Whatever the brute's motive may be for getting hold of Wun, it must be pretty strong. He took a lot of risk breaking into the school to get his clutches on him. It stands to reason that he will try again if he gets a chance."

"You think he may have been watched coming here after leaving the school?" asked Johnny Bull, staring. "Never saw any jolly old shadower about, for one."

"Well, he would hardly let us see him," remarked Harry Wharton. "But—" He looked curiously at Bob Cherry. "Look here, Bob, cough up the rest! What is it?"

Bob coloured a little.

"Old Mr. O's secretary, Dr. Sin, is coming for us to-morrow," he said. "He's taking us across the Channel. Well, you know what Bunter said that night at the school—that he saw the kidnapper, and that he was Dr. Sin!"

"Bunter's always talking rot—and that's the silliest rot that even Bunter has ever talked!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Look here, Bob," exclaimed Nugent, "you don't believe that rubbish? That blind Owl made a silly mistake! How could Wun's uncle's secretary be after Wun to kidnap him? It's not sense!"

"Might have been a Chinaman, and Bunter took him for Dr. Sin, as he'd seen Sin that day," said Harry. "Nothing in it, of course."

"I'm not saying that there's anything in it," said Bob. "I like that chap Sin, same as you all do. But—but it isn't only what Bunter said; there's a lot of little circumstances that all seem

to fit together. Mind, I don't believe that Dr. Sin is the man, but I think it looks doubtful enough for us to take care that Sin never gets Wun Lung to himself."

"Not so jolly easy, as Wun likes the man and trusts him," said Harry. "Wun would be jolly offended if he saw anything of the kind."

"Well, I'm going to keep on my guard, at any rate!" declared Bob. "I don't like distrusting a man, but I'm not going to take chances of poor little Wun getting clutched by a kidnapper before he reaches his uncle in Paris. If we notice on the journey that Dr. Sin tries to get Wun away from the rest of the party—"

"We won't," said Johnny Bull.

"Well, if he doesn't, good; but if he does, I'm going to take jolly good care, if I can, that he doesn't get by with it," said Bob. "And if—I'm admitting I don't believe it; it's only a possibility—if Sin's the kidnapper, he knows that Wun is here, and so—"

"Rot!" said Johnny Bull.

"Even if he's the kidnapper—which he isn't—he won't butt in to-night, as he will have lots of chances on the journey to France," said Frank Nugent. "Stick up your jolly old burglar-alarm, but I'll bet you we shan't be rung up!"

"After all, no harm in taking precautions," said Harry. "Get going, Bob, old man, and let's get to bed!"

The Famous Five went out into the passage.

All the rooms occupied by the Greyfriars party opened on that passage, which could only be reached from the landing at the staircase.

The burglar-alarm, therefore, was easy to manage.

The floor was of oak planks. Across it Bob trailed the cord, with the bell in the middle. There was nothing to fasten the ends on on the old oak wainscot, however.

"Going to knock in nails?" grinned Johnny Bull. "You'll have the household up here to inquire if you start."

"No, ass!"

Bob Cherry had evidently made his preparations for this stunt. From a pocket he drew two screws, a small gimlet, and a small screwdriver. Hammering, certainly, would have caused surprise in the household. Screws could be driven in without noise.

Bob bored two holes on either side of the passage in the wainscot. Into them he drove the screws, leaving the heads well out, to tie on the cord.

The cord was tied across, taut, about six inches from the floor.

The other fellows watched him, grinning. They did not think it likely that Wun Lung's enemy would come in the night. But if he did, he was certain to meet with a surprise.

Even if he carried a light, he would hardly see the dark, thin cord stretched so close to the dark oak floor. And it was improbable that a burglarious kidnapper would carry a light—at least, anything more than a gleam or two from a pocket torch.

Inevitably, if any man came along that passage in the night, he would stumble over the cord, probably land with a bump, and certainly ring the bell, whether he fell over or not.

"Not bad—what?" asked Bob.

Bob was a handy man with tools, and he was rather proud of this masterly device.

"Oh, fine!" grinned Johnny Bull. "If it's still there when anybody comes up in the morning you'll hear the bell ring all right."

The juniors chuckled.

"You'll hear something else, too," retorted Johnny Bull. "No. 1,542."

marked Nugent; "swear words, I shouldn't wonder."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Fathead! I shall cut out early and take it up!" said Bob.

"Let's hope you won't oversleep yourself, then, and leave it for Wells!" chuckled Nugent. "If you fellows hear sixteen stone come down wallop about eight in the morning you'll know that Bob's made a catch!"

"Oh rats!" said Bob, while his friends chortled. "Let's get to bed."

"Time we did," said Johnny Bull.

And they went to their rooms, and the passage was left in darkness. Ten minutes later they were all fast asleep.

Harry Wharton did not know how long he had been asleep when the alarm came, but when his eyes suddenly opened it was still pitch dark and evidently nowhere near dawn. He fairly bounded up in bed as he was suddenly startled out of slumber by the ringing clang of a bell in the passage and the sound of a heavy bump.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

No Biscuits for Bunter!

BILLY BUNTER smiled in the darkness.

It was half-past twelve.

Seldom did the fat Owl's round eyes open at that hour of the night. At Greyfriars, no doubt, he would have slept and snored till rising-bell and never opened them once.

But circumstances alter cases. Billy Bunter had two reasons for awakening. One was that he had slept before he went to bed, and so was not quite so sleepy as usual; the other was that there was food available if he woke up—which was not the case at school.

The pie, which had seemed almost up to his fat chin when he went to bed, had had more than two hours in which to settle deeper and deeper into the extensive recesses of the interior Bunter. There was now space available for more. Bunter dreamed of food; his sleeping as well as his waking thoughts always ran on that entrancing subject. Turning his fat head on the pillow, he half-woke, and the remembrance of food was sufficient to finish awakening him. He smiled as he sat up in bed. Food was there, ready to his fat hand—not the cake he would have preferred, but very nice biscuits—and lots of them. No wonder he smiled!

From sheer laziness he did not switch on the bedside light; there was no need for a light to grope for biscuits in a box and masticate the same.

He reached out, felt the box in the dark, lifted the lid, and groped within.

Then the smile faded from his plump face.

He gasped.

His fat fingers, groping in the biscuit-box, encountered only empty space!

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter.

He was almost thunderstruck.

With his own eyes, not to mention his spectacles, he had seen that biscuit-box nearly full of biscuits before he carried it out of the dining-room. Now it was empty! It was amazing and dismaying and catastrophic. It was incomprehensible. It seemed like black magic.

He groped for the bedside lamp and switched it on. In the light he leaned over and blinked into the biscuit-box.

His fat fingers had not deceived him, unless his little round eyes were deceiving him, too. The box had not a single biscuit in it!

"Oh crikey!" stuttered Bunter.

He sorted out his spectacles, jammed them on his fat little nose, and blinked

into the box. But even the aid of his big round spectacles brought no relief. There were no biscuits.

Bunter gazed into the empty box with feelings that could have been expressed in no known language.

He was hungry. The thought of food made him hungrier. This was bitter. It was one of those unexpected, awful blows that might overwhelm any fellow. What, in the name of all that was mysterious and inexplicable, had become of those biscuits?

"Beast!" ejaculated Bunter suddenly.

He guessed it! It flashed into his fat brain why Bob Cherry had so obligingly offered to carry up that biscuit-box.

The iniquitous, unspeakable beast had bagged those biscuits to scoff them himself.

That Bob had tipped them out into the wardrobe with the playful idea of giving him a hunt for them did not even occur to Bunter.

If a fellow bagged food, it could only be for one imaginable object, so far as Bunter knew—and that was to eat it.

Bunter had no doubt that those biscuits had been scoffed. He did not even think of doubting that. That utter beast had scoffed his biscuits, leaving him the empty box—insult added to injury!

"Beast!" hissed Bunter. "I'll jolly well punch his nose, the awful rotter! Stuffing my biscuits, the greedy beast! It's simply sickening the way some fellows stuff food! Greedy beast!"

Bunter glared at the biscuit-box. He would have liked to bang it hard and heavy on Bob's head. The beast deserved that and more—indeed, a fellow who deprived Bunter of food deserved something lingering, with boiling oil in it. Bunter would have liked to roll along to Bob's room, root him out, and punch him—punch him right and left.

It was a happy thought—but, unfortunately, it had to remain only a thought, not to be translated into action. For it was an unhappy fact that if the punching began, it was Bunter who would bag most of the punches and the heftiest ones.

Bunter groaned.

A few pounds of biscuits would have seen him through nicely till morning. Now, like Mrs. Hubbard's poor dog, he had none.

He was too hungry to go to sleep again. That dreadful disappointment seemed to have given a keen edge to his appetite. At Greyfriars, no doubt, where food supplies were not available in the small hours, he would have settled down and made the best of a bad job. But at Wharton Lodge supplies were available and ample if a fellow could get at them. The biscuits were gone, and Bunter's fat thoughts reverted to the cake—which, after all, he would have preferred to the biscuits.

His mouth watered as he thought of the cake.

If that brute Wells, the old colonel's butler, had locked it up it was out of reach. But had he? Bunter had looked through the sideboard in the dining-room for it in vain. Still, he might have overlooked it. There existed the possibility that it was there.

Anyhow, there were other things; a dish of fruits on the sideboard—bananas and apples and things. A bunch of bananas would be better than nothing; a dozen or so apples would fill odd spaces.

Bunter rolled out of bed.

Food, at all events, was available; if not the cake, something else. All was grist that came to Bunter's mill.

He put on a pair of slippers which he had borrowed from Wharton's room.

He did not put on a dressing-gown, as he had had so far no opportunity to bag one. But the night was warm, and he could go down in his pyjamas. Nobody was likely to be up at that hour.

Leaving the bedside light on—gleaming on the empty biscuit-box—the fat Owl rolled across to his door and opened it.

The passage outside was dark, glimmering only with the summer starlight from the high window at one end; but Bunter knew his way about Wharton Lodge, and it was easy enough to find it in the starlight gleam. Even Bunter

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

Bob Cherry's Catch!

BUMP! Clang—jingle—ting-ting-a-ling!

Harry Wharton leaped out of bed.

He had not had much belief in the possibility of a kidnapper penetrating into Wharton Lodge that night; he had thought it very unlikely that anybody would be caught in Bob Cherry's burglar alarm in the dark hours. But there was no mistaking that uproar from the passage.

Somebody had walked into that taut

There was a flash of light as Bob Cherry came running from his door, a flashlamp in one hand, and a heavy stick in the other. Bob, who had prepared the trap for the kidnapper, was ready to deal with the kidnapper if he fell into it. He came speeding down the passage, flashing the light before him, the stick half raised.

"Urrgh!" came a gasping gurgle. "Wurrgh! I say, you fellows—"

"Bunter!"

"Has Bunter turned out?"

"Ow! Wow! I say—wow!" howled Bunter.



"Oooooogh!" A howl in the darkness, followed by a resounding bump, brought the Greyfriars juniors out of their rooms with a rush, prepared to deal with any would-be kidnapper who had fallen a victim to the burglar-trap. "Bunter!" yelled Wharton in surprise, as the beam of Cherry's flashlamp revealed a fat figure on the floor. "Ow!" howled the podgy junior.

"Some idiot fixed a string across the passage!"

did not quite like to switch on electric lights all over the house when everybody was in bed.

He rolled away down the passage towards the stairs. The starlight was enough to show him his way as he groped on.

He passed the rooms occupied by the other juniors. A few yards more and he would have reached the landing.

But Bunter did not cover those few yards.

Suddenly his feet caught in something. He gave a startled gasp as he stumbled headlong.

He did not know what it was. All he knew was that his feet were suddenly plucked backwards under him and that he went headlong over.

"Oooooogh!" gasped Bunter.

There was a sudden, startling clanging of a bell. It mingled with a wild, terrified splutter, and it was followed by a sound like the delivery of a ton of coals as Bunter landed on the old oak floor.

Bump!

Bunter tried to extricate himself from the tangled cord, causing the bell to ring louder than ever.

Clang! Jingle! Ting-ting-a-ling!

cord in the dark, caught in it, stumbled over it, and came down with a bump, ringing the bell. Following the bump, and mingling with the clinking of the bell, was a sound of spluttering and gasping and panting.

Without even staying to switch on a light, Harry Wharton tore across to the door and rushed into the passage. If it was Wun Lung's enemy there, there was not a moment to lose.

Other doors were opening at the same moment. Every member of the Co. had been awakened by the sudden uproar in the middle of the night.

"Who's that?" came Johnny Bull's voice.

"What—"

"Look out!"

"Ooooooooogh!" came spluttering from the dark. "Oooooogh! Wow! Wooooogh! Ow! Goooooooogh!"

"Somebody's here!" panted Wharton. "Wun Lung! Are you safe, Wun Lung?"

"Me allee light!" The little Chinese had been awakened with the rest, and was out in the passage. "Me here, allee light."

"Thank goodness! Show a light!"

Nobody had expected Bunter to turn out at an alarm. He was not likely to wake, in the first place; and in the second place, an alarm was more likely to hurry him under the bed than out into the passage.

But there he was—howling in the dark, yowling and spluttering. Bob Cherry's light flashed on him.

Bunter was sitting up on the floor, a dazed and dizzy expression on his fat face, gurgling for breath, and holding a fat hand to a fat nose.

That fat nose had tapped on the floor, and seemed damaged.

"Where is he?" exclaimed Bob, flashing the light up and down the passage. No one was to be seen but Bunter, sitting beside the cord.

"Ow! My nose! Wow!"

"Where that velly baddee man?" exclaimed Wun Lung.

To the surprise, and rather to the alarm, of the juniors, the Chinese had a long, curved dagger gripped in his hand. It looked as if Wun was prepared to use drastic measures with the kidnapper, if he came. There was a

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spot of Oriental fierceness under Wun's outward aspect of a Greyfriars junior.

"Ow! I say, you fellows—wow!" groaned Bunter. "I say, what silly idiot stuck this silly string across the passage? Ow!"

"Wha-a-t?" gasped Harry Wharton. "Oh crumbs!" gasped Bob. "Was—was it you? Oh, my hat!"

"Was it you fell over?" roared Johnny Bull.

"Eh? Of course it was!" yapped Bunter. "Who did you think it was, you silly idiot? What blighted maniac put this cord here for a fellow to fall over?"

"Oh, my hat!" stuttered Nugent. "Bunter! Not a jolly old kidnapper, after all! Just Bunter!"

Harry Wharton, bursting into a chuckle, ran along to the switch and flashed on the passage light. Billy Bunter, sitting there in purple-striped pyjamas, was revealed in all his glory.

Bob Cherry glared at him as if he could have eaten him.

"You blithering, blethering, bloated bloater!" he hooted. "What did you want to walk into it for?"

"Eh? I didn't want to!" gasped Bunter. "I never saw it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I've hurt my nose! I came down wallop!" roared Bunter. "Bang-wallop! Wow! What silly idiot played this silly trick?"

"Robert Cherry of that ilk!" chortled Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors chortled. Evidently there was no kidnapper. It was William George Bunter who had walked into the burglar alarm and come down bump!

Nobody, of course, could have foreseen that. Bunter was not, as a rule, a fel-

low to take his walks abroad in the small hours. Generally he was safe, once in bed, till morning.

"Ole fattee Bunttee velly funnee!" chuckled Wun Lung. "Whatttee Bunttee goey walkee for, 'long dark?"

"Yes. What the thump were you up to, Bunter?" demanded Wharton.

"Ow! I was hungry!"

"Wha-a-t?"

"That beast Cherry priggd my biscuits, and I was going down to look for the cake!" gasped Bunter.

"Oh crikey!"

"I never knew the beast had laid that rotten trap for me!" gasped Bunter.

"Dirty trick, making a fellow come down bump-wallop!"

"You pernicious porker!" hissed Bob.

"It was a burglar alarm, to catch the kidnapper if he blew in."

"Yah! Beast! I jolly well know you fixed it up for me, after priggd my bikkies! Yah! Rotter! Cad! Beast!"

gasped Bunter. "You knew jolly well I should go down for something to eat after you pinched my biscuits! Yah!"

"You—you—you—" gasped Bob.

"If I'd known you'd barge out in the middle of the night, I'd have locked you in, you burbling bloater. Your biscuits are in your wardrobe, you fat chump! Get back, and if you come out again I'll wallop you with this stick!"

"Yah! Beast!"

"I will, anyhow," added Bob, and he did.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yow-ow-ow!" howled Bunter. He bounded up, bounded along the passage, and bolted into his room. Bob had only time for three licks before he disappeared. But, to judge by the howls that floated back, they were good ones!

Then Bunter's door slammed, and a key turned.

In the passage the juniors grinned at one another, with the exception of Bob Cherry. Bob snorted. His burglar alarm was, he was assured, quite a good idea, and a useful precaution. Bunter had made the whole thing look absurd.

"That chuckleheaded chump has busted the cord!" growled Bob. "A chain cable wouldn't stand his weight falling on it!"

"Going to mend it?" grinned Johnny Bull.

"Yes, ass!"

"Oh, all right! Call me when you catch a kidnapper with it. I'll come out and eat him!" Johnny, grinning, marched back to his room.

"Fathead!" grunted Bob. "Look here, if you fellows can't do anything but snigger like a lot of gorillas, you'd better go back to bed!"

And the juniors, still sniggering, went!

Bob repaired his burglar alarm. He went back to his room at last, perhaps hoping that there would be a catch later.

But there was no catch! Bunter had found the biscuits, parked them, and gone to sleep. There was nobody else to be caught. Bob Cherry's burglar trap was still undisturbed when the summer morning dawned on Wharton Lodge.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Bob Cherry's Problem!

COLONEL WHARTON smiled genially as he greeted Dr. Sin.

It was a bright August morning. The old colonel was standing in the doorway, when a handsome little two-seater ran up the drive from the gates, and a plump Chinese gentleman stopped the car opposite the doorway and jumped down.

Dr. Sin was in European garb, but his yellow complexion and slanting eyes of jetty black betrayed the Oriental. So did also his manners and customs. He came up to the colonel with a series of low bows, as near to the "kow-tow" of his native land as European garments would allow. After which, he solemnly shook hands with himself in the Chinese manner.

Colonel Wharton had met a good many Chinese, at one time and another, and generally they had adopted European manners along with European clothes. But Dr. Sin, though he spoke English well, was fresh from the Flowery Land, and retained the manners and customs thereof, little changed. He put his flowing and almost overpowering politeness into English instead of Chinese, that was all.

"O born-many-centuries-before-me, I crawl in the dust at your magnificent feet!" said Dr. Sin, having finished bowing. "With extreme humility I intrude my loathsome person into your jade-like presence."

"Oh!" ejaculated the colonel. "Ah! Yes! Quite! I am glad to see you again, Dr. Sin!"

"This slave is too much honoured!" declared Dr. Sin, as he entered the house with the old colonel.

Harry Wharton & Co. were in the hall. They greeted Dr. Sin in a very friendly manner.

Bob Cherry was as friendly as the rest. When he saw Dr. Sin, he was a little ashamed of the doubt of that smiling gentleman that lingered at the back of his mind.

Many little circumstances had concurred to give colour to Billy Bunter's amazing statement that the kidnapper in the Remove dormitory at Greyfriars

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was no other than old Mr. O's secretary. And yet, in Sin Song's presence, it seemed impossible to believe so.

His good-humour was plainly genuine. He looked good-natured and kind. A kidnapper was, presumably, a bad man; but if Dr. Sin was a bad man, his looks utterly belied him. If ever a man looked kind-hearted and good-hearted, Dr. Sin did.

Wun Lung clearly liked him very much.

He had known Dr. Sin in early boyhood, in far-off China; he had liked him then, and he liked him now.

And Wun, soft and polite as he was, was certainly no fool; he was as keen as Sheffield steel; and it seemed very unlikely that he could be deceived as to the man's character.

And yet—

Bob hardly knew what to think and what to believe. He hated being distrustful. He liked Dr. Sin. And yet—

Yet, though he joined in the friendly greeting with sincerity, he knew that the painful doubt lingered, and that he was going to keep a sharp eye open, to see that Dr. Sin had no chance of getting away with Wun Lung, if—against all appearance—he was the enemy and the kidnapper.

Billy Bunter, on the other hand, had no doubts.

Bunter knew, because he could not help knowing, that Dr. Sin was the man he had seen kidnapping Wun Lung in the dorm at Greyfriars. He had seen his plump, yellow face by the gleam of a flashlamp, and he knew.

Nobody believed Billy Bunter. The general opinion was that he was talking rot, as usual; or making an idiotic mistake, also as usual! Only Bob Cherry gave any heed to Bunter's strange tale; and Bob's mind swayed in incessant doubt.

The fat Owl blinked morosely at Dr. Sin through his big spectacles.

Having no doubt that he was the kidnapper, the fat Owl regarded him as a villain of the deepest dye, and all his flowing good-humour and politeness as so much "eye-wash."

Dr. Sin went in with the colonel, after speaking to the juniors in the hall, to bestow his exuberant politeness on Miss Wharton. Billy Bunter blinked after him with a frowning, fat brow.

"I say, you fellows, it's a bit thick, that kidnapper coming here!" he remarked.

"Shut up, idiot!" said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Chuck it, you silly ass!" said Harry. "Haven't you been told often enough not to tell that silly story over again?"

"It happens to be true!" said Bunter sarcastically.

"How could it be—coming from you?" inquired Nugent.

"Beast! I'm not at all sure that I want to start on a holiday with a kidnapping Chink!" said Bunter morosely.

Wun Lung's slanting eyes gleamed. He came over to Bunter, with a dark and grim look on his little yellow face.

"You shuttee up big mouth blong you!" he said quietly.

"You cheeky little heathen—"

"Buntsee talkee too much—plenty too much! Shuttee up! Savvy?"

"Is that how you heathens talk to a chap you've invited for a holiday?" sneered Bunter.

"You savee this lil' Chinee 'long kidnapee, 'long Gleyfials," said Wun Lung. "Me glateful—me takee you 'long holiday, along uncle blong me, likee you wantee. But me no wantee

you talkee 'long fiend blong me, Dr. Sin! Spossee you talkee like that, you no comee."

Billy Bunter drew himself up to his full height—which, however, was not imposing. He gave the little Chinee a disdainful and devastating blink through his big spectacles.

"You cheeky heathen!" he said. "Do you think I care two pins whether I come or not on this second-rate trip? I've a jolly good mind to ring up Mauly, at Mauleverer Towers, and tell him I'm coming there after all for the hols."

"Maulee no standee!" grinned Wun Lung. "All light—spossee you no wantee comee, you no comee! All light."

"I'm not the fellow to turn a fellow down!" said Bunter haughtily. "I've said I'll come, and I'll come. It's hardly the sort of party that I care for—still I'll come!"

"Allee light—but you no talkee any mole 'long Dr. Sin!" said Wun Lung. "Me likee that fellee too much; me no likee you talkee 'long him."

"Yah!" snorted Bunter.

However, he made no more remarks on the subject of the doctor.

His claim to be included in the party for the Continent rested on the service he had done Wun Lung. Wun was grateful for that service—to the extent Bunter required. But there was a limit, and the limit was—Bunter's unpleasant remarks on the subject of his Chinese compatriot. Bunter had to chuck it, or be chucked! So Bunter chucked it!

After all, it did not worry Bunter! Nobody, certainly, wanted to kidnap Bunter! Billy Bunter's fat person was, so to speak, of no value to anyone but the owner! If Wun chose to travel with a kidnapper, in hourly danger of being snaffled by him, he could jolly well do so, and be blowed!

Dr. Sin joined the Wharton Lodge party at lunch. He was quite popular there. He had called at Wharton Lodge before, to make the colonel's acquaintance and arrangements for the holiday—and he had made quite a good impression on the old military gentleman and his sister, Miss Amy.

It was hardly possible not to like the plump little gentleman, beaming with good-humour and overflowing with exotic politeness.

Billy Bunter knew what he knew, so to speak, and was not to be imposed on. But at lunch, Billy Bunter, as usual, devoted himself to the foodstuffs, disregarding everything else; a cannibal at table would hardly have drawn Bunter's attention from the food. Bob Cherry insensibly found his lingering doubt melting away. He was glad of it, for his frank and cheery nature disliked, more than anything else, a feeling of distrust towards a man with whom he had to be on outwardly friendly terms.

But—and that discomforting "but" cropped up again before the cheerful meal was over. The arrangements for the journey to Folkestone, to take the Channel boat, were discussed over lunch. Colonel Wharton was going to drive his nephew and his friends in his car. Dr. Sin was going to take Wun with him in the two-seater.

Bob's heart gave a sort of jolt as he heard that.

It was a natural enough arrangement. The family car at Wharton Lodge was roomy—but six fellows and the driver would fill it pretty completely. Dr. Sin's car was a two-seater—room for one passenger with Dr. Sin.

Naturally, that passenger would be the Chinee.

But—

Bob's cheery face was worried as he left the lunch-table. If—he admitted the unlikelihood—but if—if Dr. Sin was the kidnapper, he would have Wun in the two-seater, all to himself, and what was to prevent him from missing the other car on the road and vanishing into space with the Chinese junior?

Nothing!

Bob was looking forward to the holiday—he liked Wun Lung—but it was more than anything else, to see the Chinese boy safe that he had joined up for the trip. If there was even a remote chance that Sin Song was the mysterious kidnapper, was this seeing Wun safe? And there was, at least, a remote chance—more than that!

Bob tramped out on the terrace by himself, trying to think it out!

He had set himself the task of seeing Wun safe through the holidays—safe till he was back in the security of Greyfriars School. And he realised now, more clearly than before, what a knotty problem he had set himself.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Hidden Hand!

"I SAY, you fellows!" Harry Wharton held up his hand.

"Nothing about Sin!" he said.

"That's barred."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Find a new record, Fatty!" said Johnny Bull. "Or, better still, ring off, and keep rung off!"

"Splendid idea—if possible!" remarked Frank Nugent. "But it's no good asking Bunter to perform impossibilities."

"Will you let a fellow speak?" snorted Bunter. "It's not about Sin, blow him! It's about something important. I hear that we're to start at once."

"We've lunched early on purpose," answered Harry. "We've got to catch the afternoon boat at Folkestone."

"Now you know perfectly well, Wharton, that I like a nap after lunch! Don't say you don't—you jolly well do!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"You'd better go to sleep in the car, then," he said. "We're starting at one o'clock, sharp."

"Then you start without me," said Bunter firmly. "I'm going to have my nap! It's not many comforts I get at a place like this—I don't expect the luxuries of Bunter Court. But I'm not going to miss my nap, and that's flat!"

"Don't, by any means!" said the captain of the Remove cordially. "Go to sleep, old fat man, and sleep as long as you like!"

"You'll wait till I come down?"

"Oh, no, we shan't wait! When you wake up, you can take the train home, and roll in the luxuries of Bunter Court."

"Good egg!" said Johnny Bull heartily. "Do, Bunter!"

"The goodness of the egg is terrific!"

"Jolly good idea!" agreed Frank Nugent. "Remember us to the prince and dukes at Bunter Court, old fat man!"

Billy Bunter breathed hard and deep.

"Well, I'm not going without my nap!" he said. "That's that! Go and eat coke, the lot of you!"

Bunter rolled away, with his fat little nose in the air. The four juniors grinned, apparently not at all dismayed by the awful possibility that Bunter might be fast asleep when they started, and in consequence left behind. It might even have been suspected that that idea rather bucked them!

Bunter, however, did not go up to his room. He rolled out into the gardens, probably to take his nap under a shady tree, with one ear open for the cars when they were brought round from the garage.

The four continued to stroll on the terrace.

Bags had been packed, everything was in readiness, and they were only waiting for their elders. Bob Cherry had left his friends soon after lunch and was not with them now. They supposed that he was giving some finishing touch to his packing.

However, when he reappeared at last he came from the direction of the garage. They did not notice that circumstance specially; neither did they observe that there was rather a flush in Bob's face. He was always rather ruddy, anyhow.

The five of them sauntered and chatted. All were anticipating the trip with pleasure and looking forward rather curiously to seeing Wun's uncle when they reached Paris. Mr. O was, Wun had told them, a gentleman of very venerable years—almost as old as his grandfather Wun Ko at Canton. He was fond of his nephew—indeed, the juniors knew that, for he had often sent the Chinese junior valuable gifts. Likewise, it was known that he was childless and immensely rich. He had evinced a desire at one time to adopt Wun Lung; but neither Wun's father nor grandfather would assent to that. Even for Mr. O's immense possessions they did not want to part with their "Little Pink Toad"—which was Wun Lung's "milk-name" in the family circle at home.

Harry Wharton & Co. were quite curious to see the ancient gentleman who had travelled, it seemed, from far-off China for no other purpose than to see his favourite nephew.

He was, Wun had told them, an old-fashioned Chinaman; nothing of the "modern" Chinaman about him. He lived in the past, when the Manchus reigned over the Flowery Land, and regarded all the happenings of the last twenty years as a series of bad practical jokes—rather like some old gentlemen of Europe who cannot take quite seriously anything that has happened since the War.

For such a "diehard" Chinaman to undertake a journey to the farthest West, through the countries of the foreign devils, was rather extraordinary, and showed that his affection for Wun Lung must have been very strong.

Snore!

That musical sound floated in on the conversation of the Famous Five, and they glanced round, grinning.

It proceeded from a hammock under a shady tree on the lawn. There, evidently, William George Bunter had found repose.

"Jolly near one!" remarked Harry Wharton. "Oh, here comes the car!"

Brown, the colonel's chauffeur, brought the family car round from the garage, and left it on the drive opposite the doorway, ready for the numerous passengers to pack in.

He walked back to bring out Dr. Sin's two-seater, which had been parked in the garage till wanted.

Bob Cherry looked after him with a

rather curious expression on his face. But he said nothing.

Baggage was piled on the big car. Colonel Wharton came out with Dr. Sin, and the juniors went in to say good-bye to Aunt Amy. Then Harry Wharton ran across to the hammock, to give Bunter a shake. If the fat Owl chose to snore on that was his own look out, but Wharton felt that it was up to him to give Bunter a chance.

Shake, shake!

The hammock swung. Billy Bunter grunted and opened his eyes behind his big spectacles.

"Beast! Lemme alone!"

"We're just going to start, fathead!"

"Yah! Beast!"

"Stick there if you like, you blithering bloater!" said Harry, and he ran back to the drive to take his place in the car.

Bunter sat up and glared after him. He did not want to turn out of that hammock. But still less did he want to be left behind. He sat and glared, leaving it till the latest possible moment before he turned out.

As it happened, there was delay, and no hurry for Bunter to move. Brown seemed a long time bringing the Chinese gentleman's car round. At five minutes past one he had not arrived with it. Colonel Wharton glanced at his watch and frowned. He had habits of military punctuality; moreover, it was a very long drive to Folkestone from the house in Surrey, and Channel boats, like time and tide, wait for no man.

Dr. Sin glanced round with his slanting black eyes.

"Wretched car belonging to this poor person does not appear to approximate!" he remarked.

"Good gad, what does the man think he's doing?" exclaimed the colonel testily. "Does he want the boat to be lost? Oh, here he is!"

Dr. Sin started, and all the fellows stared, as Brown appeared with the car. It was clear that he was having serious trouble with it. Engine trouble was, as it were, "writ large" all over the car and all over Brown's worried, perspiring face.

"What is the matter, Brown?" exclaimed Colonel Wharton. "Is there anything wrong with Dr. Sin's car?"

"There ain't anything right with it, sir!" answered Brown. "I can't make it out, unless some of the young gentlemen have been larking with it."

"Nonsense!" said Colonel Wharton, and the juniors stared blankly at Brown—with the exception of Bob Cherry. Bob seemed interested in the landscape in another direction.

"You won't get that car on the road, sir, without overhauling," said Brown. "From what I can make out there's been cinders and ashes poured into the petrol-tank—and if that ain't larking I don't know what it is."

"Good gad!" exclaimed the colonel.

Dr. Sin's slanting, black eyes opened wide. For a moment the smiling good humour deserted his plump face.

"Harry," exclaimed the colonel, "surely no one—"

"Of course not, uncle!" exclaimed Wharton. "Nobody here has larked with Dr. Sin's car! Why should anyone?"

Dr. Sin, with a set face, walked to the car. Brown left it to him; but the Chinese gentleman could only ascertain that the chauffeur had stated the facts. Quite a lot of overhauling was required before that car was likely to be a going concern again. That handsome little two-seater was, for the time being, crocked. Dr. Sin set his lips very hard.

"It is extraordinary!" barked the colonel. "I cannot understand it in the least—it is incomprehensible. I can only apologise for such a foolish trick being played—if indeed it is one."

Dr. Sin did not answer. For once his almost unfailing politeness failed. With a grim brow, he plunged into the mysteries of the two-seater, while the Greyfriars fellows exchanged glances, feeling extremely uncomfortable. And Billy Bunter, taking a longer rest in the hammock than had been anticipated, grinned.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Not Bunter!

JOHNNY BULL caught Wharton by the sleeve and pulled him back—out of hearing of the colonel. Harry gazed at him inquiringly.

"That fat chump!" breathed Johnny.

"Eh?"

"Somebody's crocked Sin's car!" hissed Johnny Bull. "That blithering idiot Bunter—"

"Oh!" ejaculated Wharton.

"That potty porpoise—"

"Oh, my hat!" said Frank Nugent.

Nugent and Hurree Singh followed the two juniors as they moved away from the cars. Bob Cherry, on the other hand, had entered the colonel's car and seemed deeply interested in disposing of some articles of baggage there.

For some reason of his own Bob did not seem to want to meet the eyes, or the remarks, of his friends at present.

They did not observe it, however! Certainly they were not likely to think of Bob in connection with the mysterious happening to Dr. Sin's two-seater.

"That potty, piffing, pie-faced porker!" said Johnny Bull, with conviction. "Nobody else would be idiot enough! That's how he's going to get time for a nap before we start."

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Harry.

"The esteemed, idiotic Bunter!" exclaimed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

They glanced across at Billy Bunter, sitting up in the hammock on the lawn and grinning. Bunter did not venture to go to sleep again, lest the party should start and leave him stranded. But he remained resting his fat and lazy limbs in the hammock, glad of the delay, whatever its cause.

"The awful ass!" muttered Nugent. "Look here, Sin's car is crocked—his temper seems a bit crocked, too! If we're not going to lose the boat we shall all have to pack into the other car, Sin and Wun Lung and all."

"We can pack in all right," said Harry, "but—"

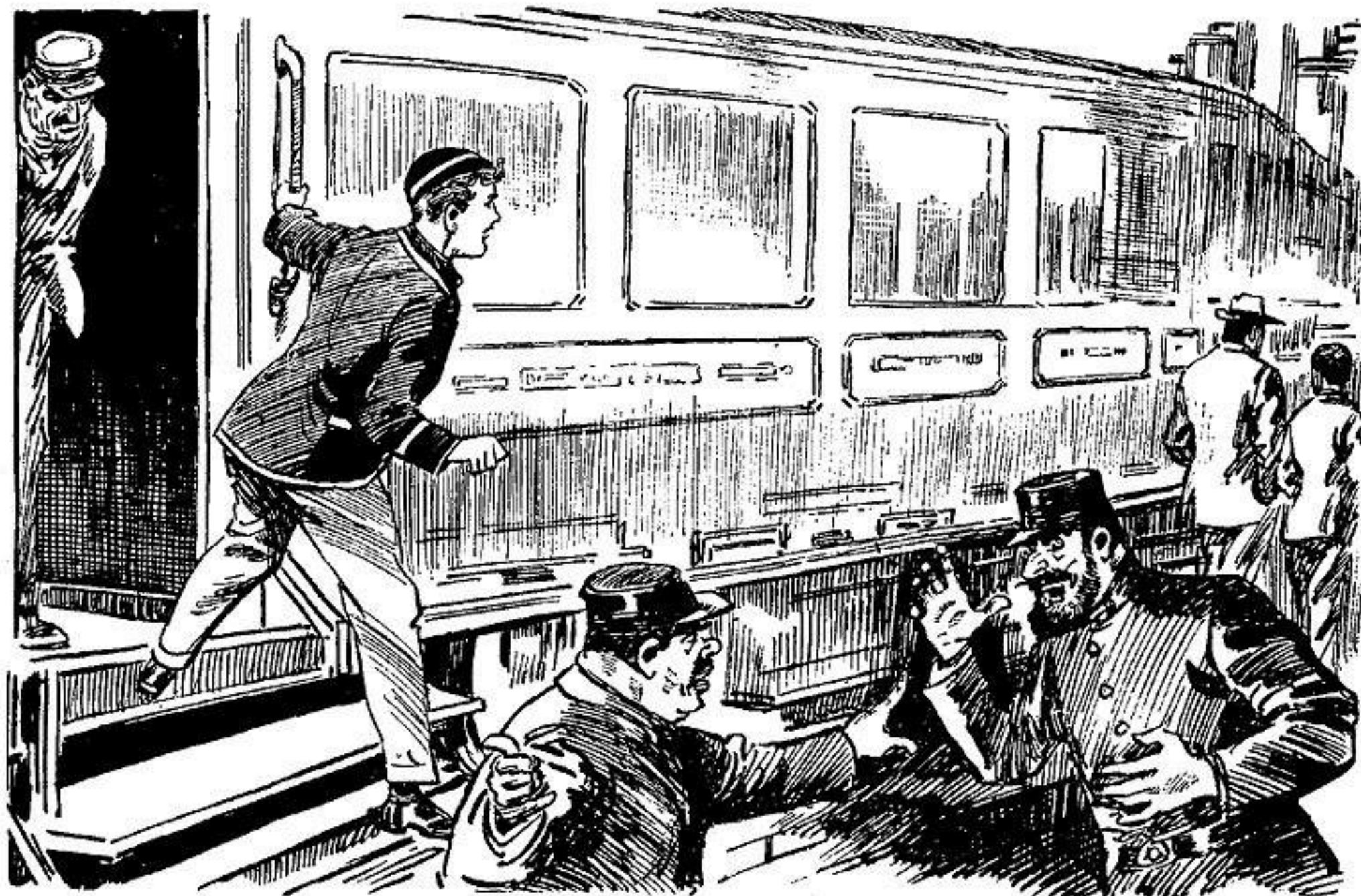
"But it will be a close fit!" said Johnny Bull. "And we're going to be packed like sardines all the way to Folkestone to please that fat, frowsy, frumpious, frabjous, foozling freak!"

Johnny tramped across towards the hammock. His friends followed him.

Dr. Sin was still grappling with the internal troubles of the two-seater, watched anxiously by the colonel and Wun Lung. Bob Cherry, inside the colonel's car, seemed busy. But four fellows had leisure to bestow on Bunter, and they bestowed it on him. He grinned at them as they came up to the hammock, evidently amused.

"I say, you fellows, we ain't starting, after all," grinned Bunter. "Something wrong with the Chink's car—what? He, he, he!"

"You fat scoundrel!" said Harry. "What have you been doing to Dr. Sin's car?"



Careless of the passengers he was jostling, Bob Cherry pushed his way to the door of the carriage in time to see Dr. Sin hurrying away from the train with Wun Lung at his side. Was the man trying to give the Greyfriars juniors the slip?

"Eh—nothing?"

"Not sticking something into the juice?" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Eh—no!"

"Then who did?" demanded Nugent.

"Not much use asking who did," growled Johnny Bull. "Only one fellow here is idiot enough to damage a man's car, and only one fellow wanted to delay the start—and it's Bunter! We may lose the boat, because he wants to squat in that hammock. Heave him out of it!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Heave him out!"

"I say— Yaroo!" roared Bunter, as the four juniors grasped the hammock and heaved. "I say, leggo! I shall fall out—yaroooh!"

Bump!

Billy Bunter landed in the grass. He roared as he landed. He sat in the grass, and continued to roar.

"Ow! Wow! Beasts! Yaroooh! Wow!"

"Boot him!" said Johnny Bull.

"The bootfulness is the proper caper!"

"Go it!"

Billy Bunter bounced up. He bounced and bolted. Four juniors cut after him, dribbling him.

He rushed for the drive; and only as Colonel Wharton glanced round, frowning, the four ceased to boot Bunter. Bunter, however, rushed on, and scrambled headlong into the colonel's car for refuge.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry grinned at him as he scrambled breathlessly in. "Got a move on at last, fatty?"

"Ow! Wow! Oooogh!" gasped Bunter, as he collapsed on a seat. "I say, old chap, keep those beasts off! Ow!"

Harry Wharton & Co. looked into the car from either side with wrathful

looks. They did not want to draw the old colonel's attention to Bunter, or they would certainly have grabbed him, and yanked him headlong out of the car. But they looked at him as if they could have bitten him.

"I've a jolly good mind," said Harry, "to heave you out of that car, you fat freak, and leave you behind. You ever play such a rotten trick again?"

"Ow! You beast!" gasped Bunter. "What have I done, I'd like to know? Ow!"

"You frabjous freak!" hissed Johnny Bull. "If we lose the boat, we—"

"We can't lose it!" said Harry. "Old Mr. O is expecting us in Paris this evening. We've got to manage with my uncle's car, somehow."

"Lots of room, if we chuck that fat bladder of lard out!" growled Johnny Bull. "And it's his doing."

"The terrific idiot—"

"What on earth has Bunter been doing?" asked Bob Cherry, in surprise. "I thought he had been snoring since lunch."

"He's crocked Dr. Sin's car—"

"Wha-a-t!" gasped Bob.

"You heard what Brown said? Somebody's been monkeying with the car—and it was Bunter, of course!"

"It wasn't!" howled Bunter.

"It was, you fat villain! I've a jolly good mind—"

"I tell you it wasn't!" shrieked Bunter. "I haven't been anywhere near his rotten car!"

"Shut up!" hissed Johnny Bull. "You tell another whopper, and I'll have you out on your neck, and bang your fat head on the car!"

"Beast! I tell you I didn't!" spluttered Bunter. "I never went near the car, and never even knew what—"

"That does it!" growled Johnny Bull, and he reached in and grabbed the fat junior. "Now, you frabjous footling freak—"

"Hold on!" exclaimed Bob Cherry hastily. He pushed the excited Johnny back, and Bunter wriggled out of his grasp. "Look here, Bunter never touched Sin's car!"

"Don't be an ass! You know it's been crocked!"

"I know! But Bunter never did it!"

"Oh, don't talk rot!" snorted Johnny Bull. "If Bunter didn't, who did? Think there's any other chap here potty enough to play such a mad trick?"

Bob Cherry reddened.

"Well, it wasn't Bunter!" he snapped. "Bunter's been in that hammock all the time. Leave the fat ass alone, fathead!"

The four juniors stared at Bob blankly. That such a trick could have been played by anyone but Bunter seemed impossible to them.

Obviously some person had deliberately crocked Dr. Sin's car, and made it impossible to use it on the run down to Folkestone. Who, but Bunter?

"Look here, Bob, don't be an ass!" said Nugent. "You jolly well know as well as we do that it was Bunter."

"It wasn't!" grunted Bob.

"Then who was it?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"Oh, ask me another! I know it wasn't Bunter!"

"Rot!"

"The rotfulness is terrific!"

"Don't be an ass, Bob!"

But Harry Wharton did not speak. He was giving Bob a very startled look. Something in Bob's flushed, discomfited face brought an almost unbelievable suspicion into his mind.

"I say, you fellows, I told you—" spluttered Bunter. "I should think you could take a fellow's word! Bob knows I never did it, don't you, old chap?"

"Yes, I do," said Bob Cherry. "Chuck it, you fellows! I tell you that it wasn't Bunter, and I jolly well know it wasn't! Now let it drop!"

Harry Wharton compressed his lips and said nothing.

The matter had to drop, anyhow; for Dr. Sin by that time had satisfied himself that there was no hope of getting the two-seater going without such delay as meant losing the Channel boat.

"After all, there is room in my car, sir," Colonel Wharton was saying. "We can manage very well. Leave your car here with my chauffeur, sir!"

Dr. Sin was breathing hard. His sleek politeness was cracking under this strain like thin ice. But he forced himself to remember it.

"It is nothing," said Dr. Sin. "A larkish joke—yes. Some unthinking person has played a trick on my poor car. I only regret that excessive crowd in one car will incommode estimable young gentlemen—"

"That is nothing, sir," said the colonel. "The fact is, we have no more time to lose, unless we are to be late for Folkestone."

"Allee light!" said Wun Lung. "We travel velly nicey 'long big car. Me likee all light."

Colonel Wharton looked round.

"You boys ready?"

"Here we are!"

"Get in!"

The numerous passengers packed into the big car, and Colonel Wharton sat at the wheel. It was undoubtedly rather a cram, roomy as the car was—especially for Billy Bunter, who wanted room for two, and was given rather less than room for one. But it could not be helped.

Anyhow, cram or not, the party were off at last. And Dr. Sin, crammed in among the rest, resumed his smiling good humour, and dismissed—or appeared to dismiss—that untoward incident from his mind.

The car rolled away from Wharton Lodge, and took the long road to Folkestone. Wun Lung, whether he would have been safe or not in the two-seater with Dr. Sin, was quite safe in the crowded car in the midst of his friends.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Across the Channel!

COLONEL WHARTON waved his hand as the gangway was taken in. From the swarming deck of the Channel steamer, the Greyfriars fellows waved back, hands and hats.

The steamer was thickly populated. Holiday-makers innumerable were crossing the Channel that sunny August afternoon. From stem to stern there were jostling crowds and buzzing voices.

Of the Greyfriars party, only Billy Bunter did not bother about waving farewell to the old military gentleman, who had driven them to Folkestone, and was seeing them off. Bunter rolled down to the grub department at once for a little light refreshment.

But the rest waved to the old colonel, standing like a ramrod amid the crowd seeing the boat off. Dr. Sin, polite to

the last, executed the nearest approach to a kow-tow that he could manage.

The siren roared, and the boat glided away, and the ramrod figure grew indistinct in the distance. Folkestone sank into a blur, and the sunny Channel shone and glimmered round the steamer.

Everybody was in high spirits—only Bob seeming to have a spot of worry on his mind, and Harry Wharton a rather thoughtful look. Wharton had had no opportunity, so far, of speaking aside to Bob; but as soon as the steamer was out in the Channel, he drew him away on the crowded deck.

"Now, you ass!" he said, in a low voice.

Bob grinned rather shamefacedly.

"You've guessed?" he asked.

"I think so. What the thump did you play such a mad trick for—a trick too silly even for Bunter?"

"You jolly well know."

"Well, I suppose I do," said Harry. "But—look here, Bob, you'll have to chuck it! It's just lunacy, and nothing else."

Bob's brow wrinkled with worry.

"I don't know," he said, "I can't get it clear. But—Wun's not going to be kidnapped on this trip, Harry! Such a lot of things point the same way, all of them trifles, I know, but— Look what happened before we broke up at Greyfriars. Dr. Sin came and looked over the school—and that kidnapper knew his way all right to the Remove dorm! He took Wun for a drive in his car, and there was an accident that jolly nearly caused Wun to go without his friends. He turned up at Rookwood the day we played cricket there, thinking that Wun was with us—in a two-seater—to drive Wun home, with no room for a fellow to go with him! Now he turns up in a two-seater again and—"

Bob paused, looking deeply worried.

"I know it may all be trifles, amounting to nothing!" he said. "But you can't get away from it that Bunter was the only fellow who saw that kidnapper, and Bunter thought it was Dr. Sin."

"That fat, short-sighted owl—"

"Oh, yes, I know! But it all adds up together," grunted Bob. "Mind, I don't believe it—not exactly! I can't, the fellow seems so decent! But he's not going to get Wun to himself this trip."

"Have a little sense, old chap! A kidnapper would be bound to be a pretty thorough scoundrel—"

"I know that!"

"Well, could anybody take Sin for a scoundrel?"

Bob was silent for a long moment.

"No," he said, "that's rot!"

"Well, then, you awful ass!" said Harry. "Are you going to make out that a decent man, as Sin plainly is, would do a rotten, rascally, wicked thing?"

"Don't ask me to answer riddles," growled Bob, with a touch of impatient irritation. "I like the man; he seems a decent sort! But there's too many things pointing the same way! I don't exactly distrust him, but I'm going to see that Wun's not left alone with him till he reaches his uncle's house in Paris."

"Well, thank goodness we shall be there this evening, and then you'll have to chuck up playing the giddy ox!" said Wharton, impatient, also. "Crocking a man's car—"

"Was there any other way?"

"I suppose not—but it's all rot!"

"I'd be jolly glad to think it was all rot. I don't know. But I know this

—I'm watching Wun like a cat all the way to Paris, and if Sin shows a sign of getting off alone with him I'm going to put the stopper on."

"He won't."

"Well, if he doesn't, all the better."

With that, the discussion ended. It was just as well, for Wharton could not help feeling annoyed at the extraordinary measures Bob had taken at Wharton Lodge; and Bob, worried by the unpleasant feeling of distrusting a man with whom he had to be friendly, and towards whom, indeed, he felt friendly, was not quite so good-tempered as usual.

The Greyfriars fellows moved about the deck, mingling with the innumerable passengers, or sat in deck-chairs and watched the shining sea, and kept their eyes alert for the white cliffs of France.

Boulogne was in distant view when Billy Bunter rolled up from below. His face was fat and shiny. There were traces of jam and other sticky things on it, and he seemed to breathe with a little difficulty. Clearly, Bunter had been punishing the provender. It was fortunate for the fat Owl that the day was calm, the Channel almost like a pond, or he would have been in danger of losing the good things he had taken so long to pack away.

"I say, you fellows, where's that man Sin?" he asked, rolling up to the Famous Five on the crowded deck.

Dr. Sin was sitting in a deck-chair, about two yards away, and he smiled as the short-sighted Owl inquired after him.

"Seen that man Sin?" went on Bunter. "The steward wants to speak to him. It's rather important."

"What the dickens does the steward want with Dr. Sin?" asked Harry.

"Well, there's a bill, you know—"

"A bill!" repeated the Famous Five.

"Oh, really, you fellows! It's understood, ain't it, that we're guests on this trip," said Bunter warmly. "If that Chink thinks I'm going to pay my own expenses when I'm invited on a holiday, he's got another guess coming, and I can jolly well tell him so."

"You podgy octopus—"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"You bloated bloater—"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Go down and see the steward yourself, you fat foozler!" growled Johnny Bull.

"What's the good of my going down to see him?" asked Bunter. "I'm not going to pay him! The fact is, I can't! I rather expected to get my postal order at Wharton Lodge before we left; but it never came, after all! Otherwise, of course, I should pay the man. It's only a trifle—two pounds ten—"

"Two pounds ten!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"Yes, that's all—might be a few odd pence. A trifle! I'm not the sort of fellow to spread myself because somebody else is paying the bill."

"Oh, my hat!"

"The sooner Dr. Sin sees that steward the better," said Bunter anxiously. "He didn't seem to want me to leave without paying, for some reason! I'm pretty sure he will be after me if the bill ain't paid before the boat gets in! You know that class of people—sordid; always thinking about their money."

"You pernicious porker—"

"Oh, really, Wharton! Look here, don't jaw. Where's that man Sin? Can't you see his ugly mug anywhere about?"

"Ugly mug approximates close to estimable young gentleman!" said a

voice behind Bunter as Dr. Sin rose from his deck-chair.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter, revolving on his axis and blinking at the plump yellow face through his big spectacles. "I—I didn't see you! I—"

"Don't bother about the steward, Dr. Sin!" said Harry Wharton hastily. "We'll see to that!"

"Not at all, esteemed and respectable sir!" answered Dr. Sin. "Instructions of lofty and jade-like master, Mr. O, are to put a foot to such things, expense being no object. This is honour and pleasure to humble self."

And Dr. Sin went down to give himself the honour and pleasure of footing Bunter's little bill in the refreshment department.

Billy Bunter grinned as he went. "Well, that Chink knows what I think of him now!" he remarked. "He heard me call him ugly mug! He, he, he!"

"Gentlemen, chaps, and sportsmen!" said Bob Cherry. "Dr. Sin knows what Bunter thinks of him. Now let's let Bunter know what we think of Bunter!"

"Hear, hear!" "I say, you fellows—leggo—" roared Bunter, as five pairs of hands grasped him. "I say—yarooooop!"

Bump! Billy Bunter sat on the deck, with a concussion that almost shook the steamer. There was a roar from Bunter, followed by a horrible gurgle! With two pounds ten shillings' worth of foodstuffs packed away inside, Bunter was in no state to be shaken up! He gurgled horribly.

"Urrgh! Groogh! Ooo-er!" The chums of the Remove walked away and left him gurgling.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

In France!

"BULLONG!" said Billy Bunter, half an hour later, blinking at the white houses rising on the hill, and the great Casino shining in the sun. "I suppose that's Bullong!"

"You can suppose so, if you like," assented Bob Cherry.

"Well, isn't it?" demanded Bunter.

"No." "I thought we were getting off at Bullong. If that's not Bullong, what is it?" yapped Bunter.

"Boulogne," answered Bob cheerfully.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly ass!" growled Bunter. "Think you can teach me how to pronounce French! I say, you fellows, when we get ashore you'd better leave the talking to me. I can speak French!"

If you want to speak to them, just tell me, and I'll do it for you. You'll want an interpreter to make them understand you if you speak English—see?"

"You'll want another to make them understand you if you speak French!" suggested Bob.

"Yah!"

Dr. Sin came up, smiling and sleek. "Here we approximate to foreign shores," he remarked. "May I request young but deeply respected persons to remain in my undistinguished company, estimable passports being in my sole possession? Wandering footsteps in immense crowd are liable to cause objectionable difficulties."

"I can look after myself, thanks!" said Billy Bunter, with dignity.

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Rely on us to keep close, Dr. Sin!" answered Harry Wharton.

He caught Bob's eye as he spoke, and could not help smiling.

So far from any sign of Dr. Sin trying to get Wun Lung away from the party, he was warning the juniors not to get separated. As Dr. Sin was in charge of the passports, it would have been very awkward for the Greyfriars fellows had they lost him in the swarming crowds.

Dr. Sin, indeed, looked after the party rather like a shepherd looking after his flock.

He saw them through the passport inspection, and he gathered them to go ashore, politely heedless of Bunter's objections to being looked after. Baggage was taken by half a dozen eager "facteurs," and the Greyfriars party went ashore amid a thick throng.

They passed through the "douane," where they had nothing to declare to the Customs; though Billy Bunter very nearly succeeded in giving the impression that he was a bold, bad smuggler, by his determination to talk French.

A polite official, having remarked "Rien a declarer?" was ready to chalk Bunter's bag, when the fat junior answered at once: "Wrong!"

The French official appeared to understand that English word, for he held back his chalk.

"Quelque-chose a declarer?" he asked.

"I say, you fellows, what does he mean by kelker-shows?" asked Bunter. "Look here, why don't he let me take my bag away?"

"You utter ass, what did you tell him he was wrong for?" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "You've nothing to declare to the Customs!"

"Eh! I told him so! I said I had nothing!"

"You said 'wrong'!" hooted Wharton.

"Well, that's French for 'nothing,' ain't it?" yapped Bunter. "If you don't know an easy word like that, Wharton—"

"Oh crikey!"

"Wrong" was, apparently Bunter's

special pronouncement of the French word "rien," meaning "nothing." The man in the Customs had taken it for an English word!

"Alors ouvrez, s'il vous plait!" said the official, tapping Bunter's suitcase. "Ouvrez, done."

(Continued on next page.)

"BOY O BOY!"

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"Donk yourself!" retorted Bunter indignantly. "My hat! They say the French are awfully polite people—and listen to him! Calling a chap a donkey because he's got nothing to declare!"

"Ouvrez!" rapped the man at the wooden counter. "Ouvrez!"

"What is he saying 'hurray' for, you fellows?"

"For goodness' sake shut up!" roared Wharton. "Drag that fat idiot away, you chaps, or we shall be here till midnight!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

Two of the juniors grabbed Bunter, and jerked him away from the counter. Wharton explained in his best French, which really was a credit to Monsieur Charpentier's instructions at Greyfriars. But the Customs man's suspicions were aroused now, and he insisted on Bunter's bag being opened, and he went through it with sedulous care in search of contraband goods.

He did not notice—though the juniors did as the contents were sorted over—that it contained collars marked "H. W.," shirts marked "F. N.," other garments marked "J. B." or "R. C." Bunter, who always travelled light, had evidently borrowed a few things when he packed at Wharton Lodge!

However, there was nothing of a contraband nature, and the official grunted, and chalked the bag at last, and the juniors got through.

"Lot of time wasted!" snorted Bunter, as they headed for the platform. "Might have lost the train through you fellows! We should have walked straight through if you'd let me explain to him in French. I hope you fellows are not going to keep up this sort of thing all the while we're in France!"

"Shut up! Where's Bob?" asked Harry, looking round among innumerable heads. "Bob! Bob! We've got separated, after Dr. Sin specially told us to keep together."

Dr. Sin and Wun Lung were out of sight on the long, crowded platform—so was Bob Cherry!

But a powerful voice shouted from a distance:

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! This way!"

"That's Bob! Come on!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, and come on!"

"I've dropped my bullseyes—"

"Drop after them, and stay there, then, fathead! Good-bye!"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter rolled after the four as they pushed through the crowd, heading for the spot whence Bob's powerful voice hailed. The bullseyes had to be left to their fate.

"Oh, here you are!" exclaimed Harry, as they came up to Bob, Dr. Sin, and Wun, standing by the train. "Sorry we were delayed, Dr. Sin—that idiot Bunter—"

"There is ample measure of time," assured Dr. Sin. "The train does not stir for many minutes. This humble person regrets that he did not observe delay and remain in attendance."

"Dr. Sin did not notice that you fellows were held back in the Customs," explained Bob Cherry. "He walked on with Wun Lung, you see! I thought I'd better keep with him."

Wharton gave him a quick look.

There was a faint, but unmistakable, note of sarcasm in Bob's tone.

If it was lost on Dr. Sin, it was not lost on Harry Wharton. It struck him rather uncomfortably.

After Dr. Sin's excessive care of the party, till they got into the douane, it was really a little singular that he had

not noticed the fact that Bunter's fatuous fatheadedness had caused delay, and that the other juniors had stayed to see him through.

Only Bob Cherry had walked on with Dr. Sin and Wun Lung, and disappeared through the thronging crowd with them. Bob had his own reasons for that!

For a second, Harry Wharton felt a pang of doubt. Would the Greyfriars party have seen Wun Lung again had he disappeared through the crowd with only Sin Song in his company? Was Bob's watchfulness justified?

But he dismissed the uncomfortable thought the next moment. It was all rot—of course it was all rot!

It was impossible to believe that Dr. Sin was the kidnapper—that he was watching, with his smiling eyes, for any trifling chance that might occur to whisk off the Chinese junior under their very noses!

Wharton knew that this little incident had strengthened Bob's distrust. He did not need telling that. But he did not share it.

"Well, here we are!" he said, rather hastily. "Let's get on the train."

"I say, you fellows—"

"This is the train, Bunter! Pack in, fathead!"

"I say, what about going back to look for those bullseyes—"

"Kick him, somebody!"

"Beast!"

And the holiday party mounted the high steps of the train—all aboard for Paris!

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A Near Thing!

"**P**AR ici!" said a polite voice.

"Par ici!"

"Oh good!" said Billy Bunter. "I could just do with some ices! I say, where are they?"

"Comment? Je dis, par ici!" said the puzzled conductor.

He was showing the juniors to their places in the train.

They followed him along the corridor, glancing into compartment after compartment. The train for Paris was thronged, and seats had been booked in advance for the party. The railway attendant, no doubt in happy expectation of a tip from the tourists, bowed them along, and stopped at a vacant first-class carriage, where, evidently, the seats were engaged for the party.

Bunter blinked round with an inquiring and irritated blink.

"I say, you fellows, I don't see any ices!" he exclaimed.

"You howling ass, what on earth makes you fancy there are any ices?" exclaimed Harry.

"Eh! Wasn't that chap saying ices?"

"Oh crikey! He was saying 'par ici'—which means, 'this way'!" howled Wharton.

"Oh rot!" said Bunter. "You don't know much French, Wharton! He was saying ices, all right! Still, I don't see any!"

"He was saying 'ici,' which means 'here'!" hooted Johnny Bull.

"Rot!" said Bunter. "Wharton said he was saying 'this way,' and you say he was saying 'here'—he couldn't have been saying both! He was saying ices—they pronounce it 'eeecs,' you know, like the wireless announcers at home."

"Oh, my hat!"

There were six seats booked for the Greyfriars juniors. Wun Lung and Dr. Sin were passing farther on, when Bob Cherry stepped out into the corridor again.

"Where are you going, Wun?" he asked.

Dr. Sin answered before the Chinese junior could speak.

"In one carriage there is insufficient space for whole estimable party," he explained. "Two persons sit in next. The jade-like son of Wun Chung condescends to sit with this humble person."

"All light, ole Bob Chelly!" said Wun, smiling. "Me sittee 'long Dr. Sin—talkes Chinese 'long him. All light!"

Bob stood in the corridor, breathing a little hard.

Some such arrangement was unavoidable, with a party numbering eight. Indeed, on a thronged train, at the height of the holiday season, the party were in luck to be able to keep together at all.

That did not alter the fact that Dr. Sin and Wun Lung were going farther down the train by themselves, out of sight of the rest.

"En voiture!" came the calling voices of the porters.

More passengers hurried along the corridor of the train. Bob Cherry had to get out of the way. The porters were calling "Take your seats!"—which meant that the start was at hand. Bob stepped into the compartment with his friends, but did not sit down.

"Here's your seat, old bean!" said Johnny Bull. "Squat!"

He jerked Bob down into a seat.

"I say, you fellows," squeaked Billy Bunter, "if that chap's really got any ices—"

"Fathead!"

Bob Cherry sat in utter uneasiness. It looked normal and natural enough—like every one of Dr. Sin's proceedings. At the same time, it gave him a chance if he was the kidnapper—also like all Dr. Sin's proceedings! Bob jerked out of his seat and stepped out into the corridor again.

The conductor came hurrying by. Bob touched his arm as he passed.

"A quelle heure partons-nous?" he asked in his best French.

"Trois minutes, monsieur!" answered the conductor over his shoulder, as he hurried on.

The train was to "part" in three minutes. After that, the whole party was booked for Paris, as there was no changing on the "rapide." If Dr. Sin had any trick to play, he had only three minutes in which to play it. And he was in his carriage with Wun.

Bob moved along the corridor to the doorway of that carriage.

He heard Dr. Sin speaking; but, as he was speaking to Wun in Chinese, Bob had no idea what he was saying.

Wun answered in the same tongue.

Evidently both were there; and Bob, relieved in his own mind, a little ashamed of his haunting doubt, backed along the corridor again.

Then he gave a jump as the plump figure of Dr. Sin emerged into the corridor, followed by Wun.

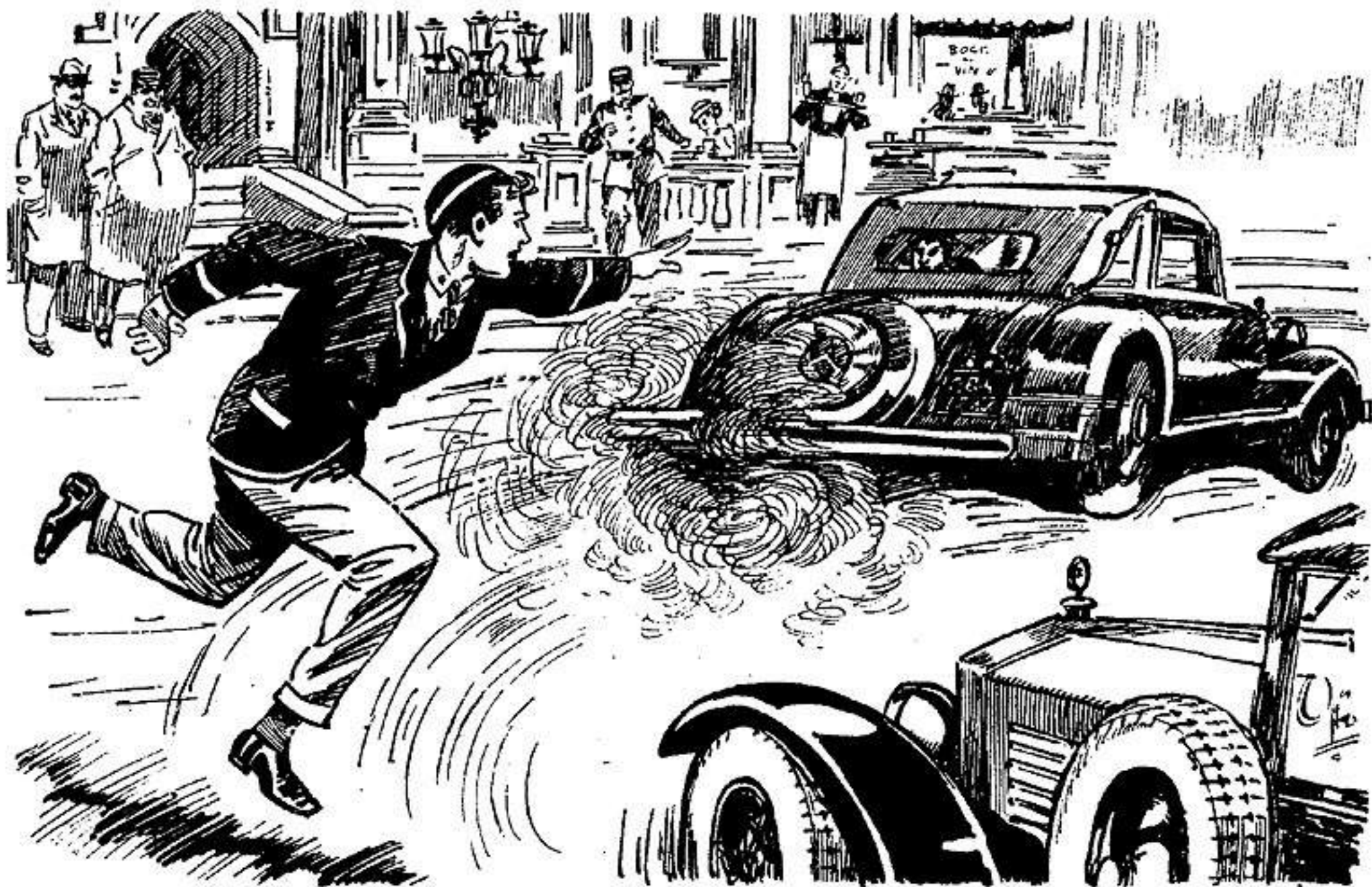
Their backs were to Bob as they walked down the corridor—the direction away from the Greyfriars carriage.

He stared after them.

Were they leaving the train? What imaginable excuse could Dr. Sin have made to Wun to cause him to leave the train on which his friends were all embarked for Paris? Was that what he had been speaking about to Wun in Chinese?

Bob caught his breath. He followed on.

They were leaving the train—not by the door by which they had entered it—to reach which they would have had to pass the juniors—but by another right



Almost wild with rage, Bob Cherry tore after the receding Mercedes. Somehow, he had to keep in sight the car that was carrying Wun Lung away from his friends into the wilderness of Paris.

down the train, far out of sight of the party.

Bob Cherry hurried after them, careless of hurrying passengers, whom he pushed and poked in his progress. He hardly knew what to think, but he knew with crystal clearness what he was going to do. A few seconds after Dr. Sin and Wun Lung had alighted, Bob jumped down. He cut after them on the platform.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Trying to lose the train, Wun?" he asked, with an assumption of carelessness in his tone.

The two Chinese looked round at him, Wun with a smile, Dr. Sin with a sudden flash in his jetty eyes under the heavy, slanting lids. But that flash came and went in the fraction of a second.

"All light!" said Wun Lung. "Plenty time takee tlainee, Bob Chelly! Walkee talkee fol ten minutes before tlainee startee."

"The train starts in two minutes!" gasped Bob.

"No tinkee—Dr. Sin savvy."

Bob, breathing hard, looked at Dr. Sin. Clearly he had told Wun that there remained ten minutes before the train started, and proposed a walk on the platform—welcome enough before sitting down for four hours on end. Bob knew from the conductor when the train was due to start.

"There is no cause for uneasiness, honourable young one!" said Dr. Sin reassuringly. "Ample time remains for a walk."

"They're calling on 'En voiture!'" said Bob. "I tell you the train's just going, Wun! Jump on!"

Wun Lung smiled.

"All light!" he answered. "Dr. Sin savvy plenty; no lossee tlainee!"

Bob's jaw squared.

"Oh, all right!" he said. "If there's time for you to take a walk, there's time

for me to take one, too! I'll stick to you, old chap!"

"Velly much likee handsome Bob Chelly walkee 'long this lil' Chinese!" agreed Wun Lung. He was always glad of Bob's company, whatever might have been the views of Dr. Sin Song.

At that moment it was rather certainty than doubt that was in Bob Cherry's mind. Anyhow, his mind was made up not to lose sight of Wun Lung for a split second. If Wun lost the train, Bob was going to lose it along with him.

Now that he was with Wun, and evidently intending to stick to him, he rather expected Dr. Sin to discover that there was not, after all, time for a walk on the platform before the train started.

He was right. Dr. Sin made exactly that discovery. He called to a passing porter, and the "facteur" answered:

"Tout de suite, monsieur!"

"At once!" said Bob. "Hear that, Wun?"

Wun looked inquiringly at Dr. Sin.

"This foolish one is in error!" said Dr. Sin. "Esteemed French language is not so familiar to me as beautiful English, and I have made one ridiculous mistake, or perhaps the person of whom I inquired did not answer in truth-words! We have no time to lose."

"Oh clikey!" exclaimed Wun Lung.

"Come on!" said Bob.

They clambered back on the train together. Dr. Sin followed them on board. With what feelings he followed them, Bob could only guess.

They had indeed no time to lose. They were still in the corridor, and had not yet reached their seats, when the train started and zoomed out of Boulogne Station. They plunged along the rocking train, and Dr. Sin and Wun Lung took their places; and Bob, having seen them sit down, passed on to the juniors' carriage. Whether Dr. Sin was playing a double game or not,

Wun Lung was safe now till the next stop. And Bob had hardly a doubt left now that the sleek and smiling Sin was playing a double game!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Fooled at the Finish!

HARRY WHARTON glanced curiously at Bob as he came in and sat down. So did Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. Billy Bunter, who was engaged in an extensive and intensive search of his pockets for stray bullseyes, had no attention to waste on Bob Cherry or anybody else.

"Well," said Harry quietly, "anything up, Bob?"

Bob was breathing rather hard, and his face was a little flushed, and there was an uncommonly grim set to his lips.

"Oh, nothing!" he answered. "Wun and Dr. Sin came near losing the train, that's all—without us."

"What rot!" said Johnny Bull, staring at him. "How could they lose the train when they were sitting in the next carriage?"

"The howfulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"What's happened, Bob?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Oh, nothing much!" There was a very unusually sardonic tone in Bob's voice. "Dr. Sin thought that the train didn't start for ten minutes; he seems to have misunderstood something a porter said. So he proposed a walk on the platform to Wun, as there was plenty of time."

"You don't mean they got off the train?"

"I do."

"Oh!" said Harry.

(Continued on page 16.)

The House of Peril!



(Continued from page 13.)

"You see," continued Bob, still sardonic, "Dr. Sin misunderstood what was told him; but I didn't misunderstand what was told me, so I hiked after them. And when our plump friend found that I was going to lose the train, too, he found out that he was in error. I thought he would!"

The four juniors looked at Bob in silence. Johnny Bull was the first to speak.

"Don't be an ass, old chap! Sin's a Chinese, and probably knows less French than we do! Anybody might mistake what a French porter yapped out in a language he only half understands."

"Of course!" said Nugent.

Harry Wharton did not speak. In spite of his belief in Dr. Sin and his liking for the man, he could not help feeling a shock of doubt. Bob had said, on the Channel steamer, that if Dr. Sin showed a sign of getting away alone with Wun, he was going to put the stopper on. Wharton had declared that it would not happen. Now it had happened, and Bob had been as good as his word—he had put the stopper on.

Again, it was only a trifle; Dr. Sin had made an error that any foreigner in France might have made. But Wharton could not help feeling that altogether too many of these trifles were piling up, one after another. It was not half an hour since they had landed from the steamer, and twice, in that short space of time, Dr. Sin and Wun had become detached from the party—by accident or error. Harry Wharton was beginning to share Bob's suspicion that there was a yellow hand behind these accidents and errors.

He said nothing; neither did Hurree Janset Ram Singh speak. But the nabob's dark eyes rested very curiously on Bob—and then met Wharton's. And the captain of the *Remore* could see that the dusky junior's thoughts were very like his own.

Neither of them had actually reached the point of distrusting Dr. Sin. But both of them decided, in their own minds, to act, from that moment, in concert with Bob, taking care that Wun was not left unwatched with Sin Song. Even if there was nothing in it, it could do no harm, to be on the alert.

The train boomed on.

Johnny Bull dismissed the discussion with a grunt. His opinion still was that Bob's doubts were all moonshine—and Nugent rather agreed.

Billy Bunter, having failed to find any bullseyes, or anything else of an edible nature, leaned back in his corner, closed his eyes behind his spectacles, and went to sleep. Saxophonic effects mingled with the boom of the train.

Bob Cherry sat with a slight furrow in his boyish brow.

He was certain, or practically certain now, of Dr. Sin's duplicity; and it worried him. It was a weight on his mind until Wun Lung could be safely delivered into his uncle's charge. But after that?

Even after the arrival in Paris, after

joining with Mr. O, what then? Dr. Sin was the old gentleman's secretary, and would be with the party all the time they stayed with O Bo. Would he venture to carry on, under his master's eyes? Bob wondered.

When the train clanged to a halt at a station, Bob leaned from the window, to keep a wary eye on the platform.

He was quite prepared to jump out and loose the train if Dr. Sin alighted with Wun Lung.

Farther down the train, another head was put out of a window—and Bob looked along at the sleek and smiling face of Dr. Sin.

The Chinese gave him a polite smile and withdrew into his carriage again. If he had been thinking of getting out, he knew that he could not do so unseen—and doubtless he was keen enough to know what would follow.

Bob did not pull his head in till the train had started again; and he was still standing at the window till it was clear of the station. Then he sat down again. Johnny Bull winked at Nugent.

"Sin jumped out with the kid, Bob?" he asked.

"No!" answered Bob quietly.

"I dare say he's gone to sleep and forgotten that he's a bold, bad kidnapper!" murmured Johnny.

"He hasn't! I saw him looking out of the window."

"Frightfully suspicious thing—looking out of a train window!" said Johnny.

"You were just doing it yourself!"

"Oh, don't be an ass!"

"Give yourself that advice, old bean!" grinned Johnny. "If looking out of a train window means that a man's a kidnapper, you're a bit of a doubtful character! Look here, why not chuck playing the giddy ox?"

Bob Cherry did not reply to that.

The train rolled on through the not very attractive landscape of Northern France. Billy Bunter snored. The juniors talked or read, or watched the scenery, such as it was, Bob Cherry every now and then taking a stroll along the corridor and exchanging a word or a nod with Wun Lung in his carriage.

Every time he glanced in, Dr. Sin gave him a polite smile. If he suspected that Bob was uneasily watchful, he gave no sign whatever of it.

The *Rapide* made a few stops on the journey to the French capital, but at each one, Bob was very much on the alert; and so, now, were Wharton and Hurree Singh.

But if Dr. Sin had entertained the idea of trying anything on during the train journey, he realised that it was not good enough. Nothing had happened when, at last, the train boomed into the Gare du Nord, at Paris, in the dusk of the summer evening.

Then Billy Bunter was shaken into wakefulness, and the Greyfriars fellows descended, to join Dr. Sin and Wun Lung on the platform.

"I say, you fellows, I'm hungry!" remarked Bunter. "I say, it looks to me as if we shall be late for dinner with old O. What do you fellows think?"

He blinked anxiously at the other fellows, without, however, discerning in their faces any signs of disquiet on that urgent subject.

Dr. Sin beamed on the juniors.

"Please to keep in my loathsome company and do not loose yourselves in numerous concourse," he said. "Cars await to carry your precious persons to residence of Mr. O."

The juniors were aware that Mr. O occupied a mansion in the Etoile quarter of the French capital. As he was a gentleman of immense wealth, they had no doubt that he was doing himself well

on his travels in the land of the foreign devils.

Bob, at least, did not heed Dr. Sin's warning not to get lost in the crowd. He had a strong suspicion that Sin Song gave that warning with his tongue in his cheek!

Anyhow, he kept close by Wun Lung as the party went with the crowd pouring out of the Northern Station.

"Taxi! Taxi!"

"Messieurs, taxi!"

The Greyfriars party did not want taxi-cabs. They walked with Dr. Sin to the spot where two handsome cars waited, each with a French chauffeur in attendance. One, a Daimler, was larger than the other—and in that Dr. Sin disposed Billy Bunter, Wharton, Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Singh. The smaller car, a Mercedes, he arranged for himself, Wun Lung, and Bob Cherry.

Johnny Bull favoured Nugent with another wink as he saw that arrangement. He could read in Bob's face that he had expected the arrangement at Wharton Lodge to happen over again—but, on the other hand, Dr. Sin had deliberately selected Bob to go in the car with Wun Lung!

Baggage was piled on, and the Daimler moved off first, with five fellows in it. Bob, who had not the slightest intention of quitting Wun Lung, even if he had to come out into the open in dealing with Dr. Sin, was glad enough that it did not prove necessary to take any disagreeable measures.

Wun Lung sat in the Mercedes, and Dr. Sin, standing at the door, was speaking to him as the Daimler drove away. Bob stood close behind Dr. Sin—perfectly prepared to leap in after him if he made any sudden move to jump in and get off with the Chinese junior.

Dr. Sin made no such move.

He stepped back from the car and smiled round at Bob. All the baggage was on, except two small bags which Dr. Sin had left on the pavement. These, Bob supposed, were to go inside with the passengers.

"You will take one bag in your honourable hand?" asked Dr. Sin as he stepped across the pavement.

Bob nodded and followed him to the bags. So long as Dr. Sin remained out of the car, Bob was satisfied.

But as they stooped to pick up the bags, there was a sudden buzz from the Mercedes, and Bob spun round.

The car was dashing away with Wun Lung staring back from the window.

Bob stared blankly.

"Inordinate fool of a chauffeur!" exclaimed Dr. Sin. "He starts without us—what does he mean? What—"

Bob did not stay to listen!

He knew at once how he had been made a fool of—knew that Dr. Sin knew that he was suspected and watched, and had deliberately pulled his leg.

Bob was keen enough, in his own way, but hardly a match for the artful Chinese. Too late, he realised that Sin Song must have fixed this up with the French chauffeur—that the driver of the car was carrying off Wun Lung at Dr. Sin's orders—while the sleek and smiling Dr. Sin kept Bob out of the car!

Wun Lung was going—vanishing into the wilderness of Paris—only the cunning Dr. Sin and his confederate, the chauffeur, knowing where! From the door of Wharton Lodge in Surrey, to the railway-station in Paris, Bob had watched and guarded, and had been most successful—only to be deluded and fooled, at the last moment. Almost wild with rage, Bob tore after the Mercedes—utterly hopeless as he knew the chase to be.

"Taxi! Taxi! Monsieur, taxi!"

A taxi glided by his side. The French taxi-man, seeing an English monsieur running like a madman after a car, hardly needed telling that that English monsieur was in need of a lift.

"Taxi! Taxi!"

The French cabman's voice was not musical; it was husky, and flavoured with absinthe; but it was sweet and musical to Bob's ears at that moment. He grabbed at the door and plunged into the taxi.

"Follow that car!" he panted.

"Comment?"

Bob staggered into French.

"Voilà—vous voyez ce Mercedes—suivez! Suivez cet automobile! Cent francs, si vous le suivez jusqu'à la maison!"

A hundred francs for following that car to its destination was pie to the Paris cabman. He grinned from ear to ear.

"Oui, monsieur! Ça se fait! Parfaitement!"

The taxi shot away.

French cab-drivers are reckless, at the best of times. They like to make their passengers feel that one neck is not enough to last out a trip. But the taxi-man outdid himself—with a hundred francs in prospect.

He careered away, with a happy disregard for anybody's business but his own. He shaved corners, he grazed other vehicles, he made pedestrians jump nearly out of their Gallic skins; he caused a sergeant-de-ville to wave both hands high to the skies; he endangered his own neck, and Bob Cherry's, five or six times; but he clung to the Mercedes like a leech!

Paris hummed and thronged unheeded around them. Bob, breathing hard and deep, sat with his eyes glued on the car ahead, and never lost sight of it for a second! The man from the Flowery Land had not beaten him yet!

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The House of Mr. O!

"VOILA, monsieur!" grinned the taxi-driver.

The taxi jerked to a halt.

Bob sat and stared.

He doubted whether the driver of the Mercedes knew that he was followed. The Mercedes, at any rate, had made no attempt to dodge pursuit. It had driven fast, and the taximan had had to go all out to keep it in sight. But that was all; and it was followed now to its destination.

Bob Cherry had had a holiday in Paris before. It could hardly be said that he knew the city; but he had a general idea of the topography. He knew the Arc de Triomphe when he saw it, and the great avenue in the wealthy residential quarter.

It was in that quarter, as he knew from Wun Lung, that Mr. O. Bo rented a mansion for his stay in the French capital.

And it was in that quarter that the Mercedes arrived at its destination, rolling in at a gateway set in a vast wall of stone blocks, disappearing from sight as the gates shut behind it.

In the avenue the taxi stopped, and the driver looked round, grinning, at Bob. He had earned his hundred francs.

Bob just sat and stared.

The driver of the Mercedes had shot away, while Sin Song kept Bob back from entering the car. That was clear—and the motive was clear—the hand of the yellow man was behind it. Bob had, therefore, expected the kidnapped

Chinese junior to be rushed off at speed to some den in a low quarter of Paris—perhaps to some dismal alley in Montmartre, where some gang of sour-faced "Apaches" might have been ready to deal with possible pursuit.

Instead of which, the Mercedes had arrived in a quarter where only the wealthy dwelt, and driven into a garage attached to a vast mansion.

If that mansion was a kidnapper's den the kidnapper, evidently, was in a big way of business!

Bob sat and blinked at it.

The great stone wall ran a considerable distance along one side of the broad avenue. It enclosed yards, and garages, and other buildings. Farther on, it joined up with the frontage of the mansion, also of great length. Great bronze gates were set in the wall at that spot, giving admission to a vast courtyard, beyond which was the grand entrance of the mansion.

The place looked as if some millionaire, or billionaire, lived in it. Even a casual glance from without showed that the cost of its upkeep must have been enormous.

And it was into that building that Wun Lung had been taken! The Mercedes had driven in at the garage gate and disappeared.

What did it—and could it—mean?

"Voilà, monsieur!" repeated the Paris cabman. "Voilà la maison, monsieur! N'est-ce pas?"

Bob stepped out of the taxi.

Up and down the great avenue ran streams of cars. Well dressed pedestrians passed every moment. To think of that imposing mansion as a kidnapper's den seemed fantastic.

But Wun Lung was there! He had been kidnapped, and he was there! Bob's brain seemed to reel as he tried to think it out. He had tracked the kidnapped Chinese down—to that vast mansion! Neither had there been any concealment about it. It was not yet dark, and dozens of passing eyes might have seen the Chinese junior driven in. What did it mean?

Bob began to wonder whether, after all, he had made a mistake—a series of utterly idiotic mistakes!

Every incident that had intensified his suspicion of Dr. Sin was capable of innocent explanation—and was the explanation, after all, innocent? Had he, after all, been foolishly suspicious, led away by Billy Bunter's absurd statement that he had recognised the kidnapper in the Remove dormitory as Dr. Sin?

And yet—

Sin Song had deliberately led him to believe that he was going in the Mercedes with Wun, and had tricked him at the last moment, keeping him out of the car! Why, if all was well?

Bob stood in perplexity. The Paris cabman eyed him and waited. Bob sorted out a hundred-franc note and passed it to him. But he signed to him not to drive away.

He knew where Wun Lung was! He knew that he was kidnapped, though now a tormenting doubt was at the back of his mind. To drive to the nearest police station was easy, and he knew enough French to explain the matter there. But—What were they likely to think of a tale of kidnapping in connection with that grand mansion in a fashionable quarter of Paris? Bob, who was beginning to doubt, himself, could picture the amazement and doubt, if not derision, in official faces! The police were a last resort.

Where his chums were, he did not know. He had seen nothing of the Daimler, with the other fellows in it,

since it had driven away from the Gare du Nord. He had not the remotest idea where to find them. In his haste to keep the kidnapped Chinese in sight he had had no time to think of other things. He could not consult with the Co.

What he could do was a puzzle. But he was not going to leave Wun Lung immured behind those immense walls unfriended. For several long minutes he thought, and thought, while the taxi-man waited patiently—perhaps in hope of another hundred-franc note to follow the first.

"Look here," said Bob, at last. He changed at once into French, as the cabman stared. "Voyez—écoutez!"

Bob wished, at that moment, that he had done a little less ragging in the French class at Greyfriars, and paid a little more attention to Monsieur Charpentier's instructions.

"Oui, m'sieur!" said the cabby.

"Je desire savoir a qui la maison?" Bob's French might have made Mossoo, at Greyfriars, shrug his shoulders over his ears. But it was, at least, comprehensible to the cabman. "You—I mean vous—vous allez demander—on vous dira a qui cette maison belongs—I mean appartient—le nom de propriétaire, n'est-ce pas?"

"Oui, monsieur," grinned the cabman. "Très facile, m'sieur, puisque je le sais, déjà."

"Oh!" ejaculated Bob.

His idea was that the cabman could root out information regarding the house better than he could himself, which was certainly true. It had not occurred to him that the Paris driver knew already. But he realised at once that a Paris taxi-man naturally knew his Paris from end to end.

Anyhow, the man's reply was that he knew who the proprietor of that great mansion was. That was what Bob wanted to know, as a first step.

"Alors?" asked Bob.

"Monsieur le Marquis de Montanges!" said the driver.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bob.

Apparently he had tracked the kidnapped Chinese to the wealthy residence of a French marquis.

"Mais," added the driver. "On la loue!"

"Louer—louer!" repeated Bob, trying to recall the verb. "Oh! Louer—to let! The house is let! I see! Je comprends! The jolly old marquis isn't at home—he's let the house to somebody! A qui la maison est-elle louée?"

"Un monsieur Chinois!" answered the driver.

Bob caught his breath.

He had asked to whom the house was let, and cabby had answered that it was let to a Chinese gentleman! The mention of the marquis had fairly flabbergasted Bob; but the mention of a Chinese gentleman set him right again, so to speak. For who could the Chinese gentleman be but Dr. Sin? Amazing as it was that such a vast edifice should be the kidnapper's den, the fact that it was rented by a Chinaman seemed to settle the matter. For Wun Lung, undoubtedly, was there!

"Et son nom?" asked Bob eagerly.

"His name? Le nom du monsieur?"

The next answer made him almost stagger.

"Monsieur O, monsieur."

The cabman grinned as he made that answer. To French, as to English, the Chinese name of "O" seemed a little droll.

Bob blinked at him.

"O!" he repeated faintly.

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"Oui, monsieur!" grinned the cabby. "C'est un nom Chinois—O, seulement O—O tout simple! Nom pour rire, n'est-ce pas?" And he chuckled. "Mais c'est comme ça!"

Bob Cherry felt as if his head was turning round. This was the quarter of Paris in which Mr. O's mansion was situated. He knew that already! But the discovery that this was the actual mansion of Mr. O was stunning!

What became now of his theory of kidnapping? He knew—he knew—that Sin Song had tricked him from getting into the car with Wun Lung! Why? The Mercedes had driven Wun direct to his uncle's house—and this was it!

The wide avenue, the shady trees seemed to dance round the bewildered junior for some moments. Wun Lung—kidnapped by his uncle's secretary and taken to his uncle's house! The thing was not merely fantastic—it was absurd! And yet—what did it all mean? What could it mean?

Bob was glad, at all events, that he had decided to inquire before he called in the aid of the police!

He was done with the cabby now! The man had told him all he wanted to know—and more! He handed him a tip of ten francs, and the cabman drove away, back into the city, leaving Bob standing on the pavement of the avenue more utterly bewildered and befogged than he had ever been in his life.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Farewell of Sin Song!

"I SAY, you fellows——"
"Are you going to say you're hungry?"
"That's just it!"
"Then don't!"
"Beast!"

The Daimler was threading the Paris traffic. Several times Harry Wharton & Co. had looked out for a sight of the Mercedes with Wun Lung, Bob and Dr. Sin in it! But they had seen nothing of the other car! Having started first, they had, of course, seen nothing of the episode at the Gare du Nord; and having taken—though they were unaware of it—an entirely different route, they were not likely to see anything of the Mercedes.

So far as they knew, Wun and Bob and Dr. Sin were on their way to the house of Mr. O, all in the Mercedes together! They had no reason to think otherwise, and no doubt crossed their minds for a moment. Losing sight of the other car meant nothing in the thronging traffic of Paris.

In the falling dusk of the summer evening, Paris was noisy and merry and bright. The French chauffeur drove steadily on—heading, they had no doubt, for Mr. O's mansion in the Etoile quarter. That the man had secret instructions from the artful Dr. Sin naturally never occurred to them.

After a long train journey, other fellows, as well as Billy Bunter, were ready for dinner, or supper, or a meal, anyhow. But Wharton and Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh found plenty of entertainment in looking from the windows of the big car, at the traffic, the crowds in the streets, and the bright cafes. All of them, however, began to wonder a little how long it would be before they arrived "chez" Mr. O.

The Daimler had left the city, and was running swiftly and smoothly on

the more open outer boulevards. All the juniors had been in Paris before, and all of them, except Bunter, could see that if the driver was heading for the Etoile quarter, he was taking a very roundabout course. Bunter, with his thoughts concentrated on the anticipation of food, noticed nothing.

Still, a chauffeur employed by Mr. O had to be supposed to know what he was about, and the schoolboys only wondered a little.

It was Hurree Jamset Ram Singh who made the first remark, with a tincture of doubt in it. The car turned in again from the boulevards, and for the second time traversed streets it had traversed before.

"My esteemed friends," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur, "the Rue de la Paix is a very estimable street, but why are we seeing it twice?"

"What the dickens is the driver up to?" grunted Johnny Bull. "Sin can't have told him to take us for a drive round Paris before getting to Mr. O's, I suppose?"

"Looks like it," said Nugent, puzzled.

"Well, that's rot!" said Harry Wharton. "I can't make this out! I'd better speak to the man, I think."

He slid back the glass and touched the chauffeur on the shoulder.

"M'sieur!" said the man, over his shoulder, without turning his head.

"Est-ce ici le chemin a la maison de Monsieur O?" asked Harry, in his best French.

"Ca va, m'sieur."

That answer was rather non-committal.

"Repondez, oui ou non!" said Harry sharply.

"Oui, m'sieur."

The man answered yes, that it was the way to Mr. O's house. But his hesitation in giving a direct answer was noticeable.

"Allez droit!" said Harry. "Allez tout droit!"

"Oui, m'sieur."

Wharton sat back again, vaguely uneasy.

"What were you gabbling about?" asked Billy Bunter, blinking at him. "What do you mean by shunmong?"

"Chemin, fathead! I was asking him if this was the right way to Mr. O's."

"Well, I suppose he knows the way!" grunted Bunter. "What were you asking him about two doors? I can't see one door yet."

"I never said anything about two doors, ass."

"I heard you!" yapped Bunter. "You said something about two doors in an alley, or an alley with two doors, or something."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You fat ass, I said 'allez tout droit'—which means, go straight there!" said Harry. "I can't make this out, you fellows. The man's driven us over half Paris—and now it looks to me as if we're heading back to the railway station."

His eyes met Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's. Both of them had shared Bob Cherry's uneasiness, since the incident on the train from Boulogne. But they had been quite reassured by the fact that Dr. Sin had specially selected Bob to go in the Mercedes with Wun Lung. Now their uneasiness revived.

Bob was with Wun Lung—at least, they supposed that he was! But together, they were separated from the

rest of the party. And the rest of the party, instead of arriving at Mr. O's house, were being driven aimlessly about Paris!

"We're getting back to the station!" said Frank blankly. "No mistaking that unearthly row!"

"He's taking us back to the Gare du Nord!" said Harry, "after wasting an hour going up and down and round about!"

"Mad, I should think!" said Johnny Bull. "Unless Sin's told him to take us round to see the city."

"That's rot!"

"Well, it looks like it, but it's jolly queer!"

"I say, you fellows, I'm fearfully hungry!" said Billy Bunter pathetically. "I say, there's a buffet at the Northern station! We can get some grub there."

"Oh, dry up!"

"Didn't you hear me say I was hungry?" yelled Bunter.

"Fathead!" snapped Wharton. "Will you shut up?"

Deeply worried and uneasy by this time, Harry Wharton was not likely to bother about the yawning gulfs inside Bunter. Hurree Singh fully shared his uneasiness; and Johnny Bull and Nugent were beginning to feel that something was wrong somehow. The chauffeur could hardly be supposed to be playing an insensate practical joke on his own. Obviously, he was acting under instructions—Dr. Sin's instructions! He had been told to drive them about for an hour, and then take them back to their starting point. It was inexplicable—unless Dr. Sin was playing some deep, double game.

"Well, we shall see soon!" said Harry at last. "Something's up!"

"Oh, it's all right!" said Johnny Bull—Johnny was always very slow to change an opinion. "I tell you it will turn out all right."

Billy Bunter blinked at him.

"Think so?" he asked.

"Yes, I do."

"Well, I hope so," said Bunter. "I remember feeding at the Gare du Nord once, and it was all right! You have to be careful, of course—refreshments at French railway stations are pretty beastly, as a rule. Still, I dare say it will be all right once we get there."

Johnny stared at him for a moment and then grinned. He had not been thinking of food! Bunter was!

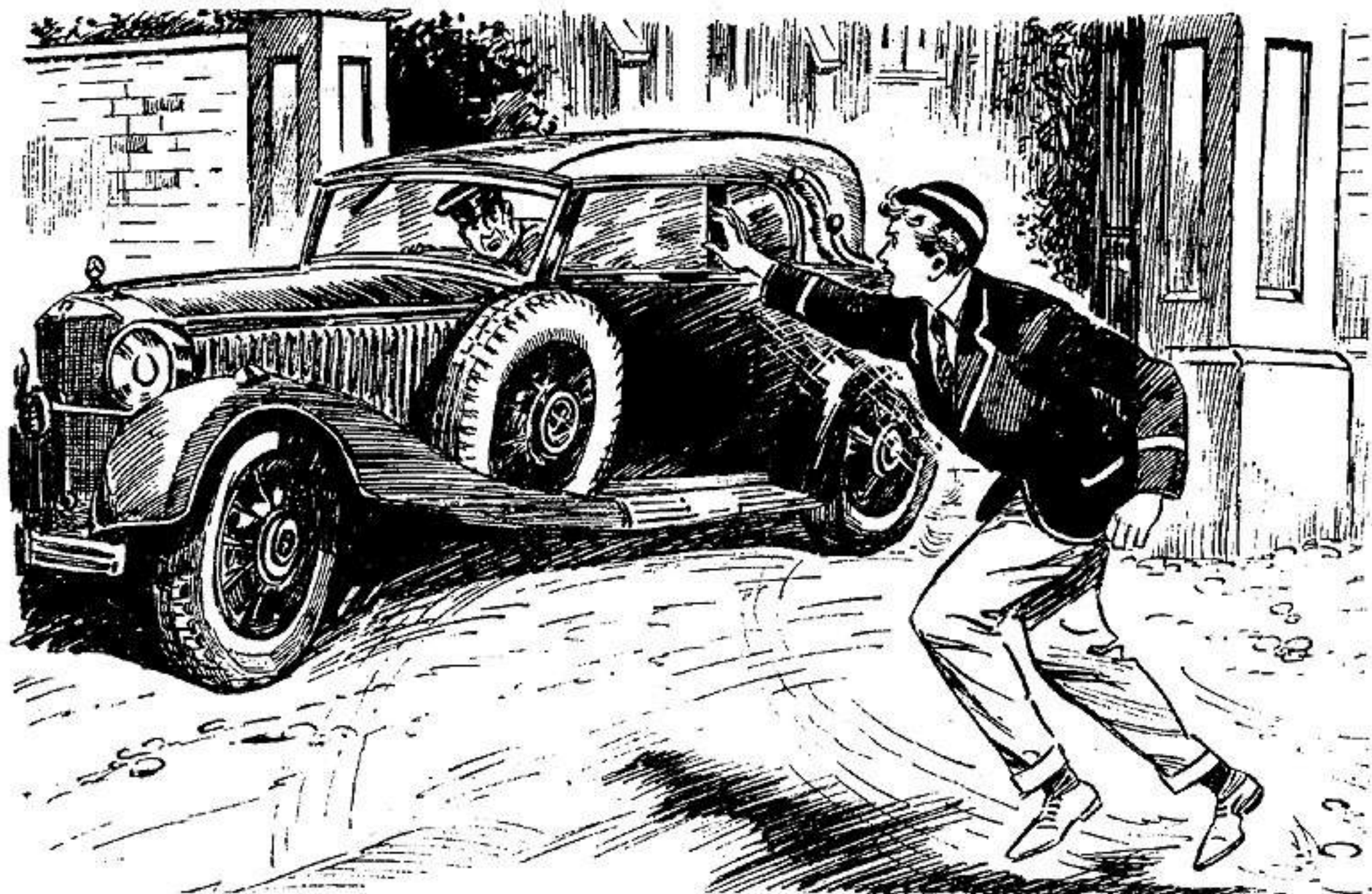
The Daimler came to a halt. The chauffeur stepped down from his seat and opened the door. There was a faint grin on his face.

The juniors got out of the car. A couple of "facteurs," having received a sign from the chauffeur, ran up and began to lift down the baggage. Harry Wharton compressed his lips, fixing his eyes on the French chauffeur. It was clear now that the man had no orders to take them to the house of Mr. O.

To his surprise, the man took a packet from under his coat, and handed it over.

"Pour vous, monsieur!" he said, civilly enough, but with a faint note of amused mockery.

In astonishment, Wharton took the packet and opened it. It contained the juniors' passports, which had hitherto been in the keeping of Dr. Sin. With them was a letter in a flowing hand, written in English, but couched in the full-flowing phraseology of Dr. Sin Song.



As the car sped through the gateway, Bob Cherry made a bound for the running-board. Where Wun Lung was being taken he had no idea, but he was determined that the Chinese junior should not go alone!

The juniors read it together. And it was with deep feelings that they read:

"Humblest respectful greetings from your poor servant Sin.

"With sorrowful lamentation I regret to say that the light of your beneficent countenance must be withdrawn from the eyes of this poor worm.

"Owing to change of circumstances beyond control, proposed holiday excursion necessitates complete abandonment and wash-out.

"I beg you, kneeling at your gifted and magnificent feet, to excuse this humble toad. The wish of my respectful heart is that you may have prosperous and happy journey returning to your own glorious country, unequalled in its share of the blessings of Heaven.

"Your star-like eyes will behold your friend Cherry waiting at Gare du Nord.

"The inestimably precious son of Wun Chung Lung is now in presence of venerable and jade-like O Bo, already leaving Paris on extended journey.

"I touch the dust with my humble forehead at your distinguished feet.

"This is the heart-felt and sorrowful farewell of Sin Song."

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Stranded in Paris!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. stood dumb.

They stared at that letter.

As they stood, in an utterly amazed and dumbfounded group, the French chauffeur jumped back into the driving-seat and drove away in the Daimler.

They paid him no heed. The man was of no use to them. Sin Song had instructed him to play them this trick; he had played it, and he was done with them—and they with him.

Bunter was the first to speak.

To the other fellows all was clear now, but the fat Owl of the Remove was slow to grasp how matters stood.

"I say, you fellows, what does that silly Chink mean by all that silly gabble?" asked Bunter peevishly. "I'm hungry—"

"Shut up a minute, Bunter, for goodness' sake!" muttered Wharton.

"That car's going—"

"I know that, ass!"

"Well, isn't the man going to take us to Wun's uncle?" demanded Bunter. "Are you going to take a taxi, after all, or what? I can tell you I'm jolly well not waiting much longer for some grub."

"Kick him!"

"Beast!"

"This tears it, you fellows!" said Harry Wharton quietly. "There's no doubt left now. That rotten Chink has been pulling our leg all along the line."

Frank Nugent nodded. Johnny Bull gave a grunt.

"Bob was right!" went on Harry. "All the way from Wharton Lodge he's been trying to get shut of us and get Wun away by himself. He had to let us come with Wun because Wun refused to travel without his friends after what happened at Greyfriars. But he's been on the watch all the time to get rid of us—and now he's got by with it."

"Looks like it now!" said Frank slowly.

"And, having got hold of Wun, he simply leaves us stranded," said Harry. "It would have happened at Wharton Lodge if Bob hadn't crooked his car—it would have happened at Boulogne if Bob hadn't stuck to Wun Lung like glue—it would have happened somewhere along the railway if Bob hadn't kept on the watch—and now it's happened here in Paris."

"By gum!" said Johnny Bull. "But Bob was with the kid—"

"He says here that Bob's waiting for us at the Gare du Nord. He must have tricked him somehow and got off without him."

"By gum!" said Johnny again.

"Bob's here somewhere," said Harry. "If he's waiting here for us he will spot us standing here I suppose. But Wun—"

"That villain's got him!" said Nugent slowly.

"That's plain enough now," Wharton drew a deep breath. "We can hardly doubt any longer that Sin was the kidnapper that Bunter saw that night in the Remove dormitory at Greyfriars."

"I told you so a hundred times over!" yapped Bunter.

"You fat idiot!"

"Beast! If you'd believed me—"

"It's all Bunter's fault!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Mine!" howled Bunter. "How do you make that out, I'd like to know! I warned you from the first about that rotter Sin! I told you he was the man I saw in the dorm, kidnapping Wun Lung, that night—"

"Yes, and if you hadn't been a gabbling, babbling, untruthful, blithering idiot we might have believed you!" snorted Johnny Bull.

"Why, you beast—"

"We might!" said Harry. "But it's not much use thinking of that now. What we're going to do is the question! We know Sin Song now in his true colours—but I don't catch on yet. He says that the holiday is washed out—but that depends on Mr. O, not on Sin Song! Not that we shall think about a holiday if poor old Wun is gone for good—"

"I suppose that's what he means!" said Nugent. "But—"

"I say, you fellows, we shall have to talk this over," said Billy Bunter, blinking at the troubled juniors through

his big spectacles. "Well, I've got a suggestion to make."

"Well, what is it?" asked Harry impatiently. He did not expect much in the way of useful wisdom from the fat Owl.

"My suggestion is this—let's go into the buffet to talk it over!" said Bunter. "Then we can have some grub at the same time."

"What?" howled Wharton.

"I'm jolly hungry—"

"I'm going to kick him!" gasped Johnny Bull. "I'm going to boot him all over Paris. I'm going to kick him up the Eiffel Tower and down again—"

Billy Bunter jumped away.

"Look here, you beast, wharrer you getting shirty about?" he exclaimed. "I told you before that I was hungry—more than once! You know I did."

"Will you be quiet, you fat chump?" hooted Wharton.

"No, I jolly well won't, if you think you're going to starve me!" exclaimed Bunter indignantly. "Look here, if you want to stand here and jaw I'll go into the buffet and begin—see?"

"Go, for goodness' sake!"

"That's all very well, but somebody will have to lend me a thousand francs or so. I came away in rather a hurry with you fellows, and quite forgot to bring any money—"

Harry Wharton extracted a fifty-franc note from his notecase, shoved it into a fat paw, and gave the fat Owl a push.

"Now cut!" he snapped.

"Jolly glad to!" retorted Bunter. "But, I say, this is only fifty francs! That's only about seven or eight shillings! Look here, Wharton, if you're going to be mean—"

"Get out!" howled Johnny Bull.

"If you think you're going to be stingy like this, after all I've done for you, I can jolly well say—Beast! Wow! Ow! Leave off kicking me, you rotters! I'm going, ain't I?"

And Bunter went.

"We'd better find Bob first," said Harry, when the fat Owl, snorting with indignation, had rolled away. "Sin says here that Wun Lung's with his uncle. But that can't be true—he's got him somewhere! He says that he's leaving Paris already—and I'm afraid that much may be true. But Bob may have seen something of what happened to him—we left him with Wun, anyhow. The first thing is to find Bob."

That, clearly, was the first thing to be done. According to Dr. Sin's letter Bob Cherry was waiting at the station for them—as, undoubtedly, he would have been, had Dr. Sin's plans gone exactly as planned.

Sin Song, when he had written that letter, certainly had not foreseen, or counted on, Bob's prompt pursuit of the Mercedes in a taxi. Neither, of course, did the Co. know anything about it, and they fully expected to find Bob at the Gare du Nord—though they had a faint hope he might know something of Wun's whereabouts.

But they did not find Bob at the Gare du Nord.

Nothing doubting that he was there, they went up and down and round about the station, looking for him and inquiring of dozens of railway porters and attendants.

But they saw nothing of Bob—neither could they learn anything of a young English monsieur having been seen waiting about. Bob evidently was not there; and they had to give him up, in a state of dismay and exasperation. Where Bob Cherry was was as great a mystery as where Wun Lung was. But

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wherever he was, he was not, as Dr. Sin had believed he would be, waiting at the Gare du Nord.

"There's one hope," said Harry. "Sin must have planned to leave Bob stranded here, from what he says in his letter. Bob may have gone after Wun when he was taken away—in fact, it looks as if he must have, or he'd be here. We mayn't have lost track of poor old Wun, after all."

"It's a chance, I suppose!" said Nugent.

"There's only one thing we can do," said Harry. "We've got to get into touch at the earliest possible moment with Mr. O. He's Wun's uncle, and expecting him—and we know he's fond of the kid. We don't know his exact address, but we know the quarter he lives in, and a Paris cabby can find out anybody anywhere in Paris. We'll shove the baggage into the consigne, and take a taxi, and hunt up Wun's uncle."

And that, which seemed to all the juniors the best, indeed the only step to be taken, was decided upon. Uneasy as they were about Bob, and anxious to see him again, it was clear that first of all they had to let Wun's uncle know of his disappearance, so that he could be searched for without delay. If Dr. Sin supposed that the stranded school-boys were going to take the train home, and leave Wun to his unknown fate, Dr. Sin, keen as he was, was making a mistake.

Having decided on their course of action, the chums of the Remove lost no further time, and they went to root Bunter out of the buffet.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bob Edits In!

CLANG!

Bob Cherry started.

He had seated himself on one of the seats in the avenue, under the shady branches of a tree, at a little distance from the great gates of the mansion. Dusk was thickening over Paris; lights were gleaming from the cars that ran innumerable up and down the broad avenue.

Bob was trying to think it out.

For a quarter of an hour since his cabby had left him there, he had been trying to think what to do.

During that time, there had been no sign of life from the great mansion, shut in by the courtyard walls. The garage gate remained shut; the huge bronze gates farther on were shut. The house itself stood back, behind a wide court. And he could see no windows. Great stone walls of square-cut blocks were all that he could see, with tree-tops beyond. Like many wealthy residences in foreign cities, the place had rather the aspect of a fortress. Wun Lung was there—somewhere in the great mansion hidden behind those stone walls. Mr. O, too, was doubtless there—it was his residence in Paris. If Wun Lung were in his uncle's house, what cause for alarm?

To walk up to the bronze gates, to ring, and demand admittance, was easy. Mr. O was expecting Wun and his friends—and Bob was a member of the party. But he hesitated to take that step.

The fact was, that he did not know what to think, and what to do! After all Dr. Sin's wily tricks to separate Wun from his English friends, he had landed him, finally, and utterly unexpectedly, so far as Bob was concerned, in his uncle's house.

Was it imaginable that, having kid-

napped Wun, he was keeping him a prisoner in the house occupied by Mr. O—unknown, of course, to the ancient Chinaman?

It was, of course, possible! But it was so utterly improbable that Bob's mind fairly staggered at the idea.

But if Wun was not a prisoner, what did it all mean? Why one wily trick after another, leading to nothing?

And where were his friends? They had started first from the Gare du Nord. True, Bob had covered the ground at excessive speed, in his pursuit of the Mercedes. Still, it was twenty minutes since he had arrived—and that allowed ample time for the rest of the party to come along.

They had not come along! Dr. Sin did not intend them to come along. He no more intended them to rejoin Wun, than he had intended Bob to accompany the Chinese boy. Bob was sure of it. He did not expect to see his friends coming up the avenue—and he did not see them!

Where they were, he had no idea—except that he did not doubt that Dr. Sin had instructed their driver to keep them away from the house of Mr. O.

What was he going to do?

Demand admittance to the house, demand admittance to Mr. O, tell him of his secretary's trickery! That, it seemed to Bob, was the only thing that he could do. Now that he knew that it was O Bo's house into which Wun had been taken, what else could he do? Yet he hesitated in painful doubt and indecision; and it was the clang of the great bronze gates, farther along the avenue, that interrupted his troubled reflections.

The bronze gates had swung open.

Bob jumped up from the seat under the roadside tree, and ran quickly along. This was his first opportunity of getting a glimpse of the interior. Standing by a vast stone pillar beside the gateway, he looked into the court.

It was a great open court, with fountains, grass-plots, and statues. Back of it rose the great facade of the mansion, with a vast doorway approached by several shallow wide steps. A circular drive ran from the gateway. A car had halted at the steps of the house. Obviously, someone was going out, and the bronze gates had been opened in readiness.

At the wheel of the car sat a chauffeur—Bob recognised him as the man who had driven the Mercedes. He recognised the car the next moment as the Mercedes itself. Now it had the interior blinds closed, as if to shut off the intended passengers from the view of the public. Bob noted that at once.

His mind was almost in a whirl as he watched.

He had never, of course, seen Mr. O. All he knew of him was that he was very rich and very old. Was it possible that the secretary—cunning enough for any artful trickery—had the household under his yellow thumb, taking unscrupulous advantage of his employer's age, perhaps senility? For two of the household, at least, were clearly at Dr. Sin's orders—the driver of the Mercedes, and the man who drove the Daimler. They were employed by Mr. O, but they had taken part in Sin's trickery.

Had he other confederates in the household, and were they now going to get Wun away, with the ancient Chinaman in ignorance of the whole affair? Dr. Sin did not appear to have followed Bob, but it was very likely that he had got on to the nearest telephone to warn his confederates that the English boy had followed Wun Lung home.

Bob watched—still perplexed and

(Continued on page 22.)

YOUR PRESENCE IS REQUESTED BY—

The GREYFRIARS GUIDE

A TOUR OF GREYFRIARS. (The Old School Wall.)

(1)

Under the spreading chestnut-tree
The sinful Smithy stands,
And climbs its branches rapidly
With agile feet and hands;
Then drops beyond the Cloisters wall
Outside the Greyfriars grounds,
He's off to pay a stealthy call
At some place out of bounds.



AFTER SCHOOL HOURS Football

(1)

Hip-pip-hooray! We'll have some fun,
The footer season has begun,
Get out your clobber, everyone,
Let's play a game together!
The football ground's a splendid sight,
The goals are standing trim and white,
The ref is shivering with fright,
Away—let's chase the leather!

(2)

Here Coker comes—and there he goes!
He's landed on his tender nose,
The welkin's ringing with his woes,
Spectators shout with laughter!
He scrambles up again, wild-eyed,
And kicks a goal—against his side—
Then flees to save his precious hide
With Blundell following after!

(3)

Now comes the time of friendly feuds
With Rookwood Highcliffe, and St.
Jude's,
And Wharton's men, which he includes
To serve in the eleven,
Are criticised by those outside
Who never will be satisfied
Till all the Form are in the side—
Our football thirty-seven!

(4)

In goal, there's Squiff or Hazeldene,
At back, John Bull and Brown are keen,
Two clumsier fools were never seen—
(That last remark was Skinner's!).
Todd, Linley, Cherry, Ogilvy,
With Wharton, Inky, Smithy, me—
A splendid team, you'll all agree,
Let's hope we turn out winners.

(2)

One day they'll put here, I suppose,
A notice-board which states:
"The Cloisters Wall—WAY OUT for
Those
Who Dare Not Use the Gates!"
For this old monastery wall
Provides a handy way
Of getting out unseen by all
For bad lads "going gay"!

(3)

At times that rotter Loder prowls
About this secret route,
He isn't looking at the owls
Which gather here to hoof,
He's waiting for a bold bad blade
To climb the Cloisters wall,
And then the next act will be played
In public in Big Hall!

THE GREYFRIARS ALPHABET

ARTHUR CARNE

(The Unpopular Prefect of the Sixth.)

C is for CARNE—a bullying cad!
Although a prefect, he's so bad
That if the Doctor knew his stunts,
He'd hoof the blighter out at once!
No decent prefect ever bets,
Or smokes forbidden cigarettes.
Or wrecks his temper on the fags
By lashing them across the bags,



Or reads a sporting magazine
Which he takes care is never seen.
So black a sheep is Carne, you know,
Beside him soot's as white as snow!
Yet all the time he thinks he's quite
A football star at outside-right.
But Wingate's views don't coincide
And Carne is left—and right outside!

ANSWER TO PUZZLE

Fitzgerald and Wiggins, 32 points.
Prout, Snoop, and Stott, 0 points.



A WEEKLY BUDGET OF FACT AND FUN

By
THE GREYFRIARS
RHYMESTER

GREYFRIARS GRINS

Coker says he would show us Football
—with a capital F—if Wingate would
put him in the first eleven—with a
capital IF!

Gosling complains that he is getting
the "rheumatics crool 'ard" in his
back. So, at the next public flogging,
when the Head says: "Gosling, take
him up!" we shall have two lots of
groans instead of one!

Bolsover has a black eye—and a hasty
temper. He was talking in his sleep the
other night, and happened to contradict
himself. Wallop!

Why is Mr. Hacker the opposite of a
fire? Because when you put him out he
flares up!

What's the difference between Fisher
T. Fish and a cricket scorer? One buys
books and the other books byes.

How many hairs are there in Bob
Cherry's head? None. They're all on
the outside.

PUZZLE PAR

If A equals 1, B equals 2, and
so on up to I equals 9, which
Greyfriars SURNAME adds up
to the most points? You ignore
the letters for which there are
no numbers. Thus SINGH equals
24 points—I (9), G (7), and H (8).
How many names have no points
at all?

Answer at foot of column 2

Prout was heard to say recently that
Coker is driving him grey-haired!
That's a bit of luck for Prout, since he's
as bald as an egg!

"To" in Latin is "ad." And if you
"ad" them together—"toad"—you get
Harold Skinner. See that one, boys?

RESERVE NEXT SATURDAY FOR ANOTHER TOUR, BOYS

undecided in his mind, but resolute on one point; if Wun was being taken away in that car, he was going to stop him.

"Wun!" breathed Bob, suddenly and amazedly.

From the great doorway a figure appeared. It was Wun Lung, of the Greyfriars Remove; evidently no prisoner! He came out of the doorway on the steps.

There was a slight cloud on his cheery little yellow face, otherwise, he looked precisely as when Bob had seen him last.

He did not come out alone.

Following him, more slowly, came an ancient gentleman, whose calm old face looked as if it were carved in yellow ivory.

He was dressed in the Chinese fashion, with many flowing garments, and on his ancient head was a small black skull cap.

Half a dozen Chinese servants were bowing him out to the car. Mr. O had, apparently, brought some of his native household to Europe with him.

Bob stood transfixed.

He guessed, at once, that the ancient gentleman was Mr. O. Wun's manner of affectionate respect towards him would have told as much, even if it had not been clear at a glance.

But if Bob had been mystified before, he was doubly and trebly mystified now.

So far from Wun being a kidnapped prisoner in the great house, unknown to his uncle, he was not a prisoner at all, and he was in his uncle's company. He was going in the car with Mr. O.

At all events, he was obviously a free agent.

Bob, staring across the great court at the Chinese boy and his uncle, gave up trying to understand it. It was too much for him.

Dumb, he watched the old gentleman assisted into the car by the Chinese servants; and saw Wun Lung step in after him.

Once inside, the curtained windows hid both from sight.

The car got into motion, gliding round the drive, and approached the gateway where Bob stood by the pillar. It was moving slowly till it reached the gateway. Bob watched it coming blankly.

Wun was going! He was no prisoner—he was not kidnapped—he was going with his uncle. But what, in the name of all that was incomprehensible, did it mean?

Bob was going to know, at all events.

If this inexplicable state of affairs were, somehow, brought about by the cunning of the man who had tried to kidnap Wun in the dormitory at Greyfriars a week ago, a word to the Chinese boy would be enough.

The car glided out through the great gateway. Out in the avenue it would have gathered speed. But it came slowly through the gateway; and, as it came, Bob Cherry stepped forward, caught the door, and swung it open.

"Wun!" he exclaimed.

The chauffeur, with a start, stared at him. Heedless of the man, Bob leaped into the slow-moving car.

"Wun!" he repeated breathlessly.

There was a sharp exclamation from the old Chinese gentleman as his deep-set, wrinkled, slanting eyes glittered in sudden surprise at the schoolboy who had leaped into the car from apparently nowhere.

His words, in Chinese, were meaningless to Bob, but the tone expressed angry astonishment.

But Wun Lung's clouded face brightened up in surprise and delight.

and he grinned at the Greyfriars junior gleefully.

"Ole Bob Chelly!" he exclaimed. "Nicey ole Bob Chelly! Plenty glad see ole Bob Chelly! You comey 'long this Chinese! Me goey 'long uncle blong me, look findce!"

In his gleeful satisfaction, Wun grabbed Bob and dragged him into the car. But Bob's eyes, as if fascinated, were on the ancient ivory face of the old Chinese, whom he had guessed, and now knew, to be Wun's uncle, Mr. O Bo.

That face, when Bob had first glanced at it, had been calm, as calm and almost expressionless as a face carved in old yellow ivory. Now its calmness was broken up in a spasm of rage.

Wun, his eyes on Bob, did not see his uncle for the moment. Bob, looking past Wun, saw him, and caught his breath at what he saw.

Never in his life had he seen so enraged a face, passionate fury gleaming from the old wrinkled eyes, the snarling lips, the gritting teeth.

It was only for a moment, for the old man's self-control was instantly reasserted. The rage of a demon flashed into his face, but in a flash it was gone, and the face was a calm mask of yellow ivory again.

But in that startling moment Bob Cherry knew the truth—understood all that perplexed him in the actions of Dr. Sin; realised, as by the illumination of a lightning-flash, how the matter really stood, and knew that the man who had planned the kidnapping of Wun Lung was Wun Lung's uncle, O Bo!

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Unexpected!

"I SAY, you fellows—"

"Get a move on!"

"Do listen to a chap!" said Billy Bunter irritably. "What's the good of stuffing a few sandwiches and a cup of coffee? Sit down and have something solid."

"Come on, ass!"

Billy Bunter was disinclined to come on.

By the time Harry Wharton & Co. came to root him out of the buffet, the fat junior had packed away refreshments, liquid and solid, to the exact value of fifty francs—without even ten centimes left over for the waiter.

He was, therefore, glad to see the fellows again.

Earlier, they would have interrupted his important occupation of parking the foodstuffs. Now they were welcome as the flowers in May. Bunter had only taken the keen edge off his appetite so far. He was ready to go on, the one thing needful being a further supply of francs.

The four juniors, tired and hungry enough by this time, snatched a hasty sandwich and a cup of coffee each—which, to Bunter, seemed absolute idiocy when there was plenty of grub to be had.

"I say, you fellows, do have a little sense!" he urged. "The grub here isn't good—there isn't any decent grub in France at all, I believe—but some of the stuff isn't bad. The chickens are fair; the omelettes really good. The coffee's a treat! The vegetable omelettes are a bit leathery, but the jam omelettes are really—"

"Are you coming, fathead?"

"You needn't be afraid of the grub," urged Bunter. "I'll go over the menu and order supper for you. I've sampled the stuff, and I know!"

"Leave him here!" suggested Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull! I say, what's the hurry?" demanded Bunter. "You're not thinking of hunting all over Paris for Wun, I suppose? That's simply fat-headed! If you're going to the police, you'll want me to speak French, and I tell you plainly that I'm not coming till I've had something to eat!"

"You frabjous owl—"

"Oh, really, Wharton! Look here, the holiday's washed out!" said Bunter. "That letter from that beast Sin makes that plain enough! I don't believe Wun's uncle wanted us at all, really; only Wun wouldn't come without his friends. Now we're left on our own, my idea is to stay in Paris a week or two and do the exhibition."

"The exhibition?" repeated Harry.

"Yes. I suppose you've heard of the Paris Exhibition!" said Bunter sarcastically. "It's on now, and worth seeing, I believe. As that Chinese has let us down, we'll stay here on our own. As for the expenses, you can leave them to me! I'm prepared to stand treat for the whole party!"

"You burbling bandersnatch—"

"All that's necessary is for you fellows to lend me some money till I get a remittance through from Bunter Court, and—"

"Are you coming or not?"

"Not till I've had some supper!" said Bunter firmly. "Where are you going, anyhow? If you're going to look for Bob Cherry, you can hike off and do it, and leave me here to finish supper. Lend me a hundred francs!"

"We can't find Bob!" said Harry. "I think he must have got after Wun. We're going to take a taxi and hunt out Mr. O's house, and tell him what has happened."

"Oh!" said Bunter. "Well, that's all right. But it may take a jolly long time, and it's only sense to park some supper first. If you're afraid of spending your money, you can leave the bill to me. Nothing stingy about me, I hope. Lend me—"

"Oh, come on!" said Johnny Bull. "Leave him here."

He started for the door, and his comrades started after him. Billy Bunter jumped up in a hurry.

"I say, you fellows, what's the good of leaving me here without any money? They won't give me tick here. I say—"

As the juniors did not answer or stop, Billy Bunter rolled after them. The buffet had great attractions for Bunter, but without cash it was obviously useless to remain.

Breathless with indignation, Bunter rolled out after the other fellows. They were, it appeared, more worried about Wun Lung than about Bunter—which was exactly what he might have expected of such beasts.

The four juniors walked out of the station, with Bunter grunting in their wake. As they emerged a facteur came up to them, scanning them and touching his cap.

"Suivez moi, messieurs!" he said.

The juniors looked at him. The man, it seemed, was in search of the party—easy enough to identify if they were looked for, as one of them was a Hindu, and another William George Bunter, always easy to recognise by his circumference. But why the porter was looking for them, they could not guess.

"Comment?" asked Harry.

"L'ami attend, monsieur!" said the facteur. "Venez avec moi, s'il vous plaît."

"What the dickens—" said Johnny Bull.

Wharton's face brightened.

"He says a friend is waiting for us,"



Suddenly Harry Wharton held up his hand for silence. His schoolfellows held their breath. From outside, in the dark corridor, came the sound of soft footsteps. They passed the door and stopped at the next—Bob Cherry's room!

he said. "It must be Bob; he must be about somewhere, and he's tipped a porter to find us."

"Oh, that's it!" said Nugent. "Come on!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Par ici!" said the facteur; and he led the way, the juniors following him. "Je vous cherche, monsieur! On dit cinq garçons, comme vous—c'est ça!"

"Somebody's described us to him," said Nugent. "It must be Bob, though I'm blessed if I know how he knows we came back here!"

"If he's looking for us, he would begin here," said Harry. "I suppose he knows that we never got to Mr. O's house, so we should have come back here to look for him, even if the driver hadn't played us that trick."

"Yes, that's so. But where—"

"Voilà!" said the facteur, indicating a car drawn up by the pavement.

Two schoolboys were standing by the car—one of them Bob Cherry, which was not surprising; the other Wun Lung, which was astounding.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" called out Bob, as his astonished friends came running up. "So you were here, after all?"

"Yes!" gasped Harry. "But—but what—Is that really you, Wun? We—we—we thought—"

"Lil' me!" grinned Wun Lung. "Allee light! What you tinkee?"

"We—we thought—"

"The thinkfulness was terrific!"

"You—you—you haven't been kidnapped, after all?" stuttered Johnny Bull.

"Tinkee no!" grinned Wun Lung.

The juniors stared at Wun and stared at Bob. Wun was grinning with glee, evidently glad to see his friends again. But Bob's face was dark with troubled thought, and it was easy to see that something was on his mind.

Bob was not much of an adept at

hiding thoughts and feelings. He looked like a fellow who had had a startling shock, which had left him in a state of bewildered uncertainty.

"I thought you might have come back here," he explained. "Anyhow, we had to find you, and this was the place to begin. So I tipped that porter to comb the Gare du Nord for you—"

"We've been combing it for you," grinned Nugent.

"You fellee hoppee in car," said Wun Lung cheerfully. "Allee light, now findee. Uncle blong me comey 'long this li'll Chinee, 'long findee Bob; but when Bob Chelly turnee up, Bob Chelly comey, and uncle stop 'long house. You hoppee in car, comey 'long house blong Uncle O."

Utterly amazed as they were by this strange and unexpected turn of events, the Co. were greatly relieved. Bob Cherry stood irresolute on the pavement as the other fellows stepped into the car.

"You—you're going to Mr. O's house!" he stammered.

"Eh, of course!" said Harry. "What do you mean?"

"Oh, nothing!" stammered Bob. Wun's slanting eyes turned on Bob in wonder.

"You likee comey, Bob Chelly?" he exclaimed.

Bob flushed.

"Oh, yes, rather, old chap!" he said. "I'm sticking to you till we get back to Greyfriars."

He stepped into the car.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bob Cherry's Secret!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. exchanged glances as the car rolled away through the lighted streets of Paris.

They were in a state of considerable

mystification. That something was the matter with Bob Cherry all eyes could see, though apparently he had no intention of explaining what it was. It was an immense relief to see Wun Lung again, safe and sound, and they would have wondered whether, after all, they had misjudged the sleek and smiling Dr. Sin, but for the letter in Wharton's pocket. That letter was proof that Sin Song had planned to get Wun away from his Greyfriars friends, including Bob Cherry, with what object they could not doubt. But what else had happened was a puzzle to them.

Wun, it seemed, had no knowledge, so far, of Dr. Sin's treachery, and he had to know, now that it was certain. It was an extremely uncomfortable task to tell him, however. But for his own safety, he had to know.

Bob sat, plunged in moody thought, without speaking.

His friends looked at him, but he did not meet their eyes.

"Look here, Bob!" said Harry, at last. "Put us wise, old chap! We can't make head or tail of this."

"Oh!" said Bob. "It—it was like this. I was going in the car with Sin and Wun, but it shot off with only Wun in it."

"Fellee chauffeur no savvy," explained Wun Lung. "Velly great fool, he tinkee Bob Chelly goey 'long other fellee. Me speakee 'long him; but he no savvy French blong me." Wun grinned. He was aware that his French was even more exotic than his English. "He takee me 'long house blong Uncle O."

"He took you to your uncle's house," ejaculated Harry. "But you, Bob—what did you do then?"

"Oh, I cut after him in a taxi,"

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leaving Dr. Sin with his bags!" said Bob. "I haven't seen him since."

"Oh, I see! You followed Wun home?"

"Yes," said Bob.

"Is that all?" asked Nugent.

"Well, yes—no—yes, that's all," said Bob vaguely.

"Then you've seen your uncle, Wun?"

"See Uncle O—what you tinkee?" said Wun Lung. "Velly nicey ole uncle, O Bo? Me tellee him friends blong me left 'long Gare du Nord. Me no savvy Bob Chelly follow 'long taxi. Uncle O say we go lindee that fellee too quick. Nicey ole man, O Bo. We goey 'long car, and ole Bob Chelly jump in 'long we goey out of gate-way."

And Wun chuckled.

"Uncle O velly muchee surprise," he went on. "Bob Chelly jumpee 'long car all samee kangaroo."

And Wun chuckled again.

Bob Cherry looked at the cheerful little Chinese without speaking. He knew—knew in his very bones—that Dr. Sin had been carrying out the orders of O Bo. He knew that Mr. O, so far from intending to drive to the Gare du Nord, to look for Bob there, had been taking the little Chinese away; that but for that sudden leap into the car at the gate, Wun Lung would have vanished from all knowledge—kidnapped by his Chinese uncle.

He knew it; but he could not say it. Wun Lung would not have believed it, if he had said it; but, anyhow, he could not say it.

Even to Bob himself it seemed incredible, certain as it was to him.

He sat miserably silent.

What a fellow could do, in these strange and inexplicable circumstances, he did not know.

It was only too clear to him now why O Bo had asked his nephew to pay him that visit in Paris during the holidays.

He had wanted the little Chinese to come by himself; but Wun's determination not to travel without his

friends had forced him to give up the idea, or to ask the whole party.

He had done the latter, and given instructions to Dr. Sin to shake them off somehow on the journey.

At the finish Dr. Sin had succeeded, and, but for Bob's prompt pursuit in the taxi, and his leap into the car as it was leaving Mr. O's house, the whole thing would have gone like clockwork.

Under the pretence of driving to the Gare du Nord to pick up Bob, he was taking Wun away in the car, losing no time in getting him clear before his friends could institute a search for him.

Wun certainly would have tumbled to the facts before very long, but he would have found out the truth too late.

Now he had still not the faintest suspicion of it.

Bob Cherry's sudden appearance on the scene had caused Mr. O not to give up the kidnapping scheme—Bob was certain of that—but to postpone it till a more favourable opportunity.

Such an opportunity was certain to occur with the Chinese boy in his house, quite unsuspecting what was intended.

In the circumstances, it was utterly distasteful to Bob to enter Mr. O's house as a guest. But he could not leave Wun to his fate.

It was no wonder that he sat silent and moody as the car glided through the glimmering streets of the French capital.

Wun Lung, little dreaming what was in his friend's mind, rattled on cheerfully:

"Me tinkee you fellee come 'long house, but you no comey, and Bob Chelly tinkee you no comey, so we comey along Gare du Nord, look-see! Me no savvy why you no comey 'long house blong Uncle O."

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged looks again. The captain of the Remove coughed uncomfortably, and plunged in.

"You'd better know, Wun, old chap. That man Sin's not to be trusted."

Wun's slanting eyes opened wide.

"You remember that night at Greyfriars that Bunter fancied that the kidnapper was that man Sin," went on Harry.

"Buntsee velly big fool."

"Look here, you cheeky heathen, I—"

"Bunter's a fool; but he was right, Wun Lung," said Harry quietly. "Bob knew it, or suspected it, all the time. Sin's been trying to get you away from us ever since we left Wharton Lodge. He fixed it with your driver to leave Bob behind at the Gare du Nord, and with our driver to make fools of us, taking us all over the city, and then back to the station."

Wun Lung nodded.

For a moment Wharton supposed that that meant assent. But he remembered that a Chinese nod was a sign in the negative. Wun Lung nodded very emphatically.

"No tinkee," he said.

"I'm awfully sorry to have to tell you, kid, but you've got to know before he begins his tricks again," said Harry.

"No tinkee. Sin Song velly nicey man—me savvy that fellee long China. 'long me velly smal'. Sin Song all light."

"Look at this! He sent it to us, with our passports, by the chauffeur," said Harry, taking Dr. Sin's letter from his pocket.

Wun Lung stared blankly at the letter.

His little yellow face seemed almost dazed with astonishment.

"Oh clikey!" he ejaculated.

"That's plain enough, kid," said Harry. "He never knew when he wrote that and gave it to the man to give us later, that Bob would be so jolly quick in getting on your track, of course."

Wun Lung looked bewildered.

"But me no savvy," he stammered. "Spousee Sin Song wantee kidnappee, why he sendee me 'long house blong Uncle O."

Bob Cherry compressed his lips. He knew the answer to that one, if the other fellows did not.

Again he seemed to see that spasm of fury in the old ivory face of Mr. O—instantly suppressed, but unmistakable.

"Well, that's queer, I know," said Harry. "I can only suppose that he had some scheme for bagging you in your uncle's house, if your friends were not with you. Or he might have persuaded Mr. O to leave Paris with some lying tale—that letter sounds like it. Anyhow, he got you away from us, and certainly never intended us to see you again. That letter's proof of it."

Wun Lung shook his head. This time it was a sign of assent.

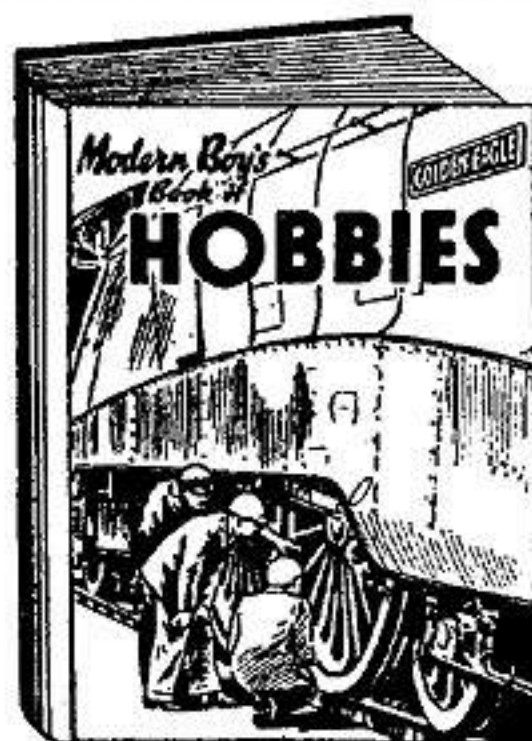
His slanting eyes glinted at the letter. That Mr. O had instructed his secretary to get rid of the Greyfriars party did not and could not occur to him. He could only conclude that Dr. Sin had got rid of them on his own. Anyhow, it was perfectly clear that Dr. Sin had done it. There was his farewell letter in proof.

"Me no savvy!" said Wun at last. "Me no tinkee Sin Song velly bad man—so me no savvy! But me savvy he wantee makee me lose friend blong me! Soon Uncle O see this lettee, and he put foot 'long flousers blong Sin Song."

"I'm sorry, kid," said Harry. "But if you're going to be safe in your uncle's house, that man Sin will have to be kicked out."

"Kickee velly hard!" said Wun.

But his little yellow face was



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thoughtful and troubled, like Bob's, as the car rolled up the avenue and stopped at the house of Mr. O.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

The House of Peril!

O BO rose to his feet. There was a swish and rustle of costly silks as he moved.

How many coats, undercoats, and petticoats the old Chinese gentleman wore it would not have been easy to compute; but they were very many, and most of them resembled Joseph's celebrated coat in its many colours.

At a glance it could be seen that Mr. O was an old-fashioned Chinese; nothing of the "modern" or "reformed" Chinaman about him.

His only concession to the West was that he had learned to speak English—or, rather, an English version of Chinese magniloquence.

Chinese servants, in their native garb, attended him.

There were French servants in the great house on the avenue—indeed, they seemed innumerable, and had no doubt been let with the house by the Marquis de Montanges. But the old gentleman's personal attendants were from his own country.

Wun Lung conducted his friends into the ancient one's presence, and they looked at him with great interest.

Only Bob had seen him so far, for a few minutes when he had jumped into the car at the gate. The other fellows were very curious to see him.

Now they saw him.

He rose from the chair in which he was seated and kow towed to his nephew's friends in the Chinese way.

Kow towing in return was a matter of some difficulty, as the juniors did not, so to speak, know the game. Likewise, their clothes were against such acrobatics. But they bowed as low as they could, Billy Bunter nearly falling over his fat knees.

Then Wun presented them, one after another, by name.

Mr. O did not shake hands with them, of course; but at each introduction he clasped his left hand with his right and solemnly shook it.

Harry Wharton & Co. were wise to this Chinese custom, and they imitated it, shaking hands with themselves with great gravity, though a little disposed to grin as they did so.

But they did not grin. It was a serious occasion, and no time for grinning. Moreover, it was only the unaccustomedness of the Chinese manner that made it seem a little droll. One way of shaking hands was as good as another; it was only a matter of custom.

"This honour is overwhelming to this poor person!" said Mr. O—without, however, looking overwhelmed. "My poor house is distinguished by the presence of the noble and lord-like friends of my little Pink Toad."

There was a benevolent smile on the old yellow-ivory face. Mr. O's manner was one of the most polished politeness.

Bob Cherry wondered.

He was convinced that all Dr. Sin's proceedings had been by the ancient gentleman's orders. He was certain that Mr. O had been taking Wun away, never to see his English friends again, when Bob had so fortunately butted in at the gate. He had not the slightest doubt that Mr. O had only postponed his intentions.

Yet it was hard to believe, looking at the polished old gentleman, who

looked almost as if he had just stepped off a fan or a Chinese jar.

His motive Bob could not begin to guess.

That he was fond of Wun Lung the most casual eye could have seen, and every ear noted how his voice softened when he spoke the Chinese junior's "milk-name," referring to him as the "Little Pink Toad."

But Bob could not forget that sudden glare of rage and fury in the face that was now so calmly smiling.

Whatever the old Chinaman's mysterious motive was, he was at the bottom of the kidnapping. Bob knew it. His friends did not dream of suspecting anything of the kind, puzzled as they were by the fact that Dr. Sin, after separating Wun from his friends by trickery, had sent him direct to his uncle's house. But Bob knew.

The old Chinese must have had some reason—some mysterious Chinese reason, perhaps, that a European could not expect to be able to guess. Anyhow, there was no doubt in Bob's mind about the fact. With all his polished courtesy to Wun's English friends, the old man, at the back of his mind and the bottom of his heart, wished them anywhere but where they were. So long as they were with Wun, his mysterious plot could not be carried out. It was a very uncomfortable thought for Bob; but the other fellows, taking Mr. O at face value, were very pleased with the old gentleman.

"My poor house," went on the old Chinaman in slow, measured tones, "is yours. This poor hovel and what little it contains is entirely yours. There are a few miserable servants who will serve you, and if you make a long and happy holiday in the company of the Little Pink Toad the cup of this poor person's joy will overflow."

"Thank you, Mr. O," said Harry Wharton. "We're all very glad to have a holiday with Wun Lung, and there's no doubt that we shall have a jolly good time."

Mr. O bowed his ancient head solemnly.

"Being old, though not so old as the honourable friends of my Little Pink Toad," he resumed, "I live much in retirement. Orders are given that all your wishes shall be obeyed, with all the resources of this wretched hovel; and if I do not see you, yet you will remember that my thoughts dwell upon you continually with admiration, esteem, and humble benevolence."

Which did not surprise the juniors.

They did not expect a gentleman of Mr. O's venerable years to ramble over the Paris Exhibition with them, to shoot up and down scenic railways, or to climb the Eiffel Tower.

They were prepared to have a jolly good time with Wun, and if news of it caused the cup of Mr. O's joy to overflow, so much the better.

Mr. O, having thus graciously welcomed his nephew's friends, bestowed another flowing kow tow on them, his silky garments billowing round him.

This, it seemed, terminated the audience.

Wun Lung led his flock out of the apartment, leaving the ancient one settling down in his chair again amid his many brocaded silks.

"You likee?" asked Wun Lung, beaming, when the door was closed.

"Yes, rather!" said Harry, with a smile. "Topping old sportsman, Wun."

"The topfulness is terrific," declared Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh.

"A fine old Chinese gentleman, all of the olden time," said Nugent, smiling.

"Velly nicey ole man," said Wun.

"Likee this li'll Chinese velly muchee. Likee fleind blong me."

"I say, you fellows, what about supper?" asked Billy Bunter. "I had a bit of a snack at the station, but I can tell you I'm jolly hungry."

Wun Lung grinned.

"Comey 'long feedee, fat ole Bunter," he said.

Supper, fortunately, was all that Billy Bunter could desire. If he had had any doubts on that important subject, they were now set at rest.

But after supper, when the juniors went to their rooms, Bob Cherry had a deep wrinkle in his brow.

A magnificent suite of rooms had been assigned to the Greyfriars party. Silent-footed servants waited their orders. Billy Bunter remarked that it reminded him of Bunter Court, at which the other fellows smiled. There was no doubt that old Mr. O was doing his nephew's guests well, though he was apparently going to see little of them personally. Six apartments on a vast corridor were prepared for the Famous Five and Billy Bunter. Wun Lung's room was on another corridor at a distance in the great house. That was why the wrinkle deepened in Bob's troubled brow.

Wun Lung came up with his friends and said good-night to them at their doors. Bob lingered in the corridor after the other fellows had gone into their rooms.

Wun's slanting eyes peered at him curiously. Wun had not failed to notice that Bob had some worry on his mind.

"Ole Bob Chelly tinkee 'long some trouble?" he asked.

Bob breathed rather hard.

"Well, yes, kid," he said slowly. "I'd rather you weren't so far away from your friends."

"Allee light, 'long house blong Uncle O!" said Wun. "Spooee Sin Song bad fellee kidnappee, you no tinkee he comey kidnappee this li'll Chinese 'long housee blong Uncle O."

He grinned at the idea.

"That's exactly what I do think, Wun," said Bob quietly. He paused. It was impossible to breathe a word of his deep suspicions of O Bo. But, after a moment's pause, he went on: "The man's got confederates in the house. Those two chauffeurs, to-day, were in the game with him, to get you away from us and leave us stranded. I—I think there are others."

"Plaps!" murmured Wun Lung dubiously.

"I'm sure of it," muttered Bob. "To-morrow, old son, I want you to fix it up for us to camp together, same as in the dorm at Greyfriars. But to-night—" He paused again. "Look here, for to-night let's change rooms. You take mine, and I'll take yours."

Wun Lung grinned again.

"Spooee kidnappee comey, he baggee ole Bob Chelly!" he said.

"He doesn't want me," said Bob. "That's all right! Do as I ask, old chap. There's no danger for me, and I tell you I know there's danger for you. Send the servants down—we don't want putting to bed like kids—and then—"

"Allee light."

It was clear that Wun did not believe that he was in any danger in his uncle's house. And Bob could not tell him that it was because he was in Mr. O's house that he was in danger! But Chinese politeness, if nothing else, would have made Wun accede to Bob's wishes. He grinned, but he agreed.

When Wun's slanting eyes closed that night he was in Bob's room, with the

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door locked; and Bob Cherry was in Wun's room, but Bob did not mean to close his eyes.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

The Prisoner of the Chest!

BOB CHERRY stirred—and awoke in intense darkness.

Waking, he realised that he had slept.

His first feeling was that he was in motion. Dizzily, he fancied for a moment that he was still on the Channel boat. Then his brain cleared, only to make him wonder more.

He had not meant to close his eyes as he lay in the canopied bed in Wun Lung's room, in the great house on the avenue. He was tired with the journey and the excitement of the day, but he had not meant to sleep.

Convinced that Wun was in danger in the house of Mr. O, he believed that the room would be visited in the small hours, and that a locked door would not keep out the visitor. He meant to be wide awake, and see what happened. Now he recalled that as he lay, there had been an aromatic scent in the air; he remembered he wondered if it came from incense-burning, likely enough in the house of a Chinese. From that time he remembered no more.

Evidently he had slept.

But where was he now? Not in bed—but where? He lay on something hard. It was padded, but it was wood. He stirred, and stretched a hand out, and felt a wall close to him. He stretched out the other hand, and felt another wall!

To find himself in a narrow space, between two walls not more than two feet apart, was so startling that it banished from his dizzy brain the last mists of sleep, and—as he knew now—of a narcotic! For he knew, in a flash, what that aromatic scent in Wun Lung's room had been—a drugging vapour, introduced by some interstice in the walls to make the Chinese junior insensible before the kidnapper came!

Had Wun Lung been there, he would indubitably have fallen a victim to it. Bob had been there, unknown to the kidnapper, and he had fallen a victim! And even at this terrible moment he was glad that he had saved Wun, though he knew now that he had been taken in the place of the Chinese junior.

But where was he?

He could feel motion, though he knew now that it was not the motion of the sea. It was the motion of a vehicle. He groped round him again. He felt the folds of a blanket. It flashed into his mind now how it was that he had been taken in mistake for Wun Lung.

Not for a moment had he supposed that the kidnapper, if he came, would make such a mistake. Yet it had been easy to make.

Nothing doubting that it was the Chinese junior in the bed, the man of the night, as soon as the drug had had time to reduce him to unconsciousness, had simply rolled him in the blankets and lifted him out.

Probably there had been more than one of them. Bob had no doubt that most, or all, of the Chinese servants of Mr. O were at the kidnapper's service.

But where was he? If they had carried him down staircases, down long corridors, to a car waiting in the courtyard, it was amazing that they had not discovered their mistake.

And what sort of a vehicle was this—

a space so narrow, that his elbows almost touched the sides, and in the blackest darkness?

He lifted his head.

Crack!

It was not a hard knock, but it made him fall back again, like one stunned. His head had struck wood, close above him.

Then, at last, he understood.

He was packed in a chest! He remembered now that there had been a long, deep Chinese chest in Wun Lung's room. He could guess that this was it—and why it was there!

Now he understood why the kidnappers had not discovered their mistake. They had not carried him down staircases and corridors in the blankets. He had been lifted directly from the bed to the chest, and the lid closed down on him. It was the chest that they had carried down to the car.

Very likely the whole thing had been done in the dark—they did not need a light. Anyhow, it was certain that, when they placed the sleeper, rolled in the blankets in the long chest, they had believed him to be Wun Lung. Certainly they did not want one of Wun's English friends.

Bob lay very still, his heart thumping.

He understood it all now. The blanket, rolled round him, had hidden him; it had fallen loose since, while he lay in the closed chest. Probably he had stirred a good many times before he finally woke. They believed that they had Wun Lung, and they were taking him—where?

The chest had been placed in a car; the car driven away from the house of Mr. O—for what destination?

Suppose it had been Wun, what would have happened on the morrow? Wun would have gone—Mr. O gone with him; the Greyfriars juniors left at a loose end! They had come with him to guard him and keep him safe—and that would have been the end of it!

But it was not Wun who lay in the heavy teak chest—it was Bob Cherry, and from the bottom of his heart he was thankful that it was!

He hardly thought for some time of what was going to happen to him when they discovered their mistake.

But when that thought occurred to him, and he wondered, his wonder was not mingled with dread. That the kidnappers would be exasperated and enraged, he knew; but he did not believe that they would harm him. If they did, he had taken the risk for Wun's sake, and he was glad that he had taken it.

But Mr. O, whatever his amazing and incomprehensible reason for kidnapping his own nephew, was not a man for dark deeds. Neither was Dr. Sin—cunning, artful, unscrupulous as he was, his good-nature and good-temper were genuine enough.

There was some mystery behind all this that Bob could not begin to fathom; but he was not in the hands of criminals. These Chinese were breaking the law, but they were not crooks, or anything like it.

Bob could only wait!

How long he had been in that coffin-like chest he did not know—he had no means of guessing how long he had been unconscious.

He was being carried away like baggage—perhaps in the midst of other baggage—as safe a mode of transit for a kidnapped prisoner as anyone could have desired.

But would they venture to put that

box on a railway train? The lid was locked on him; but, thick as it was, surely he would be able to make his voice heard when he shouted! Was the journey to be made by car? He could tell nothing—he could only lie and wait!

He breathed easily enough. He could tell by that that there were ventilating holes in the chest. That made it fairly certain that he could make his voice heard if he shouted, if the chest were dumped down in a railway station. He could only wait for the journey's end.

There was a sudden jerk—the car had stopped. Bob still waited. He felt the box lifted from the car.

It was carried, and a sudden tilting told him that it was carried up steps! Whether into a railway station or some other building he had no means of guessing.

It was dumped on a floor.

Journey's end, whatever it was, had been reached. A glimmer of light came to him in the darkness.

He was, clearly, in a lighted room. One of the ventilating holes, he could see now, was just over his head, and it was through it that the glimmer came.

He debated in his mind whether to shout, or to wait for the box to be opened. Then a soft voice that he knew reached his ears—the silky tones of Dr. Sin, speaking through the little orifice above his face.

He knew the voice, but the words were in Chinese; naturally, as Dr. Sin supposed that he was speaking to Wun Lung!

Bob grinned and lay silent.

The sleek voice went on, with a faintly anxious note in it. From the fact that Dr. Sin spoke at all, it was clear that he supposed that the prisoner had recovered consciousness by this time—as, indeed, he had! But the silence from within the chest made him uneasy. "Shen mo szi giao ni buh schwang kwai?" came in an interrogative tone. Dr. Sin was asking something—what, Bob had not the faintest idea, as he knew hardly a word of Wun's language.

"O yao hwei hsin?"

Bob suppressed a chuckle. The meaning of the words was wrapped in mystery to Bob; but the tone showed that Dr. Sin was uneasy and impatient. Bob did not doubt that he would soon lift the lid of the box to ascertain why the Chinese junior did not answer.

He was right!

There was a click as the key turned.

Bob drew a deep breath. He was ready to act as soon as the lid was up. Little Wun Lung, if he had given trouble, would easily have been pushed back into the chest by Dr. Sin—but it was not so easy to handle Bob Cherry.

The lid began to lift.

It was half-lifted, when Bob, reaching up, gave it a violent shove, sending it flying back out of Dr. Sin's hands.

As it flew, he scrambled up, the blankets dropping round him.

There was a yell of surprise as Dr. Sin's slanting eyes fairly popped at him. Taken utterly by surprise at the sight of Bob Cherry, the plump Chinese stood goggling like a man in a dream.

Then, as Bob bounded out of the chest, Dr. Sin made a clutch at him—with what intention Bob did not know, and did not wait to ascertain. As the yellow hand clutched, Bob Cherry's right lashed out with all his beef behind it, and landed full in the yellow face—and Dr. Sin Song went over

backwards as if a cannon-ball had hit him.

Crash!

Dr. Sin, letting out a fearful yell, landed on his back, with his feet in the air. He sprawled and yelled, but he was up again like a cat, his yellow face glaring rage.

Bob did not wait for him. He was close by an open door—and he ran through it; and then, with a gasp of astonishment, he realised where he was!

The teak chest had been landed in the baggage-room of a passenger plane—and, had the prisoner of the chest been Wun Lung, the Chinese junior of Greyfriars would have vanished by a route that his friends certainly could not have followed.

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

An Anxious Night!

"M'SIEUR!" Harry Wharton awoke suddenly.

He sat up, blinking.

"What the dickens—" he ejaculated.

He rubbed his eyes and stared at the bowing manservant at his bedside. In the house of Mr. O, each of the honoured guests had been assigned a special valet-de-chambre; and it was Wharton's valet who had awakened him.

"M'sieur, le telephone!"

"The telephone!"

"Oui, m'sieur! Un ami demande Monsieur Wharton."

Harry Wharton glanced at his watch. It was half-past-two. Who could possibly have rung him up on the telephone, in a foreign city, at half-past two in the morning, was a puzzle and a mystery to him.

"You're sure I'm wanted?" he asked. "Vous en etes sur?"

"Oui, m'sieur!"

"But who—" gasped Harry blankly. Did he give his name?"

"Le nom Robert, m'sieur!"

Wharton almost fell back on his pillow. The name of "Robert" could only mean Bob Cherry; likewise, it could only mean that in giving that name, Bob wanted to get through to Wharton, without mentioning his surname.

That was only cautious, if there were spies of the kidnapper in the mansion. But where was Bob at that hour of the night? His room was next to Harry's; but obviously he could not be there if he was ringing up the captain of the Remove on the telephone.

Utterly amazed as he was, Wharton lost no time. He leaped from the bed, and bundled on a dressing-gown and slippers.

"Suivez-moi, m'sieur!"

Wharton followed the valet-de-chambre. In less than a minute he was sitting at the telephone, dismissing the valet with a gesture. He did not want the man to hear what was said over the wires, if it were Bob who was calling him up—and "Robert" could hardly be anybody else.

"Wharton speaking!" he said.

"Oh, good!" came Bob Cherry's voice, over the wires. "Thank goodness I've got you! You guessed who Robert was, what?"

"Yes; but what—"

"If I'd said Cherry, you mightn't have got the call! I don't suppose the French servants are in this game, but you never know! Anyhow, thank goodness I've got you, old bean! I'm speaking from the aerodrome."

"The aerodrome!" gasped Wharton. "You're out of the house—you're out of Paris—How the dickens did you get to the aerodrome?"

"In a teak chest."

"Wha-a-t?"

"On a car. I changed rooms with Wun when we went to bed."

"Oh!" gasped Harry.

"And they got me instead!"

"Bob!" gasped Wharton.

"I've borrowed a coat and a pair of shoes from a man who nearly fell down when he saw me in my pyjamas—"

"I should think he did! What—"

"I was going to keep awake, but they let a drug in through some hole in the wall in Wun's room. I woke up in a teak chest."

"Oh crumbs!"

"Sin opened the chest in the baggage-room on a plane. Taken there as baggage, see? Sin expected to see Wun

—he saw me, and I got him in the eye with my right! Then I did a jump down the steps of the plane—and out."

"Bob!" gasped Harry.

"I've caused some surprise here." Wharton heard a chuckle over the wires. "But it's all right! I'm getting back as soon as I can; but I shouldn't wonder if Sin Song cuts in ahead! Having bagged me in Wun's room, he may guess that Wun is in mine, see? I fancy he's going all out for Paris this minute—but he will want a very fast car to beat the telephone, what?"

Wharton could only gasp.

"That's why I've rung you. Wun's in my room, next to yours. Wake all the fellows and keep Wun in your room till I get back, see? Don't lose sight of him."

(Continued on next page.)



COME INTO the OFFICE, BOYS - AND GIRLS!

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.

ALL merry and bright? That's the stuff to give 'em!

One of my letters this week comes from George Bradshaw, of Woking, who, after saying a nice lot of things about the MAGNET, asks me if I can give him a cure for stammering.

I assure you, George, you have my heartfelt sympathy in your affliction, for I realise under what a heavy disability you are labouring in the great battle of life. All the same, my chum, you must take heart in the fact that in nine cases out of ten, a stammerer may, with perseverance, cure this most unhappy complaint.

I have known the following method to meet with success.

Shut yourself up in a dark room for about half an hour each day, and while there repeat slowly, deliberately, and with great precision, any piece of prose or poetry you may have committed to memory. This treatment should be kept up until it shows signs of producing good effect. When conversing with friends, make a point of talking slowly and deliberately. Form your words carefully, and don't endeavour in any way to hurry them. I don't see any reason why, with careful practice and determination, you should not get rid of your impediment of speech. At any rate, the cure is worth trying, isn't it? I shall expect to hear from you again later.

That's all the room I can spare, as far as the answering of queries is concerned, for

THE GREAT TIME HAS COME

for me once again to bring before your notice the fact that the "Holiday Annual" will be seen on all the book-stalls throughout the kingdom on Wednesday next. Take it from me, chums, the new "Holiday Annual" beats its predecessors into a cocked hat.

There are ripping yarns of Harry Wharton & Co., Tom Merry & Co., of St. Jim's, and Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood. I'm not going to take up a great deal of space with descriptions of the new Annual, for really it needs no recommendation from me. Its great appeal to boys and girls of all ages was made years ago, and ever since it has held the proud position of being the most popular Annual ever published. Trot along to your newsagent to-day and have a look at it. You're bound to want one!

Now for

NEXT SATURDAY'S ISSUE.

Frank Richards goes on from success to success in his fine Greyfriars yarns, and next week's story, which is entitled:

"MENACE FROM THE EAST!"

is a real top-notch. Keen and wary as they are, Harry Wharton & Co., who are keeping a sharp eye on Wun Lung, are hardly equal to the cunning of the subtle Oriental whom they have set themselves to defeat. But they tackle their difficulty right royally, and keep the old Greyfriars flag flying in the manner which you have learned to expect from them. There are chuckles as well as thrills in this yarn, and you won't want to leave it until you have read every word of it! Frank Richards certainly knows how to keep on the top line where schoolboy fiction is concerned, and you'll find next week's yarn one of the best he has written. There will be another issue of the "Greyfriars Herald" guaranteed to raise a number of smiles on your face and another interesting tour with the Greyfriars Guide. Don't miss next Saturday's MAGNET, whatever you do, chums!

YOUR EDITOR.

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"Rely on that, old chap! I'll tell the servants to call Mr. O—"

"Don't!"

"Why not?"

There was a moment's silence on the telephone. Then Bob went on:

"I've picked up here that that plane is a private plane, chartered by Mr. O. It's booked to pull out at dawn. If it had been Wun in the chest they'd have had him—he couldn't have got away as I did. That plane would have been hitting east at dawn, with Wun on it and Sin and—and—Mr. O."

"Bob!"

"Not a word about that to Wun! We can't tell him! But that's it, old man! I'm telling you now—because you've got to guard Wun till I get back. When I jumped in that car to-day at the gate old O wasn't bringing Wun to the Gare du Nord; I know now where he was heading—to this aerodrome and this plane."

"Bob," stuttered Wharton, "you don't mean—you can't mean—"

"I can—and I do! Now you understand."

"Bob, you're mad—Wun's uncle!" gasped Harry. "Why—"

"Don't ask me why! How should I know? Perhaps the old bean's cracked. Goodness knows! But there it is!"

"I can't believe it—"

"That don't matter so long as you look after Wun. Get to him at once and see that he's not left alone for a minute. They can't touch him with his friends round him. Got that?"

"Yes, yes! But—"

"That will do, then! Get to my room—Wun's there. But he won't be there when I get back if he's not looked after. Jump to it, old man!"

"Right-ho!"

Bob Cherry, at the other end, rang off. Harry Wharton left the telephone with his brain in a whirl. What Bob had said of Mr. O fairly staggered him, and he could not believe it. But he did not lose a moment.

Less than a minute after speaking to Bob he was tapping at a locked door. Wun Lung's voice came from within.

"Whatee wantoo?"

"It's Wharton. Let me in, kid."

"Allee light."

The door opened from within, and Wun Lung's slanting eyes stared in surprise at the captain of the Remove.

"Whatee mattee?" he asked.

"Come with me, and call the other fellows," said Harry.

The astonished Chinese junior followed him, and Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh were quickly awakened. Billy Bunter was left to snore undisturbed. In a few minutes the Co. were gathered in Wharton's room with Wun Lung.

The captain of the Remove shut the door and locked it.

"Something's up, I suppose?" said Johnny Bull, blinking at him. "Why haven't you called Bob?"

"Bob called me," answered Harry.

"Where is he, then?" asked Nugent.

"Some miles out of Paris—coming back from the aerodrome in a taxi, I suppose."

"Eh? What?"

"My esteemed Wharton—" gasped Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"You deeanee?" asked Wun Lung.

Harry Wharton succinctly explained what he had heard on the telephone—without mentioning the name of Mr. O, however. Whether Bob's suspicion of O Bo were right or wrong, it was not a matter that could be mentioned to Wun. The little Chinese's almond eyes opened wide as he listened.

"Oh clumbs!" he said. "Ole Bob Chelly savee this li'll Chineee! Me

sign of silence. From the corridor without came a sound of soft footsteps.

They passed the door—and stopped at the next.

The juniors exchanged glances in breathless silence.

Two or three men, at least, were in the passage. They were entering Bob Cherry's room—softly, but not so softly as to escape the ears that were strained to listen. Who they were, and what they were after, was clear enough! But for Bob's warning on the telephone they would have found Wun Lung in Bob's room. And Dr. Sin's mistake would have been set right!

The Greyfriars fellows listened, with beating hearts.

There were soft footfalls in the corridor again and a faint murmur of voices. That Dr. Sin and his myrmidons would venture upon open violence was very unlikely, but if it came the juniors were ready for it. But they did not expect it—and it did not come! Probably Dr. Sin was not long in ascertaining how the matter stood, and realised that his game was up for that night. The murmur in the corridor died away, and all was silent again.

Another hour had passed, then the sound of a car floated in from the silent avenue. A few minutes more, and there was a thump at Wharton's door.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came booming in from the corridor.

Wharton unlocked the door, and Bob Cherry tramped in.

"Wun all right?" he exclaimed.

"All light, ole Bob Chelly!" grinned Wun Lung.

"Oh, good!" said Bob.

"Long morning comey mo tollee Uncle O, he tankee you plenty too much long you savee this li'll Chineee from kidnapee."

Bob Cherry had his doubts on that point! But he did not state them.

"I say, you fellows!" Billy Bunter blinked, a fat, contented blink over the breakfast-table in the morning. "I say, this is all right! I slept like a top all night—did you fellows? I say, the grub's all right! Looks to me as if we're going to have a jolly good time in Paris. I think I should prefer Margate, as a matter of choice—but we're all right here—what?"

"Right as rain!" agreed Bob Cherry.

The Greyfriars party were going to have a good time in Paris. But they could not help thinking that it was going to be an exciting time, too.

THE END.

(The sinister Dr. Sin's plans have come unstuck so far! But he's not the man to give up trying, as you will discover in "MENACE FROM THE EAST!" the next yarn in this powerful holiday series.)

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tinkee all light, 'long house blong Uncle O. No all light."

"Beats me!" said Johnny Bull slowly. "We know that man Sin's game now, but how the dickens could he work it like that in this house? Some of the others here must be in the game with him."

"No doubt about that!" said Harry. "Anyhow, we're keeping Wun under our eyes till Bob blows in."

"Yes, rather!"

The juniors were not likely to think of sleep again that night. That Dr. Sin had confederates in the house was quite clear, whether he was, as Bob believed, acting under the orders of the master of the house or not. It was a relief to Wharton, after what Bob had said, that Wun did not suggest awakening Mr. O. They waited, talking in low tones and listening! What step the defeated secretary might take they could not guess—but they were on their guard now, whatever might happen.

It was about an hour later that Harry Wharton suddenly held up his hand in

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HIS GUILTY CONSCIENCE!

Sparkling School Story of St. Sam's
By DICKY NUGENT.



No. 256.

EDITED BY MARK LINLEY.

September 4th, 1937.

The GREY FRIARS HERALD



TOM BROWN tells you SECRETS OF LARRY'S POPULARITY!

I.
"Hi! Half-a-jiffy!"
Doctor Alfred Birchermall, the awe-inspiring headmaster of St. Sam's, craned his ostrich-like neck out of his study window and bawled out in this fashion to Jack Jolly and Frank Fearless.

The heroes of the Fourth stopped and looked up.
It was a half-hollerday and they were on their way to footer praktiks. But half-hollerdays and footer praktiks had to take a back seat when the Head said "Stop!"

"Good afternoon, sir!" cried Jolly and Fearless, doffing their caps politely.
"Wotcher!" returned the Head, in his refined way. "Doing anything special this afternoon, boys?"

"Yes, rather, sir!" said Jack Jolly. "We're playing footer!"
"Your mistake, Jolly!" said the Head blandly. "You're not!"

"Eh?"
"You're not playing footer after all! You're coming along to the golf lynx instead—to carry golf clubs for myself and Mr. Lickham."

Jolly and Fearless frowned.
"Look here, sir, if you're trying to be funny—"

"If this is your idea of a joke—" Doctor Birchermall wagged a warning fourfinger at the two dismayed Fourth Formers.

"Now don't argue the toss, boys, unless you happen to be looking for trouble. It's not a joke—and I shan't be put off my streak! For the rest of the afternoon, you two are going to be caddies!"

"Don't be caddish, sir!" cried Jolly; but his plea fell on deaf ears.

"Stay right where you are, boys!" grinned the Head. "Lickham and I will be down in a minnit!"

Doctor Birchermall was as good as his word. Less than two minnits after, he appeared on the Skool House steps, arm-in-arm with Mr. Lickham.

Jolly and Fearless couldn't help laughing when they saw them. They were both dressed in plus eights and sports jackets and they both wore rather large check caps at a jaunty angle. The combined effect was awfully comical and the two Fourth Formers fairly roared.

"Ha, ha, ha! Jevver see such a couple of guys, Fearless?"
"Never!" gurgled Fearless. "I bet they'd take first prize in the Muggleton Carnival—or a freak show!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
The Head and Mr. Lickham frowned, as they drew near the historical juniors, dragging their golf-bags behind them.

"Now then, boys, stop this here cackling!" cried the Head, as he heaved his bulky bag across to Jolly. "Catch, Jolly!"
"Yarooooo!"
"Here's mine, Fearless!" added Mr. Lickham. And he dropped his bag on Fearless' toes, bringing a yelp of pain to Frank's lips.

Jolly and Fearless would have given a lot just then to have been able to tell the old buffers to carry their own bags and leave them to go to footer in peace.

But there were limmits even for fellows like Jolly and Fearless, and neither of them fancied earning a Head's licking. With a mitey effort, they resisted the temptation and shouldered their burdens instead.

They soon reached the Muggleton Golf Lynx and Doctor Birchermall made the first drive.

The Head's method seemed to be to turn himself into a spinning top and close his eyes as he hit out at the ball. It was not a very successful method at first, for the only thing he hit was a chunk of turf weighing several pounds which sailed through the air and hit Mr. Lickham on the nose. But he scored a bull at his second attempt, and the ball bounced beautifully in the direction of the first hole.

"Oh, well hit, sir!" chortled the Head, giving himself a hearty slap on the back. "I bet you'll never make a drive like that, Lickham, if you try from now till Doomsday!"
"I should be a bit nervous of trying, myself, sir," confessed Mr. Lickham. "We're quite near a public footpath, you know, and if a ball goes wide of the mark, it's quite possible it may do some dammidge."

"Hear, hear!" chimed in Jolly and Fearless.

But the Head merely grinned.
"Pah! You shouldn't let trifles worry you, Lickham. After all, if we do happen to hit somebody, we shan't do more than brane him!"

"Oh, grate pip!"
"On with the game!" grinned Doctor Birchermall. "See if you can nock your ball into the middle of next week, Lickham!"

While Mr. Lickham fussed about, getting ready for his shot, Jack Jolly drew Fearless aside.

"The fakt is, old chap," he said, sotto voce, "the Head badly needs a lesson!"

"True enuff, old fellow," nodded Fearless. "But how can we give it?"

For answer, the kaptein of the Fourth whispered something in his chum's ear—something that made Frank Fearless grin like a Cheshire cat.

"Ripping wheeze!" he whispered. "You slip off while they're not looking and see if you can work the oracle."

Jack Jolly mannided to dodge off while they were on their way to the next tee, and neither the Head nor Mr. Lickham noticed his absence.

Once again Doctor Birchermall closed his eyes, turned himself into a spinning-top and lashed out at the ball.

Nobody saw where the ball went. But a couple of seconds later they heard instead. A wild, anguished shriek rang out from behind a hedge that bordered the golf lynx. The Head and Mr. Lickham, staring in the direction of the shriek, were just in time to see a tattered figger staggering to the ground!

Mr. Lickham uttered a gasp of horror.

"You've done it, sir—you've done it!" he cried. "I warned you, but you didn't take any notiss. You've given some poor bloke his deth-blow!"

A garstly pallor spread over the Head's feetchers. He dropped his golf club and began to walk towards the fateful spot.

Fearless ran on ahead of him and Jack Jolly reappeared and joined his chum.

When the two beaks arrived, they found the Fourth Formers bending over a huddled heap of yewmanity that was ominously still.

"Jolly!" croaked the Head. "What has happened? Releve my awful suspense! Tell me—does he breathe?"

"No fear, sir!" came back Jolly's prompt reply. "There's not a sign of life in him!"

An aggrised groan burst from Doctor Birchermall's lips.

"Then leave him where he lies and let's all do a bunk!" he cried, horsely. "Quick—before the perlice arrive!"

Doctor Birchermall then turned and fled.

Mr. Lickham rubbed his chin dewbiously for a minnit, then followed him.

Jolly and Fearless stopped behind to retrieve the beaks' golfing kit. Then they brought up in the rear.



11.
Tramp! Tramp!
Tramp!

Doctor Birchermall paced up and down the floor of his study at St. Sam's like a caged tiger. Mr. Lickham, who sat in the armchair, noticed that he had a hawnted look on his skollarly fizz and an eggspression of fear in his somewhat shifty eyes.

Ever and anonymously, the Head crossed over to the window and glanced fearfully down to the gates—drawn and haggard at the mcer thought that his eyes mite lite on

the dreaded figger of the village constable, P.-c. Podge.

"Whoa is me!" cried the Head, horsely. "To think that an innersent game of golf should lead to this! Oh, that I should have lived to see this day! Do you think I left any clues behind, Lickham?"

"Pooh, nothing much, sir!" answered the Fourth Form-maer, with a shrug. "A few footprints, I eggspert; some shreds of cloth from your clothes, a button or two and probably a rubber brel. Nothing to worry about!"

"Nothing to worry about!" shrieked the Head. "Why, you idjnt, the perlice could track down a man on a half of that!" He clutched frenziedly at his beard and eyed Mr. Lickham with a spes that almost bulged out of their socks.

"S-s-suppose they nab me, Lickham? What then?"

"Well, in that case, sir, I'm afraid it will be a case of standing your trial with as good a grace as possible," said Mr. Lickham, with a shake of his head. "They'd probably reduce it to a charge of trampslawter—your viktin looked rather like a tramp to me—and let you off with about forty years hard labour."

"Forty years!" gasped the Head. "I could never do it! Fancy a meer youth like me goag in to chokey for forty years! Why, I'd be an old man by the time I came out! Ow! Wazzat?"

Doctor Birchermall did a dive, as a nock sounded on the door, and crawled under the sofa. But there was no need for alarm. It was only Binding, the page, bring'g in the Head's afternoon tea.

Binding blinked when he spotted the Head.

"Lumme! What are you a-doing of, sir?" he cried.

The Head crawled out of his

hiding-place, fairly gasping with releef.

"Binding, Binding, you really must take more care of your grammar!" he said. "Never say 'What are you a-doing of?' Say 'What are you doing of?'—without the 'a'!"

"I—I, sir!"

And Binding retreated, eyeing the Head in a decidedly puzzled and suspishus manner.

Doctor Birchermall dropped a handful of sugar into his tea and stirred it moodily.

"A nice state of affairs, me diving under the sofa whenever anybody comes near," he cried bitterly.

"I shinch at every footfall, Lickham—shrink from every shaddo!"

"So would I if I were in your place," said Mr. Lickham. "The fakt is, sir, you've got a gilty conscience. The only way to get rid of it is in my opinion

is for you to give yourself up to the perlice."

Crash! Swoosh!

The Head's teacup dropped from his nerveless fingers. It smashed into a thousand fragments and spilled the tea all over the floor.

"Give myself up?" he gasped. "Beads of perspiration stood out from the Head's forehead."

"Look here, Lickham, you wouldn't think of giving me away—"

"That's eggactly what I am thinking of, as a matter of fakt,"

said the master of the Fourth, rising to his feet. "The more I turn it over in my mind, the more I see that it's my duty. Yes, sir; if you won't do it, then I must!"

Mr. Lickham rose to his feet and made a move for the door.

Doctor Birchermall, with a howl of fear, rushed after him.

An eggsting race ensued, Mr. Lickham sprinting through the House like a champion on the cinder-track and the Head galloping feveriously after him.

Mr. Lickham never reached the perlice. He crashed into Jolly and Fearless at the front door

comes about with pleasure."

Larry gripped me by the scruff of the neck with a grip of iron and dumped me bodily into an armchair.

"Yaroooooh!" I yelped. "Wharrer you doing?"

"Being kind, but firm," Larry replied cheerfully. "That's one of my secrets, you see. I am kind enough to want you to be seated—and I am firm enough to see that you are!"

Larry stood in front of me and bared his teeth. I recoiled with a howl of terror.

"Help! If you bite me, sir—"

"Have no fear, Brown. This is merely another little aid to popularity. I am showing my gleaming teeth in a genial smile! See?"

"Oh, good!"

Larry then sat in a chair, crossed one leg over the other, and started twisting his foot round as though he was trying to wrench his leg off his body!

"What the thump!" I exclaimed.

"Another helpful little trick, my dear Brown!" laughed Larry. "I am loosening one of my limbs. If there's one thing above all others that excites admiration it's my loose-limbed appearance."



instead, and all three finished up on the floor.

Jack Jolly, who had a happy knack of putting two and two together and making five of them, soon saw what was in the wind.

"I say, sir, I hope you're not worrying over that incident on the golf lynx," he said to the Head, as he scrambled to his feet. "Because if you are I can relieve your worry at once. The fakt is, it wasn't a yewman being at all."

Doctor Birchermall jumped.

"N-n-not a yewman being, Jolly? Then what was it?"

"Please, sir, it was a scare-crow!"

"Wh-a-at?"

"Fakt, sir!" grinned the kaptein of the Fourth. "You could have seen for yourself if you'd stayed. But you were in too much of a hurry to go!"

"B-b-bless my sole!" gasped the Head. Then his face cleared and he grinned again and finished up by performing a Highland fling of joy!

Five minnits later, all his troubles over, he was scellybrating with Mr. Lickham in the tuckshop.

And meanwhile, in the Skool House, Jolly and Fearless and their pals were larfing fit to bust.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Jolly. "It worked like a charm! We wanted to get back to footer practice, so I nocked down the scarecrow myself—and let the Head imagine his golf-ball had nocked down a yewman being!"

"Wouldn't the Head be wild if he knew?" chortled Fearless.

Forchuntly he never did know!

be ripping sport, firing off maroons or ringing the old alarm bell.

You can bet I'd keep a sharp look out for smugglers and pirates and foreign invaders, too. If any of them ventured to attack my stronghold, they'd get a jolly warm welcome.

I'd lean over the gallery at the top and pour boiling oil over 'em. I fancy they'd give my lighthouse a pretty wide berth after receiving my first greeting!

Yes, I think I'll certainly become a lighthouse-keeper when I leave school.

It's a great pity I've got such a dashed long time to wait!

LIGHTHOUSE-KEEPING WOULD GIVE ME GREAT DELIGHT!

Says WINGATE MINOR

What a lovely life it is when you live in a lighthouse!

I once went over one with my major, and now it's my great ambition to be a lighthouse-keeper. Give me the chance to swap places with a lighthouse-keeper and see me jump at it! Geo-wha! I'd be monarch of all I surveyed—with just a pal to keep me company, of course.

There'd be no lessons, no prep, no kicks from fagmasters, no swishings from beaks.

I'd be as keen as mustard on the work, I can tell you. The lights would always go on at the right time and in foggy weather it would

be ripping sport, firing off maroons or ringing the old alarm bell.

You can bet I'd keep a sharp look out for smugglers and pirates and foreign invaders, too. If any of them ventured to attack my stronghold, they'd get a jolly warm welcome.

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STOWAWAY CHARGED IN CHILDREN'S COURT!

Judge Tubb on Fag Prestige

Sobbing bitterly, Samuel Tuckless Bunter, a twelve-year-old eating champion, was charged in the Children's Court with being a stowaway on board the boat which, at the time of going to press, is conveying our regular Editor and a party of Greyfriars' fellows across the Channel.

Det. Insp. Penfold, who said he had been deputed by the Remove Court to hand over prisoner to the Children's Court, produced a letter signed by Harry Wharton and witnessed by Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent. The letter stated that prisoner had been found in the hold of the cross-Channel steamer, and that one Bunter in the party was bad enough.

Judge Tubb: "So Wharton thinks Bunter minor's no better than his major, eh? Dashed cheek—and a flagrant attempt to lower the prestige of the fagging Forms in the bargain! What's the plea, prisoner? Guilty or not guilty?"

Prisoner: "Guilty, your Honour, but I didn't mean—"

Judge Tubb: "Never mind what you meant. My verdict is Not Guilty!"

Det. - Insp. Penfold (warmly): "But, look here, your Honour, you haven't heard all the evidence—"

Judge Tubb: "No, and I don't want to hear it, either. If you expect me to believe that anybody but a blessed Removeite would want to join a crowd of old fogeys like Wharton and his pals of his own accord, you're in for a disappointment! I'll admit that prisoner is several sorts of a silly young ass. But he's not completely off his rocker; and he'd have to be to want to join this trip! Not Guilty!"

Bunter minor was then released without a stain on his character.

Legal circles in the Remove are greatly puzzled by the Judge's decision in this case, but we are in a position to explain it fully.

We happen to know that the day before Sammy Bunter's unsuccessful bid, Judge Tubb himself tried to join Wharton's expedition—and was promptly turned down!

Third Form justice seems to be not altogether unprejudiced at times!

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